

RIDERS

... magazine of the KAMG

*Post lockdown special . . .
We hope!*

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KENT ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS GROUP





Go on... take the long way home

THIS EDITION INCLUDES ...

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Cover picture - The D38 near Marciac in SW France - it won't be long now!



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Is this a warning or is it advice? See page 23



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Nick Farley, Editor

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Views contained within this publication are not necessarily views of the Editor, the KAMG or the IAM.

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The Editor cannot guarantee sunshine on club runs.

Magazine design and layout by John Gardiner.

EDITORIAL

Chairs, Chairwomen, Chairmen and Chairpersons

Call them what you will but we are saying goodbye to one and hello to a new one. Tina Underwood has been a brilliant leader of the group for the last three years, and unless you have seen her in action, encouraging, chivvying, cajoling and praising the committee and others, and, most of all, always undertaking a huge amount of work herself, you simply have no idea what KAMG owes her. I just want to say an enormous thank you to her. Tina, you have done a fantastic job. Thank you.

And now we have a new Chairman, Ian Burchell. Well, actually he's not new at all, he's done the job twice before so he will slide comfortably into the 'Chair' barely checking his stride, and although he may sit in the 'Chair' we shall never call him 'Chair' in this magazine – he is the Chairman. It seems like only a week last Wednesday that we were thanking him in this column for his last very successful stint at the helm, but it was actually three years ago. Besides at least two previous stints as Chairman Ian has done virtually every job known to man in his time with KAMG: he is, of course, a national observer, he has run IDCAMs, he has been Associate Co-ordinator, he has edited the magazine, he's organised day trips to France and Belgium and done a lot more besides, notably being a commanding MC at noisy Kentagon club nights. So it's the start of a new 'unlocked' term and a big welcome back to Ian.

RIDERS editorial policy

As a result of something that was said in the last issue of *Riders* about proposed changes to *The Highway Code*, one member of KAMG decided not to renew his membership. It was very disappointing to hear that since the object of the magazine is to inform and entertain and not to be the reason for anyone to cancel their membership.

That cancellation, and a couple of things that have been said to me recently, suggest that the editorial policy of *Riders* needs clarifying. The most important thing to make very clear is that the views and opinions expressed in the magazine are solely the views and opinions of the people who submit the articles, and those views and opinions should never be taken as, nor be presumed to be, the official view of, nor views supported by, either the KAMG or IAM RoadSmart.

Every single article that appears in the magazine has been written by a KAMG member, or if by a non-member this will be indicated. None of the articles has appeared in any other medium anywhere else. Every article is original and has been written specifically for *Riders*. Every piece that is submitted for publication is printed, and the only 'editing' is to make corrections to spelling and grammar and re-writing where necessary to make the text clearer. *No change is ever made to a writer's expressed opinion.* The magazine is, of course, apolitical, but will always be critical, and supportive too, of politicians of every political colour when speaking about the roads, traffic law and road safety matters.

Within that framework *Riders* is the place for every single KAMG member to say what he/she thinks about anything and everything connected with riding and driving. *But if you do disagree with something that you read here, please, please don't cancel your membership, instead, say so by letter, by email, by postcard, by smoke signal, by telephone or just by shouting loudly at me. This magazine is the place for everyone to have their say.*

NF

I must start my first 'View from the Chair' with a public expression of my sincere thanks to Tina Underwood for her Chairing of KAMG over the last few years. I am sure everyone in the Group knows her from all the events and activities that she has tirelessly supported. The good news is that she is not leaving KAMG, she is just stepping back a little and becoming Deputy Chairwoman – liaising with IAM RoadSmart and assisting me in my duties. "Thank you Tina."

It looks like we are now reaching the time when we may soon be able to fully restart KAMG activities. Observer/Associate rides are now taking place, and by the time you read this a fish and chip run will have happened, and we are looking at restarting IDCAMs in a real, not virtual, classroom. The KAMG Group Night in June may also be real and at Brands Hatch, and the Sunday Training and Social rides and Machine Control Day may restart in the next couple of months too. It will be a bit strange to be able to hold meetings in person, Zoom meetings are a bit odd. To keep up to date do have a regular look at Tracker or our Facebook pages – if you have not already joined up, I recommend that you do so – a lot of communication and offers of ride-outs are now happening via Facebook.

I have been very lucky during the lockdowns as I have been working three evenings a week driving around south London, Kent and East Sussex, delivering shopping. There has been very little traffic to concern me, and getting out of the house, driving around and meeting people, has kept

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



me in shape both mentally and physically (it's probably done my wife a world of good too). I hope that you have also been able to keep mind and body in good shape – something that motorcycling has been proven to do, so why not get out there and dust off the cobwebs.

I look forward to meeting up with many of you in person in the not too distant future.

Ian Burchell
chairman@kamg.org.uk



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PS. Don't forget to drop me a line about your adventures. You just might inspire others to follow in your tyre tracks.



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IDCAM

INTRODUCTORY DAY COURSE IN ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING



The revised style IDCAM has been running for some months now. Attendees book in at 8.45am and have their documents and bikes checked over. A short classroom presentation about KAMG and Advanced Motorcycling commences at about 9.00am. An assessed ride follows with a short debrief before a coffee break. A classroom session about the System of Motorcycle Control takes us to lunch time. We also fit in a Highway Code quiz and the POWDDERSS check of a motorcycle, so it's quite a busy morning. After lunch, attendees go out for a second assessed ride with an Observer, finishing at a mutually agreed location.



If you would like to attend as an Associate contact associates@kamg.org.uk. Observers should confirm their willingness to help by registering on Tracker and they will kept informed about the needs for any particular session.

MACHINE CONTROL DAY

Our machine control days are organised by Jim Pullum. If you have not yet signed up then do it now – simply log on to Tracker and register your participation or contact email below:

mcd@kamg.org.uk

Held at: Car Park D, Ebbsfleet Station
 International Way
 Gravesend, Kent DA10 1EB

July 31st September 11th

Non-KAMG members will be asked for a small fee of £10.00 contributing to the running costs.

Arrival time: 08:45 for 09:00 start
 Finish Time: approx 13:00 Hrs



BLIND LEFT HAND BENDS

KAMG National Observer, John Lemon, asks whether being in 'Position 3' is always appropriate as we approach left handers.

One of the current hot topics among associate members, who are being mentored by their observers, is the approach, preparation and planning needed for negotiating tight left hand bends, and blind left-handers, where you are unable to gain any advance information by looking across the bend. When approaching blind left hand bends, particularly on single track roads, like country lanes and some narrow, single carriageway 'B' roads, it is vital to accurately read the 'Limit Point' in order to gauge the severity or otherwise of the bend you are approaching.

To tackle this particular hazard we must first break it down into its component parts, and because those parts will be constantly changing as we move forward we must have a flexible riding plan to help us stay safe. The first question is: what can we *actually see*? We can always see the 'Limit Point', which is the furthest point along the road or round the corner that is visible, yet there may be other clues that offer information about the severity of the bend, such as telegraph poles, hedgerows and oncoming traffic. But what if we can't

see any of the above? We must also take into account, for example, the road surface and consider possible obstructions and field accesses on the off side, past the bend. And we must ask ourselves what can we reasonably expect to happen or to find round the bend? Taking account of what we can reasonably expect to happen is the foundation of a flexible plan for all riding and driving circumstances – *anticipation* is key.

Give a thought to the worst possible scenario. Yes, it's reasonable to expect



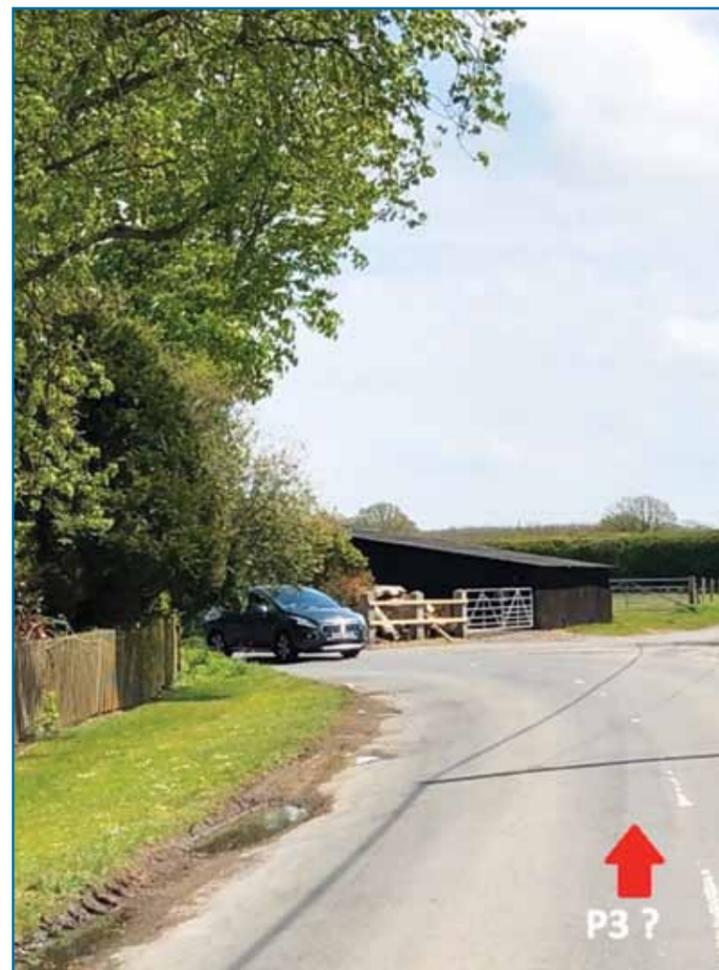
Once again, is P3 a good place to be? If a car appeared in the side road on the right, it would cause oncoming traffic to move towards the centre of the road and that would place you in a vulnerable position if you were in P3 sacrifice position for safety.



A useful Kentish road sign!



A blind left hand bend on a narrow road, with a minor road joining on the apex of the bend.



As you get closer to the corner this car appears and is well over the centre line. Is P3 a good place to be? Sacrifice position for safety.



As you ride round the corner you find that the road narrows, which would have meant that any oncoming traffic would necessarily have been in the centre of the road and represented a danger to anyone who had been in P3. Note the distant hedgerow indicating the likely direction of the next corner.

to find pedestrians, perhaps with children and dogs, or cyclists, or horse riders with vehicles passing them, particularly with the relaxation of lockdown. But even worse there could be a large truck, an HGV or an agricultural vehicle unseen just beyond the 'Limit Point'; the

possibilities are endless. It's imperative that you've done your mirror check when you see the warning sign on the approach to the corner (a triangular shaped information sign), so as to avoid becoming 'the meat in a sandwich' of an oncoming vehicle and one following you, and then check

again on nearing the hazard. Consider a horn warning too. **Take, Use and Give** information (TUG).

A systematic approach to negotiating left hand bends on wider roads is to consider a position in the offside wheel track (P3) for optimum vision, but on narrow roads it is vital that you consider sacrificing this position for safety because of the possibility of an oncoming vehicle appearing. Once you have changed your position, seriously consider reducing your speed, and then of course a lower gear may be required to give you improved control of your machine by having a positive rather than a trailing throttle; a little bit of gas, and the resultant flexibility will allow you to STOP within the distance you can see to be clear on your side of the road, or to accelerate away from the hazard. This all comes from the system of motorcycle control that dictates our way of sequentially negotiating hazards – **Information, Position, Speed, Gear and Acceleration**. IPSGA.

Safe riding and enjoy those bends.

BIG Z MAKES PROGRESS

You might remember that Martin Brown* was lucky enough to find three oldish motorbikes - two Ducatis and a Kawasaki - lying unused and covered in sawdust in a neighbour's garage and he bought them. He

started to refurbish the Kawasaki ZRX1100 first and began his tale of restoration in the Feb issue. I held my breath and lo and behold he did send the second instalment. Here it is...

The ZRX 1100 is fighting back, but resistance is futile against shed power. In part one you will remember that I stripped and rebuilt the front brakes and fitted new discs. I was very pleased with myself. Needless to say this euphoria did not last. As I tried to mount the lovely fresh calipers they would not fit. Grr! What have I done wrong? The discs seemed a bit big, but wait, the *evilbay* listing quite clearly stated that they were a direct replacement for my bike. WRONG. Measure twice etc. When I took them off and compared them to the old ones (which luckily I still had...never throw anything away), I found that the new ones were 10mm bigger. Back they went.

Not wanting to take a chance on ebay again I ordered a fresh pair from Nick at ABE (Allbike Engineering) in Greenwich. These have just arrived after a nearly six week wait. However, at least I know they will fit. At the same time Nick refurbished my rear shocks including fresh powder-coat on the springs. Lovely. Other jobs completed include the freshly powder-coated rear swingarm in metallic silver, which is a thing of beauty in its own right, and also back from the powder-coaters are the big valve cover, clutch slave cover, the radiator mounts and chain guard.



Fresh calipers

While waiting for these various bits to arrive I had not been idle. I had removed the exhaust, as I intend to replace it; it was another part of the bike that had suffered in a low speed drop. Removing it was always going to be a bit risky due to the age and lack of care of the previous owner(s). I was quite lucky in that six of the eight retaining nuts came off nicely, but unfortunately two of the middle ones did not. These two studs sheared level with the top of the exhaust flange leaving the stubs of the retaining bolts sticking out. I have left these for now while I get on with other jobs and sulk. I do have a plan but it's best not to rush into these things. I've been applying heat and penetrating oil to help the eventual release, and in the meantime fingers are crossed. I have also spent a lot of time repairing the ground-down fins on the clutch side engine cover. This damage to the lower three or four fins had been done in the aforementioned low speed drop. It wasn't too bad, but was enough to notice. Top tip: when removing the bolts from such covers they are invariably of differing lengths.



"... freshly powder-coated swingarm in metallic silver is a thing of beauty in its own right."



Being restored...

Don't try to remember what goes where. It will go wrong! Try this: take a piece of cardboard and roughly draw out the outline shape of the cover. Mark where the bolts go and poke a small hole with a pencil. Then, as you remove the bolts, poke them into the appropriate hole (stop laughing at the back). Hey presto, when you come to put them back, the correct bolts will go into the correct holes.

After sorting my bolts I set to work to build up the ground-down fins with two-pack glue and then tried two-pack filler. My first attempt was a fail as the filler was not able to get enough purchase on the surface to support the build up of the fin and just snapped off. So I drilled three tiny holes into the cover, and then cut up a stainless steel split pin and glued the bits into the holes to act as a support frame. Gradually I built up the filler with the use of plasticine moulds, and after a lot of filing and sanding I'm pretty pleased with the result. If it doesn't last then I will have to bite the bullet and either get it alloy welded or try to source an undamaged cover.

Now that this is done I can get to work reassembling stuff. My new swingarm bearings have arrived so the back end can go on first. Then I will replace all the covers, the new radiator and brackets and refill the engine with fluids. The swingarm bearings can be a bit tricky. They are of the 'needle roller' type and are quite fragile. It is not recommended to try knocking them in with a drift as this is likely to cause damage, so what to do? My solution was to make my own bearing 'puller-inner' tool. This comprised



... restored

a long bit of 12mm threaded rod, some nuts and washers of appropriate size and an old 20mm socket that was just the right size for the bearings. Once I had tested my masterpiece for size, I popped the bearings in the freezer and the swingarm in my greenhouse. The resulting expansion and contraction always helps insertion. (Stop it.)



Home made bearing-puller-inner (right)

Puller in action (below)



A liberal coating of grease later and working quickly, before the frozen bearing expanded too much, I assembled the first bearing in place and started tightening. It only worked! Job done. Seals in place, the arm bolted straight back on. I then cleaned up the shock retaining bolts and bolted the refurbished shocks back in place. The back wheel, sporting new bearings, new sprocket, new brake disc and new tyre, was next up, along with a nice shiny gold chain. Excellent progress.

Now that the rear end and back wheel were on I could add my just received Brembo rear brake upgrade that had been a while coming. Back in January I was talking online to a chap in Finland who had a Brembo rear caliper and specially made hanger for the ZRX that he no longer required. We agreed a price and he posted it on the 21st January. End of February, no sign. End of March, no sign, and still no update on the tracking site. We were just about to give up when 'ding-dong' there it was on my doorstep. The tracking site still said it was 'in transit' and didn't even show that it was in the UK. You have to love a bit of Brexit fallout. Almost exactly 11 weeks to get here.

In between all this excitement I have also been busy polishing various bits including the rear passenger footpeg hangers. These needed a bit more than just a polish. I started off with a 400 grit wet and dry paper, then went to 800 and then 1200 with a bit of the marvellous Solvol Autosol as a lubricant. They are looking much better already, but there is still a fair a bit to go. How shiny is too shiny?

Next time I hope to give you a more 'exhausting' update... see what I did there? Carry On.

** You definitely won't remember 'Martin Brown' doing anything in the last issue of Riders because, for some inexplicable reason, I called him 'Bob Martin' in that issue. I apologise profusely to him and to you. Ed.*



Brembo caliper and special hanger from Finland!



Before and after...



CHRONICLES OF A 'NEWBIE'

Many KAMG members have been riding since God was a boy and have long forgotten what it's like to start from scratch today. Tom Griffin reminds us...

I fell in love with motorbikes when I was 13 years old and my father bought me my first bike, a Puch Dalesman 125cc trials bike. I progressed to a 250cc Bultaco Sherpa trials bike when I was 17, but my heart was really in motocross, rather than trials. World Motocross Champion Roger De Coster was my idol at that time and that's why I bought a 390cc Husqvarna, joined Sidcup Motorcycle Club and competed in their 'Worker' motocross series. I dreamed of racing at a higher level but, for a variety of reasons, I knew that it wasn't possible and would take more support, emotionally and logistically, than I could muster. So I sold everything, and I didn't own another motorbike until I was in my fifties. Then, in order to pass my test, I decided to take a four day 'direct access' course, which involved riding the school's 125cc bike for two days before progressing to a 650cc Kawasaki on day three, followed on the fourth day by a short run around while being groaned at by an instructor before taking the Module 1 test at 10.40am and Module 2 at 12.30. Crazy.

"Ok Tom, no faults, go through the gates and park up outside the reception then go inside and wait till I call you to the office before the road ride." Module 1 completed and to say I was pleased was an understatement. That said, the emergency stop speed was too high and I really had to lean on the front brake and be mindful of how much I was applying to the rear to avoid a lock-up. Thankfully I controlled the front wheel to stop comfortably in the box. Gaining my licence was very important and sitting waiting to be called for Module 2 was a nerve-racking experience. Everyone wants to pass first time around. My school instructor seeing my nervousness stood up, came over and gave me a man hug in front of the other instructors and trainees who were sitting waiting, and this, whilst being an unusual but thoughtful gesture, did help. I think he'd done it before.

My examiner called me into the office. I entered and completed some admin before being fitted out with an earpiece and waist-mounted radio receiver, this was followed by the obligatory eye test and some general knowledge questions. At this point I felt very settled as the examiner went through a few prelims before we set

off. "OK Tom, go to the end of the road and turn left, go to the top of the road and at the first roundabout turn right. At the second roundabout go straight ahead and at the third roundabout turn left. OK?" Nerves kicked straight back in. He repeated the instruction and said, "if you don't understand anything at any point just nod from side to side. OK?". I indicated my understanding of that bit and was given permission to proceed, but as I pulled away I was in a stressed state worrying about the sequence of instructions he had just given as I was solely focussed on riding the bike. Well... at the first roundabout I nodded my head and the instructions were repeated in my earpiece. I turned right and stopped at the second roundabout. I was in the right-hand lane and as I looked to my left I saw the examiner nicely positioned in the correct lane. I realised I had just committed a major mistake and failed. I had a gut wrenching feeling of disappointment. I was informed at the end during feedback, that I'd also missed a 20mph speed restriction going into Bredhurst village, which was an instant fail in any case, and there was a front wheel lock-up on a wet manhole cover during a dodgy left turn on to a sloping road, and I had also steered too wide (swan-necked) on a right turn. That was December 2nd 2016.

On returning to the training base I enquired about the cost of a retest, which at £190 wasn't cheap. In consideration of how I had performed I decided that I'd have a think about the way forward, and over the following days I decided that to retest would be a gamble as I honestly felt I just wasn't good enough to pass, and if I did pass it would be a lucky and unconvincing pass. I remember saying to some colleagues that it was a good fail...it just wasn't good enough. So I put everything on ice for a few weeks while I continued to reflect on all that I'd experienced during training, including my attitude and approach. I was dissecting everything about me, the school, the syllabus, the methodology and the instructor and, of course, what, in my view, could have been done better. And I put everything down on paper. After exhausting all areas of thought I decided that I needed two important skills: the first was being able to ride the bike without thinking, and the second was being able to read the road and bring the two together in synergy. During training I was either riding

the bike and being distracted by the road, or reading the road and being distracted by the bike. I realised that skill and knowledge need development and the best way was to gear-up properly with kit that was mine and get on the road and start riding with *my own bike* whenever I wanted to. It was a eureka moment and I felt that I was taking ownership and control of my development.

After researching the different types of rider gear, I bought a new Arai Excess II helmet and moderately priced boots and textile suit from a well-known accessories shop in Maidstone, and I also researched buying a bike with price/quality balance in mind and opted to take a look at the Benelli 'Keeway 125cc RKS Sport', eventually buying a brand new one from Bowen Kawasaki in Chatham. The day I was due to pick it up I got dressed in my new textile suit and my new boots, and with my helmet, gloves and paperwork in one hand, my wife, Julie, dropped me off at the dealership. It was a sweltering day and I was roasting. After the sales admin was done and with my helmet and gloves on I started the engine and composed myself before pulling away and riding home. It was fantastic. I felt exhilarated by the freedom and fun of riding on my own, albeit without a full licence. Julie was waiting at home and looked very happy too. I think she could see this was very important for me. I was pleased to get that look of approval. We all know how important that look is, don't we?

Over the next weeks and months I commuted to work, initially taking the same route as it enabled me to build confidence and with repetition came improved handling of the bike. During that time I also started reading various tutorials from companies on the web including 'Begin Motorcycling' and 'MC Rider'. The rider information was very informative and insightful, but at the same time I was drawn to revisit the DVSA test criteria that I was to be assessed on, and from that moment every ride became a self-assessment. It was a game changer. Now I became immersed in a list of performance benchmarks. It made me very aware and, importantly, very self-critical. I roamed around the Gillingham test centre on Saturday or Sunday mornings retracing my test route and generally riding the surrounding area to familiarise myself with any 'funnies' that might be present. On one Saturday I rode in and out of the 'Bowaters' roundabout repeatedly from every direction. Then went home and recalled from memory, and committed to paper, every exit from every entry including approach lanes and idiosyncrasies where, for example, a quick indication and filter may be required from certain positions. Nerdy perhaps, but it underlined my determination to pass the test.

With continued practice over the next 12 months or so (including the 'Bowaters' roundabout) I was feeling there was a much stronger synergy between bike handling skill and road awareness to a point where I was self-marking

each ride as if it were a test. Some days were 'clean' rides and some included 'minors' with the odd 'major' (eg. speeding and amber light violations). This went on until I reached a point where the 'clean' rides were consistent with no real hiccups, and after some nervous but excited thought I contacted Phoenix Motorcycle Training in Maidstone for my pre-test 'tune-up' and re-test. (Phoenix was not my original training provider.) On the morning of training I was introduced to Nick who explained that there was a slight logistics issue that meant that I and another candidate, who was on a direct access course, had to ride to the Phoenix main office in Orpington to collect two CB 650cc Hondas. At the Orpington base, Nick briefed us on common issues to be aware of and invited discussion. It all worked out well and I benefited from some experience on a different machine as well as some A2/NSL riding on the way back. Nick had eyes like a hawk and was explaining what was going on much further ahead than I would've anticipated looking, and he did it with razor sharp accuracy. This really was literally an eye opener for me and showed what I needed to develop. I later described it on the Phoenix 'Trust Pilot' feedback as a master class in scanning and observation.

On the morning of the test I was met by Gregg who was very helpful and supportive and after chatting I think he gauged how important the licence was for me. During the ride to the Gillingham test centre he kept information to a minimum, promoting calm. I was test ready and Gregg didn't interrupt that mind set. As an Instructor myself (in a different field), it was something I recognised. When we arrived and were seated in the waiting room Gregg asked some warm up oral test questions that might be asked. After this there was a lull and I sat for a short while in silent

contemplation. I was filled with a calm confidence and was excited to start the test.

I was called first and went through the same routine as last time before eventually pulling away. This time I turned right over the mini-roundabout and straight on to the 'Bowaters' roundabout. It was one of those 'Five P' moments – preparation and planning prevent poor performance – and it wasn't a problem as I stopped at the lights in the correct lane to head off towards Gillingham. Nicely away on 'green' with a good look to the right, then ahead and then a left look for oncoming traffic on the link road before indicating left, taking the exit with a nice right shoulder check before cancelling the signal. Great. "Let's go," I thought as we headed towards the roundabout at the top of Hirohito Way. A lane change preceded again by OSM-PSL on the approach to turn right towards Twydall. 50mph down here, so mirror checks and quickly up to speed. Slowing for the next roundabout, straight on with a left indicator and a timely left and right shoulder check before taking the exit.

The pattern of riding continued through the test and I was feeling comfortable with what I was doing, but as we came into the heart of lower Gillingham we navigated around Richmond Road which has some very nice little 'testers' that can easily catch you out if you're not thinking. The first was a 'TURN RIGHT' at the end of a 'ONE WAY' street. Fluff your position at the junction and it's all over. Safely over that hurdle we rode towards the Strand before we ended up turning left off Victoria Road into a side street, but the side street was jammed with cars parked on both sides right up to the junction where I was entering. No problem except that a van coming out of the road arrived at the corner at the same time. Eager to show my calm, I went into slow

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The Benelli 125, my first bike in over thirty years



The pride and joy in Snowdonia

control mode and was determined not put a foot down. I slowed the bike right down to almost snail speed and with a small gap appearing I eased the throttle open and carefully passed the back of the van and travelled up the centre of the road. A short distance travelled, I looked down and blasted myself as I cancelled the indicator. Idiot. Actually stronger words were used I can tell you. I was mortified as I thought I'd just blown it. My positive feelings had just been flushed down the toilet and I really had to dig deep to compose myself. I remember dropping speed a little but then just thought, "that's it, you've failed, just carry on Tom". And that is what I did, only to meet another 'tester,' a 'NO ENTRY' after being instructed to follow the road ahead. I dealt with it without problem before being asked to pull over whereupon I was instructed to follow the signs back



to the M2. This was completed without drama via you've guessed it.....the 'Bowaters' roundabout.

Back at the test centre after a short wait I was called into the office expecting the worst, but no, "Congratulations Tom, you've passed. One 'minor'". "Eh?" I said, "I thought I'd failed for that late signal cancellation." The examiner shrugged and said, "No, it was a good ride". We shook hands as I thanked him and left to tell Gregg the good news. "You did well with one 'minor', this guy gives 'minors' away like confetti," he said. I was over the moon. That was Feb 20th 2018.

Whilst riding for a couple of weeks without 'L' plates I was scouring the internet for bikes and decided on taking a close look at the R1200GS as my intention was to start tour riding. I advertised my Keeway 125cc on AutoTrader and sold it. The same week I headed to Hemel Hempstead by train to see an R1200GS. I inspected this beautiful machine and fell in love. Well, after a chat with the seller and agreeing on a price, I paid in full and took it for a test ride with the agreement that if I wasn't back in 15 minutes the bike was OK and I was happy. Shortly after setting off I was heading towards the M25 and it felt fantastic. The bike seemed to ride itself, and once on the M25 I couldn't believe what was happening, the bike was glorious and with so much more power on tap than I'd been used to yet it didn't seem intimidating at all, I just thought that this is a car with handlebars. As the miles passed by heading towards the Dartford bridge I made the decision to take a detour to Leigh-On-Sea to my daughter's house where Julie was visiting at the time.

I rolled on to the drive and Julie, my daughter and Teddy (the family Cockapoo) were staring out of the window looking very concerned until they 'twigged' it was me. Dad. I got a hero's welcome with my daughter donning my helmet and sitting astride the GS as if she was riding it, furry slippers and all. After a cup of tea I set off home. I pulled up on to the drive switched the engine off and I came up with the great idea of using the centre stand whilst still mounted on the bike. As I kicked it down and pulled on the bars to bring the bike backwards, it lifted me from the ground and the bike started to lean and with my right foot now touching ground it was too late and she went over on to one side. I was gutted. The bike was sitting on the beautiful right pannier with the bar guard buried into shingle around the edge of the drive. After Julie, a passer-by and I had lifted the bike upright I reflected on what an idiot I'd been. But hey, I'm not the only one right? Straight on to YouTube where I found the correct way to dismount, park and recover a GS on my own. The latter I have had to apply on another occasion, but we won't go there right now.

Julie was keen for me take her out on the bike, but I announced to all the family that I won't be taking anyone



High-vis in all directions en route to Barmouth in Wales

on the back until I'm as safe as I can be. It was with that announcement that I enrolled on BikeSafe and attended the day course at the Bike Shed in Old Street, East London. The course was a real eye opener to such things as the statistical data for injury and death on roads, in particular to motorcyclists, and to saccadic masking, looming effect and considerations when approaching junctions. The first part was classroom delivery with a mix of verbal instruction supported by training videos, actual camera footage and the law. The second part was a two-part ride through East London to South Mimms for a debrief, lunch and then a rural ride to be guided through IPSGA. I was very fortunate to have an advanced tutor, Neil, all to myself and learnt a lot during my time with him. After completion of the day I had verbal feedback, which was followed up with a formalised report a few days later. During our chat Neil suggested that I take a look at IAM membership for advanced riding skills with various reasons why he prefers the organisation to others. Sometime after, I contacted the KAMG and arranged for a taster ride.

I met up with KAMG National Observer Joe Mair during a machine control day at Ebbsfleet. Joe gave me a brief on what we were going to do, how we were going to do it and what he wanted from me. He led me off and gave the signal to overtake and I followed directions, which included hand signals and the occasional blare from his wind-tone horn on his then new Triumph. All seemed to go well until I approached a tight left hander up a hill and I got into a bit of a pickle to say the least. The left hander was tighter than I thought and caused me to 'fixate' on the centre lines and destabilise. I pulled over soon afterwards and told Joe that I was tired and needed a break. I got the coffees in while Joe gave the good news and the bad news. "The bad news Tom is that you've got 12 points on your licence." After then telling me what I'd done to achieve the points and giving me instruction on safety and positioning including vanishing point and IPSGA, I knew I had to enrol on the course.

Before I joined the KAMG I was getting in some rides and preparing the bike for a road adventure I'd been invited to join by a good friend, Paul, who I'd known since a teenager.



The group on the Hardknott Pass



The Hardknott is nearly 1 in 3!

BACK PROTECTORS, EBAY AND FLIP FLOPS

It's Dave Willson with his usual mix of bargain info, weird (and dodgy) facts and some good advice

We crossed paths in town one day and it restarted our friendship, which progressed into curry nights and home visits, and a plan was laid for me to join Paul, his brother, brother-in-law and another close friend on a three peaks tour – Snowdon, Scafell and Ben Nevis. Their purpose apart from riding the areas was to climb the peaks on foot as a personal challenge. Like all tours there is a lot of information including often unforeseen circumstances that arise on such adventures, so this time round I'll keep things to a bare minimum, but maybe they will be revealed in more detail another time. What I will say is that it was one of the most – perhaps *the* most – challenging experience I've ever had. The group riding from the beginning was brisk, fast at times, and at high speed on motorways for much of it. My first experience of wind buffeting was very disconcerting and frightening sometimes; a fear that caused an underlying anxiety about when it was going to occur again. The tension caused me to grip the bars draining me of energy and composure for most of that first day in the saddle. It wasn't an enjoyable experience to feel that way when it was supposed to be a leisure experience?

After eventually hitting our third peak, Ben Nevis, we bedded down in a lovely rented house in Fort William. I spent the day alone while the others went off to climb and I found this was a good time for me to relax and reflect on everything that had gone before. With the bike checked and the boxer engine, that had worked hard at times get me here, topped up with oil, I went to the local

garage, a stone's throw from the house, and filled the tank before soaping the bike and giving her a careful jet wash. With tyres and pressures checked I returned to the house and had a relaxing walk around the town, which was surrounded by lovely countryside including, of course, Loch Linnhe.

Whilst that trip was demanding and even scary at times the experience gained as each day passed was something that I wouldn't have missed. Why? I have asked myself, and my answer is that if I hadn't experienced the things that I did, I wouldn't have learned from them. A sobering thought is that safety **MUST** always outweigh risk. Safety is the factor that underpins everything that I've learned since joining the KAMG and IAM RoadSmart. It is the reason I joined. Like many other associates at present, I am on post lockdown training with my observer, and I have completed one informal 'rust clearing' ride that was...rusty. I should endeavour to learn to ride the bike "like it's a second skin," as David (my observer) said as we ate fish and chips one evening recently on the front at Tankerton. We all want to enjoy motorcycling, but not at any cost to our own or to others' safety. That said, being an instructor, albeit in another field, my aim is to pass knowledge gained on to others: to be a better anything – a better rider – trust and learn all you can from others who are trained in what they do, and then self-study, practise and analyse everything that YOU do.

DC Comics bought the rights to Superman from its creators, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, for just \$130, and as we all know Superman morphed into a multi-billion dollar empire. Even the actual 130 dollar cheque that DC Comics wrote, later sold at auction for \$160,000. So, \$130, was a bargain. I'm not tight, or, at least, I don't think I am. No one has ever described me as having long pockets and short arms, or of being able to peel an orange in my pocket, but I do like a bargain, and where better to get one than that well known auction site, ebay. Motorcycle clothing as we are all well aware is expensive; in fact, depending on how you kit yourself out, it is possible to pay more for kit than for your bike. For example, Alpinestars Absolute one piece leathers costs £2499.99; Daytona Evo Voltex boots cost £749.99; a pair of Five RFX race gloves come in at £399.99 and as your head obviously needs some protection, an AGV Pista GP RR will set you back £1399.99. Apparently you also need a 'base layer', which is what in my day we used to call 'vest and pants', and a Bull-it Covert base suit costs £399.99. If it's raining you'll need a Furygan race over suit for £149.99, and if you're going the whole hog you'd better squeeze yourself into a Held Air II protector vest that will have you cashing a cheque for £479.99. That's a grand sum of £6079.93. See what I mean?

The last bike I bought cost three and a half grand. All right I know that's an extreme example so in the name of fairness I had a look at everyone's favourite clothing and accessories store in Maidstone (*J&S Accessories. Ed*), where you can buy an AGV K3 helmet for £199.99; an Alpinestars Andes textile jacket for £199.99; Oxford Montreal textile bib trousers will cost you £107.99; Richa Zenith waterproof boots £74.99; and a pair of Held Gore-Tex lined gloves are £209.99. That's a total of £796.94. All good quality gear, but it still totals nearly eight hundred quid, which is a lot of money. Ebay is absolutely littered with secondhand clothing and kit, but a word of warning if you are an ebay virgin. There are, unsurprisingly, a number of scallywags trading on ebay, and there are also a number of people who sell a right load of old crap. I always view every ebay purchase as a punt and adopt the philosophy that you have to be willing to say, "Oh well that was a waste of (insert amount here)." Having said that, I have bought

some cracking bargains off 'the bay', so let me tell you about two of my best purchases.

A few years back I found myself to be a newly qualified KAMG observer and as such I was keen to help out a Kent Fire and Rescue biker skills day at Brands Hatch. Now I have to be honest and say that a big attraction to helping out, and I suspect a big draw for anyone signing up for the skills day, is the opportunity to hoon around the Indy circuit at Brands. An opportunity to unleash your inner Barry Sheene. The only problem with this is that to go on the track you need either one-piece leathers, or two-piece leathers that zip together. A budget set of leathers will set you back about £300 so to get a half decent set would probably cost £500 to £600 and I didn't really want to pay that for something that I was only going to wear about three or four times a year. So, time to fire up the laptop and see what ebay had to offer. A trawl through ebay revealed literally hundreds of sets of leathers to choose from and I was drawn to a set of red, Spyke, two-piece leathers that looked nearly new, apart from a large black scuff on the right arse cheek. I obviously don't know the seller's motorcycle history but I'd imagine it went something like this, viewed through the eyes of his wife.



Ebay bargain £25 Spyke leathers in the 'hooning' queue at Brands Hatch

"You want to get a bike, OK then. "

"You've passed your test, well done. "

"What's that, you want a 'gixer' thousand? Isn't that a bit big? You've only just passed your test. Well OK if it's what you want. "

"A track day, that sounds like fun. "

I don't know what followed, but I'm guessing it has something to do with target fixation, and a trip to the gravel trap.

"You're never riding another bike, and you can sell those effing leathers as well!"

The leathers had a starting bid of £25 and I suppose the seller would be hoping to get £150 to £200 for them. Unfortunately he put a very poor description in the advertisement: "One set of Spyke zip-together leathers. Size Large." That description plus three photos, one of which was out of focus. If you find yourself selling bike kit on ebay can I suggest that you post as many photos as possible – I think twelve are allowed – and try to make them good clear photos including any marks, wear, and labels. In the description put as many measurements as you can. If you don't do that, and as supply massively outweighs demand, you will find that people will just pass your advertisement by, and that's obviously what happened in this case. These leathers had been listed for six days and there was not one single bid. With about ten minutes to go I cheekily offered the starting price of £25 and ten minutes later I was the proud owner of said leathers.

Now a word of warning: the seller clearly wasn't happy that the leathers had sold so cheaply, and I'm guessing he was new to ebay and was wondering how to get out of the deal. Most people would just say that the dog chewed them but he chose to do nothing until I contacted him to say they hadn't arrived. When you list something on ebay you specify how much postage you're going to charge. Well, clearly this chap hadn't a clue as he was only charging a fiver. His next tactic was to say that he'd underestimated the cost of postage and could I send him another fifteen quid? That was never going to happen, and when I threatened to get ebay involved in the dispute he sent the leathers. They are in really good condition, apart from the scuff, and have served me well. After about a year I did have to replace the jacket zip which cost £45. Even so I still think they were a bargain and if they last as long as Terry Friday's green leathers they'll be the bargain of the century.

As motorcyclists we have freedom to choose what we wear on the bike, other than a mandatory helmet of course. We can, should we so choose, just ride in shorts T shirts and flip flops. (Did you know that flip flops were

invented by a Frenchman called Phillippe Philoppe*). Or we can truss ourselves up like Sir Galahad setting off to find the Holy Grail with armoured back, shoulders, elbows, chest and knees. We can squeeze ourselves into a thick suit of leather that leaves us looking like Jason Lee Scott or Trini Kwan. (Really? You don't know who they are? Well, good luck when Rita Repulsa comes knocking at your door. No? Still nothing?) Or you could equip yourself like the 1894 character Bibendum, the Michelin man, with an airbag jacket. Incidentally, the reason the Michelin man is white is because tyres were originally off-white: black tyres were introduced a few years later when carbon was added to the mix to make them black. Also, while talking tyre trivia, I bet you can't guess which manufacturer makes the most tyres every year? Go on, guess, you'll never get it.... Give up? OK I'll tell you, it's Lego. They make 381 million tyres a year, Bridgestone comes next with 190 million.



A Knox back protector for a fiver

But back to the subject of riding protection: I tend to take a varied approach to how much I wear and it usually depends on the weather, on what I'm doing, on how far I'm going, and so on. Although I know that none of those things should make a difference, they just do. One thing I'd never owned until recently was a back protector, so it was time to fire up ebay again. If you're ever in the market for a back protector can I encourage you to buy a secondhand one on ebay and don't spend more than a fiver on it. The reason I say this is because ebay is littered with the things, and if the one you're looking at escapes you, don't worry because, like buses, there will be another dozen along in a minute. I think there's two reasons there are so many for sale. First, people who buy back protectors are serious about their safety and as back protectors are constantly being updated with better materials for improved comfort and protection the safety conscious are constantly upgrading. Second, airbag jackets and vests are becoming more popular now and are making back protectors redundant. I picked up a hardly worn Knox back protector for £5, with free P&P. While we're on the subject of back protectors a couple of interesting points for you: Geoff Travell the founder of Knox was an upholsterer by trade and an amateur racer. After a bad crash he found himself in hospital with a fractured back. Barry Sheene, who was a friend of his, came to visit him and told him that when

he started racing his mum used to shove a cushion down the back of his leathers. Geoff had a light bulb moment and the rest is history.

MotoCAP, the Motorcycle Clothing Assessment Program, is an organisation set up in Australia to test motorcycle clothing. One test they conducted was on textile jackets ranging from the cheapest, the Dririder Air Ride 4, to the most expensive (you've guessed it) the BMW Airflow, and all the jackets scored a very low 1 out of 5 for safety. A recent German study found that 30% of all textile jackets failed the abrasion test. So what's the problem with textile jackets and why wear a back protector when you undoubtedly have back armour in your jacket? Firstly, a proper back protector will cover a much larger area than the upside down teardrop piece in your jacket, but more importantly a proper back protector will stay put, and therein lies the rub (literally). A back protector won't stop you breaking your back any more than a knee protector or elbow protector will save those joints. Think about it logically. How can it? You're going to hit that lamppost at 70mph, and putting a piece of plastic and a quarter inch of foam between you and an unyielding lump of concrete isn't going to help much. What a back protector will do, however, is save you from abrasions because it stays put, and if you think abrasions aren't much of an issue find an image of Barry Sheene's leathers, or what's left of them, after his famous Daytona crash in 1975. Unfortunately the problem with some, although not all, textile jackets is that they rip, and suddenly as you are sliding towards the unyielding lamppost you find that your built-in back armour has bailed out and dived for cover. But, as you can see from the photo, a back protector, especially when compared to the built-in piece in the average textile (or leather) jacket, really covers a huge area and when you can pick them up so cheaply, well why wouldn't you wear one? Food for thought.

Some textile jackets are very strong and tear resistant particularly those with kevlar in the mix, but if you're serious about protection you really need leather, and it needs to be at least 1.2mm thick leather that is made into a jacket that is specifically built to offer protection when riding a motorbike. Some motorcycle manufacturers today make bikes just to appeal to Harry the hipster, who likes spending all his time polishing his shiny bike and just riding it from Shoreditch to the Bike Shed, and similarly there are clothing manufacturers that make motorcycle clothing specially for that short journey. It looks very nice and is very comfortable when sipping your Frappuccino, but it's not really what we're after when talking protection.

Until next time, keep the rubbery bits on the ground.

**Yeh, and his brother Phosbury invented the high-jump. Ed.*

ROADSIDE LITTER

Forty years ago I was an excited first-time visitor to Los Angeles and despite that city's reputation as the glittery home of Hollywood and film production, the thing that actually struck me as a new visitor, and the thing I remember now, was the litter;

cigarette and then chucked his empty packet out of the window. I said, "I can't believe you've just done that."

"Done what?"

"Chucked your fag packet out of the window."

"Don't worry," he said, "Someone's paid to pick it up."

The cost of cleaning up people's Red Bull cans and MacDonald's bags is not a cost that should fall on councils, the rubbish shouldn't be there in the first place and a continuing campaign to that effect would help. I'm not expecting KAMG members to scoop up Kent's rubbish, although I hope none of us adds to it, but I am asking everyone to sign the 'Fund a national anti-littering campaign' petition. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/566467>

This petition closes on July 12th, but don't leave it until the last minute, please do it today and get as many other people as possible to sign it. It needs 100,000 signatures for it to be debated in parliament and it only has 12000 at the moment.

NF

there were incredible amounts of litter everywhere and particularly alongside the freeways. Tinsel town it may be but the tinsel was in the gutters and alongside all the freeways. I had never seen anything like it in this country back then, and I thought that we Brits wouldn't put up with it; indeed, I smugly thought, we wouldn't chuck the stuff away in the first place, but oh how wrong I was. What a different story today. Now we are sinking under an avalanche of litter. Roadside litter is particularly noticeable when the verges have been cut at this time of year and the tons and tons of litter that lie hidden by the grass and taller growing plants on the verges is suddenly minced up by the mowers and rudely exposed. It is appalling.

A few years ago I was driving down Park Lane with another bloke. He lit a



BORING BUT NECESSARY STUFF FOR INSOMNIACS

Don't count sheep, read this...

The reason that I am still banging on about the proposed changes to the *Highway Code* is because they are fundamental changes that will, if implemented, have a major effect on the way that we ride and drive and this fact does not seem properly to have been recognised. I have been told that the proposed rules are not changes, and that what is being proposed has always been the case. That is not true. There are fundamental changes in the offing. The saga drags on and still we have heard nothing from the Government. At the time of going to press the Government had not published any of the submissions made to its consultation process on the subject. However, it has been possible to see some of those submissions because the organisations that made them have published them on their own websites although they are often very difficult to find. Interestingly, many of the points that the KAMG raised in its own submission are also raised by other organisations.

The Highway Code used to be a short, easily read and easily assimilated 'code', easily contained in a small pamphlet. There were one or two child-like drawings of nice friendly policemen in pointy helmets holding their hands in different positions and that was about it. Now it is a book of 150 pages with 307 'rules' and bags of pictures, diagrams and other stuff. Important stuff, no doubt, but everyone – repeat everyone, all 60million of us – is supposed to keep up to date with that stuff. And of course we don't. But if you disobey some of those 307 rules it's not just a matter of a few points on your licence, you could actually be committing a criminal offence. Moreover, there are moves afoot to make it even more complicated, and, in the view of many people, they are moves that could increase danger on the roads rather than reduce it.

Be in no doubt, these proposed changes to *The Highway Code*, if implemented, will dramatically

change your status on the road: you will become part of a new 'Hierarchy of Road Users' (new rule H1) and your position on that hierarchical ladder will affect your legal position in any collision in which you might be involved, and your position in the hierarchy will depend entirely on what vehicle you are driving or riding.

The hierarchy is based on the premise that those likely to be at most risk in the event of a collision are at the top and those who are likely to do most damage are at the bottom – in crude terms,

CYCLISTS



**Beware of passing
this vehicle on
the inside**

pedestrians are at the top and lorry drivers at the bottom. It is actually a simple hierarchy of vulnerability, and that no one can argue with; it's a hierarchy of which we are already instinctively and naturally aware and which we take into account every time we use the roads. It is, in short, a hierarchy of the bleedin' obvious. This hierarchy is constantly changing because it is an organic thing that is affected by circumstances; it changes with each yard we drive, although fundamentally the most vulnerable are always at the top. However – and this is the danger – this 'natural' and flexible hierarchy is going to change into a rigid, fixed hierarchy that will be used to make some quite radical rule changes to *The Highway Code* by giving those at the top of the hierarchy, principally pedestrians and cyclists, a lawful priority on the road that they have never had before. The 'Hierarchy of Road Users', as proposed, is using a road user's vulnerability as an inverted hierarchy of responsibility and, implicitly, of blame; in other words, lorry drivers must take greater care and be more 'responsible' in their driving because their vehicles are big. As KAMG pointed out in its submission, the proposed hierarchy is based simply on mass and nothing else. It assumes big is automatically dangerous, but a badly ridden bicycle is just as dangerous, not only to its rider but to other road users that might collide because of something the cyclist does.

Another dangerous implication of the Hierarchy of Users concept is that the smaller the vehicle you drive or ride the less careful you need be, and perhaps, by extension, in the event of a collision between a large and a small vehicle – between, say, a bicycle and a lorry – the more at fault the driver of the large vehicle would be judged to be.

Let's take just one example: bicycles undertaking large left-turning vehicles is a well-known cause of collisions in London and anyone who has done much driving in London will probably have seen such a collision or certainly witnessed some very near misses. This situation is presently covered in *The Highway Code* by Rule 72, which says to cyclists: *When approaching a junction on the left, watch out for vehicles turning in front of you.....Do not ride on the inside of vehicles signalling or slowing down to turn left.* However, proposed new rule 76 says to cyclists: *If you are going straight ahead at a junction, you have priority over traffic waiting to turn into or out of the side road.* (My underlining) In other words even if a driver is indicating to turn left and is in the appropriate left hand lane preparing to make

that turn, and is ahead of a cyclist on his nearside, that cyclist has priority and the driver must wait. Furthermore, drivers are told: *You should give way to any cyclists in a cycle lane, including when they are approaching from behind you.* (My underlining.) However, and despite his apparent priority the safety of the cyclist still depends on his being seen. Hmmm!

Is there anywhere in the present *Highway Code* that says that if you are correctly positioned in the left hand lane and indicating to turn left that you do not have priority over people behind you whether they are on a bike or in bloody spaceship? No, there isn't...at the moment. Of course, and regardless of priorities, we all look out for cyclists and dopey blokes on scooters undertaking on the inside, but the new rules give *priority* to a cyclist in that position. In effect, encouraging them to put themselves in that position. You can write all the new rules you like, but that, seems to me, to be a recipe for collisions. It is a rule that is designed to make cycling safer but which will actually encourage cyclists to put themselves in danger in the belief that because they have a notional priority they will be safe. Knowing that he had priority may be a small comfort to a cyclist as he 'blues and twos' his way to hospital. Just because *The Highway Code* says that it's the responsibility of a driver to see the cyclist that is not the same as a driver actually seeing the cyclist.

It is good to see that the IAM says the same as KAMG (not always the case) and in its submission the IAM said: "IAM RoadSmart disagrees with new Rule H1 establishing a hierarchy of users. All road users have a duty to take responsibility for their actions – that is natural justice. IAM RoadSmart understands the thinking behind this change but is concerned it may lead to cyclists and pedestrians assuming priority in potentially dangerous situations, where the operator of a motorised vehicle cannot see them or stop in time. This could lead to more injuries and conflicts on our roads rather than fewer". The Road Haulage Association (RHA) says: "the hierarchy lessens the responsibility of some road users and increases the liability and responsibility of others. The proposal seems to make some road users partially responsible for the behaviour of other road users based solely on the size of vehicle or device used. This is inappropriate".

The RHA goes on to say: "We are concerned that this sends a message that the responsibility for road safety rests only on the operator of larger vehicles,

and that operators of smaller vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, no longer have to take responsibility for their own actions."

There's lots more. Go to the websites listed below for the complete picture. The point is that, apart from Cycling UK, we are all saying the same thing. Worryingly, cyclists seem to think that there is a 'them' and 'us' war going on here because there are so many objections to these new rules. It should be very obvious that nothing could be further from the truth. These proposed new rules are explicitly being considered in order to make the roads safer for the most vulnerable road users, pedestrians and cyclists, and only cycle and pedestrian organisations were consulted when these new rules were framed without input from any other group. It was only subsequently that others were allowed to comment, and all the submissions to the consultation process that I have read, including KAMG's own submission, but excluding Cycling UK's submission, say very clearly that these new rules will not make the roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians, and could actually make them more dangerous.

Finally, let me ask you a question: when did you last read the law regarding your rights as a burglar and bone up on your legal obligations to non-burglars

and the burgled? "Ah," you will say, smugly, "I'm not a burglar, so frankly I haven't bothered to keep up to date with things. Sorry." Here's a more relevant question then: when did you last look at *The Highway Code*? Be honest. Aha! Just as I thought. It was probably about the same time that you last studied the law relating to burglary and theft. Unless you are an observer or an observee you never pick up *The Highway Code* do you? Interesting thought isn't it, that the one set of rules/laws that applies to every single person in the country without exception should be so little read? And if people like us, we jolly keen, upstanding and virtuous members of the IAM and KAMG, are infrequent readers of *The Highway Code*, how often does Joe Schmo read it? Never? Correct!
NF

Try these websites:

IAM RoadSmart

Road Haulage Association: www.rha.uk.net/News/Policy-Campaigning/Consultation-Responses

PACTS: www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/PACTS-Hw-Code-Response-Data.pdf

KAMG's submission can be seen in November 2020 Riders on the KAMG website.



FOR THE RIDE

- . New and used bike sales in store and online delivery available
- . Demonstrators available
- . Motorcycle servicing
- . Motorcycle MOT testing station
- . Motorcycle parts and accessories
- . Motorcycle clothing

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Sanderstead Road, South Croydon
Surrey CR2 0PL
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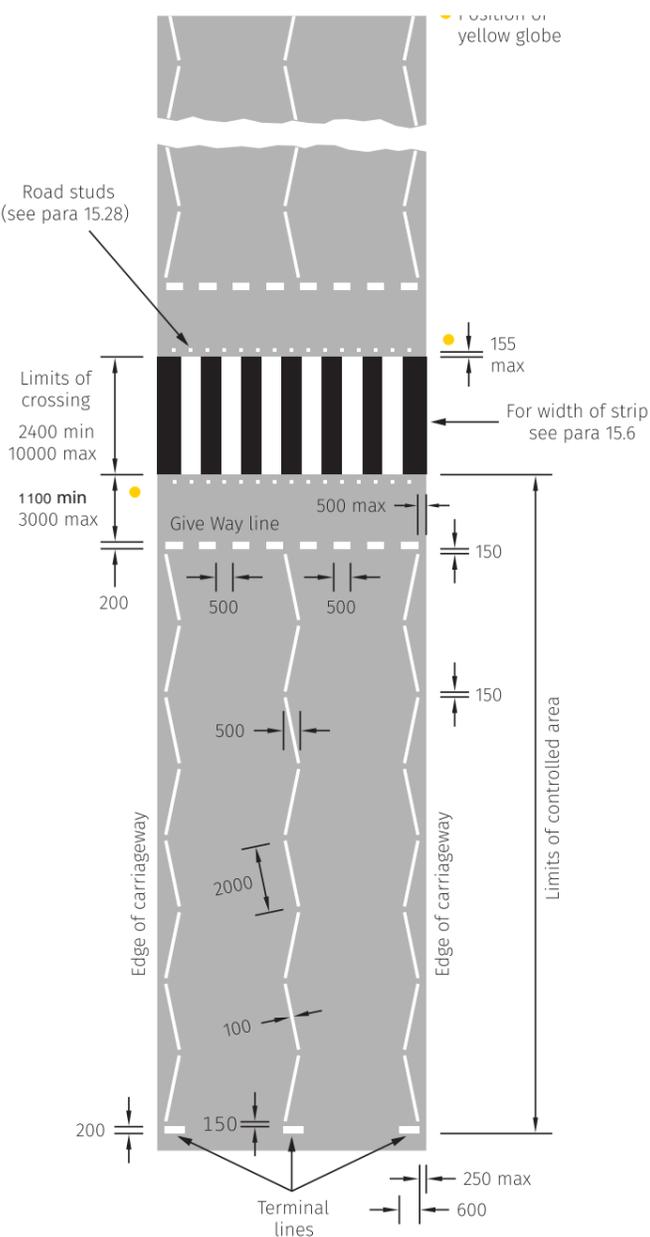
IS THIS LEGAL?

Surely it's a black and white case?

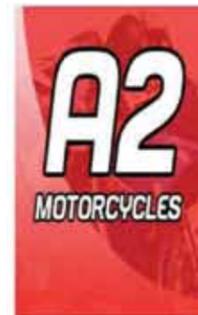
On May 15th Sutton council announced that a pedestrian crossing in Sutton town centre had been permanently painted blue, pink and white, for reasons that are explained on the council's website. www.sutton.gov.uk. I make no comment other than to ask whether it is legal? And whether it's OK for councils arbitrarily to decide that they will alter,

and alter radically, road signs and road markings for reasons other than road safety? As you may imagine there are pretty detailed rules governing the layout and colours of zebra crossings and this Sutton effort seems to me to contravene most of them.

First, and most obviously, the stripes are supposed to be alternately black and white (I believe it's got something to do with zebras being animals that are striped black and white); furthermore, the stripes on a zebra crossing must run in the direction of travel rather than at right angles to it, as these coloured stripes do; and the stripes must not be longer than 10 metres, yet clearly these pretty coloured stripes stretch across the road and are longer than 10 metres; finally, the stripes adjacent to the edge of the carriageway must be black, but in Sutton there are three stripes adjacent to the edge of the carriageway and none of them is black.



It will be interesting to see what the outcome of any court case is when someone is eventually flattened on this multi-coloured crossing. And just in case you have forgotten what a real zebra crossing looks like the official layout that applies to most of them is shown on the left.
NF



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READERS' WRITES

In the last five years there have been very few letters from readers – three, maybe four, in total in that time, certainly not more – however, this month there's an avalanche of four!

Sir,
24th March 2021

A good reputation is hard to achieve but quickly lost

In my time with KAMG, I know that everyone is very welcoming and all give their time freely to make us all better motorcyclists and considerate users of the road. I enjoy reading Riders and am grateful to those who volunteer their time to write the articles. I eagerly opened the latest edition of the magazine (Feb 2021), but on flicking through that issue, I did a double take at the headline on page 15: DO NOT 'TAKE THE KNEE'. By the time I had read the first paragraph I was very concerned.

This statement and the global movement associated with this is one of the key debates of our time and whatever your personal view may be, it is not going away anytime soon. We are after all a motorcycle group and the only politics we should be involved in is that relating to motorcycles and road safety. The aim of this (letter) is not to express my personal views on this matter, but to express concern about the impression this headline

may give to readers, of which I believe there are many outside of KAMG. I do understand from reading beyond the first paragraph that it is a typical informative and entertaining KAMG article, and would like to believe the headline is intended as 'tongue in cheek'. However, a prospective associate, an existing or potential advertiser or key stakeholder may consider that we are a group to steer clear of based on this headline alone. In my opinion, this clumsy headline does not do the KAMG membership justice.

What I would really like to drive home is this: we should be going out of our way to make sure that whatever your gender, race or background, if you want to be a better, safer motorcyclist and you live in Kent we are the group for you. Perhaps this should be a catalyst to re-double our efforts in this area.

I hope that you can appreciate my concern here, as I care greatly about the good reputation of KAMG and about treating everyone equally.

Nigel Clibbens

Sir,
21st March 2021

Many thanks for putting a brief note about helmet tabs into this month's Riders. (Feb 2021 edition. Ed) I really hope that no one ever has need of the information, but equally I would like to think that anyone of us 'down' at the roadside remembers it and takes control if anyone – paramedic or otherwise – tries to take their helmet off without employing the tabs.

Since my accident I have joined the National Association of Bikers with a Disability (NABD). This charity was established in 1991 and its aim is to enable disabled people to have full access to the independence and freedom of motorcycling. This is achieved through financial grants, assessments and training, adaptations and awareness.

I was very pleased to read in the Spring 2021 edition of its quarterly magazine that NABD has teamed up with IAM

RoadSmart, not only promoting the disabled charity but also helping to make advanced rider training all inclusive. I am not sure whether news of this has filtered through to KAMG, but I wondered whether this could be celebrated in a future copy of Riders.

I have attached a scan of the pages of the NABD magazine* for your reference. I am not sure how IAM work and whether there will be press releases available from on high, but do let me know if there is anything you would like me to do

Matt Pounds

**The scans that Matt sent are not of good enough quality to reproduce here but you can go to the NABD website: www.NABD.org.uk for more information. And by the time you read this NABD will have given a talk, via Zoom, on club night, May 27th. I have also asked Matt if he will write something for a future edition of Riders. Ed.*

The following letter was written by KAMG observer Geoff Curtis to the editor of RoadSmart, the IAM's magazine, but he also copied it to Riders for publication here.

Dear RoadSmart
7th March 2021

I take issue with the article 'The Science of Speeding' in the Spring 2021 of RoadSmart magazine. Although quite enlightening about categories of speeding offender, it falls into the trap of confusing safe speeds with legal ones. Consider the quote from Wells, the lecturer in criminology (NB. not health and safety or collision statistics) who states "A speed camera gives you an arbitrary differentiation between safe and dangerous." Er, no it doesn't. It measures speed and determines whether it is legal or not. It has no knowledge of the environment in which it is placed; no thought of being near a school or a junction or what the road conditions are at the time. Is 70mph fine and dandy while 71mph is lethal? Apparently 71mph is not considered lethal on the continent where 130kph (approximately 81mph) is legal. Is it inherently dangerous to drive a modern car at 100mph (e.g. on a dry empty motorway in the early hours of the morning)? No, the police do, it's just highly illegal for the rest of us.

The article begins with the emotive statement, "Speed kills, particularly 'inappropriate' speed." Most of the

readership will understand the term 'inappropriate' speed but others might latch on to the first two words as confirmation of their belief. I can imagine zealots campaigning for new and, in many cases, unnecessary 20mph limits saying they have our support (the IAM's). The IAM says, "Speed kills". Dissecting the opening statement causes me to say again – er, no it doesn't. In my view it makes no sense at all. If indeed speed, per se, kills, then surely we wouldn't be happy to fly to our holiday destinations because jet airliners often cruise at around 500mph. As a wit once said, "Falling from a cliff does no harm at all, it's the sudden stop at the bottom that's the problem." Speed is a vague term which is not explicitly defined in my dictionary, referring as it does to similar words such as 'fast' and 'quickly'. These are all relative terms and require interpretation according to the circumstances, and people do so (interpret) according to their own perceptions. Excessive speed is often a contributing factor in road deaths but never the sole cause. A more accurate opening to the article would have been 'Inappropriate speed is dangerous' but this of course does not trip off the tongue as a slogan or lend itself easily to use in a poster campaign.

I expect better from the IAM than to perpetuate fallacies and to regurgitate common simplistic misconceptions.

Geoff Curtis

This letter is from a gentleman in West London who isn't a member of KAMG but who obviously tripped over the February magazine somewhere and it struck a chord.

Sir,
12th March 2021

This may be petty but I think you may have missed something. If you haven't and I, in fact, missed it — then no end of apologies. It is this: when 'smart' motorways were first hatched out, the idea was that they would be 'dumb' most of the time; that is, they would run like an ordinary, proper motorway with a hard shoulder just sitting there doing nothing except saving a few lives every now and then. And perhaps providing a sightseeing or nappy-changing opportunity for foreign tourists.

Motorways became busy as they got more popular, particularly at certain times of the day, and rather than make them wider (which McKinsey said would not be cost-effective as most of the time the expensive extra width and land wouldn't be needed, ker-ching), they would make them, er, smarter and use the hard shoulder

at peak times as a running lane. Or even not just at some arbitrary peak times but whenever the brilliant algorithm detected that another lane was needed.

And there would be no problem because, as the planning document would have pointed out, by definition, when the hard shoulder (sorry, the Smart and Safe Running Lane) was actually needed, traffic would be going at only between 1.3 and 2.7 mph. (No, of course nobody measured and calculated that, but no-one ever got sign-off on a document which said that 'traffic would probably be moving rather slowly'.) So any death on a Smart Motorway when the S&SRL was in use would be from old age, starvation or boredom.

Then, of course, they decided to use the Smart Deathtraps all the time, so rather than traffic inching past and holding you in long conversations about your engineering skills while you were changing your wheel, it will be screaming past at 70 mph, when it feels like obeying the law, probably more if it feels frisky. Or possibly a fraction less if a few mph has been scrubbed off as it went through the chicane you've just created.

Ralph C.



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