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TRAIL

The Bulletin of the TRF, the National Club for all who wish to ride Legal Motorcycles on Legal Carriageways. EDITOR: Fred Ellison.

DECEMBER 2005 No. 328



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MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

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- EQUESTRIAN EVENTS LIAISON OFFICER** Mark Holland, Corn Farm, Devauden, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, NP16 6NS. Tel: 0845 3308892 Mobile: 07941 427774.

TRF Website <http://www.trf.org.uk>

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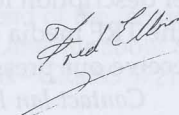
The views expressed in 'Trail' are those of its correspondents and not necessarily of the editor or the T.R.F.

EDITOR

Christmas 2005 is here and we are still riding as many lanes as we did Christmas 2004. What will happen by Christmas 2006? Quite simply no one knows but the NERC Bill is not law yet and the fight is still on. There is an Officer's report on page 7 - **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO DO SOMETHING** to influence the final outcome and the TRF is doing everything possible. We have people running around like their lives depend on it. Remember S34A? That was going to be the end of trail riding and there have been other scares in the past. So think positive, the antis are a pain but we're fighters aren't we.

Don't forget hunting has been banned, hasn't it?

MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR



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DON'T GET COURT WITHOUT THEM!!!!!!

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COVER PHOTO
from Terry Stapleton
Trail Riding in the Snow

All Contributions to the Editor, Fred Ellison, Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe, Lancs., BB7 9DG. editor@trf.org.uk
COPY DEADLINE: FIRST POST, 1ST TUESDAY OF MONTH

NOTICE BOARD

TRF MEDIA DATABASE

Remember to send media e-mail contact addresses with a brief description for inclusion in the TRF media database to receive our press releases.

Contact Ian Packer
Email: pr@trf.org.uk

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NATIONAL EXEC MEETING

10.00 am, Saturday 21st January 2006

Lilleshall National Sports Centre
(signposted from the A41 south of Newport), Nr Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9AT

Please ensure that your group is represented at the meeting. If you have anything for the agenda please send it to me via secretary@trf.org.uk or post via the address in the front of TRAIL. The closing date for the agenda is 14th January 2006

Polly Cody,
Hon. Secretary

WEST YORKSHIRE TRF

The new committee are keen to attract any new or elapsed members back to the group (you don't have to live in W. Yorks).

We have a lot of exciting plans for the coming year in addition to finally having a RoW officer in the shape of Brian Thompson

Meetings are on the 1st Thursday of the month at Bankfoot Cricket Club, Odsal, Bradford, starting at 9.00 pm.

For further details please contact Richard Hirst 01274 632676, email: richard.hirst1@tesco.net

USER EVIDENCE, DEVON

The Devon TRF Group's work on BOAT claims has already had an impact in that I have now received from DCC the Definitive Map Review "Consultation Map" for Shirwell Parish and it includes three proposed BOATs that, prior to submitting our Schedule 14 claims, were proposed as bridleways. This puts pressure on us to find additional evidence to strengthen the TRF case, particularly more user evidence forms, and make the claim stick at the PRoW Committee. If they agree a BOAT then it makes our work at subsequent Public Inquiries so much easier as County then support the case for Byway status. If any TRAIL readers have used these lanes, and are prepared to complete user evidence forms, please contact Noel Squibb on 07970 823613. The claims are:

Route 1 - Upgrade of Shirwell Footpath 15 to BOAT - Kingdon's Lane - from the end of the recorded county road near Kingdon's Gardens, Smoky Lane, along a track through Raleigh Wood, Kindon's Lane, for about 2020 metres to the county road near Collard Bridge - GRs SS 5829 3470 to 5915 3556 together with: Upgrade of West Pilton Bridleway 5 - Smoky House Lane - from the end of the recorded county road near Court Farm along a track, Smoky House Lane, for about 650 metres to the recorded county road west of Kingdon's Gardens - GRs SS 5721 3467 to 5779 3482

Route 2 - Addition of BOAT at Cott Down Plantation from the otherwise cul de sac recorded county road from Ford Cross for about 620 m to the end of another cul de sac recorded county road from Cott Bridge, Loxhore Cott - GRs SS 6025 3813 to 6075 3849

*Brian Sussex, RoW Officer for the Devon Group, Email: briansussex@hotmail.com
Aldenharn, Longdown, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7SR*

PARKAMOOR

The U5051 Parkamoor to High Nibthwaite WILL BE OPEN FOR DECEMBER 2005. The section across Seven Wells will be closed (grid refs. SD 316924 to SD 324923). The tro signs at these locations are displayed.

Given the relatively dry and very cold end to November only the deepest potholes south and east of High Parkamoor and across Seven Wells are water filled. Otherwise the route is relatively dry and hard. There has been a lot of frost heave during the prolonged cold spell in November, resulting in track surfaces freezing to a considerable depth. As the weather has got milder, this has thawed creating very soft ground. So although there is relatively little water on the surface of the route, it is currently sensitive to vehicle use. This is why the Seven Wells section is closed. There are stretches of very soft ground that would be damaged by vehicles. Motorcyclists should also avoid riding on the grassy sections on the level stretch south of Parkamoor as these are also very soft. Please stay in the hard stone ruts.

Dave Robinson, Trails Adviser, Lake District National Park Authority

MEETING OF THE TRF EXECUTIVE

Saturday 21st January 2006

National Sports Centre, Lilleshall, TF10 9AT - just west of A41, 10:00 for 10:30

AGENDA

1. Chairman's introduction and report
2. Apologies for absence
 - 2.1 Notice of AOB:
3. Approval of minutes of meeting on 25 September 2005 - Trail No. 327
4. Matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)
 - 4.1 UCR Report - Booklet & CD (Tim Stevens & Dave Giles)
 - 4.2 Group Contacts (Polly Cody)
 - 4.3 Membership payment without forms (Mary Stevens)
 - 4.4 Byway Bonus (Polly Cody)
 - 4.5 Wales Off Road Motorcycle Steering Group (Andy Gerrard, Tim Stevens)
 - 4.6 Membership Renewal Form (Fred Ellison, Arnold Brewer)
5. Elected Officer Reports:
 - 5.1 Vice Chairman (Tim Stevens)
 - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Bill
 - 5.2 Secretary (Polly Cody) - Joining process and subscription payments
 - 5.3 Treasurer (Arnold Brewer)
 - Limited Company Status
 - Refunding part of membership subscriptions to groups
 - 5.4 Membership (Mary Stevens);
 - 5.5 Public Relations (Ian Packer) - Marketing the TRF
 - 5.6 Editor (Fred Ellison);
 - 5.7 Rights of Way (Brian Thompson);
 - Gorbeck Lane
 - Formation of Hull Group
 - Permissive byways
6. Co-opted officers:
 - 6.1 BMF Rep. (Dave Giles)
 - 6.2 Lara Rep (Richard Fordham, Dave Giles)
 - 6.3 Web-site (Bill Richards)
 - 6.4 CCPR (Dave Tilbury)
 - 6.5 BHS (Mark Holland)
 - 6.6 PO Box
 - 6.7 Display (Leo Crone)
 - 6.8 Stationery
 - 6.9 London Gazette (Richard Hawker)
7. AOB (At chairman's discretion)

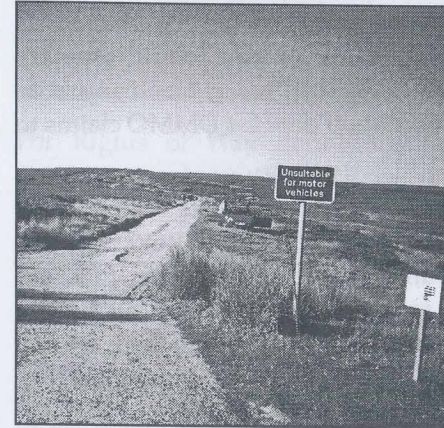
Date of next meeting: 26 March

Provisional for 2006: 24 June, 24 September.

Target finishing time - 16:00



RoW News



A MESSAGE FROM BRIAN THOMPSON!

Get out there with your camera & survey ALL UCRS (shown as ORPA on Explorer OS maps as green dots) displaying the sign "unsuitable for motors". Record the place and date and give to your group RoW Officer or send to me at: P.O. Box 593, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8WU. This is how you can help keep and save green lanes like this one on the North Yorks Moors.

Brian Thompson

HOW WILL THE NERC ACT EFFECT MY TRAIL RIDING ?

ANSWER : The NERC Bill will remove motoring rights from many minor highways. Motoring rights will remain only on

- (i) those which are recorded as BOATs on the Definitive Map
- (ii) those which are recorded on the official List of Streets and not also on the Definitive Map as footpath, bridleway, or restricted byway.

The Bill changes will apply to routes whether or not they are dirt, sealed, tarmac or concrete. Other rights including non-motorised vehicle rights are not affected; neither are they created by NERC if they do not exist.

The Bill does not say

- (iii) what happens to routes claimed as BOAT but awaiting a decision, or
- (iv) what happens to RUPPs.

QUESTION : When will the NERC Act come into effect?

ANSWER: The change will come into effect when the Minister decides it should - this is called 'commencement'. The Minister promised to introduce commencement as soon as he legally could, possibly on Royal Assent. The NERC Bill is due to be heard in the Lords again on or after December 12 2005, but the relevant sections (61, 62) may be delayed a few days.

QUESTION : Can I do anything to change the outcome of the NERC Bill?

ANSWER: The TRF is lobbying hard and amendments are possible. You can help with lobbying by writing to your MP and the House of Lords. Use the information presented in LARA guidance:

<http://www.laragb.org/lobby/lobby-mp.pdf> and

<http://www.laragb.org/lobby/committeestagebrief.pdf>.

If you don't have internet access ask someone who does, or ask the TRF secretary for a copy of the articles. You can still submit DMMO claims, get as many in as you can, they don't need to be perfect. A definite cut off date for DMMO claims to byway has not been issued.

QUESTION : How does the NERC Bill tie in with the CRoW Act?

ANSWER: When the relevant regulations authorised in the CRoW Act are approved by Parliament (by Statutory Instrument) all remaining RUPPs will change to Restricted Byways. This will add non-motoring rights to all RUPPs which did not already have them. The regulations will no doubt include any transitional provisions setting out what will happen to claims in the pipeline (but only as regards RUPPs). That process has not yet started and so the NERC Bill will need to be amended to cover RUPPs, or delayed until the change has occurred. If commencement is backdated, it does not seem possible that RUPPs will be caught, otherwise. Recent regulations require all the Authorities to compile a Register - to

be publicly available - of all applications to modify the Definitive Map (i.e. claims, etc). This must be completed by December 31 2005, although some Authorities are saying that they won't be able to comply. It would be reasonable not to introduce new rules affecting applications until after the Register were all produced - but that will not prevent earlier closure of any 'claims window'. Parliament is not required to be reasonable.

CONCLUSION: There IS a future for the TRF and trail riding. We DO NOT face a total unsurfaced road ban - yet. We will all have to fight very hard to maintain trail riding.

Further reading on the issues and the history leading up to the current

situation can be found at these links on the LARA web-site. If you would like paper copies please contact the TRF secretary.

LARA, <http://www.laragb.org>, home page :

The LARA Briefing Paper, <http://www.laragb.org/nerc/lara-nerc-paper.pdf>.

Recreation, <http://www.laragb.org/nerc/s62-recreation.pdf>

Property, <http://www.laragb.org/nerc/s62-property.pdf>

Motoring, <http://www.laragb.org/nerc/s62-motoring.pdf>

For Rights of Way definitions refer to the Glossary on the TRF web-site, www.trf.org.uk, or your TRF welcome pack.

The TRF Officers

One M.P.'S Response?

Below is the response Mike Darke of Bristol received from his M.P. - very similar to the reply I received from my M.P. (and I never said that I was involved with the TRF), a Conservative! The whole thing obviously orchestrated by Alun Michael/Jim Knight and DEFRA and so after lies and misinformation another ill-conceived bill becomes law! It is horrifying that the majority of M.P.s have little idea of the facts when they vote on issues which affect us all as well as future generations.



DAN NORRIS MP

*Labour Member of Parliament for Wansdyke
covering North East Somerset and parts of South Gloucestershire*

18 November 2005

Dear Mr Darke


Thank you for your letter of 12 November 2005 about the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill.

I believe that DEFRA has listened carefully to the views of the Trail Riders Fellowship, as they have to those who suffer from the actions of trail riders who are not law abiding and responsible. The Government has to consider the interests of all concerned.

I can understand your members' disappointment. Unfortunately my postbag shows that some trail riders cause damage to the countryside and danger to the public. I assume this also happens in other parts of the country and in drafting the Bill the Government has taken all interests into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Dan Norris



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A Message From Your Treasurer

When I was appointed Treasurer some months ago I promised to let Fred, our Editor, have a few notes about me for the next edition of Trail. Well that was 8 months ago and my excuses revolve around a house move, builders, painting and decorating, the pub next door – you get the picture.

Now though, with membership renewals dropping through your post boxes and all the activity surrounding the NERC Bill, seems a good opportunity to redress the situation.

I qualified as a Chartered Accountant many years ago having managed to delay passing my exams within the norm of 5 years to something like 7 years. My excuse for that was the temptation of a rather elderly James framed Villiers 2T powered scrambles / trials type bike that a friend had put together and taken £40 off me for the privilege, I used to take on rides around Otmoor and the villages of Oxfordshire.

Like so many of us however, those horrible dirty bikes took a back seat in my life as family and business commitments took away all thoughts of leisure time, that is until I got to the ripe young age of 50 and decided a return to biking was long overdue. It all restarted with a Moto Guzzi California, to be quickly replaced by a Guzzi 1100 Sport that I still have and cherish. However I had always had an interest in scrambles / trials type bikes (back to the Villiers) and when I saw an advert in a bike magazine for KTM Off Road Weekends off we went to the late John Deacon's little outfit in the West Country and the rest as they say is history.

Which brings us right up to date and those renewal forms sat in your post tray, perhaps wondering with all that is going on with NERC – should I bother this year? To which I say – YES DEFINITELY AND DON'T FORGET TO ADD A BIT OF A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION AS WELL. You may like to know that Mary tells me that initial renewals coming through the door are at the same rate as last year. I have had some quite sizeable donation cheques through my door with very kind letters of support so the message is renew now and support your Executive. We have several new faces at the top end and I am certain that the blend of new enthusiasm with existing experienced members will enable us to not only do our best against NERC but also fight future battles with vigour and develop your Fellowship into a modern trail riding club. WE NEED YOUR SUBSCRIPTION NOW – DON'T DELAY

Thanks,
Arnold Brewer, Treasurer

TRF Website

Many of you will know that the TRF has a web-site, whose address is www.trf.org.uk. The public can use parts of this web-site, whereas other parts are for members only. As a member of the public you can contact TRF officers via the "FAQ & Contact" page, then select "contacts page" at the bottom of the page. There is an address for the PO Box of the TRF and a form for submitting an email. Emails sent from this page are checked by the web-master before being forwarded to the relevant principal officer. The "TRF Groups" page allows members of the public to see where group meetings take place around the country. Selecting a group will lead to a display of the contact name for the group, a contact telephone number and details of the meeting time and place. Some groups also give an email or a link to their own site. The public have access to everything on the home page, this includes the "Glossary" which contains most of the acronyms and words you come across when trail riding and getting involved in Rights of Way issues. The "TRF Files" contain, amongst others, the membership application form, the constitution, and the code of conduct. The public area also contains useful information about trail riding, items about the TRF and reference material.

As a member you get extra facilities. Amongst these are Adverts, Event Diary, Email List, and Chatter Box. Any member can place an advert or event in the relevant lists. Members will only see these by logging in to the site and going to the relevant section, so it is a good idea to send an email with the same content to the Email List. There are 2 ways to use the email list: you can either log in to the site and check the last 250 emails, or you can get the emails sent to an email address specified by you. If you get the emails sent to an email address the emails arrive with "[TRF]" at the start of the subject. Most email browsers will allow you to set up a rule so that you can divert messages to a specific folder, then you can view them at your leisure and not have them cluttering up your Inbox. When sending emails, please be polite (its very easy to mis-interpret messages) and keep to the subject. The Email List is a good way of: finding out what is going on, asking for help, or arranging rides with other members. The Email List is ideal for keeping in contact with people who live a long way from a group meeting point, I recommend that everyone with email signs up to it. The Chatter Box is designed as a quick and short message facility for communicating with whoever is logged in to the Chatter Box at the time.

The member area also contains Bookmarks, Files, and Photo Albums. These sections allow you to present your information. The Bookmarks section contains links to local group web-sites and links to trail riding and rights of way web-sites. If you would like your group's link added to the web-site please contact the web-master, bill@trf.org.uk. The Files page is for you to share information with other members. The Photo Albums section gives you the facility to post your photographs.

Finally the member area has TRF Files and TRF News. The TRF Files contains information from the TRF officers to the TRF members. The TRF News is used to keep members informed. You need to log in to the web-site to see this information, only the emails can be automatically sent to you.

Polly Cody, Hon Secretary

Don't Lose Your Bike - The Law

Several members have asked me to explain the new police powers to confiscate trail bikes. Police forces in several counties are (sometimes on bikes) apprehending illegal riders. The TRF has no argument with this. These laws are aimed at curbing the growing illegal trespass problem. Such "cowboys" give the TRF a bad name and make getting Byways more difficult. So with thanks to North Yorkshire Police here is the law.

Under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, police are given the power to confiscate any vehicle used illegally. But only after a second warning. The first warning is recorded on the Police National Computer. A written warning is not necessary. The second offence does not have to be in the same place or using the same machine. On a second offence the motor cycle can be "confiscated" and recovered at the roadside (within an hour or two of the offence) by a recovery operator and removed to a base. If you are lucky you may get a lift into town in the recovery vehicle or police car! The driver/rider then has to produce full documents and pay the recovery firm £100 plus a daily storage fee to retrieve it. The storage fee varies from force to force.

There is NO power (as some members fear) to keep and sell off your expensive bike! But it will cost you at least £100 and you may well be prosecuted also.

The new powers apply if any person commits a road traffic offence ie for inconsiderate riding; (Section 3 Road Traffic Act 1988), contravening a TRO, (Traffic Regulation Order), or caught riding on a footpath, bridleway, restricted Byway or on open land. (Section 34 Road Traffic Act 1988), and the rider may be reported for summons.

These same powers of warnings and confiscation can also be used if that vehicle in the opinion of the police officer is causing or likely to cause alarm, distress or annoyance to the public (ie if excessively noisy or is dangerous).

Several TRF members caught using a bridleway (and we assume that all TRF members would not use a wrongly designated footpath or bridleway "green lane" unless it has vehicular rights) have been able to explain to the police that they are not riding illegally and can produce evidence of higher rights. And been able to convince the police not to issue a warning. If you are then prosecuted in addition to a warning, and wish to defend the charge get in touch with your local TRF group who may have evidence to help you or a Byway claim may have been made. This will cease when the NERC Bill becomes law when all green lanes wrongly shown as footpath or bridleway or no status will be extinguished of vehicular rights and no defence will be allowed.

The only lawful green lanes in future will be Byway and UCR status of which there is still a considerable mileage in most counties. Dual status UCR and footpath or bridleway will also become illegal, as will RUPPs. So ride extra carefully in future! Ignorance as ever is no excuse in law!

Brian Thompson, National TRF Rights of Way Officer

National Green Lane Day and other Green Lane Maintenance Work during 2005

Throughout this year as in previous years, across the country representatives of many user groups have been making collaborative efforts with their local Highways Authority or Rights of Way department to arrange volunteer work for National Green Lane Day (NGLD). In case you were not aware NGLD is a project that GLASS coordinates for LARA by bringing together as many groups as are interested in working together to maintain green lanes.

From as far afield as Dorset, where Friends of Dorset Rights of Way (FoDRoW) organised work with the Parish Council as part of their ongoing programme of maintenance, to Yorkshire where the TRF worked out a plan in conjunction with the tenant farmer to repair a collapsed drainage system, people have been organising maintenance events for months.

Some plans were thwarted at the last minute; Horsehouses in Yorkshire for example became a casualty of heavy rain which prevented delivery of the materials to the site where they were needed and the event was postponed to a later date. In East Sussex, the AWDC and TRF also suffered a last minute cancellation from the County Council who found they were unable to approve anywhere for NGLD and suggested their effort should be postponed till later.

Others did not even make it far past the first hurdle; in Surrey the RoW department is undergoing a reorganisation and volunteer work fell a victim of the lack of SCC volunteer coordinators. In Oxfordshire an attempt was made by the local GLASS rep, Graham Whiting to set something up, but this did not make it past the discussion stage.

The first plan for NGLD in Warwickshire and the West Midlands foundered on lack of availability of materials for the event, but they were however able to clear low foliage and this

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was much appreciated by some equestrian users who have expressed an interest in getting involved with any further work or to clear low hanging foliage. However, that is not the full story. In August John Willby had managed to find volunteers in response to an urgent request from the Council. Tyres were cleared which were being dumped on a lane faster than the CC could clear them, while Warwickshire sorted out arrangements with the Environmental Agency to deal with the root cause of the problem. As a result of this work a very favourable article was published in WCC magazine "Viewpoint" issue 4 Autumn/Winter 2005.

Elsewhere in the country however, NGLD efforts did get underway as planned and sometimes exceeding the plan. In Hampshire, Patrick Manuel, managed the near impossible, namely to get two county councils to engage in joined-up-thinking and volunteers indulged "extreme gardening" that crossed county lines into West Sussex. The numbers in his group benefitted from the East Sussex cancellations and the lack of an event in Surrey and over 50 people turned up to help representing half a dozen different organisations. The Hants and West Sussex Borders Bridleway Group were instrumental in assisting them in the work in the West Sussex area, building on work that the equestrian group had commenced the previous week.

Cambridgeshire's NGLD event sounded like it might also become a non-event when it was first broached. For it to happen it was dependent on the Council succeeding in moving on the two groups of travellers living "in the usual places" from the lanes in question. However, it did happen and rubbish and dumped cars were moved off the lane for collection, ruts were filled with stone and trees were cut back.

In Hertfordshire, the local group met at the Rookery Cafe car park which abutted the BOAT in question and restored the Definitive line by clearing away incredible quantities of builders rubbish.

The planned event for Brecon Beacons National Park had more incarnations than a Time-Lord. It changed markedly from its inception in an unlikely-sounding, labour-intensive, by-hand, volunteer-only deployment of 200 tons of stone on one day using wheelbarrows over a couple of miles of waterlogged ground. Changing champions in the process, it underwent a metamorphosis into a series of events starting with a full weekend with overnight camping when 150 tons of stone were delivered using a dumper and on the Sunday after some unashamed chatting up of the farmer's collie - the local farmer's tractor and tipping trailer were used to move the stone along the lane. Volunteers at the first event were dressed more for a construction site than a NGLD maintenance project. A second event is to follow on Sunday 27th November involving another 100 to 150 tons of stone.

In Gloucester they had permission to work on several lanes, cutting back hawthorn and carrying out minor stone removal on an absolutely beautiful lane that goes down the hill with views of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire valleys.

Breckland Land Rover Club in Norfolk works closely with the County Council's countryside access team to organize green lane maintenance days over the winter

months. Usually they do just the clearance of vegetation, but other projects have included widening bridges and track repair. Their NGLD event this autumn was a straightforward clearance, chopping and cutting back vegetation with bonfires to remove the debris.

As in Warwickshire and Dorset, another event was hurriedly convened in Bedfordshire in September which involved the removal of the 4 bollards at the east end of a BOAT plus the filling in of the resultant holes and the erection of way-marker posts in the verge to clarify the status for users coming from Hertfordshire.

All the above catalogue of work was carried out roughly in late summer or autumn. In early spring work was carried out in the Lake District National Park, Sussex, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, The Marches Area, West Midlands and the Wye Valley.

Green Lane Days are an ongoing set of affairs; the Sarn-Helen project for example is still ongoing. Already around the country representatives from many different organisations will be approaching their council and Highway Authority contacts with a view to making further Green Lane maintenance events possible.

I should like to thank everyone involved; I consider that to be not only those who worked on the day, but also those who were unable to take part in the heavier work due to injury, disability, recent operations or other medical problems, who offered support by just "being there". Then there were those who spent countless

hours working behind the scenes in order to make it happen, liaising with the authorities to set up an event, filling out (sometimes multiple) risk assessments and setting up site meetings, starting with a nucleus of an idea that seems improbable in the extreme and against the odds making it happen.

It should also be pointed out that these events only happen where there are local authorities that are prepared to work in partnership with volunteers as part of their commitment to best value. Across the country hundreds of people have turned up, often in unimaginable weather, to make their contribution to the events throughout the year each to the extent that he or she is able.

So thank you all, you know who you are.

Gillian Nelson

GLASS & LARA NGLD Coordinator

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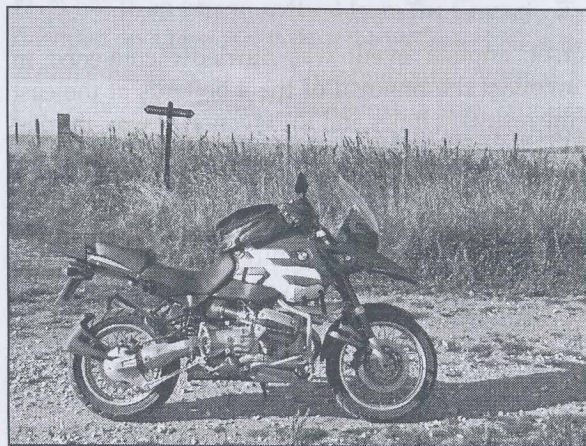
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One Bike Does It All!!



For a good many years now I have been in the very fortunate position of owning two bikes - one for trail riding and one for greater distance on the road. But, like so often happens, you forget just how privileged you are and want something different. I sold the DR350 (something I regret as it was a competent and comfortable trail bike) and I gave the ZZR600 to my son, who was without a bike at the time.

The ZZR had not lived up to my expectations, particularly in the comfort and handling departments. In particular, I found that journeys of an hour or more caused considerable pain to the wrists and, after a little longer, my back. So, I gave thought to what I wanted a bike to do, which was tour, with some off tarmac capability (the ZZR was not ace at this, but has seen many a lane) and provide everyday transport.

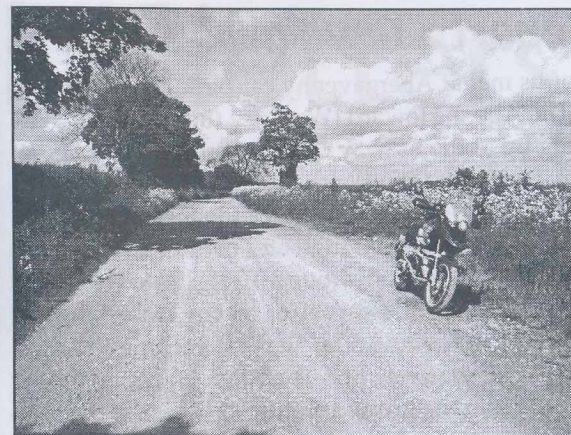
I looked at a Tiger, at a big KTM and at a BMW GS. The Tiger didn't really hit the spot and the vile colours gave me the excuse to strike it from the list. The KTM was, for me, too trail oriented, and it has a one-piece seat, which I thought would be a source of contention with 'the Pensioner' on the back. So I had to take a look at the BMW.

As I rode up to the nearest BMW dealership I pondered the expense, the height, the expense, the fact that the ZZR wasn't too bad, really, and that the BMW would be expensive. After all, here am I pottering along at 80 - absolutely fine. I don't need to go any faster on nice B roads like this...

And so it was that I arrived at the BMW dealer in a negative mood. I showed my license, signed the waiver, threw my leg over an R1150GS and potted off down the same road that I'd been so happy to ride on the ZZR just minutes before. Hmm, very pleasant, thought I. Less wind than I'd expected. Wonderfully comfortable. Spot on riding position, and it does seem to overtake and pull away quite well. After all, I want the change because of riding position and comfort, and, at my age I can cope with bimbling along like this.... %*%@ me!!! I'm doing 90!

Forty miles later I signed the sale agreement for a second hand R1150 GS.

So, what is it like? This bike has given me the most memorable day of 2005



so far (don't tell the Pensioner that). I left home early on the morning of 2nd September and rode up the A34 to the Ridgeway. Along the Ridgeway for a short distance and then, by country lanes and byways, made my way down to Inkpen. Wishing to avoid certain lanes, for obvious reasons, I discovered the village of Kintbury - a delightful and very photogenic place - a place that

I will return to one day.

Up to the gibbet and on to the A4 at Hungerford. The A4, or the Old Bath Road, is a classic road to ride. The history, the horse troughs and mile stones, the good surface and sight-lines, not to mention (be warned) the newly installed speed cameras.

Readers will remember the TRF's little court victory on a Wiltshire lane, Preshute 12. I headed for that. Passing through Marlborough, that delightful but car choked town in the downs, I spotted a parking space on the sunny side of the street, right out side a coffee shop, and took this as a sign from the great sky pixy to stop.

Preshute 12 looked a tad too overgrown from about halfway down and so I turned around and headed south, over Knap Hill to the Wessex Ridgeway, down to Lark Hill and on down the byway past Stonehenge to the A303. I left tarmac again at Shipton Bellinger and did a circuit of Tidworth, dropping south to the last lanes of the day at Broughton.

I'd covered 203 miles at speeds varying from 10 mph to, well, to what is known euphemistically as 'making good progress'. I was not stiff or tired. I had not dropped the bike, or even come near it. If the BMW has a fault it is that for trail riding, first gear is a bit high, especially when approaching those 'decision time' bits of lane - or maybe I'm just getting mentally slow. The only other fault, if you can call it a fault, is the lack of any impression of speed. This is fortunately compensated for in the bikes ability to go round bends. The riding position gives a commanding view of the road for overtaking and the acceleration is 'quite acceptable'.

And, as if that wasn't enough, the heated grips are now showing their worth....

Dave Tilbury

Worcester Run Report - Guy Fawkes Run

Saturday 5th November eight of us met at Abergavenny car park, Dave Gunster (The General) the leader today, Ron (The Alien), Howard (Way), Jez (Pee Wee Pornstar-given the vest of shame for not turning up at the by-way claim meeting), Rob (Aggy), Tony (Casey Jones - he drives a train), Shadrack (The Welsh Git).

As we were about to leave at 8.30am the local police arrived in a gas guzzling 4 wheel drive asked us where we were going, friendly enough and owned a WR.

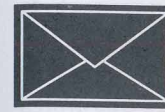
Out of Abergavenny on the A40 through and around Craig Wood towards Crickhowell, great lanes at this time of year with a carpet of leaves hiding unseen obstacles, fallen tree close to Tretower had to re-route. The General keeping the right pace, we had a quick break and a chat at Cwnfforrest. Ron The Alien given the vest of shame for not looking behind and resulting in the group splitting. Nice trails towards the mountains, now RUPP'S, so perhaps soon to change! A loop around the gliding club and Rhos Common brings us all back to the foot of the Grwyne Fawr (brown trousers). Our only encounter with walkers (other friendly jolly users of the countryside). The General gave his advice how to climb and give the way back to Aber if no one makes it. Slippy start with some losing grip including me, we all finally make it to the corner apart from Aggy who's 40 aday habit gets the better of him, so he heads down and gets back via Gospel Pass. The final climb, I'm sure gets steeper and the boulders get bigger or is it just my age? Mountain bikers at top had a chat told them of the implications of the NERC bill, they were quite shocked at the detail. With the weather closing in we pushed on past the reservoir and the lanes around Upper Ho and Llwynceilyn. We all have bonfire parties to attend so head back down to Gudder. Good flowing lane, over the road to the ford to clean the bikes, everyone gets across but Shadrack (aka Welsh Git) who tips his WR 2 stroke into the drink. After a pull out and draining it fires and off we go. Three mile road trip back to car park, its 4pm a great day, 68 miles, no hassle, big smiles and long may it reign.

Tim Dinsdale

Tip

Trailer Tech single motorcycle trailer, for those of you that own and use one of these. Whilst generally a good bit of kit you should pay particular attention to the axle mounting points. Where the axle mounting frame is bent through 90 degrees to meet the trailer chassis, a crack appears at either end and eventually the combined weight of a motorcycle and the trailer bends the mounting frame. I only found out by noticing that the plastic mudguards were smoking whilst waiting at a road junction. The trailer appeared to be perfectly serviceable prior to leaving. I checked my friend's trailer and his had fractured about an inch long either end. Well worth checking.

Glenn Winn



letters

NERC BILL

Ref your appeal to Members re the NERC Bill, it occurs to me this Bill could infringe the new Disability Discrimination Act as for many of us OAPs the only way we have of visiting scenic places is by motorcycle, as the infirmities of old age do not allow us to walk very far. One member, Steve Tucker, of Hedgehog Motorcycles, has no use of his legs, due to spinal injuries, and can reach such places by riding with us on his quad on the lanes. Being the proprietor, he works literally seven days nearly every week and should not be denied enjoyment of a peaceful pursuit. Green Laning also provides everyone's social need for companionship. Our Group motto is "look after one another", which is really a Christian concept. Likewise, youngsters who ride with us gain respect for the countryside and for their elders and obtain an understanding of team spirit. Far better to ban football, for example and its associated hooliganism. To my knowledge no one has been assaulted or killed whilst indulging in our peaceful pastime, which is more than can be said for soccer.

Should the lanes be closed, farmers will not be able to access all of their fields.

I shall be writing to my M.P. on the above lines and stressing that many of our members are from professional classes e.g. solicitors, teachers etc or own their own businesses. The law can be sensible at times. A local rider was summoned for parking his motorcycle in a cycle park. In court he produced photostats of his (so called) "road fund" tax disc and of his registration documents, showing clearly that the taxation class of his vehicle was CYCLE. The case was dismissed.

Trusting that the foregoing may be of some help in our battle,

John Chilcott,

The Oldest Swinger in the West!

IN FURTHER DEFENCE OF LITTLE "SORROWS"

I was delighted to read Rodney Morrison's letter in TRAIL concerning these wonderful little bikes. Often they climb far better than bigger machines, due to their lighter weight and plonkability. This was demonstrated a few weeks ago in Cutliffe Lane (known locally as "Cuddly Lane" as two thirds of the inhabitants of Hartland Village claim to have been conceived down there!), when a CCM and a 450 KTM failed to make the climb but Bill Dauncy on this Serow effortlessly reached the summit.

These bikes are easy to work on and require only minor items as routine



John's "Sorrow" takes a wash

replacements, such as pads, the chain, sprockets and wheel bearings. It is very easy to change the oil, wash the filters and check the valve clearances. I do the former every 400 - 500 miles and the latter once a year. I grease the 5 nipples after every second event.

On the lanes, despite my 15 1/2 stone, I obtain at least 70-80 m.p.g. (as do others) and on the tarmac an incredible 110-120. These little bicycles make excellent road machines and can nip through roundabouts with amazing agility.

In our group we have 8 or 9 and during a recent long distance trial from Minehead, Serows outnumbered all other bikes.

John Chilcott



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miles, e. start, exc. cond., knobbles, tax July 2006, Renthals handlebars & spare tyres available. Can email pics. £2400 ono. Tel: 01603 259373 or 07776 146906 (Norwich).

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2nd Tues, 8pm, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott.

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2nd Thurs, 8pm, The Crown Inn, Fivehead, Nr. Taunton.

SOUTHERN Lee Wildsmith, Tel: 02380 611110
3rd Thurs, Southampton & District MCC, Woodside Ave., Eastleigh, (opposite Halfords).

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY
Steve Sharp, 0208 773 4204
8.30pm, 4th Wed, Nescot Centre for Sports Development, Banstead Road, Ewell, Surrey.

SOUTH NORTHANTS
Graham Walker, Tel: 07841 158820
2nd Mon, 9pm, The Live & Let Live Pub, Harpole, Nr. Northampton..

SOUTH WALES Stuart Dodwell, Tel: 01446 710851
1st Thurs, Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff, 8pm.

SUFFOLK Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073
Last Wed, Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Bury-St-Ed.

SWINDON Phil Male, Tel: 01793 731777
1st Wed, 8.30pm, The Sun at Liddington, Swindon.

SUSSEX Nick Harris, Tel: 01798 344594
Last Thurs, Ashington Social Club, Rear of Red Lion, A24, 9 miles North of Worthing.

TEESSIDE & NORTH YORKS
Roger Preston, Tel: 01429 837093
3rd Tues, The Ranch House, Thoraldby Farm, Nr Stokesley, map ref 93...493074.

THAMES VALLEY Gary Hiller, Tel: 01932 851291
3rd Mon, District Arms, Woodthorpe Rd, Ashford, Middlesex.

WEST ANGLIA David Knight, Tel: 01933 313816
1st & 3rd Thurs, Scott Bader Social Club, opp. Parish Church, Wollaston, Wellingborough.

WEST MIDLANDS Paul Clark, Tel: 01564 741700
1st & 3rd Thurs, Wilmcote Mens Club, Stratford on Avon.

WEST YORKSHIRE Peter Dyson, Tel: 01274 571747
1st & 3rd Thurs, Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd), Odsal, Bradford.

WILTSHIRE Vic Price, Tel: 01380 724651
1st Tues, The Bell On The Common, Broughton Gifford.

WORCESTERSHIRE
Dave Gunster, Tel: 01527 456095 Mob: 07960 422523
1st and 3rd Tuesday, White Hart, Fernhill Heath, Worcs.