

Autumn 2023

FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



iam
RoadSmart



SOMERSET
Road Safety

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Front Cover: Mike Shand leads Dave Wilmott and Wayne Timbrell on Richard Pearse's recent "Woody Bay Express".



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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



Strong winds, sunshine, flooding, heatwave – the end of summer seems to have fought for supremacy in the weather record charts before it allowed Autumn to appear this year. This has made for some interesting riding conditions over the last 3 months, but hopefully our training has ensured we've been able to expand our experience in dealing with such changeable conditions.

The recent clock change has robbed us of any evening daylight, luckily Lisa's "Eli's at Dusk" ride just about got in there before the change. For those who don't regularly ride in the dark, night riding is often challenging, but leading (and participating in) a Group ride in the dark demands the highest concentration – seeing markers, identifying arm signals, differentiating Group members with other road users etc. Not so bad with modern LED lighting systems, but a different story with 20 year old halogen single lamp units. It was good to see a couple of first timers out on this annual event (see write-up later in this issue), also to reassure them that most rides aren't quite so challenging.

Following IAM RoadSmart's decision to merge both Local Observer (LO) and National Observer (NO) qualifications into a single NO one, many of SAM's existing LOs are now embarking on the transition to NO. The aim of this streamlining was to allow a consistent standard across all of IAM's Groups across the UK, and whilst initial thoughts (including mine!) were that it could result in us losing many experienced and capable LOs, I am delighted to see most of them going through the re-assessment



process. Within SAM we are very lucky to have had a robust and competent Observer Training programme in place for many years, meaning the change from LO to NO is minimal to these Observers and almost unnoticeable to associates. Any associate can, after passing their Advanced Test, continue their development by training to become an Observer via the annual Observer Training programme. This is scheduled between March and May each year, so if you are interested, and have passed your Advanced Test, contact the Training Team and register your interest with them.

Insurance rates appear to have taken a turn for the worse this year, with both my car and bike renewals (which have remained

almost static for the last 5 or 6 years with the same insurers) increasing by over 50%. Is it just me that gets frustrated when a phone call (with long waits) is required to get these stupid increases reduced? But unlike previous years, the best I seemed to achieve was around a 20% increase over last year. Checking various on-line, comparison and dedicated sites and companies, the opportunities for lower rates appeared conspicuously absent. Whether this is a sign that escalating personal injury claims and repair bills are coming to the fore, or just companies taking the opportunity to copy current inflation levels, who knows, but I'm sure the amount of plastics (and their replacement cost) on modern bikes has something to do with

this. We're still lucky in this part of the country in having lower rates than many other regions, but it looks like rates are only going to head one way in the coming years.

A quick update on the Honda NT1100 front, initial thoughts on having it re-mapped are now gone due to a complete refusal from 5 different companies willing to insure it after it's been remapped. The fact they don't understand what this involves in my case, and



has no effect on power output, has no influence – it's just beyond their comprehension, so easier for them to say "no". With the 1st year service this week, I'll just have to rethink, but apart from the low-speed fuelling issue, it continues to please.

Thank you to everyone who has submitted contributions to this issue – without them we'd have no Full Chat. So if you fancy putting pen to paper (or preferably fingers to

keyboard), please do so – deadline for the next issue will be 15th January 2024. Happy and safe riding.

Graham Tulloch



CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Well here we are again, getting close to the end of another year. In retirement I thought things might be at a slower pace, but how wrong I was. Time really does fly by, not because there is lots to do but just because you are able to do the things that you never had time to do when you were working. Like rehangng doors, new shed and fencing etc - its never-ending. But the one thing that is constant is motorcycling. Being out on the bike, with or without the other half, one has the freedom and the ability to enjoy riding, even on crowded roads with bad drivers in today's world.

Many of you may well be thinking about putting your trusty steeds away for the winter, wrapping them up and putting the batteries on maintenance cycle; time to reflect on another year. For me as Chair, the year has been very quiet and there have not been many big issues to deal with, which makes my life very easy. I had more issues trying to get my bike fixed and serviced due to a lack of capacity within the dealerships to deal with the ever-increasing demand.

As a club, we had the annual hog roast which was well attended and we raised £300 which was split between St Margarets Hospice and Gina's

foundation fund, for which each received £150.

We also have an issue with the lack of attendance at committee meetings, where members can join us to put their views on matters that concern them and the club, or changes they would like to see. A club is only as good as its members. I realise that some may think that it's a waste of time to attend but the committee needs more input from the membership for it not to get bogged down with the same person being in the same committee post year after year, this is not good for its long-term survival. I will be putting something forward at our next meeting to try and encourage more members to attend and take part in the running of the club.

As I take my bike to Ocean BMW for servicing etc, they sent me an invitation to go on one of their Welsh weekend tours. It was a 4-day trip with the base at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells. On the face of it, it seemed a little expensive at £390, but it was 3 nights and included a 4-course evening meal. So I thought let's see what it is all about and signed up. I got the itinerary and agreed to join the tour at Sedgemoor Services. I



was informed that there were 15 riders, 5 of which were two up. I arrived at Sedgemoor and was joined by two other bikes; we sat there chatting away and realised that the time was an hour over the ETA time of the rest of the group which was coming from Plymouth. I then got a call from the leader stating that they were running late as when they left Plymouth the drop-off system did not work.

All but 2 riders went off on a different road and it took an hour to get them all back together. I thought this did not bode well for the rest of the weekend. So, the 3 of us went on to the old railway station café at Tintern and

waited for them to join us. After a drink and cake, we all set off and it became apparent that there were only a few of us who were advanced riders, and that this tour was for ordinary riders just having a weekend away with their mates. The drop-off system did improve, and we got to the hotel with no problems at a very comfortable/relaxed pace. The room was very big and comfortable and the ensuite had a large bath and shower. After drinks and chatting we went to dinner and the food was very good - 4 courses, of which you had 4 choices per course.



For the next 4 days, we had a good time, and it was interesting chatting and listening to others from outside of our club and the way they think about bikes and riding. All in all, it was a very good weekend, very relaxing with good food and company. I might well go next year.

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



to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

Trevor Oats on 28th August, riding his Honda VFR 1200X Cross Tourer and observed by Rob Malton.

Ray Norton on 8th September. Ray was riding a Triumph Tiger 900 GT Pro and was observed by Jim Donnelly.

Paul Janssenswillen on 21st September, riding a KTM 1090 Adventure. Paul was observed by Andy McKay.

Matt Wilkes on 22nd September, gaining a F1RST. Matt was riding a Yamaha MT10 and was observed by Mike Collins.

Mike Harris on 2nd October, riding a Triumph Sprint 1050 ST and observed by Jim Donnelly.

Caroline Killer on 7th October. Caz was riding her Suzuki GS500 and was observed by Rob Malton.

John Cox on 14th October, riding a BMW K1600GT and observed by Bob Muckett.

Steve Musgrove on 19th October, gaining a F1RST whilst riding his Kawasaki ER-6f 650. Steve was observed by Lindsay Wilson.

Gary Balham on 20th October. Gary was riding his Moto Guzzi V70 Bobber 850 and was observed by Martin Surrey.

Julie Bellamy on 9th November, riding her Kawasaki 400 and observed by Martin Surrey.

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

Training Update - Overtaking

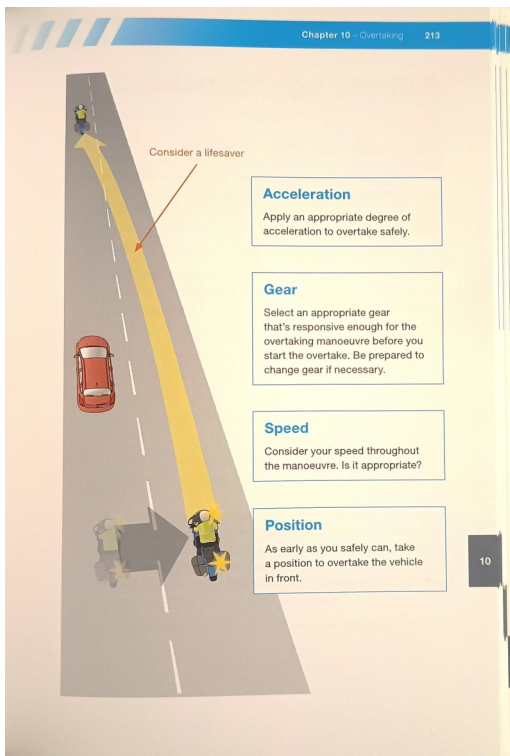
Continuing the intention of Jim and me alternately writing an article for Full Chat, this season's subject is **Overtaking**. I wanted to give you a flavour of the questions we receive, and try to give answers, so here goes.

Q1. What is the fundamental difference between the 2- and 3-stage overtake?

A1. Put simply... Hazards. Broken down.... Imagine a straight section of road ahead, you see a vehicle in the distance on your side of the road, you see no other hazards (junctions, lay-bys, other traffic, etc). On approaching the vehicle you still have an open view to the road ahead and see a straightforward overtake. You indicate your intention early and smoothly overtake the vehicle with no hazards around. This is the 2-stage overtake, with a lack of hazards. Motorways and Dual Carriageways are good examples.

So how does the 3-stage overtake differ? Again, put simply, Hazards... Consider the situation where we have an increase in hazards. So again the same bit of road, however we now have a junction on the right and a right hand bend in the distance. 2 main considerations to make - I decide to close up so that, as the junction clears on the right, I can move out to confirm that the distance I have to overtake (within the speed limit of course) is still available (as I thought it was before moving out). Now, with an extended view confirming that the overtake is still safe (i.e. no additional hazards have appeared) then it is Good to Go. If not, then return to the following position.

Q2. When should we use indicators?





A2. It depends...! In the first scenario, where there are no hazards and I have clear vision ahead, I will indicate early and throughout the overtake, turning them off once I have cleared the vehicle.

In the second scenario I might wait until I come out and reaffirm what I believe will be a good overtake, and at that time engage indicators and throttle.

Q3. What common mistakes are there?

A3.1. Looking at the speedo within the overtake on a 3-stage overtake and then stagnating. The difference in speed that is available between yourself and the vehicle you are overtaking should have been sorted out within the planning stages. Therefore once you have taken that into the equation you should be using the right amount of throttle, with the confidence you have the speed differential to complete the overtake safely and legally.

A3.2. Making the decision to overtake with your indicators early (but I accept it does depend) from the following position or close up position and not once they have come out and rechecked what they can see ahead is as good as they thought it was when following.

Overall, in the 3-stage overtake, the come out and re-check/deliberate/confirmation/extend our view/see our return position is so important, Note

that it takes much less time to make those actions than it just did for you to read this. That pause allows us to say “Yes this is on, lets go” or “No, it’s unsafe”, then simply manoeuvre easily back in behind the vehicle and re-start the process again.

I hope this simplifies what can be a confusing part of Advanced Riding, but feel free to give me a call to have a chat. Safe and happy overtaking!

Callum Bremner, SAM Co-Chief Observer



IAM Inform

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

Volunteer Request!

As you will have read in our Chairman’s Chatter earlier, we are actively looking for volunteers to assist in the running of the Club, and steering it forward in a way that makes it attractive and effective for all existing and potential members.

I know the word “Committee” doesn’t evoke the most exciting of things, but there is a statutory requirement to have 3 key roles (Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer) plus a minimum of 3 other committee members in order to maintain our role as an IAM RoadSmart Group. Historically we have tried to change the 3 key role positions every 2 years - the aim of this is to ensure SAM doesn’t stagnate, as well as offering development opportunities for members. This does, however, require a healthy pool of members offering up their services.

With regards to the additional committee member roles, we currently have

16 of these covering all the specific “jobs” necessary in running the Club. The fact that 3 of these (see inside front cover) are currently vacant shows how much we need support from our members.

But aren’t committees starchy and opinionated, and just a talking shop? Well, they’re certainly a talking shop, providing the only formal environment for making decisions that are likely to best serve the membership, and fulfil IAM RoadSmart’s aims to bring in new members. Which is why SAM have, since their inception in the early ‘90s, invited ALL members to participate in our Committee Meetings (which are usually held every 3 months). This allows the whole membership to help shape our Club, and hopefully help keep the committee focussed on what is important.

Without fresh blood, there is the risk that: we cannot make the regular rotation of key roles every 2 years that we would wish; that members with specific subject responsibilities (eg Publicity, Sponsorship, Full Chat Editor etc etc) have no option but to keep doing it, potentially losing focus on what needs to be done; missing opportunities through new ideas and concepts that fresh individuals might bring; and individuals having to leave the roles due to other personal demands.

Over the last few years we have successfully encouraged new recruits to share some posts, which spreads the load, provides continuous back-up and develops wider skills within the Club. But there are opportunities to further develop this, extending role-sharing into other areas. Doing this means new recruits have support from the existing role-holder, easing their introduction but also offering “sounding-boards” with each other.

If you think you would like to offer your services to SAM to help it in its running and development, then please contact the Secretary (details on inside front cover, also below) or any committee member. If you have any areas where you think your skills would best add value, let them know - if not, and you would generally just like to be involved, then that’s great too. If you have any suggestions on how we could do things better/more efficiently, then come and join us. The good news is that helping us in running SAM would have no income tax implications on you whatsoever (because you won’t be paid!).

Graham Tulloch, Full Chat Editor 07825 201650

Andy Bourne, Secretary 07963 775504

BIKE REPORTS

BMW C400GT

It's a great feeling - decision made, wonga paid and I rode out of the Bristol premises with a nice, ten year old BMW1200GS, 8500 miles and a whole lot cheaper than a new 1250. Six months later and after 6000 miles I've bonded nicely and my thoughts turned to servicing. The BMW used bike two year warranty is always a reason to buy pre-loved from a main agent, but reality clicks in now that I must pay over £100 an hour for a job that would take twice as long in my garage, yet I glow with satisfaction when I've done a service which saves about £300. Never mind, service booked and Lovatt gave me a nice new C400GT scooter to play with

for the day while the GS was being serviced by the technicians who live behind closed doors. I was not disappointed as I have owned four scoots and found them all to be really practical AND enjoyable.

I took the C400

over the old bridge to the land where twenty is now plenty, and after spending several hours marvelling at Chepstow Castle (highly recommended), I strolled the C400 around a 90

mile loop through Usk, Abergavenny, Monmouth, Tintern and back to Bristol. Being unfamiliar with the bike and it not being my property, all was taken at a steady pace.

The C400 single cylinder engine is relatively small for many of us SAM members, but having completed a few long distance trials on a TS250MZ, I'm a believer that exces-



sive horsepower isn't essential to doing what I love. A 350 will travel the miles in comfort and control, although it's essential to keep ambition and 'progress' within the performance envelope if disappointment or unnecessary risk is to be avoided. To that end, my ride was mostly void of overtakes, heavy braking and fast bends.

How was the bike? Being a scoot with small wheels and a CVT drive, comparison to a lively motorcycle is unfair; suspension seemed under-damped but acceleration was lively on A and B roads (though of course not blistering). The M48 and M5 were cruised at 70 with ease and stability, although acceleration (and possibly steep motorway-hills) would be a problem at those speeds. The brakes were adequate but with such elemental suspension (my dear Watson), I reckon again, the bike should be ridden within its market envelope of commuter or modest mile-muncher.

I was on the bike for about four hours and never felt cramped (I'm 5ft 8Ins) or uncomfortable. The scoot-stance gives options for feet-forward or feet towards the rear - both provide opportunity to move around after an hour or so. The screen and body-work, as with most scoots, provided reasonable refuge from wind and fatigue. The whole plot (screen, wind and engine) seemed to me vibration-free and quiet. The TFT provided plenty of info, recording a return of over 80mpg. The speedo was absolutely bona (really good) as the digits were about 35mm high and easy to read (officer!). I found the bellows-style drop-down floor under the seat good to store a full-face, but only when stationary - the bike won't start until the storage-floor is pulled up with the bellows locked, this then reduces the

under-seat storage. It's probably to allow a low pillion seat and full rear suspension movement. It seemed a bit of a gimmick or compromise, like tightening the string on a duffel-bag (remember those? And if you do, I know how old you are!), compared to most other medium-size scoots which swallow whole whales of kit without any shrinking storage.

In the land of the twenty (Wales, in case you haven't guessed), the



absence of cruise control was not helpful with the new speed-mandate. My biggest dislike was the low-speed manoeuvring judder - there were a few occasions around Monmouth when I trickled with the traffic, and at walking pace the transmission gave out a horrendous judder. The lack of clutch-control really showed up badly here. Not great for a commuter.

I liked the white body-work and four head-lights; they made me feel the centre of attention, surely that must be good when approaching a phone-user waiting at a junction. The bike was well equipped with heated grips and a heated seat, so the missing cruise control was surprising. But guess



what? This and practically all scoots come with a centre-stand as standard. Ever paid extra for one on your mega-horsepower? I bet you have.

Overall I liked the bike but would I buy one? Of course not while I have the GS, but as time waits for no man, I am always considering the future when it's either a scoot or out-riggers! Scoots really have a place in our bike-world, but not just yet!

Andy Hall

Triumph Speed Triple 955i

I suppose a bit of history never hurts: I started riding on what we now call naked bikes, when in those days only the police, the AA and a few others had fairings. I did fit a fairing to my CB750 and enjoyed both the weather protection and better MPG. I then had a Guzzi Lemans with its two piece fairing, and later FZ 750s and Fireblades, and - as detailed in an earlier article - several Honda VFRs. These were all sports or sport tourer bikes and although I had ridden all the early BMW GSs and owned many trail bikes it was not until about 20 years ago that I fancied an adventure style bike. I bought an early Tiger 855 which convinced me of the benefits of the upright riding position, which led to a Tiger 800 and two Tiger 955s. All this time I was buying bikes mainly to use for trips abroad, to race meetings, SAM events and touring at home, sometimes with a tent and sometimes with Maggie as pillion.

I had never really considered a 'modern' naked, but having recently sold my sports bikes (and being disappointed with the new Transalp, the only new bike I had fancied buying) I decided to look for something older that I had liked but not owned in the past.



Two bikes I had always fancied were the Honda CB1300 and the Triumph Speed Triple. The Honda is a great bike, I tried one when they were new, but they hold their price well and are heavy, another consideration these days. The Triumph had to be the one with twin chrome headlamps, and I prefer the later 955i engine, post 2002. I found a few nearby but none quite had that “take me home” look. On marketplace was a nice looking one in Aberdare, so on the SAM ride “Meet the Frasers” to Llandovery, I detoured via Aberdare and had a look. The bike was clean and well maintained and the seller and his family were friendly, making a mug of coffee and showing me paperwork history, including all the MOTs and servicing. I left him with a

deposit and my plan to return soon to collect.

A week later I drove to Wales, with Maggie, my brother and his wife coming along for the ride and to bring the car back. After stopping at Mountain Ash for lunch we drove to the seller's house and were again offered drinks and had a chat. A few spares came with the bike and these were loaded into the car, then I kitted up and we left to find our different ways home. Maggie wanted to go down the Wey Valley and I took the Heads of the Valleys road, then down through Usk.



About 140 miles later I was home, surprised to find that I had been comfortable, and really only needed to adjust the rear brake lever for everything to fit me. Since then I have done a few rides and am still very pleased with my purchase. I will shortly SORN it and give it a thorough check and do a couple of things like fitting a Scottolier. Otherwise all good. No doubt as time passes I may find faults and have problems, but I hope I can pass on my experiences with the Speed Triple in the future.

Rick Chubb



BIKING NEWS

Another Advantage of Group Riding

There are many advantages to riding in a group: always someone to have a chat with at the coffee stops; an opportunity to learn additional skills by following others; an opportunity to learn from others' mistakes; someone to help if you have bike problems; and the ride leader clears the path, other road users tending to look for other bikes once they have seen one.

I have recently discovered a new advantage with group riding that I will share, so that you never have to suffer the high levels of embarrassment suffered by myself.

It started with a very enjoyable ride to Bampton on a warm and sunny Sunday morning in August. Perfect riding conditions and brilliant roads with minimal traffic. I rode past the cafe at the bottom of the hill and noticed that it was open - perfect.



I parked up in the main car park, said good morning to a couple of posh people making their way to church and made my way to the cafe. I stood in the queue and ordered my coffee and cake. Put my tray on a small table and started to take off my jacket - what's that fluffy thing embedded in my jacket vent?

Suddenly the embarrassment hit me like a sledgehammer, all the people I had spoken to must have thought I was either mad or well hard. Luckily my coffee was not scalding hot, so I

downed it quickly, rolled my jacket up inside out and left.

Therefore my newly discovered advantage of riding in a group is - someone is bound to tell you if you have wildlife hanging from your body.

Now when out on my own I take my jacket off and check it over as soon as I get off my bike. **Mike Shand**

Tunnel Vision

It's a common experience, when riding, to pass from bright light into deep darkness. This could be due to a change of direction when a low sun has been in your face, a tunnel, overhanging trees or blinding headlights. It takes a few moments for your eyes to adjust, during which time your vision is seriously degraded. This adjustment time increases as you age. Try

this.

As you approach the light change, close one eye for a couple of seconds. The pupil in your closed eye will dilate. At the change open the eye, it's pupil will stay dilated, while the other eye catches up, and the degradation of your vision will be much reduced.

Steve Schlemmer



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAM Green Ride

"Remembrance Day Ride"

Sun. 12th Nov. 2023

09:30 @ Cross Keys

Led by Richard Pearse

SAM Amber Ride

"Winter Wednesday Wander"

Wed. 15th Nov. 2023

09:00 @ Smiley's Café, Honiton

Led by John Ridd

SAM Red Ride

"Twisties Galore"

Sun. 19th Nov. 2023

10:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park

Led by Graham Tulloch

SAM Green Ride

"Frosty Fingers"

Sat. 2nd Dec. 2023

09:30 @ Ilminster Services

Led by Rick Chubb

SAM Social Event

"Xmas Get-Together"

Wed. 6th Dec. 2023

Leather & Lace TA7 9EW

From 18:30

SAM Amber Ride

"Wednesday Winter Wander"

Wed. 13th Dec. 2023

10:00 @ TBA

Led by John Ridd

SAM Committee Meeting

Wed. 17th Jan. 2024

19:30 @ Lamb & Lion,

Hambridge, TA10 0AT

Everyone Welcome!

SAM AGM

Watch This Space!

March/April 2024, Date TBA

SAM Committee Meeting

Wed. 17th Apr. 2024

19:30 @ Lamb & Lion,

Hambridge, TA10 0AT

Everyone Welcome!

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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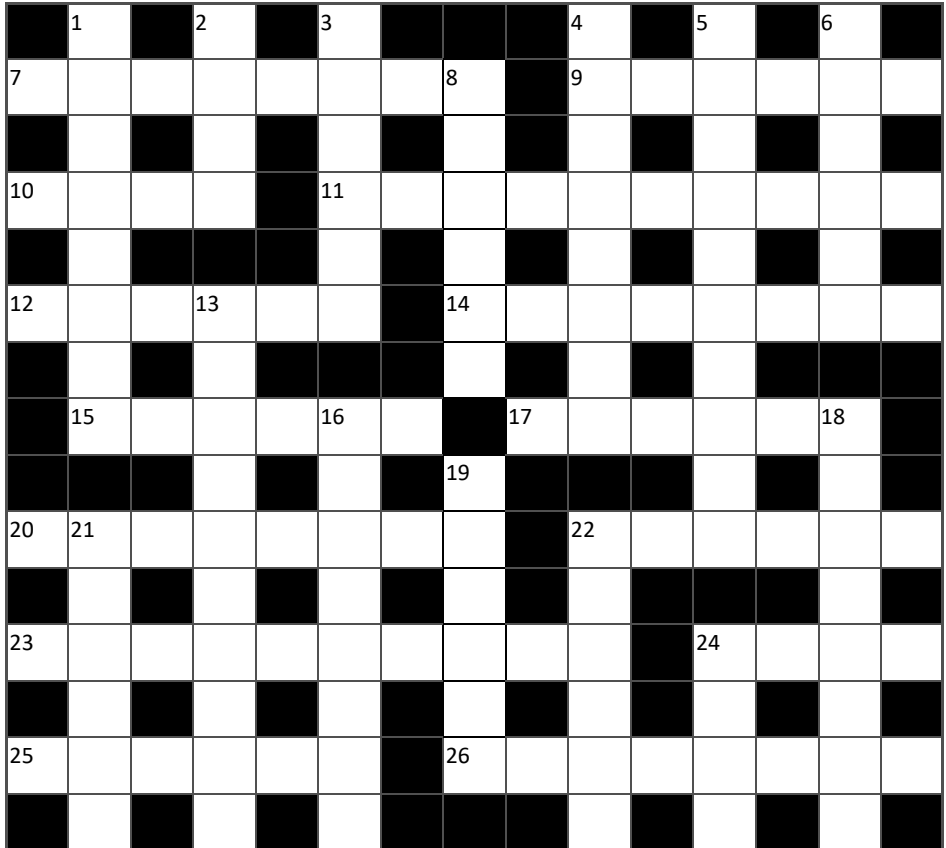
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CROSSWORD



[Over half the words in the solution relate to an allotment]

Across

- 7** Ice clear, cooked variety of celery (8)
- 9** Prelapsarian, like A and E's garden (6)
- 10** Lose temper with type of 13 (4)
- 11** We trust tab-altered barrels (5,5)
- 12** The clod germ has a temporary resident (6)
- 14** Believed magi dine out (8)
- 15** Weirdly in a spooky way (6)
- 17** Bulbs orations using name for rat (6)
- 20** Daisy-like flower, not many after high temperature (8)

CROSSWORD (cont.)

- 22** Sweetheart in thick, Herts town (6)
23 Commanding officer and politician with Ordnance Survey have tuberculosis in garden waste processor (7,3)
24 Places African fly uncovered (4)
25 Lizard changes university again (6)
26 Beat rake excitedly for refreshment stop (3-5)

Down

- 1** Tall, slim person provides support (8)
2 Scottish root in one episode (4)
3 One in front of TV rewrites review (6)
4 Appear mainly to include variety of apple (8)
5 Relating to 13 for example in luminous (5)
6 Small? Not much! (6)
8 Type of acid critic used (6)
13 "Ee! Grandpa's cooked frozen veg!" (6,4)
16 F'in' spaniel frolics from birth to death (8)
18 Propagating container recycled in Tees yard
19 Paltry pair part (3-3)
21 Stop! Plenty! (6)
22 "Tiny tree inside", Audubon said (6)
24 Tender rambling rose (4)

Solution in next issue

Many thanks to Steve Schlemmer for submitting this Crossword Puzzle.

Solution to Summer 2023 Crossword

Across: 6 Misleading, 8 Clay, 9 Wimbledon, 11 Fred, 13 Multihull, 16 Toss, 17 Stagger, 18 Emerson, 20 Shot, 21 Advantage, 24 Tofu, 25 De rigueur, 29 Knob, 30 Chirruping.

Down: 1 View, 2 Slam, 3 and 26 Ball girl, 4 Giddy up, 5 Mateus Rose, 7 Gentleman, 8 Cafeteria, 10 Bat, 13 Match point, 14 Light bulb, 15 Icelandic, 19 Overhit, 22 Tau, 26 see 3, 27 Expo, 28 Rank.

TECHNICAL



Ryobi One+ Inflator

Sometimes dragging out the compressor and airlines, or finding an equipped service station to check or top up our tyres when we know we should be checking them regularly can be a bit of a pain, so I like to find tools that make light work of simple tasks such as the Ryobi One+ inflator does.

Equipped with a handy gauge, it is easily used one handed whilst climbing over the bike to top up my tyres.

The One+ system battery fits all their range, impact wrenches, drills, torches etc, so handy if you already have some of the chargers and batteries.

Other similar, usb-chargeable inflators are available on various auction sites, just something that makes life easy on the driveway during our busy lives.

Wayne Timbrell



RIDE REPORTS

Eli's At Dusk

I should really rename it The Halfway House at Dusk, unfortunately it doesn't have the same ring to it. Life moves on, there is nothing wrong with Eli's as long as you are happy with a bag of crisps on a Tuesday evening! The Halfway House at Pitney boasts several top awards for its extensive range of real ales and local ciders, whilst

we were there they had nine choices! The pub is rustic with a homely feel, the staff were friendly and made us feel very welcome. I booked a table for eight on the Monday, guessing from previous years attendances.

So what about the actual ride? I would describe 'dusk riding' as quite technical both for the leader and for the participants if you are riding as a group. Everyone needs to have their wits about them, especially when dusk turns to darkness. It's a good idea to count the number of riders involved and memorise the pattern of the headlamps so you can identify the Tail End Rider. It's also a good idea to have a clean visor with



minimal scratches to prevent glare. As a leader you need to choose a route which is interesting, safe but not boring. The narrowest lanes were undertaken in daylight and the long stretches of the Burrowbridge road done at the beginning to stretch out the field. All of my turns were left apart from the turn into the pub carpark, this was unavoidable. I used my standard group ride brief but



emphasised the fact that in darkness I wouldn't be able to point out where to mark a junction. I did wear my observing jacket which has reflectors on the arms, it's a medium size so the upper arm reflectors are visible at my wrist level. Those of you that know me personally will get this.



Surprisingly 33% of our group were women and 33% were associates, and the feedback from this contingent was positive. I always enjoy leading this ride but in the early days it was a little daunting, the weather and road conditions play a big part at this time of year. The conditions for the ride were perfect as the roads were dry with very little to worry about, especially during this time of year where roads can become treacherous with mud from tractor traffic. My advice this time of year would be to definitely do a recce and check for seasonal hazards! **Lisa Martin**



Fireworks and Sparklers

Despite Wayne's typical thorough planning of the route and coffee stop for this annual event in the SAM calendar, Storm Ciaran had other ideas, with several of the planned roads flooded and impassable. Alternative thoughts of heading South West instead of North East were also foiled for similar reasons, so with a great turnout on a dry and sunny Sunday morning at



Cartgate Services, a last minute route change took us North through Langport, Seven Bends, Glastonbury and Wells. With Charlie and Dave on their first SAM ride, an additional briefing for them on the drop-off system followed with adoption of the buddy system ensured that the Group spread out comfortably throughout the ride whilst adhering perfectly to the route.

Once again, Del Fowler provided TER services for the first leg, his CanAm being ideal for this role (which also avoided him having to mark any junctions, not ideal when you're nearly 5 feet wide!) He's also surprisingly easy to recognise in your mirrors when you're marking a junction.

Weather could best be



described as changeable, with black skies and heavy rain one minute, then blue skies and a gentle breeze to dry off the damp clothing. After the weather earlier in the week, this was better than any of us expected.

Bypassing the centre of Wells to go through Dulcote, we were treated to a superb view of the magnificent Cathedral from the B3139 Constitution Hill – a new route for me, and one I'll definitely use again.



Leaving Wells on the Bristol Road and turning right at the Green Ore traffic Lights took us to Hartleys Kitchen at Binegar for a mid-ride breakfast stop. A first visit here for both Wayne and me, it managed to accommodate our fairly large Group, and offered an excellent range of breakfast fare – I can see this

being used more by us in future.

After a refreshing stop, some members headed back home cross country, whilst the majority of the Group headed back to Cartgate via the A37.

Overall an interesting and enjoyable route, with roads washed clean and predominantly clear of any flooding, capably managed by every rider.

Graham Tulloch



MEMBERS' ADVENTURES

Double Your Mileage

Riding since 19, I have not toured except for trips to see my wife's family in Germany. With a busy job and young family I did even less! Roll on a few years... In 2014 carelessly losing my job, bike mileage increased from 2,000 a year to 20,000! Touring turned out to be straight forward: decide where to go, download a few routes, decide how many miles a day, book hotels/ferry and head off! Doing 2-3 tours a year of 1,000-2,000 miles each I decided to look for a stretch. In 2019 I booked a tour with a company touring to the Arctic Circle, 4,000 miles over three weeks. 2020/21 were lost to COVID and 2022 due to my health. But as they say if it is worth waiting for...

2023 arrives and I find myself planning servicing (6,000 miles) and tyres (5,000 miles) in more detail than usual to avoid needing a garage along the way. I don't normally carry more than basic tools, so I needed to find



an enhanced tool kit: tyre repair kit and pump... Then of course as I am on the road for 3 weeks I needed chain cleaner/chain lube in smaller cans and more clothes than usual. In the end I realised a top box was in order to compliment my two panniers. Did this prep make a difference? It is difficult to say, but I was not one of 4 people who got punctures and definitely not the person who ended up paying “through the nose” for new chain and sockets at one days’ notice in the local German BMW Motorrad shop!

Paying a company to organise the tour for me is not cheap but it IS convenient. I got a route book, daily route files, hotels every night and important ferry crossings booked in advance. Oh, and a t-shirt. The route book gave expected daily mileage, way points, important fuel stops, hotel info, tourist information plus suggestions for coffee/lunch stops. The latter might sound over the top but when in north Norway/Sweden there are very few stops (and even some of those are closed) so you realise why they had done it. For example, heading from the Arctic Circle back through the first part of Sweden we only saw a couple of vehicles coming the other way (none in our direction) for around 100km, never mind fuel stations.

A week into the tour we met storm Hans ravaging Scandinavia, and abandoned the day’s ride. The tour company found all 15 people on the ride rooms for the extra night where we were marooned; they also moved all the following nights’ hotel bookings to the day after, and changed the 14 bike ferry crossings (which were cancelled due to the storm) to the following day(s). I sat in the bar chatting about the delays as new reservations popped into my mailbox, now that WAS worth paying for!



The tour did not use a drop off system, everyone has SatNav routes and you can all ride together or alone – the choice is yours. The standard of riding was high and I soon fell in with a fellow IAM member from Bristol who was on the same tour. Riding with “like minded” people is not assured on these types of tour, but it is easier to make progress and you have a much better idea of what people around you are likely to do! The tour operator was clear about the dangers of speeding on Norwegian roads and one member of the group found out to their cost – they were caught rolling into a 70kmh limit at 87kmh. The police were very polite and said they would only register 84kmh on the fine, which was given on the spot - £500, ouch! Every country has good roads, but I think Norway has a higher percentage of amazing roads than most. Even if the road is a bit average the scenery is tremendous. It does not matter if you regularly tour 100s or 1,000s of miles, doubling what you normally do is a very interesting experience and a good challenge. As with my experience/trip it shows that with a little planning and good preparation you can go a lot further.



Peter Baker

"Swiss Alps & Italian Lakes" Tour

Strange how some of us travel for work, explore deeper on holiday and see the world in the armed forces as if going to Europe and beyond is just a casual trip. Not so perhaps if work keeps you close to home and holidays jet us off to a beach holiday.

Enough's enough, I've been riding for too long not to have experienced European roads and weather. I'm going, end of.

Assaulted by numerous video edits online of others 'just going', Tina and I set plans to do a biggish trip, taking in the Italian Lakes and

Swiss mountain Alps.

Not quite brave enough to go alone as a first time, we had a meeting with one of our Observers, John Eggleton who, with Jen, own and run BN European Motorcycle Tours from Ilminster.

BN have a variety of Euro tours from exploring Normandy Battle grounds to hotter destinations such as Spain, Portugal and Italy.

We confirmed our booking for the following August's 'Swiss Alps & Italian Lakes Tour', and the saving started immediately.

We booked on the 10pm Brittany Ferries Portsmouth crossing to Caen with cabin, and sorted MC touring insurance with Navigator.

Nearer the time, Paul Furlong Tyres put a new set of Michelin PR6gt boots on the K1600gt, whilst a service with BMW in the fortnight leading up to the trip ensured the bike was in fine fettle.

Everything started, and quite frankly went very



smoothly for the whole tour. First day meeting the other riders, getting into the local lingo eventually got us lunch without too much embarrassment, using my GCSE French. We rode down through the Loire Valley to our first pre-booked hotel. A lovely



welcome rest after a full day's riding in beautiful sunshine.

Onward towards Annecy, working towards Italy over the Petit St Bernard Pass. My first experience of the Alps, and they didn't disappoint. Good weather, little traffic.

The big K simply came alive in the twisty roads two up, hot roads and sticky tyres. It is a fabulous bike for effortless mile munching.

A real treat was photos on Lake Como, a destination we've dreamed of visiting together. The weather and scenery here was stunning. We had a bit of a heat-



wave, with a couple of riders succumbing to the 38 degrees heat

wearing their riding kit, so it was a challenge to keep taking on fluids whenever we could.

Back at home I had sourced two bottle holders & brackets, mounting them neatly to the fairing, which was one of my best decisions of forward thinking. The bottle I chose

is like the GP/ BSB racers use with a flexi tube to be able to draw fluid in through a full face lid. I drank where I could and kept plenty of water in the topbox. One stop by a lake had pints of flavoured ice slushy. We were getting throat freeze while melting!

Riding on, we were headed for our 2 night Lakeside Hotel in Stressa





with outdoor pool and lots of beer. The pool was really nice to stretch some tight muscles and relax in the sun. The accommodation overlooks the beautiful Lake Maggiore. We took a boat ride out to the 'Pearls of Maggiore' islands, with restaurants, shops and

a Palace with beautiful gardens.

From Italy, we worked North into Switzerland and through St Moritz for a couple of nights, then onto Brienze. We chose a couple of days off the bikes and rode the fantastic red Bernina Express trains between the towns and visited Interlaken. At

Morteratsch we could take an hour's walk up to the glacier. A lot had already been packed into this trip.

With the weather expected to be wet for the last 3 days in Switzerland



(which was accurate from the forecast I had seen at home), we still chose to ride the Grimsel, Furka and St Gothard passes. Some were a bit bleak and misty with restricted alpine views, but still fantastic riding none the less. It was patchy, but we were regularly re-ful



warded when it cleared. We certainly ticked off a few bucket list destinations that day. I chose to wear my full Goretex Rev'it Poseidon GTX suit for the bad weather forecast, and deal with the heat. It was a great decision, the suit has big openings on the breast and thighs, so heat management was bearable, but had good safe kit for the rain.

Homeward bound, and out of interest, I put a direct route into Google maps – I was really surprised just how far we were from home on our bike.

Tina found the bike really comfortable and we enjoyed the bike's linear, electric-like smooth power, especially the days where we left the rest of the group and managed to hook up behind Jen on her Triumph Street Triple, from memory The Route De Chalon. There is something just magical about following a very good, confident rider on beautifully fast flowing roads, no traffic, lots of grip and constant radius linking



bends. We had the K decked out using limit point of vision and forward observation. We were lucky enough to get away with John too, up and over the Alps on the way home towards Chamonix. They were the rides that stood out more for me than the views.

Soon it came time to meander our way on A roads back up through France to catch the ferry at around 4pm. 3 of us got collared by customs on the way through the port. They scanned our panniers and topbox liner,

luckily not having to turf it all out. I've heard they're looking for Leatherman tools, so be warned if yours has a long knife blade. *(Ed – my Leatherman was seized at Portsmouth this summer during a vehicle search on my way out – apparently it's due to the blade locking in place when opened.)*



I paid a little more for a return cabin, it was a great decision as we had a shower and found a few hours kip before our ride back home to Somerset some 1850 miles later.

If you've ever dreamed of a motorcycling trip,

give John and Jen a call first, they have so much knowledge of all the destinations, sights and hotels and have a great list of tours throughout the year.

Wayne & Tina Timbrell



CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo of Andy Spiers and Andy Hall taken during a recent SAM ride.

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.

Summer 2023 Caption



This issue's suggested caption (Jez Martin and Sally Huard during this year's Welsh Weekend) comes from Alf Bagshaw:

"Magners are currently reviewing activities at their Welsh brewery after reports of disturbing side effects"

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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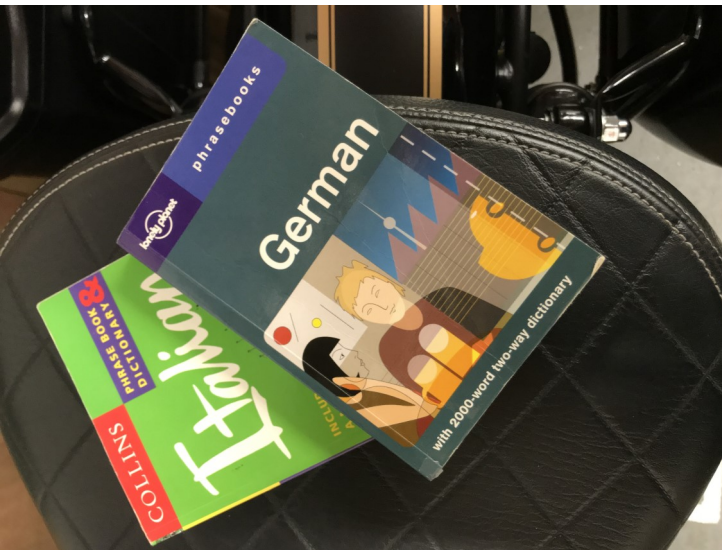
TAILPIECE #25

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

When planning tours, the rider likes to shortlist possible overnight stops from the collective hotel booking websites. He then checks for accommodations that have good, up-to-date websites and plenty of images both interior and exterior. With the help of phrasebooks and on-line translation he can manage a simple booking email in French, German, or Spanish. It's important also to talk to the owner, manager or receptionist to create a memorable relationship before arriving. These conversations can be amusing but most often they quickly revert to English.

For one trip to Germany, the rider found a splendid, independent, family-run hotel meeting all the requirements and the email booking process was successful. A few weeks before the trip he called the hotel. He started with his limited German but could understand little of what the owner said even though the rider was sure the owner himself was speaking in German. No English was forthcoming, but he was just able to ensure that his prepared sentence in German, confirming what time he'd be arriving on the reserved date, had been understood.

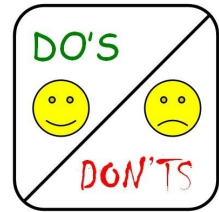
On arrival day, he was met at reception by a charming young receptionist with no English. Overhearing the rider and receptionist struggling, the owner stepped out of the office and shifted the conversation straight into English. It was immediately obvious why the earlier conversation on the



'phone had been difficult. The rider's formal, school-boy, German had been up against the owner's limited, and very heavily accented German, which was his third language. The owner was Italian.

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 XMAS GET-TOGETHER

If you'd like to celebrate the season with other **SAM** members, come along to The Leather & Lace Pub in Chilton Polden (TA7 9EW) on the evening of Wednesday 6th December.

NOTE: This is not a formal **SAM** event, purely an excuse to meet up and enjoy a meal or drink in good company.

If you're thinking of coming along (I'll be there from around 18:30hrs), please let me know ASAP so I can give the venue an idea of numbers, otherwise they could get booked up and unable to cater for "extras".