

Digby Brown Racing: A 120 mph business card

Stephen Moore talks to Brenda Mitchell of Digby Brown about her racetrack success, single vehicle accidents and the new Motorcycle Law Department.

I have been reading about Digby Brown Racing in the local press recently. What is this and how did it come about?

Digby Brown Racing is our own motorcycle racing team competing in the Scottish 600cc Supersport Championships and the Sound of Thunder Championship.

Have you personally had an interest in motorcycling for a while?

Yes, for a long while. I got my full motorcycle license when I was 18. I gave up road bikes just before I got married but now my whole family is involved in off-road motorcycling.

In terms of motorcycle accident claims, is there a different approach required to cater for motorcycle accidents as opposed to RTA claims in general?

Definitely. Motorcyclists are more vulnerable to serious injury and so we work closely with our Brain and Spinal Injury Unit headed by Robert Swanney. We recognise that the medical condition and quality of life of an injured motorcyclist may be improved by early intervention including the carrying out of an immediate needs assessment. Further, a large number of motorcyclists are involved in single vehicle accidents where there has been a catastrophic loss of control as a result of a road surface defect. This includes for example diesel spills, pot-holes and overbanding. It is important to understand how a bike will perform or not perform when it hits a defect in the road surface.

We have always had a Motorcycle Claims Unit, but did not really promote it as a separate department until April of this year when we formally set up the Motorcycle Law Department.

Do other solicitors, perhaps less experienced in this area, pass this type of work onto you?

Some do but many don't. We do, however, offer referral packages to other solicitors. I have seen a number of cases where a motorcyclist has gone to another solicitor with a tricky single vehicle accident claim and we have provided an opinion, or assistance, or taken on the case using our Compensate funding package. In Brain and Spinal Injury cases, we adopt a holistic approach to the claims process and subscribe fully to The Rehabilitation Code of Practice. Having key resources of access to funding and specialist knowledge are paramount when you are dealing with a case involving either a spinal cord or acquired brain injury.

Do you look to employ solicitors and staff who have an interest in motorcycling?

Experience of riding bikes is something that is definitely of benefit. We work closely with John Macdonald, one of our team riders and a Director of Pro-Scot. John has achieved the highest grade for a motorcycle instructor and is the six times Scottish Motorcycle Road Race Champion. We also use experts with a background in Motorcycling and utilise our large database of specific motorcycle case law. All our qualified assistants

within The Motorcycle Law Department are familiar with The Motorcycle Roadcraft Manual; essential reading for experts in Motorcycle Accident law!

How are your other partners about having a race team carrying the firm's name?

We have been involved in sponsoring young riders for years. From there it was a natural transition to set up Digby Brown Racing, which is confined to racing in Scotland and The North of England with the exception of The Manx GP. John Macdonald of ProScot approached us with the idea and we all thought it was fantastic.

From a strategic point of view, we now get a lot more exposure. Digby Brown is a 'well kent' face on the Scottish motorcycle racing scene. It was just one of those decisions that was incredibly easy to make.

What reaction has there been from Motorcyclists?

Motorcyclists often have different needs and requirements compared to other victims of road traffic accidents and the reaction from them has been very positive. We are seen as being the one firm offering an involved service to motorcyclists because we are passionate about racing and motorcycling in general. The passion that we have is far more effective than a business card, a brochure or an advert.

From your own work perspective it must be great marrying work with a passion you have out of work?

It is an added bonus. I have always been extremely enthusiastic about my work but when you add in the bonus of a hobby you get a whole new level of enjoyment and drive.

Are other partners and staff getting into it?

Totally – colleagues are coming along to the events with their families, meeting the riders and enjoying the hospitality of the Team within the paddock area.

And how is Digby Brown Racing getting on?

Extremely well. Derek Glass is leading the Sound of Thunder Championship and John Macdonald is currently leading the Scottish 600 cc Supersport Championship. You can't get much better than that.

What type of bikes are you racing?

We have been racing the highly competitive Triumph 675 Triples and it is great to see Triumph, a British manufacturer, up there leading the way in Scottish racing. The Triumphs bring a real 'wow' factor.

So are you the new Bernie Ecclestone of Scottish Motorcycling!

Not quite as far as funding is concerned but just as enthusiastic...