

Track Days by Glyn Jones

Having been tasked with organising "something different" for a stag do for one of my son's, four of his friends and myself, I decided to book a track day at Donnington race track for the six of us. The single seater race cars were powered by a Ford 1.8 Zetec engine with a 4 speed gearbox (no synchro-mesh) with right hand gear change. The cars did not have servo assisted brakes or power steering so they were really back to basics.



After a safety briefing we were kitted out with overalls and helmets and shown our cars. So with the seat of my race suit quite close to the tarmac, we set off behind a safety car for the first lap at a steady speed which gradually increased the pace. Whilst we were not allowed to overtake the safety car, if any of us could catch up he then it would go faster. One comment made by one of our group when we returned to the pit lane was this should be on prescription as therapy. After lunch we visited the Donnington Race Museum and the day was deemed a great success.

As I have just celebrated a BIG birthday, my son reciprocated and booked me a track day at Elvington air field near York. With a choice of cars I decided on a Porsche 911, and a Jaguar "F" type.

After another safety brief my first car was the Porsche. A wet track and bunching up on approach to chicanes meant some speed was lost, although speeds between 80 and 90 mph were achieved. It was my first time in a Porsche and I was expecting a hard ride but I found it quite forgiving, comfortable and the car really stuck to the road.



For the Jaguar laps, the track was not as wet and vehicles seemed more spread out so there was the opportunity for some overtakes and speeds into three figures were achieved. I really enjoyed the Jaguar drive, it handled well on the corners but it seemed to have a little more body roll than the Porsche. It just seemed to suit my style or perhaps that's just my age.

The day ended as a passenger in a Holden Commander with a 6 litre supercharged engine. "Very exhilarating."

Thanks Glyn. Perhaps you have tested a vehicle and would like to share the experience.

Editor

Corners and Bends by Martin Jones

I usually teach the subjects of positioning and cornering in the same lesson. My associates have also started to give a commentary at this stage, but knowing how to refer to corners and bends does seem to create some confusion. Chapter 9 of Roadcraft tells us the position we should take to turn left and right depending on the angle of the corner. Chapter 10 tells us how to develop competence at cornering - driving a car round a corner, curve or bend. What is the difference between a curve and a bend and when does it become a corner?

Using dictionary definitions, a curve is a line that gradually deviates from being straight. So I refer to this as a slight or gradual deviation.

A bend can be a curve, so this would be a slight deviation, or an angle which I would refer to as a sharp deviation and fits in with the Highway Code definition.

A corner is a place or angle where two edges meet. So it follows this would be an intersection or junction where a turn would be made from one road to another. However it could be referred to as a corner if the road deviated sharply around a building.

I did find this quote which may or may not clarify the point.

"A bend is a corner when it features an abrupt change of direction; a corner is a bend when it is merely a gentle curve. A turn is what you suffer when you mistake a corner for a bend. A turn is what I have as I go round the bend trying to explain just exactly what is a corner."

Insurance minefield– Sue Speight gives us her professional advice



Prior to my professional driver trainer career I enjoyed a 30 year career as a Chartered Insurer/Chartered Insurance Broker. I managed a £30m book of commercial property insurance, most of my Housing Association clients had a 7 figure spend for their portfolio of covers. Sadly the industry refuses to value experience and qualifications in favour of lower paid staff as

processes become more & more IT based even for complex commercial insurance resulting in redundancy of highly qualified experienced staff.

Most people purchase insurance as a “commodity”, not unlike shopping for a tin of beans, generally looking for the cheapest. Insurance irrespective of type is a “contract for indemnity & service” and should never be purchased on price alone, although price is a factor in the deliberations.

As with any contract for service cover levels differ with varying terms & conditions (T&C). Some people call this “small print”; the industry is heavily regulated so small print is not an accurate description of said T&C. It is the level of cover and the T&C that should be the purchasers’ “key concerns” when deciding which policy to buy. Some terms could be conditions “precedent to liability” or “warranties” and may require you to adhere to them before the policy will indemnify any loss.

Household insurance policies may contain, amongst others, a “minimum security condition”. Breaches from this could invalidate your cover just when you need it most!

Indemnity will generally be subject to the policy T&C being complied with. Generally the policy holder should act as if they are uninsured thus minimising risk of suffering loss.

How can you comply with the T&C if you don’t know what they are? Some are highlighted on your schedule but some will be embedded within the policy document so you must read & understand these preferably before you buy. Would you sign a divorce agreement without understanding your obligations?

A few examples where you could be caught out. Voluntary excesses may reduce your premium. But what if the cover already carries a £450 compulsory excess for say escape of water under your home insurance policy? If you take a further £250 excess to reduce the price are you really happy to pay the first £700 of any such loss? What about NEW for OLD cover where you have a responsibility to set the sum insured based on replacement as new costs not the cost of purchase of your household goods. The sofa you paid £2000 for 5 years ago may cost you £4000 to replace now, you must update your sums insured regularly so that there is no risk of under insurance. This applies to your buildings insurance too, if your buildings sum insured is too low to cover the cost of reinstating after a total or partial loss then the insurer could apply an “average” clause where they can reduce the indemnity by the same percentage of under insurance, so if your sum insured is only half what it should be the insurer average clause entitles them to reduce any indemnity payment by 50%.

These days some insurers offer unlimited sums insured so “average” clause will not apply. Guess what I buy! But if you buy “cheap” insurance you will get what you pay for, lots of T&C to comply with before you will be indemnified.

Some insurers offer incentives to buy from them, like free cinema tickets, free fuel and the like, I would urge you to look for better T&C /better cover not gimmicks. Also shop around on the WWW but then go to an authorised insurance broker who will listen to what you have got in the market place and search the professional market place and talk you through the T&C so you fully understand your obligations & price options.

I could buy my home insurance at half the cost I currently pay but I choose not to because my present policy has wide cover, unlimited sums insured and very few T&C to trip me up if I suffer a loss.

Recall the current Ad on TV by the UK’s largest insurer – get a quote not a quiz? Well that is a prime example of a minimum security condition used by many home insurers which requires locks to be to BS 3621. This means the lock has a British Standards kite mark & is recognised by professionals to be robust & highly theft resistant hence offering a more secure lock for your property.

Insurer financial security/ability to pay claims is also a VERY important issue which can catch out a “direct purchase” policy holder who may not fully appreciate this key aspect of buying insurance. Look for a UK capacity provider with a Standard & Poors rating of A or above. Some markets have capacity provided from Malta or Lithuania and several in recent years have gone into liquidation leaving policy holders immediately uninsured with a need to re-insure and pay again. These I speak of were commercial insurers with some specialist classes of business but the principal still applies.

Buying insurance direct can be a mine field! If you are not an expert and insist on buying it direct (not through an Insurance Broker) make sure you are wearing your PPE before you enter the market!



The committee have decided to discontinue the sale of group branded items of clothing due to the cost implications and stocking the various sizes and items.

Members can now purchase a far greater selection of clothing from **TUFF SHOP**; (4 Midland Street, Oulton, Leeds, LS26 8SW.)

The store now has details of our group logo which can be embroidered or printed on any article from their clothing range at a cost from only £3-50 + VAT . They can also deliver so phone **0113 2887713** or you can order items on line.

www.tuffshop.co.uk



Slow Riding by Jon Browne

Slow riding practice is one of the things motorcyclists know they should do, a bit like motorway work, but when there's an open road and a lovely day the temptation is just to get out and get on.

However, at the pre-season motorcycle tutors' meeting last year, it was agreed that as a training organisation, some work on slow-speed control and manoeuvring should be carried out. Senior tutor, Jon Browne, (previously renowned for his slow manoeuvres at the IAM), was volunteered to work out a course which could be set out in the John Smith's Brewery car park at Tadcaster in May.

Jon's first task was to work out how to mark the course, and he chose to use small flower pots weighted down with stones freely available in the car park. Making sure he had some spares in case of accidents, he designed a devious course that would test the best, then laid it all out and tried it on the day before the agreed date.

The day itself was a lovely sunny day, and tutors and their associates were invited to take a time slot and arrive at the carpark in shifts. This would solve the problem of too many trying it at once.



One of the first to arrive, with his associate, was Jon Taylor with his associate, who took it upon himself to show everyone the course as they arrived. Apparently, this could only be achieved by running around the course with arms extended to the Dam Busters' theme.



It seemed to be a great success with Richard Hirst setting the early pace and thoroughly enjoying himself, running the course both ways just to show it wasn't a fluke!

Most seemed to find it a challenge but doable, although one or two did not manage to complete the course without a foot down at some point (no names, no pack drill, Pete!).

As was expected there was some collateral damage-but, all in all, only two pots took any punishment, which was not bad for the whole morning.



So successful was it that Richard and his cohort came back for another go, and even some of our friends from York Advanced Motorcyclists who were also using the car park had a go and did well.

Unfortunately, there were some that could not make the day, so it was agreed that Jon would re-run the day (hopefully with JT to help) later in the season.

So in mid-September Jon laid out the same circuit and, with the same method of time slots, riders were invited to come and have a go. Indeed, Jon Taylor was there to help, and took control and showed associates how to navigate the course.



Mark Hewitt pictured above, showed early skills and Richard Hirst nailed it once again. Finally Dave Green on a Thunderace 1000, pictured below, a bike which is possibly not gifted with the best turning circle ever, showed that it was possible with just about any bike.



Once again everyone enjoyed the day and afterwards, while having a well-earned cup of tea, an associate told Jon that it was the best practice he'd had at slow manoeuvres and he felt much more in control of his bike at low speed. At the end of the day, that's exactly why we do them, and so everyone was pleased with the results.

Editor's note.

Jon has already worked out a new course and the tutors have decided there will be another slow riding training session at the open training day on Saturday 2nd May. If you are interested contact the motorcycle training officer-Pete Fenlon, Jon Browne or any of the motorcycle tutors.

Astra in the pink!

Ten years old was far too impressionable an age for a car-mad schoolboy to be reading such an article. It was 1991 and I'd just read 'Edinburgh on a Monkey', an article in a copy of *CAR* magazine which, using a format since heavily exploited by BBC's *Top Gear*, tasked two journalists with each acquiring a car for no more than a 'monkey' (£500 for the non-cockneys). They were to then drive their purchases from London to Edinburgh. First one there was the winner. The article featured the test drives of some real old wrecks before one writer selected a Renault 14 and the other a Renault 18. -I think the 14 won.

This seemed like a great idea to me and one which has stuck with me ever since. - Exactly how far can you go in a very cheap car? - With the offer of a suitably hopeless candidate (for free) last year, it seemed like a good time to find out.



The car in question didn't have a lot going for it (apart from the price). -It looked terrible in its faded-red state, it ran badly and had a lot of the signs of a car which was ready for recycling, including a very short MOT. However, it made it home and I started to draw up a jobs list. -If nothing else, it could at least provide some experience of a few jobs I'd not tackled before.

A good detailed inspection revealed a solid car. -I attacked it with my machine polisher which made it look a good deal smarter. -I replaced the thermostat to get the engine running at the right temperature, fixed a broken door mirror and gave it a good service. -The MOT man condemned a headlamp and a significant length of brake line. -I fitted a used headlamp myself and paid to have the brake lines replaced.

I now had a presentable car with 12 months MOT, however, there was still a serious running issue. -It would lose power and put itself in 'limp' mode. -My internet research suggested various sensors, which I replaced, gradually reducing the number of fault codes my friend's diagnostic reader picked up. -But the issue remained. There was one big remaining component possibly at fault; the engine's electronic brain: it's ECU.

Expecting this to be a very expensive component and difficult to fit I was nearly ready to throw in the towel. However a fruitful internet search saw me securing a second-hand unit for the princely sum of £36. -Fitting it took less than two hours and transformed the car! -No more misfiring or limp mode. -We were ready to roll.

The first big trip was west instead of north; Liverpool to see a fellow advanced driver. -I journeyed via the Vauxhall plant in Ellesmere Port, pausing outside the factory that had produced my car 17 years previously. (*front cover*) My free car managed 350 miles that weekend without missing a beat.



So I didn't go to Edinburgh and in the end spent just over a monkey on repairs, most of which was swallowed up by tyres and the MOT work. -However, I did get 1,300 miles out of a car that was still going strong 6 months later. -I found it a new home with a nice chap from Halifax and came away about £150 down. -That's pretty cheap motoring when you think about it!

Closing the project on a high, I immediately reinvested the funds into a big Rover V6... but that's another story.

Dave Robertshaw



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GOLD

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**Whiteknights
Yorkshire
Blood Bikes**

You may remember an article which appeared in our summer 2019 edition about Whiteknights Yorkshire Blood Bikes. -Andy Richardson, one of our West Yorkshire RoADAR Group members, joined Whiteknights in 2017 and has been on the reserve rider list since. He was also one of the drivers until that service ceased, as seen in the article, but since then he has become a main rider for the North Yorkshire Blood Bikes team. Whiteknights is a voluntary organisation which supports the delivery of blood, medicines and breast milk in an out-of-hours service for the NHS.



Andy completed his first tour of duty in the role in October 2019. The on-call shift pattern is from 1900 Friday till 0700 Monday and for the remainder of the week 1900 till 0700. He had five calls which he found very challenging, not only getting up and getting the motorcycle gear on but riding to the hospital in a timely manner without breaking any laws. It is essential that the emergency calls are taken and the service is completed in an efficient time for all customers.

To become a Whiteknights volunteer you need to live close enough to the hospitals, have an advanced riding qualification and complete a ride on both your own bike and a blood bike observed by the Blood Bikes manager. For further information visit www.whiteknights.org.uk

Well done Andy!

The Fatal Five

no excuse
d.c.police.nk/FatalFive



Drink and drug driving



Careless and inconsiderate driving



Distracted driving



Failing to wear seatbelts



Excessive and inappropriate speed