

CAMunicate



The Newsletter
of
Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists

www.cambsiam.org.uk

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Editorial. Peter Kidney

How many of us took the trouble to read the October issue of Insight, the IAM Group briefing? This had some interesting stuff about a study which sought to understand what the general public knew and thought of the IAM. About 3000 people were interviewed spread across 24 towns and cities in the UK.

The good news is that the IAM is seen as:

“Trustworthy, respected and considered to be experts”

The less good news is that we are also seen as:

“Boring, not at all fashionable, unhelpful, not much fun, and not friendly”

It is tempting to immediately believe the first part because it is positive and then start to discount the second because it is negative, but these opinions must be taken seriously because they are about people's perceptions of us.

So how can we change those perceptions?

Boring? Not much fun? These perceptions seem to be linked to me. All of us must of course keep focused on encouraging people to take up advanced riding in the first place. From there we must deliver an interesting and enjoyable way of acquiring these skills. That is largely down the Observer

team to make sure that not only do we get the advanced riding system across but make it interesting too. We want as many associates/members as possible to encourage their friends and other riders they meet to join and go through the same process.

The best measure we can have is whether we are attracting sufficient numbers in our area to train, that we have the capacity to train them and that we can steadily expand to meet an increase in demand while maintaining a high level of service. We give a lot of feedback to the associates while they are training. Perhaps we should get them to assess us and then ask them what they think of us and how we could improve our training package.

Unhelpful, Not friendly. I have never heard of this with respect to the Cambridge group and I would be seriously worried if it ever was. It would be an indicator of fundamental problems. It is something we should always be aware of and not be complacent about. Next time you see some new faces make the time to talk to them and find out what they are interested in, help them to feel at ease and part of the group.

Not at all Fashionable! This does bring a smile to my face. It seems that things haven't changed since I was a greaser at the age of 16. I wasn't fashionable then and am lucky enough not to be now. I'm one of the few people left on the planet without a tattoo! Fashionable is something we should never strive for. If it comes close stop doing it or cut it off. Do you really want to be like everybody else? Keep wearing those individualistic black leathers, black helmet while riding a black bike or if you like sports bikes try the colour coordinated colour blind all in one suits that make you look like something out of a fruit bowl. At this point those of us wearing the reflective clothing must take a bow. No one thinks being coloured fluorescent yellow is fashionable. This of course is the point for a biker. Not being fashionable gets you noticed.

Let's face it if fashion took over we would all have to wear leather trousers that had the crutch cut low down between the knees. There would be no way you could ever get your leg over a bike wearing those! If you are lucky enough to own a hoist you could lower yourself onto your bike but that low crutch would clamp your legs to the sides. You would not be able to work the foot peddles let alone get a foot to the ground when you stopped. (Ok, you're right you could buy a step through scooter. So, if you really want to, go get those pants)

We are all agreed then. Let's look seriously at the other things but fashion? That's the uniform everybody else wears.

Test Passes

My apologies to Matt Howes who passed his test earlier in the year and did not get a mention in Camunicate. Matt's observer was David Martindale.

Well done to the following associates for passing their IAM test recently. Also thanks to their Observers for their time and effort

Associate	Observer
Rob Murray	
Derek Timbrell	Peter Kidney

Observer Contact

If an Associate has not heard from his or her Observer then please use the list in the 'members section' of the CAM website to make contact. Any problems then get in touch with Chris Curryer chris.curryer@bt.com

From the Chairman's Bike

Things have been a little quiet from the Chairman's bike over the past few months, but that is not indicative of a lack of riding – in fact exactly the opposite!

As many of you will have now heard, David Martindale and myself recently passed the IAM senior observer qualification, and it is the process leading up to this which has been eating up rather a lot of my time. The past few months have been spent looking for every opportunity to take out associates on observed rides, prospective members on taster runs, and shadowing pre-test rides. Added to which we have undertaken a number of stooge rides, spent time working on the theory and practice of observing, and sought to polish the quality of our own riding to ensure that we meet the required standard of a high quality demonstration ride. All in all a lot of hours and miles, but it paid off and I have learnt a lot in the process.

I can honestly say that the SO test itself proved to be one of the most nerve-wracking but also most satisfying rides that I have ever undertaken. The pressure that you put on yourself is not to be underestimated – especially when it seems like everyone in the group knows that you are putting in for this test! It is also a very daunting prospect to have your observing and own riding skills being scrutinised at the highest level by the IAM staff examiner over a period of three hours. However, come the day all the practice that had been invested in the run up to the test paid off and the whole process felt entirely familiar. This is of course largely thanks to the time that Meg and David Parnell had put in to helping us prepare, for which I am very grateful.

So the group is now in a position where having recently lost one senior observer through a retirement to the country (most careless!) we have now gained two more to take the core senior observer team back up to three. Over the coming months we will be working together to identify opportunities to further improve the training opportunities within the group and ensure that we continue the good work of previous senior observers in promoting the highest possible standards of riding.

This also seems a timely point to reflect on the contribution that David Parnell has made to the group over recent years. David's involvement in the group stretches back almost ten years and over that time he has progressed from being a keen associate through to becoming a full member, an observer, and in more recent years a senior observer. David also contributed a significant amount of time to the running of the group through his time serving on the committee, including holding the role of chairman. Over the years he has invested a vast number of hours in to the activities of the group and has always offered support to others whenever sought. We wish David and Loraine all the best for their move to Dorset, our gratitude to David for the contribution that he has made and our thanks to Loraine for her tolerance of this!

The group has had a number of successful events over recent months including our Skills Day and a Maintenance Day, alongside a whole series of Sunday rides and all day rides –of which you can read more about in this issue. There is also more to look forward to with an upcoming social evening, a first aid course, and of course the CAM Christmas dinner.

As always, I'll close by reminding you to please drop me a line if you wish to comment, have any ideas that you think would be good for us to try or if you would like to suggest anything concerning the group or our activities. I can be reached on chairman@camsiam.org.uk

I hope to see you all at some of our events over the coming few months – ride safely.

Peter Burge, CAM Chairman

Report on Recent Events

BBQ

Well what can I say about the BBQ? Of course rather than me waffling away I should show you some pictures but after pleading with all those present I don't have a single one! Clearly the message from those attending is "what happened at the BBQ stays at the BBQ".

Perhaps I should spill some beans. Garry and Linda Ellwood kindly offered to host the event on their farm in Landbeach and what a great venue. In preparation Garry started early the first thing he did was to clear the barn by saying, "Linda, clear the barn". He's very brave that Garry.

On the day, up went the IAM stand and a couple of wind breaks. Chairs and tables appeared from nowhere. Richard Leney arrived with lights and a sound system. Food was laid on tables, wine beer and spirits were raised. Then it occurred to me there might be something I had forgotten, something I was supposed to have arranged. That's it! I rushed over to Garry and asked, "Garry, do you have a BBQ?" Luckily Garry had two, one running on gas and the other? Let's say it was more traditional but worked a treat.

It has to be said that Garry has some rather large equipment (on the farm), but the truck that Richard and family arrived in while towing a trailer tent seemed huge. With a choice of spectacular views around Richard immediately reversed the trailer tent into a dark windowless parking bay. Very strange. We didn't have the heart to tell him that it had been full of fertilizer a few days ago.

People started to arrive, more tents were pitched and more beer and wine appeared. Music started to play and we started to relax. Gary had laid out a slalom course where you had to drive a quad through very narrow gates marked by pairs of sticks. On top of each stick was a golf ball so the idea was to get around as fast as possible without knocking the golf balls off. Great fun.

As the day wore on many stories were told. We ate too much, drank just enough and the ladies danced. Now that was weird because it was dark now and we were sitting on chairs with the windbreak between us and the ladies who had the barn lights behind them. So we were treated to a sort of shadow dancing silhouette theatre with some detached heads bobbing along the top of the wind break to music.

It was now getting late or possibly early and people were drifting off home or into tents. Was this a good time to tell the campers that after encouraging them to brave the elements Catharene and I were going to sneak into Linda and Garry's cosy, dry warm spare bed. But no the night was not over. Apparently in the Martindale household 3:30am is breakfast time so I was dragged off by our Chairman into David and Gill's tent for breakfast and accused of being a lightweight for thinking of going to bed so early. Inside the tent we watched a surreal re enactment of ready steady cook while my accuser promptly fell asleep. Ha! Who's the lightweight now?

The following morning we all crawled out of bed to what for some was second breakfast cooked by Linda and the slow clearing up and packing away started. It was only then when we had to sit and wait for about two hours for the IAM tent to dry out that we realized Richard was not so daft after all. He was able to quickly pack away a bone dry trailer tent and that is why he parked it inside.

Many thanks to you all for making the BBQ a great successes and a special thanks to Garry and Linda our hosts and Richard for the sound and light system.

CAM Maintenance Day

On Saturday 8th October we held an event focusing on the maintenance of our motorcycles, which we were fortunate to be able to run at Cambridgeshire Police Headquarters.

The premise for this event was that as motorcyclists interested in advanced riding we all spend a lot of time thinking about the standards of our riding, but it is equally important that we know how to check the condition of our motorcycles to make sure that they are fit to ride.

During the course of the day a team of our experienced members gave attendees some guidance on a range of different topics.

- Graham Pryke covered the maintenance and adjustment of chains
- Chris Curryer covered the fundamentals of motorcycle electrics
- David Martindale explained how to adjust controls to better suit the individual and their preferred riding position
- Sarah Burge gave guidance on how to prepare a motorcycle for those intending to take a break over winter and then issues to consider when recommissioning it in the spring
- Peter Burge covered the inspection and maintenance of brakes

Julie D'Alessandro kept everything moving on the day by managing the rotation of the groups, keeping us all to time, and making sure that refreshments were available throughout the day.

The attendees on the day entered fully in to the spirit of the event and drew upon the depth of knowledge of the session leaders by asking questions on a broad range of topics. In fact, one attendee was back for their third Maintenance Day in a row and was still learning new things! At the end of the day all involved left feeling more knowledgeable about how to inspect and maintain their bike - including the session leaders who got to see Graham and Chris reassemble their bikes before they could head home.

Dates for the Diary

Observers Meeting – Wed 9th Nov, 19:30

Open to Observers only

Venue: **Orwell Pavilion**

Social Evening – Tue 15th November, 20:00

Come along to our new format CAM Social Night. Meet fellow biking buddies. tonight we will be joined by Ben Mullen of Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers (SERV) who will tell us about the work of SERV and the efforts being made to set up in Cambridge.

Ben hopes to bring along the new SERV liveried bike they have just obtained

The Pub will be able to serve you with food from 6pm so come along a bit earlier and grab some nosh as well. Please let Chris Curryer know if you are attending so we have an idea of numbers. Members, partners, guests are all welcome.

Open to: All

Contact name: Chris Curryer

Email: chris.curryer@bt.com

Phone: 07802 497187

Venue: [White Horse Inn, Barton](#)

Website: <http://www.thewhitehorseinnbarton.co.uk>

First Aid Course – Sat 19th November, 09:30

Learn or refresh your skills in dealing with incidents and casualties. Emphasis on dealing with situations you may come across on the road but could equally find yourself faced with at home or work. Cost is £15 which is being subsidised by CAM. This is an all day course presented by a professional accredited First Aid Trainer

You will receive a certificate of attendance and a handy book covering the course. Course starts at 09:30 and finishes at 16:00. Please bring a packed lunch or local shop is available nearby. Places are limited so book early, if oversubscribed we may consider running another course soon and will give priority to you on future courses.

Please complete the booking [form](#). to book your space. Bookings must be received by 10th November

Open to: Associates and members
Contact name: Chris Curryer
Email: chris.curryer@bt.com

Venue: [Barton Village Hall](#)

Christmas Dinner Fri 16th Dec, 19:30

Come along to the our festive Social event, bring guests and partners . Enjoy the festive season and have a chance to have a good banter with fellow CAM members and guests

3 courses for £19.95 plus wines from £8.95 a bottle

Places are limited to 40 so book early to avoid disappointment

Please complete the booking [form](#). and send with your payment by 30th November.

Open to: All
Contact name: Chris Curryer
Email: chris.curryer@bt.com
Phone: 07802 497187

Venue: [White Horse Inn. Barton](#)
Website: <http://www.thewhitehorseinnbarton.co.uk>

PAUL'S 2011 ROUND BRITAIN MEGARIDE



Almost fifty years ago, I travelled up to the far NW of Scotland with my younger brother, Paul, riding our BSA singles, camping overnight and crossing sea lochs on tiny ferries, far from early 1960's civilisation. Since then, every visit to that glorious area of Britain has been by car with my wife or our family. Each time, I have yearned to ride those roads on my motorbike again!

It seems my brother had the same longing and, last Christmas, he mentioned to older brother, John, that he really fancied riding all the way round the coast of Britain, especially up to the NW of Scotland. John's response was that, as he is now 72, he'd organise such a trip while still able to get his leg over the bike! For the last few years, we three brothers, plus our cousin, Derek, have met up for a few days of riding together, last year spending four days going across to Wales and, based in Malvern where John lives, enjoying the roads around the Brecons and mid Wales.

The plan was easy, we managed to find two weeks in July when all four could make it and a total distance of about 3,500 miles meant 250 miles a day, which we thought was possible (though a bit daunting!). The only major decision was "on which side to keep the sea?" We decided to travel clockwise so that, while fresh and keen, we'd do the holiday traffic filled areas around the South East and get that over with early on. On wives' advice we added a two-night stop on the Isle of Skye for R&R (and washing smalls!) As it would be midsummer we decided to pre-book accommodation and John decided on B&Bs in the following towns (as O.A.P.s, we didn't even consider camping!).



Ufford (Paul's home) – Hastings – Beer – Newquay – Bridgend – Tywyn – Greasby – Carlisle – Greenock – Kyleakin – Ullapool – Wick – Newburgh – Ashington – Skegness - Ufford

Derek, who is Chief Observer at Suffolk Advanced Motorcyclists, had intended a trip around Scotland with another SAM Observer, John S., so that was incorporated into our trip, with John S. joining us at Greasby in The Wirral.

Although the trip was entirely at our expense and intended just for fun, brother John suggested we should support a charity. He proposed "Canine Partners for Independence", a charity providing trained dogs to help severely disabled people who had helped a friend of his to rebuild a shattered life after a motoring accident. His daughter, Kate, is also disabled and has two dogs, one now retired and supported by the other! We all agreed to this and John set up a means for collecting donations at www.justgiving.com/2011roundbritain.



With the plans made, I set about ensuring my much loved Suzuki SV650K2 would be up to the job. I fitted a Garmin 'Zumo' sat nav (bluetoothed to my new Schuberth C3 helmet), had the bike serviced with new brake pads and new Michelin Pilot Road 3 tyres (as I'm not confident in the wet and we expected wet!). Then, as suggested by Graham Pryke of the Cambridge IAM group, I had the suspension upgraded and tuned to suit me by Darren at MCT Suspension of Stowmarket. This was a great success, transforming my budget Suzi into a much better handling bike. Darren even removed the chicken strips on my tyres to prove that the bike is OK, it's me that's the limiting factor!

The first half of the year had been filled with work around renovating our house, fitting new doors and windows, a new conservatory and patio and re-roofing the boat-shed. This left little time for biking so I added a sheepskin rug over my bike's saddle to ease my bum on the planned, but unpractised, 250 miles a day riding!

I was now set for 'the off'. Brother John travelled to Cambridge from Malvern and together we set off for Ufford. Torrential rain caught us before I had stopped for over-trousers and soaked us on the way to Suffolk. Why do I like naked bikes? John's Honda Deauville was so much better suited to such weather. John S. had produced yellow stickers for our bikes and impressive yellow on black 'T' shirts, which really enhanced our feeling of something special about to happen. So, Sunday evening was spent adorning our bikes, and ourselves, in preparation for the 'adventure'.



On Monday 10th July, with Paul, on his new Yamaha XJ6, we joined up with Derek, on his Triumph Tiger 1050 and started on our Round Britain 'megatour'. The weather was kind and we had a great run around the Essex coast, Walton-on-the-Naze, Clacton, Maldon, Southend-on-Sea (here the traffic became a bit of a nightmare, though still flowing freely). Over the Dartford Crossing, filtering between enormous trucks, then on to the A2, M2 and A299 to Whitstable, Herne Bay, Margate, Deal, Dover, Folkstone and along the coast road into Hastings, our first night's stop. The pattern was set: Breakfast, set off about 9am, ride, stop for coffee, ride, stop for lunch, ride, stop for tea (or ice cream), ride, stop at B&B about 7pm, shower, find food, eat, go for a walk, sleep. Repeat for fifteen days! As O.A.P.s, needing comfort breaks might have influenced the number of stops we made during the ride?



Day two involved more horrendous traffic as we dragged through Bexhill & Eastbourne, a quick blast over Beachy Head, then more traffic and filtering through Newhaven, Brighton, Hove and Shoreham. By Worthing we'd lost so much time, and were so frustrated, that we hit the A27 and M27 for a catch up blast round Southampton and down to Lymington. Our original, ambitious, plan was to have taken the ferry from Portsmouth to Fishbourne then across the Isle of Wight to Yarmouth and hence by ferry to Lymington! Not a chance!

Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole provided more traffic to cope with but then from Wareham via Lulworth Cove to Weymouth things started to look up with much better roads and far less traffic. After a spectacular run along the B3517 through Abbotsbury, overlooking Chesil Beach and the Fleet, we stopped at West Bay for a break.

That's where it was all over for me! Sitting astride my bike, paddling it backwards down a slope from the car park, slight instability caused me to put my feet down but I couldn't touch the ground! By the time I did, the bike was too far over and it fell, crushing my left leg, causing a total of eight fractures in both the Tibia and Fibula!

Derek's IAM training kicked in and he rapidly (and very cleanly) picked up my bike and took control, in spite of helpful onlookers, one of whom kept insisting I had to be put in the 'recovery position'! A paramedic was called and she agreed the leg was broken and called for an ambulance, which took me off to Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester.



Having never broken a bone in my 68 years on this earth, I managed a really nasty set of them in just two seconds, which immediately ruined my biking trip on just the second day out of fifteen planned! I was gutted and more so when I realised that my wife would have to cancel her holiday and our trip to Sardinia arranged for the beginning of September, plus trips to Sweden and Switzerland to visit our children (and grandchildren). Further, I will now be useless and a load on my poor wife for six to nine months, at least!

John and Paul arranged with The George Hotel (thanks to them) to store my bike, my luggage and my biking gear and then, with Derek, they continued on their way to the B&B at Beer, in Devon, arriving around 9:30pm! They phoned me in A&E and I managed to persuade them that they had to abandon me to the tender care of the NHS and continue with the trip, as all the accommodation was pre-booked and to a tight schedule.

John and Paul arranged with The George Hotel (thanks to them) to store my bike, my luggage and my biking gear and then, with Derek, they continued on

For me, the rest of the trip was in my head as I visualised the roads they were travelling. This was aided by text messages saying that, for example, the road from Lands End to Newquay was awesome, in fact, all the way along the north coast of Cornwall, Devon and Somerset was awesome! Whilst the surviving All Rounders crossed the Severn Bridge into South Wales, I was undergoing surgery to have a pair of titanium plates and numerous screws fitted to reattach my foot to my leg! Thanks to the staff at 'The Dorchester' for doing a fabulous repair job.

Wales was very windy with blustery showers that made the brilliant Welsh roads extra exciting. After Anglesey, the rain dried up so they had a great blast along the North Wales coast. At Greasby, John S. joined them after crossing from Suffolk on his new Honda TransAlp in continuous rain! Rain continued on and off around Cumbria and into Southern Scotland (more 'awesome' messages). Whilst the All Rounders headed up the West coast of Scotland past Oban, towards Skye, on dry roads and in crystal clear air (lucky them) I was being transported back home to Cambridge in a MediDrive Ambulance with my leg in the air!



Time ran out again and the intrepid adventurers had to skip going to Ardnamurchan Point and ride fast along the lovely road from Fort William to Mallaig to catch, just, the last ferry to the Isle of Skye (another 'awesome' text resulted!). They did, however, achieve all the other key points, Lands End and John O'Groats, Lizard Point (S), Dunnett Head (N) and Lowestoft Ness (E).



The knobbly rear tyre on John S's TransAlp wore out in NW Scotland and had to be made to last until they got to Mitchell's in Inverness. Everything is available in the North of Scotland but only from Inverness!

North and East Scotland remained clear but suffered from a particularly strong and very cold, northerly wind. Brother Paul wore all his clothes like 'Michelin Man' but brother John simply plugged in his electric vest (older folk have got it sorted, it seems).

Throughout the trip the stickers on the bikes and the 'T' shirts attracted attention and donations. Two waitresses in a café at Morecambe donated their

collection of tips. At Whitby (after stopping for fish & chips) a Traffic Warden was not only talked out of issuing tickets but also persuaded to donate the contents of his own pocket! What a wide range of training SAM has given its Chief Observer!

The last night was spent at the Grand Hotel in Skegness. As usual, the four went for a walk in the evening and were caught up in the delightful, family fun, atmosphere of the Lincolnshire 'Las Vegas'. They had a go on a motorcycle race challenge in the games arcade sitting astride dummy motorbikes staring into a computer screen. All the riders on this trip, except Paul, are IAM advanced motorcyclists but they were suitably chastened to have been soundly beaten by Paul, who even beat the computer by coming overall FIRST. Obviously, he had learned a lot by riding round the coast of Britain with such an 'elite' group!

The four intrepid ALL ROUNDERS completed the circuit on Tuesday 25th July. John and Paul rode over to visit me in Cambridge the following day (Derek and John S. having to go to work!). Since then (on 7th August) all five of us, plus wives, had a reunion at Paul's home in Ufford to swap tales and recall the great trip they had enjoyed (and I had missed). Derek's Tiger's computer showed that he (and hence, they) had spent a total of 100 hours in the saddle, covering 3,600 miles, an average of 36 mph. Brother John, the eldest, covered 4,076 miles from Malvern and back home again. I had done less than 500 miles. In spite of being a secondary part of our megaride, so far we have collected £1,375 (including gift aid) for our supported charity, Canine Partners for Independence. Thanks to all of you who have donated.

Lessons learned? 250 miles a day was just too far, 200 would have been easier! Dragging round in all the holiday traffic was a pain so next year we'll plan something less apparently noteworthy but more fun! Eating a light lunch at midday is easier for comfortable riding in the afternoon than a full dinner (Whitby fish and chips was too much). Modern motorbikes are far more reliable than 1950's singles. I recall constantly putting oil in my BSA C12 until I eventually replaced the piston rings at the roadside to complete the trip. Apart from John S's rear tyre, on this trip the bikes were entirely trouble free.



Finally, be aware that it can all go pear-shaped in a big way in just a second or two. I was fortunate in that I don't need the help of Canine Partners. Others are not so lucky!

Please note that donations can still be made at www.justgiving.com/2011roundbritain.

David Warner

(on behalf of Paul Warner, John Warner, Derek Barker and John Sillett – The ALL ROUNDERS)

Montenegro – Garry Ellwood

Following on from our Norway trip last year, Robin had a friend and ex work colleague he wanted to visit in Montenegro and thought it might make a nice little trip if I was interested. Collin had travelled extensively through Yugoslavia and surrounding countries during the eighties in an old camper van and thought it might be a nice place to live one day. Roll on twenty odd years, and several jobs, several of which were working for Robin in container ports, and Collin finds himself living the dream. Not content to just build a house, he found a nice spot in a remote picturesque part of inland Montenegro and started building a resort! His newly built house set on a hillside, just below a wooded ridge overlooks his venture. So far a log cabin restaurant, (which recently held a reception for over a hundred wedding guests,) and six log cabins complete with en-suite facilities for two. After over a year of aggravation, effort, and expense, and not a little help from friend and partner Goran, 'Meadows' was born.

But I knew nothing of this when Robin first floated the idea. It seemed an awful long way to go say 'hello'.

The plan was hatched, arrangements were made, enquiries of Croatia and Bosnian borders were made and we were ready to go. Very early on 23rd June, we met on the A11 and rode to Dover. An easy crossing saw me back on French soil just a week since my last visit, that time with Linda as pillion on a Globaltouring trip. But now with fair weather it was time to put some miles behind us and find a campsite somewhere near Charleville Mezieres. We found a site in a wooded valley next to a large fast flowing river, as we checked in it started to rain and the very friendly owner offered us a caravan, at no extra charge, to save putting the tents up in the wet! After we got inside and settled I produced the three litre box of wine and glasses, (plastic of course,) that I had brought along to make our trip that bit more special. This started a trend, as soon as we got to our allotted camp pitch I would pour two large glasses of wine and toast the days progress.



finding a site just below Lienz.

We had got so far off the beaten track to find such a wonderful place, next day it took a while to get back on good roads to cover the 250 odd miles we needed to cover if we were to make Montenegro in five days. A long day's riding found us in a wood, in Germany, in what I could only conclude was a nature reserve. I knew we would not be very popular if found out, but we had seen nothing resembling a campsite all day, and needs must. It was another beautiful spot and we took particular care not to damage any flora in the area, and left next day leaving no trace of our presence. This was the only 'wild' site we used this Holiday, and so on we went, down through Germany into Austria, going over the Grossglockner pass and

The day had seen some stunning scenery, especially the Grossglockner pass although the top was shrouded in freezing mist. We used quite a lot of motorway next day, but not before both satnavs started playing up around Tolmezzo, just a coincidence I think, but emphasises the need for good old maps as backup! Giving Trieste a wide berth meant taking the short cut through Slovenia, then into Croatia, south of Rijeka, to find the most amazing coast road I have ever seen! If you ever get even

half a chance to ride this road, take it! On and on we went, the twists and turns running into the second day. Sitting in a layby overlooking Dubrovnic, I thought it was the most picturesque town I had ever seen. It was around here that I made my first mistake, of any consequence that is, I took my riding gear off in an attempt to cope with the relentless heat. Riding in short sleeved shirt, shorts and beach shoes was heaven, but later on I realised I hadn't applied suncream and I was going to pay the price. Into Montenegro, up around a huge lake and on to Niksic. Ever Northwards we finally found the sign for the Eco village of Brezna, and on a post another more welcome sign.' Meadows '.



Riding down the valley to Brezna was like going back 50 years. The houses were more like small shacks, no shops. The small farms just a 'skinny' acre or so with no out buildings. A few sheep and cattle in the fields which were just fenced off pieces of the valley which was one huge meadow, full of all manner of grasses and herbs as far as the eye could see. This was a special place, where whole families work to bring in the hay and tend the livestock for virtually no money. They live hand to mouth and are pleased to do so. The project that Collin has begun should bring a little prosperity to the valley, let's hope it doesn't change it too much.



Collin had arranged a full four days for Robin and myself, as well as for his son and daughter and her boyfriend who just happened to be staying there at the same time.

- Day one, lake trip with swimming (optional) and picnic on the shore.
- Day two, white water rafting.
- Day three, canyoning! Bloody hell!

Fortunately the canyoning was cancelled because there had been too much rain and the river was unsafe! Phew!

Anyway we had only just arrived, it was late afternoon and we were introduced to everyone who worked at the restaurant. All were friends, and keen to make the project work. No standing on ceremony here, you won't find a more laid back friendly place to stay. If you want something just ask, if it's possible you can have it, and most things are possible! After unloading the bikes, my GS Adventure and Robins Tiger 1050, we went back inside to sample Meadows hospitality. All the food was sourced locally and for the whole of our stay we were never billed for the food we ate, (I can't promise you the same treatment!) before we left we were asked to pay what we thought it was worth! After much head scratching and counting we arrived at a figure only to be told it was too much! Never had that problem before.

Next day we were on the lake but it had turned colder and although enjoyable and very picturesque it didn't turn out as planned. Back home we settled in for a nice meal and as much happy water you wanted and life felt good!

Second day, white water rafting, now you're talking, this is going to be fun! After a long ride in the beaten up Lada we reached the base where they keep all the wet suits and safety gear in containers. Although this adventure malarkey is quite new hereabouts, I was very impressed by the professionalism of the set up. Soon we were all toggged up in our suits and helped the guy's put the

raft on top of the long wheel base Landrover. Another drive over sand tracks and we reached the offloading spot and everyone helped get the raft off the roof and into the water, so far so good.

Remember all the water that was to scupper our plans to go canyoning, well, it hadn't got into this particular river, which by the way was huge, and so the rapids were not quite so rapid as they might have been but hey, this was still going to be fun! The water here in Monty is gin clear, and if you get thirsty you just cup your hand over the side and drink to your heart's content! The sun was shining, the scenery stunning, the river was beautiful, the company first class, does it get any better? Yup. Shortly after setting off a plain bottle started doing the rounds. Not sure what was in it, but it sure was potent stuff and by about the fifth time round I realised I might need to ease up, a bit. Funny how



a little lubrication helps you make decisions. Someone says 'let's go over the side' you say 'yeah, let's go'. We might have had a wet suit and life jacket on, and the extra 'beer jacket' as it were but it was still bloody freezing! No one was allowed to stay in the boat, and soon we were all splashing and shouting like a bunch of kids, which some of us were of course. More booze, a stop for pictures at a waterfall, which we just had to get in, (so drunk now I didn't care) back in the boat, more booze, can't



see so well now, glad I'm not steering the boat. Got to exit point, got out couldn't stand very well.

Struggled to get out the wet suit, it was like fighting a black rubbery animal! Back in Brezna we stopped at Elvis's for a few beers, (a very small friendly bar,) apparently we needed more alcohol, then back to Meadows for a nice meal, a few more beers and a spin on the bike! What a day. The last day Robin and I went for a gentle ride round Monty, some of the roads are just hardcore, which we struggled on, and some were strewn with rocks and stones from recent rains, but we covered 195 miles and the scenery was never less than spectacular!

Eventually we reluctantly said our goodbyes and started the five day trip home, which Robin made me plan and lead almost all the way! It was my turn to do something, he had planned everything else! The trip home was great, and we enjoyed some beautiful campsites some with swimming pools and all the evening meals enjoyed with a nice glass of wine. How the hell are we going to top a holiday like this?

If you want more info about meadows it's,
www.meadows-eco.me
email, meadowseco@gmail.com

Useful Information

Group Contact

If you require information for a friend about the Group's activities or have other queries please contact:

Phil Duffy
Club Secretary
Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists
PO Box 236
Royston
SG8 1BW

secretary@cambsiam.org.uk