

Winter 2017

# ***FULL CHAT***

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



## SAM Officers

Chair	Richard Pearse	07779 285666
Secretary	Peter Herridge	07866 723128
Treasurer	Paul Dyer	01935 474220
Membership Sec.	Mark Livingstone	01278 653361
Events Coordinator	Jez Martin	07590 368808
Associate Co-ord.	Rob Bartlett	01823 336941
Publicity Officer	Ken Octon	07970 114619
Sponsorship & Advertising	Andy Spiers	07876 102602
Full Chat Editorial Team	Gina Herridge	07745 052815
	Graham Tulloch	07825 201650



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*Front Cover: Adam Evans after successfully passing his Advanced Test at the age of 19.*



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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



New Year, new bike? Oh, no, wait.... The little Fazer 800 is still a work in progress, and actually, had a very good

Christmas. First I bought him some Vulcanet at the Bike Show. You may have seen Dale Stote's Google + post about this stuff. It's designed to be a water-less cleaning system, where you basically wipe off the crud with the specially impregnated wipes and then polish off. Hey presto! However, at £30 for 80 odd wipes, it's quite expensive at 3 or more wipes per bike clean, so I've modified the technique by using Muck Off and the pressure washer, drying and then attacking with the wipe (singular if most of the dirt is gone). What is most brilliant about this stuff is that it seems to apply a slightly dirt repellent coating so that it's easier to remove the dirt the next time. Plus he looks in showroom condition since it works on paint, plastics, black bits, exhaust and everything else. (Did I mention that he has

gold wheels?) I also got an Air Hawk cushion for Christmas from my mum (she might have had some inside advice for that one) so longer rides should be a bit more comfy. Peter bought me some really brilliant (literally, this time) fog lamps for the bike, too. I've long moaned about how pathetic his headlights are, and I can't wait to get out and try these, but that brings me to another seasonal hazard: Commiserations to any of the rest of you who have had the dread flu - like virus. I am



still struggling with it, nearly 5 weeks in, and hardly feeling well enough to ride even now, if the weather is at all iffy. Unfortunately iffy weather is a fact of life at this time of year, and even for the New Year's Day ride I felt that although I could just about ride it, I couldn't face making the beautiful bike dirty, so I took the little Serow instead.



Many thanks from Graham and from me to the contributors for this edition of Full Chat. Let us have any other articles or snippets you may have (what did your bike get for Christmas?) for the next one by mid April.

**Gina Herridge**

## ***CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS***

I'm beginning to perk up, the shortest day is well behind us now and there is a discernible extension of daylight particularly in the afternoon/evening. My thoughts are turning towards better biking weather in a month or so, and plans for long weekends away and even a biking holiday are making their way to the front of my mind. I'm already hoping for a good summer!



By the time you read this our first event of the year, The Bristol Classic Bike Show, will have taken place. Organised this year by Ken Octon, he has put a lot of effort into ensuring that we as a club put our best foot forward. Our drive this year at this (and other) events is attracting new members to our club via taster rides. In terms of membership we are as strong as we ever have been, but that does not stop us spreading the word, in particular to attract younger riders to safer riding.

Also looming up on the horizon is the South West Peninsula Spring Rally, taking place on April 1<sup>st</sup>. We had a record entry last year and I'm hopeful



that this year will be equally good. It makes up for all the hard work put in organising this event when riders come from all over the country and are complimentary about the event and its friendly approach. The event has grown in size through word of mouth, which is a credit to all involved. Thanks to the

efforts of one of our club members we may have a bit of support this year from a major motor cycle clothing manufacture (no.46 wouldn't be seen on a bike without them is your clue), more next time if it goes to plan.

Staying with the Rally, if there are any club members that would like to take part (and I hope there are lots) and you would like some company on the way round, or perhaps it's your first Rally, please let me know or put a note on your entry form (obtained from the SAM web site) and I will pair you up with a SAM member or two for company.

Finally, our club is in need of a secretary. Peter H has expressed a wish to stand down after many years' service. Peter will continue to be an IAM Ambassador and maintain the club links with the IAM and I know plenty of assistance/guidance will be available from Peter during the hand-over period. So if you believe you could fill this role for us then please have a word with me or Peter. If you would like some more information then Peter is your man.

**Richard Pearse**



## SAM NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS!

*When you pass your test, please inform Graham Tulloch or Gina Herdridge so it can be included in Full Chat to encourage us all.*

To the following members for passing their IAM test:

- Tom Williams on 17th September, observed by Keith Johnston, riding a Triumph Thunderbird.
- Anthony Woods on 19th November riding a Suzuki GSXR1000, earning himself a F1RST. Anthony was observed by Dale Stote.
- Adam Evans on 27th November, observed by Graham Tulloch, riding a Yamaha YZFR125.
- Mik Simonetti also on 27th November, observed by Lisa Parsons and riding a BMW F700GS.
- Greg Souster on 3rd December riding a Kawasaki ER6f, observed by Dave Watson.



**Thank you to all observers for your help**

### CONTACT DETAILS

If your contact details change (especially email address), please inform Mark Livingstone so that we can keep you informed of the latest news and events.



## Committee Meetings

i.e. what we are doing in your name; all members are welcome to attend Committee meetings to keep an eye on us. Equally, if anyone has a comment to make on any matters mentioned here, please contact a committee member to let us know.



The minutes of the last Committee meeting held at The Old Pound, Wearne on 10th January 2017 will be emailed to members.

## Training Experiences

***New members of SAM often ask what more there is for them to do to develop their riding: here Rick Stowell describes his own achievements to that end.***



“In the 3 years since I passed my Advanced test, I have always been looking to improve my knowledge and riding skills, by way of reading, Internet, youtube, taking advice and riding etc.

Every year I need to set myself goals to achieve: don't ask me why, I just need to.

So after passing my test my next goal was to be an observer.

Thanks to Gina and Peter for changing their observer training days to Saturday afternoons from Tuesday evenings because due to work, I couldn't make Tuesdays. I started training to become a local



observer in the 2nd year and at the same time I also decided I wanted to do my Masters test and organise a 10 day group ride down to Switzerland.

I decided in January 2015 to do all the above, and I managed to do it by July the same year.



I failed my 1<sup>st</sup> Masters test due to putting too much pressure on myself, and rode like a novice. At the end of the test I said to Robbie Downing, my examiner, "If that is a pass then you have very low standards." I was really disappointed in myself. After my 15 questions, he confirmed to me that I was correct in my assumption that I had not passed. Then he gave me a brilliant 45 minute debrief: I knew exactly where I went wrong, and knew how to correct my errors. I learnt loads from the debrief and advice given to me by Robbie.

I rode home back to Taunton from Bristol down the M5, feeling a bit sorry for myself. When I got home I went straight on IAM website and rebooked my Masters test which came through 4 weeks later. I met Robbie at Weston-super-Mare and straight away he put me at ease by saying, "Forget what happened last time." I was also in a different frame of mind this time, and was just going to ride like I normally ride; I knew what to expect. We went all over the Mendips and finished off going down Cheddar Gorge to a cafe. I sat down, got asked my 15 questions, 5 Highway Code, 5 Motorcycle Roadcraft, and 5 System. I was then told that I had passed. I had clean forgotten I was doing a test and said that even if I had failed, I thoroughly enjoyed myself on the ride.

The following week was my group ride that I had organised to Swit-

zerland, but that's another story.

The following year (2016) I told Peter that I would like to train up to be a National observer. After attending the training day at Mudford, and feedback from my trainer, I then had a mock test with Peter who



gave me some good pointers and advice. I put in for my test which was conducted by Robbie Downing. This time the boot was on the other foot, I had to pick him up on his faults and coach him on how to correct them while he was acting as

an associate. All went well and I passed the test.

In 2016 I also got 3 people, 2 male and 1 female, through their advanced tests.

Almost forgot; in January I decided to do a 1,000 mile ride in 24hrs for charity. My ride was Wellington, Oxford, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, back down to Newport, across the old Severn Bridge and back down to Wellington. I managed to do it in 18 hours despite heavy snow from Edinburgh to Preston.

I also did another 1,000 mile ride in 24hrs, in May with Tom Moore, Jez Martin and Robert Bartlett – John O'Groats to Penzance, via Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdonia, which we did in 22 hours.

In July 2016 I did another 10 day ride over to Switzerland with a different group of riders.

In November while looking on the Internet I came across the RoSPA site and ended up clicking on the link to take their advanced motorcycle test. I think it is important to make sure that you are on top of your game if you are coaching riders to the standard of an advanced

rider in readiness for their test.

My RoSPA test was on Saturday the 17th December. I met my examiner at Costas, Hankridge, Taunton. I didn't tell him I had passed my test with IAM or that I was an observer, I didn't want him to pre-judge.

I am glad to say I passed with their highest standard, a gold award. I did tell him at the end of the test when he gave me my result what I had done. I was more interested in his test report and feedback than the award. The RoSPA Examiner did mention in his report that "It was a very progressive ride, with no opportunity missed to make progress"!

2017 plans: 550 mile ride around Wales in March, in a day. Scotland NC500, with 6 other riders and then riding back from JOGs in one hit again with Tom Moore."

**Rick Stowell**

### ***BAWAM Skills Day @ Castle Combe***

Following my report on the Thruxton skills day in Full Chat (Summer 2016), I started to prepare my BMW K1300S for the next skills day at Castle Combe. So, after an oil and filter change and brake fluid change, we were good to go. Or so I thought.

Castle Combe have an extremely strict noise policy placed upon them by the local council, such that some standard bikes fail the noise test. As a precaution I took my bike over to the circuit to be tested prior to the event, thinking it would be a simple formality. No

such luck, I was 2 decibels over the limit, so that was that!

I should add that my bike is a totally standard BMW K1300S Motorsport and whilst it has an Akrapovic silencer, it is original factory equipment and is fully baffled; however, all to no avail.

Only one thing for it then, dust down the "big scooter" (aka – Honda Crosstourer auto) and go on that!

This skills day was organised by Bournemouth Advanced group direct with the circuit, so there was no IAM involvement as such

and the format was different from Thruxton.

The morning session was split into two halves, slow speed control off the circuit and braking techniques on the circuit.

The slow speed riding was in fact great fun, a mixture of figure of eights around cones, following the lines of cones around ever decreasing circles followed by a slalom course, at the end of which you had to stop the bike, balance for 3 seconds and then ride off. The Honda proved to be the ideal bike for this with upright riding position and good steering lock. On the BMW it wouldn't have been so easy.

Next we went to the circuit for some braking practice. The instructor was getting us to snatch at the brake levers in order to lock up the front and back wheels respectively, in order to demonstrate what happens if you don't load the suspension first and apply the brakes progressively. In any event, it didn't work on my bike, as the linked ABS just stops the bike without drama, which is precisely what you want to happen anyway!

After lunch we were split into three groups, Advanced, Intermediate and Novice and let loose on the track. This worked really well





as only one group were on the track at any one time and so speed and ability was constant.

Using the manual settings on the auto box on the Honda was absolutely brilliant, as I could really focus on braking for the corner, thumb the down-change button at the last minute and around you go; then change up through the gears exiting the corner on full throttle, click, click, click! It makes pulling in the clutch lever, blipping the throttle and changing gear with your foot seem almost quaint by comparison!

I had recently fitted new tyres on the Honda, Metzeler's new Roadtec 01's. These proved a revelation on track and despite hard braking and acceleration, gripped superbly and didn't cut-up at all, despite running at the standard road pressures of 36f 42r.

So to sum up, another well organised great day out on a top circuit.

**Nigel Short**

## ***BIKING NEWS***

### ***Growing Old Disgracefully***

I know a few of you have noticed my ULYSSES CLUB hi-vis waistcoat, since one or two have asked what it's about.

**Ulysses Club** can be defined as a social and touring club for older riders. It was started in Australia by veteran Stephen Dearnley, who wanted to carry on socialising and riding with his mates in civilian life. The name came from Tennyson's poem, which is about an ageing king who gets bored ruling a peaceful kingdom and wants to go off exploring again with his old mates.

Stephen consciously distanced it from the many rough gangs around by making it, right from the start, a family club, with WAGs and kids very much involved. Although he aimed it at the older rider (ideally 50+) even youngsters in their 30s are accepted, as long as they're past the wild or-





gan-donor stage of riding (and don't mind being called "junior")!

The club motto came from an early radio interview. Stephen, now in his 70s, had just explained the club background, and the presenter famously said "at your age shouldn't you be growing old gracefully?"!

Naturally it grew fast, and in Australia has thousands of members, more than any other bike club. It is also the only club that is welcome to hold significant sized meetings (last year's AGM in Alice Springs had 4000 attendees), in a country where gangs are still rife. It spread to New Zealand (where I first heard of it), then to South Africa, then about 10 years ago made the leap to the northern hemisphere.

In 2008 I was a founder member of the UK club (<http://ulyssesclubgb.org/>), which now boasts over 100 members all over Britain. Our youngest riding member is a woman in her 20s, the oldest a vicar in his 80s! Germany has a club of similar size and age, while smaller versions exist in several European countries. A new one started last year in France, and there are promising signs of a US start up.

Why bother? I find it complements my other clubs. If SAM and the Quantock riders are mainly about local mates, rides and social events, Ulysses is my go-to club for an international dimension. Last year for example we toured the French Alps, the Mosel in Germany, the west coast of Ireland, North Wales, the IOM, and Sunderland! In 2017 we already have trips planned for Germany (this time Saarland, we meet the Germans every year), Belgium and France (for a tour of WW1 sites) and possibly Spain. We're large enough now to have Southern and Northern groups, and the former



typically meet somewhere in the Cotswolds about once a month. We currently have three members in Somerset.

Another feature of Ulysses is that we stay with local club members when we're on their patch, and they with us, continuing the attractive Australian club tradition of

welcoming strangers and sharing. I'm hoping to visit NZ next winter, and through Ulysses I already have several offers of bed and board, and one even offering me a bike. So be warned, if you join, you might have to put up an Aussie or two!

**Barry Croft**

### *The Arter Matchless G50*

Whilst some motorcycling friends and I were on the Isle of Man at the end of August last year for the Classic TT, I by chance met SAM chairman Richard Pearse. We were both walking around the pits area by the main grandstand in Douglas. The beauty of this race meeting is that the pits are free to all comers to wander round and enjoy. Every conceivable TT race bike from the recent past was on show.

The machine Richard is pictured beside is the 500cc Arter Matchless G50. It was designed by legendary racer and engineer Peter Williams and built and sponsored by engine tuner Tom Arter. The frame was built in Reynolds '531' tubing by master tube bender Ken Sprayson.



The bike was nicknamed "Wagon Wheels" as it was the first bike ever to wear cast magnesium alloy wheels. Coupled with its equally ground breaking front and rear disc brakes and unique wind cheating body work it was a truly avant-garde machine. This brilliant design allowed a British four stroke 500cc single

cylinder motorcycle to be competitive well into the era of the super quick racing two strokes of the early 1970's.

The bike was brought to the IOM from New York by tuner/collector Robert Iannucci who owns Team Obsolete. His regular rider Dave Roper rode the bike around the TT course in the Classic Racer Lap of Honour on Monday 29th August 2016.

It was a privilege for me personally to be so close to this special motorcycle as I closely followed its racing antics in its heyday in Motor Cycle News and the like but had never seen it in the flesh.

**Matt Towill**

## ***RIDE REPORTS***

### ***Measuring Somerset***



#### Part 1

OK, My plan was to do as much of this in one day as I could, but I had left it until mid Dec. so had only 8 hours daylight. Having spent a few hours with a 4 mile/inch map I had a route starting close to home at Stockland. Although it's normally easy enough to find a place, the location of each clue can find me going up and down the streets or asking the way. I don't use any sat nav or smart phone help. I won't give anything away in case you read this before the AGM, but after finding the first measurement I headed in a north west direction to pick up the next few measure-

ments until I got to Parracombe. Now I had to ride across the top of Exmoor along the A39 through Bridgwater so after enjoying the views, I stopped for a coffee at Riders to stretch my legs before carrying on to the



A38/A37 towards Bleadon and more measuring. Due to the very mild weather, I was enjoying the ride as much as ever, but I was beginning to realise I was falling behind schedule as I needed two answers/hour. I had already got lost several times, and had never noticed before how many junctions on Exmoor have no signs, one had a finger post at a crossroads only pointing to the village I had just left. Is there some kind of resistance at work on Exmoor to put us tourists off? Anyway, clocking up far more miles than expected I topped up the fuel in Lower Langford and carried on. Why do the "church" signs only face away from the direction you arrive, meaning more U turns? By the time I got to Dilton Marsh and my 11th clue It was dark and sod's law had me asking a non-resident the way!. After finding the answer, I phoned Maggie to say I was heading home, seeing no point in struggling to find any more in the dark. 280 miles door to door, a sometimes frustrating but fun ride, I hope it stays mild for part 2.



So, 5 more to get with the last only 2 miles from home, should be a doddle!

### Part 2

Had finished off my first attempt with "should be a doddle" to get the rest done, so with a couple of hours to spare on the shortest day, I headed out towards Bruton to find Kilmington. On arriving at the outskirts of Wincanton without seeing any signs for it I rechecked my map to find I had been carefully looking at every signpost on the wrong side! Backtracking got me to my first target but now not much time left so of course got lost again! Eventually found second clue and rushed home for a family get together.

### Part 3

Not far to go for the final 3 clues so headed off on 23rd. Dec. after lunch with hurricane Barbara just beginning to blow. Found first one fairly easily, then headed towards the next on the side of Toller Down in some really miserable weather, very wet, very windy, and a constant problem keeping my visor and glasses clear. Took a lane towards the church hoping the

**Continued on page20**

## QUIZ—ANSWERS

Here are the answers to the Anagrams contained within the Autumn 2016 issue of Full Chat. The first correct answers came in from Janet Short, who wins an IAM Buff . Well done Janet. Watch for another quiz next issue. And no prizes for the 1 spelling mistake that no one spotted!

**Graham Tulloch**

1.	TRAUMATIC DUD TAILS DUCATI MULTISTRADA	16.	DOVE RAN A HOARD HONDA VARADERO
2.	DONS RUSH NEAR CORN HONDA CROSS RUNNER	17.	I AM DAISY HANOVER YAMAHA DIVERSION
3.	PETER HEAR MY NAUSEA YAMAHA SUPER TENERE	18.	W.C.C. IN BAD SHOVEL TANK VINCENT BLACK SHADOW
4.	DARLING DADS HAVE TEERY COLLIE - HARLEY DAVIDSON ELECTRAGLIDE	19.	TOIL ON AU PAIR APRILIA TUONO
5.	DAVE LEND A HAUL HONDA DEAUVILLE	20.	U VACATE LID I.D. DUCATI DIAVEL
6.	PANIC POOR RAIL AD APRILIA CAPONIORD	21.	HERMITS PURPLE TITTER TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE
7.	BIRTH PUN HID MURDER TRIUMPH THUNDERBIRD	22.	ELF IN HEADBOARD HONDA FIREBLADE
8.	NUDE MARKET TV KTM ADVENTURE	23.	MOM PUKES TROT KTM SUPERMOTO
9.	ANDREA ATE MUCH HAY YAMAHA THUNDERACE	24.	HELD ANY NOB HONDA BENLY
10.	A POUND NEAR PHONE HONDA PAN EUROPEAN	25.	MATRON ON CONDOM NORTON COMMANDO
11.	I ASK GUID ZULUS SUZUKI GLADIUS	26.	EVICT MAD JOURNAL LAVERDA MONTJUIC
12.	TRY A FULL ON BLEED LIE ROYAL ENFIELD BULLET	27.	I PUNCH AT DATA DUCATI PANTAH
13.	SIR KEV ASKS AWAY KAWASAKI VERSYS	28.	GIN DOWN OLD HAG HONDA GOLD WING
14.	RAVISH LAIR PIE APRILIA SHIVER	29.	TEXT RUTH ON LOVE ETC. VELOCETTE THRUXTON
15.	M, PHONE VIRILE BLUNT TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE	30.	OAF REQUIRES AURAL ARIEL SQUARE FOUR

## ***FORTHCOMING EVENTS***

### **Bath & West Classic Bike Show**

@ The Bath & West Showground,  
Shepton Mallet  
Sat. 4th & Sun. 5th Feb. 2017  
Come along and visit SAM's  
stand

### **SAM Amber Ride**

"Breakfast Run"  
Sat. 18th Feb. 2017  
09:00 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Rick Chubb

### **SAM Green Ride**

"Breaking Virginity"  
Sun. 26th Feb. 2017  
09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Dave Parker

### **SAM Green Ride**

"March Hares"  
Sun. 5th. Mar. 2017  
09:30 @ Cartgate Services  
Led by Jez Martin

### **SAM Green Ride**

"Boing Boing Spring"  
Sun. 12th. Mar. 2017  
Watch Google+ /Email for details

### **Control & Technique**

"Cornering"  
Sat. 11th. Feb. 2017  
10:00 @ The Old Pound, Wearne,  
nr Langport TA10 0QJ  
Presented by Peter & Gina H.

### **SAM Red Ride**

"Checkpoint Charlie #2"  
Sun. 19th Feb. 2017  
09:00 @ Cross Keys Inn, nr. Nor-  
ton Fitzwarren  
Led by Rob Bartlett

### **Control & Technique**

"Group Riding"  
Sat. 4th. Mar. 2017  
10:00 @ The Old Pound, Wearne,  
nr Langport TA10 0QJ  
Presented by Graham Tulloch

### **SAM Committee Meeting**

Tue. 7th. Mar. 2017  
19:30 @ The Old Pound,  
Wearne, nr. Langport TA10 0QJ

### **SAM Green Ride**

"Chasing Bunnies"  
Sun. 19th. Mar. 2017  
09:30 @ Podimore Services  
Led by Graham Tulloch

**Refreshments including Bacon/Sausage Baps will be available at C&T sessions. Come along and join in with your experiences.**

measurement object would be there, but no, and after turning round on the dirt track I nearly came a cropper, only saved, I think, by my off road experience. Anyway, found what I needed and headed for Thorncombe. Now this is only about 2-3 miles from home but by the time I arrived it was getting dark and due to the conditions I only spent a short while looking before heading home to dry out. OK only one to get and as I often cycle that way I'll pick it up some-

time soon.

I must thank Steve for devising this challenge for the second time, I have enjoyed the riding and finding many more places I had not seen. My bike has been extremely dirty on three occasions and I have travelled a total of 449 miles, about double what it would have taken had I got round in one day without getting lost several times, but that's down to me. Great fun.

**Rick Chubb**

### ***Checkpoint Charlie #1***

Rob Bartlett's first Checkpoint Charlie ride of 2017 – searching for clues for this year's South West Peninsula Spring Rally (SWPSR) – was greeted with weather conditions much improved from those experienced in previous years. So, after meeting at the Jn.27 M5 services, 7 bikes headed into the heart of Devon in dry conditions, with temperatures better than average for January. Heading through Tiverton, Rob led us on a wonderful assortment of Devon's best roads before picking up clues at..... well, if you enter the SWPSR on 1<sup>st</sup> April, you'll be able to see where we actually went, so I won't spoil the surprise! Suffice to say that great riding roads are inevitable in finding these checkpoints, and hopefully by April the greasy surfaces typical after January's salting and gritting will be but a distant memory. A slow puncture on one of the bikes didn't delay us too much, but seeing 6 grown men with 2 electric pumps, 2 cigar lighter plugs and 3 DIN sockets trying to add 10psi to a tyre must have kept some of the locals amused!

With a number of checkpoints in the bag, a breakfast stop at South Molton ended our search - we were approaching Exmoor, and that is the target for the next Checkpoint Charlie ride. If you really don't want to do the Rally, but want to see some of the checkpoints, come along on Rob's next





CpC ride on 19<sup>th</sup> February. Although these rides are Red ones (so for test pass holders only), this is due to the increased technical input required whilst searching for suitable clues. You can, however, be assured that due to the effort put in by members on these checkpoint Charlie rides, the clues eventu-

ally adopted for our Rally will be simple to find, accessible, fun and suitable for all levels of riders – plus, of course, they involve great roads getting to them!

**Graham Tulloch**

### ***Dress for the Conditions***

I'm usually busy on a Weds leading my own regular run for the Quantock and Exmoor group, but I've noticed their numbers fall as the weather cools, and this week I had no interest from anyone at all – which was great, as I'd been itching to go on a SAM mid-week run, in this case Rick Chubb's "Dress for the Conditions"!

I duly turned up at Ilminster services just before 10, to find 8 other ~~natters~~ serious motorcycle folk busy nattering. In deference to the ride title I'd thought carefully about my clothing, donning my thick and heavy Skintan leather jacket over

a nice warm long sleeved skiing base layer and a thick fleece; thermal leggings and two pairs of socks under my Kevlar jeans; and a ski balaclava under my lid. And just as well, as the gauge was flashing 3°C at me on the way down from Taunton. No need for any restrictive snood though, or fancy heated clothing, and due to the great BMW screen aerodynamics diverting the air, I only needed the heated grips on 1. I was cosy.

I should be able to tell you where we went, as I've been out with

Rick before on precisely the same route, but can I hell! At one stage we were on the A35, but most of it was on minor roads. With slime and mud (and worse) quite common on the road – and an eye on the temperature too in case of the ever-present threat of ice (seen lurking in the shadows) - I wasn't really focussing on signs.

We must have gone well to the east of Bridport though, for the trouble started about Abbotsbury...

As we climbed the coast road uphill now heading west, high above Chesil Beach, a tail ender caught up. Little John's GS was playing silly bu\*\*ers and had finally ground to a halt.



The problem seemed to be

with the fuel pump\*, i.e. not fixable, so the RAC were called.

At this point we were basking in the sun at a heady 5°C, but put away the sun lotion and unanimously agreed to press on to Bridport, lured by Maria's Café and her generous pots of hot tea and gorgeous bacon baguettes!

Maria was expecting us, so both drink and food appeared quite quickly. Conversation as usual was about anything and everything, but we did make some attempt to talk about clothing. Most had gone for textile suits (ranging from Lidl's finest to expensive Halvarsson kit) over lots of layers, with a lot of wool in evidence. At least two (Rick and Graham) had fancy heated vests too. I'd had a problem with my tyre pressure sensors on the way down and someone suggested their internal batteries were struggling, which made sense in that cold.

The run back was as usual even better than the run down. The roads had dried, and as the pack split up and headed off in different directions home, our little subgroup seemed to get faster. We only got lost once (and spotted it within a few meters). Only when I found myself headed the wrong way on the A303 did I leave Graham and Tony to it, peeling off at Cartgate to head back to Taunton. The bike wasn't even that dirty, but I gave it a quick hose down anyway in case of salt. A great day out!

**Barry Croft**

*\*I had a supposed fuel pump problem on a 955i which turned out to be no such thing. The Triumph had valves in the fuel hoses to automatically shut the fuel off if a hose came adrift, and one of the junctions hadn't been clicked home fully, causing partial valve closure and fuel starvation. I wonder if BMWs are the same?*

Barry Croft

## TECHNICAL



### *Dusting off the Fireblade*

25 years ago Honda brought out the first Fireblade and after reading all the rave reports I ordered one from Taylors of Misterton (now no longer in existence). This bike was all they claimed, and a huge step up from anything I had ridden before, including GPZ900's, VF1000R's and my previous bike, an FZ750 Yamaha. It could get a bit exciting some-times and once or twice tank

slapped after cresting a bump in the road. Anyway three years later with about 22,000 miles covered I traded it in for the newer model, at £9,500 the most expensive bike I've ever bought. I did get a good trade in, again from Taylors. As time went on this bike covered 44,000 miles, being used for trips to the TT and on many SAM rides, but as always it was

not the only bike in the garage, so eventually it became a summer ride only and then got put away one day and left.

Being the 25th anniversary in 2017 I thought now's the time to dig it out from the back of the garage and get it



going. Under the dust sheets I had left a note saying "no petrol, 200cc 2T oil in tank, Nov 2008". Over 8 years! I must have really been enjoying these Tigers!

So, off with the fuel tank, check there are no mice nests in the air box (it does happen). Rinse tank out with some unleaded, take out spark plugs to check, and allow me to turn the engine over by putting into 6th gear and turning the back wheel several times to get a bit of oil around. Plugs back in, tank on, and some fresh fuel in. New battery fitted and starter tried. No joy, and I could hear nothing from the fuel pump, so I tried a trick I've used before: I connected the pump directly to a battery and away it went. Tried the starter again and this time the motor fired and ticked over smoothly. I let it warm up and drained the oil, then changed that and the oil filter. (I had done this prior to storing, but after so long it's better to play safe).

After cooling down I also replaced the coolant, brake fluid and checked the charging, lights etc. On running the bike up again I let it get hot, to check the cooling fan. I found it not to work, so out with the multi meter and eventually traced the problem to a sticky ignition switch. These bikes don't usually get hot in normal use; I will try it on the road when the time comes and hope a bit of use cures it, but I may need to strip the switch.

That's it for now; I'm going to wait until it's a bit warmer before I bother with the MOT. I hope to use it on the "Ride Your Other Bike" day in June, and some of the classic runs perhaps.

**Rick Chubb**

### ***Modifying your Motorcycle***

Do you modify your bikes? It came up in conversation recently so I thought, well what have I changed on my Fireblade over the years and why?

It soon became apparent that the Blade would be a prime target for thieves so I used a Datatag kit to mark all the major parts as a deterrent. The insurance companies soon found the same and insisted on an immobiliser being fitted so I got a Datatool wired in to keep them happy. To try to keep things clean at the back I bought a hugger, and to prolong the chain life I fitted a Scottolier.

Next I fitted a Rentec grab rail to give Maggie something to hold on

to, and then welded some extra bits to this to form a rack for the trips to the IOM TT races, when we also used some throw over panniers and a tank bag.

I fitted a small length of tube to the fairing support to fit a cycle computer, so that I had

a clock. And some VarioBar handlebars, the original bars were the only part that never seemed quite right and the VarioBars worked really well, being fully adjustable, but expensive.

As the brake hoses seemed to get spongy I fitted some stainless ones.

Eventually the mild steel exhaust downpipes rusted through and



although I repaired them once with a bit of welding I finally gave in and bought some Motad stainless pipes.

I think that's about it, and it has to be said the Blade was one of Honda's great bikes from the start. What have you done to your bike?

**Rick Chubb**

## ***BIKE REPORTS***

### ***2017 Honda NC750X***

The other day after trying the Honda NC750X I think I had almost made up my mind, but as I had also considered the Yamaha Tracer I thought I had better have a look at one. My reasons for looking at something new now are many, one is I wanted something a bit lower to encourage Maggie to get on the back. As I keep my bikes for a long time I wanted something



that hopefully will still be suitable in 10 or 12 year's time when my parts may be starting to get a bit rickety. I want a bike I can do all the maintenance on and not one with any more gadgets than is required by today's regulations, so ABS but no more - even that will be a first for me!

The Yamaha is a great bike, the magazines rave about it but it's a little taller than the NC and to be honest I'm not too keen on the looks, so not a hard decision.

Bransons in Yeovil had been advertising the NC at £450 off list, so I contacted them just as the offer was about to end. But they only had a black one left, I wanted a red one. Mike the salesman said he would make enquiries and came back to me with the offer of a red one for the same price, and he was prepared to hold the bike until March if required, which suited me as I want to sell my Tiger 955i if possible to make room. So a deposit has been made and I will pick it up in March, watch this space.

**Rick Chubb**



### ***Harley vs Indian Head-to-Head***

*Which comes out on top as your favoured cruiser/tourer – the Indian or the Harley? Guest Blogger and seasoned biker Matt James clocked up the miles on two popular bikes and shares his impressions in this Chieftain verses Street Glide review.*

“By far the most common motorcycles hired for a solo rider on the Annual Coast to Coast Runs are Road Kings / Soft tails and the Chief Vintage for those going for the “classic” look, and their more “modern” brethren the HD Street Glide and Chieftain. The latter bikes having the perceived advantages of hard lockable luggage and power outlets for sat navs etc. I have ridden coast to coast on both of the latter bikes and the following is my personal opinions of both.

#### Comfort

I have done 400+ mile days on both. I think I'm lucky in being the right

height for both bikes as I've never had any real discomfort riding either. Taller riders who I've ridden with seem to struggle with the Glide on longer days. I would say the Chieftain's seat has a slight edge over the



Glide and the electronically adjustable screen is very useful depending on the riding conditions. Both riding positions are very similar, although the Chieftain's slightly wider bars do make it a little better in traffic in my opinion. Very close call but I would say the Chieftain wins very slightly, 10 – 9.

#### Luggage

I travel as light as possible on these trips, carrying one 35 litre waterproof roll-top bag and so my prime concern is a rack to strap it to – which both models have. The hard luggage side bags on both are handy for hand luggage, laptops or anything of value you'd prefer to be locked away. In fairness, neither would be hard to force but would certainly deter the casual thief. That said I've probably done something like 20,000 miles in USA, and to date my bag has never been touched. The Street Glide I would say has slightly larger bags so will accommodate more if that's a requirement for you. I tend to put my helmet bag, tablet, chargers, and maps etc. in one, and waterproofs, hoodie or similar in the other, so either bike accommodates my gear. Personally I think there's nothing in it and so; 9 – 9.

#### Rider Aids, Gadgets etc.

Both bikes are fully equipped with all sorts of electrickery which will appeal to some more than others. Very few appeal to me but I do like the "comfort" factor of a 12v charging port on the bike, particularly when riding completely solo. Both have radios and entertainment systems that can either be plugged into directly or via a Bluetooth connection. I like scan-

ning the random radio stations! Like the Chieftain, the latest Street Glide has a dash mounted “pocket” into which your phone could be stored while charging or being used, which was a nice touch. Both have



cruise control. In my experience this works better on the Chieftain than the Glide but am reliably informed this has been improved on the latest models. I try and avoid roads where cruise control would be a benefit but there are some cases (New Mexico I’m talking to you) where it is a plus. Chieftain probably nudges it 10 – 9.

#### Performance and Handling

While neither bike handles like a sports bike (if you try to ride them like one, expect to get into all sorts of trouble), they will both handle far better than many sceptics will have you believe. So if you have a friend who tells you that they “don’t handle, don’t stop” etc, I’m betting they’ve never ridden one. The Chieftain has the larger engine of the two and in a straight drag race that extra bit of power is noticeable, but for the

majority of riding you wouldn’t notice much difference. The Chieftain motor is a little smoother which Harley purists will equate to it being soulless – I’m easy either way. Through bends and twisties (yes, there are plenty of them in America – if you know where to find them) I feel the Chieftain feels more planted. That said, the Street Glide is equally adept at spirited riding – you’ll just feel a bit more give. Nothing to worry about after your first couple of bends. Both bikes are equipped with ABS and I have felt it cut in when riding both which probably says more about me than the bikes! Again I would say the Chieftain nudges it 10—9.

#### Economy and Distance

The Chieftain’s extra performance does have a downside – it’s a tad thirstier than the Street Glide. This, combined with the smaller tank does mean it has a slightly reduced range

on a tank full. This is hampered by the very pessimistic low fuel warning on the bike which (un)helpfully just flips to saying "Low fuel" and so you lose sight of the miles done so far. EagleRider recommends the Chieftain max'ing out at approximately 160 miles – we pushed one to just short of 200 but I wouldn't want to do that too often. The Street Glide still had fuel to spare and you should see 200 from a tank comfortably. Whether you want to do that sort of distance without a comfort break and refuelling is up to you but the information is worth knowing – especially if you get nervous about that kind of thing. The Street Glide wins this comfortably 10 – 8.

### The Winner

The scores may seem to indicate the Chieftain is the clear winner overall but, having spent many hours riding on both bikes, it's not as clear cut as that to me. The Street Glide isn't Harley's best-selling model for no reason. While it may not excel in any single category, it performs well in all and truly is a "Swiss Army knife" of a cruiser bike. It just gets the job done!

### Conclusions?

Either bike will serve you well and get you coast to coast in comfort.

If you've ridden Harleys before, why not take the Indian for a new experience?

If you're Harley-phobic, take the Indian – because it's not a Harley. If you don't like the faux styling of the Indian or are (unnecessarily) worried by my comments on range, take the Harley. Neither bike is going to disappoint – enjoy the trip!"

**Matt James**

## **FOR SALE**

### ***BMW Spares 'nearly free' for SAM members***

*I have some bits for a 2009 standard GS hanging about in the garage:*

- *Riders's saddle*
- *Standard tinted screen*
- *Plastic handguards*
- *Oil filler cap tool*
- *Haynes manual*
- *A broken Vario pannier for spares*

***Free from me in return for donations to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance or to the RBL Poppy Appeal, your choice.*** No, I won't put them in the post but I could bring to a SAM event or they can be collected from my place in Shepton Mallet.

Hugh - 07445 960707

or [hbeamish222@btinternet.com](mailto:hbeamish222@btinternet.com)

## MEMBER'S TRIPS

### *No Room at the Inn*

On one of our early bike trips to France we booked a week in a bike-friendly pension near Narbonne on the Mediterranean. Great biking roads in the hinterland and lots of sights to see. It was early September so we decided that, for two nights on the way down and four on the way back, swinging through the Pyrenees, we'd find rooms when we needed them at the end of each day.

We'd visited Chartres previously and made that our first objective, passing to the West of Paris. On arrival late afternoon we parked and took our bags and blithely sauntered into a nice little hotel we'd seen before, only to find it was full - AND to be told that we were unlikely to find anywhere in town. Apparently, although the main two holiday months were over, many French people without children, and lots of overseas visitors (like us) waited till early September; also business travel spiked after the break.

Sure enough after an hour or so we'd found no room in Chartres, not even at the unstaffed, auto hotel where your credit card buys you a bed on a shelf in a cupboard.

We decided to continue towards Orléans down the N154. That area of France is part of the country's breadbasket, a vast, big-sky plateau with industrial-scale wheat fields and few villages. We turned off at every junction and tried the local villages – nothing. And then just before six, in the middle of nowhere some 20 miles from Chartres, my mind having been on other things, the low fuel light came on. I'd never seen it before on this

bike and didn't then know that the 50 miles reserve was pretty reliable. We stopped for a conference. I felt miserable, I'd let Jane down, I imagined us sleeping in a roadside barn. Then it started to rain - hard. We put on our waterproofs over our leather jackets and armoured jeans; Jane was marvel-





lous, we decided we'd ride economically towards Orléans, 30 miles away. If we couldn't find a room, we'd find somewhere to eat, stay as long as possible to rest and warm up and then ride through the night.

In the next village there was a rare petrol station with the owner just locking up. We managed to buy a tank full. On the way to Orléans we tried a few more hotels, by now I was simply walking in, dripping, with my visor up and receiving the expected 'Je regret ...' or 'Malheureusement ...' or simply 'Non'.

Light and hope were fading as we entered the outskirts of Orléans and followed signs to Ibis Orléans Nord Saran. 'Oui', they had a room. When I went back down to get the bags off the bike, reception was turning people away. Never had we felt so relieved and as a bonus they had a delightful little restaurant in the hotel serving local 'home cooking'. The misery of the last few hours melted away over a hot cassoulet and a few pichets of red wine.

*Two thankful old bikers in jeans,  
Arrived rather wet in Or-leans.*

*It had rained on and on,*

*Riding to Or-lé-ans,*

*(Which is the French way to say  
it, it seems)*

The remaining five nights of un-booked room finding were fine because we stopped a bit earlier each day and found small towns or villages that relied on tourists and, towards the end of their season as it was, they had more empty rooms. Our delightful overnights included the inevitable and eccentric Hotel de la Poste, half a gîte ('would you mind having for supper what the family is eating?' – delicious, including a bottle of local red), and in the loft



Le Postillon, one of Steve's un-booked hotels in Luxembourg

bedroom above a wedding celebration ('would you mind having for supper what the wedding guests are eating?' – delicious, including Champagne and wedding cake)

After this experience, we nearly always book ahead now and make our discoveries and

have our relaxed diversions and adventures along the way during the day, knowing there's a guaranteed welcome at the end of the journey.

Here are some tips for booking accommodation:

- Use an accommodation comparison website to see what's available in the area you want to visit.
- Use a mapping app with good satellite imaging to preview the location.
- When you've made a possible choice visit their own website. Only book at places with a professional, up-to-date website with lots of interior and exterior images.
- Contact them direct by email or phone; if you can use their language, even just for 'hello', 'please', 'sorry', 'thank you' and 'goodbye', so much the better.
- If you think your stay will be at an appropriate time, gently and politely ask for a deal based on taking meals, or extra days or avoiding busy times. You should be able to equal or beat the comparison website rates.
- If you are going to an area new to you, consider using a motorcycle tour company, either for all or part of an organised trip, or to make arrangements for you. Tour companies know good destinations, routes and accommodation; some are flexible – if they aren't, don't use them. Choose one that is bonded or protected and recommended by other bikers.

**Steve Schlemmer**



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**SURETY**

\*Based on new motorcycle insurance quotes given by Germainet in UK IAM members since 2007, for those who meet acceptance criteria. IAM Surety is available to IAM members who've passed the IAM Motorcycle Test and meet criteria. Policy benefits shown apply to policies arranged with Agnia Insurance through Germainet Insurance Services. Calls may be recorded for our mutual protection. Germainet, Roachier Place, 4-6 Roachier Rd, Belfast BT12 5HB

Thank you for your articles and pictures. I am sorry if I was unable to fit them all in. Please keep them coming: [Tullochg@aol.com](mailto:Tullochg@aol.com)

### SAM Code of Conduct

All riders participate at their own risk.

Turn up on time with a full fuel tank.

Listen to the brief about the intended ride.

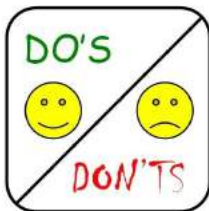
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

Ride with the safety of every other road user in mind.

If you wish to detour or leave before the end of the ride, let the leader know.

Ride cancellation is rare, but in extreme conditions the decision rests with the ride leader. If the ride is cancelled the leader should ensure that someone is present at the advertised start point/time to inform any rider who turns up.

Non-SAM partners, friends and guests are welcome to join rides.



### Colour Code of Rides

**Green** – Ride open to all SAM members. Shorter rides, typically of 2 hours duration, with stops. Aimed at getting riders used to group riding. There is usually no overtaking within the group, except when a slower rider specifically signals the following rider to pass.

**Amber** – Ride for test ready associates (Observer's discretion) and test pass holders. Riding over varied conditions, usually between a half and a full day of riding.

**Red** – Test pass holders only. Riding over more challenging conditions. Riding can extend over a full day, sometimes longer.

The ride leader will brief each ride to ensure all riders are aware what's required of them.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of IAM RoadSmart or Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists (SAM). Similarly, goods and services offered do not carry a recommendation from IAM RoadSmart or SAM.

### The Drop-Off System

This is the preferred SAM method to control group rides. Each ride has a 'leader' and a 'sweeper'. Once underway, riders do not need to keep sight of each other, as route deviations will be marked. This is achieved by the 'leader' indicating to the rider immediately behind that a junction is to be marked. This rider (the 'marker') pulls up in a safe and visible position, and indicates the route to all the following riders. The 'marker' then re-joins the group just in front of the 'sweeper'. Everyone on the ride – except the 'leader' and the 'sweeper' – then takes turns to be the marker as they take up the position behind the 'leader'. Headlights are kept on, as this makes it easier to see following and approaching riders.

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## **MEMBERS' REMINDERS!**

### **FREE TASTER RIDES!**

If you know anyone who is thinking of undertaking some advanced riding tuition, and who may be interested in a **FREE** taster ride, tell them to get in touch with any **SAM** officer.

### **BRISTOL CLASSIC BIKE SHOW**

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th Feb. at Shepton Mallet (Bath & West) Showground. A must see if you're interested in classic 2-wheelers. Look out for the SAM club members bikes on display, and pop in to say hello at the SAM stand.

**MEASURING SOMERSET** — Steve Schlemmer's excellent quiz (just needs a bike that doesn't mind getting dirty, some fuel, and a tape measure to complete!) has to be completed before the SAM AGM on 23rd March 2017. So if you haven't yet completed the clues, it's time to plan in a trip or two. And if you haven't started it yet, or don't have a form, just contact Peter Herridge who can email one to you.