

Summer 2020

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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Front Cover: Dan Wright "eyeing the gap" during the recent Slow Riding Skills Day at Bridgwater College



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



Well, it's been a funny old summer so far, that's for sure. On the one hand I feel blessed that our chosen form of transport turns out to be a less risky one, for a change, increasing our freedom of movement. On the other, I miss all my SAM friends and the camaraderie of the rides out. Zoom meetings are way better than nothing, and nowhere near as good as actual face to face contact. Social media has lived up to its reputation as both a blessing and a curse, both providing a way of keeping in contact with people and finding out how they are, and also allowing a truly gobsmacking amount of nonsense to be spouted by the less informed or the frankly malicious.

Like many people I know, I have a sense of being a bit fed up with this new game now, and ready to go back to life as normal. It's really difficult for me to get my head around such an invisible menace, as well as the idea that "normal" is a long way off, if not permanently different. The thing I



find hardest is trying to do familiar things in an unfamiliar way, so I am constantly forgetting to keep a face covering on my person, (I do go back for it, but it's another thing to get unreasonably annoyed about) gel my hands after touching public surfaces, like door handles or supermarket trolleys, and staying back from people when I meet them.

However, we've finally managed our first official SAM event since lockdown, at the Branson's Open Day, where we had our new gazebo and some volunteers ready to promote the cause of Advanced Riding to all comers. I must say it was an unexpected delight to see so many SAM members who popped in to say hello – so good to see them all. By the time this hits your doormat, we'll also have held a Slow Riding Event at Bridgwater College. Both venues lend themselves well to social distancing and it's a relief to be able to get something constructive done.

Although the weather has become much less gorgeous, there have been some good riding days. Traffic levels have built up a lot from the lockdown lows, but I feel that as this has happened, there's been a bit less lockdown lunacy, as well, not to mention some truly excellent restrained driving, on occasion. I still ride with a sense of mistrust of other road users, though. I got the opportunity to practise my emergency braking skills the other day when the driver of the car in front of me decided that turning right at a local beauty spot was an emergency. Since I was busy reviewing the possibilities for an overtake after we'd passed it, a rapid switch to plan B was re-



quired, along with the mental reminder that laybys are junctions too.

Many thanks to all of the contributors to this issue. If you've never sent us anything for it, do consider it. The deadline for the next issue will be 15th October, 2020.

Gina Herridge

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

How do you start your first chairman's chatter?

A bit of an into' perhaps? If you'd have told me 6 years ago that I'd be chairman of a 270 person strong Advanced Motorcycle Club I'd have laughed in your face. Well, here I am. I joined SAM in the summer of 2014, a month or so after passing my Direct Access qualification to ride a motorbike. I then progressed to Observer, National Observer and Masters. I'm hoping that

my achievements are perceived in a positive way to encourage new riders and women for that matter to pursue Advanced Riding. I'm sure anyone can achieve what I've achieved if they put their mind to it, with a bit of encouragement in the right places.

Taking over from Jez Martin my partner was in hindsight the best time to take on the job because the hand-over has been seamless. We are able to talk through ideas at home. As chairman I hadn't quite realised how much was involved. I'm in demand, especially with my other role as Associate Coordinator.



Bringing the club out of lockdown is a tense and sensitive time. As a club which is affiliated to IAM Roadsmart we need to follow the government guidelines to the letter. I have everything crossed that there won't be a second wave of infection and restrictions get tightened again as I for one enjoy the merits of our very active social calendar.

The feedback from our recent return to Green Group Rides has been very positive. The first weekend of Group Rides included 6 groups of 6 leaving from two different start locations at staggered times. These are the first

rides since March and were fully booked via Eventbrite. There is an emphasis on Associates to attend these as they offer an opportunity to meet other club members and get to ride behind an Advanced Rider. I can assure you that the organisation that went on behind the scenes to make this happen was of titanic proportions! I'm hoping we can use this as a template for further repeats of the same. Watch this space!

A special mention also has to go to our recent Slow Speed Skills Day which again was booked out via Eventbrite within days. This event was a complete team effort by our core of volunteers.

The future?

Our virtual zoom fortnightly committee meetings will continue so that we can plan and organise further events for our club members. If you wish to get involved just contact me, 'the Chair' (woman / person / man, whatever she likes to be called / not decided yet)

Lisa Parsons



SAM NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS!

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

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

- Simon Greenwood on 10th March. Simon was riding his BMW K1600GT during his MBP assessment, observed by Graham Tulloch.
- Andy Woodhead on 30th June, riding his Triumph Tiger. Andy was observed by Martin Surrey.
- John Ridd on 1st July. John was riding his BMW GS1250 and was observed by Andy Phillips.
- Perran Woolfrey also on 1st July. Perran took the MBP route for his Test riding his Kawasaki ZXR600 and was observed by Jez Martin.
- Tony Nares on 7th July riding his BMW GS1200. Tony was observed by Callum Bremner.
- Paul French on 12th July. Paul was riding a Yamaha 950 Scrambler and was observed by David Slocombe.
- Alan Wardle on 13th July riding a BMW XR1000. Alan was observed by Martin Surrey.
- Andy Bennett on 28th July riding a Suzuki GSXF1250, observed by Georges Dupuis.
- Angus Stewart on 5th August. Angus was riding a Kawasaki Versys, and was observed by Rob Malton.
- Paul Houghton on 6th August riding a Triumph Thruxton 1200. Paul was observed by Georges Dupuis.
- Andy Jones on 10th August. Andy was riding a Suzuki GSXR and was observed by Martin Surrey.



- Tom Humphries on 10th August riding his Yamaha Fazer 600, also observed by Martin Surrey.
- Peter Saunders on 14th August. Peter was riding a BMW GS F800 and was observed by Simon Greenwood.

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

CONTACT DETAILS

If your contact details change (especially email address), please inform sammembershipsecretary@gmail.com so that we can keep you informed of the latest news and events.

Committee Meetings

i.e. what we are doing in your name; all members are welcome to attend Committee meetings to keep an eye on us. Equally, if anyone has a comment to make on any matters mentioned here, please contact a committee member to let us know.



The minutes of previous Committee meetings (held at The Lamb & Lion, Hambridge before Covid restrictions, and then via Zoom Conferencing) can be obtained from the Secretary on request.

IAM Inform

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

Single Lane Riding

SINGLE LANE RIDING

By this we mean, there are no central markings in the road. Even where this occurs temporarily after resurfacing, you will still encounter road users who struggle to use the road in two halves.

What do we need to think about?

See and Be Seen (Huge Factor) – It's all about the

Information phase, because the lack of road space means that you need more time to plan and act. The oncoming vehicles need half of that space to plan and respond, too, remember. Also drivers are seated on the right so have less visibility to a right hand bend.

Constant Re-Assessment (Huge Factor) – Most single track roads vary in width and surface along their length, so you can start with a good surface and plenty of space, and find that they end up much narrower and with a rubbish surface. Or you can start with long views and gentle curves, and transition to tight blind bends.

Broad categories:

1. **Can Pass with Good Positioning.** Just position well and remember the “less tarmac equals less speed” rule.
2. **Bit of a squeeze.** Large oncoming vehicles will require special



care. What if the next thing you see is the milk lorry? Less tarmac equals less speed.

3. **Can only pass if riding slowly and close to oncoming vehicles.** The speed of the oncoming vehicle becomes a crit-



ical factor – the faster it's going, the harder it's going to hit you if the driver misjudges. All you can do is try to make yourself visible early and look for your safe space on approach. *If there is time*, consider positioning assertively at first, to try to persuade the oncoming vehicle to slow, but ensure that you have time to get to your refuge.



4. **You are going to have to stop** unless you are at a passing place or gateway where one of you gets off the road. Anticipation and planning are crucial here. You have to make yourself visible as early as possible to give the oncoming time to stop and figure out that they have to reverse. Consider stopping opposite an earlier passing place than the very last one you can see – if the oncoming driver doesn't stop at the best place, you still have a plan.

Other Features:



Long Straight....with or without middle bit of bad surface. (e.g. gravel, mud, or grass.) Straights give you more time to see and be seen by oncoming vehicles, but remember you need to be able to stop in half that distance, they need the other half.

Long/Medium bends. As the view closes, your safe speed falls rapidly – half the distance

you can see to be clear, remember.

Tight blind Bends – These are trickle-round on the extreme left jobs. You won't have time to change course if you see an oncoming vehicle, so you have to assume that there's one coming and be out of its way. You do get

even less view tucked in on the left, but if you weren't going to have time to reach a place of safety in half the distance you can see, you can not afford to be out on the right for a look, it puts you right in the path of danger.

Crap in Middle with narrow tracks of decent surface. It's all about the planning. If you will destabilise your bike in crossing back to the left track, *you have to stay in the left track.* (This is true for newly gravelled two track roads, too.)



Field entrances....old (or new) evidence from muddy tracks –

there may be mud or debris on the road or the surface may be broken up by tractors. If you are going to want to be on the right hand side of the road, you need to approach slowly enough that if an oncoming vehicle appears, you (and they) can stop. If you have to cross poor surface, plan to do it straight and level, with no braking or acceleration.

Cattle grids. Again, be upright, and not changing speed. If it's raining and the grid is on a steep uphill, you need to accelerate on the approach to gather enough momentum, then pull in the clutch so that you coast over the grid. (Your bike needs to be under drive to get you up the hill, but the rear tyre will spin on the wet metal of the grid, so you need to take off the drive as you cross the grid.)



Pedestrians have nowhere to go. Pedestrians and horses are effectively road blocks when the road is narrow. Stay back until they are able to either get by you or to get out of your way.

Broken Debris – if the surface is loose or bumpy, grip is compromised. Momentum (up to a point!) is your friend if you are going in a straight line, braking and turning are *not* your friends, plan them for the bits of roads where there is grip. Look well ahead, past the rough stuff, keep your hands gentle on the bars – if

you have a death grip, all the bumps become steering and throttle inputs, giving you more problems. Plan to not to use the front brake.



My ability to cross.....My ability! If you are on the right of a strip of poor surface, you are going to have to be the one to cross it if something comes the other way. How much distance do you need for that plan? If there's not too much of a ridge or rut, a gentle angle so that the bike stays straight is best, but keep looking ahead and cross before it gets too challenging: The laws of physics are unforgiving. However, be prepared to stay on your side if the challenge of re-crossing the crap would be dangerous to your health! You won't be judged on which side you pass but on being seen early and stopping at the side to let the vehicle through. Riding on the left is just a convention – safety is more important.

Gina Herridge & the Training Team

Filtering is our Friend if done right

Filtering on your motorbike is legal in the UK but there are still laws around when you can and can't filter. (HC Rules 88, 160 and 211). IAM guidance is in the filtering section of ARC.

Luckily, most car drivers in the UK now know that filtering by motorcycles is entirely legal. They've probably watched a police motorcyclist do it and

then realised there is only one law and it applies to all of us.

Occasionally, though, you may come across some four-wheeled Neanderthal who isn't quite up-to-speed on the legalities around filtering. So, it pays to make sure you are up-to-speed yourself and where you can and can't filter.

So, what's the law on motorbikes filtering?

In 2006, a judge ruled in the case of Davis vs Shrogin that "a filtering motorcyclist passing stationary or very slow-moving traffic could not be to blame if a collision occurred if the rider had no chance to take avoiding action."

Checking the Highway Code, under Rules for Motorcyclists, Rule 88 states, 'manoeuvring. You should be aware of what is behind and to the sides before

manoeuvring. Look behind you; use mirrors if they are fitted. When in traffic queues look out for pedestrians crossing between vehicles and vehicles emerging from junctions or changing lanes. Position yourself so that drivers in front can see you in their mirrors. Additionally, **when filtering in slow-moving traffic**, take care and keep your speed low.'

Then in Rule 160, where the advice is aimed more at other vehicle drivers, it clarifies this with, 'Once moving, you should be aware of other road users, **especially cycles and motorcycles who may be filtering through the traffic**. These are more difficult to see than larger vehicles and their riders are particularly vulnerable...'



So, it's clear that the Highway Code has specific provisions that cover filtering.

Many bikers shy away from it but if you follow these tips you should be able to filter safely and at the right speed.

We need to consider 2 types of filtering:

- Filtering to the offside of traffic (approaching traffic lights or a roundabout).
- Filtering between lanes of traffic (dual carriageway or motorway).

Both of these have specific dangers.

Generally speaking, you shouldn't be moving faster than 10-15mph more than the prevailing traffic speed. Doing 40mph in or past stationary traffic, even in a 40 zone, really isn't advisable, there's too much information to take in. If you have an accident, it's likely that your



insurance company will take the same view.

Where the traffic itself is moving at anything more than 15-20 mph the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) advises that you shouldn't filter at all, as the traffic is flowing and vehicles can more quickly move into spaces ahead of you. In this instance you are not filtering, you are overtaking and undertaking!

Going faster also means you are getting to spaces quicker, giving you less time to react if anything gets there first.

Body positioning - Your ability to react quickly during filtering is vital if you are to deal with cars turning into your path at short notice. So it doesn't help to have tensed arms and legs – they actively reduce your reaction time. Keep your body relaxed, with arms slightly bent and your legs gentle against the tank. You don't need to be gripping the bike fiercely at filtering speeds.

You really don't want to be tense when filtering for long periods of time, during a miles-long motorway jam, for example. Tense muscles tire you more quickly, making you vulnerable to fatigue.

When this happens, you can find your mind wandering to the issue of fatigue and not focusing on what you should be doing, which is focusing on the path ahead.

If you do become fatigued when filtering, find a safe gap between other vehicles to pull into and stay with the traffic flow until you are back up to your peak riding quality state-of-mind. The IAM advises 'Any prolonged session of filtering is tiring and requires the utmost concentration. On certain machines, the riding position may cause discomfort at slow speeds. Be prepared to stay in line for a short time if you are affected.'

You should also consider when filtering to the offside: "Can I see my return position, or could I possibly get caught out?" If you get marooned out there with no safe landing space, your safety relies on opposing traffic manoeuvring around you.

At the end of filtering, consider where you want your bike to be. Following filtering on the offside or between lanes, you don't want to be at the front for the traffic lights – chose a safe place to end up, normally behind the first car in the queue.

Also be aware of 2 lanes merging into a single lane, both queues of vehicles will be attempting to get optimum position. The safest place for a bike is either in one of the lanes or to the offside – definitely not between two lanes of merging cars. Worth repeating some of the defensive riding stuff

here about driver body language, wheels turning etc etc Good old SLAP comes in handy. Let's do it Safely, we know it is Legal. We should definitely gain an Advantage, but that Perception of bullying our way through will get us no brownie points in the public's eye.

All in all, filtering is great for making progress when others can't! We have engines that don't like just being sat there getting hotter and hotter, so by all means filter but do it with courtesy and consideration, where the available road space makes it safe to consider. And don't forget to thank those drivers who help you filter safely! **Callum Bremner & the Training Team**



BIKING NEWS

MAG



The following article appeared in the July/August 2020 issue of The Road, MAG's bi-monthly magazine, and has been reproduced here by kind permission of Ian Mutch, President of MAG.

Rick Chubb,

SAM MAG Representative

Of Carbon and Motorcycles

Director of Campaigns and Political Engagement, Colin Brown takes a long look at motorcycle carbon emissions.

To quote the Walrus, "The time has come to talk of many things". Now first of all, we all know that Carbon is not a greenhouse gas, so it can't contribute to global warming or climate change. Why then is the shorthand so commonly used? The answer seems to me to be nothing more than to create maximum confusion. After all when we quote emissions numbers how many people really take the time to check? When comparing numbers from different sources are we comparing like for like?

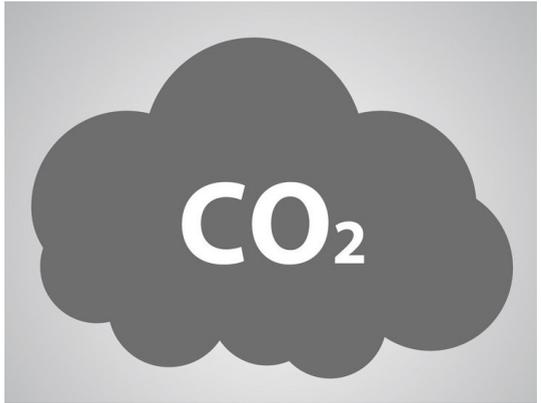
Reading on the whole subject you may also come across the term carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). 'carbon dioxide equivalent' or 'CO₂e' is a term for describing different greenhouse gases in a common unit. For any quantity and type of greenhouse gas, CO₂e signifies the amount of CO₂ which would have the equivalent global warming impact.

Carbon is a chemical element which is present in many gases and compounds. For example, carbon combines with oxygen to make carbon dioxide (CO₂), and combines with hydrogen to make methane (CH₄). The term 'carbon' is used in a variety of ways when talking about greenhouse

gas emissions, and therefore tends to be ambiguous and potentially confusing. 'Carbon' is sometimes used as a shorthand for referring to CO₂, or greenhouse gases in general, and it can also be used to express CO₂ emissions in terms of the amount of carbon in the CO₂.

The atomic weight of a carbon atom is 12 and the atomic weight of oxygen is 16, so the total atomic weight of CO₂ is 44 (12 + (16 * 2) = 44). This means that a quantity of CO₂ can be expressed in terms of the amount of carbon it contains by multiplying the amount of CO₂ by 0.27 (12/44). E.g. 1kg of CO₂ can be expressed as 0.27kg of carbon, as this is the amount of carbon in the CO₂.

The term 'carbon' can be confusing as it is used as a shorthand expression to refer to either just CO₂ or to greenhouse gases in general (although not all GHGs contain carbon!). In addition, converting CO₂ to carbon is not particularly useful as doing so does not allow comparisons between different GHGs, in the way that converting to CO₂e does. As a result it is less and less common to see CO₂ emissions reported in terms of 'carbon', though shorthand terms such as 'carbon accounting' and 'low carbon econo-



my' are still used as popular proxies for 'GHG accounting' or 'GHG'. If by this point you are still reading, then the lockdown really has gone on far too long.

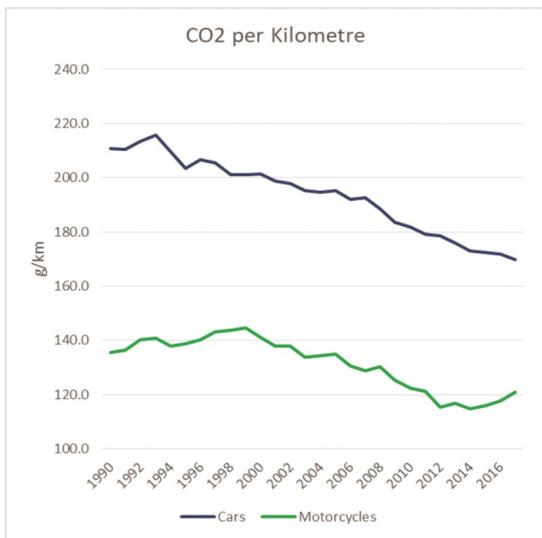
When we look at data sheets for vehicles their emissions are normally quoted as CO₂ per kilometre. So that is carbon dioxide per kilometre not carbon per kilometre. The National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory is the official publisher of the UK emissions of greenhouse gas emissions. They quote emissions of 'carbon as carbon dioxide' so the number is not directly relate-able with the CO₂ emissions figures – you need to multiply by 12 and divide by 44 or vice versa depending which direction you are heading (and possibly which day of the week it is).

Confused yet?

So I will stop boring you and cut to the chase. What we really need to know is, are motorcycles better

than cars when it comes to CO2 emissions? The answer is a resounding YES.

As I did with NO2 emissions I have used NAEI and DfT data to calculate



average emissions per kilometre for cars and motorcycles and put it in a nice graph for you. As you can see the average motorcycle on the road at any point in history emits significantly less CO2 per kilometre than the average car. And if you are wondering, yes that includes electric cars and motorcycles in the averages. You may see a closing gap in the last few years, which is likely to be down to a number of factors, including the fact that electric cars are a larger proportion

of the car fleet than electric bikes are of the total motorcycle fleet. Another possible reason is a shift from 50cc mopeds to electric push bikes that have similar performance with none of the regulation, and are not classed as motorcycles.

Whilst doing this analysis and rummaging around in DfT data sets I also stumbled on a rather depressing set of data. Now it probably won't come as a surprise to most of you that the proportion of bikes to cars on our roads has been in gradual decline for many years. We all discuss the aging demographic of bikers and lament the dwindling numbers of young riders bringing new blood to our cohort. What I came across however was a much starker decline in the area of motorcycle commuters. Those sturdy folk for whom the motorcycle is their main mode of transport for arriving at and escaping from the daily grind.

Over a 15 year period from 2002 to 2017 the number of regular motorcycle commuters plummeted by 37%. Now it is true that some of those may have converted to the holy trinity (walking cycling and public transport), but I would suggest that most will have just gone for the car keys. What is the CO2 emissions impact of bikers foregoing their bikes for cars to carry out their daily commute you may ask. Well, so did I. And strangely enough I

answered myself. Over the 15 year period the carbon emission cost of commuting bikers using cars instead was 130.2 Kilotonnes of carbon (yes that is carbon, not CO2 – to be consistent with NAEI reporting figures).

What, I hear you ask would have been the emissions saving had the Government taken an enlightened position of encouraging more people to ride motorcycles to work? Well I asked that too, and yes I answered myself again. Had there been a modest program to result in a mere 1% modal shift over 15 years from cars to motorcycles (that is just 1 in every 150 car commuters each year making the switch) the nation would have emitted 294.3 Kilotonnes less carbon.

Remember these figures are just

using motorcycles to commute, there is no inclusion of benefits for using motorcycles for other trip purposes.

Regardless of arguments about electrification, I defy anyone to say that promoting motorcycles would have damaged the nation's attempts to reduce carbon/carbon dioxide emissions.

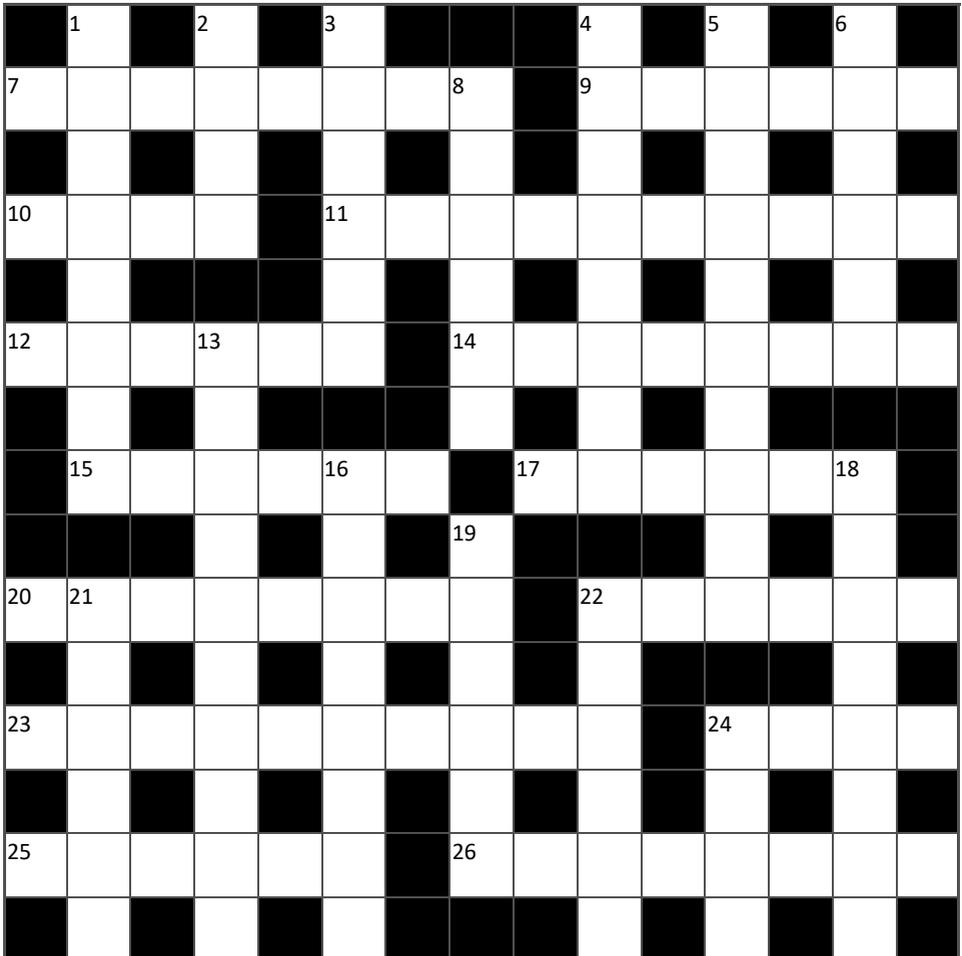
Remember also that tailpipe emissions are only part of the story when it comes to total carbon emissions. The 'embedded carbon' emissions from the manufacture and de-commissioning of the vehicles would add even more to motorcycling's green account (Are green brownie points a thing?)

The only question remaining has to be, why can the policy makers not get their heads around this simple argument?

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

As you will be aware, Coronavirus has caused the cancellation of all Group Rides in the SAM calendar for 2020 until further notice. However, following a couple of carefully-managed rides in August, Ride Leaders will try to arrange some Group Rides over the coming months. These will be restricted to a maximum of 6 bikes per Group, but hopefully we can arrange multiple-Groups for each event. Attendance will be strictly through advance booking on Eventbrite, so keep a close eye on your emails/Facebook over the coming months for advance notice. We will try and ensure some Green rides are included, and we would encourage all recent associates to join these if possible, as they are a fun and valuable addition to your advanced training.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 7 Something done next to young woman in charge of Milky Way (8)
- 9 Wader played octave (6)
- 10 Outside Broadcast by old English instrument (4)
- 11 Reliability shown in homestead in Essex (10)
- 12 Sets locations (6)
- 14 Helpings of wine and charged particles (8)
- 15 Sung by skeletons around hospital (6)
- 17 She was challenged, initially, as nobody new, ever knew anything (6)

CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 20 Guess from East. Time adjustment required (8)
- 22 Performers? Bill Hill second (6)
- 23 Shades of 15 girls (10)
- 24 Unusual pink (4)
- 25 Performer? Sculpture first (6)
- 26 Spectra sounds like what queens do and what ribbons may make (8)

Down

- 1 Acid in soap makes crab coil another way (8)
- 2 Benefit drink from 17 for example (4)
- 3 Assist to change equilibrium (6)
- 4 Chairman daringly holds senior civil servant (8)
- 5 'Same time, same place?' Penny precedes detectives to hospital department (10)
- 6 One of four, cause starting with second, not right (6)
- 8 Mysterious American First Nation member with first pair of pyjamas (6)
- 13 Feature of engine, Highland cow, fish and feature of fish (7,3)
- 16 Rural, a cart even has individually priced items (6)
- 18 Propellers without second personnel propelled (8)
- 19 Signal device that cuts content when broadcast (6)
- 21 'T' for example, not hip (6)
- 22 Leo Abse illness gets let down face by rope (6)
- 24 Dress alumnus in religious studies (4)

Solution in next issue

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

Solution to Spring 2020 Crossword

Across: 1 Jocund, 4 Esoteric, 10 Natal, 11 Maharajah, 12 En masse, 13 Rancher, 14 Raring, 15 Poach, 18 Knobs, 20 Launch, 25 Gumshoe, 27 Ramadan, 28 Panama hat, 29 Tidal, 30 Nearside, 31 Prayer.

Down: 1 Jane Eyre, 2 Catamaran, 3 Nilsson, 5 Sahara, 6 Toronto, 7 Rajah, 8 Cohere, 9 Amber, 16 Canada Day, 17 Chandler, 19 Bahamas, 21 Ammeter, 22 Egg pan, 23 Method, 24 Greta, 26 Monza.

KIT REPORTS

The Saga of the Indian Gaiters

First of all I should say that this may not be typical of service from India, but this year has been far from normal.

My idea, after asking on the Royal Enfield forums, was to order something cheap on E-bay from India, to see what the service was like - how quick, genuine parts, and if it was worth ordering other more expensive parts in the future or not.

I wanted to fit some fork gaiters. Many bikes of this style would have previously had them as standard, and I have fitted them to a couple of bikes in the past and never had to touch the fork seals despite my less than average bike cleaning regime.



Searching E-bay, the cheapest on the site were advertised for £13.47 + freepost. Delivery estimated 24th April to 1st June. This was on 26th March so we were in the first few weeks of lock down and no great hurry to



put the Interceptor back on the road. I paid up and got on with other things.

The 1st June came and I started checking the shipping details. On I think the 17th they were despatched and were then scanned into a container in New Delhi on 19th. This was the last shipping detail listed and was under a DHL heading but I assumed the parcel was now on a ship.

On the 8th July the gaiters arrived with my postman and are now fitted. Some of my questions are still un-answered, so I may try again but will wait for things to settle down to "normal" before I do.

Rick Chubb

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

Throughout my motorcycling career, I like a lot of others have had numerous bikes. I started my adventure on a Honda MTX50 and rode that thing for hours, I cannot ever recall getting off of that machine with a numb backside.

I progressed to a Honda CG125, now though I have friends who are 12 years older than me, so suddenly I'm transported to pillion and the extravagance of Blackpool or Filey and Bridlington as a weekend run 70-80 miles.

I passed my test and bought a Suzuki GS550. No more pillion for me!

Throughout this period, I can't remember having pain at the end of a ride. So why is it that nowadays we all seem to suffer with this very issue? Is it an age thing? It could be - however, I believe it has much more to do with ergonomics and manufacturing costs. Seats used to be about 4 inches thick, or 100mm in new money. They were flat and wide, not shaped and you could ride for hours. Now we have incredibly thin seats, gel seats, memory foam seats, air pads, sheepskins and the like.

We all seem to know what we like and go with it. I ride a K1600 and whilst I love the bike, I don't like the ergonomics out of the factory. For that matter I didn't like my RT1100 when I bought that either. My bike previous to going to BMW was a GTR1000 Kawasaki, old style seat, big fairing, a ride from Cheddar to Halifax, non-stop saw me get off just as I got on. No aches or pains.

Unfortunately, someone decided they needed the bike more than I did and despite chasing them around a housing estate at 2 in the morning, a burned-out machine was all that was recovered. Lesson learned - better locks and security, and take the car to visit family.

This was all before I was due to go to the TT in a month's time, so I needed a bike and bought the RT as on test ride it seemed to fit. However, riding from Cheddar to Heysham for the ferry it soon became apparent it was



not as comfortable as the GTR.

Now like a lot of others I tried a gel insert, better but 1.5 hours in the saddle was causing pain. Air pad could not get on with that at all. Cycling shorts, I wear them for my mountain bike rides (gravel tracks not serious MT bike routes) and as I do this for exercise, they are fine. Everyday riding, no thanks, I would feel like I had an accident down there.

So, I found some Corbin seats on eBay going for a very reasonable £250,



I bought them and drove to Telford to pick them up. Like having a different bike. I moved the bars higher and further back, different screen and then had the bike I wanted.

10 years on I sold the RT and bought the K16, on test the bike felt much better good

seat (or so I thought), good screen etc. Then real world, 1½ hours in the saddle and there is the old pain again, this time my lower back hurt as did my arms.

With what I had learned from the RT I knew where to start, change the seats. Corbin seats, rocking horse nuggets unless you want to pay full price (£800+). I found some Sargent seats with backrest for £450, been fitted for two months (£950 new). More local this time in Chippenham. What a difference, now three hours is fine. However, I am still getting lower back and arm pain, so I raise and move back the handlebars, pain gone. Now to fix the other aspects I don't like, gearshift is too long and not always positive, there is a double linkage with pivot kit from America,





bought and fitted, it's a different bike.

I changed the screen for a wider and higher unit, still a little buffeting, so I try a cheap screen extension from eBay, and the buffeting has gone with the screen on its lowest setting, the only time I lift the screen now is to get my wallet out of the storage bag.

What have I changed? Exhausts, too quiet as standard, Max Torque; Engine Bars, Held; Rear crash bars from America as Held units raise

up to top of pannier and would be behind the knees of a pillion; Plastic protectors for engine bars, Uk; Gear Linkage, America; Seats, Sargent; Handlebar raisers – Wunderlich; Screen Wunderlich; Hand guards, Wunderlich, keep the cold air off in winter; Extra Lights, Denali; Loud Horn, Denali; Rubber pannier top paint protectors, Australia; Rear Reflective Kit, eBay; Rear compartment behind number plate for Puncture kit, Uk; Uprated speakers, Halfords; Rub-



ber protectors on side and base of panniers, Wunderlich

Under screen bag, Wunderlich; Tank bag, SW Motech; GPS Speedo, UK- Marine spec.

What do I still want to change? ECU map, the throttle is like an on / off switch and is too abrupt when letting off the throttle initially and too snappy when back on. This means sending the ECU to, you guessed it,





America.

Which brings me onto my last point - we live in a great country with quality engineers and have had decades of motorcycle manufacturing experience (in the past mostly), why can't we get parts as simple as profiled rubber for a pannier, without having to send to Australia?

Why can't motorcycle manufacture build a bike, especially a tourer, that you can ride for hours without pain? The big question is why we accept it as a characteristic, it's not, it's a design flaw... **Simon Greenwood**

MEMBER'S ADVENTURES

A Thousand Bends

In 2000 we made our first foray into Spain, this is a copy of my diary made at that time.

As with many great ideas, this one was hatched when Maggie and I were having a drink with long-time friends Ruth and Tim. I mentioned a desire to ride a bike to Spain, to sample the mountain roads. It was soon agreed that the four of us would go together at the beginning of September, when

Europe had gone back to work. Although several months before the agreed time, when Maggie phoned to book ferry places, some of the sailings were already full. We finally settled on Brittany Ferries, Wednesday August 30th. Sailing to Santander, more expensive than P&O but much quicker, with a return ferry from Cherbourg on 9th September.

As none of us had travelled in Spain, other than Maggie and I on package holidays, we decided to pre-book accommodation for the first two nights and then look for B&Bs along the way. Brittany Ferries did a list of "character inns" which all cost about £37 for a double room, half board. I had been told the road from Santander to Burgos was great for bikes, so from the Brittany booklet we chose a converted monastery at Aguilar de Campoo, which lies half way between.

After much thought and a couple of trial rides, I decided to take the trusty VFR, as Maggie never complains on the pillion, and besides, the Triumph (Sprint RS) was due its 6,000 mile service two days after our return and had already clocked 5965 miles. So with tank bag and panniers (Oxford Lifetime) loaded, we met Ruth and Tim at Axminster and headed

west towards Plymouth. No problems getting on the ferry, and with the bike securely tied to a hand-rail, we dumped our gear in the cabins, grabbed some beers and sat in the sun. We had been concerned that 24 hours on a ferry would be a drag, but in fact, we all really enjoyed our "mini cruise". A few drinks, meal, good night's sleep, breakfast, more sun, I even saw a whale "blowing" close to the ship.

Suitably wound down into holiday mood, we rode down the gangway, through customs into Santander, where we ran the gauntlet of frantically waving, whistle blowing police, who obviously have to clear the roads of all these visitors as fast as possible. Once out into the country we started to enjoy just about the best road I've ever ridden. Little traffic, warm, every uphill a series of fast bends, all with crawler lanes, so you never get stuck behind slower vehicles. After a well-earned coke at a roadside bar, we made our way to Aguilar de Campoo and booked into the hotel. Once changed and settled in, we walked up to a nearby dam, where we obtained a panoramic view of the town below, the lake and mountains. Then back to the hotel for a beer, dinner and bed.



After breakfast on Friday morning, we decided to go for a ride in the mountains, following a circular route via Cervera, Potes (where we stopped for a breather and much needed coke), then on to Riano and returned through Cervera. The roads seem to follow a pattern of corners with perhaps a long blind right followed by two gradual rights then a tight open hairpin left, with a view to the valley below. This seemed to repeat itself again and again, then, after passing through a town, the new road would have a different pattern that would repeat itself. At Riano we lay in the sun by a lake before riding back to sit in

the small orchard, surrounded by the old monastery buildings that had been used to make this hotel, and enjoyed a cool beer. It's worth noting that each of us probably drank between one and two litres of bottled water during the day with more at dinner, besides several cokes each day, to stave off de-hydration.

Saturday morning found us checking out and loading the bikes, with the only plan being to head south to Burgos, then east until we felt like stopping and finding somewhere to stay. Most of the route was much flatter, with wide open, gently curving roads with little traffic, making it easy to

cover ground, and we did over 200 miles without complaint from behind. After getting slightly lost in Logrono, we ended up stopping for cokes in a small town called Mendavia, whose square was covered in soft mud. It was market day but we did not find out what made the mess, it was the only time the bikes got dirty on the whole trip. After passing through Tafalla and Sanguesa, we decided to look for a place to stop. During the day we had passed several hill towns, so when another appeared to our left, Tim pulled in and suggested giving it a try. What a genius, Berdun centre was at the top of a tightly twisting road. The hotel had decent rooms and a restaurant, but more importantly the owner took the trouble to point out some local places of interest. Views from the town were fantastic with the Pyrenees mountains to the north and a flat plain and more mountains all around. Several eagles flew past as we walked round the town. Before dinner, we walked down to a river in the valley below, the return climb certainly gave us a good appetite.

Sunday was spent trying some of the ideas suggested by our host. We rode down into a narrow gorge then climbed a mountain road where at times the sky was full of eagles (not sure what birds these were but they were big, some were definitely eagles and some looked like vultures). We

turned onto a minor road which passed through a tunnel, had a poor surface and climbed up through trees before dropping down to a town called Echo where we rode up through narrow cobbled streets before stopping to find a bar for another coke (my Spanish vocabulary





only allowed me to order coca cola or beer and neither of us would risk even a small beer riding in this terrain). We then rode on to a monastery, San Juan de la Pena. The monks must have had great faith, because they had built under an overhang of thousands of tons of rock. We stopped at the side of the road near the monastery to eat some lunch, and marvelled at the view, then rode on with the intention of following a circular route, which included a white road on the Michelin map. After meeting a bemused local who tried to help, and then off-roading into a power station, we decided to cut our losses and return the way we had come. According to the key, the road should have been surfaced, but it does not say how long ago! We returned to Berdun for a second night well knackered.

Monday, and time to move on. Taking the N260 then A136, we headed up the Pyrenees mountains towards France, stopping at El Formigal, a ski resort, for a break. The temperature was 11°C, cold when you have been enjoying 30°C for the last few days. We stopped again at the border to take in the view, then made our way down into France. I noticed that the roads now had less in the way of barriers to prevent you flying hundreds of feet to the valley below if you should be unfortunate enough to run off the road. There were several shelters on this road, built to catch falling rocks,

these appear to be popular with livestock as the road underneath is covered in their droppings. At Eaux-Bonnes we found a hotel and sat outside enjoying a ham sandwich and beer and commented on the difference between the dry, bare, barren Spain we had left behind and the lush green France where we now sat. Above, the sky was getting dark with clouds, which might explain the difference. That afternoon we went for a long walk before returning to the hotel restaurant for an excellent meal.

Tuesday morning dawned bright and sunny, and we were soon on our way up another mountain pass. The road was covered with cyclists' names as this had been used as part of the recent Tour de France. At the road's highest point we stopped at the cafe and walked up a grassy slope, gasping slightly in the thinner air. The ride down was quite hairy in places and we passed one cyclist gingerly making his way round the bends with sheer drops to one side, I remembered watching the Tour on TV with the racing cyclists going down these roads crouched low over the bars for maximum speed, mad or very brave? We had to make our way through a crowded market in one town then we headed for Lourdes for a quick look at

the many shops selling Madonna statues. The streets are full of people with various disabilities who come here in the hope of being cured in the baths, famed for their healing properties. Heading north up the N21 in hot sunshine it was good to get away from the traffic again. We were slightly puzzled to pass several filling stations closed that afternoon, including one in Bergerac where we had decided to stop that evening. Anyway, we found a hotel in the centre and made use of the swimming pool to cool down, before going out for a drink. Eight large lagers, 240 francs (roughly £24) meant we decided on a take-away to balance the cost for the evening, with a couple of cheapish bottles of wine in a betting shop to finish the day.

Checking out of the hotel on Wednesday morning, the receptionist advised us to keep our tanks topped up, he explained about the drivers barricading the refineries, making petrol scarce. Suddenly our holiday turned into an economy drive, 400 miles to Cherbourg, 150-160 miles to a tankful on the VFR, forced us to heed the advice given - every filling station that looked open saw us topping up, luckily our bikes being older and not burdened with

CAT converters meant we could use any fuel available other than diesel, which was just as well as we used super, LRP and some from a motorcycle shop (with a queue of young moped riders) hand pumped into our tanks that could have been anything. The bikes never missed a beat. We stopped at Oradour, a whole village destroyed by the German army during world war two, all the occupants had been rounded up and shot, the buildings looted then burnt to the ground. The whole place has been left as a solemn memorial. Nearby a modern building contains a very graphic exhibition explaining the events leading up to and including that fateful day.

We had arranged to stay at a cottage belonging to a friend of Tim's near Ruffec so this is where we now headed. In complete contrast to the previous evening the cottage lies out in the country and we enjoyed a few drinks and food purchased from a supermarket in the nearby town.

Thursday morning we decided that if we could not fill the bikes we would stay put and hope the situation would be resolved in time for us to get back to work. An English neighbour advised us where we could get fuel so we filled up, packed the bags and planned to get as far north as possible. Some of the French roads are unbearably straight, sometimes stretching as far as you can



see. They are also very quiet traffic wise, so at least you can safely glance around at the occasional windmill, chateau, fields of sunflowers, etc. The fuel situation was now getting desperate and to avoid a repeat of problems we had getting through Angers (very apt) we took the D178 towards Vitre to avoid Rennes. At La Caleche we looked for a hotel and booked into La Caleche for the night. As we had not seen any fuel available, Tim rang Brittany Ferries to request a change of sailing from Cherbourg to St. Malo. At first they only had room for one bike, but a phone call to St. Malo the following morning got us all on the Saturday ferry, we still needed some petrol but felt relieved to have only about an hour and a half ride left to do tomorrow. We walked into the town centre and found the best restaurant of the whole trip, the chef at the "Les Marchands" barbeques the meat over an open fire, highly recommended if you're in the area. The next morning at breakfast the locals, who seemed to be getting together for a fishing trip, informed us of a supermarket having taken delivery of fuel. We had to queue for quite a while, but now the pressure was off and we both enjoyed twisting the throttle a little harder on our way to St. Malo, where we booked into a hotel before spending a very enjoyable afternoon wandering around the walled town, doing a bit of shopping and sitting outside a cafe with a drink, doing what the French love doing, watching the world go by.

Saturday morning, and it's time to go home, no problem getting on the ferry and soon as we had dumped our leathers we sat on the deck in the sun with a pint. The barman thought we were mad ordering beer at 11am but we figured we could drink a couple early on then be safe to ride by the time we reached England. The ride back from Portsmouth started in fine weather, but as it got dark it also got foggy, nice to be home!

Sunday morning I rode the Triumph into Chard to fill up with petrol ready to go to Exeter the next day, I could not believe it when I found out the petrol crisis had followed me home and I had to queue.

I did not do anything to the bike during the trip, apart from checking it over. After 1600 miles the chain did not need adjusting thanks to a Scottoiler. We did scrape the undercarriage a few times, so maybe a new shock will be needed before I next load it so heavily. Otherwise I could not think of a better bike for the job.

Written twenty years ago and no doubt some things have changed a great deal. Spain is still a great destination if, like us, you enjoy your adventures fairly close to home.

Rick Chubb

Cumbria TT

Having started going to the TT in 1982 as a one off, we returned in 83 on a MCN coach trip, then 84,86, 88 and 90 when we met our good friends Roy and June from Cheltenham. We had all had trouble getting accommodation over the years and decided to find a decent B&B and come every year. The Richmond on Douglas prom suited us fine and we returned for many years until the landlady retired and it was taken over by a man who let the place go downhill. We stayed once then used the homestay system for later trips.

So why the picture and title? Traveling nearly 300 miles to catch a ferry for a four-hour sailing before arriving in the I.O.M. could be a drain, so Maggie and I decided to break the journey into two days in the early 2000s and started by booking two nights in Windermere to give us a look at The Lakes. We spent a great day "doing" as many of the big passes as we could. Hardknott was quite a challenge as the car in front stopped on one of the steepest bits, but a great day, being our first time in the area.

The next morning we had a short ride to Heysham for the start of the rest of our holiday.





We stayed in Eccleston a couple of times and Morecambe once. Times change, and with Easy Jet starting to do flights to the Island at a very reasonable price the first year, we decided to fly. You can buy a travel card that lets you use all public transport on the island, these include all the historic trams, trains and modern buses too. We found ourselves going to all those first-time tourist spots we had seen on our first visits, but of course, could not get to see much of the beautiful landscape inland from the TT course.

So, a few more memories stirred by an old print found during Covid lock down.

Rick Chubb

RIDE REPORTS

Slow Riding Day 2020

Having had to cancel 2 of the planned days for this year, Mark Livingstone and his Team managed to put on an excellent event on Sunday 2nd August, with almost all the spaces booked up in advance. Here are a few photos from the day, and a huge thank you to all those who helped out.





CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo, taken at the recent SAM Slow Riding Day at Bridgwater College. Suggestions to me at Tullochg@aol.com, we'll publish the best one in the next issue.

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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Winter 2020 Caption



Thanks to Alf Bagshaw who came up with the following Caption for the Spring 2020 photograph :

After a long riding stint, Alistair hoped his “muscle memory” provided a good excuse to avoid helping with the washing up!

TAILPIECE #12

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

The rider was leading a small group tour in Wales. He had stopped the group above Hay-on-Wye to enjoy the panoramic view but they were behind schedule so he rode off, leaving them to catch up over the Black Mountains. At the top of the pass he saw a dozen or so cyclists ready to move off in the same direction. Part way down in a deep, narrow, downhill section he rounded a bend and saw below a large 4x4 pick-up ascending - he stopped and waited – there was no room to pass. The 4x4 stopped, almost touching his front tyre. ‘Go back up,’ shouted the woman driver, gesticulating through her open window, ‘there’s a gateway just behind you.’ The rider shook his head. ‘You [...expletive deleted...] bikers think you own these roads to play on, we have a living to make.’ She eased open her door and squeezed through the gap, the cab towered above her as she advanced. Her next rant could be summarised as ‘Get off my [...] road, I’m in a [...] hurry.’ As she paused to take a breath the rider said politely, ‘I’m sorry but I don’t have a reverse gear.’ This just provoked a further expletive-filled outburst about unroadworthy machines that should stick to city streets and motor shows. The woman’s face went redder, the rider worried about assault as he patiently waited for a silence to make his next remark. But then in full flow she stopped, her jaw hung slack, and a glance in the rider’s mirrors showed a dozen cyclists and six motorcyclists slowing to a stop behind him.

The driver seemed to shrink three inches as she returned quietly to her cab and reversed down the track.

South West Peninsula Spring Rally

It is with regret that we have had to cancel the South West Peninsula Spring Rally for this year, having previously postponed it from April until September. The potential health risks from over 250 entrants from across the country was just too great to manage, despite some innovative changes introduced into the organisation. Hopefully 2021 will allow us to run this once again, with the spirit, challenge, adventure and enjoyment that this event offers. Watch this space for a date and booking details.



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Thank you for your articles and pictures. I am sorry if I was unable to fit them all in. Please keep them coming: Tullochg@aol.com

SAM Code of Conduct

All riders participate at their own risk.

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

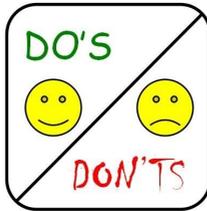
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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

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

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

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



Colour Code of Rides

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

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

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

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

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

The Drop-Off System

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

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