

Winter 2024

# ***FULL CHAT***

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



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Front Cover: Will Eccles, eager to get his coffee at Corks Café Bistro on the recent Morning Ramble SAM Green Ride.



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# FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



2024 was welcomed in with a couple of weeks of very cold weather which, after the volume of recent rains we have experienced, made for some less than ideal road conditions - I am sure I wasn't the only Observer in SAM to delay planned rides from morning to afternoon with the aim of avoiding the worst of the conditions.

We're now in the middle of February, and what a difference 2 weeks make! The evenings are noticeably

brighter, temperatures are (almost!) high enough to leave the thermals in the drawer, and the road surfaces have been cleaned up nicely.

Our Control & Technique events continue to be as successful as ever, with 43 people attending Jez's excellent topic on Braking in January. It was great to see our friends from Bournemouth and Wessex Advanced Motor-



cyclists joining us in these events, but arriving at 9am in freezing conditions and seeing them already waiting outside, I was immediately thankful for the heater in my van! The next one is on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March, this time on Group Riding, so try and come along and enjoy an interesting and enjoyable session (not to mention refreshments and bacon/sausage baps).

As we head in to Spring, the SAM Events Calendar becomes busier, so keep an eye on your emails and the SAM Facebook page for pre-notification. The SAM Website includes outline details of events for the next 3 months if you want a quick view on what's coming up.

And for those Test Pass holders who are interested in furthering their development, the annual Observer Training course takes place on Wednesday evenings at Long Sutton Village Hall throughout March.

Like many of you, the New Year has seen me drawing up plans for biking trips, in my case with 3 other SAM members – the great thing about being a member of a Club like SAM is that you build friendships with like-minded individuals with shared riding standards. This year, in addition to our annual Scottish Trip, we've planned

a week to Spain in September. I've spent 17 years riding in France, so know it well, but only once crossed the border into Andorra and Spain. So I will be hoping the others in the Group can show me the best bits of Spain (and translate for me



when required!)

With regards my NT1100, I'm waiting to have the ECU re-calibrated in order to eradicate Honda's in-built fuelling issue. If I can cure this, there's not much else on the bike I could wish for, so fingers crossed.

Happy and safe riding.

**Graham Tulloch**





# CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Well, here we are again entering a new year and hoping the weather is going to get better. As you take the dust sheets off your machines, remember to give your bike the once over ready for the summer ahead (POWDERS).

As you will see later in this copy, we have an AGM

and there are officer's posts that need to be filled. I will not go into what they are as you can see them in the Secretary's note. But just to say that members need to have a look at the positions and see if you can help fill these places. It does not have to be just you but a couple of you can get together and job share.

New blood needs to come on to the committee to give their views in order for the club to grow and serve its members in the best way it can. We have a reputation within the motorcycling community for being well-run and forward-thinking in all aspects of riding and training. I think we have the highest pass rate within that community. It's something we should be proud of as there are a lot of people giving their time and effort to make this so, and keep us at the forefront of Advanced Motor Cycling in England. But these people cannot go on forever, which is why new blood is needed.

So please have a look and contact the Secretary if you feel you can help. A club is only as good as its members.

**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.

## Thank you, Ladies

It was great to see three of our female associates at the latest committee meeting. As the only woman on the committee, it was good to have some female company. If you are unable to come along to meetings, but have ideas you would like to put forward, please do get in touch with me or any of the committee members. Let me know if there is anything specific you ladies would like to see on the events calendar. Contact details are in the front of Full Chat.

Thank you. **Linda Hay**



# Test Passes



to the following members for passing their IAM tests:

Mark Tutton on 14th November riding a Honda NC750X and observed by Pat Leeds and Paul Goulder.

David Rush on 22nd November, achieving a F1RST. David was riding a BMW F800S and was observed by Andy Bennett.

Charlie Vowles on 30th November riding a Kawasaki Versys 1000. Charlie was observed by Lindsay Wilson.

John Mews on 6th December riding a BMW R1200RT and observed by Mark Wells.

Matthew Galea on 15th December. Matthew was riding his Ducati Multistrada 950 and was observed by Mike Collins.

Brian Pearson, also on 15th December, riding his Yamaha XSR700, having been observed by Richard Pearse.

Dave Horsley on 28th December. Dave was riding a BMW R1200RT and was observed by Colin Reynolds.

Gareth Plunkett, also on 28th December, achieving a F1RST. Gareth was riding a Triumph Sprint GT 1050 and was observed by Matthew Brock and Georges Dupuis.

Matt Phillips on 18th February. Matt was riding his Triumph Speed Triple and was observed by Will Eccles.

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

# AGM and Committee Positions

**Please don't quickly turn the page having seen the dreaded words AGM and Committee positions!**

We held our first committee meeting of 2024 on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January at our regular haunt, the Lamb & Lion in Hambridge and, encouragingly, we had a good turnout.

One of the subjects up for discussion was **the AGM**, to confirm the date and venue as well as the possibility of making it into an event to try and encourage more members to attend. So, **the date has been set as Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May, 7.00pm at the Lamb & Lion**. We're planning on organising some Pod Rides to the venue, there will be (free!) food and possibly a skittles tournament. More details nearer the time.

Another discussion was concerning committee positions, as I was aware that a number of members had expressed a desire to stand down at the next AGM. Of course, prior to the AGM any member can put themselves forward for any of the committee positions, even if somebody occupies it, as one third of all committee members must stand down at the AGM before being voted back on.....or not. The only exception is that Associates cannot apply for committee positions.

**Please help us in guiding SAM into the future by using your skills as part of our committee**

So, the positions that will definitely need filling at the AGM are as follows;

**Club Secretary.** "Trustee" positions are only supposed to be held for 3 years; this is my 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

**Treasurer.** As above; this is RAB's 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

**Events.** Sadly, due to family commitments, Trev is having to stand down before moving over to Suffolk.

**Observer Coordinator.** Tony Sauer has held this position for several years but feels that it is time to hand over to someone new.

**Taster Ride/PTA Coordinator.** Until last year, Tony Sauer combined the Observer Coordinator role with this, then Simon Greenwood took it on but, due to work commitments and having to move to Bedford, he is having to stand down.

**Social Media.** A post that Tom Moore has held for some years now



but, again, due to work commitments, he too is having to stand down.

We then have those positions which have been vacant for a couple of years and, possibly, could be combined with Social Media, they being **Under-30 rep, Recruitment and Publicity**. We are (now!) painfully aware that Facebook just doesn't cut it anymore with younger riders so we need to create a presence elsewhere on social media.

Of course, you can always apply for any of the other positions; **Chair, Deputy Chair, Deputy Club Secretary, Membership Secretary, Chief Observer, Merchandise, IT Lead or Full Chat Editor**.

**Can you help us?**

I cannot stress enough how important it is to have a full and active committee and new members can provide new impetus and even a new direction; what is important to you?

The majority of committee roles are not particularly onerous but, as the name suggests, it does require some commitment.....and before you ask, they are volunteer roles, so there is no salary! You would most definitely not be "dropped in it" from the start and be expected to get on with it (that would be grossly unfair!).....there will be support available from other committee members and, hopefully, from the previous incumbent.

Currently, committee meetings take place every quarter, on the third Wednesday of the month; if there is something urgent for discussion, we usually arrange a Zoom meeting. For meetings you would be expected to present a report on how things are going regarding your area of responsibility.

I think that I have covered most aspects of what it means to be a committee member; it is a responsibility but it shouldn't be something that gets on top of you.

It can be fun and it can be rewarding so, PLEASE, give it some thought; as I wrote earlier, it is SO important that we fill all committee roles, allowing the club to grow and be even more successful. Should you require any further information or would like to discuss any of the roles (in confidence and with no pressure!) please contact either myself or Martin Surrey (Chair).

Thank You!

Andy Bourne, SAM Club Secretary.

**THANK YOU!**

# **IAM Inform**

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

## **BIKING NEWS**

### **DocBike Somerset and Avon**

Hi everyone! I am Elaine Callaghan, Associate member of IAM working with Andy McKay to obtain my advanced qualification. I'm excited to share the journey of DocBike Somerset & Avon with you. It all started in June 2023 when my husband Brett and I attended a Biker Down course in Poole, hosted by DocBike in Dorset. Inspired by their mission to prevent motorcycle accidents, we decided to create DocBike Somerset & Avon.



Since then, it's been an incredible ride. We've attended various events, from bike nights to talks with IAM, 999 emergency days, carnivals and even a ride

out to Henstridge. We've raised over £7k, allowing us to purchase our very own gazebo – a small but exciting milestone for us!

The support from local businesses, Avon & Somerset Police, Somerset Road Safety, partners such as Mental Health Motorbikes and the community has been overwhelming. We've been involved in our first Biker Down course in the north of the region, featured on BBC Points West. For you motorsport fans, Castle Combe has selected DocBike as their motorcycle charity for 2024, so we will be attending events there throughout the year. In addition we plan to be at the BOS 999 show again, amongst others, and even have preliminary plans to attend the Motorcycle Show at the NEC. Kicking off this year we will be at the Bristol Classic Motorcycle Show, Bath & West Showground, with an engagement bike - we'd be chuffed if you came and chatted with us.

Now, we're asking for your help. If you have skills to share, whether medically qualified, a graphic designer, an IT guru, or just enjoy talking to other motorcyclists, we'd love to have you on board. If you can spare some time to join us at engagement events and showcase DocBike, or even if you just want to spread some joy by donating, contact me at [elaine.callaghan@docbike.org](mailto:elaine.callaghan@docbike.org)

Your first step to volunteering? Visit our volunteer webpage and fill out the details <https://docbike.org/volunteer>

There is more information about DocBike here - [www.DocBike.org](http://www.DocBike.org) where you can learn more about what we do and how to donate. Your support can make a real difference, and together, let's make 2024 the year DocBike really takes off in Somerset & Avon!

**Elaine Callaghan**



## Auto Suggestion

I didn't start riding a motorcycle until I was 50. After two-and-a-half days Direct Access, I passed my test and picked up my first bike, a BMW R 1150 RT. I noticed that I was sometimes riding tense: holding the bars in a vice-like grip; locking my elbows straight; or keeping my right boot cocked up ready for rear brake application.

So I printed a little label saying 'RELAX' and stuck it on the dash next to the speedo. Every time my scanning took in the instruments I also saw the label and checked that I was riding relaxed with a light grip, slightly leaning forward, forearms level, a bend in the elbows and feet comfortable.

When I changed the bike, I meant to add a new 'RELAX' label to the new bike, but never did. But I noticed that

scanning the instruments still caused me to check my grip and riding position. And many bikes later over 26 years it still does. (And it works in the car, too.) **Steve Schlemmer**



## A Cautionary Tale

Let's set the scene - 8th November, 08:40 hrs, windy and raining, but broad daylight riding a BMW RT (fully serviced, MOTd, nearly new tyres, fully comprehensive insurance with 13 yrs No Claims) on West Coker Road heading towards Yeovil from West Coker, wearing high viz jacket and bright yellow helmet. The adverse camber on Bunford Hollow Roundabout and a slick surface dictated only 15mph. I entered the roundabout and passed the Watercombe Lane exit in first gear. I looked ahead and noticed a young, pregnant woman standing in the rain on the pavement



immediately after the exit on West Coker Road, looking as if she might step out in the dipped section of the pavement offering a crossing to a small island (mindful of new pedestrian regulations, even if not a “junction”). Already indicating left, I checked behind, “dinked” my rear brake to indicate me slowing (very slightly) .....and found myself flying through the air.

Temporarily stunned after my helmet hit the road, I spent a couple of seconds watching the bike, on its right side, describing circles on the road as the smashed pannier maintained an angle that kept the rear tyre in contact with the road. I picked myself up, and a young passer-by helped me right the bike so I could get it off the road. Another young (independent) fe-

male pedestrian was by now on the phone to PoliceAmbulance, having witnessed what had happened from 15m away. The middle aged female driver of the car which had rear-ended me had immediately stopped and was standing in the road on the roundabout, apologising profusely.

I moved the bike to a bus stop a few metres away, and got the lady driver to drive her car to the same spot. Despite the young witness’s (still on phone) pressure to wait for ambulance etc to arrive, I asked her to cancel the request. And here’s where it goes pear shaped.

My trip to Yeovil was to sit as Presiding Justice in the Family Court with five families (who had been waiting for months) to have their applications dealt with. The court

briefing was due to start at 09:30, by which time I have to be properly dressed and ready to take charge of proceedings.....you can see where this is going!

The lady who had hit my bike told me that she didn’t have insurance details with her but provid-



ed me with her name, address and mobile phone number on a rain-soaked piece of paper, saying she worked in a local school and would put her phone in reception for me to call and get insurance details when I had time. As an out and out sceptic I had still assessed her as a genuinely upset individual doing her best to comply, and so I let the desire not to let down the families in court drive a decision to take her word for it and get to Court. Needless to say, there were no replies to my calls, nor to two months of emails and letters from my broker and insurance company.



Trick question....anyone noticed what's missing? Yup, the Registration Number! (I've never had to take one down in 50 years of driving).

The lady in question has spent two months (perhaps under family pressure?) refusing to engage, to the point where my insurance company told me that, despite an independent eye-witness prepared to swear a statement in my favour, in the absence of the vehicle registration, if I wanted the bike fixed I would have to accept fault. My comprehensive insurance would pay and I would "only" lose the £500 excess. I said "No !"

**Lindsay Wilson**

## RIDE REPORTS

### Tick in the Box

I try to always go for a walk first thing in the morning and today at 07.30 with the weather station telling me it was just about freezing point outside I ventured out for an hour to find myself getting wet in fine rain - surely it should be snow at this temperature? After climbing the nearby hill, spotting a couple of deer and not seeing any sign of ice, I decided it should be safe to venture out on the bike and join Lisa for the third SAM event of the

new year.

Riding to Langport was uneventful, although I was being very cautious with the roads looking very slick and shiny after a week of frosts, gritting/salting, and the morning rain. I arrived at Cocklemoor car park to find more bikes than I expected,



the total eventually convincing Lisa to split into two groups, with Jez leading the second and Del and Hugh taking up the rear respectively.

After turning right out of the car park and heading through Aller and on towards Street I lost track of where we were. Apparently I wasn't the only one, as Lisa admitted she had taken a wrong turn which took us on some 'interesting' roads with ruts and very slick tarmac. Unfortunately, we came across a lady who had taken a tumble from her bicycle and was lying in the road. We all stopped, and as she had called her husband we all waited until he arrived as she was in some discomfort.

Lisa got us back on track and we duly arrived at the Bere Cider Company cafe near Aller. Jez's group had got there ahead of us; this is a good venue

although care is needed on the gravel car park. After refreshments we made our separate ways home.

Thanks to the four mentioned above plus Alan, Lindsay and Ian, who helped make the cyclist as comfortable as possible while we waited.

**Rick Chubb**



# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## **SAM Amber Ride**

### **"Winter Wednesday Warmer"**

Wed. 21st Feb. 2024

10:00 @ TBA

Led by John Ridd

## **SAM Amber Ride**

### **"Winter Exmoor Bimble"**

Wed. 28th Feb. 2024

10:00 @ Cross Keys

Led by Steve Parker

## **Observer Training**

Wed. 6th Mar. 2024

19:00 @ Long Sutton Village Hall

## **Control & Technique**

### **"Group Riding"**

Sat. 9th Mar. 2024

10:00 @ Othery Village Hall

## **SAM Green Ride**

### **"Harbour Café Exmouth"**

Sun. 10th Mar. 2024

09:00 @ Costa Ilminster

Led by Rob Bartlett

## **SAM Amber Ride**

### **"Winter Wednesday Wander"**

Wed. 13th Mar. 2024

10:00 @ TBA

Led by John Ridd

## **Observer Training**

Wed. 13th Mar. 2024

19:00 @ Long Sutton Village Hall

## **SAM Green Ride**

### **"March Mosey On Down"**

Sat. 16th Mar. 2024

09:30 @ Podimore Services

Led by Roger Moffatt

## **Observer Training**

Wed. 20th Mar. 2024

19:00 @ Long Sutton Village Hall

## **SAM POD Rides**

Sat.23rd & Sun. 24th Mar. 2024

Keep an eye out for details

**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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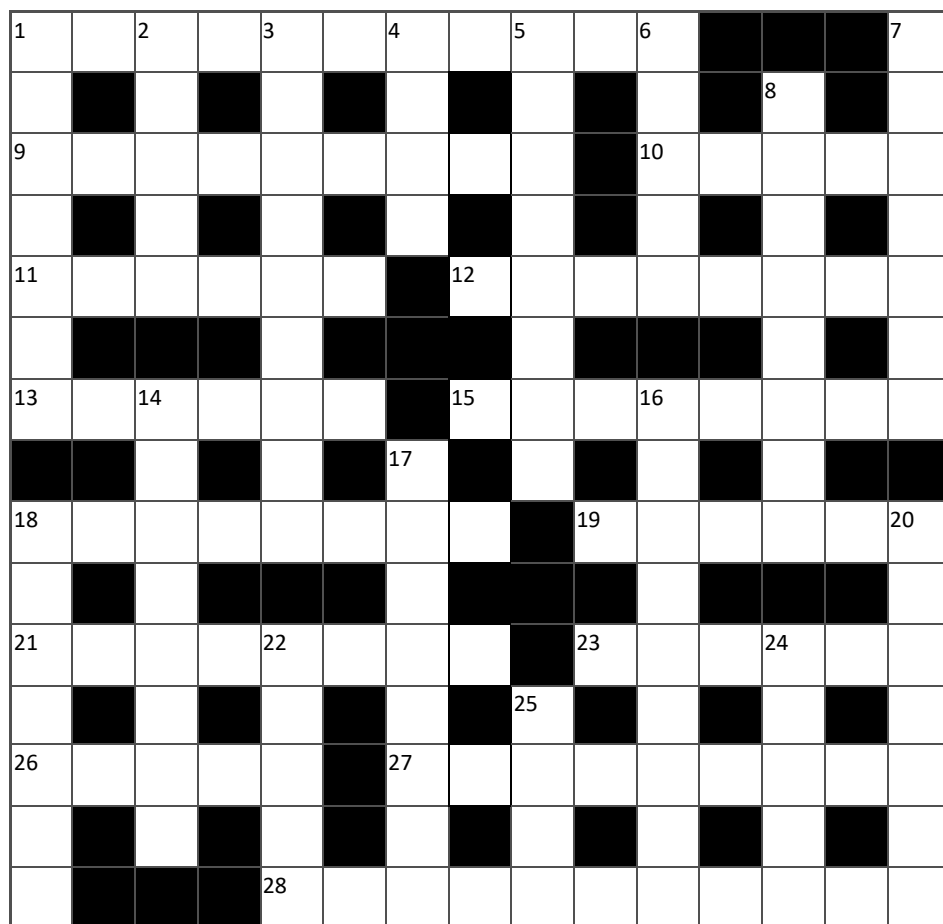
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# CROSSWORD



*[[Two thirds of the words in the solution relate to music or instruments]]*

## Across

- 1** Stringed instrument made from some others and one combination of notes (11)
- 9** Do this before “cut once” (9)
- 10** Writes down various tones (5)
- 11** Holds forth or eats somehow (6)
- 12** Alter mood rate at 108 – 120 bpm (8)
- 13** Go back into yurt for Turkish dairy product (6)
- 15** Writing music badly? No! Not I, ta! (8)

## CROSSWORD (cont.)

**18** Latin American percussion may also resound in Michael Bublé and Sinatra at first (8)

**19** Tap peg (6)

**21** Recount story concerning funeral car (8)

**23** Change game in variations by Elgar (6)

**26** Raise Beethoven's fifth, nothing first (5)

**27** Daughter of Cepheus, wildly adored man (9)

**28** High tension initially after listening excitedly for carol (6,5)

### Down

**1** Concord agreement (7)

**2** Zumba changes top for dance (5)

**3** Ensnared Rumanian holds piece of kit (5-4)

**4** Gather together and go dancing (4)

**5** Final movement of Beethoven's ninth anthem (3-2-3)

**6** African National Congress in Delaware waltz, say (5)

**7** A woodwind by degrees and so on (7)

**8** Larceny messily eats fish (8)

**14** Composer's shin grew when decomposed (8)

**16** Help Ann or play mountain instrument (9)

**17** US law officer left company making speakers (8)

**18** Border region revolutionary wears spoils (7)

**20** Afternoon trolley in office rat race altered with time for king (3,4)

**22** Choral Tosca employs these voices (5)

**24** King George, for example, grand founder of bakery chain (5)

**25** Initially, Arabian desert empire nabs port (4)

Solution in next issue

*Thanks to Steve Schlemmer and Lucy Ball for submitting this crossword puzzle.*

## Solution to Autumn 2023 Crossword

**Across:** 7 Celeriac, 9 Edenic, 10 Snap, 11 Water butts, 12 Lodger, 14 Imagined, 15 Eerily, 17 Onions, 20 Feverfew, 22 Bushey, 23 Compost bin, 24 Sets, 25 Iguana, 26 Tea break.

**Down:** 1 Beanpole, 2 Neep, 3 Viewer, 4 Pearmain, 5 Leguminous, 6 Little, 8 Citric, 13 Garden peas, 16 Lifespan, 18 Seed tray, 19 Two-bit, 21 Enough, 22 Bonsai, 24 Sore.

# MEMBERS' ADVENTURES

## Portugal's 'Route 66' - the iconic N2

At the end of September I set off on my Triumph Street Triple R for a 2 week tour of Portugal. I was met outside of Santander by my friends who now live on the Algarve. We spent a pleasant few days riding south together before arriving at their home in Almadena on the south coast. I chose to go at that particular time as I am a massive WSBK fan and there was racing at Portimao. Our tickets were in the grandstand right on the start/finish line! And what a great weekend of racing we had, especially Race 2 with Bautista and Razgatlioglu swapping places to take the lead throughout the race. Definitely one of the most exciting races I've witnessed!



The return ride, with my friends, was along the iconic N2 route - Portugal's longest road, extremely popular with Portuguese motorcyclists and described by Biker magazine as one of Western Europe's finest road trips. It didn't disappoint! The N2 runs from Chaves in the north to Faro in the south and is often referred to as Portugal's 'Route 66.' It was built in 1945, 740kms in length, and snaking through an ever-changing landscape of mountains, plains, forests, cork oak plantations, vineyards, rocky highlands, beautiful valleys and large reservoirs.

It is now almost deserted except for local traffic and, therefore, perfect for a leisurely (or otherwise) road trip on two wheels. Most people begin their journey in Chaves and head south, but we rode it in reverse, as we were returning to the UK. My friend was unwell on our planned day of departure



and so we didn't have time to ride to Faro. Instead, we joined the N2 further north, using major roads to allow us to make faster progress.

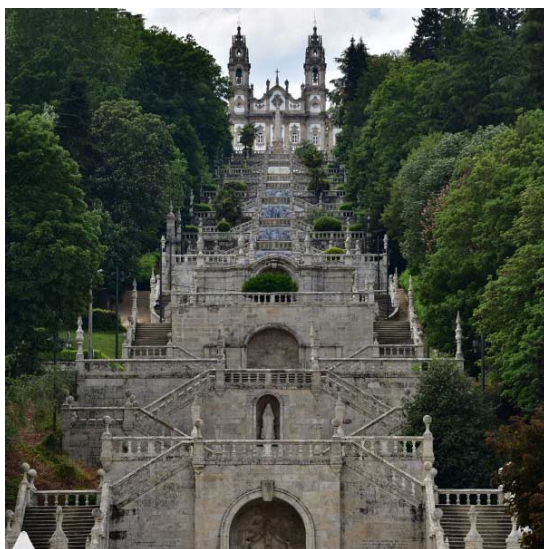
Our first day's riding took us through the region of Alentejo, to the village of Montargil. This part of Portugal comprises mostly rolling countryside, olive groves, small villages and long sections of straight roads. The following morning brought thick fog, which caught us by surprise, as we continued our journey north towards Villa de Rei. The landscape changed, become more undulating and much greener.

You cannot ride the N2 without taking a short diversion to the Picoto de Melriça, the geodesic centre of Portugal. From the summit we found spectacular 360° views of the region's pine forests and rolling hills. There is a visitor centre and refreshments, so a good place for a break.

Our next stop was the Cabril Dam, the highest arch dam in Portugal. Here we took in the view of Lake Cabril and the breath-taking beauty of the gorge of the R Zézere. That night we stayed in an ancient villa in Lamego. It's a delightful town, set amidst the rolling hills of the Douro region.

The highlight of the town is the magnificent Santuário dos Remédios, arrived at by climbing the 686 steps of the Baroque stairway.

From Lamego the N2 winds through the mountains of the Duoro and Vila



Real regions. We made a short ride to Viseu, an historic city constructed of dark granite with a medieval centre dominated by an imposing 12<sup>th</sup> century cathedral and a baroque church.

The next morning we set off for Chaves, riding some stunning mountain roads. We took our time taking in the beautiful views as we crossed rivers and climbed steep mountain sides. Finally, we arrived in Chaves, and along with those about to start their journey south, we took photos at the 0km stone, before heading into the Café Kilometrozero for some well-



earned refreshments. Riding in Portugal was a fantastic experience. I would highly recommend the ride down to Faro along the N2 from Chaves; the best road trip to see Portugal's diverse landscapes.

**Linda Hay**

## **"When I Was In The ....."**

You might well wonder how on earth the title of this tale ever came about. Well, if you were in the employ of the Forces, or even dare I say Merchant service, the stories bantered around and things done in the past usually start off with "When I was In the ...". At that point those of us who were not part of that circle either shut down or put up with the same old story. How-

ever as an outsider to the inner circle it took the outsider to suggest that a trip to Spain in the Autumn would do the Inner circle a power of good - having spent most of their time in colder climates or under the bonnet of a Helicopter or looking inside the guts of a cargo ship while serving our country. Of course, we do thank them unconditionally.

I spent an awful lot of time from my forties onwards travelling Europe with Carol on modern Triumphs. So most of Europe has been covered several times over, and other countries and continents afar. We've also organised trips for large numbers of fellow Triumph riders, so to organise a trip to the Pyrenees for a few chaps was easy. Our group was to be small, making it less hassle to accommodate than a large group with all differing wants and habits. Believe you me, the hours wasted in a day with large groups can be very frustrating.

We had a plan as one of our group had not been to the Pyrenees and this was just the trip to make that happen. Up steps Mike Collins who offers to sort the routes out - never turn down an offer down like this, and it has to be said Mike did a brilliant job as every day challenged the chicken strips on the tyres. I took the task of pre booking accommodation. You would think in early October that there would be plenty to pick and choose from, but it seems this is a busy period for the getaway brigades. All was well and sharing took place here and there to keep costs down, even if some Hoteliers thought we would like double beds – NOT.



Ferry booked, hotels booked, routes altered and now all set to go. Come October, off we set to Plymouth. Rob Bartlett insisted we stop for a full English on the way, knowing he was to be denied one for possibly another 9 days. We go to leave the café and the Triumph decides to embarrass itself and fail to start. I was not pleased, and in my haste to get off and give it a darn good thrashing nearly took out Tony Sauer holding me up next to him. After head scratching and the help of the 500amp Portable battery pack start-





er, miraculously the bike starts. Now to save any further embarrassment you could either bale out or tuff it out and board the ferry, keeping the old girl running until in the ferry hold, so into the ferry hold we came.

Would the beast start up on our arrival in Spain (and please remember that there are Three Bavarians and One English Rose in our group, so the crossing had plenty of banter at my expense)? But the Beast fired up and I kept this running from the ferry to our 1<sup>st</sup> Hotel stop in Pamplona. The route down from Santander to Pamplona was all on back roads apart from a skip here and there on the autoroute, but as always keeping the old N240 close by. Strange what you see on routes in the back of beyond, but I noticed several birds of prey and vehicles that should have been resigned to the rust acre. Even in a remote farmstead there was a Telecom Engineer installing Fibre Optic to the premises. We have a lot of catching up to do back home for sure.

Once fed & watered (loosely used word here) we had a good night's sleep, and after breaking our fast we headed to the bikes for Day 2. Hand on heart I said a little please prayer to the Triumph - he/she heard (and thankfully for the rest of the trip), although I had doubts some days.



Day 2 we headed towards France and it was going to be a long day but whilst the sun shines.... oh, did I not say that the sun shines all day in Spain, and for the next 9 days (even if it was cold in the mornings until the glowing globe rises up above the Pyrenees Peaks)? From as low as 5 de-



grees, then slowly creeping up to mid-20 degrees cannot be bettered. We headed up the D933 towards [Saint Jean Pied De Port](#) and this is a must ride for anyone planning a trip round these parts, with sweeping twisties on very good road surfaces. Pushing on we pick up the D918, full of mountains and twisties, we are having a ball. We stop on top of the Col de Tour-



malet for respect to cyclists and a quick lunch. Always have plenty of fluids with you as dehydration - no matter whether you recognise the need for thirst or not - is never far away. Onto the Tunnel d'Aragnouet via the D173 then linking back into Spain on the A-138 for our hotel stop for a few days. Some 280 miles done thereabouts and with a few tense moments of "come on no time to stop and stare at those

vultures and another group picture stop", we arrive at our Hotel.

We stayed at Hotel Turmo, and if you remember back in the Autumn of 2022 Gina and Peter Herridge stayed there with friends. This was our reason to stay here and have a drink in Gina's memory. Now we know why

they liked this area so much. There is not a second where the bike is upright, so as always “Keep a positive throttle, keep that limit point of vision, be able to stop safely in control on your side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear”, we all know that and “Should” – nay, “Must” - at all times keep those values. I led the ride today, popping through Ainsa and then out on the A-2205 towards Barbastro, then back up to Ainsa for lunch. Never a dull moment riding round the less used roads but strange how many bikers seem to seek them out more than the car drivers. Well done Mike. Mike and Tony go for another afternoon ride to take in some mountain views whereas Rob and myself decided to try and watch the rugby somewhere. We failed, and ended up at our hotel for a spot of lunch and whetted our thirst a few times.

The 4<sup>th</sup> day we planned to ride to Ripole, so we headed South then picked up the N123, then through Tremp onto the C1311 C1-412b. So you can now guess by road numbers it's getting nadgery, and it has to be said in



places very nadgery (strange how this word is not in the good old Oxford Dictionary). We understand, of course, but on we went taking in Col de Nargo – C-26 and oh boy what a fantastic route. The views alone are spectacular from high up in the mountains looking across vast landscape vistas. The riding was very spirited and the 3 Bavarians equally matched with each other although, in different ways. But all seemed to engage in harmony, the Triumph keeping them in check as an Observer should do from the rear noting the class of riders styles and habits. Everyone felt safe with each others company and that goes a long way when riding in a group. Our host for tonight was Hotel la Sequia Molinar. On our arrival the place was full of

Policia that put me on edge for a minute but it seemed after talking with the hotel manager that this was the place they all go to for food and team talks before and after the days shift. We are in safe hands.

The 5th day was to ride the N260 all the way back to Ainsa. The N260 was the original main road with no tunnels, no dualling of lanes, no straightening of bends etc, but sadly the EU gave the Spanish millions of euros and they decided to straighten this route out. It killed many small village trades, but all was not bad as some parts are just what they are, high climbs up, twisties, and down etc. I led some way on this ride as my Sat Nav started to work again and we all took turns to lead a route. So the Triumph had a chance to show it's head and held it high in all sectors. This road is still a great ride and challenging, and where they stopped developing you jump straight back to the good old twists and turns. Filling up the bikes with fuel before going to the hotel is a must every day and here we paired up every day to save extra faffing between us. On our arrival at Ainsa the hotel decided to give us apartments instead of a bedroom at no extra cost, we were spoilt. The food was good as was the beer, at long last I found a decent dark ale which was more like a porter.

Day 6: we head back towards Saint Jean Pied De Port but taking in a different route. Picking up again the N-260 then heading Northerly via Biescas into France towards Oloron-Sainte Marie, then north westerly to our destination on D roads with 2 numbers so you can guess we are now again in the nadgery zone. Nobody complains and we revel in the challenges. We stopped for a hearty lunch that seemed to go on for ever but the pizza was worth waiting for. Before we all snoozed off it was coffee and head for the hotel. For those that are unaware this town thrives on pilgrims who take the challenge to walk and complete the French Way to Camino de Santiago in the far west of Spain. Its easier on a motorbike but don't tell too many people, the problem here is that the hotels are not cheap for what you get. I rated ours as a 1 star not the 3 they adorned themselves with but one poor stopover will not spoil the trip.

Day 7: Thick damp fog was our morning greeting along with hundreds of walkers traipsing off down the road, so we head from France back into Spain and this route was the one route that proved difficult to put together due to where we were and where we wanted to end up. As it happened the route was an absolute corker (by-passing Bilbao to the south) and far too many roads to identify here. All I can say is there was never a dull mo-

ment. The north east of Spain has some surprising roads and terrains to deal with, so try it out sometime. We end up at another hotel in a place called Guenes. We are met by the lady of the hotel although I mistakenly took her for some other kind of service, so lesson - never judge a book by its cover. We were then greeted by a caged parrot who seemed to have the measure of us as we walked in. Our room was insufferably hot and the air conditioning was not working, lucky for me I was sharing with the team mech officer who promptly took the thing apart and smugly got the thing to cool us down. We were watered and fed and then more watering until our host decided enough and shunted us off to a remote part of the hotel. This was, after all, our last night on this trip and we still had a lot to say it seemed.

Day 8: back up to Santander and again the back roads (different from day 1) were not disappointing. The BI-630 followed a wooded valley and river for mile after mile and it was on this day that - only the once - did our sat nav routes decide to sling a curve ball. But that's what adventuring is all about: where does it take us? Don't panic, you will pop out somewhere sooner or later. Luckily not so late as we headed for the ferry. The final climb down from the hills looking out to the sea was truly a special view and marked for another day.



So, onto the ferry. Well, for 3 of us okay, but a starting fail at passport control struck home, to a BMW of all things. Triumph to the rescue with the jump starter and off we head for home. So, via Ocean Plymouth BMW who replace the faulty battery, we part company and head to our homes. All in all the bikes did what we demanded of them, and after some 1500 miles or so with the right company we all had



a grand time, Now did I tell you "When I was in The....." **Dave Parker**



# CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo of Roger Moffatt, taken at the start of a South West Peninsula Spring Rally.

Suggestions to me at [Tullochg@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:sammembershipsecretary@gmail.com) so that we can keep you informed of the latest news and events.

## Andy Spiers



I am sad to advise that Andy passed away on 7th February 2024.

Andy was one of our National Observers, and in his 12 years with SAM he has nurtured and supported many associates through their Advanced Tests. Always willing to offer his support in key SAM events, Andy's contribution and camaraderie will be greatly missed.

## Tyre Discounts for SAM Members

SAM members are able to take advantage of discounted tyre supplies from 2 local companies, on production of your IAM RoadSmart membership card. **Furlong Tyres** in Yeovil and **A303 Motorcycles** at West Camel (near Sparkford) are well known to many existing members who can confirm the quality of service and products these suppliers offer. Due to the variety of products and add-on services involved, specific discount percentages cannot be listed, but give them a ring with your requirements and you can be sure of a competitive quote.

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**A303 Motorcycles:** **01935 507620**      **Bunny (Dave)**



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## TAILPIECE #26

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

It has been said that the French are the natural enemies of the English; although it is the rider's experience that every French person he has met has been delightful.

Certainly, the French often go out of their way to be helpful.

On a summer bike trip to the Alps the rider and his pillion came across a good example. They had decided to take the train to Chamonix, rather than donning biking gear for the short ride from their accommodation. On a notice board at the unattended train station the operating company had helpfully translated into English the instructions on what to do without a ticket, or with an unvalidated ticket, and had provided contact details for information (including the cost of the call) and where to buy tickets and how to reserve them by 'phone or on-line. Very comprehensive.

However, perhaps the historical and underlying enmity between our two countries lurked just beneath the surface. Failure to immediately see the onboard inspector threatened the English traveller with 'persecution'.

### WITHOUT TICKET, UNDATE STAMPED TICKET

If you don't have any ticket or could not validate it, please see straight ahead the train inspector on board, if not, you could be persecuted.

For information about TER trains in the Rhône-Alpes region, you can call 0 891 67 68 00 (0,22€/mn from Monday to Saturday from 7.00 to 19.00).

Train tickets are available in Argentière, Chamonix and St Gervais office

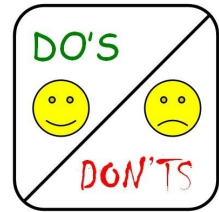
You can also get information or reserve tickets by phone. Dial 3635 (0,34€/mn from 7.00 to 22.00) or on the Internet on following website: [www.voyage-sncf.com](http://www.voyage-sncf.com).

Have a pleasant travel.



## 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](mailto: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.

### **SOUTH WEST PENINSULA SPRING RALLY**

**Saturday 6th April 2024**

This year sees the 15th running of this event. If you fancy entering, just go to the SAM website and register. Join together with a few friends (whether they're members of SAM or not), it makes the event even more enjoyable. Not fancy doing the event? Then why not come along and support us in running it - we need helpers for the HQ at Long Sutton as well as at the 4 manned checkpoints in Dorchester, Ilfracombe, Okehampton and Perranporth. Contact Jez Martin if you can help out.