

Autumn 2017

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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Front Cover: Dave, Steve & Russ having fun on Matt Towill's "Exmoor Breakfast Ride".



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



After a busy end of Summer on the bike, mainly with SAM related activities, I've hit a wall of other stuff (you know, work, family, all that trivia) which is keeping me from trying out my snazzy new end can. On the upside it's not getting plastered with mud.

It's all getting quite Autumnal out there, wet, windy and knee deep in leaves, not to mention plenty of mud from our local farmers' tractors. There always seems to be something that has to be hauled onto or off the fields these days, so how muddy the roads are at any given time only really depends on whether it's raining, and how hard. (At least heavy rain washes the roads clean again.)

The new series of Control and Technique will be kicking off on 11th November with Matt Towill taking us through Bike Maintenance. These meet-

ings are very sociable, and an excuse to get out and see your SAM mates whatever the weather.

Had an interesting week in Jordan seeing family. Amongst the stunning antiquities, the traffic was interesting, in a terrifying sort of way. The concept of rules doesn't really resonate with Jordanian drivers, so speed limits, no entry signs and lane markings are all



ignored if one's business or personal status need to take precedence. In order to control what is essentially anarchy, there are two strategies: one is physical - kerbs are a foot high, so cars cannot physically mount them, and instead of speed restrictions to defend junctions, there are speed humps, so if you want to speed through a junction, you are going to lose an axle. Warning signs are in the form of rumble strips, to, you know, wake you up or give you time to end your phone call. The second strategy is the law that states that if your car hits a pedestrian, you become legally liable for *all* their medical bills for any related condition *for the rest of their lives*. So either do not hit a pedestrian, or make sure you kill them outright. The other interesting thing was that there were virtually no motorcycles - I think we saw six in total and four of them were police bikes. The reasons are, I think, several. The chaotic nature of the driving together with the impossibility of wearing decent protective kit in summer temperatures makes it very dangerous. In addition, the roads are made with a very stony aggregate so that they don't melt and are hard wearing, but the result is that they are lethally slippery even in the dry, and in the wet, you can hardly even walk on them, let alone ride. It rains in the Winter, so even Winter riding would be impossible in many parts.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue, and for those who haven't, there is always next time. Please let us have your stories, reviews, opinions, pictures, reports by 15th January 2018.

Gina Herridge



CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

How time gallops by, I have already had two meetings recently regarding our South West Peninsula Spring Rally 2018. Next year will be our tenth year of organizing this increasingly popular event and we are making some significant changes.

First, a larger and more suitable start venue at Long Sutton which I'm sure will be appreciated by all, as the car park and facilities at our previous venue were stretched, particularly around 8 AM when the bulk of the entrants arrive. Second, we will also have on line booking and payment

available for next year via Eventbrite. We will maintain a manual booking system for the few that are unable to use online booking and payment for whatever reason. We will also have a Facebook group dedicated to the event, which should help to spread the word as there are many out there who attend similar events but have not heard of ours yet. How do I know? Because I was on holiday with one this year!

The Rally date is the 7th April 2018 so if you have not taken part before, or even if you have, put that date in your diary, it's a great way to visit parts of the South West you have not visited before. Solo, or as part of a small team, it's a rewarding challenge and part of the challenge is prior planning - always remember the 6 p's!

There will be some requests for



assistance on Rally day going out over the coming weeks, so if you are not planning on taking part in the event you may be just the person we need!

On a personal note, have you ever visited one of those two German supermarkets and made a purchase from the center isles of something you didn't know you needed? Well



Bikes lined up at the start of the 2016 SWPSR

on a similar theme, while assisting on the SAM stand at Branson's charity day a month ago I got into discussion with a member of the public who initially was asking me about my Yamaha Super Tenere as he was in the process of buying one. It transpired that he had a Kawasaki KLR 650 that he was thinking of selling and, long story short, I bought it. It's 15 years old and long since stopped depreciat-



ing, in fact its quirky enough to go up in value a bit perhaps, although that's not why I bought it, after all a small increase on not a lot = not

much.

No, I bought it as they have intrigued me for a while. Kawasaki have been making this big single cylinder model now for 30 years and it has remained pretty much unchanged in all that time. It still has a carburettor, there is nothing digital about this bike, the speedo still drives off the front wheel. No longer sold in the UK, they still sell well in America where I saw a

number of them recently. It seems that people appreciate their simplicity, which is understandable if you live 250 miles from your nearest dealer, a real possibility in parts of the USA. Is it a "keeper"? The jury is out.

Finally, my time as SAM Chair expires at the AGM next March so we will need a new Chair person. If you think you could fill the role (it's not time consuming, honestly) please let me or Andy Hall know. In case you were wondering, as a registered charity, SAM has to have a formal set up of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Andy

Hall and Alistair Gee have offered to continue in their respective roles.

Safe riding.

Richard Pearse

SAM NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS!

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

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

- Mark Goodman on 4th September, riding a BMW 1200RT and observed by Martin Surrey.
- Alex Mabbott on 13th September, riding a Honda Pan European 1100. Alex was observed by Rick Stowell.
- Matthew Lockyer, also on 13th September, riding a Honda CB1300, observed by Alistair Gee.
- Jon Wyatt on 9th October. John was riding his Triumph Tiger 800 and was observed by Jim Donnelly.
- Andy Martin on 27th October, riding a BMW1150GS and observed by Nick Griffin, achieving a F1RST in the process.
- William Ho on 28th October. Observed by Gina Herridge, William used a hired Harley Davidson Street 750 for his Test.
- Dave Hedditch on 29th October, riding a Ducati MultiStrada. Dave was observed by Paul Dyer and Lisa Parsons.
- Robert Malton on 3rd November, riding a Kawasaki Versys 1000 and observed by Paul Goulder and Gina Herridge.
- Andy Williams on 3rd November. Andy achieved a F1RST riding his Triumph Bonneville T120, having been observed by Richard Pearse.
- Lee Thompson on 4th November, riding his Honda CBF600, and observed by Dave Watson.
- Andy Rowden on 10th November. Andy was riding his BMW K1200 GT, and was observed by Greg Souster.
- And just as we go to print, Jeremy Dugdale on 16th November, riding his BMW 1200RT, observed by Martin Surrey



A huge thank you to all observers for your help in assisting these members to achieve such a great set of results.



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 13th November 2017 will be emailed to members.

South West Peninsula Rally 2018

Next year sees the 10th running of this ever-popular event. The number of entrants has risen from 70 in 2009 to 150 in 2017, with riders coming from all over the UK to experience one of the most scenic navigational rallies in the country.

Covering Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall (and occasionally dipping into Wiltshire!), the object of the event is to visit a number of manned and unmanned checkpoints, picking up clues at each location. Riders can set their own challenge level—Bronze (8 unmanned + 1 manned check-

points, approx. 200 miles), Silver (12 + 2 and approx. 300 miles), or Gold (15 + 3 and approx. 400 miles). Those doing Gold can also add a further challenge, the Lands End Award, adding a visit to the tip of England to their trip. Part of the enjoyment is the preparation, with riders usually getting together in the 2 weeks before the event to plan alternative routes round the pre-advised list of checkpoints. This allows entrants to change their plans at any point during the day, whether due to adverse weather, or else to enjoy a prolonged lunch stop, or just to appreciate a detour to visit a previously undiscovered attraction.

The success of this event depends on both willing volunteers as well as entrants, so if you feel you would like to help, contact Jez Martin; if you'd prefer to enter yourself, just keep an eye on the website for registration. Either way, you're sure to have a great day.

Friends of SAM

SAM has decided to offer a "Friend" category of membership to anyone who would like to be involved in the workings and events of the club in their own right, but who don't ride a motorcycle. Friends would pay a subscription of £10 per year, and receive an electronic copy of Full Chat. Guests who attend rides as pillioners are still welcome, and are not required to become "Friends". As non members of the IAM Friends would not be entitled to vote at the AGM or hold office as Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, Friend membership just offers a way of supporting SAM on a formal basis. Anyone interested in this should contact Gina Herridge for further details.

Solution to Summer 2017 Crossword

Across: 6 Hexagonal, 7 Speed, 10 Arrival, 11 Clutch, 12 Gear, 13 Position, 15 Monster, 17 Playing, 20 Advanced, 22 Safe, 25 Theirs, 26 Bonuses, 27 I P S G A, 28 Plastered.

Down: 1 Legal, 2 Carrie, 3 Converge, 4 Gallops, 5 Reechoing, 8 Poultry, 9 Acts, 14 Woodchips, 16 Shaving, 18 Lushness, 19 Oddball, 21 Cast, 23 Faster, 24 Ashes.

He's Created a Monster!

I wouldn't want to embarrass individuals in the club by personally naming them all, but my rapid development from Advanced Pass, to Master (Distinction) and National Observer in 3 years isn't all my own work. It's not that I'm an imposter. It's not entirely my fault that I've hardly ridden with Non-Advanced riders either – it was the reason I joined SAM. This rea-



son being to ride with other motorcyclists and get my Advanced qualification along the way. My standard of riding is the result of miles and miles with SAM.

When I make contact with a potential new member on a taster ride I sometimes have to show restraint if they fail to see the benefits of Advanced Riding. I see myself as a prime example of undertaking Advanced Training and what it can do. I started a month after passing my DVSA test. Some potential taster people don't even bother to return my call. We have to move on to the next taster person and put that experience

behind us.

From my very first ride out with SAM I've been observing (I think it's in my nature) – initially, it was how can I keep up with that rider in front, or how do they negotiate that bend so smoothly.

I fully understand the principles behind the method of motorcycle control now, and by applying IPSGA it allows me more time to plan and negotiate the hazard. My awareness of the things around me has developed further so I'm using, taking and giving information at a higher level. Personally, I'm big on Anticipation - it's one of the 3 parts of the Riding

Plan which encompasses the 'Information' phase. (Observe, Anticipate, Prioritize). You should try to anticipate what you can see, what you can't see and what you might reasonably expect to happen, then 'Decide' what to do and then 'Act' (it's found in Motorcycle Roadcraft -The Police Handbook - OAPDA)

Take the other day for example. I was out training on my racing (pedal!) bike along the A361 towards East Lyng. I was descending so I was close to 30mph, and was planning to turn from a major road to a minor road and head off right towards North Curry. I knew I had a tractor behind me so I moved over to the right hand side of the road and indicated with my arm. I anticipated that there would be a line of following traffic behind the tractor even though I couldn't clearly see them. I also clocked that the tractor also had his indicator on to turn into the same junction. I had taken up the right hand position in my lane nice and early and because I'm on a bicycle I also performed a shoulder check nice and early. What I saw then took me a little by surprise, in that there was a car performing an overtake of both the tractor and me! He had his right hand indicator flashing and was alongside the tractor yards from the junction. There was a left hand bend approaching and he was on the other side of the road in a 50 mph speed limit! There was no way he could have stopped in the distance he could see. I waved my right arm in the air to highlight to the driver of the car my intentions to turn right across the road in front of him. I completed the manoeuvre and then naturally breathed a huge sigh of relief. Further down the road I pulled over to let the tractor pass. The driver in the car was wrong in so many ways. He hadn't anticipated that there could have been a cyclist in front of the tractor, he didn't plan ahead and note



that he was overtaking near a junction and he certainly didn't take into consideration the dead ground ahead when he began his manoeuvre. So the point I'm making is whether you're on a bicycle or a motorcycle, it's worth anticipating the unexpected. As a cyclist of many years, the unexpected becomes the expected, and you start to anticipate poor driving every time you throw your leg over the top tube. This is certainly not the first time I've been overtaken in this situation, but it was the first with a tractor involved!

Teaching / Mentoring / Coaching, call it what you like – it's fairly easy getting across to associates the principals behind Position Speed Gear and Acceleration, but the Information phase which encompasses everything we do is sometimes lost and a little fuzzy or

misunderstood. It's not mechanical, it's a state of mind. Read the chapter on 'Human Factors' in the new Advanced Rider Course Manual. Perhaps the driver of the car was in a rush and he hadn't left enough time for his journey. I couldn't see the drivers face so I don't know if he/she was angry. I just wanted to get out of his way. Positive personal qualities / behaviours are important in order for the whole Riding Plan to co-exist. Anger, frustration and lack of concentration can all cloud your judgement and impair your performance (and can cause a driver to overtake in a dangerous situation!)

Jez hasn't really created a monster – he said that recently in reply to a club member after he pointed out that the level I'd reached was partly due to the fact I follow him on a regular basis. What's good is



that he no longer needs to correct my position or tell me that I've changed gear too early into that bend. What's also good is that I keep 'him' on his toes and we both make sure that we keep riding to a very high standard.

Lisa Parsons

Road to Masters

There are several reasons riders might think of taking their Masters or even have some mentored rides. For me, the idea of improving my riding started in 2014. I was bumbling along with around 20 years of on and off riding. I often used to see other riders out and about and compare myself to them. I didn't feel I came off very well! So after attending a Police

Safe riding event, I decided to venture into the IAM arena....joining first the Devon Advanced Motorcyclists and then moving over to SAM, when I realised what a nice bunch of lads and lasses they were!



I passed my Advanced in April 2014. An achievement I was pleased with, but not necessarily proud of. I had passed, but felt I had only just scraped through. I realised then that the Advanced was just a starting point. I now started to enjoy getting out with like minded people, to try to improve my skills and enjoy the social element, which I am still enjoying. After about 6 months, I decided to see if I could help with the Yeovil Blood Bikers. I now know that the majority of bikers who are part of Yeovil Free-wheelers come through SAM. The organisation gave me somewhere to improve my skills and at the same time give something to the Community.

During this time I met Nick Griffin and after several ride outs together I decided to ask if he could look at my riding again to see if he could improve my skills as I felt I had reached a plateau. This worked well, and is what eventually led me to become a local observer.

At that time there was a Training Officer vacancy in YFW's, so Steve Joyce and I offered to take over the training. My main role was to train riders for the Blues and Two's and to carry out annual ride check. Within my first year I had observed around 25 riders and had seen some excellent examples of good riding. What was even more impressive to me was that they all had their own styles, yet still showed all the elements of a good progressive safe ride.



We now have 8 local observers within Yeovil Freewheelers, and I felt it was the right time that if I was trying to improve as well as assess riders annually then I needed to be as good a rider as I could, with the understanding behind that....the masters.

Peter Herridge couldn't

have been more helpful, as someone who I think is a legend within SAM, I was pleased that Peter agreed to mentor me for the Masters. On my first mentored ride....and this is a confession...I missed Peter's indicators so Peter overtook me and asked me to turn round where I felt it was safe and showed me the junction I missed. This is what happened next....something...then Peter's comments (about 30 seconds later) “. Callum, up until the point you dropped your bike, you were showing some really good riding”. Now that's diplomacy!, that nearly made me laugh. The moral of that story is I tried to show a cheeky little turn in an area that was too cheeky for me and my little bike. From then onward I told myself that you ride the way you ride, not the way you think people are wanting or expecting, and you learn from what comes out of it.

Through oral, written, and video feedback I received from Peter over the next 4 months, I gained finer point detail to my ride and what it was to ride in your own style, but with a constant thought process going through your head, which in the end not only improved my ride, but evolved it. The

main changes were doing things intuitively, without having to think about them, which freed my brain to concentrate on the ride itself working pro-actively, so I moved from one hazard to the next seamlessly. So what became intuitive; Mirrors and Position, which meant an enhanced awareness of what was going on around me and the ability to be in the right place at all times to take every opportunity that presents itself whilst optimizing my safety on the road. I think they are going to be different for everyone, but they were mine.

When I started I said I would say why you should try out the Masters. These are my answers; The mentor will re-affirm your knowledge and practical skills, from your current level and allow you to develop those skills at your own pace.

They will improve your precision and thought processes...helping

you display that elusive quality: SPARKLE.

And finally, no matter what the outcome, you will be a more accomplished rider able to ride with more confidence.

I took my test on 10th Oct with Shaun Cronin, one of the national examiners, over a distance of around 50 miles mixing urban, rural and marginal lanes. I would have to admit to one emotionally disconcerting moment when Shaun came past me and pulled me over earlier than I was expecting...fortunately it was simply to tell me he was changing the end point of the test. The feedback you receive lasts as long as the test itself so you gain a massive insight into your riding ability and knowledge.

Even if you don't want to take the test, the mentored rides are brilliant in their own right, so my advice is that if you are looking to taking your riding to a new level then apply to be mentored. You have nothing to lose, save the cost, which I can only say was an investment for me.

Finally if I had to give 1 bit of advice....Enjoy the experience....I did! Good Luck.

Callum Bremner



BIKING NEWS

You Couldn't Make it Up!

or....PROOF OF THE VALUE OF IPSGA AND ALL ROUND OBSERVATION !!

A middle aged man is persuaded by his biker son to "Carpe Diem" and take up biking. He goes out and buys himself a brand new Fazer, does the requisite courses and Hey Presto passes his test. To gain experience (and build confidence....wait for it !!) he goes out with his son on a well attended charity bike ride near Exeter. The group pulls in to a garage and while some ride up to the pumps, our hero, with a large group of fellow bikers, swings left and circles the wagons waiting for the others to refuel. On the periphery of the group, he is alerted by shouts to the fact that life is about to take a sudden turn for the worse.

A farmer's Landrover has entered the forecourt and turned towards the pumps. Unfortunately the large trailer hitched to the Landrover, hijacked



by a group of ISIS sheep (Independent **S**heep In **S**omerset), tears the towing hitch off the Landrover and heads directly for the assembled bikers, most with their engines off, standing over/on their bikes. A quick turn of the head and realisation dawns that there is no time to save the bike....just enough time to leap sideways before the



trailer impacts with his outer leg. Kinetic energy being what it is the bike, which is totalled, slams into him propelling him side-

ways and down onto a kerb where he sustains two cracked ribs. Luckily he had kept his helmet on !

Undeterred our victim starts his IAM course next week and his Observer wants to know whether all those "Jedi Masters" out there have any tips for him on what he should tell his associate about how to avoid hijacked sheep trailers ???

The Sting in the Tail for the farmer.....there are dozens of "independent" witnesses, garage CCTV footage.....and the victim is a practising solicitor specialising in personal injury claims !£!£!£!£.

Lindsay Wilson



Eating my Bike

Like most normal people, I enjoy living in harmony with the wildlife in this country, we don't have any dangerous animals apart from the adder which most never see anyway, and the threat when riding of being taken out by a deer or badger. But occasionally we may have to control our wild friends to avoid damage to our property, and so it was recently, when one day I noticed a few bits of chewed rubber underneath my Yamaha FZ750.

Having uncovered the bike I found that fortunately only some of the foam in the battery box had been attacked, but I needed to catch the culprit before they developed a taste for the electrical wiring, so a humane trap was set.

Nothing happened for a few days but I did find my box of disposable gloves had also been chewed inside a drawer. The next time I checked



the drawer out jumped a mouse!

So the trap was re-located to inside the drawer, and since then four mice have been caught and transported to a new home in the countryside. The trap will stay in the drawer from now on.

Rick Chubb

KIT REPORTS

Are You Under Pressure?



I have lost track of the number of times when I have responded to “Dad, will you kindly move my car?”, to find as I walk out to the vehicle the tyre pressures look ominously low. Yep, sometimes 10-15psi low, and to the more experienced eye you did not need a pressure gauge to realise it.

So, after nagging until blue in the face as to the value of checking tyre pressures routinely, I eventually fitted 4 tyre pressure guard caps to my daughter’s car so that she can do a straightforward visual check of her tyre pressures and quickly see if she needs to break out the air compressor. Yes, where the vehicle has a number of pressures for different loading, you need to settle on the most appropriate, or buy a whole host of different pressure caps if you are feeling flush! These have proved so useful on my daughter’s car, I have now fitted 42psi caps to my Pan-European to see how practical and effective they are on the bike. The valves are several grams heavier than a plastic dust cap, so ideally your wheels need to be balanced with the caps in place, but having fitted them prior to balancing I have felt no discernible difference. EU law, which requires all new cars from Nov 2014 to be fitted with a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS), will probably catch up with new bikes at some

stage, even after BREXIT. In the meantime, these pressure caps are a cost-effective alternative to the more elaborate and expensive electronic systems. Worth remembering that if you have TPMS fitted to your car, it must be in full working order to pass an MOT.



Roger Moffatt

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAM Green Ride

"Frostie Fingers"

Sun. 3rd Dec. 2017

09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef

Led by Rick Chubb

Control & Technique

"The Comfort Zone"

Sat 9th Dec. 2017

10:00 @ The Old Pound, Wearne,

nr. Langport TA10 0QJ

SAM Green Ride

"Frozies Toezies"

Wed. 13th Dec. 2017

18:45 @ Podimore Services

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Green Ride

"The Resolution Shuffle"

Mon. 1st. Jan. 2018

10:30 @ Cartgate Services

Led by Gina Herridge

SAM Committee Meeting

Mon. 8th Jan. 2018

19:30 @ The Old Pound, Wearne,

nr. Langport TA10 0QJ

Control & Technique

"Braking

Sat. 13th. Jan. 2018

10:00 @ TBA

SAM Red Ride

"Checkpoint Charlie"

Sun. 14th Jan. 2018

09:00 @ J27 Services, M5

Led by Rob Bartlett

SAM Green Ride

"Tick in the Box"

Sun. 21st Jan. 2018

10:00 @ Kelways Inn, Langport

Led by Lisa Parsons

SAM Green Ride

"Morning Ramble"

Sun. 4th Feb. 2018

10:00 @ Podimore Services

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Observer Training

"Theory 1"

Wed. 7th. Feb. 2018

19:30 @ TBD

Led by Peter & Gina Herridge

Control & Technique

"Cornering"

Sat. 10th Feb. 2018

10:00 @ TBD

**Please check on Events List or
Website for up to date information
before Event.**

CROSSWORD

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Across

- 1 Better mechanic (6)
 4 Builder in Osaka was a Kiwi (8)
 9 Rewrite news, or bikes belong to them (6)
 10 Top apartment, first US motor (8)
 12 Pistons have one. Wide smile first to last (4)
 13 New faces where Rockers met (5)
 14 Two thirds jam and one waffle for this Czech offering (4)
 17 Fantastic war horse, this – forces induction (12)

CROSSWORD (cont.)

Across (cont.)

- 20** We are all one (12)
- 23** One way or the other it's the ideal cycle for a petrol engine (4)
- 24** Jane's novel supposedly first sold in California (5)
- 25** Show this in your valve train, requires tappet adjustment (4)
- 28** Strung, like fixings on your machine (8)
- 29** Turn right round gallery (6)
- 30** Chillest, but most agile (8)
- 31** They protrude from your engine heads (6)

Down

- 1** Break under 12in. peg (8)
- 2** Parsnips have an element for standard, they cut sheet metal (8)
- 3** Money says "You row!" (4)
- 5** Grid alliance worked for BSB 600 Superstock team (6,6)
- 6** "Put down before the deal", Mum's northern sister said (4)
- 7** Where you might see trials indoors are not applicable South (6)
- 8** Manufacturer from the sub-continent (6)
- 11** Surveying instruments not to be confused with rev counters (12)
- 15** Less-faired Leader is idiomatically straight (5)
- 16** Girl's adjustable spanner without resistance (5)
- 18** Combinations of brandy, orange liqueur and lemon juice (8)
- 19** First course, they replaced kicking (8)
- 21** Famous make, and not heavyweight (6)
- 22** Galvanize spur (4,2)
- 26** Scooter not the 30 (4)
- 27** Motorway has services operator (4)

Solution in next issue

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

RIDE REPORTS

Time Travelling

A combination of an extra hour in bed, and a forecast of dry and relatively warm weather bode well for Ben Everard's annual Time Travelling October Amber ride, but I think even he was surprised when 25 bikes rolled up at Cartgate Services. Luckily Rob Bartlett knew the roads Ben had planned in to his route to the breakfast stop at the Driftwood Café in Blue Anchor, so we had a leader for the 2nd Group – the number of bikes could have led to some congestion, or perhaps concern to other road users if we stayed together, so splitting into 2 Groups was essential. Ben set off with half the Group, whilst the rest of us waited 10 minutes before Rob fired up the MultiStrada.

The route took us through Ash, Long Load & Long Sutton to High Ham, where we branched off left to Turn Hill before arriving at the start of Seven Bends. Luckily these had recently been re-opened to traffic, so we could all enjoy a bit of "swinging"! Onto the A361 at Othery, turning off at Burrowbridge to track along the River Parrett

Ben with his trusty BMW F800 GS



through Moorland and Huntworth. Crossing over the M5 at Jn 24, we soon left main roads at North Petherton to head towards the Quantocks. Through Spaxton and circling round Hawkridge Reservoir, Rob led our Group into the Quantock Hills, heading for Crowcombe. Just before de-

scending the 1 in 4 hill into Crowcombe, Rob took an unscheduled stop at Dead Woman's Ditch, very busy with walkers on this beautiful Sunday morning. Thinking it was a call of nature (?), Rob walked down the line to let us know he had caught up with the Tail End Charlie of Group 1, so we hung around for 10 minutes before heading off again. Onto the A358 and in to Williton, before turning off for Watchet and the super stretch of road that is Cleeve Hill, following the Coast in to Blue Anchor.

Our unscheduled stop had allowed Group 1 to get a head start with their breakfast orders, but the popularity of the Driftwood Café together with our numbers still resulted in a queue out the door. Before long, though, the rapid service that Driftwood is re-

nowned for had us all fed and watered, ensuring we could all enjoy a relaxing blether.

A great route, in great weather, so hopefully Nathan and Mark (on their first SAM Group Ride) got a good insight into why SAM rides are so popular.

Leaving Blue Anchor, Ben and Nathan disappeared off for an Observed Ride, while various Groups of riders headed off (all in familiar territory, thankfully) in various directions for their own preferred roads home. Ken and I kept Rob company, returning via Dunster and Luxborough before joining the wonderful B3224 via Raleigh's Cross to Bishops Lydeard and home.

A great morning's riding, thanks for organising it Ben.

Graham Tulloch

BIKE REPORTS

BMW C650 GT

I don't normally take courtesy bikes when having mine serviced. However, after some intriguing, positive reports in *Motorcycle Sport and Leisure* I borrowed the BMW C650 GT scooter from my dealer's demo fleet.

I have an enjoyable, 50 mile, A and B road trip to my dealer and for a good comparison I rode the scooter most of the way home and then back to the dealer, doing about 70 miles. I made progress just as I do on my

R1200RT. One-up, performance and handling were fine, even smart overtakes at 50 mph plus were achieved comfortably. I felt perched on board instead of part of the machine and, in corners, I missed having something to grip with

my knees, but I found no problem using the hand lever rear brake; and, after reaching the best speed for each hazard the machine was always, already in the right gear. Through villages and the one town on the route the auto transmission was a benefit.

Seat comfort and weather protection from the adjustable screen were good but my legs were draughty. There's a big space under the seat and with a top box I'm certain it would meet all my solo needs. The scooter weighs much the same as my RT and has significantly less power so two-up touring would have to be more leisurely. Total luggage space would be less and fuel range (a



major benefit of the RT) reduced. Motorcyclists who have changed to maxi-scooters report being ignored by other bikers. This wouldn't bother me. What would bother me would be the structural and, therefore, weight compromises required to keep the hot bits away from the rider, to provide step-through mounting and (on some examples) to provide a platform for shopping bags.

So, would I consider owning one? Yes, if I rode mostly alone, and couldn't swing my leg over the RT. However, the BMW scooter is expensive and I would seriously check out the key competitors to maximise value for money.

Steve Schlemmer

Yamaha Tracer MT07

Whilst my Honda was in for a check, I had the use of one of these popular Yamahas.

I pulled out of Branson's, after adjusting the mirrors, and found all the other controls "fitted" me well enough, even the rear brake, which I generally have to lower on most bikes, due to a rather inflexible ankle. The clutch seemed a bit sharp, biting suddenly, so a bit of care needed for a smooth getaway. At junctions I found the seat low enough to place both feet flat on the floor if needed (I am 5'8"). The gearbox worked nicely and

the bike accelerated briskly when required. In fact all functions worked as you would expect of a modern machine.

Once away from town, I felt that the foot pegs were a little far forward for my liking. The dash had all the normal functions, but were not all on view together, needing to be scrolled through to find.

I guess the fact is, I cannot find much to fault with this bike, and the only reason I did not consider one more, when looking for a new bike, was the unattractive and "bitty" appearance, to my eyes, a

personal thing of course.

If you fancy one of these, don't be put off by me, give it a try. Thanks to Bransons for the loan of the Yamaha.

Rick Chubb





No doubt many of you started out with an old 2nd- (many?) hand motorcycle that you needed to fix on a small budget, or walk, for me it was a BSA C15 250cc, before the law changed to limit learners to a 125cc. This was just before helmets became compulsory, and yes I did "enjoy" riding without for a while. That bike, and several that followed, needed a fair amount of attention to keep on the road, and I soon got used to doing my own maintenance.

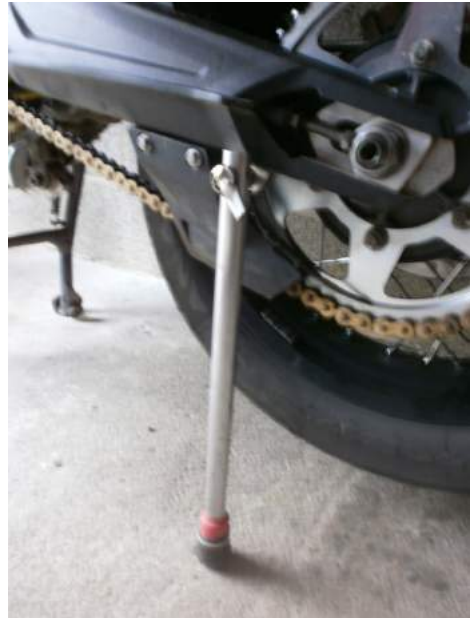
As time flew by and we bought a house, one of the first priorities was a garden shed and this soon filled with an assortment of tools, either scrounged from family, or saved for, from what was left after essentials like mortgage etc. had been paid.

Of course, not wanting to spend too much often meant making do, or making my own tools, and I still do this if what I need is either not available or too expensive. Sometimes a very useful item can be made for little cost but turns out to be so useful you wonder why nobody is making something similar.

So, about six years ago when I bought my Triumph Tiger 800XC, I found that when cleaning, due to the way it's so well balanced on its centre stand, it needed some kind of prop to enable both wheels to be spun for cleaning, (and other maintenance tasks), the photos show what I came up with. A length of alloy tube with a walking stick rubber foot at one end,



drilled at the other, with a thumb screw and nut fitted, and also a short piece of alloy rod that slots in this end. The thumb screw fits into the swing arm where it is threaded for paddock stand bobbins, and holds the rear wheel just off the ground, with the small rod inserted it slots into the bottom of



the forks and holds the front wheel up.

This tool is small enough to carry on the bike for longer trips, but it's main purpose for cleaning has seen it used many times.

Rick Chubb

MEMBER'S TRIPS

Coast to Coast USA—Part 1 of 2

For some years I have idly imagined what it would be like to ride from Alaska to the Southern tip of Argentina, but that will have to remain a pipe dream for oh so many reasons.

A more realistic dream was to ride the USA Coast to Coast, and in 2016 I became aware of a guy (Chris) who arranged such trips

while carrying out his day job. The real bonus for me was being able to ship our own bikes and use them rather than hire. Apart from the obvious satisfaction of riding my own bike, comfort was a prime consideration with long hot days in the saddle planned, and my Super Tenere is the most comfortable bike I have ever owned. We

all carry out modifications on our bikes to improve comfort and in my case, some require surgery, not something that could be done on a hire bike.

A trip to Manchester was arranged for a meeting, I wanted to satisfy myself that Chris was a regular guy not some super human (the thoughts of a Nick Sanders type character, 12-14 hours a day in the saddle has no appeal at all). All was good, in fact very good and reassuring, he uses Interstate Highways only when there is no alternative, and no fast food chains. We would travel the highways and bye ways, visit some of the iconic locations as we meandered our way from East to West. Of course, I still had moments of doubt, the trip involves serious mileage day after day and would get hotter as we travelled West. Anyway, there was only one way

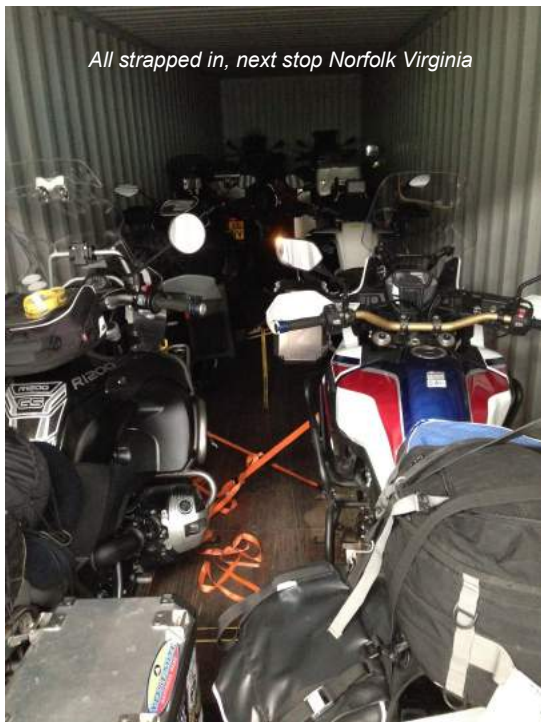


to find out and that was to commit to it which is what I did. All I had to do then was sit back and wait to hear that the trip is on as Chris needed enough bikes to fill the container to make it as cost effective as possible for all concerned.

In due course the news came through that all was good. So fresh oil and filter in the bike and I put on a new set of tyres, check that nothing was loose and the



spokes were all ringing the same, what else could I do? The paper work started to fly to-and-fro, importing a vehicle into the States involves the odd tree being felled. Book my flight and await further instructions. The bikes were to be containerised in Pershore and in due course the call came through with a delivery date. The other bonus was that all the riding gear and personal effects could travel with the bikes, flying with just hand luggage is much preferred by yours truly. While dropping off my bike I met up with some of my fellow travellers which was good.



My departure day finally arrived and my long day began with a trip to Bristol Airport on the Falcon Bus. Despite missing my final connection from Atlanta to Norfolk Virginia due to thunder storms delaying all flights in the area I got to my hotel at midnight, only two hours behind schedule.

The following morning, I meet up with the rest of the team and we were off to a warehouse just a 10-minute walk from our hotel where we were reunited with our bikes. Check the bikes and kit over, all good, no issues so the remainder of the day was spent acclimatising around Norfolk and Virginia Beach. So, there we were and ready to go: 6 bikes, my Yamaha S10, 1 Honda Cross Dresser, 4 BMW GS's together with two pillions. I did wonder how our one lady pillion was going to get on as she had only done short local trips previously, however as it turned out she was just fine. One thing that struck me early on was that while there were no smokers in our party, smoking was allowed everywhere, but then again, we were in the heart of Virginia the home of tobacco.

The first few days were spent in Virginia and North Carolina, day one con-

sisted of run down the Atlantic Coast to Kitty Hawk home of the Wright Bros first powered flights, a visit to the museum, a bid farewell to the Atlantic and then onward through miles of wetlands which included The Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge to our overnight stop in Washington, North Carolina.



Farewell to the Atlantic Ocean



The Smoky Mountains

The following day we moved into the Blue Ridge Mountains, or Smoky Mountains as they are known due to the mist that hangs over the valleys. It was refreshing to have gained height and got away from the previous day's humidity. Day 4 we rode the Blue Ridge Parkway National Park, mile



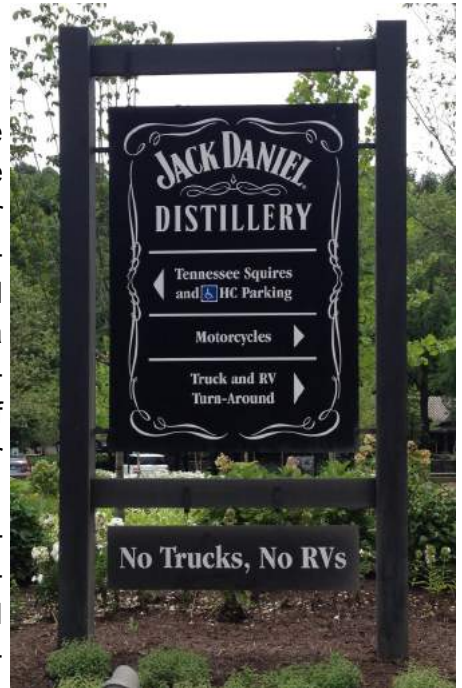
after mile of sweeping bends and first class road surface. Onto to Maggie Valley for a stop off at the Wheels Through Time Transportation Museum, mainly old Harleys but none the worse for it, it's the USA after all! On to Townsend for our overnight.

Day 5 and we rode the infamous Dragon's Tail at Deals Gap, 318 bends in 11 miles (You Tube is your friend) the temptation to have



The start of The Dragon's Tail at Deals Gap

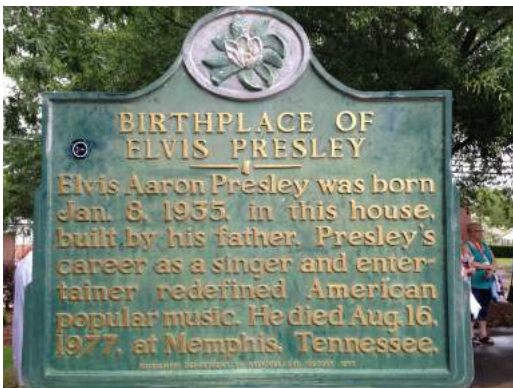
some fun was too great, thankfully no incidents while we were there and we all made it through ok. We enjoyed some other fantastic roads in the area before moving on into Tennessee. This was one of our longer days at 420 miles.



The day was broken up by a visit to the Jack Daniels Distillery in Lynchburg. We chose to join the non-sampling tour for obvious reasons, never the less an interesting stop off. We also appreciated the fact that the bike park, and it was a big one, was right outside the main entrance. Car and camper parking was off site, quite right. On to Lawrenceburg for our overnight.

The following day we pass into Alabama for a couple of hours before entering Mississippi State. Today's mid ride stop off is Tupelo and a visit to Elvis Presley's birthplace and museum, I'm

not particularly a fan but the tour was most interesting none the less. We were shown around by a relative which gave it a bit more meaning. Then it's on over the Mississippi River into Oklahoma. The next day its Pine Bluff to Davis taking in the Ouchita National Forrest. One week into the trip and it's going well, and is as good



as I had hoped, and we are all getting on fine which was great. My roommate turns out to be J Corbin's no.1 fan so we quickly discover that politics is best avoided, then we get on just fine! Pine Bluff to Dalhart another 400 miles across Oklahoma, flat for mile after mile broken up by the occasional farm buildings (farms

available and cheap as chips, if a building, including houses, become past it, rather than demolish they build alongside and leave the existing to its own devices. Anyway, no matter how humble the property they do like a nice well-cut front lawn running down to the road, it's the home of the ride on mower!



It's mid-morning and brunch time, we come across a café which looks promising and on entering we are greeted by the proprietor with "how on earth did you all find us, we are in the middle of nowhere in the back of beyond" now we didn't need to be told that as it was plainly obvious but as usual we were made to feel very welcome and own-

the size of counties). This is dust bowl country of the 1930's and the horizon always appears very distant, and some of the small groups of houses that we ride past do look a bit third world. It appears that as land is readily



ers, staff and fellow diners who were invariably amazed, and always interested in what we were doing. Talking to many Americans, almost always, those that have travelled overseas did it while in the Army, it's their way out.

Our overnight stop is Dalhart, a scruffy Mid Texas town but I like the place, it's a X roads town (that's how their signs show them) not just road but also rail. A steady flow of slow moving freight trains with 100 plus trucks each time kept me entertained with their constant wailing hooters, I'm told they have to sound them as they pass through built up areas as no form of track side fencing is in place, so people take short cuts over the tracks constantly.



We have now been in Texas for two days and the Eastern Rockies appear on the horizon and they stay there for most of the day as we ride the flat lands of Texas on past huge cattle ranches and steak on the hoof. At the end of the day we begin to climb into the Rockies and our destination for the night Canon City. The city is noted for being the location of nine state and four federal prisons and a welcoming sign says "Corrections Capital of the World". Our ride in took us past a couple and they were vast.



Richard Pearse

TIME TO POLISH UP THOSE FADING SKILLS?

The bad news:

Opinions vary as to how great the IAM affiliated insurance company, Surety, is. However, one very useful thing to come out of access to the Surety insurance data, now available to the IAM, is a measure of how useful advanced training is in reducing insurance claims. It turns out that five years after passing the advanced test, drivers and riders start to approach the same risk levels for claiming as those who have never had any advanced training. So our skills are not a once and for all asset, but something which will gradually erode with time and which need regular refreshment.

The good news:

Who enjoyed their training? Yeah, all of us, right? The committee has decided to offer post-pass coaching and skill development for all SAM members who wish, so that it will be simple and convenient to keep

your riding skills polished and sharp. At present anyone who would like an observed run should contact Paul Dyer to be put in touch with an observer. However since regular skills development can benefit us all, we are looking for some kind of fun incentive to offer members so that the opportunity is more likely to be taken up widely. Anyone with an idea of what the club might feasibly offer, please contact me to discuss it.

Gina Herridge

(photo below—Peter Herridge “Flying the Flag” for SAM at the popular 3rd Sunday of month Haynes Bike-Meet.)



DEAR SANTA!



With Christmas now just around the corner, hopefully the following will provide some ideas for those who can never think what to buy for family and friends. Or maybe you just want to treat someone, to add further enjoyment to their motorcycling in 2018?



SAM CLOTHING

The range of garments offered through the Club is currently being updated to reflect the recent change of the SAM logo. Final pricing and designs have still to be finalised, but should be in place by Christmas. Designs will be largely the same as previous garments, although the base colour will change from Black to Navy Blue. The current range (together with last year's prices) are:

Beanie Hats - £7*

Soft Shell Jackets (showerproof) - £35*

Polo Shirts - £15*

Fleeces - £25*

* prices subject to change

Anyone interested in any of the above, please contact Mark Livingstone at livingstonem@bridgwater.ac.uk

SOUTH WEST PENINSULA SPRING RALLY 2018

Taking place on Saturday 7th April 2018, this year sees the 10th anniversary of this ever-popular event. Why not buy an entry ticket for a friend? Prices are **£29 for Rider only, £17 for a Pillion**, and these can be purchased by following the SWPSR link in the SAM Website.

IAM ROADSMART ADVANCED RIDER COURSE—now just £134!

Allow others the opportunity to improve their riding by giving them an IAM RoadSmart Advanced Riding Course. Providing a year's membership to both IAM RoadSmart and SAM (or another local Group for those outside our area), together with all the required learning materials and the Test Fee, this is one of the best value presents you could give. **To buy an Advanced Rider Course gift voucher, ring the order hotline 0300 303 1134 and quote gv10 to save 10% on the normal price of £149.**

TAILPIECE #1

rider n, an addition to an otherwise complete document [*set out like a dictionary definition*]

"The rider set out with his beloved old Honda to an evening classic bike event. It was its first outing for weeks – its life featured more spruce than use, more Mr Sheen than Barry. He rolled it out, it started, it ran but would not pick up speed. He dawdled off stopping a number of times to check it over. Slowly and eventually, in the failing light, he found himself many miles from home, too late for the event. He called the AA.

The AA man promised 'we'll soon have you back on the road, sir', and made the obvious checks of fuel and electrics - nothing amiss, and finally said, 'let's check the air cleaner'. As the AA man returned to his van to fetch a spray can, the rider lifted the seat to expose the air intake. There, right next to the intake was his yellow, polishing duster. When the engine demanded enough air, a flap of yellow cloth was pulled onto the intake, strangling the engine.

The AA man reappeared, sprayed and started the engine. It ran beautifully and revved freely. 'There you are, sir, I don't know what we did but that's fixed it. Enjoy the rest of your ride'.

But the rider knew, and the duster was safely in his pocket."

CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!

Thanks to Lisa Parsons and our many other willing photographers, we are gradually building up a great selection of photos. So as a bit of a fun, I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo. Suggestions to me at Tullochg@aol.com, we'll publish the best of them (the printable ones, that is!) in the next issue.

Graham Tulloch



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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 have 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 5HJ

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

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.

SWPSR

The 10th South West Peninsula Rally takes place on Saturday 7th April. Start point this year is Long Sutton Village Hall. £29 for Riders, £17 for Pillioners. Entry forms can be found on the SAM Website. Sign up, and look forward to a great day out in the South West.

CONTROL & TECHNIQUE — Starting in November and running through until March, the 2nd Saturday of each month signals our ever popular C&T sessions. These offer the chance for all members to chat about various motorcycling topics, such as Bike Maintenance, Braking, Cornering, Group Riding & The Comfort Zone (i.e. how to dress & prepare for riding in all weathers). 2 hours, starting at 10am, come along, join in and share your experiences.