



# TREADS

[www.aamc.co.uk](http://www.aamc.co.uk)

The April 2014 Newsletter of AAMC

## EDITORS BITS

– Chris

I have to admit that it can be a struggle to write even this short column once a month and, to be perfectly honest, tonight is particularly difficult. I have had a long day and been sat at a computer juggling several projects. But you don't want to read this kind of rubbish. It is on the wrong side of uplifting to say the least. However I have managed to see the upside of my situation...

The weather is good, the bike is out and for the last half an hour of the working day it was just great to get out on two wheels, even if it was just the commute home from the city centre. The traffic wasn't too bad either. I didn't ride that well though, I mean, it was safe enough but for the odd moment during the ride it became clear that I wasn't concentrating as well as I should have been. After the long day sitting at a computer all I had to look forward to after dinner was another stint in front of another screen. So where is this upside?

Well, I have added to my experience and learned another instance where I may not be so alert getting on a bike – so simply put, I have learned something today!



## First Ride

I don't think anyone would argue if I said we had suffered a wet winter. The only good thing – and it's not **that** good, is that it hasn't been cold, so the heating bill hasn't been as big as normal. It started raining in November and only stopped a few days before my ride. However, what a difference a few days can make. 17 of us on 16 bikes met at the Cross Hands on a really warm and sunny morning, including new member Tim. Adan and Rick both volunteered to be back-marker, but Rick is bigger than Adan so he and Joy won that title.

I knew the B4040 had been closed for a bridge repair during the winter, but thought it was open again as I couldn't find anything anywhere about it being still closed. How wrong I was! When we reached Acton Turville there was the sign, so it was a

quick about-turn and through Badminton village.

As we didn't start until 10:30am, there was no time for a tea stop and I took a direct route to Chipping Norton through Cirencester, Bibury and Burford, as I decided we needed to be at the café by noon to be able to get a seat. As we drew near, a huge crowd of motorbikes were just parking outside. Oh dear. Not what we needed. We parked up and discussed the options.

There are a couple of other cafés nearby as well and a pub, but they pall against the Old Mill Coffee Shop.

We decided we should ask, so went inside. They kindly offered to open the garden for us, and immediately organised for the outside tables to be put out, for the first time this year. It was

very kind of them and suited us down to the ground. We had lunch and a good natter, then it was time to depart.

I had chosen a route through Charlbury that has some nice twisties, from there back to Burford and on to Lechlade. Nigel

B knew a good unclassified road from there to Cirencester that avoids the normal A road grind and that turned out to be a good choice, apart from a few bumps here and there.

To make a change I decided to go from Tetbury towards Nailsworth,

then back on the A46 past the Cross Hands and over the M4 junction at Tormarton. We finished at the Tollgate Tea Shop, just south of Dyrham Park, where most of us went inside for a cup of tea and slice of cake. It just had to be done.

Thanks very much to all who came, especially Rick and Joy for going back-marker. The warm and sunny weather was a real godsend and made an excellent start to the Club riding season. More please!



# View From the Saddle

## Motorcycle Self Defence.

It is worth noting, before reading this article, that whilst training self defence it is appropriate to accept that other people are actively trying to harm you be it physically (e.g. a fight), financially (e.g. a mugging) or even psychologically (e.g. threat displays). On a motorcycle the attacks are less likely to be deliberate but perhaps no less dangerous. This article is intended to provoke some thought as to your own attitudes towards defensive riding. Everything discussed here is in a vastly simplified and basic form and requires further reading and research for a fuller understanding.

*"It's better to avoid than to run; better to run than to de-escalate; better to de-escalate than to fight; better to fight than to die."*

*Rory Miller,  
Meditations on Violence.*

Over the 16 years of my training I have discovered that my martial art is only a fraction of what is required for self defence – the physical skills of the art must be supported by other elements. In his book *Meditations on Violence*, Rory Miller writes on 7 subjects that must be learned / covered / understood for self defence; law and ethics; violence dynamics; avoidance, escape, evasion and de-escalation; counter-assault; the freeze; the fight; the aftermath. These elements become quite interesting if they are applied to biking.

**Law and ethics:** in self defence it is essential to know what you are allowed to do (law) and what

you will allow yourself to do (your own moral and ethical boundaries or limits). It is necessary to know your limits before you need to act – it is too late to find yourself in a situation before tackling these questions. You may not like the answers and fall short of being able to deal with the situation. On the motorbike what we are allowed to do is largely covered by the Highway Code. What you allow yourself to do is different for each of us and will depend on many things such as, for example, your feelings and opinions on speed, attitude to danger and other road users.

**Violence Dynamics:** I will lift the quote directly from Rory Miller's web site, "If you don't know how bad guys attack, how can you possibly know what to train for?" If you don't know where the dangers are and how they arise when on a bike, how can you train to deal with them?

We need to understand what, when, where, how and why.

**Avoidance, escape, evasion de-escalation:** an understanding of how situations begin, develop, escalate and skills to counteract this are essential. Looking back at the quote at the start of this article – skills and understanding of the situation may well enable you to avoid rather than to be in a position of having to talk a potentially violent person down. It is a position of not fighting. On a bike? This same use of skills and understanding of how situations develop is essential in learning to avoid a truck rather than perhaps trying to persuade it to take a different path, how to change the situation to a position of your own safety. There is no point in being right and in an ambulance.

**Counter assault ambush attacks and sucker-punches:** This is slightly more tricky to apply directly to motorcycle riding for various reasons however Motorcycle Roadcraft talks about a riding plan and having an escape route or alternative plan. If this happens, how will I respond? You will not have time to work these things out during an incident. It is better to have planned for those "what if..." moments in advance. Ideally we would not leave ourselves open to a 'sucker-punch' on a bike.

**The freeze:** Understanding what it is, recognising it and training to minimise it are essential. We will all freeze, however you can train yourself to deal with it and act. It is that 'oh shit' moment. Perhaps this is the instant tight grip on the handlebars and brakes in a surprising situation. A more experienced rider (with a plan) is more likely to act than 'freeze and squeeze'. One example of this is the ability to avoid potholes.

How often have you seen the pothole and continued to look at it only to ride straight over it? Training to look away from the pothole, to plan your path around it takes practice to break the more natural reaction of staring at this particular hazard.

**The fight:** Again, straight from the web site (well, he writes better than I do), "The fight itself. Most practitioners concentrate right here, and that's fine. But even at the core, you have to train with respect to the ways fights actually happen – with compromised structure and speed and movement and obstacles." Whilst in self defence this refers to the physical contact part of a conflict on a motorcycle we can consider a developing scenario – a car pulling out could be the first punch thrown. On your motorbike this can be likened to the physical skill used for riding. Most of us ride under levels of low stress, in comfortable surroundings (read weather, roads we know etc.) and in our comfort zone. A conflict situation on (or off) a bike is potentially lethal – other road users won't be where you expect them or at a speed you expect them. Adrenaline hits the system, stress results in a loss of fine motor skills and you may experience tunnel vision. You are out of your comfort zone, you may have to turn or brake harder than you ever have before or take a route off-road. This is where we don't want to be but experience and skills training is a huge plus.

**The aftermath:** Whether you 'win' or 'lose' a fight you will have to deal with the aftermath – this could include medical, social, legal and/or psychological ramifications, dealing with the law, living with having caused pain or injury to someone else. These points can also be applied to motorcycling.

If you 'win', whilst you may have added to your 'bag of experience' the fact that you have had, say, a near miss can affect you physically – you may still be riding but now with adrenaline in your system not to mention the possibility of being angry at what has just happened. Your mind may not be on the next bit of road and dangers are still out there. A near miss may put you off getting on a motorbike ever again. If you 'lose' you may lose in the physical sense, serious injury or worse. You may lose in a legal sense and face prosecution, even if no one was hurt and this has to be dealt with as well. Talking to the police is a skill and in my opinion, should be considered before you talk yourself into trouble. Preparation and an understanding of the consequences of your decision making are essential both on and off the road.

Many of these ideas are covered in Motorcycle Roadcraft, albeit in a different form. Riding a motorbike puts us all in the Venn bubble of higher risk – the latest version of Roadcraft mentions bikers are 50 times more likely to be killed or suffer a serious injury – so defensive riding really ought to be part of our riding skill set. This is a vastly simplified overview of complex areas self defence and goes far deeper than the points I have made here. In riding terms, however, I hope this has given you something to consider.

### Something to say?

Please don't be shy. E-mail [editor@aamc.co.uk](mailto:editor@aamc.co.uk) And send some photos in too!

# Ride Report

– Jim

Simon's ride may have been sunnier & had a greater turn out but, in the game of Club Ride 'Top Trumps' my ride beat his in the 'Road Closed' stakes – finding 2 as opposed to his measly 1!

The joy of not planning things down to the last detail [not your ride plan!] is that you can be endlessly flexible. So when the B road from Monmouth to Hay was closed at Grosmont a quick squint at the map had us on a suitable detour – complete with nervous horses, mud and pot holes – and we were shortly back on course for Hay & lunch at the Honey Café, which was a lot quieter than it is in the summer.

Post lunch another random factor was thrown into the mix when John said that he was pretty short of petrol just as we were to head off into the wilds. A quick change of plan saw us hotfoot to Brecon for fuel and a hastily recalculation of the afternoon ride.

I don't think that we go down [up?] the A40 between Brecon and Llandovery very often but it is a road I shall probably use again. After the traffic for Cardiff is dropped off, the road changes from a dual carriageway into a fairly twisty road with swooping bends for about 15 miles.

Turning onto the Builth Wells road in Llandovery saw more traffic controls as the road was being repaired in several places but the road remained open! More bends, twists and stunning scenery saw us turn off in Garth onto a B road to take us up over the top & down to Upper & Lower Chapel. Fortunately at this point the sky was blue & clear and we were

rewarded with far reaching views and several sightings of Red Kites. The Gods must have been looking on favourably as even the sheep kept well away from the road. Continuing on from the 'Chapels' saw us back in Brecon and on to the tea stop at the little café in Talybont.

After tea we managed half a mile before the road to Gilwern was closed. Another swift detour & a loop around to Crickhowell and back over the old bridge to put us back on the Gilwern road, rather than traipse through Abergavenny. The final part of the ride was down the usual route to Chepstow via Usk, all on dry roads and sunny skies.

So the moral of the day for any future ride leaders? Well, it could

be 'be flexible and have a plan B', if there is any plan at all. Or it might be that 'fortune favours the brave' as, despite the weather forecast, there were always more showers threatened than actually precipitated, most of the ride was on dry roads and it can pour down in July and August too!

Finally, mention must be made of new member Dave who, having only just joined the club a few days ago and having just had eye surgery meaning that he could not ride, came along to the start to meet us – hope to see you out on a ride soon Dave. And thanks to Mark for going back marker and for fixing the connector for Helen's heated clothing which will be done before the next ride I'm sure.

---

## I broke down today...

This is how the AA got me to Fowlers!! Chris K.



# Ahmed's Curry Café...

– Morton

**What do Ahmed's Curry Café, Magic Clean Carpet Cleaning (£25 for 2 Standard Rooms) and luxury handmade vintage cupcakes have in common? Not a lot, you might think, but all are emailed offers I've received from kgb deals. Of those three, I've taken up the Ahmed offer of a banquet for 4 for £30, and excellent it was, too.**

Yes, but why would we want to know? – I hear you ask. Well, these offers that come out of the blue can introduce you to something new, that you might not have come across otherwise – and in my, case, stir me to get off my backside and do something more interesting. Hence a very pleasant two-night stay for two, with dinner, at an hotel in Worthing last June, for £89 (Arundel Castle, Littlehampton and Brighton nearby), afternoon tea at the Hilton for not much, and soon 2 nights at the Brynafon Hotel (The Old Workhouse) in Rhayader for £69, as a trial biking holiday to practise our packing for the Cornwall trip in June.

All the accommodation deals have a decent length of time from buying the voucher to using it (which you know in advance), and the discounts are genuine. If you miss one, they usually come around again sooner or later – so having missed the offer of a car air-con service for £30 a few months ago, I'm looking out for a repeat! Sadly, I don't get any commission from kgb deals, and of course "discount deals are available from other suppliers", as the BBC feels obliged to say in these circumstances. The only downside we've noticed is that once in a while, postage costs would spoil the deal, but so far, our experience has been entirely positive, and we recommend kgb to friends and relatives, several of whom have been pleased to get vouchers as presents – again, it often introduces them to something they might not have come across otherwise.

## Oops! – Morton

Have just spotted a booboo in my Bloodhound article in last month's issue of Treads – it jumped out at me when I re-read it: the rocket produces 122KN of thrust, not 44!

To finish off, here are today's offers (nothing biking-related, but look at the variety!):

£25 for a 3-course Spring Menu tapas meal for 2  
Harveys Cellars

Good Vibrations £49 for 3 ultrasonic lipo sessions

West Country Karting £17 for 80 sprint laps for 1 person

Magic Clean £25 for 2 Standard Room Carpet Cleaning

Great British Food Festival £8 For 2 one-day tickets to the Great British Food Festival Plus a Recipe Book

Online TEFL Course + teaching pack £19

£16 for 16 EuroMillions Tickets From Lottoland Ltd

The Luxury Cup Cake Company £12.99 for 4 luxury handmade vintage cupcakes - boxed and delivered!

Diet Specialist £39 for a 26-Module Online Certified Nutritionist Course

Buyagift Plc £85 for a 2 Night B&B stay from a choice of 80+ hotels UK wide

Frying Pan Set £29 for a 5-piece ceramic frying pan set -shipping included

£18 for 16 Gillette-compatible razor blades-shipping included

The Melville Hotel Blackpool £59 for a 2-night stay for 2 + breakfast in Blackpool

## Horlicks

– Stu & Sue

Hi Everyone.

I am sorry to say I made a Horlicks in re-arranging the club week-day ride to the 8th May. I am not available on that day and should have put the **1st May** as the new date.

I could blame it on Jet-Lag but to be honest it was just a blunder on my part!

Sorry. Look forward to seeing you there.

# Parish News

– the Vicar

## 2014 Club Bashes

There may still be a place available for someone to come with us to Cornwall on Stuart's long weekend away from Friday 20th to Monday 23rd June, inclusive. We will be staying in Falmouth, as previously, and Stuart will organise the routes down and back, together with rides out on both the Saturday and Sunday. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Stuart straight away. It promises to be a great weekend away.

## Training

The Skills Development Course is now underway with eleven trainees attending in order to improve their riding skills and general road safety. If you want to know more about it, please get in touch with me. It's never too late to hone your skills.

Alternatively if you think you might like to become a Club Tutor and help others, I can organise a tutor course. It's great fun and you're giving something back too. Please contact me for a chat.

## Skittles

The skittles evening in the Crown at Saltford has been and gone, and we had a great time. Unfortunately I forgot to take my camera, so have no photos to show. What a twit! Anyway I'm pleased to tell you that Mark won the main game and Alison won the killer. Well done to both of you.

## Rides

Club Sunday rides have now started in earnest, with both weekday and evening rides starting shortly as well. Now all we need is some decent weather during the summer, and it will be perfect.

My ride to the Ace Café is coming up on 18th May. Their website says it will be their Springtime SportsBike Special that day. It's always worth a visit, especially if you've never been. History.

Please note that Stu has changed the date of his weekday ride in May from 15th to 1st. All other details remain the same.

## Karting

The Club karting event this year is on Saturday 10th May and will be followed by a meal, possibly a curry. If you are interested, please contact Mark asap for further details – see his e-mail address below. We had a great time last year, and this year we have a meal out too. What could be better?

[webmaster@aamc.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@aamc.co.uk)

## SMIDSY talk

Stephen Wilkinson-Carr of the Gloucester RoSPA bike group will be coming to give us a talk on Smidsy type accidents (Sorry Mate I Didn't See You) on Wednesday 23rd April. This promises to be both interesting and educational, and I already have twenty-two names on my list of attendees. This is open to members, their families and interested friends, so if you haven't already told me you want to come, please get in touch ASAP. I'll send out directions nearer the time to those attending.

## Congratulations

I would like to congratulate Neville for getting a gold pass on his first RoSPA test a week or so ago. Neville joined the Club training course last spring and went on to do a little one-to-one training afterwards, culminating in his test. A great result. Well done Neville!

## Welcome

This month I would like to welcome Dave as a new Club member. Dave lives in Henbury and rides a Suzuki GSX600F. We all extend a warm welcome to you and hope to see you out and about with us at as many Club events as you can.

# Slow Riding Skills Day

**We are running a slow riding event on 11 May 2014 at Berkeley Power Station and would like to invite your riders to come along for free.**

**Timings:** 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Venue:** Lower Car Park, Berkeley Power Station, Berkeley, GL13 9PB (N51 41.406 W2 29.727)

The morning will be run by Tony Dix assisted by tutors from Gloucestershire RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders' group and will provide riders with a safe environment to explore the slow speed handling and braking performance of their bikes.

Tutors will be on hand to offer instruction and encouragement throughout each of the exercises! We will be running a slow race, a variety of coned exercises, braking practise and, hopefully, a motogymkhana event.

Here is a taster video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLIHh56yX1Y>

If you are planning to attend this fun and challenging event, please contact Stephen Wilkinson-Carr ([swcroadar@sky.com](mailto:swcroadar@sky.com)).

## How to get there from the M5

- Exit 14 M5 signed to Dursley from the south and Thornbury from the north.
- Follow signs to Berkeley (A38).
- Turn right onto A38 to Gloucester.
- After 1.3 miles, as you exit the village of Stone, turn left toward Ham, Rockhampton, Hill.
- After 2.1 miles you will see a red telephone kiosk on the right. Turn next left onto Hamfield Lane (about 75 meters after the kiosk).

- After 1 mile turn left onto main route into the Power Station.
- At the first roundabout you come to take the first exit and follow this approach road (watching out for the pot holes) until you approach the Berkeley Centre gatehouse. Take the left turn through the upper car park and continue until you see the cones in the lower car park.

Full details and a photomap are on the forum at: <http://tinyurl.com/Slow-Riding-2014>

Hope you can make it.

Stephen Wilkinson-Carr,  
Membership Secretary, Group Ride Coordinator,  
Glos RoADAR.  
07976 644485  
[swcroadar@sky.com](mailto:swcroadar@sky.com)

## Diary

### April

#### Saturday 12th.

**Simon**

BikeSafe event at Castle Combe race track. The Club will have a stand to help recruit new members. Volunteers needed to help with the manning please.

#### Wednesday 23rd.

**Simon**

SMIDSY talk by Stephen Wilkinson-Carr.

#### Sunday 27th.

**Terry**

Club Ride.

### May

#### Thursday 1st

**Stuart**

Weekday Ride.

#### Saturday 10th

**Mark**

Karting at the South West Karting Centre in Cheddar, followed by a meal.

#### Sunday 18th

**Simon**

Club Ride to the Ace Café, London.

#### Thursday 22nd

**Steve**

Evening Ride.

#### Sunday 25th

**Mark**

Club Ride.

UPDATED  
RIDE DETAILS