

Winter 2019

# ***FULL CHAT***

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



**iam**  
RoadSmart



**SOMERSET**  
Road Safety

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*Front Cover: Heading down Combe Hill into Hemyock on  
Rick Chubb's "Frosty Fingers" ride in December.*



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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



Well and truly in the deep midwinter as I write, 4.5°C outside and splattering with something between rain and hail. I'm feeling lucky not to be on my bike right now, and hoping all those who are out there get home safely and comfortably. The roads are slick with all kinds of grime: grip is significantly reduced in these conditions. It's always seemed a paradox to me that just



when I need to apply all my skills to maximise the grip I can get, I tense up and then fail even to make best use of what there is. In a bid to persuade myself to relax, I tend to mutter, "If you are not relaxed, you are going too fast." Strangely, if I succeed in relaxing, then I find that the same speed no longer feels so fast, because I am allowing my bike to work better for me. However, lack of concentration a couple of weeks ago led to my going for a late gear change entering a slippery roundabout. I did not have any drive as I tipped in, and down the little Serow went. I don't suppose the knobbly (road legal, though) tyres helped much, but if I'd used the correct technique, it would not have happened. (See kit report on my Helite Air vest later in this issue!). The first time I've ever fallen off a bike in motion, and a chastening experience.

Valentino, the red Ducati Multistrada, has managed to keep possession of his corner of my heart, in spite of showing a bit of a thirst for oil. In fairness, he isn't consuming as much as my equally



beloved BMW 1100S used to, but crikey, I thought that modern bikes didn't do this at all. I've yet to put any oil in Shinyuu (the Fazer 8) he gets his service and the level never seems to change until the next one. Vale has also had a new clutch under warranty after his original one showed some signs of premature wear (wouldn't go into 2nd or 1st gear without an almighty stomp) at only 3,200 miles. Riders gave me great support, though, so I didn't have to try to persuade Ducati that I don't normally wreck clutches in 3,200 miles. (Again, for comparison, the Fazer has done

37,000 miles and clutch is still absolutely fine.). Santa very kindly brought me a Scorpion dual injector for the Ducati's Scotttoiler, which has made that work much better, especially after I re-routed the feed tube to eliminate its tendency to get a massive airlock, and fitted a breather pipe which wasn't supplied when I bought the bike.

After a very successful 2018, SAM can look forward to an equally good, if not better, 2019. We are hoping that some more of our record number of members will find some time to contribute to the running of the club, keeping the load on each individual as light as possible. It's usually much more fun than you would expect.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue, and if you haven't yet, then please consider it: Any bike related items of interest, ride reports, trip reports, kit reports, bike reports, opinions, questions, all welcome: email Graham Tulloch or Gina Herridge. The deadline for the Spring Issue will be 15th April, 2019.

**Gina Herridge**



## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

It's been a busy time over the last few months and there are a number of things coming up that I want to share with you in this edition.

First off, I wanted to let you all know about the improvements we have made to the club's Website over the last few months. We now have a Photo Gallery on the web site, where we can publish photos from our events. This helps to enhance the website from a visitor perspective and also provides a place for those of you not on social media, to be able to see the photos of you that our photographers take and submit. So that we are not reliant on just the one photographer, please feel free to send your snaps to me (labelling them with the event) at [somersetadvancedmotorcyclists@gmail.com](mailto:somersetadvancedmotorcyclists@gmail.com) and I'll upload them into a suitable gallery.

We have also added an online shop to the website to facilitate the sales of club merchandise etc. Those of you who have attended our C&T's this

season will no doubt be aware that our newly formed Merchandising Team have put together a range of quality branded items that can be purchased via the shop, or in person at our events. Nathan Beesley is always ready to take your money!

To help facilitate this and assist in recruitment, we have purchased a Credit Card reader for the club, which will allow us to more easily close the



deal at recruitment events, such as the Bristol Classic Bike Show.

The club's 2019 Events list should be accompanying this edition of Full Chat, and it's a busy one again. There are still a few rides looking for leaders, so if you fancy taking the next step after passing your test, drop me a line so I can try and assign you to a suitable date. Preparations are now in full swing for our annual South West Peninsula Spring Rally, to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> April and

tickets for this year's event are now on sale in our online shop. If you haven't participated in this rally, then I would urge you to consider it; even with the poor weather we had last year, everyone returned with a smile on their faces, and a feeling of satisfaction after a full day in the saddle enjoying the great countryside that the South West has to offer.

Our season of Control and Techniques sessions is now in full



swing, with just two more remaining – Cornering on 9<sup>th</sup> February and Group Riding on 9<sup>th</sup> March to be held at Othery Village Hall. We have had a good turnout for the sessions so far, with good interaction and participation from all attending. Again, if you haven't been yet, try and make the effort; we get great feedback from those that do.

We are about to start this year's Observer Training program with the first of four theory sessions on

12<sup>th</sup> February. If you think Observing might be for you, then drop Gina a line at [ginabromage@googlemail.com](mailto:ginabromage@googlemail.com). I would stress that there is no obligation at the end to go on and qualify as an Observer.

I hope that you have all received my recent email asking for volunteers to fill multiple roles within the club. Some require filling as the incumbents are stepping down, and we thank them for their contributions to the success of the club, others are roles that I have created in order to try and spread the load a little more evenly and to ensure there is minimal disruption to the club should the unexpected happen. I am still looking for volunteers for some of these positions, most notably the Publicity Officer and Assistant. I know that Ken will ensure that whoever takes over from him will be well briefed and will be taking over a well established process. I have asked for an Assistant to try and spread the load so that these roles don't become too onerous. Don't be shy, we only continue to be successful due to the efforts of all of our volunteers.

Finally, I wanted to mention the AGM to be held at The Lamb and Lion, Hambridge on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. We have moved the AGM to a Saturday evening this year, in an attempt to encourage more members to attend this meeting. It's in a pub, we are putting on food, and I promise we'll keep the business part of the evening as concise as possible; it would be great to see a good turnout.

**Jez Martin**

## **SAM NEWS**



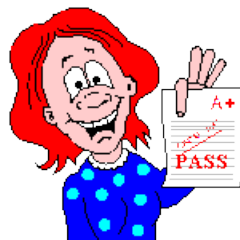
*When you pass your test, please inform Graham Tulloch or Gina Heridge so it can be included in Full Chat to encourage us all.*

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

- Ned Heasman on 20th September, riding a triumph Tiger 800, and observed by Steve Layzell.
- Debbie Judd on 16th November, riding a triumph Street Twin. Debbie was observed by Richard Pearse.
- Dave Richards on 21st November. Dave was riding his Suzuki V-Strom

1000, and was also observed by Steve Layzell.

- Dwaine Howarth on 1st December, riding his KTM RC8 and observed by Andy Spiers.
- Mark Rhodes, also on 1st December, riding a Honda Deauville. Mark was observed by Bob Muckett.
- Ben Preston on 7th December. Ben was riding a Triumph Tiger 800 and was observed by Callum Bremner.
- Johnny Johansson on 13th January. Johnny was riding a Honda Vradero 1000VA, and was observed by Gina Herridge.
- Chris Mutton on 19th January. Chris was riding another Triumph Tiger 800, and was observed by Jez Martin.
- Finally, well done to Steve Williams. Steve is an existing Rospa Gold rider, and after a Taster Ride with Gina Herridge, successfully gained a FIRST on 19th January riding his BMW R1200GS.



**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 9th January 2019 will be emailed to members.



## ***IAM Inform***

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

## ***SAM Annual General Meeting***

In order to try and attract more members, we have this year arranged SAM's AGM for a Saturday evening—23rd March 2019. Whilst a necessary part of our Club's activities, we try to make it as painless as possible, running through the essential business items of appointing Club officials at a pace to prevent anyone falling

asleep! But whilst we are required to have certain official posts filled, the very nature of SAM is to involve as many members as possible in the running of the Club. So if you wish to become more involved, or just see who is who within SAM, come along to our AGM. This year, it will be held at The Lamb & Lion public house/restaurant in Hambridge (which is also the venue for our committee meetings throughout the year). Start time is 19:30 hrs, and once the business side is finished (usually less than an hour), food will be provided (no charge!) to all those attending. So please come along and join us, meet the team, listen to what we have been up to, and join in the discussions. Or just join us in some good food!

**7:30pm Saturday 23rd March  
at The Lamb & Lion,  
Hambridge TA10 0AT  
ALL WELCOME**



# BIKING NEWS

## Luxembourg Motorcycle Initiative

Whilst planning for my next trip around Europe, a friend of mine showed me an article I have found quite interesting for several reasons.

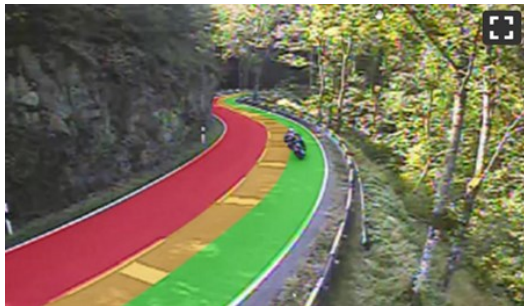
At the end of June, the company that manages the motorway in Luxembourg kicked off an experiment to increase motorcyclists' safety. In fact, between the N25 and Wiltz Kautenbach, you will now find new road signs in corners—horizontal lines of variable lengths from the middle of the road. Those lines ideally show the rider's position exposed to oncoming traffic, and therefore it is to be avoided.



Preliminary findings show that before the experiment, circa 12% of riders' positions were in this 'red zone', whilst now that number has reduced to 1%. A similar experiment was conducted in Austria with positive results – but I have been in Austria on my bike a few

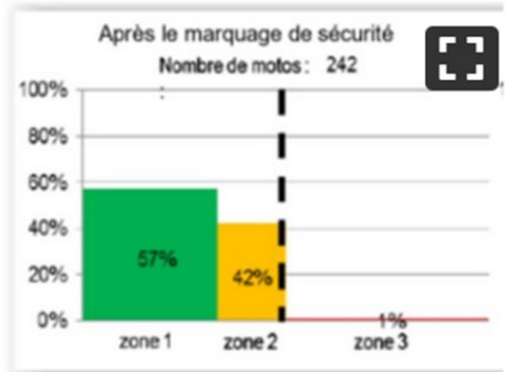
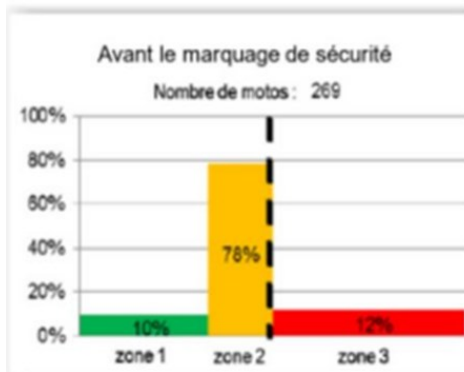
times and I don't recall these road signs.

The first thing I thought was “how commendable it is for these organisations/ Governments to take care of motorcyclists”. I would like to see more of these proactive attempts to improve our safety.



When you talk about safety, motorcyclists often focus on speed. And of course, if you adapted your speed (to speed limits, to road surface, to your bike, to your abilities, to moving hazards, etc.), you would be already safer than riders who do not do any of these things!

We learn that positioning is your second biggest area of focus when you learn and practice IPSGA. The correct 'positioning' improves your ride and conversely your safety.



These road signs encourage riders to think where they are, and where they should be, on the road. And this has great merits for me.

I do not live in that area in Luxembourg, but I would hope they will communicate the rationale of correct positioning. This is the real step up they can do to help motorcyclists improve their riding experience and their safety.

My initial thoughts on this initiative remain, but I would love it if riders knew why positioning is so important and what is the 'science' behind it. As for you folks, whether you are already an advanced rider or not, that article made me think of:

- Safety – Stability – Visibility (SSV) – don't prioritise the last one if you need to compromise the first two. And this to me speaks to positioning
- What should your positioning be in a series of bends?
- Wrong Positioning is often a symptom of something else – ask yourself and your observer *why* you had the wrong positioning (forward planning didn't happen, wrong speed, didn't see the hazard, didn't follow the limit point of vision, etc..)



PS: I wonder how that paint is when it rains... I wonder, but I do not actually want to find out! **Michele (Mik) Simonetti**

**MAG**

Please see below the latest article from Kevin Williams on a subject that I find I often make comment on, either to myself or at C&T, having in the past noticed a rider marking a junction with apparently no arm, (high viz striped sleeve with yellow flowers and shadows behind), or the rider with a washed out high viz which has become dull and green, a very good camouflage. This has been transcribed from MAG's 'The Road' magazine, November/December 2018 edition, and has been written by one of their regular contributors, Kevin Williams. A thought provoking theme. **Rick Chubb**

**MAG**

*Motorcycle Action Group*

*Update from SAM's MAG rep, Rick Chubb*



### ***Hi-Viz or Camouflage? (by Kevin Williams)***

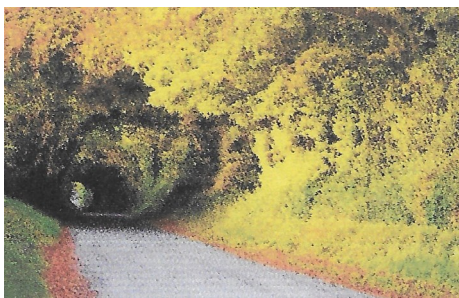
"Autumn – time to recalibrate your hi-vis strategy Autumn's here! The days are drawing in and the foliage on the trees and the hedges out in the country are changing colour. And that means it's time to rethink our day-time rural hi-vis.

I'm not going to blind you with science – there's the 'Science Of Being Seen' website to do that (see foot of page), but I'm going to point out that if hi-vis clothing is to help us stand out, then it has to achieve two things: firstly, it needs to create a strong colour/brightness contrast against the background behind the bike and rider. If we can achieve this, then hopefully we'll stand out and flash into another road users' awareness... but...



at the same time clothing needs to create a solid silhouette that can be rapidly identified by the brain's 'object-detecting' system as a motorcycle and rider. So let's start by thinking about what colour will create a hi-vis contrast.

Most of us use the conventional 'Saturn Yellow' colour. It can be effective in urban areas where there are a lot of dark colours behind us. It's also reasonably good at night because it's a light colour. But have a look at the photo and the colours of the foliage! If Saturn



Yellow is generally effective in urban areas, it's a poorer choice in rural environments, particularly in spring and autumn. Now, a yellow vest is less 'hi-vis' and actually tends to blend into the background. And as the colours change further towards orange, it should be pretty obvious that an orange hi-vis vest won't stand out either in autumn. In fact, in bright sun in rural conditions, several

studies have suggested a black motorcycle and black-clad rider are most effective – fair weather, daytime-flying RAF trainers are now painted black for that reason. The problem is that the background behind us will change as we ride, and that means the effectiveness of any particular colour varies from moment to moment. The issues of black clothing as soon as we ride into shade or the weather changes should be obvious. If there is one colour that offers reasonable contrast in all daytime riding environments, all year round, it's arguable that the best choice is pink. Sorry chaps. If you really can't stomach pink, then pick a colour that contrasts with the background where you'll be riding. Maybe you have two hi-vis jackets, one for in town, one for out – it's not difficult to slip a spare mesh hi-vis under the seat.

Now, what about the solid silhouette? Why is this important? The answer is how our 'object-detecting' system in the brain operates. It relies very much on spotting edges and shapes rather than patches of bright colour.

We are quick to see something which delivers a good, strong silhouette. The more distinct the sil-

houette, the quicker we'll pick it out against a background of other random shapes. It's no coincidence that animals like tigers and giraffes use stripes and patterns of colour – it's to break up their outline. Think tiger; it has bright, hi-vis orange stripes, yet is totally invisible in a jungle environment where there are bright and dark patches. This is known as disruptive pattern camouflage. Anything that breaks up the solid silhouette of 'rider and bike' can camouflage us, even if we use bright colours! So avoid multi-coloured hi-vis. Just like the tiger's disruptive patterning, so clothing and bikes with lots of stripes and multi-coloured patches break up that solid silhouette and can make us harder, not easier, to spot.

The human brain is tuned to spotting humans. A typical tabard or waistcoat lacks arms – it's just an oblong of bright colour. If we want to look human, there's a simple solution – wear a hi-vis garment with sleeves of the same hi-vis colour – it creates a much more human-looking shape. And match it to the colour of the bike if you possibly can. For example, if you've a red bike, then orange would work well with it. A second-

ary advantage is that sleeves are visible side-on, and around fairings, passengers and top boxes which hide a vest. Apart from aiming for a contrast with the riding environment, consider using hi-vis in conditions of poor visibility or light – dusk, rain, fog etc.

At night, the problems change again – more on this next time. There IS research evidence that suggests the use of hi-vis clothing is associated with a slightly lower crash risk, but we MUST understand the limitations – hi-vis is NOT 'fit and forget'. It's particularly dangerous to slip into the mindset where – as one rider wrote a couple of years back: "it makes me feel more confident that I've been seen".

Hi-vis, like any conspicuity aid, is a passive aid, and will ONLY work IF the other driver sees us coming and does the right thing to keep us out of trouble. And that means we should never rely 100% on hi-vis clothing or lights.

Junction collisions are what I call 'two to tangle' crashes. If one road user sets up the circumstances in which the collision CAN happen, we still have to ride into it to complete the crash! I can't sum up better than the authors of the

TRL's 2017 literature review on the topic:

*"Given that environments may differ over even fairly small changes in time or location, there is not likely to be a one-size-fits-all solution, meaning that motorcyclists need to be aware of the limitations of whichever interventions they use."* In other words, 'Biker, THINK!'"

**You can visit my Science Of Being Seen (SOBS) site here:**

<https://scienceofbeingseen.wordpress.com/> © 2018

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## KIT REPORTS

### Helite Air Vest

Peter and I made the decision to purchase these vests about four years ago. We'd seen compelling footage on YouTube of a horse rider apparently crushed as his horse flipped forward over a fence and fell squarely on top of him. It was one of those moments where you think, "Oh no, that guy just died." Then the horse rolled off and the rider stood up and walked away.

Helite jackets are not cheap - we paid about £425 each (with a special deal) for the turtle back version, which has the back protector on the outside of the airbag. This is the more expensive design but increases protection of your back massively. I think they are about £500 each now. We reasoned that with the amount of miles we do, and the amount we spend on



motorcycling, if £500 can convert a fatal or life-changing injury into a walk away event, it was good value.

Until a couple of weeks ago, we had no idea whether they would actually deploy (they should be serviced every couple of years, and needless to say, we'd not quite got around to it), let alone what effect they would really have. However, a moment of poor planning on the approach to a slippery roundabout saw my little Yamaha Serow slide out from under me, and down I went.

The jacket did deploy. It was tight when inflated but not cripplingly uncomfortable. It protected my neck (it's designed to inflate around your neck and engage with your helmet base so that your head movement is limited) and trunk: not even bruising to my shoulder and hip (no separate hip armour in my trousers), although my knee, despite its armour, got quite a bruise. I was fine; a similar impact involving black ice and my bicycle in 2013 broke my collarbone and a rib.

I was not at high speed, probably 20 mph. I didn't hit any objects. There are plenty of ways to die in a crash that a Helite is not going to help: it doesn't protect your head, or limbs, and if there is a very large amount of energy involved in an impact, its protection still won't be enough. But I'm jolly glad I bought it.

**Gina Herridge**

### ***Motorex Moto Protect***

There is a vast array of products to keep your motorcycle all sparkly and looking like new.

There are for example the spray-on before Winter and wash-off in the Spring types, the spray-on before washing (the motorcycle, not you, or maybe both!!) and then rinse away all that road grime types.

Personally I prefer washing my motorcycle after every winter ride,

especially if there is salt on the road. After a thorough wash with just water I leave the bike to dry in my garage for a couple of days. I do lube the drive chain after washing though. When the machine is dry I use a soft cloth to apply Moto Protect by Motorex to all surfaces except brakes, screen, bright paintwork and exhaust. I find it readily restores the finish to black plastics, engine cases and wheel



rims etc. It also gives a finish that sheds water.

This in my opinion is the only way to really protect your motorcycle's finish from the muck and grime of winter riding. A wash at the end of every ride and then a good clean and polish.

Of course everyone has their own views on this, so please share them with an article in Full Chat, our editors would be delighted!!

**Matt Towill**



## ***RIDE REPORTS***

### ***Resolution Shuffle***

In recent years it's become traditional for me to lead this ride, usually my only official one for the year. There's not usually much competition for it, since the weather is always a potential spoiling factor, but this year it was just gorgeous. Not only sunshine, but not even cold, and the roads were pretty well dry. So it was that 35 bikes turned out, and I split the ride with



Peter leading the second half. Ian Fraser and Jez, our Chair, served as Tail End Charlies, and off we went, over to Crewkerne, dipping South to Dorchester via the Maiden Newton road. We returned over the Giant's Head to Middlemarsh and Sherborne, then ducked left to avoid the A30

and Yeovil, sneaking into the bottom of town on the Stoford road, to finish at the Ninesprings Cafe, 55 miles of New Year delight. It was mobbed because of the lovely weather, but the staff slaved cheerfully away and eventually we were all elbow deep in coffee and cake.



For a mid Winter ride, SAM members acquitted themselves admirably, even the more tentative came in with a grin. There seemed to be a very long gap until the second wave arrived, but it transpired that they had stopped to assist at an incident where an older rider (not a SAM member) failed to make a bend on his scooter and ended up in the ditch. SAM riders employed their First Assistance skills to administer First Aid and call



the emergency services, remaining with the rider until they were able to take over.

Let's hope our first 2019 ride sets the pattern for the rest of the year.

**Gina Herridge**



## ***FORTHCOMING EVENTS***

### **Control & Technique**

#### **“Cornering”**

Sat. 9th Feb. 2019  
10:00 @ Othery Village Hall

### **SAM Red Ride**

#### **“Checkpoint Charlie”**

Sun. 17th Feb. 2019  
09:00 @ Cross Keys, Norton Fitz-warren  
Led by Rob Bartlett

### **SAM Green Ride**

#### **“March Hares”**

Sun. 3rd Mar. 2019  
09:30 @ Cartgate Services  
Led by Jez Martin

### **Control & Technique**

#### **“Group Riding”**

Sat. 9th Mar 2019  
10:00 @ Othery Village Hall

### **SAM Green Ride**

#### **“Wherever the Road may lead us”**

Sat. 16th Mar. 2019  
13:00 @ Podimore Services  
Led by Andy Hall

### **SAM AGM**

Sat. 23rd Mar. 2019  
19:30 @ The Lamb & Lion,  
Hambridge TA10 0AT

### **SAM Amber Ride**

#### **“Breakfast Run”**

Sat. 16th Feb. 2019  
09:00 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Rick Chubb

### **SAM Green Ride**

#### **“A Winter’s Shake Down”**

Sun. 24th Feb. 2019  
09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Dave Parker

### **SAM Committee Meeting**

Wed. 6th Mar. 2019  
19:30 @ The Lamb & Lion,  
Hambridge TA10 0AT

### **SAM Green Ride**

#### **“Boing Boing Spring”**

Sun. 10th Mar. 2019  
10:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park,  
Langport  
Led by Lee Thompson

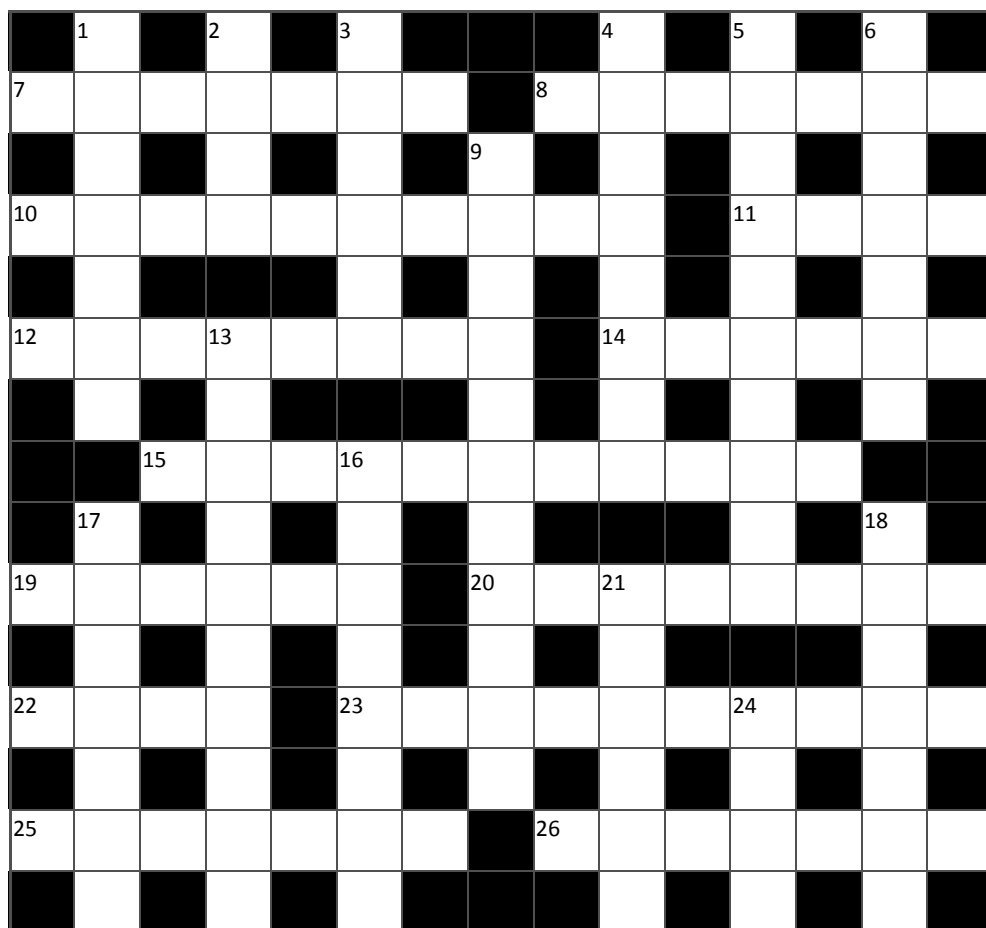
### **SAM Green Ride**

#### **“March Mosey on Down”**

Sun. 17th Mar. 2019  
09:30 @ Podimore Services  
Led by Roger Moffat

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

# CROSSWORD



## Across

7 Tighten failure (5,2)

8 Time on distance gives fuel economy (7)

10 Face break out for right-hand lever (5,5)

11 Appearance is, behold, all right (4)

12 Blend and merge for French police officer (8)

14 Large snake to damage hose (6)

15 Action after IPSG truck rate (4,2,5)

19 Conceal Indian between poles (6)



## CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 20 Amazing teapot? I'm a proprietary battery conditioner (8)  
22 Instrument panel. Ducati – and BMW – has two (4)  
23 Elvis fears reforms so looks over the shoulder (10)  
25 Covering in skin of kangaroo! "Fings ain't what they used to be" (7)  
26 Sauce boat at university (7)

### Down

- 1 Articles around the neck joints (7)  
2 Untitled Atkinson character; endless comic (4)  
3 'R' in powder games (6)  
4 Slide, after team makes lateral movement (8)  
5 Tailless marine mammal, headed Ray to type of leading light (6-4)  
6 Nothing embarrassed after ignition short disregarded (7)  
9 Oilskins oils skins (11)  
13 Fat Dervish remade part of powertrain (10)  
16 Benevolent Heather provides twigs (8)  
17 "Rewrite act!", Goon Shows figure (7)  
18 Establish young business (5,2)  
21 Sample free observation (6)  
24 Very iniquitous conduct; evil primarily (4)

Solution in next issue

*Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.*

## Solution to Autumn 2018 Crossword

**Across:** 1 Ad nauseam, 6 Mobil, 9 Cottage, 10 Clarinets, 11 Evaders, 12 Oboists, 13 Telescopic forks, 18 Trapped, 20 Bipedal, 22 Panoramas, 23 Trigger, 24 Tiger, 25 Desolated.

**Down:** 1 Accident, 2 Not at all, 3 Unable, 4 Elects, 5 Macaroni, 6 Mini golf, 7 Bikers, 8 Losses, 14 Superior, 15 On demand, 16 Red light, 17 Soldered, 18 Top Cat, 19 Awning, 20 Bastes, 21 Podial.

## BIKE REPORTS

### KTM DUKE 390

It was like the other day when I put the Caponord Rally in my garage and the other day I had to take it for the first big service! Anyway, this is for another topic. The dealer was kind enough to give me a loan bike. The Duke 390.

**How does it look 'n feel?** It looks great guys. It looks like a mini version of "the beast" (*for those unfamiliar with KTM's range, that means the Super Duke 1290*). It is made in India (*this only means economy of scale not low quality, just in case...*), single-cylinder, 44cv and 140kg, 43mm upside-down front forks from WP (not adjustable) and Metzler M5 tyres (*could have been better but would that be much better?*), ByBre (Brembo) brakes with 300mm front and 230mm rear, TFT screen. It is not the kind of bike I would look for, but KTM provide more than just a decent bike for this segment.

**How is riding it?** Moving from the Caponord to the Duke you feel like jumping on a (small) bicycle. The seat looks and feels like an ironing board to start, but it gets more comfortable as you ride and you find your spot. I rode 1.5 hours and I was fine (*but I rode across Europe on a Harley*



*Sportster too...).* I am sure you can find something better in the aftermarket. The riding position is quite forward (*I could not see the cockpit at the beginning*) but the pegs are back enough so that your position does not feel too compromised. The suspensions are not as rigid as



I thought and in fact they cope well with the road conditions. It was great to go through the bends because weight and power makes this bike a joy to ride.

The Duke 390 is so slim that I managed to squeeze through the crazy Bristolian traffic, through tiny spaces that I could earn a PhD in filtering! It excels in the city of course but the best experience is on twisty roads.

Being a single I was expecting to ride a washing machine but no. The engine is smooth and responsive (*never seen the red-zone of the RPMs so frequently*) and also very precise. Below 5-6,000 rpm the engine is well balanced but encourages you to make use of all the gears; between 6-8,000 it really feels sporty and the sound is engaging; beyond that it all be-

comes a bit messy and vibrations materialise.

Heated grips should be standard on any bike! At 5C on a naked bike and no heated grips it was a challenging ride. You appreciate all the little things of a bigger adventure bike.

I put £10 of fuel in and I basically filled the tank up. In my 2-days commute from Bristol I reckon I did circa 28km/l, which is great (*it's time you started using the proper units! – anyway 79 mpg*).

Duke 390's clutch and the transmission are like butter. That anti-slippery clutch is such that it can be pulled with one finger, and gears slot in effortlessly.

**Is it all good then?** Some "friends" told me that this little machine can reach 100 mph. I do not doubt this, but I don't think this is

what its purpose is. In fact, the time I spent at 70mph was the worst one. Oh yes, forget long two-up trips because the handling is impacted and the comfort is not good.

Also, I don't know what's wrong with KTM engineers, but they are the only ones to design silly side stands. As per the other bikes the side stand puts the bike so upright that if you are not careful where you park it the bike will fall.

**Would I buy it?** I would not, but just because I don't like that riding position anymore. But in general, if I had money and time, I would think about putting something similar in my garage. These 400cc nowadays are cool, quick, super well finished and super fun to ride! And they do provide you with a different experience compared to bigger bikes.

**Michele (Mik) Simonetti**

### ***Benelli TRK 502X***

Every year I take a trip to the NEC Bike Show, partly as a social outing but also to pick up odd bits of kit and equipment. I seldom get excited about any bikes, new models usually being simply a slight update of existing ones, so with my typical 5-8 year change cycle, I never have a "must-see" machine. And so it was at this (last!) year's Show – until I saw the Benelli

TRK 502X. Benelli have taken their existing TRK 502, and given it a slight Adventure treatment, fitting alloy spoked wheels (19" front), high-level exhaust and centre stand (in place of the road-version's underslung can). Minimal changes, but dramatically changing the appearance. Benelli claim they took



cues from BMW's GS range in their design, but I disagree – I love the look of the Benelli...!

Those who know me know that I am not a test-ride jockey – the only ma-



chines I ever test ride are those I buy, usually just the final ratification of extensive research. So, after trawling the internet for test reviews and launch reports, I found myself at Moto Corsa in Gillingham, the local dealer. Nestled between the Brough Superiors and MVs, it seemed odd to find a

couple of examples of this £5.5k machine, but it still had massive presence for a 500cc twin (even if the “elephant ear” extensions to the standard engine bars looked like an afterthought).

Moto Corsa’s demo was the standard model with the under-slung exhaust and 17” front wheel, but being mechanically identical to the X model, the road manners would be similar, and the seat height probably better than the 850mm of the X. So was it as good as expected? No, it was better! Physically a large bike, I was unsure if the 47bhp would be sufficient to haul the not-inconsiderable 235kgs fully fuelled kerb weight. However, with 45Nm torque at a relatively low



5000rpm, the creamy-smooth engine provided sufficient urge at all revs, with a gorgeous sound from the standard raspy exhaust. Very much a big bike to ride, the controls were perfectly-sited, the initial lack of bite from the brakes eliminated when squeezed slightly harder. The ride was nice and firm, and the steering – whilst producing a slight understeer effect – was pin sharp in its response. The fuelling was faultless, even in 4<sup>th</sup> gear at 30mph, and the only evidence of the power/weight trade-off was a constant 7000rpm in 6<sup>th</sup> gear at dual carriageway speeds. But still smooth as silk, with minimal wind blast and reasonable seat comfort (for short journeys, at least, even if the 20 litre tank





could last longer). Pillions were also well catered for with a decent perch, although two-up performance may be slightly blunted due to the restricted (A2 compliant) power.

ABS is standard,

although that is the extent of the electronic interference – I leave you to decide if this is a benefit or not. Sitting back on the X version in the showroom, the only real niggle was a centre stand lug that you couldn't get your foot on to, as it was virtually hard against the swing arm – but still worth having one fitted as standard.

Overall, I loved riding this machine, and was sorely tempted. However, too many voices kept on questioning whether parts back-up (if ever needed) from China would be up to scratch, and whilst 47bhp is more than sufficient for most riding, I think I would always be looking for a wee bit more. Word is that Benelli may be extending the range with a more powerful 700-800cc version in the not-too-distant future, but obviously this would be more expensive, and thus affect the incredible value of this impressive machine.

**Graham Tulloch**

## ***South West Peninsula Spring Rally***

A reminder to all riders, **Saturday 13th April 2019. Start & Finish location is Long Sutton Village Hall, with registration from 08:00—10:00.** Breakfast (pre-ordered) available from 07:00. Control re-opens at 17:00 at the end of the Rally, when a hot meal will be provided to all entrants. Pre-register via the SAM website. Give it a try, link up with some friends, get your maps out, plan some routes, and enjoy a fantastic day's riding in the West Country.

**[www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk](http://www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk)**



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## ***Autumn 2018 Caption***



Thanks to John Watson, who came up with the following Caption for the Autumn 2018 photograph :

**“Quick, let's go  
before they real-  
ise we've nicked  
their bike!”**

## TAILPIECE #6

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

The rider was leading a long weekend motorcycling in Wales. The group had stopped for coffee in Hay-on-Wye and as they left southwards his pillion announced over the intercom that she needed to stop for a natural break. He stopped the group under Lord Hereford's Knob to admire the stunning, 200 degree panorama, but it was too open for his pillion's need.

After once having a whole tour group passing her in full view on a bare mountain side, she liked a little privacy. So, as they left, the rider opened up a good lead over the others as they rode up over the pass and down the valley. He found a gateway on the left, stopped, and the pillion hopped over the gate, down into the field. The rider grabbed his binoculars from the tank bag and stood on the right bank of the road looking up to the ridge. Soon, as the group arrived and bikes stopped, he answered 'Shush, red kites!' to any questions as all the group members stared up the hill.

The rider heard the pillion's breathing as she climbed back over the gate and no one noticed as she re-joined the group from the other side of the road.

'Red kites?' she whispered, 'More like red herrings!'

## CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



Another photo that's inviting some humorous captions to explain what is happening with Paul and Nathan here. I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo, taken on last year's "Ride your Other Bike" ride. Suggestions to me at [Tullochg@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:Tullochg@aol.com)

### **SAM Code of Conduct**

All riders participate at their own risk.

Turn up on time with a full fuel tank. Listen to the brief about the intended ride.

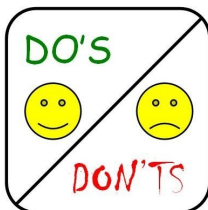
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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

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

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

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



### **Colour Code of Rides**

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Drop-Off System**

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



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## ***MEMBERS' REMINDERS!***

### **FREE TASTER RIDES!**

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

### **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 now, just visit SAM's website for the link [www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk](http://www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk)