



Our new Chairman in a happy place

SOUTH CHESHIRE ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS June/July Newsletter 2023

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

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.

Forthcoming Social Events

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

For information on social events and Tuesday rides contact Howard Payne
howard.payne163@gmail.com

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

Look smart! Embroidered SCAM leisure wear.

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

For Committee contacts and newsletter back-numbers see:

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



Lighter metal

I feel ten years younger having switched from an RT to a Tiger 900 and Chris also has a spring in his step after changing his adventure bike for the lighter and lower GS. I asked Alexa for a second opinion on my choice of bike. She recommended a Ducati Panigale as the best middleweight and a Suzuki V-Strom 650 for touring. What does she know?

There is much talk in the media and industrial action in the entertainment sector about the expected loss of jobs to Artificial Intelligence. I decided to investigate further and see if I could make the office of SCAM newsletter editor redundant. I requested help from ChatGPT on preparing an editorial suitable for advanced riders. A lengthy, in parts cheesy, and rather patronising text was churned out. A heavily edited extract follows:

Embracing Excellence: Advancing the Thrills of Motorcycling

As the engines roar and the wind embraces us on exhilarating rides, we, the advanced motorcyclists, are a breed of riders who seek the pinnacle of motorcycling mastery. We are united by a shared passion for the open road and the quest for unparalleled skill. In this edition of our esteemed club's newsletter, let us delve into the essence of our riding community and explore how we can continue to elevate our experiences as advanced motorcyclists.

First and foremost, safety remains paramount. We have reached this stage of riding not only through our skills but also our dedication to responsible motorcycling. As advanced riders, we set an example for others by adhering to safety regulations, wearing protective gear, and maintaining our bikes in top-notch condition. Remember, the thrill lies in conquering challenges, not in compromising our well-being.

While safety is essential, our pursuit of excellence should never waver. By constantly expanding our knowledge and honing our techniques, we become more proficient riders. We should embrace mentorship and foster a supportive environment for riders at all stages of their motorcycling journeys. By sharing our experiences, we can cultivate a culture of continuous learning.

Ride on, ride safe, and ride advanced!

To me, the product though eminently sensible is strong on rhetoric, weak on substance and devoid of the humour, self-mockery and banter which we enjoy so much. I accept that the deficiencies are probably partly due to inadequate



definition of the task on my part. Have no fear, I will not be retiring and relying on AI anytime soon. Instead, I will be seeking a pay rise.

Club members have been travelling far and wide this summer and I know the membership are poised expectantly, awaiting a flurry of articles on the adventures, thrills and spills. I certainly am.

Editor

Chairman's Report

Just a quick introduction for those who don't know me. I'm Phill Hamilton and I was elected Chairman when Dave Cox resigned from the group due to becoming our new Area Service Delivery Manager. Many congratulations to Dave and I am sure you will all join me in wishing Dave every success in his new employment with the IAM.

I have been on the SCAM committee for a few years now and I am a National Observer and a Local Observer Assessor. I got a taste for advanced riding many years ago when I decided to do a BikeSafe course with Cheshire Police. I thoroughly enjoyed it and immediately recognised the benefits of using the 'system' for a safer, smoother and more progressive ride.

I joined SCAM approximately 8 years ago as an Associate and successfully completed the IAM RoadSmart course. When the course was completed, I missed the training and the group riding. I still recall the advice given to me by Chris Steel (Chief Observer at the time) when I passed my advanced test, "don't slip back into your old bad habits!" So, when the opportunity arose to train as an Observer I jumped at the chance – not only to give something back to the Group but also to continue to improve my own advanced riding skills. I completed the Local Observer course along with the other trainees: Dave Cox, Phil Buckley and Neil Jewel (must have been a vintage year!!) and I remained a Local Observer for about three years until qualifying as a National Observer.

Away from SCAM, I love motorcycle road racing and regularly visit Ireland for the North West 200, the Ulster GP and the Armoy Road races. I currently ride a



Ducati Multistrada V4S that I absolutely love!

I am about to complete the IAM Masters Course – something I've been meaning to do for years, as we should never stop learning or developing our road craft skills. Watch this space – I will let you know how it all goes!!

I know Chris Steel is going to mention in the newsletter about the recent bereavement of Don Wood, but I would also like to add my condolences to Sandy and the entire family. Don was a lovely guy who will be greatly missed by all at SCAM.

There is lots happening within SCAM now, Sunday morning ride outs, Tuesday ride outs, Wednesday evening ride outs, plus monthly social gatherings some with guest speakers. Hopefully we can catch-up in person at one of these events in the very near future.

Ride Safe.

Phil Hamilton

Message from the President

This Month has been a sad month, the longer standing members of the group and observer team, will know that we lost Don Woods last month. I remember Don joining the group and participated in his training. It was obvious from the first session, that here was a man who was passionate about motorcycling and road safety. It was obvious that he was going to become an observer once he had completed the course and passed his test, and subsequently he did. Over the years Don helped many associates to improve their riding and make them safer and happier in their chosen mode of transport and enjoyment.

I also had the privilege to go to Norway with him and four other members of the group. It was a fabulous trip, and then we got to go to Italy with him as well. My memories of Don are of a man who lived for motorcycling and giving something back. He was always first to volunteer to help in any group promotions or events and always ready to take a training session when required. Nothing was ever too much trouble; he always had a smile and a joke when we met.



A life well-lived, and knowledge distributed, I am reminded of an inscription on a World War One headstone:

“To live in the hearts we leave behind, is not to die.”

Don will live on in our memories for a long time to come. I am grateful for having had Don in my life, an example to strive to equal.

My sincere condolences to his wife, family, and friends.

I have taken delivery of the new GS and by the time you are reading this I will have been to Spain on it with Ian Cunningham - a future article, I am sure. I have regained my confidence as the Adventure model was just a bit too big for me now that I am seventy; although only about 20kg lighter it makes all the difference and I am enjoying the experience.

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

Chris Steel

Social Scene

Social Second Mondays

Social meetings are 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.

These meetings are invariably well-attended and a hotbed of lively discussion on all club matters, topics including riding, bikes, IAM and total nonsense.





Forthcoming speaker events

9 October 2023

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

11 March 2024

Simon Weir, ex Ride Magazine and author of Biker's Britain route guides.

Date TBA

Jamie Whitham will make a return visit due to popular demand.

Tuesday rides



Tuesday riders take a break to stretch legs and other parts, analyse their rides but mainly to talk bikes and b**locks.

A blast from the past



I encountered a vintage bike and car ride out in Hornby, near Lancaster. I was particularly fascinated by this 1920s BSA with its carbide lighting. “Lighting up” involved igniting the acetylene which is released when water is dripped onto the calcium carbide located in the base of the brass cylinder visible behind the horn.

Editor

Features

Howard’s MotoGP rant

Howard is decidedly unhappy by the way MotoGP is organised and run by Madrid based, Dorna Sports. I do not think we can cure the problem but we can listen as politely as one can to a Yorkshire man and provide him with counselling. To me, MotoGP seems a mirror image of where Formula One is going [Editor].



Riders are gagged, even Jack Miller has been reigned in and just permitted to issue party political words when we all know it is rubbish. It will not be long before the riders are just like football prima donna's complaining, "he tried to pass me." All the penalties issued during a race are no help to anyone be it riders, teams or organisers. Just use the black flag, it works very well everywhere else in the world. How an earth can you run a race from a TV screen and be fair and consistent.

MotoGP requires its own dedicated TV channel as now we must buy all BT sport just to watch six months of bike racing plus more money to view in HD.

FIND ME ANY BIKER who likes Silverstone. It is a ridiculously overpriced venue. Very little actual racing, well, just three races on the day with far more waiting than actual racing. You cannot see much of the action without a telescope to locate the track through the prisoner of war fencing. Catch a bus to get around, pay a fortune to sit in a stand or try and find somewhere to view while standing. Silverstone is for cars it was never ever going to be a suitable location for viewing bike racing, even the television cannot make it exciting. Please Silverstone, do us all a favour and refuse to hold MotoGP. I went to Silverstone the first year it was held there and cannot see me ever going again. Perhaps some corporate entertainment might change my mind!

I used to go every year to Donnington Park. I know all the reasons for not using Donnington but every other bike racing series manages to go there. Where there is a will there is a way.

It is no way a world series as most of the riders go to Dorna's junior school then infant school and then senior school so it is a closed club reserved for the chosen few whose family could or can afford to send their little darlings to the preschool club for future MotoGP series. After all, Dorna has conveniently forgotten the agreement that there has to be has be a British rider on the grid!

Not to forget, if you don't actually make the standard for MotoGP we have our second series which we can send you to so you don't have to retire and you can take the ride away from some up and coming young rider. In a few years Dorna



will have swamped SBK with hand-me-downs and then finally closed the door on progress.

The trouble is it is all far too corporate and not worth the money. In fact, it is now becoming irrelevant in the UK. I hear Dorna want to bring someone from across the pond to help. Is this a good idea? Let me know.

BSB is run wonderfully with brilliant nonstop racing all weekend at prices we BIKERS can afford. World Superbikes SBK is only for Dorna selected teams. How on earth can they call it a world series when they do not have all the teams at all the races! I cannot see Honda in MotoGP in 2024. In fact, MotoGP and SBK are becoming single bike series. Limit the grid to no more than four bikes from one single manufacturer and no pretend bikes like GasGas. My friends in Spain say that when a business there isn't making enough money, they put up their prices up and make less money and if you ask a Spaniard for discount they don't understand or wave their hands in the air.

It is fair to say, we are seeing both Dorna controlled series in the throes of a slow death. Bringing somebody in from across the pond scares the living daylights out of me. How many Americans have heard of MotoGP?

Howard Payne.

Northumberland Tour

Day One:

With everything packed on my Honda ST1300 Pan European I rode to the agreed meeting point at Lymm Services where I met Tony on his Honda CTX1300.

We made our way up the M6 to junction 34, Lancaster, where we took a right and headed on to the A683. The majestic Ribbleshead Viaduct came into view on the B6255 and we rode on to Hawes for our first fuel stop. Due to the stunning weather, the town was packed with bikers.

The hairpin bends of the Buttertubs Pass required care with the fully loaded Pan. After a quick drink at Tan Hill, the highest pub in Britain, the route took us across



the Pennines to Barnard castle. We then followed a deserted and fantastic B6278. A quick blast around Derwent Water and we arrive the Derwent Manor hotel, our base for the next few days. The mileage tally for the day was 195.

Day Two:



We set off for the day with a quick ride up the A68 before leaving the main road at West Woodburn to head towards Kielder Forest.

Passing Biggar, we continued to Moffat for a spot of lunch at a great little café on the high street. After a quick sandwich, we headed to Wanlockhead which is the highest village in Scotland; the views were stunning. A quick blast back to Moffat and on to my favourite place, St Mary's Lock, where we managed to get a drink before the café closed.



It was now 5pm and we had been riding since 10am. After checking google maps I was surprised to see it would be another 2 ¼ hours back to the hotel.

Back through Keilder and Bellingham and onto the A68, we arrived at the hotel at 7.30pm. We had ridden a whopping 320 miles.



Day Three:



We headed up the coast to North Shields and onto Seaton Sluice where we changed the setting on the sat nav to winding roads. The next destination was Druridge Bay. The roads were mainly single track and uneven, populated by quite a few car and van drivers who had not read the updates to the highway code. We eventually arrived at the causeway to Holy Island and after a cursory check of the tide times we ventured onto the island. We were both surprised at the length of the causeway and the distance to the village. After a quick sandwich, we cheekily rode through the village and up to Lindisfarne Castle for a photo or two much to the annoyance of the car drivers.

Heading back towards Wooler on the B625 and then onto Rothbury, Otterburn and the now familiar A68 we arrived back at the hotel having ridden a total of 200 miles.

Day Four:

Our destination was Hawick Museum. After a quick blast along the massive dips and crests of the A68, we aimed for Errdington then routed along single-track, unnamed roads until stopping on the outskirts of Lyneholmford for a short break.



The B6318 took us to Langholm to top up with fuel. The great A7 provided the perfect excuse to open-up the bikes. At the Hawick Museum, we made our way to the 'Hizzy Room' to see Steve Hislop's championship winning Monster Mob Ducati 996. Also in the museum was a room dedicated to Jimmie Guthrie who was a legend, winning many TT races in the 1920's and 30's before his untimely death in the



1937 German Grand Prix.

Setting back, we headed for Kielder and stopped at Landal Kielder Waterside for a late lunch where the view across the water was stunning. Familiar roads led us back to the hotel ready for a pint having added 250 miles to the clock.

Day Five:

We checked out of the hotel and headed over the Pennines towards Waskerley where we encountered the most stubborn sheep who would not move out of the way, thus slowing our progress. Back through Barnard Castle and on to Tan Hill Inn where upon arriving we found a sheep show in full swing. A quick drink, back on the bikes over the Buttertubs Pass and onto Hawes which was a little quieter this time.

We dropped down on the B6160 through Kettlewell and onto Grassington along lovely winding roads. With Skipton behind us, we joined the A59 which was surprisingly busy at that time of day. Inevitably, we joined the necessary evil that is the M6 and set a course for home bringing the day's mileage to 220.

Overall, we had a fantastic five days riding, clocking up just under 1,100 miles. A quick wash, a check over and the Pan is ready for its next adventure.

Rob Halsall

Then there were three...



Winter's Gibbet. The grimmest of trig points, marking the highest place on the ancient Drove Road and the spot where, in 1791, the body of William Winter hung in chains. Retribution for his crime and a tacit reminder to all who passed - this could be you.

Today, there's a tattered flag that hangs there. Its pathetic raggedness is a sordid symbol of the wastage that isolation



brings. Inevitable. Inexorable. Still a reminder. Never more poignant.

We were four at the outset. Three, when the Gibbet rose into view...

The roads that brought us here - Ant Beeston, Dave Creedy and Richard Downes (B, C and D), and me - started in Sandbach. We took the flowing roads up past Jodrell Bank, the A34, M60, M61 to rejoin the M6 at Preston, avoiding the mayhem that plagues junctions 16 - 19.

We continued to Harwick (pronounced Hoik) via roads that were clear of most traffic, scenic, well maintained and/or underused. Fun to ride. The 12 miles 'off road', through Kielder Forest was gravelly and uneven enough to focus our minds on keeping the bikes upright - 2 x BMW R1250GS and a pair of Tigers - 900 and 1200.



The real adventure came as we approached the hotel at Harwick. We dismissed the **Road Ahead Closed** signs for 15 miles. It was at this point that the reason for signs was made clear. Excavated and partially back-filled for half a mile or so, the road was closed. We parked the bikes on the brink of a significant man-made precipice. The ragged edge of the old road crumbled slightly and fell into the drop under the weight of the bikes.

In the middle of the gorge, the last remaining contractor looked over and dismissed our impressive line-up as he turned to climb into his [Hi-Lux Invincible](#) and leave for home.

It could have been a smugish shrug - it might have been wind - but he was certain that we would have to retrace a weary road and follow a lengthy diversion trail, to find our destination. Imagine his surprise when, in his rearview



mirror, the dust up of two Fierce Cats and a couple of Big Germans turned a 'no-road' situation into an 'off-road' masterclass.

The lesson we all took from this: **Road Closed** is terminal - only if you let it.

Having carried us over the gorge and earned their overnighter, the bikes were put to bed outside a [Four Star Scottish country pile](#). Inside the welcome and service were both excellent and carried the fading opulence of

creaky boards under tartan shagpile. Three beers and a fizzing lemmo, with a straw, were a welcome sight in the bar. Day one. Done.

Day Two:



After three full Scottish Brekkies and one portion of eggy bread, we were ready to roar. A couple of Cats and a rumble of Prussian engineering smouldered along the beautifully carved A7, across the wildness of the Scottish Borders and up to North Berwick.

North Berwick was worth a stop. Quite posh; seemed to be mostly Edinburgh second-homers who speak with the mildest of Scottish lilt. Laird like.



It was here that on a shore-front [classy, glassy caff](#) that we were schooled in the difference between [Cullen Skink and Boston Chowder](#). It's subtle, but well worth knowing.

It was going so well up until this point. Then darkness descended and displaced the easy companionship. Memories of The Restaurant - Uig, Isle of Skye - the memories that Richard, Ant and I had worked hard to suppress - were brought back by all the Skink-Talk. We perspired collectively and withdrew into our heads, before leaving the confines of the caff, deeply breathing in the liberating air on the Firth of Forth. (Dave Creedy, having led a long and blameless Zen-like existence was unaffected. He stayed, polished off the Skink and paid.)

The roads in and out of Moffatt were probably the best and most dynamic of the entire tour.

Moffatt – incoming: The A708 was the warmup for the next part of the journey. It was on this magnificent stretch of tarmac that we found a great touring rhythm in our riding. The comms were mainly silent as we appreciated the quality and solitude of where we were. We parked up briefly at Moffatt, using the facilities before leaving town.

Moffatt – outgoing: The A701. [The Devil's Beeftub](#). This was the road where we found our form. It's not uncommon that in many parts of Scotland, particularly in the Scottish Borders, that you can get the genuine experience of being the only vehicles on the roads - roads that have been well engineered and maintained to an almost European standard.

The Devil's Beeftub is such a stretch that took us across miles and miles of magnificent bleakness. The privilege of riding so exclusively on roads of this quality might have drawn riders, those lacking in the IAM stoicism and cast-iron discipline, to choose a racing-line and have their needles nudge three figures. Not us. No.

So when, during our evaluation of the day, over three frosted pint pots of amber nectar and a lime and soda, we considered the most testing of the trip to be behind us. Because we had been off road the previous day and turned our backs



on the temptation of the Devil's Beeftub on that day, surely the rest of the trip would be much more reflective, conversational. More Driving Miss Daisy.

It might be a surprise then that a trip four of us rode in and out of Holy Island, yet only three made it to Winter's Gibbet. More on this - next edition.

Ed Liptrot

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