



T R F

TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER 145 AUG. 1990

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AUG. 1990 NEWSLETTER 145

The National Club for the Encouragement of non-competetive
Green Roads Motocycling and Maintainance of Rights of Way



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EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

This is my last Newsletter as Editor. It has been a lot of work but it was made worth it by the many letters of appreciation. This would seem to prove that too much criticism can be destructive.

In his wisdom, our Chairman has suggested that the Editorship should last for a six month period. This will certainly suit my wife and family; probably the Group too. It will also give the membership a rest from my style of editorship. Thank you to my Group and especially to Alan Seagrave for all the help given.

As I write this, I again assume that this issue will be a small one. I wrote that last month and it turned out to be 20 pages - almost a Bulletin. You lucky members have never had it so good!

I have been asked to print the Group List more frequently. I have spent some time on updating this but inevitably some details will be wrong, just let the new editor know. I will leave the List in the computer for future use.

The Croydon M.C.C. to which I also belong, recently attended the Croydon Carnival, where we put on a demonstration trial in a hollow near the main display. This was a great success and attracted a large crowd of spectators. I believe it might be adapted for the T.R.F. Groups to show what we do and stimulate membership. I spent over an hour giving rides to small boys and girls in the sidecar of my outfit, all with their parent's consent. (I must take a bag of sweeties next time!)

Do you recall how often older people say of youngsters "They need a bit of Army discipline" Well the Army had the stand next to us at the Carnival and several of them were trying a KLR 250 belonging to someone else. They were racing all over the showground with scant regard for the visitors. Guess who had to tell them to behave themselves?

The day after risking life and limb on a motor cycle I took my dogs out for a run on my mountain bike. The front wheel hit a tree root and dumped me in the brambles. I received bad grazes to knee and shin, scratches to hand and head and lots of bruises. Now the point is, I have had far worse falls from a motor cycle and not received a scratch. Yes, you've guessed it, it is all down to wearing the correct clothing. This weather there is a tendency to think "It is too hot for boots and gloves, just this once" Do not be tempted, wear a lighter jacket or leave the zip undone. I invariably wear knee and elbow protection as well as boots and gloves. I am self employed!

Looking through some old Bulletins, I came across an article by Allan Kind in which he puts the suggestion "Why not register all moto-cross and other competition bikes" When they are new they are frequently stolen. When they are older, they are frequently used by thoughtless youths with equally thoughtless parents who allow them to annoy lots of other people. The latter and the police respond by hitting out at all "off roaders" or "scramblers". If these motor cycles were registered they would be more easily traced. They would also have to be street legal: and why not? They can still be raced.

I believe the dealers should bear more responsibility for the machines they sell. Making a quick buck may be O.K. in the short term, but when there is no motor cycling where does that leave the dealer? I have often heard it repeated that after a sale of an old moto-crosser the first question is usually "Where can I ride it?" No doubt the answer is "In the woods" or "Over the common" (Oddly enough, since typing this, I note that Bill Kershaw covers the same point in his W.T.R.A. booklet paragraph entitled "Where will you ride it? Oh, on the mountain of course")

Quote from David Benson testing a Volvo " It is a long time since I found it in my heart to love a Volvo. They are so staid. The people who drive them seem to feel they are cocooned in an impregnable tank and mostly, have scant regard for other road users." End of quote.

After the World Cup was over I read that "only" 1% of English supporters were arrested and therefore we would apply to be allowed back into European football. If we could only obtain a Public Inquiry we should be able to present a good case against Sussex (South Downs Way) and the Ridgeway Counties in terms of trail riders arrested don't you think? I have just received a copy of an excellent 12 page booklet issued to the Welsh Trail Riders quarterly. It appears to be written entirely by Bill Kershaw as he states they have no editor or contributors (put a few wrong addresses in Bill, they'll soon write then. Ed.) How about a motion for the A.G.M. That the T.R.F. allow affiliation with the W.T.R.A. for a nominal fee to cover the cost of sending the Newsletter to each member. Another motion that we extend the same facility to the riders of mountain cycles and horse riding clubs. If these clubs are unwilling to pay the fee, then their organisations could be sent a single copy of our Newsletter allowing their editors to circulate items of interest to these other clubs. If there is sufficient interest, our Newsletter could contain special sections of interest for these members.

The All Wheel Drive Club have done it again. They have managed to obtain the maximum possible publicity for their repairs recently carried out to the Ridgeway and Fosse Way etc. by publishing the fact in both their own magazine and Four Wheel Driver (and for all I know they've probably informed the local papers and the Council's own newsletter) I quote from their mag. "The District and County Councils are now starting to realise that we are a legitimate user group with a responsible attitude to rights of way."

I would like to read more articles like the Lancs. Group Maintenance Weekend which appeared in the last Newsletter telling as many people as possible about the T.R.F.'s good deeds.

Also in the A.W.D.C. mag. was an item concerning the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. They invited various users to form a R.of W. Users Group in Berkshire. Only the Ramblers, British Horse Society and the A.W.D.C. responded positively! Where were you, T.R.F.?

During a recent run on the Sussex / Hants. border I was reminded of the huge differences between Councils. Some time ago we were challenged near Hawkley Hants. Upon investigation I was informed that the landowner was wrong, the lane was a RUPP and would become a BOAT. Also, this particular person had moved his mother into a nursing home and taken over her house. Yes, they had some spare Right of Way signs and they would be erected. They were to!

More recently, I was again challenged, this time near Rogate Sussex, about five miles from the previous occasion. Again, I investigated, to my amazement I was informed that although it was a RUPP, that only allowed for walkers and horses and, until after the Review they could not confirm higher status. When I pressed further the young lady made reference to the Rubinstein case. I was able to inform her that this case had no bearing on the matter and she withdrew her comments and suggested I write to the County Solicitor's Department. If the Sussex Council are passing on this information to landowners, they must be aware that it can only promote conflict. One wonders if that is the intention.

I see there is to be another conference on Motorised Sport in the Countryside at Grantham Lincs. on 2 October. It is to be called "Overcoming the Challenges" at least that sounds positive Noisy sports to be discussed include motorcycles, A.W. Drivers, microlights, jet skis and would you believe mountain bikes? I think they should include gliding, have you heard the racket the towing planes make? The Sports Minister will be speaking and it is expected that many local government officers will attend. No doubt our enemies will infiltrate. We must be prepared. If there is time we need a propaganda document to put our case.

The above leads me on to several small items of news. The M.A.G. rally in Trafalgar Square attracted 25,000 without causing (more than the usual) traffic jams. The Green Party's Tony Slade gave it support. The M.A.G. are trying to influence two other groups who might help the motorcycle become environmentally acceptable, Transport 2,000 and the Environmental Transport Association.

In case it has escaped your attention, we now have a new Roads and Traffic Minister, Christopher Chope replaces Robert Atkins. The latter hardly had time to become a "hate figure" did he?

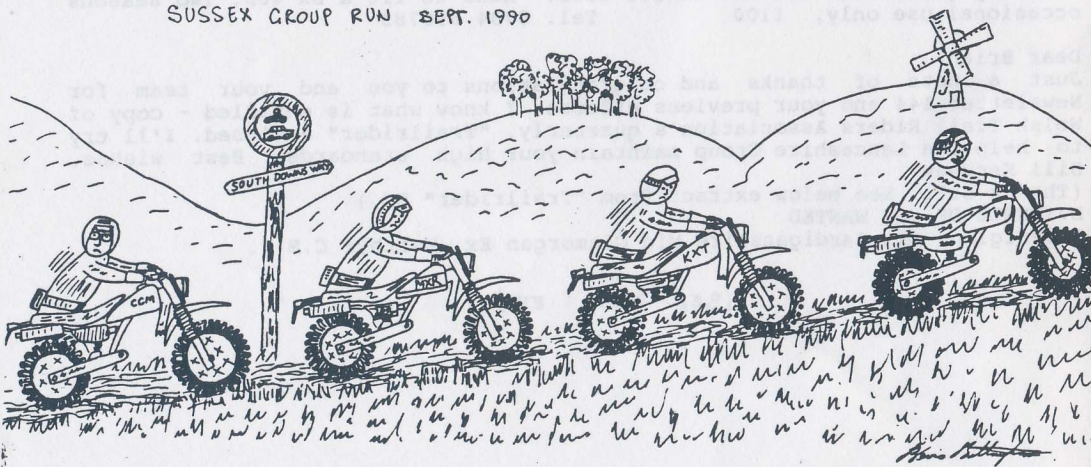
In conclusion, thank you dear member for treating me so kindly. I hope you enjoy my successor's efforts but remember, it's YOUR Newsletter. I regret that I have not been able to print all of the items sent to me, they will be forwarded to the new Editor who is Tim Stevens, his address is in every copy. If you refer to issue no. 144 July 1990 page 20, you will find all the details and addresses you need to send your "copy" to the right person. Goodbye and good riding.
Brian Wright

SMALL ADS.

Lady Elizabeth Kirk of the Byways and Bridleways Trust and formerly a Countryside Commissioner, has recently opened three self catering cottages on her farm just North of Pickering, North Yorks. Ideal for Moors, Dales, Wolds, Scarborough and York. Enquiries to Lady Kirk, 0751 72601 or write Manor Farm Holidays, Newton on Rawcliffe Pickering North Yorkshire YO18 8QA

Gite or B and B in the Scottish Highlands, 15 K Inverness. For more information contact Ali at 0349 64374

SUSSEX GROUP RUN SEPT. 1990



"COME ON, LADS - THE COUNTY COUNCIL HAVE SPENT A FORTUNE TO ENHANCE YOUR ENJOYMENT OF THIS OLD ROAD"

BOOK REVIEW

There are not many books on trail riding. There is our own Secretary's Exploring Green Roads and Lanes of Great Britain by Ian Thompson, which I would recommend and a book by Frank Melling in the Ride It! series entitled The Complete Book of Trail Riding which is really about Enduro riding and rather outdated now.

I have discovered another book entitled Reminiscences of Motor Cycling by "Ixion". Older members might recognise the the author as a regular contributor to the Motor Cycle when it existed as a magazine. Ixion started riding at the turn of the century and the book contains memories of thirty years and 300,000 miles.

Although the book is out of print I understand many public libraries have it, if not ask for it to be loaned from another branch. Bear in mind the book was written in the late twenties, when most roads were dirt and the machinery was unreliable. I give you a few quotes from the introduction. "Pioneer motor-cyclists were regarded by the general public as incomprehensible lunatics. Indeed, unless we frightened peoples horses, they were quite outstandingly polite to us. The uncertainty of being able to start on a journey was only exceeded by the improbability of our ever reaching our destination in the saddle." "The odds in the first place were heavily against our being able to trace the trouble; in the second place the betting was equally strong against our being able to remedy it, if found. When it rained, we sideslipped and got drenched, for our machines were woefully top-heavy, and the modern dreadnought clothing was not dreamt of. Our belts slipped and broke; the slip which they developed in wet weather was not more habitual than the glaze from which their leather suffered when roads were dry and dusty. We often covered a few miles at a speed which was then regarded as suicidal - say 24 mph or so but a cross country journey was generally slower than a scissor-grinders handcart." "Now that the horse is all but extinct, I may inform the curious that it was an observant, suspicious and ignorant animal. When motor-cycles first dawned on it's vision, it took careful stock of them. Several disturbing points were immediately obvious. Motor-cycles smelt abominably. The men who accompanied them were dreadful ruffians. Sometimes a motor-cycle might be met travelling at inconceivable velocities. On other occasions, indeed more commonly, they were found stationary by the roadside. This latter attitude was pure cunning, intended to entice the unwary horse up to close range before the noise and smell began. The new monster was evidently a lethal projectile, a kind of bomb on wheels. We produced some such impression on the horses of our day. The consequence was that when they sighted us they immediately did an 'about turn' and worked up to maximum revolutions in an amazingly few yards."

"Only a very Prussian foreman could keep his hands at work when the unaccustomed 'tutta tutta' in slow time was audible in the road. Presently the public decided, as it always does, that a new noise was an intolerable nuisance. Jeers or scowls became our portion. We knew what it was to have an elderly stranger shake his fist at us in front of an empurpled and twitching countenance. Even our nearest and dearest could furnish up no sort of defence for us. They spoke of our insane hobby behind closed doors and with bated breath, much as if we had cheated at cards or made an unsuitable marriage."

"When there is no war on, no uncharted islands to explore, this land of policemen and accurate maps and black coats on Sundays is apt to bore a certain type of temperament. The purchase of a motor-cycle imported a spice of risk and uncertainty and Bohemianism into such a life." If you can find a copy for sale, buy it. You will find it full of interesting and amusing recollections, all in rather quaint prose. A large part of which, the trail rider will find somewhat reminiscent of more recent days.

SPOT A WILD BIRD

Once, the Barn Owl was found in most parts of Britain. However, as its habitat of old fashioned barns and large trees disappear, so the Barn Owl becomes scarcer. This owl is well known for its prolonged eerie screech. It's feeding time is at dusk when it emerges to hunt for voles, rats and even small birds. The Barn Owl can be recognised from the Tawny Owl by its different colouring, having snow white underparts, while the upperparts vary from burnished copper to faint orange. The trail rider will usually see it at dusk, when it appears as a large bird of ghostly white with big black eyes. If it choose to screech at that moment you might find out who has "bottle"

TRAIL PROBLEM PAGE

I have received a reply from David Marchant regarding the queries in last month's Newsletter.

Dear Brian, I enclose info. you requested on map no. 99. I have no info. on Bellerby Moor other the fact that it is M.O.D. land. Try Leo Crone. If you receive anything let me have a copy. P.S. I have lane inf. for maps no. 98, 99, 104, 110 and parts of no. 103, 105, 111 and North Yorks. Moors. Thanks David, I like your lane information sheet, if you do not mind, I'll make it available to other groups at the next Committee Meeting, Ed. This Month's Queries are intended to be for all member's information, not just me. Ed.

WALES Sarn Helen, Banwen to Neath. Has the three months T.R.O. now ended? Judging by the obstructions at Banwen it looks rather permanent. A few months ago the previous section to the North East was blocked by fallen trees. A T.R.O. on Grwyne Fawr? Yes, but don't panic. Powys have advertised this in order to impose "one way" traffic (downhill) for A.W.D. vehicles only and not for motor-cycles I believe the Association of Rover Clubs will agree, I hope the A.W.D.C. will also. It makes sense.

THE RIDGEWAY I see from the A.W.D.C. mag. that there is a restraint - No Motor Vehicles on Sundays and Bank Holiday Weekends between May and October. I believe this is our own Voluntary Restraint which the Councils "took over", and not something new. Could local groups confirm and let the Editor have an update on the T.R.O.?

SUSSEX Two lanes near Bepton are ploughed every year. One, running West from Fairfield and another from the South Downs Way across Linch Down. When I complain, the Council say they will take action. If they do, it is not effective.

HAMPSHIRE A lane running East from Buriton past Cowhouse Farm is completely blocked by fallen trees. I can remember when this linked up with a track at the edge of the trees. A clearance job for you Pete Wildsmith? Still in Hampshire, it seemed to me that there is rather too much evidence of 4 W.D. activity on certain lanes near to Basingstoke. This needs repair not restraint. Does any member have "pull" with the A.W.D.C. in this area? It needs an earth mover. Are you there Dave Tilbury?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Brian, (From P.R. Officer)

Re. Reports from Counties or Regions

To enable R.o W. workers within the T.R.F. to know what is going on nationally, I should like to propose that every delegate attending Executive Committee Meetings prepares and delivers a short report on the situation in his own county.

In those parts of the U.K. where we are not well represented, a regional report comprising several counties would suffice.

Such is the nature of our fight to conserve green roads that we must have up to date information on our "market." Gwyn Thomas

Dear Mr Editor,

Just a brief note in praise of one of your Newsletter's advertisers : three colleagues and myself were fortunate enough to have a couple of days available for some trail riding in Wales and we engaged the services of Bob Buck as both our guide and our host.

We cannot praise Bob highly enough, both as a guide and his ability to bikes and exhausted riders from Welsh bogs. A thoroughly enjoyable two days with excellent accomodation and meals at the Cornhill Inn.

If anyone is in the Rhayader area, there is always a welcome for any motorcyclist and trail riders especially so. Roy Martin

Dear Brian,

Attention all XR 250 owners from 1986 onwards. Recently whilst trail riding, a small twig managed to pass through the standard engine guarding, passed up between the oil pipes and the frame, removing the wiring from the pulse generator. Since this wiring passes through the "clutch cover" at the joint by use of a rubber grommet the result was also a loss of oil sprayed onto the front wheel until the bike came to rest. I pushed the bike home!

I do not carry a spare unit, neither do the Honda stores it seems, it took approximately three weeks to get and costs about £30. This wiring seems to be well protected as are the oil pipes but I've been concerned at the protection afforded by the original tube guard. Guess who's new skid plate goes right to the engine mounts? Colin Patient

P.S. My green lane sidecar is for sale. Made to fit a DR 400. Two seasons occasional use only, £100 Tel. 0734 696783

Dear Brian,

Just a note of thanks and congratulations to you and your team for Newsletter 144 and your previous efforts. I know what is entailed - copy of Welsh Trail Riders Association's quarterly, "Trailrider" enclosed. I'll try to help the Lancashire Group maintain your high standards. Best wishes. Bill Kershaw

(Thanks Bill. See below extract from "Trailrider" Ed.)

EVIDENCE OF USE WANTED

Ceredigion Ex. Cardiganshire Mid Glamorgan Ex. Merthyr C.B.C.

(SEE OVER ED.)

RIGHTS OF WAY

General

We continue to be notified of proposed public path diversions and reclassifications in Wales but they are seldom of interest to vehicle users. Simon Cleeve is still the official contact for the Welsh Authorities and he lets us know of any notices of potential concern.

WTRA is not consulted when a local authority makes a traffic order or uses Planning Powers to affect a R of W. It is for you to keep an eye on the local Press and to read Notices posted on site so that decisions can be taken whether or not to make representations. Current traffic orders being processed are (a) a one-way (south to north) scheme for vehicles with more than 2 wheels on Grwyne Fawr and (b) a total prohibition on all vehicles on the Pont Scethin track in Gwynedd. We only know about such proposals if you tell us, so don't leave it to others. It is likely that our entitlement to use R of W's will be curtailed more in future by the imposition of traffic orders. We may well agree with some proposals but where we need to take a contrary view it is important that our comments reach the highway authority before the specified date. DO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.

Gwent

We have been consulted on a review of Gwent's strategy for Public Rights of Way and this is a reminder that it won't be long before evidence will be required for the reclassification of RUPPs this close to 'home'. We need to liaise with TRF (the Bristol Group is very active in the Wye Valley and eastern part of the County) and for one or two WTRA members to emerge who can help assemble relevant documentary and use evidence. Gwent looks for 18 or more user evidence statements so there is lot of paper-work to be done.

Pont Scethin

Gwynedd County Council has confirmed its intention to make a Traffic Restriction Order, (TRO) under the 1984 Act to prohibit vehicular use of this well known Unclassified Road (UCR) with a commitment to review the need after 5 years. The County's justification for the Order is that time is needed to allow reinstatement of the damage caused by Dŵr Cymru and to enable other repairs to be undertaken. The County Council could elect to hold a Public Inquiry but are not obliged to do so. I am not aware of any Regulations which enable us to pursue this matter further but I have requested that the Order be reconsidered in 3 years rather than 5 as this was the original intention.

The Code on Conservation, Access and Recreation agreed by the Water Authorities before privatisation requires them to take precautions to reduce the effects of their activities on users of the countryside. Dŵr Cymru has been challenged in regard to the Pont Scethin situation. In reply the plc acknowledge and regret their failure to consult but say the works had to be carried out urgently to preserve water supplies. As to the quality of the reinstatement work the claim is that it was carried out in consultation with the National Park and with conservation groups. None of those of course have any interest in preserving established vehicular rights and this is reflected in the unsuitability of what was done.

We have no reason to doubt Welsh Waters assurance that "the utmost importance is placed on conservation, access and recreation" but individuals who are called upon to make decisions in the field are bound to be influenced by expediency, costs and the wishes of land owners. No one out there is looking after our interests. It is up to you to see and to make representations.

Sports Councils

The Sports Council for Wales is monitoring the Water Companies' (Dŵr Cymru and Severn-Trent) compliance with the industry's Code of Practice and this is welcomed. You should let Dr Nicola Bolton know of any failures you come across.



It is understood that the Sports Council nationally, is contemplating some changes in philosophy that may be announced later this year. We could find a bias in favour of traffic orders denying vehicular use of many existing rights of way. This would be a serious matter if true especially if it means positive support for TRO's by Sports Council Officers.

Merthyr Borough

R of W Officer Charlie Morriss has let Mid Glamorgan have a list of the tracks for which we will be claiming byway status. He is researching documentary support but we need evidence of use preferably (but not exclusively) over a long period of time e.g., 5 to 30 years. This copy of Trail Rider is being sent to past members who should be able to complete valuable standard Use Forms from years gone by. We ask that they and you contact Charlie on (0594) 530152 with your name and address for him to send you the appropriate forms. The area concerned includes Trelewis, Merthyr Common, Heol Gymro, Fochriw, Morlais and, on the west side of the valley, up to the ridge of Mynydd Merthyr.

Dear Editor,
The comments in a recent Newsletter regarding how others see us can be added to by an article in the Friends of Epping Forest newsletter. This organisation was established about 20 years ago to combat the rapid growth of "Horsie-culture" around the Forest to exploit the little bit of green and the, mainly permissive, bridlepaths in an otherwise urban area. The problem was not horses but the numbers, mainly from the rapid growth of riding schools.

A comment in their newsletter was challenged by me in a letter to the editor who asked if it could be read at the A.G.M. which was due at about the same time.

At the A.G.M. the letter was read and I made a general statement on the legislation related to vehicular rights of way. A general discussion took place and whilst there was an acceptance that the subject was a bit more complicated than vehicles on bridleways, the general approach was anti, one member had a go telling me that he used to ride a Velo. some years back and these lanes were no place for bikes etc.

I enclose the original article and my published letter.

Seymour Moss

Extract from Friends of Epping Forest newsletter.

The increased use and availability of 4-wheel drive vehicles is causing problems on our local green lanes. The Council have had to prohibit horse riding on a green lane that leads to Parvills, due North of Copped Hall. The public notice states "The closure is necessary because damage caused by unauthorised vehicles has rendered the bridleway dangerous for horses" Not much fun for walkers either!

The background to this problem is that the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1983 laid a responsibility on councils to reclassify green lane and R.U.P.s (Roads Used as Public Paths) so as to clarify their status. Thus any path with a history of being used for vehicular traffic either has been, or is liable to be, reclassified as a B.O.A.T. (Byway Open to All Traffic). It seems ludicrous that paths which perhaps in the dim and distant past had been used for horses and carts can now be legally used by mud plugging 4 W Drive (or any other) vehicles, which makes the path unusable for walkers and riders.

The only solution is for councils to make traffic prohibition orders on the paths they have just reclassified as B.O.A.T.s i.e. open to traffic! Does the D of E have a special section devoted to shooting itself, and others, in the foot?

Hitherto councils throughout Essex have been reluctant to make traffic prohibition orders and 4 W vehicle clubs are going round working out routes on these newly created opportunities for ruining what remains of the countryside.

The newsletter goes on to explain that Mr Moss' letter was read to the A.G.M. and a lively discussion resulted. As a P.S.Seymour includes an item from the Independent 24 July as follows; "A war game referee was recovering from a fractured skull after being pistol whipped by a player he declared 'dead' "

(I cannot help wondering if the various councils are making it quite clear to people that the review is not an UPGRADE but merely confirmation of an existing status. It seems that when mainly motorcyclists rode green lanes, they were not noticed and left little evidence of their passing. Therefore people assume they have not been used since the days of horse and carts. Ed.)

Letters (cont)

Dear Brian,
I was amused to see myself promoted to Cumbria Group Rep. in last months Newsletter. Correctly it should be; Colin Thompson Crag Cottage, Colthouse, Hawkshead, Cumbria LA22 OJZ I am the spokesperson for the "Rights of Way" committee. You were certainly correct about the wrong information getting a response, sadly whoever responded last time got it wrong!!

I would like to thank members who responded to my appeal for user evidence on the Maiden Way. I would like still more evidence which will be filed and used if any of our members are reported to the police.

Now the old perennial. A farmer recently told me that he had a party of over 20 trailriders through his farmyard. The farmer was upset (not so unusual), both with the numbers and their attitudes, whatever the rights and wrongs, or for that matter the "right of way" of this situation, 20 riders in this sensitive and beautiful area of Cumbria is ridiculous. I would like us all to ride these roads into the 21st century, but with parties this size touring our country, we don't stand much of a chance and for once I sympathise with the farmer. So please small parties, with a leader who has a good knowledge of the area. If there are not enough leaders, lets train more or else we will lose all our credibility, which has been built on knowledge of our rights but also respect for the people who live and work in the countryside.

Cliff Brown
P.S. Thanks for your work on the Newsletter, it's been different AND interesting.

(Well, it was a close thing but I think Cliff's letter wins the car window sticker this month Ed.)

Dear Editor,
As a trail rider of only a few months I am still learning about the various intricacies of the game. However, I have a couple of observations from recent runs.

During a recent run, we came to a pretty village green at a place called Chilbolton in Hampshire, in fact, the green turned out to be a water meadow. While we paused to check the map a woman called to us. Our leader walked over. She explained that the common was now an area of Special Scientific Interest and as such we could no longer use the right of way. I expected our leader to argue the point, but instead he agreed it would be a pity to ride across the common and engaged the lady in further conversation, during which it emerged that since the S.S.I. lots more people visited the area, all by cars which had to be parked on the common as there was no car park. Sometimes there were 40 or 50 cars spread all over the area.

I began to see what our leader was up to. He egged her on until she finally agreed that things were actually better as they were before, even agreeing that the odd motor-bike was better than the constant stream of cars. On another occasion we met a walker who, upon seeing us, adopted a typical pose of standing with hands on hips. Instead of riding past, the leader stopped next to him, turned off engine and removed helmet and said "You look as if you think we are not allowed here?" The walker replied "Well are you?" He then received a potted history of the lane, the area and green roads in general. The walker may still not agree with vehicles in the countryside, but he has now got another point of view. Both of these instances seem to me to represent a more subtle approach of making a point.

Ian

The Spectrum of Opinion

In my dealings with members at all levels of experience around the TRF I have noticed that there is a fairly wide diversity of attitudes to what the TRF is for, how it should operate, and how it could be improved. This is a good thing because it means you are thinking about the club rather than simply sitting back and leaving it all to someone else. It also means that you might not be 100% happy the way we are, which is also good because you recognise that evolution is necessary in a changing world. These diverse attitudes show up most clearly in the way in which we think of green roads.

RoW News

* At one end of the scale are those who care about green roads for their value as bits of history, as ancient monuments if you like, and feel that they should be preserved for the same reasons that the Magna Carta is preserved. For them the motorcycle is simply a convenient way of enjoying the history, the scenery, the wild-flowers, the geology, and without the right to ride they would struggle on with a push-bike or on foot.

* Next in line come those who believe that just as the Magna Carta should be read and understood if it is to have real value, green roads were meant to be used as well as cared for, and used sympathetically, lest they are destroyed in the process. The point for them is that roads exist only because of their right to use them, and while they are interested in the heritage aspects, should the rights be extinguished their major interest is also switched off.

* Then we come to those who are interested in using green roads as a way to get the most out of their riding. Feeling perhaps that the tarmac is getting too crowded, or that modern 'bikes make it all too easy, they use green roads to bring a little extra excitement to their hobby without the danger, expense, and risk of failure that goes with competition.

* After them come those who feel that they are entitled to use all the roads, they pay their road-fund after all, and that the countryside is supposed to be a challenge. Perhaps they yearn for the days when moto-cross stirred their blood, and still feel the urge to prove themselves. Last one to the top is a cissy.

* At the far end of the scale are those who couldn't care twopence about all that heritage crap, they joined the TRF so that they could charge about the countryside with someone else showing them the way, and doing all the work behind the scenes. After all they are in an enduro next weekend and there's nowhere else to make sure the suspension is properly set up for high speed jumps, and if that silly old cow comes out and shakes her fist like she did last week they'll make sure she needs a JCB to fill the grooves in her lawn.

Both ends of this spectrum are extremes, of course, and most of us fit somewhere in the middle. Am I alone in thinking that the pendulum of opinion in the club is swinging towards the gentler end of the scale, and that perhaps we should help it along? Perhaps you could suggest how the shove could be applied? Perhaps this tendency is another aspect of the growing feeling that the TRF could benefit by opening its doors to others who also care about green lanes. And perhaps both could be further encouraged by a slight change in emphasis in the aims of the club, to the effect that instead of being a motorcycle club that is also interested in preserving green lanes, we become a club which cares about green lanes and is also interested in preserving our rights to ride along them. I think I'll put a proposal to the AGM to that effect, so that you can all come along and agree with me.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance

Where Next?

As to what might be done to improve the club apart from making it clear that non motorcyclists can join, that is another matter. That is what the AGM is for. As an ordinary member you have very little say in the every-day details of what Dave Giles does, what Ian Thompson does, what any member of the executive committee does for you or for the club. You can mention an idea to your group rep at any clubnight, and he can pass it on at the next exec meeting, where it can be taken on board, of course. But perhaps you don't go to club, perhaps your rep doesn't go to the exec, perhaps in any case he doesn't think your idea is worth bothering with, or hasn't grasped it well enough to argue your case, perhaps he forgets in the haste to get home after a long day away from home. All these are real hurdles at which your idea could fall, and even when the question is put it might be necessary to refer back to the members for their views, or it might involve finding a volunteer and no-one steps forward, or nothing gets done. Only at the AGM can all these problems be overcome, only the AGM allows anyone to change the rules. It is as if the club wanted very little to do with its members in between times and therefore makes your access to the decision process difficult. Or, it could be that you, the members, don't want to have anything to do with everyday matters, and you only elect officers you trust completely to do always what you want, even to the extent of reacting to ideas they have never asked you about. Only you can say which of these is nearer the truth. Whichever it is we would like to know, so please come and set our minds at rest, and if you are not happy with anyone or anything, *say so*. If you do want to change things, you should put your thoughts on paper and find

someone else to second them (another hurdle) and get them to the secretary before the end of August. Then they can all be published in the agenda so everyone can think things through before setting off for Haydock Park.

Here are a few ideas which might be worth a thought:

- * Does the TRF publicise itself enough?
 - * Should our notepaper tell everyone the other groups we support, like the B&BT and LARA?
 - * Should TRF members be asked always to identify themselves or their 'bikes so that we can all see who is in, and who isn't?
 - * Should there be a proper qualification for Run Leaders so that we all knew who could be relied on to do a competent job?
 - * Should we run more seminars or workshops in all regions to improve members skills?
 - * Which skills need improving?
 - * Should we affiliate to the A-CU?
 - * Might we do better to try for Sports Council recognition as a Governing Body?
 - * Should we be more, or less, militant when faced with RoW problems?
 - * Should the fees be doubled?
- There, I knew I would get your attention eventually.

Distance lends ...

Despite all the friendliness being expressed towards other riders, there is still a feeling in some quarters of the TRF that we ought to distance ourselves from other users whose use of green lanes tends to cause noticeable damage; not to mince words, the four-wheel-drive lot. Perhaps we should recognise that we must put our own house in order first, on the basis of pots not calling kettles black. It would be fair for anyone holding this distancing view to put their own ideas to the AGM, too, and we can all say what we feel. Especially as it was thanks to the generosity of the All Wheel Drive Club that the TRF saved £500 off its LARA fees this year.

Tim Stevens

(The scoop test I hoped to finish with was to be the new DR 350 Unfortunately it will be at least another week until I obtain a ride. Perhaps Tim will make some space for a report on this in one of his issues. Ed.)

GREEN LANE TEST KDX200 E1 (water-cooled)

Compared with my previous KDX there is not a lot of difference in performance. What was immediately apparent was less noise and less vibration, I found the air cooled model rather uncomfortable on tarmac, the E1 is smoother, although not in the same class as the more road orientated KMX 200.

A big minus point for me was the lack of grease nipples. The owner is supposed to dismantle the rear suspension every 300 miles. (not if they have been Editor for the last six months)

It is a compact and light bike with all the power I could ever need. However I can imagine it would not suit everyone, even if they like two-strokes. Two members sold theirs shortly after buying them!

Suspension is plush, with lots of adjustments to play with, or to leave alone. (I suspect only enduro riders need them all) On the trail it is (just) possible to burble along sitting down and letting the bike do the work, one can steer with very little input. However, this machine persuades the rider to use a little more throttle and effort and just let it show you how it can go. This sort of riding is not so relaxed but it is certainly rewarding. My feeling is that if you wish to ride like this, you should do it in the wide open spaces away from the Home Counties this is why I keep an XT 350, and a good all rounder it is.

Other drawbacks are having to use premixed oil and petrol. I notice that most seem to smoke rather more than, say, the KMX with it's oil pump. I feel that the smoking is compounded by plonking along at relatively low speeds, which allows gooey oil to build up in the KIPS chamber, this is then burnt off when the throttle is opened wide.

The flexibility of the engine is amazing, especially compared with my old Yamaha IT 175. On a recent trip to Derbyshire lots of my group were caught out by "Cathole", although I was two gears too high, the KDX just kept going.

Reliability is another priority for me. Both of my KDX's have been excellent in this respect, only needing tyres, brake pads, chain and sprockets. Brakes are well up to the performance, I prefer having a disc at the rear as the old drum needed to be dismantled and cleaned after a wet run. The best brakes I ever experienced were on my old XR 350, but the KDX performs as well thanks to it's light weight.

Pricewise, I think the KDX 200 must be a bargain, being still available for just over £2,000 This compares with £2,350 for the XR 250 (I have not seen these discounted) and £2,500 for the XT 350 The other bargain must be Kawasaki's KMX 200. I think it has to be said that each of these three are better all-rounders, but when I finally part with mine, it will be an admission that I have joined the "old boys" Brian Wright

GROUP NEWS AND REPORTS

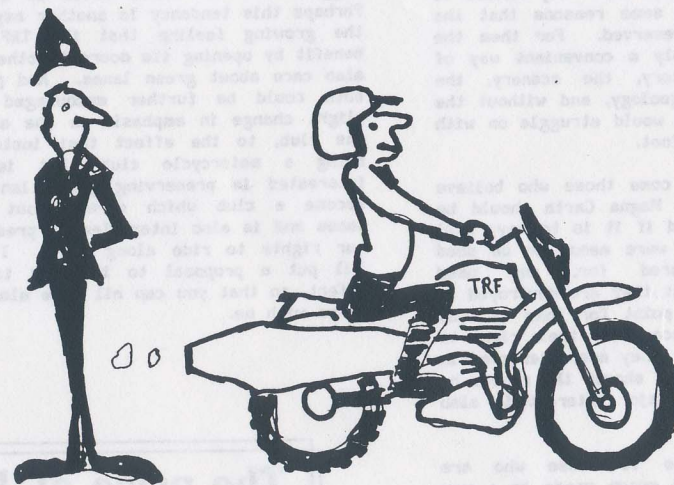
SUSSEX GROUP

A special meeting of the Sussex Group is to be held at Storrington Village Hall on 23 August at 8pm

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the organisation and future activities of the group. All local members are urged to attend. Bevis Billingham

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY

Recent runs have taken us into the Counties of Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The routes have been carefully chosen to include as many wooded areas as possible because they tend to be sheltered and therefore cooler. One trip paused at Popham Airfield, where we were informed that flying a microlight is like motorcycling in three dimensions! (We do that already) If any local member is interested in sampling the sport, 20 mins. experience costs £23 and a one hour trial lesson costs £59 Brian Wright



It has been my way, for quite a few years now, to run more than one motorcycle, and throughout the year rotate the use of them. This firstly means that the mileage on each bike is kept down to a respectable amount and spreading my annual 15,000 miles over them allows me to keep them longer. Secondly it makes life easier regarding the upkeep. By that I mean the cleaning and the polishing, not that there's a lot of either around anyway, is cut down. With this system my BMW GS, as well as being used for a fair amount of tail riding throughout the year, does tend to be used for the majority of my riding during the winter months when the dreaded salt is on the ground.

Therefore last autumn seemed an opportune time to acquire a new shock absorber for the GS and therefore test it over the ensuing months. It would also fit in very nicely with the entry I had put in for the Edinburgh Trial which is one of the Classic Trials organised and run by the MCC. I had heard that M R Holland from Spalding were importing French made Fournales, which are a pneumatic shock absorber. Following on from my living very successfully with S&W air shocks for many years on twin shock standard road BMWs, this might be a prudent ploy as I had heard these Fournales were good quality stuff and excelled off road, and when one gets to my time of life and has the abilities off road which I do, one needs every help to see off the competition.

One was duly acquired from Hollands and fitted mid September. This would allow just long enough to test it, refine it if necessary and run it in, (as they need 500 miles or so before they operate at their best), prior to heading south from Kendal to the start of the Edinburgh Trial.

I always have been, and probably always will be, a great believer in not taking for granted everything I read and hear, and so when I read about the qualities of the Fournales I was somewhat sceptical. Yes- it was the first time I had heard about an air shock for a monolever system, and as such this must be good, and yes- it is impossible to bottom out an air bag unlike a conventional coil spring. The selling point that this unit features 'high sensitivity at start of compression due to the release spring which, by balancing the thrust of the pneumatic <spring>, greatly reduces the load required to initiate shock absorber compression and give better grip and drive' seemed a little over the top. How wrong I was to be proved. The other part of the specification which worried me somewhat was that the unit was pressurised, or charged, at the importers and this pressure was 17 bars (246 psi) for the GS. There are not many foot pumps that will cope with that, so if the pressure needed to be altered it wasn't going to be an easy job. Anyway Hollands did loan me a high pressure hand pump for the job, but more about that later.

As with most of my life, time caught up with me and I did not manage any refinements before the trial, although I did get enough miles on the unit, with quite a few of them on the rough, all as part of the preparation for my onslaught on the Edinburgh. And so it was that I was riding through the night, or rather early morning as it was, somewhere between the start at 3.00am and the first off road section at 8.00am, which was, to the uninitiated, the dreaded Bamford Clough. This was, to my knowledge the first year that Bamford Clough was first on, and it is renowned for its ability to throw even the most experienced of competitors because of the rather large rock step which seems to move each year to a different part of the climb. It is also noted for its traffic jam, as many competitors fail and as an alternative to going out of the top, retreat to go round by the road, but this year being the first hill I thought this would not be so. Wrong again. There it was, a queue, with motorcycles coming down as opposed to disappearing up the hill. Ah well, if you're going to fail it might as well be on the first as the last section. The butterflies in the stomach were not being helped by having to sit and watch the retreating traffic, but soon it was time and away

we went. The claims were right, we sailed up, not quite as if on a tarmac road but that release spring was certainly working giving better grip and drive, and we were soon at the top, unscathed.

Another 8 sections passed before 12.00 noon and still no fail, and as there were only 2 observed sections left it was certain that I was at least in for a third class award, even if I made a pigs ear of the rest of the trial, and this was a distinct possibility as No 10 was the notorious Litton Slack with a stop and restart in the middle of it. It also had been gently drizzling for the past three hours, just enough to ensure a lack of grip at the wrong time on the seemingly never ending grassy/muddy slope. When I arrived at the bottom of the hill there were two other BMWs waiting their turn in the queue, one GS and one converted standard road going animal. Both failed, one not even making it off the start line. Ah well, time for drastic tactics. Let a bit more air out of the rear tyre. One advantage the GS has over smaller capacity engined trail bikes is that it has enough pull to cope with almost flat, relatively speaking, tyres and so with less than 10 psi in the rear we managed to clear the start line, stop on the breast of the hill, and pull away and keep going to the end boards only to be told by Pete Spence (of M R Holland) that I was the first BMW to have a clean. My reply was that it must be the Fournales as opposed to the rider!

The final section was also eaten up by the machine and so it was after many years of trying I had managed to gain a first class award in one of the Classic Trials. Jubilation was the order of the day only to be added to a few days later when the official results were announced and I found out that I had won the Class Award for all machines entered using trials tyres, pipping a Honda 250 trail bike on the special timed tests by 0.2 of a second.

Since then the Fournales has been used under varying conditions and has been in the main successful in its abilities to cope. The only reservation is the difficulty of varying the pressure, as when on standard pressure with the GS fully laden with two people and camping gear it is just a little too soft for the best ride. This of course does not really apply if the machine is being used purely on the trail, and without a doubt this is where the Fournales comes into its own. It is so smooth and sweet and as the advertising said, you get better grip and drive. If the pump needed to adjust the charge it will cost you about £70 to buy, although they can be hired from Hollands service department. My only attempt to alter the pressure was a complete disaster as the pump supplied had a malfunctioning gauge and did not register, or was it just me who couldn't operate it correctly. So until I returned the unit for proper re-calibration I rode for quite a while with an unknown amount of air inside and it performed adequately. Evidently a change of 20 or even 30 psi does not have such a drastic effect.

In conclusion, I think that the Fournales is a superior suspension unit which looks and feels as though it would last indefinitely. At a price of around £300 for a mono and £200 for a pair of twin shocks they are not cheap but perhaps it's a case of you get what you pay for, and accepting that they are bred for competition, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. As well as looking good they are also a lot lighter in weight without a massive coil spring to carry around, and are completely rebuildable. I wonder if I can justify replacing the unit on my other trail bike, an ageing DT 175!

GROUP & GROUP REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL GROUP MEETING

MIDLANDS

CHESHIRE J. Johnson 39 Hawk Green 2 & 4 Monday The Robin Hood
Road, Marple Stockport Cheshire Buxton Road, High Lane
SK5 7HR Tel. 061 427 6963 Hazel Grove, Stockport
DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE 2 & 4 Tuesday The Victoria Hotel
David Bonsall, 99 Cobnar Road 248 Neepsend Lane Sheffield
Woodseats, Sheffield S8 8QD Tel. 0742 748688
EAST MIDLANDS Graham Franks 2 Wednesday, Three Horseshoes
2 Hillviews Close, Horsley Hemmington, Nr. MI Junct. 24
Woodhouse, Derbys DE7 6AZ Tel. 0332 882602
NORTH MIDLANDS Ray Morse 1st Tuesday, The Jester
4 Sidmouth Av. Baswich Macclesfield Rd. Leek
Stafford Tel 0785 661543
SHROPSHIRE Steve Rawlings 2nd & Last Wednesday, The Bell
Cheshire Coppice Admaston Crosshouses, Shrewsbury
Telford Shropshire Tel. 0952 244161
WEST ANGLIA David Knight 1 & 3 Thursday Scott Bader
89 Blackfriars, Rushden, Northants. Clubhouse opp. Parish Church
NN10 9PF Tel. 0933 313816 Woolaston, Wellingborough
WEST MIDLANDS Dennis Hayter 1 & 3 Thurs. Wilmscote Mens
4 Thruyton Close, Winyates West Club, Nr. Stratford on Avon
Redditch, Worcs. Tel. 0527 23550
WEST YORKSHIRE Charles King 1 & 3 Monday, Frizinghall Cons
11 Sycamore Rise Holmfirth Club Lythorn Road Frizinghall
Huddersfield W. Yorks. Tel. 0484 686383 Bradford
WYVERN Gwyn James, 18 The Every Thurs. Hill & Cakemore
Spinney, Finchfield, Wolverhampton Ex-Servicemen's Club
Tel. 0902 763824 Victoria Road, Blackheath

NORTH

CUMBRIA Colin Thompson 2nd wed. every other month
Crag Cottage, Colthouse, Hawkshead, Albert Hotel
Cumbria, LA22 0JZ Tel. 09666 494 Bowness on Windemere
LANCASHIRE Keith Westley 1st Tuesday, Hindhead Pub
6 Briars Lane, Lathom, on A49, Charnock Richard
Ormskirk, L40 5TG Tel. 0704 893215
NORTHUMBRIA Dave Vaughan, 3rd Tuesday,
15, Seaburn Gardens, Sunderland Ryton Rugby Club
SR6 8BT Tel. 091 529 3202
TEESIDE & NORTH YORKS. Leo Crone 1st & 3rd Wednesday
4 Saltergate Road, Darlington, Queens Head
Co. Durham DL1 3DX Tel. 0325 380117 Stokesley
EAST YORKS. Dave Barratt Contact Dave Barratt
74, Grasmere Road, Knottingley, W. Yorks.

EAST

CAMBRIDGE Howard Biddle Where do you meet?
7, Park Lane, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4JJ
NORFOLK & SUFFOLK Andy Bedwell 1st Wed. The Blue Lion,
53 Raglan Street, Lowestoft, Suffolk N. Pickenham Nr. Swaffam
LINCOLNSHIRE Alan Wilkinson 4th Thursday
Christopher Close, Heckington, The Mall, Woodhall Spar
Sleaford, Lincs. NG34 9FA Tel. 0529 60793

SOUTH

LODDON VALE Don Lewis 2nd Thurs. The Lamb,
Ladybower, Dogmersfield, Fleet, Theale, Hampshire
Hampshire, RG27 8SS Tel. 0252 616359
SOUTHERN Pete Wildsmith 3rd Wednesday, The Priory
5 Meynell Close, Eastleigh, Bishops Waltham, Hampshire
Hampshire. SO5 4DZ Tel. 0703 617582

SOUTH EAST

N W LONDON Roger Newark 1st Thurs. Coach & Horses
76 Hale Grove Gardens, Mill Hill Newgate Street, St Albans
London, NW7 3LU Tel. 081 959 2386 (to be confirmed)

HERTFORDSHIRE Alan Vincent as above

No address
for Alan yet.
KENT Nick Moon 88 Ship Lane 2nd Tuesday, Pied Bull
Sutton at Hone, Dartford Farningham, Nr. Brands Hatch
Kent DA4 9EE Tel. 0322 862855
ESSEX Neil Gamble 4th Tuesday, The White Bear
13, Cankwell Close, Chelmer Village, Stanford Rivers
Chelmsford, CM2 6SG Tel. 0245 461643 Nr. Ongar
SOUTH LONDON & SURREY Brian Wright 9pm Every Wednesday
99, Boundary Road, Wallington, Epsom & Ewell F.C.
Surrey, SM6 OTE Tel. 081 669 4214 West Street, Ewell
SUSSEX Bevis Billingham, 182, Last Thursday of every month
Elmer Road, Middleton on sea, Bognor, Selsey Arms, Coolham
West Sussex PO22 6JA Tel. 0243 585128 Junction A272, B2193
THAMES VALLEY Bob Williams 3rd Mon. District Arms,
43, Cheapside Road, Cheapside, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford
Ascot, Berks. SL5 7QR Tel. 0990 24958 Middlesex

SOUTH WEST

BRISTOL Richard Tallon 2nd Monday, Tennis Court Inn
5, Danvers Road, Corsham Deanery Road (A420) Kingswood
Wiltshire, SN13 9LP Tel. 0249 715426
CORNWALL Roger Fogg, The Old Post Office, 3rd Tuesday
Lanjeth, St. Austell, Cornwall London Inn
PL26 7TD Tel. 0726 883536 Summercourt
DEVON Martin Cooper, 152, 2nd Tue. The Welcome Stranger
St. Margaret's Road, Woodford, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott
Plympton, Plymouth PL7 4RF Tel. 0752 337491
DORSET Norman Howard 1st Tue. Stable Bar,
Dairyhouse Farm, Berwick St. John behind Drax Arms
Shaftsbury, Dorset SP7 OHQ Tel. 074788 615 Bere Regis
MENDIP Gwyn Thomas, Minories Cottage, Ring Gwyn
Wells Road, Priddy, Wells, Somerset Hunters Lodge Inn
BA5 3AU Tel. 0749 75294 Priddy, Wells, Somerset
GLOUCESTER Ron Carter 2nd Tues. Painswick Institute
Lynton, Ebbley Road, Stroud, Painswick Glos.
Glos. Tel. 045 382 2707
SOMERSET Nick Crocker Last Thurs. The Globe Inn
Sunnymead Farm, Halstock, Market Place, Somerton
Yeovil, Somerset. Tel. 093589 261 Somerset
WILTSHIRE Bill Riley 1st Tuesday
141, Bath Road, Bradford on Avon The Tollgate, Holt
Wiltshire BA15 1SS Tel. 02216 3811

WALES

GWENT Brian Stubbs 1st Tuesday Kings Head
68 Caernarvon Crescent, Pontnewydd, Cwmbran
Cwmbran, Gwent Tel. 06333 65886
NORTH WALES John Mills 1st Weds. Hope & Anchor
7, Brookfield Drive, Holmes Chapel, Ewloe Place, Buckley
Cheshire, CW4 7DT Tel. 0477 34425 Clwydd
WEST WALES G. Jones 17, Hillfield Place, To be arranged
Parcllyn, Cardigan, Dyfed SA43 2DJ

SCOTLAND

EAST SCOTLAND Les Mollison 2nd Weds. Glencarse Hotel
28, Redcastle Crescent, A85, Perth to Dundee road
Broughty Ferry, Dundee, DD5 3NF Tel. 0382 738530

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Peter Clark 34, Oak Road, Barton under Needwood,
Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE13 8LR Tel. 0283 713209