

aamc



TREADS

The September 2009 Newsletter of AAMC

Editor's Bits

In the ongoing saga of the new motorcycle test, so far 47 examinees have required hospital treatment (it's cheaper in bulk!!). It seems that some MPs and motoring organisations are taking this issue up with the DSA. This should be interesting with the DSA's past record of listening to complaints.

When I was on the Club Bash to Wales my gloves developed a split. Whether this was due to the rain or old age I don't know but it left me needing a new pair before I went to Ireland. I had a good look round and ended up at Hein Gericke in Bristol. I tried on various makes and the size labels vary tremendously, so I ignored the labels and found the best fit I could, ending up with a pair of Hein Gericke's X-Trafit leather Gore-Tex gloves. They were very expensive but they **actually are** waterproof.

See the report of my Ireland tour later in this issue.

Keith

View from the 'Saddle'

Help - it's all going dark!

That's it. No more evening rides & it won't be long until the daily commute is done after dark. Oh joy. What a depressing thought!

This time of year brings on many new hazards, often relating to vision - or the lack of it. It is the first time that many people will have driven at night for several months. This means that many of them will have lights that don't work properly [and rear fog lights that have been left in the default 'on' position since February]. They will be peering through misted-up windows into the gloom and braking for no apparent reason other than darkness completely removes any ability to cope with a corner or oncoming traffic. Conversely, there will be others driving at speeds that can only be based on the fact that the road was clear the last time they went along it and so it must be now. I suppose that the moral of the story, as ever, is to treat everyone else as an idiot and to be warned.

From our saddle, exposed to the elements, autumn brings numerous other factors to consider - wet leaves, slippery mud around farms/fields/building sites, slow tractors with very large & hard attachments, leaking waterproofs - to name but a few. Mind you, this was

equally true of July & August despite the promise of a 'barbecue summer', especially on Simon's fish and chip ride.

All of this will test your powers of observation and ability to react accordingly. Watch out, you never know when you might have to call on previous experience.

Congratulations this month to Richard (Harley) and Linsey (Kawasaki) who have both passed their first RoSPA test with flying colours.

Ipsga

BORN AGAIN BIKE

No there isn't an R missing off the title.

Yawn . . . yawn . . . yawn . . .
yawn . . . yawn . . . yawn . . .
yawn . . . yawn . . . yawn . . .

My goodness I feel unusually stiff. Very stiff, sort of squeaky and my eye feels heavy, like it hasn't been open for a while.

Where on earth am I? This isn't the hospital I was in when I was last fully awake. That one was full of bikes in bits plus very shiny new and newish ones on stands and by the shop window. I have vague sleepy memories of another very dusty one full of bits of bikes and some not-so-shiny ones. Wow, who's that little blue and red CBX beauty over there? She's looking a bit neglected but I can see her potential. How do I know she's a girl? Because she's got a *bikini* fairing, silly.

And there's another CBX 550!! Same colour as me but this one's got a fairing. I've never been in one place with so many CBX 550s all at once! I'll get chatting and find out all about their histories and their pets when I feel more fully awake.

In this third hospital, I can't see either of them here but there's yet another red F2, this one looks quite shiny too. Brrr, the door's open and it's a bit cold as you would expect for February. As I look around what is obviously yet another bike hospital I notice one of those tits and boobs calendars that some pets seem to like. Hmmm, it's December - *December!!!* That means I've been away from home and my pet for 10 months. *No, what's going on!* Hmmm, then I look at the calendar again - 2008. *2008!!!! 2008???* But that's a year and 10 months! It can't be right. I could believe it if it said 2006 as people often leave old calendars up. But they can't leave future ones up, can they?

Oh no. Has my pet put me to sleep then sold me to a CBX 550 collector? I start to snivel and hoot long. A strange man comes over and pats me and tells me not to worry - I'll be seeing her soon and that she's given me a very special birthday present for my 21st. I point out that I am extremely miffed that I was asleep for my 21st and my 22nd. Next year I shall be 23 on the 23rd (of April, St. George's Day) - I'd better not be asleep for that one! He says just to look at myself. This I begin to do, slowly and thoroughly with the aid of my mirrors and those of my new friends to be.

Woweeeeee!!!! Is this tatty old me? Unbelievable. My engine is all black again - I had gone grey like pets do. All my forks and disc covers are black and shiny. My paintwork has been re-done and I can see I have lots of brand new bits too. I can feel I've had all sorts of organ transplants inside too. Now if I had any money of my own, I could treat my pet lady to a restoration too! She often says she needs one.

Apparently Bishops took about 6 weeks to get my engine apart and out - all to replace a gasket and my pet decided to replace anything that looked worn. They of course wanted her to give up, chuck me and get a nice shiny new one from them, thanks very much. She cried a lot in their shop. Then she took me to Restorer 1 who promised great things, took me apart then

got stuck and finally admitted March 2008 he was never going to get me finished. She cried a lot in his shop too. My pet found Restorer 2 and although not entirely happy to pick up someone else's pieces, they took me on in June, in a collection of boxes of bits that used to be living, breathing me. There are loads of bits missing and loads of bits covered in overspray hence more delays.

I spring into life at the first touch of the button after my long sleep. Well, what do you expect - I am a Honda after all. Ooh, that feels good and the chaps tell me I sound good too.

My pet comes to see me at last but can't give me a hug as I am up in the air on a ramp. Good thing I prove not to be scared of heights. I still have some bits missing and I can hear her asking for this bit and that bit to be improved. I pass my MOT.

Not home in time for Christmas, boo hoo.

Next time she visits, I am on the ground so she strokes me all over, hugs and kisses me and says how sorry she is I am away so long. She is pleased with my new paint-work but points out there is still a small dent on the tank and this is just not good enough. The boss man agrees to sort it. A lot of phone calls are made. I get loaded onto a lorry - am I going home? No, we're heading North on the motorway - oh no, perhaps I am sold after all, boo hoo. I get a day trip to York to have my dent removed - all that way for a few seconds' work. Like my pet, Restorer 2 is fussy and can't find anyone nearer to magic the dent out of my tank. Thirty seconds and £50 later (he pays), I am dent-free again and we head back South.

Not home in time for my 23rd on the 23rd either, boo hooo.

She comes again and spots some more tatty bits and I get new indicator beepers. The first set they get sound like a strangled parrot and they get sent back pronto. I am re-data-tagged, retaining my first lot so should be able to do stereo

rattling with the two transponders in my tank and seat! She finds a bit more dirt and dust inside one of my wheels which feel odd anyway as I have been given them by the bikini-faired bike.

She pats me and says I might be home next week. Yeah right. I suppose I could get used to this independence.

I go up the ramp into the van and in May I finally arrive home after 2 ½ years away to find the red F2 is in my stable, plugged into his Optimate, I slip in between him, "Scruffy", and Herby the Mini Cabriolet. We have a lot of catching up to do.

It's June, my pet's birthday month and she plans a big party for us. What excitement when the garage door opens and another red CBX 550 appears to join us, ridden in by a pet Carezza met out on a ride. This one resides in Oxford. Another was supposed to come from Swindon but was put off by poor weather. But watch this space regarding that one. It's hard for me to chat because I have my mackintosh (or pyjamas) on.

Eventually the door rises up again and a lot of people come into our stable with glasses in their hands. My pet and the other - Russell - give short speeches on why they love us so much. Everyone does 3 cheers for Scruffy as he has been an excellent bike. They sing an adapted version of 21 today for me. Next, my pet slowly unveils me to the music of Chariots of Fire amidst much gasping, oohs and aahs. They sing Happy Birthday and my pet puts a cake with 23 candles on my seat. I even get re-named: "Pegasus the Magnificent". Our pets stay in the garage for hours talking about us and my pet has put out articles and catalogues about us.

Next morning, the guest CBX takes his pet home. This is all very well, but when are we going OUT?

It's a sunny Sunday and at last my pet comes leather clad to take me out. Her man (I am pleased she has a human man at last, it was such a responsibility for me

to do it alone) follows in his car to make sure we are ok. She gives me my first proper meal in 2 ½ years and we set off from Bath. She says it's like riding a brand new bike. We get as far as Batheaston then suddenly I seem to lose power. Oh well, she thought I might have teething problems. My front brake is completely seized on! She is just phoning the RAC when she spots a van coming in the opposite direction. She jumps about in the road waving her card.

I am sandwiched between the car and the van for protection. The man bleeds some brake fluid off and has to adjust my clutch. He follows us home and I seem to be OK.

Restorer 2 comes to look at me and declares that I am fine now. My pet is a little disconcerted that his test ride is all of 30 seconds.

It's the annual Bristol IAM trip to Wales. After debating all afternoon whether to take Scruffy or risk getting me wet she decides to take me. It's great - I don't have to carry any luggage as her man takes it in the car.

We get as far as Saltford this time then, guess what, my front brake seizes again. A cyclist is kind enough to help bounce me out of the way a bit. So it's RAC again, back home, and my pet jumps onto Scruffy, leaving me feeling cross and miserable.

Restorer 2 comes to collect me and off I go again for more fiddling. They are then in-between vans and it never stops raining so it's another month before I get home again.

It's a Saturday in August and it's Bristol Bike Day - back in the centre and off we go - this time without a hitch although my pet is very nervous of my front brake. It's amazing how we can not use it much with sufficient observation and planning. She parks me up with Bath Classic Bike club - I haven't met any of them as she joined while I was in surgery. It is an hour and a

half before she gets over the road to drop her gear off as so many people come up to chat. She also keeps polishing me and find more bits that aren't quite right or could be improved. So I am still work in progress rather than finished. The main thing is my wheels and she now has a spare pair to play with.

I see a few of my old friends from other clubs and we avoid the rain.

We also have a trip out to Chipping Sodbury where she spends hours trying to improve my wheels. Any ideas anyone?

By Pegasus. Typed by Carezza

PS - a full list of my new bits is available for petrol-heads and insomniacs.

PPS - how much does it cost to run a bike for 21 (as I was off the road for 2 ½) years? (excluding my original purchase price and restoration and it took my pet about 2 hours to photocopy all my receipts for repairs and servicing, MOT, service record book etc.) She had no idea what to expect and when she first looked at it she thought well that's less than she had spent on her Mini Cabriolet in two years! At a princely £22.60 per month, she thinks I'm pretty good value, even though that excludes tax, insurance and fuel. That's £5 per week, which is less than a ticket by train or bus from Bath to Bristol. Even if you add on my original purchase price and the restoration, she reckons I am still good value and far less expensive than changing your bike for a new one every few years

Carezza

Ireland - The Emerald Isle

I booked to go to Southern Ireland on the trike in August. I left home and it was just spitting with rain but by time I got to the M4 it was raining hard. I stopped at Pont Abraham Services and filled up with petrol and joined the A48. It was sheeting down then but by the time I had reached

Haverfordwest the rain had stopped and the roads dried up. I stopped at the harbour sea front in Fishguard and had a snack before going to the B & B for the o/night stop.

On Sunday I filled up with petrol and booked in at the ferry terminal where I meet a husband and wife who were also going on the same tour. They had a Harley and a Ducati respectively. The crossing was smooth and we arrived at Rosslare on time.

On leaving the port we were joined by another rider on a Triumph and rode together to our first O/night stop near Wexford and joined the main party on tour who had used the Holyhead to Dublin ferry. The sun was out and it was quite warm.

On the Monday morning it was all change and it was back to rain. My trike seemed to be reluctant to start but did and I noticed that the clock was showing the wrong time but did not take too much notice thinking that I had not reset it correctly. We made our way to the B & B at Killarney on some super roads (thanks to the EU).

The Irish have quite a good system of road markings. There is a white centre line and a broken yellow line on the nearside with the verge 2 or 3 metres from this line. Basically what happens is as you come up behind cars and lorries they move to the left to allow you to pass, and they do this as soon as you come up behind them, which means you can make good progress. It's a bit like our system when you have 3 lanes - the centre one allows overtaking in one direction. It really does work. The road surface is not quite so good when you leave the major roads and go onto the normal 2 lanes in the country. In fact these roads are a test of your suspension and your endurance.

On day 3 it was still raining but we went round The Ring of Kerry. The roads were really bad - the nearside by the verge was all broken away where the heavy vehicles and coaches are forced to go as far to the nearside to allow oncoming vehicles to pass. At one point we were stuck behind 6 (yes 6) motor homes nose to tail. Fortunately they turned off after a couple

of miles!! Back at Killarney we filled up with petrol at £1.17 a Litre. Gulp. The trike was still reluctant to start. (I'll explain later.)

During Tuesday night I was woken by rain and wind blowing on the bedroom window at 3:45am. It was still raining in the morning and it was so bad that most decided not to go out on our bikes and instead went into Killarney. It did brighten up in the late afternoon. Now you know why it's called the Emerald Isle.

Things brightened up further on Thursday and we went round the Bara Peninsular. The roads were very bumpy, twisty and it was hard on the wrists and back. We stopped in the village for lunch and when we got back to the bikes we were moved on to allow a mobile cinema to park. The event of the year I expect! We stopped a couple of times for photo's but the views were still not good due to mist.

It was Horse Racing week at Killarney but due to the heavy rain the event was cancelled from the Wednesday. This had never happened before.

On Friday we moved on to our last stop at Bray, which is near Dublin. This was mainly main roads and the surface was good which made a change, it was not raining either! When we stopped for lunch I found that one of the mudguards had come loose so had to deal with that. I suppose it was not surprising considering the roads we had been using. The hotel was one of a major group but I was not impressed and the food was nothing special or plentiful.

Saturday was go home day and 5 of us were having to travel south to Rosslare to catch our ferry. The sun was out and it was quite warm (great!!). It was all major roads and we made good time, even managing to stop for lunch on the way. On arrival at Rosslare we booked in. I had notified the Ferry Co. that I would like to be parked near a lift to allow access to the Decks. The lady told me to put the Hazard lights on and I would be directed to where to park. We were booked on the High Speed Ferry which was nearly an hour late docking so it was a good thing it was not raining. When we boarded I parked as directed and asked where the lift was. I

was told "we don't have any lifts on this boat". After struggling up the stairs I saw that there was a vehicle deck that allowed access onto the level where I was. 10 out of 10!!

I stayed overnight in Fishguard and came home on the Sunday. It was raining again when I left the B & B with poor visibility until I neared Cardiff when it brightened up only for me to be held up at traffic works on the M4 for about an hour.

PS

I had had problems starting all the time I was away but the bike never failed to start; the clock always went to zero and the instrument lights went out momentarily.

When I got home I took the battery out to discover that there was no fluid in it. When I had had the bike serviced I had asked if they had checked the battery to be told that it was a "Maintenance free battery".

A new Gel battery is fitted now. As to the mudguard this was due to a welded threaded insert coming loose which I have replaced with a shouldered insert drilled thro' and screwed in place.

How these things are sent to try us!!

As for the gloves; well they didn't leak, I didn't have black hands and they have broken in beautifully.

Since I went to Ireland about 4 years ago the influence of the EU is very evident the cost of petrol now about £1.17/ litre but diesel is about 10p less. As for the cost of food this has shot up. Fish & Chips is about £12.50 and is about the cheapest meal with most main courses costing upward of £15. A pint of the 'Black Stuff' is £4.80.

Despite all these things I enjoyed the trip, the group were great; but when like-minded people are together this is always the case, especially motorcyclists.

Keith

Club Ride – 13th September – Devon & Exmoor

The very bright early morning sunshine on Sunday progressively became greyer and more overcast as the departure time approached for the seven of us assembled at the Little Chef at Farrington Gurney. It did look as though the rain was only going to be minutes away. Brian had a ride planned for us around Devon and Exmoor with a break for lunch at Zeal Monachorum between Crediton and Okehampton.

We left Little Chef and headed for Chewton Mendip, however the first stop was to be very shortly after departure as I noticed that Mark's keys were dangling from his Top-Box! Keys secured, we then headed through Wells, Glastonbury and Street before taking the A361 to Taunton. As soon as we had started heading south, the weather got brighter and only when we were riding through densely wooded areas, of which there seemed to be quite a few, did the temperature drop and it felt a little chilly. Or is that just me getting older and less robust?! It was only after Taunton that we started to discover some really cracking roads largely devoid of traffic.

From Taunton we headed to Bampton and then Tiverton before a very much needed comfort break, which I realised was becoming desperately required and discussions later were to prove that I was not the only one!

After Crediton we headed through some very narrow winding lanes with a gravelly centre to Zeal Monachorum and The Waie Inn, a very nice establishment that Brian was able to tell us that the owners had extensively developed over recent years. I attach a web address for information: -

<http://www.waieinn.co.uk/>

After consuming a very nice selection from the Menu, we continued our journey north-west on the A377 and Molton for a fuel

stop. From South Molton we headed back across southern Exmoor through Bampton and up and across the Brendon Hills before returning through Taunton and ending the ride just outside Othery.

According to my bike, we covered some 200 miles over a great variety of roads, many of them containing some well-surfaced twisties and very little traffic.

Thanks Brian for a great day out and a great ride!

Andy

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.

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