

# CAMunicate



The Newsletter  
of  
Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists

[www.camsiam.org.uk](http://www.camsiam.org.uk)

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## Editorial.

Most of you by now will be looking out of the window hoping that the forecast of minus one degree is somehow going to be wrong and I suppose that is not unreasonable because when sunshine is forecast we generally get wet. Once the sun comes out there are some good riding days to be had as long as you watch out for the shadows and lingering frost but nothing really beats summer.

Many of you will be hoping to get across the channel for adventures further afield and that usually means travelling through France. Most of you will be aware that there were some changes in French Law in January that now outlaw the possession, transport and use of devices that alert you of roadside checks including static speed cameras. This of course will include Sat Navs and Smart Phones with apps like Google Navigator/Maps.

The penalties include 1500 Euro fine and seizure of the device. If the device is permanently fixed to your bike it could include seizure of the bike itself.

The change in French law does allow for devices to warn you of official Danger Zones so expect the manufacturers to provide updates for some Sat Nav units to comply with the law as well as implementing the new warnings.

If you are going to be travelling through France it would be a good idea to see if there are updates available for your device. Failing this you will need to disable/remove the speed camera data. Below are links to the Tom Tom and Garmin websites that should help you through this. For those of you with machine specific units you may need to check with your supplier. For Smart Phones I have struggled to find out how this has been handled in Google so let's hope that recent updates have/will sort it out.

General info re the new law can be found on this French road safety site. (Google translate is helpful for those of you like me who barely manage English).

[http://www.securite-routiere.gouv.fr/article.php3?id\\_article=4024](http://www.securite-routiere.gouv.fr/article.php3?id_article=4024)

Tom Tom and Garmin info can be found here

[http://uk.support.tomtom.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/5560](http://uk.support.tomtom.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/5560)

<http://www.garmin.com/uk/extras-camera-alerts/#france>

If you are thinking of winging it because checking Sat Navs will be difficult. (working your way through the "intuitive" menus can be a real pain). Remember that the police have apparently been trained on how to check that your device complies.

Happy Riding ☺

Peter Kidney

## Test Passes

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

<b>Associate</b>	<b>Observer</b>
<b>Nick Whisson</b>	David Schindler
<b>Mark Borley</b>	Peter Kidney
<b>Mark Fox</b>	Chris Curryer

### 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](mailto:chris.curryer@bt.com)

## CAM Social 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011



We had a very good attendance with about 25 members, guests and partners. We were joined by Ben Mullen and Nick Whisson from SERV. That is Service for Emergency Rider Volunteers. Nick is also a CAM member who has just recently passed his IAM test so congratulations Nick if you are reading this.

Ben and Nick took the time to explain what SERV does and the level of commitment their volunteer riders put in. SERV is a charity that transports Blood, Plasma, Platelets, Samples, Vaccines, Factor VIII and other urgently required medical items to hospitals - at night, daytime weekends and bank holidays. This service is provided completely free of charge. The volunteer riders do all this in their own time, on their own bikes and do not receive any payment. This saves the NHS money because if SERV did not do this then they would employ Taxi's or Couriers to do this at a commercial cost.

They are very keen to recruit additional rider volunteers and particularly welcome riders with an Advanced riding qualification be that IAM or RoSPA. For more information on SERV [www.serv.org.uk](http://www.serv.org.uk)

As well as the talk we all enjoyed a good natter with food and drink. We hope to make these type of Social evenings a regular event starting in January 2012. If you have any suggestions what would be of interest please let any of the committee know.

From left to right

Sue Curryer, Chris Curryer,  
Peter Burge, Nick Whisson  
and Ben Mullen (Standing).

Anonymous wimp in  
foreground drinking coke  
shall remain nameless



Chris Curryer

(photo by Meg Morris)

## Future Social Events

At the AGM you the membership wanted to have more Social events. We held the first one on the 17th January where we were joined by Kate Jennings of Hideout Leathers and have got two further Social evenings planned for February and March so please make a note in your diary and come along.

**28th February 2012.** We will be joined by Bernard Adams of CAM rider. CAM rider do more than teach novice riders to wobble around Cambridge. They are involved as a professional body representing the interests of motorcyclists both locally and nationally.

**20th March 2012.** Mike Frohock of Ultimate Bike Gear will tell us all about Tyres, Crash Helmets and Intercoms and how to get those that suit you or the bike.

As well as the speakers these evenings are a chance to catch up with other CAM members over a pint, or soft drink for the riders and drivers. All of these will be held at The White Horse Inn, Barton, starting at 7:30 pm. It is the same place we held the Christmas Party. If only I could remember what happened then !

Full details of these events are on the website [www.cambsiam.org.uk](http://www.cambsiam.org.uk) including directions for those who have not been there before.

Chris Curryer

## My Biking Christmas 2011

Hello All. Lets get the whinge over. I've had Man Flu over Christmas but I managed to get to friends for Christmas day dinner but because of the above serious illness I went by CAR. That's how bad I felt.

I made up for it by my now annual visit to the Plum Pudding Races at Mallory Park in Leicestershire. It's about an hour and a half from Cambridge. With plenty of parking mostly grass. Bikes usually park at the entrance on the tarmac in front of the hotels and restaurants.

You never know what the weather will do on Boxing Day. Last year 2010 it was snowy. The snow had compacted and it was like ice. It was also my turn to drive and with my new car a bit scary. The only level area was on the track. Some drivers could not get off the car parks because of the ice and snow. Thankfully the track was clear and most of the events took place.

The hairdryer was put on-call in case the track froze. This hair dryer is a jet engine mounted on a trailer and is in use at the Santa Pod Raceway nearby also used for drying the track there.

However today it was 11°C so very mild.



The circuit at Mallory has been upgraded to include better crash barriers and sadly move the spectators further back. It's not everywhere, you can still get as close as two metres at Shaws Hairpin.

You can cross a bridge at anytime of the race and walk around the paddocks. There's a great café, coffee and tea stands plus the shop and more toilets. The nice thing was that between races you could cross the track to the far side of the circuit. This shortcut has now gone as it is now the in route at the end of the race. This area seemed to



be very slippery and many riders got caught out and lost all grip.

There was only one call for the ambulance for a rider but he stood up after the bike went down and could have walked to the ambulance but First Aid insisted they use the stretcher.

His bike was wheeled away to a van and in a blink of an eye was lifted into the back. Too quick to get a photo.

There were cars as well as bikes and in some cases races were run with handicaps to get a decent field of races. In the case of the motorcycle side cars they were started 40 seconds apart.



I left before the last car race but there was a three wheeler JAP engine car. The driver had spent all day trying to get it to start and finally made it work half an hour before the race began. As I was leaving the circuit I saw him leave the start grid, all be it with a little bit of miss firing

I have attached one last photo for all you motorcycle lovers.

You don't see many of these on ebay.

It's a V8 petrol engine. Chain drive touring bike. It was a visitor's bike and not a race bike. Surprisingly it was very quite..



Regards

David Schindler

## **Two weeks in Nepal on an Enfield Bullet.**

Back in early summer, it was becoming clear that the family holiday wasn't going to happen this year. The kids are pretty much grown up and all doing their own things with assorted boyfriends and girlfriends. So it seemed an opportunity to do something different and I started looking into organised bike tours.

After some research, I came up with a company called Blazing Trails (<http://www.blazingtrailstours.com>), who organise tours in India and Nepal on Royal Enfield Bullets. I rejected the August tour to the high Himalayas as too much like hard work, and settled on a 2-week tour of Nepal.

So 12th November found me at Kathmandu airport with an enormous holdall full of bike gear being met by most of the Blazing Trails team.



From the left, they are Wendy (retired GP and the tour medic), Ramji (mechanic and backup rider), Suzie (the boss), Siraj (van driver and keeper of the tea-kitty), Jemal (chief mechanic and tail-ender) and Damon (way-marker and trouble-shooter).

Suzie moved out to India in 1999, set up Blazing Trails and has been running tours since then. She leads most of the tours herself and sets a good pace. She speaks Hindi and doesn't take stick from anyone – as five Nepali policemen found out when they stopped us for a spot-check. One of them made the mistake of being a little off-hand with Suzie when she took her helmet off and he realised she was a woman. They decided against the spot-check and waved us on. His ears are probably still burning!

Damon is a bike journalist and a massively experienced rider. He and Suzie married about a year ago and they now live in Manali in northern India.

When the rest of the group (twelve people total) had arrived on various flights, we walked to the domestic terminal (a sort of shed, with monkeys running about on the roof) and caught an internal flight with Yeti airlines (really!) to a small town in the west of Nepal called Nepalgunj. From here we had a two-hour bus ride on rough roads to the Bardia National Park. The bus seemed to be about 50 years old and seriously on its last legs. We later realised that all the buses in Nepal are like this, and that they comprise most of the traffic on the roads. We were lucky to be sitting on the inside – they're quite often full and most people sit on the roof!

By this time most of us had been travelling for over 24 hours, so the chance for a cold beer, a meal and some sleep was very welcome. We met up with Jemal and Ramji, and saw the Bullets all lined up waiting to go.



Our accommodation in the Bardia National Park

We spent most of the next day heading down the river on rafts. The guy who runs the lodge at Bardia is the head man of a local village, and we were invited to a meal in the village – complete with dancing and a lot of local rice beer. This involved a mile walk through 8-foot tall grass and half an hour in a bullock cart. The village has no electricity and light was from a car battery and a tiny bulb. Around 400 families live in this village and the surrounding land. We were made very welcome and ate strange food from dishes sewn from palm leaves. This was my first, and probably last, taste of river-snails!

Returning to the river, we spent the night in tents on an island in the middle of the river. Actually it was quite warm and most of us slept outside in sleeping bags round the fire.

The next day we walked back through the park to the lodge. This was around 20 miles, but only one guy took up the option to go back in the rafts as either the river snails or the rice beer had got to him! We saw a group of rhino at a distance, and lots of tiger and elephant footprints. But no actual tigers – probably a good thing!

After a good sleep at the lodge, we made an early start and got on the bikes for the first time. The first hour was on very rough roads inside the park, but the bikes were easy to ride and nobody had any trouble. Right-hand gear change (one-up, three down), kick-start and decompressor took a little while to get used to. The bikes are superbly maintained, start easily and sound beautiful.

The Bullet is a 1950s British design, and is now made in India with very little change. They can be bought new in India for around £1,300. The ones that are imported into the UK are a different spec and much more expensive.



The bikes at Bardia – ready to go



My bike at a stop

Shortly after hitting the main road we had our first and only accident. An elderly guy on a bicycle with his wife on the back, turned right into the path of one of our group. He hit them at low speed and didn't fall off, but knocked the couple off the bicycle. They had a few minor cuts, and doctor Wendy (aka Nurse Gladys) cleaned them up and stuck some plasters on. Siraj arrived and negotiated (he speaks about six languages). 200 rupees (around £1.50) changed hands and we were on our way. That seems to be how things are done in Nepal.

Traffic in Nepal is quite different from the UK. The concept of right-of-way doesn't exist. Nobody stops at junctions – everybody just moves over and squeezes through. If there is a gap, they take it. Nobody stops unless they really have to – motorbikes don't stop at all as there's always somewhere to go, even if it's the verge on the wrong side of the road. The horn is essential and used continually. It's quite common to meet five or six vehicles coming towards you (handcart, bicycle, truck, bus and a couple of motorbikes, say) all overtaking each other and taking up the whole road. Into this chaos add

roaming dogs, wandering bullocks and goats and the odd suicidal pedestrian. Strangely, it mostly seems to work but you do find yourself constantly giggling at the sheer lunacy of it all.

They do get close though. One guy had his front brake lever snapped off by a van that got too close in traffic. He managed another forty miles with no front brake without a problem. As I said, nobody stops anyway – and frankly the Bullet brakes aren't so great that you'd really miss one!

Slow-riding skills are essential in this traffic. I discovered that the “keep the revs up and slip the clutch” approach doesn't work though. The Enfield clutch quickly overheats and starts to drag, which makes the overheating worse, and now you really can't stop at all without stalling the engine. In first gear, though the bike will pull at about two miles an hour, so once I'd learnt to use the clutch in “on or off” mode it worked fine.

There are very few cars on the road, lots of buses, quite a few trucks and thousands of small motorbikes – mostly Honda 125s and 150s. These carry entire families. Scooters haven't taken off in Nepal – probably because there's no tank to sit the baby on!



There are five people on this bike – count the feet!

Another vehicle that's quite common is known as a "Nepali helicopter" because of the sound it makes. These things are made in China for about £2.50 and are used on farms for general pulling work, in place of a pair of bullocks. They last longer, but you can't eat them. They're also used on the road to pull a trailer. They have a single-cylinder engine with a big flywheel and an open cooling system so at first sight they appear to be powered by steam.



Nepali helicopter

Over the two weeks we visited Tansen, Pokhara (Nepal's second city), Ghorka (where the Gurkas come from), Chitwan (another National Park, with elephant rides), Nagarkot (fantastic views of the Himalayas) and a place called the Last Resort which boasts a deep gorge with one of the highest bungee jumps in the world as well as the highest rope-swing. No, I didn't have a go! We rode up to the Kosari bridge which crosses the border into Tibet. We spent a night in the walled city of Bhaktapur (lots of temples), and finally a night in Kathmandu (more temples).

We had about 8 days riding – a couple of these fairly long days – on roads ranging from good tarmac to dirt tracks. In many places, the road had been washed away in the monsoon, leaving some fairly challenging off-road sections. The highest point was the Daman pass (2,600m) with stunning views of the Everest range.



The road up to Daman pass

The trip was unforgettable. Nepal is a fascinating country and almost everything is totally different to the UK. Experiencing it from a bike – particularly from one as basic as the Enfield – gives you a real feel for the country. Surprisingly, quite a few people speak reasonable English, especially the children, and would often come to talk to us at the many tea-stops.

The people on the tour ranged 28 to 68 years old. Most had ridden classic bikes before. One lady, Sue, rode pillion and reckoned she was comfortable even on the rough sections.

Blazing Trails are a really experienced and professional outfit but also brave enough to take groups on the Kathmandu ring-road. I thoroughly recommend them to anyone considering a tour in India or Nepal.

Phil Duffy