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Mr D. Jones - Editor
Isle of Man Newspapers
18 Finch Road
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By post & email: newsdesk@mediaiom.im

Dear Mr Jones

RE: Opinion to Editor – “The horns of a TT dilemma”.

The TT races are part of me. I have lived most of my life beside the course in Kirk Michael. As a boy I used to cycle with my brother up to Barregarrow and Cronk-y-Voddy to watch the bikes, sat on a grassy hedge with corned beef and pickle sandwiches, Marathon chocolate bars and sharing a bottle of cream soda.

In those days there was practising at 6.00 am in the morning and I remember watching at Rhencullen when Joey Dunlop won a wet race in the rain. And I still have my little orange autograph book with signatures inside from the likes of Mick Grant and Siegfried Schauzu.

To my mind, the TT is not just the greatest motorcycle event in the world, it is one of the iconic sporting events in global sport and the riders are the bravest of the brave, modern day Odysseus, Ajax and Achilles.

And yet. And yet my conscience is increasingly troubled.

This year the rider Daniel Ingham sadly became the 271st contestant (TT and Manx Grand Prix) to be killed on the Snaefell Mountain Course; eight spectators in Ramsey were injured in a shocking crash involving a competitor's machine and the whole Sidecar class extraordinarily abandoned as unsafe.



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In addition, for each of those 271 dead riders, there are likely to have been 271 bereft mothers, 271 heartbroken wives or partners and 271 inconsolable little children.

Moreover, each individual fatality can be multiplied at least 10 times for the number of those racers catastrophically maimed and livelihoods brutally destroyed.

This year Michael Dunlop was clocked at a staggering 203 mph through Sulby Village, the reigning champion's sidecar flipped over at Crosby Leap and a lady entrant Maria Costello has cruelly been left partially paralysed following a horrifying crash near Brandish Corner.

In 1911 the fastest TT lap was a sedate 47.63 mph. In 2026, the fastest lap is an amazing 136.35 mph, nearly three times faster than in 1911, on essentially the same circuit layout.

Quite simply, are the speeds now just too high for this event on public roads through towns and villages? Has a Rubicon been crossed? Put another way, balancing the glory, exhilaration and fanfare against the suffering, grief and tragedy, what is the answer to this fundamental philosophical question: *"Is it ethically right for the TT Races to continue"*?

I find myself torn between chilled champagne and warm blood; between race records and traadylloar; between turning a blind eye and speaking out; between the waved chequered flag and stationary red flag, between huge profits and civic responsibility; between victors' garlands and funeral wreaths; between absolutely respecting riders' choice and being complicit in carnage; between the silver Marquis de Mouzilly Trophy and a black urn of ashes; between 37¼ miles and infinity; between feeling thrilled and feeling guilty; between a racing pulse and no pulse; between heart stopping and gut wrenching; between the supremacy of freedom and the sanctity of life; between skid marks and tear stains; between petrol fumes and thy sweet mountain air; between the sidecar and the wheelchair and truly torn between looking forward to welcoming everyone again next year and saying tearfully, the fondest, but final, farewell to our dearest friend, the IOM TT Races.

Yours sincerely

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