



Heading into peace and quiet

Recent research has shown that 40 per cent of professional motorcyclists – such as police officers, paramedics, instructors and racers – have incurred significant hearing loss from the noise created when air flows over their helmets. The fear is that many ordinary motorcyclists who ride regularly are damaging their hearing too.

A new project has begun to establish the extent of hearing damage in motorcyclists and to find ways of reducing it. Engineers hope to find the causes of the noise that damages hearing and, in the longer term, to use aircraft noise limitation technology to reduce the damage caused.

The team has begun the project by inviting motorcyclists to take part in a survey to give details of their riding, the type of equipment they use and their hearing. This will give them an idea of how widespread the problem of hearing loss is, before they begin to design a quieter helmet.

The research project is being carried out by a team led by Dr Michael Carley (pictured), of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Bath, in collaboration with Bath Spa University.

The University of Bath is part of the Prohelm network of European universities, research institutes and companies, which aims to study how helmets affect riders' performance and safety.