

Autumn 2019

# FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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# FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



As Summer draws to a close, it's time to think about the pleasures and chores of Winter riding. Once the leaves are off the trees, we get the benefits of better views through the hedges, and no dappling of the road surface in deep shade. On the other hand, we're always washing our bikes, although mud is often easier to remove than splattered insect glue. (It has helped me to become quite Zen about this, and to take pleasure in seeing bikes clean and sparkly, however briefly.) The roads are generally quieter, caravans largely go into hibernation, beauty spots are not mobbed. There is also the sense that if you do get a dry, warm(ish) ride, you have been truly blessed. If not, well, you have been bold and intrepid, and honed your poor-grip and poor visibility skills. Time to put the thermal liners back into the bike kit and break out and check any heated clothing

you might be lucky enough to have, or drop hints to loved ones about Christmas presents if budgets allow. If the leathers are going away for the Winter, give them a clean and feed, so that they are less likely to dry and crack on the first lovely day of 2020.

The new series of Control and Technique seminars will start, and before you know it, Christmas and New Year will be done and dusted, and Observer Training theory will be underway.

Many thanks to contributors for this issue, the deadline for the next one will be 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.

**Gina Herridge**



## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Some of you may have noticed that I haven't been out and about on our club rides recently, this is due solely to the new job that I started back in March, which has necessitated me travelling all over Europe during the week – usually departing on a Sunday, meaning any Sunday ride becomes a rush to complete and then turnaround to catch a flight or train.

Why am I pointing this out? Well, because I'm conscious of the fact that I have had to change my priorities, and therefore some of the things that I previously have been doing for the club, are now taking longer or being delayed.

There are still things that I need to start to prioritise in the near term, so that we can continue to offer the wide range of events in the coming year, the SWPSR 2020 being one of them now entering front of mind – so expect appeals

for help very soon!

If in recent months I have let some of you down with missed appointments – or tardy replies to your offers of help, I apologise – that is a symptom of the juggling I have been doing recently to fulfil my responsibilities to work, family and club.

Just to help emphasise that point, I am currently drafting this on an evening of my second week in Johannesburg on a work trip. I know Graham is waiting on this so that he can get the Full Chat assembled correctly ready to go to print – I'm already late!

On the positive side, I have managed to use my evenings away from home to redesign and build a replacement database for the club officials to use, which (I hope) is less clunky than the Google Sheets solution that we have been using for the last couple of years. Whilst I have not been able to attend the club rides myself, I have been able to see from Facebook that they continue to be popular as ever, and the Ride Leaders have been rising to the challenges of larger groups.

Recently, I saw that Dave Potter led his first ride just 2 weeks after passing his test, now that is step-





ping up! I know that he was ‘trained up’ to be the second lead should it be necessary by Lisa Parsons (as this was scheduled as her ride), but in the event he led the ride. This surely is an example of how prospective Ride Leaders can be eased into leading their own ride – we need to consider a second ride leader on most rides now, so if you are interested in taking on the challenge, this shadowing exercise could well be a good way of dipping your toe in the water. Remember that most of our members join us because of the number of rides we schedule and without new ride leaders those routes can easily get stale. With all of the passes achieved over the last year, we surely can ‘blood’ more than one new ride leader?

That’s it for this edition (Andy Kynaston will be pleased!), remember – if there are changes you would like to see in the club and any of the aspects in the way it is run, everyone is welcome to make their suggestions to the committee and to attend the committee meetings.

**Jez Martin**

# SAM NEWS



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

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

- Ian Cleminson on 19th August, riding a Triumph Explorer. Ian was observed by Rob Bartlett.
- Duncan Dury also on 19th August, riding a Triumph Street Twin 900 and observed by Nathan Beesley.
- Theo Guy on 23rd August. Theo was riding his Honda CRF250 and was observed by Lisa Parsons.
- Dan Wright on 28th August, riding a Yamaha FJR1300 and observed by Dave Parker.
- Steve Elliott on 1st September, achieving a F1RST. Steve was observed by David Bates and was riding his BMW S1000XR.
- Paul Lynham on 6th September, riding a BMW R1250GS and observed by Callum Bremner.
- Paul LeCornu on 8th August. Paul was riding his CCM Adventure, and was observed by Hugh Beamish.
- Dominic Knight on 9th September, riding a Honda Hornet. Dominic was observed by Lisa Parsons.
- Trevor Watts on 14th September. Trevor was riding his Yamaha Tracer 900 and was observed by Alistair Gee.
- Andrew Byrne on 15th September, riding a Honda Africa Twin. Andrew was observed by Peter Bayliss.
- Nigel Simms on 17th September, riding a Triumph Street Triple R and observed by John Hooper.
- Richard Franklin on 18th September. Richard was riding a Honda VFR800, and was observed by Jim Donnelly.
- Neil Moore on 19th September, achieving another F1RST. Neil was observed by Wayne Timbrell, and was riding another Honda Africa Twin.

- Rab Lavendar on 24th September, riding his BMW R1000RR and observed by Steve Joyce.
- David Potter on 2nd October. David was riding his Honda CBF1000, and was observed by Martin Surrey.
- Matthew Brock on 3rd October, riding a Triumph Tiger 1050 Sport. Matthew was observed by Graham Tulloch
- John Elliott on 4th October, riding a Ducati Multistrada and observed by Jim Donnelly.
- Simon Hartley also on 4th October, riding his Moto Guzzi and observed by Bob Muckett.
- Oliver Judd on 13th October. Oliver was riding his Kawasaki Z900X and was observed by Andy Phillips.
- Robert Leitch on 18th October, achieving a F1RST. Robert was riding a Honda ST1100 and was observed by Colin Reynolds.
- Richard Buckland on 24th October, also riding a Honda ST1100, observed by David Bates.
- Roy Marriott on 26th October. Roy was riding a BMW R1100RT, and was observed by Georges Dupuis.
- Henry Cullingford on 3rd November, riding a BMW R1250GS Rallye TE, and observed by Mick Hill.
- Georgina Moore on 4th November. Georgie qualified via the MBP route, and was observed by Jez Martin. She was riding her Kawasaki Z650.
- Steve Hill, also on 4th November, achieving a F1RST. Steve was riding his Triumph Explorer, and was observed by Ian Wilson.



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

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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

# Committee Meetings

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



The minutes of the last Committee meeting, held at The Lamb & Lion, Hambridge on 28th August 2019, can be found on the SAM website.

## IAM Inform

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

## Membership by Portfolio (MBP)

Until very recently, the only possible route to becoming an Advanced rider or driver involved taking the IAM test, in front of an IAM examiner. This worked well for many of us, some even performing better on the test than in "normal" riding. A lot of us, though, found the test a bit daunting, and quite possibly didn't ride as well as we'd have liked. Further along that spectrum, there are those for whom actual exams and tests are so overwhelmingly nerve

-racking that they simply can't produce their normal performance. I've spoken to many people who would like advanced training, but are completely put off by the prospect of an exam/test at the end of it. Some of those even sign up, take the training, but never put in for the test itself.

It's to reach this group of riders and drivers that IAM RoadSmart has been rolling out a new type of assessment, Membership by

Portfolio. This is rather like what we always used to call “Continuous Assessment” where the reports from six observed sessions are recorded, and the candidate declared up to advanced standard when two rides score a ‘2’ (or better) in every category. The completed portfolio is submitted to the IAM RoadSmart Area Service Delivery Manager for approval and when granted, the candidate is admitted to full membership of IAM RoadSmart. Because an examiner is not involved in the process, only National Observers do the rides for the portfolio, since they are independently quality checked by IAM RoadSmart.

The huge advantage of this is that there is no test to distract the rider, although because at least two rides must score at the advanced standard, the rider does have to produce a more reliably consistent performance. Training for that can therefore take a bit longer, but hey, you get advanced rider standard and IAM RoadSmart membership without a test. If you know anyone who has been hankering after getting some advanced training to help them develop their riding skills, but who has a phobia about exams, tell them about MBP - Membership by Portfolio. **Gina Herridge**



MBP—It's all about the riding

## Quick Shift 1 — The Route to Test

**Quick shifting** – the technique of applying pressure to the gear lever before pulling in the clutch, leading to a smooth fast gear change, facilitating progress and not clunking the gearbox. (Oh and to hear the detuned fireblade engine on my Honda CBF 1000 (a ‘Big Biffer’) making all manner of delicious and intoxicating engine noises as we progress through the revs and gears!)

Joking aside this is very poignant for me. Throughout Advanced SAM training you learn best practice for everything, seemingly small incremental steps, like gear changes, that all add up together

to produce a *Much* improved rider and a test pass (2 weeks ago). Though I’ve always known that for me it was not especially about passing the test or receiving the crisp IAM pass certificate (with Nigel Mansell as President) but more about the ‘**Learning Journey**’ and how much you could learn on the way, even to stretching out the training programme a little. Sure, I’m delighted to pass, it’s another Life Event like passing a car driving test, my DAS in May 2017, running a 1<sup>st</sup> London Marathon, qualifying as an RYA Yachtmaster Offshore or Degree graduation day.

But even pre-test with SAM, I wondered if structured learning would continue post-test (besides self study). So many questions still to ask and things to perfect!

Then post-test, what now? My first post-test Green Ride was the answer, being an essential debrief, a confirmation. I seemingly had wings like my Honda. Then shifting focus to others, like reassuring fellow Sammers about their training or rideout experiences or celebrating the test passes of ‘The Trio’. Thankfully also the continued support for me with words of wisdom from Pam and Ian and



Lisa, et al.

And now looking back, I feel indebted. To have had access to observers like Martin Surrey, 30 or so years as a Police motorcyclist, is humbling. Giving their precious not-at-work time for free. Yes, we all gain fun and friendship and share our favourite routes for the pleasure of all, but ultimately riding a motorbike is an increasingly serious business; SAM makes us all safer and could save lives. Such a worthwhile cause! My partner Jenni worries about me when I'm biking; I always say 'but I'm with SAM.' That cosy nurturing Green Rideout, professionally led and with Ian and Pam et al as TECs always made me feel safe, when feeling unsure, an environment for 'ironing out my creases.'

And I thought the rigours of the four-part DAS test was the last word, but as Peter Herridge rightly pointed out (after saying 'I'm pleased to say you've passed') 'you're on a ***Learning Journey***, David.' **David Potter**

## Quick Shift 2 — Leading a Ride

So, when Lisa suggested I lead the second group on the '**Tour De(s) Mendips**' I thought, well YES. To show appreciation, and because SAM always needs ride leaders, and hey, here's the next part of my development, my '***Learning Journey***' as Peter called it.

Lisa showed me the route, my sat nav recorded it, the route having a 'fiddly bit' in the middle. A couple of solo practice sessions, revised the sat nav mounting and a waterproof bag when the cling film blew off... And I dare to wear an *Orange Jacket!* Yey!

Then came the day, **The 'Tour De(s) Mendips'** of Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Floods and heavy rain, but myself feeling super organised and determined, and with 13 experienced bikers to help, the Met Office said dry by 11am. Lisa presented, then we took it on, as one group, sharing the ***challenge***.

This just felt right. Ride my own ride Lisa said. Flow, as one with the bike, but find safe marking points at route deviations, everyone helped, my determined concentration, ***oh nice quick shift***, caution here Sammers, tricky bit, show you with positioning and restraint and a flash of brake light, a 3<sup>rd</sup> flood (well if my CBF can do it...). I know every bend and pot hole. Speed – left them behind (well ok we have the marking system) now I need a buddy for marking, oh good sometimes I can see the TEC, quick break in Cheddar Gorge. Ah this is simple; get the route right, point and mark in a



safe place, progress here, and restraint there.

And we're back (from our underwater adventure!) Coffee and bacon butty never tasted so good. Smiling faces and appreciation of the ride. Thanks for your support Sammers! More kind words from Sammers on Facebook later, when as chance would have it the sun came out.

How rewarding! Putting something back in! Use everything you know, concentrate but relax and enjoy. I have grown. I have developed. Did it feel like a **Quick Shift** from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 1 gear too far? Nah!

So there it is all you (recent) test pass types! Entirely do-able. Even I did it, 2.5 years riding and Advanced test pass 2 weeks ago. YOU can do it too. We'll all help. There's so much support in person and on the website, so share the ride lead tasks to begin with.

So How is YOUR **Learning Journey** coming along?

SAM needs more leaders, come on show us your favourite routes!

Develop you. Develop your riding.      **David Potter**

# The Drop-Off System

Is it time to review the Drop-off System?

The beauty of the Drop-off System is its simplicity.

The weakness of the Drop-off System is its simplicity

Those of us who have used the Drop-off System (DoS) on numerous occasions for group rides cannot see how it can go wrong, because it has worked so well for countless years, but it can and it has done.

The DoS relies on a few fundamentals:

1. A Ride Leader responsible for pointing out the most suitable locations for marking a junction/change of direction by the number 2 rider, subject to safety etc, and **MAKING SURE THAT THE JUNCTION IS MARKED**.
2. A number 2 rider who will mark the junction/change of direction in an obvious, visible location, **PREFERABLY BEFORE THE JUNCTION**, indicating **WITH ARM SIGNALS AND INDICATORS** the direction of travel.
3. Following riders in the group to take responsibility for marking any



- junctions/changes of direction WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN MARKED.
4. All markers to STAY AT THEIR LOCATION until the Tail End Charlie (TEC) is visible to them.
  5. All riders to STICK TO THE MARKED ROUTE, not wander off on their own path.
  6. A Tail End Charlie to sweep up the markers once all riders have passed the marked junction/change of direction.

How could it possibly go wrong?

On a couple of recent group rides I have seen examples of the following:

- A. Roundabouts not marked on the entry side. One roundabout had so much vegetation in the middle of it that it was impossible to see the marker who had placed themselves in the road beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> exit which was at 270 degrees to the entry point! At least one of our group failed to see that marker and carried straight ahead, meaning that they lost the route completely, although, thanks to the ride briefing, they eventually caught up 30 minutes later. Luckily, due to increased rider spacing, no one else followed them.

- B. Despite being told at the ride briefing that the group would be travel-





ling on a major road for 2 junctions, one rider decided to turn off after one junction, resulting in the riders following him also turning off and losing the route for a while. Luckily there was a parallel road to the major road which converged with the planned route, but it could have been so much worse in other locations.

- C. Ignoring what the Ride Leader says during the ride briefing about how to mark a junction (i.e using full arm signals and clear, unambiguous indicators). Do not use hazard warning indicators – which direction are they meant to represent? And don't confuse indicators with position - a bike sat on the right hand side of a T-junction, next to a traffic island, with a left indicator flashing and a left arm waving, means what? Or a bike sat on the left hand side of the road with hazard lights flashing and a right arm waving vaguely means what?
- D. As a marker, CAN YOU BE SEEN BY FOLLOWING RIDERS where you have positioned yourself? One marker turned right off a major road onto a minor road (failing to consider marking the junction in

advance on the major road) but stopped so far down the minor road that following riders could only see him as they drew level with the minor road, at 60 mph!

- E. Markers have moved off from their locations BEFORE THE TEC HAS ARRIVED, joining back into the middle of the group - so how does the remainder of the group know the way to go? How does that marker know that every rider in the group knows the correct direction? This behaviour risks the group becoming split up and one section of the group losing the route.

### **So is the DoS flawed? Yes. Does it need changing? No!**

The problem is human behaviour. Poor human behaviour. Riders are not abiding by the rules of the DoS and thereby the system is breaking down. Why are they not abiding by the rules? Probably because the rules have never been fully explained to them, yet.

The issue seems to be mainly around new members or guests who have not seen Graham Tulloch's excellent Control & Technique session (C&T) on group riding. Graham has compiled a PowerPoint presentation which shows how to mark correctly (and just as importantly HOW NOT TO MARK) a junction/change of direction on a group ride, and fully explains the Dos and Don'ts of group riding.

If you have not been to that C&T session then I would urge you to attend the next available show (Ed's note – probably the March 2020 C&T). Graham's detailed explanation of the simple DoS is extremely worthwhile. If



you cannot wait for the C&T session then why not request for the Powerpoint presentation to be made available online - either on the group website, Facebook page or both?

**SAM Says**  
(aka Ken Octon)

# BIKING NEWS

## MAG



Motorcycle Action Group

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

This issue, Ian Mutch (MAG's founder member and president) offers an insight into MAG's current aims and activities, and the challenges it faces in ensuring motorcycling remains accessible and enjoyable for all.



## MAG in the 21st Century

*"Historically MAG's fiercest critics have stemmed from the road safety lobby of decent but sometimes irrational people who simply view motorcycling as too dangerous. The truth is that for most people it is. The fatality rate per mile travelled is at least 20 times that of motorists. Recent figures suggest it's much worse than that as modern cars have enhanced the survivability of crashes."*

*Against this stark reality MAG has argued with remarkable, though not uniform success, against a number of initiatives that we felt were red herrings. The original issue which defined MAG's ideology was of course the helmet law. Prohibition of owner modifications was an early concern, followed later by the 100bhp limit and mandatory high visibility or protective clothing. Today we must deal with the rapidly accelerating anxiety generated by climate change and resource depletion.*

*To ride head on into this unassailable juggernaut of logic would be to marginalise ourselves and climb into the dustbin of irrelevance. What we have to do therefore is persuade all parties that motorcycles offer a part of the solution to congestion and pollution issues, and can assist the resolution*

*of the global warming threat. In all cases MAG has endeavoured to embrace the broad objectives of the international consensus by recognising those parts of its agenda that are legitimate. No biker wants to get injured and no sane person can, by definition, argue in favour of an unsustainable lifestyle. It does not follow, however, that we should endorse every crackpot red herring that zealots concoct to promote their agendas, particularly so when those tactics are counter productive.*

*So rather than promoting a simple, 'leave us alone' adolescent squawk, MAG has worked its way into the consultative process. We have sought allies in parliament and the civil service who recognise the legitimacy of our argu-*

*ments. We could have rested on the 'saloon bar logic' of many riders who repeat the tired rhetoric of cynical sages and howled 'politicians never take any notice.' That is the language of defeat which MAG resists.*

*Our challenges in the 21st century require sophisticated reasoning and well researched arguments allied to an ability to project them into the most relevant forums. To assist this programme MAG engaged the professional services of former MP Lembit Opik who, via his network of contacts has effectively presented us with the key to the Westminster Village. This access gives us a tremendous advantage with our lobbying activity. We also have the services of Colin Brown, a former engineer with great talents in the research*

*and lobbying fields. As the editor of MAG's bi-monthly 84 page colour magazine, I am employed on a retainer and we have two full time office staff to handle administration. As serious lobbying organisations go, this is a very small team but one that has proved impressively effective over the years. This all costs money of*



*course and MAG has to spend a great deal of effort on its events to supplement the income from our membership subs. The incomprehensible truth is that less than 1% of all known motorcycle riders in the UK bother to pay the modest £27 a year membership fee in order to have their interests represented. To become a part of the movement to defend and promote motorcycling you can join on line at [www.mag-uk.org](http://www.mag-uk.org).”*

***Ian Mutch, MAG founder member and president.***

## A Cautionary Tale (or an old fool who should know better)

Picture this. Four chums returning from a biking trip to a MotoGP in Italy. A long trip, almost 1500 miles each way. Normally I would plan the route but on this occasion, after nearly 20 years of duties as route-master, I handed the task over to another. I would plan the days to allow for no more than 250/280 miles per day. For this trip the plan was for 350 miles per day and similar for the return journey. The new designated route planner had not carried out his pre-planning duties well and gave up.

Without any pre-planning of my own I was volunteered into the route-master duties again. What's the big deal? Follow the route and get everybody to the next stop.

I take the route-master task seriously and like to plan a route that encompasses interesting roads (the ones on the Michelin maps with a green edging), and informative places to stop for morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. The foregoing doesn't work well with 350 miles/day schedule. I can't stand blitting down the motorways. Inevitably the time on the road became longer than had originally been planned.

The last but one day on the way home, and a stop for lunch. We were in France. It was raining heavily and we found a traditional Hôtel with offers of Plat du Jour 15€. We decamped to the ressy with extremely damp views over a rain strewn river. Andouillette Sausage. My favourite. On this trip I had suffered without and here was the opportunity to indulge. Three courses and a tripe sausage for main course. All reason went out the window.

Lunch over and off we went. A few hundred miles of N routes, dual-carriageways and then the final destination in France of the Ferry Port and

the boat home. Once again I was in the lead. The traffic was very light. One or two cars and trucks being passed from time to time. The bike was in cruise control. The set speed by GPS was to the signed limit, which inevitably ended up a few klicks faster than the rest of the traffic. I was tired. There were Aires en-route (laybys with few facilities) which would have given an opportunity to stop and rest. I wanted a fully serviced stop to combine refuelling with a break to save time. I pressed on. Only 15 Kms till the next service stop.

I woke up with the bike approximately six inches from the offside back bumper of a tan coloured car with a couple of old folk inside. The man was driving. I saw him glance into his wing mirror and noticed his astonished look at how close the following motorcycle was to him. I think I could see the words from his lips as he turned to his wife to comment on this. I ride a BMW 1200. The right hand cylinder was now approaching the back bumper of the car. The closing speed bike and car was only 2 or 3 kph. The closing speed of bike & rider with road was considerably more.

What to do? Plan for the worst. Practice for all eventuali-

ties. Make the unexpected something that you have rehearsed. I didn't bloody well plan to fall asleep.

I casually dipped the clutch & the bike went out of cruise. "You have control". Thank you. It's a pity you didn't tell me that before I fell asleep. Without any further inputs from myself, the bike drifted away from the back of the little tan car. The old man and his wife carried on with their journey unmolested and I slowed down and pulled into the next Aire which was only a couple of klicks further on.

Lessons learned? If I'm honest with myself, None. Whilst I didn't foresee everything, I did know that I was tired. I did know that the journey times for each day were far longer than we were used to. I did know that I should have stopped when the first opportunity presented itself. I did know that the goal was to arrive safely. A large meal at lunch time is not what I would normally partake of if I want to stay alert. All the blood occupied in my stomach, dealing with the sausage. Nothing left over for bike control or any reasonably sensible decisions. There's no fool like an old fool but at least I lived to tell the tale.  
**ANON**

# Something to Keep an Eye On



After an occurrence the other night I thought that this would be worth sharing. Like most of the information I have received in my time doing the Associate's Course it is not a staggering new concept but something quite obvious when thought about, and pointed out. This information is tiredness of the eyes. Due to other activities that I engage in I do have regular eye sight checks at the local opticians. As my vision is not perfect, I have a slight prescription for distance reading, I always ask the question 'Do I

need to wear my glasses for driving?' and I am informed that I meet the legal requirement without corrected vision. At the start of a planned ride the other evening, a spot check of reading a number plate indicated that perhaps this is not always the case. Previously when these exercises have been carried out I have had no issues identifying the characters, so what was different this time? While the weather was grotty it was not dark, the vehicle in question was not parked in shade or shadow, being a front number plate the characters were black on white, with a good level of contrast and cleanliness. The differences here were definitely with me and not the physical surroundings.

When I book my optician appointments they are generally on a Saturday. I am fortunate enough to be able to have a gentle stroll down, leisurely have the test and do what I need in town with no pressures. Previous pre-ride tests have been conducted in relaxed situations where plenty of time has been available to prepare for the ride and get into the right mind set. Human Factor 1: In the office I had been working on various documents including forecasting spread sheets, proof reading and error checking

PLACE CHART 10 FEET AWAY



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across multiple computer screens. All intense close focal range stuff. Simply put, my eyes were tired. Human Factor 2: After a day in the office where nothing went right, I was late leaving, having an appointment to keep, the weather turning, my mind was not as fresh as it could have been.

With many investigations when things go awry it is not normally all attributable to a single factor. In this case I would self-diagnose my difficulty in reading the number plate principally to tired eyes but also because my mind was not in the correct state. I did not pick up on this and exercise / relax them as appropriate to correct.

Failure of a roadside sight test by the authorities can have severe consequences, failure to spot hazards speak for themselves... tired vision is something I shall be keeping an eye on in future.

**Rab Lavender**

## KIT REPORTS

### Head Up Display

*The following article has been provided by SAM member Ephraim Angus, who was previously a member of LAM (London Advanced Motorcyclists) and Surrey and South London SERV (Blood Bikes). It was forwarded from his previous colleagues, following a presentation by the suppliers, Bikesystems, in August.*

*"BIKESYSTEMS are launching their next generation Head up Display (HUD), BIKEHUD for bikes tomorrow (Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019). Dave Vout from the company dropped in to our new Scout Hut HQ (and new bunk house) on Wednesday for a mug of tea, chat & demo with the current prototype on a test bike.*

*The guy was around all morning while he explained how the product worked and answered our questions. At its core the system projects a rear-*

*view and your speed right into your helmet. The display follows the automotive industry's recommendation of showing the information just outside your forward vision – around 2m in-front and to one side of your front wheel either to the left or right.*

*When the product starts shipping in December it will also sport turn by turn GPS navigation. From next year the system will also have the option of bike-data such as engine revs, gears, indicators etc. You can get a fair idea as to what it looks like from a video on their web-site at [www.bike-hud.com](http://www.bike-hud.com)*



*A great point is its simplicity in use. It comes all-synchronised and it is fully automatic. It is modular too – which means depending on your style and what you need at a particular given time you can display as much or as little as you wish.*

*Oh! – and the other thing we found cool is it's British made. Designed in the North West. Parts manufactured all over the UK including right here in London and assembled in Stoke on Trent. It doesn't get any more British than that!*

*All in all a very informative and impressive morning spent.*

*Vout was only vaguely aware how Blood Bikes is financed and run. I think*

*it's fair to say that he was amazed to find that all of the group is staffed by volunteers, funded by donations and most of all much of the equipment used is bought and paid for by the riders themselves. So much so that he would like to get involved. As he explained though, BIKESYSTEMS is still a tiny family organization with limitations. None-the-less he's offering some pretty hefty discounts for us. Advanced sales of BIKEHUD are available from tomorrow via an Indiegogo crowd-funding campaign. The BIG carrot for us is that following our meet yesterday he's offering a fantastic Hero's deal that includes all member of Blood Bikes, NHS, Police and members of the Armed Forces.*

*The offer covers the whole system – worth £623.00 and available to us for £359.00 – a saving of 42% or £264.00. In addition he is adding an additional BIKEHUD cam-*

*era mounting kit – which can be fitted to the fleet bikes – at no extra charge.*

*He is asking for our help though..... Vout has 30 days from tomorrow (Aug'19) to sell a minimum of 100 through the campaign. Ideally he would like to sell 500 in the same time frame. In order to do this he needs to gather momentum as quickly as possible. This is where you come in. If you like the product enough to purchase it, register your interest on their web site today. This evening you will receive a special invitation to register and order yours from midnight tonight. If he can sell the 100 quickly then that will start the momentum to push the other sales. If you like the product but are not sure about whether you would buy it right now – then he would really appreciate it if you would spread the word and help him get to where he needs to be."*

## XCP Rust-Blocker

With the daylight hours shortening and our editor's promise of falling leaves soon to become a reality, a biker's thoughts will be turning to SAM Base-layer clothing and Bike Anti-Rust Protection. Know what I mean??

Ok, no need to shout - "ACF-50", I can hear you say, and why not indeed? I've been using it for years and have been quite happy, until I



read a Bennetts Product Test Report last year.

I was very impressed by the testing methodology of all these products and they claim to be all readily available in the UK, and for some reason got the feeling that this was pretty impartial, unlike tests published in some of the motorcycle publications that I try not to buy as frequently as I used to. Anyway, the article is quite substantial and the link to it to view online is: [www.bennetts.co.uk/bikesocial/reviews/products/the-best-motorcycle-corrosion-protectants/tested-xcp-rust-blocker-corrosion-protectant-review](http://www.bennetts.co.uk/bikesocial/reviews/products/the-best-motorcycle-corrosion-protectants/tested-xcp-rust-blocker-corrosion-protectant-review)

XCP gave very impressive corrosion protection – the best in test – and can be considered a product that will protect your bike through a full winter and beyond. If you ride through the salt and rain, application around the end of summer should see your motorcycle fare extremely well, right into spring. If you use a cleaning agent, as with any product, it's worth giving another coat of protection. Highly recommended.



Of course, we haven't experienced winter conditions since I found the article so I can't give an opinion on the one that I purchased. It was, of course, No 1 on the list, XCP Rust-Blocker.

Would I have bought it if my AFC-50 can had been full? Really not sure as the data from the tests does show the XCP to be significantly better than the competition. I've put some on BigVic (must read the instructions). **Ian Fraser**



# RIDE REPORTS

## Eli's at Dusk

Lisa once again led the penultimate evening ride of the year with this Green ride. Decent weather led to 13 riders turning out at Podimore for this short ride, the destination being Eli's at Huish Episcopi. A taproom rather than a bar (with the workings all round the edge of the bar area), Eli's (which has been a pub since it was built in the mid 17th century) is officially called The Rose & Crown, but was named Eli's in the 1920s after Samuel Eli Scott, who married the daughter of the then licencees (and whose descendants run the pub to this day).

Setting off from Podimore, Lisa took us on a very enjoyable loop round Butleigh Woods, Aschott, Greinton and Othery, before treating us to Seven Bends en route to Huish Episcopi. Just long enough to build up an appetite. Being a couple of weeks before BST ended meant that we completed the ride in daylight. Once inside, although we were advised that the room next to the bar was normally occupied by the skittles team, the absence of said team made an immediate SAM occupation inevitable. After refreshments were ordered, and seeing a menu on the side with a range of meals on it, I enquired about availability — it turns out that menu choice



in the evening is either Salt & Vinegar or Cheese and Onion! Ah well, didn't spoil the ride, so we just spent the next 45 minutes doing what every SAM ride does, putting the world to

rights. A very enjoyable autumn jaunt, thank you Lisa. But for the last evening ride of the year (my annual festive "Frozies Toesies" Green ride on 14th December), I will make sure the food choice extends beyond crisps!

Graham Tulloch

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## Control & Technique “Bike Maintenance”

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

## Haynes Breakfast Ride-In

Sun. 17th Nov. 2019  
09:30 — 12:00

## SAM Committee Meeting

Tue. 19th Nov. 2019  
19:30 @ The Lamb & Lion,  
Hambridge TA10 0AT

## SAM Green Ride

“Frostie Fingers”  
Sun. 1st Dec. 2019  
09:30 @ Ilminster Little Chef  
Led by Rick Chubb

## Control & Technique “The Comfort Zone”

Sat. 14th Dec. 2019  
10:00 @ Othery Village Hall

## SAM Green Ride

“Autumn Leaves”  
Sun. 10th Nov. 2019  
09:30 @ Cross Keys, Norton Fitz.  
Led by Richard Pearse

## SAM Red Ride

“Twisties Galore”  
Sun. 17th Nov. 2019  
10:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park  
Langport  
Led by Graham Tulloch

## SAM Green Ride

“Frozies Toesies”  
Wed. 11th Dec. 2019  
18:45 @ Podimore Services  
Led by Graham Tulloch

## Haynes Breakfast Ride-In

Sun. 15th Dec. 2019  
09:30 — 12:00

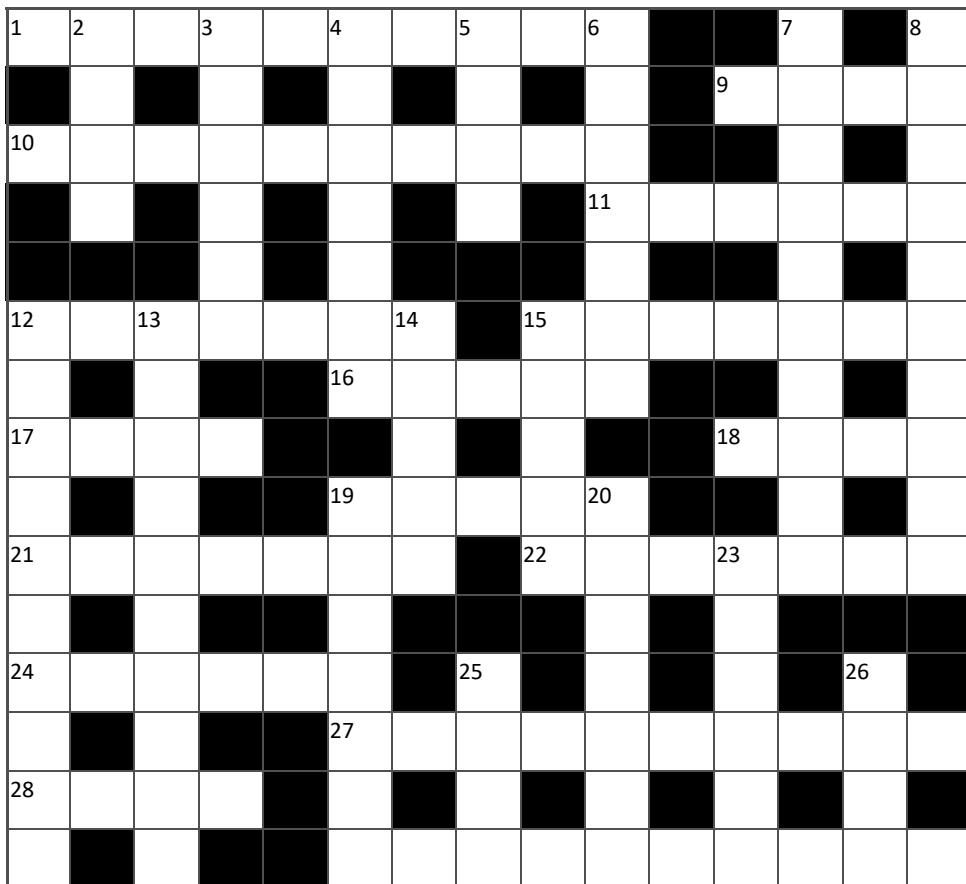
That's your lot for 2019 folks, but don't worry.....

## 2020's ride calendar will start again on New Years Day!

SAM members can look forward to another extensive and varied range of rides throughout 2020, with many of the regular favourites plus — we hope — some new rides, destinations, roads and coffee shops from those members who have recently passed their Advanced Test, and willing to lead a ride. Look out for Jez Martin's note later this month asking for volunteers for rides for next year's calendar, or just contact him direct with your suggestion.

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

# CROSSWORD



**Note:** 10 is a theme common to nine other clues

## Across

- 1 Four Sundays before Christmas sure to change exploits (10)
- 9 Simpson's expression a sporting capital with space for 10 (4)
- 10 Starts out for freedom, riding over any domain, including natural ground (10)
- 11 Banking family from sea here in France (6)
- 12 In Eugene, riches are applicable to any member (7)
- 15 As an alternative, differently stained (7)
- 16 Number Somerset, say, with penultimate letter missing (5)
- 17 Green, vying to conceal a deadly sin (4)

## CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 18 Quick look at summit on the radio (4)  
19 Mused about rock plant seen on green roofs (5)  
21 Education, e.g. lectures accommodates lack of attention (7)  
22 Amble! Run! Tea's served (7)  
24 Season's fall in US (6)  
27 Urge Heather to be irresistible (10)  
28 Public School? Folding money going west (4)  
29 Snakes and Ladders hides equipment for 10 (4,6)

### Down

- 2 Handy in debt back to front (4)  
3 Make very angry, alter, enlarge, left out (6)  
4 Trade vehicles (7)  
5 Rally! Attack! (4)  
6 A portion of Home Counties, time to receive agents (7)  
7 Large, dry Asian area with space for 10 (4,6)  
8 Two capitals, famous 5 visited (5,5)  
12 English tracks for 10 eco-friendly ways (5,5)  
13 Canal route finding (10)  
14 Arrive on time for airliner (5)  
15 Rain, dust – rat removed Asian flower (5)  
19 For candle holders, Charlie holds small plain cakes - on the contrary (7)  
20 Crew market 'Our Nige' (7)  
23 Grippy run up was first (6)  
25 Zero staff in another place with space for 10 (4)  
26 Cone changes on one occasion (4)

Solution in next issue

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

## Solution to Summer 2019 Crossword

**Across:** 1 External, 5 Fascia, 9 Theta, 10 Diaphragm, 12 Complicate, 13 Scot, 15 Accelerated, 16 Sob, 17 Old, 18 Altercation, 20 Made, 21 Strike gold, 24 Tennessee, 26 Trial, 27 Riding, 28 Recycled.

**Down:** 1 Entice, 2 Therm, 3 Reallocate, 4 Lei, 6 Ache, 7 Chanced on, 8 Admitted, 10 Decelerates, 11 Alternative, 14 Stridently, 15 Abandoned, 16 Scimitar, 19 Addled, 22 Oriel, 23 Lean, 25 Ear.

## The Tale of Valentino



Early in 2018, I had some health issues which made me (a) retire from work and (b) think “Oh what the Heck, I’m going to treat myself to a brand-new bike.” This is not my usual strategy, because there are a lot of pristine, low-mileage bikes out there whose current owners sadly find that they are unable to get as much joy from them as they had hoped when they bought them. The result is a relative glut of great-value newish,

used bikes where the depreciation has largely been paid by someone else, allowing me the budget to trick them up to my individual taste.

In this state of mind, freshly post-surgical, I visited AMS in Tewkesbury and had a test ride on the KTM 1290 Superduke GT, while Peter was checking out the 1290 KTM Adventure S. (Reader, he bought one!) I didn’t like the Superduke nearly so much, though. I found its throttle response harsh, unpredictable and jerky, and considering the power available, those are not good things, not in my relatively clumsy hands.

Later in the year, the KTM 790 Duke was released, and I had a go on that. Beautifully light, powerful and flickable, but without much in the way of weather protection or practicalities like a centre stand and luggage.

Between those two test rides, I’d had a go on Ducati’s relatively new 950 Multistrada. The KTM’s mainly served to highlight what an eager, civilised, poised, capable bike the Multistrada is, and come August, I was back at Rider’s in Bridgwater for a second test ride.



My acid test for a new (to me) bike is, when I get back on my own bike, am I glad, or do I wish I were still on the new one? The Multistrada convinced me, even without the bells and whistles of active suspension and colour screen, and with Rider's attractive accessories discount, the deal was done, and I had my first new bike since 2003.

Almost immediately, I took the new bike to Spain for a touring holiday, where it performed beautifully, carving up the mountain bends but also impressing me with its unexpectedly good weather protection and effective heated grips. I don't buy bikes for those things, but they are jolly nice to have.

However, right from the get-go I seemed to have trouble checking the oil level. I didn't really bother about it up to the first service, but once back from Spain, even on the centre-stand there was no oil visible in the sight glass. As is often the case, there was quite a rigmarole specified in the manual for checking the oil, and even when I finally got around to performing it, still no oil visible. Around this time, the clutch started to play up, with the bike refusing to go into second or first after a SAM ride, as I got home. Ducati Assist (free membership for a year with the bike) sent a mechanic who added oil to the bike and got a measurable level, but it was recovered to Rider's who found signs of wear on the 3,000-mile old clutch. Since I've never needed to replace a clutch on a bike, despite usually keeping them until they are in the mid 40,000's I was pretty sure I'd not worn it out with abuse, and Ducati paid for a new one. However, the oil still seemed to disappear from the sight glass at an alarming rate, so I bought 4 litres of the recommended Shell Advance off the internet, and noted the mileage when I needed to top it up, on Rider's advice. The result was just about 1ml of oil per mile. Wow! Seemed absurd for a modern engine, but looking on the



internet I found that Ducati don't specify a consumption figure, and some owners reported about half that figure, a couple a similar amount and some none at all. Weirdly, there was no oil under the bike or even around the exhaust, and no smoke visible in the exhaust. Where was it going? While still pondering what to do, and whether it was just a cost of owning such an absolutely cracking bike, I took it to Scotland to do the North



Coast 500. On day three the catalytic converter got so hot that the Scottoiler mounts and chainguard melted, and on day four the bike ground to a halt, throwing flames out of the exhaust, popping and banging with a catastrophic loss of power. Unhelpfully, we were about 15 miles South of Dunnet Head, the most Northerly point on the UK mainland.

The long and unedifying saga of the bike's eventual return to Somerset left me unimpressed with Ducati Assist (decided only to recover it to Manchester, rather than Somerset as I'd requested). Ducati Manchester stoutly maintained that the blown cat. was completely unrelated to the 3 litres of oil it had absorbed, and Ducati, who had to be badgered into sending the bike to Rider's, also maintained that with a new cat. all was tickety-boo. Luckily for me, Rider's took the situation in hand, and we did a calibrated oil-burning trial to verify my consumption figure, and then they applied to Ducati to fund an engine rebuild under warranty. Since then, I've run the "new" engine in, and the bike has been running fantastically well, reminding me why I wanted it in the first place. So far, I can't detect any reduction in the level of oil in the sight glass, though it will be a while before I stop nervously checking it every time I take the bike out.

So, long story short, it's still possible to buy a brand new lemon, and when the chips are down, you really need your dealer in there batting for you.

Heartfelt thanks to Rider's of Bridgwater for looking after me and Valentino\*.

\*Valentino because he's Italian, but also because when you look at the front of him, the fairing makes a "V". And I'm still a Rossi fan.

**Gina Herridge**

## Suspension Set-up

Most modern motorbikes have fully adjustable suspension; spring preload, rebound damping and compression damping.

Some riders don't touch the suspension at all, through fear of getting into unknown territory and are therefore unaware that their (motorcycle) riding pleasure can be considerably enhanced!!

It stands to reason, that a 10 stone rider will require a different suspension set-up to that of a 20 stone rider.

Before changing any suspension settings on your bike, the following need to be in good order; tyres

and tyre pressures, wheel bearings, fork bushes, steering head bearings, swinging arm bearings and any monoshock linkage bushes.

So what's it all about then?

Spring preload – before looking at changing the damping it is essential that the fork springs and rear suspension spring(s) are correct for your weight, either by way of adjusting the preload on your bike or even changing the springs, if you are a particularly light or heavy rider. Otherwise, you'll have a spring that won't compress, so any damping adjustments won't work, or you'll use up too much suspension movement when sat on the bike, restricting the suspension's operating range.

Rather than go into detail here, there is plenty of info on the internet on how to set-up the static sag and rider sag to suit your



weight. Having set the spring preload, we can now look at the damping.

It is important to note that the damping only adjusts the speed of the suspension movement, not the spring force.

Rebound damping – controls the speed with which the suspension returns to the normal ride height after releasing the brakes or going over a bump.

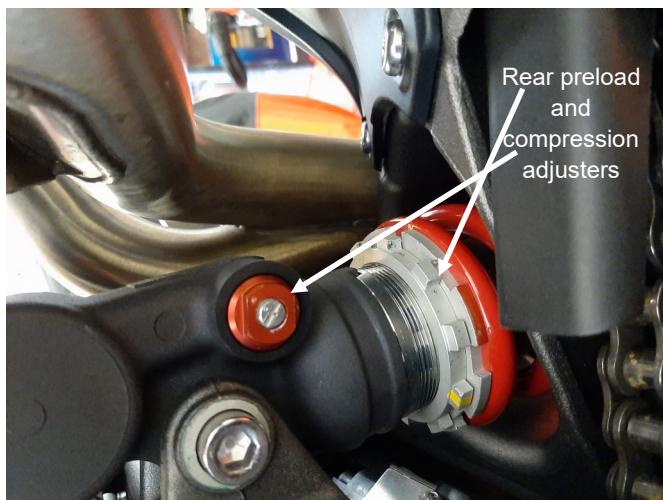
Compression damping – controls the speed at which the suspension is compressed when braking hard or hitting a bump.

The easiest way to understand this is to wind out fully (anti clockwise) the rebound and compression adjusters on the front forks. Then bounce the forks up and down and it will feel like a big pogo stick as the springs will be doing all the work.



Next, wind in fully the rebound adjusters and bounce the forks again. This time the forks will compress quickly but return very slowly back to their normal height position.

Next, wind out fully the rebound adjusters and wind in fully, the compression adjusters. This time, it will take considerable pressure to compress the forks, but they will bounce back up to their normal height very quickly. The pictures are of the suspension on my Triumph Speed Triple S.



On the top of the fork leg, the red hex adjusts the spring preload and the screwdriver slot in the middle adjusts the rebound damping. At the bottom of the fork leg, the screwdriver slot adjusts the compression damping. At the rear, you can see the threaded preload adjustment collar and above this is the compression adjuster. The rebound adjuster is the large screwdriver slot at the bottom of the shock.

When I bought the speed triple, I checked the suspension settings as per the handbook for normal road riding and went for a ride. I found the suspension to be quite harsh.

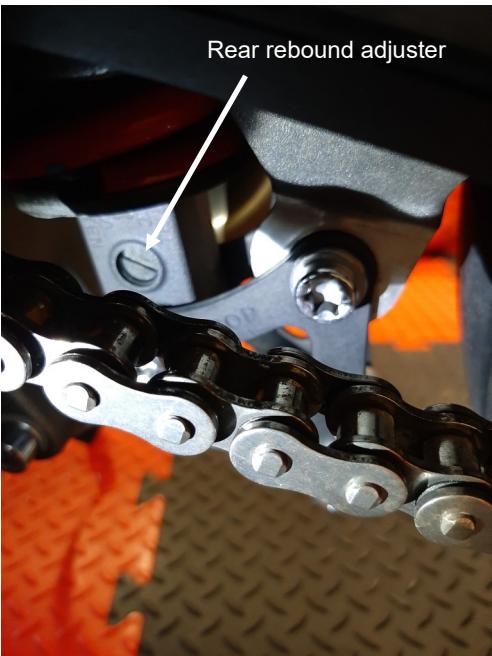
I then set the suspension to the sport setting as per the handbook and went for another ride. This time, at speed, the bike was almost unrideable. My hands and arms were getting a pounding every time I hit a bump, like operating a jack hammer and at the rear I was getting chucked out of the seat.

So, I then set up the suspension to suit me and based on previous experience. This is not a recommendation, but it works for me and may well work for you too.

Having established that the spring preload has been adjusted to suit my weight, I then unwind the rebound and compression damping adjusters to their minimum settings. Next I'll wind in the rebound adjusters, just to the point where having compressed the forks, they fully return with a smooth movement, top out, bounce once and return to their normal ride height. Same applies to the rear suspension.

Next, I'll go for a ride with no compression damping set, so that the springs are doing all the work. I take along my screwdriver and stop every few miles or so and start winding in the compression damping adjusters, just to the point of compromise between diving too much under braking and feeling harsh over bumps.

As a final check, push in the centre of the bike and note that the front and



rear suspension should compress at roughly the same rate.

I find that my adjustments give a smooth and controlled ride at normal road speeds on typical roads, that include bumps, potholes, undulations, surface irregularities, etc, etc...

They are not trackday settings, where the surface is smooth and consistent. Although, having said that, I used these settings at the IAM Thruxton skills day recently and other than the bike slightly squatting at the rear on acceleration and diving at the front on the brakes (which a little more compression damping would have addressed), all was well.

**Nigel Short**

## Scrub 'em In

As I'm off to Spain on my Multistrada (again) I treated myself to a new front Pirelli Angel GT. I reckoned that the original Pirelli Scorpion, at 8,500 miles, was going to be (a) no fun and (b) illegal by the time I got back. I know that new tyres need to be scrubbed in to wear off the releasing agent from the tyre moulds, otherwise grip, especially in the wet, can be catastrophically disappointing. I still recall a friend whose Fireblade ended up on its side in a 5 mph corner from its slippery brand new tyres. Not too long after this, I was about to go touring on my own bike, with a brand new rear tyre. I'd had it fitted rather hastily and it was a bit more sporty than I would usually choose. That created a potential problem: the weather

turned unseasonably wet and chilly, and the sporty rubber was going to struggle to get up to a working temperature. I felt very worried about the ride to Plymouth on the new tyre, so in desperation, set to with a wire brush, and in about 15 minutes had cleaned off the new surface to reveal the dull, blessedly grippy compound beneath. To my surprise, the tyre felt *fantastic* so I've used a wire brush ever since. It's so much quicker (and cheaper) than doing the recommended 100 miles of riding, and it's completely independent of the weather.

**Gina Herridge**



# BIKE REPORTS

## 1991 Honda VFR 750F-M

I bought this from another member of SAM 21 years ago, I had been riding an FZ 750 and wanted something a bit more comfortable for longer distances. The Honda fitted the bill admirably and in the following years took me on many SAM rides, and Maggie and me on several trips abroad and to the Isle of Man for the TT. We toured Ireland and saw the Ring of Kerry in brilliant sunshine. The bike only really let us down once - we were at the TT and we had spent our usual ten days watching the action from various vantage points, and been to many parts of the island sightseeing and enjoying the other events that fill the time between races. I had also enjoyed a few pre-breakfast laps of the course. On the day of departure we loaded up and rode the short distance to the ferry port and then waited for the loading to begin. As the bikes ahead of us moved forward I pressed the starter and nothing happened,



completely dead! After a few checks I contacted our breakdown company through Carol Nash insurance who agreed to meet us at Heysham. It turned out the regulator/rectifier had failed and in turn had "cooked" the battery. With no batteries available the bike came home on a lorry.

Other than that, the fuel pump once needed some new points and a wire failed because of the bend in the loom between the fairing and frame. A few wear and tear items like wheel bearings and of course tyres, brake pads and service items. The servicing I did myself and although the V four layout might seem daunting, with



a manual and a bit of patience it's fairly straight forward.

I did have a stone go through the headlight which I repaired with some of that screen repair stuff, and used it for several years before finding a good second hand unit on E-bay.

I replaced the entire exhaust with a Motad as the original was rusting badly in the collector box, and I have to say the Motad seems very good quality even after many years of all year round use. I also replaced the rear shock as it started to do a good impression of a pogo stick whilst touring the bumpy roads of Southern Ireland.

I have enjoyed this bike immensely, even doing a track day at Donnington, the day after Moto GP - great having Vale's tyre marks to follow. But in recent years I have neglected it in favour of more comfortable Tigers etc., and needing to make space for a new bike, I put an add on Gumtree. Yesterday I rode the VFR for the last time as I delivered it to its new owner in Sherborne. Sad, but I hope he enjoys it as much as I have.

Now, have I still got that VFR750F-R in the garage?

**Rick Chubb**

## Zero SR/F

Having been watching the Isle of Man Zero TT with increasing interest – and I've just bought a Prius too - I'm very curious about electric bikes. So when a Facebook item popped up at the beginning of August advertising Zero test rides, I grabbed the chance. I called my nearest dealer, Dave at Davant Bikes in Torquay, and booked a ride on the new SR/F the next day. The strapline for this model is “effortless power”. First impressions: YES!

I'm not sure about the modern styling, but getting on it I found the mid-level seat a happy height

for me, which is rare! You can specify mid, higher or lower seats as you prefer. The riding position is slightly forward leaning so looked as if it would annoy but actually proved very comfortable, although I'd probably want higher bars and a taller screen if I bought one. The lights are LED and very bright. The “engine bay” is mostly battery, with the electric motor proper tucked in between the battery and the rear wheel and also acting as the swinging arm, directly driving the rear wheel by belt. The fully adjustable Showa suspension proved excellent, and alt-



ough the weight sounds high for it's size (around 220 kg) it sits low - so it felt easy to manage and handled like a 250. The "tank" on this budget version is a large empty storage space. If you upgrade to the top of the range it houses the 25% more capacity and a fast charger but still has room for gloves and a phone.

So you get on and turn the key, and suddenly... nothing happens! Well, the screen lights up. This is a TFT item and apparently has several colour modes. It defaults to light on dark as the picture shows, and gives you a wealth of information. As well as normal data such as time, temperature,



RPM and MPH, it also shows you more modern information such the engine and traction modes, and then very unusual data such as the state of charge, estimated range and Watts per m! It comes with Rain, Eco, Street and Sport modes, all selectable from the left bar, and apparently it will store a number of custom modes, which you can set and upload to it from your mobile phone while you're having coffee! Yes it has a SIM inside somewhere, so it also comes with a free tracker.

Select your desired mode(s), check out the State of Charge and off you go. No starter, no sound, just a gentle urge as you gingerly crack the throttle, accompanied by a gentle sizzling sort of sound. And that's it – no clutch, no gears, not even an automatic box, just an engine that revs from 0 to a gazillion rpm seamlessly. Amazing! As a beginner I started with the engine in Eco mode (limited to about 75% of full power, and with lots of

lovely engine braking to recharge the battery), and the traction in Street (ABS and Traction Control on).

The throttle was very progressive, such that a whiff of electrons would have me sizzling along at only walking pace, with a nervous practice slow turn requiring only a gentle dab of steadyng rear brake. In traffic it's just twist and go, very light and easy manners. For a few seconds I was looking for a clutch and a gearshift but very quickly got the hang of the very progressive throttle. Pootling through town was effortless and soon felt natural. I paused to play with modes and tried Street mode, which seemed to have little effect? To be fair I couldn't test the power in town, and perhaps it had less engine braking?

My first time out I stayed mainly in Eco mode and pootled around town, for about 20 minutes. I got back with a big smile on my face. "Everyone does" remarked Dave, before inviting me to "go for a longer run if you like". Yes please!

So this time I thought I'd try Sport mode, as I wanted to get out onto the bypass and head back towards Exeter for a few miles. As I merged onto the A380 I opened the tap properly for the first time - and was rewarded with instant jet fighter acceleration! Dealer Dave had warned me but it still surprised. It's probably the fastest accelerating machine I've ever ridden, but with not a hint of any wheel spin or wheelies, just seamless thrust, all controlled beautifully. Apparently it has more torque than a Rocket 3, and from zero rpm too. The acceleration in Sport is full blast from zero and is quoted as 0-60 in about 3 seconds. (If that 0-60 sounds unlikely, I've discovered it was wrong: Cycle World tested it at 1.57 seconds!)

At 85 (ahem!) it was still effortless and comfy, if starting to get some wind-blast, and spookily silent. Overtaking was completely effortless and rapid. The bike itself felt rock solid and went exactly where I wanted, almost telepathically. Even in Sports mode there was enough engine braking that I could largely "fly" the bike without troubling the brakes. And whatever the situation the engine always felt in exactly the right "gear". Brilliant.

It started to rain so I pulled off at a roundabout and paused to select Rain mode before heading back. This was like Eco but gave a much softer throttle response and less engine braking. One not so brilliant thing was that cruising at 30 in town it was virtually silent, as I noticed most when a dog walker started to cross just ahead, having not detected me. The lights are always-on but conspicuity is definitely an issue. Perhaps future models



will make more noise.

I'm afraid I can't tell you much about the display other than mph while on the move, as I was firmly watching the road. It would be interesting to see what the rpm and W/m gauges tell you. I was out for more than half an hour the second time, and when I got back two more people were waiting impatiently, so I reluctantly had to stop! In total I'd been out for about an hour and 30 miles and the charge had fallen from 84% to 69%, so I used 15% of the charge in an hour of mixed but mostly town-speed riding. Real range? Dave reckons he saw just on 100 miles, in mixed riding including A roads to Cornwall and back.

Normal slow charge for the base model (£17k+) is off house mains via a kettle-like lead, and takes 8+ hours for a full recharge. You can buy an express charger with a public powerpoint adaptor which gives 85% charge in 1 hour, and you can also buy an extra 25% capacity, but these goodies will add weight and £4k+ .

Obviously the high price and limited range are still issues. As a tourer it's not there yet, but as a commuter, city bike or even day run machine it's already thereabouts, and these things can only get better. I should say that the SR/F is the model in the news but they also make an adventure-style bike with the same powerplant, which may also be of interest. On the other hand Zero make several smaller models which would do just as well as pure city bikes, so I suppose this model is aimed mainly at commuters –

and if I was still commuting from Taunton to Bristol, I'd be quite interested. Talking to Dave afterwards he admitted that Zero don't really know who their market is yet. He has sold several though, to folk as varied as two Green-minded riders (one a newbie, one a greybeard) and one rich chap with a big collection. It may not be coincidence that the next chap in the queue was another Advanced rider, with a recent F1RST, from Devon... Overall: very impressed, I think I've seen into The Future. Just let me know when the range has doubled! For more information see:

<https://www.zeromotorcycles.com/eu/>

**Barry Croft**

## Royal Enfield Interceptor 650

For several years now, I have been eyeing up the many "retro" bikes being turned out in their millions to satisfy the born again and mature riders, looking to re-live the past, without the constant maintenance required on classic bikes. Personally, I wanted something new, but also simple, the

less electronics the better. Also, I don't see the point in adding bits to pretend (Triumph's carb looking covers over the injectors). So when I saw the first Interceptor at Shepton show early in 2018 I knew it was what I wanted, then I enquired on price, and was quoted 5-6 thousand pounds. It turns



out that most of the research and development was carried out in Britain as R E have a big facility here and of course the bikes are built in India as the name and, I believe, much of the tooling etc. went there back in the days when I was a teenager.



The bike has proved to be very popular and the factory has struggled to meet demand so, back in the summer, I ordered mine to be delivered in October, to coincide with my insurance renewal.

I have just collected the bike, £5,699 on the road with the red/black colour paint, and so far only ridden home, putting about 60 miles on the clock. As I wrote in a previous article when I had a demo ride, the bike is a pleasure to ride, not a huge amount of power but enough for a "red" ride I am sure. Comfy, smooth, good brakes, with ABS being the only intervention added to curtail my enthusiasm.

I will report on life with the bike in the future, once a decent mileage has been done.

**Rick Chubb**

## MEMBER'S TRIPS

### Himalayan Heights

In July of this year, Peter and I went to the Himalayas to ride the Royal Enfield Himalayan in the most amazing scenery, and on some incredible roads. We had been thinking of a riding holiday in India, and after some research came across Ride Expeditions Ltd, a British owned company founded in 2012.

Our trip started in Delhi. We arrived at about midnight where the temperature was around 30 degrees and were met by a company representative and taken to the hotel. The next day when the rest of the group arrived, 16 in total, 2 millions, we had a full briefing from the tour leader and were given our goodies – t-shirt, hoodie, mug and maps! The next day we set off on a luxury air-conditioned coach for a 9-hour journey to Shimla, the start

Day 1—Meeting  
the bikes



of our riding adventure. This gave us chance to get to know the group a bit, before we had our helmets on for most of the day!

Once we had checked in to our rooms, we wandered into the town to stretch our legs after the long journey, but not before we checked out the bikes, all lines up, ready to go the next day.

I'm not going to write about where we went each day, 1: because I want you to read my article without going to sleep, and 2: because the Ride Expeditions website has all this information and loads more. This was just one of the areas that, for us, make this company really stand out from many others in giving you the confidence that this was going to be a good trip. These guys really know how to organise a

trip.

When you got to your accommodation, you park up your bikes and sit down and relax with a drink while your rooms are allocated. When you are ready to collect your key, your luggage is already in your room. In the morning, pack up,

and the bags are taken to the truck for you.

When you get to the bikes in the morning, they are all lined up neatly and, have been running for 5 – 10 minutes so that when you turn the key, they are already warm (good thing at altitude). The previous evening, the support team will have performed their 25 checks on each bike, including a complete refuel and mirror clean!



Support Team and Ride Leader Nono

Coffee and lunch stops - you arrive and sit down, orders are taken for your masala chai or honey, ginger and lemon, and a host of food is brought out.

2 support trucks carry your luggage, water and snacks, and a spare rider. The group was led by a local guide, ours was called Nono, and a mechanic was tail ender. The company owner and another employee rode amongst the group helping out if required and generally keeping an eye on things.



For those that know me, you won't be surprised to hear that I was a fair bit apprehensive of this trip with regard to the 'off road' riding. According to the trip information, "***the tour is on-road, but some very rough roads, approximately 25% unpaved. 98% on road but road conditions vary from smooth tarmac, to harsh rocky tracks. About 2% is on a sandy track alongside Pangong Lake***". In reality, it felt like it was about 60%



off road, with some challenging river crossings (well, for me, nicknamed the mermaid after 2 dunking's). But it was such a buzz to ride those bikes on that terrain, they are perfect for the conditions.

All but one of our group opted for the Himalayan, you could also choose the Classic. At 411cc it is not a powerful bike but has plenty of torque to deal with the rough roads and a pleasing exhaust note.

Total distance is around 1,400 kilometres over 9 days of riding. Some days were quite short distances but long days just because of the terrain, and instances such as delays due to trucks over the side of the road or a bit of road grading due to a landslide.... The highest pass is Khardung La, reputed to be the highest motorable road in the world is at 5,380 meters. It was sunny as we ap-



proached, snowing on the summit and sunny the other side! One of the other amazing statistics is Pangong Tso lake. This was the true off-road section where we rode to our campsite alongside the lake – not all the way as it is 124 kilometres long with 2 thirds of it in China! It is



the highest saltwater lake in the world, and it is freezing cold – but what an amazing experience to swim in that lake.

Weather – we were very lucky with only 2 half days of rain, but I got pretty wet in those river crossings! So, we had blue skies, generally very warm temperatures apart from the summits, and our night camping in Sarchu which was very cold.



Sarchu overnight stop

Whenever I need to use the horn on my bike, I always struggle to find it without looking down. I had no trouble locating it on the Himalayan, just as well, as it's as much a necessity as your throttle and brakes in India, and it really works! Our Highway Code states that horns are only to be used in



Another hold up

order to warn another road user of your presence, and that's exactly what it means in India. There's no point in trying to make yourself seen in the mirrors of the huge truck in front on the rough mountain road, hoping he'll pull over. No, you just honk on that horn (lots of times) brace yourself and go forth!

As impressive as those trucks are, they do chuck out some unpleasant fumes, as do the cars. With that and some incredibly dusty roads, the use of buffs and face masks were being used by some to try and avoid dryness of the mouth and nose - a particular problem at altitude.

Scenery – absolutely spectacular, and visibility so sharp at altitude.

Altitude – yes, that can be an issue for some, I decided to take Diamox to prevent any headaches and sickness having suffered from altitude sickness many years ago. Consequently, I was fine apart from tingling fingers at the highest passes. Some of our group had headaches and felt a bit yuk, so made a quicker descent than the rest of the group to regain normality.

The tour ended in Leh, and we then had a spectacular flight back to Delhi over the mountain tops and glaciers of the Himalayas. Arriving back in Delhi after nearly 2 weeks in the mountains with beautiful scenery, and not



If you are thinking of such a trip then we would recommend Ride Expeditions 100%. The information provided for each tour is extensive. Each tour



too many people, was certainly a bit of a shock, not to mention the excessive heat again. We had planned to visit the Taj Mahal while in India.....well, we have ticked it off but the trip was such a long journey there and back that it took an element of enjoyment away from it. But we have the memory and the obligatory photo!



The Group on the last day

shows an itinerary, questions and answers section, what is included / excluded, gallery photos, excellent videos, reviews, and if you need any further information, the correspondence via email or phone is excellent. I spoke to Toby (owner) well before the trip on what to expect regarding the road conditions, and had many emails with Anna (owner and partner of Toby) who was always so helpful and answered our questions fully. Visit <https://rideexpeditions.com/> for an inspiring read.

It was truly an amazing trip and experience – to ride a Royal Enfield Himalayan in the Himalayas, over the highest motorable road in the world, alongside the highest saltwater lake in the world, and for me to return having fallen off with no broken bones!

**Kaye May**

## 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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## Spring 2019 Caption



Thanks to Andy Hall, who came up with the following Caption for the Summer 2019 photograph :

**“I woondar if Ah can get mah whippet in that mug wi’out thut Paul seein’ it?”**

## TAILPIECE #9

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

On a bike tour of the Rocky Mountains, the rider had seen numerous Honda Gold Wings, some converted to trikes, and many towing trailers. So it was not too surprising, when he stepped out of the diner with his tour mates, into the searing heat of midday Wyoming, to see a Gold Wing pull into the lot. However, what was surprising was that it was towing a beautifully-detailed, one-third scale model of a horse box. Naturally a biker-to-biker conversation followed.

"That's a neat rig," offered the rider in his best transatlantic idiom. "Thanks," came the reply, "it's for my dogs, so they can join us on tour." The obvious question immediately occurred to the rider, "don't they get hot?" "No, the trailer's air conditioned" and with this the owner opened the triangular forward compartment of the horse box to reveal a small, and professionally installed, air-conditioning unit complete with leisure battery array, compressor, evaporator and fans blowing into the rear compartment. "It has an electronic control unit and will automatically maintain the dogs' space at 68 Fahrenheit all day." "Well, that's brilliant, I'm really impressed – can I see where the dogs ride?" "Er, yes" replied the owner a little reluctantly, and with a slightly embarrassed look, he opened the rear compartment. There, inside the beautifully-detailed, one-third scale model of a horse box, was a beautifully-detailed, one-third scale model of a horse.



### CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!

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



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

## SAM Code of Conduct

All riders participate at their own risk.

Turn up on time with a full fuel tank.

Listen to the brief about the intended ride.

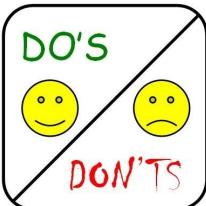
Take care, remember the presence of a group may intimidate other road users.

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

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

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

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



## Colour Code of Rides

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

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

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

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

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

## The Drop-Off System

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

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## **MEMBERS' REMINDERS!**

### **FREE TASTER RIDES!**

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

### **Committee Meetings**

Every member of SAM is welcome to attend these, which are held at The Lamb & Lion in Hambridge. Please feel free to join in, give us your thoughts & ideas, put forward your suggestions on how to further improve our Club. Or just enjoy a night out.

### **SOUTH WEST PENINSULA SPRING RALLY—4th April 2020**

Our planning for this ever-popular event is now in full swing, so it's time for you to start your own planning - get the date in your diary; are you going to participate in it as an entrant, or as a helper? If you're entering the rally, who are you going to do it with? Which parts of the south west peninsula would you like to explore? We'll have some checkpoints there! Watch this space for more details.