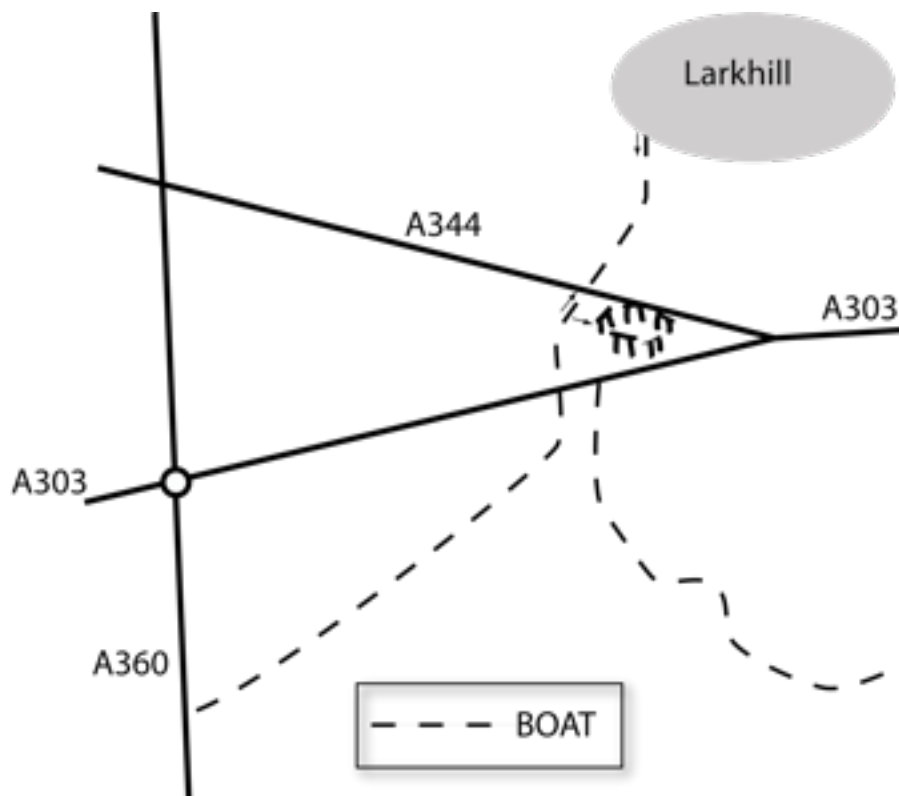


## Stonehenge - A view on the TROs proposed for the BOATs that cross the World Heritage Site.

There seems to be a lot of motorists getting very hot under the collar regarding Wiltshire County Council's proposal to impose Traffic Regulation Orders on BOATs that cross the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (hereafter referred to as the WHS) and this paper hopes to set out, in the briefest terms, what all the fuss is about and hopefully replace any speculation with fact.

There are about 7 km of BOAT that pass through the WHS, much of it so recorded after hard-fought Public Inquiries and court battles. This sketch map provides an idea of the area under discussion.



More detailed information is available at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council/consultations/troconsultations/trostonehengeprohibitionondriving.htm>

These BOATs are in pretty good condition, being wide with a hard surface. (Images below)

English Heritage want to build a new (and long overdue) visitor centre and in an earlier scheme wanted the BOATs closed to motorists so that they could run road trains to ferry visitors over part of the BOAT network and grass over the rest, thus obliterating any visible hint of the roads that met on this site. There was also the expectation that the A303 would be buried with the existing tarmac removed and grassed over. This would create an aesthetically pleasing setting for the stones, albeit isolated from their history and reason.

The latest scheme is to build the visitor centre at Airman's Corner, the junction of the A360 and the A344, with the A344 closed to allow road-trains to ferry visitors to the stones. The A303 is to remain as it is - on the surface, noisy and visually intrusive.

Wiltshire CC have taken on the role, as Highway authority, of imposing TROs on the WHS BOATs that would prohibit motorised vehicles, although I am not sure this 'need' is central to the current plans. What we have here is a history of discussion, application, planning, etc that has given rise to the expectation that Stonehenge WHS would be MPV free. Those involved are now reluctant to relinquish that expectation, even though most of the original need has gone and the 'sterile' landscape in which they wanted the stones to be displayed will no longer come about.

Clearly there is no visual, practical or safety reason to include the two BOATs south of the A303. The same could be said for that BOAT that links Larkhill to the A344. The section of BOAT to the west of the stones is, for the most part beyond the brow of a rise in the land, thus all but invisible to the visitor at the stones. The most visually intrusive aspect of this BOAT, from the perspective of the visitor, is the fence that runs alongside the BOAT - and the



entire perimeter of the grassland that surrounds the stones.

*Looking due east, with the stones centre image and the A 303 climbing the distant hill to the right. The arrows on the plan above indicate position images taken from.*

What we have here is an ancient monument that was either built on the intersection of a number of routes, or a number of routes headed toward Stonehenge because it was there. No matter, the routes are inextricably linked to the stones and that should not be put aside for aesthetics.

As can be seen from these images the routes are open, wide and with good surface. If the verges were mown there is minimal opportunity for conflict between user groups. The main

issue here, and most pertinently for the motorcyclist, are the alternative routes open to you, if these BOATs be closed to MPV. There are BOATs and UCRs to the east of Lake, BOATs west of the A360 and BOATs north of Larkhill. The WHS BOATs are 7km of crucial links in the



network. The alternatives available consist of lengthy excursions on minor roads and/or joining either the A 303 or A360, and probably both.

*Taken from the same position as the previous image, with the stones on the right, looking directly toward Larkhill. The A344 is hidden in the dip in the middle distance and the BOAT can be seen heading to the trees at Larkhill beyond. This is a new route. The original ran directly through what is now the fenced off area where it forked to form the two routes south of the A303.*

How do we address this? I would suggest that via e-mail and fora this paper is circulated to you members, asking that they write to Wiltshire CC, objecting to the TROs as proposed. The deadline is 14<sup>th</sup> February, but that should focus the mind and not permit the 'tomorrow' approach. It will be seen below that you would be advised to object as an individual and without including any reference to your club or group. But, do mention that you use the BOATs - if in fact you do.

And... Please do not copy/paste the text from this paper, as it will be so obvious and that will reduce the weight given to your input.

I set out below points that could be considered and utilised in a letter of objection, remembering that the closure of the objection period is 14 February.

- ▶ The letter must include the words "I object to the TROs as proposed".

- ▶ The letter should also offer alternatives to the proposal. You may consider that you stand no chance of winning on the route next to the stones, but you could suggest that "due to the proximity of the A303 and the fact that the English Heritage Survey did not look at those BOATs



south of the A303, there is no need to include them in the Order. You might suggest that the TRO should be amended to "no parking" on the BOATs, or that an Order on some routes that prohibited traffic at certain times - like school holiday periods or when the Visitor Centre is open. But - offer an alternative is a powerful tool, as these must be considered.

*This image is taken from Larkhill, looking directly at the stones. Where the track turns to the right in the distance you are then on the line shown in the previous image.*

- ▶ There is blatant bias in the report - example 'the LAF do not object to the TRO' but it could have honestly also have been said 'the LAF do not support the TRO, because they remained neutral.
- ▶ Awfully rude, I know, but you might point out that Cllr Tonge (the Cabinet Member) has made a fist of the TROs at Chute and Ludgershall, and that this proposal demonstrates the same bias and lack of forethought.
- ▶ The TRO proposals are not fact based - but desire led - this is counter to the statute that requires that a TRO must benefit the users - and motorists are amongst those who should benefit. Instead there are substantial safety issues that have been glossed over (see below).
- ▶ The Cabinet Member who signed off the Order has refused to meet with objectors.
- ▶ The TRO Officer has amalgamated all objections from each user group and called them "one objection". Thus it would appear that the true number of objections to the proposed Orders is being concealed.

- ▶ All surveys show very low MPV user numbers - thus why the need for a TRO? Traffic modeling suggests no safety advantages in the scheme. In fact the survey of MPV users did NOT even look at the two BOATs south of the A303.
- ▶ Press for a public Inquiry so that objectors can better air their views, cross-examine WCC to expose the underlying anti MPV bias.
- ▶ Given the volume of MPV user on the WHS BOATs and the proximity of the A303, there is no real prospect of the TRO achieving the stated goal of "improving the amenity of the area".
- ▶ ***This must be cited in all objections.*** Appendix 3 to the WCC report on the WHS TROs makes a number of references to road safety - yet this 'safety' is not then considered for the byway users (particularly motorcyclists on low-powered/low-g geared trail bikes) diverted onto the main roads.

As stated above, the alternative for the local (who will be aware of the TROs) or user from afar (who will see the long BOAT on OS and arrive to find it closed) will have no alternative but to mix with fast moving traffic with a high proportion of HGV, including many foreign lhd vehicles.

Wiltshire CC are belated very aware of their (glaringly obvious) lack of thought to the displaced traffic and the associated safety concerns, and this was revealed in a recent meeting between WCC & the TRF's local group Officers. (TRF members are currently awaiting a response from Wiltshire police on the questions 'How many accidents, injuries and deaths have occurred on the A roads around Stonehenge? And how many accidents, injuries and deaths have occurred on the BOATs across the WHS?' I think we can guess. So, the safety aspect of these TROs on vulnerable road users appears to be a large crack in the proposed scheme.

Letters of objection to the proposed TROs should go to:

Kate Davey  
 Senior Traffic Order Technician  
 Dept. for Transport, Environment & Leisure  
 Wiltshire County Council  
 County Hall  
 Bythesea Road  
 Trowbridge  
 BA14 8JN

Or e-mail your letter to [trafficorders@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:trafficorders@wiltshire.gov.uk)

As to the future, should LARA engage with WCC and English Heritage with the aim of securing at least some MPV access to the WHS BOATs? This matter will not end with the proposed TRO. If WCC do eventually put this Order in place others will follow. If they do not, or if they have serious doubts (as I believe they do) on the imposition of this Order as far as motorcyclists go, then there will be a need to enter into dialogue with the landowners and highway authority for a reasonable outcome. There will be more TROs and we know that WCC are under more pressure to impose TROs than there is pressure from users not to.

DT - 6 February 2010

Should you require further information, please contact me at [dave.tilbury@laragb.org](mailto:dave.tilbury@laragb.org)