



Northern Greenlanes

Bulletin



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GLOSSARY

BOAT : Byway Open to All Traffic ;

- Vehicular Right of Way (VRoW).

RUPP : Road Used as Public Path ;

- VRoW if evidence exists, await reclassification if in doubt.

UUCR : Unsealed Unclassified County Road ;

- VRoW .. though some County Councils do not acknowledge them as such.

RT : Ratione Tenurae road ;

- Mostly VRoW, but not always.

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EDITORIAL

Many thanks to all who contributed - keep it up !!

DRIVE THIS LANE

The BOAT, pictured right, between Sedburgh and Kendal is getting badly overgrown making it difficult to navigate - especially on horseback.

I managed to get through on a motorbike but it could do with a couple of four wheel drives travelling along it.

Map 97, 621846 to 624845.

Photo right:
 Drive this BOAT !
 (Photo courtesy of Mathew Field.)



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LANCS BOAT PUBLIC INQUIRY

A bridleway near Burnley that has been proposed as a BOAT has been in the news again recently (Map103 SD881298-880290-876286 Holme Chapel nr. Cliviger).

This lane was recently opened by Princess Anne as part of a circular bridleway route around Burnley. Objections to the proposed modification order was heard at a public inquiry at Burnley Town Hall on October 10th to 12th where Parish councillor Tony Harrison told Burnley's planning committee there were fears that if it were given highway status it would be used by scramblers and four wheel drive vehicles. Nimby villager Phil Smith said that what was classed as a highway in the 18th century may have been suitable for horses but was not satisfactory for the 21st century. He said "Walkers come to enjoy the countryside not to be mowed down by four wheel drivers. We don't want children being swept aside by young drivers in baseball caps".

There is a 3D photograph of the lane available on the 'Northern Greenlanes' website.

LANE MAINTAINENCE - YORKSHIRE DALES

A hole has appeared in the Stonehouse to Widdale Foot road (RD/107/G) south west of Hawes near to the forest - foul play is suspected. A team is being put together by Brian Lewis (email Brian on Brian@limb.demon.co.uk) in conjunction with NYCC in November.

About the maintainance Brian say's .."The water is flowing down the hill into the hole at the south side of the gate at map reference SD 806867, and because the drainage to the east of the road at this point is completely blocked, by long grass and peat bog, the water continues to flow down the road collecting at the large hole developing in the road at map reference SD 807868. In order to stop this flow of water, the ditches on the hill to the south of the gate need digging out and a new ditch dug through the long grass and peat



to the east of the gate. This is not constructing a new drainage system, merely reinstating one in use before which has simply become overgrown through lack of maintenance. Once we have stopped the water running down the road, the holes can then start to be filled in. It is difficult to determine the hole's depth or if there is any solid ground beneath them. If firm ground is discovered then can easily fill the holes with stone. However, if there is no firm foundation , then a membrane of some kind will be needed.

At the moment, the damage is small and could be tackled by volunteers using hand tools. Unfortu-

nately, if it is left until after the winter then the damage will be much greater and machinery will be needed."



Photo's:

Top: The lane.

Middle: The problem.

Bottom: The hole.

CATALUNYA, PYRENEES

by David Goode

I had never really taken much notice when a friend raved about the Pyrenees as a good place for driving his Land Rover, then I met Dave of Llama 4x4 who is passionate about the subject with an enthusiasm that is impossible to ignore. So when my wife had to go to Barcelona on business it seemed like as good a reason as any to take a look.

It is, of course, a long way to go. Even if you drive through France on one of the brief intervals between lorry-drivers blockades it is a long, tedious and expensive journey. Most of your holiday could be used just driving there and back. An alternative is to fly to Bilbao or Barcelona and then hire a Suzi Vitara, which you can do at many places in Spain. There are a number of hire firms that can be found on the web. For business reasons we had to hire from Barcelona airport which didn't do 4x4s but the Renault Megane had air-conditioning and that there are a great many tracks that can be driven in a 4x2 if you are careful and if you don't expect to get your deposit back.

There are many things about laning in the Pyrenees to make us Brits envious: stunning scenery, agreeable climate, very few obstructions and relatively few 'no vehicles' signs, tracks so long they can even be seen on my trans-galactic scale atlas, even the most remote tracks seem to be looked after, and there is no attempt to hide them - there are direction signs in the most unexpected places (given that the maps are largely works of fiction this is necessary) and we were given information about 'jeep tracks' by the tourist office. (OK, we can forgive the American misconception of the definitive 4x4). Can you imagine going to the tourist information office at Settle and being encouraged to use a byway that ran the length of Wensleydale?

I'll admit that I pined for my Land Rover but as we picked our way along a stony ridge 3000 ft above sea-level, cloudless sky, breathless air, no shade, miles from anywhere, I was grateful for that air-conditioning and the reliability of a car with only delivery kilometres on the clock.

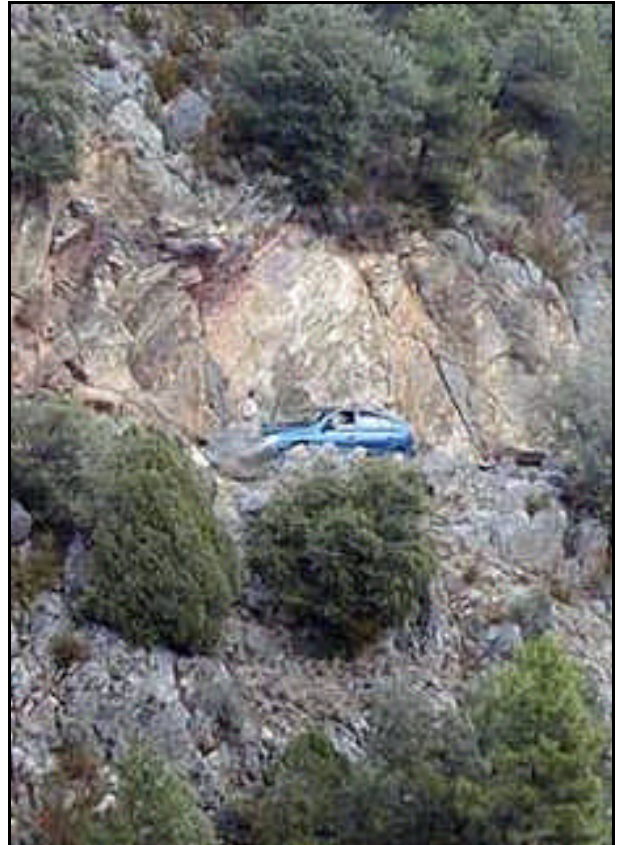
There were, of course, many tracks where air-conditioning is no substitution for 4 wheel drive and decent ground clearance. Once we had to turn round after several miles because the gradient was steep uphill and the surface was gravel the size of tennis balls - no chance with front wheel drive and though I considered trying to reverse up that section I was later told that further on there were rocks that would have grounded the Renault. Turning back was not a disappointment, however, but another chance to follow a superb track with dizzying drops on the one side and fantastically weather-sculpted rock formations on the other. Just as when we're laning in Britain, we don't start a lane with a determination to drive to the other end whatever happens but with an attitude of being open to whatever it has to offer. We made plenty of stops - you can't admire the scenery and be sure of not driving over the edge at the same time - other halts for photos, watching the lizards, having fir-cone fights or just being amazed at the effort someone must have gone to in order to built a seemingly-precarious track across a remote mountain cliff-face. According to the tourist leaflets these tracks were built by smugglers and witches - why would they want to invest in such feats of engineering is missed out of the English translation!

Photo right:

Track to
Tuixen.

Photo opposite:

Sant Llorenc.



Whenever we are exploring green lanes in UK we often come across curious things, and here was no different. At one point halfway down a series of zig-zags we came across a fingerpost which supposedly pointed out the direction of Saigon and Bogata and separated from the road by a pair of high metal gates was a rectangular, almost-windowless building flying the Catalonian flag - the half-hearted quip about ETA or Catalonian separatists fell like a brick when we remembered the Megane had Madrid registration plates. Another track shown signs of recent widening to make access for some sort of water treatment or hydro-electric scheme. Where the rock had been cut or blasted back it had left a hole in the overhang in the rock face, revealing a hollow space filled with stalactites and columns.



A number of the tracks we used serve remote houses whose residents use the smaller 4x4s, mostly Suzi, Lada or Nissan Terrano. These are their ordinary roads, they are not just linear access tracks but a network connecting them, just as there used to be in Britain and which our green lanes are now a disjoint remnant. This explains why the condition of the tracks is good despite what must be severe winter conditions. As we drove along one track an electric storm broke with heavy hail and torrents of water - we could see parts of the track begin to wash out as we drove along and were glad that we were in a valley, nearly back to the tarmac road and not on a remote ridge or exposed cliff-face. We passed a few other vehicles on the tracks, all 4x4s, probably mostly local use rather than laners. We also found a few trail riders on motor-cycles and two on quads (although distinctly unlike the sort of quad used on hill-farms in UK - the stony, dry conditions did not require balloon tyres and the riding position was more like a bike).

Would we go back? Yes, but with 4 wheel drive next time.

QUICKIES

- 'Short Lane' (SK 038311 to 036310) in Staffordshire, which is on the LoS, is reported to have a fallen tree blocking the lane.
- Telford & Wrekin made an application under HA80 s116 to stop up 'Leighton Lane' claiming it was "unnecessary". It may soon be TRO'd. Objections asap to Susan Kembrey, Civic Offices, PO Box 213, Telford, TF3 4LD.
- The Gwent lane from Wayne Green to Lettravane Farm (SO 411183 to 425183) has in places a bedrock holloway with a washed-out stone surface. This lane is unsuitable for 4x4s (too narrow) but is okay for trailbikes.
- The bridge over the River Swale at Myton on Swale, North Yorks has been TRO'd. Apparently the road is a RT/UCR, but the bridge is in a danderous condition.
- 'Coach Road' (Tameside, Gtr Manchester. SK001959 near the A57) is reportedly overgrown and in need of clearance. Contact Tameside MBC (0161 342 3911) to verify its vehicular status.
- There is to be a temporary TRO placed on the Powys lane UCR 557 at the southern end of Talybont Reservoir for up to 6 months for tree-felling. (Grid Refs. SO 080174 to 101176).
- The obstruction of UCR 15/4 at Llanvihangel Crucorney (GRs SO 325205 to 339198), especially at it's eastern end, should soon (hopefully) be a thing of the past as Monmouthshire CC is arranging for it to be cleared.

LAKE DISTRICT GREEN ROAD CODE

As mentioned previously in these bulletins the LD Nat.Park has introduced the Hierarchy of Trail Routes (HoTR) initiative in an effort to manage use of greenlanes. They have produced a leaflet (right) with information on the HoTR..

"Using vehicles on unsurfaced roads in National Parks is an emotive subject - there are many who would like to see this recreational activity banned. Although the NPA has stated that green road driving is not compatible with National Park purposes, it is following current Government advice in looking for management solutions.

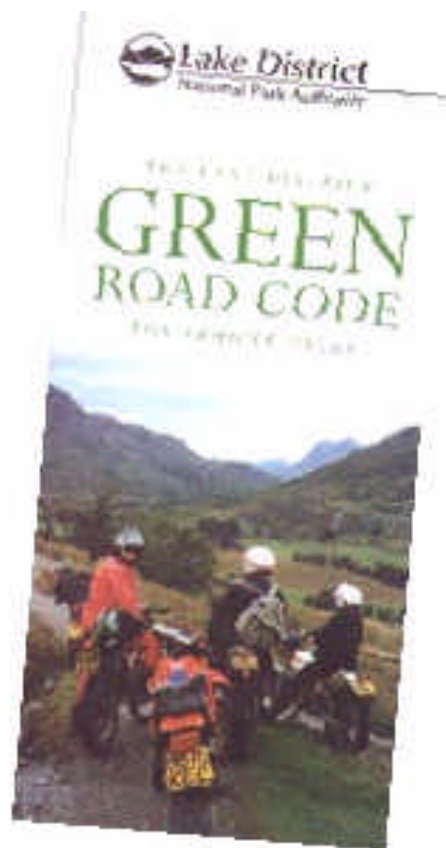
LARA members believe that all users of the countryside can enjoy their pastime without upsetting others, and without destroying the green roads themselves, so long as care and consideration is exercised.

The NPA's Green Road Code of Conduct aims to promote responsible driving in order to ensure sustainable use of green lanes in the Lake District.

It is intended to make all drivers aware of the Hierarchy of Trail Routes Experiment and to enjoy their recreation in a sensible manner. Please ensure its success by giving it your full support. Rights of Way all(Restrictions

Vehicles can be used legally on all 'Byways open to all traffic' (BOATs) while use is presumed but not proven on 'Unclassified County Roads' (UCRs).

If in doubt, check with the NPA, highway authority or a LARA member organisation. The use of some vehicular routes has been suspended by Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) - you must obey the signs at the ends of these routes.



Voluntary Restraint

As an alternative to more formal measures, LARA operates a system of 'voluntary restraint' to help solve specific problems on particular green roads. This system is supported by the highway authority and in the Lake District by the NPA. Signs are erected where the system is in operation; they carry the logo of the supporting organisations, a local contact telephone number and location details. This system is only applied after agreement with local users, and all motor vehicle users are asked to obey the signs. Failure to do so may lead to permanent closure.

Maps and Signs

Do not assume that Ordnance Survey (OS) maps give correct information on rights of way. Many maps contain out of date detail, or have serious omissions, especially on green roads. The latest editions of the 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Map series of the Lake District have classified many UCRs as 'Other Routes with Public Access'. These routes are marked with a green dot symbol. This does not imply that such routes carry vehicular rights however. With this new map classification the OS is attempting to show which roads are public UCRs and which are private access roads. Do not assume that every minor road is public. Some highways shown on maps or on signs as 'bridleway' or 'footpath' may have vehicular rights, but unless you have evidence of this you must not drive on any footpath or bridleway without the landowner's permission. This approach, pioneered by the NPA and LARA, seeks to manage routes in an integrated way. The Hierarchy consists of 115 unsealed UCRs and BOATs in 7 categories. These relate to the degree of difficulty to drive or ride, popularity with other users and whether the route condition is suitable at any particular time.

All routes were initially surveyed by local users and NPA rangers between 1995 and 1997 and assigned a certain category. They are regularly re-surveyed. The main route categories are:

FREE USE - those routes open to all green road traffic at all times of the year.

PRIVILEGED USE - those routes to be used by members of LARA affiliated clubs only, who it is presumed will have special skills and understanding.

NO USE 4x4s - those routes that are not sustainable for 4x4 vehicle use but can be used by motorcycles.

NO USE - those routes that are unsuitable for use by recreational vehicles or are dead ends with no links to other parts of the network."

A DRIVERS COUNTRYSIDE CODE OF CONDUCT

Taken from the LARA/HoTR 'Green Road Code' information sheet

Now that winter is almost upon us we all need to be reminded how to look after the countryside that we often find ourselves driving through whilst 'greenlaning'

1. Respect the life of the National Park.

Be courteous to all other users, and take great care when passing horses, cyclists and walkers. Be prepared to stop your engine if needed. Always fasten gates and take particular care near sheep and livestock.

2. Use only vehicular rights of way -

not all "green roads" have vehicular rights. Even those that have, may not be appropriate for all vehicles at all times. The NPA and LARA groups can help with information.

3. Keep to the defined track,

and deviate only to pass immovable obstructions. Report obstructions, including low branches and very soft ground, to the NPA or highway authority. If the correct route is not obvious on the ground, ask the local users, or check the details held at the NPA, highway authority and local record offices.

4. Travel at a quiet and unobtrusive pace,

or in small groups (recommended 4 cars or 6 motorcycles per group). Remember that others seek to get away from bustle and rush. Do not use routes after dark.

5. Ensure that you and your vehicle are fully road-legal.

"Green roads" do not mean you are 'off-road' and you are subject to the same laws as surfaced roads. Obey all traffic and LARA signs. There is no public right to drive from a road on common land, moorland or fell, sand dunes or beach.

6. Pay attention to 'the Four Ws'

WEATHER: Do not travel on green roads when they risk being damaged beyond a point of natural recovery when the weather improves. In the wetter winter months routes can be especially prone to damage too.

WEIGHT: Do not use roads that may be seriously damaged by the wheel pressure of your vehicle. LARA does not support the use of heavy vehicles on green roads.

WIDTH: Do not use roads that are too narrow for your vehicle. Avoid damage to walls, trees and hedges.

WINCHES: Do not get yourself into a position where you need one. If you do, use it only as a last resort. Always avoid damage to trees, walls, and surface while recovering.

7. Remember that wildlife faces many threats,

and green roads can be valuable habitats. Take special care in spring and early summer.

QUICKIES

● The recent BOAT DMMO's in the Durham region - all on OS sheet 92; Middleton Lane (997307 - 058349), Pikestone Lane (043344 - 084325) and Stanhope Lane (084325 - 094324), have been thrown into doubt by the courts. It seems that there is no doubt of their status but their alignment on the ground, the fourth BOAT Hexham Lane was unaffected by the court hearings. Effectively the 3 BOAT DMMO's have been quashed until it is resolved.

● 'Sarn Helen' road from Aberdulais to Coelbren (S.Wales) is subject to a 'Seasonal Prohibition of Driving Order' by Neath/Port Talbot CC and is only open from 1st June to 31st August. There are still some deep ruts at the mid point before the forest. It will be reviewed in approx. 2 years for any damage.

● TRO's 'Up North' .. Parkamoor from Nibthwaite UCR U5051 Map97 SD294896 to 312925, Old Coach Rd UCR U2236/3132 Map90 NY316231 to 380219, Breast High Rd BOAT/UCR U5278 Map90/91 NY553035 to 570047 and Pockstone Moor IN321G Map99/104 SE129594 to 078616.

All of the above are to enable repairs and maintainance to be carried out.

TRAILBIKE TIP

Suzuki DRZ400S owners may be interested in 'engine guards' that bolt directly onto the frame. These protect the susceptible engine casings. Call Leisure Trail UK 01159732466. £52.30 incl p&p.