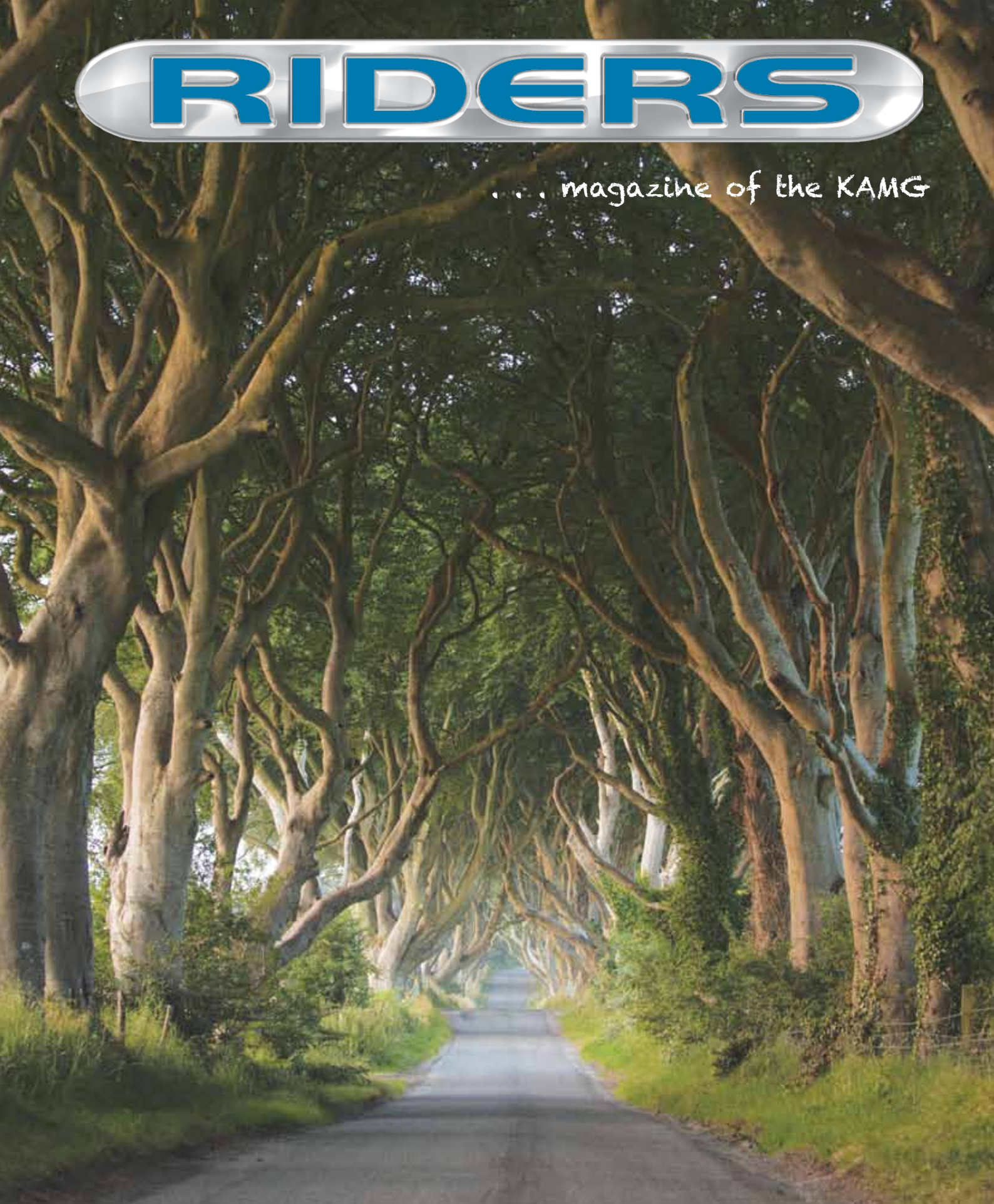


# RIDERS

... magazine of the KAMG



ISSUE 205 February 2017 • Registered Charity No. 1060837



**KENT ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS GROUP**





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<sup>†</sup>Test ride subject to applicant status and availability.



See page 8.

# THIS EDITION INCLUDES...

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Left: Ring of Red (see page 22).

Above: See page 24.

Front cover: – The Dark Hedges in County Antrim; one of the 191 best biking roads ridden by Geoff Curtis. (see page 20).

Magazine design and layout by John Gardiner.





Nick Farley, Editor

When sending articles for publishing in this magazine, please send images (with captions) as separate JPEG files.

Images should be in colour in as high a resolution as possible, preferably the original size in which they were captured. Please do not place images inside Word documents as this will significantly reduce the quality of the images.

Views contained within this publication are not necessarily views of the Editor, the KAMG or the IAM.

The Editor claims no liability for correctness of information, printing or typesetting errors.

The Editor cannot guarantee sunshine on club runs.

PS. Don't forget to drop me a line about your adventures. You just might inspire others to follow in your tyre tracks.

# EDITORIAL

## How Roadsmart is the IAM?

Each year we have to pay £32.50 to be members of the IAM and, apart from receiving *Advanced Driving* magazine three times a year, am I alone in wondering what we get for our money? From where I'm sitting it doesn't seem like much. The IAM or, as we're supposed to call it now, IAM Roadsmart, is all about improving riding and driving skills so that we, and those around us on the roads, are safer. Safety is a job which the IAM seems to think is entirely down to you and me – we must ride and drive better. But *is it* all down to us? How many accidents, I wonder, are due to 'faults' in the road? I have seen it estimated at as little as 7%, but I would bet that it's much higher than that if we could only get accurate figures, which, of course, we can't. My point is this: why doesn't the IAM act as our (paid) mouthpiece and campaign for road improvement or, at the very least, for proper road maintenance? No one else in Europe has to ride on the appalling roads which we have to endure. As individuals we have no chance of being heard on this important subject. Even as the KAMG we have no chance of being heard. But, as the IAM, a respected, national, long-established, high profile, charitable organisation dedicated to improving the driving standards of the country, we have every chance of being heard.

With the IAM behind us we would have access to the powerful news media of the country and, as a result, have access to and an influence on the Government. Once upon a time the AA and RAC acted as voices of the motorist, but since they are now straightforward commercial companies (not even British owned Companies either), they seem less inclined to fulfil that role and in any case they now lack the impartial weight necessary. This leaves us with the IAM and RoSPA, and as far as I can see neither is acting as a campaigning mouthpiece on our behalf to present our views to Government at all levels. Remember, as IAM members, by definition, we care more about, and, yes, we *know* more about, riding and driving in this country than the average Joe, which is why our informed opinion should be valued and welcomed. If the IAM gave us a voice I might feel as if I was getting something for my money, but sending out facile Press Releases telling us to mind how we go when riding on ice, doesn't cut the mustard with me. How do you feel?

## 191 Best Biking Roads

As you will see inside the magazine various of our members have been chucking themselves at the European scenery again and one other has just completed 6000 miles riding the best 191 roads in the UK. Yes, that's right, 191 roads. Interesting number that, 191. I wonder where it came from and who arbitrarily decided that the best biking roads in the UK numbered 191? You would have thought that he or she could have got it up to the round 200 wouldn't you? Anyway, Geoff Curtis, unfazed by such questions, has ridden all of them and it's taken him since 2002 to do it. (see page 20). Doubtless some of those biking roads are in Devon and Cornwall and you will see that a new advertiser in the magazine, Janner Kernow, knows where they are and is offering KAMG members a 10% discount on tours there.

## Easter Egg Runs

Don't forget there are two Easter Egg runs this month: one to Parkwood School as usual, and one to Demelza House. See Tracker and Calendar of Events on page 5 for details of both.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## APRIL

- Sat 1st IDCAM Contact Tim Johansen at idcam@kamg.org.uk
Sun 2nd Easter Egg run to Parkwood School and Social and Training ride. The Social/Training ride will start at the Oakdene at 9am and finish at Polhill Nursery, Sevenoaks, TN14 7AD, at 1030am. The Easter Egg run will leave from Polhill at 11am.
Sat 8th Machine Control Day
Contact Mick West at MCD@kamg.org.uk
Mon 10th Committee Meeting.
Sun 16th Easter Egg ride to Demelza Children's Hospital. Departing from Leybourne Lakes at 10.30am. ME20 6AA. See Tracker for more details
Sat 23rd IDCAM Contact Tim Johansen at idcam@kamg.org.uk
Thurs 27th Group night: Talk about SERV (Service Emergency Volunteer Riders)
Sun 30th Training /Social ride. Start Oakdene 9am.
Sun 30th Ladies' Training Day at Kent Fire and Rescue Road Safety Experience in Rochester. Contact Tina underwood 0771 847 5004 or tunder2122@aol.com for details.

All dates are subject to change at short notice so before attending any activity please check dates, times and location on Tracker for up to date information.

## MAY

- Fri 5th The Second Pork Pie run starts
Mon 8th Committee Meeting
Thurs 11th TSC meeting
Sat 13th IDCAM Contact Tim Johansen at idcam@kamg.org.uk
Sun 14th Green Badge Ride: Organiser required – contact committee member if you can do this
Thurs 18th Fish and Chip run: Organiser required – contact committee member if you can do this
Sat 20th Day Trip to France depart Eurotunnel at 8.20am. Contact Ian Burchell at ianandchris377@btinternet.com
Thurs 25th Group night: Police Road Safety talk. Magazine.
Sat 28th Vianden 2017 run starts
Sun 29th Social/Training ride. Start Oakdene 9am.

## JUNE

- Sat 4th IDCAM Contact Tim Johansen at idcam@kamg.org.uk
Thurs 15th Fish and Chip run: Organiser required – contact committee member if you can do this
Sun 18th Observer ride out
Sat 24th Machine Control Day
Contact Mick West at MCD@kamg.org.uk
Thurs 29th Group night: Triumph and Honda demo night

When going on a Club Run, Fish and Chip run or any club jaunt come to that, please take a camera with you and share some of your pictures with us. You can easily email them to editor@kamg.org.uk including some captions or perhaps a few words to share your experiences with other members of the club. Supporting the magazine is always greatly appreciated.



DON'T FORGET YOUR CAMERA



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HOT MEAL SERVED AT 6.30PM. £8.50. BOOK ON TRACKER.





# WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

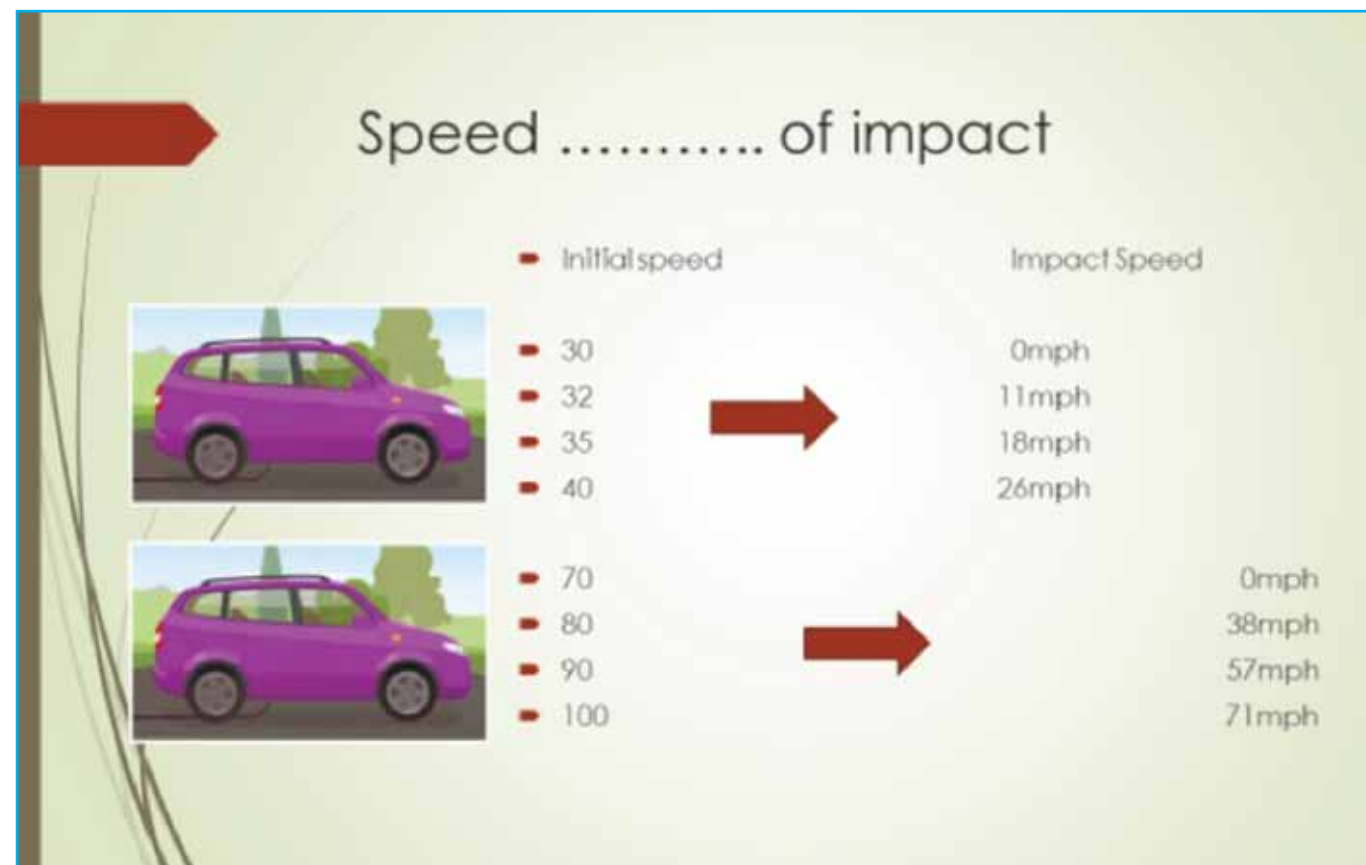
These words may be the last ones that I write as Chairman: the AGM will be taking place at the March club night meeting and I may well be replaced by another candidate in the near future – or I may already have been replaced if you are reading this after the meeting? I feel a bit like I am watching a repeated TV programme on Dave! Just in case this does happen I would like to thank all those that have helped me, and KAMG, over the past year. Without your support I would not be offering to stay on for another year in the Chair – so it may be your fault if I am re-elected!

We have had a busy year engaging with the outside world at the Kent County Show, the Merlins and Motorcycles Show and at the Maidstone Police Show. We have also offered free assessment rides to some 60 riders, and I hope that getting our message out to a wider audience continues in 2017. One thing that I would like to improve, is the welcome we give our club night visitors when they enter the Kentagon. We have a small team of folk, led by Matt Barnes, tasked to meet and greet new visitors to club night. Unfortunately, there are times when new guests slip past this team. Therefore, I would ask all KAMG members at club nights to say hello to strangers entering

the Kentagon, make them feel welcome and pass them over to Matt and his team to look after. Failing this, please introduce them to me or to any other committee member. First appearances are very important after all.

I had the privilege of giving a talk at the February club night about my work on some of the Police Diversionary courses, viz the Speed Awareness, RIDE and Mobile Phone courses, and I was asked to reprint a copy of the slide relating to speeds at point of braking and their relative impact speeds.....

Ian Burchell



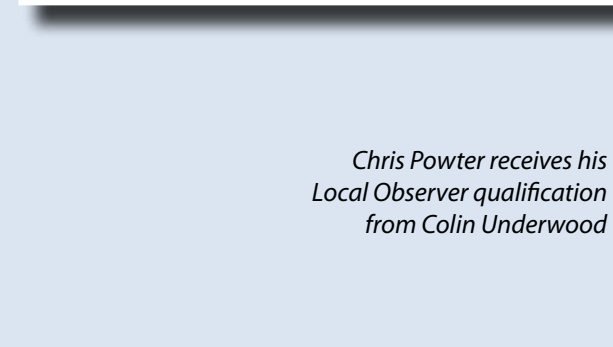
# TEST PASSES

Since the last edition

A warm welcome to the Group's new members and existing ones



*Congratulations to Robert Lawes for achieving his Masters with Distinction qualification*



*Chris Powter receives his Local Observer qualification from Colin Underwood*



*Richard Savage receiving Advanced Rider qualification from Tim Johansen*



*John England receiving Advanced Rider qualification from Colin Underwood*







# A LATE SEASON RUN TO AUSTRIA

## ***Dermot Horan eats sundaes in the Tyrol with June in September!***

My proposed 'annual project' of a *GlobeBusters* trip to Morocco via Spain at the end of September had to be postponed due to a lack of sign-ups, so as an alternate I asked *RideWithUs* to design a two-week 'self-guided' single-bike run to Austria for myself and June.

*RideWithUs* provided the itinerary, the Chunnel bookings and the daily routes, and they booked the accommodation too. The whole thing arrived in the post as a complete document pack, so I got on the laptop to convert the written route instructions into GPS files, followed by a session with Cha refining those. ('Cha', in case you are wondering, is *Charlie Ferguson*, not some fancy new nav program. Ed.) Fortunately, my two-year-old (and therefore 'pre-historic') Garmin had enough memory

to swallow the lot. The satnav was to prove essential to mission success, as it automatically re-routed us round the multiple closed roads and *Umleitung* (Diversion in German)) which we encountered and which would have utterly defeated and confounded any written directions, causing confusion and stress, as well as costing time and extra miles.

The outbound segment consisted of three successive 250 mile days; the first was across North France and South Belgium to gorgeous Vianden in Luxembourg, and the second sped us South-East around Strasbourg into the Black Forest, where, as always, we took the utterly incredible swoopy-swoopy-twisty bikers' dream road, the B500 *Schwarzwaldhochstrasse* (Black Forest high road), towards Bavaria. The next day, day three, took us into Austria, staying well clear of the dense traffic around the eastern end of Lake Constance. The weather outbound was wall-to-wall sunshine

with temperatures in the mid-twenties Celsius, which was brilliant for late September, though we were very lucky.

We stayed for a couple of days at the Weisseespitze hotel south of Landeck in the Tyrol, Western Austria, using this excellent hotel as a base for daily tours around those spectacular mountain parts. The Weisseespitze is exceptionally biker-friendly, with an underground bike garage, workshop, bike-ramp, compressor, jet-wash bay, drying room, its own gleaming rental fleet comprising the entire BMW bike range, and more mapping and local route advice than you could possibly ride in weeks. They even gave us a free upgrade with spectacular views up the Kaunertal valley from our now first-class suite, and the owner and head chef respectively took time for amiable, supportive chats with us. The ride-outs from the Weisseespitze were fantastic involving mountains, valleys and passes like the Pillerhöhe and Fern Pass, with coffee and lunch stops in picturesque, chocolate-box villages like Nassereith, with idyllic, Disney-like settings everywhere and yodelling or Sound of Music warbling optional. Despite ever more fantastic routes seductively beckoning us we unfortunately hadn't quite enough time to try for nearby Liechtenstein and Switzerland. But the sunshine and balmy temperatures, albeit slightly chillier at altitude, continued into the end of week one. How lucky was all this? Does biking get much better?

Sadly though, one morning we stood for an hour in the sunshine with an amiable group of local bikers at a road closure on the Hahntennjoch

*Two old bangers at rest*



high pass because two other bikers had apparently launched themselves airside at speed off the side of a cliff road up ahead – another “WAAaahhh” event. It's virtually a routine bike-touring hazard in these parts and the road was closed while the two were being rescued by air ambulance.

Leaving the Weisseespitze on day six saw us on a 220 mile schlep across central Austria to St. Margarethen in the South. On the way we had lunch at the, highest-in-Euroland, Krimml waterfalls, in the mountains near Gerlos, and later an afternoon coffee (and a Sundae!) in balmy sunshine on the lakeside patio of the Grand Hotel in beautiful Zell Am See. The

last hour of that evening run into St. Margarethen was across the Tauern and Twenger Tal passes and 'good progress' was made ('sparkle', anyone?) in spectacular swoopy-swoopy-twisty, zero-traffic, biking heaven, but it was getting chilly and was only about 5°C when we reached our destination in the looming dark.

Those high passes approaching St. Margarethen from the North were so good we aimed to ride them in reverse the next day, the first of four days that we were to be based there, only to discover that the daytime temperature at altitude in the high passes had dropped to -2°C. Our weather luck was now used up. Early

October in those parts is a bit hard and the days of balmy sunshine were suddenly over. The temperature had plunged overnight from a daily average in the mid-twenties to mid-single-figures Celsius even 'down low' at our Hotel Grizzly resort, not unexpectedly or unreasonably, I suppose, for the Austrian Alps. At least it stayed dry.

The Grizzly resort at St. Margarethen is another one of those specifically biker-focused Austrian hotels with excellent motorcycle facilities. Just like the Weisseespitze, they cater to the skiers in winter-time, and to bikers, cyclists and walkers in the summer. But by early October, apart from the hotel's own rental machines, ours was now one of only three bikes in the garage, which says it all for the time of year. So, keeping a careful eye on weather forecasts, we explored the region around St. Margarethen, just about squeaking in the high twisties of the Nockalmstrasse, Katschberg and Turracher Höhe passes when temperatures allowed. There was beautiful lakeside riding too with coffee stops in warm café conservatories and spectacular views around the Millstätter See.

We spent a fascinating couple of hours at the Porsche museum in Gmünd; a petrolhead's dream, and Porsche's first factory at the end of the Second World War (safely removed



*An Austrian hazard*



from the Allies' Stuttgart and Munich bombing). Visions that we also had of a possible day's punt south as far as Italy or Slovenia, were thwarted by insufficient time and dodgy cold weather conditions.

Day 11 saw us clearing out of St. M just ahead of near 'no-go' cold weather (phew!), and bypassing the adjacent Grossglockner this time (too c-c-cold). We swooped 'around the corner' at Zell Am See again, yomping over some ch-ch-chilly mountain-or-other and past Innsbruck to picture-postcard Mittenwald in Bavaria. Then from Mittenwald, on a cold and slightly damp day, number 12 of our magical mystery tour, we made our way by twisties (thanks to multiple

Mittenwald  
(Christoph Schauerham)



road closures and *umleitungen*), out past me' ould stomping-ground, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, to Fohrenbuhl in the Black Forest. Again, we stayed well clear of the notorious traffic and gridlock around Lake Constance.

Another 250-miler on day 13 returning along the fabulous B500 (yesss!), followed by a motorway blast, and then across the Eastern bit of France that sticks into Germany (Alsace / Lorraine) and which duly got us back to the bikers' magnet, Vianden. Saturday night at our usual Belle Vue hotel was crammed with coach-loads of Dutch visitors, but we managed to blag a top-floor suite, while the bike was toasty in the

underground garage with a dozen others.

The final day, day 14, was a relatively easy and straightforward blitz mostly on dual carriageways and motorways to Calais for a mid-afternoon Chunnel. A pretty boring last day blat across South Belgium and Northern France, except of course initially on Luxembourg's delightful twisty-smoothies. For once, and nowadays remarkably, we rolled from check-in on to the Chunnel train almost without stopping despite the 'migrant activity' forecasts of doom.

So to summarise: it was a weather risk which we just about got away with and I'll aim to keep it safely

inside September next time. The ol' GS lolloped up the 2616 miles, two-up with gear, at 55.1 MPG without missing a beat. Luxembourg and Austria were particularly spectacular, as always. Germany – especially the B500 and Bavaria – was typically excellent. France and Belgium were 'a means to an end' this time, which is in no way to diminish how good those countries actually are, given time to explore their delights. Fair dues to *RideWithUs*, the hotels were all of a high standard, and all biker-friendly. A sprinkling of free upgrades was the icing on the cake.

This was an excellent and highly worthwhile last-minute run just before winter's onset, as per this write-up's title. Next time we'll be going earlier in the year though, and with heated vests. As always, I'll be only too happy to 'guide' for another one, and for only a nominal fee by way of keeping me hydrated with après-biking beers.



The Weissespitze Hotel

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# ROAD RAGE PART II



Left a SCRIM. Above a Road Assessment Vehicle.

## OR WHAT IS A SIDEWAY-FORCE COEFFICIENT ROUTINE INVESTIGATION MACHINE?

"Slow to chide and swift to bless" is a line from a hymn which I seem to remember from my school days, and whether you are a hymn singer or not you would probably admit that on the whole it's a pretty good philosophy to adopt in life, but when it comes to road works I find my slowness to chide being sorely tested. In fact, I'm quite the opposite: I'm bloody quick to chide when the repairers of the roads of Kent are under discussion. Bikers are more vulnerable than any other road users to the er... 'inconsistent' road surfaces which we encounter, and in the last two issues of *Riders* we have had a bit of a rant about the roads in Kent. I thought, therefore, that I should get a counterbalancing view from Kent County Council and so it was that I had a meeting with Toby Howe, Senior Highway Manager at Kent County Council, to find out why our roads are falling to bits.

If you don't want to read any further, the short answer to that question is money, or, more accurately, *lack* of money. Surprised? No, I thought not. The roads' budget in Kent is just over 3% of the total budget or, put another way, it's buggar all.

Let's start by getting that 3% into perspective: the KCC is responsible for every inch of every single road in the county, apart from the motorways and the A2 which are the responsibility of the Highways Agency. That means that the KCC has nearly 5500 miles of road to look after. That's 5500 miles worth of tar, gravel, tarmac, kerbs, armco,

traffic lights, signs, roundabouts, white lines, yellow lines, salt, grit, bridges and...well, anything else you can think of. Kent is tiny; it is only about 60 miles across at its widest East to West point and about 35 miles North to South and yet in that minuscule area there are nearly five and a half thousand miles of road crying out for care. FIVE AND A HALF THOUSAND MILES is more crow-flying miles than the distance from the very top to the very bottom of Africa, and all crammed into tiny Kent.

Now, if you imagined, as I must admit I did, that the reason that the Kentish roads are in such a shocking state is because the chaps at the KCC are sitting around in the office smoking cigars with their feet up and playing battleships all day long as the roads turn to beach beneath our buckled wheels, you'd be quite wrong. There's blokes out there all the time checking stuff and deciding what needs to be done and how quickly it needs to be done, and yes, yes, they are fully aware that it *all* needs to be done and it all needs to be done before the end of next week at the latest. But, sadly, the reality of the 3% budget kicks in and repair priorities are based on money rather than whether you or I are going to fall into a canyon one dark night.

Toby Howe has been in this business for a long time and admits frankly that today he can't begin in his wildest dreams to think of doing the sort of things which would have been routine twenty years ago; there's simply not enough money.



Huge old holes in the middle of a Kentish corner.



A corner on the busy Tenterden Cranbrook road. It's been like this for years with degrading trenches on both sides of the road which are impossible to avoid and which go on for miles.

Successive governments have been cutting the amount of funding for roads for years, and roads are expensive things to look after. Consider this: it costs about £45 per square metre to do the very best five-star re-surfacing job; you know, where they strip the old surface right off and lay that super grippy, black stuff that we really like. Now do the sums: those 5500 miles convert to about 44 million square metres of road and at 45 quid a square metre it's going to take £2 billion to resurface the whole lot with the best black stuff. And remember it does *all* need resurfacing *this week*, we've already agreed that. The trouble is that the KCC's total budget for absolutely everything is less than two billion pounds and the roads are only going to get 3% of it anyway. Doesn't look very promising does it?

Let's look on the positive side of the ledger and see what is happening to put things right. For a start there are twenty Highway Inspectors inspecting the Kentish highways all day, every day of the week, logging what's wrong and deciding the priorities for putting things right. It is these inspectors who have within their gift the magic white spray of hope which signifies that a hole has been officially recognised and deemed repair-worthy. There doesn't seem to be a universally agreed specification for the point at which a minor hole becomes a fully-fledged, grown-up pothole with voting rights, but in Kent to achieve majority they must be 50mm deep, or two inches in old money. In addition to inspectors there are also Highway Stewards who respond to calls from the public about potholes or other road dangers.

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Left: Uncomfortable for cars but potentially lethal for bikes.

Above: A trench separating from the surrounding road but apparently not yet a white paint job!

Right: There's thousands of these. Why?



On receiving a call a steward will go to investigate and decide whether a repair is necessary and how urgent it is.

A really dangerous hole can be repaired within two hours, but other less dangerous ones can wait for up to ninety days for repair.

Some of the most dangerous hazards for motorcyclists are those canyons and cracks which run *along* the road rather than a single hole in one position. These hazards represent no more than discomfort for car drivers but for us they can be wheel-grabbingly lethal. They happen when the edges of an old patched trench become separated from the surrounding road surface and I was keen to know from Toby why this happens and whose responsibility it is. It's the 'utilities' who dig the trenches and in an emergency they can just turn up and dig a hole even if the poor old KCC has just spent a fortune relaying the road only the day before. Under normal circumstances, however, the Council can and does prevent the utilities from digging up a road for a period of a year after resurfacing, and after that the digger-uppers have to get a permit to carry out routine work, and they get fined if they take too long doing that work. More to the point, it is the responsibility of the diggers to ensure that the carriageway is properly reconstituted after they have dug it up. After a year, however, any deterioration in the road surface as a result of a trench degrading reverts to being the responsibility of the KCC. Some local authorities 'overband' the cracked joints at old trench edges, but Toby Howe explained that Kent has not done this because such overbanding is very slippery and some years ago there was a serious motorcycle accident as result. The good news is that they are testing a new non-skid mix which will allow them to overband and fill these dangerous trench edge cracks and gulleys. Let's hope that happens sooner rather than later. They are also testing non-skid manhole covers. But why haven't manhole covers always been non-skid? It doesn't require 21st century, nor even 20th

century, technology to do that. Once again, let's hope they come in to use quickly.

Finally, I asked Toby why it is that sometimes we see perfectly good roads being resurfaced when a nearby road which is pitted with cracks and potholes is left unrepaired. Apparently it's because what may appear to be all right on the surface when subjected to a KCC inspector's Mk I Eyeball Test, is not OK when more scientific testing is carried out. Furthermore, it may surprise you to know that it's not only motorbikes that are testing the slipperiness of Kent's roads in the wet, there is also a *Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine* (a SCRIM) doing it too! This amazing vehicle and its close mate the Road Assessment Vehicle are driving around measuring whether a road surface has the required level of skid resistance, and whether some obvious surface failure is just that, a simple surface failure, or whether it is due to more serious deeper-rooted trouble in the road's sub-structure. Such faults, when detected, get priority treatment and that means that some superficially 'good' roads get resurfaced when other roads are left untouched.

It is clear then, that the Highways Dept of the KCC is fully aware that its roads are perhaps not in the peak of condition and would like to do more to improve the situation but, frankly, until there is more money available the situation is not going to improve and, I sense, could deteriorate further. And that's where we come in: we need to care more about whom we vote for in local elections and we need to make sure that our Council members know that we think that expenditure on roads is important. In the meantime make sure that you report potholes to the KCC. However, I must say that a dangerously potholed junction near to me where the A28 meets the A268 was reported on April 19th 2016 and as I write, 233 days later, it hasn't been repaired or even sprayed with the white paint of eternal hope and optimism.

NF

Report potholes <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>  
Interesting KCC website with all sorts of information about the roads, roadworks and potholes:  
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/roads/potholes>

# BAVARIA AND BACK ON A BAYERISCHE MOTOREN WERKE MOTORADD

## THE CHAIRMAN GETS HIGH AND CHRISTINE HAS TO SIT DOWN

For 2016, Christine and I decided to take our biking holiday to Bavaria and Salzburg travelling on a direct route dictated by our Garmin satnav, which was set to avoid motorways. This meant riding about 150 miles a day and stopping overnight at Saint-Quentin and Nancy in France, and Freudenstadt in the Black Forest, before arriving at Garmisch-Partenkirchen where we had booked an apartment for eight nights. The ride through France, Belgium and Germany was marked by warm dry days and lots of lovely scenery, particularly in the Black Forest region. Our Garmisch apartment was in a quiet suburb just a 20 minute walk from the centre of town along a river side footpath. It consisted of a basement bedroom (!), a kitchen and an open-plan living and dining room, and a communal garden area. The landlady, couldn't do enough to look after us, even offering to do our laundry one day, especially when she found out we liked dogs, and hers seemed to obey me.

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is a very clean and tidy town and is a regular tourist attraction. It is surrounded by hills and is well worth a visit if you are in the area. We were there when they were holding open air concerts and it was very pleasant to sit in a park on a summer evening listening to the big band sounds of a German Oompah band. It was particularly funny on one evening when one of the local ladies, all dressed up to the nines, and probably having had one sherry too



The Plansee

many, entertained us all to some very strange impromptu dance moves. Not sure how Len Goodman would have scored it, but for comedic value we gave her a well-deserved nine. At weekends the main road through the town was full of motorcyclists passing through to ride some of the fantastic roads in the area. My favourite was the St2060 from Ettal to Reutte via the picturesque Plansee. The St2060 is a well-surfaced twisty road that has hairpin bends, long sweeping curves, beautiful views and just two 100 metre straights. At the Reutte end of the road we encountered the Highline 179 suspension footbridge, which is 376 feet above the valley floor, and at 1329 feet long is the longest pedestrian suspension bridge in the world. And yes, we did visit it, and we strolled across it. Wobbly would be an understatement, but once we got

our sea legs the views were stunning particularly as the footplate was a see-through grille and the fences were chain-link.

Another wonderful viewpoint, this time over Garmisch, was when we went up the Wank mountain cable car one morning and apparently the







country back to Calais, stopping off at Regensburg, an attractive medieval town centre complete with a large market and visiting fun fair, then Jasseron, Nancy and Mauberge. 2,500 miles averaging 50 mpg. Riding across country, as opposed to using the Autoroutes, can be really enjoyable. Yes, it does increase journey times, but you see a lot more of the country, you can stop off to visit sights whenever the fancy takes you and it can be quite relaxing, much more so than riding a motorway. Time to start planning for next year – Portugal and northern Spain beckon.

The trip was undertaken on our new bike, a BMW K1600GT SE with less than 700 miles on the clock when we set out. According to Christine it's

one of the most comfortable bikes we have ever owned and is on a par with another favourite, the FJR1300. It dealt with the two up, full luggage riding without any hesitation, hardly noticing the added load – but then again it is a 1600cc six cylinder engine. It was perfectly at home trickling around town or going a bit quicker on open roads, and we also managed to get to 135mph, fully laden, on an unrestricted German Autobahn! It has lots of toys and gadgets from heated seats and handlebars, to on-board radio and USB port, electronically controlled suspension, a variety of warnings on the electronic dashboard, plus power and traction settings. And all that is added to unlimited, ridiculously smooth power and the ability to go round corners, and still average 50 mpg. It is big and heavy to push around but I did a Machine Control Day at Ebbsfleet and managed to complete the cone courses without too much difficulty. A mighty fine machine.

Ian Burchell



Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

night before they had held an open air concert at the summit. They regularly hold an open air cinema during the summer months too and obviously nobody leaves any rubbish up there as it was spotless when we visited, as was the whole area – unlike the UK.

After a week of Bavarian and Austrian roads and views, German hospitality, large portions of food (they do like their meat) and cakes, we moved on to Salzburg for a three night stay in a hotel 20 minutes from the city centre. We chose Salzburg as we have been to Austria a few times on the bike but never to this old and scenic town. I have to say it did not disappoint even though it did rain whilst we were there. The castle on the hill in particular afforded great views across the town and the Salzach River. The local area was also pretty for riding and we even managed to fit in a visit to the Red Bull HQ, just outside of the town, where they store their fleet of aircraft in a modern, futuristic hangar and have a display of their cars, bikes and other exhibits. It was free to enter and well worth a visit.

After our time in Salzburg we finished our holiday by travelling cross



Above: The Highline 179 suspension bridge, and below: The Town Hall at Nancy.



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# A MASTER'S TALE

*In which Rob Lawes distinguishes himself*

My reason for wanting to do the 'Masters' was to try and take my riding skills to the next level; to improve. I reasoned that even if I didn't pass, I would still benefit from the experience. So it was that sometime early in 2016 I asked Colin Underwood, our then newly elected Chief Observer, if I could do my 'Masters' training, even though I wasn't an observer. Yes, of course I could and he volunteered to mentor me. A few weeks later we met up in Essex and did a two hour stint on mostly unfamiliar (to me) 'A' and 'B' roads. The next outing would be dual carriageways plus 'A' and 'B' roads again. Colin generally added

another element to the session such as roundabouts or filtering, and most sessions would be two hours or so of riding followed by a debrief when he would ask me why I had stopped in a particular position, or why I hadn't overtaken the silver car, or why I hadn't moved out earlier and so on. "Try doing it like this," he would say, or he would give an explanation, or refer to Roadcraft. He often asked too if I was satisfied with his observing and mentoring skills; with me being his first Masters candidate, it was a learning curve for both of us.

A few days after each ride, sometimes even the same day, I would receive a

thorough written summary of my ride highlighting the good and bad, also what was in need of attention and practice. In fact, Colin was so keen that on one Saturday, after he had already done some observing and other KAMG things in the morning, he felt he needed to do a bit more, so he gave me a call. I met up with him for another intense session on single track stuff, getting me to use the limit point to the max, "Always being able to stop in the distance you can see to be clear on your own side of the road," and "slow in fast out!" This I would practice on my own at every opportunity, even in the rain, so eventually I felt comfortable. The idea is to ride quicker than necessary so that when riding normally it feels comfortable. I hope that makes sense.

On the first few outings with Colin I would start to lose concentration towards the end of the session and he could always pick up on this because of my 'lacklustre' riding - no sparkle! But after possibly my fourth outing and during the debrief Colin uttered the magic words "that ride had sparkle," music to my ears.

Then came the check run with Trevor Shearsmith, about one hour forty five minutes around Kent encompassing all types of roads and traffic conditions. At the debrief I got the regular leading question: "How do you think that went?"

"Very well, apart from one or two minor issues," I replied.

The detail of the debrief was at a different level and by the end of it I felt rather deflated. Then a few days later I received Trevor's marked report, each element being given a score with comments, followed by a summary of the ride in general. This ride he reminded me was scored at 'Masters' level so overall the ride was pretty good, with a few things to work on.

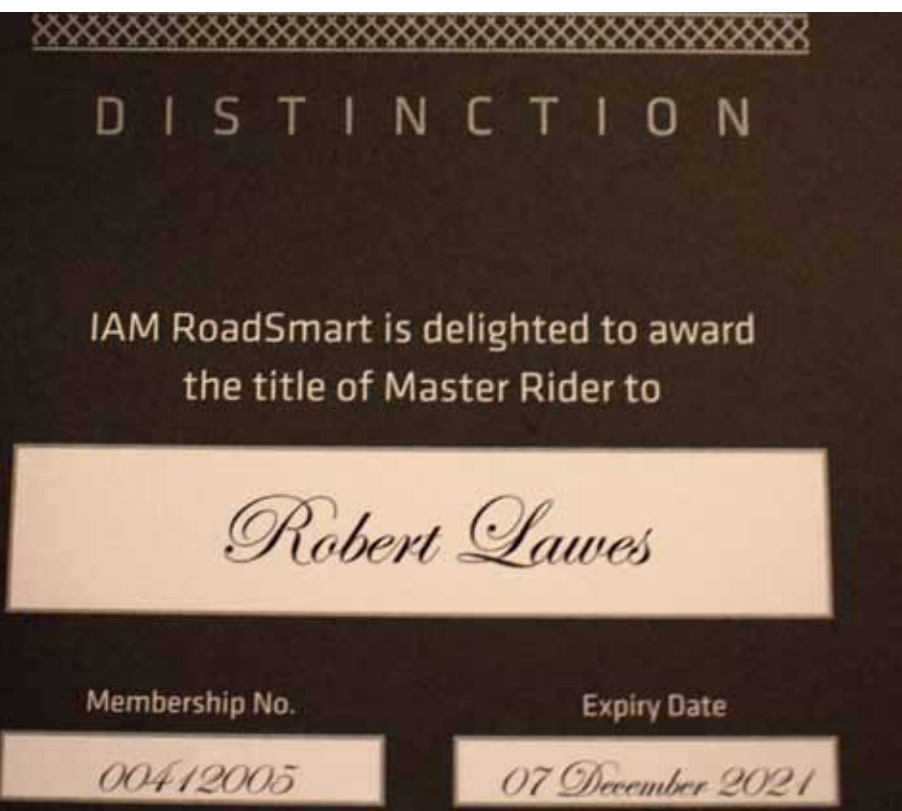
The observed rides with Colin were done over a period of seven or eight months and Kathy and I went on a European biking holiday in between. Then, when we returned in August, I put in for the test. Now committed, there was no turning back. Most Saturdays and Sundays I would try to spend a few hours on the bike doing

the 'homework' Colin had given me. I found that doing a commentary to myself improved my concentration. With all this riding the basics have become automatic; my riding has become safer, systematic (a thinking rider), and when Kathy gets back on the bike (when the weather improves) she will, I hope, find it a lot smoother.

The day of reckoning finally arrived two months later (delayed due to weather and IAM examiner issues), and I met Pete Doherty, the examiner, at the Baldock services on the A1. He laid down the requirements and standard expected, "if the speed limit is 30, your speed must be 30, not 29 or 31 but 30, and if we get back in less than 90 minutes, we go round the block again!" Well, none of this talk was doing my already nervous disposition any good. You start with

100% and lose marks along the way. The ride started okay, on damp and greasy roads, and once I settled down I became more confident and my riding got better and better. There was some tricky filtering, loads of nice overtakes, showing restraint while displaying a safe, smooth ride with systematic use of the controls, and before I knew it the ride was over and I was getting the coffees in. Pete gave me the good news - I had passed with Distinction, with a score of 87%. Smiles were the order of the day. I was beaming, and after a whirlwind debrief, my journey home in the dark, on the M25 rush-hour car park, didn't faze me at all.

And to think I had had all this quality tuition from a volunteer: many thanks Colin for your enthusiasm, patience and guidance in helping me achieve my goal.



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# THE END OF THE LIST

*Geoff Curtis modestly understates his monumental achievement in riding 6,000 miles on the UK's 191(?) best roads!*

Early last October I took myself off to The Lake District for four days and in so doing completed riding a list of 191 Great British Roads as printed in the magazine Bike in May 2002 which was given to me by my son Simon. (Yes, that is 2002 not 2012. Ed.) Now it may seem a little sad to some of you, but if you want to ride roads you haven't ridden before, what better than ones which come recommended by other riders? After all, when you get your bike out, you have to go somewhere.



*Burren National Park, Galway Bay*



*Snowdonia*



*The Shetlands*



*Where it all began*

Highlights for me were the 80 spectacular miles from Sumburgh Head to Haroldswick – that's end to end of The Shetlands – in fact Haroldswick is just about as far north as you can go in the UK. The coast road from Ullapool to Durness which is at the very Northern tip of the Scottish mainland was another highlight, and of course, the A537 Buxton to Macclesfield via the famous Cat and Fiddle was memorable too.

On the advice of another biker along the way, I added the unclassified road west from the A896 near Skye to Applecross, which gives a little taste of mountain passes right



*The Hardknott Pass*



*Portstewart, Northern Ireland*

here in the UK, plus of course The Hardknott Pass in Cumbria; the descent through the Hardknott hairpins being quite interesting on a Blackbird with full luggage.

There were also a few roads on the list which made me wonder about their inclusion, notably the A13 North circular to Basildon. Why on earth was

this included? This is a six, then four lane dual carriageway with only mild sweeping bends and no interesting scenery. The road would only become fun at very illegal speeds, but I suppose for London residents it's a chance to open the throttle and get to somewhere more entertaining even if it does only lead to Essex.

The mileage of the list of roads was 6,039, but add to that about 10,000 to connect them up, plus the extras encountered along the way and it's easy to see how I rack up the miles. Overall, this was a really enjoyable way to see The British Isles and a great reason to get the bike out. Try it. I've still got the list if you want it! *Happy touring.*



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# RING OF RED 2016

## GEORGE GEORGIADES REMEMBERS TO RIDE IN A BIG RED CIRCLE

This has become an annual event on Remembrance Sunday as a special way for we motorcyclists to remember the fallen of the wars. The idea is to create the world's biggest poppy by having riders, all wearing red, travelling together, clockwise around the whole length of the M25. Riders left simultaneously at 1.30pm, from Clacket Lane, Cobham, South Mimms and Thurrock Services to create the poppy effect. We Clacket riders were instructed by the leader to ride at approximately 50 mph and not to exceed 55 mph, and under no circumstance to pass the leader.



Last year we were sent out in batches, weaving into the other M25 traffic on the inside lane, but this year we all streamed out in staggered formation at 1.20pm joining the

inside lane, which, surprisingly, was devoid of other traffic. We assumed that measures had been taken further back to keep the inside lane clear, although it may possibly have been that all the other road users had recently learnt the art of observation and advance lane change planning. I was behind three bikers who seemed to be messing about, changing lanes and changing speed, and I quickly passed them and found myself alongside a scooter rider who was maintaining regular speed, lane discipline and not losing puff on the long grind between junctions 6 and 7. The three riders I had passed shot by and disappeared into the distance leaving me leading the pack which filled my mirrors and was a very impressive sight.

50 to 55 mph proved a comfortable speed, especially with such a large following, any faster and the pack would stretch out and split. Also, at this relatively slow speed very few overtaking opportunities presented themselves, although we were frequently passed at speed by foreign 40 tonners, often travelling nose-to-tail. The relatively slow speed meant that extra care had to be taken when allowing other faster traffic to join from slip roads such as Junction 6 where there are multiple roads joining the M25, but we managed to keep our pack more or less intact. I know that we have to ride for ourselves, but we do also have to take some responsibility for the pack and give as much advance warning of lane changes and warnings of slip road entrances as possible. Funnily, we passed those same three earlier riders on the long uphill grind from



Junction 6; they had got themselves stuck behind two slow moving lorries, but once they merged themselves back into our group they shot off again, glad to say.

We hit the usual very slow traffic on the approaches to Junction 10, and where the junction 11 slip road joined the M25, there was mass filtering which was quite exciting to watch in my mirrors, everyone filtered by the exit slip road, and between the vehicles in all the lanes. The same thing happened at Cobham Services, where quite a few riders left us, including the three that we had passed yet again during filtering. Riding past the Heathrow junction quite a few more riders left us and after Heathrow, more riders gradually disappeared and eventually I found myself riding solo for a while until another batch caught me up and we rode on to the South Mimms Service Area where they all left *en masse*. At this point, it was beginning to get dark and a bit cold, so I headed for the QE Bridge, and even went through a snow flurry, although luckily that was all it was, just a local flurry.

Finally made it home to Orpington and filled up with petrol before putting the bike to bed. I'd clocked up 130 miles at 65 mpg on a very enjoyable day. Riding The Ring of Red is a great way to Remember on Remembrance Sunday.



*We all know this feeling.*

## CHRISTMAS AT



*The Chairman would tell you that this is all for the kids, but he just loves the dressing up.*



*Dad, will you please stop grinning like an idiot, I'm trying to look cool here.*

## PARKWOOD SCHOOL



*Above: So there I was absolutely flat out, I'd just passed Dunlop over The Mountain and I'd get McGuinness on the way down to Creg-ny-Baa.*



*Right: Is this a snowman, a snowflake, or perhaps just a flake? No, it's a Lemon.*



# BIKING BITES

## THE HASTINGS & ST. LEONARDS ANGLING ASSOCIATION

I like Hastings. Everyone bangs on about Brighton, but Brighton is all-hat-and-no-knickers with its poncey London ways and its ridiculous blanket 20mph speed limit, whereas Hastings is more down to earth. It's more motorbike. I like it. Always have. Which is one of the reasons why I have breakfast there from time to time when the sun shines. Poor old Hastings has recently had to endure a period of unfashionability when smartarse comics from London were

is excessive and that two is just straightforward, unbridled gluttony, but in my defence I must tell you that the eggs, both of them, arrived unbidden. They were just included as part of the kipper breakfast deal in The Hastings and St. Leonards Angling Association clubhouse. Yes, you have read that correctly. I have just had breakfast in a fishing club. What a brilliant place. And I didn't have to crawl there at a funereal 20mph either. Suck on that Brighton!

This breakfast Shangri La is right on the beach. You look out over your kippers or sausages, on over the club's boats to the sea beyond. It is bliss. I neither fish nor do I angle. I am not a member of the aforementioned club. I was not with a member. I just walked in. For a long time I have walked past this place because there is a posh, gold-painted sign on the door which says very clearly "Private. Club Members Only". I only recently discovered, however, that this sign is

HASTINGS & ST. LEONARDS  
ANGLING ASSN  
PRIVATE CLUB  
MEMBERS ONLY



rather misleading: we non-members can go in, indeed they want us to go in, and there is another contradictory sign which says "Open. Come on in." Inside you will find it's a large place that's a bit like a nightclub, a sort of daylight nightclub. There's



a bar and there's pool tables, and there are lots of eating tables with comfortable seats around them, but best of all there is a small kitchen which delivers the best breakfast you will have anywhere at a cost which defies belief. I haven't eaten there other than for breakfast, but if that is anything to go by I would have no hesitation in trying their lunches and I fully intend to do so. What else can I tell you? I'll let the pictures do the talking.

Where is this gourmand's delight? It is towards the old fishing hut end of Hastings right beside the western terminal of the Hastings Miniature Railway. Or for the satnavigators the postcode is TN34 3AG, and you can park a bike about 100 yards west of the building for £1.30 all day while you enjoy the rest of Hastings. Do it. You won't regret it.

<http://www.hstlaa.com/wewelcomevisitors.htm>



content to mock it, but it is now getting over that and it has a new no-nonsense spring in its stride and confidence is evident wherever you look. So, now that Spring is here and Summer is just around the corner and you are looking for somewhere to ride, you could do no better than spin down to Hastings for a good breakfast, and I mean a *really* good breakfast. As I write this I have just returned from one such: kipper, two poached eggs, two doorstep toasts and coffee. £4.30! You might think that any poached egg with a kipper



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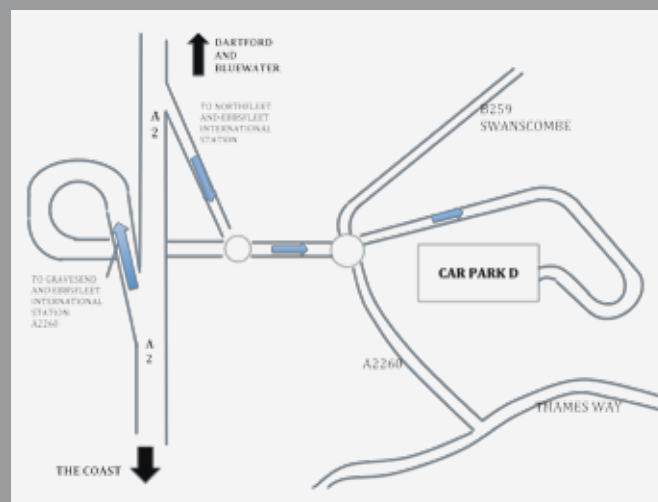
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## OBSERVER ASSOCIATE CHARTER

What is expected of the Observer / Associate partnership

### THE OBSERVERS

➤ Have made the effort to train, not only for the test, but have also taken part in Observer Training courses. They are a valuable asset to the group and give of their time freely, except for a contribution from the Associate towards their expenses, as determined by the Committee and the IAM.

### THE ASSOCIATES

➤ Are expected to have equal commitment, with the goal being the Test.

➤ Are to be available for observed runs once every two weeks (ideally), as continuity cannot be maintained with regular gaps of three weeks or more.

➤ Should make their monetary contribution before setting-off.

➤ Must establish the date(s) of the next run(s) at the debriefing, and they must PRACTISE between these dates.

➤ Must make an effort to STUDY the THEORY by reading the relevant literature; for example 'How to be a Better Rider', 'Highway Code', 'Roadcraft' etc.

➤ Cancellation of a run due to the weather will be at the discretion of the Observer. If, after a period of one month, an Observer has not heard from the Associate it will be assumed that interest has been lost and the Associate's name will be placed back at the bottom of the waiting list.

➤ A review of the Associate's progress is mandatory, requiring a Check Run with a Senior Observer after six runs or six months. When the Observer feels that the Associate is riding consistently to the required standard a Pre-Test Assessment will be arranged with a Senior Observer. The Observer will give as much help and encouragement as possible but the onus is on the Associate to endeavour.

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# IDCAM

## INTRODUCTORY DAY COURSE IN ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING



The revised style IDCAM has been running for some months now. Attendees book in at 8.45am and have their documents and bikes checked over. A short classroom presentation about KAMG and Advanced Motorcycling commences at about 9.00am. An assessed ride follows with a short debrief before a coffee break. A classroom session about the System of Motorcycle Control takes us to lunch time. We also fit in a Highway Code quiz and the POWDDERSS check of a motorcycle, so it's quite a busy morning. After lunch, attendees go out for a second assessed ride with an Observer, finishing at a mutually agreed location.

If you would like to attend as an Associate contact Tim Johansen [associates@kamg.org.uk](mailto:associates@kamg.org.uk) Observers should confirm their willingness to help on Tracker and Tim will keep them informed as to our needs for the session.



**CHECK THE KAMG WEBSITE FOR NEXT AVAILABLE DATES  
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# SOCIAL AND TRAINING RIDES - GUIDELINES

START from the OAKDENE Café layby with a FULL petrol tank and an EMPTY bladder!

There will be a green badge holder at the front and back of each group of 4 riders, who will depart at 2 minute intervals.

It is an opportunity to ride with others who have passed their IAM test and then socialise with club members at the finish point over a cup of tea or coffee and breakfast.

Rides start at 10.00am in December, January and February and at 09.00am for all other months

For the safety of participants, if the temperature at the start point drops below **3°C**, the ride will be cancelled.

## PLEASE CHECK THE KAMG WEBSITE OR TRACKER SYSTEM FOR THE ROUTES OF ALL FUTURE RIDES.

The up-to-date routes can be downloaded to your Sat Nav or printed out if you prefer. They will also be advertised in the RIDERS Extra E News published and sent out to all members monthly via Tracker.

## ASSOCIATES NON GREEN BADGE HOLDERS

- Maintain highest riding standards at all times
- Read the road ahead, NOT the vehicle in front
- Always keep the rider behind in your mirrors
- Maintain your allocated position unless otherwise directed
- Ride to YOUR capabilities not the rider in front
- **YOU are responsible for your ride at all times**
- **Carry your KAMG membership and ICE cards**

## GROUP LEADERS GREEN BADGE HOLDERS

- Make sure all in your group are logged with the run organiser (for insurance purposes)
- Please follow the prescribed route not your own
- Confirm destination and route to group
- Explain run guidelines
- Explain stopping procedures
- Allow a quicker group to pass if necessary
- Select a 'Tail-End Charlie'
- Consider change of associate order at a midway point
- **Adjust speed as appropriate for the group and ride to the SLOWEST rider**

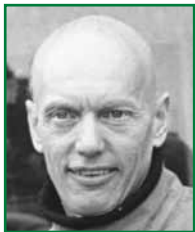


Carry your ICE (In Case of Emergency) card with you, as you may be asked to produce it. When going on a group ride, the ride will terminate at the destination. If this will leave you in unfamiliar territory and you would like an accompanied ride back to the start,

please make this known to the run leader or your group leader before the ride starts. **It is a condition for all club runs that you MUST be a member of the IAM for Insurance purposes. Not a member, then you are not insured.**

# CONTACT PAGE

President: **Terry Friday**  
Vice President: **Dave Murphy**  
Honorary Life Members: **Rod Collins • Kevin Chapman • Terry Friday  
John Leigh • John Lemon • Mike Knowles  
Brenda Vickery • Ian Burchell • Sue Mills**



**PRESIDENT**  
Terry Friday



**CHAIRMAN**  
Ian Burchell  
0844 585 7798  
chairman@kamg.org.uk



**VICE CHAIRWOMAN**  
Tina Underwood  
0844 802 7091  
vicechairman@kamg.org.uk



**SECRETARY**  
Jim Pullum  
0844 585 7789  
group-secretary@kamg.org.uk



**CHIEF  
OBSERVER**  
Colin Underwood  
0844 585 7791  
chiefobserver@kamg.org.uk



**DEPUTY CHIEF  
OBSERVER**  
Tony Young  
0844 585 7796  
dco@kamg.org.uk



**TREASURER**  
Paul Jessop  
0844 585 7784  
treasurer@kamg.org.uk



**MEMBERSHIP  
SECRETARY**  
Jon Potter  
0844 585 7792  
membership@kamg.org.uk



**MAGAZINE  
EDITOR**  
Nick Farley  
07831 295269  
editor@kamg.org.uk



**IDCAM &  
ASSOCIATE  
CO-ORDINATOR**  
Tim Johansen  
0844 585 7797  
associates@kamg.org.uk



**REGALIA  
MANAGER**  
Paul Ashwin  
0844 585 7795  
regalia@kamg.org.uk



**RUN  
CO-ORDINATOR**  
Neville Smith  
0844 585 7782  
runleader@kamg.org.uk  
webmaster@kamg.org.uk



**GROUP NIGHTS**  
Mick Mills  
07535 249 451  
groupnights@kamg.org.uk



**MACHINE  
CONTROL DAY**  
Mick West  
0844 585 7783  
mcd@kamg.org.uk



**COMMITTEE  
MEMBER**  
Dave Murphy  
Vice President  
07739 019 942  
vicepresident@kamg.org.uk



**PUBLICITY  
OFFICER**  
Nick Farley  
07831 295269  
publicity@kamg.org.uk



**COMMITTEE  
MEMBER**  
Paul Aspinall  
0791 265 9431  
aspinall456@btinternet.com



**COMMITTEE  
MEMBER**  
Jaime Tollerton  
07958 541 319  
j.tollerton@talk21.com



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