

# The System

1. **Information** - Most of your information is obtained by sight, although your other senses can give important information, Touch - the feel of your machine, feedback from handlebars, brakes and balance. Smell - diesel, a smell quickly identified by motorcyclists. Hearing - others giving warnings, changes in road noise, changes in machine noises should all be sensed and considered. Taste - a sense to be used when getting to journeys end, with that self-satisfying glow only achieved by a good standard. If you are lucky to have a sixth sense cultivate this, it very akin to anticipation, which is one of the hallmarks of a good rider. With information all hazards have to be considered and prioritised, on identifying the largest imminent hazard you then move on to the next feature of the system.

2. **Position** - this is the safest position for you to negotiate the approaching hazard. Obviously life is rarely simple and it is not often that you are only contending with one hazard at the time. Your position will therefore be influenced by what position you are travelling from, and what is the next hazard to be encountered after the impending one. Rarely should the position change be sudden, the ride should flow. If sudden directional changes are encountered, I would suggest that maybe you are travelling too quickly. The path you take down a certain road will vary each time you travel the same section due to the hazards created by class 2 and class 3 types of hazards (you can check which class of hazards these are!) When asked 'what is the correct path' one way of describing the answer is to apply the following 'Bubble' principle. Each hazard is enveloped by a bubble, the greater the hazard - the larger the bubble. As you navigate down a stretch of road you have to pass between these bubbles without intruding. Alternatively consider yourself enveloped by a bubble and consider all hazards as a pin! With position you are always looking for advantage. Advantage of the - safest position, greatest view - to give other road users the greatest view of you, smoothest line, best road surface, opportunity to overtake, and opportunity for an alternative route. You can use your position to influence other road users, this has to be used with consideration and experience. The line between influencing and intimidating can be fine; the same position could be either, depending on who is interpreting it. Having chosen your path on the approach to this hazard you then select the third feature.

3 **Speed**. - Your speed is adjusted to allow you to pass by the hazard safely. Remember the golden rule - 'you must always be able to stop safely on your own side of the road, in the distance you can see to be clear'. Speed can always be easily increased; excessive speed can be hard to get rid of, especially if approaching bends! You can adjust speed by brakes and throttle control with use of gears. Acceleration sense should be developed; this will counter the throttle/brake style of riding. Speed should be adjusted prior to the entrance to a hazard following the position phase and prior to the gear phase, especially for a bend. The motorcycle is most stable when under constant acceleration; you cannot be under any form of acceleration if still braking. As with position, the speed at which you can travel through a hazard is dependent on the position you are coming from and what awaits you further on along the road. When at the appropriate speed, you are now ready for feature 4 -

4. **Gear** - 'select the appropriate gear for the speed at which you intend to negotiate the hazard' is what the book states. One of the main faults of riders is by not selecting the suitable lower gear. Know your machine, know what speeds you can do in the lower gears; the lower gears will give you the flexibility and crispness in acceleration when required. Do not mistake this for encouragement to 'thrash' your engine. Like all features of advanced riding the aim is to take a course which suits you, your machine and the conditions at the time. When slowing from a high speed to a relative slow speed, you will have to go down through a number of gears; whether you block change i.e. 2 or 3 gears in one go or change one gear at a time to balance the gear for the road speed is your choice. The determining feature is the result i.e. what are you happiest with and what produces the smoothest and most controlled result. Remember you are selecting the gear appropriate for the speed selected to negotiate the hazard. Now in the right gear you are ready to move to the 5th and final feature.

5. **Acceleration** - the amount of acceleration applied is dependant on the circumstances. For bends, the acceleration should commence immediately prior to or as you commence to lean the bike over. If the exit is not visible, then gentle acceleration is applied to maintain your speed and to ensure stability; as the exit is reached and as the bike commences to be brought upright the throttle can be progressively opened. Always accelerate in relation to what you see.

The above is an insight of 'advanced riding', I have deliberately attempted to keep this reasonably brief, but there is much to be written and talked on the subject. I have not covered any law, mechanics, method of cornering; these are wholly other chapters. I will end this by highlighting one feature that is an essential basic building block on which all good riding is built. Observation. The art is to be able to see and to interpret what you see. There is so much to be seen, don't just see a vehicle; see who is driving it, what are they doing, have they seen you - 'eye contact', what is the vehicle doing? At junctions and roundabouts what direction are the front wheels? - this will indicate the direction it will move off. At junctions don't just wait to come to the head of a queue, plan ahead to anticipate the flow of traffic in front of you. At traffic lights watch the sequence to anticipate green for you. Observe road markings and signs; learn what they really mean, there is a wealth of information out there. When in a queue - look ahead, anticipate what the vehicles ahead are going to do, judge their competency. Lastly continue to learn, observe your surroundings and observe others, it makes for an interesting journey. If the system is applied correctly it should always give you the most important ingredient of advanced riding - "TIME TO REACT"

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