
Staying on the Right Track

Vehicles in the Countryside in the Peak District National Park



Update – October 2009

Operation Blackbrook Update – report by PC Kevin Lowe

Operation "BLACKBROOK" was launched in April 2007 to look at issues created by 'off road' bikers and 4x4 drivers travelling through areas such as Taddington, Longstone Edge, Pilsley, Baslow, Eyam and Millers Dale.

Residents in these areas had complained of noise and pathway erosion caused by the motorcycles and 4x4 vehicles, which in turn had affected their quality of life using the unsurfaced tracks, public footpaths and bridleways.

The operation has developed a close working partnership between Peak District National Park Authority rangers and rights of way staff, Derbyshire Police, South Yorkshire Police and representatives of vehicle users including the:

- Peak and Derbyshire Motor Vehicle User group (PDVUG), which represents a considerable number of 4x4 and off-road motorcyclists
- Buxton and District Landrover Club (BADLRC)
- Glossop 4x4
- GLASS (Green Lane Association) and the
- Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF).

Representatives from all these groups now take part in the operation stopping drivers and riders to hand out publicity materials giving advice on where to drive and where to avoid.

Areas identified for particular attention include Pilsley, Hassop, Beeley, Monyash, Youlgreave, Longstone Edge, Pindale, Ball Cross Wood, near Bakewell, Silly Dale at Foolow, Rowland, Long Causeway at Stanage, Bar Road at Baslow, Houndkirk and areas of Shatton, Brough and Bradwell.

Other areas will be visited as part of the on-going operations.



The governance meeting on 15 September

At a well-attended governance meeting on 15 September 2009 vehicle users and local residents were able to put questions about the operation to Chris Jackson, the new deputy leader of Derbyshire County Council; Neil Hickman, senior highways officer for Derbyshire County Council and Peak District National Park Authority staff Andy Farmer, Garry Bacon and Richard Pett.

Various matters were raised ranging from suggestions by vehicle users regarding partnership working through to residents requesting Traffic Regulation Orders. There were also requests for further resources, signs and repairs to routes.

Regular multi-agency operation days are planned until the end of the year and beyond.

Advisory Signs – Report by the Peak District National Park Authority’s rights of way team

Advisory signs are being erected at various locations to warn all users of issues about a particular route.

They have gone up at:

- Rowland (SK 2172) to alert users passing through the village

- Brushfield (SK 1671) where a very small number of users have been trespassing off the track. They also warn about the narrowness and steepness of parts of the route
- Edensor (SK 2469), a very busy route for all users and
- Beeley Hilltop non-classified highway (SK 2768), again a popular route with all users.

We will continue to provide advisory signs where appropriate and are happy to consider any suggestions. Please do heed the signs, which are erected where there are issues we feel all users should be alerted to.

Silly Dale at Foolow

After a second Public Inquiry the status of Silly Dale (SK1976) has been determined as a Public Bridleway. Read the full determination at <http://tinyurl.com/y8qr89b> (the last decision on the page). Advisory signs have been erected on site.

Yorkshire Dales TRO Proposals – High Court Decision

You may be aware of the considerable national interest in the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's decision to make 13 Traffic Regulation Orders, four of which were subject to legal challenges from users. The authority lost the case and the High Court quashed the TROs on the four routes.

The full judgment can be viewed at:

www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2009/1425.rtf

We will obviously be watching developments in the Yorkshire Dales and take into account the experiences there.

Sustainability Update

Officers of Derbyshire County Council's highways and countryside sections will meet with officers from the Peak District National Park Authority in late October to discuss how to progress the 8 Action Plans for the 'worst' green lanes in the Derbyshire area of the Peak District National Park. Expect to see a special *Staying on the Right Track* newsletter on the subject in due course.

Pindale - A Special Place?

We thought you would be interested to see this article by Chris Mitchell, who is the GLASS Derbyshire representative and chair of the Peak District Vehicle Users Group. It appeared in a recent GLASS newsletter.



Pindale Road, (TrailWise ref. SK1582-01) is a rocky track, near Castleton in Derbyshire, which runs next to a disused quarry and an old lead mine. It's a favourite lane for recreational 4x4s and trail bikes. So, why is it special? Well, not just because it's a rather challenging route with a steep narrow walled section and some impressive scenery!

Apparently, the quarry faces and rock outcrops within Pindale provide examples of limestone layers formed about 350 million years ago during the early carboniferous period. The character of the limestone changes progressively across the site, recording a boundary on the carboniferous sea bed which separated a shallow "shelf" area from a deeper basin. The limestone contains fossil remains of the marine organisms that lived in the carboniferous sea. The site therefore provides important evidence of the nature of the environment in this area 350 million years ago.

Also present in Pindale is its very own "Pindale Quartz Rock" which is a silica-fluorite present in boulders and in-situ in the quarry. This along with the carboniferous evidence gives the site considerable research and teaching value, and for this reason it is registered as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

OK, so you aren't a geologist and all that stuff about rocks sounds pretty boring. So why should we care? Well, Pindale also boasts another SSSI. Alongside the historic lead mine with its empty lager cans and boulders, are "the Pindale Scrins". These are narrow open slits up to 12 metres deep, where miners excavated ore. Strangely, the Scrins are now host to some very rare plants such as leadwort and Pyrenean scur grass (yes, really!)

Shown as an ORPA (Other Road with Public Access) or unclassified county road on your maps, Pindale Road is acknowledged by the Peak District National Park staff and the Derbyshire Police as a public road. Mind you, the lack of maintenance over the years has left it in a rough old state. The road runs alongside both SSSIs, and so it's important that users stick to the original track to avoid damaging the surrounding environment.

The road has long been popular with walkers and green laners, including mountain bikers and trail bikes. Some years ago the quarry company had a barrier of earth erected along the quarry edge to prevent trespass into the old quarry (which - by the way - still has dangerous rock falls), and all was well for some time.

Needless to say, I was horrified when I visited the road recently to find that blatant "off-piste" activity by 4x4s and trail bikes has turned the environs of Pindale into what now looks like part of a 'Pay and Play' site. A large number of off-road tracks have developed up and around the sides of the old lead mine and over the earth barrier into the old quarry. It would appear that recently a significant number of illegal users have organised off-road sessions on a regular basis.

The Derbyshire Police, Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the Peak District National Park Ranger service have formed a voluntary partnership with the Peak and Derbyshire Vehicle User Group (PDVUG). Members of all these organisations regularly get together to patrol Pindale Road and other sensitive lanes in the area, to talk to and hopefully persuade riders and drivers to use the routes sensibly and legally. This initiative is known as Operation Blackbrook, which is led by PC Kevin Lowe of Bakewell Police (see earlier article).

GLASS, TRF and other motoring clubs are members of PDVUG, and the Operation Blackbrook partnership promotes the use of TrailWise and the green lane code of conduct.

This article is a plea to our members and affiliated clubs to spread the word that illegal off-road driving by cars or bikes is absolutely **not on**. Stick to public lanes or byways at all times and avoid driving on the adjoining land or property.

Please report any 'off-piste' activity that you see to the police and your local GLASS rep, and take every opportunity to educate the uninitiated in the green lane drivers' code of conduct.