

RIDERS



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Nick Farley, Editor

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EDITORIAL

KAMG is 40 years old

There is a little bit of doubt about exactly which day is our birthday: it is either 24th March 1980, which was the date of the inaugural meeting of "A club to be formed for the advancement of riding skills," or it was the 10th of April 1980, which was the date when the club was formally recognised by the IAM. The evidence for both is shown in this magazine – see page 16.

Young rider bursary scheme

The KAMG, apart from being affiliated to the IAM charity, is itself a road safety charity in its own right, and in that capacity, and if it had not been for the Chinese bat flu, we would by now have launched a new bursary scheme that would pay for the cost of learning to ride to an advanced standard for a young rider. The idea behind the scheme is to help younger riders who presently don't sign up for advanced training because they find the cost of advanced training off-putting or simply unaffordable.

The details of the scheme have yet to be completely worked out, but the idea, in principle, is to pay for the IAM Advanced Rider course and to pay the observer expenses for ten observed sessions. This amounts to £249 at the current rates. To be eligible riders must obviously have passed the standard motorcycle test and to have a bike capable of maintaining a speed of 70mph on motorways, and there will be some other conditions too. There will only be a small number of bursaries available each year, but if you know of someone who might be able to take advantage of this scheme please let them know about it and look out for more details in the coming months. Apart from its direct beneficial effect on anyone who qualifies and is awarded a bursary, publicising this scheme will enable us to draw the attention of a much wider audience to the fact that there is such a thing as 'advanced riding' and that it is possible to learn how to do it. Not everyone knows that.

STOP PRESS

Literally at the very last minute as this magazine was going to press this morning (May 22nd), the IAM released some top-line results of its recent survey about e.scooters, and because of the strong opinions expressed on page 8 in this issue these results require some comment.

Frankly, the findings of this survey are worrying and show that a great many people obviously do not understand the potential dangers that e.scooters could represent if their riders are not properly regulated and controlled. First, it must be said that the IAM's survey questionnaire was not terribly well constructed and was predicated on the biased premise that e.scooters will be allowed on the roads, rather than being based on a neutral premise that should have been the starting point for an objective survey – in effect, the questionnaire led the witnesses, M'lud.

Without access to the full survey results (which we don't have in time for this magazine), it is not possible to do a detailed analysis, but some of the top-line results are worrying. For example, a majority of people, 6 out of 10, feel that e.scooter riders should pass a test before being allowed to ride on the road, but that does mean that a very significant minority of 4 out of 10 people would be quite happy for e.scooterists to

ride on busy city streets without having to pass a test. How could anyone think that would be a good idea? Most people are in favour of registering, but even so a huge minority of 1 in 3 don't think this important. 1 in 3! There was no mention of compulsory insurance. And, believe it or not, 20% of respondents are actually in favour of allowing these things to be ridden on pedestrian pavements. Without any evidence at all, the vast majority of people it seems have been beguiled into thinking that e.scooters will reduce congestion and reduce the use of fossil fuel, and while 8 out of 10 think that they will only be used for 'fun', more than half paradoxically think they will provide a viable alternative to public transport.

If e.scooters are to be allowed on the road it must be within a framework of proper control and regulation. Back in January long before this survey had taken place, we wrote to the IAM making it very clear that we were against there being any more people on the roads who are unqualified and uninsured, driving vehicles that are unregistered (see page 9). That remains our view and we hope that the IAM will represent that view strongly to the government, but what exactly is the IAM's view? Just saying that it hopes "...road safety continues to be a high priority," seems a bit woolly to me.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR . . .

This is one of the strangest reports. There's nothing much to do with biking in our calendar at the moment and I hope you are all keeping well and staying safe in the Covid lockdown. I am really proud of all the KAMG team and members who have been adhering to the government guidelines. It would be very easy to find lots of excuses to get out on two wheels, but we have all been strong. The bikers who have been out delivering blood, baby milk, Covid tests and emergency supplies have done an amazing job. Well done.

It was with great sadness that Amanda Binks passed away, she had been ill for a short while and will be greatly missed. Such a shame that we could not be involved in her funeral arrangements due to Covid. Several members have offered to run a memorial ride for her later in the year when we will have a chance to remember her properly.

Mark Reed one of our observers has been extremely ill with Covid. It's true to say we nearly lost him, but at the time of writing he has now moved from intensive care to a high dependency unit and is making a slow but sure recovery. I am sure that all the great messages and prayers have helped him to fight this horrible virus. We hope to see him up and about really soon. Keep up the fight Mark xx.

Over the next few weeks we will hopefully see some relaxation of the lockdown and in some shape or form with the use of technology we can resume our training. Maybe smaller rides with sensible social distancing, radio work and Zoom or FaceBook for our briefings. Observers and group run leaders are desperate to get back out, so rest assured as soon as it is safe to do so we shall be back on two wheels. In the meantime FaceBook and media technology has allowed us to keep in touch and many thanks to the quizzers amongst us who have kept us occupied. The committee have had a few Zoom meetings to keep things rolling and the IAM newsletters and surveys have been interesting.

On the 28th April KAMG passed its 40th birthday with only a FaceBook message and good wishes. I hope that this lockdown situation passes in time for us to have a celebration later in the year if we can. Terry Friday, our president and founder, has been keeping in touch by phone and sends a huge birthday cheer to us all. In the meantime stay home, stay safe, help the NHS and I look forward to seeing you all really soon on motorbikes cleaned to within an inch of their lives.

Tina Underwood
3rd May
2020

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

At the time of going to press the Covid 19 restrictions on movement and the rules regarding social-distancing are still in force and that means that all KAMG events have been cancelled, and that will remain the situation until the IAM guidelines are changed. As soon as any events, observed rides or

ride-outs are permitted we will notify you. At the moment the situation is fluid, so please check on Tracker, FaceBook and other social media for updates and advise others who may not have heard about the latest changes when they occur.

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



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TEST PASSES

Since the last edition

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



Chris Brooker receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from Matt Barnes and Steve Riches



Steve Riches receiving his Masters Requalification from Trevor Shearsmith

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Full Breakfast with Pelican	£33.95
Full Breakfast with Heron	£34.95
Full Breakfast with Kingfisher	£35.95
Full Breakfast with Osprey	£36.95
Full Breakfast with Sparrowhawk	£37.95
Full Breakfast with Buzzard	£38.95
Full Breakfast with Eagle	£39.95
Full Breakfast with Osprey	£40.95
Full Breakfast with Golden Eagle	£41.95
Full Breakfast with Bald Eagle	£42.95
Full Breakfast with White-tailed Eagle	£43.95
Full Breakfast with Black-headed Eagle	£44.95
Full Breakfast with Bonaparte's Eagle	£45.95
Full Breakfast with Common Eagle	£46.95
Full Breakfast with Eastern Eagle	£47.95
Full Breakfast with Western Eagle	£48.95
Full Breakfast with Northern Eagle	£49.95
Full Breakfast with Southern Eagle	£50.95
Full Breakfast with African Eagle	£51.95
Full Breakfast with Asian Eagle	£52.95
Full Breakfast with Australian Eagle	£53.95
Full Breakfast with New Zealand Eagle	£54.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£55.95
Full Breakfast with European Eagle	£56.95
Full Breakfast with North American Eagle	£57.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£58.95
Full Breakfast with African Eagle	£59.95
Full Breakfast with Asian Eagle	£60.95
Full Breakfast with Australian Eagle	£61.95
Full Breakfast with New Zealand Eagle	£62.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£63.95
Full Breakfast with European Eagle	£64.95
Full Breakfast with North American Eagle	£65.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£66.95
Full Breakfast with African Eagle	£67.95
Full Breakfast with Asian Eagle	£68.95
Full Breakfast with Australian Eagle	£69.95
Full Breakfast with New Zealand Eagle	£70.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£71.95
Full Breakfast with European Eagle	£72.95
Full Breakfast with North American Eagle	£73.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£74.95
Full Breakfast with African Eagle	£75.95
Full Breakfast with Asian Eagle	£76.95
Full Breakfast with Australian Eagle	£77.95
Full Breakfast with New Zealand Eagle	£78.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£79.95
Full Breakfast with European Eagle	£80.95
Full Breakfast with North American Eagle	£81.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£82.95
Full Breakfast with African Eagle	£83.95
Full Breakfast with Asian Eagle	£84.95
Full Breakfast with Australian Eagle	£85.95
Full Breakfast with New Zealand Eagle	£86.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£87.95
Full Breakfast with European Eagle	£88.95
Full Breakfast with North American Eagle	£89.95
Full Breakfast with South American Eagle	£90.95
Full Breakfast with African Eagle	£91.95
Full Breakfast with Asian Eagle	£92.95
Full Breakfast with Australian Eagle	£93.95
Full Breakfast with New Zealand Eagle	£94.95
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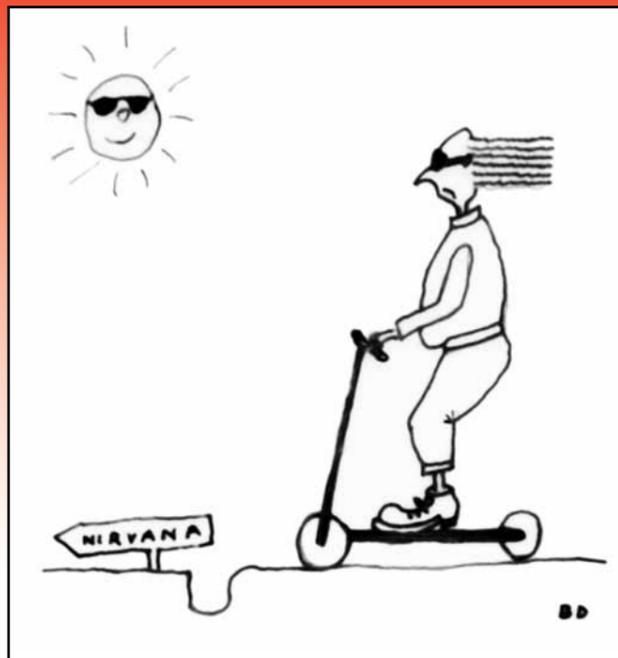
STANDBY!

E.scooters are about to sneak up on us.

Whilst we have all been distracted and bored witless by the bat flu lockdown and the general collapse of civilisation as we know it, things have been stirring in the e.scooter undergrowth. The Transport Committee of the government has, apparently, launched "an inquiry to explore whether electric scooters should be allowed on UK roads," and this will include, we are told, "looking into potential safety considerations." I think that there are probably quite few safety considerations, so this inquiry ought to be very thorough, but I bet it won't be. Call me a cynic, but I bet we are already well on the way to the unfettered invasion of the e.scooter. It is clear that this inquiry is predicated on e.scooters being allowed and all that the inquiry will do, if it does anything at all, is to decide on a skimpy set of minimum regulations to govern their use.

The starting point of any discussion about e.scooters seems to be that they are machines of great virtue. Apparently they are the answer to our prayers: they will enable millions of people to glide effortlessly to work; they will reduce congestion to a point where it is barely noticeable (thereby making travel by car very attractive again?); they will reduce the strain on public transport; and they will reduce pollution to practically zero. Oh my, how they will reduce pollution! These marvellous things will enable us all to skip gaily through the sunlit uplands of the promised land breathing air so pure that that we shall all live to be at least 150. Shall we? Well, that's what the scooterists want us to believe, and I've exaggerated their arguments only a little.

The reality is different. Anyone who today has to drive or to ride a motorbike through our cities after dark and especially in the rain, knows just how difficult it is to see cyclists, a task made more difficult by the propensity of many cyclists (yeh, I know – it's a small minority, I've heard it all before) to be poorly lit and to be in places where they have no right to be. But cyclists were using the roads long before cars and motorbikes and there's no way in which a bicycle 'driving' test could be introduced retrospectively now, and that means that there are, quite justifiably, already millions of unqualified, uninsured and



unregistered cyclists for everyone else to steer around. However, we do not need to add several million more to that pool of the unqualified and uninsured. There is now for a very short time a window of opportunity in which the government can enact the necessary legislation to ensure that e.scooter riders have to take a test every bit as challenging as a normal driving test, and to make sure that they have mandatory third party insurance, and that they display a prominent registration plate. Once there has been the usual government dithering time – already the government has delayed the end of its consultation period from May to July – and thousands of people, perhaps millions, have been using e.scooters, albeit illegally, without any regulation, restriction or control for a few months, maybe for a year, perhaps even two years, it will be impossible to introduce controls. Although these scooters are at present illegal in this country, they are being used widely and quite freely without, it seems, attracting much police attention. And, unbelievably, their use even has the implied approval of Peter Rodger, the IAM's Head of Driver Advice. (See *Riders* Feb 2020, page 25)

If we believe our Transport minister, the *wunderkind* Grant Shapps – he who can't see that walking for 600 metres along an active motorway lane is dangerous – if we believe him then everything will be OK because he said recently, "This review will ensure we understand the potential impacts of a wide range of new transport modes such as e-scooters, helping to properly inform any decisions on legalisation." (It's slightly off the point, I know, but why do these awful people now use the word 'impact' when they actually mean 'effect'?) And the government has allocated £90m to fund what it grandly calls 'Future



M. Quinton
CEO IAM RoadSmart
Albany Place
1 Hyde Way
Welwyn Garden City
AL7 3BT

25th January 2020

Dear Mike,

As a committee we are becoming increasingly concerned about the rapidly growing number of road users who are legally allowed to drive or ride on the UK's roads without ever having to take any test to demonstrate their competence, without having any insurance and without having to display any means of identification in the event of an accident. People in this fast growing group include cyclists and those who drive on the road in small electric powered buggies. The number of cyclists has increased enormously in recent years: for example, in the last 40 years the number of bicycles crossing central London every day has risen from 27,000 to 162,000. (Source: tfl traffic data)

Cyclists preceded cars and have always been legally allowed to ride on the roads without a test, without insurance and without any form of registration, and it would obviously be impossible to introduce a retrospective test now – although it would be perfectly feasible to introduce a registration scheme and compulsory third party insurance – however, there is a real danger that a new class of unqualified, uninsured, unregistered and unlit(?) user could soon be taking to the roads in very large numbers – electric scooter riders. Electric scooters are inexpensive, widely available and are already being used illegally in London without seeming to attract the attention of the police.

At the moment electric scooters cannot legally be used on public roads or pavements in this country, but there is a very powerful commercial lobby pressing the government to have these illegal scooters made legal by emphasising their apparent 'green-ness' and their perceived ability to 'solve' the traffic congestion in towns and cities, and by citing their already widespread use in European cities such as Paris and Madrid, where, as you know, they are actually causing real problems, but where it's already too late to exercise any control over them.

We are concerned that there does not appear to be any influential or organised body countering the strong commercial lobby to legalise these scooters and, indeed, other electric powered vehicles such as electric skateboards. As individuals, or even as the KAMG, we have no influence in these matters. We have no access to the government or to the media at the right level. However, we would like to think that the IAM does have that access and that influence. There is, we believe, a real need for a body with the credentials of the IAM to enter this debate and for it to be heard, and to provide the nucleus around which other organisations and individuals can coalesce to counter the commercial lobby that seems to be gathering considerable momentum and which presently seems unopposed. We do not want a repeat of the removal of the motorway hard shoulders fiasco, which happened without any reference to knowledgeable road safety organisations, or at least without any obvious opposition from them, and which is only now, after many deaths, beginning to claim the government's attention.

We hope that the IAM shares our view that it would be dangerous to allow these 'vehicles' on the road without their riders being required first to pass a test, to be insured and to be registered and identifiable. We hope therefore, that in its meetings with the Department of Transport the IAM will press strongly for no new category of powered vehicle to be allowed to be used on UK roads without proper regulation, and certainly not at all on pedestrian pavements whether registered or not.

Yours sincerely

Tina Underwood - Chair KAMG

Kent Advanced Motorcyclists Group
Email: chairman@kamg.org.uk . Tel: 0844 585 7798
KAMG Charity No: 1060837



This is the government's idea of what its 'Future Transport Zones' will look like.

Transport Zones'. Grant says, "Funding these new zones across the country will also help us safely test innovative ways to get around, creating a greener future transport system for us all." Oh, and how long is that going to take Grant? More than a couple of months I'd say. Anyway, it will be quite long enough for the e.scooter to have escaped its present illegality and multiplied uncontrolled. And while Grant and his mates test innovative ways to get around in nirvana (see picture), I'd like to remind them that it rains in this country; it rains quite a lot; and

have you noticed how for six months of the year there's more night than day, in fact on some days in December there is practically no daylight at all. How many of these jolly e.scooterists are going to be solving the congestion problem, easing the strain on public transport and creating pollution-free slipstreams then? Not many, I'll bet. And dare I mention potholes? Those tiny scooter wheels will look awfully silly when they hit a proper, man-sized, British pothole.

The IAM ran a survey amongst its members last month so that it could gauge opinion about e.scooters. I hope that you all responded and let them know what you think. The survey will have closed by the time you read this, but long before that survey was launched, or even thought of, the KAMG committee wrote to the Chief Executive of the IAM to make it perfectly clear that we think that no more people should be allowed to ride or drive on the UK roads without first passing a test, and without being insured and without being registered and displaying a registration plate (page 9). It will be interesting to see the full results of the survey when they are published (if they are published), and it will be very interesting to see what the IAM's point of view is and how it is able to affect the outcome of the government inquiry. Indeed, it will be interesting to see if the IAM is able to have any effect at all. Watch this space, but don't hold your breath. The commercial lobby to have these scooters legalised with the minimum of regulation is very strong and I think we shall see them in very large numbers.... on dry sunny days. NF

E-scooter fans hope gizmo will zip down path to legalisation

Nicholas Hellen
Social Affairs Editor

For commuters who cannot imagine squeezing onto a

begrudges the cost of leasing his car, a BMW X2. However, he has found that mastering potholes in the roads requires a certain agility. "You have to

One retailer has said more than 400,000 e-scooters could be on the road within 18 months if they were legalised. At present they may be ridden only on private land.

Adam Norris, 48, founder of Pure Electric, said he sold 135 of the machines last Monday and about 11,500 last year. If the law were changed, he estimates he could sell 100,000 a year.



GETTING A GRIP

Dave Blanchard writes in reply to Vernon Witney's off-road article in last November's Riders

As an off-road trials rider for 30 years, mainly riding British motorcycles of the late 1930s period, I always try to help newcomers by telling them the reasons behind the techniques they are instructed to use. For example, standing up on the bike has two advantages: the first and less obscure, is so that you can transfer bodyweight backwards or forwards to assist in keeping the front end down on a climb or alternatively if the rear wheel loses grip and spinning sets in, you can lean back in the hope of regaining grip. Leaning away from the bike in a turn keeps the rider more upright and directs his weight vertically down through to the tyre contact patch for more grip, also assisting to turn the bike. The reasons for this easier turning are a steering geometry change during leaning, but it is a little longwinded to explain here. The second and less obvious reason for standing up, is to lower the centre of gravity of the machine. Just taking your backside off the saddle transfers the weight to the footrests thereby lowering the centre of gravity considerably. Also don't have too much

weight on the handlebars because the weight of your arms and shoulders will raise the centre of gravity and balance will be affected. Easy when it's explained, but somehow obscure to many. Did you know too that a shorter trail geometry will mean that the bike needs less effort to balance, while a longer trail is for more stability at speed? But steering geometry is an all round compromise and constantly changes with suspension movement and of course during braking.

The exercise Vernon practiced of stopping on a hill and then turning the bike around again to point downhill is a good one. However, if you are looking at a dauntingly steep climb that you think you might not make, it is wise to practice stalling on a lesser slope by just closing the throttle and letting the bike stop in gear. Never ever pull the clutch in! This is, in effect, your handbrake as Vernon was taught. But, if you do have to lay the bike down on a steep climb always try to plan to drop it on its left hand side. If you drop it on the right side, and the bike slides backwards, the throttle will wind open to maximum giving you more problems. Clearly riding an extreme heavyweight



Here I am climbing the first part of 'Misslefore'. An observed section that steepens considerably further up, with ruts and rabbit holes.



This photo was taken during the Arbuthnot 'observed' Long Distance Trial. A 78 miles off-road event for bikes without rear springing. This competition originated between the two world wars, and is still running today using many of the original tracks down in deepest Wiltshire. It takes its name from Rear Admiral Arbuthnot, who organised military service motorcycling competitions. He also rode in the early TT. Unfortunately he went down with his ship at the 'Battle of Jutland'.

such as the bikes Vernon and the others were using on the course would be a non-starter for me at 73 years old, short of leg and strength. I couldn't cope with that weight and power. Off-road motorcycles should be light and manoeuvrable and in my opinion be of around 500cc and single cylinder for more grip. Who needs 100 mph performance off-road; someone enlighten me please?

To elaborate more on that previous grip statement. Tyre treads and pressures on the enormous off-road bikes of today are another big compromise, due to spending most of their life on tarmac. Also how many times have you heard the AA or RAC tell a driver to use a higher gear in slippery conditions. Some of you will say because you get better grip, and that's spot on. But how or why does this happen? Every time an engine fires it sends a pulse down through the transmission chain, and finally ends up at the tyre contact patch. This translates as a snatch on the tyre and that tries to break the traction. If you are in first gear there will be many more snatches per revolution of the back tyre. Using a higher gear results in less frequent snatches on the contact patch, and therefore more grip. Simple to understand when you know why.

THE WAR OF THE INVISIBLE MOTORBIKES



The most common Brit war bike the BSA 500cc side valve M20

It may be the 40th birthday of KAMG, but this month is also, and more importantly, the 75th anniversary of VE Day. As you well know, it was on May 8th 1945 that Germany surrendered unconditionally to end the war in Europe, but what you may not know is just how important the motorbike seems to have been to that victory. I say 'seems to have been important' because without knowledge of any great victory that a brigade of charging motorcyclists pulled off, I base my argument solely on the numbers of motorbikes that were kicking about in the various theatres of war. There were hundreds of thousands of them supplied to the allied armies, navies and air forces. There were perhaps half a million or more. Enough it seems for every man to have had his own personal motorcycle transport. And it also seems as if just about every manufacturer worth his salt managed to get a piece of this two-wheeled action. The British forces used bikes made by BSA, Norton, Matchless, Royal Enfield, Triumph and even Excelsior. You would have thought that it would have been sensible, from a spares point of view at least, to have limited the manufacture and models to one or, at most, two types, but no; the same efficiency and procurement machine that today has built us a ruddy great aircraft carrier with no aircraft for it to carry, was in the last war ordering a vast range of mixed motorbikes, some of which were of very doubtful specification. Looking at some of these bikes today it is clear that they were totally unsuited to operating on anything other than perfectly smooth roads. The thought of riding them on the rough tracks and war-torn roads that they must have been confronted with in Europe and North Africa, is frightening. In fact, I remember attending, as a boy, a winter trial in the woods at Brands Hatch in the mid-fifties, where the poor Army team riders were having to ride heavy great girder-forked monstrosities on the same sections that the works trials riders were riding with pukka lightweight, properly sprung, trials bikes. At least no one was shooting at them in the Brands Hatch woods.

in orders that, by the end of the war, had totalled 120,000 and made the M20 the most used British bike of the war. Then when the Americans eventually turned up, they came armed to the teeth with Harleys and Indians that, in size, dwarfed the Brit bikes and in numbers totalled about 150,000. There must have been bikes everywhere you looked. Steve McQueen would have had a hard job jumping fences in the Alps on an Indian, a Harley or even the comparatively small M20. Good job he found a post-war Triumph lying around the props tent. As for the clunky old M20 there were so many of them that surplus ex-WD M20s were still being flogged through Pride & Clarke for £39 10shillings as late as 1959, 14 years after the war ended.

The Germans needed bikes too and as you can imagine BMW were right there at the front of their procurement queue, but hold on – they were beaten to the big contract by Zundapp. Zundapp's bike was decidedly better than BMW's effort and, humiliation upon humiliation, BMW was even asked to produce the Zundapp model instead of its own design. BMW sulked, stamped its foot and said that no it wouldn't, so there.



The legendary Zundapp K750 that beat BMW in the competition to be the German's premier WW2 motorbike.

Take for example the bike ordered in the largest numbers by the British government, the hulking great 500cc, side valve M20 BSA. This slow heavy beast with the ground clearance of a slug, when first tested by the War Department procurement bods failed so dismally that after only six thousand miles it needed a new piston and barrel. It was modified and re-tested and this time it just scraped through its 10,000 mile trial, but that was all the recommendation the procurement blokes needed to slam

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But they made friends in the end and co-operated to the extent that about 70% of the parts on Zundapp and BMW models were interchangeable. The Germans were very keen on the sidecar and saw it as the best means of quick cross-country, off-road travel and designed many of their bikes specifically for this purpose, equipping their sidecars with a driven sidecar wheel and even a limited slip differential. They were, in effect, a German Jeep. The British approach to developing bikes specifically for their intended purpose was more basic and involved paint rather than engineering – khaki for use in Europe, sand for use in North Africa and blue for bikes going to the RAF.



Another Brit side valve the 16H Norton. Like the M20 ex-WD 16Hs were also available in huge numbers for years after the war.

The Russians, who at the beginning of the war had a non-aggression pact with Germany, managed, through this pact, to obtain the BMW designs, enabling them to make their own Russianised 'BMW's. They subsequently used these Russian Beemers, I guess with some irony, against Germany when they, the Russians, joined us in the war on the right side. The Russians also had thousands of Harleys and Indians from America as part of the Lend-Lease scheme, in fact the Russians were the largest users of the WLA Harleys and had special motorcycle battalions who were the vital advance reconnaissance units of the Russian tank forces, and who rode well into and behind the German lines as the Russian tanks advanced on Berlin. The Japanese too used bikes in the war and, like the Russians ripping off the BMW designs,



A Rikuo, the Japanese Harley.



The drive to the sidecar wheel of the R75.

they did the same thing to the Yanks. Before the war the Japanese were making Harleys under licence and their war time motorbike was, in effect, a Japanese Harley that they called the Rikuo, and which, again with an irony that I'm sure was lost on the Americans, they used against America. While all this nicking of designs was going on elsewhere, back in Blighty the War Department was busy commissioning some of the most ludicrous two-wheelers you can possibly imagine for our chaps to take into battle. Consider, for example, the Royal Enfield Flying Flea. This little beauty was designed to be dropped by parachute so that the paratroops could leap aboard it when they touched down and quickly roar off to the nearest battle. And, get this, if the going was too rough to ride they were supposed to be able to pick it up and carry it. I have some knowledge of this machine since my very first bike was a Flying Flea that was ridden to death by me and my mate in the woods in our village. It was a tricky little blighter with the most imprecise and slow hand gearchange known



Tommy just about to dash off to battle carrying his Flying Flea.



The most prolific wartime Harley, the WLA.

to man, and light though it was I wouldn't have wanted to carry it anywhere. What a ridiculous idea. It probably seemed sensible to some deskbound wallah in the War Department, but what the paratroops thought about it might have been different. "Sir, what happens if we land in a ploughed field, sir, and we can't ride the motorbike?" "You can jolly well pick it up and carry it, Tompkins. Don't be bloody soft. Any more questions?" And even worse than the Flying Flea was the Excelsior Welbike. This really was a joke. Fortunately, after ordering several thousand it was eventually cancelled, but these things were re-branded after the war as the Corgi and were a common civilian mode of transport on the roads in 1950s.

Customers own sidecars fitted, or built, made up to individual requirements.

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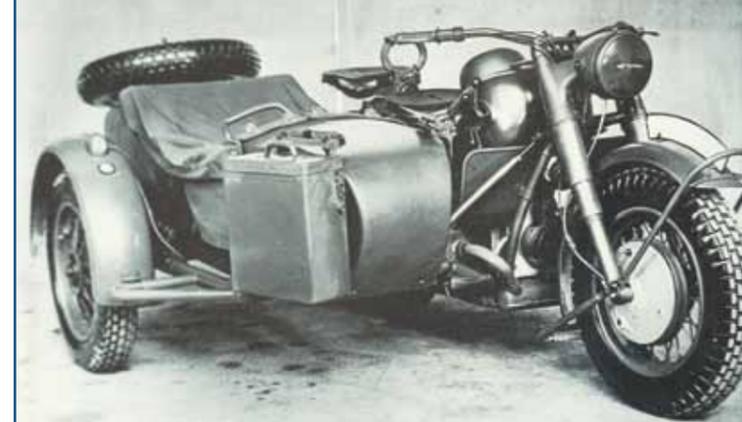
GENERAL SPECIFICATION

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An ad from Motor Cycling (The Green'un) in May 1959. Note the description 'fine modern machine' for something that was out of date before the war!

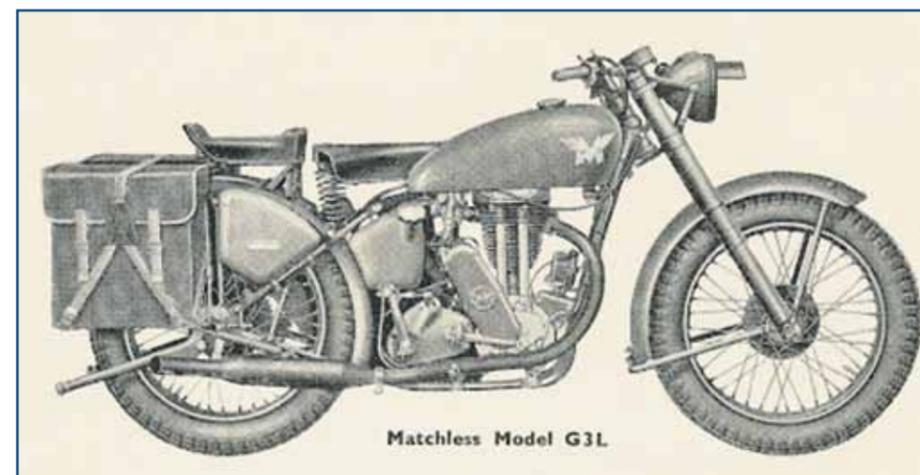


The BMW R75 sidecar outfit. This was very clever and designed for its job and it was very effective. All wheels were interchangeable and used car tyres. The sidecar wheel was driven, and it had a limited slip differential and reverse gear. We had nothing to compare with it.

Perhaps the best British bike to emerge from the war was the Matchless G3 350cc OHV single, although at first it didn't look as if it would make it to the front line. It lost its WD competition to the vertical twin side valve 350 Triumph, but unfortunately for Triumph its factory was bombed before production could start and all the designs and drawings were lost, so the Matchless got the nod in its place. This was probably a good decision as the G3 was well liked by its riders and it had the excellent Teledraulic, oil-damped, telescopic front forks rather than those awful girders. Imagine the faces of the poor M20 riders when they saw the light, fast, G3 with its Teledraulic forks.

There were obviously many more models and makes than are mentioned here but you can see that there were literally thousands and thousands of motorbikes everywhere you went in the last war and they played an important part in it, yet although you see endless war footage on TV you never get more than a fleeting glimpse of a motorbike. Why is this? There must have been a great deal more than half a million on our side let alone the enemy's legions of Zundapps and BMWs. Is this more evidence of BBC bias? We must be told.

NF



The best Brit bike the Matchless G3L 350cc OHV single.

“A MOTORCYCLE CLUB FORMED FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF RIDING SKILLS.”

The origins of KAMG

It was on the 24th March 40 years ago that the inaugural meeting of “a motorcycle club for the advancement of riding skills” was held at Springfield Maidstone. Such was the enthusiasm for the formation of such a club that riders came from all over the south, even from as far away as Southampton, to attend this meeting. This was the beginning of the club that quickly, but not without some difficulty, morphed into the KAMG and became the first motorcycle-only club to be affiliated to the IAM, and was the blueprint for motorcycle groups across the UK to do the same. At that time the IAM's constitution did not allow for a motor-cycle only affiliate; each IAM group had to accept drivers and riders both, and most groups were very much car orientated, although there had been a special IAM motorcycle test in operation for three years.

An approach was made to the IAM to be allowed to form a motorcycle group but they responded by suggesting that the proposed motorcycle club should come under the umbrella of one of the existing groups in the county. The South Eastern group was very supportive of this proposal but the other two groups were not.

This article does not attempt to tell the story of the last 40 years because, sadly, there is no record or archive covering the period, but on these pages there are some extracts from early minutes and other documents that give a flavour of how exciting it must have been for Old Green Leathers and Co. to have got the show on the road. Many of those important early members are still alive and still members. We thank them all. We owe them much.
NF



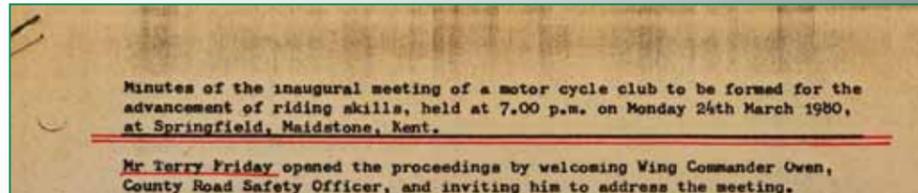
A Kent Messenger cutting from May 1980

Right: The story inside the IAM Summer 1980 magazine. The chap in the centre of the picture is Lord Strathcarron who did a great deal to ease KAMG's way to affiliation. Next to him is his wife Lady Strathcarron both of them were keen bikers.

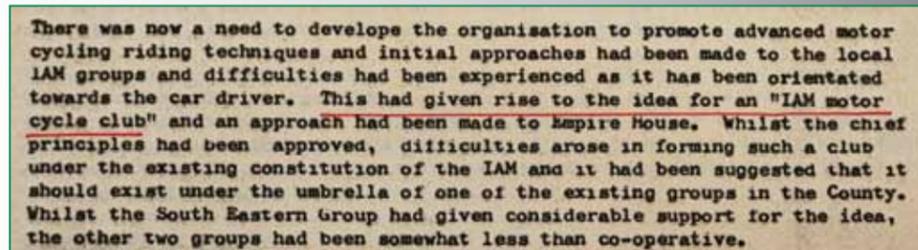


Below left: A very early picture with some very important members. Rod Collins and Mike Knowles played a crucial part in starting the group. Rod only recently died but Mike Knowles and Brenda Vickery are still alive and their importance is recognised in their Honorary Life Membership of KAMG

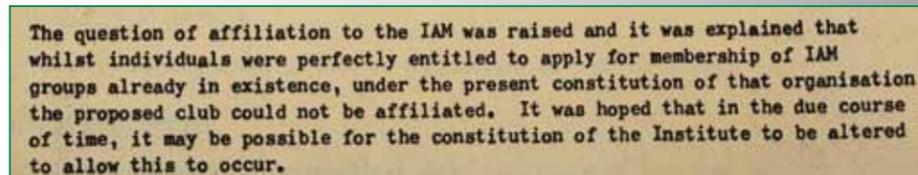
Bottom right: In the early days members always sent cards c/o Rosemary to the Lantern Café in Charing which had become the regular club meeting place. There is a file full of these cards of which these are just three.



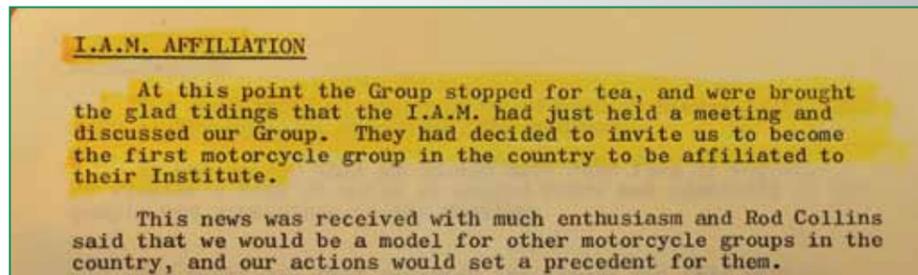
The first lines of an historic document



It wasn't all plain sailing. The IAM in based in Empire house in London was very much a car orientated organisation



It looked as if it was definitely not going to be possible to become affiliated to the IAM



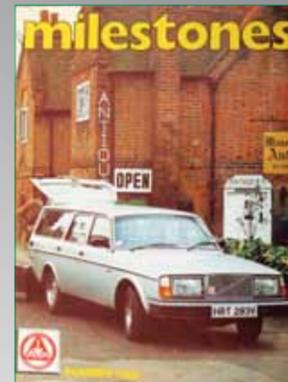
The turning point came at a committee meeting on the 10th April 1980



1980-2020



The covers of the first and the fourth magazines. After early uncertainty about the apostrophe it was eventually dropped altogether. Wise move.



The exciting cover of the IAM's magazine for Summer 1980 – ironic numberplate too.



THE PRESIDENT GOES GREEN AT FARTHING CORNER

A few weeks ago KAMG President Terry Friday was rummaging through a pile of stuff that had not been rummaged through for a decade or two, and he was just about to chuck out a whole lot of papers when he fortunately noticed in a torn envelope at the bottom of the pile a small splash of colour. He opened the old torn envelope properly and inside was the ancient cartoon that you see on this page. Why was there an old cartoon of Terry in green leathers? Here's why: it is a story that has been told in these pages before but that was some years ago and as Terry is the founder of KAMG and this is our 40th anniversary, it's appropriate to tell the story again. Apart from anything else, at least half the members will not have heard it before and those that have are now so senile they will have forgotten it.

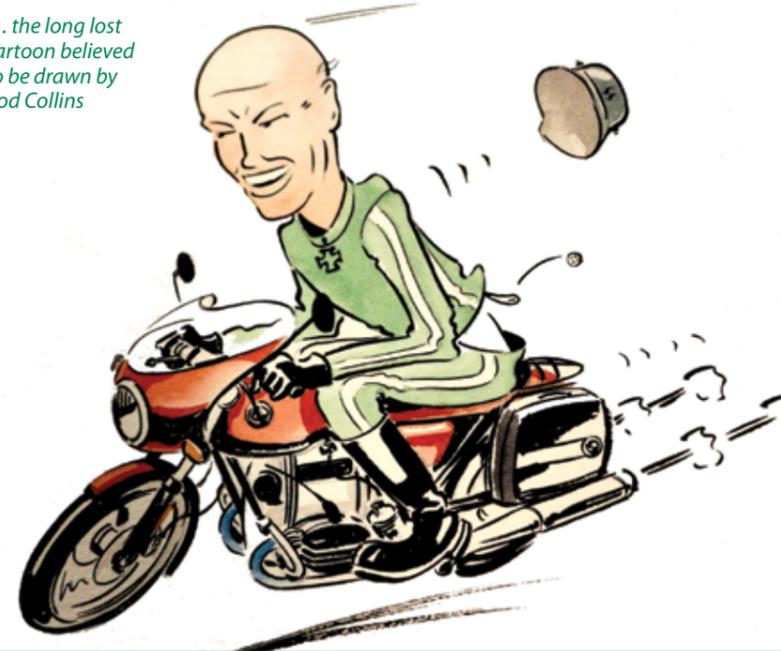
Terry Friday was once a copper working at the Kent Police training centre where he was a skilful trainer of other coppers from all around the world, teaching them the dark arts of riding police motorcycles and driving cars. Today, amongst KAMG people, he is well-known for being stick-thin and parading about in green leathers, and those leathers, believe it or not, are official police issue leathers, official *German* police leathers, and Terry acquired them like this

One day many years ago when KAMG was still wearing nappies, Sergeant Friday was scorching down the motorway bent on police



business when he came upon a stationary Mercedes and caravan on the hard shoulder. (Some older members may remember the good old days when motorways had hard shoulders.) The Merc had a broken windscreen and the distressed German occupants were waiting for the AA who were expected in two hours. This was not good enough for Sergeant Friday who said that he had a mate who would fix the windscreen pronto and get the folks on their way. There were no mobile phones

... the long lost cartoon believed to be drawn by Rod Collins



in those medieval times and mates had to be visited in person if their aid was to be enlisted. So TF shot off to summon the windscreen cavalry. The mate obliged and went to help the Merc, while

policeman Friday continued with his constabulary duties elsewhere. And that was that.

Then, about a year later, TF was unexpectedly summoned to his

boss's office. Never a good thing. A suspicious boss said that some German bloke had called from the motorway services asking for Terry and he should go and find out what was going on. On arrival at the services Terry was surprised to meet Mr Merc from the year before, who presented him with a big box, inside which there was a full set of new green German Polizei leathers. Apparently the chap was the man responsible for supplying the German police with their leather wear, and these official green jobs were his thanks to Terry. "I wonder if they fit," asked Terry. "They vill fit," said the Merc driver in that meaningful way that some Germans have and which means that it's best not to argue.

He was right, they fitted then and they still do.

NF



Real German coppers



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CHAIN REACTION

Dave Willson is still not lubing his chain

In the words of Frankie Goes To Hollywood, "Relax, don't do it". Sorry wrong song, although please feel free to relax whilst reading this. Can I suggest a hot bath, a glass of Châteauneuf-du-Pape and a Cuban Havana. No, what I meant to say was, "Chain lube, what is it good for? Answer: absolutely nothing. Say it again." About a year ago having spent big bucks on a new chain and sprockets I started to wonder, what we are actually trying to achieve when we liberally coat our chains in that gunky, grungy, sticky grinding paste called chain lubricant. Now all you chaps and chapes with shaft drive – and I know there's a lot of you in the group – please feel free to keep reading, after all this is a very friendly and inclusive group, but I am going to be banging on about chains and sprockets. You remember those, don't you? You remember those horrible dirty greasy things that need cleaning and lubricating, and adjusting, and that cover your back wheel and swinging arm in dirty gunk. All I can say in the defence of the chain is that your shaft drive costs you a couple of bhp between the engine and back wheel. A small price to pay for maintenance-free motorcycling. In fact, most people on sports bikes who just whack on an Akrapovič exhaust are probably doing the same thing, unless they have it re-mapped, but hey, it sounds fast. Anyway, back to the plot: you see, when I started motorcycling, chain lube didn't exist. I just used engine oil to keep my chain better lubed up than a group of middle aged women on a hen night in Southend. Let me take you back to 1979, three years after the long hot summer of 1976, a time when it was still cool to go to Glastonbury, when Larry Grayson was shutting that door

on the Generation Game, when Debbie Harry was a Sunday Girl, and when if you wanted to see a woman with a tattoo you had to go to the circus. In 1979 I went to the bike show at Earls Court and whilst looking around I came across a stand demonstrating a new-fangled chain lubricant. The demonstration consisted of squirting a small amount from the aerosol on to your finger while you stood there amazed as it transformed into a gooey sticky gum in front of your eyes. And due to huge amounts spent on marketing and advertising, we've all been using it ever since. Well, not anymore. I'm going back to engine oil. This is only my opinion, so please carry on walking towards the bow of the ship, but remember it's upside-down and the thinnest part of the hull is at the stern by the propeller, I'm going with Gene Hackman and Shelly Winters. (Please don't tell me you haven't seen the Poseidon Adventure - it's a classic.) So, let's have a look at what we're trying to achieve when we douse our chains in lubricant. Depending on whether you're Baron von Greenback or not you'll either have an O or X ring chain. Oh please, it's bad enough you haven't seen the Poseidon Adventure, now you're telling me you don't watch Danger Mouse. (For an explanation of the difference between O and X rings see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ou3RkE_vas Ed.) The chain manufacturer lubricates the moving parts of the chain with grease so that all the pins, bushes and rollers are pre-lubricated; that lube is kept in place by the O or X rings (unless of course you're over-enthusiastic with the jet wash), so we don't need to worry about that, although the O rings do need to be kept lubed. A tiny drop of oil on each O ring once every few weeks would suffice. What else? Well the side plates would go rusty if they were left unattended, but this isn't really a problem, it just doesn't look very nice. The same reason why car brake discs are made of cast iron and bike discs are made of very expensive stainless steel. We pay a huge premium for discs that don't rust just because we like our bikes shiny. Stopping the side plates of a chain rusting is more a cleaning issue than a lubrication issue. So what else? Well, I suppose you could try to reduce the friction between the chain and sprockets. A few drops of oil on the sprocket teeth would solve this. So what you need is a few drops of oil periodically dripping on to the O rings and some of this oil will work its way on to the sprocket. If only a company would invent a system where you had a small reservoir of oil carried on your bike and a way of dripping it periodically on to your chain. Oh wait, Scott have done that, and it's universally recognised that a Scottoilier will increase

the life of your chain. So I propose to make myself into an inefficient human Scottoilier. Obviously there's no miracle answer to lubricating a chain, but let's have a look at the pros and cons of using engine oil as opposed to grinding paste. First, cost: engine oil is cheaper than aerosol chain lube. Second, it's easy to apply: I use a one inch paint brush. I just paint it on liberally and wipe it off of the side plates. Third: it's not as sticky as aerosol lube so all the detritus from the road like mud and dog poo doesn't stick to it. Cons? Well, as stated, it's not that sticky so some of it will end up on your wheel and swinging arm. Also the rain will wash it off so you need to reapply. Having said that, we all clean our chains using kerosene before applying more lube, don't we? Now I imagine a third of you are thinking what's kerosene? Another third are thinking where do you buy kerosene? And another third are thinking "No, I don't clean my chain." Well if you don't clean your chain before re-lubing all you're doing is adding more sticky gunk to the dirt, grit, leaves, dog poo, tar, and other assorted muck that's already on your chain. So, in conclusion, I'll let you know how I get on. Obviously if in 10k miles I need a new chain then I've made an expensive cock-up and I'll go back to following the herd, but if in 30k my chain is still going strong then I'll rest my case.

PS. I won the raffle at the last club night. Mine was the last number pulled out of the hat and the only prize left was a bottle of Wurst chain lube, which I'm hoping isn't actually the "worst" chain lube (can you see what I did there). I suppose it's testament to the number of shafties in the club that no one wants chain lube. Anyway, I'm going to put it to one side and continue with my experiment, but before I put it away I did read the blurb and it suggested cleaning your chain with brake cleaner. I had never considered this but I gave it a go. Well, there is a much overused expression for enthusiastic joy and I hate using it, but OH MY GOD, and I'm going to say it again, OH MY GOD!!!! (See that, four exclamation marks.) A quick squirt and the dirt just fell off, a wipe over with a rag and the chain was as clean as a very clean thing in Cleansville on national clean day. Go on give it a go.

PPS: Shortly after writing this article I sold the bike. So, unfortunately, I'll be unable to complete my experiment and draw any conclusions. I can only sum up by saying that in the year that I was lubricating my chain with engine oil I covered 6000 miles and I didn't have to adjust the chain.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ou3RkE_vas



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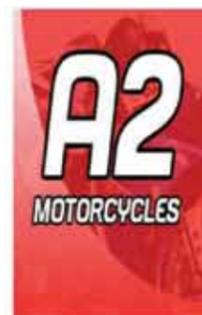
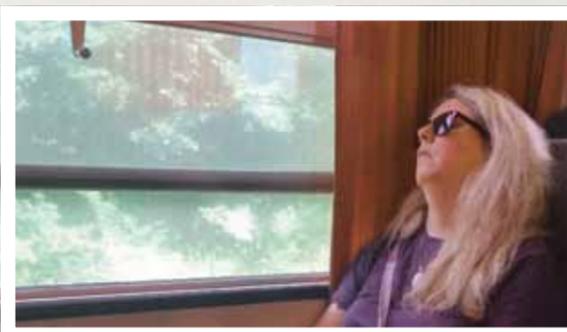
Amanda Binks

Sadly, on 30th March Amanda Binks died unexpectedly following a stroke. She was a Full Member who was passionate about her motorcycling and being a part of the KAMG family. Amanda was a very popular figure within the group, with many friends who warmed to her smile, openness and loyalty, and she was a person you could rely on to support each and every KAMG event and function with great enthusiasm.

Amanda always attended the monthly group meetings; she went on practically every trip abroad and on the umpteen Pork Pie Runs, loving the camaraderie and the holiday atmosphere of them all. Immediately prior to her illness, Amanda had taken over as the organiser of the monthly

Social and Training rides and was planning many new routes for us. She never missed an opportunity to support the annual visit to Parkwood School to distribute Easter eggs to the children there who have moderate to severe learning difficulties, and latterly also supporting the Christmas Toy Run for the very sick children at Demelza House Hospice near Sittingbourne.

Unfortunately, because of the Corona virus lockdown we were not able to attend her funeral nor to organise an escort, but it is hoped that there will be a memorial run in her honour later in the year when restrictions are lifted. She will be long remembered for her marvellous contribution to the life of the KAMG, and she will be greatly missed by all her friends in the group.



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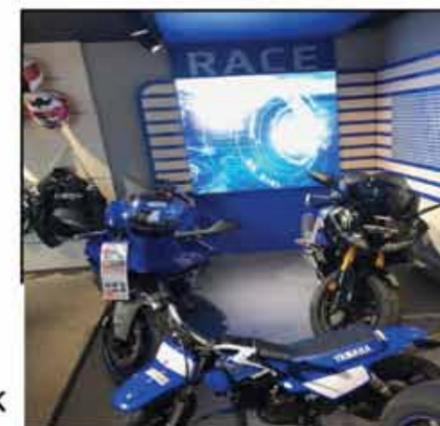
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FROM WINKLE PICKERS TO CARPET SLIPPERS

In which Roger Lancaster switches from the fashionable ??? to the comfortable but doesn't lose a second

It's gone! My MT-10 was in that space. I remember going into 'what I must do' mode, immediately phoning 101 to inform the police that my motorbike had been stolen and likewise the Datag guys. Then I contacted my insurance company when I got home. Getting home wasn't much of a problem in the end. Oddly, I didn't feel angry or upset, just weirdly numb about the whole thing. Sure, I was miffed and went through the 'Why me?' thought processes; it's only metal and plastic; it's mine, I put a lot of effort into adapting it to what I wanted it to be; nobody was hurt, all that kind of thing. Even before I got home I'd arranged the loan of a bike and during the following two days the observed rides I had planned were conducted without any need for rescheduling.

That same evening our Group Chairwoman, Tina, phoned me to say that a guy had contacted her wanting to talk to me about the theft of my bike. Apparently he's a member of an anti-theft motorcycling group

that monitors the activities of the scumbags that steal our pride-and-joys. There didn't seem any reason not to phone him so with a few precautions in place, I made the call. Within seconds I got the impression the fella was a genuine sort who passionately wanted to reunite owners with their bikes. I was quite astounded when he told me he knew within an hour of the theft and where my bike probably was, who had nicked it and he even sent me two photos of my machine 'for sale' lifted from a social media site. Blimey, unbelievable! I phoned the police with this additional information, and I have to say that every person I had spoken to at the insurance brokerage, the insurance company and the police were very pleasant, sympathetic and reassuring.

The observed rides conducted immediately after the theft went without a hitch, but it was noted by one rider that I didn't have that usual sparkle in my ride. By that stage I hadn't tweaked the preload

on the suspension of the borrowed bike, a Yamaha Fazer 800, me being somewhat heavier than the owner, and I suppose I wasn't riding the bike I wanted to ride. Anyway, I led one of my Friday Rides to Thaxted on the Fazer (familiar to me because I used to own one), which turned out to be a very enjoyable experience as the suspension tweaks worked and the little Yam handled and went very well. I had to make alternative arrangements to borrow another bike as the Fazer could not be insured for me to ride it as a named rider. Martin Stevens (a fellow one-time member of Team West within the Observer Corps) came up trumps with his Yamaha FZ8, almost an identical machine to the 800cc Fazer. I collected it from his parents' home, dusted it down a little, did a POWDER check and yes, tweaked the preload.

My insurance company informed me it wouldn't be much more than a fortnight before they settled with an offer. This meant I ought to do some research around the value of my nicked bike. I phoned the helpful people at A2 Motorcycles, the Yamaha dealership at Gravesend, who gave me a high and a low figure. I also took their advice to go on ebay and see what price 2016 MT-10s were being flogged at, and use all these figures to judge whether or not I was being offered a reasonable amount, bearing in mind that mine was in a slightly higher mileage category than most on the market. True to their word the insurance company sent me a cheque within three weeks. Oddly it was without warning or discussion as to whether or not it was acceptable. I imagine they hope that customers would just roll over, cash it in and run away. It wasn't a disastrous amount

but a member of the KAMG, upon learning of my plight, came forward with some advice that included not accepting the first offer and not cashing the cheque until negotiations were finalised. The long and the short of it was that I turned down the amount on the cheque and they came back with two more cheques totalling an extra £500. Job done. Now to locate a low mileage MT-10 and get buying.

In the meantime Steve Riches asked me to do a pre-test check ride with Simon Ranner (now a Full Member). I happened to be in possession of a Yamaha scooter on the day; a 300cc single cylinder jobby. I pulled up outside Nell's Café and Steve came out with a big smile on his face asking, "Are you going to do an observed ride on that thing?" Well, it gave the two of them a laugh as I wrung its neck to keep up at times, one particular overtake I did almost made Steve fall off his Honda no-clutch thingy because he was laughing so much. Simon with his BMW 1200 RT was kind about it and said I was brave. I think he really wanted to say 'stupid' to be honest.

My research for another motorbike kept pulling me towards looking for FJRs as well as the MT-10. Quite different bikes I guess, but that's what was happening. I've always had a bit of a hankering for an FJ but couldn't justify the cost or reason to buy a tourer. I located an MT to look at and I also thought I ought to get this FJR business out of my head. In the middle of February my wife and I were preparing to visit my daughter and her family in Worcester and my research revealed the presence of a two and a half year old FJR AE model at the city's Yamaha dealership. The missus suggested I take my bike kit with me and take it out for a test ride. My thought was that I'd find it not to my liking and I would be off to where the MT was for sale in no time. The day before we departed for the rurals north of Watford, a Saturday, I noticed that A2 Yamaha, in Gravesend, had an ex-demonstrator FJR 1300 A for sale. I didn't think it would do any harm to road test it



before taking my clobber all the way to Worcester only to discover that the machine there wasn't for me. The A2 model was without panniers and some sort of electronically adjustable rear suspension. Whereas the one at Worcester had all the gubbins on it, 9k miles and it was 1500 quid cheaper.

I turned up to see a matt mid blue and rather large machine prepped ready for me to ride. Taking it off its side stand the reality of how heavy it was hit home. Stewth, this'll be fun to squeeze between two cars on an uphill shared drive! Once out on the road I immediately felt comfortable on it. It was light to use and powerful, but lazy if you wanted it to be. I rode through the rural back doubles to my place at Orpington to check it would get in the garage. The wife liked the colour and I was impressed with its ability to be ridden in a sprightly way, and by its comfort. Sports mode was impressive. Maybe not quite like an MT-10 in the performance stakes, but it was different and it would be a change to own something different too. You can see where this is going, can't you? I returned to A2's, walked into the garage and admitted I liked it. I discussed the price, got a few

hundred quid off (and it was originally priced a lot less than the RRP for a brand new one), shook the salesman's hand and walked out with a nearly new bike with 780 miles on the clock. Gawd, what had I done! This wasn't the plan, but done it was. A week later I collected it. I only specified a couple of extras for it: a tank bag ring to clip on the tank bag that wasn't on the bike when it was nicked, and a tank protector to prevent my jackets from scratching the paintwork; not helped by having a well-proportioned tummy underneath them.

The following day was the group's scheduled training and social ride to Rye, an excellent opportunity for me and the FJ to get to know each other. It certainly was a lot heavier to push around, but I'll get used to that. There was one aspect of the bike I was looking forward to and that was not having to fill up with fuel every few hundred yards, or so it always seemed on the MT. The FJ has a 25litre tank, the MT-10 was 17 litres and I rarely managed 40 mpg! The FJ's fuel tank was nearly full so I could easily get to the rendez-vous, do the ride, get home and even do a local ride from home the following day without going to



a petrol station. Bliss. And the FJ did 47mpg, possibly the lowest figure it'll normally achieve.

Returning from Rye I was able to explore the FJ's capabilities and find out how I could exploit its attributes and maybe discover its foibles. A couple of times I didn't do an overtake that in hindsight I thought I would've done had I been riding my MT. I thought I was using the ample torque of the FJ to keep the ride sparkly and didn't bother to change down a gear to complete most of the overtakes. In fact on these two particular occasions when I decided not to overtake but perhaps could have done, I discovered that had I selected a lower gear to get the monster engine to hit the 5000 rpm mark, of the 9000 available, I would've been home and dry. Blimey, in Sports mode and with the revs higher up the scale, the plot just took off. Woh! Keeping the bike in third for the twisties, with an occasional visit into second meant I felt much more in control and safer. I was kinda surprised I had to do this as I was always under the impression that big

tourers plodded about in a high gear with plenty of grunt on tap. Well, yes they do, but there's obviously a pot of gold in the performance chest that'll make it go in a sprightlier manner when you make the engine sing a bit. I should've known better having ridden with Paul Aspinall when he was solo on his FJ on a lovely stretch of road in Austria. He effortlessly rode it like you could a sports bike.

I completed one more trip to the coast on the FJ before the COVID-19 stay-at-home request kicked in. Part of that journey was ridden in the rain and I discovered I didn't like the OE Bridgestone 023 tyres in those conditions – there was an 'orrible lack of feel, they slip a bit as if your bike's wearing full-on sports tyres in the wet on a very cold day. They're absolutely fine in the dry. I'm sure Bridgestone's T31 tyres or something similar would be just the job but I planned to change the tyres for Metzeler's Roadtec before going to Vianden at the end of May. Of course that won't be happening now because of the difficult times we are all going through combating the Coronavirus.

I already feel at one with the FJ and don't at all regret buying such a different motorcycle to the MT-10. You could say that the theft of my MT was a small blessing; although I'm not sure I would go that far as it sounds as if I've justified or condoned the actions of the scumbag thief. In different circumstances it would've been nice to have put a few thousand miles on it instead of cleaning it and leaving it in the garage for weeks, but...

Postscript: I cannot say any more about the chap who originally called me when my bike was stolen except to say that it took a month for the police officer in the case, or his supervising officer to contact me! By then I had been paid out by the insurance company. I did though find out through the insurance company that the police marker on the shared police file revealed that a central police squad was interested in the theft of my bike. With a bit of luck the thief will get nicked fairly soon.

Roger dedicates this article to the memory of KAMG member Amanda Binks who died recently after suffering a severe stroke.

IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE, ASK A BUSY MAN

KAMG FREQUENTLY ASKS TONY YOUNG

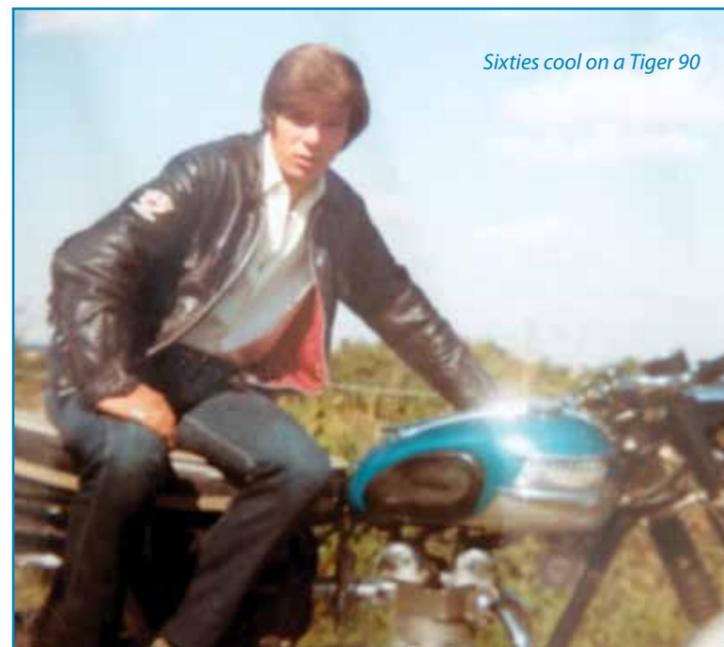
One day back in 1961, in the village of Barham near Canterbury, a 350cc AJ's was being offered rather hopefully in part exchange for another bike at the noted dealers Arter Brothers Ltd. Unfortunately, the canny brothers Arter were prepared to offer only a measly 35 quid for this little gem and the deal quickly collapsed. The result was that the disappointed exchanger took his Ajay home and instead



Very young Young

gave it to his 11 year old nephew. That nephew was Tony Young, and that was the beginning of young Young's motorcycling life. The Arters' loss was our gain. Tony lived on a farm and rode that bike round the field next to his house for the next five years with only the odd out-of-field 'excursion' which he said he wouldn't mention (as he mentioned it), and remarkably, after five years of field riding, he still managed to sell the bike for £20. That £20 went towards the purchase of a 250cc James on which he made his legal road debut at the age of 16. The two stroke James was soon upstaged by a Triumph Tiger 90, which, as you can see from the picture on this page, lent the 16 year old Tony an impressive amount of sixties 'cool'.

Many miles have been covered since then and many bikes have passed through his hands at an average rate, I calculate, of about one every three years since 1966.



Sixties cool on a Tiger 90



Tony with his current favourite bike, and looking just a little bit grumpy for some reason

His bikes have included, of course, a proper Meriden 650 Bonneville as well as the inevitable TRINORBSA café racer comprising various BSA and Triumph parts screwed into a Featherbed frame, with clip-ons, bump-stop seat, five gallon tank, GP wheels and all the gubbins. When I asked what his favourite bike was he simply said that it was always the latest one, and today's favourite is the Honda 1100 Africa Twin with dual clutch transmission that has only got 700 miles on the clock because immediately after he bought it the full force of the Chinese bat 'flu hit us and lockdown started.

Tony is now and has always been an important part of KAMG since he joined about 30 years ago, although he's been a full member of the IAM for even longer than that, gaining his first IAM qualification 42 years ago as an HGV driver in the Territorial Army where he was an instructor. Now he is a national observer and a local observer assessor and



was heavily involved until recently with the training and testing of KAMG's new observers. He is no longer a member of RoSPA but was for many years a

Was the moustache a good idea?



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He used to ride horses too, but probably not this one

Gold level RoSPA rider. He's also accredited for radio training and testing which is being tried by KAMG. However, his involvement with motorcycle road safety and rider training extends well beyond the IAM and KAMG: he has also been an active member of the BMF for 30 years or so, and was their regional rep for 15 years and their Show Organiser and their Deputy Chairman at a time when they had 120,000 members. It was under the BMF umbrella that he set up the Blue Riband Advanced Training School, a voluntary outfit that ran for four or five years before it closed when he realised that he was doing all the paperwork and not actually doing any rider training. It was while running Blue Riband that he persuaded Kent Police to start a BikeSafe scheme that was run jointly with Blue Riband. Kent BikeSafe was eventually taken over entirely by the police and then, sadly, closed down completely 18 months later. In addition to all this he also spent a year or so as an on-road trainer for the Kent County Council, re-educating those that had had bad accidents or had speeding tickets and were referred by the courts for further training.

It was after the closure of the Blue Riband scheme that Tony really started to become heavily involved with KAMG, first as an observer, and subsequently in many more roles. Two of the most important jobs in KAMG are that of Associate co-ordinator and IDCAM organiser. These are the engine room of KAMG. All associates attend an IDCAM session before embarking on their observed training, and the first point of contact for all new associates is The Associate Co-ordinator who makes sure that each associate is teamed up with an appropriate observer and that that relationship remains workable and viable. Tony Young filled that dual role for ten years before handing it over, but then had to take it on again when the job became unexpectedly vacant after only a short period in someone else's hands. He did it for a further two years but has now deservedly been able to hand over to Matt Barnes. Another very active and time-consuming 'official' role which he filled for many years and has only recently relinquished was that of Deputy Chief Observer. Yet it's not just his 'official' roles that make Tony so important to KAMG, it's all the other stuff, the non-specific stuff that

other people don't think about and most members don't see, but which has to be done because if it isn't done chaos reigns. For example, Tracker: when he took over IDCAM and the Associates, KAMG was using a muddled and outdated system that was, as he describes it, "woefully inadequate," and now we have Tracker, which, appropriately, keeps track of all KAMG activities. Tracker is not Tony's system but it is because of Tony that we have it at all and it's because of Tony that it is properly managed and, most important, that it is up to date. It is also he that keeps the calendar up to date. That's a vital job that always gets done. No one asks him to do it, we just assume that he will do it. It's these sort of unglamorous, untitled, time-consuming but essential back-office jobs that can quickly lead to chaos, if they don't get done. Even as I am writing this he has just emailed to say that there will be a committee meeting by Zoom tonight because of the lockdown; it is he who has got all of the committee marshalled into the Zoom system and also into the Slack system that allows the committee to communicate – yet another thing that probably wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for Tony.

If there's any KAMG event happening anywhere the chances are that you'll find Tony there, often with Annette his partner of 30 years. He hasn't missed a Machine Control Day in ten years, he'll always be at the IDCAMs and at the Kent Fire and Rescue days at Brands Hatch, indeed it was he who first got KAMG involved with KFRS six years ago. And as well as all this he is a very active observer, one of a hard core of observers who do a disproportionate amount of work. It is true that he can sometimes be... how shall I put this?...he can be a little brittle and I have even heard him referred to as grumpy, but we wouldn't have it any other way. It was Benjamin Franklin who said, "If you want something done, ask a busy man." Tony Young is our busy man, and I think we owe Arter Brothers a big thanks for inadvertently sending him our way sixty years ago.

NF



Tony, Annette and Joey Dunlop



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IDCAM

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If you would like to attend as an Associate contact associates@kamg.org.uk. Observers should confirm their willingness to help by registering on Tracker and they will be kept informed about the needs for any particular session.

MACHINE CONTROL DAY

Our machine control days are organised by Jim Pullum. If you have not yet signed up then do it now – simply log on to Tracker and register your participation or contact email below:

mcd@kamg.org.uk

Held at: Car Park D, Ebbsfleet Station
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Non-KAMG members will be asked for a small fee of £10.00 contributing to the running costs.

Arrival time: 08:45 for 09:00 start
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