



South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Newsletter

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Message from the Chairman

Just a couple of domestic issues... You should have all received an email from Geoff about a Christmas get together, (details are also included later in this newsletter). Hopefully we can get as many people there as possible for our first social event since you know what. If you are able to come along let Geoff know as soon as you can.

If any of our former Observers still have SCAM hi viz jackets, could they return them to me please. If possible I'd like to reissue them rather than go to the expense of replacing them. Thanks.

Lastly, Chris Cullen is moving to pastures new and relocating to Oxfordshire, thanks again Chris and all the best to you, keep in touch.

Dave Cox
Chairman

Message from the President

The clocks have gone back, and now it is starting to feel like winter is on its way, going to work in the dark and coming home in the dark, not much fun, but we can look forward to spring.

Don Woods has had an extensive operation, he is home and I would like to wish him a speedy recovery, we are all thinking of you Don. I don't have a lot to say this month, as I have not been out observing, and have not met many members, apart from the committee, at our monthly meeting.

I hope you all enjoy Bonfire night, I will hopefully see some of you soon. That is all from me for this month, so to you and your families stay safe, until next month, take care.

Chris Steel.
President.

The wonders of the Scottish west coast

Neil Jewell recounts his recent tour of this spectacular destination

The whole world and his campervan seems to want to go to Scotland these days and “do the NC500”. That is great and as a stretch of road some parts are truly amazing, especially the west coast. However, move off the NC500 and you can find some challenging empty single track roads that will really test your mettle.

So, a non IAM buddy of mine and I set off on a Friday – Monday trip to Scotland. The start meeting point was Otley and the destination on the first day was Lennoxton north of Glasgow.



The route took us off the beaten track and away from the motorways. If you are going on a bike trip then why pound up the M6 like everyone else? So the route from Otley went up through the Yorkshire dales, including Hawes, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Alston, Heydon Bridge, Gala Shields, Peebles, Carlisle and then still avoiding the Motorways ending up in Lennoxton north of Glasgow.

The Highlight for me was the stretch from Middleton-in-Teesdale to Alston – a 23 mile

twisty-turny bumpy technical road lined with snow-poles that actually are incredibly useful in helping you read the road. We arrived at the Galzert Country house hotel too late for food so we ordered a Chinese to eat in the bar. We were also planning on leaving too early to get breakfast so the manager put us a couple of free pints behind the bar. Total mileage for day one was 406. Snow-poles road (with commentary)

Day two saw us leaving the hotel at 06:40. Our plan was to get to the Ardnamurchan Lighthouse and then catch the Mallaig Ferry to Skye then Applecross and then on to Ullapool. As with all best laid plans we soon realised that we would miss our Mallaig ferry so altered course

after visiting the lighthouse to skip Applecross and head to Spean Bridge and then turn west at invergarry head towards Dornie. Picking up the A890 and heading North east to Achnasheen and onto pick up the main A835 road to Ullapool.



The road to the lighthouse was out of this world. Tight, winding single track that had so many blind crests that it really kept you on your toes. The journey to the most westerly point on the mainland was worth it, but I don't think I'd be rushing back there anytime soon. Then finishing the day with the wide open smooth flowing A835 Ullapool road is a total delight. If you haven't ridden that one, put it on your list. Total miles day two was 379. Run to Ullapool - See the YouTube video [here](#).

Day three was a late start, something to do with Ullapool hospitality I think. Can't remember. And we are heading for Fort William, via the north coast. Ullapool to Durness but making a left to do the loop past Loch Assynt. Then back on to the NC500 to do battle with



campervans and charity car drives. A stop at the Kylesku Bridge is always worth it. Onto Durness and around the tranquil Lock Eriboll, carry on to Tongue and then take a sharp right and pick up a single



track road south through some farming country. Continue heading south to Lairg. Trying our best to avoid the A9 but failing as we must take the Cromarty bridge but then heading away from Inverness towards Beaulieu and on to Drumnadrochit. That last stretch is a rollercoaster of tow-down, up and down hill corners. A quick pit stop on the banks of Loch Ness and the formidable A82 to Fort William awaits. Get stuck behind a bus and it's a terrible road, get out in front and the s-bends keep on coming and keep on coming. Some of the best riding on major A-roads is to be had on the A82. Full concentration required which is a big ask after 12 hours on the bike and 304 miles. A82 YouTube video here

Day four arrived and we are homeward bound. Heading South from Fort William the remainder of the A82 certainly wakes you up in time for Coffee in Oban. We then headed south towards campbeltown but got the ferry at Tarbert a short trip across to Dunoon athen back on the mainland in Glasgow. The trip was about over now with that first part of the day rounding off a great trip. A quick blast through Glasgow then the trudge home on the motorways Total mileage 399. Oban to Tarbert YouTube clip

The highlights of the trip were the road south from Oban for its very many sharp corners and perfect tarmac, the snowpole road from Middleton-inTeesdale to Alston, fast and technical, the road to the lighthouse, the GTR only just fitted down it, the A82 for the flow. The run across Struie Hill (with Commentary) is also worth doing.

The west coast of Scotland is awesome biking country. I'll be back again next year for sure.



Neil Jewell

IAM Skills Day at Mallory Park

Howard Payne takes us through a recent track day...



If any of you are apprehensive about taking your bike onto a racing circuit then read on and dispel all your fears.

I did Mallory Park this September. It is a very well organised event with safety as the main part of everything. You have the option of three groups to be in A B & C. These equate A is experienced on track, B is for those with some experience on track & C for the all round novice. Fast, medium and steady.

So there is a group for all levels and each group go on track individually so you are never outside your comfort zone.

You arrive for 7.45am to sign on. There is then a full briefing about the circuit and how the day works. You get three twenty minute sessions in the morning and three in the afternoon each preceded by a briefing . You are placed in groups of three or four and your own group has the same instructor for the day.

During the day you gradually increase your pace with every session. One thing to keep in mind is our bikes can meet our demands on them - for example the capability of the tyres is more than a match for what we ask of them.

It is very good value for money and Mallory is only 70ish miles away. Next years dates will start to be available toward the NEC bike show in December.

Trust me when I say, you will have a great day.

Just do it you won't regret it.

Howard

The great Scottish petrol hunt **By Chris Steel**

Ian Cunningham and I booked three nights in Moffat, staying at the Buccleuch Arms Hotel, two weeks before departure, the petrol panic started, thanks to an article in the papers saying how there will be food shortages due to transport drivers being in short supply, what next petrol shortages due to a lack of drivers, there was never any mention of a shortage of tanker drivers previously, the petrol stations had been receiving regular deliveries, everyone was buying petrol as and when required, all normal,

then some journalist speculating on what might happen next, plucked petrol tanker driver shortage out of thin air, then total chaos, everyone is out panic buying, the pictures in the papers of long queues and people fighting at the pumps everywhere, beyond belief.

Ian and I discussed the situation and decided we were going, if there was a shortage, then we would make decisions as to come home early when there, the government and petrol retailers association were assuring us that there was no supply problems, and the

refineries had plenty of stock, the problem had been caused by press speculation.

Sunday October 3rd I conducted a one to one training session, after which I went to my local petrol station, no queue, and filled up ready for the following morning and departure to north of the border.

Monday 4th October I met Ian at his house and we set off in damp conditions, the rain steady and constant, we rode up the M6 to junction 34 and continued on A and B roads for the rest of the route, we had a late breakfast in Hornby at a nice little cafe on the main street, well the only street, I explained to the proprietor that we were not sure they would still be open after the lockdowns, as it was three years since we had been, she explained that they had had to diversify during lockdown, doing more take away catering, but they had weathered the storm and were still in business, the scrambled egg was delicious, and was a welcome break from the rain, having had our breakfast we mounted up again, just as the rain increased in severity, the route from Hornby was going to be Kirby Lonsdale, Sedbergh. Kirkby Stephen, Brough, Ian had the route worked out so all I had to do was follow, the rain continued to descend, this was giving my new waterproof trousers a test, J&S assured me they were fully waterproof when I purchased them, so now was the ultimate test, a day in the rain, we passed the famous burger bar at Devils

Bridge, where I am sure we have all been at least once, Sedbergh, Kirby Stephen all negotiated without any drama, then things went awry, we came across a road closed sign, preventing us carrying on our route, we followed the diversion signs, which after three signs disappeared, I am sure when they close a road, they think it is fun to just put a few diversion signs up, then let you get completely lost and frustrated, having got lost, got frustrated, consulted a map, ended up on the A66 heading West, it was all going



horribly wrong, pulled into a lay-by on the A66 on the moors, the wind blowing a hooley, the rain at

forty five degrees, Ian explained that if we did not turn North we would be at the A1, we got off the A66 and headed North, well sort of, after about ten Miles we arrived at a Junction the the A66, well that worked out well, we eventually ended up in Barnard Castle, and from there we went to Alston, where we had coffee and cake Alston House hotel, we have been there before, so we were now back on our original route, having had our coffee and comfort break, it was back to the rain, there was a petrol station just down the road, it was almost empty, no queue, straight onto a pump each and filled up, now we were set to make it to Moffat with no concerns over fuel, we headed to Gretna, Lockerbie, then Moffat, we arrived about half five, and were greeted by Dave Smith the proprietor, we dismounted unpacked the bikes and checked in, it had been an eventful trip, but enjoyable, and the bonus being no soggy crutch, the trousers had done what it said on the label, waterproof. Having checked in, we were informed due to covid there was a reduced menu, and we had to make our choice now, so it could be prepared, no starters on offer, so I opted for the steak

pie and a sort of sticky toffee pudding, Ian had some alternative, but I have forgotten what it was. We went up to our room and prepared for a quiet evening in the hotel, we had a drink at the bar, the hotel did not seem that busy, as it was supposed to be fully booked, the meal was delicious, the wine enjoyable, Ian and I discussed the days dilemma's and looked forward to tomorrow, and where we were going to go.



To Be Continued

By Chris Steel

Winter is coming...

Neil Jewell offers advice on keeping your riding skills sharp over winter

Those immortal words of House of Stark, “Winter is Coming” are ringing out crisp and clear from our favourite motorcycle media outlets so many of us choose to hibernate the bike over the winter months. This has many advantages and some pretty big disadvantages too. This isn’t about what is right or wrong. You’ve already made that decision and it is right for you. This is about what you could do if you are not out there battling salt and elements and what you can do if you are.

Riding through winter is a battle of wills. Will you or won’t you. It’s also that age old balance between want and need. Do you want to ride? vs. do you need to ride? For some there is no choice, others don’t need to and some others actually want to. Yes, you read that right.

For those that choose not to ride over winter the first tip I will give you is that you must be aware of your own skill fade. As you ride your bike into its cosy winter accommodation for the last time for what will be a few months, know that you are on your game, you have had an amazing summer of riding and all your motorbike senses are dialled in. That first ride out again once all the salt has been washed off the roads by the April showers you will not be as good as you were. There is a real and genuine danger here if you do not recognise that skill fade is a thing. You are still you, the bike is still the bike right? Wrong. Your keen sense of speed, gaps, grip, grunt, anticipation & judgement have all taken a holiday too and you will need to work at getting them back on point. Trying to shock them back to life with a balls out 20 minute blast isn’t the way. They need coaxing back to life gently and steadily, for some people this can be a few minutes for others it might need a few extended rides. The point is that you need to be aware of it and ride accordingly.

What is Skill Fade?

There is evidence that skills decline according to a curve, with the greatest decline being during the first few months, and subsequent decline being at a much slower rate. This is good news for those that don’t ride over winter, it means that you won’t be as good after a few months but you are unlikely to forget what riding is altogether! You will still be competent but you will be physically less accurate and your decision making skills will have slowed.

Many studies of retention of specific skills measure retention at six, twelve, eighteen and twenty four months. There is some consensus that two or three years out of practice should signify a need for reassessment and retraining. This is why RoSPA do retests every 3 years and the same for IAM fellow members.

Is there anything we can do over winter to keep our edge and avoid skill fade?

Research shows that different people in different circumstances react to skill fade differently however, while it is not completely avoidable it can be slowed down. Parking the bike up, covering it in a dust sheet and simply forgetting about its existence is the worst case scenario. So, to stay involved try some of these suggestions.

Sit on your bike – yes really. Take a few moments out each week and just go and sit on your bike, the memories of rides will come flooding back and you can reminisce about the rides you went on. The muscle memory that you have built up will not fade as quick, you’ll be able recognise a hurty knee or wrist before riding season and hopefully get that dealt with too.

Watch videos of rides – there are many, many hours of rides on the internet, Subscribe to a rider that rides a bit like you and watch them. Turn the sound off if they are talking for the sake of it. Now, get involved. Start reading the road, looking for hazards, clues, turn in points, camber changes, signage. All the things you do normally without thinking about it. Consider how many hours a week you ride during the summer and try to watch around half that much. Keep your observation game sharp by observing others.

Use computer games – got a PlayStation or Xbox? Get yourself a riding or driving game. You are looking for a game with unfamiliar tracks so that you can hone your road reading skills, even Mario Kart works for this. As you are playing, look for the vanishing points, are they opening up are they closing in. Try to avoid tracks you know like the back of your hand as you will be more interested in getting the best lap time and lines. The object of this exercise is to recognise the limit point of vision and keep that part of your skill set sharp.

Visualise you are riding. Take some time out – maybe even while you are sitting on your bike in the garage or shed, close your eyes and Visualise that you are riding. There are two parts to effective visualisation techniques the first is outcome visualisation. This is where you create a very detailed mental image of the desired outcome using all your senses. Create a mental image of what it would feel like to have that perfect ride. Hold onto that image as long as you can. How do you feel in that image, hot, tired, exhilarated, what will your mates say when they finally catch up. A vivid, recallable, mental image is what is needed here. The next visualisation method is process visualisation. You will need to think about every aspect of your ride, the feel of the throttle in your hand, the pressure you put on the bars to turn, the feel of the gear lever on your foot, the more details you can add to this process visualisation the better. You don't have to do it physically, you just have to imagine you are doing it. Use the two visualisation techniques together to achieve the greatest effect. According to research using brain imagery, visualisation works because neurons in our brains, those electrically excitable cells that transmit information, interpret imagery as equivalent to a real-life action. When we visualise an act, the brain generates an impulse that tells our neurons to "perform" the movement. This creates new neural pathways that prime our bodies to act in a way consistent to what we imagined. All of this occurs without actually performing the physical activity, yet it achieves a similar result. You will see top racers and sports people do this before the start of the race or match. They aren't just having a quiet 5 minutes, they are visualising that first run down into Redgate or Expo '92. The point here is that your brain doesn't know the difference, so if you ride some imaginary miles over winter you should be able to keep that skill fade at bay.

Talk to your mates – We ride bikes because we love them, we also love our mates. We miss them when we don't see them at the local bike meet. Call them up, chat about the crap you'd normally chat about, make plans. Check in on them. Plan a visit or a meet up. You don't have to take the bike. Keeping your riding mates close during the winter months has many benefits, chatting about bikes is great. Get a discussion going about tyres, gloves, overtaking anything just to get you talking and thinking about how you ride.

Read about riding – grab a book written by an actual expert and read it.

Polish the bike – take the time to really get hands on with your bike, remove all the panels, get in behind places that ACF50 can't. Biking was your down time, you still need that. Use the peace and tranquillity that a tube of Autosol offers and try to remember where that stone chip came from or that time where you were awesome, because remembering and recalling rides keeps us sharp.

Get a winter hack – If you put your bike away for winter because you don't want to ruin it, consider getting a winter hack. A cheap, run about that you don't care about. Until you've had the pleasure of hooning a scooter about through rush-hour traffic don't dismiss the idea. This will keep your skills up and not ruin your pride and joy. If you can't find a winter hack then head off to your local bike shop and see if they are doing test rides, keep a close eye on the weather as there is some cracking riding to be had on a dry day in February just use their bike and not yours.

Critically self-analyse your summer of riding. – Look back at all those photos you took on your phone. Recall the fantastic rides that you had to those exotic truck stops. Then ask yourself, could you have done it better, are you lucky to be alive? Be honest about any mistakes you made and then really investigate what happened and why. Being overly critical with yourself will help you improve and remind you what your riding was like ready for when the sun starts to come out again.

For those that do ride over winter my advice to you is keep warm, keep an eye on your tyres and if going on extended rides let someone know where you are going and what your ETA is. Keep a phone power pack charged up and available and learn to use the What Three Words app.

Winter riding poses its own set of problems but there are some advantages.

Here are some things to be aware of...

Cold saps concentration. If you are cold admit it to yourself. Pressing on while not being able to feel your fingers and toes isn't great. Especially when you need to use the controls. Cold fingers move as if they are in a bucket of treacle this is bad when you need to use them quickly.

Micro Climates exist – now I'm not talking about it always drizzling in Manchester or the continuous rain of Wales. This is about how tiny sections of road can be affected by shadow especially in winter. If there is danger of ice then bridges can be colder than the road because they are literally out in the open. Damp patches of road that are in shadow during the weak morning light may still conceal ice patches.

The low winter sun. Check your shadow. If you can see the shadow of your bike stretching away directly in front of you then **you can bet that oncoming drivers are being dazzled.** Watch for cars pulling out at junctions that may be blinded. You've heard of fighter pilots coming out of the sun to surprise their enemy this is exactly what you will be doing to the car driver.

Use heated kit. Heated Grips are great but consider adding a heated vest. This will keep your core temperature warm. With a warm core your body is less likely to pull the blood away from hands and feet as it tries to keep your vital organs warm and functioning.

Change your riding style to suit the conditions. Wet, leafy, cold B roads are not the place to be trail braking. Use the advantage of no leaves in hedges to get a good view around and through corners. Brake progressively before you commit to turning and keep all riding inputs smooth.

If it's too bad, don't ride. – take the car. Get a taxi, the bus or call in sick. Ask yourself is that trip really worth it.

So whether you ride in winter or you don't there are still plenty of bike things to be involved with. If you know you will be having a few months off then consider what you can do to get yourself back to your best.

Neil Jewell

Movember Challenge

Looking for King Mo

Whatever you grow, could save a Bro.

From the Movember Foundation: ‘our work in mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer has never been more important – and we’ve never needed you more.’

Here’s the challenge...

Grow a mo in the month of November and send a picture of your facial hair do to:
***southcheshirebikenews@gmail.com*, on or before December 1st.**

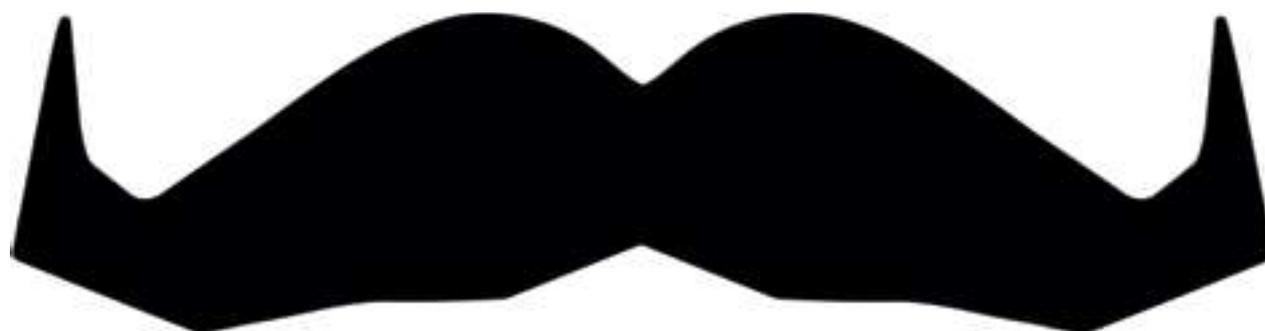
Pics will be included in next month’s edition. If there are enough entries to constitute a competition, the entries will be judged by the Committee and the **SCAM King Mo, 2021** will be named and duly honoured.

More information:

Follow the link to the Movember website

Make a Donation:

If you feel the urge to make a donation to the charity, you can do so directly: Follow this link to donate



Christmas Meal
Friday 10th December
Woodside Inn

This year's Christmas meal will be at the Woodside Inn, Valley Rd, Wistaston, Crewe CW2 8JU. Here are the details...

Date: 10th December with a 7-30 for 8-00 start

Dress: casual tidy

Cost per person: £19.99 3 courses, £16.99 2 courses - extras are an additional cost.

A £5.00 per-person, non-refundable deposit is necessary for each booking. Please will people let Geoff Highfield know as soon as possible with their meal choices and deposit but, in any event by no later than 1 December. The balance to be paid on the night.

Follow this link to the find the Woodside Inn Christmas Menu



Thanks to this month's contributors. If you have an item for a future newsletter, please send it to:
southcheshirebikenews@gmail.com