



**DEVON
ADVANCED
MOTORCYCLISTS**



NEWSLETTER 80 Jan - Mar 2025



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Chairman's Chatter

Richard Whybra

Happy New Year, Devon Advanced Motorcyclists!

As we kick off 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible year we've had and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead in 2025. Our community has grown stronger, and our commitment to promoting safe and advanced motorcycling has never been more evident.

I want to give a shout-out to our team of observers led by Simon who have been doing a sterling job all year to help DAM achieve its aims, these are all volunteers who give their time, patience, and resources to help make DAM as successful as it is. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to them and all our members, and volunteers, for their unwavering support this year. Together, we are making a difference and fostering a community where safety, skill, and camaraderie thrive.

Here's looking forward to a fantastic 2025 filled with safe rides, new friendships, and unforgettable adventures!

Ride safe and see you on the road!

Best regards,

Richard



The cover photo was taken by Simon Housam in Navarre National Park, Spain. (Not on the moon).



Just look at this glorious road; from N Tawton to Winkleigh. Going towards Dartmoor is breathtaking. Dreaming of spring now, it won't be too long! We are so lucky in Devon.

Thanks to Steve Rose from Bennetts Bike Social for permission to publish his article. John Millgate has used this as evidence for the importance of attending the Post Test Training Rides. It is a great way to spend the third Saturday in every month! A good breakfast and company followed by an enjoyable ride where you have a chance to hone the skills you choose.

I appreciate the opportunity to publish topics with some debate: we have three pieces with answering responses in this issue. Maybe have another look at Kevin Williams' article on 'Cornering Problems, Lean or Brake?' in the October issue for a third point of view on trail braking?

We also can enjoy the second half of Helen Beer's Norway trip (apologies for the proof-reading muddle in the last issue).

We are still looking for volunteers to help in the running of DAM. Many committee members have fulfilled more than one role; it does often fall to a small group of people to keep things going and people do need a break. Incidentally, if anyone feels they would like to take on the magazine do let me know. I would do a job share if needed. I've done it for 3 years and it is beneficial to the club to keep ideas fresh.

Happy New Year!

Diana x

Road Versus Off-Road Riding

Alan Ebbage



Having recently got back into off-road riding I am surprised how the IAM skills are just as useful off road. I used to compete in Enduros in my thirties but had not ventured off road for 25 years.



I joined the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) and discovered that they have comprehensively mapped the green lanes available in the UK, including Exmoor where I happen to live. TRF also run training days which I have found very useful. TRF Training day - how to climb, traverse and descend steep, slippery slopes.

Some people venture off road on their large adventure bikes but I must admit I did not want to spoil my R1250GS so acquired a lightweight (100Kgs) Beta XTrainer 300 instead. It is an Enduro bike and is road legal. A couple of friends of mine are familiar with the Exmoor green lanes and I went out with them a few times. It soon became obvious that a lot of the local green lanes are extremely narrow, steep, full of ruts and large rocks and surrounded by dense vegetation. You would need to be a very competent rider to ride an Adventure bike along these lanes!

Apart from developing riding skills the rides are a great opportunity to see Exmoor at its best with some outstanding views.

So, what IAM skills have I found useful for this type of off-road riding? Certainly slow riding, planning ahead, taking a wide line to get a better view and being able to stop in the distance that is seen to be clear. The last point is particularly pertinent for narrow green lanes as you never know when pedestrians might be sharing those lanes! It is amazing what you come across on the rides! This time an overturned motorhome on a very narrow lane near Lynmouth. Fortunately, nobody was injured.



In addition, I believe the skills acquired off-road help me in road riding, specifically, balance, clutch and brake control and coping with slippery conditions.



Hope to see some of you out on the green lanes soon!

Alan Ebbage

28 November 2024

A Biking Journey

Adrian and Louise Gallagher



My wife Louise and I completed our CBT on 7th October 2021, never having ridden a motorbike before. I passed my test on 7th October 2022 and Louise, on 2nd June 2023. Whilst attending the Bideford bike show, we decided to improve our newly gained motorbike skills by signing up at the show with DAM. I was assigned Graham Hirst as my observer and Louise was assigned Nick Marks.

After about 6 or so lessons each we had our check rides, mine with Tony Curley and on 8th October I had my test in torrential rain. Louise's check ride was with Graham Hirst and on 10th October, Louise had her test, both tests were with Adrian Veale. Amazingly enough, not only did we both pass, in the same week, but we both passed with a F1RST.

From a non rider to Advanced in 3 years, amazing!

We cannot thank enough D.A.M., I.A.M. and all those involved for giving us improved skills, to ride better and more safely.



Louise has recently treated herself to a new bike for passing with a F1RST, a brand new Honda NC750X. My bike, is a cheap Voge 500DSX. I look forward to treating myself to a new bike at some point.

Roadcraft, Motorcycle Control and Mindset; How to be Safer, Smoother and Better at Motorcycle Riding.

Steve Rose

Bennetts BikeSocial Publisher since January 2017.

Posted: 06.09.2024

(Thanks to John Millgate for arranging for this to be published here)



Share on social media:

How good was your riding today? How do you know? Who's the judge of your day-to-day skills on a bike? Oh, it's you. That's handy.

Imagine if all assessments were that easy.

'How good are you at cooking Mr Rose?' 'Well, I'm brilliant as it happens, thank you for asking.'

'How good are you in bed lover-boy?' 'The best...Grr'

Etc.

Leaving that image behind, the point is that most of us never have our riding assessed after passing our tests. So, how do you know if your riding is any good? Does it bother you that you could take that blind left-hander better every flipping time you ride it? Does it bother you that you turn in too early to that uphill right hander on the B660?

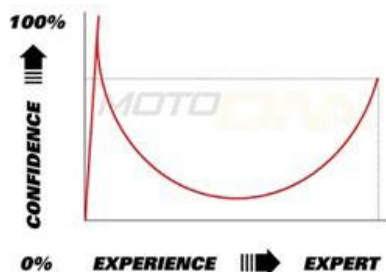
Me too. Come on in and join the other 997,000 of us in the UK.

There's a generation of middle-aged riders who survived the 80s on cross ply tyres, the 90s on sports bikes and the noughties-and-beyond on overweight, over-accessorised Buck-a-Roo adventure bikes.

Riders fool themselves that survival equals competence

We fool ourselves that survival equals competence. A psychologist would call it unconscious incompetence – we don't know what we don't know, and we've developed survival techniques rather than riding skill.

Dunning Kruger effect shows how many people with low skills have disproportionately high levels of confidence that decreases as skills increase.



There's a relationship between experience and confidence that you might not expect. It's known as Dunning-Kruger was formally identified in 1999 by (you guessed it...) David Dunning and Justin Kruger. The short version is that people with low skill levels in a given discipline tend to have much higher confidence in their ability than you'd expect and as skill level increases, perceived confidence actually decreases.



Dunning and Kruger might not have identified it till 1999 but I've been experiencing and understanding just that on a motorcycle (and with many other things too darling, but let's not revisit those images...) for an awful lot longer. Maybe I should have claimed it as the 'Pompous Rosie effect'?

At his best, this fella could toy with the best riders in the world and then bugger off and make them look stupid. That doesn't happen by luck

Practice the right things and practice them often to get better at motorcycle riding

A few years back – forgive the name-dropping – I interviewed Valentino Rossi. This was his purple patch at Yamaha when he'd toy with his rivals for 18 laps, before sailing past like they were on mopeds seemingly at will. Valentino explained how he'd choose his moment and then brake a few metres later, turn the bike even harder and open the throttle earlier, while learned experience and muscle memory took care of the humdrum, regular bits of guiding a 250bhp two-wheeled missile on worn-out tyres around the planet's fastest riders, already on the limit, as if they weren't there.



No one gets that good by being lucky. It's all about the hours you put in actively learning and practicing the correct techniques.

That's how you get to the 'unconscious competence' at the opposite end of the psychologist's scale. It won't surprise you to hear that this doesn't just happen by riding around with your mates pulling bad wheelies.

Practice only makes perfect if you practice the right things. Otherwise, it just normalises bad habits. Watch an on-board TT-lap of Hicky or McGuinness for the very best two-wheeled examples. McPint is in his 50s and still getting faster round

the IoM because he still wants to learn and get better.

Can I let you into a secret? I'm a terrible rider. I've had a licence for 40 years, been a professional road tester for 29 of them and I still get that right hander on the B660 wrong.

I've shared racetracks with GP legends, had my riding assessed (and complimented) by some of the best-respected riding coaches, but deep down, I know I should be better.

Wanting to be a better rider should be aspirational because who wouldn't want to be better at the thing they enjoy doing more than anything else?

Post-test motorcycle training in the UK is based on the Police riding system

Much of the post-test training in the UK is based on roadcraft and the Police Riding System. It's a good system that helps keep riders out of a tricky situation. Back in the 1960s when it first appeared, that was a smart way to operate because the chassis, tyres and brakes of the day didn't give riders a lot of leeway when something went wrong.

Fast forward to 2024 the chassis, tyres and brakes on your mountain bike are better than any 1960s motorcycle. 21st century motorcycles have brakes, suspension and tyres that can stop in half the distance of grandad's old BSA. We have ABS and traction control systems that work when leaning over and ignition maps for wet weather riding.

So why choose a bike with all that high-tech and not learn to use it?

Roadcraft is as valuable as ever but in 2024, we should be thinking harder about machine control skills because there is so much more we can do.

I've survived as a rider by using roadcraft to avoid situations where I need to be really skilled. I haven't fallen off a bike since 1990, but I've had plenty of 'non-accidents' as an instructor I know calls them. I've been lucky... so far. Mark McVeigh is BikeSocial's Motorbike Coach. He ran a riding school in Australia for ten years training more than 10,000 riders. He's a firm believer that skills, craft and mindset are the three key elements of better riding.

You can't improve what you can't measure

"You can't improve what you can't measure," he tells me. "Being assessed by an expert is great but you don't have that expert on every ride. Most of us might take a couple of sessions every few years with BikeSafe or an advanced trainer, but how do I know if I'm improving in the meantime?"

Mark's modern riding system is based on 10 years of research and scientific principles such as FLOW. Using micro-learning – incremental improvements made easy with regular, achievable practice, that quickly become second nature. The

sum total of these small improvements can be a significant increase in skills in a short space of time. Here's a simple example that could just save your spine. You're riding through town at 30mph. A car pulls out 25 metres ahead. The Highway Code tells us that a car travelling at 30mph takes 23 metres to stop. Nine metres of 'thinking' time as your brain processes what's happening, and 14 metres to bring the car to a halt when you start to brake.

The Highway Code doesn't quote stopping distances for motorcycles - there are too many variables.

That statement alone should make all of us go straight outside to practise...now.

The Highway Code quotes the same stopping distance for cars and bikes, but the actual distances required can be much more varied on a bike because there is a lot more rider skill required. Mike Abbott from British Superbike School tells us that a skilled rider can brake from 60mph in 13M less than the official Highway Code distance.

Cars don't fall over or pitch violently forwards or skid, because they have four wheels and ABS. All the driver does is stamp on the brakes. The concept of 'thinking time' and 'stopping time' is much more applicable to cars because that's essentially all a car driver needs to do. A bike rider has two independent braking systems, one tyre doing most of the work and a bike that becomes increasingly unstable as the front suspension dives.

Stopping a bike takes skill and skill takes structured, meaningful practice. If you grab the front brake too hard, the wheel locks, and you fall off. If you don't grab enough brake, you hit the car and fall off. If you stamp on the back brake you skid, hit the car and fall off. And if you try to steer around the car while braking, you'd better be a Hollywood stunt rider because they're the only ones who pull that one off.

ABS doesn't reduce your stopping distance, it just lessens the chances of you falling off during the process. ABS doesn't replace braking skill, you still have to apply the brakes at the optimum rate to slow effectively

At 30mph a motorcycle covers 13.4 metres per second

To achieve the Highway Code stopping distance of 14 metres from 30mph a rider needs to brake at a G-force of around 0.7G. Most modern bikes are capable of hitting 1G, but only if the rider loads the suspension properly to allow sufficient force through the tyre without locking the wheel. Mark McVeigh's data shows even some police riders don't hit 0.5G in an emergency stop.

At 30mph your bike covers 13.4 metres each second. Your nine metres of thinking will take two-thirds of a second. Then you must shut the throttle, move your hand

to the brake lever, pull it gently to transfer weight to the front tyre. Only then you can apply the brake hard enough to generate the G-force required.

The weight transfer will lose half a second in which time you'll travel almost seven metres and will be about to hit the car. But you have to transfer the weight, or you'll lock the front wheel and fall off. So, you need to gain that half-second back because you've only got 23 metres to play with and you've already used 16 of them.

Knowing when to cover the brake could shorten stopping distances by 30% at 30mph.



The answer is to be already covering the brake. Riding in town is high-risk so a smart rider looks for danger and knows when to cover the brake with a couple of fingers. This cuts the thinking time (because you're alert to the dangers), and you can gently pull the brake (because your hand is already there and waiting) to weight the front tyre and then

pull hard enough to stop the bike safely and in control. That simple action of knowing when to cover the brake saves half a second and more. Half a second at 30mph is 30 per cent of the total time it takes to stop. That's what Mark means by microlearning and incremental improvements. Learn when to cover the lever, practice getting weight onto the front tyre and then increase your braking force in small steps. You can do this every time you come to a halt. Don't be too ambitious. Aim to stop 10cm sooner than last time and then 10cm sooner again.

This will become second nature, and the improvements grow organically without putting yourself in danger.

I tried it this morning and it works. I'm still at the 'conscious incompetence' stage - level two of the psychologist's scale. This time next week I'll have it cracked. BikeSocial and Mark will be working together to help break better riding down into simple, achievable, easy to practice exercises. Some will be here on the website, others on our YouTube channel.

We hope you find them useful. *If you'd like to chat about this article or anything else biking related, join us and thousands of other riders at the Bennetts BikeSocial Facebook page.*

John Millgate's Response to Steve Rose's Bennett's BikeSocial Article 'How to be safer, smoother and better at Motorcycle Riding'.

This article immediately caught my attention due to my being the co-ordinator of the DAM Post Test Training scheme. The author makes the point that for most riders usually the only person to judge our competence on the ride is ourselves.

'How good was your riding today? How do you know? Who's the judge of your day-to-day skills on a bike? Oh, it's you. That's handy'.

He also makes the point that most of us never have our riding assessed after passing our tests. So how do we know if our riding is any good? Additionally, if we struggle with a particular aspect, do we still do nothing to rectify the issue or improve?

We in DAM can say, 'Not us'. However, how many of us ride at the same standard as when we passed our Advanced Test? How many of even those that have passed their Masters or were or still are Observers can say that their skills have not diminished?

Steve Rose's second heading: *Riders Fool Themselves that Survival Equals Competence*

As an Observer myself, and I am sure all those that have observed in the past, as well as our current crop, we see or saw the above regularly. Many of us have witnessed the super confident associate who accelerates towards 'blind' junctions concentrating on the bend rather than what might be emerging from the hidden junction. It is common to have to explain such techniques as Positive Steering formerly known as Counter Steering and as for the Highway Code, well let's not go there.

As an Observer the 'confidence' chart intrigued me and then I remembered the usual response from 'observed' riders doing Post Test Riding after the question 'How was that ride?'. I would like a pound for everyone that said something like, 'I wasn't happy with that bend/corner/position etc.'. This from the riders seeking to improve.

Rose makes the point re the ability of Valentino Rossi but it could well be Hailwood, Agostini, Read, Sheene (for the older readers) with the caption:

At his best, this fella could toy with the best riders in the world and then buggo off and make them look stupid. That doesn't happen by luck.

Of course, motorcycle racing and riding motorcycles on Devon roads are not the same and perhaps the racers are partly the cause (not intentionally) of road riders having accidents through trying to emulate their heroes. Rose is making the point that those racers and countless others are the best through practising their skills.

As an aside, several years ago Motorcycle News had an IAM Observer follow Peter Hickman (fastest rider around the TT course and the winner of more than ten TT races - no prize for whoever comes up first with the number of his TT wins) and critique his performance on the road. From recollection Hickman, like many new associates, seemed determined to ride up the backside of any vehicle he came across, usually losing all vision.

The last aspect of the article that I intend to comment on and probably the most important, is: ***Practise the right things and practise them often to get better at motorcycle riding***

It may seem to be an obvious statement but how many of us do it? Yes, many of us travel thousands of miles more per year than, say, the average weekend rider but as the article asks 'Are they doing it right?'. Of course, practice and more practice is important but it must be the correct techniques; if not you become very good at riding badly. How many of us can relate to his next comments?:

Can I let you into a secret? I am a terrible rider. I've had a licence for 40 yrs been a professional road tester for 29 of them and I still get that right hander on the B660 wrong. Wanting to be a better rider should be aspirational because who wouldn't want to be better at the thing they enjoy doing more than anything else?

On most rides I can relate to the above and I usually say to myself, 'I could have done that better'. That is to say, I wasn't exactly unsafe but in my own mind I could have been in a better position, or a better gear, or a bit slower, or taken into account any other factor which would have made me safer. And although Steve Rose doesn't mention it in this part, being as 'safe' as possible is essential. I am sure we all have loved ones who want us back home safe and sound after every ride.

If all or any of the article resonates with you, then please consider coming to DAM's Post Test Riding every third Saturday of the month. As long as there are enough Observers training is on a one-to-one basis with the emphasis on practising what the rider wants. Just because you have an advanced riding qualification it does not mean you are riding to that standard at present. However, after a PTTR session all Observers love to say, 'That was tremendous, well done' or something similar.

2024 CHIEF OBSERVER QUIZ OF THE YEAR

Match each fact to the relevant observer.

Send your answers via magazine@devonadvanced.com. (E.g. 1-R, 2-Q, 3-Z, ...)

Exclusive prize

OBSERVER FACT	OBSERVER NAME
1. I fell off the summit of the world's 12th highest mountain.	A. Andrew Pratt
2. I have been known to shout out 'I love Thomas the Tank Engine' when asleep in a hammock between torpedo racks.	B. Andrew Robertson
3. I have often been mistaken for Alex Higgins (despite my maximum break being 4 points).	C. Andy Burden
4. At the age of 11, I was stopped by the police for exceeding 30mph, whilst enroute to my cycling proficiency test.	D. Darren Evans
5. I'm an amputee.	E. David Mudge
6. I have 3 Weetabix for breakfast every morning.	F. Graham Hirst
7. My first job was as a dolphin and killer whale trainer at Windsor Safari Park: my nickname is "Flipper."	G. Hector Vass
8. Whilst in the middle of the Masai Mara, I changed a clutch on a land rover belonging to some midshipmen from Dartmouth Naval College.	H. Les Mosco
9. I occasionally slide a bit of chocolate down the back of the wife's underwear when she's asleep.	I. Mark Fouache
10. I am a member of the British Boomerang Association (membership number 77).	J. Martin Rushworth
11. I can ride a unicycle.	K. Richard Thorns
12. I once missed a whole day by sleeping through it.	L. Richard Wiseman
13. I spent a week on a nudist beach in Skiathos	M. Stuart Taylor

Round the Bend?

Jim D N Smith



I often go round the bend, but not always following the established orthodoxy about exactly how to do so (e.g. Motorcycle Roadcraft, Chapter 7).

Among other considerations, like speed, gear and throttle control there is a strong focus in IAM on getting the correct position well before entering a bend. To be in the correct position means to place your motorcycle to optimise your view around the bend. The further you can see, then the more time you have to prepare and cope with any eventualities that might otherwise appear more suddenly. This is good sense and leads, on the whole, to safer riding.

So, approaching a left-hand bend in the UK we move smoothly and carefully towards the centre of our own lane, so that we can see further round the bend than if we had remained more centrally in the lane. No problems with that? Well, there is the risk of oncoming traffic cutting the corner onto our side of the road, or a long lorry bridging the corner markings to get round a sharp bend. This makes it more dangerous than a right-hand bend. However, with the correct position we are safer because we see what is happening sooner and can take evasive action.

However, in my view, the problems with the IAM guidance occurs when related to a right-hand bend.

With the right hander, we are advised that the correct position is on the left of our lane. On the far left if you want to pass the IAM assessment with flying colours. I call this road position the ditch, and I refer to so adhering to the guidance as Riding in The Ditch.

I'll mention later that there is one aspect of riding in the ditch that is a great contribution to road safety. However, there are many other aspects which are potentially hazardous.

Firstly, consider the camber of the road. For drainage purposes, the camber slopes down to the ditch on the left of our lane. This effectively increases the angle of lean between the road surface and the motorcycle wheel, increasing the demands on tyre grip, and increasing the risk of a slide.

Secondly the ditch itself is likely to be more badly surfaced than the rest of the

road. It may contain water or autumn leaves, which can hide a variety of hazards, such as potholes. The ditch definitely will contain metal drain covers, slippery when wet and always sunk below the level of the road.

Thirdly, debris gravitates into the ditch through water flows, spinouts from car tyres, bits falling out of adjacent hedges, etc. Debris is also not conducive to good tyre-to-road contact.

Fourthly, particularly in rural areas like Devon, right next to the ditch are often hedges with hazardous bits of stick poking out of them. These can be painful, at the least. By going too close to them you almost halve your safety bubble.

Finally, a sequence of two right hand bends, separated by a short straight encourages the rider to stay in the ditch between the consecutive bends. TUG, or Take, Use and Give information is relevant here. By continuing in the ditch, you are potentially giving information to following vehicles that you wish them to overtake you. This can lead to chicanery at the next bend.

All of the above increases our risk as riders. I'm told the solution is to continually scan the ditch and hedging for these hazards. This defeats the object of the exercise by diverting attention from the vital forward view across the bend to the Limit Point of Vision.

Oh yes, there is one aspect of riding in the ditch that is a great contribution to safety. It is that whilst in the ditch, leaning to your right, this position will keep your head well away from oncoming traffic. This is certainly a major benefit, but maybe, it's the only one.

We need to balance our risks. Keeping our heads away from oncoming traffic and maximising our forward view has to be balanced against the many hazards of riding in the ditch.

My own balance of the ditch-riding issues is to go left but not too far left on the right-hand bends. In other words, ditch the ditch. I go a bit slower if my forward view is not quite as good as a ditch-rider but benefit from being able to focus on the forward view, not on scanning the ditch.

Ride safely, and mind how you go round the bend.

NO TO MOTORCYCLES IN BUS LANES BY DEFAULT

(Submitted by Ian Pruce, Observed Rides Co-ordinator.)

Thanks to Graham Feest F Inst MTD, FARRM Road Safety Consultancy for allowing us to publish this.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has announced it will NOT proceed with plans to grant motorcycles and mopeds default access to bus lanes, despite overwhelming public and stakeholder support.

The consultation results reveal that 98% of individual respondents (13,885 out of 14,089) and 93% of stakeholder organisations (185 out of 198) supported the measure.

Despite this, the DfT stated it has “no policy to encourage greater uptake of motorcycles,” signalling a stark departure from the previous government’s vision to embrace light, sustainable vehicles as part of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Mopeds, motorcycles, and other powered light vehicles (PLVs) are recognised for their ability to reduce congestion, lower emissions, and ease pressure on road networks. Granting bus lane access would not only have improved safety for new and experienced users by providing segregated road space but also made PLVs a more appealing alternative to cars and vans.

The DfT’s decision, citing a lack of evidence on safety benefits, leaves no plans to revisit or further investigate the policy. This stands in contrast to its prior acknowledgment of PLVs’ potential to deliver shorter journey times, reduced congestion, and meaningful environmental benefits.

Graham Feest F Inst MTD, FARRM

Response by Ian Pruce.

So, Advanced Riders do not make the rules, but we can look to make use of them to provide us with a safe, legal and progressive ride. In those towns and cities where permission for motorcyclists to use bus lanes exist, we should consider using them. Page 2 of the ARC Logbook states “Through good Observation, sensible Anticipation and accurate Planning (OAP) combined with sound operation of the machines’ controls, they should enjoy a comfortable, progressive ride while maintaining safety.”

Bus lanes usually fall into two categories; named users only or timed operation, after which they are open to all. If they are available, then they offer bigger segregation from oncoming traffic and using them removes the temptation for others to undertake.

Helen Beer's Norway Trip Continued from October issue... Helen Beer



17th June Adjust suspension and off for the ferry from Andenes via R82 and Bo, Noss and the Bukkekjerka viewpoint with loos with a view (one way glass which you could turn opaque if you didn't like it - funny having a pee with sheep looking in). The golden beaches of Stranda and the ferry to Gryllefjord on Senja (compared in its beauty with Lofoten). R86, 862 and Fv251 to Skaland and our apartment overlooking the

sea - a relaxing 115 miles and time for a walk. Just before Skaland we stopped at the Bergsbotn Viewpoint which got the top marks for the day.



18th June and a leisurely day of 80 miles planned. So many places to stop and take photos. We took the A862 to Tungeneset Viewpoint then Mefjordvaer for coffee which turned into lunch - we hadn't really stopped to chill along the way but this was just the place to do it - perfect setting for a brew and picnic and definitely the favourite bit of the day. Back on the A862, round the island and back on the A86 to Silsand to the Sorreisa Hotel after a loop around Finnfjordvatnet. Dinner was in the local Pizza shop - run by Italians so highly recommended. At one point I was despatched into a motor shop to acquire some chain lube (both our scottoilers were misbehaving) - Andrew waited patiently outside while a v helpful lad worked his magic with the store app and found me the last can on the shelf.



19th June and today we reached the north coast of Norway. The R85 to the E6 and 195 miles. An easy ride but mainly wet with no choice of roads though good bends and scenery. Coffee at Tommerelv and a break at Olderdalen. We had a hexagonal cabin at Arctic Fjordcamp looking over Burfjorden.



The best bit of today must have been the kit keeping the rain out in torrential downpours.



20th June Andrew's birthday and the day we made it to Nordkapp. It was very cold and very wet but we had chocolate birthday muffins at Skaidi in a cafe with lots of other soggy smiling bikers. All on the E6 and E69 and we finally saw some reindeer (so close we could appreciate their felt-like antlers). We were also blessed with pods of whales at Repvag - a good viewing and we could hear them blowing. Magical. We booked into the Scandic Bryggen at Honningsvåg and ditched the luggage and warmed up before heading to the northern most point. It was reasonably quiet at 1800 and we got the obligatory photos with ease and headed to 'In Cod we Trust' for fish and chip supper

before watching sea otters in the harbour by our hotel. The Carpenters song 'Top of the World' came into my head - the scenery was a mix of Scotland, Wales and Dartmoor - very barren for the last 20 miles and tents belonging to the Sami people who herd the reindeer. It had been a perfect 220 mile day and we agreed the best bit had to be the whales.



21st June and all downhill as we headed south to home - a slightly more direct route with some special places on the way. The E69 then the E6. Coffee at Skaidi again. I took another turn in front - can't say I was leading as just following instructions but it gave Andrew a break - I did it a few times and today Andrew was happy to just chill - normally he wants pole position. A brief stop in the afternoon at Burfjord and some interesting rough ground due to roadworks - their engineering is incredible - all the

bridges and tunnels. Henriksen Gjestestue at Sørkjosen was our overnight stop and a short walk to the restaurant by the fjord. After 229 miles we decided the best bit today were the reindeer herds - lovely to watch in wild open spaces.

22nd June and the E6 to the Olderdalen to Lyngseidet ferry (with a Scottish ticket collector). R868 along the Fjord, E6 and E87 through mountains and



valleys - very bumpy and everything had to be well strapped on and in! Back on the E6 to our hutte at Ballengen Camping near Narvik with a trip to Rema 1000 (our favourite supermarket) to pick up supper. A sunny day and the E87 had to be the best bit of our 193 miles.



23rd June was our last full days riding (193 miles) in the arctic circle and the best bit was the morning's stunning mountain scenery and warm sunshine - 23 degrees when firing up. We were on the E6 all day with the ferry from Skarberget to Bognes and coffee at Innhavet . Plenty of northbound traffic as schools had just broken up but okay our way. A brew at a rest area as temperatures dropped and raining again. We took the R77 to our Airbnb at Graddis Fjellstue and were

horrified - nothing like the website, nowhere near what the booking had promised and declining an overnight stay we rode back to the E6 and were lucky enough to get a large cabin at the National Park Centre in Storjord - this came with entertainment as the girl booking me in said she didn't understand me and could I speak in English....now I know my Devon accent can be a problem but Airbnb have since given me a full refund...there was a list of issues but the main one I couldn't photograph - the damp musty smell on opening the cabin door knocked us sideways.



24th June and straight to the E6 and coffee at Korgen. Then the R806, a minor road to Hattfjelldal where I managed some breaking and entering.... I was desperate for the loo and there was a big building on the edge of town ...although it had a museum it was more of a bank/hotel/office block...anyway - I made it to the second floor, hid behind a door when someone came along as I didn't want to be questioned and a hasty exit (although not through my entrance door) meant I was much relieved. Andrew was well entertained and welfare checking me on the comms. Next the R73 and the E6 with a stop at The Gateway to the North on the Nordland



boundary to warm up ...guess it was also The Gateway to the South depending on your direction and it also produced the obligatory fluffy moose cuddly toy. It had been cold, wet and windy so we bypassed the Arctic Circle Centre as it looked very busy. On to Namsentunet near Grong for our overnight stop. It was worryingly quiet at this lovely location and the reason was the government had stopped all fishing in rivers and fjords 2 days previously which had led to a serious number of cancellations. After 250 miles we agreed that the R806 was the best bit of the day.



25th June and what a difference - sunshine and 28 degrees all the way. We took the Fv391 out of Grong going south, then the E6 departing from it to take the beautiful R763 around Snasavatnet to Steinkjer for coffee. R759 around Leksdalsvatnet to the E6 and stopped at the Tirpitz Memorial to allied aircrew at Faettenfjord. The E6 to Stjordal where we visited Hell Station (jus coz!) Then the Fv705 to Tidal for our overnight stop at Kirkvollen Pilgrimsguard B & B. This was a lovely farmhouse where there were domestic reindeer and on a walk after supper, sat in the sun, we finally saw a moose - it ran across the path right in front of us - what a beast. There was a debate about the best bits, with 176 miles to choose from, but it had to be the R763 with its lakes and forests.



26th June and as we negotiated the gravel drive out of the farmhouse we spotted the moose again with two calves - a great start to the day. We continued on the Fv705 to Brekken then the R31 to Roros - a Unesco World Heritage Site. Coffee at a bakery in town and a mooch around for architect Andrew to admire the buildings. Next the Fv30 to Tynset, Koppang and the



E3 north to see the Silver Moose at Stor-Elvdal.... Norway's version of the Scottish Kelpies. The Fv634 across the mountains to Ringebu Stave Church and the E6 to Sjoa. Then the R257 to Heidal and the Lusaeter Timber Cabins where we had 2 miles of steep dirt track with hairpins before 'celebrating' our last night in a hytte with a 3 course dinner of fish soup, steak bap and apricots with yoghurt - the local shops are good! We easily agreed the 251 miles had been fun and

the best bit had to be the enormous silver moose.

27th June and the gravel track was much easier in the morning despite the goats and sheep... We set off for the R51, as recommended on Best Biking Roads in Norway on YouTube, and it was stunning - rivers, mountains, snow pockets, quiet and twisty - a very Dartmoor type landscape, almost moonscape, but with whole families of reindeer. Coffee and amazing cakes at Cafe Husfliden in Fagernes in glorious sunshine - just perfect. R51 to Gol and R7 to Geilo then the the R40 to Uvdal Stave Church followed by our last Norway Mountain Road for a cuppa at Imingejell Turistheim. Down the other side (glad of that as it suddenly became very windy) onto the R37 and round the end of Lake Tinnsja and down the side to the E134 to Notodden and the Hotel Brattrein by Lake Heddalsvatnet arriving very late in the evening. 253 miles and easily agreed the R51 and Jotunheimen National Park were definitely tops today.



28th June and after banter with some Dutch Bikers we headed off in the sunshine to Heddal Stave Church before the crowds and then the E134 towards Drammen and coffee at Mjondalen. E134 to Drobak, wiggled on the E18 towards Aksin where Andrew was swearing at his tech stuff and I had to take the lead (which was v amusing with roadworks) then the R124 to Rakkestad and the R220 to Halden our last stop in Norway which warranted an ice cream and a walk round the harbour. We followed the Iddefjord to the Swedish border and south to Saltkallan and Hensbacka Herrgard for the night. A motel with a religious feel and plenty of house martins flying around. Of the 218 miles Andrew strongly voted the Stave Church was tops.

29th June A full day of Sweden ahead so early pack and a cross country route to Boras for coffee. Another hiccy with Andrew's tech (the Garmin Nav 6 was a pain) and I led us safely to a fuel stop. Lesson learnt - it's best not to have any



idea of the route and then there are no sudden requests to take pole position. We wiggled to Reftele for lunch, then to Bedjaror a Heritage Neolithic Burial Site. We stayed off the main roads as far as possible - on to Markaryd and arriving at Fladie Mat and Vingard for our overnight stop - 9 hours and 274 miles after setting off. It took us a few hours to warm to Sweden but after a while we came into National Park areas and the scenery improved and the sunset was stunning.



30th June arrived v wet with weather warnings so we stalled our start while the worst blew through. Straight on to the motorway as we had 310 miles to do. The Oresund Bridge which joins Sweden with Denmark, and the subject of the now infamous Scandi crime series 'The Bridge,' was stunning and agreed best bit of the day despite the low cloud. The Storebaelt Bridge followed - the main bridge that links the islands of Denmark and then the Den Nye Lillebaeltsbro that joins

Denmark to mainland Europe. The bridge services were excellent although very busy and the view of the sea was a pleasant change. All motorway to Germany with a Border Control Check (apparently monitoring traffic due to the Euro football championship) and on to Gut Kaden Golf Club for the night. There were storks nesting on the roof and hares and rabbits on the greens.

1st July 348 miles back to Gisele's in Saive - all motorway with just one blip searching out a non existent fuel stop on an industrial estate - but a detour through a pretty village was a bonus. Best bit - the warm greeting by Gisele with more of her family to enjoy a lovely evening.

2nd July and about 460 miles to home - the sat nav that I'd been using for mileages had a blip - possibly confused by the tunnel. About 7366 miles in total and yes, the highlight of the day was landing safely on my home driveway.

SUMMARY



Firstly, we'd like to obliterate the rumours that Norway is mega expensive. Fuel is dearer but with the speed limits (mainly 50 mph, occasionally this reached a dizzy 56) you get a good return. Plenty of fuel stations - many unmanned and just card machines. The services had good facilities and the coffee machines were tops. Accommodation averaged out about the same as ours and we got 2

coffees and 2 good cakes for just over £6 on one occasion and always cheaper or about the same as home. Fresh fruit was cheaper and tastier, alcohol is pricey and with their strict drink driving laws it's best to avoid it anyway. I know I've mentioned coffee lots but, despite it being early season, my point is there were plenty of options. We spent very little cash as everywhere prefers card payments. We had a card that didn't charge any exchange/commission fees. All we really needed was change for showers.

Kit - we had metal panniers, tank bags and mainly a mix of Wunderlich and Kreiga bags - Wunderlich were easy on top of the panniers - Kreiga more waterproof but took longer to strap on/off (Andrew's reasoning for being ready second on 32 consecutive mornings). I have a policy of not packing too tightly - makes it easy for moving on each day and room to pack away layers as they need removing. Also, space was then available for groceries.

Wildlife - we were lucky to see whales, moose, reindeer, sea otters, deer, sea eagles, redwing, oyster catchers, jays and hares. There were thousands of lupins, azaleas, rhododendrons, thistles, buttercups, daises - wild flowers everywhere as well as neat tidy gardens. Norwegians are proud of their country and keep it immaculate. You also feel very safe - there is a huge trust ethic.

The roads were generally very quiet. The main road up through Norway (E6) can get a bit busy and yes there are a lot of camper vans - but they are just doing their thing like we are doing ours - a little bit of patience and tolerance. Even this main road has plenty of bends and good views. We had been warned about an abundance of speed awareness officers imposing huge fines for misdemeanors - we saw 3 (one in a tunnel as the weather was horrid). There were plenty of cameras, but all had warning signs. 50 mph is adhered to by almost everyone and was plenty fast enough with the scenery and bends. The roads were just brilliant - surfaces good, fun twisties and hairpins. The ferries were seamless - in and out so smoothly - Andrew had sorted a 'ferry pay' app

so the staff just took photos of the number plates, and we were charged accordingly - just remember to clean your number plate - and bikes go to the head of the queue.

The scenery was stunning - ever changing but always beautiful. Waterfalls, lakes, fjords, forests, valleys, gorges, tunnels (some with roundabouts and junctions), mountains, mega bridges, wide open spaces and the air was so clean and crystal clear that the clarity was amazing.

Everyone spoke English - so google translate was only really used on labels and signs. There was always a signal and wifi almost everywhere. I had the Norwegian Toilet App on my phone (stop laughing - I don't wild wee) but didn't need it as plenty of comfort stops along the way and all immaculate.

Having Comms was brilliant - as well as keeping each other safe we could share what we saw, make requests for breaks etc. We actually managed really well and compromise was minimal. It truly exceeded our expectations and yes we would go again - not to the top but we would explore Fiordland Norway and the adjacent plateaus more fully and Lofoten would need to be visited again.

Overall costs for two - a rough guide: fuel £1500; coffee and cake £350; accommodation £4000; evening meals £1125; ferries, tunnels, and bridges £290; shuttle £242. Other expenses included tyres, services and travel insurances - we won't mention I upgraded my bike before the trip. 4 1/2 weeks for less than £4000 each must be pretty good.



Trail Braking and Getting out of Shape

Hector Vass

The mention of Trail Braking normally fires up a debate and the surfacing of entrenched positions from advanced motorcyclists who may not even know they had an opinion a few minutes before. Just like social media it drives engagement but little else so I will try instead to open a dialogue. So let me explain my thinking.

So, to start with Trail Braking, what do I really mean by this? Yes, a technique used on the track but before we simply write this off as not for the road, obviously, it might be worth trying to understand where this comes from.

Motor racing is primarily about stopping and changing direction and on a bike Trail Braking has a number of advantages for stopping and changing direction. The Yamaha Champions Riding School Road Academy is based around a couple of key principles

- "slow until you have the bike facing in the right direction"
- "only accelerate when you can take away lean angle" ..their 100 points of grip

I won't argue with these or defend them, I am not a racer, I take them as given here to understand how Trail Braking might fit into this.

Track racers know how important braking is to winning and what they achieve is remarkable as they spend their lives at the very edge of grip. The first 5% and the last 5% of brake effort are seen as critical, the first 5% as you load the tyre, the last 5% as you release the suspension. Trail Braking is about how you release the suspension, why you want to do this in the bend rather than before and how you trade brake effort for lean angle. Bikes turn better with weight on the front tyre because they get more grip, and the steering geometry sharpens making the bike turn faster.

Lastly, Trail Braking allows you to turn in trading lean angle for braking so braking effort can still be employed after the turn in point. It is after all how you continue to "slow until you have the bike facing in the right direction".

I contend that there are 2 good reasons why this is shunned on the road:

- perception of danger

There is a general perception that braking in a bend increases the danger as with 100 points of grip you need grip for cornering not just braking. Surely any increase in danger should be avoided on the public highway, well, there

is danger everywhere for example from speed. We are constantly trading the dangers when we are out on the public highway. So I wonder how much we have bothered to question this perception of danger. Avoiding any Trail Braking might also mean foregoing one of the controls allowing us to keep the tyre loaded and to control the release of the front suspension.

- lack of conditioned behaviour

A natural fear reaction is to grab at the brakes or as I used to call it 'stop the world'. To overcome this requires conditioned behaviour. Back in the day as an instructor inheriting a new student I would check for conditioned behaviour. Just as they are setting off I would create a panic and get them to stop. Similarly, you can tell a lot watching riders turning up in a car park and unfortunately lack of manoeuvring skills tend to go hand in hand with poor conditioned behaviour. Number of miles under the belt tends to be a poor predictor of riders conditioned behaviour with the brakes, particularly the front brake.

Creating better judgement of danger and improving conditioned behaviour through repetition has to be a good thing. So why do we avoid it all together by not practising loading and unloading tyres in our everyday riding, do we just hope we won't ever need these skills or are we trusting to some inherited gene that means we will perform brilliantly the first time we have to brake in a bend?

What are we afraid of? Take 'slow riding' and stay away from the front brake. Why? Well for the same 2 reasons perceived danger (last time I did that I dropped the bike) and lack of conditioned behaviour. Are we suggesting our advice should be: just don't? Or should we be looking at learning to sensitively use the front brake, that is actively use the front brake? If your whole riding experience involves staying away from the front brake when slow manoeuvring because someone told you to, are you not missing a trick? Let me let you in on a trade secret, lazy motorcycle instructors teaching new riders to pass a test and avoid drop damage to their school bike tell students not to use the front brake. On a CBT they will be 1-2 hours into their time on a bike when they have to do a figure of eight and a slalom. They may be 1-2 days into riding a big bike before they have to do this on their Module 1 test. Being told not to use the front brake saves the bike school money and avoids maybe 5% of fails on the Mod1. It also produces new riders whose first experience of grabbing the front might be a wet roundabout.

So nowhere above have I actually advocated Trail Braking like a racer on the road, but don't you think we should at least consider if it might have an application for us.

There should be no need to go fast into corners if we have correctly anticipated

the corner and slowed before getting into the corner. Well yes great, but what happens if the corner does not turn out as expected? Following the mantra of slowing until I have the bike turned and trail braking means I am already on the brakes maybe only a few percentage points but the alternative is I have to roll off, load the front tyre and then effect braking. Does the practice of being in the right gear and being able to use engine braking rob us of having the capability to slow more effectively. However much engine braking we have once we are set up for the bend should we want to quickly moderate our speed we have a limited and slow capability to make the adjustment with engine braking, brakes are rather effective at this task.

Rather than seeing it as the ability to go faster into corners we might see it as same speed into the corner with greater safety. When compared to the traditional look push lean roll variants stretching back to the Twist of the Wrist II, Motorcycle Roadcraft and the IAM advanced rider course handbook "Gentle throttle application allows a motorcycle to maintain speed and stability through a corner".

Employing Trail Braking will likely be slower mid corner, even slower over all as you continue to slow all the time until you get the bike turned and are ready to trade lean angle for throttle application. Not the optimum approach in terms of speed for those rare open bends with full visibility, but then I am not looking to go faster but with more control and margin.

Furthermore, I would argue that trail braking into a corner if done successfully is preferable to having to get on the brakes whilst in a corner. This is true to such an extent that advice is often if you have to brake mid corner use the rear brake, which unfortunately leaves you open to the possibility of locking the rear which at speed has the potential to high side you. It should never happen only if you can perfectly judge every corner and unforeseen hazard in advance.

So as a thinking biker don't be too quick to discount what Trail Braking might do for us.

A track based IAM skills day can be a great day out. Trail Braking will not be mentioned in the lower groups for the 2x reasons outlined above but it is what most people are there for, certainly in the upper groups, to explore the limits of how a bike corners and brakes.

There are foundation skills that you can practice without the rarified atmosphere of the track to build up your finesse at the first 5% and last 5% of braking and improved your conditioned behaviour when it comes to the front brake.

- use the front brake slow manoeuvring, I know, crazy hey!
- power walk the bike

Walk beside the bike in first gear under drive slipping the clutch moderating speed with the front brake and stopping accurately at a mark by removing drive using the clutch rather than grabbing brake. Kind of helpful for developing clutch control as well.

Now the health warning. There is danger in trying these simple exercises, even so they might still be worth trying.

And now for a different point of view....

Trail Braking vs The System on Public Roads

Martin Rushworth

My take (for what it's worth) on the use of 'Trail Braking' vs 'The System', (following a recent Observer meeting I attended).

First point to take into account: a motorbike that is upright travelling in a straight line is more stable than one that is under (ABC) Acceleration, Braking or Cornering.

The TRAIL BRAKING technique, as I understand it: as you approach the bend, you start to brake and then as the bike tips into the bend, you are easing the brake pressure, to the point where you eventually release the brakes.

This is completely contrary to what you are taught in the UK at test and advanced level.

Some are saying, that, by using trail braking, it is positively influencing the way the bike steers, because there is more weight shifted on the front tyre so there is more grip on the front which enables the bike to steer through the bend.

They are also saying if you need to brake mid-bend (!?) you have already set the weight of the machine forwards, and therefore there will be no de-stabilising of the bike, because it is already set up to brake more firmly in the bend, (as long as your front tyre maintains grip with the road surface, of course.)

On the roads that I use in this country, to trail brake is encouraging me to enter the bend at a speed that I would consider to be too fast... and what's the point in that?

Trail braking is nowhere to be seen in I.P.S.G.A.

Save it for your track days, and be entertained by MotoGP front end wash outs on every race perhaps?

Managing the front-end dive at speed and canted over in a bend, in my opinion, is best left for the professionals and elites. (Or... simply buy a bike that has NO front-end dive... like a BMW GSA perhaps?)

BTW, Remember this?

The 5 Principles of cornering:

- Position: Be in the correct position as you approach the corner.
- Speed: Be traveling at the right speed for the corner.
- Gear: Be in the correct gear for your speed.
- Stopping: Be able to stop safely on your side of the road within the distance you can see to be clear.
- Throttle: Maintain a steady/positive throttle to keep the bike stable.
- And from me, always leave yourself a margin of error, and keep it smooth.

Driving any vehicle within the last 10% of either its or our own capabilities is always questionable - especially if we attempt to employ extreme processes.

We share the UK road system with many other road user types and each have expected behaviour imprinted on their minds.

Using extreme techniques is unexpected behaviour and likely to result in conflict, or much worse.

Stay safe everyone.

Regards,

Martin Rushworth

IAM RoadSmart National Observer

Dear Denzil....

DAM's very own Agony Uncle.

Two Seconds, Fool

Dear Denzil, I am familiar with the two second rule for judging a safe following distance / speed. But I am not a mathematician and find it very hard to count to two. Do you have any other practical tips for judging how far a two second gap is? Yours Mr C L Uless.

Dear Mr Uless,

One of the things you could do is practice counting when sitting in front of the log fire and a mug of cocoa. Open the stopwatch app on your phone and count at the same speed as the stopwatch. That's the counting speed you should use when out on the road. Here are some other things you might try:

- Town driving: imagine the car in front is not the annoying silver Audi it really is, but rather your seven-year-old daughter on a tricycle. Do you still think you are far enough away?*
- Dual carriageways, travelling at 70mph: can you read the number plate of the car in front of you? Yes? In which case you are probably closer than 2 seconds.*
- Dual carriageways, travelling at 70mph: hold your left arm out straight in front of you. Does your thumb nail look bigger than the car you are following? Yes? You are probably too close. (This works better in a car, than on a bike!)*

Enjoy the space around you this Christmas.

Yours, Denzil.

Stabiliser Wheels

Dear Denzil,

When riding, my friend often sets off and then keeps (one or more of) his feet dangling for several seconds before picking them up and riding off properly. As a birthday gift, I bought him a pair of stabiliser wheels. He sent them back and he is no longer talking to me. Was I wrong?

Yours, P Perfect.

Dear Pete, I suspect you don't have many friends. You can feel satisfied that you have made your point though.

Yours, Denzil.

Denzil's Christmas Gift

Dear Denzil, I know you are very well acquainted with the group's chief observer. Could you ask him what all of us members could do to make him proud of us in 2025, please.

Yours, T E Cherspet.

Dear T E Cherspet,

Thank you for your letter. I have been unable to contact the chief observer recently, so I'll suggest a couple of things on his behalf.

1. Overtaking on the approach to nearside junctions, offside junctions, driveways, field entrances: don't do it! Other vehicles (even the ones you can see) often behave unpredictably in these situations. Yes, you may get away with it a few times, but sooner or later you will end up having a personal interview, with extra blood, with Mr Steel Wall. Chill for a few seconds: I promise there will be a safe opportunity for you to pass just up the road.

2. Cornering. Almost all advanced riders apply the system of control (IPSGA) to the art of cornering. Almost all advanced riders could be even better by planning and applying the system a few seconds earlier. If you are one of the people who thinks this advice doesn't apply to them, you are probably wrong.

I understand the chief observer may write a more detailed article on each of these topics in a subsequent edition. Please let the editor know if you would appreciate this ... or if you have any other suggested topics.

Yours, Denzil.

Ten Per Cent Plus Two

Dear Denzil, I'm a self-righteous advanced motorcyclist and always aim to ride at the speed limit plus 10% plus 2mph because that the tolerance used by police in deciding whether to prosecute. Will you support me when my case comes to court, please? Yours, Ray C Rhyder.

Dear Ray, Of course I will. I'll arrive at the court at the allotted time, plus 10%, plus 2 minutes. I'm sure the magistrate won't mind. The legal requirement (and the advanced riding standard) is to ride at no more than the posted speed limit.

Yours, Denzil.

Collisions and the Choices We Make

Hector Vass



An interesting article in current Dec/Jan MAG magazine by Professor Mat Humphrey on “Vision Zero and the End of Trade-Offs” states that a motorcyclist is 50x times more likely to die than a car driver per mile travelled, but to quote the article “taking informed risks is part of what defines adulthood”.

We think we accept the risks, otherwise we would not ride, but how closely do we bother to look? In other areas of human endeavour where risk is accepted we have a debrief process for any failure. We look at the factors that make the ‘holes line up in the Swiss cheese’. With road accidents we seem to simply accept this as part of modern life, thankful that it was not me this time, and move on. It was an accident. I get the Vision Zero just as I do the Net Zero, I’ve worked in industry; I’ve had to put up with a lifetime of mission statements and all that guff that management think we swallow but come on let’s have a bit of realism. We are never going to eliminate risk completely, just as we are never all going to have electric cars.

We should study the collision statistics. As an aside I applauded the switch in language from RTA to RTC, there is no such thing as an accident there is always an error of judgement involved hence road traffic collision.

End of November saw the release of figures from the department of transport for the first half of the year (subject to revision). I took a look, and I recommend you do the same. Best practice, have a look at a few cases before summarising or attempting to analyze the figures.

So, looking at collisions in the first half of 2024 in my local area where a vehicle involved was a motorcycle. First thing to note is this data comes from STATS19 reports. Vehicle recorded as being involved if it or its occupants were damaged. So, when you hear a statistic like a third of motorcycle accidents are single vehicle, don’t assume no other vehicle or road user like a sheep was involved, or contributed to the Swiss cheese alignment. (Sorry I’m being lazy using Swiss cheese alignment as an analogy for trying to understand how collisions happen,

let me credit it now to “Human error: models and management” James Reason (BMJ 2000).

The police (or you can now self-report but very few do) record collisions with STATS19 and it is this data that is made public under the open data initiative, read readily available at scale for free. I am guessing subsequent coroners reports for accident severity 1 (fatality) have more detail. In theory these are public, you just have to apply in writing to the coroner involved so not part of the open data initiative.

There are obvious sensitivities looking at debriefing collisions; these are real people where at least one person involved has made an error of judgement resulting in grieving families and the whole knock-on shit storm that lasts for lifetimes. But if we take responsibility for our choice to ride we owe it to our loved ones not to flinch and to try and understand the how and why and improve the feedback loop. This feedback is the only way to continuously evolve our own internal model of risk.

In the absence of truly knowing all the details but with our own understanding and experience of using the public highway we can paint a picture for each of the collisions from the recorded data.

For illustration and apologies to all affected I am pulling these examples out because I can envisage scenarios for them. You might read the same STATS19 data and envisage a completely different scenario.

2x motorcyclists travelling north Simonsbath to the A39 Lynmouth to Porlock road. Dry fine bright Saturday 13:00 hours big bike (>500cc) goes off the road “Very Serious” for which you should read with life changing injuries, 125 following falls slightly injured. Was the 47yr old male leading the 48yr old 125 rider an experienced rider showing a mate how to come off the road? Were there any other road users involved? If you know this road it probably classes for you as a great motorcycling road but it is not without its surprises; corners, adverse cambers, sheep and other road users who assume no other traffic. Failure to stop in the distance you can see to be clear? A poor decision to run wide feeling could not stop in time, who knows? 125 falling off in sympathy? Again, who knows but let’s just start my list

- Review my ability to stop in the distance I can see to be clear
- Review what might it be reasonable to expect

Saturday 12:00 dry and bright May day, 90 year old coming from Atherington turning right A377 takes out a 52 year old on a big bike, just another right turn

accident. Let me add to my list

- Review approach to hazard speeds
- What would it be reasonable to assume might happen

So just taking these two where do I get my reject inference from. Again, sorry for talking slang borrowed from credit score modelling. Think of this as it hasn't happened to me yet so I have little experience to base the possible downside on, so cannot accurately assess the risks I am taking.

This might help.

I'll hazard an error in judgement of ability to stop.. can be defined as

Frontal impact

Not at a junction

I'll hazard error in judgement of risk from vehicle turning right minor to major or left side hazard.. can be defined as

Vehicle turning right

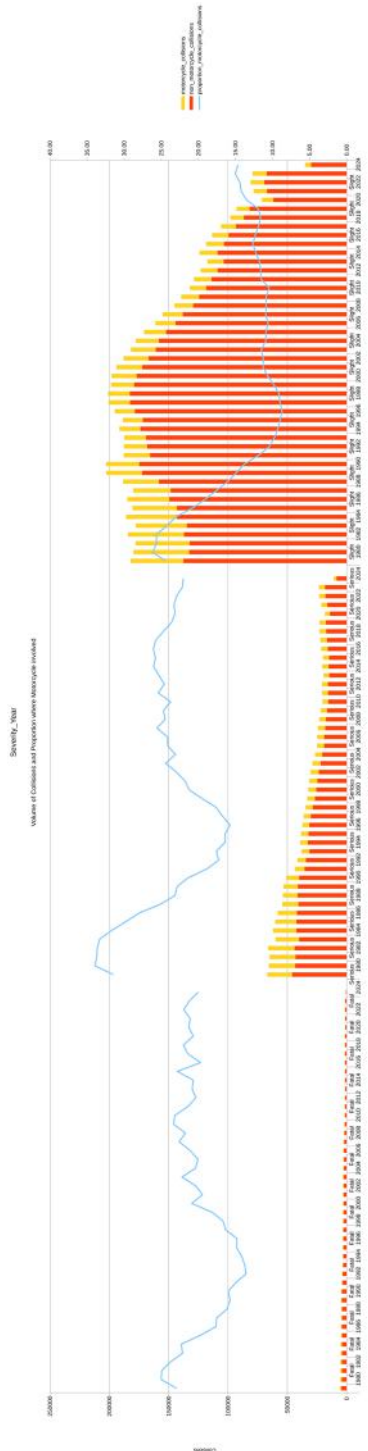
Collision at junction

Let's start by just looking at the trends in collisions as a whole.

Anyone remember the good old days, that weren't always, certainly not for motorcyclists. This chart puts the proportion and number of fatalities in perspective but note how high and persistent the proportion of fatalities and serious that are motorcyclists.

Let's validate what we may instinctively already know and ensure we are not taking anything at face value. From this point on I will use data from the Jan 2004 to latest data June 2024

- a third of biker accidents are no other vehicle



involved, bikes must be dangerous, or bikers reckless right?

25.5% of fatalities, 26.2% of serious and only 17.7% of slight were single vehicle. But fatalities are only 2.1% of collisions. With a 25.5% of fatal collisions with no other vehicle recorded you are in danger of legislating for the 2,135 fatal collisions and ignoring the other 117,241 motorcyclists killed and injured in the same time period (I am excluding slightly injured).

- Most biker accidents happen on wet roads, wet roads must be the problem, right?

Similarly, 23.3% of collisions are recorded as on damp or wet roads, but 27.4% of all accidents are recorded as on damp or wet roads. You can express the relationship between the two proportions and an index. For damp or wet roads, the index is motorcycles being underrepresented. So no, 'most' biker accidents don't happen on wet roads, furthermore motorcyclists are under-represented when a collision is recorded as happening on damp or wet road surfaces. Perhaps it is because we instinctively know wet roads can be tricky and there might be lots of reasons for this under-representation, perhaps the only people motorcycling on wet roads know the risks, are more skilled or experienced or mitigate the risk more carefully.

Something describing the relative proportions or index is more difficult to get your head around, so you are unlikely to see it in the media. It does give us the tools to examine questions like when a risky time is to be out on a motorcycle.

If we use the dimensions of month, day of week, weather and hour, so which combination of these have the highest relative number? A Fine Sunday in August at 15:00 comes top with the rest of the top 10 also being a Sunday.

The riskiest time (suppressing for low number of cases) drum roll please.

Fine Sundays around midday, take your pick April through to September as long as it is a Sunday around the middle of the daylight hours in fine weather

If you look at the other end of this table some of the least risky times are a fine Friday 04:00 morning in January. But no surprise here that the least risky times to be out on a motorcycle are when other vehicles aren't.

If it is risky to be out and about when others are, is it better to be out in a car? Certainly, for collisions involving 2 vehicles 75% of the collisions no-one is injured in the car but only 3.6% of riders are uninjured and only 1.5% of cyclists. If we only look at fatal and serious injuries this is still 69.5% not a scratch in the car but only 2.3% get away with it on a big bike and 1.6% on a bicycle. Cars

are safe, just not safe to motorcyclists or cyclists. If either the driver or the cyclist makes an error or both, the driver has a 75% chance they will be fine but the cyclist only 1.5% chance. Hence why we say the public highway is a complex social interaction characterised by risk asymmetry.

If policy makers are not mitigating risk for us, we need to get better at assessing and managing our own risk so let's get back to my list.

Ability to Stop. Using a restrictive definition where motorcyclists had a frontal impact but not at a junction and not overtaking, we see 32% of fatalities falling into this category and 17% of serious. Compare that to overtaking a moving vehicle which accounts for 6.5% of motorcycle fatalities and 3.4% of serious. And our other example car turning right minor to major and the motorcyclists goes into them: 8.1% of fatalities, 9.5% of serious.

When did I last really validate my ability to stop and in what distance at what lean angle at what trim (weight distribution)? If you get a chance at the back of your group at a track-based skills day worth just checking out your ability to stop in a bend, even better if it is raining, the start finish S's at Thruxton for example. You might also want to review if the IAM line against trail braking really makes any sense.

The IAM exhort us to be the thinking rider. The thinking rider does their research and thinks to continually update their risk model. Should I SORN the bike for the winter and avoid the issue of the danger of riding over the winter or should I simply put my mental model of risk into winter mode? There are some notable days of the year requiring a switch in your mental model, first leaves, first salt, first sun (in the spring). I will just continue to work on the 3x crafts required to be a motorcyclist: bikecraft, ability to get my bike to perform so corner and stop; roadcraft ability to calculate risk accurately and mitigate effectively. And the difficult one is ridercraft, to make good, informed decisions under pressure. A ride out on wet cold roads anyone?

Lest we Forget

Betty Nott



DAM Memorial Ride: 10 November 2024

A fantastic turnout of over 40 bikes and the weather was kind for an early morning ride to Winyards Gap where we remember those fallen.

There was a change in the order with Helen at the helm and Brian sweeping. Dave Cooper was the VIP who, at the memorial, spoke so eloquently of those who lost their lives for our freedom and those we have loved and lost in our Club who helped forge it into the organisation we are all proud of today.



I was unable to ride due to losing a fight with my bed post but was able to attend the start so sorted the important stuff such as how many for a bacon bap! Helen did her detailed pre-ride brief, we had the obligatory group photo and, with careful planning, I positioned myself and my camera where I would get the best video shot of 41+ bikes, in an orderly queue, setting off on their morning ride. However, Sod's Law came into play - Helen chose to ride in the direction of the arrows on the car park tarmac and not past me, then everybody else decided to do their own thing!! After all, they knew how to get to the exit of the Services, so my plan of a lovely video went in the



bin. I did get some pre-ride shots though!

Rumour has it from reliable sources (such as DAM's Facebook page) that it was a very good ride - "one of best".

The route included some spectacular scenery, at one point it was so clear we could see the sea. Some mentioned cheek-tightening moments on mud and damp leaves but the mix of roads kept everyone entertained. After coffee there was the obligatory photoshoot at Sutton Bingham reservoir and then onwards to Windy Corner Cafe for lunch. Farewell cuppas at Greendale Farm Shop and home for some serious bike cleaning....

Thank you to everyone for your support.

Training Through DAM

Les Mosco

For me, 2024 has been a year of intensive training, in a large part supported by Michael Whitfield's legacy to DAM. As I chair the Legacy Committee, I've been careful to be very transparent in my applications for Legacy funding and made sure I didn't have any advantage over other DAM members' applications. Last year I passed the F1rst reassessment, but this year became more ambitious, embarking on both the Masters and Observer training. I started Masters in June, was allocated by IAM to Rob Bartlett in Somerset Advanced group (Taunton) as DAM members had filled the capacity of our local Mentors. Rob was excellent, quietly coaching and pointing out where I could polish up my riding to meet the Masters standard. None of it was completely new, but all of it was refining, thinking and planning better. We had about 5 training rides before Rob thought I was test ready and the big day was 31st October, tested by Shaun Cronin and starting in Blandford Forum. I was delighted to pass with a Distinction. Masters has definitely improved my riding and I recommend it to anyone wanting to improve their riding and confidence.

And news hot off the press: Les has just passed his Oberver's assessment! Massive congratulations for all this dedication over the last couple of years.



For Sale & Wanted Our Facebook page is under-used so please get chatting on it and we might attract some new members. Search for Devon Advanced Motorcyclists and at www.devonadvanced.com



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WHAT'S ON **REGULARLY** ARRANGED BY DAM?

PLEASE ALWAYS check the [website](#) or event co-ordinators for up-to-date information.

Also please double-check times after clock change. www.devonadvanced.com

Date	What	Where
January		
Sat 4	Rookie Ride	See website for details
Sun 12	Group Ride (full members)	See website for details 9:00 am for 9.30am start.
Thurs 16	Full members ride	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com
Sat 18	Post Test Training Ride	Contact John Millgate trainingrides@advancedmotorcyclists.org.uk. 9:00 am for 9.30 am start.
Sun 26	Group Ride	9.30 am for 10.00am start. (GMT starts, clocks go back)
February		
Sat 1	Rookie Ride	See website for details 9:30 am for 10am start.
Sun 9	Group Ride (full members)	See website for details 9:30 am for 10am start.
Sat 15	Post Test Training Ride	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com Contact John Millgate trainingrides@devonadvanced.com
Thurs 20	Group Ride (full members or associate with observer)	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com
Sun 23	Group Ride (full members)	See website for details 9:30 am for 10am start.

March		
Sat 1	Rookie Ride	See website for details
Sun 9	Group Ride	See website for details 9:30 am for 10am start.
Sat 15	Post Test Training Ride Group Ride (full members or associate with observer)	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com
Thurs 20	Group Ride (full members or associate with observer)	Contact John Millgate trainingrides@advancedmotorcyclists.org.uk. 9:30 am for 10am start.
Sun 30	Group Ride	9.00 am for 9.30am start. (check this...)





Call for Volunteers

Communications and Marketing Team Members Needed

Dear Members of Devon Advanced Motorcyclists,

As Chairman of our esteemed group, I am reaching out to you today with great enthusiasm. Our community thrives on the dedication and passion of its members, and it is this same spirit that propels us forward, making Devon Advanced Motorcyclists an outstanding organisation.

We are currently seeking volunteers to join our committee in two pivotal roles: Communications and Marketing Manager. These positions are integral to the smooth operation and continued success of our group's activities.

Why Volunteer?

- **Enhance Your Skills:** Take this opportunity to develop or hone your financial management and marketing skills in a supportive environment.
- **Make a Difference:** Contribute to the strategic planning and execution of our numerous events, training sessions, and community outreach programmes.
- **Network and Connect:** Engage with like-minded individuals who share a passion for motorcycling and safety. Build relationships that extend beyond the road.
- **Give Back:** Play a crucial role in shaping the future of Devon Advanced Motorcyclists, ensuring we can continue to provide value to our members and the wider community.

About the Roles

Marketing Manager: The Marketing Manager will head up the marketing team, working closely with our Social Media Lead and Communications Lead. This role will focus on promoting our group's activities, increasing membership, and enhancing our public image.

Tasks include designing marketing materials, managing social media, and organizing promotional events.

Communications Lead: The Communications Lead will handle all written communications and notifications to our members. This role involves drafting and proofreading new and events notifications, managing email campaigns, and ensuring all members are kept informed about our activities and events.

Your involvement can make a substantial impact on the success and growth of our group. If you are interested in any of these roles or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact our Secretary secretary@devonadvanced.com or myself chairman@devonadvanced.com.

Together, we can continue to foster a community that is not only passionate about motorcycling but also committed to safety, education, and camaraderie.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication.

Warm regards,

Richard Whybra

Chairman, Devon Advanced Motorcyclists

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Bideford Bike Night - Thursday 25th May 2023 from 6.00 pm





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From 6pm



25th April - 30th May

27th June - 25th July

29th Aug - 26th Sept

Bideford Quay Car Park
www.bidefordbikeshow.org



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Pat Allen, Thomas Boyling, Jayke Stancombe, James Berry, Andy Coomber, Steve Moir, Gemma Jones, Keith Fox, Robert Harris (returnee), Wayne Turner-Lymath (returnee), Jake Shillaber, Lee Wardle, Mark Dunne, Sarah Brooks, Ian Cornell, Steve Ditchburn, Matthew Cameron

Congratulations to the Test Passes

Associate	Observer
Jo Carter (F1rst)	Simon Jeffery
Paul Fitzhenry	Ian Pruce
Andrew Layton-Hill (Legacy F1rst)	Ian Pruce
Felix Gregory (F1rst)	Nigel Bond
Wayne Vallance (F1rst)	Graham Hirst
Adrian Gallagher (F1rst)	Graham Hirst
Jamie Goodreid (F1rst)	Martin Rushworth
Louise Gallagher (F1rst)	Nick Marks
Andrew Sharratt (F1rst)	Barrie Dennett
David Edmonds	Rodney Rayner
Ant Bosaw	David Page
Jim Smith	Richard Wiseman
Jake Chant (F1rst)	Robin Watts
Paul Henderson	Hector Vass
Matt Capps (F1rst)	Rodney Rayner
Joe Cox (F1rst)	Martin Rushworth
Charlie Smith (F1rst)	Martin Rushworth
Jonathan Soellner	Catherine McKinley

Many congratulations to Darren Evan who passed his Masters with Distinction (11/12/2024) with Trevor Olding as his Mentor

The Observer Team

26 December 2024

NO = National Observer

LO = Local Observer

TO = Trainee Observer

■ NORTH AREA (8)

NO: Robin Watts TL
NO: Nigel Bond
NO: Simon Kidner
NO: Martin Rushworth
NO: Andy Pratt
NO: Hector Vass
NO: Stuart Taylor
NO: David Strickland

■ EAST AREA (8)

NO: Dave Cooper TL
NO: Gareth Taylor
NO: Ian Holten
NO: Richard Blyth
NO: Daniel Knight
LO: Terry Dormer
TO: Leanne Wilkinson
TO: Jonathan Doney

■ SOUTH AREA (11)

NO: Dave Page TL
NO: Catherine McKinley
NO: Phil Pike (inactive)
NO: Steve Westlake
NO: Tony Curley
NO: Graham Hirst
NO: Barrie Dennett
NO: Nick Marks
NO: Andrew Robertson
LO: Brian Lee (inactive)
TO: Richard Thorns

■ WEST AREA (9)

NO: John Millgate TL
NO: Simon Jeffery
NO: Mark Fouache
NO: Pete Wright
NO: Alex Thomas
NO: Richard Wiseman
LO: Tim O'Callaghan
TO: Andy Burden
TO: Darren Evans

■ CENTRAL AREA (9)

NO: Ian Pruce TL
NO: Dave Mudge
NO: Rodney Rayner
NO: Brian Strong
NO: Dave Grant
NO: Simon Padley
NO: Chris Palmer
TO: Les Mosco
TO: Ian Robins

■ 'FUTURE OBSERVERS'

Sam Iskander - Totnes
Roger Sell – Ashburton
Jonathan Mendez - Brixham
Mano Cheema – Exeter
John Paradise – Newton Abbott
Tim Pattermore – Barnstaple
Philip Ware – Loc TBC
Chris Kingsley – Loc TBC
Andy Yarwood – moving into area 2025/6
Greg Evans – moving into area 2025/6



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KEEPING UP WITH YOUR RIDING AMBITIONS

What can Devon Advanced Motorcyclists do for you?

In three minutes time, you'll know exactly that.

Devon Advanced Motorcyclists is THE leading provider of IAM Roadsmart's Advanced Rider Course in the whole of Devon!

We are here to make competent and confident motorcyclists.

We have a team of 35 nationally qualified Observers who can help you become the best motorcycle rider you can be. And help you stay that way.

If you have no ambition for this, stop reading here.

The Advanced Rider Course

We are affiliated with the national road safety charity IAM Roadsmart. Our role is to provide on-road coaching to enable IAM Roadsmart members achieve a nationally recognised advanced riding standard.

Advanced riding is the ability to maintain focus on the road and traffic environment and to take timely action to deal with it safely, smoothly, and systematically. It's a frame of mind.

Our members come from all walks of life and all ages. Our common goal to be the best riders we can be. The only prerequisite is that you should have a full (A or A2) motorcycle licence.

To apply for the **Advanced Rider Course** visit <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/courses/advanced-rider>.



The course includes the Advanced Rider Course manual, one-one on-road riding sessions with your allocated Observer, the price of the advanced riding test, and one year membership of both IAMRoadsmart and Devon Advanced Motorcyclists.

Not sure? We offer a free, no-obligation, **Taster Ride where** so we can answer all your questions. To apply for one of these free Taster Rides visit www.advancedmotorcyclists.com or contact Mark Fouache on tasterrides@devonadvanced.com

Social Rides

At any one time, we have up to a hundred people like you preparing for their advanced riding test.



FREE

We encourage new members to attend our regular social rides aimed at those new to advanced riding. We call these Rookie Rides, and they take place on **the first Saturday of each month**. You can use the opportunity to compare your advanced riding experiences with other new members.

Once you have passed your advanced riding test, you will be eligible to join our other Group Rides. These tend to be longer, all day, rides, and normally on more challenging roads than the Rookie Rides. You'll be riding in the company of experienced advanced riders and come to enjoy the best riding roads and destinations the county has to offer. Put these regular dates for Group Rides in your diary now: **the second Sunday of every month, the fourth Sunday of every month, and the third Thursday of every month**.

Devon Advanced Motorcyclists also organise a number weekend or longer trips throughout the year to UK and European destinations.

Detailed arrangements about forthcoming Rookie Rides and Group Rides are emailed to members on a regular basis. Contact our Rookie Rides co-ordinator dnmudge@blueyonder.com or our Group Rides co-ordinator groupridescoordinator@gmail.com for more information.



FREE
FOR
MEMBERS

The End of the Beginning

For some new members of, passing their advanced riding test and joining in with the regular social rides is sufficient for them to keep their advanced riding skills honed.

For many more that is just the beginning.

We continually encourage all our members to take opportunities to keep their advanced riding skills up to scratch. Newly acquired skills can (and do) fade remarkably quickly.

IAM Roadsmart offer a **Fellowship** membership status: in return for an additional annual subscription, Fellow members are automatically offered a re-test of their advanced riding skills every three years. What better way to keep you on your toes?

Information about **Fellowship** membership can be found at www.iamroadsmart.com/membership.

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PER
YEAR**

Alternatively, to take your riding skills up another level, you might consider the **Masters** programme. This provides mentoring support and guidance that will help you attain the highest standard of civilian riding in the country. The coaching encourages the use of professional riding techniques used by police and other emergency services riders.

Information about the **Masters** qualification can be found at www.iamroadsmart.com/masters.

£299

If something less formal is your thing, we run a variety of events offering ongoing encouragement of advanced riding.

On the third Saturday of each month, we run **Post-Test Training Rides**. These offer you the opportunity to ride with experienced observers who will offer suggestions for improving and refining your ride. No fee. No obligation. No reason not to!

Contact posttesttrainingrides@devonadvanced.com to book your place on a Post-Test Training Ride.

**FREE
FOR
MEMBERS**

Personal Training Ride: Your DAM membership means you are eligible for bespoke one-one coaching from one of our Observers. Just fill up your Observer's tank and away you go. Any time, any place, anywhere.

To arrange your **Personal Training Ride**, contact chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com.

Be a Giver

The ultimate way you can hone your advanced riding skills is by passing your knowledge along by joining the club's team of Observers. Observers are not only excellent advanced riders, but also possess the personal qualities to coach and encourage others to ride to the best of their ability. You will receive training to a nationally recognised standard overseen by the Institute for the Motor Industry.

If you think you have what it takes to become an Observer, get in touch with Simon Jeffery, your chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com



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Committee & Club Officers

<p>Chairman: Social Media; Richard Whybra E: chairman@devonadvanced.com</p>		<p>Group Secretary: Catherine McKinley E: secretary@devonadvanced.com</p>	
<p>Chief Observer: Simon Jeffery E: chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com</p>		<p>Treasurer: Brian Lee E:treasurer@devonadvanced.com</p>	
<p>Marketing Officer/Events Coordinator: Nathaniel Goss E:marketing@devonadvanced.com</p>		<p>Group Rides Co-ordinator: Rodney Rayner E: grouprides@devonadvanced.com</p>	
<p>Newsletter Editor: Diana Percy E: magazine@devonadvanced.com</p>		<p>Webmaster: Nick Tucker E: webmaster@devonadvanced.com</p>	
<p>Rookie Rides Co-ordinator: Dave Mudge E: rookierides@devonadvanced.com</p>		<p>Membership: Barrie Dennett E: membership@devonadvanced.com</p>	
<p>Observed Rides Co-ordinator: Ian Pruce E: observedrides@outlook.com</p>		<p>Rider Development Evening Co-ordinator: Tony Curly E: riderdevelopment@devonadvanced.com</p>	
<p>If you are a new associate member please contact Ian as early as possible, preferably by email, even if you don't intend to start your <i>Advanced Rider Course</i> immediately.</p>		<p>Other Committee Members: Steve Hyde Brian Churchward Jill Payne Les Mosco</p>	<p>Trustees Terry Dormer, Catherine McKinley, Richard Whybra Philip Pike, David Mudge Brian Lee.</p>

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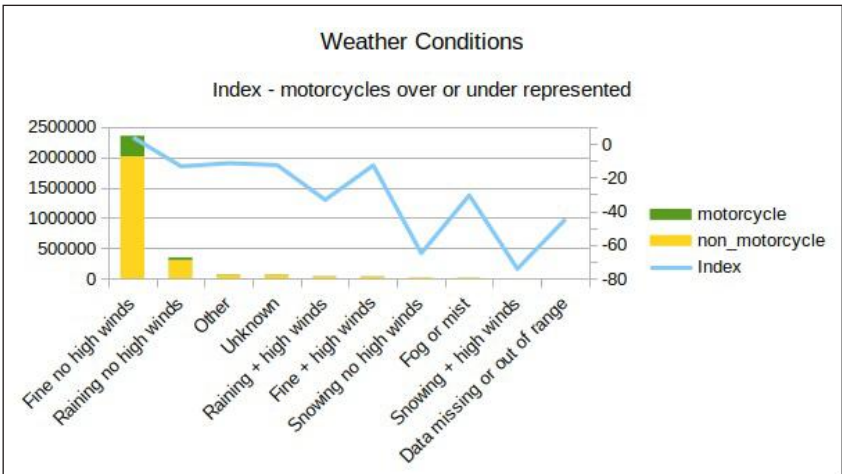
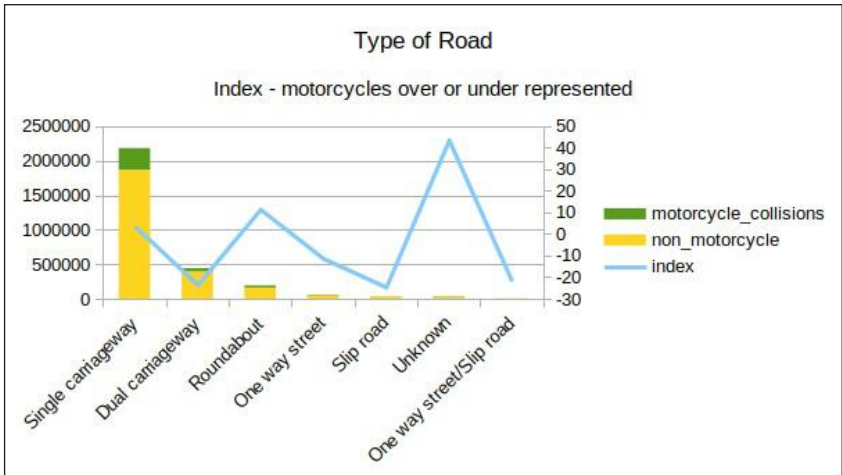
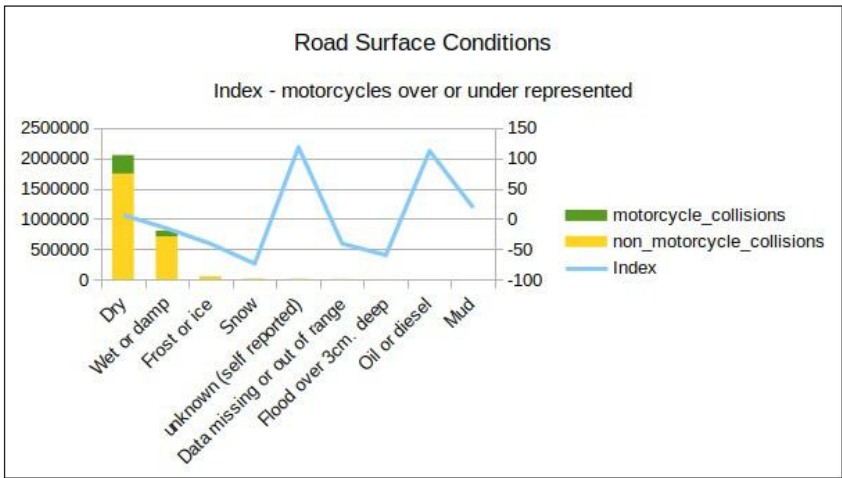
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