

Winter 2020

# ***FULL CHAT***

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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*Front Cover: Dean Gibbs and Darren Wilton enjoying themselves on the recent "Twisties Galore" SAM Group ride.*



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# FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



Happy New Year to everyone. As it's blowing a gale and horizontal rain as I write this, I cannot honestly say I would rather be out on the bike. It's been the wettest winter I can remember and even my Zen attitude to bike cleaning has been overwhelmed on occasion. The result is that I find myself thinking that I can't quite face going out on my newly pristine bike and getting it filthy again, so only three outings in 2020 so far. The January

edition of "Ride" magazine contained a timely feature on anti-corrosion products. The conclusion was that there is a better product than ACF 50: XCP Professional Rust Blocker. It was cheaper than ACF 50, but a bit more prone to attract dirt and debris after application. ACF 50 still scored well, though. FS 365, the Scottoil product, was not at all well rated, although I'm going to continue using it until I finish off the 5 litre container I've got. I do all the metal bits of the bike with ACF 50 two or three times a Winter, and use FS 365 every time I wash it. Good old WD-40 did ok, too, better than FS 365. Whatever you use, though, don't forget your rolling brake test when you get on your bike. If, like me, you don't completely avoid contaminating the discs, you will find that these products are all fantastic at preventing the pads from gripping, and will need to be burned off by dragging the brakes until they are working normally.

I suppose the up side of all the rain is that there's been very little salt, so far. The roads haven't actually been as muddy as they might have been either, since a lot of the poor farmers haven't been able to get machinery onto their land in the first place. However, I'm still finding that around any bend





there might very well be an apron of mud or some interesting storm debris, not to mention new pot-holes as flood water lifts layers of tarmac. So it's definitely survival riding when I do venture out - although I guess that's always the case for us – we can't have fun if we can't keep the shiny side up, can we?

Many thanks to the contributors for this issue of Full Chat. If you've never sent us anything, why not give it a go? Long or short pieces on items of interest vaguely relevant to motorcycling are all welcome – with pictures, please. The deadline for the next issue is 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2020. **Gina Herridge**

## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Now that Christmas and New Year are receding in the rear-view mirror, thoughts now return to the future. The club's Annual General Meeting is planned to be held at the Lamb and Lion, Hambridge again this year, on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March. Given the great turnout we had last year it would be helpful to have an indication early on of how many of you plan to attend (we may need to move if the numbers get high enough!), feel free to drop me an email at [somersetadvancedmotorcyclists@gmail.com](mailto:somersetadvancedmotorcyclists@gmail.com)

to let me know if you plan to attend.

Of course, we don't just hold an AGM for everyone to get some free food, there is some serious business to be conducted there, not the least of which is the election of our club officials. This year we are looking for someone to replace our Treasurer, Alistair Gee, who has done a sterling job for us for the last 3 years and is now standing down. We are also looking for a replacement Chair Person as I will have served the usual



2 years in this post. If you are interested in stepping into either of these elected roles then please let the club Secretary Kev Colmer at [samgroupsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:samgroupsecretary@gmail.com) know or, if you think of someone in the club who would be a good fit for these roles, then please do have a chat with them to see if they would be willing to stand. Each candidate will need a proposer and a seconder and the nomination forms can be supplied by Kev.

Another important part of the AGM is the award of the Club's Unsung Hero, the purpose of this award is to give us a chance to recognise members' contributions to the running of the club which might otherwise go relatively unnoticed. The nominations for this award should be made to Gina [ginabromage@googlemail.com](mailto:ginabromage@googlemail.com), with a short explanation as to why you feel your nomination should receive the award. The club runs well because of the contributions of many members and it's important that we take this opportunity to recognise them and show our appreciation, so please get those nominations in.

We have just conducted the first C&T (Control and Technique) session of the New Year, and once again it was a well attended event, it's always



nice to see new faces attend and get welcomed into the club in a relaxed atmosphere – though at times I think everybody would be just as happy if we just turned up for a chat – so long as there's hot drinks and food! Two more C&T's left this season which I'm sure will be equally well attended/received, I look forward to meeting you there.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who do turn up to the committee meetings, the last two

have been particularly well attended, something that I am really pleased to see; fresh faces taking an interest in the running of the club and contributing to the (sometimes) lively debates keeping the club officials honest. The next meeting will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> March and as always all members of the club are welcome.

Finally, I would like to plug the South West Peninsula Rally 2020. This is our big-



gest event of the year, open to anyone on 2 or 3 wheels. Designed to be a navigational challenge across the whole of the South West, we get entries from across the UK to complete the rally and tickets are on sale now. It's another great excuse to get out on the bikes and explore our fantastic area of the country. Each year more of our members take the plunge to participate, and all of them come back smiling, despite the conditions that can prevail in April! If you haven't entered yet, make this (our 12<sup>th</sup> year) be the year you take it on. The date for your diary is 4<sup>th</sup> April. Head over to our web site for more details and to purchase your ticket(s).

**Jez Martin**

## SAM NEWS



***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:

- Martin Payne on 26th October, riding a Kawasaki GSX-R750 K5 and observed by Kevin Colmer.
- Nigel Massey on 10th November, riding a Husqvarna Vitpilen 700 and achieving a F1RST. Nigel was observed by David Slocombe.
- Martin Herrod on 22nd November. Martin was riding his Aprilia Tuono and was observed by Matt Towill.
- Jules Cooper on 24th November, riding a Yamaha TDM850 and observed by Bob Muckett.
- Mel Adams, also on 24th November, riding his Triumph Explorer and observed by Andy McKay.
- Pete Churchill on 26th November. Pete was riding his Triumph Tiger 955i and was observed by Rob Malton.
- Nicholas Judd on 8th December, achieving a F1RST. Nick was riding a Triumph Street Twin 900 and was observed by David Slocombe.



**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.

## **Observer Training — February 2020**

Every year SAM offers the opportunity for test pass holders to attend Observer Training. There is a series of 4 theory sessions, this year held on the Wednesday evenings of 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February. You may wish to attend merely to focus on your own riding development, and you are welcome on that basis. There will be no commitment to becoming an Observer until the end of the theory sessions, and there is no charge for them. Many existing observers attend as a refresher. The venue is the Fire



Station, Lisieux Way, Taunton, TA1 2LB, the meeting will gather from 19:00 for a 19:30 start, and should be finished by 21:30 *If you would like to be an observer but can't get to these sessions, please contact me – other options are available.*

**If you have any questions contact**  
**Gina Herridge**  
[\*\*\(ginabromage@googlemail.com\)\*\*](mailto:ginabromage@googlemail.com)  
**01935 477498, 07745 052815)**

## St. Margaret's Hospice Charity Cycle Ride

### 29th March 2020



Last year SAM supported St Margaret's Hospice by providing motor-cycle riders to marshal their charity cycle ride between the Taunton and Yeovil hospices. The riders' presence and assistance was very much appreciated both by the participants and St Margaret's, and they have asked us to help them again this year. We will need between 12 and 20 marshals, the proposed route being a circular one, taking in both the Yeovil and Taunton hospice sites. If you are able to help, please contact

**Gina Herridge**  
[\*\*\(ginabromage@googlemail.com\)\*\*](mailto:ginabromage@googlemail.com)  
**01935 477498, 07745 052815)**



## 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 7th January 2020, 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'.

## Let Me Introduce Myself.....

I only joined SAM last year and, due to various commitments, only managed one club ride (Rick Stowell's Exmoor ride) but have attended 2 of the C&T Events recently and have put my hand up to lead 2 rides during the forthcoming year; there might be one or two midweek rides added as well depending on my work schedule.

Joining a new club like SAM which has in excess of 250 members and trying to develop new friendships within the group

is quite daunting to be quite honest so I thought I'd put a little something together about myself in the hope that it resonates with some of you.



My original purpose for joining an advanced club (over 25 years ago now!) was twofold really; firstly, I had recently bought a Yamaha FZR1000 EXUP which had more control over me than the other way round (!) so I felt that some advanced training would be worthwhile and, secondly, not having lived in the Bristol area (as I did then) for very long I was hoping that I could meet some like-minded people with a view of developing some friendships, which I guess is why most of us join a club. And, I have to say, both worked out very nicely thank you very much. I have a lot to thank Avon Advanced Motorcyclists for (even if they are RoSPA affiliated!) as we had some fabulous club rides as well as some great holidays, trips to BSB, WSB and



GP events, some green laning and even some gigs with the guys I developed friendships with.

My motorcycling since those 90s and early 2000s days has been somewhat sporadic having, for a short while, fallen out of love with it, then being a bit too skint to be able to afford anything and then changing bikes like underpants, unsure of what type of motorcycle I wanted....sportsbike? streetbike? Adventure bike? ...and back again; it never used to be so difficult, did it?

Since the early 2000s, my nomadic lifestyle has seen me living in East Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, West Midlands, Northern Spain and finally (hopefully!) East Devon. In each area I have sought out a bike club to join.....all IAM affiliated apart from, of course, in Spain. It would be unfair to



mention these clubs by name but, bloody hell, some of the riding has been woeful! Rides falling apart due to poor junction marking, lead riders getting lost, one club not allowing overtaking within the group and not even employing the drop-off system, citing safety concerns for associate members....???? And, disappointingly, not one new friend made! Is it harder to develop new friendships as we get older?

Riding with a Spanish club was something else! It was essential, of course, for a mid-morning stop for a coffee and perhaps a tortilla.....but a beer?! Then for lunch it would be a full 3 course, menu del dia, dinner, complete, of course, with bottles of wines (or more beer) and maybe one for the road....just a little "chupito" of scotch or local liquor, señor? I kid you not! On one occasion when I was leading a ride, perhaps unsurprisingly, one guy crashed.....then tried to blame me for riding too fast! I have even ridden with a Guardia Civil Traffic Cop who indulges in the same way! Quite an eye-opener. Not all on the club rides were the same thankfully and some are really good riders....and good friends!



Anyway, having lived in East Devon for a little while, I started looking for a new club to join....but which one? Devon? Dorchester and West Dorset? Somerset? I did rejoin Avon Advanced...not the most convenient of course but it was good to catch up with old friends again although it seems a shame that there aren't so many active members these days. I went out on a ride with one of the other local clubs (no names of course!) which was OK but even that broke down due to a roundabout not being marked! The aforementioned SAM Exmoor ride of Rick Stowell's was very enjoyable so I'm looking forward to more of the same this year....and hopefully for many years to come! I'll be the guy on the KTM RC8R or, very occasionally, the bright yellow Aprilia RSV-R Mille; see, I still love my sports-bikes! Hope to see you around!

**Andy Bourne**

## Pride Comes Before a Fall

For a few years now I have written short stories about my motorcycling experiences, for my own amusement but sometimes for magazines and eventually for me to read if the worst should happen and I could no longer ride. The write up for this particular challenge towards gaining my advanced test was without a title for some time but that was to change.

I have been aware of SAM for some time having competed in the excellent spring rally a few times, I also knew a bit about the IAM through friends and acquaintances who were already members (one being ex Police and another who rides as a bicycle race out-rid-er, so very experienced people) so I did some research and when my wife asked me what I wanted

for Christmas last year, there was no second thought, I asked if she would pay for me to do my advanced test. I finally signed up with Nathan at the Classic Bike Show at Shepton Mallet in February.

From the beginning the paperwork and e-mails were very professional and clear, although I did find the book hard going initially but very soon I had been allocated an Observer who got in contact very quickly and we arranged to meet at Haynes. As I had no real idea as to what to expect (I hadn't read anything really!) I set off with the plan of just riding how I always do and leave it up to my Observer. This turned out to be Robert Malton; right from the beginning Robert continued the very professional

approach with his smart SAM riding gear and a beautifully turned out GS, I felt like a right scruff in comparison with quite old riding gear and an 85000 mile Triumph Tiger 955i, that normally lives outside and



Pete's original Tiger 955i  
at 6am in Glecoe on the  
Britt Butt Rally



is used all year round; anyway Robert put me at ease and explained the whole process, in particular the option to either take a test or pass by continuous assessment, I told him that I was useless at tests because I usually became a bundle of nerves and had the potential to cock-up massively; this has been a trait all the way through my life from my 11 plus exam, that I cocked-up massively, onwards!

After Robert asking me to just ride like I normally would but with observing speed limits, we set off and I soon became used to watching out for his signals in my mirrors; after a while it became apparent to me that I mostly saw Robert in one mirror or the other, so where I was riding sort of centrally to the lane, he was positioning himself properly so I started to adjust my position to suit. Otherwise I felt the ride was pretty good and then came the debrief. All I can say is that it was satisfactory as I scored 2's all the way with a couple of 2/3's; One was for braking technique, Robert thought I was braking too far into corners and therefore leaving my braking too late, I also had the habit of hanging at least one finger over the brake lever and was clearly flashing the brake light without realising. How this habit had evolved over the years is anyone's guess but easily fixed by thinking a bit more. The other 2/3 was positioning in bends which again was easily rectified by reading my Logbook, the rest would be dealt with by reading the theory and putting it into practice.

One significant point that occurred to me during the debrief was that Robert remembered everything about the ride, whereas I only remembered about what I had seen over the hedges and so-on; I was convinced that he had a tape recorder in his helmet somewhere and was using the playback. This was another area that would change.

The next ride was much the same but with improvements in some areas, although I did hold my position out wide on a left hander and my pannier came close to an oncoming car; okay I hadn't got to the bit in the book on TUG yet and the panniers are very wide on the Tiger, so I read the book more and took the panniers off!

The next trip out was a disaster! My wonderful Tiger that hadn't even misfired in the 60,000 miles that I had owned her let me down. We had set off on a new route when she started to run roughly, I put up with it for a bit and compensated by using the clutch and throttle more but eventually she ran so badly that the engine management light came on so I pulled over. After huge apologies to Robert, I limped home. I eventually found out that

the fuel was badly contaminated; Tigers have a bit of a sump in the tank and this had gradually accumulated water (it had done it before but I discovered it during a service!) so I cleaned everything out, changed the plugs while I was there and she was back to normal.

Next I broke down! At some point during April I tore a tendon or ligament in my left knee and could barely walk. The problem here was also that I couldn't bend my left knee for any length of time and even now it is slow to react if I have been riding for some time. So motorcycling was out for a while, which did actually give me some time to read the Highway Code and the Roadsmart Logbook in more detail but sadly I could not ride in the South West Peninsular Rally or the Brit Butt Rally, two of my favourites — and of course I had to stop riding out with Robert.

I started back about six weeks later with the knee still a limiting factor with me eventually deciding to use my right leg regardless when pulling up but it was ten weeks before I started riding with Robert again. In the meantime I had been 'practising in my head' while driving cars and had done some short practise runs on the bike. Now here I have to make a confession; I found myself riding to Haynes to actually start these practise runs when at some point the penny dropped with a clang, that I should be riding as if I was practising ALL the time! It seems so stupid now that I am embarrassed to admit it but that is how it was.

Anyway the observed rides progressed well and the twos gradually turned into ones so by August, Robert suggested that I have a pre-test assessment. On the last run sheet there are two significant comments, one was to keep reading my book and the other was to keep concentration throughout the ride. So Robert had noticed that I was still weak on theory and I also had a bit of a concentration problem after about half an hour, which only goes to show what a good observer he is because I could not disagree!

The pre-test assessment was to be with Callum, who I hadn't met before, starting out from Crewkerne, which although familiar it would be new enough to keep me on my toes. I felt confident but certainly not over confident and more than anything, I was keen to ride in test conditions. It was a beautiful day as well so what could go wrong? It didn't take long, coming down the hill into Crewkerne the bike started misfiring and spitting back; I simply couldn't believe it. This is a motorcycle that I have jumped on and ridden to Holland and back, Scotland and back a few times, rallied all over

the UK and she wanted to play me up now?! Anyway, I got to the meeting point early and checked over what I could, then when Callum turned up, I explained that I may have a problem but would like to go ahead regardless.

He gave me the briefing then tested my eyesight and off we went. The bike had started running well again and I was enjoying the ride in different country, so I felt everything was fine until we got to the junction of the A35 just outside Axminster. I approached in the normal manner but at some point had forgotten about my left knee and went to put it down, soon realising that it was very stiff and not going to make it in time, so I stuck my right foot down very quickly, creating the messiest pullup that I have ever done! Pi\*\*ed off with myself does not cover it!! I gave myself a right telling off and in the meantime missed an ideal opportunity to pull out so had to wait longer than needed, then going into Axminster I missed the beginning of a 20 limit and did 35 in a 30 as well. By the time we pulled up for coffee and debrief my brain was fried and I was fed up; Callum however has seen it all before and was very kind in his assessment even when I messed up the theory

questions as well. All in all I needed work and it was all down to me. At this time I was having some serious doubts about my Tiger, after all this time she was showing her age and clearly needed more than her regular servicing, so I costed the work required and it amounted to quite a lot on a bike that was now reaching eighty five thousand miles and twelve years of age. A couple of days later I just happened to be looking for bits and pieces on Ebay when I spotted an 07 plate (as late as the 955i gets) with 3500 miles on the clock, furthermore she was being sold at Stafford Triumph where an old friend just happens to be the Sales manager; it all seemed too good to be true, so I gave Tiko a ring and the deal was done. Weirdly he had just got back from holiday and had wandered up to look at the second hand bikes that had come in while he had been away, saw the Tiger and had made a note to phone me about 10 minutes before I phoned him.

To cut a long story short, I now had a new bike to get used to, so I spent a lot of time in the saddle and re-rode most of the training routes that I had already ridden, including the route that I had taken to Axminster with Callum and realised just what a howler that I had



made of that. The new bike was surprisingly different to the old one but in a good way and I realised how much I had been compensating for her foibles over the years but now I was ready, so I booked my test. I let Robert know that I was to be tested by Peter Herridge and he very kindly offered a shakedown ride on the weekend before which was a lot of fun and very reassuring. Then on the morning of the test, I rode over to Wellington to the house that I was living in 50 years ago to the day when it burnt down, weird

you may think but it was a significant event that ultimately led to me taking up motorcycling.

Peter had already been in contact with regard to a wet weather forecast but by this time I would have ridden through anything so if it was okay by him, we would go ahead. We met at Podimore services where Peter recognised that I was pretty nervous and I admitted as much as well. We chatted about motorcycling for a while and then smoothly went into the briefing. I knew most of the route Peter described but was not overly familiar with it so I knew I would

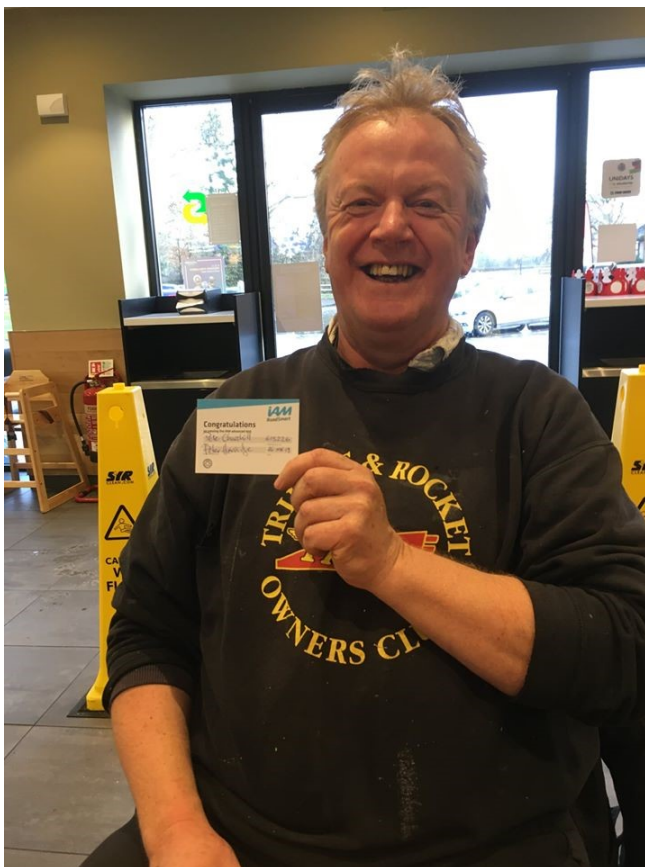


have to keep my eyes peeled and my wits about me. We set off and went around Podimore roundabout, where you definitely have to keep your eyes open for half asleep drivers and random roundabout activity but it all went smoothly; we took the road to Shepton Mallet but soon turned off for the village of Charlton Mackerel with a smattering of mini roundabouts, blind turnings, parked cars and agriculture; this was going to be a test! I felt that I was doing okay but could not relax to save my life. I was gripping the bars way too tight, so much so that my right hand was going numb and my back was stiffening up like there was no tomorrow. The weather was variable to say the least with rain one minute and then riding into Somerton in blinding sunlight the next. It was 'interesting' to say the least and despite my stiffness, I felt that my concentration levels were good and I was actually enjoying myself! We rode on through to Martock, a route that I know but the speed limit signs had popped up like weeds since I used to live out there and here I felt I may have made a mistake; a bus was pulling on to 'my' side of the road to overtake some parked cars and without thinking I just pulled into someone's drive, when the bus had gone and I pulled away I didn't see Peter so started to worry that I had done something wrong, anyway he soon caught up so I thought what is done is done and just carry on but the damn stiffness would NOT go away!

We went for a short trip down the 303 which normally would give me a chance to relax but not this time, so when we turned off towards Yeovil I was beginning to dread what was coming! Tintinhull provided some challenges with heavy traffic coming towards us but I just rode how I thought best and carried on; Peter called for a right turn as we approached the double mini roundabouts near the garden centre and by now I honestly thought I had left my wooden coat hanger inside my jacket with how stiff my back and shoulders had become! I negotiated the roundabout okay but probably looked so awkward that an oncoming car was just waiting to see if I would get around or not; ridiculous! Anyway we returned to the 303 and headed back to Podimore. I pulled up and was sitting on the bike trying to take it all in when Peter pulled up and said 'you can relax now you've passed'. I think I was silent for a while and am sure that when I did speak, my first words were you're joking aren't you? Paranoia had set in and I had convinced myself that regardless of everything else, anyone who rode as stiffly as that could not possibly pass a test.

We went into the café and while I was buying the coffees I realised that my

right hand was still numb, to the extent that I thought carpal tunnel syndrome had returned despite my having the op to cure it 20 years ago. Peter was extremely kind however and I started to relax and enjoy myself. He recognised my stiffness throughout but said it didn't impact my ride adversely, my decision regarding the bus was the right one and I carried it out swiftly and safely which left the bus driver in no doubt as to my actions, then he mentioned a couple of other 'incidents' where I hadn't even thought



about my actions but had just carried out the right manoeuvre automatically. The main difference in all of this was that during this debrief, I remembered the entire ride and was able to discuss it whereas after my first ride with Robert, I remembered none of it; I had become a thinking rider and I had passed my advanced test. I was one very happy man!

Right at the beginning I mentioned that I did not have a title for this piece, well that was about to change. I am also a member of the Iron Butt Association who through the year organise Ride to Eats, which is exactly what they are; someone nominates a place suitable for a meeting and a meal, then fixes a date and people ride there and eat, simple as that. One of the regular venues has been Calais in recent years, so what a friend of mine and I have done is meet at Folkstone, take the tunnel over then ride to some war site or another, then back to Calais for Saturday lunch and catch the tunnel to return home on Saturday evening. This year we decided on a



10am tunnel on the Friday morning that meant arriving at 9am, so at 5am I set off from home in wet weather. Even though the weather was bad, I was making good time but was getting increasingly worried by the speed and volume of traffic on the 303 and wondered what I would find on the M3, so I decided to pull off and have a rethink, even considering phoning John who was near Brands Hatch to see if we could catch a later train. By now the weather was vile and I pulled off at Micheldever services. The next thing I knew was that I was riding or sliding on grass, ending up on my left side (with my bad knee under the bike) and sliding back onto the tarmac. I was okay but shocked so picked the bike up straight away and

rode to a parking spot, at which point I noticed oil coming out of a hole in the left-hand engine case. This was game over so I called John and then the recovery people and actually ended up back at home with my tail between my legs by 9:30am.

I have no excuse, it was my fault but in the conditions I just did not see the mud and grass in the photo above. Did I learn anything from it? I don't know as hopefully I will never encounter those conditions again; could I have pulled over earlier? Yes. Could I have gone up the night before and stayed with friends? Yes again. But I didn't—although I did get a title for my story!

**Pete Churchill**

# BIKING NEWS

## MAG



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

This issue, Ian Mutch (MAG's founder member and president) & Lembit Öpik look forward to 2020, *"the year we get hard commitments from Ministers about the role of motorised two wheelers"*.



## The Long Ride to Freedom—MAG in 2020

*"MAG was set up to defend your freedom. Since 1973, the State has been determined to take aspects of that freedom away from you. It started with the helmet law which insisted you be forced to wear a helmet even though not doing so couldn't hurt anyone except yourself. The onslaught against our personal liberties has continued ever since. All the signs are that the dead hand of bureaucracy will continue unless someone stands up and says: 'you shall not pass.' MAG is that 'someone.'"*

*As your political Unit, we're determined to act as a brake to the inexorable creep of legislation, which seems determined to protect us from ourselves. Let's stay objective and make the messages crystal clear – internally and externally. Here's what we're expecting to do in 2020, and we hope you'll also play your part in making sure that legislators don't trample on our rights through misguided good intentions.*

*The environment seems to continue to be the focus of a huge amount of media reporting and*



*political commentary. MAG has already developed a profound understanding of the environmental facts, researching far beyond the headlines. Now we will turn that knowledge into making a super-clear and balanced message in 2020: you will NOT punish bikers for using two wheels instead of four.*

*Motorcycles are evidently better than cars for travelling around in many circumstances. Consistently, research shows that, when there's a lot of traffic, the roads tend to clear when commuters shift to motorbikes and scooters. The fact that the eco-lobby don't understand this shows that they really haven't got a clue about the travelling realities in the UK. In 2020, your Political Unit will find creative ways of making this point clear. We're even running the Ride to Work event, to make sure that the message is louder than the voices of those who think that petrol engined vehicles should be banned by 2030 or even 2025.*

*No matter what we think of Clean Air Zones, areas where vehicles are fined or banned from entering, they are going to remain a feature for the foreseeable future. MAG will continue to factually challenge each instance that arises, and challenge the base data which we know to be incorrect. Increasingly this work is likely to see us working with others who share the same point of view in preserving use of perfectly good internal combustion*



engines vehicles. Working with allies increases our collective firepower to protect our right to ride the bikes we choose.

Road safety is another area that needs a fistful of common sense. There are some who seem to believe they can eliminate ALL road deaths and serious injuries. This is plainly undeliverable. The danger is that the safety fanatics will use this to ban anything that offends them in terms of their authoritarian agenda. The issue here is the level of emotion associated with the question of death on the roads. We hear statements like 'if this policy saves one life, then it's worth it.' On that basis, you would certainly have to ban cycling, walking and fireworks.

MAG will fight fiercely for a proportionate approach towards safety. We know the risks of riding. We also know that it's our responsibility to manage that danger according to our own acceptance of what's called actuarial risk. Safety is one of those policy areas that play on feelings. Death can be tragic, but it's even more tragic when emotive language causes us to have to listen to irrational speeches that blur the edges between practical policy and personal liberty.

Road access continues to be a

central area for our important campaigning activity. We need to get around, to make the economy move around and motorbikes and scooters are often the most cost-efficient way to achieve that. MAG is making the case right up to Cabinet Minister level. Once things settle down a bit, 2020 will be the year we get hard commitments from Ministers about the role of motorised two wheelers in the transport mix. That's something we've already made progress on. We can do even more – and we will.

As for crime, we hate what's happening to bikers – and their bikes. The police have shown massively variable levels of commitment to reducing bike crime, with London coming bottom of the class in terms of bike theft. Vigilantism is likely to increase. It would be much better if the police found ways to reduce bike crime using the powers they have. But this is a flashpoint we expect to reach some kind of resolution in the year ahead.

And then there's the curious direction that the Motor Cycle Industry Association – or MCIA – are choosing to take. They've apparently embraced the 'L-Category' vehicle sector. This includes motorbikes, but it's mainly about all

*sorts of three and four wheeled devices that look nothing like motorbikes at all. Nothing wrong with those machines, and the MCIA can decide to prioritise those if they want to. The acronym MCIA officially no longer stands for the Motorcycle Industry Association, but MAG most certainly remains the Motorcycle Action Group. MAG is dedicated to protecting YOUR right to ride what YOU want to. We hope that the industry body will continue to back the basic right of riders to celebrate the freedom and joy you can only get from a 'traditional' motorbike.*

*MAG's been around for a long time. We intend to be here for a lot longer. As long as you want to ride your bike, we want to represent you. We will represent your rights, not by being on the back foot, but by taking the battle forward. We have built credibility and influence through determination, hard work and clear thinking. We are able to present fact based logical arguments with passion and in a format that will be taken seriously. That's what we'll do in 2020. If that's what you want, join us. Joining MAG is a short cut on the long – and never-ending - march to protecting your freedom."*

*The above article appeared in MAG's 'The Road' magazine Jan/Feb 2020 edition, and has been kindly reproduced with the permission of Ian Mutch, MAG President*

## Tyre Pressure Optimist

### **Are you a tyre pressure optimist or pessimist?**

We have all been there, preparing to ride our trusty steed and duly carrying out our 'POWDERS' check, or whatever acronym floats your boat, when you get to the rubber/tyre check. This is where your tyre pressure optimism or pessimism comes to the fore.

### **The Tyre Pressure Optimist**

The tyre pressure optimist will assume that the tyre pressure is at, or within a gnat's whisker of the correct pressure. They will make an instantaneous assessment of recent atmospheric condi-



tions, coupled with bike usage since the last pressure check and convince themselves that nothing much has changed. Therefore, any check of tyre pressure will just confirm this, and should be conducted with the least amount of fuss or faff. Their chosen weapon will usually be their favourite pressure gauge, like these:



Of course, if the tyre pressure optimist finds that after conducting the quick check that the tyre pressure is low, they now have to fiddle and faff with an electric, battery or manual powered inflation pump to get the tyre to the right pressure, and thus make the whole process a lot more time consuming.

### The Tyre Pressure Pessimist

The tyre pressure pessimist on the other hand, will assume that the tyre pressure pixie has sneaked in, causing the tyre to be below its optimum pressure, even if just by half a PSI, and this could have a detrimental effect on the bike's performance and their general wellbeing. It matters not that

they seldom find any significant pressure change, such is their PSI -passion they duly delve into their tool cupboard and retrieve their favourite DC or AC electric, battery or manual powered inflation pump, and set about the task in hand with a device like these:



Of course, if the tyre pressure pessimist finds that after all the fiddle and faff of setting up the tyre pump, the tyre pressure turns out to be spot on where it should be, they are now left to tidy away and restow their equipment, whilst swearing they will just use a pressure gauge to save time on the next ride.

### Tyre Pressure Compromise

It's fair to say that each of the techniques has its advantages and disadvantages, therefore, what we need is a compromise

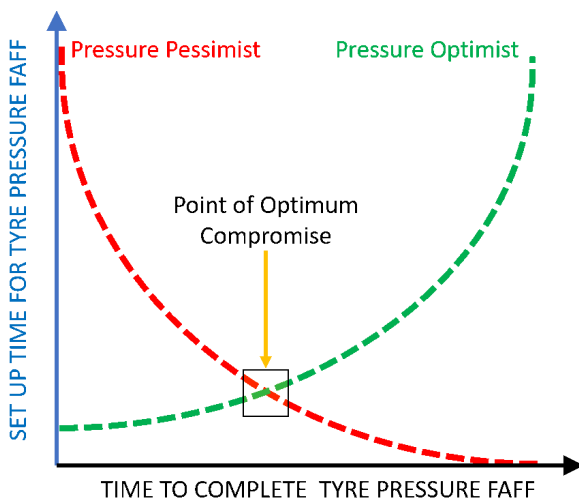
that draws on the advantages of both the tyre pressure optimist and pessimist. Using scientific analysis (well, not really) this graph shows the Point of Optimum Compromise:

### The Tyre Pressure Pragmatist

By using the Point of Optimum Compromise a Tyre Pressure Pragmatist will look for something that is relatively light and easy to use, allowing a convenient way of checking the tyre

pressure, but with the advantage of being able to rapidly inflate the tyre if required. One such device is this, the Emperial Cordless Digital Tyre Inflator:

#### TYRE PRESSURE POINT OF OPTIMUM COMPROMISE



It can be powered by its own battery or direct from a DC power socket. It comes with the mains battery charger, has an integral white/red LED light and natty carry bag. Pressure can be shown and set in PSI, HPA or BAR. Checking it against other pressure gauges has shown it to be accurate to +/- 1 PSI. It is ideal for motorcycle tyres, and although it can inflate car tyres, the relatively small volume of the pump makes it a slightly arduous task for 4 car tyres that need significant air input. If you want to know more or give it a try before you buy, grab me when you see me on a club ride, I invariably have it with me.

**ROGER MOFFATT**



# KIT REPORTS

## TILE Key Fob

Is there anything worse, you go to the place you keep your keys, only to find they are not there.

You check, in my case a drawer, not there. You empty said drawer, still not there.

You start to question your eyes and check again. Still not there.

You remove said drawer to see if they have fallen down the back, still no joy.

This is when the questions start, where could they be?

Have I left them in the bike, you go to the garage no keys in the ignition, as I don't lock the top box in the garage, did I take anything out after the last ride and did I leave the keys in there by accident? Still no.

I have a conditioning charger and I sometimes put the keys on the pillion seat whilst I connect the charger, did they fall off and under the bike without me hearing them? No.

When was I on the bike last? Well, that was the end of year Green ride,



Work and Christmas with family down has gotten in the way of riding. Sad but life.

On the evening in question what did I do, well like most, the key part is usually auto pilot, like locking the car and walking away. Sometimes I think



did I lock the car, I have not experienced that with the bike.

So where are my keys? I remember needing to answer a call of nature and having to get my over trousers off rather quickly, so did I put my keys down in the kitchen, if I did has my wife moved them. Now like a lot of couples I put things in a safe place, or so I believe. Shelley has other ideas and moves things to a safer place, then wipes that event from her memory. This sometimes causes me to take a cursory glance over the area of concern only to be accused of taking a "man look"!

This leads to me usually losing it for a few minutes and my better half shaking her head and walking off.

So after asking if she had seen my keys, I got the expected no. When I ride the bike I always have my keys, obviously, phone and wallet.

Phone and wallet are present where are the keys?

I now check the bike jacket - NO. Jeans - NO, over trousers - NO.

Now fear sets in, did I drop them in the drive and has someone picked them up?

Next day a call goes in to BMW, a new key £198, but of course I would want two and could they come with different transponders

and be coded, meaning the old keys no longer work and the bike is safe.

I decide to wait to see if I can find them.

Two days later and still racking my brains after being irritable and distracted for a long period, the brain says whilst driving home, check the boot on the car.

Why you may ask, well being an engineer by trade I tend to carry things in the car that others may wonder why, case in point a gas soldering iron. I needed that for something else and I remember washing the bike, now was I a good boy and did that happen after the last ride or before?

So I check the boot and the false floor, gas soldering iron no keys, then I see it, the Hi Viz waterproof jacket I carry in case of a puncture at night or in the rain, I check the pockets and I find my keys.

I'm happy now for the first time in three days.

Where is this leading? Well it got me thinking about trackers both for my keys and for the bike. I'm still researching bike trackers, pros and cons. I have one fitted already, this relies on a phone signal only. Some on the market also use radio frequency. Once I've done the research and if there is any interest I will gladly share.

Back to key trackers, well after quite a lot of research TILE seems to be the brand. They connect to your phone via Bluetooth and have up to a 400ft range!

You can set up a Geo fence, meaning if your keys and phone start to go out of range an alarm can sound. You can also make your phone ring from the tile, even if its on silent.

These units have replaceable batteries and cost around £30 for one, £85 to £89 for four. Needless to say I've gone with four, one for each of my toys. The following Library image and internet blurb explains better than me!



*“Updated for 2020, the Tile Pro water-resistant Bluetooth tracker can help you locate lost items like your keys or phone within a range of 400 feet. You can even use your smartphone to make your Tile ring if you misplace any item. For example, if you can’t find your phone, just double press the Tile button on your Tile to make your phone ring, even when it’s in silent mode, or you can spot it on a map. You can even use Tile to find a lost Tile. Should you lose track of your Tile, you can anonymously recruit the entire Tile community to help you find it via the companion mobile app. It also now works with Amazon Alexa.”*

**Simon Greenwood**

# RIDE REPORTS

## Froziez Toeziez

This is traditionally the last SAM ride of the year, an excuse to meet up in the build-up to Christmas and ride to a pub for a chat. Being less than 2 weeks before Christmas Day, and with an evening start, the weather is usually challenging, and this year was no different – cold, wet, windy and with filthy roads everywhere! Unlike a previous year on this ride (where I was the only rider out in a Force 7 gale!), 3 hardy souls turned up to join me at Podimore. Consensus was quickly achieved that the ride would be a short one, so 15 miles later we were pulling in to The Lime Kiln Inn at Knowle, just outside Long Sutton, ready to order from the recently-revamped menu at this popular hostelry.

As we sat beside the open fire, we quickly realised that the ride to the start at Podimore was purely an excuse to enjoy the good food and social banter, which raised the question – why ride at all? So whilst this evening will remain in the SAM Events List for 2020, instead of a ride-out it'll purely be a social get-together, with bikes optional. Festive parties and the like will inevitably require some form of pre-booking (assuming more people turn up next time round), and those who want to brave the elements can still do so, but at least this year I will be warm and dry on arrival at The Lime Kiln Inn – and hopefully we'll have more members joining us to welcome in the Festive Season.

**Graham Tulloch**



## Morning Ramble

This Green ride was shorter than most at just 30 miles, as I had to get across to the Classic Bike Show to help the SAM Team dismantle the stand and take it back into storage. But that didn't deter 28 bikes turning



up. With the day before bringing what was probably the first dry roads for over 4 months, the overnight rain ensured that our bike-washing skills would still be in demand later in the day! Splitting into 2 Groups due to the numbers (with Lisa kindly heading up #2), we headed towards Glastonbury and Street via the Drove roads before returning to the Green Lemon café at Huish Episcopi via the inimitable Seven Bends. This was the first outing for

Pete Churchill and Ian Jewson on a SAM ride, so they paired up with Calum and Wayne to help familiarise themselves with the drop-off system (you're on your own next time, guys!). Despite the café having our booking for the following Sunday, service and food was as good as usual. Thanks to all for joining me on this short jaunt.

**Graham Tulloch**

## Bristol Classic Bike Show

Well done to Nathan Beesley for once again organising SAM's stand at the Bristol Classic Bike Show last weekend, and to Georges Dupuis for supporting him throughout the weekend at this key Recruitment event. Foot-fall up on the balcony was slightly down compared to last year, due to the lack of an upstairs café this year, but it was still successful, with 8 new



members signing up at the IAM RoadSmart discounted Show rate of £99. This year we had Wilts and Bath (WABAM, they signed up 3 new members) join us on the stand on both days, it's always good to share resources and meet up with colleagues from other local Groups. Thanks to Roger Moffat for lending his support on the stand on Saturday morning, and of course to all the SAM members who stopped by to say hello (and bring the coffees!). Another successful weekend with lots of interest.

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## **Control & Technique** **"Cornering"**

Sat. 8th Feb. 2020  
10:00 @ Othery Village Hall  
TA7 0QU

## **SAM Red Ride**

"Checkpoint Charlie"

Sun. 16th Feb. 2020  
09:00 @ Cross Keys, Norton Fitz.  
Led by Rob Bartlett

## **SAM Green Ride**

"March Hares"

Sun. 1st Mar. 2020  
09:30 @ Cartgate Services  
Led by Jez Martin

## **SAM Green Ride**

"Boing Boing Spring!"

Sun. 8th Mar. 2020  
10:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park  
Langport  
Led by Lee Thompson

## **SAM Green Ride**

"March Mosey-on Down"

Sat. 21st Mar. 2020  
09:30 @ Podimore Services  
Led by Roger Moffat

## **SAM Amber Ride**

"Breakfast Run"

Sat. 15th Feb. 2020  
09:00 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Rick Chubb

## **SAM Green Ride**

"A Winter's Shake-Down"

Sun. 23rd Feb. 2020  
09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Dave Parker

## **SAM Committee Meeting**

Wed. 4th Mar. 2020  
19:30 @ The Lamb & Lion,  
Hambridge TA10 0AT

## **Control & Technique**

**"Human Factors &  
The Comfort Zone"**

Sat. 14th Mar. 2020  
10:00 @ Othery Village Hall  
TA7 0QU

## **SAM AGM**

Sat. 21st Mar. 2020  
19:30 @ The Lamb & Lion,  
Hambridge TA10 0AT

## **SAM Green Ride**

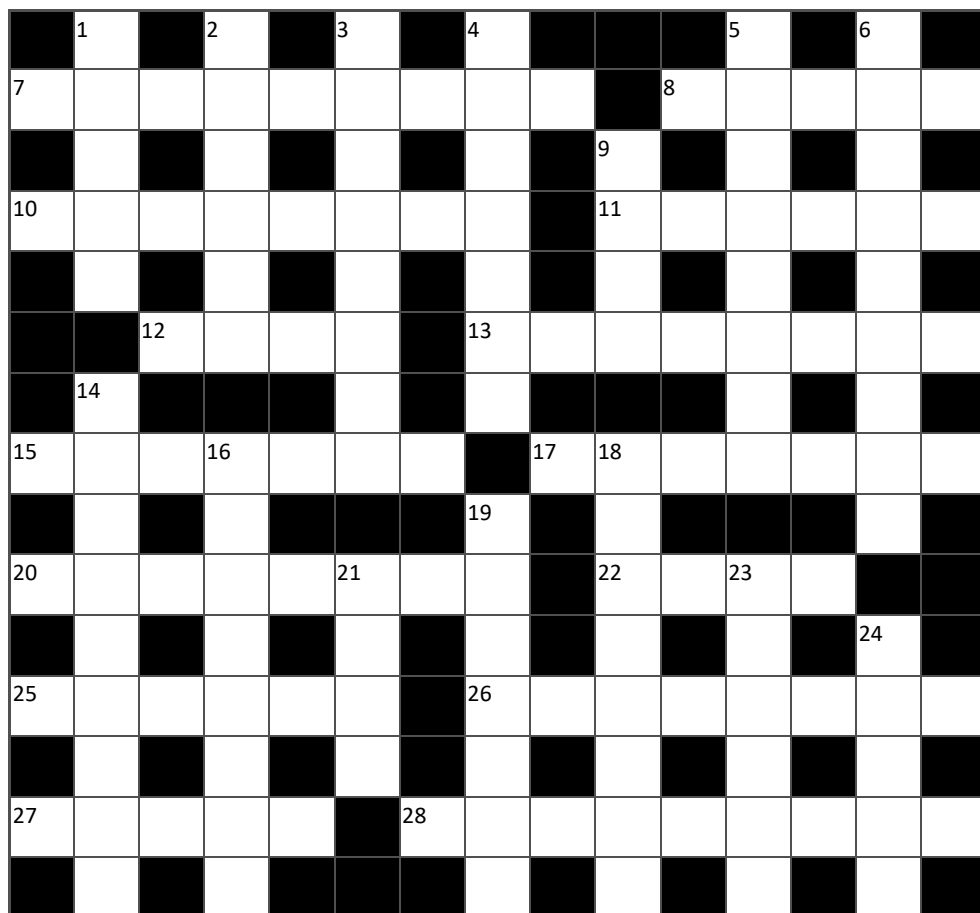
**"April Fool's Run"**

Sun 5th Apr. 2020  
10:00 @ Cartgate Services  
Led by Jez Martin

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



# CROSSWORD



## Across

**7** Average time, second tilt makes catalogue of items (5,4)

**8** Colourless sound of south coast island (5)

**10** Second Hill Road is major road (7)

**11** Continent amateur opera conceals (6)

**12** Peel reorganised South American forward (4)

**13** After sunset, time Women's Institute easily digested (8)

**15** Primarily found in religious sites, to love you, initially (7)

**17** His mug gleams; has to avoid duty (7)

## CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 20 Part of water pump, I'm equal with learners (8)  
22 Another east of 11 (4)  
25 Fisherman left in temper (6)  
26 Peace-keepers eat popular fruit? No other way round flood (8)  
27 Loud left seed watched by 25 (5)  
28 Met together (9)

### Down

- 1 Flesh cured 17c writer (5)  
2 Gently rub last oar (6)  
3 Move through the air and turn a heavy disc (8)  
4 Sambas by, at times concealed, English writer (7)  
5 Rushing filling (8)  
6 Pets up son, say, new partner's issue (9)  
9 Fabled beast from Nchen-nye, Tibet (4)  
14 Disrespect, cloak, take apart (9)  
16 Take off cargo, great deal (4-4)  
18 Steps masseuse changed right for one second (8)  
19 Trudge from drunken parties (7)  
21 Peer praise, by the sound of it (4)  
23 Ignore the odds (lien) – edge a bit owing money (2,4)  
24 Adrift? Puzzled? (2,3)

Solution in next issue

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

## Solution to Autumn2019 Crossword

**Across:** 1 Adventures, 9 Doha, 10 Offroading, 11 Medici, 12 Generic, 15 Instead, 16 Count, 17 Envy, 18 Peek, 19 Sedum, 21 Neglect, 22 Saunter, 24 Autumn, 27 Compelling, 28 Eton, 29 Sand ladder.

**Down:** 2 Deft, 3 Enrage, 4 Traffic, 5 Raid, 6 Segment, 7 Gobi desert, 8 Paris Dakar, 12 Green lanes, 13 Navigation, 14 Comet, 15 Indus, 19 Sconces, 20 Mansell, 23 Nurlled, 25 Oman, 26 Once.



## The Joys of Re-tyring

A quick background to this mix of words so that you have an idea of where my thoughts and actions have come from.

Almost 40 years ago now, in the days when you could ride a 250cc machine on 'L' plates, I managed to write off a Honda CB200e (Green fuel tank, ran like a bag of loose bits that had been put into a washing machine and a 2 into one exhaust system that made it sound, well, awful actually). That fateful extremely wet night in November 1980 between Guildford and Dorking on the A25 I came down a hill to a roundabout brak-

ing for a car that I thought was entering the roundabout from the right when the bike locked up, it hit the right side, (the right indicators were not a lot of use) it flipped over to the left slinging me gracefully onto the pavement and ran the gearbox along the kerb. I was travelling at about 30 mph when it all started. I was ok other than a rather bruised ego and an aching leg. I picked the bike up, pulled the indicators off, bent the headlight back so it was pointing toward the road and thought how lucky was I? On starting the bike, I realised that the wet patch on my left leg was warm and on closer inspection it was oil that was being ejected from the gaping gear case onto my leg. That was it, game over. My journey by motorcycle to Chatham was complete! The police came, pointed out that there was diesel on the road and the bike was a write off. Bless them, I am so pleased they broke the news to me gently! I have been very aware of greasy roads ever since whether on a bike or in a car. Fast forward nearly 40 years, December 2018, other than a



couple of years in the early 90's travelling to and from work on a Yamaha 100 I had not ridden a bike much at all. I took my Mod 1 test in the damp conditions and every time I braked, that night in November 1980 came flooding back, but hey ABS and far better tyres than those from the early 80's made a huge difference and my confidence grew. I took my Mod 2 test at the end of January 2019, passed and then in March I joined SAM and started being observed in preparation for my IAM test. I started on a Yamaha XJ6s with Bridgestone Battlax BT-023 Tyres on and though I had no ABS on the bike and never needed it, but due to my concerns and nervousness I very rarely rode in the wet. I was 40 years older than I was when I broke the CB200 and knew I wouldn't bounce as easy as I did all those years ago. In June I decided that a new bike was in order and after some tense negotiations with the Motorcycle requisition and permission officer (for clarification purposes, she is also my good lady wife of nearly 35 years) I became the proud owner of a Yamaha Tracer 900gt. I had done a fair bit of internet and review research before I purchased it, the one point made by many who had the bike and had ridden it was that the OE tyres Dunlop D222 were not so good and definitely very poor in the

wet.

I had 10 or more observed rides and in all the time other than one mildly moist Saturday morning the roads were dry and therefore there were no concerns regarding riding in the wet. September came, IAM test passed and all was good in the world, then came damp and wet roads as we came fully into Autumn and then into the Winter months. The Dunlop tyres were obviously not able to build any warmth on the roads and even relatively gentle braking was causing the ABS to activate - ok, the roads around Somerset that I have been riding on over the last few weeks have not been main roads and have been covered in mud and grit left by the farmers as they move to and from their fields and as such had



Original Dunlop D222

to be treated with respect. I generally don't hurry when I am on the bike and will happily plod along at my own pace but the nervousness regarding slippery roads and lack of grip were causing me to look for reasons not to go out rather than saying sod it and go out anyway.

On a ride out I went into Devon and part of the route involved some lanes and tracks that I really should have left alone - grass in the middle of the road, heaps of gravel and mud scattered everywhere, two clear tyre tracks where cars had gone before and barely a passing place if it was needed. But I had reason to ride them in the wet and slippery conditions and this did 2 things: 1, it gave me a bit more confidence in such conditions and 2, it gave me a puncture in the rear tyre. Thankfully I had Bike-Seal put in when I bought the bike so I could get home again and at last, a reason to get new boots on the bike. Back to the internet and research tyres once more.

A call to Aaron at Furlong Tyres resulted in a trip over to Yeovil that same afternoon to get new tyres fitted. I had a choice — Michelin Road Pilot 5 or Metzeler Roadtec 01. Many years ago, I had a brand-new Mercedes Benz



S560 sideways on a roundabout on brand new Michelins so decided that the Metzeler would be first choice. Looking at the Roadtec tyres they looked as if they could move more water than the Road Pilots, so decision made. A couple of hours later in really quite damp and greasy conditions I am riding away from Yeovil with Aaron's words ringing in my ears: 'Be careful, don't brake too hard, don't accelerate too hard and keep the bike as upright as possible for the next 100 or so miles, it will be like riding on ice with weather like that out there!'. Gulp, November 1980!

The somewhat cautious 30-mile ride home was totally uneventful, no issues. The first thing I did when I got home was follow Gina's advice from the last edition Full Chat, I spent an hour or so



with a wire brush and gently cleaned the release agent from the tyres. The next day a call to Dale who came out the same morning and there I was ready to go, new tyres that were scrubbed and Bike-Seal added just in case.

I have ridden about 550 miles since the start of December when I had the tyres fitted and the confidence I have in the bike and tyres has been transformed. The bike feels better planted on the road, I have had no issues with any ABS activation and therefore feel that the bike is stopping considerably better than it was. The other thing is that the new tyres seem to be warming up rather than staying at ambient temperature which doubtless is what is giving them the feel that they have.

I feel that my riding will only get better as my confidence and competence builds, slowly erasing the memory of that night in November 1980, these new tyres are going a long way to helping with this.

**Trevor Watts**

## CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo, taken at last year's "Boing! Boing! Spring!" ride. Suggestions to me at [Tullochg@aol.com](mailto:Tullochg@aol.com), we'll publish the best one in the next issue.

# BIKE REPORTS

## Yamaha Tenere 700

Lovely couple days weather to go riding in the Christmas break, so I seized the opportunity to nip down to Bridge Motorcycles for some brekky (they do a full breakfast now) and sneak a demo on this 700 Tenere that I've had my eye on since the 2018 NEC bike show. Perhaps a new steed to join Matt & Richard's Exmoor rides and a good all-weather observing platform.

Branson's Motorcycles had the lower seat, standard bike available on demo, but Exeter had the Rally Raid setup with the lanky leg seat and sports can. This bike is stripped of the new tech adorned by more recent bikes such as traction help, fly by wire throttle, TFT dash etc, and only benefits from ABS, which can be inhibited for off road forays.

A fun ride on the twisties down to Moretonhampstead was had on this box fresh bike in blue and grey, the tubed, blue anodised rims setting the bike off a treat in the sun, while trying to get a feel for grip and feedback following the rivers down towards Dartmoor. Standing whilst riding was cool too, with a feeling of being



well in control while out of the saddle.

Well-mannered on the motorway too, no buffet at any head height, though I had a road helmet on which would help touring comfort without a peak. It felt comfortable at 70 without fuss, the engine was smooth and getting up to speed in short order. Even on the Pirelli Scorpions, laying it into the fast sweeping on/off exits surrounding the A30 /M5 there were no dramas from the adventure setup.

Fantastic progressive feel from the long stroke, adjustable suspension & twin disc Brembo brakes, and the twin cylinder MT07 derived motor pulls so much harder and smoother than my VStrom in the midrange, though with a little less bottom end torque pulling away than the Strom. I did have a niggle about the O/S clutch pivot arm cover stuck out a tad and fouled by right boot if moving about on the peg, and the plastic throttle grip tube with excessive rattling sideplay which seems to plague many modern machines with cheap plastic handlebar switchgear housings. (I've shimmed my ZZR throttle sideplay out with mylar discs to sweeten the twist action). The Akrapovic Euro5 pipe was way too quiet though to enjoy the package, sign of the times hey? & not worth the extra money for the factory pipe set up. One other noticeable positive was the smooth upshift, where only a quarter of upshift lever force sees the gear pulled into the next ratio in a refined action and made for an enjoyable feel keeping the engine in the power band.

Gave it some stick out the bends and it fired out into the next, supermoto style, with either my weight hard over the bars or sat relaxed and upright.





The 21" front wheel carving the way ahead accurately, while the narrow but comfortable seat provided a reassuring connection to the chassis MX style. Very easy to ride if you can touch the floor in the Rally option, though had fun at the fuel station when I forgot just how tall the seat was, even with a 6'1 frame I was using tip toes!

I've since watched a few Australian adventure videos, and the Tenere 700 has excelled in its other environment of off road, holding its own on the bush trails in the outback tours. I felt when riding it I would be encouraged to green lane on it, or at least have a go with confidence, as it carried

its weight well, giving a big bike feel on the road, but nimble, light and narrow on the slow stuff. I've not done much off-roading, just a couple of seasons of local Kickstart Trials.

Just one hour's demo simply wasn't enough as I chased down some other bikes enjoying the winter sun. I think KTM's 790 is similar in design and comparable, being more on / off road orientated, carrying less bulk and gizmos than the heavier tourer Adv bikes - I don't think I'd risk taking a Tiger800/ Multistrada off road myself. A simple bike, but executed well. Decisions, decisions. Happy 2020 riding. **Wayne Timbrell**

## Triumph Sprint RS



Back in the 90s I was riding a Fireblade and my VFR for touring, although the Blade took us to the Isle Of Man a few times and Maggie was happy on the back (not sure if I would be). Since the demise of the British bike industry I had ridden mainly Japanese machines, but with the new Triumph

factory starting to produce bikes, my interest gradually turned to these. The only problem I had with the early Triumphs was the modular concept, which made them a bit of a compromise when the Fireblade was a full-on sports bike. I rode several of the Trophy's and Daytona's and liked them, just not enough. Then Triumph brought out the Sprints, both an ST and an RS, the RS having less fairing and firmer suspension amongst other things. As I wanted a replacement for the VFR I decided to get a new Sprint RS in yellow, this gradually became my most used bike and soon had over 20,000 miles recorded. A friend one day asked if I wanted to sell it and as Triumph had some re-imported black RSs at a bargain price of £5,000, I agreed.

VU03RZR came from Bransons in Gloucester as a friend of mine wanted one as well and we got another couple of hundred pounds off for buying the pair. As with all my bikes, the first years see some changes - a centre stand, heated grips. After a trip



to Spain I decided some higher bars would be good, so I fitted some LSLs. I had a slight oil leak from the engine which Bransons did under warranty, but otherwise the RS performed faultlessly until about 15,000 miles, now out of warranty, when the dash packed up. I was quoted £850 for a replacement, so fitted a cycle computer, which did the job until one turned up on e-bay for sensible money. The only other major problem to date was when the alternator broke, again, e-bay came to the rescue for £45, a tenth of a new one. Recently, I have replaced a sensor in the air box and the throttle stepper motor, after having problems with the engine "stalling" several times, to my embarrassment.

Further trips to Spain, the Island and Ireland left me convinced this was





close to my perfect all round bike, and getting older I was not so keen to ride the sports bikes very much. Other bikes have come and gone in the 17 years I've had the RS, and now my perfect all-rounder is my Tiger 800xc. As the Sprint has seen many winters and not enough soapy water, it is suffering cosmetically, but does sterling service as my winter bike. Coming up to 60,000 miles I will probably carry on using it for the winters, until it gives major trouble.

Running costs have not been too bad. Fuel consumption is around 58mpg. After the first two years, I have done all the servicing myself, so it's just the cost of parts. It's had a dozen new tyres, two sets of brake pads front and rear, two sets of chain and sprockets and one battery.

Unfortunately, it got knocked over once, needing a new silencer, fairing side panel and a brake lever, paid for by the third party. I also fell off once at slow speed, after a driver gave way then changed his mind on a narrow bridge, being on a slick of cow muck, I tried to slow, but my tyres just slipped, after releasing and re-applying the brakes I fell onto the grass verge. Thanks to some crash bungs the only damage was a broken gear

lever and my embarrassment.  
I've just been out for a ride today  
on the RS and still enjoy it very  
much, in fact I gave it a good

clean as a thank you for it's excel-  
lent service so far. Long may it  
last!

**Rick Chubb**

## MEMBER'S ADVENTURES

### Dave Thorpe Honda Off Road Course

The guided motorbike tour company <https://www.guidedmotorbiketours.co.uk> I rode around Europe with last September also do a tour of the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos and Vietnam which is on my to-visit list. The motorcycle tour in Vietnam is on Honda 250CRFs on roads and well beaten tracks between villages and although having ridden off road is not a requirement, I thought that I would get ahead of the game by doing a beginner's course in the UK. I signed up for the Dave Thorpe Honda beginners enduro course on Exmoor and I naively thought that it would be like a novice's ski course, on nursery slopes. I set off on Friday in the mist which grew thicker and colder as I climbed onto Exmoor on my Tiger 800. I was the only one to arrive on 2 wheels, there was a group who had driven from Gatwick that morning. There were a small number of Honda 250CRF bikes that were re-



served for non-licence holders and the rest of us were issued with Honda 450CRFs weighing in at 112kg or 247lbs, what was slightly off-putting was the saddle height which was a tippy toe affair especially after the Tiger which is much lower. We left the meeting place The Raleigh

Inn and headed down the road (knobbly tyres seem to have a mind of their own on tarmac), to a forestry estate on the side of a hill with deep mud, bottomless puddles the size of Somerset, loose shale tracks eroded by running water and dead pine needle impacted ground that the back wheel excavates with the efficiency of a chain saw. It soon became obvious that we were all lumped together and we learned very quickly from our mistakes as this is totally different from road riding, as you end up going where the bike wants to track and balance is everything. I managed about



150m before my first inadvertent rapid dismount (falling off), which I am sure would have scored quite highly for artistic impression as it involved a puddle, a tree and rolling down a slope. It's not just the falling off but dead lifting 112kg sometimes up slope becomes very tedious. I don't think I came off more than anybody else but at least I have perfected the relaxed dismount which comes from being a little on the slow uptake spectrum, in that I am usually rolling along the ground before I have realised that I am in trouble? One of my more memorable offs was in a stream with my left foot under the bike with water filling my left boot. We all took out damage waiver insurance and I managed to break 1 clutch and 2 brake levers and one of the course tore off a headlight. Our last exercise was quite impres-



sive in that there were no fallings off and we made it back to the hotel in one piece, that is apart from the feeling that we had gone a few rounds with Mike Tyson! I had confessed to being older than average (75) when I applied for the course and the instructors were looking out for everybody but that didn't thankfully translate into extra help and they were all very congratulatory to everyone at the debrief. What is noticeable with any new physical activity where you are using muscles that you don't normally use is stiffness which, with age, just takes longer to depart. If you have always fancied a go at off road with a professional outfit on new small manageable bikes (how could anyone manage a 1250GS over that terrain?), then this is the event for you.

**Chris Mutton**

## South West Peninsula Spring Rally



Over 100 tickets for our Spring Rally in April have now been sold and so SAM members who want to be part of this annual event should really start thinking seriously about reserving their places.

This is the 12th annual South West Peninsula Spring Rally and it has become one of the key milestones in our year.

Whilst we have plenty of tickets left now, we have been known to sell out and the sooner people book the easier it is for us to plan catering, contents of goody bags and all the other things that go with an event of this size.

This is by far our biggest event of the year and it's

always great to see so many SAM members there, so please grab yourself a ticket on the SAM website whilst they are still available.

If you fancy participating but don't have anyone to do it with, then why not consider doing it with a fellow SAM Member? The planning, as well as the day, can be more enjoyable with company. Maybe consider putting a message on the SAM Facebook page if you're looking for someone else to pair up with?



## Tyre Discounts for SAM Members

SAM members are able to take advantage of discounted tyre supplies from 2 local companies, on production of your IAM RoadSmart membership card. **Furlong Tyres** in Yeovil and **A303 Motorcycles** at West Camel (near Sparkford) are well known to many existing members who can confirm the quality of service and products these suppliers offer. Due to the variety of products and add-on services involved, specific discount percentages cannot be listed, but give them a ring with your requirements and you can be sure of a competitive quote.

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## **Autumn 2019 Caption**



Thanks to Alf Bagshaw who came up with the following Caption for the Autumn 2019 photograph :

**“OK, I think I’ve mastered right hand bends. Can we try some left-handers now?”**

## TAILPIECE #10

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

The rider's homeward commute took him up a long dual carriageway out of Plymouth towards the South Hams. One beautiful spring evening he guided his RT out of a roundabout onto the next stretch when he saw a car unusually parked in a small layby. As he approached, he saw it was an exquisite, creamy-white Jaguar XK150 fixed head coupe from the 1950s. As he passed, the rider recognized that the bonnet was up and a fellow was leaning in from the offside.

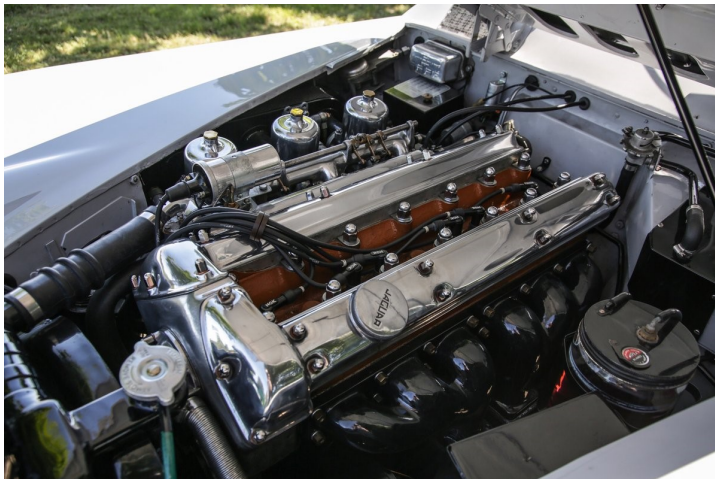
Here was an opportunity to be a good Samaritan. He was past before he could think of stopping safely so he turned back at the next roundabout, turned again at the roundabout before the Jaguar and pulled in just ahead. Having climbed off his bike and removed his helmet, the rider approached. He could see the gleaming aluminium, and the red-painted details of the six cylinder engine and the massive pots of the three SU carbs with their gold damper covers.

'Vroom, vroom', the engine revved, at least the engine was running. 'Vroom, vroom' again then it settled to a smooth tick-over.

'Good evening, are you all right,' opened the rider, 'is there anything I can do to help?'

'Oh, thank you, but no - but put your head under here' The driver and the rider both leant under the bonnet.

Grabbing the throttle linkage the driver revved the engine again.



'Vroom, vroooom, vroooooooooom' the engine sang. As it dropped to idle again, the driver turned to the rider. 'Isn't that wonderful? I've just tuned and balanced the carbs and I just had to stop and listen to them at work!'

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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.

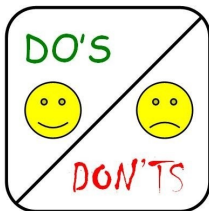
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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—4th April 2020**

Places are selling fast, so if you're thinking of entering this year's Rally, get onto the SAM website and book your place. Once you've registered (and paid!), a map with details of circa 60 checkpoint locations across Somerset, Dorset, Devon & Cornwall will be sent to you 2-3 weeks before the event—use these to plan your day in advance, then just turn up at Long Sutton for an 8am start (7am if you want breakfast) on Saturday 4th April and enjoy a great day out.