

## GROUPS

**AXE VALE** Malcolm Preece, Tel: 01275 844757  
2nd Mon, The Star, Star (A38), Nr. Shipham, Somerset

**BLACK COUNTRY** Nick Hammond, Tel: 01384 221520  
1 & 3 Tues, 9pm, The Mitre, Church Road, Bradmore, Wolverhampton

**BRISTOL** Paul Andrews, Tel: 01179 659255  
4th Mon, Keynsham Rugby Club, Bristol Road, Keynsham

**CAMBRIDGE** John Brooker, Tel: 01767 692805  
1st Thurs, Golden Ball, Boxworth

**CHESHIRE** John Stansfield, Tel: 07899 844872  
2 & 4 Mon, The Robin Hood, Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport

**CORNWALL** Tony Stuart, Tel: 01208 862960  
3rd Thurs, The Ship, Wadebridge

**CUMBRIA** Richard Smith, Tel: 015394 33470  
2nd Tues, Derby Arms Hotel, Witherslack, Nr. Kendal

**DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE**  
Kevin Marsh, Tel: 01246 811949  
2 & 4 Tuesdays, The Angel Hotel, Sprinkhill, Eckington, Nr. Chesterfield, Derbyshire

**DEVON** Rob Williams, Tel: 01626 364564  
2nd Tues, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott

**DORSET** Paul Jackson, Tel: 01305 772208  
1st Tues, Greyhound Inn, Winterbourne, Kingston, Nr. Bere Regis

**EAST MIDLANDS** Graham Chinnery, Tel: 01332 863433  
2nd Wed, The Chequers Inn, Main St, Breaston, South Derbyshire, J25 on M1

**EAST YORKSHIRE**  
Howard Wadsworth, Tel: 01405 860904  
1st Tues, Boot & Shoe, Gowdall, Nr. Snaith

**ESSEX**  
John Lay, Tel: 01206 263912, Mobile: 0831 886032  
2nd Wed, The Swan Public House, Great Eastern, Nr. Dunmow

**EXMOOR** Ron Rickarby, Tel: 01271 326653  
2nd Wed, The Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham, A396 1 mile north of Tiverton

**GLOUCESTER** Wayne Little, Tel: 01452 611735  
1st Wed, Painswick Institute, Painswick, Glos.

**HERTFORDSHIRE** Colin Adlam, Tel: 01727 768055  
2nd Thurs, The Old Guinea, Ridge, Near Potters Bar

**HIGH PEAK & POTTERIES**  
Simon Lowe, Tel: 01298 70680  
1st Tues, Black Horse at Endon (A53, about 3 miles west of Leek, Staffordshire) & 3rd Tue, Cheshire Cheese, Buxton

**ISLE OF WIGHT** Andrew Hawkins, Tel: 01983 617232  
1st Wed, The Eight Bells Inn, Carisbrooke, Newport, IOW

**KENT** Gary Westbrook, Tel: 01843 590184  
2nd Wed, Pied Bull, Farningham, Off A20, Nr Brands Hatch

**LANCASHIRE** Keith Westley, Tel: 01704 893215  
1st Tues, Hindshead Pub on A49, Charnock Richard

**LINCOLNSHIRE** Alan Wilkinson, Tel: 01529 460793  
4th Thurs, The Queens Head, Kirkby-la-Thorpe, Sleaford

**LODDON VALE** Bernard Green, Tel: 01344 450289  
2nd Thurs, Inn in the Park, Woodley Centre, E. Reading

**NORTHUMBERLAND** Chris Moody  
Tel 0191 387 3507 6-10pm or 0860 302001 (mobile)  
1st Tues, 8pm, The Swan Inn, Heddon on the Wall

**NORTH WALES** John Mills, Tel: 01477 534425  
1st Wed, Hope & Anchor, Ewloe Place, Buckley

**OXFORDSHIRE** Kevin Lindsey, Tel: 01993 841179  
3rd Thurs, The Red Lion, 127 Cassington Road, Yarnnton

**PEAK DISTRICT** Neil Walker, Tel: 01788 811919  
1st Thurs, 8pm, Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby

**RIBBLE VALLEY** John Hargreaves, Tel: 01254 721897  
2nd Tues, Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59)

**SHROPSHIRE** Rob Latham, Tel: 01952 592324  
2nd & last Wed, White Horse, Shrewsbury

**SOMERSET** Steve Hounsell, Tel: 01460 66452  
2nd Thurs, The Bell Hotel, Currey Rivel, Nr. Taunton

**SOUTHERN** Russ McDermid, Tel: 01703 812371  
3rd Tues, The Phoenix, Twyford, Nr. Winchester

**SOUTH LONDON & SURREY**  
Steve Sharp, 0181 773 4204  
9pm every Wed, Ewell Sports & Social Club, Banstead Road, Ewell, Surrey

**SOUTH NORTHANTS**  
Trevor Gardiner, Tel: 01788 815927  
2nd Mon, The Live & Let Live Pub, Harpole, Nr. Northampton

**SOUTH WALES** Stuart Dodwell, Tel: 01446 710851  
1st Thurs, Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff, 8pm

**SUFFOLK** Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073  
Last Wed, Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Bury-St-Ed.

**SWINDON** Keith Owen-Bines, Tel: 01793 751129  
1st Wed, The Carrier's Arms at South Marston, Swindon

**SUSSEX** Bevis Billingham, Tel: 01243 585128  
Last Thurs, Ashington Social Club, Rear of Red Lion, A24, 9 miles North of Worthing

**TEESSIDE & NORTH YORKS**  
Mark Bieganski, Tel: 01904 656469  
3rd Wed, 8.30p.m., Blacksmiths Arms, Swainby

**THAMES VALLEY** Laurence John, Tel: 01784 470438  
3rd Mon, District Arms, Woodthorpe Rd, Ashford, Middlesex

**WEST ANGLIA** David Knight, Tel: 01933 313816  
1st & 3rd Thurs, Scott Bader Clubhouse, Opp. Parish Church Woolston, Wellingborough

**WEST MIDLANDS** Colin Bott, Tel: 01386 834105  
1st & 3rd Thurs, Wilmcote Mens Club, Stratford on Avon

**WEST YORKSHIRE** Gordon Carr, Tel: 01729 830569  
1st & 3rd Thurs, Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd), Odsal, Bradford

**WILTSHIRE**  
Alan Yandell, Tel/Fax: 01225 864187 Mob: 07989 127093  
1st Tues, The Bell On The Common, Broughton Gifford

**WORCESTERSHIRE**  
David Gunster, Tel: 01905 452742 Mob: 07970 919790  
3rd Tuesday, The Fox at Bransford, Worcs.



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

# TRAIL

NOVEMBER, 2000

No. 267

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



A Gerbil (the bike that is) somewhere on The Monks Trod. The rider is John Pritchard, our National Membership Secretary. Photo by Martin Harding. See article on page 18.

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**All Contributions to the Editor ..... Please keep it short and sweet!**  
**COPY DEADLINE: FIRST POST, 1ST TUESDAY OF MONTH**

## TRF OFFICERS

- CHAIRMAN** ..... David Giles, 22 Ford Lane, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2EW.  
Tel: 01332 552288, E-mail: davidgiles@dlgtraining.freeseerve.co.uk
- PUBLIC REL. OFFICER** Mark Holland, Corn Farm, Devauden, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, NP16 6NS. Tel: 01291 650240 (Weekends only).
- MEMBERSHIP SEC.** ..... John Pritchard, 8 Chantry Close, Bishop's Stortford, Herts., CM23 2SN.  
Tel: 01279 505343, Fax: 01279 501599, Mobile: 07879 804614,  
E-mail: trfmemsec@aol.com
- SECRETARY** ..... Karen Wilson, 69 Nottingham Road, Trowell, Notts., NG9 3PJ.  
Tel: 0115 930 0414.
- TREASURER** ..... John Gardner, 119 Hallbridge Gardens, Up Holland, Lancs., WN8 0EP.  
Tel: 01695 622792.
- EDITOR** ..... Fred Ellison, Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe, Lancs., BB7 9DG.  
Tel: 01254 823893, Fax: 01254 887999, E-Mail: print@ellison.sagehost.co.uk
- RoW OFFICER** ..... Richard Marshall, 1 Burlington Close, Breaston, Derby, DE7 3UB.  
Tel: 01332 873416, E-mail: richard.marshall@eggconnect.net
- BMF LIAISON OFFICER** ..... Derrick Collins, 11 Grangewood Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, Notts. NG8 2SJ. Tel: 0115 928 2806.
- KEEPERS OF STATIONERY** ..... Leaflets & Membership Forms, John Pritchard. *Membership Secretary.*  
Letterheads & Compliments Slips, Fred Ellison. *Editor.*
- DISPLAY EQUIPMENT CO-ORDINATOR** Leo Crone, Tel: 01325 487927 (7a.m. - 5p.m.). Display boards held at Unit 10, Red Barnes Way, McMullen Rd., Darlington. Tel: 01325 463815.
- EQUESTRIAN EVENTS LIAISON OFFICER** Colin Patient, 14 Ryecroft Close, Woodley, Berks., RG5 3BP.  
Tel: 0118 969 6783.

TRF Website <http://www.trf.org.uk>

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*The views expressed in 'Trail' are those of its correspondents and not necessarily of the editor or the T.R.F.*

## NOTICE TO ALL THE MEMBERS

At the TRF Annual General Meeting on 28th October 2000 the meeting failed to find any new officers for those standing down from the posts of:

Elected Officers: Chairman,  
Vice Chairman,  
Secretary,  
National Rights of Way Officer.

Co-opted Officers: LARA rep,  
BMF rep.

As the Constitution requires the elected roles to be filled for the continuance and good governance of the TRF, the meeting had no alternative but to adjourn the current meeting until a later date. This date has been agreed as Sunday, 28th January 2001 at the National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham.

Prior to this the meeting had debated and agreed upon the following:

- To extend the current Executive roles and current membership until 31st January 2001.
- To authorise the Executive to engage paid help to support the Executive Committee until 31/12/01 (maximum £15,000) to be funded by an increase in subscription to £30 per annum (pensioners £25). (This is to cope with the workload and the need to represent the TRF Monday to Friday, so that the demands on the honorary members could be reduced to a level that would be acceptable to a volunteer).
- To defer the motion for Regionalisation until the January meeting.
- To elect an Executive Committee or to dissolve the TRF at the General Meeting in January 2001.

All Groups are therefore required to ensure that they are represented by a briefed delegate at the next Ordinary Executive Meeting on 2nd December 2000. This will also be held at the National Motorcycle Museum. Other members may attend and participate but not vote.

If the TRF dissolves the following is likely to happen to trail riding:

- The opposition to our riding will be quick to challenge
- There will be no support for defence of prosecutions
- LARA may collapse
- No legal advice system
- No RoW respondent system
- No London Gazette information
- No national representation
- Dismissed as unworthy of consideration

David L. Giles, TRF National Chairman

## REGIONAL HAPPENINGS?

Well the time has come for you all to decide what **you** will be doing for the TRF. We had hoped that the AGM would have brought people & ideas forward. But with less than 2% of the membership at the AGM it is perhaps not surprising that we had so little in the way of suggestions from **you** to change the TRF into a strong fighting force. But I thank every one of **you** that attended, listened and even stated **your** views, whatever they were! How many of the other 2,900 members went trail riding?

Regionalisation - personally, I do not really mind whether the proposed Regionalisation goes ahead or not - but the present situation of the isolation of members from the inner workings of the TRF must improve. If not we will be starving ourselves to death. This isolation results in around 80% (2,400 members) of TRF members getting no input into the TRF National meetings or feed back from them, it deprives them of the representation they are entitled to in the TRF Constitution through their elected Group Reps. More importantly it also deprives the TRF of the opportunity to encourage and nurture these 2,400 isolated members to put more into the TRF, to help with RoW research, to support a Principal Officer, to get a Region up and running, to save the TRF.


Please go to **your** Group Meetings, go to **your** Regional Meetings. If **you** have supported their creation, talk with the reality - the survival of trail riding in England and Wales. Stand up, lower **your** C of G and be counted!

How will **you** actively support the TRF? What real effort will **you** put in? How many days trail riding or bike preparation will **you** sacrifice to help the TRF? How many good trail riding days with friends will **you** give up to attend the Executive Meetings and AGMs and offer real help to counter the serious threats against us? How will **you** save **your** TRF?

Remember - "if we do what we've always done, we will get what we've always got"....and what have we got? We have got at least three key vacancies again on your TRF National Committee. We got that because we are doing what we have always done - wait until the last moment and hope somebody else gives up their riding time to work free on **your** behalf!

*Peter J. Ballard*

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TRF Executive Meeting  
Saturday 2nd December 2000  
at the National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham  
10.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

## AGENDA

- 10.30 Welcome and Outline of the day  
Notification of Any Other Business  
Minutes of the last Meeting  
Matters Arising
- 11.00 Summary of the AGM Part I  
Further Information to date
- 11.30 Discussion: this may take the form of discussion groups  
to enable everyone to participate
- 12.30 LUNCH
- 13.30 Feedback from the discussion group.
- 14.30 Arrangements for the dissolution of the TRF if necessary
- 15.15 Agreeing a framework for the AGM Part II in January
- 16.00 Close

Those Groups furthest from the centre of the country might like to consider arranging bed and breakfast accommodation for their delegates on the Friday evening. The local (Coventry) Tourist Information Centre tel. no is 02476 227264. Local group members may wish to offer a bed. Mary Stevens 01630 657928 has agreed to act as a Contact.

## NOTICE BOARD

### CLEANING MOTORCYCLE PLASTICS

A few issues back someone gave a tip on how to clean up the plastics on a trail bike but I can't remember what it was. Neither can I find it looking through my back issues. Can anyone help?

I can be contacted via e-mail mikerees65@hotmail.com or on 01495 222728.

### GROUP REPS

Please note that Group Reps are the people who are required to represent their Group at Executive Committee meetings. They are not just the contact person for the Group. There seems to have been some confusion about this. (Ref. TRF Handbook, Constitution, point 6.4).

### LARA RIGHTS OF WAY WORKSHOP

The LARA Workshop arranged for the 30th September and 1st October in Derby has been postponed to the weekend of November 25th and 26th. The main reason for the change is the late running CRoW Bill. Many of the key people we need to influence are involved in other work arising from the Bill. Also it will give participants a better understanding of what the Bill contains after its passage through the Lords and hence a better understanding of the implications for us.

Members wishing to attend the Workshop should contact the LARA MRDO Tim Stevens on 01630 657627 or timLARA@aol.com

My own Group has agreed to pay the costs of any Group members wishing to attend. Other Groups may wish to consider a similar course of action.

*Richard Marshall, National Rights of Way Officer*

### WRONG PHONE NUMBER

Mary Stevens has offered to act as contact for TRF Exec. members coming to the next (last?) exec. meeting, her phone number is NOT as quoted.

Tel: 01630 657627, Fax: 01630 658928,  
e-mail: TimLARA@aol.com

Mary can also offer B&B for those from the NW - she is about an hour NW of the NMC.

## DISCRIMINATION IS ALIVE

The recreational road-legal motor cycle use of minor highways is a lawful pursuit, like any countryside recreation or use; there is nothing new in the use of motor vehicles on the minor highways of the British Isles. For decades, local men and women have driven their cars and motorcycles on these old roads for the love of the fells and valleys and the enjoyment of travel and exploration of motorcycle trail riding; riding the old roads for enjoyment of the countryside: years before any of these roads were eventually tarred. Road-legal motorcycles, being somewhat ahead of cars in development, had long since surmounted these roads and this fun of travel has become synonymous with 'trail bike riding'.

With this in mind I dutifully sent a letter to my friendly, 'new labour' M.P. for Sherwood, Paddy Tipping expressing my concerns regarding the proposed Wildlife & Countryside Bill 2000

I have recently received a reply from Sherwood M.P., Paddy Tipping. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid it's bad news; there's no easy way of breaking it to you. This could come as something as a shock, so I want you to prepare yourself. I have reason to believe that my suspicions have been founded. I had my suspicions for some time but I could not really pin any thing down. Stands to reason, when you come to think of it. Why would the incumbent government go to so much trouble to persecute a poor impoverished minority group who ride along unsealed unmetalled roads, devoid of any tarmac purely for pleasure? Yes, that's it. There's only one logical conclusion,.... ....it's official, we are being discriminated against. Mr. Paddy Tipping stated in his response to my objections to the proposed Countryside and Wildlife Bill, the following statement:-

'I am sorry to say that I do not support your cause. Motorised traffic on green lanes causes a great deal of damage and nuisance. I have opposed it for many years. I know my position will disappoint you. Nevertheless, I will make sure that the Environment Ministers in charge of the Bill are aware of your views.'

I am sure one of our East Midland Group members, who is 74 years young, will be mortified to know that he has been a 'nuisance' on our minor highways for the past 55 years!

I also enjoy fell walking, All Terrain Cycling (ATC) and even officiate at equestrian horse trials, apart from green laning, so I am living proof that the general public at large, can, co-exist with leisure pursuits in our countryside without being a 'nuisance' to one another.

Mr. Tipping describes green lane user groups as being a 'nuisance' which is strange because that I am sure that he will know that rambblers organised a mass trespass in 1948 on Kinderscout, Derbyshire in order to further their concept of the 'right to roam', but very illegal. This type of radical action created the long distance path, The Pennine Way which commences at the bottom of Kinderscout at Edale.

Trespassers can be sued in the civil courts (Law of Tort) by the land owner (and not 'prosecuted' like some signs wrongly depict.) as in the RuPP 13 case. Therefore the police will not get involved, as the police deal with only criminal acts (and not civil misdemeanors) I wonder if Mr. Tipping perceives this activity by ramblers as being a nuisance to land owners, or does he have double standards?

I have just returned from a walking holiday in the Yorkshire Dales and was disappointed that I never once saw anyone riding motorcycles along the byways of the Dales (where were you all?) As for the 'destruction' of minor highways the biggest culprit is fell walkers themselves (of which I am one). A National Park paper was calling for restraint on the fells for some of the footpaths which were now 150 metres wide, in places, and are having to create engineered footpaths. Therefore, I ask the question who really is a 'nuisance' and causing 'a great deal of damage' to our public rights of way in the countryside; walkers or a minority user group using road legal motorcycles on non-classified highways?

Perhaps after all these years we have been too law abiding and should have engaged in mass trespass like the ramblers association!

'New Labour, (New Danger)' was the government who prided itself in responding sensitively to the full range of diversity which the countryside attracts. However, cyclists are also being threatened. On a recent trip to Snowdonia, I observed that the use of mountain bikes was prohibited between May and September between the hours of 1000 - 1700hrs. along the bridleway to the summit of Snowdonia.

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The 'Bobble Hat Brigade' are not exempt either; the Peak District National Park, under the auspices of Martin Doughty as chairperson has plans; (among the first of the kind in the country) which are very radical, but the chairman is unrepentant. stating:

'We have to look ahead to what the Peak Park will be like in ten or 20 years time. There is no doubt that it will still be a popular place and there isn't room for more cars. The traffic issue does create tension, particularly where commercial interests are concerned. They tend to think that all trade comes by car and will always come by car, so we ought to provide more car parks. In my view there is very little point in doing that. We don't want the area to become a huge car park, so we have to provide alternatives. We have to persuade them that public transport is just as easy and convenient to use.

However, walkers are complaining of the impracticality of using public transport in the Peak District (and the exhorbitant cost). The 'Bobble Hat Brigade' are also becoming disillusioned with politicians telling them that they should be leaving their cars at home when it was politicians who appointed Beeching to 'butcher the rural railway system in the first place thus forcing people to rely on cars. (Peak District Magazine, Jan 2000)

Other proposals include traffic calming measures on major roads through the Peak Park, such as the A57, A515 and A626.

The idea is that because journeys on such roads would be slower, motorists would be encouraged to use alternative routes outside the park, or use trains and buses where available. The government has introduced new measures to ensure that emergency ambulances will reach the scene of life threatening emergencies within 8 minutes 75% of the time. How does the Peak District Park expect such a respected emergency service to achieve these targets if traffic calming measures are introduced on the major routes into The Peak Park?

If you are unfortunate enough to have a medical emergency or be injured in the Peak Park; and require an emergency ambulance; then please feel free to consider suing the Peak Park for introducing these obstructions, in the knowledge that emergency vehicles will be impeded. Traffic calming will undoubtedly impede any emergency service, making 8 minute response unattainable.

**Observations** - It is interesting that a hundred years ago all roads were 'green roads' and only towards the end of the last century were the road stones bound together with waterproof tar to cope with the demands of the motorcar. Tarred Macadamised roads spread slowly at first and it was not until the 1920's that County Councils slowly took over road maintenance from Parish Councils at a time when minor roads were still untarred. We owe a great debt to the Parishes of Queen Elizabeth 1, whose task it was, after 1555, to maintain the roads through which they passed.

A study of green lanes in 1977 stated that all minor tarred roads are 'destroyed green lanes'. In spite of this about 5,000 miles of green roads remain, a pathetically small mileage compared with the 120,000 miles of rights of way discussed in the Countryside Commission document 'Recreation 2000' for other user groups.

The need for preserving ancient carriageways for future generation is even more paramount now because of the pressures being exerted by the incumbent Government to down grade such byways, (for reasons unknown to me.) Indeed, some people have the idea that if a road is not tarmacadamed, it is not a road at all. It would be a tragedy to loose the motorcycling tradition of freedom, which is further enhanced when spectacular areas of countryside, otherwise inaccessible by road, are closed to trail riders and disabled users who rely on such transport. Therefore, unclassified county roads, RuPP's and 'dual status' routes are a creation of the twentieth century, but at the same time, 'green lanes routes' are as old as civilisation.

Tar is still encroaching, aided by bitumen and concrete. Green lanes are becoming even rarer; they are an endangered species. It is often hard to believe that less than a century ago, all our roads were green. Therefore, I profer that the British Isles current network of non-classified roads must remain unchanged; ancient carriageways must remain carriageways for future generations. The only real guarantee of ensuring this does occur is to pay an increase in the annual subscription fee.

This will enable the Executive to have the confidence (and pecuniary advantage) of challenging any future prosecutions (or should I say persecutions) of our chosen pastime.

In the meantime, quite clearly, Mr. John 'Two Jags' Prescott, DETR Minister and MP Paddy Tipping will not be happy until they have made all motorists miserable!

*Graham Wadsworth, East Midlands Group*

*See page 11 for a copy of the letter sent to Graham by Paddy Tipping.*

## OBITUARY

As many of you already know, Peter Knagg, former RoW Officer with the Lancashire Group, went missing from his home in May of this year.

On the 10th October his body was found in an area of woodland near his home. He had, unfortunately, been suffering from depression and had taken his own life.

Peter was a well known and popular TRF member who did a lot of RoW research work. He also submitted a number of byway claims, one of which was for Fernyhalgh Lane, where he was found. He will be remembered not least for researching sufficient lanes, many of them short, for a day's trail riding previously not known of, in the Fylde Coast area of Lancashire.

His father wishes to donate to the TRF and the Lancashire Group in particular, his collection of maps and documents relating to his rights of way research.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

### PADDY TIPPING LABOUR MP FOR SHERWOOD

Our Ref : cas/wadsworth

27 June 2000

Mr Graham Wadsworth.  
15 Chillon Way,  
Hucknall,  
NOTTINGHAM.  
NG15 6TH.

Dear Mr Wadsworth,

Thank you for your recent and detailed letter about the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill. The Bill has now completed its Committee Stage (I was not a member of the Committee) and will come back before the Commons later this month. There will be further opportunities to amend the Bill when it progresses to the House of Lords following that.

Rights of Way legislation, as you point out, is detailed, out of date and needs reform. I am sorry to say that I do not support our cause. Motorised traffic on green lanes causes a great deal of damage and nuisance. I have opposed it for many years.

I know my position will disappoint you. Nevertheless, I will make sure that the Environment Ministers in charge of the Bill are aware of your views.

Yours sincerely,

Paddy Tipping M.P.

LOCAL OFFICE  
TEL: (0115-9640314)  
FAX: (0115-9681639)  
E.mail: p.tipping@dial.pipex.com

Sherwood Parliamentary Office,  
1st Floor, Council Offices,  
Watnall Road, Hucknall, Notts. NG15 7LA

MINUTES OF TRF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Held at: the Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham on 29 October 2000

**Welcome:**

The Chairman, David Giles opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and asking that the timetable on the Agenda be followed as closely as possible in order to get through the business of the day. **All Agreed.**

**Present:** See Attendance Book: 59 members were in attendance.

**1. Apologies for absence:** Were received from K. Wilson, G Thomas, A Kind, R Halstead J. Stansfield, S Sharp & W Little.

**1.1 Declaration of Any Other Business:**

Derrick Collins: BMF Seminar 19th Nov. a forum to discuss the problems of running clubs.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the 1999 AGM:** The minutes were approved by the meeting. Proposed by Leo Crone, seconded by Tim Stevens.

**3. Matters Arising:** The Chairman reported that the actions from the previous AGM Minutes had been dealt with by the Executive during the year. There were no other matters arising.

**4. Elected Officers' Reports:** Written reports were also circulated

**Chairman:** David Giles said that in his opinion this had been the best of years and the worst of years for the TRF. Our greatest achievement was in successfully fighting 3 significant court cases from which we had learnt a lot: i.e there is now a well co-ordinated opposition to trail riding; the greater our fighting fund the greater our options; the defence process requires time in the week; we need to ensure the continuation of TRF expertise and - most importantly - that no one group could have survived any of these attacks by themselves.

The worst aspect of the year had been the abysmal support by the Groups for their elected Executive, only 10 of the possible 40+ groups were represented at times. There was a lack of willingness to share the work load, so perhaps we were now at the end of what could be done without paid help to cover work demands during the week.

Looking forward - the sale of farms to become homes for the wealthy will only increase the opposition to trail riding. Coping with this will demand more sensitivity and greater skills on the part of the membership. There is a need too for individual members to be sure in their knowledge of the rights associated with where they are riding, sticking to the agreed TRF code and riding in small unobtrusive groups. There were no questions.

**Membership Secretary:** John Pritchard reported his active stance in getting membership renewals by sending out a series of reminders. The membership now stands at 2926 with 1000 new members this year. The renewal rate has been good with 63% of renewals this year compared to other years.

**Questions:** Ian Walker asked if lapsed members were chased up. John Pritchard explained that more reminders are sent out, and he also asks why they left. He felt this was worthwhile even though it takes time and funds for the postage. Ted Scott asked if an analysis had been done of the reasons people do not renew. John Pritchard felt it might be because some people expect too much hand-holding from the TRF. He noted that if people stay for a couple of years they generally renew for the next five years. Further discussion took place on how to improve membership and where to best advertise, John felt the Website was very good for attracting and informing new members. The Chairman thanked John for his hard work and commitment. **All Agreed.**

**Secretary:** The Chairman gave Karen's apologies for not sending in a report.

**Treasurer:** John Gardner circulated his report along with the financial breakdown for the year. He thanked Jeff Ward and the Finance Sub-Committee for their help in this rather extraordinary year in terms of finance. John explained the costs involved with several court cases, pointing out that even when we win it is not possible to collect 100% of the costs. He reminded members of the fighting fund and the need to continue to donate. John expressed concern that Group funds were still not known. The Accountants being aware that there are further funds within the organisation. John warned the meeting that the membership fee will need to be increased, but also reminded members that it had not changed for the past four years.

**Questions:** Peter Ballard asked what action did you take this year to find out what funds are held by the groups? John explained that a questionnaire was sent to all groups for this information, but most groups did not wish to reveal their finances. But he will continue to ask them. Tim Stevens was concerned that over half the groups did not attend Executive Meetings or send group information to the Secretary. He asked if it is the feeling of the meeting that something should be done about this? Robert Wilson agreed with Tim that the Groups are part of the TRF and should be accountable. Discussion continued on what can be done to ensure groups are accountable, and also to clear up the original misunderstanding about reporting group finances to the Treasurer.

Keith Westley proposed the accounts be adopted, seconded by Ron Carter. The Chairman thanked John for his hard work during the year. **All Agreed**

**RoW Co-ordinator:** Richard Marshall circulated his report stressing the importance of an effective fighting fund to help counter the effects of the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill which will undoubtedly lead to more confusion about vehicular rights in the countryside. He felt the TRF needs to become a more effective lobbying group, although there are helpful ties with the Bridleway Association. The proposals to cap the definitive map in 20 years time will mean that TRF members need to be better trained in research and for public inquiries. However, the need for research may bring opportunities of funding from agencies like the Countryside Agency or DETR.

Richard highlighted the problems of the National Parks trying to ban vehicular recreation. He felt that user led initiatives such as the Hierarchy of Trails Route in the Lake District and a further embryonic one in the Peak Park are the way forward, but these initiatives take time to progress.

Questions: Colin Patient wondered what affect the new National Park areas in the South would have on our recreation. Richard was not sure, but felt that all local users would need to work together in these areas, attending any RoW Liaison meeting, etc. Not leaving it for the National Park to manage users, but for users to manage themselves. Discussion centred mainly on the 'Bill' and its consequences. The Chairman thanked Richard and reminded the meeting that the RoW Co-ordinator post was due for election today. **All Agreed.**

**Public Relations:** Mark Holland reminded members that he receives other organisations' publications and he felt the TRF needs to influence the wording used by farmers, the NFU, Countryside Agency etc in their publications. Mark's report gave a summary of his activities throughout the year, which were many and varied.

Questions: Peter Banks asked how much money horse events had put into the fighting fund. Mark reported that the Gloucester Group had donated £1000 this year. Peter Banks expressed concern about the Golden Horseshoe Event where motorcycle marshals are traditionally organised by the TRF. It was now being run by a non-member so consequently the funds earned were not going into the TRF fighting fund. Mark replied that there was not much that could be done about this kind of situation, but it was incumbent on TRF members to ensure that their hard work was bringing benefit to the Fellowship. Colin Patient reported that several groups were doing horse events, that it is a worthwhile means of raising funds, and he estimated that there were around 60 to 70 man days spent on any one of these events. The TRF gets some good publicity from such events and could possibly benefit from an even closer partnership with the BHS and Endurance Horse Society.

**Editor:** Fred Ellison explained the problems we have with self-censorship in the TRAIL, he was concerned that e-mail communications may lead to a lack of articles for the magazine. He went on to report that Advertising in the magazine had dropped since a more commercial rate had been fixed, but he felt that new advertisers were coming along. Fred noted that inserts with the magazine, such as the recent Lake District Green Road Code, might lead to higher postage. The Chairman thanked Fred and also thanked the lickens and stickers who work hard to get the magazine out. **All Agreed.**

#### 5. Co-opted Officer's Reports:

**Equestrian Events Liaison:** Colin Patient reported that in discussions with the BHS at Stoneleigh it is apparent that predominantly TRF members are helping at horse events. He was disappointed that he doesn't get enough information from the groups about their horse events, even when he asks them, they do not respond. Colin noted that Jackie German has spoken with the British Driving Society, Endurance Horse Society and other long distance horse event groups and they don't appear to have rights of way officers, they tend to leave that to the BHS. Perhaps the TRF could suggest to these groups that we may be more helpful to them than they realise. Discussion continued around these events and the funds they can generate. Jeff Ward was concerned that TRF members are fully insured when doing these events.

**BMF Liaison:** Derrick Collins expressed his gratitude for the response from our delegates in attending BMF Council and AGM meetings. He reminded members that he will be retiring from this position in three months time, which means someone will have to take his place. Tim Stevens asked the members to be aware that the BMF who have backed the TRF in the past, has not the same interest in green lanes as it had. There is a need for someone to replace Derrick and to keep our interests alive within the BMF. The Chairman thanked Derrick for his work over the years. **All Agreed.**

**LARA Liaison:** The Chairman explained that Richard Hawker had stood down from this post during the year and a volunteer was needed for this vital liaison role. The Chairman reported that he had attended the last two LARA Meetings and felt the TRF gets good value from its membership of LARA and through it a contact with other parts of motorsport. The Government will always want to speak to one organisation, not to lots of small ones when discussing policy and LARA has gained a good reputation in this respect. The Chairman was concerned to learn that LARA has had its funding from Sport England reduced over the next four years, and perhaps will get no further funding from them. It will be up to the LARA Members as to what happens; there is the possibility of raising funds through various projects, like the research mentioned earlier.

**Stationery:** Fred Ellison noted that Aelwood Finch is no longer a member of the TRF. He went on to explain that the Stationery has been modified and there are now just two leaflets which John Pritchard distributes. Tim Stevens reminded members that the HoTR routes is an initiative of LARA and wondered whether the TRF might put the LARA Logo on its stationery to remind everyone that we are part of LARA.

**Display Material:** Leo Crone reported the TRF has done several events this year with the display material being sent to various locations. There had been only two occasions when things went wrong, but all sorted now. Jeff Ward asked if the material and boards were insured as he knows the difficulty in claiming from couriers. There was some discussion about the material on display.

**Regionalisation Presentation:** Peter Ballard and Peter Banks gave a presentation about their proposals for Regionalisation of the TRF. This was to ensure that members understood their ideas properly. These proposals have been publicised in TRAIL several times and they were looking to the AGM to ratify their suggestions as a way forward for the TRF.

#### LUNCH

#### Options for the future of the TRF:

In opening the afternoon session The Chairman reminded the meeting of the need to elect officers to the vacant posts, not only for the success of the Fellowship, but to enable business such as cheque signing to continue. Other voluntary organisations were also having difficulty in finding officers. But the TRF was different in that we are fighting to maintain our rights and if there were no volunteers coming forward then we shall have to find a way of funding someone to do the most important jobs. Robert Wilson felt the TRF should speak to the BMF because we ride roads and they



are a riders rights group.

The options before us appeared to be:

- a. Try to continue as before
- b. Regionalisation
- c. Employ a part time executive officer
- d. Dissolution of the central organisation
- e. A rebirth

Steve Pighills asked if the Executive has anyone in mind when we spoke of a paid worker. The Chairman replied that a number of candidates sprang to mind but this was just the start of the discussion and there was no-one specifically in mind. He reminded the meeting that they would still need an Executive Committee to manage a paid worker. Jeff Ward was concerned that when an organisation pays someone to help out, that the person is then lumbered with lots of work and that they then need a paid helper too, so before long you have a whole office of paid workers.

Peter Hope was concerned that the discussion here today should be about finding someone to be Chairman, Secretary and RoW Officer. He felt the meeting was wasting time discussing issues that may not be relevant. The Chairman felt we are heading for an Extraordinary General Meeting as there is no-one in this room willing to be put forward as an officer. There were capable people within the TRF but they were unwilling to contribute as officers. The root cause appeared to be at Group level.

Mark Holland proposed a formal motion to enable a paid contractor to be found, and after discussion on how much we could afford, he proposed *'This meeting authorises the executive to engage paid help to support the Executive Committee until 31.12.01 (maximum £15,000) to be funded by increase in subscription to £30 per annum'*. This was seconded by Tim Stevens. An amendment was then discussed and Mark agreed to add the extra clause - *(pensioners £25)*. The amendment was agreed by the meeting: For 34, Against 5, Abstained 8. The amended motion was then passed: For 40, Against 7, Abstained 4.

Tim Stevens suggested to the meeting that the best way forward was to adjourn today's AGM, as it was not possible to complete business according to Standing Orders. In any case, an EGM was more complicated, took too long to arrange, and required action by a Secretary who was not present. The meeting agreed that this would be done.

The Chairman closed discussion on this topic, to continue with other items on the Agenda.

#### 6. Election of Officers:

The Chairman started the process of voting onto the Executive Committee members who had shown a willingness to continue. However, John Pritchard was concerned that, although he is willing to continue as Membership Secretary, he is unhappy to stand with an unknown committee. He stated that if at the reconvened meeting he was nominated he would stand. The Chairman reminded the meeting that the current Executive Committee is to serve until

the 31 December 2000 and we would need to extend this period to incorporate the reconvened AGM after Christmas. Perhaps it would be better to elect all of the new Executive at that meeting. Similarly it would be sensible to continue current membership of everyone until that date. **The meeting selected Sunday 28th January as the date for reconvening the AGM.**

Mark Holland proposed: *'That we extend the current Executive roles and current membership of the TRF to 31.01.01'*. This was seconded by Colin Patient. Vote: For Unanimous.

Richard Marshall felt there should also be a proposal to wind up the TRF, if the officers cannot be found. He proposed *'To elect an Executive Committee, or to dissolve the TRF at a General Meeting in January 2001'*. This was seconded by Ron Harris. For majority, Against 1, Abstained 4.

At this point the time limit in Standing Orders was suspended to enable the meeting to continue after 4 pm. **All Agreed.**

#### 7. Motions to the AGM:

**Regionalisation:** Proposed amendments to the Constitution printed in TRAIL No: 262, July 2000.

Peter Ballard spoke again to this motion explaining that currently executive representation is poor and this has to be resolved. The members do not get their views heard, because at Executive Meetings only a small number are being represented. At Regional Meetings all the groups in that Region take part. This may also solve the problem of succession to the Executive Committee.

It was clarified that Group reps would be replaced by a smaller number of regional reps at Executive meetings. The Chairman felt the motion should be put to the vote. However, Peter Banks suggested leaving this motion on the table with members having Regional Meetings in December to discuss it more fully. Tim Stevens proposed *'That this motion should lie on the table until the adjourned meeting in January'*. This was seconded by Keith Westley.

Vote: For 30, Against 15. This amendment was accepted. The meeting agreed to bring this motion to the adjourned meeting on 28 January 2001.

#### 8. Any Other Business:

Derrick Collins reminded the meeting that there will be a BMF N&OMC Conference on 19 November 2000, to discuss the problems all clubs are having finding people to fill executive roles. This conference will take place at the ACU Office in Rugby. The Chairman asked for an indication of interest in this room, 6 hands went up.

John Pritchard asked how he should prove that people are pensioners when renewing their membership. It was suggested that a copy of their pension book, or their driving license (which has birthday information) could be used.

#### 9. Date and Place of next meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 5 pm, to be reconvened at 10.30am on 28th January 2001 at the Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham.

## A MAGNIFICENT 6 FROM BRISTOL, AND JOHN, RIDE OUT

Over the last couple of years as the Membership Secretary I have made many reports about things regarding members and the TRF, most of this being mundane though important.

But I am pleased to report on my weekend away with the Gentlemen from the Bristol Group.

About three months ago Martin Harding the Rights of Way Officer for the Group contacted me regarding some TRF business and ended by inviting me for a weekend away with them. This I accepted expecting nothing really to happen, but just a few weeks ago he contacted me and arranged a date, time and place in Rhayader. The Lamb and Flag to be precise and a jolly good B&B it was too with a bunkhouse at the rear. Whilst travelling down to meet them I did become a bit apprehensive, what are these fellows like? How do they ride? I am sure you understand the feeling, though I need not have worried. When I pulled up outside the pub with my trailer with the Gerbil on it I noted the face of a chap standing at the door having a pint light up. He approached me and knowingly said, (as I was locking myself in) are you John, and introduced himself as Steve Cousins from the Bristol Group. We were now joined by Tim Frost, Jason Bamford and big Peter Hopes the shadow puppet champion? (You may well ask). The car park was small and full but like some sort of Krypton Factor quiz the car and trailer was shoehorned in and my Gerbil was locked up. As I turned I was confronted by mine host Martin who proceeded to do something called belly barging, some sort of ritual I am told. I did the honourable thing when challenged by a 17 stone belly barging champion and fell to the ground like a stone and smiled. This of course was all done in the best possible taste; this was the beginning of a really great weekend. I was briefed that young Lee who was in the pub guarding the beer had never ridden the Monks Trod and we were all to let him know just how perilous it was. I shan't bore you with the evening's banter except to say the older you get the better you were.

Next morning was fine but rather hot and we set off towards the Trod splashing through the puddles and streams like kids set loose. I was wondering what if I get stuck, how much help would I get? Who is going to be the first one to have a spill? And with that the front washed away and I am left looking into the eyes of Tim who says, "I wonder if this will be in the run report" as he helped me up. By now my apprehensions have gone, Martin is setting a good pace but is not roaring around, and as a group we have managed, with a lot of team work and effort, to traverse the whole of the Trod. Where Peter found those planks of wood I do not know but he left them for the next lot of travellers passing that way.

As I said it was by now very hot and we were all looking as if we might melt, so into Pontrhydfendigaid to a small shop whose owner must have seen us coming

as he had just enough pies left, without any sell by dates on, but he heated them up for us, made us suitable and copious amounts of tea, and we were off again. To Tregaron for some petrol and to look at the local sights. I think that Lee was quite disappointed with the Monks Trod after all the stories told the night before.

Back now to Strata Florida for a splash through some streams. Never having been there I was very happy to be led. I was given some advice by Peter about not standing on foot pegs for some reason but I think the comment must have been aimed at Tim as he just looked at the ground knowingly, smiled and rode off. The water was shallow and the views good, what a day and more to come. Then I saw Tim come bounding around the corner on foot waving his arms. It would seem that while enjoying the view poor old Lee had fallen off; he was lying in a heap on the track with his bike on top of him. Quickly we resuscitated him. Zip tied his bike back together but alas Lee seemed less that he was. But reassured we pressed on through the splashes and on. Near the end and after Martin's photo shoot there is no sign of Tim so back we go to find him standing in the water trying, though not very hard, to start his DR. We heave it out; obviously he had not taken heed of Peter's earlier warning and stood up on his pegs. Like all DRs it is determined not to start but Peter is equally determined and kicks and kicks the bike, while the rest of us, including Tim, bask on the river bank enjoying the sun. Peter's mighty right leg eventually starts the Beast and we're off again to regroup at the end. Quite where we were I don't know, but as yet Martin has not even looked at a map.

I was left at one point to close a gate and when I looked around everyone had gone, though it was obvious where they had gone, so off I went. Alas I met a farmer who I thought was going to complain when he stopped, but no, he passed the time of day telling me my new found friends were waiting for me by the house. When I met the others they were concerned about me and were just about to turn back. Martin said when we go through this farmyard look for the farmer and give him a wave as we are probably the only people he is likely to see. Through the farmyard and up a steep climb with some treacherous wet rocks on it but we made it and on we went. It was soon apparent that only Martin, Jason and myself were about and we concluded that maybe Peter and Steve had been held up by Lee not being able to make the climb because he was in more pain than he had let on about, so we waited. When they arrived they confirmed our thoughts so we went on very gently. I could go on forever talking about the things you all know about and love but I won't. Except to say we came across what one would think was a puddle. We stopped to look at it and I foolishly went on. It got deeper and deeper and went around a corner, the water was well above the Plimsoll line of the Gerbil. I was expecting at any time to see Dr. Foster (You know, he went to Gloucester) but the end was in sight, it then got deeper, the gerbil spluttered but somehow managed to pull itself out at the other end. Good Girl.

I was quite exuberant at my triumph and waved on the others shouting to keep to the right. Next through was Martin. It was only then that I realised just how deep the puddle was. Poor Martin got within sight of the end and his Husqvarna just stopped. Those that know Martin can guess what he said, those that don't, well

I will let you guess. Now young Lee with his injury made a clean break of it, but Jason managed to find a huge hole on the left and you couldn't even see his saddle. He was hanging on to the bank to stop himself from drowning. Peter and Steve managed to find a way around it (tarts) but got as wet as us rescuing the others. Well Jason's bike was full of water the air box was full to the top with water and all sorts of bits and pieces, but with our engineering skill we got it going and carried on. We kept riding until about 8.30.

The next morning I felt fine and after breakfast was off lane after lane ending up at the Claerwen reservoir for a quick stop and the first look at the map. Whilst in a layby a vehicle pulled up with Ranger written on it. As it pulled up the driver looked at us as though we should respond. Martin asked if we could help. He responded by asking what we were doing, bit of a cheek really, but we went on to talk about the TRF with him. I was surprised, and disappointed to find that he claimed that he had never heard of the TRF and when we mentioned that we have a strict code of conduct he responded by saying he had codes of conduct coming out of his ears and do we really think that it is possible to have some enjoyment in the countryside if you are bound by these. Well Martin soon put him right about this point and I had to agree I had had a fine weekend's riding without infringing any of our rules. I have since written to the head Ranger though he has yet to respond. Let's hope he will so we can all understand each others points of view.

We finished the day's riding back at the B&B having returned via the Monks Trod the other way. More interesting. Back at the digs I was helped to load up, went to wash my hands, came back and everyone had gone, except Martin who told me that the gutsy buggers had gone to the chip shop, so no fond farewells. The best way to end a splendid weekend's riding with fellow TRFers.

Now I mentioned earlier about shadow puppets. Peter while riding along in the sunshine kept making all sorts of hand signals, hand on head, strange hand motions. I just thought like the belly bargaining this was just some strange ritual but my curiosity got the better of me so I asked him. He replied, "I get bored just riding along so I make patterns with my hand in the shadows. "Oh right", I reply. Strange but true.

I would just like to add that I really enjoyed my weekend with those strange buggers from the Bristol Group. We had a truly TRFing good weekend.

*John Pritchard, Nat. Membership Secretary*

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# LETTERS



## HAVE IT OFF, FOR THE FIGHTING FUND.

For the last 20 years I have sported a rather splendid moustache which I believed (probably incorrectly) gave me a rather dashing image. The young ladies in my employ, who are so young they cannot remember 45rpm singles let alone 78's, have suggested I was a little old fashioned and that I ought to have it off (the moustache that is!). Comments about my 'Village People' image and 4 pints of the foaming ale one Friday lunchtime had me agreeing to the removal of my moustache, subject to the assembled audience having a whip round for the TRF Fighting Fund. The sum of £35 was duly raised and with great panache and to the delight of the assembled audience, I was shaved clean by the said young ladies. Well it felt very odd for a couple of weeks but I have persevered and I am definitely getting more attention from the fairer sex or perhaps they are not used to seeing older men with bits of toilet roll stuck on their shaving wounds!!

I have come to the conclusion, having noticed the high incidence of facial hair amongst members of the TRF, that significant fighting funds could be raised if members got into 'sponsored shaving'. So what are you waiting for, 'have it off' for the fighting fund.

*Adam Fletcher.*

## BMF/MAG DIVIDE? - BOG OFF!

Please will the National Committee make meaningful contact with the National Committee of MAG (UK).

MAG (UK) have addressed all the problems that the TRF face now: funding; regionalisation; image and organisation.

MAG (UK) needs an arm considering unsurfaced road use.

By the way ANYBODY who has a BMF/MAG divide problem can BOG OFF!

ANYBODY who has a 'MAG = bad attitude' problem should stick their outdated and bigoted views up their R's.

**ALL MOTORCYCLISTS SHOULD STICK TOGETHER. WE HAVE COMMON GOALS, PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS. WE MUST TALK TO EACH OTHER.**

*Richard Stiling, MAG Member, TRF Member, The Bristol Bike Show Organiser*

## Ed. - AND EVEN MORE FROM A TOTALLY FED UP RICHARD STILING

I am NOT a recreational rider! I pay tax and insurance as a ROAD USER. I expect ALL ROUTES I am entitled to use to be CLEARLY SIGNPOSTED.

I expect a DEFINITIVE map of these routes to be maintained.

I expect the HIGHEST RIGHTS on any highway to be signposted.

If I am on an UNSIGNED HIGHWAY and no vehicular rights exist, I EXPECT

the Highway Authority to be responsible for NOT SIGNING the highway and therefore in breach of their duty to provide me with the necessary information for me to know my rights. Example: I come across a track leading off a surfaced road. It's continuous with the road, there is no gate or pavement crossing, there is no sign or indication that there is a break from road to track, other than a change of surface. This 'track' is obviously a ROAD as it is connected and continuous with the surfaced road network.

To say again, I PAY; for the stupid or ignorant I PAY MONEY.

UNTIL the Councils properly sign all highways THEY are responsible for ANY right of way transgressions caused by THEIR lack of signs.

I PAY for this service, they are not delivering the service they agree to supply. THAT IS CRIMINAL.

Richard Stiling, MAG Member, TRF Member, The Bristol Bike Show Organiser

## TRAIL BIKE SEATS

As Leo Crone pointed out in his comments about the Yamaha TT600, nearly all seats on trail bikes are diabolically uncomfortable. My personal belief is that they are designed by 'stylists' to give the 'aggressive moto-cross image' rather than by ergonomists and shaped to fit the human back-side!

However, help is at hand and with a little bit of info as explained below you can even do it all yourself. To date I have successfully modified seats on KLX650, KLX250, NX650 Dominator and two TTR250s.

# BETA ALP

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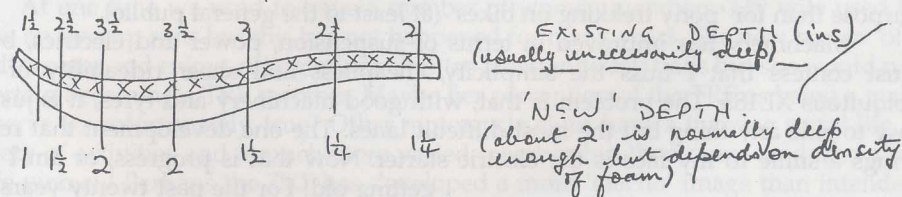
- some soft to firm foam obtained from local market or upholsterers
- impact adhesive
- a hand operated staple gun is unlikely to be powerful enough so I usually do all the preparatory work and then visit a local upholsterer/furniture restorer, cross his palm with silver and persuade him to fire in the heavy duty staples. He's also probably better at stretching and persuading your original seat cover back into place.

The chances are that your seat will also be lowered by between 1 and 1.5" which is an added bonus for 'them of us what was born with their back-sides nearer to the ground'.

George Cherry, Herts.

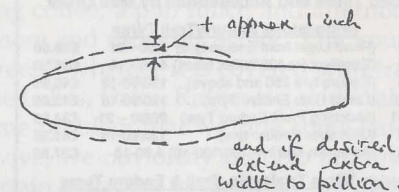
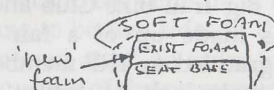
## MAKING TRAIL BIKE SEATS COMFORTABLE.

- 1) Remove seat cover
- 2) using long fine needle or hot-pin plot a profile of foam depth



- 3) using a serrated bread-knife or electric corner cut across horizontally to new profile

- 4) using spare foam cut-off build outwards



- 5) glue soft foam on top & contour edges
- 6) stretch existing seat cover back over - work in hot sun, or use hair-dryer start stapling from the middle & work towards ends. you'll need a powerful compressed air staple gun.

## EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

I reckon that I have now been a member of the TRF for just about 20 years and this leads one to consider the changes that have occurred in this time. When I joined there were considerable concerns that we would lose the rights to many green lanes, so no change there! Due to the dedication and sheer hard work of many individuals, we have established ourselves as the rights of way specialists and, despite the

problems we are now having, it looks as though we can continue to enjoy our pastime for a while longer.

My first run as a TRF member consisted of an incredible day in the Yorkshire Dales, lasting from 9:30 to 18:30 and I enjoyed every minute of it, including Mastiles Lane in the dark and the pouring rain! We never used to bother too much about group sizes and runs regularly used to have ten to fifteen riders. When I started leading runs myself, I had to marvel at the skill of experienced leaders like Tim Stevens, Keith Westley and Peter Halstead who made it all look so easy. Trying to please all the people all the time was always impossible and I shudder to think of the basic mistakes I made and still do! Nowadays, I am not really happy with taking our maximum of six members, preferring even smaller groups of two or three. Other people must feel the same way, since the number of people prepared to take the responsibility of leading group runs seems to be on the wane and the number of small, 'unofficial' runs seem to be on the increase. There is nothing wrong with this but I can't help thinking there must be a better way to get more members involved. Equipment has changed over the last twenty years. No longer do we have to put up with waxed cotton suits, thank heavens, but the trend towards 'gladiatorial' styled clothing suggests a different purpose than for 'pony trekking on bikes' (at least to the general public).

Machinery has improved in terms of suspension, power and electrics, but I must confess that I miss the simplicity, cheapness and sheer rideability of the ubiquitous XL185. The problem is that, with good machinery and tyres, it is just so easy to ride any thing but the most difficult lanes. The one development that really brings a smile to my face is the electric starter. Now that is progress, or am I just

getting old! For the past twenty years we have been organising runs which involve taking a group over as many lanes as we can fit in a day and, apart from marshalling at horse events, there has been very little in the way of alternative activities. Recently I attended a meeting of the Big Trail Bike Club and found that it was made up of a fair proportion of disgruntled ex-TRF members. The nature of their lack of 'grunt' seems to be concerned with the TRF's perceived obsession with finding the hardest lanes and trying to ride them all in one day, resulting in worn out bikes and bodies. Apart from one or two BTBC members who seem interested in high-speed tarmac riding, maybe they have a point.

I love a hard day out on the trail as much as anyone, but I don't want to do Walna Scar every week. Variety is the spice of life, so there are other ways to enjoy motorcycles and the countryside. Since joining the TRF I have developed a

love of old maps and a keen interest in history. It is amazing what echoes of times gone by still exist in our countryside if you know where to look. I must confess to an insatiable curiosity with regards to what lies down each and every lane whether it is surfaced with tarmac or grass.

Recently I have been attempting to promote 'discovery runs' where riders can practice their map reading and take time to explore quiet lanes while enjoying a relatively stress free day in the country. One such run started from Tesco car park, Chorley and progressed in a big 70-mile circle around the Southport plain. There were 30 possible clues with map references, a morning coffee stop and a pub lunch stop. The trail riding was minimal (and optional) and the run was accessible for any number of machines, solo or two up. This type of event is not new but we do not tend to cater for members who just want to have a few hours out on a bike, some time for socialising and a chance to explore some quiet lanes. We do, however, neglect some interesting areas simply because there is not a suitable density of trails. Perhaps we need to be treating trails as a bonus to a ride out rather than the sole reason for it. It would appear that we are not only losing members but also losing members who could have a positive influence on the TRF.

At one time we used to have a number of women members. My wife used to come on two-up runs but this has not happened for many years. She now has an 'off-road' scooter and enjoys riding minor country lanes and easy trails but she would not entertain becoming a TRF member. Maybe her perception of the TRF as being a male preserve is, unfortunately, true? Other motorcycle clubs have a thriving social life, a variety of activities and a much more varied membership than ours - and also a lot more women! Perhaps the TRF has developed a more 'macho' image than intended and in doing so we are intimidating potential members and discouraging new members. I don't mind admitting that I am now leaning towards the gentler side of trail riding, and the attraction of being up to my knees in mud trying to pull a bike out of a bog is waning somewhat! Now, morning coffee, a pub lunch and afternoon tea with some riding in between is becoming more and more attractive. Our country's rich variety is out there waiting to be discovered, whether it is covered with trails or not. We tend to stick to the same areas, i.e. the Lakes, Dales, Ridgeway, mid-Wales etc. It certainly seems to be two sides to the same problem that we ride some lanes too much and others not at all. In order to survive, we obviously need to improve our image by taking some of the pressure off certain areas but in doing so, we also need to evolve. Any ideas?

*Rodger Davies, Lancs Group*

## REPLY TO MR. M. J. COLLINS

Firstly may I congratulate Mr. M. J. Collins on his powers of observation. As noted by him, trail riding members of the Bexleyheath & District Motorcycling Club Ltd. (50% of whom which are also active T.R.F. members) do everything possible to be courteous and ultra considerate towards walkers, horse riders, dogs and dog walkers, etc. as we are very aware that good P.R. is so important at this time, with our much loved pastime under threat from so many sources.

We now have the policy that riders who think they are in a 'permanent enduro' are told to behave themselves or not come out again and likewise anyone on a noisy bike gets one warning and then we refuse to take them out - run leader's decision is final. If all run organisers adopted these standards I think we would have a lot less

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problems.

However, Mr. Collins, I would suggest that in future, before you show your ignorance by accusing the Bexleyheath & District M.C.C. of freeriding on the efforts of the T.R.F., you get your facts straight as the Bexleyheath Club recently contributed the sum of £500 (five hundred pounds) to the T.R.F. Fighting Fund, as did the S.E. Centre A.C.U. and contributions have been made by many organisations (not all motoring) and many private individuals. Incidentally the T.R.F. Kent Group have donated a total of £600 in the last 3 years, most of which was given to the Group in appreciation of their assistance in running and marshalling at horse enduros.

Let us hope we will all be out there riding our bikes for many years to come, including Mr. Collins, when he has finished scraping the omelette off his face!

*Mike Hembrough, Director & Treasurer of Bexleyheath & District Motor Cycling Club Limited and Treasurer of Kent Group TRF*

## THE FUTURE OF THE TRF

What a massive loss it would be if the TRF would fold - this is the situation we face this January 2001 if this valuable organisation does not act now. I write following the Ribble Valley monthly TRF meeting where issues following the recent national meeting of the TRF committee were discussed.

The TRF executive cannot continue to work without recompense. They need our financial input to help support them in co-ordinating the trail riding movement and preserving the activity we all enjoy. We need the "financial muscle" of having a pot of money to draw from to support RoW activities, being able to pay for legal representation to defend our right to continue to use what we perceive as legal lanes. We need people on the executive committee who have the time and commitment (financial backing) to support the aims of the TRF.

The present annual fee of £20.00 (3000 members = £60,000) should increase to at least £30.00 (£90,000). Most of us, I am sure, would stump up £50.00 (£150,000). This, as I see it, would provide a fair income for key executive members and build sufficient funds to provide the power to defend what we all love for the future.

Please support our TRF.

*Dr. John Zak, Ribble Valley TRF Group, Clitheroe*

Ed. - The national meeting of the TRF committee was actually the Annual General Meeting of the TRF to which all members are invited. This was adjourned until Sunday 28th January 2001 when it is hoped to resolve these problems.

## PLEASE NOTE

Aelwood Finch is no longer Keeper of Stationery.

Stocks of leaflets and membership forms are available from John Pritchard, your National Membership Secretary.

Stocks of letterheads and compliments slips are available from Fred Ellison, your TRAIL Editor.

*See inside front cover for details of how to contact John and Fred.*

## CLASSIFIED

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**HONDA TL125 "S"** 1978 "S" reg. Tax and MOT, Sammy Miller exhaust. Home made loom. Also manual and most original bits. Very low seat, very light and very economical (120 mpg!). superb little green laner. £495 ono. Can deliver most areas. Tel: 0831 476839 (days) or 01254 209683 (eve & w.e.) (Blackburn, Lancs.)

**XR250 RT "P"** reg, T&T, new rear tyre, C&S, pads, sensible extras and lots of spares. VGC. £1700 ono. Tel: 07957 887471 (Derbys).

**SUZUKI LT80 QUAD Y2K** model. Absolutely as new, approx. 6 hrs use. Auto, e/start. Suit 7-14 years. £1700 ono. Tel: 01258 837340 (Dorset).

**YAMAHA DT MX175 "W"** reg. T&T 2001. £400 or exchange Serow plus cash. Tel: 01947 893254.

**WANTED** Suzuki DR350S front and rear wheels

(cush drive type), rear shock, DEP tail pipe, rear rack, will collect in UK. Tel: 01908 261656.

**YAMAHA XT350** Latest model "J" reg 1991. 8000 miles. Used only 5 times off-road. Excellent condition throughout. Black with red trim. Sump guard, new all chrome Micron exhaust, bark bashers, service history, Datatag security system. £1490. Tel: Paul 01869 345060 (Bicester).

**FOR SALE BMWF650** Arrow Tail Pipe. VGC. £150 ono. Tel: 01494 474807.

**KTM LC4 1999** Low seat elec. start trail bike. Only 550 mostly road miles. CRD exhaust/extras. £2995. **Dainese Cordura Desert Suit** blue/red, s. 54, zip out lining/armour. Virtually as new, £100.

**Alpinestars** size 10, black, as new, £50. **AR41 MX4** size 57/58, white with unique Union Jack design. Worn 3 times, as new, £50. Tel: 01285 740279.

**SUZUKI DR350 1996 "N"** reg. E/start, Acerbis tank, frame guards, 1 owner, new toy forces sale. Offers. Tel: 0116 2833376 (Leicester).

**HONDA XLR250** for sale. 1992 with year's MOT and tax. Nicely equipped for road and trail (Renthals, s/20 chain, etc.). Just been serviced and 'greased'. New bike means reluctant sale. £1300. Tel: Phil 01625 875642 (Cheshire).

**KTM LC4 400cc**. White, electric start. '98 "S" reg, 3000 miles. Ex. condition, loads of spares inc. road wheels. £2400 ono. Tel: Paul 0208 801 8203.

**HONDA XR400 1999 "S"** reg. 1 owner from new. Only 3800 kms. Taxed June '01. Extras include Renthals, alloy bashplate, Acerbis Rallypro handguards, Vortip exhaust insert. £2800 ono. Tel: Geoff 0114 236 3825.

**CRM250 MklII, "H"** reg. Tax & tested. Full road equipment. Renthals and hand guards fitted. Redundancy forces regrettable sale. £1495 ono. Tel: 01873 880061 (South Wales).

**SWAP, SELL, PX, CASH EITHER WAY "K"** reg Saab 9000CD XS. CD player, ABS brakes, air con., very good condition. Sell for £1895 ono. Wanted dirt bike preferably CRM Mk3. May consider others. **Armstrong MT500** Very good condition. Much money spent new tyres, etc. "E" reg. £850 ono. Tel: 01254 721897 (Blackburn).

**HONDA XR250R 1998 "S"** reg. 4000km. UK bike. Excellent condition. Good tyres. Sensible trail mods. £2400. Tel: 01282 770291 (w), 01282 776211 (h) or 0802 835953 (m).

**DR350 SEX 1999**. Black "T" reg. Taxed, 4000 miles, green lane use. Good condition. £2175. Tel: Peter 07980 237889.

**KAWASAKI KLX650 1993**. 17000 miles. 99% road use. Carefully maintained. Long tax/MOT. £100s spares. Bargain £1650. Tel: 01257 241289 (Chorley, Lancs.).

**HONDA VFR400** Road bike, "K" reg. Good condition. Trial bike forces sale. offers. Tel: John 01827 286692.

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