



In memory of our late, great, club President

# SOUTH CHESHIRE ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS Oct/Nov Newsletter 2024

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*The newsletter is a bimonthly publication. The next one will be issued in January 2025*



## News and Diary Dates

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

**Bid farewell to Chris at 12.00 on 3 December at Vale Royal Crematorium, Northwich and continue the celebration of his life at Hartford Hall afterwards. A group presence on bikes is not planned; a memorial ride will be held next year.**

### Social Rides every:

**Sunday 10.00am** Co-ordinated by Dave Coomber (01270569439)

Meet at Shavington Costa, Jack Mills Way.

**Tuesday 9.30am** Coffee and Ride, meeting at Costa, Jack Mills Way, Shavington, Crewe. Co-ordinated by Howard ([howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com)). Come for coffee and a chat even if you are not riding.

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### Forthcoming Social Events

**Socials:** Social second Monday in the month meetings will restart next year. Keep a lookout for an announcement in the New Year.

**Christmas dinner** – 9 December, Market Tavern, Sandbach. 7.00pm for 7.30pm. Spend a fun evening with your biker mates. See later in this Newsletter for menu and booking details.

**Big event** – Friday 21 February 2025: Steve Parrish, former bike racer, commentator and raconteur will be coming to entertain us. 19.00h, Sandbach Rugby Club. Tickets £30 including a pie, chips and peas supper. All profit will be donated to the national biker mental health charity [mhmotorbike.com](http://mhmotorbike.com).

**Triumph Factory Tour** – 12 March 2025. £30 a ticket. A few places are left. Contact Howard if you are interested.

*Howard Payne*

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

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



## Editorial

While we mourn the passing of our much-respected President we also celebrate a life well-lived. We will remember him for his friendship and his incalculable contribution to safer riding.

Chris had a no nonsense approach to committee matters. He was very supportive of the newsletter as an organ of the Club and promptly submitted his address and an article for every issue. His most recent story was the quest for the elusive Canfranc Station in the Spanish Pyrenees.

He was always ready to describe experiences from which we can all learn. An extract from the March 2022 newsletter recounts a valuable lesson. Chris's BMW had experienced a series of technical problems and he set off for the dealer for what was, hopefully, the final fix. We take up his story:

“There were no real dramas en route, apart from the wind increasing in intensity with every mile covered. By the time I arrived at Jefferies, it was blowing a hooley. I checked in and had a coffee in the waiting area. As I sat there, looking at the shiny new machines on display, a wheely bin blew past the window then the rain started. An hour later my bike was ready. Outside, conditions were now borderline hurricane and monsoon. I thought about waiting until the weather abated. But what if it got worse? I decided to go. I have ridden in poor conditions before but the combination of high wind and rain was a whole new experience. Negotiating the Bradford ring road was nerve shredding. At one point, when attempting to remain stationary at traffic lights, I was being blown backwards. Having survived that, I joined the M62 and was exposed to the open moorland. The wind batted me around like a piece of paper. I adjusted my speed to 40mph and took refuge behind an artic. Despite the screen, the movement from side to side was alarming and there was no respite even after dropping down from the summit. The battle with the elements was relentless. Having reached the safety of home and reflecting on the experience, I was reminded of the first question you should ask yourself whilst doing your risk assessment: is my journey essential? With hindsight, it was not; we do not appreciate the true force of nature.”



## Chairman's Report

This Chairmans report is one of reflection and remembrance of Chris Steel, our group President.

Checking back through the records Chris became a member of the IAM in June 1994. Think of all the riders he has helped over the years really brings home what a loss to the group and the community his passing is. He was hugely passionate about advanced motorcycling and "his" group. Always going above and beyond to help members and associates reach their potential.

I can personally attribute some of Chris's imparted wisdom to my own survival. That way he had of making phrases from the IAM book leap off the page and embed themselves deep into the subconscious.

Those words of his ringing in my ears, "what can you see, what can't you see and what can you reasonably expect to happen. You can see the aeroplane you might not expect to have a suitcase fall out of it and cause you to swerve. What can you reasonably expect to happen?" This has become a mantra of mine and it works in everything, not just motorcycling.

His passion for the group was perhaps only matched by his passion for the BMW GS, touring Spain with his great friend Ian and accumulating motorcycling paraphernalia. The latter of which he requested to be sold and the proceeds given to the group shows the true mark of the man.

I remember often pulling his leg about the GS and suggesting isn't it time he got a proper bike but I was always impressed whenever I got the chance to follow him out on the road. Impeccable manners, he exuded confidence and style and with such a true mastery of motorcycle riding that he elevated it to an art form. His riding style can be best described as flowing like water, smooth and swift. I will miss that.

Please tell us about your special memories of Chris for inclusion in the January 2025 newsletter.

Ride Free Chris, Ride Free

*Neil Jewell*



## Chris's legacy

At the Group's thirtieth AGM in March 2024, Chris recounted the origin of the South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Club:

"There are two members who were present at the group's formation evening at the Railway pub Nantwich in March 1994; namely Dave Coomber and myself. We were part of the Cheshire car group, and having gained a fair number of motorcyclists, Bob Higginbotham, the IAM regional co-ordinator, suggested that the motorcyclists should form their own independent group. Bob made the necessary arrangements. The IAM divided the UK into seven regions in those days and Cheshire was in region 5. We were the 213<sup>th</sup> group so our group number was 5213. In March 1994 our launch evening was organised and advertised. To everyone's surprise about thirty people turned up and joined, a fantastic start. But like all new ventures all the details had not been worked out. How were all these new members going to be trained, and by whom? Chris was still an associate in training but South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists was official.

In the run up to the launch evening Fred Dean had agreed to be Chairman, Dave Leader Chief Observer and Lorraine Rossiter was going to do the accounts. As for Observers it was a case of those who had passed the test were seconded to Observer duties. Fred Dean had a friend who was a publican and he agreed to let the group use his pub as our meeting point, the Hawk Inn, Haslington. The internet was just in its infancy so all correspondence was done by mail or phone calls. Luckily, quite a few of the thirty people who joined on the launch night never turned up to carry out their training, which gave the group time to sort out a routine. We had our social and committee meeting location sorted but where to meet for training and social rides? It was decided to use Crewe College car park on Sunday mornings. One Sunday morning college security turned up and told us to leave. It was private property, so we moved to the access road leading to the car park. Training was done on a one-to-one basis. My Observer was Derek Gray, who passed on his knowledge to me and in June 1994 I took my test with examiner Geoff Windsor. I passed and was the first test pass for South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists. I was keen to hone my new riding skills and



went on most social rides for the next few months. It was around September when Derek asked me if I would like to be an Observer. I thought I would like to give something back, and what better way than to pass on the knowledge that I had gained from Derek. Observer training was very different to the system in place now. It was a case of shadowing an Observer and interacting with Associates, then after a few sessions I had to go out with Dave Leader the Chief Observer and debrief him on his ride. Having satisfied Dave that I had the ability to recall the details of his ride and highlight the area of development I was elected as a group observer.

Having become an Observer, it was satisfying to assist in the improvement of rider skill sets. Dave Leader stood down as Chief Observer and Derek Gray became his successor. The training sessions were still a bit like when you were at school and it was time to pick a football team when two boys would call out who they wanted on their team. The training sessions were no different. Derek would say "Chris who haven't you Observed, and I would pick the Associate I had not Observed. The Induction evenings at the Hawk, were very much made up on the go. Having witnessed Derek do his best, I felt that although we were not professionals, we should be professional amateurs. To this end, myself and Brian Kitson another recently qualified observer, took over the induction and theory evenings, and introduced a structure to proceedings. We applied for and received funding from Congleton Borough Council to subsidise the cost of training local riders. This along with high profile magazine articles regarding born again bikers led to a flood of Associates. Derek stood down as Chief Observer and I became his successor. The next few years were hectic, averaging thirty to forty associates a year. In turn we set up an Observer training course, firstly with Nigel Curtis organising and then Pete Mathieson taking over from Nigel. The number of Observers increased and we could process all the Associates. Having been Chief Observer and Chairman for many years I stood down. My successor as Chief Observer was Chris Mannix, followed over the ensuing years by Mark Rogers, Dave Cox, Neil Jewell and now, in 2024, Richard Downes. It is testament to the dedication of all the members who have given their time freely to the group in all the roles: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee member, Chief





Observer, Observer, members, that after thirty years we are still active as an independent group and have not had to merge with another group due to falling numbers. To each one of you I say a heartfelt thanks. I have met many people over the thirty years I have been a member of this group. My life has been all the richer for your friendship, support, and company.”

*Chris Steel*

## **A tribute to our late President by his close friend, Ian**

The passing of our President is a big loss to our club and the IAM



Chris had a big heart with a passion for motorcycles and safe riding of which he gave unreservedly his time, knowledge, and skills.

His association with SCAM and IAM started some 30 years ago joining in the early days of the club’s conception.

Having gained his advanced riding credentials and wanting to pass on safe riding skills he trained to become an Observer and ultimately becoming Chief Observer

He was a commanding character who strived for correctness but was compassionate, understanding and had the great ability to bring out confidence in rider’s abilities.

He was very much a king pin of the group and determined for it to function professionally, which it does and with a resounding reputation. This determination reflected in the life of the group through its ebbs and flows which led to him taking on not only Chief Observer’s but also the Chairman’s role.

His contribution has ensured the group’s solid position today and for the future

He loved the comradeship of social activities, rideouts and trips both home and overseas



He has left a monumental legacy together with his friendship and company which will be sadly missed but also leaving some great memories.

Safe riding Chris.

*Ian Cunningham*

## Social Scene

### Events

#### **Social second Mondays**

As many of our members are rightfully spending the summer months swanning around the UK and the continent, looking after grandchildren, or spoiling their partners with exotic holidays, the second Monday in the month socials will restart in 2025.

**Christmas dinner** – 9 December, Market Tavern, Sandbach. 7.00pm for 7.30pm. 1 course £20.00; 2 courses £25.00; 3 courses £30.

Pay due amount to the Club a/c 36603198 sort code 54-10-17 put Xmas Dinner + your name as reference. Email [howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com) with your menu choice (Appendix 1).

**Big Event** - On Friday 21 February 2025: Steve Parrish is coming to entertain us. Steve, born in 1953, is a former motorcycle and truck racer. He won numerous titles and moved on to manage the UK Yamaha motorcycle race team from 1987-1991. He started commentating in 1985, initially on motorcycle racing and later to include touring cars and the Red Bull air race series. This not-to-be-missed event will commence at 19.00h, Sandbach Rugby Club.

Pay £30 to the Club a/c 36603198 sort code 54-10-17 put STAV+your name as reference. Email [howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com) for your ticket(s).

#### **An invitation from Camadar to attend a presentation on Pirelli tyres**

The event will be held at Astbury Village Hall, Pool Lane, Astbury, CW12 4RQ, on





the 27th November, starting at 7.30pm. There is plenty of free parking and free refreshments.

Graham B Board, Group Secretary, Congleton and Macclesfield Advanced Riders and Drivers.

## Features

### The Mighty CB500

As is Might 'e run again or Might'e not! Well after spending far too much money on spray-paint the answer along with a clean MOT is a resounding yes.

Those of you that saw the initial state of this bike:

<https://youtu.be/0Mzk5qkw7wU> may be forgiven in thinking that this is not the same one – I assure you that it is, well, most of it anyway.

After what seemed like a never-ending mission to get the bike looking nice, respray engine, frame and tank and get new decals and then make everything work it was time to get the bike MOT'd. I had swapped the tyres for some decent "scrubs" that I got from a CB500 racer and set off to the MOT station. After an initial look around the bike I was handed the result – FAIL.



Wait, what?

The front tyre had been put on backwards! Our well-known tyre man must just have been having an off day and I never even noticed the direction of travel arrow pointing the wrong way, so I put it down to one of those things and set off home with my tail between my legs. I

considered removing the wheel and running it back to our tyre man and getting it changed but then thought how hard can it be? I got all the spoons I could find



from the kitchen drawer and set about the tyre swap task on my own. After much cussing, I returned to the MOT station and the bike sailed through without issue. Now I could do some proper shake down trials.

I had a work meeting at the Old Lambing Shed in Knutsford so thought that would be the perfect opportunity to see if I'd left any of the bolts slack and actually see if the engine was any good. So, I did the right thing and absolutely thrashed the bike all the way there and back. Bearing in mind this bike had not been on the road since 2013 it did surprisingly well. The temp gauge in the dash did not work and the clutch was slipping under extreme duress. You have to test these things. <https://youtu.be/cGO4Jg1XMEA> The following weekend, I was due to go to Devon and attend Dave Thorpes off-road school and I had an idea to take the CB500 if the weather looked OK. A new clutch kit was ordered and I tested the temp sender, which worked fine, then the dash to discover some corroded contacts. I cleaned these up and waited for the new clutch to arrive.

I was due to go to Devon on the Friday, the clutch arrived on Thursday so I just bunged it in, had a sleep and then set off on the 450-mile round trip.

I planned on going down the A49 then the A38 to Devon. I left at 9am Friday morning and by the time I'd stopped for breakfast at Ma Bakers, stopped at Cheltenham J&S to have a coffee with a chap I know works there then have lunch I was behind schedule. I jumped on the M5 at junction 11 and headed south. Being a Friday, mid-afternoon, led to an exciting opportunity to test the CB500's ability to filter. The bike was half a wide as my usual steed, the GTR1400, so filtering was a breeze. The CB500 was in it's element, a commuter bike at heart, finding gaps that I didn't know existed. It passed the filtering test with flying colours. I jumped off the motorway at J23 to see my folks then back on again at J25 and on to J28 for my destination. <https://youtu.be/7XyPOGuwR6I>

The CB500 just lapped up everything I could throw at it and still wanted more. The trip home on Sunday was a straight run, M5 J28 to J6 then up through Kidderminster and Telford to home. It did 60mpg and did not miss a beat. The temp gauge even works.

A brilliantly fun, capable bike that will keep up with everything on the road, if



you get the engine singing about 8000 rpm that is. It's for sale now. I very much doubt there is a profit in it for me but that is not why I do it, is it?

*Neil Jewell*

## Rideouts

### Tuesday rides

Tuesday rides continue to be popular. More and more members are joining this group of mainly, but not exclusively, third age riders. If you are available on a



Tuesday, enjoy an advanced ride and like a good lunch then it is for you. Group size varies depending on individual availabilities and weather. Conditions need to be desperate to deter the hardier riders.

If you want to know how to join the excitement, and get your bike muddy, contact [howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com)

Bikes can now be purchased, ready muddied, a popular new line attracting much attention at Motorcycle Live.

We continue to honour Chris by getting out on our bikes, honing the skills we have learned and living the dream.

### Bike backdrop photo competition

If you have not already done so, pick the best backdrop photo from your 2024 collection, and send it to [david@creedy.net](mailto:david@creedy.net) before the end of November 2024. Please include a date, title and location. The winner will be selected by an independent panel of judges and a magnificent prize awarded at our next year's presentation evening.

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

Editor: [david@creedy.net](mailto:david@creedy.net)



## **Appendix 1: SCAM Christmas dinner menu.**

### **To begin**

Winter spiced parsnip soup, with herb croutons and crusty bread and butter.  
(Vgn)

Pigs in blankets with a honey and mustard dip

Classic prawn cocktail in a light Marie rose sauce with buttered brown bread.

Mozzarella dippers with a sweet chilli sauce. (Veg)

### **Mains**

Traditional hand carved turkey with pigs in blankets, stuffing accompanied by roast and mash potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

Pan fried salmon fillet with a herb crust, on a bed of crushed new potatoes with broccoli in a cheddar sauce.

Roast beef with Yorkshire pudding accompanied by roast and mash potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

Beetroot and butternut squash wellington accompanied by roast and mash potatoes and seasonal vegetables. (Vgn)

### **To conclude**

Traditional Christmas pudding, with a rich brandy sauce.

Yule log with indulgent chocolate and fresh cream.

Lemon roulade with cream and shortbread.

Trio of ice cream.