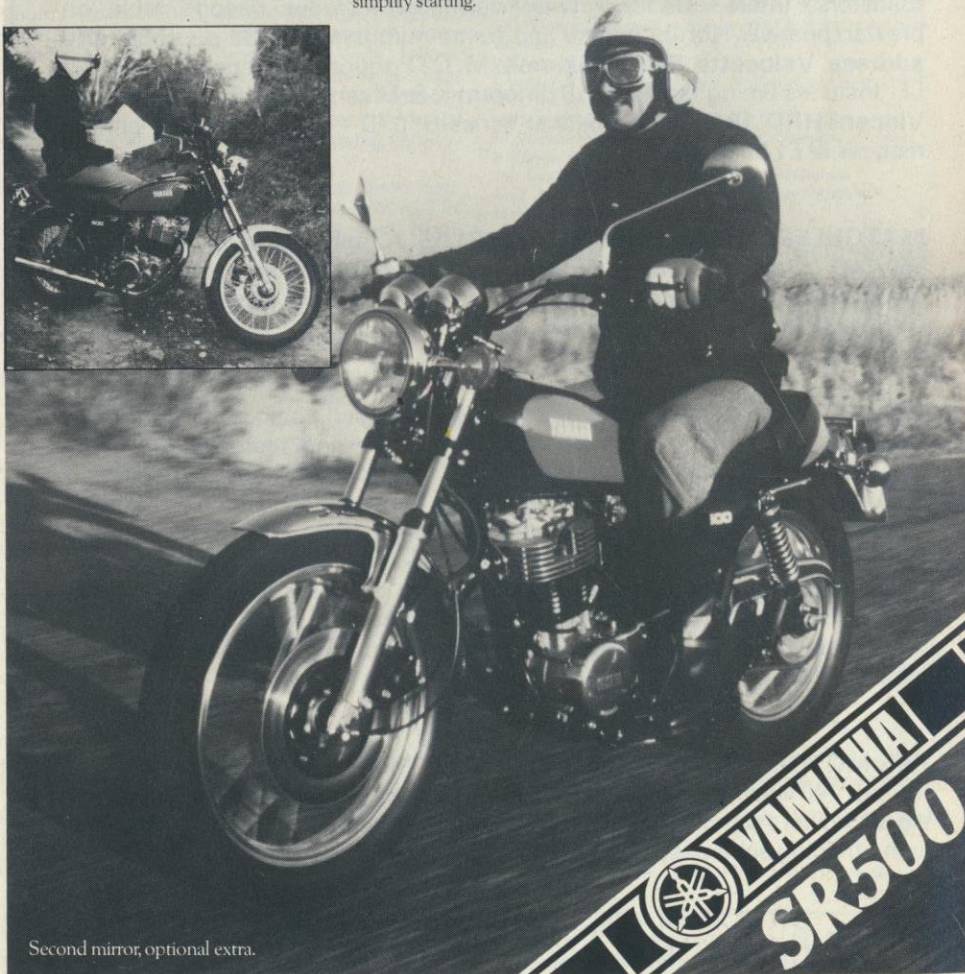


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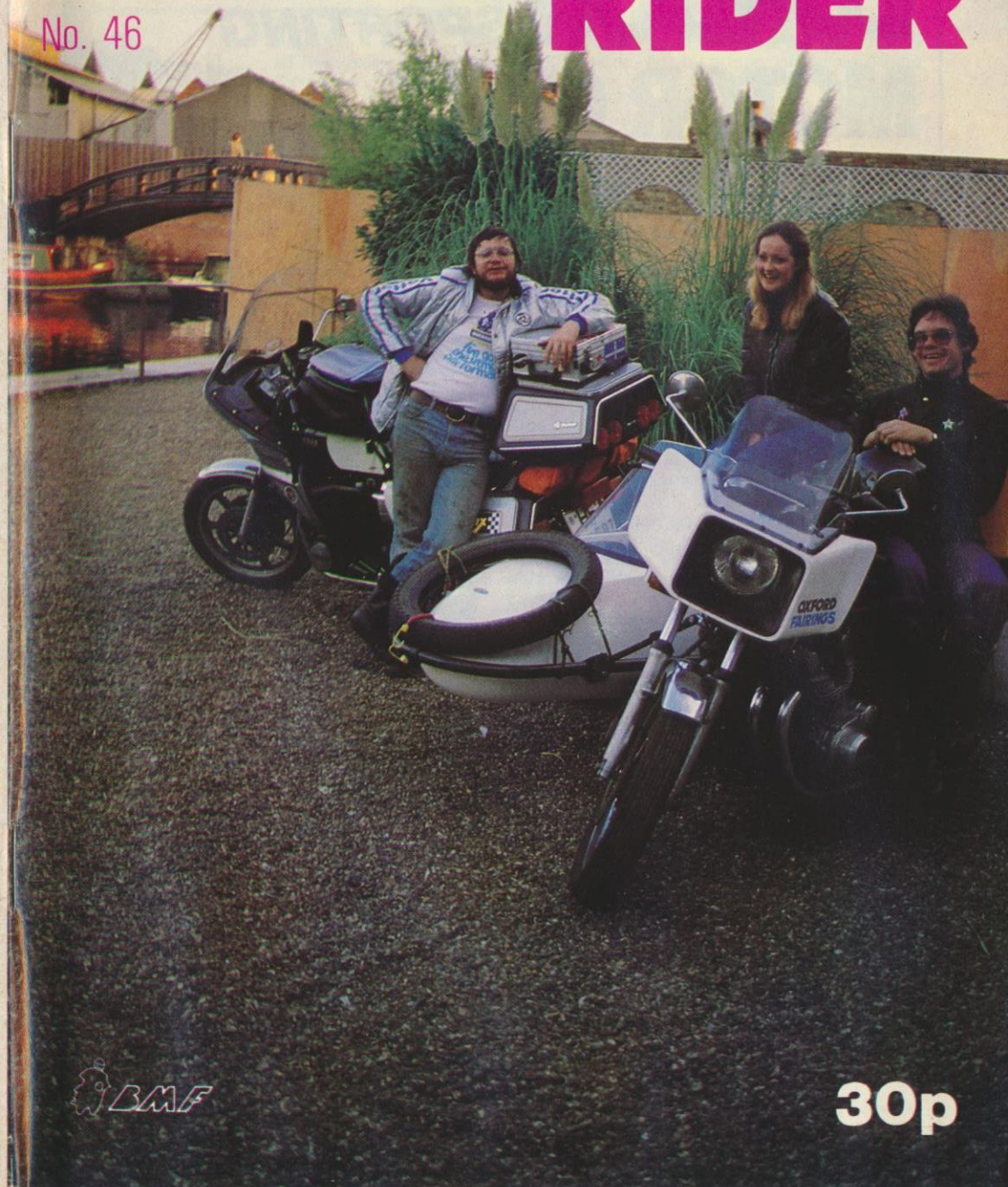


Second mirror, optional extra.

# MOTORCYCLE RIDER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1980

No. 46



BMF

30p



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# MOTORCYCLE RIDER

No. 46

THE JOURNAL OF THE ISSN 0306-1647  
BRITISH MOTORCYCLISTS FEDERATION

## OUR VIEW

### GOOD TIMES IN THE '80S?

This issue of *Motorcycle Rider* is the first to carry a 1980 dateline, but by a quirk of the publishing world it should reach you a few days before Christmas 1979. As such it links two decades and provides an ideal opportunity to reflect on the decade just past and look to the 1980s.

Motorcycling in the 1970s has been characterised by exciting and rapid developments in machinery on the one hand, and an ever-increasing bureaucratic attempt to restrict our sport on the other. One may have been partly responsible for the other, but what happened in the '70s was really only an extension of the Nanny State mentality that blossomed in the '60s.

My own motorcycling career—like many others—began in earnest with the new decade on my 16th birthday in February 1970, and those were heady days indeed. Honda had just introduced the revolutionary CB750; petrol was about six bob a gallon; insurance cost about a tenner; helmet compulsion was still a long way off; and the whole motorcycling world looked set to follow Kawasaki's advice and let the good times roll.

Good times they were, too. Honda's Four was soon followed by Kawasaki's eyeball-popping 750cc two-stroke triple; Tridents and Rocket 3s were still a force to be reckoned with on the track; and the Japanese introduced a plethora of highly desirable middleweights that gave motorcycling a badly needed touch of pizzazz. *Bike* magazine arrived on the scene at its irreverent best and shook up the staid world of motorcycle journalism. Kawasaki (again!) proved with the Z1 that ultra-high performance and reliability could go hand in hand.

Unfortunately, the writing was already on the wall. In 1971 passenger insurance was made compulsory for motorcyclists—a factor which has been largely responsible for our rocketing premiums ever since. This was followed shortly afterwards by the raising of the licence age for motorcycles to 17, and in 1973 the wearing of helmets was made compulsory. Since then we have had to weather calls for an outright ban on motorcycles, compulsory daytime headlights, a curfew on learner riders, maximum bhp limits, lower capacity limits, compulsory dayglo clothing, and a seemingly endless list of half-baked 'instant' solutions to reduce motorcycle accidents.

The BMF had fought compulsory passenger insurance and helmets for more than 10 years successfully, but had always been working

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### FRONT COVER

*A London backdrop for two machines now en route for Africa. Peter Thoeming and three companions were sitting in Dingwall's in the background when they hatched a plan to take them to the sun for the winter. The bikes are a Suzuki GS750/Squire sidecar and a Yamaha XS1100. You can read all about preparation for the five-month trip on page 16, and Peter will be keeping us posted on his progress in the months ahead. (photo: J. P. Thoeming).*

The views published in *Motorcycle Rider* are those of its correspondents and not necessarily those of the Editor or of the British Motorcyclists Federation Ltd.

(continued on page 18)



**2 EITHER WAY — WE LOSE!**

It seems you just can't win. Early in 1979 the BMF scored a notable success when its arguments caused the Government to drop plans for a ban on motorcycles of over 100 bhp. This followed the introduction of a 'voluntary' ban on bikes producing over 100 bhp in Germany at the end of 1978.

Unfortunately, Honda's CBX production is too small (by Honda standards) to make it economical to produce a separate model for Germany. So for 1980 the mighty six has had its horsepower trimmed from 103 to 98 for all countries. According to *Cycle* in the United States, the 1980 model is down from the shattering 11.55-second/117.49-mph quarter mile of the original CBX to a mere 12.16/111.11. It's still one of the quickest and most exciting motorcycles in the world, but we think the whole saga amply demonstrates the global implications of restrictive motorcycle legislation in only one country.

**US HELMET LAW HAS FAILED**

Helmet laws in the United States have failed to achieve their objective of reducing the number of injuries and fatalities after motorcycle accidents, according to figures in a recently published document by Gary Winn, legislative analyst of the American Motorcyclist Association.

He highlights the immense problems in correlating accident data from each of the American states because of the widely differing statistical bases and accident-reporting procedures. However, he did find 18 states where valid comparisons could be made, and went on to analyse the fatality/accident ratio in these states—all of which had implemented a helmet law.

The average fatality/100 accidents ratio for all years before helmet laws were enacted is 2.688 compared with 2.562 after helmet laws. Applying a common statistical test shows there is no significant difference between these averages. If helmet legislation did significantly decrease fatalities, the 'before' ratio would have had to exceed 3.875 or the 'after' ratio would have had to be smaller than 1.375. The actual difference is not large enough to exceed what might be normally expected to occur by chance alone.

'These results indicate that helmet laws in these statistically comparable states did not reduce the number of fatalities to motorcyclists that occur in a given number of accidents,' says Winn. In other words, compulsory helmet laws are no more than legislative window dressing; not only do they infringe the freedom of the individual—the laws don't even work!

**100 ATTEND BMF AGM**

More than 100 riders attended the ninth annual general meeting of the BMF at the Manor Hotel, Meriden, on 14 October. They represented 58 member clubs—the highest number ever represented at a BMF AGM.

The meeting approved the minutes of the 1978 AGM and unanimously adopted the annual report and accounts for the year ended 30 June 1979. The existing directors were re-elected for another term, with the exception of Harry Louis whose overseas motorcycling business commitments forced him to step down. However, he has accepted the invitation of the Executive Committee to stay on as a vice-president. The BMF sub-committee members and the auditor were also re-elected.

With the official business of the day completed, BMF insurance adviser Geoff Pedlar spoke on insurance and answered questions from members about the new BMF insurance scheme. Dr Alfred Minter gave the meeting a full report on the work of the Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Rider Training set up by the Department of Transport and on which he was the BMF representative, and Geoff Wilson followed this by outlining the BMF's policy on training.

Other matters raised by the meeting included type approval, BMF publicity, regionalisation, the state of our roads, noise limits, compulsory helmets, daytime lights, and green lanes riding.

A synopsis of the BMF's annual report is published on page 12.

**BMF AT JANUARY SHOW**

You can see the latest BMF badges and regalia and discuss all aspects of road motorcycling with Federation officials at two shows in January and February. We'll be on stand 41 at the Racing and Sporting Motorcycle Show in the New Hall of the Horticultural Halls in London from 12-20 January.

You'll also find us at the Midlands Show in Walsall from 21-24 February.

*Below is the latest BMF sticker. It's just over 4 x 2 in and costs 20p. Round sticker on page 12 is 15p. Order from Jack Wiley and add 10p postage.*



*Practising what he preaches is Kenneth Clarke, Under-Secretary of State for Transport. Mr Clarke is keen to see all new riders taking training, so when he visited the STEP headquarters in Birmingham in October he took basic training and was soon threading through the cones with other trainees. He had never ridden a motorcycle before.*

**DOT REPORT ON TRAINING**

The long-awaited report of the Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Rider Training, set up by the Department of Transport, was finally published at the end of October after its findings had been leaked to the *Daily Telegraph*. The BMF's representative on the committee, Dr Alfred Minter, reports on the work of the committee on page 9.

The key findings of the report are that training should remain voluntary but that compulsion should be introduced if the proportion of riders taking training does not reach about 75% within three years.

It recommends a two-part test for learner motorcyclists aged 17 and above. The first part would be taken at an approved training course, conducted by one of the training organisations, or at a DoT centre. The second part would be taken on the road and conducted by DoT examiners. Learner riders should be restricted to machines with a maximum of 12 bhp, says the report.

A majority of the committee recommended that 16-year-olds who have passed the moped test be allowed to ride a motorcycle up to 12 bhp. The report further recommends that central Government should continue to encourage riders to take training through publicity, and provide financial support for local authorities towards the cost of establishing further training centres.

The report is now being considered by the Minister of Transport.

**3 GREEN CARDS WITH THE BMF**

Green card charges under the BMF insurance scheme will be based upon the nett premium paid, and not a fixed sum. There will be a £3 minimum charge, and rates for the Irish Republic will be half those for other countries. For policyholders in London, Glasgow, and the Lancashire conurbation, rates will be 7½% of annual premium for 1-8 days; 12½% for 9-15 days; and 15% for 16-30 days. Rates for other areas will be 10%, 15% and 20% respectively.

**MPS GET FACTS WRONG**

Tom Torney, MP for Bradford South, is getting up a petition to have compulsory training introduced for motorcycles. He said motorcyclists are a menace on the roads. 'I think they are a real source of danger,' he is quoted as saying in the *Halifax Courier*. 'I sit in my car and I am appalled at what happens in front of me. They swerve round my car and then the next one, and figures show that an enormous number of accidents are caused by motorcycles'.

The figures show no such thing, Mr Torney, as you would discover if you examined them. What they do show is that an enormous number of accidents involving motorcycles are caused by cars—75% of all car/bike accidents, in fact.

A similar lack of understanding is apparent from Transport Under-Secretary Kenneth Clarke, according to a report in *Surveyor* magazine, which attributes to Mr Clarke the statement that one in four of all teenage deaths is caused by a motorcycle. Wrong again! It may well be that 25% of teenage deaths occur on motorcycles, but that is entirely a different matter.

**FANNING THE LIGHTS-ON FIRE**

The Leader in the last issue of *Motorcycle Rider* has certainly achieved its aim in starting a creative debate on the subject of riding with lights on in broad daylight. The matter received coverage in both motorcycle weeklies. MCW got the wrong end of the stick first time around but published a clarification three weeks later, while MCN saw fit to write a Leader on the subject, disagreeing with the BMF view. Chairman Bruce Preston was given the right of reply in MCN two weeks later. On page 29 of this issue we publish a reply from Ken Huddart of the GLC Road Safety Unit, the body whose recommendation of daytime headlight use prompted our editorial in the first place. The BMF is now more convinced than ever that ill-advised recommendations on headlight usage be challenged before the whole preposterous notion gets completely out of hand. You'll be hearing a lot more on the topic in the coming months.



**4 REPS NEEDED IN MIDLANDS**

Now that Jeff Stone has taken on the role of BMF public relations officer in addition to his responsibilities as area representative for the West Midlands and Wales, he requires one or two assistants.

A BMF regional representative needs to know BMF policy on a wide range of topics and be able to explain this to clubs as well as handling any queries that arise from other members in his or her region. Anyone interested in this post would work initially with Jeff until he or she felt able to take over, although Jeff would still be there to lend assistance.

Ideally two reps are required—one for the West Midlands and another for Wales. At a time of rapidly increasing membership it is important to continue to run these regions effectively. This is your chance to put something back into motorcycling and really get involved. Any member interested in either post should phone or write to Jeff (address on page 7).

**SUCCESSFUL DANBURY MEETING**

The inaugural meeting of the NE London and Essex BMF region, held in Danbury on 17 November, attracted 51 riders. Eleven clubs were represented, including one non-affiliated club, and a number of individual members attended. The BMF insurance scheme was explained and attracted a great deal of interest. Trouble at rallies was a major topic of concern, and it was agreed that secretaries of rally-oriented clubs in the region would get together under the chairmanship of BMF regional representative John Ross to discuss the matter.

Training and the BMF's role on the DoT advisory committee were discussed, while other items included conspicuity, the BMF Rally, and the BMF's success in preventing a ban on 100-bhp-plus motorcycles. John is preparing an agenda for the next NE London and Essex meeting in March, and would welcome items for inclusion from clubs and individuals in the region. His address is on page 7.

**BIBLE FOR LAVERDA OWNERS**

An absolute must for every Laverda owner is a new 175-page book by Tim Parker entitled 'Laverda twin and triple repair and tune-up guide'. The manual is a blessing for Laverda enthusiasts who, until now, have had no workshop manual dealing with their machines.

Parker is an enthusiastic motorcyclist and Laverda owner who has used his experience with the Haynes and Osprey publishing companies to put together a comprehensive shop manual which has been checked and approved by the

factory. It's not cheap at £12.50 plus 85p postage and packing, but the drawings, photos, and descriptive text should make it money well spent. The author has drawn on the experience and assistance of Laverda importers Slater Brothers in the UK, dealers and owners everywhere, and has spent six years researching the content.

The Laverda manual is available from Dept WP, Slater Bros, Collington, near Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4NB.

**BMF REPLY TO YORKSHIRE POST**

BMF members and motorcyclists in general responded well to a series of articles in the *Yorkshire Post* in October. The series itself was largely an accurate and informative treatment of the motorcycle accident problem, but was marred by sensational headlines and the repeated use of a logo which depicted a headstone adorned with L-plates and a helmet. Local motorcycle accidents were included daily as a postscript which amounted to little more than scare-mongering.

BMF public relations officer Jeff Stone wrote to the *Post* explaining why compulsory training is opposed by the Federation, and clarifying a number of other points. The letter was published in full, along with several others from the paper's motorcycling readership. Our thanks to BMF members Chris Griffiths of Otley, West Yorkshire, and MCR advertiser Tony Hepworth for making sure that we received a full set of cuttings from the series. Members are asked to send anti-motorcycling cuttings to their BMF regional rep.

**VISIT TT WITH THE BMF**

The Individual Membership section is repeating the successful scheme pioneered in 1979 for first-time visitors to the TT races. Any member who has not previously visited the Island and who wishes to be included in a small conducted party leaving Liverpool on Friday 30 May, should contact (with s.a.e.) Eric Stromberg, The Acorns, Rectory Chase, Dodinghurst, Brentwood, Essex (Tel: 0277 821474). Act quickly as ferry bookings must be made without delay.

**200TH CLUB JOINS BMF!**

The BMF has just scored a double century with the affiliation of its 200 member club—the Roundheads MCC of Newark in Nottinghamshire. BMF local rep Bob Osborn will be presenting the club with a commemorative tankard in the near future. Meantime the growth continues: already we are up to 206 clubs! Welcome to you all, and particularly to the Roundheads.

**HELMET IN A HAT TRAP**

Just arrived on the market is an ingenious new device called a Hat Trap, designed to keep your helmet dry and secure when left with your machine. Basically it comprises a double-skinned nylon duffel bag lined with a flexible mesh of high tensile stranded steel wire. The wire is linked at intervals by swaged ferrules, and the links are threaded by a 3-mm steel draw-wire at the mouth of the bag.

One end of this draw-wire is fitted with a swaged eye and padlock, and the other end is threaded through a tapered cleat, known as the Wire-Lok, which allows the free length of the draw-wire to be adjusted to suit individual machines. When the padlock shackle is passed through the Wire-Lok the draw-wire cannot be adjusted further.

The idea is that you put your helmet in the bag, draw the mouth closed, place the bag on the dualseat, thread the 58-inch-long draw-wire through the rear wheel, pull it taut, and snap the padlock shut. Your helmet is then safe from all but the most determined thief equipped with sophisticated wire-cutters, it's dry, and the bike is locked as well.

We have been trying a pre-production example for three months now and are pleased with the results. Ours was not fitted with the Wire-Lok or the padlock, so we merely attached it to the motorcycle's normal helmet lock (see picture). With the added sophistication of the Wire-Lok and padlock it would offer even greater protection.

The Hat Trap folds into a tight bundle which takes up little space in a bag but is a little too large to stuff in a seat tail. It comes in 13 different colours or shades and sells for less than £10. For full details write to Hat Trap Ltd, 2 Water Street, Ramsey, Isle of Man; send 'em a tenner and they'll post you a Hat Trap complete.



**SOUTH-WEST SHOW SUCCESS**

The BMF stand was a notable success at the South-West Motorcycle Show in Pontins Holiday Camp, Breen, on 17 and 18 November. More than 5,000 attended the show, and both membership enrolment and sales of *Motorcycle Rider* reached healthy levels. Doug Baker and Jeff Stone and their band of helpers were responsible for the BMF stand, and they report a better awareness of the Federation and its policies in the area this year than last.

**HELP US END DIESEL MENACE**

We need readers' help in combating the danger of spilt diesel on our roads. The BMF Legislative and Technical sub-committee is working to publicise the danger on national television—but we need your recommendations on suitable sites for filming where spilt diesel is an almost constant threat to motorcyclists. Please write to the editor if you know of a real troublespot.

**BMF ON BSI COMMITTEE**

The BMF is to be represented on the Personal Safety Standards Committee PSS/4/2 of the British Standards Institution by John Ross, who is the BMF area representative for NE London and Essex. This committee deals with visors and goggles, and John hopes to ensure that some degree of scratch resistance is incorporated into future BSI standards.

**MUTUAL AID SCHEME EXPANDS**

Twenty-four new names have been added to the BMF Mutual Aid Scheme lists, bringing the total to 83. These are members who are willing to provide assistance to other members whose machines have broken down in their locality. The full list is available from Nigel Graves, membership secretary of the individual membership section, whose address is on page 32. A further 35 names have been added to the list of dealers offering attractive discounts to BMF members, and this list will be published in the next issue of *Motorcycle Rider*.

**THE 'BROTHER' JOINED UP!**

In the last issue we published a picture of BMF Executive member Geoff Wilson's two brothers, Robert and Alan, at the opening of the IAM test centre at Kendal. Robert was the first motorcyclist to be examined in Cumbria, and Alan is the local IAM examiner. We pointed out that Alan was the only non-BMF member among the three. This made him feel sufficiently guilty to join forthwith—ah, the power of the press!



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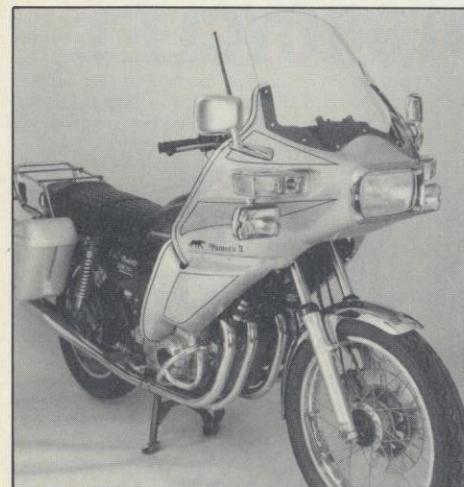


CB900FZ Specification: Air cooled, four cylinder In-Line, DOHC. Bore and Stroke: 64.5 x 69.0 mm (901 cc). Torque: 7.9 kg/m at 8,000 rpm. Power: 95 ps (DIN) at 9,000 rpm. Fully transistorised ignition with mechanical advancer. 5 speeds. Twin Front Discs, Single Rear Disc. R.R.P. £2,099. inc. VAT.

# THE HONDA 900. IT SEPARATES THE BIKES FROM THE TOYS.



## NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS



*This is the recently introduced Pantera II fairing, claimed to be far superior in design and construction to Pantera I. It incorporates running lights, a hydraulic headlamp adjuster as an option, and a built-in console to accommodate four instruments, a radio/cassette player, plus switches and an aerial. Looks like a British rival for the American Vetter, but we have no price details yet.*

### 1980 FIM RALLY DETAILS

The 1980 FIM Rally will be held at Ettelbruck in Luxembourg from 15 to 17 May. This will be the 35th in the event's history. Entry will cost £35 but this includes drinks, meals, and all the usual rail or coach excursions to places of interest. Both hotel and camping accommodation will be available.

All individual members of the BMF or members of clubs affiliated to the BMF or ACU are eligible to enter. If you are interested in helping to boost British attendance at the Rally, write for an entry form to Geoff Wilson, 4 Scaur Close, Lazonby, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1BT. Last year more than 400 entry forms were requested but less than 100 were returned. Please try not to waste Geoff's time in this way.

### THANKS TO SHOW HELPERS

It was almost inevitable that we should forget one or two worthies when we recorded our thanks for assistance at our Earls Court show stand in the last issue. We are extremely grateful to all those who gave up their free time to help man the stand, but our particular thanks go to Eddie Martinez who devoted a week's holiday to running the stand, and also to those members of the Wimbledon Club who took it in turns to man the stand on the first Sunday of show week. Don't know what we'd do without you!

### DROP IN ON JOHN CARR

We were very sorry indeed to hear that John Carr, an active and longstanding supporter of the BMF, is in hospital with leg injuries following a hit-and-run encounter with a van. John has worked on the BMF stand at London motorcycle shows for the past five years or so and was campsite marshall at the BMF Rally in May.

He has written to warn other riders that no matter how experienced we are there is always the serious risk of a freak accident. He was knocked from his bike and had his leg crushed when a van came round a bend on his side of the road. Fortunately the driver was subsequently traced, but it looks as if John will be in hospital for several months after a series of operations.

We know he would welcome any visitors, letters, magazines and the like. You'll find him in Bed 19, Twining Ward, Kings College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5. Look on the bright side, John: if this winter is anything like last, you should be fit again just when motorcycling starts to be a pleasure again rather than a necessity!

### TRAIL RIDERS AGREE NEW CODE

Britain's trail riders have agreed a new code of conduct in a bid to appease those seeking to close 3,000 miles of green lanes to motorcyclists. The code stipulates a voluntary 25-mph limit on green lanes; voluntary restriction of use on 'problem' lanes; keeping the Country Code; stopping for horses; and showing respect for all other lane users. See Rights of Way on page 22 for full details.

### BMF REGIONAL REPS

**South-East:** Bruce Clark, 51 Sunningdale Road, Cheam, Surrey (01-644 7106). He is assisted by Jim Harris, 2 Windmill Cottage, April Cottages, Hurst Lane, Weald, Kent (073 277 359).

**North and Scotland:** Geoff Wilson, 4 Scaur Close, Lazonby, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1BT (Lazonby 584).

**East:** Bob Osborn, 75 Knightscliffe Way, Northampton NN5 (0604 51866).

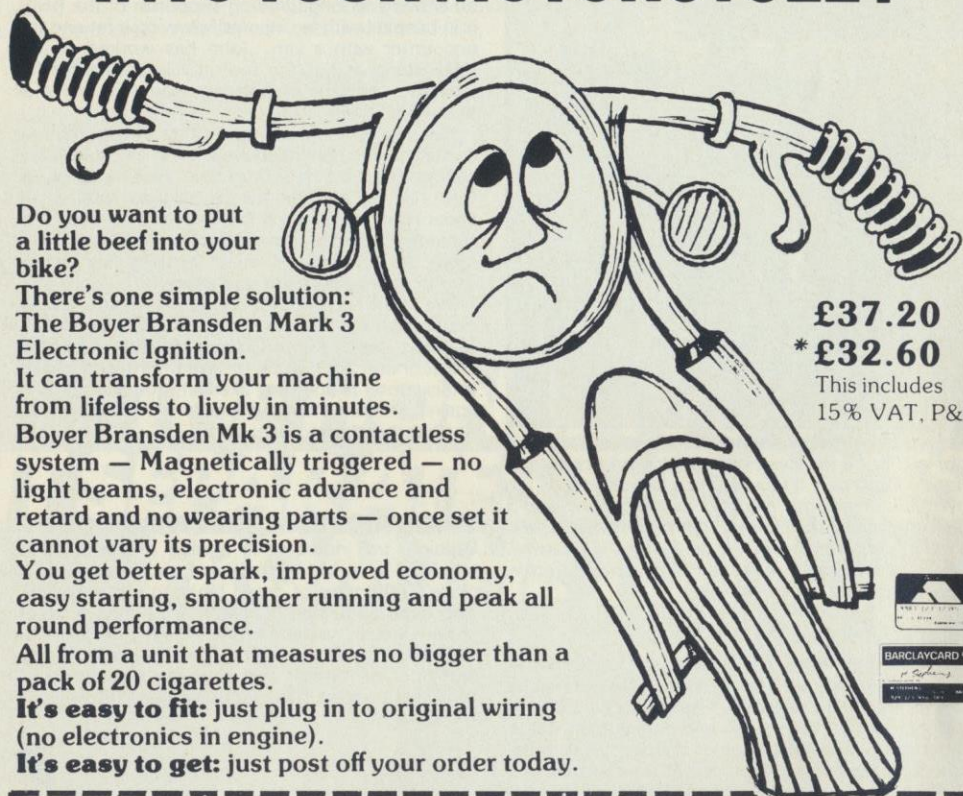
**West Midlands:** Jeff Stone, 22 Kingswood Close, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 3ET. (021 744 8235). Also Mid- and South Wales.

**West:** Dick Powell, Uplands, Down Lane, Braunton, Devon.

**NE London and Essex:** John Ross, 105 Salisbury Road, Barnet, Herts.



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## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAINING

Dr Alfred Minter, BMF man on this body, takes us behind the scenes

The Department of Transport Advisory Committee on Training met six times, the first being on 20 July 1978 and the sixth on 3 July 1979. Its terms of reference were: 'To consider the provision and development of training for motorcycle riders and to make recommendations'.

The Committee was appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport. It consisted of representatives of the following bodies: Association of Chief Police Officers, Association of County Councils, Association of District Councils, Association of Metropolitan Authorities, Accident Officers Association, Greater London Road Safety Unit, Motor Agents Association, Motorcycle Association, National Association of Cycle & Motorcycle Traders, BMF, RoSPA, RAC/ACU Training Scheme, STEP, TRRL, Department of Transport (Driver Examining Section), and Department of Transport (Secretarial Service).

It was chaired by a senior DoT officer who was replaced halfway through due to the practice of regular organisational rotation of duties in the Civil Service.

The representatives of these bodies were not young men, and only a few individuals had any extensive riding experience. Your BMF representative felt that he did more regular riding than anyone else on the committee. Five members of the committee seemed to be involved currently in rider training.

Early meetings were concerned with trying to decide what to do—look at training arrangements, methods, course content, or what? Data about training courses in other parts of the world were tabled, and also (of course) UK accident statistics, and the fact that only 10-15% of new riders get trained.

### A firm 'No' to test plan

It seemed impossible to find out how many motorcyclists are tested for their driving licence each year; it seems that this figure is just not available except as a sort of fag-packet estimate of 200,000. Eventually we decided to look at how to get people to take training. The usual things were kicked around; cheaper insurance (No, the insurance companies had no data on accidents to trained versus untrained riders, so they couldn't contemplate that!); discounts for goods; limitations on number of provisional licences (Swansea DVLC system cannot tell who, other than 16-year-olds, have provisional motorcycle licences); but none were seen as serious ideas.

At long last the proposition appeared that the driving licence should be awarded for the successful completion of the end-of-course test. Quite a number of us felt this was the strongest possible motivator to get people into training. The official reaction was spectacular: 'It cannot

be done because it would be impossible to maintain the present high standards of testing' and 'The British test is something to be proud of when compared with the rest of the world' and 'The examiners would be unable to cope'. It turned out that they would refuse to work on Sunday mornings when we do so much of our training. Department officials ruled pursuit tests were out of the question and impracticable.

Then we suggested delegation of testing, as the police, armed forces and certain companies are allowed to test for driving licences. We suggested RoSPA, which would be prepared to organise a corps of examiners who were (very properly) not involved in training. No, that would mean dilution. No, standards could not be maintained. No, the trade union would resist any attempt to take work away from its members.

### Present bike test under fire

When we asked the difference between the moped test and the motorcycle test we were told that (a) both tests were exactly the same, (b) they were not the same because a moped is not the same as a motorcycle, and (c) 'they are still the same test'. And so it bounced around. A moped is a moped whether it is like a Fantic or like a Fizzy with gears. Barriers to mutual understanding seemed rather impenetrable.

We criticised the present test as being too short, too limiting and ridiculous in being conducted from the side of the street. It was the best that human ingenuity could possibly contrive, we were told, but we were not impressed.

Eventually the compromise emerged, with which the BMF representative agreed in the absence of anything better and so as to get something moving. This is to have testing in two parts. Part I is 'off-road' machine control of manoeuvrability, and will be taken at the end of a training course. It could, of course, be taken at a DoT location, but this will probably be so hard to arrange that a course will be much easier. Part II will be on the road, as at present, without the emergency stop bit.

Further details are the change from 250cc maximum engine size to 12 bhp. This is not unreasonable, when you recall what a 250cc bike was like in 1962 when the restriction was introduced. We also evolved a system of letting 'passed' learners under 17 years ride larger machines.

All this is against a background that rider training must be accepted as beneficial, as an act of faith. There is no sound evidence to support or deny this view, anywhere in the world. The TRRL even went to Japan to see. It is also against a

(continued on page 18)



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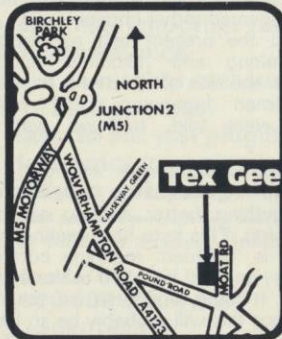
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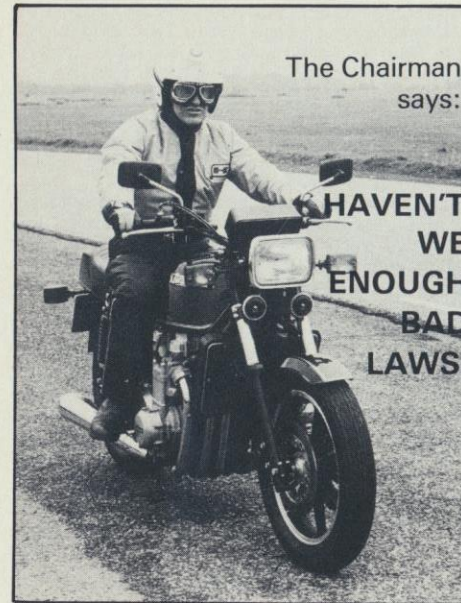
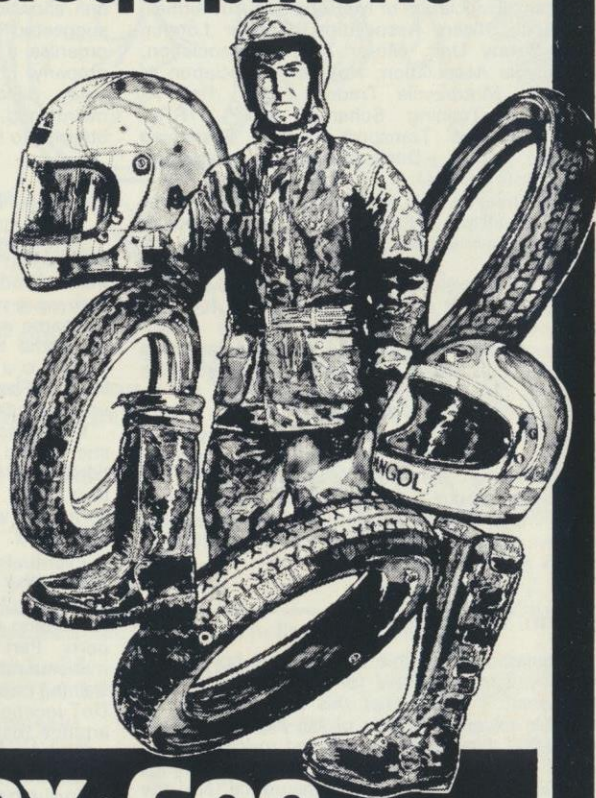
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The Chairman says:

HAVEN'T  
WE  
ENOUGH  
BAD  
LAWS!

being studied by our Legislative and Technical sub-committee. Few will quibble with the lower limits.

In the same vein did you see the noise comparison of various 'bolt-on' exhaust systems in the December issue of *Motorcycle Mechanics*? Far too many systems were way above 100 dBA<sup>11</sup> and one made by Dunstall would only just be acceptable on the race track, having a top reading of 110 dBA. OK, so young people like to make a noise, but the manufacturers of such systems are doing the sport of motorcycling no favours by offering such blatantly illegal systems to the general public.

When you hear systems like this shattering the peace you cannot blame the proponents of Type Approval as used in Europe for suggesting that it be introduced here. I know that many exhaust system manufacturers are equally worried about this and have formed an association to combat the problem but, as always, the few are going to spoil it for the many. If we do get the dreaded type-approved exhaust systems then the blame will lay squarely on the shoulders of those who don't give a damn about motorcycling—just profits.

### INSURANCE SCHEME SUCCESSES

Over the past decade we have seen compulsory helmets introduced, compulsory passenger insurance, the age limit raised to seventeen except for 'sixteener specials', and then sixteeners limited to motorcycles which are quite unsuitable for the temperament and needs of that age group. All, we now know, were bad laws. I'll except passenger insurance from that from a social standpoint but who can deny that it has cost the motorcyclist dearly?

The remainder have merely caused resentment for the riders and irritation for the police. So what does Government do? It looks for even more bad laws to introduce. Like the banning of right-hand sidecars on new bikes. The whole machinery of Parliament is to be mobilised to make it illegal for, maybe, a dozen riders a year to use the vehicle of their choice when there is an easy and acceptable option. If, as the Government says, it is a problem because of the sidecar's small light what could be easier than to pass a law requiring that the sidecar has a decent-sized light? Agreed, that might be difficult, but it then becomes the manufacturers' problem.

An even better idea would be to drop the whole nonsensical business, for with only a handful of Russian sidecars likely to be sold (and it is reported that the importers of these are *in favour* of the law!) there is really no need, especially as it is not going to apply to the vast majority of users of this type of outfit anyway—foreign tourists.

### NOW FOR A GOOD LAW

What is the biggest curse of serious motorcyclists today? In my view, it is unreasonable noise. The Government's plans to make bikes quieter with a lower decibel limit is currently

We expected our new insurance scheme to take off like a rocket, for it offers the experienced rider a great deal, but such initial interest has certainly swamped the insurers. If you find that your quote is a little slow coming back, please be patient; they are doing their best to cope with the rush. Many riders have asked why we have asked them to wait until four weeks before renewal to apply. The answer is simple: if a price is quoted now for a policy that expires next July, for example, there is always the chance that the final quote will be different—prices may go up, or the riders circumstances may have changed.

I know it would be nice to have an idea and we are looking at ways of overcoming this, but in the meantime please bear with us. If you have a special reason for needing a quote right now (for example, you may have changed bikes or be insured third party and be attracted by the idea of going fully comprehensive on the new policy) then send a covering letter to the insurers. I am sure they will do their best to help.

One thing we must be aware of is that the favourable rates exist because we have convinced the brokers that the BMF rider is above average in his approach to motorcycling. Now if we use the scheme merely to recruit new members then the standard will inevitably drop and we will not be such a good bet after all. No, I am not being holier than thou, but we do believe that serious riders, whether in the BMF or not, are safer and less likely to have an accident and if someone joins just because he thinks he can save money on the insurance we all stand to lose. Having said that, I am not starting a closed shop—just explaining why we do not intend to use the scheme as a recruiting aid.

Bruce Preston



## Management and membership

By June 30 1979 the number of member clubs of the BMF stood at 189, an increase of 19 over the previous year. Club membership of the Federation has now doubled in the past three years. The individual membership section has never fared better, following the decision last year to have both the individual and club sectors operating under the common BMF banner. In May the individual membership topped 2,000 for the first time, and at 30 June it stood at 2,209 (it currently stands at 3,300—Ed). The continuing good publicity for the BMF has no doubt played a valuable part in this growth, as has a very effective advertising campaign in the motorcycle press.

To promote greater contact between the Executive and the membership the whole system of regional representation was revised during the year to give almost every club in the country a regional rep with direct access to the Executive. Each region has held meetings to give both member and non-member clubs the opportunity to meet their representative. This has proved a major success and will be expanded in the coming year.

The Executive Committee met seven times during the year, while the Public Relations and Publicity and the Legislative and Technical sub-committees each met four times. The L&T is another BMF success story. No less than 19 riders responded to a plea for expert assistance, and as a result the sub-committee has been split into two parts, north and south, to enable more work to be accomplished with less travelling. Alan Bridgman remains the chairman of the southern committee while Tim Wilkinson runs the northern one under Alan's auspices.

The Executive Committee has continued to widen its scope. Doug Baker, who is social secretary of the individual membership section, Bruce Clark and Bob Osborn, who has been BMF East Midlands representative for some time, were all co-opted on to the committee.

## Presidency and chairmanship

Following Harold Booty's retirement at the 1978 AGM it was the unanimous wish of the BMF that he be asked to fill the post of president, vacated by Hugh Palin due to pressure of work. Hugh kindly agreed to stay in touch with the BMF as a vice-president.

Following the election of directors, Bruce Preston was elected chairman. He has been a member of the BMF Executive for 10 years, nine of them as editor of *Motorcycle Rider*.

## Finance

The annual accounts continue to show a satisfactory situation. With the retirement of secretary Jack Wiley now not too far away it became obvious that the BMF would have to find its own offices and appoint a second full-time official to learn the ropes before Jack retires. Perhaps the greatest step the BMF has taken since the appointment of a full-time secretary came when suitable office accommodation was finally

secured at Number Four Hammersmith Broadway in West London. Jack Wiley will continue to work from his home address until his retirement and this will not be until a suitable successor is found and settled. Certainly the BMF will continue to function administratively at Ilford until further notice.

## Working for the motorcyclist

It will be obvious to members that the growth of the BMF has thrown considerable strains on the secretarial system and the Federation is now coping with twice the workload compared with even a couple of years back. Just to illustrate this let's look at a few of the subjects the BMF has tackled over the past 12 months.

## Insurance

If there is ever a time when the BMF looks back and says 'this is the turning point in our history' then it will look to the day that we finally negotiated our own insurance scheme. BMF insurance adviser Geoff Pedlar finally reaped the



rewards of years of labour and made BMF insurance available to all members, whether clubs or individuals. Although it became operative only at the end of August it falls within the scope of this report because the final decision to proceed was taken before the end of the financial year. The scheme is designed for the safe, enthusiastic clubman and it is essential that they participate. We will also be looking at other aspects of insurance, including personal accident.

## Politics

Both major political parties figured in the BMF's discussions during the year. At the beginning of the year Norman Fowler, then Shadow Minister of Transport, was interviewed for *Motorcycle Rider* by editor Peter Rae. Last November the BMF chairman met John Horam, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of

Transport, as part of the regular working lunch arrangement that has prevailed for some time. Both Fowler and Horam made it clear that there was not even the faintest possibility of helmet law repeal.

Training figured prominently at all meetings with Government during the year. It became clear that there is considerable determination on the part of both the Government and the National Training Scheme to 'encourage' more novice riders to take training. The BMF was represented on the Government's Advisory Committee on Rider Training throughout the year by Dr Alfred Minter (see report on page 9—Ed). The Federation pointed out that training seemed to be dominating Government thinking and thus closing the door to other areas of discussion on road safety, and expressed its concern at the consequences if training did not prove to be the panacea many were sure it would be.

It has been BMF policy to ensure someone who actually rides a motorcycle attends technical and advisory meetings wherever possible to

# OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR EVER!

**The BMF Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1979 shows it was our best yet. Here is a detailed synopsis of that report, showing exactly what you got for your money.**

protect the interests of motorcyclists. Right at the beginning of the year Alf Minter represented the BMF at the DoT-backed 'Roads to Safety' conference which among its 53 recommendations was one that riders should use headlights in daytime—a 'solution' that has since had a shadow cast over it by TRRL findings. This shows once again that we must be wary of non-motorcyclists speaking for us.

Peter Rae tried out the new sintered pads for disc brakes at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, although it was to be almost a year before they were marketed seriously. Bruce Preston visited the Kiwi helmet factory in Switzerland to see how quality polycarbonate helmets are made.

Rarely a week went by without meetings of some kind. Geoff Wilson devoted a considerable amount of time trying to regain admission for

motorcyclists into Lake District campsites and held a series of meetings with the National Federation of Camp Site Owners in a bid to come up with a solution. One idea has been to introduce a carnet system as on the Continent but the BMF has been reluctant to bring in an arrangement that could actually encourage campsite owners to refuse admission to motorcyclists unless they had a carnet.

## Discussion papers

The growing strength of the Executive has made it possible to treat some subjects in much greater depth than before. Alf Minter's brilliant paper on why the BMF objected to the proposals to abolish road tax was discussed at every level and was much acclaimed. Geoff Wilson wrote a controversial paper on the BMF's attitude to rider training. Both succeeded in stimulating valuable discussion among motorcyclists.

## Practice in other countries

The successful Legislative and Technical sub-committee is still studying regularly developments in other countries and learning valuable lessons. Hundreds of foreign publications are monitored and a considerable amount of information is available from Australia. This monitoring will be broadened as our resources increase.

## Type approval

Much has been written about the threat of 'type approval' and regrettably there has been a great deal of kite-flying. While wishing to draw attention to real threats, the BMF feels that to make an issue of imaginary ones is only bringing those closer to fulfilment. To sort out the real threats the Federation has engaged the country's top type approval expert to keep us reliably informed.

## Discrimination

In addition to tackling campsite discrimination, the BMF investigated several cases of discrimination against motorcyclists in pubs and other public places. The true facts have not always been as reported in the Press. One can hardly blame a publican for getting a little nervous when not one but 200 or 300 riders pack a quiet village because it has become known as a 'bikers pub'. It is really up to motorcyclists to use a degree of tact and play such situations down. Very often, reports of discrimination are based on misunderstandings, and we would ask riders to try the kid glove approach before screaming 'prejudice'.

## Tolls

You win a few, you lose a few. The BMF was strongly represented at both the Mersey Tunnel and Severn Bridge toll enquiries. We scored a victory at the Mersey Tunnel and every rider using the tunnel benefits to the tune of 5p each trip, but the Severn Bridge case was lost. Still, the Mersey victory could save riders £10,000 a year at current traffic rates.

(continued on page 14)



# THE BMF ANNUAL REPORT

(continued from page 13)

## 14 Other legislative matters

The Federation voiced its concern that 'sleeping policemen' put motorcyclists at risk, and will be watching to ensure that those which are to be installed at least comply fully with official guidelines. We have remained totally opposed to helmet compulsion but are not prepared to devote a disproportionate share of our resources to fighting what a majority of our members consider a lost cause. But any attempt to harden the law by, say, making integral helmets compulsory will be resisted with every means at the Federation's disposal.

Such was the power of the BMF's arguments against suggestions that Britain should adopt Germany's 'voluntary' 100-bhp limit for motorcycles that our case was immediately accepted by the Government and the idea dropped. The Federation resisted and is still resisting a proposed ban on right-hand sidecars being fitted to newly registered bikes. Despite the Government's refusal to exempt visors from VAT the BMF will continue to press for this exemption. Throughout the year the BMF continued its efforts to have diesel spillage on roads recognised officially as a major hazard to motorcyclists. One point that emerged was that the more riders who report accidents caused by spilt diesel the more likely we are to have the seriousness of the matter accepted.

## Rallies and shows

Almost 20,000 riders—the biggest attendance ever at a rally in Britain and probably in Europe—enjoyed a highly successful BMF Rally at Peterborough's East of England Showground. The BMF was also present at the two major London motorcycle shows and a number of smaller ones in Walsall, Birmingham, Bristol and Burnham-on-Sea. Geoff Wilson was once again the BMF/ACU juryman to the FIM Rally, held this year in Holland.

## Publicity and the media

This was our best year ever for coverage in the Press and on radio and television. Jeff Stone had a regular show on Birmingham's BRMB; Peter Rae and Bruce Preston were both called on at short notice to give the BMF view on radio shows; BMF clubs and officials were prominent in Southern TV's 'Talking Bikes' programme; the chairman was interviewed in *Motorcycling*, and he had full-page stories about the BMF in *Motor Cycle Weekly* and *Motor Cycle News*. Rarely a week went by without something on the BMF being published.

## Green lanes

The Middleton Moor case dominated events during the early part of the year. Extreme pressure from landowners compelled the ACU to

withdraw their objections to the closure of this lane because the Scott Trial, Allan Jeffries and other trials were put at risk. Reluctantly, as the other body on the joint Countryside Committee, the BMF felt obliged, on legal advice, to follow suit. The after-effects of the case are still being felt. The BMF contributed £250 towards the £1,000 costs of appealing the crucial Suffolk CC v. Mason case to the House of Lords, but the Lords upheld a ruling that keeps 750 miles of downgraded lanes closed to bikes for many years until the next Special Review.

On a brighter note the Byways and Bridleways Trust was formed to represent the interests of all green lane users. BMF Rights of Way agent Brian Thompson represents all trail riders on the Trust's executive committee. Due to his unstinting efforts and those of many other voluntary workers, the BMF was represented at public enquiries throughout the country.

## Public relations

The Public Relations and Publicity sub-committee continued to meet throughout the year but was then disbanded in its present advisory form to be reconstituted at a later date as a working body. It is hoped that the excellent men and women who sat on the sub-committee will be able to employ their talents elsewhere in the BMF. The Federation continued to maintain close links with the Institute of Motorcycling and the Motor Cycle Association of Great Britain, and the IMC has been particularly helpful in keeping the BMF informed of threats to the road rider. Links are maintained with the Motor Agents Association's motorcycle committee, the National Breakdown Recovery Club, the Association of South-West Motorcyclists, and a number of other relevant bodies. Two more leaflets were published: 'Getting Insured' to help riders through the insurance jungle, and the updated version of the annual BMF Directory of Clubs.

## The future

Reading this synopsis of the annual report you will realise just how many areas the BMF is involved with. Our greatly increased membership will provide us with a growing pool of experience on which to draw and the capacity to extend our influence even further. We have a new logo to take us into the 1980s. But remember one thing: YOU are the BMF, not the handful who run the ship. Without the support and encouragement of the thousands of riders who pay their subscriptions we will get no further. We need a constant influx of talent and energy. If you have the desire and the ability to assist the BMF, get in touch with your regional representative. Our growth and success has been staggering in the '70s—together we can achieve great things in the '80s.



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Date test passed:					
Convictions other than speeding/parking					
Accidents past 5 years: (details required)					
COVER: Comprehensive				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Third Party Fire & Theft				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Third Party Only				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Number of years claim-free insurance					
Policy contains minimum £25 excess. Would you like to bear additional voluntary £75 excess—15% discount? YES/NO					
Do you hold a proficiency certificate? YES/NO If YES state which.					
If insurance to include any additional driver, please supply information separately.				Required commencement date*	

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325 High Road, ILFORD, Essex IG1 1NT.

\*Quote will be sent four weeks before the commencement.



# CHRISTMAS IN THE SUN

Peter Thoeming describes how he and three friends prepared for five months on the road in winter—bound for Africa

16 Like all truly great ideas, it's very simple once you've thought of it. None of us, you see, was looking forward to an English winter. The only thing that was going to make it bearable was the fact that we could plan our trip for next summer while the snow fell outside. And then it struck me—why stay? Why not spend the winter somewhere warm? Like Morocco for instance . . .

Not that it's quite that simple. We still have to get there, and get back. All through wintry Europe. But the thought of the sunny North African beaches (we hope) should pull us through the odd snow flurry on the way. And there is a little more to it than a simple escape to the sun. Why waste a good trip? While we're down there, we'll cross the Sahara as well. And why not have a look at Turkey before it falls apart? And . . .

The itinerary that finally emerged is roughly as follows. We'll leave England by way of Portsmouth on 3 November, and spend a few weeks drifting south through France. I've always wanted to see the Camargue, for instance. Then into Spain, round the coast into Portugal, back into Spain for a look at the Alhambra, and across to Morocco. A slow drift down the coast should see us in Agadir for Christmas, and a couple of weeks more.

The snow-covered Atlas comes next, and then the trip down through the Sahara to Tamanrasset. Back up to Tunisia, with a bit of time to look at the Roman ruins. Over to Sicily, up through Italy to Venice and on into Yugoslavia. Down the coast, over to Greece, and then the ferry to Mersin in Turkey. A look at the rock houses of Göreme, a slow run along the very beautiful Mediterranean coast of Turkey, and then the tough part starts.

## 15,000 miles in five months

It should now be the beginning of March, and Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria, not to mention the mountainous Czechoslovakia, will be cold. But I have relatives in Berlin, and we'll thaw out with them. And then it's back to Britain. Five months, 15,000 to 20,000 miles and the Lord knows how many frozen days and icy nights.

Perhaps it's time I introduced "us". Annie is 25 and a graduate geographer; Neil is 26 and a TV director (he'll be making a film of the trip which you should be able to admire next year on the club circuit); Millie is 24 and a nurse. Your humble scribe is 32, and a photographer/journalist. I answer to "the Bear", generally.

Preparations for the trip started with basics, namely choice of bikes. Now we would have liked matching bikes, of course. But the best laid plans . . . So we've ended up with a GS750 Suzuki, familiarly known as Redeye for the instrument illumination; and an XS1100 Yamaha, better known as PT Barnum. It was Barnum, I

believe, who said 'Nothing succeeds like XS'.

PT, in fact, is just about the perfect bike for this kind of trip. The big, reliable and very flexible engine is mated to a sensible frame that still manages to provide reasonable handling. With care, PT will give a healthy 45 mpg. Redeye has his strong points, too—unfortunately he will not be showing off the best of them, his handling. He's tied to a Squire sports sidecar, specially prepared for us by Squire.

Why isn't a chair on PT, you ask? Politics. PT is on loan from Yamaha Germany, and they don't have approval from the German body that approves all that kind of stuff, theTÜV. So they don't want me to run the bike with a chair on it.

Never mind. Both bikes have a reputation for reliability, and both should be able to handle the trip. Redeye was fitted with Boyer Bransden electronic ignition, a steering damper supplied by Squire, an R5 rear sprocket to make the weight of the chair easier to shift, and Avon Sidecar Master tyres. Oxford Fairings supplied a very nifty little nose fairing, a prototype of their new Corsair. Looks very smart and keeps the wind off the rider.

The biggest change is of course the sidecar, which will not only guarantee one of us a comfortable ride but will also supply storage for water and petrol across the Sahara. Other storage is taken care of by Craven gear, with a

topbox and a couple of the largest panniers<sup>17</sup> attached to one of their new stainless steel racks.

PT Barnum got the full treatment from Vetter Industries. Along with the Windjammer fairing, he now carries the top box (complete with four extra tail lights) and panniers made by that company. And very smart they look, too. I've never had quite so much attention paid to my bike, not even in my youth when I used to ride some rather horrific "choppers". I put that word in inverted commas not because there's anything wrong with choppers as such, but because there was lots wrong with those in particular. Like handlebars made out of gaspipe. I count every day I'm alive as a bonus. If there were any justice in the world, I'd have been dead for many a summer now.

Britax very kindly came to the rescue when we started thinking about chains. Their Tsubaki chains are supposed to last at least twice as long as a normal one, so there's a chance we'll make the trip on two. A lot less to carry. Duckhams will be supplying lubricating agents, another contribution that's most welcome.

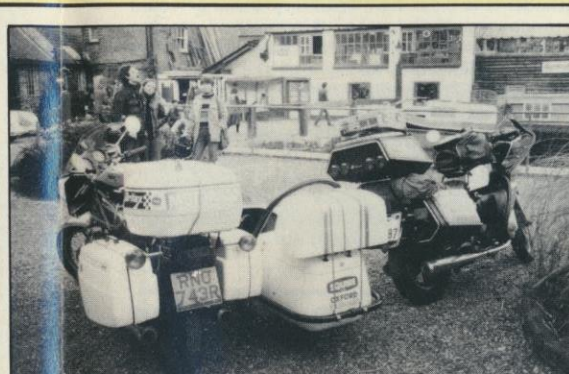
## Clothing and camping gear

You don't go out into the kind of weather we'll be facing without a bit of preparation for your own comfort. Being particularly badly affected by the cold (I swear and stamp up and down waving my arms about, shouting "Why is it so bloody cold?") I made a point of securing Damart Thermaware for the entire crew. The stuff is great, and keeps you warm without adding great bulk to your clothes.

The hands are looked after especially well, the riders' by heated handlebar grips from Oxford Fairings, the passengers' by Glo-Gloves. These are electrically-heated inner gloves that work a treat. Passengers have fingers, too, you know! And if they're nice and warm, it doesn't take said passengers so long to put up the tents . . .

Legs are shod in the very latest from Bata, the new MCB boots. Derived from the best-selling Derriboots, these will be interesting additions to the wardrobe. Britax also supplied a couple of Alaskan Motomod suits. These things are waterproof and so warm it's incredible. I'm looking forward to giving mine an exhaustive test, believe me. Just waiting for the first snowstorm.

Neil and Millie were the proud possessors of new helmets, but Annie's was showing a bit of wear and my old Shoei was an insult to the helmet law. A very good helmet in its day, the old S21 had seen rather more action than was strictly safe. I can still see Bill Vero's eyes go wide on catching first sight of this veteran. We'd gone to see him about a couple of his new



*Clockwise from bottom left: Almost ready for the off are Millie, Neil, and the writer on 'PT'; Neil fits the fairing while Trevor from Squire tightens the sidecar frame. The group received a great deal of help with preparations, most of it unpaid; topbox on the chair holds the 'kitchen', while a camera case is bolted to lid of PT's topbox. One of the tents peers out underneath. All in all, the bikes look tidy compared to many tourers; the 'Bear' finds that getting the fuel lines back onto the petrol taps can be a fiddly business. Switch on sidepanel controls heated handlebar grips.*



(continued on page 18)



## CHRISTMAS IN THE SUN

(continued from page 17)

18 Everoak Casquette helmets, and he very kindly offered to have a couple hand-fitted for us.

We were set up for short, weekend camping jaunts, not for this kind of marathon, so we obviously needed equipment. Rather than hassling around getting a bit here and a bit there, we decided the best thing was to get the lot from a large camping supplier. We settled for Binleys.

They supplied a Vango Force Ten two-man tent, as well as a Lowrider two-man. The latter is especially designed for bikes, and will accommodate a bike and a rider and passenger. Both tents are light and easy to pack, as well as being sturdy. Binleys expressed an interest in seeing what was left of the tents after the trip. A bit of research never goes astray, and if your next tent has a double seam here or an extra eyelet there, you may be able to thank us.

There are other bits and pieces, of course. Both bikes are equipped with alarms from Oxford Fairings. Britax kicked in a spare toolbox that'll go on top of the sidecar and hold our 'kitchen' of cooking gear from Binleys. They also supplied sleeping bags and airbeds. And both Yamaha and Suzuki have contributed spares.

### Products in for 'thorough thrashing'

If you're beginning to get the idea that the trip has been fairly heavily subsidised by a number of firms, all supplying a selection of their products, you're right. A couple of points are worth mentioning in this connection. Firstly, all the contributions were made completely without obligation. No one expects us to plug products we don't find useful. Secondly, we haven't accepted anything just because it was free. We've asked for the stuff because it's the best, or because it's new and promises to become the best. No point in taking second-best, you know. I've tried to save money on wet-weather gear, for example, and then spent a week in total misery in the monsoon in India. Never again.

Before you rush off to your local dealer to score a moped to ride from John o'Groats to Land's End as a promotional exercise, remember this. It has to be worth the manufacturers' while to give you something. In our case, we'll do our damndest to give them their money's worth. Neil is making a film of the trip. Annie is covering it for a couple of magazines, I'm writing for four or five and also compiling a book, and flogging stories to newspapers as well.

Some of the people who have helped us have done it just because they're really nice people, some after a careful weighing up of the possible publicity value. But they all have sufficient faith in their products to hand them over for a very thorough thrashing, which is what they'll get on this trip. Stay tuned for their performance.

## RIDER TRAINING

(continued from page 9)

background that if this doesn't bring riders into training within three years, compulsion will be brought in. STEP are working hard to create facilities and an organisation. Several of us felt that the Government should be more helpful with money for the present courses.

What was not talked about was the situation that, under compulsory training, a number of things would have to be done that we had been told were completely impossible. These are such as the control of provisional licences, testing linked to training, provision of adequate facilities, creation of a more suitable corps of examiners, better training of instructors, more extensive funding of training, and more realistic testing methods. It is clear that voluntary training would be encouraged if these things (said to be impossible) were done, but that they will perforce become possible and *be done* if the decision is taken to make training compulsory.

Your BMF representative's overall impression of the whole exercise was that it was intended to be a whitewash job, to cover up for something the civil servants of the DoT really intend to do anyway. The work of this committee had a little more sting to it than they expected. It is supposed to be going to meet again, to continue its work. We shall see.

## OUR VIEW

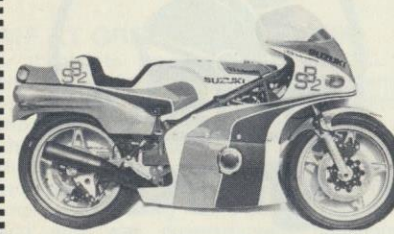
(continued from page 1)

against the apathy of the vast majority of riders. The experiences of the 1970s may have changed things for the better: the BMF went into 1970 with around 85 member clubs, but we're going into the '80s with 206 member clubs. This growth has enabled the BMF to win even greater respect as the voice of the road-rider in Government circles, which in turn has helped make us even more effective.

The innocence and the carefree days of 1970 may have been blunted by the combined effects of inflation, two fuel crises, and increasing interference by Government in the private lives of its citizens. But the bikes are arguably better than ever, with the promise of even greater things to come. Clothing and equipment is more varied and comprehensive, and overseas touring is within the means of more riders than ever before. Motorcyclists aren't about to be pushed around any longer by bureaucrats hell-bent on regulating everything that makes life worth living. With your continued support, we can all look forward to making the good times roll all the way through the '80s as well. Merry Christmas. Enjoy your riding in 1980.—P.R.

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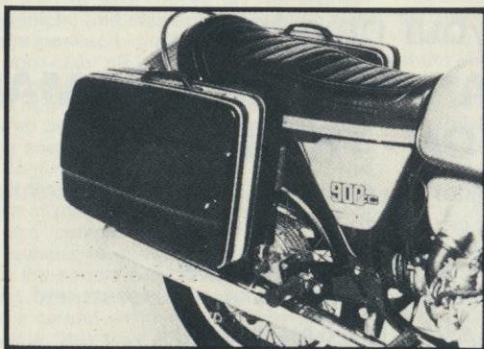
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# Clubroom

## BMF AT GREENWICH FORUM

Our thanks to the Greenwich M&MCC for a highly successful and well organised forum at its clubroom on 21 November. The editor of *Motorcycle Rider* was among the panellists, along with Barry Ditchburn, Mick Woollett, Allan Robinson, Barry Foley (rally driver and cartoonist), and Castrol promotions man Graham Temple. Road racing was a major topic, but road riding was well covered with questions on insurance, training, and the BMF's approach to motorcycle politics.

## OFFICIALS CHANGE AT BRACKNELL

Several committee positions at the Bracknell and DMCC now have new occupants. Dave Pypers is rally secretary, Kevin Bowran is competitions secretary, Iris Turner is club PRO, and the lady to write for all other details is club secretary Karen Bowran of 3 Gaffney Close, Aldershot, Hants. Why not drop in on the club any Monday at 8 pm in The Queen's Stag Hounds, Fernbank Road, North Ascot, Berkshire. They have 200 members and run discos, film/slide shows, talks, club runs, competitions, and attend rallies, races, and camping weekends. Annual subscription is £2.50, including ACU and BMF affiliation.

## WYVERN RALLY ATTRACTS 600

The Wyvern Rally in the south-west attracted more than 600 riders to the site near Ilfracombe on 7-9 September. Overseas riders attended from Holland and France, and by all accounts the disco, bar and excellent catering made it a rally to remember. Two riders from the Royal Club in Holland took the 'farthest-travelled' award, while the farthest-travelled British riders were A. Wright and S. Watkiss from Cleveland. The Marine Tavern club from Torquay had the largest club attendance, while the Tamar MCC won the award for the largest attendance from an ASWM club.

## NORTON CLUB IN EDINBURGH

The secretary of the Edinburgh branch of the Norton Owners Club is now Douglas Muir, 14 Wester Broom Avenue, Edinburgh EH12 7QZ. If you live in the area and own a Norton, why not drop him a line for details of the NOC.

## SMBB ECONOMY RUN RESULTS

SMBB International in Northampton never ceases to amaze us with the results of its annual economy run. The overall winner was club secretary Trevor Jones with 105 mpg on his Bonneville, but how about class winner Malcolm

Beeson with 79.6 mph on his Gold Wing? The up-to-250cc class was won by Christopher Gilbert with 92 mpg from his Kawasaki KH125, while Kevin Hearth won the 251-700 cc class with 66 mpg from his Suzuki GT500. It just shows what you can achieve with a light throttle hand.

## NEW GT CLUB SECRETARY

Gerry Lancaster is the new secretary of the GT Motorcycle Club, having progressed from the post of chairman. Enquiries should be addressed to Gerry at 203 Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex. The club meets every Wednesday at 8 pm in the Esso Club, Short Lane, Stanwell, Middlesex.

## TWO MORE FOR TRIUMPH

The Triumph Owners MCC now has two more branches in Wirral and West Middlesex. The Wirral branch meets at the Railway Inn, Meols, just outside Hoylake. Secretary is Mr I Morris, 45 Windermere Road, Noctorum, Birkenhead L43 9SJ. The West Middlesex branch meets at Cranford Community Centre in Cranford High Street. Secretary is Mr L Harris, 20 Crane Lodge Road, Cranford, Middlesex.

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# RIGHTS OF WAY

BY BRIAN G. THOMPSON

## 22 CODE OF CONDUCT

Despite the total opposition to any code of conduct at the September BMF Seminar, the TRF approved and agreed the same code with a huge majority at its AGM on 14 October. The code means adopting a voluntary 25-mph speed limit on green lanes, agreeing to a voluntary restriction of use period on lanes with proven conflict, following the Country Code, stopping for horses, and respecting all other lane users. The Welsh Trail Riders Association agreed a similar code, and the ACU/BMF Countryside Committee passed the code on 1 November.

In view of opposition when first announced, the original plan to have a 20-mph limit for National Parks was dropped. This I now regret as both the Peak District and Yorkshire Dales authorities, while very impressed with the code, would have liked some recognition of the special problems in National Parks.

It is therefore very pleasing that the whole of the trail-riding movement is in favour of some concessions and recognises the seriousness of the threats against us. A resounding smack in the eye for the extremists!

## WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE BILL

If this goes through the Ramblers' Association will have a great victory. Two thousand miles of lanes will be closed, 1,000 of them overnight. This is of course their stated policy and aims. One Government official said they were reluctant to alter the Bill in our favour because they would face bitter opposition from the Ramblers. In other words the Department of the Environment is afraid of the RA pressure group and apparently is prepared to sacrifice the rights of trail riders to avoid offending the Ramblers.

On 2 November the Byways and Bridleways Trust had a two-hour meeting with the DoE Permanent Under-Secretary in an effort to get the Government to make last-minute changes.

Trust membership continues to grow slowly, partly because the trail riders and the BMF have subscribed to it. Nevertheless the Trust refuses to alter its aims in favour of any particular user group. It will continue to fight for all green lane users. A monthly journal is issued with the accent on informing and increasing knowledge. Some members have accused the journal of being too intellectual but we regard this as a compliment. Membership costs £5 per calendar year. I represent all trail-riding interests on a four-person Executive Committee. If you wish to join send £5 to Byways and Bridleways Trust, 9 Queen Anne's Gate, London W1. The Trust is very grateful to Kawasaki UK for its £10 donation.

**SURREY.** The County Council wants a Traffic order on the well-loved Stone Street green lane. Many local clubs like the Carshalton Club are

making a good fight of the proposals, and I have added our strongest objections.

**SUFFOLK.** A Special Review is being prepared with a relevant date of 1 October 1979. Clubs have been busy surveying and preparing Byway claims, with the Sudbury Club among the keenest. Dave Andrews, 123 Burrow Road, Chigwell, Essex is the man to contact. He is trying to co-ordinate efforts and avoid duplication of work.

**DERBYSHIRE.** RUPP No. 45 New Mills is causing problems. A conflict between horse riders and Manchester 17 trail riders has led the horse riders to request a Traffic Order. The BMF solicitor is investigating the matter and has a three-point plan for a peaceful solution to avoid closure.

**MOOR BOTTOM LANE.** Thanks to financial support from ACU/BMF and the RUPS Club, the Byways and Bridleways Trust has taken legal action under Section 121 and re-opened Moor Bottom Lane near Halifax for the first time in five years. The total cost will be in the region of £200.

Sadly many other wilfully obstructed green lanes throughout the country remain blocked. We simply do not have the time and money available to take action in the courts to re-open these to the public. Councils are not prepared to spend any public money on such problems even though it is their absolute duty to do so in law. Therefore in future self help is going to be the only means of action. You can always try the local Ombudsman but this can take up to 18 months.

**YORKSHIRE DALES.** On 5 November the Dales National Park asked me to call to discuss several problems. The main complaint was riders not keeping to the lawful course of the green lanes. Farmers are observing and giving bike numbers to the police. It is a fact that most of the better, adventurous, wild and challenging trail rides are in this category with a high risk of conflict of this kind. We have been asked by the farmers and the National Park to deal with this problem or a Traffic Order will be imposed. I suggest waymarking so that riders can easily follow the lawful highway.

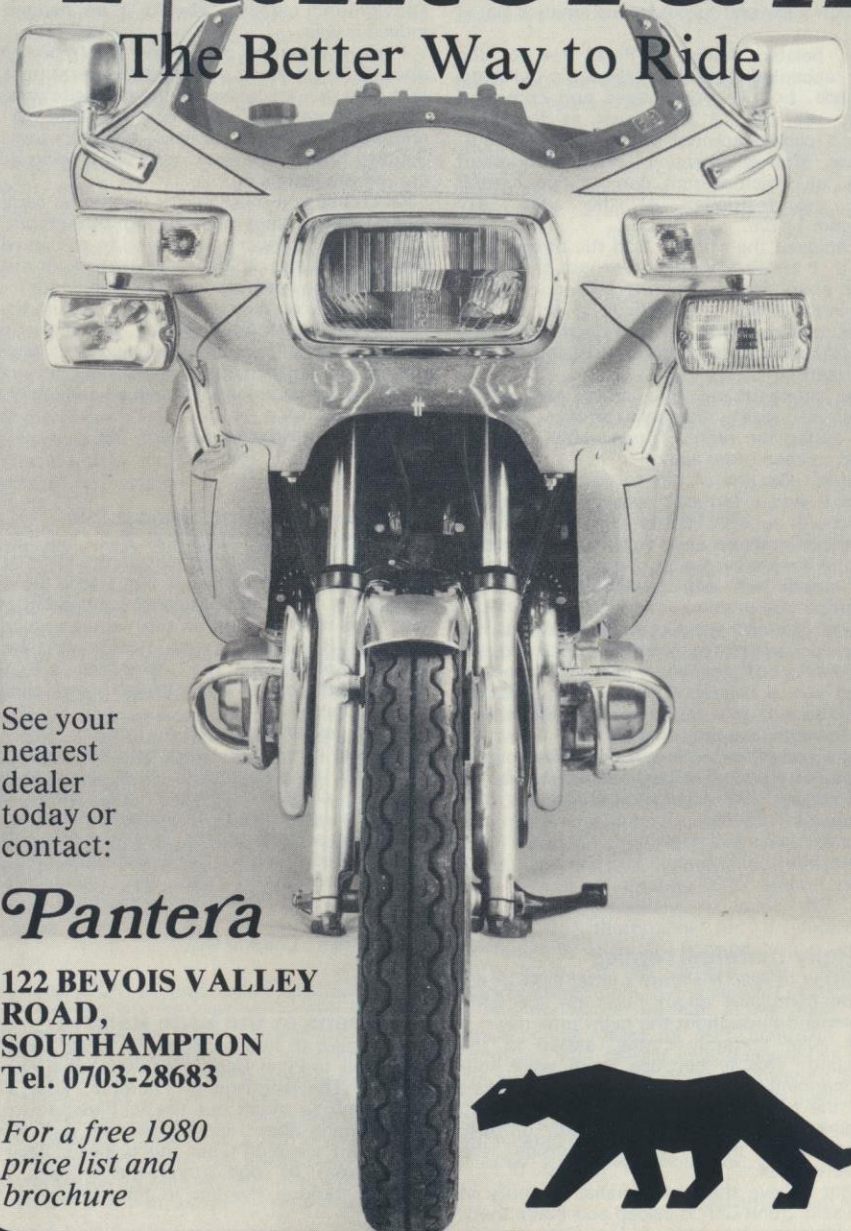
Meanwhile riders are asked to restrict their use of 'Great Wold' and 'Highway' for six months to enable a plan to be worked out in conjunction with the farmers and County Council to waymark these lanes. I suggest April/May 1980 for a weekend's work. Volunteers please contact me. If riders refuse to co-operate then a Traffic Order is inevitable.

On the 'Coal Road' above Dent the problem is caused by the Pennine Land Rover Club which is reported as damaging the soft surface. They then

(continued on page 32)

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## 24 BMF campsite—Cocker replies

Little did I realise, writing as I do from my geriatric wheelchair, that my comments would cause such a stir and furore in one lonely isolated case.

Firstly, belated thanks to Peter Rae for the apology, accepted gratefully. I think the point has been made, both in your pages and comment made to me, that a rally such as the BMF requires a certain amount of mature behaviour. There are, after all, plenty of rallies throughout the year at which Kermit can indulge himself without the restriction of the aged. Try Silverstone; I have.

I too enjoyed the bonfire, and the atmosphere around it. I certainly wouldn't expect silence by midnight or so. Fortunately the civilised appear to abound in the BMF. It is difficult to act upon a group of rowdies if you are an individual. I enjoy playing jazz on the trombone, but I can't do that without teeth.

Maybe those of us who arrive early could volunteer to assist marshalls should this be needed during the night. The marshall can't be expected to keep order alone.

I wouldn't like any of this to detract from the fact that it was a fantastic weekend. I just feel that it could be even better and bigger if we could turn it into two days, with more campers, particularly the family groups. This is not going to happen unless we can guarantee reasonable behaviour.

Finally to Kermit I would say that biking is not restricted to the infantile. You too will be old one day. I only hope for your sake we are not legislated out of existence before then. We will be if we do not present a united front, and a publicly acceptable one at that.

I'm sure our differences can be settled over a pint. Give me a ring—I'm in the Orpington book. I would suggest The George at Shoreham, but we're banned from there.

Peter Cocker (alias Animal),  
Orpington, Kent.

## BMF Rally marshall replies

I am replying to Alan Meldrum's letter in MCR 45, where he complains about noise on the BMF Rally campsite throughout the night until dawn. I was, as Alan correctly states, asleep in the showground. This is because there were four people manning the gate caravan. We worked through the night on a two-person shift lasting two hours at a stretch. The two off-duty marshalls slept in a caravan inside the showground itself.

I cannot believe that the marshall on duty at the time said 'John Carr is asleep and that's that'. This couldn't-care-less attitude just did not exist.

The on- and off-duty marshalls were linked by two-way radio and my car was available for transport between the main gate and the showground caravan, should it be needed, as indeed it was.

I was awoken by one of the gate marshalls at about 2.30 am when a man had a heart attack. At that time the only noise on the campsite was that of the occasional bike arriving, and of the ambulance when it arrived. I never saw any 'loudest hooter' contest or any bikes being ridden around the campsite.

Of course you must realise that if you camp on a site where bikes are arriving throughout the night then you must be prepared to put up with a few disturbances. If Alan was that much awake, how come he never noticed the ambulance?

Now come on men, we are supposed to be one brethren; stop all the bickering, and if you can't put up with a few bikes arriving and possibly waking you up then don't bother camping—come the following morning and have a happy rally.

John Carr,  
Kings College Hospital, London SE5.

## Civilised conduct 'impossible'

I did not attend the 1979 BMF Rally, but I clearly recall being kept awake most of the night at the first camping rally which I *did* attend (Woburn 1966) by Ogric and Malcolm preparing their machines for a burn-up on their way home on the Sunday. Because of such hooliganism as the burning of fences on campfires we were subsequently barred from Woburn and camping was dropped.

Such experiences have taught me that successful camping is restricted to club members only and not advertised. It is impossible to enforce civilised conduct on very large gatherings, even with unacceptable measures like employing security guards. It seems that nothing has changed much for the better since 1966, and I have no doubt that the complaints re Peterborough 1979 are fully justified.

Bill Whitbread,  
Wood Green, London N22.

## Hooligans at the BMF Rally

With regard to hooligans on the BMF campsite, your reply to Peter Cocker is nothing but absolute rubbish. The language was terrible. That didn't bother me so much but the fact that the noise and roaming about carried on until well after 4 am meant we didn't get much sleep. That did bother me. At one stage the morons were running through the fire to the cheers of their mates.

Later on they seemed to be riding their bikes

through the fire. I couldn't see properly, but if they were not riding through they were certainly riding very close. One particular 'motorcyclist' rode round and round on a Trident for nearly an hour. There really was a terrible row going on. In the morning there were rubbish bins strewn round but I didn't see that much rubbish.

Now the thing is that me and the wife go to the odd rally and therefore weren't that surprised at the goings-on, only the length of time it lasted. But somebody who goes camping only on holiday must have been very upset by what went on. And anyone who brought small children probably won't be back. Why were there no marshalls to stop this sort of thing?

For me the worst thing is that you write a reply more or less saying it did not happen. Pretending it did not happen won't stop it happening again. You may say it is not very important as it happened on private ground and nobody but motorcyclists was affected. Fair enough, but at least warn everyone that they will be subjected to a lot of noise and revving of bikes until nearly dawn. Then people who don't like the idea can make alternative arrangements. Next year we will be camping again but as far away from the beer tent as possible and hoping you have done something to ensure a quiet campsite by midnight.

Why is it that whenever there is a gathering of motorcyclists there is a small element who must throw away the opportunity to show the public at large that we are quite normal, respectable people. They play right into the hands of the anti-motorcycle lot.

At the rally the editor of our club magazine was leaving the site in his three-wheeler (necessary for bringing up various bits and pieces for our club stand). This was on Saturday night at about 11 o'clock. At the gate there were a few motorcycles whose riders refused to move for several minutes until they eventually rode off. This was probably because it was not a bike trying to get through, but what if it had been the editor of the *Daily Express*? He would probably have set his anti-bike department into operation again.

Bob Slater,  
Ramsgate, Kent.

*If you read MCR 44, Bob, you'll see that I have already pointed out that I was misinformed when I first made enquiries about hooliganism on the rally site. From your letter and others which I have received and published it is quite clear that the behaviour of a minority of riders on the campsite fell far short of the standard expected by the majority. There is no point in protracting this subject any further in these columns, so correspondence on the matter is now closed, but all members can rest assured that the BMF will*

*take steps to ensure, as far as is possible, that there is no repetition of anti-social behaviour at the 1980 rally. Your other comments hit the nail right on the head. Is it any wonder that motorcyclists still have a poor public image? It seems we are our own worst enemies.—P.R.*

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## BMF cover valid in Ulster

I was interested in the report on the BMF motorcycle insurance scheme. I hope the underwriters will see fit to provide cover for members in Northern Ireland as well as on the mainland. After all, the number of BMF members here would be small. Heretofore we have been unfavourably treated by most insurance companies.

J. M. Funston,  
Trillick, Co. Tyrone.

*You'll be pleased to hear that BMF insurance does include members in Northern Ireland. We are well aware of the insurance problems facing owners of large machines in the province and hope that the BMF scheme will ease the position considerably.—P.R.*

## Rights of Way seminar

As one of those who attended the Rights of Way seminar in Manchester on 2 September, and as Honorary Secretary of the Trail Riders Fellowship, I feel compelled to write to you and to make some attempt at correcting the false impression presented by Mr Thompson in his column in the November/December 1979 edition of *Motorcycle Rider*.

However, before doing this, I would beg to advise Mr Thompson to appreciate the fact that each person has a right to their own opinions and just because they might conflict with his own does not necessarily mean the holders of such opinions are his enemies. Indeed, I would remind Mr Thompson that we live in a democratic society and not in a dictatorship. It is by allowing each person to express their own views and through the discussion of same that we are enabled to thoroughly air a subject and subsequently arrive at a just decision.

To return to the seminar. Mr Thompson's report referred only to a small part of its content. In fact the report referred, in the main, to only those points raised by Mr Thompson and his complaint that certain individuals dared to have the audacity to hold opinions different from his own. As such the portrayal of the events of the seminar was misleading.

Incidentally, it is those selfsame three persons referred to by Mr Thompson, who have done

(continued on page 26)



26 much to further the rights of trail riders and assist the TRF.

The seminar was held to determine a future policy to Rights of Way which all trail riders might adopt, and to discuss means by which the policy might be assisted. This included the raising of finances and the future use of publicity, both in the press and through the motorcycle trade. None of this was apparent in Mr Thompson's report.

The seminar was not held with the aim of setting up another green lane body, and indeed, another such body will not result. The seminar was held to determine means by which the efforts of all those interested in motorcycle trail riding might be better co-ordinated. The decision of the seminar was that this might possibly be done through the TRF co-ordinating all our efforts. Admittedly reference was made to the TRF dis-affiliating from the BMF. However, as we are all 'road' riders and as the BMF has greatly assisted trail riders, it is now considered more appropriate that, if the BMF is not considered to be fully in accord with the TRF, then it is better to educate the BMF and to continue to receive its kind and considerable support.

I am pleased to conclude by advising you that a 'Green Lane Workshop' is to be held at the Grand Hotel, Bristol, on 15 December between 10 am and 1 pm. The main purpose is to progress the decisions resulting from the Manchester seminar, ie to discuss the attitude of those motorcycle trail-riding clubs represented at the Manchester seminar, to the determinations of the seminar, and to further progress the means by which finance might be raised to enable the pursuance of our efforts in preserving our Rights of Way.

Bruce J. Roberts,  
Bromham, Bedford.

## Be tough with trail lunatics

It seems highly likely that we may soon lose access to the mere 5% of unmetalled rights of way over which vehicles can still be used. In the October issue of *Motorcycle Sport* is a most interesting article on the preliminary organisation of the Welsh Two-Day Trial where, again, there is a strong possibility of losing routes.

There are three important reasons in Wales for loss of local goodwill among farmers, landowners and residents: structural damage by knobby tyres to tracks; noisy machines; and the utterly appalling ill-disciplined behaviour by riders other than competitors, leaving gates open, causing in-lamb ewes to panic, and even chasing sheep in the hills.

The writer stated that if farmers decided to

padlock their gates they'd have his entire sympathy, and added: 'Those journalists who habitually encourage trail riding have a lot to answer for'.

It is frankly a waste of time writing to MPs as Brian Thompson suggested unless we are prepared to take a very hard look at trials and trail riding. I know it smacks of selfish bloody-mindedness for some pressure groups who have vehicle-free access of 95% of the RoWs to aim at refusing to share the remaining 5% with us, but if we are not going to lose we must put our own house in order.

So far as riding on green roads is concerned it should not be regarded as a sport in itself. They are roads, and if they are shared by rambles and horse riders then due regard and consideration must be given.

My wife and I have had dirty looks from walkers on actual lanes, as distinct from green roads, as we potter gently past on a really quiet machine. We have been referred to as rabble when we visited one caravan site to see a friend. Therefore we can appreciate the strength of public opinion which the lunatic fringe has stirred up.

I think that if our reasonable freedom is to survive, we have got to be tough if necessary with lunatics who won't listen to reasoned argument—not physical violence but straight talking and, if necessary, booking them! Nasty, I know, but why should we suffer for them? They aren't worth it!

D. A. Branch,  
Eltham, London SE9.

## Bike ban by National Trust

Having a few days' holiday still owing to me this year I decided to take Thursday and Friday of last week off. I had been intending for some time to visit Hatfield Forest, a National Trust country park in Essex (just east of Bishop's Stortford on the A120). One of my interests is studying nature and I had heard that this forest is particularly rich in wild life. So on the Thursday I set off at leisurely pace towards Essex on my Yamaha XS250. Imagine my dismay on arrival at the Forest entrance to see a sign saying "Entrance - Cars 50p. Motorcycles not allowed".

As there was no one on duty at the entrance (I suppose because it was a weekday and early afternoon) and as I had specifically set out with this destination in mind I rode in, parked my bike near the lake in the centre of the Forest and spent a very pleasant afternoon walking round this splendid park. Had it been a weekend though (with an attendant on duty) I wonder whether I would have got in quite so easily. I do feel that this "no motorcycles allowed" is discriminatory and would be interested to know how rigidly the

National Trust applies this rule. If for instance I arrived at the entrance gate on a motorcycle prepared to pay the 50p car admission in order to take my bike in, surely they would realise that I was hardly likely to be a teenage wheelee-popping moped rider (I am assuming this type of rider is the cause of the ban).

I do have a car and could easily use that method of transport if I wanted to visit the Forest but that is hardly the point. I happen to enjoy travelling by motorcycle and do not see why I should be barred from entering National Trust property because of this. Would the BMF be willing to approach the NT about this matter? What I really want to know is if an obviously mature rider arrives willing to pay 50p admission, would he be allowed in? Would the NT for example refuse admission to a clergyman with a sidecar outfit or a middle-aged woman on a 50cc Honda? (I think I qualify as 'mature' being 32 and a civil servant!).  
Marjorie Park,  
Harpenden, Herts.

*We'll take the matter up with the National Trust and report back. — P.R.*

## Beating the sidecar ban

As a soldier currently posted in England, the Government proposal to ban right-hand sidecars does not affect me yet. However, when I am posted to Germany again I intend to buy a new Triumph and Squire outfit—fitted on the right for Continental roads.

Does this mean that when I come home on leave to England I am expected to leave my sidecar in Germany or perhaps donate it to the Customs at Dover? No chance. If the Government does ban chairs on the right I suppose it will include BFG-registered outfits as well.

If that happens I'll get a German-registered one and let them sort that one out! You don't think they have forgotten about left-hand-drive cars, do you? Of course not, they couldn't be biased, could they?  
Vaughan Marks,  
Bordon, Hants.

## You'll never satisfy anyone!

I fully agree with Gina Inman (*MCR 45*) that the long-distance award for the BMF Rally should not be won by someone who rides around the country and goes to the Rally. The problem arises when you try to stipulate what will be regarded as an entry for the award.

There are loads of possibilities, but the two most commonly used are: a) farthest travelled to

rally—this allows people to ride around the country and enter; b) rider living farthest from the rally—this allows people on holiday or working away from home to win the award.

Probably the best idea would be to award it to the person who travels the farthest distance going straight to the rally within a certain time, getting this confirmed with signatures and date stamps from police stations. That will make the event into a pre-planned one and rather serious.

Anyway the best of luck in trying to get a better solution, but remember that you'll never satisfy anyone!

Alan Madeley,  
Liverpool.

## Measure distance in straight lines

I would like to comment on the letter in *MCR 45* concerning the long-distance award system. To me, the only fair system is the Continental one, with measurement by 'Luft-Kilometer'—in straight lines from one's home address. Between 1974 and 1976 I attended around 100 rallies all over England and never won any award, even though I had sometimes ridden 250 miles in the winter. I was often beaten by certain characters who lived in the Midlands but who claimed the award by means of a zig-zag route to the rally.

Any keen biker can go out and clock up 500 or 600 miles in a weekend, so what does it prove if the destination happens to be at a rally? You never find those same people attempting the ACU National Rally (now sadly no longer), probably because if they complete the course their award is the same as others, whereas at a rally it is the only one. This and the hooligan element is the reason why I have attended only four rallies in the last three years, three of them being the BMF rally. In the same time I have attended about 10 Continental rallies.

Just a few quick comments now. I am a member of both MAG and the BMF and I believe both have a part to play, the BMF acting behind the scenes and MAG acting directly.

Two weeks ago I noticed an unlit builders' skip on the apex of a dangerous bend in my locality. I reported it to the police who said: 'There is not much we can do at this time of the night'. The time was 9.50 pm. If an accident had occurred due to their lack of action, what would the outcome have been? An official viewpoint please.  
Brian Wilkins,  
Millbrook, Southampton.

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# I'D SOONER BE MOTORCYCLING

## Letters . . . Letters . . . Letters

premium cost, but a scruffy duplicated unsigned letter saying in effect 'we can't quote now because the premium may well go up by the time your present insurance policy expires'!

If this is any indication of the level of efficiency offered by your oh-so-splendid deal for BMF members it augurs badly if and when a claim might have to be made. Looks as though I, for one, may continue my insurance with the Norwich Union next year.  
D. R. Lindley,  
Ruislip, Middlesex.

*The decision to quote people for insurance only four weeks before their renewal is due was taken after the scheme was launched in MCR 44. This was because a high proportion of quotation requests were submitted by members whose present policy still had six months or more to run. Coupled with the overwhelming response to the scheme from members, the insurers were faced with a huge backlog of requests to answer—hence the duplicated letter. We are sorry that yours appeared scruffy; it must have been a freak exception. The initial rush has eased slightly now and DIS can cope more easily and promptly with quotation requests. You will automatically be sent a current quote about a month before your present policy expires, and I am confident that you will be favourably impressed. If it's any help, you may be interested to know that I have taken out comprehensive insurance with the BMF for £111 compared to the £150 quoted by the Norwich Union. If this were the average saving then the BMF could save its members a potential £1.2 million in insurance premiums in 1980.—P.R.*

### GLC replies on daytime lights

Your editorial of MCR 45 called for a response—we are on your mailing list and find the journal interesting. But, as David Pope says on page 21, the impact the BMF can expect to have depends on its showing an open mind.

That being so it is a pity that you criticised the GLC statistics. These did take account of the weather and motorcycle sales changes in 1976 by using other motorcycle accidents for control purposes (see *Traffic Engineering and Control* of August 1978 for details). We remain convinced that the 'Ride Bright' campaign did encourage 25% of motorcyclists to switch on headlights in daytime and resulted in the daytime accidents being 7% less than they might otherwise have been. The figures continue to improve.

Your analysis of the TRRL information equally leads readers into a less safe course of action. Their leaflet (LF865) says a large 40W headlamp is as conspicuous as wearing a fluorescent jacket/

waistcoat—something they have been recommending for years. But riders of bikes with small lights or batteries would do better to fit a pair of daytime running lights.

I could go on but hope your readers are bright enough to 'Make Daytime Light Time' and thus reduce their risks.

Ken Huddart,  
GLC Officer for Road Safety,  
County Hall, London SE1.

*Are you really saying that with only 25% of riders using headlights the accidents fell by 7%? This implies a 28% reduction in accidents if all riders used headlights, and there is no way that mere headlight usage is going to bring that sort of improvement. It certainly has not happened that way where headlamp usage has been made compulsory. In the United States, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has said that 'there is no significant difference in the percentage of a state's daytime head-on motorcycle accidents among those states that have headlight laws and those that do not'. In Australia, a Parliamentary Committee report on motorcycle safety commissioned by the Government stated in 1977 that 'studies have shown that use of dipped beam in daylight is not a successful accident prevention measure'. Unless you are a miracle-worker, Mr Huddart, there is no way your 7% reduction in accidents can be attributed solely to rider conspicuity.—P.R.*

### Reflective gear is the answer

Whilst agreeing with your Editorial (in MCR 45) against the use of daytime headlights, I cannot agree that a rider should not take steps to make himself 'visible' to other road users.

We should all know that substantial evidence exists to prove that motorcycles and mopeds are less easy to see because of their reduced frontal area. And, as a member of our Club found out to his detriment after a spill, the first question his solicitor asked him was 'Were you wearing any reflective clothing? No, well that will reduce the claim we can put in against the other driver! This would seem to imply that we are already having an onus placed upon ourselves to become more conspicuous.

I am certainly against any compulsion upon the matter of conspicuity but, with the odds already stacked heavily against us, it would appear to be sheer lunacy NOT to take some steps along these lines, and daytime headlights are surely better than nothing. But, even with an output of 40W or more, what happens if the bulb fails? Suddenly, and without knowledge, the rider is suddenly placed in the position where he has taken no positive steps to make himself visible!

That's why I would personally recommend (not



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## Letters . . . Letters . . . Letters

compel) any rider to forget daytime lights and invest in a reflective waistcoat or shoulder-band. You know it's there (It can't suddenly go out!) and, more to the point, it places a positive onus on the *other* road user to see you. Surely this is the point that your Editorial should have been making?

I don't expect you, or the BMF, to necessarily agree with the contents of this letter, but if it helps to broaden the outlook of readers such as David Pope (Letters in MCR 45), then it's served its purpose!

Roger B. Bennett,  
Chairman,  
Harlow 70s MCC, Essex.

### Conspicuity study 'premature'

I am delighted to see that the TRRL has confirmed that use of headlights in daylight is of doubtful benefit; the light must be large and exceed 40 watts.

When the police are called to a motorcycle/car collision, at a junction, the words 'I didn't see him' must be very familiar: there are several factors to consider:

- (1) The driver's own pride. He does not wish to admit to himself that he made a mistake of judgment as to the direction in which the motorcycle might be heading. He thought the bike was turning left, or possibly right, because of its road position and approach speed. Allegations that the rider signalled also go with this error;
- (2) Legal blame. In panic, confronted by the men in blue, the car driver is far more likely to say 'I didn't see him' than 'I misjudged his speed' - it seems less incriminating.
- (3) Very few drivers will analyse the accident's cause before the police arrive because they are in a state of semi-shock. Failure to see a motorcyclist will therefore be described in the same terms irrespective of whether that failure was due to not noticing the rider because he blended well with the background; because the car driver relied on peripheral vision (a glance); because the car driver never even looked that way; or because the rider was concealed in a 'blind spot'.

The type of blind spot can be classified as follows:

- (1) Stationary external object: tree, pole, vehicle, hedge, wall;
- (2) Moving external object: pedestrian, other vehicle, animal, wind blown rubbish, etc;
- (3) Stationary internal blind spot, car not moving: windscreen pillars, door posts, interior mirror, passenger's head or body, objects hanging in the car, luggage on back shelf or coats on pegs;

- (4) Moving internal blind spots, car moving: any of (3) but more usually front screen pillars, quarter light window frames, centre door posts in particular.

Probably (4) is the greatest single cause of junction accidents involving cars and motorcycles. This will be on the increase because of the emphasis nowadays placed in road construction on allowing traffic to keep moving on approach to give way lines by curving the approach road and kerbs. The effect is such as to provide the vehicle driver in the side road with a sweeping view of the road he is about to enter so that the whole road surface is seen without the apparent need to see round the blind spots listed under (4). Regrettably this provides an excellent and un-impaired view of all stationary objects but subject to approach speeds coinciding (in a manner likely to cause bike and car to arrive together, or nearly so) will keep the car's internal blind spots aligned with the oncoming bike. Not surprisingly the car driver simply accelerates into the bike's path at the last moment.

Analysis of the above must be extremely difficult because the person taking details is usually a policeman whose duty is to establish 'blame'. The words 'I didn't see him' establish that blame.

The car driver, using the words 'I didn't see him' in a vain attempt at reducing blame or sincerely without accident analysis, is providing the statistics so often quoted as a reason for making motorcyclists conspicuous. The police have an interest in accepting that statement without further time-wasting investigation because it suffices to establish responsibility for the accident.

The two parties have apparently provided the TRRL with a reason to look into how to make a rider more conspicuous: I have yet to hear statistical proof that making a rider more conspicuous will severely cut the number of riders killed or injured in this type of accident. Of the four main headings I listed at the start only one is directly the result of poor conspicuity; the second would have an element of conspicuity in it but is more affected by direction of travel of the approaching motorcycle in relation to the car driver's eyes.

Obviously neither the third or fourth can be affected by rider conspicuity. Furthermore, and in line with the government's 'think bike' adverts, I suspect that the bulk of these accidents relate to not noticing the rider because the rider was in a 'blind' spot.

I suspect that the whole conspicuity investigation was premature and should have been preceded by an independent accident investigation based on a breakdown along the lines suggested herein! I believe this has been mooted: Does anyone know it's in progress yet?

Colin R Fenton,  
Prop Motorcycling Academy of Cambridgeshire





## RIGHTS OF WAY

(continued from page 22)

32 use wall stones to repair mudholes. However, in view of our code of conduct and in return for proper co-operation the Park will apply a Traffic Order with an exception clause for motorcycles. The Park will also provide Byways on well-defined lanes. The key is good relations with the farmers. They are alarmed at large parties of up to 20 bikes on green lanes, and request parties of no more than five or six.

Cam Fell Roman Road from Bainbridge to Horton—ie from Bardale Head south to Horton and to the ford—is only a footpath, and according to the Mason case is closed to all vehicles even though it is also an Unclassified County Road. Riders should not be using this track. The Park authorities say that if riders ignore this warning prosecutions will follow. There is little doubt that the north-west Dales region is suffering from over-use by trail riders. If you must use the vague high moorland tracks go with an experienced guide to avoid going astray.

**NORTH WALES.** The news is not good and, with Gwynedd downgrading about 600 RUPPs and Clwyd about to downgrade 250 more, North Wales should be declared a disaster area. Help is needed urgently to save just a few of the best. Contact Jeff Allen, 22 Beech Court, Allerton Road, Liverpool 18. Only the Denbigh and Mold Club appears to be interested and concerned.

**RIDING STANDARDS.** If you see any motorcyclists behaving badly, riding on open moorland etc, I recommend that they be brought to justice to show the authorities we intend to put our own house in order. Report registration numbers to the police, or if you wish I will do so.

**SOMERSET.** An unconfirmed report says that County Hall may cancel the 1978 Special Review when it 'converted all 350 RUPPs into an exclusive network for horses and walkers'. Good news! The main reason is that County Hall has reduced the Rights of Way department staff and can no longer carry out a Special Review, especially when faced with our 300 objections. Keep up the pressure, lads!

### Individual Membership section addresses

Individual Membership Secretary: Nigel Graves, 19 Farm Road, Hamstreet, Ashford, Kent. Telephone: Hamstreet 2194.  
Social Secretary and Breakdown Scheme organiser: Doug Baker, 11 Wiltshire Way, Fairfield Park, Bath BA1 6NW. Telephone: Bath 317138.

## Additions and Amendments to the 1979-80 BMF Directory of Clubs

### NEW MEMBER CLUBS

#### ANTELOPE MCC (Chelsea)

S. R. Cocks, 108 Queen Mary Road, London, SE19 3NP.

#### CLOGHOPPERS MCC (Leigh)

Miss S. Fazackerley, 6 Entwistle Grove, Leigh, Lancs. Tel: 674959

#### HERMES MCC (Scunthorpe)

D. Cheeseman, 9 Canterbury Close, Scunthorpe, S. Humberside, DN17 1PU. Tel: Scunthorpe 846371.

#### LONDON FIRE BRIGADE MCC

J. Davies, 1 Arvon Road, London N5.

#### MID-KENT MCC

T. Oliver, 53 Medway Avenue, Yalding, Kent ME18 6JN.

Tel: Hunton 652.

#### ROUNDHEADS MCC (Newark)

J. W. K. Butcher, Little Trees, Bell Lane, Collingham, Newark, Notts.

#### 623 MCC (S. Yorks)

I. A. Cooper, 8 Denham Crescent, Stoney Middleton,

Nr. Sheffield, S30 1TW. Tel: Hope Valley 30031.

#### WARWICK UNIVERSITY BIKE CLUB

The Secretary, Warwick University Bike Club, Students Union, Warwick University, Nr. Coventry CV4 7AL.

#### WEALD OF KENT MCC

I. Walker, 6 The Wickets, Weald, Nr. Sevenoaks, Kent, TN14

6PG. Tel: Weald 548.

#### WYLFA MCC (Anglesey)

M. Thomason, Wylfa Power Station, Cemaes Bay, Amlwch, Anglesey.

#### MIDDLETON MOONRAKERS MCC (Middleton)

B. M. Nicholls, 13 Castlerigg Drive, Langley, Middleton,

Manchester, M24 4LY. Tel: 061-653 7290.

### NEW CLUB SECRETARIES AND CHANGES OF ADDRESS

#### BIRMINGHAM MCC

G. Wyatt, 27 Colebrook Road, Greet, Birmingham, B11 2NT.

#### BRITISH MOTORCYCLE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

P. J. Holden, 22 Greengate Road, Sheffield S13 7QB.

Tel: 0742 896061.

#### G.T. MCC (Stanwell)

G. Lancaster, 203 Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx. TW15 3NS

#### INTERNATIONAL M/C TOUR CLUB

J. F. Kentish, Bishops Hill House, Swanmore, Southampton

SO3 2PN.

#### LONDON DOUGLAS MCC

L. Boydell, 'Birches', Castledon Road, Downham, Billericay, Essex.

#### MOTO MORINI RIDERS CLUB

C. Rea, 3 Winters Croft, Singlewell, Nr. Gravesend, Kent,

DA12 5EA.

#### SOUTH YORKSHIRE AFFILIATED MOTOR CYCLISTS

Miss H. G. Whomersley, 15 Ranmoor Park Road, Sheffield,

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#### VINTAGE MCC

K. Hallworth, 26 Shrigley Road North, Nr. Poynton, Nr. Stockport,

Ches. SK12 1TE. Tel: Poynton 4475.

#### WEST MIDDLESEX AMATEUR MCC

A. Groves, 70 The Crescent, Bricket Wood, Herts.

Tel: Garston 73943.

#### WHITE ACE MCC (Portsmouth)

Mrs. B. J. Turner, 12 Carless Close, Rowner, Gosport, Hants.

#### WIMBLEDON AND DMCC

Miss S. A. Morris, 21 Grasmere Avenue, Merton Park, London,

S.W.19. Tel: 01-540 4800.

#### WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE MCC

K. J. Whincup, 36 Long Street, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos.

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