

March 2002



GAZETTE



Your 2002 Committee

Chairman

Richard Stiling
rstiling@blueyonder.co.uk

Secretary

Richard Llewellyn
07775557797
louigi748@aol.com

Treasurer/Membership

Andy Mounter
01761 418615
andy@amounter.freemove.co.uk

Magazine Editor

Tony Steel
01225 443200
anthony@asteel.freemove.co.uk

Rights Of Way

Martin Harding
0117 9696674
sumpnut@compuserve.com

Lane Clearing

Steve Filer
01761 490833

Club Rep

Paul Andrews
0117 9659255

Social Secretary

Tim Frost
01761 470359

Run Co-ordinator

Steve Cousins
01225 446148
steve.cwcousins@virgin.net

ROW Records

Nick Crook

Ed's chat

Tony Steel

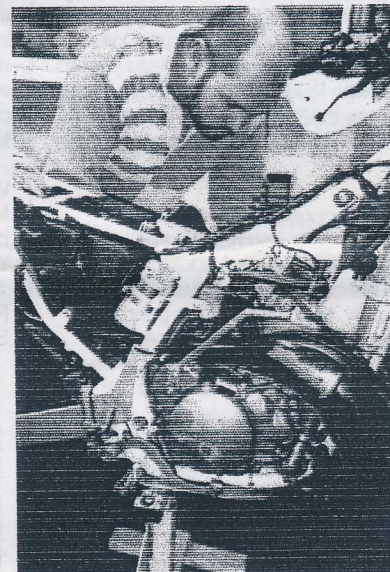
Welcome to the March mag. To the contributors, a big thanks.

Suddenly since about September with the dreaded Foot and Mouth dying out we have seen big numbers turning up at club nights. Welcome to all. Recently I've noticed a lot of bike mags on the shelf at WH Smith seem to have articles on packing up your sports bikes and to go trail riding instead. Maybe some of you have been swayed by this. This has caught us a bit on the hop especially with our club runs. To the people who have joined and been out on a run for the first time, I'm sure you will have enjoyed it and realised what it's all about (except for you Mike! Wasn't that water deep!!).

The problem is that everyone wants to go out and we have not got enough run leaders. At both National level and local level we should be running with no more than groups of 6 for many reasons and recently we have been running larger groups which needs to be sorted out. We need to run more smaller groups, but to do this we really need people coming forward and offering to help. When I started in the TRF (all those years ago) I went on about 50% club runs and 50% was me and a mate exploring with a map. I can honestly say that I enjoyed the exploring as much as the club runs. As a result I learned a lot of the Wiltshire/Hampshire/Berkshire lanes. I contacted other groups to confirm some lanes had vehicular rights in 'their patch'.

If you need help, ask. All our telephone numbers are over there on the left. Not sure what maps to get or how to read a grid reference? Ask. Don't always follow... get up front!

If you go out in two's or three's please ride responsibly and follow the TRF code of conduct. Also please fill out a run sheet as we use this as valuable evidence at public Inquiries and need all the help we can get.



'Now whats that big bit called again?'

If you are fairly new to the club please pick up a TRF welcome pack if you have not already received one. This guides you through all the basics. Have Fun!

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Chairmans Chat

Rich Stiling

Well, what a meeting in Feb! My first, but definitely not my last. We live and learn and I see that I have a lot to learn, but then I ain't dead yet and I don't give up. It is good to see a new faces especially as they were willing to start claiming lanes.

Here's one thing I was well peeved about: All the doom merchants. For christ/budda/allah/mohammed/money (delete as applicable) sake, what is the point in concentrating on the negative. Ever heard of 'target fixation'? You will go where you look. Please stop it or keep it to yourself. If you want to fail then that's up to you and I hope you have fun, the rest of us want to get on. Special mention goes to Peter Hopes, ex chairman and now regional chairman. If you really think 'bugger you I don't care, in twenty years time I won't be riding' then why become regional chairman? What about your kids future? What about respect for those people in the past who fought for the rights you have now? Anyway that's enough of that. Let's keep positive and deal with problems as they arise.

First I gotta apologise, I am absolutely useless at remembering names, so I can't refer to people when I would like to. Big thanks to the committee on whom I am going to rely heavily, they really are the people who run the show, big it up for them peeps. Please take part in things, it's better to be a happy fool than a miserable wise person. When it comes to all this lane claiming, the task has been blown out of all proportion and anyway it's better to start and fail than just lie down and die. (I tried to get up this bloody great hill 10 or 15 times, never did make it but it was fun trying!) All we got to do is do what we can, the will to start often is the biggest hurdle. Please bear with me with a bit of luck we can improve our lot.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on all things TRF, I probably won't know the answer but I will know the man who can.

Well the last club meeting was held in The Crown which was pretty crap. It ain't the best venue and the Rugby Club really need a good kicking/ a stiff talking to/gentle persuasion (delete as applicable) to ensure that we can meet in the Rugby Club. After all, we do pay them. Hopefully we can sort this out so that we don't get turfed out again! It was great to see a good turnout nonetheless, too bad we don't seem to be able to get new people to come back. Maybe it was the change of venue. We need new members, we will always need new members. Where else will new run leaders and active doers come from?

Every member is important, nay vital to the TRF. The more, is definitely, the merrier so come on, encourage people, we all need a bit of encouragement sometime. (Me too!).

Why is Lane Clearing important?
Lane clearing, labouring for a couple of hours, aching muscles, thorn scratches, muddy clothes, getting wet in the rain. Doesn't sound like fun. Well you're wrong. It is fun. Out there in the countryside, exercise, having a laugh, being voided, having your picture taken, doing your bit for a healthy world. All you gotta do is be there. On a more serious note, when a lane clearing day is organised the local authority oversee the work done, that means a Council Rights of Way Officer attends. This is very important. We clear a lane, he gets mightily impressed and goes away thinking 'what a wonderful bunch of people' we are. This means that when we have a rights of way issue we have him 'on our side'. Given that we need people like him to make decisions in our favour I am sure that we can all see that any positive influence we can have is definitely worth the effort! Please give some time to this, we could even get some excellent press coverage, that's right, your smiling face in the local paper (maybe).

We are trying to get volunteers for Sunday 24 March 9.30 a.m. start, ref. Landranger 172 645 814 at Ferndale Farm Winterbourne. Please ring me, 07974 151439 or Steve Filer 01761 490833 or Richard Llewellyn on 07775557797. See you there?

Exmoor Run 02/11/01 *Tony Armstrong*

The date was set at the September club night, and with the interest being so great, both Paul Creed and Steve Cousins agreed that they would each lead a run starting in different locations. Paul's run would start at Hawkridge Reservoir with the gay riders (according to Dave Holt) and Steve's ride started at Dunster lay-by.



Andy Mounter on 'Hamburger Hill'

After the formalities, which Steve explains to us, we then started on our journey to see the glorious sights of Exmoor.

The weather was brilliant sunshine all day, it also stayed dry for most of us (Colin). The scenery around the area was outstanding.

The first lane we attempted to ride was a great tester and every body seemed to enjoy it. This may have given some the false sense of security for the rest of the ride. Things seemed to be going fine that is, until the first ford crossing, Colin's dependable Serrow come to a disintegrating halt. As normal you can always depend on Dave Holt and me to diagnose the problem (to ask us to fix it, you must be kidding). Reliable Tony Steel come to the rescue. Anyway, with the bike fixed we persevered with our travels.

As the day continued the riding was getting easier, that was until we come across **THE HILL** and **SLIMLY LANE**. If you had the pleasure to ride the hill before, you could imagine the sight if you are the last person. Tony, enjoyed the hill so much he rode it twice! Once on his CRM and the second time on a DRZ400. After a much-needed breather we carried on. We then arrived at the dreaded slimly lane. After Steve lost it on a corner the next four riders decided to continue, however what happened next made Steve laugh so much he had to sit down. The four riders were four abreast going nowhere fast, it looked like something out of the Wacky Races. It took the best part of ½ hour to man handle the bikes to the top. Dave Holt entertained the group with his impressions of John Curry, skating around on the rocks. At one stage, he attempted to do a backward somersault only to land on his backside breaking his mobile phone.

After slimly lane lunch was taken. During lunch Steve made contact Paul, so it was only a matter of time before we met up. We progressed on with our travels and made our way to TARR STEPS. Dave Holt swears blind that he saw Tim and Paul Andrews entertaining themselves in the woods, comparing their garments (pink skirts). Considering it was November, the river was shallow and everybody crossed without any fuss.

After a little chat and compare notes on the days ride so far, both groups continued with the days ride. The rest of the day seemed uneventful until we descended a steep hill followed by a river crossing, the first seven bikes cross safely, until Colin decided to do an impression of a nuclear submarine doing an emergency crash dive. Both he and his bike vanishing for a brief moment, only for him to resurface like a dolphin. After drying out we then continued.

After completing black monkey lane, John's bike (DR250) refused to start so it was agreed that Colin and Neil would continue with the ride and return with the van to pick John up.

After a good days ride some of the group stopped in a local public house for some much needed refreshments.

Flying Without Wings The Cagiver Navigator

Jason Bamford

Having fallen in love with large V-twins a few years ago after running a Cagiva Elefant for two years, I'd been eyeing up the Navigator for some time. After the Elefant I tried a Honda Transalp for a while. It was nice bike, good road manners with a flexible engine. However when you stick on some panniers and a passenger the performance was not much better than your average car, so it had to go...

Now I'm sure we've all bought bikes for strange reasons in the past but the trigger for me to fetch the crow-bar and open my wallet was of all things September 11th 2001. A day many of us will not forget, and for me a day when I was in the air myself travelling to Germany on business. For me that was it, have it now while you can!

After several visits to DMA Racing in Brinkworth near Swindon peeping through the window at the new unregistered Navigator, and in just the colour I wanted it was time to sign me up. I'll have that one please and yes Sir I'd like the optional hard luggage to go with it Thank you.

For those who don't know much about Cagiva's or heard of them for that matter. They are an Italian make, and they don't use their own engines. Until recently Cagiva was an owner of Ducati, so most of their machines ran on Ducati motors. The old Elefant (yes that is how you spell it) used either the 750ss or the 900 Desmo motors. Later, this model was updated with the Grand Canyon which ran the 900 Ducati with fuel injection. The Navigator is the latest in the line up, but since Cagiva sold its stake in Ducati to fund its development of the MV Augusta come back, Ducati no longer supply motors to them. Cagiva now have a deal with Suzuki and they now use their two great 90 degree V-twins. The SV650 motor and the scaled up TL1000 is various machines.

So the Navigator gets the TL1000. It's been tamed so they tell me. It no longer puts out the 125bhp+ that's on tap in the TL, but now a gentle 95bhp (try telling my arse that) with the low-mid range torque increased and spread over a wider area.

Although the machine looks like a Giant trailie, it has no off road ability what so ever! With a low slung oil cooler and no radiator protection it would be broken in seconds if you tried. This is a sports bike that lets you sit up in comfort. Although it has spoke wheels, it runs tubeless low profile sports bike rubber.



So how does it go? I hear you ask. Well, the word speed is redefined by this machine. I considered the Elefant fast, but with that you accelerated to 100mph. The Navigator uses this as a starting point. It's more like you accelerate from 100mph. Most older Cagiva's have the speedo in KPH. The Navigator now has MPH around the outside in red, so that you can only see it at night or when you really stare at it.

Coming out of Bristol on the M32 keeping up in traffic, no sign of any wide blast, engine relaxed, not much happening. Oh, right I am doing 80mph. It felt more like 40mph! The motor still retains the six speed close ration box from the TL so there's a gear for every occasion, mind you, you only need 5-6 out of town.

Pulling away from the Severn Bridge tolls two-up, 80 mph happens in 2nd rather rapidly. If I put a couple of wings on the thing, the bridge would not be necessary to make it to Wales.

Yes this bike has brakes too. Not up to the stopping power of your Fireblade or R1, but with longer travel forks I'd expect it to dive more. However whereas the single disk of the Elefant was not much better than my Raleigh Commando push bike when riding two-up, these do the business and there's no adverse dive that I've found.

Cornering. This bike loves it. We did a 150 mile ride up to Oswestry at the weekend taking the Mid-Wales route through Abergavenny, Builth, and Newtown. The A483 from Newtown to Welshpool comes highly recommend for no traffic and great twisties. The rear shock doesn't seem to need any adjustment for two-up and after 150 miles I could still feel my arse! Very unlike the Elefant where bum fade occurred by the time I'd left Bristol.

Can't say much about the fuel consumption. Two-up to Oswestry with some high speeds on the A40 and M4 saw average MPG come it at around 38! But then you don't buy a one litre machine if you want a cheap way to get to work do you? I think that figure goes up to

around 45mpg if you can keep the speed legal, but you would have to try quite hard to do that. The handling only really starts to come alive at 80mph. Anything less is walking pace to this motor.

Problems.

This is the first brand new roadie I've ever bought, and it's not been without its little problems. Being a Jap motor I was not expecting any bad news there. But all the little problems I've had centre around it.

I've had clutch slip problems under hard acceleration since I finished running it in.

'The Italian Stallion'

Searching the Internet I found more info on the TL1000 website. I'm not alone with this, but we think it's now sorted. After the first service the dealer installed Motul Semi synthetic oil which as it turns out has extra friction reducers in it. It looks like hard working clutches can't always handle it. They have change it for Castrol GPS, and its looking like things are OK.

The only other problem worth a mention is the snatchy running at just off idle. The fuel injection performs very well, but was not really set up properly out of the box. The dealer had to plug in a engine management adjuster device to richen up the slow running. This has helped, but it still needs some work. This can make it a bit of a pain in traffic, but then if you're going to the chip shop for pie and chips, leave it home, take the trail bike, you'll have much more fun in that distance. This bike is for going places, not trundling around town.

All that said, the dealers help and friendless has been great. DMA Racing is a small family run shop. They want to get it right. I wonder how helpful bigger dealers would be with these problems. They would probably tell me I couldn't ride properly and I broke the clutch myself. The clutch isn't strictly covered under the warrantee but they are sorting it, no questions.

Conclusion

Plus points

- Well priced.
- Well built.
- Uses all Jap electrics.
- Looks/sounds gorgeous
- Torque, Torque and more Torque
- Instant throttle response whatever
- Good support and friendly dealer
- Good brakes,
- Very stable at speed,
- Rock solid cornering
- Good seat one or two up.
- Good wind protection up to 95ish

Good lights
Eats the miles

Negatives

A bit heavy of fuel
Not good in heavy traffic
(a little snatchy)
No under-seat storage
Useless helmet lock
(but can get two helmets in the top box)
Don't take it off road any more than you would an R1 or Blade, it will get broken!
Poor factory adjustment or a few little things

If you want a sports bike, but don't fancy all that bum in the air, knees bent double, and your entire body weight on your wrists, then take a serious look at this one.

Remember to file a flight plan at least 30 minutes before departure. Orbital velocity a real possibility!

Don't buy one if you already have 9 points on your license.

Weston Beach Race A spectators view Ian Hingley

Made my annual trip to the beach race, this time with my wife, mother-in-law, 12 year old daughter and 8 year old son, Peter. The girls were to spend the day shopping, only Pete and me were to watch the action.

Usual traffic jams on the way in, with hordes of bikes filtering past us. Eventually managed to find an on street parking spot with just about enough time to walk to the sea front. Donned plenty of warm clothes and waterproofs, as I know how the cold and damp can strike up through the beach when you're standing there for three hours or more. It always tickles me the number of blokes who turn up in motocross boots, which must be incredibly uncomfortable to walk in, with their girlfriends in new white trainers!

We needn't have rushed to the beach as the start was delayed for half an hour due to the volume of traffic trying to get in. I remember last year when it was run in a torrential downpour. Arrived in time for the start only for them to delay it for an hour cos of the weather – meant we were drenched for 4 hours rather than 3!

Only a fiver to get in and Peter free represented damn good value. Couldn't find

anyone selling programs though some people had them. Caught a glimpse of Tony Steel and Steve Cousins in amongst the crowd.

We pressed ourselves against the barrier of the mile long straight ready for the start. What an awesome experience! The deafening roar, the smell of racing engines, the blur of bright colours, the vibration coming through the beach up your body as over 800 bikes come screaming past you is not to be missed. Some bikes came screaming by only a matter of millimetres away from the barrier. Most spectators wisely decided to take a step back at that point.

It was then time to dash across to the dunes to watch the racers come back through. These are massive dunes made by massive earth-moving equipment. There is not enough room for all the bikes to get through and not all the riders have the skill to stick to their chosen line (sounds like trail riding!). The result is pure and simple chaos with bikes, riders, and sand going in all directions. It stays like this for the next three hours.

The big dunes get flattened slightly with the passage of time, but the rest of the course gets more and more rutted, so the overall difficulty probably stays the same. That's the beauty of the race for me – no matter where you choose to stand and watch there's always something going on. You just know someone's going to make a hash of something and eat sand and before you realise it, the next twenty riders are also stuck. Someone opens the throttle injudiciously, the spinning back wheel eats through the sand till his seat is level with the ground, he tries to lift the bike out sideways, topples over and knocks three other riders over like dominoes. That sort of thing goes on non-stop for three hours. Brilliant fun!

It's real dog eat dog racing, with riders elbowing past each other, or using others for grip. Only once did I see any 'trail rider style' gentlemanly conduct. One rider had buried himself up the seat and stalled it. He tried to get going for ages, but eventually ran out of strength to either haul the bike out or start it. After several minutes wait another rider buried his bike nearby. They agreed on a 'I'll help you if you help me' pact and away they both went.

The bikes are mainly current season MX-ers, with a sprinkling of enduro weapons and even the odd trail bike. Definitely more four strokes around this year. A guy on a pre-65 Triumph twin caught my eye, and seemed to be doing better than many on modern bikes.

Who wins is really incidental to watching the fun. You can't hear the PA unless you're stood underneath the speaker, and I found the commentary team a bit puerile this year. My knowledge of top motocross riders isn't that good these days, so I couldn't recognise the good guys. Didn't have a program either.

Did spot Kurt Nicoll on his KTM who is more my era. What did make the top guys stand out was their ability to negotiate the difficult stuff and the hold ups. They could spot lines that most wouldn't even try and then had the courage skill to ride 'em as well. Guess there's no substitute for raw talent!

All too soon it was over and time to trudge back and meet the rest of the family. Back to the car and then sit in the traffic jam leaving Weston. Eventually reached the M5, but that was like a car park as well. Decided to keep on the A370 into Bristol, but an accident in Congresbury delayed us for ages. Eventually took over two hours to get home. Worth the effort though.

I'd love a go at the beach race before I'm too old (Whaddya mean it's already too late then!). But all that sand and salty water grinding through the chains, sprockets, wheel bearings and engine internals means I'd have to borrow someone else's bike first!

So, a great day out and a suitable event to take non-bikers to as it's such a laugh. See you there next year!

PontyPool Run Jan 2002 Tony Steel

At last, a chance to get back across the bridge for a ride. After sorting Tony Webb's starting problems (a kink in the breather...be warned!), we set off on a chilly morning in Pontypool and went straight into the first few beauties. No problems except somebody didn't look behind themselves and we lost a couple of riders for a few minutes. As we headed towards the Roman Road the Sun started to poke its head out of the chill. I made my way up to my customary position of right behind Paul at the front coz I like a clear run even though Paul always falls off in front of me and continued his fine record with another get off!

It was pretty slippery this time with a layer of wet leaves on top of mossy stones. I struggled to the top knackered as usual but there was a long wait so Paul and me went wandering down to pick up the waifs and strays. Lucky for me Mike had had enough on his DR so I kindly offered to ride it up for him. Obviously this generosity had an ulterior motive as it meant I didn't have to walk all the way back up the hill!

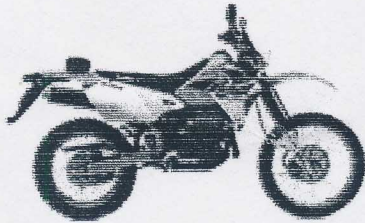
Paul showed us how to jump properly on his XR400 at the top....Very impressive, and no, we didn't try to copy him. We moved up onto the moor with stunning views all around us. The CRM was running well and as it may have been my last ride on it I was enjoying

myself. Tony M managed to break his clutch lever in a tumble, which was to be the first of 3 he got through that day!

We got into the forest climb with Tim going up with CW right behind him and me close behind. At the first sharp left one of the others had stalled and I merely utilised the small gap to get passed all of them. 15 all for CW and me!

The next lane over the top down to the golf course is one of my favourites. A good mixture of fairly easy going along with great scenery. I was pleasantly surprised that we saw no F&M warnings on any of the lanes all day.

As we had set off late and were moving at a very leisurely pace we had lunch at the chippy and decided to head back over the top. The first section is a classic with 2 big climbs on one hillside followed by a good run along the top. A couple of lanes later CW and Timmy Lampkin has a coming together with a nasty fall but luckily neither was hurt but Steve lost use of his front brake which was a problem as the next lane was the steep drop off the top of the hill. Now this can be a sphincter clencher at the best of times but without a front brake.....mmmmmmmmmm. I struggled down as usual and looked back up to see Steve and Tim trying to manhandle the bike down. After much cussing they just about succeeded whilst Tony M was going sideways across the hill. He still hasn't told me why he done this but it looked amusing. Anyway we got back at a reasonable hour and headed home. Thanks to Paul for leading a good day. I think the newer guys enjoyed themselves and all survived to tell the tale.



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