



**TRAIL RIDERS
FELLOWSHIP**



Devon TRF Newsletter

November 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the Nov 2020 Newsletter.

It really is amazing what our group is capable of and we should be extremely proud of the people that make these things happen. Thanks folks and WELL DONE!

Don't forget that we still have vacant positions to fill, so if you feel you may be interested in them, then please contact to discuss the posts.

The primary function of the newsletter is to educate, motivate, and inform its readers. This can only be completed with your assistance

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on:-

Meetings will be held via Zoom, Web Conferencing.

please see Forum for more details

EVENTS

Check [Forum](#) for Latest Updates

**T2T – will run
16th-18th April 2021**



Paddling ruts though soon saps energy on a long ride



November 2020 Meeting Minutes

TRF meeting on Zoom

Due to current restrictions, meeting held on the zoom platform, invitations sent out via forum, face book.

11 attendees, no apologies received

TF opened the meeting and Noel welcomed everyone including the new member **Nigel, from Loxbeare.**

Paul, Group rep

Paul reported some changes in management at national level, and pointed out that there had been a call for any interested parties with some management, specialist and other quite specific skill to apply for a national roll.

All group officers had received the email but no one had applied for any posts.

It was not known what the national uptake was.

It was thought a great idea that Devon could be represented on the national leadership structure, so if anyone who was not at the meeting thinks this would be for them, contact me and I will give you the details.

Ian, Lane clearing

Everything on hold at the moment.

Ray informed that the road closed lane clearing signage was with him.

Ray, ROW

1 192-207 Three Tree, Teignmouth golf course, blocked by felled trees at both ends. PROW were already aware of the issues here and have planned a site meeting with the landowner and forestry worker. In the meantime, Land Charges have added this lane to their digitalised records, having previously omitted it.

I spoke to Jon, he did make the site visit with the new owner and forestry contractor, the owner claimed not to know about the ORPA, then on viewing Jon's maps, claimed the true route is the other side of the fence. Land he owns too. Jon also mentioned to him the ditches he'd dug 'for drainage' although they don't drain anywhere. I asked Jon what his next move is, he said he would tell the owner to clear the UCR. I said we'd been patient, but had volunteers to clear the obstructions, which Jon understood and confirmed we were legally able to do. I'll wait for lockdown2 to conclude.

202 017 Gulmwell Lane Combe-in-Teign-head, Jon Rowlands mentioned he'd been in conversation with David Halpin, the retired surgeon who owns the orchard to the east of this lane, who refuses to acknowledge that it is a legal road, continually referring to it as an ancient drove road, and Mr Halpin's concerns about 4x4s using the lane and damaging his stone wall due to the narrowness of the way. Jon had thought about re-instating the

central bollard that had been in place, or a TRO with motorcycle exemption as a solution, as Mr Halpin does not complain about the bikes.

3 202-081 The Compton Mud Plug The TTRO finished on 22/08/20, I believe the scaffolding closures were moved to one side by trail riders. There are plans for some clearing and scraping back in mid-October, some assistance from DGTRF has been requested by PROW.

I have spoken to Jon, he still intends to carry out phase 2 (Grading the top and putting in steps to break the water flow) with his contractor, no decision that our help is required as the contractor says he has the equipment. Jon confirms he too thinks a second wet spot will appear where the dip is, but may deal with that in phase 2. He's not sure when Phase 2 will take place.

4 202-360 Fursdon waiting to hear from Peter Guy if any progress made. **STILL AWAITING UPDATE FROM PROW**

5 Claim C-030 Bradford and Cookbury up for DMMO, replies by 15 Jan 2021

Rob Drake has offered to represent DGTRF at the DMMO. I will take him up on this.

GRM

The beta version will soon be available to group Officers. I am still working on the Cornwall submission together with Andrew Sillence.

We voted for Rob Drake to represent the TRF at a council meeting, this was carried. (thankyou for your support Rob)

Sean, Marketing

Sean had written and submitted an article to the newsletter and also to Trail Magazine.

AOB

We discussed the riding in the lockdown and the room was split.

It is a legitimate form of exercise, just like horse riding and mountain biking/road riding.

Only 4 weeks, some felt it better to wait and avoid any bad press.

Lanes are busier than usual with walkers.

There is a dearth of ride outs advertised on the forum, this may be a reflection of the current times. Sometimes despite the offer of a ride there is no takers.

Some riders tend to stick to their own smaller group of friends for easier to arrange short excursions in the area.

The question was asked, should mountain bikes have their own section within the Forum.

It was felt that they already were integrated by the fact that many of them owned and used trail bikes as well. Their use should be encouraged and built on.

Chris told us about the CLA and NFU being allowed to temporarily close ROW to ensure safety of stock and people for 40 – 90 days. There were fears expressed that this could be used to deter use and would be difficult to define and track the timescales involved. No immediate fear as it was still in its planning stage.

Could we make meetings more entertaining/interesting to encourage more people. Other groups are doing this and regularly have 20 – 30 attendees.

Note. If anyone feels able to produce an entertaining presentation/lesson/tutorial/story/slide show or even some lane-based comedy, please contact me and I will gladly add it to the agenda.

The next meeting will be this year's AGM. It would be great to see a larger number of attendees. If this is the only one you come to this year, please try!

TF thanked everyone for their time and input and closed the meeting

Autumn 2020 (Sean Comber)

I love the seasons, each brings something new, colours, smells, temperature, mood. I know the last couple of winters have been a bit dreary, but we always hope for that crisp, cold morning dew and wintery scenes of snow hanging from the branches giving off that Narnia vibe. Ahead of that we are currently in autumn, the colours are close to peaking, maples, sycamores, beeches are all turning beautifully, along with vivid scarlet virginia creeper draped over garden walls at the end of lanes. With all of the Covid crap happening (again) it feels essential to get out whilst we can, just like trying to make the most of spring, when we came out of lockdown first time around. Take it while you can!

**Shiny new bike!**

The state of the nation seems to hang heavily over a lot of us at the moment, struggling to make things work, worried about having work in the first place. This malaise hangs over charity organisations, sports groups, and most hobbyists. There are no exhibitions, no 'events' and no fun. I've noticed on the Devon TRF forum, since June after lockdown there has been only 5 runs posted up from Ray, Neil and Trevor, and I'm not sure Ray had any takers. Why is this I wonder? There did seem a trend towards less rides being posted before Covid, but the pandemic seems to have made things worse. This is set against what seems to be more riders out and about and the SWEAT Facebook group also seem to be very active. From my point of view, there has been a slow but increasing trend towards 'local' groups on WhatsApp. It started with me and Paul, as we lived within a few hundred yards of each other and being secretary I contacted him years ago. Then Nick's name came up handed on by Paul Studley I think, noting a local TRF rider looking to get out. Then Nick was contacted by Rich in Wellington, and he was added to the group. Soon followed Paul's mate Jason, who was enticed out from Willand on his WR250. Next up was Chris linked via Pete Smith, one of the Loddon Vale crew who knows him from classic

scrambling, with him came his mate John Stocker, all TRF which is good news. Paul B from HM Motors who like Jason and Paul S are/were all track day power rangers was next to sign up with his thirsty 250 2 smoke KTM. We met Dan, randomly down a lane and he tagged along on a Honiton ride and was added as was Phil, who Paul B linked us with via his bike being in the garage. Finally in the last month Martin was included on his shiny Husky 250 as a mate of Jason. So there you have it. A Devon TRF faction, mostly members or in the process of being coerced, all within a 15 mile radius of Cully and all screaming to go out on rides. If this has been replicated across Devon/England and Wales then it is not surprising there are less rides posted on the forum. This and concern (may be) of mixing outside known acquaintances could explain the trends. It does show (a) the power of social media/modern comms and (b) how good we are at networking providing there is an instigator, I guess. I do not see this trend changing any time soon either.



Relaxing after successfully fording another river

With our Whatsapp group being into double figures now tho, it means when a ride is posted up on the chat, inevitably someone at least will be disappointed if we keep numbers to 6 as required by Covid and recommended by the TRF anyway. I'm never keen to go out in bigger groups anyway. Too complicated, slows you down and annoys other lane users. The good news is that Nick is now map savvy and has a Garmin GPS64 like me and Paul S has an impressive Garmin Montana that he is getting his head round, as well as having ridden the lanes sufficiently frequently to be able to scratch round anyway. So it is now a case of you snooze, you lose, or begin to organise multiple runs.

Anyway, being out on the bike, at least provides a few hours of escapism away from the unrelentingly depressing news of outbreaks, tiers, redundancies, and recessions. I try to get out at least once a week and recently for various reasons the rides have been around 60-70 miles for a morning or afternoon. I fancied a full day out though and had not been across to N Tawton for ages so plotted a 100 route to blow away the Covid miasma.

Within an hour or two, the ride was full, with Rich and John as 'reserves' should anyone drop out. Sunday was forecast dry but cloudy, mild and calm, so good enough for a day out. The 6 of us convened at socially acceptable distance and it was interesting to see the slowly changing face of Devon Trail riders bikes. TTRs, XRs, DRs held together with binder cord, cable ties and Duck tape are being replaced by WRs, EXCs, shiny Huskys (i.e. more KTM's) and may be 2 stroke Betas. This does partly reflect the demise of the old skool 'proper' trail bikes, which if you go hunting, then they are restricted to increasingly aged Serows and TTRs, Beta Alps, AJP's may be, though I've never seen one in Devon, Kawasaki KLXs, which were always a bit rubbish on the trail and Honda CRF250Ls which are quite popular, but a little porky. Still I was keeping my end up on the air cooled simplicity front with the TTR.



The lads in a leafy glade besides the Taw

Under a heavy sky, but promised dry day by the Met Office we trundled through Cully and up the hill over to the Trinity lanes which had been recently flailed which strangely changes the characteristics of a lane, and the one down from Week Cross is always heavily closed in during the summer, brambles as thick as your thumb dangling down, seeking out fresh faces to tear open. The farmer had recently taken the top of the hedge down so you could peer of the top across to Ball Copse and Rode Moors, but still had to be mindful of the briar scragging your hands and body. But on Sunday the job had been completed and the full width of the lane was available to ride giving it a very open feel. Riding down to Great Dorweeke, we met a dog walker and met a Landie coming up so we had to do a U'ey to ride up to a gate to pull in and let them through. The first time I've ever seen anyone in that lane and indicative of our Covid times of folk being out and about. Given we were on a mission, we only took direct lanes across the Exe up through Cadeleigh, steadily rising out of the Exe valley and up into the clouds it seemed. By Brindiwell we'd broken through the 200m contour and a thick mist was damping down my clothes which was concerning as I'd banked on a dry day and was wearing my old leaky padded trousers, with leaky over trousers on the top, with a T shirt, fleece and riding jacket without the waterproof membrane in it as it always seems to get tangled up. I was therefore not keen to be damp within an hour of a days ride and I was cursing myself for not going for the new 'winter' kit hanging up in the garage. At the end of the Coombe UCR we were at a heady 233m and the mist intensified. The normally panoramic views down across the rolling Devon countryside was draped under the thick cloud. This was probably the highest we'd climb, so I was hoping as we tracked west and dropped to lower altitudes we'd benefit from drier conditions. Still we had Cotton Farm UCR to rides which is a favourite and bloody lovely. The woods we rode through we cloaked in a thick aroma of leaf mould and damp mud. If splashing through the fords and scrambling up the stony incline to the farm fails to put a smile on your face, then you have no soul. Through Way Village and down to Claw showed the river run down Holly Water to be gaining flow after being almost dry over the summer, still it was not too slippy and the muddy southern section has been recently sanitised. The Wellesbeare lane was slightly playing on my mind as with the detour across the river now sporting quite a high horse gate, you are now effectively driven down the UCR running down the river, as it meanders a few 100 yards there are some deep washouts which would be challenging under high flow conditions. We'd had a lot of rain earlier in the week, but it had been dry for a few days so I was hoping we'd

be OK. At least I'd duck taped my over trousers around my boots, giving me a fighting chance of retaining dry feet. The lane past the farm was not blocked with farm machinery or too deep in cow ship so more pleasant than some times. Down through the copse and across the field brought us down to Binneford Water. Cunningly I held the gate to let the others through and suggested they crack on down the river to clear the gate. Although deepish, it was OK and we plunged through the pools and took a welcome break on the far bank, relieved we were not pumping water out of a drowned bike. Just down the road is the Splitwell Cross UCR which for some reason I never remember, even though it is a lovely long flowing lane down to Vellake. This was rapidly followed by the equally pleasing climb up the stoney lane at North Creedy which was rode without fuss and at the end we paused to allow Martin to rummage in his rucksack to change the battery on his GoPro, and it was possibly hear that we later heard he'd lost his car and house keys. This used to be a case of nipping down to the hardware shop to get one cut for a few coppers. Nowadays they are coded and cost a fortune to replace - £322 apparently - ouch!



Socially distanced chat

Now we made tracks west through Sandford with smoke curling out of the rustic cob thatched cottages, reminding us that winter is coming. It's such a comforting smell of well aged hard wood smouldering in a grate. Fantasies waft through your brain of warming hands in front of stoves in country pubs, a pint of dark syrupy local ale sat on a stained beer mat comfortably within reach. The chatter of friends huddled round the bar. All these thoughts are but memories at the moment in our socially distanced world. Pubs have heavily relied on the ability to sit outside all summer. I cannot imagine they will be so popular when you have to huddle in a tent in the beer garden under a patio heater in the dead of winter. Sad times. Leaving Sandford we cut cross country to the A377, and along the farm track to Knowle. Another couple of miles brought us to Colebrooke another pretty hamlet nestling in the Yeo valley, seemingly bypassed by the 21st Century and a large chunk of the 20th century it seems. We'd dropped over 100m of altitude now and the air was drier and my kit was beginning to dry, although I still was prodding the switch on my heated grips to try and encourage them to work as they were in one of their temperamental moods and we waiting for numbness to set in before relenting and providing enough heat to take away the pins and needles in my fingers.

Rising and falling across the rolling hills brought us to Bow and another easy lane to keep us from getting too bored from road work, before we climbed once more to Zeal Monachorum, and the very pleasant lane starting at Gissage bridge, splashing through a stream then climbing up to Loosebeare where we looped the UCRs on 2 sides of a triangle, the north one being quite rutted and so I knew Chris would be cursing me, as I saw him drop back a bit, paddling through. Up to then he'd been comfortably pacing me which was great news. Paddling ruts though soon saps energy on a long ride.



Plenty of mud out there

We repeated the first lane and passed one of numerous trig points I noted on the day. Seeing trig points always illustrate you are dinging the high points or ridges, with clear line of sight to others in the area. The concrete pillars erected by the OS are the result of the elaborate mapping exercise of the UK. The process began in 1935 to assist in the accurate retriangulation of Great Britain. The Ordnance Survey's first trig point was erected on 18 April 1936 near Cold Ashby, Northamptonshire. In low-lying or flat areas some trig points are only a few metres above sea level and one is even at -1 m (near Little Ouse, Cambridgeshire). When all the trig points were in place, it was possible in clear weather to see at least two other trig points from any one trig point. Careful measurements of the angles between the lines-of-sight of the other trig points then allowed the construction of a system of triangles which could then be referenced back to a single baseline to construct a highly accurate measurement system that covered the entire country. In most of the UK, trig points are truncated square concrete (occasionally stone) pyramids or obelisks tapering towards the top. On the top a brass plate with three arms and a central depression is fixed: it is used to mount and centre a theodolite used to take angular measurements to neighbouring trig points. A benchmark is usually set on the side, marked with the letters "O S B M" (Ordnance Survey Bench Mark) and the reference number of the trig point. The standard trig point design is credited to Brigadier Martin Hotine (1898–1968), head of the Trigonometrical and Levelling Division of the Ordnance Survey. Many of them are now disappearing from the countryside as their function has largely been superseded by aerial photography and digital mapping using lasers and GPS using satellites.



Nick successfully crosses the Taw

From this high point we ran down into Bondleigh, to take in the Tarka Trail down to the river Taw on the way to North Tawton. Given the depths thus far, I was confident we'd be OK to cross it, but just in case I suggested Martin go across first to allow him to video us coming through.... Heh heh heh. It was deepish but not butt clenchingly deep. Still it was a relief to see all 6 of us across right side up and dry. We nipped around the grassy lane by the cheese factory and up through North Tawton which always seems a bit quiet and a shadow of its former days of Roman forts, wool industry, the railway and booming agriculture. We passed the 13th century church and down the eroding 'yellow road' to the main road and past Bathe Pool, which apparently fills with water at times of national crisis. We could not see it from the road, but I assume it is overflowing at the moment.

For the next hour and a half we rode the best lanes on offer in the area. First flowing west to the excellent long rocky lane at Langabeer down to the little ford at Rat Combe and then down to Taw Green and a blatt along Cocktree throat a hard packed flowing lane. The loop around Sessland to Hendicott goes on and on, ensuring you complete it with a grin from ear to ear. Crossing the field at Coxmoor resulting in a splash across the muddy river Yeo, the mud being a result of the poaching by the hooves of cattle accessing the river for water I guess. But as we opened the gate across the river, the whole herd practically stampeded towards us, with Nick in amongst them. It was only when I shooed them back did Nick emerge from their midst's, I did not realise he was even there! The lane back to the main road from Brandis Corner tracks the Yeo itself. The lane is always damp, but does not seem to get too flooded, so is always a hoot to ride; a little washed out in places but the stoney bottom ensures it is eminently rideable. Crossing the main road we trundled down the seemingly routine farm track at Post Cross, up front, I had to choose between two watery whoops, and went right, disappearing like a submarine

in an emergency dive into water that washed straight over the top of me! So much for drying out. The others behind me had time to change course and avoid the soaking so were laughing their heads off at the end of the lane. I guess I got my comeuppance having sent in others into the river crossings ahead of me in a rather cowardly way. We crossed the A30 and rode down the lane to Sticklepath, which starts off behind the church and eventually drops steeply into the Taw valley and is again, part of the Tarka Trail tracking the Taw. The lane off of the Throwleigh road at East Week provided a taste of Dartmoor, stone sides to the deep old UCR with lovely views across to the granite Tors, just beginning to peer out of the murk of the morning's low cloud. Blue sky was now creeping in between the breaking clouds, which helped warm us up, and distract me from my dysfunctional heated grips.



Within touching distance of Dartmoor

The last lane before lunch was a concern to me as it is steepish, narrow and loose for the first part at the northern end, then tops out as a long overgrown rut. I was not sure how the less experienced in the group would cope, but in for a penny, in for a pound... In the event the climb was not too bad, with a reasonable amount of grip and the rut at the top was at least visible as the vegetation was dying back, compared with full summer when you are guessing where to put the front wheel. Thankfully everyone popped out besides the old A30 in god time and in 1 piece -result! Time for fuel and lunch at Whiddon Down. We recharged on various Ginsters products and chocolate before setting off back east. I decided to avoid Fingle Bridge as being in the peak of the autumn colours on a Sunday, I thought it would be rammed with walkers scowling as dirty bikers riding past so just nipped down the Mortonhampstead road to Venton to ride the easy, grassy lane before riding the ridge above the Teign valley into Drewsteighton and nipped around the back of the church in the sunken little lane, half expecting ramblers to be walking off their Sunday roasts, but thankfully there was no one around. We

wriggled along the narrow lanes towards the A30 once more, being reminded that it is the season of mellow fruitfulness with boxes of free apples laid out in front of houses in hamlets. I need some for my yummy curried/chillie apple chutney, but alas no room this time to pick them up. The lane down to Forder farm is a nice little climb if we were going in the other direction, but as it was we simply trailed our rear brakes down over the clay/stone surface to the bottom. Next time I really must go the other way and enjoy the climb. We criss crossed the A30 through Cheriton Bishop to ride down a similar lane that is best ridden uphill at Tillerton, but this time even steeper, again next time.... We wended our way down Ford Brook which is a lovely ride, meandering through a mixed deciduous/coniferous woodland the vibrant autumn colours of the trees and dying bracken could not fail to warm even the coldest of hearts. Climbing once more we were left with the treat of running up through the Posbury lanes which are long, not technical but massively fun. We paused to take in the view across the Culvery valley towards Crediton then scampered up the steady climb to Oldridge, another flowing and long lane that typifies this route. Time was getting on and so we put in some road work through Crediton, across to Thorverton and finally picked up the muddy UCR at Silverton leading onto the excellent climb up over Greenslinch and then down into Bradninch for the last lanes of the day. We pulled over in the middle of Cully to reflect on an excellent day out before going our own ways. I feel we crossed a bridge today, our pace was steady but consistent, there were few spills and the 'newbies' have come on leaps and bounds! Must be because they were following an expert.....



TTR in natural habitat

Election of officers 2020

	Nominated/coerced	Unanimously nominated and seconded.
Chairperson	Vacant	Yes
Vice chair	Noel Squibb	Yes
Treasurer	Jacki Cole	Yes
Secretary	Trevor Foxon	Yes
RoW officer	Ray Tribe	Yes
Map marker	Liz Millet	Yes
Run recorder	John Leah	Yes
Newsletter editor	Phill Lowe	Yes
Forum coordinator	Doug Piper	Yes
Club welcomer	John Heal	Yes
Event coordinator	Tim Ruck– will do the fun days with Jay and James	Yes
Media coordinator	Sean Comber	Yes
Horse trial coordinator	Jacki Cole	Yes
Rep for National TRF	Paul Studley	Yes
Web site manager	Phill Lowe	Yes
Lane Clearing coordinator(s)	David Bell (S Ham) Wacky/Mike/Kev/Vic (E Devon) Volunteers N and West Devon?	Yes

Devon
TRF
Newsletter