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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.

MAY 2006 No. 333



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Cover Photo: Cumbria TRF Group Playing in Cumbria at the top of  
Dungeon Ghyll, Langdale. Photo from Ian Knowles

## LIFE AFTER NERC:

### Keeping on the Right Side of the Law

Part 1: The effects of NERC, and how the law will be applied to drivers on unsealed roads

The commencement of the rights of way provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC), on 2 May 2006 (Wales in commencing later - date to be confirmed), has finally brought to an end the lawful enjoyment of hundreds of public vehicular roads that had been wrongly recorded on the definitive map - or not recorded as public roads at all - over the last fifty years. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of NERC and the mistruths bruited in Parliament, NERC is now law, and drivers of motor vehicles need to understand the basics of the new order so as to keep out of harm's way when encountering the forces of law and order.

A basic summary of the effect of NERC is that, blacktopped public roads aside, the public may now exercise a vehicular public right of way only on byways open to all traffic (BOAT) and unsealed roads recorded in the highway authority's 'list of streets' (otherwise known as unclassified (county) roads), where these unclassified roads have vehicular rights (see below). All former roads used as public paths (RUPP) became restricted byways (RB) on the same day as, but immediately before, the NERC provisions were commenced. Underlying public rights for mechanically propelled vehicles (MPV) have been stripped away by NERC from all footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways, meaning that it is a 'clear' offence to drive a MPV on such routes by virtue of s.34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. There is no longer any available defence (except in limited cases - see below) in being able to prove that, for example, a footpath on the definitive map is really an awarded public carriage road in an inclosure award. Where a route is 'dual status', i.e. an unclassified road and also on the definitive map as a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway, then the definitive map status takes precedence.

There remain a few routes, not currently BOATs or UCRs, where NERC has not extinguished underlying existing MPV rights. These exceptions are mainly on routes where an application for a definitive map modification order (DMMOA) was lodged with the order-making authority before 20 January 2005 in England, and 19 May 2005 in Wales. These applications will be processed into orders and then through to completion, and as any MPV rights have not been extinguished (at least until the order finishes its passage and vehicular rights are not found to exist) it remains open to a driver threatened or charged under s.34RTA88 to plead these underlying vehicular rights in defence - but the burden is on the accused to prove the rights claimed. It would be bad policy for a driver to rely on 'hearsay' that any route is subject to a 'NERC-proof' DMMOA, or to assume, without checking, that where such a DMMOA is lodged, that the evidence of vehicular rights is sufficient to form a defence to a s.34 prosecution. There are also two very limited exceptions to NERC, one where MPV usage has been the main usage of a route over the past five years, and another where MPV rights were created by MPV usage prior to 1931. Again, anyone wishing to rely on either of these exceptions needs to be personally very sure of the facts before using the lane(s) in question.

Where footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways, which have lost their public MPV rights, are used for motor competition purposes, it is still possible to use these routes for events, with the 'lawful authority' of the landowner, under the provisions of s.33RTA88.

The above is the main thrust of a TRF article in preparation.

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## NOTICE BOARD

### VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY REQUIRED BMF SHOW 19TH-21ST MAY

East of England Showground, Peterborough. Arguably the biggest & best bike show of the year. This year includes, for the first time, American style short track racing as well as vintage speedway & the Moped Enduro. Plus a huge auto jumble & many goodie stands.

If you can help in any way with the TRF Stand contact  
**Polly Cody, Tel: 01525 717634,**  
**Email: secretary@trf.org.uk**

### WAYFINDER INFORMATION FOR TRF MEMBERS

The GLASS supported Wayfinder site is the site with a grey background at <http://www.wayfinderproject.co.uk/>. At the moment accounts for new members are being created manually and there is a notice saying the following on the site:

If you are a new member of the TRF you can still register for a Wayfinder account but your account will be created manually.

Send an email with your name - for use on the account, Membership number, postcode, user name of choice & email address to Wayfinder Accounts Team at [accounts@wayfinderproject.co.uk](mailto:accounts@wayfinderproject.co.uk) Please be sure to use the same details that you used when completing your TRF membership application (and if they have changed, tell the TRF Membership Secretary too)

An account will be created manually for you and an email sent to the email address you nominated with your username and a temporary password which will allow you to log in and change your password to a permanent one that is more memorable.

Mary Stevens, Membership Secretary

### TRAIL RIDES FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

Saturday 17th June 2006 at 13:00 hrs (ish),

Gwyddon Forest near Abercarn, S. Wales (st235959), signposted from A467 at Abercarn.

Mike Rees is again organising this worthwhile and enjoyable event for local groups of handicapped children so they get to sample the delights of trail riding as pillion or sidecar passengers around a 5 mile course of forestry roads and trails in the Gwyddon Forest. The course is suitable for any big/little trail bike, side cars, mobile sofas etc but rear footrests and a spare helmet are very useful. The ability to eat lots of free burgers and smile all day at others enjoying themselves in the countryside is essential so ramblers/NERC supporters need not apply.

If you can help contact Mike on 01495 222728 or email [mikerees65@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerees65@hotmail.com)

### DEVON TRF FUNDRAISING EVENTS

May 21st Fulford Estate;  
June 18th Haccadown Woods;  
July 23rd Hazelwood Farm, Marldon  
Further dates will be announced  
if venues can be agreed.

Once again the format will be quiet  
and road legal bikes and riders.

We will not be very impressed by thinly disguised, unregistered  
bikes, nor can we risk noisy bikes at any of the above venues.

In order to try and operate safely and maintain  
the balance between riders who like to get on  
and novices, we make the following statement:

If your day will be spoilt by waiting behind  
another rider until it is safe to pass, please do  
not come to our events. We welcome all trail  
riders, their friends and family. You do not  
have to be TRF members. The charges for this  
year remain unchanged at £15 for all riders  
where we pay for the venue and a £5 reduction  
for current TRF members where the venue is  
free of charge.

Noel Squibb, [squibb1@btinternet.com](mailto:squibb1@btinternet.com) or telephone  
07890 643084 for information nearer the event date

### SOUTH NORTANTS GROUP

Due to closure of our old venue  
we have moved to:

The Old Sun, 10 Middle Street,  
Nether Heyford, Northampton,  
NN7 3LL.

Meeting still 2nd Monday  
of the month.

Polly Cody

### ISLE OF MAN?

Anyone fancy a few days trail  
riding in the Isle of Man and/or  
a week or 10 days in Scotland?

Gordon Dalgarno  
Tel: 01524 427919

### 1ST - 2ND JULY NATIONAL ROAD RALLY

Jointly organised by the ACU  
and BMF. Proceeds to Mencap.  
Dave Giles

### NORTHUMBERLAND TRAIL RIDING & CAMPING WEEKEND - BIKES, BEVVIES, BANTER 3rd & 4th June 2006

A social weekend that is fun for all the family, with guided tours of  
Northumberland with some of the best trails you could wish for.  
Led on the Saturday & Sunday.

Field available to camp or caravan (bring your own tent or caravan, food &  
refreshments, beer, water, bbq etc). Toilets provided only. (No water).

£12 per bike for TRF members (proof required).

Friday & Saturday open air bevvies & banter.

Good evening out with other TRF members (families welcome).

#### TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

Please phone to book as numbers will be limited. So ring a.s.a.p. to avoid  
disappointment & missing out on a good weekend.

Contact Neil Pattison 01434 683905 before 9 p.m.



# RoW News

## NERC IN CUMBRIA

The dreaded NERC Bill has bitten in Cumbria just like the rest of the Country.

Apart possibly from some very rare exceptions, it's now illegal to ride on anything which is marked on current OS Maps as a Bridleway or Footpath. In due course, when they begin to be created, this will also apply to Restricted Byways. Byways (BOATS) are okay, and so are UCR's (often on the map as "Other Route with Public Access") provided you are satisfied they have vehicular rights and you are prepared to defend those rights.

Cumbria TRF Group feels as betrayed as you by Parliament's steamrolling through of the Bill with complete disregard for natural justice; especially those who have spent the last year preparing and submitting Byway Claims only to be hit by the backdating of the cut off date to January 2005.

The Group nevertheless has a good relationship with the Lake District National Park Authority and with Cumbria County Council, and continues to work with them to protect vehicular rights of way in Cumbria.

Illegal riding will destroy our relationship with the National Park and County Council and may only hasten the day when there may be no legal trail riding at all. So any who feel that bad laws can be disobeyed and intend to use Cumbria to do that, please don't. You will not be welcome.

*Cumbria TRF Group*

## The Italian Way

*The Italians call all non-tarmac recreation "ENDURO" even trials are "enduros" and as you will observe the translation is a bit literal at times but it is a good indication of how genteel trail riding is in this country.*

In May 2005 I had the very pleasant task of entertaining Massimo Neriotti a part time journalist with "MOTOCICLISMO FUORI STRADA" for a couple of days trail riding. Massimo is a horse dentist by profession and as my fiancée owns 4 horses there was hardly a lull in the conversation all weekend!!

*Richard Aisthorpe*

*An Enduro Weekend in England marred only in part by good weather: regrettably, pouring rain was only on one day but we rallied all the same summoning up the pluck of British plugged style*

The strain of modern life wrecks my peace of mind: the Italian autostrada depresses the hell out of me; the beltway is my daily dread, the mobile phone boils my ear and the smog chokes the breath out of me. I am stressed out: I am in need of an English Enduro. British trail riding might not be quite the equal in punishment of

the Bergamo mountain mule-tracks that Italian endurists submit themselves to, but it is a jolly good ride all the same. I say, it is even relaxing and my new English friends are true gentlemen. They belong to a Motorcycle club affiliated with TRF, an association that groups numerous Trail Riding clubs all over Great Britain.

Richard Aisthorpe and his brother Christopher accompany me the first day on a ride around Norfolk County: There are places up there where you could almost feel that you've reached Nirvana. The English countryside has that touch of class and Romanticism that is not likely to be found anywhere else. Maybe it's the red brick houses or maybe the multitude of pheasants that unhurriedly take to the air when a motorcycle approaches; NO HURRY WE'RE ENGLISH

Perhaps it's even in the farms with pigs roaming freely or the perfection of the yellow fields of rapeseed in flower. I don't know exactly what it is but in England you just feel more romantic and even a tad English yourself.

There are two things right off that we continentals find curious. First:, driving on the left even on the trails. Here you can note the instinctive difference between the British and the rest of the Europeans. I follow them, staying to the left but I slowly tend to drift to the right; they stay firmly convinced to the left. Outstanding. The second one is the weather. We were taught in elementary school that in England it rains. In the Sahara there is sand and in England there is rain. But not today! And not only that - it's even hot as blazes. The weather of that first day is an almost unheard

of event in England: sunny and clear skies! Hot air! Sweat! They tell me that this is not normal, that tomorrow it will surely change back to the dear familiar damp English weather. The boys, in fact, reassure each other with the weather forecast for the next day: not just rain but driving rain. Now that's British weather!

And so, the first day we wander around a countryside that seems much more like Provence than a county in England. The whirr of my absolutely silenced Yamaha TTR 250 won't disturb any living creature as we roll past gentle green hills, trees in blossom, pheasants and hares, pastures with pigs and horses all of which repose your eyes as well as your spirit. To be perfectly frank, I envision those pigs as enormous piles of the smoked bacon, sausage and ham that I will be served for breakfast in these parts.

In the English countryside you meet

<b>TRF NATIONAL EXEC MEETING</b>
<b>Saturday 24th June 2006, 10.00 a.m.</b>
National Water Sports Centre Holme Pierpoint Adbolton Lane Nottingham NG12 2LU
<i>Please ensure your group is represented</i>

farmers who speak a language that I, personally, have never heard. It should be an occasion to have a chat. But with my mixture of Italian-Yankee English, I won't get very far here so I express myself, characteristically Italian, accompanied by gestures. We meet entire families and people who are, simply, just out for a walk with their dogs. In every case, to each is reserved the same treatment: we stop, exchange greetings, polite remarks and appropriate comments. Not a one voices the slightest objection. On the contrary, they want to know about the jaunt we are taking. Not bad, eh?

### English Mist

The second day, the gentlemen who are my companions are more relaxed: well of course, it is raining and the wind is blowing. The sky is mouse-grey and it is all very English as demonstrated even in the finer drops of rain. Today's group is different as well. The leader of the expedition is again Richard, who knows the trails of the whole Norfolk County like he knows his own pockets, but the most remarkable chap that day is a Mr. Thomas Fayers. Here is a brief biographical note on Mr. Tom: he is seventy years old, one metre ninety in height, and participated in a total of nine International Six Days! He shows up for the day's engagement on board his personal motorcycle: a BSA military 350 from 1967, with plugged tires. Gorgeous! The understatement of the day is that today will take a different turn. More English than that you cannot get! Tom shows me the photos of his last Six Days, for the record the one held in Camerino in '74. He gives me his account of that edition: the English team had given him a KTM 360, two stroke engine with a cylinder head like a cauliflower. It was hard going, long, fast and dusty but he recalls that Gritti rode like lightning. Of the bike, he had this to say: "They gave me the most powerful one, because I was the largest on the team; the others raced with the 250's. the only thing was, that this 360 was the wrath of God: every twenty minutes the motor stopped and I had to change the spark plugs; I had a whole pocketful. No mechanic ever did understand what the devil was wrong with it. Great chassis though!" I listened, dazed by the thought that this man was already crunching his bones in the English Enduro Championship before I was even born. He ran his first Six Days in 1961, when I was no more than a vague idea for my parents-to-be. This man made it to the finish in seven out of nine of the Six Days, starting with a Norton, moving on to a Triumph, then a BSA and finally a KTM. With my three year experience of only two races, and ford-crossings gone amiss, I feel out of place and small, very small. <sup>Ed.</sup> *Good job it was only a Trail Ride then!*

We leave under a sky that is about to release tanks of water on top of us and our surroundings. Another gentleman, Mr. Mark Palmer, joins us for his first Enduro outing. He is also on a Yamaha TTR 250. Richard leads us straight away to the heart of Norfolk County. The small convoy of gentlemen rides along beautiful sheep-tracks, through gusts of wind and lashing rain. It's raining and no-one is the least upset about it. Rain, in this country is so common that the country roads and lanes are carpeted with a runner of grass so stubborn you couldn't dig it out with a pick-axe.

Incredible! The English countryside surprises me for its luxuriance and its flowers. Every once in a while we ride back into civilisation passing through little villages that seem deserted. It's always a trip to search out the signboard of the local pub. How could you not stop in places with names like "The Spread Eagle", "The Black Horse", "The Coach & The Horse", "The Angel", "The King's Arms"? These places can just about move you to tears of joy for the choice of beers that they offer.

Every single one of us drives his motorcycle in absolute accordance with the British rules of the road. Our engines are silenced to the limit of suffocation. This combination of adherence to and respect for the rules practically does not exist in Italy. "We do not want any trouble with authority or with the others who use the trails, particularly the horse-riders." says Richard. In effect, the "statute" of the TRF emphasises respect for all those who use the off-roads and the environment in general. I have no objections at all - I am in total agreement. Our inexpert companion of this Enduro is having a bit of difficulty piloting his trail bike: I can overhear Tom who is giving him his first suggestions on manoeuvring while standing up and techniques of creek crossing. With his rich baritone and as you would expect, his perfect English, it is a pleasure to listen to him. And when it is time to accelerate, there's no lagging behind, with his BSA from 1967! This Tom, in his roaring years, must have been quite a pilot.

Just when I, in harmony with the environment, have reached a perfect

temperature for hibernation, we make our entrance not so triumphantly in Wells-Next-The-Sea, a small village on the sea. The sky is lead pencil grey and there is a breeze that seems to come straight from the North Pole. The sea is rolling in the diagonal. The only creatures about are those crazy seagulls, coasting over the rollers. All of the inhabitants are snug in their cottages or idling in one of the two fish and chips restaurants. It is barely six degrees above zero and I am soaked to the skin and numb with cold.

The only chance to get warm is to polish off some fish and chips. At this point, I would even smear their hot and greasy delicacy on my bare chest just to warm up. As soon as we're out again I get the shivers and the shakes, but what the hell! I'm in England with these good new friends, on a motorcycle riding through



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Please phone before visiting as not all stock is kept on site  
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the English greenery, far from my daily stress and tonight I'll get merrily soused in a pub. What more do I want (In all truth, from a well-informed source, we know that the author would really like to win the Paris-Dakar, ndr)?

#### *Captains of the long haul*

I am fascinated by Tom, the one of the nine International Six Days. He rides his 1967 military BSA with decided coolness and impeccable style. When it is the right time to draw on his experience, he does it naturally and unaffectedly. This gentleman has Enduro grafted into his genetic code. We arrive at a nice large creek of which we cannot see the bottom. It is drizzling (of course). I don't even have the time to stop my bike, that Tom Fayers is already in the drink. The BSA skids around like crazy on the stones underneath; he, astride the pedals, guns it and plunges through, raising a wall of water on either side of him. Seventy years old. Incredible! I watched Tom and Richard fairly daring each other to go right into an enormous brown mud puddle. They both drove right through, drenching each other and draining the puddle in the doing. They stopped right in front of me dripping and grinning. The one who enjoyed it the most was, of course, Tom, nine Six Days...

At the end of the outing it finally stops raining, and a handful of sunbeams dart out of a corner of a little blue eye in the sky. I am about to leave these jovial fellows and we part company with slaps on the back, good-byes and the promise to join each other again for another jolly good jaunt, a hearty meal and copious rounds of beer. I like these lads from TRF a lot, they have the attitude coupled with a heartfelt respect for the environment, this is all good. God save the Queen, TRF will take care of the English.

#### *Evergreen*

Who wouldn't want to live like Thomas Fayers, the seventy year old who, after nine "Six Days of Enduro", hasn't had enough and still does Enduro with his 1967 BSA military 350? This man is proud of his past experiences, and does not miss the occasion to show a collection of photographs in regard. Having heard that Polpo, (of whom, like all of the English he is a great fan), was arriving, as soon as Polpo got stuck in the mud, he pulled out the photos with great and gleeful pride.

#### *The Gas Volunteers*

The "Trail Riders Fellowship" is an association of volunteers, founded in 1970 on the initiative of a group of persons who, on their motorcycles, love exploring trails and paths some of which have been deserted for some time. Their work and their goal together is the conservation of a heritage of "green trails" so that they can be enjoyed by all and freeing those public passages that were unfairly closed with gates and fences by farmers who gradually had taken them over. TRF wishes to make perfectly clear the fact that an Enduro motorcycle, if used in an inconsiderate manner, can be very dangerous. At the same time TRF would like to point out to the group of opposition to motorcycle sports, that much damage is done by other kinds of use as well. TRF has a complete site and a very serious code of conduct. To find out more: [www.trf.org.uk](http://www.trf.org.uk)

## Malta and Motorcycling



Self May 1949

Ed. You don't say whether you've changed much John!

There ain't much of either! J. D. (my son) and I estimate that the total area of the 3 main islands amounts to less than that of Exmoor and we can cover all the lanes there easily in a day. The first bikes we saw were mainly small capacity trail types, although we did notice a faired Daytona and, on the Sunday, quite a lot of large Yamahas and one former British Army bike!

In view of the warm and virtually rain-free climate it is surprising to see faired machines and so many people driving cars with just one occupant. Talking to the owner of a 25 year old Yamaha that looked, as Johndan said, to be in showroom condition, (due to a climate that does not encourage rust), when we visited the megalithic, Neolithic temples at Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, constructed before Stonehenge and the Pyramids, around 3000

B.C. i.e. when I was a lad and, if I remember correctly, when I was asked to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony, he commented on the use of cars with only the driver, saying it was stupid, causing congestion and pollution. Incidentally, that visit was the first time I've been green laning in a bus!

After we had been to the Blue Grotto in a little boat, right into the caves with fabulously clear and extremely blue water, we noticed a rider winding the starter on his "Viagra" and spinning the motor without any firing. He thought he had a flat battery(!) so I told him how to bump start, also without result. When we last saw him he was hoping to find a car with jump leads - a vain hope - as it would be here. I did suggest that the problem could have been one of fuel or ignition.

The Police ride scooters or faired, big,

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beefy, boxer B.M.s as we noticed in the enormous Flea Market, just outside the walls of Valletta in Floriana, where I obtained a hefty, new m/c encyclopaedia for roughly half of what it would have cost here. The Barracks I knew in Floriana, 50 years ago, when I was 18, i.e. a mere two years older than J.D. is now, are currently the Offices of the Inland Revenue! Our Pay Office is still there as are the Granaries - vast underground caverns for grain storage during sieges, as the one in 1565 when the Knights of St. John defended fortified Valletta against the Turks. The other great siege was during World War Two when the population was driven underground to shelter from the German/Italian bombers based a very short distance away in Sicily and Italy. I have photos of some of the ships that sank in the Grand Harbour when the siege was lifted in 1942 and the population saved from starvation.

The Maltese are a friendly, courteous people who love a joke and are greatly appreciative when spoken to in their own language (I could understand the words a bus driver used in traffic - even ruder than those uttered by some group members!). The people are a mixture of Phoenician, Carthaginian, Roman, Arabic, French, Italian, British etc and this is reflected in their language e.g. "Hufna shita ceiebb" means "a lot of rain mate", "Bon soir" equals "Good Night" and "Alright" means "All right". Customs buildings and their features making for some attractive females or "tiflas". One 18 year old waitress, working to fund her university fees for degrees in Maths and Accountancy, was a "vine gurt maid" and seemed attracted to my son, only 2 years her junior. She may visit us. Maltese courtesy is reflected in their road signs. For example, in place of our curt "Get in lane" their equivalent is "Please choose your lane".

A tourist guide (we went on only one organised trip, preferring the bumpy old buses as they enabled us to meet more Maltese) has a KTM and may come to England and ride with us on the lanes to experience mud and possibly even ice. He is hoping to borrow a bike from friends in Sussex. He rides in enduros and says such events and even motocross are ridden, because of the heat, in sandals and shorts. Prickly pears are far more vicious than our brambles!

We visited the dungeons in Mdina and saw horrific tableaux of tortures, one of which was breaking on the wheel. This involved placing stones at both ends of every limb and smashing a heavy wheel (such as a rear enduro one, but made of wood, with a metal rim, not a nice "soft"

rubber one) onto each bone, the number of blows to each, including those to the spine, being decreed by the Court. Then the prisoner was left to die, with all limbs broken. A torture nearly as bad as Council Tax! <sup>Ed</sup> sounds just the thing for R.A. and Gleam eh?

J.D. and I greatly enjoyed swimming in warm (about 74 F) buoyant seas in Mellieh and Armier Bays with "interesting" waves and incredibly clear water, (as we soldiers did nearly every afternoon in 1947-48, first picking up an urn of tea, a load of sandwiches and a "Tilley" Army truck with Maltese driver!). Johndan was surprised to find that there were no tides. Chatting to a Maltese dry stone waller we found that he couldn't believe that we had similar constructions here. He commented on the amount of building and increase in tourism - there were NO tourists in 1948!

We were somewhat appalled by the number of people who still smoke. Boy and girl friends are now allowed to meet without a chaperone and can wear jeans - things we never saw in the forties! The waste of food in the hotels is appalling, especially as so many people are dying of starvation elsewhere. In view of the sunny climate it surprises me that we saw no solar installations and the former windpumps are now few and derelict. The salt pans, where water is let in from the sea and allowed to evaporate are still working however.

We were surprised by the large number of cats - over 20 feeding at one time below our balcony. 48 years ago there were few as most had probably been eaten to avoid starvation during the War. Their fur is rough - due, I surmise, to the constant sunshine - more like horse hair! As the Maltese are fond of animals I can't understand why they shoot, for "sport", large numbers of migrating birds. This spoilt the "wonderful peace", as a German couple put it, at Hagar Qim. Most Maltese deplore the practice. Other changes I noted were the fantastic numbers of private cars and hotels. In '47 there was only ONE of the latter. Driving is still on the proper side of the road but no where, because of the pot holes, narrowness of the roads, few straight stretches and the volume of traffic, is it safe to do more than 60 m.p.h. and then only for 30 seconds max. A big bike can only be for posers, hence the popularity of Trailie types.

Interestingly, old British post boxes - V.R., G.R. etc are still in use as are the red phone boxes. The new runway near Luga, extends for about 1/4 of the main island's length! However, the islands have seen many changes from what was once a desert basin that became the Med (several times) as the Atlantic broke through, taking several years, each time, to fill the basin, being covered in ice during the Ice Ages and at other times having a wet tropical climate with hippos and elephants buzzing around. It has a very bloody history, being fought over many times, due to its commanding position.

On our return flight, 2.15 a.m. start, our plane driver must have been a green laner, wandering all over the sky, but giving us some wonderful views of the snow covered Alps and of Southern England from Brighton to Exeter.

J. A. Chilcott

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# An Embarrassment of Riches

After a long winter of discontent brought about by an enforced break from trail-riding due to work commitments, and a CRF that seemed to develop new malfunctions every time I ventured into my new full size garage, I finally broke the mould and ventured out onto the Hampshire lanes. My company for the day was the infamous Paul 'Robbo - aka the mousse meister' Roberts who had thrown a sickie to avoid the Bordon 3 stager. In fairness he did have a sniffle. The day started badly on account of 'Beryl' (my tortoise) passing a stinky dung all over PR's boil in a bag top. Once this was sorted we headed off to an uncertain future with weather warnings ringing in our ears. The first lane is an absolute smasher with mixed and technical going- definitely sets one up for the day. Lane ran into lane - most score an 8-10 around here compared to Herts/Essex where grading is ruining the better lanes. After visiting the scene of my January chain-break disaster at Cheriton (when all my recent mechanical travails started) we headed north to New Alresford to gas up. Paul chatted up the elderly but up for it proprietress before we headed to a nearby UCR . On

exiting this we were surprised by an old steam engine flying along the horizon - it transpired that we were not a stones throw away from the 'watercress line' which the trainspotters amongst you will know of I'm sure.

Next we rode up St Swithins way which proved to be a challengingly sinuous washed out and rooty technical climb. Paul stopped at the top to smugly ask if I'd found it difficult and to his surprise I commented to the contrary. The CRF had swallowed the nadgery going with ease, and I'd enjoyed the challenge of picking a line ie swooping from one side of the washout to the other whilst maintaining momentum - failure would have resulted in a painful off and ignominy at the end of the lane.

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After taking in several more delightful lanes we headed to East Meon to gas up the thirsty long distance Scorpa. We decided to give '5 ways' (the stuff of nightmares- its like Ermine street of old but goes in 5 different directions!) a miss and headed for a 10/10 byway, which runs north - south to link up with the south downs way. Paul then scared me by insisting on visiting the notorious Butser hill despite me declaring my fatigue due to lack of bike fitness. We took the hill gently from behind and then took in the vista whilst imbibing a cup of tea from the kiosk. That done we descended the hill the hard way, dodging walkers and tourists. The route seemed cut up since last time so discretion being the better part of valour we decided to ascend the 'easy' way..... which was only just do-able. We were nearly taken out by a couple of tear-away horses on a blind bend, and then Paul performed a most graceful 'dismount' whilst attempting to ride the camber of a huge rut. He left knee scrape marks about 10 yards long, and once my mirth had abated I offered to let him off notching it up as an off, as he'd only really 'tilted' over!! Paul accepted my kind offer without further ado and we headed onwards and upwards. Near the top there were some wreaths for some poor unfortunate called 'Tom', who may have been a fellow trail-rider or possibly a horse rider or paraglider for whom this is a popular take-off spot.

After all the excitement we knew that a home run was in order so we set up a brisk pace heading for Bishops Waltham. On the way the weather hit us and within a few seconds the temperature dropped like a stone and a torrential downpour ensued. Despite being dressed for a worst case scenario my body temperature began to fall and it was a fight to survive the conditions. I stopped to ask Paul how he was doing and he was unable to reply on account of a frozen face- this is one down side of an open helmet.

It was a relief to reach home and pop a brew on. I caught the last few minutes of the footy whilst Paul washed the bikes...now that is true friendship.

All in all it was a top run - 96 miles of tricky lanes in tricky conditions- its a dirt junkies heaven and I was only stiff for 3 days!! Best of all my dubious mechanics on the CRF had stood up to all that we'd thrown at it- whew...

*Pat the Whistling Vet*

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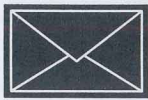
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# letters

## TTR

*In response to Gordon Dalgarno's article:*

Mate you so need a TTR.... it should be TRF standard issue. Its frugal and will do 150 miles on a tank and is very easy on tyres/c+s etc and maintenance is low and easy. Its ok for shortish/slowish commutes- has 6 gears too. Go for a 2000 model with a blue plastic tank- much better off-road geometry.

I can't comment on the Serow but 225 is small. Its better than a CRF 230- its not built for a dwarf and has brakes that work.

The Beta looks odd and the Suzy 350 is a lump. I think it may weigh 146kg- no thanks, the TTR is only 129 and built to last. All the others are more of a long distance thing, the TTR is a serious all rounder that's capable of a LDT or even an enduro.

Mine was nicked and I upgraded to a CRF250. Its a lovely bit of kit with a lovely suspension, beautiful but fiesty engine- I've had to relearn throttle/bike control because all my years on a TTR have made me lazy. If I'm honest I still miss mine.

In summary its a very EASY bike in all senses of the word. Buy one and you will not regret it.

*Pat Bullen*

## BETA ALP 4



*Beta Alp in foreground*

Hi Gordon, re TRF article, I have been running a 'Beta Alp 4' for nearly a year and it's a damn fine compromise. It's never caught me out on the rough stuff - though the forks can get you a bit out of shape if you push it too fast (which I don't do very often). I bought the bike in Swansea and rode it back to Liverpool without discomfort - it did weave badly above sixty, though when I checked the tyre pressure next day it only had 10psi in the front, blew

it up and it's been fine since. It doesn't have a kickstart but always starts easily on the button even after a little lie down in the mud!

I ride to the trails as I don't possess a trailer, so my average day would be 160 - 200 miles (300kms on the metric speedo). The seat is low enough to easily get your feet on the floor, but is on the hard side (I don't carry any natural padding!) - I cheat here sometimes because I have an 'airhawk' seat, which is inflatable and extremely comfy, it just sits on top of the standard seat while I'm on the road and deflates into my back pack while I'm on the trail. Best accessory I've ever bought as I use it on my road bikes too.

The parts for the engine are Suzuki DR350 but the 'beta' parts I have tried to source have been expensive, forty+ quid for a pair of levers to carry as spares (I bodged up a pair from a different bike at a fiver each to carry instead).

After market bits are very limited - I had to make my own bashplate as I couldn't find one (original is hard plastic and a bit small), they do a nice kit for the 200 but not the 350.

It came with the high front mudguard and hand guards, and I've fitted smaller indicators, fork gaiters and kick plates (home made) over the engine and frame to stop too much damage from my boots rubbing (bike was like new when I got it). I've also removed the side panels from the plastic tank to preserve them!

I've been biking for thirty years but haven't had as many 'trail' bikes as you and so can't give you the comparison with Serow etc. My other recent trail bike is a BMW Dakar, an excellent all round road bike. I did a long weekend in Scotland from Liverpool, staying at Tounge on the north coast. The Dakar is brilliant on the single track roads up there, and will cruise comfortably on the motorway. I put on some TKC 80's for the dirt, but it's very heavy, tall and wide on the trails and tends to sink when the going gets boggy, then it takes four to pull it out! Better suited to the 'Lakes' where it tends to be rockier and firm - I 'chickened out' of doing the 'Walna Scar' on it (when it wasn't TRO'd), but it goes well in Grizedale and similar non too adventurous places.

Hope this is of some use to you, good luck finding what your looking for.

*Dave Blair, Lanc's Group*

## YAMAHA TTR250

The TTR250 has an air-cooled, 4 stroke, 4 valve, DOHC single with electric start, six (fairly close ratio) speed gearbox and disc brakes front and rear. It is an ideal dual purpose bike - a Serow on steroids with bigger engine, better brakes, ground clearance and suspension. If the seat height is too tall then it is possible to drop the front forks through the clamps, shave some foam off the seat or fit a simple lowering link from [www.koubalink.com/TTR250.html](http://www.koubalink.com/TTR250.html). Full workshop manuals are available online as are parts lists.

An excellent trail and Long Distance Trials mount. My brother and I (both on

TTRs) recently completed the MCC Lands End Trial – 407 miles and 21 hours – and all the TTRs needed was topping up with petrol occasionally. No perceptible oil use and sufficient power to scare yourself if necessary.

"White" models. There are basically two models: the Open Enduro and the Raid. The TTR is a very civilised trailie that the UK Trail Bike and Enduro Magazine (TBM) described as being "as civilised as it is competent". Only a handful of TTRs was imported into the UK back in 1995 by Yamaha and they were never classed as "official" imports. They seem not to have sold well - not because they weren't good bikes - but because of what was described as an "exorbitant" price tag at the time of £4,000 plus.

There seemed to be a lot of imports between 93 and 95 (usually white plastics and metal tanks) after which there seems to be a gap until the new "blue" TTR (plastic tanks) became available, again only as imports. About 3 years ago, Yamaha made the TTR an official import but, meeting EU regulations seems to be an issue, and it has again been dropped from their catalogue with no official UK 2006 model being available.

The Open Enduro model has a well-specified suspension set-up with adjustable units front and rear. The very capable quick-steering front end has a leading axle and air-damped forks with over 10" of travel. The rear has Yamaha's own rising rate monoshock with a remote reservoir that allows adjustment for both compression and

rebound damping and about 10" of travel as for the front forks. The ride is plush and predictable. The TTR has a steel box section frame with a heavy-duty alloy swing arm and distinctive purple anodised wheel rims which you either love or hate! The engine thrives on revs but has enough bottom end to plonk along at low revs and still pull cleanly from nothing. Quoted at 28bhp @ 8,500rpm

"Blue" models. The UK plastic-tanked models have electric and kick start as standard making them "dual start" as well as having revised steering geometry and suspension. They look good in blue and white Yamaha "YZ" livery

As a born again biker, I started off-roading with an '86 air-cooled Husky WR250, followed by an RM250 and a KDX200. My stepdaughter bought a Yamaha TTR250 Raid (full-on trail version

of the TTR) and by pure coincidence my search for an electric start 250 4 stroke turned up a tatty 1993/4 Open Enduro version which tidied up very easily.

I am now on my third TTR250. On the basis that you don't live forever, I pre-invested some of my pension into a brand spanking new one from P& H M/C through eBay - £2,950 on the road – prepped and delivered to my door ready to ride! I continue to be delighted with the model. I think they are the best all-round trail bike available (probably).

When I got my first TTR there wasn't any information anywhere that I could find so, as I discovered it, I put it on a website - the "TTR250 FAQ" which now seems to have a life of its own. Since the initial web pages went up I have had a lot of input from other TTR owners which I have added. – see [www.ttr250.com](http://www.ttr250.com). There is also a very active Yahoo user community with 1,400 members from around the globe (lots sold in the Antipodes) who seem to have answers to every big or little problem! To join: [TTR250-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:TTR250-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Brian Sussex

## RE; THE QUEST FOR THE IDEAL DUAL PURPOSE BIKE

In April's Trail Gordon asked for opinions on the Beta Alp 350 as a possible improvement on a Serow. I've had 2 Serows over a period of perhaps 10 years and found them reliable, robust and very forgiving of rider errors, I even felt that they

were pretty good on rides of a few hundred miles. Nonetheless I wanted to change, really just for the sake of it. On paper the Beta looks good, although at 145kg it's not light, but everything else hints at a 'Super-Serow'. Reviews in TBM suggested that it was possibly a better road than trail bike, but such are compromises. I bought my Alp on eBay, at a considerable reduction in price from new, with 1200km of road use on it and rode it 120 miles home. I was quite impressed, the gearbox was precise even though the clutch needed adjustment, it handled beautifully on B-roads and could manage motorway speeds with ease. Fuel consumption is probably better than the quoted 25km/litre which gives a pre-reserve range of 180km. Over the last 6 months I have done 2 long distance trials and some trail rides and have gradually warmed to the bike on the dirt.

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<b>Yamaha:</b>	TTR250
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I had hoped for an easy ride that would float me up hills but found the bike heavy, a little too highly geared and poorly suspended. Swapping the front sprocket from 15 to 14 tooth helped the gearing with a minimal loss of speed and trials pattern tyres at 10 psi have helped soften the ride. As specific negatives I have found the engine to be a very reluctant cold starter, the rear rim design makes tyre changes arduous and most importantly the construction is not as well planned as the Serow. For instance, the DR350 engine has external oil lines, the suspension linkages do not have grease nipples, the indicators and rear brake level are outboard of the frame and thus vulnerable and there is a lot of plastic for styling. Perhaps the biggest problem for long distance use is the seat which I find very uncomfortable, and my knees don't quite fit into the tank cut out – maybe I'm too tall at 6'? As a small issue, the bike is rare and so spares and aftermarket items are few and far between.

Clearly I'm not yet convinced that the Beta is a net improvement over the Serow but will persevere for a while. You may wish to follow the story on <http://www.alp350.blogspot.com>

Adrian Jowett, [adrian650@yahoo.com](mailto:adrian650@yahoo.com)

## A Fantastic Bloke



On Easter Monday, 17th April, a freak accident claimed the life of Michael Ayling, whilst riding on a byway near Four Marks, Hampshire. Michael was riding his Yamaha Wasp sidecar outfit, with his brother David as passenger. His other brother, James, and myself, were following on our own bikes. Michael was unconscious immediately after colliding with a tree, and when the emergency services arrived there was nothing they could do to revive him.

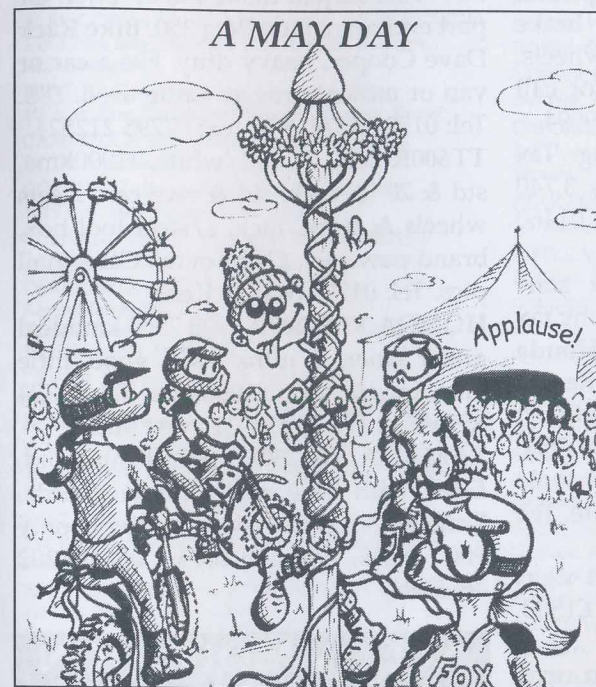
Michael was a very experienced and competent rider, having ridden bikes most of his life, both on and off road. He had also competed in many enduros over the years, mainly on solos but also with the sidecar outfit. He was a TRF member, and knew the green lanes of Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex like the back of his hand, and enjoyed riding them, either on his Husky or the sidecar outfit, whenever possible.

He leaves a wife, Anne, and their three children. Michael was a fantastic bloke, and the best rider I knew. He will be sadly missed by his family and everyone who knew him.

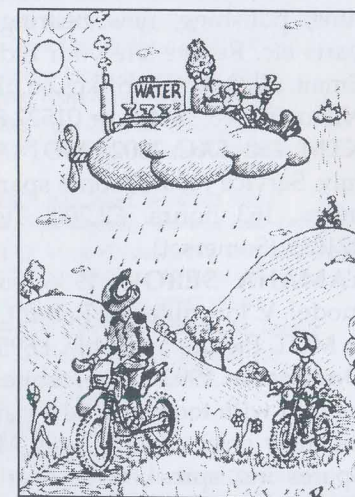
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Send your thoughts to the Editor.



Cartoon by P. Rowlands



Captions for last month's:

I see David Bellamy has sent his lackeys out again.

Tony Broughton

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**GAS GAS PAMPERA MARK 111** Extremely low mileage & maintained to v. high standard. Used only for occasional trail riding (I have a Serow as well). Exc. apart from paintwork.

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Near new tyres. Must sell cos bought a new bike so just make me an offer. Or part exchange for a Beta 350. **Bike Rack** Dave Cooper, heavy duty. Fits a car or van or motor caravan. Little used. £80. Tel: 01524 427919 or text 07795 212524.

**TT600R 2000/V, red/white, 11000kms,** std & 20 ltr tank, std & race can, 2 sets wheels & tyres, rack, s/steel tool box, brand new c&s. £1750 ovno. Can email pics. Tel: 01795 664838 Kent.

**HONDA XLR 200R 1998 7500 km ideal** green laner, 8 mths T&T, good little bike, low & light. £1000 ono. Tel: 01384 359068 or 07977 456211 West Mids.

**YAMAHA WR250F 2005, 8 mths old,** fitted with bash plate, frame guards, Renthals, Acerbis bark busters, only 900 miles, v.g.c. £2695. Tel: 01202 460508.

## ACCOMMODATION

**BRENDAN CHASE B&B** Windermere from £17.50 each x 4 sharing. Bike lock-up, parking, all rooms c/h, CTV, H & C, pub and grub handy, CCTV surveillance. Tel: 015394 45638.

**B & B NEAR KIRKBY LONSDALE** Convenient for Dales & Lakes. Lock up for bikes. Food & ale 100 yds. 1 Double, 1 Twin. From £20pp inc. Full English Breakfast. Sorry No Smoking. "River Cottage" (2) Brookland, Burton in Lonsdale (next to bridge over river Greta). Tel: 015242 64988, Mob: 07766 271889.

## GROUPS

**AXE VALE** Malcolm Preece, Tel: 01275 844757  
2nd Mon, 8pm, *The Star PH at Star on A38.*

**BLACK COUNTRY** Nick Hammond, Tel: 01902 700749  
1 & 3 Tues, 9pm, *The Mitre, Church Road, Bradmore, Wolverhampton.*

**BRISTOL** Glenn Summers, Tel: 01454 619246  
4th Mon, 8pm, *The Midland Spinner, Warmley, Bristol.*

**CAMBRIDGE** John Brooker, Tel: 01767 692805  
1st Thurs, *Golden Ball, Boxworth.*

**CORNWALL** Steve Woods, Tel: 01326 211860  
3rd Thurs, 8pm, *Pencaron Club, Bodmin.*

**CUMBRIA** Anthony Hayhurst, Tel: 01539 721115  
2nd Tues, *The Gilpin Bridge Inn, Levens, Nr. Kendal.*

**DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE**  
Kevin Marsh, Tel: 01246 811949  
2 & 4 Tuesdays, *The Angel Hotel, Sprinkhill, Eckington, Nr. Chesterfield, Derbyshire.*

**DEVON** Rob Williams, Tel: 01626 364564  
2nd Tues, 8pm, *The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott.*

**DORSET** Martin Diamond, Tel: 01202 571325  
1st Tues, 8pm, *Greyhound Inn, Winterbourne, Kingston, Nr. Bere Regis.*

**EAST MIDLANDS** Graham Chinnery, Tel: 01332 863433  
2nd Wed, *The Chequers Inn, Main St, Breaston, South Derbyshire, J25 on M1.*

**EAST YORKSHIRE** Peter Hall, Tel: 01405 862616  
1st Tues, *The Plough, Snaith.*

**ESSEX** Dave Anderson, Tel: 01277 657783  
2nd Wed, *The Wheatsheaf Public House, Hatfield Peveral.*

**EXMOOR** Ian Sadler, Tel: 01884 821547  
2nd Wed, 8pm, *The Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham, A396 1 mile north of Tiverton.*

**GLOUCESTER** Geoff Wilkie, Tel: 01453 811412  
1st Wed, 8pm, *Wagonworks Club, Tuffley Ave., Gloucester.*

**HERTFORDSHIRE**  
Nicola Graham-Adriani, Tel: 01582 623 277  
2nd Wed, 8pm, *The Old Guinea, Ridge, Near Potters Bar.*

**HIGH PEAK & POTTERIES**  
Graham Till, Tel: 01782 510533 or 01782 833222 (work)  
1st Tues, 8.30pm, *The New Inn, Leek Road, Longsdon. (A52, 1.5 miles West of Leek).*

**ISLE OF WIGHT** Andy Hawkins, Tel: 01983 617232  
1st Wed, 8pm, *The Eight Bells Inn, Carisbrooke, Newport, IOW.*

**KENT** Phil Airey, Tel: 01732 847055, Nige Jeffrey  
Tel: 01795 438769 2nd Wed, 8.30 p.m. for 9.00 p.m., *Pied Bull, Farningham, Nr Brands Hatch, Kent.*

**LANCASHIRE** Keith Westley, Tel: 01704 893215  
1st Tues, *Black Bull, Hall Lane, Mawdesley.*

**LINCOLNSHIRE** Paul Vernon, Tel: 01522 889079  
4th Thurs, 8pm, *Manvers Arms, Monks Road, Lincoln.*

**LODDON VALE** Patrick Evans, Tel: 01252 660179  
2nd Thurs, *Inn in the Park, Woodley Centre, E. Reading.*

**MANCHESTER** Phil Kinder, Tel: 0161 339 5343  
2nd & 4th Mon, 9.00pm, *Arden Arms, A6017 in Bredbury.*

**MID WALES** John Mason, Tel: 01597 811141  
Last Thurs, 7.30pm, *The Crown Inn, Rhayader.*

**NORTHUMBERLAND** Brian Eland, Tel: 01207 272228  
1st Tues, 8.30pm, *The Travellers Rest, Burnopfield.*

**NORTH WALES** Richard Hughes, Tel: 01244 533855  
1st Wed, 8pm, *Cross Keys, Buckley, OS 117 290 637.*

**NORWICH** Jeremy McNulty, Tel: 07800 690269.  
2nd Wed, 7.30pm, *White Horse, Trowse, Norwich.*

**OXFORDSHIRE** Peter Cole, Tel: 01844 214075  
3rd Thurs, 8.00pm, *Royal British Legion Club, Rutten Lane, Yarnton.*

**PEAK DISTRICT** John Ward, Tel: 01335 370191  
1st Thurs, 8pm, *Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby.*

**RIBBLE VALLEY** Mark Wolstenholme, Tel: 01282 432088  
2nd Tues, *Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59).*

**SOMERSET** Greg Hughes, Tel: 07887 821472  
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 Old Sun, 10 Middle Street, Nether Heyford, Northampton NN7 3LL.*

**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** David Yarwood, Tel: 01793 762455  
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**  
John Robinson, Email: [nytrf@hotmail.com](mailto:nytrf@hotmail.com)  
3rd Tues, *The Ranch House, Thoraldby Farm, Nr Stokesley, map ref 93...493074.*

**THAMES VALLEY** Julian Ogley, Tel: 0208 5799778  
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** Richard Hirst, Tel: 01274 632676  
1st Thurs, *Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd), Odsal, Bradford. Rights of Way 7.30pm, main meeting 8.30 pm.*

**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.*