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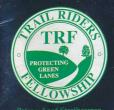
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The Bulletin of the TRF, the National Club for all who wish to ride Legal Motorcycles on Legal Carriageways. EDITOR: Fred Ellison.

IUNE 2006 No. 334



Shaun Younger on Rudland Rigg, North Yorkshire, 2005, photo by Geoff Younger

All Contributions to the Editor Please keep it short and sweet! COPY DEADLINE: FIRST POST, 1ST TUESDAY OF MONTH

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Life does go on after NERC. This year's Coast to Coast was a huge success despite the loss of some lanes, mainly in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Phil Fawcett, who has organised the event since 1996 (with more than a little help from Linda and the boys) was for the first time in his life showered with Champagne - well not exactly that was Phil's dream, but he was presented with a bottle of top bubbly as a token of appreciation for all the work he has put in over the last ten years. He did say this might be his last year. He has now said if he keeps getting bottles of bubbly he will carry on (see page 8 for Coast to Coast).

Now the Editor is begging again he NEEDS photographs for the front cover, articles, letters, in fact anything of interest to your fellow trail riders. There is much to discuss/decide about the future of Trail Riding and TRAIL should be the forum. Talking about it within your

immediate group of friends doesn't usually change very much you have to reach a wider audience.

Yours in anticipation,



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Fred Ellin

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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

TRF Action & Advice on the Legality of Routes Post-NERC

- 1. After 2 May 2006, members of the public wishing to drive mechanically propelled vehicles (MPV) on unsealed public roads are at greater risk of inadvertently breaking the law. The implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) means that the law is now clearer, with a harder edge beyond which both prosecution and conviction are more likely. On some routes, 'slumbering vehicular rights' still remain, but the exercise of those rights is both harder to understand and harder to assert. Members should assume that the government will advise highway authorities and the police to be more assertive about 'illegal off-road motoring'. If any 'illegal' use is just that illegal then the person doing the driving has committed an offence and runs the risk of punishment, which might be a fine, or seizure (or the threat of seizure) of the vehicle.
- 2. The TRF Executive advises TRF Members that:

• You have a right to drive on BOATs shown in the definitive map.

• You have a right to drive on unclassified (county) roads (shown in the list of streets on 2 May 2006) where these have vehicular rights, but not on 'dual status' unclassified (county) roads, where the road also appears on the definitive map as a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway.

• Former roads used as public paths (RUPP) have lost their MPV rights.

- 3. Not all unclassified (county) roads have vehicular rights. There are a few routes recorded on the highway authorities' lists of streets that are plainly, or probably, not vehicular. These are generally obviously so: for example, flights of steps in towns, church paths, and ginnels.
- 4. It is not an express offence under s.34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to drive on unclassified (county) roads. It is an offence to drive on a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway. If an unclassified (county) road is not shown in the definitive map as a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway, then to convict under s.34 the prosecution must prove that the route is only a footpath or bridleway.
- 5. Some routes that appear to have had their MPV rights removed by NERC are subject to definitive map modification order applications (DMMOA), which were submitted before the 'cut-off date' imposed by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The cut-off date in England is 20 January 2005 and in Wales is 19 May 2005. These DMMO applications will be processed to completion. TRF members may wish to keep using these 'claims' in the many years that will pass until the applications are determined and the resulting orders are confirmed (or not). Members are advised that the simple fact that a 'claim' is lodged does not of itself guarantee protection from prosecution or conviction.

- 6. The simple fact of a 'claim' being lodged does not, of itself, prove the existence of public MPV rights, but it does allow the evidence of these rights to be brought forward if a person is charged with driving on the route contrary to s.34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. The TRF advises members wishing to use a route subject to a 'claim' to contact the TRF group in whose area that route lies, for advice on the strength of the evidence, before using the route. The existence of a 'claim' is no warranty that defensible public MPV rights exist, but where there is good evidence of such rights, and a member has made prudent checks before using a route, the TRF Executive will consider a request for legal assistance on its merits and within the spirit of the TRF's constitution. Members are reminded that they can use the statutory 'online register of definitive map modification order applications', made and maintained by every order-making authority, to view and assess the evidence on any 'claim' for themselves.
- 7. This advice is liable to change as the post-NERC situation develops through 2006 and beyond. Members are advised to check the TRF website regularly for up-to-date advice.

NOTICE BOARD

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Are you ready to help out at a horse event?

Contact Leo Crone, Tel: 01325 463815

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This will be held at Mr Fletcher's Farm, Little Ayton, North Yorkshire. Costs will be £20 for TRF Members and £30 for non-members, this includes camping if you so wish and guided rides out onto the North Yorkshire Moors. Riders can also use the enduro course which is at this venue for no extra cost.

Toilets are provided and a marquee tent for evening relaxing and entertainment. Individuals must bring their own beer, food and BBQ.

This is our fifth year here and things just keep on getting better. Last year's top raffle prize was a pair of Sinisalo MX boots donated by Graham Charlton Motorcycles Gas Gas Agent, prizes were also donated by Frontline Motorsports, D. T McKenzie, Romax Powder Coatings and many more. Thank you all.

All bikes must be road legal and noisy bikes will not be allowed. For more information contact Phil on 01287 634972.

Where Do We Go From Here?

'Managing decline' in my business is a rather wishfully upbeat term applied to nursing monthly magazines whose revenues are disappearing down the toilet, largely due to the impact of newer media which satisfy public appetites for ever more instant gratification. But judging from recent events, it's something that's also appropriate to trailriding.

These events are of course the passage into law of the NERC Bill, the consequently emboldened attitude of county councils towards further eliminating the rights of MPV users on RoW, and finally the message I took away from the last TRF National Executive Meeting on March 25th which was that whilst we've lost the war, there may yet be a few more skirmishes which we must be prepared to fight.

Since that meeting I, and I suspect many other members, have been seriously considering the future of trailriding, both personally and as a national pastime. In both respects I am very gloomy; from LAF, local Byway User Group and TRF meetings I've subsequently attended, plus a regular trawl of the always illuminating Trail Bike Magazine web forums, a number of things are clear. If it helps concentrate your own thoughts on the subject, or provokes some useful counterpoint, I'll summarise them briefly here:

• Councils, especially in areas (like mine) where there's a fast rising influx of trailriders and 4X4 users displaced from their local lanes, are committed to using

extensive TROs to further limit MPV use.



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• A lot of riders will simply break the law and ride what were hitherto RuPPs, and this includes many angry and frustrated TRF members who will lapse their membership.

• Even though some consider that NERC is unenforceable, councils will erect clear warning signs and both they, the police and vigilant anti-MPV parties will self-righteously snitch on those who they see breaking it.

• We will lose even more trails as a consequence of the above, and the TRF – despite the dedication and efforts of its core activists – may well lose members and, ergo, its relative political power.

Those at that March meeting may recall that I was commissioned to embark on the first stage of a plan that I'd submitted some two years earlier, namely to assess the feasibility of getting the bike trade to help market and fund the TRF, thus increasing membership and boosting its campaigning clout, a remit now broadened to include hiring full time

marketing and p.r. staff. Had such a scheme been in place 18 months ago, our anti-NERC efforts might not've been quite so ineffectual.

That may sound self-serving and starry-eyed, but I've been in both the bike trade and the media for almost forty years and when I look at the Ramblers Association with their 140,000 members and their well-funded and professionally-managed crusades, I'm convinced that the TRF's only hope of effective retaliation against NERC would've been to marshal the energies and the resources of those who also stand to lose out in the longer run. And that means the bike trade and the wider trailriding constituency who, I'm afraid it must be faced, aren't inspired by what they consider to be the arcane and inclusive practices of the TRF. Or, worse still and despite my own meagre efforts, weren't even aware of what we were up against until it was too late.

Unfortunately, and this is why I had to turn down the task in question, there's a substantial section of the TRF that believes that we must co-opt the 4X4 community if we are to survive further attacks, and to that end my brief was changed to one that required LARA to act as the ultimate authority for any fundraising, marketing and p.r. operation. It was further required that any consequent funds should be used to employ a professional lobbyist, which I disagreed with simply because it's not necessarily a full-time post and it would be far more (cost) effective to hire specific lobbyists for specific tasks at specific times.

Like anyone with half a brain, I recognise and applaud the endeavours of those at the top table trying to restore morale post-NERC. But I do not want to become

allied, or worse, beholden to any 4X4 organisations whose members have a whole different set of criteria from mine and who are, at least where I live, far more responsible for what ails us as trailriders than trailriders themselves. (I recently and inadvertently received an e-mail from a CRAG member promoting the prospect of a whole convoy of his brethren tearing across Wales - at night - with lots of opportunities for winching themselves out of deeply-rutted bogs).

The TRF's future may have to be about managing decline, but if so I think it must once-and-for-all decide who its real allies are, what it stands for and where it's going. My opinion is that we should let the 4X4 boys look after themselves (but join forces when the need arises), focus exclusively on our own interests and determinedly reach out to, inspire and coopt those who might better understand

and help us.

Mark Williams, Mid-Wales Group Vice Chair

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Coast to Coast 2006

Despite the gloomy weather forecast (what do they know, they are only on £40,000 +) Saturday was cool and bright as we assembled at Scarborough for the annual C 2 C run. I was thinking Phil must have sorted the groups out by colour, not ability. The first five bikes were all Blue. Team Yamaha, I thought, maybe Phil has arranged a sponsorship. Then the KTM and Honda turned up and scotched that theory.

Duly signed in, we were the first off with a rush of adrenalin that subsided as we headed for West Ayton on the road.

Middle Lane, Moor Lane, Troutsdale, Thompson's Rigg and Blackdale, the lanes came thick and fast. The ground was bone dry after three weeks of good weather and the fields were full of thousands of lambs. Some Lanes have been lost to NERC but on a C 2 C run you just need a linking network and you can enjoy the single track roads in between.

First stop Lockton. Tea at the local General store, very welcoming and some lovely home-made fruit pies. Then heading North we crossed the wild open moors on Stapes road, six miles across and not a building in sight. At Egton Bridge we headed to Glaisdale Rigg, North End Farm (a fantastic climb) and then Castleton for Petrol. Heading West again we took in Coleson Banks and Kirby Bank where we stopped for a photo call. We could see 40 miles across the Tees Valley, up toward the Durham coastline and inland towards the Dales.

Raismill and Scugdale led us to Osmotherley. Sheepwash proved a little

difficult for some of the group. Two foot rock steps are a little daunting, only one person cleaned it, so it was all hands to the bikes and we were soon on the road to Masham. More petrol. A pint of elixir to me, milk to you and off we went. Grewelthorpe Lane and over the moor, where the younger riders were let loose on the hard stone track for the four mile run. A circuit of Sypes Moor, over the whoops, proved too much for a KTM's front wheel. He had popped at least three spokes. So out with the grips. Yes you have guessed non-standard spoke adjusters.

Ten minutes later we had a stable but wobbly wheel, that at low speeds was trying to rip off the fork guards. Anyway we nursed the bike off the moor to Ramsgill and up the road towards Scar House Reservoir. Here he took the road up to the reservoir, as the rest tackled Middlesmoor Lane. We met up at the Dam and he was having thoughts about calling it a day. How he got the bike across Dead Man's Hill and into Arkleside without the wheel collapsing I'll never know. I guided them round to West Witton by road. It was then the KTMs decided to go gently to Hawes by road, while we did High Lane and on to Kidstone Scar and Stake Moss. By the time we got to Marsett we were running out of time. I thought the Petrol station closed at six but they had closed at five. Tough, because David and I were staying in Gunnerside, ten miles away, in the next valley and we had about enough petrol to get there but not back. Thank goodness for the support vehicle who had a jerry can of petrol and gave us just enough for the return

journey and at £25 a litre it was worth it. (Only joking. The olds will remember

the AA service years ago).

After signing off the team headed off for their digs and we headed for the Chippie. The biggest, whitest cod I had eaten for years, fantastic. David's face was a treat, pure Paris-Dakar. Having brought up the rear most of the day his face was caked in red dust with a perfect outline of his new safety specs revealing his white skin.

The young and the brave went to the party at the White Hart Inn on the Saturday night. I had a bath and retired at 9 o'clock, zonked, after covering 170 miles. Nothing really when you consider the lad from Great Yarmouth, due to retire next year, had ridden 100 miles to Scarborough from Leyburn just to start the run. Amazing!

Saturday was Tourist Dales Weather. Sunday was Reality Dales Weather.



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Unit 9, Hightown Industrial Estate, Crow Arch Lane, Ringwood, Hants BH24 1NZ Tel: 01425 474800 Fax 01425 461962 Email mail@inchains.co.uk Web page & on-line shop: www.inchains.co.uk Light rain, hill tops covered in mist and cool. David and I fuelled up on porridge until it was coming out of our ears. It was thick enough to stick to your ribs, the birds got the rest, though I am sure they would have had difficulty flying that day. So it was over to Hawes. There was a rumour that the petrol station was open at 7.30. No chance. Commercialism hasn't touched parts of the Dales yet, thank goodness. We signed on and returned to the petrol station and formed an orderly queue. By the time he opened there were seventy bikes lined up with their owners lovingly admiring the pumps. With the stations at Thoralby and Aysgarth permanently closed this year, things are looking bad for the independents. I just thought, if some militant Rambler bought this petrol station, we would all have to change to twenty litre tanks.

Back at the assembly point the KTMs turned up, one sporting a new front wheel. Apparently some wise guy dealer had converted some 125 KTM's into supermoto. Call it a fashion statement if you like. Then he advertised the off road wheels, "suitable for KTM 400/450". It was it's second trip out when the spokes popped. Let's hope the replacement one lasts a little longer. How did he get the replacement? His friend's brother had driven from Yarm to Whitby, to pick up the wheel, then to Hawes, to deliver it, then returned to Yarm. About 200 miles round trip. Your brother must love you said I. Oh yes, he owes me a few favours he replied. The good news was we all got petrol. The bad news was David had left his mobile phone at Gunnerside. His works mobile phone: what would we do without them? Well, I said, this is a tourist group, we will take them into Swaledale. The views were very atmospheric, mist skirting the hill tops with the odd glimpse of sunshine, the Dales at their best. None of the party had been into Swaledale before and were most impressed. Another boost for tourism. One of the lads from Cambridgeshire said "I want to come back already" and that was only two hours after we set off from Scarborough on the Saturday.

We headed back into Wensleydale for a circuit around Carpley Green, Stalling Busk and the Roman Road before topping up with petrol and making for Backsides and Dodd Fell. The initial climb proved too much for one of the party. Quote "I am getting too old for this " so David rode his bike over the rock steps. Same place as Alex turned the air blue last time out. So you are not alone in that respect.

Over to Horton in Ribblesdale, Helwith Bridge and lunch stop in Settle. Bacon Bap heaven. Time was running out, as usual, so we made for Salter's Fell not knowing whether it was open or not, since all my contacts came up blank!

David said he had the route on his GPS so I gave way to technology. You guessed. The first intersection and we took the wrong fork. Double back. Five miles later the batteries went on the blink. Back to basics then, out with the map and straight there. Almost. There was an ominous sign next to the first gate. Thank goodness, a TRO, for Four wheels only.

What a fantastic run across eleven miles of open moorland track. A bit like Rudland Rigg but more interesting ups and downs. The only people we saw were



Phil Fawcett, who has been running the Coast to Coast ride for the past ten years, was presented with a bottle of the finest Champagne by Fiona Shaw, our first lady run leader, as a token of our appreciation for all the hard work involved in organising such an event. We also gave thanks to Phil's wife, Linda, and the boys for their invaluable help. Well done.

a pair of twitchers who waved hello and a lone watcher who bird opened one of the gates us as approached. He had walked six miles onto the fell to catch a glimpse of a buzzard. Heading West we could see the sea from up on the fell. Now there are times in my life when I think "someone up there is looking after me". We had just left Salter's Fell and I was dreading the last ten miles, map reading on the move. We were on a one track

road in the middle of nowhere when we approached a low-loader and a service car. The men had just finished loading a digger and trailer. They had been doing some road repairs. I stopped at the service car and said to the driver, "Is this the road to Hest Bank?" "You want the Hest Bank? I take you" he replied. This lad had a Polish accent and was probably an EU worker. Well I was absolutely taken aback, gobsmacked as they say nowadays. "That would be very kind of you" I said and off we all went. He used his knowledge of every cross country back lane to short cut the six miles towards the coast. When we entered a housing estate I though "I think he is taking us home for a cup of tea". Then he pulled over and said "This is Hest Bank" We were 100m from the Hest Bank car park. "Fantastic" said I "Please accept £5 as a token of our appreciation, you have restored my faith in the Human Race."

As we parted company I was thinking, what were the chances of that happening. After two days and nearly three hundred miles we arrived just in time to be guided all the way to the finish. If we had arrived five minutes later we would have missed a very generous person. After signing off at the control van, we exchanged a few e-mail addresses and all shook hands. A brilliant ride, smiles all round. A great big thank you to Phil and Linda and their support team for all the hours of preparation. All those who rode this leisure weekend know what a great experience it is, even though some were too exhausted to say so at the time. Happy trail riding John Robinson.

P.S. If you have any good photos of the Coast to Coast ride from this year or previous years please e-mail to nytrf@ Hotmail.com.

LETTERS OF THANKS

I would like to express my gratitude to all those involved in the 2006 Coast to Coast ride. I had an absolute ball enjoying the riding, the camaraderie and the magnificent countryside we are so lucky to live close to. Even the conditions were the perfect mix of dry and grippy one day and wet and slippy the next.

Responsible for my immense enjoyment was undoubtedly a lot of work carried out by many who must have planned and researched for weeks, or even

months.

I do not know all those involved, and to try to name them all would inevitably mean missing someone out, but I would like to single out the group leaders, tail sweepers and in particular Phil and Linda Fawcett. Thanks to those people, I, and everyone I spoke to (and judging from their smiles to everyone else taking part), had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Without these organisers, guides and assistants, who are prepared to put themselves out for others enjoyment, there would be no Coast to Coast.

Trail riding is facing difficult times with uninformed people (who seemingly disapprove of any minority activity) trying to bring a halt to our passion. But, with weekends like this breathing new life and vigour into new and old riders alike, we can only hope that a groundswell of resistance will help protect the lanes and

tracks we have left.

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Harry Gleghorn

Just a quick note to say thank you for another fantastic Coast to Coast weekend. I thought Group 5 had the perfect match of abilities which made for a good distance covered with only one enforced stop for a puncture on Breast High Road (not me again). A top weekend yet again.

More specifically, special thanks to you and the lads for fixing my puncture in the car park at Scarborough.

Here's to a lot more of the same for many years to come, despite Tony and his cronies.

I am sure that with a bit of assistance and advice from yourself others within the group can keep the event running next year and beyond.

Thanks again, Andy Riley

First Run (For a Few Years)

I'd had a few reservations about going off road with the XR 400 wearing the Avon Gripster tyres it was supplied with, but as I couldn't afford to change them, justified it with myself by deciding to compare the Avons with other tyres that would come along later. Wait for the Gripsters to wear out and replace them with an Enduro tyre of the most common type in the club. I was lucky enough to go on a beginners run for my first one, with beginners on sensible bikes like TT220's with 'proper' off road tyres. Led by Simon Edler and occasionally Robin Hickin around Southam; warning bells went off as we sped out of the layby where we'd met, probably just eagerness to get to the first trail, the pace would surely slow down when we got there. How naïve I was, my pace slowed down because speed generated wobble due to poor grip, though at one point the trail ran alongside a wet field edge where we picked up speed to the 'full 25', good job there was plenty of room to slow down at the end of it. (How come everyone had full fuel tanks? When I last rode with the TRF we used to stop and fill up on the way to the first lane.) A soft, muddy surface on the first lane had me worried, but it wasn't as bad as I'd feared and initial apprehension melted away until we arrived at the lane down to Ufton off the Welsh road. Coming off the slippery but solid surface to a few ruts, I looked up to see a wide lane with deep ruts from side to side and about 75 to 100 yards long. I picked a route out up the left hand side and was doing well until a tree forced me to the very edge of the first rut and the back wheel dropped into it. I managed what I considered to be a creditable 15 to 20 yards with the front wheel on top and the back wheel in, hoping that at any moment the back wheel would lift itself out. No chance, the front wheel dropped in and that was that. I paddled the rest of the way, much to the amusement of better riders on 'sensible' tyres waiting at the 'dry end'. After this, all went well until we arrived at Marston Doles; another joy filled lane masquerading as a maze of 18 inch ruts where the West Midlands contingent of the four wheel drive club had come to a gate they couldn't get through and had eventually turned around. I chose a rut to ride in knowing that the bottom of it at least would be solid enough to find grip so I could ride up the hill after the rest of the group. I made a little forward progress then started to slide backwards, I blipped the throttle to make sure I was still in gear but nothing happened. At a standstill I looked at the back wheel, it was turning in the required direction, the bike slid a little further back. Physically lifting the bike out of the rut onto grass I thought I'd got it sussed. The bike and I slid sideways down the field, front wheel pointing up the field. Despair started to set in and I realised the only way up was down a little to build up some momentum and clear mud from the tyres tread pattern, then up. It worked to the point when I tried to go uphill and could only go uphill sideways, shifting as much weight as I've got over the back wheel but getting slower and slower. Eventually reaching the muddy rutted track again, I could see where enduro tyres had bitten, leaving their trademark block pattern. Incredibly enough, on the lane we passed a group of walkers, one of whom was in white (muddy) jogging shoes and slacks. I bid them a good morning; what else can you do?

Obviously, I was last to join the waiting group at the gate out of the field. As I pulled up, a Land Rover sped off the road and parked in front of us. It was a farmer who owned the field. He had been told that a group of motorcyclists were riding in his field. Simon, venerable leader, eventually mollified him, and seeing not a group of young hooligans but a group of older motorcyclists, the farmer retreated. That made me think. Suppose I rode into a valley of similar conditions and couldn't get out, what then? I wondered if my nearest and dearest would recognise my need to change these tyres. Sod comparison testing for the life of the tyre, I'd proved their suitability and limitations already; reinforcing them would only make me a liability to the rest of whichever group I rode out with. Visually, the Avon Gripsters should be about as useful as a slick in a beach race, and in mud, they are. In dry, leafy and rocky places, similar to conditions on the Snow Hill run, they found grip, always on 15 to 20lb pressure. I didn't like riding across slopes on them, they always felt as if they were about to break away, but for most conditions they were surprisingly adequate. Robinsons of Rochdale supplied the bike, bringing with it a tyre with knobs on and only a little wear, off the back wheel; the front tyre had been beyond use. At Christmas my nearest and dearest did get a front tyre to match the back – just for winter use, both were fitted and I planned an early test of their capability on the Tysoe run just after Christmas. The Tysoe Icebreaker was one hell of an eye opener, after much rain the trails were sweaty with mud galore; the XR performed faultlessly, we didn't fall over neither did we get stuck. In future, we are going to stick to Tyres with knobs on.

It all depends on where you ride Paul. I recall a trip to Cornwall when the locals fell about laughing when they saw our 'tyres with knobs on' - they can't get to grips with all that Cornish slate you know.

Runaround in Shropshire

Tony and I had arranged to meet at the Forge 0830hrs to load his Husky 350 into the Vito and go straight through Birmingham out to Angel Bank filling station but the more I thought about this the more I realised it would be far safer to park on the street in Ludlow.

Even at nine o clock, temperatures had not risen above freezing. Such are people that we were following drivers at 25mph or being overtaken at 70mph. Having parked in Ludlow I realised how cold it still was as we rode to Angel Bank, not to worry though, I thought, we'll warm up riding the trails. Turning off the A4117 to Dhustone we immediately came upon ice, in broad sheets across the road, rippled and thick where runoff from the fields continued to flow. Waiting at a cattlegrid for another Landrover to pass, Tony looked dubious; he also looked a lot warmer than I felt. The trail from Titterstone Clee Hill heads off right from the road and across the top before dropping down into Cleeton St Mary. Just before the left hander up to the summit there were tracks and off we went. About half-way up the tracks seemed to be going over the banking into the quarry. Wrong trail! Volte-face and there was Tony helplessly cross-rutted, his determination to escape increased

as I got closer until he finally freed the bike just before it stalled. Laugh, well... I told him I'd taken the wrong trail, that we needed to start further down from where I'd stopped, our trail was a little lower and going towards the bungalow on the near horizon. It took a couple of kicks but he got the Husky started and shot off across the heather. I stalled the Honda then fell over with it. One of those times when cursing ones own failings is the only recourse. A group of walkers up on the summit ridge of the hill had been watching Tony, and now my performance. With much relief I followed Tony who by now was far away and waiting. Memories came trickling back as the trail wound down through the many streams crossing it, some of these were real traps, all were covered with thick ice which took the weight of the front wheel but collapsed under the back, dropping the wheel into ruts. I last rode this in 1981 with West Mids TRF, returning to the vehicles at the end of the day in twilight. Tony's performance, if it can be called such, was surprising considering the last time he rode off-road was 20 years previously on a Suzuki TS185 around an old gravel pit. Making progress towards Cleeton gets easier once the streams thin out due to the gradient therefore confidence was growing when I found the rut, half of a four wheel drive track, the XR hung there suspended on its footpeg brackets. Tony stopped to encourage me and the Husky stalled; we were both quite warm when we set off again. This trail became difficult to follow as it approached Cleeton St Mary so we stayed as close to the boundary fence as conditions allowed until we got to the back of the church.

Our next trail started at the cattle grid at Cleetongate, four wheel drive vehicles and tractors have made some impressive ruts climbing up here, alongside these we could see where bikes had been up the side. Rutted and icy, ridges of mud frozen into slippery sided walls that deflected the most determined attempt to surmount, after a hundred yards I'd had enough. Thing is, if you stop you have a devil of a job to get going again therefore leaving the 'novice' to his fate was really the only option. At the top of the first rise is a grassy patch, an ideal vantage point to assess the following rider's methods of progress. The following rider sat on his bike, legs flailing like windmill sails, doggedly paddling his way through ruts full of water under ice an inch thick. Front wheel on the ice or breaking it, back wheel slipping and gripping lurching back but mostly forward until it stalled in a particularly vicious rut. Photo opportunity not to be denied, by the time I'd got the camera out Tony had kicked himself to a standstill before throwing himself on the snow covered bank leaving a stubborn Husky standing in disgrace. Left handed kick-starts are probably brilliant for left handed people but make idiots out of the right handed. Having no-where to stand without getting a welly full of freezing water, unable to get a full swing on the kickstart due to the depth and width of the rut, we eventually pushed the damn thing out. Recovering in triumph gave us both the time to see where we were, sitting in hot sunshine with our coats and helmets off with Titterstone Clee Hill looming like a Swiss alp surrounded by ski runs on one flank and a snow capped Brown Clee visible over the Gore on the other, stretched in front of us lay a snow covered valley all the way over to Bridgnorth in the north-east.

It was cold however and we soon became cool as the effects of our exertion wore off. The Husky started relatively easily as it does when its cold. Time to move

on. Tracks visible at most times of year are not easily followed when under a layer of snow; sheep and farmers in various vehicles leave their mark and if you don't know exactly where you are going, it's very easy to become disoriented and lost. Fortunately we were able to pick up old tracks left by knobbly tyres every now and again; this confirmed my memories and led us to Callowgate farm. Through the gate into the lane which is part of the Shropshire Way, a long distance footpath trodden by a great many feet, perhaps the Ramblers Association had recently had a meeting there, very muddy but at least not bottomless. At the end of the trail in Bromdon, Tony suggested stopping somewhere for a drink or lunch. He had decided on a stout breakfast to set himself up well for a days trail riding, a few bacon sandwiches; I wondered why he'd been eating snow at the foot of Titterstone hill, I hadn't the heart to tell him why it was yellow... Good thing the leader had prepared a packed lunch. (Experienced at getting lost!).

Our next set of trails were off the lanes at Clee St Margaret from the back of the Yeld. Most of these lanes are old, worn down by centuries of use sunken below the level of the surrounding fields to become places where the low winter sun can't reach and were literally sheets of ice, rideable only with great care, especially down to the Yeld where we found our next trail went past a lovely homestead, we were unable to ride this because of social conscience. Instead we went through Clee St Margarets to find the trail to Peckledy, this is where the leader got lost, went through a gate very kindly opened by second rider who waded through a small river to do it, into a field full of sheep, turned around and came out again. In this

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context, maps are very consumable as it came out yet again and after due consideration was stuffed back into the rucksack. I waited until Tony had forded the river and regained his bike, still ticking over as he dare not stop it in case it wouldn't start again, I felt real sorry for those people living in the two houses either side of this access to the field and wondered how many TRF, Ramblers and other lost souls had made the same mistake and disturbed their peace. We turned right into the lane around a long right hand bend totally covered with ice, as it straightened I could see at the far end, the opening to our trail. Just to be sure, I checked the map again and seized opportunity to take more photographs. After an era, I thought I'd better check on Tony, his bike did seem to be possessed with an amazing propensity for stalling and refusing to start; I'd only walked a couple of yards when his helmeted head bobbed up

behind the hedge obscuring the corner. Yep, hit the ice, hit the deck. Good job those new waterproof trousers were only cheap ones eh? No damage though thanks to body armour, just a little bruised pride. I enjoyed this next trail, it is to me one of the reasons for trail riding, an ancient right of way worn down to bedrock; huge slabs of sandstone, natural breaks in it forming deep steps leading down to Clee Brook. Given the rain recently I don't know why I was surprised to see the brook a couple of feet deep, at least. The chances of us being able to ride through it a good 75 yards without mishap seemed unlikely but it seemed such a shame to be defeated by it. Cross the Rubicon. I walked the length of it and left my rucksack on the other side, taking out the camera and walking back to the bikes then back to the rucksack having taken a few pictures. I thought I knew where the easiest passage would be, certainly where the shallowest places were, slippery rocks and underwater boulders. But actually riding through it was a lot easier than I'd imagined. On the other side I took the camera out to record Tony's crossing, He stopped to pose with both feet down just before a small waterfall formed by a step, this is when he found boots to be less superior to wellingtons, he made shore fairly swiftly and stalled the Husky again. His chagrin turned to anger as he booted the hapless bike to no avail; packing the camera and maps away I wondered whether we would finish our run on the XR, leaving the Husky dead in a hedge, or river. It roared into life unexpectedly, who was the more surprised? Revving its nuts off, the very air seemed to vibrate before Tony took off up the trail disappearing rapidly. It took some determined riding to bring him back into view, the full '25mph' you might say, I needn't have been concerned; he'd stopped at a divergence near the top. Very perky after the adrenalin rush he actually praised the bike for its ability; maybe he was just glad it hadn't spat him off. Through the gates at Peckledy onto the farm drive, rolling pasture to our left formed one side of a large triangular valley with the small hamlet of Bouldon at the bottom.

I was very conscious of the suns position relative to ours by this time; we couldn't ride as much as I thought we might if we were to arrive back at Ludlow before nightfall. We would be able to ride two more trails based on our progress so far, Beambridge to Broadstone and Hungerford to Roman Bank, both on the way to Church Stretton.

Again the narrow lanes had not seen the sun for days and were icily exciting especially when vehicles came the other way and expected us to get out of the way, somehow we always did. At the mouth of the trail on the lane into Beambridge we saw the only horses of the day, an elderly gent on a huge horse leading another smaller horse stopped and passed the time of day, we all agreed it was a bit cold to be riding but nice to be there to agree to it! I didn't like the look of this lane, it was mainly ice; four wheel drive vehicles had cut narrow troughs into its surface, practically the full width of the lane, bikes had ridden up the centre making another even narrower trough in which the tell tale scoop of differential gear housing betrayed the presence of depth either side. At least one rider had been up there this day because the ice was broken up one side and trail tyre tracks were yet unfrozen. Snotty and difficult, enjoyable for the challenge but I was beginning to recognise fatigue setting in as my tolerance towards other user groups diminished. I arrived at the river crossing, it looked deep, the thing was in spate and was it really worth crossing if all we had was another half mile of rutted frozen snot, and would Tony be alright? His feet must surely be iced up by now, temperatures were definitely falling and I favoured riding back, going through Beambridge and doing the last lane from Hungerford with an option, time and light permitting, of riding its companion lane from the top end of Broadstone. When Tony eventually arrived at the river he didn't take any persuading at all; turning the bikes around in the narrow rutted space put him in front, I relished watching him ride, seeing his machine control and posture which he'd managed to keep behind me all day. He set off steadily getting about ten yards before the bike stalled; I waited at the end of the lane for him.

He was not a happy chappy, he was going to strip this bike end to end, sort it out, give it a good malleting, and if it still wasn't right flog it and get something anything - with an electric start!

I rode past the entrance to our next lane, completely missed it; and the next. In fact, we were half-way to Much Wenlock before I realised something was definitely up. Map check. Volte face and a few miles later rode past it again but at least saw it, parked and walked up with the camera. Tony stayed with the bikes; he wasn't going to risk having the Husky stop or stall itself. A beautiful little lane (opposite a sign for Holdgate). A new cast iron storm drain cover lies just a few yards within it, about three feet in circumference. Debris up the sides of the lane testified to its necessity, before its installation storm water probably ran like a small river across the Much Wenlock Rd, washing stones, small boulders and everything else it collected with it. Another 75 yards up the track, blocking it almost completely lay a plug of debris. Two small trees had fallen into the lane, their trunks pointing downhill leaving the tops to act as a filter to everything that got washed into them. Passable with determination but not in the tired condition I was in. At the bikes Tony agreed, shame about it but we rode to the next lane, again sailing straight past the entrance at the top of an embankment and returning. I stopped at the top of the bank to ensure Tony got across the Much Wenlock Road safely, he'd stopped in time beside Hungerford House and was ready to ride straight up, but he waved me on, so I went, forgetting to photograph this beautiful lane. Full width sandstone ridges like miniature plateaus washed clean by flash floods rose in steps from solid rock banking giving way to the inevitable mud, shallow at first becoming rutted where four wheel drive tyres had bit deeper into the surface. I was glad of some exertion, wrestling the XR over, across and through the ruts; the sun had fallen taking its vestigial heat below the hedge eight feet above us at field level; even riding on the 'sunny side' was no better. At this point the track had been fairly easy but tricky due to ruts, I'd not looked back to check on Tony in case I cross rutted the XR and threw it away. Another 100 yards or so and the mud had dried on the lightly frozen surface, here almost at the top of Slang Coppice I rested waiting for my novice. In low temperatures body heat is soon lost so it didn't take long to become cold and edgy, especially with there being neither sight nor sign of Tony. The XR started first kick, unusual, it normally starts second, it then took five minutes to turn around in the tractor ruts almost two feet deep. Halfway back down again he hove into view around the last corner, he must have had a problem because he seemed to be struggling. Once again a light, portable

turntable would have been god sent if I'd had one, turning a six feet long bike round in a five feet wide lane, by the time this was done Tony was within twenty feet. He looked up and was about to say something, probably profane, when his bike engine stopped. He looked at it in disbelief and swung the kickstart out. Cursing and sweating; a feature of this ride, his first for twenty years, was not an ideal introduction back into it. The recalcitrant Husky seemed to look as fed up as Tony did, especially when he kicked the crankcase and threw it into the verge. Being short in the leg I had to push it to a place where I could reach to kickstart it, all part of doing my bit, helping out on the trail. Amazingly it started, after it'd had my best. We were about to set off again when it stalled as Tony put it into gear, then he discovered the flaw. When the clutch was pulled in it pressed the kill switch on the non standard switch cluster, which itself was spun around by the engine vibrations so when he twisted it out of reach it always returned to the same position where pulling the clutch lever in killed the engine. That sealed its fate really; it was going to get such a malleting... And the previous owner, well...

We were now practically in twilight, not dim but deep yellow going to orange as we rode up the side of a deep narrow valley, woodland on the far side made dull shadows on the greensward up towards Whitbach. Through the two gates another rutted lane but a wide one this time and we were able to ride on grass at the edge, in this way we both collected grass, twigs, branches and various lengths of bramble in the right hand footpeg carrier. (Proximity of the bank). We were warm, I didn't realise how warm until we were almost at Church Stretton when the cold really started to bite. Most of the day I'd had my old jacket open or at best with a couple of press-studs fastened, but now they were all fastened, up to the neck. At the fuel station we recharged a bit, sugar boost and a drink albeit a cold one, jet-washed the bikes and prepared for the ride back to the van in Ludlow. The XR speedo had stopped working sometime on the last trail but after looking without success for a fault I reckoned the inner cable had broken. Thicker gloves replaced the flimsy trail riding ones and a neckroll tucked in to my jacket top. While we'd been at the petrol station our temperatures had plummeted, the ride back is one I will not forget for a long long time. Cold penetrated my fingers making them almost inoperable, pain shot up my wrist whenever I changed gear or pulled the clutch in. Worse, salt blew into my eyes stinging sore and cold, I could not think why this was happening, no cars were in front or passing apart from the occasional one. Blinking my eyes became slow and laboured, my mouth kept opening of its own volition and I had to consciously remember to keep it closed but couldn't, my eyes kept stinging and stinging; keeping them closed was the only way to stop them stinging as if ground glass or fine sand was in them. Slowly I realised my eyes were icing up, I was feeling the formation of ice crystals on my eyeballs. Approaching the turning into Ludlow from the A49 my world was distant and indistinct, patterns of light and dark with half remembered colours resembling traffic signs; a speed bump alerted me to the town, knowing the road well I managed to get to the van. I didn't want to get off the bike in the high street no matter how quiet it was, I knew I wouldn't be able to get off without considerable pain, and may even have to fall off, so we dismounted in the old petrol station where the high kerb helped considerably. I remember wondering if Tony had been riding with me or if he'd managed to insert

himself into a warmer parallel dimension to ride back; he was more interested in stopping his engine then starting it again! Several times, without failure.

Loading the bikes and tying them down was a nightmare; pain, inoperable body parts and fatigue conspired to bring me to the point where crawling between them and falling asleep seemed like the best course of action. Driving was painful; walking and sitting were painful; and the cold was interminable. Heater on full blast and I was shivering, all the way home via the Forge to drop off Tony and the Husky. Lying in the bath with a sturdy G & T, topping up the hot water every five minutes started to thaw me, even stoking the stove until it throbbed red didn't have the desired effect; not until the following day did I actually feel warm; and the amount of logs it took I don't want to think about. Although it was Tony's first run off road with a strange bike he performed very well, he didn't fall off, break anything or break down and enjoyed himself tremendously despite having starting problems with the bike.

Anyone want to buy a hardly used Husqvarna 350?

Paul Clark

Interesting concept - the others ALWAYS cause the damage whether they be on 2 or more wheels or 2 or more legs.



BMF RALLY - A BIG THANK YOU

I'd like to say a big thank you to: Chris Hurworth, Simon Bingham, Matt Reynolds, Jason Fuller, Richard Hirst, Neil Hopkinson, Richard Colquhoun, Richard Sugden, Rob Balderson, Graham Walker, Matt Thom, John Moore, Jim Appleby, Mark Holland and Adrian who helped (chairman) Andy and me with the TRF stand at the BMF Rally in Peterborough. The weather was absolutely foul; consequently there were fewer people attending the show this year. We managed to sign up a small number of new members, so please welcome them when they arrive at the local groups. There were significant numbers of riders visiting the tent who thought that trail riding had been banned completely. Obviously we put them right on that matter. BOATs/Byways are still open to motorised traffic (except where there is a specific TRO), UCRs are legal where they do not coincide with a right of way on the definitive map e.g. do not use them where they are also bridle way or footpath. Please check the status of UCRs with the local authority.

It was nice to see all the current members who passed through the tent.

Leo Crone came round and showed us a list that the Lake District National Park Authority has compiled, it shows all the lanes that are open to motors and all those that are not. Leo is on the LAF in North Yorkshire and they are working on a similar list.

Polly Cody, TRF Hon Secretary

Caption Competition

Send your thoughts to the Editor.





Captions for last month:

TRF membership drive hits new high with introduction of the new initiation ceremony.

Steve Goodridge

Well done girls. That's the last time bobblehead will tell us "not to get our knickers in a twist" or That's the first time I have seen a bobblehead wrapped up in red tape.

John Robinson

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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.

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,

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 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.