



**SOUTH CHESHIRE ADVANCED  
MOTORCYCLISTS**  
April/May Newsletter 2023

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*The newsletter is now a bimonthly publication. The next one will be issued in July.*

## News and Diary Dates

Keep abreast of upcoming activities and dates by regularly checking the Facebook page of the South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Group.

### Group rides

Second Sunday of the month. Group ride outs will be confirmed on Facebook and by email. Meet at Costa, Jack Mills Way, ready to depart at 9.30am.

### Social Rides every:

**Sunday 9.00am** Costa, Grand Junction, Crewe. Will merge with monthly group rides as appropriate.

**Tuesday 9.30am** meeting at Costa, Jack Mills Way, Shavington, Crewe.

**Wednesday evening 7.00pm.** The first and third Wednesdays start from Starbucks, Holmes Chapel Road, Middlewich - next to the Shell garage. The second and fourth start from KFC, Radway Green Road at junction 16, M6. Please arrive about 10 minutes earlier with a full tank. There are fuel stations at both start points. There is no ride out when there is a fifth Wednesday in the month.

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### Forthcoming Social Events

Socials will continue on the second Monday of the month at the Duke of Gloucester from 7.30pm throughout the summer. Come along for a chat.

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For information on social events and Tuesday rides contact Howard Payne  
[howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com)

For information on social rides on Sunday daytime and Wednesday evenings contact Dave Coomber, Ride Coordinator, tel. 01270569439

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**Look smart!** Embroidered SCAM leisure wear.

<https://customsportskit.co.uk/other-clubs/south-cheshire-advanced-motorcyclists/>

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**For Committee contacts** and newsletter back-numbers see:

<https://www.southcheshiream.org.uk>

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## Editorial

You will observe that the newsletter format has changed. The attractive, trendy two column presentation has been replaced by a simple, single column page to facilitate easy reading on mobile phones. It also makes life easier for the editor.

Last week, I took a bicycle ride to try and better understand the plight of the vulnerable road user. I learned that the key concepts of IAM training for motorcyclists are equally applicable to cyclists. In fact, the essence is embedded in the official guidance <https://www.think.gov.uk/cycle-safety/>. I must admit that I had not previously read the government guidance for cyclists and I may well be among a majority.

I observed that some casual cyclists (not sports riders) were trying to be helpful to motorcycle and car drivers but by doing so were creating hazards. Some rode very close to the kerb in accumulated roadside debris at a risk of puncture and concealed potholes with a risk of a fall. They swerved outwards to miss grids and conspicuous drops without any signal, thus alarming powered road users. There was also a tendency to enter gaps between parked cars to help traffic flow then emerge once again to cause consternation. Cyclists invariably passed close to parked cars and would have no chance of avoiding an opening door as the “Dutch reach” has passed most car users by.

I chose to cycle about 0.8m from the kerb thus avoiding debris, potholes and grids and moved further out to ensure clearance from parked cars. While my actions may have slowed traffic for a short while, what I was doing was both visible and predictable to riders and drivers allowing them to act in a planned way and significantly mitigating the hazards faced by most cyclists. A general observation was that motorcyclists tended to pass at lower speed and with a greater clearance than many car and van drivers. My motorcycle training has made me a safer cyclist and my understanding of other vulnerable road users a more respectful motorcyclist. One can gain a better appreciation of competing road users by joining them and experiencing the receiving end of our activities but I am not yet ready to take on the horse-riding perspective.

*Editor*



## **Stop Press!**

Some news to share with you: I've been appointed IAM RoadSmart Area 6 Service Delivery Manager replacing Steve Ellis and will be taking up the post in June. I think the official announcement may be next week. This means I have to leave the group and have stood down as Chairman and Chief Observer with immediate effect. At Monday's committee meeting, Phil Hamilton kindly took on the role of Acting Chairman until the next AGM and Neil Jewell has been appointed Chief Observer. Thanks to both for stepping up. I'm sure you'll give them all your support.

Thank you to all who made my time with South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists so enjoyable and I'm sure the group will go from strength to strength. I still plan on coming to the social events and hopefully also ride outs, so I'll be around and available for advice.

Thanks again everyone and all the best.

*Dave*

## **Message from our new Acting Chairman**

Congratulations to Dave on his full-time IAM role. On behalf of you all, I thank him for his hard work and dedication to the group.

We've had a busy time since the last newsletter with events including the AGM and presentation evening which was well attended. Thanks to everyone who came along.

Also proving very popular are the social evenings, at the Duke of Gloucester. On 17 April, a "Meet the Examiners" evening was held where we were joined by Andrew Bloomer, Jed Lloyd and Geraint Hughes. There were lots of questions and it provided for some most interesting discussions. We plan further guest speakers later in the year, do try to attend.

You should all have heard the news that our Membership Secretary and Associate Coordinator, Geoff Highfield, has decided to step down after many



years valued service to the group. On behalf of everyone in the group, I thank Geoff for everything he has done.

I encourage you to join the monthly group ride outs, further details of which will be circulated in advance on Facebook and by email.

*Phil Hamilton*

## **Message from the President**

Well, here we are again, June already. I do not have a lot to say as usual. I have been recovering from my knee replacement, which is going well. The pain is almost none existent, just the occasional discomfort and stiffness. I am back on the bike, and generally feeling good.

I made a dramatic decision the other week. I have decided to down size from the BMW R1250 GSA to a BMW R1250 GS. I have had a couple of tumbles when coming to a halt recently and have decided that I do not need thirty litres of fuel in the UK or Europe - as I am not going to cross Africa it is weight I do not need. Having had eight GS Adventures I think that itch has been well and truly scratched. I hope to have taken delivery by the time you are reading this. I am off to Spain with Ian Cunningham at the end of June and must get it run in beforehand, so long rides it will be.

I would like to thank Geoff Highfield for his ten years of devoted duty as membership secretary and associate co-ordinating. It was with sadness that the committee accepted his resignation; it is only with people like Geoff that we can achieve the things we do as a club. Geoff thank you for everything.

That is all from me for this month, so until next month, safe riding.

*Chris Steel*

## Social events

### Social scene

The AGM, presentation evening and supper held on 29 March was a great success. Chris Steel kindly took on the role of official photographer. Associates who had completed their training, and attended the event, were awarded framed certificates. Their success is a tribute to the dedication of our observers.



### Social Second Mondays

Social meetings will be held every second Monday of the month, unless advised otherwise, starting at 7.30pm at the Duke of Gloucester, just off the big Crewe Green roundabout, Beswick Drive, Crewe, CW1 5NP. Some meetings will be purely social and others will include an invited guest speaker.

### 9 October: advance notice.

Howard has arranged for Simon Carter & Barry (Baz) Urand from Pirelli to come to our meeting on 9th October.

## Ride Outs

### A ride out masterclass

Over a thousand horsepower of bike and adrenaline massed for the group ride out on 16 April. As usual, Neil's organisation was impeccable. We were issued with key information including route outline, distances and food stops. After a preflight briefing we departed Costa Shavington, jostling for position in the cavalcade. Neil did all the thinking for the second man drop offs, indicating very clearly where the unfortunate should stop. The leader controlled his enthusiasm for the open road to ensure the group did not become too scattered. We weren't the only large biking group on the road. Despite infiltrators merging and passing through, nobody was terminally lost. I was perfectly positioned in the front ranks for the first tea stop as the facilities were foremost on my task list. The poor second man had to wait at the entrance to wave his colleagues into



tea and warmth. Second man drop off is a good leveller as at some time everyone gets demoted to the back, as I had been just before the lunch break at Welshpool railway station. There were some uncluttered parts of the route



where we could indulge in a spirited ride. After the second stop a few groups left to make their own way home while the stalwarts completed the final stage hoping to arrive home before nightfall. The event was a reminder of what a great group of people make up S.C.A.M. A special thanks to Neil for his planning and leadership. It was



unfortunate that our chairman was unable to join us due to his bike being turned into a crisp. Remember, no one expects the unexpected so expect it.

## **A bike is born**

One Tuesday morning, I forsook the ride out. When I said I had only come for a coffee because I had sold my current bike our illustrious editor suggested I should write an article about buying a new bike!!!

My first thought was, “you have been had again.” The reason I say been “had” is that when I got round to thinking about it, said editor has just bought a new bike and has another on order, so on that basis he is better qualified than me to write on the topic. However, I am a Yorkshire and after all a Scotsman is only a Yorkshire man in training!!

The seed to my personal journey was sown when I read an article about the new Moto Guzzi, V100, Mandello. The wait was on to see one in the flesh. I remember saying to myself you will be able to see one at the NEC’s “Motorcycle Live.” How was I to know that Piaggio would not be displaying.

Eventually, 2023 saw the bikes hit the showroom so on one of our Tuesday rides we went to see the machine and it didn’t disappoint. In fact, it passed the most important test of all for me, “it fitted me perfectly,” thus, the project moved beyond the conception stage.

At this point I tried to backtrack and forget all about it as my Honda was not yet two years old. Shooting myself in the foot as usual, I had clearly said to management that it was, “the best bike I had ever had.” I do make things difficult for myself but I am far too old to change the habit of a lifetime.

However, I was not for turning as my love affair with Moto Guzzi was starting to get serious. Fortuitously, an opportunity arose after visiting some friends in Buckinghamshire to celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary. On the way home we, that is management and I, made a slight detour to Aylesbury where there happens to be a Moto Guzzi dealer.

The seed was now growing again. Management said I could go and have a look in the showroom. Inside was the most beautiful bike I had ever seen, apart from





certain MV's. It was the limited edition V100 Mandello. I was well and truly smitten.

I shot back to the car and suggested to management that she might like to have a look. The offer was accepted and to my great surprise she absolutely loved it and agreed that I could fulfil my dream.

The next day was our Tuesday ride out so we went to another Moto Guzzi dealers. There was no going back now, project delivery had to be achieved. Many phone calls and much price juggling later I approached deal closure but there is always room for a little more haggling and it was time for me to put my motto into action, "If you don't ask you don't get." A financial arrangement was finally agreed after a few extras and a free first service was negotiated. After what seemed an interminable wait, I dropped off my not very old machine and collected my new dream machine of pure engineering beauty.



Now to the usual Howard "cock up." Yes, I do have a few and sometimes bad luck. Back in 2016 I had just signed up to buy a new bike and part ex the BMW F800R. All I had to do was get on the bike ride five miles home and five miles

back to collect the new bike. As bad luck would have it, I got on the bike and nothing happened. Now a lot of bovine manure is spouted about how good BMWs are. Well in my case, from 2005 – 2016, I had six Beemer's and the quality was not of the standard I expected. The fault on mine was well known, the fuel pump at £476.00, ouch.

Due to lack of planning, my Honda that was to be part exchanged was two years old on first of April this year. I had just insured it and had it serviced when a few days later I purchased said new bike.

No real problem, just a blip in my Yorkshire pride! I contacted my insurers and after a wait on the phone of forty-two minutes I got to speak to a live human



who proudly advised me that my current insurers did not insure said new bike but were happy to quote a very unrealistic price somewhere in the £500s. I went elsewhere.

Having insured on the 1<sup>st</sup> April I had fourteen days to cancel the current policy and get a full refund which I did. One slight snag, I could not have the new bike until 18<sup>th</sup> April. No problem, just insure it for one day and problem solved. As you must have guessed by now, nothing is that straight forward. Being seventy-six years old is a problem to insurers as they had been happy to cover me up to, but not including, seventy. How did they know I had turned into boy racer when I reached seventy? Comments welcome [Editor: struggling to hold myself back].

I did get a quote of £119.00 for a single day and that went where the sun doesn't shine. Eventually, for under £100.00 I insured it for another year and you know what is going to happen after collecting my new bike.

Having worked within the insurance industry for thirty years, I am more baffled now than I was when I started in 1973. I got three different prices from three different brokers for exactly the same insurance policy which proves you must do your research?

*Howard Payne*

## **Joining the chain gang**

Dragging the Motorrad Panzerwagen in and out of my garage has been getting tougher for my aging but still athletic frame.

Having succumbed to a Honda CB500F at the beginning of the year, a whole new world has opened before me. Light, agile, exciting and a smooth gearbox that relishes hard-working is pure fun, even without fur. I expected to struggle when riding with the big bikes but not so. Overtakes have to be cautiously planned and I accept that motorway riding on a naked bike is not the most comfortable experience.

I realised that I had been missing the true feel of motorcycling behind the barn door of my R1250RT. Time for a change there too. What was the best middleweight tourer for me? My short list got longer until hands on visits to



various purveyors whittled the choice down to one. Shedding weight inevitably involves replacing a shaft drive with chain and hence an additional maintenance requirement - a small price to pay for ease of handling and a cooler look. Fortuitously, Howard was investing in a limited-edition, shaft driven Moto Guzzi and he very kindly presented me with lots of chain-related goodies from his former Honda. A Triumph Tiger 900 seemed to meet all my touring requirements but I won't really know until after a few weeks in the saddle. An offer for my BMW significantly higher than made by any other garage clinched it. As the salesman lured me with extras and discounts, the reduced weight advantage was gradually eroded and the chances of HMRC ever recovering inheritance tax from my estate evaporated.

*Editor*

## Projects

### **Aussie street tracker project**

Peter Rowland, brother of a longtime friend and work colleague of mine in Australia, built a street tracker for his brother over the last 5 or 6 years. The before and after pictures are shown below. Quite a few of the replacement parts were machined by Peter from scratch. View the links for the full story:

<https://www.bikeexif.com/honda-cb450-street-tracker>



The whole build, which took place over 5 years is recorded on this blog.

<https://www.dotheton.com/index.php?threads/cb450-tracker.74729/>

Another fascinating project involved an old dead RD350 Yamaha.



<https://www.bikeexif.com/yamaha-rd350-dirt-tracker>

*Editor*

## Features

### Nearly the Snowdonia 360

The key ingredients comprised two days, blue sky, wind, three riders, flexibility, cafes and cake. The first morning was spent riding our favourite roads to Bala via Lake Vyrnwy including the infamous kamikaze corner on the final pass. We were unable to find our carefully chosen cafe and moved on to the usual lakeside stop. Midday and we were only just starting the “360.”



A southerly track took us to Aberdovey where the route turns north. A rickety wooden toll bridge shortened the route around the estuary to Barmouth for tea and cake. It was free, because Richard paid. Then, onto the southern limb of the Llyn peninsula where, after Criccieth, we departed the official route to head across

country to our modestly priced hotel at Nefyn.

After a full Welsh breakfast, we departed under a blue sky for Caernarfon and beyond, crossing the



Britannia bridge into Anglesey. The aim was a full clockwise circumnavigation with a loop around Holy Island. A beautiful photo



opportunity was grasped on the edge of the Menai Strait. By the time we reached Holy Island it was clear that our timetable had been over optimistic.



We sacrificed the remainder of Anglesey and shot down the wind blasted dual carriageway back to the mainland so we could complete our route there. The A5 took us past a glimmering Llyn Ogwen then to Capel Curig and the wonderful Moel Siabod cafe where we basked in the sun while devouring a tasty lunch.

After refuelling in Betws y Coed we set off to Bala via Ffestiniog on exhilarating tarmac, new to us, a great discovery that we will return to. Mountain scenery blended into old industrial townships beneath bleak, towering slate quarries.

The inbound route to Crewe would have involved the usual well-trodden path but for a road closure that we ignored to our cost. Excellent weather, great riding and good company made for a memorable outing. The distance travelled was in excess of 400 miles. On a good day, Wales must figure among the best biking areas in Europe.

*Editor*



## **The diary of an introvert: a weekend on the Isle of Man**

The last time I went to the Isle of Man was over ten years ago and it reflected my previous and, until this year, my standard approach to motorcycle touring: alone or with the wife.

This year I decided I would try to be different so I joined a club or they prefer “the clan” of bikers associated with Bruce Smart aka “TeapotOne” YouTuber and host of Bru Time podcast (teapotone.com) and signed myself to the first clan



ride of the season: 3 nights away on the Isle of Man. The home of the greatest and deadliest Motorcycle race in the world; The Isle of Man Tourist Trophy (TT).

Being a fortunate bloke, my next question was which of my bikes I would take.



I chose the Ducati (Multistrada 950) for no other reason than I had hardly used it on a tour only taking it for the odd night camping. Had a look over it and decided a new chain and sprocket kit would be needed.

The shameful state of the rustic look was not going to hold water which is ironic as the chain demonstrated its ability to do so. A quick trip to the laptop and after a few days reviewing forums re options I decided standard teeth and ordered the one I saw all those days ago. Putting it on was only delayed by work and a specific socket that I didn't have but it was all done and dusted in time and I even had time to test on the club ride out on the 16th April.

That evening I joined a Zoom meeting of the clan and it was clear that the depth of experience, insight and self-awareness regarding group riding was going to make me cautious. I agreed to be the tail-end Charlie for the main ride on Saturday as the ferry & hotel were booked so it was a done deal (although with hindsight maybe I should have been a bit more self-aware). I packed light but added a bit more bike security than I normally take and set off.



The ferry crossing lived up to the local's nickname "vomit comet." Fortunately, I am never too bad on boats, however, quite a few bikers weren't as fortunate. Three groups had independently chosen the same weekend. As well as the one



I was in there was a group led by a couple of police instructors and my favourite 20+ Honda monkey bike owners.

I arrived at the hotel (Sefton) feeling a little tired. After checking in, I discovered the absence of a few things that I should have packed and others I needn't have bothered packing. A greet and meet took place at a nearby pub and before I knew it, it was time for bed and rest.

A while ago we had learned that the top of the mountain road was shut for repair but it soon become clear much more was shut than had been advertised or anticipated. Fortunately for the group, Ben & Trudy, who had planned and arranged almost everything, had come a day earlier to test the main ride and



came up with a few last-minute changes.

The newly worked route was good and I'd like to do it again without the rain and low cloud. Indeed, I took the opportunity to do almost all of it again later in the dry. I set the alarm early for the morning but couldn't remember why until I set off on the bike with just enough time to get to the start line (literally the TT main stand).

I needed petrol, so in a panic I rode off before setting the sat nav and drove more in hope than knowledge of finding a Petrol Station. By the time I got to the starting point all the others were waiting and tail end duties had been passed on to a lad called Dave. Off we set and the first place was Laxley Beach. By the time we got there (30mins), my jeans had absorbed the majority of the water that should have been in the Irish Sea. It was the last time I trust the BBC weather forecast app.

A quick stop to drink a coffee (gave the ice cream a miss) and after 30 mins I was still wetter than a deepsea diver. A braver man than me on a sports bike decided today wasn't going to get better so he decided to head back to the hotel.



Either my pride or need to fit in made me carry on, a decision that was challenged more at the next stop.

Off we set along the east coast and north toward Ramsey, where the rain seemed to ease off but I was only taking a breather for the next step. We drove through Ramsey passing several dry welcoming coffee stops and on to Point of Ayre Lighthouse. I am sure the edifice has its appeal but on the last leg to it the puddles were so deep they exposed a flaw in my waterproof boots, i.e., the hole you put your feet in. The misery caused by the spray became apparent after the first few puddles.

The next bit of the route was to the Victory Café, near the Bungalow on the mountain road. We had to go via the A14, up and down, as the road works had been extended in the last 24hrs meaning a slight change. Victory Café had been booked by the Honda S2000 Club (30 cars) who arrived after us by about 45 mins; a gap that would continue for the next three stops. I failed to take a picture of the Statue to the great Joey, instead I was like a sardine with a few fellow clan members around the wood burner, watching the steam come off my jeans and gloves. As I became drier, I wondered how my waterproof textiles were fairing in my hotel room.



After a group pic around the statue of “Joey” we set off just as the last S2000 arrived (meaning the A14 was clear down the mountain) and off to Peel we went. From this point on the rain became more sporadic and less intense.





Peel was more of a petrol stop than a visit but I chose to return on the last day to explore a bit more and what a difference 48 hrs makes; it was a great ride.



The last stop was at the bottom of the island at the Sound Café, a place I liked so much that I visited it every day for coffee and to enjoy the view from the tables.

As we left, the S2000 club made their last appearance. Fortunately, shortly before they arrived, the carpark had virtually cleared, otherwise they would have been nose to tail all the way up to the single width element of the road.

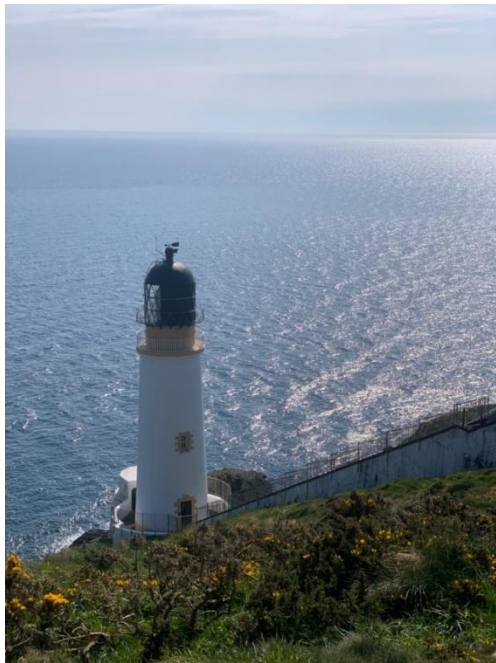
We headed back to Douglas via a short divert. The first race of the day was between the 40+ riders who had stuck it out to the end to get back to their rooms and defrost in the shower before the hot water ran out; I am not aware that anybody was denied the pleasure of a warm shower but it was a reminder that simple pleasures are often the most welcome.

That night we had a taxi to the “meal of the trip” with the Sunday being more optional and we were at the Creg. Apparently, it costs £800 to stand on the balcony and watch the racers come down the mountain but I have to say being there made me think it may make a great “retirement treat” for myself when that time comes.

After the meal the “clan” awards were handed out and a good night was had by all. Well almost as I must admit the effort of meeting new people making “normal” conversations was starting to wear me down. By the time the taxi came I was up like a shot to find some of my own space.



The following day was less formal, there was a “ride out” but it was optional and the group split into smaller sub groups, a reminder that the clan was made up of many types, families, couples and groups linked by interests (fellow youtubers, bikes or location). Some like me were clan virgins, and some had been there from the start, but all were friendly and welcoming. I chose to stay with the formal-



a tale of two halves, the first being to Maughold Light House where I suspect some GSAs went off road for the first time but all managed it up and down the path. Afterwards, we headed to Ramsey where this time we stopped at the harbour for a coffee and chat. Another ride was a joy until we took a wrong turn near Selby Bridge and eventually found ourselves down a dead end. Unfortunately, at the end the only place to turn was on gravel at an angle this caught out the lead rider and his bike went down, which

we have all either done or will do at some time. Unfortunately, the gear lever hanger broke; the aluminium casting snapped clean in half. Fortunately, the rider and pillion were both OK but we then had to turn 4-5 bikes around on the gravel track and get them back to a road. Everyone stepped up to the plate and a temporary fix was made in the field, second gear was found, the pillion was accommodated on another





bike. The injured bike was surrounded by the clan for the journey back to the hotel where a mechanic and Bruce spent the next hour developing a Heath Robinson solution. The aim was to get the riders on the ferry booked for 7.15 am. Even our own Neil gave advice via WhatsApp. Fortunately, an appeal launched by Bruce resulted in a supporter in Liverpool offering to tig weld it as soon as they got off the boat. Thus, the couple safely made it back to Kent.

While that misfortune was being addressed, I decided to focus on some “me time” and set off to do a few of my favourite roads from the last time I was there and the new ones I had found in the last two days. I spent every available minute enjoying myself and still recall the feeling that I was travelling at speeds that would lead to a ban on any road on the mainland while not breaking the law. What an island! Before heading to the ferry, I could not resist one last drink at my new favourite café.



Motorcycling is ideal for an introvert as you are alone in your helmet with the odd conversation at coffee stops. The last few days of the trip showed me, like riding itself, feeling comfortable when meeting strangers takes practice and patience. Finally, I have to say if it was not for the likes of Bruce Smart and his decision to start *TeapotOne*, I am not sure I would have challenged myself to meet 50+ strangers but I am glad that I did and they are no longer strangers, just fellow clan.

*Andy Galton*

*Many thanks to this month's excellent contributors. Please keep writing about your adventures and misadventures! Editor.*