

**THAMES VALLEY**

Terry Jolley, 4 Halley's Walk, Addlestone  
Surrey. Tel: Weybridge 42935

**UPPER THAMES (ABINGDON)**

Dave Moore, 5 Whitelock Road  
Abingdon. Tel: Abingdon 29138

**WEST ANGLIA**

David Knight, 89 Blackfriars  
Rushden, Northamptonshire  
Tel: Rushden 313816

**WEST MIDLANDS**

Albert Billington, 171 Valley Road  
Solihull, W.Midlands B92 9AY  
Tel: 021-743 5801

**WEST YORKSHIRE**

Charles W. King, 53 Townend Road  
Woodale, Nr. Holmfirth, W.Yorkshire  
Tel: 0484 684782

**WEST WILTSHIRE**

Bill Riley, 141 Bath Road  
Bradford on Avon. Tel: 3811

**WYVERN**

Gwyn James, 18 The Spinney  
Wolverhampton WV3 9EU  
Tel: 0902 763824

3rd Monday — District Arms  
Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex

Last Tuesday — Lansdown Club  
Milton Trading Est., nr Abingdon

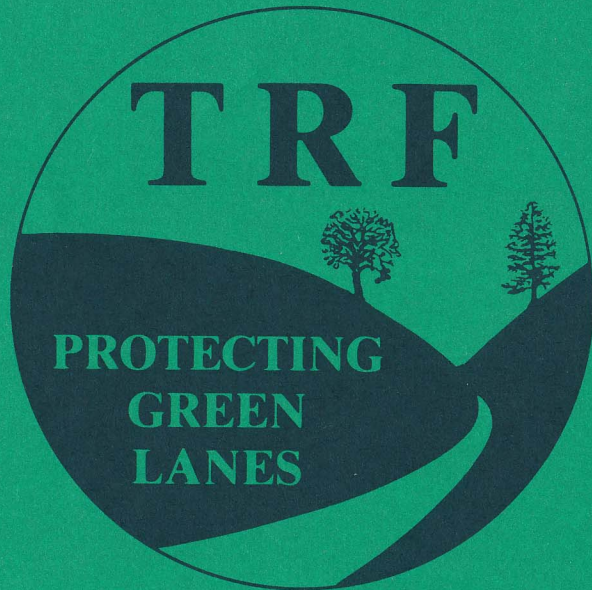
1st & 3rd Thursday —  
Scott Bader Club House (opp.Parish  
Church), Wollaston, near Wellingborough

1st & 3rd Wednesdays —  
King George V Memorial Hall, Stratford  
Road, Hockley Heath, Solihull

1st & 3rd Mondays —  
Frizinghall Conservative Club  
Off Manningham Lane, Bradford

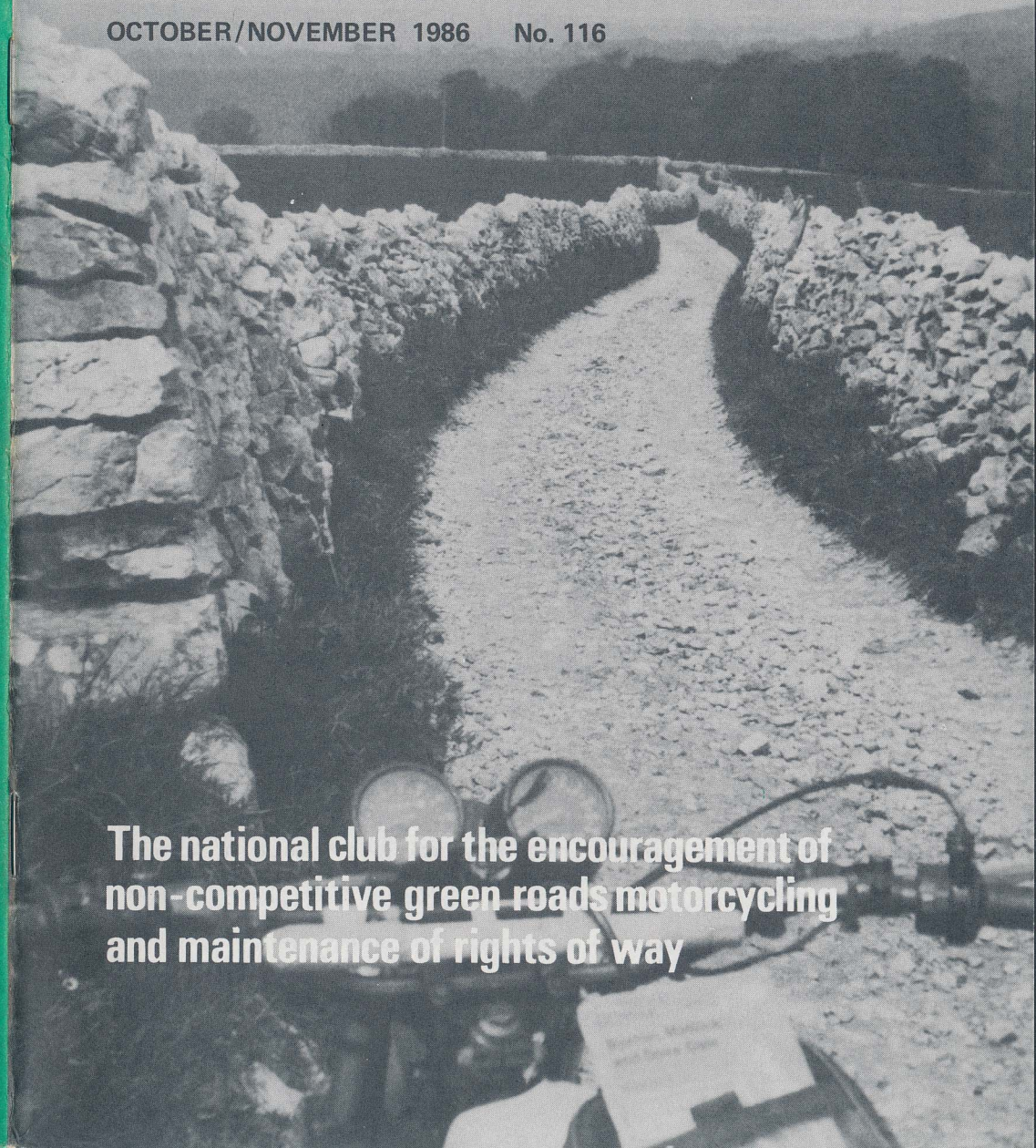
1st Tuesday in month — The Old Bear  
Staverton, Near Trowbridge, Wilts.

Every Thursday 9.30 p.m.  
Hill & Cakemore Ex-Servicemen's Club  
Victoria Road, Blackheath, W.Midlands



# TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1986 No. 116



The national club for the encouragement of  
non-competitive green roads motorcycling  
and maintenance of rights of way



# TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

BULLETIN No. 116

October / November 1986

## FUTURE EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 5th East Yorkshire Group. Kettlewell Run. Contact : Don Burt 0977 - 612258.
- 12th TRF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. National Motorcycle Museum, Stonebridge, Birmingham (near the NEC). 11.00 a.m.
- 11th/12th Trail Riding Weekend. Yorkshire Dales. Contact : Jim Souter Bradford 42361 (work), Bradford 611789 (home).
- 18th Thames Valley Group. Weekend in Derbyshire. Contact : Ron Rickerby: 01-998 6691.
- 18th/19th Trail Riding Weekend. Shropshire and North Worcestershire area. Contact : Gwyn James, 18 The Spinney, Wolverhampton WV3 9EU. Tel: 0902 - 763824.
- 19th East Yorkshire Group. Settle Run. Contact : Don Burt.
- 26th West Yorkshire Group. Salter Fell Run. Contact : Jim Souter.
- 29th October/  
2nd November OLYMPIA BIKE SHOW. We have a TRF stand here — YOUR HELP IS NEEDED. Contact : Secretary, John Higgin.

### NOVEMBER

- 2nd East Yorkshire Group. Pateley Bridge Run. Contact : Don Burt.
- 9th West Yorkshire Group. Denby Dale Run. Contact : Jim Souter.
- 15th/16th Trail Riding Weekend. Baslow area, Derbyshire. Contact : Dave Bonsall, 9 Blackdown Close, Sheffield S19 6NF. 0742 - 471882.
- 16th East Yorkshire Group. Helmsley Run. Contact : Don Burt.
- 30th East Yorkshire Group. Pickering Run. Contact : Don Burt.

### DECEMBER

- 9th West Yorkshire Group. Blubberhouse Moor Run. Contact : Jim Souter.
- 14th East Yorkshire Group. Boothferry Run. Contact : Don Burt.
- 28th East Yorkshire Group. Christmas Food Shakedown, Ackworth. Contact : Don Burt 0977 - 612258.

Cover Photo: *Trail Riding in Derbyshire — courtesy Dave Giles (see article "Derbyshire Trail Ride — a Laidback Viewpoint")*

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## EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

First off, I'd like to offer congratulations to Alan Kind for landing the LARA Right of Way Consultant job (see article by John Higgin below) and also for passing his law exams and becoming an 'LLB'. All the best, Alan!

Courtesy Honda and Suzuki, I'm glad to say I've been forced out of my apathy and hit the trails after too long an absence. Trying out a couple of learner 2-stroke bikes, I was surprised how well these supposedly down-on-power 12bph bikes coped on the lanes (although it seems the Suzuki could be more than 12bph). I was also impressed how quiet and clean these modern two-strokes are. They make my 1981 KE175 seem prehistoric by comparison. Reports on the Honda MTX125 and Suzuki TSX125 will appear in a later issue.

*Bike* magazine (September issue) mentions the TRF and Alan Kind in a trail riding article. Basically a run report (once you've thrown out the hype), it gives scant mention of the trail bikes, except for 'star quality' in terms of road and trail use. The unrestricted Kawasaki KMX125 and Suzuki TSX125 rating the best of the bunch. The Suzuki, albeit the learner restricted model, being dyno tested to 15bhp!

Don't forget, keep sending in your articles and photos. In answer to a few queries, yes clear colour shots can be reproduced in the *Bulletin*. Please, however, do not send in your only copy of a prized snap as I cannot return photographs.

And finally, don't forget the TRF AGM this month. See page 2 for details.

## LAND ACCESS AND RIGHTS ASSOCIATION (L.A.R.A.)

You may have read in the weekly newspapers about the formation of the Association to look after Rights of Way and problems of land availability for motorcyclists; the first meeting of the Association was on 23rd June.

At our last AGM it was agreed that the TRF would support the idea of a full time Rights of Way officer. Brian Thompson had indicated for the last two years that this was needed, subject to the examination of the details such as management, finance and personnel.

The Secretary of the TRF was asked to attend the meetings to set up the Association and the Chairman has also attended; the 'job description' was virtually written by Brian Thompson. It was decided for technical reasons that the person to be employed would be a self-employed person reporting to the Chairman of LARA and the Secretary of the ACU for management and information purposes. The TRF itself does not have a big enough budget to fund the operation and, in fact, is one of the smaller contributors. The ACU is the body nominated by government both to oversee the sport and to receive all notices about changes in rights of way. The ACU will be setting up its own manned offices in Rugby to where all enquiries should initially be made — Millbuck House, Corporation Street, Rugby. The other contributing parties are the Amateur Motorcycle Association, The British Motorcyclists



Federation, RAC, Motor Sports Association, the Welsh Trail Riders Association and the Motorcycle Association of GB. The latter being the manufacturers and importers association, all the others being rider organisations.

After great debate it was decided to offer the post of Consultant to our Press Officer — Alan D. Kind — and he started in June 1986. I am sure that he will continue to give members every assistance and that he will give sufficient time to Rights of Way, both individually and as a whole, to make our joining worthwhile. As the details were written wholly to our satisfaction, I can see no reason for us not to join. This will be discussed at our next meeting.

It is hoped that with grant aid from the Sports Council and DoE plus further donations from clubs and manufacturers, that the Bureau may take on more staff and make a real impression in opening up rights of way in contrast to the last few years when we have been fighting to hold on to what we have got in a rearguard action — doing valiantly on the resources available but steadily retreating. We have great hopes for the future.

John R. Higgin, TRF Secretary

## LETTERS

*Re Welsh Office not regarding RUPPs as Public Roads, please remind them that there was a Green Handbook for Path Walkers issued and approved by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in 1950 in which a CRF or a CRB was to be a Public Road mainly used as a footpath or bridleway. Government Circular 91/50 urged that this Handbook should be used.*

*My copy went to BBT and I saw one at Kent CC, Maidstone. I think the BBT should copy relevant pages and send them to the Welsh Office as England and Wales were as one under the National Parks Act 1949.*

Norman C. Smith, 12 Loring Hall, North Cray, Sidcup, Kent

*Following Ken Dixon's comments on why some of us use enduro bikes as opposed to trail bikes, I would like to venture my synopsis: that is, a relatively boring run on a trail bike becomes exciting on a responsive, good handling enduro bike. After all, we do do it for fun, don't we? A fact that seems to be forgotten in the arguments about suitable machinery for the job. Anyway, if you can afford a £300 trail bike and a £500 enduro bike you'd be far better off in events on an £800 enduro bike which can also be used for the trail.*

Nigel Douglass

*I refer to your test report in Bulletin 109 on the Kawasaki KL250 — one of which I own. I agree with almost everything you say — good report. False neutrals are a slight problem if you're not careful, especially if you're 'hustling' the bike along. I certainly wouldn't call it 'light' — small and low, yes, but lifting out of some bottomless bog . . . Hernia City!! And where were they sold at under £1,000?*

David Clegg, 58 Coldharbour Lane, Bushey, Watford

Denny, who loaned me the KL250, did, in fact, buy it for an 'on the road' price of under £1,000 somewhere in Leeds. The KLR250 had just been introduced and Kawasaki wanted to clear their dealers' showrooms of 'old' discontinued model KL250s, so discounting them for a short period. As to the bike being light, I admit ANY machine becomes heavy in a bog, but weight can be relative and in comparison to other machines I'd been riding at the time it did feel light. — Rosie.

Oops, I must apologise to Alan Kind, Press Officer, for publishing a set of Minutes from the BBT meeting that were for 'information only'. Alan wishes it known that he phrased the report clumsily and there was absolutely no intention on his part to criticise the handling of the Abergwynolwyn case, and that what is being looked at is the possibility of trying something different, if there is anything different to try at the next, similar, case. Hope this lets you off the hook, Alan. — Rosie.

*I refer to the item (Aug/Sept) from John Gillett, in which the 'Lancashire ACU Club' to which he refers to is presumably the North Lancs Motor Club. His sneering phrase 'so-called groups', and his general tone, indicates that he thinks that we have set up some sort of formal trail riding group as a threat to the Lancs TRF Group. Nothing could be further from the truth. We were simply a group of people who all went trail riding and happened to belong to the NLMC. There are only around seven of us and I was designated run organiser. Some threat!*

*As for Mr Gillett's statement about arranging meetings to test us, this is pure drivel, the meaning of which can remain in its perpetrator's mind as far as I am concerned.*

*What we do here has no affect whatsoever, directly or indirectly, on Mr Gillett or his group, and we shall continue to get together to tidy the lanes without permission or approval from the south.*

*Finally, the charge of bringing the 'County Group' and the TRF into 'disrespect', is a foul insult which requires an apology and retraction.*

C.A. Wright, 46 Schoolhouse Lane, Halton, Lancaster LA2 6QX

*Dear Friends, It has come to my notice that the Exec Committee refused to spend £300 needed for research of green lanes in the Yorkshire Dales, yet have set aside £10,000 for the Ridgeway farce. By my estimates, 75% of all members, past and present, use the Dales and therefore up to ¾ of the Fighting Fund should be spent on securing our rights in this area.*

*The National Park is doing the review, on behalf of the County Council, but it is of the whole area — in and out of the Park. This area is under review for the first time. Now is our only chance to secure these trails. Evidence is thin and any money spent would be well spent. Our mainstay is the UCR, Unclassified County Road, a term abolished in 1974 and of uncertain meaning nationally. A court case could go against us with disastrous results. When all our lanes are wrong status is the TRF going to fight for us in court or will it say "Plead guilty and pay your fine, it's cheaper". Do we need to resurrect the Route Use Preservation Society, RUPs, of the late 1970s?*

*If you wish to ride in the area now, contact me on 0943 466901 or write to me. I am willing to act as guide to groups, or individuals can join in our own runs. Accommodation can be arranged on request. Gill Myers says that she is willing to offer B&B to members if it doesn't clash with when they are away at enduros. They should contact her on 0943 644184 or write to 104 Albion Street, Otley, W. Yorks.*

Gordon Thackray, RoW Officer, West Yorkshire Group  
105 The Oval, Otley LS21 2EE

(I don't know the details, but I understand that the money decision re the Dales has been reversed. — Rosie)



Just a line about an additional pleasure to be had while seeing the Dales. No, it's not 'Joe's Whorehouse' in Settle but the famous Skipton to Carlisle railway. There have been a few more stations added to the list of stops. I have used this line WITH BIKE to make the 'getting there' easier. The only drawback is that you must find a plank or something to get your bikes into the train at most stations, but it's worth it, especially for a fast return to Skipton when tired and wet.

A single example is a ride to Settle, catch the train at 9.58 a.m. to Appleby (10.50 a.m.) and ride back with most of the day to enjoy the route. OR, go by green lane/road to even Carlisle then relax on your way back to Settle. The 5.42 p.m. gets you back in two hours. This way you can see the Ribbleshead Viaduct first from Great Wold and then from the train.

David McWhinney, 44 Walverden Road, Brierfield, Nelson, Lancs.

## CIRCUIT DES PYRENEES — Nigel Douglass

There are probably some of you who, as I was, are under the impression that this event is a 200 mile trail ride through the French mountains. This is not so. Perhaps some of the people who go on Brian Thompson's road bike (wrecking) runs would find a couple of the sections challenging, but for those of us who use trail riding as enduro practise, the event can basically be described as a fast treasure hunt, run along the kind of road we all ride to join up the real trails on an average day out.

The clues on this treasure hunt take the form of a time card which has to be clocked in at various points around the circuit which, apart from the three special tests, is run on open roads. To get some idea, find a suitable twisty uphill/downhill country lane, 15km long and ride it in 15 minutes, as the speed schedule to be maintained is approximately 1km per minute. The winner is decided on performance on the special tests and a clean time sheet.

First Test — The Boss de Bager. This is held in awe by most competitors. Tales of fearsome tank slappers on gravel strewn bends abound. I suppose it would be a bit of a handful at speed for the lads who entered on FJ1100 Yamahas. Coming across the Bois on a normal touring holiday, when it could be ridden at a sensible speed, would prove no problem. For those of us on trail bikes it wasn't such a task, proved by the fact that I don't like 'getting it sideways!' and was eighth fastest on the day; fastest time being set by an Irish enduro rider on a KDX200 Kawasaki.

Second Test — La Mouline. This is basically a road race up the side of a mountain, with a surface which would not be disgraced by some of England's smaller airfield circuits. Plenty of tight lefts, rights and hairpins.

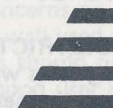
3rd Test — La Col de Marie Blare. This is like La Mouline but has patches of gravel, the position of which could be noted if you practised it enough.

Unfortunately I never got to ride the 2nd and 3rd specials as I crashed heavily after 75 miles, requiring hospitalisation.

Which brings me to another topic — body armour. I was always under the impression that three kinds of people wore body armour: BMX racers, the idle rich and those who don't back off the throttle when us mere mortals do! So I never bought any. As I write this from a hospital bed where I am lying with two crushed vertebrae, I would advise anyone to buy a back protector. In the course of our hobby we all spend some time travelling along minor roads at 50–60mph, usually in foul weather conditions: snow, ice, wet, mud, flooded brakes, trail tyres — all a recipe for disaster. And I can tell you, should disaster strike, it's bloody tedious and boring damaging your back (as well as painful!).

# Samy Miller

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XR250/350 R	4.75	12.00	23.00	38.75	XL250 S, RC	6.00	11.00	15.00	31.00
<b>KAWASAKI</b>					XL500 S, RC	6.00	11.00	15.00	31.00
KLX250, KDX175/250/420	4.75	12.00	23.00	38.75	<b>KAWASAKI</b>				
<b>SUZUKI</b>					KE125/175	4.50	7.00	9.75	21.25
PE175/250/400 N/T/X/Z	4.75	12.00	22.00	37.75	KL250	4.75	10.00	15.00	28.75
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<b>BULTACO</b>					DR/SP 370, 400	5.50	9.25	15.00	28.75
Sherpa — all models	4.00	8.75	15.00	26.75	<b>YAMAHA</b>				
ARMSTRONG 310-320	4.00	9.25	15.00	27.25	DT50M/MX, TY50, DT100	3.50	7.00	8.50	18.00
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HONDA TL 125	4.00	9.00	9.75	21.75	DT250/400 MX	5.00	9.50	15.00	28.50
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## RIGHTS OF WAY NEWS — Brian Thompson

### LAKE DISTRICT

Following talks with Tony Houlihan, Cumbria TRF Rights of Way Officer, Gatesgarth Pass, the newly upgraded bridleway to Byway status, is suffering over-use and is badly churned up. As Gatesgarth is on the highly sensitive list we have agreed to ask riders to restrain use for a short period of eight weeks to let nature heal. The alternative is permanent closure. So ease up on the riding and go elsewhere. The TRF is taking the initiative in this case to show the authorities that we *can* control and regulate ourselves without having to have the bureaucrats do it for us.

### DORSET

I am pleased that my application to the Byways and Bridleways Trust to utilise the services of my son, Steven, has been accepted and he will spend four weeks in Dorset in the autumn researching some of the 800 green lanes, *ALL* of which are the wrong status! Will groups let me have details of priority green lanes that need researching.

### CLIMBER MAGAZINE

Following the editor's call for climbers to stone any trail riders they meet, Alan Kind has asked the Chief Constable of Cumbria Police to prosecute editor Walter Unsworth for inciting violence. Mr Unsworth's outburst beats the famous "all riders are birdbrains" by the RA Secretary Alan Mattingley, although Mattingley is a far more dangerous foe given the Parliamentary influence of the RA. Deputy leader of labour controlled Newham Council said: "We should watch carefully the Socialist Countryside Group and should have our 'mole' in there to report back." We have the same moles in Friends of the Ridgeway, another very anti-trail riding pressure group. The Socialist Countryside Group is at 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

### RIDGEWAY

The Countryside Commission is to ask the Secretary of State for Transport to make a partial traffic ban on summer Sundays and Bank Holidays. Meanwhile, a 'Ridgeway Information and Accommodation Guide for 1986' has been published. Although it is Britain's most ancient road with full vehicular rights, trail riding is completely ignored. However, the B&B and other information is useful. The Ridgeway runs for 80 miles from Overton Hill near Avebury in Wiltshire to Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire, and is clearly marked on all OS maps. Use it with the greatest care as we are under close scrutiny. The RA would love another 'accident' to blow up out of all proportion. Price of the Ridgeway Guide is 50p from Oxfordshire County Planning Services, Ridgeway Officer, Speedwell House, Oxford. A Ridgeway Information Pack is also available.

### PUBLICATIONS

The Countryside Commission publishes some useful information. "Ploughing of Footpaths and Bridleways" for the Review Committee, price £3.30, ref. CCP 190; "Waymarking Public Rights of Way" free of charge, as is "Out in the Country", all from the Countryside Commission, 19 Albert Road, Manchester 19.

"Rights of Way; a Guide to Law and Practice" by Paul Clayden (a lawyer) and John Trevelyan (Deputy Secretary of the RA) is biased against trail riding, but still recommended. Price £5 from Ramblers Association, 1-5 Wandsworth Road, London SW8.

### WOOD LANE CASE

This case has now rumbled on for more than five years and concerns an ancient pre 1983 green lane in the village of Christow near Exeter, Devon, well used pre-war by trials riders and thoroughly blocked by a wall. In theory, this should not have presented any problem. An admitted County Road with some good user and old maps evidence should have been enough for Devon County Council to do their duty and order the blockage to be removed. The trouble is that Devon County Council dismiss County Road status as meaningless, although other county councils accept them as having full vehicular rights. Worse still, Devon want all County Roads turned into footpaths only and will not listen to our legal arguments. The recent public inquiry, when a Byway claim failed and footpath status was confirmed, is nearly the end of the line. However, yet another chance may take place when the Council publish the footpath order. The need for much better research and evidence at the inquiry is now sadly very clear. Alan Kind is now spending a few days in Devon to try and knock some sense into the bureaucrats in Exeter but, like Dorset, we are up against immense difficulties.

### MAP MARKING

Still very popular and understandably so in view of the great difficulties in finding out where to lawfully ride. Most popular is still Mid Wales, although this area has only four Byways in all the Rhayader area. Most of Mid and North Wales map marking is now reduced to 'use at your own risk' following massive losses.

The other areas that can be marked up are Derbyshire, all Yorkshire (including both National Parks) and the Lake District. The cost of map marking is still £2.50 each plus a stamped addressed envelope. Sorry we have no information for other areas and I suggest you enquire from the local group. Please note that you must supply your own OS 1:50,000 series maps for marking up, I cannot provide these. The address is 39 Warren Road, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5PP. Cheques/POs made out to S.R. Thompson.

### YORKSHIRE DALES/LAKE DISTRICT

I was very disappointed when the TRF initially refused money to help protect lanes in the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District, thereby for the first time rejecting the expert panels advice backed by three local groups. The reason given is that the TRF must cut back on rights of way work due to the £1,500 year donation to the ACU run LARA Land Bureau. The Great Wold success was only achieved by hard work and good evidence. That means spending money and that is what the Fighting Fund is for. Few riders take their holidays in Essex or Surrey but many do their riding in the Yorkshire Dales, Britain's number one trail riding area. A change of mind on the TRF's part and work is now underway. It was thought that local groups could do all the work, but trail riding in the National Parks is too important and the task too difficult to leave to the under financed and inexperienced local riders; the TRF's national expertise and healthy Fighting Fund must be utilised.

### COUNTY ROADS CRISIS

Half of the 5000 miles of trails are Unclassified County Road status. Thanks partly to RA propaganda, more County Councils are telling riders to keep off! Devon, most of Wales, Dorset and now Gloucestershire. In Gwynedd, all County Roads are to be downgraded, the status is disputed. We are satisfied that they *are* lawful for trail riding, but it makes life very difficult and leads to conflict with other users and farmers. Contact me if you have any difficulty.



## DALES RUN

The so-called road bike run on 10th August turned into a most enjoyable trail bike run complemented by hot sunny weather. As my converted Hondamatic 400 roadster was stolen from a Doncaster car park the week before, I rode up on my Kawasaki AE80.

On the Friday and Saturday I was joined by Steve Newland from London on his 125 c.c. Yamaha and we surveyed all the major Dales trails for the review now under way. Only Dandra Garth (a Byway) from Garsdale defeated us, rather than the bikes.

On Sunday, for the Buckden run, only seven riders turned up with two leaders missing. As everyone was trails bike mounted, I changed the route to suit the machinery and went over Horse Head Pass. This was a mistake for the older riders, Bill Holdsworth and John Hartley riding new XL250s, were forced to retreat. Ted Palmer, a 70-year old Yamaha 125 c.c. trials rider, made it over to Halton Gyll, a magnificent effort.

Down to just four riders, we tacked Foxup Moor, an adventure and a challenge for any trail bike, let alone a BMW R80G ridden by Derek Allen from Sheffield. With great skill that comes from years of trials, 53-year old Derek successfully piloted his £3,000 worth of 380lb BMW over a very wet moor. A great sight and only a little help was required. My AE80 at 160lbs just skimmed over the bogs with ease. Both managed amazingly well, proving there are no hard and fast rules for the best type of trail machinery.

*Brian Thompson, 39 Warren Road, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5PP*



*Steve Newland (Yamaha) in the Dales*

## TWO WHEELS GOOD, THREE WHEELS BETTER!

The broken chain was the last straw. Stranded in the forest, well over my hour and feeling cold and dejected. My spare link — Sod's law — was the right size but the holes in the outer plate were too small to fit over the pins. Eventually someone stopped and lent me his spare link, allowing me to crawl back to the start of the Yorkshire One Day Enduro and the reviving flask of coffee. My day of misery was not finished, some tea leaf relieved me of my petrol cans and trailer tie-downs.

A month later my exciting Husqvarna Enduro had gone, leaving me with a fistful of fivers, the faithful XR200 and a happy wife. I was going to return to the leisurely and genteel pastime of trail riding, vowing not to compete again.

I have always fancied a three wheel outfit and now I had the chance. The main reasons were to try something different, introduce new people to green lanes, and in a few years take my sons into the country trail riding. After seeing the sidecars at the Tour of Wales Enduro I fancied a 'Wasp' outfit, but thought a trials type would be lighter and hence more manageable. An advert in *TMX* produced a Beamish Suzuki 325, which has the reputation for being bullet-proof. One snag, it was in the Isle of Man. Luckily this was shipped across for free in an empty container, but it needed re-registering (only £15 in the IOM!) and was lucky not to be allocated one of those anonymous Q reg. plates.

Right, all fired up and ready for the off, but no passenger. A passenger is as near to a genetical cross between a limpet and a lemming as is possible. This allows him to hang on at all angles of lean and produce a manic smile as the outfit jumps over cliffs! It is very difficult to persuade a hardened trail rider to join you in a chair. Alan Kind was first to offer but dates clashed (lucky escape — has anyone seen a photo of ADK *not* falling off a bike?) I was fortunate enough to ask Dave Boyce, whom I had met only a couple of times and who was bike mad (well, he has an MZ). He has since proved to be an excellent passenger and a good laugh.

The intrepid pair first set out in March from Morpeth. Much of the country was blanketed in snow and sheet ice covered the rivers. We managed quite well on the fairly easy country roads without getting too stuck. The hardest part was trying to start Ken Canham's TT600!!

Anyone who has ridden a solo motorcycle will have heard the tales of not being able to steer an outfit. I was no exception; you have to learn to yank the bars round and not lean. It can produce a few hairy moments, such as aiming for open gates and missing, but anyone can master it after a few tries. The first to fall off (or is it out?) was yours truly. I missed my footing and the bike kept chugging along, held in a straight line by some deep ruts. Poor Dave's face was a picture as the outfit continued a further 30 yards and all he could do was hang on! Dave was the next victim. I pushed a branch out of the way only to have it swing back taking my ballast with it. The first I knew was when I looked over my shoulder to see him lying flat on his back — at least the snow gave him a soft landing. The first day's outing was good fun and was a lot more strenuous than riding the XR, but my passenger asked for more trips in the future and I have been happy to share more trails together.

The most difficult part is getting used to the outfit leaning over with the camber of the road. This is accentuated when driving in ruts left by tractors. The width of the outfit is less than that of a tractor and inevitably the bike wheels fall into a rut leaving the chair wheel a couple of feet higher. Here a good passenger is essential, as



it takes a little bit of bravery to hang on to the grab handles over the wheel, hopefully preventing the outfit from toppling over. Steep hills are awkward and are best tackled by blasting up the bank after as long a run up as possible. Extra weight over the rear wheel helps, but a trials tyre is not enough and I will swap it to a knobbly when it wears down. On rocky, greasy climbs the wheel often spins, only to find grip which then lifts the front wheel (as with any trail bike) but pulls the outfit to the left. Once it caught us unawares and we did a beautiful pivot turn that Steve Saunders would have been proud of and we ended up going back down the bank!

The only drawbacks are due to it being trials competition machinery. The suspension is only of limited movement and you tend to bounce over rocks. This is made more noticeable by the seat (or rather lack of one) – call half an inch of foam a seat? A couple of hairy moments have been caused by the anchors. Trials brakes tend to be soft for plenty of feel to prevent locking up in trials sections. This means they are pretty poor, and this is made worse as they are doing the work for twice the weight. The petrol tank is small and restricts range, but a gallon petrol tank fits into the chair and can double the range to 50 miles, but you are always on the look out for a garage. That sidecar can carry quite a bit of luggage really. The gearing has been upped a bit and the bike can now scream along at 50 mph (the engine gets hot, though!)

One of the best bits is riding along twisty tarmac lanes between trails. These can be ridden fairly fast by imitating Rolf Biland and crew by hanging out at each bend. With practise the back wheel can be drifted out! Overall, the outfit has been great fun – we have seen a sidecar trial and will enter one before long (well, someone has to come last). Trail riding can be hard work and often requires a lot of pushing – we made it up the Pack Horse Road from Stokesly when it was very muddy, and can keep up with all but the fastest of groups.

One last thing, a couple of gates are narrow – especially in the Yorkshire Dales. The outfit has to be put on its side and dragged through – I'd like to see an enduro outfit try that! Also, Dave has taken over the reins a couple of times and I can say it is a lot more strenuous being a passenger.

*Dave Vaughan, 15 Seaburn Gardens, Seaburn, Sunderland*



*Dave Vaughan and Dave Boyce near Sunderland*



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### ATTENTION!

Interested in green lane research, but don't know who to contact for information?

Alan Kind has supplied me with a list of County Archivists and addresses. Send SAE for a copy to me, TRF Editor, 39 Shakespeare Avenue, Portswood, Southampton SO2 1HA.



## GROUP NEWS

### SOUTH LONDON GROUP

We continue to see new faces although we now miss some of the earlier supporters. If everyone turns out at the same time we should exceed 30 members.

Clive Morris is keen to move to Wales and help save green lanes there. Fortunately, I don't think the Welsh yet realise what is in store for them!

We recently organised a novice run but, of the five who turned out, only one was classed as a novice so the route was altered to make it more of a challenge. We still tend to organise runs only a day or so before the Saturday, covering an area including parts of Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire (not just South London).

So, if you fancy a different area or different people, give me a ring on 01-661 2296 with a few days notice for the following Saturday and I will tell you the meeting place.

### A NEW GAME

In case the competitive urge is not being satisfied by trail riding, the South London Group has a new game which we call 'TRESPASS'.

Trespass may be played by any number of people but preferably a small group. Items needed are: the players, a green lane with insufficient signposting, a grumpy farmer or landowner. Nothing too difficult to find.

To begin the game, ride slowly and carefully along the lane, stopping occasionally to make sure of your direction. The farmer will appear just as you lose your way at a junction. Politely ask the way and the farmer, who knows the rules of the game, will reply . . .

"I'm not telling you, you find the way yourself and, if you go wrong, I'm doing you for trespass."

Now begins the real skill; the better player will dismount and take a few steps in what he thinks is the correct direction. If wrong, the farmer shouts "trespass" and he is out. The next player then has his chance, and so on, until there is no call from the farmer.

With skill, the game can last some time and a lot of fun can be had by all. Sometimes the farmer spoils it all by his realisation that it is rather silly and collapses in fits of laughter, but we are experimenting with another version in which the farmer fires his shotgun instead of calling "trespass".

(This story is based on a real live incident on a South London Group run in Hants. It seemed the All Wheel Drive Club became lost in the farmer's field and ploughed it for him! I have since asked for further way markers to be erected.)

*Brian Wright, 2 Orchard Road, Sutton, Surrey SM12QA*

Roger Newark recently tracked down this old article from a 1975 issue of the HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE magazine all about the beginnings of the TRF. Many thanks to the magazine publishers for allowing us to reproduce the article and photographs from that historic first run.

### TRACKING DOWN OLD TRAILS

BY E.A. Wrigley, Director of the Trail Riders Fellowship

Not unlike the horse-riding fraternity, the motor-cycling movement was generally oblivious to the ultimate effect of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, when thousands of miles of old cart roads with vehicular rights were downgraded to footpaths or bridleways. For horse riders, lanes of twenty or more feet in width being restricted to walkers was to mean a considerable loss in the 70s with the increased growth of horse riding. For today's motorcyclist it spelt a double loss, for he may not ride upon a bridleway without special permission, even though some may be thirty or more feet wide.

Additionally, the 1949 Act produced a number of idiotic situations like the one near Hitchin, where a 200 yard strip of old county road was downgraded to bridleway with no junction by which to leave to make a detour. Some bridleways terminate as footpaths where they enter another parish and these are often ploughed up to within two feet, because, a farmer will aver, no one ever walks along anyway.

Understandably in 1949 few people saw the shape of things to come, but one man, a bank cashier named Norman Smith, then resident in Kent, undertook to protect the interests of the South Eastern Centre of the Auto Cycle Union, the body responsible for the control of motorcycle sport and an affiliate of the RAC.

In the 60s, Smith retired and moved to Suffolk where he also acted for the British Motorcyclists Federation, a body concerned with the leisure activities and interests of non-sporting motorcyclists. This, of course, greatly widened his activities and today he is known to practically every highway authority in England and Wales. Indeed, it has been jokingly said that he lives in the centre of a huge filing cabinet, such is the enormity of his records.

With the passing of the Countryside Act, 1968, and more lanes being put at risk, people began to realise the need to protect their interests — no less so motorcyclists. When that year the South Midland Centre of the Auto Cycle Union held its November board meeting in Berkhamsted, a number of delegates pressed for a rights of way committee to be formed. A unanimous vote brought a committee into being and the writer was appointed chairman.

Its area of operation covered Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, a part of Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and a part of Essex; seemingly a momentous task when one considers the need to survey hundreds of old cart roads known as 'Roads used as public paths', or RUPPs, as well as a number of bridleways which ought in fact to have been shown as RUPPs. Many needed clearing of growth before it was possible to ride through and at that time there was insufficient help for such a task.

But the Berkhamsted decision was to have far-reaching effects as motorcyclists of all ages began to identify themselves with the fight to save the old rights of way. Many of these riders were unattached to clubs, but had been enjoying runs on green lanes in their own areas, either on their own or with a friend; but some felt the need for an organisation to co-ordinate their efforts and interests.

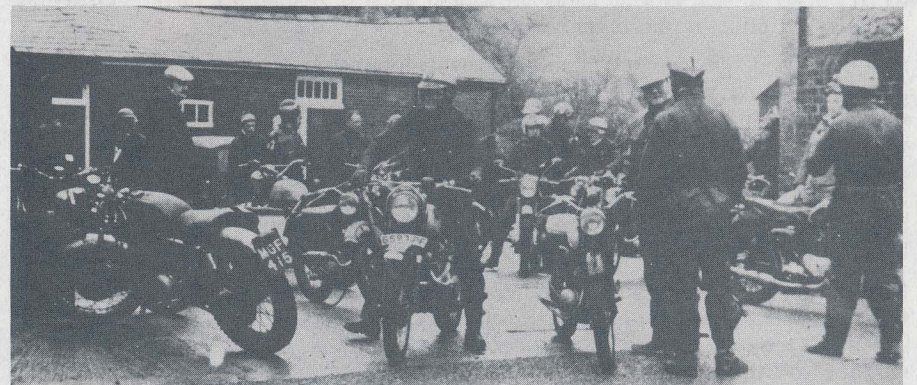




*Physiotherapy student Deborah Rose from Bushey rides through a forgotten track on the Herts/Bucks border.  
Photograph by Mike Brown*



*End of the run as riders gather on the Icknield Way near Ewelme, Oxon.  
Photograph by Mike Brown*



*Scene at the Valiant Trooper, Aldbury, January 1970.  
Start of the formation run of the Trail Riders Fellowship. Third from right, facing, is 67-year-old George Abbey from Bradford, who became President.  
Photograph by Mike Brown.*



As it happened, the Berkhamsted Motor Cycle and Car Club Ltd., although principally a sporting club, had been discussing this idea with several enthusiasts and, as a result, just two years after the formation of the South Midland Centre Rights of Way Committee, a new organisation was formed.

In January 1970 the club staged a green lanes run which, as a result of publicity in the motorcycle press, was supported by thirty riders coming from as far as Bradford and Cardiff. From the former city came 67-year old George Abbey and, from Kings Langley, 16-year old Mike Wastley. The run, which took in much of Icknield Way as far as Benson in Oxfordshire, terminated where it began, at the Valiant Trooper, Aldbury, where the Berkhamsted Club had its clubroom.

After a wash down and a priming of sausages and mash, the by now large assembly considered the formation of a national club to foster and protect green lanes riding by motorcyclists and so was born the Trail Riders Fellowship with fifty foundation members paying in their £1 membership, with several Berkhamsted members agreeing to act as officials.

Now known generally as the TRF, the organisation is dedicated to keeping open green lanes and has an excellent record of successes — often in co-operation with other organisations and is treated with respect by highways authorities. By becoming affiliated to the British Motorcyclists Federation, it enjoys the services of Norman Smith on rights of way matters. The original South Midland Centre Rights of Way Committee, now probably the best regional one in the country, works closely with the TRF in that area and, in fact, with any other body including at times the British Horse Society.

The TRF, with its 400 members stretching from Morayshire to South Wales formed into regional groups, is actively concerned with group runs, clearing undergrowth and dealing with local authorities and other bodies concerned with the countryside. A register of members enables individuals to contact a riding companion in a particular area. Such 'twosomes' often combine additional interests such as archaeology or botany. The TRF exercises a strict riding code to follow, including stopping when horses appear, closing gates and riding quietly. A member turning up with a noisy bike is politely told to go home and do something about it.

One commendable facet of its activities is its interest in 'Help the Aged' charity by organising sponsored long distance runs. In 1972 a sixty mile run by fourteen riders yielded £80; in 1973 forty riders covering 100 miles on old tracks in Berkshire and Wiltshire collected £300. Last year, on what must have been the wettest day in August, forty-eight riders set off from Newbury covering the same route as in 1973. By evening, thirty-two returned with over 100 miles behind them, including Mrs Jean Sutton from Kings Langley who mastered the slippery conditions on her 125 c.c. Honda trail bike in spite of the handicap of an artificial leg.

Most of the riders finished wet and cold after this almost monsoon weather; some faced long runs home to places like Suffolk, Northants and Birmingham, yet without exception they all claimed to have enjoyed themselves. "Mad", someone remarked, yes, but isn't that what makes good Englishmen?

\* \* \* \* \*

## MEMBERS MACHINE REPORT — YAMAHA XT350

Compiled by Rosemary Swindells

In the past these reports have concentrated on discontinued, but nonetheless good, trail bike models. When the XT350 was introduced into this country in 1985, it immediately created a stir amongst the trail riding fraternity and has quickly become a popular machine in the TRF. Therefore, it seems only natural to report on this machine now, while you can still buy it new, rather than wait until the only XT's available are secondhand models.

You only have to look at the XT350 to see that it is a true trail bike and not the marketing man's idea of a trail bike, which usually means a street posing moto-cross replica machine with little green lane capability. The XT350 actually looks like a purpose-built trail bike; a solid looking though relatively small and lightweight machine for a 350. I know I was surprised by its lack of bulk when I had my first ride on Steve Marston's XT, it being much lower and lighter than I had imagined it would be, so for once, bigger has meant better.

The XT350's engine is basically a bored out, updated version of the 4-valve, twin cam head XT250 motor — a model that was never imported into this country, incidentally. With narrow valve angles this makes for optimum gas flow and thus combustion efficiency. With a red line at 8500 rpm and a bore and stroke at 86 x 59.6mm, the XT is quite a revvy unit, so bucket and shim valve adjustment is used as opposed to the screw type adjusters to help keep tolerances true for longer. Vibration is cut to a minimum by the use of a gear-driven balancer shaft. Ignition is electronic CDI and electrics, thankfully, 12 volt. Carburation is by 2 x 24mm Teikeis using the YDIS system 'Yamaha Dual Intake System' with its differing forms of primary and secondary carburation. Direct cable throttle operation of the primary carburettor gives instant low-speed response whilst the vacuum controlled secondary unit chimes in at higher revs. The air scoops on the front of the fuel tank are designed to guide air over the cylinder head to aid cooling. However, some members questioned have consigned these to the bin with no ill effect to engine cooling, as they say they spoil the styling. Power output of 31 bhp at 7500 rpm hits the road courtesy a 6-speed gearbox, 13 plate clutch and expensive heavy duty 428 'O' ring final drive chain.

The single downtube diamond pattern chassis is constructed in lightweight high tensile steel. The engine acts as a stressed member of the chassis, which not only provides rigidity, but also improves ground clearance. With no bottom frame rail the engine is protected by a large alloy bash plate. The rear monoshock suspension unit has five position damping and spring pre-load adjustments, the box section steel swinging arm pivoting on needle rollers. Rising rate suspension, this exerts progressively more damping force as rear wheel movement increases. Front suspension is by 35mm Kayaba air assisted leading axle forks giving 255mm of travel. The XT350, in common with many modern off-roaders, has a disc brake up front incorporating alloy caliper with semi-metallic 'all weather' friction pads and protective plastic shield. At the rear we see the standard drum brake. Alloy wheel rims are standard 21" front and 18" rear, affording owners a better choice of tyres than the fashion dictated 17" rear wheels ever did.

So that's the nuts and bolts of the XT350, all very impressive on paper, but what did members think about their 350 Yamahas?



All the machines were bought new in either 1985 or 1986 with ownership ranging from 2–12 months, thus the average mileage figure for these bikes is low at 1550 miles. Used for trail riding, commuting and general road riding, John Shephard also hopes to enter his in enduros. Although some of the reasons for buying the XT350 varied, the main underlying theme was that the Yamaha offered a good combination of weight, size and power, with a good chassis and reliable 4-stroke engine. Rod Thomas also pointed out that the XT350 makes maximum use of the 225–350 c.c. insurance bracket.

Although some members trailed their XT's box standard, some have removed or modified the usual bits and pieces – indicators, pillion rests and rear mudguard extension removed; return throttle cable disconnected; back light/number plate unit reduced in size, chain oiler, tank cover, digital clock on handlebars fitted. Other modifications included dropping the front forks by 1" to shorten the wheel-base. Obviously the tyres were changed from the original equipment Jap trail slicks with alternatives stated as Pirelli M43 and M17 models, Metzeler (though no model stated) or Michelin T61. Rod Thomas lowered the gearing by fitting a 58 tooth rear sprocket. He also stated that Mitsui recommend leaving the gearbox sprocket at 19 teeth to avoid vibratory harmonics in the chain and high wear.

Rod Thomas explains further about the problems of re-gearing:

*"XT350 owners beware – the bike comes with an extra heavy duty 'O' ring chain as standard (DID 428VS) which is a super chain of good quality. The catch comes when you need four or five extra links to lengthen it or need new split links; then you find that the chain is special, only made for original equipment on the 350. It is not imported into the UK and is not likely to be either. I have spoken to both Mitsui and the chain importers, Intercontinental in Ipswich, about this and whilst very helpful, could not justify importing chains solely for a bike that sold 170 units per year. So if you want to change the gearing, a 58 rear tooth sprocket (costing around £22 from B&C Motors) is the thing, but be prepared to shell out another £40 for a replacement 'O' ring chain as well! A non 'O' ring chain is approximately £12 but is liable to wear out quickly – especially off road... and take the expensive looking gearbox sprocket with it!"*

With some saying the XT350 is difficult to start when hot, others cold, a couple of useful starting tips are: to keep throttle closed when the engine is cold or hot, quarter open when warm for reliable starting (Pete Wildsmith), whilst both Roger Briggs and Mick Mayers say that using the kickstart on full swing, thus employing the valve lifter, makes starting effortless. Other tips cover handling on green lanes: Rod Thomas recommends using the softest setting for the suspension and 14 psi in the tyres on lanes, otherwise the bike is unrideable. Bob Pulford recommends using 12 psi in tyres and Rock Oil 5 Grade in the front forks and no air for optimum handling.

Having modified their XT350s to their own liking, what changes would members like to see made by the manufacturer?

There was no general consensus of opinion over any one change, with only two members saying they'd like less weight, e.g. alloy swinging arm. Generally, changes were of an individual nature, including:

- Wider rear swinging arm fork to take knobblier tyres
- Electric start (as the bike is heavy and difficult to start after having been dropped in mud)
- 1–2" more seat height
- Stronger sprung rear suspension
- Lower price!!
- Stronger sub-frame at rear of seat
- Linked air forks
- Re-locate brake master cylinder as it is rather vulnerable on the handlebars
- Stainless steel exhaust (I think that goes for ALL motorcycles)
- 43mm diameter forks
- Smaller rear mudguard/no plate unit
- Softer seat.

A unanimous "NO" was the answer to "Has anything failed or needed to be replaced?" The only exception being bent handlebars and, in all cases, these were as a result of a fall. Generally, members' complaints and/or problems with the XT350 were of an individual nature:

Rod Thomas states that his uses a lot of engine oil. Also, the mechanic who assembled the machine in the UK put the headlight assembly wiring and front brake hose together all in the wrong locations.

Roger Briggs complains that it was not possible to lengthen the 'O' ring chain nor is it possible to fit a larger rear tyre due to the narrow swinging arm fork.

Mick Mayers says his wife complains about the uncomfortable pillion seat.

John Shephard complains that the paint finish is thin, that the twistgrip tensioner at the end of the handlebar falls out and that it is a difficult machine to start.



*The XT350 is the latest addition to Yamaha's XT range*



All genuine and valid problems/complaints, but nothing comes through as being an inherent XT350 fault and generally the bike seems problem free, at least from an engine point of view; the only trend being the inability to use larger knobblier rear tyres and the difficulty/expense of changing gearing due to the size of chain used. But, on the positive side, undoubtedly the XT350's best features are its good handling, power and quiet, smooth engine. Can't say fairer than that!

The majority of members' machines are home maintained with dealer servicing. With most being under 12 month old machines and thus still under warranty, this is only to be expected. Those who home-maintain their machines say it is an easy bike to work on, there being just a couple of niggles: Pete Wildsmith says the owners handbook doesn't give enough help, and is also concerned that valve clearance setting may not be easy with the shim and bucket arrangement. John Shephard says that the spanners in the toolkit don't fit the bolt as well as they should. There are no problems nor complaints about obtaining spares, nor about the cost. However, the recurring mention of inability to change gearing crops up.

And so to the performance of the XT350 . . . The fuel consumption averages out at 55/65mpg with an occasional 85mpg. Only one member complained of high oil use, the rest said use was nil. On standard gearing, the XT350 seems good for around 85-90mph. Rod Thomas commenting that even with lower gearing he can get 70mph two up and also states that, at the other end of the scale, the machine has "good low down grunt", thus proving that you can have the best of both worlds with a dual purpose machine.

The brakes are stated as being good for a trail bike — especially in deep water and mud (comments Roger Briggs). However, they are lacking on the road for braking from high speed. This is surprising considering the disc front brake. Handling and steering are generally well praised with just a couple of comments over the steering being heavy and the bike's lightness affecting high speed stability. Steve Marston commented that on the lanes, whilst the bike's weight could be a hindrance in heavy going, sometimes the extra weight actually helped stability and when lighter machines were skittering over obstacles, the XT stayed on line. The Japanese trail tyres are said to be good on the road but poor on grass cambers and mud. Clutch and transmission are light and snatch free, but first gear could do with being lower.

Although the majority of members say the riding position is good, two moans were echoed: (i) the handlebars appear to be too high and far back as standard and some members have opted for trials bars in preference; and (ii) the seat is uncomfortable two-up and/or for journeys over 50 miles.

All praised the detail design of the machine, especially the fact that it is not easily damaged when dropped. The lighting and controls are stated as being superb. Snail cam chain adjusters are said to be good. The only complaints being that the paint finish is a little thin in places, the front wheel speedo drive is awkward for wheel changing and a 520 size chain would have been preferred. As is common throughout this report, many of these are individual comments, with few generally recurring themes.

Most would buy this model again, the same members would recommend the machine to someone else, although John Shephard further clarified, only if they wanted an all purpose bike. Some would buy this model again, others will wait and see what the market comes up with. John Shephard is hoping Kawasaki will bring out a KLR350 or that Yamaha will import the TT350.

The XT350 appears to have been well accepted by trail riders as a serious green lane mount and also as a good road machine. This feeling is also backed up by other people I know with XT350s, who didn't take part in this report. A good all-rounder with good power to weight ratio, and a machine with few vices so far. The XT350 was almost bound to make a killing in a class where there is no new trail bike competition these days. The nearest competitors, I should say, being the Honda XL250R or Kawasaki KLR250; the 600 c.c. machines being in a totally different class.

I know I thoroughly enjoyed my 'quick spin' and will conclude with Bob Pulford's comment "quite an outstanding bike, very good value, very impressed."

#### SPECIFICATION

<i>Engine type</i>	4-stroke DOCH 4-valve single with YDIS
<i>Displacement</i>	346 c.c.
<i>Bore x stroke</i>	86 x 59.6mm
<i>Maximum power</i>	31bhp @ 7500rpm
<i>Maximum torque</i>	30 kg-m @ 7000rpm
<i>Fuel tank capacity</i>	12 litres
<i>Transmission</i>	Multi-plate wet clutch, 6-speed gearbox
<i>Overall length</i>	2225mm
<i>Overall width</i>	865mm
<i>Overall height</i>	1210mm
<i>Dry weight</i>	120kg
<i>Tyres</i>	3.00 x 21" front/110/80-18" rear

-----ooOoo-----

My thanks to the following for their help in this report:

Rod Thomas	Bob Pulford	Pete Wildsmith	S. Thomas
Roger Briggs	Mick Mayers	John Shephard	Steve Marston



## DERBYSHIRE TRAIL RIDE! — A Laidback Viewpoint

One of the great pleasures of trail riding, I remember hearing Graham say, is wallowing in a nice hot bath afterwards! That, and a good pub that serves jumbo sausages and chips with a pint of Burtons, I thought, bringing my new-found local knowledge to bear. In the contemplative mood brought on by the warm water lapping round my ear 'oles, I appraised the two bluish patches of skin — one above each knee and deduced that they must have been caused by the handlebars stopping me going over the top when the front wheel broke through the snow-bank and the bike stopped in the handstand position, as it were.

It had been a great ride, the first warm day of '86, which by lunchtime had me rolling up the tool bag, adjusting the chain and telling the missus that I was just going 'up the road' to see if the lanes were still there. North West of Ashbourne, the first lane was that delightful crossing over the River Dove on the UCR bridge west of Thorpe, and I put on just enough power to give me the momentum to overcome the slippery climb up to the farmyard exit. Not like the first time, I thought, when new to the area I had simply spun to a standstill, fooled by the innocuous-looking slope. It's not just knowing how to tackle the trail, I thought, as I spent all of fifteen minutes kicking the wind-blown snow away from the gate at Upper Musden, it's the confidence of knowing where you are and that where you are is where you should be — legally, I mean. Exploring with just the map six months beforehand I had thought it prudent not to take this trail since, with no local knowledge and no guide on that day, I simply had not known which notch in the skyline to make for.

The view of the White Peak before me was breathtaking as I descended towards the Manifold.

Three miles further north I repeated the experience as I crossed the hilltop above Throwley Hall; descending again to the river, stopping at the lower gate for a few moments to watch the rock gymnasts on the cliff face of Beeston Tor. From here a narrow single-lane road with passing places winds upwards through double 1:4 hairpins to Wetton village, then down again to Wetton Mill with the tourist attraction, Thor's Cave, clearly visible across the valley. Right through the gate near the footbridge takes me for a mile through a scenic steep-sided valley on a green lane which goes in and out of the shallow stream that runs its length. A weasel runs across the path six feet in front of me and races up the hillside before disappearing between the rocks.

My plan is to make a clockwise circuit from Ashbourne in the south to Hartington in the north and back again; first west, then east of the River Dove. The next bit I haven't done before, so I'm map reading again. I pass through a minor RUPP, down a good sized country lane past a caravan site to roads end: the deep swift-flowing River Dove at Wolfscote Dale. There is a footbridge, but two high handrails make it impossible for the bike. To turn back would be prudent, to drive in distinctly foolish. At times like this the moral support of some mates comes in mighty handy, not to mention the potential 'get you home' factor. I'm reluctant to give in without some sort of try. I decide to wade across. It's a very good knee deep, flowing fast and it creeps inside the Barbours and over the top of my NCB wellies. That makes me even more determined to get some return for my endeavours. I start the bike and push it firmly into bottom gear and then get off again! I walk, slipping the clutch,

to the brink. I lean towards the bike, the bike leans towards me; clinging to each other for support as we inch our way in.

All goes well until just past half way when a big wave slaps my legs and goes straight over the cylinder head. The sparkler goes out. I heave us onto the far bank and pray that if I blow the surplus water off and stay patient long enough, residual engine heat will evaporate the rest. Time up, a good strong prod and the DT immediately bursts into life. I relish the steep, twisting track and the trials-deep mud that follows, attacking both with adrenalin-induced aggression. For that, as the Duke of Wellington was reputed to have said of Waterloo, was a damned near thing!

At Hartington I turn south-east and poke my nose into the lane which you see on the front cover, except it's pretty full of snow. Where a tractor has been through I can make some way, but after the tracks turn into a field it's a different story. I charge the first snow bank which holds our weight, but on the second occasion the front wheel breaks through and I do the aforementioned handstand. I decided to give it 'best' since the snow banks go on undiminished out of sight.

Back on the road I'm sweating from the exertion and the sun is still shining; it is in truth a glorious day; the kind of day one doesn't want to hurry and gives space for other thoughts.

I remember walking into the East Midlands Club, a stranger to the area, for the first time and the courteous and kindly welcome I got. When everything is new, impressions are the more striking and one sees otherwise taken for granted characteristics. In this case, friendly as I've said; then lots of people marking up OS maps with highlighter pens and — as I was to discover — the strange monthly ritual of the secret of next Sunday's run.

I cross the A516 Buxton to Ashbourne road and enter that delightful series of wide, smooth, easy to follow lanes just south of the A5012. My very first day trail riding in the Peak Park had been a wet club run from Matlock but when I got around to exploring for myself this had been the good beginners area Richard had suggested. Cardlemere Lane flows into Green Lane and I cross the old railway line that now forms the High Peak Trail. Hedge Lane to Rockhurst Farm, then Gallowlow Lane to Royston Grange, and south down a very class 6 road through a steep sided valley to the hamlet of Ballidon. "My last and best lane" I think as I climb the greenest of green roads, over the shoulder of the hill before plunging, classic zig-zag style, down to meet the B5056 at the Brassington intersection.

I stop before the final descent and drink in the scene, the sun is finally slipping away, but its paling light illuminates a breathtaking 270 degree panorama. In sheltered corners of nearly every field some remnant of snow remains to remind me of what seemed to be a very long winter. I drop down the trail to the last gate of the day and for the first time feel chilled.

I shudder again, violently, and peering along the surface of the water observe a remote big toe sticking above the surface. It looks decidedly wrinkled. It dawns on me where I really am and that the bath is now cold, but the inward warmth of the day remains; the delights of new trails and the recognition of new-found friends.

*Dave Giles, 22 Ford Lane, Allestree, Derby*



## BOOK REVIEW by Rosemary Swindells

**Title:** The Complete Book of Motocross  
**Author:** Frank Melling  
**Publisher:** Haynes Publishing Group  
**ISBN:** 0-854299-473-2  
**Price:** £14.95

For as long as there have been motorcycles, folk have wanted to race them. The earliest cross-country event in this country was held in 1914, arranged by Alfred Scott as a form of relaxation, would you believe it, for his employees at the Scott motorcycle factory. This event later became known as the 'Scott Trial'. The 1920s saw the first of the real scrambles with the late 1930s seeing the hey-day of the "ride what you brung" scrambles. Post war machines and events became more and more geared towards the specialist machine.

And so, author Frank Melling takes us through a brief, but nevertheless informative, history and development of the sport and includes some super archive photographs and action shots. Following this history, Frank reflects on the sport today with regard to finance and policy, how much the Japanese really spent on the sport and how modern rear suspension came about. Interesting as these observations are, this, as Frank Melling states, "is not the aim of this book". A highly competitive and specialised sport, he stresses, and rightly so, the secret of moto cross is to ENJOY yourself!

This book then sets out to cover every aspect of the sport of motocross — there being no doubt about the author's expertise in this field, having been involved in the sport for twenty-one years as an amateur rider, professional journalist and team manager. His style, very readable and informal, chatty in places, makes for a very enjoyable read as well as offering invaluable reference information to the would-be "Mudgrunt".

Surprisingly, Frank talks about what clothing to buy before buying the bike! Most of the advice given about clothing is common sense, best protection at the price you can afford. Although stating his own preferences and sponsors, Frank doesn't expect the reader to rush out and buy their make of gear exclusively, but offers good guidance and pointers on what to look for and how to look after your riding gear.

The following four chapters cover the machine. Buying: the author offers advice as to which is the best c.c. for the beginner, throwing in the pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages of all classes from 125 to 500 c.c., whether to buy new or second-hand, trade or private. Knowing that not everyone can afford or want to buy new, Frank gives seventeen very detailed points on what to look for when buying second-hand. The information in this chapter is excellent and, although dealing with off road machinery, much of what he says would go for the buying of any motorcycle. So, having bought your beast, the author tells you what tools to get, how to keep and look after them, together with a general maintenance schedule. Maybe disappointed with your bike's standard power, Frank mentions a few "beginners tuning" tips, but don't expect in depth details of how to make your YZ the fastest thing on two wheels! Tyres, as I have found, are very much a personal thing, but the author covers these round black objects in detail, explaining what a knobbly tyre is for the

novice, the differences between hard/soft compound tyres, suggested pressures and even how to fit the tyre.

Dressed and ready to go with your bike all set, Frank goes through the different modes of transport to actually get to the meeting: trailers, vans, racks, including a plan for making your own trailer.

Rider preparation is just as important as machine preparation. Do you think you can do Kurt Nicholl's training programme? But, on a more sober note, a top surgeon talks about the different injuries from which a rider can suffer and, having told you about the injuries, he then gives you some riding techniques on how to avoid falls and injuries. Trouble is, these books always make the riding techniques sound so easy.

You must be in a club to race in motocross. This chapter tells you how to join a club and which organisation is the best for you to ride with. It talks about schoolboy racing, getting entry forms and insurance. There is even a chapter which tells you what to do and where to go when you actually get to the race track, so you're not standing around looking like a dummy. Here, Frank Melling adds the personal touch again by telling you what he would do, and how he used to go about organising what spares to take, tools to take and what clothing to take with you and also not to forget plenty of food and drink (although not alcoholic!), where to park even, and set up for the day.

Chapter 13 is more of a bit of fun with top riders having helped with this section. All the secrets of Grand Prix racing are here, including how to do a double jump!

Sponsorship may be every riders' dream, but the author tells of the bad things in sponsorship as well as the good. How to approach sponsors, what to expect from them and what the dealer/sponsor will expect from you.

Finally, and as if to spur you on to greater things, a chapter covering a week in the life of Dave Thorpe, one of the top men in motocross today. His training, home life, race preparation, racing, etc. A real insight into a World Champion's life.

Never condescending, never dictatorial, Frank Melling offers his advice, how he would approach each subject, but never says "Thou shalt!" His writing is interesting, flows and shows an obvious enthusiasm for the sport.

This book includes a lovely colour section of action and still shots; something many publications sadly just cannot afford. Throughout the rest of the book there are over 190 b&w shots illustrating points made in the text — even down to photographs of spanners and body building! with the inclusion of some really fabulous action shots. A quality book also in terms of print and paper.

Motocross certainly must be the most action-packed of all motorcycle sport. An excellent and well informed book which should guarantee every motocross rider knows the ins and outs of the sport and will get them raring to go! This most certainly is the "complete" book about motocross.

-----ooOoo-----



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## TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

### Group and Group Rep.

#### BRISTOL

Martin Chandler, 37 Orchard Walk  
Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire  
GL12 8SD. Tel: Dursley 842528

#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Richard Shaw, 37 Western Way  
Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SE  
Tel: 0462 670926

#### CHESHIRE

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#### HERTFORDSHIRE

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Tel: Hemel Hempstead 41136

#### LANCASHIRE

Keith Westley, 6 Briars Lane, Lathom  
Ormskirk, Lancs. Tel: 0704 893215

## LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS

2nd Mondays  
White Hart, Brisington Hill  
Brislington, Bristol

1st Monday of the month —  
The Falcon, Mill Road, Buckden,  
Huntingdonshire

1st and 3rd Thursday — The Robin Hood  
Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove,  
Stockport

Golden Lion, Market Place, Kendal

2nd & 4th Tuesdays — The Victoria Hotel  
248 Neepsend Lane, Sheffield

2nd Wednesday — Three Horseshoes  
Hemington, Leicestershire

2nd & 4th Wednesdays  
Kellingley Social Centre  
Knottingley

4th Tuesday — White Bear  
Stanford Rivers, Nr. Ongar, Essex

Bath Pool Inn, Bathpool  
Taunton  
Last Thursday 8.00 p.m.

1st Monday  
Raglan Arms  
Conduit Street, Gloucester

1st Wednesday —  
Sow and Piglets  
Toddington, Beds.

1st Tuesday — The Hind's Head  
Charnock Richard, Chorley, Lancs.

## LODDON VALE

Don Lewis, Ladybower, Dogmersfield  
Basingstoke, Hants. RG27 8SS  
Tel: 02514 616359

## NORFOLK & SUFFOLK

Dave Rose, 15 Shire Green, Fen Lane  
Kings Lynn. Tel: 0553 765661

## NORTH MIDLANDS

Brian Smith, 'The Smithy'  
Ballfields, Bradnop, Leek, Staffs.  
Tel: 0538 384218

## NORTHUMBERLAND

Ken Canham, 'Overdale'  
Woodside Villas, Hexham, Northumberland  
Tel: Hexham 602553

## NORTH WALES

John Mills, 7 Brookfield Drive  
Holmes Chapel, Cheshire  
CW4 7DT

## NORTH WEST LONDON

Roger Newark, 76 Hale Grove Gardens  
Mill Hill, London NW7. Tel: 01-959 2386

## NORTH YORKSHIRE

T. Thornell, 38 Woodlands Grove  
Harrogate. Tel: 888191

## SHROPSHIRE

Paul Kingston, 52 St Michael's Close  
Madeley, Telford, Shropshire  
Tel: 0952 583812

## SOUTH EAST

Steve Neville, 115 Ifield Way  
Gravesend. Tel: 57061

## SOUTH LONDON

Clive Morris, 114 Spa Hill  
Upper Norwood, London SE19 3TZ  
Tel: 01-771 0639

## SOUTHERN

Peter Wildsmith, 5 Meynell Close  
Eastleigh, Hants. SO5 4DZ

## SUNDAY WINTER CLUB — CWMBRAN

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West Pontnewyd, Cwmbran  
Tel: Cwmbran 4742

## SUSSEX

John Penfold, 'Mariners'  
Nyton Road, Aldingbourne  
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## TEESIDE

Leo Crone, 35 Flamingo Close  
Darlington. Tel: Darlington 282671

2nd Thursday — The Lamb  
Theale, Nr. Reading, Berks.

1st Wednesday — The Blue Lion  
North Pickenham

1st Tuesday — Jervis Arms  
Onecote, Nr. Leek, Staffs.

3rd Tuesday —  
Ryton Rugby Club, Ryton

1st Wednesday — The Fox & Grapes  
Chester Road, Hawarden, Clywd  
(nr Queensferry & Mold)

1st Wednesday —  
Sow and Piglets, Toddington, Beds.

2nd & 4th Tuesdays — Prince of Wales  
Starbeck, Harrogate

2nd and last Wednesday of month  
(except December)  
Bell Inn, Cross Houses

2nd Tuesday —  
The White Swan, Crayford

1st Thursday —  
Fox and Hounds  
Carshalton High Street

3rd Tuesday — The Woodman Inn, Lower  
Upham B 2177 (Formerly the A 333)

Tuesday — King's Head Hotel  
Pontnewyd, Cwmbran, Gwent

Contact John (every other month — 4th  
Wednesday — i.e. Feb., April, June, etc.)  
Hassocks Hotel, Hassocks, Mid Sussex

1st Wednesday — The Station Hotel  
Kirby, near Stokesley