

# ***FULL CHAT***

## **Lockdown Special Issue #1**

**Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists**

**Group No. 1241**



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RoadSmart



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## SAM Officers

Chair	Jez Martin	07590 368808
Secretary	Kevin Colmer	07557 552424
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Observer Co-ord.	Lisa Parsons	07894 340336
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Sponsorship & Advertising	George Dupuis	07999 349667
Full Chat Editorial	Gina Herridge	07745 052815
Team	Graham Tulloch	07825 201650



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*Front Cover: Not happy with just social distancing, Peter May decided a Face Mask was in order too*



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# FAVOURITE BIKING MEMORIES

## LOCKDOWN SPECIAL ISSUE – BIKING MEMORIES

Welcome to this 1st Lockdown Special Issue of Full Chat. It is aimed at sharing with other SAM members some of your favourite biking memories, hopefully raising a smile or rekindling a distant memory. *If you would like to be included in the next issue, please send your contribution to me at [Tullochg@aol.com](mailto:Tullochg@aol.com).* It could be:

- Your earliest biking memory
- What got you interested in bikes
- The bike you had a poster of on your bedroom wall
- Your earliest recollection of a 'Bike' Magazine article (other magazines also allowed!)
- Your 1<sup>st</sup> bike
- Your favourite bike
- Your favourite biking trip
- The silliest thing your mate (obviously not you!) did on a bike
- The kit you wore with your 1<sup>st</sup> bike
- Unusual breakdowns you suffered on your bikes

**One-liners are welcome if you don't want to write an article, I will include all of these together. But....**

**anything more than 1 line must come with a photo(s)!**

Keep it light, keep it fun, keep it interesting, keep it memorable.

To start the ball rolling, I've included a photo illustrating my earliest motorcycle clothing—frightening now, despite my Honda PC50 struggling to hit 30mph! Who would have thought this was the 70s!

Many thanks, stay safe.

**Graham Tulloch,  
Newsletter Editor**



# BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN

If you have been off your bike for the whole of lockdown, and are feeling a bit on the rusty side, here are a few tips to help make sure that first ride is all you've been waiting for.

1. Check the bike. If you ride regularly normally, then it's especially important to work through the whole of your POWDDERSS pre ride checks. (Petrol, Oil and hydraulic fluids, Water, Drive, Damage, Electrics, Rubber (tyre pressures and condition, plus hydraulic hoses) Suspension, Stopping (brake callipers, pads, discs plus operation of all of them).
2. Clean the bike. It's a great way of examining it closely to make sure that nothing has acquired a fur of rust or corrosion.
3. Most important of all – you. Your state of mind is critical to your safety. Take a few minutes to think about your “riding head”. You won't be the only one who has had a lay-off out there; expect some crazy behaviour, some lazy behaviour and some distracted behaviour. If you make up your mind to be calm, measured, thoughtful, to take it easy and not push the situation, then that is what you will do, but you have to make that conscious plan first.
4. The route. Pick one that you know, then ride it as if for the first time, because, you know, other people doing crazy stuff. Maybe not even crazy stuff, but walking, running, riding bicycles with or without accompanying children, in places where you've never seen them before.
5. Talk yourself through IPSGA as you ride, as part of a commentary on what's happening. It will keep you focussed on the here and now. Take deep even breaths, and smile - you are back on your bike!



**Gina Herridge**

# MY FIRST BIKE

Every day I had to get the tube to work, and home again. It took a long time. Every day I walked past the local Honda showroom. There was a beautiful bike in the window.

Honda CBF600N. That would get me to work a lot quicker I thought. All I have to do is learn to ride it, and buy it. I thought.

I contacted a training school. Passed the necessary theory test etc. and went on to pass my bike test. In those days there was only one test.

I'm ready to buy the bike I thought. I went to the bike shop and spoke to their salesman.

Have you got any insurance quotes yet? he asked.

Not yet. I answered,

Right, here's all the details of the

bike he replied, writing down all the info on the back of the nearest flyer to come to hand. Get the insurance in place, and let us know when that's done. We will keep this bike for you.

I went off with a load of details about the bike and started the hunt for a quote. After a lot of internet searches I finally got a quote.

Back in those days internet searches were a lot more basic.

"How's the transport hunt going?" my mate asked me one morning. I told him I had almost got the bike, and would be coming to work on it very soon. All I had to do was buy it.

"That's good. Let me know when you want to go and get it. I will give you a lift up there."

The fateful day arrived. My mate collected me and my crash helmet, and off we went to get the bike.

New bike. Bank loan in place, and the bike shop are ready for me to collect it. I bought the bike. All I needed to do now was ride. I thought .

Must be fun riding I





said as I climbed on the bike, and smiled at the thought of it all.

“Have you thought about a biking jacket?” my mate asked. Be nice, but don’t have the money till pay day. A bit of water never hurt anybody, I replied.

“Here’s a card, go and get a jacket.” my mate said. “Remember what you were told by the bike instructor that first day.” He had a point I thought, but debt is not good, I said.

“Better to be warm and dry and a little bit in debt, than cold and wet. That leads to worse problems. Pay me back when you can.” my mate replied.

Back to the gear shop a few metres down the road. On the way my phone rang. A nice gentleman from the IAM asking me if I could start training. I replied that I already had insurance so would consider their company at renewal.

The chap explained that the IAM wasn’t an insurance company, but I could possibly get a cheaper quote after passing their test. Could you start training tomorrow morning? There starts another story.

**Jasper Mearns**

## LOCKDOWN RAMBLINGS

I hope that you are all managing to keep yourselves amused during this surreal situation we currently find ourselves in, but apart from cleaning, tweaking or carrying out repairs to our bikes there’s not too much motorcycle related stuff we can do. So, taking the lead from Graham’s email requesting contributions for Full Chat, I thought I may as well apply fingers to keypad.

My first biking memory takes me back to the early 60s, when a friend’s dad took us to Mallory Park to see the Post TT Interna-

tional races (I had no idea that this is what it was at the time!). I must have only been 8 or 9 at the time so remember very little about it.....except for the overwhelming smell of Castrol R!!! Addictive!

I can’t really pinpoint any one particular thing that got me interested in bikes; perhaps the Post TT event (and Castrol R!) had wormed its way into my brain to lie dormant for the next few years? Or was it watching the Scrambling (before it became MotoX) on Grandstand on Saturday afternoons? Or going on the back

of a mate's Norton Commando down to London for a bike show? Or going on the back of another mate's Honda 750F1 to Mallory Park for the Easter Transatlantic Match Race? But undoubtedly the one event that led me to buy my first bike was the (yet another!) failure of the Mini Cooper S I had at the time; yes, I know it would be worth a fortune now if I'd have kept it but the snapped cylinder head stud really was the final straw!! So having thrown it back together yet again it was sold and I went out and bought myself a brand new.....Yamaha XS250!! I think MCN at the time likened the performance comparable to that of a wet teabag! Probably no bad thing as it made it the perfect bike for learning on.....so on the 1<sup>st</sup> April (!) 1978 I took to the (very wet!) road on it for the very first time!

An overall favourite bike is a difficult one as I think just about every bike I have ever owned (many!) has provided good memories (with the possible exception of a fairly hateful Suzuki TS250!). If I had to pick one...jeez, this is almost as hard as choosing favourite music...it would be 2! Suzuki GSXR750 from 1997 and Aprilia RSV Mille from 2000. Did loads of miles on both, many of them in Europe; ultra-reliable, superb handling and wonderful engines.

A favourite biking trip is just too difficult to pick; perhaps going down to the Serra da Estrela in Portugal a couple of years ago? Riding across Mallor-



ca on any Sunday afternoon? Leading a mid-summer bike club bash up to Yorkshire? Many rides through France? No, sorry, impossible to decide! Breakdowns have never happened! True, the aforementioned, hateful TS250 would misfire when the roads were wet but as long as I had a cloth and WD40 with me I got by. One puncture on the GSXR750 coming back from Brands Hatch after the August WSB round but remarkably I had breakdown recovery so no drama there. My biggest problems have been with running out of fuel! Thankfully on most occasions it has happened within pushing or rolling distance of a petrol station but I did once run out of fuel on an autoroute on the Germany/France border and had to negotiate in pathetic French with a farmer to buy a couple of litres at an extortionate rate!

The daftest thing that I (no, sorry, I mean a mate!) did goes back almost 40 years; well, he was young and foolish.....but hey, weren't we all!? He'd been running a quiz night and was consuming ale in between asking questions, so by the end of the night he was just a tad over the drink driv-

ing limit. He could have ridden along the A65 safely enough back in to Leeds but no, the silly sod decided it would be a good idea to ride over Ilkley Moor! He was doing OK until he came over a rise and missed the left hand bend and instead went straight on and into a dry stone wall. The rider himself thankfully cleared the wall only to hit a horse jump in the field beyond; 4 faults! The bike meanwhile, a very nice Honda CB750F (at least pre-dry stone wall incident) suffered irreparable damage and had bounced back into the middle of the road in a myriad of pieces.





Meanwhile, the slightly dazed idiot in the field climbed back over the wall and was grateful that the roadblock created by the disintegrated Honda at least prevented the on-coming car driving past and was therefore able to cadge a lift back to civilisation. Apart from huge embarrassment and a destroyed helmet, the only injury sustained was a stiff neck. The moral of the story? Don't be a dickhead!!

Let's hope this bloody awful virus leaves us before long and we can all get back to doing what we love so that we can create many more good memories to look back upon in years to come...with hopefully not too many daft ones!

**Andy Bourne**

## GREEN ROADS

Those in the TRF will know, but others may not understand that we enjoy riding on roads that are not surfaced with the tar or concrete layer most common to your average driver. Some will have been tarmacked in the distant past but as better roads have been built they have got less used and have broken up and overgrown. These "roads" often get used for walking, cycling and horse riding and over the years much conflict has occurred due to misunderstanding between each group. Some counties such as Devon have fairly well signposted County Roads or By-ways, others leave lanes badly signed and add to confusion. For these reasons, I would encourage anyone interested in riding these Green Roads to either join the TRF or speak to one of us who belong, for more information.

The picture is of me and I think Tim Radford climbing a rocky



hill somewhere, although classed as a road, remember it may well have only ever carried horse traffic, but possibly over many centuries. The bike is a KTM 450, great machine but way above my skill levels, and often had me out of control, or worse, on the ground. As far as memory serves, this photo was taken by Matt Towill who, apart from appearing to know the local road network better than a GPS, is kind enough to invite others to join him.

Back to the beginning, like most boys, I enjoyed riding a push bike on the many unused bits of land that surrounded Chard. As a young motorcyclist, I commuted a short distance to work and decided a small bike would suffer less damage during the winter, and be easier to pick up if I fell on ice or snow. This led to me buying a number of Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki 125s. I would find one in the autumn, ride it to work through the winter, then clean it up and sell in the spring. Sometimes I would explore the lanes on my own (not wise) or have a ride in a farmer's field, but it was not really until SAM and a few like-minded riders who also rode "dirt" bikes, got together that I did any serious riding of this type.

I don't consider myself a very competent rider on the rough stuff, and have suffered some painful though not serious falls. Falling off is part of the fun, and we wear similar protection to on the road. Speeds are generally low, and the ground is often soft (muddy and wet), so most times you just laugh and carry on.

I bought a Honda XR250 in 2005, so the photo pre-dates that. I seem to find it's soft, easy going power suits my riding style and don't plan to change it. Surprisingly, for all the falls, struggling through overgrown lanes and all sorts of weather, my red jacket, bought from the BMF when I was a member, is still going, just. Trousers don't last long, and boots are always full of water and get battered so likewise.

So, just a few things that came to mind when I found this print during the lock down.

**Rick Chubb**

## MY TRIBSATON

'Write about your first motorcycle', Graham said, 'Oh, and include a photograph'. Hmm, I'm not sure that my parents would have deemed my first motorcycle as being worthy of one of the precious black and white images on one of their 8 photograph camera rolls of the time. There won't

be any stock images on Google either...it was certainly not a production bike.

The motorcycle that caused my 13 year old heart to swell with the pride of ownership when I handed over a precious £1 note to purchase it was a 'Bitsa Bike'; it comprised components of Triumph, BSA and Norton origin, and I subsequently added some custom refinements of my own, such as the Heinz baked bean can that, with the aid of two jubilee clips, held the exhaust together.

# TRIUMPH

# BSA

# Norton<sup>®</sup>

MOTORCYCLES

Our house was opposite a sizeable piece of arable land and the crop had been harvested so I had plenty of space to ride the bike...or, more often, push it up and down as I tried to start the recalcitrant beast.

All too soon the summer was over and my scrambling track was ploughed ready for the next crop. My anguish was eased by selling my machine for

£6...not the only motorcycle

I have ever made a profit on but the only one that saw a six-fold return. Perhaps more importantly though, that motorcycle was the beginning of a passion that has burned steadily in me for 53 years.

**Peter Herridge**



# MARSHALLING AT DONNINGTON

Back when SAM was new, the police in Taunton were asked for help marshalling at the big races at Donnington. With three serving motorcycle police in SAM, members were asked to help. Some of us jumped at the chance to join them and Maggie and I spent several years in the paddock



Eddie Lawson  
pitlane wander

and pits enjoying such responsibilities as holding the numbered boards up on the start grid, asking Barry Sheen (and many others) not to smoke, grabbing the extinguishers when an Ital-

ian team set fire to spilled high octane fuel, and generally enjoying being amongst all the 500 GP bikes and later, World Superbikes when Foggy and co. did battle. Once I got to drive round on the parade lap, with the third-place sidecar crew.

When not busy, I spent time looking at the bikes, some interesting things seen, included Honda mechanics stripping an engine and throwing all the bolts in a bin. These were titanium when it cost a fortune. Also, when Honda had a new bike, the rider would go straight into the pit garage and the door would be shut. The bikes would spend more time in bits on stands than running.

All good things come to an end, and when Sky took over the broadcasting rights we were expected to do long days. But as we were doing it for virtually nothing (a few free goodies and I think they used to give us a pound a day) with a long journey home, we decided to pack it in.

**Rick Chubb**



# LEWIS LEATHERS

Don't ask where this was taken but these Lewis Leathers were purchased at Silverstone whilst at the GP in 1984. I still have the label on which they are described as "Star Rider Instructor Suite. Size 40". Orange/brown. £75.00. They were on Wilf



Churchill's stand. The suite must have been made for someone and then not wanted, it had several badges which meant nothing to me and were removed. I bought it mainly because it was about half price for a good quality set of leathers at that time, I liked the colours and they fitted (still do, I may wear them on a "Ride your Other Bike" run one day). They have no armour, just some foam padding, but before these I just wore a leather jacket and denim jeans.

We had started to visit the GP at Silverstone in the mid-seventies and saw some great races including Sheen/Roberts and Fast Freddy doing the 500/250 double in the rain. Camping was an adventure with many fans from around the world, some crazy antics including wheelies between the tents, big bonfires, even rocking the portacabin loos until they fell on their side. As you can imagine, sleep was not easy. The race day was spent either baking in the sun or sheltering from the rain whilst trying to stay awake after so much noise during the previous night.

I guess I must have been getting more mature at this time as I also took the IAM test the year I bought the leathers. Although Maggie claims I have never grown up.

**Rick Chubb**



# TEENAGE THRILLS

Like most teenagers in the late 60s/early 70s, my bicycle was my essential means for exploration and freedom. So it was inevitable that the addition of a motor was to be the next target. Come 16 years of age, my father had already convinced my mother that I'd be safer on the roads with a full 1.8hp to help my legs keep pace with other traffic, so when a local motorcycle shop was selling a Honda PC50, I made sure it didn't stay in the



showroom too long. At a time when Yamaha were just launching their FS1E, the PC50 certainly wasn't cool – but it was also a lot cheaper, it was good enough to stay with my mate's Puch Maxi, and it had an engine! (Honda also launched the SS50 at that time, but being a 4-stroke it always played

2<sup>nd</sup> fiddle to the FS1E, or the 3 speed Puch VZ50).

Being a twist and go, the PC50 couldn't even dream of a wheelie, so when a friend was selling his Puch MS50V (yes, a clutch and 2 speed handlebar gearchange!) an upgrade was obvious. Clothing remained the same, though – a windcheater and (if necessary) waterproof trousers on top of my school uniform! After all, it didn't go much faster than my pushbike.

My 17<sup>th</sup> birthday soon came, and having covered many thousands of miles on my 2 mopeds it was now

time to buy a "proper" bike. Money obviously came into it, but I was also very aware of the risks on moving to a (then-allowed) 250cc rocket. So



ready for the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1974 new 'N' registrations, I bought a brand-new Suzuki A100 from a dealer in Inverness. £278.10 (which included £18 for a year's fully comprehensive insurance) was money well spent on a bike that wasn't a step-through, even if it didn't have a proper



cradle frame. I remember marking the full throttle movement into 1/8ths, and using these to run it in for the first 800 miles – 1/8 for 100 miles, 2/8 up to 200 miles, etc. The benefit of this careful running in regime meant that, when I came to sell it a year later (having by then bought a car ready for Uni), it had over 10,000 miles on the clock and still running like new. When the exact same bike rode past me in traffic in Swindon in 1987, 13 years later, still looking and sounding good, I was convinced on the value of running in engines of that era.

3 months later I passed my Bike Test, allowing me to dispense with the L Plates and carry passengers – relatively unusual at my school at that time, which probably explains why I was regularly pulled over by the police to check my licence! Even then, though, I wasn't entirely daft, and tended to ride it within the legal limits most of the time - bikes then (and still now) scared me! I didn't come off, I didn't have an accident, so obviously I wasn't a 'proper' biker!

Protective clothing still wasn't something that figured heavily in my vocabulary, mainly because my bike was my freedom, my means to get to-and-from school, rather than a long-distance work tool. So whilst motorcycle gear at that time seemed to revolve around 2 options (leathers or Belstaff, both of which were way outside my budget), it was normal everyday jeans, denim jacket and a cagoule/waterproof trousers that kept me safe and dry. A couple of years at University and it was time to sell my car, which meant that I needed another set of wheels. It was May, so seemed sensible to get a bike for the summer (I had to commute from one side of Edinburgh to the other for my summer job), and found a beautiful Suzuki GT250M.



Owned by an old (to me, but probably only in his 30's!) gent who also had a Velocette Thruxton and an old BMW, this was an immaculate 2 year old example with 7,000 miles on the clock. And once again, it had been run in carefully, so retained the smooth “ting ting” that the RamAir engine always did from new, delivering surprising torque at low to medium revs (my flat mate later bought

a less-well looked after one, which had nothing below 6000 rpm and sounded like a bag of nails!).

At this time I shared a house with 5 other students, in a location that even now amazes me. It was on the promenade at Portobello, a suburb of Edinburgh, so not only did the front garden give us space to look after the 6 bikes in the house, it also had the most amazing view over the Firth of

Forth. The stable with-in our house at this time included My Suzuki GT250M, a Kawasaki KH250, a Honda CB125S (which 2 years later I was to buy from my flatmate), a Honda C70, a scooter of some sort and a lovely Harley Davidson SXT125. This was actually manufactured by



Aeromacchi, of whom Harley Davidson's parent company, AMF, owned a 50% share.

And clothing? Well, I still had my denim jacket! And for very wet journeys back home (circa 200 miles up the A9), an anorak on top of the denims, then a cagoule on top of that, seemed to suffice.





Come September, I had put on several thousand miles commuting across Edinburgh (including quite a few careful trips with Alison on the back, a first for her at that time), and it was time to sell the Suzuki for something bigger. The choice was either a new Kawasaki Z650, or the budget option of a Honda CB500T, which was being heavily discounted by Eddie Grimstead “down South” due to the current demand for 4-cylinder bikes at that time. The result? A Renault 6!! Ah well, it was coming in to Autumn and Winter, and unlike most SAM members, a car was more important to me then (and now) than a bike, which was (and remains) a social pleasure rather than an essential means of transport. And that was the end of my early biking days, with an absence of bikes for the next 20 years. **Graham Tulloch**



## ODE TO A BIKER

Back in the 70s I got stopped by the law,  
"Take your lid of sonny" saw him drop his jaw.  
"Is this your bike?" "No, I nicked it" came to mind,  
But I thought be sensible, don't want to be fined.  
After he had told me off and said I mustn't speed,  
He had a look around my bike and said, "Nice indeed."  
Then sent me on my way "Be careful as you go."  
40 years later, who would ever know,  
That I'd still be biking and love it even more.  
If the cops stopped me today, it is pretty sure,  
Points would swiftly follow, lenience? No chance.  
Look out for those cameras and regular mirror glance!  
Sensible among us say "Of course, you shouldn't speed."  
No argument, they are correct, and virtuous indeed.  
But who can put their hand up and say they NEVER do?  
Ah, there's someone at the back, congratulations you!  
To enjoy speed at its best, let's get on the track,  
Get those tyres shabby, and one day get the knack,  
Of knee down on those sliders, bum out of the seat.  
Grinning all the way home, a track day you can't beat!

**Janet Short**



Janet Short on her Honda 400-4 (right of picture) from her days as an RAC/ACU instructor, around 1979