

Spring 2019

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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Front Cover: Dave Moffett emerging from the Ford at Allerford during Matt Towill's recent "Spring Fords Run" green ride.



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



Clocks have changed, South West Peninsula Spring Rally run, IAM RoadSmart Skills Days underway: suddenly the 2019 biking season is in full swing. Of course, for many of us, the riding season starts on 1st of January, and finishes on 31st December, but riding in daylight, preferably warm and dry, is an added joy for most. I would certainly rather be soaking flies off my bike than scrubbing mud off. The training season is also in full swing with



Gina & Georges preparing to take Louise out for a Taster ride

a record number of associates and new observers due to be trained this year, a testament to the success of SAM in getting the message across that advanced riding is a great way to have more fun

on your bike while improving your skill. Of course, we still need to be wary out there: there's nothing like a bit of sun to bring out the exuberance in a motorcyclist, and every sunny day will see a few incidents where enthusiasm has outstripped skills, to remind us that riding is first and foremost a mind game.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue of Full Chat, and to those who haven't, have a go. Everything biking related is potentially welcome. Your experiences of kit, bikes, trips, news items, with suitable photographs are what makes the newsletter an interesting read, so send us something: tullochg@aol.com or ginabromage@googlemail.com. The deadline for the next issue is 15th July 2019.

Gina Herridge

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER



I'm writing this whilst manning HQ (Long Sutton Village Hall) for the club's annual major event – the South West Peninsula Rally. Having had 266 entrants (Riders and Pillions), this year has turned out to be yet another record breaker; the event just seems to be getting more and more popular every year. This year we have engaged a new caterer, and that decision seems to have been a good one to have made, with the whole breakfast service and quality being another improvement upon previous years. My thanks have to go out to all of the volunteers who help to make the day the success that it is, from those manning the checkpoints to those who turn up bright and early on the day to help the HQ part of the day run

smoothly. Of course, I have to mention my partner in crime for this event, Richard Pearce, who handles so much of the logistics behind the scenes. It's been a bit fraught in the lead up to this year's rally, but we seem to have managed another successful event. If you haven't participated in the



Rally then put the 4th April in your diary for next year – everyone enjoys the day on their bikes whatever the weather!

Another great event that I've just come back from was the annual Welsh Weekend, this year 30 of us (Yes! 30!) took over a B&B at Welshpool and spent a weekend riding around the glorious countryside that is Mid/North Wales. Travelling up on the Friday, Rob Bartlett led us over the Brecons in some challenging conditions (I mean snow) on the single lane roads (?) that act as passes over that



range. Saturday saw Snowdonia, led by Matt Towill who had booked better weather for us (thanks Matt!) and Sunday saw us ride home, and practise our filtering on the M5 to round out another great event that again gets more popular each year. My thanks to Rob and Matt for their leadership over the weekend – how they find those routes always amazes me.

March also saw the AGM, which we held on a Saturday this year in order to try and make it easier for those that work to attend – Yes! we have members in the club who are not retired! As per usual we kept the business part of the meeting as brief as possible (37 minutes, I'm told), so that we could spend more time on refreshments and food for the 40 or so who attended. It was nice to see so many of our newer members attend, I hope you all enjoyed the evening. Neill Sedgewick gave us a short but entertaining chat on the work of Somerset Road Safety Partnership and his work in particular with Powered 2 wheelers. My thanks to Neill for that – I did stitch him up a bit!

Training of our new Local Observers continues; soon they will be qualified which will bring the active Observer cadre up to 42, an impressive number to help support the continued expansion of the club.

That's it I think for now, as always I would like to thank all members for their continued support and remind you all that if you would like to get more involved in helping the club to continue to be successful, then please let me or any of the committee know – as we grow, we need more volunteers to help spread the load. **Jez Martin**

SAM NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS!

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

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

- Steve Dixon on 17th February, riding a Honda VFR, and observed by Rich Sutton.
- Steve Morton on 15th April, riding a Honda CBF1000GT. Steve was observed by Steve Layzell.
- Leigh Morgan on 18th April. Leigh was riding his Suzuki GSX1000, and was observed by Lindsay Wilson.
- Kevin Billings on 22nd April, riding a Honda NC750X and observed by Roger Moffatt.



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

- Congratulations also go to Tom Moore and Alex Mabbott, both of whom passed their Masters with Distinction, on 16th and 18th April respectively. Both Tom and Alex were mentored by Rick Stowell, so well done to Rick.

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 6th March 2019 can be found on the SAM website.

IAM Inform

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

BIKING NEWS

MAG



Update from SAM's MAG rep, Rick Chubb

Following on from last issue's article by Kevin Williams of Survival Skills on conspicuity, the article below has been transcribed from MAG's 'The Road' magazine, March/April 2019



edition, and - whilst it contains a similar message - gives a little more background on the subject, and offers some suggestions on how best to make us visible at all times. **Rick Chubb**

Conspicuity or Camouflage? (by Kevin Williams)

“Why do motorcyclists use hi-vis? In fact, why does anyone wear hi-vis clothing? The answer is pretty obvious – to stand out in whatever environment the hi-vis is being used in.

As the ‘Science of Being Seen’ website explains, the idea of using clothing and lights to help riders stand out was first promoted as a motorcyclist safety aid in the mid-1970s in a campaign in London.

As I was riding in London at the time, I was one of the first riders to adopt a bright yellow ‘Sam Browne’ belt although the lights idea didn’t work so well at that time – riding in London with the headlight on all day simply flattened the battery!



Gareth Newstead Unsplash

Over the next few years as I left university and began my time as a courier, I graduated – if that’s the right word – from the Sam Browne to a full sleeved jacket in the vibrant saturn yellow we’re now all familiar with.

But in fact, the idea of being conspicuous isn’t new. It’s almost certainly a lot older than most of us realise. For example, Roman officers most likely wore helmets with brightly-coloured crests in battle. Whilst they were usually red, other colours such as yellow and purple were used. Why? Almost

certainly the crest helped the soldiers locate their officers in battle. They stood out both in terms of height and colour.

Around about 1990, I switched from working in London to Kent, and started to do a lot more riding in rural areas. And I noticed that hi-vis yellow didn’t stand out well against foliage on sunny days. Even in London, there were now so many people using hi-vis clothing in yellow, I realised my

jacket didn't stand out so well. I switched to something a little different. I wore pink.

I carried on wearing that jacket until it finally fell apart. By that time I was working for Cinque Ports Rider Training in Kent. Yes, my pink jacket generated predictable hilarity but my fellow instructors admitted that it did stand out when we were riding across Romney Marsh.

Of course, I'm not the only one to be a fan of pink hi-vis. Danny John-Jules was kind enough to send me a couple of pics of him out on his bike.

I've been writing about hi-vis and the need to stand out against the background since I first started writing my blog before they were called blogs on my website back in the early 2000s. I've been talk-

ing publicly about the issue since 2011 when the original Kent Fire and Rescue Service 'Biker Down' project was launched.

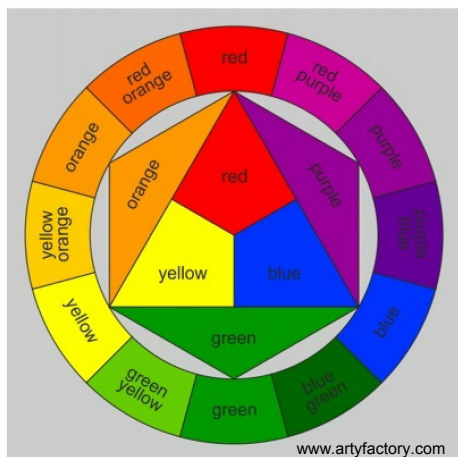
And at long last, the need for clothing to contrast against the background, not just be selected because it's hi-vis has started to make it through into official advice.

The Transport Research Laboratory have recently released a couple of papers in which they reviewed the literature on visibility and conspicuity, one for motorcyclists and the other for the riders of horses on roads.

In both cases, advice was that riders should wear high visibility and reflective clothing, CHOOSING A COLOUR APPROPRIATE TO THEIR RIDING ENVIRONMENT. That really is quite a shift in understanding.

So now it's up to us to bear that in mind and that means think about just where we're riding.

Bright sunny day in early summer, when the leaves are that lovely yellowy green of spring foliage? Ask yourself, is saturn yellow going to show up? Probably not, have a look at the colour wheel – the colour that creates the greatest contrast is on the opposite



side. So in spring, see what's opposite yellow-green – it's pink! Orange would be reasonably effective too.

Autumn colours? Then that orange vest had better go back in the cupboard, but yellow won't show up well either, will it? As a light colour, in urban areas, on gloomy winter roads and at night, saturn yellow generally creates a good contrast. Orange won't show up so well in a red-brick environment. Orange also doesn't work well if your nighttime roads haven't been upgraded to LEDs and are still using the old sodium street lighting either.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, on a sunny rural road, then there is evidence that a black-clad rider on a black motorcycle shows up best of all.

What you should be realising is that the background – and hence your conspicuity – changes on a metre-by-metre basis. There's no 'one size fits all' solution.

Three final paragraphs of advice.

First, it might seem that by using a multi-coloured vest we get the best of all worlds. But in fact, we recognise what we're looking at via its shape, not via colour. So vests that are yellow AND orange,

and also have the reflective stripes that appear silver by day actually work as 'disruptive camouflage' by breaking up our outline just at the moment we're expecting to be more conspicuous. My advice? Go for a single, solid colour. Hi-vis isn't expensive so long as you avoid buying motorcycle specific garments, so there's no reason you can't have several different ones in the cupboard.

Second, get a garment with sleeves, and avoid tabards or vests. Vests tend to vanish behind screens, top boxes and passengers and can't be seen from the sides. And a vest won't create that all-important 'human' silhouette in the same way that a sleeved garment does. There are lightweight sleeved hi-vis jackets available that are barely more expensive than the vests and they take up little more room.

And last, and in some ways most important of all, any conspicuity aid is a passive aid to safety. It relies entirely on the other road user seeing us, then making a decision to keep us safe. Do you really want to rely 100% on that? I certainly don't."

www.survivalskills.co.uk

There will be Weather.....

I used to get annoyed with the motorcycle press using the term 'the biking season'. I rode in all seasons for several years and here was 'our' press telling us when we could start riding. I have mellowed, slightly, with age. I now see the term as meaning the time to cross the country to a piece of grippy tarmac with no speed cameras or oncoming traffic.

The season opening round of the North Gloucester Road Racing Club has for several years now been a March weekend at Brands Hatch in Kent. It tried to be last year but the Beast from the East Part II caused a cancellation, after Part I caused the cancellation of the pre-season test weekend at Pembrey! For 2019 along with the Official Test Day Friday, racing on both Saturday and Sunday, there was the added bonus of a Track Day on the Thursday. Four days of track riding on the Triumph 675 for one trip in the Transit.

Thursday was to be a shake down session for both rider and machine. Although my everyday road bike is also a sports bike, it does not put the rider into the same positions due to the control positioning and hence is not the same to ride. It also has padding on the seat. Fractions of a setting make a difference to the feel of the bike and while I now use a paint pen to put alignment marks on components, such as yokes and clip-ons, to get close to the base setting, it doesn't beat actually riding the thing.

At the compulsory briefing the organisers warned that there would be little patience for noisy machines, one warning and then go home. Even though the 675 is a race bike, running it in Streetstocks the regulations require it



to be less than 98dB on a static noise test and the only 'tuning' that has been done is removal of the power valve and catalytic convertor from the exhaust system. After the briefing it was off to noise testing where it was measured at 97dB, with the limit for the day being 102dB. Out on circuit there are additional drive by noise meters and the slight 'pop' as the un-burnt fuel ignited in the exhaust on the entry to Paddock Hill and Druids were tripping them. Friendly warning received as I came down pit lane at the end of the first session. For the rest of the day I had to be on best be-



Picture courtesy of Harry Beast Pix

haviour. The new aims were not to get kicked off and polish up on my lines. Booking an instructor for a session I got the same feedback as I do on my observed rides; 'your lines are okay but could be better'... at least I have some consistency.

Friday was an official test day which eliminates several rules that a track day has to abide by, the main ones being a higher noise limit and timing is allowed. Another noticeable difference was that the sun put in an appear-

ance. After the cold and damp-to-monsoon conditions of Thursday it was now time for the dry tyres to be fitted. Riding the Triumph more aggressively the suspension began to work again and the whole experience was actually smoother. I am not an expert on setting up suspension, that I leave to someone else (and pay them for the privilege), but it needs to be set for your riding style to give you the right feedback. Hence why it was not working for me when I was being too gentle on the track day. This left me in a good positive mood for the weekend's racing.

A typical club meeting race weekend will consist of morning warm up or practice sessions of which the times are for information only and do not decide anything officially. This will have various classes of machine on circuit at the same time, all capable of a similar pace. Next is qualifying in which the machines on track are those that are going to be in the same race. One physical race can contain different classes, for example I race in Streetstock 700 which also has 600 Pre Injection in the race. The Qualifying times will determine where on the grid the rider

will be starting from. After qualifying it is race time where Championship points, for each class, can be gained. Along with the awarding of Championship points, the finishing positions from one race will determine the grid positions for starting the next race over the weekend. With North Gloucester this normally translates into five or six practice sessions on Saturday morning followed by a Qualifying Session and the first race in the afternoon. Races Two and Three occur on Sunday.

Streetstocks' regulations require a controlled tyre of a Metzeler Race-Tech RR for dry conditions. With overnight rain leaving the track damp and the fact that it was March leaving the track cold, even with tyre warmers this road legal treaded tyre is not the best for these conditions. A racing wet tyre is designed to not only disperse water but work at lower temperatures. With wet tyres fitted and suspension softened, the morning practice was completed with no signs of anything requiring any further adjustment before qualifying.

'Cloudy' and 'Damp' were the weather and track conditions recorded on the official Qualifying

session timing sheet. As the track had started to dry, a wet front and a dry rear, with logic being that a rear losing grip is not as scary as the front going, were fitted. In total nine laps were completed, all within a 2.5 second spread and the quickest being lap 8. Not earth shatteringly quick but consistent and not dropping off at the end. Race one was recorded as 'Cloudy' and 'Dry'. The



Picture courtesy of Hairy Beast Pix

skies had darkened creating the need to change the visor from black to clear, but the mixed tyre fitment remained. Until my last lap, where I was lapped by the winner, the times were reducing on each circulation. All were under the qualifying time. This for me is a positive result, getting quicker each time around.

Sunday morning was looking so promising, then minutes before being called to the grid a sleet shower and people were scrambling around changing from dry back to a full wet set up. It is at times like these that the support and camaraderie in the garage are priceless. We made it to the grid on time and despite having a

few moments, managed to bring it back at the end of the race in one piece. The final race of the weekend for me and another tyre change with the dry rear again being fitted. As the race progressed I could feel the front starting to move around as the drying track was causing the wet tyre to overheat. The lap times were all over the place, but I have my excuses, overheating tyre, four days on track, start of a new season etcetera but overall it was a successful weekend with no unscheduled excursions and sitting in eighth place in the championship.

Rab Lavender

“Ducking Quack Racing (DQR)”

{photos courtesy of Hairy Beast Pix}

KIT REPORTS

Sugru Mouldable Glue

Don't you just love it when that little bit of plastic drops off ?
Lost, gone, but not forgotten.
The hole in your glove will always be there to remind you, another 500 miles and your thumb will need plastic surgery.

'Probably happens a lot', you think. 'Bet the dealer will rip me off by several quid, but gloves aren't cheap'.

You're now resigned to biting the bullet and you ring the dealership.

"Hi Tom, it's Ian."

"Hi Ian, what can we do for you?"

"Well, you know that little button on the turn light switch?"

"You've lost yours haven't you? It happens, but it's not a separate part. The unit is £135 + vat.....

Ian ?! , IAN ???



Time to get creative, what can I stick on there? Black Jelly Baby (be sure to bite the head off). Search ebay, nothing. Guys on the Victory forum, "Get one 3D -printed" thanks!

And then, ta da! **Sugru Mouldable Glue**. Why not? Never used it before, how difficult can it be?

This product did the job and I would recommend it for similar jobs. Apparently it works on most materials and is useful for bonding as well as moulding, and acts



as a sealant if required.

In my case I performed an initial rough shaping to get the slot formed and then, after 24 hours, I built up a second layer to get the overall shape and the strength. Final shaping was done by a sharp knife and various grades of wet and dry paper.

The finished button has been glued on to the metal arm and has been in place for a few hundred miles without any problems. The cost?

£6.99, and one of the 3 packs still unopened.

Ian Fraser



Bike Seal

Having gone several years without a puncture, I've now had two in the space of a few weeks. The first was a large screw embedded in my rear tyre. I was completely unaware of any problem while out on the bike, and it was only the next time that I wheeled it out of the garage for a ride, that I found myself thinking, "Gosh, this is really hard to push, I wonder if there's a brake binding, or maybe the garage has got subsidence..." Isn't it strange how your mind presents all sorts of really, really unlikely scenarios and

ignores the blindingly obvious? (Oh, just me, then?) Anyway, the Bikeseal had done its job and got me home, but when I stopped the bike, the still-moving screw came to rest above the level of the pool of Bikeseal, so the damage it caused allowed the tyre to slowly deflate. Out came the repair kit - actually out came the other bike, first - but in due course the hole was plugged, and the bike back in service.

You can imagine my surprise, not to say dismay, when I checked the tyres yesterday before riding, and found that there seemed to be something



wrong with my tyre pressure gauge. It had completely stuck and was too stiff to slide out and give me a reading. Oh, wait, it couldn't be.... Yep, not only another puncture, but a nail right through the plug I'd put into the first one. Seriously? Once again, I'd noticed nothing while riding the bike, and got home without any problems. Now it is possible that this is just a freaky chance, but equally, I'd been a bit careless with trimming the ex-



cess plug and left a big sticky blob of the compound nestled in the trough of the tread. I wonder whether this made it very much easier for the nail to get a purchase on the tyre surface and start to work its way in. Anyway, I've trimmed the new plug much shorter, just in case. Also wondering how much more life I'm going to get from this tyre! **Gina Heridge**

Urban Glow TriStar Club 'Special'

Urban Glow products will be well known to SAM members, their sleeved Ridestar jacket having been used by Observers for several years now. They have recently produced a bespoke garment aimed at club members looking for a bit of personalisation, and available to special order. Based on their well-established TriStar Max

vest, the TriStar Club 'Special' shares the same body platform, build quality and materials. It also offers a range of high visibility panels and generous areas for fixing badges.

I first started the design and sizing process when I visited Steve Rogers at his stand at last year's Motofest event at RNAS Yeovilton.



Not being one to rush into my decision-making, it took me over a month to finalise the sizing and range of options – these include soft loop stitched panels (Velcro to you and me!), choice of badges, additional reflective panels, D-ring hanger, mesh cargo pocket, and choice of neon green or electric silver tape – electric pink will shortly be added to this list.

I chose 2 velcro panels on the front (name badge and ID card holder – the IAM RoadSmart badge fits perfectly); Velcro patch on the back

(for the SAM logo); D-ring on the right (to hang keys); small mesh pocket; and a web tab on the left for my Masters badge. Unfortunately, due to me having to choose a size 1 vest, there wasn't room for another pocket - larger members shouldn't have this problem!

The total cost for my design was £58, but as these are all bespoke, this will vary – the basic vest comes in at £47 + P&P.

Steve was very helpful throughout the process, but in order to give him some time to run his company (!), future SAM orders will be channelled through the existing SAM clothing supply route – hopefully this will be set up within the next few weeks. Overall, a great product, and great service.

Lisa Parsons



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAM Red Ride

"Brecon Challenge"

Sun. 5th May 2019

10:00 @ Severn View Services

Led by Hugh Beamish

SAM Green Ride

"Fish n' Chip Run"

Wed. 15th May 2019

18:45 @ Ilminster Little Chef

Led by TBA

SAM Slow Riding Skills Day

Sun. 26th May 2019

10:00—16:00

@ Bridgwater College

Organised by Mark Livingstone

SAM Committee Meeting

Wed. 5th Jun. 2019

19:30 @ The Lamb & Lion,

Hambridge TA10 0AT

SAM Green Ride

"Ride Your Other Bike"

Sat. 15th Jun. 2019

09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Green Ride

"Pancake Express"

Sun. 12th May 2019

07:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park,
Langport

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Green Ride

"Pronta Via!"

Sat. 18th May 2019

10:00 @ BP White Post,
West Coker Road, Yeovil

Led by Mik Simonetti

SAM Amber Ride

"Cornish Camping Weekend"

Fri. 31st May-Sun. 2nd Jun. 2019

10:00 @ Cross Keys,
Norton Fitzwarren

Led by Rob Bartlett

SAM Green Ride

"I'll Think of a Name"

Sun. 9th Jun. 2019

09:30 @ TBA

Led by Janet Short

SAM Green Ride

"Coast to Coast"

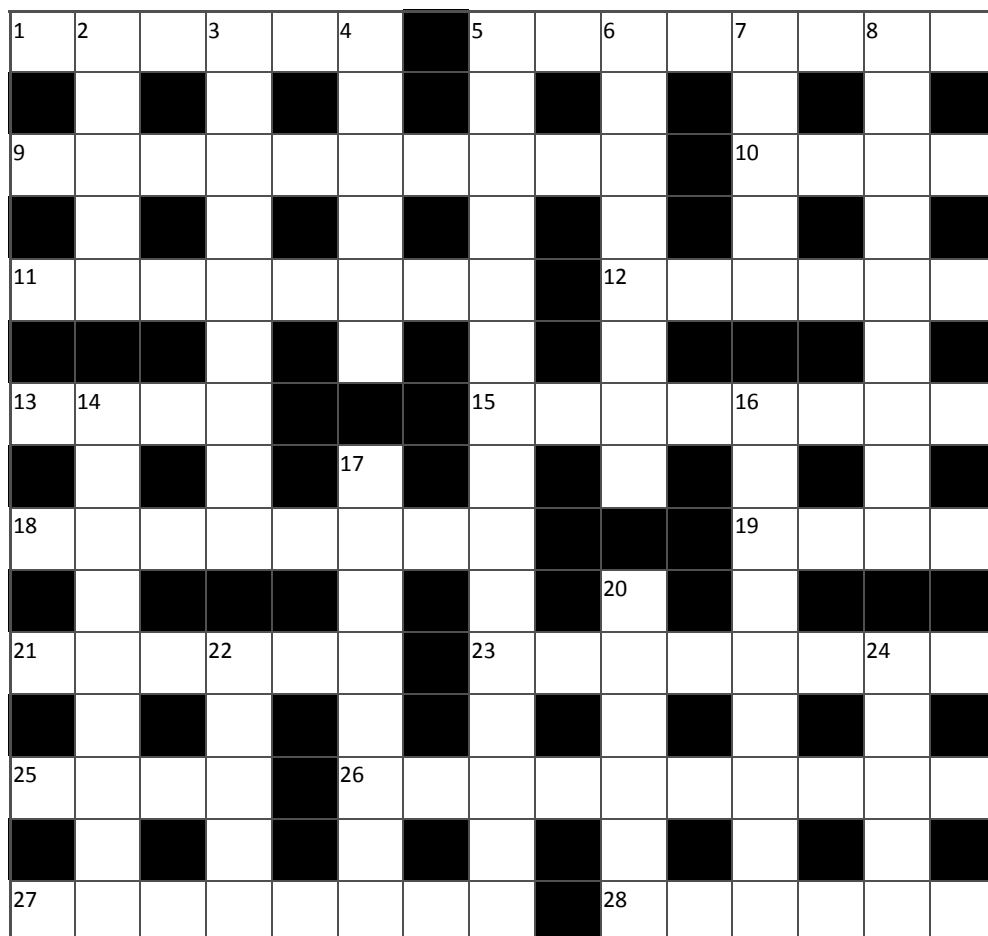
Sun. 16th Jun. 2019

09:00 @ Cross Keys,
Norton Fitzwarren

Led by Steve Schlemmer

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

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Fastener in Ducati Diavel cross-threaded (6)
- 5 Harley front end is a dog (8)
- 9 Solid opening often shut too late (6,4)
- 10 Newly enthusiastic joint you get down (4)
- 11 Back more? On the contrary – unidentified (8)
- 12 Director-General with energy in suit to move restlessly (6)
- 13 Pike changed French army cap (4)
- 15 Former lover with drug, right size, by the sound of it, for working out (8)
- 18 Small county meal. Democrat support for the night (8)

CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 19 Lacking character, composer is heel (4)
- 21 '48 Vauxhall creation with wings (6)
- 23 Improve batting line on pitch (8)
- 25 Catch banger (4)
- 26 Girl scout died on Parisian tower excursion (6,4)
- 27 Flock follow collie (8)
- 28 Oddly, stand led back to front seat (6)

Down

- 2 Wide addition (5)
- 3 Wire binds small straps (5,4)
- 4 Cook's corkscrew, for example (6)
- 5 Lopsided swinger redeployed Advanced skill (4-5,6)
- 6 Thin artist, whistle-blower that is daughter (8)
- 7 Without fairing, North American journalist put on kilo (5)
- 8 During a duel, even, session has late-morning break (9)
- 14 Each part of a foot entirely (5,4)
- 16 Assembled and rectified with lefts instead of rights (9)
- 17 Between 12 and 20 in committee nag editor (8)
- 20 Cheats sailors on board ship (6)
- 22 Twentieth century comic is under par (5)
- 24 Propel with blade over stern, south, about one third of Ullswater (5)

Solution in next issue

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

Solution to Winter 2019 Crossword

Across: 7 Screw up, 8 Mileage, 10 Front Brake, 11 Look, 12 Gendarme, 14 Ladder, 15 Pick up speed, 19 Screen, 20 Optimate, 22 Dash, 23 Lifesavers, 25 Roofing, 26 Ketchup.

Down: 1 Scarves, 2 Bean, 3 Rubber, 4 Sideslip, 5 Sealed-beam, 6 Ignored, 9 Waterproofs, 13 Driveshaft, 16 Kindling, 17 Octagon, 18 Start up, 21 Taster, 24 Vice.

RIDE REPORTS

Welsh Weekend 2019

As a SAM member for a couple of years it's clear that several of the highlights of the very full events calendar come in a bit of a rush in spring. Of course there is the South West Peninsula Spring Rally and the famous Spring Fords Run but standing alongside these is the legendary Welsh Weekend.

Those of you who have attended over the many years it has been running know what it's all about, a fantastic weekend of riding on those exhilarating Welsh roads, some more challenging tracks and a couple of great nights-out thrown in. I don't know how long its been running but even talking to some of the club stalwarts, I haven't yet spoken to anyone who has claimed to attend the first one!

I won't pretend that I didn't have some concerns before taking part, after all I hadn't completed a Red Ride of any sort before, but I also knew it was led by Rob Bartlett and so I would be in good hands.

As I was coming from Bristol I met the rest of the team just over the old Severn crossing on the A466. We were soon on the road heading towards mid-Wales. The lovely twists and turns of the Wye Valley up to Monmouth were just a taste of what was to come.

Heading further North to what would prove the first, and possibly greatest challenge of the weekend, "Gospel Pass".

A quick look at Gospel Pass on Google Maps will show that the highest pass in Wales (549m) features acres of green moorland where sheep and Welsh ponies live happily. The first hints that this wasn't quite what we were likely to see were rivers struggling to burst their banks, running angrily against bridge stanchions and churning with mud.



As we pushed on the roads became first a little muddy, then puddled and eventually we arrived at a small lake that we had to ride through, my Explorer creating a bow wave that came up to my knees and then steaming and hissing like a small but very angry Welsh dragon through the narrow lanes.

Then came the snow, first a few patches at the side of the road, then banks of the stuff and eventually we were all simply following tracks cleared by tractors and 4x4s as we desperately tried to keep upright and out of the white stuff.

Finally we came to the top of the pass and pulled over onto what was once a car park and even

experienced hands like Robert and Graham Tulloch agreed it had never been quite like this before. At about this point, and I'm blaming tiredness, my bike felt the need for a short lie down in the snow and was put upright with the assistance of capable helpers.

We stopped for lunch at the Honey Café at Bronllys, just north of the Brecon Beacons, for a well-earned lunch, before heading west along the A40 to Llandovery and up onto Llyn Brianne lake to the Abergwesyn Pass.

We came down from these heights via the wonderful Devil's Staircase. The road through the valley at the bottom was exhilarating, I can't have been the only one whose rear came off the seat as





we went through the dips and bumps - fantastic riding.

That night we arrived at our accommodation at about 4:30 but frankly I was so tired I had little idea of where we were, what time it was or indeed what I was doing there.

Needless to say the accommodation lived up to its billing, and far exceeded my expectations. For those who have been to the oasis that is Tynllwyn Farm you know what I mean, for those that are wondering about joining the next Welsh Weekend I can tell you that it is friendly, comfortable and there is plenty of telephone coverage.

A great and restorative night followed, a few beers followed by dinner at the Corn Store in Welshpool.

The second day saw more of the same. The ride was led by Matt Towill and saw us winding our way through Snowdonia, along narrow but good paths and on those occasions when I dared look left or right breath-taking vistas opened up, views that you just wouldn't see unless you were an experienced hill-walker or a Red Kite, of which there were many.

The highlight of the day, for me at least, came after we stopped for lunch at Porthmadog. We climbed up towards Snowdon on the twisting and turning A498 and stopped for a group picture at the viewpoint. With the help of a passer-by even our photographers Kay and Lisa were able to



get into the shot.

Again we arrived back at Tynllwyn Farm exhausted but happy, I was so delirious I even agreed, after a pint or two, to write this piece for Full Chat. Our final day featured some of the sweeping, winding roads that make Wales such a magnet for people like us. I just enjoyed the ride and tried to keep the correct line as we swept through turn after turn on some of the



best roads I have ever ridden.

These roads eventually led us back to the Honey Cafe and from there we turned past the Steel Horse Cafe without stopping and back down one final section of wonderful Welsh roads before saying our farewells at Chepstow. The fact that the old Severn Bridge was closed and we all had to take a minor detour to go over the new bridge wasn't a problem.

I'll be honest and say for me the weekend held its challenges from a riding perspective but I left feeling that I had enjoyed the company of great people and most definitely learnt a few things about riding a motorcycle. And surely that's what a great weekend is all about.



Sincere thanks go to Rob for leading the ride, Matt for leading on day two and Kaye who organised the dinners on Friday and Saturday.

Mark Hill



It's really past the time of year for this article, but having seen the previous Full Chat article on rust prevention for your bike I thought it might be worthy of a mention.

I know there are many products which are on the market all claiming to do all sorts of wonders in protecting your pride and joy. However there is very little "proof of quality" out there.

I had been put on to this product from a different source other than motor-cycling; in fact it was from the aircraft industry. I have been using ACF 50 for a few years now with good results. It's used in the aircraft industry for corrosion protection, so it should be good.

One of my customers happens to be Triumph motorcycles. I visit the Quality Control department in Stafford where they check mostly hardware like springs, nuts and bolts etc. I was having a conversation with the head of the department and we were talking about corrosion and the issues they can have with what they use on the bikes and I asked if he had heard of ACF 50. He said that he had and in fact they had just carried out some testing in the lab on this very product. He then at length explained how it had been tested; in brief (as I don't wish to bore you good folks out!) one

test they had done was a 72 hours environmental chamber salt corrosion test. The results were indisputable as shown in the attached photo. I think you can spot the difference. The test article is a rose end bearing from the gear lever mechanism.

I think that if anyone



Corrosion Protection (cont)

was sceptical about the benefits of using ACF 50 then this should convince them! There is out there a franchise called “all weather bikers”, they will give your bike a full professional treatment of ACF 50 for about £70.00. They are on the internet just google it. You can of course (and I do) do it yourself. I have used them on my Explorer for a couple of years when I store my bike for the winter; I never have any noticeable corrosion on the bike when I bring it out from storage. If you do ride all year then they do recommend topping up the areas that get the most punishment. A can of ACF 50 spray will cost in the order of £15. **Dave Pape**

BIKE REPORTS

Triumph Street Twin—The case for Less is More!

As some of you will know, last summer I was unceremoniously dismantled from my long serving 955i Sprint ST. Although repairable, I chose to sell it on. I was also repairable although that is an on-

going journey with physio etc. Net result: I was struggling to ride my Speed Triple 1050 for anything more than an hour without suffering for the next 4-5 hours. New bike required, Street Twin on 3 years 0% - deal done.

Less than half the power of my Speed Triple, but no slouch as I can testify to, what it has done has made me appreciate The System even more so - especially the “SGA” aspect. Being down on power G in particular be-



comes more important - I think we probably all become complacent on our 130bhp beasts, knowing a slight twist of the wrist we'll be hurtling past that car in front etc.

As a result of this unscheduled bike change I feel that to a certain extent my use of the system has increased and improved.

The bike itself? Cracking - why Triumph market it as an entry level/urban bike is beyond me. I've done 3,200 miles on it since November (averaging 74 mpg!) and cannot fault it. The way they've delivered torque in the low / mid-range makes it a joy to ride. Food for thought. **Matt James**

Royal Enfield Interceptor

A bit of background first, I have ridden bikes since the early seventies, so did in fact start out on what are now classic bikes. Until a few years ago I owned a couple of 1950's machines, but I started to have problems swapping from modern to classic, in as much as my feet got confused which one had to brake or change gear. The old bikes were sold and since then I have often looked at the retro models appearing on the scene, wondering if they might fill the gap. One thing I try to do is minimise the amount of technology on my bikes, mainly because I keep them a long time, as mentioned in previous articles - this runs into decades, and the easier a bike is to maintain, the better.

With all this in mind, the appearance last year of the Royal Enfield 650 twins re-kindled my thoughts on getting a "retro" bike. Like their singles, the twins actually look as if they could have been built in the middle of the last century, apart from a few things needed for modern legislation (but these are kept to a minimum).



The 23rd of March dawned dry and mild, so I rang G V bikes in Taunton and arranged a demo ride at noon. What a pleasant change to be asked for my licence and then handed the bike to try and a suggested route to avoid the traffic. No forms to fill out?

Following the road through Kingston St. Mary and up Buncombe Hill the bike sounded surprisingly loud after my Honda NC, but with a similar V twin crossed with parallel twin character now found with the use of offset cranks etc. The throttle response was one of the best I've tried, no on/off hesitation as often found on modern bikes, trying to meet all the regulations and produce the power figures

expected by today's bikers. OK, there is only about 50bhp available, but it was so nice to just ride and enjoy the woods and quiet roads. In fact only one thing caught my attention and that was the slightly wide footrests - everything else just worked. I caught and passed a couple of cars on my return journey and realised that although there is no screen I had not noticed any buffeting up to 60mph.

So, a nice easy throttle control, slick gearbox, light clutch, comfy as far as a short ride goes, good looking (to me) and a sensible price of less than £6,000. Time to make room in the garage perhaps.

Rick Chubb

Triumph Scrambler 1200 XE

Most got their first chance to see Triumph's new 1200 Scrambler at the NEC Bike Show last December, I was among them. A little disappointed was my first reaction. The styling was good with shades of sixties looks, but the exhaust was huge and the swing arm in silver just didn't seem to fit. I couldn't go to the recent dealer launch night, so my first 'open air' viewing



was seeing the machine in the demo line-up at Total Triumph whilst visiting to collect some service items.

Being someone who first got in to British-built motorcycles in the late sixties/early seventies, I could immediately see styling parallels in this new machine. A test ride



was arranged!

At this point I must thank Total Triumph and Craig for giving me the opportunity to ride this machine. Craig's passing comment before I set off was "take it down some country lanes".

The test bike was the £12,300 XE model; there is a lesser spec XC model which is £800 cheaper, your choice.

The XE is 204kg dry and seat height of 870mm; fuel capacity is 16 litres, giving 150 miles before the low fuel light comes on. Suspension is Showa front and Ohlins twin shock rear, all multi-adjustable. Brakes are by Brembo, with Metzeler Tourance tyres mounted on tubeless spoked rims, 21 inch front and 17 inch rear.

There are a multitude of rider aids controlled from a joystick on the left handlebar control, linked to a new TFT display. More info on all this aspect of the bike is on the Triumph website or the many Press ride reports. The impression I got was that this is a new generation of canbus-type rider aid system where all aids can work together to give a higher level of machine

enjoyment for the average rider. Of course, you can switch aspects off and ride by the seat of your pants! Standard features include 3-way heated grips, keyless ignition, cruise control, USB port and cornering ABS. There is then a catalogue of 80 Triumph accessories!

So what's it like to ride? I have ridden Adventure bikes for a while, so the perceived high seat height was not a problem, and all controls fell readily to hand. The 1200 motor is a peach, it spins up readily thanks to a lightened crank with no vibration, and the gearchange is silky-smooth operated through a sprung



-loaded spring back gear change pedal – Triumph really mean this bike to be ridden off-road! I was asked not to ride it on the dirt, there is Triumph's off-road experience courses for that side of things. So the bike was set to 'road' mode and, following Craig's advice, I set off for the country lanes in the depths of the nearby Blackdown Hills. Now as we are all aware, road maintenance budgets are being squeezed and some of these country lanes are a little 'rural', but the big scrambler just took them in its stride, no drama, confidence inspiring. It is a comfortable bike to ride on these roads. I did include some of my favourite faster roads too, and the bike is just a dream to ride on these too – bags of torque from the 89bhp motor and good handling to suit, despite the 21 inch hoop on the front.

It's difficult to put this bike in a class – an Adventure bike without the fairing perhaps? It's certainly not a re-hashed styling exercise of another model. Do you group it with Ducati's 1100 scrambler and BMW's R nine T Scrambler X? They are all about the same money, but neither of these have the tech complexities of this Triumph, plus its modern classic appearance and adventure prowess. Perhaps it stands alone?

Matt Towill

South West Peninsula Spring Rally 2019

Beautiful weather welcomed 266 riders and pillions to Long Sutton for this year's 11th South West Peninsula Rally. With new catering in place for breakfasts and evening meals, riders headed to all parts of Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall in search of their Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards. The brave added a visit to Lands End to their Gold Award, clocking up around 450 miles in the process. Feedback from competitors, and volunteers manning both HQ and Manned Checkpoints at Dorchester, Ilfracombe, Okehampton and Perranporth has been fantastic, with the relaxed atmosphere and excellent organisation adding to the appeal of the event. And not to forget the wide range of checkpoints gathered by SAM members on a variety of rides throughout the year, which ensured entrants couldn't fail but encounter brilliant riding roads across the peninsula. If you didn't go this year, be sure to put Saturday 4th April 2020 in your diaries now so you can see for yourself how good this event has become. Below are a few photos taken on the day, thank you for all those contributing to our collection.





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Autumn 2018 Caption



Thanks to Rod Coles, who came up with the following Caption for the Winter 2019 photograph :

“Thanks, my wife normally dresses me!”

TAILPIECE #7

rider *n*, an addition to an otherwise complete document

The rider had completed the tour of the champagne house in Épernay, south of Reims, he had seen the amazing, cool, chalk caverns and seen the bottles being turned. Didier, the owner, had demonstrated great skill in removing the temporary stopper, expelling the dregs from the top and re-corking the bottle all in one swift motion. He had even opened a bottle with a sword.

Having left the bike at the hotel, the rider had been able to taste the different offerings; he was particularly taken by one and decided to take a couple of bottles home. He was at the end of a solo trip so had space in his panniers. But he was worried about the effect on the bubbly of the 500 mile trip home on the motorcycle with the inevitable temperatures and vibrations. Before buying, he put this concern to the owner.

“Is okay” replied Didier, “I ‘ave le moto and off-ten carry le champagne to my friends. Is no problem, ‘owever, la bouteille, when you bring ‘er ‘ome, she must lie down in a dark room for some days.’

CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!

Another photo that's inviting some humorous captions to explain what is happening here. I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo, taken during the recent Welsh weekend. 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.

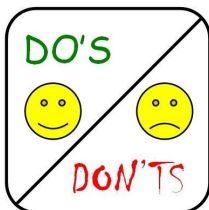
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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.

SOMERSET ROAD SAFETY MOTOFEST - 22nd & 23rd June

This free two day event promises to be a fun and interesting event celebrating everything on two and four wheels for all the family. As well as a range of car and motorcycle dealers, there will be stands from a range of local road safety organisations and automotive suppliers. Discount entry to the Fleet Air Arm museum is also available to visitors. *Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton BA22 8HT*