

OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

1. Knowledge: What do we need to know?

by Paolo Volpara OMM 2008

The fourth sphere* of biking could be as controversial as the "risk taking" one. Knowledge is not the center of biker's conversations although in recent times more and more bikers are realizing that "the more you know the more you enjoy".

When taking part in training sessions I have a recurrent question in my mind: "what is there to learn to become a good biker?" and I not always find the right answer.

If we abandon the tons of theoretical explanations on counter-steering, center of gravity, transfer of weight, braking, leaning and apexing we are left with the "parking skills" so important for American riders.

Not that I despise these erudite debates: when it comes to road riding reality changes so rapidly and so unpredictably that "knowing" is not enough; the say of the proverb "To know and not to do is not yet to know" sounds especially true when that car comes across your path suddenly.

You may know, in theory, how to swerve or how to play emergency braking, but unless you can do it *on that spot*, almost without thinking, the complete knowledge of the RoadCraft book will not keep a rider out of hospital.

So, is knowledge not valuable? Is Socrates wrong in saying that "knowledge is the food of the soul"?

Knowledge is the first step of liberation from the "monkey in us" and as such is probably the most precious gift we can receive in life. We simply have to understand how knowledge operates if only when it comes to riding: theory is just the first step and it can be accomplished quite rapidly since I believe that there are only three things to know in theory:

- * How to balance a bike at low speed.
- * How to modify speed
- * How to modify direction

On top of this we need to assimilate a system of behavior, a guide to the hazards on the road. A system is fundamental for fast reaction, for liberation of the brain and the RoadCraft System (Position, Speed, Gear and Acceleration) is easy to understand and extremely difficult to put in practice.

Once the theory part of "knowledge" is completed are we good riders?

No unless we place a second stone in our knowledge building: the observation of somebody that knows how to place knowledge into practice. Here the value of riding with good, expert companions and the joy of sharing application of the theory.

Without observing and observing deeply it is impossible to assimilate the knowledge.

That's all? I wish it was: "Repetition is the mother of learning and imitation of the best is the best attitude"

OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

Repetition is the cement that keeps the stones of knowledge in place, is the building block of experienced knowledge.

This is way unless one rides a lot, frequently and consciously all the theory, lessons and reading, means nothing. Unless we spend time on the saddle thinking how to apply and improve what we know, we will not do what we know.

Theory, Observation and Repetition form the permanent circle of knowledge: what closes the circle is "**realistic self evaluation**" that my friend H.H. Dilthey always preaches as the key virtue of good riders.

This is because without self-evaluation (realistic) the observation of good riders, the hours spent on the saddle, the listening and reading of experts are just waste of time. And you can see it on riders who occasionally join the group with a lot of "knowledge" but with very low level of self evaluation: they always find excuses for poor performances.

Last thought: repetition does not mean doing the same thing over and over again as riding every Sunday the same 100 K. Repetition loves variety: when it rains, go out for a ride and repeat what you know under different circumstances, go out at night and see how the knowledge changes, stretch the ride for few more miles and see how the focus on knowledge get affected. Follow Picasso: *"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it"*

*I use the concept of sphere in the etymological sense: from Latin *sphaera*, from Greek *sphaira*, literally, ball... (5) Natural, normal, or proper place. (6) An area or range over or within which someone or something acts, exists, or has influence or significance.

2. Riding ancient old sheds (while wearing shorts) and the search for spiritual enlightenment.

by Rupert Paul. Bike (UK) March 2008.

Rummaging around under the stairs last night I found an old notebook I thought I'd lost years ago. It dates back to when Osama Bin Laden was still only fighting the Russians in Afghanistan, and I hired a moped and plattered around the Kashmir region of India, eventually ending up near Leh in Ladakh, close to the Tibetan border.

There I met a holy man who lived naked in the snows. His hair was down to his waist, his eyes sparkled with life and, although he looked in his mid-thirties, he claimed to be 54. For the few days I knew him I was fascinated, all the while wondering whether he was fraud, saint or lunatic.

In good English he told me the story of Milarepa, the Tibetan sorcerer who repented his evil ways, found a teacher and, through terrible hardships (at one point his skin went green from eating nettles), eventually became enlightened. I used to wonder if my storyteller was enlightened too. 'What difference it makes?' was all he would say.

Even in this remote and staggeringly beautiful area it was obvious the Western world would shortly rear its ugly, beguiling, unthinking head - something my mystic apparently regarded with nothing more than the

OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

twinkling amusement a kindly uncle might have for a wayward nephew. My notebook still has a quote: 'In the eyes of the Buddha the splendor of a king is no more than spittle or a speck of dust.' I can't remember if it came from him or something I was reading out there, but it sums up what meeting this least materialist of human beings was like.

Well, I now reckon I've met his double in the West. His name is Lewis, and although he owns an FJ1100 and some kind of MZ, he usually pilots a C70 with Sainsbury's carrier bags bungeed on. And for the last I few years Lewis has been sending me a running commentary on life.

Naturally he is more worldly and cynical than a holy man of Ladakh, ~ which translates to utter disdain for modernity in general and new riders in particular. But he is bloody funny: *'Hope you're enjoyin' this miserable excuse for a summer. At least it keeps those numpties on Blades back home in front of their PlayStations. The fuzz have been putting up signs allover telling bikers t6 slow down and citing bothersome crump rates. Perhaps all these new lot should be restricted to C90s, although most would appear unable to handle them either.'*

He's also safety-conscious, compensating for wearing shorts on the FJ in hot weather by donning steel toecaps: 'On the way back from the airport I happened upon one of these tiresome modern car twerps, the FJ dispensing summary justice whilst accelerating me and my duty free to a somewhat ballistic speed.

'As is always the case, this was followed by a similarly harsh deceleration, during which an extreme pain was felt in my thighs. Investigation revealed that tiny cracks in the side panels (probably due to said vehicle's rather chequered history, including several Bol trips and almost being washed away during a river crossing In Iceland) were trapping the hairs on my legs. Your thoughts on this problem would be appreciated.'

All of which illustrates, yet again, that it's perfectly possible to ride an ancient old shed and have as much of a laugh as anyone else. And that's a comforting thought when the rest of this issue is telling you how badly you need an RCB or somesuch. After all, why do you, really? I've spent decades seesawing between the latest thing and trogging along on old shite, and in all honesty my happiness level stays about the same. But then I have to think that, because my free 2007 GSX-R is gone, and I only have my own bedraggled bike left. My Himalayan mystic would probably take it a bit further, and throw me a look which asked whether, like him, I could be content with nothing. But life without some sort of bike is unthinkable. I hope that when I croak I at least still own a C50.

3. From OMM friends

The Very Boring Rally II: Aerostich and RiderWearHouse Catalog announce that the Very Boring Rally II will take place August 22-24, 2008, at Aerostich World Headquarters and the nearby Spirit Mountain Resort in Duluth, Minnesota.

OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

The event will feature riding-related seminars and shows from motorcycling greats such as acclaimed writer Dr. Gregory Frazier, Dr. Flash Gordon MD, Ted Simon, and many others. And some great VIP surprise guests! There will be on-site camping, celebrated national entertainment, great food (BBQ dinner), guided local scenic riding tours, an on-site National Championship Observed Trials, and lots of prizes, games, and awards - for motorcycle poetry readings, the oldest/youngest/farthest distance riders, and much more. Even an award for the sorriest bike ridden to the party, and one for the most worn-out Aerostich suit. For more information on the Very Boring Rally II, and to see detailed online event schedules or to join the rider community planning to ride to the rally, please visit www.boringrally.com or call 800-222-1994.

Homer Brockner is a good friend and good rider who rode with some of OMM bikers in the "Search for Count Dracula" Ride in Transylvania and Moldavia. Omer has a "gipsy" life that takes him in improbable places around the globe and while he was in the "zone" I took a three day ride around north/central **Vietnam**. *"Accommodations and bikes he mail me were slightly substandard but the people and scenery make up for any deficiencies in creature comfort"* Pictures and diary at http://homeskillet.smugmug.com/gallery/5204899_bw566/1

4. The Spirit of Riding:

For Long Distance Riders here an "ideas-competition". We have to find the best route from the Bosphorus (Istanbul) to the Channel (Calais). This route allows a lot of diversions offering the central itinerary from Europe (south, central, and north) to Turkey. I have continuous requests of suggestions from riders coming to our Country and from Turkish riders planning to visit Europe. I would love to receive suggestions from the readers of the Bulletin who covered the roads (all or in part) in the last 12 months by bike. The idea is not to find the quickest route but the



OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

"best one for bikers" in terms of fun and practicality. If one leaves it to Autoroute Express program the fastest route is approximately 2.800 Km. (1.750miles)

Is this the "best for bikers"? The answer is left to you to the north-express Kaan Yildirim or to the coastal-king Hakan Cetinel or to the Dolomites-freaks Selim Demirel and Cemil Turker or to many other of frequent travelers to the continent. Send your experience [by e-mail](#) and the registered entries will get an OMM T-Shirt.

To wet your appetite here a description of an alternative route (3.300 kilometers) done (pressed by time) on Suzuki GSX 705 by the English OMM friend Yanto Barker:

"Starting from Istanbul to Edirne North Turkey, I went North West on the E80, a busy road with lots of through traffic and articulated lorries. Road good surface but very strait.

After Sofia which was a beautiful town with lots of quaint cobbled streets and dated buildings giving a real sense of character also slightly hard to traverse, you join the E75 this quickly turns into a newly surfaced dual carriageway. I followed this past Nis to an exit called Cicevac where you turn west on the E761 direction Krusevac, Kraljevo and Uzice. This road was very busy again, quite a few police also. You are constantly passing through lots of little towns with speed restrictions. However the surface is good and all the borders were relatively efficient up to this point. Often the border control personnel liked motorbikes and gave extra respect to you for riding one. I also went strait to the front of any queue without any problems.

There was never a problem with Gas stations I stopped every 200k. I stayed the first Night in Uzice Serbia in a little motel that spoke English, here the country side was beautiful and mountainous with rolling forest hills as far as the eye can see. After Uzice the traffic was much less and the road surface good and windy! I kept heading west on the E761 direction Visegrad and Sarajevo. The border to Bosnia was quiet and friendly the road to the border from Uzice was slippery in the early morning dew. After the Bosnian border the road was amazing, quiet, windy, fun.

There was Police with speed cameras about 50k to Sarajevo and 50k after: they were in small villages with 60k/ph speed restrictions and well hidden, I paid a €50 fine here. But the road is great and worth every penny! Sarajevo is also a very happening and trendy place with lots of character and a vibrant population. After Sarajevo the road is great along massive fresh water gorges and fiords. I headed south west direction Mostar on the E73 on the way to Croatia.

On reaching the border with Croatia I crossed at Metcovic and headed for Ploce. Again from the border to the coast here was busy and with regular speed checks along the way, but the road surface was good. At Ploce on the E65 North direction Split you reach the Dalmation coast, this is one of the best pieces of road in the world ever. The road surface is so ridiculously grippy and there is no more then about 300m between corners for about 300k all the way to Rijeka all on the E65. There are regular

OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

service stations and towns to stop for lunch or coffee etc.

At Rijeka you take the motorway E61 direction Trieste all well signposted and easy to find to the Slovenian border. The roads are all good here as you head to Italy and Udine. I stayed the night in a little motel in the industrial estate of Udine north off the E55. In the morning I set off for Tolmezzo and Cortina di Ampezzo, both climbing up into the Dolomites. You reach Canazei up some beautiful winding roads and magnificent mountain scenery on the way to the Austrian border at the Passo di Rombo via Merano, then Sölden. Here the roads are beautiful but a little slippery on the corners.

The Austrian way down the Rombo is also bigger and wider than the way up but still greasy on the corners. After the climbs I continued along the E60 where it was very busy indeed and a bit of a nuisance.

I continued along the motorway to Zurich then Basel and finally into France where I stayed at Belfort. This is a beautiful town where I lived for two years. It is set in the Alsace region of France with great roads all around and beautiful countryside. I continued my journey from Belfort on the N19 direction Vesoul, the roads here are wide A roads where it is easy to go 160kph - 200kph with out too much trouble, not much traffic no police between towns and a good road surface with intermittent sections of dual carriageway. I continued on the N19 North West to Langres then Chaumont still on the D619 to Bar sur Aub and finally Troyes where I joined the motorway to Calais"



OMM BULLETIN MAY 08

Year 9, Issue 83, New Series 6

5. OMM Events Ahead

21-Jun-08	Roadcraft Ride	Istanbul
03-06.07.2008	Emok-Festival	Bilecik
12-13.07.2008	Ara-Road (TT,TT)	Istanbul
9-Aug-07	Ara-Control	Istanbul
16-23.08.2008	Black Sea - Touring Tour	
30-Aug-08	Roadcraft Ride	Istanbul
13-14/9/2008	4 Corners of Marmara Touring Tour	
20-21/09/2008	Ara Road International Ride	Istanbul
23-Sep-08	IAM	Istanbul
24-Sep-08	IAM	Istanbul
25-Sep-08	IAM	Istanbul
27-28/9/2008	Ara Road International Ride	Izmir
4-Oct-2008	Ara-Control	Istanbul
11-Oct-08	Roadcraft Ride	Istanbul
18, 19, 20-Oct-08	Ara-Road National Ride	Istanbul
15-Nov-08	Roadcraft Ride	Istanbul

The OMM Calendar and list of activities is presented in www.ommriders.com and invitations are sent to the ARA Yahoo Group open to everybody who wants to sign up at **ARA Yahoo Groups**

OMM communities are riding in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa and Trabzon.