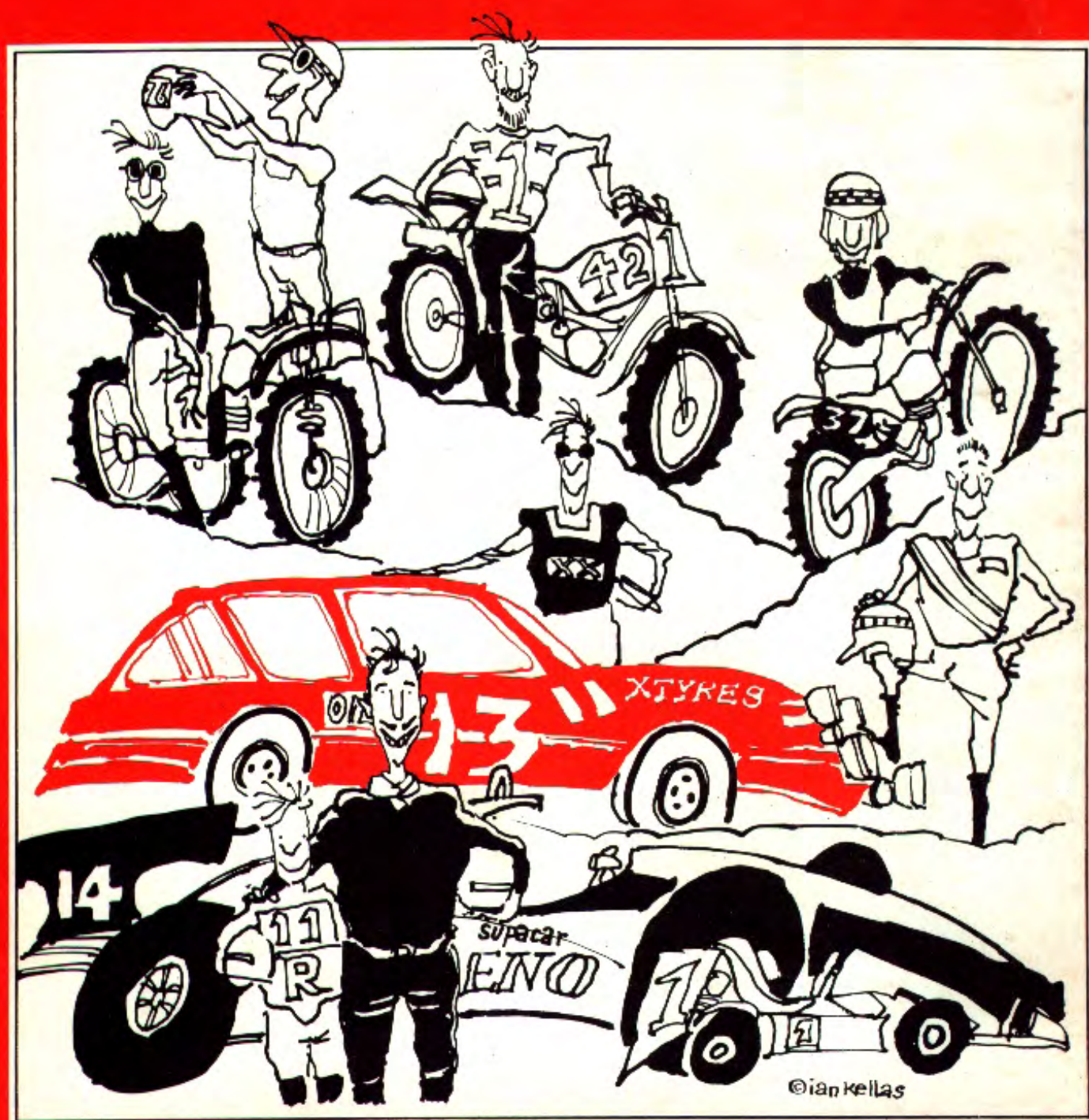


# Providing for Motorsports

From image to reality



Martin J Elson, Henry Buller & Peter Stanley £5.00

## PROVIDING FOR MOTORSPORTS

**From image to reality**



**Martin J Elson**  
**Henry Buller**  
**Peter Stanley**

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## FOREWORD

Motorsports are the product of 20th century leisure patterns and technology. For the participations and enthusiasts they are exciting, involving skill, achievement and great fun. For many landowners and residents they are seen as a noisy, smelly, periodic or near permanent nuisance which brings more cost than benefit to their lives and environment. In the case of motorcycling, the participants are all-too often seen as ne'er do well hell raisers.

This report shows some facts that might surprise the public - motor-sports have 200,000 active competitors and 500,000 supporters and friends. It also documents problems that the sports face, of loss of sites because of agricultural change, wider social pressures, and resistance from powerful and articulate interests in planning and non statutory processes. It shows that most public authorities, while acknowledging a problem, do not know how to provide for the twelve motorcar, six motorcycle and kart disciplines covered in this report. Examples of good practice in site provision and management, within which many problems have been avoided and solved, are therefore documented.

The Sports Council in publishing this report, and the accompanying Handbook on providing for motorsports and motor recreation, hopes that they will be read and their lessons heeded by several groups:

- \* the motorsports organisations which need to consider how to better promote the benefits of their activities, to manage the problems and to articulate their case for sites and access for events
- \* the local authorities who could do a great deal through site provision, strategic planning, highways management, and by setting up enabling mechanisms whereby clubs, landowners and others can meet to overcome problems
- \* the police who could consider setting up educational programmes for riders as well as enforcing against nuisance
- \* farmers and landowners who could consider temporary and permanent provision which might supplement their incomes
- \* residents and conservation groups who might recognise that there may be sites and routes where people can enjoy these activities while also protecting other rare, fragile and quiet habitats.

.../

The Sports Council is not asking for special treatment for motorsports in a busy multi-purpose countryside; only for fair and reasonable accommodation of activities which excite and attract many people, especially the young. In motorcycling for example, the number of competitors from eight to sixteen years old has grown from 600 to 13,000 in the last ten years.

The Sports Council hopes that this report, the Handbook, and the seminars which help disseminate their messages, will indeed provide a new basis for reasoned debate and action for better provision. Without action nuisance will grow, de facto trespass is likely to increase, and the frustrations of drivers, residents and other users will rise. Surely such problems are not technically and organisationally beyond the capabilities of the public, private and voluntary sectors to solve. The question is 'are they beyond our collective wills'.

M F Collins

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was commissioned by the Sports Council in December 1983 and has been carried out at the Department of Town Planning, Oxford Polytechnic. This document is the full text of the Final Report. It is complemented by a Handbook for Providers, also published by the Sports Council.

The project principals were Martin Elson and Peter Stanley, the former taking responsibility for the general management of the project, and the latter the conduct and analysis of the national survey. Henry Buller was the Research Associate. The extent of his devotion to the task of uncovering the nuances of motorsports in practice is demonstrated in the following pages.

A project such as this could not exist without the cooperation of the motorsports community. We would therefore like to thank the many club members and officials who responded so enthusiastically to our inquiries, with hospitality and by organising and attending meetings, arranging site visits, providing material, and sharing experiences. In particular we record our thanks to Frank Carter, Alan Foster, Dr B S Foulds, Don Green, Mr M A Jackson, Mr L V Jones, Graham Malcolm, Leo Pendergast, Jim Rendell and Brian Thompson. The project has also sought the involvement of local authorities throughout England and Wales, by individual interviews in our case study areas, and through the national questionnaire. We would like to thank all officers involved for their cooperation and help.

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Mr Brian Parry	Sports Council (N.W. Region)
Mr Roger Prescott	Hampshire County Council.

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## AIMS OF THE STUDY

"Motorsports should be recognised to a greater extent in our Country. There are more sports than football".

John Surtees (1).

1.1. In its 1982 Report 'Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years' the Sports Council recognised its responsibility to improve access for those taking part in active sports, including 'motor sports' (2). Over the past five years a number of Regional Sports Councils have convened study groups and produced recommendations encouraging provision for motorsports and calling for effective policies of management (3). These initiatives reflected recognition of the problems being experienced by motorsports interests in retaining access to the countryside and individual sites. However, despite this work, there exists virtually no comprehensive information on the range of disciplines comprising motorsport, their land and site requirements, the nature and extent of participation, and how such factors are interrelated. Although the land use planning system is ostensibly well suited to resolving land use conflicts little knowledge exists of how such a process works in respect of motorsports or, indeed, of how motorsports relate to important land interests such as the Forestry Commission, the Ministry of Defence, or the Regional Water Authorities, all of whose policies may affect site availability.

1.2. Motorsports have frequently been discussed in a 'conflict' framework (4), many motorsport disciplines being seen as incompatible with existing patterns of land use. Adverse urban images of deviant behaviour and anti social attitudes contrast with the pleasure and sense of achievement experienced by participants and spectators. Although subject to strong internal control and regulation organised motorsports have appeared unwilling to bring effective pressure to bear on agencies in a position to affect site availability.

## THE BRIEF

1.3. In recognition of the above the aims of the project were:

1. to establish a national picture of motorsports and identify the principal issues confronting the governing bodies;
2. to assess the range of motorsport activities undertaken in selected study areas, the number and distribution of the clubs concerned, their membership, and where their participants are drawn from;

3. to review the type, extent and availability of land for motorsports, including current legal, financial or managerial problems;
4. to assess the nature of demand for motorsports, including the social composition and motivations of the participants;
5. to assess whether there is a shortfall of land or other resources within selected study areas, including the particular needs and problems of individual sports and governing bodies for local and regional provision;
6. to assess the problems and issues surrounding the securing, planning, development and management of different types of motorsport sites, including:
  - (i) the way in which motorsports are seen by other groups and organisations; and
  - (ii) how such attitudes influence behaviour and policy with reference to possible noise, accident, vandalism, erosion, and legal issues;
7. to evaluate examples of good practice in provision; and
8. from the assessments in 1 to 7, to make recommendations for the more effective planning, development and management of land for motorsports.

1.4. Although the project has considered motorsport in its broadest sense we have nonetheless concentrated our attention on the 19 motorsport disciplines shown in Table 1.1. These are not largely dependent on purpose-built permanent facilities, though we have considered the extent of the provision of such facilities. Thus we have excluded from detailed investigation motorcar and motorcycle road racing, drag racing, and speedway racing. In addition we concentrated, within motorcar sports, on activities supervised by the Royal Automobile Club Motor Sports Association (RACMSA), thereby excluding 'Hot Rod', 'Banger', and 'Stock Car' racing. The principal exception to these exclusions is kart racing which, within the context of the study areas, we have considered in some detail. Kart racing has been included as it forms an important and growing area of youth motorsport and is believed to suffer from problems of site availability.



Table 1.1.                      Motorsport Activities Included in the Study

MOTOR CAR SPORTS

- Hill Climbs
- Sprints
- Autocross
- Rallycross
- Four-wheel drive Sprints
  
- Stage Rallying
- Road Rallying
- Twelve-car Rallying
  
- Trials
- Four-wheel drive Trials
  
- Autotests
  
- Trail Driving

MOTORCYCLE SPORTS

- Grass Track Racing
- Motocross (Scrambling)
- Enduros
  
- Trials
- Arena Trials
  
- Trail Riding

KARTING SPORTS

- Racing

For definitions, see below; paras 2.13 to 2.27.

## METHODOLOGY

1.5. The central focus of this study is the changing availability, control, and management of land for motorsport. The chosen methodology reflects this concern. Two parallel approaches have been adopted; the first examines the motorsport community itself, the practice of motorsports, and the demands made for land by individual disciplines. The second examines the aims and actions of authorities and agencies whose primary roles can be seen as land provision, management and control.

### Approach A: The Motorsport Community.

1.6. This has involved a detailed evaluation of the motorsport community and the practice of motorsports at national, regional, and local levels (Figure 1.1.). At the national level the work has involved:

- establishing the structure and organisation of the various forms of motorsport;
- conducting detailed interviews with relevant bodies and individuals;
- examining the procedures, controls, and regulations governing motorsport;
- evaluating published and unpublished documentary sources related to the organisation and practice of motorsports; and
- monitoring changes in the numbers of events and in the levels of participation.

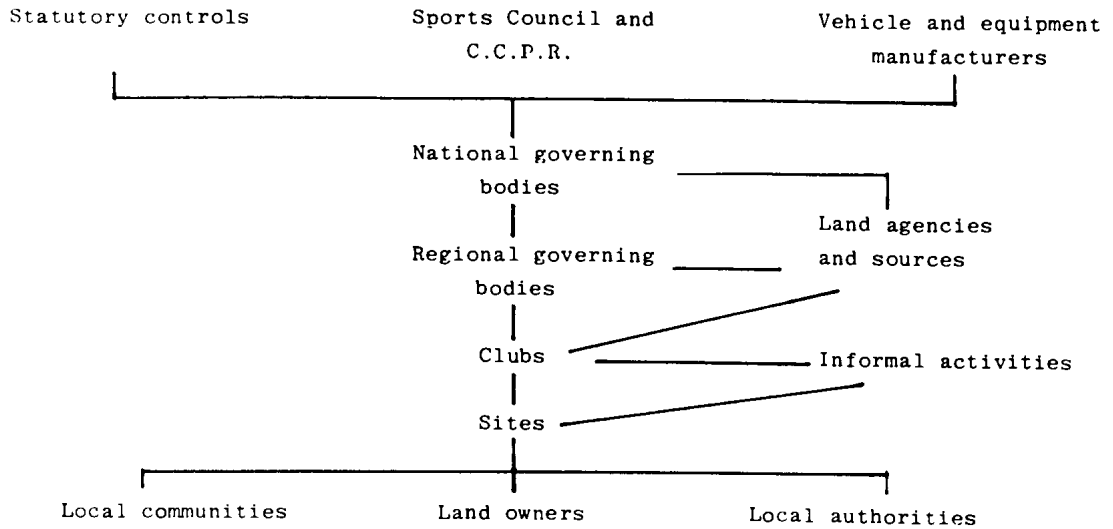
Within selected study areas (para. 1.12.) motorsport clubs and regional associations have been interviewed focussing on four broad areas of interest:

- the history, organisation, membership and activities of clubs;
- the sources of land used, the frequency and cost of site use, and related issues;
- the relationships of clubs to other bodies such as local authorities, the Forestry Commission, other clubs and recreation organisations, the governing bodies and local communities; and
- the present and potential roles of external bodies such as the Sports Council in assisting or promoting motorsports.

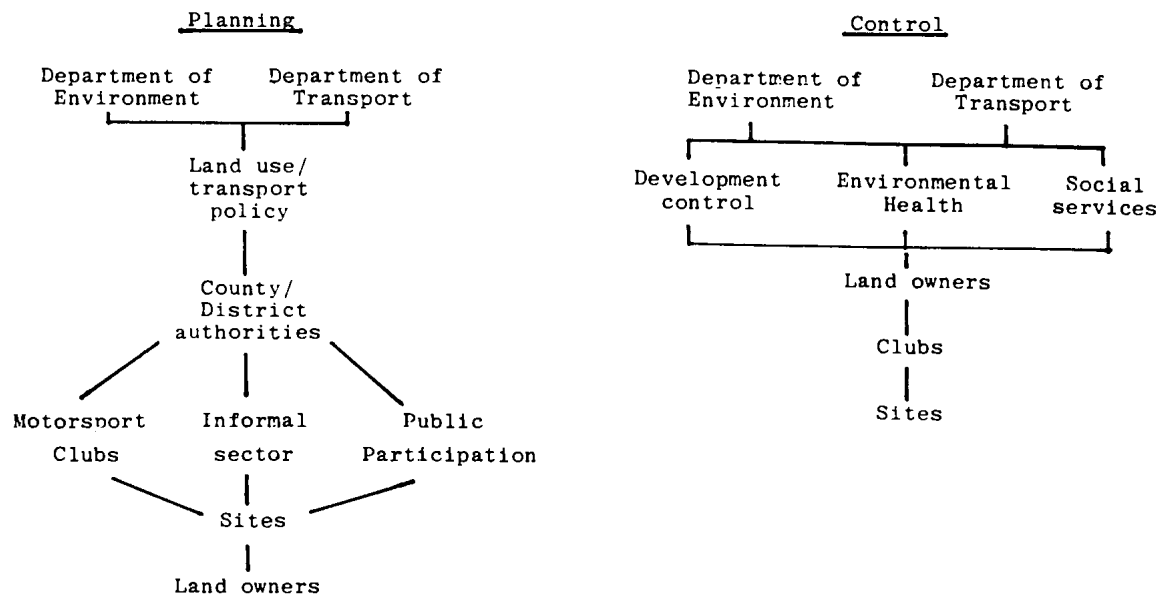
Members of the research team have also attended club and regional association meetings and motorsport events, and have interviewed those officers of the motorsport community responsible for links with external

Figure 1.1. Methodological approaches

a. The motorsport community



b. Planning and the control of land



agencies which either provide land (for example, the Forestry Commission) or otherwise influence use (such as the Police).

1.7. The assesement of land availability and site use within the study areas has been an important component of this first approach. Sites have been identified through the motorsports press and by club interviews. Individual site histories have been compiled and, on occasion, site visits made. In addition assesements of site turnover (losses and gains) have been made for each study area. In each case the factors contributing to site loss and methods of site search and acquisition have been established. Examples of specialist sites which lie beyond the case study areas have also been examined.

#### Approach B: Land Management and Control.

1.8. At a national level, the study of land management and control has sought; first, a comprehensive review of legislation related to the practice of motorsport and its use of land and, second; an assessment of the range of interests and organisations that either provide land, affect land availability, or directly oppose such land use. Of importance to this second approach is the role of local authority planning and leisure services departments (see Figure 1.1). Within the case study areas the roles and policies of these bodies have been examined in detail.

1.9. Land management and control has been studied by:

- interviews with officers of local planning and leisure services departments within the study areas;
- interviews with representatives of other public bodies relevant to provision, (e.g., water authorities, countryside wardens);
- reviewing and assessing the stated policies and actions of all relevant agencies with regard to the use of land for motorsport and the activities of the informal sector;
- monitoring land use planning decisions;
- examining within the study areas specific examples of provision, exclusion and control;
- considering the 'response' of local communities to organised motorsports and the informal sector;
- evaluating the roles of consultative bodies and the procedures set up to mediate between conflicting demands for access to land; and
- considering the efficacy of motorsport interests in such consultative arenas.

1.10. In addition, in order to create a data base regarding the roles of local authorities in provision a questionnaire survey was carried out of all:

- County and District Planning Authorities in England and Wales;
- County and District Recreation Departments;
- National Park authorities; and
- Development Corporations in England and Wales.

The questionnaire, reproduced in Appendix 1, was despatched in February 1985. The response rate has been 72 per cent.

1.11. Using the questionnaire returns and other sources, the research team has sought to document examples of 'good practice' regarding site location, management and control. Having drawn up a framework from which to select such examples (see Appendix 2) we have sought to establish the criteria that constitute good practice with a view to assisting future providers.

#### THE STUDY AREAS

1.12. Although the bulk of the findings in this report are applicable to motorsports in general, it was considered important also to obtain detailed information on motorsport practice and provision within selected study areas. The following criteria were used in selection. The areas should:

- be within one or more of the Sports Council Regions which had identified motorsports as being constrained by a lack of venues;
- display contrasting physical, socio-economic, settlement and agricultural features;
- include areas and issues of controversy over organised motorsport and informal activity; and
- be areas where an active motorsport community existed.

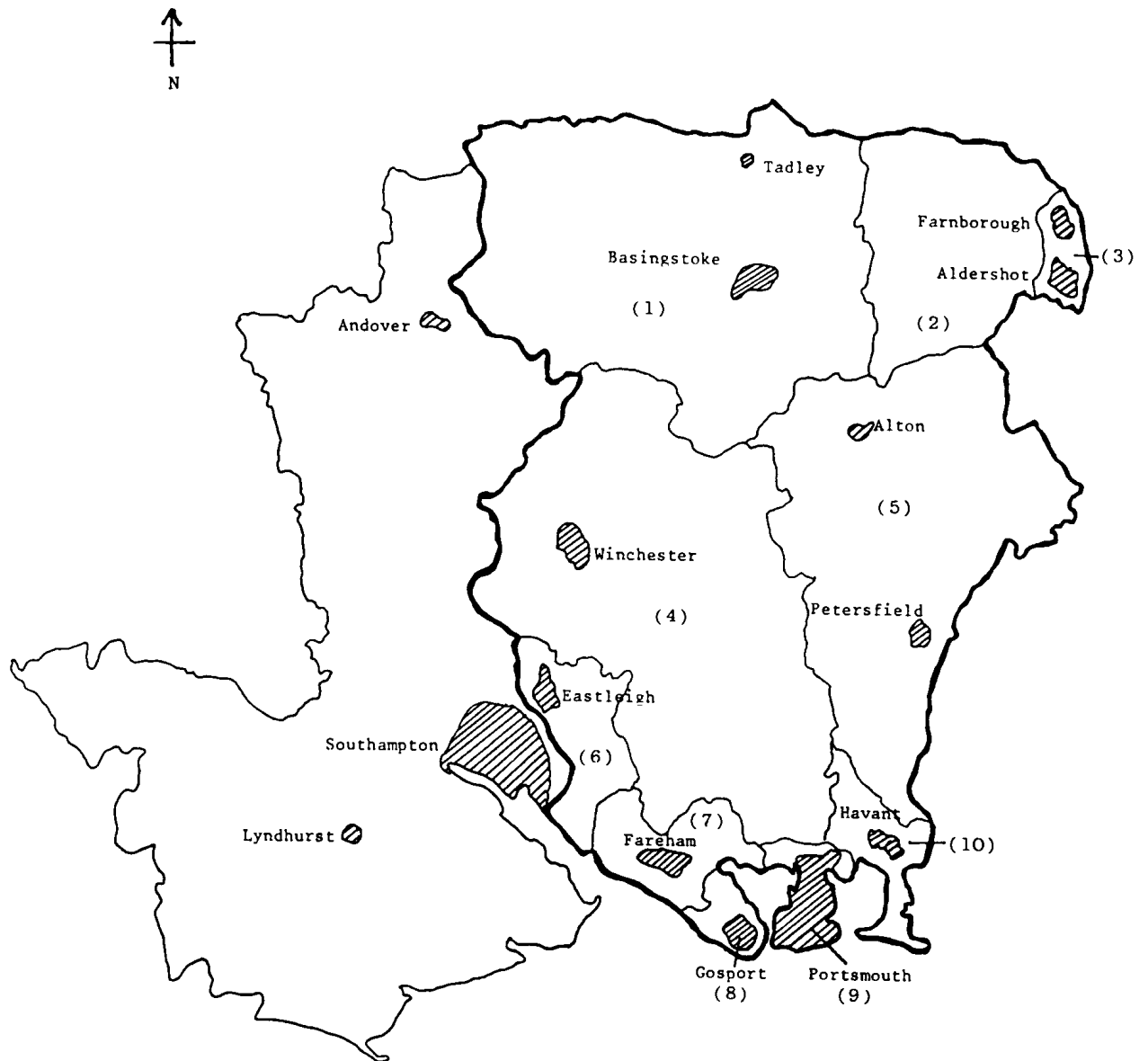
The chosen areas were Eastern Hampshire (Figure 1.2.) and South Lancashire (Figure 1.3.). Their key features are compared in Table 1.2.

### RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

1.13. This report is written with three particular groups in mind; the motorsport community, the Sports Council and its Regional Councils, and other bodies and agencies responsible for controlling and providing land for motorsports and informal motor vehicle activities. It is hoped that the findings will have a three-fold relevance in establishing:

1. The detailed state of British motorsports including:
  - (i) agreed definitions of the characteristics of each activity, their site requirements, and the issues generated by them;
  - (ii) the organisation and representative role of the various units of motorsport; and
  - (iii) changing participant and activity levels.
2. The roles of the Sports Council(s) both in supporting motorsport, and possibly in direct involvement in the resolution of land and management issues; and
3. The roles of the local authorities and other agencies in providing for, controlling and managing motorsport and informal activities.

Figure 1.2.

The Eastern Hampshire Study Area

## LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICTS

(1)	Basingstoke	(6)	Eastleigh
(2)	Hart	(7)	Fareham
(3)	Rushmoor	(8)	Gosport
(4)	Winchester	(9)	Portsmouth
(5)	East Hampshire	(10)	Havant

5 miles



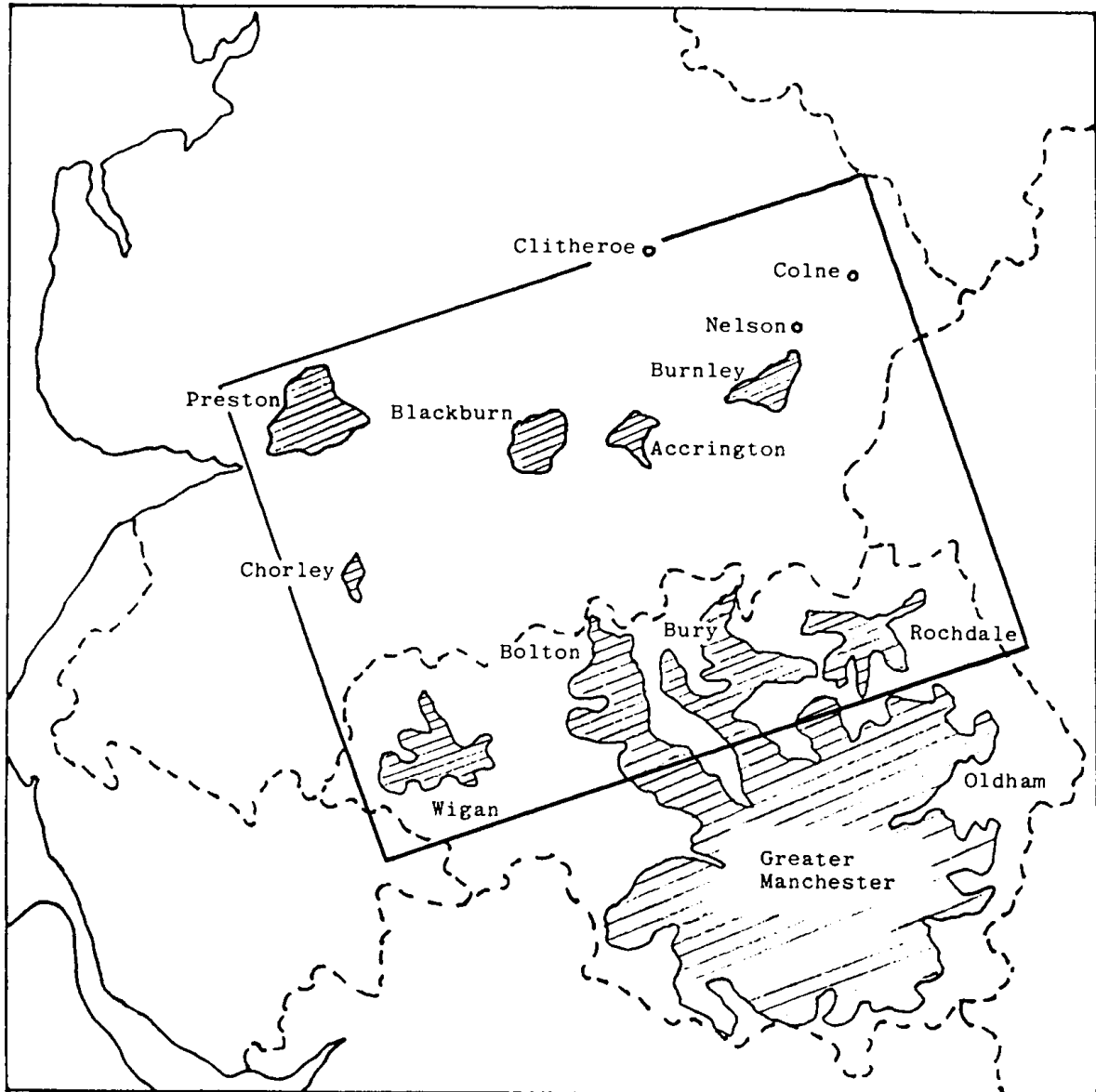
 Case study area  
 Built-up areas.



Figure 1.3.

The South Lancashire Study Area

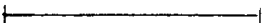
Scale:  Ten mls.

Table 1.2.

Key Features of the Study Areas

	The South Lancashire Area	The Eastern Hampshire Area
Size	120,404 Ha	233,765 Ha
Population	c. 1,250,000 (1984)	c. 1,000,000 (1984)
Local Government	2 County Councils 13 District or Borough Councils	1 County Council 10 District or Borough Councils
Largest Settlement	The Greater Manchester conurbation forms the southern part of the study area and includes (for the purposes of the study area definition) the towns of Bury, Bolton and Rochdale.	The largest town within the study area is Portsmouth but immediately to the west of the study area lies Southampton. Greater London lies 25 miles north east of the study area.
Settlement Pattern	Large, industrial towns and nucleated rural settlement pattern	Relatively small market towns, many villages and a generally dispersed settlement structure
Landscape Structure	Dominated by the West Pennine Moors, which form the central part, the study area is surrounded to the west by coastal lowland, to the north by upland forest, to the south by the urban areas of Greater Manchester, and to the east, by the main Pennine enclave. The bulk of the settlement lies along the river valleys within the uplands or on the lowland areas to the south and west.	Characterised by gently undulating downland in its central and northern parts and a low lying coastal strip to the south. Much of the central area lies within the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The main urban concentrations are in the south; Portsmouth, Havant, Fareham and Eastleigh. Elsewhere, there are numerous heavily-farmed large private estates.

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## THE GROWTH OF MOTORSPORTS

2.1. Motorsports in Britain have a long and venerable history, dating back as far as the emergence of the first motor vehicles, but becoming a more accessible reality in the first decade of the present century. In its early days motorsport was dominated by road racing. The world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit was established in 1907 at Brooklands, near Woking, Surrey. In the same year the first TT (Tourist Trophy) motorcycle race was held in the Isle of Man. Two years later the first Scottish Two-Day Trial was held, both events still being run annually today. Brooklands however ceased to be used as a racing circuit in 1939, being replaced by the larger circuits, such as Brands Hatch, Donnington Park and later Silverstone.

2.2. The first recorded motorcycle event was the 1903 International Coupe Race, held in France at a time when there were already some 21,000 machines on the roads in England. Currently the International Formula 1 Series is one of the most popular spectator events in the world. Formula 1 represents merely the pinnacle of competitive motorsport, the whole encompassing a great variety of disciplines and a wide range of participants; from those testing themselves and their machines to the limits, to those for whom motorsports are a 'fun' activity, a social event, or an exhilarating way of appreciating the natural landscape.

2.3. Car rallying developed in the classic era of the 1920's into a major discipline, one which has been of enduring importance to the motor industry on account of its dependence upon production car bases. Off road motorcycling began largely with trials and grass track racing during the years immediately before and after World War 1, but remained for a long time a more specialist activity, attracting enthusiasts rather than general spectators. It was not until the 1950s that off road motorcycle sports began to attract major spectator followings. With these came the interest of riders and the then leading manufacturers such as Greeves, Norton, BSA and Triumph. During the 1960s the off road component of motorsport achieved a more widespread popularity, particularly in European countries. In Belgium for example motocross and, to a lesser extent stage rallying, have come close to becoming national sports. A consequence of popularity has been increased commercialisation, largely the result of the entry of works teams and riders, and the increasing dependence of such teams and riders on major external sponsorship.

2.4. The current range of motorsport practiced in Britain draw participants, enthusiasts and spectators from a broad spectrum of social and economic groups. Although the high costs of championship participation have limited access in some cases, off road motorcycle events have traditionally formed an important component of the general recreational/sporting opportunities of working people. This is especially so in rural areas. In urban areas, the motorcycle (and its riders) can be

associated with deviant images - frequently propagated with the American-imported subculture of the late 1950s and 1960s. It is notable, however, that in addition to being upheld (erroneously) as the 'cause' of deviant activity, some forms of motorcycle (and to a lesser extent motorcar) activity have more recently been seen as a means of addressing youth deviancy particularly in deprived inner urban situations.

2.5. The value of motorsports to the various groups involved is considerable. To the participant they present a variety of experiences, from driving/riding fast in a relatively safe and legal environment, to enjoying vehicular access to the open countryside. Also, importantly, motorsport demands and assists the development of vehicle control skills, many of which are applicable and relevant to road driving. The throughput of participants from one discipline to another illustrates the universality of such skills. To the enthusiast and spectator motorsports offer a similarly wide range of experience and benefits. In the early years it was the novelty of speed and powered locomotion which appealed. Later, as motor racing became more common, this was replaced by the drama of what was evidently a dangerous activity, and the genuine 'theatrical quality' of both drivers and machines. Since the 1950s both motor racing participants and enthusiasts/spectators have become more sophisticated as racing has become more professional and commercial. In addition the variation between the performance and the appearance of competitive vehicles has narrowed. Less formalised motorsports, on the other hand, have retained much of their traditional atmosphere drawing crowds from among local communities and blurring the distinction between the real enthusiast and those merely viewing an exciting or unusual spectacle.

2.6. Motorsport has always had a significant place within the motor vehicle industry and its associated concerns. Today, as competition for vehicle and accessory sales intensifies, (particularly given the relative decline during the 1980s in the numbers of motorcycles sold), the relationship between organisers and participants, and the manufacturers and distributors, becomes more important. Manufacturers are actively involved in the sponsorship and management of participants. In motorcycling in particular, road racing and motocross are seen as critical areas of manufacturer involvement. The myriad small accessory industries (from protective clothing to machine parts) are also dependent upon the continual growth and development of motorsport.

2.7. Although commercial interests seek to project the value of motorsports forward, it is often an element of nostalgia for the classic eras of the past that motivates many enthusiasts and participants. Vehicle restoration (for example of British motorcycles of the 1950s) is a mushrooming interest catered for by specialist magazines and publications, and the increasing number of owners' clubs and 'classic' events. The heritage of British motorsport, its national popularity, and its international reputation, make it a vital component of any wider definition or assessment of sport in Britain.

## THE MOTORSPORTS DISCIPLINES

2.8. Motor vehicles can be used in three distinct ways; as a means of conveyance and transportation, as a means of recreation, or as the basis for some form of sporting activity.

2.9. This project is concerned with activities contained within the umbrella term 'motorsports'. These may be broadly defined as taking place within the context of organised competition (from which there is some form of 'result'), or supervised practice. Within this broad definition, there nevertheless remains a vast range of motor vehicle activities.

2.10. The most common subdivision made of the generic term 'motorsports' is that based upon types of sporting motor vehicle; motorcar sports, motorcycle sports, and kart sports. With the exception of kart sports, which are basically race oriented, both motorcar and motorcycle sports can be further subdivided into those activities concerned principally with speed and those that are not. Within motorcar and motorcycle sports, two forms of speed-related activities can be identified; speed events, defined as:

Those in which vehicles run individually, even though two or more runs may be taking place at the same time, over a course (exceeding, in the case of motorcar speed events, 200 yards in length) and in which the relative performance of the competitors is assessed by timing these over a given distance, the winner being the competitor who covers the distance in the shortest time (1);

and race events, defined as:

Those in which two or more vehicles are started simultaneously from the same starting line and over the same course, and in which the winner is the competitor who first completes a specified distance, including any handicap credit, or who completes the greatest distance in a specified time (2).

Similarly, three principal forms of non-speed activity can be identified;

rally events, defined as:

Those which may use the Public Highway either as routes for non-competitive driving or riding between competitive off-road sections, or as competitive on-road sections, and where there is an imposed average speed for competitors, the winner being the competitor who completes the course within the allotted times and with the minimum of penalties; (speed is not the principal factor in determining the result);

trial events, defined as:

Those in which vehicles run individually through a number of tests, known as sections, which are so constructed or laid

out that their object is to cause, in the case of motorcar trials, the driver to bring his vehicle to a stop or, in the case of motorcycle trials, the rider to put his foot down; the winner being the competitor who, having completed the course, has the least penalty points;

and finally, test events, defined as:

Those in which vehicles run individually through distinct tests, the 'winner' being simply decided upon performance alone.

These five categories, speed, race, and rally events, trials and tests, form the basic types of motorsport.

2.11. A third level of distinction relates to the nature of the environment within which the sport is undertaken. For the purposes of this study a three-fold distinction was made. First, there are those forms of motorsport that take place either wholly or mainly on the Public Highway. For motorsport purposes, the Public Highway has two distinct forms; sealed-surface (or metalled) roads, and unsealed roads. The latter are described variously as Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs) or Byways. Second, there are motorsports that take place on some purpose-built or modified permanent facility, such as a race track or circuit, which incorporates a specialised road surface the use of which is frequently exclusive to motorsport. Although the principal form of motorsport using such facilities is referred to as 'road racing', its characteristic feature is that it occurs on such purpose-built roads and not on the Public Highway. Third are motorsports that demand 'off road' surfaces; grass, stubble, ash, wood chip, rough ground, sand, bare earth or mud. Some motorsports also use sites with man-made surfaces, such as asphalt, tarmac or concrete laid down for another purpose (for example an airfield or car park). These three levels of categorisation are identified in Figure 2.1. and are fundamental to an understanding of the nature of motorsports in Britain.

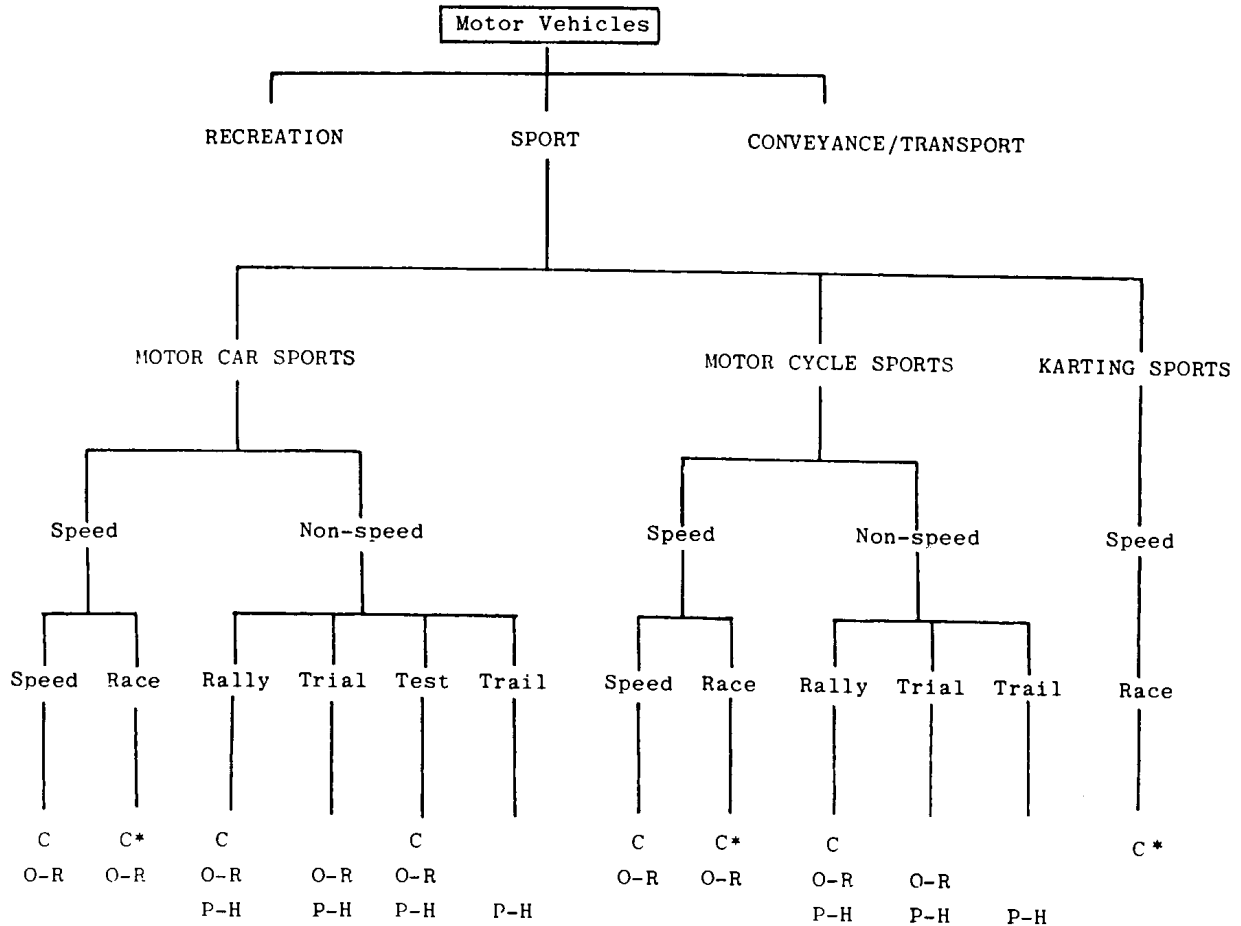
2.12. Using this classification the various forms of motorcar, motorcycle and kart sports will be differentiated in turn. This will provide the basic definitions for subsequent discussion in the Report.

### Motorcar Sports

2.13. The following definitions are based upon the regulations of the Royal Automobile Club Motor Sports Association (RACMSA) contained in its 1985 Yearbook (3).



Figure 2.1.

The Principal Disciplines of Motorsport

C = CIRCUIT or other sealed-surface venue.

C\* = Note: On the Continent of Europe, the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland, the use of the Public Highway for race events is, in some cases, permitted (viz, the Monaco Grand Prix and the TT Races). In England and Wales, a specific Act or Parliament is required to hold such an event.

O-R = OFF-ROAD: ie, an unsealed surface site that does not form part of the Public Highway.

P-H = PUBLIC HIGHWAY: ie, either a sealed road or an unsealed RUPP, Byway or Green Lane, upon which operate all the statutory controls governing the use of vehicles on public roads,

## Speed-Based Events

## 2.14. (a) Racing

## i) Road Racing

A competition where two or more specialist 'racing cars', or converted or modified production cars race, from a simultaneous start around a purpose-built or modified race circuit, which includes a specialist track surface, for as many laps as has been specified for that event. The winner is the competitor who first completes a specified distance (including, if applicable, any handicap credit), or who completes the greatest distance in a specified time.

Speed is therefore the principal factor in determining the result. There are 24 distinct car formulae and 10 historic car formulae in road racing. There are 14 licenced road race circuits in Britain, the competitive lengths of which vary from one to three miles.

## ii) High Speed Trials

A race event, generally run under the same competition regulations as road racing on a circuit, in which competitors are required to maintain a minimum speed (usually 50 mph) for a specified time or distance, or to cover a minimum distance in a specified time.

## iii) Off Road Racing

Non-contact racing on an unsealed circuit, usually grass or stubble, in which the average speed should not exceed 45 mph.

The RACMSA recognises three forms of off road racing:

- 2 CV Cross;
- Mini Cross; and
- Non-Contact Grass Track Racing.

## iv) Autograss

Banger Racing

Stock Car/Hot Rod Racing

These types of off road racing occur on grass, bare earth or sealed-surface circuits using either specialist 'stock cars' or 'stripped down' production vehicles. The racing takes place on a continuous 'short oval' circuit and contact between the vehicles plays a significant part. Whereas stock car racing is principally stadium-based, autograss and banger racing can also take

place on open off road sites.

None of these forms of motorcar racing are controlled by the RACMSA, but all are popular forms of off road motorsport.

## 2.15. (b) Speed Events

### i) Sprints

An event run on a flat, straight, sealed-surface course which is usually well under a mile in length and includes a short competitive straight and breaking area. Vehicles run singly from a standing start and are timed from a starting point the winner being the competitor who travels the distance in the shortest time.

Although there are currently 39 registered venues, sprints can also take place at race circuits and on unsealed surfaces.

### ii) Hill Climb

A sprint event on a continuously rising gradient which varies in length between on average 400 and 1,100 yards.

Usually run on sealed-surface tracks, but occasionally on off-road unsealed surfaces, hill climbs involve a wide range of vehicle types from racing cars to production vehicles.

There are 34 registered venues in Britain.

### iii) Autocross

A non-contact speed event on a smooth grass or unsealed surface (e.g., stubble, quarry floor) circuit of between 600 and 1,200 yards in which two or more cars 'race', though no 'racing car' is permitted. Time is the deciding factor in competition rather than 'first past the post'.

Only one registered autocross venue exists though the majority of events take place either within the confines of race circuits or on private land.

### iv) Rallycross

Often described as 'professional autocross', a speed event in which several cars, starting simultaneously, 'race' over a circuit incorporating a variety of sealed and unsealed surfaces and gradients.

Although there are seven rallycross circuits many events, including the 1984 Rallycross Grand Prix, take place on and off race circuits.

v) Cross Country Speed Events

Speed events for 4-wheel drive vehicles run on off road surfaces at a single venue and do not involve use of the Public Highway (either sealed or unsealed). Competitors are timed over given distances.

vi) Drag Racing

A race between two specialised vehicles over a flat, straight, sealed-surface course of 440 yards and minimum width of 50 feet with an additional minimum braking distance of 800 yards.

There are only four registered venues in Britain.

2.16. Race and speed events can attract large numbers of spectators. They therefore require elaborate safety precautions and, in the case of race circuits, purpose-built spectator facilities. In addition all race and speed venues require paddock areas, scrutineering facilities, fire and medical equipment and, for races, pits. If spectators are encouraged paying gate facilities are also needed as well as car parking provision. Specific and detailed regulations for each of these requirements can be found in published sources (4).

## Non-Speed Events

### 2.17. (a) Rallying

#### i) Economy Rallies

A rally event run on the Public Highway, designed to assess the fuel economy of the competition vehicles, and in which the overall results are based on the relative fuel consumption of the cars.

#### ii) Navigational Rallies

A rally designed to test the navigational skills of the crew and run on the Public Highway.

#### iii) Road Rallies

A rally taking place on the Public Highway, run usually at night, involving low average speeds over highly variable route lengths divided into competitive (timed) and non-competitive sections,

in which maintaining a time schedule forms a substantial part of the competition.

iv) Special Stage Rallies

A rally consisting of a number of special, competitive (timed) stages (sections) to which competitors have exclusive access, each being over half a mile in length, on off-road sites (though these can be either sealed or unsealed), joined by non-competitive sections, which may or may not use the Public Highway. Penalties are imposed on competitors who exceed or under-achieve a target time for each stage, which are established on the basis of a permitted average speed for each stage.

v) Single-Venue Special Stage Rallies

An event which takes place at a single venue at which all the stages are laid out. These can be wholly sealed or wholly unsealed sites, or a combination of both.

vi) Twelve-Car Rallies

A specific class of rally, complying with one of the above categories (e.g., navigational, economy) which, provided that it meets certain requirements (such as involving 12 or less competition vehicles and does not occur on a Saturday night) may take place on the Public Highway without the need for specific authorisation under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles (Competition and Trials) Regulations 1969.

vii) Veteran Rallies

A rally restricted to vehicles built before 1 January 1919.

viii) Vintage Rallies

A rally complying with one of the above categories and restricted to vehicles built prior to 1 January 1941.

## 2.18. (b) Trials

Trials are test events run chiefly on private off road sites of varied terrain and steep slopes, with a number of competitive sections created with the object of bringing the vehicle to an involuntary stop. The winner is the competitor whose vehicle either completes the sections in the shortest time or who incurs the least number of penalty points.

i) Production Car Trials

A trial using slightly modified but road legal production cars on relatively non-damaging sites.

ii) Sporting Car Trials

A trial using purpose-built specialised trial vehicles.

iii) Classic Reliability Trials

The original form of trial, dating back to 1904/1910, using Public Highways (both sealed and unsealed) for either all or part of the route which can vary in length between 35 and 400 miles.

iv) Four-Wheel Drive Trials

A trial either wholly on private off road sites (or using not less than 50 miles of non-competitive Public Highway), in which the event is based upon the ability of competitors to climb and descend hills and traverse sections non-stop.

2.19 (c) Tests

i) Autotests

A competition in which marking during the event is based solely on a competition performance in tests of the 'box' and 'garage' variety, usually on sealed surfaces (e.g. car parks) but also, though less frequently, on grass or stubble. Ordinary road vehicles are used.

ii) Treasure Hunts

Principally a 'social' rather than a competitive event in which the vehicle provides solely a means of transport.

iii) Gymkhana

An event held solely on private ground which involves a combination of test and skill on timed and untimed performance.

2.20 (d) Non-Competitive Trail Driving

Although not strictly a 'sport' in the sense of organised competition, trail driving is nonetheless an organised form of motor vehicle

activity. Using 'green lanes', RUPPs and Byways, groups (usually less than six) of road legal vehicles (usually four wheel drive vehicles) drive along prescribed routes on unsealed Public Highways. As a 'legitimate' and formal activity, trail riding is organised by specialist clubs.

2.21. Motorcar non-speed events attract few non-enthusiast spectators, with the exception of the more prestigious special stage rallies such as the Lombard RAC. Where spectators are present provision for them is supervised but informal. The site requirements of non-speed events tend to be less complicated and, for those that run on private land or the Public Highway, are usually temporary.

### Motorcycle Sports

The following definitions are based on the competition regulations of the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) in its 1985 Handbook (5). The definitions are appropriate to all forms of motorcycle sport (including sidecars and three-wheeled machines) including youth motorcycle sports.

#### Speed-Based Events

##### 2.22. (a) Racing

###### (i) Road Racing

A race on a purpose-built or converted circuit in the manner of motorcar road racing.

Competitive vehicles are grouped into seven principal classes and six TT classes.

There are 24 licenced motorcycle road race circuits in Great Britain.

###### (ii) Grass Track Racing

A race on a flat, oval or kidney-shaped grass or stubble course between 500 and 1,000 yards in length using specialised, breakless, single or twin cylinder machines, usually starting four or six at a time.

###### (iii) Sand Racing

A race on the sea shore either on a continuous circuit, either oval or kidney-shaped, or from point to point.



## (iv) Motocross/Scrambling

A high speed race on a rough, off road circuit (from 500 yards to two miles in length) with natural or man-made jumps and banks built into the course. Large numbers of starters ride specialist, powerful, yet lightweight motocross machines with long travel suspension and 'knobbly' tyres over a series of laps, the winner being the rider who completes a specified number of laps in the shortest time.

## (v) Trail Cross

A specialist form of motocross for road legal trail and enduro machines.

## (vi) Stadium Cross

A form of motocross that takes place on a wholly man-made artificial circuit within a stadium (such as a football or speedway stadium).

## (vii) Speedway

A specific form of off-road racing which takes place on a shale surface oval circuit laid down within a purpose-built or converted stadium facility which incorporates one or more stands for spectator accommodation. Riders use specialist machines (500cc 4-stroke, breakless motorcycles for Adult events) and race four at a time for four laps.

## 2.23. (b) Speed Events

## (i) Sprints

A timed 'race' between two or more competitors from point to point in a straight line on an approximately level sealed-surface not exceeding one mile in length.

## (ii) Hill Climb

A 'race,' from point to point up a steep gradient, between two or more competitors against time.

## (iii) Drag Racing

As in motorcar drag racing, a form of sprint between two specialist machines from a standing start on a straight sealed-surface track. The winner is the rider who covers the distance in the shortest time.

## (iv) Enduros

An off road rally, using a course commonly of up to 60 miles with no individual sections. On occasion incorporates sections of Public Highway (sealed and unsealed). Machines are road legal. Enduros can take place as multi-lap events incorporating existing motocross circuits.

## Non-Speed Events

## 2.24. (a) Rallies

## (i) Competitive Rallies

A competitive event in the form of a trial taking place over various routes (on and off road or a combination of both), converging on a specific rally point, and in which the average speed is fixed.

## (ii) Social Rallies

An event organised primarily with the object of assembling riders at a fixed point in advance.

## 2.25. (b) Trials

## (i) Trials

A low speed, off road skill event in which a course, comprising a series of distinct, natural, competitive sections is laid out with the object of either bringing the motorcycle to a halt or causing the rider to place his foot, or part of his body, on or against either the ground, or any part of the section. The winner is the rider who completes the course with the minimum of penalty points.

## (ii) Arena Trials

A form of trial event which takes place on a single site, such as a football pitch, with man-made competitive sections.

## 2.26. (c) Non-Competitive Trail Riding

The riding of motorcycles along unsealed Public Highways (RUPPs, Green Lanes and Byways).

This has been a popular activity for many years though, in the sense of organised competition, it

is not strictly a 'sport'. Nevertheless, trail events are organised by specific clubs and the motorcycles used are road legal.

### Karting

2.27. The following definition is derived from the RACMSA 1985 Yearbook (6).

#### Kart Racing

A specialised form of motorsport using purpose-built open karts of varying engine capacity (100-250cc) on sealed-surface circuits. Events also take place on motor racing circuits. Kart racing takes three forms:

- (i) short-course racing on circuits of less than 1.5 km lap length;
- (ii) long-course racing on circuits of more than 1.5km lap length, and including motor racing circuits;
- (iii) Round-the-houses racing on the Public Highway on occasion, and passing through residential areas. (Because of the statutory prohibition of the use of the Public Highway for vehicle racing these events can only take place off mainland Britain.)

There are 41 sealed-surface circuits in Great Britain. The six round-the-houses circuits are all in Northern Ireland.

2.28. It is clear, from the above, that there are considerable variations in the nature and land requirements of the different disciplines comprising motorsport. The extent to which this variation can be subsumed into the single, umbrella term 'motorsport' is debatable (7). Indeed, there is a growing plurality of sporting disciplines and organisations. In one sense it is perhaps an unnecessary constraint to consider 'motorsport' as a single type of sporting activity. One would not for example seek to ascribe a similarly aggregative function to the term 'ball sports'. Certainly the all-embracing use of the term motorsports is more common amongst those outside the participant community, such as those in positions of statutory authority and the general public. As we shall show, such an undifferentiated view often acts to the detriment of individual forms of motorsport. Nevertheless the principal issues faced by British motorsport are faced by all the disciplines and all the individual forms. Although some forms may thrive while others decline, all are affected by the costs of participation, changing legislation and public attitudes.

2.29. Motorsports, like all forms of sport, provide a dual function. They are participant activities, drawing riders and drivers of all ages seeking to enjoy the skills of vehicle control, often on unfamiliar terrain, and the ability to drive or ride at speed. Motorsports are also

important spectator events. Although more detailed discussion of participant classes and spectator numbers for each discipline will follow, it is important to distinguish certain broad categories at this point.

2.30. Participants are of three kinds. First, there are those riders, drivers, co-drivers, passengers and navigators who constitute competitors. Second, there are participants made up of organisers, officials, inspectors, scrutineers, time keepers, observers and judges who maintain the standards of competition, set the rules and regulations and officiate at events. An important intermediate category is made up of mechanics, engineers, outfitters, stall holders, equipment sales and other promotional sellers found at many events. The General Household Survey 1980 (8) estimated that 0.5% of the adult population of Great Britain had taken part in one of the broad range of motorsports during the most popular season - winter. This represents some 200,000 participants (9). Of these, some 40-50,000 might be described as active, competitive motorcyclists, and 102,000 active motorcar and kart participants (10).

2.31. Competitors can be seen as falling in one of five groups:

1. Full-time professional;
2. Semi-professional;
3. Regular amateur;
4. Casual amateur; and
5. Youth competitors.

Amateur and youth competitors considerably outnumber the full-time and semi-professional competitors. In many areas of motorsport non-competitive participants outnumber the riders or drivers. The British Formula 1 Grand Prix meeting draws upon some 2,000 volunteer officials for three days while only 180 drivers compete. Similarly, the Lombard RAC Rally requires 8,000 volunteer officials for an event in which 150 crews compete (11).

2.32. Although most forms of motorsport can attract amateur and professional drivers and riders some events have come to demand specific classes of participant. The most obvious example is Formula 1 motor racing, but this is increasingly true for championship stage rally and motocross events. Significantly, at the local level, there has been in recent years a trend against increasing 'professionalisation' of motorsports through the growth and encouragement of accessible and cheap, amateur events. As will be demonstrated below, the effect of this has been to polarise competition, both in the status of events and in the forms of motorsport accessible to the amateur participant.

2.33. Whereas participation is generally accessible to anyone fulfilling the relevant statutory requirements governing the use of motorised vehicles, competition is organised and coordinated by individual clubs (the basic operating units of the sports) within a framework laid down by the governing bodies. With the exception of certain championship events, all motorsport events are organised by such clubs, either singly or in

partnership. In addition, virtually all participants in motorsport are members of at least one club, and in many cases, several. However, with the exception of kart and youth motorcycle clubs, the greater proportion of club members do not actively compete in motorsport events, other than those 'social' events that might be organised specifically for non-competitive club members. Earlier, it was estimated that there are currently some 200,000 active motorsport participants. However, active participants make up a relatively small proportion of total club membership. A recent survey of RACMSA affiliated motorcar clubs has estimated that only 17 per cent of club members were actively involved in competition (12). In motorcycle sports the figure would seem to be nearer 40 per cent. Taking these two assessments we estimate total motorsport club membership as in the order of 650,000, though in this figure we have excluded the membership of the larger 'recreational' motoring clubs also affiliated to the RACMSA.

2.34. Youth motorsports are, of necessity, subject to more rigorous control and supervision than adult competition. Youth participation is currently the fastest area of growth in motorsport, particularly in karting and certain forms of motorcycle sport (motocross, trials, and grass track racing).

2.35. Apart from the actual participants, there are two further relevant interests in motorsports; first, non-participant enthusiasts and, second, spectators. Enthusiasts are difficult to define or enumerate. We might distinguish two groups; (i) members of motorsport clubs, already identified, who do not actively participate, but nonetheless retain club membership in order to gain spectator access to events not generally open to the public; (ii) 'enthusiasts' amongst the public who are neither participants nor club members, yet who attend events and subscribe to motorsport journals. The total estimated figure for non-participant club membership is around 450,000. The number of enthusiasts lying outside club membership is more difficult to assess. The sales figures of motorsport journals give some guide to numbers. Table 2.1. gives the approximate weekly and monthly sales figures for the principal motorsport journals. The highest selling 'Motorcycle News' is the fourth most popular sports periodical in Britain (the first being the football journal 'Shoot' with a readership of approximately 250,000 per issue). In a 'Top Twenty' of sports periodicals motorsport journals appear in fourth, sixth and eleventh places (13).

2.36. For the non-club enthusiast and non-participant, the scope of motorsports available as a spectator sport is considerably diminished. Championship road racing events dominate in terms of spectator numbers and television coverage. The General Household Survey of 1980 (14) estimated that 500,000 adults watch motorsport events during the most popular spectator season, the summer. Veal in his analysis of GHS results shows that 'watching motor sports' has increased in popularity during this period (15). Watching motorsports currently ranks with watching horse racing as the fourth most popular spectator sport in Britain; though those attending motorsport events generally do so more frequently than those who attend horse races (16).

Table 2.1.

Sales Figures for some of the Principal Motorsport Journals

## MOTORCAR JOURNALS

Custom Car	monthly	90,000
Motorsport	monthly	87,000
Car and Car Conversions	monthly	82,000
Motoring News	weekly	74,895
Motor	weekly	57,661
Autocar	weekly	52,488
Auto Performance	monthly	50,000
Autosport	weekly	40,376
Rally Sport	monthly	20,300

## MOTORCYCLE JOURNALS \*

Motorcycle News	weekly	145,000
Speedway Mail	weekly	45,000
Trials and Motocross News	weekly	30,000

## KARTING JOURNALS

Kart and Superkart	monthly	6,500
Karting	monthly	4,000

\* This listing only involves those 'off-road' journals, it excludes the numerous Road Race journals.

SOURCES: RAC Motor Sports Association, 1983. Submission to Sports Council, 12th April, 1983; and Authors' survey, 1984.

2.37. Nevertheless with the exception of the Lombard RAC Rally, which can attract some two million spectators over a five day period, most off-road motorcar and motorcycle events draw relatively low numbers of non-enthusiast spectators. Championship events that are openly advertised may attract upwards of 10,000 spectators but these are comparatively rare. In addition, television coverage of off-road events has become fairly limited. In 1984 the major networks broadcast coverage of, amongst others, the Lombard RAC Rally, the British 250cc Motocross Grand Prix and the British Rallycross Grand Prix. The regular broadcast of non-championship club level motocross and scrambling events, a popular element of televised sport during the 1960s, has ceased. Such coverage was said to have had a disastrous effect upon the spectator attendances of scrambling events in general. As such events often depend upon spectator revenue organising clubs were relieved when the practice of televising events stopped. Today the only regularly televised non-championship off road motorsport is arena trials, which feature in the BBC series 'Kickstart'. In this instance the effect has been more positive stimulating youth participation and improving the image of the off road motorcyclist.

2.38. Thus far in the Report we have adhered closely to our initial definition of motorsports as activities involving some form of organised competition. Yet organised competition forms no part of what has been described as the most popular 'sport' in Britain; walking, with over eight million participants (17). If one considers walking to be a sport then there is a case for including recreational motoring, and informal motor 'sport', in any evaluation of the general popularity of motor vehicle related activities.

#### Informal motor vehicle activities

2.39. Informal motor vehicle activities take place outside the jurisdiction of the clubs and governing bodies of motorsport and do not involve organised competition. Four categories of informal activity can be distinguished:

##### 1. Recreational Motoring

Where the Public Highway, both sealed and unsealed, is used for informal, unsupervised 'touring' either by solo participants or small groups driving or riding road legal vehicles and complying with all statutory regulations.

##### 2. Road-Based Informal 'Motorsport' (18)

Where informal 'competitors' take part in small-scale non-club 'events' on the Public Highway and, though driving for the most part road legal vehicles, are not obliged to obey voluntary codes of practice nor comply with those regulations applying to formal club members.

### 3. Competition Practice

Where formal motorsport competitors use off-road sites for individual, unsupervised practice, generally complying with all relevant statutory, voluntary and club regulations, though not infrequently in an unauthorised capacity.

### 4. Informal Off Road 'Motorsport'

Where participants (the great majority of whom are motorcyclists) use, either authorised or unauthorised, available sites for unsupervised, uncontrolled off road activities frequently in breach of the statutes governing the use of vehicles, the eligibility of riders, the legal ownership of vehicles, and rights of access to land.

For the purpose of this Report we shall largely ignore the first of these categories; recreational motoring. The remaining three, however, form a necessary adjunct to any examination of motorsports. Therefore, throughout this Report, these three categories will be referred to as the informal sector or informal motor activities.

2.40. It has not proved possible to estimate the number of informal 'participants' Informal riders may vary considerably in motivation and attitude, from highly proficient adults who seek opportunities for off road riding with the minimum of disturbance to others, (but beyond the constraints of formal club membership), to 'cowboy' teenage riders using stolen and stripped down machines on rough land with little obvious concern for the impact of their activities on the environment or neighbouring site occupiers. Many urban fringe sites and areas of accessible countryside suffer from the environmental impact of this latter group.

2.41. Despite a numerical growth in informal off road motorcycling, and increased sales of road legal motorcycles modelled on motocross machines, there are few outlets for this form of activity. To date the demands of this sector have been little met or understood. In one of the few studies carried out Blezard concludes "... a much fuller awareness is needed at local government level, of the eclectic and multifacetal nature of the subject" (19). The activities of the informal sector can directly affect those of its formal counterpart by provoking site loss and stimulating public antagonism. Motor 'sport' is thus comprised of two distinct sectors. The formal sector is a long-established, legitimate and recognised branch of sport involving around 200,000 participants and over 500,000 regular enthusiasts. At its fringe, the informal sector is an apparently rapidly growing, yet more transient body, implying a need for the involvement of agencies otherwise unfamiliar with the roles of control and provision.



## THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES

"If Princess Diana were to ride a motorcycle, all our troubles would be over" (an off road rider, 1984).

2.42. Both formal motorsports and informal motor activities are subject to constraints imposed by three basic and inter-related issues; noise, image and land availability. The impact these and other issues have had upon the practice and organisation of motorsports has been seen as increasingly debilitating, provoking competition between the formal and informal sectors for land, and stimulating the unauthorised use of land and vehicles by the informal sector. Described as a "vicious circle" (20), such actions have perpetuated the longstanding problem of the image of motorsports and of motorsport participants, and serve ultimately to place further pressures on the owners of sites used by both sectors.

### Noise

2.43. For the majority of people the quintessential feature of motorsports is noise. Indeed noise is frequently the feature by which motorsport is distinguished from many other forms of sport (21), although sports such as shooting, power boat racing and flying can be more intrusive. Noise is an issue that the entire motorsport community is aware of. All the principal governing bodies enforce their own vehicle noise controls at competitive events which, as the majority occur off the Public Highway, are not subject to statutory vehicle noise limits (22). These have reduced the potentially damaging environmental impact of competitive events and have gone some way to drawing the distinction, in the minds of the general public and local authorities, between organised events and informal activities (23).

2.44. Despite the fact that motorsport events have taken place regularly in the countryside for over half a century, and the maximum noise levels permitted by the governing bodies having been decreased over the years, a recent growth in public opposition has contributed to the problems of event organisers and promoters. Opposition normally takes two forms. The first one can term the 'drawbridge mentality', and the second the assumption of guilt by association.

2.45. Lowland Britain has seen over the past 20-25 years a process of dispersed decentralisation of population encouraged by improved accessibility and job growth in rural areas. It has frequently been remarked that in rural areas the most recent in-migrants are often the most vocal in defending the 'rural image' of their new found environments (24). Certainly the nostalgic rural image fostered in much literature, art, and even modern advertising has little place for such activities as motorsports. The most vocal residents of the accessible countryside neither see pre-existing motorsports as activities with rural links and participants, nor distinguish between the different types of motorsport, which may vary considerably in the disturbance they create. The perception of motorsports and its equation with non-rural and 'deviant' activities by other recreational users of the countryside, is evinced in the following view:

"A true country lover would no more wish to ride a motorcycle across the fields and moors than a true cathedral lover would wish to ride up and down the aisles" (25).

Such statements are symptomatic of a narrowness of vision that defines a 'country lover' and a rural interest solely in recreational terms, (farmers, for example, have for a long time used off road vehicles as a means of crossing fields and moorland), and identifies motorcyclists particularly as urban vandals. It has been suggested elsewhere that it is these newer 'rural' interests that have come to dominate the political and representative forums in which land use in the countryside is debated.

2.46. The growing impact of the informal sector appears to have added to the problem. Where informal activities take place off the Public Highway, with or without the permission of landowners, they are not governed by statutory noise control. Neither, due to the informality of the activity, is there generally any voluntary or self-imposed noise restraint. The machines and vehicles used have no statutory requirement to be legally silenced, nor to be road legal in any sense. Where the use of a site is shared between motorsport and informal users, the formal motorsports use may suffer penalty or site loss as a result of the actions of informal users. Furthermore, whereas motorsport clubs are often keen not to use sites more than a few times each year for fear of inviting opposition, the activities of unauthorised informal use may create a general impression of over-use thereby leading to public objection.

2.47. Issues relating to the use of RUPPs, Green Lanes and Byways have assumed a particularly high profile. In a number of areas they have become the catalyst for public opposition to off road motor vehicle activities in general. Theoretically the use of unsealed Public Highways is governed by the same statutes that apply to sealed roads. In reality however, not only are relatively few informal participants aware of this fact, but there is also little active enforcement of vehicle and driver/rider regulations. Thus a mixture of legal and illegal machines, licenced and unlicenced riders and drivers utilise such routes. They are also shared with walkers and horseriders to whom the noise of machines, their potential speed of travel, and the numbers passing at any one time may be of particular concern. However, whilst the form of locomotion may

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differ organised trail riders, horse riders, and walkers may all be seeking to enjoy the same exhilaration of moving through attractive, unspoilt or dramatic landscapes. Where public opposition to the vehicular use of such routes is backed by evidence of their abuse local highway authorities have sought to prohibit vehicular rights of way upon them (26). As with private land the effect can be to deny legitimate motorsport participants access to rural land.

### Image

2.48. Much of the conflict surrounding the use of motor vehicles in rural areas derives from the noise and related environmental effects that such activities can cause. However, the identification of these factors as adverse depends ultimately upon the values and attitudes towards both the countryside and the activities themselves, of those affected. Unifunctional agricultural communities are often less intolerant of the impact of motorsport events in their vicinities than are 'gentrified' commuter villages. For the former, the countryside contributes a work as well as a leisure environment and between the two there is no necessarily inevitable conflict. For the latter, however, a distinct set of exclusive values can be said to exist regarding the use of rural space, and motorsport does not fit easily into that idealisation. On the contrary, motorsport is frequently associated more with urban (noise, smoke, fumes, people and control) than with rural (quiet, clean, isolated freedom) a priori conceptions. The Sandford Committee on National Parks for example maintained that:

" ... recreational uses of national parks must be compatible with the qualities of the parks, among which ... a sense of tranquility and of contact with nature seem to us to be of especial value. Accordingly, noisy pursuits will nearly always be out of place in national parks" (27).

Although this image of motorsports and motorsport participants as being fundamentally 'urban' is not necessarily valid, it has nevertheless played a large part in framing public attitudes.

2.49. The individual components of this ascribed urban image are complex. Motorsports derive the majority of their active participants and enthusiasts from the cities and towns. The same, however, could be said of many of the principal recreation and conservation organisations. There is no implied urban bias in the spatial distribution of motorsport participants other than that which exists for the population as a whole. Many middle sized county towns (for example, Winchester, Newmarket, Oxford, Harrogate and Stratford-upon-Avon) have local motorsport clubs who draw their membership from the town and surrounding areas and who practice their sport in the neighbouring countryside and urban fringe.

2.50. Organised motorsports can undoubtedly be noisy and may attract large numbers of spectators and competitors. Whereas circuit and purpose-built facilities can often accomodate such pressures, rural off-road sites

are frequently small and only accessible via relatively narrow country lanes. The combination of intrusions that off-road events can bring about (noise, smoke, fumes, traffic generation, large numbers of people, site erosion and general disturbance) can, quite understandably, provoke justifiable complaint. However, there is a widespread public belief that all off-road events necessarily take place in areas where all of these intrusions will necessarily occur. This has led to indiscriminate and perhaps less justifiable opposition to almost all motorsport in the countryside, and at a more general level, to opposition to the use of RUPPs and Green Lanes by motor vehicles (28).

2.51. Motorsport interests necessarily compete with other recreational interests for access to limited land resources. It has been suggested that the ability of any interest to achieve such access is dependant, in part, upon the recognised 'legitimacy' of its claim (29). Although the urban image of motorsports might challenge any claim to legitimacy, we would nonetheless suggest that formal motorsports have such a claim, its components being:

- the fact that many forms of motorsport have been practiced in rural areas for considerable lengths of time and in many cases, pre-date the large scale growth of the so called, 'traditional' forms of rural recreation; e.g., walking and riding;
- the fact that motorsport participants are accountable, not only to the clubs to which they belong, but also to the recognised governing bodies of motorsport, who are accepted, in some cases in statute, as legitimate organisations;
- the fact that large numbers of off road motorsport events take place in rural locations without provoking opposition amongst local residents; and
- the fact that where opposition does occur, it is usually the result of a conflict of interest between the two different sets of rural values, neither of which is necessarily indigenous.

If these are the components of legitimacy, then the informal sector of off road motor activities might have a more questionable claim to it. It is predominantly the informal sector that provokes the adverse urban images from which all off road activities seem to suffer.

## Land

2.52. Land is the basic operating currency of off road motorsports. Yet an adverse image, and the effects of noise, appear to threaten the legitimacy of motorsports as a rural use of land. Their combined effect can be a reduction in the land useable for events. Site loss, and declining availability among those that remain, comprise the single most important issue facing motorsports in Britain today.

2.53. The clubs have traditionally used land by arrangements made with three main groups;

- private owners (e.g. farmland);
- quasi-government and government bodies such as the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, Water Authorities and the Ministry of Defence/Property Services Agency); and
- other public land owned by local authorities (e.g. local authorities and development corporations).

Previous research has suggested a rapid decline in the availability of land. A survey undertaken by the South Western Sports Council in 1976 found that 34 out of 46 local motorcycle clubs had lost at least one private site in the preceeding five years (30), a situation recorded in many other Sports Council regions (31). The impact of site loss appears compounded by the ineffectiveness of local authorities in resolving conflicts surrounding site use, or in making available alternative venues. Only in a few localised instances has successful provision been made. The reasons for this, and the effect of land use planning and environmental management on motorsports, are considered in Chapter 6.

2.54. The issues of noise, image and land are closely interlinked. Not only do noise and image contribute ultimately to the loss of land, but also land loss itself can lead to the overuse of those sites remaining with a resultant increase in noise levels and growth in informal site abuse. Although these three issues are not the only ones facing contemporary motorsports in Britain, they appear the most significant. They have the potential to threaten and constrain a demonstrably popular and legitimate set of activities.

2.55. The imbalance between a growing public and participant interest in motorsports, and declining land availability, is becoming increasingly recognised as a matter of requiring immediate remedy, both from within the motorsport community and beyond (32).

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"The motor sporting community has been accustomed to self-help to enable its sport to continue and increase. Unfortunately, certain measures designed to protect the

rural environment and assist the access of certain sections of the public have, wittingly or unwittingly, reduced the opportunities for motor sport to be enjoyed" (33).

"The sport urgently requires assistance if it is not to die in Wales and it is recommended that approaches be made to all agencies owning land in Wales to secure adequate facilities for training and competition at local level" (34).

"It is fully recognised that making satisfactory provision in the countryside for noisy pursuits, such as car rallies, model aircraft flying and trail riding, is not an easy task. Nevertheless, these are legitimate forms of recreation and positive steps should be taken to meet the demand and make proper provision for them" (35).

Evidently what is required is some framework for establishing the extent and impact of these and other issues on the practice of motorsports. Systematic research is required to more fully illuminate and quantify the assertions being made. This Report seeks to inform such a debate.



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## ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF MOTORSPORTS

### THE NATIONAL PICTURE

3.1. In Chapter 2, it was estimated there are currently some 200,000 active motorsports participants in Britain, although the total membership of motorsport clubs amounts to well over 700,000. Most motorsport activities are governed and controlled by two national bodies, the Royal Automobile Club Motor Sport Association (RACMSA) and the Auto Cycle Union (ACU), to whom the bulk of motorsport clubs are directly affiliated. There are two sets of exceptions to this general pattern. First, there are a number of clubs and organisations that operate forms of motorcar sport not controlled by the RACMSA; autograss, banger racing, hot rod and stock car racing. These have their own organisational structure of clubs and governing bodies, and can number between 10,000 and 20,000 active participants. Second, motorcycle clubs may be affiliated to other governing bodies. The Amateur Motor Cycling Association (AMCA), the British Schoolboy Motorcycling Association (BSMA), and the Youth Motorcycle Sporting Association (YMSA), control similar types of motorcycle disciplines to the ACU including motocross and trials. Others such as the Speedway Control Board, the Trail Riders' Fellowship (TRF), and the British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF) are involved in more exclusive activities; speedway, trail riding and non-competitive road rallying respectively. The wider composition of the motorsports community and their relations to the governing bodies is shown in Table 3.1.

3.2. The RACMSA and the ACU are the recognised representative federations of British motorsport within the international motorsport community. The RACMSA is formally recognised by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), its international competitions committee (the Federation Internationale de Sport Automobile (FISA)), and the Commission Internationale de Karting (CIK), as the controlling body for automobile and karting sports in Britain. The ACU is similarly recognised by the Federation Internationale Motorcycliste (FIM). These various international bodies are the ultimate authorities in motorsport, although such authority only applies to events and activities undertaken within the relevant International Sporting Code by clubs affiliated to the national motorsport federations (the RACMSA and ACU in Britain).

3.3. The role of the RACMSA in respect of the use of the Public Highway for competitive events has been endorsed in statute. Under the Motor Vehicles (Competitions and Trials) Regulations 1969 (S.I. 414/1969), the RACMSA acts as the Minister of Transport's Agent in authorising, through its Rally Authorisation Department, the use of the Public Highway for competition. This statutory function is non-discriminatory applying to all potential users of the Public Highway for competition not solely those clubs affiliated directly to the RACMSA.

Table 3.1.The Principal Governing Bodies of British Motorsport1. Competitive Sport

## The Royal Automobile Club Motor Sports Association

- 615 Car Clubs
- 47 Kart Clubs
- Total membership: 811,500

## The Auto Cycle Union

- 580 Adult clubs
- 230 Youth Clubs
- Total membership: 70,000

## The Amateur Motor Cycling Association

- 114 Clubs
- Total membership: 6,500

## The Speedway Control Board

- 34 licenced circuits
- Total riders: 600 - 650

## The British Schoolboys Motorcycling Association

- Total riders: 2,000

## The Youth Motorcycle Sporting Association

- Total riders: 900

## The National Hot Rod Promoters Association

- 27 approved circuits
- Total membership: 500

## The British Stock Car Association

- Total drivers: 300 - 400

## The National Autograss Sports Association

- Around 20 clubs nationwide

(Total Banger Racing Clubs - for which there is no central governing body

- Total drivers: 10,000 - 18,000)

2. Non-competitive sport

## The Trail Riders Fellowship

- 31 regional Groups
- Total membership: 825

## The British Motorcyclist's Federation

- 256 non-competitive clubs
- Total membership: 7,390

3.4. Each governing body has a number of roles. These can be summarised as:

1. providing a structure around which participation in motorsport may be organised and coordinated;
2. providing a means of controlling both participants and events, and adjudicating in questions of dispute;
3. promoting and organising competition; and
4. representing motorsports with regard to external bodies.

To a degree these four functions, and the very existence of the governing bodies, serve to legitimise motorsports in the eyes of the general public and the wider sporting community. It is perhaps ironic that those activities regarded as 'controversial' are often more stringently controlled than those more readily accepted by the prevailing social consensus. Stringent control has been the primary function of the governing bodies, a role that has led to motorsport as a whole becoming introspective and self-effacing. Beyond the immediate sporting community, and with the exception of the 'flagship' events, the role and actions of the governing bodies of motorsport are relatively unknown and unrecognised. Indeed the Sports Council has shown in the past some reluctance to accept the governing bodies of the sports, and in some cases, the sports themselves, as genuine. There is clearly a potential conflict between the government agency and controlling roles of the governing bodies, and the lengths to which public lobbying and active criticism to promote change can be taken.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE MOTORSPORT COMMUNITY

3.5. Most motorsport clubs have found it advantageous to affiliate to one of the governing bodies. In this way they benefit from the representative and legitimising functions they perform and the ordered and regulated structure of competition they provide. The RACMSA has only been in existence in its current form since 1979 when it assumed full responsibility for the control of automobile sports from its predecessors within the RAC; the Motor Sports Council and the Competitions Committee. The ACU, formed as the Auto Cycle Club in 1903, grew out of the RAC which formally delegated the governance of motorcycle sports in Britain to it in 1924. In 1932, the Amateur Motor Cycling Association was formed as an offshoot from the ACU. Its aim was to promote specifically amateur scrambling (motocross) events. Whilst the ACU began as a national body, the AMCA grew up chiefly in the Midlands, the heartland of the British motorcycle industry. Although today the AMCA is a national organisation it retains both its Midlands stronghold and its emphasis on amateur club-based motocross. The ACU meanwhile controls virtually all forms of motorcycle sport, from road racing to trials.

3.6. The three governing bodies all have specialist committees to deal with the various policy areas of motorsport, those of the RACMSA being operated in conjunction with the Motor Sports Council. The implementation of policy is achieved through the regulations of the governing bodies, and their enforcement is the duty of the appointed officials. The overall structure of the motorsport community reflects the basic participatory structure surrounding individual clubs. Four types of club can be distinguished:

- a. major competitive clubs operating on a national basis (e.g., the British Automobile Racing Club, the British Motor Cycle Racing Club);
- b. regional and local car, kart and motorcycle clubs (the bulk of ACU and RACMSA clubs, and all AMCA clubs);
- c. large-scale clubs for which motorsport forms only a part of their general social and recreational activities (e.g., the Civil Service Motoring Association, the International Motorcyclists Touring Club); and
- d. 'one-make' or owners' clubs whose activities are part sporting and part-social (e.g., Austin Healey Club, Porsche Club, and the Triumph Owners' Motorcycle Club).

Clearly the sizes of such clubs vary. Whereas the average local RACMSA affiliated club has around 100 members, 'one-make' clubs frequently attract around 1,500 (2). The Civil Service Motoring Association has a membership of over 200,000 although only 1,000 of these are licenced motorsport competitors. For motorcycle clubs the range is less great the averages being between 80 - 100 for ACU clubs and 50 for AMCA clubs.

3.7 The RACMSA estimate that 102,000 members of their car clubs are active in motorsport, though in any one year there may be as many as 184,000 entries in some form of competitive or social event (3). Of these some 54,000 have been described as active competitors, the remainder being non-competitive participants. Within motorcycle sports there are around 25,000 adult and 11,000 youth competitor/participants.

3.8. The numbers of directly licenced RACMSA motorsport competitors have remained relatively static over the last 10 years, following a major increase during the 1960s (see Table 3.2.). Since the mid-1960s however the number of clubs has declined by 22 per cent, a situation that has been ascribed to a decline in motorsport venues (4). The data in Table 3.2. suggest that one of the effects of this has been to concentrate more participants in fewer clubs. A detailed analysis by motorsport discipline suggests that while the total number of competition licences issued in 1984 does not show any great variation from that 10 years ago, the early 1980s have evidently been a lean time for automobile sports (Table 3.3.). The number of speed licences issued in 1982, for example, was 43 per cent

Table 3.3.RACMSA Licenced Competitors by Sporting Discipline

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Race Licences	6,285	5,885	5,680	5,569	5,405	5,208	4,937	4,807	4,589	4,897	5,322
Rally Licences	12,159	13,404	12,435	13,062	12,653	11,751	11,155	11,085	10,185	10,425	10,596
Speed Licences	8,332	7,362	7,225	6,724	6,427	5,531	4,995	4,700	4,701	4,963	5,325
Kart Licences	4,129	4,210	4,022	3,828	3,886	4,139	4,981	4,843	4,230	3,878	4,010
Total Licences	28,415	29,369	29,084	29,967	29,601	29,650	29,600	28,600	26,242	26,893	28,145

Source: RACMSA.



lower than in 1974 and rally licenses have declined by 22 per cent since their peak in 1975. The RACMSA have attributed decline to such factors as the increasing cost of competition and the general economic recession (6). Significantly the numbers of all forms of competition licence increased in 1983 and 1984.

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Table 3.2. RACMSA Affiliated Clubs and Licenced Competitors\*

	1965	1970	1975	1978	1979	1980	1984
Clubs	851	751	776	743	721	700	641
Competitors	19,000	23,000	29,000	34,000	33,200	30,500	28,100

Sources (5)

\* Note: not all competitors require RACMSA Licencing (see below, para. 3.17.).

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3.9. Participation levels in motorcycle sports have been less stable. During the 1970s there was an increase in the number of ACU-licenced competitors and affiliated clubs (Table 3.4.) though competitor numbers have declined since 1978. The seemingly dramatic growth in the number of clubs during the early 1980s is largely due to the increased popularity of youth competition. The ACU established a separate Youth Division in 1974. In that year seven youth clubs were affiliated to the ACU and by 1981 some 182 were running specifically youth events. By 1983 this had risen to 230.

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Table 3.4. ACU Affiliated Clubs and Adult Competitors

	1970	1975	1978	1979	1980	1983
Clubs	604	547	579	603	614	810
Competitors	N/A	17,700	22,500	20,200	19,439	19,609

Sources (7)

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3.10. The expansion of the AMCA from a sub-regional to a national organisation coincides with the fluctuating growth of the ACU during the 1970s. Table 3.5. illustrates the rapid growth of the AMCA, particularly in the last decade. In many cases this has been to the comparative detriment of the ACU particularly in areas where the two organisations compete for riders and club members. The AMCA's less stringent

participant demands and more amateur style have attracted many riders unwilling to enter the more competitive and controlled world of ACU competition. In areas where AMCA motocross is strong the membership of ACU motocross clubs has frequently declined. However the shorter AMCA competitive season, the less prestigious competition hierarchy, and the lack of youth classes, suggest that the AMCA will remain an alternative rather than a replacement for the ACU.

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Table 3.5. The Growth of the AMCA

	1962	1973	1983
Affiliated clubs	12	24	120
Licenced Riders	277	N/A	6,000
Total Events	19	67	500

Sources (8)

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### REGIONAL ORGANISATION

3.11. Between the individual clubs and the governing bodies are the various regional associations. Although only in Northern Ireland is it compulsory for RACMSA affiliated clubs to formally belong to a regional association, some 90 per cent of clubs do so, many to more than one (9). Similarly within the ACU all but 26 non-territorial motorcycle clubs belong to a Centre (although ACU clubs can only affiliate to a single Centre). Figures 3.1. and 3.2. show the areas covered by motorcar associations throughout mainland Britain and ACU centres throughout England and Wales.

3.12. RACMSA Regional Associations, ACU Centres, and AMCA Groups (the three types of regional body) have a number of functions:

1. to widen the scope of events available to participants;
2. to organise and coordinate events and championships;
3. to formulate local policy;
4. to resolve and coordinate event dates;
5. to resolve and coordinate the use of the Public Highway for competition;
6. to control and 'guard' the use of sites and routes within the regional area;

lower than in 1974 and rally licenses have declined by 22 per cent since their peak in 1975. The RACMSA have attributed decline to such factors as the increasing cost of competition and the general economic recession (6). Significantly the numbers of all forms of competition licence increased in 1983 and 1984.

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Table 3.2. RACMSA Affiliated Clubs and Licenced Competitors\*

	1965	1970	1975	1978	1979	1980	1984
Clubs	851	751	776	743	721	700	641
Competitors	19,000	23,000	29,000	34,000	33,200	30,500	28,100

Sources (5)

\* Note: not all competitors require RACMSA Licencing (see below, para. 3.17.).

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3.9. Participation levels in motorcycle sports have been less stable. During the 1970s there was an increase in the number of ACU-licenced competitors and affiliated clubs (Table 3.4.) though competitor numbers have declined since 1978. The seemingly dramatic growth in the number of clubs during the early 1980s is largely due to the increased popularity of youth competition. The ACU established a separate Youth Division in 1974. In that year seven youth clubs were affiliated to the ACU and by 1981 some 182 were running specifically youth events. By 1983 this had risen to 230.

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Table 3.4. ACU Affiliated Clubs and Adult Competitors

	1970	1975	1978	1979	1980	1983
Clubs	604	547	579	603	614	810
Competitors	N/A	17,700	22,500	20,200	19,439	19,609

Sources (7)

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6. to control and 'guard' the use of sites and routes within the regional area;

Figure 3.1.

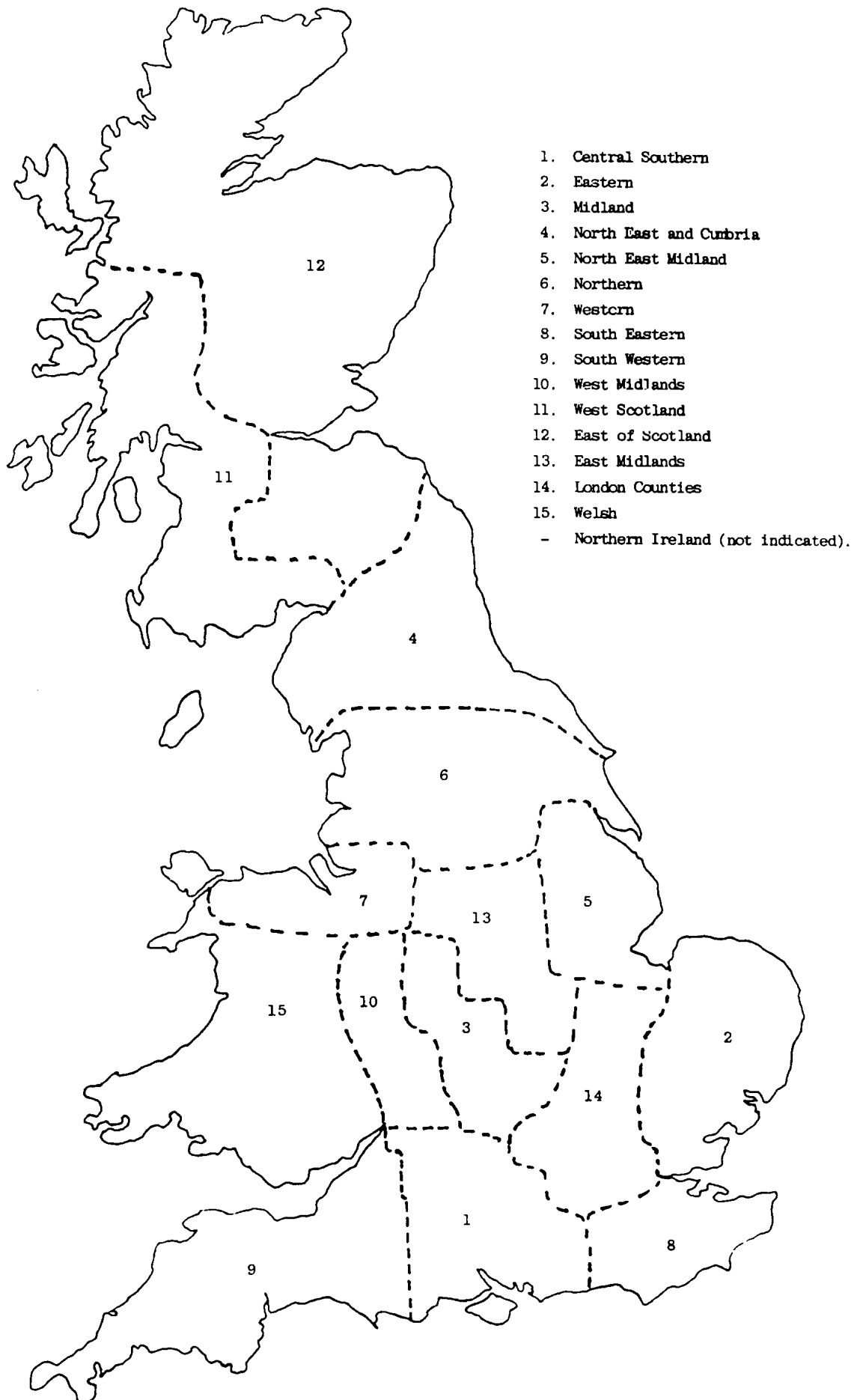
Associations of RACMSA Affiliated Motorcar Clubs

Figure 3.2.Centres of the Auto Cycle Union

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Cheshire                | 11. North Eastern    |
| 2. Cornwall                | 12. North Western    |
| 3. Eastern                 | 13. South Eastern    |
| 4. East Midland            | 14. Southern         |
| 5. East South Wales        | 15. South Midland    |
| 6. East Yorks              | 16. South Western    |
| 7. Isle of Man (not shown) | 17. Wessex           |
| 8. Midland                 | 18. Western          |
| 9. Mid Wales               | 19. West South Wales |
| 10. Northern               | 20. Yorkshire.       |



7. to liaise with external bodies and land agencies;
8. to licence and approve off-road motorcycle speed and race venues (ACU Centres only); and
9. to liaise with the governing bodies.

The functions of the AMCA groups involve closer regulation as all events organised by clubs within a group are open to all group riders. Thus, only a single group event occurs at one time within a group.

3.13. The roles of 'regional' intermediary bodies have grown as pressures have intensified on site venues and road rally and other routes. Individual clubs have looked to the regional associations to coordinate the use of land and the Public Highway and to find solutions to local site and event related problems. In response regional associations have most readily adopted intermediary and consultative roles with external agencies. Significantly it has been at the association level that many of the problems associated with road rallying have been most effectively countered (see below, Chapter 4).

### CONTROL

3.14. The central function of the governing bodies has been to control and regulate motorsport. The rules and regulations serve three purposes:

1. to provide a fair and systematic framework for competition thereby mitigating against unfair advantage;
2. to protect competitors, participants and spectators through safety measures; and
3. to seek to minimise the potentially intrusive effects of motorsport activities.

The mechanisms of control are two-fold; regulation and licence. The means of control lie with the appointed officials of the governing bodies, the regional associations, and the organising clubs. The regulations govern all aspects of competition (10). General, standing and competition regulations control the organisation of all types of event, from the safety of the course to the mode of entry (11). Technical regulations specify the requirements of all competition vehicles. In addition, specific controls and regulations at national, regional and local levels, regulate the use of sites and the Public Highway. Frequently these have arisen as a result of growing public controversy and illustrate the desire of the motorsport community to minimise the impact of their activities on local communities. Of particular note are noise controls. All three governing bodies enforce noise limits which vary depending upon the type of activity, the type of machine, and the distance and angle from source at which the noise is measured (Table 3.6.). Also, each competition event is subject to Supplementary Regulations imposed by the organising club(s) or regional bodies for that event only. Such regulations reflect any concerns arising from the past use of individual sites.

Table 3.6.

Permitted Noise Level Maxima for RACMSA, AMCA and ACU EventsRACMSA

<u>Event</u>	Maximum permitted noise emission by distance from source			
	0.5m	2.0m	8.0m	16.0m
Car road racing *	115	103	91	85
Autocross, Autotests, Rallycross, Stage Rallies, Trials	108	96	84	78
Road Rallying	102	90	78	72

All figures, dB(A).

\* Certain classes of race vehicle are exempt from noise emission maxima,  
 - See RACMSA, (1985) The British Motor Sports Yearbook Section QG.1.13.

ACU/AMCA

<u>Event</u>	Maximum permitted noise emission at 0.5m from source	
	0.5m	
Enduros	100	
Grass Track Racing	108	
Hill Climbs	110	(+ 5 dB(A) for 4-stroke machines)
Motocross	108	
Road Racing	110	(+ 5 dB(A) for 4-stroke machines)
Sand Racing	108	(+ 5 dB(A) for 4-stroke machines)
Trial Cross	108	
Trials	100	
All figures, dB(A).		



3.15. Most competitive motorsport events require a specific permit from the appropriate governing body before they can take place. The only exceptions to this are certain closed, non-speed automobile events. Otherwise the various categories of permitted event are as follows:

- Closed - entry open to members of organising club only;
- Closed Co-Promoted - entry open to members of an agreed number of co-promoting clubs (not more than 6);
- Restricted/Open - entry open to either, in the case of RACMSA affiliated clubs, members of a specified and restricted number of clubs or, in the case of ACU and AMCA clubs, members of any club belonging to the Centre or Group of the organising club;
- National - entry open to qualifying, national status, competitors;
- International - entry open to any qualifying, international status competitors;
- Full International - entry open to holders of a valid competition licence issued by any National Club under the authorisation of the FIA.

Upon the issue of an event permit or authorisation, (or either a formal Waiver or Exemption of permit), competitive events organised by ACU, RACMSA, and AMCA clubs are covered by Third Party insurance. Under the terms of this automatic cover, the exact specifications of which vary by sport (12) the governing body, the organising club and its officials, competitors, and other officials are insured, as is the landowner of the venue, against third party liability. In certain instances this cover extends to contractual liability. For the governing bodies, therefore, the authorisation of events serves the three important functions of coordinating competition throughout the year, enabling comprehensive insurance to be placed upon those involved, and facilitating general supervision.

3.16. The control functions of the governing bodies also extend to the licencing of certain types of venue, particularly race and speed tracks. Such permits may be permanent (as in the case of the ACU), annual (as in the case of the RACMSA), or temporary. Included in the licence granted to a course are specifications of the highest status of event the course is capable of supporting (for example, open, restricted, national), the number of starters at each event, safety and medical provisions, and the standard of facilities required for scrutineers and officials. Table 3.7. shows the number of licenced road race and motorcar speed event venues in the United Kingdom in 1985.

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Table 3.7. Licenced Road Race and Speed Event Circuits  
In the United Kingdom,

Motor car road race circuits	14
Motor cycle road race circuits	27
Registered speed venues (RACMSA)	87
Kart tracks - permanent	18
- temporary	17
- Public Highway*	6

- \* All Public Highway courses are in Northern Ireland as, on mainland Britain, statute forbids the use of the Public Highway for race events.

Sources: RACMSA (1985) The British Motor Sports Yearbook  
London, RACMSA; ACU (1985) Handbook, Rugby, ACU.

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3.17. Controls also extend to the licencing and insurance of competitors. Individual drivers, passengers and navigators require competition licences and mandatory insurance for all but a few closed non-speed automobile events. Such licences specify the eligibility of the competitor by type and status of event. For example, a National grade Speed Licence, a Novice grade Short Circuit Kart Licence, or a Restricted status Motocross Licence.

3.18. The enforcement of the various regulations falls largely within the jurisdiction of the appointed officials. Two types of official can be distinguished; those directly appointed by the governing bodies (see Table 3.8), and club members who perform 'official' duties at each event, either as stewards, Clerks of Course, starters, judges, observers, measurers, or marshalls. Of particular importance are the stewards who enforce compliance with all the regulations governing an event and adjudicate in matters of dispute. It is notable that the RACMSA have 130 rally noise test officials and the ACU 118 noise inspectors.

3.19. The most numerous officials at competitive events are the marshalls, appointed by the organising club(s) to control both spectators and competitors in accordance with the supplementary regulations. Almost all marshalls are drawn from the non-competitive memberships of clubs, although few clubs are self sufficient in this respect. An internal RACMSA survey revealed that lack of suitable marshalls was a major problem for clubs seeking to organise competitive events, particularly lower status road and stage rallies (13). In some areas this has led to the formation of specialist marshalls clubs. Nevertheless the problem of a shortage of marshalls remains.

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Table 3.8. Officials of the ACU and RACMSA

	RACMSA	ACU
Timekeepers	190	92
Noise Inspectors	17	118
Scrutineers	185	118
Race Recorders	9	12
Measurers	-	22
Forestry Liaison Officers	18	-
Rally Liaison Officers	52	-
Rally Noise Test Officials	130	-
Handicappers	3	-
Kart Clerks of Course	41	-
Kart Scrutineers	45	-

Sources: RACMSA (1985) The British Motor Sports Yearbook, London, RACMSA; ACU, (1985) 1985 Handbook, Rugby, ACU.

### THE PROMOTION OF MOTORSPORTS

3.20. One of the major functions of the governing bodies, and that which gives them the highest profile, is the active promotion or support of competitive events. In 1981, the last year for which fully audited event statistics are available, some 4,286 RACMSA-authorized events took place. Normally the governing bodies have little direct involvement in the detailed organisation of events. The exceptions to this are generally International Status events. In 1984, the RACMSA directly organised:

- The Lombard RAC Rally
- The RAC Veteran Car Run
- The Kart Grand Prix
- The British Grand Prix
- The British Rallycross Grand Prix

and the ACU:

- The World Trials Championships
- The TT Road Race World Championship
- The British Road Racing Grand Prix.

In addition the governing bodies also run a number of championship series the component events of which are organised by individual clubs. In 1984 the RACMSA ran 15 such series and the ACU thirteen.

3.21. A further important area of promotion lies in rider and driver training. Although the British Motorcyclist Federation dominate the training scene with their involvement in road safety and Department of

Transport Part I and II tests, the ACU and the RACMSA have also been involved in the education, training and proper equipment of persons involved in motorsport. In 1977 the RAC/ACU Training Trust was established to train officials, marshalls and associated personnel. At Centre and club level the ACU is closely involved in motorcycle training, though again it is essentially Public Highway training. Whereas both the RACMSA and ACU train their officials, motorsport competitor training is more rare and, where it does occur, tends to be through private training schools. There are currently seven road racing and four rally schools registered with the RACMSA.

### THE REPRESENTATION OF MOTORSPORT INTERESTS

3.22. For many individual participants and clubs, the most important and valuable functions of the governing bodies are their roles as representatives of motorsport interests. These fulfill three broad criteria:

1. Providing a legitimisation for motorsport;
2. Enabling motorsport interests to enter policy-making arenas to which they would not otherwise have access; and
3. Allowing motorsport interests to collectively respond to external pressures.

We would suggest that the representative role of the governing bodies is played in four relatively distinct arenas:

- a. the motorsport community and its associated concerns;
- b. national and local government;
- c. land agencies; and
- d. other bodies, particularly those representing the sporting community as a whole.

Each arena demands its own style of representative participation, some being dominated by formal consultation roles, while others are more amenable to 'pressure group' style lobbying.

3.23. The governing bodies retain close informal links with those interests allied to the practice of motorsports; manufacturers, circuit owners, sponsors, other national clubs, and the international governing bodies. Of particular note is the relationship between the practice of motorcycle sports and the policies of the motorcycle manufacturers. Purpose-built competitive machines and production road motorcycles form an important component of total motorcycle sales in Britain. Many of the major manufacturers have since the late 1970s specifically targetted machine sales toward the off road competition market (particularly the 'big four' Japanese firms, Kawasaki, Honda, Yamaha, and Suzuki). This situation has contributed to the decline of many of the more specialist

and traditional European off-road manufacturers (particularly Fantic, Bultaco and Montessa). Nevertheless, there is increasing concern among off road manufacturers over the general drop in competitive machine sales. Table 3.9. indicates, for example, that the sales of trials bikes have declined by a third in the five years to 1984, and those of motocross machines by 21 per cent.

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Table 3.9. Competition Motorcycle Sales: 1980-1984

	Trials	Motocross	Enduro
1980	4,170	7,943	1,101
1981	2,710	7,447	1,306
1982	2,313	8,756	1,297
1983	2,211	7,703	1,417
1984	2,766	6,247	986
% decline 80-84	33.6	21.3	10.4

Source (14)

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3.24. Also important are links and contacts between the various governing bodies of motorsport. Although both the ACU and RACMSA have long had a close working relationship born out of their common origin, the relationships between the ACU and the AMCA, and between the RACMSA and other automobile bodies such as the National Autograss Sporting Association (NASA), have not always necessarily been in the best interests of individual motorsport participants. Until comparatively recently the RACMSA and the ACU prohibited members of clubs affiliated to them from participating in events organised by the NASA and the AMCA respectively. In 1982 this ruling was relaxed in respect of RACMSA/NASA competition at which point hope was expressed that cooperative events would result (15). At present the situation regarding cross-competition in ACU and AMCA events remains unresolved, though at the local level the demand amongst individual riders for joint competition is strong, particularly in those areas where overall event entries are falling (16).

3.25. In response to the growing problems of retaining motocross venues, the AMCA and the ACU, with the associated youth bodies (the BSMA and the YMSA), have established a Joint Committee on Land and a Motocross Association Liaison Committee. The result of these initiatives has been to establish a Code of Practice governing the use of motocross venues, designed to avoid site poaching. It entails:

- a. the need for written permission to be sought and obtained in writing before the use of land which has previously been used by another club;
- b. the need to contact the relevant governing bodies over any dispute regarding individual sites; and

- c. the need for written permission to be sought and obtained for the use of a site that has been unused by another club for less than five years.

Beyond this however AMCA-ACU relationships, particularly at national and regional levels, remain formal and distant. Denied the opportunities for a single coherent voice the motorcycle sports community has become fragmented in its pursuit of influence in external forums. This has led, as we shall show, to varying political styles and achievements.

3.26. A specific area of cooperation, arising from outside pressures and the challenge of other countryside users, relates to the use of Byways and Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs), (collectively referred to in this Report as Green Lanes). Such routes can be used for competition (trials and enduros) but are more commonly used for non-competitive trail riding. There are currently some 5,000 miles of Green Lanes in Britain. During the last 10 years alone some 2,000 miles of Green Lanes have been lost to vehicular access, either through the imposition of Traffic Restriction Orders, or as a result of reclassification as Bridleways or Footpaths. In response to this the ACU and the BMF have established a Joint Countryside Committee. Its functions have been to oppose central or local government attempts to reduce or remove vehicular access to Green Lanes, and to advise motorcyclists as to their legal rights regarding access. In practice however this has become solely an advisory body for riders, clubs, and local authorities, and a proponent of a specific type of formal, non-competitive off road facility; the trail park.

3.27. In its stead, lobbying for the continued use of Green Lanes has become the primary role of the Trail Riders' Fellowship (TRF), a body that has emerged during the last 10 years as the most important defender of all vehicular access to Green Lanes. Formed in 1970 to promote the non-competitive use of Green Lanes for trail riding, and to resist attempts at Green Lane closure, the TRF (with a membership of under 1,000), is arguably the motorsport fraternity's first and foremost pressure group. The TRF has vigorously sought to enter and influence the policy-making community at national and local levels. To these ends, it has become involved within the land use planning process, has contested the closure or reclassification of individual Green Lanes (over 1,000 cases of which have been opposed by the TRF since its formation), and has sought a voice on local and national consultative bodies established to coordinate and identify user demands regarding rights of way (from Groundwork Schemes to the Regional Sports Councils). Both the TRF and the ACU/BMF Countryside Committee are represented (through their shared Rights of Way Officer, and the former's affiliation to the Byways and Bridleways Trust) on the House of Commons Right of Way Review Committee. The impact of the House of Commons Committee has been considerable, as will be shown below (Chapter 6), not only defending the existing status of Green Lanes, but also as a forum in which the balance that continues to disadvantage motorsports interests in the face of other countryside interests may be redressed.

3.28. In an effort to forestall public objection to Green Lane driving or riding the TRF and other motorsport bodies have established a Code of Conduct regarding Green Lane use (17). Under its provisions users of Green Lanes are obliged to:

- use only vehicular rights of way;
- keep to defined routes across farmland;
- give way to walkers, horses and cyclists and on narrow lanes, stop and switch off engines;
- fasten all gates;
- travel at a safe speed (25 mph maximum);
- ride or drive quietly; and
- honour the Country Code.

In addition the TRF reiterate that Green Lane riding or driving demands by law road legal vehicles and participants. Also in deference to the view that some Green Lanes are, despite the exercise of voluntary restraint, wholly unsuited to vehicular use, the TRF and others accept in some cases the necessity of traffic prohibition or restraint (18). Significantly two major Government sponsored reports have endorsed voluntary restraint imposed by organised trail riding bodies (19). Both have concluded that objection to vehicular access is frequently based solely upon 'emotive' responses, rather than empirical verification of any disamenity or environmental damage caused (20). This factor was largely responsible for the successful opposition to the anti-Green Lane riding provisions contained within the Wildlife and Countryside Bill 1981 by the TRF, the Byways and Bridleways Trust, and the House of Commons Rights of Way Review Committee (21).

3.29. Public attitudes nevertheless continue to run strongly regarding the issue of vehicle access to Green Lanes. The principal opponent organisation, the Ramblers' Association, has consistently sought the restriction or total prohibition of vehicles on Green Lanes (22) and has maintained a doggedly intolerant attitude towards motorcyclists in general. In a recent article the President of the Association described trail riders as:

"birdbrains who have no thought whatsoever for other users of the countryside" (23),

a remark which drew criticism from within the Association's own ranks (24). Allied to the Rambler's Association have been the Cyclists' Touring Club, the Council for National Parks, the Countryside Commission, and countless conservation bodies. Whilst the Ramblers claim to assert "the views of the public" (25), controversy regarding their intended plans to disrupt the International Welsh Six Day Enduro and the Lombard RAC Rally in 1983 (26), and their own acknowledgement of lack of support amongst some county councils (27), suggests this may be an over optimistic claim.



3.30. The issue of vehicular access to Green Lanes frequently attracts the attention of the national (non-motorsport) press (28). The emotive nature of objections is however increasingly recognised by those in positions of responsibility regarding the maintenance of Green Lane access and general provision for recreational needs (29). Specific controversies nevertheless persist, for example the issue of vehicular access to the Ridgeway (see paras. 6.63.-6.66.).

3.31. The pressure group mantle has been adopted voluntarily by the TRF. The RACMSA, on the other hand, fulfills an important statutory role as the Minister of Transport's Agent for the control and authorisation of the use of Public Highways (sealed or unsealed) for competition. This statutory role and formal authority is unique in the governance of sport in Britain. Beyond this role, however, the relationship between the governing bodies of motorsport and government has been restricted. Motorsport bodies have generally evinced a low profile in national policy making forums. This has led to the development of a characteristic non confrontational stance in those arenas in which motorsport interests face potential challenge. Thus the elaborate public relations procedures and other regulations applied to road rallying by the RACMSA exist primarily as a means of forestalling controversy. Consequently motorsport interests have failed to develop lobbying skills comparable to those of other countryside interests. It has been the continued experience of motorsport interests at all levels that prolonged entry into formal negotiative and mediatory processes frequently results in some loss of ground (either in absolute or figurative terms). Much of this has been the result of insufficient support from other sports organisations, who have often failed to endorse motorsports with the legitimacy necessary to present a viable case or defence. The negotiative fatalism of motorsport organisations is particularly evident with respect to their cardinal problem land availability. Liaison and negotiation with public agencies for the use of public land for competitive events has nonetheless been an important function of the governing bodies. The principal agencies concerned are the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Defence (MoD)/Property Services Agency. To a lesser extent negotiations also take place with local authorities over the provision of land for motorsport and the management of existing facilities.

3.32. As will be shown below, much motorsport activity depends upon the use of Forestry Commission or MoD land. At the national level the RACMSA negotiate with the Forestry Commission every five years for forest allocations. The specific sites and dates made available are allocated to organising clubs at a regional (association) level through the RACMSA's Forestry Liaison Officers. Negotiations with the MoD are not centralised. Individual centres and associations negotiate with each MoD command.

3.33. Despite the extensive use made of such land for motorsports neither governing bodies clubs are accorded a policy making role in negotiating site use or fixing pricing policy. In 1982, the Forestry Commission announced an increase in charges of over 30 per cent. The impact of this has already been noticeable. Many of the smaller rallying motorcar clubs are now unable to afford the flat rate fee, which applies

irrespective of the number of competitive vehicles taking part. The motorsport community was not consulted over this increase and (with the exception of certain forest areas in South Wales) is not consulted over relevant forest management policy or route allocations. At the regional level, the absence of consistent site leasing policies or opportunities for site negotiation with the MoD, has contributed to the decline of those motorsport disciplines most dependent upon such sites.

3.34. Relationships between governing bodies and the wider sports community are often tenuous. Without doubt motorsport has struggled for recognition from other organisations which exist to promote sport. Only in 1967 did the Development and Coaching Committee of the Sports Council accept the "principle of motorised sports". Although the 1973 document, 'Provision for Sport' (30) makes specific mention of motorsport, there has remained some doubt within the Council as to its general eligibility. The need to introduce the following statement into a recent Council paper is perhaps symptomatic;

"It is not the Council's role to recognise or define what constitutes a sport. It is only in determining eligibility for grant aid and other services from the Council that attempts are made to define those bodies which are eligible. This definition admits to eligibility National organisations promoting sport and physical recreation requiring a substantial element of physical skill and effort from the participants.

In considering the eligibility of an activity of the 'motorised sports' type, there is a need clearly to identify the extent to which it has a sport and recreational function as opposed to a transportational function". (31)

Until recently both the RACMSA and ACU were judged "wealthy bodies" by the Sports Council rendering them ineligible for administration grants. In 1983 however certain national activities (and a number of individual clubs) were assisted, including the International Six Day Trial, and elements of youth training. These developments have been welcomed by the motorsport community.

3.35. Although motorsport interests are still negotiating effective recognition from the Sports Council, at a regional and local level relationships with sports councils have been more longstanding and profitable. In the last five years, a large number of regional sports councils have either established or contributed to motorsport liaison committees (32). The bulk of these have subsequently identified the lack of sufficient motorsport facilities within their areas, and have adopted the furtherance of motorsport as a matter of policy (33). For certain motorsport interests the Regional Sports Councils perform a vital intermediary, liaison and pressure group role, particularly with regard to land use planning and statutory environmental management procedures.

3.36. To some degree the relatively close relationship between a number of ACU and RACMSA clubs and the Regional Sports Councils has relieved them of the need for a more direct participatory role in formal land use decision-making processes. However other motorsport bodies such as the AMCA appear to have been denied such a close working relationship with Regional Sports Councils and have found it necessary to perform more direct participatory roles in land use planning and environmental management. A more active pressure group role is however taken by both the ACU and the RACMSA with respect to the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) and the British Standards Institute. Through their membership of the CCPR both have sought more competitive events and in 1982 successfully opposed moves by central Government to place VAT on competitor entry fees. Prior to the 1983 General Election, the CCPR sought to lobby MPs on behalf of the motorsport community. The ACU and RACMSA in their turn "constantly lobby" the British Standards Institute over safety margins in helmet design and construction.

### SUMMARY

3.37. The motorsport community comprises a set of structured networks of clubs and participants, whose activities are coordinated at the regional level, and governed at the national level. For the most part, each network is independent though gradually, as issues of declining site availability and concerted public opposition increasingly affect motorsports, the various networks are seeking a more collective stance.

3.38. At the national level the governing bodies represent club and participant interests in a variety of arenas. Four distinct types of arena can be distinguished:

1. those internal to the motorsport community in which the governing bodies seek to maintain safety and competition standards on behalf of participants;
2. those in which the representative bodies seek to defend motorsport interests against hostile opposition (for example, over the use of the Public Highway for trail riding, or competitive road rallying);
3. those in which negotiations take place over the use of land (particularly with the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Defence); and,
4. those in which the representative bodies seek to promote their sport.

3.39. The 'traditional' governing bodies the RACMSA and ACU have been reluctant to become directly involved either in 'political' action, or in the formalised procedures associated with land use planning and statutory

environmental management. They prefer to operate by proxy through agencies such as the Regional Sports Councils. In recent years however, other younger bodies, denied access to informal consultative channels, have pursued a more aggressive participatory style.

3.40. The enduring popularity of motorsport, particularly at the grassroots club level, would seem to merit support and assistance from both the national motorsport community and the representatives and agencies of sport in general. It is at the club level that the bulk of motorsport activity occurs, a level at which the effects of declining land availability are also most acutely felt. The following chapters examine motorsport at grassroots level, drawing from our two case studies, and assess the impact of declining land availability and other current issues.

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## MOTOR CAR AND KART SPORTS

"Just like a car  
You're pleasing to behold  
I'll call you a Jaguar  
If I may be so bold".

(Marc Bolan, 1972)

### ORGANISATION

4.1. There are currently some 450 territorially specific RACMSA affiliated car clubs in Great Britain (Figure 4.1.). Clubs form in areas of high population though their activities may take place over a much wider area. This is reflected in the membership of the regional associations. In addition to the reasons already specified (see above, paragraph 3.12.), clubs seek affiliation in order to run competitive events within an association's territory, and to qualify for entry into such an association's championships and restricted status events. The number of clubs belonging to an association is therefore indicative of local demand as well as the number and quality of the venues available within an Association area. Thus, almost 50 per cent of the clubs belonging to the Welsh Association, one of the largest areas with excellent rallying venues, originate from outside its territory. Similarly of the 78 clubs affiliated to the Central Southern Association, which negotiates and coordinates access to many major MoD facilities, some 25 come from elsewhere including Kent, Essex, Avon and Greater London.

4.2. The spatial distribution of clubs by Association therefore reflects both the location of participants and the venues of chosen motorsports disciplines (Figure 4.2.). A third factor affecting the formation of clubs, is the existence and distribution of major circuits. Kart clubs for example display a significant spatial affinity with the location of karting circuits (Figure 4.3.). Similarly specific clubs also exist for the majority of road race circuits (for example, the British Automobile Racing Club at Thruxton, the Donnington Racing Club, the Brands Hatch Racing Club, and the Silverstone Racing Club). Due to the relative lack of motorsport venues in urban and urban fringe areas, car clubs often expect to travel large distances to run competitive events. Around each of the areas of club agglomeration one might thereby identify a competitive hinterland. Given similar hinterlands existing around all the areas of concentrated club formation it is not difficult to visualise virtually the whole of rural England as being host to some form of competitive motorsport.

4.3. The primary function of a sporting club is the organisation of its own competitive events. It may also act as a means of entry for members into other events. These may be either co-promoted events, or ones where the club is specifically named as one of a restricted number whose members are invited to compete. Motorcar clubs can have general interests, organising a variety of events of different types and status, or they may specialise



Figure 4.1.

RACMSA Affiliated territorial Car  
Clubs

(Excluding Northern Ireland)

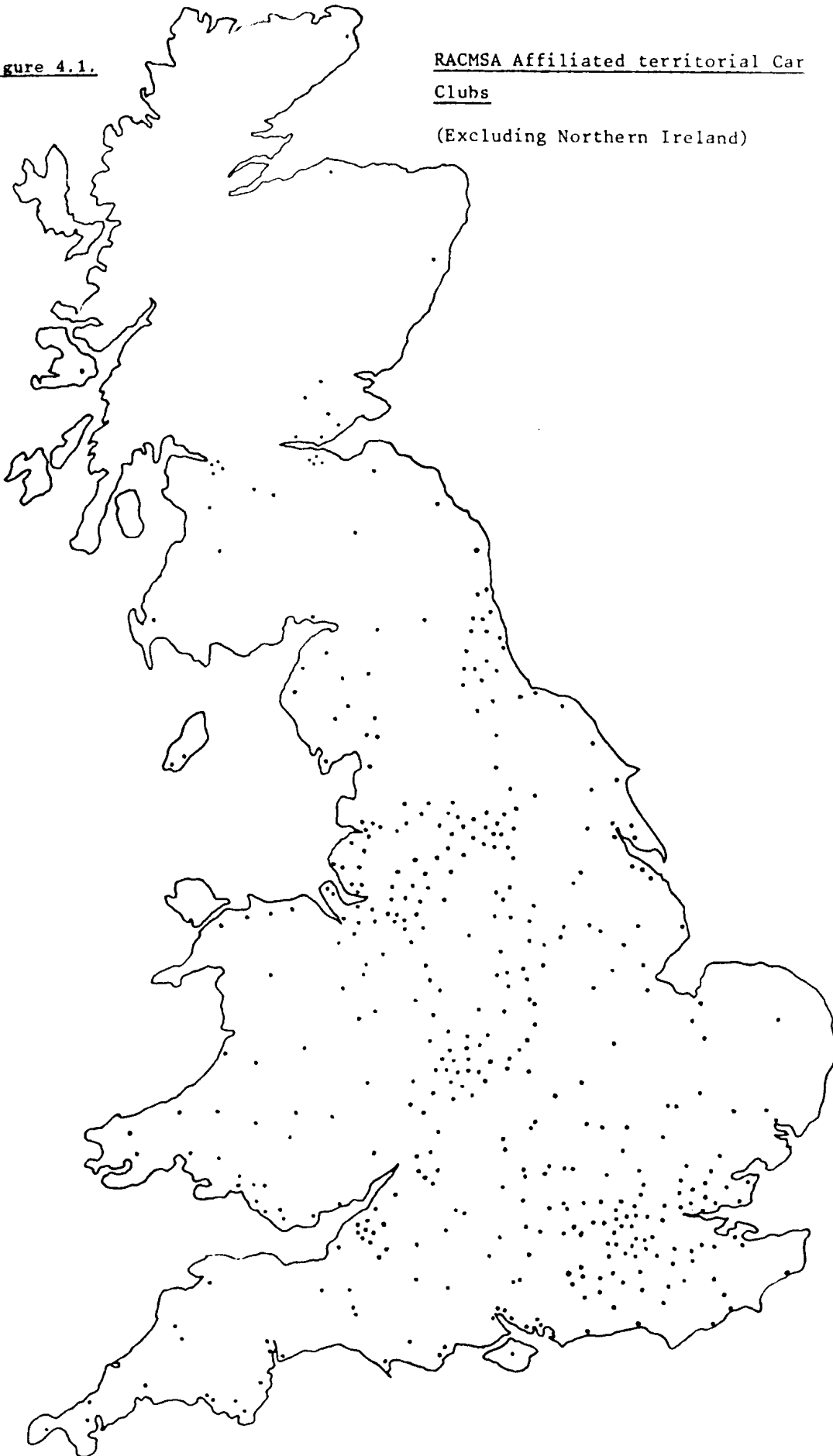


Figure 4.2.

The Distribution of RACMSA Affiliated Motorcar Clubs  
by Regional Association

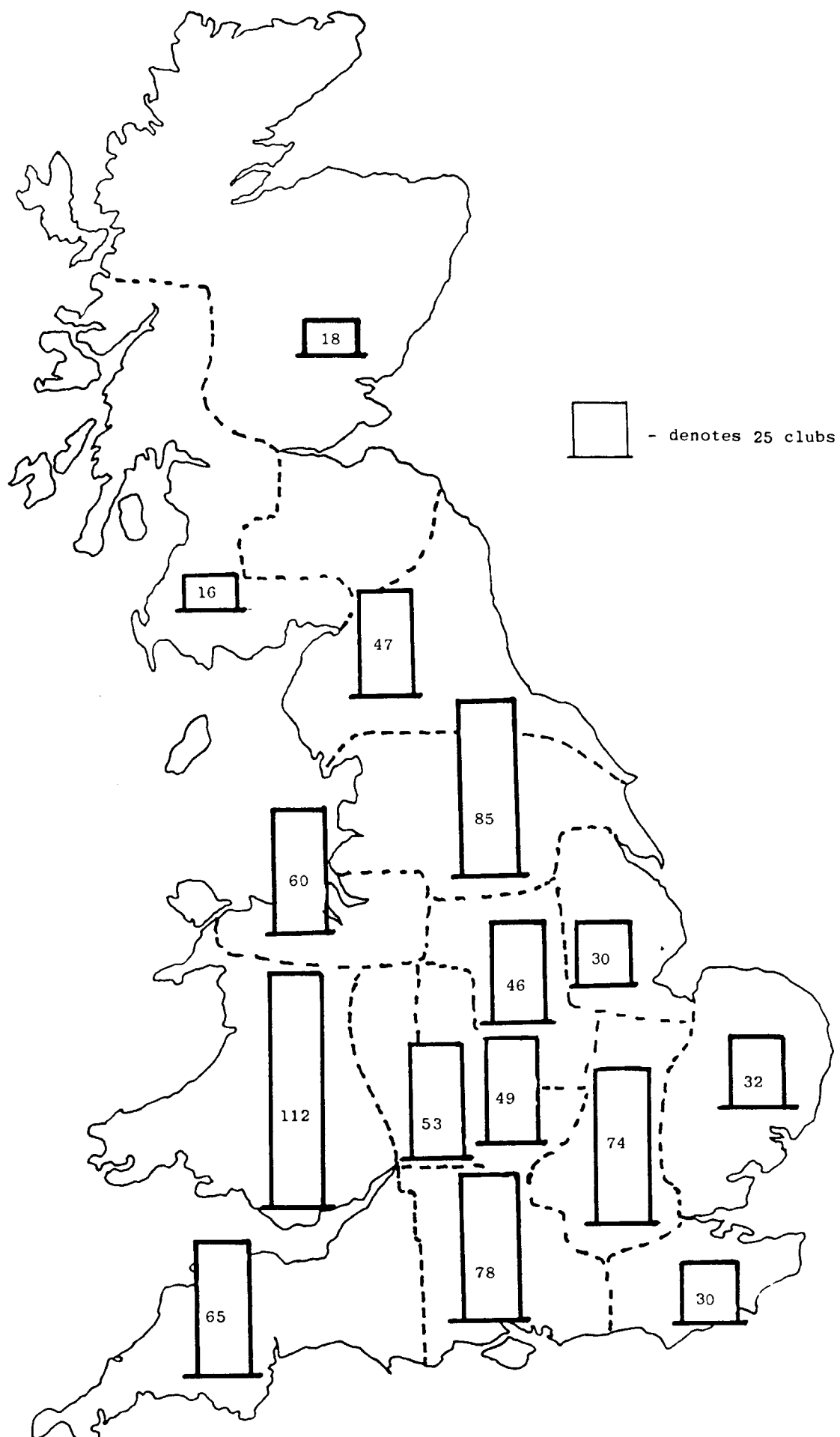
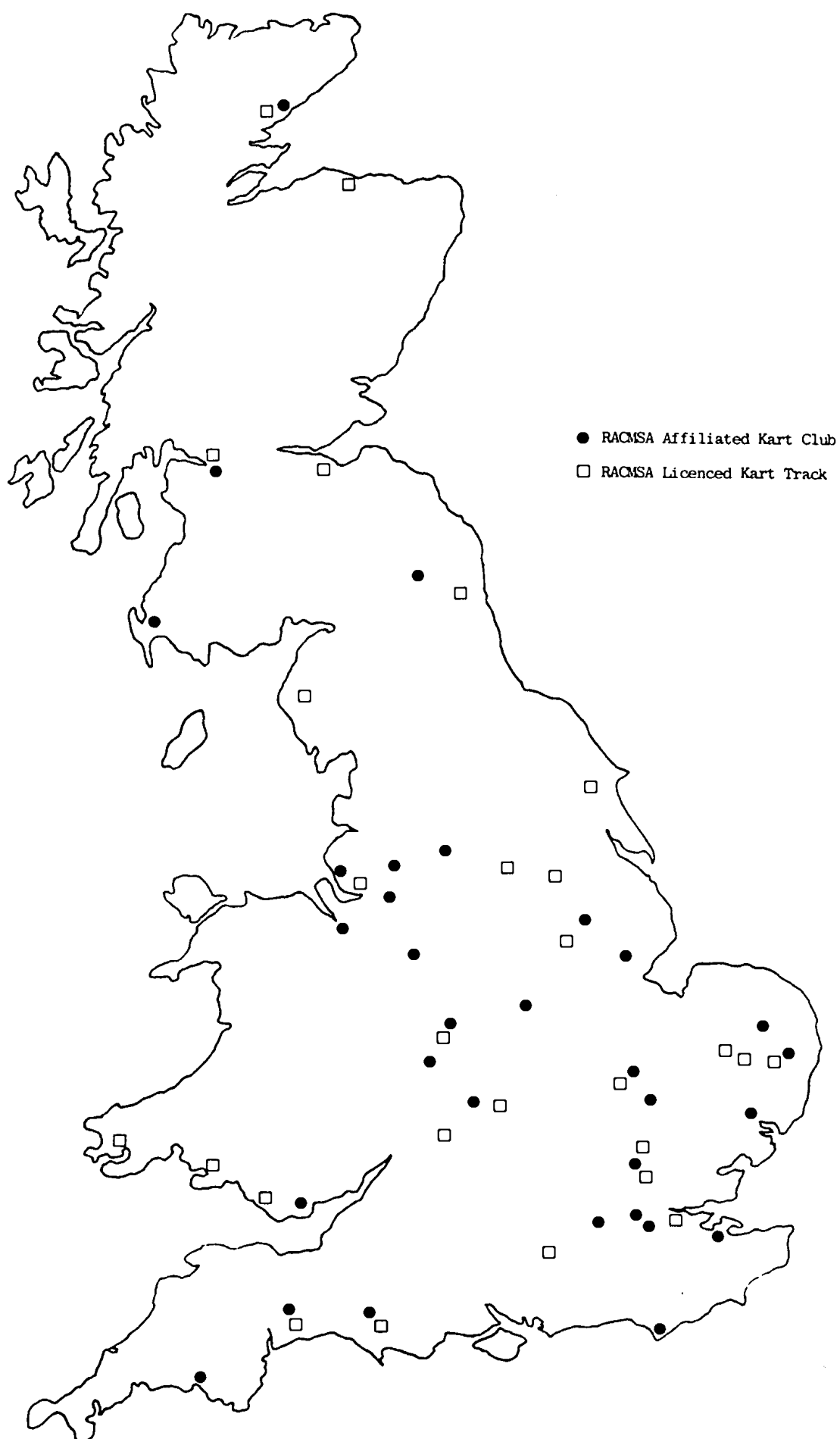


Figure 4.3.Kart Clubs and Licenced Tracks in Great Britain

in a single discipline or type of event. Within racing an additional speciality exists in the existence of protected formulae clubs (such as the Mini 7 Club or the 750 Motor Club).

4.4. The majority of local motor car clubs however organise a mix of competitive and social events. The nature of the mix will depend on:

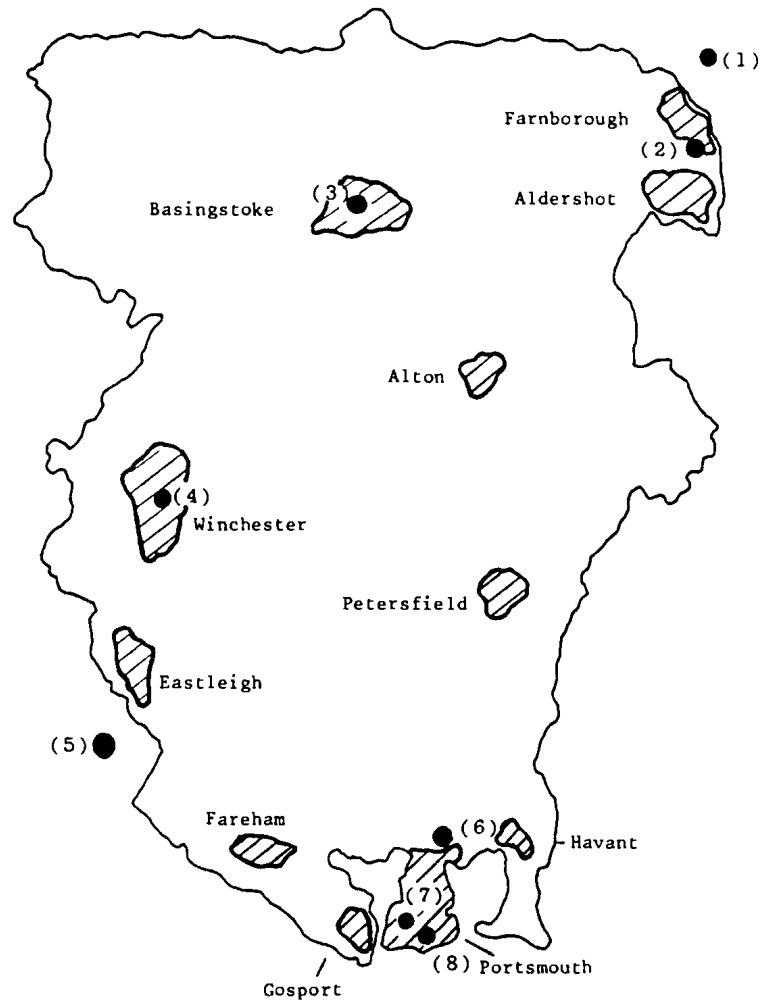
1. the competition demands of the membership;
2. the availability of venues;
3. the size and financial status of the club;
4. club expertise; and
5. the nature and extent of motorcar sport activity undertaken within a reasonably accessible area.

Many of the more competitive clubs specialise in one discipline; trials, rallies, sprints, and so on. A typical competitive rally club may organise two or three restricted status special stage events, and an equal number of single-venue stage events per year. The less frequent national status events demand considerable organisation, which may act to the detriment of lesser status club events.

4.5. Within the two study areas the range of competitive club activity found was wide. In the Southern Lancashire area the largest club (Longton and District) has a competitive membership of over 400 drawn from all over the country. It runs a large number of prestigious championship events, including the national status Blackpool Sprint, the Isle of Man Hill Climb, and two restricted status special stage rallies (one in association with the Liverpool Motor Club). Other smaller clubs in the area (with competitive memberships ranging from 30 to 180) can, however, also run major events, such as the Clitheroe Club's Hall Trophy Rally. In Hampshire one of the larger clubs (the Cosmopolitan) with a competitive membership of around 250, ran five co-promoted single-venue stage rallies, a restricted status special stage event, and provided individual stages for two other restricted status events in 1984. At the other end of the scale the local branch of the Civil Service Motoring Association, with a competitive membership of some 30 drivers, organised only one championship autotest in 1984.

4.6. Less competitive clubs operating a broader mix of activities of lower status such as road rallies, autotests, twelve car rallies, and production car trials, are nevertheless equally popular. Table 4.1., taken from the RACMSA's 1985 Fixture List (1), shows licenced motorcar and kart events by type in Britain in 1985. Although a significant proportion (10-30 per cent) of these events may not in fact take place due to lack of entries or losses of venues, the list indicates the numerical supremacy of lower status 'club' events such as closed and co-promoted road rallies, autotests, and production car trials. For a large number of clubs such events provide the basic diet of competition, though they involve

Figure 4.4.

Motorcar and Kart Clubs in the Eastern Hampshire Study AreaTerritorial Clubs

- (1) Camberley Kart Club
- (2) Farnborough MC
- (3) Portals MC (Basingstoke)
- (4) Winchester MC
- (5) Southampton MC
- (6) Cosmo MC
- (7) Portsmouth Polytechnic MC
- (8) Southsea MC

Non-territorial Clubs

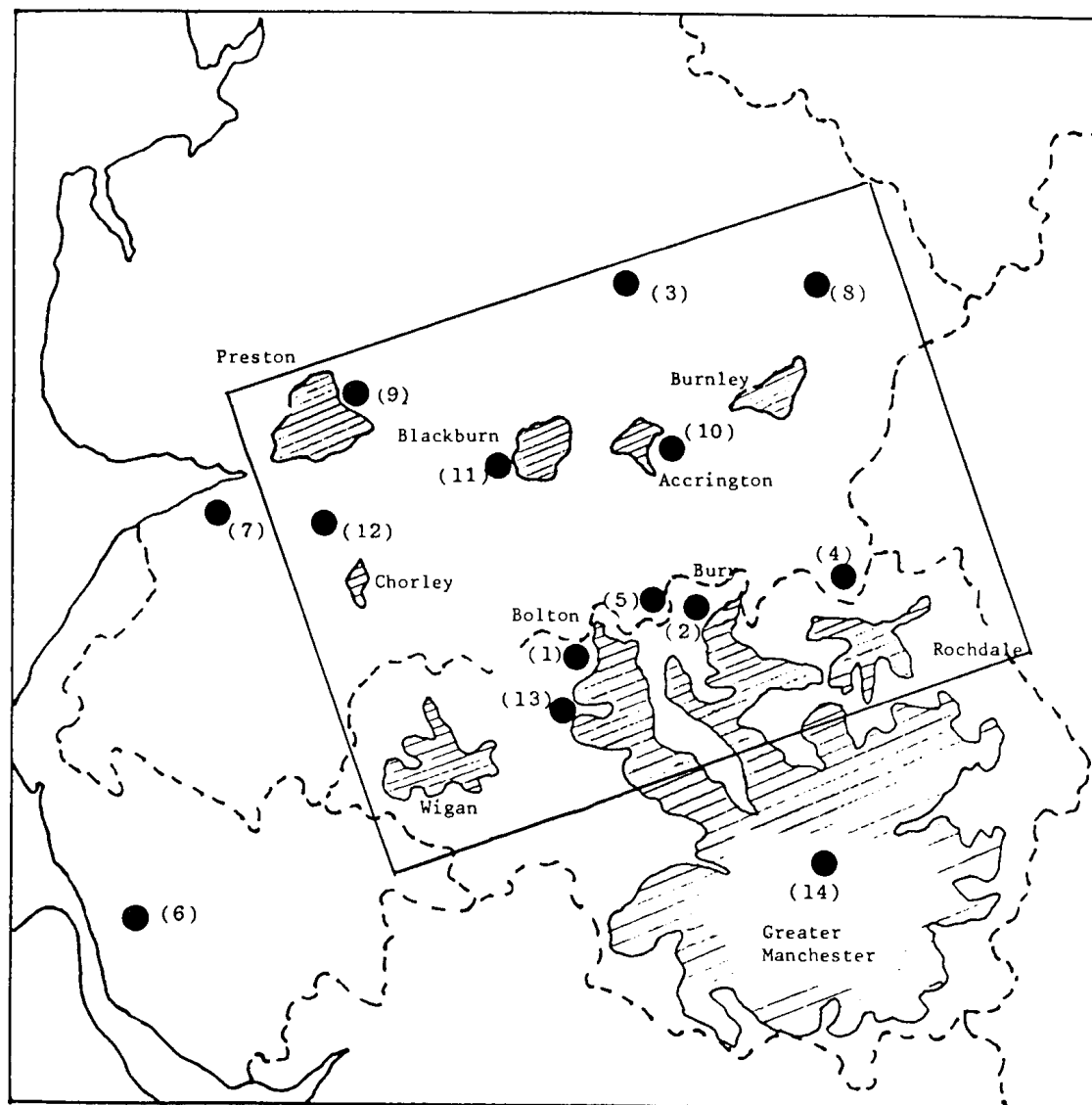
- The All Wheel Drive Club
- The Civil Service Motoring Association
- The Hants and Berks Car Club
- Southern Autosports



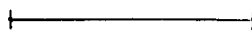
Urban areas

Figure 4.5.

## Motorcar and Kart Clubs in the North West Study Area



Scale:



Ten mls.

- |     |                    |      |                                |
|-----|--------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| (1) | Bolton-Le-Moors    | (8)  | Pendle & District              |
| (2) | Bury               | (9)  | Preston                        |
| (3) | Cliitheroe         | (10) | Springhill                     |
| (4) | Knowledale         | (11) | 2300                           |
| (5) | Lancashire         | (12) | West Lancashire                |
| (6) | Liverpool          | (13) | Bolton Kart Club               |
| (7) | Longton & District | (14) | Manchester & Buxton Kart Club. |

Table 4.1.

## RACMSA Licenced Motorsport Events: 1985

Status	Closed	Co-promoted	Restricted	National	International	TOTAL
Event						
Autocross	16	11	89	0	0	116
Autotests	317	295	106	1	0	719
4 Wheel drive	213	58	5	0	0	276
Classic trials	7	10	1	0	0	18
Drag races	0	0	17	0	4	21
Economy runs	7	2	0	0	0	9
Hill climbs	5	7	45	23	1	81
Kart races	52	0	111	32	4	199
P-c trials	75	72	50	1	0	198
Car races	12	0	112	26	25	175
Road rallies	102	133	148	0	1	384
Special stage rallies	12	11	94	20	7	144
Single-venue rallies	13	31	106	2	1	153
Rallycross	0	5	28	6	2	41
Sand races	10	0	2	0	0	12
Sporting trials	29	35	35	0	0	99
Sprints	21	4	87	16	0	128
TOTALS	891	674	1,036	127	45	2,773

Note: This table excludes all 12-car rallies, social events and events with automatic authorisation from the RACMSA (ie, certain forms of closed status, non-speed event).

In addition, this list represents the 'provisional' fixtures for 1985 as received by the RACMSA. In actuality, a number of these events might not take place due to site loss, lack of entries and other reasons.

Source: RACMSA, (1985) The British Motorsports Yearbook, London,

relatively small numbers of participants. In addition to the organisation of events, clubs possess a series of secondary functions (which for some might nonetheless become their sole role). The most important of these is to act as a social focus for competitors, non-participants and family members. For the majority of car clubs, social and 'fun' activities are the most numerous items on a club calendar. They can range from social 'events' such as treasure hunts, 'hunt-the-marshall' and 12-car rallies to club outings, car and parts auctions, film shows and club nights. Many car clubs meet weekly or fortnightly combining informal social gatherings with the planning of future events and the analysis of those past. Larger clubs, such as the Cosmo or the Farnborough and District organise annual semi-competitive, semi-social events combining production car trials, grass autotests and hill climbs with picnics and children's activities. Such outings can attract 50 or so club members and their families. Other clubs, such as the Longton and District combine competitive events (such as the Isle of Man Hill Climb) with family holidays by the chartering of ships and the block booking of hotels. At any level, social activities are an important component of belonging to a motorcar club.

4.7. More specific still are marshalls' clubs whose role is to provide officials for other clubs' events. A symbiotic relationship often exists between a competitive and a predominantly marshalling club. In return the former may run special closed marshall events. As has been mentioned above the declining availability of marshalls, and the increasing cost of marshalling (estimated at around £10 per day per person) have made such clubs, and those which provide marshalls for others, indispensable (2).

4.8. The average membership of motorcar clubs recorded in previous work (100-150 persons) (3) masks considerable local variations, and changes over time. Membership of the 26 clubs surveyed in our two case study areas ranged from 40 to 600 persons (Table 4.2.). Although car and

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Table 4.2. Membership of Motor Car Clubs.

	Eastern Hampshire*	North West Area
Average Club Size	180	190
Largest Club	350	600
Smallest Club	40	45

\* These figures exclude the Civil Service Motoring Association (membership, over 250,000), the All Wheel Drive Club (2,300) and the British Automobile Racing Club (5,000), all of which operate out of Hampshire.

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kart club membership numbers appear stable at the present time, these represent lower levels than in the past. Such reductions have largely taken place over the last 10 years, though a number of clubs identified the 1950s as the heyday for motorcar sports. The principal causes of decline are seen as the rising costs of participation, and the increasing difficulties associated with low status, clubman events (particularly road



rallying). A contributory factor has also been the relative decline in the number of motorcar clubs (see Table 3.2.above). In eastern Hampshire, there are currently nine territorial RACMSA affiliated clubs whose total membership is around 1250. The number of clubs has declined by 60% in the last 20 years. Those clubs that have wound up have generally done so for three reasons:

1. lack of suitable organisers and club officials;
2. lack of events, prompted most often by lack of venues; and
3. the effects of indirect competition for members, venues and events, between clubs.

The more resilient participants have thus been absorbed into the smaller number of surviving clubs.

4.9. Motives for membership within a motorsport club are, by nature, diverse. The proportion of members who wish to be involved in active competition can range from 20% to over 75%, this being reflected in range and the types of event organised. This is not a one-way process however and those organising clubman events (in particular, twelve car rallies, production car trials, autotests and road rallies) tend to attract higher participant memberships than those specialising in stage rallying, speed events, and rallycross. As these latter events attract entrants from wider catchments membership of the organising club is not necessarily a condition of entry. The average profile of club membership found is shown in Table 4.3. The first category 'active licensed participants'

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Table 4.3. Components of Club Membership

1. Major competitors	25%
2. Club competitors	25%
3. Active non-competitive participants (e.g. marshalls, officials)	20%
4. Part-time, occasional non-competitive participants	10%
5. Social and associated members	20%

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frequently belong to more than one club in order to gain access to alternative events. For many clubs their proportion may be as high as 50 per cent of active competitive membership.

4.10. Various assessments have been made at the regional level of the total numbers of active participants in motorcar sports. Within the Counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, an estimated 4,500 - 5,000 persons participate in car and kart sports each month (4). In East Anglia, (Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Essex) a total of 3,500 persons have been described as 'active' in motorcar sports (5). The total competitive membership (motorcar and kart clubs) within our two study areas has been difficult to assess as many of the clubs draw members from outside. It is estimated however that there are 800-900 competitors in the eastern Hampshire area, and 1,000 - 1,200 in the Southern Lancashire area.

4.11. For a number of clubs the existence of different competitive interests among members poses a number of problems. The two principal motivations of event organisers (providing competitive opportunities for club members, and promoting the club through high status, prestige events) are not necessarily compatible. The low-cost club event, involving standard or only slightly modified production vehicles, is run on low-damage surfaces (tarmac or grass) and does not demand high speed. On the other hand, the more competitive events often requiring specialist vehicles expensive to acquire and repair, demand more advanced driving skills. Moreover, whereas sufficient entrants can normally be found from within one club to make the former type of event viable the latter, which are more costly to stage, require a far wider competitive catchment (hence the higher number of restricted and higher status events of this kind). A club seeking to advance its prestige must therefore choose between staging events in which the predominant entry will be drawn from its own membership or, seeking a higher status event in which relatively few of its membership will be qualified to participate. In the more active clubs one can thereby identify a hierarchy of competitive events, each level attracting a different set of participants.

4.12. In an effort to reduce the polarisation of motorcar sports into 'clubman' and 'professional' sectors, a number of clubs are organising low-cost race events tailored to the amateur competitor. Thus bodies such as 'Eight Clubs' and the Morgan Owners' Club have hired circuits for a day's racing in order to run cheap (£30 per entrant) closed events. Because entry costs are on a per car and not a per driver basis a team of drivers entering one vehicle between them can expect to race at extremely low cost. In a further attempt to increase clubman access the RACMSA has approved a series of racing formulae based on cheap modification to existing road vehicles (for example Formula 4, Clubman Sports Formula, and MG Metro Formula), In saloon and touring car racing this has gone some way to redressing a balance that had been heavily biased in favour of professional team-based and sponsored competition.

## PARTICIPANTS

4.13. Motorcar sport participants are drawn from a wide spectrum of the population. The majority of participants however are male and aged under 30 (6), (though semi-professional and professional competitors are frequently older). In socio-economic terms two distinct categories exist.

The first are managerial and professional groups whose original interest has been driving at speed over variable terrain and whose active participation will last until other demands (in time, money and attention) became too onerous. The second are participants whose occupations are associated with the motor trade, or with motor vehicles in some other way. These include skilled mechanics, drivers, salesmen, and accessories retailers. This second group tends to be of a more diverse socio-economic background than the first. In karting two additional groups can be added, juniors and parents. As the minimum age for participants in kart racing is 10 years, (Short Circuit Junior Class), parental involvement is often the norm and many kart clubs are operated by parents of club drivers. However, it is worthy of note that recently there has been a decline in the numbers of new juniors entering kart racing (7).

4.14. Having decided upon club membership the novice participant faces a series of choices. The first is whether to compete in events, to assist in event organisation, or to become a social member only. If competitive involvement is the goal the beginner must then decide which form of sport to take up. Not all are equally accessible. A number require specialist or modified vehicles if the participant is to be both competitive and eligible for entry. A further choice relates to the level of participation being aimed for. This in turn is dependent upon the chosen activity. If a participant wishes to take part in, for example, restricted status speed events, a specific type of RACMSA licence will be required. The holder therefore of a restricted status licence therefore cannot compete in national status events. For closed status club events however, a competitor may be eligible for entry on the grounds of club membership alone. Accepting the former strategy, a final set of choices presents itself, that relating to the degree of competitive involvement. Competitive road racing and special stage rallying increasingly demand sponsorship and support (vehicles, maintenance, transport, etc.). Such events cannot be undertaken in standard, unmodified road cars. These characteristics further limit access.

4.15. For the active participant multiple club membership is a necessary prerequisite to full competitive involvement, particularly in the various national and regional championships. In a recent survey it was found that well over 80 per cent of competitive club members took part in co-promoted, restricted and/or association championship events (8). Few drivers however are able to 'go it alone' in the increasingly professional environment of top level motorcar sport.

4.16. The principal constraint governing active participation is cost. This can vary substantially between the different disciplines and levels of participation. In closed autotest events using a normal road car, costs may be as low as £60 per year (£10 for club membership, a £7 entry fee for each of five events, and an optional £5 RACMSA Clubman C licence). At another level entering a competition rally vehicle in an international event such as the Welsh Rally might cost over £80,000 and involve a team of up to 22 people. Clubman rallying (co-promoted or restricted status events) may cost a participant around £250 for each event (including entry fees and maintenance) though this can often rise to over £1,000 if substantial vehicle damage occurs. For many competitors therefore

participation in medium status events is a once-a-month or less frequent activity, unless sponsorship can be found.

4.17. The non-competitive members are drawn from a wide range of interests. On the one hand, there are 'old stagers', former drivers and navigators who have retired from active competition, and young club members, occasional competitors but without the finances or experience to participate in events of major status. Both groups perform vital roles in organising and marshalling events and assisting in club administration. On the other hand, a large proportion of a club's non-competitive membership can be made up of 'social members' who join principally for the non-competitive activities organised by the club, and to give expression to their own spectator enthusiasm. On occasion, such social members might provide a pool of assistance for the more elaborate events. For a large national body like the Civil Service Motoring Association, or for local non-competitive clubs, social membership is commonly encouraged by group activities, dances, film shows and so on. An additional non-competitive function is performed by the various owners' clubs (e.g. the Morgan Owners Club, Porsche Club Great Britain or Lagonda Club) whose principal function is to foster a common interest in a particular make of vehicle and act as a source of expertise and a market for spare parts.

4.18. Levels of involvement in motorcar and kart sports in 1981, the last year for which data are available, are shown in Table 4.4. The dominance of stage and road rallying is of particular note. It is largely these types of event that have come under pressure from a decline in venues and increasing restrictions placed upon them by the governing bodies.

## EVENTS

4.19. The balance of motorcar sport disciplines practised is not uniform across the country. The range and extent of activity within our two study areas is summarised in Tables 4.5. and 4.6. Both include events for which RACMSA Permits, Waivers or Exemptions have been sought but exclude Twelve Car Rallies, Treasure Hunts, and other closed non-speed events. They also exclude events organised by non-RACMSA affiliated organisations. Some 30-40 events of this kind (Banger, Stock Car, Hot Rod Racing, and Autograss) take place each year within the eastern Hampshire area alone. Thus the total number of motorsport events taking place in that area may amount to over 300 a year (10). Although the numbers of events and competitors in both study areas is comparable at 80-90 (despite their differences in size) there are variations in the type and status of events. There are a higher proportion of speed events organised by Southern Lancashire clubs, less rally events, and a greater proportion of higher status events as a whole. A number of factors including topography, settlement structure, land availability and site hire costs, among others combine to produce these variations.

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Table 4.4. Competitor Figures in Motorcar Sport: 1981


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Activity	Number of Competitors	%
Stage & Road Rallies*	69,900	40
Trials*	26,424	15
Kart Races	25,263	14
Car Races	21,730	12
Speed Events	14,840	8
Autotests	11,477	7
Off-Road Racing	6,492	4
Total	176,126	100

\* For rally and trial events, two participants are often involved in each vehicle; both are counted in the relevant figures.

Source: (9)

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### Stage Rallying

4.20. Stage rallying is a high profile motorsport enjoying widespread popularity. Together with road racing it constitutes the 'popular' image of motorcar sport. Driving at speed on unfamiliar off road terrain is one of the principal attractions of motorsport and special stage rallying, using combinations of stages (from 0.5.-2.0 miles in length) represents for many the ultimate in competitive driving. The popularity of the discipline extends across the participant spectrum from international to small, single-venue co-promoted events. Over the last few years there have been two important shifts in the participation structure of stage rallying. First, the increasing controversy surrounding the use of the Public Highway, and the resultant drop in the number of road rally events has stimulated renewed interest in stage rallying. Second, many of the newcomers to stage rallying seek specific opportunities for low cost, non-damaging competition using cheap modifications to production cars. This has led to the growing popularity of single-venue, sealed-surface stage rallies which form an important component of the total rally scene in both our study areas.

4.21. When compared with multi-venue stage rallies, entry prices for single-venue events are cheap (£25-35). In Hampshire, where a single-venue stage rally championship has been established, five clubs run eight co-promoted events on five sealed-surface venues. Entries are considerably oversubscribed and the co-promoting clubs have all experienced significant increases in membership since the series was introduced. In the North West single venue events have taken place for some time largely as a result of the grave shortage of multiple venues. Although entry fees are slightly higher than in Hampshire, reflecting the

Table 4.5.

Motorsport events organised by Motorcar and Kart Clubs  
Originating from the Eastern Hampshire Study Area: 1984

Status	Closed	Co-promoted	Restricted	National	TOTAL
Event					
Special stage rally	-	2	3	-	5
Single-venue stage rally	-	9	-	-	9
Road rally *	4	10	2	(1)	18
					<u>32</u>
Sprint	-	1	1	-	2
Hill climb	-	-	-	-	0
Autocross	-	-	-	-	0
Rallycross	-	-	-	-	0
					<u>2</u>
Autotests	6	6	-	-	12
Trials	3	2	-	-	5
4-wheel drive safaris	3	-	-	-	3
4-wheel drive trials	12	-	-	-	12
Kart races	-	-	12 **	-	12
Road races	-	-	-	9 ***	9
TOTAL					<u>87</u>

Notes: \* This figure excludes 12-car and social events in receipt of automatic authorisation. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a number of road rally events scheduled for 1984 by study area RACMSA affiliated clubs were later cancelled due to the change in road rally regulations that was introduced by the RACMSA in the early part of 1984.

\*\* In addition, 40 kart practice day sessions took place within the study area at the same venue as the 12 competitive events.

\*\*\* Of these 9 road race events, 3 were of International status. In addition, the circuit (Thruxton) is used for 8 days of unsilenced vehicle testing and 20 days of silenced testing.

Table 4.6.

Motorsport Events Organised by Motorcar and Kart Clubs  
Originating from the South Lancashire Study Area

Status	Closed	Co-promoted	Restricted	National	TOTAL
Event					
Special stage rally	-	-	4	-	4
Single-venue stage rally	-	1	5	-	6
Road rally	-	4	7	-	11
					<u>21</u>
Sprint	-	-	2	1	3
Hill climb	-	-	1	1	2
Autocross	-	-	1*	-	1
Rallycross	-	-	-	1	1
					<u>7</u>
Autotests	2	12	3	-	17
Trials	-	10	-	-	10
4-wheel drive events	16	2	-	-	18
Kart races	-	-	9 **	-	9
TOTAL					<u>82</u>

Notes:     \* Notably, some five autocross events were originally planned for 1984 by clubs operating within the study area. Only one however subsequently took place.

      \*\* The two kart clubs involved share the use of a single venue (Three Sisters) with three other kart clubs from Cheshire. The total number of kart race days at the circuit, which lies at the edge of the study area, is 21 (+ five non RACMSA schoolboy karting events).

Source: Survey, 1984.

dependence of clubs on a small number of expensive venues, such events are similarly popular.

4.22. Multiple-venue stage rallies are considerably more expensive. The entry fee to restricted and co-promoted stage events is frequently around £80 (an average of £1.50 per mile of stage), on top of which is added the cost of licencing, insurance, petrol and maintenance. On the more punishing stages vehicle damage is almost inevitable, a fact that can influence a competitor's choice of entry. The high entry fee is a function of the cost of organising and marshalling stage events; but more importantly reflects the cost of site hire. Thus the number of entries determines whether the organisers make or lose money. We found the average entry to a special stage event to be between 50 and 100 vehicles. Many are highly specialised production cars which, though mandatorily road legal, are nevertheless maintained exclusively for competition use.

4.23. The success of a multi-venue stage event depends ultimately upon the rallying qualities of the individual stages. There are three broad sources of land for such stages; private land, Ministry of Defence/Property Services Agency land (referred to here as MoD land); and Forestry Commission land.

(i) Private Land

4.24. Private stage venues tend to be of four kinds:

- airfields and race circuits;
- private estates (including private forests);
- quarries; and
- agricultural land.

A recent survey carried out by the East Midlands Association of Motor Clubs (11) revealed the distribution of rally stages operated during events run in 1982 (Table 4.7.). A large number of private land stages (particularly on airfields and private estates) utilise sealed surfaces, partly because of the problems of restitution of unsealed surfaces. This makes them attractive to clubman competitors and accessible to spectators who may number between 1,000 - 6,000 for restricted status events. Profits from an event are usually derived solely from this source. The costs of hiring private land vary enormously from £400 per day at Goodwood (West Sussex) and £600 at Cark (Cumbria), to £1,000 at Oulton Park (Cheshire) and £3,000 at Knowsley (Merseyside). Thus a multi-venue restricted status event may well cost over 5,000.

4.24. The use of individual tracts of private land is generally restricted to three or four occasions in any one year. Higher levels of usage are likely to cause the break up of sealed surfaces, prevent the



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Table 4.7.    The Sources of Land Used for Stages  
During Rally Events in the East Midlands: 1982.\*

	% of stages
Disused Airfields	36
Forests (largely but not exclusively Forestry Commission)	28
Farm Tracks	21
Quarries	10
Private Estates	5

N = 123 stages in 6 rally events.

Source (12)

\* The East Midlands comprises Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

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recovery of unsealed-surfaces, and can provoke local opposition. Only private stage venues specifically converted for motorcar sport use, such as permanent race or speed venues, or those that have been temporarily converted, such as working airfields, are available more frequently. Stage rallying in both of the study areas, but particularly Southern Lancashire, has been seriously affected by the decline of available private venues. Clubs in South Lancashire are constrained for the most part to three principal private sites and two lesser used venues.

4.25. In addition to land shortages and problems of the frequency of use, clubs organising stage events are often in competition for the same sites. Such competition can provoke overuse thereby contributing to eventual loss. In a number of locations throughout the country overuse, resulting from competition for venues has also contributed to the physical erosion of sealed surfaces. At Haydock Park this has been the cause of site closure. Competition also occurs between stage rallying and other motorsport disciplines. In the North West this is notable at Oulton Park, where stage rallying shares space with road racing, rallycross and other motorsports; and at Aintree, which is principally a horse racing circuit. Conflicts also exist between motorcar sport and non-motorsport interests. For example at Longridge, a derelict quarry site in the Southern Lancashire area long regarded as an excellent all-purpose off-road site, local opposition to noise and traffic generation has forced the closure and subsequent sale of the site. At Cark Airfield (Cumbria), opposition from a local caravan site has been provoked more by the activities of night-time 'cowboy' drivers than by organised events. Yet, despite heavy demand, it is unlikely that the current use rate at Cark could be increased. Indeed, so precious are the dates at Cark, that the

simultaneous use of the site by parachutists has not prevented organised rally events from taking place, though it has prompted some clubs to take out additional insurance.

4.26. A shortage of available private land has become a severe problem in many areas. Apart from site loss, the components of this declining availability are as follows:

- a decline in the overall number of large, private estates suitable for motorsport;
- the sale for development of private airfield sites;
- the prohibitive hire charges set by many private owners;
- the concern of landowners regarding liability in the event of accident or damage to participants or spectators; and
- local resident opposition.

Although RACMSA events are covered by automatic insurance few landowners appear willing to accept this as a guarantee against their own liability. Undoubtedly the most successful private stage rally sites are those upon which motorsport has become an established use (for example, Goodwood in West Sussex, and Pembrey, Dyfed, owned and operated by Llanelli Borough Council). Many other venues which are 'successful' in terms of rallying quality are, nonetheless, infrequently available. Examples here include, Knowsley Safari Park, Merseyside and Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire.

#### (ii) MoD Land

4.27. The importance of MoD land to motorcar sports varies across the country. In the south of England, particularly in Hampshire and Wiltshire, the MoD are perhaps the most important source of land for off road motorcar events and stage rallying in particular. In other parts of the country there are far fewer MoD facilities available. Such sites are particularly scarce in and around the South Lancashire study area. Although in the recent past four MoD facilities have been used in the area only one, Burtonwood Airfield, Warrington, is now in use. After a two year period during which it was closed for a solitary stage event, organised by the West Lancashire Motor Club at a total cost of £1,600 of which £100 went towards the hire of the site. At present this is the total extent of MoD site use within the Southern Lancashire study area, though a number of clubs are seeking to increase the date allocations at the Burtonwood site. Its principal limitation, however, in common with all MoD venues, is the refusal of the MoD to permit spectators on site. As the bulk of costs of stage rallies generally are met from this source stage events on MoD land are rendered more costly to the organising club.

4.28. In Hampshire the situation is very much different. Between the two MoD District Commands of Aldershot and Salisbury there are 18 MoD motorsport venues, 9 within and 9 around the study area. However a number are not available or large enough for stage rally events. Those outside the study area include Salisbury Plain, Bovingdon (Dorset), Bagshot Heath (Surrey), and Hobbs Barracks (West Sussex). The most frequently used are Weavers Down (12-14 times per year for all forms of motorsport), Slab Common (around 15 times), Broxhead Common (12 times), Barton Stacey (twice) and Salisbury Plain, which plays host to up to four major special stage rallies each year in addition to a number of four wheel drive events. Other stage venues include Hungry Hill/Burns Hill, HMS Deadalus, Long Valley, Lodge Camp, Hawley Common and Minley Manor, though the availability of each varies over the years as site erosion and MoD use cause periodic site closure.

4.29. Salisbury Plain, one of the primary stage rally venues in Southern England, is subdivided into three rally areas each of which is available twice a year. Individual stages, which can total 45 - 75 stage miles (and can be divided between sealed and unsealed surface roads), are joined during events by Green Lanes, sealed Public Highways, and MoD access routes. The two study area clubs involved in restricted status rally events on Salisbury Plain, the Farnborough and Southampton Motor Clubs, might expect entries of between 50 and 80 crews. However a reputation for competitive vehicle damage incurred on some of the Salisbury stages provoked a 30 per cent decline in entries in 1984. In part the erosion of stage sites has been provoked by the popularity of the venue as a whole, both with rally and four wheel drive vehicle competitors. Although the cost of use for Salisbury Plain is relatively high (upwards of £1,000) it is significantly cheaper per stage mile than Forestry Commission land.

4.30. A second important MoD rally venue is Barton Stacey, a sealed surface site used twice in 1984 (though four times a year before that), largely for single venue stage rallies at a cost of around £1,000 per event. The 25 stage miles (divided into 16 or 12 individual stages, depending on the event) provide a popular motorsport facility, particularly amongst 'clubman' drivers. The remaining MoD rally sites are used less frequently (usually only once a year) and occasionally, as at Hawley/Minley, in conjunction with other non-MoD stage venues.

4.31. For rally events and off road events in general MoD sites, where available, are highly regarded by clubs and participants. Consequently there is much competition for date and venue allocations. In Hampshire where MoD facilities are still in operational use, allocations to individual clubs are coordinated by the regional association (in association with the relevant centre of the ACU). Each military district has its own policies regarding the provision of sites. Aldershot district (in eastern Hampshire) distributes annually a list of available sites and their frequency of permitted use to the Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs (ACSMC) and the Southern Centre ACU (13). Clubs wishing to organise events on MoD land must then submit date applications to these regional bodies who subsequently make a joint submission back to the MoD. For many motor clubs access to MoD sites is the principal reason for joining the ACSMC. In Hampshire there is a close working relationship

between the ACSMC and the Southern Centre ACU. The allocations are established on the basis of suitability of site and nature of demand. Some, such as Weavers Down, are divided equally (six motorcycle events, six car/four wheel drive events); others, more one way than the other. Access to MoD sites within the Salisbury District is slightly less formal, though all allocations have to go through the ACSMC. There is a greater amount of contact between event organisers and individual garrison/station commanders over dates and allocations though facilities are, on the whole, more expensive than in Hampshire (a per car mile pricing system in the Salisbury District means that larger events can cost between £1,000 and £1,600). In the last few years the MoD/PSA have introduced an event licencing procedure for sites. To obtain a licence clubs must submit a reparation fee and a 'damage deposit' to the MoD/PSA. Thus the costing of an MoD event is made up of a number of elements. These are shown in Table 4.8.

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Table 4.8. Costing of a Restricted Status Special Stage Rally on an MoD Site: Aldershot District; 1984

One Day event

60 entrant vehicles

Sealed Surface site + 2.5 miles of non-competitive road work.

	£
Licence (site fee)	172.50
Reparation	10.00
Damage Deposit	250.00
Insurance	0.80
VAT	27.37
Total event cost	<u>460.67</u>

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4.32. MoD sites are popular and crucial to general motorsport activity in the south offering a variety of terrain, relatively low hire cost, and general isolation from residential areas. However their availability is declining rapidly. Over the last 10 years, some 16 MoD sites have been lost completely to motorsport. The frequency of use of those remaining has also declined. Six sites previously used regularly now cater for only occasional use. On Broxhead Common for example the number of permitted events has decreased by 60 per cent since 1974. Also the amount of land available for sporting events has reduced drastically in some cases: at Weavers Down the area involved has shrunk from over 1,000 acres in the mid-1970s to around 200 in 1984.

4.33. One consequence of the above changes has been a trend towards the over use of remaining facilities, especially those on unsealed surfaces (Longvalley, Salisbury, and Weavers Down) with the result that allocations are further reduced to allow the ground to recover. The introduction by MoD/PSA of a compulsory restitution fee and damage deposit has done little to relieve the problems of site erosion as these monies are paid centrally and not to individual garrisons/stations. Thus in many cases ground restitution has not occurred.

4.34. The lack of a cohesive MoD policy (over allocation procedures, use, pricing, and spectator attendance) is undeniably a constraint to motorsport activity in those areas that are largely dependent upon MoD sites. Major National status rally events, despite the cost advantages, tend to avoid MoD land because, firstly, there is no guaranteed security of use (the MoD may cancel an allocation at short notice if the site is required for military exercise) and, secondly, because sites are not open to spectators. The lack of debate between users and the MoD/PSA over allocation policy and the declining availability of sites have become issues in areas such as Hampshire. Following a series of "fruitless" meetings between the two sides during the early 1980s, MoD/PSA motorsport policy in the South East district is limited to the annual publication of event/area allocations. Moreover there appear no formal opportunities for objections to site closure or methods of application for the use of new MoD sites. Although rallying and motorsport in general in the south depends to a large extent on such land it is significant that only a very small proportion of total MoD holdings in the area are open for motorsport.

#### (iii) Forestry Commission Land

4.35. The third principal source of land for stage rallying is that controlled by the Forestry Commission. Although MoD land is used for motorcar, four wheel drive and motorcycle events, Forestry Commission land is used almost exclusively for stage rally events. Most of the longer, more prestigious rally events (the Lombard, Welsh, National Breakdown, Lakeland, Plains and Scottish) rely heavily upon the use of Forestry Commission land for competitive stages. Unlike MoD land, which is of particular importance for rallying in the south of England, Forestry Commission land is generally more available in the north where large areas of forest (e.g. Keilder in Northumberland, Bowland in Lancashire, and many parts of the Lake District) are used all the year round for events of varying status. Many stage rally events also occur in National Parks, the Dalby/Wykeham Forest complex in the North York Moors Park, and the Grizedale and Thornwaite Forests in the Lake District being of particular significance. The North York Moors National Park plays host to some seven stage events each year.

4.36. The use of Forestry Commission land is coordinated and agreed at the national level between the RACMSA and the Commission. Under the latest five year agreement, ratified in 1983 with effect from 1 January 1984, a standard charging system exists for all rally use of Forestry Commission land. Replacing a system of £1.25 per starter per mile, organising clubs are now subject to a primary charge of £110 per mile used

with a £90 per mile charge for the second and subsequent use of any routes (14). Because this new policy is not based on the number of vehicles, site hire costs for a 40 entrant event will be the same as one with 90 if the same routes are used with the same frequency. This has had a major effect upon the organisation of small rally events. In total the Forestry Commission has provided for 64 rallies on its land per year for the next five years. At a regional level the allocation of dates and sites to clubs is achieved through the regional associations. Coordination between these, the RACMSA, and the individual Conservances is the role of the 18 RACMSA-appointed Forest Liaison Officers.

4.37. Ironically although the North is universally regarded as the principal area of forest rallying, the South Lancashire study area is almost wholly devoid of suitable forest land. Hampshire, meanwhile, is bordered by two of the largest forest areas in southern England. Only one of the South Lancashire study area clubs, the Preston Auto Club, had been successful in gaining a forest allocation. Within the Association of Northern Car Clubs competition for the six permitted forest venues, particularly those in the Forest of Bowland, the southern Lake District and the North York Moors, is intense. This is largely due to the fact that three major rallies, the National Breakdown, the Lakeland, and the Lombard RAC all use a number of forest stages. For the clubman rally team, for whom national and international events are inaccessible, membership of clubs in other regions, particularly the north east and Wales, is often the only means of gaining entry into Restricted Status Forest Rallies. In the case of the Preston Club's 1984 event, which used around 5 miles of Forestry Commission stage at Gisbon at a cost of around £1,000, in conjunction with 5 miles of private forest land at Longridge Fell and a sealed surface venue at Preston Dock, some 69 teams competed for an entry cost of £76.00.

4.38. Forestry Commission land in and around Hampshire is allocated through the Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs which negotiates every five years for an annual allocation. Currently (1984-88) five forest venues are allocated to ACSMC clubs who have exclusive access to them. All of the allocations shown in Table 4.9 are either closed, co-promoted, or restricted, though drivers come from as far afield as London, the Midlands and Avon to compete. This is one solution to the problem of limited allocations, as more than one of the twelve or so stage rally clubs in the Association can become involved in the promotion of each event.

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Table 4.9. Forestry Commission Allocations: Hampshire Region

Ringwood Forest	2 events	30 Stage miles
Bramshill Forest	2 events	50 Stage miles

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4.39. In Hampshire the major limitations on the use of Forestry Commission land for stage rallying are;

- the relatively small size of the venues, which limits the number of feasible entrants to around 80 (the northern forest sites can accommodate in excess of 120);
- restrictions over the period of use (the Lyndhurst Conservancy, which manages Ringwood Forest does not allow competitive events to take place between 1 March and 30 November on the grounds that summer rallying is a possible fire risk);
- the high cost of the events; and
- the proximity of many forest stages to residential areas, or areas of informal recreation. A one-day stage event at Bramshill Forest (such as the Farnborough Club's Dimanche Tour) might cost in the region of £3,500.

The clear effect of the current charging system has been the exclusion of small clubman rally events in favour of larger and higher status events which attract more competitive teams. This further reduces the accessibility of such events to the clubman. The high cost of securing Forestry Commission land is reflected in the relatively high entry fees for forest rallies; £75-80 for restricted status events. As a rule of thumb organising club(s) can only break even on a forest event if the number of entries exceeds 70. Below this clubs will make a loss or be reliant on sponsorship.

4.40. In Hampshire the two permitted forest venues are surrounded by residential and informal recreational areas. Therefore elaborate public relations exercises, particularly for major events, have had to be undertaken. For the average Ringwood event the following courses of action are mandatory:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Notify: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 parish councils</li> <li>- 2 county councils</li> <li>- all permitted horse riders;</li> <li>- 900 local residents</li> <li>- the Nature Conservancy Council</li> <li>- 6 horse riding stables</li> <li>- relevant timber haulage firms;</li> </ul> |
| Obtain: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- permission from the landowner (in addition to the Forestry Commission, who lease the site);</li> </ul>  |
| Visit:  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 40 houses in delicate areas near to the stages;</li> </ul>  |

- Delineate - all 'quiet zones' where there is to  
& Seal off be no competitive access;
- Barricade - all trails, byways and bridleways  
Off that allow access to, or cross,  
competitive stages and notify  
relevant highway authority of the  
intention to do so; and
- Erect - warning notices at all areas.

4.41. The use of Forestry Commission land for stage rally events once allocated is generally secure. Under the terms of the Forestry Act 1967 and the recommendations of the 1972 Forestry Policy (White Paper) the Commission is charged to provide for and allow the recreational use of appropriate forest areas. Although the total stage mileage on Forestry Commission land is declining, (partly as a result of the recurrent use of stages following the new pricing policy), the Commission remain committed to the provision of forest routes (15). Unfortunately, the sale of unproductive Forestry Commission land as a result of the Forestry Act of 1981, and government directives in 1982 and the encouragement of informal recreation use, has led to instances of declining availability and public opposition. Within the South Lancashire area the sale of Forestry Commission land is not however seen as a threat either to motorsport or general informal access (16). In Hampshire five areas of forest land have been sold in recent years, though not as a direct response to the 1981 Act. Three of these had been used for stage rally events.

4.42. In conclusion, Forestry Commission land provides some of the best and least controversial rally sites in the country particularly for large, high status events. However, as with MoD sites, only a very small proportion of total Commission holdings are made available for motorsport use. Individual sites are nevertheless well managed and restitution, which has been the cause of considerable complaint with respect to MoD sites, is generally undertaken by the Commission as part of the general site hire agreement. The main limitations to the use of Forestry Commission land are the relative shortage of date allocations and the considerable hire costs. Stage rallying remains a fairly uncontroversial area of motorsport, certainly when held in comparison with road rallying. Where conflict does develop most often it relates to the use of the Public Highway by stage rally vehicles travelling to and from stage venues. For the most part stage areas are located on land that is well removed from residential areas, particularly in the more popular stage areas in the north.

4.43. In National Parks stage rallies are tolerated rather than encouraged by Park Authorities. The principal areas of controversy are:

1. The degree of traffic such events can generate (the 1981 Lombard RAC Rally, for example, attracted between 8-10,000 spectators in the Dalby/Whykeham Forest Stages area of the North York Moors Park);



2. The disturbance caused to settlements by night events, particularly when competitors travel along lower status roads between stage areas; and
3. The use or crossing of footpaths by stage events.

A number of Park Authorities have sought to establish consultative procedures regarding stage events in their areas. The North York Moors Committee for example recommends that, with respect to stage events:

"There shall be a presumption against the use of untarred roads across open moorland. Instead, roads in Forests are preferred.

Rallies using long sections of Public footpaths and bridleways will be against the interests of the National Park. Objections will be raised if any rally uses a section of the Cleveland Way long-distance footpath.

Rallies using unfenced moorland roads in areas where sheep are grazed between the dates of 14 April and 14 June inclusive will be opposed in the interests of preventing losses of sheep flocks on the moorland.

If possible, roads in Category 4 of the road hierarchy should be avoided as routes for spectator traffic in the Lombard RAC Rally and any others attracting large numbers of spectators." (17)

Other Park Authorities have also sought voluntary restrictions on the number of competitive stage rally vehicles using their areas at any one time, and the number of events in any one year (18). Significantly however such Authorities, while acknowledging that "support vehicles and spectators' cars can have a considerable impact on the whole area around the rally location" (19), nonetheless recognise the use of private (including Forestry Commission) land is not necessarily against National Park interests (20). Existing consultation procedures are claimed to be working well (21).

4.44. The issue of footpath and bridleway use (or closure) during stage events continues to generate public opposition under Section 14 of the Road Traffic Act, 1972. This has caused the RACMSA to seek legal clarification. Members of the Ramblers Association have threatened to disrupt the Lombard RAC Rally (22) and, in certain instances in Hampshire, have programmed rambles to occur simultaneously with stage events. In order to overcome local resident objections to the use of Hurn (a private forest bordering the Ringwood Forest) clubs have undertaken elaborate PR exercises and have established a one mile exclusion zone on public roads surrounding the area.

4.45. Private, MoD, and Forestry Commission land account for almost all stage rally venues. Water authority and local authority land make a negligible contribution. Any further decline in the availability of such venues will have dramatic consequences for what is, in many people's minds, the quintessential off road motorsport.

Road Rallying (including all events run exclusively on the Public Highway)

4.46. One of the oldest and most popular forms of motorsport, road rallying has traditionally provided an entry point for the first time participant. Almost all non-specialist motor clubs run road rallies, the most common being automatically authorised twelve car events. These can cover 40-60 miles of local roads in one night. The popularity of road rallying is clear; some 61 per cent of all events requiring a permit from the RACMSA are of Closed or Co-Promoted status. For the majority of club drivers road rallying involves slightly modified production cars, in normal road trim, with small and unobtrusive competition numbers.

4.47. The number of road rallies taking place in Mainland Britain is difficult to assess. The Rally Authorisation Department of the RACMSA issued some 384 Permits for 1985. The location of these events is illustrated in Figure 4.6. The popularity of the South West Wales, the south Midlands and the North of England is evident. The apparent paucity of events in the South East is partly accountable for by the restrictions seen necessary by the police, and local Rally liaison officers, and the existence of large numbers of blackspots and quiet zones. However it should be noted that Figure 4.6. only shows RACMSA authorised and controlled events. For every one of these some 20 to 30 'social' events might take place, many being run by non-RACMSA clubs. Indeed among local work-based or social clubs road rallying is the dominant 'sporting' activity. Moreover, in areas such as the Home Counties and the Thames Valley such 'events' are particularly popular. It is therefore important to make a three-fold distinction between:

1. Competitive road rallies requiring event Permits from the RACMSA;
2. Social road rallies requiring formal waivers of Permit from the RACMSA; and
3. Unsupervised road events run by non-motorsport clubs.

(This project stresses the first and, to a lesser extent, the second of these categories.)

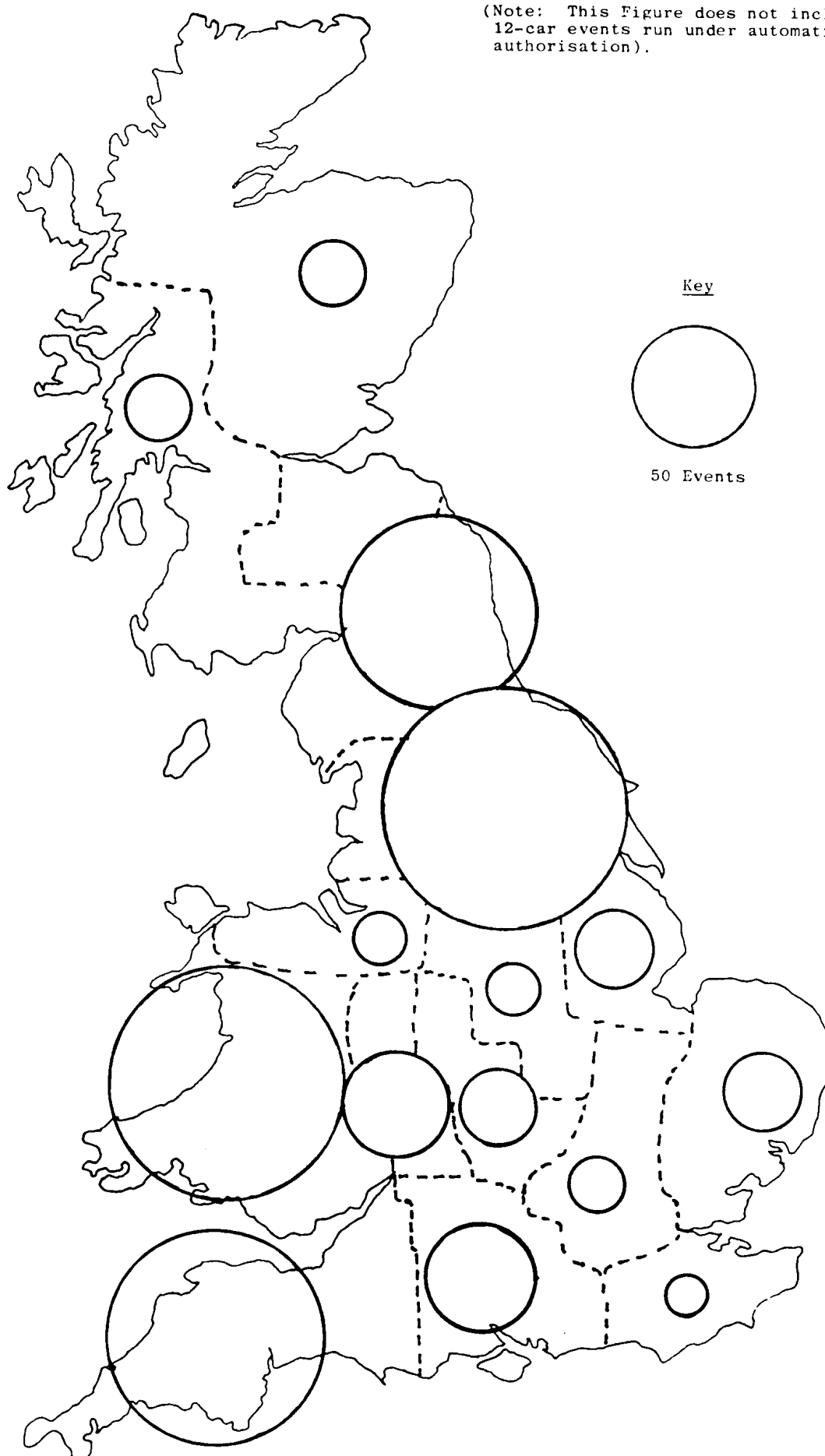
4.48. The use of the Public Highway for competitive motorsports is governed by five important considerations;

1. Participants and vehicles must be road legal complying with all general public statutes governing the use of the Public Highway (23);
2. Participants accept they do not have exclusive access to any designated course and must thereby share it with other non-competitive vehicles;
3. All existing road signs and speed controls remain mandatory;

Figure 4.6.

The Distribution of Road Rally Events by RACMSA Regional Association: 1984

(Note: This Figure does not include those 12-car events run under automatic authorisation).



4. Drivers and vehicles cannot, under any circumstances, race; and
5. All events should either be authorised or subject to a formal waiver of authorisation.

The regulations governing RACMSA club events have recently been substantially tightened. They govern the speeds of participant vehicles, the maximum distances involved, the nature and extent of mandatory and permitted vehicle modifications, mandatory procedures for public relations, the choice of route and location of competitive sections, procedures of consultation, and the timing of events.

4.49. Motor vehicles using the Public Highway during events (road rallies, or non-competitive route work between competitive off road stages) are governed by specific speed schedules which;

"shall not be such as may require or may lead drivers to exceed any statutory limits where imposed, or be a speed such as might be considered to be dangerous or unreasonable, having regard to prevailing traffic conditions and the nature of the route" (24).

In addition the RACMSA specify;

"the competition shall not have a speed schedule at any time exceeding 30 mph on an ordinary highway, or 50 mph on a motorway, or 25 mph in respect of vehicles (such as vans) subject to a speed limit" (25).

Lengths of Public Highway set up as observed and timed competitive sections cannot include "any road with a 30 or 40 mph speed limit, and must not require competitors to average in excess of 30 mph" (26). Other events have additional speed regulations (e.g. Classic Reliability Trials and Veteran Rallies). Furthermore, the RAC specify that the proportions of the route of a motorsports event using the Public Highway are limited as follows:

Closed events	300 miles
Restricted events	500 miles
National or International events	no limit. (27)

4.50. Under RACMSA regulations organisers of authorised rallies using the Public Highway must undertake public relations (PR) to minimise any disamenity and nuisance caused by an event. The basic requirements are shown in Table 4.10. The functions of PR are; to alert local residents of the intention to hold an event; to forestall objections, either by assuaging people's fears, or by diverting routes; and to demonstrate to local residents that events are professionally and sympathetically organised. The responsibility for PR lies with the organising club.

Individual routes and the associated PR are coordinated by the RAC's regional Rally Liaison Officer, to whom PR checklists may be required to be submitted. The Liaison Officer has the power to withhold authorisation until satisfied with the route and the effectiveness of the PR exercise.

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Table 4.10.     RACMSA Public Relations Requirements.

- a. that reasonable precautions be taken in the selection of the route, time of day of event, provision for spectators, etc., to avoid inconvenience being caused to the general public or to local residents;
  - b. that all households within a 300 metre radius of any point along the route of a length of road used as a competitive section be informed;
  - c. that on non-competitive sections and lengths of road, PR need only take place where there has been a history of complaints, unless the event occurs between 22.00 hrs and 07.00 hrs, in which case complete PR work needs to be undertaken for each householder along all roads (except A roads). Where A roads pass through built-up areas notification of the event has to be declared in a public place;
  - d. that on special stages or sections, PR work has to be undertaken for each household within 150 metres radius of all access and egress points to Stages or Sections;
  - e. that where cars are required to stop during an event PR must be undertaken for each household within a 150 metre radius of the stopping point;
  - f. that where the farming community may be affected, relevant details of the event must be sent to the appropriate County Secretary of the NFU and any other such national body;
  - g. that where published spectator information is provided by the event organisers, householders within 550 yards of any specifically advised location are PR'd and, where possible, marshalls provided; and
  - h. that spectators should be advised of areas they should avoid.
-

4.51. The problems of undertaking a full PR exercise for a major road event are daunting. An event using 100 miles of road might require the notification of many thousands of householders. Thus large road events may frequently take up to 12 months to fully PR. One problem found in the south of England seems to be the notification of second home owners. Many clubs have found houses unoccupied during the PR period only to find them occupied at the time of the event. Frequently it is these temporary residents that are among the objectors.

4.52. A second major problem can occur when a number of clubs use a particular length of road. If one club does an inadequate PR job the ramifications are felt by the other clubs. This problem is compounded when clubs travel some distance from their "home territory" to run a road event. Although the Rally Liaison Officers of the RAC and the Regional Associations seek to coordinate the use of roads this is not always possible, particularly in the case of twelve car rallies or events run by non-RACMSA clubs.

4.53. The routes chosen for road rallies are determined by five factors; the PR exercise, the designation of prohibited areas, the attitude of the Rally Authorisation Department through its local Rally Liaison Officers, the types of road, and the police. Following a PR exercise certain areas can be designated 'Quiet Zones' and 'Black Spots'. In the former no competitive sections can be run, nor are cars to be driven at speed, nor must they travel with their rally lights on. In the latter no competitive use is permitted (whether Section or otherwise). Black Spots and Quiet Zones are marked on the definitive OS.1:50,000 Maps. The locations of competitive sections are also controlled. None must be located in an area which has in excess of 20 houses within 300 metres unless written approval from all householders within the area is obtained. Nor must they:

"Join or cross an 'A' class road, except where there is a manned control at which competitors must stop at the junction, nor start on, or use an 'A' class road for more than 200 metres continuously" (28).

Finally no road event can be run on any section of road within six weeks of a previous event.

4.54. Cooperation with the police over rally arrangements is mandatory even for events that do not require rally authorisation. At the local level this is done by individual clubs and the Rally Liaison Officer, the final route often reflecting the choice of the police as much as the club. In general the police are considered sympathetic to road rallying, though problems are experienced when different police areas have different requirements of rally vehicles. The Thames Valley Police, for example, require all vehicles driving in a competitive event to be marked with large and clearly visible competition numbers. Neighbouring Police authorities and the RAC require vehicles to be marked with small and unobtrusive numbers, frequently placed inside the rear windscreen. Any event using both Thames Valley roads and those of the neighbouring area

would therefore be in conflict with one or other set of requirements. Events therefore normally comply with the requirements of the Police Authority in which the largest proportion of Highway use occurs. Additional mandatory procedures include informing National Park Authorities (where relevant) and, in the case of the use or crossing of footpaths and bridelways, local authorities.

4.55. The majority of club rallies (Twelve Car, Navigational, Economy and Road) occur at night. Competitive road sections must not start before 23.00 hours and cars must finish each section by one hour after sunrise (29). Although there are no restrictions as to the day of the event, twelve car rallies qualify for a Waiver of Permit as long as they do not occur on Saturday nights.

4.56. In both study areas road rallying is an important form of motorsport, although in the North West it constitutes a higher proportion of total club activity than in eastern Hampshire. The larger number of road rallies organised in the latter (see Tables 4.5. and 4.6.) is due to the activities of two clubs. In eastern Hampshire, road rallies were found on average to be 120 miles long, attracting 50-70 entries and drawing between 250 and 500 spectators. However both the numbers of events and active competitors are in decline. Thus the total number of road events organised in 1984 in the area reflects a 50 per cent decline since the mid-1970s when an average entry was around 150. There are a number of reasons for this decline:

1. The growing number of restrictions placed upon road rallying by the RACMSA and its Rally Authorisation Department in an attempt to ameliorate public opposition;
2. The increasingly prohibitive, yet mandatory vehicle modifications required for road rallying, most particularly the reduction in permitted noise emission of competitive vehicles from 86 db(A) (the permitted maximum for vehicles in general on the Public Highway as defined in statute) to 78 db(A);
3. The increasing difficulties of selecting and using a viable route through the growing numbers of blackspots and quiet zones, or routes that have not recently been used for other events;
4. The difficulties of driving competitively along increasingly congested highways; and
5. The growing numbers of illegal and cowboy events or drivers who either follow organised events without observing the route and vehicle restrictions, organise unauthorised events on well known routes, or 'poach' routes from other motorsport clubs without undertaking the necessary PR.

The role of Rally Liaison Officers is crucial in coordinating the demand for events with the availability of routes, and police and public objections. Unfortunately until 1984 it was not mandatory for all clubs to demonstrate the effectiveness of their PR to the local Liaison Officer. It is hoped that this new requirement will go some way to limit the adverse effects of past deficiencies in PR.

4.57. All clubs within the South Lancashire study area run road rallies, ranging from small twelve car events to championship rallies, such as the Clitheroe Club's Hall Trophy. As in Hampshire the number of events and entries have both declined dramatically over the last few years. The number of events has declined by 50 per cent since 1977 while entries have dropped by between 25 per cent and 40 per cent over the same period. The same reasons as in Hampshire apply. Their effect has been to increase the demand amongst drivers for alternative forms of sealed-surface competitive driving, principally stage rallying. At the club level the response has been increased vigilance and liaison over the choice of routes and the timing of events. To this end both the Association of Northern Clubs and the SD (34) Group, (a confederate body comprised of all those clubs operating within the area defined by OS Map SD(34)), hold date meetings to ensure that particular routes are not over used. Significantly the issue of cowboy events and route poaching is not as extreme as in the south.

4.58. The average road rally organised by South Lancashire clubs was found to be around 150 miles of which 100 or so are competitive. Entries vary between 50 and 80. Although the North West is relatively well situated for road events, in that the roads chosen are often less fully used and more remote from settlements, the major issues of disturbance, spectators, and police liaison persist.

4.59. Given the scale of many road rallies in the North West, many of which run across into Southern Yorkshire, public opposition is relatively low. In four years of running the Ribble Rally, for example, the Springhill Auto Club has only ever received four complaints. There are also less quiet zones and black spots (examples being Appletreewich, Airton and Arncliffe, all in North Yorkshire). Organising clubs make a point of avoiding residential areas to the extent that no competitive road work takes place within 16 miles of built-up areas. PR work is elaborate and most clubs have operated for many years on a voluntary PR code that has since become adopted RAC policy. In the North West, caravan owners have proved difficult to contact, paralleling the second homes problem in Hampshire. However objections do occur in certain areas of the North West, for example from residents on the fringes of the Forest of Bowland, often supported by the National Trust and the NFU. In the absence of the option to close roads comprehensive PR is the only solution to such objections.

4.60. In particularly sensitive areas motorsport interests have sought to accord with the wishes of Authorities. This is particularly evident in the National Parks surrounding the Southern Lancashire study area. The Yorkshire Moors, Yorkshire Dales and Lake District Parks host annually 12,



19 and 7 road rallies (or stage rallies employing extensive road work) respectively. Only in the Lake District have the number of events declined; from 11 per year in the mid-1970s to 7 in 1984. As it is mandatory for clubs to seek the authorisation of National Park Authorities if events are to be run within their areas, local policies with regard to motorsport are an important consideration. Significantly all of the above Park authorities include rally policies in Park planning documents. In the Lake District the frequency of route use is strictly limited, the maximum number of competitive vehicles participating in road-based events being restricted to 90. Organising clubs are requested to avoid disturbance to local residents and the maximum number of rally events using Park roads is limited to 9 per year (30).

4.61. Both the Yorkshire Moors and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities have sought the restriction of night events where they pass through towns and villages. Thus not more than six events are allowed to take place in any one year that might pass through settlements on Class II roads, and not more than four in any one year passing through settlements on Class III roads. Where such restrictions prove impractical the authorities have requested that 'quiet zones' be designated with "all vehicles restricted to 15 mph on dipped headlights and using the highest possible gear" (31). Furthermore, both Park authorities would object to any daytime event during the holiday season, or "at weekends where the route passes through areas where other visitors could reasonably expect to enjoy peace and quiet" (32). As with stage rallies it has been the continuing experience of Park authorities that discussion and negotiation between themselves and individual motorsport interests succeeds in reducing conflict and achieving suitable routes.

4.62. The issue of rally spectators appears a greater problem in the North West than in the South. Although it is RAC policy to discourage clubs from actively attracting spectators to road rallies, in the North West over 1,000 spectators frequently attend such events. The problem for clubs is to achieve a balance between, providing adequate spectator information (listing the best locations for viewing and routes to take and areas to avoid) for those who cannot be deterred and, on the other hand, discouraging spectator attendance which, for the most part, clubs could well do without. If spectator information is not provided and, sometimes even when it is, spectators frequently constitute the main disturbance caused by an event. Disturbance can also result from ill-informed spectators following competitive cars without observing any of the competition rules. To the objector there is, understandably, little to choose between the two activities. Without exception those clubs which have adopted a direct informing role with regard to spectators have found this to have positive effects in controlling vehicles and minimising disruption to local communities. In the more successful road events the police have also played a significant role in directing spectators to specified locations.

4.63. The role of the police is of particular importance in road rallying and in the North West care is taken to keep them informed of event dates and routes. In general terms, police cooperation is considered to be very good though, occasionally, clubs have reported a

lack of inter-police authority contact over events. However problems do arise with unofficial road events. In order to appease local opposition to properly organised road events some police authorities have found it easier to restrict the activities of organised clubs rather than to pursue those that originally prompted complaint. Motorsport clubs are thus often penalised by the activities of their less conscientious counterparts.

4.64. Road rallying remains a popular and accessible form of motorsport. On the other hand it is a controversial and increasingly regulated activity. It is ironic that one of the few motorsport disciplines that does not suffer per se from a decline in venue availability, should nonetheless suffer a decline in participation numbers prompted largely by the introduction of more stringent internal regulations. Yet it has been external controversy, in the form of police, highway authority, and local resident opposition, that has necessitated this response. There are no easy solutions to the conflicts generated by road rallying. Effective PR, which is the prerequisite of a successful event, can be nullified by the actions of drivers and clubs over whom the RACMSA have little effective jurisdiction. The closure of roads to non-competitive traffic is, perhaps, the ultimate panacea for road rallying. However such a step is largely impractical and, even were it to occur, would probably be restricted to higher status events.

### Speed Events

4.65. With the exception of certain forms of autocross/autograss, speed events such as rallycross, sprints and hill climbs take place at either specifically registered hill climb and sprint venues, or at permanent circuits. Within Great Britain there are currently 23 hill climb venues, 23 sprint venues, and two specific rally cross venues. In addition 11 of the 13 motor racing circuits are, or have been, used for rallycross and/or sprint events. The distribution of these facilities is shown in Figure 4.7 and the extent of their use in Table 4.11.

4.66. Almost all speed venues are privately owned. The major exceptions are specialist once-a-year municipal sites at Brighton (sea front drive), Blackpool (Princes Promenade), Weston-super-Mare (South Beach sea front) and Kings Parade (Wallasay). In these cases a single club operates one national status sprint event per year. The Blackpool Sprint, for example, has been an annual event for the past 16 years. Taking place in mid-August it regularly attracts over 20,000 spectators accommodated in and around the footpaths overlooking the sprint track. The organising club pays no fee for the use of the site and Blackpool Town Council, the site owners, have built the event into a summer tourist attraction.

4.67. Private speed venues exist in a number of different forms:

- working airfields (e.g. West Malley, Wick);
- purpose built or converted sites (Goodwood, Carnaby Raceway, Colerne, Curborough);

Figure 4.7.

RACMSA Licenced Sprint, Hill Climb and Racing Venues in  
Great Britain

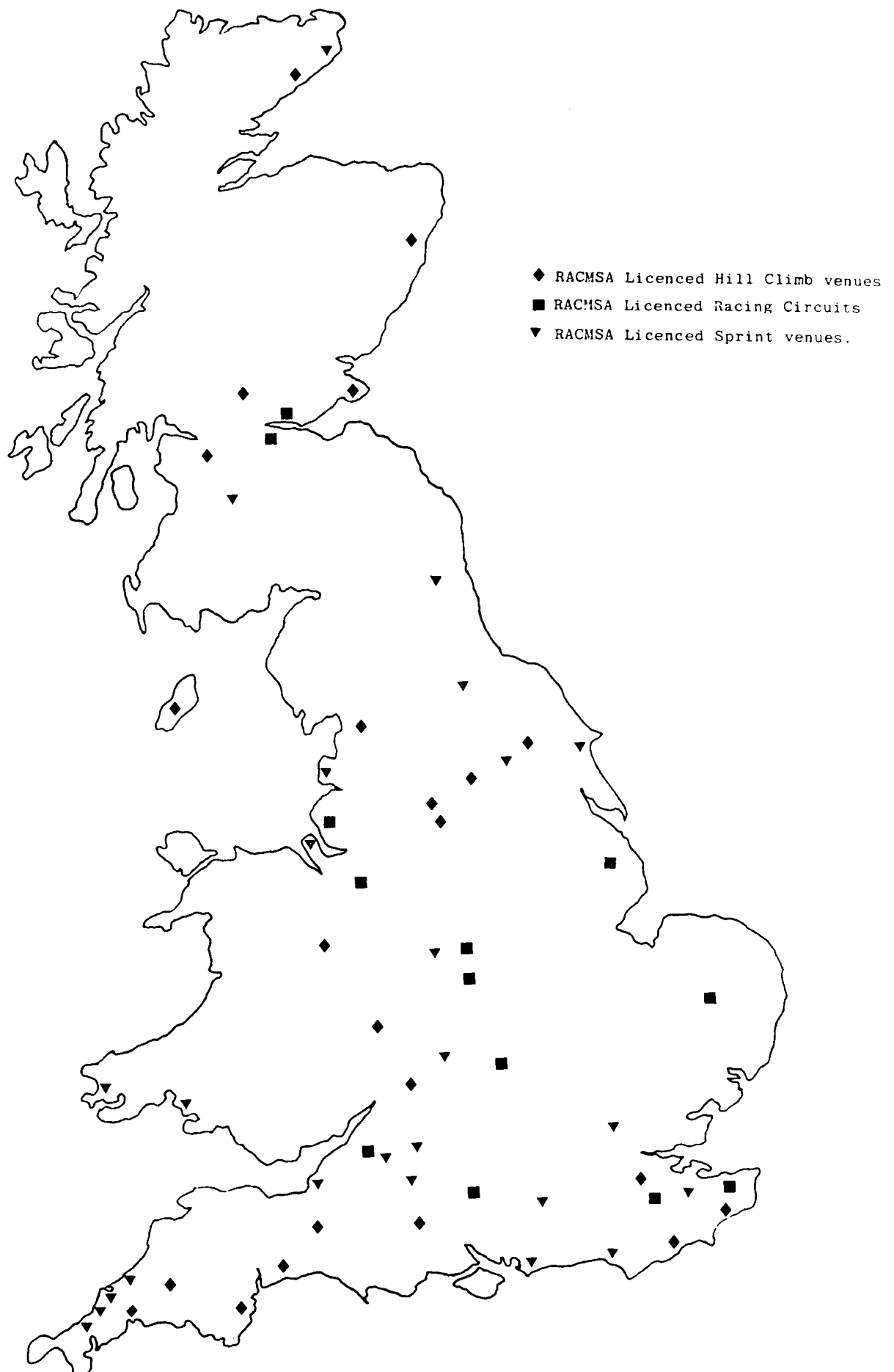


Table 4.11.

## Provisional Rates of Use of RACMSA Licenced Speed Venues

Number of events scheduled for 1985			
	Hill Climbs	Sprints	Rallycross
<u>Hill Climb Venues</u>			
1. Baitings Dam	6	-	-
2. Barbon Manor	1	-	-
3. Bodiam	1	-	-
4. Castle Howard	0	-	-
5. Cricket St Thomas	4	-	-
6. Doune	3	-	-
7. Fintray	4	-	-
8. Gt Farthingloe	0	-	-
9. Gurston Down	6	-	-
10. Harewood	7	-	-
11. Kinkwell	0	-	-
12. Loton Park	2	-	-
13. Oddicombe	0	-	-
14. Prescott	6	-	-
15. Ramsey Rd	1	-	-
16. Rumster	2	-	-
17. Scammonden	4	-	-
18. Shelsley Walsh	4	-	-
19. Strathclyde Pk	2	-	-
20. Tregrehan	4	-	-
21. Valance	1	-	-
22. Werrington	2	-	-
23. Winscombe	7	-	-
<u>Motor Racing Circuits</u>			
24. Aintree	-	0	0
25. Brands Hatch	-	2	5
26. Cadwell Park	-	1	1
27. Castle Combe	-	0	0
28. Donnington	-	0	1 (1984)
29. Ingleston	-	1	0
30. Knockhill	-	2	0
31. Lydden	-	2	12
32. Mallory Park	-	2	0
33. Oulton Park	-	5	2
34. Silverstone	-	1	0
35. Snetterton	-	1	0
36. Thruxton	-	0	0
<u>Sprint and Rallycross Venues</u>			
37. Albermale	-	2	0
38. Blackbushe	-	0	0
39. Blackpool	-	1	-
40. Brighton	-	1	-
41. Carnaby	-	0	-
42. Colerne	-	4	0
43. Curborough	-	24	0
44. Elvington	-	0	-
45. Goodwood	-	16	-
46. Kames	-	1	0
47. Keevil	-	1	-
48. King's Parade Wallasay	-	1	-
49. Long Marston	-	0	1
50. North Weald	-	10	-
51. Perran Sands	-	0	-
52. Portreath	-	1	-
53. St Eval	-	0	-
54. Talbenny	-	0	2
55. Pembrey	-	1	3
56. Croft	-	0	7
57. Swindon	-	0	3
58. West Malling	-	2	-
59. White Cross	-	2	-
60. Wick	-	3	-
61. Weston-Super-Mare	-	1	-

- private estates (Harewood, Castle Howard, Barbon Manor, Coton Park); and
- agricultural sites (Great Farthingloe, Dover; Tockenham Court Farm, Swindon).

Of these only purpose built or converted sites are used with anything approaching the frequency of motor racing current use (e.g. Goodwood and Curborough). Hill climb sites are rarely used more than six or seven times a year and many sprint venues only once. Often use is exclusive to a single club, for example, the BARC at Harewood and Gurston Down, the Midland Auto Club at Shelsley Walsh, and the Bugatti Owners Club at Prescott Hill.

4.68. The basic requirement of these disciplines is a surfaced track or circuit. For sprint events between 0.5-2.0 miles of tarmac road is necessary (though two laps of a closed circuit can also be used as a sprint venue). Curborough (Staffordshire), the most frequently used sprint venue, has a course length of only 900 yards. Talbenny (Dyfed), a lesser used venue, is 2,800 yards in length. For hill climbs 0.5-1.0 mile of surfaced road is usually required, though the average length of registered venues in Great Britain is 1,067 yards. Rally cross on the other hand is usually undertaken in a combination of on and off road conditions, and competition venues are almost equally divided between motor racing circuits (of which Lydden in Kent is the most frequently used), and specialist rally cross venues.

4.69. A fourth type of speed discipline is autocross. Although under the RACMSA regulations autocross events require track or circuit licences, the majority take place on circuits for which an explicit Waiver of track permit exists (33). The conditions necessary for such a Waiver relate principally to the size and dimensions of the course and the general layout of the site (34). Consequently, autocross events are almost exclusively run on agricultural land sites of around 40 acres in size. Often such sites are only available in the short time between harvesting and ploughing.

4.70. Speed events are a minority activity within motorsport as a whole, attracting only 8 per cent of total RACMSA competitors and making up only 13 per cent of total events. The relatively high proportion of restricted status events implies a degree of specialisation akin to special stage rallying. Noticeably hill climb vehicles are becoming very specialised, with four of the eleven vehicle classifications relating specifically to 'racing cars' (35).

4.71. Sprinting however remains widely regarded as "poor man's racing", particularly when sprint events are run on private (low cost) venues rather than circuits. However the growing numbers of clubman race events, mentioned earlier, would seem to be replacing sprints in this respect. Yet, because sprinting involves short competitive periods (usually less than a minute) the regulations governing safety and vehicle specifications

are less stringent than for racing, a factor making the activity attractive to low cost participants. For the most part, the track is the only permanent fixture (hence the suitability of airfields). Where spectators attend temporary barriers are erected. For hill climbs barriers need to be more substantial as there is a greater likelihood of a competitive vehicle leaving the road.

4.72. While sprints may be considered accessible to the clubman, and hill climbs still accessible to some degree, rally cross is mainly the preserve of the professional or semi-professional driver. This is partly the result of the specialist course requirements (a combination of sealed and off road surfaces) to which racing circuits such as Lydden, Brands Hatch, and Oulton Park are well suited. The site hire costs are reflected in high entry costs. With relatively few rally cross events being staged, the majority them being of restricted or higher status, rallycross is not a clubman motorsport.

4.73. Undoubtedly the cheapest speed event is autocross although comparatively few such events are now staged under RACMSA jurisdiction. During the 1960s RACMSA autocross was a popular, low cost, activity taking place predominantly on agricultural land. During the 1970s however participation costs rose, (largely due to increasing site hire and restitution costs), and spectator numbers fell as the sport became increasingly driver-oriented. Finally professional autocross teams forced the sport out of the clubman level of participation. As a result 'professional' autocross drivers have turned largely to rallycross, while amateur drivers have turned to non-RACMSA organisations for competition (in particular the National Autograss Sporting Association). Using vehicles described as "MOT failures", with a few basic safety modifications (roll bars, solid rear axles and the removal of all glass), autograss/autocross has become an increasingly popular form of low cost motorsport. The cost of acquiring, modifying, insuring and entering a vehicle may be as little as £250 per annum. In addition, such events can prove significant attractions; over 1,000 spectators commonly by attending events at southern autograss circuits.

4.74. In the South autograss events run by non-RACMSA clubs occur on fields, infill sites, or quarries. Within the Hampshire study area two clubs collectively run 20 autograss events a year on two sites. A third site near Ford in West Sussex lies just to the east of the study area. Two of these are on agricultural land, whilst the third is a semi-permanent circuit, bulldozed out of a privately leased tip on district council land (Funtley Raceway, Fareham). Events at this latter site attract an average of 100 drivers and cost around £800, which is usually recouped through spectator and concession revenue.

4.75. Unlike other off road motorsports non-RACMSA autograss clubs tend to use individual sites more frequently than the normal three or four times a year. The Funtley Raceway for example is used 12 - 14 days a year for autograss events. Although only one local objection has been forthcoming at Funtley, the high frequency of use of other sites has had a

destructive effect, both on the site and the general practice of motorsport in the vicinity. At Allington Lane near Eastleigh (Hampshire), the overuse of a site by a Banger Racing club has provoked prohibitive action by the local council.

4.76. RACMSA autocross, though in decline, has not disappeared altogether. In the Southern Lancashire area some five autocross events were planned for 1984 though, subsequently, only one took place. In 1985 five are scheduled. All are intended to occur on private agricultural land attracting 40-50 competitors.

4.77. Although neither of our study areas contains a registered speed venue we have investigated a number of such facilities. In the North West, Oulton Park provides the venue for sprint and rallycross events, while Blackpool and the Isle of Man host annual Sprint and Hill Climb events. To the east of our South Lancashire area lie the popular hill climb venues of Baitings Dam, Harewood, and Scammonden. The recent closure of Longridge has deprived the North West of an important local sprint and rallycross venue. Although there are a number of speed event participants in the North West, few of the South Lancashire clubs interviewed are involved in promoting speed events; Longton and District, Lancashire, and Knowledale being the main examples. In eastern Hampshire only two clubs stage speed events (both sprints). Nearby is found Goodwood (West Sussex), an airfield used extensively for sprint, stage rallying and race testing, and Gurston Down, a private hill climb venue operated by the British Automobile Racing Club and used six or seven times a year.

4.78. Goodwood provides facilities for a wide range of motorsport disciplines. Some 15 clubs, drawn predominantly from the South East, use Goodwood 18 times a year. The cost (1984) is £400 per day, all events having to cease by 5pm. The use of this facility has developed since the mid 1970s and although noise objections continue to be made, its principal function as a working airfield has to some extent absorbed the potential environmental impact of the motorsport activities. The area around Goodwood is generally heavily used for motorsport. Although different venues are involved (including Ford Airfield, six miles to the east), collectively they create an impression of over use, a point often made by local residents.

4.79. Due to their specialised nature and site requirements, speed events are considerably constrained by the shortage of registered venues, and the relative infrequency with which they can be used. Only five of the 23 registered venues in Great Britain are used more than twice a year. Of the remainder seven are used on only one occasion a year. As a large number are either working airfields or private drives this is not surprising. In an attempt to find alternatives, one club has placed advertisements in local and national farmers' journals in the hope that suitable mile-long private drives, which the club would re-surface in exchange for being able to stage six events a year, would be identified. Although a number of landowners came forward none of the facilities offered were suitable.

4.80. Sprinting nevertheless remains a popular and relatively cheap entry point into speed-based motor sport, though in this it is, to a degree, threatened by the growth of clubman racing. The success of the major speed venues (Goodwood, Pembrey, Curborough, Gurston) is indicative of an enduring demand.

#### Autotests

4.81. With the possible exception of twelve car rallying, autotests are the most numerous motorsport events, comprising 25 per cent of those permitted by RACMSA (Table 4.1.). The majority of autotest events are of closed and co-promoted status, indicating their widespread popularity as clubman activities. Autotest vehicles are almost exclusively production cars (all vehicles having to be road legal) with fewer specialist modifications than for any other form of motorsport. Autotest events are also cheap to organise and undertake, though they remain more costly than twelve car rallying or production car trials. As a combination of driver skills and occasional speed driving, autotests provide one of the most accessible forms of motorsport.

4.82. Unlike other forms of motorsport there is no general decline in the availability of autotest venues, though given their site requirements it is surprising that more venues are not forthcoming. Most autotests are run on sealed surface car parks or industrial sites. The basic requirements are for an area free of obstacles (including parked vehicles), relatively flat, and large enough to contain the 10 to 15 competitive 'boxes' (approximately 42 sq.ft. in size) in which each individual test is undertaken. According to RACMSA regulations, "competing cars must never be permitted to travel more than 100 yards without having to halt and change direction by reversing a car's length or, if in reverse, travelling forward for a car's length" (36).

4.83. Autotests are not, on the whole, spectator events, though spectators are rarely excluded from venues except at some MoD sites. Autotests are frequently run in conjunction with other entertainments such as fetes, gymkhanas and carnivals however, in which case spectator numbers might be considerable. For the larger events, and those open to specialist vehicles, the RACMSA regulations for spectator and general safety are the same as for speed events (i.e. involving a solid physical barrier).

4.84. Autotest are popular in both study areas but particularly in South Lancashire. The total number of participants however is low. In South Lancashire the average entry is around 30 vehicles, in Hampshire slightly less. Of 17 events organised by Southern Lancashire clubs one third took place on local authority owned sites (usually municipal car parks), one third on supermarket or warehouse car parks, and the remainder on private land (including agricultural land, university car parks, and motorway service stations). Though straightforward to organise (hence the willingness of local authorities to make land available), autotests are



generally limited to a few well used sites (Accrington Borough car park has been used for 22 years for autotests). This is despite an abundance of potential alternatives on disused factory or warehouse land. In South Lancashire only one industrial concern regularly permits such events. The most frequent reason given for refusing the use of sites is the issue of liability.

4.85. The accessibility of autotests to the clubman is reflected in the entry fee which averages £5 per vehicle, though many events only charge a nominal £2-£2.50 particularly to club members. This is ultimately dependent upon the cost of hiring the venue. Whereas a number of local authority and private agricultural venues in the North West are virtually free to the organising club commercial car park sites can be more expensive (over £50 per day).

4.86. In eastern Hampshire car parks provide the principal source of autotest venues, though a small number of events are also run at MoD facilities. (For example, the Southsea Club's championship autotest is run at Malta Barracks, attracting an entry of around 60 vehicles paying an entry fee of £8.00 each, a consequence of the £90 site hire cost). In addition, grass autotests are also popular in the southern study area though problems of dust have led to the closure of one site near Fareham. The Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs runs an autotest championship comprised of a number of events organised by individual clubs. Nevertheless the number of autotest participants in the area is fairly low. Entries are lower than those in the North West and it has been estimated there are only around 25 directly licenced autotest competitors within the ACMSC.

4.87. In summary autotests are numerous, though generally low status, clubman events. Few clubs travel great distances to find venues. They are significant as a form of motorsport that can be successfully staged in urban environments. Despite the use of speed between competitive boxes (and some resulting noise) few autotests generate substantial complaint from local residents. A more frequent constraint can be an illegally parked car.

4.88. Although potential venues abound the reluctance of competitors to travel long distances to available sites, and instances of municipal car park sale and development, are contributing to site loss. When compounded with the reluctance of land owners to make sites available, autotests could be said to be suffering from a problem of site shortage. It is noticeable however that clubs have been able to find replacement sites particularly among the new breed of out of town supermarkets. The attitudes of the main store groups (e.g. ASDA, Tesco) are important here.

## Trials

4.89. The two principal disciplines, production car and sporting trials are, in many ways, widely different. The former is arguably the cheapest, most accessible, and least controversial form of off road motorcar sport in Britain. The latter is a more specialised activity with far fewer active participants and a small number of organising clubs. The major distinction however relates to the competitive vehicle. Most production car trial events are undertaken in standard road rally vehicles for which there are virtually no mandatory alterations or special requirements, other than those necessary to be road legal. Most drivers however, where permitted, increase the overall gear ratios of vehicles to facilitate slow speeds on steep inclines. During competition the only other vehicle modification is the substantial lowering of tyre pressure (which for Class A, B and C vehicles can be as low as 15 lb/sq. in.). Sporting trial cars, on the other hand, are purpose-built vehicles which are not required to be road legal.

4.90. The attraction of production car trials is their accessibility to the clubman driver. Not only is the cost of participation relatively low, but club membership alone serves as a qualification for closed status events. (An RACMSA Competition Licence is not required unless the event is of higher status in which instance a 'Clubman C' licence, the cheapest entrant licence, is sufficient for all but International status events.)

4.91. Almost entirely dependent upon agricultural land trials require steep slopes (25 - 50 yards long on average), with occasional obstacles (trees, ditches, fences, etc.). Production car trials are generally run on gentle grass slopes while sporting trial drivers prefer steep woodland. In both cases little environmental damage (erosion and noise) ensues, though a number of trial venues across the country have been lost due to site erosion caused by other forms of motorsport (e.g. motocross and land rover cross country events).

4.92. Although popular among participants, trials tend to be run by a few specialist clubs. This is particularly the case for sporting trials, the bulk of which are coordinated through the British Trials and Rally Drivers Association, and are staged by around 30 clubs nationwide. The two study areas differ significantly in the numbers of clubs organising trials. In South Lancashire five clubs run production car trials largely on agricultural land in the West Pennine Moors. In addition two Land Rover clubs organise between them 18 trial events. Most attract between 40 and 60 competitors usually on a combination of small grass fields. There is rarely a fixed site hire fee. Although production car trial sites are reasonably numerous in the North West, particularly on the Pennines, drivers are unwilling to travel great distances to use them. Thus the major trial clubs are those bordering the moorland enclave. Two sites near Nelson and Wyecollar are both heavily used by production car and land rover trial drivers. Although the events at these sites are relatively small in scale, they have become popular with spectators, causing problems of traffic generation in one case. Although production car trials rarely use the Public Highway during competition (on the advice

of the RACMSA), access to sites for competitive and spectator vehicles can introduce levels of traffic intrusive to the rural areas. At Wyecollar this has been compounded by the existence of National Trust land bordering the competition site.

4.93. In Hampshire relatively few production car trials were recorded for 1984 and 1985, though a number of clubs had in previous years staged events. Most events take place on agricultural grazing land. The MoD sites in Hampshire however, particularly Weaver's Down, provide important venues for production car, sporting and four wheel drive trial events, though the bulk of the organising clubs come from outside the study area.

4.94. Although it has been suggested elsewhere that;

"Suitable sites can be found in all parts of the country and usually it is not difficult for a club wishing to promote a trial to find a venue" (37),

the experience of a number of clubs interviewed in the course of this study has been that sites suitable for production car trial events are also highly suited to motocross and motorcycle trials. The interdisciplinary competition provoked can lead to the loss of sites (due to overuse) or to competitive bidding between car and motorcycle clubs. In such a situation it is usually motocross clubs that can pay higher site hire fees (upwards of £200). In addition there has been an increasing trend, resulting from improvements in farm machinery and financial incentives, to the cultivation of ever steeper slopes, previously useable only as motorsport venues. Although less of a problem in the North West, sloping grass sites in the south are particularly likely to be 'improved' for grain production. As will be shown below this has had a major effect upon the availability of motocross sites. Production car trials also suffer from a shortage of organisers despite the relative ease of organisation of such events. If a trial site is lost it is common for a club to abandon production car trials altogether rather than search for a replacement. To a degree this is symptomatic of low status clubman sports. Its effect is to reinforce the division between clubman and 'semi-professional' activities.

### Kart Racing

4.95. Kart racing is a comparatively new form of motorsport. Invented in America in 1956, it began in England in the late 1950s largely as a 'crowd warmer' for motor racing events. In 1959 a number of British kart clubs were formed and today there are 47 kart clubs registered with the RACMSA, organised into six regional associations (see Figure 4.3). The number of kart drivers is estimated at 4,000.

4.96. Although registration with the RACMSA is essential for competitive events karting, like motorcycling, enjoys widespread support at the local level among particularly schools. Many schools have indigenous kart clubs operating on school playing fields or, less frequently, on commercial

karting circuits. There is moreover a Schools Karting Association which encourages pupil participation in karting at both competitor and maintenance levels. Schools clubs are not, however, competitive clubs in the motorsport sense; their membership is closed and they are not generally involved in organised competition.

4.97. Karting events (classified akin to car events into closed, restricted, national, and international status) are basically of two kinds; long circuit and short circuit races. The former are run on motor car racing circuits using gearbox class karts (125cc - 250cc, and Superkarts) capable of speeds of up to 140 mph. The latter are run on purpose built "short and twisty" circuits, 600 to 1,200 yards long, using both 100cc gearbox-less, and Gearbox class karts. In total there are 10 classes of kart the most popular being 7-gearred 125cc vehicles. Around 95 per cent of kart races in Britain are run on short-circuit courses, the bulk being of either closed or restricted status. Only about 12 meetings a year (the remaining 5 per cent) are run at long circuit events.

4.98. Currently there are some 41 licenced kart circuits in the United Kingdom (27 in mainland Great Britain; see Figure 4.3.). Eighteen of the UK total are permanent, 17 are temporary, and the remainder (all in Northern Ireland), are round the houses Public Highway courses. Most are converted airfields with a purpose built track constructed by the club and licenced by the RACMSA. In order to maximise the number and variety of events clubs frequently operate in association with each other, each club within a local federation running a race event in rotation. Thus the Camberley Kart Club, the only club operating within our Hampshire study area, also participates in events organised at:

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - Little Rissington (Glos.) | - Bromsgrove Kart Club         |
| - Shennington (Oxon.)       | - Shennington Kart Racing Club |
| - Kimbolton (Hants.)        | - Hampshire Kart Racing Club   |

4.99. Kart club membership tends to be broadly based in terms of age and predominantly competitive. Children can begin kart racing at the age of 10 ("Junior Booster" short-course competition) and many kart drivers subsequently go on to motor racing (notably Nelson Piquet, Derek Warwick and Emerson Fittipaldi). The average membership of kart clubs is between 100 and 150, the bulk of whom are active competitors. An average non championship race meeting can attract around 100 starters, 250 associated persons, and 500 spectators (depending largely upon the weather). The average active competitor races twice a month.

4.100. An important youth sport much of the attraction of kart racing lies in its relatively low cost. A junior non-gearbox vehicle may cost as little as £600, and a full season's racing upwards of £1,000. A higher capacity kart may cost between £1,600 and £2,800 and around £2,000 for a year's competition. Though significant these costs compare favourably with a similar frequency of competition in motor car racing.

4.101. In general kart clubs depend on a single race circuit for competitive events. In Hampshire all the events staged by the Camberley Kart Club take place at Blackbushe airfield, to which it has exclusive access. Both clubs operating in the South Lancashire area, the Bolton and Manchester and Buxton Kart Clubs, share the use of the Three Sisters circuit with three other clubs from outside the study area. The Blackbushe site is currently used every Sunday of the year for twelve race events (on the fourth Sunday of each month), and on 40 practice days, for which the club charges £6 per driver per day. An average race meeting involves two or three heats and a final for each class, with 20 vehicles on the grid. With over 120 entries, 24 races (each 8 laps long) occur in a single afternoon (12.00 am to 5.30 pm). Practice sessions usually attract around 30 karts the bulk being driven by non-competitive youth participants. In this respect, it is one of the most heavily used circuits in the country. Acquired by lease in 1960, a permanent 650 yard course was constructed by the Camberley Kart Club in 1966, at a cost of £12,000 on an 11 acre site within the airfield complex (which it shares with a Sunday market).

4.102. Unfortunately the use of Blackbushe has not been consistent over the last 25 years. Originally, under the conditions of the lease, the landowner was paid according to the number of persons and karts present each Sunday (£1 per kart, 30p per person). In 1982 this was raised to £3 per kart and 50p per person and, following substantial disagreement between the two parties, no events were staged in that year. At the start of 1983 the club was faced with the task of finding £11,000 for legal fees and a new lease deposit to secure the site for further use. The deadline was March 1984 when the existing planning permission, which had been granted annually since 1966, terminated. However the issue was successfully resolved and both planning consent and leasehold are now secure. Currently the club pays a flat fee of £6,000 a year for the site derived wholly from spectator, entry, and club membership fees (£1 per event, £10 per event, £6 per practice day and £10 per year respectively). The site appears secure only as long as residential development does not occur close by and the landowner neither changes the use of the site nor sells it. Due to this short term security it appears unlikely that any further on site facilities such as permanent spectator facilities or fully concreted pit and scrutineering areas will be constructed. This has meant that Blackbushe remains unsuited, as do many British Kart circuits, to the staging of national and international short course events.

4.102. The North West is also dependent upon a single karting venue, Three Sisters in Greater Manchester (the nearest other kart tracks are at Chasewater (Staffordshire) and Wombwell (South Yorkshire)). The Three Sisters circuit is currently used 21 times a year for kart racing (8 times by the two study area clubs). Three of the events are of national status, the remainder being restricted. In addition the Three Sisters site is used annually for five 'school kart racing days', six motorcycle, and two scooter events. The site was landscaped from a former spoil tip in the early 1970s by Lancashire County Council as a major recreational facility. In 1976 the Greater Manchester Council, in association with Wigan Borough, took over the development and management of the site and have since appointed three permanent site wardens. From the outset the North West Sports Council has been involved in discussions and planning regarding the

mix of sporting activities on the site. In 1964, the Council's predecessor submitted its first report stressing the need for a viable Regional motorsport circuit (38). The existing circuit (1,100 metres long, surrounded by a high perimeter embankment) is, however, considerably smaller than was originally recommended by the Sports Council and hoped for by the local motorsport community. As a result International status, short-circuit kart events cannot take place there, neither can any form of motorcar sport. It is intended over the next two years to upgrade the site for the type of events envisaged in the North West Sports Council's original design. In the meantime the site remains an ideal location, well placed on derelict land adjoining a newly-constructed industrial estate and some distance from residential areas.

4.104. Unlike most motorsport venues kart circuits require planning permission. In many cases converted airfield sites have obtained temporary or permanent planning permissions. At Blackbushe a time limited permission has been renewed each year since 1966. The current permission specifies three conditions:

1. The site will not be used for more than 52 days in the year;
2. All use shall be on a Sunday; and
3. All racing shall commence before 10.00 am. and shall cease by 6.00 pm.

Significantly there is no specified maximum noise level under the terms of the planning consent. It is recognised by the local planning authority and the local environmental health inspectorate that the noise regulations imposed upon club events by the RACMSA are largely sufficient.

4.105. Karting in both study areas is therefore dominated by the use of a single site. Both are currently used to capacity. Any growth in the number of karting participants in either area would have to be accommodated by running shorter races within the existing date allocations, by finding additional venues, or by increasing the number of days current facilities are used. At present it seems unlikely that either of the two latter strategies is possible. Thus karting sports in the two areas are currently at capacity.

#### **Four Wheel Drive/Cross Country Events**

4.106. These form a distinct grouping within off road activities. Virtually all four wheel drive events are run by Rover and Land Rover Owners Clubs (of which there are 19 currently active) or by the All Wheel Drive Club (AWDC), a national cross country vehicle organisation. Although these bodies are affiliated to the RACMSA they form an isolated and relatively autonomous group, somewhat outside the general motorsport community. As all cross country events are of closed or co-promotional status competition licences are not a mandatory requirement. Cross country off road sports are increasing in popularity, as evidenced both by the growth in club membership and the increasing number of specialist four

wheel drive magazines and journals currently available. Over 90 per cent of competitors drive land rovers, or modifications thereof, though competition is also available for standard road vehicles. Trials are the most popular four wheel drive disciplines and, being the least specialised, usually involve 'road legal' production vehicles. Speed/safari events by contrast are usually undertaken in converted land rovers solely on private land to which the event has exclusive access.

4.107. The largest cross country organisation, the All Wheel Drive Club (AWDC), has a membership of 2,300. Some 350 of these are speed/safari drivers and navigators, and 800 are trial drivers. The total membership of the Club has grown by over 1,000 in the last five years, though 25 per cent of the current membership is said to join for a single year only. In 1984 the club staged 54 cross country events (45 trials, 12 safaris and 3 joint events) at 29 venues throughout Britain. In addition the AWDC supports an international four wheel drive rally team which in 1984 participated in three events in France.

4.108. The majority of cross country events take place on private agricultural, quarry or 'waste' land. A trial requires approximately 50 acres of variable terrain which is often rented at a low or negligible cost. The predominant land rover trial sites within the North West are of this kind. In the south cross country clubs are largely dependent upon MoD land, particularly for safari/speed events which require a minimum venue size of 150 acres; an ideal site being nearer 1,000 acres. Significantly the Hampshire-Wiltshire area is, as we have seen, particularly well endowed with MoD land. Five sites (Weavers Down, Broxhead Common, Slab Common, Bovington and Salisbury Plain) are important as cross country venues, though in the recent past their number has been halved. The larger sites (Weavers Down, Slab Common and Salisbury) are in many ways ideal for four wheel drive events, particularly if also used for tank exercises in which case, clubs are exempted from the mandatory restitution fees. Charges can vary considerably, from £190 for sites within the Aldershot District (including Weavers Down and Slab Common), to only £30 at Bovington, Dorset. Additional problems with MoD sites, common to all disciplines are first, the reluctance of MoD/PSA to admit spectators (though the AWDC have managed to attract in excess of 1,000 spectators to their annual August Bank Holiday event at Weavers Down); and secondly, an unwillingness to negotiate over site use and allocations. All allocations in the Southern Region are coordinated through the Association of Central Southern Motor clubs to which the AWDC is affiliated. Indeed this would seem to be the principal reason for the AWDC's general affiliation to the RACMSA.

4.109. At a time when four wheel drive cross country events are increasing in popularity reductions in the number, size, and frequency of use of MoD facilities have significantly reduced participant opportunities. As such events, particularly safaris, can be damaging to ground surfaces; causing rutting, top soil disturbance and promoting run-off drainage by the destruction of vegetation cover; it would seem sensible to seek locations in areas where such damage is regarded as being acceptable (for example quarry/extractive sites, or MoD tank training facilities).

4.110. A more controversial four wheel drive cross country activity is Green Lane driving. Although the AWDC advises its members that a maximum number of four vehicles should use Green Lanes at one time, and has joined with the TRF in establishing a 'Code of Conduct' governing vehicular use of the Ridgeway (see para. 3.28.), such use remains opposed by other recreation and conservation organisations. The AWDC sees its role with respect to Green Lanes driving as:

1. Coordination and control of club use by organising, at a local level, individual routes;
2. Advice to club members on definitive maps and the legal standing of routes;
3. Encouragement of the use of routes that have become blocked or inaccessible, often due to the deliberate actions of neighbouring land owners or by overgrowth; and
4. Supporting a national, though fragmented, lobby which seeks the maintenance of vehicular rights of access.

In Hampshire, a County with a high number of Green Lanes, the AWDC enjoys a cooperative relationship with carriage drivers, also eager to see such unsealed roads remaining open. In the North and North West, with the exception of Northumberland, organised Green Lane driving is not as common. If it becomes so the controversy surrounding the general issue of vehicular access in the countryside is likely to increase.

#### SUMMARY

4.111. It must be concluded that a number of factors are adversely affecting the structure and practice of motorcar and karting sports at a local level. The most important is undoubtedly the decline in available motorsport venues. Although each form of motorsport has been affected differently by this decline, the overall shortage of venues is now creating severe competition in disciplines formerly less affected by land availability problems. Site loss extends to all the principal land sources; private, MoD, and Forestry Commission.

4.112. The most immediate effect of site loss has been a decline in the number of competitive events. Most clubs interviewed were organising more events 10-15 years ago than they are today. The decline in events has, in turn, contributed to a decline in the number of clubs. Participant members, however, have remained more stable as competitors have transferred to the remaining clubs.

4.113. Site loss has also led to the over use of remaining sites. This can, and has, led to the physical erosion of sites, and greater competition between clubs for sites. This in turn can heighten local



resident opposition which, while prepared to tolerate occasional events, may find a growing emphasis on a particular site or sites untenable.

4.114. A further effect of site loss, and one that has exacerbated a prevailing trend, has been to further raise the overall cost of competition. Stage rallying, increasingly dependent upon high cost venues, has become as a result a more exclusive discipline. High costs, combined with the increasingly 'professional' attitude of competitors in high status events have contributed to a polarisation between 'clubman' and major competitive events. In autocross this has led to the independent development of non-RACMSA motorsports. As a result of the problems of stage rallying, competitive road rallying and single venue sealed surface rallying have assumed greater importance for the clubman, constituting a significant shift in the general structure of motorcar sports. In the latter case, as the opening of the Pembray motorsport complex in South Wales has demonstrated, local authority site provision can directly assist such activities.

4.115. Motorcar sports are in a weak and dependent position in respect of their main resource needs, access to land and the Public Highway. For MoD and Forestry Commission land clubs are dependent on the site and date allocations made by the two bodies, and on the subsequent allocation procedure of the Regional Associations. Conditions vary across the country but in Hampshire, the heavy dependence on MoD and Forestry Commission land is re-inforced by an absence of alternative sites on private land. In the North West the lack of MoD and Forestry venues has led to a heavier dependence on private sites. The result has been more widespread searching for land with clubs travelling further to use the venues available. Although the North West contains many potentially suitable sites, access to them remains denied. Partly the reason is a lack of understanding of both the needs, and the form and organisation of motorsports, and ignorance of the nature of the insurance cover that clubs possess. Also, some owners are reluctant to become involved in what may be a controversial activity.

4.116. Use of the Public Highway for motorcar sports is also highly circumscribed. Here individual routes can also be regarded as 'allocated' in that authorisation of both the Rally Department and liaison officers of the RACMSA is required, and police approval must also be obtained. The routes allowed also reflect local political pragmatism, and the number of 'blackspots' and 'quiet zones' has steadily increased. The numbers of road rally events and participants have declined over the last 10 years, and the new more stringent PR requirements brought in by the RACMSA have contributed to this trend. Events continue to be lost due to the activities of informal or unauthorised groups often using officially authorised routes without employing the stringent safeguards enforced by the organised motorcar sports community.

4.117. Motorcar sports interests appear to have been ineffective in the complex institutional and decision-making environments surrounding access

to land. In this they form a stark contrast with those bodies and pressure groups seeking further control or elimination of their activities in certain areas. Clubs have no negotiative voice in the forums which govern site availability outside the private sector. The informal nature of relationships between clubs and private landowners have also mitigated against confrontational or legalistic action when faced with site loss or the reduction of use. We have also noted this situation in the relationships between off road clubs and private circuit owners. The costs of circuit venues have risen dramatically in recent years seemingly independent of consultation with clubs. The fear of total loss of some forms of access arrangement have led to such defensive postures.

4.118. Relationships between motorcar sports interests and local authority planning and leisure departments are also underdeveloped. There is little active input to the policy deliberations of those responsible for balancing conflicting interests in land use. As a result the local and regional Sports Councils have played important intermediary roles backed, on occasion, by the RACMSA in its national representative function. Regional Motorsports Liaison Committees have proved a useful device, as in the North West (for example in promoting the Three Sisters Park and lobbying for the Preston Dock development (39)). In Hampshire without such a body, although local and Regional Sports Councils have lobbied for new facilities, there has been little success (40).

4.119. The RACMSA at national level has not assumed a negotiative role for individual site access. Many clubs interviewed wished to see the RACMSA take a more active and interventionist role particularly with the MoD, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, Regional Water Authorities, and other major landowning bodies. At present this role is performed at regional level, the Regional Associations having been formed independently by the clubs for this purpose. However, the range of negotiations does not regularly cover all relevant land interests and the Regional Associations lack the political clout which more active negotiation at national level by RACMSA would bring.

4.120. This picture of motorsports is a snapshot of a constantly shifting picture. The balance of motorcar sports disciplines is altering all the time in response to vehicle developments, competitor popularity, cost and changes in fashion. The impact of changes in one discipline, through escalating cost or high levels of land loss, are relayed to others. Changing social attitudes enforce new regulations on the Governing Bodies with their accompanying local knock-on effects. Some disciplines become professionalised and break away to govern themselves under new rules. However beneath such constant change, which will surely continue, we believe the basic problems surrounding land loss have potentially severe implications for the maintenance of organised motorcar sports as a major activity within the sporting spectrum in the United Kingdom.

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## MOTORCYCLE SPORTS

"I don't want a pickle  
 Just want to ride my motorsickle,  
 And I don't want a tickle,  
 'Cause I'd rather ride on my motorsickle.  
 And I don't want to die,  
 Just want to ride on my motorcy-cle."

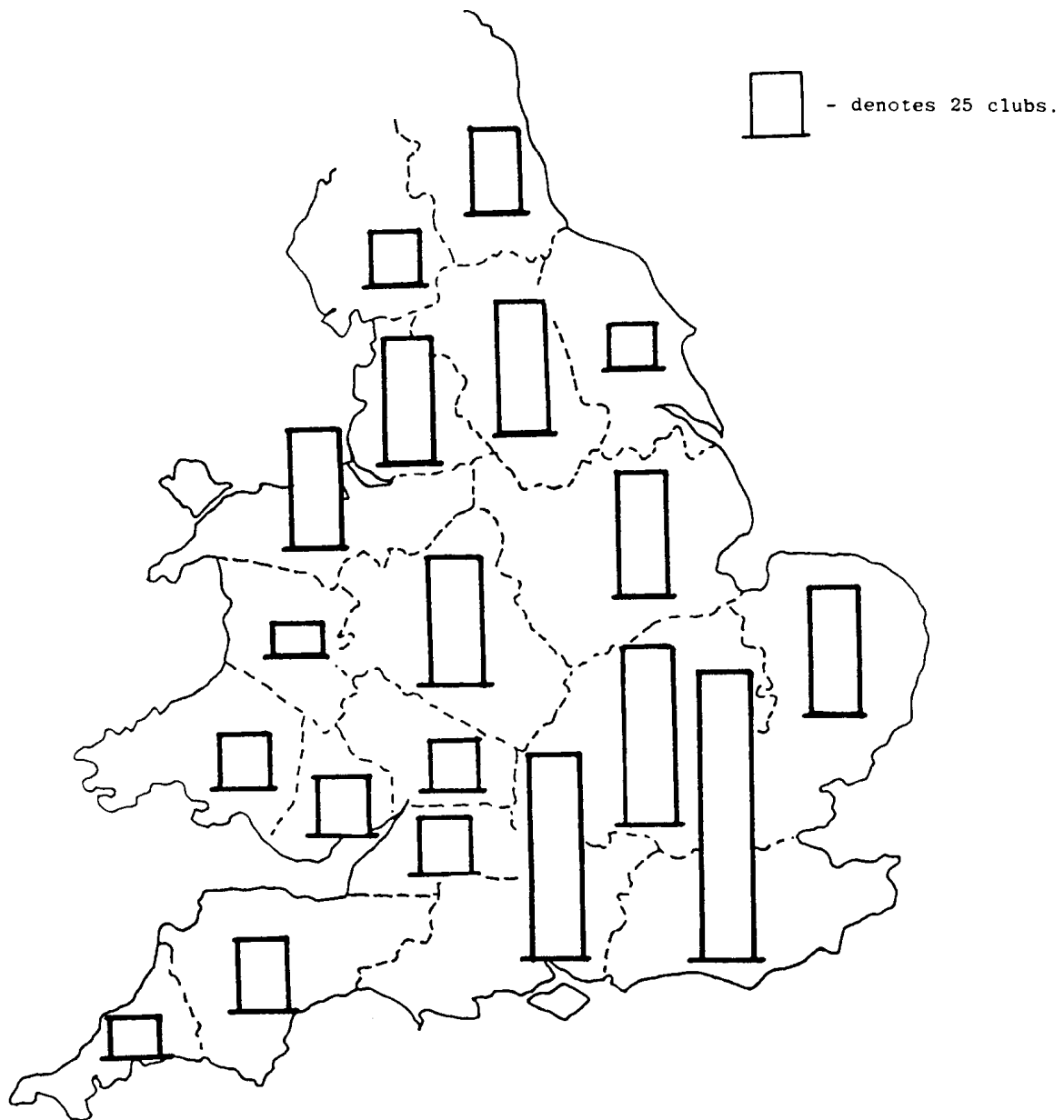
(Arlo Guthrie, 1967)

### ORGANISATION

5.1. This chapter is concerned principally with territorially specific motorcycle clubs, mainly those affiliated to the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) and the Amateur Motor Cycling Association (AMCA). As noted in Chapter 3 there are currently 915 ACU and AMCA motorcycle clubs with a total membership of around 80,000 persons. A higher proportion of this membership is competitively active than in the case of motorcar sports. 'Social' events generally form a less important role among the activities of motorcycle clubs, although social evenings, usually in a pub or club house, are frequently held and often well attended. Individual motorcycle clubs are grouped regionally in Centres in the case of ACU clubs, and in Groups in the case of AMCA clubs. These bodies play a major role in the organisation and representation of local level motorcycle sports. They are more integral to the structure of motorcycle sports than are the regional associations of motor clubs. Furthermore, because individual clubs can only affiliate to a single Group or Centre, determined solely by the club's location, the regional coordination of motorcycle sports becomes an important Group and Centre function.

5.2. The number of clubs in any one Centre is thereby a reflection of the extent of local motorcycle sport demand. The largest ACU Centre (116 clubs) is the South East followed by the Southern (83), and South Midlands (71) Centres (Figure 5.1.). The smallest are the Isle of Man (7 clubs), Mid-Wales (13), and Cornwall (17). The overall distribution shows no great spatial variation from that of motor car clubs though there are noticeably more motorcycle clubs in some of the predominantly rural areas such as East Anglia.

5.3. Most ACU motorcycle events are of closed or open status. The former are open to members of the organising club only, the latter to members of any club belonging to the same Centre as the organising club. In order to maintain a full competitive season the dates of open events are coordinated within each Centre, as are 'regional restricted' status events between Centres. To run an open status event therefore clubs need to apply to the appropriate Centre for a date, an event steward, and the publication of the event's entry forms and supplementary regulations in the monthly Centre Gazette (if published). Closed events generally take place at the discretion of the organising club unless they involve more than 50 competitors, in which case, they too must receive a specific date allocation from the relevant Centre. One of the principal reasons for

Figure 5.1.The Distribution of ACU Clubs by Centre

such regional coordination is to prevent the overuse of sites in sensitive areas. In many lowland parts of the country, it is by no means uncommon for three or four off road motorcycle venues to be found fairly close to each other. By insisting that large-draw closed events be allocated dates at a Centre level and, secondly, that clubs must organise at least one open status event for a given number of closed events, the overall extent and timing of off road motorcycle sport can be controlled.

5.4. A similar but more comprehensive coordinating role is performed by the regional Groups of the AMCA. As their principal function is to organise and coordinate events between individual clubs within each Group, AMCA Groups are much smaller than ACU Centres, and cover a far smaller area. Currently there are 16 AMCA Groups the largest, (the South East Group) having 10 member clubs and the smallest (the South West), having three (Table 5.1.). Within each AMCA group competitive events are organised by member clubs in rotation. As all events are open to the members of all clubs within a group, only one event takes place on any one date. Thus as there are 16 groups, one can expect 16 AMCA competitive events to be occurring on any Sunday during the main competitive season (February to October) throughout England and Wales. By contrast it is common for five or six ACU events to be taking place simultaneously within a Centre, particularly during the early months of the season (February to July).

5.5. Our two study areas lie wholly within single ACU Centres; in Hampshire, the Southern Centre, in South Lancashire, the North Western Centre. Similarly both areas contain two AMCA Groups, the South East and South, and the North West and Greater Manchester Groups. The total number of clubs represented by these various regional bodies amounts to 150, of which 48 off road clubs originate from the study areas themselves. Their locations are illustrated in Figure 5.2. and 5.3.

5.6. The membership of each AMCA club is around 50. It has been AMCA policy for some years to maintain a maximum membership level. Any greater membership would make Open-to-Group events impossible as well over 350 riders might seek entry. Thus new riders must form new clubs and affiliate to existing Groups. This has led to the rapid growth in the number of AMCA clubs in many areas. All seven operating within the South Lancashire study area have come into being in the last 10 years. In Hampshire the equally dramatic growth of the AMCA has taken place more recently the first club being formed in the late 1970s.

5.7. The sizes and organisation of ACU clubs are, however, more varied. Many of the older clubs were formed in the 1920s (for example, the Waterloo Club in Hampshire; and the Bury, Bolton and Rochdale Clubs in South Lancashire). Many others were formed in the 1930s and 1950s, the most recent being principally schoolboy motocross and grass track clubs. The largest clubs in our study areas are the Rochdale and District, and Bolton Clubs, both with a membership of around 400. The largest club in Eastern Hampshire has around 200 members; the smallest in both areas (normally trials clubs) have less than 50. Nationally the average size of



Table 5.1.

The Distribution of AMCA Clubs by GroupA. North region

<u>North West</u>	<u>Yorkshire</u>	<u>Greater Manchester</u>	<u>North Midlands</u>
Blackpool	Calderdale	Ashton Vale	Dane
Charnock	Castleford	Rolton	East Cheshire
Lancaster	Hebden Royd	Chester	High Peak
Leigh	Leeds	Glossop	Macclesfield
Park Hall	Rothwell	Port Shrigley	Meerbrook
Preston	Wakefield	Stockport	Newcastle
Rossendale	York	Tameside	North Staffs

B. West region

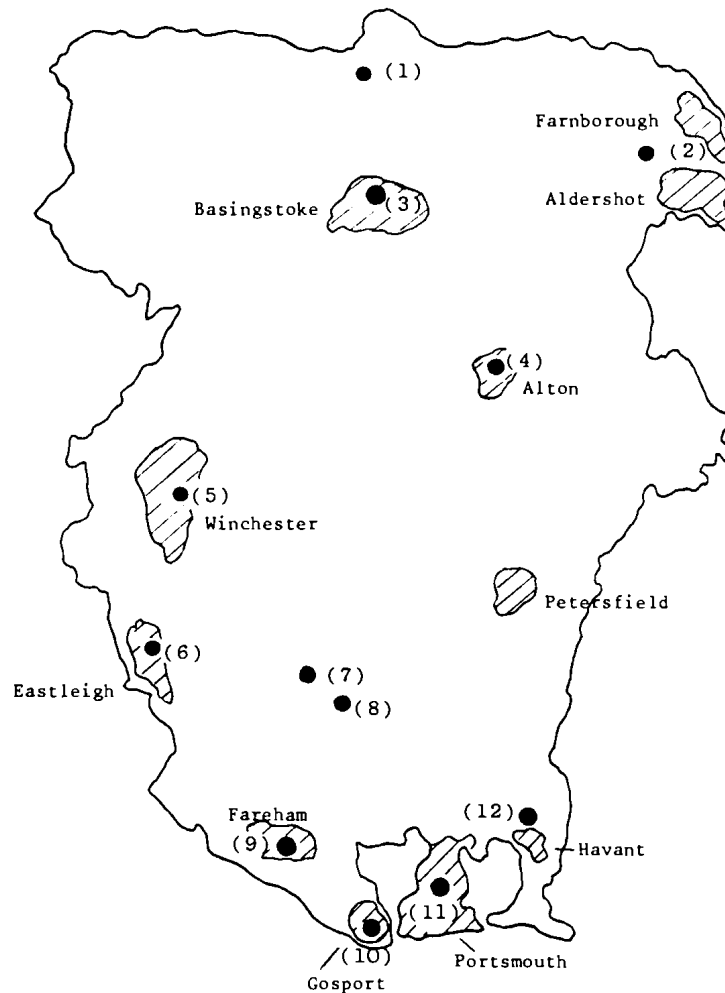
<u>West Midlands</u>	<u>S.W. Midlands</u>	<u>Border</u>	<u>Wessex</u>
Acorns	Alcester	Clee Hill	Cheltenham
Bridgenorth	Avon	Druids	Cirencester
Brierley Hill	Blackheath	Forest of Dean	Dursley
Cannock	Kniver	Knighton	Gloucester
Crusaders	Stratford	Hereford	Stroud
Telford	Suckley	Ross	Upton
Warley	Teme Valley	Shobdon	Uley
Wolverhampton		Shrewsbury	

C. East region

<u>East Midlands</u>	<u>S.E. Midlands</u>	<u>Central Midlands</u>	<u>N.E. Midlands</u>
Brentford	Banbury	Burntwood	Derby
Corby	Coventry	Coalville	Dronfield
Ely	Midland Social	Drayton	Louth
Hereward	Rugby	Moseley	Nottingham
Leicester	Solihull	Phoenix	Robriding
Northampton	Southam	Shepshed	Warsop
Oakham	Standard	Sutton	
Suffolk		Tamworth	
		Walsall	

D. South region

<u>South East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>South West</u>	<u>Avon</u>
Alton	Andover	Chard	Bath
Berkshire	Bournemouth	Teignbridge	Bristol
Crowborough	Eastleigh	West Somerset	Marshfield
Eastbourne	Gosport		North Avon
Elmbridge	Havant		Oldland
Hillingdon	Purbeck		North Wilts
Reading	Salisbury		
Shepperton	Solent		
Slough			
Surrey/Sussex			

Figure 5.2.Motorcycle Clubs in the Eastern Hampshire Study AreaTerritorial Clubs

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| (1) | Tadley Sporting MCC<br>Tadley Sporting YMCC |
| (2) | N.Hants MCC<br>N.Hants YMCC                 |
| (3) | Basingstoke MCC                             |
| (4) | Alton & DMCC<br>Alton & D YMCC<br>Alton MCC |
| (5) | Winchester MCC                              |
| (6) | Eastleigh MCC                               |
| (7) | Bishops Waltham MCC                         |
| (8) | Waltham Chase MCC                           |
| (9) | Gosport & Fareham MCC                       |

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| (10) | Gosport & DMCC   |
| (11) | Portsmouth MCRC<br>Portsmouth SCC  |
| (12) | Waterlooville MCC<br>Waterlooville YMCC<br>Havant MCC<br>Red Lion Racers |

Non-territorial Clubs

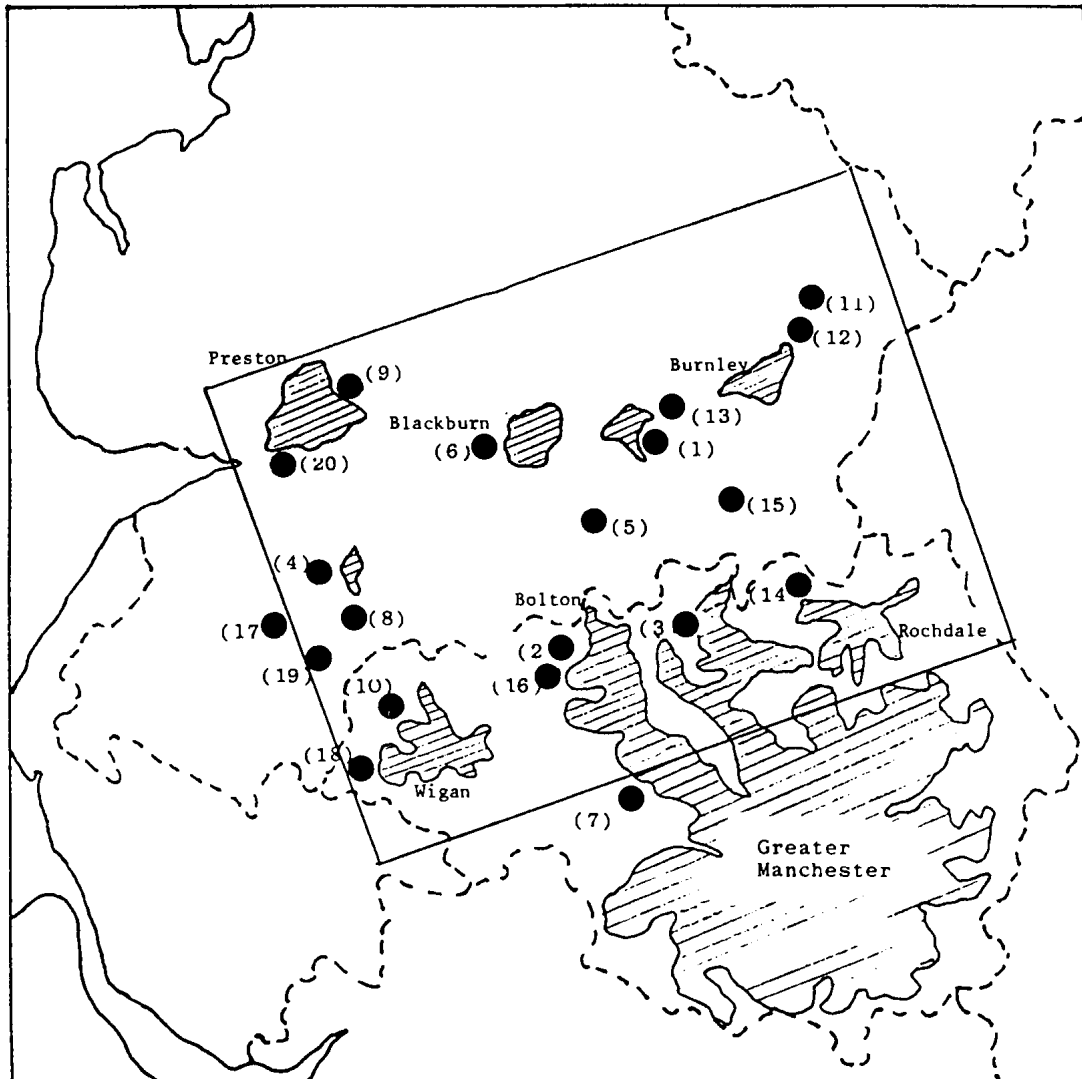
Southern Motocross  
Trail Riders Fellowship




Urban areas

Figure 5.3.

Off-Road Motorcycle Clubs in the South Lancashire  
Study Area



Scale:   
Ten mls.

1. Accrington - Adult  
- Youth
2. Arena & Sporting  
Bolton  
Bolton Youth
3. Bury
4. Chorley
5. Darwen  
Darwen Youth
6. Hyndburn
7. Lancs County  
Lancs County Youth
8. Lancs Grass Track
9. Lancs Grass Track Juniors
10. Newton le Willows

11. Pendle
12. Pennine Range
13. Ribble Valley
14. Rochdale  
Rochdale Youth
15. Vale of Rossendale  
Rossendale AMCA
16. Bolton AMCA
17. Charnock AMCA
18. Leigh AMCA
19. Parkhall AMCA
20. Preston AMCA

adult ACU clubs is around 100 people.

5.8. Most ACU clubs interviewed identified the early and middle 1970s as the period when their membership was at its peak. In Hampshire the membership of many clubs is currently half what it was at that time. In the North West, the decline has been less immediately dramatic, though a greater number of clubs have ceased operating altogether. The main reasons for decline have been:

1. costs (which can, for a competitive motocross rider, exceed £50 per week, excluding fuel and maintenance);
2. site loss and subsequent event loss;
3. the changing status of club events (a club that runs predominantly open status events can expect a decline in its own membership); and
4. a decline in the availability of club officials and event organisers.

As a result a number of ACU clubs in both study areas continue to exist in name only. Their membership might be largely derived from riders of neighbouring Centres seeking grounds for entry into that club's Centre's events. Such a situation cannot exist within the context of the AMCA as clubs are bound to organise one event per year per 15 club members. As the majority of AMCA clubs have 50 or so members, this amounts to four events per year.

5.9. Although individual clubs might be in decline, there is no widespread reduction in the numbers of participants in motorcycle sports as a whole. Participant numbers in ACU licenced competition have remained similar, the decline in adult competition during the late 1970s being compensated for by the growth of youth division sports. These are now estimated to involve some 11,000 competitors nationwide. In addition there has been the growth of AMCA competition which has initially drawn riders away from ACU clubs rather than creating new participants of its own. Nevertheless, as with motorcar and kart sports, the undeniable current trend is towards an increase in participant numbers.

5.10. It is easy to over emphasise the hierarchical nature of motorcycle sports. In reality the local clubs are very much the fundamental operating units of the sport, organising events and recruiting members. This basic club structure is consistent across the country. Each has a chairman and/or president, a secretary and, normally, a competition secretary for each of the disciplines organised by the club. In the bulk of clubs the 'officials' number under 10 people, although there may be more in road racing clubs. It is usually these officials who organise and referee events.

## PARTICIPANTS

5.11. Beyond the officials of any clubs lie the membership who pay an annual membership fee (occasionally split into two half-yearly fees) which ranges from £2 to £12 per annum (1984). This is the basic source of income for clubs, revenue from events usually going towards site hire costs. From it individual clubs make a regular contribution to the national and regional bodies. Although it has been calculated above that the average membership of motorcycle clubs is around 150 (50 for AMCA clubs) not all are active competitors. Evidence from our study areas suggests that around 75 per cent of club members are active competitors, but the range found at club level was from 40 per cent to 96 per cent. Youth and AMCA clubs tend to have the highest proportions of competitive members.

5.12. In addition, many of the more competitive riders belong to a number of clubs and thereby different Centres. In the Southern Centre it has been estimated that as many as 50 per cent of competitive riders belong to more than one club. In South Lancashire the proportion is slightly less. Such complexities confuse attempts to assess the total numbers of participants in any given area, as does the fact that youth clubs are generally much smaller than adult ones. Nevertheless we would suggest that within the Eastern Hampshire study area there are approximately 1,200 competitive riders. In the South Lancashire area the figure lies between 1,500 and 2,000.

5.13. With the exception of enduro events (defined above, para. 2.23.), whose participants are frequently drawn from a wide range of other motorsport disciplines, active competition in motorcycle sports is generally specific to one activity. However in the course of a competitor's active career, different disciplines will often have been undertaken. Each of the main disciplines (motocross, trials and grass track racing) require substantially different machines, rider skills, and expertise. Furthermore, they differ significantly in their land demands and environmental impacts. Table 5.2. provides a breakdown of the numbers of competitors in each discipline for 17 of the Hampshire study area clubs.

5.14. For the active participant club membership serves two functions; first, to gain entry to the more competitive open and restricted status events (and thereby regional and ultimately national championships) and second, to gain entry to closed club events. A rider will, if distance is not too great a constraint, seek to combine these two functions into a single club membership. Thus clubs that organise respected closed events, in addition to encouraging their members to enter open events, will attract large numbers. On the other hand, clubs that run only open to centre events, such as the Pendle Club in the North West, do not attract such large numbers as belonging to any Centre club would qualify a rider for entry. As a result club membership is becoming increasingly pragmatic, "joining for rides" (competition) rather than for any sense of local involvement. Riders are becoming more choosy about the clubs they join. Clubs are therefore in an increasingly competitive situation.

Table 5.2.                      Membership Activities amongst Eastern Hampshire Motorcycle Clubs

<u>Club</u>	<u>Total membership</u>	<u>Number of members in sporting discipline.</u>	
Alton AMCA	100	43	Motocross (MX)
Alton & District	150	62	MX and Trial (T)
Alton & District Youth	55	40	MX and T
Basingstoke	50	30	T
		2	Grass Track (GT)
		6	MX
Bishops Waltham	100	85	T and GT
Eastleigh AMCA	60	40	MX
Gosport & District	100	95	T
Gosport & Fareham AMCA	60	40	MX
Havant AMCA	75	69	MX
North Hants	166	93	T
		15	MX
North Hants Youth	60	58	T
Portsmouth MCRC	42	11	MX
		10	T
		9	GT
Red Lion Racers	150	142	Enduro
Waltham Chase	100	80	T
Waterlooville	200	170	MX and T
Waterlooville Youth	90	70	MX and T
Winchester	100	63	MX
		7	T

Source: Authors' Survey, 1984.

5.15. This is particularly evident in the Hampshire study area. Hampshire is a good locale for the participant with a wide choice of major competitive clubs, most of which have their 'home' circuit or venue. The weakening of club loyalty is unnerving for the clubs who are faced with the onerous task of securing and retaining venues, or seeing their membership (and their revenue) decline. In recent years competition among clubs for motocross riders in particular has been exacerbated by four trends. The first of these has been the impact of the AMCA which, with its policy of 'guaranteed rides', was initially dramatic. This led many ACU riders, particularly from the youth division, to abandon their former clubs in favour of AMCA clubs. This is indicative of an increasingly dominant perception; that of clubs as providers of events, rather than 'clubs' in the traditional sense of an autonomous participatory community.

5.16. Secondly, a trend is emerging as a logical ACU response to the growth of the AMCA, of specific 'money-for-rides' style clubs, using a number of sites and demanding no necessary competitor involvement in event or club organisation. In the south the most successful club of this sort, Southern Motocross, runs an average of 60 events a year, often twice a week on a variety of sites throughout Hampshire and West Sussex. Although formally affiliated to the ACU Southern Centre all Southern Motocross events are of closed status.

5.17. A third consequence of the trend towards a competitive outlook has been a decline in non-sporting club activities, such as weekly or fortnightly social meetings. These in many cases attract less than 10 per cent of club members. The AMCA has been able to overcome the polarisation between sporting and non-sporting activity by formalising the latter to some extent. The AMCA thus insist that all event entries are made at club nights. Failure to attend a minimum number of these results in penalties such as compulsory marshalling.

5.18. Finally, in the minds of many traditional ACU club members, the most disturbing consequence has been the increasing difficulty experienced in finding members willing to be club officers and event organisers. Motorsport clubs depend upon the voluntary effort and commitment of those people prepared to run the club and organise events. Because of the necessary workload officers tend not to be active competitors, though the bulk are ex-competitors.

5.19. Few competitors today appear willing or able to make the transition from rider to organiser, and those that might have frequently drifted away from the sport altogether. There are perhaps two reasons for this. First, the growing difficulties associated with the organisation of competitive events; the increasingly arduous demands of riders, the shortage of sites and demands of time. Second, and more significant, have been the major changes in the structure of motorcycle sport participation that have taken place over the last 15 years. Traditionally off road motorcycle sports have presented a unique blend of informality (in terrain, course layout, and event organisation) and formality (in rules,

regulations and general competitive structure). Unlike road racing, or the majority of motor car sports, the traditional attractions of off road motorcycle sports have been machine control, balance, grip and riding on rough or open land. During the halcyon days of motorcycle trials and scrambles, (often held to be the 1950s and early 1960s), the considerable variation in the age, social background, ability and competitive involvement of the participants was matched only by the great multiplicity of machines used and styles of riding. Predominantly an adult sport, many riders of this period maintained a 'competitive life' of 20 to 30 years using largely British or European made four-stroke motorcycles. The competitive longevity of riders such as Sammy Miller and Dave Bickers owed as much to the informal style of their sports (which mitigated against a highly competitive and commercialised structure) as it did to their own persistence. The change that came about towards the end of the 1960s, but more dramatically during the 1970s, was comprised of a number of elements including:

- the decline of the British motorcycle industry and the emergence of the Japanese;
- the replacement of four-stroke with two-stroke machines;
- the increasing commercialisation and professionalisation of motorcycle sports, associated with the increasing cost of participation and the re-emergence of works teams; and
- the growth of youth motorcycling.

As a result the structure of participation in motorcycle sports has moved towards an increasingly youthful, more commercialised profile. Riders can now enter the sport at the age of six (with accompanying parental involvement) and by the time they reach their mid 20s can have been riding for over 15 years. At such a time many leave the sport creating the hiatus between youthful participants and far older organisers. Older competitors, once the backbone of the sport, are largely restricted to pre-65 class events. This is due to the desire to maintain both the machines and the informality of past events, and a collective abhorrence of the new two-stroke machines and what is perceived as the increasing commercialisation and uniformity of machines, riders and events. Nevertheless, despite such polarisation, the opening up of motorcycle sports to youth riders has stimulated participatory growth, though possibly at the expense of wider public appreciation. Significantly the expansion of the AMCA during the 1970s can be seen as a move to return some of the informality lost during the commercialisation of the sport.

## EVENTS

5.20. In terms of numbers of events motorcycling dominates off road motorsport. As has been seen the numerically dominant forms of motorcar sport (road rallying and autotests) take place largely on the Public Highway and car parks. By contrast motocross, trial riding, grass track racing and enduros all depend upon off road venues. Although it is difficult to establish the annual number of motorcycle events at a national level, some picture of overall activity can be gained from our



study area information. Tables 5.3. and 5.4. display the numbers of events organised by clubs originating from within the study areas over the period February 1984 - February 1985. In Eastern Hampshire 21 clubs organised 208 events over the year (10 per club), and in Southern Lancashire 27 clubs organised 184 events (7 per club). Repeated nationally this might suggest around 8,000 events in England and Wales as a whole over a year for these categories of clubs.

5.21. When the number and status of events are considered together a number of contrasts between the study areas can be seen:

1. South Lancashire is predominantly a trial area, as evidenced both by the number and status of trial events;
2. Comparatively little adult motocross takes place in the South Lancashire study area;
3. The Hampshire area shows a higher proportion of motocross events, though the majority are of closed status;
4. In both areas grass track racing and enduros form a very small component of total motorcycling activity; and
5. In both areas the AMCA make a significant contribution to the total number of motocross events.

### Trials

5.22. Motorcycle trials are arguably the most popular and generally accessible off road motorsport in Britain. They range from small scale 'arena' events held alongside fairgrounds and shows, to major international competitions such as the Scottish Six Day and Welsh Two Day events. Almost all trials are run under the auspices of the ACU which currently licences some 7,000 adult trial riders (excluding those holding only a Closed event licence). Not only are trial events the most common off road motorsport, they also constitute the bulk of total motorcycle club activity. Very few clubs do not run a trial of some sort at least once during a competitive season.

5.23. Trials are popular for many reasons. First, they are cheap to stage. Because they involve neither an enclosed circuit nor speed racing, trial courses can be marked out with ropes and stakes. Also as they are not, generally, spectator events little or no such provision is required. Section observers are usually drawn from non-competing club members and there is no mandatory need for on site ambulance and medical facilities. Excluding site hire and prize money staging a trial event can cost under £50. Second, trials are cheap for competitors. Although it is a

Table 5.3.Motorcycle Events in the Eastern Hampshire Study Area: 1984

Status	Closed	Open	Restricted	National	TOTAL
Event					
Trials	69	20	1	2	92
Motocross					
i. ACU	22 (84)*	11	-	-	
ii. AMCA	-	18 (Group)	-	-	61 (123)*
iii. BSMA	10	-	-	-	
Grass Track	-	8	1	-	9
Enduro	-	3	-	-	3
					147 (208)*

\* In addition to those motocross events indicated, Southern Motocross, a regional organisation specialising in running 'commercial' motocross events, organised a large number of closed club events in and around the Eastern Hampshire study area. Of the 62 events organised each year by this Club, over half take place on five or six sites within the study area.

Data based upon the activities of 21 clubs.

Source: Authors' survey 1984.

Table 5.4.Events Organised by Motorcycle Clubs in the South LancashireStudy Area: March 1984 to March 1985

Status Event	Closed	Open	Regional Restricted	National	TOTAL
<u>Trials</u>					
- Adult	16	19	-	1	
- Youth	29	8	3	1	
- S-car	10	9	-	1	114
- Novice	7	3	-	-	
- Pre-65	5	2	-	-	
<u>Motocross</u>					
a. ACU					
- Adult	-	5	-	-	
- Youth	27	-	-	-	56
b. AMCA	n/a	24 (Open to Group)		-	
<u>Grass Track</u>					
- Adult	-	-	-	-	
- Youth	12	-	-	1	13
<u>Enduro</u>	1	-	-	-	1
<u>TOTAL</u>					<u>184</u>

Note: This Table does not include Arena, fun or beginners events which many of the clubs operating in the area are nonetheless involved in.

Source: Authors' survey.

requirement of the ACU that all competing machines "comply with all legal requirements and ... (are) ... roadworthy" (1) trial motorcycles are relatively easy to acquire. Few riders, nevertheless, use their competitive machines for anything other than trial events. In addition the low cost of staging trials is reflected in low entry costs (frequently below £5.00). Having paid for insurance, club membership and ACU Competition Licence, the average rider can compete for around £100 per year. Trial riding has thus escaped the trammels of commercialisation that have beset motocross. Thirdly, trials are accessible to an extremely wide range of participants from six to 60 years of age. In rural areas in particular fathers and sons compete together, trials providing an important component of the overall sporting opportunities of local people.

5.24. Fourthly, in providing tests of machine skills and control, applicable as much to road as to off road situations, trials are as important contributors to road safety, much in the same way as autotests. For this reason trials, and former trial sites, have been endorsed both by the police and by bodies and organisations wishing to train their members and employees in off road skills (2). Fifthly, trials produce relatively low levels of noise. The maximum permitted exhaust emission of competitive trial machines must not exceed 100 dB(A) (3), the legal limit for machines on the Public Highway. Because trials are mostly undertaken at low speeds and in areas of relatively inaccessible and varied terrain noise effects are localised. In addition the combination of smooth tyres, slow speeds, and irregular course layout, generally mitigates against severe site erosion. However care has to be taken over the use of sensitive sites and areas, particularly Sites of Special Scientific Interest (4). Among motorcycle disciplines trial events are distinguishable by an absence of site level controversy and public objection.

5.25. Trials also use land that is, for the most part, unproductive and unsuited for other recreation pursuits. The four most common sources of land used are:

- unproductive and agricultural (grazing) land;
- transitional urban fringe land;
- quarries, tips and dumps; and
- MoD, Water Authority, Forestry Commission and other 'public' lands.

The size of a competitive site can vary considerably. A small closed trial, attracting 30 competitors, may take place on 10 acres of rough land. A larger event might use a combination of section sites joined by Green Lanes, agricultural tracks, roads, or open fields and moorland. Generally single site trials use 15-30 acres of land, though only a small part of the total site area is traversed in the course of competition.

5.26. One of the principal qualities of a 'good' trial event is variety. Hence clubs seek to operate on a number of different sites

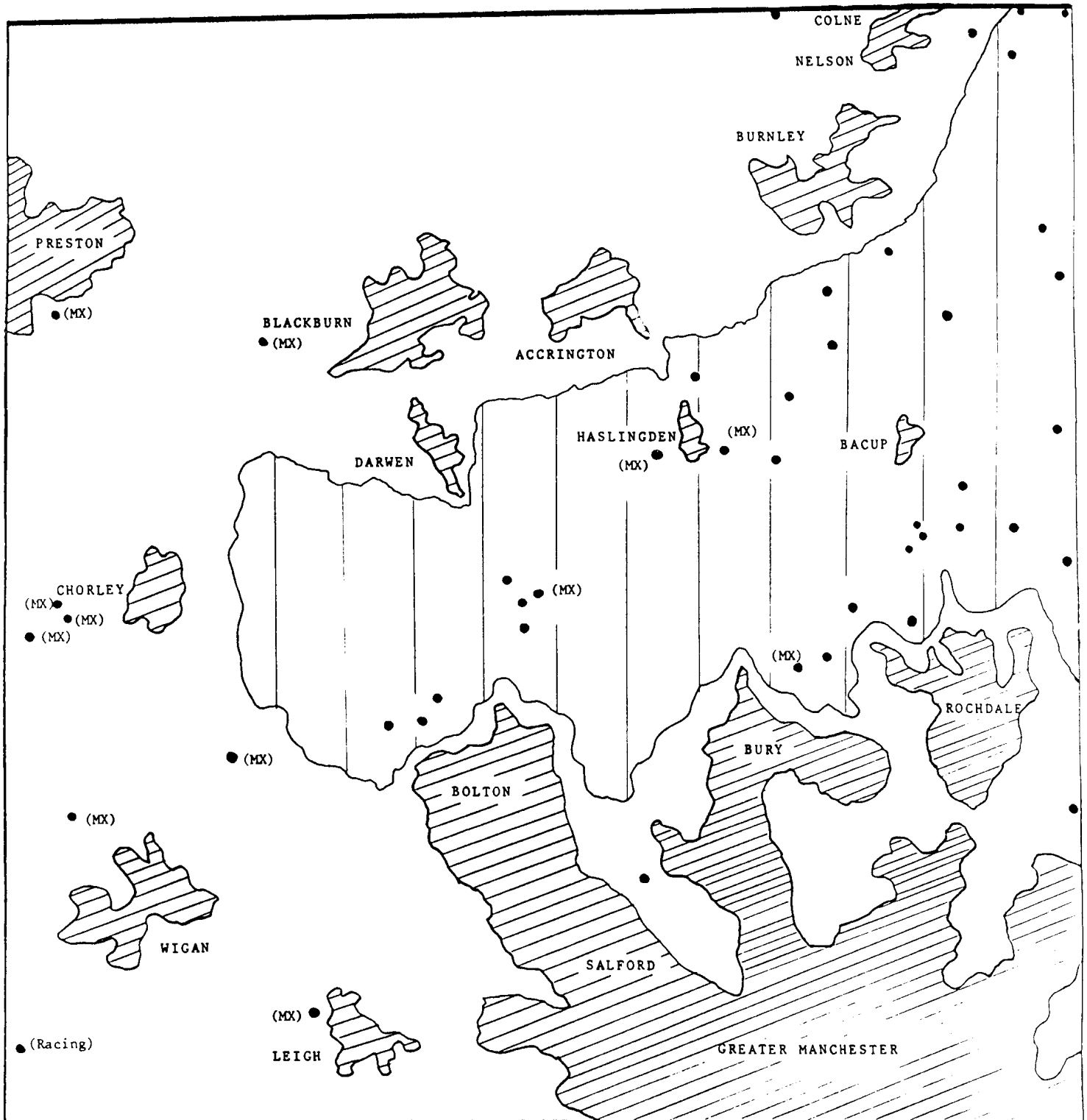
rather than, as in motocross, at a 'home' venue. For this reason, many clubs have a transitory relationship with land and sites. A venue may be used on two or three occasions then lost and replaced by others. This shifting pattern of use characterises motorcycle trials. It has enabled events to take place despite individual instances of site loss. It has also minimised the effects of trials upon general rural amenity. Although many sites have been in continued use for a number of years clubs have proved adept at acquiring and using transitory sites, such as quarry land. Nonetheless, despite the lack of intrusiveness of motorcycle trials, the general availability of venues is being increasingly constrained by forces beyond the immediate influence of clubs. To consider this process it is proposed to examine the practice of motorcycle trials within the two study areas in some detail.

5.27. The North West is renowned as an area with good trials venues and, as Table 5.5. shows, they numerically dominate the competitive events staged within the study area. The range of trial events is considerable, from small club events with 20 - 30, riders to the Red Rose Trial and others which regularly attract well over 100 riders from a nationwide catchment. With the possible exception of Scotland and Wales, the North West is held to contain some of the finest trial sites in mainland Britain. In the north west trials are most often run by trials-only clubs. The largest in the area, the Rochdale and District and Bolton Clubs run 20-30 trials a year, of varying status, and on a range of different sites throughout the West Pennine Moors. Smaller clubs, such as the Darwen Club, with a membership of around 80 (which has fallen from over 200 in 1980) can run five or six events a year all on different sites. Such events attract around 50 entrants although numbers can range from 30 to 100. Few trial events can satisfactorily accommodate more than 120 entrants. Not only do sections have to be undertaken individually, but car parking and problems of access to venues cause limitations on numbers.

5.28. Trials in the South Lancashire area are located almost exclusively on privately owned or tenanted rough grazing land, or in quarries. Most sites are used three or four times a year, though some may be used up to 20 times. Figure 5.4. shows the location of trial venues used over the last few years by South Lancashire clubs. The influence of the dominant landscape feature of the study area, the West Pennine Moors, is evident. The physiography of the Moors provide high quality trial sites (a mixture of open moorland with deeply incised stream valleys) while also, with a few notable exceptions, mitigating against speed events, motocross and grass track racing. The land use pattern of the bulk of the moorland is unenclosed sheep grazing land. While ideal for trials, which require close course definition only around and within individual sections, it is impractical for events requiring a well defined and isolated course, and an enclosed site for the paying gate. Trials that can make full use of the moorland can, as a result, be run over 20 to 30 mile courses, much in the tradition of those of the 1950s which incorporated both road and off road work. There has been a recent decline in the number of events employing road work. This has resulted from the requirement that motorcycles be road legal, taxed and licenced. This excludes youth riders. However the Moors still offer the potential, albeit a declining one, for such events.

Figure 5.4.

Sites used for Motocross and Trial Events in the South Lancashire  
Study Area



5.29. There are essentially two forms of moorland trial venue, 'open' and 'enclosed'. Open moorland can provide for long distance trials such as the Rochdale and District Club's Red Rose Trial, which covers 17 miles of unenclosed moor, or the Bolton Club's national schoolboy event, incorporating a 10 mile lap on Scout Moor. Areas on the West Pennine Moors to the east of Bacup are also used in this way. Enclosed moorland sites are more common in the north of the study area where trials take place within individual fields or continuations thereof. Such venues (e.g. Cliviger, Wyecollar and Edgeworth) are commonly associated with closed status and schoolboy trials.

5.30. Although the availability of enclosed moorland has remained constant, there has been a significant decline in useable open moorland for trials. In part this has been the result of changing agricultural practices. Traditionally sheep grazing has constituted the sole productive use of the moorland, a use not incompatible with motorcycling. In recent years however some farmers have introduced dairy cattle to some of the less accessible areas (e.g., Rooley Moor near Rochdale), largely in response to central Government incentives. This has contributed to the loss or reduction of trial venues. A second long term influence has been the changing pattern of land ownership within the Moorland enclave. Traditionally, this has been an area of large private estates and tenant farmers; but this monopoly has increasingly been displaced by public or institutional ownerships. The North West Water Authority (NWWA) is the largest land owning body within the Moors. At present over 10,000 acres are owned by the NWWA and 85 square miles lie within its water catchments. Other large landowners include the Greater Manchester Council, Lancashire County Council, the Manor of Rochdale, and a number of other local authorities. This pattern of ownership has a number of implications for motorcycle sports:

1. Institutional land owners have proved less willing to allow competitive events on their land unlike owner occupiers or tenants, many of whom either ride or have sons who ride;
2. In areas where use is permitted there are two sets of interests to reconcile; those of owners and tenants. Frequently these can have contradictory requirements of the organising clubs;
3. There is a lack of consistent policy regarding the use of land that is intrinsically the same. Thus, although Bolton Borough may permit the use of its tenant farm sites for trial events, adjoining land, owned by the NWWA is not available; and
4. The decline of some areas of large estates, and their fragmentation into smaller units, has had an adverse effect upon the availability of sites for long distance trials. This is illustrated in the case of the Red Rose Trial. In the early 1950s, the Trial was based upon a single lap of 72 to 75 miles including road work, individual

sections, and inter-section moorland riding. By 1984 this had shrunk to 16 miles, largely because of the difficulties of running an event over a multitude of privately owned sites. Consequently, most trials are now staged on land held by a single landowner.

5.31. Derelict or partially worked quarry sites have been an important source of land for trial events for many years in South Lancashire particularly in the Whitworth, Haslingdon, Darwen, and Accrington areas. To a lesser extent, quarry sites have also provided facilities for motocross (e.g. Withall Fall Brickworks) and other sports, such as clay pigeon shooting and rock climbing. The Facit quarries complex at Whitworth, (part of which (Black Cwm) has been in use for over 25 years as a trials venue), is of particular significance. It acts as both a single site for youth and closed status events, and as part of a wider, more prestigious circuit incorporating areas of moorland beyond. Although the use of surrounding moorland has recently been severely constrained, due in part to the actions of 'cowboy' riders, the neighbouring quarry sites continue to be used to the extent that the organising club has sought a blanket insurance cover against damage or injury liability for site use by its riders.

5.32. Most available quarries are in private ownership, being subsequently leased to extractive concerns. Where owned by private extractive concerns they are less likely to be available for motorsport use. In the North West the suitability of such sites for large trial events is constrained by the practice of 'fly tipping' (which both clubs and site owners have sought to combat), and the limited highway access.

5.33. The continuing availability of quarry sites in the North West, as in many other areas, is threatened by the increasing preoccupation amongst local authorities and civic organisations with quarry restoration. Within the South Lancashire area a number of eminently suitable sites have been infilled and landscaped (e.g., Catwell, Lothersdale and Facit) as part of a process of increasing informal recreational opportunities in the countryside, and restoring the countryside to its pre-industrial state (5). Unfortunately however the proven demand for this process, particularly amongst indigenous rural residents, is far from established. Many of the reclaimed quarries lie far from major urban centres (the presumed origins of potential informal recreation visitors) and, even when restored, provide a relatively poor recreational environment when compared with open moorland. Furthermore the use of such sites by indigenous residents can be for purposes (such as those mentioned above, off-road motorcycling and shooting) contradictory to those permissible within the context of restoration. Significantly, where attempts have been made to reconcile conflicting priorities and demands (6), motorcycle interests have found themselves alienated by consultative procedures dominated principally by their 'opponents' and, also, vulnerable to attacks on the legitimacy of their activity. Often it is not local residents who benefit from quarry restoration schemes but those from neighbouring urban centres. These latter groups have successfully inserted their views into rural environmental policy-making, yet the ubiquitous applicability of the new



'buzz words' of countryside management - restoration, reclamation and beautification - do not necessarily have a concomitant universal appeal or result in some demands being satisfied.

5.34. Despite the above problems motorcycle trials in the North West, as in Hampshire, do not openly conflict with other forms of rural recreation as the majority occur on private land. There are many instances where trial motorcyclists have had a greater legitimacy of access than walkers. Although footpaths continue to be a focus of localised controversy on the West Pennine Moors the organisers of competitive events pay a mandatory £25 per event footpath restoration fee to the highway authority. This legitimises their use of footpaths and forestalls protest. Horse riders are not subject to similar mandatory fees, which continues to be a bone of contention within the local motorsport fraternity.

5.35. In South Lancashire these various factors have contributed to declines in site numbers and size, in the number of events, and in the number of clubs and competitive riders. Symptoms of these problems have been the relative numerical growth of youth trial events (to which many landowners and tenants are more predisposed), and the introduction and growth of 'arena trials' (events run in single arenas, using man-made sections). A large number of clubs within the area run arena trials (for at example at Park Hall, Burnley Park, Lever Park Bolton). Their success has been marked, not only in attracting spectators and 'competitive' riders, but also in doing much to promote off road motorcycle sports in situations where recreation and sport elements can be integrated (such as fairs, gymkhanas, and agricultural shows).

5.36. Trials in Hampshire though popular suffer from an absence of large, top quality, venues. Consequently they generally take place on smaller sites often less than 15 acres in size (although one found was only 30 x 100 yards). They also attract fewer entries, commonly 30 - 50 for closed, and 60 - 80 for open events. Nevertheless some 92 trial events were organised during 1984 two, (the Hoad Trophy and the Trader of the Year), being of national status. Significantly however there are very few study area clubs devoted entirely to trial riding. Some 40 trial venues were identified within the study area though the majority are used infrequently. In the last 10 years clubs running trials have sought to decentralise their activities preferring to operate at five or six different venues running only one or two events at each, rather than concentrating their activities at a single site. Thus both the Waterlooville and the Alton and District Clubs run 12 trial events on six separate sites each. As 75 per cent of trials in eastern Hampshire are 'closed' events (as compared with 58 per cent in South Lancashire), there is a predominance of small-scale trial activity within the area.

5.37. The majority of trials in Hampshire take place on unproductive agricultural land, quarries and tips. Unlike moorland areas in the North, agricultural land in Hampshire is intensively utilised for arable production or cattle grazing. Motorcycle trials are therefore limited to

unproductive areas of farm or estate land (e.g. Norr Hill, Redfields, Crondall Woods, and Botley) or to transitory grazing areas (e.g. Buddens Bank Charlton, Froxfield, Wick Hill, Kenchington, and Langrish). Such sites, though small, are relatively freely available, albeit for only a few events each year. Quarry sites also make an important contribution to the general availability of trial venues though again these are normally smaller than in the North West (e.g. Basing Lime Pits, Funtley Tip, Poynes Pit, and Butser Lime Works).

5.38. Where Hampshire differs substantially is in the availability of MoD land for motorcycle trials. Six MoD tank and infantry training areas were used during 1984 by clubs operating within the study area (Table 5.5.). These sites are shared between the Southern and South Eastern Centres of the ACU and the Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs (see above, paras. 4.27. to 4.34.). In terms of motorcycle activities, MoD sites are used solely for trials and enduros. It has been the policy of the MoD/PSA to prohibit the use of their land for motorcycle sports involving 'knobbly' tyres and long travel suspension (principally motocross) for reasons of surface erosion. Nonetheless there is considerable competition among trial and enduro clubs for MoD dates/sites. Only three of the 21 study area clubs successfully staged trial events on MoD land during 1984.

5.39. Competition between clubs and centres for MoD allocations is compounded by the declining availability of MoD sites, and reductions in the useable area of those remaining. Longvalley, an MoD venue used during the early 1980s and before for trials, shrank from 5,000 to 3 acres in the course of the decade. In 1984 it was not available. Furthermore, the use of the larger off road sites, in particular Weavers Down, is threatened by the associated shortage of alternative car rally venues, which has had the localised effect of increasing the demands of motorcar sports for such sites.

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Table 5.5. MoD Facilities for Motorcycle Sports:  
Hampshire 1984 (Aldershot District).

Sites	Rate of Use*	Cost per Day
Bagshott Heath (Surrey)	12 times	N/A
Broxhead Common	25 times	£100.00
Burns Hill	6 times	N/A
Hungry Hill	4 times	£135.00
Miles Hill	4 times	£121.00
Slab Common	15 times	£145.00
Weavers Down	12 times	£180.00

\* These rates of use are shared between motorcycle clubs belonging to the Southern and South Eastern Centres ACU and motorcar clubs belonging to the Association of Central Southern Motor Clubs.

Source: Authors' survey, 1984.  
N/A = Not Available

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5.40. The use of MoD land for trials is constrained by similar factors to those relating to motorcar sports:

- lack of consultation between site users and the MoD over date and venue allocations;
- decline in the number and size of sites;
- the non-effectiveness of MoD restitution, for which motorcycle clubs pay a mandatory £10 (average) payment;
- restrictions on the use of 'knobbly' tyres and long travel suspension machines;
- short-term notification of site permits (6 weeks) which make it easy for MoD to cancel an event at short notice; and
- lack of consistent MoD/PSA site policy.

Given the absence of large areas of unproductive land not used for other forms of recreation, MoD land remains the major potential source of venues for trials although it is considerably underused.

5.41. Other venues for trials in Hampshire include transitional urban fringe land, (occasionally available for small scale events as an interim use before development), and Forestry Commission land. However none of the study area clubs use Commission land chiefly because such sites are considered too expensive. A basic charge of £80 is levied for events using up to five sections. Any additional sections cost the organising club £11 each. Thus a 10 section event might cost around £150, considerably more than if held on private land. The principal exception to this pattern is the annual Perce Simon Trial, organised by the Ringwood Club on Commission land at Bransgore to the west of the study area.

5.42. In conclusion, trials have been one of the most accessible and low cost forms of motorsport, particularly in upland rural areas. Organising clubs have long accepted and worked within a fluctuating and informal site acquisition process, depending more upon goodwill and personal contact than commercial site use and formal leasing. Trial clubs have also proved themselves adept at securing, albeit for short periods, fringe and interim use sites; quarries, infill sites and derelict land. A high turnover of trial venues is a common situation. Nonetheless, we can identify three specific trends which are possibly upsetting the delicate balance between demand and provision; the growth in the number of trial riders, the increase in the number of small events, and the decline of site availability. The first of these trends is largely a function of the growing general popularity of off road motorcycling, particularly during the 1970s, but is more specifically the result of the dramatic growth in youth sports. Youth trials are an important component of the total trial scene in the North West, as elsewhere. Although youth events are normally held simultaneously with adult events they do involve an increase in site demand unmatched by an associated increase in availability.

5.43. Almost all off road clubs run trial events, many being restricted to club members, and involving less than 50 entrants. Recent attempts by some Centres to limit the numbers of closed events suggests there are in some areas too many trial clubs chasing small, infrequently used venues. Although the bulk of trial venues are used by a single club only, the abundance of clubs has led to a decline in membership numbers, particularly if sites become scarce. Site scarcity has been the result of a number of factors:

- changing agricultural practice;
- changing patterns of landownership in rural areas;
- the general decline in the availability of 'public' land; and
- the increasing use of urban fringe and derelict sites for alternative forms of informal recreation which are, for the most part, considered incompatible with motorsport.

Nevertheless trial events, as a whole, remain uncontroversial (7). Taking place predominantly on inaccessible private sites, and being relatively quiet, they often escape public opposition; hence their acceptability in many National Parks. Significantly, where conflict over access does arise, motorcycle trial clubs have displayed an unequalled ability to negotiate the use of new sites.

### Motocross

5.44. Having grown out of motorcycle scrambling during the late 1960s and early 1970s, motocross is the high profile competitive off road motorcycle sport (similar in this respect to special stage rallying within motorcar sport). More formalised than trials, motocross events require a fixed course layout (though not a permanent course surface) and frequently ample provision for spectators. Motocross can attract large numbers of entrants (frequently over 200 per meeting) and the machines used are highly specialised, and reserved exclusively for off road use. A mandatory maximum noise limit of 108 dB(A) is imposed by the governing bodies and machines are only started five minutes before the commencement of each race.

5.45. Motocross events are run under the auspices of a number of organisations, principally the ACU and the AMCA, but also the Youth Motorcycle Sporting Association and the British Schoolboys Motorcycling Association. Nationally the number of motocross riders amounts to around 20,000, though there are distinct regional variations, the south and the Midlands traditionally being the dominant areas. A number of national and international motocross championship series exist (for example, the International 125cc, 250cc and 500cc Grand Prix series, and the British Sidecar Cross Championship), though the bulk of competition takes place at the open to Centre (ACU) or Group (AMCA) levels. It is estimated that during the height of the competitive season some 300 motocross events might be taking place each weekend throughout England and Wales

attracting, on average, between 80 and 100 riders each. Although participation levels have been generally increasing since the middle 1970s, this masks a number of contradictory trends:

- the increasing cost of competition;
- the increasing polarisation of the sport between 'professional' competition and club level activities;
- the growth of the ACMA relative to the stability of the ACU;
- the decline in the availability of sites; and
- a reduction in adult numbers and a growth in youth competitors.

5.46. To compete regularly in open or restricted status motocross costs a participant between £40 and £50 per week (based upon a probable rate of competition of 20-30 events per year). The individual components of cost are; event entry (£6-£10), club membership (£8-£12 per club per year - many competitive ACU riders being members of four or five clubs), Insurance (£30-£80 per year), licence (£8-£18 per year), tyres (£30 per two events); and fuel, maintenance, clothing, and transport per event as required. To set up a 'family team' comprising two sons riding a motorcycle each, transport and accessories, can cost in the region of £30,000. At the higher levels of competition the costs of motocross are thus comparable to those of motor racing. The current decline in the membership of many ACU motocross clubs, and the fall off in event entries, is largely due to the dramatic rise in participant costs and its impact upon riders in a period of general economic difficulty.

5.47. One of the effects of this has been to increase the polarisation and commercialisation of motocross (a process also observable in motorcar stage rallying). Consequently riders approach club membership only as a means of gaining entry into events. Thus those clubs operating solely open status competitions have suffered membership declines. One symptom of this has been the relative absence of motocross riders in organisational club roles. Another has been the development and success of specifically commercial motocross clubs. In Hampshire two such clubs have recently been formed, running closed status events (which often attract over 200 riders) on a variety of courses and demanding no rider involvement, other than the payment of entry fees (around £8.00). 'Commercial' clubs are frequently able to offer higher prices for site hire than other, often more conscientious motocross clubs. Nevertheless, despite an element of friction between commercial and traditional clubs (essentially over site poaching and overuse, and the occasional lack, on the part of the former, of effective community liaison), the latter have accepted the important role of the commercially oriented clubs in providing relatively low-cost opportunities for club level motocross within the ambit of the ACU. Many riders treat commercial club events as practice for more competitive open status events organised by the traditional clubs.

5.48. The growth of AMCA motocross during the late 1970s and early 1980s has been an antidote to the 'professionalism' of adult ACU motocross particularly as the AMCA, in an effort to maintain their amateur status, offer no prize money. Many of the early members of AMCA clubs had ridden in the past with the ACU, particularly in the youth division. In Hampshire, virtually all active ACU motocross clubs have lost riders in this way to the four AMCA clubs operating within the study area. However, this is not regarded as a problem. If anything, the AMCA have partially reduced the pressure on ACU clubs for the organisation of events and, in Hampshire at least, a cooperative equilibrium has been established between the two organisations. In South Lancashire where the general demand for motocross is less, the impact of the AMCA has had a more debilitating effect. For example following the recent decline of the ACU's Accrington Club, which until 1983 was running 10 events a year at Grane, Deerplay, and Larend Hey, there are currently only three ACU motocross clubs within the study area and two of these run exclusively youth events. In contrast the growth of the AMCA has been dramatic. Since 1975 seven clubs have been formed within the study area with a total competitive membership of around 350. Because of AMCA rules the number of members a club may have is tied to the number of events operated by each club. Most clubs within the region are currently operating to capacity there is a demand for more AMCA clubs. Thus with the exception of youth motocross the AMCA has become, in terms of the number of organised events, the principal umbrella organisation. The 300 or so adult ACU motocross riders in the study area are restricted to the five events organised by the Chorley Motocross Club each year, or to events run in the neighbouring Cheshire and Yorkshire Centres.

5.49. The impact of a motocross event upon an agricultural site and a rural area can be considerable. Such impact may be made up of the following components:

- noise, both of machines and public address system;
- dust;
- erosion, particularly of course surfaces;
- traffic generation, both by competitors and spectators;  
and
- large numbers of spectators.

Many areas and sites are thereby unsuited to large-scale or frequent motocross events. The West Pennine Moors, with its predominantly peat based top soil, is such an example. So too, for more obvious reasons, are agricultural sites close to areas of dense residential development. Suitable sites are found on privately-owned, gently undulating (though enclosed) agricultural grazing land, some distance from centres of population, and with adjoining areas of flat ground for car parking and attendant activities. Where such sites lie relatively close to sources of possible objection, it is often the policy of organising clubs to use them infrequently (two or three times a year) and to liaise with and seek the approval of neighbouring residents. If motocross sites can be found close to alternative sources of traffic noise for example, motorways, their disamenity is reduced (such as Cuerdon Park, Preston and the Fox and Hounds Circuit, Newbury).

5.50. In the Eastern Hampshire study area all motocross events take place on private agricultural land. The study area contains 13 well established motocross circuits used regularly throughout the season by a number of different clubs. Some of the more popular venues, such as Kingsclere, Watership Down, Blackbushe Farm, and Winchfield are used frequently, others four or five times a year. A further 12 less established sites are used only occasionally. Their general location with respect to the organising clubs is displayed in Figure 5.5. In the South Lancashire area motocross sites, limited principally to the relatively flat land of the coastal plain, are more constrained. Moreover the size of the venues is smaller than in the south, and their rate of use does not exceed five occasions a year.

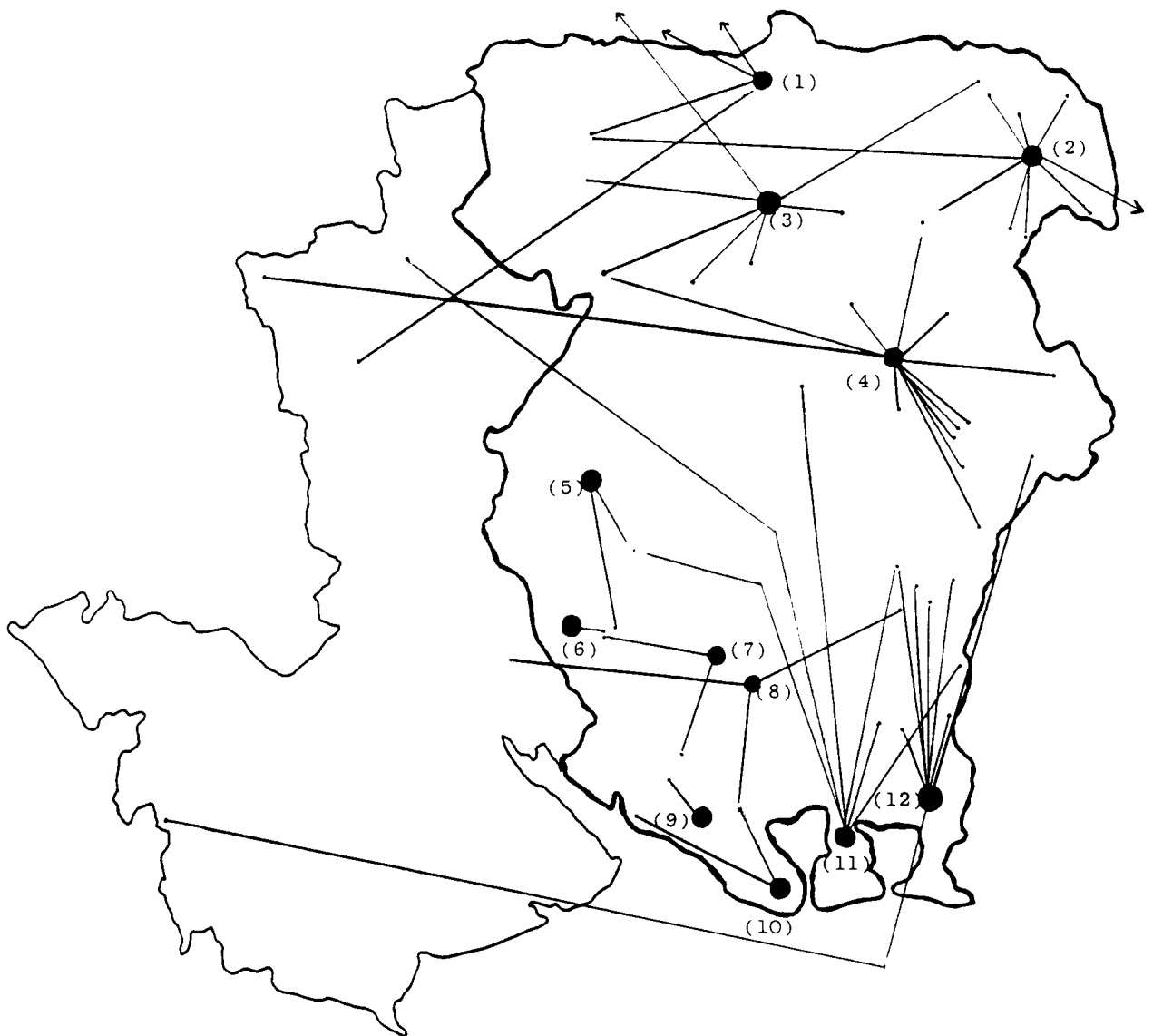
5.51. Motocross clubs tend to operate a 'home' circuit, particularly for higher status events. If such a site is lost the effect upon the club can be catastrophic, precipitating a decline in membership, revenue and general club activity. In both study areas, clubs have experienced this decline (e.g., the North Hampshire Club, following the loss of Tweseldown and the Portsmouth Club following the loss of both Ladies Mile and Portsmouth Airfield). The loss sites on agricultural land is generally the result of changing agricultural practices (the ploughing up of former grazing land), changing patterns of agricultural land use (the consolidation of holdings into larger, institutionally-owned concerns less tolerant of motorsport), organised public opposition, or increasing costs. An average open status motocross event held on agricultural land in Hampshire will cost between £800 and £1,000. Larger championship events may cost in excess of £10,000. The principal components of cost for an event are:

1. Site hire (£200-£500);
2. Insurance (£200-£400);
3. Equipment (varies depending upon how much is owned by the club, for example: tractor, £6,000; starting gate, £2,000; toilet block, £1,000; three miles of rope; 1,000 wooden stakes);
4. Prize money (£50-£500);
5. Trophies (£100-£200);
6. Programmes (£100-£150);
7. Site restitution (£60-£150); and
8. Ambulance and medical services. (around £50)

Although most clubs aim to break even with the entry fees balancing costs, many are nevertheless dependent upon local sponsorship, particularly for programmes and trophies. At the local level the extent of sponsorship, (which is by no means universal), varies between £25 and £500 per event. Spectators, normally charged between £1 and £2.50, may number between 500

Figure 5.5.

Sites Used Regularly for Trial and Motocross Events by  
Territorial Motorcycle Clubs in the Eastern Hampshire Area



TEPRITORIAL CLUBS.

- |     |   |      |  |
|-----|---|------|--|
| (1) | TADLEY SPORTING MCC<br>TADLEY SPORTING YMCC | (8)  | WALTHAM CHASE MCC  |
| (2) | N.HANTS MCC<br>N.HANTS YMCC                 | (9)  | GOSPORT & FAREHAM MCC  |
| (3) | BASINGSTOKE MCC                             | (10) | GOSPORT & DMCC   |
| (4) | ALTON & DMCC<br>ALTON & D YMCC<br>ALTON MCC | (11) | PORTSMOUTH MCRC<br>PORTSMOUTH SCC  |
| (5) | WINCHESTER MCC                              | (12) | WATERLOOVILLE MCC<br>WATERLOOVILLE YMCC<br>HAVANT MCC<br>RED LION RACERS |
| (6) | EASTLEIGH MCC                               |      |  |
| (7) | BISHOPS WALTHAM MCC                         |      |  |



and 1,000 for non championship events, and are the main contributors to any net financial gain for the organising club.

5.52. Public opposition to motocross events is not as widespread as for Green Lane riding. Yet in many areas it constitutes a significant constraint. The mechanics of opposition are twofold; informal and formal. Formal procedures will be discussed below (Chapter 6). Informal procedures are frequently more effective for they are generally directed against site owners rather than site users. A farmer, faced with public opposition to a motocross event will often stop such events rather than generate hostility, particularly if the income derived from events is undeclared. As motorsport users as a whole rarely have any formal site tenure such loss is uncompensated. All of the clubs interviewed in the course of this study had lost sites in this way. In net terms around 30 sites have been lost in Hampshire in the last 10 years. The subsequent loss of events has been in the order of 50 per cent.

5.53. Our interviews suggest that in rural areas objections come principally from retired and newcomer ex-urbanites, rather than from farmers and agricultural communities who frequently remain well predisposed to motorsport interests. Attempts by clubs to involve local communities, for example by running charity events, have traditionally been successful in promoting motocross as a legitimate rural activity. In both study areas processes of immigration continually lead to new opposition thus negating the past achievements of such conciliatory modes of action. As a result it is now common for clubs to keep the use of sites confidential preferring, in areas likely to generate principled opposition, not to advertise forthcoming events. Frequently it is only youth events that survive this growing imported antagonism.

5.54. In addition to agricultural land, motocross events have used three other land sources; Ministry of Defence land, local authority land and commercial motocross circuits. The first of these, for a long time the source of many highly regarded venues in the south, is now no longer available. Recent MoD policy has prohibited the use of competitive motocross vehicles on their land, principally in an effort to prevent erosion. In the Hampshire area alone, this has prompted the loss of 10 to 15 venues. Local authority sites are of greater significance in areas where private venues are scarce. Within the North West area two circuits are in public ownership; Larend Hey, (owned by Rossendale Borough) and Cuerdon Park, owned by the Central Lancashire Development Corporation. Larend Hey, in the middle of the West Pennine Moors, is currently used six times a year by one club. Originally the local authority sought to have it used 12 times but rescinded the arrangement due to local opposition and site erosion problems. Cuerdon Park, on the other hand, has hosted Grand National motocross events though its rate of use is similar to Larend Hey. Though hire costs have risen from £70 to £240 over the last six years Cuerdon Park is highly regarded by riders within the region. A third site also on the Moors (Grane) is owned by the NWWA though severe site erosion has now led to its closure. Elsewhere in the country local authority owned or supported sites make an important contribution to the overall availability of motocross venues.

5.55. In response to shortages of venues local clubs, national bodies and commercial interests have sought either the purchase and development of motocross sites or formal leasehold arrangements with landowners. Examples of this type of provision include the Sidcup Club's Canada Heights Circuit, Hawkstone Park, Weston-under-Redcastle; Elsworth Moto-Parc, South Cambridgeshire; Matchams Park, Dorset and Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent (see Chapter 7). However these arrangements remain the exception. Most clubs do not welcome involvement in land ownership or procedures of site acquisition, as this may require entry into the land use planning process and formal procedures for public opposition. Few clubs can afford the necessary costs, and the voluntary nature and structure of most, means the necessary resources of expertise and time are not available for individual clubs to become landowners. Furthermore, there is little evidence that site ownership necessarily mitigates those issues that lead to the loss of individually-hired sites.

5.56. In summary therefore, there has been a growth in motocross participation and demand, in both youth ACU clubs and the AMCA. However this has been accompanied by localised instances of club decline, associated principally with site loss and the lack of available alternatives. At the top level motocross has become a highly professional and competitive sport akin to road racing, with works teams and expensive sponsorship. At the grass roots level motocross is divided between traditional club formulations and more commercial 'money-for-rides' organisations.

### Grass Track and Enduros

5.57. Grass track racing is a more specialised form of motorcycle sport, requiring a flat grass or stubble field of a minimum size of around 10 acres with no obstacles such as trees. Grass track events usually attract high numbers of spectators yet occur relatively infrequently. In the Hampshire study area four clubs ran between them nine grass track events on four different sites during 1984. Few grass track circuits are used more than 3-4 times a year for adult competition, though the south as a whole contains a relatively high proportion of active grass track clubs. Many grass track venues in the south have been used for a considerable period of time. The only competition for them comes from autocross/autogross, though the clubs organising these latter forms of motorsport generally seek the more frequent use of sites. Active grass track riders have accepted the need to travel considerable distances to maintain a full competitive season. For riders within the Southern Centre ACU this can involve transporting a machine to Salisbury, Sherfield English, or Wimbourne. The costs of participating in and organising grass track events are comparable to those of motocross.

5.58. In the South Lancashire area grass track racing is in decline. Currently only one club organises grass track events on two sites in neighbouring Merseyside. Although the last 15 years have seen the number of grass track racing clubs double in the North West and Cheshire Regions, many have not run events for the last few years. In part this has been caused by a loss of sites due to development or changes in agricultural

practices. As a result no adult grass track events have taken place within the study area for three years. As with motocross the increase in youth participation is symptomatic of declining site availability. Significantly, in a manner similar to the growth of arena trials, arena grass track events are increasingly seen as an alternative to what can often be a fruitless search for more permanent venues. Nationally grass track racing is held to be in need both of more venues, as well as active participants.

5.59. Enduros are a further specialised form of motorcycle sport and are undertaken on road legal machines. The site requirements of enduros make them difficult to stage in areas of intense land use. At a minimum, they require 10 or so miles of off-road surface which, if they are that short, will be run for as many as 20 laps. Thus the average event may last five to six hours. Alternatively larger scale enduros, such as the Yorkshire or Welsh Two Day Enduros are run on considerably longer circuits of over 100 miles involving non-competitive Green Lane riding and incorporating land owned by a number of different authorities, agencies and individuals. Currently enduros are predominantly run on forest or moorland tracks (hence the popularity of Wales and, to a lesser extent, Yorkshire) but some are run on MoD land.

5.60. In the Hampshire study area four enduro events are run each year. One, the Natterjack, is a national status event run by the Army Motorcycle Association on Weavers Down. The other three, run since 1981 by the Red Lion Racers Club also on Weavers Down, are of closed status though the Club's membership of 289 has generally ensured a full entry. At present Weavers Down provides the only viable enduro venue in Hampshire given the nonavailability of Forestry Commission sites in the west of the County, though in the past three other local MoD sites have been used. The relationship between the Army and enduro clubs in general is reinforced by a mutual interest, though both are required to apply for date allocations in a similar manner.

5.61. Two issues regarding the use of MoD sites for enduro events have recently come to the fore. Although they do not specifically threaten enduro events they have, in the light of serious accidents, brought into question the suitability of MoD hiring policy. The first relates to the use of 'knobbly' tyres. Since 1982 the use of such tyres has been prohibited on MoD land within the Aldershot District, ostensibly for reasons of surface damage. Consequently enduro machines can now only operate on trials tyres which are considerably smoother and offer less grip in off road situations. Undoubtedly enduro riders prefer to use 'knobbly' tyres during competition and organising clubs, as a result of the Aldershot District ruling, have had to reduce the risk of loss of control on competitive circuits by altering the layout of courses. Since the 1982 ruling, however, a series of accidents have taken place which, had the riders in question been equipped with 'knobbly' tyred machines could, claim the organising group, have been averted. The second issue surrounds the reluctance of the MoD to allow non competitors onto sites. A successful enduro event requires substantial non competitor support; marshalls, mechanics, and so on. Furthermore, a 10 mile off road course requires substantial marshalling if it is to be safe and easily followed.

Because of MoD reluctance many enduro events are under marshalled, a situation that has in the past delayed the identification and assistance of injured competitors.

5.62. During 1984 the principal enduro club in the Hampshire study area has sought, as an alternative to using MoD land, to run an event on an established motocross circuit. Involving 150 laps of a 5-6 mile course, the Red Lion Racers' Matchams Two Day Enduro was to be an example of a growing number of circuit enduro events; a response to the decline of suitable full scale enduro venues. Unfortunately in this instance the event was cancelled, ironically due to a lack of entries.

### Trail Riding

5.63. Finally this section discusses the well established, though increasingly controversial, sport of non-competitive organised trail riding. At a national level the role and function of the principal trail riding body, the Trail Riders' Fellowship (TRF), has been examined above (paras. 3.26.-3.28.). The legislative context of vehicular access to Green Lanes, and the role of local authorities in keeping them open will be discussed below (Chapter 6). Here we seek to consider trail riding as practiced at the local level.

5.64. It has been estimated that there are some 5,000 trail riders in England and Wales of whom around 1,000 belong to the Trail Riders' Fellowship (8). Although numbers have not increased dramatically over the last 20 years three factors have contributed to a widespread impression of increased activity. Foremost has been the introduction by Japanese motorcycle manufacturers in the early 1970s of specific trail motorcycles which, though road legal (unlike motocross bikes), and capable of performing satisfactorily in road conditions (unlike trial bikes), are nonetheless designed to cope with off road conditions. Second has been the widespread growth in informal and occasional off road activities prompted by the increasing availability of motorcycles, and an expanding youth market. Finally a concomitant growth in media interest and organised opposition has occurred.

5.65. Trail riding takes place wherever accessible Green Lanes can be found although it is perhaps most popular in the South East, West Midlands, and Derbyshire. However, although rights of access for motor vehicles to the majority of Green Lanes, Roads Used as Public Paths and byways have statutory support (9), by no means all are so used. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Pragmatism on the part of trail riders who wish to minimise the disturbance caused by their activities; hence the general avoidance of the byway status sections of many of the more well-used long distance footpaths;

2. Voluntary codes of restraint imposed by trail riders as to the rate and time of use of well-used route; for example, on the Ridgeway;
3. The inaccuracy of many definitive maps which erroneously demark byways as footpaths and bridleways;
4. The blocking or ploughing up of Green Lanes and byways by farmers or by vegetation regrowth;
5. The imposition of Traffic Restriction Orders by local highway authorities under Section 32 of the Countryside Act 1968; and
6. The downgrading of byways and Green Lanes to bridleway or footpath status following the local redefinition of rights of way.

In addition there are many miles of green lanes unused by organised trail riders due to the absence of local clubs.

5.66. Within the Hampshire study area there are relatively few active trail riders (well under 100). The local TRF group organises monthly trails from September to April attracting six to eight riders at a time. On average, a day long trail ride in Hampshire may be between 80 and 100 miles in length 60 per cent on byways and RUPPs and 40 per cent on the Public Highway. The relative abundance of trail routes in Hampshire has assisted in minimising conflicts between riders, horse riders, and walkers. The three groups co-operate, frequently in association with Hampshire County Council, in maintaining vehicular and public rights of way. Where objection does arise it is often initiated by landowners who have either purposefully or unwittingly blocked or ploughed up a right of way, or have misinterpreted the classification of a right of way across their land. As many byways, particularly in the Meon Valley area, are narrow and can be ill-defined, their use by motorcyclists has on occasion upset local landowners.

5.67. The relationship of trail riders to competitive off road motorcycle interests in Hampshire has reflected the relationship between the TRF and the ACU at the national level. A Rights of Way Committee has been established under the auspices of the ACU Southern Centre, serviced by the TRF Southern Group, with representation from the local British Motorcyclists' Federation. This group has adopted a more active lobbying role with respect to local highway authorities and other Green Lane user groups. Its recent involvement has been to ensure that suitable diversions, bridges or tunnels are provided for where new motorways and bypasses bisect established routes.

5.68. In the North West trail riding in its organised form is relatively new, though the use of motorcycles for off road conveyance has been common amongst rural communities for many years. In part, the absence of formal trail riding reflects the almost complete lack of byways, RUPPs and Green

Lanes within the Region. However this has not always been the case. Prior to the drawing up of definitive maps in the late 1950s, the West Pennine Moors were criss-crossed with 'roads' used for vehicular access. Unfortunately, the lack of effective participation motorsports interests during the definition process, and the dominance of the process by those wishing to see the wholesale downgrading of byways to footpath status, has meant that the present distribution of rights of way reflects a political, and not a demand, situation.

5.69. In recent years however Lancashire County Council have come to accept first, the legitimacy and validity of access claims by trail riding interests and second, the basic inequity in byway provision (10). However, although accepting that the reinstatement of Green Lane status is a valid long term objective, the Council has preferred to adopt a "gradual, low-key approach" (11). Thus, to redress the balance, yet appease the admittedly powerful recreational and landowning lobbies, the Council has sought the designation of 'concessionary' routes;

" ... the surest way of establishing such a network will be for use of the tracks to be made available, ideally by written agreement, to accredited trail riding clubs, with 'reasonable' onus being placed upon the clubs to ensure that usage is effectively controlled" (12).

Consultation with the local TRF group during negotiation over such routes has been important, not only in seeking detailed route plans, but also in providing a focus of organised motorcycle activity. Although none have yet been established, the TRF have proposed some 15 - 20 basic routes, though it seems unlikely that more than six will come into being in the near future. The essence of the West Pennine Moors concessionary routes scheme has been voluntary restraint. Vehicular interests clearly have a valid claim for the widespread upgrading of routes within the Moors enclave under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Yet public opposition, acknowledged by the County Council, is strong (13). The advantage of the concessionary routes scheme, as recognised by all parties, is that it will limit the impact of the activities of informal riders (14).

5.70. In many ways trail riding is a paradox. Although attracting widespread and emotive public opposition and provoking contradictory actions on the part of semi-Governmental agencies such as the Countryside Commission, there is little real evidence of physical damage or environmental disamenity caused by trail riding in its organised form (15). Furthermore, the relationship between trail riding groups - principally the local branches of the TRF and many local authorities - has been one of mutual assistance, unique among motorsports in general. In addition to codes of conduct and individual instances of voluntary restraint, local TRF groups have sought involvement in local authority backed rights of way users' groups (e.g. in Kent) and have fought upgrading in the courts and in various planning forums. The effect of these actions has been considerable. In South Yorkshire the County Rights of Way Officer has recently agreed to the upgrading of 66 byways, formerly of footpath status, after evidence submitted by the TRF.

## SUMMARY

5.71. The principal issues affecting off road motorcycle sports are the following:

1. the decline in available land of all sources, particularly for speed/race events, but also for trials;
2. Increasingly widespread public opposition organised by often newly-arrived rural residents. This is frequently provoked by the activities of informal riders who, by using sites unofficially, cause erosion and legal processes of site closure to be invoked;
3. Competition between motocross organisations, principally the ACU and the AMCA, but also between youth and adult clubs which has led to the localised decline in traditional adult ACU motocross and the growth of more commercial bodies;
4. The mushrooming commercialisation of motocross provoked by the increasing costs of competition and decline in venues, aided by the polarisation between ACU and AMCA competition; and
5. The proliferation of closed status events which occur outside the date control of individual ACU centres and, in sensitive areas, can create an impression of overuse.

The above are all manifestations of the underlying and linked issues of increasing costs and declining venues.

5.72. Many of these changes are taking place beyond the control or influence of individual clubs, or of the national bodies who remain reluctant to adopt a more interventionist role over land availability. Also, it could be argued that they are provoking the more damaging, less controlled activities of the informal sector by driving young riders away from formal competitions. Third they may be contributing to a decline in the number of clubs and events at a time when the popularity of motorcycle sports in general, and off-road motorcycling in particular, is increasing.

5.73. The response of clubs at local and regional levels to land loss, loss of events and the impact of the informal sector has been fragmentary and, in many instances, fatalistic. Nonetheless we are able to identify five basic strategies of action:

1. Internal controls and recommended procedures;
2. Formal liaison roles;

3. Site purchase and formalised processes of site organisation;
4. Commercial actions; and
5. Legal processes.

5.74. Internal controls include a growing number of club and Centre/Group regulations and voluntary codes regarding procedures for site acquisition and overuse. The ACU has established a code of practice, in association with the AMCA and other motocross organisations, regarding the use of sites previously operated by other clubs. At the local level this code extends to informal contacts between clubs, Centres, Groups and organisations and, in areas where motocross sites are shared between ACU and AMCA clubs, joint policies regarding site use. The relaxation of the ACU's General Competition Rule 6, which formerly prohibited riders of the ACU competing in events organised by AMCA clubs, has facilitated greater contact in areas where entries for motocross events are low. However the joint organisation of events remains improbable.

5.75. Within the ACU itself, the large proportion of closed, as opposed to open, status events has been a source of concern as it can promote the overuse of some sites, and an impression of overuse of others. Although many Centres have adopted a policy of encouraging clubs to run more open events, a recent attempt by the Southern Centre ACU to make it mandatory to run one open for every two closed events was heavily and successfully opposed by the clubs.

5.76. In an effort to prevent overuse ACU clubs have generally accepted an unwritten code that private agricultural motocross sites should not be used more than four times in any one year. However such a voluntary restriction can break down at the instigation of landowners who, eager to gain the maximum revenue from otherwise unproductive sites, seek use by other clubs (16).

5.77. There are few strategies available to mitigate rising costs. Although clubs may seek to promote specifically low cost events (for example, by insisting that competitors use cheap and old rather than purpose-built machines) such actions are only really appropriate for trail events. There is not a great deal of difference, in terms of participant costs, between ACU and AMCA motocross events.

5.78. Similarly, there are few actions available to clubs wishing to curb the abuse of sites by 'informal' riders. Nationally we have found few instances of site policing by individual clubs where club members have advised informal riders of the illegality of the activities. As a whole, however, such actions remain largely unfeasible.



5.79. Formal liaison roles appear to be increasing as possible procedures for representation. Clubs and Centres have sought involvement in regional and local motorsport or 'noisy sport' liaison bodies largely through Regional Sports Councils (17), but occasionally independently (18). Motorcycle interests have used such bodies as bridges of contact to the formal processes of land use planning and statutory environmental management. In addition, local authorities too have sought to establish formal procedures of contact and liaison between themselves and motorcycle interests, particularly regarding rights of way and local authority provision (19). The effectiveness of the formal liaison roles has been difficult to judge. Undoubtedly they have provided motorcycle interests with a supportive platform. The published reports of these liaison bodies have identified the declining availability of sites as a functional issue, warranting the attention of national sporting bodies, public landowners and local authorities alike (20). Their error appears to have been to treat motorsports, or indeed 'noisy' sports (thereby including rifle shooting, model aircraft flying etc.) as a single entity with regard to site demands and procedures of control. As has been seen off road motorcycle activities are characterised by informal and ad hoc site use rather than formal use of purpose built facilities. The a priori inclination of bodies involved in the provision of sport facilities has been toward the latter (21). The centralisation that such a view implies is opposed by off road motorcycle interests who generally prefer the relatively infrequent use of many sites to the frequent use of a few.

5.80. Where motorcycle interests share formal negotiative and liaison bodies with other rural and access interests, their value as effective platforms is considerably diminished. In many accessible rural areas new initiatives are emerging for the reconciliation of competing recreational interests (user forums, access projects, Groundwork schemes, etc.). In those instances where motorcycle interests have been involved (in some areas, they are specifically excluded) they have found such forums inaccessible and implicitly biased against motorcycle interests. Furthermore, such bodies are dominated numerically and in terms of political strength, by those interests opposed in principle to off road activities in the countryside. These types of formal contact serve frequently only to constrain motorsport interests.

5.81. Processes of site acquisition (purchase or leasehold) are not generally an option for clubs principally for reasons of cost. However clubs are also reluctant to enter into processes associated with formal acquisition and land use planning. But as has been shown in areas of concentrated demand yet declining availability, the existence of 'money for rides' clubs provides a valuable outlet for those seeking off road riding. Their affiliation to the ACU is indicative of a tacit, if qualified, acceptance of their function in this respect; as a means of combating declining conventional opportunities.

5.82. More relevant, on a national scale, are commercial motorsport facilities, operated like racing circuits (see below, Chapter 7). Although their effectiveness as centres of higher status motorsport competition is marked they will not replace the general tendency among individual clubs for site decentralisation.

5.83. Finally, there remain legalistic and judicial courses of action to counteract site loss. Sites used for off road motorcycle sport are most often however negotiated on an informal basis. Site search is generally undertaken by word of mouth rather than through advertisement. The informality of the user/landowner relationship precludes, in most instances, either formal leasing or confrontational and legalistic recourse over site loss. In this motorcycle clubs resemble those most frequently used in metaphorical comparison, gypsies. Like gypsies, they suffer territorial insecurity and a false image of ignominy. Like gypsies also, however, they resist the direction and control of local authorities and legalistic procedures.

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## CHAPTER 5

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## LAND, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

6.1. Up to this point we have seen off-road motorsports as primarily dependent upon private, informally negotiated sites and controlled through rules and regulations imposed by self-appointed governing bodies. Yet motorsports are increasingly affected by factors external to their control or influence. Agencies otherwise external to the motorsport community are assuming increasing relevance, in matters of site acquisition and use, and in the prohibition, control or the provision of facilities. These agencies, and the procedures associated with them, fall into three broad subject areas; land use planning, noise and environmental management, and access. This Chapter considers each in turn.

### LAND USE PLANNING

6.2. Organised motorsports exist for the most part without contact with the land use planning system. Most events occur temporarily on private or other land that is used for other primary purposes - either as farmland, car parks, plantations, airfields, or MoD and Forestry Commission land. However, the land use planning system can affect organised motorsport in a number of ways by:

1. establishing the legitimacy of such activities by making firm statements of their right to use land, or to retain existing sites and areas of use, in development plans;
2. controlling any major external effects of motorsports uses of land by planning conditions on permanent facilities or on sites used on a temporary basis for more than 14 days a year;
3. excluding motorsport uses by withdrawing permitted development rights under the General Development Order by use of an Article IV Direction; or by allocating land used for motorsports for other uses in local plans;
4. 'managing' motorsports provision by facilitating the leasing of land or otherwise providing sites for club use, often at the same time reducing or removing use in other 'less acceptable' areas.

6.3. Generally, organised motorsports (including their needs and demands) are poorly understood by planners, and the various disciplines are poorly differentiated. 'Motorsports' are all too often seen as one generic 'problem'. There is little or no contact between local planning authorities and governing bodies on a regular basis, unless through a regional sports council liaison committee, although there is some contact with clubs where specific problems have occurred (for example, site loss, noise complaints, or conflicts with horse riders and ramblers). Although regarded as a legitimate use of countryside land, organised motorsports

are universally regarded as intrusive in such environments, clashing with conventional amenity and environmental policies. The image of motorcycle sports in particular is poor, coloured largely by the preoccupation amongst planning authorities with the issue of informal motor vehicle activities.

6.4. Although planning exists to 'balance' and mediate between conflicting interests in land use, the decisions which emerge from local decision-making arenas rarely support the demands of motorsports interests. In this respect, few local authorities thereby possess a 'policy' of any sort (see Fig. 6.1.). With regard to motorsport, the day to day operation of planning is reactive and restrictive; a succession of 'case' work in response to problems usually identified by elected representatives demanding some form of enforcement action. Through development control, enforcement and land management decisions, organised motorsports are 'moved on' rather in the manner of gypsies, but without any formal recognition of their problem as is the case with gypsies (1). Moreover, whilst many planners perceive a need to accomodate organised motorsports on suitable sites, the bias which discussion in elected forums engenders has resulted in few site provisions being made. Results of the national survey of local authorities conducted in the course of the research suggest that motorsports are perceived as a significant and high profile 'problem' for local authorities, although notably far less ubiquitous than issues surrounding informal motor vehicle activities.

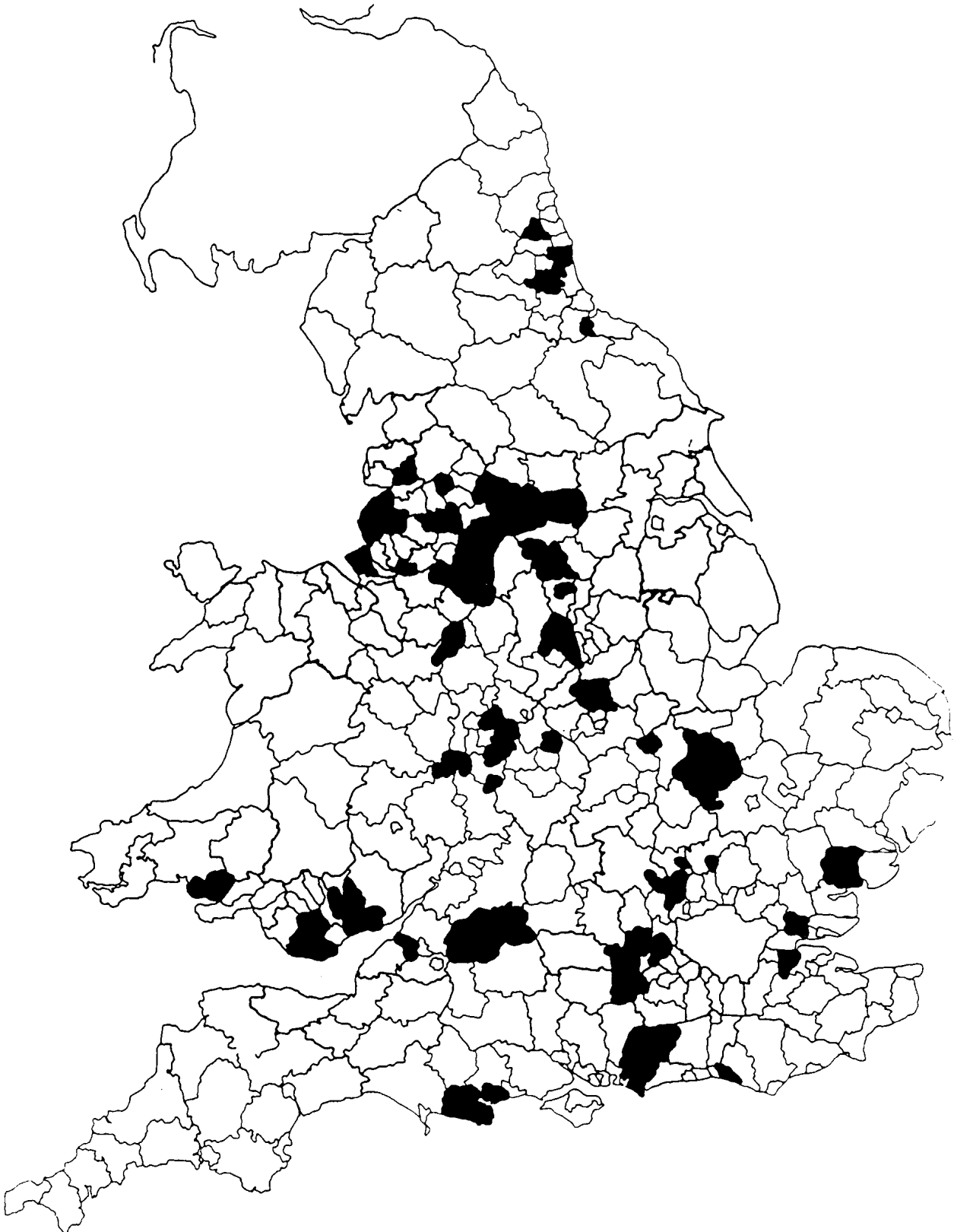
6.5. Development plans establish the general land use presumptions to be applied to applications for development (at county level in structure plans) and the specific land uses intended for particular sites (in local plans) (2). Motorsports are generally seen as marginal within the spectrum of leisure and recreation policies in structure plans. Few contain policies for motorsports, despite the fact that strategic issues clearly exist (e.g. extensive travel to use enduro sites in Wales and other upland areas; car rallying in upland areas in Wales and the north west). Those plans referring to motorsports usually suggest restriction of activities to a small number of areas or existing locations. Many include general presumptive phrases which could expel such activities altogether if rigorously applied (3). Few have a specific and positive policy regarding motorsports. One that does is the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review, published in 1985, which in recognising the underprovision of strategic leisure facilities sets out to establish certain leisure priority areas in which

"There will be priority given to ...  
motorsports and equestrian sports in  
southern and central Hertfordshire." (4)

Motorsport interests have little or no contact with, or understanding of, this level of planning. (They have slightly greater contact with the regional recreation strategy process for example, through the membership of RCSR Countryside Committees but these have proved relatively weak advisory and reconcilatory tools.)

Figure 6.1.

Local Authority Respondents to National Questionnaire Survey  
Claiming to have a 'Policy' for Motorsport Contained within a  
Planning Document.



6.6. Local plans have proved a more important arena for motorsport interests but experiences of consultation and public participation have not, on the whole, been beneficial. In subject plans dealing with recreation and countryside matters they have made little input, and had little effect, on policy formation. Any inputs made have been swamped by the combined activities of local branches of the Ramblers Association, the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the National Farmers' Union, local residents associations and other conservation interests. In Greater Manchester, the major weight of the consultation evidence on the Croal-Irwell Plan was anti motorsport and tentative proposals for motorcycling provision attracted the largest number of adverse comments (5). During the public local inquiry of the West Pennine Moors Local Plan, both the Sports Council and representations of AMCA clubs appeared in order to seek motorsports provision (6). (Such provision had been proposed in specific items in the draft plan but had been deleted due to opposition before the deposit stage.)

6.7. A number of district local plans have attempted to allocate sites for organised motorsport, or to confirm the use of existing sites used only on a time limited or temporary basis (7). This is most likely to succeed where land is in local authority ownership, but the number of local plans containing such policies is far from encouraging. Of the 343 local authorities responding to our national survey, only 30 identified sites within local plans. In some cases sites have been identified at draft plan stage only to be deleted at deposit stage due to local opposition (8). In another case in the Hampshire study area, a site has been deleted prior to deposit of the local plan although all parties agree informally that its use for motorsports will continue (9).

6.8. In some cases attempts at centralised provision are linked with intended prohibition of motorsports in other parts of a district. In East Hampshire a major site at Southleigh Forest was to be provided for a number of motorsports (primarily motocross and motorcycle trials) (10) but a concomitant was the suggested employment of an Article IV Direction to control activities on a number of other private sites.

6.9. Many motorsports sites are short-term uses of land in transition between one use and another. The use of 'marginal' or even open land can be negated by the provisions of local plans. In Hampshire the use of Portsmouth Airport as a major sub-regional motorsport facility has been lost following the allocation of the adjacent area for housing. The Gosport and Fareham MCC have also lost a site through a similar process. This process can also occur where land is defined for informal recreation use (11) and even where residential development is allowed adjacent to motorsports sites, the resulting objections to noise causing the abandonment of the site due to the enforcement of environmental health powers. It was suggested by interviewees that some landowners are more willing to allow motorsports use of marginal land in the urban fringe, as its removal as part of a planning permission for other uses can be counted as a 'community benefit'.



### Development Control

6.10. In general, all proposals for any development or use of land require to be submitted to the relevant local authority for planning permission (12). However, the majority of motorsports use is temporary without any need for the erection of permanent facilities. Temporary and permanent use are therefore distinguished in the following discussion.

#### (i) Temporary Use

6.11. Even if a field is used for one motocross event a year, this constitutes a change of use in planning terms. However, under Article III of Class IV of General Development Order (1977), the use of a site for motorsport for not more than 14 days in any one year does not require planning permission provided the land reverts to its chief function following that temporary change. Class IV states that the following changes of use are permitted:

'... the use of land, other than a building or the curtilage of a building for any purpose or purposes except as a caravan site on not more than 28 days in total in a calendar year (of which not more than 14 days in total may be devoted to use for the purpose of motorcar or motorcycle racing) ... and the erection or placing or moveable structures on the land for the purposes of that use: provided that, for the purpose of the limitations imposed on the number of days on which land may be used for motorcar or motorcycle racing, account shall only be taken of those days on which races are held or practicing takes place.' (13)

Thus, although adverse media perceptions of motorsport have caused the 14-day rule to be described as a 'loophole' (14), it is in practice a more restrictive provision than for all other temporary uses except markets. The reduction of the original tolerance for motorsports from 28 to 14 days was brought in under the General Development Order 1973 in response to lobbying by countryside interests.

6.12. Development control powers are little used however under this provision to limit temporary use. Our detailed case study evidence of around 250 sites suggests that clubs take great care to use an area of land for less than 14 days in any one year. Clubs prefer a range of sites used infrequently and very rarely apply for planning permission themselves (the main exceptions being non-RACMSA car clubs promoting stock car and autograss events). Clubs are well aware that an application, with its attendant publicity, will formalise opposition. Landowners, who may rent a site to a number of clubs, are more likely to apply for permission, but again this is rarely done. In our North West case study area, only one application was submitted of this nature; a site at Nangreaves, permission for which was refused by Rossendale Borough Council, the appeal by the AMCA being dismissed by the DoE.

6.13. A number of organised motorsports clubs do, however, inadvertently fall foul of the development control system by not leaving their site in a condition that is judged to be a complete reversion to its pre-existing use. By leaving toilet blocks, wooden stakes (which form a protective barrier around a motocross circuit), crash barriers or signs, some clubs have been left open to enforcement action. Three such cases were found in Eastern Hampshire. In one case, the club subsequently submitted a planning application for such structures but this was, however, refused.

6.14 Although the 14-day rule has little relevance because of the way motorsports are organised, local authorities can seek to exclude use altogether on a site by making an Article IV Direction. An Article IV Direction can remove some part or all of the exemption allowed to motorsports on a particular site. Thus where the DoE is satisfied that it is 'expedient' that motorsport activities should not take place, or should take place for less than 14 days in any one year, an Order can be approved. Until 1978, approval of the DoE had to be obtained for such a Direction before it could be put into effect. Since 1978, however, a Direction can be made by a local authority with immediate effect, although it lapses if not approved by the DoE within 6 months. Approved Directions remain in force indefinitely unless cancelled by the Authority (15).

6.15. It is not known how many Article IV Directions exist nationally and the number related to motorsports is also unknown (16). Our national survey reveals that of 343 authorities 27 had submitted Directions for confirmation by the DoE. Directions covering motorsports in areas as wide as a district are, by convention emerging from Circulars 39/67 and 12/73, not normally approved (17). East Hampshire District considered a Direction in 1983 but, following advice from the DoE, did not proceed. Individual sites have been made subject to Directions however, including Court Lodge Down (Wealden District Council); Darley Moor Airfield, Ashbourne (West Derbyshire District Council); Kemberland Wood, Canterbury (Canterbury City Council); Oldwick Farm, Emsworth (Chichester District Council); and Wardlow, Peak District National Park (Peak Park Joint Planning Board). Where permission is subsequently refused following a Direction, owners and those with a contractual right to use the land (i.e. motorsport clubs) appear able to claim compensation (18). The method used, as demonstrated in the Peak District case, is to apply for use for 13 days of the year and obtain a planning refusal before seeking redress (19).

6.16. However, compensation is a poor substitute for a lost site and the potential effect of a wider use of the Article IV Direction mechanism would be devastating, particularly for motocross and motorcycle trials. The net loss of sites, together with the 'knock-on' effects of the pressures which would result in adjacent areas, could destroy some motorsport disciplines as currently practiced.

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## (ii) Permanent Use

6.17. It follows from the above discussion that planning permissions for use over 14 days are concentrated in certain motorsport disciplines. These include mainly motorcar circuits, arena-based sports, and karting. The main attributes of the use of such sites are insecurity of tenure, combined frequently with a history of a long sequence of time limited permissions, often with restrictive planning conditions attached. All sites with permissions less than 10-15 years old have conditions relating to such matters as frequency of site use, times of the year, week or day use is permitted, noise levels, times and numbers of Tannoys, and the size of engines allowed on vehicles.

6.18. The use of airfields for motorsports dominates this category. They are an obvious facility often away from housing, with tarmac surfaces readily adaptable to use, and a large amount of space for spectator access, pits and paddocks. Blackbushe Airfield and the Thruxton Race Circuit typify the above situation. Blackbushe, used for karting, has an annual permission, renewed each year since 1966, which specifies use of the circuit on not more than 52 days a year, all use to be on Sundays, and all racing to start not earlier than 10.00am and to cease by 6.00pm. Continued use is dependent upon the goodwill of the site owner, and negotiations have occurred with the planning authority over the possibility of non-motorsports uses which would negate its use for karting. Thruxton has been used by the British Automobile Racing Club (BARC) since 1968. The original planning permission limited activity to 21 race events per year with 100 days of vehicle testing. When a further application for extended use was submitted in 1972 local objections led to the submission of an injunction against BARC regarding noise. Following a public inquiry race meetings were limited to 12 per year and unsilenced test sessions to eight. Track and PA system modifications were specified by conditions, as were tree screening, and building re-painting. An access road to the site was closed and silenced vehicle testing was limited to 20 days a year, excluding Bank Holidays, weekends and when the local school is in session. Subsequently, local objections have led to further controls being negotiated. With the exception of the Easter month no more than two events can occur in any one month, and racing must cease by 6.30pm. BARC have spent over £20,000 contesting injunctions and public inquiries over the last few years.

6.19. A succession of time limited permissions, interspersed with appeals is demonstrated at the Castle Combe Circuit in Wiltshire (20). The site, lying within an Area of Outstanding National Beauty, is in an area where the Structure Plan generally restricts rural development to that which is (a) essential to the rural economy, or (b) desirable for the enjoyment of its amenities (21). Motor racing has taken place on the site for 30 years but latterly has been limited to five days a year on a series of time limited permissions. These result from an appeal decision by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1968 which sought also to give the operators scope to find an alternative location. Following an application in 1980, and subsequent appeal, to increase racing days to 12 a year (between March and October) on a permanent basis, the Inspector's decision, recommending dismissal, was overruled by the DoE. The permission granted was for eight days racing per year (excluding the

November-February period) with a recommendation that North Wiltshire District Council review the permission after two years with a view to increasing the number of days racing to 10. The DoE, as the decision letter states, "reviewed the matter broadly", weighing the need to make provision for motor racing as a form of recreation, the planning history of the site, and the likely effects of use on the general character of the area and the amenities of those living in the vicinity. Stringent conditions limit the approved use to 8.00 am - 6.00 pm on race days, and the use of the PA system and paddock loudspeaker to the same hours, require noise emission control equipment on vehicles, and a site traffic management scheme to be agreed with the local authority.

6.20. Arguably a number of the conditions applied to organised motorsport activities are deficient under the 'tests' of precision and reasonableness in Government advice. In particular noise conditions may be ultra vires in that controls under environmental health legislation are already available (22). The complexities of planning negotiation leave motorsports clubs in a weak position. Most of the facilities which survive are run by the private sector who are more likely to have the time and resources to make their case professionally.

### Provision

6.21. Involvement in provision for organised motorsports is patchy, and the stances of many authorities are confused. Table 6.1. summarises the strategies of provision undertaken by the 343 local authorities responding to our national questionnaire survey. The most important element of the picture is the leasing of sites to individual clubs for (normally) motorcycling events. In the North West study area, eight sites are leased in this way and one was found in Eastern Hampshire. Other examples include the use of the Nash Mills Depot, Kings Langley by the Berkhamstead MCC for trials under lease from the District Council (23), and the agreement between Buckinghamshire County Council and a local trials motorcycle club to use Langley Wood, Little Missenden (24). However, most such arrangements appear limited to trials.

6.22. A number of local authorities have sought to link organised and informal use by granting leases to clubs whereby they also supervise or train informal motorcyclists. Whilst most clubs are keen to be involved in such activities, they are less willing to see their own club activities limited to one site in this way. (Informal use is discussed in Chapter 8). The need to provide for organised motorsports is recognised by a wide range of local authorities yet actual provision is rare. Few have succeeded in obtaining resources or local support for provision. Many have conducted extensive searches of their areas for sites (e.g. Sunderland MBC (25), Gwent CC (26)) but sites have been ruled out on locational criteria and in the expectation of stern local opposition. As long as motorsports interests remain fragmented, and largely uninvolved in the land use planning process, little improvement can be expected.

Table 6.1.

Local Authority Responses to the Demands of Recreation and  
Sporting Motor Vehicle Interests

Number of respondent authorities	Percentage of total response	Response
53	15	have either created a specific site (eg., a trail park), have leased land for use by motorsport or recreational interests, or have assisted or supported a private facility.
38	11	posses a 'stated policy' regarding motor sport and recreation.
32	9	have prepared <u>ad hoc</u> reports on the issue
32	9	have established specific committees to consider the issue.
30	9	have identified sites in Local Plans
21	6	have identified such activities within the context of recreational management plans.
6	2	have established management agreements relating to the use of sites for such activities.
3	1	have sought the establishment of waymarked trails

N = 343

Source: Authors' questionnaire survey of local authorities in England and Wales, 1985.

### Concluding Remarks

6.23. A number of conclusions emerge from this brief review. First, it is apparent that consultative procedures have been of little use to motorsports interests as their prime effect has been to formalise opposition rather than permit genuine access to decision-making. Formal commitments to the legitimacy of organised motorsports, often responding to regional recreation strategies, have been made but the implementation of schemes on the ground has been minimal. In the Hampshire area there was little effective counter-voice to resident conservationist policies. In the North West non-local conservation principles have also dominated policy rather than the less vehemently expressed, but often more supportive, views of local residents. Second, it is clear that a policy-making hiatus exists in many local authorities between officers and councillors. A large number of instances have been noted where officers have identified sites only to have them ruled out on grounds of public antagonism or anticipated lack of electoral support. Third, development control has been effectively influenced by the organised representations of groups such as the Ramblers Association, the National Farmers Union, horse riding interests, and various local amenity societies. Motorsports clubs have been repeatedly forced into site or venue abandonment, their ability to continue competition being dependent on negotiating a succession of new arrangements with other landowners. Although the AMCA has sought a more participatory stance in the North West, the ACU generally leave such site matters to clubs. Motorsports interests are unsophisticated lobbyists yet, as one commentator has written:

" ... if people who take part in motorcycle activities are not provided with facilities, then they will find their own and any chance of control will have gone" (27).

6.24. Finally, although organised motorsports interests seek to avoid contact with planning, such a stance is increasingly untenable if new sites cannot continually be found. The danger is that a perpetuation of the present situation, which already severely conditions the practice of motorsports, will lead to a major collapse in participation in some disciplines.

### NOISE AND STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

6.25. The impact of many forms of motorsport can be considerable. As has been seen controls and regulations exist to ameliorate such impact, not only from within the motorsport community itself, but also through the statutory process of land use planning. This seeks, through the control of motorsport activities (by means of prohibition, regulation or provision), to locate such activities where impacts can be minimised. As the preceeding chapter demonstrated, most attempts to plan for (or indeed against) motorsport, have resulted from individual instances of land use conflict. Where there is no conflict generated by motorsport activities land use planning has a generally small part to play in affecting those activities. The same can also be said of two further procedures of external control; noise enforcement and statutory environmental management.

## Noise Enforcement

6.26. Motorsports are distinguishable from many other sporting activities principally on the grounds of their noise emission. The level of noise produced by motorsport activities varies according to the type of machine or vehicle, the nature of the activity, and the distance from source at which the noise is perceived or measured. The perception of noise is also strongly related to the image of the activity and the attitudes of those affected. Whereas a 500cc motocross machine in an otherwise quiet rural area can produce an exhaust noise emission in excess of 105 dB(A), a crowded swimming pool in an urban environment, which can produce a similar noise level, is considered far less intrusive. Among motor vehicles it is undoubtedly motorcycles that are considered to be the most disturbing (28), despite the fact that not only are there far less motorcycles than cars on the road, but also that there is only a 6 dB(A) difference between the maximum permitted noise emission of all cars on the Public Highway (80 dB(A)) and that of the highest engine capacity category of road motorcycle (86 dB(A)).

6.27. The statutory control of vehicle noise takes two forms. First, there are fixed upper limits for noise emission from vehicles using the Public Highway. These are set out in the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, 1978 and subsequent amendments, and are reproduced in Table 6.2. To drive a vehicle which produces noise in excess of the limits is a prosecutable offence under Regulations 114 and 115 of the 1978 Regulations. Significantly the current noise limits are, on average, three decibels lower than they were when the Regulations were originally laid down in 1978. The (Construction and Use) Regulations, however, exist solely for the control of noise levels on the Public Highway and do not

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Table 6.2. Statutory Noise Limits for Vehicles Using the Public Highway.

	dB(A)
CARS*	80
MOTORCYCLES	
under 80 cc	78
80 - 125 cc	80
125 - 350 cc	83
350 - 500 cc	85
Over 500 cc	86

\* For certain classes of 'historic car' (i.e. those built on or after 1.1.31., certain higher noise limits do exist).

Source: Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, 1978.  
Schedule 9 (Amended 1980/1982).

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apply to off road sites (whether in private or public ownership). They do however apply to byways, Roads Used as Public Paths and Green Lanes and to purpose-built and converted race tracks, circuit or courses.



6.28. In off road situations the control of noise is dependent upon the extent to which that noise is judged to be a nuisance. Under Section 58 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, environmental health inspectors are empowered to monitor, limit or prevent the creation of excessive noise. With regard to motorsport activities, this may result in the prevention of the use of excessively noisy machines, the cessation of use of motorsport venues, or the removal of specific sources of noise such as PA systems. There are three characteristic features of noise control under the 1974 Act. First, there are no fixed and absolute maximum levels of noise (29). Thus, the identification of excessive or intrusive noise must depend upon the nature of the environment within which it is taking place. As the methods of recording such noise vary significantly and there is no universally accepted standard, (but see procedures suggested by the British Standards Institute (30)), enforcement is at the discretion of local environmental health inspectors and dependent upon the circumstances of individual intrusions. Second, the creation of excessive noise can be subject to negotiation as well as prohibition. Finally, the creation of noise by motor vehicles off the Public Highway does not per se constitute an illegal act. It is only subsequent to abatement action that such noise must either cease or be regulated.

6.29. Under the provisions of the 1974 and other Acts a number of strategies of noise control are commonly applied, each of which are relevant to motorsports. In the bulk of instances where environmental health powers are involved a complaint from local residents will have led, if the noise is judged to be a nuisance, to the submission of an abatement notice on either the site users or the site owner (if the activity is taking place with the owner's permission). Within organised motorsports, this is usually the point at which an organising club either loses the site or has its activities curtailed. If motor vehicle activities continue on the site, environmental health authorities can seek a conviction under the 1974 Act by identifying those using the site in apparent breach of the abatement notice, or the landowner, if permission for the use of the site is still being given. This process has had a major effect upon motorsport clubs in that, due to their recurrent use of sites, they are more easy to monitor by the authorities. The result is frequently that 'cowboy' motor vehicle enthusiasts remain undetected by noise prevention legislation. Legitimate clubs who, as we have seen, instigate their own noise monitoring arrangements have found themselves penalised by the activities of the informal sector.

6.30. A second process for complaint against noise is through direct appeal to the magistrates (under Section 59 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974). If the magistrates agree a complaint is justified, a summons will be issued and served on those responsible for the noise. If at the subsequent court hearing the noise is deemed a nuisance, then an abatement notice will be served. However, this course of action is rarely taken, objectors preferring to deal with the local authority and the environmental health inspectors.

6.31. If a local resident feels adversely affected by proximity to a source of noise, either permanent, such as a factory or motorway, or temporary, such as a motorsport event, application can be made for compensation (if the value of the property is said to depreciate by more than £50) under the Land Compensation Code (31). Furthermore, if the noise disamenity is long term, a resident may apply for a reduction in the rateable value of their properties under the General Rate Act 1967.

6.32. A further element of statutory control has been through Codes of Practice for the minimisation of noise, drawn up by the Secretary of State for the Environment under Section 71 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. As yet, however, such Codes exist only for intruder alarms (32), model aircraft (33), and ice cream van chimes (34).

6.33. Yet another element of the statutory control of noise is through the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Under this legislation employers are required to take reasonable steps to reduce the exposure of employees to excessive noise levels (35). This legislation is most applicable at organised events, particularly those involving a permanent racing circuit. Officials at race meetings, permanently or temporarily employed by the race organiser, are advised by the Government to wear ear protection and, under the legislation, employers should see that this is available (36).

6.34. The control of noise has also been integrated into the land use planning system (37). Under the auspices of various guidelines, and the Town and Country Planning Acts 1968 and 1971, local authorities are required to take into account detrimental noise effects in their consideration of planning applications (38). Thus an application approved for the use of a site for motorsports may have conditions relating to noise, particularly concerning the use of loud speakers, or the use of the entire facility at certain periods, or on certain days, when noise would be deemed an intrusion (such as public holidays or Sunday evenings). Significantly, however, Circular 1/85 states that noise conditions in development control procedures should not supercede or replace noise controls which can be applied through non-planning legislation.

6.35. It should be stressed that off road motorsports do not constitute a major proportion of formal noise complaints (see Table 6.3.). In Cheshire complaints related to motorsports amounted to only 1.7 per cent of all noise complaints received in the County between 1978 and 1980 (39). For motorsports as a whole, the most common sources of complaint are stadium based facilities, which are often located relatively close to residential areas, and race circuits which can use unlicensed vehicles. At Thruxton and Castle Combe (see above, paras.6.18. and 6.19.) conditions imposed as part of planning permissions control the noise impact of permanent facilities. Off road sites, on the other hand, due largely to the informality of their use, attract personal complaints either to the landowner or direct to the club. These can lead either to a reduction in the rate and timing of site use, or to site loss, in which case the club is usually unable to appeal to a third party.

Table 6.3.

Average Number of Noise Complaints per Year by Source  
of Noise, Received by Cheshire County Council

<u>Source of noise</u>	<u>AVERAGE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PER YEAR</u>
1. General Industrial	221
- Fans/Cooling	- 49
- Generators etc	- 43
2. General Domestic	218
- Household	- 134
- HiFi/Tv	- 72
- Parties	- 25
3. Animals	153
4. Commercial	112
5. Entertainment	75
6. Construction	72
7. Roads	52
8. Sport	40
- Motorsport	- 17.

Source: Cheshire County Council, 1981, A Review of Air Pollution and Noise in Cheshire: 1978 - 1980. Environmental Health Department and County Planning Office, 1981.

6.36. Motorsport clubs are keen to minimise the noise effects of their activities. This is done in five ways:

1. By informing and liaising with local communities over dates and times of events (which in the case of road rallies is a statutory requirement);
2. By refraining from using sites more times than would be acceptable to local residents;
3. By coordinating events between different clubs in an attempt to ensure that certain areas, containing a number of sites, are not overused nor are used consecutively each weekend for a long period;
4. By the careful monitoring and control of noise levels; and
5. On occasion, by inviting local environmental health officers to events in order to check noise levels themselves.

Where a sympathetic relationship can be created between motorsport clubs and local communities, the effects of noise can be both ameliorated by the former and tolerated by the latter. Thus although many clubs interviewed during this research had received complaints they had overcome them by, for example, moving PA systems downhill, stopping events during church services, or seeking to introduce local communities to competitive motorsport by organising charity events and local fetes. Unfortunately such actions have only been successfully used by clubs using rural sites. Objections appear more forthcoming at urban fringe sites and objectors appear less amenable to compromise solutions.

6.37. Where formal procedures of noise control are involved and abatement notices served, clubs have either lost sites outright (for example, at Velmeade Farm, Church Crookham, Hampshire), or have had to appeal through the magistrates court against such notices. Though expensive such procedures may allow some negotiated pattern of site use to continue (for example, as at Park Gate, Fareham, Hampshire, which is used five times a year following an appeal against a noise abatement order). At the Streatley Hills site (Hampshire), a motocross venue operated on private agricultural land by the Mortimer Motor Cycle Club, an out of court settlement between the landowner (on behalf of the club) and the Environmental Health Department of Newbury District Council has resulted in the following conditions:

1. No engines started before 10.00 hrs;
2. Racing to be finished before 19.00 hrs;
3. Loud speakers to be kept to 65 dB(A); and
4. A restriction to six meetings per year.

In this instance the Southern Region of the Sports Council endorsed the activities of the motorcycle club and sought to draw the District's attention to "... the social value of well-run motorcycle competition and training areas" (40). To those involved in motorsport, it remains a persistent complaint that a single objector can bring about the closure of an infrequently used site, or the cancellation of an event, that might have provided recreation and sporting opportunities to hundreds of people.

6.38. In summary the statutory control of noise with respect to motorsports is, to a great extent, dependent upon the location of the event. If it occurs on the Public Highway then statutory noise limits are enforceable. By the same token machines using Green Lanes must comply with these statutory limits. If however vehicles are either purpose-built for off road competition, or are not required to be road legal, then the statutory control of noise is both less easy to enforce and, to a degree, waived in the face of internal controls within the governing bodies of motorsport. In situations of public nuisance the onus is very much on the objector to instigate prohibitive action. Nonetheless it is unfortunate that the growing instance of site abuse by the informal sector has led to the more widespread use of prohibitive powers in general.

### Environmental Management

6.39. Although noise is the most obvious disamenity ecological disturbance and physical erosion can also be significant, both for organised events and informal motor vehicle activities. Environmental disturbance has caused increased controversy over the last 10 years. The most significant environmental effects of motorsports activities may be as follows:

1. The destruction of flora;
2. The inhibition of floristic regeneration;
3. Disturbance to wildlife;
4. The destruction and compaction of top soil;
5. The erosion and rutting of surfaces and the resultant channelling of surface run-off; and
6. The widening and deepening of tracks.

Although there is evidence that horses and indeed walkers can similarly effect local environments (41), the speed at which machines and vehicles travel, and the frequency of use of certain areas, makes environmental damage by motor vehicles more acute (42).

6.40. The ability of local environments to withstand the pressure of vehicular use is highly variable (43). It is fortunate that sites used predominantly for organised motorsport are often relatively well-suited to such use. The gently sloping, well-drained grazing land of the south of

England is not greatly effected by motocross and grass track events, particularly as the frequency of use is controlled by the organising clubs. Similarly, the northern moorland areas of the Pennines and Welsh and Scottish hills are not seriously damaged by motorcycle trial events. In instances where organised events have proved damaging they have either been stopped (as at Haslingden Grane in the North West study area), or have been replaced by less damaging activities (as shown by the MoD's preference for trials and smooth tyre events on sandy soils in the south).

6.41. The foremost statute in respect of local environmental protection is the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Under Part II of the Act the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) can designate areas of privately held land as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the grounds of the ecological, floristic, faunal, geological or physiological merits of the site, or where these are deemed to be of particular significance. Each designation is accompanied by a schedule whereby the NCC informs the landowner of a range of land uses and activities that may be inimicable to the nature conservation value of the site and for which notifications of changes of use are required. Under the notification procedure, off road motorcycling can be identified as a specific activity likely to damage sites and features (44). Having listed off road motorcycling as a specific source of potential damage to an SSSI, the Secretary of State, through the NCC, has the power to prohibit such use via a Section 29 Order. The relevant subsection of the Wildlife and Countryside Act states:

"No person shall carry out, on any land to which this subsection applies, any operation which ... appears to the Secretary of State to be likely to destroy or damage the flora, fauna or geological or physiological features." (45)

Thus to promote or to participate in off road vehicle activities on land designated as an SSSI, and on which such activities are specifically mentioned, either in the notification, or through a Section 29 or Nature Conservation Order, as being likely to damage features of that SSSI, is potentially an offence. As yet the only cases that have come to court (related to SSSIs) concern the destruction of designated woodland and have not involved off road vehicle use.

6.42. Specific controls govern the pollution of soil or water by motor vehicles. Under Section 3 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 it is an offence to cause environmental hazard by the deposit of noxious or polluting substances. Although no specific instances of prosecution under this legislation (with regard to off road vehicle activities) has been brought to light during the course of this research, individual instances of oil pollution from off road vehicles have been recorded (46).

6.43. A second area of site management relates to the provision and activities of site wardens, and the voluntary efforts of local conservation trusts. Site wardens, appointed for the management of local and national nature reserves, county parks and other recreational or landscape conservation areas, are financed by the Countryside

Commission, the NCC, the Manpower Services Commission, local authorities and other large landowning agencies. Their principal roles with regard to informal activities have been to prohibit access to sensitive areas and to direct them to areas where their activities will be tolerated or are specifically provided for. Examples of provision and prohibition are examined in Chapter 8. Situations where effective environmental management for off road activities has been undertaken in sensitive areas include the Sefton Coast, Merseyside (47) used for organised sand races; the Quantock Hills, Somerset (48), and Salwells Wood, Dudley (49) used informally. Generally where motorcycle clubs have sought to use land in sensitive areas they have liaised closely with site wardens and local naturalist trusts. In the Hampshire study area one trials venue near Selbourne has been used for many years under such an association.

6.44. Finally, procedures for environmental management involve the control and regulation of access. As these procedures affect a number of types of motorsport, and are therefore of a general relevance, they are dealt with broadly in the following section.

### ACCESS

6.45. Motorsports, and their informal counterparts, depend ultimately upon gaining access to sites and routes upon which their activities can take place without interruption. In terms of legal and statutory rights and procedures for access, three basic types of land can be identified:

1. Enclosed land;
2. Open land; and
3. Rights of way.

Here we shall consider each of these in terms of access and the relevance of the associated legislation to the practice of motorsports.

### Enclosed Land

6.46. Access to enclosed land in either public or private ownership is dependent upon the authorisation or permission of the landowner. Statutory protection of landowners' rights of exclusive access is contained within the Road Traffic Act 1972 (Section 36) which specifies that it is an offence to drive a vehicle off a road without the landowner's permission except within 15 yards of the centre of the road for parking, saving of life, fire or other emergencies (50). However, because the police do not have the automatic right to pursue would be offenders under this legislation on private enclosed land, the law of trespass is more commonly invoked (51).

6.47. Being a civil rather than a criminal matter, invoking the law of trespass depends primarily upon a landowner initiating legal action against an identified offender(s). However prosecution for trespass is most often used as a threat. Legal action can be costly and prolonged and depends upon the identification of the trespasser(s).

6.48. Collectively the law of trespass, and Section 36 of the Road Traffic Act 1972, provide the basis for the exclusion of unauthorised motor vehicles from private enclosed land. To a degree the two statutes duplicate each other's powers, and there is some debate concerning the applicability of the Road Traffic Act 1972 to private enclosed sites (52). It is often the policy of local authorities to limit their use of the 1972 Act to incursions on open and common land, preferring to encourage civil actions with regard to private land. Clearly such statutory regulations do not seriously affect the practice of motorsports which take place with the full authorisation of landowners. It is informal activities that are principally constrained by the Road Traffic Act and the law of trespass.

6.49. More relevant to organised motorsports is the process of rating private land. Under the provisions of the General Rate Act 1967, privately owned land is subject to a rateable value from which an annual rate is derived payable either by the owner or the 'rateable occupier'. Under Section 26 of the Act agricultural land is specifically exempted from rating, unless it is used either "exclusively for sport" or as a "race course" for which a rent or hire fee is paid (53). Certain forms of motorsport would undoubtedly fall within this latter category (especially motocross and grass track racing) and although provision exists under the Act for the local rating authority to waive or offer rebate to non-profit making sports clubs (54), this is totally discretionary.

6.50. Furthermore, the question of transient use, which has been established within land use planning at under 14 days per year (55), has not been defined under the 1967 Act. Although a single horse racing event on private agricultural land has been held to be a rateable activity, other more frequent types of event are not rated. In some cases where motorcycle events have come to the attention of rating authorities clubs have been submitted with rate demands. A recent example is provided by the North Lincs. and South Humberside Motocross Club which, during 1984, ran eight junior events on private agricultural land. A £599 rate demand was submitted to the Club by the local authority, followed by the offer of a £100 rebate. As the Club ran only junior events (which cannot attract a paying gate) it has subsequently ceased operating, unable to pay rates of this nature in addition to the cost of hiring the venue (56).

6.51. Potentially the submission of rate demands on motorsport clubs is a major constraining factor, exacerbated by the tendency of clubs to overuse sites where other sources of land are in decline. Significantly, the demand for rates on such sites is very much at the discretion of local authorities. On the occasions where rate demands have been made they have resulted from the complaints of local residents.

6.52. Of increasing concern to private landowners is the question of liability. Under the terms of the Occupiers Liability Act 1957, a landowner or occupier (e.g., tenant) has a duty to protect visitors or users specifically invited on to the site, particularly if a rental is charged, from avoidable accidents. To a degree exemption from overall liability can result if warning notices and disclaimers are erected.



With regard to motorsport events, the landowner can be particularly liable, hence the insistence of all governing bodies that organising clubs take out (through event permits) third party insurance cover. Under the terms of the more recent Occupiers Liability Act 1984, the liability of landowners and occupiers is relieved for injuries incurred by authorised visitors for recreational or educational purposes. Due to the payment of site hire costs however, motorsports do not fall into this exempted use. Notably under the provisions of both Acts occupiers remain liable for injuries incurred by people using public rights of way across private land.

### Open Land

6.53. Open land, which can be defined as commons, moorland or unenclosed land in public ownership, is particularly susceptible to access abuse by members of the informal sector. In a number of instances these abuses have accompanied organised motorsport events. Many large areas of open land (such as sea shores, 'access' areas, National Parks, County Parks, commons, and local authority held open space) are frequently made generally accessible to the public; although there is no automatic right of access to such areas other than on statutory rights of way. For the most part access is specifically negotiated under the provisions of the Countryside Act 1968 (with respect of County Parks), the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (with respect to National Parks); and the Law of Property Act 1925, and Commons Registration Act 1965 (with respect to common land). Rights of access to all other open land can be conferred only by the landowner (which may be a semi-public agency such as the National Trust, or a private individual).

6.54. On these types of land the provisions of Section 36 of the Road Traffic Act, prohibiting vehicular access other than within 15 yards of the Public Highway, still apply unless: a) permission is given by the landowner; b) specific access agreements exist or; c) local bylaws exist facilitating limited vehicular access - usually for car parking. Thus where motorsports events take place on open land they do so under specific authorisation in a similar manner to that pertaining to enclosed land.

6.55. Open land is particularly significant for motorsports as a source of trial and four wheel drive venues. In the North West study area, the open moorland of the West Pennines has been an important resource for major trial events though, as we have seen, such events are increasingly located on land owned by a single landowner. Moreover, the use of the Moors for trials has been endorsed by local authorities (57).

6.56. Other sources of open land authorised for use include quarries, commons and beaches. Access to these is governed solely through the authorisation of landowner though with respect to commons and beaches, additional rights of access may be conferred. Rights of common are strictly limited and do not generally apply to vehicular access. Thus motorsport events utilising common land (such as AMCA motocross at the Clee Hills course in Shropshire, and junior motocross at Sopley Common,

Christchurch Dorset) take place with the permission of the local authority or commoners. Access to beaches is less strictly defined, though motorsport clubs seeking to run beach events usually make every effort to secure authorisation from a relevant local authority. In common with other areas of public land, beaches are subject to bylaws which generally restrict vehicular access, there being no general right of access either to beaches or to the foreshore (58). At Sefton Beach (Merseyside) for example, the local bylaw specifies that all vehicles must travel at no more than 10 mph, be within 50 yards of the sandhills, and be on the beach for the purpose of parking only. Where bylaws either do not exist or have lapsed, local authorities must erect signposts declaring the private ownership of land if they are to legitimately prevent access. On a number of beaches throughout Britain, the complicated issue of vehicular access is further compounded by the existence of longstanding dedicated rights of way to or across them.

6.57. Open spaces are, by their nature, accessible to unauthorised activities associated with the informal sector (see Chapter 8). For the most part, Section 36 of the Road Traffic Act 1972 serves to prohibit such unauthorised access though many local authorities and public landowners have also sought the creation of bylaws specifically excluding motorised vehicles from open spaces (59). Under both the Road Traffic Act and prohibitive bylaws the use of motor vehicles on open land constitutes a criminal offence. The principal limitation of these controls is the need to identify and apprehend offenders.

### Rights of Way

6.58. The only land that vehicles and drivers/riders have automatic rights of access to is the Public Highway as defined in Section 328 of the Highway Act 1980. Even then legitimate access is dependent upon vehicle registration and driver licencing (60). The Public Highway is mainly comprised of hard surface roads, the use of which for motorsports is strictly governed. In addition there are a number of alternative rights of way (see Table 6.4.). Of these, vehicular access exists only on byways and the majority of RUPPs which are thereby subject to all road traffic Acts. The vehicular use of bridleways and footpaths is permissible only within the context of private land and with the full authorisation of the relevant landowner(s). However in such instances provision exists under the Road Traffic 1972 for members of the public to officially object to speed events on footpaths and bridleways. Both motorcycle enduros and motorcar stage rallies in particular have suffered from venue loss as a result of this provision.

6.59. Although the terms of access for rights of way are statutorily defined the status of individual routes, crucial to the practice of legitimate motorsport, is dependent upon a number of less rigid criteria:

1. the state of the route;
2. the type of use made of the route in the past;
3. the extent of current use; and

Table 6.4.

Statutorily Defined Rights of Way

<u>Title</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Source of statutory definition</u>
Highway	strip of land over which all members of the public have right of passage on foot, horse or motorvehicle subject to licencing etc.	Highways Act 1980
Carriageway/ Byway	strip of land with conclusive vehicular rights of access though with no duty of local highway authority to maintain or lay down metalled surface.	Highways Act 1980 Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.
Road Used as Public Path	A right of way on foot and horse but without prejudice as to other rights such as vehicular access which may exist. RUPPs are an interim definition before classification under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981.	Highways Act 1980 Countryside Act 1968 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Bridleway	A right of way on foot or horseback.	as above
Footpath	A right of way over which there is foot access only.	as above.

Note: The term 'Green Lanes' refers collectively to Byways and RUPPs with  
. vehicular access.

Source (61).

#### 4. the extent of abuse.

Under Section 31 of the Highways Act 1980, the status of a route is defined on the basis of 20 years of use at least once a year, though in certain courts, such 'presumption of dedication' has been made on the basis of as little as four or five years evidence of use (62). Under Section 32 of the 1980 Act documentary evidence, such as maps, plans and historic records, can also be accepted as the basis for determining the status of a right of way. Thus if a route currently defined as a footpath can be shown either to have been used consistently in the past as a bridleway or road, or is defined as such in a historic document, a court can order a redefinition of that route accordingly. It is estimated that a large number of the currently defined footpaths and bridleways (of which there are some 100,000 miles) are of a lower status than their original use would suggest (63). One of the primary roles of organisations such as the Trail Riders Fellowship and the Byways and Bridleways Trust is to seek the redefinition of such routes.

6.60. Currently the status of the majority of highways and rights of way is under review. The Countryside Act 1968 required local authorities to draw up definitive maps of routes, particularly RUPPs, indicating their status based upon a three point test for reclassification (Schedule 10). This system, though complicated, facilitated the widespread downgrading of RUPPs to footpath and bridleway status, resulting in the loss of "thousands of green lanes" to trail riders (64). In 1981 it was replaced by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Section 53 of which allows for a continuous review of rights of way status under the making of Modification Orders with regard to the Definitive Map. Although much criticism has ensued regarding the recalcitrance of local authorities in acting upon rights of way redefinition (65), the current procedure makes it easier for members of the public, including motorsports interests, to contest the status of individual routes. Under Section 54 of the Act all RUPPs must be reclassified into either byways, bridleways or footpaths, though there are contradictory statements regarding this process of reclassification between the 1981 Act (Section 54(2) and (3)) and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (Section 32(4)).

6.61. The relevant provisions in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 reveal a triumph of political efficacy on the part of the motorsport and other byway user interests. The original Wildlife and Countryside Bill 1980 contained a number of provisions aimed at restricting the activities of Green Lane riders and drivers:

1. The immediate closure of 3,000 miles of Green Lanes to vehicular access, particularly in National Parks;
2. The imposition of a 7mph speed limit on all Green Lanes;
3. The closure of certain routes, such as the Ridgeway, to vehicular access; and

4. Maintenance of the criteria of reclassification embodied in the 1968 Countryside Act.

Through the House of Commons Review Committee, and with the support of Ministers and other interests, these were largely defeated. Motorsport and other byway user interests were able to point to evidence confirming that byway and RUPP use by motor vehicles and carriages was not unduly intrusive (66) and that arguments against such use were emotively rather than factually based. Consequently the Act of 1981, in addition to the provisions already examined, allowed for the reinstatement of the vehicular status of those RUPPs downgraded as a result of the Countryside Act 1968, 10 per cent of which had already been ploughed up in the interim (67). More significantly it formally identified the Auto Cycle Union as a prescribed body with regard to all Definitive Map Orders (68).

6.62. The statutory endorsement afforded by the Wildlife and Countryside Act of the vehicular use of byways and RUPPs continues to attract public opposition and in certain instances, provokes other means of control. Under Section 32(4) of the Countryside Act 1968, local highway authorities can place a Traffic Restriction Order on all or part of a right of way with vehicular access if such access is physically damaging the routeway, or is causing uncontrollable nuisance. At present, Traffic Regulation Orders are uncommon, though there is increasing evidence of their consideration in areas where informal off road vehicle activities are deemed a nuisance or hazard. The most widely publicised debate regarding such an Order relates to the Ridgeway Long-Distance Route which runs from Avebury (Wiltshire) to Ivinghoe Beacon (Buckinghamshire) and has vehicular rights of way between Swindon and Goring.

6.63. Although vehicular access on the western section of the Ridgeway has been an historic function of the route (as an 'ancient highway' and thereby RUPP), conflict between motorcycle and car drivers and walkers and horse riders has characterised attempts to manage its use. In 1975 Oxfordshire County Council imposed an experimental Traffic Regulation Order for three months on a three mile section of the Ridgeway. After the period the Council sought to extend the Order, which prohibited all motor vehicles, (other than agricultural, public utility and disabled vehicles) permanently. Following the subsequent local inquiry, which prompted strong opposition by motoring and motorcycle bodies (including the Rover Owners Club, the British Motorcyclists Federation, the All Wheel Drive Club and the Trail Riders Fellowship), the Inspector recommended the Order should not be made. The reasons given included the following:

"It is claimed that the road is unsuitable for motor cars and motorcycles on account of its existing character; it is true that it is an ancient highway but has been used for many years by farm vehicles and indeed by motor cars and motor cycles. I cannot see that its continued use will affect its existing character. Its use as an informal recreation amenity might well do so but I would not wish to prevent its use for that purpose" (69).

and

"This road is suitable for use by persons on horseback and on foot. Owing to its width I do not regard it as specifically so; it is however specially suitable for those who are trail riders and indeed this is the only kind of road which is suitable for such recreation as trail riding. Compared with the facilities available to walkers, trail riders have few routes suitable for their recreation and they are becoming fewer. The same problem may arise so far as horse riders

are concerned if bridleways continue to be degraded to footpaths. It is not in my opinion expedient to make the Order for this purpose" (70).

6.64. In order to consider feasible methods of monitoring the use of the Ridgeway a project officer was appointed in 1978. Following an early report in 1979, which demonstrated the growing use of the route by motor vehicles (71), the Countryside Commission sought a second Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Confirmation of the Order was also subsequently rejected by the Secretary of State in favour of a policy of voluntary restraint to which end a code of practice was established by the relevant motor vehicle organisations (72). That code sought to avoid the use of the Ridgeway on Sundays and Bank Holidays between 1 May and 31 October, in addition to recommending that speeds be kept to a minimum (25 mph maximum) with riders or drivers travelling in small groups of not more than four. The Countryside Commission stated that any decision on the creation of a TRO was dependent upon the success of voluntary restraint. That effectiveness was considered in two surveys undertaken by the project officer in 1982 and 1984. The former concluded that the Code "... had been adhered to by trail riding clubs and motoring clubs. The level of use, and on occasion, misuse, was largely through individual riders and drivers who did not know about the designation of the Ridgeway as a Public Highway, and who were not aware of the Code of Voluntary Restraint" (73). The 1984 report showed:

"... a substantial reduction of use by motor cycles (54%) and cross country and private cars (60%) between 1982 and 1983. Motor cycle use as a percentage of total use of the Ridgeway dropped from 4% in 1982 to 2% in 1983. These figures represent a very small number of vehicles" (74).

6.65. Nevertheless, opposition to the continued vehicular use of the routes has persisted, particularly from the Ramblers Association and the Friends of the Ridgeway. In their 1984 Press Release, the former asserted that:

"The Countryside Commission must now face up to the central question: do they allow the Ridgeway

to deteriorate into a race track for maniacs on motorbikes, or do they campaign in defence of its designation as a traffic-free long distance path (which it is supposed to be)" (75).

The Friends of the Ridgeway meanwhile have dismissed the evidence of reduced vehicular use by returning to 1971 and claiming that "... the downward movement from 1982 to 1983 can be seen as a slight dip in an otherwise remorseless upward trend" (76). In 1984 however, the Countryside Commission supported these arguments, despite their contradiction of the Inspector's recommendations in 1976, and formally sought the creation of a limited TRO to "... ban motor vehicles on the Ridgeway at those times when it is busiest, that is on Summer Sundays and Bank Holidays" (77); this despite the acknowledgement that:

" the Code of Voluntary Restraint and associated wardening has clearly contributed to a substantial reduction in use of the Ridgeway by vehicles, amounting to more than a 50% reduction in the case of motorcycles during the days in which the Code applied" (78).

Undoubtedly motor vehicle interests will oppose the proposed Order in the public inquiry scheduled for 1985. The Ridgeway, however, highlights two cardinal issues with regard to vehicular access to rights of way; first the fact that such use is universally opposed by walker organisations (79) and, second, that organised trail clubs are perfectly capable of controlling and regulating the activities of their members to conform to prevailing conditions. It is unfortunately informal and 'cowboy' riders that upset what is, at best, a delicate balance. The potential value of the increasingly recommended alternative of "concessionary routes" (see above para. 5.69. and (80)) is that such routes would allow vehicular access only to organised clubs.

6.66. Elsewhere Traffic Regulation Orders have been made, with the full co-operation of motor vehicle user groups, for such reasons as preventing erosion of a route (as near New Mills, Derbyshire; RUPP 36) or to facilitate access by motorcycle to a remote lighthouse (in this instance, the Restriction Order applying to motorcars only).

6.67. In conclusion, the various statutory and bylaw provisions regarding access remain fundamental to the practice of motorsport, particularly those activities that depend upon authorised access to private sites, or the organised use of the Public Highway. Although, for the most part, motorsport interests take care to avoid specific conflicts over issues of access (with the major exception of the involvement of the Trail Riders Fellowship in the maintenance of vehicular access to Green Lanes), such issues form an important constraint on motorsport activities. They serve also to highlight the differentiation between formal motorsport and the informal sector of motor vehicle activity.

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## PROVISION FOR MOTORSPORTS

### INTRODUCTION

7.1. It has already been demonstrated that organised motorsports depend largely upon the temporary use of private land; a source that is diminishing. The major features of motorsport venues on private land are as follows:

1. They are not permanently set up or purpose-built for motorsport use;
2. They are either derelict or are used for the bulk of the year for non-motorsport activities;
3. They rarely involve formal site leasing arrangements, nor offer security of tenure to motorsport users;
4. They are wholly managed by motorsport interests when used for competitive events; i.e., there is no site management role undertaken by the owner;
5. They rarely involve permanent constructions or facilities;
6. Their use is sought and negotiated by motorsport clubs on a private and generally 'one-off' basis; and
7. Their use is, for the most part, contained within the provisions of the General Development Order; i.e., for 14 or less days in any one year.

Such private sites tend to fall into two broad categories:

1. Sites owned or leased by a private owner and rented on an informal, daily basis by a motorsport club.
  - a. In the majority of cases, sites are agricultural or derelict land used a few times a year for a cash payment by the organising club. This is the single most common source of land.
  - b. Even where sites are larger and more 'formal' in terms of their availability they remain, for the bulk of the year, in a non-motorsport use. In some instances such sites will have permanent surfaces (e.g. airfields, private roads).

2. Sites owned or leased by government or semi-public agency and let on an individual day basis for occasional motorsport use.

- a. Although such sites are used informally, in the sense that no permanent facilities exist and site management during an event is wholly the responsibility of the organising club, in some instances formal arrangements for availability and hire costs are formally set by the Forestry Commission or the MoD. Individual clubs need to then negotiate for specific day use.

7.2. The use of such private sites is individually sought by motorsport interests and, for the most part, motorsport constitutes only a very transient proportion of their total use. In the face of the declining availability of private sites, the motorsport community is increasingly seeking the provision of more assured venues. That provision, where it has been forthcoming, has derived from two principal sources, local authorities, and private commercial operators. It is the purpose of this section to consider provisions in terms of current examples and the potential each might have to ameliorate the effects of widespread loss of private sites.

### COMMERCIAL SITES

7.3. Commercial sites normally have the following attributes:

1. They include permanent or semi-permanent facilities related to motorsport use;
2. They include spectator provision;
3. Motorsports form a substantial (but not necessarily exclusive) proportion use of the site;
4. Individual clubs hire the site on a day basis for a fixed charge rate; and
5. The facilities usually have planning permission for motorsport use and for the construction and erection of related permanent and semi-permanent facilities.

### Major Commercial Facilities

7.4. At the top end of the scale of provision are purpose-built or converted private facilities for permanent motorsport use. Such facilities fall into two groups; motor racing circuits and motorsport stadia. There are currently 11 circuits in England and Wales (see Figure 4.7.), used for motorcar and motorcycle racing. In addition a number function also as venues for autocross, rally cross, and stage rally events. All are permanent facilities of varying size; the largest, Silverstone, having a circuit length of 2.927 miles and stands for 14,000 spectators. All motorcar road racing events and the bulk of motorcycle racing events are wholly dependent upon these circuits, some of which are owned by motorsport interests (such as Thruxton, owned by the British Automobile Racing Club) others being owned by agencies predominantly external to motorsport (e.g., Eagle Star, which owns Brands Hatch and Oulton Park). This partial dependency on the commercial viability of large scale venues whose long-term future is not in the immediate control of motorsport interests has led to their predominant use by high profile and thereby 'income generating' championship events. This has provoked the RACMSA, fearing their closure, to oppose on principle the decentralisation of road racing to temporary courses, including inner city road circuits (1).

7.5. The second form of commercial site is the stadium, used chiefly for speedway or banger/hot rod racing, and either purpose built or converted (usually from greyhound stadia). Stadia are used exclusively for these specific forms of motorsport, though a few of the 34 licenced motorcycle speedway stadia in England and Wales can also be used for junior grass track racing and, less frequently, autocross.

7.6. Both motor racing circuits and motorsport stadia operate within specific limits and conditions laid down by planning and noise controls. Because of their need to be self supporting, such facilities are currently operated to the maximum extent permitted by planning and other conditions. Furthermore, due to the highly specialised nature of the disciplines catered for, stadia could not be said to represent viable alternatives to the decline in private off road venues.

### Minor commercial facilities

7.7. Far more common are private commercial venues for which motorsport is not necessarily the sole site use, and for which planning permission for motorsport is not necessarily sought. Such sites may have a 'permanent' motorsport surface, whether an airfield used for sprints and single-venue stage rallying, or an open field used for motocross. What distinguishes such sites from private sites is the commercial orientation of the owner and the extent of site use. Commonly minor commercial facilities are used for motocross, motorcar speed events and kart racing. There are an increasing number of semi-commercial motocross venues throughout Britain. Hawkstone (Weston-under-Redcastle) is formally leased to a local club who maintain a semi-permanent championship motocross circuit on a site used for competition and practice around 14 days a year.

For major events (e.g., rounds of the British Motocross Championships) additional land adjoining the circuit is used for car parking and spectator access. A second site, Elsworth Moto-Parc, privately owned and leased to a commercial operator, has planning permission for use as a motocross venue for 30 days in a year. Like Hawkstone, Elsworth also plays host to championship events. Matchams Park on the Hampshire/Dorset border has also been an important motocross venue, privately owned and commercially operated, since the early 1960s. In this instance, the use of the site has been periodic rather than consistent though planning permission for motorsport use does exist. In the more recent past, Matchams has been the venue for banger racing, enduros and both ACU and AMCA motocross. Its current future is in some doubt as the site owners wish to sell. In all of these cases noise and traffic issues have provoked local complaint though, with the exception of Matchams, these have not brought about any additional constraints on use.

7.8. The majority of the more frequently used speed venues and karting circuits can also be regarded as minor commercial sites. Already, within the report we have discussed Blackbushe and Goodwood Airfields (see above Chapter 4). Curborough sprint course (Staffs) and Rowrah kart circuit (Cumberland) also fall within this category.

7.9. Privately owned commercial facilities such as these appear a viable element of general site provision. The reluctance of many owners to apply for planning permission for motorsport use suggest that such use is regarded as a transitory rather than a permanent feature. Nevertheless, those sites which have grown up in the last few years, such as Goodwood, illustrate the possible success of provision of this kind, providing that disamenities are minimised. The inevitability that such sites will provoke noise complaints should not mitigate against them unnecessarily as such complaints do not always halt site use. A more constraining factor is often the incompatibility of different motorsport disciplines on a single site. Although motorsports disciplines can be successfully combined on this type of site (e.g. Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire) commercial sites remain generally specific to either motorcycle, motorcar or kart disciplines.

### Club Sites

7.10. The purchase or long term leasing of sites by clubs, with the benefit of planning permission, is potentially a means of counteracting site loss and increasing the frequency of site use. Yet there remain very few examples of this form of provision in either motorcar, kart or motorcycle sports. Nationally, the number of off road motorsport clubs that have purchased land amounts to under a dozen. Of these, practice sites are more common than full competitive venues though the principal exception, the Canada Heights motocross site, owned by Sidcup and District MCC, is a championship course. The major constraints to club ownership are:

- a. lack of capital for purchase or site maintenance and development;



- b. lack of membership resources in time and expertise; and
- c. reluctance to enter the land acquisition, planning, and management processes.

Though site purchase remains essentially beyond the attainment of individual motorsport clubs, at least one leading motorcycle sport body recognises it as a necessary alternative to dwindling private venues. The AMCA has established a development fund to acquire land. Derived from a levy on event entries, this fund has enabled the AMCA to purchase two sites. The purchase of two more is currently being negotiated. AMCA policy has been to purchase, where possible, sites with a long-standing tradition of off road motorcycle use and, where appropriate, to extend such use to include practice and training with the benefit of planning permission. On one such site, at Nangreaves in the West Pennine Moors, such permission was refused by Rossendale District Council. Following the subsequent appeal the Inspector recognised an "accepted need for permanent and well controlled sites for this use in this part of the Country" (2, our emphasis), and acknowledged that "In site terms it appears to be well suited for this use. This is probably reflected in the fact that it has been allowed to continue unchallenged for so many years" (3). Despite this, permission was refused on the grounds that access to the site was unsuitable. Nangreaves nevertheless remains a viable motocross site though current use is well below the permitted 14 days. For the AMCA the lesson of this case has been that outline planning permission should be sought before site purchase, a policy currently applied to those sites suitable for more intensive use.

7.11. More common than outright purchase, though still relatively infrequent, is site leasing from local authorities (see below, para. 7.23.) and private landowners. Formal arrangements usually result either because a landowner specifically requires a formal and negotiated lease, thereby transferring liability, or because a club seeks the use of a site more frequently than would generally be acceptable under a day-basis site hire agreement. The AMCA leases two sites; at Brownhills, Walsall and Condover, Shropshire, under such agreements. In the latter case the site has been developed with grant aid from the Sports Council, as a motorcycle sports facility.

### Specialist Commercial Facilities

7.12. In recent years there has been a growth in the number of facilities that combine motorsport activity and/or practice with informal off road use. There is no single term for these facilities. Where they relate to the provision of supervised off road courses for informal, rather than competitive, motorcyclists they are referred to collectively as trail parks (4). Where they relate to the supervised use of old, non-road legal motorcars, by young people not otherwise qualified to drive on the Public Highway, they are known as 'banger tracks' (5). Most facilities of this kind are operated either by, or in association with, local authorities who view their provision as a means of solving problems generated by uncontrolled and informal off road activities. Few could be regarded in any sense as providing sites for organised motorsport events. However, such facilities are not totally isolated from the practice of

organised motorsport. In the first case, they can be used by competitors, particularly youth motorcyclists, for off-road practice. Secondly, they can provide an entry point into organised off-road activities, particularly if sites combine road-based training schemes with informal activities. Thirdly, such sites can be operated or maintained by persons involved in competitive motorsports. These sites and the nature and extent of informal activities in general are discussed in Chapter 8.

### Commercial Sites: Summary

7.13. Certain motorsports lend themselves to commercial provision, particularly those that are capable of generating money and can take place on a relatively permanent course. These types are:

- sealed surface motorcar, motorcycle and kart racing;
- hot rod racing and speedway;
- motocross; and
- motorcar sprints, autocross and rallycross.

Of these, racing and stadium based forms of motorsport have long been wholly dependent upon commercial provision. It is in motocross and motorcar sprints (and, to a lesser extent, other sealed-surface based events) that commercial site provision has potentially the greatest input. The establishment of a nationwide set of permanent, commercial motocross venues, along the lines of racing circuits, has often been suggested and the development during 1984 of 'stadium motocross' (whereby events were held in temporarily converted football stadia) gives credence to the notion that such facilities would be supported by both participants and spectators alike. It remains to be seen, however, whether the establishment of such a network will take place.

7.14. For other types of motorsport, particularly trials, the development of permanent commercial facilities would remove the attractiveness of low-cost, varied competition. In stage rallying, there has been a reverse trend whereby the demand for low cost club events has led to increasing reliance upon commercial sealed surface, single venue locations such as Goodwood or Oulton Park, while higher status, multi-venue events seek an increasing variety of stage sites.

7.15. Commercial sites thereby constitute a partial solution. Their current contribution to motorsport provision is small. Their success is their ability to exist within a system of constraint that, when applied to private sites, leads frequently to their total loss.

## LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES

7.16. Local authorities are becoming increasingly involved in the acquisition, and the management of sites for off road use. A fairly clear distinction can be made between local authority provision for organised motorsport events, and provision for informal off road motorcycling (and, to a far lesser extent, driving). Although demands for both types of provision are often made it is the latter that has dominated the 'response' of local authorities. Nevertheless, provision for motorsport is a growing concern motivated in part by a recognition of declining private opportunities, and also by a desire to centralise and 'control' motorsports.

7.17. There are possibly three strategies for local authority involvement in motorsport site provision:

1. Making available local authority land for motorsport events, normally without involving the authority in any site management or control activities other than those contained within the site hire arrangement (e.g. dates, times of use, etc.);
2. Supporting private facilities by allocating land in plans and granting, where relevant, planning permissions for motorsport use; and
3. Establishing purpose-designed and planned facilities for motorsports.

A fourth strategy, of lesser relevance, has been the allocation of vacant land for informal and unsupervised use which might also attract the attention of competitive riders as potential training areas.

7.18. Within both of our study areas provision along all four of these lines has been either proposed or undertaken (see Tables 7.1. and 7.2.) though in the case of permanent motorsport facilities proposals outweigh the number of schemes implemented. At the national scale the extent of local authority provision for off road motorsport is sparse. Table 7.3., derived from the national questionnaire illustrates the extent of such provision. Significantly, although only 15 per cent of respondent authorities had provided or assisted in the provision of any sites or facilities for motorsport, over 58 per cent recorded the receipt of requests for such provision. The sources of requests are displayed in Table 7.4. and are clearly dominated by motorsport participants and enthusiasts. Encouragingly, of those local authorities that had created facilities, some 83 per cent had done so as a result of specific requests.

7.19. Local authority site provision varies from creating permanent motorsport complexes to leasing small patches of otherwise derelict land. The remainder of this chapter examines this variation within the context of the threefold distinction, established above, between the permitted use

Table 7.1.

Local Authority Provision for Motorsports: The South  
Lancashire Study Area

Local Authority	Facility sought or considered by local authority	Permitted use of council land	Support given to private site
Blackburn	Hameldon Hill	-	-
Burnley	-	-	-
Chorley	-	-	-
Hyndburn	Hameldon Hill	Accrington Car Park	-
Pendle	-	Catlow (now disused)	-
Preston	Preston Dock	Preston Dock Cuerdon Park	-
Rossendale	Larend Hey Horncliffe	Larend Hey Grane	Nangreaves (though permission refused)
S. Ribble	-	-	-
Bolton	Cutacre Tip	Cutacre Tip Holden's Moor Smithills Moor	-
Bury	-	Corporation Car Park	-
Rochdale	-	Bowlee (later rejected)	-
Salford	-	-	-
Wigan	Three Sisters	-	-
G.M.C.	Three Sisters	Sale Meadows Carrington	-
Lancs C.C.	Winter Hill	-	-
Central Lancs Devel' Corp'	-	Cuerdon Park	-
N.W.W.A.	-	Hameldon Hill Crown Point Grane Rivington Moor	-

Source: Authors' Survey.

Table 7.2.Local Authority Provision for Motorsports: The Eastern  
Hampshire Study Area

Local Authority	Facility sought or considered by local authority	Permitted use of council land	Support given to private site
Rasingstoke	-	Basing Lime Pits West Ham Roundabout	-
Hart	-	-	Blackbushe
E. Hants	Southleigh Forest	Buriton Pit	-
Havant	Grundymoor	-	-
Portsmouth	4 sites considered but rejected	Portsmouth Airport (now disused).	-
Eastleigh	Westwood	-	Allington Lane
Fareham	-	Funtley Raceway	-
Gosport	-	-	-
Rushmoor	-	Blackwater Valley	-
Hants C.C.	Funtley Raceway	Funtley Raceway West Ham Roundabout	Hut Hill.

Source: Authors' Survey.

of local authority land, the support and recognition of private facilities, and the provision of permanent venues.

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Table 7.3.      The Provision of Local Authority Sites  
For "Motorsports".

	Provided a Facility.	Considering Provision.
County Councils	6	3
Metropolitan Counties	1	0
Shire Districts	28	8
Metropolitan Districts	10	2
London Boroughs	1	1
Development Corporations	5	0
National Parks	2	0
Total	53	14

N = 343.

Source: Authors' survey 1985.

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Table 7.4.      Sources of Requests to Local Authorities  
for the Provision of Facilities.

Motorsport participants and enthusiasts	40% of all requests
From the need to curb informal activities or organised events in sensitive areas	28.6%
From public opposition to the use of existing sites for both organised sports and informal activities	25.1%
From other bodies (e.g. local sports councils, schools, youth clubs, probation services, etc.)	23.3%
From the police	17.8%

Source: Authors' survey, 1985.

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## The Permitted Use of Council Land

- 7.20. Much land in local authority ownership is potentially suitable for use for motorsports. Where use is permitted it can fall into two categories: that which might be regarded as being temporary and interim, falling within the provisions of the GDO, and for which individual clubs negotiate directly with the landowning authority; and that which local authorities have allowed to develop as more permanent facilities, managed or operated by a specific lessee (either a club or a commercial operator) who would be encouraged to apply for planning permission. In both instances, the relevant local authority plays no formal role in site management or development.

Examples of the first of these forms of provision are numerous. They range from the once-a-year use of municipal sea front promenades for motorcar speed events (e.g., at Blackpool, Weston-super-Mare, Brighton) to the more frequent though lower key use of local authority owned open moorland (e.g., the West Pennine Moors near Bolton, and areas of the Lake District National Park; both used for motorcycle trials). Others include quarries (e.g., Wingate, Durham; Basing Quarry, Basingstoke; Cutacre Tip, Bolton), airfields (north Weald, Epping - a major sprint venue, and Portsmouth Airfield - during the late 1970s an important multi-purpose motorsport venue within Hampshire) and parkland (e.g., Pontypool Park, Gwent and Cuerdon Park, Preston). In all such instances sites are controlled solely by the organising club for the duration of the event. In this respect the role of the local authority is identical to that of private landowners regarding similar temporary sites. However it is difficult to assess the extent to which such sites have made a significant contribution to alleviating the crisis of land availability. Many have been used for motorsports for many years and new sites are balanced by the closure of others. Undoubtedly there are, given the generally transient demands of motorsport clubs, considerable opportunities for further provisions of this sort.

- 7.21. The second form of permitted use, in which local authorities allow a certain amount of development specific to motorsport activities is frequently seen as an alternative to full scale provision.

Sunderland Borough Council has, for example, recognised that:

" . . . there may be certain advantages in this option, particularly from management and insurance/liability standpoints, insofar as the responsibility for these may be taken by the operator. Some degree of control could be exercised by the Council as local planning authority and probably as land owner. This would

enable, for example, conditions governing times of use, types of activity, noise levels, numbers of riders, insurance, competition events, fencing, landscaping and, perhaps, degree of supervision to be enforced" (6).

Such sites are less common than those involving temporary use and have been generally developed as facilities for the informal sector. Nevertheless, there remain 20 sites of this type throughout England and Wales, distinguished by the nature of the formal lease arrangement between club/operator and council, and the extent of their use. Many combine competitive motorsport with general off road training.

Examples include:

Upton Court Park, Slough, used on alternate Sunday afternoons throughout the year and managed entirely by a local motorcycle club (principally an off road scrambling venue, this site does attract active motorsport competitors though not competitive events); Pesdiswell, Worcester, leased to Worcester Auto Club for grass track racing and motocross 17 - 18 times a year; Burtons Point, Sheerness, regarded as an acceptable venue by the local authority (Swale Borough Council); Botany Bay, Stevenage, leased to a club who control use of the site, and Chasewater Karting Circuit, leased by the Chasewater Kart Club from Walsall Metropolitan Borough and managed solely by the club throughout the year.

7.22. The use of a formal lease agreement enables a landowning authority to control use without becoming involved in site management. This can be seen in the arrangement regarding the use of Nash Mills Depot, Kings Langley, owned by Dacorum District Council. Under the terms of the 15 year lease, the Berkhamstead MCC, which operates trial events on the site, must:

- keep the land free from obnoxious weeds and keep the demised land in a clean and tidy condition;
- pay such sums, if required, for the upkeep, running costs and maintenance of all communal areas, toilets, lighting, etc.;
- not obstruct or cause a nuisance to the free right of access to the other users of the site;
- limit use to between 8 am and 8 pm, Mondays to Saturdays and 10 am to 4 pm on Sundays;
- not to erect buildings or structures on the land; and
- pay all rates, taxes and other outgoings and indemnify the Council against any claim whatsoever in connection with club use of land.



7.23. The formal leasing of council sites for motorsport remains an attractive alternative to those local authorities unwilling or unable to develop motorsport facilities themselves. Unlike private landowners, local authorities have in the past retained the ownership of unproductive and vacant land for long periods in lieu of suitable use allocations. Where such sites are some distance from residential areas their permanent or interim for motorsports can be encouraged, particularly if pressure can be relieved on less suitable venues elsewhere. The transfer of responsibility for liability and for site policing and management is often a motivating principle for the landowning authority, though it may be less welcome to the organising club if the site also attracts members of the informal sector. Hartridge Farm, Newport, is an example of a council-owned motorsport facility where the lessee club was unable to control informal use.

### The Support of Private Facilities

7.24. A second alternative to local authority provision is the support for private facilities. This can take the form of:

- a. granting planning consents;
- b. recognition through processes of land use allocation; and
- c. financial assistance.

Many of the larger commercial facilities have received local authority support in one or other of these ways. Such facilities range in scale from motor racing circuits to small club sites. Where planning permission is sought a local authority has the opportunity of imposing conditions on use, not applicable were a site to be used within GDO provisions. This has enabled local authorities to liaise and cooperate with owners and users in order to maximise the suitable use of sites (for instance at Rowrah Karting Circuit, Cumbria; Walldridge Fell, Durham; and Todmorden, West Yorkshire). Elsewhere, local authorities have encouraged the search for private land for motorsports (7).

7.25. Land allocation in plans is not, by itself, an effective means of additional site provision though it may serve to forward the acceptability of such activities in rural areas. The general wariness amongst the motorsport community toward the process of land use planning has tended to mean that only commercially oriented private site operators and/or users have sought the endorsement or legitimisation of their activities from local authorities. Furthermore, there is no evidence that local authority support is necessarily contributing to any increase in the number of private facilities, though if planning permission is granted, it generally permits an increase in the frequency of use.

### Local Authority Facilities

7.26. Although relatively few examples of this sort of provision exist their importance as regional centres of motorsport is growing. At the highest level of provision are large scale facilities that combine a number of functions: Pembrey Raceway, Llanelli; the Three Sisters Park, near Wigan; the Birmingham Wheels Park and Park Hall, Glasgow.

The Welsh Motor Sports Centre at Pembrey is a unique facility (see Figure 7.1.). Constructed on a 500 acre derelict airfield site by Llanelli Borough Council at a basic cost of £500,000 (+ £15,000 for site improvements), much of which has come from land reclamation grants, the facility is currently used for 83 meetings a year, including stages of the International Welsh Rally, kart racing, autograss, motorcar and motorcycle sprinting, motocross, road racing, rallycross and single-venue stage rallying (8). In close collaboration with local motorsport interests, the Centre continues to be developed by the local Borough Planning Department as a major commercial facility, expecting to generate around £25,000 per annum. Part of the uniqueness of the site lies in its coastal location in an area of industrial rather than residential use, within easy access of the M4 and thereby South Wales and the Midlands. Partly too, however, its uniqueness lies in the extent of the local authority role in its provision.

7.27. The Three Sisters Park near Wigan (see Figure 7.2.) is also a major motorsport facility though its use is currently restricted to kart and motorcycle racing (see para. 4.102.). As at Pembrey there are plans to further develop the site to include motorcar events, currently excluded by the narrowness of the sealed-surface circuit. Nevertheless, despite existing restrictions, Three Sisters stands as an important regional facility attracting clubs and riders from Preston, West Yorkshire, Cheshire and North Wales. A second site within the North West, at the now derelict Preston Dock, has been suggested as a possible additional motor racing circuit, although a number of alternative uses are also being considered (commercial, residential, hotels and superstores). In 1983 part of the site was used for a stage rallying event which gave support to the notion that a facility could be accommodated. The current land use allocation for the site, as informal recreation, might initially mitigate against its development as a major motorsport facility, though both the North West Sports Council (9) and a number of local motorsport interests support such a proposal. Currently the principal inhibiting factor is cost, the local authority being reluctant to permit the piecemeal development of the site, preferring instead a comprehensive development package.

7.28. Elsewhere large scale motorsport provision accompanies provision for the informal sector. Both in Birmingham and Newcastle, inner city motorsport facilities have been established by Borough and Metropolitan authorities. The Birmingham Wheels Park, Bordesley Green, initiated in 1982 and currently under further construction, provides for motocross,

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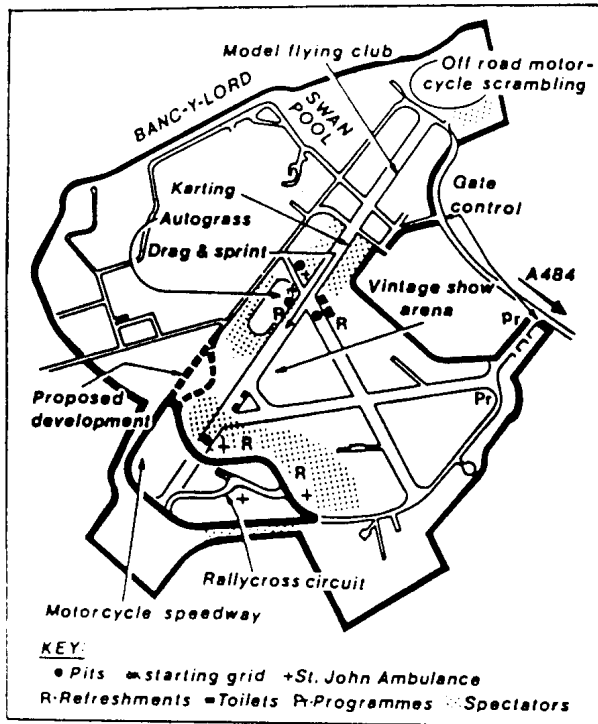
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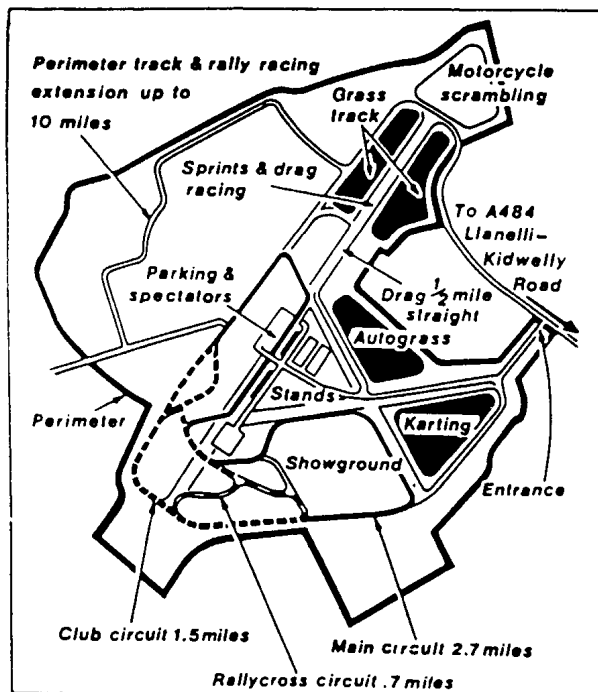
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Figure 7.1.

The Welsh Motorsports Centre, Pembrey, Llanelli



A. CURRENT SITE LAYOUT (1985)

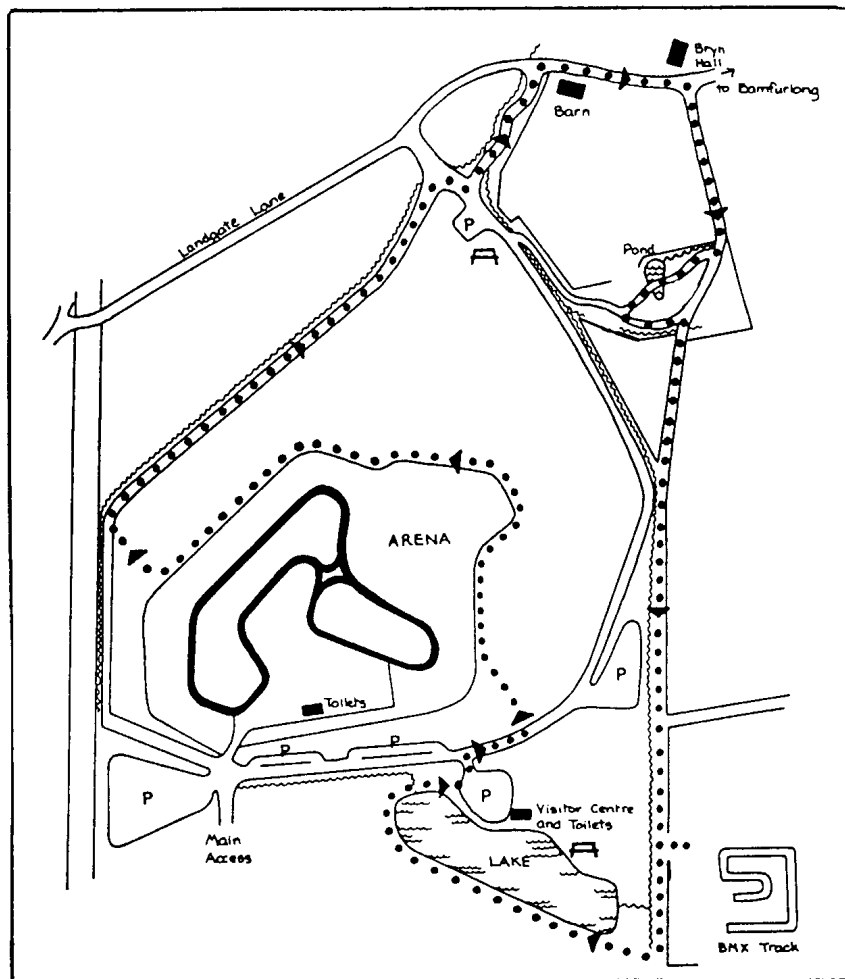


B. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF SITE OVER NEXT 10 YEARS.

Source: courtesy of Llanelli Borough Council

Figure 7.2.

The Three Sisters Recreation Area: Incorporating  
Motorsports Arena



Source: The Three Sisters Joint Management Committee.

non-RACMSA kart racing, banger racing and informal riding. Similarly the 'Walker Wheels' site in Newcastle, due to open in Autumn 1985, will combine off-road motorcycling, instruction, workshops, banger and kart racing (10). Both have been acquired and developed by local authorities as part of general programmes of land reclamation and renewal. Both have also been partly sponsored by local social services/probation departments and the police as a means not only of providing recreational opportunities for urban young people, but also of reducing the level of illegal motorcycle riding, car driving and auto theft in the areas as a whole (see Chapter 8).

7.29. Other attempts to provide for motorsport have been less ambitious, usually entailing the acquisition of sites and their subsequent use for motorsport events organised either by a club or leasee operator. Within the Hampshire study area, two such sites have been identified as being capable of development; Grundymoor, to the west of Havant, and Southleigh Forest, to the north of the Town. The site at Grundymoor has been used informally for a number of years. For the Borough Council, formal provision on the site would a) help to reduce the impact of informal use by allowing for site management; and b) help to provide a facility for which there would appear to be demand. To achieve these ends, motorcycle 'scrambling' has been proposed in a draft recreational management plan (11) and negotiations with the landowner have led to the suggestion that the site be leased to a club or local promoter, who would then submit a planning application to the Borough authority. As yet there has been little objection to this proposal, partly explained by the proximity of the site to the A3(M). Neither has there been consultation with local clubs who, it is likely, would find the one acre woodland site impractical for realistic competitive use. The Southleigh Forest site, a privately owned woodland area allocated in the draft Horndean Local Plan by East Hampshire District Council for "noisy" recreation uses (12), was proposed as a facility with a sub-regional catchment. Unlike at Grundymoor, however, public reaction was strongly antipathetic; a total of 181 written objections were received to the proposal, compared with 17 in support. Consequently, the proposal has since been omitted from the final plan (13). Significantly in this instance the local authority saw the provision of a single motorsport site as a replacement for the temporary use by motorsport clubs of 20 or so private dispersed sites within the region.

7.30. In the North West study area, a similar proposal for the development of a motorsport facility on part of Hameldon Hill, near Burnley, has also met with local opposition. In addition, despite the endorsement of the proposal by Hyndburn Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and the North West Regional Sports Council, Burnley Borough Council, in whose area the principal access route and much of the site lies, have so far refused support. Although it seems unlikely that a facility will be forthcoming within the scope of the current proposals, future intentions of the Water Authority to sell off the site might permit its purchase by a coalition of user groups.

7.31. Beyond the two study areas, one scheme of particular note is the Poplars scrambling site in South Cannock.

Following an approach to Staffordshire County Council by the Cannock MCC in 1982 regarding the possible use of a 44 acre council-owned infill site for motocross events, the County Council, South Cannock District and the Operation South Cannock project (a five year land renewal programme, partly financed by the Countryside Commission) sought to establish both a scramble training scheme, operated in conjunction with the local motorcycle club, and a motocross venue. The development of such a facility was originally proposed on the grounds that it would:

- a. relieve the abuse of neighbouring areas, bridleways and footpaths by informal motorcyclists;
- b. provide an organised motorsport club with a site; and
- c. allow young people to enter an attractive and accessible form of sport.

In its first year of operation 1982/3 three motocross events were held and six training sessions, culminating in a junior scrambling event. During 1984 a further series of scrambling sessions were operated in addition to competitive events and the scheme received a 50 per cent grant of £2,500 from the West Midlands Sports Council, subsequently matched from other sources, including the local probation service, the police and local authorities. Although the current use of the site is limited under the GDO application for planning permission has been made by Operation South Cannock. For the present, any permission is likely to be for an interim use only as the site has a possible long-term development future as an industrial park. Nevertheless, the initiative of the scramble training unit continues to develop with the purchase of motorcycles and accessories, and close liaison with local schools over the maintenance and upkeep of machines.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.32. The situation in respect of local authority provision for motorsport is currently in a dynamic state. Many authorities have recognised the declining availability of private sites and acknowledged their own potential role in providing alternatives (14). Up to the present however their predominant concern has been with provision as a means of 'controlling' the informal sector. Thus any land gains for the motorsport community have largely been secondary. Some gains have been made as a result of continued lobbying, often by intermediary agencies such as the Sports Councils regions. Alternatively some have resulted from private sector initiatives.

7.33. The number of local authority provided motorsport venues is generally increasing and more are currently being discussed or planned (for example, Preston Dock, Blyth Valley Sports Park, Thurnscoe Two-Wheel Centre Barnsley, Holton Motorcycle Centre, Widnes). Clearly however, provision on the scale of Pembrey, Three Sisters and Larkhall Glasgow, is very much the exception. Medium-scale provision, in association with private commercial operators or developers, is possibly the most attractive proposition for most local authorities seeking to make provision. In such instances a major council role must be site search and land use allocation. Formal leases can exempt landowners (be they private or public) from liability while planning controls can ensure the 'suitable' use of sites. The degree of local authority financial involvement is clearly dependent upon the general distribution of council resources. Successful schemes operated on council land (such as Kings Langley, Dacorum) demonstrate that such involvement can be minimal.

7.34. From perspective of the clubs, perhaps the most important action is the release of council owned land for temporary motorsport activity. Here there is much scope for further action. Although under temporary arrangements councils might remain liable the comprehensive nature of motorsport insurance cover, automatically effective for all permitted events, would relieve them of any financial burden were accidents to occur.

7.35. The growth of medium-scale commercial sites, often with the endorsement or support of local authorities, can also make a potentially significant contribution to the land balance for motorsport. Sites at Elsworth, Hawkstone, Goodwood, Curborough and Rowrah have become important regional motorsport centres and further provision of this kind would be welcomed by the motorsport community.

7.36. The extent to which motorsports and informal activities can co-exist at a single venue is debateable. For a local authority the juxtaposition of both on a single site is an attractive proposition though it has thus far failed to come about to the total satisfaction of all interests concerned. At the Poplars site (Cannock) informal use has become organised training, supervised by the motorsport club. Notably, at both the Birmingham and the Walker Wheels projects, the nature of the competitive motorsport activity is constrained by the predominant concern; that of motor vehicle recreation. The principal limitations of joint provision are; first, the largely incompatible site demands of the two activities, second, the necessary safety margins within which competitive motorsport events are undertaken and which would prohibit the simultaneous use of sites by informal users and, third, the effective 'policing' or wardening of sites, a role many motorsport clubs would be averse to playing as a necessary adjunct to their own use.

7.37. In conclusion, local authorities have only recently begun to approach the issue of site provision for motorsport. Many, however, fail to make the necessary distinction, when planning facilities or considering



opportunities for the lease of land, between organised sports and informal activities. Although it is undoubtedly the latter that are causing local authorities the greatest problems in terms of trespass, illegal riding, noise and environmental damage, the former, as long-standing and popular sports under increasing threat, have a legitimate claim to assistance even if limited to temporary leases on derelict or unused land.

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## CHAPTER 7

1. The RACMSA has said, for example, that it will not sanction street racing, such as proposed in Birmingham, along the lines of the Monaco event, on the grounds that such events will remove revenue from permanent circuits: see Motor Sport (1985) Leader comment. Vol. LXI (3).
2. Department of the Environment (1983) Appeal under Town and Country Planning Act 1971 by the AMCA over the use of Nangreaves Scramble Track. 14/82/450. Department of the Environment, Bristol, para. 14.
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7. As in the Mendip Hills Draft Local Plan, the relevant policy of which reads: "the local authorities will seek to secure acceptable sites for motorcycle scrambling in negotiation with landowners".
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13. District Planning Officer (1983) Comments on Public Participation Exercise, Horndean Area Local Plan; Preliminary Draft, Petersfield, Hants.
14. For example Sunderland Borough Council (1983) op. cit. (ref. 7); Gwent County Council (1980) Recreational Motorcycling in the Countryside, County Planning Officers Report; Derbyshire County Council Planning Department (1983) Provision for Motorcycling,

discussion paper; Sefton Borough Council (1983) Sefton Coast Management Plan, para. 21, p.5; Durham County Council (1984) "Off the Road Motorcycling in County Durham", Draft Officers Report.

## INFORMAL MOTOR VEHICLE ACTIVITIES

"I am enjoying myself immensely with the motorcycle which I've recently learned. What would you say my dear friends if I arrived suddenly like that at full speed at Les Ecorres." (Jupien's letter, Marcel Proust 1921.)

### INFORMAL MOTOR RECREATION

8.1. Non-competitive informal motorcycling and car driving have become increasingly popular forms of recreation throughout Britain, particularly among young people. The growth of motorcycling during the 1970s meant that by the end of the decade, some 1,400,000 two-wheeled vehicles were on the roads, with new riders being attracted at a rate of nearly 250,000 a year (1). The major component of this increased activity has been informal off road motorcycling, fostered by the growing availability of machines (especially trail motorcycles - road legal machines with obvious off road capability, incorporating long travel suspension and high ground clearance), and the disciplines such as growing accessibility of motocross. As a result local authorities and traditional recreational interests have been presented with a new set of conflicts and issues of land use compatibility.

### The Main Activities

8.2. Earlier in this report informal activities were broadly separated into three categories; road-based, competition practice, and off road activities. Although informal activities on the Public Highway can have an adverse effect upon the practice of certain forms of motorsport (particularly road rallying), they generally do not form a major component of informal motor recreation. Similarly informal motorcar based activities, though undeniably an 'issue' at a number of motorsport facilities (such as Cark Airfield, Cumbria and Pembrey), do not constitute a major component of the informal sector as a whole. This chapter therefore concentrates on off road motorcycling which, as an informal activity, can be subdivided into:

- a. competition practice
  - where participants in formal motorsport seek opportunities for the negotiated but unsupervised use of off road sites;
- b. recreational motor activities
  - where informal participants seek negotiated opportunities for motor recreation in off road environments;

- c. trail riding/driving
  - where informal participants seek opportunities for riding or driving along green lanes; and
- d. unauthorised activities
  - where 'local youths' use off road sites without obtaining the permission of site owners and frequently, without using licenced, taxed or road legal machines.

These four categories generally reflect distinct participant motivations, particularly in respect of demands for land. Those involved in competition practice and recreational motorsport generally seek sites where such activities are permitted, such as a field used under the terms of a specific arrangement, or a formally provided facility. Those involved in trail riding and driving seek to use rights of way upon which vehicles have legal access. Trail riders and drivers not belonging to clubs may also seek to use such routes, and can be unaware of the statutory requirements for the licensing of vehicles and participants. Informal trail riding and driving take place mainly close to urban centres. Finally, those involved in off road activities with no specific authorisation are in many areas the most numerous of the four categories. They generally exercise least discrimination in their site demands, seeking readily available areas of vacant and rough land as near as possible to their homes. Even then access to such areas, as well as use, can be an offence if unlicensed vehicles are used or if riders are unqualified (either through age or proficiency).

8.3. The informal sector is the main progenitor of the adverse 'urban' image of off road motor vehicle activity. Chapter 2 has suggested such an image is often unfounded with regard to organised motorsport (including organised trail riding and driving). For informal activities, however, such an image is more credible as enthusiasts are either less able or willing to travel long distances to reach suitable sites. Thus the major demand originates from urban centres, and the major use of land is directed towards the urban fringe and accessible countryside. Further components of the adverse image of the informal sector are that participants are:

1. unsympathetic to the environment and other users of it;
2. resistant to regulation or control of their activities or to attempts to prevent access to sites;
3. 'anti-social';
4. linked, either directly or indirectly, with images of:
  - juvenile crime
  - auto theft
  - vandalism
  - delinquency;

5. rarely ride road legal machines; and
6. generally use sites without authorisation.

Although such 'beliefs' are generally founded on the activities of a minority, they have achieved widespread prominence among those interests opposed in principle to off road activities (2).

#### Extent of Perceived Problems

8.4. The extent of unauthorised off road activity, particularly by motorcyclists, is nevertheless an increasing problem in many areas throughout England and Wales. A survey undertaken in 1982 by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities revealed that 37 authorities experienced a 'problem' of land use related to off road motorcycle activity, though the severity of the problem varied widely from area to area. The issues were summarised as follows:

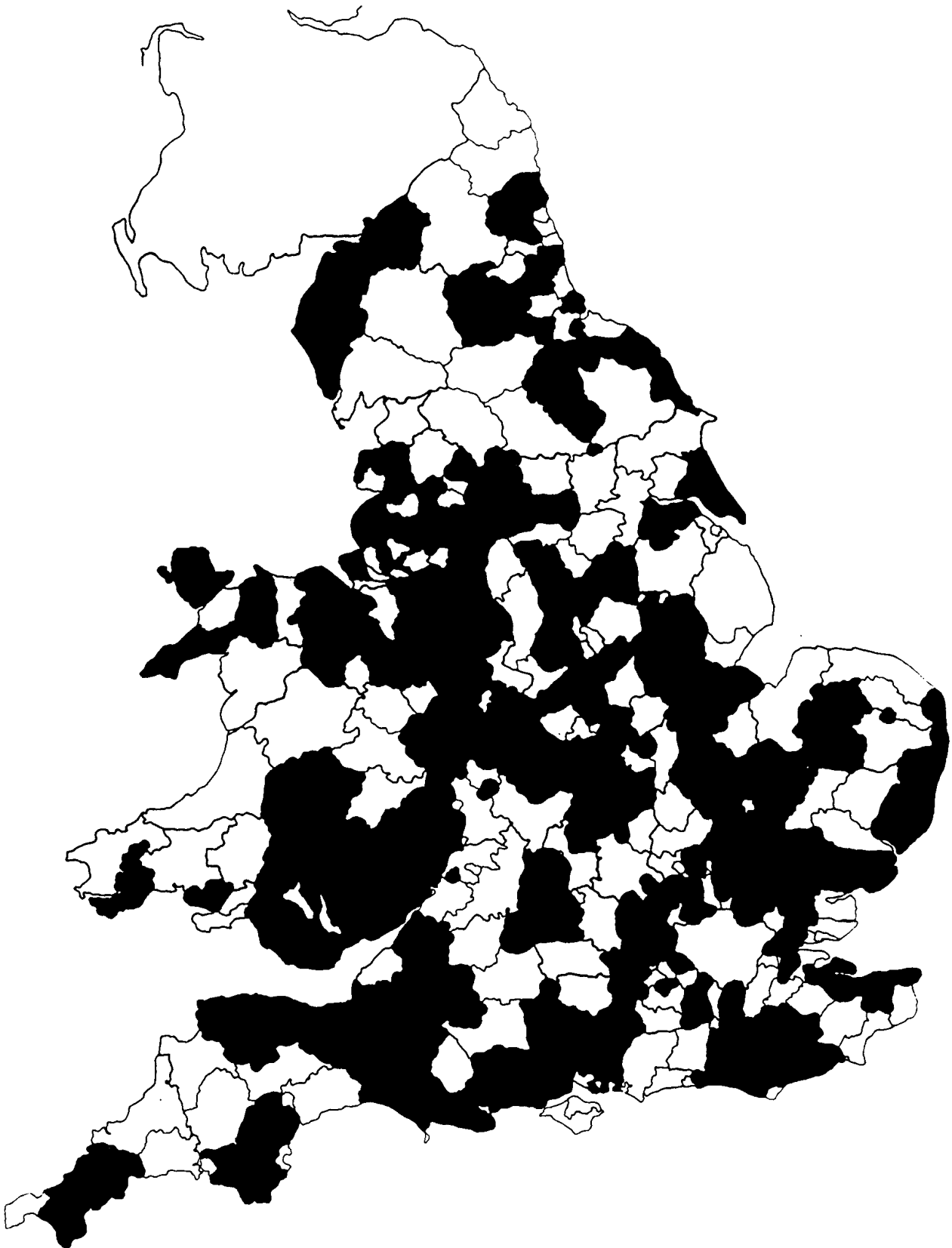
"The main problem appears to be the use of off-road and unlicensed machines near to housing. The noise is a nuisance to residents and the motorcycles may pose a physical danger. A less widespread but potentially serious problem is damage and nuisance on walkways, country parks and similar green space developments that have been created in recent years on derelict and canal land. Gates and fencing appear to be ineffectual in preventing unauthorised riders from gaining access to these areas." (4)

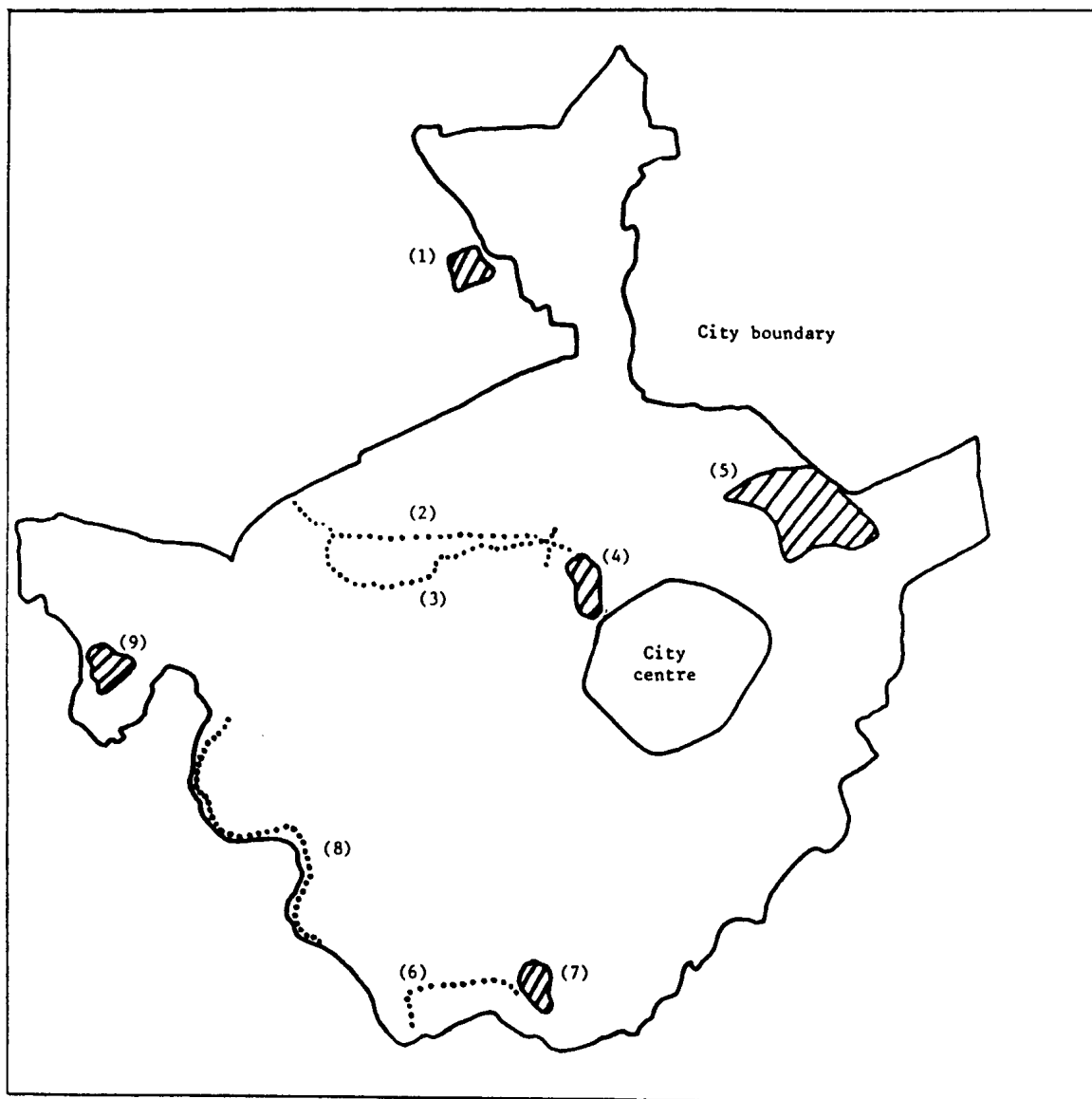
Responses to our national questionnaire (see Appendix 1) indicate that the majority of local authorities within England and Wales regard the activities of the informal sector as a problem (see Figure 8.1.). As can be seen, the issue is particularly acute in and around the major urban centres and areas of accessible countryside. The types of problem generated are summarised in Table 8.1. The predominance of unsupervised informal motorcycle activity in both urban and rural areas is marked.

8.5. All accessible urban fringe land is potentially vulnerable to abuse by unauthorised motor vehicle riders and drivers; from playing fields and public open space to derelict industrial land and open moorland. Around the City of Norwich nine sites have been identified by the local authority as being subject to informal unauthorised use (Figure 8.2.). This pattern is typical. River valleys, open heathland, and smaller sites of temporary dereliction within large urban centres, are notable for their ability to attract informal activities, especially as they often represent the only accessible off road terrain available. Greater Manchester, which has placed emphasis on open land policies in the six major river valleys within the County, has particularly noted site abuse of this kind. Within the Mersey Valley 19 areas have been identified where unauthorised 'track riding' and 'rough scrambling' take place (5) and a further eight have been identified in the Tame Valley. They commonly include playing fields, footpaths and picnic areas.

**Figure 8.1.**

District Councils Identifying Informal Off-road Activities  
as a Problem within their Area.



**Figure 8.2.****Sites Used for Informal Motorcycling in and around the City  
of Norwich****Site Key**

- (1) Site of old Speedway stadium, now closed
- (2) Derelict railway line
- (3) Riverside Walk
- (4) City Station Industrial Estate
- (5) Mousehold Heath, public open space
- (6) Marston Lane footpath
- (7) Marston Lane Woods
- (8) Yare River Valley Walk
- (9) Bowthorpe

Source: Courtesy of Norwich City Council Planning Department


Scale:  1 mile.



Table 8.1. Perceived Problems of Informal Activities

Type of Problem	% of respondent authorities identifying the problem.
Unsupervised motorcyclists in open countryside.	59.8
Unsupervised motorcyclists on vacant or derelict <u>urban</u> land.	48.1
The use of green lanes, byways, bridleways and RUPPs by motor vehicles.	42.0
Environmental problems resulting from site use.	40.8
Unsupervised use of extractive or infill sites by motorcyclists or car drivers.	30.3

N = 343.

Source: Questionnaire survey of local authorities in England and Wales, 1985.

Informal activities are not, however, solely confined to accessible urban fringe locations. Dartmoor National Park, for example, has long been used as a location for unauthorised activities; many bringing competitive off road machines on trailers and in vans, suggesting a degree of informal use by those otherwise engaged in formal motorsport (6). In a 1980 report the National Park Officer identifies the nature of the problem:

"The indiscriminate use of Dartmoor for the riding of motorcycles is a continuing problem and one which seems to be increasing.

One of the main offenders would seem to be the young boy on his first motorcycle, probably 50cc, joyriding and testing out his new machine. Then he is seen again when he is older and can afford his first large motorcycle. Although this covers the great majority of riders, ages range from 5 year-olds to men in their 60s. There are also groups of trials type motorcyclists whose machines do not bear any registration plates and who are brought to the area by pick-up trucks which then drive away." (7)

Figure 8.3. displays the extent of unauthorised use within Dartmoor National Park, much of which is concentrated in areas accessible from Plymouth to the south west.

8.6. It is difficult to assess the extent of use of such land as informal activities are irregular and rarely closely observed. As a prelude to provision, however, certain sites around the country have been surveyed; one such site is Thirteen Arches-Waterdale in the Croal-Irwell Valley, Greater Manchester. The results indicate that at maximum use the site attracted as many as 40 riders during a single day though, for the remainder of the year, use fluctuated between 15 and 80 riders per week (8). The average frequency of visits by riders in 1981 is shown in Table 8.2. Although the area as a whole is shared with walkers, dog walkers, and other informal users, (who are estimated to outnumber those involved in motorcycle recreation by as much as five to one) the site attracts off road motorcyclists from a wide area, including Preston and Leeds (Figure 8.4.). Riders travelling such distances, with their machines trailored or in vans, are frequently serious competitors seeking space for practice. The survey revealed that 51% of site users belonged to a formal motorcycle club, virtually all being motocross riders.

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Table 8.2. Frequency of Site Visits by Off Road Motorcyclists to Thirteen Arches - Waterdale (Croal-Irwell Valley).

	%
Daily	8.2
Several times a week	16.4
Once a week	60.7
Once a fortnight	4.9
Monthly	0.0
Less often	9.8

N = 61

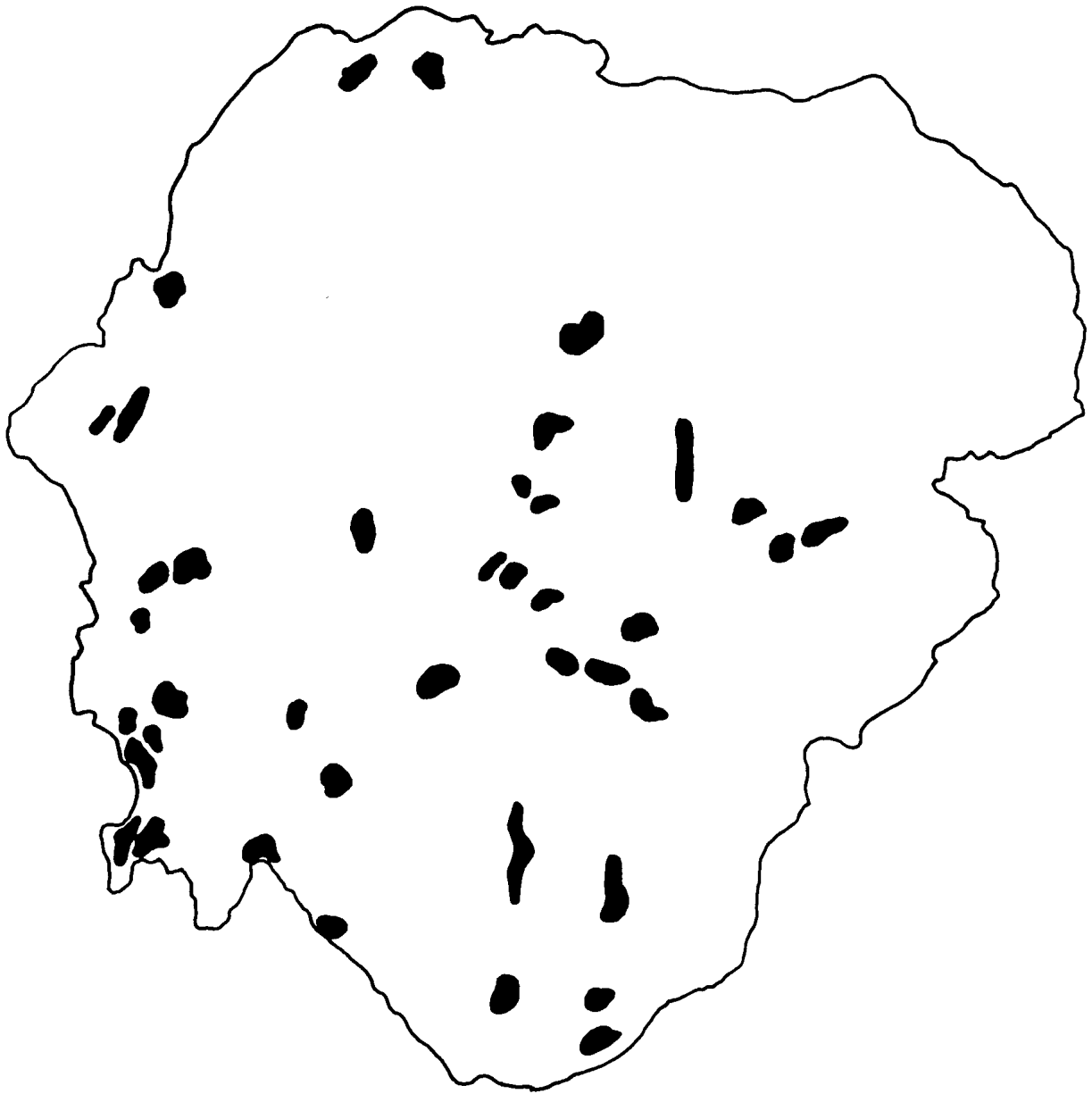
Source: Croal/Irwell Valley Park Warden Service, 1982.  
Unpublished Survey of Motorcycle use of Waterdale.

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8.7. The main problems arising from informal off road activities are:

- a. noise and nuisance to local residents;
- b. erosion and physical damage to sites;
- c. disturbance to livestock and wildlife;
- d. conflict between riders and other site or path users (including walkers and horse riders) and the associated dangers of accident or injury;
- e. destruction of gates and fences;

Figure 8.3.                      Sites Used for Unauthorised Informal Motorcycling within  
Dartmoor National Park



Source: Dartmoor National Park Authority Survey


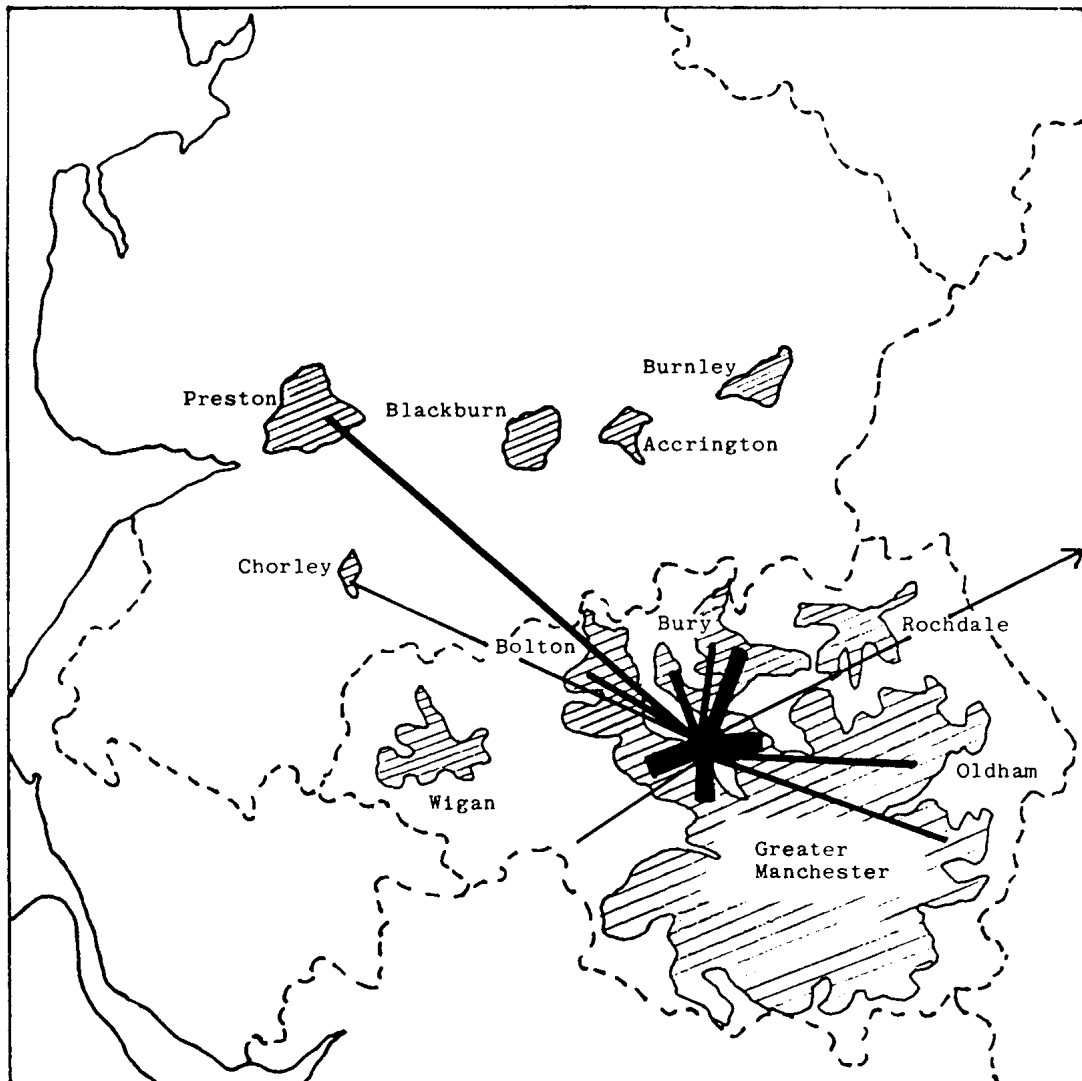
Scale:  4 miles

Figure 8.4.Sources of Catchment for the 13 Arches/Waterdale Site

Source: Adapted from unpublished material derived from a survey of motorcycle activity in the Waterdale area undertaken by the Croal Irwell Valley Park Warden Service, 1982.

Scale:  5 miles.

- f. the illegal use of footpaths, bridleways and open land; and
- g. the unlawful use of vehicles by unqualified persons.

Such problems have been identified in a wide range of situations (9). A report by the Durham County Police identified 75 sites where unauthorised activities had given rise to complaint. The sites included countryside and urban fringe locations, and ranged from quarries and disused railway lines, to supermarket car parks and recreation grounds. Of the more common complaints received, 63 per cent related to noise, 36 per cent to danger caused, and 19 per cent to trespass, many complaints referring to more than one problem (10).

8.8. The incompatibility of informal off road motor activities with other forms of recreation, particularly those seeking the undisturbed enjoyment of the countryside, is clear. The additional nuisance and danger created by such activities, when juxtaposed with traditional forms of recreation, has prompted calls for increased legislative control (11), although the "wholesale banning" of motorcyclists in the open countryside (including those using authorised sites and legitimate rights of way) favoured by some has elsewhere been rejected as being too unbalanced a solution (12).

### The Response

8.9. The responses available to local authorities are essentially three; tolerance, prohibition, and provision. The latter of these is the subject of the following section of this report. It is axiomatic that unauthorised activities only become a problem when perceived as such by those affected. Thus, although illegal, such activities do not necessarily provoke prohibitive legal action. They can be tolerated both by landowners and local authorities. Indeed, young riders might be directed towards some areas by police and wardens as a means of relieving pressure on more sensitive locations, even though such activities may not be specifically authorised (13). The Thirteen Arches site previously described has performed such a function for a number of years. As in the case of the Ship Canal sidings, Mersey Valley, unofficial 'recognition' has preceded attempts at formal provision. In England and Wales tolerance is seen as a possible alternative to the development of facilities, particularly where available sites are scarce (14). Cutacre Tip, Bolton and Queens Road, Cheetham in Manchester are both sites where unauthorised activities have been tolerated and, as a result, future provision on a low key scale is proposed. At Black Moor Quarry Bradford, planning permission has been sought to regularise an activity that has been taking place on public land for 20 years. The Forestry Commission has also seen tolerance as an acceptable policy in certain areas of transient abuse (15).

8.10. Tolerance of the use of a site may often be complemented by attempts to control or prohibit the use of others though, as Blezard confirms, prohibitive measures are rarely effective when pursued in isolation (16). The most common prohibitive actions taken by local authorities are shown in Table 8.3. Although 'calling the police' is preferred as a course of action it has only a marginal effect upon site abuse. The unauthorised use of land by motorcyclists is accorded a low

priority by many police forces, particularly in urban areas, the apprehension of offenders being hindered by their mobility, and lack of police manpower. Furthermore, police action is rarely a long-term solution. Fines, or the threat of fines under Section 36 of the Road Traffic Act, are the most common outcomes of police intervention, though prosecution for the use of unlicensed machines or under age riding on the Public Highway can also be forthcoming. The police are normally only called when unauthorised activities are particularly intrusive (such as on playing fields), or when such activities are seen as provocative or threatening. In such cases it is residents rather than local authorities that seek police action.

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Table 8.3. Types of (Prohibitive) Response Employed by Local Authorities in England and Wales.

Response	% of authorities employing response.
Calling the police. (I)	53.9
Preventing access to the site. (I)	46.9
Contacting Environmental Health authorities. (I)	33.2
Employing site wardens. (I)	26.2
Approving an alternative land use for site which is not compatible with off road activities. (I)	13.4
Closing the site. (I)	9.9
Seeking Article IV Directions. (F)	7.6
Seeking Noise Abatement Orders. (F)	6.1
Others:	22.7
including - threat of enforcement action (F)	3.5
- traffic regulation orders (I)	3.0
- persuasion (I)	2.3
- offering alternative sites (I)	2.3
- byelaws (I)	2.0
- voluntary wardening (I)	1.7

n = 343.

Note: (I) indicates that the response is predominantly aimed at controlling the activities of the informal sector, (F) indicates that formal motorsport activities are principally affected.

Source: Questionnaire Survey of Local Authorities, 1985.

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8.11. At present land use and environmental health legislation remain relatively ineffectual as means of control or prohibition. Preventative planning actions (Article IV Directions and enforcement notices - see Chapter 6) are only applicable where sites are used with the permission of the landowner as he or she has to be identified and served with notice. Instances where such measures have been used are either organised motorsport events or the authorised use of vacant land for sports practice

or rough scrambling. A more effective method has been the allocation of alternative non-compatible land uses, often involving site development. Such a course most frequently occurred on vacant or derelict sites, rather than in public open space.

8.12. Although environmental health inspectors are frequently contacted by local residents and others the number of abatement orders served has been small. The reasons for this are firstly, the inappropriateness of abatement orders for controlling informal site use and, secondly, the difficulties of serving them in situations where sites are used without the authorisation of owners. Under the terms of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, individual riders have to be identified, notified of the possibility of enforcement action, and re-identified as being the cause of subsequent noise intrusion, the level of which is determined by the environmental health inspector (see Chapter 6). Environmental health departments normally choose to refer complaints of unauthorised use to the police. However, unauthorised activities on sites also used for formal motorsports can often prompt noise abatement and enforcement action. The effects of this can frequently prevent legitimate use yet fail to prohibit unauthorised use; a process akin, in the words of one commentator, to "using a sledge hammer to crack a nut" (17).

8.13. More effective means of control or prohibition can be the erection of physical barriers and the employment of site wardens (strategies frequently adopted together). Warden services (see para. 6.44.) are becoming increasingly common in the management of the countryside and urban fringe. Wardens have performed both prohibitive and controlling functions. Their distribution is shown in Figure 8.5. indicating concentrations of such services around Greater Manchester and in North Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Essex. The effectiveness of wardening in reducing and controlling informal activities has been marked, particularly in areas of parkland used predominantly for walking and other forms of informal non-vehicular recreation (for example as Rivington/Lever Park, near Bolton). The principal strategies available to wardens are firstly; threat of prosecution (largely under Section 32 of the Road Traffic Act 1972) but also under local bylaws (see para. 6.58.); persuasion, and voluntary arrangements, (such as the establishment of concessionary routes or areas); and finally, the erection of physical barriers. Significantly many warden services regard the unauthorised use of parkland by horse riders as an equal if not greater problem than that of motorcyclists. It is revealing that in such instances horse riders are frequently less amenable to persuasion, believing in their unequivocal right of access to open land. However warden services are frequently too thinly spread to effectively police sites and areas and often lack sufficient mobility to identify and apprehend offenders. More importantly wardens have found prohibition to be ultimately ineffective as it merely transfers the problem elsewhere. Most warden services have learned that measures of prohibition and control need to be balanced with some form of tolerance and provision.

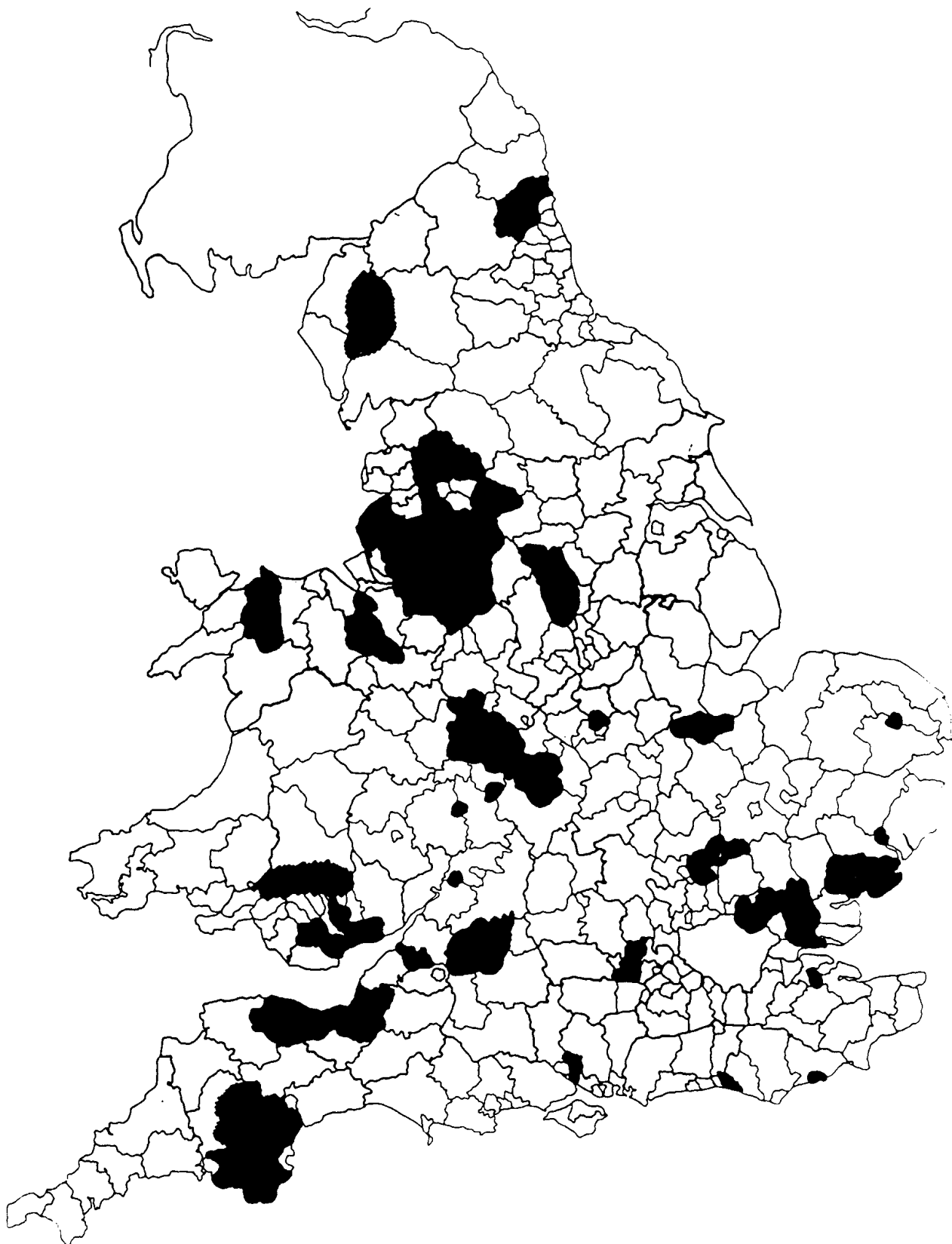
8.14. The physical restraint of access to land is widely used though its effects have been varied. One major limitation to the use of barriers is the high cost of encircling what are often large ill-defined sites.

**Figure 8.5.**

**The Use of Warden Services as a Means of Controlling the  
Unauthorised Use of Sites by Motorcyclists**

(Note: This map excludes Greater London).

Source: Authors' questionnaire survey, 1985.





Commonly barriers are placed across the principal accesses only. This can prevent cars, vans, and trailers from reaching a site but will not necessarily restrict motorcycles. The ability of informal off road motorcyclists to 'discover' new means of access to a prized site is legendary. At the Thirteen Arches/Waterdale site, the large number of unofficial access routes has continued to present a management problem to the warden services (Figure 8.6.). The destruction of barriers by those seeking unauthorised access (which can include horseriders as well as motorcyclists or car drivers) is unfortunately also common at the more well used sites. Anecdotally we were informed that the only difference between horse riders and motorcyclists who take down barriers is that the former tend to stack the wood neatly! Barrier schemes can therefore be expensive to maintain.

8.15. The rise of informal motor vehicle activities has presented local authorities with a problem with which they are ill-equipped to deal. The natural inclination of many is to seek solely prohibitive responses but these have not proved effective in the face of the growing resilience of informal riders and drivers. What is becoming increasingly evident, both to observers and local authorities (18), is that some form of provision must also be made.

## PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

### The Arguments for Provision

8.16. Changing attitude to provision by local authorities have been prompted by four principal concerns. At the forefront has been a concern to restrict and limit undesirable unauthorised use by the establishment of authorised sites to which riders will be directed. In this first instance provision is accompanied by a more widespread strategy of control.

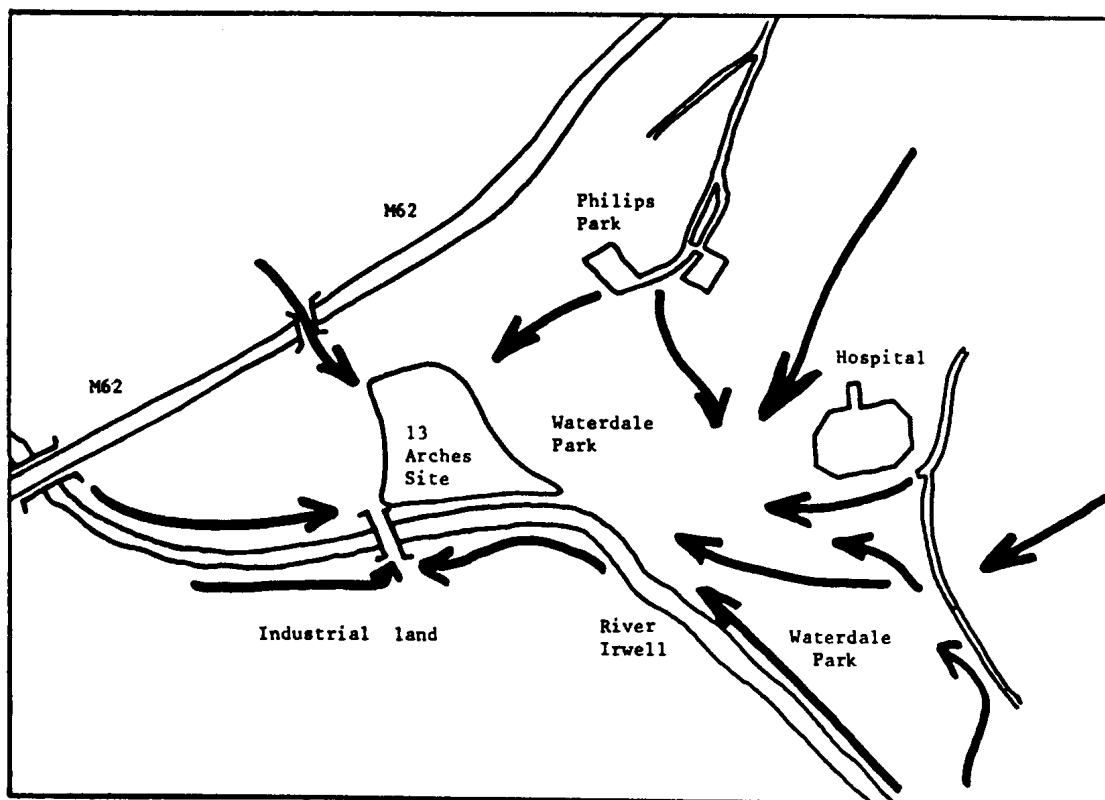
8.17. A second concern for provision has been stimulated by the undeniable popularity of off road motorcycling as a form of recreation, particularly within the countryside:

"There are large numbers of well behaved people who already use motorcycles to tour and view the countryside with great sympathy for other people. They are of all ages, spanning a remarkably wide age group and their needs as recreational travellers should be given relevant consideration bearing in mind the numbers involved and the demand." (19)

Thus local authorities, particularly leisure service and planning departments, seek provision in recognition of legitimate recreational demands.

**Figure 8.6.**

Points of Access to the Thirteen Arches Site used by  
Motorcyclists



Source: Adapted from unpublished material derived from a survey of motorcycle activity in the Waterdale area undertaken by the Croal Irwell Valley Park Warden Service, 1982.

8.18. Thirdly provision can address vehicle skill training needs. Although the Transport Act 1981 has made more powerful motorcycles less accessible to the total novice (20), accidents involving motorcyclists continue to represent the largest single category of road deaths and injuries. This is despite the fact that declining machine sales during the early 1980s have, to a degree, led to a reduction in the total number of accidents involving motorcycles. In 1981 it was estimated that only 15 per cent of new riders took some form of recognised training, compared with 95 per cent of car drivers (21). The 1981 Act sought to redress the balance by encouraging voluntary rider training by means of a two part test procedure. To date however there remains a large proportion of riders who eschew such procedures. Indeed there is some evidence to suggest that, since the introduction of the test procedures, the number of 16 year old riders who have undergone training has declined (22). Nevertheless training per se must contribute ultimately to increased driver or rider skills. Under the provisions of the 1981 Act machine handling exercises are undertaken on sealed-surface areas off the Public Highway. In addition, although there is no statutory recommendation that these exercises be accompanied by the encouragement of riders to use informal off road venues, many local authorities, police forces, and road safety groups recognise the value of such activities when used in conjunction with on road training. The Northamptonshire police have noted:

"There are many locally established 'on-road' training schemes and since accident statistics show that only a very small proportion of young motorcyclists take advantage of this form of training before venturing onto the public roads, it is hoped to encourage those youngsters, who take part in the 'off-road' training scheme, to progress onto 'on-road' training." (23)

The juxtaposition of on and off road training facilities on a single site is increasingly encouraged by police forces and local authorities.

8.19. A final concern motivating off road provision has been associated with remedial initiatives for young offenders, and a concern for the welfare and general recreational opportunities of those living in deprived conditions. Both probation and social service departments have been instrumental in requesting the public and private sectors to provide both informal and formal projects. Some 20 per cent of the authorities responding to our national questionnaire had received such requests. At least one major off road facility, the Birmingham Wheels Park, has come into being with the considerable assistance of the Birmingham Probation Service. In addition a number of organisations whose aims include programmes for young offenders have turned to off road motorcycling, motor car maintenance and banger racing as bases for legitimate experience. For such bodies, off road facilities and formal motor projects perform a series of functions:

- they permit constructive supervision of young offenders;
- they allow young offenders the opportunity to ride or drive without breaking the law;

- they provide valid recreational opportunities for those who are deprived; and
- they facilitate training and instruction both in the law and in machine/vehicle control and maintenance.

Examples of such organisations include the Ilderton Motor Project, the Kirby Motorcycle Workshop, the Newwheels Motor Project in Hackney, the Hard Times Project, Hammersmith (24), and the Rural and Urban Training Scheme in Scotland. Of this general concern for provision, Blezard concludes:

"As a response to autocrime offences, such projects offer an alternative to the vicious spiral of traditional punishment, where progressively more severe fines and bans are imposed, which only makes the chance of driving legally an increasingly distant and more difficult objective for the recipients to achieve." (25)

8.20. The Rural Urban Training Scheme (RUTS), which provides off road motorcycling and group work opportunities for young people in and around Edinburgh, offers an interesting example of this kind of project. Established in 1982 as a voluntary organisation financed from, amongst others, the Manpower Services Commission and various trust funds, RUTS has sought to provide an alternative to delinquency through supervised motorcycle activities (including off road riding, maintenance and training) and groupwork. Although off road motorcycling constitutes the dominant activity, the organisers stress that:

"... motorcycling is not an end in itself but it is an exhilarating, challenging and positive activity which can form the basis for constructive relationships between the young people involved and the adult staff of projects".  
(26)

Significantly RUTS, like the other project mentioned above, has experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining sites suitable for weekly off road sessions. The immediacy of the problem has been relieved by the granting of permission to use a site owned by West Lothian District Council, with the support of the Police Division, but this is recognised as a temporary solution. Elsewhere the project has, like countless formal motorsport clubs throughout Britain, sought the temporary use of private agricultural land. Such opportunities are especially suitable as they "encourage appreciation of the value and nature of the rural environment" (27), yet their availability is limited. More recently, RUTS has approached the Forestry Commission for land and certain areas have subsequently been made more available. Undoubtedly the success of RUTS as a rehabilitative initiative owes much to the use of motorcycles as a theme of youth interest and activity. Access to them has provided young people with recreational opportunities otherwise largely denied outside the context of deviancy.

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## Land Demands

8.21. Within the informal sector, the component groups of which have been identified above (para. 8.3.), four basic types of demand for land can be identified:

- a. Formal Sites  
- permanent or purpose-built sites with close supervision of use, formal organisation, and occasionally, vehicle workshops and associated facilities. Such sites might be used for a number of activities including rider and driver training;
- b. Informal Sites  
- normally temporary in nature with supervised use of marked courses in rough, though graded, off road conditions;
- c. Rough Land Sites  
- areas of waste land with no course layout or supervision; and
- d. Trails  
- waymarked byways or RUPPs for which vehicle access has been particularly emphasised.

8.22. Each of these demands are represented within the informal sector. Motorsport participants seeking opportunities for off road practice are likely to seek the unsupervised use of rough land, rather than the controlled use of marked courses. On the other hand youth riders unwilling to break the law are predisposed towards some sort of supervised course, particularly if located near their homes or with machines for hire. Riders and drivers seeking opportunities for 'recreational motorsport' (informal scrambling, banger driving or non-RACMSA karting), are dependent upon supervised facilities, either sealed-surface (for car and kart activities), or rough land (for motorcycle scrambling and trail activities). Riders and drivers seeking to combine off road activities with vehicle handling and maintenance training, or under supervision orders from the courts or probation services, will require supervised facilities. Finally, riders seeking to use Green Lanes for recreational motorcycling will benefit from the waymarking of specific cross country routes, rather than the layout of formal trails within individual sites.

## Forms of Provision

8.23. Provision for informal motor activities is largely a phenomenon of the 1980s. Despite widespread recognition of the 'problem' of unauthorised activity (see Figure 8.1.) the extent of provision is still comparatively small. However the number of schemes implemented is growing. In his review of facilities undertaken in 1981 Blezard identified 20 sites of varying type in England and Wales (28). There are now some 40 facilities for informal sector use operating in England and Wales and 10-15 more are being seriously planned. These are listed in Table 8.4. The form and extent of this provision is highly varied ranging from large

scale motor recreation parks to the use of small areas of waste ground. However four criteria appear valid as a basis for differentiation:

- the level of financial investment in the facility by the owner or operator;
- the degree of permanence of the facility;
- the ability of the facility to incorporate a range of motor activities; and
- the extent to which the facility is purpose-built or converted.

Using these criteria we can identify four distinct forms of provision for informal motor activities.

1. Motor Recreation Parks

- purpose-built or converted facilities combining a variety of supervised motor activities on a single site, in continuous use, and providing associated on-site activities such as workshops and training areas.

2. Trail Parks

- temporary or permanent facilities for supervised off road motorcycling involving the laying out of courses or trails with an emphasis on training and recreation, rather than sport and competition.

3. Rough Land

- vacant or despoiled land upon which unsupervised activities are permitted but without any formal management, supervision, or course layout.

4. Motorsport Venues

- sites otherwise used for competitive motorsport events but upon which informal use (supervised or unsupervised) is occasionally permitted.

These headings are used to classify provision in Table 8.4.

### **Motor Recreation Parks**

8.24. At the top end of the scale of provision are major facilities specifically designed, either by a local authority or a commercial operator, for off road use. The principal examples are the Birmingham Wheels Park; the Walker Wheels Park, Newcastle (currently under construction); and the Eldfield Park Noisy Sports Area, Milton Keynes.

Table 8.4.Facilities for Informal Off Road Activities in BritainA. Motor Recreation Parks

The Walker Wheels Project, Newcastle  
 The Birmingham Wheels Project, Birmingham  
 Eldfield Park, Milton Keynes  
 The Ackers Park/National Motorcycle Centre, Birmingham  
 The Bristol Motorcycle Centre, Hambrook, Bristol.

B. Trail Parks

## 1. Commercial Trail Parks

The Dave Taylor Trail Park, Dartford, Kent  
 Sankey's Site, Waldrige Fell, Chester-le-Street  
 Stanground, Peterborough  
 Ridgeway Trail Park, Cheshire  
 Jersey Marine Trail Park, Neath (now closed)  
 Worston Lane Park, Burnham on Sea (now closed)  
 Paulton Trail Park, Devon (now closed)

## 2. Local Authority operated parks

Third Grove, Peterborough  
 Park Road, Barrow  
 Swindon Trail Park, Swindon  
 Hanworth, Hounslow  
 Cleveland Street, Hull  
 Ranskill, Retford

## 3. Local Authority sites leased to operators

Mercia Trail Park, Coventry  
 Borough Hill, Daventry  
 Botany Bay, Stevenage  
 Upton Court Park, Slough  
 Dane Valley, Margate  
 Donnington, Telford  
 Victory Quarry, Derby  
 Smeckley Wood, Chesterfield  
 Westfield Park, Hastings  
 Woodspring Park, Weston-super-Mare  
 Bikeland Trail Park, Hull

## 4. Proposed Local Authority sites

Queens Road, Cheetham, Manchester  
 Westwood, Southampton  
 Grundymoor, Havant  
 Stafford Trail Park, Stafford  
 Walsall (unidentified site)  
 Turnscoe Two Wheel Park, Barnsley  
 Stavely, Chesterfield  
 Bryn Bach Park, Gwent

C. Rough Land Sites

Brick Kiln Lane, Mansfield  
 land at the rear of Dudley Zoo, Dudley  
 Queens Road, Cheetham, Manchester  
 Black Moor Quarry, Bradford  
 Parkwood Springs, Sheffield  
 Thirteen Arches, Bury  
 Carrington, Mersey Valley

D. Motorsport Venues

Elsworth Moto Parc, Cambridgeshire  
 Avely MCC Training Course

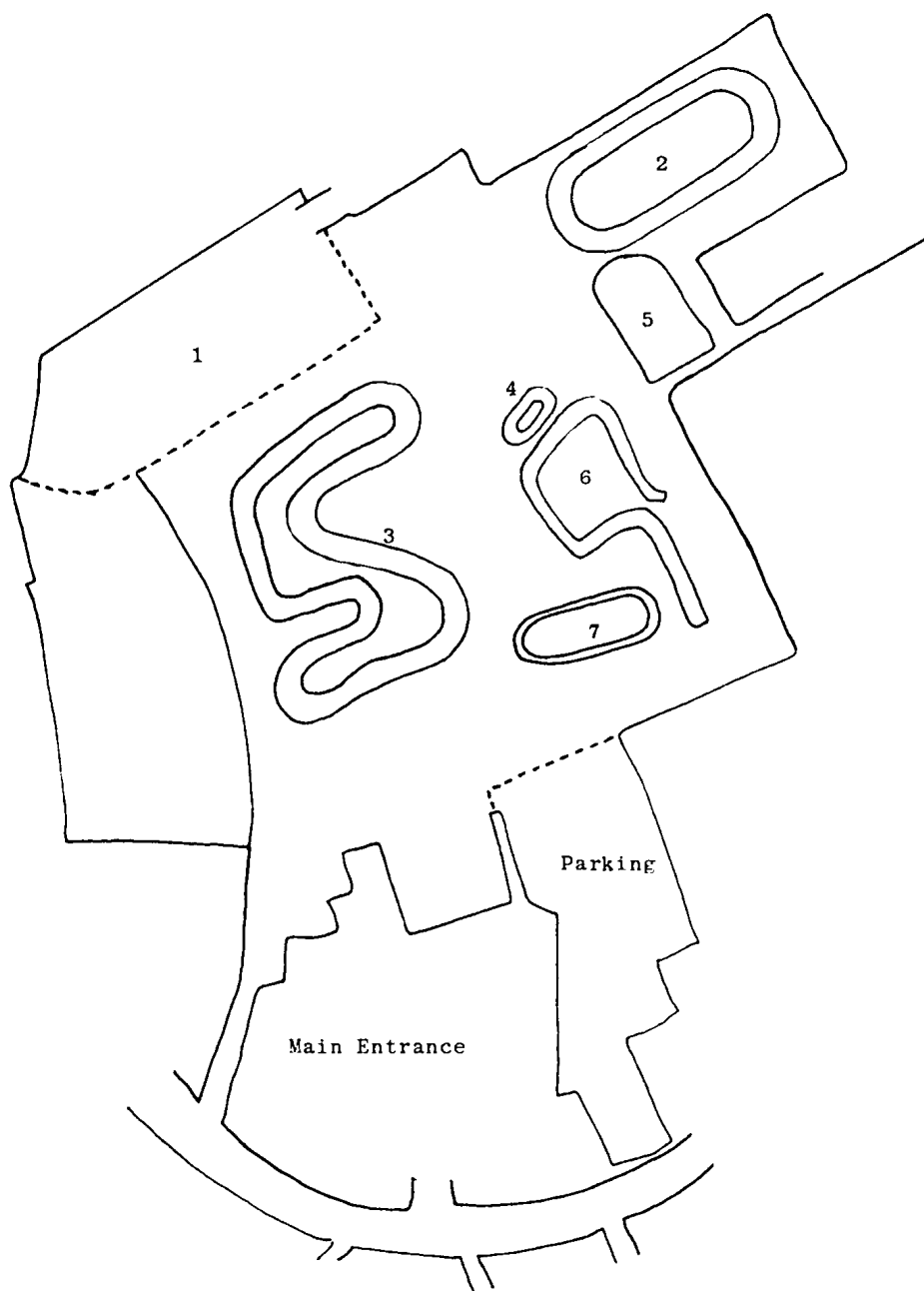


All three combine a variety of off road activities involving both cars and motorcycles. In addition two other sites, the Bristol Motorcycle Centre and the Ackers Park, Birmingham, provide sealed and unsealed conditions tailored to motorcycle training and informal activities.

8.25. The Birmingham and Walker Wheels Parks have been developed by local authorities, in association with local probation services, social services, and the police.

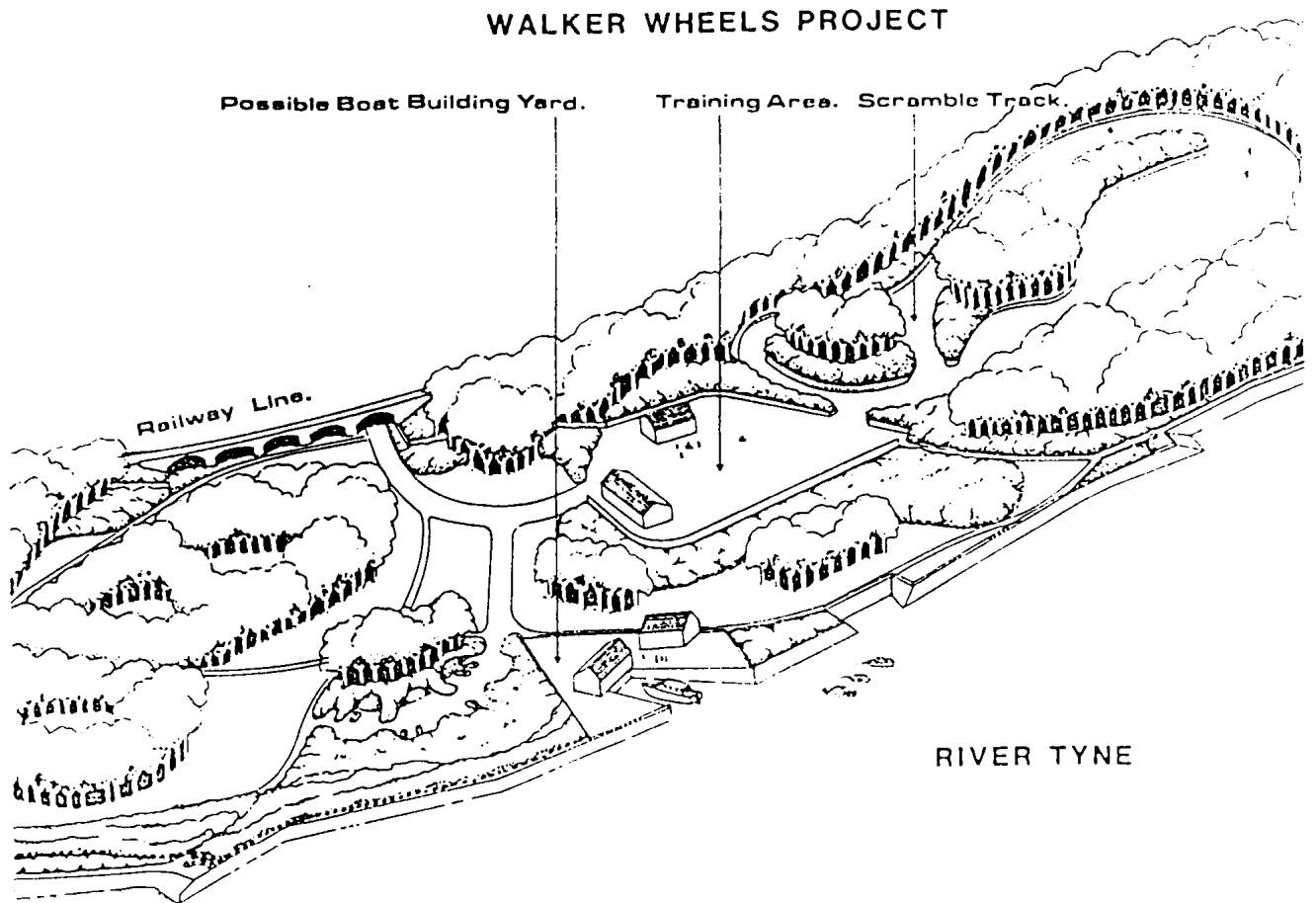
The Birmingham Wheels Park (see Figure 8.7.) is a 40 acre facility constructed on a reclaimed industrial site in the centre of the City of Birmingham. Surrounded by railway lines and industrial uses, the site is also only 300 yards from local housing though the high general ambient noise levels have meant that to date specific noise restrictions have not been required. The site currently incorporates a licensed speedway circuit, a kart track, BMX track, a banger racing circuit, and a trail park-informal scrambling area. Open seven days a week and supported by the Manpower Services Commission, the Wheels Park has been, since opening in 1981, constantly developing as an informal and formal facility. Although its principal function has been to provide opportunities for the young people of inner Birmingham, as evinced by the formative involvement of the probation and after-care service, the growth of the Park has enabled involvement in more formal activities such as speedway, motocross and, it is intended, Formula 3 racing. The Birmingham Wheels Park was the first of its kind, and is frequently advertised as Britain's only inner city motorsport facility though (as is discussed below), the compatibility of formal motorsport and informal activities on a single site is normally difficult to achieve. For the most part the motorised recreation facilities undertaken at the Wheels Park site are not of the competitive type discussed generally within this report.

The Walker Wheels Project (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne), due to open in Autumn 1985, was born out of similar concerns. The project, concludes an Official Working Group, "is the first attempt in the City to channel young people's interest in motorised activity into constructive and purposeful forms" (29). The facility is part of a multi-million pound riverside reclamation project being carried out by the reclamation team at Tyne and Wear County Council. It includes a scramble track and hard tarmac area, vehicle workshops, garages, offices and social amenities (Figure 8.8.). It is intended that the track will be marshalled at all times during use and that a maximum of 15 machines at a time be permitted on the scramble track. In order to minimise the environmental intrusiveness noise levels, access, and opening hours will be regulated and monitored. Although the site has in the past attracted unauthorised motorcycle riders and, as such, provoked complaints from local residents, it is hoped that the completed scheme will "provide a safe, controlled facility in which this activity can take place"

Figure 8.7.The Birmingham Wheels ParkKey

1. Driver Training Area and Karting Circuit
2. Speedway/Banger Racing Oval
3. Off Road Motocross Circuit
4. Cycle Speedway
5. National BMX Track
6. European BMX Track
7. Roller Speed Skating Track

Source: Courtesy of Birmingham Wheels Park.

Figure 8.8Plan of the Walker Wheels Project, Newcastle

Source: Courtesy of City of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Planning Department.

industry by way of a levy on all new machines sold, as part of their Star Rider scheme, a specific programme of rider training. The Centre is currently being developed further by the County Council at a cost of £250,000. Already a major training facility, with the construction of an arena trials area and trial training facilities, it will increasingly cater for recreational demands, particularly those of youth (under 16) riders. Like the larger Wheels Park the site, on derelict land in the inner City close to railway lines and some distance from major residential areas, is regarded as a suitable location for this form of activity.

### Trail Parks

8.27. The Trail Park concept has achieved widespread popularity over the last three years. This is due to the pioneering efforts of early trail park operators and supporters, and also to a growing recognition by local authorities that such facilities can represent a low-cost solution to the problems of unauthorised use. The number of Trail Parks has grown from one in 1977 to around 24 (either in operation or at advanced stages of planning) in 1985. Although precise definitions of a trail park may differ we can identify certain features common to the majority;

- they are predominantly, but not exclusively, established on local authority-owned land, often derelict, extractive, or infill sites;
- they have planning permission (frequently temporary) for motor recreation use, enabling them to be operated well over 14 days a year;
- their use is supervised either by an appointed site manager, or a lessee site operator;
- they are solely used for non-competitive, off road motorcycling;
- they are generally located in areas where unauthorised site use is regarded as a problem;
- they are rarely, if at all, used for competitive motorsports; and
- they do not generally have any purpose-built construction relevant to Trail Park use on site.

The original definition of a 'trail park' ("a commercial site with several tracks of progressive difficulty at which machines can be hired by riders of any age" (34)), has become inadequate as a description of the growing number of local authority and club-managed facilities. Moreover, as many of the original commercial sites have found themselves in financial difficulties, the extent to which trail parks can function on a purely

commercial basis is increasingly open to doubt (35).

8.28. The longest running trail park in the country is, nevertheless, a commercial enterprise.

Established in 1977 on an old quarry site, the 8-acre Dave Taylor Trail Park in Darenth Wood, Dartford, Kent, has been very much a pioneer venue providing a number of off road courses combining training and recreation for young riders. The facility originally included four trail circuits, a hard surface area used for Part I Tests, and a temporary showroom and amenities. It has been described as having "an ideal topography" and would be an ideal location but for the fact that it partly lies in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (36). Although there is little housing within half a mile the sensitive nature of the quarry environment has provoked public opposition. In common with later commercial facilities, the Dave Taylor Trail Park has had a chequered history in its relations with the formal planning system. Initial permission for development was for an 18-month period only. A subsequent permission for five years (April 1979 to April 1984) stipulated conditions including the maximum number of riders on the courses at any single period (20 machines), a total prohibition of formal competition, the use of road legal machines, silencing, and no public address system (37). In 1984, when the five year permission elapsed renewal was opposed, largely by conservationists. Yet in the summer of that year permanent planning permission was granted. Unfortunately, however, financial constraints have forced the Park's owner to reduce both the use of the site and the number of machines available for hire. Nevertheless the Dave Taylor Trail Park remains a key facility, and one of the few within the outer London fringe. The essence of operations such as this is, in the words of its proprietor, the combination of training and 'fun':

"Trail parks give the chance to learn riding skills - youngsters soon learn brake controls after locking up the wheels and falling off down a steep slope! They also learn throttle control by powering out of corners and don't get panic stricken if they have a slide but can master it better. This certainly gives them more chance on a wet road." (38)

8.29. Of the remaining trail parks identified in the course of this study, seven are commercially operated. One of the largest is the 30 acre site at Walldridge Fell, Chester-le-Street, operated privately by the site owner (though currently the subject of dispute following the alleged failure of the operator to comply with planning conditions established at a public inquiry governing the nature and extent of the site's use (39)). Another is the Stanground, Peterborough; a 15 acre site leased from the London Brick Company by Peterborough Junior Motor Cycle Club and used as a trail, BMX, and non-competitive youth motocross venue.

8.30. The principal reason for the closure of commercial and private trail parks has undoubtedly been that of financial viability. The main income for private operators is from three sources; the hire of motorcycles, charging for the use of the site by riders bringing their own machines, and the sale of machines. Larger facilities, such as the British Motorcycle Centre, have been able to gain some external grants (which in the case of the Bristol Centre has included £4,500 from the South West Region of the Sports Council), training fees, and income from machine and parts sales. Despite this they frequently run at a net loss. The survival of a facility depends on the extent of original capital investment by the owner or operator. In order to draw effectively upon the pool of off road enthusiasts in an area prices need to be low (usually between £2 and £4 per session) yet planning conditions, and the size of a site, can constrain the number of users limiting revenue. Although the overheads entailed in establishing a commercial venue need not be as great as those for a local authority site, (which can involve full-time site managers and workers), the costs of machines, site regrading, the erection of amenities, and legal charges incurred in securing planning consent (particularly if an appeal is necessary), can contribute to substantial initial outlays. Finally, private operators are rarely endowed with any great locational choice. For owner-operators in particular the viability of a site is largely dependent upon its locational suitability. If the site is unsuitable planning permission can be refused despite an acknowledged demand for such a facility. Where conditions are imposed as part of planning consent they may limit the numbers and capacity of machines, noise emission, and times of use. Furthermore, public opposition engendered during the period of a temporary consent can lead to the refusal of applications for renewal of consent.

8.31. Although commercial operators were largely the instigators of the trail park idea the bulk of current facilities are local authority controlled. Of the 26 trail parks identified in the course of this research eight are either owned and managed, and 18 are owned and subsequently leased to private operators, by local authorities. Local authority trail parks differ from commercial operations in three important ways. First, their emphasis has been on provision as a means of controlling general levels of unauthorised activity within a broad locality rather than provision for training. Levels of 'control' may vary from the legitimisation of a site already used informally, as at Wingate Quarry, County Durham (40), to the establishment of a specific site within an area of general unauthorised use, as at Carrington in the Mersey Valley, Greater Manchester (41).

8.32. Second, local authorities are more capable of locating sites where minimal disturbance will occur. Many authorities have been tenacious in their search for suitable locations for the establishment of off road facilities (42). For example Gwent County Council in 1978 undertook a survey of 30 possible sites within the County, most being derelict land and disused quarries. The criteria employed in making the initial appraisal of sites were:

1. Accessibility from the main centres of population, (on the grounds that sites too

remote would be no substitute for nearby hill commons from the user's point of view);

2. Suitability of the terrain for a variety of motorcycling activities such as scrambling, trails, sprints, and racing; and
3. Likelihood of minimum disturbance being created to existing land uses (such as farming and forestry). (43)

A similar method of appraisal undertaken by Durham County Council sought to identify sites that were, in addition:

- 4-12 hectares (10-30) acres in size;
- At least 400 metres from groups of 10 or more houses and, preferably, all housing;
- Close to a main road; and
- Capable of accomodating other facilities if appropriate, such as small workshops and toilets. (44)

These criteria have helped local authorities identify suitable sites where local opposition is least likely to occur.

8.33. Third, the management of local authority sites is more readily integrated with other areas of countryside management and social policy. As we have seen, social and probation services are frequently involved in the provision and management of sites for informal activities. At Third Grove, near Peterborough and the proposed Thurnscoe Two-Wheeled Centre at Barnsley, these services are directly involved in the promotion and management of trail parks. Elsewhere they have given financial and manpower support. Trail parks can also form part of wider countryside management strategies as has been the case in the Croal-Irwell and Mersey Valleys in Greater Manchester (45), the Tong Cockersdale urban fringe area of Leeds (where a proposed site was abandoned following hostile local opposition), and as is intended at the proposed Westwood facility near Southampton.

8.34. Those sites involving local authorities as both owner and managers include the Thamesdown Trail Park, Swindon; the Cleveland St. site, Hull; Hanworth Park, Hounslow; and the proposed site at Queens Road, Cheetham in Manchester, currently used on an informal basis.

The Thamesdown Park, located on an 11 acre Council-owned infill site adjoining railway tracks and industrial land, is operated by Swindon Youth Project (an organisation aimed at providing recreational experiences for young people and young offenders, in particular those connected with car and motorcycle related crimes), originally as a rehabilitation enterprise, but now largely as an informal, recreational venue. A temporary planning consent,

limiting the number of days the facility can stay open and specifying 'street-legal' silencing for the machines used, had been obtained. Financial aid from the local Sports Council, Manpower Services Commission, a local sponsor and the local authority (amounting to around £10,000) has also been obtained and the Thamesdown Park currently attracts around 800 riders per month. Motorcycles are hired at a rate of £1.50 per half hour (50cc) and £1.70 per half hour (100/150cc). The site, comprising two major trails, a beginners' area and a workshop, is increasingly used by schools and youth groups and has been successful in reducing the extent of unauthorised motorcycling on adjoining playing fields. Although the nearest housing is only 70 yards from the site, high ambient noise levels, tree screening, and the control of noise emissions have minimised local objection. Indeed local residents have been, for the most part, fully supportive of the facility following a demonstration session to which they were invited when the Park was first opened. Unfortunately, in common with those commercial operations identified above, the Thamesdown Trail Park suffers from financial indeterminacy, made more severe by the reluctance of the local planning authority to give full, rather than temporary, planning consent. This has meant that financial assistance has been limited. The Sports Council have thus far contributed £495 and are unable to give more until long-term site security is established. The Manpower Services Commission, who support the employment of the site's 14 staff (11 of whom are part-time), only operate on an annual budgetary basis. If a permanent planning permission can be obtained it is intended to seek further funding from the Sports Council and the Urban Aid Programme.

8.35. More common than public ownership and management is the leasing of local authority sites to commercial operators and non-competitive motorcycle clubs. The advantages of such an approach are twofold. First local authorities are relieved of the immediate burden of site management and control, such responsibilities being placed in the hands of persons potentially better equipped to deal with problems arising from off road use. Indeed Blezard goes as far as making such arrangements an explicit recommendation:

"... it is recommended that management and operating responsibilities should be put in the hands of people with interest, commitment (sic.) and experience in this subject matter rather than, for example, a Recreation and Amenities Department trying to do this themselves." (46)

Second, site leasing can relieve local authorities of certain liabilities, particularly if the arrangement contains specific reference to the contracting out of liability.



One of the larger trail parks of this kind is the Mercia Trail Park in Coventry. Established in 1983 following requests from local motorcycle clubs, the Park is located on council-owned derelict land on the fringe of the City, bounded by open fields and light industrial units. Although the nearest housing is over a mile away early objections by local residents to the principle of the site were overcome by an exploratory noise test in 1982. Since then planning permission for the site has been obtained. The site has been developed with financial assistance from the City's Leisure Services and Education Departments. In addition a £3,500 Urban Aid grant has been awarded. Manpower for clearing and laying out of the site was largely obtained through the probation service, with further assistance from the Manpower Services Commission who have financed seven full time posts. The Park, which has garage facilities, three separate trails and a fleet of machines for hire, is currently leased from the Council by an operating club. Within the first year of its use it was attracting around 50 people a day (47).

Other publicly owned sites leased to operators include Borough Hill, Daventry; Botany Bay, Stevenage; Dane Valley, Margate; Donnington, Telford; Victory Quarry, Dove Holes, Derbyshire; Upton Court Park, Slough; and the Woodspring Trail Bike Club's site at Weston-super-Mare. Many of these sites are on similar types of unproductive land. All are fairly small (generally under 10 acres), have planning permission, and are run and operated by local motorcycle interests principally for local riders, mainly youth riders.

#### Rough Land

8.36. A growing number of local authorities and land owners have sought to overcome the problem of unauthorised use by merely legitimising it. This is done by 'recognising' use within a formal planning document, or by directing unauthorised riders to an earmarked site. In both instances, the level of site management is low though, where relevant, warden services may seek to 'contain' such rough land sites by fencing and controlling access.

Possibly the most well known site of this kind is Parkwood Springs, Sheffield; a 15 acre area of Council-owned waste ground near the centre of the City which has been used for five years as an informal site attracting as many as 300 motorcyclists at peak times (summer weekends). Prior to its formal recognition the site was used, along with others, for unauthorised activities and competition practice. In 1981 South Yorkshire Police Traffic Division in association with the City Recreation Department sought to 'regularise' use of the site by running pilot off road training schemes and, since that time, unsupervised use has grown dramatically. Although it has only low key management, and no formal layout, the use of the site is monitored by the police and recreation departments and noise levels are evaluated at regular intervals. In a recent bid to enlarge the "motorcycling experience" of Parkwood Springs, the City Council have leased an

adjoining quarry incorporating it into the site. This, however, is the extent of their management role:

"It is considered that the supervision this Department gives to the Parkwood Springs site is reasonable in terms of the law, and the Department has tried to make the situation as unrestrictive as possible to encourage youngsters of all ages to take the opportunity of using the site." (48)

8.37. Because of its prior allocation for recreation use Parkwood Springs has to date had no need of planning permission for informal motorcycling. Elsewhere local plans have made specific reference to informal sites as part of the process of 'regularisation'. In the case of the Thirteen Arches/Waterdale site the planning authorities state:

"(This) area (is) already used for motorcycle scrambling. In principle, the use is acceptable as the area is fairly remote and has a high ambient noise level. The use needs controlling, especially by confining it, to protect other users of the area and to minimise damage to the landscape. The area will be managed by the local authority and its use will be monitored and subject to review. Substantial physical barriers around the scrambling area and along the access track will be necessary if the use is to be a permanent feature. A riverside pedestrian corridor will be protected and enhanced." (49)

A similar proposal has been made for the Ship Canal Sidings site in the Mersey Valley (50). Others, where unsupervised motorcycling occurs on public land with the tacit authorisation of the local authority, can include planning permission for that use: for example, Brick Kiln Lane, Mansfield; land to the rear of Dudley Zoo, West Midlands; and Blackmoor Quarry, Bradford.

8.38. The Forestry Commission has also sought to regularise unauthorised use by granting permission for the use of specific areas suitable for informal motorcycling. Where provision of this sort has occurred, it has generally been supervised, either by specific management (e.g. wardens) or by individual motorcycling clubs. In the latter instance, as has occurred in South East England, a local club can be given permission to use part of a woodland venue for informal activities for a small annual charge on condition that the club indemnifies the Commission, insures the use of the site, limits the number and periods of use, and ensures (through the issue of membership cards) that the area is used solely by club members. These are seen by the Commission as 'last resort' arrangements;

"Such permissions are only to be used as a means of solving an existing or incipient problem and should not be regarded or encouraged as part of our recreation facilities where we need to maintain our policy of peaceful enjoyment of forests ..." (51)

8.39. Rough land areas offer an alternative to full scale provision, though they are by no means as common. Their principal advantages lie in low cost (once in council ownership) and low management demands. Furthermore, they are often attractive to informal riders as they do not limit activities to organised courses or set patterns of use. However, the absence of formal control and management, while an attraction to site users, might nevertheless be anathema to local authorities and the police. Rough land venues can attract riders using illegal machines or can promote illegal means of access. The total absence of control is thereby untenable. Some form of support, whether it be the closure of more controversial access routes, the fencing of sites, or the monitoring of use (by either local authorities, other agents or the police), appears necessary.

#### Other Venues

8.40. A fourth, relatively minor, source of land for informal motor recreation are sites otherwise used for organised motorsports. As has been seen a significant number of private motorsport venues (from motocross to stage rally sites) suffer from use by the informal sector. Although there is no specific solution, in terms of club actions, to this abuse (other than the policing of sites by club members which, for sites used only four or five times a year for competitions, is clearly impractical), some venues now incorporate organised events, competition practice, and informal use on a single site, though at different times. The extent of authorised informal use of private agricultural land is difficult to assess as many farmers allow access to youth riders and practicing competitors for a nominal charge, even though the frequency of site use may extend beyond that permitted under the General Development Order. On a number of sites this 'overuse' has led to public objection (52).

8.41. More formal arrangements for the use of motorsport venues for informal motor recreation nevertheless exist. Elsworth Motor Parc in Cambridgeshire and Aveley MCC's practice course are two examples where motorcyclists can bring their own machines for off road use. Kart circuits, many of which operate a combination of competitive events and practice sessions, also attract non-motorsport participants who nonetheless seek opportunities for recreational karting. However such combinations of formal and informal use are rare (at least on an authorised basis). Largely this is a function of the transient nature of site use by formal motorsport clubs. It also demonstrates an understandable reluctance of organised clubs to become involved in site wardening and policing roles (see Chapter 7).

#### SUCCESSFUL PROVISION

8.42. Successful provision for informal activities is ultimately dependent upon a wide range of factors. As this review has shown, and earlier reviews intimated (53), the number of commercially operated facilities have declined. There have also been reductions in the variety and extent of activities undertaken within those surviving. The most important contributor to decline has been cost, exacerbated by the

locational constraints of privately operated sites, and the temporary nature of planning consents. Furthermore, private operators seeking to finance their facilities through the sale or the loan of machines have found the former threatened by declines in motorcycle sales, and the latter rendered impractical by the excessive damage caused to loaned machines by continuous use. Large scale facilities, such as the Bristol Motorcycle Centre, have survived due to private financial input, though their continued existence depends ultimately upon external sources of finance. Thus, although many of the private commercial sites either currently operating, or recently closed, have been both well used and supported by local planning and/or leisure service departments their future, if denied financial help, remains fairly bleak. In the words of one operator interviewed "There is no money to be made in trail parks".

8.43. Some local authorities have however proved successful in attracting large sums of external financial aid and in reconciling potential opposition and conflict at site level. Success, where it has been achieved, is comprised of the following pre-requisites.

- Suitable location;
- Effective management;
- Sufficient financial and manpower assistance; and
- Where facilities are provided as a means of reducing unauthorised use, effective wardening, fencing, and means of prohibiting alternative site use.

The majority of local authority facilities, from rough land sites to motor recreation parks, have been established on derelict land in city centres or on urban fringes. In some cases, such land is also subject to high ambient noise due to its proximity to railway lines, motorways or industrial plants. The chief advantages of derelict land are its ready availability (as opposed to 'green field' sites) and its inappropriateness for other uses including informal recreation. Where such land is surrounded by industry or other noise-generating activities, its inappropriateness for housing may also contribute to its general dereliction. Creating a trail park from derelict or rough land is fairly straightforward, though the general reluctance of planning authorities to grant permanent planning consent suggests a cautious approach to the question of permanence.

8.44. Although motor activities do not generally mix well with residential uses there can be no hard and fast 'rule of thumb' regarding suitable distances. Blezard has suggested that a minimum distance of about a quarter of a mile should exist (54) and although many 'successful' schemes conform to this general premise, others have been able to operate closer to residential areas, protected by woodland, earth banks or roads, without objection. As at Westwood, Southampton and Mercia, Coventry, local residents have objected in principle to the development of a site only to later support it once demonstrations and assurances regarding noise levels and times of use have been given.

8.45. Management is of fundamental importance to the relative success and effectiveness of provision for the informal sector. We might differentiate two forms of management; site management and use (supervision) management. The scale and extent of both is highly variable, ranging from the high profile site management and close use provision of facilities such as the two Wheels Parks, to the low-key management and supervision at some rough land sites. Styles of management are largely dependent upon the perceived nature (and demands) of the projected 'client' groups. Those sites aiming to provide training opportunities for inexperienced riders, or existing as part of youth rehabilitation programmes, necessarily require close supervision. Although rough land sites have little if any use supervision, they do require low-key site management (e.g. containment and access regulation). In summary, successful management is principally dependent upon a comprehensive management approach, either through the lease or ownership of land by a private operator or club, or through the integration of individual site management with wider countryside or urban fringe management initiatives.

8.46. Although few informal sites are specifically identified within statutory (and non-statutory) local plans, due principally to the interim status of such sites, the land use planning process, through development control, is a basic element of land management for informal sites. The role of local planning authorities within this context is essentially two-fold; the granting or refusal of planning consent (both for the use of the site and for any construction on site) and, where permission is given, the making of conditions governing use. The conditions most often specified relate to:

- noise of machines (usually specifying road legal silencing);
- machine numbers;
- hours of opening;
- control of points of access; and
- use of additional facilities and amenities, such as workshops, showrooms.

Undoubtedly there is a general notion among planning authorities that informal sites constitute an interim rather than a long-term or permanent use of land. This, coupled with the need to 'prove' the acceptability, or otherwise, of permitted sites has tended to lead to a predominance of temporary rather than permanent planning consents. Furthermore, the transitional land sources found to be most adaptable to use as informal venues are often, by their very nature, in an interim state within general development (or redevelopment) aspirations. Thus planning consents are normally for periods of five years or less. The opportunities for opposition that this provides have created problems for private commercial sites, and where conditions have proved difficult to meet (particularly if formal sites retain their attractiveness to unauthorised riders), have provoked enforcement action.

8.47. Another impact of temporary planning consent has been in the financial security of informal use sites. Although financial (and manpower) assistance is crucial to the continued existence of all informal schemes there is a marked difference in the ability of council owned/operated facilities to gain external finance in comparison with privately operated sites. The sources used by the former include the Urban Aid Programmes, Derelict Land Reclamation Grants, the Sports Council, the Manpower Services Commission, leisure, educational and probation services and, less frequently, private sponsorship. Private commercial sites have alternatively depended upon private financed initiatives (including machine sales) and, to a lesser extent, the Sports Council. It is significant that Sports Council grant aid policy is closely linked to the security of tenure of the facility. Temporary planning permissions leave most sites eligible only for minimal grant aid although those promoting sites are well advised to discuss possible funding with the Sports Council. Local authority sites have, in the relatively short term at least, a more secure financial base, as evinced by the decline in the number of private commercial facilities.

8.48. In summary, therefore, a successful scheme requires a combination of locational, management, planning, finance and control inputs. In general terms, these have best been addressed within the context of local authority provision but this has principally been the consequence of resource availability. There have been notable and pioneering contributions to provision, particularly that linked with off road training, from the commercial sector. A combination of the two, in the form of the leasing of council owned and allocated sites to private operators is, numerically, the most favoured means of provision. Such an approach combines not only effective styles of site management, but also provision motivation. The commitment of local authorities to the issue of provision must be seen largely in terms of a response to unauthorised site use. The notion of provision for proven recreational demand has come forward as an additional justification. Unlike the lobby for skateboard parks (now largely redundant) and BMX tracks (still enjoying widespread popularity), informal off road motorcyclists have not sought the overt representation of their interests. Given the longevity of off road motorcycling, particularly within the competitive sector, and the ready availability of machines, one can assume that informal activities will also persist as a recreational demand, and as a unauthorised user of land. There is no doubt that provision for such activities is a major element both in their control and in their recognition as a form of recreation.

8.49. Finally in this section we consider the limitations of provision. Although variety in the scale and extent of provision defies simple evaluation, a number of issues remain. First, there is contradictory evidence regarding the extent to which provision contributes to a decline in the unauthorised use of sites within a general area. Although individual schemes have been successful, chiefly if they have involved the legitimisation of otherwise unauthorised use (as at Parkwood Springs or 13 Acres/Waterdale), others have merely attracted a different sort of participant/enthusiast, particularly if the principal orientation of the scheme is training. Where the control of unauthorised activities have been most successful, provision has been accompanied by preventative modes of action, including physical barriers, warden services (directing riders to authorised sites), and higher rates of prosecution for unauthorised use.

Where provision is regarded as a means of providing legitimate recreational opportunities, the bulk of schemes have achieved their goal of providing a managed and controlled facility for which there is a demonstrable need.

8.50. Second, provision does not immediately solve the problem of illegal access, especially if sites constitute unsupervised vacant land. Under-age riders and illegal machines remain a problem even in areas where provision has been made. Only where machines are hired, or where street legal machines are permissible, can this issue of access be solved and, as has been seen, such conditions can form part of a planning consent.

8.51. Third, there is an understandable mistrust of provision amongst certain members of the organised motorsport community who see it as a means of controlling and reducing levels of all off-road activity. At the forefront of this mistrust are those riders who seek to use Green Lanes for recreational motorcycling. Although no cases of provision accompanied by constraint of legitimate access have yet occurred, the Trail Riders Fellowship remains fundamentally opposed to the use of trail parks as an alternative to trail riding. Their fear is founded upon three considerations. First, they have witnessed the growing opposition to Green Lane riding amongst other rural recreational organisations, such as the Ramblers Association, and have seen such bodies call for the closure of Green Lanes and the restriction of trail riding activities, in addition to formal motorsports, to controlled parks. Second, they acknowledge that the bulk of complaints regarding the use of Green Lanes are a result of the actions of the informal sector, largely unaware of the codes of conduct laid down by the organised bodies. Third, they are aware of the frequent failure by local authorities and the public, to make the appropriate distinction between organised trail riders and members of the informal sector. This has led to the erroneous presumption that trail riders will use urban trail park facilities. It is clear that the two groups are very different and although it falls to bodies like the Trail Riders Fellowship to defend their access to Green Lanes, they need also to show their distinction, both from members of the informal sector and from the users of trail parks.

8.52. A growing body of information on site management, liability, land use planning, and rates of site use now exists and proven procedures are emerging. Cost and location nevertheless remain cardinal issues and a number of erstwhile schemes have either been abandoned, or are held in abeyance, due to lack of funds or suitable sites. It is notable that local authority-provided off road facilities have not generally attracted widespread public objection. Though the principle of off road motorcycling may be opposed by local residents provision, once achieved and shown to be effectively controlled, does not often draw concerted objection. Local residents, like local authorities, would appear to accept them as a necessary adjunct to control and prohibition.

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21. Department of Transport (1981) referenced in Graham, M. (1982). Points for Planners, Journal of the Byways and Bridleways Trust.
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39. Motorcyclists had long used the site informally before the owner submitted a planning application for a trail park. Permission was initially refused as the site was thought unsuitable. Although the permission was for three years, from March 1983, the site has already attracted criticism from councillors, residents and conservationists as part of the site is an SSSI. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the site owner has not complied with the conditions of planning consent. As reported in Motorcycle News (27.6.84.), the local authority are considering enforcement action and the closure of the site.
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## CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. Organised motorsports have now existed in England for nearly 100 years. They constitute a set of legitimate activities whose attributes fall clearly within any commonly-held definition of sport. They involve the practice of skill, the measurement of performance, competition and, in many cases the development of responsibility and self-reliance. In addition, they perform a valuable training function at youth level and constitute social and community activities valued by club members.

### THE NEED FOR ACTION

9.2. The particular relationships that have developed between clubs, landowners and tenants (upon which the continuation of motorsport depends), are often short-term and transitory. This fragility has been increasingly exposed in recent years as land use change, land use and environmental regulations, and local opposition have combined to restrict the availability of venues. Internal controls have also been made more severe over the last 10 years, reflecting the weakness of motorsport interests in the face of the asserted ideologies of other groups. Predominantly informal arrangements may have served motorsports well in the past; it must however be questioned whether they do so today. It must also be doubtful whether without a number of changes, largely the responsibility of the sports themselves, the present broad spectrum of participation can be maintained in the future.

9.3. We have been conscious in compiling this study that a detailed exposition, of what are essentially internal arrangements within motorsport, could be counterproductive. However, the motorsport community is so misrepresented among 'opinion formers', the media, and in local authority and other arenas, that a realistic assessment of current conditions can only be beneficial. Little has been done to counteract the orthodoxy, prevailing in many quarters, that motorsport interests are unprincipled, uncontrolled and immune to outside pressures. On the contrary, it appears that the low profile maintained by organised motorsport interests over many years, combined with defensive and fatalistic postures when faced with external threats will, if continued, lead to further decline. Many of the skills practised on rough terrain in widely-dispersed locations will be lost, to be replaced by a narrower range of largely commercial and arena-based disciplines.

9.4. The informal nature of the club-landowner relationship must remain, and any measures taken must be designed to assist and complement this process. Accordingly, we therefore recommend that the motorsport bodies severally should seek to more actively promote:

1. support for and clear recognition of motorsports within the national forums of sport, the Sports Council and the CCPR; using evidence of the scale of participation, the range and types of skills employed by participants, and the relevance of the target groups involved to the Sports Council's 10-Year Programme to document their case.
2. a recognition of the legitimacy of motorsports as a use of land within the wide range of central and local government planning arenas; and
3. recognition of the needs and demands of motorsport within more pluralistic 'pressure group' environments (for example, access forums, rights of way committees, countryside management schemes and negotiations over codes of practice with local authorities and other users) which are becoming increasingly important.

Beyond a basic commitment to a more interventionist stance, a wide variety of specific issues require attention. These relate to the need to counteract:

- the loss of, and restriction of access to, sites, wider areas of land, and the Public Highway,
- the relative ineffectiveness of motorsport interests in the face of organised outside interests,
- problems of the image of some motorsport disciplines,
- problems of cost escalation (particularly associated with site use) and increased commercialisation, and
- problems generated by confusion and association with the actions of the informal sector.

These issues are inter-related. For example increased effectiveness in outside decision making situations is dependent upon re-creating a more favourable image of motorsports among other interests.

### EFFECTIVENESS IN OUTSIDE FORUMS

9.6. The defensiveness of motorsport interests has been commented upon many times in this report. Attention should be given to effective participation in wider decision making processes. This implies going further than consultation to take on negotiative roles where appropriate. There are also conflicts between motorsport disciplines, not only at site level but also at governing body level. These fragment effort and reduce

overall effectiveness. It is recommended that:

4. motorsport liaison committees should be set up at regional level in all regions with, initially, representation from all motorsport disciplines and governing bodies with an interest in off road motorsport and the use of the Public Highway. Such committees should act as a focus for the essential promotional roles envisaged in Recommendations 12 - 17 below, and would guide the work of access and land, or youth and training project staff (Recommendations 13 and 24). A draft constitution for such committees should be devised.

9.7. Clubs and regional organisations should develop the facility to respond quickly to emerging situations effecting the practice of motorsport in their areas. This could be achieved with guidance and advice from the Regional offices of the Sports Council. Motorsport interests should consider pursuing the following tasks within a defined set of priorities:

5. through response to public consultation and by direct negotiative methods seek to gain inclusion of policies in structure plan amendements and alterations, and in local plans which; (i) acknowledge the legitimacy of the land demands of organised motorsports and; (ii) lay down criteria for location and siting. Involvement at the earliest possible stage of local plan production is desirable, but a willingness to pursue and defend proposals through the public local inquiry stage may also be necessary.
6. where necessary, and through direct negotiation and public consultation, seek to identify sites appropriate for use above the 14 day limit, or otherwise requiring planning permission.
7. consider channelling applications for planning permission through the regional liaison committees, who could produce supporting statements where suitable.
8. take an active role in defending clubs whose use of sites is threatened by Article IV Directions, and be prepared to take such cases to public inquiry. Also be willing to offer backing to clubs in compensation test case claims over the 14 day rule, and at public inquiries into the refusal of planning permission or the imposition of conditions, with appeals over rating proposals, and court and other hearings related to noise abatement orders.
9. organise, with the assistance of the regional liaison committees, training workshops designed to improve the quality of applications and the submissions made to appeals and public inquiries.
10. conduct further detailed investigation of the types of site and motorsport disciplines against which Article IV

Directions have been used, and what other circumstances have been considered relevant to the decisions made. Using the information so derived an approach to the Department of Environment, to secure a consistency of approach, should be considered.

11. an approach should also be made to the Department of Environment to clarify a defined level of transient use under the General Rates Act 1967, and what special conditions or terms could be allowed for motorsport interests. Clear documentary evidence should be collected prior to such an approach.

### THE IMAGE OF MOTORSPORTS

9.8. Motorsports have been too introspective. Internal discussion and controls will do little to reduce the bias of those external to the sports. A concerted set of actions to promote the positive benefits of motorsport to the wider community should be a basic priority. These could take the form of:

12. promotional literature for local authority elected representatives and planners stressing the internal controls operated by motorsport interests, their positive contributions to site restitution and management, the effectiveness of insurance cover, and the character and responsibility of those taking part.
13. the further active promotion of a 'youth and training' policy with explanations of its beneficial social, and environmental effects, and the contribution that can be made to individual self reliance and responsibility. The Sports Council should be approached to provide funds towards a project officer post attached either to one of the governing bodies or a regional motorsport liaison committee to pursue such aims.
14. the production of attractive material (linked to Recommendation 12) giving examples of good practice in the training and supervision by organised motorsport clubs of informal riders and drivers.
15. the production, publication and active dissemination of existing codes of practice (and the creation of new ones where appropriate) stressing the responsibility and public awareness of participants. These need not be more restrictive than present measures and good practice.
16. the production of press releases, articles and other reports for media use. These should again stress themes of internal control, responsibility, and personal character development.
17. the maintenance of a list of speakers and spokespersons for motorsport interests, combined with an ability to effectively counter adverse press comment. Also important is publicity through the arrangement of, and participation

in, conferences, giving talks and publishing associated briefing material. (The issue of who should concert such action is discussed at recommendation 34 below).

### THE LOSS OF SITES AND LAND

9.9. Ways need to be found of strengthening the negotiative position of motorsport interests over access at the detailed site level. These should complement not replace the normal one-to-one bargaining that characterises negotiations over access to private land venues. Thus, it is recommended that:

18. motorsport interests, through the Sports Council, approach the MoD/PSA with a view to negotiating questions of the general levels of use, types of permissible motorsport discipline, and terms of entry onto MoD/PSA controlled land. A general commitment to a range of activity for a fixed period (say 3 to 5 years) should be the aim with some form of monitoring instigated to assess specific problems (if any) occurring during the period. Issues of site restitution could usefully form part of such monitoring. The benefits of some continuity within an agreed general level of use would create more certainty for both parties.
19. similarly, motorsport interests should approach the Forestry Commission with a view to establishing, by the conduct of a survey or surveys, which forest areas are potentially useable for different motorsport disciplines. Such a survey would need to be financed but could produce a more logical and balanced set of arrangements, at the same time more effectively catering for demand. Planning and guidance notes to Conservators could result from such work.
20. the cooperation of the agricultural sector (represented principally by the National Farmers' Union and Country Landowners' Association) should be sought in producing information on the terms and conditions under which the use of private land by motorsport interests may take place, and the insurance and legal safeguards that exist. It is possible that some agricultural interests may be more disposed towards motorsports in the future, for the revenue such activities would yield to farm enterprises.
21. assistance should be sought from local authorities in terms of the leasing and licencing of use of publicly owned sites for infrequent events. There are many sites that could be used for trial events in particular, but also other forms of motorcar and motorcycle event, where any noise and traffic generation problems could be minimal. This, however, will require organised approaches to be made, and ideally, an 'envelope of use' for a year over a number of sites in a local authority area might be agreed. SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE COMPLEMENTARY TO EXISTING INFORMALLY NEGOTIATED ARRANGEMENTS.



22. local authorities should regard the short-term use by motorsport interests of land in transition from one use to another more favourably, given the scale and level of internal safeguards that can be guaranteed by organised motorsport interests.
23. local authorities should, on land in appropriate locations, take the lead in promoting permanent sites for motorcar (and allied vehicle) use. Examples elsewhere show that if of adequate size, and in locations away from housing, they will be used by organised motorsport interests and will be acceptable to local populations. The scope for financial assistance here from the Sports Council, the Manpower Services Commission, Derelict Land Grants and private funds, could be considerable. Such facilities appear necessary to allow the continued growth of karting and should offer combined use by those disciplines requiring sealed-surface conditions.
24. a more effective role in resolving detailed land and access issues could emerge through the employment of a land and access project officer at the governing body or the regional liaison committee level. Such an officer may also be involved in, or could instigate, joint local authority/motorsport site experiments with a view to promoting changes in local attitudes to motorsport activities and promoting good practice.
25. motorsport interests should commission studies to assess the feasibility of acquiring a small number of strategically-placed large sites. The demands of activities, and the desirable mix of activities, should be thoroughly investigated and strategic locations selected.
26. the governing bodies should promote a more sophisticated knowledge of noise, land use planning, and other forms of statutory environmental control and procedures of decision-making at club level by; (i) obtaining the co-operation of the motorsport press to publish regular articles/columns on such matters; and (ii) by otherwise promoting such knowledge through talks at club nights and by other methods.
27. approaches should be made to strengthen links with motorsport vehicle and equipment manufacturers and distributors, with a view to gaining financial and other support for provision and management (including experimental schemes) in the formal and informal sectors. Sponsorship for some of the activities in recommendations 12-17 might also be obtained from this source.

## INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

9.10. There is considerable scope for the provision of sites and facilities for young riders/drivers in urban and rural areas. The majority of opportunities remain unrealised through lack of real political will, fragmented financial support, and the complex nature of certain proposals. However, problems stemming from the growth in informal activity do require active involvement by various bodies, especially local authorities. As with formal motorsports, policies for the informal use of land should be taken into account in (particularly) local plan preparation. We therefore recommend:

28. the need for local authority leisure, planning and other departments to combine efforts in seeking suitable sites for mixes (where appropriate) of 'motorised leisure' activities. Such provisions can contribute to the effective control and management of use in more environmentally sensitive areas. Suitable locations generally include land at least half a mile from residential areas, on derelict or degraded sites, in well screened locations, and in areas with high ambient noise levels (for example, near motorways) as the examples of the Bristol Motorcycle Centre and the Swindon Trail Park have shown.
29. sites for informal use can be successfully incorporated in countryside locations and can be combined with countryside management work, as the Operation South Cannock (Staffordshire) example has demonstrated. This type of provision, and joint arrangement involving the police and other services, should be further promoted and publicised.
30. the possibility of more extensive trails for informal use (as suggested south of Sheffield, in the West Pennine Moors, and in Hertfordshire), particularly in urban fringe locations, should be explored. The Sports Council should consider mounting and monitoring such a scheme or schemes inviting bids from local authorities. The possibility of cooperation with, and support from, the Ministry of Transport should be explored.
31. it should be recognised that very simple arrangements could be instigated to promote machine handling and safety training on existing vacant or transitional land. Local police, probation, leisure or other staff could award certificates of competence to those completing a prescribed course of training and tests.
32. the active involvement of formal motorsport clubs should be encouraged in management arrangements for informal use and training. A good example of such a relationship can be found at Operation South Cannock (Staffordshire). SUCH ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD NOT HOWEVER BE REGARDED AS SUBSTITUTES FOR COMPETITIVE ACTIVITY.

33. motorcycle dealers, in conjunction with local authorities, should develop information giving guidance on informal activities to be handed to purchasers of machines with off-road capabilities at the point of sale. Such 'information packs' have already been used, apparently successfully, in the Plymouth/Dartmoor area.

This study has revealed a need for more research in depth on the nature of the informal sector. Any future work should probe, more closely than has been possible in this study, the motivations, cultural associations, attitudes to organised sport, and relationships to wider patterns of social change (unemployment, de-skilling in the workplace) of the participants themselves.

#### A NATIONAL FORUM?

9.11. We are strongly of the view that listing physical prescriptions will do little immediately to enhance the interests of motorsport. They address the symptoms not the causes of the latter's marginal position. The paramount need is for motorsport interests to become more skilled and assertive in decision-making forums, and to develop their advocacy skills. There may well be an internal conflict of interests within bodies such as the RACMSA and the ACU. While performing a responsible agency role on behalf of Government in controlling motorsport activities, they may feel justifiably inhibited in assuming more assertive roles with outside interests. We have evaluated the possibility that an English Motorsports Federation, on the emerging Scottish model, could be of assistance, but we feel that such a mechanism may only be of marginal importance to assisting the crucial club-level which is so pressured. The time we believe is long overdue for:

34. the formation of a national motorsports pressure group which would, through an activist role, and through advocacy and persuasion, become a respected consultee on all aspects of the provision of facilities, and the control of, motorsports. Such an organisation should be formally independent of the governing bodies and the Sports Councils. Given the scale of participation in motorsports, such a body could well represent a large active membership, and could therefore claim at least equal 'authority' in decision-making arenas as other land and recreation interests.

9.12. We therefore conclude that the national level of advocacy would be best performed by such a body, leaving licencing and regulation to the present governing bodies. This structure would, most importantly, be complemented by regional motorsport liaison committees; a suitable level for promoting actions which can assist individual clubs, local authorities, and others with the resolution of their problems.

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Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

To Local Authorities

National Park Authorities

and

Development Corporations

LAND-BASED MOTOR SPORTS PROJECT

A study of the type, extent and availability of land for motorsports including current planning, financial, legal and management problems.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIESJANUARY 1985

Name of local authority.

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SECTION ONE

This section asks about off-road motor vehicle activities and about the means your authority might have taken to manage or control them.

Please tick

1. Has your local authority experienced any issues generated either by organised motorsports events, or by informal off-road motorcycling?

a. Events organised by motorcycle or car clubs	YES	NO
b. 'Informal' off-road motorcycling	YES	NO

2. If the answer to either of the above has been YES could you please indicate which of the following particular issues have arisen in your area and, if possible, their locations.

a. Unsupervised motorcyclists on vacant or derelict urban land.

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b. Unsupervised motorcyclists in open countryside.

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- c. The use of extractive or infill sites by either motorcyclists or car drivers for organised events.

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- d. The unsupervised use of extractive or infill sites by either motorcyclists or car drivers.

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- e. The informal and/or competitive use of green lanes, byways, bridleways and RUPPs by motor vehicles (cars and motorcycles).

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- f. Noise complaints arising out of the use of sites for organised motorsports events (such as scramble tracks and rally stages).

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- g. Traffic problems arising out of the use of sites for organised motorsports events.

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- h. Other environmental problems resulting from the use of sites for organised motor sports events or informal motorcycling.

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- i. Conflicts over rights of access to rural areas used either for organised motor sports events or for informal motorcycling.

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- j. Conflicts between organised motor sports events and informal motorcycling and other site users.

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- k. Any other issues (please specify).

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3. Which of the following strategies, if any, has your local authority used as a means of controlling or preventing both informal motorcycle activities and organised motorsport events? For each strategy, could you please indicate where this has taken place and whether it was for informal activities or organised events.

- a. contacting the police;

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- b. employing a site warden;

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- c. contacting the Environmental Health Inspector;

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- d. seeking noise abatement orders;

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- e. Article 4 Directions under the Town and  
County Planning Act;  
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- f. closure of site(s);  
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- g. preventing access to site (for example, by  
planting trees or erecting barriers or fences  
on site);  
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- h. approving an alternate land-use for site  
which is non-compatible with its use either  
for motorsports events or for informal  
motorcycling;  
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- i. others (please specify).  
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SECTION TWO

This section considers any responses your authority might have made regarding the land use needs of motorsports and informal vehicle activities.

4. Are there any facilities within your local authority area where motorcycle and motorcar off-road enthusiasts may legitimately ride or drive? YES NO

If so, where?

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5. Has your local authority received any demands /requests for facilities or sites for either informal off-road motorcycling or motorsports events? YES NO

If so, how have these demands made themselves felt?

- through requests from local bodies representing motorsports enthusiasts? YES NO
- through public opposition to the use of existing sites? YES NO
- through the local police or social services? YES NO
- from the need to curb off-road motorcycling and motor car activities? YES NO
- through the representation of other interested bodies (for example: the local Sports Councils, schools, youth clubs, police, probation services)? If YES, please specify. YES NO

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 - others (please specify)?  
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6. Does your Authority provide, or assist in the provision of, any sites or facilities for motor sports (ranging from a small field for motor cycle trials practice to a permanent racing circuit)? YES NO

7. If so, could you let us know something about these sites and/or facilities, such as;

PLEASE ANSWER ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

- a. the names and locations of the sites/facilities;
- b. the length of time they have been established;
- c. the range of activities that are permitted on them;
- d. whether the sites are publicly or privately owned;
- e. Whether they are leased to individual operators;
- f. the frequency of site use (say in any one year);
- g. whether or not they have planning permission, enabling them to be used more than the 14 days as permitted by the GDO?
- h. whether or not any special management policies or arrangements exist.

## OFF-ROAD MOTOR CAR AND MOTORCYCLE SPORTS SITES

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4
a. Name and location of site				
b. How long has the site been established?				
c. What range of activities are permitted on the site?				
d. Is the site in private or public ownership?				
e. Is the site leased to an individual operator?				
f. How often is the site used?				
g. Does planning permission exist for the use of the site for motorsports?				
h. Do any special management policies or arrangements exist on the site?				

8. Does your local authority have any stated policy towards the provision of sites and facilities for motorsports and informal off-road activities? YES NO

If YES, could you please indicate what form this policy has taken, and give some details:

- a. The drawing up of any positive policies for motorsports and informal off-road activities;

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- b. the identification and allocation of sites in local plans;

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- c. the preparation of internal or published ad hoc reports on this issue;

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- d. the establishment of special committees, working groups (etc) to consider this issue;

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- e. the creation of trail parks;

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- f. the identification of waymarked trails for use by motor vehicle enthusiasts in rural areas;

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- g. the identification of recreational motor sport activities in management plans;

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- h. the purchase or lease of land for these purposes;

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- i. the negotiation of management agreements for the use of land for these purposes;

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j. any others (please specify);

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9. Finally, do you have in your local authority area any sites that you consider could be regarded as examples of good practice or management?

YES NO

If YES, could you tell us something about them and what you consider to be the main elements of such "good practice".

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Name of Officer completing questionnaire

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If you require any further information concerning this project, please do not hesitate to get in contact with either Henry Buller or Peter Stanley (or Liz Howard, the project secretary) at Oxford Polytechnic, tel: 0865 64777 ext.588.

Appendix 2

MOTORSPORT SITE USERS:

A Categorisation

APPENDIX 2SITE USERS: A CATEGORISATION1. Users of Sites for Formal Competition.

- a. Those that require no permanent course layout or hard surface, or any site work/alterations other than simple course markings. Spectator provision is usually minimal and unsupervised, for example, trials.
- b. Those that require closely controlled course and site management for the duration of the event at least (and on occasion supervised provision for spectators), but do not necessarily require any permanent course layout or permanent/sealed course surface, for example, off-road speed events.
  - (i)
  - (ii) Those that require closely controlled course and site management and also require a permanent or semi-permanent off-road/un-sealed course surface and permanent or semi-permanent course layout. Such sites usually contain supervised spectator provision, for example, championship motocross events.
- c. Those that require a permanent/sealed course surface, though not necessarily a permanently laid out course. Spectator provision, if it occurs at all, is usually minimal but supervised. For example, stage rallies, sprints, hill climbs, Autotests.
- d. Those that require a permanent/sealed course and a permanent course layout. Spectator provision is usually on a large scale and is closely supervised, for example, road racing.
- e. Those that require a combination of 'c' or 'd' with 'a' or 'b', for example, Rallycross.
- f. Those that require access to the Public Highway.

2. Users of Sites for Competition Practice.

- a. Those that require the informal and unsupervised use of varied and unmarked off-road terrain (compatible with those sites used in 1.a.).
- b. Those that require the informal though 'supervised' use of regular (usually flat) terrain with an approximate course outline (compatible with those sites used in 1.b.(i), and 1.b.(ii)).



- c. Those that require the use of a permanent/sealed surface site though not necessarily a permanently laid out course (compatible with those sites used in 1.c.).
- d. Those that require the supervised use of purpose-built permanent/sealed surfaces and courses (compatible with those sites used in 1.d.).

### 3. Users of Sites for 'Informal' Motor Vehicle Activities.

- a. Those that require the unsupervised use of unmarked and undifferentiated rough land.
- b. Those that require the supervised use of rough land.
- c. Those that require the supervised use of marked courses on rough land, occasionally with a temporary surface.
- d. Those that require the supervised (or unsupervised) use of permanent/sealed surface sites.
- e. Those that require access to and use of RUPPs.

### 4. Users of Sites for Non-Competition Training.

- a. Those that require organised and supervised sites on rough land, with or without course markings.
- b. Those that require organised and supervised sites with permanent/sealed surfaces.