

Spring 2023

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



SAM Officers

Chair	Martin Surrey	07813 786427
Deputy Chair	Georges Dupuis	07999 349667
Secretary	Andy Bourne	07963 775504
Deputy Secretary	John Ridd	07725 115208
Treasurer	Rab Lavender	07968 283790
Membership Sec.	Dave Parker	07340 180989
Chief Observers	Jim Donnelly	07960 812688
	and Callum Bremner	07859 892566
Events Coordinator	Trev Watts	07713 772209
Observer Co-ord.	Tony Sauer	07983 088312
Taster Coordinator	Roger Moffatt	07812 061793
Member's Rep	Volunteer needed	
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Recruitment Lead	Georges Dupuis	07999 349667
Merchandise	Linda Hay	07784 344933
Young Ambassador	Richard Padfield	07478 675800
IT Lead	Jez Martin	07590 368808
Social Media Lead	Tom Moore	07739 191203
Full Chat Editor	Graham Tulloch	07825 201650



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Front Cover: This year's Welsh Weekend Group, enjoying their customary ice cream stop at Llanberis



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



As motorcyclists we spend most of our riding time looking at where we're going, trying to spot the hazards ahead and looking for the best path. We also need to keep an eye on what's behind us too.

Over the last couple of months I have been looking back quite a lot but I've also kept the view ahead very much in mind. Life without Gina will not be the same and I miss my riding buddy terribly but she left me with

the very clear thought that I should have my focus on the future.

So I have returned to my role as a Masters mentor, examiner and National Observer assessor with IAM RoadSmart and I look forward to riding with SAM associates on test, the members of the observer cadre who are allocated to me for their NO assessment and those Masters candidates I have the opportunity to work with. I am also going to do a little more exploring across Europe on the Trans Euro Trail, so the view ahead has plenty more motorcycling in it.

A glance in the rear view mirror though and I can still see the host of riders who escorted Gina on the 14th of March to the burial ground at Higher Ground Meadow. We were blessed with some fine weather and the host of

bikers were a fine tribute to Gina. I had so many great comments from the non-bikers who were attending too. So thank you SAM and all the other biking friends who showed their affection and solidarity. It was at the ceremony that we announced the idea of Gina's training bursary. I was deeply





touched by the number of riders who contacted me with their memories of the help Gina had given them in their riding and coaching. She was a huge advocate for learning and she cared deeply about passing on her skills and knowledge. She was especially interested in the coaching of female riders as she felt that they were often at a financial disadvantage, especially when family budgets were tight. So

Gina's children and I hit upon the idea of creating a training bursary that would aim to support female riders as they seek to develop their riding and coaching skills. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of donations to the fund and very grateful that the SAM chair and treasurer agreed to manage the monies within the SAM accounts. If anyone wishes to know more about the fund the please contact me at peterherridge@me.com

So yes, I'm still checking in my rear view mirror but I have a clear view of the road ahead of me...and my riding buddy will always be there too.

Peter Herridge

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Any loss of a family member is felt by everyone - in Gina's case her family was very large, both personal and from the motorcycling fraternity. But we have to move on, not to forget, but to remember. So in some ways this will be a strange issue of Full Chat - it will still have all the news and some views but Gina's "Forward Observations" will be absent, though not lost, as her legacy of helping other riders will continue.

A bursary has been set up in Gina's name to help female riders through different stages of their motorcycling life. This will be managed by Peter

and 3 others from different clubs to assess and distribute the funds: how this is going to work is being finalised by Peter. SAM's role in this will be to hold those funds and ring-fence them to be used as intended. The fund has received many generous donations already and is planning for the initial distribution of monies to support training to be made this summer.

The ongoing goal of getting all riders to participate in some sort of rider training is incumbent on all of us to encourage, if only for them to chat about safe riding, which may well open the door to take their training further. SAM is well thought of and our reputation is spread far and wide; this is something that has taken time to achieve and we should be proud of it.



Looking forward, we have a busy calendar of rides but I am sure there are spaces left for anyone wanting to lead their first ride out. If you do, then please contact Trevor Watts or any member to ask for advice and help in setting up and running a ride. I am hoping that we will be able to set up another social evening later in the year

along the lines of the hog roast, watch this space!

The new training team have their work cut out getting new observers and Local Observers up and running to the new National Observer level. This is a change; I feel it has been brought in by the IAM to standardise observing. This will take time to implement, but if you wish to re-train to the new level please let Callum/Jim know as soon as you can. **Martin Surrey**

SAM NEWS

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.

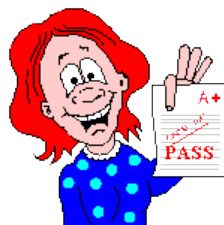


The minutes of previous Committee meetings can be obtained from the Secretary on request.

Test Passes

CONGRATULATIONS!

to the following
members for
passing their
IAM tests:



David Middleton on 27th February riding a Triumph Thruxton R and observed by Mike Collins.

David Foster on 13th April. David was riding a BMW R1200RS and was observed by Martin Hember.

Stuart Martin on 14th April, riding a Kawasaki Ninja 1000SX. Stuart was observed by Mark Baker.

Viv Duncan on 2nd May. Viv was riding her Kawasaki Ninja 400 and was observed by Georges Dupuis and Rob Bartlett.

David Thomson on 11th May riding a Honda Fireblade and observed by Lindsay Wilson.

Craig Thompson on 23rd May. Craig achieved a F1RST whilst riding his

Yamaha MT09, and was observed by Martin Surrey.

John Sheffield on 26th May. John was riding a Triumph Sprint GT and was observed by Callum Bremner.

Alfie Newsome on 26th May, gaining a F1RST. Alfie was riding a Honda CB600 and was observed by Richard Pearse.

Mark Pinney, also on 26th May. Mark was riding a Triumph Tiger 660 and was also observed by Richard Pearse.

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

2 more recent assessment successes:

Ron Hanson recently transferred into SAM from another Group up North, and achieved a F1RST in his retest following support from Martin Surrey, whilst Nigel Short has asked me to share that he has completed the IAM Masters requalification and been awarded a Masters with Distinction, achieving a score of 28.

Training Update

NEW CO - CHIEF OBSERVERS

Hi everyone, Callum and I have taken over from Gina as SAM Co-Chief Observers. Hopefully most of you will have met us previously. There won't be any major changes of direction, we have both worked with Gina over the last 18 months, so intend to keep the well proven SAM Observing cadre happy and supported.

We both have slightly different styles, abilities and time limitations, so by splitting the role, we will be able to give the Club 2 for the price of 1 and one of us should always be available to support Observers.

There is no doubt in our minds that we are here to help riders develop and improve their riding, which will have the effect of making them safer riders, but we also want everyone to enjoy their riding and have fun. But we must also be really open and honest with other about our abilities and share our experiences (good or not so good). That way we continue to learn from each other and are not too proud to learn from anyone and everyone and develop thinking riders.

We hope that over the next 3 years we can pass on a straightforward opinion/approach on how we look at things, but still be flexible, depending on

the individual situation (it always depends). What we should be able to do is steer you in the right direction.

We are always happy to be at the end of a phone or email and hope to continue the exceptional legacy left by Gina!

A bit about ourselves:



Callum had a military career until he was 41, mainly working in the Mountains. He has had motor-bikes since 25, keeping with bikes (newish) that he doesn't have to do too much to to keep going. If you have any repair questions, these are best directed to Jim! Latest bike is a K1600 (had them since they came out 10 years ago and has loved them ever since). A pig to lug about, but once they get going a dream on 2

wheels!

Joined SAM in 2017, from DAM and what might seem strange is that I live in Dorset (Lyme Regis actually). So why SAM??? I was assisting with Yeovil Blood Bikers training, that led me to do my Local Observer and went to a Local Observer (LO) training meeting in Yeovil at Gina and Peter's house and with their typical warm greeting, that was enough for me to cross borders and join SAM!

The rest is history: I did my National Observer (NO) and Masters in 2019, and not long after that I was invited to be a Masters mentor. Then in 2020 I assisted Gina as one of her Deputies.

Jim was also a military aircraft engineer for 30 years and now runs a small safety consultancy business, so is available during the week. A biker since midnight on his 16th birthday he has a large pool of bikes to choose from, but



many are elderly and require sunshine, oil and TLC to keep them going. He joined SAM in 2008 from Bristol on moving to Yeovilton and had Peter do a QA on me as a transferring LO. A National Observer since 2019 and passed Masters in 2022. **Jim Donnelly and Callum Bremner**

Training Topic—The Golden Rule

And on the 8th Day God (or possibly IAM RoadSmart) created the ‘THE GOLDEN RULE’

Jim and I plan to do an article alternating each Full Chat and so you're aware, my next one will be on the 3 stage overtake. If you have any observations that you would like me to add to the article which you think we would all find interesting, then please email or just ring for a chat.

I thought this season's article should be about a topic that goes to the very heart of our riding. When progressing through the Advanced Riding Course and beyond we talk about "It Depends"....

a lot, but when it comes to "Riding with the ability to Stop in the Distance we can See on our side of the Road"....well there's not much scope for flexibility. It is what it is!

I think I should start by saying that last weekend I was on the Welsh Weekend and by the end of Friday evening when we arrived at our lodgings, I looked back at my own riding and admitted to myself that I was guilty as charged.....and it was only when I reflected on the reasons that I thought I would share this with

you. On the Saturday I decided to be Tail End Charlie, knowing that I would see lots of different styles of riding from the rear, with regular changeovers it would allow me the opportunity to look at whether it backed up my thought process.



So, I'm sharing my thoughts in the hope that you will also reflect when group riding to see if you are falling into the same trap I did.

When we are separated within a group ride our herding or competitive instincts kick in I believe. We want to stick with our fellow riders for what might be a number of reasons: wanting the reassurance



we are going the right way, security in numbers, or even just so that we can have fun catching up with the rider in front.

The one thing I noticed from the rear, and within the ride, was that there were lots of occasions when, as Tail End Charlie, if I had wanted to keep up with the person in front of me I would have to break the golden rule. It's not that I couldn't go faster but if I did on those occasions I wouldn't have been able to stop in the distance I could see on my side of the road!

I should add that on single track roads this of course halves the distance as we are sharing the same bit of road, remembering of course that all it



takes is the person coming the other way to be just a little reckless and the distance is evaporating all the time.

So, my advice to us all is that when chasing/trying to catch the rider in front, for whatever reason, please consider how many 'Lives' you have left! The 'Golden Rule' is there to keep us and others alive, and the occasional reflection of our

ride for all of us is a great thing! I settled down on Saturday and Sunday and still had loads of fun in what turned out to be a fabulous weekend!

Happy Summer Biking!

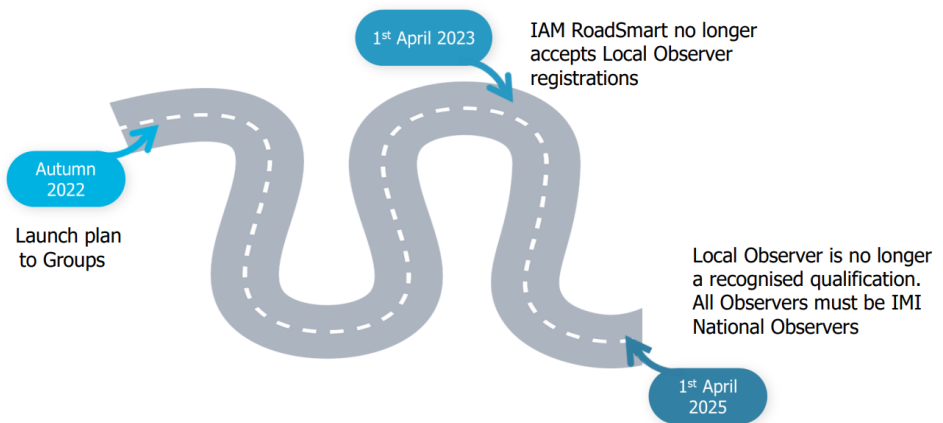
Callum Bremner Co Chief Observer (SAM) 07859 892566

What is the Future for IAM Observers?

For the last decade or so, IAM Observers have been either locally assessed (Local Observers) or independently assessed (National Observers). Although the syllabus was very similar, the differing assessment levels led to a slight difference in what the 2 cadres could do.

From March 2023, IAM RoadSmart are no longer accepting registrations, so no more Local Observers will be qualified. This has two impacts:

- Anyone who now wishes to qualify as an Observer will have to undergo local mentoring and an external IAM assessment for National Observer.
- Existing Local Observers will need to undergo National Observer assessment before 1st April 2025 (at which point Local Observer will no longer be a recognised qualification) or they will no longer be able to observe for IAM RoadSmart.



The rationale for this change is:

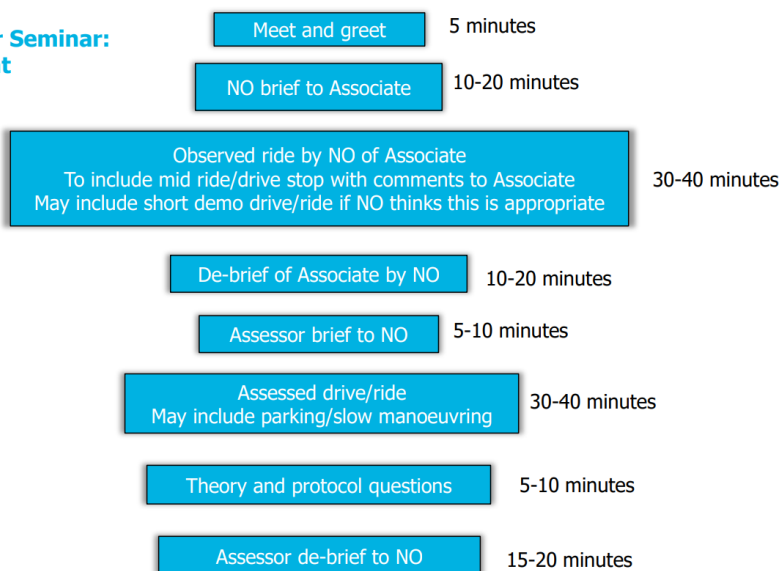
- The qualification is more transparent and has greater integrity.
- It ensures consistency of standards across Observers and Local Groups.
- It streamlines administration and removes the costs of double registration.
- More understandable to customers.
- Remove hierarchy in Observer Teams.

SAM has already tweaked its annual Observer training programme (4 weekly presentations held in Mar '23) to accommodate these changes, and National Observer training schemes are underway for both Local Observers transferring to National Observer and for associates wishing to become National Observers - these will progress over Spring and Summer '23.

The SAM record for mentoring members up for National Observer assessment is excellent, mostly based on a whole lot of good work by Gina and other experienced Observers. We hope this will continue.

The National Observer assessment is nothing to fear, it follows the normal Observer syllabus and will look a bit like the diagram below.

**Chief Observer Seminar:
NO Assessment**



Although some Local Observers will resent the need to put themselves forward for external assessment, the overall pass rate is excellent (see diagram on next page) and historically SAM candidates have performed better than average. We won't put you forward until we are confident that you're ready to pass. Interestingly, the main reason for failures is nothing to do with briefing, ride analysis or debriefing, it's down to poor riding standards during the assessed ride!

If there are any questions on the rationale of the change or how SAM will manage it then please contact either Callum or Jim.

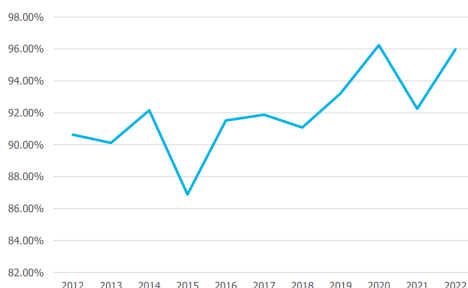
Observing is an excellent way to improve your riding and your understand-

ing of the reasons behind good decision making, and as for all SAM riding, we do our best to make it fun.

**Callum Bremner
and
Jim Donnelly**

National Observer Data

Average pass rate 2012-2022 - 91.33%



Volunteers Needed

SAM is a well-organised and run club. We enjoy lots of activities, from weekend rides to socials. Every member has a say in how it runs, and can get involved by helping out with the enormous amount of work behind the scenes.

For example, the South West Peninsula Spring Rally (SWPSR). This is run every year, plays a big part in the finances of the club, takes months to organise and involves 30-40 members giving up their time on the day to help out. This is to name just one of the activities that are run by the club.



But we need more members to take part in running the club, so if you think you can help, just give me a call.

One position that I feel needs to be addressed sooner rather than later involves Publicity and Promotions. So we need volunteer(s) to spread the message of promoting, training, and educating riders to make them safer and better, and let them know we are here. This role also involves liaising with other local clubs to come together at events to promote our aims. This could be a job

share, allowing you to bounce ideas off of one another, so don't feel as if you'd be on your own.

Anyone wishing to put themselves forward, or who would like more information about this post (or any other support you can offer), please text/call me on 07813786427 **Martin Surrey, Chair**

Organisation of Rides & Events

Firstly, thank you to all those who lead rides and events for the SAM membership throughout the year; without your help, time and effort these rides and events wouldn't happen as often as they do, and certainly SAM wouldn't have the successful social element that we all enjoy.

With having added many new full members to the club over the last couple of years, could I take the opportunity please to ask for new ride leaders to step forward?



We all have our favourite roads that we use in Somerset, Devon, Dorset and beyond and I am sure that there are several newer members who ride roads that others rarely do; if so, why not share a favourite route or road by leading a club ride? Show your favourite roads and cafés to others within SAM!

Organising a ride or event is easy to do.

- Contact me at SAM events (somersetadvancedevents@gmail.com) with the date and type of ride or event you intend to lead/run. I.e. Red,



Amber, or Green ride. Or perhaps even a Bike maintenance morning etc.

- I can then check the latest events calendar and ensure that there is no clash with any other event but if there is we can look at and discuss alternatives.
- Once confirmed I can add it to the Events calendar, which is then added to the SAM website and emailed out to the SAM membership.

Remember, all rides and events that are organised this way are official SAM rides and events; as such, they are covered via the IAMRS group insurance.

However, ad-hoc rides that are organised individually through the Group Facebook page (which you are more than welcome to do!) and not organised through the Events Coordinator are not covered by the IAMRS Group insurance.

There is a huge range of support and info available for those wishing to lead a ride; again, just send me an email and I can provide you with this.

Thanks in advance and see you on a ride soon!

Trev Watts
Events Coordinator.



My Associate Experience

My name is Ian 'Salty' Thomas, a local paramedic. I'm a late starter to motorcycling and at 52 years of age, having been out of the competitive Moto-x circuit for thirty-five years, I decided during Covid to try and get from CBT to a full A license. On completion, I thought I'd start small so bought myself a tricked up Z750 and quickly moved up to an FJR 1300 as my main commuter bike.

This is where I found SAM, so decided to challenge myself and complete a taster ride, quickly

realising that I wanted to challenge myself even further and gain the IAM Advanced Motorcycle ticket. The process has been faultless thus far and I can't recommend the transition from rookie to advanced rider with SAM highly enough.

Dave Parker won the top prize of getting me to this standard and I'm sure he thought he'd won the lottery landing a sensible, mature, ex moto-x guy who's also an IAM advanced driver (following the last 15 years driving ambulances and paramedic response cars under emergency, blue light conditions), right? Wrong!

In fact, even though I'd been trained by Roadcraft, with IPSGA at its core, I was amazed how many bad habits I'd picked up along the way - I guess I was so used to using the nee-naas and flashing things on the roof, assuming people would get out my way, that when I did not have them, progress wasn't quite so straightforward.

I'm on my 5th observed ride now and just getting myself comfortable enough to concentrate on the task that's



placed upon me. It's an unnerving experience having no communications with your observer, apart from a turn signal (or a blast on the horn if you look but don't see when checking mirrors), something that took me a few rides to feel comfortable with. Knowing that you are being watched and that every move or thought process is being analysed does take time to adjust to, but I can assure you that if you are reading this and thinking of embarking on this journey, it does fall into place eventually. But if you think that the observer won't notice you were in the wrong gear coming out a bend, or you were doing 21 in a 20 zone, think again. A couple of times I thought Dave hadn't noticed something, only for it to be highlighted in my post ride report.

In a nutshell, you are marked on everything that advanced motorcycling covers from a 3 (needs improvement) to a 1 (consistently riding at the required level). You will be miffed when you think you are riding at a level 1 or 2 when you start (because we all think that we are the best riders) and getting all 3's, but as you progress, you realise (even though you wouldn't admit it out loud) it probably was worthy of the mark.

To conclude, the level of the SAM observers, if mine is anything to go by, is fantastic. Friendly, approachable, knowledgeable and - most importantly - there to make this an experience that makes you enjoy the new skills you are acquiring through their expertise. Think of it as an extremely intense way of riding to a café for coffee and cake.

Ian 'Salty' Thomas (A hopeful, future IAM Advanced Motorcyclist)



IAM Inform

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

Leading my First SAM Ride

When our esteemed Events Co-ordinator Trev Watts sent out an email last August about getting more SAM members trained as ride leaders, I did wonder whether this was something I should attempt. I'd recently surprised myself by passing my IAM test with a F1rst and had just bought a new Ducati Multistrada V4S (in white, the faster version) - and was really enjoying my motorcycling. I felt that maybe I should give something back to the club. Leading a ride was also a little bit outside of my comfort zone which



perversely helped me decide to go ahead.

Living in Minehead, in the far west of the SAM area, the majority of the SAM rides begin 40+ miles from me, so I spoke to Trev about whether leading a ride from Minehead would be a good idea. Trev suggested that Minehead may be a bit far to get many attendees, so

we left it that I'd consider starting a ride from Taunton.

The POD rides in March seemed like a great place to start, so in February I committed to leading one of the rides over that weekend.

Trev sent me some guidelines for Green / Amber / Red route planning that he and Graham Tulloch had prepared and with that I set about with my preferred route planner, MyRoute-app, to create a 'Green' route of about 70 miles.

Living in Minehead, most of my local riding takes in at least part of Ex-moor, and I know most of the roads reasonably well. I wanted to share some of the beauty of the area with other SAM members and this seemed like a great opportunity to do so. I'd also got in mind the lovely tea room in Withypool as our stop.

I sent details of the route to Trev and in late February we met at the Cross

Keys Inn, Taunton to ride the route and check it out. We got as far as Dulverton before we were stopped by Wessex Water closing a stretch of the B3223 for some essential maintenance – the second time in the last year I've been thwarted on that stretch of road by Wessex Water. I guess that was a good lesson learned - check for road closures before setting off!

I was also aware that the tea room in Withypool was struggling for staff and hadn't yet opened for the season, so made a few adjustments to the route to take in the Exford Bridge Tearooms instead. Thanks to Trev's persistent reminders, five riders signed up for my ride, including one associate. The day of the ride dawned, a

beautiful sunny spring day, perfect for a ride.

Only kidding... of course it was another dull damp March day with the promise of more rain and wet, slimy roads.

In the end, five of us set off down the B3227 from Taunton. The poor road conditions dictated the pace, so as ride leader I never felt under pressure to ride faster than I wanted, and traffic levels were such that overtaking never became an issue.

My route took us to Dulverton via Bampton, along the River Barle valley and then on to the stunning Ridge Road along the southern edge of Exmoor, over the Anstey and Molland Commons. On a clear day you can see Dartmoor



and Bideford Bay from up there – unfortunately today wasn't a clear day! Nevertheless there is a stark beauty to this wild edge of Exmoor of which I'll never tire, almost regardless of the weather.

A group of horse riders was negotiated – a couple of the horses looking nervously in our direction as they passed us confirmed that our decision to stop and switch off engines was the correct one.

At the end of the Ridge Road we turned back north and east. Taking in the iconic Landacre Bridge was an option at this point, but as this was a Green ride I chose to avoid the ford at Chibbet, and instead we went over Hawkridge and Withypool Common, and passed the still closed tea room in Withypool on the way to Exford. The road up out of Withypool was a little slippery and had the traction controls (both electronic and human powered) on our bikes in action as we climbed out of the valley.

A couple of miles later we were in Exford. The hosts at Exford Bridge Tea-rooms made us very welcome, with a warm fire and a good menu. We enjoyed a variety of lovely teas, coffees as well as savoury and sweet food – the scrambled eggs were very good, and the question of whether it was too early in the day for a cream tea was answered in the best way possible – and it turns out it wasn't! A highly recommended place to stop.

Suitably refreshed we headed back to Taunton on the SAM staple of the B3224 via Wheddon Cross, Raleigh's Cross and Elworthy, and then on to the A358 back to Cross Keys.

And that was that - we said our goodbyes and headed our various ways

home to wash our bikes! Thank you to Mike, John, Alastair and Andy for your great company on the ride.

Having led one ride I'll certainly offer to do it again, and if anyone else is considering doing so there is nothing to fear! SAM members are a lovely bunch (well mostly...) and if there are roads you feel are under represented on our rides then why not set one up to cover them. As I've said on many occasions, if I can do it then anyone can. **Fiona Boston**



C & T Donation to DEC Turkey Syria

£103 was sent to the above fund following February's Control and Technique session. This reflected the donations of all those in attendance towards the refreshments on the day, expertly delivered by Bob Muckett, supported by Graham Tulloch. Thanks to all who generously contributed.

A Different sort of Taster Ride

I was planned in for a Taster Ride with a guy on a Fazer 1000, meeting up at Haynes.

I was there 5 minutes before the allotted 10:00 start time and the only other bike in the car park was a BSA Goldstar 350.

The rider approached me and

apologised saying his Fazer wouldn't start, could he do the Taster Ride on his Goldstar. Having a couple of Goldstars myself I was happy to continue.

Taster ride complete (including 4 overtakes) we stopped for a coffee at Nunney Catch and I started



thinking about numbers:

Combined age of both bikes was 97 years and combined ages of both riders was 134 - you're never too old to learn, and classic bikes can keep up with modern traffic if well ridden!

Points for Observers - you may need to watch for gear changes from the right foot! The Speed and Gear phases might look and feel a bit different (only 4 speed with a very high first gear so some clutch slipping required and best to knock it into neutral before you come to a stop).

Jim Donnelly

SAM Beginnings



As with many of us I expect, we started riding motorcycles as soon as we were old enough and could afford to. Many of us rode before those criteria were met, with older mates letting you have a go. Helmets were not compulsory so we didn't bother, and the bikes were mostly fairly slow. With quiet roads locally, one of the aims was to achieve your bike's top speed, with

one lad claiming 100mph down the hill into Chard High Street on his BSA Bantam. This was of course before the advent of the RD 250s, etc, that had performance un-dreamed of for those of us growing up in a world of British built bikes.

Over the next 10-15 years I progressed from (still slow) BSA 650s and (slightly quicker) Triumph 500s, a 350 and a 360 Honda, to a CB750 in 1980. Roads were still fairly quiet and I still had this aim to hit top speed when possible, which was both much faster and easier to achieve. I cringe now when I think of some of the places I saw 120 on the speedo, and I guess I already began to realise I needed

some guidance if I was to survive.

I had heard about RoSPA and the IAM, and saw a mention somewhere that the Taunton IAM group met in a car park on a Sunday once a month, so I turned up sometime in 1983/1984. I found several cars but no motorcycles. I was told that sometimes the local police motorcyclists would attend, but I could sit in the back of a car for an insight into what they did if I liked. This was my introduction into advanced driving/motorcycling, and the following month Stu Bullock was there on his police bike, and my 'training' began with "if my blue lights come on don't try to keep up", I bought and read Motorcycle Roadcraft and actually passed both my bike and car advanced tests in the following months.

Over the next couple of years a few more motorcyclists joined the car group and we 'enjoyed' some interesting social evenings. We learned important skills and developed a diary of events for two wheels. We began to realise that perhaps we would enjoy the whole advanced experience more if we set up our own group, which if I remember correctly needed the approval of the IAM. We also had members who were members of Rospa, so we discussed setting up a Rospa group instead. The IAM won the day, and there may be members out there who remember more details, but something that has always been true from those early days has been our tendency to put as much into our social ride calendar as we do our training. This is often remarked upon by new members from other groups.

SAM has grown a lot in nearly 40 years, and I hope it will remain a group with equal enthusiasm given to both improving our safety on the roads and having fun.

Rick Chubb

Measuring Somerset 2023/24

Do you fancy a bit of a challenge on your rides? This year's Measuring Somerset challenge is now open, with the deadline for completed forms next year's SAM AGM. The entry form is contained in the next 2 pages, and once completed, should be returned to Steve Schlemmer (details on the form). Just remember a tape measure and a pen!

SOMERSET ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

Measuring Somerset 8 – 2023/2024.

Entrant's name:

The locations are more or less evenly distributed across Somerset roughly 10 miles apart. Their names all begin with B, C or S. I have listed them in order west to east. To save space I've omitted all vowels, spaces, punctuation and all instances of the three initial letters. Take a tape measure, visit each location and measure or estimate the size of the feature described.

You don't have to visit locations in order. **You don't have to enter private or closed areas.** So that we don't disagree on accuracy, pick my answer closest to yours. **There is a safe stopping place at all locations. Please ride and park safely.**

Location: Feature (Sizes in millimetres unless asked otherwise. Dia.= diameter)

1 **MNTH**: Width in metres between the upstream points of the cutwaters on the centre arch of the bridge.

a 4.6 b 5.0 c 5.5 d 6.0

2 **TM**: Volume, in m^3 , of pyramidal capping stones on gate posts at entrance to churchyard.

a 0.139 b 0.118 c 0.097 d 0.076

3 **THLTN**: Gap between the brick pillars of the gate at the entrance to the village hall.

a 890 b 990 c 1190 d 1290

4 **KNLLR**: Area, in m^2 , of the top of the stone, millennium table outside the church.

a 1.44 b 1.56 c 1.69 d 1.82

5 **HPHLL**: Width of the tower's face which features the clock.

a 3300 b 2700 c 2100 d 1500

6 **NNGTN**: Diameter of the bolt on the pedestrian gate on the right of the entrance to the cemetery in High Street.

a 20 b 15 c 25 d 10

7 **KLNDTMRY**: Inside radius of the brick arched ceiling in the shelter and drinking fountain opposite the church.

a 1215 b 1125 c 1045 d 970

8 TKTGRGRY : Dia in metres of the largest flying saucer an alien could land on the tarmac of Williams Hall car park without overhanging.
9 DWRTH Thickness of the stone above the post box in the wall opposite St Michael's Church. a 180 b 200 c 230 d 270
10 TTT : Weight in kgs of the marble, 2002 Golden Jubilee plaque opposite the King William Inne, if marble weighs $2,700\text{kg/m}^3$. a 12.6 b 15.9 c 19.2 d 22.5
11 HDDR : Section of the post holding "Black Rock" sign just downhill of the start of the thirty limit when approaching from the top.
12 TPLTN : Section of the post of the 'Public Footpath' sign at corner of B3165 and West Street. a 75 dia b 75x75 c 100 dia d 100x100
13 LTNRGH : Radius of the curved portion of the kissing gate from Church Walk into St Dunstan's church. a 760 b 650 c 540 d 430
14 LPTN : Height of pillar holding the post box outside the Village Hall. a 1300 b 1500 c 1700 d 1900
15 MPTNPFT : Width of the war memorial plate inside the lych gates at St Mary the Virgin church.
16 TM : Height, in metres, of the stand-alone flag post at The Blessed Virgin Mary church. a 7.2 b 8.3 c 9.4 d 10.5
<p>You don't need to have all the answers for a chance to win. When you have some, or all, of the answers, and at the latest by the AGM, in Mar or Apr 2024 tba, let me know your answers or let me have this table with your answers marked.</p> <p>The winner will be the first drawn, at the AGM, from the highest</p>
Steve Schlemmer, Dinham, Honiton Road, Trull, Taunton, TA3 7JR
steve.schlemmer@btinternet.com 230415 Measuring Somerset 8

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAM Amber Ride

"Wednesday Wander"

Wed. 7th Jun. 2023

10:00 @ Podimore Services

Led by TBC

SAM Amber Ride

"Cornish Camping Weekend"

Fri. 16th-Sun. 18th Jun. 2023

10:00 @ Cross Keys, Norton Fitz.

Led by Rob Bartlett

SAM Green Ride

"TBC"

Sat. 1st Jul. 2023

Details TBC

Led by Georges Dupuis

SAM Green Ride

"Rivers & Bridges"

Sun. 9th Jul. 2023

09:00 @ Cartgate Services

Led by Wayne Timbrell

SAM Amber Ride

"Wednesday Wander"

Wed. 12th Jul. 2023

10:00 @ Southfields Services

SAM Committee Meeting

Everyone Welcome

Thu. 13th Jul. 2023

19:30 @ Lamb & Lion TA10 0AT

SAM Green Ride

"Cornering"

Sun. 16th Jul. 2023

08:30 @ Cocklemoor Car Park

Led by Lisa Martin

SAM Red Ride

"Black Mountains"

Sun. 23rd Jul. 2023

08:30 @ Sedgmoor Services (N)

Led by Rob Bartlett

SAM Green Ride

"Ride Your Other Bike"

Sat. 5th Aug. 2023

09:30 @ Costa Ilminster

Led by Graham Tulloch

**Please check your email and/or
the SAM website nearer the
time for confirmed details of all
of the above planned events.**



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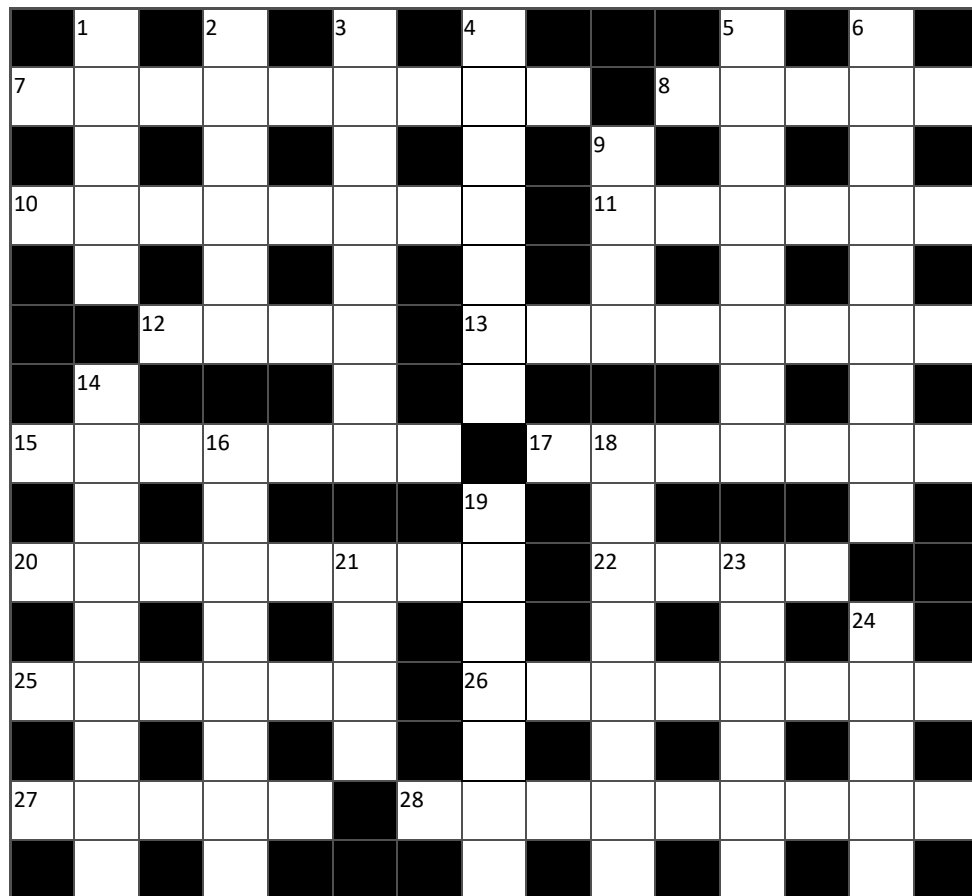
CHIANG MAI



THAILAND

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CROSSWORD



[The Napoleonic Wars is a loose theme for about half of the answers]

Across

7 See 10a

8 In the estuary, lad, it is ebbing (5)

10 and 7a Boney French leader (8,9)

11 Action in East Sussex town (6)

12 Region's length times breadth (4)

13 Britannia's subjects the rollers say (3,5)

15 and 17a Author's main act parry at variance (7,7)

17 See 15a

CROSSWORD (cont.)

20 A resolute person is determined in support (8)

22 Initially red or blue embellishes gown (4)

25 Wrestlers' hold main protagonist (6)

26 Sounds like adores frigates (8)

27 Extra intake includes drill (5)

28 Cape victory for Victory (9)

Down

1 Regal sail on 16 (5)

2 Bravery of rival, ourselves included (6)

3 Perhaps I master a fast car (8)

4 Be ready in fist and tongue (5,2)

5 Modern missile Rio Riata arranged (3-2-3)

6 Nass al Leemanhaq hides Moorish pirate ship (6-3)

9 Skilled expert (4)

14 Fondle after sailor on potassium nitrate (9)

16 Unbelievable! Send square-rigger (4,4)

18 Plane broadcast skill (8)

19 At Wrath at sea; across at sea (7)

21 Female relative of fish with head and tail swapped (4)

23 "Look bold", he ordered (6)

24 Ancient missile asp Earp uncovered (5)

Solution in next issue

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

Solution to Winter 2023 Crossword

230415 Solution 23 Winter 2023

Across: 1 Steam engine, 9 Analogous, 10 Glade, 11 Galore, 12 Bluebird, 13 Rebuke, 15 Bequeath, 18 Choirboy, 19 Camera, 21 Alarming, 23 Edwina, 26 Accra, 27 Alleviate, 28 Windsurfing.

Down: 1 Swagger, 2 E-mail, 3 Moonraker, 4 Noon, 5 Insulted, 6 Eagle, 7 Breadth, 8 Laminate, 14 Buoyancy, 16 Up-and-over, 17 Mountain, 18 Chapati, 20 A bad egg, 22 Miaow, 24 Iraqi, 25 Ales.

BIKING NEWS

MAG News



There are certain times in our lives when our leaders seem determined to spoil the enjoyment we take from various aspects of life. As motorcyclists we do get targeted quite often, but also ignored when we should be included. Back in the days when I first ventured out on the road on my BSA 250 C15, I could choose whether or not I wore a helmet. Most days I put one on, but sometimes, for a quick check ride after a bit of maintenance, I would pop up the road without. Within a year or two the government decided to make helmets compulsory, and to be honest, I didn't worry too much as I found a helmet helped to keep me a bit warmer, drier and the flies out of my face (if I had some kind of visor fitted). Many though, including a lot of commuters who at that time used mopeds that were slower than a bicycle downhill, objected very strongly. Also, there was a lot of resentment regarding the taking away of personal freedom. Because of these feelings a group of bikers decided to set up what became the Motorcycle Action Group, or MAG, in 1973, and although the helmet law stayed, they have over the years had a strong influence on such things as when the government wanted all bikes to be fitted with leg protectors.

Having been an individual member of MAG for many years I wanted to point out a few of the reasons why, and maybe encourage a few more to join up. The annual membership fee of £30.00 (reduced to £25.00 for the first year if you belong to an affiliated club) gets you a bi-monthly magazine called Open Road, which contains within it 80 odd pages, news from home and abroad on motorcycling matters, road tests and government

plans for our future. It also includes MAG's input, which is now very strong, along with a letters section and articles on ride safety and even advanced riding.

There are many companies who give discount to members, including some insurance deals which can save more than the £30.00 membership. I know that they can still give the impression of a group of people demonstrating for a lost cause, but behind the scenes they are doing a grand job in steering legislation in a more palatable direction, which could make a huge difference in the next decade, with the push towards electric being one of the things they are trying to gain some flexibility on timing.

Rick Chubb

Yeovil FreeWheelers

Many of you may have seen brightly liveried motorbikes out and about on the roads of Dorset and Somerset at one time or another. But how many of you have stopped to think about what they do and where they're going?

Often referred to as 'the 4th emergency service' these unsung heroes are your local Blood Bike team, zig-zagging across the highways and byways of Dorset and Somerset delivering much needed - and often time critical - supplies of blood, platelets, tissue samples, medication, baby milk, X-rays, CT scans, medical equipment and essential documentation to countless NHS organisations and patients across both counties, and beyond.

The team, officially called YFW Freewheelers, operates out of Yeovil and Dorchester, with Taunton coming into operation shortly, and delivers in excess of 3,500 packages a year. Riding in excess of 132,000 miles a year, (roughly 5.5 times around the world), many of these are 'category 1' life saving deliveries, making the blood bikes, and their riders, an invaluable, free of charge, emergency medical motorcycle courier service for the NHS. And because the service is a charity organisation, run entirely by volunteers, it is saving the NHS hundreds of thousands of pounds every year.





YFW Freewheelers are part of a nationwide network of nearly 4,500 volunteer Blood Bikers who between them responded to over 163,000 urgent requests for assistance from the NHS in 2021 alone. Around 36 different groups operate across the UK, with riders often co-ordinating pick ups and deliveries nationwide. Locally, the blood bike team currently comprises of nearly 100 men and women, all of whom are volunteers, giving their time and energy free of charge. In recognition of these efforts, they were awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021 - the charity equivalent of an OBE.

As a charity, YFW Freewheelers rely entirely on donations from the public and local businesses to keep them on the road. Servicing costs for the group's current fleet of 9 motorcycles and 1 Dacia 4x4 car (all proudly displaying the nationally recognised blood bike emergency response livery) runs at around £85,000 per year. This pays for the maintenance and rolling replacement of the bikes, fuel, servicing and new tyres - all of which adds up when you're racking up in excess of 180,000 miles a year!

Many people want to know why we use motorcycles rather than cars. The most important reason for this is because they offer a unique capability to deliver a fast, efficient, reliable and consistent emergency courier service - largely unaffected by traffic. As a result, our blood bikes enable the rapid redistribution of essential supplies between hospitals and care homes as well as facilitating quicker sample analysis, quicker patient diagnosis and quicker discharge or transfer times for patients than would be possible by car.

If this sounds like our riders are speed merchants, breaking the law on our counties' roads, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. All volunteer riders are trained to Advanced Motorcyclist level, whether that's IAM Roadsmart, RoSPA or Police Advanced Rider certification. YFW Freewheelers also have an internal team of qualified trainers that routinely re-validate training and riding standards. And, in addition to their riding skills, our riders have also been trained to meet NHS Good Distribution Practice for blood samples and medication. If the bikes are so good, you might wonder why we have a Dacia 4x4 in our fleet. The answer is that

sometimes it's just too dangerous for the motorcycles to be on the roads. We offer the NHS an out-of-hours rapid response courier service, 24/7, 365 days of the year. And whilst we ride in pretty much any weather, there are occasions when hazardous road conditions due to torrential rain, fog, snow or ice (especially at night) may require us to take the motorbikes off the road for a few hours. At times like these, the Dacia comes into its own and we can maintain service, whatever the weather!

Donations are what keep our bikes on the road, but it's our people that make this happen. Without our wonderful team of volunteers, YFW Freewheelers wouldn't be able to keep the service going. Our riders might be at the sharp end of the operation, but there's lots going on behind the scenes as well. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and range in age from their early twenties to late eighties. We are currently actively seeking not only volunteer riders and drivers, but also fundraisers, people with financial expertise, motor maintenance skills, operational experience, an understanding of health and safety requirements, tech support, digital and social media buffs and PR skills. Volunteer

support in all these disciplines is essential for YFW Freewheelers to continue and flourish. As the recent Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mrs Annie Maw said, "Blood Bikes provide a vital service and the bikers selflessly give of their free time and riding skills in all weathers to save lives. I encourage all to support them in all their endeavours"

Such recognition is entirely justified, but our volunteers are a modest lot. They give their time freely, their knowledge generously and their enthusiasm without restraint. If this sounds like you, and you have some spare time and would like to find a way to use it well, why not give YFW Freewheelers a call?

John Edwards www.yfwfreewheelers.org

Tel: 0300 030 1180



Mental Health Motorbike

Mental Health Motorbike (MHM) is a free mental health support charity for UK motorcyclists of all ages and types. The mission of Mental Health Motorbike is "to create meaningful opportunities so that together we grow the greater well-being of the motorbike community." The ultimate aim is to reduce suicide amongst bikers in the UK. The charity is building a free, dedicated national network of trained mental health first aiders who can support bikers and their families across the UK.

It all started when a biker called Dale Caffrey, aged just 37, committed suicide on the day of his



first wedding anniversary. He was a father, a brother, a husband, and a son and had a career as a vet. At his funeral, the founder of the charity, Paul Oxborough, decided that he needed to do something. As a biker of some 30+ years, he had an understanding of how the biker community works: we stop, we look at one another's bikes, and we talk. It's the same wherever you go, so he decided he would aim the group at bikers as he felt they would be easy to support.

Initially, he thought it would be just for males, but decided it was important to open it up to all. 1 in 4 adults have been diagnosed with mental illness of some kind during their lifetimes. I wonder how many of us in SAM have? I am one of that 1 in 4. 75% of those diagnosed with a mental illness receive no treatment, that's a shocking statistic! Suicide is the most common cause of death in males aged 20-49, and 75% of all suicides are male. It is believed that 100+ people are affected by every single suicide. And the biking community is a high-risk group.

So what does MHM actually do? They offer 3 types of support: 1-1 support, peer support, plus support at events and activities. They train bikers in Mental Health First



Aid. The course they offer is accredited and delivered by Mental Health England by very experienced trainers. They provide a free service offering support and raising awareness of mental health issues, through their website, social media and their Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs). Once the course has been completed successfully, MHFAs are issued with a sticker, which will be displayed on their helmet or motorcycle. This tells other bikers that they can approach if they need support or just for a chat.

I display the MHM first aider sticker on the front of my bike. I don't

have all the answers, but what any MHM first aider will do is have time to listen, to sit down and talk and to signpost individuals to relevant professional resources and contacts for mental health support where necessary.

One important group that the charity is training at the moment are race marshals. In fact most of the individuals on my course were

race marshals. They will have a crucial role in supporting one another at events, as well as the wider biker community.

MHM was started in 2020, but it has only been a registered charity for just over a year. It has grown much faster than was ever anticipated by Paul and the team. And anyone who is interested can do the training. The charity aim to have a MHFA in every bike group; at every biker café; at bike dealerships; and at all bike accessory shops throughout the UK.

If you want to find out more about MHM there are several ways you can access information:

Instagram – [mhmotorbike](#)

Facebook – Mental Health Motorbike Support Group (UK)

Twitter - [@mhmotorbike](#)

Website – [mhmotorbike.com](#)

Or talk to someone at an event.

Linda Hay



European Road Signs



We've travelled extensively through France, having previously lived there for 16 years and leading our Tours. Here's some important information on the French (and other countries) Priority From The Right road signs as obviously we don't have anything like them in the UK:-



This sign (which amazingly isn't included in some leading European motoring advice books) denotes a potential hazard. Remember, you are riding on the right. At the next junction only, priority has to be given to traffic coming from the right.

At such a junction there are no road markings and even if it appears that you are on the "main" road BEWARE as traffic can emerge from the right without giving way.



This sign will often be seen at the entrance to a town and again, from here on, priority from the right applies. **You** must be aware of the need to give way to traffic coming from the right (except at roundabouts).



This sign indicates that from here onwards the traffic on the main road has priority, until cancelled by the sign above with the black diagonal band.



At the next junction (not necessarily a cross-roads) traffic on the main road has priority. Minor roads will have road markings and "Give Way" or "Stop" signs.

RIDE REPORTS

1st Wednesday Wander of 2023



The first of this year's Wednesday Wanders saw 17 riders join me on one of the rare dry and sunny days we've seen this year so far. A "great mix of roads" and a "very scenic route" (other riders' comments, not mine!) ended at Shillingstone Railway Station, where we enjoyed a great café for lunch. Shillingstone Station is in the heart of the Blackmore Vale and is situated on the former Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway. It is home to the North Dorset Railway Company, a heritage railway run by a great bunch of

volunteers working to reinstate some of the old railway line and locomotives. Some fabulous views, loads of bluebells out as well as wild garlic and, continuing the springtime theme, even the route was tadpole shaped! Overall a great ride with a great bunch of people. **Andy Bourne**

Spring Fords Ride

The recce ride the week before showed that some of Exmoor's fords and minor roads were still in winter mode! At the risk of plagiarism the ride was summed up afterwards as WET, DRY, MUDDY, GRAVEL, GRASS IN THE MIDDLE, NARROW, WIDER, STEEP, HAIRPINS, FORDS, TWISTY, STRAIGHT. A motley crew of 15 riders assembled at Norton Fitzwarren in the dry for their pre-ride briefing, then it started to rain heavily. Thankfully



this had eased off a little by the time we had reached Wivvy. Then, as this was a red ride, we turned right and plunged into some narrow lanes with a fast flowing ford to cross after a while. Wimbleball Lake was brim full as we scurried by, following more muddy, wet and gravel strewn roads to our brief stop near Dunkery Beacon. Apparently The Welsh are airbrushing out any place names that have the minutest link to anything that might have a link to burning as it destroys the planet, so the Brecon Beacons are no more (SHAME). Fortunately, there is a twenty mile stretch of water between Wales and Exmoor, so hopefully our Dunkery Beacon will endure. Allerford didn't disappoint, followed by a spirited run over Porlock Hill and



into the East Lynn Valley. There we crossed the mysteriously named Robbers Bridge, although our TEC used the adjacent ford instead! Our refreshments were taken at The Buttery Café at Malmsmead, Then a couple of minor fords at Slocombeslade and Tippacott as our route turned eastwards again, with a small ford at Winsford and a dozen more miles of making progress to our dispersal point at Raleighs Cross.

Matt Towill

KIT REPORTS

Getting Properly Leathered!

No, this isn't an article about inappropriate drinking!

Back in the day, when all discerning motorcyclists rode sportsbikes, a set of, preferably, one-piece leathers were *de rigueur*.....and maybe topped off with a replica helmet to complete the look! We are, of course, talking the mid to late 90s!

For somebody like me, off-the-peg leathers just do not fit.....gorilla arms! So, the only solution was to buy made-to-measure; I wasn't intending to (honest!) but I did accompany a mate for a ride up to Louth in Lincolnshire (near Cadwell Park) from Bristol, he on his Ducati 748 and me on my Suzuki GSXR750.....a cracking ride, even in the fog! Why go all the way up there? Well, for the most discerning sportsbike rider of the time, it had to be either BKS or Crowtree, the latter being in Louth and, being a tad



cheaper, that's where we went.

As I said, it wasn't my intention to buy some leathers but, while waiting for my mate to be measured up, I was checking out the suits hanging up ready to be collected and couldn't help but be impressed with the quality.....so, despite the unhealthy bank balance and credit cards teetering on the brink of being maxed out, I had one of those "stuff-it" moments and promptly got myself measured up!

Looking back, that was probably the beginning of the end of my first marriage!! In an attempt to salvage it I did sell the Suzuki but when she remained unconvinced of the sacrifice I went out and bought a new Aprilia RSV Mille.....I know the leathers didn't match the colour of the bike but, hey, you can't have everything!

The thing was, at the time, these leathers were just so comfortable and fitted like the veritable glove, they helped to make me feel completely at one with the bike; oh what fun we had!!

Of course, time marches on and some 10 – 12 years later they appeared

to have sadly shrunk and, in an effort to get them to fit once more, I had them altered but they did a really rubbish job....so I sold them on eBay! But, as I no longer had a sportsbike, it didn't really matter, especially as textile suits work well with adventure and touring bikes.

But then I bought myself another Aprilia RSV (this time the R in glorious Acid Yellow!) followed a while later by the KTM RC8R.....and, to me, textile suits just don't feel right riding these bikes. So, more made-to-measure leathers then! Sadly, Crowtree don't exist anymore following the death of the owner and BKS are outrageously expensive so I had to look for alternatives. For whatever reason, I ended up choosing Scott Leathers conveniently up in Barnard Castle.....a good excuse for a bit of a holiday and use some of the cracking roads up that way!

Chatting with the guy there (Jim) he seemed to know what he was doing, provides leathers for some good racers as well as some police forces and is very competitively priced. So, once

again, I got myself measured up. A few weeks later they arrived in the post.....oh dear, made-to-measure? Who for?? They were a dreadful fit with two different zip sizes for the jacket and trousers, so they couldn't be joined together! They were returned for alterations to be made.....

and then returned to me; zips now the same but still a lousy fit! Last September I rode back up there again and showed them the issues (I don't have a fat behind or thighs!) and left the leathers with them. Following that, I rang several times and emailed a few times (which went unanswered).

Once we reached 6 months since going there I lost patience to the extent where I had to threaten legal proceedings - that forced a response! Finally, on 11th April, DHL delivered them! And, amazingly, they are now a perfect fit. Hopefully they won't shrink!

Andy Bourne



CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo of Matt Towill, taken during a coffee stop in Moffat whilst in Scotland last month

Suggestions to me at Tullochg@aol.com, we'll publish the best one in the next issue.

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.

ChatGDP

ChatGTP has been in the news a lot lately.

Here's ChatGTP's answer to the request "How to be a better motorcycle rider".

It's actually 644 words and pretty basic.

Maybe try a different question that may give a more interesting answer.

Try something and see what you think! **Steve Schlemmer**

Riding a motorcycle is a skill that can take years to perfect, but there are always ways to improve your technique and become a better rider. Here are some tips on how to be a better motorcycle rider:

- 1. Practice, practice, practice - The key to becoming a better motorcycle rider is practice. The more you ride, the more comfortable you will become on your bike, and the more confident you will feel on the road. Find a safe and quiet place to practice your skills, such as an empty parking lot or a quiet back road, and work on your techniques, such as braking, shifting, turning, and counter-steering.*
- 2. Take a motorcycle safety course - If you're new to riding or want to improve your skills, consider taking a motorcycle safety course. These courses are designed to teach you the basics of motorcycle operation and safety, and they can help you become a more confident and skilled rider.*
- 3. Learn from experienced riders - One of the best ways to improve your skills as a motorcycle rider is to learn from experienced riders. Join a motorcycle club or group, attend events or rallies, and talk to other riders to learn tips and tricks for improving your technique.*
- 4. Focus on your body positioning - Your body positioning can have a big impact on your motorcycle's handling and performance. Focus on keeping your weight centered over the bike, with your knees gripping the tank and your elbows bent. Use your body to lean into turns, and avoid tensing up or leaning too far forward or backward.*
- 5. Use your brakes properly - Using your brakes properly is essential for safe and effective motorcycle riding. Learn how to use both your*

front and rear brakes, and practice braking in different situations, such as in a straight line, on a curve, or in wet or slippery conditions.

6. Look where you want to go - One of the most important skills for motorcycle riding is looking where you want to go. Keep your eyes focused on the road ahead, and look through turns and curves to anticipate what's coming next. Avoid fixating on obstacles or hazards, as this can cause you to steer towards them.

7. Stay within your limits - To be a better motorcycle rider, it's important to stay within your limits. Don't push yourself too hard or try to ride beyond your abilities, as this can lead to accidents and injuries. Instead, focus on improving your skills gradually over time.

8. Stay alert and focused - To ride a motorcycle safely and effectively, it's important to stay alert and focused at all times. Avoid distractions such as using your phone or listening to music while riding, and always be prepared to react quickly if necessary.

9. Ride defensively - To be a better motorcycle rider, it's important to ride defensively. This means being aware of other drivers on the road and anticipating potential hazards, such as changing weather conditions or unexpected obstacles. Keep a safe distance from other vehicles, and avoid risky maneuvers such as lane splitting or weaving in and out of traffic.

10. Maintain your motorcycle - Finally, to be a better motorcycle rider, it's important to maintain your motorcycle properly. This includes checking the brakes, tires, lights, and other components before each ride, and keeping your motorcycle in good working condition. Regular maintenance and inspections can help ensure that your motorcycle is safe and reliable on the road.

In conclusion, becoming a better motorcycle rider takes time and practice, but with the right techniques and mindset, it's possible to improve your skills and enjoy a safer and more rewarding riding experience. By focusing on your body positioning, using your brakes properly, looking where you want to go, staying within your limits, staying alert and focused, riding defensively, and maintaining your motorcycle, you can become a more confident and skilled rider.

Winter2023 Caption



This issue's suggested caption (of Tom Moore's Golden Retriever Ferdy) comes from Jane Schlemmer:

'You're not leaving me in kennels again'

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)



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TAILPIECE #23

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

The rider was leading the annual, Spring, long-weekend tour of Wales for an IAM motorcycle group in the South West. Feedback from participants in the previous year called for more riding, with fewer, shorter stops. The rider included this in his planning and in the written preparation packs, and reinforced it in the first morning's, pre-ride briefing.

He asked all participants to be ready to leave promptly at the agreed 0900 start each morning. This involved completing all bike checks, zeroing trip meters, cleaning and drying kit, previewing the next day's roadbook, loading GPS routes, charging comms batteries, cleaning visors, packing day-bags, etc, all before dinner. He asked all participants to be at their bikes, fully dressed and ready to go at 0845 for the morning briefing.



At 0858 on the second morning, after briefing and answering questions, the rider put on his helmet, mounted up and rode away to stop at the hotel car park exit, followed by the group. Except for the group chairman and the group chief observer who

were beside their bikes, deep in conversation, lazily polishing visors and fiddling with GPS displays.

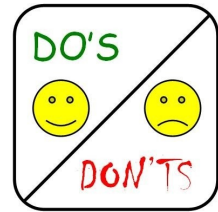
'All the other riders have made the effort' the rider thought, 'I have to stick to what I said'. So, on the dot of 0900 he raised and circled his arm, selected first gear and pulled out onto the road out of town, leaving the two group officers behind.

He immediately recognised that he had omitted to put in his ear plugs which were particularly necessary on his bike with its large screen.

However, saving face was more important than saving ears and so he kept going and suffered all the way to the first stop.

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.



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.



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Classification of SAM Group Rides

Green – Ride open to all SAM members and associates. Shorter rides, typically of approx 2 hours duration, up to approx 70 miles, 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 – rides usually of 70 miles plus, approx 4-5 hours duration, though could be a full day riding, overtaking within the group at the ride leader's discretion. Ride for all members and associates that have participated in at least 5 Green rides and are fully conversant with the Drop off system. Riding over varied conditions.

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 of what's required of them.

All rides will usually stop after approx 2 hours for comfort breaks.

Remember that you are responsible for your own ride. If at any time you feel fatigued, cold/hot and wish to leave the ride you are empowered to do just that. Wait for TER to catch you up and tell them you are leaving the ride.

The Drop-Off System

This is the preferred SAM method to control group rides. Each ride has a 'leader' and a 'sweeper', known as a Tail End Rider, usually wearing an Orange Hi-Viz.. 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'.

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

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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 speak to any **SAM** officer, or click on the link on the “**SHOP**” tab of the **SAM** website.

SAM SUMMER SOCIAL

SAM are once again arranging another social evening, this year it is on Saturday 12th August. It will be either a hog roast, or something a little different - but food will be involved. There is no charge for this event, although a £5 donation to St Margaret's Hospice is requested. In order to plan approximate numbers, If you are interested please contact Martin Surrey on 07813786427.