



TREADS

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EDITORS BITS – Stu Bullock – 07711898178



We hope you all are keeping safe and well during this difficult time. To keep you entertained, there is news about Motorcycle Training; MOT regulations for headlamps; proposed new laws for those whose dangerous driving results in a death; automated vehicles and regulations to deal with driving licence renewals due in 2021.

To start off with, remember the ban on petrol & diesel engines from 2030? Baroness Vere from the Department for Transport, has said there are “no current plans to phase out the sale of internal combustion engine motorcycles”. Wow!

Coronavirus: Driver and rider training.



Government guidance follows, with links to the Gov.UK, BMF and MCIA guidance, not a surprise to find it the same. I have been unable to find any up-to-date guidance from IAM Roadsmart. That's not to say there isn't any, but it's well-hidden if there is.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-restarting-driver-and-rider-training-and-tests/coronavirus-restarting-driver-and-rider-training-and->

[tests#:~:text=You%20must%20not%20provide%20driving,information%20as%20soon%20as%20possible.](#)

This guide is for approved driving instructors (ADIs), motorcycle trainers, and lorry and bus (vocational) trainers.

Driving lessons and motorcycle training: local restrictions, England.

You must not provide driving lessons or motorcycle training in England because of the [national lockdown](#).

You can supervise someone from your household or support bubble during an essential journey during the national lockdown.

Links to guidance from the MCIA and BMF:

<https://www.bmf.co.uk/news/show/covid-19-dvsa-issues-new-training-guidance>

<https://mcia.co.uk/en/mcia-ride/information-for-atbs-and-post-test-instructors>

In the latest (Feb '21) Care on The Road, the RoSPA head of driver training, Amy Brant, says their lockdown guidance is “no tutoring or testing for bikes or cars”. Also, “any pre planned ride outs should be cancelled or postponed”. Nothing there that should be a surprise, until lockdown is lifted.

New Motorcycles.

I'm surprised that manufacturers are still producing new motorcycles in the current climate.

I learnt recently that the market for what may be called classic cars and motorcycles has

flattened off through 2020, having seen consistent growth for several years.

With the relaxation of pensions restrictions and no capital gains on vehicles, the 'right' vehicles have been fetching better values in recent years. It appears that vehicles from the 80's and 90's are being sought after now. So, if you have one of the few remaining minter Kawasaki GPZ 900's, (perhaps an original Top Gun version), you might consider dusting it off for auction...



Maybe there is a growing interest in simpler vehicles, less dependant on computers and electronics than today's offerings and by that, being easier for home servicing? The requirement for vehicles to meet Euro 5 regulations has meant vehicles becoming more reliant on electronic diagnostics and maybe people are becoming interested in 'less is more' from their vehicles.

I include the thought-provoking item from RUST magazine and the item on the new French built MASH 650 to follow on with those thoughts.

News about headlamps and MOT tests.

I was given notice of the changes by Morton Davis, so, grateful thanks for that. I've looked at the regs and what appears below comes from the Gov.com website as well as from other social media sites following a news email from Gov.UK website. From the checks that I have made, the guidance appears accurate but, if you think you are affected, you should make your own enquiries. As you may expect, delivery of the new regs is a bit staid.

The MOT test manual concerning headlamp bulbs has changed. In a previous change to the manual, fitting an H.I.D. bulb (or system) in

place of a normal Halogen bulb became a reason for test failure.

This has now been modified so that L.E.D. bulbs have been included as well. So, if the bike was originally fitted with a Halogen bulb, it must retain a Halogen bulb. If an H.I.D. or L.E.D. bulb has been fitted instead, it WILL fail the test.



EXTRACT FROM OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT EMAIL:

MOT inspection manual: motorcycles

Page summary:

Inspection processes and rules for motorcycle, scooter, moped and motorcycle combination (class 1 and 2 vehicle) MOT tests.

Change made:

Lamps, reflectors and electrical equipment – 4.1.4 Headlamps – Compliance with requirements – Sentence changed from 'Some motorcycles may be fitted with high intensity discharge (HID) headlamps. Existing halogen headlamp units should not be converted to be used with HID bulbs. If such a conversion has been done, you must fail the headlamp.' to 'Some motorcycles may be fitted with high intensity discharge (HID) or light emitting diode (LED) headlamps. Existing halogen headlamp units should not be converted to be used with HID or LED bulbs. If such a conversion has been done, you must fail the headlamp.'

The above is just a small section from the regulations. As ever, if you feel you may be affected, please make your own enquiries.

Ministry for Justice Press release – 15 Oct 2020

Life sentences for killer drivers. Ministers confirm plans to introduce tougher sentences for those who drive irresponsibly and devastate lives. (Thought that a white paper to be introduced to Parliament in 2021. Ed).

Killer drivers face life behind bars after plans to increase maximum sentences received resounding support from families and campaigners. Ministers today confirmed that drivers who cause death by speeding, racing, or using a mobile phone could face sentences equivalent to manslaughter, with maximum penalties raised from 14 years to life.

Offenders who cause death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs will also face life sentences, and a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving will be created.



The move comes after an overwhelming response to a government consultation which revealed substantial backing for the plans from a wide range of people including victims, bereaved families and road safety experts.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/life-sentences-for-killer-drivers>

Driving Licence renewals 2021.

You may have been aware that during lockdown 1 in 2020, an extension of 11 months was given to anyone needing to renew a licence. That was for an expired photo, or age-related expiry between 1 February and 31 December 2020.

I recently checked the appropriate online site, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dvla-coronavirus-covid-19-update#renewing-a-driving-licence> which has information provided by DVLA, that clearly states renewals required after 31 December 2020 should be made as usual. So, no further extension of time for 2021 and the quickest way to make a renewal is online.

As ever, if you think you might be affected, please make your own enquiries.

And finally; keep safe and well until the next time.

TRIUMPH SPEED TRIPLE 1200 RS – 2021 – Triumph Motorcycles

The incredible all new Speed Triple 1200 RS was launched at 12 Noon on 26th January 2021, so by now you will be aware of its appearance and specifications. This is the bike that Triumph say they are renowned for, having been a main part of the Triumph range since 1994 - and a bike which has a history like no other.



The Speed Triple has never been shy, and we look forward to the class leading technology and specification coming to the Triumph Speed Triple.

Stories vary as to how the original Speed Triple was conceived but borrowed many of its components from the Daytona Sports Bike in what Triumph call 'modular' production. Whatever the facts, the first Speed Triple arrived with clip-on handlebars, a single round

headlight and essentially the same chassis and triple engine as the Daytona 900.



Bit like a 70's bathroom

With the Speed Triple's popularity increasing, Triumph treated it to its first update in 1997, giving it features that would soon become its trademark. The T509 Speed Triple debuted the now iconic 'bug eye' look with the 900's single headlight replaced by two individual lights.



The 1050 was a defining model in the Speed Triple History - with the new under seat silencers and radial brake callipers. This model was also a new bike in its own right, not a model derived from the Daytona parts store.



'Chu lookin at me??

It is hard to believe this model came out 16 years ago as its contemporary styling still looks great today, and it rides as well as it looks.

(I'd love to be able to try one. Ed.)

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 MARCH 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.

AUTOMATED CARS AND MOTORCYCLES – Stu Bullock.

An item from the Federation of European Motorcycle Associations, (FEMA) concerns motorcyclist's safety. The United Nations have adopted a regulation that will allow cars to be under the control of Automated Lane Keeping Systems from January 2021. This is another system that can be activated from outside the vehicle, although the system can be deactivated by the driver under certain conditions.

Under the World Harmonisation of Vehicles Regulations, this is the first international regulation for level 3 vehicle automation.



That automation is made with vehicle manufacturers fitting their product with a device that acts something like a Mobile Phone linked to the vehicle processor. It accepts control instructions from outside the vehicle and also transmits data out of the vehicle by Blue Tooth. It also reports how the vehicle is driven to the manufacturer, apparently for 'servicing reasons'. Can you see any reason why your insurer would also want that info? As an example, if you are in a 50mph speed limit and cancelled your auto speed control, that information can be transmitted to anyone interested in issuing you with a fine for a breach of speed regulations.

It is anticipated that level 3 automation will include systems like in car driver breath test before allowing the engine to start; emergency braking; following gap; automated parking; permanent speed control. The list is only held back by a lack of imagination.

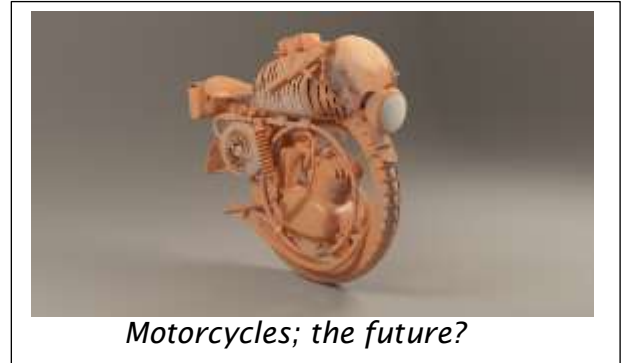
You may not be aware, but a considerable amount of info about you and your car can already be gained from downloading the data gathered by the device operating your vehicle airbag system.

If you already have a system in your car where you plug your phone into a specific USB socket, like plugging an external drive into your PC, you already provide the manufacturer with every item of data contained in your phone. Needless to say, this is a massive income stream for the manufacturer, who will sell your data.

I believe I previously reported on a system that allows a car to be operated by blue tooth from linked systems outside of the vehicle. So, an example would be an automated speed limit on a 'smart motorway'. Vehicles passing through would have their speed regulated by blue tooth equipped signs.

Anyway, it appears that none of these systems are going to apply to motorcycles, which raises a question of safety. For example, a vehicle being followed by a motorcycle automatically reduces speed by 20mph or more.

The full article can be found at:
https://www.femamotorcycling.eu/un-allows-self-driving-cars/?fbclid=IwAR2qWwT5ZCvIT_7ITV5la2_XiEz7sfG6GyJhOGEv1hz7MOr418mZ5U6d5Fk



You may not know much about FEMA, but they do mount significant campaigns towards reducing the effect of anti-motorcycle legislation. For example, in Germany there is strong vocal Government support to reduce motorcycle speeds and noise on certain roads. This group have been successful in banning motorcycles from some roads in Germany at weekends, but if support for such legislation grows, the spread could reach us in the UK.

Although this is a small number of German MP's, Winston Churchill warned, never ignore a minority. How right he was, having been instrumental in the strategy that defeated Germany in WWII, a minority of opposition supporters ousted him from Government immediately after the War.



THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

Lockdown laughter;

I just spent 15 minutes looking for my phone in my car. I was using the light in my phone to help with the search!

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes 10 months in a row. Result.

I got an email about pork, ham, salt and preservatives. I didn't open it. I realized it was spam.

Last March I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

I said to my wife it was good having someone I enjoyed being in lockdown with. She said. "Must be nice".

As I see less people, I talk to myself. Well, sometimes I still need expert advice.

I have more friends I should send this to, but right now I can't remember their names.

Now, I'm wondering: did I send this to you, or did you send it to me?

BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT ROAD GRITTING – Stu Bullock, based on an article in Driver Trainer, the magazine of the professional driver and rider trainer, Driving Instructors Association.

You might think it a bit late for this article, unless you are old enough to remember 1946/47, when heavy snow fell between January and March across the country. 1962/63 heavy snow during December to March brought the country to a halt, with the Army drafted in to help open roads and deliver food. 1977/78 January and February saw problems countrywide. Then, you might think, is it time.....?



I told him not to brake.

The onset of winter weather, and you may have seen some already in 2021, brings out the Gritting Lorries. In business for 150 years, JW Crowther, *The Gritting Company*, provides gritting services nationwide. They are the ideal people to dispel some myths about road gritting.

Myth 1. Winter Gritting Wagons contain grit. Now, you might think that was a valid opinion to hold. However, NOT TRUE.

It isn't grit, its salt. The small stones that make grit can leave a sticky residue, with the risk of a slippery road surface. Grit can block drains and so the alternative is Brown Rock Salt, which is often mistaken for grit. It is spread on large road surfaces because it is more economical. White salt is more expensive and more often used in the grounds of schools, hospitals, business parks and so on, as it leaves less residue on carpeted floors when trodden in.

Myth 2. Salt will melt ice at any temperature. Well, that must be true. I mean, haven't we all thrown salt onto our driveway and seen the ice melt? Well, it's NOT TRUE.

Salt works by lowering the temperature at which water will freeze, (maybe why the sea does not freeze so readily. Ed), and this prevents ice forming on the roads. The more concentrated the salt, the lower the freezing point. However, salt is less effective below minus 5 degrees Celsius and is why ice and snow treated with salt melt less quickly below that temperature.

MYTH 3. Once salt has been spread, ice will immediately melt. I know what I believe, but...NOT TRUE.

The de-icing effect relies on salt being crushed and spread by passing vehicle tyres. Where traffic is light, the salted ice will take longer to melt.

MYTH 4. Deep snow on roads will melt quickly with salt spread on it. OK, I've learnt my lesson now, and of course, it is NOT TRUE.

Salt works best on snow that is less than 4cm and, as in 3 above, traffic is needed to help distribute the salt.

MYTH 5. It's too cold for snow. Now, because I've worked on roads with gritter lorry drivers in icy conditions, I gotta admit that I know this is TRUE.

There is a link between the temperature of the air and how much water it can hold. However, it is less likely in the UK and only happens when the temperature plummets beneath minus 40 degrees Celsius. That does not happen often in the UK, but when that temperature is reached, the air has so little moisture in it, that snow can rarely form.



De-icing relies on passing traffic to crush and spread salt.

So, there you are, 5 myths sorted and as ever, information is knowledge and knowledge is power. Never, ever stop learning.

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. I was riding in a long queue behind what I eventually discovered to be a car being driven very badly.

As I worked my way to the front, I could see a car being driven in “classic old lady” mode. The driver was hesitant, her speed varied between 25 mph and 45 mph in a 60 zone. Her brake lights were coming on for no reason, so I decided to go for an overtake in a safe area.

Just as I was overtaking, and I do have loud pipes, the car violently braked slewing right, just clipping me. The rear corner of the “old lady mobile” had a slightly damaged rear offside balance, a scuff mark left by my tyre. Neither me nor my bike came off that well. I have now got a complex fracture to my wrist, and my now fairly elderly but much loved Fireblade is likely to be written off.

My insurers appointed so called solicitors, and yes, I have checked, and my “litigation executive” when asked has no formal qualifications but has said that as I went into the back of a vehicle, I cannot bring a claim. Is this right?

Answer

No. You can bring a claim, but you do have difficulties. The urban myth is that if you go into the rear of the vehicle, you are to blame. It is usually a pretty strong indicator of blame, but it is not final.

The Court has to consider whether the person braking did so for good reason. The driver of the car, as you correctly surmised was indeed an elderly lady, who initially told the police that she “braked for the roundabout” but when the police officer pointed out to her interview that the roundabout was over half a mile away, she then

said "I braked because I was awful scared by the noise of the motorcycle".

The two witnesses who gave brief statements to the police at the time both said the car moved quite sharply to the right, as you were winding up for the overtake, one witness saying that the car crossed the white line, dividing the road, the other witness is silent on the point.

The duty of a driver being overtaken is to maintain "safe and steady course" on the particular facts of your case I suspect that you will win, but not in full. I think it is likely a Judge will find your overtake was too close to the side, but not to the rear of the car. Obviously, you cannot maintain a safe distance behind a car whilst you are going for an overtake. At some point you are going to go past it.

The race pipes do not usually endear you to Judges, but neither is it an excuse to swing out right. In my opinion the Judge will find the driver braked for no good reason, and swerved for no good reason. However, I think you are likely to have to take some of the blame for not following the wise words of the Highway Code "not to get too close to the vehicle you intend to overtake". If you had done that, the swerve would not have got you, you would have made your overtake, and you would not be asking me the question.

In my opinion the likely range of blame is at worst equal blame, but my genuine expectation is that you will have to shoulder significantly less than half of the blame, if the insurers for the old lady are not prepared to offer you anything more than two thirds of the value of your claim, I would think about that very carefully indeed.

Andrew Dalton. January 2021.

Q2. I was approaching traffic lights on my NC700 – admittedly not the world's sexiest bike, but it is my commuter bike, and on the positive side no one wants to nick it.

It has hard-wearing but not especially grippy tyres. I approached a set of traffic lights which were on green in very heavy rain, with raindrops bouncing off the Tarmac. The lights started

flickering on to amber, and I made the decision not to brake and to cross on amber. Ahead of me I could see a bus waiting to turn right, in a right-turn lane, and sure enough, it turned right, across my path, and the front of the bus scooped me up in a surprisingly un-violent collision. The front of the bus was one hell of a mess, but I was completely unhurt; even my bike did not have much damage to it.

The Met Police turned up, and I was expecting trouble, but the Police were sympathetic, it turns out the bus driver, when asked by the Police, said he knew the route and he knew my light would be on red, so he turned right. The Police told me that they were going to recommend that the bus driver was prosecuted, not me, even though I fessed up that I had gone through on amber, but I explained my reasons, and the Police accepted them.

I later got a letter that no one would be prosecuted, and I was not particularly bothered as we all make driving errors. I was then sent a letter of claim from loss adjusters from the bus company demanding a huge bill for replacement bus rental and repairs to the bus. I forwarded my letters on to my Insurers and told them what the Police had said and insisted that they got the police report.

My insurers did get the police report, and it turns out that passengers on the bus were supportive of me, and the bus driver himself confirmed he had no filter light on before he turned right. One passenger on the bus, who was standing at the front of the bus, said that I was clearly visible to him for some distance before the bus driver started turning right, and he shouted for the bus driver to stop before he knocked me off.

My insurers have told me that they want to make a partial pay-out to the bus company as I was an 'amber gambler' and bang goes my no claims bonus for my NC, but also for my sports bike. Are my insurers right to be paying out?

Answer

No. The police statements are excellent, and neutral. The standing passenger said he saw

you riding in a straight line, clearly visible, and the passenger says he can give no explanation at all as to how the bus driver failed to see you.

The bus driver shoots himself through both feet by saying: "I knew I was safe to turn, because I know the lights, and the biker's lights are always red when the lights ahead of me are turning amber." He goes on to add that you were speeding so he must have seen you, or he didn't see you and he is lying about the speeding so he has put a fresh round into his knee, having finished with his feet.

Your amber light is a red herring. Fundamentally, it does not give him the right to ignore you, a patently visible hazard coming towards him – and If this case were to go to Court, I have no doubt that the bus company's case would be dismissed.

I know the loss adjusters who are appointed by this bus company. They are aggressive, stubborn and none too bright. However, they very rarely go to court, because they must appoint a solicitor, rather than carry on with their nonsense in letters. Because claims adjusters and insurers cannot 'conduct litigation' they will have to go to a solicitor, and any competent lawyer reading the police report would have to advise the bus company that turning right across the path of a motorcyclist because its driver thought he knew what colour a light he could not see was would fall flat on its arse.

I can give no explanation as to why your Insurers have just folded like this, sometimes I see insurers fold for small claims, because If they pay out £1,000 worth of damage, and then load your insurance for the next three years, they come out quid's in. However, this is a case claimed north of £25,000. I just hope your Insurers have the stomach for a fight rather than paying out a couple of thousand pounds, and then spanking you for the next five years with an increased premium.

Andrew Dalton. December 2020.

MIDDLEWEIGHT ADVENTURES – BRING BACK THE 600 SINGLE?- John Bentman - RUST MOTORCYCLE MAGAZINE - <https://rustsports.com/>

Has the golden age of the adventure middleweight already been and gone? Did it happen before we'd even created the 'adventure' bike category? And if so, RUST asks, do we need them back?



Many older adventure riders yearn for bikes from the past. We'll name a few: BMW R80G/S, Yamaha Ténéré XT600, Honda XL600LM, Honda Dominator, Kawasaki KLR600, Suzuki DR650, BMW Funduro/650GS, Aprilia Pegaso, KTM 625/640 Adventure. Great bikes.

Those of the 1980s were very simple, being air-cooled, 40-50hp carburetted motors (singles of course, the BMW aside), combined with long distance tanks in many cases. Not at all powerful but big on off-road capability and super-easy to maintain and repair. They inspired a generation to set sail for far horizons.

In the 90s, bikes like the BMW 650s (Funduro, GS) brought liquid-cooling, typically a sixth gear and plusher seats for more comfortable cruising (plus a bit more weight). And around the millennium came the odd fantastic beast, like Honda's fantastic stripped-for-action XR650, and KTM's rally-inspired 640 Adventure.



Yamaha Tenere 600

It would seem, however, that the advent of the super-adventure bike, precipitated by the likes of the BMW R 1100 GS, then the 1150 and 1200 – plus the Ewan & Charley effect – has seen the manufacturers focus on increasingly bigger and more sophisticated models, while the middleweights were almost all but forgotten.

So now it's 2021. And we're all hoping to get riding again in a post-COVID-19 world. Many of us may well be of reduced means so big-ticket big-ADV's might well be off the menu. So, the simple, modestly priced middleweight could see a boom period.



Honda NX650 Dominator

Only, we have to be realistic; we can't build the bikes of the past anymore, however much we loved them. Stringent emissions regulations mean today's middleweight ADV has to be more complex. It has to be fuel-injected, it has to carry often multiple catalytic converters, has to be liquid-cooled and super-muffled, has to be equipped with ABS, increasingly traction control as well. No Euro5 certificate, no bike.

Here's an odd thing, though. The whole emissions restrictions were started by the USA,

in the 1970s, when they got tough on two-strokes. Europe came to embrace this, but maybe a little over zealously. You see in the US and in Australasia they still have simple 600cc singles 'trailies' that us Europeans loved and would love again. The Honda XR650L and the Suzuki DR650 are still both current models, and priced at US\$6999 and \$6699 are a perfect first adventure bike (or extreme adventure bike for that matter). Okay you might want to add the price of a long-range tank, a little extra protection and maybe panniers to the spend, but near as dammit you're getting that 80s/90s trailie-adv experience for a comparatively affordable price.

You know, if you were a Chinese bike manufacturer today you might just grab a fair slice of the ADV market if you brought a suitable 600cc trailie-ADV to market (with Euro5 compliance). The reaction to Royal Enfield's Himalayan has shown a good portion of the market is ready to return to smaller, simpler ADVs. Only for some, 410cc and 25hp isn't enough. 600cc and 40hp – now we're getting there. And seeing bikes like the Mash X-ride come to the market with something of a knock off of the old XR600 (radial valve) motor – with Euro5 compliance – gives us hope they could do this.



Mash X-Ride 650

Mash Motorcycles -

<https://mashmotors.co.uk/models/650cc/x-ride-650/>

Motorcycle News Bike Review – Mash 650 -

Author: Mike Armitage

Published: 01 December 2020

Mash is a French concern – and yes, they're named after the TV show of the '70s/'80s. In business for a decade, their bikes are actually built by Shineray, a huge Chinese company that makes a very comfortable living from building machines based around existing designs.

For the Mash X-Ride 650 Classic this means the single-cylinder engine that used to power Honda's legendary NX650 Dominator. There's more connection to old-school 'giant trailies' too, as there's an unmistakable and completely intentional hint of Yamaha XT500 to the retro bike's look. If you still pine for the time of dirt-based thumpers the Mash seems like just the ticket, especially with its very modest £4999 asking price.

Five-grand isn't much for a well-finished 650 retro, especially one with features you don't find on similarly priced potential rivals (radial brake, LED lights, adjustable levers, and more). The engine is willing with a decent character and pleasing exhaust note, and the X-Ride feels right during half-arsed B-road bend-swinging.

Unfortunately, while it has plenty going for it, there are just a few too many irritations – even accepting that oh-so-attractive price. Its chassis shortcomings are things you notice every ride. Sorting the issues out wouldn't be rocket surgery but would require time and money, which defeats the object of a bargain-priced buy-and-ride bike.

If your riding is mostly on tight lanes and you're smitten by the X-Ride's looks, fill your boots.

There's not really anything else quite like it – you can count other five-grand retro trailies with decent-size engines on the fingers of no hands, and for cheery bobbing down back lanes it does have appeal.



MCN Photo. Mash 650

But remember that while Royal Enfield's Interceptor 650 might be £700 more expensive, the best-selling 650 parallel twin is faster, smoother, and a much more rounded package. The Indian firm's bikes hold their money far better than French ones, too. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for a 650cc version of the RE Himalayan...



Royal Enfield Interceptor 650



Proposed Royal Enfield Himalayan, maybe June 2021.

Mash running gear looks impressive. There's a sizeable radial-mounted brake calliper on a 320mm disc, with chunky-looking forks, a neat aluminium swingarm and attractive gold rims.

However, the Mash X-Ride 650 Classic doesn't ride as well as it looks. The biggest issue to get around is Mash's decision to build a supermoto with broad 17in rims, but fit chunky off-road tyres. Supermoto bikes are trail machines converted for tarmac capers with smaller, wider rims and grippy tyres, but curiously the X-Ride has low-grip knobblies. I know The Dirt Look is all the rage, but they spoil the 650's steering and low-speed handling – it feels like the front tyre is soft. They look like the Pirelli fitment on a [Yamaha Ténéré 700](#) but are made by Kenda, and don't have the Pirelli's grip at decent lean on chilly or damp roads.

The riding position is nicely balanced and spacious enough despite the X-Ride being compact, and the bench seat is comfy enough to see off the contents of the 12-litre tank. No problems with the ride quality from the rear shock either, especially given this price point. But the front forks are disappointingly choppy; the ride is jiggly and unsettled at pretty much all speeds. And while the blingy-looking Hangte four-pot front brake stops the 650 well enough with a good squeeze of the span-adjustable lever, it's desperately shy of feel.

The X-Ride's motor is the air-cooled 644cc overhead-cam single that Honda used in the [NX650 Dominator](#) and XR650 dirt bike (Shineray acquired the rights in 2016). Back when Honda made it the unit produced 39 lb. ft of thud and around 44bhp, but modern regs mean this Mash version has 32 pound-feet and around 40 horsepower at 6000rpm.

However, the X-Ride still feels how old 'giant trailies' used to. It pulls cleanly all the way to an indicated 7000rpm and thrums contentedly at 75mph in top (fifth) gear. There are no off-the-throttle power wheelies, but the Delphi injection gives great fuelling and there's a tad less low-speeding chugging than big singles of yore. It's a dry-sump motor, with oil carried in the frame – the dipstick is next to the headstock.

There are some pleasing parts on the 650. The neat rear rack, finned headlight housing and diddy ABS switch on the bright-finished 'bars are great, and the tiny clocks are in keeping with the style of bike.

Some of the welds on the frame aren't the nicest to look at (who mentioned pigeons?), and our 1000-mile-old test bike had the first tiny suggestion of rust on the underside of the steel twin-pipe exhaust. Overall finish is certainly no worse than a Royal Enfield Interceptor though, and you have to look hard to see evidence that it's a £5k bike, not one costing more.

There aren't many other 650s for five thousand. Most bikes at this price point feel a tad flimsier, too. In terms of seeming like it's worth the cash, the X-Ride succeeds. Insurance won't break the bank either. It's a group nine, which is a group higher than a Royal Enfield Interceptor but then still only the same as a [Kawasaki Ninja 300](#).

The ex-Honda engine is good for 50mpg, given the sort of breezy thrumming the Mash encourages. Tyres should last as well. But it's unfortunate that the 644cc single needs frequent servicing – as in every 2500 miles. We're not talking just oil and filter either: there's a valve clearance check every time. Access is easy and they shouldn't need adjusting on every occasion, but it's still a bit much. Spark plugs and air filter are every 5000 miles.

The Mash won't excite if you're an electronics freak. You get switchable ABS... and that's your lot. The very compact single digital dial has limited information (speed, revs, fuel level and odometer) and no scope for adjustment, but it feels right on a 70s-style retro.

Other bits make up for the lack of gizmos. The overall finish is good, the Monza-style filler cap is neat, and the rims and brakes give a fancier image than they're deserving of.



Lockdown Musings - Andy

Normally at this time of year, I'd be planning a big trip abroad, maybe a trip in the UK and a couple of club rides to lead.....but at the moment, well, it's hard to get enthusiastic about much of anything really!

But this 'kin thing can't go on forever and it's planning and looking forward, poring over maps, working out routes and overnight stops that keeps me motivated.....so a mindset reboot is required (otherwise known as a kick up the ass!). Hopefully the club trip arranged by Simon for September through France and into my beloved Northern Spain can go ahead, so I'm hoping that I'll be asked to lead some of the days (especially in Spain) and therefore I can at least get my maps out and plan some routes for that. Yeah!!

Next....a UK trip anyone? Assuming that we come out of lockdown in the spring and the vaccination programme is rolled out as planned (should I hold my breath?? I am only 8 millionth in the queue apparently) then perhaps it wouldn't be out of the question. To that end, would anyone be interested in Yorkshire Midsummer Bash?? If my memory serves me correctly, it will be 25 years ago since the last one I organised! Tempus fugit!! A long weekend from Friday 18th June through to Monday 21st? I haven't worked out any details for it yet but if anyone is interested at all please get in touch as I'd be happy to lead it.

I bought, perhaps somewhat impulsively, a (new to me) KTM 690 Enduro R recently (to add to an ever increasingly crowded garage!) on which I'd like to do some TET (Trans Euro Trail) routes both here and in Europe; the Great Western Trail, for example, is a trinity of sustainable green roads covering some 1300kms through Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. Whether I'm being over-optimistic in doing this with such a bike remains to be seen but, again, if anyone would care to join me in doing little bits of it, I'm sure it would be a bit of a laugh.....as well as a challenge!

Club rides.....who knows when we'll be able to organise these again, but I'll put my hand up to

lead one or two once restrictions are lifted; hopefully cafes will be open too as a ride without a proper stop isn't quite the same is it.

Hopefully then, a few things to plan and look forward to but, in the meantime, I'll continue to try to improve my sourdough bread making!



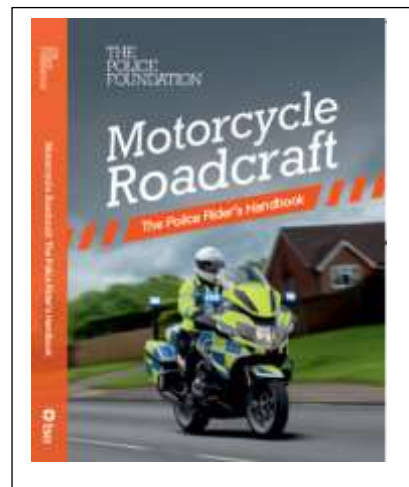
Andy and Bike in France

PRODUCT REVIEW – MOTORCYCLE ROADCRAFT 2020 EDITION.

Author: Richard Newland, Editor, Motorcycle News.

Motorcycle Roadcraft – The Police Rider's Handbook, £16.99

Time tested: Two months



What's good? This is the first new edition of 'Roadcraft' since 1996, and while it's not exactly stimulating bed-time reading, it is genuinely fascinating, well done, and worth its weight in gold.

Regardless of your age, experience or aspirations as a rider, this book will help you to get more from your riding. Providing you have an open enough mind to take the wisdom on board, the 260-page systematic deconstruction of riding and the hazards we face on the road, is truly enlightening.

Such simple aspects of riding as road position and hazard awareness are drilled in great detail, providing a wealth of hard-learned knowledge from some of the most accomplished motorcyclists in existence. The advanced techniques follow seamlessly on.

Far from being a stuffy tome of unintelligible 'police-talk', the book is light and digestible, with hundreds of excellent illustrations, and opportunities to check off what you should have absorbed in each section. Don't think you're too good for it – none of us are.

What's not? The name, and historical image of police riders, will sadly put people off buying this book in their droves. It couldn't appear any more anti-cool if it tried. It's a shame, because I defy any rider not to learn something valuable by reading it.

Contact: www.tsoshop.co.uk

Have any club members read Motorcycle Roadcraft? How about letting us all have your views? Ed.

VIEW FROM THE SADDLE – Jaimie

Who would have thought that the summer of 2019 would have been the last time we could all have enjoyed riding our bikes as we had for many years in the past?

The horrendous pandemic and subsequent loss of life continues to cause problems across the world. I'm sure each of us has our own personal

battle with the need to protect ourselves and the ones we love to the best of our ability. Sandra and myself have two very different attitudes from our ageing parents. Sandra's haven't left the house in over 12 months and even now, after having their first vaccine are still fearful of going out and about. Whereas my parents are the complete opposite, refusing to toe the line and let others do their shopping and having not managed to deal with shopping on line either. They are at least getting out for daily walks to stay fit and mentally healthy.

Apart from the obvious restrictions in place by the first and second lockdowns, for me personally I've missed the freedom to go and travel around the country as we always have and to meet up with friends and family. I don't think any of us will take a ride into Wales or any of our favourite spots for granted for a long time to come. Chepstow, Usk, Abergavenny and on to Brecon with a tea stop at the International Welsh Rarebit centre, Defynnog would be fantastic come the spring.

With restrictions due to lockdown causing problems for people wanting to take their bike test, both CBT and full licence, this could have a knock-on effect on the whole bike industry for years to come.

A colleague at work treated himself to a tidy Suzuki GSXR 600 in late 2019 thinking he could take and pass his test for the spring of 2020. Here he is 14 months later still unable to book a training course or book a test, he's getting fed up with only being able to polish the bike to the point he's almost given up and is considering selling it.

Hopefully we can all get back to riding either locally or even further afield sooner rather than later with the cafe's and pubs being able to open and restrictions get lifted.

I would say back to normal, but I'm not sure I can remember what normal was anymore. Stay safe everyone.

Jaimie.

LETTERS

Eddy

Dear Simon and Stuart

Thanks for the New Year Treads, what a great effort Stu. Normally I wouldn't bother but life is just so boring and frustrating that on this one occasion, I thought I would!

The ROSPA cornering video is a great link; there are 2 areas that I thought might be worth pausing upon:

1. 'As we see the limit coming towards us, we need to decelerate.' Do we???? Try this... we are riding along the Arizona highway; the limit point is a mile away and is coming towards us. Actually, all we need to be considering is whether we can stop safely etc etc.

The main point to get across, in my view, is that the limit point is one end of a measuring device, we are the other and what we are measuring is stopping distance.

2. 'By leaning into the corner.' There are some very good clips around that in general show a machine will turn into a corner if leaned, but in general the machine's reaction time to leaning is pretty delayed. The antidote to this is some awesome clips, where apparently a bare footed rider can get his bike to turn on a sixpence in impossibly tight conditions with no hands on the bars at all!

For us lesser mortals unconsciously or otherwise the lean is induced by a shove on the right bar if turning right and left bar if turning left, to turn the front wheel and induce the lean at just the moment we decide. That is what gives us control and control is inevitably confidence enhancing. Just saying'

Happy New year, Eddy.

PRODUCT TEST _ KLIM BADLANDS PRO – Johnathon Bentman, RUST Online Motorcycle Magazine.

This is a reduced version of the article. The full version can be found at www.rustsports.com

SERIOUSLY PROTECTED

The suit features D30 armour, called Aero Pro D30 on account it's highly perforated to improve ventilation. KLIM says there's 44% more coverage through their spec of armour (than the next best comparable) while being perforated means it has five times the ventilation. Now while we didn't have the hottest day to ride Wales there were times the work rate went up and the vents were opened – and yes, having vented armour at times like that – I like.

Talking of venting, my word it's comprehensive. I count three vents on each sleeve, two big vents on the front body matched with two more on the back. Then the vents on the trousers. You can really blow the air through this suit.



I find it amazing that somehow when closed up those same zipped vents remain waterproof. Trick design.

As with other suits the jacket and jeans can be zipped together – something I always do. I also really like the integral kidney belt found in the jacket. Kidney belts have kind of fallen out of favour, but having ridden with one since my schoolboy scrambling days, I really do much prefer to ride with one, even on the road.

When it comes to staying warm, on those cooler days, while the jacket is very wind resistant you will eventually need extra layers. And here KLIM will assist with a range of base and mid-layers that not only compliment the suit but are designed to be worn on their own, too. And having the mid-layer sweater here, I can say again there's equal quality and style in these garments. And of course, unlike the zip-in layers of other suits you're not left with extraneous zips and tabs looking kind of odd when the under layers are worn without the jacket. They make sense.

As well as the Gore-Tex there's Carbonite Ripstop super-fabric for abrasion resistance in all the key wear zones where you might tumble down the road. What's nice about this fabric is it combines maximum abrasion resistance with a remarkable flexibility – so the suit doesn't feel like knight's armour, it remains soft, pliable and comfortable.



The pants, by the way, feel generous in cut, so no bunching around the crotch, good length so they don't sit halfway up your boot

when sat riding, and there's a generous cut around the calf/ankle so they slide easy over even a bulky MX boot like the A-stars Tech 7.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

There are some aspects which could be better, mind. The low-cut collar and modest Velcro fastening might suit hotter climes, but for European winter you'll need a decent neck tube (aka Buff) to improve the seal around your neck. I think the Velcro closure could be longer too for adjustability and for a more secure fastening. Next point, the external pockets are not waterproof, so beware what you store in them on wet days. As well, the pocket sizes are a touch odd – a little undersized I'd say. Equally the inside pockets could probably do with a little rethink. The inside left chest pocket is the one I used most (wallet and phone), most other stuff I distribute between my tank bag and tail pack.

QUALITY WINS OUT

Those minor issues aside, there really is just so much to this suit, and it's only when you see it, touch it and wear it that you fully understand how excellent it is. It costs a pretty penny, for sure but given its light weight, super-smart design, impressive safety features and 100% waterproofing you can start to understand the price point. And yes, in the Sage and Hi-Viz colourways it looks damn sophisticated.

There is of course much more to say on this suit, but this test is ongoing so once we get through Lockdown and are riding again, we'll add further updates. For now, yes, I'm super-super happy with this suit.

www.klim.com

RRP. Jacket – 928 to 1195 Euros. Pants – 640 to 820 Euros.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – Tony

FINAL REMINDER. Membership renewal was due at the end of December, and so anyone from the small number not yet signed up for another year, should do so now please if you want to retain membership. The final reminder.

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

AND FINALLY

We are looking forward to life returning to normal, of one kind or another. I'm sure things will gradually improve as the days get longer and also as more people get vaccinated. We had our first three weeks ago, and looking forward to the top up.

If you have anything to contribute to club life, please drop me a contribution for TREADS. We can then entertain each other with anecdotes. March TREADS is already started!



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 Chamberlain, Mob: 07885 578105 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/>