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# LARA NEWS

ISSUE 1 – MAY 1993

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## WHAT IS LARA ?

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### ● WHAT IS LARA?

LARA is shorthand for the Motoring Organisations' LAND ACCESS & RECREATION ASSOCIATION. It is a forum set up in 1986 to promote the responsible use of our environment for motor sport and recreation.

### ● WHO IS LARA?

LARA is a voluntary grouping of organisations with interests in motorised sport and recreation in the countryside. Each contributes to, and draws information and support from the Association, and officers are charged with representing LARA to outside bodies. Membership is open to any national or large regional body. Associate membership is available to other organisations with similar or overlapping interests. LARA currently has ten member organisations which are listed overleaf.



The Sports Council takes an active interest in LARA's work and grant-aids the LARA work programme.

### ● WHAT LARA IS NOT

LARA is not a governing body of motor sport or recreation and is not superior to any of its members.

### ● WHAT LARA DOES

LARA assists its member organisations to better fulfil their own aims and objectives within the constraints imposed by legislation and public tolerance. It coordinates the policies and actions of the individual groups and, where appropriate, acts as the unified voice of motor sport and recreation and as a single point of contact for other organisations.

LARA aims to be fully aware of all political, local and environmental issues that affect, or may affect, motor sport and recreation and, by discussion and representation, to secure reasonable and well managed access to land for the various activities of its member organisations.

LARA provides a valuable information and PR service by receiving, analysing and disseminating reports of problems and successes and by responding to media misrepresentation at national and local level.

### ● WHY LARA DOES THIS

The public's growing leisure opportunities have increased the range and scale of all sorts of activities in the countryside. Social, economic and environmental changes have also been taking place throughout the countryside. All these changes can affect motor sport and recreation.

In addition, there has been a tightening of planning controls on the use of land, health and safety rules and other legislation. Many "quangos" and government agencies have been reacting – sometimes over-reacting – to the "green awareness" that swept through the 1980s.

LARA's constituent organisations wish to retain a fair share and usage of the nation's limited natural resources which are available for motor sport and recreation. The Association was established to look after members' common interests and needs, and to contribute a motor sports dimension to environmental and access debates.

### ● HOW LARA WORKS

The heart of LARA is the committee of member organisations' representatives – one from each of the constituent groups. The committee meets three times each year as a forum where issues affecting all types of motor sport and recreation are freely discussed. It elects its own chairman and treasurer from the ranks of these representatives and receives reports from nominees on other bodies and from its own two full-time officers.

Between the formal meetings, all committee members are kept aware of issues, problems and projects by memoranda and copy correspondence. They, in turn, are responsible for advising their own organisations which can then arrange for appropriate information to reach the correct level within their own structure. To assist in this process, LARA newsletters and releases are widely distributed.

### ● WHO DOES IT?

Two full-time officers undertake the day-to-day work. Their job titles indicate how the work is nominally split, although there is necessarily a considerable overlap and area of common responsibility. LARA may be contacted through either Development Officer (DO):

Alan Kind	David Kersey
Motor Recreation DO	Motor Sport DO
PO Box 19	A-CU House
Gosforth	Wood Street
Newcastle upon Tyne	Rugby
NE3 5HW	CV21 2YX
Tel: 091 236 4082	0788 541137
Fax: 091 236 7093	0788 573585

Individual members of LARA member organisations should initially refer problems through their representatives on the LARA Committee.

LARA's MSDO works within the structure of the joint RACMSA/A-CU MOTORSPORTS FACILITIES UNIT (MFU) and deals principally with competition issues including the provision and retention of venues for sport. The MRDO is responsible for non-competitive motor recreation, with particular interest in legislative and environmental matters right across the motoring spectrum. Both officers work to LARA's four-year FORWARD PLAN (1992-96) which contains targets and achievement indicators for principal programmes of work in the following areas:

**Education; Development; Liaison; Planning; Protection.**

## ● LARA'S WORK FOR LAND ACCESS

Since its formation in 1986, LARA has been closely involved in several developments affecting motor sport and recreation, and has worked to retain fair and reasonable access to the land and facilities necessary for these activities to continue. In particular, its work has been focused on encouraging the harmonisation of motoring recreation and sport with growing environmental awareness. Recent initiatives include:

### Moves towards Regionalisation.

Motor sport and recreation can only survive and prosper where the many different disciplines talk and work together locally – just as LARA does on a national level. The creation of *regional motorsport federations*, based, where possible, on Sports Council regional boundaries, is supported by LARA as the best way of giving motor sport and recreation a voice into local government. A national network of LARA respondents drawn from member organisations has been created to act as a first point of contact for local councils and other organisations.

### The Designation of Land.

More and more land of the type traditionally used for motor sport is being designated in some way. As well as the well known *national parks* we now have *areas of outstanding natural beauty*, *sites of special scientific interest*, *environmentally sensitive areas*, *countryside stewardship* and *set-aside schemes*. All of these can impose serious limitations on access for motor sport and recreation. LARA keeps a watch on the extension of such designations and informs the government about the special needs of motorists within the planning system.

### The Protection of green roads.

Motorised use of the countryside for recreation is again a political “hot potato”, with 4WD recreational vehicles coming under increasing, and largely unfair, criticism as destroyers of the countryside. LARA constantly strives to correct and counter damaging press reports and to put across the true, and mostly unsensational, facts. The lengthy and complicated public inquiry into motorised use of the *Great Ridgeway* in late 1992 highlighted the sort of prejudices and misunderstanding which have to be constantly addressed. LARA is contributing to the government's review of the law covering motorised use of green roads and to the policies and publications of the Countryside Commission and the Countryside Council for Wales.

### Codes of Conduct and educational materials.

LARA's code of conduct for motorised users has been built upon the experience of member organisations. It has been reprinted many times, with thousands of copies circulated nationally, and with several 4WD manufacturers now incorporating the code into their driver literature. LARA's *Access Guide* on basic countryside law and etiquette is now in its second edition. Other codes and information leaflets are available and under preparation. A list of LARA publications is available on request.

## Voluntary restraint.

Good management of countryside resources sometimes requires that some or all types of user restrict their use of a facility to allow repair and recovery. LARA has established a policy and practice of *voluntary restraint* on motorised use which, when combined with repair or other action by statutory and/or voluntary bodies, exemplifies good management practice.

## Conferences and Exhibitions.

As part of the process of education, both of its own members and of those who influence land access, LARA has held conferences on aspects of motor sport and recreation. Topics include wheels-parks, and coping with the planning system, and further initiatives are planned.

LARA does not organise exhibitions on its own account, but takes space at agricultural and country shows. This gives LARA and its members the opportunity to reduce prejudice and promote motor sport and recreation to potential providers of facilities.

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## LARA Members:

All Wheel Drive Club  
PO Box 6, Fleet, Hants  
GU13 9YB

Amateur Motor Cycle Association  
Chateau Pleck, Darlaston Road  
Walsall WS2 9XL

Association of Rover Clubs  
65 Long Mead Avenue, Hazel Grove  
Stockport SK7 5PJ

Auto-Cycle Union  
Wood Street, Rugby  
CV21 2YX

British Motorcyclists Federation  
129 Seaforth Avenue, Motpur Park  
KT3 6JU

Civil Service Motoring Association  
95 Queens Road, Brighton  
BN1 3WY

Motor Cycle Industry Association  
Starley House, Eaton Road  
Coventry CV1 2FH

National Autograss Sport Association  
6 Crab Lane, Crossgates  
Scarborough, YO12 4JY

RAC Motor Sports Association  
Motor Sports House, Riverside Park  
Colnbrook, SL3 0HG

Trail Riders Fellowship  
c/o 99 Boundary Road, Wallington  
SM6 0TE

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LARA Motorsports Facilities Unit:  
% A-CU House, Wood St, Rugby, CV21 2XY