



TREADS

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The JANUARY 2021 Newsletter of AAMC

EDITORS BITS – Stu Bullock – 07711898178

Anyone interested in seeing a video about cornering? I know you've heard me quote these figures before, *on average about a quarter of motorcycle fatalities every year happen on rural roads often on a corner or where the road changes direction*, but we have a vested interest in getting things right.

I'm very suspicious of so-called training videos. I've helped produce several and know well it is so difficult to get everything right and of course, you have to expect criticism over one detail or another. Having said that, this particular 5-minute film is very good and I highly recommend it. For one thing, the rider isn't hanging off a race replica, trying to go as fast as he can. Quite the opposite in fact but that means you can clearly see all of the points being made. A link to it is here:

<https://youtu.be/-ShHzG2jnaA>

RoSPA Diploma Holders: The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), has recently announced new customised training awards. The head of driver training, Amy Brant, made the announcement recently:

RoSPA Qualifications is a separate entity from other areas of RoSPA and operates independently, with its own governing body and management team.

The RoSPA Diploma qualification for cars is now the RoSPA Level 4 Award in Advanced Behavioural Driver Training.

The Motorcycle Diploma is now the Level 3 award in Advanced Motorcycle Instructor Training.

- *These two new quali's benefit from being*

benchmarked against the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) level descriptors.

- *They are quality assured and regulated by RoSPA Qualifications.*
- *They are also approved by the DVSA.*

Riders who operate as fee charging motorcycle trainers must take the relevant new qualification, when they are next due to renew their award.

Those Diploma holders who are NOT fee charging trainers, can maintain that qualification by taking the usual test when they are next due to renew it. However, the Diploma will organically be phased out as more instructors take the new Level 3/4 qualification.

RoSPA Drivers and Riders (RoADAR) members, who take the new Level 3/4 qualification will get a discount on the cost, by quoting their membership number at the time of purchase.

Check out the website for more info:
rospa@rospa.com

MAG announce an interesting development.

Press release, written by Colin Brown (MAG UK)

British motorcyclists' organization Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has received confirmation that motorcycles are not on the government's list of petrol and diesel vehicles that cannot be sold from 2030.

The United Kingdom government has announced that they will end the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. The

Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), a member of FEMA, has received confirmation from the Department for Transport (DfT) that the sale of petrol motorcycles is not in scope of the announcement.

In November 2020 the government formally announced a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. Included in the plan is the announcement that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in the UK will end by 2030.

This is ten years earlier than planned. The position on motorcycles is not mentioned in the announcement. MAG therefore contacted the DfT for clarification and received confirmation that motorcycles are not in scope of the government's announcement regarding the ending of sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans.

The DfT went on to say that there are no timeframes for ending the sale of petrol/diesel motorcycles. Further, should the department wish to make such an announcement, they will consult first with the Motorcycle Action Group and its members.

(Of course, now they are aware of our interest.... Ed).

CHATTY CHAIRMAN – Simon Gough

This month I'd like to extend a warm welcome to new member John , who lives in Yatton and rides an R1200RT. Once we can get back to riding our bikes again, we hope to see you out and about on a Club ride or at a social event very soon.

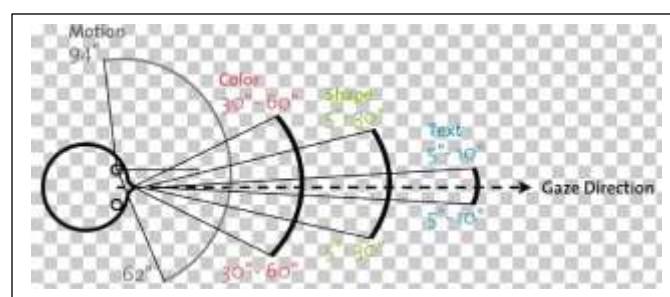
THE HOW ON EARTH – part 2 – HAVE WE SURVIVED? – Stu Bullock

In part 1, I left you with my thoughts about how we humans have evolved to become earth's dominant animal and, how short the time has been for us to get used to driving and riding. I also 'discussed' our approach to learning and risk and, how we learn by making mistakes.



In my driving and riding career I have realised some things that are important for me to learn well. Looking is a skill we hardly use to full potential. Mostly, we see what we want, or expect because we are creatures of habit. In fact, we need to practise looking to develop a number of areas but also need to understand how our eyes work.

Peripheral vision is always active, but we modern humans have often turned it off, or ignore the sensory warning received in our brain that PV will send when it detects movement.



Take the situation where you are on a motorway travelling at a set speed and you reach an on ramp. A vehicle on that ramp travelling beside you at the same speed will be seen by your PV.

The above chart shows how PV works and confirms why scanning is important. What happens next is any number of steps you can take to reduce the risk of collision. Speed up a bit; slow down a bit; change lanes; a combination of speed and space.

Only very recently did I witness a lorry in a motorway lane 1 decide not to move into lane 2 for a junction 'on' ramp. The lorry driver should have been able to see the Open Reach van in the 'on' ramp as they were travelling side by side. Open Reach man failed to see that his entry point onto the motorway had a lorry already in it. Very close call, to the point that I

slowed and moved into lane 2 to avoid the ensuing collision. I hate the sound of tyres passing over broken vehicle parts.

Right at the last second, and with the Open Reach van wheels on the give way marking, both vehicles swerved apart.

What we don't know, is why both drivers failed to see each other. They were side by side for at least 40 seconds. Maybe both drivers did see each other, but made presumptions over 'right of way'. Written on a classroom wall at my Cops driving school. **No such thing as right of way. Cos, if someone don't give it – you ain't got it.** Yes, I know. It was a learn to drive school, not a learn grammar school.



Part of looking is learning to scan. Pilots learn this skill as their eyes never remain looking in one direction for long. Other than height above the earth, the need to learn and practise scanning is just as vital to reducing risk as a motorcyclist. The earlier you can see a developing situation where higher risk may be involved, the earlier you can begin to take steps to reduce that risk. It really is very, very simple.

You may have learned that, as you enter a darkened room, you cannot see what you are directly looking at. That's normal and how our eyes work. The ring around the eye centre takes over in those conditions, so if you move your head and eyes slightly in a rotary motion you will see everything. It takes practise if you are not aware as we have mostly lost the use of this knowledge, due to our modern world of everything being lit.

I found the skill quite useful when in Spain, entering dark tunnels from a bright cloudless sky and being able to see a good part of the road ahead.



You might think that what enters your eyes is a kind of endless tape of what is actually there to be seen. In fact, that isn't correct as our eyes can miss things because our brain is adding its presumption of what it expects. This in some way goes to explain why road users who are not motorcyclists often do not 'see' an oncoming motorcycle when there is a bigger 'threat' also in view. It's about what we expect to see and so we need to pre load our brains with the factors that can raise risk and reduce safety.

This is where your preparation for a ride is worth doing well. Before setting out just remind yourself where you are going; the weather conditions expected; the road conditions expected; your rest stops; areas you are unused to. There are loads of things you can add to the list.

I used to train on circuits and had specific sessions for pillion riders. It's important for passengers on bikes to realise how their input can help or hinder. It is a huge underrated area not included in the vast majority of training schemes. My big message was to tell the pillion, before getting aboard, look the rider in the eye and ask if they will consider you and your safety on the journey. Pre loading potential risk factors is a good thing to learn.

One thing a rider needs to learn, in my opinion the most vital skills of all the skills needed to ride safely and well, is machine handling. In fact, in my view, it is more important for survival than any kind of advanced riding. I'll be clear, as I have on many other occasions, without an innate, natural and reactive knowledge of how a motorcycle works, every little foible displayed by the bike you are going to ride, you do run a great risk of a situation being better than you are.



Police Off-Road training, Tidworth.

How to get those skills? I always advise an off-road training day. There are lots about but don't be afraid to ask loads of questions about what you can expect from any one training day. The main area you will learn to live with is a sliding bike. Sliding, not necessarily out of control. Maybe only half way out of control! Circuit based track training day are also good, as long as it is not just a 'balls to the fore' track day. You need to be taught something and be able to experience the lessons for yourself.

Confidence is what you will gain. Confidence means when you are confronted by a road user mistake, your brain will have learnt to react and begin the escape plan. It's like this. Once you have a few months riding experience, you will not think too much about the lean angles you need on a road, or counter steering, because your brain will be used to dealing with the variations without you needing conscious thought. You may get that 'lurch' in the pit of your stomach if a bend has something unusual

about it that your lizard brain has not come across before. That 'wakes' you up because your brain wants you to think about the situation and very often that delay can be too late.

When in the Cops, a lot of training I received was about decision making, often in times of action, where a fast response is required. The idea is to have options pre-loaded into your brain. Then, as a situation develops, your brain will guide you to the best decision for all of the factors considered. It means that you are less likely to panic, or make a bad decision.



I'll give you an example. On one occasion I was driving a Jaguar XJ40 police patrol car along the A361 from Taunton, to a reported serious accident. As I was leaving Durston, crossing two bridges for canal and railway, I noticed two men walking towards us on the left verge. My brain locked onto them and as we were about to go past, one of them just raised his hand a fraction. Brain decided action was required and I began to brake. As we dropped over the second bridge, the reported accident was not where we had been told, but a few metres in front of us. An emergency stop must have looked dramatic to the people in the road but when my crew mate asked me why I had braked early, I had to say I didn't know. It took some while for me to realise I had not made the decision, my lizard brain had. There is no doubt that losing 20 mph meant we did not become part of the accident.

Learning machine handling away from the road means your brain will learn faster about leaning, steering, braking, tyre grip and so on without having to worry about the general road user mistakes. Once you have learnt, taking your new thoughts onto a road will then put everything into context. The example is, having

learnt advanced riding and passed a test, you eventually make a mistake and are running out of manoeuvring room. Your lizard brain now needs to take over and you may need to know exactly to the cm where you can stop, or pick up a cornering bike, resight it and reapply the lean.



Honda VF1000FF National Motorcycle Rally.

I used to enter overnight road rallies, like the BMF Rally. I had a Honda VF1000FF and running out of Leicester, about 10pm on a summer evening, towards my next rally control and a well-earned rest stop near Corby. Looking ahead, I saw a left bend scrolling over a brow with the hedge line very clear. So, cranked over to my left and holding my speed, I was mildly surprised to see the road take a sharpish bend to my right. I can absolutely guarantee you that the speed change, lean change, gentle braking, body angle change was all done at the same time and by my lizard brain. Had I had to think, I would have made a gradual merge into the scenery. I'm not saying it was pretty. I'm not saying it was the safest way. But we got around. I later found the very bottom edge of my right pannier had a little flat spot worn on it, so far over did it lean. I needed a short firm chat with myself about concentration and I was without doubt scared shirtless, but able to carry on with my journey.

I am convinced that using The System of Motorcycle Control makes you learn a disciplined way of using your knowledge and skills to recognise risk and take steps to reduce that risk. Combine that with superb machine

handling skills and you will, without any doubt, be a much safer rider.

As an aside, during my time as a circuit instructor, I would occasionally take pillion riders around a race circuit on the bike I was riding, in order that they can become used to how their position will affect control of the machine, how they can assist the rider maintain smooth control. In fact, all things pillion.

At Thruxton on one occasion I was working for Honda UK with members of the wider press. I took a lady from Vogue magazine for 5 circuits, as she had volunteered to do. We were linked by radio so that I could keep her informed about what was happening. She screamed the whole 5 circuits but when we stopped, begged for another go, because "she found it so exciting". Fortunately for me, John McGuinness*, well known road racer, was also in attendance as part of his Honda contract, and he took her for her next 'experience'. For her, this was like going from the tortoise to the rocket, and so you might imagine the emotional state she was in following that. Unfortunately for me, the occasion never made it into Vogue magazine. Another opportunity missed.



John McGuinness and 'friend', IoM TT Circuit.

58 odd years of riding, confirms to me that riding a motorcycle requires a greater emotional and mental approach than (sorry car drivers) driving a box requires. The need to take account of your own risk from error, the mistakes of others, the road engineering covering road surface and lane direction, weather, traffic density, at the same time balancing a fairly weighty amount of scrap metal on only two wheels, requires a great

deal of attention to be accurate, safe and progressive.

Don't be a tank bag, is my advice. Be active on the bike, keep thinking, keep scanning, keep assessing risk and that is how we continue to survive. It takes practice but to my mind, this is where we refute the assertion that motorcyclists are 'thrill seekers' and in fact, some pay far more attention than those sat on four or more wheels in a heated box.

As well as a fit bike, we should also keep ourselves in shape to ride. Our bodies were designed to hunt and run over long distances, climb trees and carry the results of the hunt.

Therefore, keeping good flexibility is important, to keeping 'fit to ride'.



As a walking animal, sitting is an alien activity and we need to remember that in terms of route planning, and before riding off into the sunset without a plan. When we talk about a riding plan, as I have said above, understand your endurance sitting down and plan stops accordingly. Having worked on and led tours and riding holidays, I have lots of anecdotes about what can happen to the human mind when it gets fatigued and, dear reader, its damned scary. Not only the mental strain needs avoiding but also the physical problems, in extremis, deep vein thrombosis from sitting in one position for too long.

Finally; never, ever, at any time, stop learning and seeking learning opportunities and; never, ever, at any time, stop listening to your lizard brain, to avoid ambition exceeding ability. Its

lessons have been around far longer than you have.

*PS. *John McGuinness is a most incredible human being, as far as I am concerned, and certainly would not appear to be a thrill seeker. A very gentle, 'ordinary' and considerate man, who turns into a race monster once the start flag drops, then reverts instantly to his normal self after crossing the finish line. 'Understated but not underrated' is the description of JM offered by my very great friend, the late John Truelove, and is immaculately accurate. JM also holds the record for the fastest lap of the IoM TT course, (previously held long term by Mike (the bike) Hailwood MBE GM), taking the lap record to 17:21.29s or 130.442 mph on 8 June 2009, after the race start was delayed by rain. Holy Shemoly.*

TREADS - NEXT PUBLICATION DATE

We endeavour to issue Treads on a regular basis during the third week of the month. Therefore, if you have any items to be published in the next TREADS, can you please ensure that they reach the editor at the latest by;

MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2021

Submissions accepted:

- In MICROSOFT WORD format. (May be edited to fit available space).
- Photo's as separate JPEG files, not embedded in the text.

We publish articles for the benefit of members – none are an endorsement or recommendation unless explicitly stated. You must make up your own mind if you think something is suitable for you.

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

How come lipstick doesn't do what it says?

How do you get off a non-stop flight?

How come noses run and feet smell?

LEGAL QUESTIONS – Andrew Dalton

***Disclaimer:** The legal advice and statements contained within this/these article(s) is correct at the time of printing. Andrew Dalton is a trial lawyer, with White Dalton Motorcycle Solicitors.*

Q1. There are those without morals who'll knock your parked bike over and do a runner, but they're not always guaranteed to get away with it.

My bike was knocked down in a Morrisons car park whilst it was parked in a proper bike bay. Morrisons were as helpful as they could be, and gave me video footage of a white, fairly new, but grubby Fiesta knocking my bike over. On the video footage which I saw I could not read the dirty number plate.

My Insurers paid for the repairs, no problem, but my no claims bonus went, and my insurance policy went up over £200 this year. Apart from feeling a bit sore, I did not think any more of it until a couple months ago when I received a letter from a firm of solicitors saying that they 'wanted to recover their insurer client's outlay, but needed to bring a claim in my name', and went on to say that their investigation team had run the Morrisons footage through some video enhancer and had got the number plate, which matched a white Fiesta whose registered keeper lived 1.3 miles away from Morrisons.

Their question was 'could they sue in my name' and they went on to add that if won in full I would get my no claims bonus back and a refund of the nearly £200 loading I had to pay after the crash. I am very suspicious. Am I being scammed?

Answer

No. The firm that has written to you is straight. They are a big, well known defendant outfit. I am against them all the time. But well done for having your wits about you, and I do not blame you for being a bit suspicious. The legal logic is this. Your insurers paid out under your contract of insurance because the driver could not be identified. The insurers now have what they

think is a solid lead on the car that knocked your bike over.

The usual presumption in law is that the registered keeper is the driver. Your insurers cannot as a matter of law, bring a claim, because they are not the victim of the civil wrong, but you can. In short, they are asking you to 'lend them your name'.

If they win, your no claims bonus is reinstated, they get back from the Fiesta driver's insurance what they paid to either repair or replace your bike, and you would get back your increased premium. If you lose, or if they lose on your behalf (such as failing to satisfy the court as to the identity of the driver or the car registration), then they have said that they will meet your costs so your only risk is the very slim one of you being forced to go to Court to confirm that your bike was hit. This is frankly a tiny risk.

If it was me, I would go along with my insurers. The firm they use are a tough bunch who see things through to the end, and your insurers are unusually stubborn, and good luck to them. Your insurers and this law firm are well known for pursuing and publicising fraudulent claims and they have a reputation for seeing things through to the bitter end. They are not afraid of a trial.

I cannot give you odds of success because I do not know how clear the footage is, but you have very little to lose. Your policy of insurance does have a clause in it which says that you have to assist in a 'Civil recovery', but wisely your insurer solicitors are asking nicely rather than demanding, so go for it.

If the video footage is clear enough to persuade the court as to your hit and run, the insurers of the white Fiesta will pay up, and if the driver of the Fiesta has a job or a house, the insurers will go after their insured who is in clear breach of their policy requirements to report an accident or claim.

Andrew Dalton

Q2. I was riding my trusty F650 GS along a single lane, badly broken up single track C class county road just as dusk was falling. A border collie ran out of a farmyard, straight into my path. I hit the dog. I stayed on.

My battered bike was no more battered, the dog was in a terrible state. A youngish woman ran out after the dog, got quite hysterical, and in something out of deliverance an older man came out, looked at the dog, who was clearly in distress and badly injured went back into the farmhouse, got his shotgun, and shot the dog in the head. It was a very weird day.

I called the police, because the day was just so weird, and they turned up, made some sympathetic noises to everyone, and then got back into their car. I thought no more of it until about six weeks after the collision, I got a letter from a local solicitor, telling me that the dog was a “highly trained and valuable working dog” and demanding a couple of thousand pounds for the purchase of a new dog and its training.

Do I have to pay this? Or does my insurance cover it? And if it does, will I lose my no claims bonus.

Answer

In answer to your first three questions, you do not have to pay this, and whilst your insurance would cover it, in order for this dog owner to bring a claim she has to prove negligence on your part, and there is none, and what you need to watch out for is your insurers paying off the dog owner, a few hundred pounds, and then stuffing your no claims bonus, then reaping in thousands of pounds, over the course of the next few years an increased premium.

“...it is an offence to “cause or omit” a dog to be on a designated road without a dog being on a lead.”

You certainly did have a weird day, but the starting point is that it is an offence to “cause or omit” a dog to be on a designated road without a dog being on a lead. Secondly as the dog was unlawfully running loose and uncontrolled

negligence will be presumed against the owner. If the owner can show a credible story as to how the dog got onto the road without negligence, there might be a defence to a claim that you might bring, but it does not give her a claim against you.

The letter from the solicitors, is about as weird as your day. I have read the letter. No actual negligence has been alleged against you in the bizarre letter sent to you by a solicitor who I have checked. His specialist area is estate planning and agricultural land transactions, it shows. He clearly has not got the first clue about litigation.

Send the letter to your insurers and make it crystal clear that your insurers are to make no offers to the careless dog owner. You need to watch out that they do not pay out on this claim on “a commercial basis” and then spank you for the next five years as a result of your “fault” claim.

Andrew Dalton

HONDA CRF 1100L AFRICA TWIN and The HONDA ADVENTURE CENTRE – July Behl, RUST MOTORCYCLE MAGAZINE

RUST took Honda’s latest CRF1100L Africa Twin for a bumble around Devon and a day of in-person off-road tuition at the Honda Adventure Centre.

When the current variant of the Africa Twin was launched in 2016, I was lucky enough to briefly ride the bike in Africa, Madagascar to be precise – a real test in war-like conditions. Honda had kindly loaned Touratech both its Standard and Dual Clutch Transmission (DCT) models for the ‘United People of Adventure’ project. The Standard bike was ridden by a mate from Iceland, who’s a bit of self-proclaimed off-road guru and the DCT one was ridden by another mate, who’s a below the knee amputee – and a bloody competent road and off-road rider. The Africa Twin boys loved the bikes. The combination of strong performance and

supermodel looks – I knew Honda was going to take a big slice of the adventure bike sales!



Fast-forward four years, Honda invited RUST to a UK media event to test the 2020 CRF1100L Africa Twin, at Honda's Adventure Centre run by the legendary Dave Thorpe in Devon. The plan was to ride the bike from home to Devon and then spend a day riding the different Africa Twin models at the centre. Before I knew it, there was brand spanking new Adventure Sports model in Black, with panniers and all, in my garage – Hurrah!

Commuting

Commuting into Central London on a big adventure bike doesn't sound fun. The constant stop-start, filtering between cars, navigating narrow streets, constant gear changes etc can be a pain but on the Africa Twin it was hoot. For starters, the bike hides its weight beautifully (a bit of recurring theme in this article), has a special 'Urban' mode for town riding – nice, manageable power delivery – and auto cancelling indicators which is so tangibly practical that each turn puts a wee smile on your face. The cornering lights in the dark alleys of Brixton are a Brucie bonus (*So I'm not the only one to use this phrase. Ed*) as it illuminates all the stuff you want to avoid riding over – from potholes to cartons of rotten vegetables and meat!

We want our bikes to do everything these days – commuting, adventuring, off-roading etc – and the Africa Twin truly delivers as a commuter with

a grand presence that negates any busy traffic bullying combined with stealth-like agility to get you out of hairy Grand Theft Auto moments.



Touring

Commuting's a bit of necessity but touring is where the fun begins. The excitement of packing the bike for a few days, weeks or even months on the road is pure bliss. In this instance it was a 500-mile round trip to Devon and back. My loaner came with all the luggage trimmings – top box and two pretty damn sturdy frameless panniers. Not the metal variety but these could soak up a spill or two on the road with ease. I'm not usually a fan of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) panniers but these I liked – they took seconds to mount and dismount, were aesthetically pleasing and with a whopping 128 litres of storage boy could they fit the kitchen sink... and a bit more.

The Adventure Sports model comes with a 24.8L tank, larger handguards, heated grips, 12V ACC socket, Tubeless tyres, cruise control and a five-stage high screen among other creature comforts. The bike offers everything you need for long distance travelling (as evidenced by the Ian Surgeon's experience – see below). It's comfortable, has ample luggage capacity, plenty of power with 1084cc under the hood (giving 75kW peak power and 105Nm peak torque), a 280-mile fuel range, plus Apple car play to access Google Maps, Music etc on the 6.5inch touch screen Thin Film Transistor (TFT) display. It's the complete package and touring is a pleasure on the Africa Twin – a big fat yes from me.

Off-road

Touring's fun but off-roading gets the adrenaline pumping. While Madagascar was the definition of gnarly (read the RUST special issue on this called – imaginatively – 'Madagascar') Devon wasn't a doddle either. Between the two, the bike's been tested on deep sand, snot-like clay, water crossings, broken bridges, steep loose climbs and descents, ruts, torrential rain, bogs and gravel – a variety of terrain to test any bike on the planet to its hilt.



For the off-road sections both in Madagascar and in Devon, it was the standard, i.e., non-Adventure Sports or DCT model, in play. This is where the bike truly shines. Big bikes off-road can be intimidating – not the Africa Twin. The bike feels light (Honda has shaved 5kg on the new model), is flickable, is agile and overall confidence inspiring from the word go. Not sure if it's all the clever jiggery-pokery of the electronics (and there's plenty on offer), the weight distribution, a little bit of tuition from Dave Thorpe, the accessible seat height, or a combination of all four, but it's great to throw the bike around off-road. I didn't indulge so much in Devon, but Madagascar was off-road on steroids. Let's put it this way, if you're an off-road novice like me, you'll love the Africa Twin off-road and if you're an off-road pro like JB, you'll batter the living daylight out of the bike – in both cases beaming from ear to ear.



DCT

Here's a stat for you – DCT accounts for 50% of all Africa Twin sales globally. Not sure about you but it was certainly a bit of a revelation for me. Now I'm not the target market for the DCT – I like my standard geared bikes – a bit old school like that. To start with, it's completely unnatural – no blimmin clutch, no gear lever... not right. It takes a while but you get used to it, slowly but surely. For times where you don't want the bike to 'ride' for you, there's a manual mode and the +/- gear lever on the switch console lends that familiar feeling. There's obviously way more to the DCT than the prose above but the truth is, I didn't spend enough time on the DCT and it'd be unfair to give an opinion on it. In the 30 odd minutes of me on the DCT, these things stuck out so I'm sharing them with you. What I will say is that the DCT model is a blessing off-road – no shifting gears or feathering the clutch – just twist the throttle and enjoy keeping the bike upright. More to come on this....



Honda Adventure Centre

There's a plethora of off-road schools/adventure centres for big adventure bikes in the UK and I've been to none. This was of course before my time with Dave Thorpe at the [Honda Adventure Centre](#) in North Devon. In all my years of riding, this was my first-ever formal motorcycling learning experience and it was great fun. I've been in the Education and Training sector for over 20 odd years now and I can tell a good school from an average one. In this case it was the former.



Led by Dave Thorpe and his team of extremely knowledgeable, patient and competent trainers – the highlight for me was their temperament. Their calm, confident demeanour was as confidence inspiring as the bikes themselves. They deploy a tiered delivery model of both synchronous and asynchronous coaching and gradually turn up the dial on the technical sections. Exercises included are slow speed manoeuvres, slaloms, jumping mini logs, tight turns, water crossings, uphill and downhill riding etc. The centre's got access to a few hundred acres of a wide variety of terrain – plenty to keep you occupied and challenged for any of their weekend courses or adventure days. Also, if you don't want to get your kit muddy and wet, there's kit for rent – helmets, boots, gloves, jacket, trousers etc.

Dave Thorpe Honda Off Road Centre.

Raleigh's Cross, Watchet, TA23 0LN.

T. 01404 841278.

<https://www.davethorpehonda.com/>



Conclusion

Over the years, I've had many adventures bikes from the BMW R 1200 GS to the KTM 1190 Adventure R to a Triumph Tiger, etc and of all these bikes the Africa Twin is the least intimidating adventure bike and is plenty of fun, too. The biggest differentiator for the Africa Twin is its electronics – it truly is an intelligent bike and you can top and tail it to match your riding style for a variety of terrains. And again – it's got the power of a big bike but feels light as trail bike off-road. Does it do what it says on the tin? Bloody hell it does!

VIEW FROM THE SADDLE – Andy

Greetings all and Happy New Year

It seems a very long time since I managed to get out on the bike and feel a bit of a fraud penning an article under the heading of “view from the saddle “. There are many negative effects of this lack of riding, for example I seemed to have turned into one of the group of people I always looked disapprovingly upon, those who clean their bike more than riding it! I also have no more excuses for buying gadgets that will make riding safer, so all the elaborate business cases submitted to Caroline are automatically rejected. On the plus side the mileage is staying lower than normal on the BM and this is possibly keeping the depreciation in value, linked with this, lessened to some extent.

On a more serious note, despite not riding too much, I have, through my work still been out on the roads driving as usual, and this is where I feel one of the impacts of this pandemic is being created slowly but surely, a degradation of general driving standards! Now I don't profess to be an expert by any means but as with the members of AAMC, I have some experience and have taken on board some additional training to allow me to hopefully be safer for myself and for other roads users. I, as you know have been a blood biker for a few years now and recently with work have undertaken my

emergency response driving (ERD) refresher course. I think this is where my concerns manifested themselves. I know that no one really gets education on how to react to an emergency vehicle” on response” and understandably it would be difficult logistically to do so, but, while doing my refresher it showed me vividly how general road users are losing some even basic driving skills. Speed awareness seems to be dipping considerably, possibly caused by a reduction in the number of vehicles on the roads, where previously drivers are used to being in traffic or queuing and now are not noticing that their general speeds are increasing. This is also obvious for all of us to see while taking the many walks for “exercise” that are a regular substitute for riding.

Speed awareness aside, I feel that general situational awareness of the public whilst driving seems to be decreasing. Most of us will have had a lecture at some time or another under the banner of SMIDSY which describes the physiology of our eyes and how we actually process information to give us the picture we see, assuming we have them open of course! Motion camouflage, looming effect, saccadic masking and blind spots etc. This all makes perfect sense when you sit listening to the information and are shown examples or videos, however experiencing other drivers not seeing or indeed hearing an 18-tonne bright red fire appliance covered in highly visible reflective signage with blue led lights pulsing, and a 100-watt siren pumping out yelps and wails still amazes me. If I was able to share a copy of the dash cam recording from my test you would be able to far more easily see exactly what I am getting at, as even when driving normally without blues and twos there were occasions that caused my instructor, an ex-police instructor to make comment. You will just have to take my word for it that he was not talking about my driving!!

I think what I am getting to is that, when this is all over and we are vaccinated etc we as sensible, experienced riders and drivers will need to be extra vigilant as we return to “normal”

road conditions and levels of traffic. For if the driving skills of the general public continue to fade, I am sure we will be faced with roads full of freshly released born again riders and drivers of all ages albeit on/in highly polished shiny vehicles.

(Andy, a good job here with a great, thought provoking article. My mantra; never, ever stop learning. Ed)

LETTERS

Hi Everyone

Unfortunately, I won't be renewing my membership. I have not been able to take part in the training as now the demon arthritis has really caught up with me. I still ride when I can but now on a Suzuki Burgman!

I would like to pass on my thanks to all the tutors and club members that helped me become a more accomplished and dare I say, better rider. Whilst I wasn't an active member and haven't been on many ride outs, I enjoyed the time with the club, learned an awful lot of information and practical skills that have and will hold me in good stead until I can't even get on the Burgman!!

Kind Regards, Tim

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – Tony

Membership renewal was due at the end of December, and so anyone not yet signed up for another year, should do so now please.

I have refined the process from last year as some people had problems opening the Word doc on small screen devices.

All you need to do this year is:

- 1) Send a bank transfer for the relevant membership fee (£18 single / £21 joint plus add £9 if you want Treads posted rather than emailed)

Account name: Avon Advanced Motorcyclists,
Sort code: 40-14-15,
Account number: 91070770

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME

- 2) Once I receive your payment, I will email you with the details we hold and ask you to confirm they are correct and you are happy to be held on the AAMC database

SIMPLES!!! Note I will check the bank account weekly

If you have any queries contact Tony by emailing membership@aamc.co.uk or call 07891 126850



AAMC CLUB EVENTS

Due to Coronavirus Restrictions, no club events are being planned for the club calendar at this time.

As you know, it is difficult to predict when the situation will improve. When it does, club members will be welcome to send their club event dates and descriptions to Helen, Mob: 07 and a club events calendar will then be published.

BMF DISCOUNT CODE.

Code for 2021 - CLB21TAH

Club members can use the above in conjunction with the Club Name, to receive discounts on advance tickets to all BMF rallies and events; discounts on Insurance and other BMF member benefits.

Non-Club Events –

Adventure Bike Rider Festival

25-27 June 2021

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire.

Shelsley Walsh Classic Nostalgia

Date: 17-18 July 2021

Event address: Shelsley Walsh, Worcester, WR6 6RP

Website: www.classicnostalgia.co.uk

Entry Price: £20 per adult advance ticket price, or £25 on the gate.

Times: 8am each day, till approx. 5pm

Contact number: 01886 812211

Tewkesbury Classic Vehicle Festival

Date: Sunday 22 August 2021

Event Address: Tewkesbury School, Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury GL20 8DF

Website: <https://tewkesburycvf.org/>