



South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists

June/July 2022 Newsletter

News and Diary Dates

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

Ride outs every:

Sunday 9.00am Costa, Grand Junction, Crewe.

Tuesday 9.30am Costa, Dorothy Flude Retail Park, Crewe.

1st and 3rd Wednesday in month 7.00pm Starbucks, near Shell petrol station, Middlewich

2nd and 4th Wednesday 7.00pm KFC Radway Green, Jn 16, M6

On a 5th Wednesday, no ride out

Look smart! Embroidered South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists leisure wear (see later).

For Committee contacts see: <https://www.southcheshiream.org.uk>

The newsletter is now a bimonthly publication.

The next issue will be issued at the end of September. Please keep the stories flowing. New contributors welcome.

Heavy Metal

Recently, there have been some leap forwards in road safety. Strengthened laws on using a mobile phone at the wheel increases the chance of bikes being spotted by reckless drivers. However, I have seen quite a few drivers with mobiles to their ears, oblivious to the law and their surroundings. Cultural acceptance of change will take a long time. More cameras might help but too many are an invasion of privacy. Most smart phones are able to detect if the owner is driving so the software could disconnect the calling function with no option to cancel. Nanny state, I hear you cry and I agree, that is not the ideal way. Rather than smart phones we need more smart drivers and some strong incentives from insurers.

The other major development hailed as a contribution to road safety is that “drivers” of autonomous cars will be permitted to watch TV once self-drive cars become legal. The brave assumption is that the control



systems will be capable of dealing with every eventuality, a capability that humans with their super brains have never achieved. The upshot is, that riders will need to keep their observational, planning and action skills sharply honed for the foreseeable future.

Editor

Message from the Chairman

I hope you're all having a great Summer and making the most of the hot weather. Although, as I scribble these notes in my office at Stafford, it's very miserable with that heavy drizzle that wets you, as my mother used to say. Hopefully, it will stop for my evening ride.

Last month, Neil Jewell and I spent a brilliant day at Champions Flat Track School learning how to race flat track and you can read all about it in Neil's exclusive write up only in this newsletter. It was a really great day, great fun and really develops bike control. By the end of the day my left leg didn't work anymore though but if you get the chance have a go, you'll enjoy it.

A couple of weeks ago, Neil and I also took a ride over to The Peak District where we had our Master Mentor QA refresher with Steve Ellis which

I'm pleased to say we both passed. Modesty prevents me (well nearly) from telling you we both recorded a perfect clean sweep of 1's in all categories!

The Summer course is now underway but disappointingly with only three associates. We are trying to think of ways to increase associate numbers. Any thoughts let us know.

It does though give us the opportunity to refresh our Observer skills, as with riding to stay on the top of your game it's important to practice Observing. There have also been changes in the assessment and marking of associates, so a refresher is needed. We've already had one in house quality assurance session with more to follow in the coming weeks. This is in preparation for more formal assessments to be held in August and September for all our Observers by Steve Ellis our Area Service Delivery Manager and Andrew Bloomer our National Observer Assessor.

There's another ride out planned for early August with a further one in September, so keep your eyes peeled for the announcements on our Facebook page and come along, you will enjoy it.

Dave Cox



Message from the President

This last month has been a challenge for me. On the 13th I went into the Nuffield Chester and had a total left knee replacement. It was explained that I would experience pain. I did but it was pain that my wildest imagination had not thought of. However, thanks to medication and time, the pain has eased into bearable. I still have a long way to go and painful exercises to persevere with. Hopefully, my next article will be telling you how I have been out on my bike but for now I will take it one day at a time.

So having been laid up I have nothing else to talk about but I have revisited a foreign trip – see later.

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

Chris Steel.

Ride Outs

RIDE OUT EVERY SUNDAY from Costa Coffee, Grand Junction retail Park, at 9am.

*Dave Coomber, Ride Coordinator
01270569439*

RIDE OUT EVERY TUESDAY – a couple of hours then lunch. Comfort stops as required. Meet at Costa on Dorothy Flude Retail Park, Lockitt St, Crewe CW2 7BB at 9.30am for 10am departure.

Howard Payne

howard.payne163@gmail.com

JOIN THE WEDNESDAY EVENING RIDE OUTS – note the 2 venues:

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.

All rides start at 7pm. Please arrive around 10 minutes early 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.**

2ND CLUB SATURDAY RIDE OUT

9.00am, the sun is out and our numbers are growing by the minute.



It's fabulous to see new faces on their first group ride out.

Neil Jewell was our run leader with a well-planned route around the Derbyshire peak district. We departed on time at 9.30am, just like all the aircraft from Manchester airport!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Neil beautifully skirted south of Stoke and districts taking us to the cottage country kitchen for a coffee



stop, where it was very pleasant to sit outside even if the coffees arrived in instalments. We were sat with one of the new "CCM Spitfires" next to us and the owner was very willing to talk as you do when you have thrown a large amount of money at a limited-edition machine. I have to say I have a liking for machines out of the ordinary but not the pockets to indulge. Oh dear, I can here you cry.

After coffee we were uphill and down dale enjoying every pot hole



such was the quality of the route. We pulled into the "Yondermann" carpark, a true biker café, just in the nick of time as the local chapter of hell's angels, or such like, arrived on their potato-potato sounding cruisers (Harley - Davidsons). We had our lunch and escaped back onto beautiful Derbyshire roads without having lost anyone. Everyone can give themselves a pat on the back for the faultless second man drop off system.

We ended up at Macdonald's in Congleton all safe and sound.

The next run will take place on a Saturday in August but this time with me leading.

Ride safely

Howard Payne

Tuesday ride diary extracts

One Tuesday, we were dismayed to find the Costa store shuttered with only the drive-through open. We tried to order on foot but that was not permitted so I rode my bike through. I ordered coffees and passed them to Frank and Howard who were on foot, as my slow riding skills don't extend to balancing a tray of hot drinks. After enjoying coffee, we planned a route which passed some essential facilities as drive-



throughs seem to assume that only those with strong bladders will indulge themselves.

The stress of missing our usual pre ride indoor coffee and chat seemed to have weighed heavily on Frank as, after riding a few hundred metres, he pulled into the side, got off his bike and slumped over. It was serious. A passing ambulance driver stopped and provided expert guidance. An emergency call was made. We did all we could to make him comfortable as it was clear he was suffering intense pain. As his condition deteriorated, we made further emergency calls. After 50 minutes an ambulance appeared and the very professional paramedics immersed Frank in monitoring technology on the pavement before moving him into the vehicle for more detailed examination and testing. The protracted response time for a life-threatening condition is a matter for concern. It is not the fault of the amazing ambulance crews but a systemic management and resource problem which requires urgent resolution. Fortunately, Frank survived as he is a tough old goat.

Frank is now recovering at home after an operation. He will be back

on two wheels eventually but not soon enough for him. We wish him a speedy and full recovery.

Tuesday rides are memorable for various reasons. On one occasion, Howard led a ride to Lake Vyrnwy (Llyn Efyrynwy) in mid Wales. Rob and I knew of a café at the Lake at which we expected to stop but we didn't. We continued around the lake and up onto the wild moors before descending into Bala where at last we were allowed to seek sustenance.

More recently, we made our first visit to Llyn Brenig reservoir - a RSPB reserve and visitor centre with a café overlooking the lake. The final stage of the ride introduced some beautiful sweeping bends. After dining we viewed a nesting Osprey with young on a large CCTV screen.

Excitement on the homeward run was provided by an outbreak of road closures for resurfacing. The solution we adopted was to ignore road closed signs, which were invariably placed way ahead of the blockage, and at the last-minute dive into a lane exercising initiative and GPS to get home.

Come and join us on a Tuesday.

Editor



Recovery after an accident

The demise of my son's holiday to Ireland, due to swerving around and then target fixating on the hedge (see May Newsletter), raises important insurance issues.

We are both insured with "bikesure". Now, this is where the warning comes. Chris contacted bikesure to notify them of the accident and arrange recovery etc. The phone number is for a company called "4th dimension" (not bikesure), a private accident repair company with which bikesure presumably has an arrangement to send all their insured's accident damaged motorbikes to. Now this makes no financial sense for the policy holder, or the actual insurer. The accident happened out in the country side, the nearest town being Gretna Green. The bike was an obvious total loss. I am qualified to make that statement, having spent thirty years as an automotive engineer assessor, so the sensible thing to do is leave it at the recovery agents and have an assessor examine the bike. However, the bean counters, who think they can run a business, have the bike taken all the way to Surrey to say it is a total loss. It is just crazy when photos will instantly sort everything

out. Instead, it has taken four weeks and endless money wasted! Is this really progress?

I have had a bike of mine taken to 4th dimension to be repaired by their "specialist" staff. I only let it go to them as an experiment. I could have repaired it in four hours. They took weeks and their estimate was inflated beyond belief. They said they were going to drop the forks out and have them sent to a specialist to be checked even though they say they are specialists! This they obviously didn't do as they returned the bike with the left fork stanchion still damaged, perfectly visible to anyone with normal eyesight and should have been to the person who fitted the new front mudguard crooked - but don't forget he is a specialist. So back to Surrey again, no courtesy bike.

Now here comes the sting in tail. When Chris asked how he was to get home they said that was his responsibility! So, things seem to have changed in the world of these supposed insurers who are actually only brokers. I will never insure online again.

It is advisable to make sure, when insuring your bike, that any recovery is to home and not just to the



nearest recovery agent and then on to the brokers chosen repairer, who is no doubt paying the broker a commission and not looking after the insured's interest which you and I are paying them to do.

For me next year it will be personal "AA" accident and breakdown cover.

Check your policies before you are left in the middle of nowhere trying to direct a taxi to pick you up.

You have been warned.

Howard Payne

Features

Soaked in Bruges

I've never been to Europe on the bike so when a friend I normally tour Scotland with suggested we head into Europe I thought yes, it's time.

He's been before so being inherently lazy I left him to do all the planning although he did sub out some of the route planning to Simon Weir, author of *Bikers' Britain* and other route type books. This actually proves a useful way of planning, just tell Simon what you want, how many hours and miles per day, types of stops and he puts together a route,

to your specific requirements. Ours was get us from Mulhouse in France to Bruges in two days via the Nürburgring and do some of the B500.

GPX files for the four days in Europe were shared and accommodation planned.

Day 0 was Thursday, finish work early (read skive off) and head to the Ashford Travel lodge. Nothing to report here as UK motorways don't really count.

Day 1: An early start and heading for the Eurotunnel at Folkstone, a 20-minute ride from Ashford. Having never been on the tunnel before I was looking forward to it. All Covid forms and other relevant documents had been previously uploaded when buying the tickets so the actual checking in bit was very easy. Tap in your ticket number at a booth and get a boarding pass. Then to UK passport control, no problem. Next, across no man's land to French Passport control for a stamp in passport and off, all without getting off the bike. The bikes had a dedicated lane in the collecting yard and we were soon ushered down onto the platform and into the train. Ahead of us were another 20-30 or so bikes and as they all filed into the



train carriage, we were the last two to board. As it happened the carriage ahead was full so we ended up in a carriage all by ourselves!



On emerging the other side, we were straight off the train and away, heading for Pont-à-Mousson. We avoided the motorways and used the parallel equivalents which took us through towns and villages. We had been warned about very strict and new speed limits across the whole of France and saw many examples of speed cameras. The weather mentioned showers. It didn't mention torrential rain and thunderstorms. Flash flooding through some towns and fallen trees became the order of the day. What can you see, rain? What can't you

see, clearly? What can you reasonably expect to happen, a tree down across the road around the next corner? This made a fairly straight road and 300 mile ride a bit more exciting. The hotel did not have a bar so we walked into town to find sustenance.

Day 2: The best day, the sun was out, an early start and on the road at 7am (we'd gained an hour on the train) and we headed into the Vosges region of France where the map



looks like a plate of spaghetti and our destination was Mulhouse on the France/Germany Border. Many, many hairpins later and several mm scraped off the foot pegs <https://youtu.be/rsjqrRiMMi0> we arrived in Mulhouse to a hotel on the outskirts of the town with a sausage and beer restaurant attached. Except that it was shut. The only food on offer was from a vending machine. A walk into town was required to find a restaurant.



Day 3: Into Germany and heading north to Idar-Oberstein via the B500 and the Black Forest. A stunning road with great scenery and a 70km/h limit. Think Cat and Fiddle but three times as wide, and 150 miles long. There were many, many cameras and speed traps along the route but Simon Weir had done us proud and kept us away from most of that. And there was good sport to be had chasing the locals on their sports bikes.

<https://youtu.be/YVHgOz6FnAE>

We arrived at the hotel. It was shut. The owner was in and was expecting



us. He spoke good English. We asked if the bar was open and he said no; we were the only two guests staying. We agreed a deal where he pointed us in the direction of a kebab shop and left us with a crate of beer. We basically had the hotel to ourselves. We drank the beer and headed for a kebab as the rain started to come down again.

Day 4: More of the same twisty black Forest roads and on to Bruges. Via the Nürburgring. Getting there was



great, roads drying out after an hour and some beautiful long sweepers.

We arrived at the 'ring' with the idea that we might do a lap. However, that plan was scuppered as they were prepping the track for a big 24-hour race the following week. That was probably for the best. After soaking up the atmosphere for a while we made a new plan which was to get to Bruges ASAP and have some beer. The satnavs were pointed at the hotel and we set off. This turned out to be a great plan as the heavens opened again, luckily just after the autobahns. And yes, we did go fast [watch the scary video!].

<https://youtu.be/jp59b2ACEQQ>

As we arrived, soaked, in Bruges the hotel... was shut. There was no parking and there seemed to be a football celebration on in the



town. Checking e-mails there was a code to get in the hotel. That was great, the keys had been left out for us so a quick change and into the heart of Bruges for some beer and



food and to avoid the local football fans. We parked the bikes on the street; it wasn't a problem.

Day 5: Getting home. The café culture let us down badly for breakfast. Bruges was shut. So, after a lie in we headed back to Calais, the train and then home. 1,900 miles in

five days. Some great roads.

Neil Jewell

Neil goes flat tracking

Sometime ago Laramoto (awesome racer and internet sensation) asked if I'd like to try flat track. Of course, I immediately said yes.

Some time passed.

Recently, I was reminded that I did say I'd join Lara at a track event and my memory being what it is I didn't question it but booked up there and then. A promise is a promise after all. Feeling pretty sure it was speedway we'd mentioned and the venue was in Buxton.

Some more time passed and then the email with the details landed. It wasn't speedway, it was flat track. It wasn't in Buxton it was in Caenby. A quick check on the map tells me Caenby is about three hours away between Lincoln and Scunthorpe. Dammit. Lara is a frequent visitor at





the Champions Flat Track School and was organising a private session at the track and of course I'd want to go. There were 15 places available and were booking up fast. I forwarded on the invite to a few people as I would certainly need assistance in the fuel bill for the 240mile round trip. Please check out the school here:

<http://www.flattrackschool.co.uk/>

The (t)rusty jaaaaaaag was fired up, the boot loaded with all the equipment required; you need to take your own kit, such as MX gear, MX boots etc. and on the 11th June Dave Cox and I set off into the unknown.

We arrived at the Flat Track School that is based on an old farm from what we could see. One of the bigger sheds housed the track. Dirt floor, some straw bales around the RSJs holding the roof up. Some plywood sheets as walls. While the bikes were being warmed up, we signed on and helped ourselves to a nice cup of tea. The other competitors started showing up and general chit chat was had. Most people had not been here before and we had all booked onto the beginner session.

Soon, it was time to start, we were split in to three groups and each

given an instructor. The pedigree of the instructors cannot be overlooked. The school is run by Peter Boast, 2009 British and European Flat Track Champion, TT



racer and all-round top bloke. The other instructors both compete at national level.

We were issued with a steel foot. Yes, a solid steel sole that straps onto your left boot, this we were told is for when the sliding starts, and introduced to our bikes. Honda CRF100s on road tyres kicking out an impressive 6 bhp. With a dry weight of 74kg, power to weight ratio suddenly became a genuine concern.



We started off steadily just getting used to the bikes and riding long laps of the shed, while the bikes are geared, we only ever used 2nd. That



tells you how big the track is and 2nd gear was plenty. We progressed onto weaving in and out of cones and then upped the speed a little bit. The instructors always on hand offering advice and guidance on best body position and how to lean.

Once we were familiar with the machines we split into our groups and worked on some handling drills. One person riding, the rest of the group watching and making encouraging comments at least that's what I think they were. I was out first and the drill was figure-of-eight work. Unlike speedway, in flat track you do occasionally turn right. Getting used to the available grip on road tyres on mud was the first challenge, then there was leaning off the 'wrong' way, then the lack of space. We all had a good go and laugh and then onto Drill 2, circle work. First up again, this exercise was to get us used to sliding the steel shoe on the floor while spinning circles around a cone. This also introduces the slide element of the day with the back and the front wheel, occasionally both slipping and sliding on the dirt. The steel shoe suddenly made sense with the 3rd point of contact keeping everything stable. A three-legged stool will never wobble. That session stopped

more due to dizziness than time constraints. The 3rd drill was the paperclip loop. A very narrow circuit was set up around two cones introducing the need to use rear brake to skid the bike and initiate a turn while sliding on the foot. Letting off the brake is as important as its application as the timing of the release is what sets you up for the corner and keeps the speed up the straight. Rear flat track bikes do not have a front brake so this skill is hugely important. Skidding into corners produced some great memories one of which was the instructor telling me he'd never seen someone so close to crashing without actually crashing. I'm taking that as a compliment.

With the training drills completed and our left legs already crying out for mercy it was a great time for lunch. In my excitement I hadn't packed anything and as there is no onsite catering, I was very thankful to Dave for making some butties for me just in case!

After lunch we were back on the big (still tiny) circuits and using all our new found skills. The track had been freshly watered and was basically a mud rink. Walking to the bikes was hard enough let alone riding them on



this surface. The sliding boot came into its own again and we slipped and slid like heroes around those first few laps and the track dried out and the grip came good. Overtaking and general nudging was not discouraged and there were some epic battles for position. Sliding in and around other riders was great fun and all at little over jogging pace. After each session the track layout was changed slightly and the racing got better and better. Lara is blistering fast on the road and race tracks and also on the dirt too. The instructors were lapping with us making it look effortless while we were in full on sweat mode and going as fast as we could. A few people crashed but no injuries at all.

Getting into the rhythm of go, turn, slide, skid, turn, go, slide, skid, was great. The day ended with a friendly competition between all competitors and me wiping out a team mate which cost us the podium. How we laughed.

Flat Tracking was huge wholesome fun. It certainly helped me with confidence in the slippy stuff and totally destroyed my left leg for about four days afterwards. Absolutely worth it.

Neil Jewell

The Magnificent Seven Ride Again

The day was fast approaching for the annual SCAM road trip. This particular year it was to Lake Maggiore in northern Italy. The first thing I had to do was pack plenty of pairs of glasses as Dave Nixon likes to run mine over. Six pairs should be enough, along with jungle strength mosquito repellent and a few clothes. Hey presto, job done. Finally, the day arrived when it was time to set off for foreign climes. The first leg for me was to meet Ian Cunningham a few miles down the road, then we met John Brady at Keele Services, so now we were three, then off to Mere at Stoke to meet Dave Nixon, Don Wood and Martin Rowlands. That made six, just one more to meet and this was John Bailey who had arranged to meet us near the M1 enroute as he lives in Yorkshire. Off we went, meeting John as arranged near the M1 and the Magnificent Seven were together. All we had to do now was get down to Dover for about 11.30, easy no problem. As we were travelling down the M1 at a progressive rate I was aware Ian Cunningham was slowing down, to the point where he stopped on the hard shoulder. I stopped as everyone else carried on - you know who your



friends are. Ian explained his brake warning light had illuminated on his instrument cluster and his brakes were not working correctly. Don't you just love good German engineering. Having a similar system on my panzer I suggested Ian turn off the engine and waited a minute then restart the engine. He tried the reboot and all was well. For some reason the ABS system on these panzers carries out a self-test program every time they are started and if during this test there is something it does not like, it puts the system into safety mode, or in layman's terms turns off the ABS, and all you are left with is a rock-solid brake lever. Having sorted out the problem we were forced to make good progress to catch up the others who had carried on obliviously. Eventually, we were all together again and Ian and I could take it a bit more leisurely. We stopped at the services just before the M25 and fuelled up and headed for Dover.



There was no further drama and we made it to the ferry in good time. John Brady had neglected to inform me that the paperwork he had provided was needed at the check in, so when the lady asked me for my booking reference, I said, should I have one, yes was the reply. My arm would not quite reach the kitchen table, so I had to wait for the others to be booked in first. Soon, we were all sat on the quay side waiting to board. The crossing was our break as we had just the same distance on the other side to get to our first hotel in Germany. John Brady had booked the ferry and went for the cheapest, not always a shrewd move. We boarded and were ushered into a slot in the metal deck. You had to stay seated on your machine until the crew came along to strap your bike down on both sides so it stays upright without the aid of the stand. As I was the middle bike, I could not get off due to the other bikes which caused much merriment. Eventually, having got off my bike and onto Ian's bike I could then get onto the deck and make my way up with the others to the restaurant. We used the ninety-minute crossing to get something to eat and relax because when we get off the other side it is another four hours of progressive



riding in order to reach Christian's hotel Forsthaus near the Nurburgring at Riedener Muhlen, John Brady being an old hand at this route led the cavalry charge. On previous occasions it has invariably started raining at about Monchau. Fortunately, on this trip the rain held off and we were making good progress until a barrier blocked the road. A sign which translated into road closed, exhorted the road user to follow a diversion. A cunning German plan to lure us into the wilderness worked as the diversion sign indicated turn left after which signage ceased. It was now down to John Brady's second sense, or guess work, which led us through all sorts of small villages until we were suddenly stopped by a policeman. There was a parade in progress so we had to wait while the virgin Mary was carried down the main street and back again accompanied by a marching band. The twenty-minute



break was most welcome. We navigated our way through the milling crowd and carried on. Darkness was starting to fall. When we reached the Nurburgring, John Brady suffered a "where do we go now moment." I took the lead and headed to Christian's where we were going to eat. It was some sort of festival in Germany and his hotel was full. Nevertheless, Christian had managed to find us accommodation not far away. We sat outside, enjoyed a very nice meal and discussed the days ride, all 594 miles of it. Ten o'clock was approaching and it was time to find our hotel. Christian kindly led the way; it was only ten kilometres. We arrived just in time as the hotel was on the point of closing for the night. We were just settling down for the night when Martin announced he had lost his wallet. After some frantic searching, Don said he would go back to Christian's with him and see if he had left it there. It turned out that Martin had left it on his bike whilst sorting out his things in the car park. Finally, it was off to sleep, in readiness for the short trip to Baden Baden the next day.

To be continued.

Chris Steel



Club Merchandise

Please see below for the link to your Club shop with various items of apparel now available, beautifully embroidered with the Club logo:

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

Editor's Plea

Many thanks to this month's excellent contributors. Keep telling me about your biking adventures, bloopers, ambitions, bike reviews, new kit, top tips, personal sale items and any bike, riding or road related issues that are, or should be, a matter for concern. Please attach photos separately, ideally with a list of captions.

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For Sale/Wanted

Why not sort through all those unused items, which seemed essential at the time, and turn them into cash. Alternatively, if you are desperately hunting for an item, send the details for listing in the next issue. There is no charge for advertising personal items. Don't forget to include your contact details.