

RiDE'S MONTH IN BIKES



CHANGES IN THE LAW

Nice to CE you

From now on, all new motorcycle gear on sale must be CE approved and marked

THE LAW ON bike kit has changed. From April 21, any gear sold as motorcycle apparel is classed as personal protective equipment (PPE) so has to meet a quality standard and get a CE mark to prove it. Older readers may remember the BSI kitemark, showing a product had passed tests with the British Standards Institute. The CE mark – standing for *Conformité Européenne* (calm down, Mr Farage) – indicates a garment has been tested to the current standard, common across the European Union countries.

Where it gets complicated is that there are different CE standards for different things. For example, in the past it's been common for the armour in jackets to be tested to a CE standard while the rest of the jacket is stitched together but not tested in any way.

Now jackets and trousers join gloves and boots in having an overall PPE standard to meet to get a CE mark. A few manufacturers did already test some (or all) of their gear to CE levels – but most didn't. There are two levels of CE approval for armour (level one the basic standard and level two the higher) but at the moment, there's only one level for CE gloves, boots and clothing.

Does this mean my kit is illegal if it isn't CE marked? No. This affects only kit being sold to you as motorcycling equipment from now on, not gear you've already bought.

Should I replace my old non-CE kit? Definitely not. If it's still in good condition and works properly, then there's no need.

Will it make buying kit more expensive? The cost of the tests needed to earn a CE mark is bound to be passed on to us as consumers, but kit manufacturers have known about this for a while so you shouldn't suddenly see an extra tenner on the price of every bit of gear. The likelihood is that some prices will go up, some ranges will simplify, some models will run for longer before being updated... and some low-cost lines will probably just quietly disappear.

Will it actually make kit better? It shouldn't make any difference to

decent kit. Top-end gear from established biking brands should meet or exceed the standard anyway. Well-made budget kit should be fine too. Gear will fail if it's shoddily made, uses poor materials or simply isn't designed to be tough enough for use on bikes. And that's best avoided anyway...

Can we just forget about it after Brexit? That won't really make any difference: none of the large-scale manufacturers will make one set of kit for Britain and another for the EU. Any UK-based firm looking to export will still have to meet the standards and get bike gear CE marked.

What if I don't want to wear CE bike kit? You don't have to. The law only says that you have to wear a crash helmet (which will have met a CE standard unless it's an antique). If you want to ride in shorts and a string vest, you still can, as long as you have your lid on. You'd be mad, but you could do it...



Honda goes bananas...

ICONIC MONKEY RETURNS

Modern Monkey magic

HONDA'S ICONIC MONKEY bike is back. Due in dealers by August, the 2018 Monkey is powered by an air-cooled, fuel-injected, two-valve 125cc single making a heady 9bhp. It's the same engine used in Honda's MSX125, while the rest of the Monkey's specs aren't too dissimilar either. It has a low seat height of 776mm, an incredibly short wheelbase of 1155mm (no, that's not a typo), rolls on titchy 12in wheels and barely budges the scales at just 107kg. Best tie it down in a stiff breeze then...

Styling is a tasteful homage to the

decades of Monkey heritage, a family of minibikes that dates back to 1961. But there's a deceptive level of modern tech too, including an LCD dash, all-LED lighting, and an IMU-informed ABS system which prevents stoppies.

Perhaps the Monkey's most impressive feature is its claimed 189mpg fuel economy, giving a theoretical range of 233 miles – greater than Honda's Crosstourer. But while running costs will be low, the Monkey's price might not be. It's likely to be above the MSX125, suggesting a pricetag of £3500–£4000.

CUSTOMISABLE HELMETS

Head swap

HERE'S A NOVEL idea: a crash helmet where you can change the look. The Qwart Phoenix is a super-light (1100g) carbon-fibre helmet on which you can swap the chin-bar cover, visor surround and vents to tailor the look. It's available in two forms: Standard has a visor; Slick is designed to be used with goggles so doesn't have the visor mechanism.

Lined in suede or leather, there's a huge colour range (or you can have it in matt carbon) and it's available in sizes XS to XL, with a wide range of replacement parts to be swapped when you want to change the look.

The Standard costs £605 (painted) or £640 (carbon); the Slick costs £595 (carbon only). For more info, see dot4distribution.com



A huge range of colours and finishes for a world of possibilities

Interchangeable parts let you create a unique look and feel

Good month for...

▲ **SAM SUNDERLAND**

After becoming the first Brit to win the Dakar Rally in 2017, KTM rider Sam Sunderland received the prestigious Segrave Trophy from the RAC. It makes him only the ninth motorcyclist since 1930 to receive the prize, awarded for "outstanding skill, courage and initiative on land, water and in air – the Spirit of Adventure".



▲ **SUZUKI ADVENTURE TRIPS**

Suzuki has launched a new range of aluminium luggage for its V-Strom 1000 (see p86 for how to buy a used one). The three-piece kit offers 112 litres of carrying capacity. Including fitting, it costs £1195 – which is substantial but saves more than £300 over buying the elements individually. If you're in the market for a smaller, A2 adventure bike, the V-Strom 250 comes with free panniers (worth £625) until the end of June.



▲ **JIM MEMBERSHIP**

A brief congratulations to RiDE's Jim Blackstock, who passed his test and is now ready to terrorise the mean streets of Bedfordshire... See the New Rider supplement for his story.

Bad month for...

▼ **WEATHER**

Look, we all know it's rubbish. Never mind the hottest April day for 70 years and one scorching weekend... by May Day we were scraping ice off the saddle in the morning and there were yellow rain warnings across virtually all of the country. If this is climate change, you can just keep it...



▼ **TAX**

Yes, road tax has gone up again – to £88 a year (or £64 for 401-600cc, £42 for 151-400cc and £19 for sub-150cc). That's ironic given the steadily deteriorating condition of the road network in the UK. According to a recent survey by the European Commission, the UK wasn't in the top-ten countries for road quality by mid-2017 – with worse roads than Cyprus, Croatia and Finland. The best roads were in Holland, France and Portugal.