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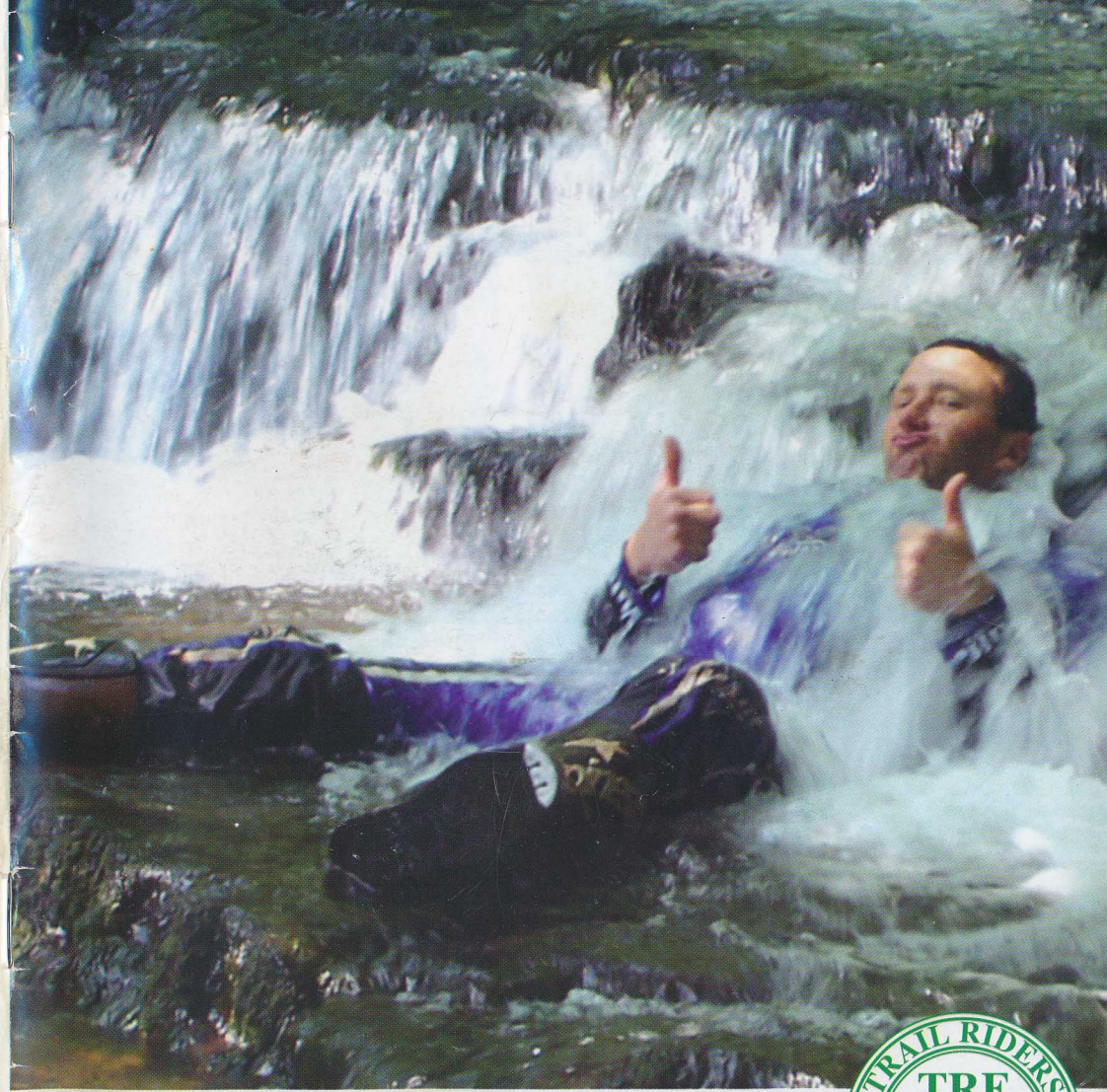
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TRAIL



The magazine of the TRF, the National Club for all who wish to ride Legal Motorcycles on Legal Carriageways

JANUARY 2007 No. 341 EDITOR: FRED ELLISON



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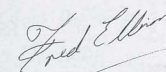
The views expressed in 'Trail' are those of its correspondents and not necessarily of the Editor or the T.R.F.

EDITOR

Are you a born leader? Do you think you could be with a little help? Do you think you and your mate could do it together? If the answer to any of these questions is yes then Phil Fawcett, who organises the annual Scarborough to Hawes Coast to Coast would like to hear from you, see below. Have you ever heard of a run leader not getting a ride because the event is over-subscribed? The Coast to Coast is, not surprisingly, always over-subscribed so think of this as an opportunity.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to Trail past and present. If you think the new glossy version is better, maybe it is, but it is your input that makes it what it is.

A Happy New Year's
trail riding to you all.



2007 CALENDAR COMPETITION

The photo of Dorset Group by Dave Oickle was considered to best embody the spirit of trail riding and therefore is printed on the TRF 2007 Calendar which is distributed to all members and other interested parties. A voucher for 2007 TRF membership is on its way to Dave. Our thanks to all who took the trouble to submit their favourite pictures.

COAST TO COAST MAY 2007

RUN LEADERS NEEDED

Could you lead a group from
Scarborough to Hawes
or Hawes to Morecambe?

Contact Phil Fawcett
Tel: 01287 634972

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STILL WANTED:

- Product Reviews • Bike Tests
- Long Term Reviews • Cover Pictures

COVER PHOTO: FROM RICHARD LILLINGTON

'The Baron' cools off

All contributions to THE EDITOR
Fred Ellison, Sheepcote Farm
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bike me **aprilia**
Supports the TRF

A Happy New Year to all, I hope you've all had a pleasant Christmas break and feel refreshed to tackle a new year.

2007 is set to be a new era and with the help of all existing members and encouragement to new members to join, we should be able to drastically change the public perception of Trail Riding.

2007 is to see new approaches to the PR of the TRF and all groups will be actively involved in creating an acceptable image of Trail Riding, in particular to those trail riders who presently support the TRF by the very virtue of being members. We would like to see the membership grow dramatically in the coming year, and the groups local PR can help to achieve this. New events, plenty of ride outs, presence at shows, and perhaps charity opportunities will all help.

As our honorary chairman said in his chat in the December issue, the principle officers held a meeting in December in order to plan "The Way Forward" and the result of this will amongst many other matters be a year of campaigning to protect the network of routes we have today and to keep them open and usable.

The word for 2007 will be SUSTAINABILITY

We must all promote the sensible use of routes and trails and most importantly encourage new members to join and respect the policies of the TRF which have grown as a result of a great many years of combined

expertise. We will welcome any trail rider into the fellowship providing they can understand that in order to maintain the future of trail riding, it is increasingly more important to recognize the purpose of the Code of Conduct which forms the core to the guidelines for Trail Riding.

The more positive the image that we all promote, the more positive the future of Trail Riding will become.

I look forward to 2007 and a new approach and I look forward to the support of all TRF members in maintaining our pastime for years to come.

Simon Bingham
PR and Comms Officer TRF



NOTICE BOARD

CHANGES OF VENUE

SOUTH NORTHANTS GROUP

From January 2007 the meeting will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 9 p.m., The Old Sun, Nether Heyford.

*Polly Cody,
South Northants Secretary*

SOUTH WALES GROUP

New meeting place & time: 1st Tuesday of the month, 8 p.m., Bedwas Rugby Club, Bedwas, Nr Caerphilly.

Stuart Dodwell

GLOUCESTERSHIRE GETS NEW WEBSITE

At the Gloucestershire Group's AGM on 6th December Alastair Lord volunteered to take on responsibility for the Group's website. The new site is now up and running at www.trfglos.org.uk

The site has two main purposes:

To give you, our loyal Glos members, valuable and timely information on what's going on in the club.

To 'sell' the Group to folks who might be interested in joining us.

If you have any contributions or suggestions for the site, please get in touch via a.lord@mootmail.com or 01242 520266

GROUP RETURNS 2007

Would all groups please complete a group return form for 2007 and return it to the Secretary (contact details inside front cover) by 31st January 2007. The form can be found on the TRF website www.trf.org.uk, in the members area under Files, TRF Stationary. If no one in your group can get a copy from the website, please contact the Secretary for a paper copy.

*Polly Cody,
TRF Hon Secretary*

STOLEN

DRZ400S from Bootle, Cumbria, reg PJ53 RUO, frame number JSIBC 111100102361, engine number K419-129181, any information please contact PC1192 Williamson on 0845 33 00 247 or email me at thomastomsk@aol.com

Thomas Hopkins

GARBURN & GATESCARTH PASSES

Garburn Pass can no longer be used by motorcycles. It had its mechanically propelled vehicle rights extinguished by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in May last year. For information on this and the other 30 routes that also had their mpv rights extinguished go to: http://www.lake-district.gov.uk/index/enjoying/outdoors/green_roads.htm

Gatescarth Pass is only open one day per

month under a permit system operated by us. The background information on the permit system, how to apply and the dates of the open days can be found at:

http://www.lake-district.gov.uk/index/enjoying/outdoors/green_roads/road_gatescarth.htm

Dave Robinson, Trails Advisor,
Lake District National Park Authority

'FIVE-YEAR MAIN USER'

NERC-proof route 'claims' where the predominant use of a route in the five years before the commencement of NERC was by the public with motors: a change to the 'Claims Audit' forms.

Some members and groups have raised the issue of routes not currently BOATs or UCRs where, on the evidence, there is a reasonable case that the predominant use of the route in the five years before NERC was motor use. The TRF Executive's advice is that the scope for such 'claims' to proceed and succeed is limited, but that each case should be considered carefully on its merits.

To allow a suitable checking process, the existing 'Claim Audit' form set has been updated into version 2 (now available to download or in hard copy from the Secretary on request) and '5-year main user' claims can now be audited in exactly the same way as 'ordinary' BOAT applications that beat the NERC deadline. The Executive would like to remind members that the TRF has to be very

cautious in the post-NERC world, and the Claims Audit process is essential if members are to receive the backing of the TRF if challenged in their use of routes not currently BOAT or UCR.

Members have also asked for advice about the situation where they use 'claimed' routes where someone other than a TRF member or group has lodged the application. The Executive's view is that the TRF will back TRF members only on routes that have been through the Claims Audit process, and there is nothing to prevent any TRF member from submitting 'someone else's claim' into the audit process. The Executive cautions TRF members about taking non-TRF 'claims' on trust.

Alan Kind



First things first, here in Wiltshire, despite NERC taking away our opportunity to ride some routes, we are still very fortunate in that we have legal access to ride and enjoy many others. We owe this pleasure, and a huge debt of thanks, to the few who have spent countless hours researching, evidencing and claiming those routes for the benefit of the many, who do appreciate their efforts!

Wiltshire is perhaps best known for all the white horses carved into the chalky hillsides, or it might be because the Ministry of Defence have a nice little 'shrubbery' in the middle of the county about 94,000 acres big! This area is trail biking heaven, providing you don't stray off track, as there is the chance of quite a serious puncture should you ride over some live ordinance, or present yourself as an irresistible moving target if it is army play time! It is well worth contacting the MOD Police if you are planning to visit. 07900 262088. They are very helpful and will tell you where and when you can ride. The area is very well patrolled from the ground and air and they can and will prosecute / seize vehicles if you misbehave!

We do have some beautiful trails outside of the MOD 'shrubbery' as well The Ridgeway and Ox drove to name but two that attract off roading

visitors from far and wide. We have a very helpful Rights of Way department at our County Hall tel 01225 713000. They too are happy to assist with any questions regarding legality of routes, latest TRO information etc.

Whilst trail riding and protecting and preserving routes is our main focus, various members of the group take part in Hare and Hounds, Time Trials, Classic Trials, and Road Racing events to name but a few. Other members are into Classic Bikes, or Touring Bikes and a few members observe for the IAM. Our trail rides see a mixture of old and new, big and small bikes, and a variety of clothing from aged wax to lurid lycra, but it is all worn in the best possible taste!

We had 46 group members at the last count and we regularly see a large number at our monthly meeting held at The Bell on the Common Pub, at Broughton Gifford. This is a very nice venue with excellent food and drink, lots of parking space, a large private meeting room for us to use and a very friendly land lord. A warm welcome is assured! A quiet meeting would still see about 20 members arriving, and a busy one 30+. The vast majority of members are very active and only too willing to assist in whatever way they can, whenever the call for help goes out. The following reports from members of the group will

show just how busy we are and what a wide range of things we get involved in. Despite being a small group by comparison to some of the others, one thing we are very big in, is having lots of fun!

Steve Holbrow, *Vice Chair*

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WILTSHIRE GROUP

The idea for a trail riding club in Wiltshire started in a Trowbridge motorcycle shop when the manager got chatting with Mark Fryer and Mick Cantello. Some visits were made to the Bristol group TRF to see what the score was and 'WEST WILTS TRAIL RIDERS' was formed in early March 1978. The first meeting was at the Cross Guns pub at Avoncliff in April 1978. We were made very welcome, and even better they sold Stella! Of course as a schoolboy I had to have lemonade! I was made Treasurer, a post I held for 11 years or so.

To start with the club was affiliated to the TRF as it was hoped that a 'proper club' would be formed in a more central part of the county. We did have some members who strongly opposed paying the TRF membership fee! At the end of the first year there were 10 members, 1979 - 15, 1980 - 25, 1981 - 20, 1982 - 30.

The group first assisted at a horse event in 1981 on the Imber ranges. It was marked out using wooden posts with arrows on! Luckily a woman from Wiltshire Bridleways carried most of the posts in her Landrover.

The club runs often attracted guests, the biggest turn out for a trail ride was 42 in 1982. We only managed to do about 30 miles due to all the punctures, broken throttle cables, snapped chains, people getting stuck etc. Some weekends we had to run a number of separate trail rides just to keep the numbers down to a reasonable level.

The group has used a number of pubs for its monthly meetings over the years.

- Cross Guns, left in the 80's because it became clean and trendy.
- The Poplars at Wingfield. 1 meeting.
- The Old Bear at Staverton. We left because the ex biker who ran the pub, who invited us

there in the first place, was overheard at the bar, saying 'We must get rid of this lot sometime, these bikers are a pain'

- The 3 Lions at Holt. We were made very welcome. However we all turned up at the pub the following month to find it locked and boarded-up.
- The Tollgate at Holt, good at the beginning.
- Current meeting place, The Bell on the Common, Broughton Gifford. We have been made welcome here for quite a while now.

Typical early bikes being ridden by members were:

DT175MX's by the dozen, DT50, DT100, DT175 twin shock, SP370, XT500, XL185, XL250, KL250, KM90, KE175, TL250, TL125, TS100, TS185, TS250, CZ250 ISDT, All classic bikes now!

Dave Riley

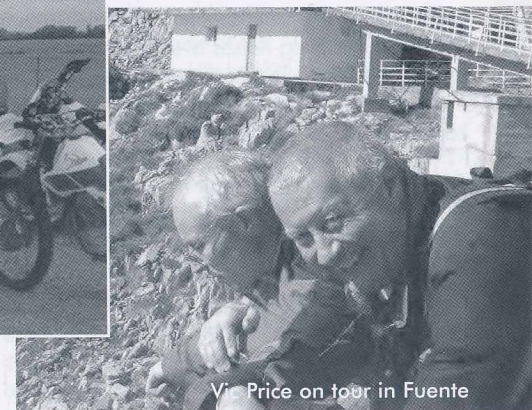
THE CHAIRPERSONS' ROLE

Having been chairman for just over a year now I can only say that I continue to enjoy the experience and am glad to have the opportunity to make a contribution to the upkeep of trail riding in Wiltshire. Despite the fact that we girls are outnumbered by the guys by about 10 to 1 in our group I've experienced only support and encouragement from all members since taking on the role. What a model of equal opportunities we are! Wiltshire TRF members are a good natured and enthusiastic lot which makes running meetings and organising events a really painless job and we do make sure we have lots of fun including lots of dirty weekends out there in the mud!

One of the tasks I have been involved in along with a couple of other group members, Don and Steve, is setting up and attending a meeting with our local council Rights of Way officer. For some time there seemed to have been some mutual suspicion between our camp and theirs so to get some communication going seemed crucial. So 'post NERC' we had a good chat over tea and biscuits and lo and behold found that we were on the same side after all. The ROW department are more than keen to keep access open to all legal



Editor Sarah, Steve, Bob, Ted & Chairperson Heather posing near to Stonehenge



Vic Price on tour in Fuente

users and expressed their support for our legal use of ROW and consideration for other users. They provided us with a marked up map of all current legal routes for our use and expressed a wish to keep lines of communication open with TRF for the future. A very worthwhile meeting.

Heather Spurr, Chairperson

WILTSHIRE'S GROUP REP

Hi. I am Vic Price the Wiltshire Group Contact. I have been riding the trails (very badly) since 1980, when I had my first go "off road" on a 250 CZ Enduro, and was immediately hooked. Anyone who fancies contacting Wilts TRF can get me on 01380 724651 at home, 01980 618183 at work, or by e-mail at vicprice@supanet.com. I will do my best to explain what us merry band of misfits get up to, and try and get any poor unsuspecting victims to roll up at one of our meetings to meet us all and get involved. Everybody will be made to feel welcome and will be subject to same amount of respect, mickey-taking and abuse as anyone else, in equal measure!

We have a wide range of ages and abilities in the club. Indeed, I am at the top of one, and the bottom of the other, so don't be shy! I can guarantee you will find someone who will become a club soul mate!

Vic Price, Group Rep

RESEARCHING AND CLAIMING BYWAYS

In common with many other TRF Groups, we responded to the Countryside and Rights of Way

Act 2000 by submitting claims for byways. We were very lucky in having as a member, a well regarded researcher who has compiled over many years, vehicular evidence on over 1000 Wiltshire ways with lesser recorded rights. This gave us a flying start but our lack of experience, and perhaps a lack of a sense of urgency, meant that of over 150 claims made by ourselves and a member of a local 4x4 club, only 50 beat the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) January 2005 deadline. It is a testament to the quality of the research that all of those 50 claims went on to pass the TRF audit process. Now they will be subjected to the sustainability and "hotspot" tests before the survivors are put back on our maps as useable routes.

So to the future. We are collecting evidence on lanes which we hope will show exemption from NERC, and recording user evidence in case any other lane is threatened with closure through alleged lack of use. We have established contact with our county council rights of way staff in the hope that this dialogue will put us in the loop when it comes to the consultation process. Our members' written objections to various proposed lane closures have been successful in the recent past and we remain watchful. There has been a noticeable reduction in the use of less obvious lanes since NERC, which will take the pressure off them, but certain well-used byways remain under threat from the antis. The aims, methods and affect of Friends of the Ridgeway are well known but an organisation called the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Area of

Outstanding Natural Beauty has also begun making threatening noises over damage caused by motor vehicles. There will be others, so we are in no doubt that there is no room for complacency - or bad behaviour!

Ted Spires

OUR TREASURER AND SHOW ORGANISER

I have been the group's treasurer for the last 9 years, looking after the money box and keeping the accounts. Like the other volunteers I enjoy being part of the group so this is my way of giving something back. I must say having observed some of the members' riding I'm glad it's only their accounts I am responsible for balancing!

I also organise a TRF display stand each year at the Bristol Classic Bike Show to help promote the work done by the TRF and the benefits of becoming a member. This year it is on the 10th and 11th February at the Bath & West show ground near Shepton Mallet, Somerset. We hope to have about 8 bikes on the stand. All present and past members of the TRF are welcome to come and have a chat, hopefully we will sign up some new members as well like we have in previous years.

Les Packer,
Treasurer & Show Organiser

THE WILTSHIRE TRF WEBSITE

As webmaster for the Wiltshire TRF I developed the site and host it myself. I try to keep the site up-to-date with the latest news and events for the calendar. There is also a classifieds section free for any passer by to advertise on, and hopefully in the near future I shall include a forum. I also like to post reports of what our members get up to, from our local monthly club runs, to group or individual adventures within the UK, or adventures further a field including Europe, USA, North Africa and the Dakar Rally, all of which are worth a read. Take a look at www.wiltshiretrf.co.uk

Neil Crookes

GIRLIE RIDES

The Wiltshire TRF is fortunate to have a few members of the fairer sex that are keen motorcycle riders and active within the group - how many other groups can claim to have a lady Chairman?!

It is fair to say that keen they might be but they are not quite as 'gung ho' as the lads and so find the general pace and duration of the standard club rides a bit too much to cope with.

A couple of years ago a dark and subversive element grew within the Wiltshire TRF from which emerged the not so ominous sounding 'Girlie Rides', as an alternative to the standard club runs.

The 'Girlie Rides' normally meet at a respectable time of around 10.00/10.30am and are out for about four hours. I say 'out' because, due to the frequent number of stops to admire the view, talk about how much we're enjoying ourselves or answering the call of nature we certainly don't ride for that long! Although the pace is leisurely and the number of miles covered relatively low we still enjoy the more 'interesting' byways.

After we broke from cover and the lads became more aware of what we were up to we found a number of them 'getting in touch with their feminine side' (!) and joining us. It has become apparent that there are a number of the 'hairier sex' out there who are also happy to indulge in less frenetic riding and the swelling numbers of our 'subversive' group has meant that we have had to have a rethink of title so that it sounds a little less how shall I say it pink?!

We now have two types of club ride - 'Progressive' and 'Leisure' Or is that 'Pleasure'?

Noeline Smith

CYCLE EVENTS

As well as a keen trail rider I enjoy exploring our unsurfaced rights of way on a mountain bike which opens up a whole raft of routes not legally accessible on a motorbike.

Flicking through our local parish magazine a year or so back I noticed a request from the SPAM biking (Salisbury Plain Area Mountain bike cycle club) asking for volunteers to act as

mobile marshals for one of their forthcoming charity events held on Salisbury Plain. Perfect - an opportunity to help raise funds for local well deserving charities as well as enjoy new routes on my motorbike.

A few calls and weeks later and a group of six Wiltshire TRF members found themselves wending their way through 600 plus mountain bikes to the event headquarters on the Plain. The SPAM events normally consist of two or three ride lengths from 15km to 90km with some overlapping of routes. We were provided with course maps, lunch and spare inner tubes (for the cyclists!) and more or less left to our own devices apart from instructions on how to contact the headquarters and the on-site St Johns Ambulance.

As that was our first event we had a pretty steep learning curve, including understanding that some of the top riders are quicker in the technical going than most of us are with engine assistance! SPAM host a number of events each year and we have since worked closely with them to ensure we provide the help they need - after all, we're providing a service first and our enjoyment is an added bonus.

So far we have attended four events and played a small but crucial part in raising over £40,000 for a number of local charities as well as the main beneficiary CLIC SARGENT (previously CLIC - Cancer & Leukemia in Children). We've raised the profile of the TRF and the constructive side of off road motorcycling and enjoyed the opportunity to ride in places where public access is not normally allowed.

Noeline Smith

THE EDITORS CUT

I have been a member of the TRF since 2002 and have been actively riding my Yamaha TTR 250 as much as possible ever since! Being part of the once underground 'Girlie' movement within the Wiltshire TRF has been great but men have overrun us in recent months, which hasn't been a problem as long as they can stand our needs for the tea and coffee stops!

It was in the summer of 2005 when I think it was the case that I volunteered to take over as our

newsletter editor, which I've managed to hold onto for another year at our AGM in November. Our group must love what I'm doing judging by their quickness to nominate me again! It has been a good thing to do for the club, as I knew from before I took the job that it was always nice to take something home from the meetings for a read. We have a diary to keep everybody up to date with all our events and our trips away. We have had many articles from group members of biking holidays and reports from club runs and events for which we volunteer such as the horse and mountain biking events that we marshal. Of course we always try to have a run report with pictures of our escapades! The newsletter articles will also usually appear on our website soon after our monthly meeting.

It has been good to be able to put something back into the club, as there are many others who do so much within the Wiltshire group by organizing events, RoW work and keeping it running in the successful way in which it has been for many years.

Sarah Crittle, Newsletter Editor

LANE CLEARING

On several occasions in recent years some of our more hardy souls from the Wiltshire TRF have joined forces with the Volunteer Scheme of the National Trails Office. They work to maintain and promote the use of the Ridgeway and Thames Path. The work carried out through the year by the scheme varies from vegetation clearance to signpost, gate and information board management and the planting and maintenance of hedgerows.

The lengths of the Ridgeway that we concentrated on each time had become overgrown and there was little light so the clearing of overhead branches and also up to six feet either side of the track would help the surface to breathe more easily. All the cleared material could then be cut into manageable pieces and stacked neatly at the side.

We were supervised by one of the National Trails Office representatives and would usually be joined by some of their other volunteers. We were provided with all tools but the coordinator for the day got to play with all the 2-stroke

machinery, and of course there was a readily available supply of hot drinks and seasonal snacks!

These events have been great, especially as we were able to put something back into the Ridgeway and promote the TRF within other user groups and to non-TRF motorcyclists.

Sarah Crittle

SUPPORTING EQUESTRIAN EVENTS

In 2006 our group assisted at no less than seven horse events in and around Wiltshire, involving dozens of trail riders and countless man hours. Typically the events fall into one of two categories: Long Distance Endurance or One Day Horse Trials.

For the One Day Trials the competitors are required to attempt about twenty or so jumps for which they are scored by Jump Judges. Our task is to visit each jump and collect the all important score cards, before relaying them back to the Master Control, where all the results are collated and then available for the competitors almost "real time". Obviously we (the trail riders) need to be constantly aware of our surroundings as the course is always "live" - competitors start at one minute intervals. A quiet bike is also a big advantage!

The Long Distance Endurance Events are a whole different affair, requiring us to mark (and demark) using fluorescent bands, at least one (but usually several) long distance "off road" loops of anything up to 100km in length. Much of the routes are on bridleways and footpaths, and so the equestrian organisers must obtain the necessary permission from the landowners and local authorities allowing us to ride these normally "closed" trails. Being able to read a map is especially useful for this task.

And for our efforts we get to prove that motorcycles and horses CAN mix, it doesn't do our public relations any harm, and we earn lots of dosh for the Wiltshire TRF, which is then spent on keeping the vehicular green lanes of Wiltshire open. A bit of a "win win" situation all round really!

Reuben Alcock



Maintenance on the Ridgeway

REPRESENTING WILTSHIRE AT NATIONAL LEVEL

My name is Glen Parkinson, and I have been a TRF member for approximately 10 years. As the joint Wiltshire Group Representative (since the end of 2005) I have been attending the National Executive meetings throughout 2006.

I feel that communication of information from the Exec meetings to the Group is important, to keep everyone informed of the 'bigger' picture.

I have also come to appreciate the need to feed information to the Exec regarding the feelings of the regular Club members.

The diversity of the problems, rights of way issues and varied responses from Local Council's through-out the UK has only become apparent since attending the National meetings.

The attendance at National meetings varies from approximately 12 to 20 ish not counting the Elected Officers, and even in the short time I have been attending, I have noticed a greater urgency in the matters being discussed.

My riding is shared between trail riding, mostly in the UK, and longer distance jaunts to North Africa, Eastern Europe etc on larger trail machines when time and money allow. That seems to be every other year at the moment.

The Wiltshire Group members have been an inspiration over the years, introducing me to trail riding in Northern Spain (Picos De Europa) as well as giving me lots of ideas over the years from other members exploits. And long may it continue.

Glen Parkinson, Joint Group Rep

TOUR DE WILTSHIRE

A Previous Group Chairman, Keith Johnston organised the inaugural 'Tour de Wiltshire' held on Sunday 4th June 2006.

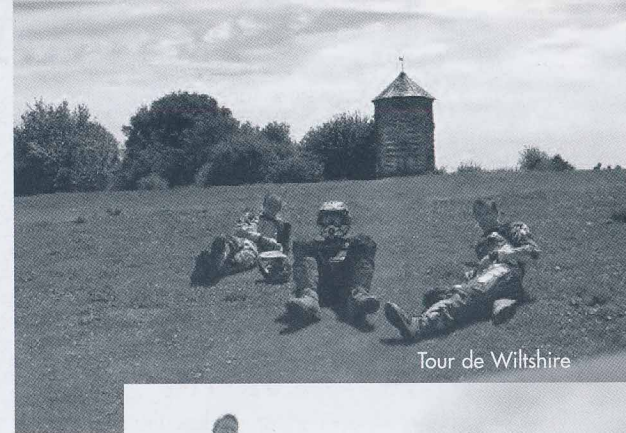
The Tour de Wiltshire is a navigational touring challenge open to members of the Wiltshire TRF, for riders/drivers of open vehicles of any layout 2, 3 or 4 wheels to explore the beautiful county of Wiltshire in the company of like minded enthusiasts on sealed and unsealed roads.

In perfect weather conditions, 14 group members started the event on a range of bikes and two cars - a Westfield and an MX5. Participants chose their own route using legal rights of way to visit up to 20 nominated landmarks spread throughout the county of Wiltshire. Proof of visit was confirmed by taking a digital photograph of each landmark and scores were awarded for each landmark depending upon such factors as ease of access, distance etc. The winner, Chris Stanbury, cleverly switched from a Yamaha Serow to a Kawasaki GT1000 to visit all but one of the landmarks. The Tour de Wiltshire 2007 will again be held in June and invitations will be extended to neighbouring TRF groups.

Keith Johnston

LARKHILL FUN DAY

Against my better judgement, a good friend of mine, Al Ranger (of Rangers Peugeot of Durrington and Salisbury) decided that it would be a good ISDE Team Fund Raising wheeze, to organise a "Fun Day" at ISDE Team member and Husqvarna Factory rider Darryl Bolter's practice track at Larkhill. The bait to get the required numbers to stump up £24 each was the possibility of winning one of the few £14,000 Husky TE510 Centennials. (£24 = 12 raffle tickets). Acting as the middle man under pressure from Al, we raked up about 30 - 35 attendees from both the Wilts and Southern TRF groups. A good day was had by all, being shown some tricks of the trade by Darryl and also Gwyn Barraclough, the ISDE team Manager. Altogether, some £700 was raised for the ISDE



Tour de Wiltshire

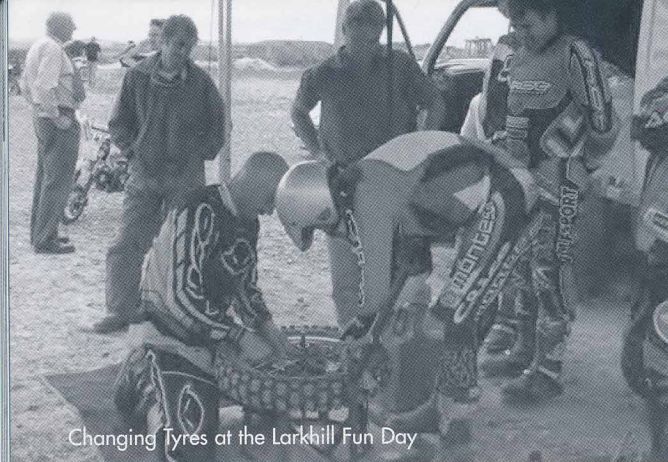


Larkhill Fun Day

team effort. Not too shabby, and great fun into the bargain. The only downer was that Steve Holbrow (our Vice Chair)* bought the winning ticket, and the bugger was filling out the stubs with ME, on the bonnet of Darryl's Race Van.

So I missed the bike by probably less than 30 tickets, from all those sold throughout the country!!!! I am ashamed to say that it forced me into stumping up for a "cooking" 2006 TE510, to replace my faithful, but heavy XR650R. Still, at least mine has turned its wheels, ain't it Steve ????? -Vic.

(*the winning ticket was actually bought and given to me by my very good friend Martin Annetts but I must thank Vic for lending me his



Changing Tyres at the Larkhill Fun Day

lucky pen to fill it in. It still writes lovely by the way Vic! Steve.H)

Vic Price

A MOTORBIKE FOR ALL REASONS

I have one bike for all occasions, a "jack of all trades". For some members locally that would be unthinkable but for an equal number of people they are just like me. Whether it is because of cash outlay or simply a "deal with the better half" the fact remains one machine fits for all options. I remember why I started riding a bike. My sporting ambitions had been cut short due to a major knee injury and I still felt I wanted to experience something in my life other than a rather mundane weekly occupation bringing in cash (being realistic, not the millionaire aspirations of a day dreaming teenager either). Biking it was then! With an engine to replace the defunct drive of the lower leg and a desire to drive across a desert (the Gobi actually and maybe one day when work and my family enable me to have a bash). Learning the skills to ride a bike has been a fun journey and meeting like minded souls on the way has been a great experience. Like a few guys in the Wilshire TRF I ride my machine in hare and hounds, Enduros, Trail Bike Rallies and on the Wiltshire lanes. The machine is fine at all of them, unlike it's rider who is usually languishing at the bottom half of the Clubman section or getting lost in the art of reading "ground to map" in the locality. Riding a machine in different disciplines means you

extract the most from each activity. I feel that exploring the thrill of speed in competition means that when on the road it makes you very aware of the risk of falling off and the need for speed has been exorcised somewhat. The lanes are for pottering fun and the events are for pitching riding skills against people on similar types of machinery and levels of rider competence. Having hit the over 40's class I find that for me the Trail Bike Rallies provide tremendous fun and a time to really explore the fun

of drifting sideways on a four stroke bike. They are the area in motorcycling that welcomes all riders. In Laning you meet those enjoying their activities whilst communicating disapproval of mine (e.g. some walkers and landowners) and in Enduros/Hare and Hounds you sometimes find a lack of tolerance often by the better riders over the less confident (ironically this is not the very top riders but often the better clubmen and experts). To be fair then it usually comes from competition and the desire of many people to extract their best performance. So my "top tip" is to try some Trail Bike Rallies. From the Pat James memorial winter rally to the Hafren at the end of the year all are great for the trail bike and jack of all trades. This year's Dovey Rally was truly spectacular and for those like me (often less competent in the big Enduros) give every rider, regardless of class the opportunity to experience and explore areas of the countryside unavailable on foot. They give you a "speed fix" should you want one and ensure you are able to explore your machine on "full song" should you want to. The other event that I believe makes for special mention is "the Welsh". The Strata Florida is for me the most fun section of riding in the UK and attempting it twice within two full days riding has to be the best way to do it. I know I bore some of the guys with my enthusiasm on events but it takes all sorts in life and please give me some sympathy, I have only got one bike to play with (and I don't think it matters what it is).

Don Oakley

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OLD DOGS AND OLD TRICKS

The beginning of November usually heralds an outing for my trusty XR with the Camel Vale MCC's Wintery Road Trial. It's been a long time since I bothered entering one of these events (paying the best part of 25 quid for someone to watch me put my feet down seems a tad pointless really) but I do like to help in some way and for a few years now John and I have been the Last Men (sic).

The trial has its roots set firmly in motorcycling history with long distance events or reliability trials being offered to intrepid motorcyclists as far back as the early 1900s. It doesn't take much imagination to appreciate that around that time just getting from London to Land's End on your 1913 Excelsior with its rigid bicycle type frame, sprung saddle, leather shoed brake and acetylene lights (you might have been lucky in 1913 and got a chain drive – goodness knows what early belts must have been like in mud and plop) was a challenge in itself, never mind the hills.

In the 1920s there was a mid-Cornwall trial and pictures exist of over a hundred entrants (cars and bikes) setting off to ride the very lanes around Bodmin, Duloe and Liskeard that we ride today. The trial was resurrected in around 1989 by Roger Fogg and called The Highwayman Trial. An evocative name perhaps but the real reason was that the trial originally started at The Highwayman Café in St Blazey (now the Chinese restaurant). Back then the trial

included sections like Muchlarnick, Rosenun and Pink Panter but had many easier sections like Old Road at St Neot, Boslymon and Tregavithick to name a few. The trial ONLY used legal roads at that time; the lanes presenting sufficient challenge without the modern day resort to taped sections in fields. Just having a good day out was sufficient incentive to most – you didn't have to WIN. Most of the early trial was driven and recorded by early TRFfer Alan Wakeford with three others in his Talbot Samba (remember these Jeremy?). At this time Curly and I also took out a Mark 1 Escort which made it up Muchlarnick without ado. How times have changed.

The trial has run every year since though has changed in many ways. It now starts and finishes at Bodmin Rugby Club and of the 20 or so sections maybe only half of them are on lanes. The profile of the riders has changed and the entry mainly comprises some of the best trials and enduro riders in the county and quite a few who fall short of this standardnearly everyone has an enduro bike however.

When I rode reliability trials in the 1980s (yes, on the same bike...) just about everyone was self sufficient; folk carried tubes, tyre levers, pumps, spares, infact, just about every thing you can imagine – except of course a mobile phone. If there were any then they certainly wouldn't have fitted on a motorcycle. Bikes were mainly Japanese trail bikes but a good



10 to 20 percent were British. The Europeans didn't get a look in.

So, it was a very different trial we followed out a couple of weeks ago, not only were the bikes mainly orange and very (very) high, but another obvious difference was highlighted when we rode the first lane and came upon a competitor with a puncture. He didn't have a tube, any tools or what's more much idea what to do about it. Helped by a chap on a passing 1979 SP400 Suzuki (remember these Jeremy?) who did have everything and watched by his equally clueless mate we were soon on our way only to encounter our second puncture of the day; this time five chaps stood round, though it has to be said, more activity here – these guys had used a mobile phone to call their mate who had come out with spares in his 4WD. Plus de change. As they say in Bodmin.

His valve had ripped clean out – no surprise to an old trialler as the locking nut was screwed down hard to the rim – and on a tyre running at about 8psi there doesn't have to be much movement to pull it clean out. Remove this nut was Sammy Miller's advice but I didn't mention it as they wouldn't have

known who he was anyway....

We carried on, clearing up markers, picking up plastic bottles and crisp packets and pacifying horse riders when we came upon another broken down group. The fate of this lot? Run out of petrol. "But you've only done 60 miles" I cried. "Ah yes well this is a modern competition machine dear" they replied.... I recognised them as the same crew who had needed a petrol donation from the trusty XR last year....

Oh well. I wonder what the future of the Classic Reliability Trial really is. I don't believe it is this frantic linking of incredibly tough sections (although the organisers plan nice lanes in to the route a lot of riders choose to miss them and just ride the competitive bits) as I think the challenge is misplaced. The only person truly challenged this year was the chap on the elderly SP400 who very sadly had to retire with a puncture – he had, after all, given his spare tube to someone else.

I was sad to see him go. He was, after all, the only person out there on a bike older than mine!

Sally Madgwick

SAND TRAINING IN SURREY

I recently did some "special sand training" with a dirt riding virgin on the not-so-hot-and-dusty trails of Surrey. Jason Mardell is an extremely experienced road rider who took his R1100RS around the world with Nick Sanders in 2002 and has subsequently helped Nick on several other tours. He's still got the faithful R1100RS but he's recently acquired an R1150GS Adventure because he's signed up for Nick's inaugural ride to Timbuktu and back, which deliberately coincides with the Dakar rally. He wisely thought that it might be a good idea to get some experience of dealing with sand before heading for the Sahara.....

Sunday December 3rd dawned grey and miserable after a night of torrential rain but the weather had brightened up considerably by the time the three of us set forth around mid-day. Jason was on my KTM640 Adventure, my girlfriend Elspeth Beard was having her first ride on my KTM 450 and I was on the freshly revived 30,000 mile Dominator 650 that I recently bought cheap off Bill Naismith - I'd replaced the utterly knackered engine sprocket the night before and tightened up the sloppy gear lever after first hacksawing a wider opening for the pinch bolt.

We did the easy trail from Albury up to Newlands Corner as a warm-up then rode east along the A25 straight to the bottom of the byway commonly known as 'Coldharbour', near Dorking. I have never seen this trail so wet since I first rode it on my XR500 way back in about 1982. In those days there were puddles so long and deep that you could almost lose a Land Rover in them, but since the lane was re-graded several years ago I've hardly ever seen any puddles in it. The main reason I chose Coldharbour was



because it's got a sandy section at least half a mile long but this weekend it was so wet that the sand was more like firm dirt and much, much easier to ride than usual. There were a lot of riders out and about - we got caught in a real traffic jam at one point with a trail rider and two horses coming towards us and a group of about six dirt bikes, plus a bold chap on a Twinduro-shod R1150GS Adventure coming up behind us.

When we got to the end of the lane, opposite the pub in Coldharbour village, we turned right and did the scenic byway to Leith Hill which was also very wet but the steep drop back down to the tarmac road wasn't as

treacherous as I'd feared it might be. We then turned around and retraced our steps back to the A25, encountering more dirt bikes, some mountain bikers, a couple of horses and a pair of 4x4s along the way. Jason struggled in a couple of places and disappeared into the shrubbery at one point, but did well for a dirt virgin considering that the 640 is a fairly big beast, although it obviously helps that he's tall, strong and fit. Elspeth did fine on the 450EXC once she'd got used to the fact that it has double the power of her customary Serow, yet weighs about the same. She also had a spin on the Dominator on the way back to her place and pronounced it pleasant but gutless

compared to the 450 ...However she declined to take part in the second and most important part of our little training session as she feared we'd end up riding the trails in the dark - and of course she was right! (Did I mention that she was the first Englishwoman to ride a motorcycle around the world in the 1980s?)

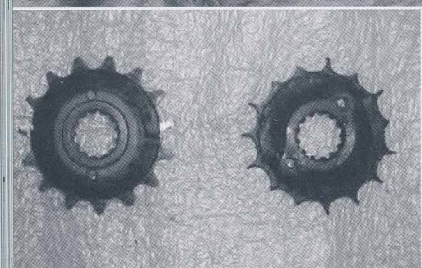
Part Two - The Frensham Sands

For Part Two, Jason and I headed east to the sands of Frensham Common (south of Farnham) with him still riding my KTM 640 but this time I was astride his R1150GS Adventure (a snip at £5K with only 12,000 miles on the clock). The monster Beemer of course makes even the 640 feel like a lightweight, but it still felt good to be back on one for my first proper ride one since I drowned my own 1150 in the second Welsh Rally of Discovery in the Spring of 2005. (It's since gone to a better home in the Emerald Isle). You can't beat those two-setting BMW heated handlebar grips, either!

The mile-long Frensham trail is pure sand but it was the wettest I've ever known it. I don't think I've ever seen a single puddle on it before but last weekend it was full of 'em. However, all the wetness also meant that it was much firmer than usual and so much easier to ride. I was still slightly concerned about how the 1150 might behave since the tyres were well-worn Tourances at full road pressures rather than the knobbly Continental TKC Twinduros that most people use for trail riding. I needn't have worried, the Beemer was like a big pussycat and just purred through everything unperturbed. Back in September it was a challenge just to keep the 640 pointing the



park but when I suggested riding the whole trail once more back and forth all the way on the 1150, he went for it and came through with shining colours, only dropping the big twin once in the softest bit. He admitted it had given his confidence a huge boost and I know that when he does encounter sand on the road or piste



way I wanted it to go in the soft dry sand, but last

Sunday even the 1150 was a doddle to ride on the transformed wet stuff.

There were only a couple of sections which offered any real challenge, so I made one of them the focus of our practice session. Once Jason was able to ride the 640 through it in a straight line I got him to zig-zag as much as possible through it. I dropped the big twin for the first time as I attempted to demonstrate what I wanted him to try, which provided a timely reminder of just how heavy those bally Beemers are! Once Jason had built up a bit of confidence we did the whole length of the trail again, both ways. Finally, I said, "How do you feel about having a crack on the 1150?" He was distinctly nervous but I pointed out that this was, after all, the beast he was going to be riding in the Sahara next month, not the 640, so it would be very good if he could get some experience of sand on it, right now.

Jason took a deep breath and said he'd have a go, and did very well. He struggled a bit on the little step on the hill at the end near the car

in Africa next month, he'll be a lot more confident and competent than he would have been if he hadn't first done Frensham on the Beemer.

I swapped back to the big 'un for the last couple of trails as darkness fell; the first was the whoopy one across Tilford Common which again, was uncommonly full of puddles, and a slippery challenge on the smooth Tourances, especially in the dark. The last lane was the one which comes out at the Donkey pub at Charleshill. The 1150 just burbled along in second at 1500rpm while Jason disappeared out of the mirrors a couple of times and put some new battle scars on the KTM's fairing – thank Gawd for those pop-off indicators (which I've finally worked out how to pop back on!).

All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon's riding.

Paul Blezard

PS In case you're wondering, the combined cost of all three of my trail bikes was less than the amount most people pay for one second hand R1150GS. Either the Dommie or the 640 is going to have to go, but I haven't yet decided which!

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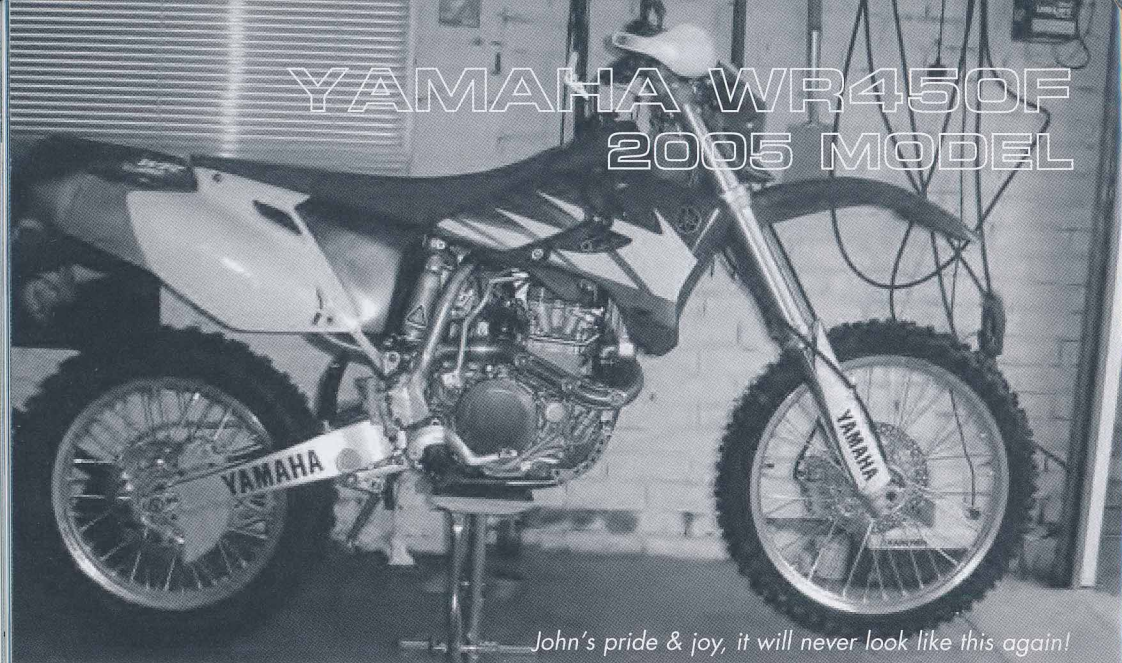
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In response to the total domination of our club runs by Team Orange, Alex and David bought Yamaha WR450F's and laid the foundation for Team Blue. I joined them a year later and a further eight months and ten thousand kilometres later I can say I know the WR fairly well.

First the bad news. The critics pointed out these bikes were fitted with dodgy oil seals on the front forks and sure enough after eight thousand kilometres they were leaking like a sieve. It's not as if I pull wheelies every five minutes or even give it plenty of air. The bike is never mistreated. Although I do not clean it as much as I should. Alex keeps dropping me hints by buying me different cleaning products. You can imagine, his bike is immaculate. I have not the patience nor the inclination to keep things in showroom condition and I admire those who do. What is important to me is to keep on top of the working parts.

The engine noise, five valves system, when I first got it, sounded like a bag of hammers when I was riding it. There seemed to be a hell of a lot of vibrations transmitting to my body producing grievous bodily harm of the

earholes and the engine felt very tight. It was! I had a word with one or two experts and the general opinion was - forget about the noise, just ride it.

Well, eventually the engine loosened up, the vibrations decreased and noise level reduced. I think the problem of noise was exaggerated by the fact that the engine is water cooled. To me it seemed as though the engine casing acts as an echo chamber. I have always been used to air cooled bikes which have never sounded clanky.

Vibration is still a minor irritation. I have to check the fixings on the hand guards every ride.

The most disappointing feature was the rear mud guard. This is held on with two bolts that grip onto the plastic. The constant up and down action wears the plastic and the alloy frame. Then the mudguard starts to flap up and down. I had to repack the area around the bolt holes to reinforce the plastic to prevent any movement. A minor design fault.

The workshop manual says you should change the oil every one thousand kilometres but I think this is excessive and since I do not race the machine or even achieve full throttle, I

change the oil every three thousand kilometres and it still is not badly degraded.

Now the good news. The WR450 F is a great bike to ride. It is nimble and above all stable. Not that I ever test it to its limits. For an average club rider it is ideal and forgiving.

The power is there instantly when needed and it has got me out of trouble on a few occasions. Like jumping up rock steps, I know it will do it without stalling at the crucial moment.

It is a bike that instills confidence although I am mindful of this and every time I start to feel really safe I shut down, settle down and get back to reality.

I did think about buying the 250 version but there is more tarmac to cover between lanes, post NERC, so I plumbed for the extra power for the road sections. Any experienced Trail rider will tell you that, on the lanes, a 250 has all the power you will ever need.

Some say weight is a factor but when you examine the statistics there is less than 10% difference between most bikes.

The brake pads do not seem to wear out as quickly as they have done on my previous machines. Which is a bonus. Having said that it has been a very dry year.

I am pleased about the bearing seals, they are an excellent fit and the bearings are showing no signs of wear so far.

Chain and sprocket wise I am on my second chain and my fourth front sprocket and my third back sprocket. Again this is good in my experience.

So far the electric start has not let me down and the only time I left the ignition light on and flattened the battery it started on the kick start first time and was charged up in one ride.

Overall the build quality is excellent and I would recommend the bike to anyone.

Previous mounts: 1954 BSA Bantam 125cc, 1958 BSA Bantam 175 complete with fairing, no joke, 1958 BSA 250cc, 1956 BSA Gold Star DB 34 500cc (the mechanical love of my life), 1979 Suzuki DR 350cc, 2000 Husquarna TE 400 E, 1999 Suzuki DR 350cc.

I do believe buying a bike is more to do with personal psychology than road tests. If you like the look of it, buy it. You will feel positive about it from the start and that is what really matters.

There is no such thing as a perfect bike. Some, however, are more reliable than others. Get out there and enjoy your riding!

John Robinson

A BIT OF LIGHT RELIEF

An aging biker decides to join the local TRF group on one of their rides. They stop for their second refreshments of the day about 150 miles into the ride. As the biker goes to dismount, he finds that a day of chasing young guys on modern bikes down rocky lanes, no electric start, a hard seat and his age have conspired to cause stiffness in nearly every one of his joints.

He walks, almost stumbles, in discomfort to catch up to the young guys who have gone into the ice cream shop. His gate is

uncomfortable even to watch from a distance. Once inside he orders a sundae from a fresh faced, pretty teenager.

The biker attempts to match her pace as she moves along behind the counter adding toppings to order but starts to feel increasingly self-conscious about her watching him clamber along in full gear and in obvious discomfort. "Crushed nuts", she asks.

"No, I think that it's arthritis", answers the biker.

Dave Blair, *Lancs Group*

SOS Children is the worlds biggest charity for orphaned and abandoned kids. In October 2006 6 of us rode 2000 km to raise money for their Children's Village in Marrakech. Quite a challenge but hugely enjoyable.

We went into the Sahara desert where they do the Paris Dakar Rally. We took deserted mountain passes through the snow capped Atlas mountains and we crossed the plains all the way from the Atlantic back to Marrakech.

The trip ended at the SOS Village to a reception of 150 very excited children. The orphanage was very different to what you might imagine. The kids live in permanent family units with other children who are who are effectively their brothers and sisters. They have a mother who is with them all the time and the whole atmosphere is designed to be as normal an upbringing as any child could hope for. After showing us their wonderful school and orphanage we returned the favour by allowing them to clamber all over us and the bikes and even gave a few rides which went down well.

The bikes were Honda XR enduro machines and did their job well. Light enough to skim over the deep Sahara desert sand dunes and durable enough to handle the long days. Starting in Marrakech our first day was designed to be a gentle start heading south over the winding mountain roads and onto the edge of the Sahara, just a rocky scrubland at this point. This didn't seem to stop everyone from exiting the road at the earliest opportunity and riding most of the second half of the day on the myriad of tracks that criss cross just

about any road you take. We soon found one of the nicest things about Morocco is there are almost unlimited places to just ride over the dirt. Either side of every road is just miles of dusty open land with sand, mud, hills and rocks. Just about anything you could want to ride an enduro bike through and always a path to suit any ability. We ranged from a professional racer to a rider whose only off road experience was the field you park your bikes in at Brands Hatch. Everyone was raving about it by the end.

To get to the Sahara proper is another 350 Km so we opted for an early start on day two and headed east. The landscape slowly becomes more remote as you travel on the southern most road in Morocco. Further down are just thousands of miles of sand dunes. The jagged hillsides around you are made up of layer after layer of rock deposits that contain every possible shade of red, brown, purple, green and yellow. With a huge clear blue desert sky above, it's beautiful. The amount of fossils for sale by the roadside is incredible and you only need to take a short walk to find them just lying around on the ground. A truly ancient land.

Our goal was Erg Chebbi. A series of 700 foot tall sand dunes that looks like a mountain from the distance. The directions were fairly basic. You just follow the road till it runs out, turn left and then head towards the tallest of the towering dunes. It really was that simple. And they are just like mountains only a wonderful shade of yellowy orange.

As you get closer you see a few mini castles. These are actually guest houses

and despite being made entirely from mud are very clean, comfortable and inviting.

So we stopped just as it was getting dark, had a well earned meal and strolled up the dunes to marvel at the stars over the Sahara Desert.

Next day, bikes in the sand. Most of us were up to watch the sun rising from over the Algerian border a few kms away before wolfing down breakfast ready for Paris Dakar action. Actually not so easy as it sounds. God knows how those riders travel for days across this stuff. Its great fun but you need to sit right back and keep the power on or the front of the bike sinks in and the bike stops in a hole followed by you falling softly into the sand. Having worked out a good technique we headed further in and only then did we realise the size of the things. Without the GPS it would be easy to get lost as there are no reference points and the whole scale of things is distorted because everything is massive. Cresting a dune successfully was only possible by stopping right on the top. If you stop too early you can't get up the last bit. Stop too late and you find yourself flying down the other side for 200 feet. However it is all soft sand and even the most ham-fisted riding is punished with nothing worse than and comedy crash and a bit of puffing and panting getting the bike going again. After 2 hours we had worked out a nice little course and everyone was kicking up huge plumes from the back wheel and jumping the dunes like pros, well the smaller dunes at least.

Having sweated like good uns and feeling like heroes it was back onto slightly more familiar surfaces and on with the travelling. We turned back north west to a place called Todra and a 400 foot gorge. This is basically a split in the



Riding Lessons at SOS Village

mountains that you can ride through. There was a road passing through it when I first went there last year but the winter rains had completely demolished this so all that was left was a river and some big slabs of concrete. Between us we dragged, jumped and skidded all the bikes through, much to the amusement of the other sightseers who stood on the edge taking photos. We did get a round of applause though and we also got to see the other side which is the best bit. On the way back a couple of brave French guys were attempting to do the same with their Varaderos but we left them to it as the limbs were getting heavy by now.

One thing that became a ritual for us was decent grub. Burning up so much energy every day had the stomachs rumbling regularly so it was decent lunch and dinner without fail. The Moroccan food was tasty, clean and plentiful. They eat a lot of Tagine, which is a meat stew cooked in a clay pot and served steaming hot in the pot. Couscous, fish and huge salads also went down well and when all that was done we even got pizza and a wicked egg and chips.

Our mission took us further west and into the Atalas mountains proper. They do have a few ski runs so we took the bikes up there to see what they were like. Obviously as you reach

the snow line the temperature drops massively but the view was more than enough to keep us going. The High Atlas Mountains to give them their correct name reach 6,500 feet and only some of the way has tarmac, so the rest was down to us. Once at the top the track continues for miles with mountains towering above one side and the tops of smaller ones on the other. The progress was slow but we managed to cut right over the top. We went through the villages of the mountain people whose simple lives consisted of a little mud hut, a couple of goats and a tiny bit of land cut into the mountain side. Whatever they made us they were quite happy to see us and always ran over to look at the bikes and point us in the right direction. Quite humbling really as they had virtually nothing but were so warm and friendly. A few bottles of water, biros and sweets lighter we emerged at the other side feeling like real adventurers.

Now the road was tarmac again and as twisty as you could want. Just mile after mile of sweeping left and right handers. We did another 20 miles stopped for the night ready to the climb up into the mountains again the next day. Our guest house was in a national park and was right on the edge of a river. One of the better organised riders brought a bottle of single malt so we had a nip or three of that before retiring to sleep like the dead

The Tizi n Tess pass was the next adventure. Here the road goes up and up again and then suddenly drops down to sea level over a series of hairpin bends with a great view over the valley below. The bikes did well and the knobbly tyres gave a lot of confidence in the corners despite their appearance. By now everyone seemed into their stride and the biggest issue was becoming sore rear syndrome as we had been sitting on these things for nearly 5 days in a row. With 3 days to go we were starting to feel the money we

asked people to contribute was very justified. Woe betide anyone who quipped about having a nice leisurely holiday when we got back. The thing really was quite challenging.

An overnight stop in Agadir was a welcome chance to stock up on a few supplies. Despite being a bit of a typical seaside resort it was friendly enough and put us in a good position to head for the hills again in the morning. We aimed north and snaked up to the waterfalls at Immouzer, unfortunately more fall than water. What it did mean though was we picked up a bit of local knowledge and instead of continuing along our intended tarmac route we managed to get right the way out to the coast on unsurfaced tracks again. We then went along the Atlantic before finding a route down onto the beach and across the smooth flat sand. All went well until one unsuspecting rider rode into what he thought was a puddle but was in fact three feet of water. The engine kept going but it took 20 minutes of revving before the popping, coughing and black smoke cleared. At least we could carry on because the evenings seem to draw in fast once the sun hits the horizon.

We made it to Essaouira just before dark. It's a great place. Completely different to the hubbub of the rest of Morocco. It's a port town with a walled old city containing the Souk (Market). Unlike Marrakech you can wander the lanes and browse without an overzealous sales guy popping up every two minutes. Great food here too.

Our last day was Back to Marrakech and we had set ourselves the challenge of riding off road the whole way back. We actually did a bit on tarmac but armed with GPS checkpoints I reckon we still did 80% on the dust. Again different terrain. Mostly farmland with gentle rolling hills and tracks. We had a river crossing which was fun. Having walked it to see how far past our boots it came we gingerly

ventured through. Not too many rocks under the surface meant no spills although we were getting quite competitive by this stage and a few bets were laid.

Marrakech came up all too fast but we still had the orphanage to visit. The village is just South of Marrakech set on a beautiful bit of land surrounded by trees. It was a Sunday so at first all was quiet but within minutes the kids had heard we were there.

The director gave us an impressive official tour before the very well behaved children were allowed to come and have a look at the bikes. I am not sure what they made of us as we were plastered from head to foot in grime and dust. It didn't take them long to decide we were fair game and there was a queue to twist the throttle and rev the unsilenced bikes to red

line. Never seen so many happy seven year olds.

Suddenly it was all over. Great to get off the bikes as the various bumps and knocks we picked up were starting to show. Sad that it was finished but we rightly felt proud.

The entry fee was £2750 and we managed to get 20% of that to the charity. A big thank you to Graeme, Lee, Richard, Spencer and Helmut for all your effort, mad stunts, good humour and for making a difference.

Charlie Limon

Ed: Charlie is organising SOS Morocco 2007 and SOS Ecuador, both donate substantial amounts to a very worthwhile cause for more information he can be contacted on 07968 727209 or www.7tiffy.cc

PRESS RELEASE

A Year on at Llanerchindda Farm

Now that the Hadley family have been at the farm for 12 months its time to let you know how things have progressed.

They have spent a lot of time and effort on improving and developing the facilities on offer including refurbishment of some of the bedrooms and bathrooms in the Guesthouse and Self-Catering Cottages and internal re-decoration of the public areas.

Work is scheduled to start in the next few weeks on a purpose built storage facility and workshop for bike and 4x4 customers, with the expected completion of this building before Christmas 2006.

In order for them to continue to develop and improve the product on offer and to provide the services you require they need a little help from you.

When making a reservation at the farm they would appreciate it if you would only book the actual accommodation you require, as potential guests are constantly being told that they are fully booked at the farm, only to find on the night that there is accommodation free because somebody has not arrived or has cancelled at the last minute. They would appreciate your help and understanding in this matter, and hope to be able to work with their guests in order to prevent disappointment to other potential guests.

Trail riding is still a very popular sport in this area and they hope to be able to continue to offer the services expected to TRF members riding from Llanerchindda.

If you would like further details please contact them on 01550 750274 or e-mail: info@cambrianway.com or www.cambrianway.com

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PRE-CHRISTMAS RUN

On a crisp December morning I set off from my Gloucestershire home on a twenty-five mile ride to Ayno - where I met up with fellow riders (Bill, Jules and Brendon) after a quick chat, and the usual pre-ride excuses "wrong tyres, wrong gearing, hangover" - you know the kind of thing! We eventually set off on to a byway past Walton Grounds (a steep, rutted down hill track which passes through a ford) the first soaking of the day! - heading towards King Sutton, then Charlton. After 1.5 km on the right we hoped to take a byway which is seasonally TRO'd, but had to reconsider as this had been totally wrecked by horses and tractors, so we decided to carry to a byway at Stuchbury Hall. Crossing a couple of fields and a railway line, through another stream, here we had the first off of the day - somebody, not mentioning any names (Jules) oops!! came off and hit an unsuspecting tree.

Carrying on towards Falcutt, we joined a well rutted ORPA to Astwell House. We then went on a byway past Presthaywood Farm which turned out to be a very wet and rutted track and then on through a small patch of wood, which was up and down, rutted and very wet. (cracking lane Grommet!!). We then hit the A43 and so had to retrace our steps back to Wappingham. Taking a byway on the right, which took us across several fields with the usual gates, turning left towards Abthorpe, which became a ridge and furrows which were filled with water and is the only section of wild lane which has not been graded (beware it didn't get its name for nothing!!) - one of us (sorry Jules) took a dive in the first of the five ponds. We then spent a happy half an hour trying to kick start a drowned WR400. By this time, with us all feeling a little hot and bothered, we SUGGESTED someone's next bike had an electric start - oh happy days!!

We then carried on through a series of gates to Abthorpe, through the village to Helmdon, turning right onto a ORPA for 2

km which skirts across fields, through a small wood and on to a grassy lane to Milthorpe. At the tarmac we went onto Weston, we would normally turn right here and pick up the byway to Banbury Lane, but this again had a seasonal TRO, so we carried on to Moreton Pinkney, again joining an OPRA heading back towards Banbury Lane. Turning left on a byway to Cannons Asby which was very mudded and rutted, then across the road on to another byway to Preston Capes - this ended in a crossroad and we went on to Daventry for fuel and food.

After a "al fresco" petrol station lunch, we headed to Badby, where we turned right into Catesby. We would have taken the byway which runs past Sharman's Hill to Catesby, but again this was seasonally TRO'd. At Upper Catesby we turned left to Hellidon. In Hellidon, right past the pub signed lower Catesby and then right again. Almost immediately we turned left onto the ORPA marked Hellidon Bridal Road. Turning right and left onto a UCR, which was closed to cars and carriages, but not motorcycles or pushbikes (this was a very muddy downhill track with ruts all the way) - this took us to Marston Doles where we turned left then right for Priors Hardwick, then turned left onto a OPRA and on to a byway which goes to Woodford Halse. Then byway to Woodford Hill, then byway to Crockwell Farm where it changes to an OPRA to Culworth. Then onto an excellent ORPA which is a long water filled, rutted track which ends in a shallow ford - not a good idea to overtake your fellow riders on this track apparently as they get B..... soaked or so I am told (sorry Brendon!!).

Then back to Weedon Lois and down the ORPA to Astwell, then Falcutt via the ORPA, then by road back to Ayno - where we said our goodbyes, thanked Bill for organising the run and all made our way home.

All in All a good day out - a bit flatter than were used too, but great day all the same

Gary Williams, Oxfordshire Group

SWIMMING WITH DOLPHINS

(WITH APOLOGIES TO THE FAST SHOW)

Isn't rain fantastic, it collects in the sky and then comes down. Fantastic. Rain, it gathers in puddles and makes a splash when you drive through it. Fantastic. Winter rain makes Ramblers invisible. Fantastic.

This week I R B mainly wearing waterproofs. We had a lot of rain this week. Which was nice!

Gale force winds and four inches of rain overnight did not bode well for the Saturday ride. Mark, Alex and I were to meet at Masham at 9.15 for a 9.30 start. We were all there by 8.45 and away by 9 o'clock. Keen or what!

I had set off from Teesside in pouring rain and forty miles later the clouds departed and produced the most glorious sunrise I had seen for years. The surrounding clouds were a vivid red with purple edges. Centered over Masham was a window in the weather, that was to last until three in the afternoon.

Grewelthorpe Lane was our first port of call. Oh no, horrors of horrors, a dozen 4x4's in the narrow lane. They were getting gripped and sorted, as I picked my way through the convoy.

Alex decided to give a demonstration of swimming in the deepest puddle he could find. Why he decide to choose side-stroke as his style of choice I do not know, that went out in the 1950's. I have heard of Swimming with Dolphins but not Swimming with 4x4's. That and the laid down burn out, heaped on the embarrassment, not to mention the discomfort. Alex quickly recovered his composure mounted and left the much amused 4x4's behind.

Well out of sight, Alex stopped and emptied

his helmet, rang out his gloves and was ready to face the gale force crosswind that was blowing across Masham Moor.

What you miss when you don't take your camera. First a sunrise. Now Alex, normally the surest of riders with an immaculate style. Well everyone has off days.

Oh no, another convoy of 4x4's, making their way across Sype Land, on the old coach road. These must be Christmas outings, I have never seen so many 4x4's out in one day. This time they were head-on. As I approached they, all ten of them, pulled to the side. Very polite I thought. When I got to the gate Mark said "What Happened?" "Nothing" I replied. "Your face is covered in blood". Sure enough when I looked down there was blood all over the inside of my chin guard and apparently all over one side of my face. No wonder the cars moved over. I must have been quite a sight. Maybe they thought I was in a rush to get to the nearest A&E. Fortunately we had a shower shortly after so the blood got washed away before it congealed.

The cause was just a nose bleed. I was victim to a duff surgeon, at the tender age of six. It was routine then to boost the surgeon salaries by removing Tonsils and Adenoids. I have had the inconvenience of nose bleeds after every cold ever since. Thirty seconds nasal pressure and we were rolling again.

Oh no, I do not believe it, another convoy, on Dead Man's Hill. 4x4's were all over the Dales like a rash. At least this time they opened the gate and we past them without incident. Having said that my WR did try to change rut halfway up the gully. A nasty moment.

Melmerby Moor, then High Lane and a pit stop at West Burton. Unfortunately they had sold all

the fruit pies, so it was chicken and mushroom pie for me. (Tasty, tasty, very, very tasty. They are very tasty). Then washed down with the habitual pint of cow juice.

Sitting on the bench, I observed, one of the Frev-offers, (Visitors who rent or buy properties in the Dales) start up an A6 Audi and drove with difficulty, the wrong way, passed the shops.

The village has a one-way system. Unusual but the fact that all fifteen cars parked along the road were facing in the same direction should have given her a clue.

Down in the valleys there was shelter and with an air temp of 10°C it was pleasant for the time of year. By this time Alex had dried out, as we headed for Kidstones Scar.

Was it wild up on the top. I'll say. We were glad to get down into Bainbridge. Filling up with petrol, the Garage owner related a incident that occurred the previous Sunday. "There were two motorbikes, just like yours, pulled in for petrol ant local bobby arrived at same time. He did 'um both for wrong sized number plates, then found out one was not taxed or insured. Before you knew it, there were six coppers and three police cars involved. Then they sent for a police van to take the motorbike away. All this took three hours. He was fined £150 for no insurance, £150 for no Tax and £60 for small number plate. All for £4 of petrol. And I can tell you mate my business did NOWT all afternoon."

This illustrates two points. How seriously the

Police are taking the situation regarding illegal motoring. How local businesses can be affected. So make sure you are legal. Otherwise you will be contributing to Police funds in the New Year.

Meanwhile back at the ranch. Over sixties will understand that quote. We retraced our steps, (we have loss some good lanes) and headed for Caldbergh and the two mile trench.

So much rain had fallen over night that the water had no time to drain away. So the trench had turned into a continuous stream of water about four inches deep for miles. Amazing.

Not a sole in sight and the brake pads down to the metal by the time we got into Closterdale. The combination of water and sandy soil grinds the pads away even if you do not use the brakes. Once the pads get really wet they slough off like snake skins.

Back at the vehicles smiles all round. Mark, what can you say. He kept out of trouble all day. A star rider!

Well that is it, the last ride in 2006. Another year shot to pieces. Not that it bothers me. You see tomorrow I am afraid I will be very, very, drunk!

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun. Happy New Year!

John Robinson

P.S. Mark lost his tax disc on the ride. Well it could have been worse!

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news, views, information, useful forms, articles, press information, club contacts & more

COMING SOON: TRF FORUM, TRO DATABASE

SCRAMBLING

Someone mentioned a Scrambler. Well this old photo (circa 1930) shows one. It doubled for hill climbs, grass tracking and trail riding. Shows how far we have progressed. In those days it was a dangerous sport. A pair of jodhpurs, welly boots, a back brace, a pair of

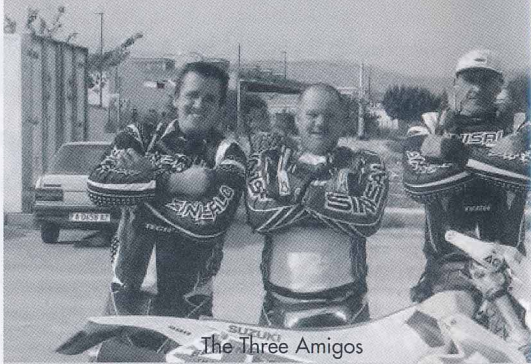
Gauntlets, and a metal helmet. The helmet was to keep your head in one piece in case of an accident. Apparently that is how the compulsory crash helmet law came into force. The Ambulance and Fire Brigades were always complaining about having to clean up the mess when someone came off a motorbike. Understandable.

Can you identify the model and cc?

Funnily enough I met a farmer the other day while out trail riding near Swainby in North Yorkshire. He was one of the Tate brothers who dominated trials and scrambling in the Sixties. He was on a quad bike. "Saved my life this quad has", he said. "Had to have a double hip replacement and this is the only thing that keeps me going. I am just going up to fetch some cattle down".

I just thought there is always a price to pay for competitive riding. Anyway we put the world to rights in about half an hour. Room 101 would contain DEFRA, NYMNPA, street furniture and about six other minor irritants. We epitomised the Grumpy Old Men Syndrome, but then again we could remember times when we did not need a thousand different laws to tell us what we could or could not do. Common sense prevailed. It was live and let live. People were too busy earning a living to worry about what other people were doing. Shut your ... Right!

John Robinson



My partner Darren is a TRF member. He also enjoys trials riding, motocross and endurance racing. Last year Darren and 2 friends enjoyed a 7 day break in Spain on a riding holiday booked with 'Blazing Saddles', which he would highly recommend. He hopes to be able to do the trip again next year - he was unable to do it this year as our first baby arrived!

Jo Curtis



What we put our lovers through for the love of bikes!

Oh the joys of motoring ... my wife after a long trip on the back of a rented TTR in Cambodia.

Gary Bedford

TRAILS, BIKES & PARTS

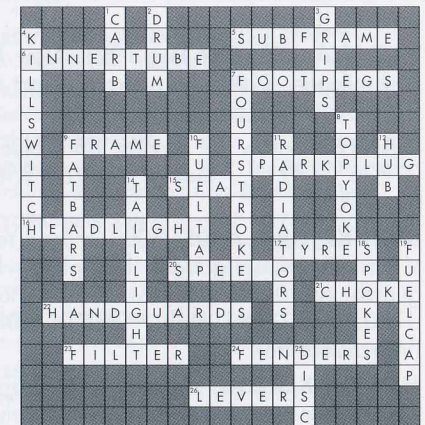
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Solution to crossword, issue 340



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HONDA SLR 650 1997, P. 22,900 miles, new tyres, MOT 24/07/07, Tax 03/07, heated grips, handguards. Top box & screen if required. Good cond. £925 ono. Tel: 01254 662337 (Lancs.)

SUZUKI DRZ 400S Mar 02. Good cond. 5800m. T&T. Mostly road miles. No longer used. £1800. Tel: 01929 424204 (Dorset).

HONDA CRF 230 May 06. Great green laner. All mods. Renthals, hand guards, bashplate, workshop manual. V.g.c. £2250 o.n.o. Tel: 01904 704122 mob: 07905 070148 (York).

SUZUKI DRZE Yellow 2005. Taxed under 2000m, green laned only. Exc. cond. Garaged last 6 mths. Some spares. £2350. Tel: 07917 190318 (S. Yorks).

EXCHANGE Yamaha Serow, 'M' reg, mech. good, recent rebore, cosmetically fair (used for proper trail riding!!) for larger 4 stroke trail bike with elec. start (cash balance). Or sell. **For Sale:** Moto Guzzi 500 cc V twin. 'J' reg. Needs wiring sorted & some attention, but believed basically sound. Hence only £390. Tel: Gordon 01524 427919 or text 07903 367978 (Lancaster area).

YAMAHA SERROW Reg 1991. New MOT. Low mileage. £1000 no offers. Contact Kevin 01202 624478 (day).

WANTED Serow air scoops, dark blue. Tel: 01726 64911, mob: 07702 956194 (Cornwall).

SUZUKI DRZ 400S 3000 miles. Yellow. V.g.c. Renthals, gadget bashplate, hand guards, AC10s. 12 mths t&t. £2100 ono. Tel: 01905 422798, mob: 07970 804658 (Worcestershire).

HONDA XLR250 1992, MOT, approx 15000 miles, owned 8 yrs & 100% reliable,

but slightly tatty. £695 ono. Tel: 01902 373882, mob: 07779 133995.

WANTED TTR250 EXHAUST SILENCER Genuine Yamaha part required for my '04 model. Fair price paid for good cond. Contact Richard on 01642 442113 or 07736 882002 (Teesside).

FOR SALE Suzuki DRZ400SK5 Dec '04. 1530 miles, mainly off road. New chain & sprockets. Taxed. £2300 ono. Tel: 07860 847442 for more info. (South Manchester).

YAMAHA XT225 SEROW 1994, T&T, v.g.c. 18000 kms, new tyre/disc/shock, extras & spares. £950 ono. Tel: 01252 714574 (Surrey).

TBM MAGAZINES V.g.c. From issue 2-75 exc no.s 30, 31, 36, 39, 46. £40 ono. Tel: 07913 563849.

2002 DRZ400E (SK3 2003 model) UK bike, elec start, 2500m, year's MOT, Renthals. Hand/rad/sump guards, tool bags. One owner, good condition. £2000 ono. Tel: 020 8330 7520, mob: 07903 653487 (Surrey).

FOR SALE: CCM 404 DS Aug 2005. V.g.c. 1300 miles, new AC10 tyres. Sump, case & handguards. Elec. start (DRZ engine). £2,750. Tel: 01706 219971 (Lancs).

HONDA DOMINATOR SPARES 23 litre Acerbis tank, red. New rear tyre, alloy sprockets, brake pads. £100 the lot. Tel: 01257 241289, mob: 07799 460641.

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GROUPS

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

BLACK COUNTRY John Oseland, Tel: 01902 656011
1st Tues, 9pm, The Longford House, Watling Street, Cannock.

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 Adam Hedley, Tel: 01579 349217
3rd Thurs, 8pm, Pencaron Club, Bodmin.

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

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

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

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 Wheatshaf Public House, Hatfield Peveral.

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

GLOUCESTER Richard Simpson, Tel: 07812 402021
1st Wed, 8pm, Wagonworks Club, Tuffley Ave., Gloucester.

HERTFORDSHIRE Stephen Vaughn, Tel: 01438 231571
2nd Thurs, 8.30pm, The Old Guinea, Ridge, Near Potters Bar.

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

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

KENT Phil Airey, Tel: 01732 847055, Nige Jeffrey
Tel: 01795 438769 2nd Wed, 8.30p.m. for 9pm,
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, The Nightingale, Nettleham 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, 9pm, 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, 8pm, Royal British Legion Club, Rutten Lane, Yarnton.

PEAK DISTRICT Steve Cartwright, Tel: 01782 848034
1st Thurs, 8pm, Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby.

RIBBLE VALLEY Mark Wolstenholme, Tel: 01282 432088
2nd Tues, 8.30pm, Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59).

SOMERSET Mark Stride, Tel: 01935 825234
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 Wed, 9pm, The Old Sun, 10 Middle Street, Nether Heyford, Northampton NN7 3LL.

SOUTH WALES Stuart Dodwell, Tel: 01446 710851
1st Tues, 8pm, Bedwas Rugby Club, Bedwas, Nr Caerphilly.

SUFFOLK Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073
Last Wed, Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Wey-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 Ogle, 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 8.30pm.

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 Tues, White Hart, Fernhill Heath, Worcs.