



THE

RIDER'S DIGEST

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Issue 174
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Be on the look out for Injuns in the wood!

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From the editor...

OK here's the way it is. When I first decided to produce an online edition of TRD, I committed to do it monthly. I did this partly to continue in the tradition of the original printed magazine, but mostly because I've known myself long enough to know that without the discipline that a deadline demands, I'd never have completed the first issue. Well, if you've been following TRD since the first online version back in March 2012, you'll be aware that, give or take the odd day's delay, we have served you up a monthly melange of all things motorcycling just the way we promised.

However, this month as I surfaced from my usual post-deadline chill-down week (when I get a chance to catch up with the various important non TRD related people and issues in my life) I realised that in spite of all my very best efforts to ignore it, Xmas was looming large, and the thought of having to chase all my equally seasonally harassed contributors, so I could gather a hundred and sixty odd pages of content and then mould them into the kind of magazine you have come to expect – all while meeting the natural

expectations of my nearest and dearest – frankly, brought me out in a cold sweat!

The more I thought about it, the scarier the prospect became; the daunting task of trying to squeeze our busiest production week in with all the stockings, booze, turkeys and relatives was downright petrifying. Then it occurred to me that TRD is attempting to mirror the sort of qualities that bikes provide – exhilaration, freedom, contentment, and, just occasionally, that wonderful sensation of being so engrossed in a magical moment that the world beyond your immediate circumstances ceases to exist – and I realised that any time I've ever been riding purely for leisure/pleasure, I have never allowed my best laid plans get in the way of those all-important factors. (My tour around New England in the autumn of 2008 is a prime example. The notion behind the trip was to ride a Triumph to the top of the Cadillac Mountain in the Acadia National Park in Maine and take some photographs at dawn because reputedly, at that time of year it is the first place on the US mainland to see the sun rise. Well, as it turned out I was travelling

along such beautiful routes and I bumped into so many lovely, interesting people, who in turn pointed me towards so many unexpected delights, that I never quite made it to my planned destination – in fact I never got any closer than about 160 miles from it, but that didn't detract in any way from a spectacular week's riding.)

So I figured that under the circumstances it seemed entirely appropriate to apply the same sort of logic to the production of the magazine and not to allow any rigid plans to get in the way of something that is supposed to be a pleasure. Consequently I decided that I would miss out the January issue to allow everyone involved in the production process a bit of space to relax and have a proper break.

However, it seemed a bit rude to just bugger off without so much as a word to you the reader (a bit like arranging to meet someone at the top of that mountain in the US northeast and then just not turning up, which would have been very bad form indeed!) so in discussion with the designer we agreed that rather than simply pinning a note on the

home page saying "See you in February!" he'd put a cover together and I'd write this editorial to explain what was happening and why.

We would have left it at that if it hadn't been for my bulging inbox; but I'd received what is probably an all-time record volume of mail in December and I realised that if they didn't get aired this month, most of the front end of the February issue would be taken up with *In the Saddle*. Besides the letters neatly underline my comments last month about readers becoming new contributors because their contents are perfect illustrations that as well as adding wheels to the TRD bandwagon they also help to broaden our appeal.

I understand the publishing business well enough to know how it is supposed to work; you find a niche in the market and once you establish what your regulars expect, you ladle it out month after month – and as long as your advertising dept. is doing its job, Robert's your mother's live-in. But I never envisaged the Digest as just another bike magazine focusing on a particular aspect of powered two-wheeling; my ambition has always been to fill its pages with words and pictures that have the potential to engage anyone who enjoys a little mental stimulation when they're not riding their

bike – whatever variety of machine that happens to be and irrespective of how they choose to ride it.

Consequently while Phil in Derby would prefer that I keep TRD largely sportsbike free and Paul in Worcester would enjoy a bit more controversy, John in Harrogate is tickled that we swear occasionally like grown-

In the meantime you might want to go through our archive and check out some of the articles you skipped on your first reading because you never know what unexpected little gem you might have missed.

**Happy New Year!
Dave Gurman**



ups, which just goes to show what a bastard it would be if I were aiming to build an audience that fits into a nice neat marketable demographic. Fortunately, as I say, that's never been the plan, so if you like what you've seen so far—you really ain't seen nothing yet!

2013 looks like it could be quite a year for The Rider's Digest, if you haven't already done so, why don't you take out a FREE subscription?

See you in February you with a regular bumper edition.

The first day of '13 turned out dry and sunny so as Wendy and I were child free we agreed that a ride to Boxhill might be in order because a) that's what bikers have been doing with their best girls since the 30s; and b) given the clement weather were likely to be plenty of bikes there to provide a topical cover shot.

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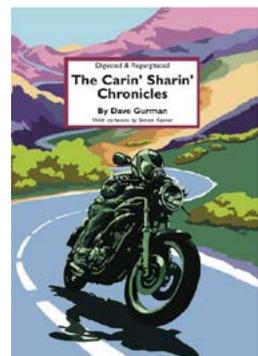
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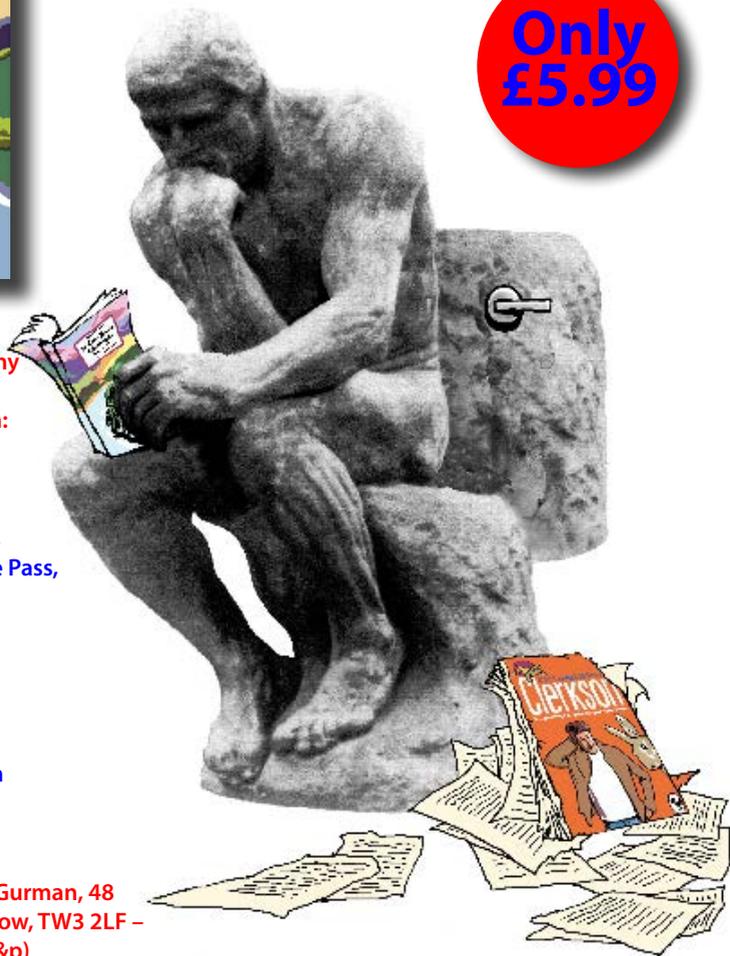
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In The Saddle...

Hi Dave,

PHRRRP...! Is the sound that spluttered from my mouth as I nearly choked on my Yorkshire Pudding (open mental picture of me scraping food from the screen) and I almost spilled my pint of Tetteleys...! Softie! Is tha calln’ me a softie, baa eck I’m vexed!

Actually you’re probably right, anyhow I’m glad to see your comments in TRD (*In the Saddle* 173 – Ed) and yes we all come to biking in our own way. What a boring world it would be if we all agreed on everything.

I have an appointment at 12:30 in the Canteen, er, staff restaurant tomorrow Kindle in hand and the world can disappear for an hour.

Cheers

Nick Lojik,

Leeds

Hi Dave,

Many, many thanks for all the work you put in month in, month out putting together this wonderful on-line magazine. And many thanks for having the courage to ‘print’ something you would find in no other motorcycling magazine – well done.

Heartbreak Hotel (*issue* 172 – Ed)

Wow !!!

What a beautifully written quality piece of philosophy.

Lois, you shared something personal and profound with us and I thank you wholeheartedly for that. Takes courage to be that open.

And a very happy, healthy and safe Christmas and New Year to all readers.

Cheers

Dave (aka thebiglad) Jebson

Limousin

France

Hi Dave,

I’ve mentioned the A4260 approaching Kidlington before. 17:15, it is dark, I am doing 50 mph and the road is unlit. I see at the last minute a cyclist coming towards me in dark clothing and no lights on my side of the road.

I avoid him/her but shit, is he/she suicidal. There is a footpath about three feet away The previous night it had been raining and even with Rain X on my visor I probably would not have seen the cyclist in time.

Oh yes and I passed two police cars in that journey.

Didn’t hear of an idiot cyclist being mown down so he/she probably completed their journey.

My army pension has kicked in (there are benefits from being ancient) so my mortgage is history and I have surplus dosh for the first time in twenty-six

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE WORKSHOP...



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years. A Khyam Highlander tent was my first upgrade to my rally gear. I didn't go for the Biker because warmer, wetter and windier is what is coming and the tunnel on the Biker could be a weakness in high winds. And as a singly I don't need any more storage space. If it is raining I stay in the pub. If a pub or beer tent is not available I am at the wrong rally and will not be returning. Then the last two weekends camping in October the nights were below zero. I wasn't too cold but could have been more comfortable so on advice from friends an Exped Downmat Pump 9 LW was ordered. It is a down filled airbed with a built in pump and is supposed to reflect heat back up to the sleeper. After a senior moment lasting five minutes I finally worked out that my palm was part of the pumps valve and tried it out. Fine at home so tested it at the last rally of the year.

(Incidentally I have seen people turn up at rallies and unpack important stuff that is still in its wrapping. I don't mind having a laugh but that is stupid.)

It does everything it is claimed to do. It makes the Thermarest last century's news.

You can feel the reflected heat almost immediately and it is superbly comfortable. Comes with a repair kit and the usual

guarantee and I have every confidence in the supplier (Les and Jane Madge at TravelDri Plus 01647 24523).

Price is £167.00 retail but I got a generous discount from TravelDri, mentioned but not named by PNB last month, perhaps not celebrity enough. Any way Les and Jane used to be Guzzi club members and know their stuff, but ride a BMW now, every one has their faults. So I bought the accompanying blow up pillow as well. £23.00 might seem a lot for something the size of the bag inside a wine box but at 11" by 6" packed the Exped is half the bulk of my Thermarest and the pillow the size of a pair of socks means my rally kit with both is a lot less bulky. And it is very comfortable.

Smaller sizes of the sleeping bed are available as are synthetic versions but I enjoyed spending the dosh after scrimping all those years.

But considering how mild the next two weekends were I am thinking of suing God. It is not like he going to have any decent lawyers is it?

Oh and get TravelDri advertising in TRD Dave, he does good stuff. He told me my 2.5 season bag would do with the Exped at below zero and he was right.

Next up is some new leathers, Halverson's look favourite and a

Garmin 660. 21st Century made up man is on his way.

Ride Safe
An ancient Guzzisti

Ian Dunmore

P.S. Riding out on a crisp and cold Sunday and approaching a roundabout I had a Landrover driven by a flat-capped chap on my right hand side. Very dangerous. He indicated left and I braked in order to let him in and then I swear the dog in the passenger seat talked to him because he stopped his manoeuvre and actually looked around. I nodded him in with my head.

So now I know why dogs are licenced.

Thanks for that Ian, we're always happy to reproduce product reviews by bone fide readers because they don't get any more legitimate – Ed

Hello Dave,

Upon downloading TRD 173 I was quickly scrolling down through the pages when a photo of a shiny black racer/cafe racer caught my eye on page 92 (or 47 of the pdf). I could read 'Metisse' on the tank, and see that it was a large capacity fuel-injected twin, but with no pic caption I was forced to scour Blez's main text to find out more, but there's no mention of it.

On a more general note, there are quite a number of other

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photos published in TRD that would benefit from captioning, as the reader may or may not have the time or inclination at that moment to read an entire feature, and well crafted captions and sub headings (also missing) are more likely to lure one into a feature than turn one away, the above example being a rare exception!

I appreciate that it's probably not your desire to produce an over-polished, ad revenue-led journal as per the Haymarket/Bauer establishment, but I for one feel that TRD's alternative, quasi anarchic appeal wouldn't be diluted by being that bit more reader-friendly.

Cheers,

Tom Stewart

London, SW18

Apologies from Blez for the absence of any description to go with the Metisse in his NEC piece, he was in Birmingham the day before our deadline so it was very much written against the clock and some words got lost in his haste. Point taken about captions and headings though, they're both things that we are planning to incorporate in the future. Watch these pages – Ed

Hi Dave,

I was heartened to read Nik Samson's comments in Rider's Lives last month about how

there are a lot of arseholes who ride bikes. No doubt we all take on this role occasionally but there seems to be a good sized element of the biking fraternity who are "holier-than-thou" all of the time; occasionally I see it in these pages but more often in forums online. They've spent so much time talking about the best way to do this or that, and how car drivers are wankers that they seem to think that the sacred rite of passing an advance course of some kind gives them a yoda-like* knowledge. This particularly applies to people riding in groups.

I met 3 of them yesterday just outside Kidderminster. Probably nice enough blokes in the normal run of things but when in a group it's like a switch goes in their heads and they start riding to different rules. I was in my car when they came up behind me, not fast but expecting to be able to overtake. The whole queue stopped at some temporary traffic lights and I was just following the cars in front into the single lane when the first one overtook, only he misjudged it and wasn't going fast enough; if I hadn't slowed down I would have hit him. OK, just a mistake. Carried on for some time, the second one overtook OK, but at a roundabout the 3rd one, anxious to catch up with his mates, cut in front of me; the other 2 had

slowed down to wait for him and if I hadn't braked I would have run into all 3 of them. So I sounded my horn. All 3 looked round in disgust and the 3rd one slowed down even more, forcing me to brake again. So I sounded my horn again. All 3 stopped in the road and got off their bikes. I've never been backward in coming forward so I got out of the car to meet them head on. They were immediately very forthright in their views about me and my driving so I attacked back pointing out their mistakes very loudly and in some detail. The first one was wearing a jacket with the words "If you can read this the bitch fell off"; I told him it was more likely that the bitch was under the wheels of the artic that he'd just cut up. The 3rd one's argument was that "common courtesy" means that I should have pulled over and let him through and that he drove a van and a car as well – I told him that I rode a bandit 12 only much more intelligently that he did. "We were trying to get back into a group" he said, as if that had any bearing on me as another road user. Eventually we all calmed down enough to get back on the road. But the thing that got me the most was the self-righteous indignation about how I should have made special allowances for them. As a car driver I don't drive any differently

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when a bike's behind me than I do when another car's behind me but they were expecting me to; have you seen those drivers who pull over to the left of the road to let you go past? They're probably very well meaning but, actually, I'll decide when it's safe to pass – its probably riders like number 3 that do it.

Last summer I was driving on the A44 when a group of about 7 or 8 bikes appeared in the rear view mirror – now, normally, a bike appears, sits on the outside until its clear then overtakes, and moves up the queue, no problem. This group were all doing it at the same time and, because they were all trying to catch up with their mates they were taking risks and overtaking when they wouldn't have normally. Near panic ensued as the car drivers braked to make room but were looking in their rear view mirrors as well – it was like being surrounded by a swarm of insects.

To my mind even if you're riding in a group, you're riding as separate units and everyone else on the road is a separate unit as well. There is no group-responsibility for your actions. Also, you shouldn't cause someone else to change the way they're driving/riding because of a manoeuvre you make. Seems like common sense to me but obviously not to them. Anyway, rant over.

So, feedback. I like the magazine but I agree with the writer last month that there are a lot of articles about adventure tours. Not really a problem as I just skip over the ones that don't interest me, but it would be good if you could put some captions on the pictures. I think its about time you had a it more self confidence about the whole thing though – the whole "what a brilliant mag", "in a different class" etc. etc. is getting a bit wearing; if something's good it'll work without it, but if that's what people write I guess you have to print it. Personally I prefer the articles about everyday biking: Lois, Boy Biker etc, probably because that's all I do. Let's have a bit more controversy though; nothing like reading something that's completely off the wall to make you think about what you believe yourself – controversy is the spice of life.

Paul

Worcester

*In my mind Dave Gurman is truly Yoda-like – have you read the Carin' sharin' Chronicles?

What can I tell you Paul, our self-confidence is actually reasonably fine & groovy, but if people will insist on sending letters saying how brilliant we are, it seems rude if not downright churlish not to publish them! Actually we publish any and all of the intelligible mail we

receive, irrespective of whether it's complimentary or caustically critical. And while the Digest has never courted controversy, it's certainly never ducked it either, so keep on reading. Lastly, just like to say how flattered I am to be compared with yoda I would. Yes, hmmm – Ed

Hi Dave,

Had to write in after reading the roundabout article. I know of people who will ride/drive miles out of their way to avoid the 'Magic Roundabout' in Swindon. When you first see it, it is truly terrifying, looking like traffic is heading in all directions!

The other thing I wanted to relate was the tale of the Town Council that had seen the French-style roundabouts (curved approach and exit; very clever as it forces you to go slow-in, fast-out) and decided to build one. Just one problem; they did not reverse the design to take into account our driving on the correct side of the road... resulting in a fast-in, slow-out roundabout!

Other than that, do you think you will be using the book review I sent you a while back? I'd like to let the author know, so he can keep his press clippings up to date.

Thanks – and keep up the good work on TRD (just promoted it on a New Zealand

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biker forum, so don't be surprised if your figures get a little upswing),

Bob Pickett

Ilford,

Essex

Thanks for the positive words Bob. As I said to Ian above, reader's write-ups are great. However, these pages are a bit crowded this month, so look out for your review next month – Ed

Hi Paul,

Just dropping you a line to say that I enjoyed your article about the Bike show in Riders Digest – I love the way you described all the scooters and ignored all the incredibly dull 'new' bikes that the mainstream journos were going on about! There was a programme on Eurosport about the bike featuring James Haydon, Jamie Whitham and Neil Hodgson – they did mention the new Burgman but otherwise they could have been reporting from a different show! There again, they didn't even mention BMW or Harley Davidson once!

Interesting that Yamaha might finally bring a TMax with ABS next year... we shall see! I keep going round in circles about what I might buy. I start at a new Tmax, then think that it seems crazy to spend all that money on something that's not hugely different from the

Malossified Mk3 Tmax I have now. I consider all the alternatives and come back to the TMax! But there simply aren't ANY demo Mk4 Tmax530s within 200 miles of me...

Tim Bounds,

Teesside

Hi Dave,

Wow! How is it I've only just stumbled across The Rider's Digest? It happened when someone on the UK VStrom forum posted asking what magazines people read whereupon many posters mentioned The Rider's Digest amongst other publications which I often buy. How I've never stumbled upon it before I don't know although I can guess it's mostly because I don't spend anything like as much time as I would like socialising with other riders.

I've been reading issue 173 on my phone, as such never finding I've left it at home where my wife will prematurely recycle it after the children have taken the crayons to it. Thus, I am instantly a fan of the format even if it's wreaking havoc with battery.

However, what has really impressed me is the content. The website claiming it's 'the best Motorcycle writing anywhere on the internet' seems a tall order. How surprised was I to

find gripping, interesting and relevant articles from writers who sounded like real people, albeit distinctly articulate real people. It's hard to explain how it was such a refreshing change from other paid for publications but one thing that sticks out is that there is an article from a young man explaining how to effectively insulate your trainers while riding. This contrasted starkly with endless reviews of boots which cost more than my first bike did. There were even naughty words, like the ones people use. And pictures of which there were many!

So, I just wanted to add to the doubtless extensive pile of emails you must have to trawl through extolling the virtues of TRD. One day I'd like to offer some content, though I'm really not sure what that would be, being as I am just a plain old normal person who loves to ride.

Kind Regards,

John Snelson

Harrogate

Dave Gurman, sir...

I recently arrived home after another stupendously boring day at work to the email notice that issue 173 of TRD was available to download – which immediately brightens my mood. While SWMBO is preparing our evening meal I download a copy onto my

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mobile, so that's me set. After dinner I head straight for "From the editor..." and everything is looking fine and dandy until I get to the bit about Andy Overton complaining about the dearth of writing in TRD about sportsbikes. That is the biggest attraction of TRD to me – it is full of articles that cover the motorcycling experience while excluding the hyper-speed, knife-edge riding that today's race bred sports bikes dictate and which brings race track riding out onto public roads.

So my next stop was Andy's piece. As I started reading the piece I was thinking "pillock" and various other words of that nature. I was reading a piece that to me was typical of the sportsbike rider, precisely describing race track riding on public roads, ignoring any and every implication of danger in his pursuit of the riding thrill. But just as I had clicked the previous month as I read Biker Boy's piece (sic), I realised that I was actually reading Andy articulating, describing and expanding on the emotions that I feel as I ride. Except Andy misses the point and by a country mile (apart from his views on the 'merits' of GPS/sat navs).

While accurately capturing the emotions he is still hooked on the warp factor capabilities of his machine and into his

attempts at proving he is capable of getting anywhere close to fully exploiting them. Which is pathetic simply because very few riders are capable of doing that on the race track let alone on the UK's public roads. If it were otherwise then we would see BSB, WSB and Moto GP grids with tens of thousands of riders instead of the paltry few that currently entertain us for 20 weeks each year.

My riding has evolved over the years from always tearing around the countryside as if trying to escape from a swarm of hornets to maximising the moment within the confines of the ride, be it a trip to the shops, the daily commute, a ride-out with friends or a touring trip into Europe. Successfully avoiding the worst potholes, being sideswiped by cagers or pinned between HGVs and railings/roundabouts while trying to make any sort of progress between points A and B all heighten the emotional high that the ride delivers. But by riding at speeds that show only marginal, and not total, disregard for motoring law I get to see so much more. My observation allows me to pull up and take in views and events that to Andy are no more than a SMIDSY moment.

So Mr Gurman, I hope that TRD remains (almost) totally

devoid of the drivel that is and can only be written by sportsbike riders as they hoon around at breakneck speeds attempting to maximise the element of danger while at the same time trying to keep the grim reaper off their shoulder. Tales of two wheeled exploration of near and distant lands, many of which I will only see on digital TV channels is right up my street. Reading about those moments of interaction with locals, the confrontations with authority in foreign lands, the communication difficulties brought by not speaking the same language and the joys of overcoming language and cultural barriers to enjoy landscapes (natural and urbane) are what whet my appetite. That is the reading that motivates me to pull my machine out on a wet and windy day for the journey to my place of stupendously boredom for yet another day, another dollar.

Phil Cooper
Derby

As I say in my editorial Phil, I am happy to offer space to anyone who isn't being intentionally offensive (and even then, depending on the language they choose and the circumstances...), you can always skip past the bits that you don't like (as Paul does above) or write to us as you have on this occasion articulating

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your objections; either way we're glad you're reading – Ed

Hi Dave,

Love your mag. Just read "The Magic Roundabout" in 173. I wish the rest of the world could read it too. A Roundabout is just a short road that runs in a circle, and normal rules, priorities and courtesies apply. It's actually easier than most roads, because you can only join, or leave, from the left (in the UK). Nuff said.

But, alas, I hate reading it. Let me explain.

I want to read it on my Kindle, and download it from my netbook (whose screen is too small for the Flash version) as a PDF. With a full two-page spread on the Kindle screen, the text is far too small to read, so I magnify it 200% for comfort, and the page is too big to fit on screen. To read down a column, I have to cursor down twice, and to get to the top of the next column I have to cursor up twice and across once. Do that four times then (if you have kept track of how many columns you have reads) press page for the next page.

This all gets out of sync when you come across a picture, which may be one, two or four columns wide by a full page or half a page high. There is no way I can get into reading mode, because driving the Kindle is so intrusive.

Borrow a Kindle, and read a few pages yourself, to see what I mean.

If I wish to look at a picture, I have to go back to "Fit to Screen" mode to view it, then back to 200% to read some more. Ugh!

Not so with Kindle-format e-books. You get one page at a time, no matter what font size you are using, or whether it is text or a picture, and controlling the Kindle is not intrusive. That's ePublishing.

Another problem is that I don't necessarily want to read the articles in the order they are printed. For example, I might want to read "Boy Biker" first. I need an active index to do that, which is available on the Kindle. Click on the entry in the index, and it jumps there. Use the Kindle "GoTo" command to go back to the index, and choose another article. Lovely. Just like a book, or magazine.

The only way to do it at present is to turn over 83 pages, or whatever number is needed, and turn back that number of pages to return to the index, and turn over x pages to get to the next item I want to read. No, it's not possible.

TRD is no longer a paper publication, and moving to e-Publishing was a major change. It makes no sense at all to continue publishing it as a two-page spread, as this is not

suited to the seven or nine inch displays on e-readers. Yes, if you happen to be reading it on a big computer screen, it looks good, but I get really tired holding it up in bed!

If your publisher says "That's the way it comes out", it's only because he's using the wrong program to lay it out. E-Books exist, so there must be programs available for laying them out. He would have a learning curve to climb, and he'd have to create the style template, but only once, but he'd also be able to take on another type of business once he gets used to it.

I fear that you are missing the point of e-Publishing (convenience), and your readership will suffer as a result. I really hope you can overcome this hurdle, and get the best from the medium, because I really love your mag, and don't want it to disappear again.

Very best wishes

Alan

(Grumpy of Guernsey)

Thanks for that feedback Alan (or may I call you Grumpy?) I'm sure there must be other hi-tech readers who share your frustrations. In spite of being an ever so slightly ageing dog our designer is very willing to learn new tricks so he is looking in to how to be as e-friendly as possible. Once again, watch these pages – Ed



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