

aamc



# TREADS

The October 2009 Newsletter of AAMC

## Editor's Bits

When reflecting on the trip to Ireland I was surprised by the variation in types of both bikes and riders.

There were 18 bikes made up of Honda Pans (current and old models); different types of BMWs: K and R Series but surprisingly no GSs; several Triumphs: Sprint and Tigers including a Bonneville; various Honda VFRs (750 / 800s); a Harley Davidson (I don't know which model); and a Ducati 683?

On top of that, there was an immaculate Yamaha 900 Diversion (at least it was until it fell off the side stand, but luckily only the front and rear indicators were damaged - it's amazing what you can do with a bit of duct tape until a proper repair can be made). The other bike on tour was a Honda DN- 1 800cc super scooter. I had not seen one before 'in the flesh'. It's going to be one of those 'hate or like' bikes. It seemed odd not having a lever on the left handlebar - the rear brake is on the right footboard. Also there is little room under the saddle - just enough for one helmet - which is bit of a downer.

This meant that you have to have a rear rack and on tour it was necessary to have a Tail Pack. As for riding it certainly had terrific acceleration and the road holding and cornering were quite impressive.

As for the riders, the ages varied from early 30s to a 76 year old (a retired Chief Constable from a Welsh

Constabulary) and the overhaul riding ability was very good which added to the enjoyment and all were familiar with the 'Drop Off' system.

The Club riding calendar is coming to an end soon and the evenings are drawing in, so we need to get out on our bikes whilst we can. Why is it that we have a glorious week and then it rains on Saturday and Sunday?

We have the opportunity to have a final get together at the Plug and Grub event and talk over the season's riding combined with the awards for the year.

This then leaves just the final ride to be led by Sue. Let's see if we can break the cycle and have a fine Sunday and a good turnout.

*Keith*

## View from the 'Saddle'

When I was ~~told~~ asked to write VftS, I wondered what I could write about. I thought about the title and it occurred to me that this was an opportunity to provoke thought on matters that may otherwise only be learned through experience. As that experience may be at great personal expense, this is an important opportunity.

A recent experience highlighted the dangers that cyclists may (indirectly) pose to us while we are riding. Consider the following scene: there's a clear road ahead, we're in a national speed limit and there's a left hand bend in the distance. Into view rides an oncoming cyclist, minding his (for the purposes of this example, we'll assume a male!) own business and, like us, enjoying his ride. He is well across to the right hand side of the road from our approach – so, does he pose any danger to us? Potentially not, but only as long as we are the only road users present at the time. On approach to the bend, we would take up a cornering position just left of the hazard warning line that's appeared warning us of the bend. This puts us into a position that would be in closer proximity to any potential approaching traffic. Now, how many times do you see traffic approach a cyclist from behind and, without hesitation or consideration for other road users, probably because the cyclist is only perceived as a narrow obstacle, just pull out to overtake the said cyclist? Given our scenario above, on the approach to the bend we need to consider the potential actions of any traffic approaching from behind the cyclist as this could put us into a position of dangerous conflict with a potential, though not immediately obvious hazard. So, a lesson to consider from this example is to develop an observation link when observing approaching cyclists, that although they themselves may only be narrow and of little threat to us, we need to consider what action their presence may provoke from other traffic that may subsequently present a greater threat to our safety.

A similar observation link may be developed when we are travelling on a major road and planning to pass junctions where vehicles are waiting to join the major road.

Vehicles waiting at a left hand junction pose a potential and immediate danger to us, should they pull out into our path. We should try to ensure that the driver has looked in our direction, although this provides no assurance that we have been

seen and a well-timed horn warning of appropriate length should be considered on the approach. We should also aim to make eye contact with the driver and certainly ensure that our speed is appropriate for the circumstances. When approaching such a left hand junction amongst traffic, we may well not be seen, or worse still be seen as a gap, if our position is towards the right of our carriageway. In this situation, we should consider variation of our position to move to the nearside to provide a clear view of the waiting vehicle and again looking for that eye contact with the waiting driver, before returning to a safer position away from the nearside junction, but equalising the potential dangers from all other directions.

Vehicles waiting at a right hand junction, whilst still a potential hazard, pose a lesser danger to us due to their greater distance from our position. Obviously the same conditions as above will apply, to ensure that the waiting driver has seen us and is aware of our approach. However, consider the scenario that we are travelling on a main road, there's a junction on the right hand side of the road with a waiting driver looking to join the major road and beyond that is a bend to the left (although either direction could apply). Should that waiting driver start to emerge from the junction without seeing a rapidly approaching or previously unseen vehicle their movement from the junction could force the oncoming vehicle to swerve, probably to the offside away from the emerging vehicle and of course, into our path as we would be seen as a lesser hazard to make contact with than the emerging vehicle. The important observation link to consider therefore, is that the waiting vehicle on the offside, whilst a potential hazard and presenting a risk to our safety, has the potential to generate much greater danger to us and so our speed and position both require adjustment to provide us with more time in which to react to any potential development in the situation.

I hope that this has been useful and might just pop back into your mind as the

circumstances arise on the road in your future rides.

## Welcome:

We would like to welcome new member Terry to the club this month. Terry lives in Bradley Stoke and rides a Triumph Tiger 1050 and a Suzuki SV1000s. He has already been out on Simon's run on 11<sup>th</sup> October and we look forward to seeing him at many other events.

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## Children's Hospice South West

Despite being bruised and battered from a minor accident just a few weeks before, I am delighted to report that David successfully completed the Bristol Half-Marathon on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

As many do, David decided to run for charity and chose the Children's Hospice South West as beneficiary. He has now sent them a cheque for the £350 he raised. Well done!

*Simon*

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## Pyrenees accommodation

Hi

I know it is a bit early for planning next year's trips, but as soon as I return from one trip I am thinking about the next...

Most of our English customers are bikers via [www.bikestay.com](http://www.bikestay.com)

Please do have a look at our home-made web site and you will see we have a lot to offer: - [www.selfcatering-pyrenees.com](http://www.selfcatering-pyrenees.com)

Another thing we notice on bike tours with MCI and Sun and Bike tours is that often their partner didn't take part, although they liked biking. The problem is the long distances between over-night stops. Here we can help. We will pick-up the ladies (a minimum of 2) from Pau airport on weekly booking, free of charge, and then they can enjoy the shorter rides out, plus think of this: extra luggage!

Thanks for your time. Margaret and John.

Lae de Haut  
Aramits  
64570  
Pyrenees Atlantiques  
France

Again, the club has no knowledge of these people and you need to make your own enquires if you are tempted to go there.

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## Driver Education for Motorway Speeders

Drivers who travel through major roadworks on the M5 at just over the 50mph limit will now be offered the chance to attend a speed awareness workshop to avoid penalty points on their licence.

It will be the first time this option has been given to motorway drivers in Avon and Somerset, although driver awareness courses for those breaking speed limits on local A and B class roads have been running for some years.

The Speed Choice courses will only be available to those motorway drivers who are slightly above the temporary 50mph limit - the so-called 'low end' speeders.

Drivers travelling through the road works at higher speeds face a fine, penalty points and a possible driving ban, depending on

the severity of the offence and their previous driving record.

Superintendent Andy Pullan of the Road Policing Unit at Avon and Somerset Police, said: "The safety cameras are used on these stretches of motorway to ensure motorists lower their speed when passing road works, in order to increase road safety for drivers and the workforce in the carriageways".

"By offering educational courses to drivers caught at the lower thresholds, we aim to raise driver awareness of the dangers of inappropriate speed, especially on busy motorways where roadworks are being carried out."

Work on resurfacing and waterproofing the northbound carriageway of the Avonmouth Bridge began last month and is expected to last until Christmas.

At the same time workers began replacing the central reserve barrier from the bridge to Junction 17 (Cribbs Causeway) in a programme of work that will continue until next March.

Work on the M5 between J25 (Taunton) and J26 (Wellington) also started last month and will last until December.

During these extensive works there will be narrow lanes and lengthy contra-flows will operate at times with temporary 50mph speed limits in place.

The average speed of vehicles travelling through the roadworks will be checked using a system - known as SPECS - that combines state of the art video cameras and Automatic Number Plate Reading (ANPR) digital technology.

The system calculates the average speed of each vehicle from the time it takes to drive between two cameras and can monitor several lanes of traffic at a time. The cameras are fitted with infra-red illuminators and can operate in darkness.

Dick Bowen of the Safety Camera

Partnership - now known as Safecam - said: "The speed limit will be well-signed in advance and we appeal to drivers to control their speed to avoid being involved in a collision in which they or others could be seriously injured".

"Driver education is at the core of our casualty reduction campaign. It is only by changing driver attitudes and behaviour that we can achieve a lasting reduction in collisions and injuries."

The Speed Choice driver awareness workshops in Avon and Somerset were among the first in the country and have been running since 2003.

More than 150,000 drivers have attended one of the courses and the vast majority have rated them as good or very good - with 96 per cent saying they believed their driving had improved as a result.

More information about the casualty reduction work of Safecam, including the location of all roadside safety cameras and the areas in which the mobile camera teams operate, can be found on its website: -

[www.safecam.org.uk](http://www.safecam.org.uk).

**You cannot say you have not been warned!**

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I recently joined an online petition regarding the rumour of changes to the speed limits on our roads.

*Keith*

**Read the Government's response**

Thank you for your e-petition on changes to the current speed limits.

The Government is not proposing to reduce the national speed limit.

On 21<sup>st</sup> April the Government published a consultation on the new road safety strategy: A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's roads the Safest in the World, which closed on 14<sup>th</sup> July. It sought views on the vision, targets and measures for improving road safety in Great Britain in the period from 2010.

Regarding single carriageway roads where the national speed limit applies, the Government propose to revise our existing guidance to highway authorities, recommending that lower limits are adopted where risks are relatively high and there is evidence that a lower limit would reduce casualties.

The Government believes that this targeted approach is the best way to ensure that speed limits are set at the appropriate level for each road.

The Government will announce the results of the consultation at the end of the year.

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## **from The Telegraph**

**A motorcyclist who was seriously injured in a collision with a stray sheep has been billed for damaging the road.**

Published: 2:52AM BST 24 Sep 2009

Moray Ferguson was sent a bill for £200 by Aberdeenshire council after his bike hit a sheep which had wandered into his path on the unclassified Cuminestown to Fyvie Road.

The 47-year-old was flung from his black Honda Fireblade motorbike which burst into flames, and suffered a broken hip socket, pelvis and collarbone, seven cracked ribs and a collapsed lung in the accident.

The fire caused the road surface to melt, leaving it with a "bubbly" texture covering

approximately six feet by six feet where the accident happened, a neighbouring farmer said.

The sheep was also killed in the accident, which happened on July 4 this year.

After five weeks of hospital treatment, the father-of-two returned home, but was shocked when Aberdeenshire council sent him their invoice to cover the cost of repairing the road surface.

A council spokesman said it was a "standard procedure" to charge people involved in accidents for damaging its roads.

But Mr Ferguson, a construction engineer, from Cuminestown, Turiff, told the BBC he was "completely shocked" by the bill.

"I didn't know there was going to be a stray sheep on the road," he said. "The accident wasn't my fault."

Mr Ferguson's wife, Susan added that the road was "really bad for stray animals wandering about".

The road was temporarily repaired, but neighbouring farmer Davey Moir, of South Teuchar Farm, said the council still hadn't fixed the damage.

"The tar melted in a puddle. There isn't a big hole, but the surface is bubbled now," he said.

"It hasn't been fixed yet, and you can still see the chalk marks from the accident.

An Aberdeenshire council spokesman defended its decision to try and claw back the money for repairing the damage.

"When damage is sustained by the public road network as a result of an accident it is the council's duty to reclaim the cost of the required repair work from the relevant party involved.

"We regret that the motorcyclist was injured but we contact individuals involved

in accidents which cause damage to our property directly because it gives them the option of putting it to their insurers, or paying for it themselves if it's a minor claim and they don't want to affect their no claims bonus."

"This is standard procedure, except in the case of fatal accidents, where requests for payment are sent directly to insurers."

"It may be that his insurers will be able to reclaim costs from the owner of the sheep if they were negligent in some way, for example, if there was a hole in fence or a gate was left open."

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## Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September Ride report

From my initial concerns that no one would turn up for my slightly different ride I had the opposite worries when more and more bikes rode into the car park.

Remembering to mark our first left turn out of the car park 12 bikes and one trike pulled out on to the A39.

With the double white lines in force I settled down to a slow pace, the first real test of man and machine came when we climbed up Porlock Hill - there was a nice smell of burning clutch plates from the car in front of me slowing my run at the hill. The drop down into Lynmouth with the Bristol Channel to my right was fantastic. The A39 or the Atlantic Highway has some of the best views I have seen. Climbing out into Linton was a complex road, looking round no one was there. Thankfully Mark and Helen soon arrived and allowed me to ride off.

Next was the toll road - again some fantastic views. I will put some money in the box next time I ride that way, some more tight bends and climbs, these lanes remind me of my trail riding days. Not a problem for the GS!

Foxed by a road closure we took some alternative roads into Ilfracombe then dropping down via Morteheo into Woolacombe.

The car park attendant was not keen on losing out on all of the parking fees and tried hard to charge Keith for parking his trike, but to no avail, the trike fitted and the scooters would have to wait.

Woolacombe has a good choice of places for lunch so the Red Barn and the Beachcomber did some good 'out of season' business from us.

Climbing out of Woolacombe after stopping for fuel we headed across Exmoor via Simonsbath. The traffic remained light and the weather was excellent for a late September ride. Missing my final turn for Bishops Lydeard, I ended up coming into Taunton and hitting the start of the M5 tail-back. I found a suitable pull-in and parked up.

I enjoyed leading the ride and I hope you enjoyed the small lanes down in Woody Bay, now what about the 2010 ride... Thanks.

*Tim.*

*I think the hold-up was due to a fatal accident on the motorway when a trike rider was killed after a car crashed through the central barrier following a 'blowout'.*

*Keith.*

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# AAMC Lakes Weekender 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Here it is guys and gals, the news you have been waiting for. We have been to Cornwall and Wales for the club weekender and now it's time to spread our wings to another area for a riding packed, fun filled weekend. We appreciate this is well in advance of the event, but as you may be aware it is necessary to secure accommodation early.

The plan is to ride to the Lake District on Friday 21<sup>st</sup>, returning on Monday 24<sup>th</sup>. Our accommodation is a village Inn at Caldbeck. We have stayed there before and found it to be excellent.

On the Saturday and Sunday we shall ride out taking in some of the better cruises around this wonderful part of our country. Lunch will be taken out and we shall return to the hotel for evening meals and relax in the bar after. You can of course go your own way on any of the days if you wish.

The trip will include: -

Planned return journeys and Saturday / Sunday ride-out, and three nights bed and breakfast.

The Inn has an attached restaurant and you can enjoy your favourite drink in one of the bar areas.

Just in case you were wondering, the trip does not include evening meals, lunches or 'nightcaps'.

One person in a room costs £111 for three nights bed and breakfast.

Double and twin rooms cost £80 per person for three nights bed and breakfast. Rooms are upstairs and each room has a shower.

To book your place you need to send us a (non returnable) £20 (cheque / postal order / cash) per person deposit **as soon as possible**. Complete the enclosed form and send it together with your cheque to my home address.

As you can see, a single room costs more per person than a twin. If you ride alone and are willing to share, you need to make your own arrangements and indicate who you are sharing with on both booking forms. Sharing makes more places available for your club colleagues.

Your outstanding balance will become due on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010** and will also be **non-returnable**. That means that if you cannot attend, you are responsible for selling your place to someone else. We cannot confirm your booking until we have your deposit. Numbers are restricted and 'first come, first served strictly applies', (the editor's decision is final), so we recommend early booking, if not sooner.

We will confirm with you when your deposit has reached us, and again when your booking with the guesthouse has been completed. You will then be responsible for any ancillary costs you incur with the guesthouse on the weekend.

Please read the attached booking form carefully and please provide as much contact detail as possible for when we need to get back in touch with you.

We will keep those on the trip fully updated with meeting place, times, routes and so on.

Best wishes  
*Stu and Sue*

**Please find the booking form enclosed.**

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# Castle Combe Track Day

The local Road Safety Department ran a skills day at Castle Combe on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September and quite a few Club members attended.

Below are two views of the event: -

1 / Several Club members attended this training session organised and subsidised by Somerset Council Road Safety Team and run by a company called Hopp Rider Training. It is anticipated that these may be run again in future and we thought that some feedback from those who attended might be useful for club members.

To start with we did not have an agenda for the day, so were unsure of what to expect. We had been asked to provide an explanation of our experience and riding style, which the organisers used to place us into two groups. The day started with a Castle Combe track orientation briefing and explanation of the flag system used on the track. Then we were divided into our relevant groups, one group went out on track and the other spent the morning in the classroom. I was in the group that rode for the morning.

We started with slow speed control exercises specifically using the rear brake and doing feet-up full lock circles on the track. Then we progressed to exercises that involved locking up the rear brake whilst moving and then slightly more nerve-wracking, locking up the front brake. This was to demonstrate to us the level of braking that we could exert before locking and also to feel what it was like once the brakes locked. Some comfort was taken from the advice that the company had not had anyone come off their bike doing this in twenty years of training. Of course, there'll always be a first time!

After these exercises we went out on track for three sessions whilst being lead by an Instructor in a 'Ducks and Drakes' format to show us the lines to take around the circuit. These laps were followed by three 20 minutes sessions of free lapping with 20 minutes rest between each. This was our opportunity to exploit our own and the machines' capabilities.

Following this free lapping we had lunch and then spent the afternoon in the classroom, listening to lectures about tyres from Avon Tyres, Safe road riding from an ex-Courier and a very useful practical exercise in how to safely and easily lift a fallen (large touring) motorcycle.

My own thoughts of the day?

- Well, if you want to do a track day, then book one, don't do this.
- It would have been nice to have had an agenda so that we knew what to expect.
- If you want to learn more about how to improve your machine handling skills, then HRT run a separate course and perhaps you should consider that.
- We could have usefully spent more time doing the braking exercises to develop that skill further.
- The 'Ducks and Drakes' exercise gave us little instruction on how to ride the circuit as it was done at moderate pace which required no brakes. However, once speed increased later on to require brakes, then riding the circuit became a totally different matter!
- Once free-lapping started, there was no instruction, the Instructors were out there having fun themselves. Their skill levels were in no doubt: there were some very quick riders there! But there was no benefit to us in having them there, we just had to watch out for them as they lapped us!
- If you have undertaken any form of advanced riding, then the Safe Riding lecture was a matter of preaching to the converted, there

was nothing presented that (without wishing to appear conceited) we didn't already know as we were already trained. The only thing was the anecdotal evidence presented by the speaker, which tended to undermine his credibility rather than enhance it!

- One very useful thing I learnt, that I have never seen demonstrated previously and hope not to need, was how to correctly and safely pick up a fallen bike. The correct technique actually makes doing so surprisingly easy – even with a large BMW tourer to lift!

In conclusion, it was an enjoyable day, but one that should probably be intended for relatively new riders who would certainly benefit greatly from the whole day.

*Andy*

2 / Having been sent the details of this course through the club and deciding it sounded like a good experience, as it included things like bike control and machine handling but all done on a track and organised in association with the road safety office, it seemed like a good opportunity, so I signed up.

However, I found as the day grew closer I became more and more apprehensive about what to expect and my own ability! I knew I wouldn't be completely on my own as Jim and Andy were also going, but I also knew they were in the more experienced group than me.

When we applied we were asked what experience of both track and road riding we had and to then say what group we would place ourselves in, but ultimately the organisers would make the final decision. Well having never ridden on a track but having ridden a reasonable amount with the club and holidays abroad I put myself in the slower group. Jim and Andy were both in the quicker group. I'd

had a few emails from Andy saying try not to worry and just to enjoy it, but it's always the unknown!

Anyway, the day arrived and Jaimie packed me off at 6.45am having had no conversation from me over breakfast for my trip to Castle Combe. They had asked us to arrive early to allow for registration and the noise testing, the limit being 105db. Andy was fairly worried his Tuono might fail so he took his baffles with him. I'd found out the night before that Mark was also joining us so we should have a good day all together. I think Jaimie was nervous for me and made the comment he would be like an expectant father waiting to hear how I was getting on as he had to work! Ahh!

We all got there fairly early and thankfully we all passed the noise test, although Mark's GS only just passed at 105db with a standard exhaust! I was also glad to see I wasn't the only female rider for the day there were several of us, as let's face it it's still pretty much a male dominated sport.

The day started with a short track briefing and being put into our groups. Group A which was Jim and Andy were on track first in the morning, whilst the rest of us were in the classroom for some hints and tips on survival and advanced riding, plus a talk from a rep from Avon Tyres explaining about how they are made and the importance of correct pressures etc. They also included a session on how to pick your bike up safely without hurting yourself, should we ever find ourselves in that position for whatever reason. This was very good and a few people got to have a go, the bike they were using was a fully panniered BMW so not a light bike but everyone managed, showing it's definitely technique not brute strength.

We all broke for lunch and had a chance to catch up with the others before swapping over. There were quite a variety of people on different bikes, which was nice. I think the nerves had had a second wind after lunch hearing the stories from the morning sessions, but off we went!

We started with manoeuvring exercises and bike control, the instructors were very good and extremely proficient, giving us good examples before anything we tried. They were trying to teach us how to brake safely, so before that they wanted us to know what it felt like to lock both the front and the back wheels (not at the same time!). Locking the back was quite easy and knowing how much pressure is needed is quite surprising. Locking the front by jabbing the brake hard and releasing immediately I found very hard, I couldn't get a sharp enough stab, only one person from our group of six managed it. We eventually ran out of time and headed back for a short break before our time on track began.

We had four 15 minute sessions, 2 doing ducks and drakes following the instructor round the track learning the lines, each person taking a turn, and then 2 sessions for free lapping putting what we had learnt into practice. We had some pretty strict rules on overtaking to ensure everyone was safe. The free lapping sessions were good fun and allowed you to build your speed up without having to worry about cars coming the other way being on a nice smooth wide track. The lines were much as we all do on the roads with our advanced lines, just a bit more extreme. And I even managed to overtake a couple of people! (Very satisfying overtaking someone on a 1098R Ducati!!)

Overall it was a very good fun day and well worth the experience, so if you are thinking you might fancy a go, I think they are planning on running some more next year.

It was great to meet other people who also enjoy riding and to have a good day out with fellow friends from the club.

*Sandra*

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## Looking ahead to 2010:-

We are looking to have a Curry Night on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January and a Skittles Match on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February. The venues are yet to be fixed. See the next issue of Treads - hopefully out in late November.

It's not too late to book for the Plug & Grub night on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November. There's an application form enclosed. Also, if you have any photos there's still time to send them to Sandra.

It's **not too early** to think of volunteering to organise a ride in 2010. Please contact Mark so that he can put you on his list and we can get the Diary of Events out early in the new year. If you don't contact him, you can be sure he will contact you, so be prepared to pick a date, location and start time.

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