

Winter 2021

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



SAM Officers

Chair	Lisa Parsons	07894 340336
Secretary	Kevin Colmer	07557 552424
Treasurer	Rab Lavender	07968 283790
Membership Sec.	Dave Parker	07340 180989
Events Coordinator	Jez Martin	07590 368808
Observer Co-ord.	Tony Sauer	07983 088312
Taster Coordinator	Roger Moffatt	07812 061793
Publicity Officer	Mikayla Harrington	07947 299253
Spons/Advertising	Georges Dupuis	07999 349667
Recruitment Lead	Georges Dupuis	07999 349667
Young Ambassador	Richard Padfield	07478 675800
Full Chat Editorial	Gina Herridge	07745 052815
Team	Graham Tulloch	07825 201650



Follow on Twitter
@ SAMtweeps

samenquiries@gmail.com

www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk

google community: [Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists](#)

Facebook: Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists (Public plus Members Only pages)



Front Cover: Adam Ledger on his Ducati M1200



THE SOMERTON
PRINTERY LTD



New & used sales
Servicing / repairs
Clothing
Accessories
MOTs



Quality, affordable
DVSA approved
motorcycle training

01935 433095

www.morganmotorcycles.co.uk

Brympton Way, Lynx Trading Estate, Yeovil, BA20 2HP

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



The early cold snap this year has turned out to be almost irrelevant for motorcycling - we are all locked down for the third time, and few of us have legitimate reasons for being out on a motorcycle, either at all, or nearly as much as we'd like. However, as in the first lockdown, there are significant effects on the behaviour of road users, of whom there are still a considerable number. It's likely that we are all suffering some psychological effects from the bizarre way we are needing

to live at the moment, and on the occasions we do go out on the roads, or indeed when we are allowed unrestricted access to our bikes again, it's worth taking some time to think about those effects. Some of you will have noticed that a proportion of other road users has become unusually reckless. I've seen extraordinary speeds in both towns and the open road, and some genuinely shocking overtaking. Less easy to spot are those who are just less focussed on their driving (or riding) than expected. For example, consider the newly recruited delivery drivers, who don't know the area and are looking for an address. Such folk are liable to sail unwittingly into a situation which they might normally have foreseen and taken action to avoid. That means the rest of us need to expect the unexpected. Just as I have felt frustrated, disappointed and depressed by the restrictions and the reasons for them, I can only assume that most people share those feelings. They don't bring out the best in my temper, patience and ability to consider a situation, so I'm guessing that other people are affected in a similar way. What can we do to counter the general malaise and





keep ourselves and others safe on the road? Answers on a postcard (or at least its modern equivalent, Facebook) please, but for me, I'm going to stop and consciously consider what the extra and different hazards I'm likely to encounter will be, starting with my own state of mind. I

have a nagging sense that I'm somehow doing something wrong the moment I step out of my door, no matter how good I think my reasons for doing so are. That feeling that some people may be looking at me and thinking I'm an idiot for not being at home is unsettling and definitely messes with my judgement and focus. In addition, there's the possibility that my skills are a little off with lack of practice, so coming to the decision to just take it gently, rather than maximising the thrill from my little moment of freedom, will be important for me.

Many thanks for the bumper crop of contributions for this issue, a reminder that although we can't meet in person we still have experiences and thoughts we can share. The deadline for the next issue is 15th April, 2020.

Gina Herridge

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

My glass has always been half full. I know there are people, close friends and family whose glass is definitely half empty and I sympathise with them. I admit it's sometimes difficult for me to empathise with others. I have had episodes during Lockdown One where I've had to call MIND on behalf of a family member who was experiencing a bad case of depression and anxiety. Riding our motorbikes is for most of us a way of escaping from the rigours and responsibilities of our work and home life, so I understand it's not been easy for some. It's tough calling the shots as chairman, but as soon as it's safe and the government guidelines allow us to meet in groups, the committee and I will yet again get the ball rolling. The new variant though,



the B117, is more transmissible so no risks will be taken, but there is a small light at the end of the tunnel – Vaccines. When you read this I'm hoping that some of you will have received your first dose.

The last time I rode my bike was to attend Adam's funeral on December 30th. Adam's wife, Sam is

keen to get involved with Road Safety and has become a Friend of our club. There will be positive things that we can do collectively to ensure that our training is relevant and practical for future associates, and we can utilise the feedback gained from his horrific crash on December 12th.

So, looking to the future. We need to focus on the community feel of our club and look forward to the gradual reintroduction of our full social calendar. There are new members now who've never attended one of our green rides and experienced the friendliness and camaraderie (and sometimes



mickey taking) of our well established (and sometimes elderly!) members. See you on the other side of the current situation.

Lisa Parsons

Fully & self-guided motorcycle tours
throughout Europe since 2003



European Tours

w: www.bneuropeantours.com e: bneuropeantours@gmail.com t: 0208 2346854

TBB

MOTORCYCLE ADVENTURES

CHIANG MAI



THAILAND

www.tbbtours.com

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:

Martin Payne on 26th October, riding a Kawasaki GSX-R750 K5 and observed by Kevin Colmer

David Male on 6th December riding his Yamaha Tracer 900. David was observed by Tony Sauer and achieved a F1RST.

Tessa Clarke on 12th December. Tessa was riding a Royal Enfield Indian version and was observed by Martin Surrey.

Patrick Robinson also on 12th December, and also observed by Martin Surrey. Patrick was riding a Triumph Tiger XCX.

Jon Millinson on 14th December. Jon was riding a Triumph Explorer 1200 and was observed by Andy Spiers.

Sean Maxwell on 15th December. Sean achieved a F1RST on his Kawasaki Z250SL having been observed by Lindsay Wilson.

Alison Sattler on 19th December riding a Triumph Tiger 800. Ali was observed by Tony Sauer and also achieved a F1RST.



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

REMINDER TO ALL OBSERVERS:

Could you please ensure that you let me know (Tullochg@aol.com) when one of your associates passes their Advanced Test, so that their success can be included in the following issue of Full Chat? This should include their name, the date of the Test and the bike they were riding—their successes will give confidence to other new associates, whilst bike details is just something that we're all interested in, demonstrating the broad church of machinery within SAM!

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'.

Adam Ledger

As you will all know, we lost Adam to a biking accident on Saturday 12th December. It was a great shock to all, especially those of us who knew him well. I was Adam's observer, and as all observers know, you build up a great friendship and bond over the time you ride together. I first met Adam at Costa Taunton on 29th September 2019 and that's when the fun started. He was an extremely nice guy and we both shared two passions, Motorbikes and Golf (although the latter we never got a round in together). He was riding a GSXR600, and during our observed sessions he grew in confidence and skill. We even rode in winter which sometimes was a bit chilly, but he never complained as he was enjoying the course. During our time together we covered all the points in the ARC, and he became very knowledgeable of The System and the finer points of the advanced course. On the day of his test (29th August 2020) we rode to Riders in Bridgwater as he was looking at a new bike (a Ducati Monster, which he bought). Adam received a F1RST that day, a deserved reflection of the efforts he put into the course and his skills as a rider.

Our last outing together was on Graham Tulloch's ride out on December 6th – this ended at Haynes Motor Museum, where we all enjoyed the high-

Adam (far right in photo) at one of last year's Haynes Biker Ride-ins



lights of a SAM ride – catching up with each other's news, sharing lots of coffee and cake, and putting the world to rights.

After Adam's wife, Sam, broke the sad news of Adam's accident, and following offers of support from various members, Sam asked for SAM's support with Adam's final journey. So on Wednesday 30th December over 40 bikes turned up at Adam's house and escorted the hearse to Taunton Crematorium. On arrival, a line of motorcycles lined the driveway to provide a guard of honour for Adam and his family. It was a sight to behold, the number of members turning up reflecting their feelings for the loss of a friend. Paul Corthorn (who had done some track days with Adam) and I were at the front, marshalling bikes into position. Adam's wife and two children came over and thanked us for the amazing turn out, as did Adam's Dad. I was, and still am, very proud of what we did as a club. To say it was an honour is an understatement. My thoughts will always be of Adam and his great outlook on life.

Nathan Beesley

A Caring Club

Taking part in the cortege for Adam Ledger's funeral in December unsurprisingly brought back memories of Martyn's funeral 15 years ago, with the weather just as cold but also some sleet! But then I wasn't riding my bike, I was in a car, overwhelmed by the sight of Martyn's coffin in the hearse in front, his Triumph Sprint 1050



close behind, and the large number of bikes and riders behind. It also reminded me of the loss of two other friends in the club, for which



many others were comforted by fellow club members.

Without the help and support of many SAM members, I would have struggled so much more in that grieving period, they were no doubt my second family, and some of those friendships have remained so close, and with me being able to return some of that support.

Many others of you will have experienced this support, not through loss, but from illnesses or other factors in our lives. I decided to write this article just to say that I feel lucky to have been a member of this club, which will be 20 years this year. It's a club full of help, support, fun, love, and even marriage!

Kaye May

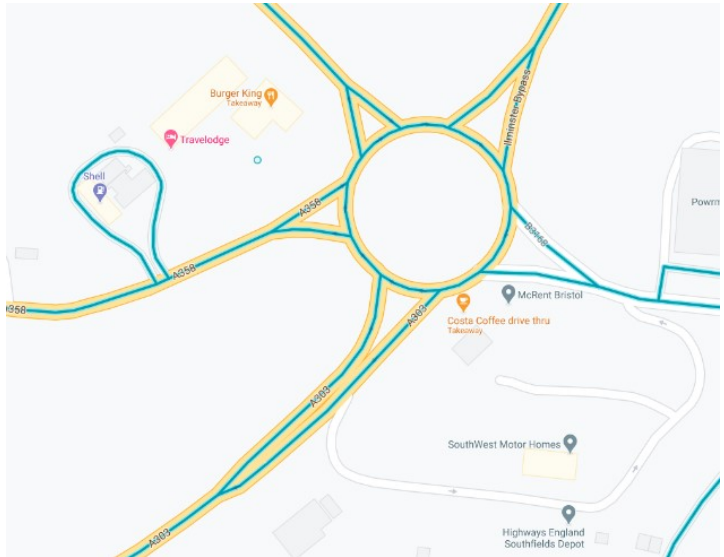
Virtual Ride Out

Fancy a ride out in your slippers? Then I've got just the thing for you.

I recently tried a Virtual Rideout (VR) with a new associate by using a combination of Zoom & Google maps (GM) "Street View" (SV) and "share screen" in Zoom. I chose a road that I know well and then carried out a recce using GM & SV to familiarise myself riding google. This recce is a useful exercise. When GM compiled the imagery for SV, for many two-lane single carriageway roads, the camera vehicle only took images when travelling in one direction. When you are using GM & SV online you can swivel round and travel in reverse, this isn't so clever when you are on a VR, other than for a quick rear view or shoulder check. Having established which direction and lane the images were taken on your route, this

will dictate the direction of your run.

When you zoom in at a roundabout in Street View it can be seen that there are two tracks entering and leaving a roundabout and then joining together to form one line on a single carriageway.

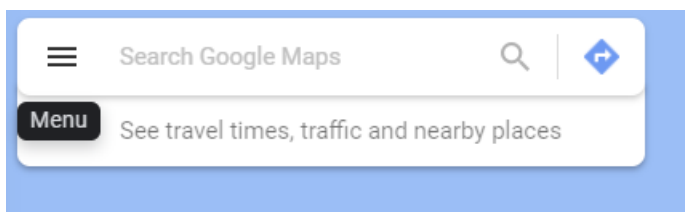


Be careful when you come to a junction, as the next section may be on the other side of the road in the opposite direction. There are even areas where on a single carriageway, the camera vehicle changes from one lane to the other lane on the opposite side of the road. It's all not a big deal, you just have to adapt.



Google Maps

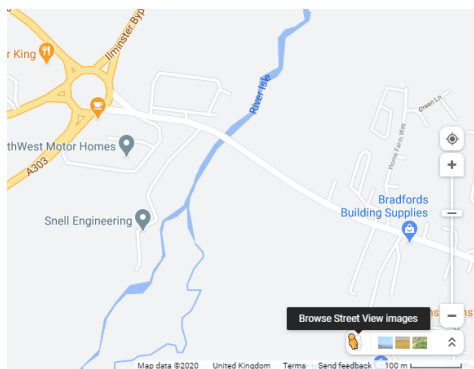
Install Google maps onto your computer. When you first open GM, the cursor will be in a box "Search Google Maps", please note a three-bar menu icon to the left. Open this menu and use "take a tour" to identify a few items. It's only seven clicks so it



won't take long.

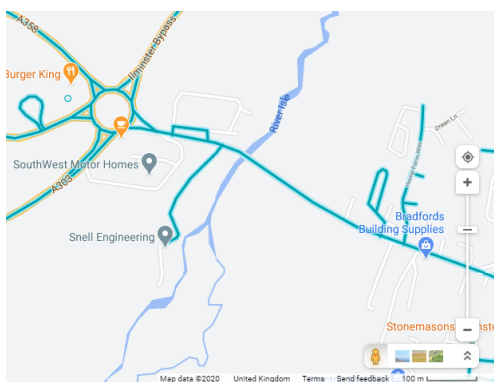
Now you are an expert. Zoom in on the map to an area of your choice and a scale that will allow you to achieve a less cluttered view.

On the bottom right of your screen, click on the Street View (SV) person, looks like a man to me. All the roads available in SV will be highlighted



blue. Click on a road of your choice and it will take you into the street view.

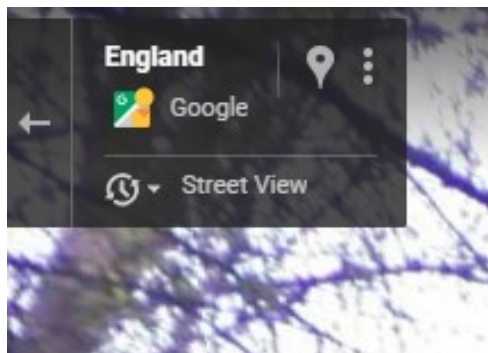
To get out of this view, in the top left is an information box with a single arrow to the left, which will take you back to map view. While you're



here, also, at the bottom of that box is another box with SV and a clock. This allows you to select historical imagery (if available for that location).

Now that you are in SV, as you move the cursor around the screen you will

notice that within the area of the road is an arrow, click on the arrow and it will take you in that direction, the further down the road that you click the further and faster you go. As you move the cursor along the road you will notice that there may be a cross. This indicates the position of the location for the next image. At any location, to allow you to look around, hold the left button down and move the cursor at the same time. This allows you to pan around and up & down at your current position. Handy for looking left and right at a junction or behind should you need. Use the scroll to zoom in and out. This zoom can be handy to give an appreciation of taking in the bigger picture rather than just looking at the black strip right in front of



you. There's a lot more to play with and use in different ways.

On the run

I found that stopping at a certain point and discussing all the information that was available to qualify and inform your decision on the preferred position for the bike to be in, to be useful. You can't move camera position or the bike but you get the idea. Google doesn't often get into a position for an overtake but I used the vision of an imaginary car at a certain location and asked the associate to take me through the steps. Position for bends was really good where for example on a right hand bend, you can encourage the associate to stay left, stay left until you can see the exit of the bend and then crack on and get ready for the next position. Approaching junctions is useful where you can stop before the junction and discuss position depending on a right or left turn and especially for those awkward, oblique junctions, where a look to the left or right is almost impossible and a different position has to be adopted. All good fun.

Zoom is more straight forward

Arrange your Zoom meeting with your associate and make sure you enable "share screen" before the session starts. To date I have only used

this system with me sharing the screen with the associate. This means that I have exclusive control of the cursor etc. I think that allowing the associate to share the screen with the observer is the next step. This would allow the associate to give more input and decide their own position and view without the observer suggesting options or the painful dialogue of left a bit no right a bit etc.

Over to you. Polish those slippers do your POWDDERSS on the arm chair and get going.

I suppose this could be useful for drivers but then most of their observing is done from an armchair in slippers anyway. **Tony Sauer**



My IAM Journey

Like most of us, I have had a long motorcycling career. I started riding at 13 with a Honda C50 field bike, at 16 I got an apprenticeship and needed to be able to get to Heckmondwike and Huddersfield from where I lived in Scholes.

After much convincing my Mum and Dad let me have a bike. As they were against the idea this had to be funded by myself, no help from them. Dad talked mum round a bit and said we should get something decent. So I ended up with a 3 year old Honda MTX50.



Having to ride year round at 30mph without the proper gear was what most of my fellow apprentices did, we gradually saved and got better boots, helmets and leather jackets.

The only real waterproof option

back then being an over suit or a Belstaff, none of us could afford Belstaff. A second hand leather was one thing, it had a slight patina, a second hand Belstaff looked like it had been slept in and rolled in oil.

I had training in the form of a Star Rider course and I was let loose on the road. Fortunately I worked with a fellow biker who became a great friend and he gave me some advice in riding safely, mostly around defensive positions and not riding too close to the gutter. At 17 I got a Honda CG125 and just before my 18th Birthday I passed my test and bought a





Suzuki GS550, off of the same friend.



Over the years I have had many bikes, being a typical Gemini I get bored and tend to swap out the bikes. I've had Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, Kawasaki and BMW bikes.

Around 9 years ago one of my work colleagues went through his advanced course and was saying how good it was. I thought I should take a look at it. Work kept getting in the way as is so often the case. So around 3½ years ago I finally found some spare time, and booked a taster ride. I was to meet a chap called Graham Tulloch in Somerton.

Well I turned up on a miserable cold day and met Graham, who asked me lots of questions and took me on a ride out to Podimore services, back to Long Sutton village hall for a mid ride chat and back to Somerton. Graham



led the way on this part giving me a demo ride.

We parted company and I had every intention of signing up. Then fate stepped in and I ended up working in Wales, the wife and I talked about moving there, so there was no point signing up just yet.

Two years go by and I take a job back in Somerset and we plan to do some touring the follow-

ing year. I now have the chance to do my advanced course, I sign up and receive an email from Lisa Parsons asking me to contact her about the type of course I would like to do. After a little discussion I settle on the MBP membership by portfolio. I get Graham Tulloch as my observer.

Five observed rides later I'm ready for my final observed ride with another National observer, provided I ride to the correct standard I will "pass the test".

So on the day I meet Jez Martin in Langport and we go for a ride where I'm asked how I think it went, well I say, it wasn't my best ride. Jez tells me that I have passed and that I will receive my documents through the post shortly.

By this time the bug has bitten quite hard and I decide I want to become an observer and take it forward. I have missed the classroom sessions, so unsure if I can train before next year.

Gina Herridge sends me the information from the classroom sessions, having read through them I believe I can take in the knowledge and be able to start my sessions.

My training starts and I'm picking things up quickly, but struggling not to fill in the gaps when there is a pause in the mock feedback sessions. So I change tack and start asking more and more questions. Things start to gel and I'm enjoying our training sessions. Gina explains that I am ready for my test and that someone will be in touch reference dates etc.

I am contacted to say I have my test with Shaun Cronin on the 6th August.

The day arrives. After the preliminaries - checking eyesight, questions about why they want to do advanced riding, bike checks, checking existing knowledge, explaining what the first ride assessment will be about - my mock associate and I set off. It's a mixed bag, sunny, but showers, quite a bit of traffic on A303 and down to Crewkerne. It goes well, Shaun then observes my riding and we head back to Podimore for the debrief.

I'm told that I have passed my National Observer test.





Simon's 1st associate, Pete Saunders, on his GS F800, having passed his Advanced Test in August

What a feeling. From my journey starting almost exactly 12 months ago to now be able to help others with their riding, to say I'm chuffed is an understatement.

Shaun asks how I found the MBP part and explains I'm the first person to go through that route and become an NO.

The rest, as they say, is history. I'm with my third associate having helped one through their test, preparing another. Lockdown is causing a delay in my second associate being able to book their test.

I've carried out several pre-test assessments, a couple of taster rides and I'm thoroughly enjoying my riding with SAM as and when lock down allows. I've been TEC for a ride and still trying to lead my own group ride, now cancelled twice.

From starting my journey on a taster ride, wanting to pass my advanced test to learn a few new tricks, to actually signing up because we were going to Italy touring took several years. Unfortunately Italy was cancelled due to COVID. Looking back now I have to ask myself why didn't I do this sooner.

So for those considering becoming an observer, there's just one question... What's stopping you?

Simon Greenwood



BIKING NEWS

Raise Your Ride

Somerset Road Safety are joining 'forces' with Avon and Somerset Police to provide a new initiative across the region in 2021. The project is titled Raise Your Ride and it is aimed at full licence holders who wish to improve their riding safety. It will replace the delivery of BikeSafe in the region as well as the MaxRider initiative run by SCC. As with the former programmes it has been designed to introduce riders to the Advanced system of riding and participants will be signposted to the local Advanced groups in their area. The candidates will benefit from a day's observed riding from either a serving or former Police advanced rider, who will give them initial advice on how they may improve their riding skills for safety. As with BikeSafe the events are not intended to be instructional but merely to give advice and encourage further training. For 2021 there will be 5 events held across the region, 2 of which will be in the SAM area, one in the Taunton/Wellington area and the other in Yeovil. We will be engaging with local motorcycle dealerships to help promote these events.

The scheme has the backing of IAM RoadSmart and all candidates will receive the benefit of a 10% discount when applying for an Advanced Riding Course. Other benefits will be made available from Air Vest UK and BikeSeal.

We will also be promoting the Biker Down courses in Somerset as an additional benefit to rider's safety, available free to all. Dates for the 2021 programme will soon be announced so if any SAM member is interested in one of these courses please check out Biker Down Devon & Somerset on Facebook.

Neill Sedgwick



2020—Which bike sold best?

Since May-June motorcycle sales grew substantially almost everywhere across Europe, as Covid measures eased and people probably looked for a reason to be happier! I have looked at the year just passed to satisfy my curiosity; which bikes are selling the most and is the GS still the undisputed queen?

Of the three largest markets - in order France, Italy and Germany - only the latter closed with a positive (+18.6%). The UK (5th market overall) ended 2020 with a 4.4% volume decline, which was not too bad, especially in the miserable context.

France

The French market is showing as a mixed bag with the 'naked' and 'adventure' segment generating the majority of the sales. The Yamaha MT-07 is the best-seller over the Channel, with more than 5,000 units (Jan-Nov data). An extremely solid place for this kind of bike in my opinion. Not the 900cc sister but the 700cc engine instead (which has also been transferred to the Tenere and the café racers range). The second bike which has "only" 3,000 units sold is the Kawasaki Z900.



Beyond these two, the consumers seem to prefer the adventure segment with the usual BMW R1250GS, basic and adventure version, and the Yamaha Tracer 900. Amongst the models that grew the most was the Royal Enfield 650 Interceptor and Yamaha Tenere 700.

Italy

The BMW GS has been the 'queen' for quite some time, but not this year. The biggest seller in Italy in 2020 was the Benelli TRK500 (3,500 units), the old Italian brand that since 2005 has



been successfully resuscitated by the Chinese Q.J. Group. A bike with a good design, mid-sized engine, full-sized adventure frame, reliable and at £6k.

One fifth of the Italian market was occupied by “adventure bikes”; in fact, behind the GS we have in order the Africa Twin, the Tracer 900, NC750X and the Tenere 700. Second biggest segment is the “naked”.

Whilst the average Italian consumer is still enticed by the adventure / enduro segment, something is also bubbling up. Mid-sized bikes are growing and generating interest as we can see above and even down the ranking (e.g. Scrambler 800, CB500, MT-07, etc).

Germany

The undisputed leader in this market – surprise surprise – is the BMW R1250GS (nearly 9,000 units sold) and by quite a lot. Second place for the Kawasaki Z900 (circa 3,800 units), then the MT-07, again the Kawasaki Z700 and two KTMs, the 690 SMC and the 790 Duke.

The German consumer loyalty is set firmly with the GS which has affected the Africa Twin sales. Whilst in Italy it is the third model, here it has not taken off, closing the top 10 shy of 2,000 units and surpassed by KTM 390 Duke and the Honda CMX 500 Rebel.

UK

The public market data is not as detailed as for the other markets unfortunately. What we can say is that the biggest segment remains the naked, followed by the adventure sport, with almost half of the volumes through this segment. It follows supersport and custom segment. But what does this mean?



It confirms the British appetite for fast bikes that offer some touring capability (at least this is how you can sell it to your other half), the best seller is the KTM 1290 Superduke GT! MCN describes it as “so astonishingly good, it could be the best road bike you can get.

Punchy performance, poise, cultured handling, adjustable comfort, easy, effective electronics". No objections sir.

In the adventure sport instead it is a head to head between the BMW R1250GS Adventure and the Africa Twin. The first prevailed in December, selling a total of 125 bikes, whilst the Africa Twin sold more in November with 64 units.

In conclusion, even though the GS remains strong in the market, I think there is a growing interest in smaller engine bikes, and we can see this in all the biggest markets. On the other side, I start to see consumers wanting to buy the non-adventure style of bike, and something that is not costly on the wallet! The adventure segment has seen the biggest positive sales trend over the past 10 years. The future? I bet on the mid-sized sport-touring segment, how about you?



Mik Simonetti

Crosswinds

Black-ice and heavy crosswinds are my two biggest worries when I ride in the winter. I do not know which motorcyclist is OK with them anyway. But if you were born and raised one hour from the Mediterranean Sea like me, you may feel a bit more susceptible than the average rider.

Really bad weather is also an element of distraction and fatigue, and these have great impact on your riding too. Therefore it is important you are prepared - and prepare your motorcycle to confront the elements, riding safely, yet still enjoying the ride. Skills and science give us a hand.

How strong is strong wind? Difficult to say, and probably it is a bit subjective too, depending on experience and comfort zone. My threshold is anything north of 35mph. Here we talk about crosswinds with gusts. A gust really comes out of nowhere and suddenly knocks you sideways, towards oncoming traffic or the edge of the road. It upsets your balance, triggers sudden reaction, yours and/or other road users. Sustained winds - and

head/tail wind - are easier to address and less cumbersome, because you can take the unpredictability factor out of the equation.

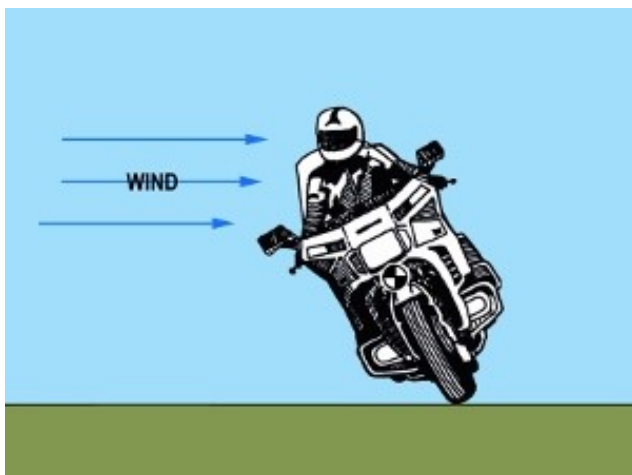
Some time ago I had to do a round trip to Exeter, which is about two hours. In those days storm Barbara was hitting the South West with heavy rain-falls and gales. Temperature was ok. Road surface - net of what was blown over - was ok too (none of the leaves and mud you get later in the winter). So here we are again, battling against one of my 'riding ghosts'. Let me take you through my coping mechanism, using the IAM tips (and not only) for riding in heavy crosswinds.

Plan ahead

Plan the route ahead and look up the average wind direction. Knowing that I was heading West and knowing the winds were coming W-SW, I had a vague idea of what to expect, and unfortunately was not good news. I also knew when most of the rain was going to hit my route that day. Planning ahead meant also choosing better roads to mitigate road-surface factor. Instead of (fun) secondary roads, I stayed on major A roads (no motorway, too exposed in my view). I knew I had to cross two high bridges too, so I was mentally prepared.

Prepare the bike

In terms of stability, heavier bikes cope better with heavy winds. Lower center of gravity bikes (customs, boxers, under-seat tanks..) are good too. Naked bikes are better than full fairing because the wind has less surface to hit. But not everyone has the luxury of choice! In my case the Caponord is helluva heavy, but it weights nearly 4 times me, and it's relatively tall. I lowered the screen and took panniers off to minimize the sail effect (tank



bags are not good either). All remaining POWDER checks remain folks.

Relax and Focus

Ok, easier to say than do, but you actually know what to expect! So find your mental zone, lower your shoulders, don't hold the grips like a pneumatic hammer. You need your body to react when cross-



wind will hit you and also you must reduce fatigue. Speaking of which, if it is a long journey, plan to stop, drink little but often. Running a commentary, aloud, in my helmet, is my way to stay focused and to remind myself of The Systems' fundamentals.

Apply physics

Positive steering and sail effect. You can knock a gyroscope off of course, but in reality if you touched it, even hard, it will move sideways but it will continue to spin. If the gust comes from the left, a left knee out will produce a sail effect that will counter the force of the wind. At the same time push gently the left han-

dlebar to allow the bike to lean. A slightly offset body position would help too, but I prefer not to move my core. This combination will provide you force and direction to manage the gust.

Use the road clues

Keep an eye for road clues to assess and anticipate the situation. Sheltered areas with big trees or buildings are your ally.. whilst they last! Check where they stop, because in that gap strong gust will/could blow. Prepare for it and keep an eye for oncoming vehicles (wind affects big lorries for instance). Bridges, dips on either side, trucks and lorries, they are all a clue to anticipate possible gusts. Use them.

IPSGA

The application of the system is still 100% valid and necessary. Focusing on battling heavy crosswinds does not supersede the principles we have learned in our advanced riding course. Moreover, they need continuous practice, always, even when the weather is taking up a bit of the fun.

Mik Simonetti

A Winter Bike

Everyone has their own opinion of the ideal winter bike and while any motorbike can be ridden through the winter, some are better than others. So during the spring of 2020, I started looking around to see what was available.

This was my list of initial requirements:-

- Easy to clean
- Easy to maintain and service with good parts availability
- Shaft drive
- Decent power and torque
- Low revving engine rather than a screamer
- A bike I could modify and add bits too
- Upright riding position with good weather protection
- Not overly expensive, with most of the depreciation expended!
- A minimum of electronics and gizmos

At the same time, the bike I would choose would have to look half decent and be enjoyable to ride around town, as well as out on the open road.

Eventually, I settled on a BMW R1200GS (1st generation 2006 model year) with 33,000 miles on the clock, full service history and low owner-



ship.

I was attracted to this particular bike, as it has standard front and rear suspension and nothing electronic, so it's out with a c-spanner to adjust it; easy. Also, it already had heated grips, headlamp guard, an adjustable Givi screen, handguard extensions and mudslinger to protect the rear shock absorber; parts I would have fitted in any case.



Being the first generation model, the linked ABS brakes are servo assisted and while this system was dropped on future models, I really like it. The brakes are exceptionally light to operate, as is the clutch. Having had carpal tunnel surgery on both wrists some months ago, light controls are now most welcome.

After riding the bike for a week or so, I set about making a few mods. As I only ride solo, I removed the rear seat, rack and pannier rails and fabricated a top plate to fit where the rear seat was. Bolted to this is a standard Givi plate, which means I can mount different top boxes as necessary.



I use a square 'Treker' box for general use and have a 50 litre oblong box for longer tours. With this set-up a considerable amount of weight can be carried and the weight is vertically downwards, mainly within the wheel-base, so there is no heavy overhang over the rear of the bike, adversely affecting the handling.

I've never found GS seats particularly comfortable, so fitted this seat by 'Sargent'. It gives perfect all day comfort and offers better support for the lower back.

In order to make the bike more visible to other road users, I fitted Denali front spotlamps and a rear led light that also acts as an extra brake light. Also, a mini 'soundbomb' horn has been fitted. These are all connected to a CANsmart controller that plugs straight into the BMW CANbus, so that they are operated by the original



BMW switchgear. You can program the CANsmart from a laptop to adjust the light intensity and the rear light modulation; a very clever piece of kit.



Next job was to improve the sound of the bike. The original BMW silencer is very heavy, so this was easily removed (as there is no exhaust flapper valve on this model) and replaced with a nice stainless steel item from SP Engineering (a local company in Frome). It does the job very nicely and is less than a third of the price of a silencer from that Slo-

venian company who's name I can never pronounce.

Of course, the SP silencer is fully road legal and emits a pleasant growl.

I've fitted a few other bits and pieces, sat nav mount, security oil filler plug, throttle potentiometer cover, etc..... as well.

So that's about it for the time being. Mileage is approaching 39,000, so time for an engine and gearbox oil change and general check over.

Nigel Short

KIT REPORTS

How things have changed!

What do you think of your motorcycling kit? Of course we all wear jackets, trousers, helmets and gloves which can vary enormously in price quality and safety. Its quite easy to spend £1000 on kit and as such we should be discerning and careful consumers demanding reliability, safety, appearance and value for money.

I owned my first bike around about 1967, a 70cc BSA Dandy. The kit I used was my normal every day wear: duffel-coat, woolly gloves and I guess I must've had a crash helmet but that was optional for me though not as far as my Mum was concerned. The evolution of my kit is an interesting story (to me anyway).

By the time I progressed to my first 'real' bike, a 1951 two-fifty AJS Model 14, my Grandad Earnie (who at that time rode a 600cc AJS and sidecar) passed on a plastic jacket and over-trouser set. It was dark grey to black in colour and had a smart belt with a white reflective patch. It varied in flexibility according to temperature and became either very hot or very cold in sympathy with the weather. It also had many small holes in places where it creased and folded around the body-shape. Water-proof it was not, comfortable it was not, stylish it was not. But as a spotty seventeen year old on his first real bike - hey what did I know - and it was very generous of my Grandad to pass it on at a time when commodities and consumer-goods were in short supply and never affordable, particularly to Grandad Earnie.



As I grew older and thought I knew everything, I managed to save enough to buy a mate's second-hand leather jacket. Being single-breasted, black and poorly lined, it makes me realise that leather jackets have changed very little since then; currently we've added warmer zip-out linings and

armour but they are still essentially the same - except this one had the words '300 Ducati' painted in white on the back and I added a few pointy silver studs to the shoulders (yep, I was young once)! Crash helmets became de-



-rigour and stripes and colours were only available either for really expensive ones or for those of us with a Dad's paint-brush. Goggles were usually the old RAF or Luftwaffe-type. I rode a 500 Velocette Venom Clubman and later conical hub Bonneville. I wore a silver leather-eared pudding basin (made me look like Geoff



Duke, so I thought) and an Easy-Rider-striped leather jacket (made me look like Peter Fonda, honest). I'm pretty sure I was the only kid on the block so dressed (wonder why?). The helmet I had bought from Rivetts' of East London, old stock, for about two weeks' wages. I guess it would go now on eBay for maybe £300?

At this time, water proof over-gear was progressing from black sweaty plastic to new nylon-proofed fabric. One-pieces were a new thing; my first was a grey plastic industrial suit advertised in Exchange and Mart "suitable for all activities including motorcycling". One-pieces are still a fag to get into and out of but not, these days, so common or as unreliable in proofing and zips. The waterproofing integrity was a lottery,



only to be proved on outings like the Dragon Rally - a 200 mile Friday-night ride from home along the A5, wet and soggy, always visiting the crotch first. Maybe you've experienced that too?

By the time I could afford my first BMW, silver plastic Rukkas were being worn by those who could afford them and waxed cotton or nylon Belstaffs or Barbours (usually pre-loved) by those who could not. The wax cotton then was different; originally in black and for a few years in green or red. The wax attracted, stored and muckily released black smudges of diesel, often onto the chest of the pillion

girlfriend, who never loved 'em. Oh and of course, they rarely stayed proofed for more than the year. By the time I could afford a Rukka, I had



accumulated a couple of nylon biking jackets which also leaked; I packed a spare on a tour to Czechoslovakia in the nineties when that country was emerging from Communism and biking was being discovered but kit was short-supplied. There was a real



gap between the ex-Communist have-nots who aspired to western consumer-goods and us from the UK. The expressions on the Czech recipients was incredulous; as if an icon of the West had dropped from Heaven without warning.

It was around this time that full face helmets had appeared on the car-racing scene. My first was a black and white Stadium brand



which demanded a new scratch-free visor every few months. Of course I balked at the cost and developed a recessed visor which mounted between shell and (very thin) lining. The result was stylish but condensation formed, fog drifted and I stamped into the rear of an unseen car (poor bloke was



very fair and we were both unharmed). So I graduated onto a Bob Heath glass insert which was screwed onto the OE visor. I rode for several years with the glass insert; it was a little heavy and when it cracked I wondered how safe it was. So I moved on.



On helmets, I wonder at the level of quality for so little cost these days. I know the brands that start at, say, £300 are probably safest, but even the £60 special that I used to major on have beautifully soft, comfortable and tailored linings. Visors used be a lottery; would it stay up or slam down, and at what speed? Now all are so reliable and functional. I have to say the

biggest helmet disappointment was the early BMW Systems helmets. The Opening chin was innovative and desirable and they were probably bullet-proof in a crash, but from new mine never latched down securely or precisely, the visors were flimsy and unpredictable and the linings just loosened and wore out with only moderate use. They were icons in their time; I was proud of mine but they were very poor. Better now I believe?

Move into the nineties and I became the proud owner of a Dainese set (not twin and pearls but blouson jacket and trousers). Features were Gore-tex liners, hard (very hard) body armour and abrasion-resistant outer. A bit

flash for me but a fate-filled choice. While wearing it commuting home, my serious 'off' was a car hitting me almost head-on (he was closing at 40mph and in my lane), I felt his bumper crumple on my shin and I scraped



about fifty metres along the A5 black-top. The hard Dainese armour on knee, elbow and shoulder scraped through the outer fabric. The suit was SUPERB. I still own a (different) Dainese suit which has never let in water, and fits and rides superbly.

So what do we expect from today's kit? The current list I started with is tempered by cost, pocket, opportunity (sales/exhibitions) and whim; but its available. When I buy from a known source, paying large sums and selecting known brands, this helps ensure quality, performance and expectations

(In the sixties when we started this tale, few such things existed and then only for the few who could afford it). We can now add heated jackets, waterproof boots and gloves to our needs; all of which contribute to comfort and safety. Great! The sky's the limit and opportunities are there for most of us with deep pockets.... Oh, but hang on, what's this Covid thing? Lets hope/pray it goes away or we find a more tolerable way to live with it.

Andy Hall



Denali LED Auxiliary Lights

Some manufacturers offer extra lights as an accessory, but often they are

positioned too close to the headlight and not high enough.

This is my solution; these are Denali LED lights that I've fitted to the handguards and wired so that they are operated by the accessory light button on the left switch cluster.

It's all about safety and self-preservation and making the bike appear to be wider than it actually is to other road users, especially when it's a dull day and at night.

The bike is a Triumph Scrambler 1200XE.

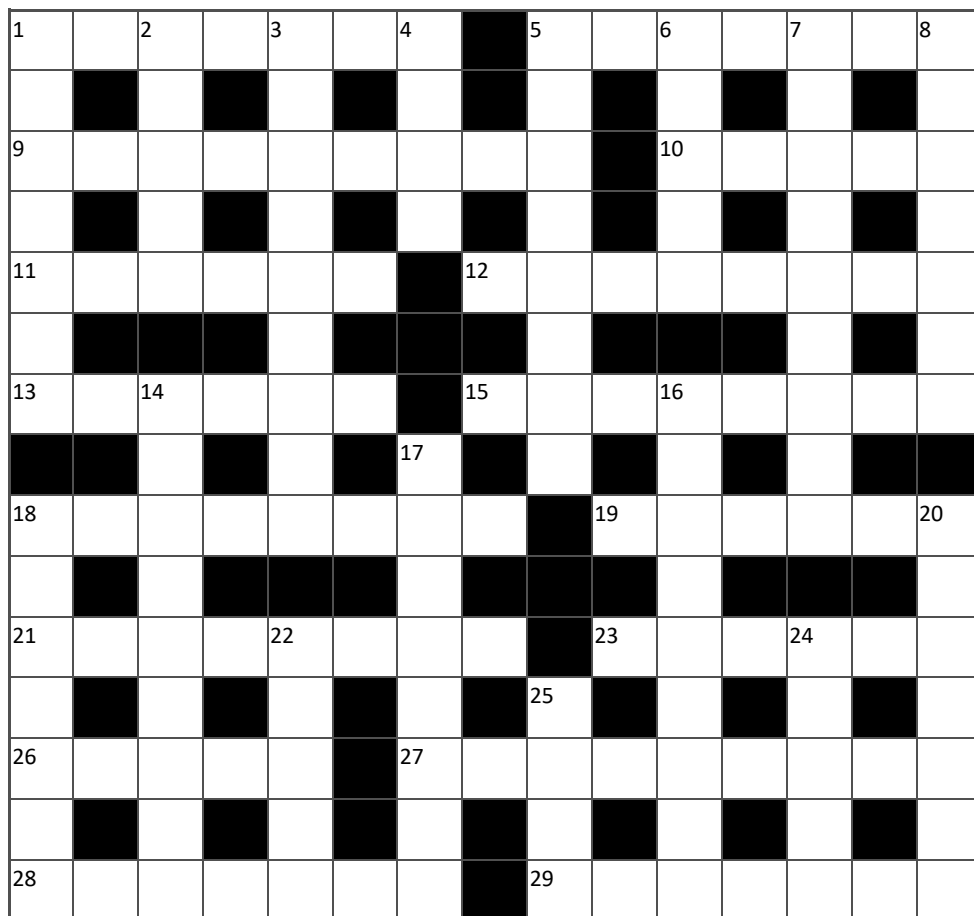
Nigel Short



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Now in our 3rd Coronavirus Lockdown, unfortunately we continue to be denied the option of SAM club rides. However, with the success of a couple of carefully-managed rides in August and October, it is intended (subject to further changes in Covid-19 restrictions) to repeat these multi-ride events as soon as Lockdown conditions ease. These are likely to continue to 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. Fingers crossed that conditions ease, and we can reinstate some form of social calendar for our members.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Carry-on love affair (7)
 5 Plaited candelabra I'd edged inside (7)
 9 Turn cold; cooling effect (4,5)
 10 Deserter, not a crowbar (5)
 11 E – means eccentric. These will get you going (6)
 12 Rusty old Rolls-Royce. [In fish – ed] (8)
 13 U-boat, German, with tender (6)
 15 Newsreader links Indian coin to car maker (4,4)
 18 Theoretical, a computer-aided design rodents' energy moved forward (8)

CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 19 Star of "A Kind of Loving" becomes less intense (6)
21 Sailor posted with eastern European; one not here (8)
23 Hollow copse with nothing in it (6)
26 Music at Funeral Director's insistence rarely goes easily at first (5)
27 Radiant suitor, Italian backed, left off replete (9)
28 Phony, ere re-election, supports President of Tanzania (7)
29 Esteemed, but in our time stuck in the mud (7)

Down

- 1 They advocate for the sozzled, swears left (7)
2 Restage inane musical (5)
3 Make acceptable Hobnob (9)
4 Brad left Scotsman up (4)
5 Everyone in blessings gives inflatable decorations (8)
6 Mouth-organist played commercial before the French king (5)
7 Devout Idi destroyed share (6,3)
8 Mocked shed in act (7)
14 Supporter lowered current in French bar serving food (9)
16 Tree collection is a right drag with small pot (9)
17 Tag about Eisenhower, for example, is charming (8)
18 Jab and onslaught hides ditch (7)
20 Romeo, Echo, Lima, India, Echo, Victor, Echo, Delta (7)
22 Relative pleasant with energy (5)
24 13 in chest without lid (5)
25 Information from US lawyer, thanks (4)

Solution in next issue

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

Solution to Autumn 2020 Crossword

Across: 1 Motorcycle, 9 Data, 10 Passengers, 11 Urbane, 12 Caterer, 15 At one go, 16 Noble, 17 Abet, 18 Stud, 19 Clear, 21 Groupie, 22 Reoccur, 24 Ask for, 27 Overstrung, 28 Lies, 29 Nineteenth.

Down: 2 Okay, 3 Onside, 4 Canteen, 5 Crew, 6 En suite, 7 Cataleptic, 8 Make louder, 12 Changeable, 13 The Rockies, 14 Royle, 15 Altar, 19 Citroen, 20 Revisit, 23 Charge, 25 Tern, 26 Gnat.

BIKE REPORTS

Honda CBR900 RR Fireblade

In the days when I was a lot younger most bikes were only too fast because they rarely handled well enough. Italian bikes were ok, but usually because the suspension was very firm. Japanese bikes got better and better engines with barely adequate suspension, and frames that flexed in the wrong places. Then in the late 80s things started to change and one of my early introductions to the way a bike could work well was my first Yamaha FZ750. A steel frame that wrapped around the engine gave a solid basis for a bike that handled far better than my previous Honda CB750. Not long after, the rumors started about a new Honda and as soon as I saw it I had to have a new CBR900 RR Fireblade. Taylors of Misterton was the near-



est Honda dealer, so it was from here that I got my first Blade and experienced what was then a revelation.

115bhp may not sound much these days, but in 1992, in a bike that weighed 185Kg dry, it was enough to reach a speed of around 166mph, and do a 0-60 in 3 seconds.

The steering, even by today's standards was very light, and of course without any rider aids, it would lift the front wheel, or spin the back, if not careful.

There were a couple of problems with the first Blade, one of which was jumping out of first gear which mine did on occasion. When the next generation came out with minor mods, I decided to trade mine in and bought the 95 model which I still have. (In hindsight, value wise, the early Blades are worth much more now.)

I think I clocked up about 22,000 miles on the first and this one has 45,000 miles under its wheels. It's probably true to say that I was a little over enthusiastic sometimes when riding, and the Blade could bite back. Riding over a humpback bridge could induce a tank slapper, winding the throttle on



too fast over a crest would lift the front wheel far more than on other bikes, the speedo always read far faster than I thought I was going. Luckily, by now I was a member of the Taunton IAM which became SAM for us bikers, and had learnt that there was a time and a place.

I remember in 98 trying the first Yamaha R1 and deciding then that it was probably wise not to buy something which made it even easier to ride fast. At this time the roads in this country seemed to be starting to lose the battle against the rising traffic numbers. The pot holes were getting bigger along with the traffic jams and I decided to try an adventure style bike for size.

The last ten years or so have seen me spending most of my time on Triumph Tigers, and the Blade has come out only occasionally, the last time



in 2017 for a few summer miles. It's great fun, but still too easy to over-do it, and to be honest, at legal speeds, it is just not very comfortable. So, it's time to sell. I have taken the covers off, put a new battery on and started it without much trouble. Now for an MOT and when it's a bit warmer find a new owner.

Rick Chubb

Honda CB750 F2

I did a short article a year ago on this bike as it was old enough for classic status. A year on and due to Covid it has not been used as much as I hoped, but looking at it in the garage, I realised that since I bought it on 4th Jan. 1980 it has been through several changes and a few adventures.

Early on I used it in all weathers to commute to work, and I admit it didn't get much care, but was always given a good clean and polish before heading off to the Isle Of Man for the TT, or a camping trip to Ireland. Maggie and I went to many race meetings in those days, including the GPs at Silverstone, which required a top

box and some panniers for the tent, etc. Late one Sunday night, coming back from Silverstone near Swindon, just as we came over the M4 in a thunder storm, the bike died, no lights, engine stopped. I fumbled about in the dark and found the ignition came back on when I turned the handlebars, so guessed the switch was at fault. I pinched a bungy strap from the



luggage and wrapped it round the ignition switch and it did the trick, we made it home.

Naked bikes can be a pain on long trips so I fitted a Rickman fairing and some "Jota" bars, apart from anything else the fuel consumption improved by 5 MPG. The fairing kept the weather off and made high speed riding comfortable.

Off to the TT one year, we had a few problems passing Bristol, one was a horse wandering about on the M5 causing a long delay. Now running late with a ferry to catch I filled up at the next services and said we'd better get a move on. An hour later we stopped again and



filled up ready for the final leg to the boat. My trip meter had recorded exactly 100 miles. I doubt I would get away with it these days, and there is a lot more traffic. We made the ferry on time.

Another year at the TT and after a great 10 days of riding and watching the races I went to check the bike over for the ride home. Oh dear, or words to that affect, the back tyre was flat. Even in those days I carried a puncture outfit, but also belonged to the AA, they pointed out that they were only able to fit new tubes at a garage and the Isle Of Man had run out of tubes, could I get to Liverpool? I removed the tyre and found a 2cm split in the tube, using the biggest patch I had, I repaired it and hoped it would get me to the ferry. On arrival at Liverpool we were met by the AA who took us to a motorcycle shop for a new tube to be fitted.

Another TT and again the ride home was not a straightforward affair. The sea was rough, so rough that although we were due to return to Heysham, half way we were told the ferry would have to sail to Liverpool, with the boat getting tossed about it is the only time I have ever been seasick, in fact the only person not sick seemed to be Maggie. So 8 hours after leaving Douglas we arrived in Liverpool, a lot of pale faces. Down in the car decks was a sad sight. In those days the bikes were lined up right across the deck then a single rope tied round each one in turn and to the wall each side. The bikes had done a good imitation of dominoes and had rocked to and fro causing much damage. As we left the ferry, the company had laid on several people to list the damage to the bikes. On arriving home, I put in my claim and all repairs were completed at Vincent and Jerrom in Taunton.

One more tale from a TT trip, again coming home. Sunday night, dark and a very strong headwind, the bike was using fuel far faster than I realized



and just after Strensham services I had to switch to reserve, I slowed the pace, but as we approached the 1 mile to Michaelwood sign, the bike spluttered to a stop. "Oh dear" again. The motorway runs slightly downhill here so we took a chance

and pushed the bike to the services down the hard shoulder, again, not something you would get away with now, or that I would want to do.

Eventually the Rickman fairing was sold on, and the old top box. The Jota bars stayed, but were adjusted upwards for a more comfortable ride. The bike has never had much work done other than servicing, and I am surprised how well the chrome has survived. The paint is tatty in places, but as many of you know, as long as the mechanics and ride are good, then I am happy.

Lots more stories with this bike, but in time I found the likes of the VFR750 and Fireblade took over from the F2. Now it can stay "taxed" (free) all year, and used when the fancy takes.

Rick Chubb





Having owned my V-Strom 650 winter hack for a little while, and with the previous owners already having pimped her up, it was on Rob's Welsh Weekend I really noticed the long clutch span, and the constant up /down changes as we motored up the Welsh valleys, keeping apace with

the 1200 Tigers. It was at that point the seed was sown that a quick-shifter would make this little V twin a proper fun bike, and take out a lot of effort whipping through the gears despite doing clutchless changes. At the time, I didn't realise just how much easier and more it would transform an 'OK' bike into a fun, smile machine.

The job started with an online purchase from one of HM's dealers, and the IQSE-1 control unit was supplied with a bike specific loom. This entails no cutting into the loom, it's all plug n play.

The Strom shifter, uses injector constant live to power the control box when the engine is running and intercepts the 'control ground' feed to the injector that makes the 80ms cut to





reduce just enough torque to let the next gear slip in seamlessly when the gear lever is pressed. Some bikes use ignition coil cut, it depends on the design.

Access to said injectors was tight and necessitated the removal of the tank and airbox, so it was prudent to check and adjust some tight exhaust valve shims while I was in this deep.

The interface harness easily plugged onto the 2 fuel injectors and was neatly run back along the chassis to the subframe. With the control box mounted, and earth wire connected, the only fiddly bit was measuring the resting position of the gearlever and fitting the solid state transducer sensor on the gearshift linkage that measures the force applied by your left foot that initiates the gearchange. It is shaped like a donut and when fitted becomes part of the rod be-

tween the ball links.

I downloaded the phone HM Quickshifter App, and used the easily configurable wizard via Bluetooth to set the shifting force, Yay, I'm programming a 13 year old bike with my phone!... and min / max rpm you want the shifter to operate. I set mine at min 4000rpm so gentle shifting around low speeds could be done conventionally.

Poor weather prevented a test ride for a little while, but I had a window of opportunity before Xmas. A short test ride to Long Load quickly led to a long extended ride. The difference made it feel like a new bike. Conventional shifting can take place still at any rpm, or once above 4k rpm, a seamless clutchless shift will be gifted at all power loads.

The IQSE ecu can be easily bypassed too with the supplied bypass plug, enabling direct engine ecu to injector wiring as per unmodified should you have trouble at a later date.

Due to the 13 year old Strom having a cable operated throttle, auto downshifts are off the menu as these are done via an auto blipper and slipper clutch, so conventional downshifting is the norm here. A video can be found on our FB page or YouTube that I've thrown together.

Subsequent rides have highlighted how much more relaxed and easier it is to ride, I'm blown away by the little Strom's transformation, the shifting is like butter at all power loads & feels factory unlike my BMW GS Dynashift that feels like loading an artillery round! Amazing. **Wayne Timbrell**



MEMBER'S ADVENTURES

Lockdown Musings

Normally at this time of year, I'd be planning a big trip abroad, maybe a trip in the UK and two or three club rides to lead..... but at the moment, well, it's hard to get enthusiastic about much of anything really!

But this 'kin thing can't go on forever and it's planning and looking forward, poring over maps, working out routes and overnight stops that keeps me motivated so a mindset reboot is required. A friend of mine has already planned a trip for September through France and into my beloved Northern Spain, so I am joining him and a few others on that and will doubtless be required to lead some of the days, so I can at least get my maps out and plan some routes for that. Yeah!!



Next....a UK trip anyone? Assuming that we come out of lockdown in the spring and the vaccination programme is rolled out as planned (should I hold my breath?? I am only 8 millionth in the queue apparently) then perhaps it wouldn't be out of the question. To that end, would anyone be inter-



ested in Yorkshire Midsummer Bash?? A long weekend from Friday 18th June through to Monday 21st? I haven't worked out any details for it yet but if anyone is interested at all please get in touch as I'd be happy to lead it. I bought, perhaps somewhat impulsively, a (new to me) KTM 690 Enduro R recently on which I'd like to do some TET (Trans Euro Trail) routes both here and in Europe; the Great Western Trail, for example, is a trinity of sustainable green roads covering some 1300kms through Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon,

Cornwall and, of course, Somerset. Whether I'm being over-optimistic in doing this with such a bike remains to be seen but, again, if anyone would care to join me I'm sure it would be a bit of a laugh.....as well as a challenge!

Club rides.....who knows when we'll be able to organise these again, but I've put my hand up to lead one on March 7th if restrictions are lifted by then; hopefully cafes will be open too as a ride without a proper stop isn't quite the same, is it?

Hopefully then, a few things to plan and look forward to but, in the meantime, I'll continue to try to improve my sourdough bread making!

Andy Bourne

South East Bimble

Scampering squirrels running along in front of me.

Very tall farm vehicles filling the lanes from edge-to-edge and road-to-overhanging branch.

Debris across the road from hedge cutting to be avoided – hawthorn spikes can puncture!

Crushed pheasant didn't get out of the way of some vehicle.

Swooping swallows chasing insects rising up for the new day.

Auburn colours of leaves, beautiful.

From undulating, corrugated, crazy-paving, crap surfaces on the Somerset roads less travelled to smooth new Dorset tarmac on the A3030, covering a series of brilliant twisty bends. Cross the border and you know which county you're in.

Early morning sunrise poking through misty clouds.

Wondering if I'm going to run out of fuel so I stop to pay an exorbitant £1.189 per litre for BP's unleaded, but just enough to get me home.

Musing that the Esso card has saved me about £10 in 3 months in rebates against my favourite brand of fuel, but that's for a bike, a car and a motorhome. Still it's a saving not to be sniffed at on something I was going to buy anyway.

Hedges! Why so many bloody hedges down here? Brought up in Northumber-



land where there are fewer hedges and a lot more stone walls the propensity of hedges in the South West is astonishing. You'd think there was no stone here to build walls, but there is plenty in the fields. Most of the time you can't really see anything because of the hedges, they are so tall/high, which means a lot of cutting and a lot of vegetation to be trimmed every year for the farmers.

Angry delivery driver in a Luton bodied van wanted me to reverse when we met as I was coming down a hill on a very narrow lane with steep banks



either side. He would not back up. I explained that I had no reverse gear and that with a 3M wide lane I would be doing a 10-point turn minimum and that he would have to get out of his cab to help me because the bike would be too heavy

to handle on my own due to the weight transfer caused by the hill. He opted instead to drive his van tight over to the LHS to allow me to paddle past but I still had to have my left leg on the bank (no verge) to get through. The rear of the Luton was angled and I had to lean to the left to get my mirror and bar end past it. Then I discovered there was a farm entrance 40M down the hill, which he could have easily reversed into! B4st4rd.

First third of the route was on roads that I didn't really know and then there were roads that I thought I knew, but didn't, and roads that I didn't think that I'd know, but I did! All in all an interesting blend and mix. Not many quick sections but very interesting nevertheless. Beware the crosswind at the top of Berhill, very exposed after a run through the woods.

Dodging Lycra clad warriors as well as unfashionable, but safe, Dayglo wearing cyclists. Plenty of early morning bipedal brethren since Lock-down...

Early morning horsey lady dragging her sheepskin shod saddle out of her car. Is she going for a ride or is she returning home?

Choice between potholes or gravel on my side of the lane? Up on those pegs, let the bike find its own centre of gravity, equilibrium, whatever and I choose gravel. The bike wobbles but carries on through. Another time the



back end steps out as the RHS of the rear tyre catches the central ridge of gravel on the narrow lane.

Coming down a hill on a decent road with a left hand bend I can see farm-yard detritus strewn right across the both sides road, so I slow down. My normal line for a left hand bend would be towards the centre or crown of the road but I can see that is where the crap is at its deepest so I choose to take the nearside line with a careful change of road position and keep the bike in an upright attitude to ride another day. It has taken you longer to read this than it took me to view, assess and react to the situation. Thank goodness for Advanced Rider Training!

Hedge obsession in Somerset! Why so many? Why so tall? They only need to be 1M tall not 2M +. What are they hiding? Naturist's conventions?

Ken Octon

BIKING MEMORIES

The Ride Home

... and how not to do it, probably! (written in 2011 when I returned to biking)

Having made a decision to purchase another motorcycle some years ago the opportunity presented itself with the maturity of an endowment policy which was mostly assigned to pay off the remaining mortgage debt; there was however, some surplus cash left over ha ha ha haaa!

I passed my motorcycle test in Redhill, Surrey, in 1976 and only rode for just over a year before passing my car test in 1977 and moving to four wheels as the girls seemed to prefer that mode of transport. Always intending to get back on two wheels, mortgage, marriage, children and life in general all conspired against me, so consequently I hadn't ridden a bike for some 34 years!

So with prayers answered for sunny weather it was with lots of excitement mixed with a hefty dollop of trepidation that I set off in car with my wife to pick up my gleaming black brand new Triumph America from Total Triumph in Taunton. I had ummed and aahed whether to go for a standard Bonneville or Bonnie America, but chose the latter just because it offered a more laid back riding style that shouldn't encourage a newly returned rider into any unnecessary lairyness!!!

With cash handed over and controls professionally explained, I swung my leg over, settled into the saddle and thought – what on earth am I doing!!



Convincing myself it won't be that difficult and it will all come flooding back in a few hundred yards, I pulled on my lid and after about 5 attempts managed to secure the 'D' ring mechanism on my newly purchased full face helmet – not a promising start. I turned the key, thumbed the starter and a big grin

spread across my face: okay deep breath, clutch lever pulled in and into first. Cautiously twisting the throttle grip I slowly released the clutch and wobbled gently forward and made it across the car park with no incident or embarrassment, phew, so far so good.



The open road beckoned (well the A38 actually), now for the next challenge – changing gear. In preparation for the big day and much to the amusement of my wife and two daughters I had been practising my gear change co-ordination whilst sitting on a dining room chair at home, miming the actions: although they thought I had gone completely mad I do believe it helped and although far from slick, I didn't miss a gear.

An even larger grin now spread over my face, but one that swiftly disappeared with the realisation that Taunton town centre was rapidly approaching and that meant stopping and starting and inevitably some slow riding and even worse finding neutral! Fingers crossed the traffic will keep flowing – not a chance! Stops with straight aheads went okay, but stops followed by an immediate manoeuvre were interesting to say the least. Right at roundabouts proved particularly problematic with jerky throttle control followed by a close encounter with a kerb which put heart firmly in mouth and the need to find a lavatory with some urgency! Almost.

With the town successfully, if not elegantly, negotiated, I reached some open country roads where under the shade of some trees I noticed that in all the excitement I had forgotten to cancel the indicators – doh! The quiet lanes were, however, confirmation that I'd done the right thing in purchasing another motorcycle and as the little techniques that had long been forgotten started to return, like feathering the clutch and counter steering, the pure exhilaration of being back on two wheels was joyous.

There was, however, one last obstacle to be negotiated before I reached the safety of home: the M5 motorway. I needn't have worried, but the thought did cross my mind as I cruised past a very large artichoke that if anything went wrong now it would all get very messy. It didn't, so with that ghost laid to rest the remaining journey home was uneventful with no further drama, the smile returned and does so every time I climb into the saddle.

Some very warm and welcome autumn weather gave me the opportunity to get some miles on the clock and although I can't pretend it all went completely to plan – nearly lost balance on an awkward incline at a filling station (how embarrassing would that have been?), and one or two misjudged bends with damp white lines far too close for comfort, and wet manhole covers (why do they always site them mid way through a bend?) were a reality check that it was early still early days. But now some 700 plus miles later I am starting to feel like a motorcyclist again and loving every minute of it. Roll on spring.

Postscript 2021: with the benefit of hindsight, should I have taken some pre getting back in the saddle refresher training - yes. Am I glad I took the decision in 2018 to join IAM Roadsmart and learn the skills required for advanced riding; you bet I am. Several bikes later I'm now on a Triumph Tiger 800 XRT which I love and does just about everything I need it to, and has taken me to Europe, Ireland, Wales and the NC500 in Scotland and hopefully many more trips.



In the meantime if you are out and about in lockdown number 3, keep it shiny side up and fingers crossed we will all be able to meet up for rides in the not too distant future, stay safe.

Steve Rogers

Easy Rider

1969, what a year, Astronauts from Apollo 11 landed on the moon, Concorde's first flight, 747's first flight, Harrier GR.1 Jump Jet enters service with the RAF and a 1960 Matchless 650 Deluxe exceeds 100mph (105mph on the clock) downhill, two-up.

I was sixteen, 'O' level mocks were looming but my Raleigh Runabout was foremost in my thoughts.

My Raleigh came with limited two stroke power but unlimited freedom. You may be aware that a two-stroke engine will, if you start it up in the wrong rotation quite happily run "backwards". On one occasion when starting the bike, whilst still on the centre stand, it backfired and restart-



ed itself but running backwards. I only discovered this as I pushed it off the stand and accelerated off back down the road. Not far and I didn't fall off. Back to an engine running with the correct rotation, and passing a friend who was walking to school, I offered him a "backer". He sat on the carrier



over the fuel tank at the back, now holding two satchels and legs dangling, we wobbled along. We didn't get far. In those days a Lagoon Blue/Ermine White Ford Anglia was the transport of choice for plod, "Panda Cars".

It was a short conversation, "No, a moped cannot be

used to carry a passenger". Unfortunately, his kindly parting comment "Don't let me catch you again" was seen more as a challenge than a reprimand. As he started his car I turned to watch him leave and noticed that his radio was still on the roof. I ran to the car and tapped on the window. He wound it down. You can't look cool when you "wind down the window". It's not the same as indifferently pulling a toggle switch whilst absent mindedly looking ahead as the window motor purrs as it lowers. His mind was clearly elsewhere as he angrily turned to me and said "What!". I also thought "What?" What to do, apologise and say "Oh sorry, nothing" and watch as he drove off with the radio clattering down the road after him and a mountain of paper work for someone or "You've left your radio on the roof" and hand it to him. Karma was in force on that morning and as he drove off, we two at least were happy campers.

For my motorcycle riding test, I borrowed a friend's Suzuki 125 and during lunch time, I rocked up for my appointment at the Ministry of Transport offices in Poole. The test was less than rudimentary. Produce your documents, once around the block, as you approached on the final leg the examiner would hold up his clip board & jump out in front of you – "the emergency stop", (woe betide the rider who got that bit wrong), a few Highway Code questions and job done. I am pleased to say that you've passed. Some riders even failed that. I was now free to take on the motorcycle of my choice with unlimited power.

I started with a Triumph 350 Twin, probably a 1958, allegedly 18.5bhp.



This was quite an improvement on the 1.35bhp of the Raleigh. The 3TA was unkindly nicknamed the "BathTub" owing to the enormous valances of the rear mudguard. My friends poured further unkind-

ness onto it by calling it the Redex Machine.

In those days Redex “Upper Cylinder Lubricant” was delivered from a red squirty dispenser at the petrol station One Penny a Shot. The 350 was often mistaken for a 500. This was an unnecessary distraction which could only be cured by a bigger bike. A chum had located a “big bike” in a chicken shed across the road from where I lived.



The chicken shed was across the road, I didn't live in one. The big bike was attached to a side car. I found the owner, paid him £10, removed the chair and wheeled it back over the road from the chicken shed, to investigate if it would run. The owner later gave me a bollocking for not also taking the sidecar.

The Big Bike was a 1961 Matchless 650 deluxe, the deluxe signified that it had a magneto and “reliable” dynamo rather than that modern alternator stuff. I later discovered that the advertising in the '60s said it was a “gentleman's cruiser”, oh how the meanings of words have changed over



the years. It ran well, the lights worked and so did the horn. So off for an MOT. My chum who had found the bike recommended that I change the square section "Sidecar" tyres for some new Avons. I ignored him, what does he know? Turns out quite a lot and the first bend to be negotiated confirmed that he was correct. The mechanic at the MOT testing station also recommended that the tyres should be changed. Now, following my first near off, I sagely agreed with him and bluffed that I was on my way to get them changed but because of the various locations, it was easier to come first for the MOT.

Back to 1969. The film of the year for me was Easy Rider. My favourite actor was Jack Nicholson, even though he didn't have a bike I thought that the lawyer chappie character was cool beyond words. Fonda for me was too flashy but I preferred the high bars on his bike to Dennis Hopper's straight bars. The music was brilliant; Steppenwolf with Easy Rider and The Jimi Hendrix Experience. Also, that year Robin Knox-Johnston becomes the first person to sail around the world without stopping and Monty Python's Flying Circus was on BBC One for the first time. At school during lunch break we would listen on a Portable Transistor Radio to "I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again". Trannies aren't the same now.

Back to the bike. To get ahead of my unkind friends I called it Praeantis-simus. Those amongst you who studied Latin, will know that this means "The most Outstanding", which was pretty close to "Matchless" for me. In those days I fancied myself as a bit of a classic scholar. Reality very quickly brought me back to earth from the ideas of dreaming spires. My Matchless was boring black. I liked the style of minimalism. I've only just found out that it was quite a modern and revolutionary fashion at the time. My father had recently bought a new Ford Corsair V4 deluxe in Saluki Bronze. The colour was fantastic. I striped all the tinwork from the Matchless, removed all the little chrome bits and manufacturers regalia, and took it to a chap who had a grit blaster. I learned then about different grades of grit but only after the paint sprayer told me I'd made a mess of it. Plenty of filler primer, lots of rubbing down and it was ready for paint spraying – Ford Saluki Bronze. It looked absolutely great. Back home to be refitted. I had the exhaust pipes coated with Hot Zinc metal spray which resulted in a matt white finish. I took off the handlebars and the twin seat and fitted a solo saddle and high bars. The electrics needed to be extended for the high bars, so I rewired it. Because a lot of the wiring was exposed, I used

single strand white throughout. It was all white cables to keep with the minimalist theme and the white exhaust pipes, I just identified each end to differentiate the cables. Somehow the exhaust silencer wasn't refitted. Now on the road it was a beaut. I could feather the throttle in town so as not to draw attention. On the open road and throttle wide open, it was as loud as a speedway bike. Born to be Wild, Get your motor runnin', Head out on the highway.



I had a Saturday job in town and on my way home on the Ringwood Road nearby the Ryvita factory, I saw up ahead a school chum who had a Saturday job at the Millers Pie factory. Anybody I knew who worked there never ate a Millers Pie. They never appealed to me much. All evening fermenting in that glass warming display cabinet on the top of the bar in your local pub. I was legally too young to drink in a boozier but who cared. In those days you could still go around with L.s.d (cash!) in your pocket. Beer was one shilling and eight pence a pint in the public bar and two bob a pint in the lounge. There were some pubs in town that sold cider at one shilling a pint but it was rough and it was only served in the part of the public bar where the floors could be easily cleaned. Years later the landlord at my local was seriously pissed off when my chums and I celebrated our 18th birthdays at his pub. I pulled up to give my chum a lift. There was no pillion seat but the rear mudguard on a sixties bike is strong enough to stand on. I don't recall if there were foot pegs for the pillion. He may have been sharing mine. Neither of us had a helmet on. If you wanted to ride your motorcycle to school, the rules were that you had to wear a helmet. Outside of that the helmet laws were still in the future. Helmets were only needed in the rain and on this day, it wasn't raining. The way home was via Ringwood Road, in a built-up area and more or less level for a mile and then it becomes Old Wareham Road, which in those days was open country and disappears downhill, a 200ft drop over a mile before it levels out for half a

mile before a roundabout at Fleets Corner nearby Hamworthy Engineering. My chum was not a biker but he did like Speedway.



Poole Pirates were in their ascendance in those days. The stadium was almost in the centre of town. We lived in Broadstone, almost three and a half miles away as the crow flies and no obstruction between us and the Stadium. From where we lived, on the evenings of a race, with the wind in the right direction you could hear the bikes taking off from the start line. My chum was about to have the real decibel experience close up. Once he was settled in, we were off. The racket of the exhaust blasting between the houses as we roared off towards Old Wareham road. As the road fell away downhill and at maximum rpm, which is just before the valves started bouncing when you haven't got a tacho, I changed into fourth and God came with us to give a hand as the forces of gravity assisted in our acceleration towards history or oblivion. With the heathland flying by either side, the speedo needle was heading towards the high beam and registered 105mph on the clock. I turned to my chum and pointed excitedly at the speedo. He had tears streaming from his eyes. Was he overcome with joy? I didn't have time to ask. Fleets Corner roundabout was fast approaching and the brakes were never much cop, time to slowdown. As I applied the brakes the force of deceleration against the highbars over-

came the gripping force of the handlebar clamp. The handlebars rotated forwards. Ooerr, brakes off and I pulled the handlebars back. I put the front brake on again. Same thing, bars forward as we braked but this time more easily as the friction was easing up a bit. I hurriedly yanked them back again. Not taking account of the reduced friction, the bars rotated all the way back, only stopped as they hit my knees. We both nearly fell off backwards. The handle bars had now effectively become a hasp and staple as the high-rise bars (hasp) were now either side of the petrol tank (staple). I may have thought to myself, "oh for goodness sake". Now was not the time to faff around. I managed to pull the bars up to a point where the vector force of deceleration was in line with the handlebars without any "resulting angular momentum", which meant that the front brake could be used to its full and Fleets Corner roundabout was successfully negotiated.

Oh yes, Jackie Stewart was F1 world champion, Giacomo Agostini was probably at the peak of his career and Star Trek was on the box. "It's bike riding Jim but not as we know it".

Tony Sauer



West Taunton Powder Coating.

Specialists in Powder Coating, Wet Spray,
Shot Blasting and Stove Enamelling.



01984 624122

Ford Rd, Wiveliscombe, Taunton,
Somerset TA4 2RE

CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo, taken on a SAM Green Ride "Autumn Uprising".

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.

Furlong Tyres: **01935 425888** **Paul**
A303 Motorcycles: **01935 507620** **Bunny (Dave)**

Tel: 01460 259888

Mobile: 07860 838989

Email: info@nigelgillard.co.uk

18 Ilton Business Park, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9DU

For all your electrical work including:
Domestic, Commercial, Agricultural
& Light Industrial Repairs & Fault Finding
Periodic Testing and Inspection
Portable Appliance Testing
Electric Space Heating and Water Heating
Our rates are very competitive
Fully Guaranteed & Insured

Autumn 2020 Caption



Thanks to Roger Moffat who came up with the following Caption for the Autumn 2020 photograph :

**Then my other half says: "so you and the girls
are off out shopping?"**

TAILPIECE #15

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

With a few words in four European languages, the rider has been able to survive in airports, ferries, petrol stations, hotels, restaurants and chemists; his skills do not extend to conversations. There have been many, sometimes amusing, misunderstandings over vocabulary. Ham *v* gift (Schinken/Geschenk), beach *v* dinner plate (playa/plato), thirty *v* thirteen (trenta/tredici), straw *v* beer (caña/caña - it's all in the context); but fortunately not pregnant *v* embarrassed (embarazada/embarazoso) or, penis *v* pasta (pene/penne).

On an unbelievably hot day (high 30's) one October in South West France and desperate for fuel, the rider stopped at a little filling station on the edge of a small town; it was service-only and had no canopy. *Le patron* eventually ambled out to the boiling and burning bikers and methodically began to fill the tank. Out of politeness the rider enquired whether this temperature was normal and was rewarded with a long monologue; it turned out that *le patron* could not pump and talk at the same time, nor could he be interrupted. Odd, recognizable words and attention to his hand gestures revealed that this road had been by-passed and passing trade had collapsed, takings were down, the local mayor insisted on the same business rates, a super market was planned nearby, a *huit-a-huit* convenience store had opened down the road; his wife and nephew were mentioned with uncomplimentary body language. No doubt the rider missed much of the diatribe. Eventually the tank was full and paid for and the bike was underway with a little evaporative cooling to treat the over-heated riders.

A little study of his phrase book that evening showed that the rider had asked *le patron* "Good day, sir; are these normal times?"

SAM member John Eggleton brings us some breaking news from the IAM in Egypt:

"Apparently the government there has instructed all city taxi drivers to regularly beep their horns as it's hoped that a return to familiar sounds will help restore peace during the pandemic.

Operation 'toot 'n calm them' will last until Easter."

SHIRES GARAGE AUTO SERVICES

S E R V I C I N G - M O T - R E P A I R S

TEL: 01458 250570

WWW.SHIRESGARAGE.CO.UK

*** we now do MOT testing for motorcycles ***

MOT Testing for cars

Laser Wheel Alignment

Car Sales too!

Servicing

Tyres – cars & bikes

*Updated weekly
on our website*

Repairs

Batteries & exhausts

Diagnostics

Courtesy cars

Like us on



Paul & Clare Broom

One Stop Motorcycle Shop

Brumers Bikes

Unit Z10, Westpark, Wellington

Somerset TA21 9AD

MOT Station, Workshop,

Triumph Specialist,

Tyre Fitting, Clothing,

Helmets, Gloves, Accessories

01823 665100

07590 260495

email—paul@brumersbikes.co.uk

www.brumersbikes.co.uk

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.

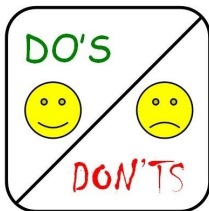
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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.

GRAHAMS Motorcycles

SOMERSET'S ONLY BMW SPECIALIST

NEW AND USED MOTORCYCLES AND SCOOTERS

SERVICE, REPAIR AND MOTs ON MOST MAKES



Clothing

Helmets

Accessories

01823 331397



Cornishway North, Galmington, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5LY

www.grahamsmotorcycles.com.

New Bikes

Used Bikes

Genuine Parts,

Clothing & Accessories

Servicing & MOT's



FOR THE RIDE



Total Triumph A38 Wellington Road,
Taunton, Somerset TA4 1ES

01823 358899

www.totaltriumph.co.uk



BIKE-SEAL **AUTO-SEAL**

PUNCTURE PREVENTION SYSTEM - SEALS UP TO 15MM



No distance / speed restrictions

Non-corrosive - Water-based - No shelf life

Mechanical not chemical process

On road / off road - Tube / Tubeless

500 ml bottle protects 1 motorbike - buy online



- Stockists of quality products
- Exclusive NEW Bike-Seal / Auto-Seal Compact Puncture Repair Kit - 6 or 12 plug system, TUV tested 186 mph.

E: enquiry@bike seal.com

www.bike seal.com | T: 01278 671900

 HM Government

NHS

STAY HOME
PROTECT
THE NHS
SAVE LIVES