



Cornwall Freewheelers EVS

Registered Charity: 1140165

Blood Bike Service



January 2015 Newsletter (ramblings from the saddle).

Huppy Nuew Yeer Hic!

When I wrote my letter to the large chap who now wears red instead of green (thanks Coca-Cola) I had according to my wife been very naughty (spending too much on my BMW...) so in my letter I struggled to be positive and hoped he wouldn't be too upset by telling him I had not been good all year and that he was a judgmental bas#%€d...

My point made I was very surprised to find that on Christmas Day I got all I had asked for, socks and then there were some socks oh and of course I got some socks. Not sure I remember asking for them but anyway that's what I got. I hope you were as lucky as me?

Anyway Christmas and New Year are always a busy time with the lead up to the holiday. It seems that as we got closer to the big day there is a pretty drastic decline in driving standards throughout the country.

In my semi-retired state I get to drive HGV1's for Danepak, which is great fun but here is my point for all motorbike riders. Trucks cannot stop in the same way that cars can. If you cut up a truck weighing up to 44 tons please don't expect the driver to be very pleased with your actions. You have probably seen that sign on the back of some trucks that states 'If you can't see my mirrors, I can't see you'. Well it's true, trucks have huge blind spots, which motorbikes fit into brilliantly making it impossible for the driver to see you. There are some tricks that can help him like seeing if there is a shadow being caused by the rider or for that matter even a car. But most of the time you will be invisible unless you can position yourself in such a way as to show the driver where you are. This means that you will have to drop back and ride to one side so he can see you in his mirrors.

The link below gives a good indication of what blind spots are like.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzL0Kyk4m-8>

Trucks driving at 40mph along the single carriageway of the A30 are not doing that speed just because they want to upset people it's because it's the law (although there will be an increase of speed up to 50mph later this year). On a dual carriageway all HGV's are limited to 56mph although a lot are now limited by their owners to 52mph as a fuel saving measure but that doesn't mean they cannot exceed the limits when going downhill. This speed infringement will be logged on the drivers Tacho card so if the police pull him up they will prosecute him.

Speaking as truck driver, roundabouts can be very dangerous both for trucks and for other road users. While driving around a roundabout people forget that a trailer follows the truck in a line so it does cut straight across into another lane sometimes. That is just math's and physics not the driver being rude. It will also take a while for a truck to get up to speed, from a standing start to get up to 30mph could mean as many as six gear changes add to that all the observations needed to negotiate an obstacle you can see the truck driver is a very busy person.

OK that was a bit of a rant but there is a reason for it. Two days before Christmas I was driving a truck in the Bristol area (Cribs Causeway) when I was cut up by a motorbike who then proceeded to prank brake in front of me on three occasions because I used my horn to show my displeasure. Bad enough that one of our biker brethren would do such a thing but when you know that he was on a marked Blood Bike it really does get annoying!

So all I'm asking is for us as riders and car drivers to show a bit of patience towards these leviathans as they make their way around our roads. After all what is two minutes lost while waiting at a junction in the big scheme of things?

There have been many campaigns about carrying your blood group and next of kin details with you but how many of us actually do it?

The argument that medics don't trust any markings on your helmet because you could have borrowed somebody else's is a valid argument and before any blood products are administered checks are always carried out. But look at it this way, if you have an 'In case of Emergency (ICE)' number in your phone and you are carrying identification stating any allergies and importantly your National Insurance number (NI) the chances of you being who you say you are increase dramatically. So what ways do we have of carrying identification? Well there is the ICE number in the phone, Cornwall County Council ran a program for carrying a card inside your helmet and there is now the green spot on the outside of your helmet but is that all? The short answer is no there are literally hundreds of ways to carry identification and it's really easy for motor bikers. I suppose it all comes down to personal preference but I have an id sticker thing on my helmet that contains my ICE details including telephone numbers and an alternative number for support for my wife. If the police call would she be in a fit state to drive so somebody else would be required possibly. It also has my NI number that can be used to access my medical documents. It may all seem a bit much but is it really?



The link below is to the company that supplied my stickers so have a look at what they can provide.

<http://www.theidbandco.com>

Ok, next issue is bikes. We are all busy people but when it comes to bikes we tend to take great care of them spending hours polishing, cleaning, applying moisturisers and hand softeners to the seat in order to protect our delicate ends and the list goes on.

But and there is always a 'but' when it comes to the marked Blood Bikes we are sometimes less than professional in my opinion. Every day we should carry out checks on all our bikes before we ride them as advanced riders that should be a given. So when a bike is picked up and there are defects on it that should have been reported it is very frustrating. As a sort of retired person it is not really difficult to sort things out during the daytime but as working people I know it's not that easy. All the more reason for reporting defects quickly to Stephan Mellows, as he is the Ops Man.

In the recent months I have collected bikes that have had headlights not working, tyres that are dangerously worn (two occasions), no oil in the bikes and on too many occasions no coolant in the expansion tank. Tyres don't just wear out over a couple of days so there should be no reason for not reporting it sooner, after all its dangerous to ride when they are not 100%.

When there are defects give Stephan a ring and if you can't deal with it during the day due to work commitments perhaps, then there are enough of us around who could possibly help out by collecting the bike and sorting it for you. So there really isn't any excuse.

As part of a recent application for funding we had to put together a costing for how much it costs to run each bike per month. As an average it will cost the charity £1,500 per month to keep the marked bikes on the road so protecting them is vitally important.

Now for fundraising. In December 2014 we were very fortunate to receive a cheque for £2000 from the charity WCPT, it was a real surprise as we weren't sure if we qualified but apparently we did and were the only recipients this year.

Our Sonia, (fundraising Guru) is in the early stages of putting together an event for the Garrison in Liskeard later this year. Now I don't want to upset anyone and I'm sure James will explain the concept at the next members meeting but the Garrison is a collection of likeminded people (300 plus) who (and for want of a better word) dress up in Star Wars type clothes. I know I haven't really sold it to you yet but bear with me. They spend the weekend 'parading' and generally mooching around raising money for charity. Think of it as a Star Wars type bar or the L2 nightclub in Truro on a Friday. As I learn more I will let you know.

Crowdfunding is moving on a pace with lots to tell you about but just not here as there is a lot. With Crowdfunding in mind I'm still trying to locate someone who will make a film for us about our organisation. It has to be a proper film not one of those with a soundtrack that goes 'chika pow, chika pow pow' if you know what I mean. Help me out here chaps, as we need this film before we can launch the project.

You are all aware if you have read your emails that Steve Well's wife Heather is running in the Bodmin Half marathon on Sunday 22nd February. She is doing it to raise money for Blood Bikes so we have produced a sponsorship form, which was attached to the original email for you download and print off. On the day of the race that is run by the Fire brigade we will require one marked bike and at least four people on their own bikes to act as marshals at road junctions. When the February riders rota comes out please append you names if you can help. It would be very nice to support someone who is willing to put herself out for us.

Final mention is to the new Coordinators who have appeared over the last couple of week, thank you!

If you have any bits you would like me to include in future ramblings please email me at fundraising@cornwallbloodbikes.org and I will see what I can do.

Hmm that's probably enough for today so I will leave it there. Don't forget to put your availability down on the rota and if you want a marked bike check out the booking form on Dropbox. **My last plea concerns Dropbox, remember to take the form you want to read or amend out of the box and put it on to your desktop. That way we don't get duplicate forms, which leads to confusion.**

Ride safe
Mark