

ESAM OBSERVER



December 2022

Issue No 204

THE MAGAZINE OF EAST SUSSEX ADVANCED
MOTORCYCLISTS GROUP

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ESAM Vision:

To develop and increase the awareness and skills level of all road users.

Whether our influence is direct or indirect, the example shown through our behaviours, principles and formal practices, will make the roads a safer and more enjoyable environment for us all.

ESAM Mission:

That through observation, we will facilitate the transformation of members' riding skills beyond the average, to an advanced level and beyond.

in this issue

From the Editor2
Chat from the chair3
Test passes and new members5
Upcoming events.....6
Autumn brekkie runs7-9
From the pulpit10
Tales from the tipi11-12
Two go to Newhaven.....14-16
John O'Groats17-18
Oliver's mount19-24
West to east26-29
Volunteers needed31
Your committee32-34
Your club needs you35
Club Sunday kitchen rota36

Front cover photo:
Steve Collins at John O'Groats

Request for contributions

If you have any material to be included in the next issue, ads, letters or articles, send by email to: esam.editor@gmail.com

Images should be a minimum of 1mb or 300dpi in jpg or pdf format.



<http://www.esam.org.uk>



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The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, ESAM, or the IAM or any other affiliated organisation.

from the editor

Welcome to the last ESAM Observer magazine of 2022. First of all congratulations to all those who have excelled in their results.

This edition holds a bumper crop of travel articles, with photos to whet your travelling appetite for 2023 and beyond. Do enjoy the read and think on a trip that lingers in your memory (for the best of reasons) and please consider writing a piece for the magazine. If you hate writing with a passion then give me a text and we can set up a time to talk about your adventure and we can get it written between us.

Send all contributions, with accompanying photos to esam.editor@gmail.com

We now have a training team – read more in Steve's article – and a new Club logo. We usually have a page on which members can advertise items for sale, so if you have a New Year clear-out, consider the magazine as free advertising space. We have a call out to membership to share local routes which you have enjoyed, preferably with a refreshment stop incorporated in the journey. We are looking to build up a compendium of routes, for rideouts and individual reference.

Merry Christmas and may 2023 be safe, happy and healthy for all of you (and yes, I do hope everyone wins the lottery too!)

Léonie xx


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chat from the chair

By Chairman Pete Higgins



On the 4th September ESAM teamed up with WSAM to assist in staffing the IAM RoadSmart stand at the Ace Café Run on Brighton Seafront. Katrina Lowe (Area Service Delivery Manager) had arranged for the stand to be there, but hadn't realised that we were sited right next to the stage. Some of the bands were good, but some were indifferent to say the least! Richard White, Andrew Harding and I were on hand to explain the advantages of advanced riding and the workings of ESAM.

Later in the day we were assisted by Chris O'Connor who took to talking to people in the manner of a "press gang officer" of the 1800's. We did manage to get several new members for both East and West groups and for other parts of the country.

In Mid-September Richard White and I took a last-minute dash across the channel to France. We got down as far as Claremont-Ferrand in the volcanic Caine des Puy Mountain area. We were going to go further south but, as the weather forecast was poor, we headed due west before heading back towards Dieppe. Please see Richard's article for more details about our trip.

On 16th October I was due to go to the British Superbikes at Brands Hatch. I was all toggged up and ready to go, got into the garage and discovered that I had a puncture! Trying to be helpful, one of our members told me I needed several bikes... I do have another bike, but I wasn't going to take my TTR250 green-laner that distance!!

On the Open Sunday in November which always falls on Remembrance Sunday, our President, Trevor Scrase, gave a fitting reading prior to the 2-minute silence.

Hopefully in the New Year we should have some samples of club clothing with our new logo on.

IAM RoadSmart have announced that they are no longer giving multiple discounts on courses, but they did offer discount to people signing up at the NEC bike show.

As we are now officially into winter I have got out my heated jacket, heated gloves and heated socks. Yes, I am a soft Southerner! I have also applied ACF50 to my bike, so I am ready to ride in these colder months. Please remember we don't do Observed rides when the temperature is below 5 degrees.

We are still looking for members to get more involved with the club since both the Treasurer and Secretary would like to step down.

Lastly, we need volunteers for kitchen duties on open Sundays; please contact Ken if you can assist.

Pete



Andrew Harding, Richard White and Pete Higgins at Ace Café Run

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test passes and new members

Congratulations to our successful Testees! Just check out the levels of these passes. See Steve Collins' write-up for further information

MEMBER Lance Douglas	PASS National Observer	MENTOR Paul Cornwell	EXAMINER Katrina Lowe
MEMBER Alan Buckmaster	PASS Masters! With Distinction	OBSERVER Paul Cornwell Region 3 ASDM	EXAMINER Pete Doherty (Test taken in Bedfordshire)
Tony Howard	First	John Preddar	Paul Cornwell
Jason Diacos	First	Steve Collins	Phil Barrow

new associates

Welcome to our New Members:

Full member:
John Hudson

Associates:

Alastair Rosenchein	
Richard Pond	KTM 1290
Sarah Hall	Yamaha Fazer 600
Kiarash Sobhanieh	Kawasaki Z1000
Libby Dowle	Triumph Speed Twin
Paul Semple	Triumph Tiger 900
Matthew Moors	Moto Guzzi V85TT

On behalf of the membership, we would like to welcome you as members of ESAM. You are invited to all our events that includes ride-outs and the many club social functions.

Any questions or issues please don't hesitate to contact any committee member (see Committee Page for contact details).

ESAM Committee

Please note that to join the ride-outs you must be either a full or associate member of ESAM, the IAM bike section or another IAM group.

club events – upcoming events

ESAM Open Sundays at Reid Hall, Boreham Street: from 0900 - 1pm, kitchen closes at 12.30:

8 January 2023
12 February 2023
12 March 2023
9 April 2023

4th Sunday of month: Monthly ride outs from Boship Roundabout rendezvous, prepare to set off 0930 with full tank of fuel!

At this time of year please check our Facebook page for the Ride Leader's decision on whether the weather is good enough to ride.

25 December 2022 – No ride out as it falls on Christmas Day
22 January 2023
26 February 2023

autumn brekkie runs

By Malcolm Scrase



October

The weather forecast was grim, and so it turned out. The four of us headed out westwards through Alfriston, Seaford and Newhaven. Then along Newhaven Road, dodging the deep areas of standing water until we reached the Ashcombe Roundabout (A27).

I'd advised before we set out that I may cut the route short and so three of us turned left at Lewes Prison crossroads and TEC went straight on. A short phone call and we were all together again heading north to Chailey. Then the A272 direct to Heathfield and the Butchers Hook café for a welcome stop. By now we were wet through the range of very moist to soaked to the skin.

Thanks to Chris O'Connor for TEC when needed.



November

The weather forecast was grim. However, five of us met up at Boship and headed off in a westerly direction to Ringmer. Along the back lanes on the much used route through Barcombe to join the A275. Onwards through North Chailey nature reserve, Wivelsfield Green, Ditchling, Hurstpierpoint, Albourne, B2116 and A281 to Chalet Cafe. One good thing about the wet weather was that there was plenty of empty tables and prompt service.

Malcolm



from the pulpit



The very Reverend Erik Sparkles

"A wise person's good sense protects him, but a fool's lack of sense leaves him vulnerable."

(Ecclesiastes Ch 10 v 2)

I thought I might write about one of my more exciting and somewhat challenging experiences as an observer. It was a club Sunday, just after the time when ESAM had moved from using the village hall in Horam to Reid Hall in Boreham Street. I'd completed the training for a pleasant chap, John, who spent most of his time working as a carpenter near Bergerac in France. If you ever visited the Dordogne in the 1990s or early 2000s, you'll be aware that the place

was filled with British ex-pats and John made his fortune restoring the ancient buildings that gullible Brits had bought and that the French didn't want.

John was a keen motorcyclist and enjoyed hammering around France. He passed his advanced test with flying colours. Those were the days when you could cruise across the near continent at 180kph, and no one would bother you. This club Sunday he had brought along a friend. A seemingly enochlophobic man – that's someone who has a phobia of crowds of people – he lurked in the foyer of Reid Hall. John asked if I would go out and speak to him. This I did. A prolific chain smoker, Garry was a large man at least 25 stone, in his late 30s, with a

girth larger than his height and dressed in one-piece green leathers which matched his Kawasaki Ninja. Occupation, demolition expert. On this subject he was quite animated describing how quickly he could, with the assistance of a length of steel hawser and his JCB, tear down Reid Hall. I listened, asked him a few questions about himself and I guessed he had spent some time at Her Majesty's pleasure, but we seemed to hit it off. It transpired that he had been caught speeding several times and if he collected any more points on his licence he would lose it. I could see he wasn't really interested in the IAM and the advanced course, but John had persuaded him it was a sensible thing to do.

I agreed to take him for an assessment ride. I calculated that to gain Garry's confidence I might take him for a much longer initial ride than I would normally. I just told him he had to stick to the speed limits other than that ride as he would every day. We wandered off from Reid Hall through Windmill Hill, even sticking to the national speed limit through Magham Down – it used to be national at one time. If the powers that be change the limits anymore, we'll need a man with a red flag – sorry I digress. After stopping at the Boship for a chat, I asked Garry to follow me and so off we set along the A22 and left on the B2124. Good road for a demo ride between Golden Cross and Ringmer. It began to rain so we stopped in Ringmer. Garry's only comment was to criticise my overtake, which I confess was a tad risky just before a rise in the road after Laughton. Other than that, I could see he was becoming bored. My turn to follow him again. This time back up the road to Halland. It was now tipping down. I was right, he was bored. The only thing controlling his speed was the Kawaka was

carrying 25 stone! As we passed the glider aerodrome on the right, I overtook Garry. I have no idea what velocity I reached but let's say it was quite quick. We stopped in the entrance to the Raystede Animal Centre. Immediately, he told me I was mad overtaking him at the speed I was doing in the pouring rain – which was probably quite true. I just think he was a bit cheesed off that I had overtaken him. However, having established I was madder than him we talked about speed limits.

Garry joined the club, and I was allocated as his observer. We had many challenging arguments about bike control on public roads, usually over a full English breakfast - and I mean a full English - double fried egg, bacon, black pudding, sausages, baked beans, chips and a couple of slices of fried bread, all steeped in enough grease to lubricate the QE2 and washed down with an extra-large mug of tea with three sugars! Garry liked his food. It became apparent that Garry had experienced a rough childhood, parents who viewed him as a pain and a liability. I'm not sure if he knew his dad and his mum had long since disappeared off the scene. In trouble at school, I soon realised that Garry was illiterate, probably dyslexic. Reading material was a challenge for him. In his late teens he had been in trouble with the police and paid the price for his transgressions. His greatest pleasure in life, when not demolishing old buildings, was to ride his motorbike as fast as he could.

During the time I knew him he changed his machine numerous times - a Honda SP2, Blackbird, Hayabusa, Ducati and I cannot remember the rest. His biggest problem was self-control. If I cracked a

joke about something he said or if I said something slightly sarcastic, his face would change to that - I'm going to punch your face look - and he'd demand to know what I meant by the remark. Fortunately, I established a reasonable working relationship with him, so it never came to a rearranged visage.

Actually, around his wife and young son he was a real pussycat.

To meet Garry's craving to go fast, his mate John and I persuaded him to take his bike to a Brands Hatch training day. We met at Brands on a pleasant, dry Saturday morning. The instructors were quite specific about the rules and strict about the consequences if you disobeyed them, that is, you'd be asked to leave. Garry had paid quite a lot to take part and therefore conformed. There were others

on the track with a greater capability than him and I think the experience proved something, he realised he wasn't as quick as he thought he was.

For the next couple of months, I managed to quell his desire to twist the throttle to its stop, at least keeping him out of three figures. Eventually, Garry completed the advanced course, managing to control his rebellious desire to scream his bike rev counter into the red zone and thus pass the IAM test.

One of my more exigent training events. Sadly, Garry died of cancer of the oesophagus at the age of 42. 'Make every effort to live in peace with everyone' (Hebrews Ch 12 v 14)

EWS November 2022

Tales from the tipi

by Chief Observer Steve Collins



Writing this as of 22nd November, racking my brains what we have been up to:- A lot. Firstly, some great news in the Observer team, Lance Douglas made the step up to National Observer from Local and Alan Buckmaster got his Masters with distinction, he is currently a Local Observer but not for long! On the observing front we have 4 Locals now looking to progress to National level.

The IAM held a Regional Forum in Leatherhead, hosted by Katrina Lowe, brought up to speed on their future plans. The phasing out of Local Observers, all Observers to be at National level. I, like some other groups have already decided not to train anymore Local Observers and only Nationals, it was quite a shock to hear

some clubs don't allow all to progress, only the worthy can be Nationals!!

We also did a workshop on how the IAM could improve in various areas, the consensus was its profile on social media and use of Youtube etc to get to its target audience the under 75's 😊. Thanks to Ashley Cole for accompanying me, we also got a very nice lunch which wasn't the reason we went - honest.

Last Saturday I went up to Tatsfield, Westerham to help Observing at London Advanced, Ashley Cole joined us from London Advanced hence the connection, we met up at 08:00 and were home at 15:00. I was intrigued how these big groups operate; unlike ESAM they don't allocate one observer for the entire training period. They hold regular meetings at Tatsfield and Banstead, the associates register and a co-ordinator allocates them to an Observer, I was sent their last run sheet prior to the event, rather interesting scoring system used but that's another story.

I also got to sit in on a chat from one of the returning examiners, if you have been around as long as me then the name John Taylor will ring a bell, he was a 'staff examiner' and he recalled me; "you weren't the normal IAM candidate". He was my examiner for both Senior Observer & National Observer tests.

Training Team

There have been some big changes in the Observer team this year, we have gained some new blood but also some choosing to retire others just disappearing without trace (I have tried to find them).

I used to have my right-hand man the Vicar

who I have worked alongside for many many years, he retired, so was replaced by another BMW rider Paul Cornwell, he was then pinched by Katrina, something she may have mentioned at the Regional Forum! But fortunately, Ashley Cole moved locally, this is a name that crops up a lot recently and we have forged a good partnership with over 35 years Observing experience between us.

The IAM RS are now withdrawing the Local Observer (Group) qualification and all Observers must requalify as National Observers (externally assessed). There has been a great response from the ESAM LO's with 5 wanting to make the step up well before the 2yr deadline. So, I needed to reform the training team.

One of my last conversations with Katrina's predecessor was I needed a number 2, this I offered to Paul C but was trumped by Katrina, did I mention she stole him from me? So, I offered the role of Training Team lead to Ashley which he accepted, joining us in the team are Pete Higgins and Alan Buckmaster.

Saturday 3rd of December will have been our first meeting with Katrina advising the TNO's what she expects from them.

Keep it Sparkly
Steve C

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Two go to Newhaven

by Richard White



Peter Higgins asked me if I fancied a few days away on the bike, is the Pope..... well you know the response! Peter had just bought himself a new machine, a Kawasaki SX 1000 with bells and whistles, it needed some miles on. Various rides in the UK were considered, Wales, the West, the East, weather conditions looked ok, we decided to hit France again, meeting at the Thoroughbred in Polegate, then riding to Newhaven for the ferry to Dieppe.

Arriving at Dieppe mid-afternoon in late September gave us plenty of time to get as far as Chartres. The weather looked good further south so with an eye on the Auvergne again, we headed past Orleans, Bourges and St-Amand-Montrond. From here we did all back roads towards Clermont-Ferrand, stopping overnight in Les-Ancizes-Comp at a hotel in the town centre. (The road from the lake to the town is stonking, uphill, smooth, wide, curvy and as quick as you want to make it.)



The next day looked good, but a storm was forecast the following day, coming up through the Tarn gorge area where we had hoped to go. A change of plan then!

I know a few good routes around here, have visited many times, so tried some I did not know and some I did. We hatched a plan to take in the best of the volcanos in the area, ending up further west at Gueret.

From our digs we took the D90/D16 through morning mist to Volvic, yes where the water is bottled, then back on D90, constantly traversing the many volcanos until we reached Puy de Dome car park. The sun had burnt off the mist by now, we took the train to the top, walked around, sipped coffee, and marvelled at the views.



Back at the car park, bikes warmed up ready for some fun due south, we set off D942, D2089 then the fantastic D983 towards Mont-Dore, stopping at the viewpoint to Roche Tuilliere, this is where Pete mentioned something about his grin says everything, no need to say a word. Well, that section of the route was memorable, for all the right reasons.



On to Mont Dore, past Puy de Sancy, stopping at Lac Chauvet then Lac Pavin at 92 metres deep, both almost perfectly round old volcano's, stopping for a late bite to eat in Besse-en-Chandesse/Besse et St Anastaise/Besse the town has several names, worth a visit just to see the old buildings built from black volcanic rock. From here a reverse turn on back roads to get on the D941 near St Avit to Ambusson then Gueret and a (dreadful) hotel. Sleep deprived we grabbed an early breakfast nearby and headed west, loosely following the motorway but on the old road, then taking small back routes to Montmorillon. Trying to find petrol en-route proved a challenge. I eventually got some just outside of Poitiers, just before running dry!!

We got to La Roche-sur-Yon late afternoon. The hotel was a breath of fresh air compared to the previous night and with a good restaurant next door we enjoyed our evening. This is where Pete mentioned Suisse Normandy!

Having not heard of the area, I was interested in hearing more, Pete said some friends of his recommended it,

turned out to be, sort of, on route, be daft to miss it.

Next day, we planned to head north, again using the old road which runs parallel to the motorway. Bad move as the road had been chopped up into sections of one-way. Finding out the hard way in misty rain found us on the motorway quite quickly. Avoiding Nantes, skirting east we made good time, stopping for coffee after an hour or so. The weather was getting better with more sun around, today was a Sunday, we stopped near a church for a break and sat watching the parishioners arriving. Later I spotted two bikes catching us fast, a pair of gendarmes came past at pace, enjoying the clear roads, they turned off soon after.

Eventually Suisse Normandy came into view, well Clecy did, great little place, built on the side of a hill. The river Orne cuts a gorge through the area, hence the name. We found some back roads, a bit like riding on the crest of our own South Downs, very enjoyable, will go back sometime. Ended the day in Lisieux.



Awoke to a sunny morning, after breakfast with clouds gathering, we got ready to ride to Honfleur, in steady rain as it happened. Stopped in my now favourite private bike-park, thanks for finding it, Nigel Jarvis, you star. Pete and I wandered about mostly getting wet, thought let's move on. Just after crossing the toll bridge over the Seine the heavens opened, as we were on a dual carriageway, stopping was out, so we carried on, eventually finding a bus shelter, standing in the corner with the driving rain still battering us. Since we were now very wet around the nether regions I and Pete (wet shirt) needed to

find somewhere to change once the storm abated.

Riding along flooded roads, we soon found a shopping centre and promptly took over the gents to get warm, dry and change wet gear. Must have looked comical to the locals. After that the rain went away and we rode gravel strewn back roads all the way to Dieppe. Another great trip over, onto the next one.

Ciao, Richard





John O'Groats

by Steve Collins



I had weeks of leave left, the wife was stuck at home, I hadn't seen my mum for over a year, and I had one corner of the UK to get to. Let's see what the weather's like in Scotland in October, how bad can it be?

I worked my routes out the night before, working on a 200 mile day, to come up with a rough destination and then looking for a cheap hotel. I use google maps street view to check out the roads then plot in Calimoto.

I left on Friday 14th October, destination West Tanfield, North Yorkshire, where my parents live. I used Calimoto to come up with a scenic route but I only ended up in the bloody Fens again! Up via Lincolnshire Wolds over the Humber bridge and across to Ripon then West Tanfield. Always avoiding motorways, I did the M25 to get across the river but then off

into Essex, some pretty good roads in Essex btw. I stayed there until Sunday; the plan was to go West to the lakes and I originally had a route of 300 miles but changed it wisely to 185 as I was taking in the infamous Hard Knott Pass. I have seen this road on many a YouTube vid but as I said in mine unless you are there you cannot comprehend just how steep it is! Great fun and much concentration, I have to say the Lake District was spectacular and somewhere I will have to return to explore more. I then headed north, Keswick, around Carlisle and onto Dumfries.

Day 2 the destination was Arrochar, I went up via the Galloway Forest, I actually went thru it on the Raiders Forest Road, then up the west coast, this day was probably the worst for rain and road closures! 231 miles covered.



Day 3, This was probably my favourite day of the trip, the hotel was in Balmacara. I weaved around the Lochs, had the most amazing soup in Kinlochleven then to Fort William to Balmacara. I got there around 16:00, sun was shining so let's venture onto Skye, found a nice quiet spot Elgol off I went, 15 mile no thru road, the island was stunning and the little harbour was idyllic, so out with the kettle and pot noodle and watch the sun go down. Highlight of the trip. Back to the hotel in the dark but so content, 285 miles done.

Day 4, I was in striking distance of JOG but would I make it? Nope, The West coast is certainly the best side so I had planned quite a winding route taking in as many roads as I could. Up through Ullapool, A837 to Lairg, A838 to Durness, then a bit of up and down and eventually arriving in Thurso, a fun 312 miles covered.

Day 5, JOG here we come, thanks to Red Maverick for mentioning Dunnet Head (most Northerly point) I went there first then to JOG, strangely not many people there, a lad offered to take my pic, he was

from Maidstone. Then onto the NC500 route down the East Coast. Now on a summer's day I bet this road is amazing, however when I rode it there was a 50mph side wind, which was pushing my helmet so hard on the side it was hurting my jaw! I endured this down to around Helmsdale where it relented. Down thru Inverness, then I went after fuel in Grantown on Spey, but when I got there it was coned off! So next fuel, 50 miles away, I had on my normal riding 30 miles left, would we make it? I continued South-ish to Ballater over some stunning roads, one which I did on Richard's tour a few years back, I got to fuel station still showing 30 miles range and having covered 250 miles, a new PB, but god it was boring riding eco style.

Off into the Cairngorms and down the A93 which has got to be the best riding road in the UK, it has everything, an epic road. I added a little detour in the bottom end and ended up in Blairgowrie. 318 miles done.

Day 6, back to my parents via Northumberland, I slipped up taking the wrong bridge and ended up on The Queensferry Crossing and on a

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Motorway! I wanted to be on the Forth Road Bridge, tut.

Heading south the scenery getting less dramatic, I did break out the kettle at a nice bridge. Another Epic Road in more summery times is the A7, just when I rode it, I was in the clouds still great fun but could only imagine the views. I arrived back in West Tanfield, 255 miles done. Spent a day at my Parents then headed home, again scenic route, via the Peak District and I ended up in the bloody Fens again! I ran out of light in North Essex so decided it was time to hit the motorways to get home at a sensible time, 358miles done.

What made this trip for me was the bike, my trusty ST1300 Pan European, bearing in mind it had well over 100,000 miles and had three melt downs, the last one resulting in it melting a hole thru my inner fairing, It sat for a few months until I decided to try and source the issue, I may have fixed it with an item from Screwfix but if it works, you know.... Miles covered 2296 with 61.83 hours riding time.



Oliver's Mount

by Geoffrey Curtis



Think of Scarborough and images of beaches, sea breezes, sunshine and ice-cream might spring to mind. Alternatively, one might think of scurrying storm clouds, bracing winds straight off the North Sea and horizontal rain. No matter which, you are probably not likely to immediately see motorcycles in your mind's eye. However, four times a year the town rings with the sound of screaming engines from the highest point in the town.

Dominating the whole area is a hill of which Oliver can certainly be proud but a mountain it is not. Perched on this pinnacle is a little gem of a street circuit – the only one on the British mainland. The term street circuit is probably misleading as one might think of Monaco and buildings flashing by; not so here. There are only the pits while the rest of the track is a collection of fairly narrow leafy lanes. Think of unclassified roads with a good surface. Just under two and a half miles of public roads are closed from

morning to evening to allow practise and racing to take place. This means that outside these hours, one can have a tootle round oneself to find out exactly how difficult and technical the circuit is, all the time obeying the 30mph repeater signs, of course.

'There is a green hill far away' goes the song and although a long way to go for a weekend's racing, it was well worth it. Practise took place on the Friday while I was enjoying meandering through the Peak District and the Dales after trying to avoid the many city centres in the Midlands without using motorways. Come the Saturday morning, on a full English breakfast, I was puffing up a long steep climb to the circuit, having decided to leave my bike at my B&B and walk, so as not to be in leathers all day. After three miles with the hill at the end, I was fully aware I am not as fit as when younger.



The morning practise session was in full flow as I took my place along the fence a little up the track from Mountside Hairpin. This is tighter than any I have encountered in the Alps and the apex is handled at around 5mph. It is at the end of a long straightish downhill section where over 130mph is achieved. This means that the braking zone before the corner is pretty exciting, with rear wheels snaking and skipping, gearboxes whining and front brakes complaining. Fortunately for any rider who misses their braking point, there is the option of a run-off area into the access road, rather than a grass bank, hedges and trees. I watched one race here and no rider needed it.

The whole circuit is accessible by footpaths and three foot bridges providing crossing points from outside to inside the track, so I was able to work my way around the circuit during the breaks as the day's racing progressed. Although for me the name is spelled the wrong way, I felt obliged to watch the second

race at the next good location along, Jefferies Jumps. This is a gentle downhill sweeping curve with a series of undulations one of which, with the right rider, results in the more powerful class of bike becoming airborne.

Farm Bends is the next section along and is a tight little chicane where the track goes down into a dip then up again which makes the flip-flop changes of direction even more entertaining for the spectator. Flashing past the pits on the start-finish straight is followed by more heavy braking into Mere Hairpin, which is often the scene of a first lap melée with riders jostling for position, fairings clashing and resulting in the end of the race for the unlucky ones.

Tearing up the steep hill which is Sheene's Rise, the riders then come to the esses, my favourite section. A right hander leads quickly into a left and these can be viewed from either side of the track. My preferred location was the outside of the second part, giving a good view of knees down all the way round



and with the sidecars, the pillion often overhanging the grass verge. Esses Out leads onto the back straight (which is not quite straight) and gives the spectator the opportunity to appreciate the speed of the machines passing on the other side of the hedge just feet away. Walking through the small wood at the highest point on the circuit rewards one with a view of the castle, or what's left of it, in the distance with the backdrop of the sea beyond, plus of course, another flip-flop section as the racers pass the memorial. Again, viewing is from only a few feet away, arguably closer than at the TT races.

Hard acceleration from Memorial Out leads to Drury's hairpin which is not very tight and gives plenty of opportunity for early acceleration into the steep wooded descent back to Mountside Hairpin where I began.

The marshals are all volunteers, some of whom have been doing it at this and other circuits for decades. Consequently, many are quite mature and special thanks must go to a charming old lady marshal at Memorial In who allowed me half way up her stand so I could attain a good video of the approaching competitors.

Other characters I met over the weekend included an ex-sidecar driver who gave me good insight to the world of motorsport and the costs and sacrifices that must be made by most of the competitors. For example, the Birchall brothers, the sidecar world champions, have two outfits; one which is quite robust for street circuits and another, lighter one, with less ground clearance, for the luxurious flatness of grand prix circuits. To be the best, you must buy the best and each outfit costs around £100,000 and will only be competitive for a couple

of seasons. Prize money is hardly enough to cover the costs even for the winner of the main event: £1,500 for first down to £100 for fifth. Lesser events have fewer prize-winning positions or much reduced values such that the lowliest class, in monetary terms, the 750cc 4-stroke singles, pays just £100 to the winner and nothing for the rest. What can that winning rider buy with £100? – perhaps enough oil for one meeting.

Having similar running costs means that those without many wins under their belt and a big name to attract sponsors must scrabble around to find local sponsors to help with their costs, such as the baker who donated the price of half a dozen tyres. Also, the big names are paid appearance money, while the lesser mortals have to pay to enter at the rate of £150 or more per event depending on the class. Families will forego holidays in the sun and any kind of treat while living on a strict budget in order to put all the cash they can muster towards supporting their racer. This is true devotion to the sport they love.

To have winners, there must necessarily be others who are not but take part knowing full well they stand no chance of reaching the dizzying height of the podium. However, they are there for the sheer joy of racing and doing the best they can on whatever they can afford. The crowd was particularly appreciative of a back marker (mounted unusually on a naked machine) in the middleweight twins class who, each time he pulled away from the Mere Hairpin, up the hill over a slight undulation, would pop a wheely just because he felt like it. Applause greeted him every time he came round. That's entertainment folks.

Late Saturday afternoon I left with a big smile on my face with the prospect of another full day to follow. My only regret was not knowing in advance that, had I ridden to the circuit, along with about a dozen other ordinary mortals I could have shelled out £50 and taken part in a memorial parade for the late Steve Henshaw, raising money for his charity. This was three laps straight after lunch behind a pace setter (to keep riders from overdoing it and causing a scene) in front of the thousands in the crowd. I'm tempted to return next year.

On the Sunday, I took a different walking route, having studied a street map, thus saving twenty minutes and a steep gradient. A heavy shower during the lunchtime interval (it's very civilised at The Mount) did not dampen proceedings too much as the strong wind soon had the track drying nicely. The prestige event, the Steve Henshaw Gold Cup (won seven times in a row, 2003 – 2009 and 2012 by Guy Martin, who is still the most successful in this event) took place on a damp track, though drying on the racing line in places. Despite Davey Todd having dominated the earlier super sport races, Adam McLean came out on top in this one.

After a long day with proceedings delayed by the weather and also a red flag and a trip to hospital for checks for the unfortunate rider, it was time to head back to town for a few more pints of the excellent local real ale called Monkey Wrench, which I can recommend.

Come the next morning, I didn't fancy a quick one-day motorway slog, so home was reached after two days taking a more scenic route via the Lincolnshire Wolds. Although this part of England is rather too

flat for my liking, there were some exceptional sections and I had picked quite an interesting route thanks to a website called bestbikingroads.com which I use for all my tours.

Although this event is not what I would call a bucket list item, nevertheless it is a big tick of a box.

What I didn't realise while watching the races was that there was someone I know competing as a novice in a couple of the lower classes. I only found out when I took my bike in for its M.O.T. at Fastlane Moto in Tonbridge (where my bikes have been maintained for over twenty years) and the mechanic spotted my sticker and said "Were you there". After I replied he said he was too – competing. I had bought a programme and read it between races but it hadn't occurred to me that the competitor from Tonbridge in Kent was him. I had only ever known him as Jamie at Fastlane and never knew his surname, so the programme entry Jamie Kelman meant nothing to me. He has been part of a successful endurance race team with his Fastlane colleague Stuart on a bike they built and raced in the no-budget cup for entry level racing a few years ago. As I recall, they won the cup in their first season. Jamie then, knows how to race and wasn't a complete novice, though new to Oliver's Mount. On his Kramer Evo 3 KTM-powered 690cc four-stroke single, he had entered two classes, the four-stroke lightweights (I wouldn't call a 690cc bike a lightweight but then what do I know?) and strangely enough, the twins

events?! (did he add a cylinder between events – go figure, unusual entry requirements at Oliver's Mount, obviously).

In his first race, from fourth on the grid he finished second. Sadly his bike did not last the day and he had to borrow one to compete the next. Mounted on his last minute entry, a Yamaha TZR 250 two-stroke twin he continued to perform well and finished fifth, down one place from his grid position. His last race of the whole event showed how well he had adapted to his smaller lighter machine and having started fourth, he made up three places to take top step on the podium. He also collected another trophy for the meeting's best novice.

He enjoyed the racing there so much he is considering entering the Spring Cup next year. Should he do this he will let me know and I will be his travelling fan club (of one) and will spur him on to winning again, I hope. He might even be able to procure a pit pass for me, though I expect the cost of this will be making him cups of tea and coffee, passing him tools and cleaning parts as he works on his bike – no pit crew at this level. I might even get a second chance at donating £50 and taking my bike around the circuit, carefully of course - can you imagine the embarrassment of dropping one's pride and joy in front of thousands of other riders when just tootling along behind the health and safety pace setter, especially if you cannot pick it up unaided. It doesn't bear thinking about.

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east to west

by Steve Collins



Following our little jolly to Lands End in a day I decided that next we should do the widest part of the UK in a day, of course doing it via the scenic route.

So again, it was down to fitting into Paul's hectic calendar, a weekend was chosen, unfortunately both Ian and Barney who came on the Wales jolly were off in more exotic parts of the world so Alan Buckmaster said can he come? Alan was at the later stages of his master's training with Paul so almost qualified to come on my rides.

Friday 23rd September was the date, I'd planned to go to St David's in Wales first then across to Ness Point in Lowestoft on the Saturday, however Paul had last minute changes and once again I'd leave without him! I changed the route to the other way, so Paul didn't have so far to go to catch us up, Alan and I set off early Friday, the plan was off into Essex to West Mersea for Lunch, then up through Essex, Suffolk and into Norfolk and see where we were around 16:00. As most know I use Calimoto then tweak the routes with way points, so the route was mostly B roads or less.

By 16:00 we were parallel to Lowestoft so decided to head to the north Norfolk coast then work back down to Lowestoft, highlight was coming around a corner to find no road and a ferry! Also not sure how but we seemed to be admiring the churches of Norfolk, this escalated! We arrived at the hotel around 19:30 covering 297 miles. Quick change and into pub for food, contacted Paul and he'd just arrived in the car park! So, we all sat down and refuelled ready for the big day.



Day 2 across we go, so we got to Ness Point at 06:00, pic taken, sun almost up, then to Maccy's for breakfast; some interesting individuals frequent Maccys at that time! Including us. This was where I noticed the Pan looked rather small alongside Alan's & Paul's 1600 GT's!

The challenge was to arrive at St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire before Sundown, that's assuming it was out in Wales. We headed off again on a

Calimoto based route heading North of Ely, thru some place called the Fens, a place I never want to visit again, you think our roads are bumpy then go ride these, I almost went over the screen on the Pan which Paul thought hilarious, I believe Alan got air on his GT!

We continued across our rural route, you may have heard of Eddie Stobart spotting, well we seemed to have changed this to churches! We were all on coms so first to shout got the point, it made for some interesting riding when you're scanning the fields and horizon for a steeple, not sure if it was Alan or Paul who got the spot of the day, in their mirrors! The

highlight of the day was always going to be Wales, so I'd pick a scenic route aiming to hit the coast at Cardigan.

We may have encountered another biker who thought it appropriate to overtake us in a 40, I may have caught them, lost them in the next 40, caught them and passed them, then stopped to allow the others to catch up, but I might not have. Around Fishguard and within sniffing distance of the end and with the sun still up Paul suddenly piped up, "Chaps, my screen's lit up, stop! tyre deflating" he then went on to say it was riding OK, in true Top Gear fashion and with my goal in sight, I said if it rides, we aren't stopping.

We continued at a more cautious pace with regular updates of how low Paul's tyre pressure was, but we pushed on and eventually made it to St David's, Paul with just 1 Bar of pressure and a rather nice screw in his tyre. What was nice was the offers of assistance from passers-by but being a BMW owner and an engineer Paul was fully equipped. We decided to pump it up and get to the B&B and repair there or call AA, Paul repaired it and re-inflated the tyre using my compressor and

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electricity from my Pan (previous electrical issues). Sorted, back to St David's for Chips.

We had made the crossing in 9:43 hrs and 391 miles - the most Alan had done in a day - most importantly before Sun set, just. Goal achieved.

Great B&B I found £40 for the night including breaky, cakes and proper milk in the fridge, it was on a working farm, so we did ride thru a few inches of cow poo to get in.

Day 3 was another scenic route back, into the sun, first part of the ride we really struggled with the low sun.

I wanted to show Alan the highest road in Wales the Gospel Pass, so we shot along the A40 up and down and in out of the mist, temps hovering around 5 degrees, I soon stopped to add layers at the first fuel stop. Gospel Pass was amazing, and we had a great view we approached from Hay on Wye as much quicker, then back same way and off into England. I recall one particular lane, it was so narrow and had a mud/grass central reservation that the Pan's left mirror was in the hedge! Alan then piped up, "what the @*\$£ is this road" – I think the brand-new GT was more in the hedge than its mirrors.

All the way back to North Chailey on another Calimoto based route, 359 miles in 10:20 hrs riding time.

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We need new volunteers for ESAM Treasurer and Club Secretary

Paul and Nigel continue to fulfil the duties of Treasurer and Secretary but not by choice. They have done their bit(s) and may move onto other ESAM responsibilities and if that's the case, will continue to contribute to the Club's life. But fresh enthusiasm and commitment to these essential roles on the committee are required.

Please consider stepping up for a time-limited period and help our Chair Pete Higgins and the committee to take the Club forward as a strong and responsive Club.

The duties of ESAM Treasurer:-

- Manage Bank account on line.
- Make payments as authorised by Committee.
- Identify and record credits to bank.
- Attend Open Sundays to collect kitchen and other takings as required.
- Invoice and manage ESAM Observer advertising.
- Post up Bank Transactions using Excel spread sheets for periodic cash flow statements.
- Help prepare annual Budget of receipts and expenditure.
- Attend bi-monthly Committee meetings to report on financial matters.

Please contact our Chair if you are interested or wish for further details, or come to a Club Sunday and have a chat.

The duties of ESAM Club Secretary:-

- Sending notifications by email to Committee Members of approaching meetings together with an agenda produced by the Chairman.
- Minute-taking at the meetings, held every 3 months and lasting for an hour or so.
- The Minutes when they are written up take the space of two sides of A4 paper and take a slow typist like me a couple of hours to prepare.

Having a role in Committee gives you a much better understanding of how your club runs, and allows you to have your say on issues that you would not normally be involved with, and an opportunity to bring fresh ideas.

Our Chair Peter Higgins likes Meetings to be focused and short, so if you would like to give the position a go or would like to chat please contact the Chair or committee member.

your committee



President

Trevor Scrase

Contact via Committee Members



Chairman

Pete Higgins

esamchairman@gmail.com



Vice Chairman

Alan Buckmaster



Group Secretary Nigel Jarvis



Treasurer

Paul Roberts

esamfinance@gmail.com



Membership Secretary

Richard White

esammembership@gmail.com



Merchandise

Duncan Allen



Chief Observer

Steve Collins

esamchiefobserver@gmail.com



Events Organiser & Wot's On

Alison Jarvis



Group Data Manager

Ken Brooks

esamchairman@gmail.com



Social Media Editor

Alex Rickman

social.media.esam@gmail.com

non committee



Ride-out
Co-ordinator

Malcolm Scrase



Magazine
Editor

Leonie Dawson

esam.editor@gmail.com



Training &
Observation
Allocation

Ray Bridgman



Spiritual Guidance
& Website
Coordinator

Erik Starkie



Slow Riding

Chris O'Connor

training team



Team Leader

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Robert Morris



Local Observer

John Pedder



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Alex Rickman



National Observer

Mick Shirt



Local Observer

Geoffrey Curtis

YOUR CLUB



We've had a vibrant 2022 at ESAM, with a lot of events, good attendance at club open days and well attended club ride outs. This is all arranged by members giving us their spare time!

The club has a potentially big impact on the safety of fellow riders but is only able to do this with the help of volunteers.

We attract new members by attending third party events, by talking to dealers and café owners about displaying our leaflets, and by encouraging other bikers that we meet to come along and give us a try! Our open Sundays are just that – open to all to come along and see what we are about.

Volunteering for a couple of hours now and then to help out would greatly increase the impact we have in the local community – it is also a great way to meet other members and see what others are doing.

Help in the kitchen is always a challenge to arrange so please contact Ken Brooks to say when you can help – we only meet 12 times a year so if enough people volunteered you probably wouldn't have to do so more than once every two years!

There are many ways you could help; distributing leaflets, attending third party events to chat to potential members, talking to café owners, helping in the kitchen (see above) etc. We are also looking for a couple of Committee members to take on the roles of Club Secretary and Treasurer. None of this is particularly onerous and can be very enjoyable!

If you are interested, contact any committee member or, in the case of kitchen help, me, and we would all greatly welcome your contribution. Contact details are in this magazine.

Hope to see you soon!

club events

club sunday kitchen rota

The Club Sunday is our monthly daytime meeting. We adhere to the government guidelines as they develop and welcome new and long-standing members for a social meet-up. It provides an opportunity for passing bikers to call in and have their curiosity answered and their riding observed.

Crucial to the atmosphere of Club Sunday is the refreshment provision and we are dependent on you to join in, roll up sleeves, don a pinny and help out in the kitchen.

Greeting friends and making new acquaintances, taking orders, hearing the gossip, learning about upcoming events, group holidays, washing up, it all happens at the kitchen. And we need a monthly spatula mechanic to do the cooking.

Please check the rota below (I've started but need others to finish) and let Ken know if you are willing to fill a space – it's fun!

Contact: Ken Brooks 07971 889864 or email kenwbrooks@gmail.com

Date 2023	Volunteer Spatula Mechanic	Volunteer kitchen team	Volunteer kitchen team
8 January		Leonie	
12 February			
12 March			
9 April			

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Polo Shirt	from £24.00
'T'-Shirt	from £18.00
Lapel Badge - Silver coloured, 12.5 mm dia	£2.00
Badge - Oval	£4.00
Badge - Circular	£3.00
Vinyl Circular Self Adhesive Logo Sticker.....	(5 for £2.00) £0.50
Vinyl Circular Self Cling Logo Sticker	(5 for £2.00) £0.50
Highway Code	£2.50
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Roadcraft Book	£10.50
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