

"MOTORSPORT IN THE COMMUNITY: THE WAY AHEAD"



GATESHEAD CIVIC CENTRE

WEDNESDAY 4th MARCH 1992

NORCARE

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NORTHERN
Motorsports
FEDERATION

"MOTORSPORT IN THE COMMUNITY : THE WAY AHEAD"

- 10.00 am. Coffee and Arrival
- 10.30 am. Chairman's opening remarks
Chairman : Professor J. Allan Patmore
- 10.45 am. Motorsports : The Environmental Challenge
Speaker : Professor Martin Elson
- 11.30 am. Five minute break
- 11.35 am. Urban Motorsports Projects : Lessons of the last 5 years
Speaker : Ian Fytche
- 12.05 pm. Walker Wheels : The history of a motor project
Speaker : David Cobb
- 12.45 pm. Buffet lunch
- 1.45 pm. WORKSHOPS (Please register for workshops on arrival)
- (i) Alternatives to Custody Schemes : Do they work? What are their particular needs? Can they integrate with mainstream motorsport and recreation?
Chairman : Mike Cope
- (ii) Links to Governing Bodies : Is the national and regional structure of motorsport adequate? How can community and commercial interests communicate? What is the way ahead?
Chairman : Geoff Wilson
- (iii) Wheels Parks : Cost and benefits : Does the investment bring an adequate return?
Chairman : Andrew Thomas
- 3.00 pm. Five minute break
- 3.05 pm. Chairman's summary of workshop issues and plenary session
- 3.50 pm. Chairman's closing remarks
- 4.00 pm. Tea

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks are due to the Speakers and Chairmen for giving their time and expertise to the conference, also to Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council for the use of their Civic Centre.

These conference papers are sponsored by the Motoring Organisations' Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA).

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Motorised sports raise many passions - and not only from ardent participants! Too many who do not have that ardour see them as an unwelcome, noisy intrusion into the peace of quiet surroundings, particularly in the countryside, and seek outright bans, or, at the very least, their removal to other "suitable" sites far outside the local area. Unfortunately, views on both sides of the argument have become excessively polarised, all too often leading to confrontation rather than the co-operation which careful, informed discussion might suggest.

I therefore welcome this conference as a timely opportunity for truly informed debate on the issues involved. With growing leisure time, and the growing range of leisure pursuits available, the demand for motor sports will increase rather than slacken. The need is acute to tackle the problems - real or perceived - raised by motor sports, and perhaps even more, to see them not so much as problems but, through a properly planned approach, as a genuine opportunity to give a satisfaction and enjoyment matched by few other activities.

Allan Patmore

Vice Chairman, The Sports Council
Emeritus Professor, University of Hull
Member, National Parks Review Panel 1989-91

THIS IS THE FOREWORD TO "PROVIDING FOR MOTORSPORTS : FROM IMAGE TO REALITY", THE SPORTS COUNCIL'S 1986 SEMINAL REPORT ON MOTORSPORT PROVISION AND PROBLEMS. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN 1992.

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 - motorsports 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

WINDING-UP THE NORTHERN MOTORSPORTS PROJECT : ALAN KIND

As you can read in the two Northern Motorsports Project reports in this pack of papers, the Project was set-up for a three year period to address a variety of problems and needs within motorised sport and recreation in the region. With the benefit of hindsight it is so easy to say "you did it wrong" and, of course, there are some who always knew it would be a waste of time, never liked the idea of wheels parks, and now feel that their stance is vindicated. Has it all been a waste of time? Are wheels parks a dead-end idea? Is motorsport locked into a downward spiral in an age of increasing environmentally justified intolerance? Have we moved on at all since Dr Elson's Sports Council report in 1986?

The Project rose in the mid-eighties on a wave of enthusiasm for the concept of the trail park - the neighbourhood diversionary site where local lads could ride their bikes safely, quietly and away from the parks and paths they usually plagued. The idea was never that the parks should be "treats for bad boys", rather that they would be a proper community sports facility, differing according to local needs and the suitability of the sites available.

So, where did it all go wrong? It is difficult to identify the precise reasons why any particular site or scheme foundered or failed, but there are some common elements clear to those with a deep involvement. It is not so much a lack of finance that is fatal, but the absence of proper advance planning (including financial planning). Enthusiasm is an essential, but if it is allowed to obscure the need for a proper management structure and business plan then, the lessons of the Northeast seem to tell us, problems inevitably lie ahead. Anyone considering such a project must put their enthusiasm to one side and ask themselves some hard questions. Some of the answers are available in these papers and the proceedings today.

As the Northeast's schemes run into problems, so the interest nationally has never been higher - just look at the list of attendees for today to see the wide geographic spread.

But, there is, perhaps, a crucial difference from the enthusiasm of six years ago. Now, these projects are seen as a possible way of tackling the new wave of autocrime and joyriding, making them, by design, more for the offender and potential offender than for the wider community - even the disadvantaged end of the community. As this is written, the Opposition spokesman on Home Affairs is reported as saying that the Government's planned spending of £3m on an anti-car crime advertising campaign would be better spent on diversionary schemes for auto offenders.

But, would it? Do wheels parks have any measurable effect on bad driving by (mainly) young people? As the problems caused by illegal and thoughtless use of motorcycles have declined steadily, due in part to the steep drop in motorcycle sales, there seems to have been a commensurate rise in the bad use of cars. And, of course, where reckless motorcyclists are likely to kill themselves, reckless car drivers can, and do, kill and cripple others along the way. One has only to stand on the Great North Road at 8.00 pm on any evening and watch the reckless speeding and disregard of traffic lights, etc, as today's car-borne young people drive to their evenings out in the pubs of Newcastle. At the end of the day is the reckless use of one's own car very much different, to the unlucky victim, from the reckless use of someone else's? Perhaps it is time that society stopped tinkering with the symptoms and got to grips with the real sickness of bad driving?

Before this latest wave of enthusiasm brings a rash of new projects, there should be some attempt to establish a "model scheme" based on the lessons learned here, in Birmingham, and elsewhere, so that the many more millions of taxpayers' money to be committed is spent to the best effect. Experience here suggests that small, local schemes may not be the answer - that projects sited and planned to meet the needs of a region may be the better answer.

The only real survivor of this region's projects is also the most ambitious - Langbaugh Motorsports - and that is the closest yet to a strategic site for the benefit of a region. Langbaugh has certainly had problems, but if its development plan had been implemented on the original timescale I believe it would now show that a careful mixture of public investment and private enterprise operation is the ideal way to go. Unfortunately, in the absence of any system of strategic planning and provision for recreational needs, it is probably a forlorn hope that a similar scheme can arise elsewhere.

Perhaps, as some of their opponents say, wheels parks have little relevance to motor sport. Indeed, these argue, their very existence is prejudicial to the public perception of "real" motor sport. What, then, of motor sport and recreation in its "pure" form? Is it nothing more than bunch of destructive, noisy hooligans spoiling the peace and quiet for everyone else. Well, once in a while, it may be just that, but every weekend there are hundreds of local motorsport events that pass off without damage or nuisance, while providing enjoyment for many thousands of enthusiasts. That said, it is clear that public concern for protecting the environment is leading us towards a more tightly regulated pattern of land use and motorsport at all levels will have to take account of this and plan their operations accordingly.

Land damage is not the main problem - while agriculture, ramblers, mountain bikers and horses all damage land, then it is difficult to single out motorsport for special control.

But the noise problem remains in some motorsport disciplines - the loss of Sunday kart racing at Langbaugh is, perhaps, the single worst blow to that project's further development. Putting up earth bankings and limiting the number of karts is merely nibbling at the edges.

The simple fact is that the local people find the noise of the karts unpleasant and are moved to take political action against it. Some disciplines such as motorcycle trials riding have got to grips with the noise problem, and it shows - complaints about trials are very rare.

The end of the Northern Motorsports Project should not be the end of similar initiatives elsewhere. The lessons learned in the North, on wheels parks, land access, motor club liaison, etc, are all applicable across the country and will give others a valuable "kickstart" in their own initiatives. For the moment, the repository of experience and knowledge will be the Auto Cycle Union's Training Trust and the archives of LARA. It is hoped that the Sports Council, perhaps the Home Office, will use this knowledge to form the basis of a manual of good practice for wheels park schemes to ensure that future money is well spent. To reinvent the wheels park, and make the same mistakes again, would really be an auto crime.

Alan Kind has been the Legal & Environmental Advisor to the Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) since its inception in 1986. As Honourary Secretary of the Northern Motorsports Federation he sat on the management committee of the Northern Motorsports Project from its beginning until April 1991, when he took over as Project Officer.

Merging a general interest in motorsports with a specialisation in countryside access law, Alan is also Chairman of the Byways and Bridleways Trust Policy Committee and Honourary Secretary to the Central Rights of Way Committee. A committed (his wife says he should be) green lane enthusiast, Alan is presently passionately in love with his Cannondale mountain bicycle.

Dr Elson's paper on
"Motorsports : The Environmental Challenge"
was not available at time of printing.
Copies will be available at the conference
and may be affixed here for future reference.

WALKER WHEELS : THE HISTORY OF A MOTOR PROJECT : DAVID COBB

Walker Wheels is a voluntary Wheels Project established in 1986 and based at Pottery Bank in the East End of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is situated on a reclaimed tar works site adjacent to the River Tyne. This area of the City is socially and economically deprived and there are few recreation facilities for local people.

The project aimed to offer local youths motor-based leisure opportunities (specifically motor-cycling) with the long-term aim of reducing motor-related crime in the locality.

Initially, the project worked well, operating with four full-time management and administration staff and approximately twenty Community Programme staff who were employed to help out in the garage and on the track. Due to the casual nature of activities provided, it was essential to have the track area intensively staffed.

In the early days of the project bike sessions were offered seven days per week with a heavy demand, primarily from local residents. The Project also offered a popular outreach service at other centres and for community festivals within Newcastle.

However, in 1989, the Community Programme was scrapped and the Project was obliged to start paying full supervision rates of pay for track marshals in order to continue providing activities.

The cost of employing large numbers of track marshals led to a drastic reduction in the operational resources to the Project and eventually restricted casual sessions to weekends only.

In an effort to fill track time and generate additional income, Compulsory Basic Training and Bike Lore courses were introduced in June 1990. Bike Lore is an A.C.U. approved training course which addresses the three main areas of motor-cycling; namely riding technique, bike maintenance and legal requirements.

In 1990 a Walker Wheels Working Party was set up to look at other ways of developing the riverside site and attracting additional funding. A Youth Project using the Community Rooms within the building, was successful in stimulating local residents' interest in outdoor pursuits, with some participants gaining nationally recognised watersports qualifications.

The Working Party decided to form a company limited by guarantee - the Walker Riverside Activity Centre (WRAC) which would manage the three activity branches operating on the site; namely motor activities, the community facilities and the provision of outdoor pursuits. In the sphere of wheels related activities it was hoped to combine the existing wheels provision with motor car based training initiatives to be funded and managed by NACRO and the Probation Service.

Due to a large budget reduction exercise, Leisure Services are unable to provide grant-aid in 92/93.

David Cobb is Director of Leisure Services for the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. He was appointed to the Department in 1982 as manager of Eldon Square Leisure Centre and became Director in 1984.

Department responsibilities include all aspects of leisure provision including sports centres, swimming pools, outdoor recreation, children's play, libraries, arts and support to leisure related voluntary organisations. David's involvement with Walker Wheels commenced in 1986 following the abolition of Tyne and Wear County Council which had initiated the scheme.

INTRODUCTION

In 1986, The Sports Council published "Providing for Motorsports, From Image to Reality", widely referred to as the "Elson report". The preparation of the report followed a recognition within The Sports Council that motorsport and recreation were often discussed within a framework of conflict with other sports and with groups and agencies concerned with the protection and conservation of the environment. Many motorsport disciplines were seen as incompatible with existing patterns of land use. Motorsport suffered from a public image problem, a perception of deviant behaviour and anti-social attitudes. In addition, it was apparent that motorsports organisations were ineffective in bringing pressure to bear on agencies in a position to affect site availability.

The study provided for the first time the opportunity to examine issues affecting the structure and development of motorsport and recreation, and make recommendations for the more effective planning, development and management of land for motorsports.

In total, the report made thirty four recommendations, relating to:-

THE NEED FOR ACTION

Recognising the major issues and pressures affecting loss of sites, restrictions on access to wider areas of land and the need for recognition in external organisations such as The Sports Council.

EFFECTIVENESS IN OUTSIDE FORUMS

The need to establish regional federations and work closely with other activities and agencies involved in land use planning and conservation of the environment.

THE IMAGE OF MOTORSPORTS

The need for educational and promotional literature and dissemination of codes of practice.

THE LOSS OF SITES AND LAND

Developing links with major land owners, eg the MOD/PSA, and the Forestry Commission.

INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

The need to provide sites and facilities for young riders and drivers in urban and rural areas.

A National Forum for motorsport and recreation.

More specifically, the recommendations of greatest relevance to this conference, and to urban motorsports projects, relate to the need for the planning and provision of facilities to create opportunities to participate in motorsport.

The study identified considerable scope for the provision of sites and facilities for young riders and drivers in urban and rural areas. It found that where provision was regarded as a means of providing legitimate recreational opportunities, the bulk of existing schemes had achieved their goal of providing a managed and controlled facility for which there was a demonstrable need. However, most of the schemes were sports-specific (ie trail bikes, karts, rallycross, etc) and limited to existing motor sport enthusiasts. The study asserted that a concerted set of actions to promote the positive benefits of motorsport to the wider community should be a basic priority.

It also recognised the need to link 'provision' with 'prevention' as far as the illegal use of countryside sites, urban open spaces, and derelict land areas was concerned, where environmental damage, nuisance and noise pollution were all concerns.

The study recommended:-

"Local authorities should, on land in appropriate locations, take the lead in promoting permanent sites for motorcar (and allied vehicle) use".

"Motorsport interests should commission studies to assess the feasibility of a small number of strategically placed large sites".

"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".

BACKGROUND: PROJECTS DEVELOPED

Since 1986, the Sports Council has published "Providing for Motorsports: A Handbook for Providers", which gives basic information relating to site planning and developing for a range of nineteen motorcar and motorcycle disciplines. With regard to urban motorsports projects, the Sports Council has been involved in two projects specific to the Northern Region:

- * The Langbaugh Motorsports National Demonstration Scheme, based around the Langbaugh Motorsports Facility and the employment of a Community Liaison Officer to promote and organise participation and training programmes.
- * The Northern Motorsports Project, a non-site-specific region-wide project focused on Tyne and Wear involving participation initiatives, for re-directing illegal usage and combating motor related crime, and developing participation amongst disadvantaged groups.

These projects are referred to throughout this paper to illustrate two contrasting approaches to achieving broadly similar objectives; the one (Langbaugh) is specific to a single facility, whereas the other is region-wide and uses a range of methods to encourage participation and the development of facilities.

This paper concentrates in general terms on the overall aims and objectives of urban motorsport projects and the lessons learnt over the past five years.

More specifically, this paper discusses:-

URBAN MOTORSPORTS PROJECTS

Objective, resourcing, finance and management location.

Specific examples

ISSUES ARISING AND LESSON LEARNT

- Planning/location and environment considerations.
Resourcing, finance, management.
- Development, participation initiatives.
- Motorsports projects and motor related crime.

THE FUTURE

- Positive planning and sustainable development.
- Developing partnerships.
- Assessing need for motorsport projects.
- Criteria for developing urban motorsports projects.

Sport Council policy and future role.

URBAN MOTORSPORTS PROJECTS

Aim and Objectives

The objectives of urban motor sports projects vary considerably, dependent upon the organisations involved in their establishment, their location and the mix of activities to be developed on the site. However, it is clear that projects have both sports development and facility planning objectives, providing opportunities for community participation initiatives and facilities which can be used as a model of good practice to be followed elsewhere. The objectives of the Langbaugh Motorsports Project were framed largely within the following parameters:-

- * To plan, develop and manage facilities for a range of motorcar and motorcycle disciplines which satisfy the needs of both motorsport organisations, and planning authorities.

- * Which can be secured against unauthorised use.

The Langbaugh site was formerly occupied by the British Steel Cargo Fleet foundries and a large brickworks. The site is 75 acres, sandwiched between the main Middlesborough to South Bank road, and the Sunderland-Middlesborough railway line. The majority of the area is surrounded by wharves alongside the river Tees and the East Middlesborough and Slippers Lane Industrial Estates. Only the eastern end of the site is close to residential areas of South Bank.

ISSUES ARISING AND LESSONS LEARNT

The development of urban motorsports projects during the last five years has highlighted a number of important issues which provide valuable lessons for the planning of future projects.

Location and Planning

Many projects and motorsports facilities have problems associated with site identification, planning consent and conflict with both residents and environment interests. Sites of sufficient size are difficult to find in inner, or urban fringe locations, close to the communities they are intended to serve and the problems of illegal activity and motor related crime they are intended to alleviate.

The Langbaugh site displays considerable advantages:-

- * A large (75 acre) derelict, degraded ex-industrial site;
- * Close to railway, road and surrounded by industrial plant - ambient noise levels were high;
- * Close to Eston Hills and the sand dunes of East Cleveland, both characterised by substantial illegal activity;
- * Remote from areas of substantial residential development.
- * Substantial local authority investment in initial facility development at the site.

Despite the advantages, the full potential of the site has not been realised as a result of a combination of factors but particularly the result of complaints received from the one area of residential development beyond the eastern fringes of the site. The scope exists, however, to instigate measures to reduce noise. These included landscaping but, perhaps, more importantly, noise reduction on the vehicles themselves.

Many of the sites used within the Northern Motorsports project area are not permanent and do not have the advantages of Langbaugh. Many depend largely upon the temporary use of private land, a source that is diminishing although some local clubs still appear to be able to find suitable sites for one-off events. These sites are often characterised by:-

- * Although wheels parks generally have full planning consent, club sites are restricted to 28 or less days in any one year under the provisions of the General Development Order;
- * Lack of on-site facilities;
- * They are not permanently set up or purpose-built for motorsport;
- * They are either derelict, or are used for the bulk of the year by non-motorsport activities;
- * They suffer from a lack of security of tenure, and depend largely upon the continued goodwill of the land-owner.

It is clear that, five years after the publication of the Sports Council report, motorsport continues to lose sites largely on the grounds of noise generation or the perception of "noisy, intrusive" activity. In addition, the increasing cost of motorsport is becoming more prohibitive to the participant.

Resourcing, Finance and Management

Site based urban motorsports projects are, in general terms, established with considerable local authority support and funding. However, in order to achieve objectives of community access to the sports, considerable ongoing financial commitment to the project is required.

Experience of both the Langbaugh and Northern Motorsports Projects, together with other projects in the region, notably at Warden Law, Sunderland, would suggest that the following issues should be addressed at an early stage:-

- * Securing ongoing financial commitment to the project to allow effective forward planning to take place.
- * Management structure - project officers need a sound management structure within which to work. A project team needs to be established inclusive of all organisations involved in financing, planning and developing the project.
- * Project objectives should be establishing within the parameters of the resources available.
- * If an ongoing public sector subsidy is not likely to be available then a partnership with the commercial sector will be necessary.

Development Issues

Perhaps the principal objective of urban motorsports projects is that of increasing community access to motorsport, through the targeting of specific groups with an interest in motorised activity, but who are not likely to be able to gain access to the sport without support, for example, young offenders, young unemployed and schools. This may be done by establishing:-

- * Specific training and coaching programmes.
- * Links with community groups and organisations. For example, at Langbaugh, a pilot project was established initially with Grangetown Opportunities Centre, working with young unemployed.
- * New groups, for example, the Pallister Park Motorcycle Group at Langbaugh, which grew out of the concern of parents on the Pallister Park Estate, relating to informal illegal use of motorcycles.
- * Links with school and youth groups.

- * For example, the Community Liaison Officer at Langbaugh targeted all schools in Cleveland with the offer of an introductory talk.
- * Casual community use, "try our sport" days

The major issues surrounding sports development issues can be summarised as follows:-

- * The relationship between community access groups and established motor/motorcycle clubs. In terms of providing continuity between basic participation and opportunities to improve performance, the link between urban motorsports projects and established clubs is crucial. Those who enter the sport as a result of a community initiative must be given the opportunity to improve their performance which requires links with motorsports clubs.
- * The role of the governing bodies of the sports, namely the RACMSA and the ACU is also important in establishing links with motorsport clubs, and in providing the necessary coaching backup for training and coaching programmes.
- * The need for programme planning, with sufficient time allocated to training, to community initiatives, and established clubs and groups.
- * The need for clear sports development objectives related to the identified needs of the resident population. This may be a need, as in the experience of the Northern Motorsports Project, to tackle the problem of motor related crime and illegal activity. This would allow clear monitoring to take place to assess the effectiveness of the project, although at present, this is very rarely done.

Motorsport and Motor related Crime

Another principal objective of some urban motorsports projects is to direct the energies of those involved in auto-crime and illegal open land motorcycling or improper use of rights of way.

The major urban areas in the North East have a particularly high incidence of motor-related crime. In addition, open land in the urban environment and specific problem areas such as the Eston Hills suffer from a high level of illegal motorcycling.

It is generally believed that motorsports projects can be used as a means of alleviating both those problems. The rationale provided for this is as follows - motor related crime and illegal activity can be alleviated by channelling the energies of those involved into equally challenging and existing activities within motorsports projects. This link has yet to be proven, and little analysis has been undertaken to appraise the various approaches to dealing with auto-crime. This continues to be an increasingly large problem in the North-East, despite the attempts of various agencies to provide motorsports projects to address the issue.

THE FUTURE

Taking account of the experiences of the last five years, from Langbaugh, the Northern Motorsports Project and others, what lessons can be learned for the future? What shape will urban motorsports projects take in the future?

It is clear that to ensure effective provision and the establishment of successful projects, schemes should be developed, within the following parameters:-

* Planning

A positive, strategic approach to planning is required from local authorities, involving "cross-boundary" co-operation to ensure that needs are identified and addressed. This should relate to the District Strategy for sport and recreation and could take the following structure:-

- * Review of existing sites, projects and policies for all forms of motorised sport.
- * Recognition of motorised sport as a legitimate land use.
- * Identification of local authority roles, aims and objectives within motorsport.

- * Identification of local authority roles and objectives of external influences, eg. roles and policy of governing bodies, Sports Council and other agencies.

- Positive policies based upon the above need to be included in local plans. The 1991 Planning and Compensation Act enhances this status; planning applications will be decided, wherever possible, in favour of policies included in the plan. This has serious implications for motorsport - applications for new facilities stand more chance of success when they are included in local plans.

* Site Design and Layout

- New and existing sites used for motorsport should not affect the long term environmental stability of the site.
- Noise level should be kept to a minimum by sensitive landscaping, screening and position of the site with regard to residential development.

* Resourcing, Finance and Management

- Political commitment to the project is essential to ensure ongoing financial support, thereby securing the future of the project and allowing project officers to concentrate on meeting set objectives.
- The project should be resourced in line with its objectives, in relation to both finance and staffing.
- A sound management structure is required, fully integrating project officers into the decision making process, with support from facility managers, and administrative backup.
- A project steering group should be establishing with representatives from the local authority, other agencies and use groups involved with the project.
- It should be established, at an early stage, which organisation/agency is leading the project.

* Sports Development

- Clear sports development objectives should set for the project related to local needs, aims and objectives of the local authority as defined in the sport and recreation strategy, and the needs of specific target groups. These may include young offenders, the unemployed, and existing illegal open-land motorcyclists, and also the opportunity to provide a wider structural introduction to motorsport.
- In the interest of establishing a continuum from participation to performance and excellence, links between community groups and participants should be established with motorsport clubs in the locality of the project.
- The role of the appropriate governing body of the sport is essential in accrediting coaches and training officers and establishing training, coaching programmes. In this regard, the advice of the National Coaching Foundation is also important.

The issues arising from urban motorsports projects during the last five years and the lessons learnt for the future discussed in this paper can be distilled into a set of criteria, within which the establishment of future projects should be framed:-

- * Political commitment from members and officers of appropriate authorities and agencies is essential if the project is to succeed and overcome the challenges that it will inevitably face.
- * Strategic planning - future projects should be set within the context of the Sport and Recreation Strategy, and based upon a comprehensive assessment of need. New facilities should be included in local, structure or unitary development plans.
- * Sustainable site development, taking full account of the needs of the environment and conservation measures is required.
- * Secure resourcing is essential - strong partnerships should be established between funding agencies, financing should be guaranteed to ensure security

and continuity.

- * Sound management, including effective line management for project officers, the establishment of support structures and a project team to guide and direct the work of the projects.
- * Security of tenure for facilities used for the project.
- * Clear sports development objectives related to the aims and objectives established in Sport and Recreation Strategies. This may be related, for example, to community participation, auto-related crime and road safety objectives.
- * A Continuum Approach is required to provide the necessary linkage between community participation initiatives and established motor and motorcycle clubs.
- * The national and regional governing bodies of motorsport should be involved, particularly in connection with the training and accreditation of coaches.

SPORTS COUNCIL POLICY AND ROLE

The Sports Council is in the process of launching a new policy statement on sport and recreation in the countryside which will include reference to motorsport and recreation. The statement recognises the conflicts that exist between different sporting and recreational activities competing for the same space and resources and recommends a strategy based upon environmentally sustainable development, positive planning and management to ensure effective provision.

The Council's role is related to providing practical guidance and advice to partners eg. local authorities, governing bodies and motorsports groups framed within the policy approach it has adopted. This will include:

- * A national planning and provision for sport factfile, which will include datasheets giving basic information on the structure and organisation of motorsports, and providing guidance and advice on planning and providing guidance and advice on planning and

provision.

- Grant aid at national level to motorsport bodies is being considered to focus on developing links with other agencies involved in sport, recreation and environmental conservation.

Regional Support

The governing bodies of motorsport have been asked to identify their priorities for the development of facilities for consideration for Sports Council grant aid.

Local authorities and voluntary organisations are eligible to apply for the development of land/buildings to safeguard and promote recreation, priorities would be influenced by the governing bodies views.

The Regional Strategy for Sport and Recreation is about to be reviewed and local authorities are encouraged to make positive provision for motorised activity.

Ian Fytche joined the Sports Council in April 1990 after a spell in local government in the East Midlands. As a development officer in the Facilities Units Planning Team At Sports Council Headquarters, he is involved in sports facility planning and development, and a number of facilities prototype and research projects. He is also the Sports Council's motorsports liaison officer, working directly with motorsports and recreation organisations in the planning and development of motorsports facilities. Despite his involvement in motorsport, he is more likely to be seen on a cricket field than on a motorcycle.

WHEELS PARKS : COSTS AND BENEFITS : ANDREW THOMAS

The Northern region offers a unique situation from which the costs and benefits of wheels parks can be assessed. No other region has seen such a profusion of community motor sports provision and participation. It should therefore be possible to use the experience of the region to make an objective assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of providing for community motor sports.

Adherents of wheels parks state that they provide a controlled environment in which the energies of young people can be positively expressed. The participants' fascination with motor vehicles is actively engaged, providing both an outlet and a discipline. The consequence is that some types of illegal and irresponsible motor vehicle use are taken off the highways and open areas of land, and diverted into wheels parks. The costs of such provision are outweighed by the deaths, injuries, property loss and nuisance caused by the participants continuing their activities elsewhere.

The counter view is that the benefits of running such facilities cannot clearly be shown and the costs are not therefore justified.

Proponents of this view would suggest that it is more productive to attempt to break the "spell" of the motor vehicle by engaging young people in equally challenging, but non motorised activities.

The workshop will ask the question; What evidence if any, exists to support either view? It would generally be recognised that wheels parks have found initial capital funding relatively easily. Monies for further development and revenue costs have been, and are, increasingly difficult to obtain. It is the deficits incurred on revenue expenditure which have proved most damaging to the continuance of activities at several facilities. The effects on the staff in such circumstances are not to be underestimated.

The workshop will ask the question; How can wheels parks meet their revenue needs?

Additionally, how can a secure financial future be created for wheels parks and what does this imply about the ownership and control of the facilities.

If wheels parks cannot continue (due to either lack of justification or funding) what form of provision should take their place?

Andrew Thomas worked as Motorsports Development Officer with the Northern Motorsports Project from October 1988 to April 1991. He was previously a Road Safety Officer for Oxfordshire County Council and a teacher in Devon and Cambridgeshire. In the latter he was Head of Social and Health Education at City of Ely College, where he also served as a School Governor. He is currently employed as Divisional Road Safety Officer for the Northern Highways Division of Lincolnshire County Council.

(The views contained in this paper are not necessarily those of Mr Thomas' employer, and should not be taken as such).

WORKSHOP SESSION : ALTERNATIVE TO CUSTODY SCHEMES : MIKE COPE

In America it is estimated that a driver of a stolen car is 200 times more likely to have an accident than the authorised driver. In this country, recent research into juvenile auto offenders showed that out of 200 young people, only 11 described themselves as average drivers or below. 101 said they were very good and 30 said exceptional. This suggests they would be driving at speeds in excess of their real ability. As 114 of the 200 said they never considered the possible consequences of an accident when taking a vehicle, we can start to understand how some of the tragic consequences of "joy riding" arise.

The Home Office "Report of the Working Group on Car Crime" states that in addition to the insurance and personal financial loss "To this must be added the cost of the nearly 1m hours of police time taken up each year in dealing with car crime, the costs to the criminal justice and prison systems, the costs of the care and treatment of accident victims - the driver of the stolen vehicle, his passengers and innocent motorists and pedestrians with whom he may come into contact - and the cost of increased social security payments to those incapacitated by injuries".

The Home Office Report made a number of suggestions aimed at reducing this type of offence. This includes -

- 1) Recognition of a multi-agency approach to the task of diverting young people from car crime.
- 2) Increased Community involvement in the development of motor projects which provide young people with access to driving and education in safe driving social awareness and responsibility. This would involve Local Authorities, Police, Schools, Driving Schools and the Business Sector.

- 3) Greater use by the Courts of Probation and Supervision Orders which require attendance on a motor project but not for the first offence.

There is a wealth of anecdotal involvement which suggests that offenders can be diverted from custody and reduce or stop offending whilst on a project.

They could considerably increase job prospects if assisted to obtain a licence and pass their driving test. But are motor projects successful? As most projects are run by people with an interest and enthusiasm for vehicles, it can be very difficult in obtaining useful statistical information.

The Ilderton Motor Project in London has been running since 1975 and has proved successful particularly with offenders aged 17 and over. In the year 1988/89 of the 32 clients referred in that age group only 4 re-offended. The Westminster Auto Project found that out of the 34 young people placed on the project programme only 5 re-offended during the 6 month period on the programme. All young people received onto the programme have multiple convictions to Taking Without Consent.

The Ilderton Project uses a multi-agency approach with the Local Authority providing premises and an annual grant, the staff are seconded by the Probation Service and the Police provide vehicles which are otherwise unfit for road use. The Committee is composed of Police, Probation, Magistrates', Social Workers and Others. These are examples of successful projects, well financed with multi-agency involvement which has a long history. Such projects can have an important role in reducing motor crime.

Offences of Taking Without Consent have attracted a lot of publicity recently. Central Government are under a lot of pressure to take steps to reduce the substantial growth in vehicle related offences and to do this have increased the penalties available to the Courts.

In Durham County alone 6960 vehicles were taken in 1990, a rise of 70% since 1988.

Durham has taken the initiative with a multi-agency project designed to try and deal with this form of offending. It is a properly resourced scheme with built-in monitoring which it is hoped will add weight to the view that it is a more effective way of dealing with this very difficult and growing social problem - something that custody has so far failed to do so.

Mike Cope previously worked as a Police Officer on both motor cycles and motor patrols and was a qualified Police Driving Instructor for cars and motor cycles. He has worked as a Probation Officer in Northumbria and as a Senior Probation Officer in Durham Probation Service, with involvement in running motorcycle groups for young offenders as part of intermediate treatment. Mike was closely involved in the establishment of the Warden Law Wheels Project.

WORKSHOP SESSION - LOCAL LINKS TO NATIONAL BODIES - GEOFF WILSON

Reporting a meeting of the Lake District National Park Special Planning Board late last year a local newspaper quoted a member of the committee:-

"We should be talking to the RAC to reduce rallies further" he said.

This was in response to a recommendation from the park's Countryside Planning Officer that since the current system of event authorisation, as exercised by the RAC, is working satisfactorily, and in accordance with the Board's policies, decisions on rallies which are essentially a repeat of previous years events should be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer.

The recommendation was refused by the Board and moreover it was thought that the Lake District Park should be further curtailing the activities of rallies.

Another member was quoted as saying that it was "time to stop people racing around the park on congested roads".

In conclusion it was decided that the National Park Officer would take up the matter nationally and look into further methods of control. The planning board would continue to monitor and discuss the rally situation every three months.

The above scenario illustrates, amongst other things, just how unsuccessful is motorsport in influencing the thinking of decision makers at local levels.

Just as is the case with most sports it is the major spectacular events in motorsport which attract the public attention. The Formula 1 Grand Prix, the Touring Car Championship, the RAC Rally, the Motorcycle Grand Prix, the Paris to Capetown Rally. But for every major motorsport event possibly fifty, or more, local and regional events take place.

It is estimated that there are approaching 250,000 regular participants in motorsport activity, with an equal number involved in the administration, organisation and spectating motorsport events most of them at a local and regional level. Britain's largest national newspaper specialising in motorcycle sport sells at the present time 120,000 copies weekly, and the publishers claim that nearer 500,000 people get to read each issue. All in all, motor sport is popular.

From the first few years of this century the sport has been well structured, mainly under the auspices of the Royal Automobile Club and the Auto-Cycle Union. Yet, despite its long history and broad spread of popularity the sport in the second half of the twentieth century has become in general introspective and defensive, and under threat.

In this workshop we will consider why this is so and what possibilities exist to change the flow of the tide.

Consider this conclusion drawn in 'Providing for Motorsports' (Sports Council 1986), which states:-

"The motorsport community is misrepresented amongst 'opinion formers', the media and in local authority and other arenas. 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".

In the five years since this report little has been done by governing bodies, or their members, to respond to the warnings contained in it. Clubs, Centres and Regional Associations, in the main, still focus almost entirely on promoting and organising events, keeping their heads down in the hope that no-one will notice them. Few seem to understand their full responsibilities for the sport.

The main functions of the regional organisations of motorsport are listed below:-

1. To widen the scope of events available to participants.
2. To organise and coordinate events and dates.
3. To formulate local policy.
4. To resolve and coordinate the use of the public highway for competition.
5. To control and guard the use of sites and routes within the region.
6. To liaise with external bodies and land agencies.
7. To liaise with governing bodies.

All this to be done in close association with the various governing bodies.

I contend that many of these functions are not satisfied at all in the regions and local centres of motorsport. We should consider why this is, and how some emphasis can be shifted from pure participation to protection and promotion of the activity at a local level.

We should consider:-

1. Why are clubs unwilling, or unable, to be involved in local consultation procedures, parish, district and county planning procedures?
2. How many clubs have close contact with their district or county councils, not just when they need to in the lead-up to an event, but in order to keep the responsible face of motorsport regularly in front of influential officers?

3. What contacts do clubs, centres or regions have with National Park officers, and how many respond to consultation exercises when park plans are being formulated?
4. What contact do clubs, centres and regions have with local secretary of The Country Landowners Association, the regional office of English Nature, The National Trust, constituency MPs, and others, who are influential in making decisions that indirectly affect motorsport?
5. Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation have an important role in the promotion of participation and in bringing together voluntary sports bodies, local authorities and schools to make better use of facilities. How many motor clubs try to have an influence on RCSR's?
6. Standing Conferences for Sport and Recreation are constituted to provide a forum for workers in all branches of sport to share problems and make joint advances. They don't always work that way, but motorsport should not avoid being in the forefront of SCSR's. But how many motorsport activists play a leading role in them?
7. How many regions of the country have Regional Motorsport Federations where common motorsport and recreation interests can be focused, and common actions taken where appropriate?
8. How much blame can be laid at the door of the many disunited bodies which claim to represent motorsport factions?
9. How many local authorities and agencies have regular contact with motorsport clubs?
10. How many clubs regularly remind participants that if they have time to participate they should also make time to safeguard their sport?

There is no doubt that advantage is taken of the fact that the motorsport community is misrepresented and under-represented among opinion formers, the media, local authorities and other arenas where, in the absence of motorsport leadership and direction, decisions are taken which directly affect us.

Attention should be paid by motorsport interests to effectively participating and, where possible, leading the wider decision making process.

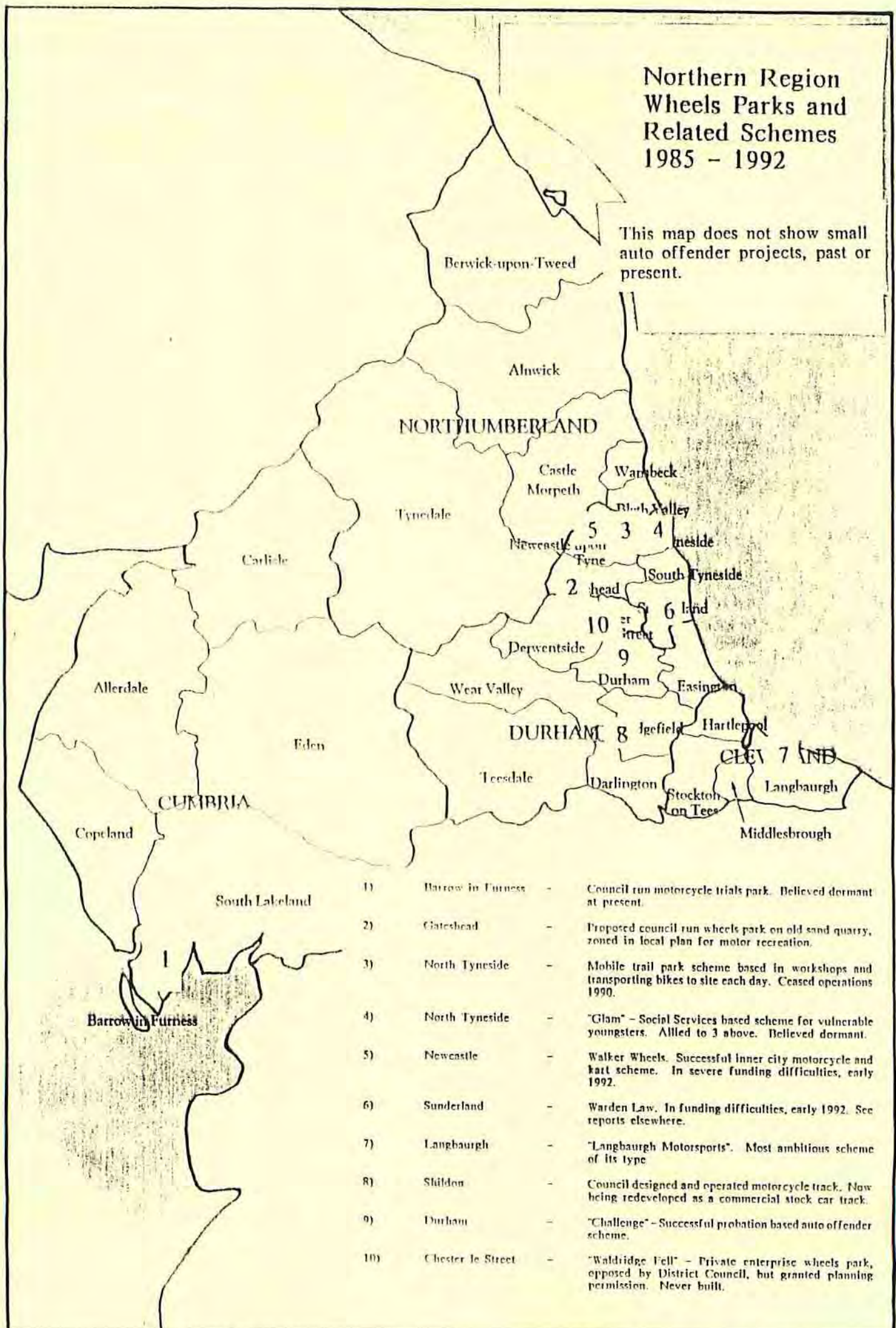
This means going even further than just responding to consultation. It means taking on proactive and negotiative roles where appropriate.

Fundamental to this is greater cooperation and liaison between various aspects of motorsport and recreation through Regional Motorsport Federations. But who will administer them and make them work?

Geoff Wilson is chairman of the Motoring Organisations Land Access & Recreation Association, Director for Touring and Environment at the British Motorcyclists' Federation, Vice President of the Touring Commission at the Federation Internationale Motocycliste (the world governing body of motorcycle sport), a member of the Motorcycling Committee of the RAC.

Northern Region Wheels Parks and Related Schemes 1985 - 1992

This map does not show small auto offender projects, past or present.





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Thankyou for contacting the ACU Training Trust for more information on its approved modular programme of motorcycle based educational courses, designed to provide people of all ages and abilities with a thorough background in motorcycle riding, maintenance, and safety and the law.....

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BIKE LORE comprises a total package of six lessons at either Bronze, Silver, or Gold standard. Each individual lesson is structured to provide the teacher with the aims, objectives, content, method, resources and aids, means of assessment, and timetable.

BIKE LORE is a well proven course that has proved its worth for many varied user groups. The Chief Superintendent of Northumbria Police has stated that the syllabus is

"interesting and touches on all the principle issues making
BIKE LORE an innovative and worthwhile initiative"

The press has also been most positive in its coverage of **BIKE LORE**. The Newcastle Evening Chronicle, for example, reports that **BIKE LORE**:

"is a structured course targeted towards the young and gives them tuition in motorcycle riding, mechanical awareness and the need to stay within the law while in charge of a motorbike."

The basic level **BIKE LORE** six lesson syllabus comprises of the following:-

Lesson One

Legal Requirement: Video presentation of documents required.

Riding Techniques: Moving away from rest and bringing the machine to a controlled halt; displaying smooth use of the clutch, throttle, and brakes.

Maintenance: Health and safety at work - who is it for? Causes of accidents. Accident prevention.

Lesson Two

Legal Requirements: Video presentation on Vehicle Insurance.

Riding Technique: Changing gear, up and down the gearbox.

Maintenance: Health and Safety at work; What is fire? Identification and selection of fire extinguishers and fire fighting technique.

Lesson Three

Legal Requirements: Video presentation on the implications of alcohol.

Riding Technique: Judgement: Bringing the machine to a controlled halt between two lines gauging width.

Maintenance: Basic skills; the identification and selection of hand tools, including - spanners, files, and hack saws. The safe and correct use of hand tools.

Lesson Four

Legal Requirements: Video presentation on Attitudes.

Riding Technique: Slow speed balance. Braking to a halt whilst standing.

Maintenance: Engine design - what is an engine? The advantages and disadvantages of two and four stroke engines. The need for lubrication. The means of lubrication.

Lesson Five

Legal Requirements: Video presentation on Vehicle Finance.

Riding Technique: To negotiate a mild obstacle with confidence.

Maintenance: Wheels and brakes. The removal and replacement of brake shoes. Fitting tyres and puncture repair. Checking wheel bearings.

Lesson Six

Legal Requirements: Video presentation on either the sport, or training for the sport.

Riding Technique: To negotiate a moderate obstacle with confidence.

Maintenance: Frame and suspension. Adjustment of the drive chain. Cable lubrication. Checking steering head bearings.

The above is a breakdown of the structure of the basic level **BIKE LORE** syllabus. Higher levels of **BIKE LORE** follow the same basic layout with upgraded lesson content.

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MEANS OF ASSESSMENT
TIMETABLE**

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In addition to the actual **BIKE LORE** package itself, you will need to ensure that those personnel assessing pupils have, themselves, the appropriate qualification from the ACU Training Trust. Therefore, your teachers/tutors will need to become Basic Training Officers.

All the Training Trust's approved off-road centres have undergone a one day course of assessment by one of the Training Trust's National Assessors.

Assessment Days usually take place on a regional basis with more than one local authority/agency putting forward their personnel for assessment. The maximum number of personnel who may attend is ten, and the Training Trust makes a charge of £250 for a Regional Assessment day with the cost being divided between the participating local authorities/agencies.

All Basic Training Officers, who successfully undergo an assessment, receive a coaching manual, certificate and badge. Please note, all Basic Training Officers should have passed a basic first aid course recognised by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, or a body of equal status.


If you would like to obtain the **BIKE LORE** package, or would like further information on the ACU Training Trust, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address below.

Mr. David Kersey, Training Trust Manager
ACU
Miller House
Corporation Street
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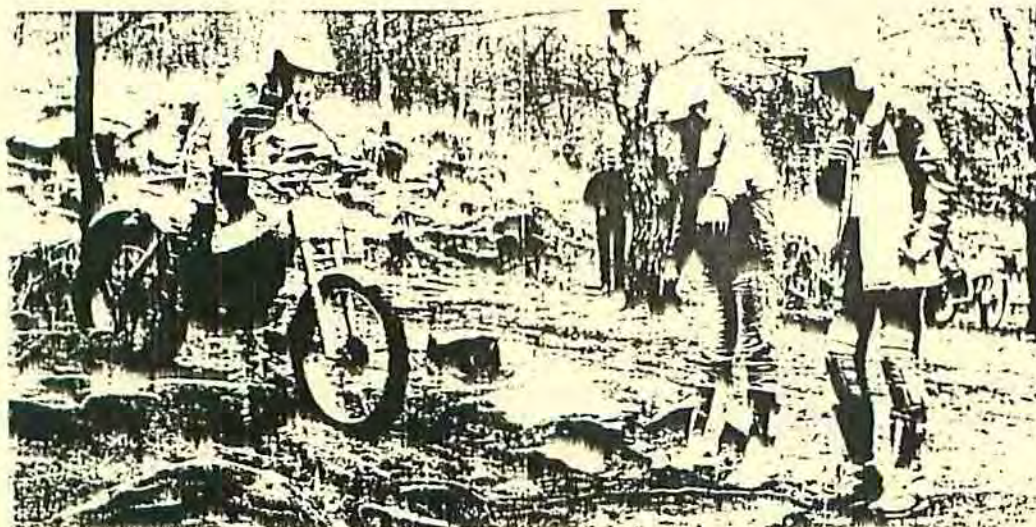
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- ✓ I will attract revenue from club events, beginning to, a product launch etc.
- ✓ I will gain highly knowledgeable people in the local community

60 401 charge based subject to sensitive areas or archaeological potential or areas of natural beauty.

- DO NOT select a site that is too remote
- DO choose a site near existing services i.e. gas, electricity, water
- DO ensure that all entrances/exits are clearly defined

F) Sporting referees who wish to practice, or improve their existing skills

ALWAYS CONSULT THE NATWEST BANK/ACU TRAINING DIVISION PRIOR TO SETTING OUT TRACKS, AND AT ALL SUBSEQUENT STAGES



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☐ ensure adequate security

EXTRACTS FROM

A PRACTICE MANUAL FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND MOTORCYCLES

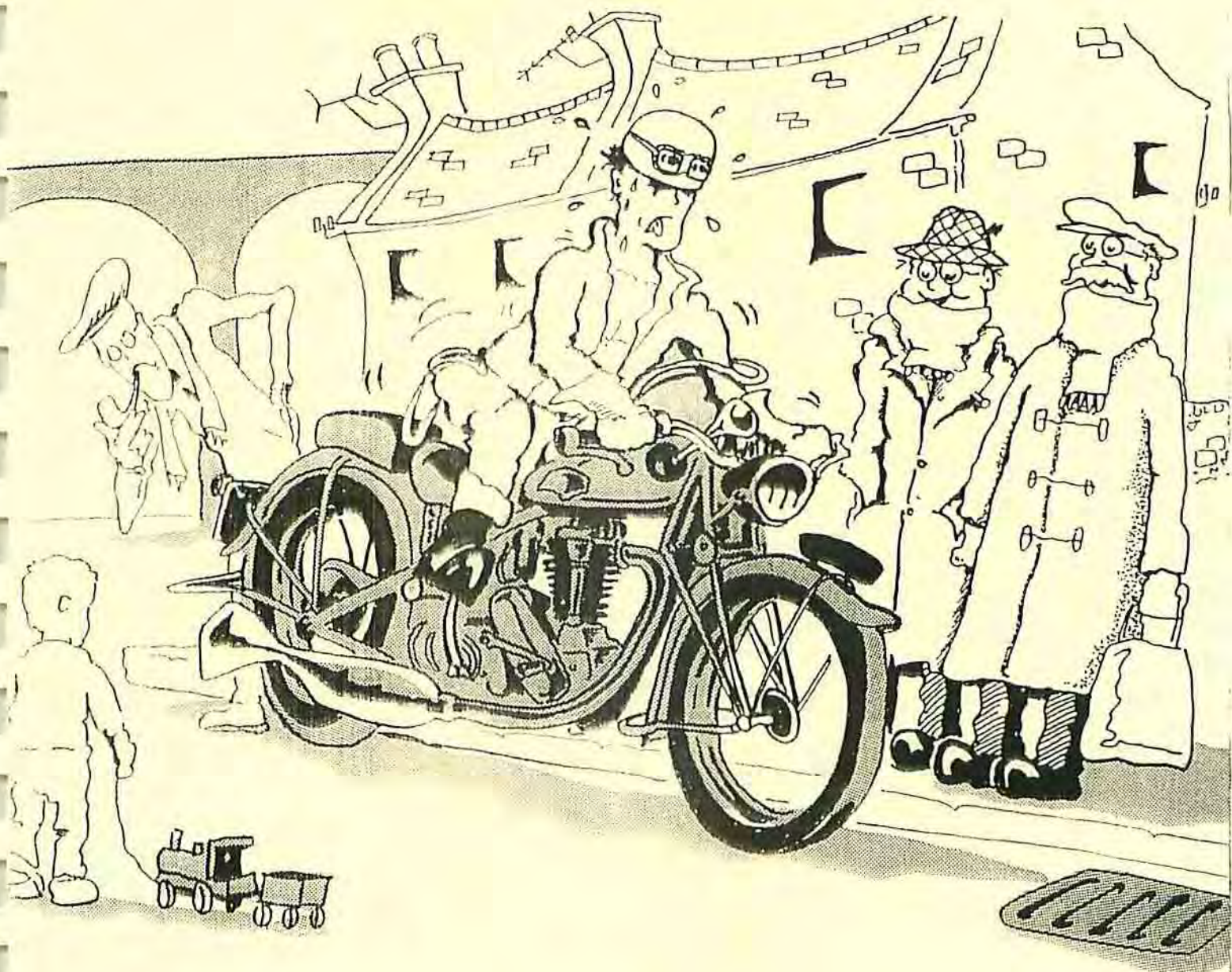
Written by Neil Thomson and Andy Gunn

Illustrations by Tombeau

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE AND MOTORCYCLES?

I believe that young people are perhaps more undervalued, poorly treated and their potential less actualised than at any time in recent history. I therefore welcome any attempt to allow young people to improve their personal situations. I am even more enthusiastic when that attempt is carefully thought out, based upon sound theory and clearly and demonstrably of benefit to young people.

I start to wax lyrical when motorcycles are a catalyst in this process. The most exciting and enjoyable times of my personal experience have been from my involvement in motorcycling. Motorcycles are actually ridden by less than one percent of our population, but are one of the most powerful images in our society, an image of power. On the one hand appreciated as a fine engineering creation, a credit to society: look at the attention vintage motorcycles draw in the street; motorcycling's image on TV's kickstart; whilst on the other hand deviant leather clad Hell's Monster intent on destroying society as we know it is another common



"look at the attention vintage motorcyles draw in the street"

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image. These complex, apparently contradictory images have compelling attractions to many young people. Not to all, but a very sizable proportion.

The fusion of young people in a groupwork programme around motorcycles is what this manual is about. The intention is to describe the model in such a way as to allow the reader to judge for themselves whether the idea is practical and to offer some advice on getting started.

To be more precise:

What this manual is about is working with very specific young people in a very specific motorcycling field.

I'm talking about young people who are really not doing too well. Victims of abuse, victims of multiple deprivation, victims of poor parenting, people the system rejects by using one or other of the many techniques we as a society have invented to package them. Offenders, deviants, low achievers, educational sub-normal, maladjusted and problem children are a few of the distasteful terms which come to mind.

The motorcycle programme is very specifically off road and centred around trials riding. The emphasis is totally on control and skill and not about speed per se.

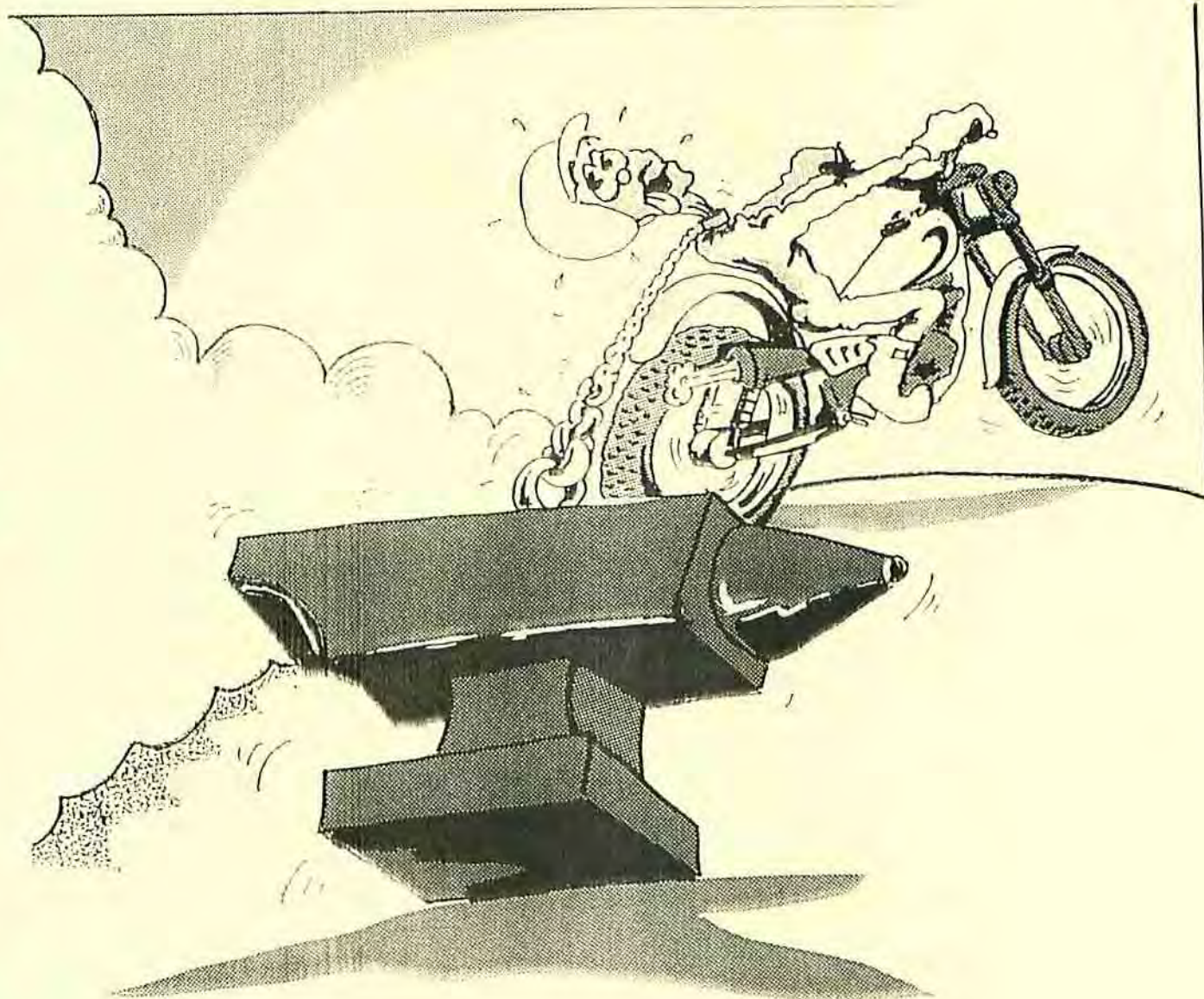
The aim is to give these young people a sense of self worth and achievement by introducing them to trials motorcycling and contact with caring adults. A motorcycle project is able to provide adults who care and who are positive role models but who are not seen by the young people as "social workers". By doing all this we may also help them to remove themselves from the package that society has placed them in, and thereby society's problem with them.

THE COMPONENT PARTS OF THE PROGRAMME:

- i **Machinery**
- ii **Land**
- iii **The staff team**
- iv **The teaching technique off-road**
- v **The indoor sessions**
- vi **The follow on**

MACHINERY

Presuming you've got money you are faced with a dazzling array of machinery. The biggest mistake you can make is buying schoolboy scramblers, which, in young and inexperienced hands, are likely to injure and are very difficult to teach people on. This is followed by an underpowered but flash looking 50cc enduro look alike which simply won't perform. What you want is a proper trials machine, one that would be capable of being used at serious competition level. It's wise to buy all the same model which makes maintenance much more straightforward in terms of spares etc., but on a more mundane level stops arguments about who gets what bike. The best bike I've found is the old twin shock TY Yamahas - alas no longer in production. This takes us into the newer monoshock trials bikes which are more expensive. Expect to pay about £1,500 a machine and try and replace it before it costs a fortune to keep running. The modern TY 250 is an ideal bike. For younger or very small children you will have to consider a smaller machine such as TY 80's but trials bikes are very much "one



6

"fit the bikes with some form of restrictor..."

size fits all" and unless you are very specifically going to be working with a very young age group then the TY 250 is as good a bike as any.

One source of machines can be "stolen/recovered" bikes from the police. If you are able to get hold of these machines they will more than likely be trail bikes such as Yamaha DT125's or Suzuki TS125's. Whilst not ideal, they can be used with young people but have a number of disadvantages when compared to a trials machine. They are much larger and so tend to intimidate young people when they first get on them, if they can get on them at all! I can only just get both feet on the ground on some of these machines! They are much faster and young people will tend to use this performance, and in a crash (which is more likely with this sort of bike) the rider is liable to suffer more injuries than on a trials bike. These machines are also more fragile than a trials bike as they are really intended for road and green lane use, not demanding off road sites, and so are quite expensive and time consuming to maintain.

However, if they are all you have got and you are going to use them, you should make allowances in you practice, ie. keep the course free of straight sections so as to limit the speed which the riders are able to go, fit the bikes with some form of restrictor and of course close supervision. I'm not saying you can't use trail bikes but I would plan to change them as soon as possible for trials types.

Unless you are garaging the machinery where you are riding it you will also need to consider transport for bikes and personnel. This will vary on the size of your operation. A trailer can pull three bikes but more than that really requires something like a Transit or Luton van.



©

"an off-road sidecar outfit, such a Wasp.....can be
your groups' 'shepherd'."

Paper prepared for The Northern Motorsports Project
conference: MOTORSPORT IN THE COMMUNITY: THE WAY AHEAD
4th March, 1992.

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE
VICTIM: AN EXERCISE IN
MODERATION?

Drs Tim May (Visiting Fellow) and Dick Hobbs (Lecturer),
Department of Sociology and Social Policy,
The University of Durham.

INTRODUCTION

Both theft from and theft of cars is believed to be a major crime facing the public today. At the same time, whilst public debates are presumed to be settled by allusions to the 'facts' surrounding car theft, compared to other areas of criminal activity, little is known about the actual practice of car thieves nor, importantly, its victims. Drawing upon material researched by one of the authors of this short paper, we seek to redress this imbalance by permitting the victim a 'voice'. At the same time, it should be noted that these victims did not have sophisticated alarms fitted to their cars and they were victims of theft of, not from their cars. That said, the sophistication of the professional car thief increases with that of the companies producing such commodities. Whilst it may protect the car from opportunistic theft, it does not follow that it is protected from vandalism, nor that the overall effect of such tactics is simple to displace the theft onto more vulnerable districts and their inhabitants vehicles.

In this paper, we concentrate upon the theft, its reporting to the police and their satisfaction with these contacts. We do this in order to demonstrate the feelings that people have and the inconvenience that they suffer and the ways in which this aspect of car theft could be improved. In a paper of the length requested, we could not regrettably include victims attitudes to the offender, nor their suggested methods of reducing car theft. What we can reveal, however, is that moderation of response and the importance of motor projects in alleviating the frustrations of more youthful car thieves figured prominently in the findings. Respondents tended to seek restitution, not retribution.

THE THEFT AND REPORTING TO THE POLICE.

The Theft.

"Have you ever watched police moving a car that's causing an obstruction? Or asked for help when you've inadvertently locked yourself out of your car? If so you'll know just how easy it is for someone who knows what to do, and has the right equipment, to get into your car". (Which? 1984, p342)

The respondents interviewed in this study were certainly aware of the ease with which most cars can be entered. The experience of coming out of their house, or returning to the place it was parked and finding it gone, is not easily forgotten. This chapter charts the theft of the car and the reporting to the police.

All but 5 of the 18 cars stolen were Fords. While this in part reflects their popularity, it also reflects the ease with which older versions can be entered and stolen, the marketability of second hand parts and their anonymity on the streets: the fact they attract less attention due to their popularity. However, one of the respondent's observations was equally applicable to the majority of cars on the road:

"I think Cortina's are notoriously easy to break into actually".

While another noted that: "they walk through Mini locks".

Clearly, the age of the car is a significant factor here. As Mayhew et al (1976) have noted, the opportunities for crime are attached to both people and objects, therefore victims will generate different opportunities for crime (none of the respondent's cars possessed any additional security in the form of alarms or extra locks). The simple opportunity is, however, not sufficient in itself, but

linked to the offender's subjective perception of conditions which are favourable to the commission of an illegal act. The stealing of cars is no exception to this. While it would be difficult to discover the degree of 'victim precipitation' - the leaving open of doors and valuable contents left visible in the car - it is estimated that one in five cars on the street are left insecure (Southall and Ekblom, 1985, p, 15) In the case of those victims in this study, it was not leaving doors or windows open necessarily, but the ease with which cars can be entered even when locked, the place of the vehicle and the subsequent action of any witnesses in interpreting what they saw as an illegal act.

Deterrent effects also having an important part to play. The pay 'n' display car park offers a thief anonymity and an exit without having to present a ticket to an attendant on leaving (due to cost cutting on staffing levels). Three of the respondents had their cars stolen from such a car park and one of these reported that her car was stolen from the same place twice in three weeks! Another was stolen from a staff car park which was easily entered, it being the subject of vandalism on two previous occasions. Most were stolen from outside the interviewees' homes, normally in the early hours of the morning. Two exceptions to this pattern were one vehicle which was taken in the morning in a populated area, and another which constitutes a story in itself.

The respondent had received a call the day before from, using stereotypical procedures, a 'gipsy looking bloke' who wanted to know whose car it was parked down the road. Having established ownership he made the respondents an offer, which was refused as the car was being renovated. The next day a lorry attempted to back into the road but was unable to do so due to parked cars. Several men then walked down the road, opened the car, and pushed it back up the road. It was then winched onto the lorry which then left.

This event is known due to the fact it was witnessed by an elderly woman from her front window. This populated area had joined the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme the day before. Apparently this group of 'diddicoys', as the police described them, made a living by stealing cars (the description of diddicoy is apt in this case. The Collins dictionary defines them as, "a group of caravan dwellers, especially ones who break old cars and sell the parts"). The police told the respondent, 'if it was nicked on Wednesday afternoon it would be in the crusher on Thursday morning'. If the group were approached during the act they would simply reply that the owner had given them permission to take the vehicle. This case illustrates the ease with which such offences, if done with the minimum amount of behaviour that leads to suspicion on the part of the general public, can be performed.

Respondent's Initial Reactions to the Theft.

The initial reaction some respondents experienced on discovering that their cars were missing was confusion, others accounted for their feelings in terms of shock. Where exactly had they parked the car? One respondent ran up and down the car park before finally realising her car was gone. On the other hand, those who had their vehicles stolen from outside their houses quickly realised when they looked for the vehicle in the morning, or glanced out of their windows. One noted that she: "just felt disbelief...like it wasn't really happening". Another woman was: "initially completely shattered", whilst her husband was concerned with how he was going to get the shopping home! In this sense, the responses were gender based. On the other hand, one woman simply recalled her thoughts as: "Just oh dear! Where's my car". Further noting that:

"To me its a fairly harmless thing to do-I mean it doesn't emotionally upset me to have my car stolen".

Another interviewee thought at first that his friends had played a joke on him and moved the car, while another first thought: "How am I going to get to work".

One woman upon discovering her missing car looked up and down the road:

"I thought it must be there but I can't see it. I stood there for five minutes-shocked...I thought 'oh god'! It can't be gone, but then I thought you're panicking, it must be there".

Others appealed to an empathy on the part of the researcher: "You know...you get that feeling in your stomach".

The Decision to Report the Theft.

The decision to report a crime may depend on its severity in terms of loss, or, particularly in the case of crime involving those known to the victim, considering it inappropriate to involve the police. Car thefts tend to fall into neither of these categories. The loss of one's means of transport is likely to be important and the material consideration is unlikely to be small. Furthermore, insurance companies require as a matter of course, that the theft is reported to the police, as Sparks Glenn and Dodd noted in their study:

"The fact that stolen property had been insured was significantly associated, in our sample, with reporting to the police of theft other than burglaries and thefts in dwellings" (1977, p121).

Nevertheless, the decision to report a crime may also be in terms of the self-definition the individual has as a victim of crime (see Shapland et al. 1985).

Two of the respondents were advised to report the theft by those on whose property it was parked. A further two reported the theft because they had previously had cars stolen and knew the idea was to: "Just report it and see what happens".

Some, however, either reported it automatically or for the purposes of insurance:

"I thought it was the law to comply with my insurance".

Another reflected:

"I reported it just because I thought I should. I didn't really think of the insurance at the time".

And:

"I went up to the police station and reported it straight away. The insurance was an afterthought".

Others wanted their cars to be recovered by the police:

"The first thing you do is report it to the police- obviously...In the hope you may get it back".

One respondent noted three reasons for contacting the police: 'duty, recovery and insurance'. He summed up the motivation to report car thefts:

"I thought it was something we should do, mainly because we may find it again, but mainly for the insurance".

One respondent mentioned a wish for the police to catch the offenders:

"I really reported it because I wanted the people who done it to be caught".

However, he was also concerned for the vehicle's recovery and the insurance company's regulations.

Of those who accounted for their reasons to report the theft in ways not primarily covered above, one was a police officer, who recovered the car but told his wife to report it because it had been damaged. He is in the process of making a claim to the insurance company. While another had his car used as a battering-ram to enter an off-licence at the back of a block of flats where he lived. He considered it important as it had been used in a robbery.

VICTIMS EXPECTATIONS OF, AND SATISFACTION WITH, POLICE CONTACTS.

The police are largely a reactive force relying on the general public to report crimes. Somewhere between 80% and 90% of crimes known to the police are reported by the public (Burrows, 1982). As one of the respondent noted:

"They must tend to rely an awful lot on people reporting things".

Given this situation the state of police-public relations is an important issue. Many will report a crime for the first time, and experience interactions with the police for the first time. Such encounters can leave a lasting impression on an individual.

As noted in the last chapter, the motivation to report the crime to the police is linked, in the final analysis, either to a desire to recover the car, or to insurance requirements. None of the respondents did not wish to see their car returned and therefore held beliefs about the police's ability to recover the vehicle. These were, however, quite realistic: "I suppose there's not a lot they can do anyway".

While another respondent reflected:

"They turned up very promptly and took all the details, there's not a lot else they can do".

And:

"There's nothing they can do about it, unless they are there and say 'what are you doing'".

Only one way in which the police might succeed is in the operation of the "incongruity procedure". Sacks (1972) noted this method involved training the police to avoid taking appearances at face value. This method of suspicion, in turn, allows them to attend to the presentation of unusual occurrences or appearances. Anything out of the ordinary therefore justifies its investigation. As one respondent, a police officer, noted:

"Detecting stolen cars depends entirely on the observation of the individual".

However, the ability to achieve this in times of mass produced cars and in urban situations where so much is constantly happening is clearly impaired.

This ability was appreciated by one respondent whose car was found 50 miles from her home. As she noted, the car was parked in such a way as to cause no suspicion to any passer-by, in good condition and taxed: "I think they did very well to find it".

This belief was widespread amongst the respondents. However, as most private car thefts fall in the category of casual, as opposed to pre-meditated theft (Southall and Ekblom, 1985) the majority are recovered. The Working Group on Car Security (1985) note that estimates for opportunist car theft fall somewhere in the region of 70% to 90% of total car thefts. Sixteen of those interviewed reported that their vehicles were recovered, in varying states of repair. Many of these recoveries were the result of individuals reporting the parking of strange cars in their neighbourhood to the police. 'Joy-riders' who required a means of transport, abandoning the cars when they have served their purpose, or removed certain parts or broken down. As a result the respondents were, in the main, pleased with the performance of the police: "They are very efficient round here". While another respondent noted of their investigations: "They were good, they really wanted to catch him".

The degree of satisfaction was not only linked to an appraisal of the police's ability to retrieve the vehicle, but also the perception the individuals had of the officers concern for their plight:

"....being honest I was a bit annoyed, they were so nonchalant about it. To them it was another car theft but it was important to me".

While the officer told the respondent that if the car were a

BMW then there was not much chance of its recovery, but as she had, in her own words "a bit of a heap", it was probably a joy-rider and therefore stood a good chance of being recovered. However, on this occasion the lack of feeling for her plight left her displeased with the officer, even though she realised the limits of their investigations:

"there was nothing more they could have done, but to me it was my car, it was important. For all they know I was penniless, there was no enquiry about how I was going to get home".

As Howley concluded in his research on victim-police interactions:

"The evidence of this research points to a mismatch between victim's expectations of police action and police assumptions about victims needs" (1982, p11).

Similar conclusions were reached by Burns-Howell (1982) and Shapland et al (1985). While another respondent, whose attitude to the police investigation of his case was overall favourable, caught the tension between the organisational demands of the police force and the victim's needs:

"There doing the best they can I suppose. You have your car nicked and you expect instant action, we know it doesn't work like that. But I got the feeling from the guy I spoke to, 'oh no, not another car theft, not more paperwork, I better take the details I suppose'. He wasn't particularly interested. Car theft to them is petty, to us it was a personal inconvenience and a downright affrontery- to them it was Jo Bloggs has had his car nicked-so what!"

The attention to details of the theft, an important part of the process of investigation, may therefore be alleviated by a greater awareness on the officer's part of the persons possible distress. Levels of victims satisfaction with the police may, in some cases, be related not so much to their law enforcement function as to the social aspects of their role in dealing with members of the public. As evidence from the British Crime Survey has demonstrated, people may appreciate a sensitive approach from the police when dealing with minor offences, including

those related to motor vehicles (Southgate and Ekblom, 1984, p21). While Sparks et al (1977) found their respondents' main cause of complaint against the police was not taking the matter seriously.

One situation which is worthy of consideration is the case of a respondent who was asked by the police to be a material witness. Her car was stolen during the night and actually recovered a few hours later some several miles away. As the offenders were also apprehended at the time she was asked to appear in court to testify she had not lent them the car, she consented feeling it to be her duty. She heard nothing from the police after that. A friend hearing this asked her if she was afraid of possible reprisals by the offenders. Up to this point she had not considered the consequences of the court appearance regarding it as her duty. However, as the police described the offenders as a couple of 'nasty little tykes' she had second thoughts. Living alone these fears occupied her mind: "Given I'm living on my own its quite scary". Had the police simply contacted her to explain what was happening this would not have occurred.

SUMMARY

As Shapland, Willmore and Duff noted in their study, the victim tends to become a neglected person in the criminal justice system, having certain information needs which tend not to be met by agents of the criminal justice system. The above example is no exception to their observations. As Maguire notes in respect to the information needs of victims:

"There is a strong case, indeed, for it to be statutory duty of the police to provide every victim with a card or information sheet about available services, and to officially inform every victim of the outcome of investigation". (1985, p546).

The Leicestershire Constabulary issue such a sheet to every victim who reports a crime to them. It details the procedure on investigations, insurance, vehicle theft, compensation, offences taken into consideration, civil action and crime prevention. This, in addition to further contact with the victim, would alleviate such fears as the above respondent had.

The levels of respondent's satisfaction therefore relates to their expectations of police action in terms of their ability to assist them in their plight by the recovery of the vehicle. As noted, the only way they might achieve this is to notice a car in suspicious circumstances, and check to see if it has been reported stolen. Or, as is often the case, rely on a member of the public to report the parking or use of a car in suspicious circumstances. Additionally, satisfaction relates to the interaction between the officer dealing with the case and the respondent. While, overall, those interviewed were satisfied with the police this was linked to the perception they had of the police's willingness to be helpful. In one case the police arrived at the respondent's home within twenty minutes of his reporting the crime, took the details, were optimistic about the car's recovery and looked around the local area when leaving. This example of police-public relations led the respondent to reiterate, on several occasions, the same sentiment in respect to his satisfaction with the police officer: "He was as good as gold".

Another respondent received a phone call from an officer a week after reporting the crime to explain he was now in charge of the case. This simple gesture, which took little time, led her to account for police assistance in very favourable terms. Thus, while the respondents were realistic in terms of the police's ability to recover the vehicle given their available resources and the nature of the crime, this extra effort reaped rewards out of proportion to the time they took.

We should consider the victim and their experiences in terms of car theft. Whilst joy riding has had tragic consequences and its exercise might not be condoned, our reactions to this must be tempered by what might realistically be achieved in terms of alleviating this issue. Pursuing social explanations for this phenomena often assumes, quite wrongly, that explanation equals excuse - it does not. However, crime is fundamentally social in its origins. As such, it must be social in its reduction strategies.

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January 1992.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dr Tim May is currently a Visiting Fellow at Van Mildert College, University of Durham and a Lecturer in Applied Social Science at Polytechnic South-West. He has written a study of organisational change in the probation service, which has been well received, entitled: 'Probation: Politics, Policy and Practice' (1991). He has also written on alternatives to custody, professionalism and human service organisations and is co-editor (with Dick Hobbs) of a forthcoming book examining the practice and process of ethnographic research. His research interests are in the general area of crime and deviance, as well as organisational change and he has acted as a consultant to staff training and development courses.

Dr Dick Hobbs is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Durham. He previously worked at the Polytechnic of Central London and the Oxford Centre for Criminological Research. His research interests are in policing (he has recently completed a large scale project on behalf of the Home Office examining the work of detectives), entrepreneurship and the general area of crime and deviance. He is the author of what is now a best seller: 'Doing the Business: Entrepreneurship, Detectives and the Working Class in the East End of London' (1988). In addition to articles on crime, deviance and policing, he is the co-editor (with Tim May) of a forthcoming book on ethnographic research.

THE VIEW OF THE OFF-ROAD RECREATIONAL VEHICLE USER

Recreational vehicle users appreciate the countryside just as much as other users of public rights of way, the only difference being that they choose to travel by vehicle rather than on horseback or on foot along the green roads of England and Wales.

That is not to say that they never leave their vehicles behind. Indeed, there are those who sometimes prefer to travel by other means, including bicycle.

Recreational vehicle users seek only to maintain the option to use those rights of way that may legally be driven. Vehicular rights of way amount to a total of some 5,000 miles in England and Wales and consist of RUPPS, BOATS and unclassified county roads. This figure should be compared with approximately 130,000 miles of public footpaths and bridleways. Vehicular rights of way, those that are essentially unmetalled carriageways, may of course also be used by horseriders, walkers and cyclists but vehicle users are more than happy to share the vehicular rights of way with all other categories of user. This attitude is in contrast with equestrians who are obliged to share bridleways only with cyclists and walkers, whilst footpaths are the exclusive domain of the walker.

There is a school of thought which says that off-road recreational vehicles have no place on green roads and that they should be obliged to use metalled roads along with other wheeled traffic. What supporters of this school overlook is that nearly all roads lacked a sealed surface less than a hundred years ago and that many did not even have a metalled surface. Gradually, and purely on the basis of cost-effectiveness, only the roads that carried a substantial amount of traffic received a more durable surface in the early part of this century. Little-used roads avoided the attention of the surfacing machine and thus, in time, became the green roads of today because they were abandoned in favour of roads with a better surface.

A great many users of off-road recreational vehicles are members of motor clubs that are recognised by the RAC Motor Sports Association, the governing body of motor sport in the UK, but all

competitive events are held on privately owned land or MOD property and they never use public rights of way for competition. The two largest off-road vehicle clubs, The Association of Rover Clubs and the All Wheel Drive Club, are both recognised by the RAC MSA and both are members of the motoring organisations' Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) which 'promotes the responsible use of our environment for motor sport and recreation'.

Many of the ARC's member clubs and the AWDC organise green road 'runs' for small groups of their members. These 'runs' take the form of leisurely recreational travel along vehicular rights of way. Ideally, groups consist of less than six vehicles and there may be only one or two vehicles travelling together. All drivers are encouraged to heed LARA's code of conduct for drivers in the countryside which, among other things, seeks to encourage travel at a quiet and unobtrusive pace, to follow the actual route of the right of way and to avoid the use of green roads when the surface is likely to be excessively damaged.

In addition to club runs, individuals also enjoy an opportunity to take their vehicles along green roads that form part of our heritage of an ancient network of communication routes. Such interest has taken place since the 1940's and there are many people who have enjoyed such recreation for considerable time with little or no confrontation.

Many clubs are involved with voluntary clearance and reinstatement of public rights of way. Although vehicle users may use only the highest category of path, very many hours of maintenance work are spent every year on all categories of path including bridleways and footpaths. Indeed, some clubs have on-going rights of way maintenance projects on various categories of path, including unclassified county roads in their area. The following are some typical examples of such voluntary work in different parts of the country.

In the midlands, an ARC club is currently involved with clearing and generally

reinstating a section of the 'Three Shires Way', which is a long distance bridleway. The club has been mentioned in local press releases and advertising of the project. Other paths have also been cleared under the auspices of the county council using the authority's plant and equipment and many man/women hours have been put to good effect to improve rights of way in the club's area.

Again, in the midlands, another club has organised many clearing parties on green roads which have benefitted all user groups. This particular club has built up a good rapport with the local walkers groups.

In the Northwest, a club which is based in Lancashire has been active in repairing an unsurfaced county road over the moors. The road is several miles long and volunteers from the club have spent a great deal of time repairing its surface using novel methods. The result of such hard work open up access to open country for all user groups, not just those who choose to travel by vehicle.

In conjunction with Wiltshire and Gloucestershire county councils, a club has a joint project carrying out surface repairs to a byway with finance, materials and equipment being made available by the authorities.

Clearance of various categories of right of way has been done in Wiltshire, Hampshire, Avon and Northamptonshire, all with authority from the respective county councils. In places, joint projects with members of the Trail Riders Fellowship have taken place to improve bridleways. Other projects involving repairs and maintenance have taken place in many other counties and bridleways have been cleared in various parts of the country, sometimes at the specific request of other user groups such as the British Horse Society.

Sometimes motor clubs pool their resources and provide members for repair projects such as one in South Wales to repair an old Roman road, again, with the co-operation and assistance from the highway authority.

Some clubs have representatives on rights of way liaison groups and also on local authority working groups. The view of the recreational vehicle user is that all user groups should be allowed access to the countryside and that this can continue to be the case given understanding and co-operation between all users whatever their chosen means of travel. All that is asked is that the voice of the recreational vehicle user be heard and considered fairly in any discussion concerning the future of rights of way.

Tony Kempster - Association of Rover Clubs

Liz Hurley - All Wheel Drive Club



DO YOU CARE ABOUT THE LAW?

It is a criminal offence to drive or ride on the beach (unless a sign says otherwise), the dunes, on common land, carriages, parks and farmland. You will break the law if your vehicle is not completely road legal (insurance, tax, noise levels, MOT, driving licence, tyres etc.) on any road — including an unclassified one.



DO YOU KNOW 'THE FOUR Ws'?

- Weather:** Do not travel on green roads when the risk being damaged beyond point of natural recovery when the weather improves.
- Weight:** Do not use lanes which may be seriously damaged by the wheel pressure applied by your vehicle.
- Width:** Don't use lanes which are too narrow for your vehicle. Avoid damage to trees, hedges and boundaries.
- Wheels:** Use only when unavoidable. Your priority should be to avoid damage to trees, walls or road surface.

Don't regard the countryside as something to be conquered, with a muddy mess left as the testimony to a battle.

MOTORING ORGANISATIONS' LARA

LAND ACCESS & RECREATION ASSOCIATION

RECREATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE USERS
IN THE COUNTRYSIDE
ENJOY YOUR SPORT
BUT DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR
Take some advice from LARA

Riders and drivers out for a day's sport or leisure can easily fall foul of the law and damage the reputation of motorsport and recreation. Some forethought and extra care may do you and your sport a favour.



ARE YOU TRESPASSING?

There is no such thing as public land in Britain. Even an apparently derelict site on the fringe of a new town, or the remotest mountain top is owned by someone. Just because you've seen other people riding or driving there DOES NOT make it right for you to do the same. They may have permission. So should you.

Unless you have special consent you CANNOT ride or drive on a footpath or bridleway or on open moorland or forest.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Amateur Motor Cycle Association	Easton Road, Walsall, WS2 9XL Tel: (0922) 37517
Anti Cycle Union	Miller House, Corporation Street, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2DH Tel: (0788) 540519
Association of Rover Clubs	Honorary Secretary 10 Highfield Road, Bagdale, Rochdale OL11 5PZ
All Wheel Drive Club	P.O. Box 6, Fleet, Hampshire GU11 3JF
British Motor Cycle Federation	Jack Wilby House, 127 Sealboth Avenue, Maitland Park, Surrey KT3 6BJ Tel: 01-542 7214
Civil Service Motoring Association	Brilliana House, 55 Queens Road Brighton BN1 3AY Tel: 0273 21921
Motor Cycle Industries Association	Stanley House, Eaton Road, Coventry CV1 2TH Tel: 0203 27427
PAC Motor Sports Association	Motor Sports House, Riverside Park, Colnbrook, Slough SL3 0HG Tel: (0753) 681236
Trot Riders Fellowship	Honorary Secretary, 197 Billen Road, Brighton Hill, Basingstoke, Hants
National Autograph Sport Association	The Beeches, 6 Club Lane, Crossgates, Scarborough

OTHER USEFUL ADDRESSES

The Sports Council	16 Upper Watling Place, London WC2H 6DP Tel: 01 353 1277
Royal Society for Nature Conservation	22, The Green, Nottingham, Lincoln, LI12 2LR Tel: (0522) 752326

SPONSORED BY



MOTORING ORGANISATIONS'

LARA

LAND ACCESS & RECREATION ASSOCIATION



QUESTIONS OF COUNTRYSIDE MOTORSPORT



ARE YOU SPOILING THINGS FOR MOTORSPORT?

Motorsport clubs spend a great deal of time organising events for people to enjoy. Clubs negotiate access to land and often pay a hefty price for the privilege. Just because there are events in, say, a forest, it DOES NOT give you the right to go there at other times. Special consent is needed for practice on *ANY* land.

NEVER practice for competition on public paths, as you risk the future of the very sport you are training for, and the safety of other path users. Ask a club about legal training and practice facilities; places where any damage caused will be repaired and the ground given time to recover by control of use.

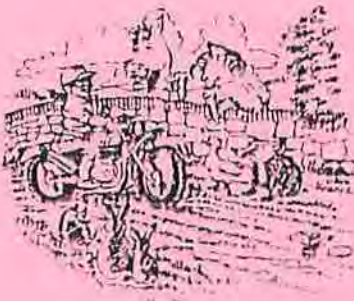
ARE YOU USER FRIENDLY?

Think of how others see us. If your vehicle is noisy, has knobby tyres and a competition number, or if you hide anonymously behind helmet and face mask whilst wearing body armour then other people can be disturbed when they meet you in remote places. A smile and a word may make a friend from a potential enemy.



ARE YOU ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY?

What may look like an overgrown tip to you may be home to rare plants, birds and animals. Important nature sites risk damage by unthinking recreational users.



WHY NOT JOIN A CLUB...?

...and enjoy your sport even more. You may not be the type to join a club. OK! Nobody is going to force you to go to meetings or do things you aren't interested in. But you may find you can learn a lot about how best to get most from your interest, and at the same time ensure that you can continue to exercise it in an increasingly environment conscious world.

DO YOU REQUIRE MORE INFORMATION?

For further information on any aspect of motorsport or motorised leisure contact the appropriate organisation listed on the reverse of this sheet. Or contact LARA at:

Motoring Organisation Land Access and Recreation Association
Miller House, Corporation Street, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2DH
Tel: (0788) 541137



Back country byways

"The sky is deep blue. Tumbleweeds roll across the dusty wagon trail. Snow-capped mountains shine on the horizon. The view is breathtaking. It's practically like a trip back in time to the Old West. And the best part is, that you can enjoy it all from the seat of your motorcycle". So begins a feature in a magazine I recently received from the United States of America.

As the B&B 1991/5 leader *Land for some of the people* implied, perceptions and cultures relating to land ownership and use differ from country to country. Not least they do between the USA and Britain. The reasons (or excuses) are many, ranging from the USA not being saddled with a history of land being given to barons and knights of favour in the Middle Ages, to land use being on average more intense here than in the States. Whatever the reasons, the result is that almost none of Britain's land is 'public' (in the sense that it is not government owned and does not have a general right of access on to it by the public).

This is not so in the USA where a much lower percentage of land is under private ownership than here in Britain. What is not privately owned in the USA is known as 'public land' and there are more than 270 million acres of it in just the 11 western states and it is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a government department.

Historic and scenic routes

An agreement recently signed between the BLM and the American Motorcyclist Association has opened up to motorcyclists a network of historic and scenic routes throughout the West known as Back Country Byways. The agreement is designed to give motorcyclists and others an opportunity to experience the natural splendour of the West's public lands. The programme calls for development of a system of rural routes that range from paved roads to dirt trails. Some of the trails follow in the tracks of wagon trains from the last century, while others provide access to scenic locations even further off the beaten path.

More than 18,000 miles of Back Country Byways through Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming have been designed. Now follows an ongoing programme of development and maintenance. An example

of how things can be done comes from a recent three day workshop staged in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Local motorcyclists involved in the West Virginia Recreational Vehicle Association joined the two industry based national groups to invite land managers - the people who run national forests - to meet with motorcyclists - people who use that land - for the purpose of sharing vital information. At the workshop a land manager from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources reported on a trail-riding programme in one of his state forests. There was some opposition to motorized recreation in the area he said, but the programme has proved itself. "I'm a resource manager" he told workshop participants. "I'm not going to put in something that creates problems. But we've found that there's little impact on wildlife on the trails and very few problems with other uses". He went on to note that confirming legal riding areas has solved enforcement problems for his agency. By giving riders a legal place, he says, the problems of illegal use in environmentally sensitive areas have dropped off.

Trails coordinator for the Wenatchee National Forest in Washington stressed that the key ingredient in any successful trail system is planning.

Under the plan American Motorcyclist Association members will be involved in projects ranging from roadside beautification and light maintenance to providing historical information about routes to travellers. The BLM will assist in the development of signs, brochures and other promotional materials concerning the importance of respecting public lands. Standards for these projects will be jointly established by the AMA and BLM assisted considerably by representatives of motorized recreation who have seats on the Advisory Councils of the BLM.

Rob Raser, AMA Vice President, announced that "This new programme represents a great opportunity for motorcyclists to help preserve one of our most important recreational resources: public lands." A key ingredient to the success of this imaginative programme is volunteers. For generations to come, voluntary help will ensure that scenic and historical routes do not disappear due to neglect and deterioration.

Listed byways?

Would that the Countryside Commission (the nearest thing we have in Britain to the BLM), and others, would cease oppression of vehicle rights in Britain's beautiful places and follow the BLM's enlightened example. *Heritage Byways*, we might describe them, should be created in this country. Starting with the 1 per cent of

public rights of way that are byways now; and maybe even by creating some new routes for vehicles on the same principle that long distance paths have been created for walkers. *Heritage Byways* could be granted some protection status akin to that given to listed buildings. After all, why should ancient routes not be protected against downgrading or diversion, or even against inappropriate improvement? And how could even the most insensitive amongst us ever do damage to an *Heritage Byway*?

What I am suggesting will not mean that Britain's beautiful places will be overrun by trail bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles. It would simply mean that the 5,000 miles of unmade road with vehicular rights (byways) which have escaped the tarmac machine would be protected for ever as examples of what roads used to be like in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Protected against being embraced into the 120,000 miles of footpath or bridleway.

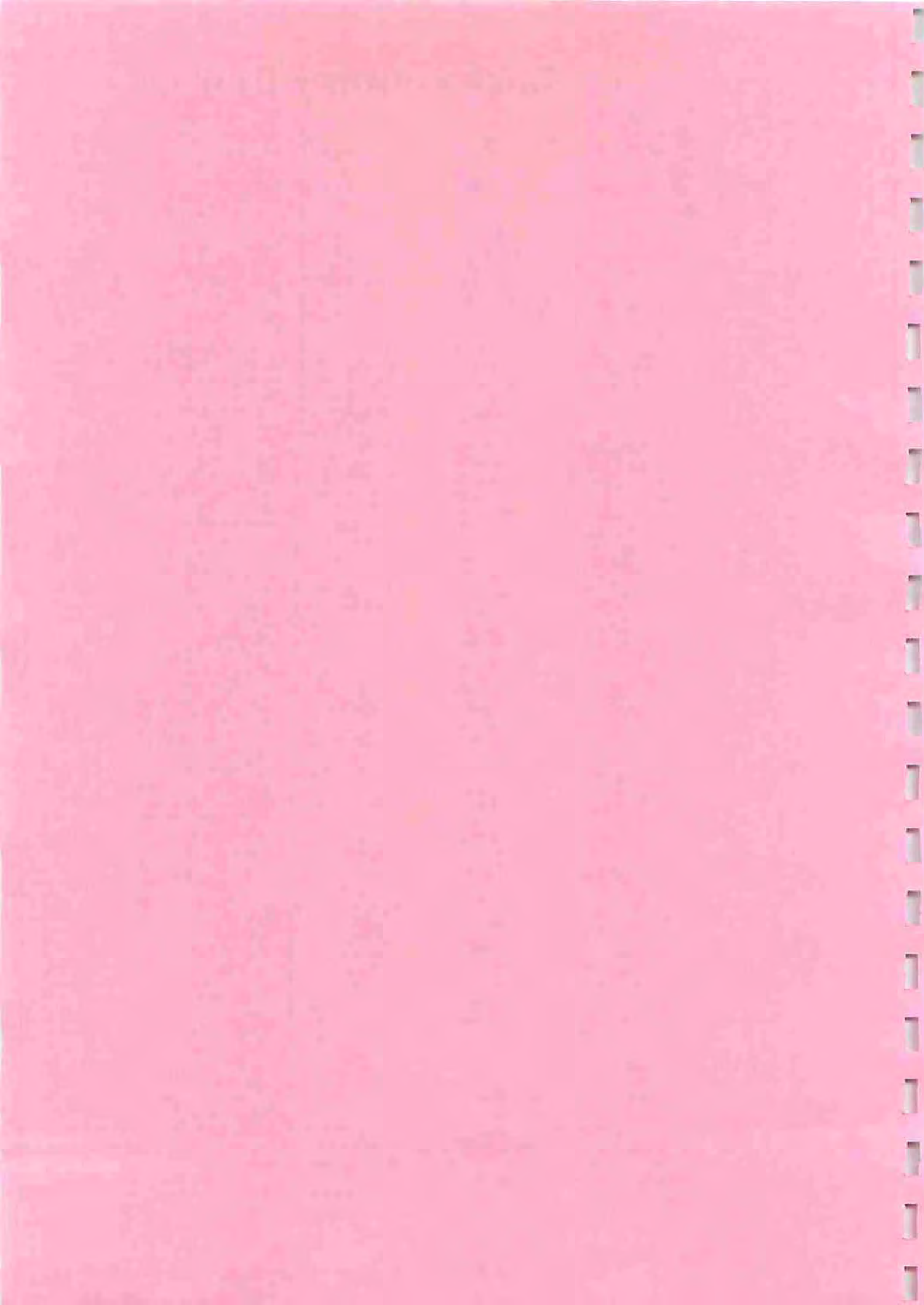
Heritage Byways would be routes which were once used by vehicles and transport which no longer exist today - pack horses, carts, carriages, stage coaches and the earliest steam driven and motor cars. Maybe even routes over which were carried aristocrats in litters, or herds of cattle driven long distance to market. Routes no longer being preserved by historical uses, yet which deserve protection as important pieces in the jigsaw that is our heritage, and which would lose unique features if allowed to degrade into something less than a byway. A place for a motoring organizations' representative at the Countryside Commission would help begin putting such plans in place.

The first National Parks were created in the United States more than half a century before the first National Park came into being in England. In 1916, by a stroke of President Woodrow Wilson's pen, the National Park Service Act brought 36 National Parks under a single federal agency. One time British Ambassador to the US, James Bryce, called the parks "the best idea America ever had". Another visionary of the park service claimed that "It is the one thing we have that has not been imported". Eventually we followed the US example. Let us do so again... but much more swiftly this time.

The BLM/AMA Back Country Byways Agreement could be used as a blueprint for ending once and for all the energy and finance sapping internecine warfare which exists here in Britain between motorized and some non-motorized recreational user groups.

Geoff Wilson,

Director for Touring and Environment
BME, Chairman of MOLARA



MOTORCYCLING IN THE PARK

Sport and recreation on wheels in England's national parks are under threat

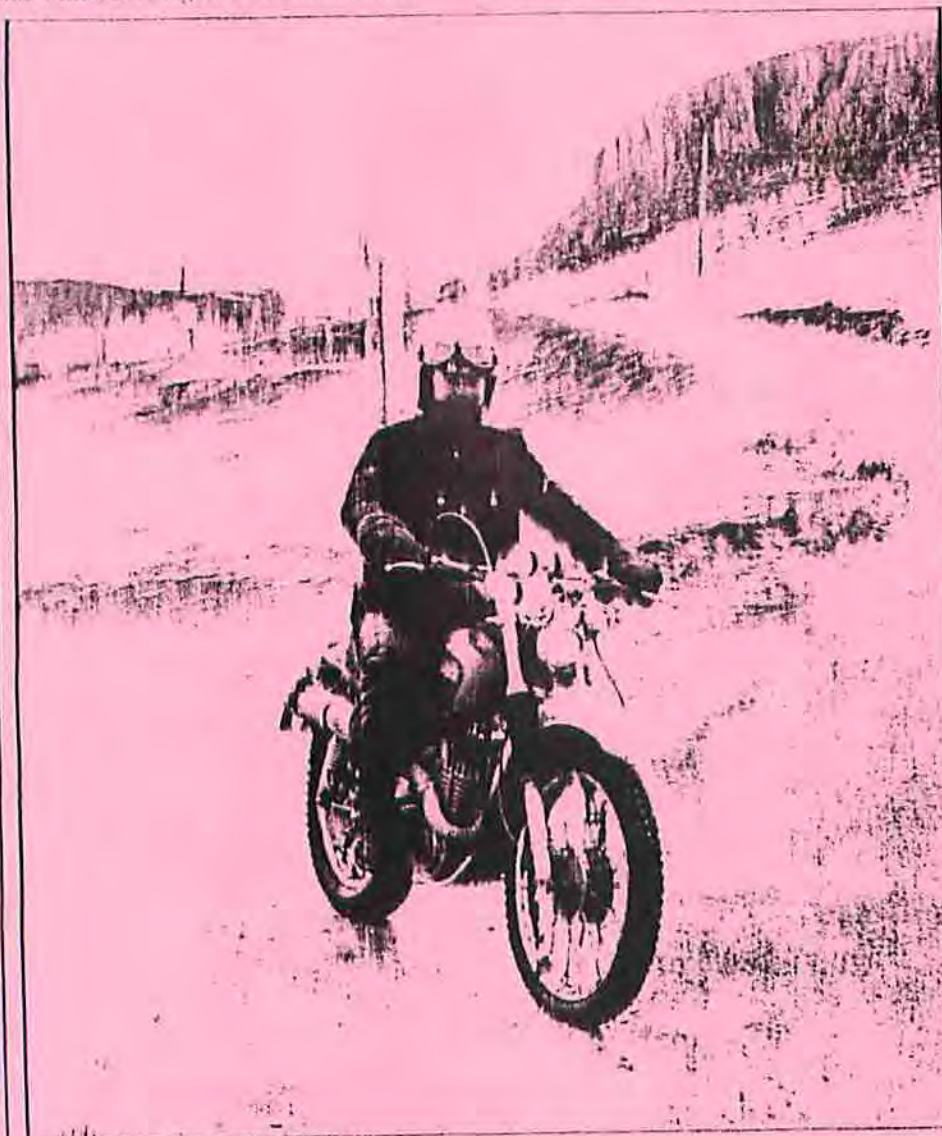
A high level panel of experts was appointed by the Countryside Commission in December 1989, under the chairmanship of Professor Ron Edwards, to advise on how conservation and public enjoyment of England's national parks should be achieved in the decades ahead. The report is the first major appraisal of national parks in England and Wales since the report of the Sandford Committee in 1974.

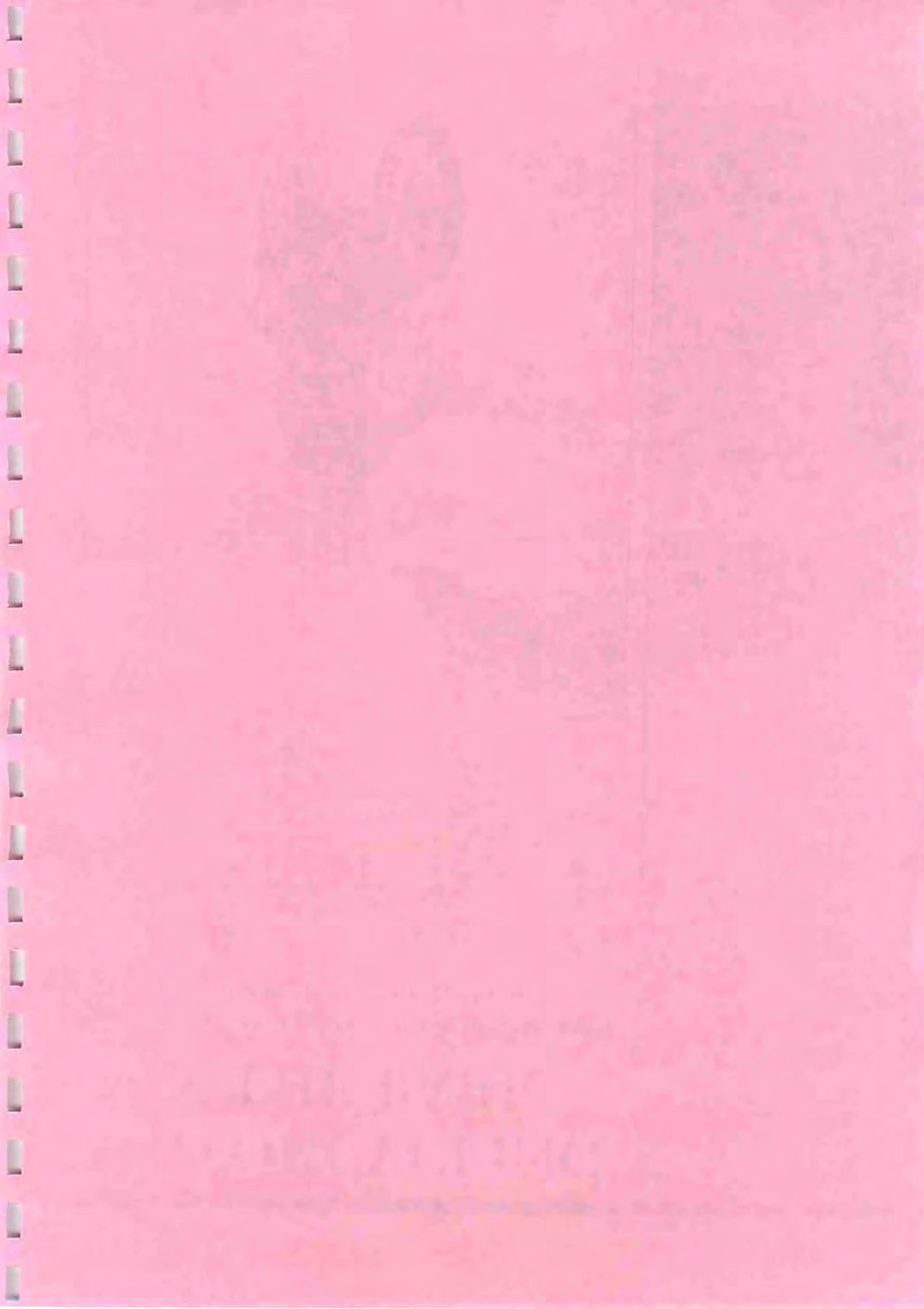
After looking at the features that make the national parks such special places, and setting out a vision for the future, the Panel investigated environmental

conservation, agriculture, forestry, rural development and housing, planning, the contribution of the voluntary sector, administration and financing of the national park authorities and, finally, what matters most to us as motorsport enthusiasts... recreation in the parks. Geoff Wilson, chairman of the Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) and director for touring and environment at the BAM, summarises the sections of the report which could have major repercussions for competitors in motorcycle sport and even for motorcycle touring.

FIRST the recommendations made in this intensive, wide ranging and elaborately presented document (all 150 pages of it) will probably form the basis of primary legislation concerning Britain's national parks. A National Park Bill, to be prepared at the earliest opportunity, according to the report, will be the first major legislative reform concerning the Countryside Act of 1949, which established the basis for our national parks.

Below, left: Ace Stan Wood and his ISDE-nephew MZ intruding on the scenery in the Yorkshire Dales National Park? Below: This is a North Pennines "area of outstanding natural beauty" (AONB) — or more precisely, the nail between Nenthead and Ashgill: not yet a national park, but equally sensitive in the matter of motorsport activity.





You may like to know that the purposes of national parks, as set out in that 1949 legislation, creating the parks, are:

"Preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the areas"; and "promoting enjoyment by the public".

There was no indication that one purpose should take priority over the other. On the contrary, it was implied that the purpose should be of equal status. However, the recommendation of the new review panel is that the first purpose should be redefined as "to protect, maintain and enhance the scenic beauty, natural systems and land forms, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area."

And the second as:

"to promote the quiet enjoyment and understanding of the area insofar as it is not in conflict with the primary purpose of

conservation".

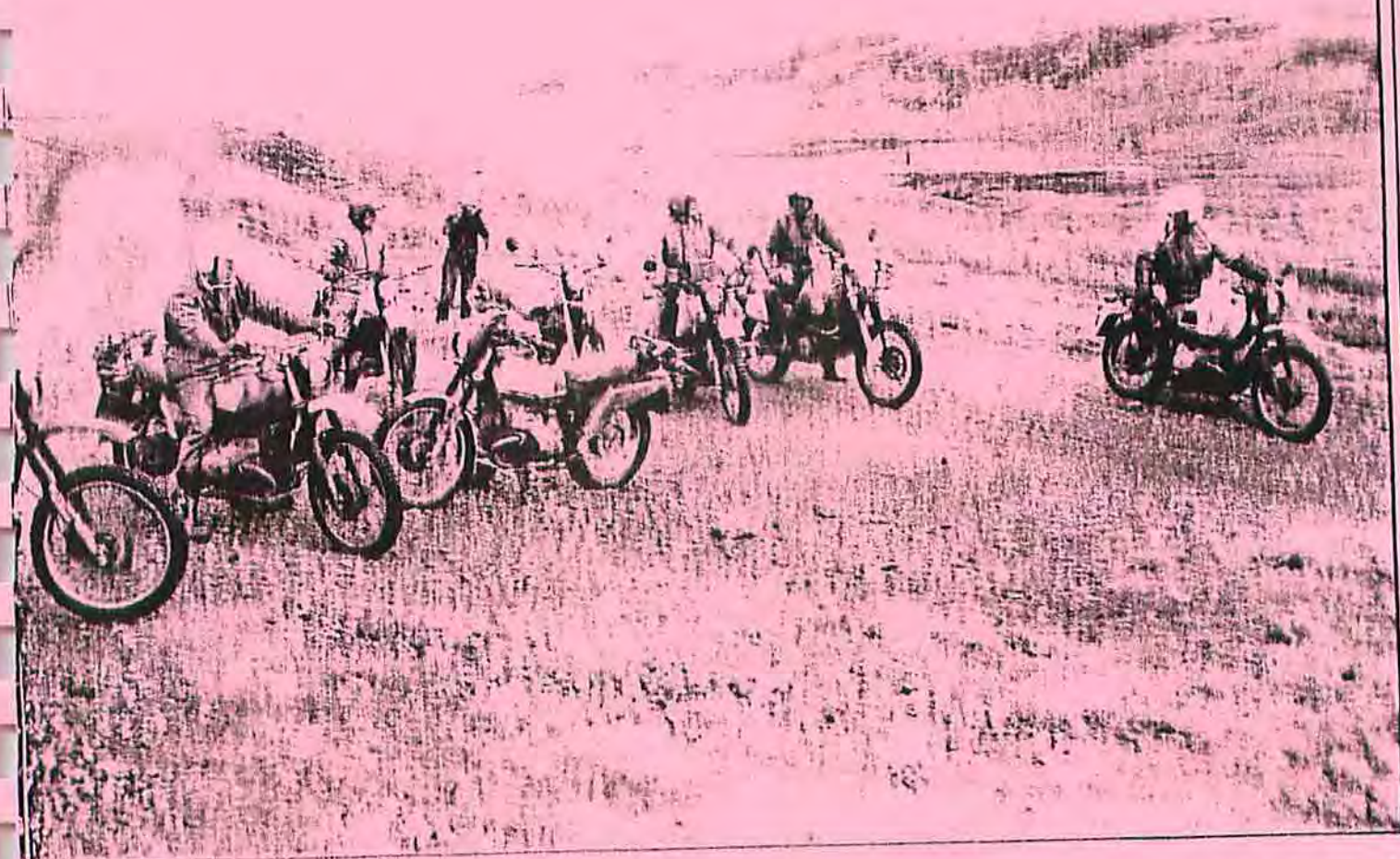
This represents a fundamental change in emphasis. Conservation takes absolute precedence over recreation, confirming the unofficial line which the Countryside Commission and park authorities have been taking in recent years. Sport and recreation cannot any longer expect to be granted a place in the national park as of right.

The report is inconsistent in the way in which it makes judgements concerning the relative intrusion and disturbance caused by visitors and recreationalists in national parks. On the one hand, estimates that four or five visitors view the parks from their cars or by taking a walk of less than three kilometres, and so cause congestion in some areas, but then asks that this congestion be put into perspective because it is limited.

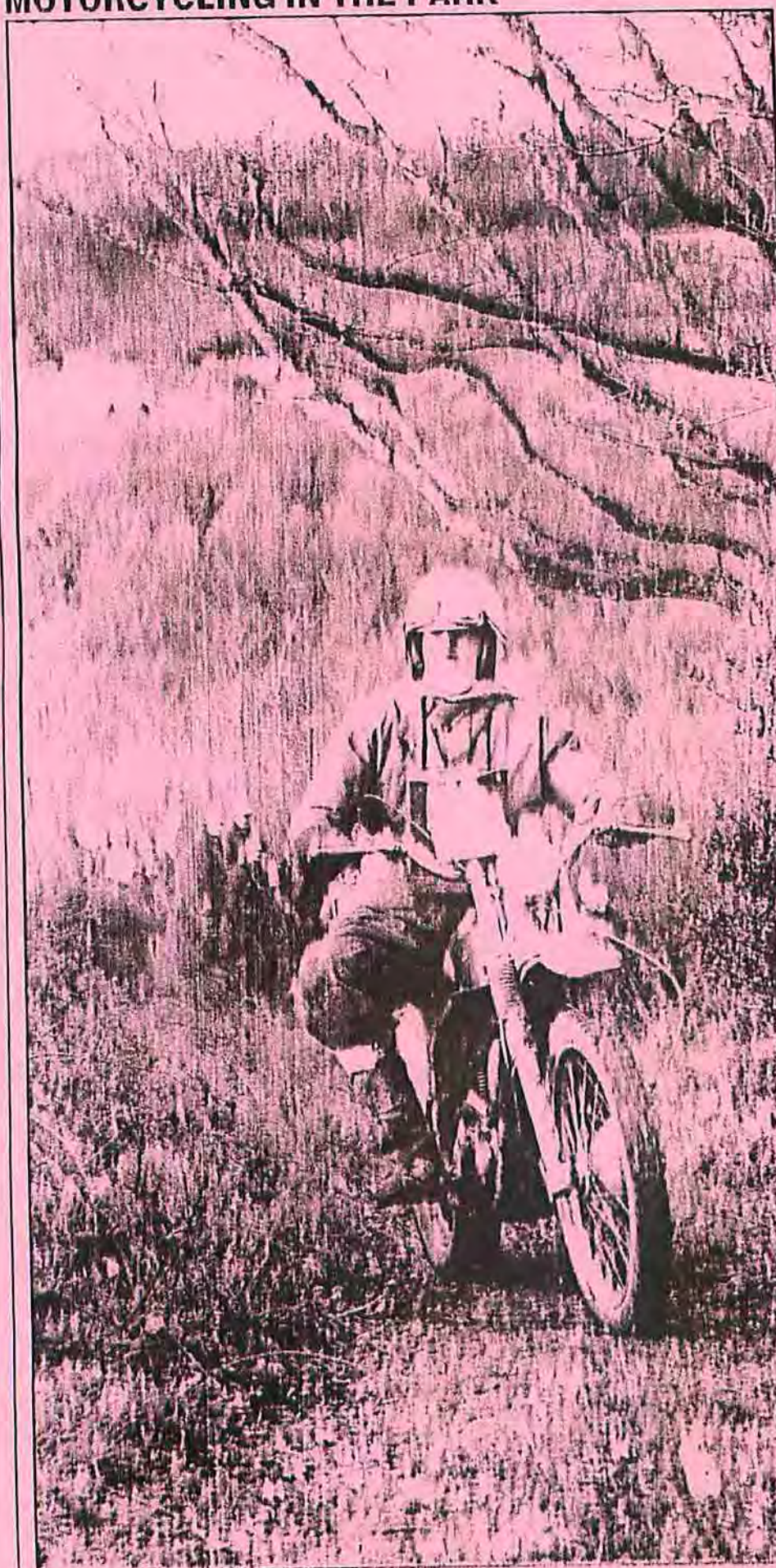
Yet on the other hand it condemns out

right the "major effect on the environment and other people's enjoyment" caused by motorised sports "of all kinds". No recognition here of the elaborate efforts of clubs and organising bodies to manage any such impact, or the stringent restrictions placed on such activity by present laws.

The report briefly mentions the problem that organisers of active sports (other than walking) have in securing sites. Despite making clear the "intrusion caused by several noisy sports, by motorcycle scrambling, by four wheel drive vehicles away from highways, by mail bikes, power boats and microlight aircraft", the final view of the panel is that while it "does not support their total prohibition in national parks, they should only take place on those rare sites where they do not cause undue annoyance to other park users or damage to the fabric of the parks themselves".



MOTORCYCLING IN THE PARK



The review panel report features a picture of two trials bike riders surveying what looks like a sand-dune, over the caption, "We see national parks as the place for quiet enjoyment — motorsports are an intrusion". Such statements are largely false today. Trials bikes are very quiet. A visit to the 1991 British round of the world trials championship in a beautiful part of Lancashire confirmed for me how quiet trials bikes are. To associate motorcycles and noise in the way that this report that has been done to reduce noise levels. However it shows also that the public perception may be that noise levels are still be too high. It is unlikely that any of the review panel will have visited a trial recently. Or a motocross or enduro event... at which their prejudices would have been confirmed! We cannot ignore that.

The panel says there may be more appropriate sites than the parks for intrusive sports, and that recreational provision should be determined on a national scale. Would that it was! It would have been helpful had the report recommended, at least, that for every facility and site lost in a national park a new site should be provided elsewhere.

While acknowledging that national parks often contain sites and resources that are extremely — perhaps uniquely — suitable for such sports as climbing, canoeing and caving, there is no recognition that the parks also have resources similarly suitable for motor sport recreation.

The review document's reference to the "noisy, ugly and damaging" nature of motor sport and recreation is offensive to the many "motor recreationalists" — there must be a better description! — who exercise their pastime without deserving any of those descriptions.

A short section of the report refers to public rights of way. In what appears to be now traditional Countryside Commission style, the opening paragraph promises to be concerned with footpaths, bridleways, Byways Open to all Traffic (BOATs) and Roads used as Public Paths (RUPPs). Then it proceeds to refer only to footpaths and bridleways!

The implication (mistaken, as usual) is that some national parks have jurisdiction over all public rights of way. This isn't true. Highway authorities (not national park authorities) retain sway over BOATs (and possibly RUPPs) — although some national parks would like to be given that authority.

The panel's view is that there should be some upgrading of footpaths to bridleways, to provide better facilities for horse riders, and that traffic regulation orders (TROs) should be applied to byways, in order to reduce intrusion from motor traffic in wilder areas. Not much imagination or fresh thinking here! No mention of better liaison or implementation of improved management methods, or of how small (and secret) is the byway network.

It is recommended that park authorities should have solved all public rights of way

Perhaps this is how motorsport should be conducted in national parks? No power slides, flying, muddy 'rooster-tails', or noise. Trialing on Dartmoor

problems by 1995. How many of the panel's other recommendations are as impractical as we know this "1995" one to be?

Under *Planning*, the panel recommends further squeezing of permitted development rights for temporary use of sites for noisy pursuits, such as clay pigeon shooting, war games and motorcycle scrambling. Wider use of article 4 directives to close down recreational sites, and reduction to seven days use of sites under permitted development rights, is proposed.

Under *Architectural Heritage*, the importance of the built landscape is acknowledged. So is the link between settlement patterns and buildings. However no mention is made of the historic importance of old roads and the need

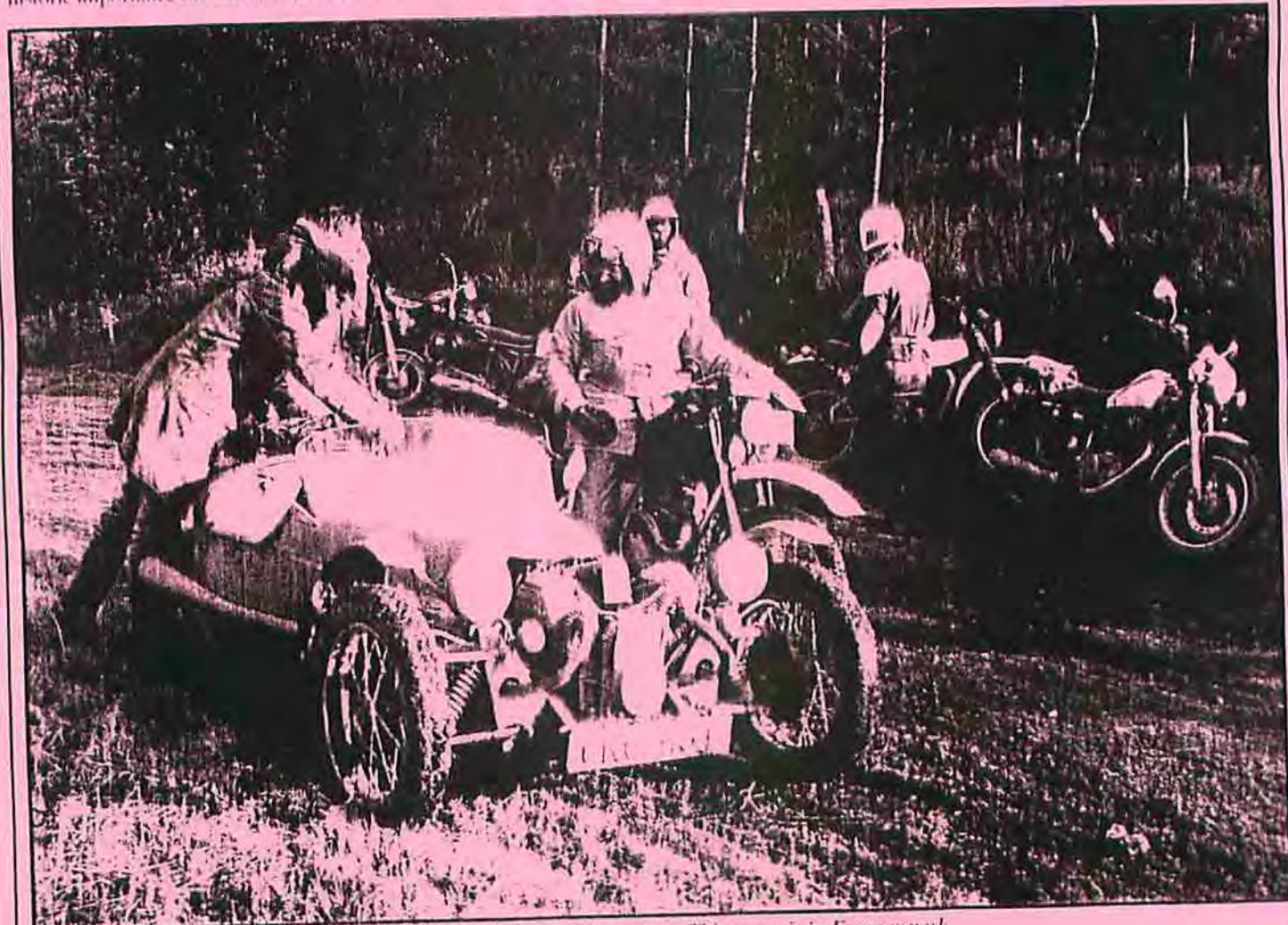
(rather than "traffic-free"), since "traffic-free" is avoided only to protect the idea of public transport. However there may be a case for motorcycles, because they are few in number and don't congest roads. Trail riders will know that closing valley roads in national parks invariably means no access to the many byways which link valley heads.

This report will be digested and acted on at the highest level. Motor recreationalists will ignore what it says about motorsport at our peril. There are forces at large which clearly see little or no place for motor based recreation in our national parks, or any other of the many beautiful places in Britain. We have to convince them that, by careful management, motor recreation and beautiful places can be

3. Misconceptions are perpetuated in this report in the way we have come to expect in reports made on behalf of the Countryside Commission. And that's extremely regrettable in such a top-level document.

4. Noise is regularly seen as the most objectionable and intrusive aspect of motorised recreation despite great reductions in noise levels in recent years. This cannot be ignored, how people perceive activities is what matters in such circumstances.

5. There is no recognition in the review document that motor recreation is one of the longest-standing activities in national parks. If the proposed National Parks Bill is drafted (as it surely will be), motor recreation will need to move to safeguard itself.



MCC classic trials have been using national parks for most of the century. This group is in Exmoor park.

for them to remain in use and be protected by motorists if they are not to be lost in the crushing embrace of footpaths and bridleways.

In the section devoted to traffic and transport, the panel addresses road and traffic issues relating to the inner park areas. The panel believes that the environmental problems created by the car are among the most serious challenges society faces. It emphasises again the need to place environment ahead of access. No new ideas emerge, but once again thoughts about traffic management initiatives... including car-free zones... are floated. I don't think that motorcycleists should take satisfaction from the term "car-free"

harmonised.

Summarizing, I'd say:

1. There is little good news in this report so far as motorcycleing or "motorised sport and recreation" are concerned. Except that there is a specific recommendation that such activities should not be prohibited from national parks. It's likely that had a corporate approach not been made to the review panel by the motoring organisations (IARA), total prohibition could have been a recommendation of the panel...
2. Where motor recreation is permitted in national parks will be severely controlled by tighter legislation.

6. The recommendation that serious thought be given to creating car-free zones in parks (closing small roads to valley heads) is a draconian measure which will seriously affect the four out of five park visitors who are content to view the parks from their cars or make a walk of less than three kilometres. There is no recognition that for some motorists their recreation is to ride through lovely scenery on those small roads.

7. The recommendation that an Association of National Parks Authorities be created to coordinate policies and so on may make our communication with parks people easier.

J.W.

THE NORTHERN MOTORSPORT PROJECT 1989 'ISSUES REPORT'

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NORTHERN REGION: LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS

Berwick-upon-Tweed

Alnwick

NORTHUMBERLAND

Tynedale

Castle
Morpeth

Wansbeck

Blyth Valley

Newcastle upon
Tyne

North Tyneside

Gateshead

South Tyneside

Chester
le Street

Sunderland

Derwentside

Wear Valley

Durham

Easington

DURHAM

Sedgefield

Hartlepool

Teesdale

Darlington

Stockton
on Tees

CLEVELAND

Langbaugh

Middlesbrough

Carlisle

Allerdale

Eden

CUMBRIA

Copeland

South Lakeland

Barrow-in-Furness

The Issues Report

This report was prepared by the Development Officer following one year in post. It has been compiled using a number of sources. Motor, motorcycle, and kart clubs in the region have been contacted and asked to return a brief questionnaire. The County and District Authorities in the region have been contacted and asked what policies they have for the promotion of motorsports provision and participation. Additionally, all the information gained in the first year of the project has been used. The purpose of the report is to raise questions which may or may not have been considered before. Many people reading this report will recognise concerns that they have been expressing for years. Additionally it is hoped that there are new questions raised which will provoke thoughtful responses. The National Park Authorities were not consulted at this stage.

The report is being prepared for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a means of documenting the level of activity and interest in motorsports within the Northern Region. Secondly it is a basis for the development of a regional strategy for motorsports. This should also provide a means of analysing funding requirements for those agencies involved.

It is not the purpose of the report to give definitive answers to the challenges facing motorsports. The questions raised will, hopefully, create a positive response and some form of consensus on the way forward. Motorsports on the whole, lag a long way behind other sporting and recreational interests in promoting themselves.

This document is intended to be a further claim to equal and reasonable consideration by all bodies and individuals who have interests in sport and recreation. The report is intended to be the first step in the compilation of a regional development plan for all motorsports. That plan can only be meaningful if it has the support of participants and governing bodies. It is intended to continue consulting clubs, governing bodies, individual participants, professionals, local authorities and any other interested agencies to hear their views on the future development of motorsports.

The Northern Motorsports Project

The Northern Motorsports Project is a formal partnership between three bodies. Norcare Ltd, the Sports Council Northern Region and the Northern Motorsports Federation. The first two partners are responsible for the funding of the project. During the financial years, 1988/89 and 1989/90 the Sports Council provided 75% of the monies and Norcare 25%. For 1990/91 Norcare and the Sports Council will share equal responsibility for the funding of the project. The principal source of the Sports Council finance is money made available to compensate for the abolition of the Tyne and Wear Authority.

The project consists of a full-time development officer who reports directly to the Project Manager of Norcare Ltd and periodically to a Management Committee comprising of Norcare Ltd's Project Manager, a Regional Officer of the Sports Council and the current Honorary Secretary of the Northern Motorsports Federation. Additionally a representative of the Durham County Probation Service attends on an irregular basis, where additional input is required.

Targets for performance are established and monitored by the Management Committee. Day to day work is the responsibility of the Development Officer and the Project Manager. In practice the Development Officer has become more independent, and the decisions taken by the Management Committee are more concerned with steering the general direction than in the early days of the project when a more 'hands-on' role was required. At the time of writing the project has eighteen months funding left and it is expected to terminate in March 1991. It may be possible to re-fund the project on a different basis from that date although it seems unlikely that this will occur.

Secretarial assistance is provided by Norcare Ltd with the Development Officer formally having one half share of a full-time secretary's time. Additional assistance has been obtained through the Newcastle Polytechnic Graduates Into Enterprise Programme although this has been of a limited duration.

The Origins of the Project

The concept of regional development officers promoting motorsports first arose in the 1986 Sports Council report *Motorsports: From Image to Reality*. (1) The Northern Region of the Sports Council has, since 1984/85 taken a pro-active role in the development of motorsports. The presence in the region of the Principal Officer of the Motoring Organisations Land Access and Rights Association also enhanced the opportunity to establish a pro-active role. Support for the principle of a project was obtained during 1987/88 and thus a search began for a partnership agency with which to work. Finally Norcare Ltd, a charity closely linked to the Northumbria and Durham Probation services offered to enter into a partnership arrangement. The workings of the agreement have been previously described.

The question of 'Why should abolition monies be used to assist development outside the Tyne and Wear area?', is one which may legitimately be asked. Motorsports are a more difficult group of activities to provide for than some other sports. The facilities required are specialised and will often not be suitable for urban areas. Secondly participants and spectators will travel long distances to events. Additionally, the governing bodies of motorsports are not organised on the basis of the Tyne & Wear boundary. Norcare's activities are also not confined to the Tyne & Wear area. It is necessary to plan and develop on a strategic basis to cater for motorsports in the future. Hence the official Tyne and Wear administrative boundary has no relevance to the needs of participants and spectators thus making it necessary to seek a wider geographical and demographic area as the basis for the project. These factors created an opportunity to co-ordinate development on a regional basis.

The Northern Region of the Sports Council provides an established boundary within which to work and has, therefore, many practical advantages over any other ad hoc area which could have been chosen.

The Motorsports Development Officer post was advertised nationally in August 1988 and the successful applicant took up his duties in October 1988.

Local Authorities

Only one of the thirty three local authorities in the region failed to respond to the question 'What policy does your authority have for the promotion of motorsports participation?'. All four of the County Councils took the view that questions of this nature were to be determined at a local level. Cumbria County Council note that restrictions on motor recreation within the National Park do exist and will remain. Likewise Northumberland County Council wish to balance the needs of active sports against environmental sensitivities. Three District Councils had positive policies on motorsports provision and seven expressed interest and support for facilities in their area whilst having no formal policies. The remaining eighteen had no policies in regard to motorsports, although as many pointed out, this did not indicate a negative attitude.

Local Authorities have a crucial role to play in the development of all sporting activities, directly through recreation departments and via the exercise of planning controls. Attitudes to motorsports vary widely amongst local authorities in the Northern Region. Some authorities are active providers, for example Langbaugh on Tees Borough Council and City of Newcastle Councils. Other authorities take a more negative stance. It is interesting to note that even some of those authorities who are providers do not necessarily have policies which formally encourage the development of motorsports. Several district authorities responded with the statements to the effect that whilst they have no specific policies they do have a positive attitude to motorsports.

The geographical and demographic composition of the region has created a noticeable divergence of attitudes. The rural authorities, particularly those that are partially within the National Parks, have a much more cautious attitude stressing the need for environmental considerations to be at the forefront of their recreational policies. These authorities tended to the view that other recreational activities were 'more at one' with the nature of their administrative areas. The primarily rural authorities who experienced less recreational pressure on land were more positive towards motor sports activity.

The most positive attitudes were taken by authorities which are primarily urban in nature. There appears to be a perception that there is a need to provide for motorsports because of social problems within a given district. The origins of this perception tend to centre upon the extent of illegal motorcycle use mainly in urban areas. This also occurs in some rural areas for example the Eston Hills and South Gate in the Borough of Langbaugh on Tees. The latter use tends to create pressure for action from the conservation lobby. The illegality is either one or all of the following: The use of stolen vehicles, riding without a licence, tax or insurance, riding without a helmet and other protective clothing, (the latter not being required by law) and most crucially riding on or near footpaths and open public spaces. Often the risks taken to reach open areas, which

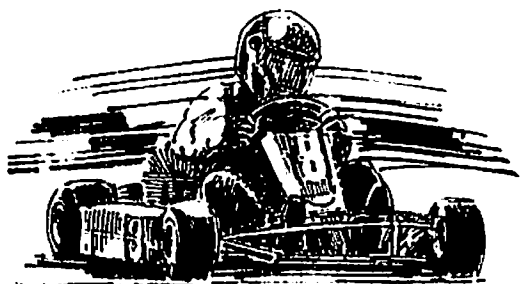
may be derelict, are greater than those which occur when the chosen piece of land is reached. There are numerous examples of accidents which injure both riders and third parties as a result of such use. Accidents reported over the last year have tended to be outside the region, hence it is not appropriate to give specific instances here. Often where these problems are perceived to be widespread, political pressure is created to create a diversionary facility. Facilities such as Walker Wheels in Newcastle and Langbaugh Motorsports have their origins in such situations. Local Authorities which have taken such steps are to be congratulated and encouraged.

However, the point has to be made that illegal or irresponsible young riders do not represent mainstream motorsports interests. Motorcycle clubs have, on the whole, felt disinclined to become involved with schemes which are intended to deal with such youngsters. There is a resentment to the basic concept of motorbike thieves obtaining legitimate access to machines as a result of their activities. It is also felt that the facilities and schemes which are founded on such a basis have no relevance or benefit to organised motorcycle sport; There is a myopia on both sides of this divide. Organised clubs need to recognise the need to foster the potential for youth development in such schemes, and the various local authority departments (and other agencies) need to be aware of the legitimate and responsible clubs who have run motorcycle sport successfully for many years in their areas. The advantages of increased co-operation are numerous, not least to the young people involved.

There is a body of expertise and knowledge within the clubs which ought to be used more successfully in the design and running of facilities. Likewise, there needs to be a wider availability of such access to motorcycles and land on which to ride them as a result of local authority schemes; availability should not only be a result of anti-social or illegal activity. The 'community' is a wide and diverse body of people, not simply those who make a nuisance of themselves. If clubs could also broaden their perceptions to encompass the idea of youth development more readily, then co-operation would become more common.

The irony of the above is felt much more by car clubs in the region. Whilst illegal use of motorcycles has created local authority interest there is hardly any involvement with the motor car as a leisure vehicle. In terms of sheer numbers motor car crime in all its manifestations is a far greater social problem than motorcycle crime. Seventeen to twenty five year old car drivers present, in total, the greatest road safety problem. Why then the lack of local authority involvement in diversionary provision? The answer lies in the fact that non-local authority agencies are the ones most likely to deal with this problem, hence very little local political pressure is created. This is a double edged sword; whilst car clubs avoid the stigma of an illegal use problem they also have very little local authority interest in their activities.

The most readily accessible branch of four wheeled motorsport is karting. This applies particularly to young people; the Schools karting Association has striven for many years to promote their sport with very little support. Likewise the three kart clubs in the region are extremely well organised and very efficient in promoting their discipline. Local authorities could assist the development of karting by actively encouraging youth participation and by investigating the feasibility of further facility provision. *There is a need for a properly developed karting facility in or close to the Tyne and Wear conurbation. Such a facility would fulfil a recreational function and, in all probability, would be self financing. Capital funding would, however, be problematic. The feasibility of a partnership between a local authority, the kart clubs and private interests should be investigated further.*



There is a widespread perception amongst officers and members that participants in motorsport in general, and motorcar sport in particular, form part of the wealthier sections of our society. In truth this is a distorted vision. Many participants make sacrifices to enjoy their chosen sport, i.e. they choose to go without some of the things which many people accept as normal e.g. holidays. Because they choose to spend their disposable income to enjoy motorsport they should not be deemed to be beyond the point at which local authority interest should be withheld. Local authorities provide facilities and equipment for equally expensive leisure interests; motorsports have a legitimate right to part of this provision.

Co-operation between local authorities and motorsports interests should be encouraged. However, there is a type of involvement which is positively damaging. Some local authorities have expressed an interest, and in some cases a commitment to motorsports provision. All well and good, but unless there is funding available to develop a facility it is surely not beneficial to advertise a proposed range of provision which cannot be met? *Where land is available for motorsports on a permanent basis and the local authority does not have the funding to properly develop a facility, commercial interests need to be encouraged. This need not preclude community involvement and may well prove more beneficial than struggling to obtain funding through other agencies.*

Much has been written on the role of the local authorities as planning agencies in respect to motorsports. (2). I do not wish to go over old ground here, suffice to say that a more positive attitude to motorsports use needs to be encouraged. Again it is the false perception that the illegal and irresponsible user is the face of motorsport that needs challenging. The usual objections to planning consent surround noise and visual intrusion. Noise limits are strictly adhered to in organised events and visual intrusion is often easily solved. With regard to the former the controls imposed by the governing bodies are becoming stricter year by year. Visual intrusion is a difficult concept to pin down. One mans 'monstrous carbunkle' is anothers aesthetic dream!

Most motorsports events run under the fourteen day rule as defined by the General Development Order 1988. By and large, these events cause no problems. Where serious problems do occur, planners can use Article IV of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 to impose restrictions on activity. At the time of writing there is only one dispute affecting a motorsports facility in the Northern Region. Given the hundreds of events which have been run, this is indeed a great testimony to the excellence of the motorsports clubs organisation and control. Local Authority members and officers should be reminded of this point.

Local authorities need to develop a more positive attitude to motorsports. The present view is problem based. The only way this perception will be altered is for officers, members and participants to communicate with one another. First hand experience will tend to mitigate the effects of present ignorance. Perhaps the level at which this can work best is between recreation officers and club officials; given that the former are paid professionals, should they not seek out their local clubs? If this does not occur then it is up to the clubs to initiate contact with officers.

To conclude on a positive note. There are now far more instances of local authority involvement and interest in motorsports issues than there were, say five years ago. It is now the time for all parties to pursue and develop this emergent growth of interest.

The Motorsport Clubs

For the purposes of obtaining a clearer picture of club activities within motorsports it was decided to contact those which are affiliated to the principal governing bodies in the region, the R.A.C. Motorsports Association and the Auto cycle Union. (3) In total one hundred and five questionnaires were sent out, and sixty three were returned. Of these forty seven were used to compile the return (see Appendix 2).

Officials of both the motorcycle and motorcar governing bodies were mailed the questionnaire both regionally and nationally. Numerous calls were received asking why this had been done: the answer is simply that as an act of courtesy to those involved in the sport, it was deemed necessary to inform them of the questionnaire despite the fact that the questions were aimed principally at clubs.

The questionnaire was divided into factual and perceptual sections. For example, membership numbers are measurable facts, whereas views on the public image of motorsports are questions of perception. Only the questions which can be translated into figures are included in the Appendix, the others are dealt with in this summation. To confuse matters, some of the perceptual questions are included in the Appendix, for example the impression of public image. Others, for example question twenty, are not included as a tabulated response. Numbers of sites and the sources of complaints did not render themselves readily transposable into statistics hence the responses are published in their basic format with an interpretation being provided in the text.

The response from both car and motorcycle clubs was roughly the same, twenty one and twenty two questionnaires respectively. The 'others' are the respective Rover Owners and Kart Clubs.

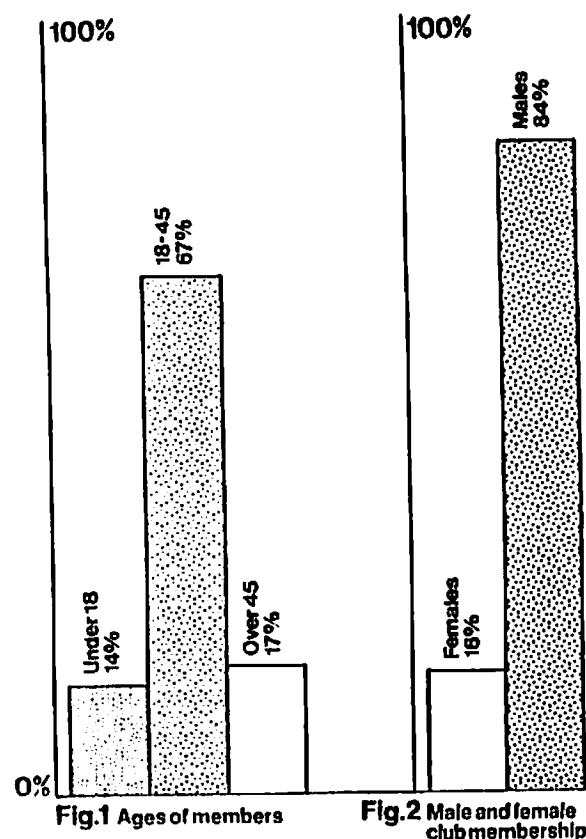
Most clubs have been established for over twenty years, with 30% being between five and twenty years old. Only two clubs reported being 'new' i.e. under five years old.

84% of all members are male with only 16% being female. Traditionally motorsports have been male preserves and it would be interesting to pursue this phenomenon in greater detail. *Does the 16% of female membership primarily participate or assist with organisation? Whilst there is clearly a cultural bias within some clubs towards the exclusion of female participants does this fully explain the lack of active involvement by women? Until recently women were excluded from some events by one of the governing bodies (the A.C.U.) and whilst this has now changed, there is still a situation in which 50% of the population are under-represented in motorsports clubs.*

It would seem that women will have an uphill battle to be accepted as legitimate participants in some disciplines and amongst some factions within the sport.

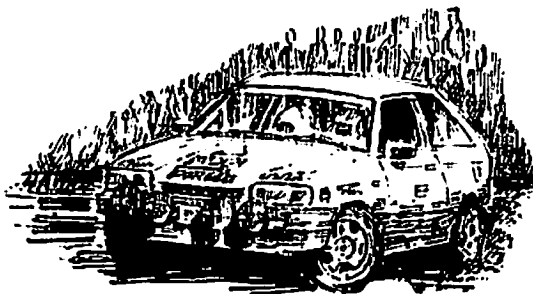
The Regional Council for Sport and Recreation has noted its commitment to promoting opportunities for women. (4). Those clubs and associations who are forward thinking ought to bear in mind that membership could be significantly increased by targeting women.

The ages of members are principally between eighteen and forty five, 67%. Only 17% are over forty five and more importantly, 14% are under eighteen. This latter figure can be explained by the fact that for many of the disciplines in which the clubs are interested, participants have to be at least seventeen. There are several school age associations which promote youth participation and these are not all represented in the survey. Despite this, there are serious issues raised when considering these figures particularly in relation to the response to question ten concerning younger participants. Most clubs responded negatively to this question, some even questioned the desirability of promoting a youth policy. The absence of any perception of importance on this issue is disturbing. As leisure and recreation opportunities expand, motorsports, rather than being outstandingly interesting to young people, becomes one out of a whole range of activities which are available. Many are equally demanding and more accessible in both location and cost. Given these factors there is the potential for a decline in youth participation.



The Northern Region is undergoing a disproportionate demographic change in the sixteen to twenty four year old age group: a 21% decline as

opposed to 16% nationally. If clubs wish to preserve their membership over the next few years, they will have to take a positive approach towards younger members and participants. Motorsports are now in an increasingly competitive environment. A fall in membership would decrease the already tenuous influence of motorsport organisations and introduce additional costs for the smaller numbers participating. It is incumbent upon the regional bodies to look closely at this issue. At the end of the day, however, if clubs do not want to promote participation amongst the young, then plans to solve the problem will not succeed. The ambivalence towards targeting young people as a membership group is probably not deep rooted and can be overcome. Again, the Northern Council for Sport and Recreation has specific targets for the promotion of



participation amongst young people. It is necessary for clubs to promote and support schemes for participation particularly in partnership with the Sports Council Northern Region, and local Recreation Departments. (5).

The above comments are aimed at the majority of clubs who responded. There was a minority who had specific plans for youth participation and these are to be applauded and encouraged. National schemes need to be able to operate effectively on the ground if they are to succeed, hence co-operation is a necessity.

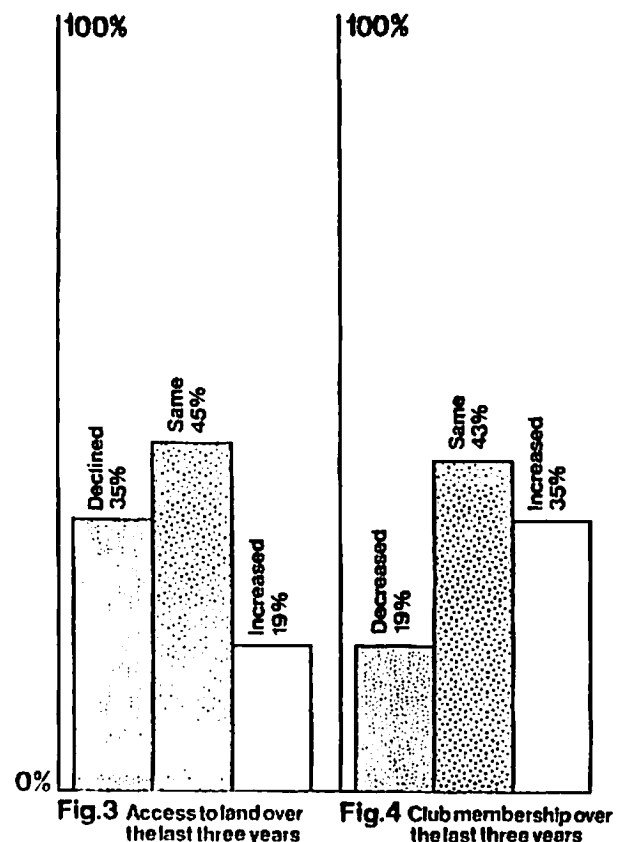
It is well known that there is a shortage of officials in motorsports clubs. Motorsports, by and large, has an excellent reputation for voluntary assistance particularly in the marshalling of events. Motorcycle clubs in particular have often acted as marshals for other non-motoring events. However, there is an acknowledged shortage of event organisers and officials. This is not a new problem but appears to be growing worse. This could be a result of more aggressive and irresponsible behaviour within the sport. To what extent this mirrors social trends is debatable but there is no doubt that there are growing problems. Sadly this is particularly the case amongst some school age sports with parents being particularly vociferous in their complaints. Governing bodies need to continue to take strong action against such people and it is incumbent upon all involved to strive for furtherance of true sporting virtues; competitiveness is to be encouraged, needless arrogance and aggression should be discouraged. Participants need to constantly be aware that without organisers and

officials events do not take place; it is not simply a matter of courtesy and sporting behaviour, it is also a question of self interest.

The bulk of club membership (56%) is, as expected, made up of active participants. In total, 29% of members are social members.

It should be noted that there were large divergences between the figures for this question and the above percentages, therefore, could be misleading.

The figures obtained for site availability conflict with most prevailing wisdom. The view most frequently heard from clubs is that sites are becoming harder to find and to keep. It can be postulated that clubs are using more sites but less frequently, to avoid potential conflict. A less charitable view would be that competition between clubs has created some less than accurate responses. The figures for numbers of sites are printed in Appendix 3. Checking the site availability question against the responses excluded from the formal results revealed a similar trend i.e. site availability had not significantly declined over the last few years. The other possible answer to this conundrum is that clubs, aware of the threats to established sites, have gone out searching for available land, and have been successful.



The increased efforts would, according to this view, have been a reaction to the loss of sites. The response to this question is perplexing as it runs almost totally contrary

to all received or verbal opinion. Professor Elson reported in 1986 that;

'It has already been demonstrated that organised motorsports depend largely upon the temporary use of private land; a source that is diminishing.'

There is a need to pursue this issue in order to obtain a clearer and more accurate picture of what is actually happening, literally, on the ground. The methodology of so doing would, however, be problematic. These questions on land access were deliberately phrased to draw out opinion, perception and factual information. A very small minority of clubs reported actual problems due to environmental pressures. The designation of one site as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was particularly resented, as it had been used for many years past. A few respondents noted that it was inevitable that motorsports would become more pressured by the green movement and as one perceptively stated, motorsports would 'have to justify their existence' in the not too distant future.

It has been pointed out by others in a number of presently unpublished works that motorsports interests need to realise the threat posed by the emergence of green politics. *The whole legitimacy of motorsports and motor recreation is being questioned.* Clubs and individual participants need to be aware of the power of the arguments being brought to bear against them. We are rapidly approaching a situation in which the work of volunteers, and the few paid officers, is simply not adequate to deal with the volume of opposition from the well financed, well staffed and well marshalled body of opinion which is actively seeking to obliterate, or severely restrict our leisure pursuits. There are important issues here which are being addressed by the governing bodies but which also need facing at local level. Perhaps the environmental issues can be best addressed by the Motorsports Federations. The Northern Motorsports Federation has recently been through a difficult period but should now be able to grapple with these issues. The Federation, if supported, could play a valuable advocacy role.

Environmental concerns were felt to be important enough to raise in the questionnaire and were covered by one all-encompassing question, number 20. In representing motorsports interests to statutory and voluntary bodies, a unified and organised response to regional issues would probably enhance the esteem in which motorsports interests are held; more importantly it would counter the ignorance which is manifest in many of the utterances of our opponents.

This cannot, and should not, alter the fact that at local level, individual clubs and their officials will have to counter what is likely to be an increasing level of opposition. Ignoring the problem will not make it disappear.

In West Germany and the United States the greater degree of sophistication and organisation of the motorsports lobby has not prevented restrictive measures being taken. The recent International Six Day Enduro in West Germany was severely restricted in its access to land; it is not co-incidental that West Germany has the most well established Green Party in the western world. We need to learn these lessons quickly, and act positively.

The clubs were, on the whole, optimistic about their public image. 42% of respondents felt that motorsports had an improving profile whilst 38% believed the situation to be stable. Only 20% felt that the image of the sport was declining. It would be interesting to explore the rationale behind this. However, a positive sense of public acceptance can be a good basis for a programme of motorsports promotion. Being defensive and reactive has in the past created problems and it is refreshing to note a feeling of confidence amongst club members.

This confidence did not entirely manifest itself with respect to relationships with local authorities. Only 11% of clubs felt that they had a poor relationship with their local authority. 44% felt that they had a reasonable relationship, only 5% have an excellent relationship with their local authority. One third, 33% of respondents had not been in contact with their local authority.

The wide geographical spread of membership and events, does mean that the local authority in whose area a club exists, does not necessarily have a great deal to offer. For example, some Tyneside clubs run the majority of their events outside the Tyne and Wear boundary. This may explain this high return for unexplored relationships with local authorities (see question 11). However, despite this caveat, the presence of a local club must be seen as addition to the range of recreational opportunities available within an administrative area. Even if facility provision cannot be an agenda item, surely it is worthwhile for clubs and local authorities to explore the range of services and opportunities provided by each?

The vast majority of respondents had a reasonable relationship with their governing body, 61%. 24% of clubs have an excellent relationship and 13% felt that their relationship was poor. A number of negative comments were received primarily concerning the cost of competition licences, in particular for motorcar sport. Even some of those clubs who reported reasonable or good relationships expressed concern over this matter.

It should finally be noted that clubs reported a rise in the number of members. This is either an objective increase i.e. more people are coming into the sport or multiplicity of membership is increasing. This could be explained by a growth in the number of closed to club events which, in effect, force members of other clubs to

join on a temporary basis. This can be an effective means of raising additional revenue i.e. good events will always attract participants. To examine the reported rise in membership, we would have to have access to more information than at present. However, at present there is cautious optimism about the reported trend of increased membership. This may well be an actual increase in participation. Further examination is required.

In this overview, no comments have been made on a few of the questions which we asked. Specifically these are the authorisation of land use, numbers of sites and the sources of complaints. In retrospect these questions did not elicit the degree of information we were looking for. Accordingly the vast disparity of either partially answered or fully unanswered questions makes it impossible to draw any conclusions from these sections.

Finally, when considering clubs and the challenges they face, it must always be remembered that they are voluntary associations. Without volunteers motorsports activities would not exist. Criticisms can be taken to heart and have often led to many dedicated volunteers leaving the sport in disgust and dismay. It is hoped the comments and observations contained here will be seen positively and not as unreasonable. There is no doubt that many of the hard working organisers and officials have encountered, or, will encounter, the problems described above. By debating these issues it may be possible to find more common ground between clubs and different disciplines; this itself will enable motorsports to present a more united and powerful voice to the outside world. Support for the Northern Federation is crucial in this regard.

Site Development

Given the vast diversity of sites used by clubs and other groups I am here concerned with sites which operate with full planning consent for both formal and recreational use.

Karting

There are three major kart circuits in the region. Felton in Northumberland, Rowrah in Cumbria and Langbaugh in Cleveland. Karting is a sport growing in popularity and has great potential to become a major participant sport. There is a demand for a kart circuit in or near to the Tyne and Wear conurbation as previously mentioned. In addition to this a private company operates an indoor kart school in Shildon, County Durham. The operator and Northumbrian Kart Club have a positive and useful relationship, referring interested parties to one another on a regular basis.

Motorcycle Sites

To my knowledge most motorcycling activity takes place on sites which do not have planning consent. In Newcastle, Walker Wheels caters for young people who wish to ride trail and trials motorcycles on an informal basis. The facility is a community project heavily supported by the City Council and Northumbria Probation Service. The facility does not have formal links with the motorcycling bodies. Mistakes were made at the design stage of the facility which had to be significantly altered. The project is associated to the National Association of Motor Projects (NAMP).

The Warden Law site in the Borough of Sunderland is being developed by a number of agencies under the auspices of Norcare. A full time Project Leader is funded by the Northumbria Probation Service and based at Norcare. The first two years of the project were not particularly productive but during the last year formal activity has commenced on the site. At present the site can cater for a limited number of organised groups, offering a variety of tracks, machinery and instruction, depending upon experience. It is hoped that a full motocross track will be available by the end of 1989. The project suffers from financial problems in both capital and revenue terms. The motocross track should be a means of generating revenue, but, nevertheless, there is a need for substantial capital investment and revenue generation if the site is to have a long term future.

Shildon Town Council and Shildon and Darlington Training Projects led the development of the Shildon Motorpark. This is primarily a motocross facility which is now run under the auspices of the South Durham Sport and Leisure Trust. An agreement has been reached with an entrepreneur to develop the site in return for a commitment to community provision. The agreement will hopefully be, beneficial to both the developer and the trust giving the former a money making opportunity and a cost efficient form of development to the latter.



There are a number of speedway sites in the region, Berwick, Newcastle (Brough Park) and Middlesbrough have such facilities. Berwick have been particularly successful during the last season. Several local authorities have expressed an intention of providing motorcycling facilities. Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council have an intention of providing an off-road site by 1991. Borough of Barrow have provided an unsupervised trail park for the last few years which has now been lost to industrial development. Barrow have earmarked a site for the same purpose which should be operational in 1990.

In addition to these there are, at present, two motocross sites which are seeking full planning consent.

The only facility for road racing is Langbaugh Motorsports, which has held a number of such meetings in the last year. The loss of Ministry of Defence land has had an impact upon this discipline. Albermarle being a prime example.

Motorcar Facilities

Motorcar sports fare the worst in terms of formal provision. Whilst many of the disciplines run on surfaces which don't demand specialist provision i.e. rallies can run on forestry roads, large car parks can cater for autotests, there is a need for more provision. At present Langbaugh Motorsports is the only facility which is specifically catering for motorcar sport on a formal basis. The loss of Ministry of Defence land has also had a negative impact on these disciplines.

Stock car racing in the region has suffered a major blow with the demise of the Newton Aycliffe Stadium. It is to be hoped that an alternative site can soon be found.

Multi-purpose Facilities

The only facility which exists for a wide range of disciplines is Langbaugh Motorsports. Developed by Langbaugh Borough Council, and the Teesside Development Corporation with support from the Sports Council, this facility is currently undergoing a debate on its future. At present it has not been decided which direction the facility will take. Despite concerns from some sources, it is undoubtedly a financially sound concept if it is developed on its original basis. There is an enormous demand in the region for such a facility and it will be a major blow if any change of direction prevents its development into a regional centre for all motorsports.

Other Agencies and Developments

As has already been noted, many other agencies such as the Probation Service, Social Services, Education Departments and Voluntary Groups, are involved with motorsports. All of these agencies have similar aims, primarily being attempts to take young people who are interested in vehicles and develop in them more responsible attitudes. The massive auto-crime problem we face has some relevance to organised motorsports. The agencies concerned with these young people have heavily funded a number of initiatives which will assist organised motorsport. The development of a motocross track at Warden Law, for example, would not take place if the Project Leader was not salaried by the Northumbria Probation Service. Many youth groups in the region have entered youngsters for events as a result of what started as diversionary facilities.

There is, however, a quite understandable antipathy towards such groups on the part of many in the sport. At its basic level if a person has their motorcycle or car stolen, it will make them very angry indeed if a court uses a disposal which gives the offender free access to a vehicle. It may well be that this is the best method of preventing re-offending, but if this is not explained then the anger will not abate.

All too often, despite the excellence of such initiatives, there is little concern with explaining fully the rationale behind them. This is often the cause of much misunderstanding. The agencies described above should attempt to involve the organised sport in their activities and fully explain why such projects are felt to be in both the offender's and society's general interest.

Surely, if better relationships can be fostered, it will be in the interests of the young people themselves and of the helping agencies. Joining a club and accepting the discipline provided by organised events will both assist socialisation and self reliance. Without links to the organised motorsports clubs any effect from such projects on individuals will surely be temporary.

Those involved in such projects should attempt to forge links with clubs, both to explain the nature of their schemes, and also to benefit from the years of experience which exists within motorsports.

Conclusion

It should be pointed out that this report was not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the state of motorsports in the northern region. It is intended to be a first step in the development of a regional strategy for all motorsport disciplines. To reiterate, the main issues raised in the document are as follows:

Co-operation between local authorities, other providers and motorsports clubs needs further development. Additionally, commercial funding should be seen more positively as a means of developing facilities.

Generally, local authorities should take a more positive attitude to motorsports provision and participation, improved communication between clubs and local authorities being the first step.

Few motorsports clubs have membership programmes, in particular young people and women are not encouraged to join clubs and participate. The fall in number of young people in the total population make it necessary for clubs to tackle this problem. Schemes to promote participation at club level should be developed and supported. This is a prerequisite for the success of any nationally led governing body initiatives.

Issues which require further exploration include that of female participation. Women make up only 16% of motorsport club membership. Do most women organise or participate? Land access is a perplexing problem. Are the findings of the questionnaire accurate? If land access is not the problem it was perceived to be, what factors have been involved in alleviating the situation? How can a more detailed survey of site availability be undertaken? Also, if club membership has increased as reported, how has this been achieved?

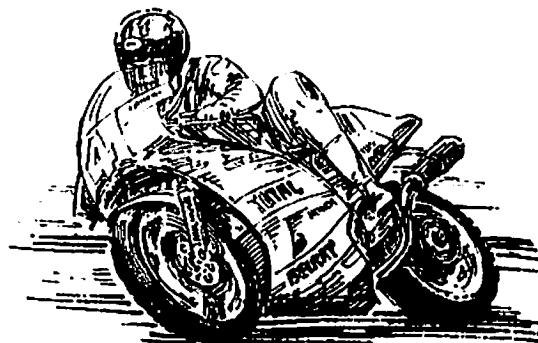
A detailed exposition of each discipline's needs and problems has been specifically avoided in this report, however the following points emerge. Karting is a growth sport with potential for further expansion. Facility development near to the Tyne & Wear conurbation would assist this process.

Motorcycle sport is, on the whole, better provided for than motorcar sport although both suffer from lack of permanent facilities. The Langhaugh on Tees complex, when completed, will be able to cater for some but not all of the disciplines which are at present suffering from poor provision. The 'other agencies' which are involved in motorsports activity should seek to co operate more fully with those already participating in motorsport.

The legitimacy of motorsport and motor recreation is being undermined. The local and regional motorsports clubs and organisations need to recognise and respond to this problem. The role of the Northern Motorsports Federation is particularly important in this regard.

The need for better communication and awareness between all parties has been highlighted in this report. The Northern Motorsports Federation should play a crucial role in this process.

To conclude, how can the Federation become a more effective advocate for motorsports in the Northern Region?



NOTES:

- (1) Elson, Buller, Stanley, (1986) *Motorsports from Image to Reality*
- (2) Blezard P. (1984) *Planning and Motorcycle and Use* Unpublished MSc thesis, Aston University: available from the Author.
Solon S. (1989) *Controls on the Use of Land for Off-Road Motorcycling*, Unpublished B.Sc thesis, Coventry Polytechnic: Available from the Author.
- (3) Primarily the ACU and RACMSA affiliated clubs.
- (4) The Northern Council for Sport and Recreation (1989), *A Strategy for Sport and Recreation in the Northern Region Prospects for the 1990's*. Available from the Sports Council Northern Region.
- (5) Op Cit.

THE NORTHERN MOTORSPORT PROJECT 'THE WAY AHEAD' 1991

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1: Preface: The Project Partners

1.1 The Sports Council, Northern Region

The establishment of the Northern Motorsports Project in the autumn of 1988 provided the opportunity to focus attention on the issues facing community motorsport. The Sports Council's objectives in supporting the project are:

- i. to explore the potential for grass roots motorsport,
- ii. to focus attention on the issues facing community motorsport, with a view to establishing policies for the way forward,
- iii. to address the problems presented by unaffiliated riders/drivers (the so called 'coveboys')

At the time of establishing the Project the concern of the Sports Council at the lack of a co-ordinated approach to the development of motorsport and the problems of access and image which it faced had already led to the establishment of a Federation of user groups (Northern Motorsports Federation) and a Forum (Local Authority Forum) within which Planning Officers and Recreation Officers of local authorities could discuss the issues and consider ways in which provision might be made. The impetus generated by these initiatives then combined with the groundswell of interest resulting from the publication of research commissioned by the Sports Council ("Providing for Motorsports From Image to Reality" Elson and others 1986). This, together with the opportunities to undertake sports development focussed on Tyne and Wear as part of funding made available to compensate for the abolition of the Metropolitan County Council, led to the establishment of the Project.

It is difficult to arrive at objective conclusions about the success of the Project so far --- there can be no doubt that much has changed since 1988. Many lessons have been learned which will undoubtedly contribute to the achievement of our objectives to increase "responsible" participation, improve performance and the provision of facilities. One of the successes has been the co-operation which has been achieved between the partners involved in the Project and the undoubted commitment of the Project Officer himself Andrew Thomas.

I leave readers of this report to judge for themselves whether the Project identifies The Way Ahead for Motorsports in the Northern Region.

Geoffrey Hughes
Regional Officer

1.2 Norcare

The 1988 Home Office Working Group on Car Crime identified the scale and impact of car crime within the community. Since then car crime, or auto offending as it has come to be known, has risen. The increase has been in the number of offences, impact upon the community and effect in terms of people killed or injured as a result of what are mainly young inexperienced individuals stealing motor vehicles.

Norcare became a partner in the Northern Motorsports Project for two reasons. Firstly, the Home Office Working Group recommended that courts should be offered packages of work which would actively engage young people in changing their auto offending behaviour. Secondly, the Working Group identified the need for motor projects to act as a diversion from auto offending. A significant part of the Project's work has been to stimulate and foster co-operation between groups and agencies involved in motorsports, community provision and work with auto offenders.

Community motor sports projects and the diversionary work which take place within such facilities are a significant component in the response to auto crime. They also have the added benefit of bringing those who may otherwise not participate, in contact with a variety of motor sports. Community motor sports projects and auto offending programmes which operate within them are generally under-funded. Changing an individual's or group's anti-social behaviour is neither simple nor cheap. If we wish to respond positively to the problem of auto crime we must ensure that the funding of programmes of work which have proved themselves to be effective is secured and sustained. Areas where a positive response has been made are identified in this report and as such they represent signposts for the future direction of a community based response to auto crime.

Tony Regan
*Chief Executive
Norcare*

1.3 The Northern Motorsports Federation

The Northern Motorsports Federation was formed in December 1987 following an initiative by the Sports Council (Northern Region) to bring together in a forum for discussion the various motorsport organisations in the region. The Northern Motorsports Federation was the second to be formed in Britain and the first to welcome membership from all major organisations in land-based motorsport and recreation.

The operation of the Federation in its first two years was greatly facilitated by the presence of the Northern Motorsport Project and the regular input of the Project Officer, Andrew Thomas. The issues put before the Federation for discussion and resolution showed the motor clubs that they face new and, occasionally, alarming challenges as motorsport prepares to enter its second century.

The pattern of motorsport activity in the region reflects most of the problems that the sport sees nationally: a decline in the number of young people, changes to the nature of life in the countryside such as an increase in residential barn conversions, a severe increase in the fees charged for the use of forests and MoD land, tight planning and noise controls, a slow but relentless shift in policy tending to exclude "noisy sports" from National Parks and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Motorsport must plan to meet those changes and this planning must occur at all levels — not just in some distant headquarters.

The various motorsport federations are an ideal forum for a two-way exchange of ideas, problems and information, both between clubs and their governing bodies and between clubs of different disciplines. The needs, problems and aspirations of, say, a big club organising major car rallies and a small motorcycle trail riding organisation are necessarily different, but they can both really benefit by this regular contact.

The Northern Motorsport Project has been of great assistance to the Federation in collecting, collating and exchanging much valuable information. It is hoped that motorsports' governing bodies have realised this and will take steps to maintain and properly service the Federation.

Some motor clubs seemed unable or unwilling to work closely with the Northern Motorsport Project. These were thus unable to profit in any direct way, although they did benefit from the Project's work for all motorsport organisations. Other motor clubs have said that they feel the Project "appeared without warning" and they express surprise that no regional ACU or RAC MSA official was on the management team. The clubs also state that they were unwilling to become involved in "Wheels Park" projects as they regard these as presenting a bad image for motorsport and not giving the clubs any real advantage in planned facilities.

One of the problems of motorsport is that it is different to most other sports in that part of its very nature is the variation in the use of venues. This means that these are only used a few times per year, unlike other sports venues. This does cause problems when seeking help from the Sports Council in that they are more used to dealing with sports which have permanent venues. More liaison with the Sports Council is vital so that they understand more about motorsport and our needs.

The formation of the Northern Motorsport Federation has been an important step in bringing the various forms of motorised sport together. However some disciplines attend very irregularly and we need to make sure that we are more than a 'talking shop'.

Motorsport in the region needs promotion and new secure venues if it is to progress or, in some areas, even survive. The Northern Motorsports Project was valuable in that we found out how we felt a motorsport development officer should work and I am sure that lessons have been learnt for any such future role in this or other regions.

A. D. Kind
Honorary Secretary
Northern Motorsport Federation

1.4 The Durham County Probation Service

Although the Probation Service are not partners I was invited to be a co-opted member of the Management Committee of the project because of my previous involvement in motoring projects for offenders. It was felt this input was to be very useful as the unlawful use of vehicles by young people was of growing concern.

Whilst auto theft has long been a problem, in the recent past it has taken on more significance. In 1990 6960 vehicles were taken in County Durham alone a rise of 70% since 1988. The media are frequently reporting the stealing of vehicles and stealing from vehicles. A more recent phenomenon is the use of vehicles for ram raids in the course of burglary. Whilst this issue is unlikely to be present in a project of this nature, it raises the public awareness and concerns about auto offending generally.

Going back to the question of taking vehicles without consent and unlawful driving both on and off the road, there have been several attempts over the years to address this problem through motor projects. There appears to be a lack of any real substantial evidence as to the long term effectiveness of such projects. These schemes have come and gone in various parts of the country, often because they have been developed as a result of the needs of a particular project without adequate facilities.

What may be required is the development of sites that a number of Projects can link into. This could provide discreet facilities to help reduce offending, e.g. assist in general education as well as particularly addressing the question of auto offending. It would involve projects using these facilities on a regional basis, calling for inter-service co-operation along the lines recently proposed by the Home Office for the Probation Service. This would provide an opportunity for a scheme to be properly monitored and reviewed over a longer period of time (say three years) so that a decision can be made regarding the viability of such projects. It would be hoped that funding from a central source could be made available to evaluate this development in this area of growing concern.

M. A. Cope
Senior Probation Officer
Durham County Probation Service

2: The Way Ahead: Introduction

This report has been compiled after two and a half years of the Project. It follows the Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report" and the research which was connected with that document. The consultation exercise for "The Way Ahead" was broad ranging (see Appendix A).

It was originally intended that the document would represent the final statement about the Project, the problems and opportunities it presented and to set out the way forward for motorsports in the Northern Region. Whilst this is still the intention the Project will now continue to run, on a part-time basis, until the end of March 1992.

It was stated in the Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report" that the report is intended to be the first step in the compilation of a regional development plan for all motorsport. (1) It is expected that this report, "The Way Ahead", is part of that on-going process.

The Report has been compiled to document the information obtained both formally and informally at this stage of the Project. Many valuable lessons have been learned, and these are documented in the main text. The perspective of the partners is stated in their respective statements.

The Report should not be seen as a definitive statement of the position of motorsport in the Northern region. It is an attempt to document the major themes which have emerged over the time of the project to date from a variety of perspectives. It is hoped that the Report will provide a framework for reflection and activity to secure a positive and dynamic future for motorsport within the Northern region, and identify a clear way ahead for the statutory voluntary and commercial interests involved.



3: The Northern Motorsports Project

The Northern Motorsports Project is a formal partnership between three bodies. Norcare, the Sports Council Northern Region and the Northern Motorsports Federation. The first two partners are responsible for the funding of the project. During the financial years; 1988/89, 1989/90, the Sports Council provided 75% of the budget and Norcare 25%. During 1990/91 Norcare and the Sports Council shared equal responsibility for funding the project. The principal source of the Sports Council finance is money made available to compensate for the abolition of the Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council.

The Project is distinct from the Sports Council National Demonstration Project at Langbaugh Motorsports. The Community Liaison Officer of that Project has worked closely with the Motorsports Development Officer on several initiatives.

The staffing of the project until March 31st 1991 consisted of a full-time Motorsports Development Officer and a third share of a full-time secretary. Management control is exercised by a Management Committee comprising of a Regional Officer of the Sports Council, Norcare's Chief Executive, the Honorary Secretary of the Northern Motorsports Federation and a representative of the Durham County Probation Service, who was co-opted onto the Committee in 1989.

In March 1991 a six month extension of the Project was agreed between the partners. The Sports Council (Northern Region) will fund 75% of the costs and Norcare 25%. The post of Project Officer is now running on a part-time basis until the end of March 1992.

The project has operated in parallel with the Langbaugh Motorsports Project since October 1988. Langbaugh Motorsports is supported by the Sports Council who provided funding for a Community Liaison Officer and designated the scheme a National Demonstration Project. Whilst the Northern Motorsports Project covered the Cleveland area, for purposes of community development it was agreed that the Langbaugh Community Liaison Officer treat the county as "home ground". Communication between the two projects was ensured by the presence of the Motorsports Development Officer on the steering group of the National Demonstration Project, and by on-going informal co-operation between the two officers. The Community Liaison Officer left his post in December 1990 and it is expected that a replacement is to be appointed in 1991.

4: The Local Authorities

Introduction

From the research undertaken and an extensive consultation exercise with all Local Authorities in the region it appears that the position of most local authorities in the region in respect of motorsports has not significantly altered since "The Northern Motorsports Project, 1989 Issues Report"

"Only one of the thirty three local authorities in the region failed to respond to the question 'What policy does your authority have for the promotion of motorsports participation?' All four of the County Councils took the view that questions of this nature were to be determined at a local level. Cumbria County Council note that restrictions on motor recreation within the National Park do exist and will remain. Likewise, Northumberland County Council wish to balance the needs of active sports against Environmental sensitivities. Three District Councils had positive policies on motorsports provision and seven expressed interest and support for facilities in their area whilst having no formal policies. The remaining eighteen had no policies in regard to motorsports, although as many pointed out, this did not indicate a negative attitude." (1)

What has become clearer is the financial climate in which local government operates. Increasingly severe budgetary constraints have served to emasculate an emergent interest in motorsports provision and participation. It should be noted that this interest has been focused on recreational provision rather than conventional motorsports. The impact of the pressures created by the Local Government Act (1988) should have little effect on motorsports, there being only one site currently run by a District Council (Langbaugh Motorsports).

Providing Opportunities

Whilst the interest of Local Authorities in being service providers has diminished, there are ways in which some departments are involved in motorsports participation. Workers in recreation, social service and education departments are regular users of the facilities which exist in the region. The high levels of use achieved by such departments are often founded on considerable subsidies. This can often be from the service provider, or from outside agencies, for example the Northern Motorsports Project, which has heavily

subsidised a number of participant groups. It is noticeable that when attempts are made to raise prices to more realistic levels other leisure activities are chosen ahead of motorsports. From the perspective of the workers concerned they have to provide opportunities for their clients within progressively tighter budgets. This creates a dilemma for service providers caught between maximising throughput to achieve viability, or aiming specifically at their target groups who cannot afford to pay a realistic fee, which in practice means their costs cannot be met. If local authority departments wish to see wheels park facilities continue then they have a stark choice -- either subsidise users or offer on-going core financial support to service providers. Private sponsorship could also be considered an option, but whilst valuable, this is unlikely to yield the constant benefits required to ensure the existence of wheels park facilities.

Planning Constraints

Local authorities also exercise a significant power in respect of motorsports provision in their role as planning authorities. Traditionally, motorsports have been perceived as a minority interest and of little concern except when specific problems emerge. In "The Northern Motorsports Project: 1989 Issues Report" (1) it was found that only 5% of clubs had an excellent relationship, 11% had a poor relationship with 33% having no contact with their local authority. There is little evidence to suggest that this position has changed significantly, from either the local authority or club perspective.

In 1987 the Sports Council Northern Region formed the Local Authority Motorsports Forum. The Forum was intended to be a mechanism for discussion of motorsports issues affecting local authorities. An attendance level of approximately 40% representation was attained until November 1989 when the last meeting of the Forum was held. It was felt that there was insufficient interest on the part of local authorities in the region to merit the continuance of the meetings.

Motor Sport In The Countryside

What cannot be doubted is the increasing concern of planners in respect of motorised sports in the countryside. Verbal comments have been received from a number of planning departments throughout last year. In essence members are taking an increasing interest in controlling sports which they perceive as "noisy", motorsports being one such activity. This aspect is dealt with under chapter 6: Land Access. From the local authority perspective noise emissions from motorsports activity must be reduced. Planners are taking a much more cautious and restrictive attitude to prospective applications and towards existing facilities.

However, there are signs of an increasingly positive attitude towards the private sector. This may be as a result of the type of activities provided by such businesses, i.e. they are perceived as less noisy and intrusive than event orientated sites. Indoor motorsport is generally acceptable in this regard. The economic benefits of such operations may also be more clearly understood. This was recommended in the Issues Report:

"Where land is available for motorsports on a permanent basis and the local authority does not have the funding to properly develop a facility, commercial interests need to be encouraged. This need not preclude community involvement and may well prove more beneficial than struggling to obtain funding through other agencies." (1)

Direct local authority involvement in motorsports grew during the 1980s. Since 1990 the pressures of legislative and financial change have tended to increase the authorities' concentration on what are perceived as core activities. It seems unlikely that these pressures will ease in the foreseeable future. As a consequence it is unlikely that significant changes to the status quo will take place, except as mentioned above, in planning matters.

Conclusions

Local authorities operate in a political climate which is increasingly "environmentally aware". Those seeking balanced provision for motorsports are aware of the pressures this situation creates. Despite these pressures local authorities could take a far more positive attitude to the use of land for authorised motorsport. During the 1980s a great deal of derelict land has been reclaimed particularly around major conurbations. However, there are still

many areas which could be utilised for motorsports on either a formal or irregular basis, provided that local authorities take a more favourable attitude to such use. Urban fringe areas are particularly relevant in this context.

The so-called NIMBY (not in my backyard) syndrome is reflected in the attitude of many rural authorities to motor sport and recreation. It can be argued that motorsport has its traditional "home" in the countryside. Pressures from more recently conceived active leisure pursuits is tending to focus attention on land use in the countryside. However, local authorities appear to be unable to deal constructively with these demands. Where land management arrangements can be arrived at which are both flexible and sustainable they should be viewed far more positively than at present. Blanket policies which are unfavourable to all active leisure unless it is silent do not progress the issue.

The Department of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Countryside Commission and the Sports Council could play a key role here. These organisations could offer incentives and on-going assessments of land management schemes which would enable motorsports to take place on a regular basis. Such support and encouragement could go a long way to identifying good practice for local authorities throughout the country.

The future for local authorities as direct providers looks bleak. Increasingly stringent financial and managerial constraints seem likely to prevent the expansion of so called "community facilities". Given that demand for provision remains high the vital role that can be played by the private sector should be recognised: such developments do not preclude "community access" as has been proved at Langbaugh Motorsports.

Motorsport is popular and will remain so. New forms of motorised sports and recreation are being created and all require provision. Local authorities need to accept this fact and develop policies accordingly. Ignoring the pressures will not make them disappear either amongst the public or across administrative boundaries.

5: The Governing Bodies

Introduction

There are two nationally recognised governing bodies in motorsport in England and Wales. The PAC Motorsports Association (RACSMA) controls motorcar sport and the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) motorcycle sport. However, there are a number of organisations representing either particular user groups or commercial interests who also play a role in motorsport, within and without the overall RACSMA/ACU umbrella.

The governing bodies exist to control all organisational aspects of their respective sports. The fundamental responsibility of both organisations is the advancement of their members' interests. Both are constituted nationally with regional structures and the RACSMA has certain statutory duties in respect of events held on public highways.

LARA

The Motoring Organisations Land Access and Recreation Association (known as LARA) is an umbrella body which exists to promote communication between its nine members and to pursue those areas of common interest and concern which exist between the organisations. Unlike the governing bodies it does not have a major resource base and employs one officer on a consultancy basis.

ANECC

PAC car clubs in the region belong to the Association of North East and Cumbria Car Clubs (ANECC). This organisation sub-divides into Tees-side, Tyneside and Cumbria motor sports groups. ANECC sends representatives to the PAC Regional Committee and currently the Chairman of ANECC is also the Chairman of the Regional Committee.

ACU

The Auto Cycle Union is divided into Centres. There are four which cover the Northern Region. The Northern Centre (Cumbria), the North Eastern Centre, the East Yorkshire Centre and the Yorkshire Centre. The East Yorkshire and Yorkshire Centres cover parts of the area and straddle the Sports Council's Northern and Yorkshire and Humberside regions. The Centres exercise a great deal of control over national policy within the Auto Cycle Union. The Centres elect representatives who control the organisation nationally and, therefore, the consultation and decision-making process is broad-based. It is, however, difficult for the ACU to respond quickly to some situations given the necessity to ensure the consent of the membership at Centre level.

The Governing Body Role

What should be remembered when contemplating the role of the Governing Bodies is that with the exception of a small number of professionals at national headquarters they are voluntary agencies. Without the selfless and continued hard work of volunteers, motorsport activity would quickly cease.

Because of the complexities of event organisation and control and the limited time available for volunteers to devote to their sport, the focus of club and regional bodies tends to be on technical matters. Responding to the on-going questions raised by regulations in numerous disciplines is time consuming. The process of event organisation is complex and tends to depend on a few individuals. For those reasons clubs and regional governing bodies have tended to consider development issues very briefly. By and large, contact with outside agencies has been limited to those authorising the use of land. Again, this is a consequence of time constraints.

Relationship With The Sports Council

The Sports Council's priorities are more concerned with the development of sport, either in terms of participation opportunities for their target groups or in performance and training.

The efforts to secure better links between clubs and the Sports Council have tended to founder on this cultural gap. The language of the Sports Council is, in many ways, alien to the active local organisers of motorsport. Even if this were not the case, the severe time limitations mentioned above would make resolution of this situation difficult.

The Sports Council is increasingly placing a higher value on structured introductions for new participants to sport, and on coaching to improve performance. Such schemes require resourcing from the Governing Bodies and at present the situation in this regard is in need of further development. The Northern Motorsport Project 1989 Issues Report noted the situation in the region as follows:

"The Northern Region is undergoing a disproportionate demographic change in the sixteen to twenty-four-year-old age group: a 21% decline as opposed to 16% nationally. If the clubs wish to preserve their membership over the next few years, they will have to take a positive approach towards younger members and participants." (1)

Relationships With Local Authorities

Relationships with Local Authorities differ widely throughout the Region. Whilst some clubs have regular and positive liaison, others have little or no contact. There is a need for regular dialogue between motorsports clubs and local authorities.

The ACU Training Division

The ACU has run a Training Division since 1988, now constituted as a Training Trust. From the limited resources available, training of instructors has been a priority for this project. The Northern Motorsports Project has sponsored the training of eighteen instructors during the past two years. Additionally, many groups of women and young people have been introduced to motorcycle sport through the activity of these individuals and their respective projects. The Training Trust has also supported national squads of young riders and endeavoured to offer coaching to raise their performance levels. Courses have been run by the ACU on a national basis for motorsports officials, e.g., Marshals and Clerk of the Course Training.

The RACSMAs Training Fund

The RACSMAs has a training fund designed to support schemes for participants and officials. During 1990 the Northern Motorsports Project attempted to develop a pilot Kart Instructor Training Scheme in the Northern Region. This scheme had the support of the kart clubs in the region and of the the Schools Karting Association North East. A framework of an instructor and participant training syllabus was written for this purpose. Unfortunately, because of difficulties experienced by the RACSMAs in pursuing the initiative, the monies set aside by the Sports Council were reallocated. The RACSMAs still regard such a scheme as a high priority. Additionally, the RACSMAs have plans to devise a major programme of training for officials during 1991. They also intend to ensure that, eventually, all new entrants to circuit racing will have to complete an induction course before being granted a racing licence.

Coaching

The efforts of both the ACU and the RACSMAs to promote training are to be applauded. Nevertheless, motorsports have a good way still to go to match either the availability or quality of coaching provided in some other active pursuits. The development of performance in motorsport has traditionally relied on informal coaching and learning: there are welcome signs that this is now changing and the benefits of the sports sciences are being understood. Links with the National Coaching Foundation could be beneficial in this regard.

The National Coaching Foundation (NCF) is a Registered Charity with a trading arm, "Coachwise". NCF receives financial support from the Sports Council and offers a range of services from basic courses on coaching to a consultancy for governing bodies and other agencies.

When considering motorsports it should be remembered that this is a generic title involving twenty or more disciplines which are constantly evolving. The difficulty of progressing more than a few priorities in the field of training should be recognised in this context. It would, however, be helpful if more resources could be secured for such purposes.

Motorsports Federations

Since 1986 the Sports Council has had a strong desire to see the emergence of Regional Motorsports Federations, based on Sports Council Regions, bringing together all interested organisations, this being a recommendation of the Elson Report (2). The North West Federation was the first to be established, followed respectively by the Northern Federation and the Yorkshire and Humberside Federation.

The Northern Motorsports Federation

The Northern Motorsports Federation still has to clearly identify its role. The members appear to be uncertain about what functions the Federation can carry out, other than that of a discussion body. The latter role is undoubtedly valuable and has improved links between many organisations who previously had limited contact. If the Federation is to clarify its role and move forward the member organisations all have to consider what common interests they have. Additionally, a resource commitment will have to be made both in time

6: Land Access

Introduction

and money. Once the Northern Motorsport Development Project has ceased someone will have to undertake the administrative duties required to ensure the Federation's continuance. These basic matters, as well as the substantive issues of functions and objectives, need to be urgently considered by the Federation, and by its member organisations at national level.

Conclusions

The constant and growing pressure from the environmental lobby necessitates a strong response from the governing bodies. The recent developments at national level should be welcomed in this respect.

Additionally the importance in participant and organiser training programmes should be recognised at regional and national level. The steps taken over the last few years require further progression in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

The establishment of new voluntary posts at regional level could enhance the development of both training and the nature of the organised sports response to environmental pressures. Whilst this would require support at national level could the resources for this not be secured by taking relatively small amounts of finance from the higher levels of the sport?

The future of the Northern Motorsports Federation requires clarification. If that organisation is to play a role in advancing the position of motorsports its objectives and intentions should be determined and expressed clearly.

When the "1989 Northern Motorsports Project Issues Report" was published considerable comment was received on the question of land access. On the basis of questionnaire returns from clubs in the region the conclusion was reached that "site availability had not significantly declined over the last few years" (1). Most club officials subsequently rejected this finding in their verbal responses to the document. Professor Elson found in 1986 that sources of land for motorsports were diminishing (2). The comments received during the last year support this view.

What this highlights is the difficulty of obtaining a clear picture of the current land access situation in the region. No satisfactory mechanism exists for obtaining an accurate current status report. The comments which follow are based on the specific cases and experiences referred to.

Motocross — The Chester Hills Experience

The discipline which has suffered most badly in this respect is moto-cross or MX (formerly known as scrambling). The Chester Hills MX track near Alnwick in Northumberland became the subject of a Public Inquiry in 1990, following enforcement action from Alnwick District Council, alleging breach of the General Development Order which restricts racing competition days to fourteen in any calendar year.

The Inspector found that the deemed planning application from the Landowner and the Governing Body was unacceptable and rejected planning permission. Furthermore, the Inspector upheld the Local Authority enforcement notice in several respects. One of the major factors in the Inspector's decision was the intrusive impact of the noise generated from the motocross machines. Many local residents complained that they were suffering significant loss of amenity because of noise emanating from events. The Inspector also prevented the development of ancillary facilities on the site. The Chester Hills track can still operate under the General Development Order for fourteen days per year, but clearly caution will have to be exercised in respect of local sensitivities to ensure the future of MX at that site.

During 1989 a planning application for an MX and all wheel drive facility at Plawsworth between Durham and Chester-le-Street was rejected. One of the principal objections of Durham City Council was the potential for noise nuisance should permission be granted.

Karting at Felton

Karting is another motor sport discipline which is currently under pressure in respect of land use. The Kart track at Felton in Northumberland has been operating for many years. During 1990 a planning application for an extension of the days of usage was rejected by Castle Morpeth Borough Council. Despite demonstrations of the proposed activity to members, it was felt that the existing permission was adequate for Northumbria Kart Club's needs. Again one of the principal objections to the application was the perception that a noise nuisance would be created. In this case that perception is difficult to sustain as the nature of the proposed activity would have been no more problematic than that generated by road vehicles in the vicinity. What has occurred in this case is that new dwellings have been converted from existing farm buildings in close proximity to the Kart track. The Borough Council has a policy of allowing planning permission to be granted to applicants wishing to convert redundant agricultural buildings to dwellings. Inevitably this sows the seeds of conflict between new residents and long-term sporting users. Furthermore in this case other noise generating leisure activities have begun to take place in the immediate area, namely micro-lighting and clay pigeon shooting.

Increasing Pressures

Noise nuisance is a difficult concept to determine. Particular circumstances differ so greatly that local authorities exercise a good deal of caution in considering planning applications. There can be no doubt that fear of noise is a major problem for motorsports interest. Convincing the public and their representatives that motorsports are not unduly noisy is increasingly difficult.

It is in this context that the separate consultation exercises currently being undertaken by the Department of the Environment and the Sports Council should be considered. Whilst these are separate initiatives they will both have significant implications for motorsport. The Department of the Environment has issued a "Draft Planning and Policy Guidance Note: Sport and Recreation" (October 1990). It is

intended to issue new planning guidelines as a result of this consultation, which will indicate how provision should be made for motorised leisure activities on land and water and in the air. The Sports Council's consultation exercise is intended to enable that organisation to determine its policy in respect of countryside leisure in an increasingly "green" environment. "A Countryside for Sport: Towards a Policy for Sport and Recreation in the Countryside" was issued for discussion in October 1990. Responses have now been received by the Sports Council who are considering their policy options.

With land use pressures increasing, the organisations mentioned above and others, for example, the Council for National Parks, are tending to the view that improved access should be granted to land outside and, sometimes, in place of, those areas traditionally used for leisure. If, as seems likely, planning authorities in areas of great landscape value tend towards a strict interpretation of their present policies, obtaining access beyond such areas will become more of a priority. Hopefully, both the Department of the Environment and the Sports Council will realise the practical implications of the policies they may adopt. Liaison with other bodies is vital in this respect, for example, removal of the motorsport restrictions on the "Set Aside" scheme could be a major step forward. "Set Aside" allows land to be utilised for non-agricultural purposes and provides financial incentives for such uses. Motorsport is specifically excluded from the scheme.

Removing access in one area must be met by improving suitable land availability elsewhere. Without so doing, the small "cowboy" element which motorsport suffers from will undoubtedly grow. These individuals do not represent motorsport, but they can, sadly, create a major nuisance for other countryside users and for the vast majority of responsible participants.

The governing bodies of motorsport are acutely aware of this problem and are actively taking measures to counter it, both individually or through LARA (see section 5). Likewise, the RAC Motor Sports Association and the Auto Cycle Union are rigorous in enforcing noise restrictions on competitors. The noise emissions of individual machines are progressively being reduced by each governing body. However, within the present context, it may be necessary to move more quickly on this issue than planned. Whilst decision-makers fear noise nuisance, whether justified or not, actual and potential motor sports sites could be lost.

The new RAC/ACU jointly-funded Motorsports Facilities Unit should help in this regard. The Unit

will concentrate its resources on the development of venues, both permanent and temporary, and will provide a point of liaison for local authorities. The Facilities Unit will be based at the ACU offices and is intended to work alongside LARA.

Whilst these measure are laudable there may be a need to adopt a more strategic approach to planning matters. For example, obtaining statements supporting motorsports provision in both county structure and local plans may lead to positive results. This will require a major resource allocation, which at present, the governing bodies are unable to identify.

It is once again important to stress the role that policies adopted by the Department of the Environment and the Sports Council will play in determining acceptable land use for motor sports. If local access is to be maintained and improved, it is important that these organisations take a positive attitude to the future of motorsport.

The difficulties in obtaining an accurate picture of the levels and nature of access need to be overcome if this issue is to be progressed. The organisations mentioned above could play a key role in enabling this to be achieved. The danger of formalising what, at present, is informally accepted in the use of land should be recognised, and the issue should be dealt with accordingly.

Conclusions

The broad consensus appears to be that land for motorsports is becoming more difficult to obtain and retain. Policies which seek to exclude motorsports from land use cannot be dignified with the title "land management". Hoping to destroy demand by denying supply would not be considered valid either in the education or health services, why should it be regarded as legitimate in planning policy? Motorsports participants are expressing a choice which is worthy of provision: public bodies exist to facilitate choices and should devise their policies and strategies accordingly.

Postscript

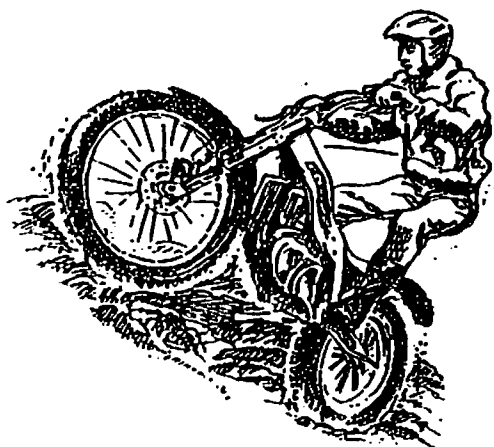
After this report was drafted three developments have taken place which may have a significant effect on motorsports in the region

1) The National Parks Review Panel has published its report which seeks to set an agenda for

major changes in the way national parks are run in the next century — while the report does not advocate a total ban on motorsports its proposals, if implemented, will inevitably lead to further pressures and restrictions on motorised recreation.

2) The Government has published a consultation paper on the use of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for motorsports and clay pigeon shooting. If implemented, the proposals will require all motorsport events using SSSIs to gain prior planning consent. This will be effected by the removal of permitted development rights — the "14/28 day rule". These changes will affect motorsport in the region, but will not do anything to tackle the far more widespread problem of illegal and occasionally damaging use of vehicles in sand dunes, the beach and coastal nature reserves, some of which are also SSSI.

3) The Road Traffic Bill has progressed through Parliament during 1991. One of its proposals is to extend the offences of dangerous and careless driving to cover "roads and other public places". Although the governing bodies of motorsport are negotiating reasonable exemptions for motorsport events, there is a danger that the new regulations will restrict access to forestry plantations, which are a major land resource for motorsport in the Region.



7: Community Motorsport

Responses To Auto-Crime

The problem of vehicle-related offending (auto-crime) is particularly acute in the North East. The urban centres of Tyneside, Wearside, Teesside, Consett and Durham are all badly affected.

Auto crime can be broken down into many types. Thefts from cars are considered by some to be an aspect of auto-crime. Whilst this is a growing problem, this report is not concerned with that activity. "Professional" auto-crime is also not being dealt with here, nor are motoring offences in general.

For the purposes of this section of the report auto-crime is being addressed as a behaviour which involves young people and is motivated by a desire for excitement. This can take many forms: it can involve the riding of motorcycles on either open areas of land or on the highway, in many cases the machines having been obtained illegally. It can also be the taking of motor vehicles without the owners consent (TWOC) which is known as "joy riding" (1), mainly in cars. In volume terms the theft of cars presents the biggest problem and is in this sense the major issue confronting workers in this field. Other road users are placed at great risk from the activities of "joy riders", and there are many tragic instances of death and serious injury resulting from such behaviour. In statistical terms, motorcycle offences are a minor problem when compared with those involving motor cars.

The generation of responses to these problems has mainly been from the concern of professionals involved in face to face work with offenders. Probation officers, social workers, the police and many others have recognised that the principal motivation of the offenders involved is to obtain high levels of excitement unavailable in their daily life. In this sense the offenders are participating in motor recreation, albeit dangerously and irresponsibly. The assumption of concerned professionals is that if such excitement can be appropriately channelled, it can be a positive means of altering the attitudes of their clients.

In most local authorities' areas, illegal open land motorcycling presents a problem. In areas of acute difficulty the issue has tended to become political. Members, inundated with complaints from residents, have sought to address the problem. In a few cases this has been through the provision of land for development as "wheel parks". These are intended to offer an opportunity for legitimate

and channelled motorcycle activity in a safe environment, satisfying the complaints of local residents and creating an exciting leisure opportunity for young people at the same time. The first major development was the "Birmingham Wheels" facility (2) and this inspired many local authorities throughout the country. However, it should be noted that Birmingham Wheels was, from the outset, designed to be used for both two- and four- wheeled activity.

In the region the authorities which have led the way in wheels park provision are Newcastle City Council, Langbaugh-on-Tees Borough Council, Sunderland Borough Council and the Borough of Barrow. Newcastle City Council developed Walker Wheels in conjunction with a voluntary body which included representation from a number of agencies. Walker Wheels was designed for motorcycle use. Langbaugh Borough Council in conjunction with the Teesside Development Corporation are developing the Langbaugh Motorsports facility. This is an ambitious plan designed to offer a multi-use facility of national significance (2).

Until 1989 the Borough of Barrow provided an area of land designated for off-road motorcycling. North Tyneside operated a participation scheme using Community Programme staff and a designated area of land. The demise of the Community Programme saw this scheme end. Shildon Town Council played a key part in developing a facility for similar purposes, but this is now run commercially. Additionally, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council intend to provide a wheels park on a presently active open-cast site when excavation is complete.

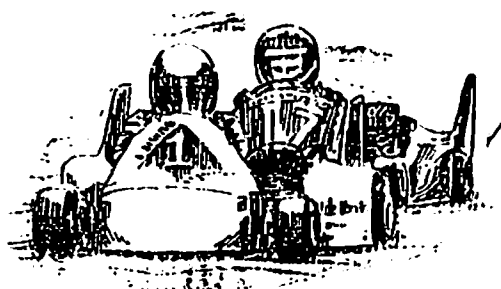
The Borough of Sunderland planning department have played a major part in assisting the development of the Warden Law facility. However, this facility, in common with the others mentioned, was primarily intended for motorcycle use.

The focus on motorcycles in respect of facility provision can be explained by the nature of activities confronting local authorities, primarily because of the areas on which it takes place. Illegal motor car use is not perceived in this way. As a result the impetus to provide land for schemes designed to combat car crime has not been strong enough to achieve positive results. The consequence is that there are three facilities in the region which are concerned with auto-crime, two of which offer motorcycle use as their core activity. The

volume of motor car offences is vastly greater than that of motorcycle crime, but provision is, however, in inverse proportion to this (4).

Most wheel parks have their origins in local needs and find their realisation through the energy generated by key personalities. Several have been based on poor financial foundations. Whilst capital costs have been reasonably easy to obtain during the 1980s, particularly within urban areas, revenue funding has been extremely difficult to secure from the various grant-aiding bodies.

In order to obtain a facility, the question of medium and long-term financial viability takes a back seat whilst the energy of the founders is concentrated on quickly bringing reality to their plans. What has tended to happen over the last five years is that balances accruing from capital funding have given a false impression of financial well being. The major de facto revenue subsidy provided by the Community Programme was lost in 1989 and caused problems for all the facilities mentioned, with the possible exception of Shildon in its early guise. The replacement Employment Training scheme did not offer the same opportunities to minimise labour costs and as a result the schemes found themselves having either to close, e.g., North Tyneside, or reduce the levels of activity, e.g., Walker Wheels. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that more careful financial planning at the initial stages of these projects would have been desirable.



In most cases the local authorities concerned never intended to become heavily involved either financially or managerially. The Walker Wheels facility, for example, is controlled by a management committee, and is technically a voluntary agency. However, experience has shown that the management arrangements for such facilities needs careful consideration at the outset and requires strong core service support. The local authorities are clearly best placed to provide this.

Financially, the facilities in question are aimed at providing opportunities for those least able to afford to pay the actual cost. If this goal is to be maintained over time then on going revenue support is

required. The other option is to allow potentially profitable activities to subsidise those which are not. Langbaugh is founded on this principle, as is Birmingham Wheels. In order to make this possible both the facility and the management structure have to be designed with this in mind, and some compromises may have to be made on the degree of community use. Some facilities in the region have not been so well considered.

If exciting activities are the key to channelling the energy of young auto offenders into constructive pursuits, then land will continue to be required for this purpose. There are, however, other types of vehicle-based projects which are not focused so heavily on participation. In essence the facilities above can offer a range of opportunities from either pure recreational access, to programmes of maintenance and education. They also provide land for those projects which require it as part of their particular focus.

Many groups who use the facilities provide their own machinery and supervision, e.g., South Shields and Herrington Burn YMCAs. The purpose of such groups is to make a positive attempt to alter the behaviour of the participants by means of disciplined and gradual education. Maintaining machinery and considering responsibility to others are key parts of the schemes, with riding or driving participation being the final part of a project. It can be argued that such projects have a better appreciation of the clients' needs than those which provide only an opportunity to ride or drive. Jeff Briggs, a Gateshead Social Worker, has unparalleled experience as a practitioner in this field which he has adeptly utilised in his unpublished MA thesis on auto crime (5). Jeff's work at Clavering House (Newcastle Social Services) was mainly concerned with young recidivist auto offenders. The auto-projects at Clavering House were practical initiatives such as the building of two kit cars with the majority of the labour coming from the young people. The cars have then been raffled to raise money to ensure the continuance of the project. Jeff's practical and theoretical work have led him to the conclusion that such projects have a valuable role in altering the attitudes of the young people involved. He recognises the necessity of providing opportunities to drive the vehicles at speed in order to allow excitement to be linked to the effort put in over the months of building. This has also been recognised by the National Association of Motor Projects (NAMP) for some time. However, whilst groups from the region have been involved in NAMP for some years, a yearly championship does not provide the participation opportunities required locally. (The owners of motor car salvage yards and stock car stadia in the region should be congratulated for their support for such projects.)

Alternatives To Motor Projects

The necessity for an element of competition and excitement is recognised and accepted by many workers who deal with these problems on a daily basis. Jeff Briggs comments that the normal sentencing procedure adopted by the courts does little to alter the perception of the young joy rider and may even exacerbate it.

"Furthermore, such sentences fail to consider the primary focus of the offender's interest, i.e., the motor car, and provides him with no means or provision of actually facing up to the responsibilities associated with driving safely." (5)

Having established the poor record of traditional sentencing in reducing re-offending, the evidence of the success of motor projects is considered. The two most detailed analyses of these come from the Ilderton project, and the Belfast Motor Projects. Practitioners claim that traditional sentencing does not deter re-offending: there is a large body of anecdotal evidence to suggest that this is the case in respect of auto-crime, but sadly there are few in-depth studies to support this. What is known is that some motor projects can have an excellent success rate. For example, the Ilderton project appears to have a success rate of around 80% (5). The value of motor projects was accepted by the Home Office in its report of 1988.

"We, therefore, recommend increased community involvement (by local authorities, the police, schools, driving schools and the business sector) in the development of motor projects which provide young people not only with access to driving but also education in safe driving and social awareness and responsibility." (6)

The report also emphasises the need for caution in mixing different types of offenders in motor projects, and recognises the need for a more substantive analysis of the relative effects of disposals available to the courts. It should not be forgotten that the emphasis here has been on the value of these projects in relation to existing offenders. However, many motor projects have a wider remit and are concerned with the prevention of criminal activity. This may be characterised as, in broad terms, an intermediate treatment type of approach. Walker Wheels and Warden Law would both fall into this category.

There are those within agencies who deal with young people who question the value of motor projects. Fundamentally, they believe that channelling the energy of the individuals involved into equally challenging but non-mechanised activities may break the spell of the motor vehicle and result in changes in behaviour. The resource implications of motor projects are a consideration in this respect. Again the lack of good evidence for this contention makes it extremely difficult to evaluate. It would appear that there is a real need for a substantive appraisal of the varying approaches to dealing with auto-crime. Criteria would need to be clearly accepted in advance and any study would need careful construction. The Home Office could play a crucial part in such a process. In essence, what is lacking here is fundamental to addressing the problem of auto-crime: firstly, assessments of clients needs are at variance and secondly the means by which these are met are disputed by some key professionals. These matters require resolution.

One of the major factors in convincing some people of the limited value of motor projects is the cost of supporting them. Within the context of the social and actual costs of auto-crime, motor projects are extremely cheap. However, for those agencies actively engaged in providing educational and leisure opportunities for young people, support for a motor project can represent a major financial burden. It should be noted that there are several separate agencies involved in crime prevention, rehabilitation and facility provision.

If successful alternatives can be found which are more cost-effective, then clearly these would in many cases be preferable. The poor evidence available does not allow such calculations to be made. It is those motor projects which are service-orientated which face the largest problems. Adequate management of a facility is costly, particularly for voluntary agencies. It is likely that when such facilities are provided there will be an on-going requirement to provide revenue support as previously mentioned. These problems tend not to affect those motor projects which are local and concerned with maintenance, education and occasional recreational enjoyment. The costs of managing a facility are not felt by these projects and, as a result, they tend to find it easier to ensure continuity of existence and endeavour. The lack of substantive information on these matters has created tensions within the management of some motor projects.

Planning And Objectives

Most of the motor projects in the region, particularly those offering land access, are multi-agency initiatives. Founded on a genuine desire to combat a range of problems, the impetus to create has often masked differences which come to light once a certain level of activity has been achieved. Whilst broad goals are shared by the agencies involved, the varying interests and perceptions of each organisation tends to become manifest at later stages. This could be avoided by better planning and contractual elements being included at the outset.

Agreed and specific "mission statements" may be beneficial in this regard. Not only would these provide a focus for partners, but they would clarify the role of the projects for outside agencies. The lack of agreed methods and criteria for monitoring and evaluation is also strongly evident. The projects in the region have suffered from this particularly when arguing the case for funding. Again, this should be part of the initial planning process. There have been a number of times when the lack of objective and respected outside guidance has been noted. The consultant totem is a factor here: support which has been provided without cost to the projects has often not been maximised by the recipients. Core managerial input, in financial and planning terms, has also been a weakness of the regional schemes.

Lack of clarity on intentions and targets does not help the staff of such projects. In many cases they are pulled in several directions at once to meet the requirements of partnership members. Agreed objectives assist staff achieve more and develop their skills. This should be recognised and acted upon by those in a position so to do.

A strategic planning approach needs to be adopted if motor projects are to have a substantive future role. Clearly facilities can only be provided in a limited number of locations. These facilities will need to ensure high throughput to maximise their revenue. This could be made easier by careful design at the early stages of such projects. Secondly, support levels in both financial and managerial terms should be agreed at the outset. Cross boundary co-operation is essential in this regard.

Not all Local Authorities districts or Probation Services can have a facility in their administrative area. Mechanisms should be found to enable support to take place beyond such boundaries. This will ultimately provide a better service to all concerned. The other option is the visible and continuing pressure from workers to obtain land for

local facilities. Without a constant financial commitment such schemes have no hope of proceeding to reality. Surely it is far better to have a small number of viable, facility-based projects which are used by the smaller, local schemes. This has the benefit of guaranteeing land use for the smaller schemes, and improving revenue and political support for the facility-based projects.

Links With Motorsport

An additional area of concern is the mechanism by which those participating in such schemes go on to take part in mainstream motor sport. There are poor links between the sporting bodies and the projects described. Those presently involved in motor sport tend to have an antipathy towards such schemes, seeing them as "treats for offenders". This is understandable as in many cases they are the victims of motor car or motorcycle theft. Because of this lack of contact, no clear bridge exists between the "informal" participants and the mainstream sport. The way into the sport for the informal participant is the same as that open to many other members of the public, i.e., join a club, buy a machine and compete.

The individuals concerned are unlikely to find the first two steps easy. They will have to make a leap in socialisation to achieve the first and overcome what may not always be the most gracious of welcomes. Secondly, those with criminal records may not be able to meet either the criteria for licence holding or have sufficient income to purchase machinery. This could also affect young people without criminal records who are disadvantaged in other senses. It seems unlikely that it will be easy to create such a mechanism to bridge this gap, except in certain local circumstances. If this is the case then one has to question the purpose of creating an expectation that mainstream participation is possible. There is a narrow line between creating positive aspirations and unfairly raising expectations. The consequences of both are profound, one positive, the other negative and destructive.

The most substantive attempt to bridge that gap has taken place at Langbaugh Motorsports in Cleveland. This facility has its origin in the concern of members over the high levels of illegal motorcycle use in the Borough, and the damage to land occurring as a result. The authority also intended to raise the profile of the Borough to create a base for tourism development.

The positive work undertaken by officers and members enabled a partnership to be formed with

Conclusions

the Teesside Development Corporation. Learning the lessons of previous community-based schemes, the Langbaugh project was intended to be a means of bridging the divide between the formal and informal users. Profitable, mainly tarmac-based disciplines, would subsidise other activities, openly available to those who have not traditionally been motorsports participants. In essence, motorsport for all was the goal.

The Sports Council supported this project by grant-aiding a Community Liaison Officer post and designating the scheme a National Demonstration Project. Sadly, midway through the process of physical development, a dispute on the way to proceed with Phase 2 of the project emerged between the Local Authority and the Teesside Development Corporation. At the time of writing there are signs that this may be nearing resolution. The development process has been considerably slower than originally planned. At present the scheme is divided into two sites. The northern site has off-road areas for motorcycling and BMX, and the southern site has an international kart track. Both parts of Langbaugh Motorsports have ancillary facilities on site.

The consequences of the slower than envisaged development process on the National Demonstration Project have been documented elsewhere. Clearly, the National Demonstration Project has not made the progress originally intended. At the time of writing the original incumbent of the Community Liaison Officer post has left the project. It is expected that the post will be filled in the Summer of 1991.

The future of Langbaugh Motorsports remains unclear. The original intention to create a multi-disciplinary facility catering for all sections of society has great merit. If this objective can be realised, Langbaugh could lead the way to a new future for motorsports facilities. The work of the new Community Liaison Officer will be crucial in this regard. Whatever the outcome of the Langbaugh project valuable lessons will be learned by a number of organisations. It is hoped that these are concerned with the on-going success of the project in relation to its original goals.

All attempts to provide facilities for community motor sport have been fraught with difficulties, particularly concerning resource implications. It is clear that long term financial and operational planning is required at the outset of such schemes. This enables staff to deliver a quality service without the ongoing uncertainty generated by under funding.

The value of community motor sports should be assessed far more rigourously than has previously been the case. Resource commitments can only be guaranteed on a sound evidential basis. With a clearer picture of the benefits of such schemes the uncertainties which they face could be clarified.

In multi-agency schemes particularly, objectives should be stated and strong elements of contract included in partnership agreements. This would enable some of the structural and managerial difficulties which have been faced by schemes in the region to be removed.

Additionally a body of good practice should be developed, both in managerial terms and in respect of the content of provision. The "Bike Lore" syllabus developed at Walker Wheels is an example of such good practice which could usefully be operated under licence elsewhere.

Finally, whilst the cultural emphasis on competition so evident in recent years cannot be ignored, there exists enormous potential for the sharing of resources between schemes involved in community motorsport.

8: The Private Sector

The private sector in motorsports provision has been growing during the 1980s. More people have been attracted to the idea of trying motorsports disciplines before committing themselves to major expenditure. Additionally, the growth of corporate entertainments has offered many opportunities. From a spectator and participant perspective, stock car racing and speedway remain popular.

Stock car and speedway stadia can be found throughout the region, from Berwick to Teesside. The Sports Council does not recognise stock car racing. This is regrettable in view of the inexpensive participation opportunities it offers.

The largest growth areas in the private sector have been rally schools and indoor karting, and this is reflected in the region. The indoor karting facility at Shildon has expanded to offer "paint ball" simulated combat games as an additional facility. However, the location of this business has not enabled it to penetrate the market provided by Tyneside as fully as was hoped. Indoor karting offers an excellent means of beginning in the sport as well as being enjoyable activity in its own right. Indoor karting has recently seen a variant on itself being developed as ice karting. This is primarily designed for the corporate market and takes place at pre-booked sessions on ice rinks in the region.

Langhaugh Kart School offers outdoor karting opportunities at that facility on a number of days, mainly during the week. Likewise, the same organisation offers a rally school. Additionally, the original Town Council-led facility at Shildon is now privately operated. Off-road motorcycling is presently on offer and stock car racing should begin during 1991.

The private sector is offering basic participation opportunities to the public who can afford to pay. The opportunity to try a sport before committing oneself to it is valuable, particularly if it reduces the costs of discovering whether or not one enjoys the discipline.

The relationship between the governing bodies and the private operators has been difficult at times. However, it appears that a symbiotic relationship now exists. The former recognise the role of the latter in bringing people to the sport, and the operators acknowledge the controlling responsibility of the governing bodies. As in all business relationships, the mutual interest of the parties creates an impetus towards agreement.

What is gratifying is the positive attitude of some local authorities in the region towards private operators. This has been particularly observable in those disciplines which take place indoors. The traditional objections to giving planning consent (i.e. noise, visual intrusion, loss of amenity, etc.) clearly have no basis in such cases, hence the more accommodating attitude displayed by planning authorities than is usually the case.

Conclusions

It would seem that high quality well marketed private sector motorsports enterprises have a future. Provided that both individual and corporate clients are prepared to remain customers, such businesses will continue to offer a valuable service. However, the general issues affecting land for recreational use and the state of the broader economy will obviously play a major part in determining the future for private sector motorsport.

Postscript

During the first half of 1991 there has been a noticeable increase in commercial sites in the Region offering hire of recreational vehicles and track time, both for the hire vehicles and for customers' own. These operations are closely tied-in with the manufacture and marketing of off-road buggies and the sale of quads and motorcycles. It is thought that, in June 1991, there are some five such sites operating in the region and at least one is facing enforcement proceedings for breaching planning regulations. This commercial activity is also publicised as now offering off-road driving in remote parts of the Northumberland National Park.

9: The Warden Law Project: A Synopsis of the Project To Date

The Warden Law Project has its origins in the mid 1980's when a widespread concern emerged over levels of illegal vehicles use in the Borough of Sunderland.

The first meeting of the interested parties took place in October 1985 and included representation from the Borough Council and Probation Service and this group formed itself into a Steering Group. The Steering Group operated under the title the Sunderland Motor Project and substantial progress was made between 1985 and autumn 1986 when the Project began to look closely at its structure, meetings became formal and a constitution was discussed. The group undertook the task of creating a "wheels park" offering motor recreation and maintenance to community groups in Sunderland.

Norcare's involvement dates from 1986 when the organisation took Warden Law into its management. The Warden Law site was also identified as the geographical location of the Project in 1986, from which point the change of the name is noted.

Sunderland Borough Council played a crucial role in the acquisition of the site, buying the land from the Coal Board for the purpose of the project with the use of derelict land grants. Negotiation of the land purchase and its use was complex and required a considerable input from the Borough Planning Department and the Chairman of the Warden Law Committee.

The active role of the Apex Trust was extremely important in the first two years of the project. As a Managing Body for the Community Programme, Apex played a key role until February 1989 when Employment Training replaced the former scheme. However, for a number of reasons, the opportunities presented by the Community Programme were not fully realised, and while some progress was made on the site, disappointment was expressed that development did not proceed more quickly. October 1987 saw the appointment of a Project Leader. The post was a secondment from the Northumbria Probation Service and was filled by an experienced serving senior Probation officer. However, it should be noted that considerable amount of work had been undertaken on the site by Apex. The work on the site was based on a blueprint created by a firm of architects in Newcastle upon Tyne. These plans were extremely ambitious and envisaged residential accommodation and major landscaping. Potential sources of

funding were identified but no detailed financial plans were made for either capital or revenue requirements.

The Project Leader was assisted by a network of interested and knowledgeable parties including the Motorsports Development Officer employed by Norcare from October 1988 in a partnership with the Sports Council Northern Region.

1988 also saw the contracting by the Project Office of Newcastle University's Department of Architecture on a consultancy basis. The revised plans and practical advice provided were of great value in enabling the Project Leader to make progress.

The demise of the Community Programme and the absence of a guaranteed labour force on the site presented a major problem. The opportunity for a co-ordinated package of physical site development, motor vehicle maintenance and sporting participation disappeared at this point. To enable all three aspects to be realised would have necessitated a broader active partnership and the securing of new resources. The breadth of the Project Leader's responsibilities placed a great strain on his personal resources. It is to his enormous credit that within one year, the site was operational with designated tracks, instruction and the provision of machines. This was achieved with the employment of a supervisor/mechanic funded with two separate donations from the Prince's Trust and the Durham Probation Service. Norcare's Fundraiser played a crucial role and has offered substantial support and assistance both in terms of time and advice throughout the duration of the project.

During 1989 the Borough of Sunderland undertook major landscaping work on the site boundary. Additionally a grant from the Coalfield Initiative assisted with further reclamation work and site development. More rigorous assessments of the on-going costs of running the Project were instituted during Spring 1990. These quickly demonstrated that revenue requirements were not being met, despite the hard work and creativity of the Project Leader and staff. This realisation generated a climate in which the re-examination of the Project's purpose and direction appeared to be appropriate.

The discussions on the future of the Project were informed by a number of facts. The financial situation has already been mentioned. Questions were raised from within the Probation Service about the

value of motor projects in general. In an increasingly difficult environment the case for significant resource allocation had to be founded on sound evidence. Very little persuasive information existed to support the thesis that motor projects reduce motor vehicle crime.

During 1989 Sunderland Auto Crime Action Group was formed. The relationship of the multi-agency body to the Warden Law Project is difficult to define. Whilst 1990 saw clearer targets being set for the Auto Crime Action Group, its role seemed increasingly similar to that of the Warden Law Project. In 1989 the Auto Crime Action Group did make a successful funding bid to the Safer Cities Initiative which resulted in a minibus being purchased and loaned to the Warden Law Project.

However, the Auto Crime Action Group has always supported the Project, and during discussions about the future, expressed a willingness to be involved in its management. The group was also willing to help raise funds, although it has very few resources of its own.

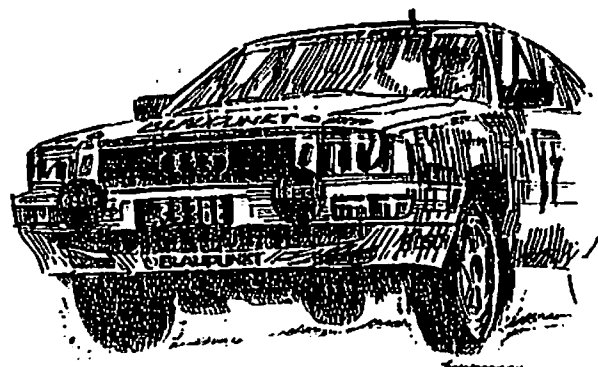
During the first few months of 1991, the Project suffered a period of great uncertainty as various options to secure its future were pursued. One by one these options failed to bear fruit, and in March 1991, the Project's activities had to be curtailed and instructional staff laid off, due to lack of funding.

However, soon after, ongoing discussions with the Borough of Sunderland resulted in new funding and management arrangements, which although very limited, secured the future of the project until March 1992.

These new arrangements involved the transfer of management from Norcare to the Sunderland Outdoor Activities Association, with some input from the Borough of Sunderland Department of Leisure Services. The funding package was provided by Northumbria Probation Service, the Department of Leisure Services, Norcare and Sunderland Safer Cities Project. Activities started again in July 1991, although to a more limited extent and the longer term future of the project is still uncertain. However, the new arrangements provide the most promising opportunities yet. When assessing the development of the Warden Law Project, it is appropriate to consider the nature of that development in the context of the time in which it took place. It is now plain to see that many of the assumptions made at the time of its establishment were unlikely to come to fruition. However, at the time these assumptions appeared to be sound and logical. The Department of the Environment in its "Good Practice in Urban Regeneration" publication (1) identifies the points of good practice for those engaged in the formation of

sport and leisure opportunities for inner areas. These provide a ready means of assessing the Warden Law Project.

There are many features of the Warden Law Project which can be commended as points of good practice, for example the driving force of committed individuals. There were key personalities involved in the development of the scheme, not least the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ken Armstrong, JP, who has played a crucial role throughout the entire history of the Project in generating support and enthusiasm, particularly in times when the situation did not look entirely positive. Additionally, the Project was designed to combat a real and growing problem. In this sense the Warden Law Project was a response to a local need, which has not yet been fully met. The Warden Law Management Committee has been responsive to the availability of resources and has been flexible and prepared to amend its plans according to the constraints and opportunities presented to it.



Perhaps the major weakness of the scheme was that its objectives were not clearly defined at the outset. To some extent, not clarifying objectives is a means of maintaining cohesion between a broadly based management group. To ensure the continuance of a multi-agency initiative it is often the case that compromises are made and objectives are modified in order to achieve "something". However, the tensions between parties throughout this Project have been, to a large extent, caused by the lack of an agreed outline and a clear sense of direction. Because objectives have not been adequately defined they have likewise been unmeasurable and unquantifiable. The Project leader did redefine the Project's aims during 1989 and financial targets were accepted by the management committee in respect of this. Despite this much-needed assessment, it is extremely difficult to exactly quantify the

success of the scheme. What should be noted, and has been agreed by all parties, is that the staff directly involved with the Project have worked extremely hard throughout the life of the scheme, and have shown themselves committed to the needs of the clients involved.

One of the principal weaknesses of the Project was that the site available, whilst excellent for the activities it was intended to be used for, was outside the urban area. This automatically rendered the site ineligible for some of the major capital grants from which other projects have so readily benefited. Successful revenue regeneration is to a large extent, dependent on capital input. By using a site which was ineligible for major capital input from, for example, the Department of the Environment, it proved extremely difficult to raise the profile and activity level to a point at which revenue costs were being met.

In the formation of the scheme mention was made of possible sources of funding but at no time were any detailed financial plans ever devised. Lack of financial planning meant that the Project operated on a shoestring throughout its life. No clear targets existed for either the operational staff or the respective Management Committees to judge performance until those devised during 1990/91 became accepted. Additionally, the provision of motor vehicle recreation of any kind is capital and labour intensive. It is even more expensive to provide motor vehicle recreation for those groups who are, by definition, disadvantaged and who are least able to pay. This financial reality was only realised during the operational stage of the Project during 1989/90. However, evidence existed from other schemes both within and without the region which could have been used to more accurately plan revenue requirements.

Additionally, requests for resource allocation need to be made upon a sound basis. The evidence to suggest that schemes such as the Warden Law Project have a significant effect on illegal vehicle usage is, to say the least, patchy. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to argue for ongoing and substantive funding for such a Project. The bulk of the monies for the scheme came from salary contributions provided by the Northumbria Probation Service. Most of the other donations were relatively small and specific in their intentions. Many of the grants given were for capital funding and had no relevance to the revenue requirements of the Project. It is extremely difficult to secure ongoing revenue funding for any project, let alone one which is so expensive in terms of cost per user.

Fundamentally, the financial liabilities of the scheme were beyond the reach of the agencies involved.

The fact that these difficulties did not make themselves readily apparent to all the partners until 1990 shows up another fundamental weakness. No systems of monitoring or evaluation were agreed. The Department of the Environment note that monitoring and evaluation schemes "are an essential part of the scheme's operation" (1). It is evident to all concerned that Warden Law could have benefited enormously from good monitoring and evaluation processes being agreed at the outset. This monitoring and evaluation should not only have concerned itself with the actual financial cost of the scheme, but also with the effects of participation in the Project on the clients. The lack of substantive evidence to support the view that such Projects significantly affect auto crime has been previously mentioned.

Positively, what can be learned from the Warden Law Project is that if objectives and criteria are agreed at the outset of any scheme it is far easier to identify success or failure. In the case of Warden Law it is possible to identify both strengths and weaknesses of both the establishment and the operation of the Project. The success or failure of the scheme can only be assessed from the perspective of the agencies involved, and it is for those organisations to consider their involvement from the outset and to modify or amend their procedures as is appropriate.



Notes

Chapter 2: Introduction

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare, 20 Portland Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1QQ.

Chapter 4: Local Authorities

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).

Chapter 5: The Governing Bodies

- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).
- (2) Providing for Motorsports: From Image to Reality. Elson and others. The Sports Council, Study 28, 1986.

Land Access

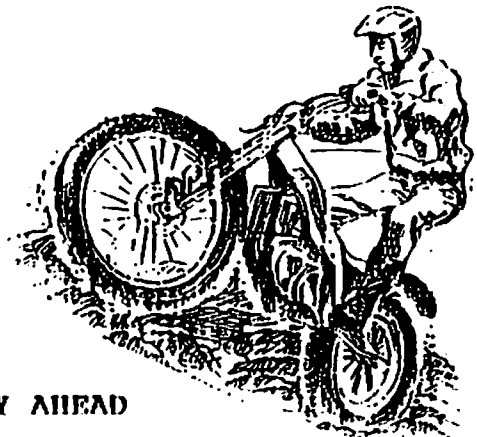
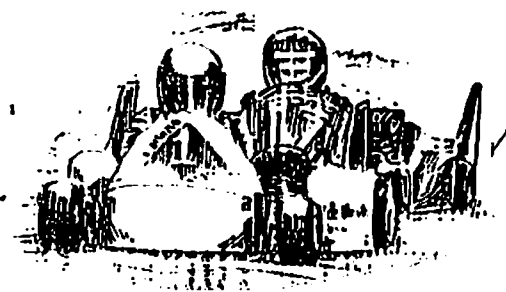
- (1) Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).
- (2) Providing for Motorsports: From Image to Reality. Elson and others. The Sports Council, Study 28, 1986.

Chapter 7: Community Motor Sport

- (1) Whilst it is commonly known as such it should be emphasised that there is no joy in joy riding.
- (2) Department of the Environment "Developing Sport and Leisure: Good Practice in Urban Regeneration" (1989) HMSO.
- (3) Sports Council Participation Demonstration Projects (1990) "Langbaugh Motorsports Project" Langbaugh on Tees Borough Council Phase 1 Monitoring Report. Establishing the Project. Sports Council Research Unit: Manchester.
- (4) The Northern Motorsports Project "1989 Issues Report". Available from Norcare (see address above).
- (5) Jeffery Briggs (1990) "A Profile of the Juvenile Joyrider: And the Efficacy of Motor Vehicle Projects As A Diversionary Strategy". Unpublished MA Thesis, Department of Social Policy: The University of Durham. Available from the Author.
- (6) Home Office: Standing Conference on Crime Prevention (1988) "Report of the Working Group on Car Crime". HMSO.

Chapter 9: The Warden Law Project

- (1) Department of the Environment "Developing Sport and Leisure: Good Practice in Urban Regeneration" (1989) HMSO.



MOTORSPORT IN THE COMMUNITY: THE WAY AHEAD

This set of post-conference papers contains the outline of the papers given at Gateshead by Roger Sidaway and David Cobb, plus a transcription of the main points brought out in the question and answer sessions.

The conference assessment sheets, given out in the packs on the day, did not have an address to return them to and no announcement was made requesting that they be handed in at the end of the conference - sorry about that! If you have any points to make about the conference, or would like more information on any particular point, please write to me at:

The Land Access & Recreation Association
C/O 45 The Fairway
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 5AQ

So, what did the conference achieve? It certainly reinforced the view that there is a real need for sports facilities such as these close to centres of population and that fits in well with the Sports Council's new policy document *A Countryside For Sport*. This report, published since the conference, stresses the need for facilities for all sorts of active recreation close to where people live, rather than export the activities into the heart of the countryside. It is plain from this and from clues as to the content of the forthcoming Countryside Commission policy report, *Enjoying The Countryside: Policies For People*, that there will be an increasing pressure for many activities to utilise "urban fringe" areas to a far greater extent.

That is an easy policy to set out - a much harder goal to achieve. So far as wheels parks are concerned the lessons of the past six years might well be persuading people that they are not, from financial considerations at least, a particularly good idea.

Where do we go from here? Will new wheels park and community schemes pop up like mushrooms to go through the same cycle of enthusiasm, realism, cynicism and failure? Is this cycle inevitable, or can such sites and schemes be designed to avoid it? I believe the feeling of the conference was that wheels parks can be made to succeed and that society needs them more now than ever. The next move would, logically, seem to be the preparation of various "model schemes" to guide those wishing to set up a new wheels park or scheme. This will allow them to learn from the experience - good and bad, of others and the savings in wasted enthusiasm and money could be big indeed. I shall press home this point to the Sports Council, Home Office, Department of the Environment and other interested organisations. If you agree that this is necessary then please write to me to support the idea.

Alan Kind April 1992

MOTORSPORT IN THE COMMUNITY : THE WAY AHEAD

Questions and Answers

Roger Sidaway ran out of time for questions.

Urban Motorsports Projects : Lessons of the last 5 years

Speaker - Ian Fytche

- Q. Alan Patmore - His outside view of this. So much of motorsport is being done on despoiled or derelict land. Is this the kind of image that should be portrayed? From purple to green.
- A. Ian replied: Motorsport aims to make the most of opportunities which do exist on derelict or despoiled land. He had recently visited a site with colleagues which had a positive strategy. Most of the sites used are coal tips, reclamation or derelict land. There is a programme of activities for sport and recreation including a variety of motorsport disciplines and diversity. Martin Elson dealt with 19 individual disciplines. It is important to create a balance to find sites at despoiled areas.

Alan Patmore - Sometimes a derelict site can turn out to be quite attractive.

David Cobb - City of Newcastle

Walker Wheels : The History of a Motor Project

- Q. Alan Patmore - Faced with the local authority funding situation for leisure how do they determine their priorities, with particular regard to motorsports.
- A. With great difficulty. Local authority money is very tight. Ability to redirect budgets has been increasingly difficult since 1986. We are in a continuing downward spiral. Elected members have an impossible task in determining their priorities between social, educational and leisure. The City of Newcastle has faced major reductions. Walker Wheels is a relatively high cost voluntary project and has, for several years, been vulnerable. He explained that Committee faced £2 million budget reductions for 1992-93. Suggestions were made to close 2 swimming pools but Leisure Services Committee shut the major pool in city centre rather than 2 local pools. City Challenge priority aimed at the west end of the city so it was difficult to support from this source.
- Q. The staffing issue was raised. What efforts had been made to find volunteers in the community who could help. What about retired executives, 'Reach' etc?
- A. 'Reach' had not been approached. However, volunteers had been used. They were also looking to the U.D.C. for financial support. In Newcastle it is difficult to get sponsorship. High profile projects are easier than low profile. Secondment of staff is also not easy in the North East.
- Q. Somebody referred to the National Foundation for Sport and the Arts. He explained that he had tried to get funding for motorsports but this was not classed as a sport.
- A. Any funding for Walker Wheels from the National Foundation for Sport and the Arts would go towards qualifying activities within the Riverside Adventure Centre, not specifically for motorsport. Such support could reduce the overhead costs of the Wheels Project.

Q. John Briggs - National Autograss Sports Association

He stated that whatever Walker Wheels cost, it was a lot to invest in one small project.

- A. Walker Wheels is not self funding. Priorities are set by the council.

Meeting Reconvened at 3.10 p.m.

Chairman's Summary of Workshop Issues

I have had the privilege to sit in on each of the three discussion groups. My only real regret was that I could not stay in one of them for the whole time. They were fascinating. I have in front of me brief comments from each of the leaders of the workshops.

I should like to say at this point that this may not be a fair reflection, but it is my own interpretation of what the Chairmen said. I will ask each of the Chairmen after, if they have anything to add, and will then throw it open for questions and comments, either from the speakers or groups. You will have an opportunity to put your own point of view.

A. Group 1 - Wheel Parks - A Thomas

1. The benefits of wheel parks are very broad indeed and not just to be seen in a narrow context. They appeal first to the participants and to the local communities and to broader society at the same time.

They are rarely properly costed and need some creative and social accounting to justify their cost.

2. The political profile has to be raised to ensure continuance of public funding and the benefits must be seen widely and not just taken for granted as with many other kinds of facilities. eg. swimming pools.

Why should motorsports answer to different criteria?

3. Financial arrangements need to be properly considered ie. these, can be either public, private, or some kind of mix between the two. There should be a proper programme of capital investment. The various methods should be made clearer at the beginning of the project as to what is being funded and why.
4. Ownership and control do not necessarily have to fit into one single pattern. If you do not have a few models to follow, it can get confusing.
5. Provision of wheel parks needs to be looked at strategically and regional planning is not always easy.

B. Group 2 - Alternatives To Custody - Mike Cope

1. Wheel parks as alternatives to custody should be used not only because they are considerably cheaper. What limited research there is shows they produce lower re-conviction rates, in participants.
2. Vehicles are used as a medium for communication for young people, people often with multiple problems (poor self image esteem, numeracy/literacy, housing, employment) Vehicles give you something which can be much better than talking at them or talking with them. You can have something where you can work in a practical way alongside them and they can have a wider purpose in getting the young person to talk. If it is in the form of response about the vehicle then so much the better.
3. It has been found that criteria for funding is inconsistent both from central and local government. A scheme may survive in one area and fail in an adjoining area although the problems are similar - we need regional as well as local answers.

4. Should sites be regionally based, multi-use, and visited by offenders as part of a wider overall programme for offenders? This should be part of a broader approach to alternatives to custody.
5. There should be a move to get away from these schemes as being regarded as 'Alternatives to Custody'. Custody should not be the norm, for it itself is self defeating (amongst other things it promotes reoffending). We need to look at wider penal policies. Wheel parks are not a cheap way of ending custodial sentences.

C. Group 3 - Governing Bodies - Geoff Wilson

1. Local Authority officials are generally ignorant of the specific nature of motorsport disciplines. Eg. All events are regarded as rallies, with all the problems that they bring.
2. Why do National Park Authorities promote seminars to try to solve problems with mountain bikes, but not do the same for motorsports.

Why can there not be a positive dialogue to say how you can get effective motor sport in National parks and in accordance with National Park principles.
3. Motorsport is still fragmented with no single body to communicate. There is not one single corporate voice/body with which to communicate with a clear, recognised brief. There is a need for an overarching governing body.
4. Governing bodies do not set their sights low enough. Safety constraints are aimed at top level events and are inappropriate for smaller local clubs introducing young people and needs to cater for grass roots.
5. Motorsports' prevailing problem is one of image and the governing body should not dismiss the cowboy element ie. the unassociated driver/rider, the renegade youngster as nothing to do with them, for it is they who create the image which authorities and public deplore.

Governing bodies should not retreat into a righteous shell.

.....
The Chairman then proceeded to ask if there were any further comments from the Group Leaders.

1. Andrew Thomas emphasised the need for proper dialogue between the clubs, organised sport and providers of wheel parts at the planning stage and that this should be on an ongoing basis. There was a strong feeling that there should be more consultation, discussion and involvement between wheel park providers and representative of organised sports at the outset.
2. Mike Cope made the comment that people who go to prison do return there in a high number of cases. He did not know if there is any information on other schemes that result in them staying out.

Projects are now being more closely monitored but it is quite a long term project. In some cases there is a two year waiting period to ascertain results.

3. Geoff Wilson - Made no further comments.

.....
The Chairman then invited questions from the floor. Following a 'nil' response. Guest speakers were invited to raise questions they had posed during the conference.

Roger Sidaway

I note that many questions queried the lack of organisation within the sport as a whole and the absence of effective lobbying. Perhaps there could be some elaboration on this.

Ian Fytche

Picking up on what Roger is saying, I would have to go back to what started with the Elson Report. The recommendation was that this lack of co-ordination should be addressed with a National Forum or mechanism for motorsports to get its act together and present a united front. Perhaps we should turn the title round, address the problem and image and come back with some positive statements.

We are talking with LARA about whether the Sports Council has a part to play. Perhaps LARA and motorsports can come together with that thought in mind; the need for one voice, and carry that forward.

Geoff Wilson

The Chairman took me to task regarding The National Parks Review Panel report. He mildly criticised me for making some not too pleasing comments about that report saying if you knew how little of positive benefit to motorsport could have come out you would not have said some of the things you did.

The other related issue was that Roger Sidaway introduced to us a CCPR policy document which was published at the back end of last year and used to illustrate what little influence motorsport governing bodies have because there is very little in there relating to motorsport.

I know what the first draft looked like and know how many more positive representations are there then were in the first draft. It seems to illustrate that whatever side of the debate you are on thereby lies your judgement. It also illustrates how much better organised motorsports is now then it was 5 years ago. Roger saw it as the opposite.

I find that interesting and personally believe that motorsports are getting their act together but accept that we are not still very good at it and need some help. I hope that the Sports Council will give us that help.

Questions from the Floor.....

Geoff Hughes

Ian has spoken about the need for co-ordination at a national level and Geoff says they are beginning to get their act together. My comment would be that it is taking a very long time to do that. There are exceptions in the Northern Region, and the work of Alan Kind and Andrew Thomas has taken the lead and tried to develop a co-ordinated approach. I wonder perhaps where the governing bodies see the role of the regional motorsports federation? Could they provide co-ordination at national level? Individuals have limped along without much help from governing bodies regional or national.

Ian Davis (RAC)

It is very difficult. There are different organisations with different boundaries. In 1985/86 we looked at changing regional boundaries. We need to look at changing boundaries to come in line with the Sports Council boundaries. There is, however, a lot of political and people resistance from within. My answer is that 'I don't know'.

Geoff Wilson

It does not apply to the two members of the governing bodies here. They are two of the most forward thinking. It is almost eight years since the Elson report and that is the only time we have had to change the entrenched opinions of almost 100 years. That is a fairly accurate statement. That is not an easy path to tread. Slowly we are going to drag governing bodies out of their entrenchment but we need some outside support to do that. It is difficult for people inside the governing bodies to do that. I hope that everyone established within the authorities outside of our own sport recognise that we have tried to change opinion over the last 5/6 years.

Roger Sidaway

I gave a pessimistic view. Would you disagree: are you more optimistic about the future or don't you think it matters anyway?

Ian Davis

I think we would agree with you to some extent, but we are slightly more optimistic. There have been many problems which have faced our sport and environmental problems, safety in particular. It is more important than just environmental issues and it is a case of balancing all of that.

Roger Sidaway

Is there anything we can do to help?

Ian Davis

I don't know. I would hope so.

Bernard Lee, Chairman, Tyneside Motor Sport Group

I would take issue with the entrenched position. While I think RACMSA is doing a good job on the legislative issues, I feel they could do more in terms locally. It really is a multi million pound industry depending on a voluntary labour force. We need paid regional officials to get their act together in terms of local pressure groups, decision makers, etc.

Speaking for the Tyneside group as Chairman, we would wind up tomorrow if something could be put in which is more effective.

Chairman

Who would pay?

Bernard Lee

It is not in our interests to see the sport die and if that means an extra £10 on the licence fee we will stand it. There are a lot of big industries using rallying as a cheap advertising medium.

Andrew Thomas

It is a case of bring the issue back to the community, ie. spreading participation on a much broader basis. At a local level we should forge links between providers and governing bodies far more actively. There are enormous benefits for both sides if people would talk to each other.

Chairman

I will try and draw the threads together and give a few personal recommendations. For me it has been a privilege to sit in on the workshops. I have three broad areas I wish to underline:

First is the legitimacy of motorsports. A lot of what has been said is defensive. I am very sorry about that. Motorsports gives a great deal of positive enjoyment and can be used for part of a wider solution to problems in society. I have every reason to say that it is a legitimate activity and one which people should enjoy and continue to enjoy.

Although outdoor activities have grown as a whole motorsports have still held their own and have not declined, which is more than can be said in some other sports, where membership is failing.

We should not be too pessimistic about what is happening.

Secondly, promoting the image of motorsport, which is too often seen as a problem and linked with problem youth, and this does not help in that context. Aural intrusion is seen as worse than visual intrusion. In this noise ridden society, people do yearn for places where they can be quiet and motorsports need to recognise that.

There is some mutual re-education to be done.

There is a positive role on the image side for the governing bodies to take note of.

We do not have to be defensive; we have to show honest enthusiasm. There is a need for an effective and unified voice from existing governing bodies - an overarching governing body. Fragmented, you will be picked off one by one. This body will have to be both seen and heard to be overarching. Angling, for example now has reasonable future. We need to try and get an effective voice and to take responsibility.

Thirdly, management of provision is important. I have been struck by the fact that so much of provision, if it is to be effective, has to be on a regional rather than local basis. There will always be scope for local elements but the kind of cash input requested means that you are more likely to get it on a regional rather than local basis. We need to get local authorities to talk together.

We do have Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation whose job is to try and show where the strategic needs are and make sure there is proper provision for each activity and that is where effective lobbying has to begin.

Chairman gave thanks to:-

The Speakers and Workshop Chairmen, Gateshead MBC for the use of their facilities, and Geoff Hughes and Alan Kind for the organisation of the day.

MOTORSPORT IN THE COMMUNITY: THE WAY AHEAD, 4 MARCH 1992

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY ROGER SIDAWAY

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

INTRODUCTION

Although much of conference is concerned about wheels parks and urban areas, what is happening in the countryside is of great importance to motorsports in the towns. The two are inextricably linked - what happens in one affects the other. There is no doubt that enjoyment of motorsport in the countryside is threatened and that its participants are endangered species.

AIMS OF PAPER

- to assess the current situation: what has happened since the Elson research team completed their study in 1986.
- to assess the future prospects for motorsports in the countryside
- to suggest priorities for action by the motorsports organisations.

ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR ISSUES

In the few days I have had to prepare this paper I have concentrated on two issues - noise and image, particularly image.

Noise

The governing bodies have increased their regulation of noise levels at organised events but this is not widely recognised outside the sports. Most environmental bodies are more concerned about informal activity, as can be seen by their responses to the draft code of practice on noise and motoring. The fact that this code has been prepared jointly by the noise and motoring associations is an achievement in itself. But many of the consultees would like to see a mandatory and not a voluntary code and want it applied to informal events, and off-road recreational motoring. Despite these advances noise is still PERCEIVED to be a major problem. This may be unjust but the problem remains.

Image

The key words are "appropriateness" and "legitimacy".

As far as the majority of countrygoers are concerned, motorsports are considered to be an inappropriate use of the countryside. Their environmental impacts shouldn't have become a general political problem because they are localised and manageable. It should be possible to sort things out by local negotiation but the impacts tend to be exaggerated out of proportion.

The report of the National Parks Review Panel (1991) is likely to be highly significant dictating future policy, as the parks tend to set the standard for the rest of the countryside.

The panel proposed a fundamental change in the objectives of National Parks with conservation being given priority and recreation limited to "quiet enjoyment". The Government has accepted the proposal and intends to introduce new legislation to that effect.

The panel presented little hard evidence to justify these changes. It admitted there is no firm statistical evidence on trends or pressures and that walking probably accounts for three-quarters of the presumed growth in active recreation in recent years. Indeed it highlights the erosion caused by walkers and presses for government resources to repair the paths. Although it resisted pressure for a total ban on motorsports, it recommended:

5.1.2 "Noisy and intrusive recreational activities should be permitted only on sites where they cause no undue annoyance to other park users and no lasting environmental damage to the fabric of the park itself."

5.1.3 "Governing bodies of sports should develop in partnership with national park authorities effective codes of conduct for their sport, to be applied in National parks to avoid intrusion and environmental damage." (p. 36)

But then more draconian measures are suggested, which do not appear to be commensurate with the scale of the problem, notably:

"... We were concerned that certain categories of development and activities were taking place in national parks which we regarded as potentially so damaging to the landscape of national parks, or to their quiet enjoyment, that planning control should be extended to cover them..."

"... We propose a general reduction in permitted development rights for temporary use to control these activities ... Permitted development rights should be reduced from 28 days to 14 days in respect of clay pigeon shooting and war games, and from 14 days to 7 days in the case of motorcycle scrambling. (page 91)

I want to highlight the very differing treatment that is given to the impacts of walking and motorsports on the countryside and I would agree with Carolyn Harrison that:

"There is mounting evidence to suggest that newly emerging recreational activities, including a wide variety of water sports which demand access to water, and a growth in "unacceptable" activities such as motor sports, trail bikes and mountain bikes are unlikely to gain access to the territory they require unless the public sector makes a deliberate attempt to promote and accommodate them.

(Harrison, 1991, pp.88-89)

This argues that motorsports are not seen as legitimate users of the countryside even though certain motoring events date back to the 1920s, long before national park legislation. This is confirmed by the recent exclusion of motorsports from sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs).

In 1987, the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC) published a survey of damage to conservation sites caused by motorsports. Apparently 130 sites were damaged, half of them SSSIs, and the Society pressed for greater protection for SSSIs. This it has now achieved. Although the Sports Council and MOLARA, challenged the evidence, few details of damage were provided. Although I do not know what evidence DOE considered in reaching its decision, and do not deny that some damage took place, I question whether the punishment fits the crime. It is clear that in these discussions the views of MOLARA carried less weight than those of conservation bodies. It is also significant that, unlike the caravan and camping organisations, motoring bodies do not get planning exemptions for recognised sites. In other words the government is more concerned about the political clout of the conservation lobby and is not concerned about motorsports.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Environmental attitudes

We know how public concern is mounting about health and pollution, indeed about the survival of the planet. More information on vehicle emissions and traffic congestion is likely to add to that concern and to have a profound influence on motoring and motorsports. The major conservation organisations have grown three-fold in the last 20 years while the membership of most recreation organisations is static. Even the farming lobby has decided to swim with the tide. In this situation motorsports in the countryside appear increasingly anachronistic. You are caught between the national parks and the 28 day, soon to be 7 day, rule. When are you going to meet the environmental challenge?

Environmental lobbying

It must be apparent to you how the system works. It works through lobbying. The effective organisations are the campaigning organisations which adopt a high profile like the Ramblers' Association which has doubled its membership over the last 20 years. The system responds to lobbying.

Meanwhile the countryside agencies are merging into a potentially more powerful body. The Countryside Commissions and the Nature Conservancy Councils have merged in Scotland and Wales and it seems likely that conservation priorities will dominate the agendas of the new organisations. Who will fight from the recreation corner?

If the new slogan is "access for all but not access everywhere" it will be require pressure on the Sports Councils to make sure that "motorsports are somewhere".

Community Forests - a rare opportunity

The new community forests proposed close to the major cities could provide the last chance to make positive provision for motorsports. Yet even here the green-wellied, peace and quiet brigade may get priority. I have been working with Leisure Consultants on a sport and recreation strategy for Thames Chase, a new forest East of London. Most of the local planning policies there start with a presumption against motorsports even so close to London and, ironically, it is the DOE planning guidelines that are more positive in recognising the problems of "noisy and obtrusive" activities. So even within this forest initiative, intensive lobbying is required to gain any access for motorsports.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Every study and every conference over the last six years has had a common message for motorsports - organise, organise, organise. You need to organise to present your case. You need to organise to negotiate access. You need to organise to put your house in order and to adopt good conservation practice.

To be effective you need a professional team with a range of expertise to research your case, to plan and design environmentally friendly facilities, to campaign and gain sponsorship on your behalf. Above all you need leadership.

You need to be represented nationally in the corridors of power, regionally in strategic planning and above all locally to counter the NIMBY factor, meeting and being trusted by the local authorities, the county wildlife trusts, the local amenity groups and country park managers.

Finally, let me remind you that Michael Collins highlighted the lessons for motorsports in 1986 in his preface to the Bison report (quoted in the conference papers). Norman Barfield at the Stoke Rochford Conference eighteen months ago commented on how little progress had been made, indeed I suspect the situation may even have deteriorated.

You don't need any more conferences to identify the issues. They haven't changed in all this time: noise, image, shortage of land, lack of organisation;

When are YOU going to do something about them?

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Roger Sidaway worked for Forestry Commission where he specialised in recreation research. He was Head of the Recreation and Access Branch of the Countryside Commission before becoming the Director of the Centre for Leisure Research where he led the study team on Access to the Countryside.

Since becoming an independent consultant he has completed a number of studies of conflicts between recreation and conservation. The main thrust of this work argues that recreational impacts may be locally, but rarely nationally, significant and can be mitigated by sound management. Sport, Recreation and Nature Conservation (1988) for the Sports Council and the Countryside Commission included a series of case studies of conflicts; Good Conservation Practice for Sport and Recreation (1991) also funded by the NCC and the World Wide Fund for Nature assessed the contribution of management techniques such as zoning and seasonal restrictions as well as self-regulation by users. With Loughborough University he has worked on Outstanding Areas of Special Significance to Sport (OASIS) for the Sports Council.

He is also a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Ecology and Resource Management at Edinburgh University, teaching on countryside recreation management and studying environmental conflicts in Britain, the United States and the Netherlands funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The case studies include motorsports and a detailed assessment of methods of conflict resolution.

RMS. 2.4.92.

WALKER WHEELS - THE HISTORY OF A MOTOR PROJECT

this paper is preceded by a short slide presentation which provides an illustrative history of the development of Walker Wheels and the nature of the activities undertaken by the Project.

INTRODUCTION

- (1) It is slightly paradoxical that I find myself addressing a Conference entitled "Motorsports in the Community - The Way Ahead" when the reality is that I am about to tell you a tale of euphoria, difficulty and finally despair - and yet Phoenix may rise from the ashes (again!)
- (2) When invited to address this Conference, the financial situation in Newcastle was only desperate - it is now much worse and one of the casualties of the £2m budget reduction within the City's Leisure Services has been Walker Wheels. There is however, at least a glimmer of hope and I will return to that later. My brief is the history of the Project and I will start at the beginning.

HISTORY

- (3) The Walker Wheels Project was conceived in the early 1980s as an 'end use' following the Walker Riverside Reclamation Scheme. As you have seen, the Project is located on the site of the former Thomas Ness Tar Works and its construction offered a major challenge funded by Derelict Land Grant. The scheme also attracted both capital and revenue support from Inner City Partnership (Urban Programme) which financed equipment and staffing costs.
- (4) The initial work on the Project was led by Tyne and Wear County Council which, along with other Metropolitan Counties, was abolished in 1986 - shortly after the Project commenced operation. Responsibility for the Project transferred to Newcastle City in 1985 and my Department and Committee were responsible for preparing the management arrangements in consultation with the Probation Service, Elected Members and local people and groups.
- (5) A detailed constitution was prepared and agreed and the Project set up as an independent voluntary organisation with a Management Committee formed from users and local people with advice and assistance principally from the Probation Service and the City Council.

PROJECT OPERATION

- (6) The Project included a scramble track, adjacent tarmac area, vehicle workshop and office and social facility which was later extended to include a youth facility. Walker Riverside had been frequently used by youths for illegal motor bike activities and the Project was targeted at the 18 - 25 age group who had offended and those under 18 who either had, or were likely to offend. The Project did, however, attract from a much wider grouping than this initial and probably too narrow target group.
- (7) Initial staffing for the Project consisted of a Manager and Assistant Manager plus 25 MSC Community Programme workers (3 full-time, 22 part-time). The CP workers undertook a full range of tasks including track marshalling and maintenance work. They were employed through the CP Agency; the management were employed by the Management Committee (i.e. the Project rather than the Local Authority). Pay and support services were initially through Norcare but subsequently from my department.
- (8) Membership rose from 496 in 1987/88 to a peak of 1200 in 1988/89 and 925 in 1989/90. The period of euphoria mentioned in my introduction was definitely during this period and although there were problems, they were partly a result of high demand levels, adjusting opening hours and managing a CP workforce. There was also difficulties in sustaining an effective Management Committee and providing them with the significant support they required. The Project, although relatively successful, did not regrettably have the firm foundation it needed when the euphoria changed to difficulty.

RESOURCING PROBLEMS

- (9) During 1989, the MSC Community Programme (CP) was gradually phased out to be replaced by Employment Training (ET). Whereas CP had been job related, ET was training related. The payment package was different and the Project was never able to effectively staff Walker Wheels as it had under CP. The training content of track marshalling duties was, for example, insufficient to attract ET placements. The Project therefore lost its 25 operating staff within a year.
- (10) Major restructuring was therefore necessary and during 1989/90 the staffing was changed to include a manager, a development officer, 2 workshop supervisors and a clerical assistant. When CP/ET staff were lost completely to the Project, track marshals were hired in on a casual basis and the opening hours reduced drastically to endeavour to live within a fixed budget. Although much good work was still being achieved by the small and dedicated workforce, the Project was now on a downward spiral with the Advisors largely acting as the

Management Committee and the Project changing direction to seek to increase its earned income and establish a solid base from which to develop.

- (11) The situation was further complicated by financial pressures within the City Council which was rate capped 3 years in succession and, on its replacement by Poll Tax capping, only avoided this penalty by making significant budget reductions, over £1m of which came from Leisure Services. To make matters worse, over the same period, ICP funding for voluntary projects was put onto a tapering contribution from the DOE leaving the Leisure Services Committee to pick up an increasing share of overall costs each year.
- (12) The Project was by now deeply into the despair phase and was under threat of closure due to escalating costs and greatly reduced activity. The cost in 1990/91 was £97,500 including a "bail-out" grant of £24,000 from Leisure Services Committee. Even at this level of support, this was insufficient to operate the Project as envisaged and several Elected Members were beginning to closely question whether or not 'value for money' was being achieved in a time of financial crisis within the City. The Project was, however, funded for the 1991/92 financial year with a clear remit to establish a more viable operation, coupled with an effective Management Committee.

THE FUTURE(?)

- (13) The future shape of the Project has now been under consideration for some months. A Working Party including some of the original players, e.g. my Department, Probation Service, Youth and Community Workers, Elected Members, and supported by the local clergy, are seeking to re-establish the Project. A wider project to be known as Walker Riverside Adventure Centre is being established and will include:

Outdoor Education
Community Facilities
Motor Activities

- (14) The motor activities element is unlikely to ever repeat the Walker Wheels of 1986-89 but already includes Compulsory Basic Training, Bike Lore and Recreational Motor Cycling. It is also hoped to combine this provision with the motor car based training initiatives to be funded and managed by NACRO and the Probation Service. Phoenix did seem to be rising from the ashes but.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

- (15) The serious financial situation facing the City for 1992/93 was not fully known until charge capping criteria and revenue support grant settlements were notified to Councils in December 1991/January 1992. At that point, worst fears were confirmed and reduction targets for Committees increased by 20%. The core funding for Walker Wheels was a casualty of these higher target levels and Leisure Services Committee resolved not to grant aid the Project for 1992/93.
- (16) The only glimmer of hope is that sufficient transitional funds might be gathered from a number of sources to enable the Walker Riverside Adventure Centre to seek longer term funding from sources such as the Home Office Development Programme, Urban Development Corporation, Grant giving trusts and Foundations etc. The Project is, however, on a knife edge and may yet go under.

March 1992

D.C. Cobb