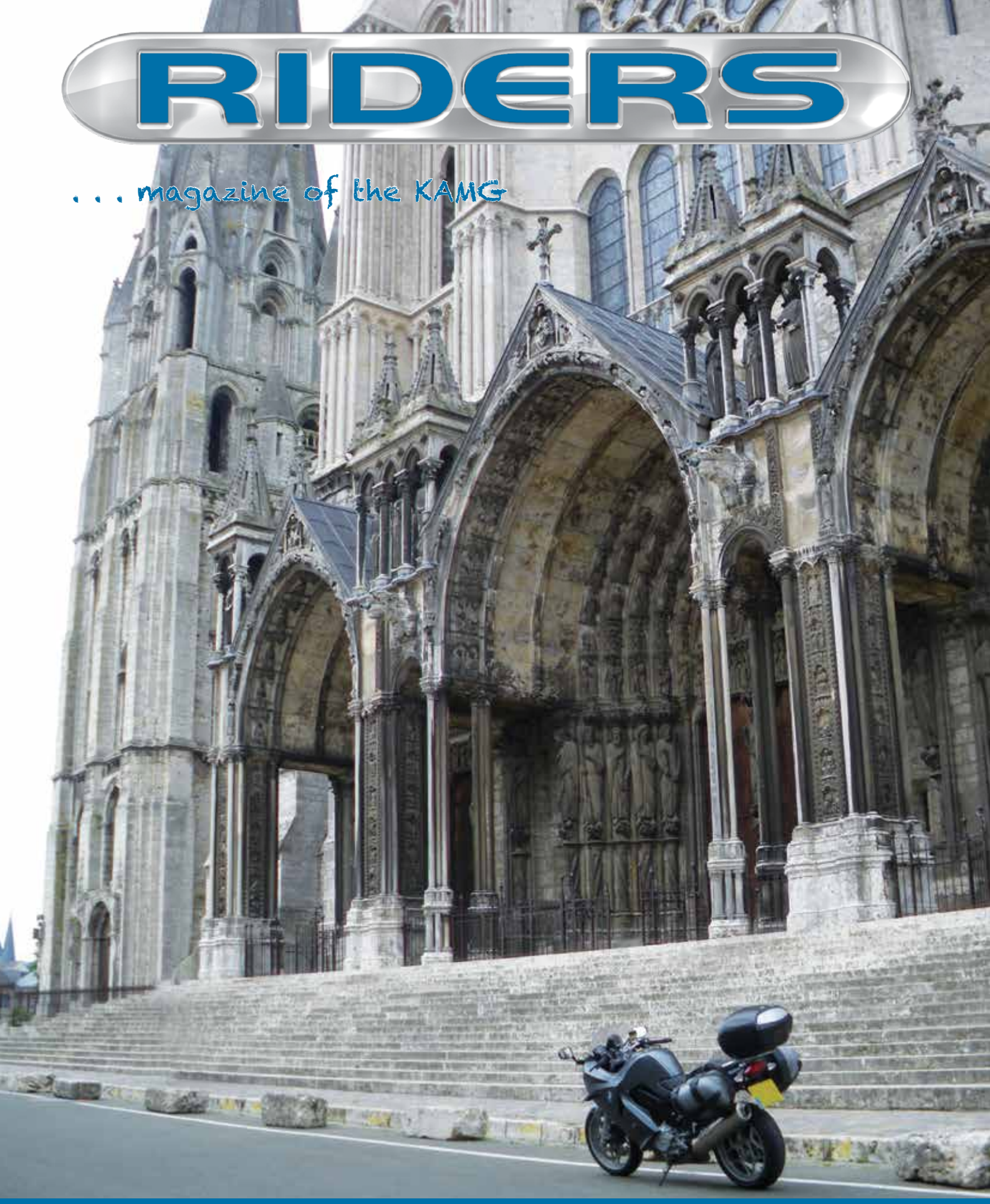
RIDERS

. . . magazine of the KAMG



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SCAN ME

KENT ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS GROUP

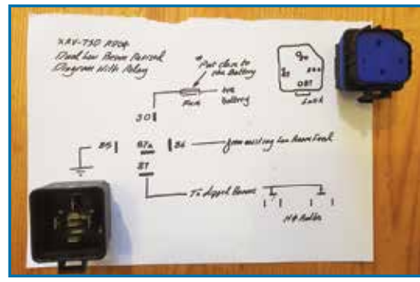
THIS EDITION INCLUDES . . .

REGULAR FEATURES:

NEW FEATURES:

Cover - Get off your bike and look - page 23

Two Strokes are still winning - page 7



Hmmm? - page 10

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

June		
Sun 30th	Ride to Roedean, Brighton	
July		
Sat 13th	IDCAM	
Sun 14th	Classic Bike Show and Jumble, Ardingly, RH17 6TL	
Thurs 18th	Fish and chip run to Rye	
Sat 20th	Machine Control Day	
Sun 21st	Grasstrack Racing, Frittenden, TN17 2 ED	
Thurs 25th	Group night BBQ	
Sun 28th	Ride-out to Lazy Shack Hythe	
August		
Sat/Sun 17/18	Peterborough Training Weekend	
Thurs 22nd	Fish and chip run to Folkstone	
Thurs 29th	Group night 'Hideout Leathers'	
Sat 31st	IDCAM	
September		
Sun 31st	Ride-out to Chichester	

This list is correct at time of going to press. Check all KAMG dates on Tracker to ensure that there are no changes. Details of contacts for IDCAM, Machine Control Days and Ride-outs are on pages 30 and 31.

Nick Farley, Editor

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Everything is done to ensure the correctness and accuracy of the editorial content of the magazine, but neither the editor nor the KAMG accepts liability for information errors, omissions or typesetting errors.

Riders is the place for every single member, or associate member, of KAMG to say what he/she thinks about anything and everything connected with riding and driving and the KAMG. Every article submitted will be published (provided it is legal) and no opinions or views will be changed or cut out. The magazine is apolitical, but criticism or praise of politicians of any political colour is welcome if the criticism, or praise, is about the politician's actions or views on road safety, roads or some other aspect of transport.

Please submit articles for publication, or letters to the editor, to the email address of the editor (see page 30). Please send pictures for publication as separate file attachments to an email if possible, rather than embedding them in the email content, and ensure that the pictures are of the highest resolution possible. Please do not send information or pictures via Facebook.

MAGAZINE DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY JOHN GARDINER

EDITORIAL

John Surtees CBE

Most of you, I guess, know of John Surtees and will know the endlessly repeated line that he was the only man to have been a motorcycle world champion (seven times!) and a Formula 1 world champion. He was a hero of my youth. In fact, he was the only hero of my youth dating from when, as a 15 year old, I saw him ride the fabulous 500 MV4 at Brands Hatch in 1958 and I have never forgotten it. He took part in 621 races on two and four wheels and he won 290 of them with a further 103 on the podium. And that at a time when machines were mechanically fragile and unreliable, and when riders and drivers were killed almost every weekend in the racing season. The very first car race he saw, he saw from behind the steering wheel of a F1 car and in it he came second to Jim Clark. Eventually he ran his own F1 team with cars designed and built in his factory in Edenbridge. I got to know him a little in 1971 when I negotiated with him a deal for the *Daily Mail* to sponsor his F1 team for a season at a cost of £72,000. That (believe it or not) was the going rate back then, and that sum was for a two-car team at every Grand Prix, with one being driven by Mike Hailwood. Imagine that. It was a different time. The stupid *Daily Mail* management didn't pursue it, but I still have the artwork for the royal blue car livery, and I did subsequently work with John on a series of articles for the *London Evening News*.

The reason I am writing about this is because there's a 1½ hour documentary biopic now on *YouTube* that you really must see. It puts the modern two and four wheel prima donnas in perspective. Added to which John Surtees was one of us: he was undeniably an 'advanced' motorcyclist and his factory was in Kent. Go to *YouTube* and search for 'Built to Win: John Surtees'.

The Election

I don't want to be unduly pessimistic, but I can't help wondering what sort of cloth-eared, swivel-eyed Herbert (or Herbertess, he adds hastily and inclusively) we are going to get as Secretary of State for Transport in the new government, no matter what political colour it is. What you can be sure of is that whoever gets the job, he/she will know absolutely bugger all about transport and will not be around long enough to do anything before there is a cabinet reshuffle and some other witless gorm will be wheeled in flapping his/her limp net zero flag while urging us all to ride bicycles, travel on non-existent buses and drive at 20mph. Meanwhile, in the real world, where you and I live, the roads will continue to crumble to dust, electric scooters will continue to be used illegally right under the very noses of the coppers, and bigger and bigger electric 'bicycles!!!' will become *de facto* motorbikes free of every motoring law that the rest of us have to obey. My advice is to fit auxiliary pedals to your GS and give up paying road tax and insurance – it's a bicycle officer, no really it is, look it's got pedals.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

At the time of writing, I am sweltering in sunny Sicily on the bike, but I understand that the UK is still waiting for summer to start. Like many members, I have opted to ride to warmer climes. Two groups have recently spent a week in Luxembourg, and at the moment another group is in Switzerland. We also have members in the south of France, some in soggy Germany and yet others are in warmer Croatia.

If you have not experienced riding on the continent, but have considered it, I will endeavour to put together a short European trip next year for members, to ease you into touring. I will keep you posted once I have time to consider the logistics.

Despite the poor UK weather, training continues with plenty of observed rides in progress. The last Machine Control Day was well attended and our thanks go to our new MCD man David Austin for picking up the organising baton.

Hopefully, the weather will improve in time for the KAMG BBQ at the Kentagon on July 25th. Sarah Livingstone is the organiser for this event and you can contact her for tickets. The BBQ is always well attended and is a chance for you to bring friends and family along.

Our CIO application is still ongoing, and we are currently awaiting a response from IAM Roadsmart. To be fair, it's only been three months since we wrote to them with our proposal, and they have acknowledged receipt, so we know that someone is in the office! However, the work from our team is pushing forward and we are still working towards completing the process by our deadline of the end of 2024.

Well, I'm now looking forward to 'Sex on the Beach' this afternoon – no, don't panic, it's just a cocktail. Nothing like it in the sun. Xx

Dave Murphy

TEST PASSES

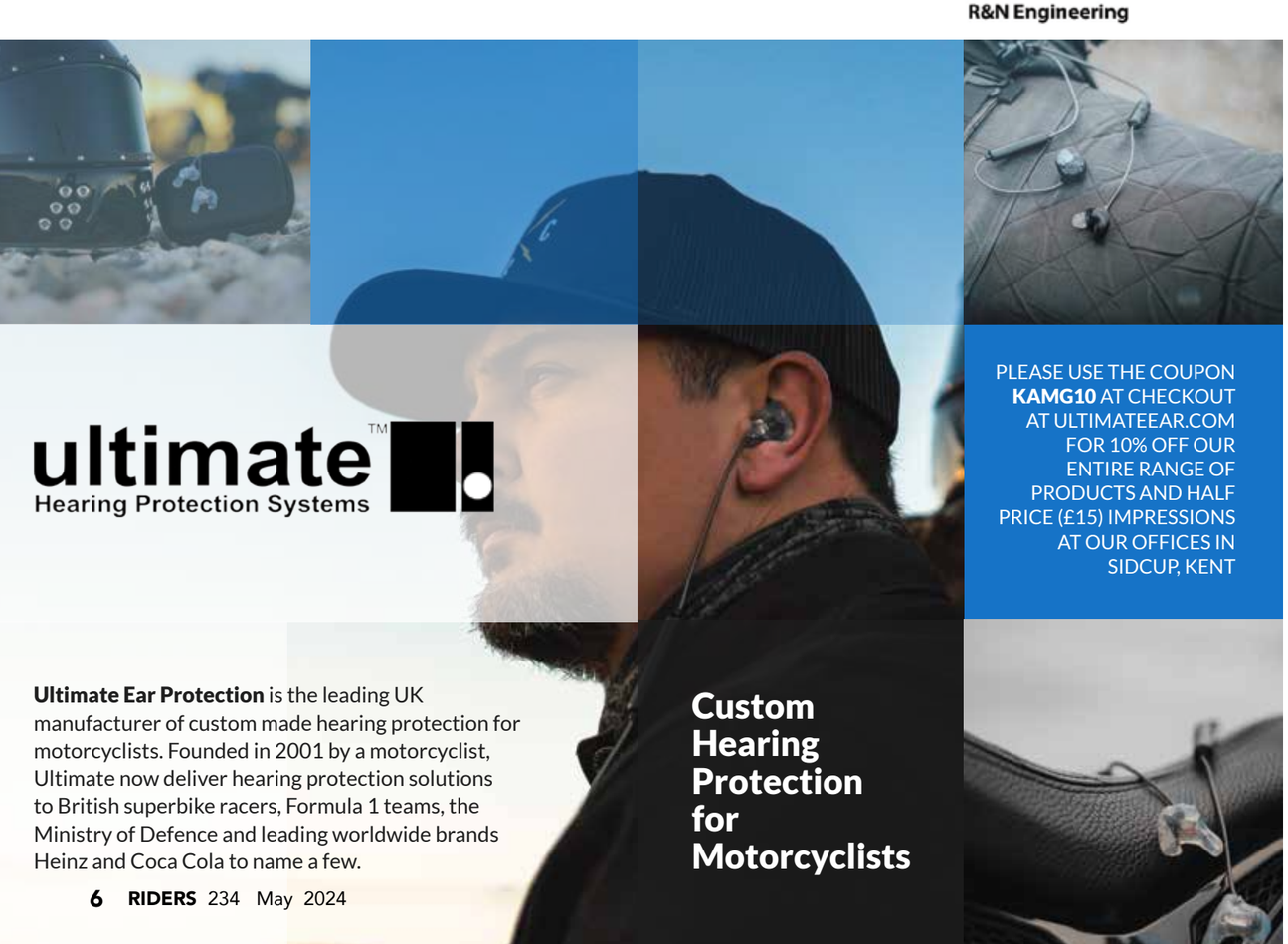
Since the last edition

Stuart Lothering on receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from his observer Matt Pounds

Brendan Burke receiving his Masters qualification from his mentor Colin Underwood

Tim Bolton receiving his Masters qualification from his mentor Steve Riches

Nicola Walker receiving her Masters Distinction qualification from husband Ian Walker



"ABC, IT'S AS EASY AS 123, DOH, RAY, ME."

So sang Michael Jackson in 1970, but Dave Willson finds it relevant today

The works

We're all experienced motorcyclists at the KAMG, and I'm sure we all know about the workings of the internal combustion engine – suck, squeeze, bang, blow, repeat. (Although, as happened to me a couple of weeks ago suck, squeeze… fart, followed by an hour or two stood on the hard shoulder of the A2 awaiting recovery.) We also know there are four strokes and there are two strokes, and while I find that there aren't many advantages to getting older, I do count myself lucky to be old enough to have owned and ridden several two strokes and to have witnessed the likes of Kenny Roberts, Randy Mamola and Barry Sheene thrashing the nuts off of their 500cc two strokes. Although in the case of Barry's Suzuki, it was more like thrashing four MZ 125cc engines bolted together – just think, if Ernst Degner hadn't metaphorically scaled the Berlin wall, we might never have experienced such delights.* I do wonder what would have happened if Greta Thunberg had been exposed to 500cc two strokes as a child – I say child, when obviously I mean as an even *younger* child – perhaps she might not have embarked on her quest to save the planet? After all what's more important, saving the planet, or large capacity two strokes? I think we all know the answer to that one.

We all know too, that motorcycle engines range in size from about 50cc up to about 1400cc with the odd exception usually built by that engineering genius Allen Millyard, in his garden shed. We also know that motorbikes come as singles, twins, threes and fours. Honda even built a six, the lovely CBX. Honda are like that. Once

This gives an idea of the size of these models

they even put *oval* pistons in a bike. I'm sure too that we all understand the bits and pieces that make up an engine and we know how they fit together – the pistons, barrels, crankshafts, conrods, tappets, valves and so on, but there is another type of motorcycle engine that you may not be aware off?

OK so I'm using the word 'motorcycle' loosely because I'd like to invite you to follow me into the world of radio-controlled *model* motorcycles, and specifically into their engines. The engines used in these miniature marvels range from about 1.5cc up to about 15cc. They are two stroke compression-ignition engines that run on nitro methanol, which is the nastiest most disgusting fuel known to man, and to Greta. Our full-size motorbikes are spark ignition, so that when the fuel mixture is compressed in the cylinder, some electrical wizardry provides a spark and it all goes bang. I'd try to explain the electric bit, but, as we all know, electricity is magic… in the same way that it's magic that makes aeroplanes fly. And don't give me all that nonsense about air travelling further over the top of the wing creating an area of low pressure and thus causing lift, because if that's the case how come planes can fly upside down?

Instead of spark ignition provided by a spark plug, these little engines have a *glow plug,* which is a plug that is kept permanently 'glowing' between cycles by the heat of each explosion, so there's no need for any electrical gubbins. Now this is where these engines get clever: as we are all aware, a piston moves up and down inside the cylinder, so logically there has to be a gap between the piston's surface and the walls of the cylinder. However, if that gap is too big the explosive mixture in the cylinder leaks and you don't get enough compression. Our bike engines, of course, solve this problem by having two or three piston rings that wrap around the piston and are sprung, so that they push outwards sealing the gap between the piston and the cylinder wall. However, in a model engine of 1.5cc, the piston has a diameter of only about a centimetre, and if you're the type of person who would relish the idea of fitting three rings around a piston that small and then try to shove the whole lot into the barrel, you need help. No, seriously, you need help. Go and see someone.

So, what do they have instead of piston rings? That's the really clever bit. Cast your mind back to the title song of this article, *ABC*: these small model engines employ ABC technology, which is to say that they have an ***A***luminium piston moving in a ***B***rass barrel that is ***C***hrome plated, and that means they don't have piston rings because they don't need them. So, what about the aforementioned gap between piston and barrel? Well, unlike a conventional piston in a cylinder barrel, the sides of the barrel on an ABC engine slope in towards the top. In other words, the bore at the top of the barrel is very, very slightly less than the bore at the bottom: or, more bluntly, the barrel is narrower at the top than the bottom. Therefore, when the piston gets to TDC, (who doesn't love a TLA, LOL), it is so tight in the barrel that it almost gets stuck, but because it has some nice shiny chrome to slide over, it just about manages to keep going. Incidentally, the oil that lubricates these engines is mixed with the fuel, much like I used to do with my MZ. Ah yes, I hear you say, you've told us that the oil is mixed with the fuel, but you also said that there were no electrics, ergo no fuel pump; so how does the fuel get into the engine? Well, mostly it's sucked into the crankcase by the vacuum that's created there by the rotating crank and the piston's movement. Also, some of the exhaust fumes are directed back into the fuel tank to keep the tank pressurised. See, I said they were clever. Obviously, the chrome bore lining will eventually wear away, but when I said the barrel is made of brass that's not strictly true. Actually, the barrel just has a brass *liner* that can be replaced when the chrome has worn away.

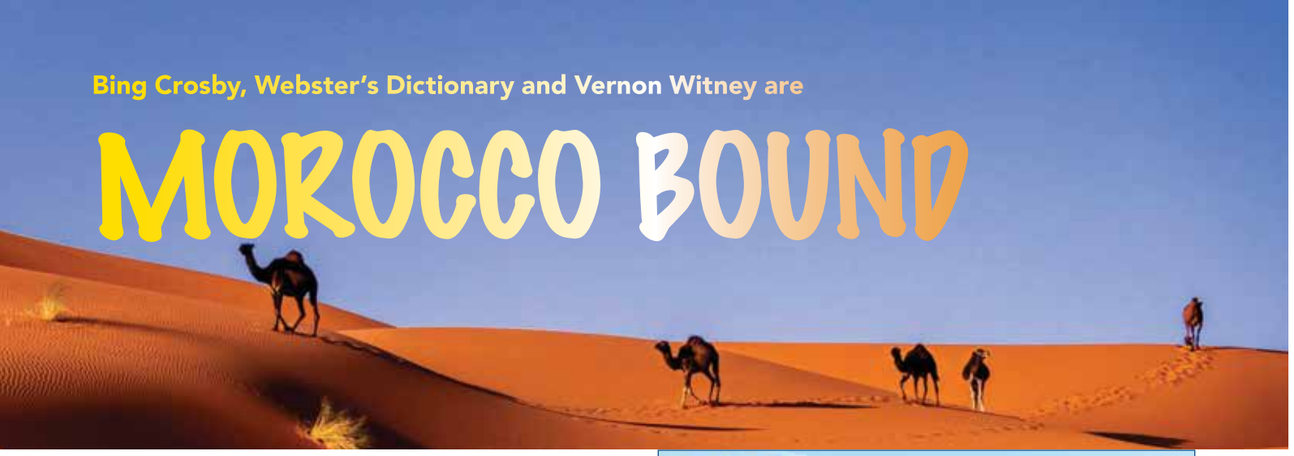
But wait, there's more: in 1926 a very talented engineer called Adolf Schnürle, came up with a way of rearranging the intake, transfer, and exhaust ports of a two stroke engine in such a way that the piston itself does the work of opening and closing the inlet and exhaust ports as it moves up and down, and so does away with all those complicated bits like valves, and springs, and cams.

You may be thinking that this is all very interesting, or perhaps not, but what has it got to do with real motorbikes? Well, in the words of another song *"Round like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel, never ending or beginning …,"* I'll just say this: the miniature engine that I've been describing is about 2cc, but if you scale that up to 125cc and hand it to Aprilia, you get the Aprilia RS125, or any other small capacity two strokes from back in the day. Yep, exactly the same engine, although to be fair they are spark ignition and they do have piston rings, but I hope you get my point, and I hope you've found this of some interest.

If you haven't nodded off then you may be interested in how these mini radio-controlled marvels work? The answer is that they work in the same way as your full-size bike works: they have steering, suspension, chain and sprockets and pneumatic tyres, but they have gyroscopes to ride them instead of you. The only things they don't have are gears: they have a centrifugal clutch that spins with the motor and as the motor spins faster discs are spun out and tabs engage with slots to engage the drive. The person controlling the bike controls the throttle and steering with his transmitter. Unfortunately, when it comes to leaning the bikes, there is a point of no return (like full-size bikes) so they are fitted with small stabilisers. If you're interested, have a look on *YouTube*. There are some great videos, but make sure you're looking at the nitro fuelled engine versions and not the electric motor variety. And if you're thinking of trying to see them in the flesh – well, like the bikes ridden by our heroes Barry, Kenny, and Randy, I'm afraid the days of small capacity two stroke engines are numbered. The model world, much like the real world, is being taken over by electricity. Thanks Grrrrretta!

The plane that Dave Willson magically flies upside down… sometimes

**If you don't know Ernst Degner's story, Google it, it is riveting. It involves his wife and children being drugged and smuggled out of East Germany in the boot of a large American car, in 'cold war' 1961. At that time Degner was a works rider for the East German MZ grand prix team, which, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, had a genius designer called Walter Kaaden, whose MZs were far and away the best two strokes of the time and challenged for world titles despite their communist factory's feeble resources. In contrast, Suzuki at that time was a well equipped but hopeless factory team, and so it arranged to get Degner and his family out of East Germany to work for them. At one stroke Suzuki thus got a potential world champion rider and an engineer with all of Kaaden's secrets. Good move. Degner has since been variously viewed as a hero or as a traitor, but his life didn't go well and he had some terrible racing crashes when his high-revving Suzukis seized. His life ended early and sadly, but his name lives on at the Suzuka circuit in Japan, where turn 8 is named after him. Ed.*



Bing Crosby, Webster's Dictionary and Vernon Witney are

MOROCCO BOUND

Quite some time ago, I wrote an article about my experience of attending the BMW off-road school, and I said in that article that I'd like to ride to Morocco or Tunisia. *(See 'Riders' Nov 2019 on-line. Ed.)* Well, Morocco is more accessible, plus the number of articles and videos I have seen about it persuaded me that it was the best place to visit. Yes, it's on another continent, but with easy access from Europe.

The next decision was what bike to use? I'd seen quite a few videos about the older Dakar bikes. There are some very interesting videos about the exploits of Harry Metcalf on his channel, *Harry's Garage*, where he talks about Dakar bikes and also about his exploits in Morocco. I loved the look of the Honda XRV650/Africa Twin RD03, so this was a possible contender, or perhaps a later bike. Having restored a few cars and worked on some of my bikes, I thought it would be a bit of a challenge to buy a bike, rebuild it, and then take it down to the Sahara. Checking on-line forums, as well as on the availability of parts, confirmed that an Africa Twin RD04 would be an interesting project; it was similar in looks to the Dakar RD03, but was a bit more available, had a bigger engine and twin discs at the front.

Buying someone else's stalled project is fraught with danger, and therefore the plan was to buy a complete running bike. I didn't know much about these bikes, so determining if all the parts were there would have been pretty much impossible for me beyond the basics of frame, forks, wheels and engine. However, I would have entertained something that had been in storage, but was otherwise complete. When I started looking, I found that the earlier bikes – those between 1990 and 1992, which were never officially imported into the UK – were scarce, with just two coming up. One was in London, so I went to take a look, and it was definitely a candidate, although it had clearly been well used and abused. However, it was certainly running and on the road with a current MOT. It was also in my favourite colours, although that really wasn't much of a concern as the plan was to repaint the bike anyway. I said I would let the seller know and I went to see another bike that was on Facebook Marketplace. This one… well, let's say the colours were 'challenging'. I noticed it had been reduced a few times already and I'm sure that the colours put people off. Chris, the owner, ran a custom bike building shop, so he was very much a biker, but more of the Harley cruiser type. He had bought the bike, had done few miles on it and had lost interest. We joked about the colour and he called it the *Miami Vice* bike, as the colours were reminiscent of the *Miami Vice* logo of the TV series from the 1980s.

The starting point, Miami Vice on two wheels.

Despite the colour, this bike was far cleaner than the first bike I looked at. Chris said he would even put a fresh MOT on it for me. This gave me a bike that was complete, on the road and MOT'd. A good start for any project. It had covered around 67000 km (about 42000 miles) and was a German import. Just over £3000 changed hands and I had my steed: a 1991 RD04 Africa Twin. One warning note here: I found that imported bikes do seem to increase insurance premiums, so consider this if you are buying an imported bike.

This really was a sound bike for a project and it certainly did not need rebuilding. It would, however, need some work and a little more than I originally envisioned, as I was soon to find out. But first, I had to move my faithful Mk1 Capri in the garage to free up just about enough room for the bike restoration to begin. The area was bigger than the bike, but not by much, so all the work had to be done in a relatively small space.

One of the issues I wanted to address straight away was some rust on the frame, especially at the front. My thoughts were to strip the bike down to the frame and get it blasted and powder coated. I'm not a huge fan of powder coating; it has to be done correctly, and not many places do it as I would want. What typically happens is that the powder coaters blast parts clean and then powder coat directly over the bare metal surface. It looks fantastic, but if you pick up a stone chip moisture soon gets underneath and creates the perfect environment for rust. So, after some research, I settled on a company called 'Windridge Coatings' in Broadstairs, which was a bit of a hike from where I live, but I wanted this done properly and Windridge blast clean *and* apply a rust resistant coating before applying the powder coating. As I'm sure you know, powder coating is a process where the bare metal parts are blasted clean and hung up on a conductive frame. This is then earthed and a gun sprays powder 'paint' that is electrostatically attracted to the part that is to be coated. The parts are then baked in an oven, where the powder melts and flows out to give a tough durable surface. But besides powder coating, I would also be using several other ways of protecting various parts of the bike, including Cerakote, zinc plating and plain old rattle-can paint.

Taking the bike apart, I was pleasantly surprised to find how good the condition was. When dismantling anything that is 30 or more years old there can be 'issues' with rusted or seized bolts, but, luckily, in the whole strip down, I encountered only two seized bolts. We all know that feeling, don't we, when you start to undo bolts and you sense that all is not going well. Penetrating oil and heat can help, but sometimes it's a case of knowing it's snapped, or will very soon snap. Dealing with a sheared bolt means drilling it and using a stud extractor or even redrilling and using a Helicoil to restore the thread. One of the problem bolts was on a heatshield on the exhaust, which didn't matter, as it was going to be replaced with a much lighter system. But the other bolt was on a front fork leg and really did need attending to. That one was a relatively hard steel bolt seized in a soft aluminium casting, and extracting it needed a little care. Apart from this, there were no real challenges, and many bolts and parts still had their zinc passivate plating intact (a silver/yellow metallic finish); so, those bolts were simply cleaned and re-used 'as is' while others were replated.

It would definitely have been useful to have a bike lift, but the room I had really didn't allow for this and instead I bought a small hydraulic lift to raise the bike off its wheels.

The strip down begins. Not a huge amount of space to work in, but enough. I have a small workshop next to this, where I worked on the sub-assemblies, but this is where the bike was disassembled and where it was ultimately re-assembled.

Here you can see the engine on the lift with the frame in the background. I really did not plan on going further with the engine, as it ran sweetly with no issues… famous last words.

Once stripped, and with the head bearing races removed, I could take the frame, along with the centre stand, rear subframe and rear brake pedal, down to Windridge; but, of course, I forgot the side stand that was also in the back of the car. It would take a few weeks, possibly even a month or so to get them done, so it was best to get these parts into the queue for the process. The guys at Windridge put silicone bungs into all the threaded holes, so that, in theory, I would not have to clean out all the threads with a tap once I got the frame back, but they could miss something, so I was prepared to have to carefully clean out threads after the powder coating.

It's always a good idea to take pictures to remind yourself of what you are dropping off at the platers, or painters. Things can get lost.

This is the look I was after. My vision was to recreate the look of the earlier Dakar RD03 bikes.

The other part of the project that I knew would take time was the paint job. When the bike was delivered, the seller was saying how rare the colour was and how he really liked it. I didn't have the heart to say that I hated it and had a very different vision for the bike.

Martin Brown had mentioned that he had used the services of 'Pauls One Off Customs' for paint in the past, and I took his recommendation. I told Paul what I had in mind, and showed him pictures, and he gave me a very reasonable quote. So, the tank and external panels went off to him, near Brands Hatch. This also helped me with space, as storing all these items took up a fair amount of room.

The last time I would see these'challenging'colours.

While various components were away being painted, I started work on the remaining parts of the bike. Although this was my first *bike* restoration, it was not my first vehicle restoration rodeo, and I still applied the same thought processes I had applied to other restorations in the past. As I removed bolts, these were bagged in Ziplock bags and carefully labelled, whether or not I was going to replace or renew them. It can be months or even years before you put things back together and you don't want to be left wondering what was this for, or where did this go, and how does that go back together? Take lots of photographs with your phone as you dismantle things. You can never have too many. If you don't, you'll have loads of fun wondering how various pipes and electrical looms were routed come re-assembly time. I took loads of pictures probably into the hundreds, but it was still not enough in some cases.

Typical pictures I would take, here showing how a wiring loom is routed. Believe me, this will be a complete mystery in a few months' time without pictures.

Good restoration advice is to treat the various parts of the main project as complete sub-projects themselves. It can sometimes feel overwhelming when you have a bike separated into its constituent parts and you are wondering how it is ever going to be a complete bike again. Dividing the work into separate chapters can make it seem less daunting. An example of a sub-project would be the brakes: I stripped the calipers and assessed them, looking for corrosion on the pistons and particularly in the bores. I learnt that the calipers on these bikes can suffer from corrosion around the bores where the dust seals fit, so I wanted to be sure these were in good shape on my bike. Significant corrosion here could mean replacement calipers. The brake fluid in the front calipers was pretty disgusting. I wasn't sure for how long the fluid would be effective, even if it was effective at all, as it was a rusty brown colour with large flakes of congealed fluid in it. Interesting that the bike had a fresh MOT when I bought it. Under heavy use there is a good chance that the fluid would have boiled at the calipers.

Once stripped, I was able to take the parts to be blasted and Cerakoted. Cerakote is a relatively new method of coating and, as the name implies, it is ceramic based. I've never used this process before, so I thought I would give it a try. I reminded the Cerakote people to be careful with the bores of the brake calipers, as I didn't want these damaged. My calipers were in good condition as far as corrosion was concerned, and I didn't want them damaged. Cerakote is a much thinner coating than powder coating. This means that if you Cerakote the threads, for example, it's so thin that threads don't need to be masked. Powder coat, on the other hand, is so thick that threads definitely do need masking. One piece of advice here: try and drop several items to the platers at the same time, as it is more economical on a per/part basis.

I did try to drill out the sheared M6 bolt in the fork leg by using an extractor, but with no luck. So, I decided to drill it out for a suitable 'Helicoil'. This involved drilling the hole to a size that is specified in the Helicoil kit – this will be larger than the original hole and the kit will usually have the right size drill and suitable tap for this. You then drill and tap the hole, creating a new thread. Then screw in a new hardened stainless-steel coil that, in effect, re-forms the new hole with its original sized thread.

Here is a good example of a sub-project. I've cleaned the lights, rubbers and fasteners and started rebuilding the headlight assembly. This is a small project that you can work on, complete, and put to one side when done. You can see where threads were blasted but then masked before being powder coating on this assembly.

This was the front master cylinder. The sight glass really wasn't much use. Luckily, replacements are available from China via Amazon. The trick was getting the old glass out.

What not to do. This is the splined end of the rear brake pedal. It's a very precise fit into an actuating arm. The splines should have been masked before powder coating. If this had been Cerakoted, it would have been fine. This powder coating had to be blasted off and the part was then re-powdered after masking.

Actually, the glass itself came out easily, but there was a metal frame remaining and here I'm using a bearing puller to remove that.

Once the thread was repaired, I wanted the fork legs and swing arm linkages to be Cerakoted, but I wanted these to be carefully vapour blasted first, and I wanted to replace all of the suspension bearings too.

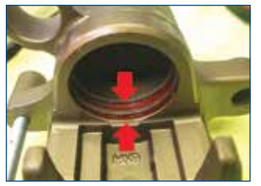
Extracting the suspension bearings was probably the toughest part of the whole rebuild. These things really did not want to move after 30 years.

The suspension linkages, also now bearing free, but this was also a tough job and a lot of heat from a gas torch and a good amount of swearing proved to be (literally) pivotal here.

Once bearing free, the forks and various suspension parts were sent off to Dave at 'TSR Vapour Blasting Services' in Sevenoaks before they were powder coated or Cerakoted or just painted.

The brake calipers were another sub-project. Here are the new pistons and seals.

I used Red Rubber grease along with brake fluid for assembly of the brake components. Red Rubber grease is specifically for rubber components.



Here you can see the two seal grooves. The deeper one is the hydraulic seal, the outer one the dust seal. These are the front calipers with the seals in place.

And with the help of hydraulic fluid, the pistons are now in place, along with a few other rubber components. Another little project done.

Progressing like this, I treated each sub-assembly as a separate project until they were all ready to be fitted to the bike – the main project.

Various parts after coating. The black parts are powder coated, while everything else is Cerakoted, either in silver or a bronze colour

A picture of what I took to be Cerakoted. These are brake calipers, master cylinders, various brackets and fork lower triple clamp with the bearing race removed.

The forks were another sub-project. I have no idea when the fork oil had been changed. But from the look of it 'never' would be a reasonable guess. It was a green colour.

Although it looks the same as it did before, the swing arm has here been Cerakoted and awaits its nice new bearings.

My home brewed 'bearing installing kit'. Just add suitably sized sockets and threaded bar

Here the bar and nuts with suitable sockets are being used to press the bearing in. The masking tape on the socket gives me an indication of when the bearing is fully seated.

A bearing with its circlip in place. A dust seal will go in next.

And I knew this was coming. That sheared bolt on the fork leg.

Tapping for the Helicoil

And the restored thread.

These are all the bearings and seals that have to go into the two suspension linkages…

… and when done, they look like this.

When it comes to all the fasteners and odd plates, I have a process for these as well, and again it is important to take plenty of photos so that you know what you have taken to the vapour blasters, or the platers so that when they come back, you can match them up.

If kept in damp conditions, the newly blasted fasteners will rust within days; it can sometimes be within hours; so they were taken straight down to 'Colmor Finishing' in Borough Green to be zinc plated, after which they all ended up looking like new and at a fraction of the cost of new fasteners.

They went to TSR like this…

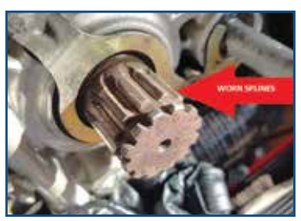
… but I knew what they were and I knew that I had got everything back.

… and after blasting they came back like this…

Next up, it's the forks. These had been disassembled previously and the fork stanchions checked for straightness and corrosion or scratches that might cause problems. Thankfully, they were all good, so it was a case of rebuilding them with new seals, bushes, gaiters and also with Ricor 'intiminators'. The 'intiminators' *(Google it! Ed.)* improve the damping characteristics of the fork. Actually, I can't really comment on how the forks were without them, as I had almost no time on the bike before starting the restoration, so I thought that as I was rebuilding the forks anyway, I would give them – the 'intiminators' – a try. They are, in effect, shim stacks that control oil flow better than standard and can be tuned. I just fitted them to try; just to see what I thought of the bike's handling overall. The next step was to fill with oil, set the correct air gap between the top of the oil and the fork top before screwing the caps in place and finally, the nice new fork gaiters to finish these off.

One other important thing to get in train was the wheels. These looked OK, but had definitely suffered some corrosion to the rims and spokes. They were not unusable, but they would let the side down once on the completed bike. This is the restorer's curse, or it is certainly mine: you make parts of the bike look like new and suddenly, you are looking at all the other parts that you bolt back on and you are thinking: hmm, is this good enough to go back on? Wheels are very noticeable, so I decided: in for a penny, in for a pound, and the angle grinder came out and I merrily cut all the spokes from both wheels, leaving just the hubs, which I cleaned and repainted. I delivered these to Hagon in Essex for nice new Morad rims and stainless-steel spokes. The wheel bearings were in good shape and so were left in place. Had there been any issues I would have replaced them before painting.

The rear hub. Cleaned, flatted down, etch-primed and painted satin black.



The output shaft. The front sprocket locates on this. The short length of splines right on the outer edge of this shaft show what the splines should look like, the inner longer areas nearer the engine show the wear.

With the wheels being treated I moved on to the next task, and this is where things took an unexpected turn. The engine really ran sweetly and I had no intention of taking it apart, but I knew that these bikes had one significant weakness: the output shaft splines wear if the chain is too tight. There is an associated bearing for this shaft that can also wear. Both require major surgery to fix. I 'thought' my splines were fine, but when the engine was out and cleaned, I noticed they were quite badly worn. I could have used an aftermarket sprocket that would probably have prevented more wear, but the thought that this simply was not right, bugged me.

Hmm, should I risk it? Over 3000 miles? I'd be kicking myself if this failed, and while it was a small chance, I did decide to replace it. These parts are still available, but the biggest cost associated is the labour cost in fitting. Having rebuilt car engines before, I thought well, let's give it a go, and so I prepared the workshop for surgery.

This is where the patient will be laid out. The surface is hardboard coated with sticky back plastic to give a cleanable surface. It won't last long, but long enough.

While I could just about lift the engine, it was silly to risk hurting myself, so I drafted the engine crane into action.

As usual, everything was bagged and tagged as it was removed from the engine.

Splitting the crankcase involves removing the heads and barrels, so you are pretty much taking the engine apart completely. Here the heads and barrels are off. You can see the wooden cradle I made up to support the engine. Not pretty, but it did the job.

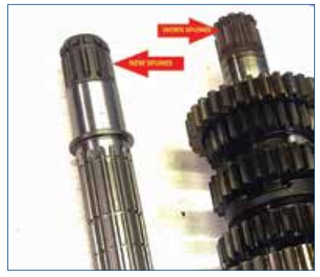
Another challenge was undoing the central nuts for the clutch basket and generator rotor. I made the tool that the *Haynes Manual* recommended, which worked for the rotor, but I just could not budge the clutch central nut. I should have loosened it when the engine was in the bike, but at that point, I didn't know I was going to go in this deep. After an evening of struggling, I caved in and bought an impact gun.

With the impact gun in five seconds the nut was off!

It was then a case of evenly undoing the multitude of bolts that hold the engine cases together and finally using specific levering points to ease the cases apart.

Finally, we are there. Crankcase split. The large gear on the left side of the engine is one of the gearbox gears and is at the top of the output shaft, so that has to come out. You can also see the crank, counterweights and pistons clearly here.

Here we have the components of the gearbox. All the gears have to be carefully removed from the old output shaft and assembled on the new shaft, on the left.



Note the difference between the new and the worn splines.

There is no gasket between the two case halves, so 'Hondabond' sealant is used. Before assembly, the mating surfaces need to be spotless and cleaned of all the old sealant. A time-consuming job using sharp blades and acetone.

Once the case halves are back together, along with new O rings for the oil pump, it's time to clean up the mating surfaces, the barrels and the engine cases, fit new barrel gaskets and lower the barrels on to the engine, carefully persuading the piston rings into the bores.

Here the heads are back on, and the camshafts and cam timing chains are in. Note the engine's paint finish, which is original and 32 years old. It has held up really well.

With the engine on its side, the newly powder coated frame was lowered over it, an idea that worked pretty well without damaging the fresh paint.

With the engine in the frame, I used the crane to lift the whole assembly vertical. Then strapped it to the lift ready to bolt further parts of the bike to it.

New head bearing races were pressed into the headstock…

… and more new and reconditioned parts were fitted to the frame. Here the swing arm, suspension links and the shiny new Nitron shock are all in place…

… and the forks with smart new gaiters too.

Then it was the wiring loom.

The wiring loom had needed cleaning and few simple repairs had to be made, but all in all it was sound and in good shape. I also I had news that the painted parts and the wheels were ready, which was good news because I was not too far away from needing these, especially the wheels.

Paul did an awesome job of the paintwork. This is all painted. Paul prides himself on not using any stickers, everything is painted. Hugely impressive.

New wheels with new Mitas E07+ tyres and she starts to look like a bike again. The wheels have the discs mounted and the calipers fitted, along with a new rear sprocket, and a shiny new chain. Other parts that were reconditioned were the two radiators at the front, along with the radiator mount. These were vapour blasted and then painted at home with heat-resistant radiator paint.

The reassembly was a relatively relaxed affair, doing a little bit each evening, but not every night, and yet I still made mistakes – I was torquing up the top and bottom fork yokes, thinking that the torque rating for the top and bottom was the same. Unfortunately, the top yoke had a lower torque specification, and one 'relaxed' evening I tightened the bolts to the incorrect spec and *bang*, the top yoke broke!

… and bang, the top yoke broke.

After much colourful language in the garage, I realised my mistake and it was another lesson learned. Luckily, yokes from later bikes are compatible, and a second-hand yoke was found on eBay. I had it blasted and although I was now back on track, there were further niggles to come.

Bikes of this age can suffer from a failed regulator rectifier in the electrical charging system. When these fail, it can lead to an over voltage condition, leading in turn to melted wires and a damaged battery, which can leave you stranded. Most people fit volt meters, but I thought I would try something different. Gammatronix, a small UK company, make an intelligent LED assembly that indicates voltage by colour: green = OK, orange = getting low, red = too high.

But how was I to mount the Gammatronix? Time for a bit of overengineering. I like modifications to look like they should be there, and not as if they are some home-made afterthought. So, I copied Honda's own side-stand switch mounting to mount the Gammatronix. In this case, admittedly, I copied something that, although Honda designed and made it, even they made it look like an afterthought.

The Gammatronix voltage indicator.

I made a cardboard template of a bracket that apes the Honda side stand switch on the instrument panel.

I know it's not exact, but I was happy with it and makes me smile.

Voltage indicator on the instrument panel beside the 'official' Honda 'afterthought' side stand switch

Testing, just to be sure:

I find it enjoyable putting all these lovely clean parts back together. The clutch went straight back on.

Scarcity of parts is one of the difficulties of rebuilding an old bike, but fortunately there is still a huge amount of aftermarket and new original Honda parts available for these particular bikes. Not everything is available, but a lot are. My main source of parts was CMSNL in the Netherlands, David Silver and Fowlers here in the UK. I did my research and was pleasantly surprised to find that I could buy uprated water hoses form Samco, upgraded regulator rectifiers and I sourced a nice new Arrow exhaust from Italy. This exhaust sounds better than the original and saves a good few Kg too. I'm not sure how much, but the original was very heavy compared to the Arrow.

CMSNL have excellent exploded diagrams, so I could see where bolts went if I wasn't sure. Having an iPad in the garage was very handy.

The cleaned and rebuilt carbs, with new seals and replacement needle valves that had worn.

This shows the left side of the engine, where you can see the starter motor at the top, the rotor for charging and ignition timing and one half of the water pump at the bottom. The gasket surfaces are spotless and awaiting a new gasket and the cover.

Here is the side cover with the stator. There is a small plate held on by a cap head screw at around the 3 o'clock position. This simple little part would come back to haunt me.

Wheeled out into the sunshine for the first time in months.

And with a temporary fuel supply to see if she will start.

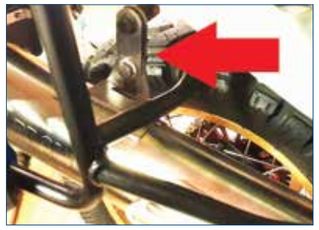
One of the first things I did when I got the bike was order a new seat cover from Germany, seen here, which was expertly fitted by 'Viking Motorcycle Seats', who were able to slim down the seat and add a gel pad, as this is still a tall bike for me. Here it's getting close to being finished, with those all-important crash bars, which I can tell you were actually tested later!

I think it has ended up being a fair representation of what I was aiming for, and I'm very happy with the outcome. The next step in the process was the MOT, which I was a little concerned about, because this was an import bike – would the headlight aim be a bit off, for example? I adjusted the lights as far down on the left as possible, but there was still a noticeable 'kick up' of the beam pattern to the right.

Luckily, 'Fastlane Motorcycles' in Tonbridge seemed to be quite enthusiastic about the bike and came up with their own simple fix for the headlight issue.

The final step was to order some pannier racks for my panniers. These came from a company called 'Heavy Duties' in Romania. Unfortunately, they won't ship to the UK post Brexit, so I had to ask a good friend in Germany to help out. 'Heavy Duties' shipped the racks to Germany and my friend shipped them on to me. They looked very strong and fitted really well, but I had not considered that they would not fit with the new arrow exhaust. This was no real problem; I was able to make some parts to lower the exhaust can so that they could happily all live together on the bike.

Kit of parts made to lower the exhaust…



… giving the clearance needed for the pannier racks.

Kitted out and almost ready for Morocco.

It was by now almost exactly a year between taking delivery of the bike and having her on the road, post MOT. My plan was to ride it as often as I could to make sure that there were no teething issues before the big trip, and things mostly went well, but on one occasion, the bike was standing idling on the house drive, when I heard a sudden tinkling from the engine. Something had come loose. Cue self-doubt! Had I forgotten something? Not tightened something perhaps? The tinkling went away, but it would come back intermittently. Then the misfire began! And suddenly the engine was only running on one cylinder. Using a laser thermometer, I took measurements from the front and the rear cylinder exhaust manifolds to find that the rear cylinder exhaust was significantly hotter than the front. Something wasn't right. Morocco was only a few weeks away. Would I be able to take the bike after all this work? This had to be sorted. So, that evening, I took the crash bars and the under-belly bash plate off, drained the oil, and then, when I took the left side engine casing off, I immediately saw the issue: the plate that held the stator wiring out of harm's way had broken off and was being thrown around the inside of the engine casing where it had blocked one of the ignition pick-ups on the flywheel. Problem identified and thankfully it was nothing deeper inside the engine, like flailing cam timing chains.

This is when that little part that was highlighted earlier, came to haunt me. Here I have removed it but you can see it was starting to damage the stator wiring (arrowed) and the inside of the case (circled).

This is the troublesome broken part, which unfortunately is no longer available.

I thought I would be able to buy a good second-hand casing on eBay; I did find one, and from the eBay photo, it looked like this part was in place, but when I received the casing, it turns out that the same retainer had broken in exactly the same place on that too. Clearly, it's a design issue. I put it all back together minus the broken part, as the stator wires looked like they were not going to stray too far towards the rotor. I fired the engine up, and to my amazement exactly the same thing happened again – firing on one cylinder. This time I replaced the CDI unit (capacitor discharge ignition unit) that the two ignition pick-ups connect to, and we were back in business. It's quite possible that the broken part that had been blocking the ignition pick-up, shorted out the pick-up and damaged the CDI, but it could well have been that the CDI had simply failed. It looked like it was the original, which, at 32 years old, had done well.

Mentioning my woes to Martin Brown at a club meet, his view was that Mr Honda must have put the retainer in for a good reason. Damn. *My* logic, on the other hand, said that I didn't have a retainer but it all looked OK without one. However, I knew Martin was right, and next day, I took it all apart again and made up a retainer and fitted it.

So, what did I learn in from this project? Well, apart from that little retainer, I really came to like the engineering Honda puts into its bikes. How some things could only be assembled one way, or how they made it obvious how things were meant to be assembled. It was my first (and unexpected) bike engine rebuild and it was nowhere near as scary as I had envisioned; the process was remarkably smooth; even the gearbox, which on cars I find a bit of a nightmare. The official Honda service

manual is excellent with exploded diagrams and torque settings included within the exploded diagrams rather than settings that have to be referred to on separate pages. Rebuilding forks is easier than I thought, whereas pressing bearings out of and into suspension linkages is a time-consuming task and harder than I thought. Having exploded diagrams available on-line was a Godsend for those 'what bolt goes where?' moments.

The project was finally completed and was running well and I was at last ready for Morocco. But the question remained: would a bike that I built myself get me to Morocco and back? You may have read the article that Tim Bolton wrote about our trip to Morocco *('Riders' November 2023. Ed.),* a trip that wasn't quite without incident. I'll write another article about that particular adventure, but here are two images as teasers in the meantime…

DUSK TILL DAWN . . . AND MORE

Richard and Helen Bromley leap across France in one bound

Helen, and I spend most, if not all, of our holidays in the south of France, and we get there by travelling virtually non-stop, and by riding overnight, taking 14 to 16 hours. This can be demanding, and there's nothing worse than riding when tired. You need to recognise this and to act quickly before it becomes an issue, so STOP! It's important to do your POWERDY checks, with the emphasis on the **Y –** this means YOU! Both of you. It's simply not enough to concentrate only on the bike maintenance; you both need to be ride-fit as well. Are we both mentally and physically fit to do this? Yes. Helen and I are well used to these journeys and simply do things out of habit. We have learnt what works and what doesn't; and, trust me, it's easier to do on a bike than in a car, although perhaps not on all bikes – we used to do these journeys on a full-blown race replica ZX10, but I got fed up with walking around like John Wayne the following day.

In my job, I drive all over the south east most days of the week, but on my last day at work before the holiday I base myself at my head office in Sevenoaks. Then, when I leave the office at five o'clock, the holiday has started. I arrive home at six, have a quick bite to eat, freshen up, and we leave for the Eurotunnel at seven. We arrive at the Eurotunnel at eight for a nine o'clock departure. The journey to the tunnel actually takes less than an hour, but I like to factor in some spare time in case of hold-ups or last-minute hiccups, and there is usually an opportunity to get on an earlier train, which is gratefully accepted.

Showering rather than taking a bath just before a long journey like this is better: a bath will induce tiredness, whereas a warm shower, not too hot, not too cold, is just enough to stimulate blood flow but not induce sweating. Similarly, it's important to keep your core body temperature consistent, so if it is hot outside, I kit-up in a cool place, whereas if it is cold outside, I kit-up in the warm.

Normally we just potter along the M20 from Maidstone to Folkestone as its always busy and more recently there have been 50mph speed restrictions in some form or another. This pace helps with slowly adjusting one's body to the fact that it's now on a motorcycle, and there's a long journey ahead.

On one recent occasion, while going through French customs at the Eurotunnel terminal, the customs officer started talking about our bike and his love of bikes, which inevitably led to asking where we were going. It turned out that he was going to the same place as us a week later, and it was agreed that if we bumped into each other, we would get a coffee.

Once off the train in France we ride east briefly on the A16 Autoroute to join the A26 south towards Reims, and it's here as we join the A26 that satnav 'Emily' says, follow road for the next 236 kilometres, and then 'she' goes all quite after that. The day bleeds into darkness (thank you Lewis Capaldi) as we head to our first and only planned fuel stop roughly 90 miles from Calais. All the rest of the stops are 'as-and-when'. It's at the first stop that we get some drinks and snacks: normally just a fruit juice and a wrap. We stay away from coffee and tea as caffeine is a diuretic, which means that when you drink coffee, it causes the body to send signals to your pituitary gland that inhibits the production of the ADH hormone, which in turns causes the kidneys not to reabsorb water. In other words, you dehydrate. Dehydration while riding can be as dangerous as drinking alcohol, because you think you are keeping hydrated, when, in fact, you're not. Please remember to keep correctly hydrated. It's also at this first stop that we make any minor adjustments to clothing or packing because it's going to be a long, long ride and we don't want any little niggles that WILL become BIGGER as time passes. One thing I do is take several pairs of gloves, summer and a winter pairs. The simple act of changing gloves every now and then can be beneficial to reduce aching hands.

We are now on our way, with a long overnight journey ahead of us, and the first of many fuel and rest stops is

now behind us. It's nearly midnight and I say to myself "We will still be riding this bike in 12 hours' time," and I look forward to the moment, when I can say "I was riding this bike 12 hours ago." We normally have the company of other English motorists with us on this stage of the Autoroute. Mostly fishermen in their vans on their way to their chosen lakes, and the occasional motorcyclist. But as the miles and hours pass by, they all disappear into the darkness.

Helen and I normally choose to do these trips in June for several reasons, one is that the dark nights are the shortest, about seven hours, and another is that it's spring time, and it's beautiful in Provence in the spring; although, admittedly, there is not a lot to see at night in the dark, whether you're on an Autoroute or a Route Nationale (RN). However, by staying on the Autoroute we get the luxury of regular posted service areas, something we would not get on the RNs; on the RNs you would normally have to go into a town centre for services. On the Autoroutes if you miss a service area there is usually a sign in kilometres giving the distance to the next one – they are roughly 40-50 miles apart. I have a fuel range of nearly 200miles, therefore I normally plan to refuel at about 150 miles or so, or after 90 to 120 minutes of riding, subject to aches and pains. This also gives me the added benefit of allowing me to get to the next service area if my chosen one has no fuel or there's an issue at the service area.

We only stop to refuel, but at every fuel stop we need a leg stretch and at every second or third stop we get a drink and answer the call of nature. Between the hours of midnight and 6am the pumps are automated and will only accept card payments, pre-authorised up to the value of £150 and pay-at-pump. At all refuelling stops we have a well-rehearsed procedure: stop at pump, get off, gloves off, helmet off, tank bag off, refuel. If we have the option of cash payments, Helen goes to the cashier, in the service station, sets a 30€ limit and then informs me via our Bluetooth headsets that the pump has been authorised. Tank bag, helmet, gloves and pillion back on, ride off. This process gets the blood circulating, stretches the legs, and helps with reducing aches and pains.

On the longer fuel stops, once I have refuelled, I push the bike off the pump to a suitable parking spot and wait for Helen to return, before I go for a walkabout to stretch my legs. Sometimes while we are standing around by the bike drinking and talking, we get approached by other motorists for a chat. These little chats help with revitalising our energy levels for the next couple of hours and they prove to be really beneficial. Back out on the Autoroute between fuel stops, sometimes there is not too much to think or talk about, we sometimes don't even pass another car, it's just us, and the darkness for company; but it's never boring. We will have tuned into Autoroute radio, which is in English as well as French and has regular traffic updates.

The first of many Autoroute *gares des péages* (toll booths) on our journey is at Ormes near Reims and it's very welcome. This is an opportunity for me to stretch my legs and to take the weight off my wrists and backside and get the blood circulating. I simply pull up beside the automated ticket machine, and stand astride the bike, while Helen deals with paying. Don't forget, you need to tell the remote operator that you are on a motorbike, which is Classe 5 and therefore cheaper than a Classe 1 car. The toll booth may not do this calculation automatically. I wear a bumbag that has our toll money and tickets, and which Helen has access to. Actually, we use a Chase card, chip and pin, no fees for using it abroad and just as secure as a credit card. Just hold it over the toll booth card reader as you would in shops, no fumbling about for money. The few minutes at the *péage* are just enough to collect our thoughts before carrying on.

We never set an ETA for our villa, nor do we plan fuel/rest stops, we decide those en-route as and when required. When we're tired, we stop, and we get to the villa when we get there. This reduces the stress that this type of journey can induce if you are running to a 'got to get there' schedule. All the time I am alert we carry on. Helen, on the other hand, is doing the nodding donkey. When she falls asleep her head falls forward and nudges my head. She is used to falling asleep while riding pillion on these long motorway journeys; that is, when she is not too busy hanging on! As a rider with a sleeping pillion, I simply become more cautious with my riding. A sleeping pillion can be dangerous. When you're asleep, you're not using any part of your body to hold on. You're not gripping with your knees or hands and you're relying solely on muscle memory to stay in place. She is not asleep for long, a change in engine tone or a minor course change usually wakes her up gently. She only sleeps on motorway journeys. However, when I'm tired, I stop at the next service area and find a quiet area to settle down. I carry an inflatable pillow that I use on these occasions, and sometimes I lie down beside the bike for a cat-nap, 20 mins or so, it depends on how tired I am.

It's not long before the darkness gives way to daylight, the sun rises, and it's a very welcoming sight as you start to see the horizon and the scenery. 500 miles is

now behind us and 250+ miles still to ride. At this stage of the journey we start to consider whether to stay on the Autoroute or re-route through the mountains. We decide to ride through the mountains. Now the sun is up and the temperature has risen to 30 plus, and it becomes harder to ride. This is where the pace starts to slow, now we can admire the scenery, as we pass through lovely provincial villages. Stopping occasionally to take in the atmosphere, and when it gets really hot, we stop at either a roadside stream or a village centre fountain and de-kit, soak our tee-shirts in water, and put them back on, with bike kit over the top to cool down. We do this as often as needed for the rest of the journey. We are nearly at the end of our ride, and I look back and say to myself, "we were riding this bike 12 hours ago". One thing I have noticed is that when the weather gets hot, our heads, hands and feet swell slightly, just enough to make removing and refitting gloves, boots and crash helmets more difficult, but this only happens when we haven't achieved the correct balance of hydration and exercise.

This non-stop method of travel, I know, will fill some of you with dread, and you may say that it's not your cup of tea, but this is what we do, and we enjoy it. Finally, we reach the last 20 miles of our journey riding along the coast and we stop at our favourite spot, park the bike, de-kit and settle down on the beach for a swim and an ice cream, and we can finally say to ourselves, "We're here!"

TOP TOURING TIP: WEAR BIG PANTS

Kevin Morton does . . .

I've been touring ever since I joined the KAMG over 20 years ago, and here are some tips that may be useful to anyone thinking of undertaking a tour of their own or joining a tour with others. Recently, as part of a transition to retirement, I've travelled a bit on my own, but the vast majority of my trips have been in small groups and a lot of the ideas below are from fellow travellers.

Packing

Have a system and keep everything in a dedicated place each time you pack. I keep stuff I need for each night, such as chargers, toiletries, evening clothes (which are also to be used for the next day) and dirty washing, in one pannier, and remaining clothes in the other. This enables me to take out just one pannier bag for one night stays and helps narrow down where stuff is when I'm looking for it. Essential items – phone, wallet, passport, keys – keep on your person, then you can check that they are always safely with you when you are on the go. I find the act of checking these four vital items very reassuring. If you always keep stuff in the same place – wets in the top box, hat and sun cream in the tank bag, for example – and stick to the plan, it makes life so much easier, and you look almost like you know what you're doing in front of your mates.

What to Pack?

I take modern fabric T-shirts and polos from the likes of Under Armour, which are perfect for biking. They are light, wrinkle-free and they dry very quickly when washed. I think it's also a good idea to pack a pair of flip-flops/sliders/crocs because they don't take up much room and they are really quick and easy to slide into when re-packing the bike in the morning, for instance, or just heading down to the bar for a beer or breakfast. If you are going away on a longer tour and will need to wash anything while away, you'll find Amazon do some cheap little travel washing lines that are good. And I also pick up a pair of those blue shoe-covers from the local swimming pool, which are great for covering your civvie footwear when it's packed in your panniers with your nice clean clothes. I would also encourage you to consider taking a small drone, especially if visiting more remote places. I always fly close by whatever I'm filming and I don't do anything risky as I'm a coward at heart. But even flying fairly close to your subject and away from trees, you can get some excellent shots that are impossible on your phone. Great for team shots and also for selfies if you're on your own.

Tools

It's good to take a few tools in case 'issues' occur that can be fixed on the go. Unless you're a mechanic on a classic bike, stick to basic tools that actually fit your bike. There's no point in taking a socket set if you ride a BMW that is bolted together with Torx bolts. Check around your bike and choose tools for the fasteners you can see, and check that the tools fit and the fasteners are tight and present before you start. When packing tools, work as a team with your travelling partners: there is no point in two of you taking the same things. Save space and co-ordinate with other members of the group.

Paperwork

It goes without saying that you need to check that your

bike insurance covers you for the countries you are visiting, likewise for recovery. I discovered this year that most travel insurance policies only cover motorcycle riding up to 125cc. I've been travelling on Direct Line insurance for years not realising they had this limitation. I've now switched to Voyager Insurance that specifically covers motorcycles over 125cc. I also discovered this year (in the nick of time) that Europe does not accept passports that are more than 10 years old, even if they are still in date. Check well before you go. For everything else check the websites of the specific countries you're visiting.

Contingency Contingency Contingency

It's all about having options. A lost key or passport can be as devastating to a tour as having the big end emerge from the side of the crankcase, in both cases the bike is going nowhere. So, always take a spare key. I wear a spare around my neck and drop it into my boots when I change for the night. Keep pictures of your passport on your phone and printed copies on the bike. Your phone is an absolutely essential device when exploring new and exciting places where the locals don't speak English. Lose it or run out of battery and you'll be in trouble. Take an auxiliary battery pack to charge it on the go if it goes flat. Having a way to charge it from the bike is an advantage too. I take an iPad as a backup tool, which also gives me a bigger screen for route planning. And if you wear glasses, remember to take a spare pair. I need glasses for reading, and so I always carry a very cheap, small spare pair in my luggage. If I were to lose my main pair, I have back-up.

Remember too that if you need particular medication or have allergies, make sure your mates are aware and know what to do in an emergency. I use the Navigator 6 on my GS but also have a cheap phone mount from AliExpress. If the Navigator fails (and it has) my phone acts as a secondary sat-nav. A simple phone mount carried in a top box and a set of maps can help get you out of trouble. And, most important, always know roughly in your mind, the general direction in which you are heading; know the towns you'll pass through and the roads you'll be on. Do this even if you're not leading or if you are using sat-nav. If, for example, you are intending to head towards Monaco and your sat-nav says you're heading north, something is probably wrong and you might want to check. We've all heard the stories of the truck driver arriving in Leeds Yorkshire looking for Leeds in Kent. Since being stuck on the M25 smart motorway with a flat tyre and a flat phone battery, I now always carry a small tyre pump and puncture repair kit. You can get really small pumps that take power from the bike battery. Even a hand pump will get you enough pressure to get you moving. Options.

Software

I highly recommend MyRoute-app for navigation. It makes plotting a route very easy and you can save the results to your sat-nav. The routes are stored on the cloud so are easy to get to when away. You can link with friends and share routes between you. There is also a great library of routes that you can adapt for your own use. These come with recommended fuel and coffee stops as well as interesting places to see along the way.

Think Simple

If an 'issue' occurs, try to think of a simple solution before going for the nuclear recovery option. For example: when a friend's bike stopped due to a failed battery, we faced a long wait in scorching heat in Italy. While he tried to organise recovery, I spotted a tyre garage and strolled in while Googling 'flat battery' in Italian. Within two minutes a mechanic in overalls had the bike running using a jump pack and we were on our way (after crossing his palm with a few notes of course). This meant we could get the battery changed later in the air-conditioned comfort of a dealership and we didn't waste half a day sweating at the side of the road. Similarly, if your bike fails to start in a petrol station try pushing it a few yards up the road and trying it again; there are so many wireless signals bouncing around a forecourt they can sometimes stop an immobiliser receiving a message from its key fob. Also, if a mate has a problem, try and think calmly if there is an easy solution. If you're immobilised by something it's easy to get panicked by the stress of holding everyone up and potentially ruining the tour for them. If your bike is running fine and you have no pressure you can think clearly and maybe give advice and try something simple. The same person I helped to get going in Italy saved me in Maidstone, when my battery failed. He guided me to tools under my seat that I never knew existed and helped me tighten the battery terminal that cured the problem. I remember being panicked and was going straight for the nuclear option of calling recovery. On the same theme when you leave a petrol station, hotel or wherever, check that you have everything with you, but also glance around your mates: do they have their tank bags and panniers, and are their top boxes secured? An unsecured top box is rectified in seconds in a hotel car park, but it is a different story on a motorway with belongings scattered all over the road.

Just Ask, and Say Thank You

I have found that people are very helpful if asked. I've changed and asked shop owners if they can store my gear while I am visiting their town. Never been refused so far. Another thing worth knowing is that some dealerships are willing to take external parts off a showroom bike if the spare is not available in stock. I was stuck in Spain with a broken throttle sensor on a festival weekend and no spares departments were open. A very kind sales person agreed to take a sensor off a new bike to replace mine and save my tour. It's always worth asking. Also, when checking in to a hotel ask if they have somewhere inside to store the bikes. Even if they don't advertise parking, it's amazing what you can find when you ask. I've stored bikes in barns, garages, sheds, under the canopy at reception and even *in* reception itself on one occasion. If someone does something kind for you, for goodness sake thank them to help smooth the way for similar help to be offered to those that might follow you. A few coins in the tips jar, a few notes in the hand, or a bottle of wine goes a long way. This is also important on the road. If someone pulls over to give you space, give them a cheery wave. I like to think that it gives them a tiny bit of pleasure in their dull car or lorry-bound life. I do also give arseholes a cheery wave after I finally pass them in the hope that they may be kinder to the next rider.

Just stop and look!

Drone picture of Kevin outside a foreign church... somewhere?

Wear Big Pants!

It's no fun walking around your destination town, or the attraction you've come to see, in the heat of summer while wearing leathers. However, by wearing big sensible underwear, you can slip out of leathers and into shorts and flip flops in a car park next to the bike or beside the road. You can then enjoy in comfort whatever it is you've come to see. I also take a long cable and padlock to secure jacket, trousers and helmet to the bike. It's also nice if you are staying somewhere for two nights or longer, to be able to go out with empty panniers knowing that as you are wearing the 'big pants' you can change and stash your leathers in the panniers when you stop.

Some Old Classics

I'm sure everyone knows these but just in case:

Remember, always pack duct tape and WD40. If it moves and it shouldn't, use the tape to fix it. If it doesn't move and it should, then it's WD40. Keep a plastic carrier bag with your rain trousers: your boot goes into the bag and then the bagged boot slides easily into the trousers. When you arrive hot and sweaty at your hotel, shower and change into the next day's clothes. You're then clean and fresh in the evening and feel so much better. If your sports bike mate needs to fill up his small tank, then take the opportunity to fill your tourer at the same time even if you don't need to. It saves the pain of you having to fill up a short time later when he doesn't need to. Also, if he runs out of petrol and you have half a tank you have more options. A length of small diameter tube can be very useful to move petrol between bikes should the worst happen.

Always follow the old army adage and take a pee whenever there is opportunity. You never know when the next opportunity will present itself.

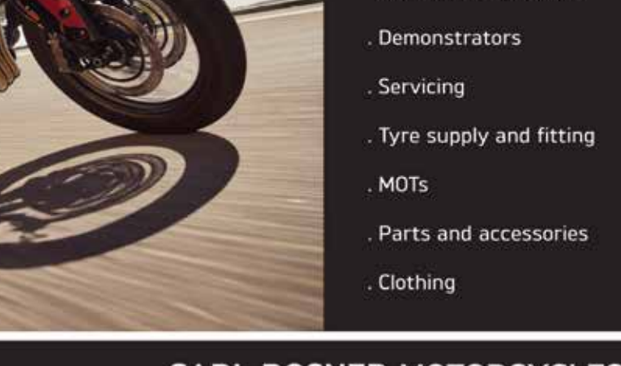
And a Final Thought... *STOP*

I have never regretted stopping to look at a view or to visit an attraction when I'm riding, but I do have many regrets about the times when I have decided *not* to stop. I know it's so easy to ride on past and it's much harder to make the effort to stop, but it is so much more rewarding when you do.

Riders back numbers

We often refer in the magazine to articles that appeared in back numbers and which may be relevant to a piece in the current magazine. There are some references in this issue, for example. All back numbers of the magazine from February 2015 are available on the KAMG website.

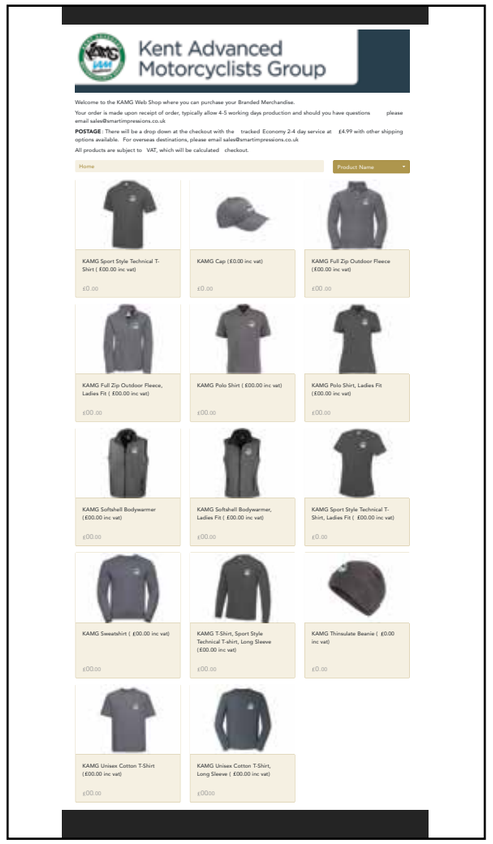
There are two ways of finding them: either navigate to ABOUT KAMG/PUBLICATIONS/RIDERS MAGAZINE, or scroll approximately half way down the 'Home' page and click on the green link under the *Riders* Magazine picture.



KAMG MERCHANDISE is here now . . .

… actually, it's *almost* here now. The merchandise exists, but the access details to the website so that you can buy it had not quite been finalised when the magazine had to go to the printer. Everyone will be sent the access info in… well, probably a few minutes after the magazine has been printed. That's the way things work. But, fear not, it's all worth waiting for, and a little wait sharpens the appetite.

There is a big range of excellent stuff including fleeces, bodywarmers, sweatshirts, polo shirts, beanie hats, caps and, of course, T shirts – including 100% cotton, long sleeve T shirts. How about that? Everything comes in a wide range of sizes ranging from XS to 4XL, and in ladies versions too. And everything is branded with a choice of two KAMG logos. How about that, again!



Machine Control Days

If you haven't been on a Machine Control Day before, you have got two chances left this year to tick that box or scratch that irritating itch – Saturday July 20th and Saturday September 7th. You could even do both!

If you have been on an MCD before you'll know the form, and you'll know that it's good fun and that you ought to do it again, and possibly again after that.

One of the major reasons for enjoying MCDs in the past was Sue Aspinall's great cakes, which unfortunately will no longer be a feature of the days, but do not let that deter you, you'll just have to learn to control your machine on an empty stomach in a full car park.

MCDs start at 8.45 in car park 'D' at Ebbsfleet station, DA10 1EB. July 20th and September 7th.

IDCAM

INTRODUCTORY DAY COURSE IN ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING

2024 Dates

- **July 13th**
- **August 31st**
- **September 21st**
- **October 19th**

Our IDCAM is held at the Kent Fire and Rescue Road Safety facility in Marconi Way, Rochester, ME1 2XQ. If you wish to attend, please register your interest via the calendar on Tracker. Attendees are asked to arrive at 08.45 for a prompt 09:00 start. The morning session consists of a presentation about IAM RoadSmart, about KAMG and the aims of the course, and how to check that both the rider and motorcycle are fit for the road. This is followed by a coffee break.

The second presentation is all about the system of motorcycle control and, if time permits, a *Highway Code* quiz. The morning session will finish at approximately 12:15.

Please note that lunch is not provided. You may bring along your lunch or, if you wish, your allocated Observer can take you to a local café.

The afternoon session consists of an observed ride with a National Observer, and includes a pre-ride briefing and post ride debrief. The finish point is at a mutually agreed location that is usually closer to home than the start. The afternoon session lasts around two and a half hours.

If you would like to attend as an Associate, please contact associates@kamg.org.uk .

MACHINE CONTROL DAY

Our machine control days are organised by Paul Aspinall. 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

2024 Dates

Sat 20th July **Sat 7th September**

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

Vice President Dave Murphy

Honorary Life Members Kevin Chapman, Christine Botley, John Leigh, John Lemon, Brenda Vickery, Ian Burchell, Sue Mills, Tina Underwood, Tony Young, Roger Lancaster

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