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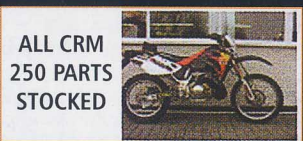
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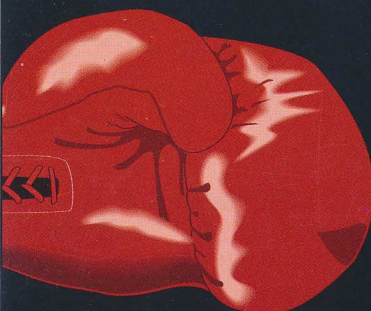
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TRAIL

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

AUGUST 2006 No. 336



Photo by Clive Perrior

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

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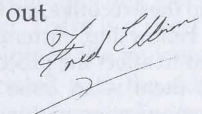
EDITOR

At the 2004 AGM a member claimed that it was the intention of the government to close ALL green lanes, as they did not appear on a database grid which would be used for road charging and if a vehicle left the grid then reappeared at another point this would throw the system into disarray and give it palpitations or something! The man said he had been working on the European Gallileo Satellite System which is what will be used to follow you around when your vehicle is fitted with its little black box. Guess what - we didn't believe him!

This week there has been a leaked document suggesting that road charging is the way forward, not only that, there is a report recommending lots of new speed limits, but there is the question of enforcing all these new limits. Just a minute though... couldn't that little black box be used? Oh by the way the satellites are already up there!

Is it not a little strange that there is no opposition by any of the major political parties to the closing of such a wonderful recreational facility as our green lane network or the progressive paralysis of our highways?

Would the last free thinker to leave Britain please turn out the lights before they leave?



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COPY DEADLINE: FIRST POST, 1ST TUESDAY OF MONTH

FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Post NERC I hope all of you have taken the opportunity to get out there and ride those routes still available to us and made every effort to look at other areas where ample riding is still available.

I thought I'd take this opportunity to answer a few criticisms that have been voiced by some members (and others). The first is a seeming lack of effort either by officers or by members. Well, my experience is that all the TRFs activists are at their absolute limit on what they can do and it's no good bleating "I've paid £30 you should do it all for me!" At the very least, all members should be badgering their local authorities, MPs, councillors, the police, in fact everybody who can effect our hobby even if it's just to attempt to correct some of the misconceptions attached to trail riding. As executive officers, we can't do that job for you, what we can do, is represent your views at a national level to all those disparate bodies that claim to represent the user groups as well as to government and all those decision making quangos. Criticism is fine, I welcome the opportunity to see feedback from the members, but within the terms of our limited resources - principally time - it would be more welcome if couched with offers of assistance.

There is no doubt that there are communication problems up and down the TRF, some members claimed not to have known what was going on during the NERC debates or how it affects us. (Don't forget, we had NO advance warning of the change to the cut off date!). There was continuous advice given during the process either via e-mail, on the web site, in Trail or at the executive meetings and thereby hangs another problem. If you want to know what's going on in the executive, ensure your group representative attends or go yourself. Remember, the TRF is a Fellowship; currently, decisions made at the executive by the eager few affect you all. If you want to affect the process or raise a topic of concern, you must take part! However, I recognise that there is an issue and have tasked a eager volunteer to look at the way we manage communication within the TRF, develop a methodology which allows day to day stuff like e-mail, chat rooms and other forums, renewals, administration etc. as well as provide an avenue for rapid guidance to members when required and communication with outside bodies. This system should be in place by the time membership renewal comes round. Initially you can help in two ways, ensure we have full contact details for you when you renew and tell us your group officers and how to contact them in an emergency.

"What about our human rights?" is another common question. Our legal advice so far is basically this, our human rights are not affected and there is no hope of overturning the NERC act as such. Our best opportunity lies in affecting future legislation so that the parts of NERC that affect us the most become effectively redundant. That's not to say that when a relevant clause of the act is tested in court we might not be able to get a judicial review that works in our favour. Our reserves are in place and we are ready for that fight, we have formulated specific questions to place in front of counsel should such an opportunity arise.

To be honest, I believe our biggest problem in the future will come from ever increasing "management" of the countryside especially where recreational use is concerned. The use of motor vehicles will come under ever increasing scrutiny and we already know that our remaining routes will be subject to review (or attack?) in the very near future. It is vital that the TRF is in a position where it is seen to be a respected part of the management process as well as providing rapid, accurate, well-informed member services. To achieve that, the TRF must become much more flexible than at present. We are heavily constrained by our present structure both in terms of decision making and potential liability to the members. All my efforts are going towards streamlining that decision making process, removing that liability, increasing our efficiency and improving the delivery of member services. Personally, I believe this is best achieved through incorporation of the TRF into a limited company and whilst some may argue against that route, the one thing I know for sure is that the best place to find out what's happening with trail riding is within the TRF.

See you all at the next meeting and if you feel encouraged to play more of an active role, contact me direct, I'm sure I can find something for you to do!

Andy Gerrard, TRF Honorary Chairman

NOTICE BOARD

FEEDBACK REQUIRED

I'm looking for reader's experiences with the 'Serow' as I'm thinking of investing in one of these despite my recent article praising the TTR!

Pat Bullen

DON'T USE PIPER LANE

Motorcyclists, some claiming to be TRF members, are still getting prosecuted for using Piper Lane at Old Brampton, 2 miles west of Chesterfield in Derbyshire. All TRF members have been told repeatedly not to use this lane which O.S. map shows to be a non-classified highway at the southern end, but a Bridleway to the north of Westwick farm. The repeat message to everyone is don't ride on this bridleway!

Dave Giles

ALL VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

TEESSIDE & NORTH YORKS HORSEHOUSE LANE REPAIR, COVERDALE Sunday August 27th

Would all volunteers meet at 9.30 am at Horsehouse Pub. We are building four bridges using sleepers, removing ruts and placing plastic mats in the run up areas.

This repair was postponed in October 2005 because of bad weather. All materials are now in place, we just need bodies, at least 25 volunteers. We expect to finish at 2 o'clock.

*If you can make it please email
fionaj.shaw@ntlworld.com.*

HORSE RIDE

Two riders are undertaking a long ride, on horses, from N. Yorks to S. Wales. They are promoting safe riding & supporting Cancer BACUP via sponsorship. There is a need for marshalls at certain points in the journey & the TRF, who are associated with the riders through the BBTC, have been asked to assist. The main areas of concern for the riders are:

Sat Sept 2nd am, N. Yorks, coming down to & across the A59.

Tues Sept 5th, getting round Colne (Gisburn to Wycoller).

Fri Sept 8th, getting through Glossop, where Pennine BW team has not yet completed route.

For more info:

<http://www.bbtrust.org.uk/jfa2006.html>
*If you can assist please contact Dave Tilbury on
02380 618937 or dave@dave-tilbury.co.uk*

TRF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 15th October 2006, 10.00 a.m.

*The Crow's Nest, The National Motorcycle Museum,
Coventry Road, Bickenhill, Solihull B92 0EJ*

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION MUST BE WITH THE SECRETARY BEFORE 31ST AUGUST.

THERE IS CURRENTLY A VACANCY FOR TRF ROW CO-ORDINATOR

*Tea, coffee & biscuits will be provided in the morning & afternoon.
You can purchase lunch in the restaurant.*

MINUTES OF TRF EXECUTIVE MEETING

Heritage Motor Centre Museum, Gaydon on 25 March 2006

Principal Officers present:

Andy Gerrard (Chairman), Tim Stevens (Vice Chair), Arnold Brewer (Treasurer), Polly Cody (Secretary), Fred Ellison (Editor), Brian Thompson (RoW Officer)

Co-opted Officers present:

Mark Holland (Equestrian Liaison), Dave Giles (BMF & LARA Liaison), Dave Tilbury (CCPR & BBTC)

Groups Represented: (23 of 44)

1. Chairman's introduction and report

The chairman opened the meeting by stating that there would be an update on the NERC Bill. He also stated that there would be a guest speaker from CRAG after lunch and questions would be welcome.

2. Apologies for absence:

Dave Quinn & John Ward (Peak District), Mary Stevens (membership secretary), Ian Packer (PR), Dave Knight (West Anglia), Dave Yarwood (Swindon)

2.1 Notice of AOB : none

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2006 – Trail No. 330

Dave Tilbury proposed, approved

4. Matters arising

4.1 Group Contacts (Polly Cody)

Despite repeated efforts, the following groups have not supplied a Group Return: Bristol, Norfolk, South Wales, and Suffolk. It was noted some group officers are not members (including a treasurer). Mary Stevens has contacted all groups where she has found non-member group officers. Dave Tilbury pointed out that this undermines the organisation and could lead to problems if these people are organising events on behalf of the TRF because they do not represent the TRF. Adam Hedley asked how the membership renewal tied in with the Group Return and the timing of the group AGMs. Polly Cody pointed out that membership renewal forms were sent out in mid-November giving plenty of time to renew the membership before the Group Return is due. It was agreed that non-members should be excluded from group meetings, that enforcement of membership should be done at group level with prompting from the executive if required. It was further agreed that each group would be provided a local membership list. It was agreed that the TRF still has a vital role to play post NERC and that while the TRF must not be exclusive, groups should not discuss TRF business with outsiders.

[Action: name and shame groups with non-member officers]

4.2 Byway Bonus (Polly Cody)

The majority of the recent applicants have been paid. There is still one outstanding claim where additional information was required. Members were reminded to provide full details when applying for the scheme including documentation from the relevant rights of way office and maps attached to each claim.

4.3 Membership Renewal Form (Fred Ellison, Arnold Brewer)

The electronic membership has been developed for the web-site by Bill Richards and tested by several of the principal and co-opted officers. Bill asked Arnold to set up the PayPal account.

[Action: configure PayPal account – Arnold Brewer]

4.4 UCR Report (Dave Giles)

Mike Furness has been contacted about updating the CD of the UCR Report. He has quoted £72 to create a new master CD, £3 each for batches of 10 CDs of the whole UCR Report. The paper appendix has supplied free to everyone who received a copy of the original report. Mary Stevens sends the UCR Report on request and there have been few requests. Tim Stevens suggest we have 1 batch of 10 update CDs produced.

[Action: request 1 batch of 10 updated CDs – Dave Giles]

5. Elected Officers Reports:

5.1 Vice Chairman (Tim Stevens) including NERC Bill update.

If you wish to know what was discussed at the meeting in full, please contact your representative. The NERC Bill is due its final reading in the House of Commons shortly (probably before these minutes are published). The amendments have been discussed in the House of Lords. It seems likely that the cut-off date for DMMO

claims to re-classify RUPPs will be 19 May 2005. There are doubts that the safe guards for home owners will be ineffective and that home owners may suffer property devaluation or be unable to sell their property where they are situated on a route which relies on the vehicular rights of a RUPP. Groups and individuals making DMMO applications should continue since nothing changes until the NERC Bill is given Royal Assent. It was felt that the authorities would pick and choose who they prosecute for using RoW changed by the NERC Bill, it was expected that home owners would be ignored although their access could be cut by an antagonistic owner of their access route. Andy Gerrard pointed out that this debate was another good reason to be a TRF member; where else would people be fully apprised of government legislation that affects them. Tim Stevens recommended that post NERC Bill groups contact the BHS and cyclist organisations where they have evidence on lanes that would affect them. The TRF could continue to make claims to Restricted Byway for other user groups if they made a donation for the costs involved. It is likely that aspects of the NERC Bill will go to judicial review and the TRF may need to contribute to the cost. The TRF will require a significant fighting fund to take part in this process.

5.2 Secretary (Polly Cody) including joining process

Mary Stevens estimates that the web-site application will not take any more time to process. Mark Williams expressed a dislike of the PayPal system. It was pointed out that the traditional method of subscription would still be available. The TRF is reacting to market forces by introducing electronic subscription. We are not going to use credit card payment at this point because it is expensive and we are required to provide certain guarantees to the banks which we are unable to do while we are not a limited company.

Groups with 1 signatory on bank accounts are urged to get their withdrawals approved by a minimum of 2 signatories. Polly noted that groups should discuss any problems with their provider as they are responsible for other people's money.

5.3 Treasurer (Arnold Brewer)

Arnold confirmed that membership money has been received and is at a similar level to last year and that there were sufficient funds in the current account to cover annual budget and that the fighting fund was still healthy. There were additional fees for the Preshute 12 case. Although the TRF won the case and was awarded costs, the latest bill was £10000 bringing the total cost to £16500 since September 2004. Dave Tilbury stated that the order for byway was made recently. There have been applications for bursaries of matched funding from the West Yorkshire group and the Devon group.

Arnold went on to talk about forming a company limited by guarantee (non-profit) to ensure limited liability for members and officers. Accounts would be audited as current and initial costs would be approximately £300. Safeguards to club funds would remain (the fighting fund being treated separately and all members would be made fully aware of liability implications and protection.

Proposal: TRF form a limited company

Proposer: William Williamson

Voted: agreed by everyone except Mark Holland who abstained pending further research on his part

Arnold noted that no group had been refused funding where an application had been received (despite rumours). Applications from West Yorkshire were in progress and Cumbria, Lancashire and Manchester have all recently received funds. Arnold was not aware of any groups being refused funds. Applications from other groups were encouraged.

[Action: provide Arnold Brewer with Trail account every 6 months – Fred Ellison]

7.1 CRAG presentation (David Rogers, chairman of CRAG):

CRAG is a multi-user group open to all users, it was started in September 2005 by 9 members of GLASS unhappy with the development of that organisation. David explained that CRAG has formed a partnership with the international mountain bikes, is talking with the Ramblers about the Brecon Beacon RoW and has been mentioned in the Welsh Assembly. CRAG members include horse riders, canoeists, and ramblers. There are currently 72 members across the country of which 60% are 4x4 users. The members are actively involved in RoW maintenance and would like to open up the current RoW network further for all users. They were keen to form a formal alliance with the TRF in order to share knowledge and expertise, to gain from our previous experiences and to show a united front against those who seek to end our right to drive on unsurfaced routes. They were prepared to offer access to an extension of the Wayfinder database that overlaid it on an OS map.

A robust discussion followed which covered such ground as 4x4s being seen as the root cause of damage to green lanes, that another "user" group would just add to the confusion and that despite apparent co-operation with councils, very little positive outcome results. It was noted that a high percentage of CRAG

members work with local authorities compared to the TRF due to the enforcement of their member requirements by officers. Further discussion revolved around the belief that there were already sufficient user representative organisations and that the TRF was established to represent motorcyclists not 4x4 drivers.

Further discussion regarding a potential affiliation with LARA being more appropriate followed as well as arguments regarding the pros and cons of being associated with a broad spectrum of users.

[Action] Would Executive members please take this discussion back to your groups and get their opinion. If David Rogers makes a formal proposal for affiliation then we can make a decision.

5.4 Membership (Mary Stevens)

The membership level is at the level expected for this time of year. Mary can provide membership lists to local groups. Mary is concerned about the groups who have non-member officers, the fault lies with the members, they should insist that only TRF members are involved in running the local groups.

5.5 Public Relations (Report provided by Ian Packer)

Ian noted that Dave Giles and he made a positive and well received appearance on the Daily Politics show (lunchtime on BBC2) and had been active with rebuttals in his local press. He noted that the PR and Marketing requirement of the TRF is beyond the ability of one man and that significant funding is required (£10 - £30k per annum). He advised that it was unlikely he could continue in his role without a radical change to the way the TRF operates it's PR function, possibly by employing a PR professional.

After a robust discussion concerning what the PR brief actually means, what it should say, who it should represent and what objectives are trying to be achieved it was agreed that funds of £750 should be allocated to an appropriate person to draft a PR/Marketing brief that could ensure the future of the TRF as an authoritative, respected and effective lobbying organisation concerned with maintaining our right to ride. Mark Williams (who had provided an action plan 2 years previously) was accepted as one candidate and Scott Nettleton who had previously expressed interest as another.

It was noted that LARA are developing a new PR strategy and that our interests might be better served by contributing to their PR fund.

Proposal: Simon Bingham: TRF to give up to £5000 to LARA for PR if matched by other member organisations.

Seconded: Dave Tilbury

Vote: Carried.

[Action. Executive to discuss both avenues, once reports received]

5.6 Editor (Fred Ellison)

Trail is well received, but Fred asked for more varied contributions.

5.7 Rights of Way (Brian Thompson)

The Rights of Way Contractors are working on the List of Streets, determining it's existence and content and trying to obtain a copy from each local highway authority. The aim is to ensure that roads don't disappear from the List of Streets.

Permissive Byways: we can seek permission to use tracks. There is one in Teesside which is low cost with a draft agreement in place. Farmers prefer gentleman's agreements. It was noted that these should be in conjunction with other organisations

A meeting with the NFU was proposed where the likelihood of large scale acceptance of such schemes could be discussed.

[Action: Andy Gerrard to arrange meeting with the NFU].

Northern Byway Claims: 157 prior to May 2005; 105 after 18 May 2005.

Cumbria: 25 after 18 May 2005

County Durham:

South Yorkshire: 100 pre-May 2005, all '68 Act claims. The claims were accepted. During the summer notice needs to be served on the land owners. Richard Hirst is going to apply for a bursary for a researcher to do this.

Tim Stevens: South Yorkshire RoW department are applying the law incorrectly.

Brian Thompson: I have briefing notes for public enquiries and old map evidence.

Announcement: Brian Thompson is resigning as the TRF National RoW Officer. He would like to concentrate on the Northern RoW work, continue to manage the part time researcher and remain as RoW Officer for the West Yorkshire group.

No volunteers were found for the role at the meeting, meeting requested to take requirement back to groups.

[Action: advertise role of RoW Officer in Trail - Fred Ellison]

The issue of marked up maps issued by the TRF was discussed again. As recorded at the previous executive meeting, because of potential liability issues arising from confusion and the misunderstanding of the RoW situation post NERC, it was agreed no TRF authorised maps would be issued to members until such a time as the full implications of the act was understood, protocols were in place to ensure the accuracy of our advice and both the officers and members could be confident in the quality of any advice given. It was emphasised that this is for the protection of both the club, it's officers and all it's members. Members are advised to contact their group rights of way officers or regional contractors for the latest advice.

6.1 Dave Giles

6.1.1 BMF

There have been reports that the BMF is collapsing. The BMF have issued a strong rebuttal to these allegations. They have internal problems which they are addressing. Dave Giles is in contact with the acting chairman (Anna Zee) and Richard Olliffe (lobbying)

6.1.2 NERC Bill

Whilst initially being caught out by the House of Commons, an enormous amount of lobbying has been carried out by the TRF and such organisations as the BMF, MCIA and LARA to the House of Lords. It would appear that we have few friends in the houses of parliament. Why? The PROWI group sent letters to the House of Lords and received more replies than the TRF. Dave is waiting for the bill to clear the House of Lords before further action. He has prepared a letter for MPs correcting the misinformation. It is likely the cut off date for byway applications will be moved back to the 19th January 2006.

6.2 LARA

Dave Giles attended the last LARA meeting. Alan Kind was asked to write a paper about the future of LARA so that it could be put to the members. Alan wrote a worst case scenario. If doesn't matter that we have been treated unfairly because the majority find us intrusive and they will continue to deal with us. Where should LARA focus e.g. contact the industry about noise? The CSMA has changed from an interest club to an insurance company; consequently it is pulling out of LARA.

Proposal: Is the TRF happy to continue as a member of LARA and possibly pay more for membership?

All agreed.

6.4 Dave Tilbury

6.4.1 CCPR

Dave Tilbury attends their meetings and finds support for the TRF.

Tim Stevens has been nominated as a board director for CCPR.

6.5 Additional item: BBTC

Adam Hedley: did we issue an ultimatum to BBTC?

Tim Stevens: I raised the issues with them as a BMF representative.

6.6. Additional Item: Legal cases.

A non-member who had been threatening the TRF with legal action has been dealt with by Alan Kind and Brian Thompson. There has been no news on the Jagers Lane issue for more than 2 weeks. If the riders involved request more assistance Brian will threaten them with legal action for damaging the lane.

6.5 Equestrian - Mark Holland

When Mark is marshalling at horse events his bike has a sticker identifying the TRF and that he is marshal. Mark would like to see something about the TRF put in the program for horse events and a TRF banner placed around the course. Some TRF groups have fluorescent jackets for their marshals. It was proposed that sample fluorescent jackets with appropriate wording and the TRF logo printed on them be obtained for assessment.

Mark Holland has written a letter for the BHS and British Eventing organisations to send to their MPs, it was agreed a meeting with these and other interested organisations may be advantageous.

[Action: Andy Gerrard to get sample jackets]

[Action: Mark Holland to arrange meeting with BHS]

Meeting finished 17:00

MINUTES OF TRF EXECUTIVE MEETING

Held at: National Watersport Centre, Nottingham 24 June 2006

Present:

Principal Officers: Andy Gerrard (Chair), Polly Cody (Secretary), Tim Stevens (Vice Chair), Fred Ellison (Editor), Mary Stevens (Membership Secretary)

Co-Opted Officers: Dave Giles (BMF Liaison), Mark Holland (Equestrian Liaison)

Groups Represented: (12 out of 44)

Cumbria, Devon, Dorset, East Midlands, Gloucester, Lancs, Northumberland, North Wales, Ribble Valley, South Northants, West Yorkshire, Wiltshire.

1. Welcome: The Chairman opened the meeting, giving the usual safety arrangements and expressed his disappointment at the turnout for this meeting. He felt that in these uncertain times when there are lots of rumours and misinformation circulating in the TRF, the group reps need to know what is being agreed and take the correct message to their groups.

The Chairman explained that he will take some of the Agenda items out of the order printed, to enable Dave Giles; who has to leave early, to have input in to items 7 and 8.

[Minute takers note: These minutes will be typed up in the order that items came up, not in numerical order.]

2. Apologies for absence: Arnold Brewer (Treasurer), Dave Tilbury (Co-opted Officer), Simon Bingham (South Northants), John Gardner (Lancs), Roger Peters (Northumberland), Worcestershire.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 25 March 2006 meeting: Following a discussion on item 5.7 regarding the List of Streets held at Highway Authorities and a correction in item 6.2 regarding the LARA fee increase. The minutes were accepted.

4. Matters Arising:

4.1: Group Contacts & Non Members. Polly had nothing to report from the previous minutes.

4.2: Formation of Limited Company. The Chairman explained that this would be reported at item 5.3 Treasurer's report.

5. Elected Officers' Reports:

5.1 Vice Chair: Tim Stevens said he had not had to stand in for the chairman. He went on to report that the ACU has taken its system of Right of Way Respondents back from LARA, and he would like to know if this is still working well, and whether any TRF members who are respondents have been properly informed of the ACU's decision. Tim felt the TRF needs to keep an eye on this situation so as not to miss any Definitive Map Modification Orders.

There was a discussion on why LARA is not a Prescribed Body. The Chairman suggested drafting a letter to the ACU asking what Right of Way changes have come in recently.

5.2 Secretary: Polly had nothing to report.

5.3 Treasurer: Arnold Brewer sent his apologies and sent a report which the Chairman read. This report gave details of the TRF finances which are in a healthy state. Arnold has set up a company limited by guarantee named 'Trail Riders Fellowship'. He will shortly be meeting a solicitor who will be advising on the type of insurance policy needed in order to safeguard the company directors and TRF Officers. The meeting discussed this in some detail, expressing some concerns, as well as being in general agreement that this is a good move for the TRF.

Arnold also wondered whether the TRF should research the after effects on lanes which have been lost to NERC. It was felt that we have enough to do trying to keep what we have left.

Also discussed from Arnold's report is how best to deal with TROs and whether we can somehow fight any TRO which is put on lanes. There was a suggestion that TRF members need to lobby their local Council to try and get TROs which would allow motorcycle use, or be

seasonal and not permanent.

The Chairman asked for a proper decision on Arnold's suggestions and the meeting agreed the following:

Research lanes lost to NERC. NO

Fight TROs. YES

Fight HAs who try to close down the countryside to motorcycles. YES

5.4 Membership Secretary: Mary Stevens noted that membership stands at 2895 which includes joint members. This is lower than at this time last year which was 3386. She went on to give the finances for subscriptions and donations taken over the current year.

Mary also reported that she would be moving house in the near future, and that the amount of TRF stuff she is storing will have to be passed on, or dumped. This includes the filing cabinet from the old Cheshire Group and the Ridgeway Inquiry material, as well as much more information which may, or may not be useful.

7. Liability and the TRF post NERC: The Chairman asked Tim Stevens to start the discussion on this. Tim felt that there is much useful information in the article in this months TRAIL and until we know what the effects of NERC are we can't say more. Members could go to their local group and find out the proper routes to use. Dave Giles felt the TRF has been quite clear on what advice to give.

The meeting discussed map marking and what advice to give to members wishing to ride outside their local area. On the question of map marking the Chairman reported that Principle Officers are concerned about legal liability and he felt that this may be sorted out when Arnold has spoken to the solicitor about insurance, and the limited company status is totally in place.

Tim Stevens thought that the most useful information groups could give is to avoid those lanes where a known trouble maker lives who takes photos of riders, and reports activity to the police. Brian Thompson said he is selling marked up maps on a private basis.

8. DEFRA's 'Evidence & Innovation Strategy Programme': The Chairman wished to bring this document to the attention of members, as he feels that this may be another threat on the horizon and he does not wish the TRF to be wrong footed again. This document states that there is going to be a major look at routes in 2008. The Chairman said the TRF needs to get its act together with PR and RoW and be more co-ordinated and quick acting in future.

7.2 & 7.3 Where to Ride. The Claims Audit Scheme: The Chairman asked Tim Stevens to report on these items. Tim noted that the TRF will need to know what is happening to claims and whether they are going to succeed. Brian Thompson said it is sufficient they are on the Register of Claims. Tim said the claims audit form is to make sure what is safe to use. The Chairman agreed that there are many other claims in the system put in by others and rushed in with perhaps not enough evidence for them to proceed. He also noted that the only list the TRF has of claims put in, is the Byway Bonus Scheme, and he knows that there were many more claims put in than are on the Byway Bonus list. Brian Harwood said that Derbyshire is sitting on 200 claims and not saying whether they are going to be successful or not.

The meeting discussed these claims, the claims audit process and how best to help the members, noting that every Highway Authority has a different opinion on what evidence is proper.

Tim Stevens felt that every group should have a member who can report back to the Principle Officers on the state of the Register of Claims in their local Authority, so that he can put this in front of DEFRA and the RoW Review Committee.

7.5 Constitution Changes: Tim Stevens asked what constitutional changes would be needed for the TRF limited company. He thought there may have to be two organisations with two constitutions and that there should perhaps be a sub-group to deal with this. The meeting discussed the way forward, perhaps needing to split the assets of the TRF to protect the fighting fund and other assets. The Chairman noted that once the solicitor has looked at the insurance

possibilities we will know more. He asked who would help with the constitutional changes. Mark Holland, Tim Stevens, Andy Gerrard and Arnold Brewer offered to be the sub-group to deal with this.

There was further discussion on how the groups would fit into the limited status situation. This would have to be sorted out with the solicitor and incorporated in the new constitution.

8 (reprise) DEFRA Document: The Chairman went back to this item to clarify some points. He felt this document could be another 'Trojan Horse', but we want to be ready for it and he asked that everyone take a look at it and keep it in mind. Dave Giles proposed that we note this report and he asked that Alan Kind be asked to keep a keen eye on this for the future. The document also says there will be a national database of RoW by 2008.

Action: Alan Kind be asked to keep a watching brief on this DEFRA report.

Action: Put the web address for the Defra EISP document in Trail
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/pdf/eis-needs.pdf>

6 Co-opted Officer's Reports:

BMF: Dave Giles circulated his report in which he thanks the BMF for their support in the Houses of Parliament over the NERC Bill. He asks members to look at the BMF website www.bmf.co.uk 'campaigns' and respond to the call for help on Diesel Spills Kills & the European Driving Licence directive, we are all in this together.

The BMF rally in Peterborough was held in bad weather conditions, but 73,000 motorcyclists attended and the TRF had a stand there. There will be other BMF rallies during the year. The Kelso event on 15 - 16th July and the Tail End Rally at Peterborough on 16-17th September.

Tim Stevens asked for members to attend the BMF General Council. He noted that the TRF has around 6 reps to go to this meeting and vote and he would like to be considered as one of them. Andy Gerrard, Dave Loney, Keith West, Mark Holland, William Williamson, John Gardner, and Dave Giles volunteered to fill the places available to the TRF.

Right of Way Contractor Report: Dave Giles circulated a report on his Eastern Sector in which he states that he continues to respond to requests for assistance, although this has dropped off recently except for the groups within the PRoWI system.

Of most concern to Dave and his groups is Derbyshire's current review of their 'Policy for the Management of Motorised Vehicle Use in the Countryside' this document forms a report which they try to push through the local access forum as part of the RoW Improvement Plan. Dave wanted to bring this to the attention of members and ask that any members who have a place on their own LAF should watch out for this type of policy which if not challenged could lead to yet more draconian methods to stop our recreation. He is also convinced that UCRs will be under attack in future. The meeting discussed LAFs and how to try and influence the advice they give to Local Authorities. It was felt however, that the TRF does not have enough members to cover every LAF, but there does need to be representation in the most desirable trail riding areas.

6.2 LARA Representative: Dave Giles circulated his report on the last LARA meeting in which he notes that LARA in the past had declared that it would not be involved in Public Relations but in the light of recent experience with NERC that view was now under revision, and exploratory talks will be conducted with the ACU, MCIA and a potential LARA retained MP, with a view to improving our 'intelligence' of governmental thinking and improving our ability to lobby more effectively. For this to happen LARA will need to rewrite their Forward Plan. Each LARA member has been asked to write a 'mission statement' to be presented at the next LARA Steering Committee Meeting. Dave asked members what they wished from LARA.

The meeting discussed the various things that they wished LARA to do for them, but it was also pointed out that LARA was only as good as its members, and it will need considerable input from the TRF to help achieve their wishes.

Members agreed that the idea of an MP would be good. Dave Giles noted that only the TRF and GLASS were recreational motorists within LARA and that there would be an extra cost for this

MP on top of the normal LARA membership fee, but it shouldn't be more than £1,000.

Officer's Reports.

5.5 PR: The Chairman reminded members that Ian Packer had resigned and we desperately need to get our PR message out to the public. He recognized that this post is too big for one person and looked at ways to spread the load, as with the Right of Way post. One of the problems the TRF has is getting information to its own members and he feels we need a communications officer who would keep an up to date e-mail list of contacts. The Chairman reported that he has had two volunteers come forward to help with this task, and he would make sure that Bill Richard was fully informed of what is happening, because Bill will need to help with website lists etc. The meeting discussed this revised post and agreed that an internal communications person is needed.

5.5.1. Already dealt with.

5.6 Editor: Fred Ellison reported that TRAIL is suffering from the downturn in members. He felt that TRAIL is not informing members, but does not see this as the job of the Editor. Fred also noted a downturn in advertising and he asked members to help advertisers by telling them where they have seen the advert when buying tyres, chains and other consumables.

Fred felt that members need to be told where they can ride and if not given maps then they should be given a list of claimed lanes.

The meeting discussed these ideas, not coming to any conclusions.

The Editor then went on to state that he felt that the RoW Contractors need to broaden their work and not just wait for groups to ask them to do things. He felt they should be more proactive. Brian Thompson asked why the Contractors emails are not in TRAIL and felt they should be. It was pointed out that the other three Contractors details are in TRAIL because they do dual roles within the TRF. The Chairman said that all the Contractors are willing to work more effectively, and the management of the Contractors role falls to the Chairman and Treasurer.

Fred Ellison proposed that the contractors work 2 days per week (16 hours) reviewed in 6 months. And Contractors will accept enquiries from individual members. *All Agreed.*

5.7 Contractors: Tim Stevens read out Dave Tilbury's report which went into detail on what his activities have been over the past months, plus asking members to say what they would like the BBTC to do for them. The next meeting of the BBTC is on 7 October, and Dave Tilbury had asked whether the TRF wishes to stay on this committee. The meeting discussed Dave's report. The Chairman asked the meeting for their thoughts on seeking a legal opinion of the NERC effects. Tim felt it is still too early as we don't have a specific question to ask. He also reported that he had put a paper to the RoWRC which had been well accepted, and he had already asked DEFRA to send an advice note to a Highway Authority because they are saying they don't need to deal with claims from the motorists. DEFRA had agreed and sent advice.

Brian Thompson proposed the TRF continue to pay BBTC membership. Seconded by Dave Loney. *All Agreed.*

Dave Tilbury also reported on the CCPR. He had been unable to attend a recent meeting, but he continues to send any CCPR papers which might be of interest to the Principle Officers. Dave asks whether he should attend the CCPR AGM which he feels is an unnecessary expense. Tim agreed that it is not worth going to this as it is not a forum where proper decisions are made.

5.7.1 Contractor: Brian Thompson Report: Brian reported the loss of a number of popular routes in the Yorkshire Dales and northern areas due to NERC. He noted that he has been very proactive in his region, working lots of hours for the groups and they appreciated it. He also confirmed that he is marking up maps and selling them as a private individual.

Mark Holland was concerned that Brian is saying we have lost lanes, when an assessment has not been made.

Tim Stevens asked if Brian had received his email regarding Bedlam Rigg and if he has

responded. Tim noted his complaint to the Authority had been regarding the short response time given for volunteers.

5.7.2 Contractor: Tim Stevens Report: Tim Stevens reported on his work in Wales. He also noted a confusion around the designation of CRF and CRB on parts of the Ridgeway and how this has caused the Authority to designate parts as Restricted Byway when they shouldn't be. He explained that if the definitive map had been changed after 1981 it was done illegally because the 1981 Act states that no RUPPs should be put on the Definitive Map. Tim asked if there are any other Counties which still have CRF and CRB on their maps.

6.5 Equestrian Liaison: Mark Holland reported on a meeting he and the Chairman had with the BHS where they talked about guidelines for when horses and motorcycles meet on routes. The BHS is interested in the DMMO process to establish Bridleways because of verifying width of the routes. Mark also reported problems with some endurance rides where landowners may not let motorcycles cross their land. The meeting discussed this briefly and Mark is working on a letter to go to event organizers.

9. The Pennine Bridleway Consultation: The Chairman asked Tim to report. Tim reminded members that when this route had been researched it was the TRF who had helped the horse people find the lanes to use, on the understanding that motoring rights would not be effected. There is now a consultation paper circulating which is trying to stop motor vehicles on the route.

10. Any Other Business:

10.1. The Chairman reminded members of the date for the Annual General Meeting, but asked if this date could be changed, as he and Polly would be unable to attend and he feels they should be there. He recommended changing the date to the 15 October 2006, possible venue being the Motorcycle Museum. After some discussion it was agreed to this change of date.

10.2. William Williamson was concerned that members had joined the TRF on the understanding that we would fight NERC. He asked what do we tell them now and what are we doing about NERC now. The Chairman said this is an Act of Parliament and we can only make it difficult to operate the law, and possibly make them look again at Rights of Way. Polly noted that we have also asked groups to collect their 5 year motor user. There was a short discussion on what some groups are doing.

10.3. The Chairman noted that Arnold Brewer had asked whether we should advertise in the national newspaper motoring sections for new members. Fred Ellison said we do get a discount from TBM and he felt the price for the nationals would be too much.

The meeting closed at 4.35 pm.

15. Date of next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 9 September 2006. Venue to be advised.

AGM on 15 October 2006 at the Motorcycle Museum. Venue to be confirmed.



RoW News

WORCESTERSHIRE

Please visit links below your input is needed:

<http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/home/wcc-countryside-rowipv4.1.pdf>

<http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/home/wcc-countryside-rowipactionplanv4.1.pdf>

Take a look and send your comments to Worcestershire County Council.

Polly Cody, TRF Hon. Secretary

Group News

Roger Preston was presented with a token of appreciation for all the years of work for the Teesside and North Yorkshire TRF Group by Leo Crone. Roger was Runs Officer for many years before taking over the Chair, which he held for several years.



Leo Crone (without the beard) making the presentation to Roger Preston

Roger is retiring from teaching this year and going to Crete to set up a sub-aqua club and trail riding. We thought it was rather an extreme reaction to the NERC Bill but Roger assures us he had it in mind for years. So if you see a hairy monster off the coast of some Greek island or halfway up a mountain track on a trail bike, give him a wave.

Best of luck Roger from all your "old" riding friends.

John Robinson

Ed. Roger will be missed, apart from his habit of appearing unexpectedly out of the heather. He is a good RoW man.

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TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP SOUTH WEST COAST TO COAST 2006

I wish to take part in the fourth TRF SW Coast to Coast on 21st/22nd October 2006:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TEL NO:

E-MAIL:

PREFERRED RIDING STYLE:

TRF GROUP: MEMBERSHIP NO:

MACHINE DETAILS

MAKE: MODEL:

All entries are dealt with in a strict 1st come 1st served basis and numbers are limited. Please do not ask to be grouped with a friend, the intention is to ride and meet TRF members from afar.

ALL MOTORCYCLES AND RIDERS MUST BE ROAD LEGAL

INDEMNITY

*I declare that I am physically and mentally fit to participate and am competent to do so. I confirm that I understand the nature and type of event and the risks involved and agree to accept these risks even if such risk may involve negligence on the part of the organisers/officials. I further agree that I shall not seek to claim against the TRF, their organisers or officials, the landowners, or other bodies or individuals connected with the event in respect of any damage to my property regardless of the cause, including any damage caused by the negligence or breach of said bodies or persons. I confirm that my motorcycle is road legal and effectively silenced. **RIDERS OF NOISY MOTORCYCLES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE.***

SIGNED: DATED:

*Please return this form with payment of £50 and s.a.e. (cheques made payable to "Somerset TRF") to: **Reuben Alcock, 11 King Castle Road, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3LS***

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letters

THE FUTURE OF TRAIL RIDING

I was a bit surprised to see my letter flagged up as 'controversial' in the July issue of Trail, and even more surprised at the reaction which it got from Tim Stevens, particularly as I had made it clear that I did not wish to be critical but was suggesting, as asked, what the way forward might be.

If I may, I will explain why I think that the TRF's then executive over-reacted to NERC.

A press release appeared containing a statement from the then chairman, which was used by Bike magazine and others, which claimed that NERC effectively meant the end of trail riding in the UK. The release may not have actually said it was banned, but journalists (I know, I'm one), will often extract what seems to be the essence of a press release and use it to kick-off the story. I think that this is what happened in this case. In fact, the then Rural Affairs Minister Jim Knight was careful to state that NERC did not mean that trail riding had been banned. But the TRF left the impression that it had been. Visitors to the the TRF stand at this year's BMF Show were reported in Trail as saying as much. Like it or not, this is the situation we have to deal with. Was there a subsequent attempt made to explain the facts to Bike, MCN etc?

I am puzzled by Tim's remarks about NERC and Byways claims. Byway claims made by the TRF, and the payment of the 'Byway Bonus' were cited in Parliament as justification for the restrictions in NERC. Wasn't it the then chairman of the TRF who asked us to freeze byway claims at the request of the Rural Affairs Minister?

Tim should be careful not to criticise members for following advice given by the then chairman, who was, I'm sure, acting in good faith. Perhaps the then chairman should have got something more concrete from the Minister before asking us to hold fire. Easy to say with the benefit of hindsight, I know.

Anyway, I'm sure we've all learnt a lot from the passage of NERC. In particular, members should have been encouraged to start lobbying their MPs far earlier than they were, and professional help should have been sought sooner. But my original letter was, and my current concerns are, about the future.

We need to look at what NERC actually means. We need to take legal advice on aspects of it. Is a retrospective ban on Byway claims contrary to natural justice? Most retrospective law is. How much scope is there in subsections a, c, d, and e of Section 67 (2) of NERC? What can be done to protect remaining rights on UCRs and BOATs?

Why can't we appoint a paid national ROW officer? Why can't we create a RoW database constructed on the basis of use?

Until we have a professional opinion on all of the above and more, we can only guess, and we need a strategy founded on more than guesswork.

Post-NERC, there was a real surge of energy from TRF members in Gloucestershire at least. Now there is a feeling, fair or otherwise, that not much is being done by the TRF Exec. Looking at various web forums I get the impression that this feeling is widespread. Unless we 'seize the day' and take advantage of what's left of that wave of energy which swept through the TRF after NERC, many current members are likely to leave at the end of the

year. There are few enough of us now. Can we afford to let the TRF get any smaller?

Lastly, Tim asked what difference the voting power of the TRF might make. To answer that question, he should look at the margins by which Labour members holding rural seats such as Dorset South (Jim Knight) and Stroud (David Drew) were first elected. In both cases, their initial majorities were perhaps rather less than the number of TRF members living in their constituencies.

Tim, that's just one difference which the TRF can make. The members' need is a coherent strategy and clear direction. Time is running out. Your knowledge and experience can make a big difference to the members' efforts.

Over to you.

Richard Simpson

GET A GRIP

As a member of the Ribble Valley and West Yorkshire Group I want to tell those running the TRF to get a grip – or get out!

I attended the joint Lancashire/Ribble Valley group meeting on 11th July in Clitheroe to hear what Fred Ellison and Brian Thompson had to say about the situation after the NERC bill when we lost so many of our trails in Yorkshire and Lakes. What came over is the anger at new TRF rules that ban marked up maps and bans any help for members in trouble! WHY? You have taken away the main reason why we join the TRF. Who do we turn to? Who are the experts? What happened to the 35 years of rights of way service? All gone.

At the Clitheroe meeting Fred got attacked when it became clear the decision is not his. Brian Thompson, who is some sort of paid TRF official, offered a 'private map marking

service' that the TRF officially disapprove of. While at this and the West Yorkshire Group meeting we were happy to pay £2 each for the maps we need why is no one allowed to issue these free of charge to fully paid up members like myself?

The TRF is not worth £30 for a non-existent rights of way service and I will not be renewing my membership. If the TRF wants to commit suicide then just carry on.

'The Lone Rider'

RESPONSE TO GET A GRIP

We are not issuing TRF marked up maps at the present time because the current structure of the TRF allows all the members to be sued if someone brings a case against the TRF. This would lead to every member having to pay the court costs. The current law is open to interpretation so there are areas where the vehicular rights are uncertain therefore the only safe map is the local authority Definitive Map. The Ordnance Survey map is only certain for byways.

NERC is not the end of the attack on vehicles on rights of way. We know there is going to be a review of Rights of Way in 2008. There is evidence that single status UCRs will come under threat.

You can walk away from this attack on your past-time, but in the future all you will be allowed to do is walk. You can let the powerful and the bigoted walk all-over you. Alternatively you can continue to be a member of the TRF, do what you can to counter the attack on your liberty and help fund a counter attack on your rights. Don't go round thinking this is a win or lose situation. There might not be a way for trail riders to win, but we should all try to get the best outcome possible.

"I want to tell those running the TRF to get a grip or get out!"

I can only speak for myself on this point. I'm managing to do my full time job, with a long commute, keep my finances in order and run my household. I'm also doing my best to do the general administration for the TRF and keep up with current issues. I am neglecting my bike. No one volunteered at the AGM to do this post, so I took it on afterwards to fill the gap. I'm sure most of you could do a better job so don't be shy in coming forward.

"the situation after the NERC bill when we lost so many of our trails in Yorkshire and Lakes"

The TRF has been telling its members since 2000 to get their claims in. If you were riding then on anything that wasn't a byway you should have evidence that it is vehicular. Why didn't you put the claims in between 2000 and 2005?

"TRF rules that ban marked up maps"

There are no new rules in the Constitution. This is advice for your own protection.

"bans any help for members in trouble"

We still offer help to members who ride with-in the law.

"You have taken away the main reason why we join the TRF"

We all have our own reasons for joining the TRF, the main ones being to meet other trail riders and to find out where to go. However, the Constitution clearly states that "The TRF aims to preserve and protect the full status of vehicular green lanes and the rights of motorcyclists and others to use them."

"Who do we turn to? Who are the experts? What happened to the 35 years of rights of way service? All gone."

While the membership remains at its present level, the TRF is still able to provide advice and we still retain the best Rights of Way experts in the country. The rights of way service is still available as much as it ever was. If you are legally challenged on a vehicular route the TRF will still back you up.

"At the Clitheroe meeting Fred got attacked when

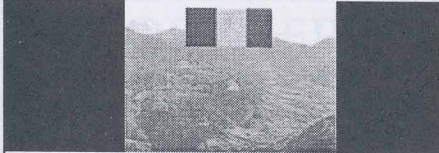
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KTM:	All LC4's & 400, 620, 625, 640 Adventure
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Kawasaki:	KDX200/250, KLR250/650
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it became clear the decision is not his."

Don't shoot the messenger.

"Brian Thompson, who is some sort of paid TRF official"

Brian Thompson is the TRF Contractor for the northern region. He can advise and take on TRF projects for up to 2 days per week. He is not paid to do DMMO claims and research which all members could be doing.

"private map marking service that the TRF officially disapprove of"

There has been no official disapproval of Brian's private activities.

"we were happy to pay £2 each for the maps we need why is no one allowed to issue these free of charge to fully paid up members like myself?"

You can get free maps from the local authority rights of way department. I have already stated above why the TRF is not issuing its own maps.

"The TRF is not worth £30 for a non-existent rights of way service"

If you want to know how your membership money is spent then come along to the AGM and pick up a copy of the Treasurer's report. Printing, postage, travel expenses, membership to other bodies, contractors, meeting rooms, matched funding all come out of your membership and donations.

"I will not be renewing my membership."

The battle to keep your rights is only just beginning, this is the only organisation working for you and this is the best organisation to keep you informed. We need your membership money and donations to fund the fight against up and coming legislation. We have to use the current weapons of the day including lobbying and sustained PR campaigns, and that costs money. The Country Landowners Association and GLEAM were successful with NERC because they kept telling parliament their point of view and they paid MPs to promote their arguments.

"If the TRF wants to commit suicide then just carry on."

Some positive suggestions would be more helpful, or perhaps a bit more input than paying your subs and turning up to club night, this is a fellowship which means everyone has to do their bit.

Polly Cody, Secretary

RESPONSE TO GET A GRIP

I did point out to the joint group meeting last week that thanks to the TRF we have 15 valid claims in the Yorkshire Dales. We have 115 valid claims in South Yorkshire. Who will be paying my expenses next week to travel to South Yorkshire to secure these 115 lanes?

And who has saved 60 green lanes in the north east. Who do you think pays for me to travel the 140 miles to Clitheroe and back to Newcastle and pays for Bed and Breakfast? Who paid for all the research for my 130 Byway claims? And this will go on for years...

Who paid £10,000 for the vital UCR study? Who pays for 4 regional contractors?

Who pays for a part time worker that I manage helping to save the 1200km of green lanes in North Yorkshire? Who will pay my expenses to travel to Settle on August 2nd to give evidence to try and save Gorbeck lane? Its the much maligned TRF of course which some members are all too eager to dump!

As soon as the TRF becomes a Limited Company I am sure it will feel able to offer a free marked up maps service for the north of England that I now issue privately.

The full TRF rights of way service should be resumed fairly soon. I apologise for the lack of information since NERC took affect on May 2nd. Not enough was done to inform

northern members. Blame me.

Don't forget that there is more expertise within the TRF than in the majority of county councils and Govt Depts. So please do not be too hasty to leave the TRF. We have suffered a major defeat and morale is low but there is still a good future for trail riding especially if you are prepared to explore new lanes in other areas.

Brian Thompson

"I WAS PROCEEDING IN A EASTERLY DIRECTION..."

...when I went out for my first post-NERC trail ride today (July 23). I had gone about half way along the Daneway UCR between Stroud and Cirencester when I was asked to stop by a uniformed police constable who I now know to be PC Jon Palfrey, the rural beat and wildlife crime officer for Cotswold and Stroud, based at Cirencester.

He was accompanied by a man from GLASS, another policeman, the local landowner, Lord Apsley, and someone who was either an employee of Lord Apsley or a local resident, or both.

PC Palfrey thanked me for stopping, then asked what I was doing there, and did I know the status of this right of way?

I think he was surprised by the answers, as he had been told that the road was regularly used by hooligans on motorcycles who were tearing it up, riding in the adjoining woods etc. In fact, he had been there all morning and I was the first passer-by of any description.

Interestingly, he had never heard of the TRF, so I took the step of inviting him to a forthcoming meeting where he could find out more.

My thinking is that if the rural police are informed about the TRF they are much less likely to think 'all motorcyclists are hooligans'. They could even prove to be allies of a kind if they can see we only want to operate within the law.

Meanwhile, if you are on the Daneway, make sure you stick to a) the marked way, and b) the TRF code of conduct. But then, you do that anyway, don't you?

Richard Simpson

"LITTLE GEM"

Like many of us, I have debated the question of which is the ideal off-road bike; depending of course on the type of riding you do and especially mixed terrain riding as I do. However, after 20 years I may have the answer!

As a company offering fully inclusive tour guided holidays in Romania, the bikes purchased each year are an important decision.

With great interest I have listened and read comments about the Honda CRF 230 and

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now I feel I am in a position to give an accurate account of this bike.

My background is 20 years experience of MX and Enduros on many different modern bikes 2 stroke and 4 stroke and understand the importance of a bike to suit all abilities and varied terrain.

Everything was running perfect for us whilst we could purchase KDX 220s (of which we still have four, bought new in 2004), a bike suitable for novice or expert alike, after the last of these which I hunted down, I need to find another suitable bike for riders with a range of abilities from novice to expert and for the very mixed terrain here in Romania.

Here steps in the CRF 230, which I have ridden for the last six months and also has been ridden by our customers.

The bike is simply fantastic for easy or hard trial riding and much, much more! The riders that come to us with varied ability take to them instantly and build confidence, they are fast enough, stop quickly, are easy on chains, sprockets and pads and are comfortable over 6-8 hours riding, there's no radiators to bend and the bike looks great.

We have had six footers on the bikes who praised them and for those of us a bit shorter they are perfect!

We recently had five ex I.S.D.E. enduro riders with us on their own tricked modern enduro tools for 5 days riding. On the first day as their tour guide, I wheeled out the Honda and noticed some funny looks! The boys explained that they wanted non-stop hard technical riding.

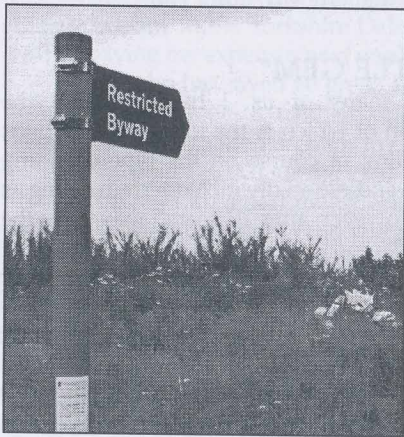
Off we went with myself leading up and down steep hills, over rocks and up and down riverbeds for several hours before we stopped for a short break, the conversations then between the boys was about how good this Honda was.

During the five days all the boys rode the CRF, admittedly it's half the horsepower of a modern enduro, lower to the ground with no suspension settings and a drum back brake; but the bike is very capable and lots of fun.

The fact that it is about half the horses, is for most people an advantage. I'm not saying it would be the weapon of choice for an average enduro rider, but it could be a choice for a novice enduro rider and certainly up there as a choice for most trail riders.

Stephen Palmer, www.adventuromania.co.uk

Ed. I keep thinking about buying a bike that you can ride to Wales (80-100 miles), ride a few lanes and then ride back at a sensible speed - any good ideas?



LANES POST-NERC

Just in case anyone was in any doubt as to the negative impact of NERC on the countryside, look at the enclosed. It's an Restricted Byway (formerly a RUPP) off the A40 between Cheltenham and Oxford.

The lane has been engulfed by vegetation, because no vehicles have passed through. No one has bothered to clear the dumped rubbish (in previous years, the TRF might have done this). This is after just one Spring. What will it look like next year?

I hope Ms Street-Porter and her horrible friends at the Ramblers Association like the countryside

which they have created.

We've sent this picture to our local MPs to show them the outcome of NERC. Do you think they realise what they have done in supporting NERC yet?

Richard Simpson

MORE ADVICE FOR GORDON!

In reply to Gordon Dalgarno's quest for the ideal dual purpose bike, I had a Suzuki DRZ400. Although an excellent machine, I found it pretty tall and heavy off-road, even with a lowering link. After that I couldn't decide what to do, so I went for the obvious option (everyone said they were good) a Serrow. As Gordon said, this is an excellent machine, but a little heavy for 225ccs and a 300cc engine would seem about right.

Some years ago George Silk (manufacturer of Silk motorcycles) developed a trials bike with a gearbox containing high and low ratios. From memory I believe this had four speeds but by using a second gear lever these four ratios could be engaged in high or low, similar to some off-road four wheelers. This idea seems to me to go a long way to solving our off-on road requirements.

I have just returned from a trail riding trip to Romania organised by Adventuromania. I was made most welcome by Stephen and Vica Palmer and quickly introduced to a superbly prepared, in fact nearly new Honda CRF 230. Next day Stephen led a small group consisting of myself and Tom from Germany, riding his own Husky 250 4 stroke. It soon became obvious that Tom was a very accomplished rider. Talk about a baptism of fire! We did 120km all off road. Stephen's route took us through steep forests, rutted cart tracks and stoney climbs. Stephen seemed to balance the route extremely well, difficult enough to keep Tom's interest and yet just within my capabilities. Whenever I came to a halt Stephen was always there with advice and when necessary muscle power. Ideally Stephen would prefer a larger group of similar ability but such was the generosity of the man, his enthusiasm and encouragement was never lacking.

The CRF 230 for me was ideal, very light and easy to ride with similar power and grip finding characteristics as the Serrow but with a little more power at the top end. We only covered about 10 kms in the week on road but it was obvious this is not a machine for road work. The gear ratios were quite close, so there was always a gear for every occasion off-road. So, in a nutshell, my ideal for a dual purpose machine would be a Honda 230 fitted with George Silk's high and low ratio gear box. It is a pity this machine does not exist so we will just have to have the pleasure of continuing the search.

I have no connection with Adventuromania only as a very satisfied customer.

Mike Legg

THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT TRAIL BIKE CONTINUES

On opening Trail I was drawn to the above article and then noticed it was talking about the "Pamp" and the CRF230. Hmm I thought, neither bike would feature in my considerations for the perfect trail bike. I suspect the author may be both shorter and lighter than many of us. The Pamp is probably better positioned to cope with my weight but both would give me a very sore back after a day's riding. However I was interested in the article because I keep mulling over the same question but coming to a very different answer. I am beginning to suspect the perfect trail bike for me might be between a KTM 525 ideally fitted with the 540 big bore kit or perhaps a Yamaha WR450 or Honda CRF450X.

I'm sure many members might frown on such powerful enduro bikes. I'm not sure why because I suspect the same members would consider a BMW or other big trailie

perfectly acceptable if a little terrain limited for the average rider. So what's the issue with enduro bikes? I can think of two; the aggressive stance and noise. The former is hard to do much about, form following function etc., the latter need not be a problem. I currently use a KTM 450 for trail riding and one of our senior, conservative, Serow riding and most respected members even commented how surprised he was that it wasn't particularly noisy. I did explain that it was because I was trail riding which doesn't require much throttle and consequently not much noise on a standard exhaust enduro bike. My conclusion is something like a 540 KTM would just waft along on a smidgen of throttle on the trails yet have plenty of power to cruise at 60 mph on the ever increasing tarmac interludes.

The new Japanese 450 enduros are extremely well silenced as a result of legislative pressure in the USA. These bikes would put many Serows to shame. In fact over winter during some enduro training I was shocked to be passed on a fast section by a TTR250 – it turned out to be a WR450 that was so quiet I thought it a TTR. If only the FIM and European manufacturers would see sense and bring the noise limits down. It also wouldn't hurt if our government did something, in fact it seems so obvious to me that action needs to be taken that I begin to wonder what nefarious scheme is behind the lack of action. There are plenty of vehicles on the tarmac road that need dealing with too – both 2 and 4 wheeled.

Other plus points of an enduro bike are light weight, strength, long travel suspension and if you only trail ride, they should be very reliable. The high maintenance schedules are designed in response to hard usage. Many gentle users relax the maintenance from that advocated in the manual once out of warranty with no noticeable ill effect. On the downside they do require an element of right hand control when things get technical, without it you're going to be in big trouble at some point.

Going in the opposite direction another bike worth keeping an eye on for the future is the Blade electric bike. They have performance of a similar order to a Pamp or Serow and it won't be long until the range issues are sorted. Currently 3 hours is claimed as a maximum. When a day's riding is possible we can all be totally silent. I'd like to think that would open up more riding areas – or is that too optimistic in a time when only conformance to the norm is acceptable? I enjoy walking – when I choose to.

Ian Packer

EXCELLENT SERVICE FOR SPARE PARTS

Just had some terrific service from Ellastone Off Road – thought all members should know – maybe a few lines in the mag – may come in handy.

I ride a CRM 250 Mk 2 – c'91. My kick-start broke – small crack near the ball bearing

joint. A new one - £110. Spoke to the guys at Ellastone – they had one in – received it the next day – perfect - £40 delivered. Brilliant. Stick their number in your diary – may come in useful. Apparently, they import used parts from Japan, so they may not have what you need in stock, but they're always getting more stuff. Details: The Workshop, Ashbourne Road, Rocester, Staffs. ST14 5LF. Tel: 01889 590 186

Ed. *Now they have had the freeby - tell them they should be advertising in Trail* Matt Arnold

TRF GOES PRO-ACTIVE?

Belatedly, the TRF has woken up to politics and the fact that all the main political parties - the Lib/Lab/Con - have co-operated to ban vehicular access along unsurfaced carriageways or green lanes. My advice to all disgruntled members (and you should be) is to support the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

Why? Last April 23rd, they held a conference in Salisbury supporting motorcyclists' rights against EU legislation. I was concerned that the TRF failed to make its presence felt, although I do recall one chap mentioning he was a TRF member. Motorcyclists get a generally bad Press and need a Party who will stick up for their minority rights. Sadly, many motorcyclists walked out while the BMF representative was doing his admittedly over-long, uninspiring presentation. Only UKIP, (who need support if it is to get MPs into Westminster and local authorities) is on our side. Send a message next time a local councillor or candidate asks you for your vote.

Gwyn Thomas, Axe Vale TRF

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Cartoon by P. Rowlands

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HONDA XR250R 2004. Lowered (Suit rider 5'5 plus). 2000 miles, exc, CRD bashplate, Vortip, Rally Pro guards etc. Spares. £2200. Danny, Surrey 01276 475835.

HONDA CRF 250X 04/54 reg road legal. Sumpguard, handguards, green lane use only. Just serviced. £2850 or newish trials bike in PX. Tel: 01568 720395 Mob: 07785 558033 (Hereford).

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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.

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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 W. John Williamson, Tel: 01929 553640,
Mob: 07850 727873 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 Thurs, 8.30pm, The Old Guinea, Ridge, Near Potters Bar.

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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, Maudesley.

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, Rutton 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.

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1st Thurs, Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd), Odsal, Bradford. Rights of Way 7.30pm, main meeting 8.30 pm.

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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.