

# TORQUE

SPRING 2026  
ISSUE NO. 124



# EDITOR

## WELCOME TO TORQUE MAGAZINE

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Hello and welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of TORQUE. With Microsoft Publisher support ending this October, I've moved Torque to Canva and refreshed the design for a cleaner, easier read. I'm also relaxing my old ten-page limit, so content may be spaced out more. You'll still see test results, what the committee's been doing, and meeting details—only in new spots.

I'd love your seasonal cover photos: portrait format and must include the place and date taken, a road, and depict the season.

In November last year, along with our chairman, I visited our oldest member, Paul Stephenson and I have added an article about his driving story. I also carried out some research about Osmotic power which drivers of EV's may find interesting.

So after seven years of the old style Torque and looking at the photo opposite, I thought we could both do with a face lift.



*Martin Jones*

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Cover photo: St Oswald's Church, Arncliffe – taken by Martin Jones April 2022



# Committee

Chairman  
**JON TAYLOR**

Secretary  
**NIGEL STOREY**

Treasurer  
**PETER STIRK**

Membership Secretary  
**CHRIS LUTY**

Car Training Officer  
**MIKE BELL**

Deputy Car Training Officer  
**MARTIN JONES**

Motorcycle Training Officer  
**PETE FENLON**

Deputy Motorcycle Training Officer  
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# THE AGM

*who said what*

## **CHAIRMAN JON TAYLOR**

Jon reflected on his unexpected fourth year in the role and reported a busy and productive year for the Group.

In 2025, 43 new members joined. Total membership now stands at 215. Thanks were given to Chris Luty for taking over as Membership Secretary.

A new GDPR compliant membership spreadsheet has been introduced. Significant work has been completed to ensure full GDPR compliance. Updated policies are on the website, and members will receive a questionnaire in February to update records, permissions, and contact details.

Dave Green stepped down as Motorcycle Training Officer; Pete Fenlon resumed the role. Geoff Halpin will shadow Pete in 2026, aiming to take over in 2027. Treasurer Ellen Clayton stepped down; Peter Stirk returned as Acting Treasurer. Members were encouraged to consider stepping into this role.

The Group were nominated for the Kings Award for Voluntary Service and reached the final stages of nomination but was not awarded. However, two senior members attended a recognition event at Bowcliffe Hall.

Several successful presentations were held in 2025, including talks from guest speakers and a popular quiz night. The 2026 programme is filling up, with Reg Local presenting on tutoring and tutor training in May, though speaker suggestions are still welcome.

Strong appreciation was expressed for Martin's work editing and producing Torque. Members were encouraged to continue submitting articles. Distribution continues to grow, reaching 241 recipients by December 2025.

The Chairman thanked the 2025 committee, welcomed the incoming 2026 committee, and expressed gratitude to the Group's tutors for their vital volunteer work. Final thanks were given to all members for their continued support and contributions to the Group's road safety mission.

## **SECRETARY NIGEL STOREY**

Nigel covered the finance report on behalf of our temporary treasurer Peter Stirk, and thanked Ellen Clayton for her work earlier in the year. The group finances are healthy. There is some intentional subsidy to help encourage new members and support the group's road safety aims. Thanks were given for a substantial donation in 2025. Gift Aid claims are in progress. The audited accounts were approved by the members.

Thanks were given to Chris Luty for membership secretary work. New members joining this year balanced out those who did not renew, so overall membership is stable. The committee monitors whether there's a healthy balance between people requesting training and available tutors. This balance is currently good, and new members are still welcome. AGM information was sent to all members, including those who opted out of general communications, as this is allowed for essential governance purposes under GDPR and charitable rules.

## **CAR TRAINING OFFICER MIKE BELL**

Mike informed the meeting that at the end of 2024 we had 134 car members. This dropped at the start of the year with a number of members not renewing. Car membership finished 2025 in a strong position, rising to 141 members after welcoming 30 new drivers during the year. This includes 68 full RoSPA Advanced Drivers, 28 Life members, and 18 members with dual car and motorcycle membership.

Throughout the year, our volunteer tutors continued to deliver high-quality tuition, refresher and improver sessions. A total of 17 Pre-Course Assessments and 8 Pre-Test Assessments were completed. Despite some delays caused by staffing issues at RoADAR Head Office, 23 advanced driving tests were successfully passed.

Demand for training remains high, with 30 associate members currently receiving or waiting to commence tuition. While the group sadly lost three tutors due to retirement and personal commitments, this was offset by three trainee tutors completing their training, leaving the group with 9 Advanced Tutors and 8 Group Approved Tutors.

Not all members aim to take an advanced test, but feedback continues to show how valuable the training is in promoting safe, systematic driving. The year once again highlighted the dedication of our tutors, whose voluntary efforts are essential in helping to make West Yorkshire's roads safer for everyone.

## **BIKE TRAINING OFFICER PETE FENLON**

Pete Fenlon once again took on the role as Motorcycle Training Officer in June after Dave Green stepped down due to personal commitments and will continue through 2026. Geoff Halpin has been appointed Deputy TO, with a view to taking over in 2027.

Bike section membership ended 2025 at 81 and is expected to increase overall in 2026 despite some early-year changes.

During 2025, 12 tests were passed and the Tutor Team delivered 294 hours of training. Eighteen open training sessions were held, alongside a full programme of popular social rides, including overnight trips. Slow riding and indoor training sessions continued to be well supported.

Planning for the 2026 bike programme is underway and will be published in February.

## **PRESIDENT KEVIN SHARP**

Kevin dissolved the 2025 committee thanking them for the work they had carried out throughout the year. He offered his condolences to the group for not succeeding in their nomination for the Kings Award for Voluntary Service even though we were the only driving group nominated in the country.

## **TREASURER WANTED TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE-CAN YOU HELP?**

# A LIFETIME BEHIND THE WHEEL- PAUL STEPHENSON AT 97

At the age of 97, Paul Stephenson still gets behind the wheel of his Hyundai automatic, continuing a driving career that began more than eight decades ago. His mileage these days is modest — around 5000 miles a year, mostly local trips — but his passion for safe, skilful driving remains as sharp as ever.

"I started driving when I was 17," Paul says. "I thought I was good — until I went on a drive with Sgt. J.D. Bradford, the Chief Driving Instructor for Bradford City Police. I came away resolving to drive like him." That moment set the course for a lifetime devoted to mastering the art and discipline of driving.

## Early Days and the Police Years

Paul joined the Bradford City Police in 1952 under Chief Constable H. Price, having trained at Durham. Although not an official police driver, he was often called upon to assist with police work in his own car. "Sometimes they woke me up in the middle of the night when one of their officers had broken down," he recalls. "I'd go out in my car and bring him back."

During this time, Paul became close friends with Sgt. Bradford, whose influence on his driving was profound. "I remained friendly with him until he died," Paul says warmly. Their shared commitment to driving standards shaped much of Paul's later career.



## A Lifetime in Motoring

After leaving the police, Paul became a bus driver with the West Yorkshire Road Car Company before joining the British School of Motoring (BSM) as an instructor. He later ran his own driving school in Bradford, then becoming an Examiner and later a Supervising Examiner responsible for inspecting driving schools and assessing other examiners. "I finished by examining the examiners," he says with a smile, reflecting on a long and respected career.

Paul's list of driving achievements is extensive — a record of steady progression and lifelong learning:

- 1946: Passed car test (age 17)
- 1947: Passed motorcycle test (age 18)
- 1953: PSV single-deck and all-types tests (age 24)
- 1955: BSM Instructor's test (age 26)
- 1956: Founder member of the IAM, passing the advanced car test (age 27)
- 1956: Unofficial West Riding Police test
- 1959: CAMDA test (age 30)
- 1960: Unofficial Bradford City Police test; winner of Bradford City Road Safety Rally
- 1961–63: Department of Transport Entry, Examiner's, and Motorcycle Examiner's tests
- 1977: IAM Advanced Motorcycle test (age 45)
- 1982: Examiner's ADI test

He ultimately achieved the civil service rank of Higher Executive Officer, overseeing examiner standards — a fitting culmination to a lifetime of dedication.



## Cars Through the Years

Paul's car history mirrors Britain's motoring evolution. "My first car was an Austin 16," he recalls fondly. Over the years came a series of memorable vehicles — a Rover 3500, Ford XR3i, Triumph Dolomite Sprint, Mazda, and his favourite, a Rover 623 GSi automatic, which he owned for 20 years.

"It did 200,000 miles with no trouble — but it was well maintained," he adds proudly. Today, his Hyundai keeps him comfortably on the road, equipped with the latest safety and driver-assist technology. When fellow RoADAR members Martin and Jon visited him in November, they presented him with a group mug, enamel badge, windscreen sticker, and the latest edition of Roadcraft. Martin pointed out the new chapter on ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems) — particularly relevant for Paul's modern Hyundai.



## Sharing Knowledge and Advice

In the 1950s, Paul was already promoting safer driving, writing articles for the West Riding Police booklet Road Safety Notes. His advice remains as practical and relevant today as it was 70 years ago:

Concentration, observation, anticipation, action.

Read the road well ahead. Give yourself plenty of time.

Remember the two-second rule — and extend it downhill or in the wet.

After every drive, analyse your performance — every driver makes mistakes.

"I have always believed there's no such thing as a perfect driver," he says. "I still analyse my driving and admit to the odd mistake."



Paul's personal library reflects his lifelong dedication to learning. "I have every edition of Roadcraft, The Driving Book from the Ministry of Transport, and booklets from the West Riding and Lancashire Police," he says.

## Colleagues, Connections and CAMDA

Paul's interest in advanced driving also led him to the Carters Advanced Car and Motorcycle Driving Association (CAMDA), which operated during the 1950s and '60s promoting higher standards among car and motorcycle drivers — an early movement that shared many ideals later formalised by IAM and RoSPA.

He also became an early member of West Yorkshire RoADAR, forming a lasting friendship with founder member Keith Bamford. "I used to visit Keith regularly to talk about driving matters and even saw him in hospital before he moved to Derbyshire," Paul recalls.

## A Record to Admire

Now, at 97, Paul still holds an unblemished driving record — a remarkable achievement spanning more than eight decades. His experience gives him perspective on how driving standards and attitudes have changed.

"Conditions are very different now," he reflects. "There's much less respect for law and order."

Despite that, Paul remains an inspiration to all who believe that driving well is both a skill and a responsibility — one to be practised, reviewed, and refined for life.



## RENAULT 5 E-TECH BY DAVE ROBERTSHAW



It's rare these days that a new car launch genuinely excites me. Perhaps it's age, or perhaps it's the creeping cynicism that comes from watching wave after wave of overweight, over-priced, over-grey electric SUVs roll into showrooms. But there has been one recent exception: the Renault 5 E-Tech.

The early reviews were glowing. An initial road test in CAR magazine painted a picture of a lighter, more affordable EV with characterful design touches and engaging dynamics. Further similar reviews followed and began to appear on YouTube. Harry Metcalf tested one on the Harry's Garage channel. He liked it too. I wanted this car to succeed and I wanted to experience one myself.

A wet Tuesday morning while on holiday in Wales provided the opportunity. I announced to Mrs R that I intended to test drive a Renault 5. Surprisingly, she wanted to come along. We hit the dealership at the perfect moment: yes, they had a demonstrator; no, they didn't need to accompany us. Bingo. Having subsequently achieved what must be the record for most miles covered in a "20-minute" test drive, I returned impressed. The road testers were right—here was a genuinely fun small EV, a ray of sunshine among the grey mass of SUVs and some hope to a car enthusiast that it was possible to still obtain a new car with a bit of joy about it.

And it wasn't just me. Over the following days, Mrs R—normally indifferent to anything with wheels—began dropping increasingly unobtrusive hints about pursuing Renault 5 ownership. Two days later we were back at the dealership choosing colours. Four months on, I was driving our new car out of the showroom.

Renault has deftly blended the best styling cues of the original 1970s and '80s Renault 5s. The rear lights and interior details echo their predecessors, yet the result is thoroughly modern. Twin infotainment screens and a suite of electronic safety features are present but well-integrated and—crucially—not intrusive.

On the road, the 5 is genuinely fun to drive. Its turn-in brings to mind a Mk1 Ford Focus—high praise indeed—and the immediacy of the steering makes the car feel alert and agile.

The chassis and suspension settings have clearly been tuned by someone who values driving pleasure.

It's not flawless. Motoring journalists have commented on the abundance of selector stalks, and I'd agree—though familiarity reduces the issue. The brake pedal sits a touch high relative to the accelerator, and Reno, the in-car avatar, while cute, swiftly becomes irritating (thankfully, he's easy to switch off). Beyond that, there's little to dislike.

Practicalities? Renault claims a theoretical 230-mile range from the 52kWh battery. In reality, urban driving yields closer to 180 miles—which is still around 160 miles more than Mrs R typically needs in a week. Our longest journey so far, a 140-mile round trip from Leeds to Cheshire, was handled comfortably on a single charge. As it's her car, I'll give the final word to Mrs R:

*"I wanted one because it looked a lot less boring than most new cars. It's comfortable, easy to drive and to see out of, and the tech isn't too complicated. The app and charger pairing for smart charging could definitely be simpler, but Renault says it's working on that. Overall, I'm very happy with it."*



So bravo Renault for producing a car my wife and I can actually agree on. Achievement enough in itself to make the Renault 5 a deserving winner of the 2025 European Car of the Year Award!

# TRAINING UP GROUP TUTORS FOR BIKE SECTION BY STEPHEN CIRELL

After recently qualifying as a West Yorkshire RoADAR Group Motorcycle Tutor, I thought I would share my experience of the process. It proved to be both an enjoyable and challenging journey. Having passed my advanced motorcycle test six times, I'd often thought about becoming a tutor. However, while still working full-time, the time commitment made that impossible. Upon retiring last year, I mentioned my interest to the then Training Officer, Dave Green, and applied to join the ranks of our bike tutors. I was under no illusion that qualification as a Group Tutor would be either simple or guaranteed. Achieving a Gold pass as a rider is one thing; coaching others to that level is quite another.

At my last re-test, I had been tutored by Advanced Tutor Mike Suggitt, so it was agreed that he would oversee my training. Before we began, I attended an Open Training session in May, where the new Training Officer, Pete Fenlon, gave me an introduction. Another Group Tutor, John Cavalier, volunteered to play the part of my "student," and we set off from Otley Garden Centre for my first taste of tutoring.

## Learning to "Keep on Station"

The first challenge was maintaining "station" – staying close enough to observe the student's riding while remaining safe. It's much trickier than it looks. If the student is applying the ROSPA system correctly, their road position is often not where you would ideally be. You must therefore ride closer than normal, plan junction stops carefully and ensure you don't lose sight of your student.

I didn't excel at this on my first attempt, showing what was described as "initial hesitancy" – perhaps the result of years spent perfecting my own system rather than adjusting to someone else's.

## Mastering the Art of Feedback

Another key skill is delivering effective feedback. Having some professional coaching experience helped, but I quickly realised that tutoring on the road required a different approach. You must encourage as well as correct, avoid overloading the student with too many points, and identify key areas for improvement.

Early on, my comments sounded overly negative, even when well-intentioned. With practice, I learned to balance praise with constructive advice — and, thankfully, my "station keeping" had improved by then too.

After several sessions with Mike, I was allocated an associate member still under training to tutor. That was nerve-racking; neither of us quite knew what to expect. It soon became clear that working with a genuine trainee, rather than another tutor pretending to make mistakes, was an entirely different experience. It reminded me that most of my regular riding companions are already advanced riders — an easy group to take for granted.

## Planning the Ride

Route planning and choosing good stopping points proved more important than I'd imagined. On one ride, I decided to pull over for feedback only to realise I'd picked an unsuitable location. I had to continue another two miles before finding a safe place to stop. Not quite the smooth, professional process we all aspire to!

On another occasion, I was too slow to intervene when a student's manoeuvre became potentially unsafe — a sharp reminder that safety oversight must always come first. These experiences were humbling but invaluable.

## What Makes a Good Tutor

Over time, I distilled the tutor's role into seven key skills:

- Making a clear and encouraging introduction.
- Maintaining good "station" throughout the ride.
- Observing the student carefully and methodically.
- Formulating feedback points as the ride progresses.
- Prioritising those points for discussion.
- Choosing safe, convenient stopping places; and
- Delivering debriefs that are both helpful and motivating.

Balancing all seven proved more demanding than I'd anticipated at the start. Each element interacts with the others — you're riding, observing, analysing, planning, and communicating, all at once.

## Assessment Day

My final Group Tutor assessment took place on Saturday 25th October last year, with Training Officer Pete Fenlon observing. Attendance at Open Training that day was low — the end of the season — so our Chairman, JT, gamely volunteered to act as my student.

It was an intense session. Pete methodically worked through the Tutor Assessment checklist, evaluating how well I'd demonstrated each skill. I was both relieved and delighted when he announced that I'd passed.

## Looking Ahead

The proof of the pudding, of course, will come this season when I begin tutoring in earnest. It's often said that the real learning begins once you start teaching, and I suspect that's true. Nevertheless, the structured training and thorough assessment process have been excellent preparation for what lies ahead.

Becoming a Group Tutor has given me a renewed appreciation of the high standards upheld by our Motorcycle Tutors Group. It's not just about being a good rider — it's about communicating, encouraging, and inspiring others to become safer, more skilled motorcyclists.

It's been a rewarding journey so far, and I look forward to continuing the learning — this time from the other side of the visor.

# HYUNDAI KONA HYBRID

## BY MARTIN JONES



For the past fifteen years, I've been something of a Hyundai loyalist. Between my own cars, the loaners I've driven during dealer visits, and the models my dad once owned, I've accumulated a fair bit of seat time in vehicles wearing the familiar "H" badge. Most recently, that included a stint in the 2024 Hyundai Kona Hybrid—an experience that left me both intrigued and occasionally puzzled.

### First Impressions

The Kona Hybrid lineup is refreshingly simple: four trims, all built around the same 1.6-litre petrol hybrid engine paired with a 1.32 kWh battery. A six-speed DCT feeds power to the front wheels, delivering a manufacturer-quoted 0–62 mph in 12 seconds and a WLTP fuel economy of 60.1 mpg. My loaner was the entry-level Advance model. Step up the range and the upgrades are largely comfort and convenience features—think leather upholstery, blind-spot cameras, and an electric glass sunroof. Metallic paint is an extra £650, unless you opt for the lone free colour option: a rather gentle shade of pale green.

### Inside the Cabin

Sliding into the driver's seat, I made my usual ritual adjustments. Seat, mirrors, steering wheel—and it was the steering wheel that immediately stopped me in my tracks. Hyundai has opted for a flat-bottomed, "D"-shaped design. While this shape occasionally appears in sportier models, here it feels more stylistic than functional.

Ahead sits a neat, modern dashboard anchored by a 12.3-inch touchscreen infotainment system with integrated navigation. With keyless entry and start, the engine button was exactly where I expected it to be—just to the left of the steering column. Then came my first real moment of confusion. Where on earth was the gear selector? No buttons, no lever. Eventually, after refusing to return to the dealership in embarrassment, I discovered a small stalk tucked beneath the right side of the steering wheel, marked with D, N, R, and P. It felt like an odd placement, but I adapted quickly enough. This did, however, spark a broader question: why do manufacturers insist on relocating familiar controls? Muscle memory is a very real part of driving.



### On the Road

My next surprise came in the form of the speed limiter. On every Hyundai I've previously driven, the limiter and cruise control controls sit on the right of the steering wheel. In the new Kona, they've migrated to the left—cue my accidental activation of the radio as I pulled away from the dealership. But once I settled in, the Kona began to shine. It's comfortable, composed, and confident on the road. Acceleration—particularly in Sport mode—felt more than adequate, and handling was pleasantly precise for a mid-size SUV. The digital instrument cluster provides clear hybrid information. The rev counter drops to zero as the car switches into EV mode, and regenerative braking feedback is easy to follow.

### The Tech That Watches You

Then there was the persistent eye-shaped flashing light and occasional beeping. After trying and failing to diagnose it on the move, I resorted to Google and later cross-checked the manual. The culprit? Driver Attention Warning (DAW)—a system that uses a camera atop the steering column to monitor eye movement. This particular iteration is surprisingly vigilant (or overzealous, depending on your perspective). It triggers if your gaze deviates from the road for more than three seconds at speeds above 12 mph, for ten seconds within a 30-second window, or if your eyes close for just two seconds above 6 mph. The system can be disabled—but only until the next ignition cycle. It resets every time you start the car.

### Features, Quirks, and Final Thoughts

The handbook revealed several "if equipped" disclaimers, and indeed, a few blanked-off switch panels hinted at features reserved for higher trims, such as heated seats and a heated steering wheel. Interestingly, the Drive Mode selector includes "Snow"—a curious inclusion given that the Kona Hybrid isn't offered with all-wheel drive in the UK. Presumably, this control panel serves multiple models. Quirks aside, I genuinely enjoyed my few days with the Kona Hybrid. I didn't cover enough distance to judge its fuel economy properly, but as a well-rounded, mid-range SUV, it makes a compelling case for itself. The entry-level Advance model I drove, with metallic paint, comes in at £31,235. At the top of the range, the Ultimate trim with metallic paint and the Lux Pack totals £36,835.

If I were in the market for a compact hybrid SUV, the Kona Hybrid would absolutely earn a spot on my shortlist.

# NOT BIKING THROUGH WINTER- A FEW THOUGHTS

## BY JOHN CAVALIER

Unlike our RoSPA car section pals, many of us in the motorcycle section have laid up our bikes for the winter months. As our motorcycles quietly gather dust, I suspect our riding skills do much the same.

So, before we fire up our bikes in spring (assuming they cooperate) and head off for tea and buns somewhere scenic, I thought I'd share a few thoughts on winter storage and preparing for another year of riding.

### **POWDDERSS**

Firstly, POWDDERSS. This should go without saying for an advanced rider, so I won't cover it in detail here, other than to emphasise that it deserves particularly close attention when re-commissioning your bike. Likewise, I won't cover scheduled servicing items. Instead, I want to focus on what I believe are the key considerations when storing a bike and bringing it back into use after an extended lay-up.

### **Petrol**

Opinions differ on whether you should store a bike with a full tank or an empty one. Some say fuel only lasts two or three months before going off, so it's better to drain it and start the new season with fresh petrol. Others recommend filling the tank completely. Which is right? In truth, both approaches have merit, and your owner's manual will usually give the best guidance for your particular machine.

### **By way of background:**

If your bike has a steel fuel tank, the manufacturer will often recommend storing it full to reduce the risk of internal corrosion. In this case, adding a fuel stabiliser can help preserve the fuel and protect the tank. This is especially worth considering if you use E10 fuel. The "E" refers to ethanol, and E10 contains more ethanol than premium fuels. Ethanol is hygroscopic, meaning it absorbs moisture from the air, increasing the risk of corrosion and fuel degradation. I tend to use E5, which I believe is kinder to the engine and often gives better fuel economy, but even then a stabiliser is a sensible precaution.

If your bike has a plastic fuel tank, storing it empty may be preferable, as it can help avoid potential tank deformation over long periods.

Whichever approach you choose, if your bike is carburetted (rather than fuel-injected) and you are not using a fuel stabiliser, it's advisable to drain the carburettors. This prevents petrol from varnishing or gumming up, which can cause running problems when the bike is brought back into service.

### **Electrics**

Many riders rely on battery tenders to keep their batteries in good condition, but don't assume that a charger indicating "all is well" means the battery is healthy. Batteries dislike cold weather, and older ones may not survive another winter.

On many modern bikes, the ECU will simply refuse to let the engine turn over if it's unhappy with the battery's output—even if your high-end charger claims everything is fine (speaking from first-hand experience). This can be confusing. On older bikes, a weak battery tends to be more obvious: the engine turns over slowly and lacks the necessary oomph to start.

Is it a good idea to start your bike every few weeks over winter? It can feel reassuring, but running the engine briefly won't get it hot enough to evaporate moisture from the oil and exhaust. In fact, it can increase the risk of internal corrosion. A proper 20-minute ride is far better—if conditions allow.

### **Brakes**

Does pushing your bike feel harder than normal? This could be due to low tyre pressures, but it may also indicate that the brakes aren't releasing properly.

To check, lift the wheel clear of the ground and spin it by hand. You should hear a light, even "shhh" as the pads lightly contact the disc, and the wheel should complete at least one or two full rotations before stopping. If the brakes are binding, the wheel will be difficult to turn and will stop almost immediately. If you're confident resolving this yourself, do so; if not, seek help. Binding brakes are a safety issue and an MOT failure.

### **Tyres**

It's important to keep tyres correctly inflated even when the bike isn't in use. Tyres can develop flat spots if the bike remains stationary for long periods, especially if under-inflated or stored in cold conditions. Often these flat spots disappear once the tyres warm up during riding, but prolonged standing can cause permanent deformation, leading to vibration and instability on the road.

### **IAMSAFE – and a Gentle Reintroduction**

I often feel a little apprehensive on the first ride of the season, even on familiar roads. Spring conditions bring their own hazards: cold tyres, damp surfaces, gravel left behind by winter gritting, and low sun glare. That said, after the first couple of miles, it usually all comes flooding back.

A few months off can dull reactions and confidence. Clutch control and cornering may feel a little rusty at first, so I prefer to ease myself back in with a short, gentle ride. It's a bit like riding a bike, I suppose!

I look forward to seeing you all again soon and sharing the road for another year of riding.

## BLUE ENERGY ON THE HORIZON- HOW OSMOTIC POWER COULD FUEL THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY

As drivers and riders, most of us care more about torque, handling, or whether that new bypass will ease traffic than we do about what's happening where rivers meet the sea. Yet lately I've found myself glancing at estuaries and wondering if the future of mobility might just come from something far calmer than a roaring engine or a high-speed charger humming like an annoyed kettle.

Enter osmotic power—also known as blue energy. And no, it's not a Scandinavian wellness trend. It's a genuinely clever renewable energy source built on a wonderfully simple idea: when freshwater meets seawater, the difference in salt concentration creates energy. Separate them with a special membrane, and freshwater rushes toward the saltier side, creating pressure that can spin a turbine. No emissions, no moving blades, and—crucially for those of us who have planned long rides around daylight—it works all day, every day.

The first prototype osmotic plant appeared in Norway back in 2009, and since then engineers have been busily refining membranes and systems in labs across Europe, the US, and Asia. Two methods dominate the field: Pressure-Retarded Osmosis (PRO), which uses pressure to power turbines, and Reverse Electrodialysis (RED), which generates electricity directly. Both are still maturing, but both show enormous potential.

### A Coastline of Possibilities

Globally, osmotic power could theoretically provide up to 2,000 terawatt-hours of electricity per year—enough to satisfy around 5–7% of global demand. That's not going to turn the automotive world upside down overnight, but it could certainly reshape how coastal regions power mobility.

Imagine rolling up to a sleek coastal charging hub, plugging in your EV, and discovering that the electricity is coming from the river flowing beside you. Fleet operators positioned near estuaries—delivery companies, ports, and logistics hubs—could rely on a predictable renewable energy source that doesn't vanish on cloudy days or drop off when the wind decides to take the afternoon off.

Osmotic power plants also take up far less space than sprawling solar fields or forests of wind turbines. That makes them attractive for coastal cities where land is priced like limited-edition Italian motorcycles. And there's a fascinating synergy brewing between osmotic power and desalination. As future megacities increasingly turn seawater into drinking water, the leftover brine—usually a disposal challenge—can supercharge osmotic power systems.

*by someone who spends far too much time*

*wondering what might power my next road trip!*

So, tomorrow's water plants could double as clean-energy stations feeding local grids and, yes, your next fast charger.

### Not Quite in the Fast Lane Yet

Of course, we're not quite at the "powered-by-the-ocean" stage of road trips yet. Current membranes still need to become more efficient and less prone to clogging up with the sort of mysterious sludge rivers love to offer. Costs also need to fall, and investors tend to gravitate toward more familiar renewables.

But material science is improving rapidly. New membranes are thinner, stronger, and far more resistant to fouling. If progress continues, osmotic power costs could drop to competitive levels. And the big advantage remains unlike wind and solar, osmotic power doesn't care about weather, nightfall, or seasonal shifts. It's consistent, predictable, and available 24/7—qualities the fast-charging networks of the future will absolutely depend on.

### The Next Mobility Frontier

Blue energy's role could stretch far beyond EV chargers. Think electric ferries and harbour vehicles powered by microgrids built around osmotic plants. Or hydrogen electrolysis stations lining major river deltas, producing clean fuel for long-distance trucks. Even marine-to-grid energy corridors could use estuary-based osmotic stations to stabilise renewable-heavy power systems.

And because osmotic plants are low-profile and quiet, you won't see them sprouting across the horizon like wind turbines or shading half a county like some solar farms. They can slip discreetly into river mouths and coastal infrastructure without disturbing wildlife—or your Sunday morning ride scenery.

### A Quiet Revolution Worth Watching

Osmotic power won't replace wind or solar, and it won't single-handedly power the world's transport network. But in a future where electrification becomes the norm for everything from city runabouts to port machinery, every renewable source matters. Especially one as steady and plentiful as the natural mixing of rivers and the sea.

So next time you're riding along a coastal road or driving beside an estuary, spare a moment for that quiet chemical handshake happening beneath the surface. One day, it may be helping power the charger you plug into—or even the hydrogen that fuels your next long-distance adventure.

Blue energy: the silent, salty workhorse waiting patiently at the edge of the mobility revolution.



# TULIPS, TRIPMETERS AND TEAMWORK - THE ROUTE



# DUDLEY MARTIN BEM

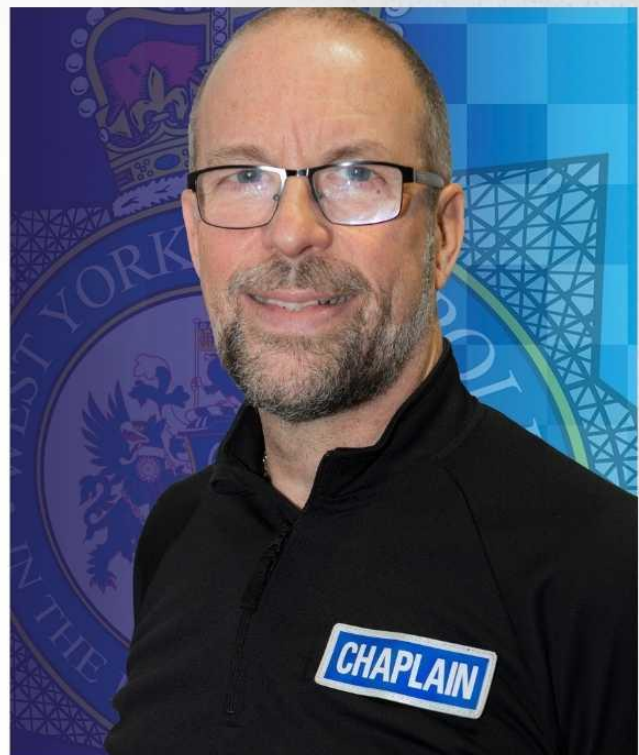
Dudley Martin, a former local RoSPA motorcycle examiner, has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in recognition of his professionalism and leadership as Volunteer Lead Chaplain to West Yorkshire Police.

Dudley joined West Yorkshire Police in 1980, working predominantly in response, neighbourhood and then roads policing roles. In 1993 he qualified as a police advanced motorcycle rider and, in 2004, went on to become a RoSPA examiner for both motorcycles and cars. In recognition of his many years of dedication and support, Dudley was recently appointed an Honorary Life Member of West Yorkshire RoADAR.

After retiring in 2010 following 30 years' service as a uniformed officer, Dudley continued his commitment to policing by becoming a Volunteer Police Chaplain to Halifax District. In 2016, he was elected Lead Chaplain by his fellow chaplains. To date, Dudley has given more than 11,000 hours of voluntary service to West Yorkshire Police, demonstrating exceptional passion and commitment in supporting officers, staff and volunteers.

He has played a pivotal role in developing a team of more than 26 volunteer chaplains who provide consistent, independent support to those facing the most challenging circumstances. This includes welfare visits to individuals affected by bereavement, as well as support for police employees dealing with financial hardship, relationship breakdown, work-related trauma and other issues that impact their wellbeing and ability to perform their roles.

Alongside this work, Dudley serves on the Board of Trustees for Police Chaplaincy UK (PCUK) and is an active member of Huddersfield Christian Fellowship, a large free church in his home town.



Dudley Martin BEM, who only recently retired as a local RoSPA Motorcycle Examiner, is also Chaplain to Huddersfield Town Football Club, a role he has held since January 2015. Reflecting on his award, Dudley said:

*"I am obviously honoured to be recognised in this way. Policing played a major part in my coming to faith, which helps me to deal with trauma and support colleagues who are struggling to cope. The advanced skills I have developed over 50 years of riding, surviving relatively unscathed, have enabled me to continue my chaplaincy work."*

You can find out more about Dudley in the "Meet the examiner" article featured in the Spring 2021 issue of TORQUE by visiting our website [www.wyg-roadar.org/torque](http://www.wyg-roadar.org/torque)



# WHAT THE GROUP HAVE BEEN DOING



## DECEMBER

Historically a quiet month for the motorcyclists in the group – though, not being one of our two-wheeled brethren, I struggle to understand why. Even John's article on page 10 doesn't enlighten me. They spend a small fortune on a machine purchased largely for pleasure, invest heavily in all-weather riding gear... and then lovingly tuck it away for winter like a prized lawn mower. I live in hope that one of them will eventually explain this logic to the rest of us. There was no open training for motorcyclists on Saturdays and, unsurprisingly, no reports of individual motorcycle tuition either. Curiously, only around 25% of our motorcyclists are also car members – perhaps proof that four wheels and a heater are occasionally appreciated.

Meanwhile, the car tutors – smugly warm, dry and still able to feel their fingers – were able to continue tuition sessions with associates as well as tuition sessions with trainee tutors. Two late notifications reached the editor about tests in November. **Sue Speight** once again achieved a GOLD in her triennial driving test and **Chris Parker** achieved SILVER on his initial motorcycle test.

There were no tests held during December, but six new car members joined the group seeking to improve their driving. Although there was no committee meeting this month, the committee members remained busy sending out AGM invitations and gently reminding members that subscriptions for 2026 were due. By the end of the year the total group membership stood at 220.

Finally, the group banner at the top of the Facebook page and website received a little festive tidying up courtesy of the magic of Canva. Can you spot the five differences?

## JANUARY

It was a particularly busy month for the Group, with preparations including compilation of reports and accounts for a very well attended AGM. A full report of the AGM can be found on page 4. **Stephen Muirhead** volunteered his services at the eleventh hour and joins the committee.

Once again, there was no open training for motorcyclists this month. Newly collated figures show the car tutors have conducted 230 hours of tuition over the last three months including the tuition of three trainee car tutors who completed their training and final assessments during December and January. Congratulations to **Colin Fairburn, Afzal Ahmed, and Lee Curtis** who are now Group Approved Car tutors.

Life member and former Diploma holder, **Robin Jones**, was successful in passing the Advanced Tutor triennial car test.

This month also saw two new car members join the group and along with those from December, all required pre-course assessments and allocation to tutors.

## FEBRUARY

We started January with around 25% of members not having paid their 2026 group subscriptions. The group does allow a bit of leeway with payments, but training officers in each section were asked to follow up with anyone whose subscription had lapsed, to check whether it was just an oversight or whether they no longer wished to remain a member.

A few Life members, who are exempt, accidentally paid the group subscription, and some members paid the wrong amount. Just a reminder that annual subscriptions are £20 and are due on 1st January, so it's worth double-checking—especially if you pay by standing order.

Some members chose not to renew, while others did pay, and by the end of the month our membership stood at 193.

The new committee held their first meeting of the year, with subscriptions and membership being top of the agenda.

Huge congratulations to **Akhtar Hussain** on passing the triennial Advanced car test, and to **Anthony Bentley** on passing his initial Advanced car test—both with Gold results.

At the February Group Meeting, Kevin Sharp delivered the President's Address, praising the tutors for their excellent work and giving a special mention to the excellent drive shown by Anthony Bentley during his test.

Pete Fenlon has been busy putting together the bikers' open training schedule and also volunteered to represent the group at a workshop in Leeds, organised by the West Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership, looking at powered two-wheeler road traffic collisions.

The National Road Rallies...The **BEST** excuse ever for a Ride Out!

# Whatever You ride, ride it in the National Road Rallies.

If you can ride a motorcycle and read a map, the ultimate biker's destination has to be the **National Road Rallies**.

With a range of entry levels there is a route for everyone, from new to seasoned rider. (Full motorcycle licence required).

**Member of a Bike Club?, why not make it a Team Event!**



**Welsh**  
National Road Rally  
9th May 2026



**National  
Road Rally**  
4th-5th July 2026



**Scottish**  
National Road Rally  
12th-13th Sept 2026

[acu.org.uk](http://acu.org.uk)

# THE ROAD AHEAD

Whats coming up...

## MARCH

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> 7pm** - Committee meeting - Isabella Room, Garforth Miners Welfare Hall.

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> 8pm** - Group Night Presentation - Jason Sykes Garforth Miners Welfare Hall.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>** - Motorcycle Tutor Training - National Coal Mining Museum

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> 7pm** - Car Tutors meeting - Stanningley Fire Station Community Room

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> 7pm** - Motorcycle Section social meeting- Stanningley Fire Station Community Room

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Open Training - National Coal Mining Museum

## APRIL

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Open Training- National Coal Mining Museum

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> 7pm** - No Committee meeting - Zoom meeting will be held if required.

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Open Training - Lumby Garden Centre

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Social Ride

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> 8pm** - Group Night Presentation by Colin Fairburn - Garforth Miners Welfare Hall

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Open Training - National Coal Mining Museum

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> 7pm** - Motorcycle Section social meeting - Stanningley Fire Station Community Room

## MAY

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup>** - Motorcycle Social Ride weekend event.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> 7pm** - Committee Meeting - Isabella Room, Garforth Miners Welfare Hall.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Open Training - National Coal Mining Museum

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle open Training - Otley Garden Centre.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> 8pm** - Group Night Presentation by Reg Local - Garforth Miners Welfare Hall.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> 7pm** - Motorcycle Section social meeting - Stanningley Fire Station Community Room

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>** - Motorcycle Open Training - National Coal Mining Museum



A PRESENTATION  
BY JASON SYKES

AS SEEN ON FACEBOOK AND TIK TOK



ADI to DVSA Examiner to ADI  
and now RoSPA Advanced Driver



A PRESENTATION BY  
COLIN FAIRBURN



PROSTATE CANCER  
AWARENESS



REG LOCAL  
PRESENTS



"TUITION & TRAINING"

If you wish to find out more about the motorcycle social rides contact Pete Fenlon.