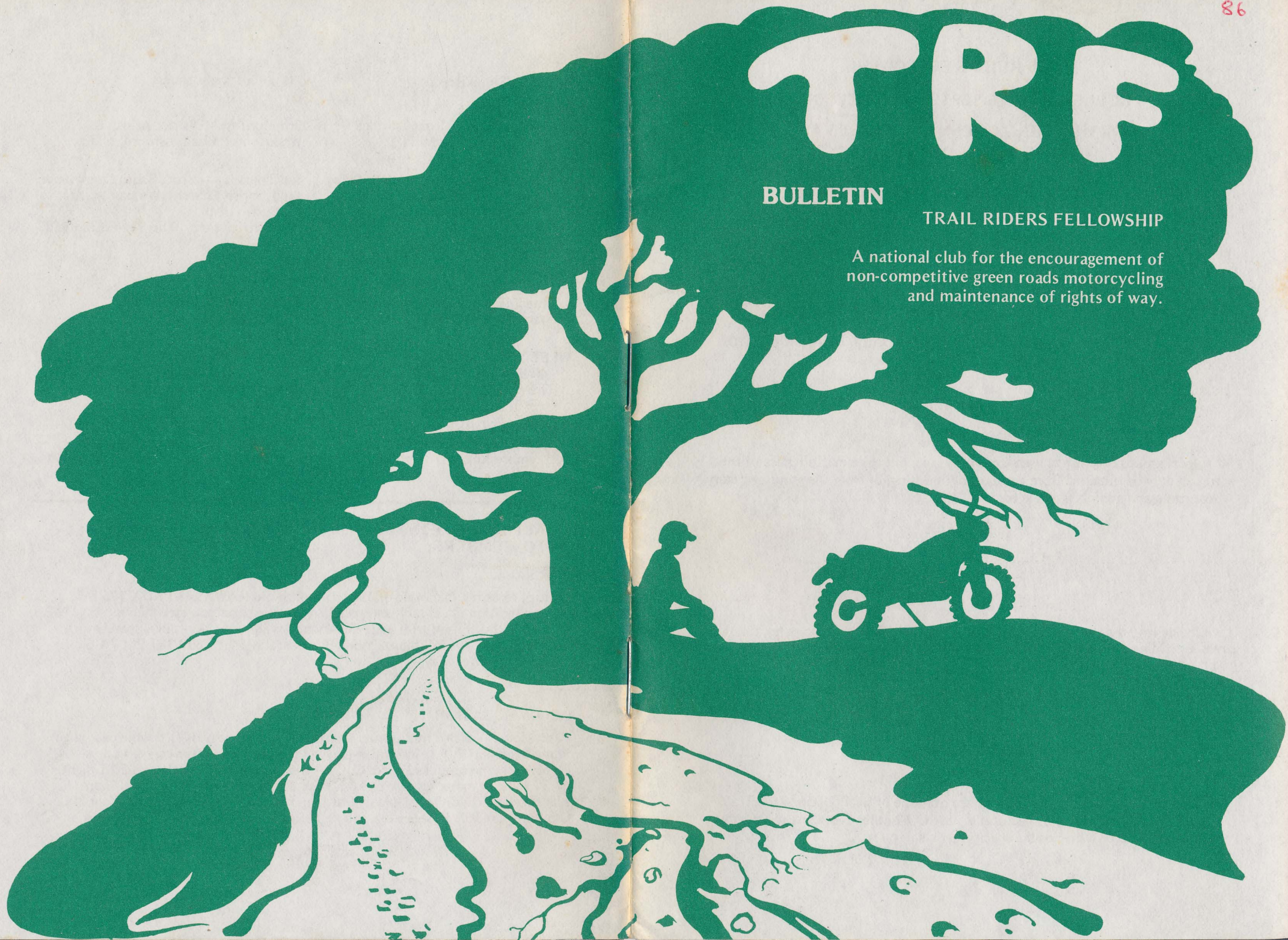


# T R F

**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. 86 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

FORTHCOMING GREEN LANE RIDES AND  
OTHER DATES OF INTEREST

- 10th October Reading: Pre A.G.M. Ride. Contact Colin Patient,  
Reading 696783
- 11th October Woodley, nr. Reading. 11 a.m. ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING.
- 11th October Kirby Stephen Area: s.a.e. David Howe, address as above.
- 18th October Leicester: Start Whetstone Car Park, 9.30.  
Contact Richard Marshall.
- 25th October South Yorkshire: Contact Mick Drury, Harrogate 885410.

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

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I will be delighted to publish any dates of rides when given specific dates, times and areas. Providing always that copy is received prior to 3rd November for inclusion in the next issue.

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The opinions expressed in this magazine are only the official policy of the Trail Riders Fellowship where it is specifically stated. All other comment and policy is that of the group or writer of the specific article.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Firstly, many thanks to those of you who responded to my appeal in the last issue for contributions. The postman certainly has no overtime but at least still has a job! The contributions that have been received are all very welcome and never cease to amaze me with their quality and originality, I hope that you enjoy them as much as I do, and hopefully their writers did. We have in this issue, articles from regular contributors – Stephen Russell, Brian Thompson, Hazel Kirby and frequent contributors – Brian Crook, former Editor Nick Walker and Ray Pittman. Without these you would have no bulletin because there is no way that I can write 'the lot' myself.

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Secondly, as you should know, we are at Annual General Meeting time, or as it used to be known "The National Members Conference". Details of where and when are elsewhere in the issue and I hope that this year we will break all attendance records. I think that Reading is a very easy spot to get to, but then living there I must admit some bias, however as this meeting is "way down south" to a northerner, or even a midlander, the committee would be grateful for offers of hospitality in 1982. Even Dr. Hugh Davidson of Aberdeenshire can offer and personally I would love to visit that part of the T.R.F. membership area. It would also sort out the members with a genuine grievance and those looking for an excuse! However, turning to more serious matters, if you wish to elect NEW officers to carry out the management of the Fellowship then this is your chance to do it. You might even wish to thank those existing Officers who VOLUNTARILY give up hours of their time for the benefit of us all, here is your chance. People and policies is what the A.G.M. is all about so come and let us know your views.

John R. Higgin.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have been an active member and group secretary for the past two to three years, I think I can offer some thoughts as to why the member pays his subscription and we never see him again.

Over the past two years we have been under the threat of the Wildlife and Countryside Bill, where at one stage it appeared that trail riding was doomed to extinction. Now you can't expect a bloke to go out and part with one thousand pounds for a trail bike if he can't go trail riding when he's bought it, and his enthusiasm will suffer pro rata. I myself like many others felt this way up till recently when the Bill went through more favourably to us.

Most people like to be associated with success and winners, and as trail riders we seem to be the all time losers!

In each Bulletin, Brian Thompson gives a chronicle of lanes lost and a general tale of woe. What we need is more lanes gained! More successes!

I have asked the members of my group to make a concerted effort to check the status of doubtful lanes, i.e. look at the old maps such as the 1873 first edition of the O.S. map, and where recent maps show a downgrading, then to check with County Hall when the court order for downgrading was made. If there is no such evidence of court order then the current status of the lane in question should be challenged.

This should lead to some lanes gained, then Brian Thompson can list lanes gained as well as lanes lost, which should cheer the membership up somewhat, and subsequently boost enthusiasm. This should encourage better attendance at hearings if we are seen to win an argument once in a while.

Enthusiasm will follow success.

Fred Lord, 22, Glynrosa Road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

*Thank you for writing Fred, I hope that we will all hear more commonsense from Gloucestershire in the future. Brian does bring some good news to the quarterly executive meetings but on the whole the pattern has been of retreat and defence. Let us turn the tide. I shall be more than grateful to publish news of this in your Bulletin when you let me know.*

**ANNUAL MEMBERS CONFERENCE (AGM) –  
11th OCTOBER 1981 – \*SUNDAY START 11.a.m.**

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S NOTES**

Once again the National A.G.M. fast approaches – this year it comes south to near Reading, and plans are well advanced for a busy weekend for Loddon Vale Group (hosts of 1981).

The area is easy to reach from junction 10 (M4), Sonning on A4 (midway Reading/Twyford). Signs will be erected from those points.

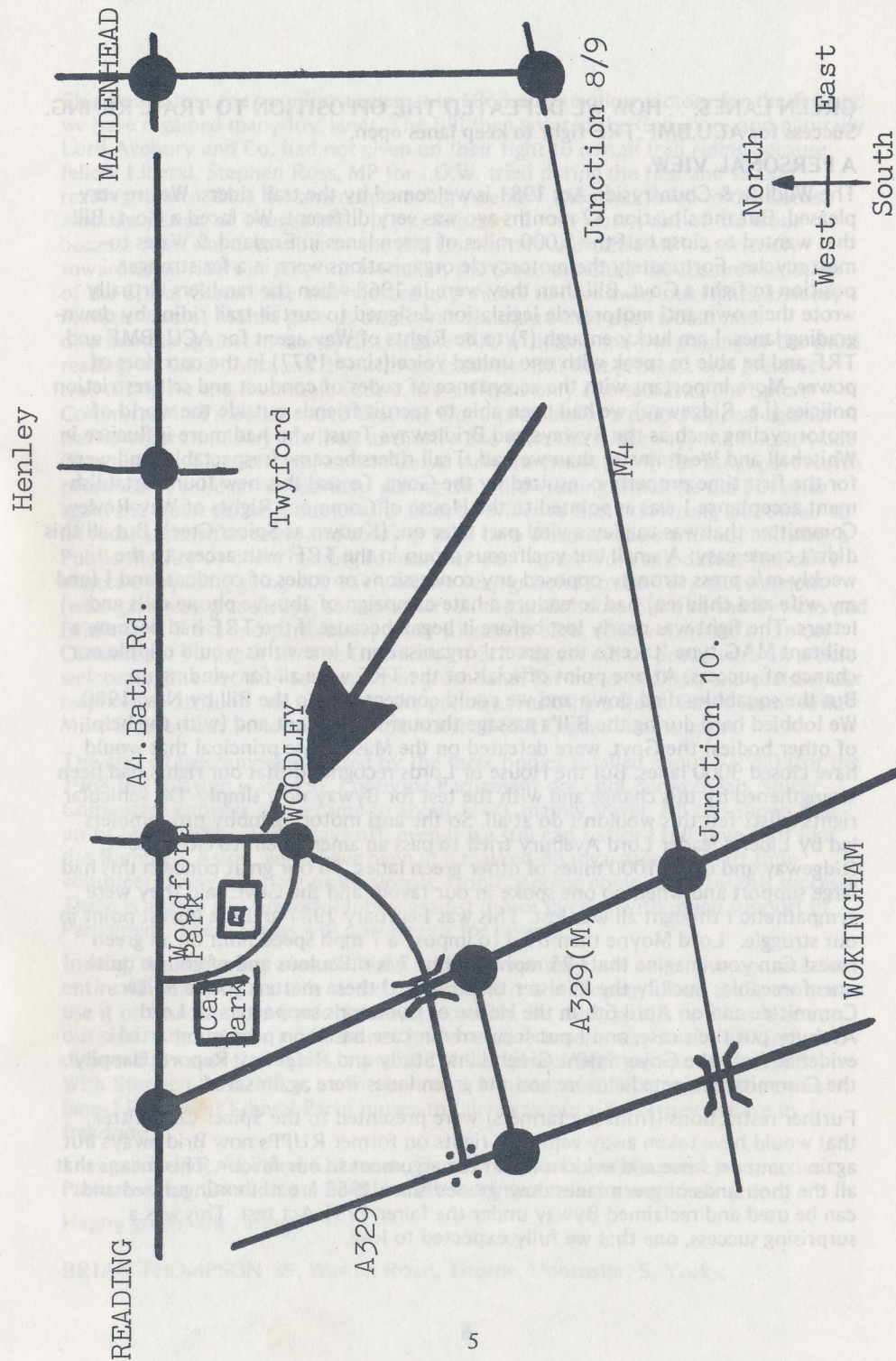
The venue is Woodford Park Pavillion and the adjacent car park will be in constant use. Motorcycles should have room, but if you are arriving by car/bus etc. please use the very large free public car park nearby.

Accommodation lists will be available from Peat Gleed, 2 Norlands, Thatcham, Berks. (S.A.E. please), but it will be more expensive than some rural areas (typically £14.00/night, bed and breakfast). There are camp and caravan sites nearby also for anyone with a boat on the Thames, the venue is a pleasant walk away.

Following our recent policy of small numbers on rides, most of the Loddon Vale Group will be officiating on runs on the Saturday which promise mud and chalk for all, dependant on weather conditions. The terrain is varied with some riding easier than others, so new members need not fear!

Depending on numbers the starts for Saturday rides will be prompt at 10.30 a.m. from centres around Berks/N. Hants. If small groups wish to ride together and they inform Peat where you're staying in GOOD TIME then Loddon Vale Group will probably arrange a local ride. If others wishing to attend the runs from their own homes will inform Pete, with a contact telephone number details of starts will then be given later.

A reminder that only paid-up members may vote at the A.G.M. and proof may be required at the time – so membership cards should be carried. Also in the recent past, attendance at A.G.M.'s has been poor (between  $\frac{1}{5}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$ %). Please try to attend, – take part, make your feelings known because it's your own fellowship, and if you don't tell us, we can't always guess !



## GREEN LANES. . . HOW WE DEFEATED THE OPPOSITION TO TRAIL RIDING. Success for ACU.BMF.TRF fight to keep lanes open.

### A PERSONAL VIEW.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 is welcomed by the trail riders. We are very pleased. But the situation 12 months ago was very different. We faced a Govt. Bill that wanted to close half the 5,000 miles of green lanes in England & Wales to motorcycles. Fortunately the motorcycle organisations were in a far stronger position to fight a Govt. Bill than they were in 1968 when the rambles virtually wrote their own anti motorcycle legislation designed to curtail trail riding by downgrading lanes. I am lucky enough (?) to be Rights of Way agent for ACU, BMF and TRF and be able to speak with one united voice (since 1977) in the corridors of power. More important with the acceptance of codes of conduct and self restriction policies (i.e. Ridgeway) we had been able to recruit friends outside the world of motor cycling such as the Byways and Bridleways Trust who had more influence in Whitehall and Westminster than we had. Trail riders became 'respectable' and were for the first time properly consulted by the Govt. To seal this new found establishment acceptance I was appointed to the House of Commons Rights of Way Review Committee that was to play a vital part later on. (Known as Spicer Ctee). But all this didn't come easy. A small but vociferous group in the TRF with access to the weekly m/c press strongly opposed any concessions or codes of conduct, and I (and my wife and children) had to endure a hate campaign of abusive phone calls and letters. The fight was nearly lost before it began because if the TRF had become a militant MAG type 'take to the streets' organisation I knew this would cripple our chance of success. At one point officials of the TRF were all for winding up. But the squabbles died down and we could concentrate on the Bill by Nov. 1980. We lobbied hard during the Bill's passage through Parliament and (with the help of other bodies) the Govt. were defeated on the Mason case principal that would have closed 3000 lanes. But the House of Lords recognised that our rights had been strengthened by this change and with the test for Byway now simply 'Do vehicular rights exist? felt this wouldn't do at all. So the anti motoring lobby pro rambles led by Liberal leader Lord Avebury tried to pass an amendment to close the Ridgeway and up to 1000 miles of other green lanes. To our great concern this had large support and when no one spoke in our favour and the Govt. said they were sympathetic I thought all was lost. This was February 1981 and the lowest point in our struggle. Lord Moyné then tried to impose a 7 mph speed limit on all green lanes! Can you imagine that? 25 mph yes, but 7 is ridiculous and of course quite unenforceable. Luckily the Minister then referred these matters to the Spicer Committee and on April 6th in the House of Commons supporters of Lord Avebury put their case, and I put forward our case based on proper impartial evidence from the Government Green Lane Study and Ridgeway Report. Happily the Committee rejected closure and the green lanes were again saved.

Further restrictions (from the farmers) were presented to the Spicer Committee, that would have taken away vehicular rights on former RUPPs now Bridleways but again common sense and evidence won the argument in our favour. This means that all the thousands of green lanes downgraded since 1968 are not extinguished and can be used and reclaimed Byway under the fairer 1981 Act test. This was a surprising success, one that we fully expected to lose.

This means that the humiliating defeat in 1968 was a hollow victory for the RA and we have regained many lost lanes. The Bill then entered the Commons and naturally Lord Avebury and Co. had not given up their fight to curtail trail riding because fellow Liberal, Stephen Ross, MP for I.O.W. tried during the first and second reading to introduce the amendment that Avebury tried and failed in the Lords. Another period of intense lobbying took place. By no means out of the wood because Ross was a member of the Bill Committee and other MP's unfriendly towards trail riders in support. However, the Govt. accepted the recommendation of the Spicer Committee and rejected any moves to take away our rights. Indeed, Minister Hector Monro gave us the Govt's assurance that they would not discriminate against motor cyclists in the Bill. With this and the passing of the third reading we were home and dry with an excellent Bill that protects and preserves trail riding for the foreseeable future. We suffered only one setback. The Spicer Committee had recommended that the Govt. provide for a proper appeal against traffic orders made by the local authority and (like the Ridgeway) the Countryside Commission. The Govt. refused to do so. Andrew Bennett, MP for Stockport North promised to raise an amendment during the third reading which he did but once again the Govt. threw it out despite piles of evidence that it is wrong and unfair to let local authorities bring and confirm their own closure orders without allowing a Public Inquiry or court hearing to hear our side. Apart from this defeat (we can't expect everything going our way), we are very grateful to the Tory Government (who gave way gracefully); to supporters in the both houses; and to the Byways and Bridleways Trust and particularly Lady Elizabeth Kirk, fellow member of Spicer Committee. To cap it all 'The Guardian' of 3rd August did us proud with an article welcoming the decision to keep open green lanes for motorcyclists, and praising our responsible attitude and give and take policies. Tackling a Govt. Bill is team work. Mike Rowley our Solicitor and Dick Marshall (TRF) gave vital support.

The cost of the campaign shared by the three bodies totalled about £2,500 (for the 1968 Bill the sum was £75). Lobbying Parliament does not come cheap. Spicer Committee expense alone came to about £600, mainly travel. All this shows that unity (ACU, BMF, TRF) pays off, even if we still can't afford full time staff like the Ramblers Assoc. and I have been at a marked disadvantage as a part time volunteer facing full time professionals. Don't become complacent by this success! There is a large and powerful lobby against motor cycling with much support in Parliament. These forces will now be out for revenge.

Indeed, the Ridgeway closure lobby have told me they will never give up until the entire 42 mile long route is closed. Meanwhile it is still open, all we ask is try not to use it on Sundays and Bank Holidays, May/Oct. Be alert; public opinion is not on our side — though the evidence is. The next Government may not be so kindly disposed towards trail riders, especially if the Liberal/SDP gain power in 1983. With Stephen Ross, MP as an Environment Minister what chance then for green lanes? In view of Liberal Party moves to take away our rights (they believe in freedom!)

I resigned as local Liberal Chairman, County Council candidate and prospective Parliamentary Candidate. I could hardly work towards my own destruction!

Happy green lane riding !

BRIAN THOMPSON 39, Warren Road, Thorne, Doncaster, S. Yorks.



**LETTERS FROM THE FILES OF SAM HOLEDTROUSER,  
PRIVATE DETECTIVE.**

221b Baker Street,  
London W.1.

Dear Mrs. Buckle,

After six weeks of following your husband (bill enclosed — sorry about the high expenses) I have at last managed to obtain the evidence you require. I have discovered exactly what Mr. Buckle *really* does on the days he tells you he is going "green lane riding".

Exhibit A (photo no. 1) shows Mr. Buckle on his motorcycle being towed down a leafy country lane by his accomplice Larry "The Fink" Lamb. As you know Mr. Buckle is an inch or two under the average height for his weight which is why Mr. Lamb is having to use his feet to assist the pulling power of the motorcycle.

Exhibit B (photo no. 2) shows Mr. Buckle waiting at the place of the assignation with a lecherous grin playing round the corners of his mouth. He has not yet realised that the object of his evil desires (one Edith Sadthighs of 2 Railway Cuttings, Neasden), is approaching him from behind.

Exhibit C (photo no. 3) shows Mr. Buckle, the tryst in the bushes over, coasting his motorcycle downhill — I do not know if you realised it but the motorcycle has no engine and Mr. Buckle has never been able to master the art of motorcycling — with a satisfied grin on his face.

I trust I may expect settlement at your earliest convenience and I therefore remain yours sincerely,

Sam Holedtrouser.

The Tortus Sanctuary,  
Ickenham, Middx.

Dear Mr. Holedtrouser,

Thank you for your recent letter and the enclosed photographs. I enclose my cheque to clear your account; I can quite understand the high expenses, particularly the cleaning costs — mud is very difficult to remove, as I know from personal experience.

I am pleased, at last, to have my suspicions of my husband's activities confirmed, although Miss Sadthighs hardly looks worthy of three weeks 'bike preparation' (particularly as you say the machine has no engine anyway) and at least four days cleaning of muddy clothes, bike, etc. — all for one day out. However, with the information now provided, I shall be able to proceed further and expect a substantial financial settlement when matters are concluded.

I feel that your efficient service may be of use to other wives of members of this odious, so-called 'Trail Riders Fellowship' (are they connected with the Moonies — they seem to have the same aim of dividing families!), and I have taken the liberty of passing on your name and address to them as I have heard that several of them are not wholly satisfied with their husbands' explanations of how they spend their time when they say they are going 'green lane riding.'

Yours sincerely,

B. Buckle (Mrs.)

Nick Walker, 13 Central Avenue, Hounslow, Middx.

## BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE GROUP NEWS — PART 1

On Saturday June 6th our small group marked out the 1981 cross country circuit for the ENDURANCE HORSE & PONY SOCIETY annual event. Five TRF members gave up 6 hours. To name just two, Keith Cockrell and Stephen Jones.

The marking of the course was completed by 18.00 hours. We had hoped to be away earlier but due to the alterations of route from last year we lost at least 1½ hours sorting the course out. We got up at 6.30 a.m. Sunday 7th June and were at the start area before the first batch of horse riders got away at 8.30 a.m. The route was 25 miles and included many Bridleways and a few "Roads Used As Public Paths." On the Sunday, seven TRF riders checked the route and generally kept an eye open for lost horse riders or lame horses. Out of the seven TRF riders again helping, I name two Andrew Meechan, and Bob Shepherded for extra mention.

The Endurance Horse & Pony Society were very pleased and grateful for our assistance and each TRF rider received a horse rosette award, a small donation to our R.O.W. work was suggested.

In all, a good weekend was had by everyone.

## PART 2

On May 21st, Bob Shepherded attended a Public Inquiry at Ashmore in Dorset. We had claimed a Bridleway a "Byway Open To All Traffic." We still have 30 claims to research and attend in the future and so far none have been withdrawn of those 30 outstanding.

Anyone in or near Dorset who feels they could assist us with inspections of lanes and research, please contact myself. Our small R.O.W. committee for this group are pleased with the way the Wildlife & Countryside Bill is proceeding. Everybody's thanks to people like Brian Thompson for the Herculean work they carry out.

S. Russell, Sandy Top, 56 Winston Ave., Branksome, Poole, BH12 1PG.

## THAMES VALLEY GROUP:

The lane walk reported in Bulletin Number 84 has resulted in 1, byway granted and another probable. Negotiations continue for the others. Evening activities have included film shows, bike preparation talk by Chris Buckle, R.o.W. talk by Kate Clow, and a Bring and Buy sale. Three 2-day runs are planned for the latter part of this year in addition to the usual one day runs. Discussion and a review of finances etc. at our July meeting resulted in a decision to contribute another £25 to the fighting fund.

The summer months of June, July and August, are always the least active (lane run wise) due to the dryness of the lanes, (dust, flies, etc.), holidays and the increased usage by other people out for the day. This lack of activity was to have been outweighed by "social" type events in the form of treasure hunts etc. but these ideas were voted out by a majority at the committee meeting stage which also discontinued the informal meetings which had been held on the first Monday of each month. These had not been very well attended lately except for the committee and of course Derek Curling who can always be seen at any activity. Come to think of it, the publicans food profits will take an unexpected dip, perhaps Dereks local take-away will benefit!

Brian Crook, T.V. Group rep.

## HIGHLAND HOLIDAY

After the success of our '1000 km Trail Ride' reported in the November 1980 issue of the bulletin, our minds turned to thoughts of how to 'top that'. As the headline suggests, one of the areas that we had not ridden was north of the border. The original plan was for a trip up by train, followed by a tour using all the tracks for which we could obtain approval, stopping at either Youth Hostels or B+B.

Accordingly the first of many letters were sent off during October '80 to be followed by pleasant evenings poring over maps at first obtained from the libraries of Wimbledon, Hounslow and Staines, being the home towns of Colin Fern, Nick Walker, and myself. As the plans firmed up, logistics and common sense, (not necessarily in that order!) showed that two weeks riding over that sort of going really required a base from which to operate. It was also becoming clear that the R.o.W. position is vague to say the least and would require considerable diplomacy not to invite unreasonable refusals and at the same time not concede absolute authority by requesting permission over a track which if in England would have clear byway status. Couple with that our intention not to use any of the routes used by the Scottish Six Days Trial and the size of the problem becomes shall we say, rather large.

In the end we decided to plan day by day and accept any rebuffs with good humour no matter what the circumstances.

With only a few weeks to go Nick had to drop out through unforeseen reasons, and it was Colin and I who were waved off at 4-50 on a nice dry morning by my wife who left me slightly puzzled as to what she was more pleased to be waving goodbye to — acres of maps or me.

We arrived at Newtonmore in the late afternoon and were pleased to find our chosen home for the fortnight to be all we could have wished for. Colin was so happy he was whistling and singing which caused me to rush out of the house to check if the rhythmic rumbling was his XR's mains going accompanied by the sound of air rushing through a hole in his piston, but no — despite my misinterpretation we had left the Fern Gremlin way behind. Or had we? On all the tracks we used except the Corrieyairack which is a public road, we sought out the keeper or manager and in most cases received their approval even though they were sometimes concerned about such matters as gates, vandalism and most of all poachers. To combat the predominantly rocky going, I was running at 15 lbs front and rear. Considering that I only 8 lbs in Wales some idea of the going is indicated. The fords proved most exciting, round slimy rock balls 6" to 9" dia. surrounded by fast water, reminded me of a reply made by Gordon Farley to a fellow competitor in the Scottish Six Days some years ago whilst I was spectating, "Foot flaying first, mate". A tactic which was O.K. for Colin whose legs start just above the breast bone but I was sharply reminded of the height of the XR.

The bogs are more deceptive than any others I have met, when Colin who was leading at the time dropped his front wheel below the horizon as he exited via the 'front door', I was suitably amused and photographed the occasion before grabbing him by the armpits to help him out. 10 miles later and having taken as many exits it was getting a little wearing, especially when heading across a bog field we both aimed for the same dome of high ground at the same time, both gripped at the same time and both closed throttles whilst side by side with the bikes vertical. The

resultant melee left us in fits of laughter but serious reflection spelt out the facts — miles from anywhere — a track which is probably not used for years if at all — and a perfect holiday waiting to be ruined. I managed to claim the “deepest in” of the holiday, an accolade which took all the strength of both of us, applied to nylon tapes to extract. On one particular track the route had been ploughed across by forestry preparation which in case you have never met it, is deep grooves across the direction of travel made by cutters attached to the wheels of an XR200, which is then dragged sideways. I could have the technique details wrong but the result is grooves, a wheelbase apart and deeper than the ground clearance. Attempts to take them on the back wheel resulted in a botanical lesson on young pine tree root growth and ‘tacking’ only broke away the soft sides.

Whilst on the subject of bogs we were travelling along a Wade road which the manager had at first opposed and then after some chatting about things in general, turning of course to his exploits on a motorcycle he explained the only way to find the route, warned us of the problems, and then left us to meet his challenge and return through his farm if we made it. We duly set off and found his doubts were well founded.

Moving across a particularly low lying stretch, Colin dropped his bike into a nice ‘XR’ length break in what General Wade had built as a causeway, of course now so over grown that it was difficult to detect. I naturally paused to admire the scenery while he extracted his privates from the handlebars with his legs flaying about in lovely liquid peat. When he had pulled up what must have been at least a two foot deep slot, being such a fine fellow, he proceeded to bridge the gap with stones. Being fully appreciative of his efforts if slightly puzzled, I waited until he had nearly finished then moved slowly forward to take a by-pass route I reckoned I could make, I had only just rolled off the “causeway” at nil MPH, when I sank straight down to over hub-depth. That was more than Colin could stand — he immediately sussed out what I had been up to and rolled about with tears streaming down his face — can’t say I found it so amusing!

After a drop into a river which even had Colin with one ankle hooked over the seat nose whilst the other groped for a footing on a steep, layered rock incline, we returned triumphant through the farm complex. The manager was there to smile and wave and we really felt we had made a convert. The day light was so long, that we were able to return from some of the runs across the Corrieyairack at ten and eleven o’clock at night and frequently rode for eleven and twelve hours a day.

Both of the XR’s performed faultlessly and required only minimal servicing. Neither of us needed to change a chain (although both are well guarded and have oilers) and both of the rear tyres (New) were well rounded at the end. The weather had been perfect all the time we were riding and it was with a well satisfied reluctance that we closed the gates on what had been our base, in the early hours of the morning and headed south.

I deliberately haven’t mentioned the gremlin’s exploits on the basis that with no publicity he might give up. Some hope!

Brian Crook, Knightsbridge Crescent, Staines. Thames Valley Group.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH ROADS

Trade amongst other factors played a large part in the nature of early roads. For the most part they ran either along the higher ground, which is why they are often called Ridgeways, or from it too points in the valleys where the river could be easily forded.

Our ancestors were more “wayfaring” in life than some of us accept. Our early Kings insisted on the local maintenance of roads and bridges. As time and attitudes changed Central Government found it necessary to concern itself much more with the welfare of roads. This change crystallised in the Act of Parliament 1555 which constituted “Surveyors of the Highway” and placed the burden of road maintenance on the parishes in which the roads lay.

In the days of old, meat could not be transported very far without deteriorating and therefore live animals were driven to towns and ports. Huge numbers of livestock and fowl (yes, it must have been!) were driven across the width and breadth of the road system. The Act of 1555 eventually became outdated and proved inadequate. Additional funds had to be found which could be devoted to the construction of new roads and improve the maintenance of others which, left to the method of ‘statute labour’ had become far from satisfactory. The new provisions included local highway rates, from these grew the practice of levying special contributions from users of particularly expensive stretches of road. These in turn developed the whole great organisation known as “the turnpike system”.

The Turnpike System within its limitations did good work, but the provided no proper method of repairs and maintenance, nor until a later date, road construction. At best they made an incomplete patchwork. With the advance of fast and important road traffic the Turnpike system of tolls soon became a burden. The general Highways Act of 1835 was of great interest as this Act repealed almost all previous statutes relating to highways. Parish meetings of ratepayers were given the power to elect a board of management and to nominate a Surveyor who would be paid! The Act also abolished “Statute Labour” and removed many restrictions on vehicles and horses.

By 1850 the roads had again fallen into neglect due to the Railway boom. Some steps forward, such as the gradual abolition of the Turnpikes and the handing over to the newly formed County Councils were made, but no great advance in the building of roads took place from this period until well into the present century.

Stephen Russell, 56, Winston Avenue, Branksome, Poole.

## THE NATIONAL RALLY

The news that Mike was actually going to enter the Rally was met with mixed feelings, in as much as I supported him in his venture, but knowing his track record, there was some doubt as to whether he would actually make it. As he said, it would probably be the last time that this competition would be run and this could be his very last chance to enter and having contemplated entering before (but not quite making it for one reason or another) then the least I could do would be to show some enthusiasm.

So I showed some enthusiasm — but did point out that he didn't have a bike to enter with. Never mind, he would renovate the Kawasaki in time and enter on that. This bike he had bought some 6 months previously in partially knock down condition (the engine was in a box) from an enthusiast who had stripped it down, and then lost enthusiasm. He has already spent quite a lot of time putting it all back together, but he still had quite a way to go before it was roadworthy. Failing that, he said he would borrow a bike from a friend! Never the less, that small feeling of disbelief just wouldn't go away.

He also inspired Richard — another fanatic from up the road, who also has great aspirations to fame — so much so, that he was willing to enter too. The forms were duly completed and sent off, and there they were, two enthusiastic bikers discussing how they would be dressed, which bikes they were to go on, who was going to meet them at various checkpoints (no names were named, but they looked at me every time this was mentioned) and if they could actually stay awake and on the bikes for 24 hours. But, still in the back of my mind was the thought that in some way they would try to get out of it, preferably without loss of face now that they had come so far, but how would they manage it?

Work began on the bikes in preparation for the great event. Petrol costs and consumption were calculated, tyres inspected, engines tested and a dummy run was considered — perhaps even as far as the local pub. They talked for hours on end in each others houses, and it was evident that they really were keen to enter the Rally.

Then came the announcement “THE RALLY IS OFF” due to lack of support. Cries of “shame” were loud and long, but I also heard some sighs of relief!!

I *knew* he would get out of it some way!!! Well done Mike.

Hazel Kirby, Hazel Grove, Hockley Heath, West Midlands.

## BUYING A USED TRAIL BIKE

It is always a good idea, if you are a novice or relatively inexperienced, to take a knowledgeable friend with you (assuming you have one!) when vetting a prospective purchase. It may also be of help to note down any relevant points whilst inspecting the machine.

For the sake of convenience it is a good idea to split the vetting of a 'bike into several parts, i) General condition, ii) Frame and cycle parts, iii) Engine, gearbox and associated systems, iv) Valuation and negotiating.

i) **General Condition.** Before commencing the actual inspection determine whether the machine has a current road-fund licence and M.O.T. certificate (if not, why not?) Having ascertained this go on to look at the machine in general. Is the paintwork good, bearing in mind the *recorded* mileage? (not always the *actual* mileage!) Any trail bike used as such (as opposed to Saturday posing at your local multi-franchise, anything taken in part exchange, spares for nothing, super dealer is notoriously difficult to keep looking good especially those black engine cases! Is the seat untorn, is the bike free from dents, scratches and other hopefully superficial damage, are the levers intract, cables intact, handlebars straight and, a point of frequent corrosion, *the exhaust system* in good order??

Having given the bike a fairly brief initial inspection (and having noted down any points requiring attention) go on to look at it in greater detail — assuming you are still interested.

ii) **Frame and cycle parts.** It is always a good idea to be methodical in ones approach so start with the tyres. Check for a) Suitability. Whilst many riders prefer M/X tyres, there may be problems over their legality for roads (including “green lane”) use. Whereas the not for Highway Use sidewall marking is, it is understood, for the U.S.A. market, there are still prosecutions being brought against riders using machines so equipped — despite a recent successful defence in such a prosecution. Consequently it is probably sensible to stay with Trials tyres (unless the local constabulary take an enlightened view), b) Tread depth/sidewall condition. To give any useful grip especially “on the rough” tyres will need well in excess of the 1mm minimum. Cracks in the sidewalls of tyres and any other damage signal the end of their useful life and necessitate replacement.

Go on now to check that the wheel rims are true by spinning the wheel and with a straight edge held against a fork leg etc., note any “run-out”. Check the spokes — Condition and tightness. Next check the wheel bearings (often an area of accelerated wear on trail bikes), by rocking the wheel(s) at the rim (grasp the wheel rim at opposite sides of the wheel). The steering head bearings and forks may now be checked. If gaiters are fitted look underneath them, they may conceal weeping seals — indicated by a ring of oil on the stanchions (assuming that there is oil in the forks, that is!) Gaiter-less bikes are consequently easier to check. Look at the stanchions for signs of pitting (NB. effective repair may be made with ‘Araldite’ — filed to shape after filing and curing.) Now support the front wheel clear of the ground again and, grasping the fork legs, move them fore and aft to detect any play in the bearings. (Don't confuse head bearing wear with worn fork bushes which will be identified as wear between the lower legs and stanchions). Head bearings may be adjustable. Now move the forks from lock to lock. Any roughness indicates pitted races (usually), necessitating replacement. Mere stiffness may only be due to over-tightening.

Whilst dealing with the wheels turn your attention to the machine's rear, and check the rear wheel and engine sprockets and chain. The sprocket teeth should be straight and not hooked, if they are, then new sprockets are required. Apart from anything else, worn sprockets will quickly ruin a good chain. Check the chain for wear by a) noting the amount of adjustment left on the chain adjusters and b) by taking up the slack in the chain, with one hand and trying to lift the chain away from the rear sprocket with the other. Any more than a small amount of “lift” will indicate a worn out chain. Another frequent area of wear on trail 'bikes is the swinging arm. Check for wear (with the rear wheel supported clear of the ground) by grasping the frame with one hand and the swinging arm with the other and attempting to move one relative to the other. Any wear (unless the spindle is loose or the swinging arm grossly underlubricated!) will necessitate bearing replacement. Look carefully now at the condition of the brakes, noting the position of the commonly fitted brake wear indicators. If these are not fitted the angle between the operating lever and cable/rod should not exceed 90°. Excess wear will necessitate new shoes, (brake shoes that is!) The condition of cables/rods should be also carefully noted and their smooth operation. Check next the action of the shock absorbers by pumping the rear of the bike up and down and trying to note any stiffness or lack of damping. Inspect the damper units for oil leaks. (Leaks generally mean new units are required unless “aftermarket” rebuildable units are fitted.) The shock absorber/spring unit on mono shock machines bears careful inspection also since replacements are expensive. Pump the front forks (with the brake held on) to check for smooth action and damping. Note that a test ride will usually be the best test of the efficiency of the machine's suspension.



iii) **Engine, gearbox and associated systems.** If you are still interested turn your attention firstly to the electrical system. Do all the lights work properly, does the horn work? Are the indicators functional? (They are often removed on trail bikes, but worth having if only for when *you* re-sell the bike). When you get to running the machine check the charging circuit (albeit crudely) by noting an increase in the headlights' brightness and/or the indicators efficiency as the engine r.p.m. rises from tickover.

Now is the time to check the engine and gearbox, and if the 'bike is taxed, MOT'd and *you* are insured have a test ride. Turn the engine over and make sure the compression is good. Now start the engine (it should be a ready starter cold *or* hot) — listen carefully for undue engine noise. Piston slap is very common with two-strokes — present as a metallic ringing noise — it is not serious unless very pronounced at which point a rebore/piston replacement may be needed. Small end rattle, big end knocking and main bearing rumble should be carefully listened for, generally the lower down the source of the noise the more expensive it is to eradicate, (please note it is often difficult to differentiate these various noises, hence the value of a knowledgeable friend!). Now slip the bike into gear (engagement should be positive, clutch action smooth) and move off. All gears, up and down the 'box should engage and disengage smoothly, with no tendency to jump out of gear. Check for clutch slip when accelerating briskly or pulling hard up a steep incline.

Any deficiencies in handling and braking should become apparent on the test ride, the machine should run in a straight line on a level road. When finishing your test ride you should note that at rest the engine idles evenly. Finally, whilst listening for any odd noises again, check to see that the exhaust system is not leaking anywhere, and check all over for oil leaks.

iv) **Valuation and negotiating.** Assuming you still want the machine now, make an assessment of the 'bikes value — bearing in mind a) what others of similar type and age are offered for, b) the condition of this particular bike, c) how much you want it and how much the vendor wants/needs to sell it! Hopefully you will have a good idea of the average asking price for a similar machine (whether private sale or dealer) and bearing in mind any work which needs doing on this particular machine, you can make an offer (allow yourself room for manoeuvre). Most private sellers will haggle (that famous Scott again!) and any reasonable dealer will put right any important shortcomings for the asking price. As a final note: when buying from a dealer make sure that you appreciate the scope and limitations of any guarantee offered.

Assuming that you have now got a trail bike, go out and support your local TRF group, and above all ride and enjoy your 'bike!

Ray Pittman, 4 Hollydale Close, Reading.

★★★

The next bike for the RIDER'S REPORT is the HONDA XL185. If you send reports in. Get your easy form from me or your group rep; or just drop me a line with details of year, mileage, troubles, good points, etc. The more reports we have the better all round review, and the more accurately we can pinpoint faults etc.

Any more suggestions for bikes to be reported on will be welcome, have we any Triumph owners, or Kawasaki, DT400, SP360, you send me the details and I will try to print it.

## TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP — LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS

Group & Group Rep.	Pie & Pint Night Venue
<b>ANGLIA</b> Bob Aley, 1 Aldersford Street, Sible Hedingham, Nr. Halstead.	NONE
<b>BOURNEMOUTH &amp; POOLE</b> Stephen Russell, Sandy Top, 56 Winston Ave., Branksome, Poole, BH12 1PG.	1st Tuesday — Dorset Soldier, Corfe Mullen
<b>BRISTOL</b> Russ McDermid, 1 Woodlands Park, Lower Swainswick, Bath, Avon, BA1 8BQ	2nd & 4th Mondays Stanshawes Court Hotel, Sundridge Park Road, Yate.
<b>CAMBRIDGESHIRE</b> Hugh Mason, 3 The Green, Haddenham, Ely, Cambs.	1st Monday — Manchester Arms, Needingworth Road, St. Ives.
<b>CHESHIRE</b> David Eaton, 125 Victoria Road, Northwich, CW9 6JH	1st Thursday — The Robin Hood, Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport.
<b>CHRISTCHURCH</b> Carl Nicolls, 30 Southey Road, Somerford, Nr. Christchurch.	1st Thursday — Ashley Hotel, Ashley, New Milton.
<b>CUMBRIA</b> David Howe, 3 Greenfoot, Mealsgate, Carlisle, CA5 1DF	NONE
<b>DERBYSHIRE &amp; SOUTH YORKSHIRE</b> Ian Dunshire, 1 Lodge Drive, Harley, Rotherham, S. Yorks.	2nd & 4th Tuesdays — The Victoria Hotel, 248 Neepsend Lane, Sheffield.
<b>EAST MIDLANDS</b> Graham Chinnery, 28 The Woodcroft, Diseworth, Derbys.	2nd Wednesday — Flying Horse, Kegworth, Leics. (on A6).
<b>EAST YORKSHIRE</b> Howard Wadsworth 7 Hammond Road, Knottingley, WF11 OHL.	2nd Wednesday — Red Lion, Bramham, Nr. Wetherby.
<b>ESSEX</b> Dave Andrews, 123 Burrow Road, Chigwell, Essex.	Last Tuesday — Warley Sports Centre, Holdens Wood, Warley Gap, Brentwood, Essex.
<b>GLOUCESTERSHIRE</b> Fred Lord, 22 Glynrosa Road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham.	1st Monday — Raglan Arms, Conduit Street, Gloucester.

**Group & Group Rep.****HERTFORDSHIRE**

Frank Diamond, 42 Aldridge Ave.,  
Stanmore, Middlesex.

**LANCASHIRE**

Keith Westley, 6 Briars Lane,  
Lathom, Ormskirk, Lancs.

**LODDON VALE**

John Holloway, 25 Pheasant Close,  
Winnersh, Reading.

**NORTH MIDLANDS**

Tony Davenport, Moortop,  
Onecote, Leek, Staffs.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

David Young, 9 Edwards Road,  
Whitley Bay, Northumberland.

**NORTH WALES**

Stan Whitaker, 15 Wedgewood  
Heights, Holywell, Clywd.

**NORTH WEST LONDON**

Roger Newark, 34 Highlea Close,  
Grahame Park, NW9.

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

M. Drury, 21 The Avenue, Starbeck,  
Harrogate. Harrogate 885410

**SHROPSHIRE**

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

**SOUTH EAST**

Mike Rich, 18 Way Volante,  
River View Park, Gravesend.

**SOUTHERN**

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

**SUSSEX**

John Penfold, 'Marriners',  
Nyton Road, Aldingbourne,  
Chichester.

**TEESIDE**

John Bloomfield, 31 Thames Ave.,  
Thornaby, Cleveland.

**Pie & Pint Night Venue**

Saturday — LUNCH TIMES.  
Red Lion, Radlett.

1st Tuesday — The Bay Horse,  
Leyland, near Preston, Lancs.

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

3rd Tuesday — Jervis Arms,  
Onecote.

NONE

1st Wednesday — The Fox & Grapes,  
Hawarden, Clyd, (near Queensferry and  
Mold).

Alternate Saturday LUNCH times,  
commencing with 24.1.81.  
Red Lion, Radlett, Herts.

4th Tuesday — Prince of Wales,  
Starbeck, Harrogate.

Last Wednesday  
Bell Inn, Cross Houses.

2nd Tuesday — The Westcourt Inn,  
St. Hildas Way, Gravesend.

3rd Tuesday — Chamberlain Hotel,  
Eastleigh, Hants. (opp. Co-op).

Contact John (every other month  
i.e. Feb, April, etc.)  
Hassocks Hotel, Hassocks.

1st Wednesday — The Station Hotel,  
Kirby, near Stokesley.

**Group & Group Rep.****THAMES VALLEY**

Brian Crook, 26 Knightsbridge  
Crescent, Staines, Middx.

**WEST ANGLIA**

Bruce Roberts, 36 Rosemary Drive,  
Bromham, Bedford.

**WEST MIDLANDS**

Mrs. Sheila Lewis, 72 Field Barn  
Road, Hampton Magna,  
Warwick, CV35 8TS.

**WEST YORKSHIRE**

Mike Pemberton, 36 Alder Hill  
Grove, Leeds 7.

**WEST WILTSHIRE**

Bill Riley, Allin Motorcycles,  
Seymore Road, Trowbridge, 64580

**Pie & Pint Night Venue**

3rd Monday — District Arms,  
Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx.

3rd Thursday — Scott Bader Club House  
(opp. Parish Church), Woolaston, near  
Wellingborough,  
and 2nd Thursday, The Swan, Cranfield,  
Beds.

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

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

First Tuesday in month,  
Cross Guns, Avoncliff near Bradford on  
Avon, Wilts.

**SMALL ADS: FOR SALE: WANTED: ACCOMMODATION:  
£1 TO MEMBERS:****FOR SALE**

Injuries force reluctant sale of 1981, 5 month old **KAWASAKI KDX 175 B-1**. Good condition. Steel tank and speedo. (Road legal and quieter than most Enduro bikes). Fitted with Metzeler knobbles and fork skins. Plus spares, and riding gear — £750 o.n.o. Phone Bradenstoke (Wilts) 890 381 Ext 7476 Roger Evans (Weekdays).

**ACCOMMODATION**

Farm House — Welsh traditional, 4 single beds, 2 single beds, 1 double bed, large lounge, (colour TV). Under cover parking for bikes, room for cars & trailers. Plenty of home produced food. Costs — B & B & Evening Meal — £8.50 1 night. £7.50 for 2 or more, 1 week £49.00. Dick & Jean Sutton, Pen-Rochell Farm, Llanfihangel Rhydithon, Dolau, Near Llandrindod Wells. — Tel: Peny-Bont 200. O.S. Ref. 154665. (Sheet 148).