



**Southern Sporting  
Motor Cycle Club**

**CONTACT**

February

2021

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## **Your Committee**

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President.....	John Mason
Vice President.....	Ian Slater, Mick Wallace, Richard Barnett
Chairman.....	Christian Gorth
Club Secretary.....	Ian Slater
Treasurer.....	Chris Booker
PRO.....	Steve Pearce
Club Captain.....	Mick Wallace
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Auditor – Club.....	Rob Wood
Centre Board Delegate (2)	
BMF Liaison Officer .....	Ian Slater
Minutes Secretary .....	Heather Wallace

## **Dates for your diary**

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No Dates this Month

## Editor's Comments

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Welcome to your February Edition of Contact.

I hope you are all still managing to stay sane as we continue in lockdown. The Welsh Assembly have just it's extending this one by another 3 weeks...

Its wet, snowing and cold, so I wouldn't be venturing out on the bike anyway.

There are more articles for you this month including the top ten A2 license bikes, a report that British shoppers could face extra charges when buying from Europe, and an article on the New Indian range revamp, amongst others.

Other news, I heard today that Captain Sir Tom Moore who raised almost £33 million for the NHS has been admitted to hospital. He has recently been treated with pneumonia and has tested positive to the coronavirus. I wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Finally, I have to tell you that this will be my last Contact. With my slight change in work, I am putting away my editors hat! I would like to thank all who have contributed to the last 2 years which I have found enjoyable and interesting to read. I am sure my replacement will enjoy writing for you all as much as I did.

Watch this space!



# Presidents Piece

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Hi. Some pictures to look at that I found.





# Top 10 A2 Licence Bikes | Best of 2021

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By Phil West Bennetts

If you're between the ages of 19 and 24, get your provisional licence, take your CBT and pass your theory and practical tests, you qualify for the A2 licence category which, in simple terms, is restricted to bikes of up to 47bhp.

Some models have fallen by the wayside due to failure to comply with Euro5 regulations, Kawasaki's Ninja 400 among them, but with more and more A2-specific bikes coming onto the market, not to mention increasing options for larger, A2-restricted machines (which we're not dealing with here), which should you go for? Here's our pick of the latest and best purpose-built A2 bikes, in price ascending order...

## Top 10 A2 bikes

1. BMW G310R, £4875
2. KTM 390 Duke, £4899
3. Yamaha MT-03, £5299
4. KTM 390 Adventure, £5649
5. Yamaha R3, £5649
6. Royal Enfield Interceptor 650, £5699
7. Honda CRF300 Rally, £6039
8. Honda CB500X, £6119
9. Honda CBR500R, £6149
10. Triumph Street Triple S, £8100

### 1. BMW G310R, £4875



Prestigious German marque BMW were latecomers to the A2 category with this all-new, Indian-built, single-cylinder roadster only being introduced in 2016, but it's since been joined by a GS version (currently £5435) and for 2021 both have been updated to comply with Euro5 and get a raft of other updates, too, with slightly revised styling, slipper clutch, LED lights and ride-by-wire. Sure, the 34bhp from its novel reverse-cylinder, 313cc single isn't much to get

excited about, but the 310R is very novice-friendly and flexible; the upright ergonomics are good; it's easily manageable and the revised S1000R-esque styling, complete with sporty nose cowling and inverted forks is eye-catching. It's not bad value, either. As an entry into the world of BMW it's tempting indeed.

## 2. KTM 390 Duke, £4899

Austrian manufacturer KTM has its roots in off-road and supermoto and its lightweight road singles reflect that heritage with an emphasis on perky performance, lairy style and lively handling. In the A2 category, its 390 Duke is the fun-packed joker in the A2 pack. It's powered by a liquid-cooled, 373cc single that has been updated for 2021 to comply with Euro5, puts out a respectable 43bhp and is a hoot to ride, especially around town. Its diminutive size, light weight and slimness counts against it over distance or for larger riders, but the orange Austrian is still a very tempting buy.



## 3. Yamaha MT-03, £5299



Following the lead of its sportster sister bike, the R3, as significantly updated in 2019, the roadster version of Yamaha's 321cc A2 twin also received a major makeover in 2020. Although the perky, 41bhp powertrain is largely the same, the MT got new, more aggressive styling, improved front forks, a new LCD dash and tweaked rear shock. But although more aggressive-looking, the MT-03's riding position is comfortable and upright, but now

places you more over the front end for a more engaging experience. Better looking and classier, the MT-03 is one of the better A2 roadster options – but it also faces still competition from the likes of Honda's CB500F.

## 4. KTM 390 Adventure, £5649

The most junior adventure bike offering yet from Austrian off-road and adventure bike specialists KTM, first landed in 2020 based on the perky Duke 390 single-cylinder powertrain and like that bike is fully A2 and now also Euro5 compliant. Unusually for KTM, however, the 390, unlike its bigger 790, 890 and 1290 Adventure brothers, is very much a novice-targeted road bike, with road wheels, although it is capable of gentle trails. With longer suspension than the Duke plus upright bars and a touring screen, it's better suited to taller riders and longer distances than the Duke while still offering plenty of perky fun from its 43bhp engine and lightweight, nimble chassis.



## 5. Yamaha R3, £5649



Like most manufacturers, Yamaha offers a dedicated, A2-compliant bike in both sports and naked roadster variants. In Yamaha's case these take the form of the sportster R3, as first introduced in 2015 and then called the YZF-R3, and the naked, more upright MT-03, which followed a year later. Both are built in Indonesia to keep costs low and are based around the same, perky, 321cc, 41bhp parallel twin motor. The R3 received a major update in

2019 which much sharper, R1-alike styling to bring it into line with the rest of Yamaha's sportsters, improved suspension, new LCD dash and more. The result is one of the sportiest-looking (and handling) of A2 sportsters, even if its engine hasn't quite as much go as Honda's CBR, yet its riding position and practicality is actually friendlier and more novice-suited than ever.

## 6. Royal Enfield Interceptor 650, £5699

Indian-owned Royal Enfield's all-new, retro-style 650cc twins, the roadster Interceptor and café racer style Continental GT have been a revelation since they were launched in 2018 becoming not only best sellers for their combination of credible, accessible retro-roadster style and Triumph Bonneville beating value, but also, by producing 47bhp, for conveniently falling within the A2 licence classification. As such, they're



by far the most tempting A2 retros available. Both are mechanically virtually identical, with an air-cooled twin producing smooth, pleasing performance and a twin loop chassis that, while a little budget, is sufficient and entertaining. The more upright, different tanked Interceptor is the more conventional, and £200 cheaper. The Continental, although being café racer style, is barely more extreme, although it's difficult to argue for as a better buy. They may lack the crisp quality, extra performance and refinement of Triumph's more established Bonneville family, but both tick nearly all of the retro boxes, are A2 compliant and are undeniable value.

### 7. Honda CRF300 Rally, £6039



Originally introduced as the CRF250 Rally in 2017, the Rally is a semi-adventure or Dakar Rally-style version of Honda's CRF, single-cylinder trail bike. With a larger (10.1litre in place of 7.7litre) fuel tank plus wind-cheating screen and bodywork it's longer-legged and better over distance than the trail bike L, making it a better all-round road machine. While the move from 250 to 300cc for 2021 brings with a worthwhile boost in power from 23 to 27bhp. It's still a fairly

specialist A2 offering and should only appeal if you're serious about off-roading (if not, Honda's CB500X is a far better option), but the Rally is unquestionably stylish, decent around town, reasonable over distance and one of the best off-road.

### 8. Honda CB500X, £6119

Honda's adventure variant of its A2-licence specific, 47bhp, CB500 twin family, which also includes the CMX500 Rebel cruiser, CB500F roadster and CBR500R sportster, as also picked out here, is one of the most popular A2-compliant bikes of all – and with good reason. First introduced in 2013 it was an instant hit for its combination of smooth, flexible twin cylinder performance in a class otherwise dominated by lumpier, lower-powered singles while its roomy, upright performance and reasonable weather protection both suited larger riders and made it a great all-rounder. Updated repeatedly since its most significant refresh so far came in 2019 when it received a larger, more adventure-style 19inch front wheel, longer travel suspension and res-style – although it's still pleasingly unimposing and a doddle to ride.



### 9. Honda CBR500R, £6149



Introduced in 2014 as the sports variant of Honda's purpose-built, three-strong, A2-compliant 47bhp, 500cc twin family, the CBR was designed to fully exploit the new regulations in terms of performance but also, in typical Honda vein, be a quality, affordable machine in its own right. It succeeds on all counts. As a full, 471cc, 47bhp, parallel twin it's substantial yet in no way intimidating. The chassis is nimble, manageable and

comfortable. It's decently equipped and stylish (especially since its latest 2019 update which brought sharper styling, engine revisions and further improved suspension) and yet, due to its

fairly basic components, modular approach and the fact it's built in Malaysia, it remains impressively affordable, too.

#### **10. Triumph Street Triple S, £8100**

The current Street Triple S is the special, A2-specific, 660cc version of the 765 Street Triple, first introduced as the Street Triple S (A2) in 2017. For 2020 the range was revised whereby the cheaper, base S only came in 660cc A2 form, while the higher spec R (£9100) and RS (£10,500) were both 765cc and 118PS and 123PS respectively. Adding further confusion for 2021 is Triumph's new £7195 80bhp Trident 660 which can also be bought with an A2-compliant restrictor kit, reducing power to 46bhp @ 8750rpm.



The Street Triple S, however, still has bags of appeal for being a genuine, full-size Street Triple that complies with the A2 classification. Yes, it's 50-odd bhp down on its siblings and its spec is more basic, but this is a far bigger, meatier proposition than most other A2s – with the more substantial price to match.

## Brexit bargains? Online shoppers could be stung with hidden charges when buying from EU

By Dan Sutherland MCN



Shoppers in the UK buying products from European retailers could now be stung with hidden fees, following Britain's exit from the EU on December 31, last year.

Previously, buyers usually only had to worry about any additional delivery costs, but following the transition, any goods purchased that were produced outside of Europe, may be subject to additional payments upon arrival, in a process known as DAP (Delivered at Place.)

This will be to cover any duty, VAT (currently 20%) plus any courier charges and must all be collected on top of the original purchase price, before the product can be delivered.

For any orders totalling a value less than £135 (that's for all the items in your basket), the VAT should be collected at the point of sale, before being sent on to HMRC. However, additional delivery fees may still apply. Import VAT will be charged in Northern Ireland.

*But what is duty?* Duty is calculated depending on the type of product and its country of origin. For example, a textile jacket made in China, entering the EU and then being sold on to the UK will have a 12% duty fee added. Products made in the European Union will not have any duty to pay, however may incur other costs.



To put that into practice, one of the UK's best-selling Gore-Tex biking jackets costs £1249.99 in the UK. A German website lists the same Chinese-made garment at a tempting price of around £975. Once purchased, this then gets an added £117 in duty. A 20% portion is then taken from this figure to calculate the VAT, meaning an overall cost just shy of £1310, with more left to pay for shipping and delivery. Ouch.

Confused? You'll be pleased to know the government have rolled-out an online calculator, allowing you to work out the potential extra charges you might face. Unfortunately, this requires you to know where the product was made and under what category of item it falls – with the site listing every conceivable product type under a list of vague terms; from 'live animals' to 'ammunition'.

*And what if I wish to return it?* If you are unhappy with a product you have received, you may still return it to the European seller, however any VAT and duty paid will need to be reclaimed from the UK government in a separate process.

### **What do the experts say?**

Which? Consumer Rights Expert, Adam French spoke to MCN to bring you everything you need to know about shopping with a European retailer.

"If the total value of your order is less than £135, the retailer should collect VAT and pay it on your behalf, but confusion around the new rules means some customers are being asked to pay VAT by the courier. This might be because the retailer hasn't filled in the right paperwork or hasn't collected VAT from you. Check your receipt, if it says you've paid VAT that's all the evidence you need to refuse to pay again.

"If the total cost of your order is more than £135, VAT is collected at point of delivery. If you already paid VAT to the EU nation you bought it from you can claim a refund of that once you've paid VAT to HMRC but involves some form filling. For orders over £135, customs duties may apply, ranging from 0% to 25%.

"Couriers have started charging additional handling fees to cover admin costs and extra customs checks. The Royal Mail, for example, is charging an £8 fee. DHL charges 2.5% of the amount paid to clear customs with a minimum fee of £11. From October 2021, Mastercard will increase surcharges to 1.5% on every transaction, up from 0.3%."

# MAG UK Discuss Dangerous Barriers With N-Ireland Minister

Fema Member News



The Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure accepts that wire rope crash barriers pose a hazard to motorcyclists' safety.

Motorcycle Action Group UK's Northern Ireland Representative, Martyn Boyd, and MAG UK Director, Ian Churchlow met with officials of the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) in July 2020 to discuss MAG's concerns about the continued use of wire rope style crash barriers on the trunk road network across the province.

At this meeting, MAG explained the motorcyclists' concerns about wire rope crash barriers. In turn, the Department for Infrastructure officials explained the regulatory issues and the difficulties associated with alternative rigid systems, that currently make it



difficult for an immediate unilateral cessation of their use. Nevertheless, they understood and accepted MAG's perspective. At the end of the meeting, the Dfi accepted that wire rope and steel post type crash barriers are hazardous to motorcyclists' safety in a collision with such a barrier. The Dfi agreed to actively promote the wider use of much safer Motorcycle Protection System barrier installations at high-risk locations which are or could be particularly hazardous to motorcyclists. The Dfi also agreed to work with the local universities on any research projects, with the goal of developing a crash barrier system that is much less harmful to motorcyclists but still effective against twin-track vehicles.

Minister Mallon: "I'm committed to improving safety on our road network for all road users."



**Nichola Mallon, Northern Ireland's Minister for Infrastructure (photo: DfI)**

Recently, in December 2020, MAG had another meeting about wire rope barriers, but this time with Nichola Mallon, the Northern Ireland's Minister for Infrastructure. Minister Mallon said: "I'm committed to improving safety on our road network for all road users, and this review addresses a long-standing issue impacting a vulnerable road user group."

Because of the danger that they pose to motorcyclists, MAG wants the use of wire rope barriers to end and is working constructively with the DfI in Northern Ireland to achieve this goal. MAG's Martyn Boyd commented: "I found the meeting positive and proactive, and The Minister and officials gave fair consideration to our concerns and suggestions. I thank Minister Mallon for granting this meeting and look forward to further constructive dialogue with her Department. This is another step

forward on the path to improved road safety."

The DfI will schedule another meeting with MAG for early 2021, which will allow further discussion on any recommendations coming from the review. Additionally, Minister Mallon invited MAG to input to the upcoming Northern Ireland Road Safety Review.

# New Indian FTR range revamped for 2021

By Ben Purvis Bennetts Social



Indian's FTR range of water-cooled, DOHC V-twin streetfighters was a bold move for the firm when it was introduced two years ago and for 2021 all four models in the FTR line are getting a set of updates to increase their appeal.

Perhaps the most notable update is to the chassis of the road-oriented FTR and its higher-spec FTR S and FTR R Carbon siblings. All three models get new 17in front and rear wheels, replacing the previous 19in front and 18in rear setup, allied to a significantly steeper 25.3-degree steering head angle, down from 26.3 degrees, and 100mm trail instead of 130mm.

Those changes, along with shorter-travel suspension – 120mm at each end instead of 150mm – should add up to a huge change in the bikes' handling characteristics, making for a much more flickable feeling. The changes also give the road-oriented FTRs a 36mm lower seat, and they're narrower than before courtesy of 40mm shorter bars.

On top of the chassis tweaks, all versions of the FTR get a revised, Euro5-compliant version of the 1203cc V-twin engine. While peak power and torque figures are unchanged, with a max of 123hp and 88.5lbft on tap, the engine is cleaner than before and for 2021 it gains cylinder deactivation. This system stops the rear cylinder from firing when the bike is at idle, reducing the heat that soaks through to the rider when stopped in traffic.

Revisions to the engine's injection calibration are also claimed to give a smoother, more predictable throttle response.



As before, there are three street-oriented FTRs and the more scrambler-style FTR Rally in the range. Here's how the four models stack up against each other.

The entry-level FTR, which benefits from the new 17in wheels and sportier chassis for 2021 (although Indian confusingly calls all these machines '2022' models), is the most stripped-back version, but that doesn't mean it's lacking kit.

Sachs fully-adjustable suspension front and rear, with 43mm forks and a piggyback monoshock, means it's mechanically much the same as the higher-spec 'S' model, but the base machine lacks the S's electronic gizmos. That means you

get analogue clocks instead of a TFT display, and none of the clever riding modes or the cornering ABS of the S.

Just one paint scheme is on offer – black with red accents – and the base model can also be had in 47hp A2-licence compliant form.

Stepping up to the FTR S, the paint options increase to a choice of maroon or white, and you get a touch-sensitive TFT dashboard to access settings for three riding modes, wheelie control, rear lift control, stability control, traction control and cornering ABS.

An Akrapovic exhaust is standard, too, along with Bluetooth phone integration and a USB port. Both the base and S versions of the updated FTR weigh in at 233kg ready to ride with a full tank, which is 2kg more than before.

At the top of the FTR tree comes the FTR R Carbon, which has gained an ‘R’ compared to the old model to reflect its sportier handling.

As before, it benefits from Ohlins suspension front and rear instead of the Sachs kit of the other models and earns its ‘Carbon’ moniker via tank covers, fenders and a headlight fairing made of the stuff. It also gets an Akrapovic pipe (black instead of the S model’s silver one). Weight drops to 232kg wet, which is 3kg lighter than the previous generation Carbon.



The final member of the FTR range is the scrambler-style Rally. As befits its look, the Rally doesn’t get the smaller wheels of the other models in 2021, instead sticking with the existing 19in front and 18in rear wire-spoked design. It’s also got 50mm taller bars than the other models.

Like the rest of the updated machines, the Rally gets the Euro5-compliant engine with rear cylinder deactivation this year. Like the base model, it’s also offered in 47hp form as an alternative to the usual 123hp version for riders who need to comply with A2 licence rules.

## Bike crashes way down in 2020

By Ben Purvis Bennetts



Newly published figures for the year between July 2019 and June 2020 show that injuries from motorcycle crashes on British roads dropped significantly compared to previous years.

That might seem obvious, given that around three months of that period were spent under lockdown with travel being discouraged, but it's worth noting that in the key metric of 'killed or seriously injured' there was a greater percentage improvement in motorcycle figures than those for any other type of road user.

In bare numbers, 4790 motorcycle riders or passengers were killed or seriously injured in the 12-month period, compared to 5817 in the year before, running from July 2018 to June 2019. That's an 18% drop and compares to a 9% decline in the equivalent figure for car users, a 13% drop for pedestrians and a 1% improvement for pedal cyclists.

How much of the decline was due to lockdown? We can narrow that down by looking at the same figures for the first half (Jan-Jun) of 2020.

In that period, 1920 riders or passengers were killed or seriously injured, a 30% drop compared to the figure (2732) who suffered the same fate in the first half of 2019. Interestingly, that reduction – 812 fewer names in the KSI column – doesn't completely account for the decline during the year. In the second half of 2019, before COVID was even known of, some 210 fewer motorcycle users were killed or seriously injured than in the same period in 2018.

That means lockdown had a big effect, but it doesn't appear to be the only factor in the reduction in serious motorcycle-related injuries.

Looking at the first lockdown, overall fatalities and injuries on the road inevitably saw significant drops, with a 19% reduction in fatal accidents during the first half of 2020 and a 28% cut in total crashes for all vehicles.

Month-by-month, the effect on motorcycle casualties (including all injuries) can be tracked along with lockdown. In January 2020, before the pandemic hit, 1080 riders were hurt on British roads (a 7% increase on January 2019). In February, long before lockdown, the number dropped to 870 (down 20% on the previous year), and in March the decline was 25% (940 injured). April, the height of the first lockdown, saw a massive 60% reduction in motorcycle-related injuries (560), with May down 36% on the previous year at 1010. June's injuries – the latest to be published in official statistics – were down 22% at 1160.

The Government's official report on road casualties for the period understandably urges caution in extrapolating trends from the data – pointing out that the extraordinary conditions caused by the pandemic and lockdowns, with the reduction in traffic that went with them. A more detailed report, including figures for the second half of 2020, is due to be released in June.

## Break Time

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What is it?



Which UK Racetrack is this?



### Lateral Thinking:

Jacob would not stop playing video games no matter what his father said. Angry at Jacob's disobedience, the father decided he could fix the problem permanently with a hammer and a little elbow grease. To Jacob's dismay, he could no longer play video games however his father could. What happened?

David entered a restaurant where a crowd of people were enjoying a meal. When the people saw David they dropped their forks and fled the restaurant. What happened?

### Did you know...

In 1887, Yamaha started as a piano manufacturer, but today is a multinational conglomerate that still produces musical instruments. They have added boats, car engines, swimming pools, industrial robots, wheelchairs, RVs, electronics, and golf carts, and motorcycles.

The record for the longest-ever backwards motorcycle ride was set by Dipayan Choudhury in Jabalpur, India on October 7, 2014, lasting 125.52 miles (202 kilometers).

Motorcyclists in Indiana only have to stop for 120 seconds (2 minutes) at a red stop light. They can treat the stop light as if it were a stop sign, then proceed through the intersection cautiously. The law was nicknamed "The Dead Red" law, but officially is designated IC 9-21-3-7b-3 signed in 2015.

The sound made by the "motorcycle" that Chris Pine rides to the shuttle departing to Starfleet Academy in the film Star Trek is the same sound used on The Jetsons from 1962 for the "cars" they fly.

## Thanks for the memories: Honda Ron Haslam Race School calls time after 24 years of expert tuition

By Dan Sutherland MCN



After 24 years and an estimated 87,000 customers, the chequered flag has fallen on the Honda Ron Haslam Race School.

Having announced that 2020 would be their final year of operation back on Wednesday, July 15, bikes rolled out of pitlane for the final time at the Donington Park set-up on Monday, October 26 - marking the end of an era that's seen everyone from biking novices to A-list celebrities queue up for expert track-based tuition from Ron and his instructing team.

The recipient of 2020 MCN Dave Taylor Lifetime Achievement Award, Rocket Ron set-up the school back in 1997 and has helped riders learn new skills on everything from learner-friendly 125s on their novice courses, to arm-stretching CBR1000RR Fireblade superbikes on their Elite programme.



In the early days of the school, these riders included six-time British Superbike champion Shane Byrne and MotoGP race-winner Cal Crutchlow, as well as Ron and Ann's own son Leon – himself a former BSB champ and current factory Honda World Superbike rider. Speaking to MCN when receiving his award, Ron spoke of the school and said: "To get letters of thanks or to see someone improving because of your work is brilliant. It's definitely kept me young and I hope to carry on doing

something along the same lines."

One of the riders attending the day's course was MCN reader, Ivor McCullagh, 51, from Banbury, who had been booked onto the Premier Experience to ride a Honda CBR650R by his friend, Ben Sheard, as a 50th birthday present.

With the pair attending the school together, Ivor told MCN: "It was an amazing day. The track was wet to start with, so both of us were a little bit nervous, but after the first lap you realise how much grip the bikes still have - it was such a big confidence boost.

"The instructors put us at ease straight away and we realised it wasn't going to be as scary as we thought. We never felt out of our depth at all."

With the light fading, the final day was rounded out with a parade lap of the track by Ron and Leon, before they arrived back in the pits to a round of applause.

Ron and Ann were then surprised by their instructing team, who had laid on a cake, photos and all signed one of the school's red jerseys. On top of that, Honda also presented Ron with his own CBR650R and Ann with a hamper of goodies as a mark of thanks for their services.

"It's the end of an unbelievable era – and eras have to end," Ann continued. "It's such a shame because it's needed, and it's wanted - not just for Honda or the Haslams - but for the whole industry."

MCN Chief Road Tester, Michael Neeves has instructed at the school for eight years and also attended the final day at Donington Park.

"My final lap last Monday was emotional. It was the last time I'd ride around Donington on a Fireblade, wearing my red instructor's bib, with a customer in tow," he said.

"I've seen how the school operates from behind the scenes during the eight years I've been with them. It's more than just a riding school, it's always been about giving back to our sport for Ann and Ron.

"Thousands of young and new riders have been introduced to biking and many racers have been nurtured, not to mention all those who've got their track fix from some the best instructors in the land, on one of the finest tracks on the planet. There's nothing else like it in the world. It's great British biking institution that'll be sorely missed by everyone."



# 'Mandatory Motorcycle Inspections Do Not Improve Road Safety'

Fema News



There is no evidence that the technical state of motorcycles plays a significant role in accidents, but still some members of the European parliament want to periodically inspect every bike in Europe, thinking it will improve road safety.

In 2014 the Periodic Roadworthiness Tests Directive (2014/45/EU) came into force. This directive regulates the technical inspection of cars and motorcycles. As a result of the hard fight that FEMA and some of its member organizations, supported by some MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) had in 2012 and 2013, motorcycles were excluded until 2022. In 2014 the European Parliament by a large majority voted in favour of the compromise proposal from the European Commission on a European regulation for the periodic technical inspection (PTI) of motor vehicles. This compromise included that the PTI for motorcycles was postponed until 2022. If a member state managed to find another solution to enhance the road safety for motorcyclists and reported this to the European Commission before 20 May 2017, this country would be excluded from Mandatory Periodic Technical Inspection (PTI). Three countries managed to do so: Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands. Some other countries have or will have PTI for motorcycles, but not (yet) for mopeds.

On 25 January 2021 the Transport Committee of the European Parliament discussed a report about the implementation on the road safety aspects of the Roadworthiness Package, of which the Periodic Roadworthiness Tests Directive is part. Many MEPs asked for mandatory periodic technical inspection for all powered two- and three-wheelers, although we also heard doubt about the effectivity of this measure. During the presentation of the report by rapporteur Benoît Lutgen, he himself expressed his doubts if a mandatory periodic technical inspection would be the best way to enhance motorcycle road safety.

Because FEMA has no doubts and are still of the opinion that mandatory periodical technical inspections have very little impact on road safety for motorcyclists, certainly less than other



**Benoît Lutgen MEP**

measures could have, we decided to write a letter to all members of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament. In this letter we explained why we think that the introduction of a mandatory European periodic technical inspection for all powered two- and three-wheelers is a bad idea. This letter was sent on 27 January 2021. Of course, we will keep following this issue and we will continue our fight against a mandatory European PTI for motorcycles.

‘Training of road users, behavioural aspects, infrastructure and enforcement of existing traffic rules play a much bigger role in road safety than periodical technical inspections ever will’  
The periodic technical inspection of motorcycles is a very old discussion in which various parties argue that this would benefit road safety. However, not only is there no evidence that the technical state of motorcycles plays a significant role in accidents, available reports on motorcycle accidents all point in the opposite direction: the technical state of motorcycles plays only a very marginal role in accidents. Training of road users, behavioural aspects, infrastructure and enforcement of existing traffic rules play a much bigger role in road safety than periodical technical inspections ever will.

# Why car drivers don't see motorcycles and what YOU can do

By Dave Yorke Bennetts



Dave Yorke, the author of this article, is an ex-Merseyside police motorcycle sergeant and tactical pursuit advisor. He's owned everything from mopeds at 16 through sportsbikes, off-roaders and super-motos. He currently rides a Honda Africa Twin...

Whenever there's a serious collision on the roads in the UK – and by serious collision I mean where someone receives a very serious injury and sadly also when those injuries result in a fatality – the police complete a form that bluntly asks questions around a vehicle's movement.

One of the questions can be answered with a simple 'going straight ahead' and another can be answered with 'at or near a junction'. So, how does a motorcycle travelling straight ahead become involved in a collision at a junction?

The simple answer is that, in a high proportion of cases, another vehicle will be involved.

I spoke to DocBike about its plans to hopefully reduce casualties and how you can help. DocBike, in case you've missed it on social media, is a charity passionate about motorbikes, but equally keen to reduce the amount of road deaths amongst motorcyclists. The aim is to get a consultant-level doctor or a critical care paramedic onto two wheels, working wherever possible with a local air ambulance to provide the most seriously injured patients to with the care they need.

But the charity also carries out work on the basis that prevention of a collision is better than dealing with the effects of a collision. Having personally dealt with the devastating effects of fatal motorcycle collisions, I tend to agree with them...



Before DocBike became a charity, the project was set up by Dr Ian Mew (pictured), an air ambulance Intensive Care Consultant, and PC Chris Smith QPM, a police motorcyclist, advanced police motorcycle instructor and Family Liaison Officer with Dorset Police.

How YOU can help shape potentially life-saving road signs

I'm sure we've all seen the signs that say "Bends, dead ahead" or "To die for". In the past there's been a lot of emphasis on bikes as the sole cause of collisions but acknowledging and highlighting that there are other causes is definitely a good thing. BikeDoc has a couple of variations on proposed new signs, and they'd like YOUR feedback. Please do use this link to help improve the safety of UK riders: <https://docbike.org/evidence-based-road-signs>. I've filled it in with my thoughts, as has the rest of the Bennetts BikeSocial team; it would be great if you could too...

Which of these signs do you think work best? Visit <https://docbike.org/evidence-based-road-signs>

### Option 1



### Option 2



I asked Dr Ian Mew, one of the DocBike founders about the proposed new signage and why many drivers don't see motorcyclists at junctions: "The more experienced, more skilful riders among us recognise that while a vehicle pulling out in front of us is not our fault, it's us the rider that gets hurt," he said. "To avoid being knocked off our bikes, we can't rely on other road users seeing us – the brain simply is not built that way.

"Think Bike' signs are great, but if we're to avoid being knocked off of our motorcycles, we need to be aware that we often are not seen and be able to stop or avoid that vehicle if it does pull out on us. We may not like it, but these are the facts!

"The DocBike charity will never tell other riders what to do – we believe in the freedom that motorcycling brings and we want to preserve that. But recognising that human brains find it hard to see small profile objects (like motorbikes) travelling towards them at speed, we as bikers have to take the initiative if we're to stay on two wheels. There's even a part of our eye that has a blind spot (called the optic disc), where an image (for example a motorbike) falling on this part of the eye will not be seen by the brain.

"The DocBike charity is passionate about understanding why bike collisions occur, and helping fellow bikers to understand the facts, so that they can avoid being in a collision themselves in the future."

## Optical Blind Spot Test



1 2 3 4 5 6

Cover your right eye and look directly at the number three. Can you see the motorcycle in your peripheral vision?

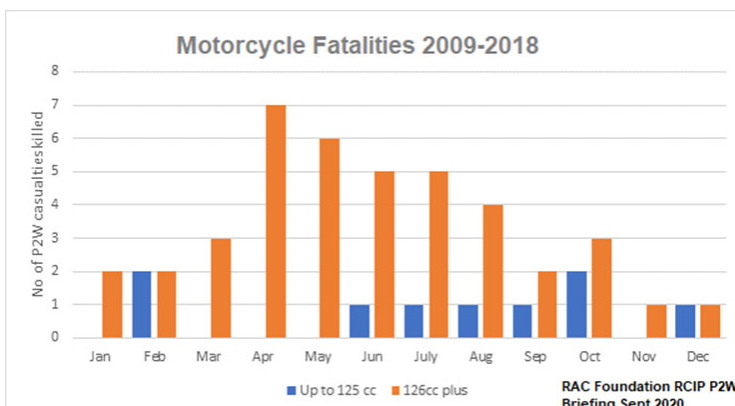
Now slowly move your head towards and away from the screen and you'll see how the bike vanishes and re-appears.

Riding with the knowledge that other vehicles could pull out in front of us – because we can be hard to see – may well save our lives.

### What YOU can do to protect yourself

If drivers can't always see us, what can we do about it? Well, simply knowing where collisions occur is a vital part of riding, whether you're out for a weekend ride or on your normal commute. The knowledge that junctions are the places where collisions can happen – and that you might be in a driver's optical blind spot – should help to ensure that you continue to enjoy your ride. If someone does pull out on you, you'll be ready to deal with it.

With DocBike engaged in the work they do, and riders and drivers learning where collisions happen, how can the police help? During the year, the NPCC (National Police Chiefs Council) runs campaigns aimed at reducing casualties called Motorcycle Weeks of Action. During those weeks – one in spring and the other traditionally in autumn – it would be great if forces could highlight the work they do around reducing this type of collision, and could tie it in nicely with the dashcam initiative I wrote about recently, helping to educate drivers around the limitations in seeing motorcycles



There's a clear peak in incidents during Spring.

The real world of roads policing  
It's all too easy for some to jump to the conclusion that the rider must have been going too fast when a driver pulls out, but the reasons are far more complex.

Dealing with collisions as a police officer is a strange thing; in every other aspect of policing we deal with both a victim and a criminal who sets out to commit crime.

Roads Policing is different; the overwhelming majority of collisions like these that I dealt with – where vehicles pull out – involved a victim and another member of the public who had often made a very costly mistake. In every other aspect of life they were a nice person (there are always exceptions to the rule), but in the world of roads policing, nice people kill people.

The effects on a driver who makes that mistake can often be absolutely devastating. It's devastating for everyone involved. These signs should remind drivers to take that extra look for bikes, but also remind riders that collisions have happened there. If it's successful in Dorset, the scheme could be implemented nationally.

It's all about sharing the road and looking out for each other, so please take a moment to help the DocBike charity with its research by having your say here: <https://docbike.org/evidence-based-road-signs>



## Regular venues

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**Wednesday evenings** from 8pm in the Adelaide Public House, Teddington.

**Saturday mornings** Sam's café, Nelson Road in Whitton. If there's a big rugby match on at Twickenham Stadium when we usually reconvene at Power Mill Lane café so it's worth getting hold of one of the team to get confirmation.

**24/7** We have a Club page so please "follow" both and make sure your views are heard.



**FIND IT OUT AS IT HAPPENS:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8085330049/?ref=bookmarks>

**Contact:** This document comes out monthly and is restricted to club members. The FB pages are more promotional and open to a wider audience so there may be more detail in this than we would share on line.

### Membership Benefits

CBS in Whitton give us a 10% discount.

BMF (British Motorcycle Federation). The affiliate membership is worth

mentioning when you next seek an insurance renewal or similar.



## Breaktime Answers:

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What is it?



Yamaha XJR 1300 Racer

Which UK Racetrack is this?



**Lateral Thinking:**

Jacob would not stop playing video games no matter what his father said. Angry at Jacob's disobedience, the father decided he could fix the problem permanently with a hammer and a little elbow grease. To Jacob's dismay, he could no longer play video games however his father could. What happened?

**Angry Father: The father used the hammer to install a shelf high up on the wall. He then placed the video game console and the controllers up on the shelf out of Jacob's reach.**

David entered a restaurant where a crowd of people were enjoying a meal. When the people saw David they dropped their forks and fled the restaurant. What happened?

**A Fearful Crowd: David was the name of a reticulated python who escaped from the local zoo and found himself entering a crowded restaurant.**