

BIKER **DOWN** WISE **UP**

Leicestershire has some of the best biking roads in the country as well as two international race circuits; Donington Park and Mallory Park. No wonder the county is incredibly popular with motorcyclists. Most of these ride responsibly but some don't, which is why Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) has taken on a Triumph ST1050GT and converted it into their Firebike, which forms part of their new BikerDown! training package. If you're wondering what BikerDown! is, read on and we'll tell all - including how it might save your life, or the life of one of your friends...



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FIREBIKE

As a motorcyclist, you are hugely vulnerable, so it's no surprise that a disproportionate number of bikers are killed on our roads. The number of biker casualties has remained static in recent years whilst those riding machines up to 125cc are involved in an ever-increasing number of collisions.

With this in mind, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) has created its own Firebike, which you will be able to see at events around the county this year. The bright red 1.0-litre Triumph Sprint is purely a show vehicle; it's not used operationally. That's not to say it doesn't have some

bells and whistles though! It's had blue lights fitted along with eye-catching high-vis decals to look like the regular LFRS response vehicles.

The Firebike team consists of a small number of experienced firefighters who are also accomplished riders. Each one has passed

a DSA Enhanced Rider Scheme course and achieved the highest possible grade.

LFRS' Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, Andrew Brodie explains, "You always ride with a helmet and perhaps your motorcycle has ABS. But such measures make only a small difference to how safe you are, compared with your riding behaviour. Motorcycle riding means taking full responsibility for your own safety, such as by learning to anticipate the mistakes of others.

Motorcycling is a skill for life and any skill needs to be practised, honed and developed. If you haven't been on the bike for a while, ease yourself back into

riding gently and think about refresher training.

When you've had a good, safe ride, what made it good? Where it hasn't, what issues have been a factor, such as group pressure, lack of practice, tiredness, distraction, anger, or stress?"

“Having a licence doesn't make you a safe rider, any more than having a lottery ticket makes you a millionaire”

Triumph have very generously donated each of the Firebike Team with full set of riding apparel



KILLER FACTS

- Bikers account for about 1% of road users but approximately 20% of road deaths.
- Motorcyclists are eight times more likely to be in a crash than a car driver, and 24 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured.
- 95% of all road accidents involve some human error and in 76% of road accidents the human is solely to blame.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

There are **THREE** key messages attached to the Firebike initiative:

1 Always ensure that your riding clothing is in good usable condition, and conforms to current EU and BS standards

2 Register for BikerDown! training (see over for further details)

3 Take advanced rider training to become safer and more competent on your bike, whatever your age or experience

WHERE CAN I SEE THE FIREBIKE?

The Service is keen to show off their Firebike, which is why you will be able to see it at all sorts of events across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland this year.

EVENTS INCLUDE:

- Club meets across the county
- British and World Superbike Championships
- Race events at Mallory Park and Donington Park

- Community Station Open Days
- The Firebike team will also hold Pit Stops at biker-friendly cafes, where they will be available for free rider safety advice



Avoiding crashes and knowing how to deal with one are skills that too many motorcyclists don't have. But a free solution is at hand...

An advanced riding course can make you a better rider and bring even greater enjoyment to your ride. To make it as easy as possible for you, LFRS offers a free course called BikerDown!, available to biking communities, clubs and organisations as well as individuals. As bikers tend to ride in groups or pairs, when a motorcyclist is involved in an accident the first person on the scene is usually a fellow biker.

Paul Speight from LFRS' Road Safety Team explained: "It's easy to think it won't happen to you, but sadly crashes involving bikers are far from unusual. That's why

the BikerDown! programme was created (originally an initiative created by Kent Fire and Rescue Service) - for bikers to help each other, and also to prevent crashes happening in the first place".

You don't have to make a huge time commitment, as this three-module course takes just three hours to complete.

TOPICS COVERED ARE:

1 What to do when first on a crash scene involving a motorcyclist, and how to ensure your own safety.

You'll find out what information you need to help

the emergency services as well as any moral obligations.

2 Basic life-saving first aid: understanding trauma and injury. You will learn all you need to know about snatch rescues plus the basics of life support, as well as details of how to give CPR, managing spinal injuries and when and how to safely remove a crash helmet.

3 How to be more visible: You will receive tips and advice on how you can make yourself more visible without covering yourself from head to toe in hi-vis reflective yellow.

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