

aamc



TREADS

The October 2008 Newsletter of AAMC

Editor's Bits

You are correct. This is the October issue of Treads. The committee decided that there would not be an issue in September.

I'll explain how Treads is produced. As Editor, I collate articles that are sent in by members, notices of events etc into the Treads format you receive. I then email the copy to Simon who adds any photos (I cannot do this on my Computer for some reason). Simon then sends out copies to those members who receive the issue by email. Simon, Sandra and Jaimie get together to put hard copies into envelopes for posting. This, whilst a simple task, is time consuming and pretty boring, it also requires a mutual date that suits them. This month Simon has been on holiday in the USA (I think I might get an article for Treads if I play my cards right!!) so you can see from the above why there was no issue for September. If one member of the team cannot do their bit it causes a major problem.

There has been a lot in the Motorcycle press recently regarding the new Driving Standard Agency (DSA) test that requires off-road facilities. Despite having had 4 years to get this up and ready to run they still have only two thirds of the sites available. This means that a learner rider could be required to undertake a 150 mile round trip to take the test. This is on a Moped or under 125cc Motorcycle, using A and B class roads, in an area they do not

know. If I had a son or daughter needing to make this journey to take their test I would not be too pleased. It just shows how far the DSA have their heads in 'Cloud Cookoo land'.

PS. After I wrote this, the DSA have decided to delay the change for 6 Months. (I'll bet they still will not have enough sites available, even then.)

View from the 'Saddle'

Bikers have always existed on the edge of accepted society. Rebels to be feared and despised by a non-comprehending public. This is the way it was, this is the way it is, this is the way it always will be. This is our creed. This is why we do it. Oh yes, deep down we are all a little bit "Marlon Brando". Let's look at what we ride and what we wear.

Motorcyclists have never let sensible functionality or safety dictate their choice of bike or gear. Ever. This is in spite of attempts over the years by manufacturers and politicians to shape us into something rational.

In the 1950s the Triumph 3TA or "Twenty-one" offered the rider a degree of weather protection by heavily valancing the mudguards, particularly the back one. This made a very ugly bike and subsequent

owners binned the “bathtubs” and probably fitted very high handlebars. This did nothing to improve the handling, but man, we looked cool.

Or, instead of higher bars, we might have gone the clip-ons and rear-sets route. Makes the back and wrists ache just thinking about it. We looked like our TT heroes though. Cool.

The Americans were at it too. Take a standard Harley of the ‘50s or ‘60s like the Electra-glide. Bulky, ugly, slow, poor handling, but comfortable with luggage carrying capacity and protection from the elements. Biker improvement involves chopping off all but the essential parts, moving the footrests forward and up a bit to improve ground clearance and, oh look, we have a “chopper”. It’s still a bit sensible though. Let’s make the forks a lot longer then. Yeah, man that looks good.

We did a bit of that “chopping off” ourselves, back in the 1970s. It was trendy at that time to show as much back wheel as possible so we would cut off as much of the back mudguard as we could, never mind a wet muddy back. The manufacturers cottoned on to this and now produce bikes with inadequate mudguards, with an extension available as an optional extra.

Yes, the manufacturers think they have us sussed. Harley and others produce the “factory custom”. Triumph and others produce “factory street fighters”. They all try to fold us into race replicas. Hah, I see their game. By conforming to our non-conformist ideas they force us to conform, if you see what I mean.

The politicians do their bit. They have to be seen to be doing something about road safety and “green issues” or whatever it takes to win a vote. Call it what you will, it’s a veil to disguise the real agenda: to quash the cult of individualism which we represent.

We will not be stopped. We can still make our bikes look good by fitting tiny

indicators and titchy little mirrors. Look through your dark tinted visor and see the world for what it is. Shout it through your loud after-market cans;

“WE ARE THE ONES OUR PARENTS WARNED US ABOUT!”

Tommy Twistgrip

Half day ride Sunday 31st August 2008.

With the chaps at the met. office forecasting thundery downpours, I was not surprised a lot of you decided to stay snuggled up under the duvet. I would have stayed there too if it had not been my ride. Instead I dragged out the bike, said bye to the wife and kids, with the remark of “I’ll be back...probably in about ½ an hour!” and duly set off to the meeting point of the Cross Hands in the damp mist.

First to arrive was Simon, followed by Tim, and Stuart with his girlfriend Tara riding pillion. We discussed the available options, which were: -

One. Continue with the planned ride to Hungerford;

Two. A shorter ride to Slimbridge, so if the heavens did open up we all didn’t have far to go home; and

Option Three. We all just go back home again.

It was a unanimous decision to continue with the ride as planned. So after waiting another 10mins just in case anyone else turned up, we set off, just as it started to rain. I remember thinking after the first 10 minutes of the ride, as the rain seemed to get heavier and heavier, that this was probably not one of my better ideas! Oh well at least I could be a contender for wettest ride award! Or so I thought. However, it was not long before it turned back to drizzle and then stopped.

The route I had chosen went from Old Sod to Grittleton via the Gib, (as the Malmesbury road was closed) then Seagry to Dauntsey, Dauntsey to Bassett, it was on the Dauntsey to Bassett road that we faced our first of many agricultural vehicles we were to encounter that day. We also came across 3 on the Broad Hinton road, and it wasn't the first time they had been out that day either, as some of the roads were laden with mud and crud.

We then travelled over the downs on to Marlborough. This is when we started to encounter dry roads. A quick left turn in Marlborough found us on the Mildenhall / Ramsbury Road towards Hungerford through a number of quaint villages. We ended up stopping in Hungerford at the Tutti Pole for a nice Cuppa. Stuart felt a little peckish and managed to demolish something large and sticky too...

Suitably refreshed, we headed back to the bikes to Saddle up, and head back. This took us back via a very quiet B4192 Aldbourne road, then Chilsdon, Wroughton, Minety, South Cerney, Somerford Keynes then down the A429 and back up into Tetbury on the B4014. We then followed the A433 and A46 back to the Cross Hands.

Despite the weather at the start, and the mud, crud and cr*p on the road, it was actually a very enjoyable ride, even if I say so myself. It certainly made one focus, and hone one's advanced skills, as we encountered almost every hazard possible....Wet roads, standing water, mud on road. horses, cyclists, learner drivers, Sunday drivers, tractors and trailers of all descriptions. We even came across part of a tree blocking part of the road on the B4014 to Tetbury.

Thanks to all that came, thanks to Simon who went back marker and got covered in muck for his services.

Tim Wrighton.

Letters

*I must apologise to Peter for not including his letter about this year's training course before now. Somehow "I lost it" in my computer. Sorry.
Keith.*

Dear Simon,

Just a note to say Thank You for a very valuable course and for all the time and trouble which clearly went into it by all concerned. Being new to biking again after so many years, my main concern and objective was to find out what I didn't know and from there to develop a level of skill which will make me safer, and my riding more enjoyable.

Generally I feel more confident now in that at least I have a good idea of what I **should** be doing.

My special thanks also to Keith for all his advice thoughtfully given, including one or two tips about riding a bike generally. Keith was very constructive and always ended the day on a positive note!

Thanks again for a very good course
Simon, hope to see you again soon.

Kind Regards,

Peter

The West Coast of SCOTLAND and the Isle of Skye, 2008.

In December 2007 I received a list of Motorcycle Tours being operated by White Rose Tours with whom I have been a couple of times before. I quite liked the

look of a trip to the Normandy coast but "She who holds the purse strings" said NO. So I settled to go on a tour of the west coast of Scotland and the Isle of Skye in June. About 2 weeks before departure I received details of the Hotels, Routes between locations and a list of the other riders. This was 31 people and 26 bikes. A big group.

The assembly point was at Lockerbie, so I decided to break the trip and stay in a B & B just outside of a town called Wem, which is about 20 miles from Chester.

I left home at about 9am and had a gentle ride there. I filled up with petrol at Wem. (I should have mentioned this was the weekend the Petrol Tanker Drivers had decided to go on strike!!) After breakfast I set off again, filling up with petrol ensuring I would not be stranded if I found a garage without petrol.

We all met up at dinner and I found that I knew a couple of riders from a previous trip. The tour was using the "drop-off" system that we use but some travelled on their own. Up to now it had been dry but as we arrived at Inveraray it started to rain. One of the group found that he had oil on the front wheel of his Triumph and at first it seemed to be from the brakes, on further inspection an oil seal on the forks was the cause. Using his handbook he found a Triumph dealer in Glasgow. He rang them and they said they would fit a new seal if he took the bike there, which he agreed to do the following day (Glasgow is about 80 miles from Inveraray).

The midges decided to come out for dinner, I've seen so many. They sure made a meal of some of us!!

The following day we were going to our hotel on the mainland at Lochalsh. During the evening our tour guide found out that the road we would be using to catch the ferry at Mallaig would be closed for blasting at road works between 13-30 & 14-30hrs. We had been booked onto two ferry crossings because of the number of bikes anyway, so a fast group left early the following day and the rest followed at a more sedate speed.

They are doing a tremendous number of road works in Scotland and the roads there will be super when they finish.

Going through the road works after the blasting was interesting to say the least and it had to be raining as well.

We went straight onto the ferry, so no hanging around on the dock at Mallaig. There were even two seals swimming around the Fishing Boats!!

Our Hotel was at Lochalsh so when we left the ferry we were on Skye and rode round to the bridge and our hotel. It was quite windy on the bridge, which made life interesting.

The Triumph rider rejoined us here. The Dealer he went to arranged B & B for him, took him there and collected him when his bike was repaired (they also fitted a new seal in the other leg whilst the bike was stripped down). It's nice to know that there are some Dealers who are prepared to ensure satisfied customers.

The next day was a 'free' one and I decided to go out on a boat with glass panels under water instead of another day riding. So about six of us went which took a couple of hours and it was B---y cold, starting to rain not long after we set off. No Dolphins but plenty of Seals and then we were shown the wreckage of a WW11 Minelayer which had just finished loading 680 sea mines when a fire was discovered in the engine room. The ship was towed to the far side of the Loch but the order to 'abandon ship' was given when she was within 100yds of the bank. All the crew got away, the engine room exploded making a big cavity in the seabed and the superstructure landed ¼ of a mile away, but the mines did not explode!!! 540 of the mines were recovered in 1977. Just don't go paddling there because they couldn't find the rest.

It was time to leave Lochalsh and make our way back. We stayed at a Hotel in Dunfermline and finished at a hotel in Crooklands outside Kendal.

I stayed at the same B & B on the way home but the weather from Crooklands was heavy rain and most unpleasant but improved for the remaining last part home.

I enjoyed the trip, it was well organised, the hotels were good as well as the group. I'd go with White Rose Tours again but it seems that any hols I have will have to be in the UK.
I wonder if I could squeeze-in Ireland??

Keith

Club Bashes in 2009

If everything goes to plan, 2009 should be another year when we organise two of our now-famous club 'bashes' - trips away to intimidate the locals and generally cause panic and mayhem whilst having a great time ourselves. You know. The things biking has been all about since Noah was a lad ...!

Anyway, the two trips planned for next year are both long weekends, the first to the Mosel region of Germany and the second to the Snowdonia National Park in North Wales.

You will find a separate sheet about the Snowdonia trip enclosed with this issue of Treads. Please complete and return it to Stuart if you are interested in attending.

I am still trying to finalise details for the German trip, but the synopsis is that we will be leaving on Wednesday 10th June, staying in France on that night, then riding on to Bernkastel on the Mosel river for three nights. I have found a small family-run hotel that appears to fit the bill. I will organise rides around the area and I expect there will be some sight-seeing too if anyone would like it. The Mosel region is very picturesque, and I usually appreciate some time off the bike. There may even be some wine-tasting involved somewhere.

We will leave to ride back on Sunday 14th. It will be possible to get home within the day, but it is a fairly long way. I will probably stay overnight somewhere near

Calais or Dover and ride the rest of the way home on the Monday. It makes sense.

I am looking at the practicalities and costs of using both the Tunnel and Ferry.

I will keep working on this and issue further details next month, but if you are interested I suggest you let me know NOW. The hotel has only a limited number of rooms and it will be 'first come, first served'.

Simon.

Club Stands

I would just like to express my thanks to Tim for organising and helping to man the club stands this year at both the Bristol Bike Show and Weston pier. Despite poorish weather we gave out quite a number of leaflets and information about the club, and so far have gained two new members.

I must also mention the members who supported us by helping to man the stands, namely Peter, Keith, Nick and Arnie.
(I hope I've not forgotten anyone.)

Thanks very much for making the effort to help the club by recruiting new members.

Simon.

Situation Vacant.

There is currently a vacancy for Events Co-ordinator in the Club.

It is an equal opportunity position and an equal pay policy!

The annual Diary of Events, listing Club rides etc. plays an important part in the club's functions and success. Experience is

not essential, as on-site training will be given.

Applications to Simon or Sue **PLEASE**

Welcome

A warm welcome this month to three new members: -

Dennis who rides a Suzuki SV650S and lives in Knowle,
Mark who also lives in Knowle and rides a Suzuki SV650S and a 650GS, and Andy who lives in Yate and rides an ST1300 Pan European.

We hope to see you out on Club rides asap.

Photographs

The club needs some more photos to use with the publicity brochures and the web site. Come on, dig in those drawers, there must be some you could send in.

Plug & Grub Night.

The 'Plug and Grub' night this year is to be held at the Swan Inn, Tytherington and should prove as enjoyable as it has been in previous years. There is a flyer enclosed with this issue.

Please complete and return it to Sue as soon as possible so that she can pass the details to the staff there for catering purposes.

Do come along and enjoy the night of food and laughs.
