

Autumn 2018

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



After what will surely be recalled as “The long hot summer of 2018” we’ve escaped to Spain for a couple of extra weeks of warm riding. From a weather point of view it must be said that it’s been only partly successful, since we have seen quite a bit of rain, although we have been very fortunate that it’s almost all fallen while we’ve been off the bikes. As always Spanish roads are a joy, and we’ve clocked up more miles of twisties than in the rest of the year put together. That a few of those miles have been cold and/or damp is just good training for the forthcoming British winter, and a great chance for me to bond with my lovely new Ducati Multistrada 950. I have had some jolly laughs while getting to grips with the menu tree of its various modes and options; perhaps the most abject episode of which

process was succeeding in selecting kilometres on the speedo when I was trying to switch on the heated grips. However, a bit of quality time with the manual and a couple of sessions of playing around with the screen have got me mainly competent, although I’ve left the default levels of intervention on the suspension, traction control and ABS alone in a spirit of “If it ain’t broke...” There doesn’t seem to be a way of re-setting the clock, so it’s stubbornly on UK time here in Spain: it’ll be interesting to see if it reverts to European Time when the clocks change - i.e. just stays on BST forever. The other thing it refuses to do is change riding modes on the move, which I can sort of understand but which is more of a



hurdle to switching them than you would think. Somehow stopping to fiddle with it isn't something I find easy to do once I start riding. It's pretty civilised in Touring mode though, so it spends most of its time there. Urban is comforting when conditions are significantly slippery and I doubt I'll be troubling Enduro, or even Sport, much.

It'll be back to chilly Blighty and bike coddling and fettling for the next six months in a few days, but Valentino now has a firm place in my heart for his smooth, eager, tractability, unexpectedly great weather protection and sense of surefooted poise.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to this issue of Full Chat, and for those who have not,

consider sending us something. It's never too early, we'll just keep it on file until the next issue. Anything bike related or relevant, (but please play nice) with pictures, even if they are of you and or your bike rather than the article, will be considered.



Gina Herridge

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

It never seems very long before I get a gentle reminder from Graham that he needs another Chairman's Chatter, and every time I struggle with what to write about!

But when I look back since the last nudge, there always seems to be something worth revisiting to share with you all. The biggest standout for me over the last few months was the recruitment success that we had at the 2nd Somerset Road Safety MotoFest, held at the Fleet Air Arm Muse-

um over the weekend of 15/16 September.

Motofest this year was a spectacular success for our recruitment team, ably led by Roger Moffatt with 16 new Associates taking advantage of a generous discount and signing up with us. Given there were several other IAM RoadSmart clubs right next to us, we walked away with the lion's share of new members. Well done and thank you to all who gave up their time to support the event over the two days. A hearty welcome to all of our new members, I hope that you will enjoy your membership of SAM as much as I do and take advantage of the busy events calendar to join us on the club ride outs and, now we are nearing winter, on the Control & Technique sessions we will be running from November until March.

The first C&T in November was on bike maintenance, and this year included a general maintenance section and a puncture repair section, led by Matt Towill and Dale Stote - something that a few of us have found to be a useful addition to our skill set this year! The next C&T will be on The Comfort Zone, so come along and join us at Othery Village Hall on Saturday 8th December and share your own hints and tips.

We now have a membership of more than 200, a dramatic increase over the last few years. Of course with that increase, there is more work generated behind the scenes for the club's officials and Observers; it's a nice problem to have and Paul Dyer ably coped with the sudden influx of members who all needed an Observer allocated, with the Observer corp stepping up and volunteering when the cry went out. Thank you all for your commitment and giving up your time to help the club provide new mem-



bers with a positive experience of Advanced Riding.

The weather still seems to be on our side, as I write this, even if the Raid Mendip ride on Sunday 14th October was sensibly shortened (to exclude the Men-

dips!) by Lisa Parsons, due to the heavy rain. Despite the inclement weather, 8 riders still turned up at a waterlogged Podimore Services car park to enjoy whatever route was planned for them, ending up at Haynes to join the existing SAM presence at the Haynes Bikers Breakfast Ride In – I've never seen Haynes so quiet! We must have been the only bikers there!

Recently a conversation was running on Facebook about the requirement to maintain membership of IAM RoadSmart in order to maintain Advanced Rider Status; as not everyone in the club is on the Members Only Group on Facebook (unbelievable - I know!), I thought it worthy of a mention here, as I see on the IAM RoadSmart database a number of paid up members of SAM who have failed to maintain their IAM RoadSmart membership.

To clarify the situation, your membership of SAM is dependent upon membership of IAM RoadSmart, it is IAM RoadSmart who provide us with public liability insurance for all of our events, and covers us as individuals when



we are delivering IAM RoadSmart services, such as observing. It is also the case that lapse of IAM RoadSmart membership will result in a lapse of your IAM RoadSmart Advanced Rider qualification (and any other IAM RoadSmart qualifications that you may hold) and you may be required to re-qualify should you leave it too long. I don't highlight this to spook anyone, just to inform, so that when that reminder from IAM RoadSmart comes through the letter box, you understand the ramifications should you fail to act to renew.

Earlier this year we introduced the ability for non-riding supporters of

the club (wives, husbands, girl/boy friends and any other politically correct term) to hold official membership of the club as a Friend.

If said Friend wishes to receive their own copy of Full Chat, then the annual subscription is £10, but if they do not then the fee is waived. These Friends are then welcome to attend and contribute to the running of the club and support it's events (though only Full Members can vote), as more than just the pillion who comes out on a lot of rides. Pam Fraser is our first and currently only Friend, but I hope that there are more out there who would like to get a bit more involved in the club, but up until now have not been able to because they don't ride a motorbike for themselves. If you would like to know more please feel free to contact me or a Committee member. **Jez Martin**

SAM NEWS



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

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

- Firstly, sincere apologies for not including Adrian Maul last issue. Adrain passed his Advanced Test on 20th June, gaining a F1RST. He was riding his Kawasaki Z1000SX, and was observed by Hugh Beamish.
- Kevin Colmer on 1st September, riding a BMW R1200GS Rallye, and observed by Ben Everard. Kevin also gained a F1RST.
- Mark Baker, also on 1st September, riding his Honda VFR800. Mark was observed by Ian Gyatt.
- Jon Boulton on 8th September. Jon was riding his Ducati 1260 Pikes Peak Multistrada, and was observed by Jez Martin.
- Paul Knight on 8th September, riding a Triumph Explorer. Paul was observed by Martin Hember.
- John Clark on 29th September, riding a Honda NC750X. John was observed by Rich Sutton.
- Tony Sauer, also on 29th September. Riding his BMW R1200RS, Tony

gained a F1RST, and was observed by Dave Parker.

- Gareth Stone on 2nd October, riding a Yamaha Tracer. Gareth was observed by Wes Wells.
- James Pass also gained a F1RST, riding a Honda CB500X on 4th October, and observed by Mick Hill.
- Alan Smith on 10th October. Alan was riding a BMW R1100S and was observed by Matt Towill.
- David Gauld on 13th October. David was riding his Triumph Tiger 800, and was observed by Graham Tulloch.
- Ed Miles on 13th October, riding his Kawasaki ERN6. Ed was observed by Alistair Gee.
- Ian Jewson on 27th October. Ian gained a F1RST riding his Ducati MultiStrada, having been observed by Alistair Gee.
- Congratulations also go to Vince Houlihan, who passed his Masters on 10th October.



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 **sammembershipsecretary@gmail.com** 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 Lamb & Lion, Hambridge on 14th November 2018 will be emailed to members.

SAM and Social Media



Like it or loathe it? Social Media is with us everywhere we look and everywhere we go. Whether it's email, text, Twitter, Facebook, Skype, Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram or Snapchat there are so many ways of communicating with each other it can be really difficult to keep up. Most of us have smartphones of one type or another and even the simplest can handle most of the applications already mentioned, often all at the same time!

However when we are riding our bikes the Social Media is left far behind us – until the breakfast/coffee/tea/cake/fuel stop, when it sneaks back into our lives as we

peak at that blinking light on the phone which indicates that we MIGHT, just might, have an important message waiting. All we have to do is wake up the phone and check our email/text/Facebook/Twitter etc etc account (s)...

So it's a bad thing, all this Social Media, right? No, it's not, but some can be. It can be a very good thing if it is managed properly, by us, not it. "Control IT, don't let IT control you", seems to be the way forward.

SAM uses Social Media to raise awareness within the group, and in the general biking family, about our activities from Advanced Rider



Training through to the South West Peninsula Spring Rally (April 13th 2019 by the way!), but also as a platform to inform and allow discussion between us, the members. At the latest estimate SAM membership stood at around 210, roughly split 150 Full Members and 60 Associate Members, but we have an even bigger following on Facebook of over 650!

If you weren't aware there are 2 SAM Facebook pages: one for Members only (including Associate Members) which is a Closed Group – only members of that group can read or post in those pages, they are invisible to the rest of Facebook; the other is our Public page which anyone can

read or join. The Public page is used to create awareness of our activities and promote us to the biking world and has the larger following of 650. As at the end of October only 131 Members out of 210 use the Members Group Facebook page, which means that a third of the membership is losing out on our intra-group communications – some of which are extremely useful, such as access to the list of all the good cafes and tea rooms in the South West! – plus the opportunity to pose questions or suggest rides/destinations/topics, post pictures of your ride etc.

We would like those members who haven't joined the Closed Group to check out the Members Group page at:

www.facebook.com/groups/674022109364113 or, Search for Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists (Members) in Facebook. You will need to submit a request to Join the Group. Your name will be checked against our current membership database and then you'll be granted access. We look forward to welcoming you in to the online world!

For those members who currently use the Public Facebook page

(Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists – SAM) as your source of information and communication then you are likely to be missing out on important group communications. Future developments on the Closed Group are planned and could include features such as an exchange of SAM ride routes in .gpx file form to download to your satnav, or for you to upload your own favourites to share with other members. This has not been set in stone yet but is a real possibility, which would be a great Member-only benefit.

Like it or loathe it? Imagine if Social Media were a bike - you would control it the way you wanted to so that it responded to your inputs and gave you the best ride.

Engage with it, don't ignore what could be the best ride of your life!

Ken Octon

Publicity.sam@gmail.com

Observing—Could it be for You?

As you know, the training SAM offers to riders who wish to develop their skills and prepare for the IAM test is provided by a volunteer force of observers. Why do they do it, do you ever wonder? The short answer is because it's fun, but we like to murmur things about "Giving something back" and "Keeping my own riding sharp" which sound much more laudable. Seriously, though, if it wasn't fun, who *would* do it? An excuse to get out on your bike with a fellow rider, and to get to feel that you are doing some good as well as having a good time – bring it on.



Every year SAM holds a set of theory classes for prospective new observers, from January through February. These are open to all SAM members, whether or not they think that they will go on to observe. The idea is that the classes will, in themselves, provide some skill development, encouraging and

giving techniques for riding analysis, which we can all apply to our own riding. At the end of the four sessions attendees are invited to register for the practical training if they wish to become fully fledged observers. There is no charge for attending the theory sessions, but once someone is registered for the practical training, the club will be charged by the IAM if that person doesn't complete the qualification.

The dates of the theory sessions will be publicised in the 2019 Events list. In the meantime, please contact Gina Herridge if you wish to register your interest, although we won't be turning anyone away if they just show up.

Gina Herridge

IAM Inform

"The IAM RoadSmart weekly bulletin, "Inform" can now be accessed via a link on the SAM website under "Helpful Links" "

South West Peninsula Spring Rally 2019

By the time you read this, it'll be only 4 months before 2019's South West Peninsula Spring Rally. This will be our 11th event, and takes place on Saturday 13th April 2019. For those who have not taken part in a navigational rally like this event, the 200+ riders from all over the country who came to last year's event would convince you

to try one soon. Starting between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs from our Long Sutton Village Hall start and finish venue, the distance and intensity of the day is totally up to you. Try a Bronze Award, which requires visiting 9 unmanned checkpoints across Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall (plus an occasional foray into West Wiltshire!), picking up Treasure-hunt type clues at each location. And also visit 1 manned checkpoint out of the 4 available – Ilfracombe, Dartmoor, Perranporth or Dorchester. At these





manned checkpoints, you'll have the chance to dismount, have your entry card stamped, try a short motor-cycle-related Quiz and grab something to eat or drink. SAM members will be manning each of the manned checkpoints, but contrary to popular opinion, they cannot

be bribed to provide answers to the Quiz (mainly because they don't know the answers either! But don't worry, there are no prizes for the Quiz, it's just a bit of fun to take your mind off riding and navigating for a few minutes.) Bronze level routes will normally involve around 150 miles of riding, but as the Control at Long Sutton doesn't



re-open until 17:00 hrs on the day (and doesn't close until 23:59hrs), it'll prove a very relaxing day's riding.

Or perhaps you feel a bit more adventurous, and want to try the Silver Award? This requires visiting 2 manned checkpoints and 12 unmanned ones, with around 300 miles (if your map-reading is still up to scratch!).



Maybe take in Dorset and North Somerset? Or North Somerset and Dartmoor? The choice is yours; we'll give you around 60 unmanned checkpoints in total across the whole South West to choose from, leaving you to make up your own route(s). And for the Iron Butt riders among you,



go for the gold Award, which brings 3 manned checkpoints and 15 unmanned checkpoints, so around 400 miles. Still easily manageable in the 16 hours maximum time available, just requiring good map-reading and route planning skills.

For those doing the

Gold Award, an additional challenge is to add in our Lands End Award, which requires having your control card stamped by the Lands End Hotel – useful if you are thinking about completing the JoGLE trip with a future visit to John O’Groats.

Not sure how far you’ll want to go on the day, or what the weather will be like? No problem – plan a Gold route if summer arrives early, and your winter diet and fitness regime has worked; also plan an alternative Silver route, in case weather or mental state is less than perfect



on the day; and maybe also a Bronze route, just in case you find that idyllic country pub where you can enjoy a long, relaxing lunch. The only person who cares which route you travel is yourself.

Whilst the riding on the day is a key part of the SWPSR, the planning is also a critical element in the preparations. A map and list of all the Checkpoints (without clues!) is sent out to each entrant 2-3 weeks in advance of the event, and provides a chance for riders to meet up and come up with a selection of routes to consider on the day. Plan these to take in parts of



the country you know and love, or else visit parts of the South West you've never been to and want to explore in a bit more depth. Most entrants find this element as enjoyable as the event itself, poring over maps and plotting routes around the vital coffee, lunch and fuel stops! Sat Navs are a useful

back-up, but there's nothing to beat maps for this planning stage, ensuring you can ride the best roads the South West has to offer (and avoiding the notorious forest tracks that Sat Navs always seem to suggest!)

Included in the entry fee is an evening meal on your return to Long Sutton at the end of the Rally, plus a goody bag. And for those who need fuelling up beforehand, breakfasts will be available at Long Sutton before the start (chargeable extra).

So if you fancy giving this event a go, pop on to the SAM website **after the New Year**, where a link will take you straight to registration. And then wait for the map to arrive, do a bit of planning, check the bike over, pack a grin and get out and ride the South West!

IAM Skills Days—2019



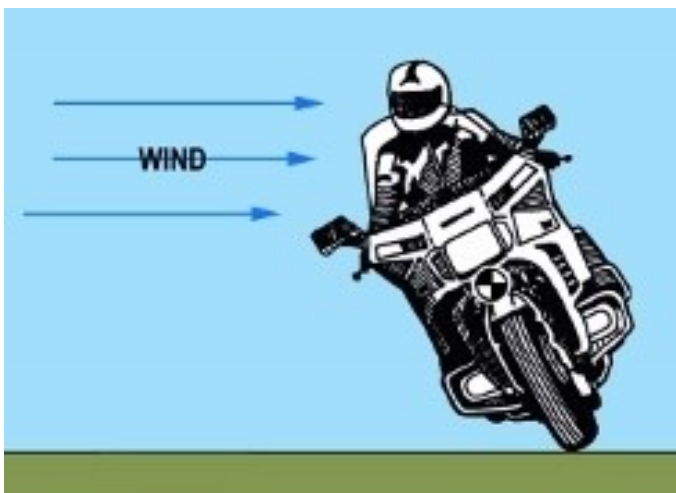
IAM Skills days for 2019 will be available to book from **19th November**. Many SAM members have attended these, and, like Nigel Short here, keep going back for more! Thruxton is our nearest, but other venues across the country are available.

BIKING NEWS

Achtung! Seitenwind

I was bowling down off the Blackdown Hills on my bicycle, in the recent high winds of storm Callum, when I passed a gap in the hedge and was blown right across the road. I had exceeded the safe speed which is governed by the width of road you need to recover the swerve from the sideways force of the wind. Fortunately there was no traffic coming up the other way.

I've experienced this effect a number of times over my motorcycling years; it is worst when the wind is so strong that, with fairing, screen, pillion and top box, it's not possible to keep upright when stationary. If you stop you have to lean well into the wind, and the change in side force in gusts or lulls is so great that you cannot react quickly enough to hold the bike up. In crosswind conditions, the minimum speed at which you need to ride allows you to steer into a gust or away from a lull far enough to keep the bike under you; the maximum speed, which you have to keep below, allows you to keep the bike under you while staying in your own lane.



Gusts can be sudden changes in overall wind speed or gaps in roadside wind breaks. Lulls can be drops in wind speed or short barriers in otherwise open conditions, like passing the towers when crossing the old Severn bridge. Lulls can also be caused by on-coming traffic passing on your windward side. I've known conditions in the open spaces of the US when it was necessary to lean well over to the left into the wind on a long, straight

road. When long trucks with trailers came past, it was necessary to slow right down and steer to the right, anticipating the approaching windbreak. It's a bit like the point, around Force 4, on a windsurfer when you have to lean back before sheeting in. It's a matter of faith.

In strong winds on twisty roads, you have to be aware of the general wind direction. On the Route Napoleon in Southern France I once entered a left hander, turning into a strong headwind, and it felt as though the wind picked up the front wheel and forced it wide. There was enough grip in hand to lean further into the bend and come through safely.

Even when you are aware of the wind direction there's a phenomenon that can catch you out. In mountains, a side wind from across the valley can hit the mountain side above you and wash down across the road so that it seems the wind is coming out of the rock. My worst experience of this was coming over the Rimutaka Range into Wellington, NZ. The road was two lane, single carriageway, narrow, tight bends, high cliffs, big drops and with heavy traffic; it was raining. The

minimum safe speed and the maximum safe speed were the same, about 20 mph but the crosswinds and down wash were completely unpredictable and changed in seconds – one of the least enjoyable rides of my life.

There must be a wind speed above which it's unsafe to ride in crosswinds because you can't both react and stay in your lane. This unsafe wind speed will be different for different bikes depending on weight, bodywork, pillion and luggage. Sir Isaac Newton tells us that, all other things being equal, a lighter bike will be accelerated sideways faster by the wind than a heavier one. I know that a Honda Goldwing, despite its weight, is hard work in side winds as it presents a pretty solid barrier to the wind – low ground clearance, large side area and no spaces for the wind to blow through. My 1200RT is better because despite its fairing it has plenty of ground clearance and holes for the wind to pass through.

In whatever windy conditions, it's certainly good to relax, let your upper body roll with the punches and be ready to react fast.

Steve Schlemmer

SLOW, SLOW, QUICK, QUICK, SLOW

When out and about, I always avoid riding over road markings wherever possible. The paint used is often of a plasticised consistency and affords no grip, especially in the wet.

We can however, use certain road markings to our advantage, take for example SLOW.

SLOW will be painted on the road surface, often on the approach to a righthand bend, or a left hand bend, or on a straight section of

road approaching the brow of a hill, to warn of a potential hazard.

Next time you ride over a SLOW road marking as you approach a right hand bend, have a think about riding between the S and the L and say to yourself “stay left”.

When riding round a left hand bend, consider positioning your machine between the O and the W and say to yourself “out wide”.

Or if you are riding along a



straight section of road, you might consider riding between the L and the O and “laugh out loud”!

As always, “it depends”!

Nigel Short

SWPSR 2019 —Freebie Suggestions

As many members will know, entrants to SAM's South West Peninsula Spring Rally receive a goodie bag at the finish. We're now looking for ideas or suggestions for a freebie that we can give to entrants of our 2019 event. For the first 9 years of this event, entrants received a Rally T-Shirt, which was well received by most. However, with spiralling cotton costs, and increasing entry numbers (leading to difficulties in order lead times,

and matching sizes to individual entrants), last year we provided a 10th anniversary Rally Mug. We have a couple of ideas for this year, but would like to hear what others think might be well received.

Key considerations on the type of gift offered are: cost; order lead time (bearing in mind final numbers are not known until 2-3 weeks before the event); personalisation; portability (most have to be taken home on a motorcycle); and usefulness.

Please send any suggestions on what we could offer this coming year to samchairperson@gmail.com.

MAG

As most of you know, SAM is affiliated to the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG). What you may not realise is that there are some benefits that may or may not tempt you to



join MAG as a full individual member. Firstly, as a member of SAM you are entitled to a discount of £5 on MAG membership, so you only pay £22. You will receive a bi-monthly magazine, *The Road*, through the post. This is different to most bike mags and I find it an entertaining read. You will of course be doing your bit in the struggle to get things such as universal access to bus lanes for bikes, exemption from congestion and emissions charges in our cities, and many other bike related legislation that can creep up on us if MAG was not there to monitor things. They are now active on many Councils and Highway Authorities so can balance the arguments that could otherwise affect our enjoyment and safety on the road. MAG has approved partners, one that I use is their MAG Travel Insurance. As stated in their advert "on-road motorcycle riding cover included as standard", this can cost as little as £41.58 for a year including Europe. If you have any questions I may be able to help.

Rick Chubb

KIT REPORTS

Clothing Review

It was in the summer of 1970 that I gained my motorcycle licence and had my first road legal bike (a 50cc Suzuki that, with five gears, would nudge 60 mph but suffered mightily in the strong, East Anglian winds). Just over a year later, having joined the Royal Navy, I purchased my new Triumph



Trailblazer SS 250c. In the days before the M25, this trusty steed got me from Portsmouth to Newmarket and back on many week-ends. I seem to recall that it cost me £231 but that almost emptied my bank account and so there was no money for riding gear other than my open face helmet.

I wore work boots, a heavy woollen jumper and my mum's old Red Cross greatcoat. I used welder's gauntlets for my gloves. This gear kept me reasonably warm most of the year but the winter months were brutal, I can still recall the agony of having the blood return to my near frozen fingers.

Now we have some great kit available but I was a late adopter, my first set of heated grips were on the bike previous to my current machine. My heated jacket was a Christmas gift from Gina last year.

We do, however, face a couple of conundrums over bike gear. Firstly, how much do we spend, it seems that there is almost no limit. Secondly, we can buy a lot of equipment but it only has a relatively small window of optimum usage. Perhaps my heated jacket is a good example of this latter point. Recently I had to take my KTM 1290 Adventure up to Tewkesbury for its 9000 mile service. It was booked in and as I was planning to wait on site I wanted to be there first thing. That meant setting out in temps around 0°C and riding on the M5 for about an hour with the sun only grudgingly

warming the countryside. My Ge-bring heated jacket was ideal, on the mid-setting of three it kept my core temperature comfortably warm. However, if the temperature that morning had been one or two degrees lower then I would have postponed the trip. By the time I started the return trip, around lunchtime, I didn't need the heating elements on at all and whilst the jacket is very comfortable, a fleece would have done the same job.

Now, let's be clear, I really love this heated jacket but if my budget were limited then I would have to think carefully about how much use I would be likely to get from it. A similar thought process goes into which motorcycle suit should be purchased. I won't open the debate about levels of protection between textiles and leathers here (remember I used a Red Cross greatcoat for over a year) but rather the breadth of usability. I have leathers and they are my preferred clothing for riding but for practical usage, my textiles win every time. I like good waterproofing and I opt for Pro Shell technology so that the water stays on the outer element of my clothing. The other key elements for



me are the effectiveness of the cuff fastening and the ability to have some venting when the temperatures rise.

Boots.... I would say simply ensure that they are waterproof and designed for motorcycle use, ie they have protection in the right places. My Daytona RoadStar boots are comfortable for me all the year round, I might just vary the thickness of socks I'm wearing. Gina, who feels the cold rather more than I do, swears by her Keis heated insoles. They come with a rechargeable battery pack and will last for a long winter ride if used on the medium setting.

I know other riders who cherish their heated seats but I haven't

gone for that modification yet.

There is that one upgrade that I only relatively recently adopted though: heated grips. As far as I am concerned this is now the No. 1 piece of kit to specify, either as a manufacturer's or aftermarket modification. Not only do these devices keep your hands tolerably warm they also allow the continued use of thinner gloves (I like the feel of summer gloves)... and I also prefer thin gloves and heated grips in wet weather, so much easier to get the gloves on and

off.

Perhaps one of the many benefits of being part of a group like SAM is that when you're thinking about making a bike kit purchase you can seek the views of others, either over coffee after a group ride or via the group FaceBook page... yes, you might get some contradictory opinions but surely you'll get a more reliable response than just reading the manufacturer's blurb.

Peter Herridge

TECHNICAL

A Cautionary Tale on Malfunctioning Brakes



BMW R 1200 RS front brake seized on, caused by brake lever in wrong position and fouling on throttle cable preventing the lever from fully retracting.

That's the short explanation. For those who have the time, below is a full story. A bit long, but keep going if you are interested.

On tour in Spain and overnight in the hills it had been down to 4°C. During the morning on the plains temperatures now up to 25°C. Cruising on a motorway at the lead of a group. In cruise at a good speed just passing some lorries. Cruise control light went off. Bike started to slow dramatically.

Returned to overtaking speed via throttle and passed the lorry. Bike not responding well to the throttle, felt as though it was running out of fuel. Pulled over onto hard shoulder.

As I slowed the bike came to an abrupt stop. I realised that the brakes were "on" by themselves. Looked down to the front to see smoke pouring off the front brake discs and that distinct smell of hot brake pads. Put bike

on centre stand. Could not rotate front wheel, absolutely solid. Took Leatherman to pads and eased them back off the discs. Now the wheel would turn again. I was quick to get the wheel turning as I didn't want the discs resting with brake pads firmly on while they were so hot for fear of warping the discs due to uneven cooling.

Tested brakes. Brakes (front and back) going on and off without any problem. Tested brakes again with engine running and all satisfactory.

My chum following said that just before I slowed, my brake light came on. One more test. All ok and off we went again. My mind was in complete turmoil. What could have caused this problem that has now, apparently, gone away.

Stopped for lunch and called my BMW dealer in the UK. He had never come across such a problem and had no suggestions. Checked our next overnight stop and could see that there was a BMW dealer in the town. Good job they open late in Spain.

During the afternoon started to convince myself that the problem had "gone away". Very quickly reassured myself that a problem such as a seizing brake does not come and go and not to be so optimistically stupid. I had now adopted a routine of regularly disengaging the clutch to prove that the bike was still freewheeling easily without any brake binding.

Mid-afternoon and brakes started binding again. Same solution to release discs with Leatherman with further tests and off we went again. Explained problem to BMW dealer in Toledo (my Heroes). Mechanic came to look at my bike and then looked at a nearby GS. Came back to mine and pronounced that "Your brake lever is in the wrong position". My immediate thought was "The man's a fool". (I even said it like Tony Hancock (in my head)). The mechanic showed me that in it's present position the master



cylinder and lever was rotated too far forward and when lever was released after braking, sometimes it just fouled the electrical cable from the throttle control and prevented the lever from returning fully 'home'.

A short explanation of the operation of a hydraulic brake now

To allow for expansion and contraction of brake fluid in the hydraulic system, the master has a reservoir. The reservoir is connected to the system via a small vent hole in the master cylinder. When the brakes are applied the lever moves the master cylinder piston and thus compresses the fluid and moves the slave cylinders. However during the first mm of movement the piston first closes off the vent hole, otherwise the piston would just circulate the fluid between piston and reservoir.

Back to my bike

The lever was not returning home on occasions and thus the vent hole was remaining closed off and not allowing for any expansion of the brake fluid. When I started in the morning the system and fluid was cold. During the day it warmed up and because it could not go anywhere else to expand it moved the slave cylinders out. The brakes were gradually applied and heated up the pads, callipers and fluid. Eventually the increase in pressure was sufficient to put on the brake light and switch off the cruise control. The rest is history. NB. The brake light switch is operated by pressure not by a limit switch on the lever.

The Fix

Out came a Torex 27. Lever rotated back away from throttle cable and problem fixed. My hero mechanic allowed me to tighten the bolts. He had looked at the GS because he had first come across this problem on a GS where the lever was fouling on the guard.

It will be obvious that this problem is not unique to an RS but could happen on any bike. Happy days and a few enjoyable beers that evening.

Tony Sauer

RIDE REPORTS

Autumn Uprising

After a couple of days of grotty weather, it was perfect for this year's Au-



turn Uprising. 25 riders thought so too, turning up in good time at Podimore Services to see what the route had to offer. Included in this number were Kevin, Jamie, John, Steve, Mike and Chris, all 6 attending their 1st SAM Group ride – no pressure, then, if I was hoping to attract them back on future SAM rides!

A pre-briefing on the Drop-Off system hopefully didn't confuse them too much, but with the welcome help of 6 willing (!) experienced Observers, they were all paired up to ensure that their initiation into this process was safely and confidently completed.

Due to the number of bikes, it

was necessary to split the ride into 2 groups, so thankfully Simon Kidner stepped up to lead the second group. So with Ian and Roger (& Kim) taking up TEC duties for the 2 Groups, it was time to explore East Somerset.

The route took us through Queen Camel and Sparkford to Hadsen



Mike Shand (before he changed to a MultiStrada)



crossroads, then on to Wincanton and a quick trip up the A303 to Mere. Onto the A3092 to Maiden Bradley (the 50mph limit not detracting from this super road), before hanging a right down to Shearwater Lake and Crocker-ton. What a stunning road, the trees turning the most amazing shades of red and gold, with the Lake (and the numerous fishermen and sailors relishing their particular sports

on the water) appearing like a magnificent oasis of calm.

The return journey took us through the Deverills, and one of my favourite bits of road running along the top of the escarpment with stunning views over the Blackmore Vale. Down into Mere, then onto the “old” A303 through Zeals, Bourton, Wincanton and Holton before the short hop through Sparkford and on to Café 750 at Haynes Motor Museum. Being the 1st Sunday of the month, this was the venue for the monthly Car Drive-In (Bikes are the 3rd Sunday of the month), and with the fantastic weather, the whole place was packed with a huge range and variety of cars.

It was almost a shame to move indoors for breakfast refreshments, but the lure of the bacon, sausage and coffee, plus the opportunity to share personal views of the ride with each other, sealed this (for me at least) as one of my favourite rides of the year. Thanks to all who came along for helping make it so enjoyable. Anyone wanting a copy of the route for their SatNav, just email me direct (Tullochg@aol.com) and I'll forward to you, either as a .gpx (Garmin) or .itn (TomTom).

Graham Tulloch

{NB—photos from 2017's Autumn Uprising}

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAM Red Ride

"Twisties Galore"

Sun. 18th Nov. 2018

10:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park,
Langport

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Green Ride

"Frostie Fingers"

Sun. 2nd Dec. 2018

09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef
Led by Rick Chubb

Control & Technique

"The Comfort Zone"

Sat. 8th Dec 2018

10:00 @ Othery Village Hall

SAM Green Ride

"Frozies Toesies"

Wed. 12th Dec. 2018

18:45 @ Podimore Services
Led by Graham Tulloch

Please check on Events List or Website for up to date info before an Event.

Fancy Leading a SAM Ride in 2019?

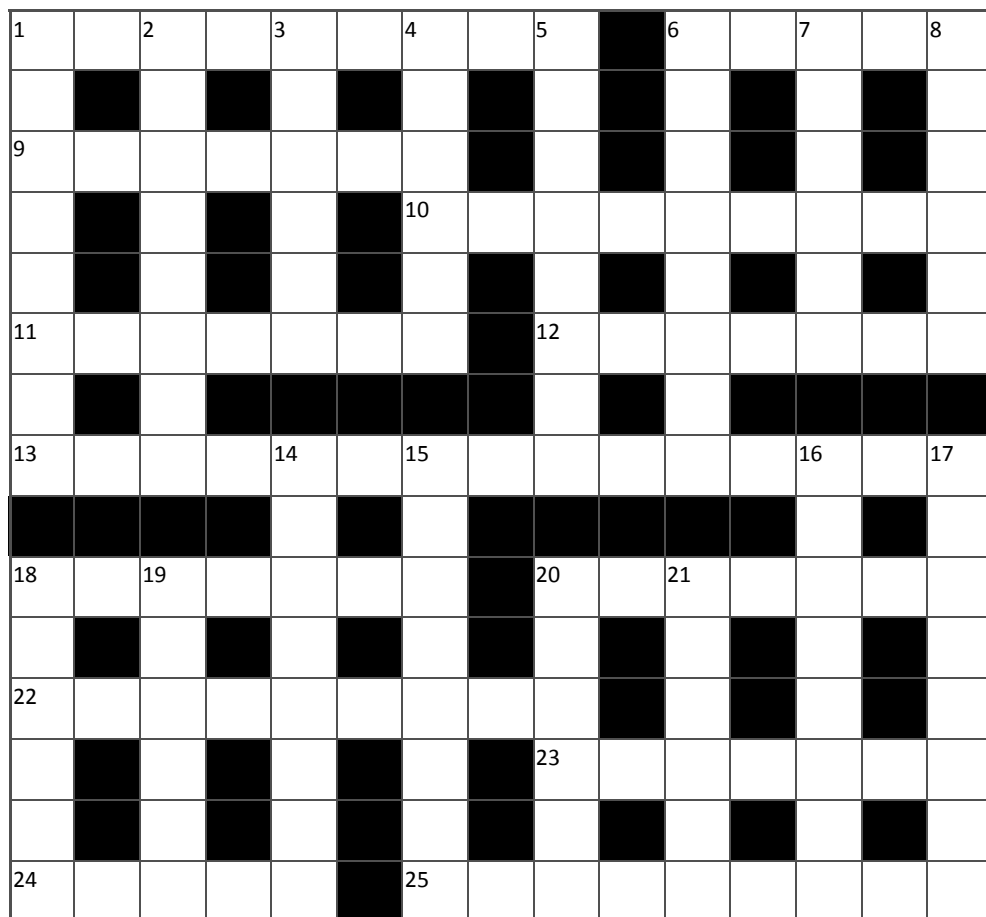
We will shortly be compiling our Events list for 2019, and would welcome any new Ride Leaders. Any Full Member of SAM (i.e. anyone who has passed their Advanced Riding Test) can lead a SAM ride, so if you fancy showing other members some of your favourite roads by leading a ride next year, just get in touch with Jez Martin and let him know—remember, the more ride leaders we have, the fuller the events calendar, and the more variety we have in routes. And if you're not sure what needs to be done, don't worry, one of our experienced Ride Leaders will be more than willing to support you on your first led ride.

Solution to Summer 2018 Crossword

Across: 1 Handling, 5 Ducati, 9 Road-book, 10 Quilts, 12 Embers, 13 Frontier, 15 Scooter, 16 Chic, 20 Audi, 21 Stoppie, 25 Ice floes, 26 Aspire, 28 Spiral, 29 Audience, 30 Ninjas, 31 Back-ache.

Down: 1 and 17 Harley-Davidson, 2 Nearby, 3 Liberace, 4 Neon, 6 U-turns, 7 All right, 8 Instruct, 11 Pre-empt, 14, Foot peg, 17 (see 1d), 18 Adhesion, 19 Dipstick, 22 Alpaca, 23 Picnic, 24 Red-eye, 27 Tuna.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Sauna made changes until disgusting for Roman (2,7)
 6 Fuel brand, not fixed, not English (5)
 9 Short retaining pin holds silver in rural dwelling (7)
 10 Instruments found near 12 (9)
 11 Illegal tax avoiders served a redistribution (7)
 12 Players found near 10 (7)

CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 13** 1935 innovation for BMW recreates relief stopcocks (10,5)
- 18** Caught cornered (7)
- 20** Two-footed by said 'lever' (7)
- 22** A sampan or different landscapes (9)
- 23** Literary bouncing **24** about right to set in action (7)
- 24** Regularly, thing heard becomes ferocious animal (5)
- 25** Be beaten back in, old hat, forlorn (9)

Down

- 1** Mishap with papers in grave, say (8)
- 2** 'It's not a tall order' covers 'don't mention it' (3,2,3)
- 3** Not having the skill, dad's bro' has sailor instead of Conservative... (6)
- 4** ... votes in select states (6)
- 5** Playing 'armonica, Yankee Doodle's 'at (8)
- 6** Short game with obstacles or two cars (4,4)
- 7** SAM members, possibly gang members (6)
- 8** Defeats inefficiencies (6)
- 14** Short superintendent, current or better (8)
- 15** No direct debit, name altered whenever required (2,6)
- 16** Warning, dashed dodgy district (3,5)
- 17** Continued doggedly without one sort of joint (8)
- 18** Hanna Barbera creation, **24** say (3,3)
- 19** Shelter from starting of day without starting (6)
- 20** Beats moistens meat (6)
- 21** Back in plaid, operator of the winner's platform (6)

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

BIKE REPORTS

BMW R1200R

For many years I have ridden Ducatis and that is the make that I am passionate about. I still have a 748 and S2R1000 Monster. In recent years much of my riding has been with a pillion passenger on the Monster. For a little while we had been thinking about finding a bike that would be more comfortable for Jane on longer journeys and also to be able to carry luggage.

Over a year ago I saw an R1200R parked at a BMW dealer and thought it was a nicely proportioned bike. I didn't do anything about it but saw another one down at West Bay back in the Spring. I thought it looked ideal, having wondered about the GS and RT models I felt that both were a bit big and bulky for my liking. I started having a look on the internet and found a 2013 model with only 10,000 miles, complete with panniers.

My first impression when riding it away from the dealers was that it was quite a bit bulkier than the Monster. I liked the low seat, being fairly short in the leg. The bars were a little higher than the Monster giving a more upright riding position. Over the first couple of weeks I thought about changing the bars for lower ones but I have got used to them and grown to like the comfortable stance.

I had read about the tendency for BMWs to rock sideways when idling. I found this a bit disconcerting, especially when two-up. I think that as Jane is sat higher up it exaggerates the phenomenon. Die hard IAM members will be tutting but I found it reassuring to put both feet down at junctions.

Another quirky thing about the bike is the switches for the direction indicators, to turn left you press a button on the left bar and cancel it on the right side. To turn right it's a button on the right and cancel with another switch on the right. I developed the annoying habit of looking down at the switches when using them. The indicators are self-cancelling but I haven't worked out whether the timing is due to distance travelled or engine speed or something else! They sometimes stay on longer than needed or in other instances will cancel sooner than I would like. The salesman correctly predicted that I would indicate left if trying to sound the horn.

Having Jane on the back I initially took it steady and rode quite moderately, gradually increasing cornering speed as time went on. I have to say that despite being heavier than the Monster, the handling is very light and precise. I think I am already riding twisty roads as fast as on the Monster and with quite a bit more power it accelerates out of corners very quickly.

A friend of mine pointed out that I would have trouble with clunky gear changes in the lower gears, something that BMW have improved in more recent models. He was right about this and I was conscious of the clatter especially changing from first to second. I have been riding the bike since

early May and suddenly realised that over the last couple of months the gear changes have been a lot quieter. I can't understand why this is because I don't

think I am doing anything differently.

I have never before owned a bike with a decent headlight, the 748 has a headlight like a candle, the Monster is quite a bit better but I have to slow down quite a bit at night. The headlight on the BMW is phenomenal, I rode up to Tywyn in Snowdonia during September, the last hour and a half was in darkness. I had a brilliant, spirited ride and it was nice that the headlight wasn't a limiting factor on progress.

The panniers are spacious, strong and very well thought out. We have found them very useful and got in the habit of using them even on short days out, a case of wondering how we used to manage



David's 10 year old granddaughter Lucy loves going out on the BMW

without them. I am not sure what difference they make but Jane says that she feels more relaxed and secure when they are on the bike. The next thing will be a top box with a back pad.

I find the trip computer a bit baffling, however much fuel there is in the tank it tells me 56 miles to fill up. At first it was a novelty to scroll through the different functions but I haven't had a look for a while. If I bump into someone more knowledgeable I would appreciate it if they were to explain the functions.

The Telelever front suspension looks a bit involved and I would have perhaps preferred the look of straightforward forks but when it comes to actually riding the bike, the system can't be faulted.

The ESA electronic suspension seems to work well with various settings for solo, pillion riding and luggage, each with an option for sport, normal and comfort. I have occasionally forgotten to reset it; I was riding up to Wales on my own with it set for two-up. The suspension seemed a bit hard, causing a bit of a bumpy ride but it wasn't a problem.

During recent years I have used heated gloves with wires that plug in to the electrics, the BMW has a neat little switch with two settings for the heated grips, it really is a luxury not to have to mess around with wires.

The wind noise around my crash helmet can be quite loud but not overly bad, at the moment the bike has a small fly screen. I could try either taking it off or fitting a slightly larger screen but it isn't a priority.

To sum up, my reservations about the bike being larger and heavier than what I have been used to were completely unfounded, it really is fun on more windy roads. Jane keeps saying how comfortable the seat is, she used to have to stretch and get over a ride on the Monster but no ill effects on this one. If we go on local rides we find that we are averaging thirty miles or more extra per fill, and feeling fresher at the end. Fuel consumption is good and riding two-up doesn't seem to make much difference. I have ridden up to nearly 200 miles on a tank of fuel and the fuel light has yet to come on.

We both think that it was a very good decision to buy the bike and if anyone like me is hesitant about buying a larger GS or RT, this could be the ideal bike. My only qualm is that it hasn't got the heart stirring tone of a Ducati, but I can live with that. **David Matthews**

MEMBER'S TRIPS

3 Go Down to Europe

The plan was to take a month off work and have an extended tour around Europe, starting in Spain via the Portsmouth/Bilbao ferry and ending in Holland; Wasse-naar to be precise, Marianne's home town. Then the Hook of Hol-land /Harwich Ferry home. Mar and me don't have any children (DINKS - Double income no kids) but we do have a little dog called Dugie, or Dugs, and yes she is

definitely a she called Dugie, she is the third person in our family. We had already made some shorter trips with the 3 of us on 2 bikes but nothing like this one. Dugs usually goes pillion with Mar on her KTM SMT with the help of a purpose built doggie box from the US of A, well you know they do everything better there! Actual-ly it's pretty bloody good. With a few mods to the base plate to

make room for camp-ing gear, luckily we both still enjoy camping and with the dog it is much easier than to find accommodation.

I had my KTM Adven-ture then and with a good sized top box and a couple of those roll down stuff sack's each we can manage.

So we take the ferry to Spain and I remember when we left the boat, you know those serious faced custom people that you have to get through, waving their



arms around, stopping and staring you. We got to the kiosk and when the guys saw Dugs in her box their expression changed dramatically and with laughter they stopped the whole queue so the guy in the kiosk could come out to take a picture. Typical, Dugs is never short of attention.

By 'eck, Spain was hot, 30 something and turned out that we had fantastic dry hot weather for most of the trip with literally just a couple of wet days in the middle, about Germany I think. Through the Pyrenees we went and into France and the Alps. I



love the Alps - although the roads are full of switch backs and can hamper your speed cornering, the spectacular scenery more than makes up for it. We only dipped into Switzerland and was not the best road, need to try again another time. Italy was more Alps, GREAT.

Into Slovenia where we had lovely fried fish, the only camp site where we had a fire and Dugs scared the hell out of Marianne when she took after a hedgehog, only her extending line cut her short, GULP!!

The Coast of Croatia was very touristy and a little disappointing so we rode inland, in some of the towns the houses still bear the scars of their troubled history with masonry peppered from bullets and black blown out windows and doors, pretty sobering actually, how lucky are we? Despite their problems we noticed how happy the people were and the kids always waving to us.

Ahh Hungary, well they were the only border to ask with a scowl to see our passports including Dugies', yes she needs a passport too. Actually we couldn't find hers in a hurry amongst our luggage, and with a grunt they sent us on our way.

In Budapest they did put a new clutch in my bike and I thank them for that. Slovakia and the Czech republic we had some rain and we probably raced through a little bit. Marianne was a little concerned about Germany re finding a nice scenic route but bless her she spent a lot of

time plotting routes on the Sat Nav and lo and behold she did it again.

Into Holland and Mar's old stomping ground, rather flat boring roads, sorry Mar!! We did have some excitement at a set of lights when a rather frisky and rude car driver invaded Mar's space and got a size 7 boot in his door, nice one Marianne, he deserved it. No damage done but he was a bit irate and his wife said we were smelly bikers, must remember my Brut 33 next trip - actually I blame Dugs! We caught up with Marianne's family at the end, which was great. What a fantastic trip one of my best, partly because we get to travel together and have a few adventures along the way, we do like a little adventure!!

Tim Radford



Better Late than Never!

Last year, 2017, we had an amazing “trip of a lifetime” and it's taken me over a year to write about it. Amazingly, we've had another “trip of a lifetime” this year. Hopefully I'll write about this year's trip a little quicker, but for now I'll look back to last year.

We set off very early on the morning of 31st May and had planned to arrive in Germany at the first hotel we booked by early evening. Co-pilot would not switch on and eventually Barrie decided just to head south using the sun and we travelled on some great roads and saw some very nice scenery but didn't



manage to get out of France and we stayed in an Ibis Hotel on a services motorway. At some point or another, we always seem to get lost when we go to France.

The next day we set off for Augsburg and still Co-pilot wouldn't switch on. We asked for directions several times and either we misunderstood, or we were given incorrect directions. Anyway we didn't by any means get a direct route as we found ourselves lost numerous times. We decided at one point to use my phone with Google maps but although we had a charging cable on the bike, it had been hidden by mechanics while having a pre-trip service, so whenever we needed to charge the phone we would have to stop at a garage or coffee shop etc and spend however long it took to wait for it to charge. Barrie had a bit of a blast at 150mph on the last bit of the trip but we didn't arrive at the hotel until 6am so only had a couple of hours sleep before having to leave the hotel.

The next day we travelled to Golling in Austria. For the very last bit of the journey the road was isolated and it was getting dark and had been raining for a little while and I was thinking we wouldn't find the hotel when we



saw the sign. The hotel was in a picture postcard location, it was nestled in the Alps. The next morning we had a fab breakfast, so many choices, after which we packed up ready to go. In the hotel grounds a model was just finishing a photo shoot and I just missed getting a picture of her before she changed into leather motorcycle gear and took off on a Harley Davidson.

The next stop was a pension by Lake Magdalena in Villach, in Carinthia, Austria. The roads twisted their way through the Alps with spectacular views. There was very little traffic and it seemed as if we had gone back in time. Austria is so beautiful, from its amazing roads to the pretty villages with beautiful houses and others nestling high up in the mountains. We had come across a sort of a train

stop which took cars and bikes and their passengers through the Alps and we turned back to try to find an alternative route, but after talking to a couple who were working in their garden we realised it would be better to go back and get the train. There were a few bikers, some from Italy, who Barrie

was having a conversation with using gestures as they didn't speak any English and we don't speak Italian. A girl who was with a guy who had a Fireblade asked me to take a picture of them, and later when we got off the train to continue our journey we caught them up and followed them for quite some time with Barrie enjoying having a blast on the sweeping roads that were full of twists and bends, until they eventually went off in a different direction.

We were using my phone and Google maps again and we arrived at the guest house and booked in. We were getting ready to go to a nearby restaurant when I realised I didn't have my phone so after a look through our stuff and not finding it Barrie left to go and have a look and he came back within minutes, as it was in

the road not very far from the guest house and apparently it had not only come off the bike but had been run over. To make matters worse, I discovered I had taken the wrong thing to charge the camera I used to take pictures as we rode along. Annoying to say the least. The guest house was great though, and we had a lovely lake view from our balcony, and I wasn't going to let these things spoil our holiday.

We left the next morning to travel to Croatia. On this day we were in three countries - Austria, Slovenia, and of course Croatia, which I compared to the three counties that we very often go through on a SAM ride.

Riding through Slovenia, we saw some beautiful countryside and it was a very pleasant ride.

The last leg of our journey to the next hotel was to travel in a seemingly never ending spiral upwards, another guest of the hotel described it as "a thirty minutes adventure of curves". Because of the thick trees and shrubs at the sides of the road, Barrie was unable to see through the bends and was finding it really difficult to keep to the right side of the road, unaware that he needn't have worried be-

cause as we found out when leaving the hotel it was actually a one way road. It was an amazing hotel, 1,006m up and it had a lovely swimming pool with whirlpools which we weren't going to miss the chance to try out.

The next morning we travelled into



Zagreb to the dental centre we had arranged to visit and who had provided us with a room at a hostel about 10 minutes walk away. The bike was garaged for 4 days and nights while we visited the centre, local shops and markets and took a tram into the city to the shopping centre. While here we tried to see if we could find anywhere that sold a charger for the camera but sadly we were unable to get one. On Thursday evening we booked our next place to stay as we had no other rooms booked, this would now be a daily

occurrence.

We left on Friday morning to travel to Zada where we stayed in a beautiful basement apartment with space for parking the bike right outside. The owner gave us a bag of cherries and a can of beer (I don't usually drink beer and Barrie doesn't drink at all, but when in Rome, oops sorry I mean Croatia!) While on my lunch break at work months before, when we hadn't even any thought of going on holiday, never mind going to Croatia, I had seen an article on the sea organ (an architectural sound art object), and while we were so close of course we were going to see it, so that was our next stop. I had also read since we had arrived in Zada that this was a place where the sunsets were meant to be spectacular, so after a late dinner, Barrie made sure we were at the sea's edge for a beautiful sunset. The next morning we arrived at the sea organ which was magical. The pipes play music by way of sea waves and tubes which gives random but harmonic sounds. A very unique experience.

After leaving Zada, we headed for Split and from there we took the coastal road to Dubrovnik - one hundred and thirty two miles of the best coastline ever, and a superb ride. I so wished we



were still able to use the camera for this journey. One minute we were close to the shingled seashore and little coves which a few people would have them to themselves, and the next we were high up on a constantly winding road looking down and across the beautiful, crystal clear and calm, intoxicating blue of the Adriatic sea which became turquoise as it reached the shoreline. After travelling for approximately 30/40 miles, we stopped at the side of the road where there were some notices advertising rooms, and after asking at one of the houses we arranged for our next night's stay. We had a balcony with a view of the Adriatic Sea and another

amazing sunset.

The next morning we carried on with our journey to Dubrovnik, briefly riding through Bosnia and back into Croatia. When we arrived in Dubrovnik we found a car parking space, for which we earned a parking ticket because only cars can park in parking spaces, motorbikes can park virtually anywhere but there. We sat on a bench in a park nearby overlooking Gruz Harbor and looked for somewhere to sleep for the night. Again a beautiful apartment with parking right in the grounds.

We left before 11am the next morning, and making sure we parked correctly this time we went to the ferry booking office to buy tickets and decided to pay extra for reclining seats and not have a cabin. After which we spent most of the day in the park with me trying to get a suntan. We had a little hitch when we went to board the ferry as a policeman asked Barrie for documentation for the bike which he did not have. I thought our plans to go to Italy were going to end there, but thank goodness for computers, because the policeman was able to confirm that the bike was ours and our problem was solved.

We hadn't needed to pay for reclining seats because virtually every seat in the lounge we were in was empty as there was only one other couple in the same lounge. Lots of people boarded when we did but obviously they were somewhere else on the ferry. The ferry left at 9pm and the average crossing is around 7 hrs and 30 mins but not ours, it was 11hrs 30 mins before we docked. Luckily we were able to sleep through most of the journey and we were happy to arrive safely at Bari, in Italy, especially as Barrie had said the ferry was held together with gaffer tape and super glue.

When we got off the ferry, one of the mirrors had come loose and we didn't have an allen key that fitted, so we stopped at a filling station and in no time at all about 6 Italians were all trying to help and one of them found a box of keys and sorted it and we were on our way to Pompeii. We arrived at around 3pm. The drivers





there were unbelievable - two lanes turned into five with traffic passing us on either side and from the front, and people were using their mobiles while they were driving. We stopped and looked for somewhere to stay and we chose somewhere quite easily, but finding it was another thing. We spent hours that day trying to find the hotel and had decided to stay for two nights to give us the whole of the next day to see everything.

The first thing you see when arriving at the ruins are the casts of men, women and children who were buried by the ashes when Vesuvius erupted. We then spent hours walking around the ruins of Pompeii and you get close to Mount Vesuvius nearing the end of the tour. The whole day was very thought provoking.

The next morning we started our journey to Rome and we took in

some of the beautiful Amalfi coastline. We rode through a bit of the city of Naples, and in the streets we passed I saw so many cars with dents. When travelling on the toll roads there was burned and blackened grass alongside it, and there were fires being put out in fields that ran alongside the road. A little while later we saw a guy putting out a fire on the central reservation. All quite unnerving, for me at least. At some point Barrie was aware of an MV Augusta following us and after passing a toll and pulling off to the side the guy and his lady pillion passenger spoke to us for a little while and then it was time to get on and the guy went in front this time at an unbelievable speed and it was like as if he was pushing the traffic side to side out of his way and we went some 50 miles or so following him, which was an experience to say the least.

We arrived at the Grand Hotel Fleming late afternoon and the next morning we got a taxi to visit the Vatican City. After being able to dodge the queues (quite legally) we latched onto a group of tourists with their guide, staying a reasonable distance so the guide didn't cotton on but keeping an

eye on the flag she held up for her group. A great way to see everything without getting lost, and also a way not to pay the extortionate fee.

After visiting the Vatican City we went for something to eat in McDonald's, as you do, or maybe don't. A young man noticed my chalice well pendant and asked if we were from Glastonbury and I asked how he knew it was connected with Glastonbury. He said he'd studied architecture in England and had visited and loved Glastonbury. Small world.

When we got back to the hotel to collect our gear and the bike we decided that we weren't going to travel too far to the next hotel and found another "grand" hotel, and here we met an American lad who came from Buffalo, New York.



We left next morning and made our way to Pisa. It was a lovely trip, nice roads, not too much traffic and Barrie had wanted to take me to see the Tyrrhenian Sea. We saw huge camping sites to the left of us and at one point he pulled over and we started to make our way through a campsite to the sea. The beach stretched endlessly either side of us but the ocean was directly in front of us. Pisa was great and we saw a lot of tourists taking the customary shots trying to push the tower back.

Our next hotel was in Collecchio, Parma. We left the next morning planning to get to Germany, so we were again in three countries in a day - Italy, Austria and Germany. It was a very nice scenic trip as I think all of our trips were but it did not end as we planned. We arrived at Fussen but we decided not to stay at the place we booked as it turned out to be a hostel without a private bathroom, so after trying to see if there was anywhere else in the area we decided just to keep travelling, making it the second time we rode through the night. I often think people years younger than us would strug-

gle if they had to go without sleep as we did.

Next plan was to go on the B500 road in the Black Forest, the opposite way in which we went on a previous trip. From there we went onto Strasbourg. It was easy to book an Ibis hotel but extraordinarily difficult to find and we spent hours trying. Long story short, after parking in an underground car park we couldn't find reception so I got Barrie to sit on a sofa on the second floor lobby while I went to find reception which turned out to be in another building as we were in the wrong hotel. I then had to get someone to help me find the way to get back to Barrie so we could all get back to the right place. Next stop was an overnight stay in Calais and the following morning back to Dover. We hadn't realised that we chose Bank Holiday Monday to return and the traffic was horrendous and we had to filter all the way to Podimore before turning off towards home.

We had three amazing weeks of the most beautiful weather and we saw sights we never imagined we'd ever see.

Carol Clark

An Autumnal Break in Spain

Gina and I had decided that we wanted another motorcycling trip to Spain and somehow we managed to fit two weeks into the crowded diary, albeit in mid October. Actually not such a bad time, the weather is still mild, typically 20 deg C during the daytime although some of the higher passes get colder. We experienced some rain but largely avoided the worst weather and were lucky to ride through Teruel the day before it experienced flooding.

We like to plan a complete route on a single map and we joined the dots (or more accurately, the wiggly roads bordered in green, which indicate them being scenic) from Bilbao, south



east to Estella. Then two nights in Ainsa on the southern edge of the Pyrenees. Next stop a night in Puig-Reig south of Berga before another overnight in Cornudella de Montsant, a walking/climbing centre north of Reus. Two more nights were spent in a self contained apartment inland from Vinaròs.

Top Tip 1: to save carrying too many clothes it's worth putting in stops where you can do some laundry and also self cater...Spanish food in restaurants is great value but meals are large and the Spanish eat late so for us Brits it can become problematic.



We then rode inland towards Madrid, staying in a small village north east of Cuenca for two nights before two more nights near Soria then a final night close to Bilbao for the return ferry.

Generally we like to plan daily distances of about 300 Kms and we use minor roads almost exclusively. The views are simply stunning, the traffic almost non-existent and the bends seemingly unending. One morning I

noted that we rode for 90 Kms without encountering another vehicle on our side of the carriage-way.

We pre-book each hotel stay on booking.com, which means we have a planned start and end point each day. If staying two nights then we explore more locally on the second day. At this time of year you could certainly ride as far as you want then book into a hotel, they are plentiful. You will find that some rudimentary Spanish is a great help...we met some people who spoke English well but that's less common than some other European countries...the more remote the location, the less likely you are to encounter English speakers. Although we still have a Spanish phrase book there are many phone apps that will give you good translations...you can even take screen shots of menus and get a text translation.

As always, we have to re-learn some lessons on these trips so let's tell you a few more of the things we 'remembered' on this journey.

Top Tip 2: We always carry a

detailed road atlas (on this trip we continued using of 2013 Michelin Road Map of Spain) and although we used sat nav it really helps to note the names of locations you're planning to pass through. We experienced some problems with Gina's ageing Garmin Zumo and nearly came unstuck when the early hotels didn't have adequate wi-fi speed for me to download the Spanish maps to my phone to link in to my KTM system. Wi-fi was, however, freely available at all locations we stayed in. Poor prior



planning on my part...I should have ensured I had the maps loaded before we set off.

Top Tip 3: Spanish road engineering and signage is very good and they generally make junctions much safer than in the UK...but crossing a solid white centreline will get you in trouble. Similarly, 'Give Way' signs are very rare whereas 'STOP' signs are ubiquitous and you are expected to STOP. Whilst you may choose to simply slow and take a view at a remote junction in the hills, in urban areas you will likely be pulled over and fined for an infringement.

Top Tip 4: Motorcycling is popular in Spain (Marquez, Lorenzo and Pedrosa are national heroes after all) and a left hand wave is exchanged no matter what the make.

We like the ferry to Bilbao because we can ride south of the ferryport and get on to interesting roads quite quickly although on this trip we actually headed east to get us towards our first stop...this was an error as those roads were busy, which is uncharacteristic of riding in the country as a whole.

You can, of course, ride down through France but by the time you have paid fuel and overnight stay costs the price is very similar to taking the ferry...so we pop a couple of Cinnarizine (Stugeron) and challenge the Bay of Biscay to do its worst.

Top Tip 5: Fuel is slightly cheaper than the UK and many garages still have attendant service. If you're taking more remote roads then clearly plan your fuelling but garages are likely to be located in larger villages. One caution with relying on sat nav for fuel stops is that we have ridden to garages to find them shut down. We generally fill up frequently to avoid problems...also a chance to use 'the facilities' as public toilets are a rare sight.

Top Tip 6: Spanish coffee is great but they still struggle to make decent tea. Don't forget that siesta, from about 15:00 to 18:00, is still widely practised and many shops/cafes will be shut during that time.

If you're an old hand at riding in Spain then you will surely acknowledge that this country is a superb location for motorcycling. If you haven't tried it yet then we can only suggest that you start planning for 2019.

Peter Herridge

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Summer2018 Caption

Alf Bagshaw is in fine form again with a Caption for the Summer 2018 photograph :



*“OK you young
Tearaway, you
have exactly 2
seconds to get
your front
wheel off my
left foot!”*

TAILPIECE #5

rider n, an addition to an otherwise complete document

“The rider had a desk job in the Engineering Department of a manufacturing company. In his spare time he enjoyed tinkering with his motorcycle, bicycle and lawnmowers. One Monday, he was invited at short notice to a black tie dinner that evening to represent Engineering at the press launch of a new product.

After technical presentations and dinner it was the chance for the journalists to meet the company’s staff and pursue their own angles and story lines on the new product. There was a loud and obnoxious woman representing a technical magazine; she collared the CEO and demanded an interview with an engineer. ‘I want a proper engineer’ she insisted, ‘not one of your suits!’

The rider was called over and introduced as the senior engineer present. ‘Show me your hands!’, the woman commanded. Having stripped down an old engine at the weekend, his hands were in a state, ingrained with oil and with very black finger nails; the rider had spent all evening keeping them out of sight. He reluctantly presented them for inspection.

‘Perfect!’, cooed the woman, ‘a real engineer, we shall get along famously.’

CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



Another photo that’s crying out for some suggested captions to explain what is happening here. I’d welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo, taken on the recent SAM “Dorset Dogleg” ride. Suggestions to me at Tullochg@aol.com, we’ll publish the best one in the next issue.

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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.

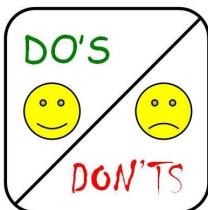
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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.

Committee Meetings

Every member of SAM is welcome to attend these, which are held at The Lamb & Lion in Hambridge. Please feel free to join in, give us your thoughts & ideas, put forward your suggestions on how to further improve our Club. Or just enjoy a night out.

SOUTH WEST PENINSULA SPRING RALLY — 2019'S Rally takes place on Saturday 13th April 2019. Starting at Long Sutton Village Hall, registration takes place from 08:00—10:00, with breakfasts available from 07:00. Control re-opens at 17:00 for riders to check in at the end of the Rally, closing at 23:59. Advance registration for this event can be done online from early in the New year, just visit SAM's website for the link www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk