



# TREADS

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The MARCH 2021 Newsletter of AAMC

## **EDITORS BITS – Stu Bullock – 07711898178**



Here we are through another month but with a much better outlook for the year ahead.

Club events can go ahead from 17 May 2021, if Covid limits remain low. Therefore, you are welcome to send your rides and events with brief details to Helen Chamberlain, Mob: 07885 578105. A club diary can then be compiled.

It's really important to club life that every member considers whether to organise a ride, or other event. For one reason or another, I won't be organising club events for 2021, and new organisers are very welcome to come forward.

In the past, we have had trips abroad, long weekends in the UK, weekday rides, evening rides, BBQ's, fish and chip suppers, magic evenings and so on. There is plenty of help and guidance available, so don't be shy.

### ***E10 petrol due in September.***

In order to reduce vehicle engine emissions, a new fuel has been developed that has 10% ethanol, hence the name E10. It has been announced that this petrol will be on sale in the UK in September 2021.

Petrol engines made before 2011 do NOT have to be E10 compatible. To help owners check their vehicle, the GOV.UK website has a search facility to check. I checked for Honda, as I have a 2017 Civic and a 1995 CB1300. The answer: *Car engines managed by fuel injection PGM-FI are compatible. All EU market motorcycle engines since 1993 are compatible.*

Owners of classic vehicles are being advised they may need to switch to the current 'super-unleaded' fuel. It contains 5% ethanol and is said that it won't harm older engines.

Without doubt, owners ought to check. Remember the change from leaded petrol to unleaded? Here we go again.

## **FOND FAREWELL**

**Murray Walker 1923-2021.** What a fulfilled life he had and gave such pleasure to so many through his motorsport knowledge.

**Sabine Schmitz 1969-2021.** The Queen of Nürburgring, racing goddess and TV personality, appearing on Top Gear from 2016 to 2020. A very nice person who lived her life doing something she adored.

## **TREADS - NEXT PUBLICATION DATE**

We endeavour to issue Treads on a regular basis during the third week of the month. Therefore, if you have any items to be published in the next TREADS, can you please ensure that they reach the editor at the latest by;

**MONDAY 12 APRIL 2021**

Submissions accepted:

- In MICROSOFT WORD format. (May be edited to fit available space).
- Photo's as separate JPEG files not embedded in the text.

**We publish articles for the benefit of members – none are an endorsement or recommendation unless explicitly stated. You must make up your own mind if you think something is suitable for you.**

### **THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH**

#### **A lockdown plea.**

Give me a sense of humour;  
the grace to see a joke,  
to get some laughter out of life,  
and pass it on to other folk.

#### **A soulful comment.**

Cars move the body.  
Motorcycles move the soul.  
*Henry Cole.*

#### **Understanding Engineers.**

To the optimist, the glass is half full.  
To the pessimist, the glass is half empty.  
To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it  
needs to be.

Normal people believe that if it ain't broke don't  
fix it.  
Engineers believe if it ain't broke, it isn't  
sufficiently complex yet.

### **LEGAL QUESTIONS – Andrew Dalton**

**Disclaimer:** *The legal advice and statements contained within this/these article(s) is correct at the time of printing. Andrew Dalton is a trial lawyer, with White Dalton Motorcycle Solicitors.*

As it has been awhile since I gave Andrew some good press, here is his story:

Andrew Dalton is a highly experienced *trial lawyer* who delights in taking on difficult and demanding motorcycle cases. He is one of the few solicitor advocates in the country who regularly carries out trial work in all levels of Court. He has a tough and relentless litigation style and is utterly focussed on getting the best possible outcomes for his clients, whether in Court or by negotiation. Andrew originally practiced as a Barrister but preferred the specialisation that being a solicitor advocate allowed him. He has very hands on style of litigation and is always willing to come to accident scenes to fully understand the case. He is a determined and successful trial lawyer.

Andrew took a career swerve in 1988 when his entry into HM Forces was postponed by a motorcycle accident which left him with a steel pin in his ankle. Unimpressed by his own solicitor, he decided that he could do a better job for injured motorcyclists, and he started his legal training.

His formal qualifications are impressive, an honours degree in law, a qualified Barrister (1993), Solicitor (1997) and Higher Courts Solicitor Advocate (2000), as well as a Personal Injury Panellist (1999). He is also regularly instructed as trial lawyer by other firms of solicitors who need to bring in real heavyweight experience of motorcycle trial work. He is also authorised to provide continuing professional development training to other solicitors. He has been a regular motorcyclist for over 20 years and was a motorcycle courier for two years prior to University and throughout University and his Barrister's training.

Andrew's special interests are brain injury and amputation work, fatal accident claims and large loss of earnings claims. He also becomes closely involved in cases where there is likely to be a trial or a complex point of law or difficult evidence.

Andrew has had over 20 bikes in his time from Kawasaki GT despatch nails to hyper sports but has now given in to all year-round riding (and age) on his R1200GS with hot grips.

### **Q1. Where is the best advice?**

As the Government relentlessly moves up the value of claims and legal disputes which the citizen is deemed to be able to deal with himself absent of any legal advice, where does the citizen turn for legal advice when against an insurer, the manufacturer or a retailer?

The one source to avoid are the forum sages. As a basic test do a google search about something within your expertise and look at the utter guff convincingly pontificated by people about your area of knowledge.

It is the same in my line of work. I do not frequently venture onto forums because I am conflicted by my desire to ensure people do not disappear down misconceived legal rabbit holes, but this is counterweighted by my equally strong desire not to get dragged into a flaming session wherein the end I pull out my trump card and say that I have been practicing law since 1993, and I bloody well do know the answer. To which the understandable retort is: 'business must be tight if you are hanging around here then.'

### **A bright chap**

In the last week I had a bright chap absolutely convinced his three-year limitation period was 'suspended' by a Solicitor writing a letter, and it seemed authoritative internet Counsel had told him this on good authority.

It is cobblers. But the most common, convincing but incorrect exchanges I see are the apparently authoritative citing of genuine cases, said to be precedents. It is hardly surprising that well informed and bright people put these 'authorities' or 'precedents' up on forums because greenhorn lawyers,

and even those experienced enough to know better do the same in front of real judges.

Where a scenario, say a motorcyclist overtaking by a junction and a motor vehicle emerges from the side road into the path of a motorcyclist, is discussed, I could very easily give published cases of the motorcyclist being found wholly to blame all the way to the motorcyclist being wholly exonerated on exactly that same scenario.

To quote the wise words of the Court of Appeal: 'these cases provide a useful starting point', but in collision cases, the judge determines the facts of what happened. Change just one single fact and a fact-based decision from even a senior court becomes largely irrelevant. This is why the senior courts are very careful to set out a fact-based decision does not bind other courts. The Highway Code is a much better starting point than 'case law' as it is a publication the Court will take into account to indicate or rebut any negligence.

### **The wisdom of forums**

It is best to ignore the wisdom of the forums in technical aspects of the law, but if a piece of general internet advice goes out under the name of a barrister, an individual solicitor or a law firm, from your jurisdiction, chances are it will be reliable enough.

Just be sure you are not considering words of wisdom from a judge or lawyer in Indiana, Saskatchewan or Limerick. What those lawyers say is likely to be sound in the United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland, not so much Oxford County Court.

Following through your case based on forum wisdom is like juggling axes. It might end up well enough, but it is a risky proposition.

Andrew Dalton, 2020.

## Q2: Overloaded Bike?

The carrying capacity of your motorcycle does not increase in line with your waist and is extraordinarily easy to overload, even an Ubertourer.

As you read this, and your body digests its way through Christmas excess, remember the average Britain will gain 6lbs over Christmas, and most will keep a fair chunk of it ready to load up for next year, which is also an explanation as to how leathers curiously shrink over the winter period.

One disgruntled reader wrote in convinced that he had been mis-sold a bike he (a substantial fellow) and his wife, whose weight was not svelte like were too heavy, with kit, for touring. So, let us take a bike, popular for two up riding, the ubiquitous R 1250 GS.

BMW make no secret of its payload (unlike certain other manufacturers) and the new GS will carry a payload of only 216 kilos. A big but not huge man can easily weigh 100 kilos, add helmets boots and a suit, 120 kilos. We now have 96 kilos left. Put 40 kilos of luggage into 12 kilos of Vario paniers, along with tank bag, top box and roll bag and that leaves us with just 44 kilos for a pillion or just under 7 stones in kit. So, an overloaded bike is a very easy thing to achieve.

### So, what are the legal consequences of overloading?

On a GS the electronic suspension will do a good job of disguising an overloaded bike, and you will not draw a traffic policeman's eye like five likely lads in a Vauxhall Corsa, but if you are going to be overweight you could be slapped with an immediate prohibition notice, which you could (if you were feeling brave) ask your pillion to get off and walk to bring you under the weight.

If your overloading is only 10% or less (21.6 kilos on the GS) you can have a maximum fine of £5,000, which depends on your income, but

on the bright side it is a non-endorsable offence. Budget on a fine, for a modest overload of one to two weeks take home pay.

However, the real problem is not legal, it is the fact that your motorcycle tyres, brakes and suspension are not designed for its maximum payload, and braking, handling, and tyre adhesion are all compromised by overloading. The only answer is to shed weight, whether that is kit, luggage, or body.

**Andrew Dalton March 2020**

### **LOCKDOWN RAMBLINGS – Extracts from a 1976 Motorcycle Diary – Nigel Dean**

Recently, in a drawer full of rubbish, I discovered the typed-up diary of a motorbike trip I made as a teenager. It's not particularly riveting, but it has some points of interest which a trip of this sort is bound to generate. Extracts from the actual diary in italic font.

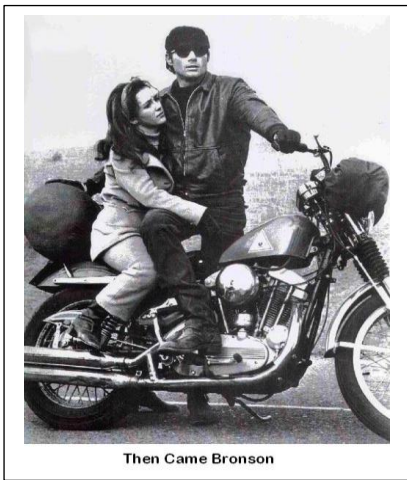
It's April 1976. James Callaghan is the Labour Prime Minister, British Leyland has just introduced the new Rover SD1, Sid James is just about to die of a heart attack on stage, and I am preparing to embark on an ambitious "round the world" motorcycle trip. Brotherhood of Man were 4 weeks into a 6-week stint at Number 1 with "Save Your Kisses for Me," a fact alone that was reason enough to leave the country for a while. I had just turned 19, I thought I knew everything, but in reality, I knew '...eff-all about eff-all'.



**Rover SD1**



I had been interested in motorcycles for as long as I can remember. My father had been a motorcyclist in his youth and was disparagingly described by his future mother-in-law as "...that man on that old motorcycle, "although this was sometimes recounted as "...that old man on that motorcycle." The films "On Any Sunday", "Easy Rider" and a US TV series called "Then Came Bronson" about the adventures of a lone motorbike rider convinced me as a boy that life as a modern-day "Lone Ranger" was my calling just as soon as I was old enough to ride.



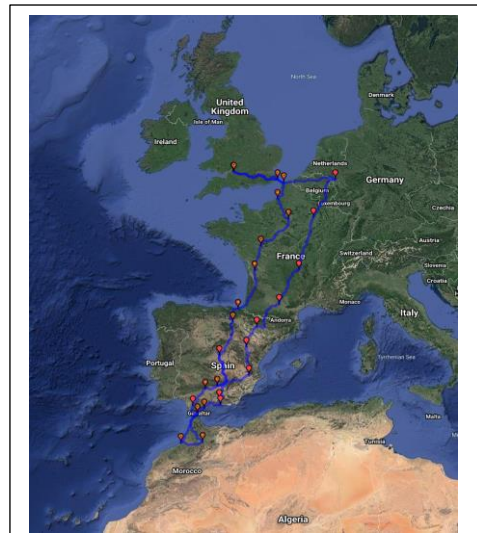
Then Came Bronson

So, mid 1975 I left my poorly paid job as a trainee draughtsman and went to work as a builder's labourer, thinking I would earn plenty of money for my grand trip. However, after 6 months of hard toil, even this naive teenager came to the realisation that his savings were certainly not going to take him all the way around the world. So, I finally decided that I would head out, take whatever money I had saved and then turnaround for home when half of it was spent. It seemed logical at the time.

Looking back, planning and preparation were sadly lacking. I joined the International Youth Hostel Association, bought a big Ordnance Survey map, and spent a day in London trawling around various Foreign Embassies and Consulates. I assumed that when I walked in and declared I would be visiting their wonderful and exotic countries on my motorcycle, they would welcome me with open arms, pat me on the back and load me down with useful tips and

travel information. Instead, I got vacant looks from the security guards and dismissive rejections from the receptionists. I can see their point of view now; here was a wide-eyed, longhaired teenager with a Canadian accent and clad in a greasy Belstaff jacket arriving unannounced and without an appointment. I returned home from London undaunted and made ready for my journey.

My bike was a green Honda CB250 from about 74 or 75. A top box but no fairing or panniers; not even a windscreen. A luggage bag, various bits and bobs and a camera case were strapped on with bungee cords. I was a keen photographer then, as now, and I had an Asahi Pentax SP500 with a 135mm telephoto lens which I took with me. So, with my Travellers Cheques in my pocket, my strategically folded OS map in the top of my tankbag, I was off!



The Plan

### Motorcycle Diary - SPRING 1976

#### BRISTOL- RABAT-BRISTOL

DAY ONE - TUESDAY, April 20

Days mi. - 218

Total mi. - 218

Chipping Sodbury, to Dover

Weather couldn't have been better first day out. Nothing spectacular. Same old freaks trying to run you off the road. Very windy. Slipstream

most of the M4 to save petrol. Rang up Dover Youth Hostel from Maidstone to check on state of bookings; not full so press on all the way to Dover. Stopped at Slough. Only Steven and Anthony there. (Lino going out somewhere). Cup of tea and off. London very hot, slow, fummy. Didn't stop. A20 to Folkstone then up coast to Dover. Hostel filled for tonight by Germans. Chatted to one Australian.

#### DAY TWO - WEDNESDAY, April 21

Days mi. - 166

Total mi. - 384

Dover to Criel, France

Left Dover under overcast sky. Drizzle kind of weather, but it didn't. A bit chilly. Caught 10.05 ferry. Arrived at docks at about 9.25. Didn't even want to see my ticket. ("You have an honest face even though I can't see it behind that helmet"). Rocky ride on ferry. Ride off ferry amid Yankee choir group walking off. First out. A bit chilly for the first while but OK once sun breaks out. Stop at Amiens to see immense cathedral. Arrive at Criel to find I've lost an hour. (Something to do with the difference in summertime). On to Paris tomorrow. Meet a Triumph riding Londoner and his girlfriend who've been to South of France on £19 for three and a half weeks. French drivers better than English. More respect.

#### DAY THREE - THURSDAY, April 22

Criel to Paris, France

Days mi - 60

Total mi - 444

Away by 9.30. Airmail reply to Dad's call. Buy rolls and pastes for lunch and fill up with petrol before leaving Criel. Arrive in Paris and find myself on northern part of ring road. (Note: Foreign drivers don't drive anywhere on purpose in Paris, they just dodge the Paris traffic until they find themselves somewhere).

Pull off the ring road after about ¼ of the way around and suddenly I'm in the centre lane of 1400 lanes and looking directly at the Arc de Triumph. Run a few red lights as I stare at it

while riding down the road. The Arc itself is a massive wrong way roundabout. Give way to those trying to kill you from the right and close your eyes and grit your teeth and hope they'll let you through on the left. Epitome of bedlam. Up the Champs Elysée's and somehow up the north bank of the Seine, by the Louvre and back again the other side. Get lost 17,987,573 times finding the hostel in Suresnes. Finally, an "Auto-Ecole" instructor, chauffeured by his far from willing and very jittery client led me right to it. That was 3.00pm, however. Doesn't open till 5.00pm. Find a sidewalk cafe and watch the world go by for an hour and a half.

Have a small 35p coke, a long cheese sandwich and a sweet and sickly beer. Took a few pictures. Check into hostel and take train into Paris. F1.60. Not bad. Just walk around. Louvre grounds, Seine bank. Back to train at 10.00 and back to hostel. Start talking to a MZ'er from Dortmund. Yankee from New York lost his bed so uses someone else's. Force myself to write diary. Dipped beam filament in headlamp bulb went. Replace tomorrow. Bike fell over as I tried to prop it up on centre-stand on heavily cambered road. Silly me. Sunshine all day. Very warm.

#### DAY FOUR - FRIDAY, April 23

Days mi. - nil

Suresnes, Paris, France

Stroke of luck. Met Susan, a Kanuk taking a French course in Paris. Met her on a train into Paris proper from the outskirts. She's an au pair to a French family. She hates it and Paris and can't wait to get home. Got all around the metro (underground) by shuffling through the turnstiles with her on her season ticket. (must have saved pounds). Went to Sacre Coeur, around shops, usual stuff. Notre Dame, Eiffel tower at night. Quite a view even though the upper bit was closed. Took time exposures without tripod. Hope they turn out. Missed inside of Louvre. Oh well, can't do everything. Besides, I can't afford to stay any longer. Off tomorrow. A bit chilly when clouds masked sun. Touch of rain in evening but not much. Cold in eve.

DAY FIVE - SATURDY, April 24

Days mi.- 223

Total mi.- 667

Paris to Saumur, France

Last to get up after late night in Paris. So what? Leave Suresnes at about 10am and head for Versailles. Buy two spark plugs on the way for spares. Very expensive. Close to £1 each. Also got headlamp bulb. Over £1 as well. Christ, money going quickly. Stop at Versailles for lunch and just look, don't go in. Stop at Chartres for "cafe au lait".

Start chatting to this French kiddie of about my age. He didn't speak a word of English and my French, although better than a week ago is still lousy. Bikes and bike racing we get around to (somehow). Then he got into an argument with a middle-aged man in French and I just sat, picking out one word about every seven. I think it was about bikes. Head south to Blois on N10 then D924. Finally reach the Loire. Decide to push on to Saumur even though it's late already. N10 long and straight. Easy 75 all the way. Bikes great at that speed. 7000 rpm. Not screaming too much. All bikes passing the other way flash and wave. Friendlier than Limeys.

Follow riverside road to Saumur. Stop here and there on the way to get some canned junk and things for dinner. South tomorrow. Get out of France as soon as possible. Too goddamn expensive. Spain should be a relief. Cold today. Wore long johns for the first time on journey. Overcast sky all day and one hell of a wind blowing on the flatlands. Touches of rain here and there but nothing to speak of.

DAY SIX - SUNDAY, April 25

Saumur to Saintes, France

Days mi. - 133

Total mi.- 800

At the moment I've got 15 centimes in my pocket and £175 worth of paper in my other pocket that is worth nothing until tomorrow. Banks closed, so I cut my journey short by staying here (Saintes) instead of pressing on farther. Spent

my last 10 Franc note to get the petrol to get this far. Supper is leftover bread and pastry from lunch instead of the usual gourmet's delight of beans on toast or tinned ravioli. Had to defer payment of hostel fee till tomorrow morning when banks open.

Picked up a Honda 350 on the way and had a good ride to the petrol station where I spent my last 10 Francs. Rode to St. Jean D'Angelo where we stopped for coffee. Its riders were a guy of about my age and his sister of about a year older. He didn't speak any English and she spoke about as much English as I spoke French, but we got on alright. Exchanged addresses. She said she's going to Paris to be a nurse. Still haven't mailed postcards. Find Post Office tomorrow. Saw the end of a bicycle race up the Saintes high street. Seemed as though the whole town was out. It was a bit crazy though. They lined the streets in anticipation and waited and waited and waited.

All that went by were police bikes and cars. Not a bicycle to be seen. Then it was over in no more than a second. Two dozen bikes shot past in a clump and that was it. Crazy. They seemed satisfied, however. Must buy film tomorrow and cut down on camera work. Too expensive. Drove down wrong side of road and round corner. Forgot where I was. Swore at bike for being so stupid. Should see Spain tomorrow. Cold again today, but not as cold as yesterday. Not so windy. Overcast sky. This is silly! It's getting colder the farther south I go. Soon see ice caps in Morocco.

DAY SEVEN - Monday, April 26

Days mi.- 255

Total mi.- 1055

Saintes to San Sebastian, Spain

Cashed cheque in bank early and paid dues. Mailed cards before leaving Saintes. Long ride today; longest so far. Broke the 1000-mile total mark. Didn't stop at Bordeaux. Changed Francs to Pesetas in Bayonne. No trouble at border. Scenery decidedly changed after flatness of France. First glimpse of Pyrenees just before Bayonne. Still overcast but with

occasional sunny period. When I did see the sun, it was quite strong. Indication that I'm moving south.

Difficult finding hostel, but OK in the end. Situated on road used exclusively it seemed by learner drivers. Doorman seemed the only one in the place who spoke Spanish. All other hostellers were American, Canadian, or Australian. Had supper with two Australian guys and two American girls. Had a good laugh. Dinner (the main joking point) was fish soup, which wasn't bad, eggs and chips, squid (now there's a novelty) and custard for dessert. Plus all the bread and wine you wanted. Not bad. Had a beer with them at the bar afterwards.

#### DAY EIGHT - Tuesday, April 27

Days mi.- 173

Total mi.- 1228

San Sebastian to Logrono, Spain

Left San Sebastian at about ten. Rough looking sky; chilly. Long johns again today. Started to rain at petrol station in Zarauz and continued for most of the day. Used rain over trousers for the first time. Took slow scenic road up mountains. Really nice. Typical Spanish-Pyrenees scenery, very windy road. Very slippery. Came off on especially sharp corner that got sharper as I got around when front brake locked and shot out from under me. Me and bike slid together for about 30 feet to the shoulder of the road. Thank God for crash bars. Everything OK except for small hole in elbow of Belstaff jacket and broken visor screw which means that I can't flip the visor up any more which is a bit of a bind. Got up, picked up the bike, took a few pictures to commemorate the occasion, had an orange and pressed on. More good scenery although a bit misty. Got back onto main road and pressed on. No hostels open at this time of year in this area of Spain, so head for hotel. Stop at a cafe for warm-up and coffee and watch these Spaniards come in, sit down, and play a funny sort of whist with funny cards. All smoking big cigars. Madrid tomorrow, with any luck. Bike absolutely covered with muck, dirt, etc. Hose it down at hotel though.

#### DAY NINE - Wednesday, April 28

Days mi.- 266

Total mi.- 1494

Logrono to Madrid, Spain

The worst has happened; I've lost my camera. It fell off the back of the bike as I was riding along a particularly bumpy bit of road. I found out by sliding my bum against my sleeping bag and then meeting no resistance. The bag slid back. I almost came off looking around to see for sure whether it was gone or not. Christ, I couldn't believe it. Still can't. I discovered that I lost it about three in the afternoon and looked along the road for hours but no luck. I went back and forth along a stretch of road about three miles long four times before I gave up. Not a trace; not a thing. I couldn't believe it. I wouldn't have minded so much if it was smashed to bits but at least I would have found it. I reported it to the cops: and gave them my name and address and what I lost. I'll stop there on the way back in case it gets turned in. (slim chance). All I can assume is that someone picked it up in a car and drove off with it before I turned around and started looking because there was absolutely no sign of it. All those shots as well. Shit. I still can't believe it. I was having such a good time as well. I'll have to forget about it though and try not to let it spoil the rest of the trip. Hotel was too expensive.



Left at about eleven. Sunny periods but becoming overcast. Splotches of rain on the way. Brilliant sunshine sometimes. Stopped for sandwich on the way. Very good. Steak. Very



cheap and large Pepsi. Good scenery (you'll have to take my word for it; no shots to prove it).

Pull into Madrid late because of searching in afternoon. Hectic traffic. Find hostel with aid of tourist info map. Bike beginning to show signs of wear and tear, oil seepages, etc. Chain stretching, needs oiling. Generally dirty. Still as smooth as ever though. No signs of being out of tune yet; no funny noises. Definite signs of sluggishness due to altitudes. Climbed mountain to over 5000 feet. Snow all around. Very cold. Find I can knock up cruising speed by about 10 mph at same revs if I lay very low on tank. This allows me to roll off the throttle a bit to save gas.

DAY TEN - Thursday, April 29

No miles

Madrid, Spain

Depressed today. All I kept thinking about was the camera. Maybe buy very cheap second-hand camera. Can't do the rest of the trip without pictures. Didn't like Madrid much, maybe because of depression. A bit dirty. A lot of litter. Men keep spitting everywhere. Walked around most of the day and metro'd around aimlessly. Fantastic fish market with every type of seafood and freshwater fish imaginable. Fascinating.

Very warm when sun shone through. Hot and stuffy down in metro. Not as good as Paris metro. Called on Mike's brother Jim, but he was not there. Tried to get air mail letter in P.O. but no luck with language. Gave up. Adjusted and lube chain in evening and will get address of Honda agent in south Spain from Australian couple heading for North Africa on Honda 360 and Yam 400. Talked to a couple of South African girls touring Europe. Head south tomorrow. Only hostel open down there is Marbella, so it looks like another hotel between here and there. Must find a cheaper one than last time.

DAY ELEVEN - Thursday, April 30

Days mi.- 249

Total. Mi.- 1743

Madrid to Bailen, Spain

A touch of bad luck. About 10 miles north of a place called Madrudejos, I stopped to tighten a few nuts and bolts. The front right-hand tappet cover was weeping a bit of oil, so I tried to tighten that one up. As I pulled the spanner the bloody cover broke in two. The actual cap rolling about on the floor and the threaded bit still on the engine. Luckily enough the threaded bit was not in too tight and came out easily, but now I've got a hole in the top of the engine (which isn't too good). Two passing motorbike cops stop to investigate and try to explain that there's a "mecanico" down the road about 10km. So, I whack the right-hand side rear tappet cover in the front hole and stick a cloth in the back to catch any oil that shoots out as I putter along the side of the road at about 15mph. (the cloth didn't catch much oil, but my leg did).



*The cloth didn't catch much oil.*

To cut a long story short, they all said they couldn't do anything until I came to one that ground down a sort of plug, and whacked it in with a hammer, just to tide me over till I get to the next bike place. (which is god knows where) It holds but there's still oil pouring out everywhere over everything. Hope it hasn't ruined the threads in the head. If that wasn't enough for one day, the speedo cable broke leaving me with 1693 miles on my journey and a steady zero miles per hour on the clock. From now on all mileages will have to be approximate, worked out from km on maps.

Spain just doesn't seem to be my country. First, I come off, then I lose my camera, then today

happens. Took road to Toledo from Madrid this morning. Toledo old, picturesque but too commercialised in aid of tourism. Took wrong road from Toledo which added about thirty unwanted miles to my journey. Wouldn't have minded if it was good scenery, but it was just industrial. Belted with rain for ten minutes outside Toledo and then drizzle and spots every now and again. through the afternoon. Better see some sunshine soon, or else. Money will never last the planned six weeks at this rate. Have to do some drastic planning; jobhunting or something. Head for Cordoba tomorrow. Possible Honda dealer. Aussie last night said the only way to get into Gibraltar and out again is through Morocco. Spanish border is non-existent for tourists going either way. Lousy deal.

DAY TWELVE - Saturday, May 1  
 Days mi.-65  
 Total mi.-1808  
 Bailen to Cordoba, Spain



*Cordoba*

Left Bailen with few pesetas in my pocket, my last note going for petrol. Putter along so as not to stir up the oil much, as it's already plastered over everything. Pass a bunch of BMWs going the other way. Don't know where they're from. Hope to get to Cordoba before banks close.

Arrive in Cordoba and stop at a Ducati dealer and show him the broken tappet cover. No, nothing he can do. No Honda dealer in Cordoba. Ask where the bank is. He says banks are closed until Monday. Explain my situation to them about travellers' cheques and that I've got no cash 'till I can cash one. (Difficult to do as the mechanic spoke no English and his friend, a very jovial character by the name of Fernando, speaks about half a dozen words of slurred English punctuated by blowing raspberries to indicate my motorbike). Finally, they ask me to follow them to a friend of theirs. I follow and I'm led to a bar where the barman says his brother speaks English.

So, they buy me a drink and we wait for the barman's brother. He turns up and translates for me. He says the banks are closed but I might be able to change my money at an hotel. So off we drive in his car and soon we arrive at this big hotel. (Too expensive for me, by the way, but still amazingly cheap for the standard it was. About £6 a night for a four- or five-star hotel). On the wall it had posted every currency exchange rate but sterling. Just my luck. However, my friend does a bit of talking and they decide to give me slightly less than the banks. Oh well, beggars can't be choosers. It wasn't much less anyway. Drive back to the bar and it's decided, as everything is closed until Monday, that I should spend the weekend in Cordoba. The mechanic says that I can park my bike in his garage so off we go and after doing that the barman's brother takes me and all my gear, in his car again, to another bar that has rooms for the night.

The two barmen, obviously friends, chatter for a while and I get a room for what I'm sure is a reduced rate. 80 pts a night isn't too bad. Dump my stuff, wash and change, pop back down to the bar to find that he's waiting for me to take me back to his and his brother's bar, (they're twins and they picked up their bit of English in Majorca serving behind the bar of an English-speaking hotel), where I'm accepted as one of the crowd.

They give me a glass of wine and when they order a plate of small clams, (not sure what they're called), they keep offering them to me. The clams were very tasty. Still in their shells, you pick one up and slurp it off the shell. Very nice, cooked in a tangy, peppery sauce. They were all very hospitable and jolly this lot of Spaniards, singing songs and generally being merry with the gentle aid of their very powerful wine. (This is their lunch hour, about 1.30 till about 3 or 4 in the afternoon. Then they work until about eight at night).

They always offered me their cigarettes first and even though I kept refusing they always offered me before anyone else. For all this hospitality I thought I'd better buy them all a drink, so I got a round in. Three glasses of wine and a beer comes to around 30p. I'm staggered. Fernando, who is the brother of the twins, asks me (or "axes" me, as he puts it) if I want to play dominoes for a while. After that the barman who took me to the hotel asks me if I want to go with him up the mountain to fetch his father who is a carpenter working on a house. So, at about five o'clock we shoot off up some of the windiest roads that I've ever been on. Nice house at the top. Return to bar after a while chatting to his Dad and watch a football game on TV. Sit around a while and chat. Things in the bar have quietened down a bit until later on in the evening. The bar does however stay open all day. Incredible hours. Nine in the morning to one or two in the morning EVERY day and there's just the two of them.

The evening (early evening) brings long drinks. Gin and coke with ice and lemon seems about the most popular. I didn't try one. Maybe tomorrow. By G.B. standards, about a gill (triple measure) of gin and a big bottle of coke works out to about 40p. Incredible. Same drink would cost about 90p to £1 in England.

At about 10pm Fernando and a couple of his friends move onto another bar and ask me to come (or almost tell me to come). We wend our way there and back again. Drinks everywhere. Back at twin's bar we finish off their working night with a few beers. Their names are Laure,

pronounced Lawree, and Pepe. Fernando and his friend leave and as I go the twins make me wait until they've locked up. This is about midnight; early for them. So, we make the rounds of bars still open until about one o'clock eating and drinking, finally ending up at my hotel bar. It seems all the local barmen are really good friends. After a drink at the bar I go to bed; I'm whacked. The twins stay and chat to the barman. They still have to get up the next day to open up at nine. Amazing! Sometimes they stay open to two am.

Leave diary until tomorrow (today, Sunday). Whether not nice; cold, cloudy, slight touch of rain. Oh yes, forgot. Had a nice type of potato salad in the afternoon and ate shrimps (or "shrinks" as they said). They were still whole; unshelled. You just pick one up, pull off the head, pull off the tail, then the legs, then peel of the hard skin/shell. Really tasty. Made a balls-up of my first one but it got easier. Trouble is it takes so long to do each one.



DAY THIRTEEN - Sunday, May 2  
No miles  
Cordoba, Spain

Blazing sunshine today. Very warm. Spent most of the day wandering around the town.



Stopped in park to write postcards and bumped into Canadian couple from Alberta and B.C. travelling on a £65 rail pass. Went back to bar in early evening and played a sort of dice game. Didn't understand at first but gradually I caught on. Early night. Can't afford a drinking session tonight.

DAY FOURTEEN - Monday, May 3

No miles  
Cordoba, Spain

No chance for the tappet cover from stock. Has to be handmade. Trouble is: 1000pts! That's about £8! Oh well, nothing I can do about it. Get a good tour of the city in car of the "mecanico" while looking for a Spaniard who could speak a bit better English than the twins. Some streets so narrow you can't stick your elbow out of the car window for fear of having it scraped off. Spanish drivers are all mad.

Back to twin's bar in the evening. Talking about Spanish and English drinks and costs. Bottle of Bacardi, a litre, costs just £1.20. Pick up tappet cover tomorrow morning and will set off. In a way breaking that cover was a good thing because it got me three days of living in a Spanish town where I was accepted as part of the crowd and not just a passing tourist. I really enjoyed my stay. Hot day again today for me but just a nippy spring day to them. Temp about 75 degrees F. Lauri says in the summer it gets to about 95-100 and over. Christ!

*To be continued....*

**VIEW FROM THE SADDLE – Helen**

***Reflections on a very strange year that was 2020!***

I thought I would take a few moments to reflect on what a weird year it's been and what that has meant for me and mine, good and bad and in no particular order.

It looks likely that I shall have a 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday spent in Lockdown – there can't be many of us in that unique position. Shopping at Tesco's was the highlight of my birthday in 2020! I stood in a queue for over an hour and a half before getting into the store, just as well it was a sunny day.

Walking as principle means of exercise gave us the chance to explore local footpaths, byways, lanes and villages. So much on our doorstep that we didn't realise – like most people we had become used to jumping in the car and driving somewhere for a walk and had successfully ignored what was in front of our noses! We've also been privileged to catch sight of deer, foxes, even a hare which was amazing as well as seeing and hearing so many more birds.

Garden was spectacular – best it's ever been – largely due to the time I was able to devote to it and then able to take time to sit and enjoy it was fabulous too and listen to the birdsong ...lovely! Normally weekends would be full of rugby matches, bike club rides (Ah, those were the days!) and meals out.

'Ourgate' became the go-to place for holidays – very exclusive. The only actual holiday we managed was our Welsh bash for long weekend which was a great triumph. I remember we were given very odd looks by Welsh natives when we entered shops with masks on. It was mandatory in England but not in Wales at that time! We had sunshine for the whole weekend which according to Geoff, was unheard of for Wales; a little wet stuff normally falls over there. Sun shines on the righteous is what I say!

Mask wearing became the norm – what a joy they are, especially if you wear glasses and/or have long hair and a fringe ...hmmm, complete nightmare but a necessary evil. I wonder how long we will need to continue to wear them...?

Certain individuals managed to buy another bike during the pandemic – how did that happen? Must have blinked and missed the discussion about that! Still, we now go for walks to recce byways which suits me – I still get my



exercise and see some fabulous countryside whilst the other half has his fun! Perfect!

Something else to note is that I have got out of the habit of driving. The car can sit on the drive for a week or more at the moment and when I do give it a run, I feel much more anxious than I did and that my attention isn't so good ..something to work on and be aware of when things return to normal; whatever that looks like. On the plus side, I've saved lots of cash in petrol and parking! But on the downside, nothing to spend it on!! 😞

With no libraries open, I ran out of books to read – OH NO!! I therefore succumbed and had to get to grips with using e-audio and e-books to survive, something I didn't think I'd ever do but times change, and things move on. I still prefer my physical books but ... when needs must.

I was fortunate to continue working throughout the pandemic – for a whole year now I have worked from home. No, that's a lie; I went into the office once in July for a morning! Wow! How daring was that? Some like working from home but I much prefer going to a place of work so this was such an alien concept – talk about fish out of water. Took me ages to get used to it. Left me very discombobulated for a long time. And not completely happy with it now but ....

All of this has meant a complete technophobe has had to get used to IT very quickly – getting quite a dab hand at Zoom calls and Skype messaging. Not seen any of my team or colleagues face to face for a year now. All very bizarre. I think when we meet up again, I will do so with a picture frame to hand so I can hold it up to frame the person I'm speaking to and stand 2m away, thereby mimicking a Zoom call!! It'll make me feel much more at home.

One consequence of time on our hands during holidays meant we decorated the spare room, under some duress from certain quarters but clearing, sorting and redecorating did get done – yeah, what an achievement; junk room morphed into office, at long last. Hurrah! 😊

Looking forward ...

I have received my job along with 20 million other people and hope that this will bring us closer to some form of normality later in the year and probably into next.

Personally, I'm looking forward to having retail therapy back as an option – I can't cope with shops not being open and I can't wait to be able to go where I want, when and for however long I want. I am fed up with rules and regulations which are impossible to follow.

It will be lovely to visit the hairdressers though her scissors may be blunt by the time she's finished cutting the unruly tresses.

Mostly though, it will be fabulous to reconnect with family and friends and to give someone a hug without wondering if you are in the right bubble. Roll on the summer. 😊

### **Bubble and (narrow) Squeak – Eddy**

Spring is here(ish), freedom beckons, new rubber on the HP4 and 200 miles put down trying to find 100 dry ones to scrub them in. I am returning from having dropped the bike off at Mr Lovetts for its bankruptcy (36000 mile) service.

The loan bike is a 1250RT and it carries a £1000 excess. The route back to Bath is uncomplicated M5/M4, it's just started to rain again.

We arrived at the Almondsbury M5/M4 split and I leave on the inner of the 2 East bound lanes in P1, travelling at around the same speed were 2 cars to my right, of which I was scarcely aware.

Now, here comes the word....'Suddenly', the driver of a black BMW Mini (White, male, mid 30s, shortish black hair and black beard) the rearmost of the 2 cars jerked his steering wheel swerving into my lane to undertake the car in front, missing me by a fraction of an inch - and even to achieve that I had to take avoiding action.

I would love to say that I predicted the whole possibility, hence my position; the truth however is that it came as a complete surprise. It would be lovely to claim my position was by deliberate choice, it wasn't. It may have been born out of experience, but it was a subconscious choice. That bubble, however, saved a boring discussion about insurance excess, not to mention damaged machinery, pain .... suffering.....

It occurred to me afterwards that the subconscious rather than deliberate decision might well be a product of lockdown skill fade - the essence of which is the second part of an article I wrote some while back and now lying in the wings ..... witches warning?

### **AND FINALLY – Ed**

Much has been printed/written, by those all-knowing scribes from the motorcycle world, about the first ride after lockdown.

They go on about how drivers and rider's confidence will be reduced, reactions dulled, which will all lead to a spike in collisions.

Add to that, the real-world message from Eddy (above).

Keep safe and well.



### **AAMC CLUB EVENTS – WHOOPEE.**

Club events are being planned from **17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

Please send your club event dates and descriptions to Helen , Mob: 0

and a club events calendar will then be published.

Where club events are detailed, it would be sensible to contact the ride leader to confirm final details and let them know you are attending.

Keep an eye on the Club WhatsApp page for last minute changes or other rides.

Please turn up with a full tank and please apply the ride rules that appear in the Club Diary that appertain to rider behaviour on club rides, and the 'drop off system', used to prevent as far as possible, club members becoming separated from the main group.

### **MAY.**

Sunday 30 May. Simon Gough. 07774 835025

### **JUNE.**

Wednesday 16 June. Fish and Chip evening run. Simon Gough.

### **JULY.**

Sunday 4 July. Andy

Sunday 11 July. Rob

Sunday 18 July. Nigel  
. Exmoor.

Sunday 27. Nigel Meet  
at X Hands Hotel, Old Sodbury, 0915 for 09.30 start.

### **AUGUST.**

### **SEPTEMBER.**

### **OCTOBER.**

### **NOVEMBER.**

Sunday 7 November. Final organized club ride of 2021. Simon Gough.

## **Non-Club Events –**

### **Adventure Bike Rider Festival**

25-27 June 2021

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire.

### **Shelsley Walsh Classic Nostalgia**

Date: 17-18 July 2021

Event address: Shelsley Walsh, Worcester,  
WR6 6RP

Website: [www.classicnostalgia.co.uk](http://www.classicnostalgia.co.uk)

Entry Price: £20 per adult advance ticket  
price, or £25 on the gate.

Times: 8am each day, till approx. 5pm

Contact number: 01886 812211

### **Tewkesbury Classic Vehicle Festival**

Date: Sunday 22 August 2021

Event Address: Tewkesbury School,  
Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury GL20 8DF

Website: <https://tewkesburycvf.org/>

## **BMF DISCOUNT CODE.**

### **Code for 2021 - CLB21TAH**

Club members can use the above in conjunction with the Club Name, to receive discounts on advance tickets to all BMF rallies and events; discounts on Insurance and other BMF member benefits.