

Preserving Green Lanes in the Peak District.

I wonder, please, if the Peak & Derbyshire Vehicle User Group (PDVUG) could make a plea for assistance from readers who in years gone by may have ridden green lanes in the Peak District? PDVUG acts to be one voice for national recreational motoring groups and for local clubs whose members use green lanes in the Peak District and Derbyshire in general, by maintaining a dialogue with the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

The Group fights to ensure that as many lanes as possible are recorded formally by DCC as having vehicle rights and PDVUG challenges the actions of the PDNPA, which appears, by its actions, to have a mission to put Traffic Regulation Orders on many of the green lanes in order to exclude recreational riders from the Peak District.

Currently, DCC is undertaking a review of over 100 applications for some disputed rights of way and for many 'unsealed' unclassified roads to be confirmed as byways open to all traffic (BOATS). The review of each lane involves DCC researching historical maps and legal documents dating from around 1750 to the present day. Sadly we are losing lanes because the available evidence is lacking historical evidence of modern vehicle usage. The best way that we can prevent lanes, which we currently ride, becoming classified as bridleways and footpaths is to provide what is called "User Evidence".

Proving actual vehicle use can often override the negative historical evidence and is the best way to secure a lane's future. User evidence takes the form of a statement of prior use by means of a brief questionnaire being completed by anyone who has ridden a particular lane. Unfortunately, due to the way the law is written, we need evidence of vehicle use for a 20 year period, which is usually based from around 1980 to 2004. Many people currently riding the lanes did not do so in the 1980s and 90s, either because they are new to the activity or are simply too young. Our plea is to your older readers who still ride or have ridden lanes in the Peak District to let us know if they would be willing to support our efforts by sending a very brief email to us at PDVUG@yahoo.com We can also be found on Facebook under PDVUG and Twitter @PDVUG.

To every respondent, we would forward a map showing the lanes for which we need user evidence and asking them to complete a simple questionnaire. That way we can capture any riding history and help to keep the lanes open now and for future generations.

Yours faithfully,
Nigel Bennett,
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