



TREADS

www.aamc.co.uk

The October 2013 Newsletter of AAMC

EDITORS BITS

– Chris

I'm not a fan of internet forums – they tend to be tricky to find what you are after and any topics often rapidly deteriorate into chit-chat or simply go way off topic. There is also the factor of "internet intelligence" a phrase I have borrowed which indicates how people often consider themselves knowledgeable having read an article on the web and followed up with little or no research.

My research starts here by asking those of you with way more experience than I.

How often should I replace my crash helmet?

On the first forum I came to someone is asking most of the questions I have (I recommend reading the initial posting at least) – see <http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=780904> There are some very good points but I struggle to overcome my prejudice regarding any replies. Is this advice from someone who is an expert or just has "internet intelligence"?

So over to you – have a read of the initial posting in the link above and you will see the sort of questions I have and if you have experience in these things, please let me know.

View from the Saddle

– Simon

It's ages since I wrote in 'View from the Saddle' so, having given it some thought, I've decided to cover a pet hate of mine – traffic lights.

Frankly we have too many traffic lights. The fundamental difference between roundabouts and lights is that roundabouts keep traffic moving, whereas lights stop traffic. I am well aware there are places where there is no alternative to lights, such as where the traffic flow is consistently high, or where there simply isn't enough space for a roundabout, but in the past fifteen years many more lights have been installed where a roundabout would have been perfectly adequate or even better.

This has had a number of consequences. Firstly with traffic slowing, being stationary for some time then accelerating away, it increases pollution – both noise and air quality. The longer the vehicle is stationary, the longer each journey takes and the more pollution there is. It's not rocket science. Keeping traffic flowing is much more environmentally friendly.

Secondly the lights continue to operate for twenty-four hours



of every day. I might accept an argument about them being necessary in really heavy traffic densities, but those densities aren't there all day every day, mainly only during the rush hours.

Now let me paint a scenario. A driver arrives at a red light late at night. There is no other traffic anywhere to be seen. He waits for a minute or two, nothing comes and the light stays red. What happens then? The first few times he patiently waits for the lights to change, slowly becoming more irritated and stressed. What when it keeps happening time after time? The great temptation is to ignore the lights and drive through them on red – an offence and potentially a safety issue, but it's human nature and who can blame him?

Statistics show that more and more drivers are going through red lights. Are we surprised?

The underlying problem is that the proliferation of lights we are suffering is bringing the whole issue of traffic lights into disrepute.

So what can we do? Apart from the obvious removal of unnecessary lights and replacement of them by roundabouts, there is one thing that would help enormously.

Why don't we just switch them off in off-peak times, and return the junction to a 'Give Way'? What could be simpler?

When you ask someone in traffic management they will give you all sorts of reason why it can't be done, but it's nonsense. Other countries can do it, and indeed we can do it ourselves if there is a will. A couple of years ago the Highways Agency put lights at the top of the slip road to the motorway at junction 14 of the

M5 – Falfield. This caused huge queues both on the motorway itself and surrounding roads and there was a public outcry. Within a few weeks they had changed them to only work part-time, and the queues disappeared. It worked really well, so why can't we have more like this?

Come on, you people in traffic management at the Highways Agency and Local Government. Here's the challenge. What's the problem?

AAMC on Facebook

– Chris

Following last months mention of a Facebook page in Treads I have joined up and recommend that others do too. There are only 18 of us at the moment but as more join it will only improve the discussions and there are plenty of photos up already.

Joining the group is by invitation only so anyone wishing to be included in this AAMC Facebook group should email Mark at events@aamc.co.uk

For those of you not on Facebook (yet?) here are a few of the photos that have been posted this month – log on to find out the stories behind them. There's a video on there too.



Lae De Haut, Aramits 64570

Newsletter Autumn 2013

A newsletter from Margaret Johnson who offers holiday accommodation in the Pyrenees. There looks like some interesting offers! Sorry, there aren't any photos for Treads but the weblinks have plenty...

See us on www.bike-stay.net

For 2014 we have made few changes, this is a progression as we listen to clients requests and suggestions. As we are located in such a peaceful, relaxing area with uninterrupted views of the ski station La Pierre St Martin 13 miles as the crow flies, we decided to go

Adults Only

As most of the outdoor activities are for the adults and most of our clients are adults.

This year 2013 we have had a number of groups on the self-catering basis and 3 of the larger groups have had exclusive use of Lae Haut, as this has gone so well we want to build on this.

Brittany Ferries

We offer 20% off Brittany Ferries for departure through out the year with our accommodation (3 nights plus) and if you book between

1st October and 15th November for 2014 departures 25% off. Please ask for details

B&B clients

To save costs they have use of a small shared kitchen for mid-day snacks and evening meals also use of the B.B.Q area. So they have a choice, eat in or eat out.

7 nights at the price of 6

Walks & Views

We have been here for 9 years and we still think the views are fantastic although we have seen them so many times and another plus is the area is the least populated area in France and has the lowest crime rate, up the mountains they have provided large parking areas at the start of many walks showing maps and details of the walk.

In the club room we have books on the walk routes, many printed off.

<http://www.wikiloc.com/trails/outdoor/france/aquitaine>

www.laverna.fr

Don't miss this one, 1965 it was declared the Deepest hole in the world, now is known the 3rd largest cave system in the world.

The 1 hour visit is easy as we have done it also suitable for wheel chairs, the 5 hour visit is for the more experienced. See the video where they inflate a hot air balloon inside the great chambre.

More about the mountains

<http://www.summitpost.org/pyr-n-es-b-arn/330445>

Cyclist

We have many famous Tour de France Cols in peddling distance one being Aubisque and there are many signed walks at these Cols and again we put some of last weeks ride out on Margaret Johnson Face book page of the Aubisque and Soulor.

We do expect the 2014 Tour De France to be in our area with a finish in Pau and a second stage starting at Pau (2014 route will be announced 23rd October.)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmcdQpdB14M>

Rafting

Have a look at www.rafting64.com

Watch the video, 12km riding the rapids and they end up with a B.B.Q by the river. Great day out.

Petit Train

Starts with the ski lift to the restaurant then from here you catch the little train.

Options, you can free wheel down the mountain on special bikes on hire close by or you can walk down and again there many walks at the top. We have free Maps of these.

<http://www.altiservice.com/excursion/pyrenees/train-artouste/accueil>

Another great day out.

Aventure Parc

Just 5 mins away, this is not just for kids so give it a go. See DVD Have a look at our home made web site and see photos of the accommodation available

www.selfcatering-pyrenees.com

Motor Racing

GP de Pau Historique, 11-12th May 2014

Grand Prix de Pau, 18-20th May 2014

<http://www.grandprixdepau.com/index.php?lang=en>

Two great weekends, don't forget the 25% off Brittany Ferries for early bookings, ask for details.

Pau

Water sports centre, ideal works bonding (Sink the Boss) or just enjoyment. Big competitions are held here for Olympic standards..

<http://www.paupyrenees-stadeeauxvives.com/>

Photographic subjects we have it all

Jurancon wine tasting routes www.vins-jurancon.fr

Skiing

La Pierre St Martin just 15 miles away, we can actually can see the slopes from Lae De Haut

Thank you for your time, please do call in if you are in the region

John & Margaret Johnson

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P.S www.walkfreebreakfree.co.uk as coming back to us for 2014, our friend Barry is guide for them also he is in a local off road cycling club and again he has some fantastic routes for mountain biking.

Euipe Goes Welsh

– Euipe

My rider and the heavy bloke got me all ready for the trip. I had brand new throw-over panniers to try. They are Oxford and cost about £100 in Folwups but you can get them for £40 from HRS in Oldmarket. They have a Velcro strap which goes under the seat and two on top but we probably won't bother with the one under the seat in future as it interferes with my protective webbing. They have a pocket and zip to make them smaller or larger.

We were in good time to meet the others at the lunch stop but there were two problems. Firstly, my keys went into hiding. After about 40 minutes they finally revealed themselves – in my seat lock! Secondly, there was failure to get any air into my front forks. So it was off to Sainsburys where, after a few attempts, my forks were pumped up, my tank filled up, I was ready to go. Hurray!

We, well she, had a loo stop at Abergavenny and another with food at Builth Wells. She couldn't get hold of Andy and presumed it was too late for the lunch meeting. We enjoyed the scenery and the ride, especially the dry bit in the middle, apart from the last hour.

She was trying out her brand new Revitt waterproof suit. Likes: dry until the last hour when the water from her water-logged gloves started to permeate up the sleeves; dislikes: the awkward zip together at the back of the jacket – tempted to sew on some elastic straps as on her old ones but need to check it won't invalidate the warranty, also it's awkward to get the ends of the jacket sleeves to do up tight enough to go inside the gloves. Some people said it was better to have the sleeves over the jacket anyway.

The Shoe quest helmet was also

brand new. Likes: light, inner chin piece useful to hold the tucked-in scarf; dislikes: steamed up visor the entire time, especially when wet. Since then she's put the pinlock in and it seems to be better. The instructions say not to use it at night but she has and it seems ok; better to be unsteamed than worry about the fact the pinlock is supposed to make it too dark to see at night.

We left at 10.45 am and arrived Abergavenny 12.25 pm, Builth 1.50 pm and Beddgelert 5.20 pm. We filled me up about half an hour before and had a "you don't see one of those very often/no, probably because I've got most of them" conversations which led to some very useful information that there are people out there who can make new wiring looms if they have one to copy – still trying to sort out my stable-mate Pegasus's charging challenge.

The other riders got there about half an hour before apparently. We took the most direct route in the one involving the least road number changes to keep things simple. As usual, the single room was adequate but not as nice as the doubles, but with a view of me from the window which was reassuring.

My rider had no trouble with her veggy meals which were all very nice. Others though, had a few problems with cold meals and veg arriving when they had almost finished their mains.

Saturday started wet but cleared up later. My rider went to Tourist Information, to Gelert' grave, the Copper Mine – quite interesting, very red/brown and wet, nosed a National Trust property which is now an hotel. She got slightly less unfit over the summer (gardening, walking, swimming) and is trying to keep it up so reckoned she walked 5 or 6 miles that day.

She tried eating her sausage and toast lunch from breakfast

sandwich outside but got fed up with the wasps and went in. Then she got the bus to Porthmadog – nice harbour and one posh store, the rest looked a bit jaded. She went into the maritime museum which was ok but very "black and white" – needs updating. The little trains came in amidst much photographing and the station had a decent loo. The bus took a different route back and it was nice to be able to enjoy looking at the scenery without having to control me.

The local cider and strong beer were both very tasty too.

On Sunday the rain was horizontal and so bad that only one bike went out in the morning and even the hardy stayed in. A couple went out late afternoon.

My rider lost her diary in May so spent the morning re-writing the first few months of this year in the replacement which is 2008 and correct up until Feb 29th then one day behind so works fine. She then did circuits in both

directions around the river and going anti-clockwise came across Gelert's statue so then went back to get her camera to get a picture. On the Monday, two riders left early and went their own way leaving 9 bikes. It was wet to start with but my rider stayed dry, even the hands – the old Rukka over-mitts are well melted on the inside from the heated grips. We had a tea stop at Rhayader which brought back memories of many happy weekends there with Bristol IAM. The second stop was supposed to be at a pub but it was shut so Simon found a nearby garden centre café. The final stop was at the end – Seven View Services. As usual it took ages to find our way out – we ended up at the hotel first, then mounted a pavement by mistake, but got out eventually. It doesn't seem to be very well signposted. Thanks to Andy for organizing it all and leading at a perfect pace.

On the way up I ate 71 mpg. On the way down my mpg dropped... to 70 mpg! Well done me.

Pegasus And Carenza Do Some Charity Work

Oh which of us to take – there's a bit of the wet stuff but it's warm and light so I get picked. The ride is in aid of a Cancer charity and organized by Mark from the Avon Advanced Motorcyclists Club and it's the first time. The heavy bloke is going to Cambridge so the pets travel to the first checkpoint in Malmesbury together then split. We have a map but have trouble finding it. After asking a few people – the key is the Dyson factory apparently, we find it – two ladies and a car (wot no loo/food/drink?). My pet is feeling almost too warm in her new water-proofs. We see two other sporty bikes leaving.

We take the easiest, direct route to the next point at Cadbury Fry in Keynsham which we have no trouble finding having lived there for 15 years. We stay to chat for a bit to relieve the saddle sore bum and for my pet to eat her nut burger, purchased on the trip to Keynsham yesterday. A bloke in a touring trailee comes from Glastonbury and is going on the Malmesbury so we travel onwards on our own again.

In Glastonbury, once again the map doesn't seem to lead us to the right place and we have to ask. The first people we ask barely speak English but after

the second we soon arrive at the third checkpoint and my pet is pleased they have water as she has finished hers.

They are planning to repeat this next year, possibly adding a checkpoint in Devizes. It would be great if pets could get more of their bikes involved from the local clubs and perhaps make it a bit of a treasure hunt or competition – most mileage, least mileage, oldest bike, youngest bike, smallest, largest, most handsome (me of course) etc. It is £10 to enter and you can try to get sponsors as well.

Two Welsh Legends (My Version)

– Carenza

This is my version of two stories which I have linked together, as a result of the biking trip to Beddgelert

Many centuries ago, Vortigert was trying to build a castle and walls to protect his people in Wales from the Angles and Saxons. He had a big team of builders and one the first day work seemed to be going well – they had almost completed the ground floor of the great hall. However, when they came back next day, their building work was reduced to rubble. Vortigert thought it must be some freak weather conditions so they started building again. Next morning when they came back they were mortified to see all their hard work destroyed once again. Vortigert thought "third time lucky" so again they built, more or less completing the ground floor.

On the fourth day, once again their work was in ruins. Vortigert decided that the Angles and Saxons must be coming in the night to destroy their work so they set up watch after that day's building. To their amazement, their building appeared to self-destruct in the middle of the night. There was no detectable earthquake, so Vortigert consulted the wise elders who recommended that to cure the problem a fatherless boy must be found and sacrificed – his blood scattered over the building site.

A suitable boy was quickly found. Edryn knew it was an honour to be sacrificed but was nonetheless not too keen on the idea. He was well read and had studied many myths, legends and prophecies and thus was able to offer a different solution.

"Under the place where you are trying to build, there is an underground cave where there are two dragons – a red one and a white one and they have been trapped in there, asleep, for centuries. If you excavate and release them, then you will be able to build your castle," Edryn informed.

The builders dug deep into the site and indeed came to the opening of a cave. As they peered into the gloom, they could indeed make out the forms of the

dragons. As daylight permeated the cave, the dragons awoke, yawning and stretching. As each realised he was not alone he became angry, wanting the space for himself only. They started snarling, hissing and clawing at the air and soon a fully-fledged, bloody fight started. This went on for several days and they were so enraged they did not notice all the people watching them.

Finally, the white dragon gave in and crawled away into the land of the Angles and Saxons, and the red dragon flew up into the mountains of Snowdonia.

"This is symbolic," declared Vortigert. "The weak white dragon represents the Angles and Saxons and the strong red one represents Wales. We will put him on our National flag."

Vortigert was very grateful for Edryn's knowledge and adopted the boy, taking him into his court and continuing to take his advice as he grew, introducing him to the many aspects of court life including hunting.

It was Edryn's 21st birthday and he was excited. As a present, Vortigert said he could choose a puppy from the Royal litter. There were seven – three boys and two girls. Edryn went to see them – they were all adorable, how was he going to make a choice? He decided just to sit on the floor near them and wait. After a while, one of the boys wobbled towards him, put a paw on his knee and gazed into his eyes.

"You're the one for me then! I shall call you Gelert," declared Edryn happily, picking him up and giving him a cuddle. Once he was weaned, Gelert went to live in Edryn's quarters and they quickly became close and made an excellent team, especially when hunting. Edryn often led the hunts now as Vortigert was getting on and troubled with arthritis.

Love came along, Edryn married and later a baby boy was born. Gelert was a bit jealous at first, having been used to having Edryn to himself. He soon got used to the new situation though and quickly became quite protective towards the baby boy.

One day, Edryn was off hunting and his wife had to go an errand. The nanny was having a day off so Edryn left the baby in the care of Gelert. Dog and baby fell asleep, Gelert on the mat by the fire, the baby in the cot. Gelert had happy, doggy dreams but kept one eye and one ear half-open for trouble, and trouble there was. The front door had not been shut firmly and it creaked open. Suddenly both dog and baby were fully awake: in the doorway stood the

largest she-wolf ever to be seen. She looked towards the cot and licked her lips, salivating – the baby would make a tasty lunch.

Gelert sprang in front of the cot. The wolf approached. Gelert was half the wolf's size but leapt at her throat. The wolf was crafty and twisted round, grabbing Gelert's tail. A battle ensued with flying fur, tearing flesh, blood everywhere and furniture being scattered. The baby's cot was knocked over but he landed on a cushion and crawled into the next room. The fight continued and spilled into the next room, the baby crawled further away, screaming and crying with fright. Gelert was getting tired and the wolf sensed her victory, so she stretched up her head to give a victory howl. Gelert took his chance, flew at her throat and this time he got her. As her blood drained out from her neck, she collapsed on the floor and was no more.

Gelert went to see that the baby was still alive and he was, frightened but untouched. Both dog and baby fell into an exhausted sleep.

Edryn returned from the hunt. When he saw the blood and mess everywhere he was horrified. Gelert staggered in to greet his master as usual. Edryn looked at the empty cot on its side, could hear no sound and too quickly came to a terrible conclusion.

"Gelert, I trusted you with my baby's life and I have always treated you well. I thought we were a team and I come back to find you have attacked and eaten my baby. You will die!"

Edryn grabbed Gelert by the neck and drew out his sword. He was about to strike when the sound of

a baby's cry broke the air. At that moment, Gelert twisted himself out of Edryn's grip, grabbed his master's coat and pulled him towards the next room. Edryn followed the dog and there was confronted by the sight of the largest she-wolf ever to be seen, dead on the floor, and his baby crawling towards him from another room.

He rushed over, sweeping the baby into his arms and hugging Gelert at the same time.

"Oh Gelert, how could I have doubted you! My faithful friend! You nearly lost your life twice in one day. What a traitor I nearly was!"

Tears rolled down his face as he hugged them both tight. After that he never left the baby alone again without both Gelert and the nanny to guard him.

They lived a long and happy life together, Edryn performing more wise acts and Gelert many more brave deeds. Gelert lived to a ripe old age and died peacefully in his sleep. With Vortigert's permission, in Gelert's honour, a village in Wales was named after him in the place where he was buried. He left a plaque by the grave with the story of the she-wolf in Welsh

You can go to see Gelert's grave and statue in Beddgelert today, but in the last century, a naughty, local hotelier decided that the story was not dramatic enough and changed the ending, also translating it into English. I hope you prefer my version!

I only do happy endings in my stories, hence no animals were killed in the making of these tails, sorry tales.

Gazebo!

These photos are on the Facebook page already... the Gazebo and flag for when AAMC attends events such as Bike Safe and Hogging the Bridge.



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. E-mail editor@aamc.co.uk

Highways Agency Meeting Bristol 20.09.13

By Pegasus and Carezza

Yawn, I am not used to getting up quite this early. We set off just before 8.30 am from Bath and are parking up at 9 am in the middle of Bristol! Shows how much quicker it is to commute by bike as we glide past the traffic jams. My pet and the heavy bloke are attending a meeting in Bristol in the BMF representative roles. After a very nice chocolate thing, my pet reports as follows.

"There were introductions and talks and then we were then in groups to discuss various issues to do with the roads in our region. Our group leader was most anxious to know if there are any issues for motorcyclists in particular. We mentioned getting bikes into cyclists' advance stop lines but it is route based strategies being discussed so this is not really relevant. There was action for routes in July. They want evidence for anything which needs to be changed and a draft report will come out in 2013, a "Robust" strategy 2015 – 2020 with a spending review in 2020/21. Solutions will be developed in response to evidence.

There were lots of maps of the area on the walls showing flow,

safety, climate, seasonal patterns. They want to work to improve commercial growth and serve new housing, such as in Yate, Thornbury and Oldbury Power Station. Did you know that Portishead is the fastest growing town in Europe?

There will be improvements to the A36 and A46, especially at the Cold Ashton roundabout, also J19 M5 and A303 – especially in August when lots of caravans are going to Cornwall.

We brought up the 50 mph rash and how education should be given more priority. Everyone agreed but there's no money for it. They discussed having advertisements in the cinema and on TV again and would look at it. Enforcement was also discussed, eg: 20 mph limits.

Lots of us agreed that the signage from the M4/M5 to the M48/49 is confusing. There is a push towards having an extra junction on the M49.

An interesting example of a new 50 mph limit at Claverton: the residents have been campaigning for a 30 limit for years, claiming that it's dangerous, yet there has never been an accident, so

no evidence. They did a survey and found that 89% of drivers do 48 mph so putting a 50 in there seems to be a good compromise.

People suggested more use could be made of social media to alert drivers re. accidents, road-works etc. 20 mph limits increase the number of accidents apparently but in theory have health benefits as there are less emissions.

Trees should be cut back from signs more regularly as they obscure them. The Highways Agency Information Line (HAIL) is good to consult for up to date highways information. Personalised text information before starting a journey may be possible.

People were asked to prioritise what problems need to be sorted – overwhelmingly these were: the M4/5 interchange, M48/9 junction, M49 extra junction, free flow into Wales, getting cruise ships into the docks. You can respond to: SWRBS@highways.gsi.gov.uk by October 15th."

The pets come back and I get a trip to Keynsham on the way back.

Space to let...

Had a wee bit of space left over in this month's Treads so have dropped in a couple more pics from Facebook...



Parish News

– from the vicar.

With the end of the summer having arrived complete with wet and windy weather, my appetite for riding is on the wane. All those wet leaves give me a sinking feeling, and we all need to take a lot more care. Roll on next summer, is what I say.

2014 Bashes

That leads me nicely into a short note about the Club bashes next year. As usual, there will be a long weekend to somewhere in the UK - probably Cornwall in mid June – followed by ten days to the French Alps in early September. I will be running the Alps trip, and I hope Stuart will organise the Cornish one. There were details of the French trip in Treads for

the past two months, and I've had ten members express an interest so far. I won't ask Chris to put the trip details in this issue, but they will appear in the November issue as that is the last one for this calendar year and I need to start booking the accommodation, chunnel etc. before prices go up in the New Year.

BikeSafe

In the past few weeks, the Club has had a stand at two BikeSafe events and also at the recent 'Hogging the Bridge' charity fundraiser. As you will read underneath, we managed to recruit a few new members at the Bath BikeSafe, but not at the Yate one or the Hogging event in Chepstow, which is a bit of a disappointment. In view of this, the Committee will obviously consider how many of these we should attend next year.

Welcome

This month I would like to welcome the following new members.

Nick D lives in High Littleton and rides an R1200GS; Nick P lives in Pucklechurch and rides a Kawasaki SX1000; Rod lives in Bath and rides a CB250 Nighthawk, and Richard & Clare also live in Bath and ride a CBF600 & Ninja 250 respectively. All the above joined as a result of attending the BikeSafe in Bath. Additionally Matt has also joined after a referral by RoSPA. He rides a Blackbird and an XJ900 and lives in south Bristol. We would like to extend a warm welcome to you all and hope to see you out and about with us at a Club function very soon. Please come along and join in, or you'll never know what might have been.

Letters

Just came across this web page, as part of SVrider.com site. Quite interesting to read about our American cousins view on lane positioning.

<http://www.motorcycle.com/how-to/proper-motorcycle-lane-positioning>

Rob.

I have recently had reason to borrow a motorcycle trailer (Ex AA). I have now bought it and would be very happy to lend it to anybody responsible enough to look after it. It collapses into a pile of metal and goes easily into the boot of a car. It will easily take most bikes. Perhaps the club could benefit from a donation for its use

by the borrower?

If I'm to benefit from the club in terms of training it would be good to return the favour. Just let me know if it's ever of use.

I look forward to detail of any future rides and chances to meet up.

Matt

Something to say? Please don't be shy. E-mail editor@aamc.co.uk And send some photos in too!

Diary

November

Sunday 3rd
Simon

Final Club Ride of the Year.

Saturday 16th
Mark

Plug and Grub night.
Presentation of Superb Awards for 2013.