

Afternoon all, here's the pre Easter Bimble. We've got a bit of a reminder on some basic riding principles (for those who are just venturing out again after winter), an account of the problems caused by an uninsured driver and some info on what the boys in blue are up to this summer…

And Leeds City Council are in the process of putting some more motorcycle parking bays in, I'll include a map of the new ones in the next issue.

If you've got any comments, suggestions or enquiries about an event or you just want a natter please feel free to contact us at; qualityyorkshireriders@gmail.com or ring 0113 24 75804.

Dates for the Diary:

South Yorkshire Bikesafe Dates:

May 7th

May 22nd

June 12th

July 10th

July 24th

August 7th

August 21st

September 4th

September 25th

For more info or to book a place contact

Graham Sayner on 0114 220 2996 or email:

graham.sayner@southyorkshire.pnn.police.uk

Humberside Bikesafe Dates:

Workshop	Saturday 30th April
Workshop	Sunday 08th May
Workshop	Saturday 21st May
Workshop	Saturday 04th June
Workshop	Sunday 12th June
Workshop	Sunday 17th July

For more info or to book a place contact

Chris Hood on 01482 597758 or email:

chris.hood@humberside.pnn.police.uk

Dates for Bikesafe in North and West Yorkshire have yet to be confirmed but we'll let you know as soon as they are.

General:

22nd – 25th April East Leeds Lions Easter Rally
22nd – 25th April International Classic Bike Show, Stafford,
29th April – 1st May, MAG's In to the Valley rally.

IPSGA:

This is the time of year when riders are getting out and about more and getting some miles under their wheels so I thought it might be a good time to revisit the basics and look at how to get the best from those sunny Sundays. Most of us will be a bit rusty, even if you've ridden all winter some of the skills you had at the end of last summer will have been blunted by all those cold, slippery upright miles and the first few times out in decent conditions could see you off line and a bit out of touch.

Information: The most dangerous things to a rider are those you haven't seen. Look as far ahead as you can and scan from the horizon to the front wheel and back again on a regular basis. The information you gather will inform all the other steps of your riding plan, so the more observation you get in the easier and better you will deal with hazards as they develop. This ideally means keeping a mental picture of what's going on behind and to the sides as well.

Position: From the information you have position yourself in the safest place on the road to deal with upcoming hazards – if that means reducing your vision then you'll need to slow down to compensate. This applies to bends and junctions on rural routes as much as to roundabouts, busy high streets and complex city centres. Ideally you'll position yourself to see as much of the hazard (back to information again) as you can but sometimes you have to sacrifice the ideal position for safety in response to the information you get – an oncoming large vehicle straddling the centre line mid corner for example or a large puddle on the approach to a roundabout.

Speed: The information you have and position you're in will inform your choice about the appropriate speed to use through the hazard. If an unanticipated hazard suddenly appears you may need to brake forcefully to get down to a suitable speed quickly whereas a bend up ahead should allow you to plan better, slowing and positioning without troubling the pads too much, if at all. The more hazards there are in an area the slower you'll need to go to deal with them all safely and effectively – a city centre street with pedestrians, cyclists, buses and potholes might see you down to walking pace for example. It's often down to the experience and judgement of the rider as to what is the most appropriate speed. As you slow you may gather more information which will then allow you to alter your speed and position as appropriate again.

Gear: Not your new Arlen Ness leathers but the appropriate gear for your speed. Being in the most responsive gear on the approach to a hazard will allow you to fine tune your speed through the hazard by using the throttle without the need to grab handfuls of front brake. This means the bike will be more balanced and better able to react to inputs from the rider. It'll also mean that you've got less work to do if you need to come to a halt sharpish or pull away briskly from something happening behind you (like someone who hasn't been paying attention about to rear-end you – remember that information stuff?!).

Acceleration: Once you're through the hazard you may want to accelerate back up to a suitable speed or remain at a steady speed or even slow further (decelerate) in readiness for the next hazard – back to information again. If you're in too high a gear the bike may bog down and not pull cleanly, increasing the chances of someone running into you from the back. If you're in too low a gear, small throttle inputs will give you a jerky response and you may run out of revs altogether meaning that you'll be changing gear when you should be giving all your attention to what's happening around you – information again.

These are basic steps but they can make all the difference. The more you practice them (and feel free to say them out loud to yourself as you work through them) the more automatic they will become. Once these steps become almost subconscious the more processing power your higher brain will have available to deal with what's happening. And once you're in the right position at the right speed in the right gear for a hazard the easier it becomes to deal with and the less heart in mouth moments you have. Doesn't matter what you ride or where, these simple steps form the basis of your riding plan allowing you to make safe, efficient progress with the minimum of effort meaning you can enjoy your riding more. Which is the important thing.

Cricket:

Check out the photo below, on first glance it looks like a group of mates out for a ride on a lovely sunny day. But look a bit closer and you might notice there's some non standard markings and parts on these bikes…



Yes these are all unmarked police bikes from the Yorkshire and Humber region. This year all four forces (south, east, north and west) are working together to help reduce rider casualties and tackle antisocial riding… In addition to these there are a plethora of marked bikes, marked cars and unmarked cars. You may have seen some of these bikes in action on the telly in the last year or two on various police chase programmes.

The use of unmarked bikes as evidence gathering tools has divided opinion among the riding community and, in some areas, among police officers too. Some riders think this just isn't cricket and using 'stealth' tactics is bordering on entrapment. Others presume, correctly, that as long as you're not doing anything wrong you've got nothing to worry about. The officers using these bikes have strict protocol to adhere to and operational guidelines to follow. They're not allowed to stop anyone as they've not got 'blues and twos' so they operate with a team of marked 'stoppers'.

The unmarked bikes target routes with a history of rider casualties or high speed offending, they use cameras and speed measuring equipment to record riders (and other road users if they come across them) committing offences. Once they've followed them for long enough to gather sufficient evidence they then radio ahead to a stopper who pulls the offender over. At this point, they're shown the footage and given a ticket or reported for offences depending on what they've done. The sad part is that often a rider, having noticed another bike behind them, gets themselves into more and more trouble before the police get the chance to stop them, meaning that what might have been a frank chat about riding style at the roadside becomes a court appearance and a lift home.

It's not just speeding (and we're talking high end speeding here) that gets the attention of the officers on patrol on these bikes but other offences like overtaking on double white lines or only using one wheel at a time etc.

Whatever your opinion of this type of enforcement activity the message sent out is fairly basic. If you're riding in Yorkshire and Humberside this summer and you're not playing by the rules then there's a good chance you could end up having a chat at the road side with one of these guys. If you think these tactics are a bit heavy handed then it's worth thinking about the hundreds of riders who were killed or seriously injured in the region just last year who might have made it home had they been pulled and advised about their conduct beforehand. And the hundreds of people who were waiting at home for the sound of a bike on the drive and ended up getting a knock at the door.

Insurance:

One of our readers (who currently needs to remain anonymous for legal reasons) had an unpleasant experience with an uninsured driver last year. Here is a brief account of what's happened and what he's learned from it so far. Hopefully his pain can be of benefit to some of you.

"The crash happened early in the morning on my way to work last year. I was dressed in my usual clobber + my "someone's Dad" fluorescent vest (thanks Dave.) As I approached a junction I noticed a car coming towards me about 20 metres up the road. The car does not have indicators on, is not slowing down and appears to be travelling straight on. I checked to my left and right as a few roads converge here, and as I check forwards again, the car has swung into my lane to take the right hand turn (from his perspective). I was travelling around 30 mph and he must have been doing at least the same. There was enough time for me to break slightly, however I hit his passenger wing and went up and over. I landed another 6 metres or so down the road, the impact broke the left lower part of my knee joint (tibial plateau), left tibula and radius just below the wrist and something called a greater tuberocity in my right shoulder. Ouch.

When the police arrived at the scene they took the drivers statement, checked his credentials etc. It turns out that the driver has no licence (as his expired) and no insurance (since his licence was invalid).

The remains of my bike were recovered by a local company. I never realised there was so much money in the business! £300 odd to recover and store for 2 nights.

Looking back, I'm so glad that I decided to wear all my proper gear, rather than my jeans. I could have lost a lot of skin otherwise. Thanks to my clothing, other than my fractures, my only injuries were some nasty bruising on my arms and shins and a few cuts.

The worst thing I found about the whole ordeal was the timing. My wife was due to give birth 2 weeks after the accident, and we were due to move house soon too. I thought with the new arrival and not being able to work I may end up not being able to afford the house. Luckily my company were very good about the situation and provided 5 weeks full pay sick leave and I had quite a bit of holiday saved up. By the end of the year I could work from home comfortably. And by January I was back in the office.

The driver has been charged with 3 offences. Driving without or not in accordance with a licence, driving without insurance and driving without due care and attention.

During my time off I was in touch with my insurers. Thanks to him not having valid insurance and mine only being 3rd party, fire and theft I had nothing to claim on. Luckily a relative is a personal injuries solicitor for a well known firm and said he would represent me pro bono. Unfortunately he could do nothing until my injuries had healed (to assess the impact on my life in the future) and the driver had been convicted in a court of law. So the waiting began.

The morals of my story so far are:

- *Take out fully comp insurance, even if it seems a bit steep at the time. Make sure it covers your leathers and legal expenses.*
- *Always keep your lights on and wear hi viz clothing (didn't work so well for me but it's important)*
- *Always wear proper kit. I see so many people flying round Leeds in jeans and trainers. If you come off you will lose your skin. I'm living proof that proper gear stops the majority of tissue damage."*

The rider in question has promised to let me know what happens when this all goes to court and what the outcomes are. Hopefully he'll be able to recover all the costs he has had to pay up front and get some compensation for the injuries and trauma he's received.