

Spring 2017

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



SAM Officers

Chair	Richard Pearce	07779 285666
Secretary	Andy Hall	01963 350452
Treasurer	Alistair Gee	07779 126388
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 Graham Tulloch	07745 052815 07825 201650



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*Front Cover: Alessandro & William from Dainese
enjoying their 1st SWPSR (photographed by Jurgen)*



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



The dry cold
Spring has
been pretty
good for motor-
cycling, and I
realised with
shock that
Shinyu's ser-

vice was a thousand miles overdue last week. I'd had it firmly in my head that I had hardly been out on the bike in 2017, but the odometer tells a different story. Similarly, I was feeling a bit aggrieved that the new, more expensive Michelin Pilot Road 4's had gone off horribly with at least 1,000 miles worth of tread left on them, and then checked how long they'd been on there: Ahem,



9,000 miles. Peter always talks about converting money into noise when we are about to go out on the bikes, but I think it would be truer to say that we are converting it into fun. This issue of Full Chat is traditionally the "Rally Special" and the South West Peninsula Rally 2017



on 1st April was the most well attended and successful to date, thanks to the growing and enthusiastic rally team, headed up by Jez Martin and ably assisted by our excellent Chair (wearing his Rally Secretary hat). Specifically the Rally was enhanced by the support of Dainese, thanks to Michele Simonetti's good offices.



However, other things are also afoot, and SAM is hoping to be much more publicly visible at various events over the 2017 season - all helpers gratefully appreciated!

Many thanks to all those who have contributed words and pictures to this issue, the deadline for the next one will be 15th July, 2017. **Gina Herridge**

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

How time flies, I'm now into my second year as Chairman and so much is going on in our club by way of organised events, it's a credit to the organisers.

Our South West Peninsula Spring Rally continues to go from strength to strength, just short of 150 riders and pillions this year. With so many favourable comments from participants, assistance from Dainese (our toe in



the water with social media), and a warm welcome at the manned check points, I'm convinced we have potential for more growth yet. We were fortunate with the weather, after a week of unpromising forecasts the

day proved mostly dry for the entrants, and no doubt explains the record numbers through the Perranporth manned checkpoint and on to Lands End for the Lands End award. So a pat on the back to all concerned.

Another annual favourite that I returned from just yesterday is the Welsh Weekend, organised by Rob Bartlett. This event continues to grow and I suspect a ballot for places will be required if the growth continues. On Friday we were





led as usual by Rob to our eventual destination in Welshpool. On Saturday Matt Towill took over the lead and took us to the North Coast, Llandudno and Great Orme Head, both of which were new to me, so even better. The tour included a couple of laps of Llandudno so I feel I had value there, and an impressive town it is too. The weather was ideal over the three days, and so dry that my bike doesn't so much need a wash, but more a dusting, which is extraordinary for Wales and April. To sum up, bikes, good company, good roads, pleasant weather, it doesn't get much better.

I return to Wales in two weeks' time to take part in the Welsh National Rally, if only the weather could be as good, I can but hope.

By the time you receive this edition of Full Chat one of our major fund raising



ing events will have taken place, the Pancake Express hosted by Graham and Alison Tulloch. Its sure to have been a success and raised lots of money for our chosen charity this year, St Margaret's Hospice, so full credit and thanks is due to them. Fund raising for our charity got off to a flying start this year with the auction of a leather jacket and panniers donated by Steve and Jane Schlemmer, which netted £223, so a big thank you to them.

As I said at the start, these events and many others are a credit to the organisers and reflect so well on our club.

If you have not yet ventured on to our two Facebook sites now is the time as there are lots of photographs from these events, and others.

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 test:

- Paul Crummay on 5th March, observed by Gina & Peter Herridge, riding a Honda Integra
- Justin Dodd also on 5th March observed by Ian Wilson, earning himself a F1RST.
- And to Dave Watson, one of our Observers, who submitted himself to an IAM Assessment on his CBR1100XX and achieved a F1RST, with 1s in every category.



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 7th March 2017 will be emailed to members.

Recruitment Team

I can't really remember exactly when I joined SAM; I think it was probably 1997. I remember that Rick Chubb was my observer, though. In many of the years since, at the committee meetings, we have discussed the recruitment of more members to the club. I recall that in my early days, our recruitment drive consisted of Hayley Radford greeting and making welcome any new faces on the group rides. (No one could call it a sophisticated plan, but it definitely worked for me, and I learned an important lesson about making everyone welcome as soon as they join.) As the years rolled by and we discussed recruitment over and over again, my private response was "Oh it's all too difficult, I just want to ride my bike, there's no point in all this stuff." But, not for the first time in my life, and I am sure not for



the last, I was completely wrong. The problem with years rolling by, is that I tend to get older, and quite recently (might have been about the time I confronted a serious illness and thought that I might die in the foreseeable future, instead of in some Never Never time beyond imagining) it occurred to me to address the matter of recruitment more directly, even if only to prove what a waste of time it was. So I sent an email to you all, asking for volunteers to make up a recruitment committee, and to my surprise and delight, half a dozen people came forward. Not only that, they are people with ideas, energy and commitment. Thanks to Ken Oc-ton, our new Publicity Officer, we now have a much stronger presence on Facebook, and he has begun several other initiatives to get our name and what we can do for riders' skills out there. He has had the support of Ian and Pam Fraser, Hugh Beamish, Adam Evans, Michele Simonetti, Paul Dyer and Roger Moffat, each of whom bring other skills to the task. Michele's

work on the rally website and in orchestrating the support of Dainese has taken the rally a step further into the future.

I have also emailed you to garner ideas for presenting on road skills to schools, and likewise had a dozen or so responses. This work proceeds a bit more slowly, but I haven't given up yet. I'm planning to go into a school with Somerset Road Safety to get some idea what they are already doing and how well it works. My view is that if we are to go into schools, we need to be memorable and effective, or we will do more harm than good.

However, this all goes to demonstrate that while SAM retains its essential elements of friendliness, sociability, fantastic events calendar and strong observer team, it



also has the energy of new thinking and approaches coming through, all thanks to the efforts of so many of the members. New ideas and offers of help are always welcome, and in the meantime, there are always friends, family and colleagues who could benefit from an advanced rider or driver course if we just plant that seed in their minds.

Gina Herridge

SOUTH WEST PENINSULA RALLY REPORTS

Better Luck This Year!

After last year's cock-up of missing the first planned checkpoint, I had a ride over one Sunday to try to find out what went wrong. Without Rally pressures I was able to have a bit more of a look around and found the 'missing car park' 1/2 a mile further on from the one I thought was the right one! Lesson learned; if the directions say 1 mile from a given point, then ride 1 mile, not 1/2 mile to the first car park you come across. What a muppet I was. Anyway with that ghost laid to rest I planned this year's route with some confidence.

To further lay this ghost I tried to plan a similar route to last year to prove to myself that it could work and bring home a gold certificate, so Poundbury, Princetown and Ilfracombe were to be the manned checkpoints. As usual I tried to get in as many checkpoints as possible before arriving at the first manned one at 10:00am opening time. The chosen route would have worked clockwise or anti clockwise so I was happy with that and decided on which way on the morning of the rally after looking at the weather forecast. I then tried to enter it into my satnav, I have no idea how I managed

it but by pressing enough buttons it eventually appeared inside the gadget. After last year's experience, though, I noted the locations by hand just in case.

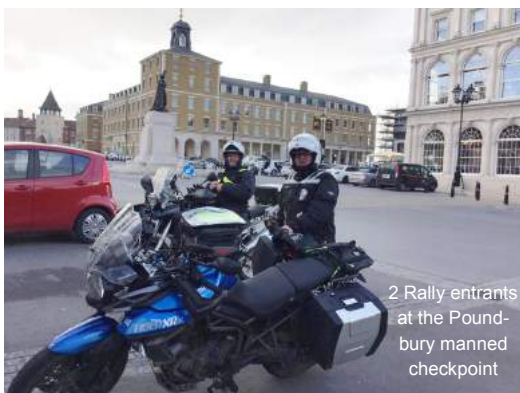
I checked the forecast on the morning of the rally and saw that 'April showers' would hit



Ilfracombe by lunchtime but not last long so I decided to go clockwise and hit Ilfracombe last, after the showers had gone through. I set off for the start and had the obligatory and excellent bacon sarnie before signing on and leaving. The first location was East Chinnock, but the satnav wanted to take me well to the East, to Podimore roundabout and then back along the 303 before turning off?! Well local knowledge certainly kicked in here and I took the direct route South through Muchelney and Martock before going over Ham Hill and dropping into Chinnock. The satnav was clearly pi**ed off with me and took ages to agree to my version of this route! However the first question was 'what is Carters Way leading to'? Well, Carters Lane leads to Portman Court where my brother Jeremy and his wife Wendy live, so that was a doddle! I fought the temptation of blagging a cup of tea at 8:15 on a Saturday morning and took off!

The next was Rampisham, well this time the satnav wanted to take me via Crewkerne and not the quick way through North Perrott. I was getting a bit concerned about the bloomin' gadget by now,

so pulled over and tapped in Rampisham as a via point and this seemed to sort it out; I also did this for Duntish and Affpuddle and arrived at spooky Poundbury bang on 10:00am. Poundbury is wierd, it looks fine but the scale is all wrong; it is as if the architect drew it in inches and the builder used feet. The buildings are massive! Don't like it.



As I left, the satnav appeared to be behaving so I went with it and we found Lodors very easily despite there being a road closure. A friend once told me there is no such thing as a road closure for a motorbike and sure enough I got through, (unlike the one I found last year which was properly closed with a JCB and some fencing!) I decided to trust the satnav to Princetown as I was doing okay so far and sure enough I got there

at 1:15-ish after visiting Colyton and Widecombe, plus a couple of others. The only snag was that I was going down some very tight lanes, when I was sure but not certain that bigger roads were available and probably quicker? I was also getting behind on time so there is something to sort here.

As I left Princetown, something definitely felt wrong as I was on the Tavistock road rather than heading North but I was low on fuel so went along with it and filled up in Tavistock knowing that the road North is quicker from there anyway (note to self, plan fuel stops better!) Anyway the next three locations at Sampford Courteney, Winkleigh and High Bickington were on a direct route to Mullacott cross, near Ilfracombe, so no big dramas although I was still on some very narrow, muddy, potholed lanes. I text Milly at my last manned checkpoint Mullacott cross and said I was heading back, to which she replied 'bring a boat!' reassuring me that my direction decision had been the right one, as I would have been right in the rain in Poundbury by now.

I had a bit of indecision now, and after heading towards Blackmoor Gate the traffic was diabolical with



early season caravans bogging the place up so I cut back to Barnstable and the North Devon link road which I know is quicker and leads me directly to the Blackdowns and my last two checkpoints at Churchstanton and Staple Fitzpaine. The satnav seemed to agree quite quickly although I was ignoring it by now! Climbing up the Blackdowns I went in to some fairly heavy showers but obviously nothing compared to what had gone before as there were torrents flowing down the road and I came across at least one flash flood. The feature of a plaque at Churchstanton was not quite as described but I was definitely there, so I took a photo just in case and rode on. The satnav had given up on me again by now but as I used to be an occasional visitor to the Greyhound in Staple Fitzpaine, my last checkpoint, I definitely know the quickest way

between there and Langport, close to where I used to live!

I clocked in at 6:00pm, an hour later than planned but not too bad considering the fuel stop detour and queer satnav decisions, 10 hours after starting and covering some 400 miles. I picked up my gold certificate (the Churchstanton plaque had caused a couple of queries so was graciously accepted) and T shirt and headed home but not before stopping to have a beer with two Biker mates that I hadn't seen in years, at a party in Ash (the very place where my wedding reception had been held 32 years ago!). The mud splattered Tiger looked a bit out of place amongst the gleaming Harley chops but they were fascinated by what I had just done, however I doubt that we will see any chops on next year's SWPR. **Pete Churchill**

A Hard Bronze!

My plan was an 8am start and a 5pm finish, due to a family do that evening, a silver should be possible but a drop back to bronze acceptable, sticking to the south coast mainly.

I had taxed and checked my Tiger 800 the day before so this was it's first time out in months, but



needed a fill up so I headed into Chard and decided to use Tesco to avoid having to remove my helmet by paying at the pump. Here was where my plans started to collapse as the receipt printer was out of order and a visit to the till was required.

Arriving in Langport and the Potting shed park is full of bikes, with Mark and son doing a fine job, including Mark restacking some pallets of compost to gain space. A friendly greeting from the rally team at check in, and five minutes noting on my route plan what clues I had to find, and I'm on my way.

Staple Fitzpaine is an easy first clue, so on to Churchstanton where I ride



Another SAM crew plan their next Checkpoint

through the village twice before finding a local who informs me the Church is about a mile away, once found, the plaque that needed to be read was nowhere to be found? oh well, make a note of what's on the big green sign and on my way.

Luppit is easy, but having chatted to a fellow rally'ist I departed in the wrong direction! I have a theory that if you keep turning the same way, either left or right, you should soon get back on route. It often works but this time I had horses to follow in very narrow lanes that eventually took me off course by several miles.

Payhembury was not too hard to find and Broadclyst too, although an elderly chap wanted to know what all the interest was in their bus shelter?

At Widecombe I was beginning to think I was back on schedule with

a visit to Princetown and a warm welcome following soon after. Half a silver in the bag.

A great ride over the moor, around Exeter, then along the coast to Colyton where a lady chatted away to me, until realising I had ear plugs in, and again asked for directions to somewhere I had never heard of!

Loders went OK, then on to Dorchester where I walked around the garden centre looking for my manned check point and stamp, thanks chaps, if you hadn't tapped the window I'd still be there.

Checking the time, I realised it was running out and I decided to miss Affpuddle and Duntish, which left Rampisham and East Chinnock to find. The first was found without drama, but my head was out of gear and although I have been through East Chinnock a thousand times, I went the long way to get there!



David Collier, a Rally regular, on his Ariel Red hunter at Princetown

Back at the Potting Shed and the team are back on duty for the evening, and I must collect my award and dash home. A great day of riding, about 236 miles and the Tiger still as good as ever.

Many thanks to everyone involved in the organization of the SWPSR, you do a grand job. **Rick Chubb**

BIKING NEWS

Why I Decided to Give Up Motorcycling

I passed my motorcycle test in 1962 on a BSA Bantam in Croydon. In those days the test was just a formality, riding round the block with the examiner watching. I think my examiner just went to a local cafe for a coffee and a fag because I never saw him until I got back to the test centre to be told I'd passed. I dashed home after the test to get my Vincent 1000 HRD out of the garage. The Vincent was the first bike that I rode at 100mph, without a helmet I might add. Thankfully they were made compulsory a short while after but not before I'd ridden under the back of a parked lorry and spent a few days in Sutton and Cheam Hospital to recover from the stitches to my head – yes, that's what it was like in those days!



In the intervening 55-years I think (hope) I've got a bit more sensible about riding. I've had countless bikes from a Mobylette Mobymatic moped through big BMW's, Triumphs, Hondas, Kawasakis, a much hated combination, you name it I've probably ridden it. One of the worst bikes I've ever owned was a Royal Enfield although I did ride a 500 Enfield

around Northern India for 2-weeks where it was ideal but definitely not ideal in the UK.

I've had a few accidents during those years: some of you probably remember me crashing my GTR 1300 on an Exmoor ride out. I also managed to

dump my Tiger 800 turning into my own drive when I lost the front on loose gravel – I had decided not to get abs, to save myself £600 on the new purchase price, a mistake I now know! My Pan dropped onto the back of a Porsche 911, puncturing his engine cover, although that was due to the Eurotunnel making an emergency stop and the bike fell onto the Porker! Definitely not my fault that one! I even crashed my C90 entering RNAS Yeovilton's main gate in the dark, in the rain, behind a fire truck that was spewing diesel all over the road – another lesson learnt!

When I left the Navy I went to work in London in a job which demanded a lot of driving. After a time I clocked up 9 speeding penalty points and decided that I probably ought to do something to avoid the extra three and keep my licence so I joined the IAM and



passed my car test. Having learnt such a lot doing that I joined Guildford Advanced Motorcyclists and passed the motorcycle test. Following that I thought 'well what's next' and trained to become one of their Observers. Shortly after I retired in 2007 and moved back to Somerset joining SAM. During the last 10-years I've ridden extensively with SAM and got a few riders through their advanced test as one of SAM's Observers.

Anyway, back to the subject. Having had an off road riding accident a few years ago, which badly damaged my left ankle, I was having to change up gears with my heel, which was a bit of a pain, so in view of the fact I was also approaching the age of 70 I decided it was time to give up riding.

Having sold all the bikes and all my riding kit Sue and I bought a motor caravan which was a complete disaster! We hated it so about 12-months later it was sold and we decided to go back to bikes.

Because of the ankle I decided I needed an automatic bike and bought a 600 Silver Wing. Another mistake. I'd never ridden a



scooter, even in the 60's, and it was dreadful. Six weeks later it found another owner and I was pleased to find the trial had not cost me anything. It was replaced with a Honda NC750 DCT which is my current bike and which I now love to bits having, eventually, got used to no lever on the left handlebar.

We've still got a Harley but to be honest that spends most of its time in the garage and because

of the footpeg layout up changes are fine with the heel plus there's no hurry with a Harley!

Anyway goodness only knows why I decided to give up motorcycling because once you are bitten by the bug it's got you forever.

Happy riding to everyone!

Alan Cole

Who Needs Pre-Ride Checks?

When you just want to get out there on the road who doesn't feel a little resentment at having to perform pre-ride checks?

Whichever mnemonic you use – POWER/POWDER/WHATEVER – they can save you from the embarrassment of running out of fuel or the danger of a having a flat tyre.

I was planning to go on the group run at the end of February and was all set to go on what looked to be a beautiful day for a rideout, leaving in plenty of time to ensure I arrived at the RV well before the start. I had fuelled up the night before on my way home, so I knew that the tank was full. Opening up the garage door I went straight over to the bike and checked all the lights worked, brakes included. The bike was on its centre stand, therefore level, so a quick look at the sight glass told me the oil level was spot on.

Next job was to check tyre pressure with the help of a handy digital gauge

I bought off t'interweb. Front pressure spot on at 33 psi, but rear was 6psi down at 30. Strange, it never varies by more than 1psi even if left for a couple of weeks, but I had been out the day before. Spinning the rear wheel my eyes were drawn to a length of wire, possibly chain link fencing in origin, that was sticking out of the tread by about 25mm (1" in old money) angled over to one side. Realising that I could not go out on the ride with the tyre in that state I considered my options quickly and decided that I would try to repair it there and then, if it was a deep penetration, but with any luck it was just stuck in the thick part of the centre of the tread having apparently gone in from the side. I pulled out the piece of wire which was approximately 75mm in length and PSCHSSSTT down went the tyre!!

Out came my trusty tyre repair kit from under the seat which had not been used for a few years but, lo and behold, the rubber solution tube had completely dried out! Where could I get some more? Visions of getting in the car and driving to Halfords in Wells about 8 miles away came and went when I remembered that it would be the

same solution/glue used in my bicycle kit. Bingo! Into the bicycle shed and a fresh tube of rubber solution was found. I proceeded to ream the hole and insert a temporary bung into the hole, but at the back of my mind was the memory that repairs to tyres could only happen within certain areas of the tyre and I didn't know what they were. By this time I had spent 20/30 minutes on the tyre and was unlikely to get to the RV in time so I accepted my fate for the day – to search out a tyre dealer who could fit me a new tyre or repair the existing one. Message sent via Google+ to Dave the ride leader that I was in a mess and would not be joining the ride.

Firing up the PC, I began to search for motorcycle tyre dealers in Somerset, all of whom were closed on Sunday!!! Whilst on the web I also found a guide to the areas of a tyre which are repairable and I printed off a handy measuring guide that shows which section of your tyre is the good part for repair. It is like a ruler with various tyre widths on it and you place it across the tyre with the centre line in the centre of the tyre, then read off the scale

on both sides to see if your puncture can be repaired. <http://www.etyres.co.uk/repairable-area-gauge/>. Naturally, my new friend the

Puncture Gremlin had decided to insert his piece of wire outside the area of repairability. !!*****!!

The following day I contacted Furlong Tyres in Yeovil and arranged to have a new tyre fitted that morning. I was after a direct replacement for my OE Bridgestone Trail Wing but Bridgestone have replaced it with a tyre from the Battle-ax range called the A40. Paul, one of the 2 brothers who own and run Fur-

long, duly replaced the damaged tyre which had only done approx. 6600 miles and still had at least 1-2000miles of good tread on it. The front tyre is still in good shape but I will probably replace it in April/May with a sister to the new rear A40 before I go to the Isle of Man.

Furlong Tyres is an amazing little shop with a small garage next door. They hold stock of over 1000 motorcycle tyres so can cover off just about any bike – on-road, off-road, sportsbike, adventure bike, you name it and they probably have a tyre for it. They will fit to loose wheels, offer a ride-in/ride-out service or supply only. It's worth keeping their number in your phone for any tyre issues - 01935 425888.

So, what's the answer to my first question at the beginning of this article?

We all do. Safe Riding!

Ken Octon



RIDE REPORTS

Welsh Weekend

The weekend, as is usual in recent years, started with us gathering at M5 services at Sedgemoor at 9am, so I didn't have to get up too early and had loaded my 800 Tiger the night before. I arrived at 08.30 to find half the group already assembled. It was dry and mild and as it turned out stayed that way for the whole trip apart from the mornings being cool. As far as I know all 25 of us were there by 9 and after a briefing from Rob we headed for Chepstow to fill the tanks. From there we took a route through Coleford, Monmouth, Norton, Abergavenny, Talgarth to Bronllys for a tea stop and fuel. Most of us sat outside in the sun, what a great start.



From there we headed to Builth Wells, Rhayader, and up the Elan Valley to Devil's Bridge for more refreshments. Then onto Newtown and the B4389 to Welshpool. Once checked into the excellent Tyn Llwyn Farm B&B, some walked, some taxi'd to

town and into the Corn Store for a well earned meal, with the usual banter, as bikers I guess we save up all the chat while riding (some seem to save a huge amount!).

Saturday morning dawned cool and bright, and as is customary, began with a hearty breakfast. Matt was to lead today and after briefing us, led



us to Lake Vernwy for a photo stop, then around the lake to take the pass over to Bala, I have travelled this road many times but am still amazed when the valley opens out to reveal the road down the side, it just seems vast. I think we then went through Betws-y-Coed and followed the A470 north to Llandudno where Matt bravely led us round trying



to find the way up to the Great Orme. After seeing some of the back streets, we took the marine drive, where Rob collected our passes, and we rode up to the top where most of us headed for the café before taking in the views and the sunshine. Back down to the marine drive to follow it around to leave the town. For some reason my Triumph had got fed up with all the slow riding and decided to stall; it then tried to convince me it had a flat battery! After switching off and on again it started and never gave any more problems.(?)

We headed west on the A55 with its tunnels, then inland to Llanberis, through the pass then right to stop for a photo of the group with Snowdon in the background. A few ice creams were enjoyed before following the road through Betws-y-Coed and south to Dolgellau, (I think) then east on



the A470/A458 back to Welshpool.

Saturday evening found us in The Royal Oak for another feast and a couple of jars.

Sunday morning and another splendid breakfast, the general feeling was to go for the direct route home, and with Rob back in the lead we took the A483 south to Newtown, Builth, then the A470 to



Talgarth and the A479 to stop near Tretower at the roadside café to again sit in the sun to take refreshments (tea/coffee/cake). From there we went through Crickhowell to Gilwern, then past Abergavenny to Usk then Chepstow where those that needed fuel stopped. The rest of us headed over the Severn Bridge towards home.

A big thanks to Rob for organising and leading, Matt for Saturday, Ian and Pam for most of the tail end charley duties, and everyone for the company. Not forgetting the weather gods for looking after us.

Rick Chubb

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAM Red Ride

"Brecon Challenge"

Sun. 14th May 2017

10:00 @ Severn View Services

M48, Led by Hugh Beamish

SAM Green Ride

"Fish n' Chip Run"

Wed. 17th. May 2017

18:45 @ Ilminster Little Chef

Led by Ben Everard

SAM Slow Riding Day

Sun. 21st May 2017

10:00—16:00 @ Bridgwater

College Car Park, Bridgwater

Organised by Mark Livingstone

SAM Green Ride

"How Was It For You?"

Sun. 28th May 2017

TBA @ TBA

Led by Lyndsay Wilson

SAM Green Ride

"Blackdown Bridge"

Sun. 4th June 2017

09:30 @ Cartgate Services

Led by TBA

SAM Committee Meeting

Tue. 6th. June 2017

19:30 @ The Old Pound,

Wearne, nr. Langport TA10 0QJ

SAM Amber Ride

"Cornish Camping Weekend"

Fri. 9th — Sun 11th June 2017

10:00 @ Cross Keys, Inn nr.

Norton Fitzarren

Led by Rob Bartlett

SAM Green Ride

"Ride Your Other Bike"

Sat. 17th. June 2017

09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Green Ride

"Coast to Coast"

Sun. 18th. June 2017

09:00 @ Cross Keys Inn, nr.

Norton Fitzwarren

Led by Steve Schlemmer

SAM Slow Riding Day

Sun. 25th June 2017

10:00—16:00 @ Bridgwater

College Car Park, Bridgwater

Organised by Mark Livingstone

SAM Green Ride

Smugglers & Pirates

Sun. 2nd July 2017

19:00 @ Cartgate Services

Led by Wayne Timbrell

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

Pancake Express

Having missed last year's Pancake Express due to a holiday, Karen and I were looking forward to taking part again this year as it's always a very sociable occasion.

We had our eyes on the weather forecasts the few days preceding the event and they were not looking promising, as rain was forecast, but the amount and timings were a bit vague. However, we were going and that was that!

I always doubt my sanity when the alarm clock goes at stupid o'clock, however it's a 30 minute ride to the 07.00 start at Langport so we had to get a shift on. Final check of the weather forecast and the promised rain is not due until midday, so providing it's accurate we may even stay dry. To guarantee dry weather we put on waterproofs! Almost no traffic on the roads at 06.15 on a Sunday morning so we have a spirited run to Langport on dry traffic free roads. We were the last to arrive at 06.50, so keen was everyone else.



Following a briefing from Graham we set off for Podimore, the second pick up point. From there we went on to Sherborne, Charlton Horethorne, Charlton Musgrove, Gillingham, The Deverells, Gare Hill, Bruton & Wyke Champflower before heading back to Wearne. No sign of any rain, so dry roads all the way, the Gods were with us.

On arrival back at Graham's there was a welcoming stack of pancakes on the table laden with every imaginable extra, including maple syrup, sugar & lemon, ice cream, syrup and a huge variety of coulis and sauces to go

with the pancakes. Alison just kept the pancakes coming until everyone had had their fill, and excellent they were.

I will admit to having 4, maple syrup being my favourite. Anyone better than that?

This is one of our main charity events, this year

raising money for St. Margaret's Hospice (*Ed's note - £114 this year, thanks to all those attending*), so a most enjoyable ride, lovely food, and a bonus the forecast rain held off long enough to get home, a super day.

So a huge thanks to Graham & Alison for hosting the event again this year.

Richard Pearse



Keep 'em
coming,
Chef!



John Cooke enjoying The Deverills on his new ZX1000SX

Progress on a 125

He may have just finished a night shift, but that didn't stop Adam Evans leading his first SAM ride. A breakfast at Yeovil hospital followed by a strong coffee at Cartgate meant that Adam was ready for the 16 bikes that turned up in glorious weather for this traditional 1st Sunday of the month Green Ride. After a thorough briefing from his mobile phone (must be an age thing!), and with Ian & Pam taking up their regular duties as TEC, the Group set off on what should really have been called a "Scenic Tour of Somerset Lanes", winding through Ash, Coat, East Lambrook, South Petheron, Hambridge and Bar-

rington, before diverting through Drayton, Muchelney Ham, Long Load and Long Sutton en route to the breakfast stop at The Potting Shed in Huish Episcopi. The nature of the narrow roads, relatively few cars and the glorious weather meant that this turned out to be one of the most relaxed, calm and scenic rides so far this year. The early morning sun, the lack of the East wind that had plagued us for the week beforehand and the first real sign of warmth in the air gave riders the opportunity to safely absorb and appreciate the terrific countryside and views that exist on our doorstep. The whole route was only around 30 miles, but all of this had been on mainly well-surfaced roads, with 360° views on virtually the whole trip. The Potting Shed excelled as usual, with probably the quickest service of any of the cafes on the SAM recommended list. Adam soon left to get some shut-eye in advance of his next night shift, whilst the rest of us –





fully chilled after our morning's saunter - savoured the ambience before escaping the climbing temperatures in the conservatory as the mid-day sun continued to rise. A great first ride, Adam, maybe next one will be "Progress on a 500"?

Graham Tulloch

(was this the last outing of the Yellow Peril? - Ed)

BIKE REPORTS

Honda CB500F

I was given the loan of one of these whilst my NC750X had its first service. I didn't have time to go far, but here's my impressions from that ride.

It feels quite small with a low seat, no screen, wide flat bars and the same reversed horn/indicator switch as the NC. It felt powerful enough through Yeovil and once out of town I took it to Sherborne via the A30 where it accelerated to 70mph briskly enough and didn't seem to produce too much buffeting. The steering did feel very light but I had been riding the NC which has a larger front wheel and is higher. I turned left at the lights and rode through Ilchester before returning to Bransons. A fun bike,



it would probably be tiring to ride at speed for long without any form of wind protection, but maybe not as the headlight could well deflect the wind. Apparently these will do about 80mpg so shouldn't be expensive to own. Definitely one to try if you are on the small side and not a bad looking bike.

Rick Chubb

MEMBER'S TRIPS

Dirty Weekend in Wales

Actually that's a lie. It was a Friday and a Saturday, but it was in Wales. Merthyr Tydfil to be close and Cefn Rhigos to be closer still. At last year's NEC there had been an off-road experience set up on a small indoor course and I had been on it with a mate for 10-15 minutes. Me on a Triumph 800 and He on an Africa Twin. So with a £50 discount offered by Honda Adventure Centre against one of their 2017 2-day courses we signed up earlier this year, ignoring the 2 available days in February, thank God, because the weather would have been misera-

ble. The Honda Adventure Centre fleet consisted of 500s, 750s and 1000s

Fresh from a night in Ye Olde Premiere Inne and fuelled by a massive all-you-can-eat breakfast we waddled past a double row of 20 pristine Africa Twins and some other bikes into the Honda Adventure Centre in Merthyr, meeting up with a dozen or so other riders who were off-road virgins, in the main. Half a dozen had some previous experience which showed fairly early on but more of that later. We were kitted out with FOX branded clothing from top to toe,

most of which was brand new and were then given an indoor explanation of the controls of an Africa Twin. We had all assumed that we would start with the 500s and work our way up to the Africa Twins as we gained more experience but, no, the Africa Twin was to be the weapon of choice. Bigger and heavier than my V-Strom 650 I thought it could end up being a struggle for me to ride it off-road but it turned out very differently. Every



one of them was almost brand new, mine only had 300 miles on the clock, and they were as clean as a whistle when we started.

Off we trotted on normal roads to the off-road playground just outside of Cefn Rhigos and straight onto a sharp gravelly hill. Lots of nervous riders. A quick brief from our instructors and, standing up on the pegs, we gunned ours steeds along a dusty, rocky track to an arena at the bottom of a short hill where a series of small cones was laid out. All we had to do was to ride up the hill weaving in and out of the cones using our body weight through the pegs to change direction. As you got nearer the top the cones got closer together, making it a little more interesting. After we had descended the same route we were encouraged to go for a ride along a track which had various hazards on it, including a barrier of several large boulders which left a gap of approx. 450mm over to one side with a stream running alongside it. Remembering the instructor's motto "Don't look at where you want to crash" all but one of us negotiated that particular obstacle without mishap.

Then we turned around and did the same from the other direction, this time without any fatalities. We then spent the morning in 2 groups performing various exercises such as downhill descents on



very firm but rocky ground, followed by uphill ascents on the same hill. We are talking seriously steep, rocky hill here, at least for an off-road novice like me, about 50-60 metres long and a gradient somewhere between 35-45%, but the Africa Twin was easy to balance and steer on the way down using clutch and rear brake, yet had terrific power to blast up on the way back. We also had to learn going downhill without using the clutch! The ABS was sometimes working overtime.

Our first encounter with a wet part of the trails was a large puddle with wet ruts to the RHS, which I managed to get cross-rutted in and ended up on my side in the puddle, much to everyone's amusement. It was not the last time that I came off during the course but it was the softest landing! The rest of the day was spent tackling different parts of the trails and building up our confidence on the bikes. I can remember at one point checking my speedo as I stood up on the pegs and 46 mph flashed at me! On a rocky trail, surrounded by pine forests, it was amazing.

On day 2 we were set a task to separate the men from the boys. Using the Africa Twin's 3-stage Torque Control System we had to blast up a hill at full throttle in second gear with it full-on (3), followed by half-on (2), a quarter-on (1) and full off (off), so that we could feel the difference that the electronics made to the engine – At full-on the electronics control any wheel spin but the power definitely feels reduced, whereas with the system turned Off there is so much power it is a monster of a machine to control over rough terrain, fishtailing and snapping. Only half a dozen people were selected for the advanced group based on their use of maximum power and bike control up the hill but that did not include me.

The remainder were again sub-divided into 2 groups for the day and we went about our exercises learning more about control in the really wet areas of the forest, one is called The Amazon just to give you an idea of what it is like – approx. 400 metres of slippery, rutted mud with glistening pools of water under a very dark tree-lined shadow and high banks either side. Although several other riders came croppers I was fortunate to not join them on that occasion, managing to sail past. We also tackled a very wet downhill section, one at a time, most of which I managed until the instructor brought out his camera, whereupon I immediately lost concentration and stalled the bike. Bang, over she goes! Luckily I did no damage to me or the bike, however one of the guys following on from me lost it near the top of the hill, went over and holed the clutch cover. With engine oil now added to the slippery wet mix it was decided to curtail that activity, go back to the staging post for a drink and to bring out a new bike. The instructor gave my bike to the unfortunate rider and I was given the instructor's DCT bike. DCT is the semi-automatic version which I thought was a weird thing for Honda to offer but having ridden one it makes really good sense off-

road – one less thing to worry about (clutch) and you can change gear very easily when you are standing on the pegs. It just requires pushing a button to go up or down a gear.

The rest of the day was spent running around on various trails enjoying the

fantastic weather and learning some new skills, then we had a road ride around the edge of the Brecon Beacons to let us see what the Africa Twin is like on tarmac. The route included rough, bumpy and narrow back lanes as well as smooth wide tarmac and, as a special treat, a couple of wide sweeping hairpins – up as well as down. We got back to the Honda Adventure Centre where we were presented with our attendance certificates and given a goody bag of promotional materi-



al. The chief instructor was given the unenviable job of washing down the 20-odd bikes which were now encrusted in grey-black forest mud and other goo. Whereas we just handed the clothing back, got changed and left for home.

Overall it was a great experience, with very good instructors, a great bunch of riders, fantastic bikes and brilliant sunny weather. What's not to like? Soggy, muddy clothing on day 1...

Ken Octon

APOLOGY—In the August 2016 issue of Full Chat, member Tony Hamilton wrote an excellent article on “Ride to the Wall 2016”. Unfortunately a section of the text was omitted in the final copy, sorry Tony. Although we cannot correct the hard copies, the full article will shortly be corrected in the soft copy on the new SAM website. - Editor.

MEMBER'S TRIPS

Close Encounters of the Wild Kind

As the Chairman led us on an Ex-moor Ramble, we encountered signs saying 'Caution, Pheasants on road'. The danger for us wasn't hitting the walking birds, or having one take off into us, but running over a carcass on the line through the bend. Being able to stop on your side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear includes being able to adjust your course to miss obstructions.

I started to think of close encounters we'd had with wildlife while riding over the years.

In the UK and Europe it's unusual to meet large animals while riding. If we are observant, as I hope we all are, we often see small animals crossing ahead: mice, voles, squirrels, stoats (easily distinguished), weasels (totally different). On an observed ride in Devon, while moving slowly in traffic, a cat jumped out of a hedge and ran between the wheels of my associate's bike – he didn't see it. When the cat saw what it had done it spun round and ran back right in front of me. There was no impact and when I looked in the

mirror I saw its rear disappearing back in the hedge. Two down that day, I hope it still had seven lives left.

We've met countless ponies, farm animals, dogs and horses. They should all be treated as wild because some part, however small, in their behaviour envelope is beyond human control.

In an ancient, royal hunting forest in France late one afternoon, Jane and I were nearly hit by a wild boar thundering across at full speed close in front of us. I selected boar for dinner that night as a reprisal. The wild goats we've met in the mountains of France generally at least stand still or walk slowly and like the cows in the road the hazard is what they leave behind.

At the summit of the Grimsel Pass in Switzerland, opposite the bikers' bar with the sculptures in the parking area, is a charming model village full of happy marionettes which we've encountered wild on and around the roads all over the Alps.

Jane and I have been fortunate to

ride in North America a few times, there the wildlife can be more dangerous and much larger.

I've had a cheeky chipmunk sit on my boot, cute but, with very sharp teeth and rabies, not to be encouraged..



NOT Cute & Cuddly

Descending from 7,000

ft early one morning at Crater Lake in Oregon it showed 32F on the bike's thermometer and despite the strong sun it didn't warm up as expected so we stopped to add a layer. With the engine off and no other traffic a large deer ambled onto the highway 25 yards ahead and, after checking all was clear, called its two fawns across after it. Home, home on the range, where the deer and the antelope play, they are not something you want to collide with.

Conveniently, in Montana, the mountain sheep have their own ranger controlled crossing.

We took a break on one bike trip to horse ride on a guest ranch 40 miles off the main road East of the Grand Tetons in Wyoming. Seventeen of these miles were on unsealed road and six were deep, graded gravel. Those of you who've ridden off-road know to stand and keep the weight forward and let the rear wheel sweep from side to side. On 1100 lbs of Honda Goldwing, two up with luggage it's an understeering, ploughing nightmare. Then the heavens opened in a torrential thunderstorm. Only Jane's vociferous encouragement from behind as I caught each slide saw us through. It didn't help that when we arrived our hosts said they'd have collected us from town. I spent the whole week thinking about that ride back out, but was compensated by seeing coyote, elk, moose and wolves. The horses we rode were very smart as they were half wild, let loose November to April in the mountains to fend for themselves.

On our trips, we've been privileged to see a dozen or more bears. One black bear and its cub crossed in front of us biking in Canada and pro-

ceeded to climb a very thin tree where they hung, swaying, to watch us.



Hungry Bear at a good distance

The scene of our first grizzly was like a car crash with vehicles stopped at angles all over the road. Jane hopped off with the camera and walked down towards the focus of attention, a hungry grizzly in a flower meadow scoffing fresh greens; I stayed on the bike with the engine running. A good decision

as we now know that while black bears climb trees, grizzlies, usually brown, can run very fast but don't climb trees. A problem is that some black bears are brown. Climb? Run? Mmm.

In a motel in California, I had to stop Jane going out in her nightie to remonstrate with noisy guests coming home late; just as well as, in the morning, it turned out to have been a bear raiding the bins. Another morning after a night in a log cabin in British Columbia we found fresh claw marks nine feet up the tree outside the front porch.

The owners of a B&B on Vancouver Island neglected to tell us that a black bear lived in the vacant lot next door so we were surprised to meet it next morning when we made an early start. We'd signed up for a grizzly spotting excursion and were lucky to see several, including cubs, foraging on the shore because the annual salmon run was late. A bonus was to meet a bald eagle in a narrow channel. The eagle flew past us a few feet away. But by far the most dan-



A spectacular fly-past



gerous and scary encounter was THE BISON. We were leaving Yellowstone National Park. There's a park wolf pack with a viewing area where, through binoculars, you can distantly see the wolves a quarter of a mile down the valley. As we approached the car park, where tourists were straining to see the pack, we slowed as a lone wolf casually trotted onto the road behind them all, took one look at us and loped off up the hill. Thinking the show was over we rounded a left hand bend with a steep drop to the right and a cliff to the left and met, head on, a young, single, male bison. There were four bikes and we all stopped in line, as close to the edge as we could and turned off our engines. We'd been warned by a ranger to keep at

least 100 yards from bison, particularly young bulls like this one. The day before, a woman had been seriously injured by one when she was charged from behind while making a call from a phone booth. What do you do? We couldn't go forward,

we couldn't turn round. We just sat still as it lumbered slowly past, snorting and swinging its great head with its massive, thick neck, shaggy hump and those evil looking horns, watching with its tiny beady eye. Was each head swing to the right the back lift for an attack? I could have leant across and touched it, one nudge and we'd be over the edge. Maybe in our helmets and astride our machines we didn't look threatening. The minute it took to walk past seemed like an hour, but it kept going. Even when it was past we waited a little as its slim rear and pendulous paraphernalia receded in the mirrors. Then we restarted and rode pensively away.

Steve Schlemmer

FOR SALE

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F650 GS (2009-2015)

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(My bike was a F700GS)

Prices on internet average between £450

(new) to £280 (used) - I would sell them

for **£250 (for collection only - Yeovil/Yeovil area)**

If anyone wants to come and see them in person I am available.

Anyone interested can contact me

on simik_974@hotmail.com or at 07827 950382.

Mik Simonetti



NOTE: Library picture, may differ slightly from actual units

BMW RT Parts

BMW RT parts for sale, having swapped it for a GS.

My RT was a 2013 twin cam model, although these parts may well fit the earlier model.

BMW Top box (large), no key but you can get the lock changed. £200

BMW tank bag. £30

BMW heated comfort seat (rider and pillion). £200

Sargent heated rider seat (for use with standard pillion seat). £200

BMW pannier inner bags. £50

I'll send photos if people are interested.
Ian Wilson

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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.

Cornish Camping Weekend

is from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th June this year. Prime aim is to gather clues for the 2018 SWPSR, but this doesn't prevent a great weekend of riding the Peninsula as well as a couple of social evenings in Perranporth. Just remember to bring a tent!

SAM SLOW RIDING SKILLS DAYS — Mark Livingstone's excellent Slow Riding Skills Days are back again this year, on Sun. 21st May, Sun. 25th June and Sun. 6th August. All are held in the car park at Bridgwater College, Bath Road, Bridgwater. SAM's Club Bike (Kawasaki ER5) will be available for all to use, although visitors are welcome to use their own. All welcome, so bring along your friends for a bit of fun in the cones!