



TWISTGRIP



The Journal of Edinburgh & District Advanced Motorcyclists

April 2017

Lock It Or Lose It!

It's a sad state of affairs, but it's a fact that your motorcycle is very likely to be stolen if left unprotected for even a few minutes. Edinburgh is a motorcycle crime hotspot and those living or working in the capital really do need to take additional steps to secure their bike.

What can you do? Well, quite a lot and most of it is common sense.

Location

When parking away from home try to leave your bike in a busy place, not a quiet backstreet or alley. A place that is covered by CCTV surveillance is ideal. At home, if you have a garage then use it immediately you get home rather than leaving the bike on the drive—don't make it obvious to thieves that you have a bike or they will surely return one evening and have a go!

If the bike lives outside, or is parked for any length of time, a cover will hide it and a scruffy cover will act as more of a deter-

rent than a 'shiny' new one.

Physical Security

The steering lock on your bike is very easily broken so don't rely on it is the only form of security. The best defence is to use a good quality chain to attach the frame of your bike to an immovable object. If this can't be done, then chain the back wheel in preference to the front (harder to remove) and make sure the padlock is nowhere near the ground.

Good quality chains and padlocks are very heavy, so it is not always easy to transport them on your bike. A disc lock is easy to carry but also easily defeated. It is quite common for high quality disc locks to be bypassed by using an angle grinder to chop through the brake disc! A better solution, if you have 2 front disks, is a U-lock that passes through both discs at the same time. Locking front and back discs will also take a lot longer to overcome.

Don't forget to check the security of your

garage doors. Up-and-over doors can be opened quite easily unless protected by concealed bolts or similar devices.

Electronic Security

It's a fact that most vehicle alarms are ignored, so it's only worth having a bike alarm if YOU can hear it. So if your alarm can't wake you in the middle of the night it's not much use. Better to spend the money on physical security.

Trackers can help a bike be found in the minutes after it is stolen, but most trackers can be easily found using scanners available on eBay.

The Bottom Line

Good bike security is achieved once you realise your bike is vulnerable and make a conscious effort to do something about it all the time. Use a layered approach with multiple devices.

Security is a state of mind. it's a jungle out there, so take care.



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Diary Date:

DON'T FORGET:

The EDAM Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 20th April at 19.00. Venue: Colinton Bowling Club, 49A Redford Rd, Edinburgh, EH13 0AB

Agenda, accounts and minutes of the 2016 AGM are available here: <https://goo.gl/iuTSaA>

Welcome!

The Scottish Motorcycle Show in March marked the start of the motorcycling 'season' for some of us. More importantly, it marked the welcoming of around 26 new Associate members to EDAM. A very warm welcome to you all!

Some of you will be wondering what EDAM is all about? Please bear with us while you are allocated to an Observer and have a chance to ask direct questions. In the May edition of Twistgrip there will be an article about EDAM in general: who we are, what we do, how it all works and who does what.

In the meantime, all members are invited to the **AGM** on 20th April at Colinton Bowling Club. Please try to attend—it's a chance to learn more and to contribute; an opportunity to meet fellow members and chew the cud. Full members can also

nominate members of the committee so please take a look at the documents here: <https://goo.gl/iuTSaA>

As always, Twistgrip is YOUR newsletter and it needs your input. Tell us about interesting rides, your biking history, favourite places, maintenance tips...

Please send any articles or stories to:

Glynn Jones
editor@edam.org.uk



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR by Sandy Dickson



Another year has passed according to my birthday & road tax and I notice that the CB1000R requires an 8K service and it is only a year old. It gets used mostly for my short daily commute and Observing, mostly Observing. I probably need new tyres as there is a distinct ridge on them as you roll into a corner. The mileage soon racks up in this Observing lark.

The more observant of you will have realised that the picture is that of a VFR1200F rather than a CB1000R. Well thanks to our Euromasters, the VFR1200F is no more as it does not meet the Euro 4/6/7/9 emission standards – good to know the planet is safe, as I import a £1.99 widget from darkest China.

As a day job, I work on the periphery of the legal services industry and see on a daily basis the unintended consequences of the 'good ideas' spewed out from our various law maker, often at the behest of the 'baying mob'.

A few years ago, I had the audacity (as it turned out) to suggest that, particularly since Scots Law is based on Roman Law, perhaps after the passage of around 2000 years (when Marcus, Antonius and their mates went home) there could not be that many new laws that need inventing, particularly since the legal system is currently doing such a sterling job of being unable to cope with the current levels of demand. Apparently, as I was advised, that was not the right attitude at all.

I was reminded of this as I came down Scotland's 'killer road' (the A9) which was laid out before me in all its glory and was

mostly deserted (except HGV's doing about 60). I could tell you that I was frankly terrified, it being a killer road and all (to be honest I thought that since it was killer road, it might move about a bit as I drove along it but no, it stayed perfectly still – not sure how the road manages to kill people without moving but perhaps I am missing the point). Really, I was safe in the knowledge that as long as stuck to the average speed, I would be completely safe, whilst reading a book, checking Facebook, eating a pie and washing it down with a couple of beers. (Perhaps I should try it in reverse gear next time to make it more interesting?)

I have often thought that it was poor driving that was the cause accidents but, apparently, it simply speed. So, imagine how much more at risk you are if your average speed was 64 rather than 60. 64mph is strictly illegal in a 60mph zone, whereas 50mph is wholly legal but since it was snowing, not a speed to be recommended given the actual road conditions.

Speeding is an easy issue to tackle but it has very little impact on road casualty rates (no, I am not advocating speeding, unless of course you are German & therefore sufficiently skilled to drive flat out on the autobahn – I am advocating using a bit of common sense). Improved driving standards would have a significant impact but some say is very difficult to tackle, so get put in the 'too difficult' box. A change in the law does not improve safety (see drink driving levels: is being twice the limit safer than being 3x the limit?) only a change in behaviour, and a change in behaviour can only happen if people actually recognise the need to change, which given IAM

Roadsmart's tiny membership as a proportion of all drivers, they do not. It seems the legislators' answer to this issue is to advocate the development of driverless cars.

So, it's heartening to see that once again Borders Council/Police/Dealer/IAM group are taking the message to the Kids (amongst others) so they might get a proper understanding of how traffic actually works, rather than how to change gear (the rather inadequate current testing regime).

My message is this, do not rely upon legislators for any form of guidance as to what is either safe or sensible, that is not their job. The Eurocrats & national/ local parliamentarians have to fill their otherwise empty days with something in case we (Joe Public) actually notice that other than raising taxes and blundering into armed conflicts, they do not actually help our daily lives very much, if at all.

So, we have to take responsibility for our own actions and our own safety as no-one else will. It is the start of the biking season for many, so take care, warm up and get some practice in before giving it yahoo down the road. The statistics remain the same: in most motorcycle accidents the rider is to blame and many are on country roads and involve only the rider, no other vehicles. Left hand bends kill riders or rather, riders kill themselves on left hand bends by failing to think about the possibility of a vehicle coming towards them on the wrong side of the road. Yes, you did have right of way but that's not much comfort in a wooden overcoat, so take care out there.

Anyway, I expect to be arrested soon for poisoning all the people in my shiny diesel car and thereby costing the economy billions. One day I will have to give all this up, turn green and knit myself a house.

More madness next month.



RIDE REPORT: A day in the Atacama Desert by Mario Alonzi

You've watched all the programmes and read the stories about guys going around the world sideways and from top to bottom; it's definitely a dream for someone like me.

I've been traveling to Chile over a period of 10 years to visit my daughter who lives there. The first time was Dec 2008, just after I'd just passed my DAS test in the November and I was so gutted to be in a hot climate and not have the opportunity to ride a bike. Every alternate couple of years that my wife and I visited, I enquired about the possibilities of doing some kind of tour but, as my daughter lives in a reasonably small town, it just wasn't going to happen.

This year was the first that we visited in the height of summer and we were going to spend 5 days in the Atacama Desert to explore a new part of the country; so there was no stopping me this time. Research done prior to the trip, I found a tour company, On Safari: <https://goo.gl/wpQo8B> who host a range of different motorcycle, quad bike, cycling and 4x4 experiences. They are based near San Pedro de Atacama, the main town in the middle of the desert. I say main town; it has 3-5000 inhabitants and just as many tourists during the summer months. It's a fab place, just like in the old spaghetti westerns. Dirt and dust roads and stone and mud buildings; all that was missing were the horses tied up outside the saloons/bars/restaurants.

You arrive at this destination by flying in from various parts of South America. We flew in from Santiago, a 2 hour flight into Calama, and then a 1 hr transfer to San Pedro de Atacama. San Pedro sits approximately 2,300m above sea level so it's safe for most people. There are hundreds of small tour operators offering walking, cycling, horseback and bus tours to the various attractions. These are either valleys offering moon surface walks or star gazing. San Pedro hosts the only digital observatory in the world, using radio signals instead of lenses, their telescope has the equivalent of a 16km radius. Thanks



also to the lack of pollution and that there is very poor electrical lighting, the stars are amazingly bright and crystal clear. The observatory is free to visit but you need to book in advance.

We visited some of the salt lakes and flats high in the mountains. The Atacama Desert salt flats are the third largest in the world. The fascinating aspect of these is that in some of the pools you can see the salt formation process happen in front of your eyes. Over the millions of years this turns solid to form the land mass which covers most of the territory surrounding "La Cordillera del Sal" the Salt Mountains. They form one of the three ranges in Chile: the most well known is the Andes, of course. Swimming or bobbing in one of the pools was an interesting experience. The pool that you can enter contains 8% salt so it's the equivalent of the Dead Sea. Going up as high as 4,300m above sea level you can visit the geysers, again a natural wonder with fascinating stories surrounding them. Getting up at 4am to travel up there in temperatures of 1-2 degrees wrapped up for a typical Scottish January day is really worthwhile, especially when you get to swim in a thermal pool.

So, my tour with On Safari booked, roughly £150, and supposed to be a half day but, as I was the only one mid week, it lasted much longer. I was on a 2015 BMW GS 650 with big knobby tyres and my guide was on the equivalent 700GS. All clothing, helmets, boots and gloves were included in the prices as well as some small snacks and water for the trip. There is literally one highway that dissects Chile from Peru to Patagonia and, thankfully, it's a tarmac surface. If you then imagine the shape of the country and the width from East to West, Chile is predominantly one big beach. With the south eastern Pacific Ocean on one side and the Andes on the other, all roads are usually covered in sand and dirt. My tour began on this main highway with two-way traffic, wide open spaces with amazing scenery for 35km. We then veered off, heading towards the mountains. After about 10km

of smoothish dirt roads we headed off road for about 50km, climbing higher and higher. We rode just about every terrain you can imagine: dirt, sand, rocks, water crossings, everything. No matter how hard or sore I was you couldn't wipe the smile off my face. We reached a height of 4,000m before starting our decent into the village of Rio Grande, a small indigenous village which has been able to prosper thanks to the growing tourist industry into this part of the country. They can now have running water, satellite TV and Internet but they still live very much in the ways of old. There are 15 indigenous tribes living in Chile and up here in the Atacama there are some who have Peruvian roots as well.

I learned that it was impossible to rent a motorcycle in these parts and go off on your own as there are still many minefields scattered around thanks to Pinochet's dictatorship. Chile's Atacama Desert welcomes hoards of bikers from the neighbouring countries, especially Brazil. Brazil boasts approximately 30 million bikers nationally, of which a few were staying at my hotel and the surrounding hotels in San Pedro. These guys and gals are were for the touring aspect rather than the off-roading though. Long range tours can be booked via various tour companies online or from Chile itself. One of the biggest tour operators is based in a town called Osorno: <https://goo.gl/iQrO11> They have about 80 bikes available and do tours up and down the country and into Argentina.



We continued our decent along very similar surfaces but taking a different route to reach the highway and our return to base camp. This tour included collection and drop off at the hotel and all the kit. Juan was a great tour guide and very knowledgeable—an experience which will be repeated in the future. This is a part of the world which is worth exploring especially when it is geared up for motorcycle tours.



RIDE REPORT: Oliver's Mount Circuit by Ian Astley

One of the first things I did on my new Suzuki was ride down to Scarborough to spend the weekend at the Steve Henshaw International Gold Cup in late September 2016. The bike needed 600 miles on the clock for its first service, so I thought I might as well get it done quickly. The ride down was uneventful, if frustratingly restrained due to my mechanical sensitivities and a certain skittishness to the handling which I put down to the new tyres and the sporty set-up on the suspension. I subsequently discovered that the mechanics at Saltire didn't know the difference between 42psi and 52psi, or how to set the suspension to the factory recommendations.



I hadn't been able to make the decision to go until fairly late, by which time the paddock tickets had all gone, so I simply paid at the gate (£20 for the Saturday, £30 for Sunday). Passing through the gate gave me the first opportunity to test the off-road skills I had gained at Moto Scotland earlier in the month: one big, wet sloping farmer's field to park the bike on. I didn't fall off and neither did anyone else.

Anyone who has seen the television coverage of the road-racing season will know that Oliver's Mount is quite an interesting circuit. It winds around a hill on the outskirts of Scarborough and incorporates three hairpins, a couple of interesting esses, and a back straight behind a necessarily hefty hedge. Not much of it is wide enough for two cars to pass comfortably at 30mph. And that's before you start the downhill stretch between the last hairpin and the last ess: it is, shall we say, undulating. The fast riders take off at a couple of points going down the hill – tellingly, the really fast ones manage to keep their front wheels almost wholly planted whilst going at a considerably greater whack than anyone else.

If you want a comfortable grandstand seat, go somewhere else. Here, you sit on grass, lean against fences, stretch over



thick hedges. You walk around from one vantage point to another and are always as close to the action as you want to be. Seeing the likes of Dean Harrison, who won the Steve Henshaw International Gold Cup, and Ivan Lintin, who came second, is quite something. A certain John McGuinness was on track, too. There were also many club-level riders who added to the mix, racing in a variety of classes, including sidecars, and on a variety of machines that ranged from tiny 125cc racers to thumping twins that didn't really get anywhere but sounded oh, so good. But few bikes sounded as delicious as the classics that had quite a thrash around the circuit, including a certain Signor Agostini on THAT MV Agusta (see photo). He was



interviewed before the race but didn't seem to understand the commentator's obsession with a joke about speed cameras on the A1. It seems that some forms of Yorkshire humour perpetrated by males over sixty, do not export too well.

If you want to get an idea of the range of races on offer as well as the programme for this year (there are four major meetings from the spring onwards), pop along to <https://goo.gl/qYJXR9>. And book your hotel or B&B early! Brief Report from IAM Scottish Spring IAM

REPORT: Scottish Forum

Scottish Spring Forum, Stirling
01/04/2017, by Elliot Beattie

1 – Neil Greig – IAM Research – highlighted the differences in Scotland including parking, drug driving, & speed awareness courses. He is about to publish a report on survey conducted about the pros & cons of Advanced Driving.

2 - Scott Tulip, Area 7 Manager – “Game” Apps & car modules are about to be introduced. M/C – only launch module will be online – subject Overtaking.

Membership still <94000, & IAM plan to grow by 20000 via modules.

3 - Pat Doughty IAM Charity Director - IAM plan "Big Idea" fund raising day – all ideas to raise awareness & funds for IAM welcome.

Group sign-off of associate to Full IAM member without test is now in pilot trial. National Strategy group (replacing NRG) is now running, but still needs Scottish & Welsh members to join.

“Year of the Observer” Observer recognition – Pin Badges & 2 free events at Silverstone & Birmingham. IAM will consider supporting regional events if organised locally. No IAM conference this year.

Associate survey of IAM experience – good result but areas to improve are better contact from IAM, group & examiner regarding what is happening.

4 - Fred Welch Trophy Quiz – Dumfries & Galloway won this year.

EDAM AGM

Got the message yet? In case you might have forgotten since Page 1...

The EDAM Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 20th April at 19.00. Venue: Colinton Bowling Club, 49A Redford Rd, Edinburgh, EH13 0AB

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ROAD TEST: Low-Cost Tracker Update by Elliot Beattie

At the meeting with Police Scotland in August 2016, one advised measure was fit a tracker to your bike. So here is my revised report on going down this route.

I chose the cheap option. This works on a SIM card and GPS if the bike is outdoors. (GPS does not work properly indoors as solid building materials will interfere with UHF signals from satellites.

I purchased a TK102 off eBay for £12.95. It comes with a spare battery and choice of magnetic or non-magnetic battery cover. The unit size is 65 x 45 x 20mm. You also need a micro SD card – not sure what this does, presumably a log store - but these are available cheaply. You also require a full size SIM card. As the unit connects to your mobile by SMS, it seemed best to go with a network offering cheap texts – ASDA at 4p per text has good coverage on EE network. ASDA PAYG SIM cards are free, so just put on £5 credit and this will give you 125 interrogations.

It is probably best to set up your SIM card on an old 2G phone and cancel voicemail. On ASDA you do this by phoning ##002#. The instruction leaflet is quite understandable but you need a magnifying glass to read it. Set up was straight forward. I

noticed a small issue: the indicator light does not line up with the hole in the case so you need to take the battery cover off to see it flashing.

Where to fit – well I am not going to say, but under your seat, in a glove box or top box/pannier, under the fairing...

This unit does not have a hard wired kit option, but with anticipated battery life on idle for a 850mAh battery of more than 1 week (from experience with a 2G phone with a 800 mAh battery) not really a major issue unless stolen and stuck in a garage for several weeks.

There is no ongoing subscription to pay. The unit will send you longitude & latitude co-ordinates and a link to google maps to show location.

Downside: Unlike the expensive subscription Tracker which works on VHF – if stuck in a garage, you may only be able to locate with help of mobile phone masts which is a less accurate method.

October 2016 update

The battery life is not as good as expected (and when the battery is low, it helpfully

texts you every 3 minutes!)

External battery – the larger capacity type has an on/off switch, so when they stop charging the internal battery, they switch off. The smaller 1800 mAh type external battery pack with no switch may help to extend internal battery life. So my initial plan was to go with fused hard wiring from bike battery via 12v socket to USB connector, wired for preferably to be always on charge rather than only when the ignition is on.

February 2017 update.

I read about Li-ion battery charging. They are not recommended for continuous charging, and may overheat/catch fire. More worryingly, 2 of the supplied batteries now show casing distortion! Maybe these were just poor quality batteries.

My next plan is use a proper charger (£7.60) buy some decent BL-5B batteries (about £4.00 each) and keep swapping them

To be continued...



RIDING TIPS by Elliot Beattie

Overtaking Planning

Overtaking planning may start well before you are behind the vehicle to be overtaken. On observing the blue hatchback turning right onto our intended route, my thoughts become: How much progress will this car make? Is an overtake available? <https://goo.gl/k2kNq0>

If we are planning an overtake on this car, there is little value in returning to near-side and then adopting an overtaking position behind the car (as there was on oncoming vehicle) as this just shuts down your clear view of the road ahead."

Off-siding

Whilst Police Scotland frown upon off-siding (using opposing carriageway for view) here is an example in a 50 limit, where even earlier use of opposing carriageway might assist in passing a near-side hazard (the cyclist) safely"

<https://goo.gl/LucyLy>

NEW FACES

EDAM welcomes the following members:

Nick Slane, Dunfermline
 Jim Campbell, Dalgety Bay
 Stuart Douglas, Edinburgh
 Steve Driver, Edinburgh
 Kevin Patterson, Whitley Bay
 Adrian Black, Penicuik
 Tom Gardiner, Livingston
 Colin Tait, Bathgate
 Keith Waring, Rosyth
 Vince Petkevicius, Lasswade
 Gareth Michell, Newtongrange
 John Main, Bonnyrigg
 Gill Main, Bonnyrigg
 Graham Baxter, Edinburgh
 Rasa Akstiniate, Edinburgh
 Andrew Muir, Edinburgh
 Colin Cumine, West Calder
 Kevin Cockburn, Livingston
 Rob Tofield, Musselburgh
 Bruce Renfrew, Currie
 Jim Ferguson, Kirknewton
 John Heron, Gorebridge
 David Ellis, Corstorphine

FREE MAGAZINE

Scottish Biker Magazine is a free resource in its 4th year which aims to encourage motorcyclists to enhance their skills (on-road or off-road). The current edition has articles covering 8 different training providers (the IAM included) – here is a link to the e-version <https://goo.gl/hXNWX7>

NEW OBSERVER

Congratulations to Stewart Geddes on passing his LO (Local Observer) assessment.

TEST PASSES

None so far this year but there are few associates on the brink. Who will be the first in 2017?

RIDE REPORT: Around Scotland in 12 days by Blair White PART TWO

Blair continues his epic tour of Scotland, and still doesn't have much luck with the weather!

Day 5. Thursday 9 June 2016. Drumbeg to Lochcarron - 182 miles. Total 774.

This is the first day that I will be setting off in sunshine. I settle up with the landlady. She tells me that she had no further enquiries about the double room and, as she wouldn't have been able to let the room she reduced my bill by another £20. That was a very generous thing to do – I'm very impressed.

Down the single-track road and a Royal Mail van travelling at speed causes me to brake sharply. These postmen need to be more careful.



Suddenly, I see a movement to my left and I'm sure that a golden eagle has just taken off from a tree and it keeps pace with me for about 100m - it's really impressive.

I decide to visit Lochinver for fuel. Just as I'm travelling into the village I am quite startled when a deer leaps in front of me and dashes across the road. Although I was only doing about 25 mph, I think I would have come off if I'd hit it.

The beautiful day stretches out in front of me. This is fantastic riding weather and the scenery is impressive. In addition, the roads seem quieter than yesterday which is a bonus.

Into Ullapool for more fuel and a cake at a lovely wee coffee shop & gallery. Three bikers come over and show an interest in my maps – they like the 1:250 000 scale sheets. I show them the 1:50 000 strip maps and they're really impressed. We discuss the round Scotland trip and they wish me luck.

After Ullapool, I have a big loop round by Poolewe and Gairloch. This is indeed beautiful countryside and the weather is great for riding - a pity I've had to wait for 4 days to get some decent sunshine. But, hey ho! – that's Scotland, eh?

A great ride along the single-track A896 through Glen Torridon – and mercifully, there is very little traffic. I'd wondered about an overnight stop at Shieldaig, but good progress is being made and I decide to make Applecross at least. If I was truly sticking to my "rules" then I shouldn't really be going to Applecross as it's on neither an 'A' or a 'B' class road – it's designated as "other road" or "unclassified". However, I may never come this way again on my bike; in addition, I have a friend who has a holiday home in Ap-

plecross and it would be nice just "to pop in" on my way past. I know from a previous car journey that the route in from the north is quite slow and so it proves – more traffic on this stretch. Arriving at my friend's house, there is no sign of him, although there's evidence that he's clearly in residence. I hang around for about 30 minutes. It's a lovely day and if the forecast for tomorrow had been better, I would have been tempted to camp and try and meet up with him later in the day.

There's a fair amount of motorbikes in the village – I wonder if the residents are thrilled that the place is on the "NC 500" – the increased traffic must make for slow movement on the roads.

As I'm going through the village I stop to let an Italian motor-home pass. He misjudges the gap and bumps my right pannier – nothing serious, but another inch and he might have forced the bike over.

I decide to continue over the pass and make for Lochcarron – the more miles achieved today then the less I'll need to

do in the likely wet conditions tomorrow. With hindsight I'm so glad to have continued the journey as I was rewarded with fantastic views down the Bealach na Ba towards Loch Kishorn and Loch Carron. In fact, when I reach the summit of the pass and look down, I am quite unprepared for the view and it quite literally takes my breath away. Unfortunately, there is a fair amount of traffic in both directions and I can't really justify stopping in a passing-place to take a photo.

Into Lochcarron and accommodation at the first guest house. Chatting to the son of the owners, he raises similar concerns about the "NC 500" route – too many one-night stays and potential for clogged roads. It's a beautiful night and I enjoy a glass of beer by the loch – it's a pity the forecast is for rain tomorrow.

And then another coincidence – my Applecross friend sends me a message to tell me he's just been in Lochcarron and is now back in Applecross – we probably passed each other on the Bealach. He sends me another message complaining about "big German motorbikes not knowing the etiquette of using single-track roads." I have to admit that I'm not sure what the etiquette is of using single-track roads – I'll Google it on my return. *[I checked this and it seems to come down to common sense; also letting people overtake and giving priority to drivers coming uphill.]*

I visit an artist's studio – his work is mostly of Skye and also a fair number of views of the Bealach. He tells me that a Royal Mail van was blown off the pass some years ago – I have to admit that I'm pleased the conditions were so benign today.

Day 6. Friday 10 June 2016. Lochcarron to Fort William – 84 miles. Total 858.

I start the day in overcast conditions and by the time I reach the A87 the drizzle has started. Again, I decide not to stop and put the waterproofs on – I'm hoping for it to clear, but up ahead there are no breaks in the cloud – all a bit disappointing. Coming up through Glen Shiel the rain is heavier and I'm getting wet. I note that bikers coming the other way are all wearing their waterproofs so it looks as if there's no respite ahead. I stop at the Cluanie Inn and change into the wet weather gear – it's always a bit of a pantomime when there's no shelter as I need to try and keep my spectacles dry. After about 10 minutes I'm on my way into the

rain and mist. This should have been a pretty impressive ride through Glen Shiel, along Loch Cluanie and then past Loch Garry; but instead it's cold and wet and I'm not enjoying it. Over the Caledonian Canal and along by Loch Lochy – the mist obscures the view over the loch; in addition, with the busy traffic and the rain, the riding needs all my concentration.

I've identified the B8004 and pull in at the Commando Monument. I hadn't intended to stop but I remember from a previous visit that there is an impressive view of the surrounding countryside and I might get a sense of any break in the weather. A quick look around confirms that the poor weather is set for the day. As I'm about to leave, two motorbike & sidecars enter the car park and they cause a bit of a stir – they are German and WW2 vintage, with one bike painted in the Afrika Korps desert colours.

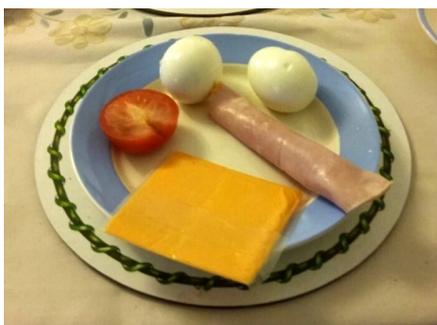
As I'm riding into Fort William I notice signs advertising "The Caledonian Challenge" which is happening at the weekend. I also note that there is a fair amount of traffic. Given the poor weather and the possible dearth of accommodation I decide to have an early stop in Fort William and sort out the lodgings first. I manage to get a B&B, but it is the most miserable place – the room is small, dark and unwelcoming - but it's only for one night and there may not be much accommodation about. The landlady leaves me in no doubt about the breakfast arrangements – "You'll be getting a continental breakfast; I don't do cooking anymore. I'll see you at 7.30 and you can have 2 boiled eggs to be going away with." A continental breakfast is fine by me – after all the full Scottish breakfasts, maybe something a bit lighter is called for.

The centre of Fort William looks fairly bleak in this weather. Lots of people in walking gear looking at shops selling more walking gear. It's still raining and I decide not to complete the loop around Moidart – that can wait till tomorrow. The good news is I've found a launderette that's on tomorrow's route. I head back to the B&B and just have an early night. A 7.30 breakfast should give me an early start. The forecast looks OK – possibility of some showers but should be drier.

Day 7. Saturday 11 June 2016. Fort William - around the Moidart peninsula and back into Fort William – 106 miles. Total 964.

I certainly get a surprise with my "continental breakfast". I was looking forward to muesli, yoghurt, a croissant and maybe some cheeses. What I got was

a tomato, a rolled-up slice of boiled ham, a boiled egg and a slice of processed cheese (still in the plastic wrapper). Tasty. B&B – all for £45.



There's low cloud & drizzle in the air as I set off for Moidart. I drop my laundry off in Caol (this has been a real bonus). A quick scoot along the A830 - a quiet road, but a string of cars and motorhomes coming the other way indicates a ferry has arrived at Mallaig. Through Glenfinnan and a left onto the A861 – the drizzle has cleared and it's brighter, but no sun. The road becomes single track and it's quite slow. And then, around a bend, I see the two German WW2 bike & sidecars coming in the other direction – I pull into a passing-place – they're certainly cracking on at a good pace. A stop at Strontian for a coffee and a quick chat with some folks about my journey – it's interesting that when people see my maps, they're quite happy to come and talk.

Because of the single-track roads, this Moidart loop is taking longer than I expected. It's quite pretty round here and in some places I am accompanied by a weak sun. Passing some of the properties, I muse that some people do live in remote places – a simple trip to the doctor or dentist would not be undertaken lightly – Mallaig? Fort William?

I pass the ferry at Corran – this would have been the shorter route back to Fort



William but my "rules" preclude it. It gives me a nice single-track road up the west side of the loch and then join the A830 and back to Caol to collect my washing. I complete this loop in about 4 hours.

The support team (with the all-important chain lubrication) has arrived at the hotel and it's certainly a big step up from last night's B&B! We have a quick walk around Fort William. The rain has held off but, to be honest, there's not a great deal to see. However, I do note that there is now an official endpoint to the West Highland Way: a "finishing" line and a monument. It's a reasonable thing to have. When I did the WHW a long time ago we arrived in Fort William and there was a certain amount of anti-climax as there was no obvious finish.

There is still no view of Ben Nevis – shrouded in mist.

We enjoy a lovely meal in the hotel's restaurant and I suspect this will be the best accommodation of the whole trip.

Day 8. Sunday 12 June 2016. Fort William to Tarbert – 183 miles. Total 1147.

After a fairly healthy breakfast and with a newly lubricated chain I leave reasonably early. It's not raining, but it's threatening. And still no view of Ben Nevis. South on the A82 and onto Oban, which I pass through quickly as I can see no reason to stop and the sky is glowering. The forecast was for better weather later in the day so I'm keen to push onto the Kintyre peninsula.

In terms of navigation, I'm now on to the Southern Scotland sheet of the OS 1:250,000 Travelmaster map series – psychologically quite a boost – I'm making decent progress.

I re-fuel at Lochgilphead – this Knapdale and Kintyre peninsula is a fairly big figure-of-eight. I'm careful not to miss the right turn onto the B8024 which runs around Knapdale. It's a single-track road but it's relatively quiet and I'm enjoying the run along Loch Caolisport with some lovely little beaches. I'm rewarded with some watery sun – it's turning into a decent day. Then re-join the A83 for a good run south with hazy views out to Jura, Islay and Gigha. As I reach Campbeltown the sun is now fully out. Again, I note that the shops are shut and there's very little choice of places to eat. I find a wee café on the harbour front and enjoy a light lunch.

I enjoy the northbound single-track B842 – the views over to Arran are a bit obscured by low cloud. I think about stopping at Carradale, but I'm conscious that tomorrow's forecast is for rain. I decide to push onto Tarbert where, again, I'm fortunate to find accommodation at the first place I call at.

Tarbert is quite a neat little place. Walking round the small harbour there are a number of eating places all advertising "Loch Fyne seafood". The port does have a feeling of being reasonably busy.

At the top of a slipway I see a couple of plastic barriers normally associated with roadworks. A couple of swans have built a nest in plain view and the council have erected barriers to provide the swans (plus three cygnets) and the public with some protection from each other.

There are a few motorbikes around, with a 1200GS with German number plates sitting outside my hotel, but I don't see the owner.

The forecast for tomorrow is not great – overcast with some showers.

Day 9. Monday 13 June 2016. Tarbert to Garelochhead – 141 miles. Total 1288.

An early start, and by the time I load the bike, the rain has started – so straight into the waterproofs; sigh.

This will be an interesting day. Once I get to the east side of Loch Fyne and south of the A8 many of the roads will be new to me. There are ample opportunities for wrong turnings and no doubt lots of map consultation and a bit of frustration.

The rain eases to a drizzle and I have a decent run along Loch Fyne, through Inveraray and then a right turn onto the A815. Then onto a single-track road where the lack of traffic makes it relatively easy. I stop for a cereal bar and to my



surprise a group of about 12 motorbikes pass me going in the same direction. A wrong turning past Otter Ferry leads me onto a road that's designated as a 'C' road – I can't recall ever seeing that road classification before.

Round to Kames and then north – it's raining hard now. There's a series of turnings and I miss a couple and have to double back. I'd noticed on the maps that there is a 'B' road (named "Hell's Glen") that goes up to the "Rest And Be Thankful" – it's a great road with no traffic. One thing I've noticed on my journey is that new tracks are being constructed. I think these may be routes for taking shooting parties into the estates. They're not minor tracks either, but probably only suitable for 4 wheel drive vehicles.

I decide against stopping at the "Rest And Be Thankful"; it's dreich and there is no view. Down Loch Long and the sun makes a brief appearance. I decide to stop at Garelochhead and once again am fortunate to get a room at the local pub. Nothing special, but it's clean with a view over the loch. A walk around the village then back to the pub for a drink, some food and watch the football. The forecast is for better weather tomorrow.

Day 10. Tuesday 14 June 2016. Garelochhead to Portpatrick – 156 miles. Total 1444.

As I leave there are glimmers of blue sky. After leaving the relative rural nature of Garelochhead I'm quickly into suburban and urban areas – Rhu, Helensburgh, Dumbarton and then over the Erskine Bridge and along the M8 to Port Glasgow, Greenock and Gourrock. The sun is out and it makes the ride a bit more pleasant. The huge cranes at Port Glasgow look resplendent. I hadn't really been looking forward to this journey along the Ayrshire coast – a decent road but too many towns to go through: Largs, West Kilbride, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Irvine, Troon, Prestwick and finally Ayr. I actually pass Robert Burns' cottage so I must have taken a wrong turning somewhere. Past the old Butlins holiday camp and then the A77

opens out and becomes a faster road – an enjoyable ride in good weather and lovely views out to Ailsa Craig.

I pass Turnberry. The hotel is as imposing as ever, but the entrance now sports metre-high shiny letters declaring "Trump Turnberry". There is nothing subtle about it. Even "Turnberry by Trump" might have been better.

The ride into Stranraer is somewhat frustrating as I get caught up in the traffic that has just come off a ferry at Cairnryan – mostly foreign motorhomes. To the west of Stranraer the 'B' roads on the Rhins are a delight with very little traffic, except for the occasional tractor.

I make for Portpatrick where there should be a reasonable amount of accommodation. And again, I'm in luck at the first place I stop. It's a bit more expensive than I wanted, but it's a great room with a bath and fantastic views out over the sea. I have a wander around the town; it's pleasant with a fair number of tourists. Back at the hotel I enjoy a beer looking out over the sea towards Ireland – possibly the best end-of-day I've had so far.

A meal at the hotel, catch a bit of the football and then go out to take some photos of the sunset. It really is a splendid place. I walk up to the headland and note that the Southern Upland Way is close by – in fact, Portpatrick is the start/finish point for the walk.

And then another coincidence – I get a message from a friend – he's in Gatehouse of Fleet with his family. He very kindly invites me to stay the next day. That would make for a very short ride – I decide that tomorrow needs a more decent mileage – maybe Dumfries? – where there should be plenty accommodation.

Apart from passing through the urban areas, today has been an excellent day. The forecast for tomorrow is decent – we'll see...

Read the final part in the May issue of Twistgrip



WHY THE IAM? by Sandy Dickson

An issue that arises from time to time from the members is what does IAM Roadsmart do for me and why can I not just be a member of the local group?

Perhaps the answer to this is not what can IAM Roadsmart do for me, rather what can I do for IAM Roadsmart? In any event, various questions have been put to head office by more than one member and the following is how they explain the position and the benefits of the organisation. I hope that this offers some insight into the thinking:

MEMBER: I completed my advanced motorcycle test in November 2015 and have remained a member of the IAM and (group) ever since, I am beginning training to become a voluntary local observer for the group this summer.

IAM: Thank you for all your expertise and practical support and good luck on becoming an observer – the feeling as your first associate passes their test will be magical.

MEMBER: Currently I cannot see the benefit to being a member of the IAM. I only remain a member as I enjoy (group) and in order to stay with the group I must be a member of IAM, despite no interaction with IAM what so ever. Or at least this is my understanding.

IAM: One of the main benefits of being an IAM member is access to our group network. You can't be a member of an IAM group if you are not a member of the IAM for obvious reasons.

The IAM fund all your observer training and IMI qualifications as we do for all our observers. We provide the training materials, the website, the booking system, the certificates, the course manuals and observer handbooks, regular re-qualifications, regional and national forums and support activities. Most importantly the IAM also provides all the insurance cover to enable our network of observers to carry out observed rides, assessments and events.

MEMBER: As a volunteer, I am giving up my time to help others, and to help support the group whilst advertising the IAM. I pay an annual fee for the group, which contributes towards venue/facilities hire etc. and is understandable.

IAM: I agree that if we were to start again we would probably not have separate local and national membership fees.

MEMBER: I currently cannot understand why I must pay a fee to IAM Roadsmart each year. Whilst I understand IAM are behind (group), from my view the purpose of IAM are to make the rules for the group to follow. I do not understand why I must pay a fee to IAM for this.

IAM: Because everyone who delivers IAM courses must be an IAM member and managed by ourselves for insurance and standards reasons – what you suggest is that anyone can deliver IAM courses without any IAM input, training or knowledge of their activities?

MEMBER: Also, by becoming an observer I will be volunteering on behalf of the IAM. I know that for every associate the group recruit the money goes to IAM except for a £31 payback to the group for recruiting them. As my volunteering will be making a profit for IAM, why must I also pay an annual subscription fee to remain a volunteer?

IAM: IAM are a charity and do not make profits, a course price of £149 simply covers our costs. Any excess income is ploughed back into the charity activities. We are a membership organisation where every member pays the same membership fee. You cannot receive financial benefit for being a voluntary observer. All our active volunteers must be current members – do you think the RNLI let anyone take their boats out and have no need for them to be RNLI members?

MEMBER: I understand that there are meant to be benefits of being an IAM member. The key benefit highlighted to me was the competitive insurance quotes from IAMSurety. However, this year my renewal premium was quoted as higher than the previous year, despite the only changes being an extra year NCB, and an extra year of holding my licence, therefore I am being penalised for gaining more experience.

It is said that IAMSurety beat other quotes, so after spending my own time researching quotes and trying to contact IAMSurety, I was told 'we no longer beat quotes, only match them'. In this instance there is no benefit to using the IAMSurety for insurance as they offer no more than the other insurance provider.

IAM: IAM Surety currently insure 45,000 IAM member policies. They also include business cover as standard on all our observer policies (other insurers may charge extra or refuse cover) Never accept any insurers first computer

generated renewal quote – always search the market and talk to Surety (as you did). The fact about matching only is not correct and I will investigate that with them.

MEMBER: I would like to stay a member with (group), however if I must continue to pay a fee to the IAM to stay a member at (group), I will have to reconsider my position as it is a significant cost to me, as a volunteer. If I were to leave, I feel this would not only be a loss to (group), but also to the IAM.

IAM: Agreed and I hope that you decide to stay. Observing does incur costs and that is part of the decision making process for you to consider. In the future we may develop a network of observers who wish to operate outside of the group environment – for example if group delivery and run schedules don't match their own availability and you may wish to become part of this network.

Just to be 100% clear, there is no way that anyone can be part of a local IAM group unless they are an IAM member. Any other scenario would be uncontrolled madness and would not meet any of our IAM standards and codes of conduct.

MEMBER: I am writing to try and make a change. Currently people are giving up their own time to support (group), this makes a profit for the IAM yet the IAM also charge them for their support annually. If an IAM membership is required to remain a member at a local group and to be an observer, I currently do not understand why, or see the benefits of this.

IAM: No profit, we are a charity who reinvest any excess income into supporting our charitable objectives and the group network.

The benefit of being an IAM member is that you are then able to access our local group network, train to become a qualified observer for free and have the reassurance and security of our insurance cover for groups and observers.

If you decided to leave and join another group then you would lose all association with the IAM – membership, training, group, course materials, our test, our certificates, our database and booking system plus anything to do with the IAM name.

Maybe consider just how much support and commitment you and the group receive from the IAM.

Continued on page 10

WHY THE IAM continued

MEMBER: If you could clarify why I must/ should remain an IAM member, or initiate a change to the IAM process to show more support to volunteers and to local groups, I would be most grateful.

- IAM: I hope you agree that we show huge commitment and support to our groups and national observer network. We can't pay you but we can do plenty more:
- Group and observer liability insurance cover for all
- Business cover included at no additional cost on personal observer policy
- Fully funded IMI qualification courses
- Soon to be launched Observer test pass lapel badges
- Certificates of appreciation always available
- Courses, manuals, booking system, database, certificates, membership cards, F1RST, Fellow, Masters, skills days, call centre, magazine, website, marketing campaigns, group marketing toolkit, regional managers, national conference and regional forums, awards

- An open ear to always listen to what else we could provide and help groups and observers with – we could make you a paid employee but it would incur tax and NI of course.
- The most common response and suggestion is 'please say thank you a bit more to us', we do and will continue to do so.

MEMBER: I honestly think that the number of volunteers is beginning to drop, I also believe that the numbers will continue to drop unless the IAM show more support to volunteers and to local groups.

IAM: This is not correct and we are delighted with the increase in IMI qualified observers. We have made 2017 'The year of the observer' and you will see a huge number of initiatives during the year to celebrate and thank our observers, I really hope that you decide to be part of it.

Thank you for taking the time to detail your thoughts and I am delighted to be able to respond to some of the inaccuracies and incorrect facts.

IAM exists because of, and for, our groups and observers, we will continue to invest

in and support them so that more drivers and riders benefit from our courses and expertise. That is why we are here and do what we do, everything else is a distraction.

EVENTS

Sick Kids Easter Egg Run

Joint run with PMC from The Steading to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. **Sunday 9th April 2017**, meet from 10:30am at The Steading, leave at 11:15pm sharp.

SCAA 2017 Hadrian's Wall Run

Sunday 23 April 2017, 09:30 departure from The Steading

NEW: IAM RoadSmart Skills Day

At Croft circuit, North Yorkshire.

Wednesday 13th September 2017

Call IAM on: 0300 303 1134

<https://goo.gl/BGQG3I>

Please check the EDAM Facebook page for the latest news on ride-outs.

<https://goo.gl/j9Gfg9>

LAW & REGULATION

Mobile Phones & Other devices

We all know that we cannot use hand-held mobile phones when driving a car and even hands-free use is frowned upon because it is a distraction. This law also applies to motorcycles.

There is a specific offence of using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving and a recent change in the law means it can attract a fine of £200 plus 6 penalty points. For newly qualified and certain professional drivers the penalties can be more severe.

There are also more all-encompassing laws that can be used to prosecute users of hands-free devices, including satellite navigation systems fitted to cars and bikes. Briefly reading sat-nav instructions is fine, but controlling the unit by hand (touching the screen) could attract a charge of careless or dangerous driving with different penalties. For that matter, so could eating an apple or smoking, if these were proven to be a contributory factor in an accident.

The message is clear, these devices have the potential to distract drivers and riders and so the laws have been toughened to crack down on their use.

Let's face it, none of us wants to meet a (more) distracted driver when we are out and about.

Information about the law related to mobile phone and portable electronic device use when driving can be found here: <https://goo.gl/OJZyee> and here: <https://goo.gl/6kKOjK>

EDAM ON FACEBOOK

Don't forget that EDAM has a Facebook page where you can find the latest information about events and ride-outs.

<https://goo.gl/qUZZDI>



FOR SALE

Hein Gericke Tank Bag £30.00



Large tank bag with carry handle, mounting strap at front, and magnetic grips on base - would suit metal tank. Large main compartment sub-divided, large front pocket, and visible pockets on top. Demountable base with visible pocket.

Contact Neil Todd: fneiltodd@me.com or: 0787 969 8990.

EDAM accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of descriptions or condition of items offered for sale in this section.