

RIDERS

... magazine of
the KAMG

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

This coming Sunday

- May 29th Group run to Bexhill
- May 29th 'Battle of Britain' grass track racing at Frittenden, TN17 2ED
(See *Riders* Feb 2020 on-line)

JUNE

- Fri 3rd Jubilee Fish n' Chip run to Dungeness
- Sat 18th IDCAM
- Sat 25th Machine Control Day
- Sun 26th Romney Marsh Classic Bike Show and Jumble, Ham Street, TN26 2JD
- Thurs 30th Group night – Phoenix Rider Training

JULY

- Sat 23rd IDCAM
- Sun 24th British Superbikes, Brands Hatch
- Sun 24th The Langmaid Trial at Burwash, TN21 8XA
- Thurs 28th KAMG Summer BBQ
- Sat 30th Machine Control Day
- Sun 31st Group run
- Sun 31st Ardingly Classic Show and Jumble, RH17 6TL

AUGUST

- Sat 20th IDCAM
- Thurs 25th Group night

Contact details for group runs, IDCAMs and Machine Control Days are on pages 27 and 29 of the magazine and on Tracker. Always check dates on Tracker to ensure that there have been no last minute changes.



Nick Farley, Editor

The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are solely the views and opinions of the people who write the articles, and those views and opinions should never be taken as, nor be presumed to be, the official view of, nor views supported by, either IAM RoadSmart or the KAMG.

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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

Normal KAMG Service

Full normal service has at last been resumed, I think. There is a packed programme of training, social rides and pleasure tours planned for the months ahead; in fact, after an enforced two year absence, Dave Murphy's very popular week-long Vianden trip is taking place right now as you read this, and already May has seen the year's first fish n' chip run, the first Machine Control Day and a two day tour of the country around Rutland Water. And the first of the year's very successful Peterborough training weekends took place a couple of weeks ago too. Just check page ???? to see how much training activity has taken place in the last year. There have been 731 observed rides since April last year, and, averaged over the year, that means there have been the equivalent of two training rides happening somewhere every single day of the year. I know, of course, that it doesn't work like that, Saturday is the most popular training day and summer the most popular time, but you get my point.

A new chairman

At last poor Tina has managed to shake herself free of the shackles of KAMG chairmanship. We have been very lucky to have had her in the chair for the last five years or so, and particularly during the difficult last two years when not only have the Covid restrictions drastically affected the group's activities, but there have been various internal problems to cope with too. Tina steered us through those difficulties with her usual cheerful aplomb, although I suspect they had a bigger effect on her than she cares to admit or ever showed. Thank you Tina.

Dave Murphy is our new chairman and he is no stranger to the role: he has been a member of KAMG since the beginning of time and he is the group's Vice President, what's more he has been chairman before. In short, he knows the ropes and he has taken over a very healthy organisation at a very crucial post-pandemic time. The future looks bright.

Scooped!

There's nothing worse when you have written a story than to have it scooped by some other publication, and in the case of the story on page 22 we have been scooped by no less an organ than the *Daily Telegraph*. The lead story in the DT magazine on Saturday May 14th was all about cricket at Newenden, and Newenden and its cricket pitch are centre stage in Biking Bites this month. Sorry about that. Our piece was written well before the *Telegraph's* and it was too late to change. Very annoying though. Actually, for 'very' in the previous sentence you can substitute any number of your choicest expletives – I did.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this edition of *Riders*. Once again, I find myself in the position of becoming chairman having been graciously voted in at the AGM. Many of you know me personally, but for those who don't, I joined KAMG in 1999 and have held many posts in my 22 continuous years on the committee. I am a National Observer and a team mentor and a member of the training team, so you will be pleased to know that I have a firm footing in the group and that KAMG is in good shape with a hard working committee at its core.

The biking season has kicked off to a furious start with the first clear run free from Covid in two years. It's been great to see how the organisation has picked up from where we left off and the enthusiasm hasn't waned. The IDCAMs, MCDs, Fish n' Chip runs, tours and of course observed rides are all in full swing. At the time of writing, 115 observed rides have been carried out by our team in the past 90 days with the resulting excellent test passes to keep our chests swelling with pride.

The Peterborough Training Weekend happened earlier this month, during which five members took their advanced rider test and all five passed and three of those scored a "F1rst", which is a tribute to the hard work and skill of the observer corps and of the associates themselves.

Tours are a hot topic at present: the Rutland Water tour in April was a great success and the Vianden Jubilee tour is in full swing as you read this, with 32 attendees this year. And two members have come forward to organise further tours for 2023, details of which will be published as soon as they are finalised.

So, the group remains vibrant and healthy for 2022, and I hope to see you guys out on the road soon.

Dave Murphy



FOR THE RIDE

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TEST PASSES

Since the last edition



Adrian Parkinson receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from Dave Murphy



Cary Bitz receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from Colin Billings



David Malka receiving his Advanced Rider FIRST qualification from John Gardiner



Chris Brooker receiving his Advanced Rider Masters qualification from Steve Riches



Jason Rickward receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from Colin Billings



Tina Underwood receiving her Honorary Life Membership from Chairman Dave Murphy



Karen Grimes receiving her Advanced Rider qualification from Simon Adamson



Steve Riches receiving his Advanced Rider Fellowship qualification from Dave Murphy

IT'S A MARATHON NOT A SPRINT . . . OR IS IT?

Let me explain. Back in the olden days of 2019 when we were allowed to go out and do stuff, I met a chap selling an engine. Not just any old engine either, but a fully serviced JAP 500cc speedway engine. Tasty. (That's an engine made by J A Prestwich, not something from Japan). The chap had bought said engine to run in his Cooper racing car but then changed his mind and sourced a different power plant. Good news for me. A deal was struck and so now I had to decide what to do with it. For some time I had been mulling over an idea to build a vintage sprint bike, so the 'new' engine seemed the ideal starting point. Time to get busy.

The next item I sourced was the front half of a BSA frame. I think it was a 250 from the 1950s. This came with a V5, which meant that the bike could potentially go on the road. Hmm, I might leave that to someone a bit braver than me. Anyway, the next items to end up in the shed were a BSA quickly detachable rear wheel, a home-built front wheel with quite a nice brake, a Norton 'lay down' gearbox and a clutch to go with it. You have to love an autojumble, right? Kempton Park seems to have become my second home.

The loose plan was taking shape. Next up were some forks (BSA again) this time from evil bay. Not bad except that one of the legs had a big dent in it and the slider wouldn't slide. Oh bother! A few calls to some chums sourced a

replacement leg and some new uprated innards from Eddie Dow. These fit perfectly and will allow some nice damping action that was previously absent. However, whilst the retro fitted dampers fit nicely, there are a lot of other 'fitting' issues to address. The thing about building a bike from scratch AND using parts from multiple manufacturers is that nothing fits together. Pretty much everything has to be made as you go along.

The first thing I started to do was to get an idea of how the engine and gearbox would sit together, and also try to line up the back wheel. I made some engine plate templates out of MDF and offered everything up. The picture gives you an idea of the set up but I think I was on set 11 or 12 by the time I was happy. Once the templates were close, I took the whole thing down to my friend Rob Aston, who is no stranger to fabricating frames and who is a much better welder than I am. A rigid rear end was very soon roughly tacked in place but no more than that to allow for the many adjustments that would prove to be needed. The picture shows things taking shape. All this was happening at the back end of 2019 and early 2020. I applied for and got a place for the bike in the Bike Shed show that was due to be held at Tobacco Dock at the end of the May Bank Holiday weekend 2020, and so with a target to aim for I started to crack on. Then the whole world went mad. The 2020 show (along with everything else) was cancelled, so there was no need to rush anymore. In fact, as we all know the pesky





pandemic caused loads of stuff to be cancelled a year later in 2021 as well. So, no show last year either. Grrr.

Anyway, I could at least still work by myself and get a few things done. I sorted out the forks and got them nicely built up using a combination of old and new bits. I fitted them into the frame using a secondhand set of yokes, which I then unfortunately broke by some over enthusiastic hammering. Luckily there are quite a few of these still out there, but it is more money spent for no reason other than impatience.

Next, I started roughing out the engine to gearbox plates. The MDF templates were now pretty much there, but I still made them with a fair bit of tolerance to allow adjustments to be made. The real ones are made from airframe alloy that, by definition, is much tougher than normal aluminium. It is also more difficult to work, but should be perfect for this job. I also made some linkages for the rear brake and for the gearchange. Both of these are going to be run from rearsets, hence the need for a linkage. I made both from stainless steel rod and bought some universal joints to go on the ends. The tricky bit was cutting a lefthanded thread to allow a full range of adjustment. To do this I sourced a lefthanded die and cut in the normal way apart from turning the die anti-clockwise instead of clockwise.

The last job for this episode was to start fabricating the oil tank. As I have a JAP engine, I thought it would be nice to have an oil tank with a JAP logo'd filler cap and I bought a couple of old JAP stationary engine petrol tanks off eBay





for a tenner each. Both had the right cap. Although one tank was too small and the other one was too big, a bit of thought suggested that the 'too big' tank would work with a bit of cutting. So I cut it in half. I then removed a section and ground out a recess to allow for the rear downtube on the frame. The tank parts then went off to the welder to have the two halves put back together, and to have a fillet

welded into the recess as well as having two ¼ BSP bosses welded in for the oil flow and return pipes. I also cut a hole for a sight glass, which although not really necessary I think adds a nice touch.

As you can see it is starting to look like a bike ... well it was in early 2020, but more on that next time.



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WE ARE ALL BEING WATCHED, YET NOT EVERYONE IS SEEN!



Here's an interesting case: the driver of the white car in the picture above, was recently fined a total of £417 and given five points on his licence for careless driving because he was deemed to have driven too close to the cyclists who were passing the 'parked' car on the other side of the road. To me, that seems grossly unfair. There was, apparently, no suggestion that the cyclists were in any way to blame by carelessly putting themselves too close to him by overtaking the parked car on a narrowish road in the face of oncoming traffic. No, it was all the driver's fault.

What's more interesting though, is that even if it had been considered that the cyclists were in any way 'careless' about their road positioning, there would be no way in which they could have been brought to book – because they are unidentifiable. The motorist, however, has a number plate (for which he pays several hundred pounds a year) that enables the police to identify and prosecute him, while the cyclists pedal anonymously into oblivion. Fair? No. Legal? Apparently so!

In this situation, where admittedly the car driver could have been perhaps a foot nearer the kerb (I calculate he is about two feet from the kerb), it could certainly be argued that the cyclists could have exercised some caution, indeed *should* have exercised some caution, and borne some of the responsibility for their position. Instead, the driver has been held to be entirely in the wrong simply because there was no way of taking any action against the unidentifiable cyclists. What's more, if the cyclists had allowed the 1.5 metres separation from the parked car, as advised in the new Highway Code, it would have been impossible for the oncoming car to have distanced himself from the cyclists by 1.5 metres too. Should he, therefore,

have stopped or should the cyclists have waited for the oncoming traffic (presumably with priority) to pass first? The cyclists, by not stopping, put the driver in a very difficult position. I would say, an unavoidable position.

The police said that had the driver not crossed the centre white line no action would have been taken against him. It doesn't look from the picture as if he crossed the line, although he is on it. But for the sake of literally three or four inches he cops a £417 fine and five points. That is indeed a 'fine' line.

An interesting final point is that the motorist decided to go to court and argue his case. Had he instead chosen to admit blame (for something that he considered was not his fault), the police said that he would have been fined only £100 and given three points. The police said that in going to court, "He chose poorly." That's a smartarse response. What he actually chose to do was argue his very reasonable case, and I think he was right. What do you think?

However, the real significance of this case, and the reason I am writing about it (whether you think the motorist or the cyclists were separately or jointly in the wrong) is that it is an illustration of one of the important points that KAMG and many other organisations made when responding to the government's recent consultation process about the changes that have just been made to the Highway Code; namely, that if cyclists are going to enjoy all the privileges and priorities that the new Highway Code confers on them, there should also be a concomitant requirement that they are registered and identifiable, particularly as we are all now being 'policed' by private video footage as well as by real police officers.

NF

JUMBLE FEVER

Elsewhere in this issue you will find a reference to the Kempton Park jumble, a place where Martin 'Z' Brown finds 'stuff'. Of course, he goes specifically looking for stuff, but a motorcycle jumble is a wondrous place whether you are seeking an indeterminate rusty thing, a specific rusty thing or just a toothsome bacon roll. And it was in the last category that the Lady Pillion and I found ourselves one recent sunny Sunday at a motorcycle jumble held in the cattle market at Ashford.

You may have thought that jumbles are not for you; you probably think they are well outside your shiny modern motorbike orbit. You are probably not rebuilding some ghastly old heap of a bike that was reviled in its day, but to which time has lent a false, romantic lustre. You are much more likely to be just a bike-ist looking for somewhere different to go on a Sunday, and if you are, then you are prime jumble fodder, trust me.

At a jumble you can buy new stuff, old stuff and very old stuff. You can buy stuff that you don't want and stuff that you do want but that you didn't realise you wanted until you saw it and it was only ten bob! You can even buy whole, complete, rideable, running motorbikes. And presumably people do, otherwise why would there be bikes there? In fact, a few years ago at an Ardingly jumble, I came within an ace of buying an awful French 'Automoto' motorbike. It was just there and I was simply caught up in the moment and it seemed like the most sensible thing in the world at the time. It was patently my destiny to own a farty little, Automoto two stroke (Ugh! I hate two strokes). Fortunately, the LP pointed out that as we were on two wheels and without a van we couldn't get it home, and she was right. Thank God. It

Why did I nearly buy this?



A large funnel with filter £1



Irresistible shiny spanners

was a damn close-run thing. Jumbles can do that to you.

It is fascinating to see what seemingly useless pieces of junk people will consider worth selling: and it's equally fascinating to see what seemingly useless pieces of junk other people will consider worth buying. "For every force there is an equal and opposite force." Observe that disgusting little bit of rust lying before you on the vendor's grubby blanket on the ground (they don't all have tables), that bit of rust might be the exhaust pipe flange off, say, a 1916 American, V twin, Whizz Bang board racer and the bloke standing next to you who is parting with a substantial part of his pension to acquire it (money that he would



Millions of 'fasteners' and I wanted them all

have been better advised to have spent on a razor) has been looking for exactly that particular part since about 1958. Jumble orgasm.

But even we lightweight jumble innocents, we fair weather dabblers, we mere seekers after a Sunday bacon roll, even we do not escape without buying something. The siren song of the jumble stallholders is irresistible. We bought a large funnel for just £1 and a brilliant Rolson head torch with batteries for three quid! Three quid! That torch retails at £14.99. At a jumble there will be blokes – and a surprising number of blokettes – with beguiling displays of shiny new spanners and other tools at prices that you decide make them essential buys. In fact, a jumble is a jolly good place to buy spanners. You will certainly find a chap selling old 'pre-owned' spanners for a song and it's a very good way of acquiring spanners for next to nothing. There was also a stall at Ashford that was selling what are now called 'fasteners' but what I have always called nuts and bolts. There were millions of them (see picture), and I know it sounds daft but the temptation to buy practically everything on that stall was overwhelming. Why? I can't explain.

At a jumble you can buy anything – motorbike clothing, motorbike bits, motorbike food and actual motorbikes. You can buy brand new stuff and old stuff, but most of all it's simply a very good place to while away an idle Sunday with people who like bikes, bread and bits.
NF



Irresistible sugary cakes

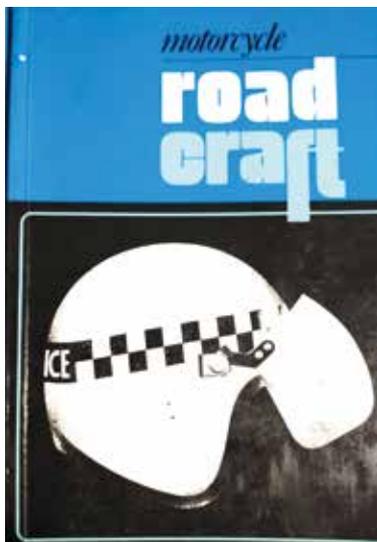
***Jumble calendar: Sunday June 26th Romney Marsh Classic Show and Jumble at Hamstreet, TN26 2JD.
Ardingly Summer Classic Show and Jumble, South of England Showground RH17 6TL***

TRAIL BRAKING

DAVE WILLSON ASKS "SHOULD WE, OR SHOULDN'T WE?"

When I was a lad, we used to play 'out'. Your mum sent you 'out' to play in the morning and told you to be home for your tea, and when you came home six hours later, filthy dirty with grazed knees, no one batted an eyelid, that was the norm. And if like me your formative years were in the early seventies, playing 'out' meant building a fire in the woods, playing chicken by jumping across garage roofs, exploring a couple of building sites, smoking 10 Guards cigarettes, and building a death-defying launch ramp for our pushbikes. Our little gang of reprobates used to play 'out' a lot on our pushbikes, and one game we'd play was to pedal furiously down the road and slam on our back brakes to see who could produce the longest skid mark. We used to call this game 'trail braking' and it usually led to a clip round the ear from your dad, as the tyre he'd bought a couple of weeks ago now had the ply and the cord exposed. The other thing that used to happen occasionally to kids playing on bikes – and I'm sure some of you dear readers have done this – was to slam on the front brake and go flying over the handlebars, and this is actually more akin to trail braking, or it's at least part of the story.

Those of you who attended the October group night were lucky enough to have a very informative, engaging, entertaining and thought-provoking chat from Giles of Rapid Training (we won't mention the dodgy joke about the nuns), and I'm thankful for people like Giles who dare to challenge the word of the almighty IAM manual or the *Police Roadcraft* book. The reason I say this is that I'm sure a lot of people assume that these instruction manuals are set in stone, whereas they are, in fact, constantly changing and evolving, and it's only by challenging their content that they will continue to evolve. For example, I've enclosed a picture of the system of motorcycle control taken from my 1975 copy of *Roadcraft*. This was the book that I studied for my RAC/ACU motorcycle training course about 40 years ago. As you can see it's quite a bit different from IPSCA; similar but different. Back then it was considered the safest and most progressive way of getting from A to B, but clearly thinking has changed. Giles brought up a couple of issues that he'd identified amongst advanced riders, the second of which was braking, and he began talking about

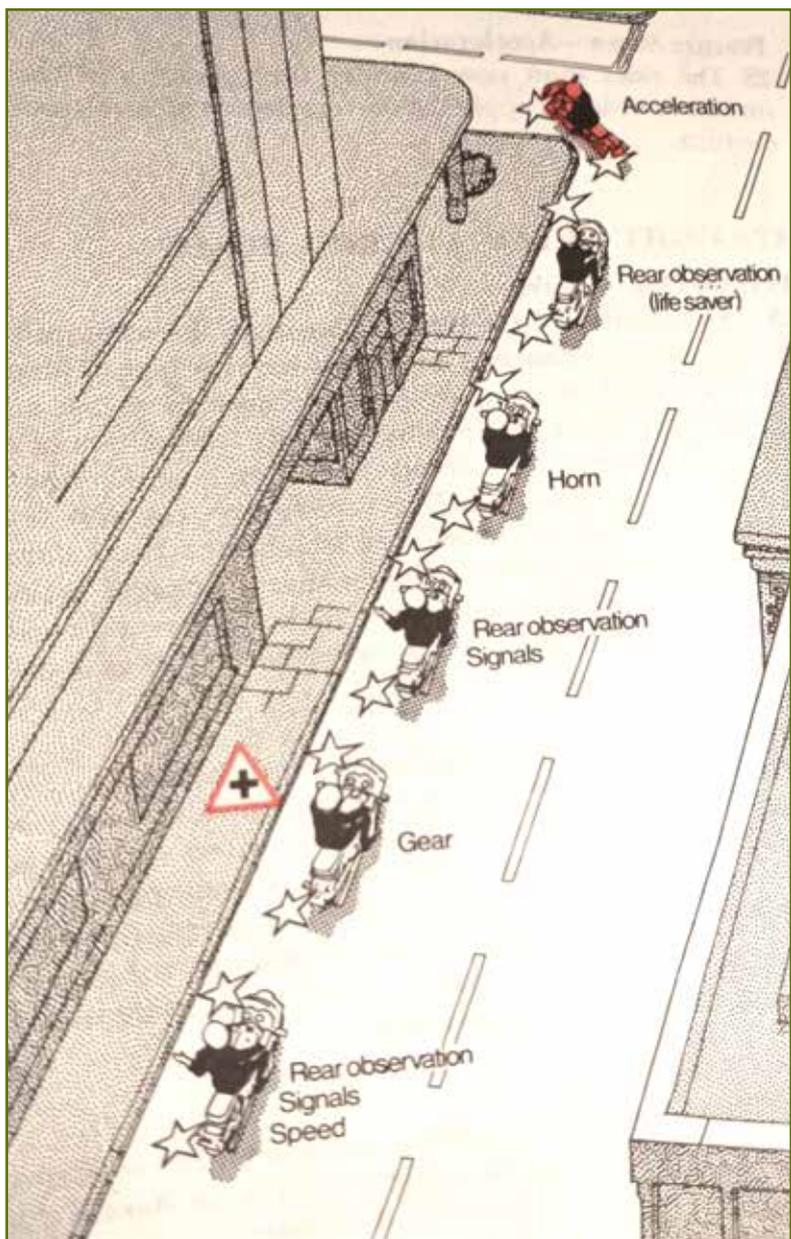


Roadcraft 1975

trail braking and the way that Valentino Rossi brakes into a corner, and it's at this point I have to say that I'm not fully on board with Giles's opinions. In fact, let's not beat about the bush, I totally disagree with everything he said regarding the way we teach braking techniques. There, I've said it. Phew! I thought the sky would fall in, but it didn't.

At this point, some of you may be asking who the hell is this bloke challenging the might of the all-conquering Rapid Rider training organisation? However, please bear in mind that what follows is just *my* opinion. I could list all the gongs and certificates hanging on my wall, but let's just say that I've had as much training, if not more, and perhaps very similar training to Giles, in the police and with other organisations, including coaching on the

Motorcycle control taken from 1975 Roadcraft.



track by Motor Sport Vision Trackdays (MSVT) instructors. Yet, like Giles, I'm just a man with a brake lever in my hand and a love of motorcycles in my heart and these are just *my* opinions. Feel free to disagree, even call me an idiot, but it's this kind of bohemian thought and discussion that moves things forward.

It was suggested by Giles that the way we approach a bend is bad – and here we're discussing the speed and gear phases (of IPSSGA); namely, brake, brake, brake, off brakes, gear. This is apparently a bad thing to do because as we brake, we transfer weight to the front wheel via the forks, and this, in turn, compresses the front tyre, thus increasing the contact patch and improving grip. This is 100% correct. It's why people can do 'stoppies'. The harder you brake, the more weight you transfer to the front of the bike, the more the tyre is compressed and the greater the grip it has. It was then suggested by the speaker that what we do next – the off brakes, gear bit – that is bad because it removes or negates all that lovely front wheel grip that we have created just as we enter a corner and need it as we begin leaning the bike. Our speaker then went on to talk about Valentino Rossi and trail braking.

I feel that the way we approach a bend, however, is absolutely the correct way of doing things *on the road*; not only is trail braking *on the road* inappropriate, it's potentially dangerous. I'll begin with an explanation of what trail braking is and try to paint a mental picture that you can understand. Not, dear reader, because I think you're thick, but because I've only got an 'O' level in physics and trail braking was explained to me by an MSVT instructor at Brands Hatch. I'll then give reasons for my thinking that it is an inappropriate technique for advanced road riding.

So here goes: saddle up, buckle in and take a deep breath. As previously explained, when we brake – and we are talking front brake here – gravity sticks its nose in and weight is transferred to the front of the bike. However, when we try to go round a bend there are other lateral and centrifugal forces that start working against us. When we lean the bike using a combination of body weight, position and counter steering, the lateral forces are working against us and are trying to fling us out of the circle and make us go in a straight line. We're fighting against them but they don't just give up and go home in a sulk; oh no, they continue battling us and as we won't allow them to stand the bike upright the lateral force is transferred through our suspension, compressing it, compressing the tyre, increasing the size of the contact patch and improving grip. Sounds familiar.

So (if you're still with me), trail braking Valentino Rossi approaches a bend and he brakes (in a straight line), which we'll say compresses his forks four inches, and also compresses and spreads the front tyre, increasing grip. He then begins to lean the bike and the lateral forces come to join the party. Now, let's say he gets to a slight lean angle, where the lateral forces are sufficient to compress his forks by one inch. While this has been happening, he has gently trailed off his brake so



Note here how the front suspension is compressed, judging by the distance between the mudguard and the beak of the fairing, but there's no use of the front brake

that the fork legs still remain compressed four inches but now the braking forces are providing 75% of the compression/grip and the lateral forces are providing 25%. He then leans further so there is even more lateral force capable of compressing the fork legs, let's say two inches, so he trails off the brake a bit more and now it's 50/50. In other words, the fork legs are still compressed the original four inches but the brakes are accounting for two inches of compression and the lateral forces are also accounting for two inches. As he continues leaning and as the lateral force becomes even stronger, he keeps trailing off the brake until eventually he has let go of the brake completely and the lateral force is providing all the grip. Throughout the whole process the fork legs have remained compressed by four inches and the tyre grip has remained the same, Rossi has just swapped the forces providing it. So that's trail braking in a (tiny) nutshell. I hope it made sense.

Giles attempted to give a practical demonstration of the forces acting on a wheel by using a tyre. He leant down on the tyre simulating braking, then whilst still leaning on it he leant it over at a steep angle to show that the tyre still gripped. He then leant the tyre over without first leaning on it and the tyre slid away. Unfortunately, this demonstration, much like Henry's bucket, doesn't hold water as the tyre is static and as such no lateral or centrifugal forces are acting on it.

So why do I think that trail braking is a bad thing on the road? First, because it's a difficult technique to master. Take Marc Marquez, for example: when it comes to riding bikes that young man has more talent in his little finger than the whole of KAMG put together. If you doubt me have a look at YouTube and watch as he defies the laws of physics. If you follow MotoGP, you'll know the number of



Above: Even at high speeds, relative to the bend and lean angle, the lateral forces are providing plenty of grip to the tyres.

Below: Front tyre after a track session



times he lost the front end last year and low-sided when he got it wrong. Second, it's completely unnecessary on the road. Have a look at the picture of me approaching Druids, the hairpin at Brands Hatch. I'm doing about 50mph here and, as you can see, I'm already at a high lean angle, although if I told Marc Marquez that I thought that was a high lean angle he'd probably laugh his Repsol socks off. However, I suggest that if you were you riding a touring/adventure style bike at that angle you'd probably be creating sparks from your hero blobs (those sticky out bits on the bottom of your footrests). Anyway, look closely and you'll see that I'm not braking. Even at these high speeds, relative to the bend and lean angle the lateral forces are providing plenty of grip to the tyres. In fact, lean angle alone is generally never a problem for your tyres, it's the idiot behind the handlebars that causes the problems. I think it was Steve Parrish who said to Henry Cole when giving him some track tuition: "If you think you've got more talent than these tyres, you're mistaken."

The picture of my front tyre was taken after a track session. The wear you can see is either hot or cold tear, and it's to do with temperature and pressures, not being a track god but just a middle-aged bloke who likes pretending he's Barry Sheene for a couple of hours on a sunny afternoon, I don't fully understand such things. The point of the

photo is to illustrate that unless, when you get home from your fish n' chip run, or club run, or observed ride, your tyre is displaying similar wear, you are getting nowhere near the limits of its grip. The third reason that I think trail braking is unsuitable for road riding is that if you enter a bend while trail braking it would be impossible to use the limit point to gauge the severity of the bend. And finally, remember that Rossi and company have a smooth grippy consistent surface to work with. Imagine if you ran on to the track and placed a few manhole covers and wet leaves down. I think the ensuing carnage would be entertaining.

So, am I saying that there is never an appropriate use for trail braking on the road? Well, the answer that most observers give to most questions asked by most associates is: "It depends". The one thing that we all have in common is that we've either passed our advanced rider Green Badge test, or we are working towards that goal. At a recent observers' meeting Les Smith, an IAM examiner, pointed out that depending on our experience, whether we've trained with other organisations, done trackdays or ridden off road, we all have differing levels of 'roadcraft', and there you have it. It's just my opinion. Take it or leave it, it's up to you, but I bet it's got you thinking, and that's all down to Giles from Rapid Rider Training.



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THE RUTLAND WATER TOUR

LYNN SAMMONDS ENJOYS THE 'RICHES' OF RUTLAND

What a great weekend we had on the Rutland Water tour. I was a bit apprehensive leading up to the weekend as I didn't know what to expect and whether I would fit in with everyone. I took my Advanced test with London Advanced Motorcyclists and have only recently joined KAMG, so I didn't know anybody and nobody knew who I was. However, Steve and Debbie Riches were great hosts and soon made me feel very welcome with their lovely friendly manner and their humour.

After the initial tour briefing, we were on our way, and although it took a little while for me to relax, once I did I thoroughly enjoyed the back roads that we were taking. Amazingly everybody played their part in the drop-off system so the group moved along nicely, and there were well planned food and comfort stops so that those with smaller petrol tanks were able to fill up before things got stressful, me included.

There were a few other female riders and we gravitated towards each other and were soon having lots of laughs and banter. The guys were a little shy at first but once they realised that we were friendly they soon started chatting to us. The Premier Inn at Market Harborough was a welcome site late afternoon and we all managed to check in with no issues. The first evening was good



fun too as we were all on a high after such a good day's riding. The food wasn't bad either!

The next day was even more fun as people started to ride well, and the faster riders were overtaking more, which kept the group moving at a good pace. I'd only had my bike a couple of weeks and it was great to put it

Rutland Water





The 'Tour' takes over Market Square in St Neots

through its paces and see what it was capable of. I felt very comfortable with it after so many miles and I had a great day. It's very beneficial to ride with others and to gain experience by riding so many miles in a short period.

The coffee and lunch stops were well planned and fun, as people were now getting to know each other: and you certainly don't go hungry on these tours! Steve had planned some great routes around the countryside and

the roads were amazing. We had good weather, which helped, and the whole group seemed to be enjoying the rides.

I'm so glad I decided to join KAMG and go on this tour. I won't feel such an outsider now on the group nights and rides. I met some lovely ladies and gents who I hope to ride with again very soon. Thank you, Steve and Debbie, for a great weekend.



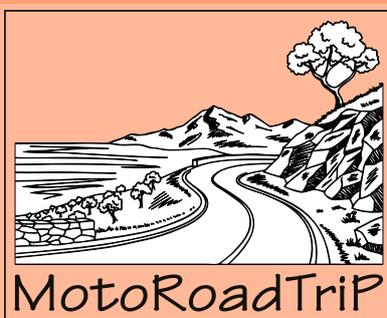
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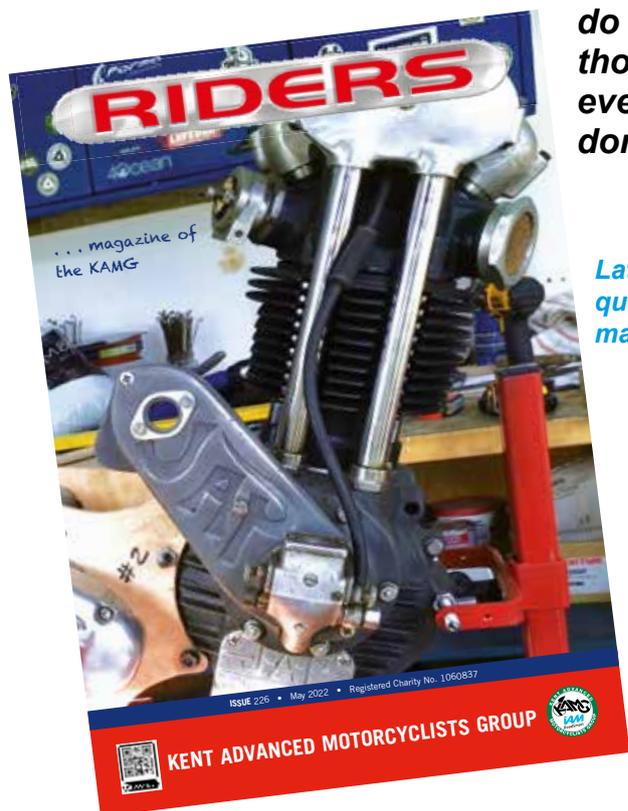
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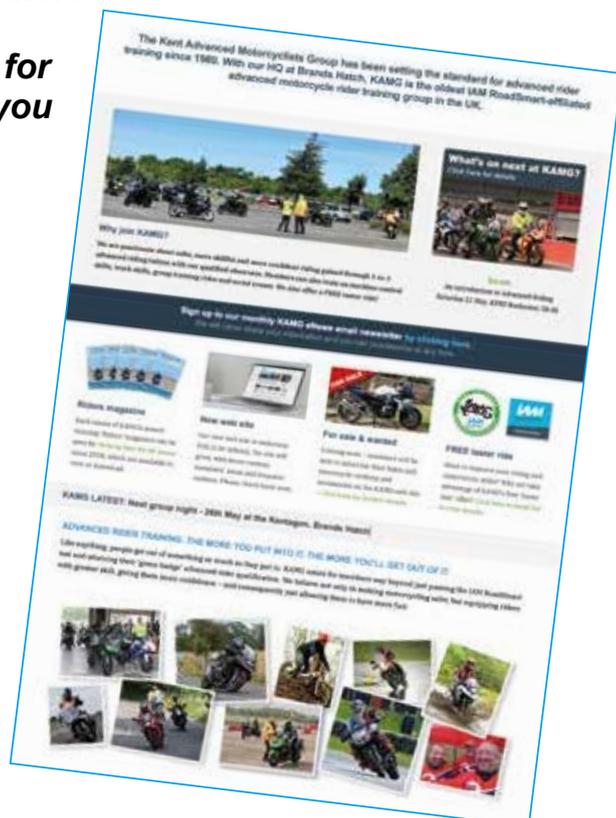
much more than an advanced training group, it is also a motorcycle club with a wide-ranging social programme including ride-outs, barbecues, club nights and regular tours abroad and throughout the UK. Our members are men and women who range in age from late teens to 'old-age'. Some ride only three thousand miles a year while others do fifteen to twenty thousand. KAMG is for everyone... even if you don't live in Kent!

If you like what you see in this magazine and would like a 'Taster Ride' or simply to find out more about joining KAMG, contact David Howard, the Membership Secretary at membership@kamg.org.uk or go to the website www.kamg.org.uk

If you like bikes, KAMG is the place to be.



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MOUNTAINS IN SPAIN

I vowed that I wouldn't spend a sou nor indeed a euro in France this year, because and I hate to drag you into my political hell here – although I love France, and riding in France, and eating in France, and just being in France, Mr Macron ... well, never mind, I'm going to Spain instead, to the Picos de Europa.

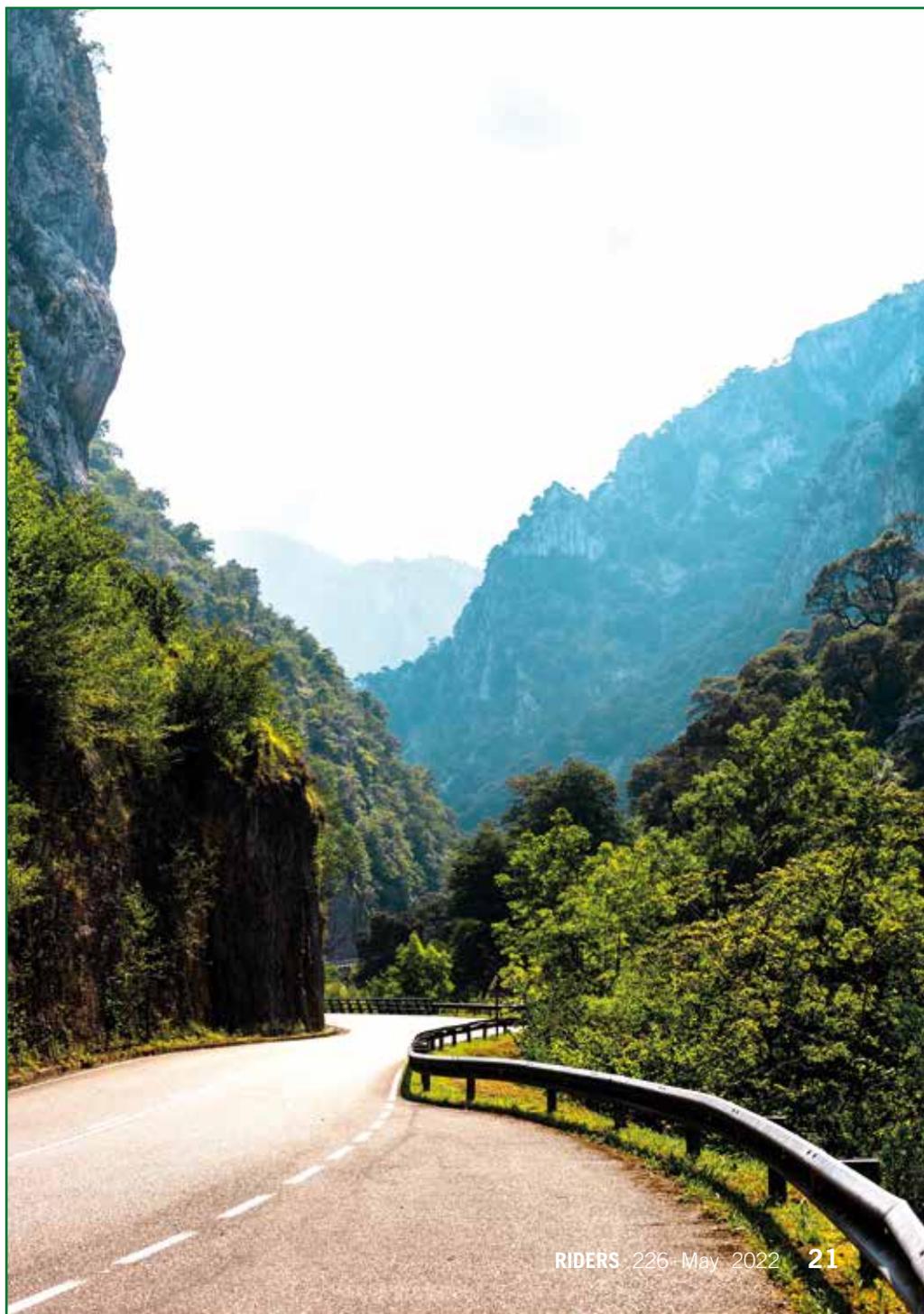
To paraphrase Ratty in *Wind in the Willows*, "There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about on a motorbike." And if that motorbike is in the mountains, and if those mountains are in Europe, where the roads are (nearly) all smooth and deserted, the pleasure is doubled, nay, tripled. So it's off to the Picos for me and I shall take the ferry from Portsmouth to Santander in northern Spain, a ferry which I admit is French, but I think one's principles can be stretched just a little bit in the interest of riding a motorbike up and down mountains.

I realise that you couldn't give an airborne reproduction where I go on holiday or whether I go on holiday at all, and you are right to be uninterested. And you might think that your lack of interest is reciprocated, but it's not; I care deeply where you go on holiday, because I remember from the earlier survey, which we conducted a couple of years ago, that despite living on the doorstep of Europe and within easy reach of ferries to Spain (and France), about half of KAMG members don't go abroad on their bikes, and if you don't you are missing a lot. Riding on your own in Europe, in the sun, on (nearly) perfect roads is about as good as life can get. If there are mountains too, it's even better.

Perhaps, many years ago, it once made sense to book with a group and go on an arranged tour, but now, the

internet has made booking hotels or campsites easy. Satnavs make navigation relatively straightforward (beware of Deirdre the pedantic satnav), although always have good maps with you and always pre-plan your routes even if you subsequently deviate from them. Language isn't a problem either because virtually everyone you come in to contact with will be used to English tourists and will speak some form of understandable English.

Go on the internet right now and search for a book called *Journeys Through the Alps and Beyond* by John Hermann. It covers the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Dolomites and the Picos. It's a book I have recommended in these pages many times over the last ten years or so. It's been my bible, and it will become yours. When you have it you will immediately want to book a ferry, I promise. Don't delay.
N



BIKING BITES



Inside the shepherd's hut

Some say that the very first game of cricket that ever took place anywhere in the world, actually took place 700 years ago in the tiny village of Newenden in Kent. Newenden is the smallest village in the county and today has only 196 inhabitants. However, its position on that mighty artery of medieval trade, the river Rother, made it an important port a few hundred years ago, and although it was obviously never going to rival Liverpool it was apparently busy

Looking across the possible birthplace of cricket towards the banks of the mighty Rother

enough and big enough to justify having 16 inns! There's only one today.

So, where is this very small place, this once important port and the possible birthplace of cricket? My guess is that you have probably already ridden through it a few times and blinked and missed it as you roared on to Rye or to that Hastings motorbike thing on a May Bank Holiday. But you really should stop in future, because although cricket is still played there on summer weekends in a very picturesque setting, much more to the point for people on motorbikes is that you can drink coffee and eat bacon rolls and other bikey comestibles in a shepherd's hut in Newenden – yes, *in a shepherd's hut* – overlooking the very pitch where maybe, perhaps and possibly, 700 years earlier, some chaps invented cricket.

The shepherd's hut in question is part of 'Nibbles' café, located precisely at TN18 5PN. But Nibbles isn't just a shepherd's hut, oh no, and shepherd-hutting isn't even compulsory either – you can eat outside if the sun is shining or in a more conventional café sort of café if it's not; Nibbles offers a choice in these things, but wherever you settle it will be good. Only yesterday I had an excellent light lunch of soup and baguette followed by a big slice of Victoria sponge (highly recommended) with



a large coffee and a complimentary doughnut. I can't promise that cricket will be played; that's a bonus when it happens.

In the balmy summer sun, the south-facing door to the shepherd's hut will remain open, but it is worth noting that there is a wood-burning stove inside that is active during the colder months and after a sharp winter's ride you will be glad of its warmth. You can reserve the hut

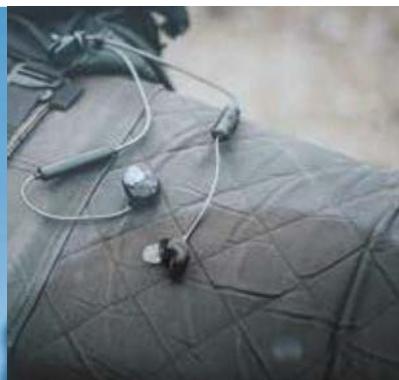
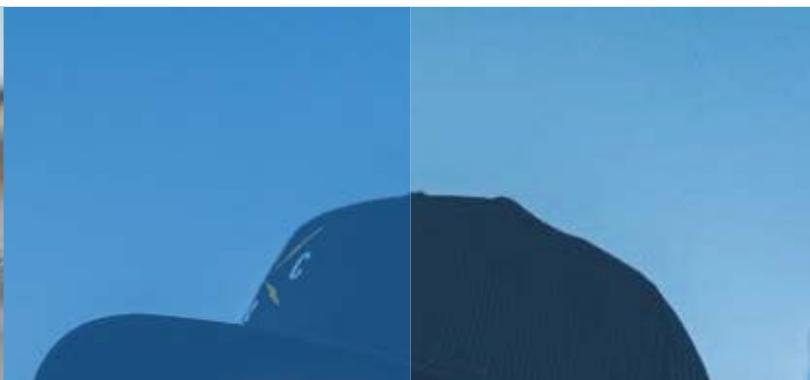




in advance and it would make a particularly good reason to brave the cold and go for a winter's ride knowing that the destination was going to be soup and/or a bacon roll in a shepherd's hut with a proper fire. Nibbles welcomes motorbikes

because it is run by people who ride them, a point emphasised yesterday when two ladies who were entering the orthodox café bit were surprised to find a motorcycle being wheeled out between the tables.

So, next time you are near Newenden, don't blink and miss it, stop and Nibble for a while in a shepherd's hut, and possibly watch some cricket too.
NF



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DUCATI DRAMA

Martin Brown hoped for a quick turnover of his 'barn find' Ducati, but he nearly came a cropper

Those of you who followed the progress of my ZRX 1100 restoration (*last episode appeared in February's magazine. Ed*), will recall that when I bought the big Z it came as part of a 'job lot' with two other bikes. As advanced riders you, of course, have well developed observation skills and will recall that both of the other bikes were Ducatis: one was a 1995 900SS and one was a 1982 Darmah. Neither had turned a wheel in over 20 years!

The 900SS was in pretty good condition, so what was needed (or what should have been needed) was more of a 'recommissioning' rather than a full-blown restoration. Anyway, I thought that I would get away with the minimum of work and the associated lower costs; I thought I'd get the thing running and sell it. New belts, filters, plugs etc. were bought and fitted. The carbs had to come off to be cleaned in my ultrasonic tank and the fuel pump was replaced. Replacing the pump was a trial. What sort of engineer decided that the best place for the fuel pump was actually *inside* the fuel tank? It needs rubber fingers and the patience of Job to sort out. Drama? No, not really, but read on...

Next on the list of jobs were the brakes. Yes, they had been standing for 20 years, but they were working and the pads looked OK. I thought, "save money, just change the fluid". This job was sorted and all seemed fine. She fired up nicely, rode nicely and passed the MOT with no issues, and so I climbed aboard for the bike's first proper ride in over two decades, which was to get me to the October Group Night. A sound thrashing along the M20 to Brands Hatch caused no distress and so, when I got on it again a few days later to go for a spin, I was pretty relaxed. That feeling evaporated very quickly.

I live in Sidcup and I was intending a run up to the Ide Hill Café via Eynsford. As I started going up the hill past Ruxley Manor Garden Centre I felt something was wrong. The bike was not pulling and indeed it felt as though something was dragging. I managed to limp into the Premier Inn car park at the top of the hill to see that my back brake was smoking. Ooo-err Missus!



The Ducati 900SS as found between Big Z and a 1982 Darmah

Grr, that's my ride done. I let it cool down and now, with no rear brake (because the heat had melted the seals and the fluid was just squirting out), I gingerly set off home, but the drama didn't end there. As I got back to the lights at Foots Cray, the front brakes locked as well. So, there I was stuck right on the junction being bombarded by traffic and unable even to push the bike into the bus stop. Double Grr. A call to the recovery people revealed a waiting time of about two hours. Hmm. So again, I waited a while for everything to cool down and luckily the front brakes freed up. Now, even more slowly, I made my way back up Sidcup Hill relying on engine braking alone until I arrived safely home. Phew. Cup of tea and start the post mortem.

I removed the calipers and the master cylinders from both the front and rear, draining the fluid as I went, and making very sure that I didn't get any of it on the painted surfaces. The calipers were quite dirty with the residue from the old fluid even after they had already been through my ultrasonic cleaner three times. I also noticed that when I drained the fluid out of the master cylinder and pipes, there were still lots of bits floating around in it. Not good. My conclusion was that, despite changing the fluid, there was still much detritus floating around in the calipers and in the master cylinders and the muck was blocking the return ports and therefore preventing the fluid from returning after the brakes were applied. This meant that the brakes were going on but not releasing, hence the binding and locking up.

The locking of the front brakes was minor and happened at low speed so did no discernible damage. The rear however was a very different story. The pads had been worn through and warped with the heat. The pistons had melted and the rear disc was a nice blue colour. This disc was close to its limit when I first got the bike so this latest issue just made my mind up to replace it with a nice new Brembo disc. I bought one from Ray Petty so I knew I was



I think this is meant to be a brake piston...



The brake pads had melted...



Refurbished rear caliper complete with Venhill hose

getting a genuine one. (There are fake versions out there of virtually all these parts, so be careful.)

After stripping the calipers and the master cylinders (front and rear) and seeing the damage, I decided that nothing less than a full refurbishment was called for. An expense that I hadn't bargained for, but I couldn't sell the bike with even a hint that it might not be 100% roadworthy.

A quick call to my pals at 'Powerhouse' got sets of new stainless pistons and seals all round, and 'Up the Shop' on eBay provided new Venhill braided hoses front and back. Refurb kits were unfortunately not available for the old master cylinders so I sourced new ones from my friend Paddy (Ducatipaddy). Normally these would have cost a pretty penny but I had a bank of three vintage Dellorto carbs from my Laverda that Paddy was quite keen on so we did a swap. Lovely.

The calipers I sent to another pal, Mick of TM Specialist Coatings in Nantwich, and yes, he is a long way away, but for most parts you can post and I get a great service – bead blasting and fresh gold Cerakote on all the calipers for £110. They look brand new. Total cost for all these parts was approaching £500 not including the carb/brake cylinder swap. Not cheap, but at least I know that the brakes will be back to full working order and not likely to kill anyone, especially me!

The reassembly of the new parts was straightforward. I got everything together on a nice clean work bench and step by step put the bits back where they came from. First job was to put the new seals into the calipers by taking a tiny smidge of the red grease supplied with the caliper kit and smearing each seal in turn as I popped

them into their slots. There are two for each piston, a main seal and a dust seal. They are different sizes so you can't get them wrong. Next, I installed the new pistons. Once again these are different sizes so it was easy to get them in the right hole, remembering flat side down, and the tiny rubber 'O' ring went in place again with the tiniest smear of red grease. The two caliper halves went together and were bolted up gently. Then it was the new pads: position the pin and retaining spring, and push the pin home. Clip the retaining 'E' clip over the end of the pin; install the new bleed valve and bolt the caliper back on the bike before torque-ing the retaining bolts up as required.

Now I was able to fill the system with new DOT 4 fluid. It was, in effect, a brand new, never filled system, so before connecting the new hoses to the calipers it was obviously a good idea to get some fluid in first. I filled the master



Bead blasting and fresh gold Cerakote and the calipers look brand new.

cylinder allowing the fluid to run down into the hose until it started dripping out of the end before attaching the hose to the caliper and repeating for the other side. With the hoses now having fluid in them I needed to get it into the caliper too. You can use a vacuum pump for this as it does make the task easier. If you don't have such a thing, attach a hose to the bleed valve and start slowly pressing the brake lever to pump the fluid through the caliper. Make sure the master cylinder is topped up as you go so that it does not run dry.

As soon as it starts flowing through you can nip up the bleed valve. If you ever have to do this it's much easier with the help of a friend – you pump and release the brake (and keep the cylinder topped up), while at the caliper end your helper opens the bleed valve on the pump cycle to let the fluid flow and then locks it up before release. Repeat until all the air has gone. Depending on the bike this can take a while. By the time all the air has been evacuated you should have a nice firm lever and the wheel should stop with the brake on and spin again when the brake is released, and I am pleased to confirm that that is what happened with the Ducati, which is now performing properly, and the brakes are back to their magnificent best.



If you've got them you can swap your 'spare' Dellorto carbs for a nice new brake master cylinder!

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KAMG TRAINING ACTIVITY

Paul Aspinall has taken over the organisation and running of the Machine Control Days. The first one under his direction took place on May 15th and was very successful with 40 participants, 14 of whom were non-KAMG members, which shows that attempts to attract people from outside the club seem to be succeeding. It's through these events like this that KAMG tries to fulfil its charitable aims to reach as many two-wheelers as possible, whether they are members or not.

The observed ride activity continues at a very high level, and as you will see elsewhere in this issue the success of rate of those associates

taking their tests is very high too. Of the five associates who took the test as part of the recent Peterborough training weekend in May all passed and three were awarded *Firsts*.

In the last year there have been 731 observed rides undertaken by the observer team. A remarkable number. The vast majority of these rides are, of course, with associates, but many are the observers undergoing their own re-tests, and there are the 'AYSGBs' wanting to check that they are still of GB standard. (AYSGB, I have discovered, means Are You Still Green Badge Standard) Well, are you?



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ARE SMART ROADS ABOUT TO GET SMARTER?

Probably not . . .



The environmentally sustainable Mr Harris

Just when you thought life couldn't possibly get any worse, it does – a new CEO of Highways England has been appointed. His name is Nick Harris and he sounds about as daft as the outgoing one, who was the terminally stupid Jim O'Sullivan – if you remember, it was dear old Jim who thought SMART motorways were a good idea. We've had a good laugh at the dim-witted Jimbo before (see *Riders November 2019 on the website*), but sadly this new bloke sounds as if he has been cast in the same mould, and his limited utterances so far do not excite hope.

Never mind, screw up your confidence, because the non-executive Chairman of Highways England is another bright chap who has managed to grab a first-class ticket on the governmental gravy train; his name is Dipesh Shah and he is, he says, “pleased Nick has agreed to act as chief executive”, so everything must be all right, then. What a relief. And jolly old Dipesh says that he is “confident Nick will build on the work we have all done since 2015 to make Highways England the successful organisation it is today.” There you are, you see, that same old ‘we-are-brilliant-and-clever’ smugness comes right from the top. Wouldn't you just love to take the self-satisfied Dipesh and his mates on a pillion ride round England's highways on the one day a week that they bother to turn up for work? Nick, of course, is very pleased that Dipesh has given him his cushy new job; he is going to be paid £400,000 a year, and you can be awfully pleased with everything when you are trousering £33,000 every month.

Do you think Highways England is a successful organisation? Come on, be honest, you didn't even know Highways England existed, did you? However, you certainly know all about the highways of England and you know that they are in, what is officially termed, a ‘CRAPP’ condition (Condition of Road Actually P--- Poor). So, you have to wonder on what basis Dipesh is making his judgement of success. What makes all his irritating smugness worse is the way that while he and Nick sit there on their fat salaries they treat us like idiots, as demonstrated by some of Highways England's first utterances under the control of the overpaid Mr Harris. For example, they say that crashes involving stopped vehicles on SMART motorways were only a “very small proportion” of all motorway collisions, which I presume means that we can forget about them. Mr Harris says that “safety is a huge priority” and what we simpletons should do is “look at it in the round”. In-the-round means that for every mile of road where someone was killed there are hundreds and hundreds of miles of road where no one was killed, which is true, he's right of course, silly me. Now I'm looking at it in the round I can see

everything's perfectly all right. However, there is still the slight niggle that, even when looking at things in the roundest possible way, Highways England's own figures show that the death and serious injury rate on SMART motorways is just over double the rate for other motorways. That's worth saying again in italics, in bold and in capitals – ***THE DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY RATE ON SMART MOTORWAYS IS JUST OVER TWICE THE RATE FOR OTHER MOTORWAYS.*** Source: official Highways England figures.

And even despite that staggering fact from his own organisation, this new CEO, in whom we are expected to have so much confidence, says that smart motorways are “our safest” roads, and when he was told that real people like us feel safer on motorways with hard shoulders, he seems puzzled that “people are more comfortable with the roads that are least safe”. No, Nick, that's demonstrably not true; we are all much cleverer than that and we actually feel safer on the *safest* roads, that is the roads that *your own figures* prove are the safest roads; it's just that you and your overpaid and under-brained mates can't work out what your own figures are saying. Just like your predecessor, mad Jimbo, you are blaming us by telling us that we are stupid for feeling safer on the wrong roads. Highways England's own figures demonstrate clearly that smart motorways are *twice as dangerous* as hard shoulder motorways. You would think that £400,000 per year would buy us someone who could do simple sums wouldn't you? And if SMART motorways are our “safest roads” why has all work on them stopped? Indeed, Nick, if SMART roads are the safest why don't you make all motorways SMART? You know the answer and so do we.

Last month, Highways England was referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for manslaughter charges to be brought in connection with the death of a woman on a SMART section of the M1 in 2018. Sadly, however, the Yorkshire police have decided not to pursue the case, but one family is bringing a case privately. I so hope they succeed and wipe the smug smiles of the faces of Messrs Shah and Harris.

Let me leave you with this last chilling comment from Nick Harris when talking about SMART motorways: he said “We've added 500 miles of lane without widening roads, so that's been environmentally sustainable.” Just say the magic words “environmentally sustainable” and all the world is suddenly bathed in a soft pink light and the fairies skip gaily among the pretty wild flowers – that cover the dead bodies.

NF

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- October 8th
- November 19th



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



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

MACHINE CONTROL DAY

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

mcd@kamg.org.uk

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

- Sat 25th June,
- Sat 30th July
- Sat 10th 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



CONTACT PAGE

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Vice President: Dave Murphy
Honorary Life: Kevin Chapman • Terry Friday • Christine Botley
Members: John Leigh • John Lemon • Mike Knowles • Brenda Vickery • Ian Burchell • Sue Mills • Tina Underwood



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