



TREADS

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The JANUARY 2022 Newsletter of AAMC

EDITORS BITS – Stu Bullock



Courtesy of DOT Motorcycles

This time of year is very much about family and friends. I hope then, you will not mind me wandering into the wider subject of community.

First of all us, the motorcycling community within AAMC, the wider motorcycling community including manufacturers and then, the communities we all live amongst.

'The Aid that comes First' is about first, or emergency aid. It's about being willing to put ourselves out to help others unfortunate to suffer injury, or become ill and need a few moments of care before professional help arrives.

In **LETTERS**, Graham tells how he relates to the Old Dog – New Tricks article from November TREADS, as our community recovers its freedom.

Jim relates his time with the racing motorcycle community. **View from The Saddle** has Andy telling us about his motorcycling experiences in the motorcycle community.

'The Art of Motorcycling' is the need for us to help ourselves from becoming a statistic. Also, to help keep the name of motorcycling in a good place by not confirming the stereotype often depicted in the press and some people's minds about motorcyclists in this country. Part two next month.

The Motorcycle Community has expanded further by the reintroduction of the DOT Motorcycle Brand, based in Bolton. Worth a look if you want something different and also looking forward to their planned electronic powered two wheelers. <https://dotmotorcycles.co.uk/about-us/>

It seems that niche manufacturers are gaining sufficient customers to satisfy motorcycle production and the list is a long one. Horex, Paton, Indian, Bultaco, Riieju, as well as the more commonly recognised BSA, Royal Enfield and Norton. The list goes on. Something different though, may come at a cost for exclusivity.



Courtesy of Norton Motorcycles

Club Rides are still sparse so could I ask that you give thought to organising a club ride or event for 2022. These rides/events will keep the club flourishing and allow those attending to maintain friendships, even make new ones.

TREADS - NEXT SUBMISSION 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 (editor@aamc.co.uk) at the latest by;

FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2022

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.

Any images included in the context will be attributed to their provider/owner, unless they are the property of the current editor.

CHAIRMANS CHATTER – Simon Gough

Renewals

It's that time of the year for membership renewals, and you should have received a reminder from Tony. There's a copy here in Treads. Please will you renew without delay as sending out reminders just gives Tony extra work. Thanks very much.

Training Course

After a couple of years with no possibility of organising any training due to Covid, I'm

pleased to be able to tell you that our annual Skills Development Course will run again, starting in March. If everything goes to plan, further details of the course and an application form are included with this edition of Treads. If you know anyone who you think would benefit from the course, please pass details to them. They will need to be a Club member first but, as you know, joining is neither difficult nor expensive.

AGM

We have scheduled this year's AGM to take place on Wednesday 23rd Feb, 7pm for a 7:30pm prompt start, at The New Inn, Bath Road, Farmborough BA2 0EG. We couldn't have one last year, so this will be the first since 2020. Hope to see you there. Don't worry, you won't be made to do something you don't want to!

Funeral

There is a write-up elsewhere by Stuart of late members Keith and Val White, who both died last year. Keith's funeral will be on Friday 28th January, 1pm at Haycombe Crematorium, Whiteway Road, Bath BA2 2RQ. Keith and Val's daughter Karen has been in touch and would be happy to see as many Club members there as would like to attend. There is no particular stipulation on what to wear, as there was with Val's funeral. Keith had been a very staunch supporter of the Club for more years than I care to remember. Even as his MS progressed and he found riding increasingly difficult, he was always around with Val to support him, determined to do what he could. They will be sorely missed.

Club Rides

The first Club ride of the year will be on Sunday 6th March, led by me. Meet at Starbucks/Greggs, 821 Bath Road, Brislington BS4 5NL at 10am for a 10:15am departure. Lunch in Gillingham.

We do need to get back to a filled Diary of rides this year, so please have a think about what you can contribute and then contact Helen with the details. Leading a ride is not difficult and there

are plenty of us around who would be only too happy to help. Please ask. We all have a responsibility to contribute to the Club.

VIEW FROM THE SADDLE – Andy Coombs

Well, yet another year with reduced time on the bikes for Caroline and myself as “life” and obviously Covid have conspired against us somewhat!! But this lack of riding has put my mind to thinking of what being a motorcyclist means to me, at least.

I started my motorcycling back in 1988 when I took my test in Germany while serving in the Army on an Armstrong 500cc dispatch rider's bike. This was not something I had been ordered to do as part of my role, but in total disregard to a friend's advice before signing up “never volunteer for anything”. It may have been more about peer pressure, or more simply, having seen how much fun and enthusiastic banter my friends and colleagues had before and after any form of motorcycling. I enjoyed the whole process of being taught and tested on the skills required and I passed my test fairly swiftly after starting. I didn't get my own bike until being posted back to the UK when my funds stretched to an “awesome classic” motorbike, namely a Honda CB250N Super Dream, in blue! Not everyone's weapon of choice I grant you, but ideal for enhancing my basic skills. What it also allowed me to join in with was the motorcycling family, that is now a big part of my leisure time. My friends in the UK showed me, not only how to ride in London, a skill in itself, but introduced me to bike clubs, meets and ride outs. The Super Dream moved on to a Yamaha XJ900 shaft drive that certainly helped with the commute from my North London home, down the A303 to Tidworth, where I finished my military career.

Now a civilian I didn't need to shave every day or have short haircuts so my biking world and indeed my whole world moved on in a different direction. I tried valiantly to grow a long beard

and a ponytail and bought myself a Harley Davidson 1340cc Soft Tail and a matt black Kawasaki Z400 to run from home to the lockup to pick up the Harley.



Andy 'on parade' in Berlin, Germany.

Courtesy of Andy Coombs

Both bikes were great fun, however the beard and ponytail complete disasters, so I reverted to the style I had known and loved, and indeed how I look today apart from the grey bits and obvious wrinkles. What I did get from owning the Harley, (not a super chromed affair but a ride all the time bike), was another family of bikers to ride with and my first European trips by bike. The first of these saw me heading to a Chopper club meet in Holland with a great friend, who's beard and pony tail I had tried to copy, and both our partners, armed with open face helmets tents and a primus stove. We then travelled on back into the Germany I knew and headed to Berlin where we found some great camping sites, and met so many bikers riding so many different makes and styles of bike, but always had the one common trait, we were bikers! Great nights by a fire and great rides are still a vivid memory as is my friends favourite story about Berlin. I had visited multiple times whilst in the Forces so I said I knew my way around! Off we went to see the sights, no problem, Brandenburg Gate, Checkpoint Charlie etc. Then it went slightly wrong, as those damn East

Germans had knocked down the wall since my last visit. So, we had an interesting day riding out of the eastern side of the city, although it was quite interesting from an historical viewpoint. Not an explanation taken too kindly by Grizzly, my riding companion!!



Easy Rider.

Courtesy of Andy Coombs

Getting back on track about the family of bikers, Berlin gave me a fantastic example of what belonging to it means. I picked up a puncture next to the Victory column, Siegessaule, on the Strasse Des 17th June on the way to the Brandenburg Gate. I was a member of ADAC, the equivalent of the AA but they could not help me for hours so despite having blocked the Harley up and removed the rear wheel we were forced to sit and wait. Then two serious looking Germans on modified Harleys pulled up and in broken English said they could repair the tyre at their club house if we followed them. I hopped on John's bike and off we went. It was starting to look a bit dodgy when we went off the street to a closed garage door in an underground park. But it opened as we approached and we rode into their "club house". There were 15-20 bikes all parked in a row, a full workshop and a bar, with a chromed Harley panhead engine as the centre piece on the bar. We were deposited in the bar with a beer and 20 mins later the tyre was returned to us fully repaired. They would not let us pay them for anything and escorted us back to our bikes accepting only a handshake and some dodgy German as a thank you.

Anyway, moving on with the tale, I did grow out of the Harley when the kids came along and after a few more bikes, I ended up on a 1979 Z1000 US spec which I loved, until unfortunately being knocked off by a hit and run driver at a set of temporary traffic lights, just 100 yards from home on my last day at work in London before my move to the West Country!! Again, amongst the people who helped me then was an off-duty motorcycle paramedic who not only did the right thing for me with first aid, he also took the number of the car that hit me and ended up being a witness when the driver was finally caught by the Police. That may just have been luck, flying through the air right in front of him, but it did a lot for my mindset when he was regaling biking stories as I lay on the floor with my helmet removed safely as we waited for the ambulance. As I say when the culprit was finally brought to justice I was fully ensconced in Trowbridge and eventually got another bike, Suzuki 1200 Bandit to start enjoying the open relatively traffic free, (compared to London), roads of Wiltshire and surrounding counties. I managed to meet up with some local bikers who showed me around and one of them happened to be Caroline, buzzing round on a Yamaha Thundercat.



Caroline and Yamaha.

Courtesy of Andy Coombs

Well, from there my biker family grew as we toured together and I was determined to

enhance my riding skills. I passed my first advanced test after completing the IAM course and we began touring in France, Germany and Italy meeting so many interesting helpful and like-minded people. I joined the Blood bikes and was introduced to AAMC where I undertook the fantastic training offered and passed my RoSPA course with the help of many of the club members. The family and camaraderie found within the club by Caroline and myself has been fantastic and epitomises all that being a biker/motorcyclist is for us. Despite not having joined in too much recently I know that whenever we get out for a ride next, it will be as if we had never missed one. It has a real community feel and does so much to compensate for some of the not so pleasant things that life can sometimes throw your way.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – Tony

Dear members; Happy New Year.

Your Avon Advanced Motorcycle Club Membership renewal is due at the end of December and, apart from keeping the fees at the same level as last year, the process is as simple as I can make it:

- i) 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.

- ii) 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, but I will be away for much of Jan so might not be able to always reply so promptly.

If you have any queries contact me by emailing membership@aamc.co.uk or call 07891

Kind regards: Tony
Membership Secretary & Treasurer AAMC

MOOR MEMORIES – Jim

The last edition of Treads may have been reflective and Eddy's article has spurred me into some recollections of my own – not about Superdreams but about the Darley Moor race circuit.

The Darley Moor track is on the site of an old airfield in the Peak district, just above Ashbourne. In my late teens [early biking years] I was living in North Staffordshire and Darley Moor was the nearest track for club races. Eddy described the place as 'rustic' and it was extremely basic in the late Seventies. There were fewer safety precautions then as well; viewing the action from the Hairpin [the best place] meant that you were only a few feet away from the bikes barrelling in to the corner 'en masse' and each determined not to give any ground. Ahhh – the smell of Bel-Ray and Castrol R and the sound of scraping exhausts on tarmac as bikes were inevitably dropped.

There was always a full programme of races with the heats being over only 4 laps [6miles?] so the action was always fast and furious. There was also a large variety of machinery which made for interesting viewing and listening. A typical race programme would include:

125cc race bikes – dull, all Honda 2 stroke singles [MT125s].

250cc production – mainly air cooled RDs, later X7s & LCs. Also, the odd Benelli.

250 & 350cc race bikes – nearly all Yamaha TZs. Maybe a Ducati single sometimes.

500cc production – RD400, RD400, RD400, RD400. One or two Laverda Montjuichs [not as quick as the RD].

Open race – Over bored TZ350s, TZ700/750s, RG500s, big Kwak 4s, BSA/Triumph triples, Norton twins.

Open production – Z900/1000s, CB900/CBXs, GS750/1000s, Ducati 900SS, Laverda Jotas, Norton Commandos

Sidecars – BSA and BMW twins, Honda and Kawasaki 4s, Suzuki GT750s plus outfits powered by Hillman Imp based motors.

As you can see, there was plenty of variety.

Some random memories that stick with me are:

- Riding my Honda SS50 up there through Froghall. There is a steep hill down followed by an even steeper one up. Even with every bit of momentum that I could muster from the 2.5 bhp on tap I still went from top to bottom gear in the space of about 100 yards. (Sound familiar Tel?) (It does to me. Ed)
- A race for all production bikes over 6 laps soon after the Honda CBX-6 was released. One the first lap one was in front at the hairpin, about half way round the lap. Then it started to rain, it is in the Peak district after all. The next lap saw the Jotas & 900 Ducati's in front of it. The third lap had the Norton's, Zs and GS's past. The fourth lap saw the RD400s go by. At the flag even the 250s were snapping at its [w]heels. They say that pride comes before a fall and I guess that the rider did not want to test this.
- One sidecar outfit, entered by Palins Honda, go into the hairpin sideways and come out backwards!
- The Laverda Jotas being ridden in the Bike Magazine / Avon production race series by Pete Davies and Roger Winterburn grinding away their engine casings as they were cornering so hard. Heavy bikes + Skinny tyres x Cornering hard = Big balls!

- At a later meeting, in the mid-80s, a Norton was listed for one of the races. We assumed that it was an old Commando still knocking around. It turned out to be a very early outing for the Rotary as the factory wanted a low-key shakedown. What a sound!

Mind you, the overriding sight and sound memory that I have is the scraping of RD400 foot pegs and silencers as one skids along the tarmac – yet again!

Thank you for sharing my trip down memory lane. The last race has finished and it's time for me to fire up the trusty 'ped and head home for tea. I wonder if I will be able to squeeze 45 mph out of it on the downhills?



A loooooooooooooong time ago!

THE AID THAT COMES FIRST – Stu Bullock

Like every cop on joining, I had to complete a First Aid written/practical test. During my probationary period, I was provided with further First Aid training, followed by another practical assessment. All fairly basic, based on the sort of emergencies cops on patrol may come across.

I was interested in being proficient at providing Emergency Aid, for example, at the scene of a motoring accident. A broken bone is a broken bone, no matter how it came about. So, more training was 'volunteered' for and having shown some aptitude, even more training came my way.

One day my youngest son choked whilst eating, heaved a huge breath in, choked again, obviously now unable to breathe. I gave him three smart smacks at the back of his ribs, designed to 'punch' a breath of air backwards and blow the obstruction out. Didn't work. My family had a telephone ready in case my next procedure failed; the Heimlich manoeuvre. It's a well-recognised way of compressing the diaphragm very firmly, which pushes air backwards into the throat. If it fails, try again. On the second go with my son, the item dislodged but by now he was showing blue tinges around his mouth, the first stages of oxygen starvation and unconsciousness. That was far too close and I shudder at what the outcome would have been if I had not gained just a smidge of knowledge.

As time went by, I became a Medic to my Police Firearm's Team. More intensive training, to give Emergency Aid under high pressure situations and maybe even under incoming fire. I learnt more about burns, shock, and how the body works and reacts to injury and pain. However, I was now provided with a big bag of 'repair stuff', which I could keep with me on all occasions.

Whilst visiting a relatives wedding in London, several people commented about the 'disgraceful' scene of three drunks sat on the churchyard wall. As I walked by, I detected something different about one of these gentlemen, showing signs of a heart attack. I started the well documented steps of compressing his heart to keep blood flowing. Ideas about this do change but around 100 compressions per minute are required. I play the Bee Gee's tune 'Staying Alive' in my head as that provides the right compressions timing. I don't sing out loud, the shock to others...

Anyway, he survived, Ambulance arrived and took over and I made it just in time for drinks at the reception. Not a wasted day then!

Another time, I was following a very slow car through Lymington when the driver began to slowly cross to the other side of the road. As it did so it slowed then gently bumped into a car that had been approaching, but had time to stop. All very odd.

I dealt with the unconscious young lady driver for heat exhaustion. That was simply removing her from the car into fresh air, keeping her head as low as her trunk to equalise blood pressure and allowing her to cool. By the time an ambulance arrived, she was slowly recovering but required a professional to check her over. After a short stay in hospital, she was fine. Two elderly lady passengers from the other car were dealt with initially by my wife for bumps to their foreheads, no seat belts on, and treated by the second ambulance and the local A&E.



The Bear essentials of first aid. Courtesy of Pixabay

Most recently, in Cornwall having our lunch at the outside section of a popular pub, a lady nearby slowly collapsed, having difficulty breathing and eventually became unconscious. Generally, in the absence of an obvious injury, keeping blood pressure even means keeping head and trunk at the same level. Keeping an airway means open mouth, head tilted back and listen for air in and out, and keeping the head to one side allows any 'loose throat obstructions' out. I got someone from the Pub to dial 111,

report the situation and ask for assistance, which was given as the procedure above. Keep the person breathing, heart beating, blood flowing. She was eventually removed by ambulance, showing signs of having had a stroke as diagnosed by the professional. Simple assistance to keep her breathing meant she survived until professional help could arrive.

And finally. My other great passion is walking. On one walk, my wife fell awkwardly on a rough downhill surface. A piece of flint entered the soft tissue near her knee, leaving a rather deep, ragged wound. On that day, I did not have my first aid kit with me.

I know...

I cleaned the wound with water and tissue. Packed it with more tissue and Susan applied pressure herself, while I recovered my kit. Using simple alcohol wipes I made sure the wound was clean; cut away some unrepairable tissue, packed and dressed the wound, gave pain relief and ate my lunch, annoyingly rather late!! The result is the wound healed very quickly, without the stitches I initially thought were required and has no scar tissue.

Why am I telling you about these few incidents out of many that I have attended? It's really to encourage you to look into learning about First or Emergency Aid. It's not that difficult. As keen motorcyclists, we are possibly more likely to come across an accident or an ill driver/rider than many others, never mind those little 'in the home' incidents.

Once retired, I have attended Biker Down sessions, delivered by my local fire and rescue service as a free session lasting around 4 hours, to keep my skills and confidence up. They go over how to protect yourself and a casualty in a road accident setting. Protect yourself first, casualty second, gawkers can fend for themselves. They go over the basics of CPR, protecting broken limbs from further damage, removing a motorcycle helmet from a casualty and so on. I mean, helmet removal is tricky and

usually not recommended if the wearer is conscious. However, if the helmet wearer isn't breathing.....

It's not difficult, it's not horrible, you don't need lots of specialist kit. You will get some confidence in controlling a scene in order to protect and look after a casualty until professional help arrives and rest assured, you will have a laugh.

Last story! In the middle of a winter's night, as a patrol cop I had to deal with an extremely badly injured man, following his high-speed car crash on an unlit 'middle of nowhere' country road. With an unconscious casualty and his multiple fractures, heavy bleeding, barely breathing, I had prioritised what I could do. Hold open his airway, plug the worst holes, and wonder how long I could leave this guy for, to dash to my bike and get a message through my radio to summon expert help. I then saw the glowing headlights of an oncoming car, hoping it would not run me over. The car passenger was an NHS nurse, who's own accident I had attended only a few days before. The driver was her partner and a doctor. I was certainly lucky that night and between us we were able to keep the guy going until more help arrived.

It is about confidence. Confidence to act, to direct, to help save a life. Confidence comes with knowledge, understanding and practise. Oh, by the way. The badly injured driver survived. More than a bit second hand but alive and maybe he was the lucky one that night.

I cannot explain the feeling you get after helping another person in trouble, other than to say it is a good one and encourages me to keep learning and practising.

In many areas of the UK there are First Responder posts for those who would volunteer to help with First Aid in their community. Training is provided, a six-week course is common, but the job is to stabilise a patient for a few minutes until an ambulance or paramedic attends the scene.

I would encourage you to look up Biker Down sessions in your area, they are effective, and great fun learning with a group of like-minded people, anyone of whom could be the next 'first on scene'. If everyone just learned a little bit, several people together could offer a great deal to help someone in trouble.

If anyone cares to make the arrangements, perhaps there could be an AAMC Biker Down day organised. I'd be up for it, how about you?

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Write it on your heart, that every day is the best day of the year.

Ralph Waldo Emerson. Poet, abolitionist and philosopher.

THE ART OF MOTORCYCLING part 1 – Stu Bullock

In my time, have observed many aspects to riding motorcycles. I have mixed with riders from various riding groups including Cops to couriers, tourers to trainers, and racers to rambles. I've been involved in a professional riding/instructing capacity, trained in the ways of Roadcraft and The System. I've also experienced casual riding and emergency response riding, track riding/instructing, off road riding. I've heard all the myths, legends, stories from 'Fred down the pub', and am also aware of the facts surrounding "The Art of Motorcycling".

One fact should be a conversation stopper. Motorcyclists have the highest road traffic collision and injury rates per miles travelled, OF ALL ROAD USER GROUPS.

If you want to know more (?), go here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data

</file/447673/motorcyclist-casualties-2013-data.pdf>

Will passing an advanced test prevent you from having an accident? No. You reduce the possibility of an accident caused by you by 50% on average. That is why insurers don't offer big, if any discounts for advanced passes.

I am not immune from collision. In 1986, I hit an oncoming car, combined speed about 50mph, whilst riding a Police Patrol Motorcycle. It was for a while, the only BMW with its wheels side by side. It didn't catch on! It was determined to be 'not my fault' but as far as I am concerned, I was at fault by not having a plan that included that vehicle.



So, there I was, riding a large pristine white BMW, lots of reflective orange tape, with bright blue lights mounted on the front and me dressed like Co-Co the Clown. The driver didn't see me as he pulled out from my left when I was about 10 feet from his bonnet. The message is, we have to rely on more than one tactic to defend ourselves from risk.

What we can all do, is reduce the risk of collision and injury in the first place, by how we approach our own riding, making it an art.

What I would like to do is to introduce you to my personal way of approaching the art of riding a motorcycle, enjoying the experience, minimising the risk of collision/injury. Let's be realistic, not everyone will agree with my views, and that's absolutely fine. Disagreement means debate,

which is great because that means we are thinking.

The first thing to ask yourself is.

Why do you want to ride?

How do you want to ride?

What do you want to ride?

If the answers are; 'enjoyment', 'carefully', 'a cruiser', we have a good starting point. Actually, 3 doesn't matter as much as 1 and 2. However, many instructors teaching learner or advanced riders will ask these types of questions to get a feeling for the riders' mind set.



So, do you know what your mind set is? Really you need to, in my view. Do you know the content of the DVSA motorcycling book, the Highway Code, or Roadcraft, or Dave Jones 'not the blue book'? You might want to. It's all good knowledge about defensive and advanced riding. However, I have met riders who can recite parts of Roadcraft and The Official Highway Code, word perfect. Following them as they ride a motorcycle, it's obvious that they either don't fully understand what they have read; are applying the tenets by rote; do not understand fully how a moving motorcycle works. Failing to understand means not reducing risk and worryingly, not knowing what the risk is.

In the advanced riding world, you will hear 'stories', 'myths' about positioning. '*Advanced riding insists you use extreme road position all the time*' is often heard but simply is not true. The first word to be concerned with is safety, not position, not speed, not gears but SAFETY. That is vital to understand. I mean, why change from a safe position, or speed into a less safe position or speed?

The idea of using a systematic approach to deal with risk is around us every day. Has your bike got a hand book? There you go. It will deal with risks like using fuel, the battery, exhaust fumes, side stand use and so on. Does your house have a boiler to heat water? There you go. It will have guidance on dealing with risk, just as your washing machine, electricity meter and so on. Your workplace will have some rules about dealing with various risks in that environment. Have you seen the now very common signs on lorries warning cyclists not to 'undertake'? That deals directly with risk, as does the sign on electricity sub stations, electricity cable poles, 'RISK OF DEATH'. Does RISK OF DEATH leave anything unclear? What is does NOT say is, 'this might sting a bit'. Ignoring risks can hurt, or really hurt and personally, I hate pain.

Having said that the first word to keep in mind is safety, the second word is 'your'. *Your* safety can be put at risk by *your* attitude; other road users making mistakes; other road users' attitude; the road surface and the weather and your response. In my world, I look upon every other motorist as threat, every road surface as turning bad, every green light about to go red, every brow has a blocked road immediately out of sight. That means that my safety comes first, I am planning an escape from every situation, I am ready to slow or deviate or stop, or all three, to protect myself from risk of harm. Now, the hard question. Can you, honestly, hand on heart, tell yourself that, on every occasion you rode through a bend, you could stop well within the distance you could see to be clear on your side of the road, if it became necessary? I don't need to know your answer, you do.

Is it unusual to put your safety first? Not at all. If you attend a 'Biker Down' First Aid course, for example, the first thing you learn is to protect yourself from harm while you are in the road. All emergency service workers are taught the same principles. Learn to use a lathe, or pillar drill, or welding kit, all insist you are trained to protect yourself and your colleagues before getting your hands on 'the big boys' toys'.

A systematic approach to riding is very simply a risk aversion strategy. It is very simple.

Let's go back to that thorny topic, POSITIONING.

Do we agree that we need a safe piece of ground to ride on ahead? We use our road position to obtain a safe place in the road to ride on, that aids stability and helps gain a better view for the rider. What do we need a better view for? To see if the road ahead is a safe place to ride on.

A change of position may well reflect our recognition of the risk to us from a hazard. Having looked well ahead and determined our path through a hazard, we should be equalising the risk around us by subtle changes in road position. We have the use of the whole of our side of the road, and in some circumstances, t'other side too. However. There are not two, three or four places on our lane to ride on. There are lots more and for me, creating divisions of 'safe strips' of road is not accurate.

I'm going to introduce you to THE TYRE TRACKS. They are the two lines that are worn into a road surface by multi wheeled vehicles. So, my normal line would be hovering towards the right tyre track, provided there is nothing else that would affect my stability and not in a fixed position. Every change of position I make will come from there.



Tyre Tracks, lanes 1 and 2

Why? I'm not tight against the right lane. I'm away from broken road edges. I can see all

around me. The very centre is not often 'swept' of debris. In fact, on multi lane roads, I am often not in lane one because of 'trunking'. Those grooves in the road surface heavier vehicles leave and which may unsettle my bike.

Personally, I don't hold with riders clipping cats' eyes or spraying verge gravel. I consider it is not big, it's not clever and raises risk.

What does a flashing indicator mean? The bulb is working. How can you tell a vehicle is turning to its right? It is turning to its right. Everything else is speculation. Nothing is true until there is a resulting action but of course, we must take some action on seeing the signal.

Will it turn? It may not turn. It may turn to its left. It may turn to its right, just not where you expect. How does that affect you? You need a plan for each variable.

At junctions, including roundabout junctions, vehicles approaching you from your right may be a risk to you eventually, but you will have to time to slow, stop or get going and reduce the risk by keeping a safe gap and looking properly. Just consider though, whatever you see, you may have several seconds to make your judgement, or less depending on view, your speed and how early in the plot you start pondering '*What is there? – How may it affect me? – What am I doing about it?*'

All the while we are looking for problems with the road surface, the movement of other road users and variations in road surface and weather conditions. On town streets it's no good changing position to your right to give room for a pedestrian standing in the road gutter, only to be collected by a vehicle overtaking you. Now, in a normal two-lane road situation, what other road user could be overtaking you? The answer is, another PTW (Powered Two-Wheeler), because they are the most manoeuvrable in traffic.

It is very obvious on many road surfaces, that the left edge of your lane will carry the most weight of traffic. Drains are in that place also.

Heavy weight, drains below; not difficult to work out, is it? Imagine the additional weight of vehicles in a bend. It's not road builder science to imagine the outcome.

Roadcraft advises; on seeing a bend to the right, adopt a position to the nearside of your lane, for view, make the bend less severe. That does not mean riding through the broken or damaged road surface. Imagine the instability, the likely damage to your radiator and/or tyre by doing so continuously.

Roadcraft also says, you must remain safe and reduce risk (in so many words). Read the text, apply it to practical experience and understand the meaning. Remember, Roadcraft is a guide to best practise, not a Bible!

Approaching a left bend, position to your right, again for view, making the corner longer, so Roadcraft says. It's excellent science but does not mean your right arm brushing the sides of oncoming traffic, or bouncing over the 'cat's eyes'. *Any change in road position must not be less safe than the position you are currently in.*

Notice I've drifted into another topic; apart from SPEED, SAFETY GAPS, and ATTITUDE, OBSERVATIONS. In the 80's, I was tasked with providing a breakdown of all of the headings from Roadcraft into sub headings, as a teaching aid. So, I had a list of the practical application of skills under Steering, Acceleration, Braking and so on. The idea is then to teach directly from one list without reference to any other list. To save you a world of research pain, it cannot be done! Impossible.

Every topic is linked to every other topic and in my view, observations is the most important. Why start with position then? Because you cannot gain a position without first looking, which can depend on your position, and what you see can depend on the quality of your eyesight and attitude and your speed. Don't look/observe = falling off = pain. Have I mentioned that I hate pain?



Broken road edges and tyre tracks. Just how deep are the puddles?

In fact, good observations will help you decide which lane is the best, which road direction is yours, which vehicle is about to change lanes, what is going on behind you and so on. We can then change/keep our position to reflect the observed risks present, and our intended route. For instance, imagine you are about to stop for red traffic lights. Look for a position to stop in, at the same time ask yourself, can your foot touch down? Is there oil or spilt fuel in front of your tyres? Can you see the lights?

Of course, you may do things differently, according to your experience. I don't have a problem with that because I do exactly the same; use my experience and learning to do what I consider to be safe.

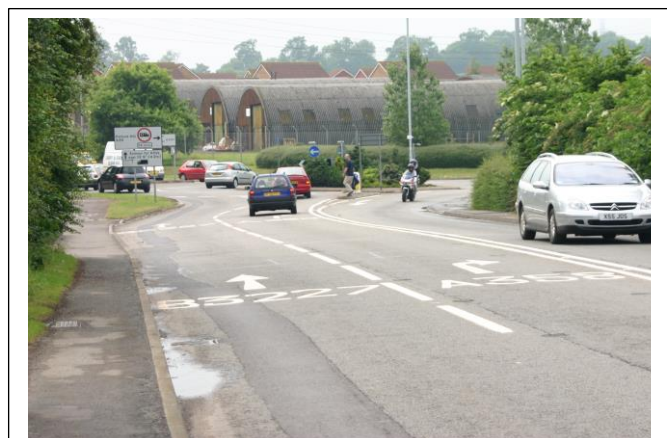
One of my police instructors advised us "sprogs" to consider the "**bubble of safety**". Imagine describing a circle around you and your machine, which reflects your safety margins and how close you are prepared to allow other road users and hazards get to you. The faster your speed the bigger the "bubble", remembering the rule of keeping at least a two second gap between vehicles in front. Like any good arcade game, we then change our road position to prevent anyone "bursting our bubble". However, unlike other games, getting the

position wrong could hurt. I hate pain. Especially mine.

The most important aspect of observations, the forward view, is linked to forward speed. The throttle is linked to your eyes. Less view = less throttle = less speed. I learnt this little nugget very early on in my training to teach on a race circuit, because of the high speed of approach to hazards.

Of course, you may be happy to get closer to a bend, junction, other vehicle than I am before losing speed. That's OK, we are not clones of each other. Some riders just want to prepare early, others don't.

Either style has its good and bad points, just learn what they are. I learnt very early in my career not to follow the bike in front closely and always rely on *my own* judgement, honed by *my* experiences.



Road repairs left of lane and hunt the pedestrian

One rider I recall on a police course was caught out by a van. On a winding, undulating and tree lined road, the rider had glimpses of the van travelling along in front of him. Aware he was catching the van up considerably; he saw the warning sign for a left-hand bend which showed the bend had a junction off to the right. What he didn't allow for was the van driver's mistake in missing the right turn. As our rider turned into the first section of the bend, he found the van reversing towards him and the missed junction. The van driver and our rider had a deep meaningful conversation, during which I hope

they found some common ground and became better people. What this tells me, and I hope you, is that as well as looking, we need to interpret what we see to provide the 'How *could* it affect me?' part of our constant interpretation of what is in view. Otherwise just rely on cat-like reactions and perfect brakes.

Here is a thing to consider. We know that a broken white line in the middle of our road means less danger from the road surface and surrounding conditions, than is indicated by central solid white lines. So, looking at the lines and seeing a solid line through a bend change to a broken line, means a rider should be planning for a change in speed (?), position (?), gear (?) as the view of the bend opens. So, on an advanced test, rider A sees the change in white lines ahead, increase's speed in the latter part of the bend but as the bend opens, sees a stationary goods vehicle in front of him filling his side of the road. Now no forward view or safety gap. Oops. Panicked heavy braking on a motorcycle never looks like it will attract points for artistic content. Those cat-like reactions and dependency on perfect brakes may work some of the time. Personally, I'd like my reactions to be measured and well timed all of the time.

Bends are a particular problem and many collisions reports I have read will relate the riders' comments as something like, "I started to corner and lost control". When examined in depth, it is often apparent that the rider lost control well before the bend because there was a failure to see properly and assess. My view of things includes the mantra "What can I see? How can it affect me? What do I do about it"? Add, less view = less throttle = less speed, but I'll add, = less pain. Many people hate pain. I'm one.

"On approach the rider should judge the severity of the corner/bend". OK, what exactly does that mean? Do you look at a bend and think 'how fast can I corner'? Or, do you think 'how quickly can I slow and stop without crashing'?

You may look at a bend ahead differently to how I do. My scanning mode goes into hyper drive.

Forward, to the horizon, then scan back and side to side, adding mirror checks when I have a 'vision time' telling me there are no immediate hazards and I can have a look elsewhere. Scanning for the exit of a bend through trees or over a wall, may mean you see the clues. Include other vehicles, because the more of the side of a cornering vehicle you can see means the corner is tighter.

If there is a warning sign visible on approach, look for the grey back of the one for opposing traffic, 'cos that's the other end of the bend and can indicate whether the bend is long or short. We know about hedgerows, tree lines, telegraph poles helping us plan ahead but scanning has to be all encompassing and linked to a strong sense of "what could be there?"

Approaching the brow of a bridge/hill should create one thought from many; is something blocking the road just out of sight? You may find that your 'miles under wheels' experience will have taught you these things and also taught you to respect and react to your sixth sense.

In 1989, I began a contract with Honda UK to deliver motorcycle training to their customers. I wrote the training manual for Honda MAC and so I know it was based on Roadcraft. At the same time period, I was working for my own motorcycle training company, training outside the UK for RoSPA, training and tour guiding in Europe and managing the odd AAMC away day. My annual motorcycle mileage was up to 40,000 miles, for several years. My education and experience in delivering understandable modules for learning the tenets of Roadcraft and the practical application developed massively. Ladies and gents, the less miles you do, the longer it may take to develop essential skills, especially at bike handling. And on that bombshell, we'll ask ourselves what, if we want to, can we do about it?

Patience is key. Also, consider an off-road track day. I have absolutely no affiliation, but I know the people concerned with BMW off-road Training, Woodlands Business Park, Swansea,

Ystradgynlais SA9 1JW, 08000 131 282, E-mail - BMW@WorldofBMW.com They are brilliant.

Experience riding a bike that is 'loose', leaning and braking on rough ground, steering ditto and the very best is, falling off does not hurt so much. What happens to most is that their confidence will soar. Not everyone, mind. Confidence is very important and so you will improve your handling skills loads, increasing your confidence around your bike. However, what I know is that being confident helps give me time to react to the senses that I have developed over time. **To be continued:**

LETTERS

Hi Simon and Stu. Just reading November Treads and just wanted to say I really connected with Stu's article '*Old dog - new tricks*'.

For various reasons over the past two years ('*the Covid years*') I've had very little opportunity to ride. I was out recently for a weekend away on the bike and was appalled how bad my riding had become. It was still safe but the flow and comfort at speed wasn't there. I forgot how hard your head needs to work to become efficient. Regular practice and getting the miles in is sooo important to skills.

Lots of work and practice for me before I can ride with the group unfortunately.

I hope you're both well and thanks for all your work on Treads. I look forward to reading it each month. Have a great Christmas

Graham

(Thanks Graham. 2 of us read it then!! Ed)

Memories of Keith and Val

Keith and his wife Val, were staunch supporters of AAMC from its very beginning. Keith was a well-respected rider of many motorcycles, often with Val as pillion and he also served on the AAMC Committee for many years.

Keith developed MS and as its hold grew, he found two wheels a bit much and swapped for three wheels, first a BMW trike, then a Can Am Spyder. Did it dampen his spirit? Not at all, as he continued to attend club rides and long weekends.

I organised a trip to North Wales that Keith attended. I have to admit, I worried about him. However, he told me he was determined to keep riding and adapt to what he could do, aided by support from Val. Great determination.

I led the group along several drovers' roads as we crossed Wales. I always looked out for Keith as the day wore on but he was always there when we stopped, always with something interesting to say and so I felt things were fine.

I mentioned his spirited riding to him later and in his rather scholarly, quiet and detailed way, explained to me the reality of three wheels and the fact that most of the roads we had travelled on had grass, gravel or both in the middle; he on a Trike. Oops.



Keith, about to deal with more gravel.

I felt really bad and Keith kept his poker face for quite a while before letting me off the hook with "actually I was able to miss most of it". I admitted to falling for it and we giggled away in a corner of the bar like a pair of schoolboys on a jape.



Always in the thick of socialising.

As time passed Keith found getting about more and more difficult, even with the ever patient Val as his pillion, often doing their own thing, rather than in a group. He had reached a stage where his strength was failing, although his mind remained as sharp as ever.

Sadly, as he became more reliant on Val, this calm, always smiling lady was diagnosed with cancer and died in July 2021. Keith passed away in December 2021.

My memory of Keith will be his absolute determination to not be defined by his illness and to continue to ride for as long as possible. My memory of Val will be the strength she had in supporting Keith's motorcycling and illness, whilst keeping her own wicked sense of humour and then dealing with her own illness with dignity and fortitude. I know that my life has been made all the richer for knowing them both.

I offer these few words in memory of fellow motorcyclists, club members and friends, Keith and Val



Keith in Blue, Val in Pink, amongst friends and supporting AAMC.

Courtesy of Mark

DIARY DATES

Helen 07885 -
@gmail.com

*Hi everyone. With much optimism and fingers and toes crossed, I am composing a **Diary of Events 2022** and need your help to compile it. So, if you are feeling enthused and energized to lead a ride or two this year, then please get in touch giving me a date, start time/location and a contact number, with a few rough details of a general direction the ride may take.*

Simon is leading the first ride on Sunday 6 March, then Stu with a weekday ride on Wednesday 23, a day ride on Sunday 8 May There are also two club holiday rides. The rest of the calendar is free, so get in quickly to secure your preferred date.

I look forward to the deluge of calls/emails I shall receive. Many Thanks and look forward to seeing you on a ride soon.

Where club events are detailed, it would be sensible to contact the ride leader to confirm final details and let them know you are attending.

Keep an eye on the Club WhatsApp page for last minute changes or additional rides.

- Please be sure to arrive at the starting point promptly, with a full tank of fuel.

AND FINALLY - Ed

Thanks for reading, and grateful thanks to all contributors. YOUR contribution will also be welcome, as will your offer to organize a club ride in 2022. Just confirm dates/times/destination with Helen. See you next time.

- Each club run will have a *ride leader*, who leads the group, and a *sweeper*, who stays at the rear of the group.
- At any junction, deviation or situation which may cause confusion as to the route to be taken, the leader will signal to the rider immediately following to pull in and stop at the point of route deviation, often referred to as being '*dropped off*'. Whilst making sure they can be clearly seen by all road users, the 'dropped off' rider should clearly indicate to following riders the correct route to take, giving them time to react.
- The 'dropped off' rider can re-join the ride, *either* after the sweeper has passed, and then pass the sweeper when it is safe to do so. OR, if the sweeper indicates to do so, the 'dropped off' rider can re-join the group in front of the sweeper.
- Remembering not everyone will ride at the same standard, overtaking within the group is permitted, provided it is carried out safely, with courtesy and consideration for **ALL** road users.
- Please advise the ride leader well in advance if you plan to bring a *guest rider*.
-

JANUARY 2022

Saturday 22nd Plug & Grub now November 19. Helen 07885 .

FEBRUARY 2022

Wednesday 23. Club AGM. 7pm, New Inn, Farmborough. Simon Gough. 07774 835025.

MARCH 2022

Sunday 6. Simon Gough 07774 835025. Meet at S at 10am for a 10:15am departure. Lunch in Gillingham.

Wednesday 16. Date change

"Crossing Counties" - Stu Bullock - 07711898178

'Leaving at' 10(am) from

Nr

Ilminster,

Lunch @ The Boat That Rocks, 7 Hamm Beach Road, Portland Marina, DT5 1DX. (12.00hrs)

Last stop (tea & disperse) @ Haynes International Motor Museum, Sparkford, BA22 7LH. (About 16.00hrs (4pm).

Please let me know if you are coming for table bookings.

Thursday 24 Skills Development Course. First theory session. Simon Gough – 07774 835025

Saturday 26 Skills Development Course. First practical session. Simon Gough – 07774 835025

APRIL 2022

MAY 2022

Sunday 8. "Don't take Flight". - Stu Bullock - bullock.stu@gmail.com 07711898178

'Leaving at' 09:45hrs(am) from

alongside the on site.

with petrol

Lunch; Apache Café, Army Flying Museum, Middle Wallop, SO20 8DY.

Last stop (tea & disperse) @ Mattia Diner. Please let me know if you are coming, for table bookings.

JUNE 2022

Friday 10 – Monday 13 Club weekend, based in Caernarfon, Wales – Stu Bullock – 07711898178 – bullock.stu@gmail.com

Let me know if you are interested by email and I will email you the necessary information, then all should be clear.

JULY 2022

AUGUST 2022

SEPTEMBER 2022

Club Bash to France and Spain – Simon Gough
– 07774 835025.

Out: Portsmouth to St. Malo leaving
Wednesday 7th September 2022, 20:16 hrs.

Return: Santander to Plymouth leaving
Thursday 15th September 2022, 15:45 hrs.

(Timings approx.)

Please contact Simon for more detail.

OCTOBER 2022

NOVEMBER 2022

Saturday 19. 7 for 7:30pm. The AAMC Plug &
Grub annual dinner. The White Horse,
Hambrook, BS16 1RY. More details from Helen

–

NON-CLUB EVENTS

Castle Combe info and contact details

Castle Combe 'action day' dates available from
www.castlecombecircuit.co.uk

Castle Combe Motorcycle Track days are
detailed at

<https://castlecombecircuit.co.uk/motorcycle-track-days>

Motorcycle Skills Day at Castle Combe by
Mercury Motorcycle Training 2022 dates:

Wednesday 8 June

Wednesday 14 September.

For further details and to book your place on the
above dates, contact Mercury Motorcycle
Training on 07444 586001.

Details can also be found at the Motorcycle
Skills School tab at:

<https://castlecombecircuit.co.uk/motorcycle-track-days>

Castle Combe phone contact: 01249 479220

BRISTOL CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE SHOW

*26/27 February 2022, Royal Bath and West
showground.*

Tickets on sale now,

Adventure Bike Rider Festival.

The 'ultimate weekend motorcycle event', the
festival will take place on the 24-26 June 2022
at the Ragley Hall Estate, Warwickshire.
More details at www.abrfestival.co.uk.

BMF DISCOUNT CODE.

Code for 2022 - CLB22VJTR

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
benefit.

