

84

TRF

BULLETIN

TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

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



**TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP
BULLETIN No. 84 MAY/JUNE
FORTHCOMING GREEN LANE RIDES AND
OTHER DATES OF INTEREST**

June 14th	East Yorkshire Dales : Contact Mr. Drury, Harrogate 885410 25p run fees.
June 14th	South Leics., Syston Green 9.30 am Yorkshire Dales, s.a.e. please to David Howe, 3 Greenfoot, Mealsgate, Carlisle CA5 1DF
June 21st	Monyash, Derbyshire : contact Ian Dunsire, Barnsley 742475
June 24th	South Leicestershire : Kegworth, Flying Horse 7.00 pm
June 24th/25th	Welsh Two Day Trial : Landridrod Wells area
June 28th	East Yorkshire Group : M Drury, Harrogate 885410
June 28th	Vintage Motorcycle Ride : Banbury
July 12th	Mid Yorkshire Dales : contact Don Burt, Hemsworth 612258
July 12th	Contact Graham Chinnery 0332 810059, East Midlands Group
July 26th	Yorkshire : contact Don Burt, Hemsworth 612258
July 26th	Yorkshire Dales : s.a.e. to David Howe

Most groups organise rides, but the time and place of the start can only be obtained from the monthly meeting, or the group representative whose name and address is at the back of this issue.

I will be delighted to publish dates of forthcoming rides (but only specific dates please) in future issues:—

LAST DATE FOR COPY FOR JULY/AUGUST ISSUE — 30th JUNE, 1981

★ ★ ★

“THOUGHT FOR THE DAY”

Would riders please look behind them on a run so as not to leave anyone behind.
Stop at junctions and wait for the next man.

★ ★ ★

FOR SALE (offers), or swop for Honda XL. TL. 125 or similar: BSA modified ex W.D. B40. rather worn, but complete with enough spares (motor, frame, forks, wheels, etc.) to build another bike.

18 Hilton Avenue, Ansdell, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire FY9 4AN

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

First of all, a big THANK YOU to all of you who have put pen to paper and sent something in for me to print. I may not use your contribution immediately, but all are carefully read and considered. We will have articles by Stephen Russell about the Ox Drove and a composite article about the start of the Fellowship with bits from Seymour Moss, George Abbey and Norman Smith, in the next issue.

Length of any contribution is not particularly important, in fact, the short, sharp paragraph stands a better chance of finding a space than the five page 'tour de force'.

Mention of Norman Smith reminds me that this Honorary Founder Member recently notched up a Golden Jubilee of married life, for which he and particularly his wife, deserve our warmest congratulations from all members of the Fellowship, because (for those newer members) N.C.S. was the T.R.F. in its Rights of Way form for about thirty years before we were officially founded.

I have been disappointed that we have as yet found no advertisers. In the response to the RIDERS REPORT on the XT500. A report has only been possible by the quality of the reports sent in and in no way by the quantity. However, riders of the perhaps more popular Yamaha DT175 can let us all know the delights and pitfalls of their ownership. I am realising the rose coloured glasses that owners have in regard to their bikes — or are they really so good? Just drop a line and let me know.

Now, a subject to get you talking. Should trailers be banned, from local runs? The bikes we ride are road bikes, all legal and roadworthy, surely we should ride them to the start and home from the end of a local ride? Trailer your bike to the start and you have a worry about parking all day, strapping down securely, and don't you always break down further from the trailer than from home? So I say ban trailers, except for the weekend in Wales, or Scotland, etc. If we don't we will finish up with bikes only capable of being ridden on green lanes, and not on tarmac — like the specialist bikes that trials bikes have become, not the great all rounders that we ride now. Let me know what you think, the more opinions the better.

Happy riding.

John R. Higgin, 11, Askew Drive, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berks.

★★★

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

11th April 1981

Bruce Roberts, our Honorary Secretary, started off the meeting with his report about the T.R.F. and its members spreading foot and mouth disease across the South of England. That was what the newspaper and television reports said, they are never wrong are they? The matter was discussed and Bruce was to find out the TRUE facts about the Treasure Hunt, the area concerned and the members involved and his report is elsewhere in this issue. Your delegates all agreed that there would be a total BAN on Trail Riding in any area affected by Foot & Mouth disease, or any similar disease (such as rabies) that could occur in the future.

Mike Dutton had reported to the Secretary that Motorcyclists had stampeded horses on the Clee Hills in Shropshire. The British Horse Enduro Society had asked for help on the 1st to the 3rd of August at Wilsforth Camp on the A386 between Tavistock and Okehampton.

The Treasurer, Keith Waddon, reported that the position financially was sound, he thanked the Bristol Group for a donation of £132 to the fighting fund, that had been earned by lane clearing in their area. He had received a letter of thanks from the Byways & Bridleways Trust for the financial support that we have given to them.

The Editor reported that the last Bulletin had just been posted and no adverse comments received (yet!). Copy and advertising material was required by 1st of May, July, September, November and January etc.

The Press Officer, Geoff Diamond, asked that Newspaper reports, such as foot and mouth disease be sent to him, or local matters of national importance at 22, Meadway Close, Kettering.

Richard Marshall reported that he receives the London Gazette and distributes the appropriate reports. After Ian Thompson's great success in getting money for lane clearing from Somerset County Council, Richard had persuaded Derbyshire to agree in principle to the idea on the basis of travel expenses or at an agreed figure per green lane. Ian Thompson could get a solicitor to object to the closure of lanes in the Minehead area, at the Magistrates Court at the end of April.

Brian Thompson then gave his report, see page 20.

It was agreed to affiliate to the Byways & Bridleways Trust for 1981.

Bruce Roberts had written to the Countryside Commission and NO voluntary ban had yet been negotiated for the Berkshire RIDGEWAY for 1981. (I have checked at publication date and there is no change).

Various groups then gave their reports, Roger Newark, for North London Group reported the request for help from a long distance Horse riding club, but as it is to be held mainly on bridleways and the owners of the land were not know, it was not possible to get permission to ride them and hence difficult to help.

The West Midland Group had been unsuccessful in getting a stand at the N.E.C. for the Bike Show. The North Midlands group had a members only noncompetitive trial. The Loddon Vale Group had supported a sponsored walk, had held a skittles night and was still growing. Bruce Roberts reported that the West Anglia group had been asked to Marshal a sponsored walk in Woburn Abbey.

The next meeting is to be 11th July and all group representatives are asked to make a special effort to show that your group exists by attending in person — the west side of the country (with the honourable exceptions of the Midlands groups) ESPECIALLY. Substitutes are allowed.

T.R.F. TREASURE HUNT AND FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE

As you will know from the last Bulletin, Stephen Russell had proposed and organised a treasure hunt on the 29th of March in the Tollard Royal area of Wiltshire. It has been stated "as fact" in 3 newspaper reports and on the Day by Day programme on Southern Television (ITV) that 40-50 riders, some from the Isle of Wight (an infected area) had ridden across farmland, and down a private lane, in a restricted area. The inference from the above 'news item' is that the Fellowship is a totally irresponsible body, organising events to trespass and spread virulent diseases. The true facts are . . .

- A. There were 15 participants in total and none came from a restricted area. Those riders who had entered, from the Isle of Wight 1. contacted the N.F.U. who advised them to contact the Min. of Agriculture. 2. The Ministry advised that it was alright to attend if boots and tyres were disinfected. 3. In spite of this advice these riders did NOT attend and thus forfeited their entry fee.
- B. The event did **not** occur in an infected or restricted area.
- C. No participant knowingly rode on a non vehicular right of way.
- D. No damage was caused.

In order to prevent any actual or potential incident like that reported by the newspapers the Executive Committee of the T.R.F. have decided that — IN THE EVENT OF ANY REPORT OF FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE, ALL MEMBERS AND ALL OTHER TRAIL RIDERS WILL BE REQUESTED TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF GREEN LANES IN ALL IDENTIFIED RESTRICTED AREAS. RIDERS IN THESE AREAS WILL ALSO BE REQUESTED NOT TO RIDE OUTSIDE THESE AREAS. THIS BAN WILL LAST UNTIL THE RESTRICTED AREA IS DECLARED FREE. ANY PERSON IN DISPUTE WITH THIS RULING WILL, IF A MEMBER BE DISCIPLINED BY THE FELLOWSHIP, BUT IN ANY CASE WILL BE REPORTED TO THE AUTHORITIES:

In order to effectively warn as many members as possible, it is hoped to arrange for the local representative of the group to be told, should an outbreak occur, and T.R.F. members will be responsible for passing on the warning to all other riders.

We are led to believe that the advice given to the riders from the Isle of Wight by the Ministry of Agriculture MAY not be correct, in that the disinfecting of boots and tyres is not sufficient. We await technical advice on this which will be published in future issues when known.

The whole of the above, of course, emphasises the need for close and friendly co-operation with the farmers and other inhabitants of the countryside. We are almost past the lambing season in my part of the world, but special consideration should always be given to all animals, particularly those about to give birth or with their young.

REPORT ON RIGHTS OF WAY SEMINAR HELD AT THE COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.

A seminar organised by The Essex Association of Local Council was held to discuss footpaths, bridleways and byways between the County Council and Parish Councils, farmers and lane users.

The County opened the debate with brief talks by representatives from each of the Legal, Planning and Highways Departments. Briefly summarised the situation (in Essex at least) is that all lane users must take paths as they find them. For those interested in figures, £14½ million are spent every year on roads and bridges and £85,000 on footpaths etc. of which there are about 4,000 miles. In 1978 the expenditure on footpaths was about £40,000. Legal closures and ploughing prosecutions are costly and are thus a last resort.

Light entertainment was provided by the Parish Council Representatives looking for loopholes in Ordnance Survey maps during a fascinating talk by an O/S Officer. One farmer asked for the dates that the survey would be in a certain locality and was the surveyor on the ground able to distinguish footpaths if they were freshly ploughed?

And the question was serious!

A general discussion rounded off the day with contributions from all interested lane users. The ramblers stressed their membership, (1200 in Essex) organisation (H.Q., Local Secretaries, Parish Reps.) and lane clearance schemes. They wanted more long distance paths and disliked rationalisation, hedge removal, horses and the hooligan motorcyclists (not us). The horse riders asked for more bridlepaths and disliked hedge removal.

The Parish Councils disliked hedge removal, motorcyclists, horses and ramblers. The farmers (many of them parish councillors) thought hedge removal part of good farm management. They disliked, in no particular order, rights of way, hedges, ramblers, horses, taxes, the weather and motorcycles.

The T.R.F. then put forward their views, which here I should say are my views on trail riding in an Essex context.

In Essex there are 4,000 miles of footpaths etc. and of these it is estimated 250 miles are rapps. At the Special Review about half of these were downgraded. We and the Council are both aware of lanes that are on the definite map as foot and bridlepaths and for which historical evidence can be provided but these are few in total. We only ask for the retention of known vehicular rights which in 90% of cases are clearly shown on the 1777 map of Essex by Chapman and Andre.

What is required is education of all lane users to the needs of each other. We have much ourselves to do educating the minority who use lanes as a scramblers course and to whom statutory closures mean nothing. Parishes if aware of problems should try to provide suitable areas through farming contacts and planners could do more to include recreation areas in which motorcycles are included. Co-operation and education should be the theme of lane use for the future.

We were then supported by ACU representatives who generally stressed their sporting side but gave valuable support to trail riders.

Dave Andrews, 123 Burrow Road, Chigwell, Essex.

SOUTHERN GROUP REPORT

After several years as group rep. and group sec. I have eventually given up the post due to less time and seemingly larger distances (thank you Mr. Chancellor) between myself and the group. I shall keep in touch though through trials and runs.

In my absence my secretarial duties will be taken over by Brian Boden until someone else comes forward the group will, of course, remain very active on the R.O.W. front and will continue to meet at the Chamberlain Hotel in Eastleigh 3rd Tuesday 8.00 pm. Information about the group can be obtained from Brian Boden (Winchester), Nick Chalk or Pete Wildsmith (both Eastleigh).

Peat Glead

SHROPS GROUP NEWS

Just held 3rd meeting of year. Small steadily growing group we recently doubled our nos. by joining with T.R.F. members in Telford (from Severn Gorge M.C.) thanks to one of them Paul Lowe, we have now raised some cash towards fighting fund. Also we now have more choice of runs by sharing the Severn Gorge's with some of our own. The weather has somewhat put the mockers on us however, the 1st March, Kerry Coach Road run spent the day in snow drifts 1 m.p.h. was all we could manage, Feb. saw us on the Monk's Trod (Monk's Trod a peat bog near Rhayden).

Jan from Hanwood and around the Stiperstone was really successful and enjoyed by all. Lots more planned.

On the R.O.W. front Salop C.C. have offered to meet me when they (and I) know what the W. & L.C. Bill entails. I am hoping to attend the Castleford course in June because Salop's R.O.W.s are certainly way out!! B.W.s that should be Byeways or County Roads and others we cannot decide what they are, I suspect this is the same in every county until you look closely at old maps you don't realise how bad the situation is.

On one lane that is blocked, at Medlicott (Longmynds) (O.C.R.) some members had offered to help clear it but changed their minds because it is not on the O/S map. We have several complaints lodged with S.C.C. concerning blocked lanes but they are very slow in dealing with them. My thanks to Harry Ball (West Midland Gr.) I think his "do it yourself" action on the Clee St. Margarets R.U.P.P. probably the best way.

I drowned myself and bike in the pond trying to get under a tree 18 inches above water level on this R.U.P.P. last year. Trouble is with all this rain we still can't use it without a snorkel. Thanks Harry.

Mike Dutton, Top Cottage, Eaton Mascott, Cross Houses.

CUMBRIA GROUP REPORT

The Cumbria County Council Special Review of Public Rights of Way is entering its final stages with a series of Public Enquiries staged by the Department of The Environment which will last for possibly two years. So far there have been three Enquiries at which m/c interests have been represented. Brian Thompson, the Trail Riders Fellowship Rights of Way Officer has been to two of them and his observations of the last enquiry (Buckholme Lane nr. Cockermouth) are frightening:—

- a) Fifty people were at the enquiry — all against m/c's.
- b) *Only* Brian Thompson represented the riders.
- c) Brian was criticised by the opposition for "not being a local."

All the opposition were.

- d) Objectors to Byway status included:—

Forestry Commission,
National Park Authority,
National Farmers Union,
Ramblers Association,
Two Parish Councils 100% against,
Cumbria County Council,
The two Landowners,
Several members of the public.

The R.A. lobby told Brian that they are to *step up* the pressure against m/c's and for the Enquiries in Kentmere (Gatescarth, Garburn etc.) the big guns will be brought up from London — presumably National Office Staff like Mattingly and Trevelyan aided by Q.C.'s.

The County Council (to whom we pay our rates for the maintenance of these roads) now say that they may not support *their own* Byway claims due to this last-minute anti-bike public pressure and feeling. That includes Garburn, Stile End etc.

If 50 people turn out for one paltry lane on the fringe of the Lake District like happened at Penrith and Cockermouth what will the Enquiries at Gatescarth and Garburn bring?

This makes us think that a new plan of action is needed and the following has been proposed:—

1. For the majority of the roads we have claimed the documentary evidence in the form of old maps etc. is quite satisfactory but for many there is just no evidence known by me of the lanes having been used before Cumbria TRF got off the ground in the mid1970's. This short span of time is not good enough for the Enquiry. We need 20 years — plus the witness turning up at the Enquiry to support his usage in front of the Inspector.

So after an appeal in the form of the press, ACU, BMF, for use witnesses to come forward we will *withdraw* at the DoE the claims on those lanes that have insufficient total documentary and use evidence. Use forms can be obtained from me.

2. In any case — we will withdraw claims on the shorter half-mile and mile long lanes and concentrate our efforts on the longer and hopefully (see part 1) above better documented lanes.

Please send donations to me to pay for Rights of Way work. Brian can't be expected to attend every enquiry — he already takes one day per week unpaid leave for House of Commons business — and a legal mind costs over £20 an hour. Unless a local person comes forward, who can take part in the Enquiries on behalf of riders?

To sum up:— we need cash and local helpers to save the longest lanes only. E.g. Gatescarth, Garburn, Stile End, Ash Fell, Maiden Way, Underbarrow, The High Way, Killington, Whitbarrow Scar, Trescofield. Contact me to help.

DAVID HOWE.

Group Rep. Cumbria T.R.F.

BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE GROUP NEWS

Firstly a reminder to all members who have not contributed their annual 50p to the Byways & Bridleways Trust, it is due! We have a member, Rod Powell of Weymouth, who is interested in the Dorchester area. Rod is exploring and noting the lanes for our future work. This, to us, is the best way of discovering byways lost by Dorset County Hall. A few people discovering the byways in their own area gives better results that can be pooled at clubnights, or sent to the Rights of Way rep. by post. We hope, in this fashion, to assist in building up a good network of byways for the future.

We have purchased two reputable pre 1835 maps. Isaac Taylor 1796 and C & J Greenwood 1826, from the British Library Museum, Russell St., London — Photographic Department. In addition, we have the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Maps of 1811. From these maps we have a good indication which green lanes should be byways. It would seem we have hundreds if the criteria is 'do vehicular rights exist!'

BYWAY No. 12 — in the parish of PUDDLETOWN. — At last, after 4½ months the farmer, Mr. Banfield, has agreed to restore the byway. A satisfactory letter from the County Council Solicitor at Dorchester states that the landowner will return the ploughed BYWAY to grass, at his earliest opportunity! The electric fence has been removed.

Our next problem is an unclassified county road on O/S 194 at West Orchard Farm. The farmer has an electric fence across the road and farm 'waste' has made the U.C.R. almost impossible. Also, we have a Byway with a sign stating "No Vehicles Beyond this point" — a Forestry sign. It never seems to end in Dorset.

WEST MIDLANDS GROUP report — Dolgellau Weekend

Nine members of the West Midlands Group met in the car park at Dolgellau at 9.30 am. They were: Harry Ball, Mick Williams, Jon Hughes, John Alder all on Yamaha DT175s; Richard Greesly on a IT 175; Peter Cookson and John Fields both on Honda XR200s; Albert Billington on a XL 250 and Ron Hubble on a TY 250.

The weather was superb when we kicked off along the main road from Dolgellau, to the first track (known as Jim's Track). This is a well defined track mainly grass and rocks, with some hairpin bends and good climbs. This track passed unevenly and led us to the Old Woman's Track, again grass and rocks and leading to a delightful bridge named Pont Scethin, which is mentioned in the Doomesday Book, where we took our first stop of the day. From Pont Scethin the track climbs steeply passed the Old Woman's stone, which commemorates an old woman who used to walk these tracks many years ago. At the end of this track we had our first mechanical gremlins appear. My DT 175 would not pull up the hills, John Alder diagnosed carb. float trouble. Fortunately John was carrying his float height gauge (patents pending). While we were doing this Richard, a newer member carried on along the track not realising that it dropped away sharply. The results of this could have been disastrous, with Richard 'endoing' the IT. Fortunately he escaped with a sore wrist and bent bars although his fuel cap came off and petrol was lost. We then set off to the next track Shooting Box, this is a really stony climb, best ridden quickly. We took lunch here in fabulous sunshine and then re-traced our steps back to the main road and on to the next track, the Gold Mine. No trouble getting to the Gold Mine but when we stopped Mick Williams had to replace a rear tube.

We continued down through some woods where the track is poorly defined, only to find we had come out of the woods at the wrong place, with a steep drop down to a forest road confronting us. This was negotiated by all except for Ron (TY 250) who used too much front brake and went over the bars. This is usually our last track but as we had time in hand decided to explore some new tracks. These turned out to be excellent and after a superb day's riding we returned to Dolgellau. A great night at the Cross Foxes was had by all.

DAY 2:

Met at digs at 9.30am. Again reasonable weather and kicked off to the first track. This one can be a real gravel but turned out to be quite easy, in fact the most difficult part was dismantling a locked gate at the end.

From here we headed for Abergonolwyn, via the Old Towyn Coach road, again the track from Abergonolwyn can be a gravel but turned out quite easy, with only a few boggy patches.

Coming down off this track, through the forestry Crasher Cookson XR 200, decided he couldn't have a weekend away without going over the bars, which he did in fine style with resulting damage to both bike and himself. From here miles of superb tracks to Anglers Retreat, again very dry and obviously well used. Then back along main roads via a petrol halt to the Bryn Cruig track. Over this superb track and back over Towyn Coach Road to Dolgellau.

Loaded the bikes into vans and got back to Brum. around 11 pm.

Superb weekend was had by all.

HERTFORDSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY

As from April, Hertfordshire has its own and resident rights of way (r.o.w.) officers.

We are:

Malcolm Bullen
38 Briars Lane
Hatfield
Herts
Tel: 65970

and

Peter Gates
76 St. Annes Road
London Colney
Herts
Tel: Bowmansgreen 23379

Both of us are TRF members and ride regularly the lanes in our area whenever we can (most weekends). We would like to set up a regional reporting system as Hertfordshire is a very large county with a wealth of green lanes that must be preserved. To this end we would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in compiling a small report fortnightly of problems/successes etc. in his or her Herts region. Those who are prepared to help in this way please write to either of us at the addresses above.

For the interest of Herts members I have made a study of lane mileage in our county and the result is:-

Footpaths	1259 miles
Bridleways	331 miles
RUPPS	150 miles

These figures were taken from information given by our friend Mr. Oliver of Herts County Council and of course only take into account lanes with a present day rupp status. The percentage of rups is a frightening one and shows how important it is that we organise ourselves in Hertfordshire to ensure we don't lose that which we already have. We will be trying to instigate re-instatement of downgraded lanes and again we will need YOUR HELP by telling us of the problems.

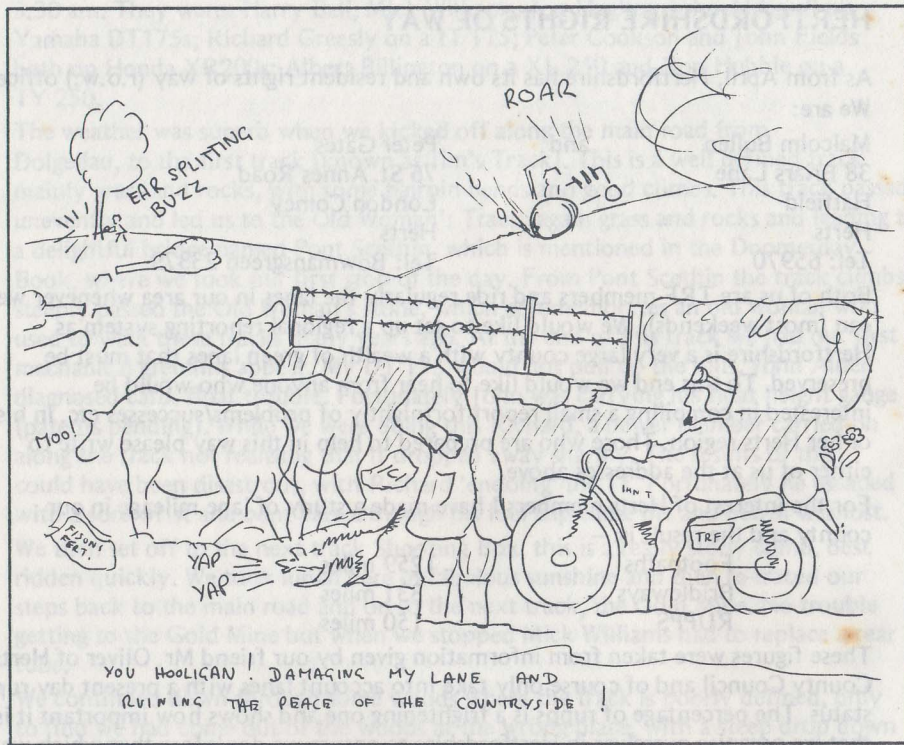
At the moment we have a fairly good relationship with other lane users in Herts so please DON'T ride where you are not sure of status as it doesn't help our case. A phone call to Mr. Oliver at Hertford 54242 during normal council working hours' will give you a status check prior to your epic ride. He will require O/S refs and if possible a lane number.

If any members know of a threatened rupp in their area (only Herts please) LET US KNOW a.s.a.p. in order that we may mount a campaign against closure of downgrading. There is a rupp known as Blind Lane in London Colney that will soon be under the M25 this may or may not be worth saving as it appears only the two of us use it. Your comments please.

In conclusion we would like to thank Dave Andrews (the flying Skoda) for the work he has done for Herts and assure him of our continued vigilance for the lanes. Good Riding.

Malcolm Bullen. Peter Gates.

★★★



DERBYSHIRE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE GROUP REPORT

The group continues to exist with an encouraging number of renewals and new members although the formation of the neighbouring West Yorkshire Group has meant that overall our numbers have dropped because of "transfers".

Attendance at meetings is tailing off as we move into the summer (!) although the monthly runs continue to be well supported and eventful.

Looking down the events list the activities have been rather varied. In November we tried a "Mastermind" evening with two teams (4-stroke v 2-stroke) attempting to answer questions in categories such as general knowledge, motorcycling history and ROW. Despite previous misgivings the evening went well and the 4-stroke team romped away to a well earned victory for which they each received a handsome trophy. (Pint of Wards Best Bitter)

There have been several film nights which have varied in quality including a very weird one on climbing glaciers on motorbikes. I thought we were slightly mad to go trail riding but watching these Frenchmen pull bikes up mountains on climbing ropes restored our faith in our own sanity.

The December social evening was well attended with Peter and June Butterley once again laying on an excellent spread which disappeared in no time.

February saw the group AGM with the full complement of officials being re-elected plus one new position, our Fund Raising Officer, for which Graham Thomas volunteered. The rather sober AGM was followed the next week by a rather drunken night out at a medieval banquet held at Eckington Hall. We were the guests of Lord Shearer who eventually ironed out the transport difficulties and organised an excellent night out.

In April we tried a repeat of the previously disastrous pub games evening which went much better this time with a good number of entries and keen (!) competition in the sports of dominoes, darts and crib. A few lucky souls turned up in May to listen to me give a talk on run leadership so now there should be no shortage of willing leaders for future group runs!

LOOKING FORWARD we have a trials evening in June at our local trail park — these are usually good for a great deal of foul language and bent handlebars. Also coming up in June is our annual appearance at the Rotherham Motoring Weekend & Tattoo on the 27th/28th June. Group members are asked to keep some time free, to help on the stand, which we may be sharing with the BMF so we can promote the broader issues of motorcycling as well as trail riding.

Things have been fairly quiet on the ROW and lane clearance fronts although

Thames Valley Group "Seven Stars" Run, Berkshire.



Editor & Distribution

John Higgin
11 Askew Drive
Spencers Wood
Reading RG7 1HG
Berkshire

National Secretary

Bruce Robert
36 Rosemary Drive
Bromham
Bedfordshire
Tel: Oakley (02302) 3139

Membership Secretary

Colin Patient
14 Ryecroft Close
Woodley
Reading, Berkshire RG5 3BP
Tel: Reading (0734) 696783

Michael Gibson is continuing to discover lanes around Doncaster and is bombarding the council with well researched claims.

Many of our members are now sporting oriented as well as just enjoying the more "sedate" delights of trail riding. It was therefore very encouraging to receive a donation of £50 for the TRF Fighting Fund last month from the neighbouring Worksop Motorcycle Club – it just goes to show that the two interests can live together and appreciate each others problems.

We have a ride on July 19th, from Deepcar, contact:

Ian Dunsire, 1 Lodge Drive, Harley, Rotherham, S. Yorks, S62 7UW
Telephone: Barnsley 742475

"Seven Stars" Run, Berkshire, 15/3/81.

Lunch Stop at the "Leathern Bottle" for Thames Valley Group Members.

**"THOUGHTS FROM THE SUPPORTERS CLUB"**

"Come on Haz, it's a nice day, we're going out on the bike."

"Great; how long have I got before you are ready?"

"Well, if we say about 2 pm that'll give me enough time to fettle (that all encompassing word!) and then we can have a good afternoons ride."

In that case, I know I have got time enough to clean the house, do some washing and prepare a hot meal for when we come back. We need something hot after a few hours in the refreshing countryside to get the circulation going again.

2 pm. arrives, and I start to get dressed. Thick tights, 2 pairs of long woolly socks, 3 jumpers, overtrousers and coat, gloves, scarf, helmet. "Right, I'm ready."

There he is, still fettling.

3 pm. arrives and at last we are off, or are we? Just one more check, and collect the spares and tools which we may need. Then we are ready.

Sit tight, here's a tricky bit; keep still, stop fidgeting about dodging the branches; don't put your feet down, the mud is a bit thick here; can you get up and give me a hand to get the bike out of this ditch; if you hold the gate open then I'll carry on through (for about 100 yards and splashing me with mud too!) keep your knees in, its only a narrow track; shall we go through the ford again so you can wash off your wellies?

My fingers are numb, my knees are permanently stiffened into a bent position, my nose has frozen solid.

Home again – "Did you enjoy that?" "Yes thanks, I wouldn't have missed it for the world," through chattering teeth.

For the next hour he stands, hosepipe in one hand, brush in the other washing the afternoons mud off the bike; straightening the handlebars, tightening up the bits which have worked loose; washing the chain in the sink before finally patting the 'old girl' and putting her away in a warm garage.

I' told that the washing ritual is part of the fun. I'm glad I don't join in that part at all, after all I'm only the passenger.

Mrs Hazel Kirby, 11 Hazel Grove, Hockley Heath.

Editor's note, I really enjoyed the above piece as I suppose it appealed to my twisted sense of humour. However, Hazel has yet another piece for the next magazine.

LANCASHIRE GROUP report from Lesley Windsor, 10 Lincoln Ave., Little Lever, Bolton.

In March the Lancashire group held their Annual General Meeting. The following officials were elected or re-elected.

Chairman	Keith Westley	Tel No: 0704 893215
Secretary	Lesley Windsor	Tel No: 0204 792743
Treasurer	Peter Plunket	Tel No: Leyland 34206
Rights of Way with assistants	John P. Gillett Nigel Foulds and Peter Halstead	

Our thanks go to the retiring treasurer Gizelle Allin, for the work she put in. At the meeting we also passed a proposal which defines our right of way area. It was proposed and carried that the following areas would be the responsibility of the Lancashire T.R.F. group.

- 1) All of Lancashire county.
- 2) Parts of G.M.C. including Bury, Bolton and Rochdale boroughs.
- 3) That part of West Yorkshire, where Lancashire lanes cross the Lancashire/G.M.C./West Yorks. boundaries.

The Group fee was put up to £1.50 per year and a club night attendance fee was introduced. It was decided that this would be 20p and will be put into a special fund to help any Lancs. group member who might have to fight a court case, over a lane that we believe to be legal right of way.

Last month we had a visit from members of the West Yorks. group, to discuss rights of way boundaries. We all enjoyed the exchange of ideas.

We would also like to thank Dave Eaton of the Cheshire group for organising a very enjoyable, if rather muddy run, on 8th March. 'I'll get up that hill one day and try to do it the right way up'!

★ ★ ★

MOTORCYCLING IN THE 1930's

Bob Curries fascinating look at the 30's provides an admirable addition to any enthusiasts bookshelf. It is superbly illustrated with contemporary photographs, charming pen and ink sketches and up to date photographs of these old machines, in addition to cutaway engine drawings which seem to be so often absent in modern motorcycling journalism!

Bob Currie's narrative is penned in an easy to read style which had this reader enthralled from cover to cover.

With chapters on the competition scene of this special interest to TRF members this is a volume not to be missed!

Ray Pittman

★ ★ ★

SOUTH WILTS RUN

Our Wiltshire run of February started from Tollard Royal. 19 riders turned up for the day, most well equipped, a couple not so well prepared. Gym shoes and no kick start-lever do not go a long way to making a trouble free day. I hasten to add they were not T.R.F. members. A beautiful sunny day with lovely views looking back southwards from the Ox Drove, using Ruppss we worked our route to the Ancient Capital of Wiltshire, Wilton.

Up the long gravelly Ridgeway, where the going was very slippery for all riders. We stopped to inspect a highway stone at a green road junction, the inscription reading "vi - Sarum." Dated 1750. Riding on to arrive at the junction of the Harrow Way with Gravelly Ridgeway and the Modern highway the A303, what a rude contrast. Crossing over the A303 we headed onto Upton Lovrel via Ruppss for a lunch stop in the sunshine. Our run leader for the day Keith Cockrell being well pleased with the progress up to this point. The two non members having been sent home, with an explanation by myself that they would be welcome to attend a club night.

The time being 2 pm past, we retraced our route to Wilton. Point of interest mentioned by several members was the absence of walkers on the lanes, I counted 6 walkers and 4 dogs and the surprising count of 4 individual motor cycle riders where seen riding the Ancient highways.

Our way was made to Stoney Stratford ie. (Statford Toney). The passing of years has distorted the name. Crossing through the river on down southwards on the Wilton Way to the A354 here myself, Stephen Jones, Andrew Meechan headed home to Poole on our bikes, having ridden 112 miles, 60 of Green roads.

S & J Russell, Sandy Top, 56 Winston Avenue, Branksome, Poole BH12 1PG

★ ★ ★

THAMES VALLEY WALKERS

On the 8th March, the Thames Valley Group held a 'walk a lane' day in Surrey. The event was ably organised by R.O.W. officer Kate Clow, and the idea was to walk footpaths and bridleways which are shown on the 1816 Ordnance Survey and the C & J Greenwood map of 1823 as old roads. A light drizzle fell from an overcast sky, as we began to assemble at the Merry Harriers, Hambledon, and we began to have doubts as to who would be fool enough to go walking in these conditions. However, our fears were laid to rest by the presence of 17 adults, 7 children and one dog, all ready and willing? to go.

The dog belonged to Brian Crook, who also came equipped with map, tape-measure, and compass. (Brian, that is, not the dog). He said that he had brought the dog for the exercise, but I suspect it was to guide him back to the Merry Harriers, should he get lost.

The assembled parties were split into 8 groups, each of whom was given a questionnaire to complete, and I ferried several out to the start of their walks, before returning to Kate and Chris Buckton to do our own bit of footslogging. By a strange coincidence (or maybe good planning) everybody arrived back at the pub at lunchtime to quench their thirsts and choose from the landlords' excellent menu. Everybody, that is, except Derek Curling and his brother, who had failed to appear.

I went out in the Volkswagen to search, but they were soon spotted climbing through the hedge into the car park. They had sighted the pub from a faraway hilltop, and remembered that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

An analysis of the results shows that out of 24 miles of footpath and bridleway walked, some 11 miles are worth claiming as Byway, which is quite an encouraging result.

I think it's safe to say that everyone enjoyed the outing, and my thanks go again to those who came along.

Terry Jolley

★ ★ ★

LANCASHIRE GROUP, EXPLORATION RUN. 15 MARCH, 1981.

We met at Huncoat, near Accrington, at 10 am., 7 bikes, all four strokes, 1 Yamaha, 1 Triumph and 5 Hondas. The idea of this run, was, to ride the U.C.R.'s and lanes claimed Byway within the area of the West Pennine Moors Plan. This area comprises some 90 square miles of moorland and valleys, the area is enclosed to the north by Leyland, Blackburn, Oswaldtwistle, and Accrington, to the west by Chorley, Adlington, and the M61, to the east by Ramsbottom, Rawtenstall, and Haslingden, to the south by Horwich, Bolton, Radcliffe, and Bury.

As can be imagined this area is used by a vast amount of people, the idea of the plan, is to control usage in general, and to strictly control usage in certain areas within the plan, these areas will be known as Recreational Management Zones (R.M.Z.).

We are at this time subject, very heavily, to the effects of the Mason case, within Lancashire, so, many lanes claimed as Byways were not used. To avoid undue publicity, I will not mention which lanes we used.

We set off, heading for Rivington Barn, near Horwich, with myself leading for the first hour, and Graham leading for the rest of the day. In the morning we used some 7 lanes claimed as Byway, and attempted to use one U.C.R., which we found was blocked (a complaint will be sent to the County Council). We arrived at Rivington Barn for dinner at 1.15 pm. (this establishment sells booze, coffee, food, etc., and is much used by motorcyclists", perfect for pose-ing on yer C.B.XI!"), when we left we seemed to be the centre of attraction, must have been our muddy machines, in a sea of glitter.

The afternoon took us over Georges Lane and into Greater Manchester, where some four R.U.P.P.s were ridden, and two U.C.R.s.

No hassle at all was encountered during the run, very few walkers were seen, the back markers (Nigel and Eddie), were approached by farmers on two lanes, who did not mind us using the lanes, as long as we kept to the lanes, our two back markers explained what we are about, and, parted on the best of terms, the few horse riders seen, gave a friendly nod.

At this point, I must thank Margery Price, for all the help she has given the group in connection with this plan.

Now if we could get shot of the crackpot element (non T.R.F.) in our area, I feel our green lanes could be saved.

John P. Gillett, 18 Hilton Avenue, Ansdell, Lytham St. Annes.

★ ★ ★

RIDERS REPORT — YAMAHA XT500

This bike was the marketing mans answer to the small, two stroke trail bikes that dominated the market and the cry from the 'traditionalists' who had always ridden large four stroke bikes. I do not think that it was entirely successful at either aim BUT it found a new niche in the market.

First introduced in 1977 it was truly a monster of a trail bike. Incredibly heavy compared to any other two stroke on the market at the time, and heavier than even the Honda 250XL that was the current 'heaviest trail bike' at 280 lbs. On the road the bike rates a 'very pleasant to ride' rating for short distances, but on anything over 50 miles the saddle gets at you and it becomes unbearable. Most riders, after a week or two to sort it out, remove indicators, battery and original exhaust and replace the latter with something lighter. It was fascinating to see the number of nearly new, or low mileage machines filling the columns of the weekly papers, some six months after the bike was announced — all presumably by riders who couldn't manage the weight and size of the XT500.

"Only suitable for sixteen stone and over" said Andy from Nottingham, on a recent ride. "Plenty of power for rocky Derbyshire but gets bogged down in mud" are typical comments. Yet, Gerry Gooch claims that one of his display team, a 9 stone girl can start it first go every time and some lighter riders do ride the bike. The slick answer is "Yes, but not for long" they either get bigger and stronger or give up.

The size doesn't help in the insurance ratings either, I remember one night at a Thames Valley meeting when two potential new members came in, seventeen year olds, just passed their tests, and a pair of new XT500s between them. A friendly chat revealed that they paid £16 per week each for their insurance and that was about 18 months ago, so it won't have gone down!

So what are the major impressions gained from your reports? Firstly, all owners agree that it makes a lovely, quiet, powerful economic road bike, with good lights,

battery, big enough fuel tank and stocks of spares obtainable by order from your local Yamaha dealer. So far the picture is rosy and really even on grass, rocks, mud and sand the XT500 is a safe, predictable to the rider that knows it, BUT it is by all current Trail bike standards extremely heavy and to ride it energetically even for a short distance requires a lot of effort and then a tired rider requires a lot of skill to keep it upright.

Keith Waddon and George Newin from different parts of the country have almost identical entries – both replaced mudguards for lighter plastic ones, and both changed the sprocket. Keith then went one further and fitted Trelleborg back tyre of the enormous 550 x 18 dimension to try and keep some power on the ground but his verdict is still “Much too heavy, particularly at the front end, goes where it wants to.” George’s similar aim is achieved by “excess weight-removed indicators, battery, exhaust, (lightweight fitted)”.

Gerry Gooch reported that “the engine responds very quickly to small throttle openings and can be a cause of problems to its tired trail rider, Hence in addition to its weight the XT can become a handful.” Gerry reports that rear chains last about 3000 miles and chain tensioners seize up and should be stripped and cleaned when sluggish, but the nylon blocks only last about 300 trail miles.

Finally to sum up, all owners who wrote in like the bike overall and the general concept was not questioned. “A beautiful motorcycle – I’ve had six”, reliable and oiltight but demanding the respect of its owners and riders in anything less than perfect road surfaces. This bike could become the classic single cylinder bike of the Seventies, its got all the soul and character and feared reputation to become a cult.

★ ★ ★

STOP PRESS ★ STOP PRESS ★ STOP PRESS ★ STOP PRESS

ERMINE STREET SOUTH (R.U.P.P.)

As many riders have noticed ROAD THIEVES are at work on this old road. The local County Council (Hertfordshire) is aware of the skulduggery and is justifiably concerned. They are NOT however, prosecuting the offending landowners.

I have been asked by the interested parties, for evidence of use in its prior state. This means that if YOU have used Ermine Street from Copse Lane southwards, please let me know WHEN?? WHY?? WHO?? etc.

One of the most important pieces of evidence we must know is how wide it was when you used it. Was it between 20' & 30' (as we need to prove) or was it only between 5' & 8' as at present? AND was there a ditch across it and was the field after the woods ploughed? Please let me have your signed and dated evidence.

MALCOLM BULLEN, 38 Briars Lane, Hatfield, Herts. Tel: 65970

Editors note: I realise that few riders like the paperwork side of trail riding, but here is a classic case for filling in the “Evidence of Use” forms with their boring old details like ‘give width of lane’ and ‘was it hedged or ditched’ and in this case although we have the backing of the Authorities to keep the lane open, we still must prove our case in full.

RIGHTS OF WAY NEWS

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980

This repeals the major Act of 1959 which governs most of the law applicable to green lanes. Some of the more useful changes are as follows

Section 34 regarding 20 years user presumed dedication is now Section 31.

Section 38 regarding pre 1835 highways is now Section 36, *also* the right for anyone to inspect County Road Maps is now Section 36 sub section 6. Important one this because it is not uncommon for snotty council clerks to refuse access to these public documents. Section 35 telling courts and inquiries that they must take old maps etc. into account is now Section 32. The well known power to extinguish under Section 108 is now Section 116. General protection of all highways duty is now Section 130 and replaces 116.

Obstructions is now Section 137/154, with the useful powers in Section 121 now Section 137. You will find it useful to head most letters of complaints under Section 130, and should be addressed to County Hall not Parish or District Councils. Spending cuts mean even less effort and attention to problems, so don't forget to complain to your local Ombudsman if you have a grievance. But these must be sent via a local County Councillor and to either the Ombudsman office for the north at 29 Castlegate, York, and for the south 21 Queen Annes Gate, London SW1. There is no charge and travel expenses will be paid if you are asked to attend York or London. Forms of application are available from these offices. I have made two formal complaints so far, one on the failure to review Definitive Maps under Section 33. The Ombudsman is the last resort say after 6 months or more of waiting for action. The other recourse is to take Councils to Court but you need £3,000 just in case you lose. The ratepayers won't miss it, but we can't risk that sort of money.

Rough justice is the name of the game.

TRAFFIC RESTRICTION ORDERS

Some members think there *is* a proper appeal against TRO's.

This is a common misconception among those who criticise the VOLUNTARY arrangement on the Ridgeway and cannot believe that objections will not lead to an inquiry like Byway claims. A County Council like the Countryside Commission (via MoT) *CAN* call a P. Inquiry but are *NOT NECESSARILY OBLIGED* to do so. Oxfordshire County C1 in 1976 were not forced to hold an inquiry or even accept it's findings.

I can assure Miss Price and other doubting souls that we have taken the best legal advice on this matter and we are in no doubt that authorities can bring and confirm TRO's without an Inquiry. Very unfair and undemocratic! However help is on the way. The Spicer Committee has recommended that this anomaly be amended. I am sure we would all be very pleased if Miss Price or anyone else can prove that there is an appeal after all, and no change in the law is necessary.

May I again stress that the Ridgeway is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year and if any member wishes to belt up and down the entire 42 mile length on their vehicle be it moped or combine harvester, they are free to do so. Subject to censure by this Fellowship, if a voluntary ban is agreed.

The best way to fight TRO's (apart from the formal written objections asking for a P. Inquiry; out of hundreds we got one PI), is to lobby your County Councillor. The only appeal allowed in law to Crown Court is if you consider that the procedures have not been carried out properly, *NOT* on the merits of the case.

The highway authority **MUST** consult with all users.

N'umberland & Wiltshire CC kindly but wastefully consult me on all orders whether on a metalled road or not.

SOMERSET . . .

A Section 108 may close a green lane at Bompton Regis on 28th April at Minehead Court. To show Somerset CC we mean business we engaged a Solr to fight this.

Still no news of the dreadful 1978 Somerset S Review that closed all 300 RUPP's to make them exclusive for walkers and horse riders. We are hopeful that this Review like Derbyshire and others will be abandoned by the Govt. and we can proceed on the new speedier and reasonable test for Byway. I am told that it was Councillors who decided on the plan to exclude bikes and not Council staff who advised against. Unfortunately the notorious test (b) for 'suitability' allows them to do this.

BYWAYS AND BRIDLEWAYS TRUST

I recommend that all trail riders join BBT and remind that subscriptions run from May 1st. £5 year for individuals brings 10 informative journals per year plus many other benefits. Clubs and TRF groups can join for 10p per member, min. £5. The BBT thinks that green lanes can be enjoyed by everyone with a little give and take on all sides. It has done a great deal already to make all parties (the users and farmers) see one another's point of view. This was recognised in a tribute to BBT by Lord Stanley in the House of Lords. (per Hansard Vol. 417, No. 39, Page 874). Head Office is 9 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. Subscriptions and donations should be sent to this address.

LAKE DISTRICT AND A CLOUD ON THE HORIZON

The response to our appeal for volunteers has been poor. David Howe is holding a meeting of all riders on May 6 at Kendal Town Hall to rally support to save Cumbria's green lanes. The TRF who have already allocated £1000 for Cumbria have agreed to increase this by £500 but expects in return a better effort by local riders. At the March 6th Inquiry at Cockermouth I was the only motor cyclist present, *none* of the seven witnesses turned up. I presented the documentary evidence and argued our case but was crippled by the lack of local use witnesses.

The packed court room was most unsympathetic to our plea for Byways, and were lining up to object based on 'unsuitability'.

The fact that I lived in another county 150 miles away did not help. Now that 'cloud'. The farmers may move an amendment in the Commons that would make all reclassified green lanes now bridleway extinguished of vehicular rights. At present if the test for vehicular rights (a) is satisfied then common law rights to continue use may apply. The NFU move if it succeeds is also bad news for those counties badly hit by RUPP to Bridleway downgrades based on 'suitability' or 'hardship'.

Of all the counties that have had P. Inquiries in the past few years we have always managed a good turn out and the Lake District effort is a great disappointment. I am told that the TRF witnesses who did so well at the first inquiry at Orton felt so badly mauled by the opposition that they have thrown in the towel. Motor cyclists should be used to prejudice by now and we have a legitimate right to be heard at Public Inquiries.

The Lakes lanes are of national importance which is probably why the opposition is so strong.

WALES . . .

A Traffic Order is proposed on the famous Gap Road through the Brecon Beacons National Park. The farmers want bikes and cars banned but Powys County C1 have said that if the motor cyclists agree to a voluntary restraint scheme they will exclude bikes from the ban. The Welsh Trail Riders Association and ACU Welsh Centre will decide soon. The Gap Rd. is of national importance and we await the outcome with great interest.

NORTHANTS . . .

After a record 13 years of apathy the D of E want to start Public Inquiries into our 1968 Byway claims. I have asked the D of E to cancel this Special Review and to proceed under the more favourable new Bill. But if they insist we are ready and Bruce Roberts, 36 Rosemary Drive, Bromham, Beds. is looking after our claims.

Brian G. Thompson, 39 Warren Road, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5PP, S. Yorks.
Tel: Thorne (0405) 814388

ADVERTISEMENTS £1 each — maximum 4 lines

★★★
FOR SALE

YAMAHA IT400C 1980 W Reg. Excellent condition, low mileage — £575 ono
London. 01-599 1717
Single Bike Trailer almost brand new, good condition, spare wheel and tyre
£85 ono. London. 01-599 1717 — R.E. COOPER