



Suffolk Riders



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This is my last Chairman's update as I will be stepping aside at the AGM. It's been a pleasure and privilege to serve the group in this capacity (most of the time) and I hope the new Chairman finds it both rewarding and challenging as I have. I'd like to thank all those who have joined the committee or contributed to the running of the group over the 4 years of my tenure as chair and



all those who stepped in to aid parking, ride-outs, and other activities promoting the brand. A special thanks goes to Ian Gilder, who is also stepping down from the committee and Training Officer duties. Ian is the last remaining committee member who was also a member of the sub-committee for the combined car and bike group based in Bury. Ian has served the group on the committee for over 10 years, from which the group has benefitted enormously. Enjoy your leisure riding Ian.

December will see most of us hopefully no worse than tier 2 and able to socialise on some level with those outside of our bubbles... I hope you all manage to see your loved ones. November's weather has been varied from frosty foggy mornings to Tee-shirt weather and pretty much all in-between. I managed only one ride in November....must try harder. I must say, I have covered around 7k miles in a period of time I would normally have expected to cover 16k. I have certainly had less drive & enthusiasm to get out on the bike, work has been

busier than in recent years and most tasks take longer due to PPE & 1-way systems, reduced maximum persons in a room, lack of face-to-face meetings, etc.. But we've got through to December and the end is in site, providing the much advertised vaccines live up to expectations.

I hope you've made it out on 2 wheels enough to keep your interest in riding and the group, we really appreciate your continued support and hope to get back to some normality next year.

I look forward to talking to as many of you as possible at the AGM Zoom meeting on 14th, we will certainly need a good number for the voting to be quorate. We will also be delivering a review of the year, as usual, and a brief run-down on what we hope to be able to do next year. Cheers, maybe see you on a ride-out over Christmas. All the best, *Jon*

December Activities

Social Rides are on.

Following the Government's recent announcement that the lock-down will end on 2 December as scheduled, and the rule of 6 will apply outdoors, the next Suffolk Riders social rides will be on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th December. Why a ride on Saturday? Well, several members told us at the 2019 AGM that they would like some Saturday social rides, so we thought we would have a trial to see how popular a Saturday ride would be.

Restrictions mean that no more than six people (including pillion) can participate in a single ride and, in the case of multiple rides, none can start or finish at the same place. We will, therefore, have three groups riding to and from different locations, enabling up to fifteen people to participate in addition to the three organisers. If more than 15 people sign up we have another organiser in reserve. Suffolk (and all the ride destinations) is in the government's Covid 'tier 2', so only household groups can eat together inside. Hence the choice is between eating inside as individuals at separate tables, or outside as a group if the venue has suitable outside facilities, or taking a flask and sandwiches. For this reason the organisers may change the destination at short notice depending on discussions with the venues. Vini has already chosen the sandwiches option.

You must register with one of the organisers by email and acceptance will be on a first come, first served basis. If one group fills up relative to the others, there will be an opportunity to transfer to another group. If you wish to accept an alternative to your first choice, please make it known in your email. NB pillion riders are welcome, but if you intend to bring along a partner, you must state that in your email and that person will be included in the total number. Only those who register will be told the starting point and route. (We have used Stowmarket in the invitation below to give you an idea of the distance – this does not imply that any of the routes will start from Stowmarket.)

1. Saturday 12 December - Social ride to Stony Stratford with Brian Carter, then back via the Cotswolds. As the crow flies Stony Stratford is 93 miles from Stowmarket. Departing at 8:00 am. To register, email to brian.carter@suffolkriders.co.uk
2. Sunday 13 December - Social ride to Hunstanton from Stowmarket with Vini Evans. Outward ride of almost 70 miles Start time TBA. A longer route home – 110m – will be offered to any interested party. Please bring a flask and sandwiches for a picnic on the Greensward at Hunstanton. To register, email to vini.evans@suffolkriders.co.uk.
3. Sunday 13 December - [Royston Old Bull Inn](#) with David Wood. About 60 miles from Needham Market as the crow flies via Sudbury. Note that if the Bull is not open, we may go to Bury Lane Farm Shop just up A10. Departing at 9:00 am. To register, email to david.wood@suffolkriders.co.uk

Events sub-group.

AGM 14th December 2020

I hereby give notice of the 2020 Suffolk Riders Annual General Meeting. The AGM will be held remotely via Zoom on Monday 14th December starting at 7.30 pm.

There are two ways you can join this meeting:

1. Following this direct link: [Click here to join Suffolk Riders AGM 2020.](#)
2. Using the following details via the zoom website or Zoom app:
 - Meeting ID: 865 1540 2869
 - Passcode: 299468

Before the AGM, I would recommend downloading Zoom ([click here to download for your computer](#)). Downloading Zoom is not essential if you are using your computer but if you are planning on using a tablet or your phone you will need to download the Zoom app to join the meeting.

Suffolk Riders AGM agenda:

1. Apologies for Absence
 2. Acceptance of 2019's AGM minutes, attached with this notice.
 3. Chairman's report including review of 2020 events and 2021 objectives
 4. Training Officer Report
 5. Receipt and approval of the group's accounts for 2020
 6. 2020 Events Review
 7. Acknowledgements & Awards
 8. Election of the committee*
- Chairman
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Training Officer
 - Membership Secretary
 - Webmaster
 - Social media and Marketing
 - Events

9. AOB & Questions

10. Brief Outline Plans for 2021

* If you are interested in joining the committee for one of the aforementioned roles, please speak to myself or another committee member at your earliest convenience by email or phone.

Nominations for Suffolk Riders Committee:

As we are unable to meet in person for this year's AGM, nominations for committee roles will need to be completed before the AGM either electronically via the following link: <https://forms.gle/XXFCdCD9cmkZnUU96>, or by replying to this email – you can make multiple nominations if you wish.

If you are nominating a fellow Suffolk Riders member, please ask the person you wish to nominate for their agreement to be nominated before you submit their nomination. For a candidate to be considered two nominations must be received (one in the form of proposer and another will act as a seconder).

Deadlines for nominations will be Saturday 12th December.

The current Suffolk Riders Committee would love to see as many of you as possible at the AGM even though it will be very different from the norm. If you have any questions that you wish to be raised at the AGM, these can be passed onto either Jon Jamin (chairman@suffolkriders.co.uk) or myself (secretary@suffolkriders.co.uk) before the meeting or at the AGM via the chat function.

If you have any issues or concerns with regarding anything in this email please do contact either Jon Jamin or myself to discuss.

Chris Patten - Secretary

Member's Forum

'Confinement barricadé lié à la COVID-19' part 2..... or Deja vu? – Steve Valentine

Our biking plans for returning to France this summer originally consisted of a ferry to Le Havre and a three to four day cross country amble along the twisty backroads to our base near Carcassonne.

With COVID cases on the rise almost everywhere, we decided that the safer option was to avoid hotel stops and be totally independent.

Plan B was put into action. The same Brittany Ferries route, but a non stop autoroute journey down by van.

The bikes were loaded, one in the van, the other on the trailer. They should have both fitted in the van, but Catherine's mission was to completely fill it with other stuff, mainly furniture. This was why I put her 790 Duke out in the cold on the trailer, whilst my MT-09SP travelled in the warm.

We arrived in Montreal early evening to find our Dutch friends, Arnold & Yvonne, ready and waiting to cook our dinner. They'd been off-roading in the Pyrenees on their [Husabergs](#) & were keen to sample some of my local routes.

After a day of rest, an adventure was planned. Catherine wasn't quite ready for a full on off-road assault, so chose to ride her 790 to our lunch stop in Mirepoix. The rest of us set off across country on some beautifully scenic tracks through the Razes. By mid morning Yvonne had taken a tumble and aggravated an old injury, so took to the road with Cath.

After lunch the girls headed home via the twisties. With Yvonne on knobbly tyres, with [mousses](#), and Cath on rather worn road rubber, it would have been an interesting trip to watch, as neither of those girls hang around. Arnold and I managed to survive the rest of the day without too many incidents. As a relative off road novice, I may have pushed his limits a couple of times but he gets better each time we ride. The next task was to get new tyres on Catherine's Duke. We had tried to get this done back in the UK, but our local motorcycle tyre specialist was closed due to Covid!. Luckily the Dafy Moto shop in Carcassonne is really friendly & helpful. They removed the wheels, fitted and balanced a pair of Michelin Pilot Road 5s, refitted the wheels & all for the same price as mail order tyres back home.



Mazeres viewpoint on the Villefranche-de-Lauragais loop



Now we could get down to some proper riding. First up was one of our favourite afternoon routes which links up some of the best twisty roads into a figure of eight loop. It heads West through Fanjeaux, Castelnau (home of the cassoulet), [Mazères](#) and [Villefranche-de-Lauragais](#). Its only 150km, but we often ride bits of it twice as you can get into a lovely flowing rhythm through the curves. Excellent place to hone your 'Safer, Smoother, Quicker' skills. I love this short route, it works well in either direction and is rather addictive.

A few days later I'm back on the dirt with a local chateau owner, Wolfgang, for a 100km loop south. He's another relative off-road novice so I try to pick a sensible route that challenges, but doesn't scare.....too much! I tend to use the DRZ for the easy trips as its such a good all round workhorse, with relatively infrequent maintenance requirements, unlike my KTM 250. With another day of clear blue sky, it was a perfect opportunity for a run up into the [Montagne Noire](#) on the road bikes. I plotted a 250km route to take in some of the best roads in the region. The road from [Minerve](#) to

[Saint-Pons-de-Thomières](#) is awesome!!.....a mini TT course, endless, well surfaced, constant radius curves. So enjoyable & such a joy to ride.

The search for a spot for our picnic lunch ended at the beautiful viewpoint of [Roc Suzadou](#). An hour of peace and tranquillity, mountain air and a fromage baguette. The homeward leg found us on the Mazamet to Carcassonne road, another twisty heaven. Its always difficult to ride sensibly along here.....especially on the MT-09SP. As we

neared home, Madame demanded more, so we took the D6 road route out of [Castelnau](#) before stopping for a well earned cold beer in [Fanjeaux](#).

Yet another sunny day.....another days riding...14°C when we left home at 09:30, but was soon up into the high 20s.

We headed south towards the snow covered Pyrennes, but not too close! So many twists and turns, no traffic, no [pelotons](#) and awesome scenery. Menu du Jour for lunch in [Tuchan](#), then the beautiful flowing road north towards [Lagrasse](#). I then rode the 790 Duke.....well, I had to.....because Catherine had stolen my MT-09!! The 790 is a great fun bike to ride, the sound is lovely & its so quick and easy to ride, I can see why she loves it so much.

Checking on the grape harvest



Lost in the woods with Wolfgang



And then the 'Second Wave' started to bite!

I had booked onto an off-road event in the Morvan region, about eight hours drive north. It's called the Massif du Morvan & is a three day, road book navigation rally. I first rode this event 21 years ago, I remember it so well as on day three I crashed heavily and ruptured the cruciate ligament in my right knee. Riding, and starting, a Honda XR600R was not easy after that!. The plan had been to take my KTM 250, & the 790Duke for Cath to amuse herself on the roads, whilst I endeavoured not to crash into the local terrain again. The KTM was fitted with new tyres, I brushed the cobwebs from my road book reader and ICO trip, and fitted those.

Then new Covid regulations were announced to try to curb the second wave, resulting in the Morvan having to be cancelled!. Things were not looking good. We also had to cancel a planned trip over to friends in Provence. We had hoped to have ridden the [Gorges de Verdon](#), in the dry & daylight this time, unlike the previous occasion with Phil, Steve & Martin last year.

We were still ok to continue with our day trips. The next one was up to the snow in Andorra. This is



always a nice ride as we head south to [Quillan](#) then follow the route of the 'Course de Cote' hill climb. This must be complete madness in some of the powerful cars that race up here. There's no margin for error, it's solid rock on one side and a 100ft drop on the other. I like to get a move on up there but I'm very mindful of the consequences of even a minor 'tippy off'.

We stopped in [Axe le Thermes](#), beside the hot spring pool, for a very pleasant and socially distanced lunch. Then headed up to the 2408m (7900ft) summit at [Port d'Envalira](#) in Andorra,

where most of the snow had unfortunately melted due the sunny weather.

Beautiful views from up there. Then, after a quick stop in [Pas de la Casa](#) for some cheap Andorran petrol, less than a €1 litre, and some duty free booze, we headed back to Montreal along yet another scenic flowing route.

Little did we know that this was to be our last daylight road trip, as the very next day it was announced that the 'confinement' (lockdown) was to be reintroduced two days later. With one day of freedom remaining, a cunning plan was formed. Early the next day Wolfgang and I headed off on a rather ambitious 180km off road



route. The trails were mainly those used on the [Moto Trail Cathar](#), a local adventure bike rally, so were not too taxing as they were intended for mid to large adventure bikes. It was a long and most enjoyable day, the weather and scenery were perfect and the tracks were mostly dry.

The second half of the cunning plan was to get back in time for a road ride with Catherine. So it was a quick change of bike and riding gear before setting off on the Villefranche de Lauragais loop. Within the hour the temperature was falling and it was dark. I hardly ever ride in the dark, so it was disconcerting to find that the four excellent LED headlights on the MT-09 were completely useless once you leant into a corner!! I obviously need more nocturnal practice.....and some fancy cornering lights. We arrived back at home around 9pm and parked the bikes until who knows when?

Nocturnal ride.....pre 'confinement'



I was then condemned to completing the DIY tasks that I had started during the last lockdown. These I had skilfully managed to avoid up until now. So it was back to repairing and repainting the shutters, cleaning the barn roof and assorted minor repairs. I delegated cutting the hedge to Cath, she makes a much neater job of it. We were back to trips out of the house for essential reasons only, during which you must have a completed 'Attestation' to cover your

journey. I had thought of riding up into the mountains on the pretence of bread shopping, but frivolous expeditions and flimsy excuses do not quite 'coupe le moutarde' with the Gendarmes, so law abiding citizens we continue to be.

Catherine has reinstated my obligatory hour of outside exercise as the 'attestation' allows, otherwise we stay at home. The nearest that we get to any motorcycling has been fitting new MotoZ Hybrid Extreme tyres to the DRZ, and on TV by watching [The Long Way Up](#) (on Harley-Davidson Livewire electric bikes) on Apple TV and, now that that has finished, we are rewatching Long Way Round. We have also continued to work on our French language skills by working our way through a box set of 'Allo,'Allo!.

Thankfully the MotoGP season has been thrilling, so I devoted most of my weekend to watching qualifying and racing.....avoiding DIY. Of course, it is also compulsory to browse the eBay motorcycle listings in times of low supervision & boredom. Eventually I had to come clean to Madame and own up to 'accidentally' buying another used bike!. It's another Orange one and I haven't even seen it yet or managed to get it collected from the dealer.

We were hoping for a slight relaxation of the rules to allow us to ride, as last night (Nov 24th) President Macron was due to speak to the nation. Whilst there have been some loosening of the rules, sadly its not looking as though recreational riding will be cleared until after 15th December, by which time we will be back in the UK enjoying our 14 day isolation period.

It's been many years since I have done so few miles of riding. I'll be glad to see the back of 2020.

Riding a 13-year old GS – Lee Gage

So we are in the middle of lockdown and having interpreted the guidelines to mean we can ride out for recreation Keith (Gilbert) and I decide to have a short run and catch up over a coffee and bacon roll. A little research shows us that '[La Hogue](#)' farm shop and cafe, Chippenham, is open for takeaway: great, that'll do well.

So with my pre ride checks complete, you know: mask, sanitiser, hand wipes, NHS app downloaded! we meet at Bury for a cross country ride of about 45mins to La Hogue. I'll not bore you with the ride but it was as usual with us a fun, progressive, ride.



So following our excellent bacon roll and coffee Keith asks me if I'd mind riding his bike on the return journey. Keith has recently had some electronic work carried out by Andy Pallot (which I think has already been written about) and as I've previously owned the same model of GS he was interested in my feedback. Well, I never need a lot of encouragement to ride another bike so I agreed. Keith's bike as most of you know is a 2007 BMW 1200GS. Now I'm going to have to dig deep in the memory bank as it's quite a few years since I owned a GS! Although I also own an RnineT which has the later 1200 boxer, my current every day ride is a BMW S1000XR so as you can imagine, chalk and cheese.

Well, in a very short space of time my first impression was 'hell what's all this using the clutch to change gear about! No, seriously, I couldn't believe I was riding a 13 year old bike. It has, as you would expect with Keith, had a lot of thought, time and work carried out

to the suspension and set up and it definitely shows, it feels great. But I'm not riding it to comment on that just the engine feel. The early boxer 1200 engine was a joy delivering enough power for normal road riding in a real flexible manner. Keith's bike brought back great memories but most of all I was surprised and amazed at how really flexible and real world usable this bike is. It pulls great from low in the rev range right up to 6000 (which is as far as I took it) and it didn't seem to worry it whatever gear was selected but most of all for me was the smoothness at and around 3500-4000rpm. It felt effortless at those revs and with just the odd gear change to keep it in the rev range it made the ride back, which was all cross country, a real pleasure. I can only assume the work Keith had done to the electronics has made all the difference.

Many thanks Keith for letting me ride your bike back, it brought back great memories of a bike I really enjoyed owning and riding. Now back to my quickshifter, yahoo!!.



STAYCATION 2020 – Keith Gilbert

So where do we go? As it was six years since we had been to Northumbria, Northumbria it was.

Self-catering – yes.

Whereabouts – somewhere central.

Northumbria-cottages website was showing a cottage for 2 at Longhorsley and was vacant the last week in September. And what a gem 'Greenyard Cottage' turned out to be. Simply a one bedroom cottage for 2 persons with a log burning stove and a good heating system on 24/7. It was about a mile from Longhorsley and formed

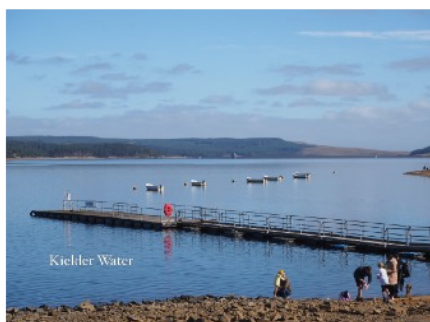


part of Todburn West Farm where owners Stephen and Sophie bred goats and rare breed sheep. The goats are Sophie's and from their milk she produces soap.

[Longhorsley](#) is situated on the A697 four miles north of Morpeth. Ten miles east and you are on the Northumbrian coast with incredible beaches, castles and Holy Island. To the north is the town of Rothbury with its independent shops and easy access to Craggside N.T. the home of Armstrong Vickers, the engineer. To the west are the Otterburn army ranges (access when

no red flags) which lead you across to the A68 where a few miles north will put you on to the [Kielder Forest Drive](#) and then Kielder Water. Should you have any interest in architecture, museums or galleries 20 miles south is Newcastle and Hadrian's Wall.

Best motorcycling road is the unclassified road from Bellingham to Stannersburn and then Kielder Castle.



I am not on any commission but having had a self-catering house in August in Durham which wasn't good and booked through an agency, Sophie did say to try and book with her direct. Northumbria Cottages did have all the Covid-19 requirements in place so no problem with them.

Greenyard Cottage – 10/10. Book direct with the owner (better deal).

Sophie Kirkup – 07720 50565

Can you help the Bawdsey Photopost project?

If you read the article on Richard Tricker last year, you might recall that he is a keen amateur photographer. His latest mission is to help create a [website](#) detailing the beach from Shingle Street to Bawdsey in photographs. To gain audience they want a Facebook page documenting their work, but need to get 20 'likes' in order to have a short URL. It would only take you a few minutes, but it would be a great help if you would visit these two Facebook pages and give them a like. 👍👍👍 Ed.

<https://www.facebook.com/Bawdsey-PhotoPost1-101469441796103>

<https://www.facebook.com/Bawdsey-PhotoPost2-101551411789000>

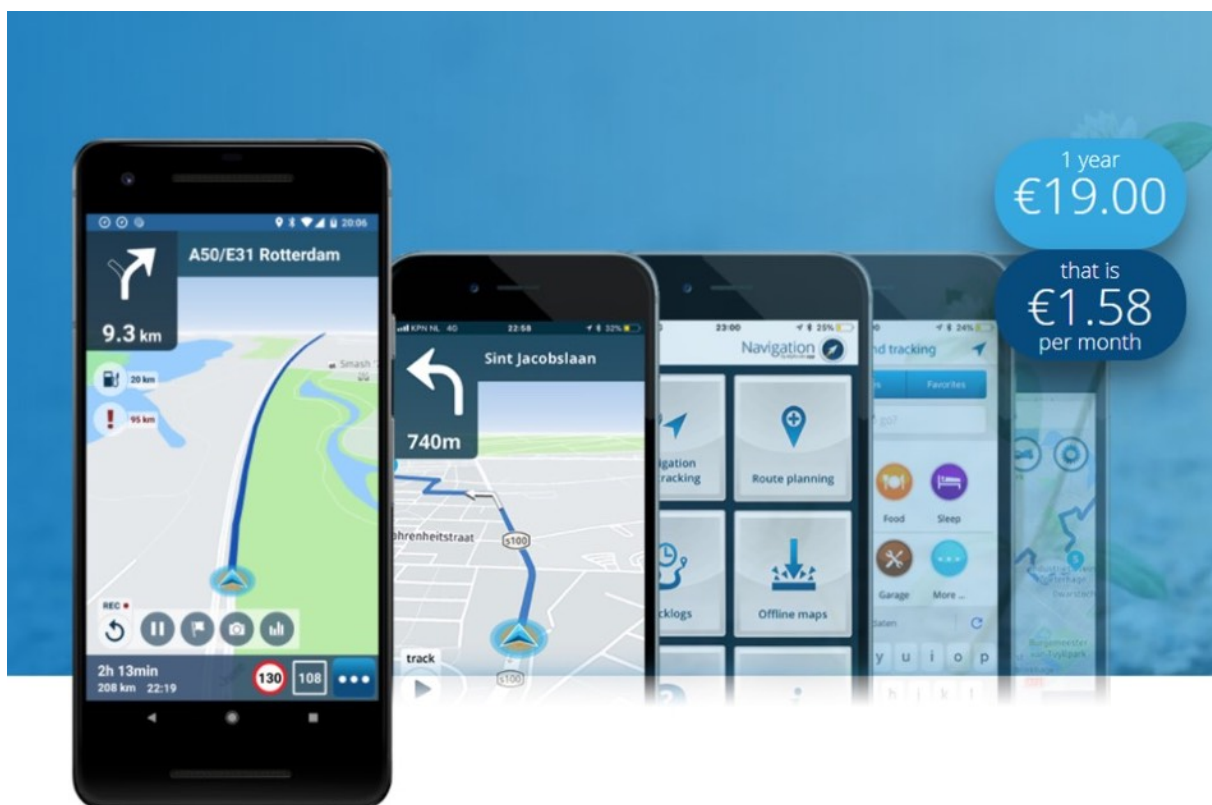
Technical Corner

Do You Still Need a SatNav? – Phil Sayer

Of all the topics covered in the Suffolk Riders Newsletter, the one that seems to keep coming up is that of problems with satnavs. Members report problems with putting routes on their satnavs (“I just get straight lines!”), with reliability issues (several of us have BMW/Garmin Nav 6s that have been replaced under warranty), and issues with navigation – such as when two people have downloaded the same route but their satnavs want to take them in different directions.

The second area of complaint is the cost. The list price of a BMW Nav 6 is £639.90. At the moment you can get one with 15% off for a mere £543.91, and most BMW dealers will give you 10% off when you buy a bike from them, but it’s still a serious chunk of change. So when MyRoute-app launched MRA Navigation, I thought I would try it out to answer the question “Do you still need a satnav or will your smartphone do just as well?”

Well it’s certainly cheaper. Assuming you already have a smartphone, the cost of a subscription to MRA Navigation is €19.95 a year. Yes, you can use Google maps to get from A to B, and it works very well, but you can’t program it to put in multiple waypoints. Many – maybe most of us? – are now using MyRoute-app to create and edit routes, so using MRA Navigation sounds attractive. For example, in the middle of a trip you can create a new route on your phone in a hotel bedroom in the evening, and



then use it to ride the next day. You don't need to take a laptop or tablet with you. You can also use any of the thousands of routes in the MyRoute-app database – and for example, if any of your MyRoute-app 'friends' creates a route, you can immediately open it in MRA Navigation and start riding a minute later. So no more downloading problems – in fact no more downloading at all.

You don't need to update the maps either, which can take hours on a satnav. MRA Navigation works like Google maps by accessing the maps on the internet in real time, so the maps are always bang up to date. This has a couple of downsides, though. If you are riding in the mountains (or rural Suffolk!) in an area with a poor or no mobile signal, your navigation will stop working. Mobile coverage is getting better all the time though, and on a recent ride to the north coast of Scotland I didn't have any serious problems. Secondly, the data cost. Most phone subscriptions these days have no limit on the 'reasonable' use of data in the UK. At the moment on most contracts this applies in Europe too, but after Brexit the sneaky mobile companies will probably re-introduce roaming charges. You will be able to buy data packages, but a two week riding holiday could run up a big bill for the use of data. To get round this issue you can use MRA Navigation in off-line mode, where it downloads the maps you need onto your phone. The only issue with this is the amount of memory it will take up. I've tried it in the UK and it works fine. It might be a problem for a long trip in Europe through several countries.



MRA Navigation has most of the same features as a satnav – and it will tell you about traffic jams ahead in real time, which most satnavs don't. It will find you the nearest petrol station, restaurant, hotel, etc., just like a Garmin or Tomtom. You can connect MRA Navigation on your phone to a headset in your helmet, and it has the advantage(?) that it uses a man's voice, not a lady's.

You will need to mount your phone on your bike. A waterproof case is essential. Nippy Normans is selling cases for most models of iPhones for £29 (reduced from £49!), RAM mounts for £17 and arms for £15. You will also need a USB connection – many new bikes have USB sockets built-in, or you can use an adaptor that plugs into a 12 volt socket, or wire in a permanent connection to a USB socket under your seat, preferably wired so that it comes on with the ignition (that's what I did). Total budget around £70.

Now the \$64,000 question. What's it like to use? On our recent trip to Scotland, I had the same routes running on my Nav 6 and on my phone. Almost all of the time they used the same roads, but occasionally they didn't. However, I'm guessing, no more often than a Tomtom. So usability is fine. The screen display is good to follow while riding.



Now for my biggest gripe. It's a rare trip where you don't need to skip at least one waypoint. If the route plotter put it too far from the road, or you need to deviate round roadworks, or the waypoint is in a petrol station and you don't need any petrol (no names no pack drill John), you will need to skip. I've put the skip button on the top screen of my Nav 6, so I can skip a waypoint with one button press. On MRA Navigation the only button on top screen is a menu button down the bottom right. Press that and you go to a screen with 6 big button and two very small ones. Yes, skip is one of the small ones. Press it and you go to a sub menu which asks how many waypoints you want to skip, and then you have to press OK (a tiny button). You simply cannot do this without stopping. Whoever dreamed this up doesn't ride a bike! It's a shame because it's the only big issue that I have with it, everything else is fine. MRA Navigation has a feature in beta test where it will automatically skip a waypoint if you ignore 3 sets of directions. This sounds very promising, but I'd still like to be able to skip a waypoint manually – and easily.

Another issue is using the phone's touchscreen through the transparent cover of a case wearing thick gloves. It works, but nothing like as well as a Garmin or a Tomtom. If you want to reprogram your satnav you need to stop anyway, so you can always take your gloves off when you do it.

In summary then, "Do You Still Need a SatNav?" No, you don't. If you don't want to spend £500, or don't plan to use a satnav regularly, MRA Navigation is a good alternative. I particularly like being able

to create a new route and then use it immediately. I love the fact that I don't need to create the route on one device and then download it to my satnav. The skip button thing is a pain, but hopefully they will fix this (I've sent in my comments!), but you may decide you can live with it. My 'waterproof' case is at best showerproof. In torrential rain on the A1 past Newcastle rain was getting inside the case, so I removed my phone from the holder and put in the waterproof pocket in my jacket. After going swimming a few years ago with my phone in my pocket I don't want to repeat that rather expensive mistake! However, the latest phones claim to be waterproof (or at least showerproof) so this issue will go away. So am I going to stop using my satnav? No. For me MRA Navigation is a great back-up tool, and I will renew my €19.95 subscription when it expires in December, but it is not as easy to use and follow as my Nav 6. If I were a new rider starting out and I already had a smart phone, or I simply didn't want to spend £500, would I buy a satnav? Definitely not!

Straight Lines on Sat-Navs (Again!) – Chris Austin

Just when you thought that you had a sure-fire cure for your sat-nav showing straight lines, let me disappoint you.

My Garmin 350LM is usually well behaved, other than occasionally wanting to go through a village rather than round it, or wanting to take a dirt road rather than an B road, but earlier this year I did a map-and-software update and immediately afterwards went for a ride. I got to the first waypoint easily enough but then it said, in effect, "Yes, there is another waypoint, but I'm not going to tell you how to get to it." The short term solution was to restart the route with the next waypoint as the starting point, which was hardly satisfactory, but at least it worked. The longer term fix that evening was to turn off the device by holding the power button down for a few moments until I got a message asking if I really wanted to turn the device off. On restarting, riding exactly the same route was uneventful. Problem solved. Or so I thought.

But the first day of the recent trip to Scotland saw a repeat of the issue, with no apparent cause, which was adjectively inconvenient. At the overnight stop we had no wi-fi, so finding a solution was a problem. Step in John Morgan with a phone with its own private wi-fi hub, and it soon became apparent that my only vague hope was to completely reset the beast, thereby losing all my settings and all my routes. Fortunately I had brought my trusty Mac with me on which I had stored the routes, and after about an hour of fiddling I was up and running.

It was with some trepidation that I approached the first waypoint the next morning, but to my relief everything was fine and remained so for the rest of the trip.

The moral of the story?

It's not just the way you export/import your route from MyRouteApp, but it also depends on your sat-nav's mood. Which makes me think that there isn't a universal answer to the straight line problem.

Or, as Jon Jamin put it so clearly one evening, "Get a bunch of bikers together over a meal and eventually the conversation will turn to the vagaries of sat-navs, everyone having their own stories to add."

Riding Tips from Rapid Training by Chris Austin

The guys at Rapid Training (rapidtraining.co.uk) have emailed this out to all their contacts, so I thought they wouldn't mind if I passed this on verbatim. I think it is a brilliant set of reasons to keep riding through the winter.

1. DON'T PUT YOUR BIKE AWAY

90% of leisure riders put their bike away in winter. Pros keep going. Cool, crisp, bright winter days with no one else around give you the chance for space and freedom. Take it – it might be another 12 months before you get it again.

2. READ THE ROAD

Landscapes change in winter and hazards such as concealed side roads and bends masked by hedges become visible. Take advantage, ride new roads and get them on to your mental map.

3. RIDE IN RAIN

Master the challenge of wet surfaces and reduced visibility now and you'll be able to focus on the experience of the ride with renewed freedom and confidence in spring and summer.

4. GET OUT WITH A MATE

At Rapid we believe in the power of observation and learning. If you haven't been putting in the miles due to lockdown then get out with a mate or better still, a Rapid pro coach and ride a few roads together.

5. AVOID SKILL FADE

It happens to the best of us and quicker than you think. Continuous riding and regular practise helps avoid skill fade and keeps your riding technique sharp and up to speed.

Counter Steering – a repost from Chris Austin.

The Editor doesn't like my musings on counter steering because of their yawn factor (he's probably right) so doesn't publish them. That's his prerogative and I respect it.

BUT ...

There may be some members out there who, like me, wonder about all sorts of strange questions like:

- Why/how does counter steering work?
- Why does a single tyre go round a circle if set in motion when tilted?
- Does standing on your pegs lower the CoG of bike and rider?
- Why do bikes have rake and/or trail, and what are their effects?
- What are the factors affecting suspension behaviour?
- Are gyroscopic effects relevant on motorcycle handling, and if so, why?
- Loads of other stuff currently well beyond my comprehension ...

There is a "go to" bible that answers all these and more.

Right at the end of my researches into counter steering I was guided to a book by the master, Tony Foale. The man is a complete genius with huge knowledge and experience, backed up by loads of science and the results of extensive computer modelling. It helps that he is English, as opposed to American, so has a decent command of our language.

Get Tony's book. If nothing else, it will prove to you beyond all reasonable doubt that 99.9% of what you read on the Internet is complete rubbish. It is called "Motorcycle Handling and Chassis Design - the art and science". It is currently out of print but you can buy the CD from him at <https://motochassis.com>, or off Amazon and others, and if you look hard enough you might even find a free download somewhere.

Chris Austin – AKA "The Thinking Rider"

Following Chris's riposte, the following is the article he wrote last month. Ed.

Counter Steering *By Chris Austin*

The piece by Bakson in September's Newsletter prompted me to think about counter steering, which is the process by which you press on the "wrong" handlebar in order to turn a corner. "Push left to go left, push right to go right" is something you may have heard before. If you think you don't do it, or even swear you don't do it, be assured you have been doing it ever since you were a kid and you learnt not to fall off your bicycle.

You might say "But counter steering doesn't happen at very low speeds." My response is that it does, but the major effects of wobbling bars and balancing (especially for a learner on a bicycle) mask the subtle effects of counter steering.

The whole process of establishing a stable cornering attitude is extremely complex and to understand it properly needs a mathematical explanation outside of the scope of this article. However, knowing that most interested readers are not engineers I have tried to keep the explanation in everyday terms as much as possible. If you don't want to know the gory details, skip to the last section headed "Putting it all together".

What happens when you push on the left handlebar?

This exercise is best done for real, but if you don't have a bicycle any more, then hopefully your imagination is good enough.

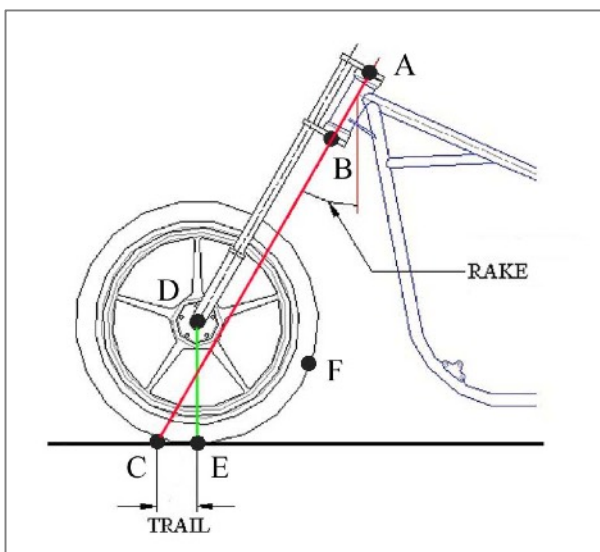
Get on a bicycle, feet in the ground, stationary. Now push the left handlebar so that the forks are rotated to be at ninety degrees to the frame. Now try pushing the bike forward. Of course it won't go, but can you feel (or imagine) that the front wheel will have a force applied through the contact point with the ground that is transverse to the wheel? If your bike doesn't allow you to turn it that far, turn as far as you can and apply the front brake: the effect is much the same but less dramatic. If you release the brake the force will be significantly less, but still there and the wheel will begin to roll. There is a force from the driven rear wheel along the frame to the front fork headstock. That force then translates into at the wheel hub which If you reduce the degree of rotation of the handlebars, the force is reduced still more, but is still present. If the bicycle remains vertical, the same force arises on a moving motorcycle.

In summary: pushing the left handlebar sets up a left-to-right ~~transverse~~ force on the front wheel, acting through the point of contact with the ground. The greater the rotation of the forks the greater the force.

By the way, as you will have noticed in the exercise, it takes time for the fork rotation to go from zero to maximum which is why various effects described later on do not all happen instantaneously and all together.

Steering Geometry

Unfortunately it is necessary to be technical for just a little while because "rake" and "trail" are at the heart of the explanation, so please hang in there.



Steering Geometry Diagram

source: <https://chopperbuildershandbook.com/rake.html> (modified to show the extra points A-F and to change the nomenclature).

In the image above, the imaginary line A-B-C runs through the frame's steering head (i.e. **not** along the forks) down to the road.

The imaginary line D-E is vertical from the front axle (D) to the road/tyre interface (E).

Consider a toy or model bike similar to the one shown, being held by the frame so that the forks can rotate around the axis A-B-C.

Now transversely push the tyre very near to Point C. Because C is on the axis A-B-C the only effect will be to try to bend the forks sideways, and there will be no rotating effect on them.

By contrast, pushing Point F will definitely cause the forks to rotate about A-B-C: F will move into the plane and its opposite side will move out of it as though the bike is turning left.

Pushing Point E is different from pushing Point F only by a matter of degree: Point E is still to the rear of A-B-C and so the forks will still rotate in the same manner. The push might have to be harder, but the effect is the same. The applied push is in exactly the same direction and position as the one above that arises when you push on the left handle bar.

You can try all this for real on a bicycle that is suspended off the ground.

In summary so far: pushing the left handlebar sets up a transverse force (from left to right in these examples) at the road/tyre interface of the front wheel and this causes the forks to rotate as though turning left.

Putting it all together

The images below are from Atlesn at English Wikipedia and are sourced from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Countersteering>

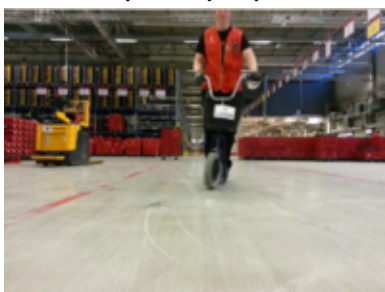
You may have seen YouTube videos of counter steering (and then again, you may not ...). There is no doubting the truth of some of the images but the explanations are mostly misguided. This is what is really happening:

- 1) The bike is travelling in a straight line. So far, so good.



‘Bike’ travelling in a straight line.

- 2) The rider rotates bike's forks by pushing on the left handle bar. The two wheels become tangents on a clockwise circle and the front begins a clockwise turn to the right. However, the rest of the bike keeps going straight on because there is nothing to make it do anything else. Well, not yet, anyway.



Wheels now more-or-less in line as turn to left initiated. Rider still going straight. Bike now falling over to its left.

- 3) The transverse force at the road/tyre interface starts to build up but until the degree of fork rotation has become sufficiently large, the force is not big enough to have any great effect.

- 4) Whilst that is happening, the front wheel is moving off to the right but the rest of the bike is still going forward. This means that one of the vertical supports for the bike (its front wheel) has moved to the right, but most of the bike hasn't followed it to any degree, so it starts to fall over to the left.



Left handle bar has been pushed forwards. Front wheel turns right. Rider keeps going straight.

- 5) The front wheel moving to the right and the bike leaning to the left is a very unstable situation, but this is transient because ...
- 6) ... by this stage the transverse force at the road/tyre interface has become large enough to have a rotating effect on the forks, so now the front wheel starts to point to the left, the bike is leaning to the left and everything is working together ...



The start of the cornering manoeuvre is complete.

- 7) ... which is the planned outcome. The transition from straight line travel is more or less over, and true cornering begins.

The whole process is very finely balanced. Of course, rider input such as amount of push on the handle bar, level of skill, movement across the bike etc., all play parts in making it better or worse, but the principle has been shown and not an equation, gyroscope or centrifuge in sight!

PS: Those of you with a mechanical bent will spot that this article has omitted to discuss the positive effect that the weight of a leaning bike has on the transverse force at the road/tyre interface. The fact that it has a positive effect is good, but the need to discuss vector diagrams is complicating and therefore confusing, hence bad. There are other complications for the cognoscenti that are beyond the scope of this article.

The Last Laugh Word

My grateful thanks to our regular contributors, without them there would be no newsletter and I would not get to read lots of interesting material each month. The band of contributors appears to be growing and we would welcome any copy from those who, until now, have been passive readers.

I felt somewhat chastened following Chris A's repost to my not publishing his article last month on counter steering, especially as Bakson had asked for help the month before. My only excuse was that having studied Newtonian Mechanics for only one year (1966 – so a pretty minimalistic knowledge) I could not map my understanding of the process onto Chris's explanation, and wondered how the membership might find it. So my apologies Chris, the article is now available.

My first encounter with counter steering (too many counters) occurred around 1974-5. My car was written off while stationary at Claydon Crossing when a lorry ploughed into the car behind me, in



thick fog, doing 40mph, totalling six vehicles. My boss loaned me his Matchless G80 500cc, while the complicated insurance was worked out. In tea room conversation he asked me how I cornered? Lean into the bend, then steer round - simple. NB if anyone tells you it can't be done see this [video](#) and accept my apologies for the beginning. I've seen better examples, but couldn't find the one I wanted. My boss then explained counter steering, so on my way home that night I tried it down the Foxhall Road and was totally dumbstruck, amazing

and so little effort. I knew that the effect was associated with the front wheel behaving as a gyroscope. I'm not going into any detail, but if you want a simple and, imho, accurate description, this [animated film](#) describes both types of steering very well. Finally, while searching for a simple explanation I came across this lecture by [Walter Lewin](#). It is 49minutes long and goes through all the maths along with some remarkable demonstrations. Worth it only if you have the time, patience and bent. I only wish that he'd been my lecturer in Newtonian Mechanics.

Thanks finally to Steve Valentine who spotted this month's laugh in the Daily Mail.

It's very lonely sitting here so any response would be most welcome. [Colin](#)

PETERBOROUGHemail: pboro@dailymail.co.uk

Bawling Bertie the biker's break-up

I came out of a shop and
as I recall
Saw a man on a motorbike
wobble and fall,
He'd stopped at a crossing,
obeyed Highway Code,
Next, he and machine were
spread out in the road.

A lady who knew him said:
'You OK, Bert?'
He said: 'Yes thanks, Hilda, I
don't think I'm hurt.'
With no need of my help
as it seemed he
could function
I strolled on ahead to the
very next junction.



We met at this junction, I
thought it insane,
'Cos he stopped and he
wobbled and fell off again.
Once more with his bike he
lay there in a heap.
I asked 'Can I help?', then he
started to weep.

He said that his neighbour
ran off with his wife,
And he's trying so hard to get
on with his life,
But he'd no sense of balance,
on him it was dawning —
'Cos he'd removed the sidecar
that very same morning.

John Butler, Flitwick, Beds.

Follow-up