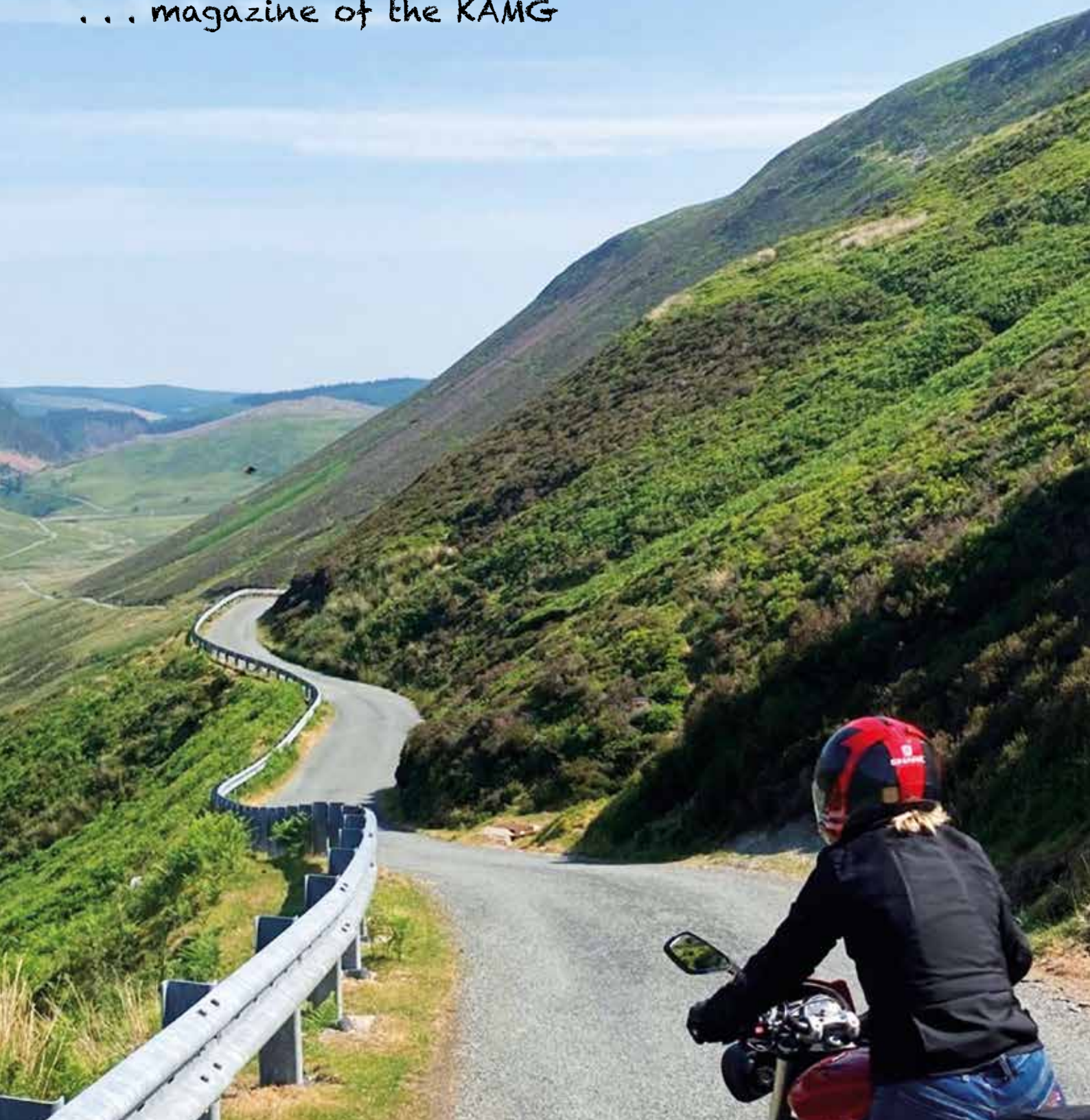


RIDERS

... magazine of the KAMG



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THIS EDITION INCLUDES . . .

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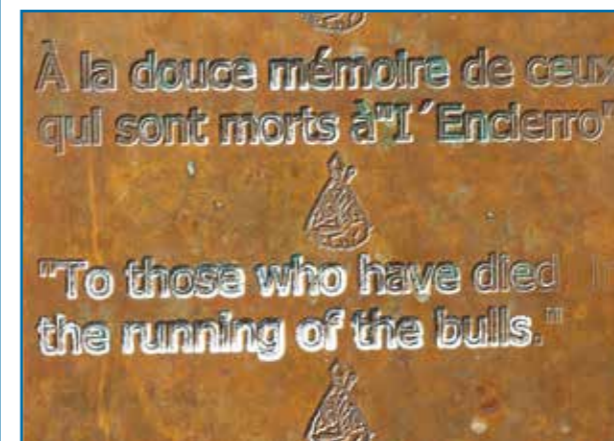
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- Sat 2nd Masters Training Weekend, Thetford
- Sun 3rd Ride from Teston Bridge (ME18 5BX) to
Hythe
- Sat 9th Machine Control Day Car Park D
- Thurs 14th Fish & Chip Run (see Tracker)
- Sat 16th IDCAM
- Sat/Sun 23/24 Peterborough Training Weekend
- Thurs 28th Group Night

OCTOBER

- Sun 1st Ride from Shorne Country Park to
Manston
- Sat/Sun 7/8th Ride to the East (see Tracker)
- Sat 21st IDCAM

- Thurs 26th Group Night: Motogirl clothing
presentation
- Sun 29th Run to Kearsney Abbey, Dover, from
Leybourne Lakes

NOVEMBER

- Sun 12th Remembrance ride to Battle of Britain
Memorial
- Sat 18th IDCAM
- Thurs 30th Christmas Dinner (no details yet)

*This list is correct at time of going to press. Check all
KAMG dates on Tracker to ensure that there are no
changes. Details of contacts for IDCAM, Machine Control
Days and Ride-outs are on pages 30 and 31.*



Nick Farley, Editor

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Everything is done to ensure the correctness and accuracy of the editorial content of the magazine, but neither the editor nor the KAMG accepts liability for information errors, omissions or typesetting errors.

Riders is the place for every single member, or associate member, of KAMG to say what he/she thinks about anything and everything connected with riding and driving and the KAMG. Every article submitted will be published (provided it is legal) and no opinions or views will be changed or cut out. The magazine is apolitical, but criticism or praise of politicians of any political colour is welcome if the criticism, or praise, is about the politician's actions or views on road safety, roads or some other aspect of transport.

Please submit articles for publication, or letters to the editor, to the email address of the editor (see page 30). Please send pictures for publication as separate file attachments to an email if possible, rather than embedding them in the email content, and ensure that the pictures are of the highest resolution possible. Please do not send information or pictures via Facebook.

MAGAZINE DESIGN AND LAYOUT
BY JOHN GARDINER

TERRY FRIDAY

We heard just a few hours after this edition of *Riders* went to the printer that KAMG's founder, Terry Friday, had died. We have managed to retrieve this page from the printer and re-write it to pay him a tribute, albeit an inadequate one for such an important man.

It is fitting, but it is actually a fortuitous coincidence that the centre page article of this issue is about the history of the KAMG, the group that he started. In that article we speak about Terry as if he is still alive and I can't believe that he isn't. It seems like only last week, when, with him on my pillion in his famous green leathers, we would tootle off somewhere for lunch. After two strokes, it has been sometime since he was able to ride himself, but he was always up for a pillion ride. He simply loved being on a motorbike.

The importance of this man, not only to those who knew him personally; not only to the KAMG; not only to the IAM, but also to the literally thousands of motorcyclists across this country who didn't know him or even know of him, cannot be overstated. Whether those riders are here in Kent or in Scotland or Northern Ireland or in Wales, if there had been no Terry Friday, they probably wouldn't be wearing a Green Badge. That completely unknown rider that you once followed one day in some far-flung corner of the country and who was riding in an obviously 'advanced' way, owed something to Terry Friday although he obviously wouldn't know it. You can always tell a rider who is 'advanced' and it is no exaggeration to say that there would not be the vigorous, thriving Advanced Rider movement that we have today if there had been no Terry Friday. Sure, there would be advanced riding without Terry, indeed there was advanced riding before he came along, but it was he who sowed the seed and then nurtured the embryonic movement so that it became the thriving force it is today. The KAMG alone has trained over 3000 riders to Green Badge standard, and add to that the thousands that have been trained by other groups, groups that only exist today because Terry made their existence possible, and you see just how much we all owe him.

Terry became an apprentice shipwright in Chatham dockyard when he left school. Then after doing his national service stint in the army in Cyprus, he returned home to find that shipwrights were not needed. So, he joined the police to just play football, he told me, but that's where he passed his motorcycle test on a silent LE Velocette, and he was barely able to hide the scorn he had for that poor 'Noddy' bike, but the bike seed proper was sown when his police bike became a 500 Triumph. Luckily for us he went on to become a sergeant instructor at the Kent Police Driving School and that was the springboard that launched the KAMG and changed the IAM.

There are many Friday stories to be told and we shall tell some in future editions of *Riders*, but until then we shall remember Terry's infectious enthusiasm and his ear-to-ear grin, and as we remember him, we are all thinking of his son Ryan and his daughters Tina and Madeline at this sad time.

Thanks Terry.



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

I'm now fully recovered from my summer tour, which covered 12,500km. We started in northern Spain and followed the coast anti-clockwise round Portugal and Spain to Genoa in Italy, from there it was north into the Dolomites, south to Montenegro, back up through the Balkans to Poland and the Czech Republic before finally pointing towards home. 54 days completing a bucket list ride. I'm hoping to produce a write up for the magazine for the new year. Next year I'm considering Sicily and Greece then up through Romania, so if any seasoned riders have any tips for this trip, I will be 'all ears'.

We missed the short UK summer that you enjoyed in June and returned to a drab and wet July and August, but the KAMG ship was in the capable hands of the committee who volunteer their various skills to keep this group vibrant. One of those volunteers is Nev Smith, who has been our Group Run Leader for around 18 years. He has decided now to step down and take a well earned break. With family life and grandchildren to entertain, Nev has handed the baton over to Roger Lancaster, who has stepped in to pick it up for the time being. We are always looking for volunteers to bring

their skills and spare time to the table, so if you think being the Group Run Leader is something you might be able to dedicate time to, please approach anyone from the committee.

Sarah Livingstone joined the committee in April to look after the events calendar. Sarah is always on the lookout for guest speakers or others who can provide entertainment for our group nights. If you have any ideas for guest speakers, please pass this on to Sarah.

Ride-outs have been a great success this season, with Fish 'n' Chip runs complementing our regular monthly social and training runs plus a handful of special rides that have enhanced our programme. If you have any venues that you feel would be worth riding to, then again, please bring this to the table for us to help carve out a route. You see, without the input from the WHOLE MEMBERSHIP this group could become stale. It relies on everyone putting something back into the kitty.

Happy Trails,
Dave Murphy



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"Fantastic service. Would highly recommend. Dom took the challenge of cleaning our Harleys after a very wet trip back from Scotland. They came up a treat!" **Sarah L.**



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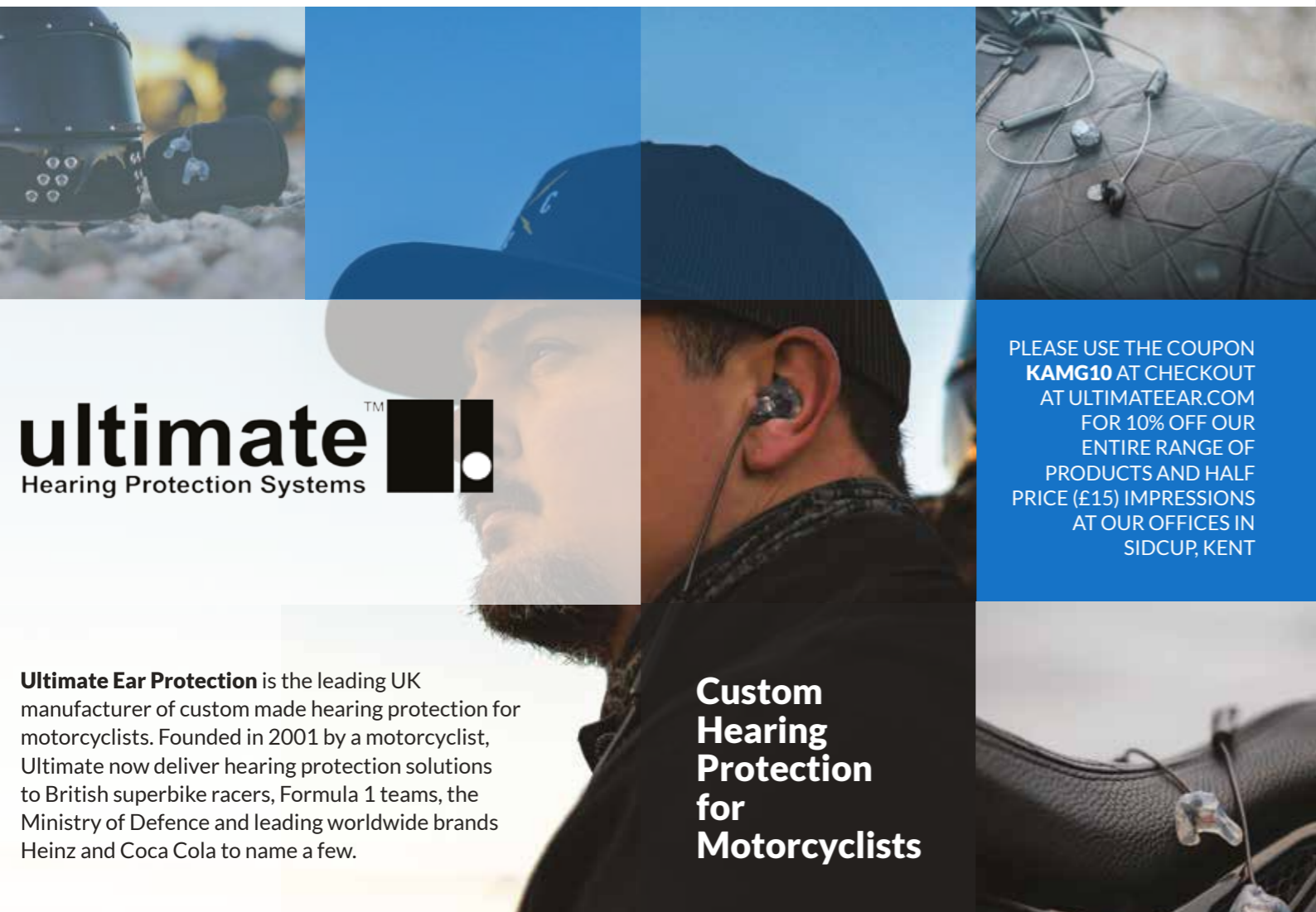
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TEST PASSES

Since the last edition



Neil McNally receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from his observer Craig Ayres



Julian Hanrahan receiving his Advanced Rider F1RST qualification from his observer John Roberts



Nicholas Gill receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from his observer David Mcconnachie



Andy Oram receiving his Advanced Rider qualification from his observer Colin Billings



Tony Young having received his well deserved lifetime membership award from the KAMG Group



Keith Burlace receiving his National Observer qualification from the Chief Observer Colin Billings



Dominic Barham receiving his Masters qualification from his mentor Steve Riches



John Roberts receiving his Masters Distinction qualification from his mentor Trevor Shearsmith



Martin Platt receiving his Masters Distinction qualification from his mentor Colin Underwood

An amazing week!



Steve Watkinson in the pink and Wales in the sun

After getting on the initial pre-booking list for Steve Riches' Wales trip as long ago as March last year, it was a long dark, wet winter, waiting for the big departure day finally to arrive. On the night before we left, we were like excited kids on Christmas Eve, and there was little sleep while we pondered whether we'd packed too little, or too much, or even packed the right stuff, such as essential tools and sensible spares. There were a few who took too much. But never mind the essentials and the sensible, Mr Riches somehow knew exactly what no one else had packed and he brought at least two of those things anyway!

Paddock Wood to Pontypool

It was Monday June 12th and despite its being 7.30 in the morning, the sun was already strong as the group assembled at the Hop Farm at Paddock Wood. Then, and apart from a small starting hitch on one of the GSs, which we all hoped wasn't a foretaste of things to come, we were on our way, with Trevor (Shearsmith), in pink, bringing up the rear as a safe pair of hands to sweep us along. (The last rider in the group wore the pink hi-vis jacket, which passed to various riders throughout the trip.) You can't get anywhere fast in the south east during rush hour, yet we made reasonable progress and dreamt of the excitement to come. First stop was at the Camelia Botnar Garden Centre at Cowfold* near Horsham, and it was a welcome break, although we thought it would never arrive. We sat together for the first time, many of us not knowing the others, and all politely engaging in safe topics of conversation, like what we thought of the route

so far, what bikes we have and how long we'd been riding. After the stop we followed what was certainly the most pleasant route I've ever taken to Wales as we navigated our way through tiny, quaint villages of thatched houses, and shared the roads with a few Bentleys and Astons.

Eventually we left the interesting roads and joined the M4 to enter Wales, but as we approached the bridge the temperature dropped and the skies darkened. Much water then fell and a 50mph speed limit was a blessing as we tried to stay clear of the river-like sections of the road. There was only a short stretch of M4 into Wales, but even that was too much for Steve up front as he fidgeted on his bike. We reached the final refreshment stop, the Cabin Cwtch, just before it closed, but the young lady was very accommodating, and certainly all the male contingent of the group seemed very keen on her getting items from the lower shelf behind the counter. The stop was an opportunity for all to compare how wet we got in the downpour and to discuss our drying out strategies, which were more or less just to carry on as normal – how very British.

That evening, in the hotel in Pontypool, I ripped the waterproof liner out of my new textile riding gear, which had been specially purchased for this trip. It may have kept the rain out, but I couldn't tell as I was so flippin' sweaty from the heat. After that it was down for the pre-dinner drinks gathering, then dinner itself and later post-dinner drinks for some, while most of us just hit the sack to be fresh for day two.

The Brecon Beacons (Bannau Brycheiniog)

Next morning, we found that eight unmarked police vehicles had joined us in the hotel car park for the start of the day's pre-ride checks. Slightly un-nerving, but we got on with our own preparations as we wondered how fast or for how long some of the police drivers could actually run if they needed to. We set off slightly excited, but also anxious about what was to come. In the early miles there were some amazing views from the tops of the Brecon Beacons in the short glimpses that we could afford to look away from the smooth tarmac twisties. The least of my worries was the odd crazed sheep that took a deeper interest in my bike than I would have liked, but the rest of the day turned out to be a special gift skills day from Mr Riches as we entered a technical bonanza of hairpins, twisting narrow roads barely wide enough for a fart to travel down, with high hedges that even our Dutch giant Waldo on his GS couldn't see over. There was gravel, mud and tight, steep corners on adverse cambers to test our concentration and endurance, as well as an angry dog to contend with too.



"... barely wide enough for a fart to travel down."

The lunch stop was a treat at the beautiful Carreg Cennen Castle, which is steeped in history and dates from the 13th century, with evidence also of earlier occupation in Roman and even prehistoric times. Along with its working farm there was a gorgeous, giant, oak-beamed barn there, which we had to ourselves that day and where we were certainly well looked after with locally farmed food and traditional Welsh dishes as we sat and pondered the morning's tortuous riding (which we all actually enjoyed in truth, just don't tell Steve).



The oak-beamed barn at Carreg Cennen Castle

In the afternoon the roads opened up a bit and we eased into our comfort zone, but there was still certainly no time for day-dreaming as the bends came thick and fast. The last stop took us to another barn, the quaint Old Barn Tea Room in Torpantau near Merthyr Tydfil, where the girl in the ice-cream kiosk had a long queue of eager customers in need of cooling due to the balmy heat. It was at this point I was beginning to feel slightly smug about being the only person using a water pouch, which was soon to be the envy of the group. When it was time to leave, Andy Stagg left in the wrong direction and three of us followed him. The error of our ways quickly became obvious and we soon got back on track. Perhaps it was even a blessing in disguise as three of us began hooning through the lanes and had a lively and exciting ride through the twisties to reach the rest of the group as 'pink' Trevor and Dawn patiently waited for us.

That night there were the usual pre-dinner drinks, and Brendan told stories of game shooting exploits on his estate and of the following pigeon butchery (complete with photos), all in a vain attempt to 'cure' Rohan and Christine of being vegans. They were both clearly very healthy people, especially as Rohan had already



Rohan and Christine, two happy vegans on an aqueduct



been knighted (by HRH Brendan himself) as the 'dump truck', 'bulldozer' (or something similar) having been witnessed rescuing a 250kg GS1250 from the side of a vertical cliff with just one hand; that was presumably whilst Christine was hanging on to his ankles at the top of the cliff! If that's what comes of being vegan, then let's all do it!

Pontypool to Oswestry

The third day it was my turn to be in pink and, frankly, I was quite looking forward to easing off a bit at the back of the group and enjoying the sweeping up through the valleys (pronounced locally as 'vaallees'). I got a few remarks about my lack of colour coordination caused by the strong clashes between my red bike, the pink jacket, orange water-pouch and yellow helmet... it was never my strong point.

The route that day was on slightly wider roads, though still with little traffic, and we enjoyed a brisker pace than the previous day. The uncharacteristic heat was getting the better of some of us and the welcome lunch stop was at the Caffi'r Hen Siop in a friendly village on the southern edge of the Snowdonia National Park. After lunch Brendan donned the 'pink', and as we skipped along some wider roads some of us got a little trigger happy at times. Pieter's NC750X certainly proved it was no slouch, in fact it's a bit of a wolf in sheep's clothing. Unfortunately, the much-looked-forward-to ice cream stop was to be at the Loch Café in Bala, but it was closed when we arrived. Never mind, we had a beautiful lake to admire while we watched Steve R relocate Sarah's bike to the loch edge for a photo opportunity. This was proving to be a bit of a habit, and confirmed the reputation that she gained on the Scotland trip. Well, I suppose it was still her new baby and clearly her friends and family needed documented evidence of this trip before they'd believe her.

The trip back to the hotel from Bala was on some of the finest roads of the trip with sweeping bends coming thick and fast. The best were those where there was a clear view through the corner so that we could get the power down early, lean harder and accelerate away; the stuff we love to do. Although, surprisingly, that was not so for all of us it seemed, and it was a topic of much debate that evening. It was an evening spent in the OK Diner, which actually exceeded expectations, though

it didn't quite require the tuxedo. Tiredness was now certainly creeping in a little for those less experienced in these sorts of trips; the sheer concentration for long periods and remaining 'on game' were demanding, but it ensured that we all slept soundly. It was just the waking up bit the following morning that became tougher each day. Still, the best was to come.

Snowdonia

It was day four and Chris had arrived the night before on his Honda CRF400 moto-cross bike. I have to say it slightly alarmed a few of us who were on pure road bikes, as we wondered if he had some inside information about the day ahead; perhaps this was to be an even more gnarly day than day two. I'm going to write very little about this day and let the amazing pictures describe everything.



There was everything from narrow tracks along beautiful lakesides to fast twisties alternating between the high open mountain tops and the deep valleys. It was a day of stunning scenery, beautiful weather and riding heaven in excellent company. My highlight of the day was riding behind the master Trevor in the mountains, where even on what seems like an aircraft carrier of a bike, he somehow switched to nimble mode and made everything look so smooth and easy while still making impressive progress.

The only slight hiccups of the day were that we didn't quite make the final stop at Pontcysyllte Chapel Tea Rooms, although we did visit the World Heritage site of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, where one of the party was a bit wobbly when tackling the very narrow path with a 150ft sheer drop beside the aqueduct, and where Steve's GS750 developed a suspected intermittent alternator fault. Fortunately, the GS750 issues were quickly resolved back at the hotel by a mobile BMW service vehicle with an apparently universal 'switch it off and then back on again' sort of black magic.

Oswestry to Home

This was the fifth and last day and a lengthy ride home with heavy hearts after such an amazing week. Though



the routes and stops were enjoyable, the traffic increased as we re-entered England, reminding us how lucky we'd been all week in Wales. Our last lunch stop was in Westbury, in Northamptonshire, where we had some gorgeous home-made food as we sat overlooking the village cricket field. Then, and despite a couple of lost riders, we did all eventually re-gather in a very warm layby before starting the final leg of the journey, joining the M25 at Hemel Hempstead. Queuing started early and my heart dropped as I prepared for 50 miles

of filtering, wondering how long it would be before there was an attempted side-wipe. I played it cool and was rewarded with just a short spell of this until the traffic started flowing again and we entered Kent over the Queen Elizabeth bridge at around 6pm.

Postscript

This was a trip with a fabulous group of people who were keen on getting everyone quickly acquainted. The evening chats covered all topics from serious discussion about furthering our riding capabilities by way of, say, a 'Masters' programme, or training as an observer, or just listening to peoples' advice and experiences as advanced riders, right through to the inner workings of draught Guinness from a can and even guidance on how to feed a 450 lb gorilla that hates you and only wants to rip your arms off. (?? Ed.) None of us can thank Steve enough for his fabulous planning, his charming wit and the superb routes between excellently selected stops. If you've never done a trip like this, you absolutely MUST.

It was an amazing week!

**The Camelia Botnar Garden Centre is a registered Charity that aims to assist disadvantaged young people. cameliabotnar.com Ed.*



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... and then Spain again

Geoff Curtis returns to Spain several times in one week



Slim adventurers pre-Spanish calories

Actually, to be really accurate, I should say Spain, Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar, and then Spain again, before catching the ferry home. This trip involved three nights on the ferry – two outward from Portsmouth to Santander and one coming back – 16 riding days, covering 3200 miles, many mountain passes and even more hairpins. Challenges and smiles? Plenty of both! The journeys by ferry from Portsmouth to Santander and back were boringly uneventful thanks to flat calm in the Bay of Biscay. If you do this trip, take a good book is my advice. My touring companion, that old sea dog Dermot (yes, he of the Trans-Am adventure, about which I'm sure you've heard much) said, when he learned about my travel sickness pills, "Oh, it's all in the mind," but I was thinking, no it isn't and it'll be all over the deck if the crossing is rough. However, he was right about modern passenger ships with stabilisers.

After landing in Spain at Santander, we covered the modest distance to our first hotel and to some proper rest on a static bed. The hotel was on the edge of the Picos de Europa mountains in Asturias, on the north west coast of Spain. The Picos reach a height of almost 9000ft, so the next day the tour proper began with some interesting roads. The picture shows us before the excess calories of large breakfasts, after-ride beers and evening dinners washed down with 'vino tinto', had all contributed to reducing the power-to-weight ratio of our machines, and which also made my leather jacket a little more 'snug' by the end of the trip.

I digress: after a little satnav trouble (see separate panel), we headed west through Asturias. There was a worry that late snow would hamper our progress along my pre-plotted routes, and well, yes, there was some snow, but it was the perennial type that makes

the high peaks look scenic, but which comes nowhere near the tarmac. Don't panic! Then turning south after riding through the Picos we spent three days crossing Portugal, mainly through national parks. Some of the flat areas were an absolute delight with long clear views across the twisties meaning that limit points and stopping distances became less of a consideration and the bends could be enjoyed with spirit.



Typical Picos hairpin

By day nine we had reached the venerable Bristol Hotel in the centre of Gibraltar, with its old-fashioned polished wood charm, and where the currency was good old sterling. However, while Bank of England notes are accepted in Gibraltar, Gibraltarian notes are not, I believe, legal tender here; although I didn't have any left to test this when I got home. After nine days

riding, we took two days to unwind and see the sights and probably shed a few pounds walking up and down The Rock. Forget the apes though; for me the most impressive attraction was the Gotham's Cave complex where a light and sound show made the stalactites and stalagmites in the main cavern even more stunning than they naturally are. Seating has been installed and this subterranean theatre now regularly hosts various events.

Back on the road in Spain we headed to Granada where our hotel had a panoramic view over the old city. We didn't have time to visit the Alhambra – it was, after all, a riding tour, not a cultural one – before heading north. Madrid didn't appeal to me either (just another old city), so my planned routes meandered around it clockwise through Toledo, Salamanca, Segovia (to see the Roman aqueduct) then Soria, before heading on to Ainsa in the Pyrenees. Central Spain was indeed mainly plain and consequently lacked interest as far as riding was concerned – and no, there was no rain.

The Pyrenees, however, never disappoint, with passes aplenty and wonderful views. Then, after Ainsa, we headed west to Pamplona, where we did not find our hotel without battling again with the satnavs as we tried to negotiate the nearly impenetrable one-way system and pedestrian zone. A kindly policewoman didn't give me a ticket for a minor transgression, she just turned me round for another go, and more by luck than judgement we eventually made it; relief. Another break from riding had been planned so that we could explore this famous old city. I learned that the famous 'running of the bulls' is up a steep and very narrow street in the morning and terminates in the bull ring, where all the bulls are ritually slaughtered in the bullfight later in afternoon. Old traditions die hard, but putting these



Gotham's cave Gibraltar

distasteful bloodthirsty events aside, the city is very picturesque with its fortifications, its cobbled streets, narrow lanes and parks. There is a vibrancy about the place, and the nightlife is plentiful. Cafés and bars abound around the main plaza in the centre of the old city, where we were staying. Families enjoyed meals and drinks in the relative cool of the evening, and in the side streets people of all ages drank outside small bars; yet the atmosphere was friendly with no sign at all of excess; no raised voices, no drunkenness, no posturing, in fact no trouble at all. Wandering around alone taking night time photos, I felt completely at ease, and at around 11pm, people began drifting away and the area became quiet. Such a pleasant change from town centres in the UK.

Before catching the ferry home from Santander, we had one last overnight stop in Vega de Pas, a little village half way up a mountain in the Pyrenees. The journey from Pamplona to the village was, at least to me, the most demanding we undertook. Six hours riding covering two hundred miles up and down at least four considerable mountain passes with many



Running the bulls in Pamplona. Each one weighs well over half a ton



The Roman aqueduct at Segovia

hairpins. It was tiring. The tiredness was exacerbated by a road closure and consequent auto-recalculated satnav directions. Fortunately, however, we made it to our hotel before the forecast rain, which began about an hour after our arrival and was torrential. Dawn broke with a clear blue sky and we had just a few more hairpins before leaving the Pyrenees behind us as we headed the last thirty miles to Santander for our afternoon sailing, which was uneventful, thankfully.

Before going our separate ways at Portsmouth, the question was: where shall we go next time? I had been considering Finland via Germany, Denmark and Sweden, returning via the Baltic states. However, just a little research showed that there would be precious few mountains along the way. Finland is mainly flat and

watery with not much, at first glance, to recommend it. The distance would be around 4,200 miles and would, I feel sure, become too much of a slog merely to tick some more boxes and buy some more stickers. My thoughts have now turned south-east instead, and I might well return to the Dolomites. Planning will begin at the end of summer.



End of the road . . . well, the end of this particular road

A Tale of Two Satnavs

We managed to get our satnavs communicating with Bluetooth and each day at breakfast I would transfer my painstakingly computer-plotted Garmin Basecamp routes to Dermot's Garmin. (Basecamp is Garmin's route plotting program.) However, he doesn't have an ordinary Garmin; oh no, he has the special BMW version. This appears to have BMW software overlaying that provided by Garmin, thereby providing some (questionable) extra functionality. Before trusting the transfer of routes from my Garmin to Dermot's, testing was required and commenced with him leading the ride. All was well for a while, he took the same turns that my satnav also indicated, but then some interesting deviations began to creep in. Misinterpretation of the route seemed to be the cause; so, next time, Dermot tried editing my route by converting waypoints to shaping points. I don't believe my satnav can do this but then I don't need them. This seemed to help but was not the complete answer. For example, on one occasion when my nav said that we should be taking a turn off the trunk road a few kilometres ahead, Dermot's took us off earlier and led us through a couple of villages, and then after a big loop, his route joined the same country road that my nav wanted in the first place. Ho hum, we were in no hurry. We found that Dermot's 'curvy roads' nav setting followed very closely my

pre-plotted route, and all went quite well sharing the lead in this way until the last full day's riding, which turned out to be challenging. I was leading along the plotted route, when it was curtailed by a very definite 'Road Closed' sign. My nav then took us up into the mountains, which was not a problem until, passing through a tiny village, the metalled road eventually became a narrow concrete lane that finally ended in a cart track at the top of a one-in-four ascent. I'm sure Dermot was ready to stand on the pegs of his rugged GS and get on with it, but my supercharged Kawasaki missile would have been too much of a handful for me, so I did a multipoint turn and returned to the village for a rest before continuing, skirting the road closure this time by using a custom avoidance. After lunch, Dermot was to take the lead again on to our last hotel, using the transferred route. Duly fed and watered we returned to the bikes (and the satnavs) whereupon Dermot's magenta route line abruptly stopped some way short of our location – we still had a couple of hours' riding left of the route – so I was back in front again. Dinner deliberation determined the likely cause of consternation was the high number of waypoints I had used to force Basecamp to follow a route cribbed from *BestbikingRoads.com*. Dermot's nav had simply given up. We know what to expect next time and you, dear reader, have been warned.



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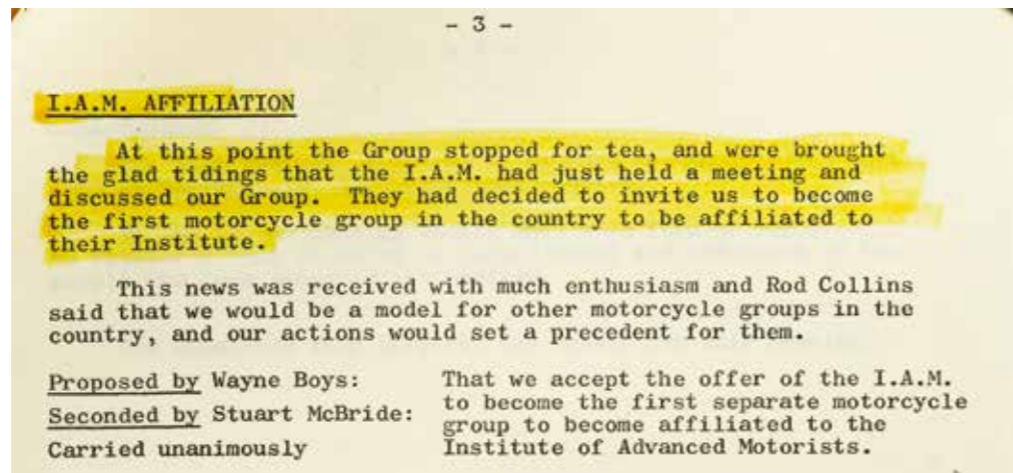


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*Subject to status



The heavily highlighted note in the minutes of the committee meeting of 10th April 1980

An excuse to describe a bit of KAMG history

You may have seen on page 57 of the summer issue of *Roadsmart*, pictures of the members of the Bournemouth and Wessex Advanced Motorcycle Group celebrating their 40th anniversary and it was claimed that the Bournemouth group was the first motorcycle group to be affiliated to the IAM. That is wrong – KAMG was the first motorcycle group affiliated to the IAM, and it happened on April 10th 1980, 43 years ago.

I make this point not just to claim the petty bragging rights (although I can't deny that there is a frisson of smugness in that too), but because it is actually a very important date, and it's not just important to the KAMG: that date has a much greater and wider significance because, although no one knew it at the time, on that day the IAM itself changed fundamentally. If it had not been for the newly formed motorcycle 'club' in Kent that morphed into the KAMG, it is quite possible – indeed, quite probable – that there would be no motorcycle-only groups affiliated to the IAM today and, as a result, the IAM would be a much smaller organisation than it

is today. Back in 1980 the IAM, which was established in 1956, was decidedly a car organisation, and its influential secretary at that time, a chap called Bob Peters, was definitely anti-bikes and anti-bikers. However, KAMG under the leadership of Terry Friday (who is still our president) and with a strong support team (some of whom are still members), the walls of castle IAM were breached and the KAMG became the first motorcycle-only group to be affiliated to the IAM.

OK. So what? Written in a few lines like that it all sounds a very obvious, simple and yawn-worthy process, doesn't it? Actually, it was very far from simple.

The whole idea of a motorcycle 'club' that taught motorcyclists to become 'advanced riders' in the sense that we understand that term today, came about when a chap called Terry Friday met a chap called Mike Knowles. Terry Friday was a sergeant instructor at the Kent Police driving school in the 1970s, and was training police riders not just from Kent but from police forces abroad, many of which sent their riders to Kent for training. At the same time, a motorcyclist called Mike Knowles, who



Above: The very first 'magazine' - the pesky apostrophe has changed position again

Right: The Kent Messenger records a significant event



L to R Graham Newton KAMG Chairman, Terry Friday, Lady Strathcarron, Lord Strathcarron, Michael Pickering IAM Chairman



was the Road Safety Officer of Kent County Council and was liaising with the Kent Police driving school, was also responsible for promoting the RAC/ACU motorcycle training scheme* in the county, and it was in this capacity that he first met Terry.

Because of his police instructor status Terry was approached sometime in the late 1970s to be the IAM car examiner in the south east and, naturally, he asked if he could cover bikes as well. There were no IAM bike groups back then, but there was an IAM Advanced Rider test, which had been introduced in 1975, and Mike Knowles thought that it would be a good idea if all the volunteer RAC/ACU instructors took that IAM advanced rider test. And so it was arranged that on one day Terry Friday and another police instructor, Barry Hill, would conduct the tests. The RAC/ACU instructors were keen, but unfortunately their riding was not really up to snuff, and when they were tested not one was of 'Green Badge' standard; in fact, two of them even wanted to take the test on bikes that they had damaged by crashing into each other on the way to the test! Fortunately, Mike Knowles also took the test and was the last rider on the day to do so, and he, having read *Motorcycle Roadcraft*, passed. That was a significant moment because, as Terry later told me, "In that moment my day changed. No, my life changed!"

The two of them, Terry and Mike, recognised that taking the RAC/ACU training scheme and passing the 'driving test' did not properly equip people to ride motorbikes either well or safely. There was a need to provide some form of advanced training to motorcyclists, and to their surprise the riders of that time were very enthusiastic about the idea too and were keen to become 'advanced' riders, a keenness borne out by the numbers that turned up for the first tentative discussion meeting at the KCC – there were over 100 riders there and they came from all over the south east, even as far away as Southampton. Two weeks later at the second 'gathering' there were even more. The inaugural meeting of "a motorcycle club to be formed for the advancement of riding skills", as it was described in the minutes of that

meeting, was held on Monday March 24th 1980, and it is from that day that the show was officially on the road. But it was not to be a smooth road.

The IAM advanced rider test was the only accepted civilian standard available and obviously in order to take that test a rider had to become a member of the IAM, but in order to become a member every one of this large group of riders would have to become part of an existing IAM group, and all the groups were car groups. There were small pockets of motorcycle members within some car groups, but there was no such thing as a motorcycle-only group. Moreover, the IAM definitely didn't want separate motorcycle groups. Yet it was clear to Terry Friday that the two factions couldn't really mix satisfactorily; apart from their common interest in improving their skills, the needs of the riders and the drivers were different and he wanted there to be a separate motorcycle-only group. This, however, conflicted with the IAM's rules and they insisted that the Kent riders would have to join the nearest car group. However, not all of the local car groups welcomed this idea, as they could see themselves being swamped by a 100 or more grubby bikers in their own groups. Yet the IAM couldn't or wouldn't accept the Kent 'club' as a motorcycle-only group.

Another founder member, Rod Collins, was the valuable diplomatic liaison conduit in the negotiations with the IAM hierarchy, and was an important counterbalance to Terry Friday's sometimes 'less calm' approach, when dealing with the powers-that-be at IAM HQ. Another member who was also in at the beginning and who later became the group's Chief Observer after Terry, was Kevin Chapman. He told me that he remembered Rod recounting the battles with the IAM about the proposals to break away from the car group, and Terry's not always polite or respectful responses to them. "Terry was the drive," Kevin said, "but Rod was the diplomat able to communicate at their level."

Undeterred by these difficulties, Terry, Mike, Rod and others started to beat on the IAM's doors to get the rules changed, and, fortunately for the Kent 'club', help was at hand in the impressive form of the 2nd Baron Strathcarron. Lord Strathcarron was obviously a good bloke to have on side; he had a weighty CV, as you might



A youthful Kevin Chapman receiving the Fred Welch Speedo Trophy for services to Motorcycling at the 1998 National IAM Conference.

well imagine, including being an IAM council member, and he was instrumental in getting the IAM to change its mind about having motorcycle-only groups. Sadly, he died in a motorcycle accident with a dustcart in 2006 aged 82, but up to that point he had led a pretty active life as a racing driver, WW II bomber pilot, motorcyclist, businessman, and motoring journalist, but above all, for my money, he was a proper peer, not some shallow pop-star or civil servant artificially bumped up to the peerage by some outgoing prime minister settling his debts to his cronies. Most importantly, Lord Strathcarron was an active, year-round, motorbike rider; indeed, he had been the very first person to pass the IAM Advanced Rider test in 1975, and as a council member of the IAM I assume he had some influence at the time when the Kent 'club' was trying to become affiliated as a motorcycle-only group. After considerable to-ing and fro-ing and careful diplomacy by Rod Collins, the IAM doors were eventually eased ajar and the KAMG squeezed itself through them. In fact, it was during a tea-break at a committee meeting of the so far un-named 'club' on April 10th 1980, that they heard that they had been invited to become the first motorcycle group to be affiliated to the IAM as the Kent Advanced Motorcyclists' Group. (That pedantic apostrophe seems to have been lost in the intervening 43 years.)

At that moment it must have seemed that they had achieved what they wanted to achieve but, as can be seen from the extract of the minutes, it was Rod Collins who presciently said that, "we (KAMG) would be a model for other motorcycle groups in the country, and our actions would set a precedent for them." This proved to be the case, and the importance and significance of the KAMG to the motorcycle growth within the IAM extended way, way beyond Kent. KAMG members rode all over the country at their own expense, including far afield Northern Ireland and Scotland, helping and advising embryonic motorcycle groups, and some of the junior motorcycle sub-groups within one or two car groups, how to become affiliated in their own right and how to set up their training programmes. Kevin says these trips occurred almost weekly and he remembers going to Hawick in Scotland, to Taunton in Devon, to Norfolk, Slough, Oxford, and the home counties as well as places further north, although he can't remember where exactly. "It was," he says, "a real Terry Friday Show. Although sometimes Rod or I would stand in if Terry was busy. I was pushed forward because I was only in my early twenties."

It was actually Rod Collins who wrote the first *Pass Your Advanced Motorcycle Test* book for the IAM, although for some reason it was apparently credited to someone who Kevin describes as "the in-house editor" presumably at the IAM. And it was Rod, Kevin and Dave Walters from Norfolk who wrote the first *Observer Guidelines* that were used by all groups country-wide in order to ensure that there were no differences in the standards between the widespread groups.

After the initial club meetings and the committee meetings at the KCC and the Police Driving School, the by now officially designated KAMG adopted The Lantern on Charing Hill as its regular group meeting place and on the first night at its new home, on 28th



Terry Friday receiving a special IAM RoadSmart award in 2016 in recognition of his work and contribution over many years.

April 1980, 170 riders attended! The significance of that number cannot be overstated – remember there was no email then, there were no mobile phones or social media to enable messages to be broadcast to a wide audience quickly, in fact only about half of all homes even had an ordinary telephone, and yet somehow 170 people heard about that first group night and turned up. At the second meeting on May 27th there was a chance to meet Lord Strathcarron and the IAM Chairman, Michael Pickering, and then to see a film about motorcycle tyres entitled *Wobble and Weave* followed by a *Roadcraft* video as demonstrated by the Kent police.

That's how the KAMG began, and although its success was far from being a solo effort by Terry Friday, those who were then and are still members today, all say that he was the powerhouse. Four years ago, we nominated him for a UK honour, but our very well supported submission did not succeed. Terry is now 87 and is no longer able to attend the KAMG group nights or to ride pillion on some of the group's rides, as he loved to do. He is now in a nursing home where he will receive this magazine and I hope that he is able to see and to understand enough to recognise what he did and to know that we acknowledge what we owe him. It's easy for us to take all this history for granted now, and I venture to say that perhaps the IAM probably does too. Yet without Terry Friday, Mike Knowles, Kevin Chapman, Rod Collins, Brenda Vickery and the many others who were there 43 years ago, but who are sadly not here now, the KAMG wouldn't exist and the IAM and, indeed, the wider motorcycle world would be the poorer for it. NF

*The RAC/ACU Training scheme

This training scheme was jointly administered by the RAC and the Autocycle Union, and its instructors were all volunteers. It was by today's standards a pretty basic form of instruction for learner riders to prepare them for the rudimentary official 'riding test' of the 1940s and 1950s. It was started in 1947 but by the late 1970s it was beginning to creak a bit and was finally wound up in 1982. There are several YouTube clips showing the usual tentative weaving between bollards that are worth looking at. Ed.

NB: I have pointed out to the IAM the error in the summer ROADSMART and they have promised that it will be rectified in the next issue of their magazine. Ed.



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Electric bike laws? Are there any?

Yes, actually there are, but they are not used!

I got over the ridiculous business of pedalling a bicycle the split-second that I was legally old enough to ride on two wheels with an engine (and that was in July 1959), but I do know a good idea when I see one, and unquestionably the *electric* bicycle is a very good idea indeed. The electric motor is the vital missing piece of equipment that the bicycle has been lacking for the last 170 years, and now that it's here I think we can safely say that the design of the bicycle is complete: there is no need to go further. Even so, and I emphasise, *in my opinion*, the 'target audience' for bicycles of any kind can be defined simply as 'other people, not me'. But ignore that, it's not the one-eyed point I want to make.

When on holiday in France a couple of months ago, I was struck by the very large number of electric bikes that were being used everywhere. I was not just struck by the absolute numbers of them, but by the huge apparent increase in numbers since I was in France last year. And, on checking, I found that almost 800,000 new electric bikes were sold in France in 2022. The electric bike, it seems, appeals to everyone. Every old lady and old bloke seemed to have one,

and it reminded me of France in the 1950s and 60s, when in every country town and village there was always a bevy of old ladies two-stroking to and fro on their Velo Solex mopeds. In those carefree days, riding a Velo Solex in France required no licence, no insurance and no registration. Back then, the rural roads were empty and speeds were low, and the Velo Solex was a simple and brilliant design. It was, in effect, the post war equivalent of today's electric bike, and it was a life-changing 'must-have' for millions of the French. It was unquestionably a good idea. In this country we had nothing remotely as good, and in any case to ride a Velo Solex in GB at that time would have required all the usual licence, insurance and registration palaver. So, here, the cheap transport option in those days remained, by and large, the heavy, energy-sapping pedal cycle.

Nowadays things are very different, and the roads are much busier. However, one thing remains unchanged for the poor old pedal cyclist and that is Bastard's immutable first law of cycling, which states that *all hills go up*. And Bastard's second law of cycling states equally clearly that *what goes up does not*

come down, it just continues going up more steeply. That's why the electric bike is such a good idea. No decently clad French lady or gentleman in 1960 wanted a sweaty ride uphill after buying the daily baguette from the village down in the valley, and that's why the simple Velo Solex was such a joy. And now it's the turn of the electric bicycle to fulfil the same role and be an even greater joy, and it has clearly been embraced with enthusiasm in France.

However, despite the obvious common sense of having their bicycle wheels turned electrically rather than manually, do not run away with the idea that France has overnight become a teeming maelstrom of old people out buying their bread on e.bikes, it hasn't quite, yet. Nevertheless, the fact is that there are an awful lot of senior-looking types cycling electrically everywhere in France these days. The young are at it too, and the countryside is overrun with *jeune hommes* on electrically charged mountain bikes hurtling about everywhere just for fun! You might have thought, as I did, that to have an electric motor on a butch and manly mountain bike would have reduced one's street cred to zero, but apparently it's OK to show such obvious weakness nowadays.

I'm not surprised that the electric bike has caught on quickly in France because, as is well-known, the Frogs are a pragmatic lot when it comes to matters of 'transport' (think of such things as the 2CV, the DS19, consistent speed limits, motos 'allowed' to park anywhere, Citroen H vans, and so on). They have quickly recognised that electric bikes are a good idea for just about anybody, and, therefore, there will be a lot more of them zooming about the place. And that is precisely my point: the world has

changed in the last 70 years and the old *laissez faire* French attitude to the riding and non-insurance of the Velo Solex in the 1950s will not do for today's hectic electric bike world. But as far as I can discover you can still cruise about in France and anywhere else in Europe on an e.bike with no licence, insurance or registration, which is a bit worrying.

Things are no better here in the UK, where we actually do have the necessary laws to govern our use of powered two-wheelers. The problem is that our dim-witted politicians have completely failed to notice that the electric bike is actually a powered two-wheeler and so they allow them to be ridden free of any laws. The e.bike, as is obvious, is a very good idea and, therefore, there will soon be millions of them all over the place. You might think that there are already lots of electric bikes here in the UK, but you ain't seen nothin' yet. There are actually millions of them in Europe: for example, besides the three quarters of a million sold in France last year, there were well over two million sold in Germany! Yes, over two million, in one year! Here, it is estimated that there were only a mere 155,000 sold, but that's obviously going to ramp up quickly. The problem is, though, that the political dim-wits think that an electric bike is really just a slow, old-fashioned, pedal bike with a motor; they have not recognised that *it is a completely new and different vehicle from anything that has gone before*. It is, in fact, a small rather specialised new class of motorbike. It is most decidedly not a friendly, slow, old Raleigh with a basket on the front and a weedy little electric motor dangling off the frame.



Electric bikes are fundamentally different from pedal cycles – and yes, I know perfectly well that's a statement of the bleedin' obvious, but it is the whole point. What's more, it is a point that is screamingly obvious to you, to me and to everyone else in the country except to the tiny handful of nitwits that we have to rely on to make our laws. They, it seems, are blissfully unaware of the problem that is building up. We are soon to be overrun with electric bikes and we, unlike France, do already have the laws to cope with them, yet e.bikes have been specifically excused from complying with those laws, on the basis that they are just glorified *pedal* bikes.

Sixty or seventy years ago, the French (as you will remember from para two above), were happy to let short-sighted old ladies cruise about the countryside on the 49cc Velo Solex with no licence, no insurance and unregistered. *In this country that is exactly what's happening today*. Short-sighted old ladies and gentlemen and teen children can ride electric bikes here untested with no licence, no insurance and unregistered, and they can ride them pretty much anywhere they like. But while you may think

that's all right, remember that in 1960 there were only eight million registered vehicles on the roads in this country, whereas *last week there were 40million*. That's why it might be a good idea to require the free-ranging electric cyclists to pass a test, register their bikes and get some bloody insurance, don't you think?

A few days ago, I saw, parked outside the supermarket, a massive great electric two-wheeled vehicle that had the required token pedals that mean, in the eyes of the law, it is classed as an ordinary pedal cycle rather than a motorcycle or moped. This monster had two child seats over the back wheel and had various carrying bags and panniers hanging from its frame and handlebars. The rider was a woman, who rode off with a very small child in one of the child seats at the back. This lady was possibly a very well qualified driver or motorcycle rider, and she may well have had so much insurance that it was coming out of her ears, I hope she was and did. But she could just as easily have been unqualified and uninsured. At the moment the law requires neither. How mad is that?

NF



Left: Typical Velo Solex rider in the 1950s
Below: Steve McQueen looked cool even on a Solex



Will this become a common sight?



The Great American Hunting Motorbike is Restored



Martin Brown's deer hunting* CT90 is now available for UK supermarket duty
Part: . . . the last!

As you may recall, we left this saga with a dismantled engine following my discovery of an incorrectly fitted clutch part. As it turned out there were a number of other engine issues too, including a loose bolt on the camshaft. So, we know that opening up the engine was a necessary evil. You have seen the picture of the dismantled engine in the last episode; now the rebuild can begin.

First, I had to make a list of new parts that would be needed. It was a list that mostly comprised bearings and seals, but I also ordered new valves and springs and a fresh gasket set as well. Unfortunately, these parts do not just nestle on the shelf at Halfords, and a good deal of scruffling around was required to locate them. The most reliable source for vintage Honda parts in the UK is David Silver, and the other main source I have used over the years has been CSMNL in Holland. However, since Brexit, the cost of shipping plus VAT has made their parts almost uneconomic to buy. That means searching far and wide on the internet – usually eBay, but not exclusively – for bits and bobs of NOS (new old stock) that someone has unearthed in his shed. I have sourced parts for this bike from the USA (fork springs and auxiliary fuel tank), from Australia (aux fuel tank bracket), from Germany (aux fuel tank locking strap and tube), from Thailand (front rack and fork gaiters), from ... etc, etc, etc. It's been a truly international effort.

As the parts arrived, I started rebuilding the engine. I had previously sent all the casings to my pal for bead blasting, but to ensure they are properly clean afterwards, it is always best to make sure that all the bolt holes and oilways are clear of the blasting medium. I usually take advantage of the dishwasher for this job (obviously when the head of the house is out), and then I use the air gun to blow every last bit out. You really don't want this sort of grit in your newly rebuilt engine.

For anyone starting out on such a project, don't be put off by the multitude of parts and wondering where they all go. The internet is a fantastic source of information and whatever you are doing, the chances are that there is a video (or a series of videos) out there on YouTube that will guide you through the process. Model specific groups on Facebook can be really useful too. I am on a

lot of them and I think the CT90 one is probably the best I use. Super friendly and really helpful.

It is not my intention to bore you with a blow-by-blow account of every move in rebuilding this little engine, but I will try to give a good outline. I had a good guide to use here from one of the CT90 gurus in the USA. (Huge thanks to Michael Mineart). He describes in some detail the processes to go through to rebuild this engine so whilst it looks complicated, as long as you are methodical all will be well. If you fancy having a shuftty to see what I mean, just look up CT90 Restoration Blogspot. You will then understand why this chap is so well loved in the CT90 community.



The first job I decided to do was to rebuild the cylinder head. I took the new valves and carefully lapped them into the head using grinding paste and a stick with a sucker on the end of it. Once you've got a nice even line all round the valve it should then seat properly and not allow any gases to escape to places where they shouldn't be. As with the blasting medium, DO NOT leave any trace of grinding compound on any of the parts.



Left: Exhaust valve with tiny, tiny collets
 Above: Tiny collet, big finger



Left side crankcase with crankshaft and transmission in place.

Next the valve springs go in, with the collars and gaskets where required. The tricky bit here is compressing the spring and fitting the tiny, tiny collets and then releasing the spring without the collets flying into another dimension never to be found. Yes, I have done it, and yes it results in a great deal of swearing and spending of more money to buy them again. Next in are the rocker arms and valve adjusters and then the covers can go on for now (they need to be accessed for adjustment later).

After that I dropped the transmission into the main left-hand side cover along with the crankshaft. On the right-hand side cover the oil pump is installed along with the kickstart shaft. The two halves of the case can now be bolted together and the gear selector mechanism installed. Followed by the gear selector shaft, the gear indexer lever, the primary gear and the rebuilt clutch. There is also a picture showing the pesky oil feed pipe with the spring being installed the correct way round! (It was this spring being installed the wrong way round in the bike that Martin bought that necessitated the whole rebuild in the first place. See episode 2 in the May edition of Riders. Ed.)

With the outer cover replaced, work can now start on the left-hand side. The timing chain and oil pump drive



"... pesky oil feed pipe with the spring being installed the correct way."



Rebuilt clutch

wheel go in, closely followed by the generator rotor, which slots on to the keyway on the shaft and is bolted down with the special bolt and washer. The generator coil slots into place and is secured by three screws. The neutral switch is popped into place and the insulating C shaped collar goes in. I had to make one of these as it was missing.

Then comes the installation of the left side cover so we can start building up the sub-transmission. The sub-transmission parts are shown below. Once the cover is in place, we start installing these as shown, and then button up the cover.

Now it is time is to install the piston and cylinder. The rings get popped into place on the piston (make sure they are in the correct order) and the piston is then connected to the connecting rod as and with a bit of jiggling, we slide the cylinder over the piston making sure that the timing chain is routed through the opening so the cylinder can sit down correctly. The timing chain idler wheel is next and now we can install the previously assembled cylinder head.

This is an important bit to get right. First, we need to rotate the crank so that the mark for 'top dead centre'



Timing chain and oil pump drive sprocket

is aligned with the pointer on the coil, as shown. Next, we locate the timing chain gear as shown with the 'O' facing out and pointing away from the engine. The two threaded locator holes need to be lined up as shown. Various gaskets and seals go in and we can now slide the cylinder head down into position making sure to keep the timing chain/gear combo taut and in position.

The cam chain can now go in. Sometimes this can be a bit fiddly, but patience and a bit of jiggling will usually work. Once the cam is in place the two retaining bolts can go in. Almost there. The rocker arms in and have

their gaps set as per the workshop manual and the cylinder head covers go on with new gaskets and seals. The manual spark advancer goes in together with the ignition points assembly, with the insulated ignition wire being routed up through the slot in the cylinder head.

All that is left to do now is to set the timing as per a variety of methods, replace the covers again with new gaskets and seals and reinstall on the bike. *Simple.*

* see page 15 episode one. Feb 2023.



Left. Cylinder being installed
Above. Ensuring that the just visible 'O' is at top dead centre
Below. Finished



Riders' Rants



The rant from Geoff Curtis (see below) prompted a thought: there is nothing like a good rant, and we have all ranted and 'road-raged' at some time. Yeh, you have, don't deny it. Maybe it was that bird-brain sitting in the middle lane at a self-righteous 60mph, or perhaps that charming young gentleman playing idiot music at a million decibels with his car windows open, it could even have been one of those minority of cyclists that ignore red traffic lights (really?). We've all been there.

The fact is that a rant does you an enormous amount of good in those circumstances, so here is an invitation to get it out of your system and to rant right here in *Riders*. You can rant for as long and as loudly and as often as you like. You can

scream at politicians and councillors and councils and traffic wardens and e.scooterists and cyclists. And cyclists can scream back. In fact, please scream back. It will be fun. And whatever you write, I guarantee that it will be printed. Neither the KAMG nor the IAM has to agree with your rant. It's your point of view, and in every issue of this magazine we make it clear that the views expressed in any article are those of the writer and should not be taken to be the view of the KAMG or IAM RoadSmart. (See page 4.) However, there are just a couple of minor restrictions: first and most important, remember that *Riders* is apolitical and the rants must have a link to the roads, to riding, to driving or to safety matters. By all means chuck a few hundred rich and descriptive words at any politician for being an idiot, but not for being an idiot of a particular political colour. The governmental incompetents who saddle us with such ridiculous things as Smart Motorways deserve to sit in the metaphorical stocks while we chuck tomatoes at them. And, obviously, no matter how rich the language you use to describe a personal object of your rant, we have to draw the line at libellous comments and obscenity.

Finally, one piece of advice – don't hold back, and don't try to write perfect prose. If you do that you will water down your ire. Just hit the keyboard and scream. It will be edited into coherence (if necessary) before it appears in the magazine.

To get the ball rolling, Geoff Curtis, when he received the spring edition of the IAM's *RoadSmart* magazine, flew to his computer with the following quite mild rant, which nevertheless raises an interesting point. Read on –

iAM RoadSmart

– Ask the Experts!

Geoff Curtis and the POGS

Reading one of the questions in the 'Ask the Experts' column in the spring 2023 edition of *RoadSmart*, I was once again amused by, but also amazed by, the level of stupidity displayed. There

was a question relating to 'autonomous delivery robots' and it clearly came from one of the many mature and stuffy car-driving members of the IAM; I call them POGs – pedantic old gits.

This POG said that the current *Highway Code* does not refer to these machines. Well of course it doesn't! They are a very recent innovation and the HC is only revised every few years. Even more stupid are those drivers who stopped and waited for said machine to cross in front of them at a zebra crossing. The writer goes on to confirm his stupidity and pedantry by asking who has priority? Well, given that a wheeled device cannot set foot on a crossing and indeed is not a pedestrian, I say drive on and if the machine is crushed, it's the fault of the operator; simple.

Send your rant to nickfarleygazka@gmail.com

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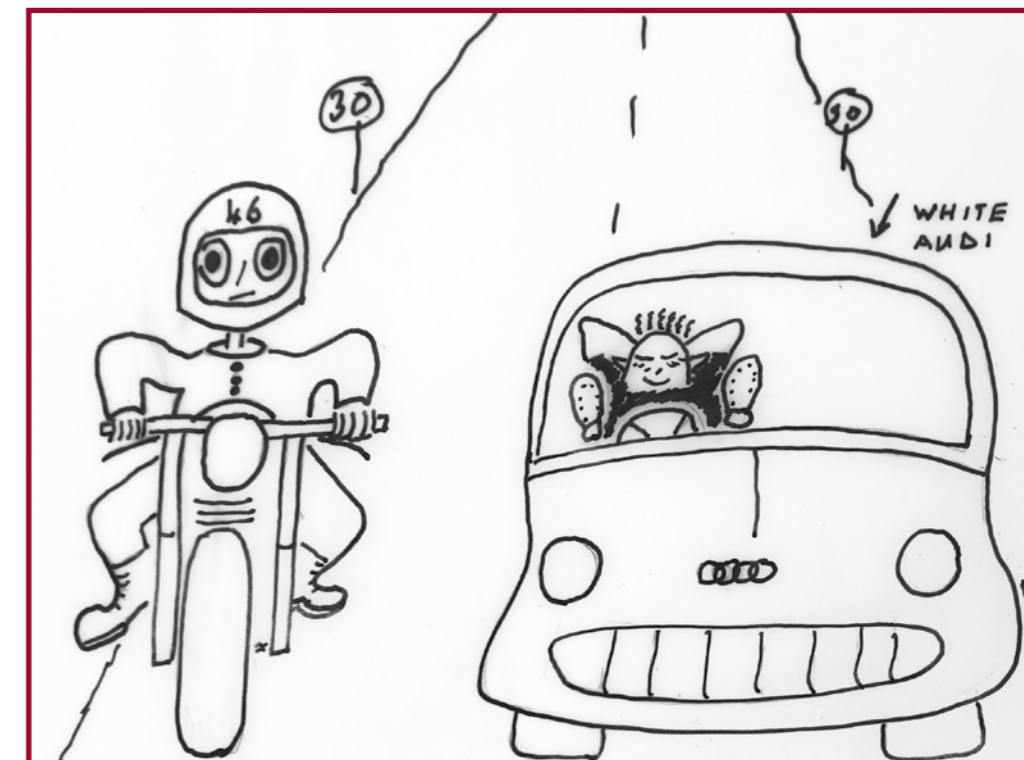
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CONCENTRATION: THEM AND US

Cars used to be quite difficult to drive, didn't they? Automatics were uncommon; there was no power steering; gearboxes could be a bit 'iffy', and brakes often didn't on long downhill runs. You needed to be awake when driving a few years ago, but am I alone in finding that as cars get better and traffic gets slower it is increasingly difficult to concentrate fully when driving today? I don't mean when I'm driving at speed on a motorway or on an open country road, or even in slow-moving traffic in towns; of course, all of those situations require me constantly to be making hundreds of decisions and taking hundreds of minor actions all the time. But there are great chunks of driving time when that's simply not the case. Let me explain.

It struck me the other day as I was driving north up the A262 from Tenterden towards Biddenden, and I was at the back of a string of four cars travelling at about 30-35mph in a 50mph limit. It's a twisty road, which I know well, and I knew that there wasn't the remotest possibility of overtaking for a few miles. I had to sit there and grin and bear it. I was driving my automatic car that, let's be honest, required minimal input from me, and in that situation, it was difficult to maintain full road-scanning anticipatory concentration. Admit it: it is all too easy sometimes, in circumstances like that, for the mind to wander and for the back of the car that's immediately in front of you to become the focus of attention. The situation is made worse because modern automatic and electric cars do make the act of operating them so easy and simple. You need to do a bit of light steering in situations like this, but that's about all. I know it's not the case in all cars: I also drive a manual Toyota Yaris, which has six gears (but actually needs about 18 because it is so inflexible) and which, therefore, demands constant gear-changing and de-clutching attention in anticipation of upcoming road obstacles and conditions, otherwise you find it going off the boil. On the other hand, in very busy town traffic



the Yaris's demanding operational needs use cubic centimetres of my finite concentration tank that would probably be better spent elsewhere, whereas the automatic car's minimal driving requirements leave me free to look around and make position and direction decisions while the car, in effect, almost looks after itself. For example, what a useful gadget the speed limiter is when you are driving in strange towns here or abroad. As your eyeballs swivel every which way trying to pick up an elusive direction sign for, say, Lugano or Stoke Newington, while watching for bus lanes or 'pride' crossings, it's comforting to know that the car can be left to look after the speed limit side of the job on its own.

Riding a motorbike is quite different, and always requires full concentration; it's not something that we even need to think about; we are always automatically concentrating fully, simply because we have to. On a motorbike in the 35mph car queue scenario outlined above we would have had umpteen opportunities to overtake and would have left the luckless drivers in our wake.

Our eyes would have been out on stalks looking far ahead for corners, oncoming cars and gaps where we could overtake. In towns, on two wheels, it is simply impossible not to be concentrating. Our vulnerability alone is sufficient incentive to concentrate fully and then add a bit more for good measure. When did a car driver have to worry about rainy roads with wet white lines? When did a car driver have to worry that his car could fall over if the camber was 'inconvenient' at the next traffic light stop? When did some spilled diesel cause a driver to fall out of his seat? Never. But when could a car driver filter to the head of a queue or just ride round a 'stop oil' protester? Also never. And that's why he doesn't concentrate as much as we do.

So, the next time that a bloke in a car doesn't see you, remember that he is probably concentrating on texting to say that he is going to be late for the meeting. Be understanding. Driving a car these days is too easy and some very average people have unfortunately become qualified to do it.

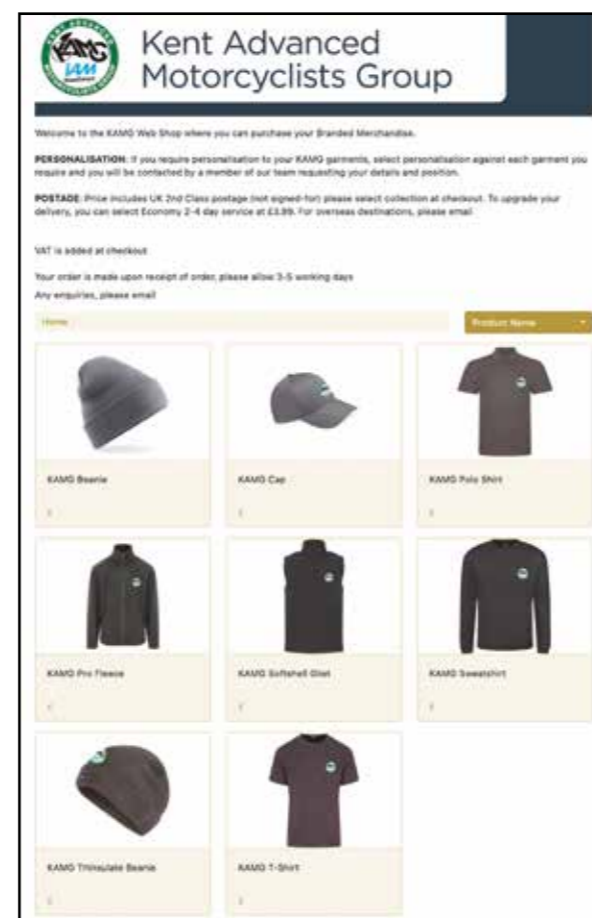
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KAMG MERCHANDISE COMING SOON!

We are currently in the process of putting together a new range of branded KAMG merchandise.

Examples of items the Committee are looking at are featured left, although no final decisions have been made.

Please contact me (Catherine Hills) on regalia@kamg.org.uk if you have any specific items for consideration.



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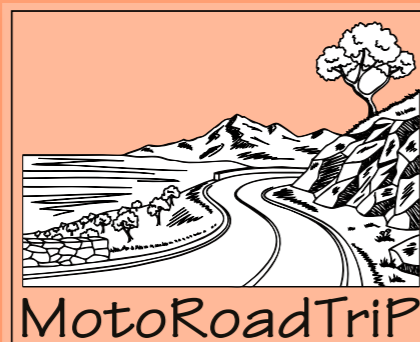
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1st July until 8th July

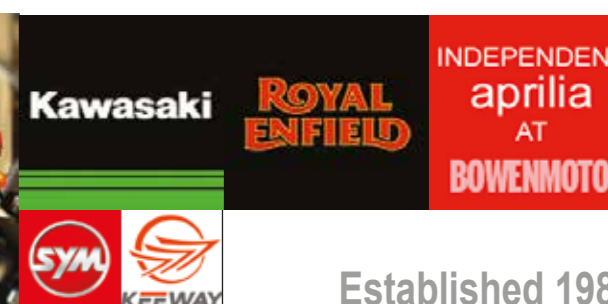
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INTRODUCTORY DAY COURSE IN ADVANCED MOTORCYCLING

- September 16th
- November 18th
- October 21st



Our IDCAM is held at the Kent Fire and Rescue Road Safety facility in Marconi Way, Rochester, ME1 2XQ. If you wish to attend, please register your interest via the calendar on Tracker. Attendees are asked to arrive at 08.45 for a prompt 09:00 start. The morning session consists of a presentation about IAM RoadSmart, about KAMG and the aims of the course, and how to check that both the rider and motorcycle are fit for the road. This is followed by a coffee break.

The second presentation is all about the system of motorcycle control and, if time permits, a *Highway Code* quiz. The morning session will finish at approximately 12:15.

Please note that lunch is not provided. You may bring along your lunch or, if you wish, your allocated Observer can take you to a local café.



The afternoon session consists of an observed ride with a National Observer, and includes a pre-ride briefing and post ride debrief. The finish point is at a mutually agreed location that is usually closer to home than the start. The afternoon session lasts around two and a half hours.

If you would like to attend as an Associate, please contact associates@kamg.org.uk.

MACHINE CONTROL DAY

Our machine control days are organised by Paul Aspinall. 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

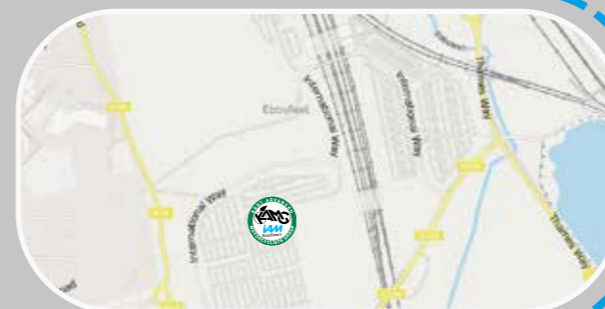
Held at: Car Park D, Ebbsfleet Station,
International Way, Gravesend, Kent DA10 1EB

Sat 9th September

**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

Finish Time: approx 13:00 Hrs



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