

TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

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



An Important Sign For Us. South Hams, Devon, Near Prawle Point.

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 1989

It is with regret that I have to tell you that for personal reasons Tony Thew our current editor of the bulletin cannot continue. Meanwhile a great deal is happening that the membership must know and act on for the good of the fellowship.

So with the help of a few of our stalwart members (their names are credited against their contributions) you are receiving the first of what we intend to be a monthly NEWSLETTER to the membership.

I have been to Bristol and gained the support of a group of individuals in that club who will produce and distribute the Newsletter for the first of each month providing they get the copy by the 10th of the previous month - and thats a tough schedule.

All copy to Gwyn Thomas our Press Officer who will edit and provide text for the production team. The commitment is for six months only, after which I shall be looking somewhere else for help. Reasonable, limited commitment by a lot more members has got to be the name of the game from now on. No more killing the 'Few' with overwork !

Clubs will be asked in turn to contribute 200 words to the monthly Newsletter, let's get some involvement, expression of opinion, reports of events or runs and lots of humour too !

When we can, we will get the Bulletin back on stream again, but sensibly as a team effort next time.

cont.....

Meanwhile a lot is going on:

Brian Thompson has started his new full time ROW job in Northumberland which precludes him continuing as our National ROW Officer. Richard Marshall will hold the fort until the end of the year, then he too will finish as he will be starting an O.U. Degree. However before then Richard will be drafting the long overdue 'Addendum' to Trevelyan's 'Blue Book' as a gift from the TRF to every County Council in the land. So if he asks for your help please give unreservedly.

Warm letters of thanks have gone from me and your National Secretary to Brian thanking him for all he has done for us over many years. He remains of course a life member.

Contrary to some reports the TRF has been influential within MOLARA circles recently where we are making a major contribution to the problems in Hampshire - our liaison man Gwyn Richards - and to the Winchester ROW conference - where Don Lewis is co-ordinating our efforts and will be our National spokesman. By the time you read this the September edition of the Bulletin (the last) should have arrived to explain what Winchester is all about.

Expect in some areas to be asked to conduct a UCR / RUPP / BOAT survey. Roger Higgins of the East Midland group is co-ordinating a survey in 33, 10 x 10 Km squares randomly selected throughout England & Wales which will equal the recent survey done by the Ramblers. I have gained verbal approval from the Countryside Commission, who say that they will give the TRF support. So get stuck in, time is of the essence !

We hold the line on the South Downs Way and intend to continue the fight. Bevis Billingham represents us, please form a support team to help him. The TRF has contributed £2000 to prime a fighting fund. I will be writing to all the other MOLARA members and the Carriage Drivers asking for their help. We will not pull out of MOLARA before we are beyond reproach in our efforts to have made it work.

Soon we will have an 'official' TRF liaison officer in every significant National Park. In the Peak Park a 'hot-line' already exists with the Chief Ranger and a working party to assist drain the top of Chapel Gate is already planned. Please support this work and similar initiatives which will follow elsewhere.

Gwyn Thomas is putting together a TRF Information Pack, So anyone who wishes to help, please do.

The South West Region have mounted a stand at Yeovil Festival of Transport (the biggest and the best in the west) promoting the TRF. They made a case for financial aid with this venture from central funds and got it. Well done lads.

Tim Lay has agreed to extend his treasurers role to encompass control over our assets and advise on all matters financial, ie budget forecasts and project control. Every initiative mentioned in this report has received, if asked for, some financial support from central funds. Groups and Regions should have their own funds, but where assistance is genuinely needed make your case. Tim has the authority within the TRF to act like a Bank Manager; if you need money to support an agreed TRF initiative, approach him with your business plan. State your objective, list your needs in materials and manpower, show your plan of action and the timescale, indicate the anticipated gain or reward. You will not find him or me a 'soft-touch' but neither will you find good ideas hamstrung for want of a budget to get you going.

The message is: we are a motorcycle group, we are a countryside user group, as you know our motto is "The protection of Green Lanes" and that means the preservation of vehicular rights where justifiable. Membership is not just a cheap "ticket to ride" , a cheap insurance policy, a freeloaders guide to the lanes. Its more than that, so please respond in whatever way you can by assisting those who are trying so very hard.

See you on the Trail.

Dave Giles : National TRF Chairman

The Order was sealed on 16th August and came into effect on 21st. Signs and "bridleway gap" barriers have been erected more or less in accordance with the plan accompanying the Order, and in addition massive earth banks and ditches have been dug to prevent vehicles escaping from two hill-top car parks adjacent to the South Downs Way. The cost is clearly far in excess of the figures produced by the council, and considerable damage has been caused to the environment. There are 7 "bridleway gap" barriers, and all users will have to climb over the raised planks, which means that bicycles, prams and invalid chairs will have to be lifted.

From the date on which the Order was sealed we have 6 weeks in which to object in the High Court to its validity, or 3 months in which to apply for a Judicial review.

We are still awaiting Council's opinion, as the barrister is on holiday until early September and the instructing solicitor is still engaged in correspondence with the County Council on certain matters.

I feel that it should not be presumed that the fact that the TRO has been made means that it is legally sound. Some of the councillors were so hell bent on Country security not to have proceeded with it, even though there are some dissenting voices at County Hall.

Apart from the matters being considered for High Court action, there are several loopholes in the TRO as it stands at the moment, and I anticipate that the local TRF will be able to use most of the affected route for some time to come without fear of prosecution. However, it would be inadvisable to use it at the moment, because we do not want to cause a situation which might prejudice possible High Court action.

Finally, on behalf of the Sussex Group I would like to express our appreciation for the support, moral and financial, which has been provided by the TRF at national level.

TRF CONSTITUTION

A sub-committee of the TRF comprising Martin Harding, Richard Tallon and Gwyn Thomas has been looking at the amendments to our Constitution submitted by Don Lewis (Lodden Vale) and Tim Stevens (Lancashire).

The purpose is to clarify and underscore our aims and objectives in a rapidly changing access climate. The draft Constitution is ready for debate and agreement at the next Executive Committee Meeting scheduled for SUNDAY September 24 at the AMCA HQ, Darlaston Road, Walsall, West Midlands starting at 1.00 pm sharp.

The Draft Constitution will then be ready for approval by the membership at the AGM on Sunday October 29, 1989 at the National Motorcycle Museum.

It is clearly important that all group representatives are able to comment on the draft constitution by attending the Executive Committee Meeting on September 24. They represent the views of their own groups. This should ease the passage of the revised Constitution through the AGM before the election of officers for the ensuing year.

Well, to start off with we are short of Honorary Editor until such time as someone steps forward to fill the breach. It was my bad luck that I happen to know the chairman, Dave Giles. He is rather good at delegating and organising...He likes to "share" things. It's his buzz word at the moment, so I've been given the job of temporary editor - just to check the spelling and punctuation, of course, some other poor souls also have been co-opted to share the glory - Richard Tallon and Jason Bamford, Jason had better watch out. He's producing a very nice bulletin for the Bristol Group TRF and I am sure it's only a matter of time before DG gets him to "share" something!

Things are really happening in the countryside access debate. It is vital that all TRF members are kept up to date through the medium of the newsheet such as this. We would rather have had a professional-looking magazine, of course but it's much more important to have news than a presentational masterpiece. That can wait until a "real" editor comes along, perhaps at the October AGM.

The style of the fellowship is changing. I believe it is changing for the better. I do not subscribe to the view that the TRF is suffering from low morale at all. Events are taking place that will put us on our mettle but our skills and knowledge are developing and improving all the time. We are "getting out there" and mixing with opinion-formers. The draw-bridge attitude is steadily giving way to a more positive approach to the issues.

My senses tell me that the TRF is a respected organisation. That does not mean we are liked necessarily. We may be small in number but what we lack in quantity, we certainly make up for in quality. Recent Executive meeting presentations have demonstrated very clearly that the Fellowship has members with skills and brains to confound the opposition. I am very reassured by the qualities and enterprise of those involved. We need more - many more to be sure. This will come as time goes on. Good leadership will inspire others to have a go.

This temporary newsheet includes contributions from several active ROW workers, all of whom are putting in much effort and thought on your behalf (and behalf of the greater public, although they don't appreciate it yet). If you notice fewer articles on machines and components, this is deliberate. There are plenty of people able and willing to ride trail motorcycles along green roads. What the TRF requires are more people who want to protect green lanes. Remember your slogan.....?

INAUGURAL RIDE OF THE TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP JOHN HIGGIN
(Honorary Secretary)

Twenty years ago, there was a trail ride from TRING in Buckinghamshire along the Icknield Way. From this the fellowship was formed.

Some of the people who rode are remembered, such as John Ebbrell, Ernie Wrigley, Norman Smith but unfortunately after having given loyal service to the fellowship, they have since died.

Others are still alive and riding their bikes, such as Dick Sutton, Ralph Venables and Pete Plummer.

If you are one of the above, or if you took part in this first ride and your name is not known to me, can you get in touch by letter at the address heading of this letter or by phone in the evening at 0256 841350 as we are planning to have a celebration ride along the same route during 1990 on a date as near to the original one as possible and practical.

The event will celebrate twenty or twenty one years of riding with the TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP the biggest and still the only national club catering for the encouragement of non-competitive Green Roads to motorcycling and maintenance of rights of way.

A BRIEF REPORT ON A SPATE OF SICK XT'S IN MY GROUP LEO CRONE

*The Secretary
Teeside & North Yorkshire*

The main area of concern among group members is the longevity of the Yamaha XT350. Little introduction is needed about this good all round trail bike but recently, a number of major failings have surfaced.

Early last year one of the group travelled to Switzerland and back on his XT350. The bike performed well on the journey there but on the way back, while cruising at a steady 70mph in hot weather a top end rattle developed, not serious enough to stop the engine nor loud enough to worry about, but enough to knock the top end performance. So it was 60mph the rest of the way home where the bike was immediately booked into the local Yamaha agency. On stripping down the top end nothing unusual could be seen. A quick phone call to Mitsui Yamaha brought a likely answer. At high speeds in hot weather the piston and bore suffer from oil starvation, net result a partial seizure, scoring the bore. The damage was repaired free of charge by Mitsui. I had heard a number of similar incidents had previously been repaired in the same manner.

Still on the XT350, my brother bought an XT350 after his XR250 starting smoking. 2½ years trouble free motoring ended about 4 months ago when the automatic cam-chain tensioner unit failed, the cam chain jumped the near cam sprocket sending the inlet valves out of time and into the piston. Net result 2 bent inlet valves (not a mark on the piston). The repairs were carried out by a local Yamaha shop costing £120. 8 days later the bike was back in the garage.

The new cam chain tensioner unit had failed, the small tensioner spring snapped resulting in another £120 of parts and labour which Mitsui paid for, while not admitting liability in writing. By this time the cam chain had stretched beyond reasonable tolerances and so was replaced at my brothers expense.

Unfortunately the bike now smokes like a YZ, which has since been diagnosed as bent inlet valve guides, which considering the abuse they have suffered is hardly surprising. I have my doubts that Mitsui will be quite as quick to pay as last time. One problem remains, there are, according to Yamaha, no inlet valve guides in England or Europe which has meant the XT languishing in a Yamaha work shop for 3 months, with no sign of its return in the near future.

Onto perhaps the most popular of XT's, the 500 and all its big bore relatives. One of the groups newer members has three Yamaha's - a 500, DT125LC and YZ250 enduro. While starting his XT the kick start idler cog shattered damaging the cog behind the clutch basket, but more seriously damaging the clutch basket beyond repair.

Into the local Yamaha agents for new parts, but no such luck, of the list of 20 parts needed, 10 are in stock and 10 out of stock (nationally) with little hope of filling the order within the foreseeable 3 plus months. All of which leaves him little choice but phoning around breakers yards in the hope of finding an XT of the correct capacity and year.

Lastly a quick gripe from me, an XT600 owner. The original exhaust finally gave up the ghost (well the back box did). It was little difference between an O.E. back box and a complete after market system, so I invested in a Micron system. All chrome and sparkle it was soon fitted, but imagine my disappointment to discover the joint between header pipe and muffler blowing badly. I've finally taken to putting an exhaust bandage around the joint with a Monteso exhaust rubber ring around that to seal it. Unfortunately this has not reduced the noise, which I find intrusive on the rough. All of which leaves me with little choice but save the system for touring abroad, and buy a quieter system. While in Italy, I heard a Fresco system on an XT600 which was very quiet. Anyone go one? Anyone got a quiet aftermarket system?

P.S. The venue for club nights will be changing from 4th october all meetings including 4th will be held at THE QUEENS HEAD, Stokesly Town Square, (behind the Police Station) starting about 8pm).

The Trail Riders Fellowship fails to promote itself outside of motorcycling circles. A stand at the Earls Court Motorcycle Show may encourage existing motorcyclists to join our ranks but does little to advertise our good works to 'Joe Public'. For this reason, the Somerset Group decided to have a stand at the Yeovil Festival of Transport.

Since its inception 17 years ago, this event has grown to be the largest of its kind in Britain, if not Europe. Several hundred old (and not so old) cars, motorcycles, lorries and military vehicles were on display together with trade stands by vehicle suppliers, major manufacturers, including Rover and a huge autojumble and ring events. This show attracts a large number of people from all over the South of England.

Nicholas Crocker persuaded the organisers that the TRF should be regarded as a charity thus avoiding a site charge and the Fellowship was duly allocated a well positioned plot 30 feet deep and 23 feet wide on a wide avenue. Together with several members of the Somerset Group, Nicholas decided that if the TRF were to have a stand, it must be done properly. Therefore the National Executive was approached and David Giles, National Chairman, offered a £100 'grant' (later increased to £200) towards expenses, although the former figure was adequate. A 10' x 10' tent was hired. 200 of the original South West Region TRF/Sports Council leaflets were photocopied. 50 National TRF membership forms were obtained. A tailor's dummy was hired and fully dressed in typical trail-riding kit complete with the obligatory TRF bib. Information on trail riding in both text and photographic form was obtained from the National TRF and MOLARA and set out on six display boards. A large "Trail Riders Fellowship" sign, professionally made, was hung on the tent in a prominent position. Two large circular TRF 'protecting green lanes' signs were printed. A garden table with benches, was acquired along with several flower tubs to add colour to the occasion. Finally, several members agreed to have their trail bikes on display over the weekend. On the Friday evening, a dozen members and wives helped set out the stand and it was arranged that for the two day event at least three members, wearing their TRF sweatshirts, would be on duty.

After all this effort, how successful was the event? Personally, I felt that it was a great success. Well worth the time and expense. There was a steady flow of people coming into the tent to look at our display boards and those on duty took it in turns to approach them offering explanations and leaflets and, where appropriate, membership forms. One visitor a non-TRF trail-rider said he must join. He realised the TRF was the only organisation fighting to keep open the green lanes he uses. One obvious non-motorcyclist genuinely didn't realise that anything like green lanes existed. He does now! A couple more thought there was a contradiction between 'protecting green lanes' and motorcycling. They both seemed happy with my detailed reasoning and explanation. Interestingly we had a visit from the Chairman of the local Ramblers club (they also had a stand, but much smaller). She sincerely thanked us for the work we do in clearing green lanes.

When the weather wasn't too windy, we put our display boards right at the edge of our stand, next to the avenue. Many more passing people looked over them. It is impossible to tell how many people walked by formerly unaware of our existence and will now recall who we are when the name Trail Riders Fellowship is written or mentioned. This is what appearing at these events is about - public relations. Something the TRF is very poor at promoting.

Many thanks must go to all the many members who helped, especially to Peter Banks who took the difficult job of arranging the display boards. The appearance of both David Giles and Tim Stevens during the weekend was much appreciated.

Would we do it again? Yes! Although next year I would like to see us have a stand at a large locally held Country Fair. We shall see!

**THE AUTO-CYCLE UNION
SOUTH MIDLAND CENTRE**

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Trail Riders Fellowship
Mr J Higgin
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Brighton Hill
Basingstoke
HANTS

29th July 1989

Dear Mr Higgin

The South Midland Centre would be grateful, if, through your Bulletin magazine, you would draw attention to a problem that occurs from time to time in our Centre, no doubt other A.C.U Centre experience similar problems.

On land where clubs have previously organised trials and motocross events off-road bikes are later ridden illegally without the landowners permission, causing problems for the clubs concerned.

People probably don't realise that years of delicate negotiations and goodwill can be lost irretrievably by such riding.

Riders sometimes assume that if there are tyre marks on the ground, then they can ride on the same area, which is not necessarily correct.

We appreciate that 99.9% of TRF members understand the problems and ride in the correct areas and perhaps your members may be able to help us combat the problem, by educating any offenders/potential offenders.

I am sure that you will agree that off-road riding facilities are at a premium and must be safe guarded for the future for all riders to enjoy.

With Best Wishes,

Mrs M Green
Hon Secretary



** STOP PRESS **



GREEN LANE SURVEY

The TRF is currently conducting a green lane survey to equate with that recently done by the Ramblers Association for footpaths. If you are asked to get on your bike and contribute to this survey, please do so. **IT'S VERY IMPORTANT.**

Dave Giles
(National Chairman)

All Cornish trail riders please meet in the Borough Inn, Wadebridge Road, Bodmin.
Grid Ref. 04 76 75
at 7.30 for 8.00, 21st September to plan our activities for the rest of the year.

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PLEASE SEND ALL BULLETIN COPY TO GWYN

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