



Machine and mountain in perfect harmony

# SOUTH CHESHIRE ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS Aug/Sept Newsletter 2024

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

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

### Committee meetings

19 September at Warmingham Village Hall, CW11 3QL at 7.30pm. All members are welcome to attend and observe or, if you wish, to join the committee.

### Associate training

All group training sessions start at Costa, Jack Mills Way, Shavington, Crewe CW2 5UZ at 9am.

### Social Rides every:

**Sunday 9.00am** Co-ordinated by Dave Coomber (01270569439)

Meet at Shavington Costa, Jack Mills Way. Please note that the start time will change to 10am on Sunday 27 October.

**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 in October. Keep a lookout for an announcement nearer the time.

**Christmas dinner** – w/c 9 December, Market Tavern, Sandbach. Finalised date and menus to follow.

**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).

*Howard Payne*

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

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



## Lighter metal

I find it astonishing to see a rider carefully framing a picture of his bike totally oblivious to the surrounding magnificent scenery. In fact, I sometimes surprise myself by doing the same. The ultimate photo, however, is one which combines both bike and its natural setting (see cover photo). To encourage sharing of photos of bikes in the wild, the club has initiated a best backdrop photo competition. If you have not already done so, pick the best backdrop photo from your 2024 collection, and send it to me (david@creedy.net) before the end of November 2024. Please include a date, title and location. The winner will be selected by an allegedly independent panel of judges and a magnificent prize awarded.

My navigation seems forever blighted by my inability to coax the same information out of my GPS device that is appearing on the screens of my fellow riders. It is not just me. On one occasion, three out of a group of four were setting off from the same location to the same waypoint but all giving different directions. All devices had the same settings. Clearly, the answer is to insert bucketfuls of waypoints. There is a strong argument for using paper maps to support route planning and execution. Closed roads are a perennial problem which do not seem to find their way onto my GPS together with diversions although traffic congestion information appears via my Garmin app. While my GPS can be told to choose fastest, quickest, or most tortuous route it is sadly unable to select a route that avoids torrential rain, the curse of our changing climate.

*Editor*

## Chairman's Report

Mileage is dropping, and I seem to be spending more time wrenching in the garage than riding these days. The good old times of endless open roads and no traffic are starting to feel like a faded memory. Maybe we will get an Indian summer, and I can finally shift out of third gear!

Got some tough news, folks. Our Group's top rider, the one and only president,



Chris, is not in great shape. We are all revving up with best wishes for a speedy recovery, mate.

The IAM is on a mission to get more riders signed up, which is fantastic for all of us. It has rolled out a Rider Development Session and asked groups to give it a spin. We are on the list to try it out, but we are still waiting for our first associate to show up. The IAM are taking bookings, so we'll keep our visors up and eyes peeled for them.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to make it to the IAM Autumn Forum in Preston this September. It is always a great chance to see what other groups are up to and hear what is coming down the road for us and the IAM. Plus, the sandwiches are not too shabby! I am looking forward to the lowdown from our Chief Observer Richard and our unofficial sandwich connoisseur, Dave Lewis, when they roll back from the event.

As for our group, we are cruising along nicely with a few associates moving up the ranks and passing their tests. Observer Training is firing on all cylinders, too. Big shoutout to our three new National Observers who have just graduated under the expert guidance of Pete Matheson and Richard Downes. Great work, guys!

Congratulations to Richard Downes, our Chief Observer, who passed his Masters test with distinction.

Really pumped for the Steve Parish talk at Sandbach Rugby Club on February 21st, 2025. That is definitely a date to mark in your calendars!

Alright, I am heading back to the garage to keep making a mess of things. Remember to check your tyre pressures and watch out for those pesky potholes!

Ride safely.

*Neil Jewell*

## **Message about the President**

For those of you who may not have heard, the club's President and longstanding member, Chris Steel, has been in hospital for the last three weeks. He was taken



poorly after feeling not too great for a week and was admitted to Warrington hospital as he was finding it very difficult to breath. On investigation, several issues were identified along with a heart condition.

He was very low in spirits for a time but since the medication has kicked in, he has improved but is still very weak. The long-term situation and recovery period are uncertain but will take some time.

His family are visiting regularly and I am pleased to say that he is much more his old self in conversation and positive although very weak.

I have passed on the good wishes for a speedy recovery from the Club and kept him up to date with all gossip.

*Ian Cunningham*

### **Message from the Membership Secretary**

The Group records confirm that both the Group records and that of IAM DARTS reflects 115 members and 116 SCAM Members.

A new associate, Kyle Lawrence, sponsored by the Dr Steven Lee Foundation will be added once Neil has clarified his registration with IAM. The Foundation was set up in memory of Steven who tragically lost his life in a motorcycle in 2022 and it funds Advanced Rider courses for young riders who may not be able to purchase one themselves.

*Neil Jewell*

## **Social Scene**

### **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 not restart until October. Details will be announced at a future date.



## Events

**Christmas dinner** – w/c 9 December, Market Tavern, Sandbach. Finalised date and menu choices to follow.

**Steve Parrish.** 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.

## Biker blessing

**Biker Blessing**  
**Breakfast**  
**and Remembrance**  
**28th September 2024**

West Hallam Methodist Church.  
High Lane West, West Hallam, Ilkeston DE7 6JN  
WTW: ///helpful.unafraid.task  
Doors open at 9am for a free bacon bap and hot drink.

Time to meet up with friends  
and remember motorcyclists who have died this year.

Facebook: [Bikers Blessing Notts and Derby](#)

10am a short act of remembrance for riders and friends who have died  
this year and prayer of blessing for safe travels

**All motorcyclists welcome!**  
Supporting Derbyshire Blood bikes

10.30 ride to The Old Smithy Tearooms - Church St,  
Monyash, Bakewell DE45 1JH  
WTW: ///skyrocket.snack.trace

Event funded by Mid-Derbyshire Methodist Circuit

The Editor received the following note from the Rev Tim Simms who kindly wrote an article on bike touring in Morocco for a previous newsletter.

*At the end of the month, I am hosting a Bikers breakfast and Blessing at one of my Churches. I know it's not 'on your patch' but it would make a brilliant ride out for your group. Free Bacon baps from 9am. After a short blessing and time to remember biker friends we have lost this year we then ride to Monyash where we'll do the same again and buy some of the amazing food the The Old Smithie has on offer. I've attached a flyer. If you can't make it to West Hallam for the*

*start, perhaps Monyash is more achievable. We'll be arriving there around 10.30-11.00. Be great to see some of you there.*



## Features

### Serious UK Road Casualties

The provisional road accident data, [published by the DfT on 30 May](#), shows there were 132,063 casualties of all severities, a year-on-year decline of 3%.

There were 29,643 killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties, little change compared to 2022.

At 12%, the biggest percentage reduction in fatalities compared to 2022 was for motorcyclists. Car occupant fatalities fell by 5%, and cyclists 7%.

There was however a rise in the number of pedestrian fatalities – up by 6%. The RAC has highlighted concern over this rise, particularly given the context of changes to the Highway Code, designed to improve safety for pedestrians (and other vulnerable road users) which came into effect two years ago. RAC research showed that a third of drivers think pedestrians now face greater danger at junctions

Other analysis of the provisional 2023 data shows:

- 75% of fatalities and 61% of casualties of all severities were male
- 4% of fatalities and 10% of casualties were aged 16 years old and under
- 24% of fatalities and 29% of casualties were aged 17 to 29 years old
- 23% of fatalities and 8% of casualties were aged 70 years old and over

A Scottish publication on 2023 accident statistics highlighted two important groups of contributory factors relevant to motorcyclists:

- Loss of control, careless, reckless or in a hurry and failure to look properly, were the most common contributory factors assigned to motorcyclists involved in motorcycle injury collisions in 2023.
- Failure to look properly, careless, reckless or in a hurry or failure to judge others' path/speed, were the most common contributory factors for



‘other vehicles involved’ in motorcycle injury collisions in 2023.

Avoidance of the former is in our hands and mitigation of the second depends on our hazard management skills. If there was any endorsement necessary for advanced rider training, this is it.

## **Artificial Insomnia**

I was searching for statements encapsulating what advanced motorcycling means when I decided to search all available resources on the internet using so-called AI. According to AI, advanced motorcycling:

- *Represents the pinnacle of skill and mastery on two wheels. It is not merely about going faster; it's about achieving a symbiotic relationship with the machine, where every movement is intentional and every decision is calculated.*
- *Demands a deep understanding of the physics of riding, an acute awareness of road conditions, and a proactive mindset that anticipates potential hazards long before they materialize.*
- *Embodies a philosophy of continuous improvement and a commitment to safety. It teaches that the journey is not just about getting from point A to point B, but about doing so with grace, skill, and respect for the road and its users.*
- *Is not just a hobby, but a lifelong pursuit of excellence. It is a discipline that challenges riders to push their limits while always prioritising safety.*

The above might be considered a touch pretentious. I therefore requested a more down-to-earth definition of what constitutes advanced motorcycling, which I find acceptable:

*Advanced motorcycling refers to riding techniques and skills that go beyond the basics, focusing on precision, safety, and control. It is about being able to handle a motorcycle smoothly in a wide range of situations, such as bad weather, heavy traffic, or challenging roads, while making quick, confident decisions. Advanced riders pay close attention to positioning on the road, anticipating hazards, and*





*using their brakes and throttle in a controlled, efficient way. It is riding with a high level of awareness and understanding of both the bike and the environment.*

*Editor*

## **The CB500 Scrapheap Challenge**

### **Making a Pig's Ear out of a Sow's Ear**

I know not why I keep doing it. It is not sustainable and it is certainly a bad return on investment but I do love it...

Buying totally knackered, (not what the advert said) ready for the skip motorbikes and returning them to good health.

This time the project is a 1996 Honda CB500. What was I thinking, I hear you ask? I was having a quiet sit down and idly scanning eBay and up jumped a CB500 for sale, very local to me, 1 day left to run and within my sort of price range, which is the low end of 3 figures. I put in a modest bid and promptly forgot all about it. Imagine my surprise when the next day I received the notification that I had won the auction. What auction?? Oh, that auction.

Borrowing a trailer and the Missus's car I set off to collect the non-runner, spares or repairs, sold-as-seen, no-warranty-given-or-implied bike from darkest Crewe. I asked the owner of its history and was assured that, "it ran when I parked it" That is good enough for me and I loaded the little Honda on to the trailer and brought it home.

On closer inspection, I could start to understand why nobody else had bid on it.

Well, it's mine now and, having discovered it has been off the road for 11 years and with the phrase *running when I parked it* ringing in my ears, I set to taking the body work off and attempting to start the engine. Body work was not a problem; it was all held on with zip ties and hope.

I cobbled a fuel tank together, checked the oil and fed the carbs some dinosaur juice, found an old battery and thumbed the starter. Hey presto! It ran. Badly.



But it ran, immediately doubling its value. Mostly because of the fuel in the float bowls.

The frame was rusty, the tank was rusty the engine was bad, the plastics were cracked and broken. The bike looked like it had been down the road more times than a bin lorry, but it is mostly cosmetic and nothing hours and hours and hours of cleaning, repairing and painting won't fix.

So, in the words of Itchy Boots..."Let's go!"

As it Arrived - <https://youtu.be/74ksoJj53OU>

Will it Run - <https://youtu.be/0Mzk5qkw7wU>

Fixing the Fairings - <https://youtu.be/i6ukj2Wd7GQ>





# Rideouts

## Tuesday rides

Tuesday rides continue to be popular, the number of attendees varying from one to nine depending on weather and individual commitments.

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)



Look what I found in the Toy Box



Demonstrating weather management skills

## Wheels and water – a tour of western Scotland

The team of four gathered at Burton in Kendal services for morning coffee. Legs were stretched at Gretna Green and Hamilton services. My GPS leapt off its mountings on the motorway complex near Glasgow and nestled in my cables necessitating a one-handed rescue before it could dive to oblivion. After Erskine bridge, we turned off into the hills. Rest and Be Thankful brought us to a kiosk at the head of the wet mountain road. By this time my quickshifter had annoyingly decided to hibernate.

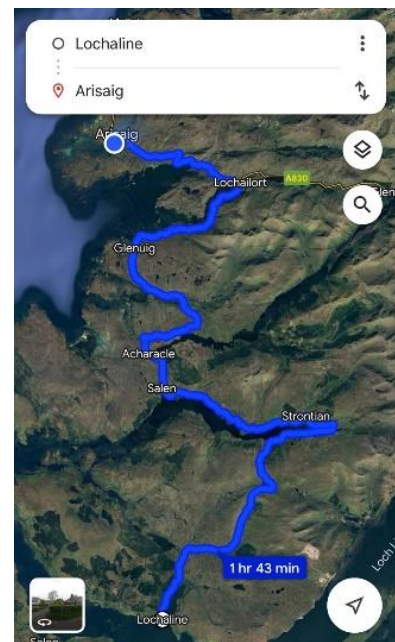




As the Portavadie to Tarbert ferry across Loch Fyne was not operational, a more direct route was taken to North Connel and the Oyster inn. Morning brought a short ride into Oban to catch the CalMac ferry to Craignure on Mull. Among the bikers waiting to board was another SCAM contingent.

Mull was damp to wet but nevertheless the route was fun and the coastal sections breath-taking. Most four-wheeled traffic behaved obligingly so as not to impede our enjoyment of the single-track sections. A characterless inn provided much needed sustenance in pretty Tobermory.

Regaining the tarmac, we rode to Fishnish for ice cream and a ferry to Lochaline on the mainland. The road from there to our lodgings in Arisaig was a 90-minute dream; dry surface, little traffic and flowing bends. The Old Library, disappointingly devoid of books, was memorable for its restaurant and food quality. It was also memorable for lack of flexibility over breakfast timing. Nevertheless, we arrived in Mallaig, refuelled and checked in for the Skye ferry without drama. On boarding, the bikes were carefully lashed down by the cheery crew. The views as we sailed across a sun-kissed sea to make landfall at Armadale were spectacular. What a lovely day which got better and better as we cruised past the imposing Cuillins. Challenged by over ambitious route plans, Uig was omitted as a destination and we descended to a heaving Portree for a relaxing lunch. A progressive ride took us to the imposing Skye bridge and the Kyle of Lochalsh en route for Fort William. We called at the Landour bakehouse for so-so drinks in paper cups accompanied by delectable cakes. Every tourist in Scotland was converging on Fort William. Food and shelter were provided by the busy Alexandra hotel which would





benefit from serious refurbishing but what lay ahead the next day countered the mild discomfort.



Sun greeted us in the forbidding pass of Glencoe, arguably the most dramatic road in the UK, not just for the landscape but also for the juggernauts loaded with logs hurtling along, hounding the rear bumpers of sightseers, terrifying the occupants. The Green Welly stop in Tyndrum was clean, charming and uncrowded. Refreshed, we continued our journey through the Midland valley, skirting the main centres of population and into the Southern Uplands to enjoy virtually deserted roads and the inspiring run into Moffat for tea and cakes.

The A74(M) led us towards Carlisle and our turning for Armathwaite. The Fox and Pheasant was delightful for its bucolic setting and warm welcome. The final day of riding took us through Keswick to Ambleside, Coniston and home via the A590 and the inescapable M6 which was amazingly tame for a Friday.

Any regrets? I didn't manage a full Scottish breakfast during the whole tour.

When the weather is kind, there can be few places in the world to match the splendour of the western highlands of Scotland.

*Editor*

## **Routes and trees**

### **Being aware of what is passing you by (with ref to the above article).**

Ordnance Survey data suggests that all the buildings in the UK - houses, shops, offices, etc - covers about 1.5% of the total land surface. Looking at Scotland alone it would be fair to assume that the figure is lower.

The point being, there's a lot of open space not far from us, and a good chance to ride into the remote.



Unless you try, you may still find yourself on motorways and trunk roads that will lead you through towns and cities. Routes, it could be suggested, are the essence of a successful tour.

There will be riders who have been followers of the routes that the Editor outlined in his piece. Some will have ridden the roads, mulled them over with fellow travellers and repeated the journey. These are the best routes, the ones with which you become familiar and start to appreciate their richness.

The second or third run on a particular route doesn't supersede the first, it adds to it. The roads and views reveal themselves in more detail; you develop a relationship with the route that cannot be done in a single sojourn. It corrects bits that have been misremembered and frames scenes and characters (people and animals) more vividly than can be done in a single outing.

Leaving the Isle of Mull on a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry from Fishnish to Lochaline, is the start of the route that could well be the where the soul of Scottish touring lives.



It threads you through valleys and, for much of its direction, alongside lochs until you find yourself beside the Atlantic coast. I can't think of a UK road that gives you the variety of altitudes,

colours, vegetation, land types and bodies of water than this route.

It is remote enough not to have been blemished by planters of pine, so indigenous trees have been left to become ancient. Stopping to take them in wasn't really an option - it would have broken the rhythm of the ride. But it is the trees and the deep lochs that stay with you when you're back and enclosed by the UK's 1.5% of urban spread.



If you've read this far you might be open to the suggestion that you **plan a route that leads you to the boat that spills you out into Lochaline. Take the road that runs around Loch Sunart up close to the North Atlantic and on to Mallaig.** And consider the question: **'Is this the best road in the UK?'**

Where you go from there is incidental, the beauty is in the riding.

*Ed Liptrot*

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

*Editor: david@creedy.net*