



Perth and District
Advanced Motorists

DRIVER

SPRING 2001

Taking Advanced Driving to New Limits

Driving Commandments

what's good and what's not

The Alternative Route North

avoid the rat race and enjoy
the "real" roads.

Knockhill

The Changes and what's
coming this season

Bikes

The idiots guide, news and
views.

News

Whats happening in and
around the roads.

Group Information

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Car Windscreen badges sporting the IAM Logo and "Perth Group" are available. They can be ordered from group treasurer Ken Swan Tel. 01337 828497 e-mail ken@perthiam.org.uk. Costs are £1 per badge.

Wanted

Articles and Pictures for the newsletter are always welcome, please do not hesitate to contact any of the above editorial team if you wish to contribute or wish to assist in putting the newsletter together. If you wish to advertise on the newsletter, again contact one of the editorial team, your advert will appear in the newsletter and on the Group Web-site.

The views stated on these pages are the views of individual members who submit them, they are not necessarily the view of the Perth & District Group of Advanced Motorists or the view of the Institute of Advanced Motorists



Perth and District Advanced Motorists

Annual General Meeting 2001

The 2001 Annual General Meeting will be held in the Royal George Hotel, Tay Street Perth at 7:30pm on Monday 7th May.

Guest speaker being arranged.

Remember your 2001 Group Subscriptions of £8, due at the end of March.

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Chairman's Bit

I must admit to feeling like a minister when writing these pieces, you know the way I have to relate an everyday situation to the benefits of advanced driving.

Well this time, because it's my last, I won't do it. Instead I'm going to praise our group Observers for all their hard work, and all the committee members, members and friends who have contributed so much during my time in the "hot seat".

My plans for the future are to continue helping as an Observer and member of the newsletter team. Let's hope we can make

the newsletter and web site the best in the country.

Being a born trouble maker, I'm looking forward to causing more strife on the South East Car Forum, and keep waving the Perth banner at the Scottish Groups Associations meetings.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter, and for those of you on the internet, you can download it as an Acrobat Reader pdf file, allowing you to view it and print it out in glorious technicolour.

If you'd prefer to get the newsletter e-mailed to you, contact the newsletter team and we'll add you on the e-mailing list.

Eric

NEWS SNIPPETS

Abbey National Motor Insurance have surveyed 500 car drivers aged 17-65, and have identified that Gemini's are the most dangerous drivers, accounting for 18% of all UK road crashes. Cancerians, on the other hand, account for only 1%. An Abbey National spokesman declined to comment because Mars wasn't properly aligned with Pluto.

UK traffic increased by 1.7% in 1999. Car traffic increased by just 1%, but motorbike and scooter volume was up 16% and pedal cycles up by 6%. So why don't we see huge great traffic jams caused by too many two-wheelers, then?

Don't go to Southampton - in a recent DETR survey, it came out as town where traffic spends most time doing less than 10mph.

Sparrow numbers in urban areas have fallen considerably in the last few years; one theory is that they're being poisoned by the nasty additives in unleaded petrol (now, why didn't the green lobby think about that?).

A DETR survey into speeding found that 56% of motorway drivers exceeded the 70mph limit, with 19% over 80mph; in town 67% broke the 30mph limit, with 31% exceeding 35mph. Well - that's all a bit of a surprise, isn't it?

Later this year Volvo cars will be supplied with a built-in telephone which contacts a call centre whenever the airbags are deployed. Hope they laid in plenty of phone lines!

The Metropolitan police are putting "black box" recorders in their cars to record speed, acceleration, siren use, etc.. It's an attempt to reduce their accident rate - they had 5710 crashed in 1998. That's quite a lot.

Japanese police have introduced a motorcycle catcher which consists of some glue and a rope - the glue sticks to the tyre and draws the rope round the back wheel, gradually slowing the miscreant to a safe (!) stop.

Last issue we heard about recycling glass as a substitute aggregate for road making materials. Now blast furnace slag is being trialled for the same purpose. Just a pity we don't have a Scottish steel industry to support it!

Then there is the two private companies who have outbid the local authorities for the motorway and trunk road jobs. Watch this space....

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The Alternative Route North



As you wind your way around the “modern” road network of Scotland we often pass those familiar wee signs saying “Tourist Route” or “Alternative Route to”, never thinking of giving them the once over. Here is an “Alternative Route” that will take you from the South to the North of our Group catchment area via many historical landmarks, places of interest and beauty spots.

Today's traveller is blessed with a fine interconnecting web of motorways, dual carriageways and good quality single carriageways. Anyone travelling from Edinburgh to Inverness will see this as they head out of Edinburgh and over the Forth Road Bridge on the A90 dual carriageway. Then onto the M90 Motorway as they cross into Fife taking them to Perth, before returning to dual carriageway and single carriageway all the way to Inverness. But before these fine high speed roads were constructed, the route wound its way through the countryside passing through villages and towns full of history and curiosity.

By following these old roads, we can find a few hidden treasures on the way through Perth and Kinross for anyone visiting the area, passing through, or anybody just wanting an enjoyable drive.

We'll start as you cross the boundary heading North into Kinross-shire at junction 5 of the M90. Here we pick up the sign advising us of the “alternative route to Perth”. We join the B996 single carriageway, formerly known as the A90. This road will take us into Kinross where the traveller can enjoy refreshment breaks from the many hostelrys with prices and quality that beat there modern day competition equivalent, the Motorway Services.

Kinross boasts a fine history dating back to the time when Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle which is accessible by a ferry service in the Summer months. During winter months at times of low temperatures the curling communities in the area take the opportunity for a “bon spiel” on the frozen Loch, for the layman it means going curling outside.

As we first enter the town we pass the Scottish Motor Auction Groups site which hosts the Groups driving competitions in their car park. The site also pays host to a Sunday market.

There are the fine gardens of Kinross House which are accessible and sign posted from the long high street upon which the town was built around. Kinross house was built by Sir William Bruce, baronet of Balcaskie, he also built Hopetoun House near South Queensferry.

The Children's Hospice Association's care centre has a fine gift shop, where all profits go to maintaining the centre which provides respite for the parents and guardians of children who require special attention. They provide excellent care facilities and would recommend that you visit the shop and visitors centre.

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In the days of horse drawn coaches, Kinross was an important stopping point between Edinburgh and Perth and therefore boasted fine coaching Inns, two of which survive today. The Kirklands Hotel and the Green Hotel both sit on the main street through the town. The Green Hotel has developed into one of the top independent hotels and leisure complexes in Central Scotland, with a golf course, swimming pool and curling rink. The Green Hotel also offers IAM members a special discount on bookings before April, check with the hotel for details (see advert).



Continuing North from Kinross through Milnathort, we join the A91 St. Andrews Road for ¼ of a mile before bearing left back on to the B996 towards Glenfarg.

Glenfarg is a small village that sits at the head of Glen Farg, the village has a couple of hotels and a famous folk club. Visitors will notice the fine architecture of the Glenfarg Hotel with its castle like tower dominating the main street.

We run parallel to the motorway as we pass through the town before the motorway and old road take their own separate routes down to the valley of the River Earn.

North of Glenfarg, we start the descent down the Glen, the road featuring many sharp bends as it negotiates the steep gradient.

The old railway which ran between Dunfermline and Perth runs beside us, then crosses over the road as it disappears through tunnels and heads North. Half way down the Glen we join the A912 that takes us all the way to Perth.

Particular care should be taken during winter months on this road as the narrowness of the glen and the steep sides keep the road shaded most of the winter, this attracts many cold icy spots resulting in impressive frozen waterfalls and icicles. Unfortunately for the motorists, black ice here can result in a callous driver christening their car in the River Farg.

We exit the Glen on to the wide flat flood plain of the River Earn, across to our left we can see the motorway emerging from the hillside on its high embankment, which if you look carefully can be seen to "swallow" up the old railway embankment as it follows the gradient the railway took as it descends to the valley floor.

We come onto the once notorious Baiglie straight, this wide straight single carriageway was the scene of many bad accidents and near misses as frustrated drivers took chances to pass after the long and often slow descent through Glen Farg in the days before the motorway opened.

The motorway crosses over us as we enter the small village of Bridge of Earn, as the name implies this is where the road crossed the River Earn, downstream from here crossings were by small ferries. The masonry arch here superseded an earlier structure

that site beside an old slip for the sloops and steamers that once plied the waters of the Earn and Tay. The road works its way round the steep sides of Tarsappie Hill before opening up a fine view of Perth as you traverse the summit. Meanwhile the newer M90 takes the more direct route where the rock was blasted in steps to allow a cutting.

As you descend into Perth you will see the old toll house on the right just after the entrance to Friarton Prison, then further down into the city you pass the imposing walls and fences of Perth prison. Anyone wishing to visit Perth can find parking well sign posted. The city offers shopping, museums and galleries in the centre, enjoying the traffic free haven of the pedestrianised streets. For those travelling onward, follow the signs for the A9 Inverness.

Exiting Perth on the Dunkeld Road, you pass along the famous Perth Motor Mile, a

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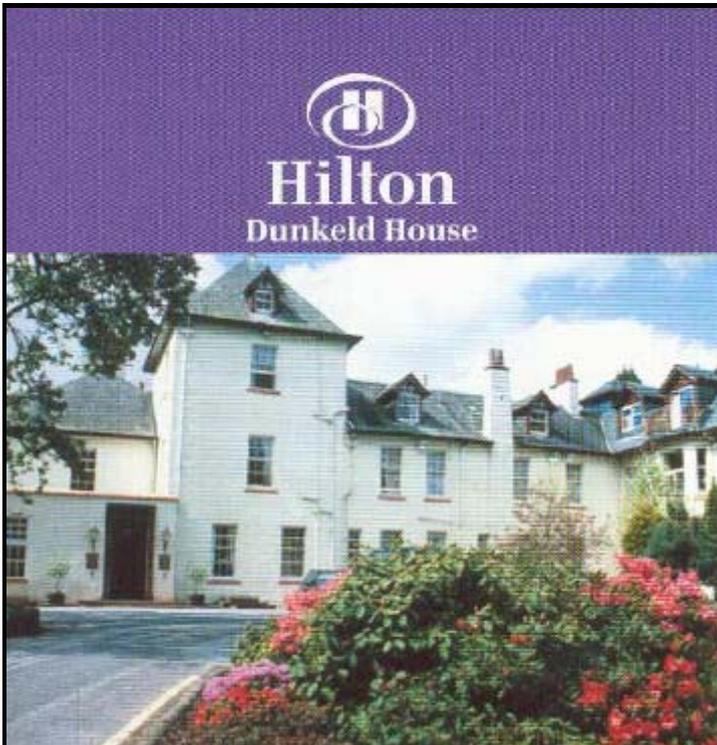
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mile of car dealerships which becomes the site for the Perth Motor Festival.

We rejoin the modern road network at the end of the motor mile, but a glance to the left as we cross the River Almond, shows the old road bridge, now closed to traffic. From here on the roads, old and new criss-cross the Perth to Inverness Railway almost all the way to Inverness.

The first opportunity to rejoin the old road comes at Bankfoot, where we pass through the village on a road that was described in the *The Contour Road Book of Scotland* (1963) as "finely engineered".

Like most of the towns that adorn this route, you will find hotels and shops, and many visitor attractions that the new roads always seem to bypass.

We now wind our way through woodland and farmland on a "cracking set of bends" where we cross the Inverness to Perth railway through a narrow bridge on a sharp double bend, a feature of most of the railway crossings on the old A9. We continue towards Dunkeld, crossing the new A9.

At Dunkeld we cross the River Tay and the bridge built by Thomas Telford in 1808. This is where we join the road originally built by General Wade as part of his claimed 250 miles of roads he built in the Highlands in the mid 1700s.

Originally two ferry boats operated by the Duke of Atholl took travellers across the Tay, the Duke offered half the cost of building a bridge if the government paid the other half.

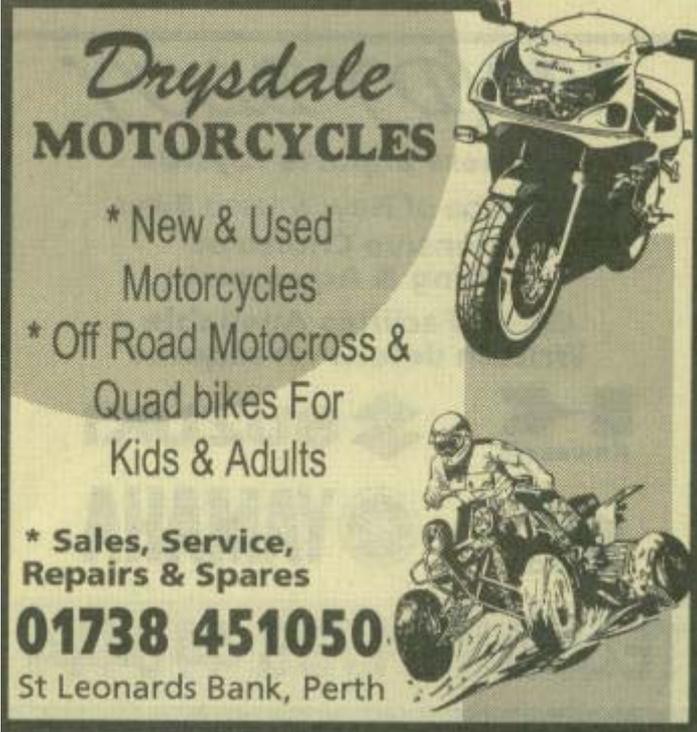
Dunkeld is also famous for its cathedral and has a visitors cen-

Continued on page 11

A Beginner's Guide To Motorcycles

(Would any bikers reading this please stop - you'll only get upset.)

Motorcycles / motorbikes / bikes (pick whichever word you like - my registration documents say "bicycle") come in a range of sizes and shapes to suit different requirements. There are probably over a dozen terms used to describe the different kinds of bike - this guide covers the main types you'll come across on UK roads. These classifications aren't "official" in any sense, but follow the general groupings used by the motorcycle press when doing comparative tests - the same sort of things as applies to cars ("family saloon", "MPV", etc.).



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Mopeds

These are quite a distinct group legally - up to 50cc; maximum speed of 30mph; can be ridden on a car licence and by 16-year-olds. Many continental countries allow 14-year-olds to ride these. Mopeds have become very popular indeed in the UK over the past couple of years, especially scooter-style machines, as a means of getting around larger towns' traffic jams; however, their lack of performance limits their usefulness outwith towns. (Honda SFX50)



Trailies

Trail bikes come with engines ranging from 50cc up to over a litre, with power outputs between 3 and 100+ bhp. The smaller bikes were originally derived from competition (trials, motocross and enduro) machines, while many of the larger ones were inspired by special bikes built to tackle the Paris-Dakar rally. Those at the lighter end of the weight scale are generally quite capable of tackling rough tracks, ploughed fields, etc. (hence their popularity with under-age bike thieves). Bigger machines are just too heavy to be manageable off-road, but are popular as touring bikes, especially on the continent. (Honda Dominator NX650)



All-Rounders

These bikes will tackle most duties - commuting, rider training, touring, Sunday afternoon runs - with a decent amount of ability. They're generally "naked" (don't have a fairing), with engines between 250 and 1000cc. All-rounders are usually fairly simple mechanically, and easy-ish to look after (many bikers do their own servicing). Often very good value for money. (Honda X11 CB500)



Knockhill is changing

After 26 years Scotland's Motorsport venue is changing! In the past Knockhill has been criticised by many team owners on the severity of the kerbs and run-off areas as well as having an inadequate pit lane. Knockhill management have answered these critics and have just finished spending half a million pounds over 4 years on circuit changes. Over the Winter Knockhill has been closed as the circuit undergoes its major changes. At all corners is the renewal of all existing kerbs, replacing them with racecar friendly kerbing, backed by eco-bloc. The pit-lane layout has been changed, mainly at the entry and exit of the pit lane. A new bespoke pit wall with timing gantry has been constructed. 4 corners have also been altered and the hairpin has been re-profiled creating new cornering lines and making overtaking easier.

These changes will make a great circuit into a fantastic circuit and without question one of the Best in Britain.

The longer and more accessible pit lane also means that events such as the British Touring Car Championship can host races with pit stops.

Checkout www.knockhill.co.uk to get more information on the events for 2001.

British Touring Car Touring or Production?

The British Touring Car Championship is the best saloon car motor sport event in Britain and the world. It attracts big names such as Ford, Vauxhall and Honda and during its hay day in the early 90's it was a fantastic championship with exhilarating races and top class drivers. Since then however popularity for the event has slowly demised and TV audiences have been reduced as well as the TV coverage. Many of the races are now only shown a week after they have taken place and even then are only highlights. Many major motoring manufacturers have left and the races are no longer as exhilarating to watch and are, at best only average, with less overtaking compared to the antics of the early 90's. Over the past couple of years the governing body, TOCA, have tried to make the championship more exciting by adding in feature races with compulsory pit stops, one shot show-down qualifying and although this helped to make it more competitive, in my opinion it needs improved. The 2000 season was one of the best of recent years but there is no doubt that the old Super Touring formula is no longer viable.

Last year the governing body of the BTCC changed from TOCA to British Motorsport Promotors (BMP) and the new tour direc-

tor Richard West took over at the end of the 2000 season. He is to work closely along side BMP and is a key member of Octagon's Marketing. Octagon currently own Brands Hatch Racing Circuit, Kent.

In the past the series was a very expensive affair, for manufacturers and teams, with spiralling costs and million pound development programs. This has meant that many manufacturers and teams have left the series and this has left the series slowly disappearing. It is still the best saloon car championship in the world and something has to be done. So along with a new governing body and new personnel the series is being changed to one with packed grids and plenty of on track action. The old Super Touring class is being replaced with a less powerful BTC Touring class. This new class will have all the action of the old Super Tourers but less of the power and there ability to absorb cash. There is also to be another class at the party, BTC Production. This class is the same as 2000's Class B or National Saloon Car regulations and is to be cheaper than the Touring Class. Between them it is a near certain guarantee that they will fill the grids to capacity. Already signed up are Peugeot with there 406 coupe in the touring class and 306 in the production class. Last years independent cup winner Matt Neal is being joined by that old hand Steve Soper at Peugeot and with that combination will make Peugeot one of the favourites for the title and with Soper's style of racing, you can be guaranteed plenty of on track action. Tim Harvey and Will Hoy will drive the production 306. Alfa Romeo are to return with the 147, Vauxhall with the Astra Coupe and many more are to join. Rumours have it that Rickard Rydell is to return in a Production Volvo with plans for a works (touring class) car in 2002 and there are strong rumours that Rover may join with the new MG.

Some of the other changes to the series include Guest or Wild Card Drivers with the likes of Nigel Mansell and other celebrities to join in the races. New Universal suspension, transmission and brake parts will make sure that the costs are kept down and provide better reliability and make expensive development programs a thing of the past. Expensive Aerodynamics are gone. The one shot showdown qualifying is being replaced with more conventional qualifying and a new three-race format with production and tournament class sprint races before a combined grid feature race finale. It is looking like it will be a fascinating year but, in my opinion 2001 will only be the warm up for 2002 when the series will, hopefully, bring in more big name manufacturers, drivers and teams and show that the new format will be the "old school BTCC biff, bash and bravado on a grand scale".

All in all it is looking like it'll be a fantastic, not to miss season. Get the chance to see how Steve Soper reacts as his 406 gets knocked out spot on by Jason Plato. We may even get a replay of the spectacular crash in 1992 with John Cleland and Steve Soper. Do you think Plato will do as John Cleland did and punch Soper's lights out? We'll find out when the season starts at Brands Hatch on April 15-16.

With the exciting new changes to the BTCC and Knockhill Racing Circuit you'll better keep your diary free for Sunday July 22nd when the BTCC comes north to Knockhill. See you there!

The Several Commandments

This is the first in a series of (more-or-less light-hearted) articles highlighting some of the more frustrating antics of (a tiny minority of) UK drivers. The following guidelines apply mainly to motorways and dual carriageways.

Acknowledgement and thanks to all contributors on www.ridersite.com

1. Keep in lane 1 unless you are overtaking. Lanes are not about speed or status; your world will not fall apart if you do 70 in lane 1.
2. It is not normally necessary to pull out into the middle or outside lane when there are no vehicles in the inside lane.
3. Let faster vehicles pass you; do not underestimate their acceleration or worry that they won't get past in time for you to pull out again. If the following rider / driver has become frustrated and "undertaken" you, this is a sign that you have bad lane dicipline.
4. If you are travelling at 70 and there are vehicles waiting to pass, you should make way when safe to do so. It is not for the general public to enforce the law, and there may be an emergency, or your speedometer may be inaccurate.
5. When changing lane you should not cause other people to change speed or direction, i.e. if changing lane would cause another vehicle to brake (at all) or swerve then DO NOT CHANGE LANE - WAIT.
6. Putting your indicator on does not mean "I am coming over into your lane; make way".
7. When driving an HGV, DO NOT overtake another vehicle going just 1mph slower. Uphill. On a two-lane stretch. Thank you.
8. Observation is still required even if you intend to change lanes from the right to the left. The left-hand lane may well have been empty for the last five miles but that does not necessarily mean that it still is.
9. When joining a carriageway try to accelerate to the speed of the traffic in lane 1 before pulling into the traffic flow.
10. Joining a motorway or dual carriageway is not a challenge to see how quickly you can make it into the outside lane. You may well have been capable of a speed in excess of the vehicle in front of you on the slip road, however this does not mean that there are not other vehicles travelling faster than you on the road that you have joined, and does not preclude the need for you to LOOK.
11. The sliproad will allow you plenty of distance to decelerate when leaving the motorway; there's no need to slow to 30mph a mile before your turn off.

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Muscle Bikes

This is what happens when an all-rounder grows up and inherits a pensioned-off sportsbike motor. Characterised by a big engine (typically 1000cc or more) in a strong, simple frame, often with lots of matt black paint and chrome highlights, these (in the UK at least), hark back to the days of Norton Commandos and Triumph Bonneville - real men's bikes! Despite their lack of wind / weather protection, muscle bikes are fast (140+ in some cases) and capable of long-distance touring.

Honda X11 CB1100SF

Cruisers



Cruisers owe their existence almost entirely to America's love affair with Harley-Davidson motorcycles. They're mainly technically unsophisticated, shiny, chrome-laden bikes aimed at people who like to take things easy. Most have large-capacity (1200cc upwards) unstressed motors, most often in V-twin configuration for that "potato-potato" sound. Owners often spend a lot of money, time and effort in customising these bikes to make them stand out from the crowd. Often seen in large groups, since cruiser owners do like to socialise.

Honda VTX1800

Tourers



The word "tourer" says it all, really - these bikes are purpose-built for covering long distances at reasonable speed and decent (for a bike) comfort. They are big, heavy (mostly over 300kg unladen), with large but unstressed motors which will take rider, pillion and a fortnight's luggage across Europe and back. They often have surprisingly good handling, and will keep up with most bikes when well-ridden. Owners can be a bit fanatical, though, and tend to drone on about heated handgrips a lot.

Honda GL1800

Sports Tourers



Often the best of both worlds, sports tourers sit between tourers and sports bikes in size, weight, performance and comfort. Many older sports bikes slide into sports-tourerdom as they are replaced by smaller, lighter, faster siblings. The best sports tourers therefore have performance and handling almost on a par with pure sports bikes, but with a bit more comfort, weather protection and luggage-carrying ability. They are often the choice of a biker who can only afford one bike, but needs to use it for commuting and Sunday afternoons as well as the odd long-distance trip.

Honda CBR1100XX

Sports Bikes



The UK is one of the biggest markets in the world for sports bikes and our top 10 sellers list is dominated by seriously sporty machines derived from Grand Prix and World Superbikes competition bikes. The top 6 or 7 manufacturers all have flagship sports bikes with similar performance characteristics - top speed around 170mph, 0-60 under 3 seconds, using engines of about 1 litre in lightweight frames (dry weight is typically about 170 kilos). These bikes are not designed for commuting or long-distance touring - can be uncomfortable at low speeds and lacking in weather protection - but many bikers do tour on them because, once at the destination and unloaded there's a proper sports bike to play with!

Honda VTR1000 SP-1

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Continued from page 6

tre for information and gifts. To continue our journey we head East for a short while on the A923 after Dunkeld before turning left back onto the old A9.

Here we continue North on the East bank of the river Tay whilst the new A9 continues on the West bank until it reaches the Jubilee Bridge (see photo).

We rejoin the "new" A9 just South of Dowally to Ballinluig where we turn off and head onto the old road yet again heading North to Pitlochry via Dalca-pon.

Pitlochry relies primarily on tourism as its main industry and therefore has many large hotels and attractions such as the Pitlochry Theatre and the Hydro Electric Dam with its Fish Ladder. With the coming of the railway the town be-



The new A9 crossing the old South of Blair Atholl

came a great holiday resort for the Victorians,

From Pitlochry we can head North almost unhindered by the new highway to Calvine, via the Pass of Killiecrankie, site of a battle in 1689 and with many woodland walks along the side of the River Garry. The old road is dwarfed at the base of the concrete pillars supporting the new dual carriageway as both roads and the railway hug the valley side.

Onto Blair Atholl the road crosses the River Tilt as it enters the centre of the village with the impressive Blair Castle up to the right and working water wheel at the old mill on the left.

The road continues through the lightly wooded flood plain of the River Garry until it reaches Calvine via the Falls of Bruar. A short walk through the woodland takes you to various viewpoints of the Bruar Water as it cascades down the hillside.

We rejoin the new A9 at Calvine after passing under the railway bridge that in olden days was the scene of many serious accidents.

The new A9, climbs to 1500ft at Drummochter Summit and we can see the remains of the original Wade road and the later road alignments running alongside. Beside the original Wade road

there is the Wade stone, allegedly named after the General who was a tall man placed a coin on the top of it when he first surveyed the route. Then a year later he recollected it when constructing the road, he obviously had more money to burn than the road builders of today! We are leaving the lush green vegetation of the valley as we enter the land of mountain and moorland.

The descent from Drummochter takes us across the Perth & Kinross boundary ending our route and towards Dalwhinnie where the old road breaks off to the left into the village and onto the junction for the A86 to Fort William via Laggan.

Sticking to the M90 and new A9 the journey from the M90 Jct.5 to Dalwhinnie is 70 miles. The route described above is about 80 miles, but includes many interesting villages and towns that are now bypassed which has helped keep their unique characters.



Touring the back roads

This is the first article in a series planned for publication in future newsletters and on the web site, giving the driving or motorcycling enthusiast details of the alternative routes to the newer trunk road and motorway networks.

The Rear End

**Ever wondered what all this
Mobile Internet is about?**



**Perth and District Advanced
Motorists has produced the
FIRST IAM WAP site**

wap.perthiam.org.uk

So what's it all about?

The Perth & District Group of Advanced Motorists is affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists (I.A.M.). Our aim is to improve road safety by promoting further driving education and ultimately the I.A.M. Advanced Driving Test.

We are a purely voluntary organisation and our activities include assisting drivers to prepare for the Advanced Test, running social and driving events, using the world wide web to keep in touch with members and friends, and creating a quarterly newsletter which we hope you have enjoyed reading.

Our membership covers a wide spectrum of interests, including HGV instructors, Off Road Instructors, ADI Driving Instructors, and Motorcyclists. As we continue to develop the group we hope to be able to cater for tests in all forms of vehicles.

This newsletter is available as a download on Acrobat Reader format from our web site, and copies are distributed throughout the UK groups.

We use advertising to assist with the funding of the newsletter and web site, this allows us to further the development and open up our audience.

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¼ A4 Page is £15 per Newsletter.

½ A4 Page is £25 per Newsletter.

Full A4 Page is £40 per Newsletter.

Full Back Page is £50 per Newsletter.

If you are interested, contact our newsletter team, details are on page 2.

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