



Rob's glorious 750

# SOUTH CHESHIRE ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS October/November Newsletter 2023

## Contents

- News and Diary Dates.....1
- Lighter metal.....2
- Chairman's Report .....3
- Message from the President .....4
- SCAM Christmas dinner .....5
- Social Second Mondays .....5
- Forthcoming speaker events .....6
- Observer training.....6
- South Cheshire trip to the IOM 2024 ..6
- Tales from the toolbox .....8
- Picos Playtime.....10
- The Dynamic Duo go to Spain, part 2 19
- Bonny Scotland – a prelude to Spain.20
- Last orders for the club Christmas dinner.....24
- Advanced motorcyclist course dates, 2024 .....25

*The newsletter is a bimonthly publication. The next one will be issued in January 2024*



## News and Diary Dates

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

### Associate training

All group training sessions start at Costa, Jack Mills Way, Shavington, Crewe CW2 5UZ at 9am on the announced dates (see the course dates on p25).

### Social Rides every:

**Sunday 10.00am** Costa, Grand Junction, Crewe. Dave Coomber's Sunday rides will continue throughout the year, conditions permitting.

**Tuesday 9.30am** Coffee and Ride, meeting at Costa, Jack Mills Way, Shavington, Crewe. Come for coffee and a chat even if you are not riding.

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### Forthcoming Social Events

Join the Tuesday gang at **Motorcycle Live**, Birmingham NEC on 21 November.

**Socials** every second Monday of the month (except in Feb 2024) at the Duke of Gloucester, Beswick Drive, Crewe, CW1 5NP, from 7.30pm throughout the year. Come along for a chat.

The talk by Simon Carter and Barry Urand of Pirelli will take place on **Monday 5 February** 2024 at the Duke of Gloucester (the first Monday in the month).

**Christmas dinner**, Duke of Gloucester, Friday 15 December 7.00pm (Not yet booked: see p24 for **last orders**).

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For further information on social events and Tuesday rides contact Howard Payne: [howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com). For information on Sunday social rides contact Dave Coomber, Ride Coordinator, tel. 01270569439

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

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

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

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



## Lighter metal

Hazard avoidance is a science. We practice its application by envisaging ourselves at the centre of a bubble navigating through a series of fixed and moving obstacles. The aim is to ensure that the envelope of your bubble does not impinge on any obstacle at any time. While you may wish to pursue all possible solutions mathematically in terms of Newtonian mechanics, it is much easier to keep your eyes ranging ahead and apply an empirical projection to stave off physical interaction. You might be able to reduce the computational burden by defining the rules applied to moving objects but the problem is that not all objects know the rules and, in any event, few bother to adhere to them. If we could describe all movements using natural laws then the systems would be predictable. However, our experience of traffic is that the mechanics are overprinted by human and social behaviour thus adding a random, and invariably inexplicable, component. Chaos theory can be used to model such situations but that is not much help to a motorcyclist dicing with potential disaster. The real-world lesson is that any attempt to predict what may happen on a chosen path must take account of potentially random actions. The greater the potential for a random event along our path, the bigger the bubble must be, controlled by position and speed; if only there was always room to accommodate it. The corollary is that roads would be much safer for motorcyclists if there were no car and truck drivers using them. Maybe, once cars and trucks are autonomous and virtually independent of humans, our lot will be a happy one; assuming it is recognised that automation of bikes would be pointless?

The most difficult risk to mitigate is side impact from emerging vehicles or vehicles changing lanes. Research at Bournemouth University (Shel Silva) revealed that that a car driver's brain can experience saccadic masking (the brain fills in the information when moving the eyes from one point to another), potentially causing a motorcyclist to be obscured from view.

Psychology researchers in Australia have sought explanations for the disproportionately high number of "Looked but Failed to See" (LBFTS) crashes — those accidents where a driver checked for oncoming traffic or looked before



changing lanes, but then reported not seeing the motorcycle they crashed into. It was suggested that a recognized psychological concept called ‘inattention blindness’ may play a large role in these accidents. Inattention blindness is a failure to see an object in real life or on a display, not because of visual disability or too-brief exposure to the image, but because the person in question simply does not devote attention to that object. Just because people do not look for motorcycles it does not mean they *couldn't* look for them if they made motorcycles a part of their attentional set. So, how can we create the attention? One way is by changing our position on the road. When approaching a car in a side road I execute a “Crazy Ivan” (Hunt for Red October, Tom Clancy): a purposeful change of direction that draws attention to my presence by creating a WTF moment in the mind of the driver. Whilst eyebrows may be raised by this technique, survival justifies the means.

*Editor*

## **Chairman's Report**

Training for the year is pretty much coming to an end before the Winter sets in, although we do still have a couple of Associates and Observers who are still training and braving the elements. Some are about to complete the Advanced Test soon. We also have four Trainee Observers who are about to start their Observer training and will hopefully be qualified in time for our spring 2024 course. Good luck to all of you.

The induction evening for the Spring Course is now set for the 1st March 2024. If you have any Biker mates who are not members, why not give them some gentle persuasion and encourage them to sign up for the IAM RoadSmart course.

Recently, I was invited by Danny Sergeant to attend a presentation at The Ride Academy in Chester. Danny has established a charity called The Dr Steven Lee Foundation: <https://drstevenleefoundation.org.uk/>

The charity raises funds to pay for advanced riding lessons (predominantly with the IAM) for newly qualified motorcyclists. The first two sponsored riders were being presented with their IAM vouchers (one rider from Chester & one from Nantwich). It was good to meet up with Danny and hear the story of why he



founded the charity. I invited Dave Cox (ASDM IAM) to also attend the presentation. I also introduced myself and SCAM to the two young riders who will hopefully be joining us on the spring course.

My wife booked a surprise holiday to Gran Canaria leaving on the 19th October for 14 days which meant I could not attend the Regional IAM Forum in Preston on 21st October. Neil (Chief Observer) and Andrew (Club Treasurer) attended and no doubt will be able to fill you in with what plans the IAM organisation may have for the future.

As this is the last newsletter of the year, may I thank all the Observers and committee members for their continued hard work and commitment to making us all safer and more competent riders.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy new year!

Ride safely.

Group Chair & National Observer

*Phill Hamilton*

## **Message from the President**

As the newsletter is now bi-monthly, this edition covers Christmas and I would like to wish all members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I hope you manage to spend time with family and loved ones, and enjoy the celebrations,

I look back over the year and think to myself, did I manage to honour my New Year resolutions. Truth is I cannot remember what they were, so I will say, yes. I got my right knee replaced to keep my left one company, so I can now walk pain free. I replaced my GS Adventurer with a GS, which restored my faith in motorcycling, as the GSA, was becoming too heavy. I went touring in Spain again after three years absence, with Ian Cunningham. Just recently the R1300GS has been unveiled. Am I going to order one? Not yet as my GS is only six months old, plus the first twelve months of a new model always has teething problems. But yes, I will end up with one, having read the first few road tests.



Finally, I would like to thank the committee and the Observers for all the hard work and dedication they have put in during the year, maintaining and improving the delivery of the product we supply. Thanks to all the Associates who have added to their skill sets by completing the course. Well done, be very proud of your achievement and continue building on your new found skills. I hope to see you all at next year's presentation evening; details to follow in the new year.

One last thought, as we are enjoying the seasonal activities; let us raise a glass to the ones we lost this year, gone but not forgotten, still alive in our hearts and memories.

Safe riding.

*Chris Steel*

## Social Scene

**SCAM Christmas dinner** – Friday 15 Dec, Duke of Gloucester 7.00pm. A large number of bookings have already been received along with the funds. However, there are still a few seats remaining. If you would like to join this sumptuous feast, turn to page 24 of this newsletter, make your menu choice and inform Howard. Then, transfer your payment to the club account indicating your name.

### **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

### 5 February 2024 (first Monday)

Howard has arranged for Simon Carter & Barry (Baz) Urand from Pirelli to come to our meeting and talk tyres.

### 11 March 2024

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

## Events

### Observer training



15 national, prospective national and trainee observers attended the training session on 9th September which went extremely well. A big thank you to Neil for organising and to the observers who gave freely of their time. A good team effort. Four passed as National Observers.

### South Cheshire trip to the IOM 2024

Next year, subject to interest from the membership, I am planning to arrange a weekend in the Isle of Man and have roped in our Chief Observer to provide us with some hints, tips and, most importantly, a round or two of drinks as well. Please, let me know if you would be interested in participating.

I was thinking along the lines of a trip I did last year with Bruce Smart's group. Basically, it would be Friday to Sunday.

My initial suggestion would be to sail on Friday and catch up for a drink in the evening. Taking the morning ferry would allow for a short orientation ride in the



afternoon. A full day's ride would be planned for the Saturday with a meal and drink to end the day. Sunday would be to yourselves and the return sailing.

The ferry timetables are not published until the new year (except for the TT period) and was thinking of three options Early April, Mid July or early August depending on interest.

There are plenty of hotels and places to eat but if there is a lot of interest then I will look at making reservations at a suitable hotel and restaurants.

To give an idea of cost: 2 nights in Douglas is coming out at about £150-200 for the time of year I am suggesting and the size of the hotel. The ferry is estimated at around £160 (1 rider, 1 bike) to £188 (rider, pillion & 1 bike). Room sharing would reduce cost and there are often short stay deals on the ferry outside of the TT. I know a group of lads who took the overnight ferry Friday and it cost them £125 (short stay deal)

When I went in April this year, the ferry was £180 including an admin fee to change my departure time to later, my hotel was for three nights (Sefton at £250 pay on arrival) and I suspect that we are unlikely to need a hotel that can manage 40+ of us.

For a flavour of the experience please either read my story in the April/May newsletter (p12) or have a look at the following YouTube videos:

Bruce Smart:

IOM part 1

[https://youtu.be/U\\_k9Ju6O9s?si=j87D320BH4HInvO2](https://youtu.be/U_k9Ju6O9s?si=j87D320BH4HInvO2)

IOM part 2

<https://youtu.be/sKvNakGjP3o?si=dfxME0yzXKvzBeXP>

Any thoughts or suggestions drop me an email: [amgralton1989@gmail.com](mailto:amgralton1989@gmail.com)

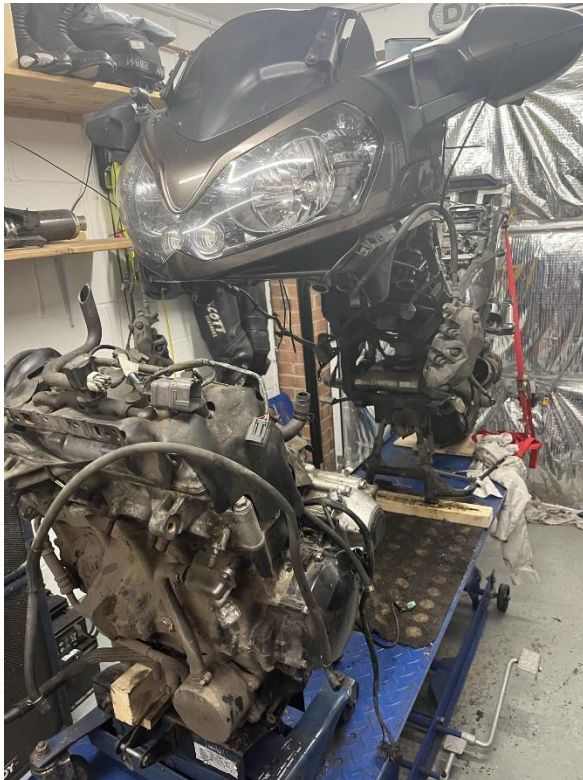
*Andy Gralton*



## Projects

### Tales from the toolbox

So... the Kawasaki GTR1400 has endured over 135,000 miles and has been brilliant. Trips to Europe, Scotland and a few track days, all taken in its stride.



I had been looking for a replacement bike since about the 60k miles mark, that's within budget, better and able to do everything and I haven't found one. The "within budget" is the issue.

As the miles clocked up, I got to thinking, what would the alternatives be and I decided that there wasn't a viable one for me. So, at 100,000 miles, I decided to adjust the valve clearances and change the sparkplugs and then, I thought, why not just refresh this bike.

I sent the suspension away to be refurbished which is amazing and I decided to replace the engine with a

lower mile version of the same. Thus, I would keep the bike but make it future proof.

After a non-energetic search of the interwebs a GTR1400 engine was sourced from Cheshire Bike Breakers at Ellesmere port.

With some actual folding money, I set off in the Jaaaaaag to collect the engine – they do ship but that would have been more money, so I took the car. The engine was in their stores and delivered next to the car on a pallet. I looked at the engine and looked at the boot of the car and immediately realised I'd made a huge mistake. Still, not to be beaten, I asked the man for some old cardboard and slipped the engine off the pallet, girded my loins and lifted it into the back seat of the car, threw a seat belt around it and set off home.



Lifting it out was a minor struggle but it was managed with only a slight twinge to some arm muscles; they started working again a few days later after the pins and needles stopped.

So, there I was with two engines. – I did consider “doing an Allan” and making a V8 out of the two engines but, not being very good with a hacksaw, I rejected that idea quite quickly. However, I was nervous about the second-hand engine bought from a scrappy for cash. I had been told it had done 21,000 miles but no proof was provided.

It sat in my garage for a good while, clawing at my conscience. I decided to give it the benefit of the doubt and took the rocker cover off. I set about checking the valve clearances while it was on the bench and treated it to some new spark plugs. Internally the engine was clean and my confidence was on the up.



I had a week of work booked and thought about a challenge to complete the engine swap in 24 hours. Because why not. All was going well until I hit a seized engine mounting sleeve that took 2 hours to unstick and then was not able to reuse it as the threads were all mashed up. I ordered the offending part from Cradley

Kawasaki and sat waiting for the postman to arrive.



Postie arrived later in the week and I set about installing the replacement engine. Everything went almost to plan and I am pleased to say that I had a running engine in the bike later that same week. It started up on the button and as I



write I have just returned from its first test ride, very satisfied.

I have a great bike with a fresh engine that I can add another 100,000 miles to in confidence.

If you want to watch the whole process then the removal video is here <https://youtu.be/Zo3l0DRplzc>

And the engine installation video is here <https://youtu.be/6W3VHwc4CJ8>

Was it necessary? Probably not. Did I enjoy doing it? Mostly. Would I do it again? Let's hope I don't have to.

*Neil Jewell*

## Features

**Teapot One**  
LIVE YOUR LIFE

**SIMON WEIR**  
WWW.SIMONWEIR.CO.UK

# Picos Playtime

## Picos Playtime

This is the story of an Englishman, an Australian and a Scotsman.



June 2023 was my first motorcycle trip abroad, to Northern Spain. I had decided in the winter of 2020 that I would tick this off my bucket list. I suspect for most, the first question would be whether to go solo, with a mate or join a tour. However, a few years of watching YouTube videos of Bruce Smart (aka TeapotOne) Spanish tours had led me to his tour company “chicken strips” and that was going to be the way I would go.

However, things moved on and post pandemic Bruce changed his offer, working with Simon Weir (Bike journalist and author of several books on best biking routes) so I wondered whether this tour would be like the videos I had watched

About a month before the leaving date, Bruce set up a Whats App chat with us all. Over four weeks we covered various topics:

- What bike we were taking
- Did we need new tyres
- What gear to wear
- What stickers we needed on the bike (blue UK £1.89 Amazon)
- What was the Spanish law enforcement like (learned if you wear glasses for riding you need two pairs)
- How long would it would take to get through customs (pre arrival estimated 2-3 hrs, actual 15mins)
- How to load the gpx files onto our various sat navs.

I confess that this bit was part of the reason for going with a company, in that I was worried about what I needed to have and where to get it from. The checklist Bruce sent certainly helped.

My actions were to check that my insurance provided cover to ride larger cc motorcycles and that it would include flying home if required. I ended up using Navigator insurance Voyager Plus, although there was not much choice.

For the bike, I had to have European breakdown cover which included repatriation of the bike if necessary. While there was a lot companies that were offering this, I decided to go with the cheapest familiar name “green flag” although most of the lads used their bike insurance company to sort it.



The day of sailing soon arrived and I decided to head down early morning and take the A39 Devon/Cornwall road to scrub in my new tyres (yes, I did give into the peer pressure).

I arrived at the meeting point with about half the guys there, waited for the remainder and off we went. Before we had got through passport control the first drop occurred; one poor lad forgot to put his side stand down, fortunately he was saved by the bike on his left.

The largest ferry I had been on before was the IOM. However, this one was on a much larger scale. Once on board, we dumped the kit in our cabins and met in the bar where we stayed until it closed. I got to bed around midnight and was up for breakfast and



before I knew it, we were entering port.

Leaving the ferry, after about 30 minutes of motorway we turned off to the start of the best riding roads I have ever come across and each day was better than the day before.

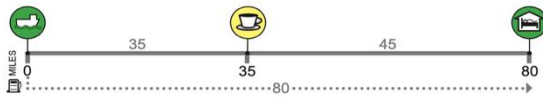
### Day 1: Ferry to Potes

Short rides today. Although it did start to rain the smile of the roads wasn't to be wiped away. Below is an example of the pack prepared by Simon, it also included, gpx files for Garmin and Tom Tom and some tank bag notes. All of it was fantastic, the second man drop off system was used and it worked well.

We arrived at the hotel in daylight and the organiser even offered to go back to the port in case anyone had left anything, fortunately, no one had.



### From: Santander To: Potes



#### Overview

Total distance: 80 miles  
Estimated riding time: ±2.25 hrs

#### Destination

Hotel Infantedo  
N621, 39584 Ojedo, Cantabria  
Tel: +34 942 730 939



### Directions

- NB: Start with a full tank
- From the port follow the signs for Gijón to pick up the the **A8**.
- Leave the motorway at **J244** for Cabezón de la Sal on the **N634**.
- In Cabezón pick up the **CA180**.
- **Coffee stop: Valle de Cabuerniga** (35 miles). Parking on the right, just past the turning for the CA182; no-frills bar opposite.
- Take the **CA182** to Carmona and Puentenansa.
- In Puentenansa turn left on the **CA281**.
- At the T-junction with the **CA184**, turn right to Potes.
- In Potes, turn right on the **N621** towards Panes.

### Notes

A short ride that starts with 20 miles of motorway to get clear of the city. Then we're into the Picos.  
Getting unloaded and through passport control is likely to take about two hours after docking, so we're not likely to start riding until about 5pm.  
If the ferry is late, delaying when we can get going, we'll shorten the route to save a little time, to make sure we're not riding as it gets dark.  
**Fuel in Plymouth**  
Please bring your tank before coming to the ferry port. There's a Sainsbury's off the roundabout where you leave the A38 for the A374 into Plymouth; if you don't want supermarket petrol, do a lap of the first (dual carriageway) stretch of the A374 to reach the Esso.

**RV in Plymouth**  
There's a big parking area before the port. Simon will be there from about 2pm. We should assemble and join the queue to check-in before 3pm.

That first night we ate at the hotel and which allowed us to get to know each other and speculate what the next day would bring.

### Day 2: Potes to Ponferrada



Our first full day started a little overcast, and we headed up a mountain side to the compulsory PICOS picture, although this one was taken on day five by one of the lads in the recovery team, but more of that later. On day two, cloud cover

blotted out the view until we got over the other side of the mountain. As you can see from Bruce's picture with the deer the view was not as good on day two.



### Day 3: Ponferrada to Lugo

We set off from Ponferrada in cloud as on the previous day. However, by the time we got to the other side of mountain the clouds had gone and I got my first experience of free-



flowing roads, that were smooth and race like. It was a welcome change to those in the UK but even more welcome was the respect and generosity of the Spanish drivers toward bikers.

Whether it was a little old Seat or large HGV, the drivers on Spanish plates would do their utmost to let us through. I must admit it took a couple of days to recognise that this was the norm.



Later we took a route that required us to use what Simon described as a 5-mile bumpy track which to me was better than most of the roads in Scotland's NC500 West coast section.



At the end of a great day riding, we had the joy of a great hotel location which was only 5 mins walk from the centre of the Roman walled city, where we had a great night but enough said.

#### Day 4 Lugo to Oviedo

Probably the best roads I have ever ridden, a combination of great tarmac and empty roads with corners that must have inspired many a track designer, mountains, valleys, dams and bridges. This day was so good that I am going back next year.



The evening was spent in the city centre, enjoying a pizza in a bar followed by people-watching. It was a friendly and perfect end to my favourite day. For a few of the lads the evening carried on until well after I was asleep.

#### Day 5 Oviedo to Santillana del Mar

Our last full day started as always, with all mounted for 9am locked and loaded. We started with a great ride through the valley and stopped for coffee before heading up to the mountains again.





Unfortunately, on the way to lunch there was an incident. As I came through a series of dip, crests and twists, I saw that one of the lads hadn't made the corner. His Pan Am was wedged under the barrier (fortunately one of the few barriered sections) and all I could see was Bruce looking down on him. I parked, grabbed my First aid kit and rushed to the scene. As I got there Bruce had nearly



completed the primary service and fortunately it looked like the gods had been looking after the victim. Not only had it occurred on one of the barriered sections, beyond it was 15 feet of land before a sheer drop.

Unfortunately, his ankle had taken the brunt. Initially I suspected it was dislocated but after keeping him on the floor for 10 mins he got up and hopped across to see how his bike was.

He refused to go to the hospital and was dosed with pain killers while arrangements were made for him to be collected and taken to the hotel. After lunch, Bruce and two volunteers were going to head directly to the hotel, while Simon and the rest of us would carry on, but we reckoned without the weather. Have a read of Simons blog for more. We got back to the hotel within 15 mins of the other party. The lad was looking a little bit off but he used his will power to get through the rest of the trip.

#### Day 6

The last day was always meant to be a short one. A combination of Simon's planned route not being available and that our wounded was looking ropey, meant a change of plan. I spoke to Bruce at the coffee stop and suggested that we needed to get to a pharmacy as all the pain killers I had given had been used and I did not think the lad would make it through the next 30hrs without something. I asked all the guys and we managed to pull together enough to get through the journey. He arranged for his family to pick him up at the port and the following day his ED visit showed a fracture tibia and fibula. He was put in a pot and had it plated a week later. He had the courage of lion and the heart of bear to make it to the port. I would not recommend it but it was his choice.

The trip to the ferry was pretty much a mixture of sadness of the trip being over, wanting to see the family, worry about our injured brother and the first leaver of the group as Simon was riding back to the UK after picking up his girlfriend from the airport.

The ferry home was via Portsmouth which meant that the journey was a few hours longer. However, the time went well and the lad managed to win the ships



version of Pointless. Unfortunately, we failed to win the big prize at the end (a tour of the bridge) which was annoying as we had identified, but not chosen, two of only three possible correct answers. (Question: Films with Arnold Schwarzenegger in the 80's,).

Finally, we landed in the UK and to make us feel at home we had to endure the joys of jobsworth UK passport control (helmets and muff off) and fellow British drivers ignoring bikers. We got through both and met up to say goodbye and make sure the walking wounded was picked up. For a professional version of the actual trip, the following link will take you Simon Weir's account:

<https://www.simonweir.co.uk/post/picos-paytime>



Will I go again? Absolutely, I have signed up for the same trip next year, another to the Pyrenees and my first adventure with my better half on our own. Rather than worry why I had not done this years ago, I am ensuring that I take all the opportunities ahead of me.

*Andy Gralton*



## The Dynamic Duo go to Spain, part 2

Tuesday morning, the sky was blue, the temperature climbing and Ian and I had had a good sleep. Having got motivated, whilst partaking of a continental breakfast, we consulted the map to work out the route for the day. We already knew it was 127 miles but what detours could we take to make it more enjoyable,



as opposed to cracking on down the main roads. The roads in northern Spain are relatively quiet, even the main roads and the scenery fabulous. I am always impressed by how good the roads are, although their preservation is helped by low traffic flow. We rode through places that, apart from names like Lumbier, Berdun and Jaca, meant little to us. The weather was good, the roads empty and we were at one with our machines – that’s what makes motorcycling great. We stopped for lunch and then continued into Ainsa which was to be our base camp in the Pyrenees for the next three nights. We found our hotel thanks to the sat nav, checked in and set off to explore the town. Ainsa is split into two parts, the old town located on a hillside which has become a tourist spectacle, with small restaurants and gift shops, and the new town below with restaurants and all the other essentials that go with modern day living. We climbed the steep stone stairway up to the picturesque old town. Ian and I enjoyed a drink whilst watching the world go by. I find people watching great fun, sad I know, but it is fun. Having satisfied our thirst for culture we

descended back into the new town to look for somewhere to eat, as our hotel only did bed and breakfast. Having checked out a few restaurants we took the plunge and decided on one with pleasant decor and an acceptable menu. Food was ordered along with a bottle of red. My order got lost in translation and I was served a large steak while Ian’s pork loin turned out to be mostly bone and grizzle. As my steak was huge, I gave half to Ian. The wine was palatable. When



the waiter came to take away the plates, Ian said it was the worse meal ever, it was inedible. The waiter looked blankly at him and smiled. We would not be going back and the tip was to get a new chef. We went for a stroll and stopped for a drink at another restaurant with food that looked more appetising which we would try on the morrow. Back at our hotel, we planned for the following day. I had seen a programme called Abandoned Engineering about a railway station, Canfranc Estacion, in the Pyrenees where the French and Spanish railways met, each with a different rail gauge. It was all change at this station during the war, Germany was purchasing materials from Spain and paying for them in gold, so the gold trains ran into the station. This fascinating place was going to be our destination the next day. Ian having finally voted his meal as the worst meal he has ever had, turned out the light and we went to sleep.

TO BE CONTINUED.

*Chris Steel*

### **Bonny Scotland – a prelude to Spain**

This Summer the annual bike trip with my wife was inspired by yet another Youtuber, this time Richie Vida and his trip to Lewis and Harris. I wasn't 100% convinced but it did mean that we would have to go on a ferry. Tracy has never been keen on water, to the extent she didn't even like walking on bridges or piers where you could see the water beneath. This I treated as dry run for a possible future trip to Spain together to be assisted by a combination of medication, good luck and a positive mental attitude.

Our trip to Scotland would consist of three parts, a visit to Dundee to see our eldest and her partner in their new home having moved up from Wales in March. Part 2 would be four days on the Isle of Lewis and Harris and part 3, four days on the Isle of Skye.

The trip up Dundee, was motorway to the border then A-roads to Edinburgh. The best section was the ride across the river bridge. Having opted for the early ferry to Stornoway, an early morning start was essential. We took the direct route (A9) most of which was done in darkness. From Inverness to Ullapool was a superb ride helped by the rain taking a break. We made enough time for coffee



and toast before the ferry loaded. This was my fifth ferry of the year but Tracy's first. It was the smallest vessel (so far) but it did its job and thankfully so did the weather and the travel sickness tablets.

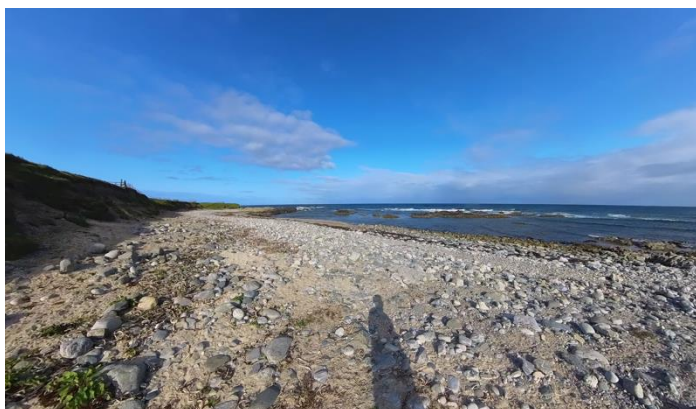
We landed and ventured into Stornoway and was surprised at how small it was. We parked up, found a coffee stop and had some lunch. I had been surprised that there were only two bikes on the ferry but was glad to see a few more around and about.

After lunch we popped up to the Museum as I was keen to see the Lewis chessman, although the exhibit that took my interest was the first computer on the island. It was the size of a fridge freezer and was used to produce the payslips at the local hospital.

Our base was on the north west coast and this gave us the first experience of the deserted centre of the isle. Relatively featureless but as Scotland always want to make it memorable it provided some 30 mph gusts of winds to keep me on my toes.



Over the next four days we toured the main highlights of Lewis and Harris, only choosing to miss out the bridge to nowhere. While I found the standing stones, the golden road and the contrast between Lewis's flatness and Harris' mountains enjoyable, I particularly enjoyed the beach at the end of the farmers



lane beside our base.

The weather was the best on our first day but, unfortunately, deteriorated each day thereafter. Indeed the "Caribbean" like sands of Luskentyre were somewhat less impressive in the rain and had



more of a feeling of school trips to Cleethorpes in the 70s. However, my favourite was the Blackhouse's and the story of the residents who eventually moved out in the 70s and fortunately, for them, not to Cleethorpes.



The final morning provided the final ferry test for Tracy. A smaller ferry and the shorter distance to Skye, compared with Ullapool, had me worried as the weather was not great. I was keeping my fingers crossed that the success of the first crossing would not be undone. My concern was unwarranted. Due to a combination of time in hand and hunger, Tracy had a light lunch before we boarded. This time there were five bikes in transit, all BMW but only one with the cylinders in the correct alignment.



Getting to Skye was unremarkable which was good for the long-term plans, (trips to Isle of Man, Spain and maybe even one day to Morocco) I was starting to dream of. However, the next few days showed a side to Scotland we had yet to experience, one where you were had been or about to get were being rained on.





Skye is sometimes likened to a miniature Scotland and I could see why. For the first time in three attempts, of planning, we were having the trip I had imagined.

Skye was magnificent and I can understand why it became populated by people from all over the world.

We spent a wonderful time, enjoying the waterfalls, mountains, and the roads. The traffic was not as bad as I had expected. There were lots of other motorcyclist, mostly Europeans with a preponderance of BMW GS's.



All good things must come to an end and so did our trip. We had planned a single day of travel to get home. An early start took us to breakfast in Fort William. We spent some time in Glen Coe. The trip was over, almost another 2,000 miles added to the K1600 and this time it had stayed upright.



Best of all was the greenlight to start the planning for the "big" trip to Spain and maybe a trip to the home of the TT first?

*Andy Gralton*

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





## Last orders for the club Christmas dinner

THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER at 7.00PM.

2 COURSES / 3 COURSES £22.95/ £25.95

Below is a simple version of the menu for ordering. At the same time as ordering please pay by bank transfer. When paying please include your name so we know who has paid.

Sort Code: 54-10-17 Account No: 36603198; Pay: South  
Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists

Pay-now-eat-later removes all the hassle on the evening as the club has only one payment to make on the night.

**PLEASE E-MAIL [howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com) WITH YOUR CHOICE OF MENU AND CONFIRMATION OF PAYMENT**

### **TO START**

SOUP - GOATS CHEESE – PRAWN COCKTAIL - PATE.

### **MAINS**

SEABASS – TURKEY – CASSEROLE – BUTTERNUT SQUASH.

### **PUDDINGS**

CHRISTMAS PUDDING – CHOCOLATE CHEESE CAKE – APPLE TART – CHEESE.



## Advanced motorcyclist course dates, 2024

All Sessions Start at Costa Coffee, Jack Mills Way, CW2 5UZ. Please ensure you arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the course start time with a full tank of fuel.

### Spring Course

Friday March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Course Induction Evening Venue T.B.A.		7.30pm.
Sunday March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Session One	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday March 17 <sup>th</sup>	Session Two	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday April 7 <sup>th</sup>	Session Three	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday April 21 <sup>st</sup>	Session Four	Costa Coffee	9am
Friday May 10 <sup>th</sup>	Course Theory Evening Venue T.B.A		7.30pm
Sunday May 12 <sup>th</sup>	Session Five	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Session Six	Costa Coffee	9am

### Summer Course

Friday May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Course Induction Evening Venue T.B.A		7.30pm.
Sunday June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Session One	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Session Two	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Session Three	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday July 7 <sup>th</sup>	Session Four	Costa Coffee	9am
Friday July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Course Theory Evening Venue T.B.A		7.30pm
Sunday July 21 <sup>st</sup>	Session Five	Costa Coffee	9am
Sunday Aug 4 <sup>th</sup>	Session Six	Costa Coffee	9am



## **Autumn Course**

Friday Aug 30 <sup>th</sup>	Course Induction Evening Venue T.B.A		7.30pm.
Sunday Sept 1 <sup>st</sup>	Session One	Costa Coffee	10am
Sunday Sept 15 <sup>th</sup>	Session Two	Costa Coffee	10am
Sunday Sept 29 <sup>th</sup>	Session Three	Costa Coffee	10am
Sunday Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>	Session Four	Costa Coffee	10am
Friday Oct 18 <sup>th</sup>	Course Theory Evening Venue T.B.A		7.30pm
Sunday Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>	Session Five	Costa Coffee	10am
Sunday Nov 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Session Six	Costa Coffee	10am

To enrol on one of the above courses please register with iamroadsmart.  
<https://www.iamroadsmart.com>