

aamc



TREADS

The July 2009 Newsletter of AAMC

Editor's Bit

I'm sure you have noticed as soon as we have some good weather and decide to go for a ride at the weekend, come the weekend what is happening? It's raining. So change of plan. We will go out on an evening ride instead. It rains. I guess the best plan is not to decide beforehand and just go on the spur of the moment. Catch it by surprise. Just don't believe what Richard Angwin forecasts...

One hundred less motorcyclists were killed in 2008 than 2007, with a figure of 493 (which is still too many). This is the lowest figure since 1996 and just 26 more than the average for 1994 - 1998, which is the base line for Government road safety targets. During this period motorcycle use has risen by 44%. It would seem that we are getting something right!

It seems that horse riders who are thrown from the saddle are 20 times more likely to be severely disabled or killed than a motorcyclist. Do we really want more Horse power?

I am going to Ireland on the 15th August, so please send me any articles for Treads as soon as possible so I can produce and send it to Simon **before** I go.

Thanks.

Keith

View from the 'Saddle'

Survival Reactions - Friend or Foe?

Survival reactions are automatic in that they occur without any forethought on our part. For example, our eyes blink to protect themselves when something unexpected happens or we automatically put out an arm to save ourselves in a fall. However, when riding a motorcycle, these survival reactions are subject to question if they cause us to act inappropriately or freeze.

When Motorcycling, various errors can cause these survival reactions to take over to the detriment of our safety, for instance in to a corner too fast, going too wide, too steep a lean angle or concerns about grip. All the above are likely to cause one or more of the following survival reactions to kick in: - Closing the throttle, tightening on the bars, target fixation, freezing and not steering the bike, and braking errors.

There is almost always an audible indicator when these survival reactions kick in to play, which sounds amazingly like your own voice echoing around your helmet shouting "S****" or something very similar.

So can we train ourselves to suppress these survival reactions that are undoubtedly working against us? Ingrained reactions like these will take a great deal of work and training to suppress. One suggestion is to stand at the top of a steep flight of stairs with your

hands in your pockets and get a friend or perhaps your partner to sneak up behind you and push you down the stairs {you probably will have no difficulty in finding a volunteer}. If you still have your hands in your pockets when you reach the bottom of the stairs you would seem to have cracked it and contain the strength of will to resist these survival reactions. If you don't succeed fear not, you can always try again.

If this training method does not appeal, perhaps you could consider using the 'System' when you are riding and thereby get rid of both the errors and those dreaded survival reactions.

Welcome.

A warm welcome to two new members this month. Bob lives in Chipping Sodbury and rides a Suzuki SV650S, and Mark lives in Emersons Green during the week and Ivybridge at the weekend, and rides a Honda VFR800.

Congratulations.

Very hearty congratulations to Bryn who recently took his first ROSPA test and achieved a GOLD standard Pass. Well done Bryn.

Top Ten Reasons: -

Why **BMW** Riders don't wave back:

10. New Aerostitch suit too stiff to raise arm.
9. Removing a hand from the bars is considered 'bad form'.
8. Your bike isn't weird enough looking to justify acknowledgment.
7. Too sore from an 800-mile day on a stock 'comfort' seat.
6. Too busy programming the GPS, monitoring radar, listening to i-pod, XM, and talking on the mobile phone.
5. He's an Iron Butt rider and you're not!
4. Wires from Gerbing are too short.
3. You're not riding the 'right kind' of BMW.

2. You haven't been properly introduced.
1. Afraid it will be misinterpreted as a friendly gesture.

Top Ten Reasons why **Cruiser** Riders don't wave back:

10. Afraid it will invalidate warranty.
9. Leather and studs make it too heavy to raise arm.
8. Refuse to wave to anyone whose bike is already paid for.
7. Afraid to let go of handlebars because they might vibrate off.
6. Rushing wind would blow scabs off the new tattoos.
5. Angry because just took out second mortgage to pay luxury tax on new Harley.
4. Just discovered the fine print in owner's manual and realized H-D is partially owned by Krapazaki.
3. Can't tell if other riders are waving or just reaching to cover their ears like everyone else.
2. Remembers the last time a Harley rider waved back, he impaled his hand on spiked helmet.
1. They're too tired from spending hours polishing all that chrome to lift their arms.

Top Ten Reasons why **Gold Wing** riders don't wave back:

10. Wasn't sure whether other rider was waving or making an obscene gesture.
9. Afraid might get frostbite if hand is removed from heated grip.
8. Has arthritis and the past 400 miles have made it difficult to raise arm.
7. Reflection from etched windshield momentarily blinded him.
6. The espresso machine just finished.
5. Was actually asleep when other rider waved.
4. Was in a three-way conference call with stockbroker and accessories dealer.
3. Was distracted by odd shaped blip on radar screen.
2. Was simultaneously adjusting the air suspension, seat height, programmable CD player, seat temperature, and satellite navigation system.

1. Couldn't find the 'auto wave back' button on dashboard.

Rich

Fish & Chip Ride 17th June 2009

After several evenings of sun & clear skies it was typical that it was grey and damp for my ride. Maybe this was why only Simon turned up, or maybe everybody else is on a diet.

Despite this, we decided to go for a ride anyway but with my RoSPA retest approaching we turned it into an assessed ride. I had forgotten how nerve wracking it was to have someone analyse your every move and the road conditions were far from ideal – everything from muddy spray to bright sunlight shining off wet roads but it was valuable experience and good use of time. The ride finished at Haynes fish restaurant as planned and the food was well up to standard.

The planned ride will be held on file for another time when, hopefully, the weather will be more clement & a better turn-out is achieved.

Thanks to Simon for acting as back-marker and observer.

Jim

Sorry Jim, the weather did not put me off but I don't think I could manage F & C's at 9 o'clock at night. This is one of the problems with an evening ride when you intend to eat that late!

Keith

Club ride 28th June 2009

In view of half of the active club riders being on Stu's Welsh Weekender, six of us turning out for my ride was pretty good. The day was forecast to be hot with the possibility of rain later in the day. The ride would be a long one but split into three stages and it turned out to be quite eventful.

The first leg was from the Severn View services up to lunch at Crossgates. No sooner had we started than the first 'event' happened. Having picked the shortest queue for the pay booths on the Severn Bridge I was anticipating a swift passage – not to be. The driver of the car in front of me did not have any money on him and had to go rummaging around in the boot to find some. He then faffed around for ages with the cash and seemed to be having a general chat to his passenger about which way to go next – I believe that straight on is traditional from there.

After passing through Chepstow and on to Usk, I stopped to turn right at the junction to go to Abergavenny and was told by a policeman that we were shortly to meet a national cycle race coming at us head on. It must be me, as those with good memories will remember that I came across a cycle race in the same area last year. A few miles further on I met the 'lead car', closely followed by the support outriders and police who told me in no uncertain [officious] terms not just to pull off to the side of the road, but to get right away from it. When the cycle pack came through it was clear to see why. It was just like a pack of hounds seeking out prey – they might be small individually, but together they would stop for nothing and take no prisoners. Once the 'end bike' came through I was able to proceed on. Just as well that not too many of us were on the ride as there may not have been enough safe refuge points.

Abergavenny was as hot and delightful as ever but we made it through with only

mild difficulty. The roads up to Crossgates became quieter as they became twistier but as we pulled into the services we discovered that Gerard was missing. Mark, on his first club ride for many years, also found that his bike was letting oil out from somewhere and decided not to continue with us but to make his own way back.

After a short sandwich stop we carried on Northwards, enjoying the bends on relatively traffic free roads. One bit of traffic we did encounter was Gerard riding the other way just south of Newtown! Turning off the 'A' roads in Newtown we headed to Bishops Castle on dry roads with barely a car in sight. From Bishops Castle we went via Clun towards the petrol stop in Knighton and encountered Carenza riding out of the town just as we were entering it.

The rest of this leg through Pen-y-bont, Kington and on to a tea stop at Hay was largely unremarkable, but highly enjoyable. As we pulled into the car park at Hay we met Gerard again, but this time we were able to stop & he was able to rejoin the rest of the ride.

There are several ways of returning to Monmouth from Hay and all are enjoyable. Often the route is down the Golden Valley but the road via Bredwardine and Madley has recently become a favourite of mine. There are many [often sharp] bends along it before joining the A465. A couple of other short links bring us into Monmouth. Monmouth really is a very simple town to negotiate and there were no problems at all as we passed through and onto the road through Devauden back to Chepstow.

The ride finished after 235 miles, as the rain began to threaten. The time was exactly 5:30pm, just as publicised.

Thanks to Andy for being back marker and I hope that Mark's bike is well again soon and that he comes out on another ride.

Jim

Thanks Jim. You're setting a good example.

Keith

Club Bash to North Wales

All who were going on the trip were given our meeting instructions by Stu well beforehand. On the Friday when we got up, guess what? Right. It was raining. We made our way to Easton-in-Gordano Services on the M5 petrol station for our 9:15am start. There should have been 11 of us but we were one short at departure time so delayed our departure but no arrival. We set off to the new Severn Bridge and onto J25A when we turned off towards Pontypool stopping at The White House Inn for a comfort break and coffee etc. It was still raining. Stu had warned us that the route would be challenging and we turned off onto unclassified roads. Unclassified!! They were about 2 metres wide - being generous!! Tight corners and sharp bends all with gravel and grass growing in the middle. We stopped at the visitor centre overlooking the Lynne Brienne reservoir. It would have been great but for the mist! On to Tregaron and a stop at the Café Hafan which is just off the square. The owners did not seem to mind the big puddles forming on their floor. They were probably glad of the trade.

We again used unclassified roads - I think that they are called 'Drover's roads' - until joining the A487 and to our hotel: the Bikers Retreat. We were made welcome, told where to put our wet kit - there was a drying room - and then shown to our accommodation. Who should we meet up with, Andrew, yes the missing 11th rider. It would seem that he got his M4 & M5's mixed up and realising that he would not make the meeting place on time had made his own way to the hotel. We went to dinner, which was excellent and then into the bar to get wet on the inside. Made a change!! Stu then informed us that due to the weather he had shortened the

unclassified roads by about 20 miles. Gee thanks.

On the Saturday, still raining!! We continued despite the rain, stopping at a Café in Betws-y-Coed. The rain had almost ceased when we stopped at a view that should have allowed us to see Snowdon, but the cloud was too low although we could see the lake below. After stopping for lunch the weather had finally really changed into glorious sunshine and quite warm. We made our way to Porthmadog for fuel then into the station café at the Ffestiniog Railway. Here we met up with Helen and Mark, who had decided to do their own thing. It turned out they had had a dry, sunny and hot day almost as soon as they left the Hotel. We all made our way via the Harlech toll road (although no one was taking any money) back to the Hotel at Dolgellau.

Sunday. Going home. The sun was out and it was quite warm when we left the hotel after another good breakfast (apart from Tim who was suffering with a horrible cold).

Travelling down through Wales, Rhayader, Newbridge-on-Wye, across the Brecons to stop at Bronllys in the Honey Café for lunch. Refuelling the bikes we made our way south through Abergavenny, Usk and Chepstow over the Old Severn Crossing and into the Severn View Services where we all refuelled and made our own way home.

Despite the weather with good company and some interesting roads I think every one enjoyed the long weekend. Our thanks to Stu and Sue who put a lot of time into planning the weekend both the route and finding the hotel. Also to Tim, Paul and Martin who all acted as sweepers at various times.

Keith

(Since I keep on to everyone else to do a write-up, I felt I had to practise what I preach. Keith.)

Club Ride – 16th July

As I was riding home from work I was wondering if anyone would actually turn up - it was almost raining stair-rods at one point, but seeing as the meeting point was 5 minutes from home and my gear was already wet I decided to take a punt and see if anyone would brave the weather.

Just before 7pm Nigel turned up, and it looked like it was starting to brighten up a bit. We had a brief discussion that went along the lines of "I'm up for it if you are" - the bar was set - we were going. Lids on (once visors had cleared), and away we went heading for Castle Coombe, Grittleton and then Malmesbury - some cracking roads already, despite the damp conditions, and amazingly I was keeping up with Nigel who was busy trying to avoid some ducks who were trying to cross the road (I'm sure there's a joke in there somewhere).

My memory gets a bit fuzzy at this point - I know we went through the Cotswold water park, Fairford (lots of planes - mental note - watch the road, not the B52 and Red Arrow Hawks parked up) - around some cars, past some push bikes, watch Nigel avoid a kamikaze pigeon, into Nailsworth and then off to Wickwar - it even stopped raining at one point (but not for long, sadly).

A cracking route of roads, some very interesting and challenging conditions, but immense fun, and great for improving your skills (when was the last time you rode in the wet?) - I've never felt my bike slide around so much, and very odd not to have been dropped off at any point on the ride!

Thanks have to go to Nigel for still going out even with just me along for the ride and in the rain - Kawasaki night was great fun! The rest of you all missed one of my favourite rides of the year so far.

Linsey

Volunteers required!

The Bristol Bike Show is being held on Saturday 15th August 2009 at St. Nicholas Market in the centre of Bristol. We had a stand last year and successfully recruited some new members.

So we thought we'd try our luck again and we have booked a stand for this year's event. The Club is looking for volunteers to help on the day. The Show runs from 10am - 4pm so if you can help for part or all day please let me know. Mark and I would love to be there - unfortunately there is the small matter of a honeymoon, which will prevent us from doing so!!

Could you have a look in your diaries, please, and give me names and times that you can cover, by **1st August** at the latest. Thank you.

Please give me a ring on one of my numbers.

Look forward to hearing from you.

From your new and friendly Publicity Officer, Helen.

Back from the Brink

(At least I thought it was the brink!)

The following tale of woe carries two warnings. It is long. Could be boring. You will be asked for money. Did I say two warnings? Ah well. For those easily bored please go directly to the last four paragraphs.

My tale of woe starts at the end of July last year. Busily minding my own business riding somewhere near Bath and lost in very narrow country lanes, as one does. Lots of gravel, surface water and small potholes. At least I thought they were

small potholes. Well I can't be right all the time, can I?

What am I doing lying in the road and what fool left a bike lying in the middle of the lane like that? Hang on, looks just like my bike. It is my bike!! That explains what I was doing on the black stuff.

OOOHHH!! My leg hurts. No blood. Good I don't have enough to waste any. By golly I do believe I need help. Call the emergency services. Call swiftly answered. No recorded voice offering the first five options. A real person was talking to me. "I'm lost", yes, on a very quiet lane ½ mile from Pennsylvania farm, somewhere near Bath and my leg hurts. Operator wants more information. What more can I say?!! Everybody knows where Pennsylvania Farm is, don't they? Except me that is.

Ahh a damsel arriving, not in distress though, rather in a Ford Fiesta. I'm doing the distress thing. She talks to the emergency services operator and soon two police cars with three policemen, an ambulance crew and a paramedic arrive. Six people in all. How embarrassing little old me tying up all these people.

Just like TV Casualty, one of the paramedics says, "We'll give you a puff of gas to ease the pain". That'll be nice I thought. Wrong. Disorientation but no pain relief. "No thank you" says I after a quick suck. "Then we'll give you some morphine they say". "Oh yes please" says I. In less than two minutes I was ready to wear my underpants on the outside, paint a big 'S' on my chest and jump tall buildings in one leap. And that was just for starters.

Do they sell this stuff in Tesco? Let me at it. I'll have an economy sized bottle please. I promise I'll never again touch a drop of alcohol.

A minor problem. All three ambulance crew need to join me in the ambulance ride. One policeman agrees to drive the paramedic vehicle to the hospital. A second policeman follows in a police car to collect his colleague from the hospital. That left the third policeman. No reason to make him feel unwanted. There was a job for him. The recovery vehicle driver, not having had any morphine didn't think he could lift the offending bike onto his

vehicle when he arrived. Couldn't see a problem myself. After all the fuel level was low and I expect the bike would only have weighed a little over 200 kilos. Off we set in convoy to the hospital. Was I embarrassed at all this manpower? No not a bit of it. This morphine really is good stuff.

The X-ray confirms I'm not from the planet Krypton. I have too many bones in one leg. No hold that thought. The bones aren't all joined in the 'right places'.

Temporary plaster applied. "How long for full recovery" I ask of the plaster technician? "Don't know, not my place to say" he replies. With a lot of prompting he finally suggests twenty weeks. He's right thinks I. He doesn't know diddly squat. I've known people break bones. Couple or three weeks in plaster and a few slaps from a physiotherapist and I'd be right as rain. No problem.

Next day the surgeon explained what he intended to do to me. I couldn't have been listening. Was the morphine still working? If I had listened I would certainly have said "No thank you I'll take my business elsewhere to somebody who can do a quick patch up with a few cable ties and duct tape". Well that's what they're for, aren't they? They work well enough on motorcycles!!!!

"How long for full recovery?" I ask the surgeon. "Be patient" he says and won't be drawn. I volunteer twenty weeks. His answer "More". More of what I think. I compare notes with a fellow patient who very inconveniently had also fallen off a bike, albeit off-roading. That was his story anyway. We agreed twenty weeks sounded good. Full recovery for Xmas with a few spare weeks for shopping. Noooo problem!!

All patched with plaster from knee to toe I'm ready for home. Another problem. I can't stay upright on crutches. What was I doing on two wheels in the first place? Does anybody know of suitable stabiliser wheels? For the crutches I mean. I compromise with the health people and readily agree to use a zimmer frame for two weeks. So much easier.

All settled in at home. TV, remote control, grapes, books and call bell all to hand at

the side of my lazeboy chair. I could learn to live with this. Alas all good things must come to an end. Ten days later. Oh woe is me. Not feeling too good. Too early in the morning to call the local Health Centre. My wife decides to ring the NHS helpline for advice. "We'll order you an ambulance they say". What kind of advice is that? Remind me never to ask for advice again.

"An ambulance" I say. Now I really don't feel well. Panic sets in with a capital P. We hear the ambulance ½ mile away. At least they have the decency to turn off the siren as they turn into our road. Did they remember to switch off the blue lights? This really is becoming embarrassing. Don't they have unmarked vehicles just like traffic police? "We'll give you a puff of gas to calm you" say the paramedics. "No thank you I say. I'd prefer to just freak out"

"Then we'll give you some morphine" they say." Oh yes please I'll have a large one. And another for the road".

We arrive at the hospital and I'm told I'm very lucky. Why? What do they know I don't? Have I won the lottery? Or were they referring to the free ride to the hospital? I certainly didn't feel lucky. Somebody was on another planet and I didn't think it was me. Well we can't all be right all of the time can we?

A week later back home and very much the worse for wear. I tell my wife the hospital had no business discharging me. "You insisted you wanted to go home" she says. Whose side was she on anyway?

I decide to set targets for full recovery. I'd start with something really ambitious. How about washing my face unaided? After a few days of washing my chest, was my face really that far away from my middle, I finally got the flannel to my face. Well I did say an ambitious target. Before I knew it I could clean my own teeth. Time moved on and by mid September the big day had arrived. The plaster was coming off. Arrgghhh!! I used to have a matched pair of legs. What is that yellow and blue cylindrical thing connecting my knee to my foot? And my foot wouldn't obey me when I told it to move and twist. Had they given me a transplant but not

wired it correctly? Even worse, my leg was hairy. I've never had hairy legs in my life. Now I had one hairy leg and one hairless leg. A result of the plaster I was told. What was I to do? Break the other leg in order to get a match? Well there was always a leg wax. I wonder if they do morphine at the beauty parlour? You need some physiotherapy I was told. Much pulling, tugging, hydrotherapy and massage later, no not the type of massage of which pub jokes are made, I had even mastered the art of crutches, sans stabiliser wheels. Now I had a new long-term target. Walk to the local pub a mile away. The reward - a pint!! The first day I managed three doors from home and back again. Still I persevered and eventually made it to the pub. "A pint of lager please barman." After all I wasn't driving was I. What an anticlimax. The pub was awful the beer even worse. Surely things could only get better? Not a bit of it. In my determination to focus on getting to the pub I'd forgotten I didn't live at the pub. I had to find a way of getting home again. Duh! Well there's always a taxi. Beats an ambulance ride, even if you do have to pay the driver.

Christmas came and went. By the end of January I was getting ready to hand back the crutches and rely on my legs to keep me upright, well one of them anyway. I was less sure about the other. What happened to the full recovery before Xmas you ask? Blind optimism is wonderful. Reality is boring. Perhaps these surgeons do know something about legs and bones after all!!

Now I really do need a man-sized challenge I thought. Well there was always getting back on the bike. What would my wife say? I need a BIG challenge. How about the Bristol half marathon? What planet am I on, I thought? I can't even cross busy roads unless there is a pedestrian crossing and lollipop lady to hold up the traffic while I do a soft shoe shuffle across the road. Stupid idea!! True to say I have walked thirteen miles, simply not all in one go. And that was when both legs did what they were told. When I count it up I'm sure it would have taken less than a year to accumulate

thirteen miles. After all it's sometimes necessary to park at least a dozen steps from the local supermarket entrance. Before I know it I find myself in front of my computer on the opening day of registration for the Bristol half marathon. Am I stupid or am I stupid? How long does it take to get from A to A via thirteen miles of closed roads? I don't know but I'll find out on September 6th.

The moral in this long-winded story? No matter how bad things can seem at times for most of us we are able to look forward to a brighter future. Unfortunately that is not true for everybody.

There are many noble causes. For me any charity helping children would be amongst the most noble. Top of the list being the Children's Hospice South West. They support children with life limiting conditions and provide support for the families.

No matter how far most of us may think we have looked into the 'abyss' it is impossible to even begin to imagine how the children and family members needing the support of the Hospice cope with each hour of each day. The hospice has one simple goal, "To make the most of short and precious lives". This they do almost entirely without government help. You can read about the hospice at www.Chsw.co.uk

I for one feel very fortunate with my lot and, in my own modest way, want to help the hospice help children. I believe I have one run in me. At the very least I'll drag myself around the course. Please help increase the pressure on me to ensure I finish by pledging sponsorship to this worthiest of charities.

You can catch me at the next club meet or email me or ring me on the mobile.

Any amount, however small, will help swell the coffers of the hospice.

David

Dave, RoSPA advise people not to dive into pools unless they know how deep they are!
Keith.

Club Communications

As you know, I send out Treads via e-mail each month to those members who have registered to receive it that way. I have a distribution list on my 'Outlook' e-mail software that I keep updated as members join and leave. Only about ten members still have Treads posted.

We also have a message board on the club website for dissemination of information, but this only works well when all the members look at it regularly.

At the last committee meeting, we discussed how we could improve communications, and decided it would be a good idea if I sent out any information or messages by e-mail in the same way I send Treads. That way, everyone gets it very quickly, without having to log on to the website.

So, if you want to send a message to all the club members about a special ride you are putting on (at short notice) or some other topic of general interest, please send it to me via e-mail letting me know that you want me to send it out, and I will e-mail it to the membership on your behalf.

Simon.

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 Treads, can you please ensure that they reach the editor before or during the first week of that month. Contributions for Treads are always needed, whether they are motorcycle related or of general interest! Please don't be shy.

