

On and on went the team, several struggling to keep up with Howard's idea of a slow pace. Three quarters of the way up, at 2,389ft the batteries were at last changed.

Howard and Trumper drove on upward over the shale and rock, getting nearer and nearer to the top. By the time the railway

station was reached, the team were determined to go right to the very top. This last part is a real climb for the able bodied, even with two feet and hands to help them.

So for Howard and his Trumper this was the most difficult part, especially with winds gusting up to 59mph. Temporarily leaving the trailer, Howard powered on. The ropes were at last needed - as the Trumper 'wheelied' up the 1 in 2 slope!

At 14:26 Howard reached the Summit where he received a spontaneous round of applause from all the bystanders.

Howard had achieved his dream. After 28 years he could sit back on the top of a mountain again. Even the weather was in Howard's favour: the summit was backed by clear blue sky and you



could see for miles.

After reaching the top Howard had the option of returning by train but there was no stopping him - he was going to drive down as well. So with his ramps and trailer the descent was on. It was 5 miles down but Howard didn't notice - he had a smile from ear to ear.

The descent was just as hazardous, though the Trumper was often able to get down steps without the ramps. The team returned to base at 18:15pm, tired but having achieved all they had set out to do. Howard & Trumper had scaled Snowdon!

#### STATISTICS

<b>Climb</b>	3,183ft over 5miles	
<b>Weights</b>		
Trumper	321lbs	146kgs
<b>Carrying</b>		
Howard Brunton	168lbs	76kgs
Trailer	22lbs	10kgs
Ramps	36lbs	16kgs
Extra Batteries	108lbs	49kgs
<b>Total load</b>	<b>334lbs</b>	<b>151kgs</b>

## DIS-RECOVERY!

All Disabled Rambles are enormous fun, bowling along effortlessly through the unspoilt and often remote countryside. That is until the dreaded, though infrequent, breakdown occurs. It may be that the batteries are more tired than you hoped or there's sabotage by an electrical gremlin.

Faced with the problem of how to get a Land Rover and trailer down narrow footpaths, the Disabled Ramblers have come up with a specially designed lightweight recovery trailer. Just wide enough to take a scooter, it can be towed by another large scooter fitted with a mini tow hitch.

The first outing was on the Surrey Ramble, with several bridlepaths barely 3 feet wide. Sure enough, we had a breakdown, a sudden power failure. Whilst once we might have spent an hour or more exploring the innards, not this time. The special trailer was drawn up and the broken scooter loaded, complete with the unhappy driver.

With the scooter safely strapped to the trailer, she sat majestically nine inches higher than normal and soon relaxed, enjoying the view. As a precaution, two able-bodied helpers acted as a dogteam, plus two pushers on the worst sections.

The special trailer was built by Beamer Ltd and is now routinely used on rambles.



## Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000

### Preparing for new access rights

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 will give people a new right of access to walk over large areas of open countryside and common land. It will also mean new responsibilities for those who visit and manage these areas.

The Countryside Agency have published a leaflet describing how these new access arrangements will be put into practice on the ground in England, and explains what they will mean for those involved, especially farmers, landowners and countryside visitors. It also summarises some of the main changes to the law on rights of way.

### When will the new access be available?

The new right of access will be introduced as quickly as possible. The Countryside Agency need to make sure that the new rights and responsibilities are established in a way that is fair to everyone involved and that everyone fully understands where they can and cannot go, and what they can and cannot do. So that everyone is clear about where they may walk, the Countryside Agency will produce maps of all of the 'open country' - generally mountain, moor, heath and downland - and common land that will become accessible. This is likely to take several years to complete.

Throughout, the Countryside Agency will be working closely with the Government, land managers, national parks, local authorities and voluntary organisations. They all have a part to play in preparing for the new access arrangements and making sure that they work well on the ground.

### Mapping the land

Mapping open country and common land begins in the north west and south east of England in early 2001. There will be a great deal of local consultation, especially when draft maps for these areas are published in the autumn.

There will be well publicised exhibitions and other opportunities for people to be consulted.

Provisional maps will be published for these areas in early 2002, and the Countryside Agency aim to produce conclusive maps (following any appeals that may be made) later that year. Mapping for the rest of England, area by area, will start late in 2001 and includes a similar process of consultation and appeal.

### Where will people be able to go?

Once the access rights are in place, people will usually be able to walk on areas of mountain, moor, heath, down and common land. There may also be other areas of countryside which public or private landowners will choose to 'dedicate' for access under new powers in the Act.

Some types of land, such as cultivated land, are not included in the right of access, and there are also restrictions close to homes and some farm buildings, for example. For more detail on this, see Excerpted land inside this leaflet.

'Access land' will be shown on maps designed for walkers. It will also be indicated on the ground by a small access land symbol. Information boards at main access points will also show people where they can go and give information about any current access restrictions.

For more on the Act, its exact wording, and its effect on nature conservation and areas of outstanding natural beauty, read 'Out in the Country', from Countryside Agency Publications, Tel: 0870 120 6466 or [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk).

### Permobil TRAX

This is a cross between a scooter and a powerchair, but is a highly competent machine able to tackle rough ground. Using a joystick to steer the front wheels as well as the speed, the Trax is sure-footed and stable. There are coil springs to the rear and the front wheels 'telescope' to reduce the length for storing in the back of a car. It costs from £7,500 from Ashdale - 0800 169 6810.



# A LAP OF THE RING

By Robin Helby

## New Record Lap Set by Class 3 Pavement Vehicle

You would think that life when disabled would be enough of a challenge, but some of us think up new ones. My ambition was to do a lap on my electric scooter of the old Nürburgring in the Eifel Mountains in Germany. The track is 13 miles long and climbs 1,000ft before falling another 1,000ft.

For about 20 hours each week it is open to the public to do laps. However, I was not allowed to take my Trampler on, not least because in places some vehicles touch over 175mph.

The only way to achieve my ambition was to do a lap before the circuit opened. This meant starting well before dawn! We could also only get access at Hohe Acht, the very highest point of the circuit. This meant that the hardest climb would be at the end of the journey! Worst of all, the only way to Hohe Acht required driving the Trampler a mile up a steep (1 in 4), rough track, so that we would start without a full battery charge.

At 5.15am in near total darkness I set off, accompanied by my local guide on his mountain bike. It was very eerie to glide along in the silence of the night, the Trampler's front light giving sufficient illumination to see the continuous steel barriers along each side of the track. The famous corners came and went, though the greatest surprise was the steepness of the track.

By 6am we had got as far as the famous straight, more than a mile long. By now the sky had lightened enough to drive without lights, so a repair crew dozing until daylight in their lorry cab

had the shock of their life when I drifted silently by! At a mere 6.3mph, the straight took forever. But on and on, up and down, with photos taken by each of the signs which identify the sections.

At about 6.30am we got to Breidtsheid, and by now it was nearly daylight. Breidtsheid is the lowest point on the circuit and we faced a vertical climb of 1,000 feet at an average of about 1 in 8, even steeper in places, especially the last mile. Happily the Trampler proved fully up to the task, maintaining a steady speed up the steepest climbs. 10 and 11 miles were passed and we arrived at the unique Karussell, a 210 degree curve with 30 degree concrete banking. In a show of bravado and faith in the stability of the Trampler, I drove safely round on the banking,

Then it was the last and steepest mile to Hohe Acht, the highest point. The battery meter was now showing only 20% left but it was on and on, up and up. At 7.15am, elated and relieved, we finished the lap, believed to be the first by a battery-powered scooter for the disabled. After a ceremonial triple circle on the track, lifting the inside wheel, we set off for a well-deserved breakfast.

The Trampler is a Class 3 Pavement Vehicle, weighing 146 kilos and fitted with a pair of 75 amp/hr gel batteries. The Trampler is geared for 6.3mph on the level. The vehicle was standard, apart from the addition of a rear pannier and a cycle speedometer. The tyres were set at the manufacturer's recommended pressures.



On the 30 degree banking in the unique Karussell



Leaving Adenaur Forst as dawn slowly breaks

# The Disabled Rambler

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## SNOWDON TRIUMPH

Palaeontologist Dr Howard Brunton was an experienced mountaineer who had climbed in many countries, until a spinal injury, a T12 fracture, in a tragic fall in the Lake District consigned him to a wheelchair. But becoming a paraplegic still did not destroy his enthusiasm for the great outdoors - or his desire to climb.

He experimented with a variety of scooters until he discovered the Trampler buggy; the ride and agility it offered convinced him he could return to the countryside he adored. It might even help him achieve his ultimate goal: to get back up a mountain, particularly Snowdon, the first mountains he climbed.

It took around 9 months of planning to attempt the 3,560ft of Snowdon via the 5 mile footpath from Llanberis. One major barrier, about quarter way up, is a stile over four-foot high dry stone wall. Even a Trampler can't manage this, but happily the farmer agreed to lend the key to an adjoining locked gate.

The team was Howard belted into his Trampler, 4 professional climbers for their ability with safety ropes, the designer of the Trampler, two experienced hill walkers, two photographers and several companions to fetch and carry.

The Trampler was standard, though two mount-

ing points were added to attach safety ropes. The Trampler also towed a trailer, borrowed from Robin Helby, which carried the two pairs of lightweight Portaramps needed to climb over the rocks and steps with which Snowdon is littered.

The attempt started at 10:34 at 377ft above sea level. The weather was fine but windy. For the first hour the path was steep but relatively straightforward. But beyond the locked gate it gets much, much harder. The surface is broken by lots of rocks, many with sharp edges. There are also stretches of loose scree. The Trampler made the climb look easy, overtaking many other walkers. But the greatest challenge was the many flights of rough steps, up to six at a time, sometimes each up to 2ft high.

The ramps were essential, as the steps were uneven and the gradient was 1 in 4 or steeper. One slip could have meant disaster, especially with Howard belted to the Trampler, but the safety ropes were never really necessary.

The Snowdon Mountain Railway had kindly delivered a pair of batteries up to the halfway station where it had been planned to change them, but it was decided to find out how far the first set would go. So the extra batteries, another 108lbs, were added to the ramps on the trailer!



**THE DISABLED RAMBLERS HELP THE MOBILITY CHALLENGED ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS**