RIDERS

. . . magazine of the KAMG

ISSUE 238 • May 2025 • Registered Charity No. 1060837

SCAN ME

KENT ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS GROUP

THIS EDITION INCLUDES . . .

REGULAR FEATURES:

NEW FEATURES:

Cover

Page 18

MCD Page 28 and 29

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

June

Sun 1st	Vianden tour begins. Group ride Lullingstone to Roedean. Joint KAMG/EKAM ride
Sat 14th	Machine Control Day
Thurs 19th	Fish and Chip run
Sat 21st	IDCAM
Thurs 26th	Group Night
Sun 29th	Group ride to Bexhill

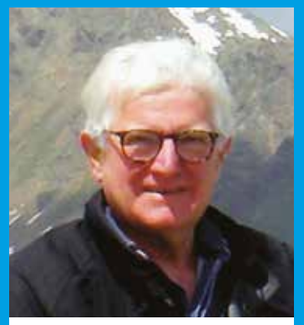
July

Sat 12th	Machine Control Day
Thurs 17th	Fish and Chip run
Sat 19th	IDCAM
Thurs 31st	Group Night

August

Sun 3rd	Group ride
Sat/Sun 9/10th	Peterborough Training weekend
Thurs 14th	Fish and Chip run
Sat 16th	IDCAM
Thurs 28th	Group Night
Sun 31st	Lullingstone to Arundel

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

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

Bealach na Bà

That's 'Scottish' for Applecross Pass apparently, which is one of the most challenging motorcycle roads in the UK with its 1 in 5 climbs and its ferocious hairpins, and it is a pass that has been grooved by many a KAMG tyre over the years including, inevitably, Steve Riches, but also Geoff Curtis, who by coincidence has an Applecross story on page 25 of this very issue. Well, it now seems that the rest of the world has also discovered the pass and it looks as if it may turn into the British Stelvio, perhaps it already has, so be warned. Its popularity is the result of its being part of The North Coast 500, and apparently people are coming from far and wide to give it a go. It doesn't sound like much fun to me. If you like a really high pass and a hairpin or two, and I do, I'd sooner go to the warm, very high European passes, although definitely not the Stelvio. The Stelvio is always ludicrously busy and there are hundreds of other amazing, deserted passes in the Alps, the Dolomites, the Pyrenees and elsewhere. Obviously you have to tick off one or two of the well-known Tour de France biggies, but there's oodles more. However, do look at the various YouTube films of The Stelvio, they'll give you a laugh and make you glad that you are planning to attend the next MCD (see pages 28 and 29).

A New Committee

It's good to welcome a new committee after the AGM. There's some new faces and some old faces in new positions and one old face, Joe Mair back after a long absence, in his old position as Group Secretary. Most important of all Tina has taken on the role of Chairman again. We are very lucky.

Dave Howard, the Membership Secretary for many years will now combine that with Deputy Chairman duties. David Austen has taken over Machine Control Days and has already run his first day with one or two exciting innovations (Pages 28 and 29). John Gardiner, a committee member of many years standing and designer of this magazine – it is he who makes some sort of order of the piles of words and pictures I send him (late) four times a year – is now also Deputy Chief Observer. Welcome too to Sandra Rutherford as Associate Co-ordinator and to Ian Paterson and Keith Burlace who will be organising the Group's runs.

I know we say it every year when it's committee re-election time, but until you have been on the committee and seen the time and energy that goes into keeping the KAMG running, you don't realise how well served we are. Things just seem to happen not because they just happen but because somewhere someone (usually many ones) have made them happen. Just look at page 12 for example.

An Editorial Thank You

As well as thanking the committee I particularly want to thank those who write stuff for the magazine. There are the one-off contributors who have been somewhere special or done something different and share that experience – remember, this is a club magazine; it's a means of keeping everyone in touch with everyone else. I know there's Facebook but that does a different job for a different reason. It's in the magazine that you get to hear about Dave Willson's amusing eBay buys and Martin Brown's rebuilds, and Geoff Curtis moaning. Thank you to all of them. And if you have something to say, we'd love to hear that too.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

I'm enjoying the sun at last, and thank you all for giving me the opportunity to steer the KAMG ship again. I am honoured to be back in the chair and hope to serve you well. Please feel free to chat with me to convey any new or old ideas for consideration as a group activity. Suggestions for interesting speakers are always welcome as we strive to keep things fresh and engaging.

The KAMG calendar is filling up fast: we kicked off with a visit at Easter to the Scott's Trust, with the Easter bunny and eggs on board. The young adults welcomed us warmly and sent a fantastic letter of appreciation to thank us for visiting. [Page???]. We have already had one of our Peterborough training weekends, which was successful, and there are two more planned for later in the year. I have been instructing for the IAM at the Mallory Park and Thruxton skills days, which are also gathering pace through the year, and we will be attending a couple of biking events this year with the KAMG advertising gazebo. There are Machine Control Days, pillion workshops, and fish and chip runs on the Tracker diary, and most important of all, training and test passes are going really well at the start of the year.

We look forward to continuing to achieve a successful 2025 with the support of the training team, committee members and all members who continue the fantastic work of keeping KAMG great.

Unfortunately, however, I must end on a sad note: we received a call from Tony Bullard's wife Joyce to let us know that Tony had passed away after battling cancer. Tony was a valued KAMG observer for many years and he was both mine and Colin's observer 17 years ago. He had the patience of a saint with me, and even had a reassessment for his IAM driving course in 2021. Our sincere condolences are sent to Joyce and the family.

Tina Underwood

TEST PASSES Since the last edition

Aisling Shanahan-Allen receiving her Advanced Rider qualification from her observer Lynn Sammonds

Cathy Hoskins receiving her Advanced Rider qualification from her observer Bob Phillips

Udit Gandhi receiving his Advanced Rider F1RST qualification from his observer Martin Ford

John May receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from his observer Graham Hills

Martin Williamson receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from his observer Mark Brewster

RE-GENERATION ZED – PART IV !!

in which Martin Brown visits the future and has his mind boggled

Hello my tinkering chums and welcome back to Shedsville Sidcup. As you may remember, the last instalment finished with my total frustration at having a completely rebuilt engine and being stymied by a con-rod that was a smidge too long. This meant that the piston was fouling the cylinder head. Grrr. Anyway, I had choices: I could cut said connecting rod and reweld it (not very practical), or I could spend years searching for a replacement part that is made of unobtanium and would probably involve moving to the USA; so, no thanks. Or, just maybe, I could just get away with a thicker gasket between the bottom end and the cylinder? After speaking to a few people, it transpires that this solution is quite common these days: in fact, not only is it quite all right to use a thicker gasket but it seems that these gaskets can now be *printed*. Yes, that's what I said, they can be PRINTED. I did get a couple of 3D printed chain guides earlier in this process [see Nov 2024 *Riders*.Ed], but these are not subjected to the heat and pressure of a two-stroke engine on full beans. My immediate thought was that a *printed* gasket between the cylinder and the crankcase would just melt, but I was assured by 'eggsperts' that this was not the case. (Visit Eggstream racing in Wrotham and you will understand.)

So where does one go for such a job? First of all, I had to figure out how thick the new gasket needed to be. To do this I ordered a pack of varying thicknesses of gasket paper and set to work cutting out a number of gaskets to build up the required thickness. Eventually I decided on 3.15mm. Now I had to find a printer, and I remembered that during a conversation with our very own David Austen, he said that he did some 3D printing at his work. So a quick call later and I was off visiting.

I approached the unassuming unit in Maidstone thinking "this doesn't look very high tech," but how wrong first impressions can be. Inside there was a cornucopia of stuff that Dave and his fellow boffins have created, and there up on the first floor are the 3D printing machines. If you want to know how they work you will need to ask David. Suffice to say that the original gasket was scanned and the measurements checked. Then a file was sent from the PC to the printer and off it goes. Bingo. See pictures for proof. All I need to do now is fit it and then the engine can finally go back in the frame.

While I was waiting for this step into the future to arrive, I pressed on with lots of little jobs. Neil Burke at Boots Mobile Tyres [page???] fitted me some new knobblies. And while the back wheel was off, I sorted out the chain and rear shock guards, jobs which couldn't really be done with the wheel on. After that I addressed the front brake, but I was unable to save the master cylinder, so I bought a cheap Chinese one that looks the part. Time will tell if it does the job.

Next, I started looking at the panels, the tank and the mudguards. They were all quite badly faded and patchy – I think the bike had been stored outside in France – and my initial thought was to scrape off the bloom to get through to nice green plastic underneath. You can do this with a Stanley knife blade or a cabinet maker's scraper (or both). Scrape, scrape, scrape . . . it is a messy business. I started with the rear mudguard and after a load of scraping and successive sandings with finer and finer wet and dry and then polishing with a mop it looked pretty good. However, although the first side panel looked OK, the nearside panel did not look anywhere near what I would be happy with. So, to paint or not to paint? Painting means a load more work, and is it worth it on a dirt bike? But I had already sourced a new set of stickers and it would be a shame to stick them on to something looking shabby. Watch this space.

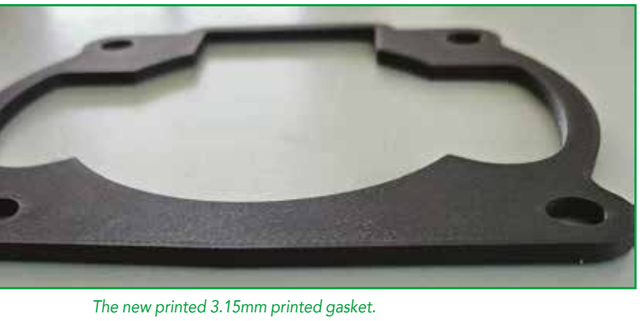
Next on my list was the silencer. I had this Cerakoted silver and it looked very smart; however, the wadding inside was as black as can be – forgot to take a photo. So new wadding was bought, rolled around the baffle and reinserted. Job done. But when I came to temporarily bolt it back on the bike, I realised that it didn't fit. Wrong silencer for this model. Grrr. So how was it fitted previously? I reverted to the many photos that I took whilst dismantling the bike and noticed that there was a small bracket showing. I had a rummage around and to my surprise I found it quite quickly. It was a bit of a bodge, but with a bit of judicious hammering and filing it looked OK. I found some rubber grommets that fitted pretty well, to act as vibration dampers (never throw anything away), and also some new bolts, and it all looks pretty good. Much cheaper than a new silencer anyway.

Next was the carburettor. As you will recall the previous owner had glued the needle in place. It was broken in two parts and unobtanium in the UK. Luckily as per the addendum to the previous article my friend came up trumps and the replacement needle was delivered to me with no extra charges. You can see the difference between the old and the new in the photos. Good progress.

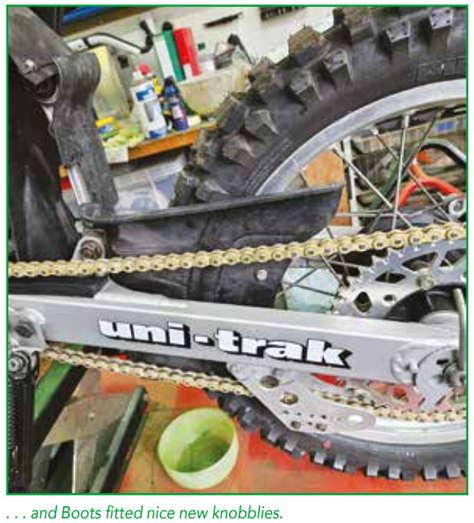
I wrangled the now rebuilt engine back into the frame, hooked up the clutch cable and gave the lever a squeeze. Nothing. Rock solid. Why didn't I check it before I put the engine back in the frame?

I would still have been able to get the clutch out with the engine in place in the frame but it is more trouble, so I hoiked it out anyway. Even so, why was the pesky clutch not working? I remembered that when I was reassembling the clutch the springs seemed a bit long and were quite hard to compress. On revisiting them I could see that they were clamping down so tight under the pressure plate that there was no 'spring' left to allow the clutch to disengage. Oops! I dismantled the clutch

A number of trial gaskets were cut out to find the required thickness.



The new printed 3.15mm printed gasket.



. . . and Boots fitted nice new knobblies.

"Scrape, scrape, scrape . . . it's a messy business."

Martin decided to mask the side panels and paint them himself . . . it didn't work, apparently. He says, "Watch this space."

The Cerakoted silencer and the baffle before it was wrapped in wadding.

The previous owner's unsuccessful attempt at glueing the broken carb needle together, alongside the one-piece US import.

The Queen of Upholstery obviously justified her regal title . . .

(again) measured the springs and they did seem too long compared to what the manual says. Just in case, I ordered some replacements, and sure enough, when they arrived, not only were they a few mm shorter, they were not as powerful either. I have a feeling that I may have installed some 'ringers', possibly from my Ducati Darmah.

I fitted the new springs, put the clutch back together again, and this time I did test it prior to refitting the engine in the frame. It worked perfectly. Commence dancing around the shed doing the 'dance of success' – not a pretty sight.

The engine is now back in the frame; the clutch is working; the exhaust is test-fitted, and we're just waiting for a few more bits like a new throttle cable from Venhill Engineering, a nut to secure the kickstart, and a couple of new springs to hold the exhaust in place properly. In the meantime, I shall carry on with my self-inflicted torture of trying to sort out the paint. Yes, I've decided to paint some of the panels. This is likely to result in great cost and many hours (if not days) of my life that I will never get back and they will still look crap.

I have also dispatched the seat to my sister-in-law (Queen of upholstery) to see if she can save the old seat foam and fit the new cover I bought.

EVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

In which Dave Willson gets the boot

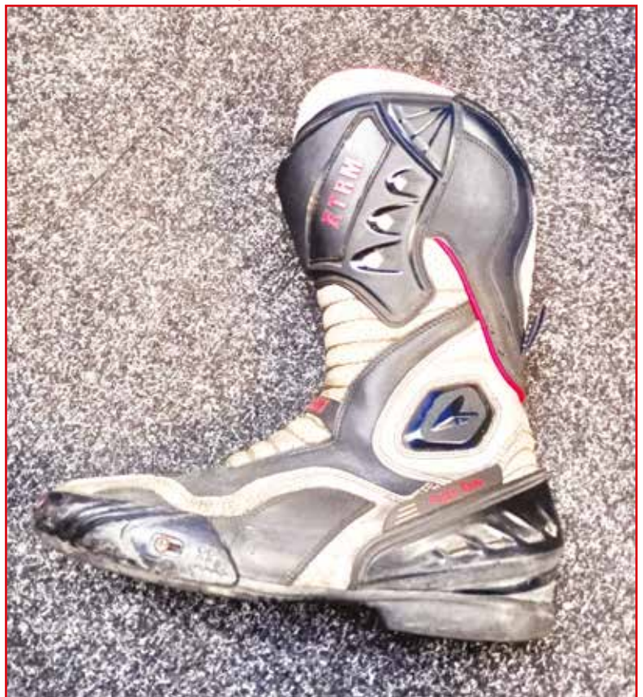
New readers start here:

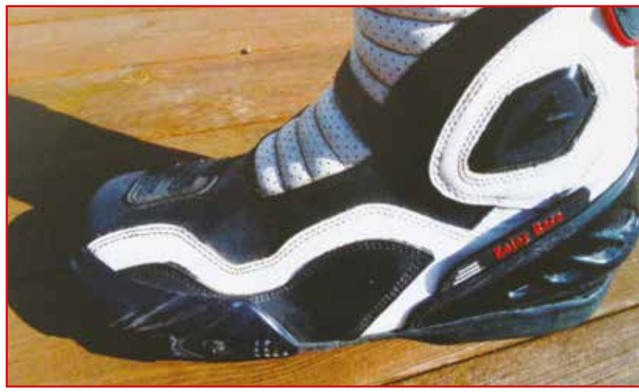
Way back in *Riders* of May 2018, Dave Willson, prompted by Chrissie Hynde, was looking ". . . fantastic in boots of Chinese plastic." One year later in the August 2019 edition, we learned that the cheap China boots were not "waterproo" [sic], but were in every other way excellent. Now, seven long and active years later they have finally died. Read on . . .

I realise that it's been a while, but I'm guessing that you're all wondering how my boots of Chinese plastic have fared. For those of you new to the group, or if you're at an age where you walk into a room and forget what you went in there for, I'll refresh your memories. In 2018 I bought a pair of summer motorcycle boots off the bay of Es, or if you're a Yorkshireman, off Ebaygum – sorry, but that joke never gets old. [Yes it does. Ed.] I paid a king's ransom of £49.99 for those boots, so as you can imagine I was expecting a lot. They duly arrived and seemed pretty decent. Good quality leather, good zips, toe sliders, hard plastic armour in all the appropriate places, etc., etc., and it would be fair to say that having owned Daytonas, Oxtars and Alpinestars, and having been issued with Altbergs when I was a rozzer, I was initially impressed with my new Chinese jobs.

So, seven years, about 30,000 miles and half a dozen track days later how have they survived, if indeed they

. . . and after seven years and 30,000miles





Original 2018 boot when it was new . . .

have survived? My initial outlay of £50, back in early 2018, meant that I bought them with the mindset that if they lasted one season, I'd be happy. I'm pleased to inform you that they've only just reached the end of their life and it's time to consign them to the bin. The right-hand toe slider has pretty much worn away, but that's largely down to Clark Curve at Brands Hatch. After about 50% of it had worn away, the heads of the screws holding it on wore away and the whole thing fell off. The one on the left boot is pristine, which says something about my riding I suppose. The zips are plastic but both still work perfectly. The zippers had little leather tags to help pull them up, and I managed to tear one of those off, but other than that they're good. The leather – or at least I'm pretty sure it's leather – has fared well; it's certainly not compressed cardboard, unlike the boots I was issued with in the military, 40 years ago. It looks a bit tatty and there's a small split at the ankle of one boot but otherwise it's OK. The soles are a bit worn and one now has a hole in it, but all the hard armour is still intact, although I haven't actually ever tested it. Basically, they're still functional, just a bit tired and knackered. A bit like me really. And there you have it: a worthwhile investment, but now it's time to go trawling the net for a new pair.

Having been buoyed up by my experience I decided to look at the cheaper end of what was on offer and came across a small British firm called 'Eviron'. They've been going for a while and began making leather suits before branching in to boots. Among their range there is a pair of boots called VR46, and if that name isn't an obvious enough clue, then I'll tell you that they were originally a homage to the 'Doctor', Valentino Rossi, and came in bright fluorescent yellow and blue. You can see a review of them on YouTube. The boots sold well so

Posh new VR46 Eviron boots

Eviron expanded the range so that they're now available in black, black and white, and in black and red.

I'm not going to fully review the boots here, and the reason is because they're exactly – and I mean exactly – the same as every other summer (racing) motorcycle boot on the market. That is to say, they have YKK zips and Velcro fastening, a micropore lining and air vents, plus hard armour on the heel, ankle and shin. They have an extra bit of leather over the toes for gear changes, and they have replaceable toe sliders. The soles are oil and petrol resistant, and they have all the necessary paperwork to show that they conform to EU safety regulations. You see what I mean: they're exactly the same as your Alpinestars or RSTs and the rest. They do however differ in one detail and that is in the fact that these boots cost £55. I'll let that sink in for a moment . . . fifty-five-pounds! In fact, if you look at Dainese's own VR46 boots it's hard to see what the difference is, apart from the Eviron boots having the zip to the side and the Dainese having it at the back. Oh, I almost forgot, the other difference is the £350 price tag attached to the Dainese boots. So why do the Dainese boots cost seven times as much? Valentino Rossi wears them so they must be good, right? Or is it that Dainese are paying him an eye-watering amount of money to wear them?

There's the rub – advertising and marketing. I'll give you an example of the power of advertising: in my local supermarket, I can buy a packet of 16 ibuprofen tablets of a well-known brand, and they cost £4.15. If I lower my eyes to the bottom shelf I can buy the supermarket's own brand of the same 16 x 200mg tablets for 60p. Yep, they're exactly the same, only they don't come in a nice shiny colourful package, and no one's been on the telly explaining to you that if you take one of their magic pills not only will it cure your headache, but it will also cure all the problems of the world, and make you more attractive to women, or men, probably.

Sensible, functional and cost-effective boot packaging

Unfortunately, the advertising and marketing extends to all walks of life including motorcycle boots. The Eviron boots come packaged in a plain brown cardboard box, whereas your more established brands of boots will come in a lovely box with cool graphics all over it, which looks great. The trouble is the box costs money to have printed and, not only that, a team of graphic designers has been employed to design the box first. But those designers can't just put any old thing on the box; no, it has to be approved by the marketing team, who then have to get it approved by the managers who have to show it to the CEO, and all these people need salaries and offices, and the CEO, gets a dividend and a company car too. These days, of course, they'll need a Human Resources department to look after all these people, and, oh yes, nearly forgot, they'd better employ a diversity officer to make sure everyone is being treated according to their needs. Someone has to pay for this and guess who that is? Yes, it's you. Don't forget we're only talking about the box here, which ultimately is going to end up in the bin just like the brown Eviron box.

Expensive ibuprofen packaging

We've also got to cover the cost of advertising in the glossy magazines, paying people to endorse their products and so on, the list is endless, and it's all paid for by the customer. Granted, some high-end boots have additional features: they may come in a nice boot bag, for example, but do you really want that? Gore-Tex, how much does that cost? When you see the premium that manufacturers charge for including it, you'd think it was made from the Golden Fleece or the Turin Shroud.

I'm guessing by now that the owners of Dainese VR46 boots will be bouncing up and down shouting "yeah but, no but, yeah but . . ." and I've already admitted that some high-end boots may have additional features, but does that really justify their costing seven times as much?

Anyway, this is just my opinion you can judge for yourself from the photos, or come and find me on a group night and I'll show the Enviro boots, but could I ask that the next time you're in the market for a bit of kit, don't go straight to the glossy ads, instead try and see if you can source anything from a smaller manufacturer here in the UK. You might just get a bargain and save the planet to boot. (See what I did there?)

EASTER BUNNY RIDE TO SCOTTS PROJECT TRUST

Paul Jessop

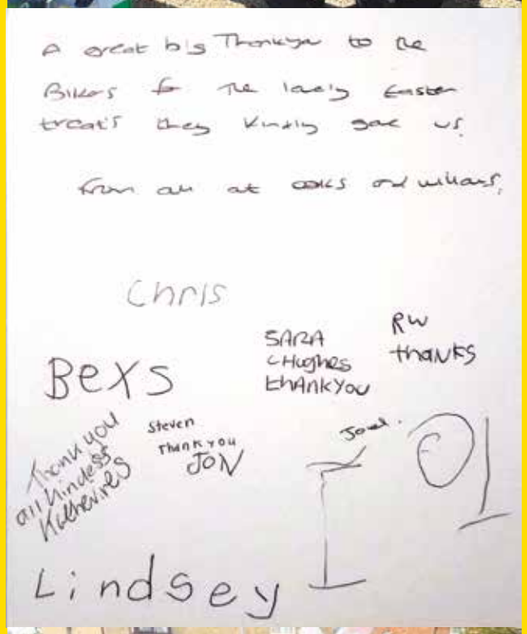
We arranged our customary Easter charity ride for the Sunday before the Easter weekend and after an extended dry spell, needless to say, it was that very day that a change in the weather was forecast. But, fortunately, the day turned out to be very pleasant, which was probably a big factor in the number of late sign-ups, which meant that there were 11 bikes together with a pillion or two that met up at Lullingstone Country Park. The Easter bunny (also known as Tina) arrived and very kindly provided yellow bows to adorn all the bikes, and following a short briefing on how the ride would be conducted we set off on a route that took in a good mix of roads around some of the wonderful scenery that Kent has to offer, and we all arrived safely at Scotts.

As usual our members were very generous with Easter eggs and there was quite a pile to be shared out. Scotts were equally generous in their provision of cakes and drinks laid on for us. They really appreciate the time that our members spend on these visits sitting and talking to the residents.

Scotts have expressed their enormous gratitude both for our donations and for our visits and have sent us a card to thank us. I would like to add my own thanks to all who attended for making it such an enjoyable day and for being so generous with the chocolate.

For more information go to Scotts website:

www.scottsproject.org.uk



KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID

In which Dave Willson actually gets quite complicated at first

Choice: it's a wonderful thing, or is it? Substitute the word 'decisions' for 'choice' and one can feel one's stress levels going up. I'll give you an example. Twenty years ago I used to go to a café in Welling called Jerry's Diner and there you had two choices, tea or coffee, and either came in a mug. In fact, you had three choices – tea, coffee or sod off. Nowadays I attend my local coffee emporium and if I decide on coffee, I have also to decide whether I want a cappuccino, a latte, a flat white, an espresso, an americano, or a cortado, whatever that is. Then I have to decide if I want it small, tall, regular, medium, large or grande. I even have to decide what milk I want – full fat, semi-skimmed, almond or soya. I'm sorry, but milk comes from an animal not a nut. You see what I mean? I'm exhausted and I only want a coffee. But these decisions have become so normalised that we don't even realise how much energy we're using making them. Television is another good example. When I grew up, we had three channels, and you can't imagine the excitement when Channel 4 came along. Nowadays there's about 300 channels to choose from, and that's after you've decided whether you're going to subscribe to Netflix, Disney, Sky etc., etc. I'm exhausted just thinking about it. A final example: my wife went into Marcus Sparcus to buy some jeans and the choice was flares, skinny, ripped, boot cut. And then it got really weird: mom, cigarette, boyfriend. God only knows what they are. And all this before choosing a colour.

I think the saddest thing of all is when you see a parent or grandparent offloading the decision-making process on to a child. I'm sure we've all been in a café and seen the aforementioned elders ask a three-year-old what it wants to eat, a decision that it's clearly not equipped to make. It's no wonder they grow up being called flotherers [Google it. Ed], or snowflakes, afraid of their own shadows. And, the world of motorcycling hasn't escaped this over-complicated decision-making process either (At last – motorbikes.)

How many of you here have to decide which bike you're going to ride before leaving the house? And then it's a case of which helmet do you wear; should you wear your leathers or textiles; and do you need your waterproofs or not? Then, when you actually get to the bike, it's which rider mode do you need, do you want full traction control, do you need to adjust the suspension, should you have the windscreen up or down, do you need the heated grips on, and will you need anti wheelie and launch control? I don't profess to know the secrets to happiness but I think if you live your life by the acronym KISS (keep it simple, stupid) then you can certainly make your life less stressful, and that is one of the reasons I bought a Yamaha MT07. You see, I don't have to worry about which rider mode to select, because I have no choice, it doesn't have any modes. Nor do have to decide how high to have the windscreen, because it doesn't have any adjustment. And I never worry about the suspension settings as they are not adjustable. With the MT07 you get an engine, chassis, fuel tank and seat, and not much of one of those either. You just jump on, press the starter, and ride.

Our editor, is always after material for the magazine and I thought he'd appreciate it if I wrote a short piece about the bike. So I sat down with my pen and paper but found it extremely difficult to write anything remotely interesting. Not because I was suffering from writer's block, but because since the MT07 was launched back in 2013 it has become Yamaha's best-selling bike with

TFT 'cockpit'

160,000 units and counting, and there is nothing to say about it that hasn't already been said by people who know a lot more about this sort of thing than I do. If you're interested in an actual review of the bike then Mick Neeves, *MCN*'s chief road tester does a very good *YouTube* review. Or, if you prefer reading to watching, I find *Bennett's Bike Reviews* are very good. However, having said all that, I'll give it a go.

Yamaha have always been innovative; they were the first manufacturer to put the air box on top of the engine instead of behind it, which revolutionised the way motorcycles were designed; they developed a 270° firing order for parallel twins, which gave them the characteristics of a V (or in the case of Ducati an L) twin, and recently they developed the crossplane crank, which Yamaha first used in the R1.

Rudimentary seating for the pillion

What's a crossplane crank? Well, as you know, engines need to be balanced or they'll shake themselves to bits. In the case of an in-line twin like the MT07, this is largely achieved by one piston going up as the other piston goes down, or in the case of a BMW twin, and not unlike the Hokey Cokey, it's one piston in, the other piston out. I'm talking about old Beemers here; the modern machines are a far more sophisticated. Anyway, in the early 1990s Yamaha brought out a parallel twin sports bike with a trellis frame, called the TRX, and much like Suzuki's SV 650 it was designed to mimic a Ducati. In order to do this Yamaha decided to give the engine a 270° firing order whereby as one piston reaches TDC the other piston is following it up close behind. Yamaha did this because, as previously mentioned, that set-up mimics a V twin, and that has several advantages. V twins have an inbuilt traction control because after the pistons have fired one after the other there is a slight pause before they both fire again. This momentarily gives the back wheel a breather and time to regain a bit of grip. And also, as we all know, V twins sound glorious.

However, the 270° firing order upsets a parallel twin engine's balance, and what a crossplane crank does is overcome this by connecting the flange widget to the elliptical coupling via the heavy drive bell shaft, which in turn passes through the trakion matrix before dropping into the warp stabilisers. Yep, I haven't a clue how it works, but basically it keeps the engine nicely balanced while keeping weight and friction to a minimum, *and it's this lack of weight* that is the MT07's secret. The wheels, for example, are forged and not cast, making them lighter. The forks are the right way up, because upside down forks are heavier. The engine is a stressed member of the 'frame', so the frame itself can be smaller and lighter, and the swingarm is asymmetrical, being lighter on the non-drive side. Finally, and getting back to the power unit, the crossplane engine means that Yamaha can use a smaller clutch, in fact they say that it's the smallest clutch they've ever used on a bike producing nearly 80 bhp. It also allows for a smaller starter motor and small battery.

So much fun you'll ride it in the snow

So what does all this mean? It means a powerful punchy motor in a nimble agile bike weighing just 179 kgs wet, and that means fun. To give you some comparisons: many moons ago I had a Honda Superdream 250cc that weighed the same as the MT07; that's right, a *250cc bike* weighed the same as an MT07. That Superdream was a nasty thing that produced only 27bhp, and used to chug about. To bring things up to date, BMW's F800 today weighs 227 kgs (without specialized equipment). The Kawasaki Versys weighs 214 kgs and produces 68bhp, so hopefully you get my point – the power to weight of the MT07 with nearly 80bhp, is very high

But having said that, I think that with the 2025 model, Yamaha has dropped the ball somewhat. The latest model has a TFT [Thin-Film-Transistor] screen, upside down forks, and rider modes, which means that it's gained 5kgs and is slightly down on power. It even has cruise control. I doubt the world's youth will have the front wheel on the ground long enough to use cruise control. By adding weight and complicating the bike I think the whole ethos of the MT07 has been lost.

Well, what else is not to like about the MT07? I've already mentioned the small battery: if you buy an MT07, buy an Optimate, because you'll need it. And speaking of small, the horn button is tiny; you've more of a chance of finding Lord Lucan than the horn button, especially with winter gloves. The suspension is under-damped and at times it can get a bit pogo-sticky, but having said that, with our potholed roads, perhaps the days of firm suspension are numbered. I'm not going to complain about the lack of weather protection, it is a 'hyper naked', after all. If you want weather protection buy a BMW RT. What I will say is that the front mudguard is tiny; if the RT's mudguard is the granny knickers of mudguards, then the MT07's is very much the thong, which means the front of the bike is very exposed to all that the road can throw at it. A radiator guard is a must. And things don't get any better at the rear, much like the MT09 or BMW's R nine T, the rear of the seat is so narrow there's nothing to stop the spray coming up.

The exhaust is another issue; the sound from the engine is glorious but thanks to the exhaust it's just too muted. The best solution is a full Akrapovič system, but £900 for an exhaust on a bike that cost £4500 seems a bit excessive. There's always the Chinese option and to be fair there's plenty of good exhausts on Amazon for a couple of hundred quid, but they're not road-legal and if you're going to go down that route you may as well just drill some holes in the stock exhaust. In fact, there are several *YouTube* videos showing you how to do just that.

Talking of aftermarket accessories take a look on eBay or AliExpress and you'll find a huge range of accessories, everything from complete graphic sets, rear sets, engine tuning parts, suspension upgrades, windscreens and carbon fibre panels; the list is endless. My bike is quite standard but even so I've got a screen, tail tidy, TFT dash, R and G bar ends, radiator guard, and a few bits of bling.

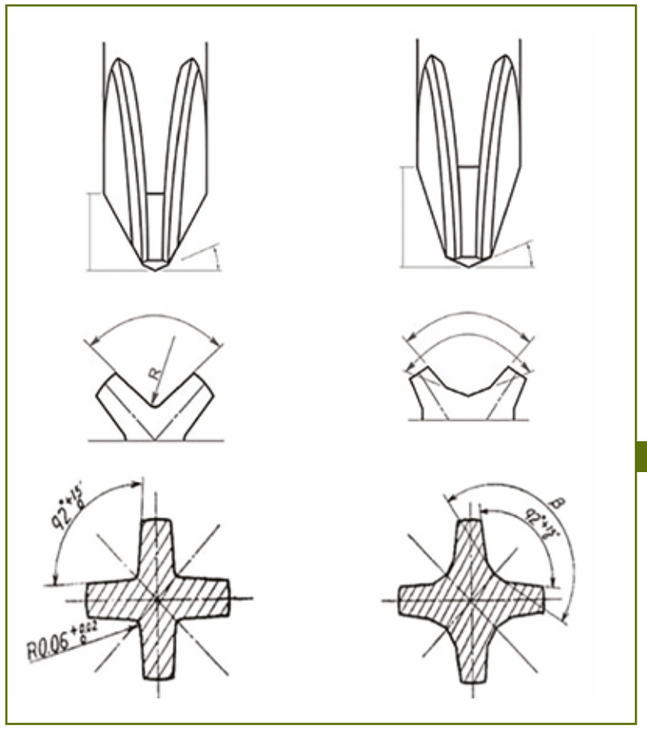
I've mentioned quite a few negatives, but these pale into insignificance when you ride the bike because it is just so much fun, it makes me feel like I'm 17 again riding my Yamaha RD400. All bikes have their place, but after years of contorting myself into the foetal position to ride a sports bike, or manhandling some behemoth around the garage, having a light spritely bike to ride is an absolute joy.

We've all seen videos of the person who rode around the world eight times on a Fireblade, or the person who completed the Paris Dakar on a Gixer or the person on a BMW GS on a track day lapping riders on sports bikes, but generally speaking bikes are horses for courses. If you want to do a track day get a Yamaha R1, if you want to go touring get a BMW RT, if you want to ride off-road get a Honda CRF250, and if you're commuting get a big scooter, but if you want to do all of those things and have some fun doing them then do as the advert says and introduce yourself to The Dark Side of Japan and get a Yamaha MT07, after all 160,000 people can't be wrong, can they?

WHO OR WHAT IS JIS? AND DO YOU CARE?

Martin Brown thinks we should know and care

Who or what is JIS? Is it a boy band or a secret society, and who cares anyway? Well, if you own a Japanese motorcycle (or car) perhaps you should care. Let's start with a quick spot-the-difference contest. In these two pictures the eagle eyed among you will notice that one bolt has a dimple or dot on it, which seems to be nothing of any note . . . but is it?



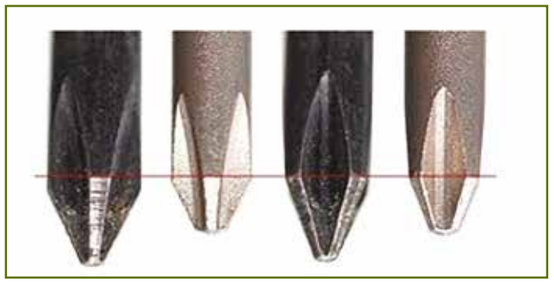
The actual difference between the two bolts pictured is that the one **without** the dot is a Phillips type cross head bolt, and the one **with** the dot is a type known as a Japanese Industrial Standard bolt, or JIS for short. But just to add to the confusion, JIS screws/bolts don't always have the distinguishing dimple! But does it matter anyway? Yes it does.

Hands up those members with a Japanese motorcycle? OK. Quite a few. Now hands up if you do any of your own maintenance? OK, a few less, but still a good number. When you've been working on your Suzondayamasaki (particularly a pre-owned one) you've probably come across a bunch of chewed up cross head screws and you have nodded wisely and said to yourself that we all know that Japanese bolts and screws are made of cheese, but the truth is more subtle and less obvious, until you know.

Japanese bikes (and cars) are held together with JIS screws and bolts, and while JIS screws look quite similar to Philips screw heads, they actually have a different internal design to Phillips heads. Check out the picture and drawing of the screwdriver heads. Phillips screwdrivers have a profile that is designed to 'cam out' of the bolt – that means they twist out of the head when too much pressure is applied. This is in order to prevent overtightening. JIS screws on the other hand do not 'cam out' and therefore they allow the tightness to be judged by the user. In factory conditions, where the bikes are assembled, overtightening is not an issue because they use torque limiting screwdrivers.

However, in the 'real' world, problems start when the inevitable corrosion over time is added to the equally inevitable overtightening by some home mechanics, which means that the fixings get stuck. Yes, a Phillips screwdriver can be used on JIS screws, but you have to push very hard to stop the 'cam-out' function because a Phillips screwdriver 'camming out' of a JIS screw head will seriously damage the screw head. New bolt needed. However, in the opposite scenario a JIS screwdriver *can* safely cope with removing a Phillips type bolt, but if it is used to *tighten* a Philips bolt you must watch out for the danger of overtightening, because the JIS screwdriver won't 'cam out' of a Phillips head if you apply too much human torque. When screw heads get damaged, they are often replaced with cap-headed bolts (for which you need an Allen key), which some people feel look better anyway. Sadly, these are not always the answer that many people think. Cap-head screws that have been inaccurately manufactured, or perhaps overtightened and allowed to corrode, are no easier to extricate with cheap tools than properly fitted JIS screws with a good quality correctly sized screwdriver.

Now you're thinking that's great: you'll just get yourself a good JIS screwdriver for those JIS screws. Well, this is where it gets more complicated: it is, of course, possible to buy JIS screwdrivers from a number of retailers, but there are real JIS and there are not-so-real JIS screwdrivers. Remember, JIS is the legitimate Japanese Industrial Standard, so a screwdriver needs to be made to that *exact* standard to be considered authentically JIS. Most JIS screwdrivers sold today by companies like Vessel, Hozan and others, are actually conforming to a new and different standard – DIN 5260 – which is identical (at the tip) to the newer ISO 8764-1. But wait, DIN stands for Deutsches Institut für Normung e.V. (German Institute for Standardization), and ISO (the International Organization for Standardization), and they don't sound very Japanese, do they?



The reason companies have changed to DIN 5260/ISO 8764-1 is because the new standard is designed to work both with Phillips and JIS screws and, for the most part, they do; but like anything meant to work with multiple things, that means compromise. A true JIS screwdriver will always outperform a DIN/ISO screwdriver in the worst of conditions on a JIS screw, and the same is true in reverse. This means that if you only need one set of screwdrivers, or you are an infrequent user, the new DIN/ISO standard screwdrivers will likely work for you on both screw types, but if using the right tool for the job is important to you, or if you frequently work with JIS screws, consider investing in proper JIS screwdrivers that are built to JIS B 4633. I have used both types and the compromise ones work fine so long as they are well maintained. (Impact bits are a different story, they work but won't last long.) But look for 'Sunflag JIS' on line. They sell them on Amazon and they have a good reputation for making tools to the full Japan Industry Standard.

Happy spannering.

PACKING FOR A FLY/RIDE HOLIDAY

Roger Lancaster gives us (perhaps too much) packing information

Packing for a holiday is an art form; well, maybe it's not an art form, perhaps it's more about thinking through what you need so that it matches the space you have available. I recently went on a fly/ride motorcycle holiday in Gran Canaria. I'd been meaning to do it for years but never gotten around to it, and then the opportunity arose, so off I went. Telling motorcycling friends about my exploits on the island on my return, revealed their interest in not only the riding and the bikes, but what should be packed and how it should be carried or worn for the four-hour-plus flight. So here goes.

I was advised to book cabin luggage – first checking the carrier's limitations on the size of cases – and to take my helmet as hand luggage. A helmet bag went on my Christmas pressie list and it did the job well, particularly as it had a zipped side pocket. This luggage arrangement would mean a much quicker exit from the airport to get into the host's transport to the hotel; they have to park outside the airport and it's not helpful if guests keep them hanging about for up to an hour waiting for their 'hold' luggage.

I am a fairly experienced traveller, both privately and back in the day when I worked for a living, but I thought packing for this fly/ride trip could be a bit of a challenge for a whole week's stay. It wasn't, but I did have to think it all through carefully. When I'm on motorcycle tours, I pack with a view to being able to wash 'smalls' in the shower during a trip; so underwear and socks were easily dealt with. The one problem I do have with packing is, deciding what 'tops' to take according to weather and activities. This is where laying everything out on a spare bed comes in handy, 'cos you should eventually reach the stage of putting clobber back in its drawers and wardrobes. Ask yourself: is what you're packing really essential? If it's not, don't pack it.

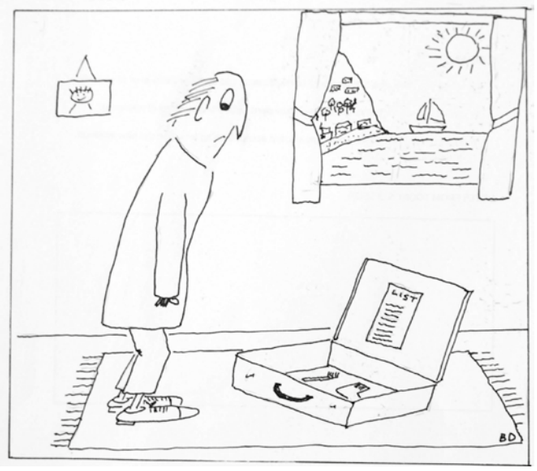
Personally, a packing list is a must for me, otherwise I'd forget something. The packing list should have everything written on it – passport, Euros, house keys, medicine, sunglasses; just everything. And when you go through it as you collect items for packing, don't skip over it, saying to yourself, "I'll get that in a minute", because that's when you forget to pack something; don't skip, even if it means going up and down the stairs goodness knows how many times during the process (and wondering why you went downstairs in the first place. So annoying).

In the end I took two polyester, breathable T-shirts because they're lighter, they wick better than cotton and are easier to wash and dry; I took two long-sleeved shirts that could be washed and don't need ironing (I wore a long-sleeved shirt for the outbound and return journeys), and a short-sleeved shirt to wear on the 'day off'. I'm sorry ladies, I can't write on your behalf, but I understand you don't need to take dresses; on the other hand, I know that some women do like to take a dress for the evening and to have a change of clothing style, especially in warmer climes.

I decant pills and essential vitamins, plus toiletries, into small containers. You could have a view that toiletries aren't essential, but I do like to splash on a drop of aftershave and use a deodorant spray. I hope that's not too much information for you. I also like to use soap, not shower gel, so I sneak in a small bar in a small container. The big bonus for me is that I don't need hair shampoo. The other non-essential things I take are two lightweight pairs of trousers (not jeans, they're too bulky). At my age, I dribble and drop food on my lap; I know, it's very sad. But if you do mark trousers, they're not so easy to clean as tops. Also, it's an alternative pair of trousers to use in the evenings. I also packed swimming trunks (not used) and a pair of short trousers that did get an airing on the non-riding day off. Again, did I need to take them? No, I didn't, but they went in; if they hadn't, the shorts would've been returned to the chest of drawers, taking only the trunks, as the style I have can double-up as shorts. All this clobber is rolled up to make it easier to pack in small places. My lightweight shoes are stuffed with socks, converter plug and anything that easily goes in.

For the flight out, I wore my textile riding jacket over a jumper, packing the back protector, and I wore my textile trousers. I also wore my riding boots for the journey. The knee protectors were awkward to wear when seated on the plane, so I took them out. For the return flight, I again took the knee protectors out, rolled the textile motorcycle trousers, placed them in my small suitcase, and wore one of my pairs of trousers. I then packed around the back and knee protectors. Some riders take mesh jackets and trousers with them. I, personally, couldn't justify buying that type of gear. On the other hand, I noticed that the riders who did wear mesh got a bit chilly at times and we did have the occasional drop of rain; it wasn't much, but mixed with the mist on the higher ground, it got a bit damp. My textiles, on this trip, turned out to be perfect – like most textiles, there's vents and you can leave the top of the jacket undone. The choice of gear is up to the rider, of course, some will always use mesh knowing that if it rains, you dry off quickly. This is the case with armoured jeans, too. I was one of the few who didn't use them, but I might consider doing so in the future. Another consideration for the future is to take my summer riding boots. They could either be packed, stuffing them with clobber, or worn for the journey. On reflection, much of what I've so far written can apply to packing in a set of panniers on your own motorcycle.

Last but not least, was the packing and carrying of my crash helmet. I packed the inside of the helmet with two



pairs of gloves and with anything else I might not have needed on the journey. I removed the intercom from the side of the helmet so that it made it easier to put the bag on its side and slide under the seat in front, thereby leaving more room for my feet. The helmet bag turned out to be a good bit of kit because I could stuff all sorts of small items in and around the helmet.

That's packing. The riding? That's another story. If nothing else is ever written about the riding, just consider the fact that if you don't like tight bend after tight bend, don't go to the Canaries. Whatever motorcycle tour you do this year, have a happy and safe time.

PETERBOROUGH DOES IT AGAIN *For Ian Paterson*

WOW! Where can I start?

Arrived bright and early at the rendezvous, where there was some of our usual banter until everybody arrived, and then the training began with the serious stuff: disclaimers were signed, POWDERS were checked, eyesight was tested; and ICE details on tracker were confirmed. Then we were handed the information packs by the lovely Tina, and this was followed by a full briefing.

We split into our groups of three and started leg one of our journey to Peterborough, a journey during which we will manage to encounter packs of cyclists, cycle events, charity runners, road closures and varying speed limits, which although challenging helped improve our skills. My first lead ride, which was about 30 miles, was to Ongar Garden Centre, Brentwood, where I had my first debrief. Positive observation made by our first observer Colin Billings plus some constructive criticism on some minor points, which I was happy to take on board for the next leg.

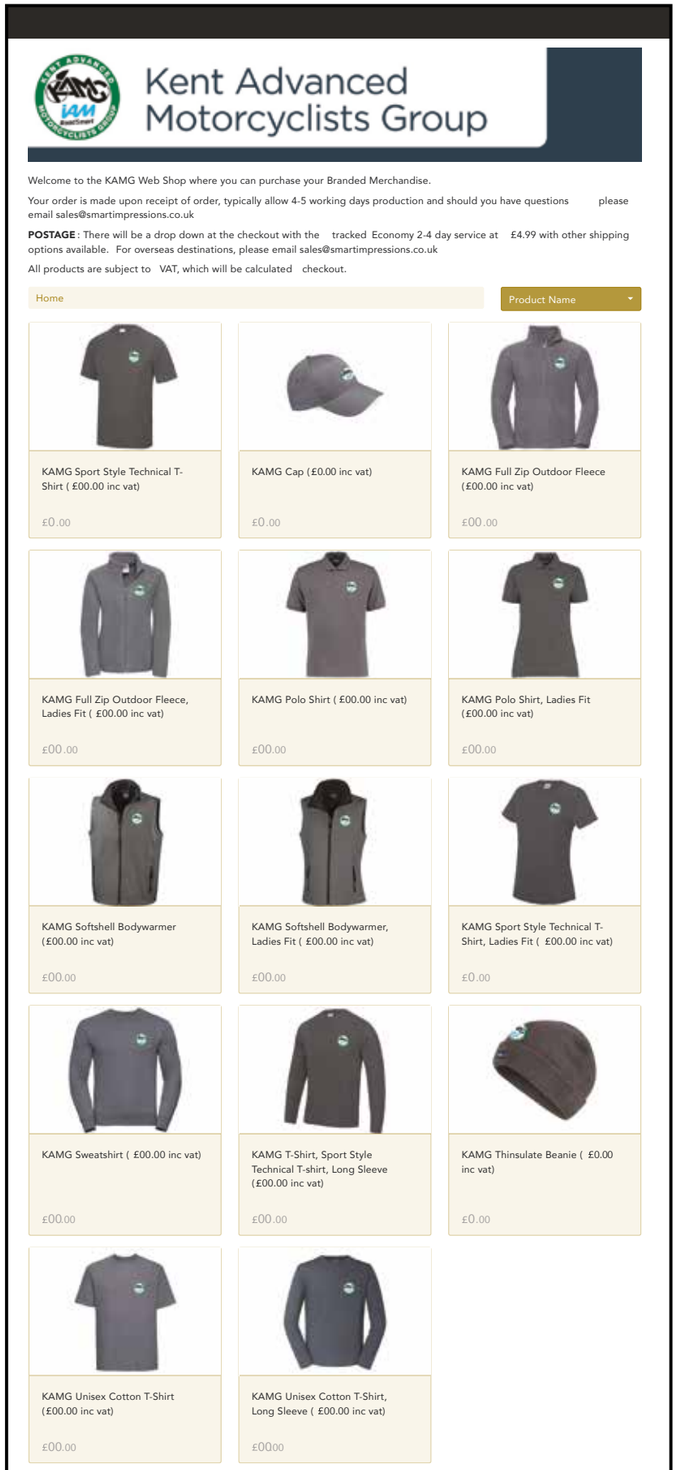
The second leg of our journey took us on some brilliant motorcycling roads where we were able to put into practice advice given by Colin. On this leg I was tail end and had the opportunity to practice and observe. Our next stop was for lunch at Willow Farm a trip of about 40 miles. Refreshed after a delicious lunch we were ready to start our second run observed this time by Steve Riches. Riding lead again, I found myself relaxing into the ride and implementing all that I knew and what I had been told I could improve on. My second debrief was at our next stop, the Twenty Pence Café. Again it was really positive with only a few things to work on. Change of lead and we were off once more on the last leg to the Premier Inn, Peterborough, where our final debrief took place. Then we headed to our rooms to relax before meeting up for dinner and a lovely relaxing evening bonding together.

Day two of our trip was homeward bound leaving at 9am for our final observed ride, this time conducted by Colin Underwood. I was the lead rider on another great route with good roads covering 42 miles before arriving at Woodview Farm Shop for refreshments and debrief. I was pleased to achieve the goals set out by my observers reaching an enhanced standard of riding. Then with a change of lead, we continued our journey to Pearce's Farm Shop after which we all rode back using the marker system to Weald Country Park to say our goodbyes.

I can honestly say that from start to finish the weekend was very professional, the whole team were excellent in their allocated roles, and they made us all feel comfortable, safe and proud to be members of KAMG. THANK YOU.

I have attended this training weekend for the past two years, and even though over my professional career I have been trained to a high standard, I never fail to learn something new. I intend to continue doing these weekends to keep my standard of riding to the best it can be. And I do not hesitate to recommend this because as they say "Everyday is a school day".

KAMG MERCHANDISE is here now . . .



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!

WE TOLD THEM SO

In October 2020 the Department of Transport concluded its so-called 'consultation' in which interested parties were invited to comment on the Government's proposed changes to *The Highway Code*. Some of the proposed changes were, to say the least, unwise; a fact that was pointed out to the D of T by several organisations including the AA, The Road Haulage Association and by KAMG too.

As was to be expected, the government of the time completely ignored the views, advice and recommendations submitted by the various bodies that knew a thing or two about road safety, and they went ahead and implemented their original proposals unchanged, as was always going to be the case. Thus it was, that in January 2021 the new *Highway Code* came into effect.

Four years have passed and we can say, with some justification, but with no satisfaction, that what we said would happen has happened and the new *Highway Code* has created new dangers, dangers that did not exist before. What's more, the opportunity to take into account in the new code the new types of vehicle that have appeared in the last two decades, was completely ignored.

After the rather pointless 'consultation' the Government of the day introduced a number of changes to *The Highway Code,* the most fundamental of which was the introduction of what was, in effect, a *mandatory* 'Hierarchy of Road Users'. They didn't use the word 'mandatory' but it is the key word here. There had always been a natural and obvious hierarchy among road users and without it any form of safe road travel would not have been possible. That 'natural' hierarchy actually worked very well, and it simply depended on common sense and what Basil Fawlty would call "the bleedin' obvious," namely, it meant that big stuff would be very aware of smaller stuff and, when possible, yield to the smaller stuff in an entirely laudable desire not to squash it – the smaller stuff, I mean. But – and it's a very big 'but' – the natural and bleedin' obvious hierarchy depended on the smaller stuff also recognising where and when it was possible to take advantage of its natural priority and where and when it wasn't. In other words, if you were on a small relatively insignificant vehicle like a motorbike you would try to avoid putting yourself in a dangerous position, and you would do all that you could to make sure that other more robust road users in cars, buses and lorries could see you and know of your existence and whereabouts. Obviously, we are not all paragons and there are always riders and drivers who take the piss or who are just plain ignorant, but on the whole the rest of us are aware of this and allow for it as we drive and ride.

Since 2021 that fundamental and natural hierarchy has been replaced by the new mandatory hierarchy, which says that *always under all circumstances the bigger vehicle must give priority to the smaller vehicle*. It doesn't quite use those words, but that nonetheless is its thrust. You might think that's sort of what we've been doing anyway, isn't it? But, no, it isn't. What this new hierarchy is actually saying is that a lorry driver, for example, ***must*** always see a cyclist; no 'ifs' or 'buts'; he must see the cyclist in all situations and in all conditions. *The Highway Code* says, in effect, that you must see something. How is it possible for there to be a 'law' that says that it's compulsory to see something? Meanwhile, there is no concomitant requirement of cyclists to exercise any judgement on where they put themselves on the road and no requirement that they do anything at all to make themselves more visible or to protect themselves in order to compensate for their small mass.

As motorcyclists we are similar to cyclists: we are small, insignificant, low mass units that can be easily hidden in the maelstrom of modern traffic, but there is one big difference between us and a great many cyclists: we have been trained; we have passed a test of competence. I am not suggesting that that makes us God's gift to traffic navigation, but it does mean that we are very aware of the dangers of being in the wrong place at the wrong time; and we are equally aware of the need to be seen and to position ourselves accordingly. Once again, this statement must be qualified by the admission that there are a large minority of dumb motorcyclists who do position themselves badly, either deliberately or through ignorance. However, a short drive in London, or any other urban conurbation, will yield countless examples of cyclists putting themselves in very dangerous positions believing, I suppose, that they are safe because the law, indirectly, implies that they will be safe: safe because those naughty lorry drivers have been told to see them and avoid them. Yet simply because the law says, in effect, that a driver *must* see a cyclist, it doesn't actually follow that that driver *does see* the cyclist, and if he doesn't see him, he can't give him priority or avoid him. Worse, the driver may actually run over the cyclist because he hasn't seen him or her:

An inquest has heard that a cyclist died after she fell into the path of a crane lorry turning left whose driver had not seen her. Jennifer Wong was hit in Oxford, and Oxford Coroner's Court heard that eyewitnesses saw the 32-year-old "wobbling" moments before the accident. Senior coroner for Oxfordshire, Darren Salter, was told that an audit found nothing wrong with the junction [layout]. The inquest heard that Miss Wong had been moving at a similar speed to the crane lorry and was next to its nearside front wheel moments before she was run over. The lorry driver said he had indicated that he was turning left. Police said they were unable to prove if or when Ms Wong would have been visible to Mr Hicks and if his driving fell below the required standard. The coroner recorded the conclusion that this was a road traffic collision. And said he would write to the Transport Secretary and recommend "relatively low cost" improvements to crane lorries, such as close proximity mirrors, which he said would "certainly improve the chances" of drivers seeing people next to their vehicles.

You can fit as many mirrors as you like but it doesn't alter the fact that a driver has only one set of eyes that can look in only one direction at a time. This poor woman cyclist, Miss Wong, should not have been in that position on the road, and if she had been properly trained, she would have known that. *The Highway Code* may imply that it's perfectly OK to be riding a bicycle on the nearside of a big crane, but it's "bleedin' obvious" that it's not.

And that's the point: the D of T can play about with *The Highway Code* as much as it likes, but if a huge chunk of road users don't ever need to read it and don't ever have to prove their competence as road users, things are going to get worse not better, indeed they are already getting worse. Bicycles were the first non-horse vehicles to use the roads way back in the 19th century and it would obviously be wrong retrospectively to introduce a bicycle road test and licence, apart from the monumental logistical problem it would cause. However, there are other much newer vehicles on the road for which it would not, at the moment, be too much of a problem to introduce a test of driving competence before there become too many. For example, no one seems to know how many mobility scooters there are in the UK – certainly the Government doesn't know – but it is estimated that there are about 330,000 Class 2 and Class 3 mobility scooters. Class 2 are limited to 4mph and are not allowed on roads, while Class 3 scooters are allowed on the road, but are limited to 8mph. They do have to be registered with the DVLA but do not need to be insured and the driver does not need to have a driving licence. In 2023 there were 16 deaths in mobility scooter accidents and 90 serious injuries. In total there were 328 injury crashes, which was more than double the figure for 2013. It is getting worse. A very small 8mph vehicle driving on the roads seems inherently unsafe, doesn't it? Does the D of T understand this? One for the D of T's 'too difficult' tray, I think.

Another D of T 'too difficult' question concerns electric bicycles. For anyone with a brain cell it was obvious five years ago that electric bikes are such an obviously good idea there would soon be an enormous increase in the number on the roads. The Government had the opportunity with its new *Highway Code* to recognise that an electric bike was not merely a slightly electrified bicycle but was actually a completely new transport form that owed more to the motorbike than to a pushbike. The dopey Government, however, chose to think of them as glorified pushbikes rather than small motorbikes. While it would be wrong, if not impossible, to introduce a bicycle driving test now, it would still be very possible to have an e.bike test based on the motorcycle test, but it won't be for much longer – there are about half a million e.bikes on the UK roads now and sales in 2023 were 180,000. At that rate of sale, the numbers will soon reach a level where it will be impossible to introduce a retrospective test, and so another enormous number of unqualified riders will be on the road putting themselves in positions of danger and putting us in danger too. No surprise is it?

NF

RIDERS' RANTS

Geoff Curtis hasn't the foggiest

Having no desire to monopolise what might become a regular feature tucked away at the back of *Riders*, but I was wondering if it's just me, or does no-one else come across anything that makes them want to blow off steam?

You might have been told that to be on the safe side, you should treat every other road user as an idiot. The level of idiocy was amply demonstrated on my ride one foggy morning recently. Visibility was poor, yet over the course of fifteen miles I recall seeing only one oncoming vehicle with headlights or fog lights on, and that was an HGV, which was fairly easy to spot anyway. Other than that, there were dull, grey, dark shapes looming out of the blur ahead with, at best, DRLs [Daytime Running Lights] on thanks to current regulations. Clearly the drivers do not realise that lights are not only to see with but also to be seen by. I wonder if they just rely on the automatic 'lights-on' function to control their headlights. I'm no expert on modern marvels but I suspect that some drivers simply wait until dusk for their lights to be switched on automatically, this doesn't happen automatically in fog because there is still plenty of ambient light for the sensors to know it's daytime. The trouble is you can't see through it.

I happened to notice that the car following me was dull grey and had only one sidelight working. When we stopped at a temporary traffic light, I got off my bike and said hello cheerily to the driver and told him about the defect. I also politely pointed out that it might be a good idea to switch his headlights on in the circumstances. I then watched somewhat dismayed as he looked for the headlight switch and began fiddling for a while. "I'll leave you to it then," I said, as I walked away. The traffic light was green again so away we went, but when I turned off a mile later there was still just that one side light on.

This incident brought to mind another from some years ago when I was heading back over the Applecross pass in Scotland on my beloved Honda Blackbird. Those who've ridden this famous pass will know that the road on the moor across the top is single track with passing places, which is all the more reason to be seen in poor visibility. Having stopped in one such passing place for an oncoming vehicle, but seeing and hearing nothing I was just moving off again when a silver-grey car appeared as far away as I could see, which was about twenty yards. Oh dear, I thought, when noting the absence of lighting. Being me, I stood at the edge of the road and waved down the driver. Informing him of his error I learned he was in a hire car and had not thought to familiarise himself with the controls before setting off.

When was the last time you had to perform an emergency stop?

Asks David Austen, Machine Control Day organiser

Do you know how hard you need to brake before your anti-lock system engages?

If you were out for a ride and you came across an unexpected road closure on a narrow lane, are you confident that you could complete a controlled 'U' turn?

If the answer to either of these questions is 'NO', then the Machine Control Day is the ideal opportunity to build your confidence and develop slow control techniques.

The first Machine Control Day of 2025 on May 11th, was a great success, with 10 Full Members, 18 Associates and six Guests undertaking the various skills tests in the warm spring sunshine.

A number of new exercises have been introduced this year, and the addition of traffic lights and a speed gun will really test your emergency braking skills.

Three more MCDs are scheduled for June, July and September, so sign up on tracker now and we look forward to seeing you there. Full details are on page 30.

IDCAM

INTRODUCTORY DAY COURSE IN ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING

2025 Dates

- June 21st
- July 19th
- August 16th
- Sept 20th
- Oct 18th
- Nov 15th

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 David Austen. 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

2025 Dates

Sat June 14th
Sat July 12th **Sat Sept 13th**

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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