

Road Rage? Me? *** off!**

Ok – so I admit I do suffer from the odd bout of road rage – yes I do get annoyed at the antics of some so called drivers. But who wouldn't? I mean, some people just don't know how to drive, do they?

Actually I didn't think I did suffer from road rage until I saw a programme on it and realised that some of the filming could have been of me! It was then that I realised that I was a sufferer. Maybe not as bad as them, but yes, I needed to attend Road Ragers Anonymous.

I suppose it really came to a head a couple of years ago. Our closest motorway island was made into a total disaster area by some numpty who not only put lights on it, but also decided they would mark out the lanes based on which road off the island you were taking.

Now this might sound a good idea, until you realise that there are actually five major roads onto and off this island, there are five sets of traffic lights, and the island is about as big as a ten pence piece!

Not only that, but the (so called) expert road planners have you changing lanes about every two cars lengths – so no-one ever really knows which lane you should be in – except the locals of course, who use it every day.

And it was definitely a local who went up the wrong lane to cut out three cars, and then blew his horn at me when I moved from one correct lane to another, which meant I cut across him – deliberately I might add because I saw exactly what he was doing and it annoyed me.

My manoeuvre was correct and legal – whilst he was just being a smart Alec. So when he blew his horn I did the natural thing – I indicated to him that he should have been in lane number two!!

He didn't like that! But then again, he wasn't supposed to! Idiot!

But I really wasn't expecting his next move, which was to indicate that we should pull over and have this out – with our fists! Now I might be just over six foot, but when it comes to a good old fashioned punch up, I'm a right flossie! Even more so when I noticed his number plate – it started with B16 – as in "Big...".

So I followed him round the next bend and as we went past a left turn, I took it rather suddenly, on the basis that he was in front of me and therefore I could lose him easily (my house was only a mile up the road and I didn't want him to see where I lived!)

Trouble is, he braked hard, shoved his Beamer into reverse and came after me. Well, he must have thought I was either lost or lived in a very strange place because I went up one road, down the next until he eventually calmed down and gave up. Only then did I go home!

And did this cure me? Nope! But I did learn a few tricks to help with my self preservation which I believe it is my duty to pass on to all members of the TVR Car Club so that they don't find themselves in a ruck with some big hairy backed gorilla!

Based on the fact that there will always be some "wally" drivers who will cause road rage – here are my top five things to ensure survival (best done before the incident starts rather than after):

1. Check for bumper or rear window stickers on opponent's car! "Make peace not war" and "I forgive you because I have been forgiven" are probably fine, and if you want to exercise a bit of road rage, you shouldn't find yourself in too much trouble.

On the other hand, cars with stickers like, "Keep honking while I reload", "Armed pitbull with Aids on board!" and "I don't have a licence to kill but I do have a learners permit" should probably be treated with a little respect.

Even if the occupants appear friendly, you never know whether it was them who put the sticker on, or a previous owner now doing 5 years for GBH! Best not to take the chance.

2. Check the occupants. Some should obviously be avoided, like anyone with H-A-T-E tattooed on their foreheads or any visible bits of metalwork sticking out of their heads or with muscles on their muscles. But it's very easy to be caught out. That nun might be a bloke called Harry on his way to a fancy dress party (actually there's a joke about that – about a taxi driver who took a nun as a passenger and admitted he had always wanted to snog a nun, so she let him – tongues and all – then discovered it was our friend Harry on his way to that fancy dress party!).

And beware the little grey haired old ladies driving 1.1 Metros. Most carry handbags that are as heavy as lump hammers, and umbrellas with lethal spikes. Take one of these on at your own peril (and don't say I didn't warn you!). They can be more dangerous than a Rottweiler with attitude!

3. Check for damage to their car (and the age of their car). Knackered old heaps and cars with lots of dents indicate either someone who is very careless or someone who doesn't really mind thumping into another road user. And it probably isn't insured either!

Now items 1, 2 and 3 above are somewhat important, as any one of them would point to someone to be avoided. But put all three together and you've got a recipe for disaster.

So, beware the fifteen year old Sierra with loads of bumps and scratches, a bumper sticker that says "Don't get me mad! I'm running out of places to hide the bodies!" and a chap driving with more tattoos than pale skin who is salivating as he watches you!

Another little tip is to check for the car stickers on the side of his car – a row of cars with crosses through them, indicating the number he has smashed into, is definitely a bad sign.

4.Ensure you can outrun them

Shouldn't be a problem for most TVR owners, but you can get caught out if the other person is in something a bit special or if the traffic is against you.

Best thing to do is to always ensure you have a clear road ahead and plenty of gas. Then if for any reason you feel that perhaps you have underestimated the growl factor of the person in the other car, just hit the gas pedal!

5.Carry a loaded shotgun, just in case! (OK perhaps a little OTT).

But if you do get caught in such a situation, there is a simple answer – just wind your window down (don't get out) and say *“if we going to argue about this, could you get my wheelchair out of the boot for me....”* Works every time!

Follow these guidelines and you should be fine. Happy Road Raging!

David G10TVR Morgan