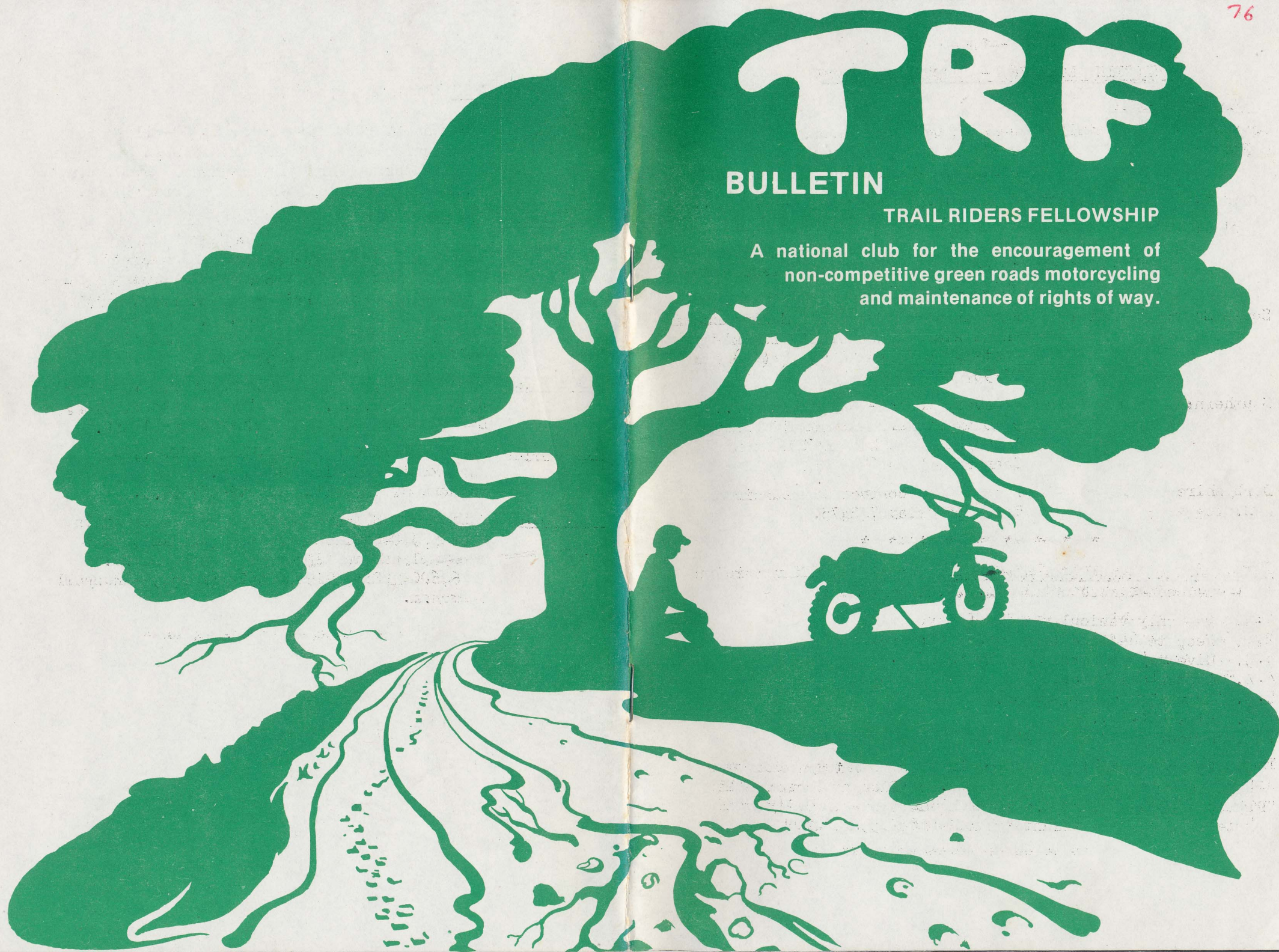


TRF

BULLETIN

TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

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



BULLETIN NO. 76 - DECEMBER 1979

FORTHCOMING RUNS

- Bournemouth & Poole: Monthly Runs in our area. SAE please to Carl Nicolls, 30 Southway Road, Somerford Christchurch, Dorset.
- Cumbria: Jan. 13th 10 am at Appleby railway station.
- Bristol: Jan. 13th 10 am in the car park at rear of White Hart Hotel, Tetbury.
- South East: Monthly Runs in Kent, Surrey or East Sussex. Phone Alan Jackson after monthly meetings on 01-660 5648 (home) or 01-357 2487 (work).
- Southern: 1st Sunday of every month - Beginners Run. 9.30 am at Carrafors or 10 am at Lunways. Tel. Henry Wilson on Chandlers Ford 60838.
- Derbyshire & S. Yorks: contact Ian Dunsire, Tel: Barnsley 742475.

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TRF CODE OF CONDUCT or TRAIL CODE. Here is a full version of the code agreed on at the A.G.M. in October:

1. Use only vehicular rights of way.
2. Keep to defined tracks across farmland.
3. Give way to horses and walkers.
4. Fasten all gates.
5. Travel at a safe speed.
6. Ride quietly.
7. Honour the Country Code.

The 25 mph speed limit on green lanes is mentioned in the note which accompanied No. 5 above: "Ride at a reasonable speed, taking due regard to conditions and visibility and not more than the voluntary maximum of 25 m.p.h."

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INDOOR MEETINGS

- Anglia: Last Thurs. - White Lion, Sible Hedingham.
- Bournemouth & Poole: 1st Tues. - Dorset Soldier, Corfe Mullen.
- Bristol: 2nd Mon. - Stanshawes Court Hotel, Yate.
- Cheshire: 1st Thurs. - Robin Hood, Buxton Rd., High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport.
- Derbyshire & S. Yorks: 2nd/4th Tues. - Victoria Hotel, Neepsend Lane, Sheffield.
- Devon & Cornwall: Every Fri. - Pig & Whistle, Little Hempstone, nr. Totnes.
- East Midlands: 2nd Wed. - Flying Horse, Kegworth, on A6.
- East Yorkshire: 2nd Wed. - Kellingley Social Centre.
- Essex: Every Tues. - Warley Sports Centre, Warley Gap, near Brentwood.
- Lancashire: 1st Thurs. - Earle & Child, Church Road, Heyland.
- North Midlands: 3rd Tues. - Jervis Arms, Onecote, Leek.
- West Anglia: 3rd Thurs. - Scott Bader Clubhouse, Woolaston. (near church).
- South East: 2nd Tues. - White Swan, Crayford, Kent.
- Southern: 3rd Tues. - Grosvenor Hotel, High Street, Stockbridge.
- South Midlands: 1st Thurs. - Lions Den, Hockliffe, on A5.
- Sussex: Last Wed. in Dec/Feb/April - Hassocks Hotel.
- Teeside: 1st/3rd Wed. - Station Hotel, Stokesley, $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile south on the Kirby road.
- Thames Valley: 3rd Mon. - District Arms, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx.
- West Midlands: 1st/3rd Wed. - King George V Memorial Hall, Hockley Heath, Solihull.

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GROUP NEWS

BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE: Rep - Carl Nicolls, 30 Southuy Road, Somerford Christchurch, Dorset.

Report sent in by retiring Rep. Stephen Russell.

After two years as Group Sec. I have stood down to let new blood take over - in other words, at last a member has volunteered. Welcome to the TRF, Carl Nicolls. I hope you have many enjoyable green lane runs on your new red SP 370. I will assist Carl in his new post.

Club nights - seem to have dramatically improved from an attendance of one to a staggering seven. The monthly club night should prove to be more popular; it's not really much to ask - one night a month.

Weekend outings. If any Group is planning a Sat/Sun run in the Brocon Beacons area, could they please contact our Sec. Carl. We would like to have an annual weekend riding in the Beacons in May. If any member can assist us with routes, please contact Carl.

And now to the Bournemouth & Poole Rider of the Year Trophy. It may come as a surprise to some that we have been operating a Rider of the Year award, given on the basis of attendance on local Group runs and away Group runs arranged by us. All fully paid up members are eligible. And so here is the toughest, hardest, most endurable, resilient, waterproof, dustproof and two-stroke proof rider of the past 12 months in our Group - Ralph Phillips of 9 Wallis Rd., Wallisdown, who I calculate has ridden 450-miles of green lanes in a year. Congratulations Ralph; let's see who can ride away with the trophy next year.

All the best for Christmas and a good safe New Year to all.

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WEST MIDLANDS: Report from F. J. Humphries, 42 Peterbrook Road, Shirley, Solihull.

We continue our riding activities despite adverse weather and our two meetings a month are attended by an average of 20 members. On October 20/21 six riders enjoyed a weekend in the Lake District in spite of very wet weather.

On November 4th a group met at Highworth and rode the Ridge-way area; on November 11th some lane clearing was done. On November 18th we visited the Cotswolds, and on 24/25th we had a weekend in Rhayader. Quite a busy month.

On November 13th Harry Ball and Jim Humphries attended the Enquiry at Rhayader. This was the first day of an Enquiry which will last weeks. The ACU and Welsh Trailriders were represented by Mr. Cleeve from Usk. Cycling, rambling, pony trekking and conservationist organisations, local farmers and landowners are asking for all RUPPs in that area to be down-graded to either bridleways or footpaths. Our two members spoke on behalf of the TRF, but the 'opposition' was represented by a QC who was a Lord, and their first witness was a Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd.) - you will appreciate the type of opposition we are up against. It is a great pity that the TRF was not represented officially because should these RUPPs be lost to us, we shall have lost some of the finest old roads in the country.

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NORTH MIDLANDS (New Group)

At a meeting on the 6th November, 1979, at the Jervis Arms, Onecote, Leek, Staffs., 20 people attended and formed the North Midlands Group of the TRF. The following were elected:

Representative/Chairman: A. F. Davenport, Moortop, Onecote, Leek. Tel: Onecote 321.

Rights of Way Officer: M. Rowley, 8 Delves Place, Westlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. Tel: 0752 617176.

Secretary/Treasurer: B. Smith, Ballsfields Farm, Apesford, Bradnop, Leek, Staffs. Tel: Leek 383479.

Indoor meetings at the Jervis Arms, Onecote, at 8.15 p.m. every third Tuesday in the month.

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JOTTINGS FROM OUR TREASURER

As Treasurer of the TRF I seldom bore our membership with the intrigues of high finance, i.e. price of our shares on the open market, etc., but I feel our avid readers ought to know why subscriptions will have to rise to £5. per year.

As an organisation we will definitely be asked to prove our claims for byways at enquiries, as has been so persistently hammered over by Brian Thompson. In order to do this we need either members willing to attend 'free gratis' who have an understanding of the procedures or, as is more likely, solicitors will have to present our case. Their services do not come cheap - £25. per hour is not an excessive rate (they think). Therefore it means that when the action starts, there will be only a few frontline troops to do the burden of the work. So if the TRF's aims mean anything at all there should be a willingness by its members to increase their contribution towards saving the TRF.

Now for something completely different:

As one who leads organised runs, I am becoming increasingly disillusioned by many riders' attitudes to riding. The main one is noise, which is often created by standard bikes, my PE being a classic example despite efforts to make it acceptable. Those who deliberately fit or modify exhausts which are then considered too noisy will not ride with me or others of my Group. On a recent run a non-member turned up with an open exhaust because the spark arrester had fallen out.

Another thing is the habit of riders turning up without giving prior notice to the run organisers, which results in large numbers in one party with problems of breakdowns, etc., affecting all of those riding.

My final grouse is the mechanical standard of some bikes; it is no good hoping that one can trail ride for ever without having a puncture, breaking a chain, losing a nut or bolt, breaking a lever, getting water in the works, etc. Some bikes and riders must have great difficulty in guaranteeing getting to the end of the High Street, never mind a rough trail, and it is not fair on the run leaders to expect them to carry all the equipment AND generally do the repairs.

Having said all this, it is not a new Howard Wadsworth talking, just the old one getting a bit browned off with being taken for granted; in future I shall live up to my pseudonym - WILLIE ECKERSLIKE.

..... Howard Wadsworth.

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...:AND FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

It is nearly renewal time again - please help me help others by renewing promptly; it is up to 6 days delay to sort from Reading alone. Renewing promptly helps me to issue an updated membership list at the next Executive Committee Meeting in January.

The TRF was nationally very strong on young new members in 1978/79 and very weak on established ones - that all-important image of mature, educated riders will be difficult to project if our majority are under 21 with 'L' plates. I wholeheartedly welcome young new members - it is a pity we cannot 'get at them' before the 'L' plate stage. Perhaps we ought to concentrate on this aspect during 1980, getting involved more in the many Talk-Ins that are held locally.

The renewal form is a little different this year and, if filled out in full, will make my formidable task a lot easier. Remember subs are now £5.00. Fighting Fund donations can be included in the same cheque/PO made payable to TRF; the inclusion of a stamp would help share the cost and be much appreciated. Any NEW members wishing to use the form in this Bulletin please indicate clearly "New Member". If you are already a member, but using one of the old application forms (J. Higgin's address) please indicate 'Renewal'. Thanks.

Last Call: Has Mr. A. Williams of Luton vanished? Would he or anyone who knows him please get in touch with me. Repeated enquiries have produced nowt.

Membership renewal form is on Page 17 of this issue.

Colin Patient, 14 Ryecroft Close, Woodley, Reading, Berks., RG5 3BP. Tel: Reading 696783.

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NATIONAL PARKS

The following are extracts from a letter sent by our National Parks Officer, Trevor Wade, to the Council for National Parks, the National Parks Policies Review Committee, Dept. of the Environment, House of Commons Environmental Sub-Committee on National Parks and the Countryside, the Countryside Commission, Byways and Bridleways Trust and the Press.

"I believe that the National Parks were designated by Act of Parliament for the enjoyment and use of the public, including minority groups.... I note that out of a National Committee of some 30 participants, the RA, who could only really be said to be representative of a small proportion of all walkers, have 5 representatives whilst horseriders, motorcyclists and motoring organisations are completely without representation.... I understand that the National Parks Committee in Peak Park advised the County Council in recent byway claims that all green lanes are unsuitable for motorcycles.... therefore are we to suppose that green lanes will also be classed as unsuitable for horseriders in the near future.... lanes and roads of antiquity which have been our rights of way for centuries and part of our heritage can be wiped out and lost to all within a few decades through lack of permitted use forced on us by powerful pressure groups.... small, well silenced motorcycles do little damage to lane surfaces and environs. All that is asked is that we get what we pay on Road Tax, rates and national levies for in our democracy, a fair hearing and representation to balance the present system which I am sure to an unbiased observer would stand out as grossly unfair and I am sure unconstitutional."

Trevor Wade, National Parks Officer (TRF), Dockland Settlement, City Road, Bristol BS2 8UH.

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BRIAN THOMPSON'S ROW BIT

Code of Conduct: Despite the total opposition to any Code of Conduct at the Sept. BNF seminar, the TRF AGM on Oct. 14th approved and agreed the same code, with a huge majority. Briefly this is:

1. Adopt a voluntary 25 mph speed limit on green lanes.

2. Keep to the Country Code, respecting all other lane users and stopping for horses. (See Page 1 - Ed.) The ACU/BNF, WTRA and RUPPs clubs have also accepted the code.

Government Bill: As I write this report on Nov. 20th the Wildlife and Countryside Bill is going through unaltered. Several members have already made valuable contact with their MPs, notably Tony Davenport (Staffs) and Brian Freegard (Wilts). One MP refuses point-blank to do anything and is in favour of a ban on green lanes. One Government Official said they were reluctant to alter the bill in our favour because they would face bitter opposition from the RA. In other words, the D of E is afraid of the RA pressure group, and apparently is prepared to sacrifice the rights of trail riders to avoid disagreeing with the RA. On Nov. 2nd the Byways and Bridleways Trust had a two hour meeting with the D of E Permanent Under Secretary in an effort to get the Government to make last minute changes. He said they would consider it.

The B & BT continues to grow slowly, partly because the trail riders (mainly TRF) have subscribed to it. Nevertheless, the Trust refuses to alter its aims in favour of any one particular user group. It will continue to fight for ALL green lane users - trail riders, horse riders and cyclists. A monthly journal is issued with the accent on informing and increasing knowledge. Some members have accused the journal of being too intellectual, but we regard this as a compliment. Membership costs £5. (Jan.- Dec.) I represent all our interests on a 4-person Executive Committee. If you wish to join, send £5. to B & BT, 9 Queen Annes Gate, London, S.W.1.

Surrey - Stane Street: The County Council wants a traffic order on this well loved green lane, which is a RUPP and a Public Carriage Road. Local TRF Groups are making a good fight of the proposals and I have added our strongest objections.

Suffolk are preparing a Special Review with a relevant date of 1st Oct. 1979. Clubs have been busy surveying and preparing byway claims. Dave Andrews, 123 Burrow Road, Chigwell, Essex, is the TRF man to contact.

Moor Bottom Lane near Halifax: Thanks to financial support from the ACU/BMF (£50.) and the RUPS Club (£25.), the B & BT have, by taking legal action under Section 121, re-opened this ancient lane for the first time in five years since it was wilfully obstructed. Total cost will be in the region of £200.

North Wales: The news from this fair land is not good and with Gwynedd downgrading about 600 RUPPs and Clwyd about to downgrade 250 RUPPs, North Wales should be declared a disaster area. Help is urgently needed to save just a few of the best. Contact Jeff Allen, 22 Beech Court, Allerton Road, Liverpool 18. At Public Enquiries into byway claims by the WTRA the main complaint from farmers and landowners is that of riders off the track on vague moorland ways. Waymarking is the only answer, on a DIY basis.

Somerset: County Hall may cancel their 1978 Special Review when they 'converted all 350 RUPPs into an exclusive network for horses and walkers.' Good news! Main reason is that County Hall has reduced RoW Dept. staff and can no longer carry out a Review, especially when faced with our 300 objections.

Derbyshire: RUPP No. 45 New Mills is causing problems. A conflict between horse riders and TRF Cheshire Group riders has led the horse riders to request a Traffic Restriction Order. Mike Rowley (TRF solicitor) is investigating the matter and has a three point plan for a peaceful solution to avoid closure.

Yorkshire Dales: Dales National Park asked me to call and discuss several problems, so I spent a day at Grassington on 5th Nov. Main complaint was riders not keeping to the lawful course of green lanes. Farmers are observing and giving bike numbers to the police. It is a fact that most of the better, adventurous, wild and challenging trail rides are in this category with a high risk of conflict of this kind. We have been asked by the farmers and National Park to deal with this problem or Traffic Orders will be imposed. I suggest waymarking so that riders can easily follow the lawful highway. Meanwhile riders are asked to restrict their use of 'Great Wold and 'Highway' for 6 months to enable a plan to be worked out in conjunction with the farmers and County Council to waymark these lanes.

On the 'Coal Road' above Dent the problem is caused by the Pennine Land Rover Club who are reported as damaging the soft surface. They then use wall stones to repair mud holes. However, in view of our code of conduct and in return for proper co-operation, they will apply a TRO with an exemption clause to allow motorcycles. The key is good relations with farmers. They are alarmed at large parties of up to 20 bikes on green lanes and request parties of no more than 5 or 6. Cam Fell 'Roman Road' from Bainbridge to Horton, i.e. from Bardale Head south to Horton and to the ford is only a footpath, and according to the Mason case closed to all vehicles even though it is also an Unclassified County Road. Riders should not be using this track; the Park say that if riders do not heed this warning, prosecutions will follow. If you must use the vague high moorland tracks, go with an experienced guide to avoid going astray, especially on Carlton Moor, Bradley Moor and Great Wold.

Will Groups please decide and let me have your views on my report. David Howe (Cumbria TRF) says they do not use Great Wold, thinks Lancashire Group use it most. Certainly Lancs members have complained to me on many occasions of conflict on Great Wold and elsewhere. David agrees that waymarking is badly needed on many Dales tracks and offers to help do this mammoth task. Contrary to my 'resignation' from Dales work, I am now more involved than ever! Following a request for volunteers for this area, one Steven Horrocks from Huddersfield has come forward and spent a day here perusing all the many maps and documents - kept, to the great annoyance of my wife, under the bed! Steven knows nothing about RoW, and we have agreed not to drop him into the deep end at once, but slowly work his way into the job and take over from me in Dales RoW matters in about 6-months time. Finally, the Park did say that if we co-operated they would consider providing some byways on well defined tracks only in the Dales. Clearly we cannot carry on using vague tracks with riders all over the moor. I recommend a voluntary restriction of use on all such tracks until we can properly waymark and avoid wandering off the lawful route. Steven is willing to help and, if I have a bike, me too. Howard Wadsworth will help and I suggest a weekend next April/May, providing the National Park and farmers agree.

This crisis has been building up for some time and we must co-operate now to save these lanes for the future.

Riding standards: If you see any motorcyclists behaving badly on green lanes, riding on open moorland, etc., I recommend that they be brought to justice to show the Authorities we intend to clean up our own house. Report reg. nos. to the police or, if you wish, I will do so.

STATE OF THE NATION AT NOVEMBER 20TH, 1979.

(A progress report on byways by County.)

- BEDS - no Special Review planned; this County Council sells copies of the Definitive Maps.
- BERKS - a SR was dated Sept. 1976, no Public Enquiries held yet, a fair review.
- BUCKS - a SR will be dated Dec. 1979 approx; they sell copies of Def. Maps.
- CAMBS - SR dated March 1974, no Public Enquiries held yet, some byways provided.
- CHESHIRE - SR approx. March 1980; CC sells Def. Maps; expect a total loss of 200 RUPPs.
- CLEVELAND - SR Map Dec. 1976, 10 byways.
- CORNWALL - SR Map Oct. 1973, 300 byways - best County in UK.
- CUMBERIA - SR Map 1st Jan. 1976, no Public Enquiries yet - due 1980, 60 byways, fair.
- DERBYS - SR due March 1980, very few expected.
- DEVON - only county to have completed a SR map, 90 RUPPs now, 70 bridleways.
- DORSET - SR 1973, incomplete, Public Enquiries under way, very few byways.
- DURHAM - SR due Dec. 1979.
- E. SUSSEX - SR 1973; CC sells Def. Maps.
- ESSEX - SR 1971, Public Enquiries still being held.
- GLOS - No SR yet; CC sells Def. Maps.
- HANTS - SR due soon and in consultation stage; fair minded Council.
- HEREFORD & WORCS - SR for Hereford was 1973. Worcs has no RUPPs at all!
- HERTS - SR under way; CC sells Def. Maps.
- HUMBERSIDE - SR 1971, General Review soon; D of E say they cannot consider byway claims again - 200 down-graded out of 210.

- KENT - SR map 1970, Public Enquiries abandoned due to D of E staff shortages. (No kidding!)
- LANCS - SR 1981; CC sells Def. Maps, few RUPPs.
- LEICS - SR map due April 1980; CC sells maps; 50 byways out of 150 RUPPs.
- LINCS - no SR planned - 'abandoned' - the most backward CC.
- N. YORKS - no plans, 200 lanes all bridleway, should be RUPP.
- NORFOLK - SR 1979, no-one to do any work, ample RUPPs.
- NORTHANTS - SR map 1968; no Pub. Enq's held yet (no kidding!)
- NORTHUMBERLAND - SR map due 1981, few RUPPs.
- NOTTS - SR map 1975, no Pub. Enq's held yet - due 1980, 320 RUPPs now 1 byway.
- OXON - SR map 1978, no Pub. Enq's yet; fair, reasonable number of byways.
- SALOP - SR 'soon'; were hostile to motorcycles.
- SOMERSET - SR map July 1978, 95% of all RUPPs to be bridleway; no Pub. Enq's yet.
- S. YORKS - no plans for a SR; Sheffield area 22 byways, very fair minded CC.
- STAFFS - SR map 1971, Pub. Enq's still being held, 50 byways, 150 bridleways.
- SUFFOLK - SR Oct. 1979, ample RUPPs.
- SURREY - SR due April 1980.
- WARKS - SR map Aug. 1977, no Pub. Enq's yet; CC sells Maps.
- W. SUSSEX - no information, contact local TRF Group or CC.
- W. YORKS - SR map due Dec. 1979, CC sells maps.
- WILTS - SR map Nov. 1972; Pub. Enq's still being held; 500 byways, 600 RUPPs made bridleway.
- WALES - Please drop me a line.
- Figures and dates are approximate.
- There is a strong indication that authorities are stopping all review work until the new Government bill is passed.
- Brian Thompson, 39 Warren Road, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5PP, South Yorkshire. Tel: 0405 (Thorne) 814388.

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Trail riding reminder:

Look behind at junctions, on the road as well as on the trail, to see if the next man is following. If he isn't, stop and wait for him.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- 13 -

51 Deorings Road,
Rugby, Warwicks.

Dear Nick,

Please excuse the familiarity, but your mag sounded so informal I didn't think you'd mind. Firstly, let me explain I'm not a member, although I did ride with Pete Plummer some five years ago in the early days, memorising some of the lanes in the Northampton area. I now organise a small group of very keen riders, about 20 in all, and we go out about six at a time once a month.

It was on this month's run that we decided to give the Ridgeway a try out and, armed with an OS map, we set off in a westerly direction just south of Wantage. The day went really great, but there is a real problem you know, caused by a few people who insist on riding along this road at speeds which quite honestly are not only a danger to themselves, but a downright nuisance to the many walkers along there. Not irate ramblers, but campers, hikers, families out for the day, etc. One such group sped past us; they were not cowboys, they had all the gear and pretty expensive bikes - XT 500, CZ Enduro, TL 125 Honda, plus, I think, a Triumph Cub and a couple of others. Some 5-miles further on, going up to White Horse Hill, I had a real mouthful from a very annoyed walker. Admittedly he was a Colonel Blimp type, but I'm sure it was the quicker group who made him see red - after all, 6 bikes at speed on a dry track put up a lot of dust which, let's face it, is not conducive to a nice day out in the country.

IS THE TRAIL RIDER HIS OWN WORST ENEMY? We won't use the Ridgeway again in a hurry!

Yours, Geoff Hartup.

Tel: Ambleside 3050.

Line Rigg, Loughrigg,
Ambleside, Cumbria.

Dear Nick,

Is there anyone interested in a 'geriatrics' run around the easier lanes in the Lakes? What I had in mind was a 2nd or 3rd gear, 20 mph pobble round the lanes.

- 14 -

We would take a few steps to chat, take photographs, have a fag, drink a cup of coffee/tea, criticise one another's bikes, etc. Say next Spring when the leaves are just appearing on the trees, it's not too hot and the Lakes country is at its best. It could be a run where no-one need feel embarrassed about being too slow or falling off too often - selfish motives here! Seriously, anyone interested? If so, please contact either me at the above address/Tel. no., or our Group Rep. David Howe, 3 Greenfoot, Mealsgate, Carlisle, Cumbria, who also thinks it is a good idea.

Please get in touch as soon as possible because David will be planning our runs list in the very near future.

Best wishes, Pete Deeley.

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Twin Trees Cottage,
Grassington, N. Yorks.

Dear Sir,

I spend all my leisure hours on horseback and have no objection to motorcycles using green lanes also, providing they are quiet and do not race past. Trail riders (don't like the word - too American) should be made aware of the special problems on horseback compared to riding a motorbike:

1. Horses have no brakes.
2. Steering is uncertain.
3. No suspension at all.
4. Poor controls via stirrup and reins.
5. Animals are easily frightened by sudden noises. A horse bolting is a fear of all riders.
6. Horses cannot cope with steep slopes or deep mud.
7. The rider is much higher off the ground than a motorcyclist, and it is a long way to fall if the horse trips.
8. Range of a horse is less than 30-miles before it becomes tired.
9. Horses often get blamed for damaging soft surface of lanes, when the hoof marks are actually those of cattle.
10. We can all live together with a bit of give and take on both sides.

11. Road riding with today's traffic is a nightmare, especially for a nervous animal. Thus a greater need to get on the greenery.

Adrian Thorpe.

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THE SCOTTISH SCENE

As most members will know, the law on Rights of Way for motorcyclists in Scotland remains vague and it is possibly better to keep it that way, though it is possible that if we do not do something about it, we may lose those facilities which, whether by right or privilege, we now enjoy. On the other hand, aggressively fighting for rights could bring us into legal conflict with parties with more power and money behind them than we and, worse, could upset the good relations which exist in Scotland between motorcyclists and the vast majority of landowners, their tenants and employees, walkers, horsemen and other users of the countryside.

I have been corresponding with the Land Use Adviser of the Scottish Landowners Federation who says: "I entirely agree with you that the relations between the various types of user in the countryside in Scotland are cordial and that we must keep things that way. Like you, we are not in favour of formalising arrangements providing landowners do not experience difficulties with motorcyclists on their land. As far as I know, there is no suggestion that they do have such problems." He also, of course, says that his members would prefer to have their permission asked in advance.

The Secretary of the Scottish Rights of Way Society thinks that my exposition on Rights of Way on Page 2 of "Some hill tracks through the Highlands" is misleading in that it can be taken to imply that motorcyclists can ride wherever they like, whereas even pedestrians do not enjoy Rights of Way everywhere. He also says that apart from the Corrieyairack and Amulree-Kenmore, none of the routes I describe are rights of way for vehicles. In this he is undoubtedly right. He also refutes my contention that the old distinction between a horse-drawn vehicle and a sole horse could be held to be the same as that between a motor-vehicle and a sole motorcycle.

opened to trail riders, perhaps controlled by the issuing of licences. Another subject raised (by him) was the incomparably greater erosion caused by the bulldozed roads being built through hill and moor by many estates to get their high paying foreign 'hunters' within gunshot with the minimum of physical exertion.

Also discussed was the Countryside Commission for Scotland which has, predictably, become quite a powerful body and has no representative of motorcycle interests, although I tried to persuade motorcycling organisations to apply for representation ten years ago and I would now strongly urge the TRF to apply.

I still have copies of "Some Hill Tracks through the Highlands" and will send one to anyone who sends me 25p.

Hugh Davidson, Tigh-na-Coille, Alexandra Terrace, Forres, Moray, IV36 ODJ.

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There was a good 30-miles of road before we could take to the rough. The bike was thumping away and it was reassuring, but God it was cold. Just pottering down to the club hadn't warranted the Belstaff mac and waders and now I was paying the penalty. The icy wind blew straight through the silly woollen gloves and without the old balaclava the cold blast of air was giving me a headache. That boring ribbon of Watling Street stretched before me. Riding mechanically I stared at the pool of light that fell a yard in front of the wheel. My thoughts drifted back to the warmth of the clubroom.

It should never have happened. Only fools and kids would accept a dare or a crazy challenge, but I had gone back on everything I had said, everything I stood for. In the past I had ridden a thousand green lanes, so why was I doing this now? Thinking deeper, it just had to be my fault, but why had I allowed myself to be driven this far? Admittedly I told the young bloods of the old days. They'd warmed to my stories of the old Douglas on the Ridgeway and of the belt drivers chugging up Sunrise, but times change; it was no longer possible to do those crazy things that seemed perfectly normal then. There are two strokes now and conservationists - we are supposedly responsible.

Reading the Blue 'un in the corner, I'd been content to sit and half listen to the youngsters, but when the midnight trail ride came up I just had to have my say. It was all OK and then that cheeky young Frank had quipped: "Take no notice of the old fella, he's past it." That really hurt, it hurt so much it was more like a physical pain. I'd sat there for a minute taking in short, sharp breaths, and then something snapped. Why, the cheeky young begger. I had ridden more green lanes than they'd had hot dinners. Struggling to my feet as quickly as my outsize frame would allow, I downed the last of my pint, stuffed the Blue 'un down my jacket and stormed out into the night.

I almost overshot the first green lane. Numbed by the long cold ride there was only a second to snap the throttle shut and drag at the bars. All my weight was on the brake, but the heavy flywheels hardly slowed the bike at all. We were still going at a fair old rate.

Send completed form to: Colin Patient, 14 Ryecroft Close,
Woodley, Reading. RG5 3BP.

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MIDNIGHT RIDE - A fictional tale by Pete Plummer.

Back at the club it had seemed like a good idea to some. Amid the chink of glasses and the banter of the darts players drifting through from the bar, someone had suggested a midnight trail ride. Right from the beginning I'd been against the idea. Musing over the light and bitter I'd said: "It's just not right, the farmers won't like it." As the wise old trail boss I had felt it my duty to keep the lads on the straight and narrow. Anyway, wasn't it my club? I was the one who had got the whole thing off the ground all those years back. They would do as I said. So what the hell was I doing riding the Matchless at 20 to 12 towards the first green lane?

The rigid back end kicked up and I remember the chain gnashing against the case. In seconds I was hot and sticky, very much awake. Experience told me to take it easy, to keep the speed down and relax, but I was too wound up. At just above tickover the lights were almost non-existent. For weeks I'd been meaning to top up the battery - now I wish I'd done it. Going down two gears brought the revs up, but that light was hardly better. Only memory told me of the gate ahead.

"Ah, there it is" I said aloud. Pulling the bike up on to the rear stand I went over to the old wooden gate and began the struggle with the twine. Freezing fingers attacked the knots and then I turned back to the Matchless. Damn and blast. The bike was on its side. That stand had dug into the soft earth and the bike was over. The reek of petrol was on the air. Annoyed beyond measure I tried to lift that old machine. Once a friend, it became just an unwieldy lump of metal. Going down on my knees I saw the bars were buried in the earth. Frantically I scraped the soil away, it clinging to those pathetic woollen gloves. Just about all in, I pushed and dragged the cantankerous old beast on to firmer ground.

Temper was up and I was riding the bike with a fierce determination more suited to the daylight hours. Balancing on the rests, the big machine was bucking on the hard and unforgiving lane. As the track swung away between the trees I knew it would be darker even with the moon coming up, but I never eased the grip for an instant. In third and doing 40 we sped on, but it was fast, much too fast. "Ah" - too late. The wheel hit something hard. The pain, the pain was terrible and then it all began to drift away - to nothing.

A month later my rescuer turned up at our clubnight. I knew it was him, although I had never met the man. You see, they had said a large red-faced farmer with an old brown and white dog had taken me to the cottage hospital. It just had to be him - there could never be two of that type, or two identical dogs, for that matter. On the night he didn't come into the bar, but Roger and Fred were summoned outside.

It was strange - nobody ever wanted to talk to the treasurer and secretary together. All they ever did was sell the odd raffle ticket. Standing and easing forward towards the door, I tried to listen to the conversation. It was difficult, the door was shut, but the merest snatch of conversation was enough. "But it's a lot of money", "How can I be expected to pay", "It's just a sport to you."

I was back in my chair when Roger and Fred came through the doorway. Throwing me a meaningful glance, Fred said: "The old boy is right upset." Roger chimed in: "Someone left a gate open, we've a vet's bill to pay." He continued "Right then lads, we'll have a whip-round." When it came to my turn I placed a crisp 10/-d. note into a greasy cap. Looking again at the receptacle that held the money, my heart missed a beat. So that's where it went, I thought, I lost it on the lane that night. How many more would recognise my own greasy cap?

It has been years since that night. The Matchless has gone and made way for a new lightweight Kawasaki with a prop stand and lights. Not that I ride much these days, of course; I content myself with a potter down to clubnights. This time of year though, I now quite enjoy. With a whisky or two I'll sit by the fire and tell the young cubs of my days on the Douglas and the things I've told them all before. Yes, it is good looking back, but no-one ever talks of the midnight trail ride.

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EDITORIAL GUBBINS

The Ridgeway is being threatened by a traffic restriction order. The Countryside Commission is considering applying for an order covering the entire length of the Ridgeway; this would mean that the only traffic allowed to use it is that which damages the surface, i.e. agricultural vehicles from the adjacent farms. The cars which park on the Ridgeway 100-yds. from the tarmac roads will still park there - the drivers don't even know what a TRO is. The odd local youth will still ride his untaxed, un-insured scrambles bike along it. The ones who will suffer will be the responsible trail riders, the people who do stop for horses, ride quiet bikes and respect the countryside.

The TRF will have to make a stand against this move which the Countryside Commission is making against the recommendations of the Green Lane Study. Brian Thompson will try to keep you posted on developments which may end up being very costly. If you want to object personally, please write to: Godfrey Phillips, Countryside Commission, John Dower House, Cheltenham, Glos.

Next Exec. Committee Meeting: 1.30 p.m. on Saturday, 19th January, 1980, at the King George V Memorial Hall, Stratford Road, Hockley Heath, Solihull, West Midlands.

TRF Goodies: Car window stickers - 20p. each (stickers are 8" long, so please send suitable SAE) from Nick Walker - address below. Cheques/PO's made out to TRF.

TRF stickers (green/black with yellow TRF) - 20p. each and SAE from Howard Wadsworth, 7 Hammond Road, Knottingley, Yorkshire.

TRF embroidered cloth badges - 50p. and SAE from Mike Kirby, 11 Hazel Grove, Hockley Heath, Solihull, West Midlands.

Posters, membership forms and any information from Bruce Roberts - address below.

Nick Walker.

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ADVERTISEMENTS (Free to members)

FOR SALE: Yamaha XT 500, 'S' reg'd, 6,500-miles, Petty mudguards, lightweight exhaust, YZ air forks, gas shocks. Very tidy machine. £500. o.n.o. Nick Ferraby, tel: Green Hammerton 30729.

FOR SALE: Suzuki TS 185 ERN. This trail bike is the actual machine tested in 'Bike' magazine's December issue. 2½-months old, electric blue, showroom condition. Reason for sale - going Stateside. Price: £525. ovno. May consider part-exchange. C. S. Hunter, 203 Hollinsend Road, Gloddest, Sheffield S12 2EE. Tel: 0742 655326.

FOR SALE: Suzuki SP 370 petrol tank, silver, brand new, unused: £18. P. Wildsmith, 5 Meynell Close, Eastleigh, Hants. Tel: Eastleigh 617582.

FOR SALE: Honda XL 250 S, July 1978. 3,000-miles, condition excellent: £580. Phone David Collard on 01-937 6349.

FOR SALE: Silk 700 S, black, twin disc, wire wheels, only 3,000-miles from new. An immaculate example of the ultimate on two wheels: £1,600. Ring Gisburn 522 (Lancs) - Russell Braham.

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