

GROUPS

BRISTOL

Richard Tallon, Tel: 0249 715426
2nd Monday, Tennis Court Inn, Deanery Road (A420), Kingswood

CAMBRIDGE

Howard Biddle, Tel: 0223 232879
1st Thursday, Golden Ball, Boxworth

CHESHIRE

J. Johnson, Tel: 061 427 6963
2 & 4 Monday, The Robin Hood, Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport

CORNWALL

Roger Fogg, Tel: 0726 67198
3rd Thursday, London Inn, Summercourt (A30)

CUMBRIA

Roger Harris, Tel: 0539 725198
2nd Wednesday, Albert Hotel, Bowness on Windermere

DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

David Bonsall, Tel: 0742 748688
2 & 4 Tuesday, The Old Crown Inn, Handsworth Road, Sheffield

DEVON

Martin Cooper, Tel: 0752 337491
2nd Tuesday, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott

DORSET

Pete Boyce, Tel: 0305 783210
1st Tuesday, The Royal Oak, Bere Regis

EAST MIDLANDS

Graham Chinnery, Tel: 0332 863433
2nd Wednesday, Three Horseshoes, Hemmington, Nr. M1 Junct. 24

EAST SCOTLAND

Les Mollison, Tel: 0382 738530
2nd Wednesday, Glencarse Hotel, A85, Perth to Dundee Rd

ESSEX

Neil Gamble, Tel: 0245 461643
4th Tuesday, The White Horse, Old London Road, Widford, Chelmsford

GLOUCESTER

Ron Carter, Tel: 045 382 2707
1st Tuesday, Painswick Institute, Painswick, Glos.

HERTFORDSHIRE

Alan Vincent, Tel: 0923 775263
1st Wednesday, The Coach & Horses, Newgate Street, Near Cuffly

ISLE OF WIGHT

Mick Holbrook, Tel: 0983 866361
Last Thursday, Liberal Club, Longford Rd, Shanklin, I.O.W

KENT

Nick Moon, Tel: 0322 862855
2nd Tuesday, Pied Bull, Farningham, Nr. Brands Hatch

LANCASHIRE

Keith Westley, Tel: 0704 893215
1st Tuesday, Hindshead Pub on A49, Charnock Richard

LINCOLNSHIRE

Alan Wilkinson, Tel: 0529 60793
4th Thursday, The Mall, Woodhall, Spar

LODDON VALE

Don Lewis, Tel: 0252 616359
2nd Thursday, The Lamb, Theale, Berkshire

NORFOLK & SUFFOLK - To be Advised

NORTH MIDLANDS
Ray Morse, Tel: 0785 661543
1st Tuesday, Leek Area - Contact group rep (above)

NORTHUMBERLAND

Dave Vaughan, Tel: 091 529 3202
3rd Tuesday, Ryton Rugby Club, Ryton

NORTH WALES

John Mills, Tel: 0477 34425
1st Wednesday, Hope & Anchor, Ewloe Place, Buckley, Chwydd

SHROPSHIRE

Steve Rodenhurst, Tel: 0952 244161
2nd & last Wednesday, The Bell, Crosshouses, Shrewsbury

SOMERSET

Nick Crocker, Tel: 093589 261
Last Thursday, The Globe Inn, Somerton

SOUTHERN

Pete Wildsmith, Tel: 0703 617582
3rd Wednesday, The Priory Inn, Bishops Waltham, Hampshire

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY

Brian Wright, Tel: 081 669 4214
9pm Every Wednesday, Epsom & Ewell F.C., West St, Ewell

SOUTH WALES

G. Jones, Tel: 0239 810255 - Meets to be arranged

SUSSEX

Bevis Billingham, Tel: 0243 585128 Last Thursday, Ashing on Soc. Club, Rr. of Red Lion, A24, 9 miles N. of Worthing

TEESIDE & NORTH YORKS

Leo Crone, Tel: 0325 380117
1st & 3rd Wednesday, Blacksmiths Arms, Swainby.

THAMES VALLEY

Bob Williams, Tel: 0344 24958
3rd Monday, District Arms, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex

WEST ANGLIA

David Knight, Tel: 0933 313816
1 & 3 Thursday, Scott Bader Clubhouse, Opp. Paris: Church, Woolaston, Wellingborough

WEST MIDLANDS

Dennis Hayter, Tel: 0527 23550
1 & 3 Thursday, Wilmcote Mens Club, Wilmcote, Nr. Stratford on Avon

WEST WALES (WTRA), Bill Kershaw, Tel: 0633 895241

WEST YORKSHIRE

Gordon Carr Tel: 0535 644568
1 & 3 Thursday, Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd.), Odsal, Bradford

WILTSHIRE

Bill Riley, Tel: 02216 3811
1st Tuesday, The Toll House, Holt, Trowbridge

WYVERN

Gwyn James, Tel: 0902 763824
Every Thursday, Hill & Cakemore Ex-Servicemen's Club, Victoria Road, Blackheath



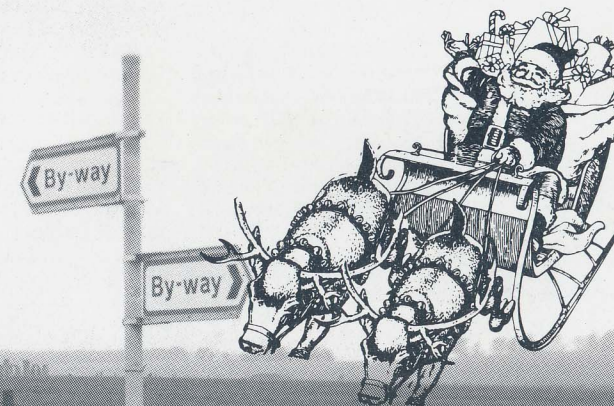
Merry Christmas

TRAIL

DECEMBER 1991

No. 161

The Bulletin of the TRF, the National Club for all who wish to ride Legal Motorcycles on Legal Carriageways.



Dave Giles at Stonehenge - It is proposed to close/divert this byway.

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Try to make it interesting! . . . All contributions to the Editor
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Chairman: Dave Giles, 22 Ford Lane, Allestree, Derby DE3 2EW Tel: 0332 552288

Press Officer: Gwyn Thomas, Minories Cottage, Priddy, Wells BA5 3AU Tel: 0749 75294

Membership Sec: Peter Clark, 34 Oak Rd, Barton -U-Needwood, Burton on Trent DE13 8LR Tel: 0283 713209

Secretary: Ian Thompson, Glebe House, The Square, St. Columb Minor, Newquay TR7 3HD Te: 10637 872813

Rights of Way Officer: Tim Stevens, 101 Square Lane, Ormskirk, Lancs. L40 7RG Tel: 0704 894136

Treasurer: Tim Ley, 17 Heigham Close, Shelton Lock, Derby DE2 9QF Tel: 0332 704748

Editor: Mike Pedley, Nettlebed, Newsholme, Gisburn, Nr. Clitheroe BB7 4JF Tel: 0200 445657

EDITOR

Those of you who are motorcyclists as well as Trail Riders will be aware of the Insurance fiasco which is about to hit us all when we come to renew our policies next year.

Norwich Union, one of the biggest insurers of motorcyclists, with their excellent 'Rider' policy have made a significant loss this year due to the large number of claims - mainly from riders in the under 28 age group who seem to regularly have their machines stolen!

I have had one of these excellent policies for almost 20 years and for around £70.00 a year third party, fire and theft, I can ride any capacity of motorcycle and own any number of bikes - a great thing for us aging trailies who seem to end up with a garage full of old bikes.

Now, when I and other "over-the-hill-never had a claim for 20 years" come to renew we could be in for a nasty shock - yet we, as a group must submit a minuscule number of claims to our Insurers - less I would imagine than any other identifiable group.

Could this be a case therefore where we should act as a group and perhaps negotiate a rate with a company based on the **actual** risk rather than the **average** risk?

Our annual average mileage can't be more than 3000 miles and a great proportion of that is of course off-tarmac where the risk is exceedingly low (except for Cheshire Group!) maybe a similar policy to those arranged by the "One-make" and "Classic Bike" clubs could be looked into.

Is there anybody out there in Insurance?

NETTLEBED

LETTERS

Brilliant Idea.

I write following the November (No.160) issue of Trail, after reading the last section of Eric Wilson's letter, together with the comments from Steve Griffiths. What a BRILLIANT idea, to have all the information on a database! It should only need about seven 'fields' for each lane - I would suggest the following: Map No., Start map ref., End map ref., 'Legal' situation (i.e. RUPP, BOAT, Sensitive, Disputed etc.), Severity (i.e. of most difficult part, whether rocks, steps, mud, water, bog etc.), Date of most recent information and Name (if any).

Really, with the present day situation, this is a MUST and all groups should be encouraged to forward the information without delay. Sadly, I don't have sufficiently up to date hardware or software to do this, even though the time is available.

On a similar note I am informed that the Planning and Transportation Dept. of Leicestershire C.C. already has all its roads on a 'digitised' system in a PC. Whether it goes as far as RUPPs or BOATs etc. is not known, but all roads are "available", something similar to the AA's Routefinding programme. This information, if in a useable form and if available to the public, could possibly be used as a start.

Like all good ideas, it's a case of "Why didn't we think of it before?", isn't it? I hope that the idea is turned into fact.

Ken (Phillips?). Leicester.

An Anonymous Anomaly.

As a Norfolk landowner with a public right of way going through it; I wish to point out to your organisation that any vehicle using a public right of way is required by law to be insured, MOT'd and taxed, whether the track is mud, grass or tarmac.

I would like this to be made very clear to your membership and made a condition of membership. This may then eradicate illegal motor bikes by pressure from within your own groups.

A Wellwisher. Norfolk.

Wales, Wille Eckerslyke and Waxproofs.

There has been plenty of discussion concerning the Cornhill Inn at Rhayader and its proprietor, Mr. Buck. The RGB stayed there in 1990 and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, although accommodation and comments were noted on a later visit and left much to be desired.

If the TRF puts restrictions on this group, then, as was previously happening, they will disassociate themselves from the TRF and "go it" alone. (It may be interesting to note that both Charley Morris and Adrian Wall representing TRF South Wales and Welsh TRF respectively, want nothing to do with Bob Buck; although at the AGM, Charley and I discussed the situation and we both agreed it would be easier to keep an eye on the situation with Powys in the TRF fold.

The situation still exists of "private deals" with local landowners and we would like to discourage this, but probably through education of Powys members (Joe Taffy keeps an eye on the situation).....

The last edition of Trail Magazine - surely the best to date. This type of issue will have Willy Eckerslyke turning in his sheep fold - and to make a Yorkshireman laugh is not easy. But seriously, criticism at the AGM was piddling (?). The TRF is receiving a first rate magazine at a fraction of the cost of the old Newsletters. It takes credit from the editorial production team and, vice-versa, the editorial team can take credit from its production.

It may be of little consequence but I would publicly like to say thank-you for an entertaining and informative monthly lifeline.....

Attempting to secure the supply of, initially, Wax Cotton Waterproof clothing for the TRF. If successful, Peter Ballard should be receiving an advertisement from them. However, if you require garments at very good discount prices by mail order, then phone 0922 693443. They also supply classic and modern style leather jackets and trousers.

Lancashire Brigand. D.Lowe.

The Haunted Trail

A few years back I was walking the dogs in a wood called Hillesdon, near Butterleigh (ref. 985-080) and came to an old ruin. Well, it was only a pile of cut stones which is, I later found out, the remains of a castle. I walked over to the stones and climbed onto them and suddenly it felt as if I was in a glass dome. I could see the dogs running about but I couldn't hear them and there was a low hum in my ears.

Later on that year I rode my XT to the wood and up a track beside it. As I was picking my way through the mud, there in front of me was a person, walking across the track and into the wood. Being in a friendly mood I decided to have a chat, so I followed into the wood. The man was dressed in a long coat and a wide brimmed hat.

When I got into the wood the man, or should I say person, had vanished. It was October so the trees had few leaves, not much cover for anyone to hide. When I got onto higher ground I stopped the motor and listened - not a sound. Then the hairs on the back of my neck started to bristle, thinking the person might be a poacher, I fired up and rode on.

This all happened before I became a TRF member. Well in November, I was in the wood again, this time I was stopped by a loud bang, fireworks I thought. Wrong again - twelve bore gun (GULP, GULP). It was being held by an angry looking gamekeeper.

Being in a friendly mood I decided to have a chat (did I have a choice?). We talked about bikes, guns, game etc. and then he told me the wood was haunted. I told him that I didn't ride at night as I have enough trouble staying on in the light when I can see. Then he told me that this ghost appears

in the day dressed in, wait for it, a long coat and a hat with a wide brim.

I don't ride in the wood now, I pass it, but I still do take the dogs in there from time to time. Haven't seen him since.

M.J. Troake. Devon

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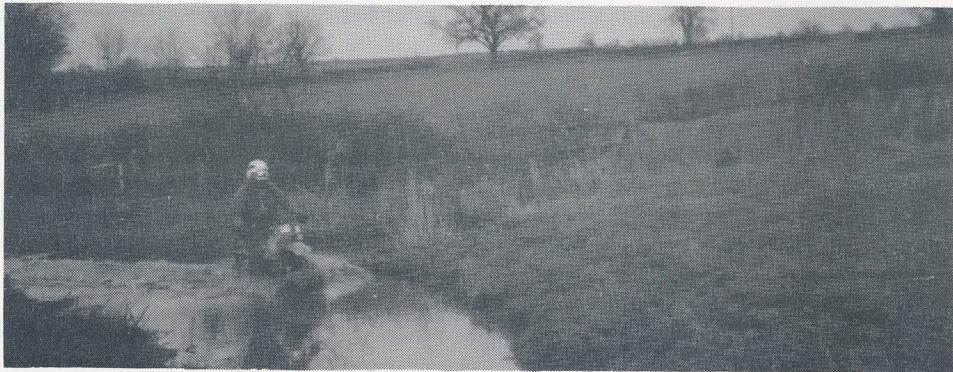
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GROUP NEWS

NORTHANTS

It may be of interest to establish a short profile of our group and this may be something that could be done monthly, with each group sending in a profile / history to the magazine. Three or four riders first joined forces in 1976/77 after becoming interested through talking to another rider who had been trail riding for many years previously. Thus the original group was started without one T.R.F. member, as the Abthorpe Hooligan Society. As we became more aware of the Rights of Way and associated problems and attended the local Public Meetings on the R.O.W. Reviews we needed assistance and after a telephone call to Brian Thompson a number of us joined the T.R.F. and we now have 17 regular riders including two ladies, one of which rides a Harley for relaxation. We are part of the West Anglian Section but as we are mainly centred to the South of



Stuchbury Lane Ford (Sulgrave). Mick Hulbert.

Northamptonshire to the Oxford / Buckinghamshire borders we are a South Northants group without official status.

Halfday runs are put on most Sundays during the winter and a week away is arranged each year during autumn to places such as Manx G.P., Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors / Cheviots together with weekends in Wales and I.O.M.

We also take groups from other sections out around Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire and also a Ridgeway run developed from Ian Thompson's book. It may be of interest to note that we do this without regular meetings or a meeting place.

We have a busy time this weekend taking out a group of 6 Lincolnshire lads on Saturday and 5 Yorkshire lads on Saturday and Sunday combined with an annual dinner on the Saturday night. This is not normal but we manage it.

I hope the above is of some interest and may prompt other groups to do the same as it is helpful to have some background when contacting groups that you do not know.

Finally, thank you for an excellent magazine, it is always well worth reading. I may get pen to paper again some time but I just had the urge and at my age it doesn't happen so often.

The Wassack (Mick Hulbert). Northants

RoW NEWS

IMPORTANT; READ BOTH NOTICES BELOW AND ACT ON THEM NOW - BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

Appeal

Powys County Council RoW Dept. and myself are requesting names and addresses of anybody who has used the track across Llandeilo Hill and Llanbedr Hills in Mid-Wales. Landranger 147, 092465 - 148, 148483. Or Pathfinder 1015 shows track to run from Pentre Moel to Ireland Well. Powys CC would like to see this four mile track put on the definitive map, so let's grab the chance to help. Name, address and year or years used to me; *Roger Bailey (Radnor TRF RoW Officer), 2 Llanelwedd Terrace, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3SR.*

ByeWay Robbery

Bradford Met. Council are proposing to extinguish "for all vehicular traffic ALTAR LANE, Bingley." O/S Sheet 104 Ref. 079397, eastwards for one mile. An interesting winter ride, as old as the druids.

West Yorks. TRF are vigorously soliciting objections from Mountain Bike users and Horse Driven Vehicles Asscn. but also from all of you out there. Just your name and address on any piece of paper, say you have ridden or would like to ride in future, Altar Lane. Send to Tim Stevens (National

RoW Officer - see "TRF Officers" for address), who has thankfully agreed to help us to fight this stealing attempt.

The case will be heard in Keighley Magistrates Court on a date in January, yet to be announced.

Come on, force yourself, this year's good deed before it's too late. We may have better news in next month's Trail.

Gordon Carr. West Yorkshire.



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Lost Members...

I have always been amazed at the enormous throughput of members that occurs in the Trail Riders Fellowship. I keep asking myself why this should be? After all why can someone join, appear to be very keen by going on runs, attending group meetings and even helping to clear lanes, then suddenly lose interest and disappear never to be seen again! OK, so some people come to one or two meetings or runs and then explain that trail riding is not for them, but not many. Most appear to be of the former, Why? Has the TRF ever done a survey of old members asking why they left. If there has been, I haven't heard of it. So with the support of the Somerset Group I sent a survey to 20 recent past members and asked them to complete and return in a prepaid envelope.

Much to my surprise I had ten replies (I expected less).

Two said my survey had prompted them into rejoining, saying they would come to our next monthly group meeting (they didn't). Of the remaining eight you will see they gave twelve reasons for leaving - Couldn't spare the time (3) Trail riding too expensive (1) Group meetings too long, tedious and boring (1) Venue of meeting changed (1) Not accepted because I rode the wrong machine (1) Got fed up with club officers telling me what to do, where to go and how to behave (1)

Under the heading other reasons:

Interested in trail riding not RoW (2) Didn't like the the introduction of limited members on runs and having to phone to book a place (2) Objected to the suggestion of a two level membership (1) Family commitments (1) Too much emphasis placed on lane clearing (1) Thought some officers were using the fellowship to massage their own egos (1)

I think you must agree, nothing very conclusive. In fact I can't see that there is anything significant that the Somerset Group can do to prevent this ongoing problem, but we're open to suggestions!

And what of the 50% of ex members who didn't bother to reply. I feel that they are probably active, clapped -out or frustrated trials, enduro or motorcross riders who dislike / resent the disciplines and responsibilities that the maintenance and preservation of green lanes entails. I say good riddance to 'em. We didn't want their sort to join in the first place.

Nicholas (massaging his own ego) Crocker. Yeovil

Public Relations Officer

Brian Wright

Public Relations In Action. An example.

A Surrey horse rider complained to her Parish Council about a destroyed "bridlepath". A meeting was arranged with the lady together with the B.H.S. rep. and two officers from the council's rights of way department, the parish councillor did not bother to turn up.

I arrived early and rode my 150 lb XR80 both ways. The chief from the Highways Dept. had forgotten his wellies and wore green suede shoes. Before we set off another horse woman passed us. She told us the damage was caused by "scramblers". The following conversation ensued,

Me "Have you seen scramblers?"

Horsewoman "No"

Me "Have you seen any tyre marks?"

Horsewoman "No"

Me "Why do you say this then?"

Horsewoman "Oh, I've been told"

I believe the assembled part got the point. I asked also what the horse weighed and was told 1680 lbs.

As we walked off I encouraged all the part to see if they could find an instance of my tyre tracks being deeper than the horses hoof prints, they could not.

I then encouraged this thinking by inviting help with a calculation on the lb per square inch or whatever the metric equivalent of the various users. When walking, there is lotsof time to select a victim and press home your point, I therefore gleefully pointed out any hoof prints that were

substantially deeper than my tracks, where visible. I would love to have a properly conducted study on this subject.

When we returned I obtained photographic evidence that the green suede shoes were still spotless to everyones amusement.

We then walked another lane which has a T.R.O. pending because of possible damage where it crosses a small stream. I had previously ridden this too, taking great care with my crossing. In due course we all arrived and looked at my 1/2" deep tyre marks in the mud. I mused as to how deep a walker would sink. At that the highway officer walked across next to my tracks and promptly sank ankle deep in the mud"! I wondered if I am the right man for the job

Brian Wright

P.S. I have subsequently received a copy letter from Surrey CC to the Parish Council pointing out that the lane is a byway and not bridleway; the damage, such as it is, has been caused by farm vehicles; and that they are not prepared to implement an expensive and ineffectual T.R.O.



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CLAPPED OUT UP CLUTCH HILL

When my old friend Roger Young rang me to say that Tim Stevens was organising a trail riding trip to Diois in France and asked would I like to go? I had no doubt in making an immediate commitment. Whilst Roger and I have been trail riding in most parts of England and Wales, neither of us had taken a trail bike abroad despite chatting about it many times. So we both paid our deposits in April and waited for October and Autumn to arrive. It seemed to take a long time and some doubts entered my mind, would France live up to my expectations, what would the trails be like and would it be worth all the effort in travelling so far? Well happily, I can now say that the trip exceeded my expectations in every respect.

We drove down in one day leaving very early in the morning and arrived in Luc-en-Diois about 8.00 p.m. We used the French Autoroutes for nearly the entire journey. They really are a superb network of fast roads, with excellent facilities every few kilometres for picnics etc. and not a traffic cone in sight! There are of course tolls to pay and they seemed quite expensive with a car and trailer, however if you want to make good time over a long distance it is a great way to travel.

We were soon sitting down with our new friends in front of a huge table in the dining room of our hotel, Les Grangiers, and enjoying our first french meal of the trip, goats cheese on toast. In fact goats cheese was to feature pretty regularly in our diet for the next five days - breakfast being the only meal where it was not on offer. The simple reason for this was that "Le Patron" Pierre has a goat herd and made cheese for sale at the local market. Our hotel was as much of a working farm as it was a hotel and that gave our accommodation an added dimension of living in rural France which was most enjoyable. It also meant that my particular dormitory, positioned over the goat shed was exposed to the distinct and pungent odour of goats. I have stayed in similar accommodation in France before and so I did not suffer from a culture shock.

The accommodation was fairly basic with most of the patron's wife's efforts going into the preparation of the most fantastic meals, mainly from fresh local produce. Each meal was served at a leisurely pace with copious quantities of good red wine. We ate like Lords and slept comfortably all for about £15 per day - fantastic value and a great gastronomic experience. I dutifully ate my goats cheese in sandwiches every lunch time, and at the end of every evening meal with a glass of wine but I have to admit to never really acquiring the taste!

So what of the trail riding I hear you ask? It would be impossible for me to describe every track, there were so many in a condensed area, but they were all so different, and just when you think you might be familiar with a particular route, Tim would lead you down it in the dark which allowed you to see it in a new light altogether. To generalise, there were lots of steep rocky climbs up through trees and over small boulders. There were also many kilometres of access roads with loose surfaces winding back and forth up to the highest ridge. But one thing every trail had in common was fantastic scenery. Everywhere you looked the hill sides were bathed in beautiful golden autumnal colours and were really spectacular.

One trail which had acquired a certain notoriety was known by our group as "Clutch Hill" as on a previous trip it had claimed the clutch of one of its victims. There was much talk about the severity of this particular trail, which brought some contempt from me as trail riders, like fishermen are given to exaggeration. Nevertheless on the afternoon when Tim first headed in the direction of the infamous "Clutch Hill" I thought it wise to take the precaution of running out of petrol. My two "stink wheel" colleagues thoughtfully assisted me in my predicament and we cruised back to base camp to enjoy a hot shower before dinner. We sat around the table together chatting about the events of the day as it got later and darker. Andy Thomas (whose clutch had

already burnt out before he got to "Clutch Hill"!) described the path in all its gnarly, rutted slippery detail and as the old Grandfather clock ticked away we became a little anxious. Had "Clutch Hill" claimed some more victims, had the party run over a cliff edge in the dark, how much longer would we have to wait for our dinner? Anyway at about 7.45 p.m. the heroic party eventually made there way back to base camp looking exhausted but with enthusiastic tales of dragging bikes with no lights up impossible never ending hills and across deep bogs in the pitch dark.

I slept well in my bunk that night safe in the knowledge that I had avoided three hours of torture but as I am not very bright I did not have the good sense to leave it at that and for the next three days I expressed my disappointment at missing out on the opportunity of riding such a fine trail as "Clutch Hill". Unfortunately Tim took me at my word and one afternoon we headed towards the bottom of "Clutch Hill". At this point the members of the group who had already experienced an ascent earlier in the week left for the hotel, they were no fools. That left a trio of stink wheels, plus Matt Matthews on an erratically running XL 250S and Andy now suitably equipped with Le Patron's XL 400 Pro Link. In fact I reckon that Andy sabotaged his XL 250S to give him the chance to ride the big XL particularly given that he had fitted suitable gearing and knobby tyres to it in five minutes flat once Pierre had lent it to him. Andy likes his trail riding to be a challenge! So off we went, Tim as usual sailed straight to the top with consummate ease which proves that all you really need is an XL 185 with trials tyres, the rest is down to rider ability and any additional mechanical hardware is superfluous. The rest of us pushed and shoved and pulled our motorcycles up impossible slimy banks riddled with a network of tree roots, through deep ruts, as deep as your engine crankcases but not as wide and over greasy expanses of wet bog. It was hell and to add to the experience it started to get dark. Eventually after much sweating and a little swearing we made it to the summit and were delighted at the fantastic panorama. The orange light from the setting sun picked out the rocky tops of the highest peaks against a background of blue sky, with the smaller hills in the foreground fading into dark shadows. It was incredibly spectacular and well worth the effort.

For me that point was the highlight of the trip and one which I will always remember. Others include watching Derrick Collins re-enact the scene from the Great Escape where Steve McQueen captures a German motorcyclist by stretching a wire across the road. Derrick strayed from the trail and found himself in a meadow, 100 metres or so from the correct path. I was tail-ender and upon seeing me on the correct route he turned his XR250 around. All he could see between him and the path was a climb followed by a small but steep bank so he gave his Honda a handful of throttle in order to make his exit from the field that bit more certain. What he could not see was that the perimeter of the field was marked out by a single wire electric fence. When he hit the fence he must have been flat out in third gear and as the wire wrapped around his handle bars it was just like a Royal Navy Jet landing on an aircraft carrier, he came to an abrupt halt! Thankfully no damage was done to Derrick or his bike although we both spent an entertaining few moments watching petrol pour from his fuel filler whilst we agonised over whether or not the fence was live!

I also will never forget a days trail riding with Le Patron et le Garcon, on a Yamaha 650 Enduro Sidcar outfit, quite a spectacle, or the terrific lunch we enjoyed that day of Crepes and Cider. Thanks to Andy for enlightening me as to the virtues of every abandoned rusting Panhard in France and for pushing me up "Clutch Hill" and a special thanks to the French Farmer who not only seemed pleased to see us but gave us enthusiastic advice on what was the best route to follow. But finally a special thanks to Tim and Mary Stevens for putting the whole trip together and making it all possible. If you have been considering a trail riding trip to France taken from what I have seen I would definitely recommend it and now that my bike has been converted to L.H.D. I can't wait to go again. Bon Voyage

Alister McFarquhar. Suffolk.

**Report of the 21st TRF Annual General Meeting held at the
National Motorcycle Museum on 6th October 1991**

Start: 11.00 am.

Apologies.

Minutes of the last meeting accepted.

Secretary - The year had gone well for us.

Rights of Way Officer gave details of his activities through regular contributions to the Trail.

Treasurer - We were doing well financially. Figures on how we spent our income to appear in the Bulletin.

Membership Secretary - A detailed analysis of membership during the year - better year than 1990.

Public Relations Officer - Improve standards, clarify aims, come up with ideas, maintain discipline, identify ourselves.

Editor - No problems. More articles.

LARA Officer and TRF member, Alan Kind brought us up to date on the Land Access and Recreation Association.

Chairman - We celebrate 21 years of survival.

Election:

Brian Wright was elected Public Relations Officer. Richard Marshall was elected Vice Chairman. The rest of the Executive Committee was re-elected.

Motions passed:

1. "An addition to the Code of Conduct: Identify yourself. Carry your current membership card with you when trail riding so that you may identify yourself as a member of the TRF, and display a current membership sticker."
Amendment "We should leave it to the Executive to fill in the details."
2. "Creation of an Annual Rights of Way Bursary Fund. A Bursary Fund should be created to encourage the pursuit of a variety of Rights of Way projects by TRF members on an annual basis."
3. "Membership fee increase. In order to support further active TRF rights of way work, the annual subscription fee for members should be increased to £15."

Meeting closed 3.35.

This is the time of year when subscriptions are due for renewal again. When you receive your new card, I think you will be pleasantly surprised by the new shape and style which our printer, Fred, has designed for us. It is made of plastic and will fit easily into a credit card type of holder which everyone carries around these days, and the year is printed boldly and clearly across the middle. The main reason for these changes is so that you can carry your card with you when trail riding and therefore be able to identify yourself as a member of the TRF to anyone you may meet. This as you all know was an addition to our code of conduct which was agreed at the recent AGM.

Another change which you will notice on your new card will be a slightly longer membership number than in previous years. The old numbers caused a bit of confusion in the past because if you joined in the same year as someone else in your area you got the same number. Your new number will have some letters for the county you live in, the date you joined the TRF and some letters from your post code. Everyone will end up with their own unique membership number which will be useful to quote if you write in to the Editor or phone up any officers or group reps to ask for information.

Please make sure that you send me your post code when you renew so that I can give you your proper number, otherwise you may end up with a rude three letter word at the end of your number (accidentally of course).

An additional service to members for 1992 will be the provision of a TRF sticker for the current year which will also show that you are a member. They will be limited to one per member so you rich people with more than one bike will have to decide where to put it (carefully).

One last word to those members who live too far away from a local group meeting to be able to join in, on a regular basis. As I tell all new members, get in touch with me for a list of members who live near to you and get together with them in a small group for a run out. Don't suffer out there on your own, thinking there is no one to ride with. With 1500 members there must be someone fairly near you

Good riding in 1992'

Membership Secretary. Peter Clark
ST85LRT

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Suspension...

What is motorcycle suspension all about? What are the correct settings for my bike? These and many other questions spring (!) to mind when we consider the suspension system on our own particular motorcycle.

Suspension is all critical these days especially if you ride in serious competition, but even if you don't and just use the bike for fun it is still a simple matter to get the best out of your suspension without it costing you an arm and a leg.

The springs are your suspension and both front and rear springing are critical if your bike is going to handle well and be comfortable. Most adult motorcycles these days are designed around an 11 1/2 stone rider (that's 75kg for you metric people), and give or take a stone (7kg to you metric people) each side, your weight should still be about right depending on your machine. Much heavier or lighter than this and to achieve the ideal springing, new springs may have to be budgeted for. Other alternatives are of course to put up with it or get out the diet sheet.

Assuming your springs are correct then the preload must be adjusted to get the best feel from the springs. Fast riding e.g. Motorcross and Enduro's will require harder suspension than for Trail or Trials riding. Ideally for faster riding the preload must be set to allow the bike to just bottom out after a big jump taken at speed. If it won't bottom out it is too hard and consequently if it bottoms out like a ton of bricks it needs more preload. The basic rule of thumb here is to set the spring as soft as you can get away with to get the suspension working and obtain comfort from the system, very essential if you are riding for any great length of time.

Rebound damping should be set that the suspension is lively but still has the movement under control. Motorcross and Enduro bikes will need a livelier suspension than Trail or Trials bikes as they need to keep the wheel in contact with the ground when travelling at speed. Slower bikes need a slower return on the damping or it will feel too bouncy at lower speeds.

Compression settings should be next to be tuned with the rule being "hard surfaces - soft damping, soft surfaces - hard damping". Hard ground makes the suspension work and requires less resistance from the damper. Soft ground requires more resistance from the shock to help the rear tyre bite through the deep sand or mud to gain traction from the harder stuff underneath.

Once satisfied with the rear end, attention to the front forks can yield benefits. Bouncing up and down on the footpegs of your bike should, on a correctly set up bike, have both front and rear suspensions working together with the frame going up and down parallel to the ground.

Adjustment to the forks can be achieved in many ways. The forks springs will sometimes have preload spacers-at the top which can be reduced or increased within limits or some forks have air caps at the top to make changes in the feel of your front suspension. Unless your forks are fairly sophisticated you will not have damping adjusters to play with, in which case the only course of action is to experiment with different grades and volumes of fork oil to achieve the balance between front and rear suspension.

All suspension settings are as individual to you and your bike as your underpants. All suspension settings are a compromise to try and deal with all the varying types of terrain you are likely to encounter. Always make notes in a little red book of all your experiments and settings, you may have to disturb them one day and then resetting will take only minutes instead of going through the whole process. Whatever settings you arrive at always monitor the results over a period of time and make any changes you feel necessary to improve the system overall.

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It really is easy to set up any motorcycle by working through the various factors involved that make up your bike's "handling", it just requires a methodical and logical approach through springing and damping to achieve a good ride for you.

Enjoy your riding.

Robin Packham -

Falcon Shock Absorbers Ltd.

TRF Beginnings..

An old magazine article sent in by Dave Giles that makes interesting reading.....

Tracking Down Old trails

by E. A. Wrigley

Director of the Trail Riders Fellowship

Not unlike the horse-riding fraternity the motor-cycling movement was generally oblivious to the ultimate effect of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, when thousands of miles of old cart roads with vehicular rights were downgraded to footpaths or bridleways. For horse riders, lanes of twenty or more feet in width being restricted to walkers was to mean a considerable loss in the 70's with the increased growth of horse riding. For today's motor-

cyclist it spelt a double loss, for he may not ride upon a bridleway without special permission, even though some may be thirty or more feet wide.

Additionally, the 1949 Act produced a number of idiotic situations like the one near Hitchin, where a 200 yard strip of old county road was downgraded to bridleway with no junction by which to leave to make a detour. Some bridleways terminate as footpaths where they enter another parish and these are often ploughed up to within two feet, because a farmer will aver, no one ever walks along anyway.

Understandably in 1949 few people saw the shape of things to come, but one man, a bank cashier named Norman Smith, then

resident in Kent undertook to protect the interests of the South Eastern Centre of the Auto Cycle Union, the body responsible for the control of motor-cycle sport and an affiliate of the RAC.

In the 60s Smith retired and moved to Suffolk, when he also acted for the British Motor-Cyclists Federations, a body concerned with the leisure activities and interests of non-sporting motor-cyclists. This, of course greatly widened his activities and today he is known to practically every highway authority in England and Wales. Indeed it has been jokingly said that he lives in the centre of a huge filing cabinet, such is the enormity of his records.

With the passing of the Countryside Act, 1968,

and more lanes being put at risk, people began to realise the need to protect their interest no less so motor-cyclists. When that year the South Midland Centre of the Auto Cycle Union held its November board meeting in Berkhamsted, a number of delegates pressed for a rights of way committee to be formed. A unanimous vote brought a committee into being and the writer was appointed chairman.

It's area of operation covered Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire a part of Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and a part of Essex; seemingly a momentous task, when one considers the need to survey hundreds of old cart roads known as "Roads used as public paths", or Rupp's, as well as a number of bridleways which ought in fact to have been shown as Rupp's. Many needed clearing of growth before it was possible to ride through

and at that time there was insufficient help for such a task.

But the Berkhamsted decision was to have far-reaching effects as motor-cyclists of all ages began to identify themselves with the right to use the old rights of way. Many of these riders were unattached to clubs, but had been enjoying runs on green lanes in their own areas, either on their own or with a friend, but some felt the need for an organisation to co-ordinate their efforts and interests.

As it happened the Berkhamsted Motor Cycle & Car Club Ltd., although principally a sporting club had been discussing this idea with several enthusiasts and as a result, just two years after the formation of the South Midland Centre Rights of Way Committee, a new organisation was formed.

In January 1970, the club staged a green lanes run, which as a

result of publicity in the motor-cycle press was supported by thirty riders coming from as far as Bradford and Cardiff. From the former city came a 67 year old, George Abbey and from Kings Langley, sixteen year old Mike Westley. The run, which took in much of Icknield Way as far as Benson in Oxfordshire, terminated where it began, at the Valiant Trooper, Aldbury, where the Berkhamsted Club has its clubroom.

After a wash down and a priming of sausages and mash the, by now, large assembly considered the formation of a national club to foster and protect green lanes riding by motor-cyclist and so was born the Trail Riders Fellowship with fifty foundation members paying in their £1 membership, with several Berkhamsted members agreeing to act as officials.

Now known generally as the TRF the organisation is

dedicated to keeping open green lanes and has an excellent record of success often in cooperation with other organisations and is treated with respect, by highways authorities. By becoming affiliated to the British Motorcyclists Federation it enjoys the services of Norman Smith on rights of way matters. The original South Midland Centre Right of Way Committee, now probably the best regional one in the country, works closely with the TRF in that area and in fact with any other body including at times the British Horse Society.

The TRF with its 400 members stretching from Morayshire to South Wales formed into regional groups, is actively concerned with group runs, clearing undergrowth and dealing with local authorities and other bodies concerned with the countryside.

A register of members enables individuals to contact a riding companion in a

**one
commendable
facet of
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activities is
it's interest
in "Help
the Aged"
charity**

particular area. Such "twosomes" often combine an additional interest such as archaeology or botany. The TRF exercises a strict riding code to follow, including stopping when horses appear, closing gates and riding quietly. A member turning up with a noisy bike is politely told to go home and do something about it.

One commendable facet of its activities is its interest in "Help the Aged" charity by organising sponsored long-distance runs.

In 1972 a sixty-mile run by fourteen riders yielded £80.

In 1973 forty riders covering 100 miles on old tracks in Berkshire and Wiltshire collected £300.

Last year, on what must have been the wettest day in August, forty-eight riders set off from Newbury covering the same route as in 1973. By evening thirty-two returned with over 100 miles behind them, including Mrs Jean Sutton from Kings Langley, who mastered the slippery conditions on her 125cc Honda trail bike in spite of the handicap of an artificial leg.

Most of the riders finished wet and cold after this almost monsoon weather; some faced long runs home to places like Suffolk, Northants and Birmingham, yet without exception they all claimed to have enjoyed themselves.

"Mad" someone remarked. Yes, but isn't that what makes good Englishmen.



THE TOP OF PORTSDOWN HILL.