



TREADS

www.aamc.co.uk

The September 2013 Newsletter of AAMC

EDITORS BITS

– Chris

This edition may well appear a little earlier this month as I am off on holiday to Iceland (the country) for a week exploring the south and west of the island. Sadly not on a bike although I did look at the price to hire a R1200GS – I think €205/day for a week was a little steep. I might also struggle to keep 'the boss' happy as it is currently about 2-5°C during the day so not much fun for a pillion without a heated seat. Iceland has many gravel roads and changeable weather but very little traffic and quite stunning scenery – I will let you know if it looks good for a bike trip when I get back. Fingers crossed for the northern lights (don't worry I won't lumber you with the photos!)

Also, I have included an article this month from RoSPA's Care on the Road journal. Although it is relating to cars I found this article on tyres more than a little interesting as I have just replaced both tyres on the bike even though they were above the legal minimum – the surface had begun to perish and coming in to winter it seemed the right thing to do.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in articles, ride reports and photos - keep 'em coming!

Ride of Support

– Simon

This year AAMC have been supporting Club member Mark, who is organising a four-year programme of Charity support for Bath's Royal United Hospital Forever Friends Appeal. The first of these events is a Navigational Rally on Saturday 21st September and the Committee endorses the event and strongly encourages all members to Register and support it.

Please see the following website link for this year's Motorcyclist's Ride of Support for Cancer Research in Bath. This should be a good day out based on Rally style navigation and raise some money for a good cause at the same time.

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

All details are fully explained on the RoS website.



Bishops Castle

– Jim

As promised on the web site the weather for the first ride of the autumn was, after a chilly start, warm and sunny. The roads were dry and it was probably perfect motorcycling conditions.

11 people on 10 bikes collected at the Severn View services for the start, including Nigel B who had come home from holiday a day early especially for the ride [the lure of Shropshire roads!] and Estelle, a former club member, who had ridden down from London to join us – no pressure for a good day out then!

Coffee was taken among the

wasps at Honey Café and, apart from the road between Crickhowell and Talgarth sprouting a new '50' limit the ride there was fairly familiar and uneventful. Sandra and Jaimie made their own way back home then and we continued via Crossgates up to Newtown. The scenery becomes more rugged and the roads swoop and turn and bend and turn and turn and bend – all with little traffic.

Newtown is always jammed up but luckily we turned off towards Craven Arms and avoided the worst of the queues. Instead we had to contend with views of the

distant hills, forests and fields of sheep – and more swooping, twisting roads. The B road to Bishops Castle provided no relief from this either but we were too busy enjoying ourselves to worry about it. All apart from Gary who was increasingly concerned about his fuel situation and who had correctly assessed that this was not the sort of area to run dry in.

Lunch was taken at the Kings Head in Bishops Castle and some tucked into the Sunday roast under the pretext of then not having to eat in the evening. Suitably refreshed we rode around the corner and refuelled the bikes, much to Gary's relief.

The route now headed south again via the quaintly named 'New Invention' [worth Googling] and the lovely swoop through the valley onwards to Knighton, Kington and Hay on Wye. The café in the car park in Hay has closed so we pressed on down the Golden Valley to Grosmont and took tea at the Gentle Jane tearoom [01981 241 655]. As far as I am aware this is a new venue for us and is highly recommended. A vast choice of loose leaf teas, sumptuous ice creams and cakes that were worthy of photographs – remember the early comments about not needing to eat for the rest of the day after the roast lunch. The only caveat is that it

is quite small and may not be suitable for large groups or in poor weather; we were OK as we stayed outside.

As we rode on back to Chepstow via Monmouth and Devauden the poor bikes creaked and groaned under the weight of all the food... But we didn't care about that as the roads were still dry and there wasn't much traffic and it was compulsory to enjoy ourselves as we were on a day out.

The ride finished at Chepstow some 8 hours and 210 miles after the start, a long day but I think that everyone went home smiling – Estelle going all the way back to London! ■

Photos...

"It's Open!" - the Café at Nunney (thanks, Simon) and a couple of pics from the Hereford & Worcestershire ride (thanks, Steve).



View from the Saddle

– Scratcher

We were recently treated to an excellent article on a visit to the Prescott Hill Climb. This is a long established Motorsport event, well known to most petrol heads, this prompted me to introduce you to what may be a much lesser known event.

The " Hot Rod Hayride" is held annually towards the end of July at Bisley in Surrey at the grounds of the National Shooting Centre.

This is more a festival of hot rodding than a competitive speed event, although this year they did hold a hill climb at an adjacent venue. Don't think this event is confined to cars, bikes are a big part of the scene. The whole event has a fun feel about it with stalls selling all sorts of hot rod kit, clothes (I

was very tempted by a Teddy Boy suit as I never had one back in the day), tee shirts, records, wall of death, tattoo parlour and anything and everything that a hot rodder needs. In the evening the Rock and Roll starts and goes on till very late.

You can wander around looking at the cars and bikes with no restrictions. The styles are varied with paintwork that shines like a mirror, to trucks that look like they have spent 50 years in a desert (which they probably have).

This is like the Goodwood Festival of Speed with Soul. It is about 100 miles from Bristol and not far from the Box Hill bike meet, so well worth considering for a visit. ■



Bikes are a popular part of the scene



Does my bum look big in this?



Shiney



Just like your high street



Not so shiny



Hot rod motorcycle or what !!!



Just taking the Harley for a ride

Club Bash 2014 – Simon

At a Committee Meeting in late 2004, I found myself being arm-twisted to organise and lead a short trip to France during 2005, and in June that year nineteen of us left for a long weekend in Epernay in the Champagne region. That was the start.

The following year we went to Chamonix in the French Alps for a week, and we've been abroad every year since – one year a long weekend, the following a full week.

In 2012 Andy Smith kindly volunteered to organise a trip to the south of France, visiting such attractions as the Millau Viaduct, Gorges du Verdon, Pont du Gard and riding up the Route Napoleon, to name just a few. On our way back, we stopped for a night in the French Alps at a small village called Vaujany, just north of Alpe d'Huez, and stayed in a wonderful catered chalet, used mainly by skiers in the winter and cyclists in the summer. It was so good, we decided then and there we just had to go back.

So, for the continental trip next year, it will be a ride to Vaujany over three days, five nights at Chalet La Maitreya, and three days ride back. We will be using the Eurotunnel Shuttle to cross the channel, and the total distance from Bristol to Vaujany is about



770 miles. Experience has shown these trips are usually best undertaken in either mid June or early September to avoid the school holidays, and for this one we have picked early September, as some of the mountain passes (cols) we want to ride over will still be blocked by snow in June!

Andy has kindly been back in touch with the Dutch owner of the chalet and sorted out pricing and available dates for our trip. The plan is to leave Bristol on the morning of Thursday 4th September, and return home during the afternoon of Saturday 13th. That leaves Sunday to relax and sort out all your dirty washing before work on Monday!

Costing for the trip (using an exchange rate of €1.15 to £1) looks like this:

Travel down 800 miles (80 litres x €1.60/litre)	£	110
Tunnel Cost (Nominal) Folkestone to Calais	£	25
2 x Overnights	£	100
Five Nights at La Maitreya (€39 x 5)	£	170
2 x Overnights	£	100
Tunnel Cost Return Calais to Folkestone	£	25
Travel back 800 miles (as above)	£	110
Food and Refreshments 10 days x £35 per day	£	350
Fuel for Riding around in the Alps (500 miles)	£	70
Total per person	£	1,060

Please note this doesn't include any alcoholic drinks.

If you are interested in coming along, please let me know fairly quickly so I can give the chalet owner an approximate idea of numbers, although these don't need to be definite bookings at this stage. There are quite a few rooms in the chalet and they also own the chalet next door if we 'overflow'.

I really can't tell you how good the place is for quality and value, and I'm really looking forward to going back.

Get a better grip in the wet

– Julie Marshall, a member of the West Yorkshire RoADAR Group



I didn't dare attempt the highest speed so went round again at 70kph and hit the cones for a second time.

Remember, these tyres are perfectly legal and thousands of motorists are driving around with them on their cars, unaware of the consequences.

Of course, lack of handling is just one aspect. Braking distance is another. The Highway Code sets out the official braking and stopping distances and we're expected to learn them to pass our DSA test and then quote them for our Advanced. But when you factor in tread depth variations they are almost meaningless. At 1.6mm, tyres only perform at 55 per cent efficiency compared to new, meaning stopping distances are greatly increased in wet conditions.

Tests have shown that the increase in wet stopping distance from 50mph of a tyre at the legal minimum compared to a brand new tyre can be an alarming 42ft (13 metres).

A spokesman for Continental Tyres said: "The main purpose of a tyre's tread pattern is to disperse water when driving in wet conditions, therefore the volume of tread pattern determines the maximum volume of water it can disperse.

"A new tyre can easily cope with wet conditions because not all the new pattern volume is needed. However, it is a different story with a tyre at the legal limit of 1.6mm because the water volume exceeds the tread pattern capacity

Two thirds of the people surveyed recently by Continental Tyres didn't know that the legal limit for the depth of tyre tread is 1.6mm. More than 40 per cent never checked their tyre tread and 20 per cent didn't know how to go about it, even if they'd wanted to.

Statistics that make grim reading and are, frankly, quite alarming.

As advanced drivers, we are more aware than most that, because tyres are the only point of contact with the road, they are key in driving safety. And, although we would hopefully be among the 33 per cent that came up with the right answer when questioned, how many of us realise just how much the depth of tread affects



the braking distance and handling performance of our cars?

I recently spent a day at the Continental Tyres state-of-the-art testing facility in Hanover, Germany, and came away with a completely different perspective.

We drove cars fitted with tyres with 8mm, 3mm and 1.6mm of tread, around a track with a section of shallow standing water - corresponding to a typically rainy day on Europe's roads.

We were instructed to drive through it at 60kph (37mph), 70kph (43mph) and 80kph (49mph). As expected, the 8mm tyres didn't affect the handling no matter what the speed. The 3mm tyres were fine at 60kph and reacted with a slight loss of control at 70kph. This was more pronounced at 80kph. It was the 1.6mm tyres that were the real eye-openers though.

At 60kph the car lost traction, at 70kph it went into a skid and I wiped out a couple of the cones.

and the tyre loses its grip on the road.”

In its survey, Continental Tyres found that 80 per cent of respondents felt the performance of the tyre deteriorating and that it affected stopping distances and braking. But it still didn't change their attitude to tyre checks.

If you don't have a tyre depth gauge it's easy to check your tyres using a 20p piece. Insert it into the main grooves. A tyre has at least 3mm of tread if the tread is higher than the outer rim of the coin.

But don't wait until you hit the legal limit; the emergency services change their tyres at 3mm which is said to be a reasonable compromise between safety and economics and this is the limit recommended by companies such as Continental. RoSPA also recommends that tyres are changed at 3mm.

Tread depth is not the only factor when it comes to tyres and stopping distance. You have to factor in the quality of the tyre as well because it can make quite spectacular differences.

A new EU tyre label was introduced last year so consumers can compare the different properties. There are three key criteria: fuel efficiency, wet grip and external rolling noise.

The most important, to my mind, is wet grip. Vehicles with tyres from Class A stop in the shortest distance from 50mph, while tyres from Class B take an additional 3-6 metres. The result is that there is an increase in braking distance of more than 18 metres from a vehicle in Class A to Class F.

This was demonstrated to us out on the test track.



A BMW 1 series, fitted with new quality tyres (rated A) was driven around a 2km wet track for five laps at increasing, but not excessive, speeds. The same exercise was carried out on an identical car, this time with new budget tyres with a wet weather rating of E.

The differences were alarming and very frightening. Lap times using the second car were noticeably slower and handling was compromised. At relatively slow speeds the car skidded and even fishtailed - not a nice experience.

It's a sobering thought - UK law simply states that the tyre must be the size it says it is and carry the load it says it can at the speed

it says it can, and it is up to the consumer to do their homework. Not easy with more than 200 brands of tyre in the UK and Ireland to choose from.

It's difficult to know what else the tyre manufacturers can do to educate the public - my experience on the test track has certainly made me more aware of the consequences of poor quality tyres but, of course, not many people get to put cars through their paces under test conditions.

Perhaps it's time the law was changed to make 3mm the legal limit. ■

This article first appeared in the August 2013 edition of RoSPA's Care on the Road journal.



View of an RT (from a GS)

– Chris

That time of year and the bike is due for a service. All booked in with plenty of notice for a loan bike from the dealer and guess what... they've loaned me a 1200RT for the day! Time for a decent test ride.

The thing is, I have had a R1200GS for about 5 or 6 years and not ridden anything else. I'm not a bike journalist who goes into loads of technical detail, comparing many different bikes either. So here is my view of the BMW RT1200 (SE) loan bike from the GS.

First things first – I got my leg over. Whilst the RT with its fairing looks like a hefty sized bike it has a "smaller" riding position. The foot rests are closer to the rest of me and the handlebars are not as wide but it is comfortable. I immediately felt in a less slouched, upright position and unexpectedly more 'poised'.

Whilst on the subject of the riding position, I put my girlfriend on the back for her comments. She is 6' tall and although she found the position comfortable we discovered the one reason why I could not purchase an RT – I ride with my toes, not my instep, on the pegs which meant my heels clattered with her feet (I have big feet, not her!) when I moved for the brake or gear shift, something I just could not live with when touring. The pictures illustrate the compared riding positions.

The next thing to look at were the controls – these were all pretty familiar as they are similar to the GS however a small detail meant that I prefer some of the controls on the GS. The RT indicator controls are all on the left thumb and felt a bit thick with no real feedback or definite click as to whether you switched them on or not. On the '59 GS there is a 'paddle' on each thumb and a 3rd cancel button. The RT's electric

windsheild adjustment was great, however once it was set in a suitable position I didn't change it after that and personally I doubt if I ever would. Other extras included a heated seat which is a real plus in my mind for the coming months.

Riding off, the RT was exceptionally surprising. I will use the word poised again as at very slow speeds the balance was excellent. Cornering was a different matter simply because it took some getting used to – narrower handlebars, a heavier bike and a different rider position meant that it was a whole new experience. The handlebars initially tended to 'push back' on the inside hand when cornering (e.g. on the left hand on a left turn) but a little more positive throttle appeared to sort this out and after a few miles it was less noticeable. I will put this down to 'learning' the bike and I mention it only because it was noticeable to start with. If anyone knows the physics behind this, please let me know!

Over to Wales in the morning, on the much ridden road from Chepstow to Usk. The next part of this RT experience really was a surprise. I was cornering quicker on a bike I didn't know! This was a tad worrying (the roads were drying out from overnight rain) until I thought about it afterwards. The RT has a similar Boxer engine to the GS but on the GS I can pretty much tell what speed I am doing just from the feel of the bike in a particular gear. I suspect the gearing on the RT is different so for a similar feel I was going that bit quicker. I paid a bit more attention to the speedo from then on. The RT, however was just great through the twisty roads and, as it was a school day, there wasn't much traffic at all. It was simply great fun.



Although I don't have my toes on the pegs in the GS picture the slight difference in seating position does make a difference to me (I am 6'2" - if you want metric you will have to work it out yourself).

The slightly larger distance to the pillion foot rests (marked with a circle) does make a difference to me and the slightly more relaxed position on the GS is my preference.

Not the most informative photos in the world – hardly done with scientific precision.

In the early corners the RT felt wallowy and soft and seemed to move around. I checked the suspension settings and the last guy had it set to 'comfort'. A quick change to 'normal' ('sport' also available) whilst on the go and everything settled down nicely for the rest of the day's cornering and a more confident ride.

The afternoon involved a ride to Cheddar and over the Mendips.

The RT seems to want more revs than the GS and responds well through the tight bends and accelerates well, feeling smoother. The RT has a build quality which gives an sense of refinement and the Boxer engine leaves you feeling that you have a more coarse element to the bike that is there if you want it.

At the end of the day, after about 120-130 miles I felt very relaxed

and not especially tired. I also felt that the poise and control of the RT gave me a huge amount of confidence. I have watched Police motorcyclists glide through busy streets and roundabouts with effortless grace and, whilst not saying that "it's the bike", the RT does seem to lend itself more to that level of control.

Then again – it might just be me! ■

AAMC, Member's Forum and Facebook – Nigel

Recently I found myself at a loose end late one afternoon and I fancied a ride out. There was little time to organise anything so I thought I would use the member's area of the club website to post a message enquiring if anyone fancied a spontaneous evening excursion. However, the member's area does not broadcast messages to members in its current configuration so unless someone happened to log in just after I had posted, the message would not be seen by anyone who might be able to come out.

So, in an effort to make the club's activities more inclusive, current and pro-active, the Committee has agreed to investigate setting up something called "push messaging" on the website. For those that are unaware of the term it simply means that a post will get forwarded automatically to members instead of members needing to log in first. Members will have the choice to opt in or opt out of these messages.

Also, Mark has created a "secret" Facebook group for club members

only. "Secret" is Facebook's term for a closed group where nothing within the group can be seen by anyone outside the group. Joining the group is by invitation only so anyone wishing to be included in this AAMC Facebook group should email Mark at events@aamc.co.uk

I know there are some who may not be keen on Facebook. You are certainly right to be wary considering much of the rubbish that is posted on the main Facebook site. Joining a secret group such as this would show you the benefits of the collaborative nature of a Facebook group without exposing yourself to the rest of the Facebook world. To create a Facebook account you need to give no more than your name, an email address, your gender and your date of birth. That's it. Beware though, once you join, there are ample opportunities to add all sorts of personal information which some people seem happy to do. You may choose to do so, but you are not obliged to.

The club would welcome your thoughts or comments on these

topics so please don't hold back. Let them know what you think.

If you are uncertain and want to ask some questions about Facebook or push messaging contact Mark on the email address above.

Alternatively I will be happy to talk to anyone if anyone wants to call me. My contact details are in my member profile on the website. ■

Push notifications as Nigel has explained are being set up and will shortly if not already become active.

Can I ask that if you have any feedback regarding this once it's in full swing that you email me at webmaster@aamc.co.uk

As always we are acting on what has been requested by club members, and we're very interested in receiving your feedback as to whether it is working well for you.

– Sandra

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 Treads, can you please ensure that they reach the editor before or during the first week of that month. Contributions for Treads are always needed, whether they are motorcycle related or of general interest! Please don't be shy. E-mail editor@aamc.co.uk

Parish News

– from the vicar.

2014 Club Bash

You will have seen last month that I managed to get ahead of myself in terms of organising the Club foreign bash for next year. We will be going to a wonderful catered chalet in the French Alps near Alpe d'Huez in early September. Further details should be printed elsewhere in this issue.

I already have five singles and two couples on a list of members wanting to come. If you haven't yet been in touch to let me know you are interested, please do so asap. It would be sensible to start booking things well before Christmas to make certain we can get exactly what we want.

Motorcycle Roadcraft

After seventeen years, the Police Foundation has finally produced a completely new and updated version of Motorcycle Roadcraft, which is now on sale. Despite a new version of the car book some years ago, the bike book wasn't touched because they thought they couldn't sell enough copies to make it worthwhile, but we are all delighted they have finally 'bitten the bullet' as it were. I have a copy but haven't yet found time to look at it! Copies are available direct from TSO.com or Amazon. Better get one before they all sell out...

BikeSafe

There are two further BikeSafe events coming up in our area over the next few weeks. 29th September will be at Bath Fire Station and 13th October at Yate Fire Station. These are just single day seminars, but we will have a Club stand there for a few hours during each afternoon in an effort to recruit new members. If you can help with manning or talking to potential new members about the Club at either of these events, please let me know.

Welcome

This month I would like to extend a warm welcome to new member Mike, known as 'Osh'. Osh rides an ST1300 Pan European and lives in north Bristol. We hope to see you out and about with us at a Club event very soon.

Some biking sentiments from the internet...

"I'd rather wear out than rust away"

"Only bikers know why dogs stick their heads out car windows"

"I'm not a motorbike freak, I'm just a freak with a motorbike"

Seen on a t-shirt somewhere...

"MISSING: Husband and motorcycle. Reward for motorcycle."

"I'm not totally useless. I can be used as a bad example"

"You never see a motorbike parked outside a psychiatrist's office"

"SFB – Single Female Biker. Enjoys a good long ride, exploring the wild side, and snuggling up to a warm exhaust pipe. Also likes going really fast, then really slow, then really fast again. Seeks – someone that won't slow me down or tell me where to go. Actually, all I need is my motorcycle. Please disregard!!!"

THIS SPACE COULD BE FILLED
WITH A LOVELY, SEXY IMAGE
OF POLISHED CHROME AND
THUMPING PISTONS
OR A BIKING HOLIDAY
SNAPSHOT...
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS
SEND IN THE PHOTO

Letters

BIKE TRACK DAY HUB

Hi there,

My name is Dan and I made the site Bike Track Days Hub, which has quickly turned into one of the Internet's leading resources on bike track days.

I wanted to let you know about the site because I figured that members of AAMC would appreciate it as there is absolutely no other resource like it on the web, and track days are a superb avenue for riders to development their skills (it's not just about going fast!).

I hope you agree and would consider sharing it with your members and maybe adding it as a resource on your website.

Thanks so much. All the best.

-Dan Netting

<http://biketrackdayshub.co.uk/>



I have registered with the website to try it out – it only takes a few seconds – and qualified for a free e-book of track day tips. Having not been on a track day I can't comment on the information but will say that it is all well presented and incredibly easy to understand. This is certainly worth a few minutes of your time to look at the site. I have since unsubscribed from the daily emails which is also easy to do if you find them remotely irritating! I would be interested in what those of you with track day experience have to say – Chris.

Something to say? Please don't be shy. E-mail editor@aamc.co.uk And send some photos in too!

Diary

September

Friday 13th to Monday 16th

Andy

Club Bash to North Wales, staying in Bedgellert.

Sunday 29th

Sue

This ride has been postponed as the Club has signed up to a Bikesafe event on 29th at Bath Fire Station – hope to see you there!

! RIDE POSTPONED !

October

Sunday 20th

Possible Club Ride. Check Treads and the Club Website for details nearer the time.

November

Sunday 3rd

Simon

Final Club Ride of the Year.

Saturday 16th

Mark

Plug and Grub night. Presentation of Superb Awards for 2013. Further details and an application form in October TREADS.