

Summer 2023

# FULL CHAT

Newsletter of Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists

Group No. 1241



## SAM Officers

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



Follow on Twitter  
@ SAMtweeps

[samenquiries@gmail.com](mailto:samenquiries@gmail.com)

[www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk](http://www.somersetadvancedmotorcyclists.org.uk)

google community: [Somerset Advanced Motorcyclists](#)



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

Front Cover: Georges Dupuis hustling his RT1200 round some of the trickier bits on this year's Welsh Weekend



THE SOMERTON  
PRINTERY LTD  
Web design, print and IT solutions

# FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



Well, summer's apparently here, but if you've been riding recently you'll know how much use your water-proofs have had throughout July. Thankfully June offered us a mini heatwave, which put a real strain on my usual all-weather riding jackets. I've had some ventilated trousers for a few years, but with several rides during the warmest days in one week I finally admitted

defeat and hot(!)-footed it down to Bransons to buy a ventilated jacket. Having worn it several times since, I wonder why it's taken me over 25 years to buy one, it's so much more comfortable. An added bonus from this visit saw me picking up a pair of RST Stunt gloves to replace my beloved 20-year old Spada summer gloves – I've picked up several pairs at various NEC shows, but all of them have disappointed. Now I've found the perfect successors.

The issues with my Honda NT1100 continue. The suggestion to put more miles on it didn't make any difference, a 2,000 mile tour of Scotland in May making no difference to the erratic part-throttle fuelling. Oh, not to forget using a litre of oil on the trip..... It's been back to Bridge 3 times now, most

recently for 2 days, with the After Sales Manager riding it extensively. The result? It's been declared "Perfect. One of the best I've ridden"! A tandem ride with him when I collected it showed it was anything but perfect, the erratic fuelling still very much in evidence (to me at least). Turns out I have 2 issues – 1, I have too delicate a throttle control; and 2, I stick to 30mph in urban speed limits, which is where the issue is most evident. Apparently it's to be expected with Euro 5,





except no one has told Honda it isn't so common with other makes. So it now looks as if a remap is the only way round the issue (apart from keeping it in Rain mode, where it has stayed for 4,000 miles since I bought it). I'll let you know what I decide, but as the rest of the bike suits me perfectly, change is not on the agenda.

This summer has seen a great selection of Group rides, so a huge thank you to all those members who have hosted such events – our ride calendar is the envy of many Groups, and it's all down to the willingness of our members in planning, organising and managing these rides. If you haven't been able to join one, do try and do so, they are an excellent extension to an associate's training, as well as an enjoyable social outing for more experienced members. Keep an eye on the SAM website/Facebook/emails for information on upcoming events.

Thank you to everyone who has submitted content for this issue of Full Chat - if you do any special rides this summer, or test ride any interesting bikes, or have a product that you'd like to share with everyone, please send on to me (with photos!) by 15th October for the next issue.

Have a great summer, and ride safely.

**Graham Tulloch**

## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Well, here it is again, how quickly Full Chat comes around. If you look around not a lot has happened, it's been fairly quiet and the club has been ticking over very nicely. But saying that, things have happened in the background.

Gina's bursary fund is up and running. The fund has been set up to encourage and help female riders. This does not just mean advanced courses or Masters etc but anything to do with motorcycling to encourage more female riders. If anyone knows of someone that might need help financial-



ly then in the first instance put them in touch with Peter Herridge and he will send them an application form.

We have been asked to help Doc Bike Avon and Somerset for help at their fundraising events, to get a Doc Bike for our region. I will be sending out an email to all regarding an event they are holding in September. If you can help them please follow the instructions in the email.

If you own a BMW, you will know that trying to get it serviced or any



work on it from a main dealer this year has been a nightmare. I and others have had to wait up to 3 months before we can get the bike in. Most of it is down to dealers not having staff or failing to plan for the demand of their services. After trying 4 dealers I found that Gloucester BMW could get me in the quickest.

On arriving at the dealership you have to go underground to access the car park. This was a big open space with lots of bikes and cars as it is a dual dealership. I walked in to find reception and found that they had escalators to the upper floors. Thinking this was very posh I later found out that I was not posh enough as I was a humble motorcyclist and not a BMW car owner. The escalators were for the car owners, bit of discrimination there I think.

Anyway, I found reception which was very clean and efficient. I booked my bike in (no waiting) and the mechanic was waiting there for me, so he took my bike straight away to start the service. I was told I could have a hot or cold drink or food upstairs. There was leather furniture which was comfortable and soft music that you could have fallen asleep to. After an hour my bike was back, done and dusted, with the addition that my auxiliary lights were not set right so they adjusted them without me asking them to.

I was very impressed with the whole setup and might well go there again after I have all my warranty bits sorted out by another dealer.

**Martin Surrey**

# SAM NEWS

## Committee Meetings

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



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

## Test Passes

CONGRATULATIONS!

to the following members for passing their IAM tests:



Jonathan Michelmore on 1st June riding a Honda ST1300 Pan European. Jonathan was observed by Simon Greenwood.

Anthony Howard on 15th June. Anthony was riding his Triumph Tiger 900 and was observed by Richard Pearse.

Ian Thomas on 16th June, riding a Yamaha FJR1300 and observed by Dave Parker.

Kevin Jefferies on 30th June riding a Kawasaki Ninja 1000SX. Kevin was observed by Martin Hember.

Toby Varney on 13th July. Toby was riding his Triumph Speed Triple and was observed by Tony Sauer.

Jonathan Barden on 14th July, riding a BMW R1150GS and observed by

Martin Hember.

Peter Walters on 31st July. Peter was riding his Moto Guzzi V100 Mandello and was observed by Steve Joyce.

Sean Ryan on 12th August. Sean was riding a Kawasaki Z900RS and was observed by David Slocombe.

Nick Warde on 12th August riding his Suzuki SV1000, gaining a F1RST. Nick was observed by Graham Tulloch.

Jason S. on 15th August riding a Triumph Tiger 900 Rally Pro, observed by William Eccles.

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

## Training Update

### Reasons for Advanced Test Failure.

SAM Training Team have recently done some analysis on DARTs data (IAM RoadSmart's database) looking for common themes on why associates didn't pass the advanced test. This was further corroborated at a recent Chief Observers get together.

The raw data is tabulated below, but what is more interesting is the analysis and what we could do about it that follows.

### **DARTs Test data for last 5 years:**

Nr	Legal							System			Progress	Restraint	Comments	
	20	30	40	50	60	70	Stop Line	H/C	Knowered	Appl icati				Comfort braking
1				x										
2		x		x										Did not flow inconsistent speed
3		x	xx											Hesitant OADP
4							x							
5			x											Safe and systematic
6			x									Too Slow		
7									x	x	x	Too Slow		Did not flow. OADP
8										x		Muted		Overcautious
9								x				Too Slow		Overcautious
10							x							Position
11							x							Otherwise a good ride
12									x	x				Overcautious Lacked Sparkle
13										x				Late adoption of position. Positive throttle in bends
14												Too Slow		Position bends and mini roundabouts. Not smooth or flowing

### **Analysis:**

The first point to highlight is that there have been very few SAM test failures over the last 5 years and our pass rate remains high. Of these failures, most passed at the second attempt. Our tried and tested routine of

mentored rides followed by a Pre-Test Assessment (PTA) appears to be working well and will remain in force.

Reading the words behind the raw data illustrates that there is a common root cause of candidate nervousness which in turn leads to an overly cautious ride or just poor decision making / silly mistakes on the day.

Other reasons for failure from a wider data set from other groups include:

Legality – failure to comply with speed limits, failure to stop at Stop signs, misunderstanding of National speed limits as they apply to dual carriageways (or even what a dual carriageway is).

System errors – the Examiner is looking for riders who consistently apply IPSCA (and in the correct order). Riders using gears to slow down rather than brakes are very unlikely to pass the advanced test.

### **So, what can we do about common reasons for failures?**

Why do we think candidates are nervous? Is it because their view of the Advanced Test is that it is being followed round and quizzed by an ogre looking for reasons to fail them? Whose fault is that? How do SAM Observers communicate about the test? I'd suggest that rather than refer to it as a test we refer to it as an assessment, stressing that this is an opportunity to display your advanced riding skills to yet another Observer (as the associate has already done during observed sessions and during the PTA). If we can get the associate in the correct frame of mind prior to the "assessment" I'd suggest this will minimise poor decision making due to nerves (whilst accepting people sometimes just do stupid things).

Hesitancy and not making progress appear common. I think this is also sometimes due to not wishing to make a mistake rather than not being able to make progress – I'd hope a rider who continually failed to make progress didn't get as far as the test! What the Examiner is looking for is a demonstration of Advanced Riding – whilst doing 40 mph in a National Speed Limit or never taking filtering opportunities might be a perfectly safe ride, it is NOT advanced riding. The associate should be confident enough in their ability to ride to the posted speed limits where it is safe to do so (accepting that there are numerous occasions where it is not) and take the advantages of being on a bike when in stationary traffic.

The issues of riders failing to produce a legal ride during assessment might have several causes:

Rider doesn't know / understand the Highway Code. When is a two-lane road a dual carriageway and hence 70 mph vs 60mph? When does a dual



carriageway cease to be a dual carriageway? What is the difference between Stop and Give Way? What is the difference between hatched chevroned areas and those bordered by a solid white line?

Inability to control speed might be poor gear choice, might be failure to spot signs or might be reliance on Sat Nav rather than speedo. Or perhaps just a mistake due to nerves (see previous paragraph).

System errors tend to be poor observation which then leads to poor planning and late decision making or the ubiquitous failure to differentiate between speed and gear phases and understand which order they come in and why. IPSGA is set out in the order it should be performed in, so again we'd hope that associates deemed test ready are aware that their speed phase should be complete before they choose a lower gear (no room here for a discussion on speed / gear overlap – ask your Observer). It may be that nerves again cause the rider to produce a ride that is different from their last few observed rides and their PTA.

So, I think there are lessons here for all of us. Observers, are you doing as much as you can to ensure your associates are aware of the common reasons for failure, explaining to them that the days of grumpy Examiners looking to fail people are over and that this is an opportunity to demonstrate their new skills? Do you cover all the above in your mentoring of associates or do your observed sessions need a refresh?

Associates, if you don't understand any of the above, please ask your Observer – they're there to help ensure you are as prepared as possible before being assessed.

As an aside, I've also looked at data for failures at National Observer assessment. The most common cause is not briefing, debriefing, analysing the ride or identifying faults; it's an inability to ride to the required standard! A separate topic which Callum and I will discuss over the next few weeks ready to propose a way forward at next Observers' meeting. But remember, we should all be self-aware and self-critical – do you ask yourself what you could have done better after every ride???

**Jim Donnelly**, 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'.

# BIKE REPORTS

## My Last VFR?

Over the years I have owned many bikes. Quite a few have had a v-four engine, all Honda's. Five 750s, I think - 3 red, 1 black and 1 blue. A VF1000R and an NC400.



I am now down to one, a 1994 red VFR750F-R, first registered on 1st August 1994. I first saw this at Braden Bridge in the Isle of Man during TT week in 2008 and it had a for sale sign on it. Not long after returning home I caught the train to Liverpool and rode the VFR

home. At that time it only had 15,000 miles recorded, and since then I have only added 4,500 miles so still less than 20k. In fact for the last 7 years it has been tucked away in a dark corner of the garage while I enjoyed my other bikes. Recently I decided it was time to get it running again. After unwrapping it I found my note under the seat reminding me that before storage I had fully serviced it, drained all fuel, added some oil to the fuel tank and 'sloshed' it around. I also noted the need for a new shock and rear tyre. Before spending too much I rinsed the tank out with a drop of fuel then added fresh fuel and fitted a new battery. I had to connect the fuel pump direct to a battery to get it going (this often works when they don't want to function after a few years rest), then tried the starter. It started quite soon, but again another thing I have found before, fuel leaks from



the carbs after a lay-up. Once again I tried a cure that often works, and just left the bike for a few days, giving the seals time to swell and re-seal. This did work but the engine didn't run as smoothly as it should, so I pulled the carbs off (not easy on these) and stripped and cleaned them. This did the trick, so I ordered the tyre and shock



and booked the MOT. The front tyre was new in 2009 and I know a lot of folk would not risk using it, but I have found, and my local bike garage agrees, that if stored in the dark and clear of the floor, then they should be ok. If not the rubber will show signs of cracking after the first few miles. So take it steady and keep an eye on this, as on everything after so long. MOT passed with the comment "perfect" when questioned.

After a couple of short runs to make sure all was well, I did the annual Coast to Coast from Lyme to Minehead and apart from a bit of wrist ache from me not being used to riding with a sporty riding position for some time, all was good. I may invest a bit more on some higher bars.



So my question, last VFR?. The 750s are all brilliant bikes, and the F-R with a larger tank, good for well over 200 miles, was the main reason for keeping this one. But....! Honda have produced some semi adventure style bikes such as the Crossrunner which might tempt me. For now, the 750 will be out on a few SAM runs this year. (Ed's note – Rick was planning on bringing this along to my recent "Ride your Other Bike" ride, but decided against it due to the very poor weather forecast. I'm sure we'll see it on other SAM rides in the next few months, though.)

**Rick Chubb**

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## **SAM Green Ride**

### **"Thatches & Patches"**

Wed. 16th Aug. 2023

09:30 @ Ilminster Services

Led by Dave Parker

## **SAM Amber Ride**

### **"Mid Devon & Exmoor"**

Tue. 22nd Aug. 2023

09:00 @ Total Triumph

Led by John Ridd

## **SAM Red Ride**

### **"Early Breakfast Run"**

Sat. 26th Aug. 2023

07:00 @ Ilminster Services

Led by Rick Chubb

## **SAM Green Ride**

### **"Mad Dogs and Englishmen"**

Sun. 27th Aug. 2023

09:00 @ Cocklemoor Car Park

Led by Andy Spiers

## **SAM Green Ride**

### **"Gina's Memorial Ride"**

Sat. 2nd Sep. 2023

10:00 @ Cartgate Services

Led by Georges Dupuis

## **SAM Slow Riding Skills Day**

### **Everyone Welcome**

Sun. 3rd Sep. 2023

10:00-16:00 @ Bridgwater College Car Park

## **SAM Red Ride**

### **"Welsh Ride"**

Sat. 9th Sep. 2023

TBC

Led by Linda Hay

## **SAM Amber Ride**

### **"Dorset Dash"**

Sun. 10th Sep. 2023

TBC

Led by Callum Bremner

## **SAM Amber Ride**

### **"Moorland to Coast"**

Thu. 14th Sep. 2023

09:00 @ Cullompton Services

Led by John Ridd

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



West Taunton Powder Coating.

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



01984 624122

Ford Rd, Wiveliscombe, Taunton,  
Somerset TA4 2RE



Fully & self-guided motorcycle tours  
throughout Europe since 2003

w: [www.bneuropeantours.com](http://www.bneuropeantours.com)  
e: [bneuropeantours@gmail.com](mailto:bneuropeantours@gmail.com)  
t: 0208 2346854



**TBB**

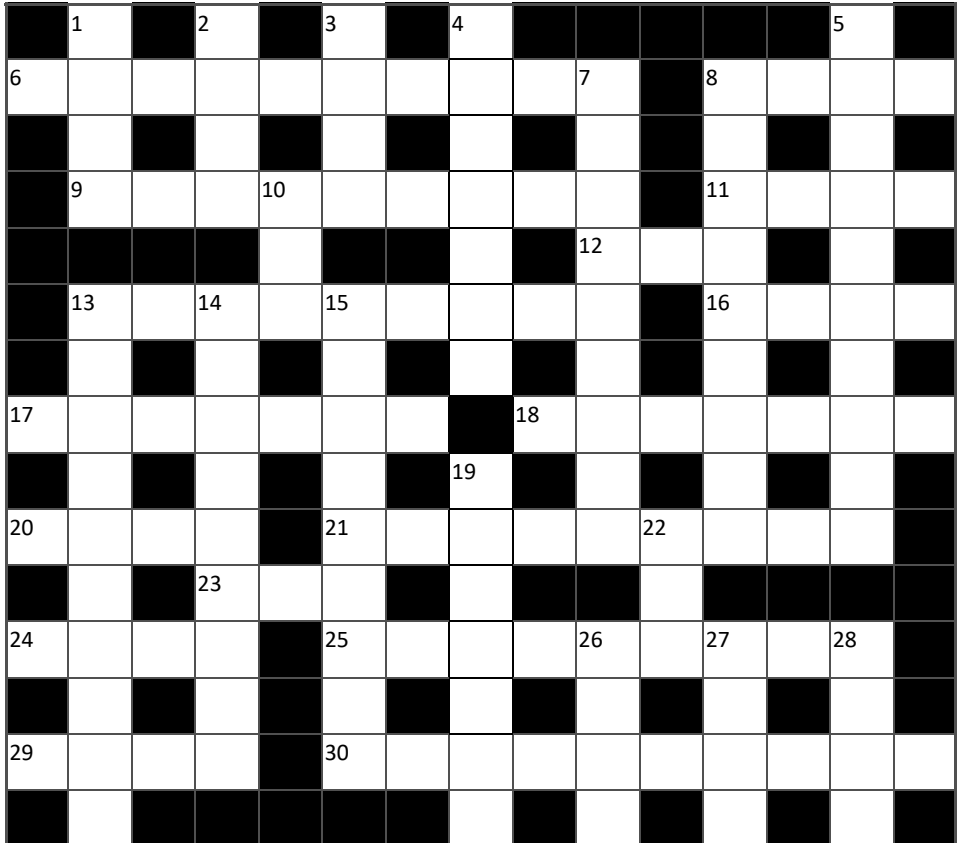
**MOTORCYCLE ADVENTURES**



[www.tbbtours.com](http://www.tbbtours.com)



# CROSSWORD



[Nearly half the answers are linked by tennis]

## Across

- 6** Sounds like girl at 30-15 is deceptive (10)
- 8** Cassius, for example, is court material (4)
- 9** A common, grand 2 location (9)
- 11** Perry, for example, is loud and embarrassed (4)
- 12** Secure draw (3)
- 13** Cat, for example, more than one shell (9)
- 16** Start of service to disheartened stars (4)
- 17** Nameless gangster arranged reel (7)
- 18** Schemer, so nobody includes 60's player (7)
- 20** Drunken host is a blast (4)

## CROSSWORD (cont.)

21 Score organised an aged vat (9)

23 Forbid short report (3)

24 Pot of unction contains curd (4)

25 Small pistol Royal Navy changed for United uniform and adjusted as required by etiquette (2,7)

29 Handle from reverse thump (4)

30 Rich pig run off chirping (10)

### Down

1 Compete with scene (4)

2 Hard hit, small left out shaken (4)

3 and 26 After party, young woman is helpful at court (4,4)

4 Keep going, though dizzy at university (5,2)

5 Cook roast with Meuse pink wine (6,4)

7 Hard woman? Quite the contrary (9)

8 Eatery found in Majorca - Fete Rialto (9)

10 Cricket Club (3)

13 Indicate after competition decider (5,5)

14 Underweight part of a tulip, it glows (5,4)

15 Internal combustion engine left and in charge from Reykjavik (9)

19 Above number one results in call of 'Out!' (7)

22 Letter that's after upsilon at first (3)

26 see 3

27 Short trade show at former Post Office (4)

28 Stinking position in list of players (4)

Solution in next issue

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

## Solution to Spring 2023 Crossword

**Across:** 7 Bonaparte, 8 Tidal, 10 Napoleon, 11 Battle, 12 Area, 13 The waves, 15 Captain, 17 Marryat, 20 Stalwart, 22 Robe, 25 Nelson, 26 Warships, 27 Train, 20 Trafalgar.

**Down:** 1 Royal, 2 Valour, 3 Maserati, 4 Stand to, 5 Air-to-air, 6 Sallee-man, 9 Able, 14 Saltpetre, 16 Tall ship, 18 Aircraft, 19 Athwart, 21 Aunt, 23 Behold, 24 Spear.

## Measuring Somerset—Omissions

Three lines were missing in the entry form published in Full Chat Spring 2023:

8: a 19.7	b 18.2	c 16.7	d 15.2
11: a 87 dia	b 87x87	c 102 dia	d 100x100
15: a 338	b 382	c 434	d 486

The last sentence on the form should read – ‘The winner will be the first drawn, at the AGM, from the highest scoring entries.’

## BIKING NEWS

### MAG News



*SAM's secretary, Andy Bourne, has forwarded details of a new MAG survey, which seeks opinions on motorcycle parking charges.*

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has launched a survey to gather opinion on motorcycle parking charges. Many local authorities are looking to introduce charging for motorcycle parking bays despite the provision being sub-standard. MAG is searching for the best possible outcome for riders.

Free motorcycle parking has traditionally been the norm in the UK. Recently there have been increasing numbers of local authorities making moves to introduce motorcycle parking charges. These plans often propose entirely disproportionate and unreasonable charges and meet great resistance from riders.

MAG argues that increasing attempts to disincentivise car use in congested city centres is being applied illogically to motorcycle parking. Motorcycles help reduce congestion and emissions and should be encouraged.

The fact remains, however, that motorcycle parking options are sub-



standard and rarely provide for the security needs of the transport mode. Motorcycle theft is disproportionately impacting motorcyclists and MAG is finding evidence that this is also having a significant impact on road safety statistics.

If motorcycle parking charges are going to be enforced, then MAG contend that revenue must be invested into bringing the parking bays up to an acceptable standard.

MAG's Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, said: "We are exploring attitudes of the riding public in this thorny area. It seems that councils are hell-bent on pushing motorcycle parking charges, which is illogical, but in the face of this stupidity we may be able to find a sensible balance that delivers a better outcome for all, including motorcyclists. We cannot and will not stand back and allow motorcyclists to become simply another revenue source for Councils, but proportionate charges that are re-invested into the infrastructure may be more palatable. We need to gather views and opinions of the riders who will be impacted as a first step to a sensible outcome. Councils seem unable or unwilling to do this, so we will do it for them."

The short survey will only take a couple of minutes to complete and there is room for comments and thoughts to be added.

Please complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z2NQ3VB>



## Triumph Tiger 900 Service

There are many of us I'm sure who prefer to service their own motorcycles. Counting myself as one of those, I recently completed the first 6,000 mile service on my Triumph Tiger 900 Rally Pro. This is a relatively straight forward service. Oil change and a thorough check over. One of the items to check is the engine air filter.

I have owned three Triumph Tiger 800s since the model was launched in 2010. I did all the service work on those bikes. One of the moans about the 6,000 mile service on the 800s was that to check/replace the engine air filter the fuel tank had to be removed to gain access to the air filter box. This required a fair bit of dismantling of body work etc before the tank can be lifted.

No such problem on the Tiger 900! Remove the seat. Four screws to slide off each side panel, 6 screws to release the air box cover and withdraw the air filter. 5 minute job.

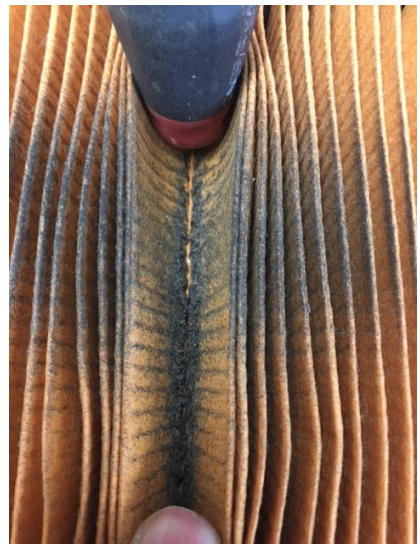






It would be convenient to go down the route of thinking that 6,000 miles is not a huge mileage, the air filter won't be that dirty, I'll leave checking/replacing it until the big service at 12,000 miles. The pictures of the 6,000 miles old air filter on my Tiger 900 show 6,000 miles is plenty to create a not fit for purpose filter!

**Matt Towill**



# MEMBERS' ADVENTURES

## Honda Adventure Centre - 2 Day Off Road Experience

The very first upgrade to my original Yamaha 600cc XJ6 “big bike” all those years ago was to an adventure-style bike, an early generation Tiger 1050. The thrilling uplift in power, handling and overall quality took centre stage but there was also a massive improvement in my overall comfort. Being tall and with knees susceptible to aching, the more sat-up position was a revelation in comfort and I realised I could ride quickly but not be



crouched over! From that point on, I was converted to the adventure-style bike. The next bike was my Tiger Explorer which I enjoyed for many years. This was further in the adventure direction than the Tiger 1050 which was more sport-orientated. While I had no intentions of taking it off road, I always looked admiringly at the press photos of the Explorer being power-slid across a sandy landscape or wheel-ieing off a rocky ledge somewhere! One day, I thought... one day! Watching Charlie Boorman's Race to Dakar series showed me that there were official manufacturer off-road training centres and a few

years ago I decided that I'd arrange one for myself some time. Roll forward a little while to February 2020 and my wife Becky got me a home-made “voucher” for some off-road training at the Triumph Adventure Centre in Wales, which I was hoping to use later on in the year when the weather was better.... Well, a little thing called COVID came along and messed all that up, and with the various challenges personally and professionally that COVID presented, the voucher and the idea were shelved for



“some point in the future”. In 2022 the centres were back open, but bookings had been made way in advance and I was unable to redeem. By now I had changed my Explorer for a Honda Africa Twin and this year I was starting to think that the Dave Thorpe Honda Adventure Centre on Exmoor would be my best bet of venue. I gave them a call, opted for the two day off-road experience, and the course was booked! The experiences are done on the school bikes, all Africa Twin 1100s with a mix of manual and DCT. A certain standard of riding gear is mandatory, with motocross boots being non-negotiable. I hired a set of the boots but to save costs I opted to use one of my own old sets of tex-

tiles and one of my older helmets. With the course only a few weeks away, on the Welsh weekend a fellow member and good friend (who shall remain nameless!) suggested that as I had booked the course, and had the right bike, I take a laney detour back to the B&B.... What could go wrong I thought, so agreed! After some briefing I headed up the muddy slippery slope, and was amazed to see that my Africa Twin climbed it easily (more down to the bike’s ability than mine), however once over the crest and heading down the slope on the other side, I started to pick up speed. Despite the clear instruction I’d just been given not to touch the front brake, I instinctively grabbed the front brake





and the inevitable happened. No damage at all to the bike, which was a relief, but I started to think that perhaps this wasn't going to be quite as easy as I'd hoped.

Fast forward a few weeks and I was at the Dave Thorpe centre, the sun was shining and 18 Africa Twin school bikes lined up outside. The Dave Thorpe centre is situated near Monksilver on Exmoor and is surrounded by beautiful woodland scenery. We had a safety briefing and then there was an initial assessment of bike handling skills which the three instruc-

tors were going to use to split the group up into abilities of beginner, intermediate, and "better"! It was to be a stood up, slow manoeuvring exercise on gravel. I was full of confidence: I already ride an Africa Twin, I can ride stood up, I've passed the Masters, and I have been attending the slow skills days for years. Higher group here I come!

Imagine how gutted I was to be put into the bottom group! In hindsight however, this was a blessing. Next up was a ride to the day 1 venue, which was around 15



minutes on road away from the centre. The venue is a lovely valley with a stream along the bottom, and tracks all over the sides. The first exercise was to build up speed and stood-up confidence riding the dirt track that ran about a mile along the bottom. Immediately I was impressed at how well the bike handled the stony and potholed terrain. Where previously I would have tried to avoid any “holes”, I couldn’t believe how the bike just soaked them up to the point that I ended up riding directly into them rather than taking any evasive action. We started to work on balance exercises, riding with one hand off the bars and one leg off the pegs. We were shown how to move the bike by shifting our bodyweight around over the seat, which was surprisingly effective.

Having done this a few times, we moved onto some bumpier exercises, with logs, little crests, dips and more holes. The message kept being drilled in – look up, look ahead, don’t look down at what’s in front – let the bike take care of the detail! It was a difficult thing to learn but once you get the hang of it, again I was incredibly impressed at what the bike could handle. Whatever was in front, be it some wood, or a stone sticking out, or a slippery patch, just ride on and let the bike deal with it rather than trying to microsteer around it. After a while I started to really enjoy putting obstacles in the way of my front wheel, not looking and just letting the bike and suspension soak it up. By now some of my nerves were receding, and perhaps unkindly I was taking some pride from the fact that, while many others had dropped their bikes more than once, mine had stayed upright the whole time.

What’s that expression? Pride go-eth before a.....? Next exercise was a stream crossing, down a muddy bank, across the water and up the muddy bank on the other side. I was first, and set off down the





bank.... I'd not heard clearly when instructor was explaining the technique and had missed the bit about which side to go on.... Ah well, it was too late to ask now, pick a side, give it some power... the rear wheel stepped out and I ended up in a bush with the bike on my leg! Oops! No harm done, but the confidence was knocked right back. My instructor, John, lift-



ed the bike, checked I was OK, and I was back on my way.

That drop however, meant the rest of the day went from being fun to being really scary. Confidence lost, each mud patch, each rut, became a major obstacle in my head and I became tense and anxious. A few further wobbles and it was time for lunch which came at a good time!

The second part of the day was about hill climbs and descents. Again, a good briefing was given before each exercise, but I kept finding myself at the bottom of a slope looking up at the rough stony and rutted surface and thinking “how am I ever going to get this bike up there?” The answer of course was to just hold on, trust the bike, and let it do its thing. After a few climbs I started to enjoy the experience of applying the power, holding on, and letting the rear wheel scrabble around trying to find some grip where it existed. Soon I was climbing hills in second, and gaining confidence each time. Descents were far easier than I expected, and the rear wheel provided far more braking grip going down than I expected. We were shown how to utilise the front brake (gently!) in such situations too. The day was looking up, and confidence was growing again right up until, on a deeper grassy rut, my steering wasn’t accurate enough and my front wheel dug in, bringing the bike to an abrupt halt with the wheel and bars hard over. This off hurt a LOT more than the previous one, as I was thrown forward onto the bar end, which planted firmly into my sternum, temporarily winding me and giving my first big bruise of the experience! Confidence shaken again, I was a lot more tentative for the rest of the afternoon, and in some discomfort, I was glad when the day was over. It was at this point, and seeing the speeds at which the more advanced group were tackling the climbs and ruts, that I was grateful for being put in the “bottom set”.

The lead instructor, Pat, had noticed that I seemed to be having some difficulty with steering accuracy over the course of the day. It’s true – I had found myself having to position my arms almost vertically to reach the bars when stood, and thus having to steer with my shoulders rather than my arms. I had assumed the centre’s Africa Twins would be like mine – however my Adventure Sport version has the bars on a riser and set considerably higher than the standard version. Pat realised that I was struggling and offered to adjust the bars on my loan bike that evening to raise them up a bit. I gratefully accepted!

People travel a long way to the experience and generally overnight in a local b&b, however given how close I live to the venue I returned home for

a wash then joined the attendees and instructors for an excellent evening meal at the Notley Arms in Monksilver (thoroughly recommended).

The next morning, the difference in the positioning of the bars made such a difference. Immediately I felt more comfortable on the bike and was able to steer with my arms more normally when stood up. Today's venue was a massive expanse of woodland, complete with waterways, grassy flat areas, muddy boggy areas, and tracks and climbs/descents covering all levels of difficulty. The nerves initially returned but, aside from soreness of the sternum, I was comfortable on the bike and soon got into the swing of things. We did some easy tracks for a little while to get everyone back into it, then headed towards the steeper and more challenging bits. Again, I was in awe of what the bike could handle. At one point, faced with a significantly rutted, steep, twisty and rough hill climb, our instructor John warned us "when you get round that second bend, there's a big rocky bit sticking out of the path – don't look at it, just let the bike's suspension deal with it." With some level of trepidation I headed up the track, went round the bend, and there it was – "surely he can't mean us to ride over that!" I thought, however by the time I'd finished thinking that my wheel had already bumped over the ledge and I was making progress up the track. There were a number of moments like that, but it was interesting to see how quickly my state of mind changed from "I'm never going to get this bike down this slope in one piece" to "I'm actually doing this!"

At one point our group was taken down a narrow steep track to a pondy area right at the bottom of the valley. I think our instructor wished he hadn't after a while – bike after bike went over on the softer ground or on the tighter turns. At one point every bike other than mine had ended up on its side... but then it was my turn, and again in a water crossing! My rear wheel dug in at the exit of the water and I was thrown off, into the stream! It was a hot day so the cold water running through my suit was actually quite refreshing – or at least that's what I told everyone anyway!

Towards the end I could feel my confidence increasing, and my speed picking up. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day a number of riders were choosing to stop through sheer exhaustion – it is very physically demanding, but I pushed myself until the end, keen to soak up every last bit of the experience.

I'm massively glad I did it – it has given me so much more confidence on the bike and a greater appreciation of what the bike can handle. I asked

whether the suspension had been specially set up and the answer was no, stock suspension and stock settings, the only difference to the bike from new being the addition of crash bars and Barkbusters (essential!) and off-road tyres.

I was uncertain before I attended the experience whether it would turn me into an off-road rider and was wondering whether I would be coming back itching to do more, to buy another bike, and to start going and doing lanes. The reality seems to be “no”. I think I like grip too much! It has shown me however how capable my bike is, and it’s given me the confidence to be less tentative around unfinished surfaces, grass, and loose gravel.

I’d thoroughly recommend a course like this to anyone wanting to learn more about how to ride big bikes off-tarmac. It’s hard work, scary at times (and I’d recommend a chest protector as well as a back protector), but with such a sense of achievement once you’ve completed it. As I said earlier, by the end of it I was taking real enjoyment from hill climbs and descents that at the beginning of the previous day I would have never thought it possible for me to ride a big bike down. The team at the Dave Thorpe centre were excellent – friendly, knowledgeable, thorough with the instructing and tolerant of our many failings as a group.

They run a one day experience and a two day experience. The one day is more of a ride around the roads of Exmoor – the sort of thing that we do as a club routinely on our club rides. The two day experience is the proper off-road training, and the one I’d suggest people have a go at if you’re going to spend your money.

I probably won’t do this sort of course again..... until maybe next time!

**Tom Moore**





# NC500 Accommodation

Riding up to the Scotland every year is always a pleasure, but suitable accommodation north of Inverness is always a challenge. The North Coast 500 was introduced 8 years ago now, but unfortunately little investment has been made to the infrastructure in the following years, most noticeable when looking for reasonably-priced twin room accommodation.

A good example of this is the Isle of Skye, a place we usually ride through, but which this year we explored in greater depth (get past the stream of camper vans coming off the ferries and the roads are actually pretty impressive). If you needed a double room and had £300 to spend per night

then no problem. Alternatively, for £28.95 you can get a bed (not much else!) in a shared dormitory at **Saucy Mary's Hostel** - don't expect a towel (unless you pay extra), or anywhere to lay a bag on the floor, or any flat surface at all (but it has shared flushing toilets!) And also probably the most expensive food and beer in Scotland in their restaurant next door. They have hotel-style rooms too, so these may be a better option unless you're really cash-strapped.

Thankfully, though, this year we uncovered a gem at Invershin in Sutherland. Off the regular NC500 route (having done it in 2017, we've tended to avoid it ever since, picking quieter - but still hugely enjoyable and picturesque - roads where we can), Invershin is around 7 miles south of Lairg and around 17 miles west of the coast at Dornoch.

**The Invershin Hotel Bunkhouse and Bar** also offers bunkhouse accommodation, but at £130 for an en-suite twin room including 2 x breakfasts (May 2023 prices),

their excellent hotel rooms are still very reasonably priced for this part of the country. And where many B&Bs in this area leave you hungry and thirsty in the evening, Invershin offers what they call their "wee bar" where



they serve a "small menu of good, home-cooked meals" along with a selection of real ales, Scottish malt whiskies and Scottish batch gins. Highly recommended if you're in this area. **Graham Tulloch**

[enquiries@invershin.com](mailto:enquiries@invershin.com) 01549 421202



# CAPTION SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!



I'd welcome your suggestions for a Caption to go with this photo of Lisa and Jez Martin and Sally Huard taken during this year's Welsh Weekend.

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.

## Spring 2023 Caption



This issue's suggested caption (of Matt Towill on a coffee break in Moffatt) comes from Roger Moffatt:

**".. for stylish motorcycle buff wearing suggestions press 1."**

## 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)**



**NIGEL GILLARD**  
Electrical Contractor



**Tel: 01460 259888**

**Mobile: 07837 293893**

**Email: [info@nigelgillard.co.uk](mailto:info@nigelgillard.co.uk)**

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



New & used sales  
Servicing / repairs  
Clothing  
Accessories  
MOTs



Quality, affordable  
DVSA approved  
motorcycle training

**01935 433095**

[www.morganmotorcycles.co.uk](http://www.morganmotorcycles.co.uk)

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



## TAILPIECE #24

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

'Plan ahead', they say. The rider wished he'd taken this advice when they arrived at 10:00 one morning at the base of the Flam railway in Norway to find two cruise ships in the fjord and no tickets on the train till 17:00. They'd ridden 70 miles after an early start from the hotel in Ulvik, including a scary, unlined, unlit, seven-mile tunnel, and were very disappointed.

Accordingly, the next year, before visiting Austria, the rider called the Schafbergbahn mountain railway in St Wolfgang and booked two tickets

for the 12:00 train.

'Nothing to pay, Sir.

Please collect your

tickets and pay one

hour before depar-

ture'. He emailed

as well to confirm

the arrangement.

On the day, they

rode 80 miles from

their hotel in Zell

am See, including



getting temporarily lost in poor weather on a minor road over the Gschütt Pass.

They arrived in good time, parked the bike and ambled up to the ticket office at 10:55. Tickets quickly issued and paid for were followed by 'Go,

go now, schnell, quick, run'

'But we have an hour'

'No ... last train ... go now'

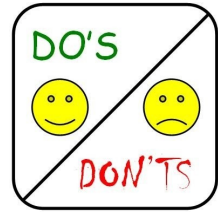
Poor weather at 3,160 feet on the Gschütt Pass translated to snow and zero visibility at 5,850 feet on the Schaffberg, and all trains after 11:00 were cancelled. Having paid, they caught the 11:00 train but saw very little. They were very disappointed.

Plan ahead? Yes, but be prepared for the weather.

[If you want to judge the rider's mood at the end of the day see #14 on p40 of Full Chat Autumn 2020, which happened the same day]

## 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.



## Paul & Clare Broom

One Stop Motorcycle Shop

## Brumers Bikes

Unit Z10, Westpark, Wellington  
Somerset TA21 9AD

MOT Station, Workshop,  
Triumph Specialist,  
Tyre Fitting, Clothing,  
Helmets, Gloves, Accessories

01823 665100  
07590 260495

email—[paul@brumersbikes.co.uk](mailto:paul@brumersbikes.co.uk)

[www.brumersbikes.co.uk](http://www.brumersbikes.co.uk)

# 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)

# **GRAHAMS Motorcycles**

**SOMERSET'S ONLY BMW SPECIALIST**

**NEW AND USED MOTORCYCLES AND SCOOTERS**

**SERVICE, REPAIR AND MOTs ON MOST MAKES**



**Clothing**

**Helmets**

**Accessories**



**01823 331397**

Cornishway North, Galmington, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5LY

[www.grahamsmotorcycles.com](http://www.grahamsmotorcycles.com).

**New Bikes**  
**Used Bikes**  
**Genuine Parts,**  
**Clothing & Accessories**  
**Servicing & MOT's**



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

01823 358899

[www.totaltriumph.co.uk](http://www.totaltriumph.co.uk)





# BIKE-SEAL AUTO-SEAL

**PUNCTURE PREVENTION SYSTEM - SEALS UP TO 15MM**



No distance / speed restrictions  
Non-corrosive - Water-based - No shelf life  
Mechanical not chemical process  
On road / off road - Tube / Tubeless  
500 ml bottle protects 1 motorbike - buy online



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

**E: [enquiry@bikeseal.com](mailto:enquiry@bikeseal.com)**

**[www.bikeseal.com](http://www.bikeseal.com) | T: 01278 671900**

## ***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 SLOW RIDING SKILLS DAY**

Sunday 3rd September sees the 2nd and last Slow Riding Skills Day for 2023 at Bridgwater College College Car Park, off Bath Road in Bridgwater. It offers riders the chance to practice their slow riding skills in a safe and controlled environment, with a range of activities aimed at honing your skills. SAM will have their training bike there for those who feel uncertain at using their own bike. Booking (via Eventbrite) is recommended. Watch out for Facebook and email notifications.