



TWISTGRIP



The Journal of Edinburgh & District Advanced Motorcyclists

May 2017



EDAM & PMC members outside The Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh
Image copyright © Graham A Warman

Eggs for the Kids

On Sunday 9th April EDAM and the Peebles Motorcycle Clan joined forces to deliver Easter eggs and presents to the kids spending Easter in hospital.

This is a regular event, organised as usual by EDAM's membership secretary, Stuart Richardson. The run was a great success and we were even blessed with some sunshine!

The gifts and eggs were gratefully received by hospital staff and Vicki from the Sick Kids Friends Foundation. Aaron, Michael and baby Rachel ventured outside and enjoyed sitting on some of the bikes.

If you missed the Easter run, don't worry; we'll be doing it all again at Christmas but with a little less chocolate.



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EVENTS

Thursday Evening Run
18th May 2017, 19:00 departure from The Steading

Penpont Coffee Run
27th May 2017, 09:30 departure from The Steading

Please refer to the EDAM Facebook page for the latest news about events: <https://goo.gl/zyVD3q>

A Busy Time!

Well, that's another AGM under our belt and what a great meeting it was. Read about it on page 9 where you can also follow a link to the draft minutes.

EDAM is going from strength with many new Associates and a lot of busy Observers. If you are still waiting to be assigned an Observer please accept our apologies and assurance that we will work as hard as possible to minimise the wait. The lighter nights and better weather should help. In the meantime, feel free to study the first few chapters of the course log-book and brush up on the Highway Code.

Any Associates or full members are always welcome on our organised rides and that includes the new guys, so please come along. These are not assessed rides, just a chance to ride with others in a structured way and stop for a chat and a coffee.

This edition of Twistgrip contains a report on one such organised ride plus the final

part of Blair White's epic trip around Scotland and a great article from John Crawford about the beginnings and continued success of the Peebles Motorcycle Clan. It's these types of article that makes Twistgrip YOUR newsletter and the more contributors we have, the better it will be.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, please send any articles or stories to me at the address below. If there is a topic you would like to see covered, let me know that too.

Glynn Jones
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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR by Sandy Dickson



ANOMOLIES

Last month you may recall within my monthly rant, I said:

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).

Sometimes, I like to be positive and having identified Borders Council for praise, I would now like to throw some criticism at them. Or rather, identify that the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing (or perhaps does not care).

Some of you will have read on Face ache about a recent case involving a motorcycle accident on the Moffat Road (which falls within Borders Council remit). The following is brief extract from the judgement (the full text of which is available from the Scottish courts website):

....explained the defenders' system for inspecting, maintaining and repairing the roads for which they are responsible. The defenders carry out this work on the basis of policies and guidance contained in their Carriageways Lifecycle Plan ("the plan"). The purpose of the plan is to set out the defenders' policies and service standards in relation to the maintenance and management of the carriageways in the Scottish Borders. For the purpose of the present case the relevant provisions of the plan are those which prescribe reaction times for certain categories of road defects. In summary, category 1a defects are defined as those which present an immediate and critical hazard to road users. The plan requires that these be

immediately made safe and repaired. The plan explains that defects falling within this category include: major debris and spillage, carriageway collapse or comparable severe surface defect, isolated standing water at a depth likely to cause a loss of control, and missing or severely defective iron-work. Category 1b defects are those which present an urgent or imminent hazard or risk of rapid deterioration; they are required to be made safe or repaired within 48 hours. The plan states that defects within this category include potholes exceeding 40mm in the wheel track. Category 1c defects are defined as those which present a moderate level of hazard or risk; the plan states that they should be repaired within 7 days. They are said to include potholes exceeding 40mm in depth in all other locations (ie other than in the wheel track). The plan goes on to explain that category 2 defects are those which, following a risk assessment, are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent danger. Defects within this category are to be repaired within a planned programme of works

Essentially, some punter in a van drives around the Borders with the 'big book of potholes' and decides which road defects are a danger and which are not. The above sets out that there is a book of 'rules', so if your hole is 37mm deep and sitting to the outside of the 'wheel track', then perhaps one day, if the council has a couple of quid spare, they might get around to fixing it, if they have nothing better to do that day.

Ok, setting aside for one moment that I am a facetious git, there is clearly a problem here for us second class citizens, commonly known as motorcyclists. We do not usually ride in the wheel tracks of cars unless conditions dictate that it is a sensible thing to do. Consequently, road defects that may affect us (and probably cyclists) are not necessarily much of an issue or given much thought by the roads department – they are demoted to the planned programme of works – or the never-never according to council budgets.

Whilst that is one matter, the other issue which is sometimes more pressing is that when they do decide to carry out such repairs, they are often very badly done. The A701 and the exact location of this reported accident is a case in point. A section of road has defects on both lanes and these have been repaired by the town drunk with a bucket of tar and hobnail boots. These repairs were not carried out with any degree of care or competence and have been

like this for a considerable period. A four wheeled vehicle simply crashes over this surface but a two wheeled vehicle's stability can be badly affected by the same 'repairs'.

If you had a repair carried out to your house to this standard there is no possibility you would have agreed to pay for it. However, as motorcyclists, we do not really count as road users and if you happen to come off due to these repairs, you will have no one other than yourself to blame (Observation, Anticipation etc, etc)

One might have thought that if BC are prepared, as they are, to support driver/rider education, they might at least involve the roads department such they understand they have a role to play in this?

It is perhaps unfair to single out BC as, to be fair, they are at least supporting driver training unlike the butcher, baker & candlestick makers that dwell in the Royal Mile.

To close, the back road from Cammo to Turnhouse has just been completely resurfaced – smooth as a baby's bottom. Quite exactly why they have repaired this at this time I am not sure. Yes, the road was completely knackered but it must be one of the least busy roads in the entire city and it is a 20mph limit passing through fields, just in case a bunny hops out on its way home from bunny school. It may be to do with the plans to build hundreds of new houses on the greenbelt—that will sort those damn 20mph bunnies!

It is not quite open (they are playing the hokey-cokey with the road closed signs). Being a well thought through and organised plan, now that they have completed the surfacing and most of the road markings, they have decided to dig up the verges for some reason. This will help to initiate the immediate deterioration of the shiny new road, since it has no kerbs, so planned maintenance will have something to do in the future. Our German chums require roads repairs carried out to take account of the needs of motorcyclists. Seems far too sensible an idea to catch on here – I wonder if they have the 'big book of potholes' also?



PEEBLES MOTORCYCLE CLAN - BIRTH TO BOOM by John Crawford

Having moved to Peebles back in 2006 it wasn't much longer before I decided the commute was costing far too much and I started considering a motorbike for the first time in my life. Now I'm notoriously impulsive so it could only end one way. Direct access.

Two Wheels took me through it and a first time pass, result. Now into the showroom. Much shininess in every corner but a Suzuki Bandit 600cc was to be mine, a beauty.

This led to a friendship with a neighbour who having spotted my bike made himself known as Bryan Begg. He had a Harley Road King, a beautiful looking thing to my eye and we started to do some short runs as I built some confidence, slowly, but my love of biking was already full steam ahead.

Bryan joked occasionally about starting a local bike club which he named Peebles Motorcycle Club but it never really was anything more than a laugh and a maybe one-day idea.

Sadly, fate was to deal a very cruel and tragic blow as Bryan was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus. We were all heartbroken but believed in nothing but recovery. I had PMC T-shirts made up for all my family, his mum and Bryan himself for one hospital visit, such was the belief that he would recover and we would create this dream club. Sadly, that's not what was written and Bryan passed away in July of 2010. My riding buddy was gone and so was this dream, for a while.

I enrolled for advanced training with the IAM through EDAM around a year later, much needed I felt. I had a great experience being observed by Brian Green. He had the patience required as I was really still learning to ride a bike never mind advanced riding. Having succeeded come the test I started taking part in EDAM ride outs and met many great people, many of whom I now call good friends. For a few years after I did nothing more than speak of this PMC idea and make up the occasional T-shirt, believing it to be a massive challenge and also frankly, a burden. My life already seemed stressful and work was 6-7 days so running a bike club, no thanks!

However, driving a black cab has its down time and during one of these quiet spells one day during February of 2015 I said to



Dalwhinnie Distillery and our Inaugural Run 2015

myself, JUST DO IT! So I got out my phone, Facebook and created a new page. Peebles Motorcycle Club. I added anyone on my friends list who was bike orientated and the dream was now a reality. It was a learning curve which included being informed that we were not an MC so without further ado and much thought about arguing we became a Clan.

A date was set for our first ever meet at the Leadburn Inn which was to become our unofficial HQ. The few who attended, around 6 people, were all keen to see if there was any legs in this idea. So a run was announced soon after, one that I had done myself solo previously. Working our way up the east coast to the Dalwhinnie Distillery, over to Fort William and down through Glencoe. A wonderful day with wonderful company and the sun shone, a good omen. I felt as though I didn't have the confidence yet to lead and was quick to find a volunteer in the shape of John Rennie. An ex-army man, John is a leader of men with a gentle touch and I soon gave him the nickname of The General which I know he enjoys.

We were off and running with around 20 members if memory serves me well. I had been very fortunate that I had friends with IAM training within the club and many with a large dose of biking experience, much more than myself. That was to be key when it came to future ride outs. For this club to be a success we had to be a well-run, safe and structured unit;

and the ride outs had to appeal. I had to get myself up to speed with routes through magazines, maps and the occasional theft of an EDAM run I'd attended, with the able assistance of Gavin D Neil and the General.

The ride outs went very well and the membership grew through word of mouth and just pure internet searches for biking related pages. I remember well posting a picture, 50 MEMBERS!!! Then 100, 150, 200 and so on. These numbers were beyond our wildest dreams. Thankfully we were not getting 200 turn up for a ride out, phew!

As it became such a success, I realised



JC models the PMC hat & fleece

**OUR MISSION TO BOLDLY GO WHERE
QUITE A FEW FOLK HAVE GONE BEFORE**



Dunnet Head and the first PMC weekender. A trip round the NC500 - May 2015

The year 2016 was another eventful year with more members joining in their droves, more ride outs and the highlight of that year for those attending was the trip to North and Southern Ireland. Taking in the NW200 and a few pints of the black stuff. The latest social event the club has ventured into this year is Hypertrax. Electric bikes off-roading and by all accounts it's brilliant fun with more visits to come. Who knows what's next!

December of last year saw the club team up with EDAM for the charity run to the Sick Children's Hospital. It was a brilliant success with Alan Neilson teaming us up with Virgin Money and Gary Blair rallying the troops to great gestures of generosity culminating in the hospital receiving a massive amount of goodies.

Here we are in 2017 and we truly have gone from Born to Booming, currently the head count is 481 members and if they ever all become active, run! It's looking like a fantastic year ahead. We now have a very solid group of admins, full of biking experience many of whom are IAM trained and some who are Observers. There are trips planned by many of us this summer, some Europe and others taking their chances with the weather within the UK.

What was once a dream has become a legacy. We ride together under the PMC banner thanks to Bryan. He may rest in peace but through the club his spirit is very much alive.



A van load of toys and other gifts

that some structure was needed. I was running it as a kind of one-man band and I knew that couldn't work long term. So I asked certain members to join me in the creation of an admin team/committee. Very loosely structured and still a lot of fun and no stress. I wanted to know that if I walked away the dream would continue.

We then decided we needed a crest. Luckily with so many members comes a skills bank. We put it out via a Facebook post, crest required! We received a crest from Graham Lyons, now a part of the foundations of the club. We then went further and decided on club apparel on which to

place the crest. Polo-shirts, hoodies, hats, T-shirts, fleeces. We now have an online shop where members can become the most fashionable of riders.

During year one we had many ride outs to many far flung parts of Scotland and northern England.

We aim to make riders' event diary as full as possible creating a variety of areas, routes and distances.

We then added socials to our events calendar such as curry nights and a now bi-annual Tenpin Bowling night which is always great fun.



Bryan enjoying a BMW demo day

PS: I've never saved a penny commuting by bike. In fact it has cost me a fortune, but I love it!

INSURANCE by Elliot Beattie

My annual saga of motorcycle insurance renewal – a multi-bike policy.

When this year's Devitt's renewal invitation arrived, an increase from £153 to £222 seemed a little steep. So I went back to looking at insuring the Sprint & Trophy individually.

On GoCompare, Bennett's came up with £180 for 2 policies, only using 1 NCB, so a phone call to Bennett's reduced the quote to £160 for a multi-bike policy with a £250 excess rather than Devitt's £400 excess. (As IPT has increased from 6% to 9.5% - very fair, and a very helpful lady on the phone).

As usual IAM Surety said this was a too competitive price – they didn't even bother to tell me their price!

Although it is not possible to use the price comparison sites for multi-bike policies, an initial search for individual bikes should give a target price.

And this only took 90 minutes to arrange!

Editor's note: It is always worth full members trying IAM Surety, but only after you have found the very best deal elsewhere. Contact them via: <https://goo.gl/7fOjMU>

RIDING TIPS by Elliot Beattie

Reinforcing Arm Signals

In low sun our indicators may not be easily seen, either when we are riding into the sun, or away from it. An arm signal to other road users can help to reinforce our intention and break up our outline.

In the video watch my shadow, and the cyclist's shadow approaching from behind me, nearside.

Motorcycle indicators can be 10W rather than 21W and I find motorcycle LED indicators can be quite directional. Check out bike 2 for this effect.

<https://goo.gl/FXUiW5>

Demonstrating Smoothness

Smoothness - one of the 4 'S's (safe, systematic, speed, smooth) - but how do you define smoothness?

Here we are following a bus and car. In

FUTURE RUNS by Peter Woolven

Below is a list of proposed future runs to be led by Peter Woolven. Please check the **EDAM Facebook page nearer the time for more details and in case of changes:** <https://goo.gl/zyVD3q>

Thursday Evening Runs:

18th May, 19:00 departure from The Steading

15th June. Traquair and Stobo. Finish at Leadburn Inn.

6th July. Ettrick Bridge.

Daytime Runs:

Saturday 3rd June. Blairgowrie, Killiecrankie and Killin. Meet at Steading 09:15, depart 09:30. Second start point Kinross Services if needed. About 220 miles, back in Edinburgh 1800 to 1830.

Sunday 1st October. Glen Lyon. Details to come later, start from Steading, time undecided yet.

Yorkshire Weekend

Saturday 5th August to Sunday 6th August.

Date is fixed and details coming shortly. Basically leave Saturday morning, down via North Pennines, overnight in Ripon and back via North York Moors and A68 arriving Edinburgh tea time. About 400 miles in all.

FOR SALE

Nobody has submitted an advert this month but current full members and associates are welcome to advertise in this space according to the following guidelines:

- The items must be the personal possessions of the EDAM member and not sold for commercial gain.
- The items must be closely related to motorcycling.
- The adverts must state a price and contact details—neither Twistgrip nor EDAM will act as a go-between.
- The items must be described accurately. Photos should be clear and contain enough detail to be useful.
- EDAM does not take any responsibility for the accuracy of the advert content and will not be held responsible for any errors or omissions.
- Adverts will only appear for a single edition of Twistgrip.
- The Editor reserves the right not to include an advert if it does not meet the above guidelines, or due to lack of space or other editorial reasons.

IAM TEST PASSES

Congratulations to the following Associates:

Scott Barron for passing his test on 25th April with examiner Alistair MacLean and gaining a **F1RST**.

Michael Murray who also passed his on 25th April with Alistair. Michael benefits from a refund of his course fees as a result of the Laidlaw bequest which reimburses those under 29 on successful passing of the IAM test.

Michael Pate who passed his test on 2nd May with Alistair MacLean. Michael is the second Laidlaw candidate of 2017.

William Miller who passed his test on 5th May with Lee Fisher.

OBSERVERS

Congratulations to Greg Symons on passing the Radio Level 3 qualification.

town, expect a bus to stop, so there is no benefit in getting too close. If we just hang back, we don't need to brake and the gap opens up to pass the bus, giving space if anyone steps out from in front of the bus.

I guess this is what I define as smoothness

<https://goo.gl/qmvqwG>

NEW FACES

EDAM welcomes the following members:

Sadia Sohail, Edinburgh
Shaun Benfold, Whitburn
Owen O'Neill, Dunfermline
Darren Bell, Penicuik
James Thornhill, Edinburgh
Helen Brown, Edinburgh
Jim Taylor, Edinburgh



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

Blair completes his marathon journey around Scotland and reflects on the journey

Day 11. Wednesday 15 June 2016.
Portpatrick to New Abbey – 158 miles.
Total 1602.

An early start and there's blue sky above. A good ride down on the South Rhins. I'm slightly puzzled that the sea is on my left-hand side and I realise I've simply gone round the figure-of-eight the wrong way – no worries, back on track quickly. Back into Stranraer for fuel and then through Glenluce and along the coast to the Isle of Whithorn, then north to Wigtown and Newton Stewart. The A75 is a quick road and I pass Gatehouse of Fleet in no time before I have a right turn to Kirkcudbright. There is an annoying wrong turn but I realise my error before I've gone too far.

The area is prime dairy country with many herds to be seen. There are a couple of signs indicating the presence of belted Galloways – but I don't see any.

The ride from Kirkcudbright to Dalbeattie is a bit frustrating in that that the road (A711) does not run alongside the coast and there are no impressive views – in addition the sky is overcast and rain looks a possibility. Just after Dalbeattie, tiredness sets in and I make for Kippford – my good fortune deserts me and there are no rooms at the inns. There is B&B available at Rockcliffe but there is very little else and I decide to push on. There are a couple of viewpoints over the sands onto the Solway Firth but the poor light would mean poor photos.

Riding through New Abbey I enquire at the roadside hotel about B&B – and suc-

cess. The proprietor (Irish) seems a gregarious bloke and he's entertaining the locals with his views on the EU referendum. Unpack the bike and have a wee wander around the village. The sun is out and it's very pleasant. Back at the hotel, the proprietor tells me that the village had recently won an award for the most beautiful village in Scotland. He then continues, "but given the state of most Scottish villages, it's not that difficult to win."

Given that the sun is out, it crosses my mind to go back to the viewpoint at Drumburn and get some decent photos – but I'm settled for the day. Enjoy a couple of beers in the evening with a decent meal. I listen to an argument in the adjoining bar concerning the EU referendum – someone asks, "Does any other EU country have midges?" No-one knows. Someone replies, "That's the trouble, we don't have the facts."

Trip Advisor has given the hotel some adverse comments. Sometimes I wonder if people have lost their sense of proportion. I would describe the hotel is an old-fashioned travellers' inn. It does not advertise itself as having any AA/RAC/VisitScotland "stars" – it's one of these places where you get what it says, ie B&B. It's clean, it's quite welcoming, it's convenient. If I remember when I get home I'll get onto Trip Advisor and give it a good review.

Looking at the maps and weather forecasts, I have a bit of a dilemma. There's approximately 250 miles remaining – two short days? However, rain is expected tomorrow from about lunchtime, and then it looks pretty grim the following day, the Friday. Is it worth just doing the

whole trip tomorrow? Completing it on the Friday might give me even more miserable conditions. Let's see how things go – the weather forecasts might be too pessimistic.

Day 12. Thursday 16 June 2016. New Abbey to Forth Bridge, North Queensferry – 244 miles. Total 1846.

An excellent breakfast and on the road by 8.30 – the weather forecasts are still predicting rain from noon onwards. I'd hoped that there might be a petrol station on the road going into Dumfries – but there's not and I waste some time finding fuel in the centre of town.

Back on the coastal road, I then make a navigational error and find myself back in Dumfries! More wasted time. I find the correct 'B' roads and make it through Annan and Gretna and then under the M74 and now begin to ride inland on the Scotland side of the border. The skies ahead are dark grey and I suspect that rain awaits me.



I'm enjoying this B6357 to Newcastleton – the plan is to go straight up to the A6088, onto Carter Bar and then the A68 to Jedburgh. But the best laid schemes etc etc – a road sign warns me of a road closure ahead with no access to Bonchester Bridge. The sign is ambiguous – I can't tell for certain if the A6088 is closed. If it is, then I won't be able to reach the A68. I wait for 10 minutes but there's no traffic either way. The rain begins and that makes up my mind for me – I decide to cut my losses and retrace my route. I'll then head into Hawick and approach Jedburgh from the south-west. The ride into Hawick is awful – heavy rain with poor visibility and temperatures at about 10 degrees C. This is a pity, as decent weather would have made it a good ride.

A stop at Hawick for coffee gives me time to ponder my options. The rain has eased a bit so I decide to press on to Kelso – I



will seek accommodation there. I join a small convoy of lorries travelling at about 55 mph – it’s lazy riding and I make no attempt to overtake – it’s poor weather and I’m happy to follow them. I loop round by Town Yetholm – and into Kelso. The rain has eased a bit and I make for Coldstream – on entering the town I’m so busy looking for accommodation that I miss the turning and end up south of the border – that wasn’t in the plan. A brief stop at Coldstream to get my bearings – the sky towards the northeast looks clearer, so Eyemouth is in my sights.

After a few miles I realise my folly as the rain arrives in earnest. I’m convinced that I’ll get a B&B in Eyemouth – but sadly, my previous good fortune deserts me. Eyemouth seems a wet depressing place as I ride around looking for accommodation – nothing at all.

I’m wet and quite cold. It’s about 4pm and I make the decision – let’s complete the journey today. Even if I was to get accommodation tonight, it would be another wet journey tomorrow. I’ve still got plenty of daylight left, even if it is dull and overcast – North Queensferry here we come.

I then endure quite a tricky ride over Coldingham Moor – there’s a lot of mist around and visibility is very poor – thankfully the road is reasonably straight and I’m able to join the A1 without too much drama. Then through Dunbar, North Ber-



wick, Gullane, Longniddry, Cockenzie, Prestonpans, Musselburgh, Portobello and Leith. Slow progress from Musselburgh through Edinburgh.

Stopping in Edinburgh to re-fuel, I receive a call from my sister – an elderly aunt has died after a very short illness. And so, the last few miles of the journey are tinged with a certain amount of sadness.

At the last moment I remember to loop round and pass through South Queensferry – then over the road bridge and back to the original start point at the rail bridge. The journey is completed in dull, overcast conditions – I’d been hoping for some sunshine. It’s 6.50pm and as I park the bike the rain starts – I smile ruefully to myself – welcome to Scotland.

I take a few photos, including a selfie – which turns out to be quite good in terms of composition, with the road bridges reflected in my visor. I add up the total mileage – 1,846 – and take some minutes to reflect on the journey. It’s been a good trip and a decent achievement.

Reflections and observations

1. Route

The original intention had been to ride the coast of mainland Scotland using the ‘A’ and ‘B’ roads closest to the coast. In the main I more or less achieved it. The road closure at Bonchester Bridge was annoying. I think if it had been a better day, then I probably would have persevered.

I also missed the B8025/B841 loop north of Lochgilphead. In addition I cannot say that I rode the required ‘B’ roads in the coastal towns – poor signage and one-way systems in some towns meant that I was satisfied if I was travelling parallel to the coast.

2. Enjoyment/satisfaction/achievement

Sense of satisfaction: 10/10. I suppose that comes from knowing that all the planning paid off and the bike and rider went well.

Sense of achievement: 10/10. I can now look at a map of Scotland and think, “I’ve been around that.”

Enjoyment: 6.5/10. If it had been better weather, then the score would have been ‘10’. But a lot of the time I was riding in mist, haar, drizzle and rain with accompa-

nying low temperatures. In addition I always seemed to have one eye on the horizon looking for blue sky, or, less grey.

3. My riding

I managed to complete the trip without too much drama. I felt I rode reasonably well and didn’t stall the bike. The roads didn’t lend themselves to fast speeds and this suited me – I was keen to admire the scenery & landscape and this is more achievable at 45-55 mph.

A couple of close calls: the bin lorry and the deer. The first was my error; the second, I’m not sure what you can really do in these situations except be more alert.

The ride also confirmed what I already suspected – that I prefer to ride alone. As a solo rider, you make all the decisions – when to set off, the route, the speed of travel, the coffee & lunch stops, the photo stops, the accommodation decisions etc. On the negative side, if anything goes wrong, then you’re on your own. Fortunately, nothing did go wrong.

4. Equipment

The packing worked well. I took the right amount of clothes but I definitely needed the launderette in Fort William.

The BMW panniers were approximately 95% waterproof, but everything had been wrapped in plastic bags. I used see-through “zipped” freezer bags to store the smaller items – this made them easy to locate within the panniers.

I also took:

- A small tool set – not used.
- A puncture repair kit – not used.
- A decent first-aid kit – not used.

I also took a spare pair of spectacles – it would have been unfortunate to abandon the trip because of a lost/damaged pair of glasses.

Before setting off I downloaded the RealRider RealSafe app to my phone. When switched on, the app tracked my progress – if the bike came to a sudden and unexpected stop then the app would phone me and if I didn’t respond then it would contact directly the emergency services and provide them with my last known geographical position. At first I was somewhat hesitant about using it, as there was some concern about forgetting to switch the app off at coffee/lunch breaks and thus causing the emergency services to be

alerted unnecessarily! However, after riding on some of the more remote roads I soon realised that if there was a mishap then the reality was that very few vehicles passed by and even if they did, I might not be visible from the road.

I seriously considered taking a tank bag to store my camera, phone and maps. In the end I decided against taking it, as it was another piece of luggage to look after.

Navigation. I took maps at 1:500,000, 1:250,000 and 1:50,000 scale. All of them had usefulness at particular points in my journey and I was pleased that I had made space for them. On a day-to-day basis, I wrote out the relevant road numbers and taped them to my tank. I then consulted the maps if need be. If there had been limited space then the 1:250,000 sheets would have been the preferred scale.

Camera. I decided to leave my camera at home and just use my phone – a Samsung A3. I was quite impressed with the quality of the photos and I have a decent record of the trip. I was pleased that one of my photos was published in the Readers' Photos section of the weekly Motorcycle News.

5. Planning

Prior to the trip I seemed to spend a lot of time on the "planning". But, it wasn't wasted time. The hours spent with the AA route finder helped me appreciate the mileage and the riding times. The two practice trips into Fife and along the East Neuk gave me evidence of the mph I could expect and also the range of the tank. Also let me see what 5-6 hours riding could achieve.

6. Remoteness

Some people do live in remote parts of the country. Travelling along some of the isolated 'B' roads, I was immediately struck by the sharp differences between urban and rural dwellers. Living in Edinburgh, it is so easy to have access to shops, dentists, doctors etc. You have to be pretty self-reliant to live in some of these remote areas – and all credit to the people that manage it.

7. Road signs

I felt that some of the road signposting was poor in the rural areas. But that was maybe because I was relying on road numbers rather than place names – and in the rural areas it's maybe the location names that are more important. And

then you had the Gaelic place names – many times coming to a junction I found myself desperately scanning a multitude of place names trying to find the road number.



9. Weather

It is no coincidence that the most enjoyable days had decent weather. Taking the trip as a whole, I estimate that one third was spent riding in sea mist/haar; one third in drizzle/rain; and one third in bright conditions. All in all, it was a bit disappointing.

On one of the sunnier days I stopped at a viewpoint and was chatting to another three bikers. As we surveyed the magnificent view, I remarked, "Pity the weather's not always like this." One of them replied, "If it was, then everybody would be here." He's got a point – maybe the elements exercise a control over the number of tourists in relation to the available infrastructure.

On the plus side, there was virtually no wind whatsoever on the trip – so that was a bonus. I'm also aware that if I'd started the trip a week earlier, I might have completed the whole thing in sunny and dry conditions – such is the Scottish weather.

10. Impact of the "North Coast 500"

Part of my journey coincided with the route of the "North Coast 500". It was interesting to hear from locals what their experiences were. Café owners and retailers were pleased that more people were passing through and as a result their trade was increasing. On the other hand, several hoteliers weren't sure – they'd noticed that people were only staying for one night and then moving on – previously, tourists might have stayed for a few nights and used the hotels as a base. Now, the one-night stays were giving the hoteliers more work with changing beds etc.

In addition, there was concern that the single-track roads wouldn't be able to cope with the volume of traffic. In my limited experience there did seem to be a lot of traffic on the single-track roads, eg

the A838 from Durness to Laxford Bridge – a lot of motorhomes to contend with. My trip was completed in June – outside of the main tourist season of July/August – would be interesting to find out if these months were busier than usual. (My friend in Applecross certainly wasn't impressed with the increase in traffic going over the Bealach.)

It's also interesting to consider the power of travel websites, bike websites, car club websites and social media in attracting people to the "North Coast 500". I met riders from Switzerland and Belgium who had learned of the road through travel websites and social media. I also saw German and French bikes on the route. But, just as people can rave about something on websites & social media and it can go viral, I suppose that equally, if the roads do become busy, then it will just as easy to inform potential visitors that the roads are clogged and the route is a poor experience.

12. Was it an adventure?

Well, it certainly wasn't a Ted Simon/Ewan McGregor epic. But, for a 60 year old, it was a reasonable adventure. There was an element of risk. The fact there was no pre-booked accommodation added to the sense of "adventure". I suppose in these modern times, many facets of life are so well organised that maybe you lose a certain sense of spontaneity.

Also, it did demonstrate that you could have a wee adventure on your own doorstep.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

There were certain answers provided by the IAM to questions they had received about IAM membership, that I felt were disingenuous, and hope this letter might clarify the current position.

IAM membership is a prerequisite of local group membership, and only local group full members can participate in running EDAM as an independent charity affiliated to the IAM. EDAM committee members / charity trustees, and EDAM Observers must be IAM members.

The IAM do not fund all observer training. Local Observer (LO) training and approval is provided by EDAM, and EDAM purchase IAM Observer course material (which is reimbursed on successful LO qualification). National Observer training is provided by EDAM, but approval is by test with IAM's Area Service Delivery Manager (ASDM). No fee is charged for successful test, but referral incurs a charge.

IAM pay for IMI Local Observer registration, but may charge back to group, if trainee does not complete qualification within a reasonable timescale (12 months).

Local Observer requalification is conducted by EDAM, but IAM pay for National Observer requalification with ASDM.

Group and Observer liability insurance is purchased by the IAM as a block policy, and is then charged to the local groups. The 2017 EDAM premium was £125.

There will be no IAM conference in 2017, and the IAM regional forums will be reduced from 2 meetings to 1 meeting for 2017 – see [here](#) for my report on this meeting held 1st April 2017.

Scottish IAM Motorcycle Forum is not organised or funded by the IAM, and will continue to meet twice a year.

The IAM Advanced course price of £149 contains a number of elements. IAM 1st year membership (£35) group component including 1st year group membership (£31) initial test fee (£73) and course material (£10).

The comparison to the RLNI seems unhelpful.

Pat Doughty, IAM Charity Operations Di-

rector stated in 2016 that IAM full membership should be seen as a charitable donation, similar to Cancer Research, and that no membership benefit should be expected. IAM Full members might take the view that they were subscribing to a membership charity, more similar to The National Trust.

IAM Surety – IAM continue to report competitiveness and high levels of policy retention at renewal with IAM Surety. This is not my personal experience and not that of EDAM members I speak to. There is no such thing as an "Observer Policy" offered by IAM Surety, and observing should not require additional cover, above your existing policy cover, from your insurer.

The IAM's suggestion of developing a network of Observers outwith the local group structure is quite novel to me, and in light of the above, may present a training challenge, unless the initial LO training was done via the group structure.

Observer lapel badges will require to be purchased by groups.

The impression is given that Full membership is subsidising Masters courses, and F1rst & Fellow membership. Masters courses cost should be covered by the current fee (£129 unmentored, £249 mentored). F1rst is no different from any other IAM test/test re-sit and is charged at the normal test/retest fee. Fellowship membership will fund 3-year retest through enhanced membership fee.

These has never been a suggestion that local group Full Members would ever be IAM employees. (Tax & N.I. would seem the least of the issues that might arise.)

As IAM is still in transition from Group Qualified Observers to IMI Local Observer, which should be completed by the end of 2017, it is unsurprising that the number of Local Observers is still increasing.

IAM 2017 Year of the Observer – the only announced initiative has been that there will be a number of free entry tickets for Observers attending Motorcycle Live at NEC in November. A "huge number" of initiatives may be a relative term.

Elliot Beattie
Committee Member
04/04/2017

AGM Report by Glynn Jones

The EDAM AGM was held on Thursday 20th April and enjoyed what is thought to be a record attendance of 46 members. The minutes are published here: <https://goo.gl/Ch4kvx>

EDAM goes from strength to strength and we are consistently the best performing IAM motorcycle group in Scotland.

The business part of the meeting was dispatched rather quickly and most officers and committee members were re-elected. One notable exception was a change of Group Secretary. Elliot Beattie stood down after many years of sterling work and was replaced by Sadia Sohail, a new member of EDAM who has transferred up from Birmingham. What a great way to say hello! We all look forward to working with Sadia over the coming year (s). I would hazard a guess that she is the youngest ever EDAM Secretary, though some say that Elliot was 18 when he started and he claims he is only 23 now!

A number of EDAM trophies were presented to their respective winners (see page 10).

Carina Cairns took care of a very tasty buffet supper and then we all settled down to listen to an enjoyable presentation by Roddy Benzies of Get2Grips Advanced Motorcycle training. Roddy entertained us with stories of his early career in Fife Constabulary which included such highlights as the miner's strike, the prison run and a slightly dodgy attempt at driving a makeshift ambulance. His passion for all things with wheels and engines led him to greater things and culminated in 5 years as a police advanced driving & motorcycling instructor at the Police College at Tulliallan.

What Roddy doesn't know about riding a bike isn't worth knowing and he now shares his wisdom with anyone who wishes to pay a modest fee for training. Twistgrip doesn't do advertising, but it won't take much Googling to find Roddy if you are thinking of honing your skills.

Thanks to all the members that attended the meeting. It is good to see so many taking an active interest in the welfare of the group.



EDAM Trophy Winners

The EDAM trophies, presented by Chairman Sandy Dickson, were awarded at the AGM. The winner of the Laidlaw Trophy (Full Member) for 2016 is yet to be decided.



President's Trophy: Elliot Beattie for service as Secretary



Two Wheels Trophy: Dave McCutcheon for service as Events Coordinator



Laidlaw Trophy (Full Member) 2015: Stuart Richardson



Laidlaw Trophy (Associate Member) 2016: Jim McLaughlin

RIDE REPORT: SCAA Charity Ride to Hadrian's Wall by Suzanne & Stuart Lothian

The Pillion Perspective: This was my first time attending Elliot's charity fundraiser for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA). The full day ride out started from the Steading Bar in Edinburgh before moving through Midlothian, the Scottish Borders, Cumbria and Northumberland to Chollerford where we stopped for lunch.

There was a great turnout with about 22 riders and 1 pillion looking forward to the 212 mile round trip to Hadrian's Wall and back. We were very lucky with the weather enjoying some great sunshine with temperatures around 13 degrees.

We left the Steading Bar at 9:30am and drove through Galashiels and Hawick before our morning coffee stop at Fletcher's in Selkirk. The weather was even good enough to let us sit outside! Some of the views on the route down were stunning where we passed turreted country homes and lush green rolling hills and countryside.

After our morning coffee, the day got even better whereby we experienced riding on some long 'Roman roads' which held warning signs of 'severe dips'. They weren't kidding ~ a rider two bikes in front disappeared for 2 seconds before reappearing out of the dip!

Lunch was a choice of homemade soup, toasties or homemade pies. Being so close to Hadrian's Wall, it proved quite a popular little café with walkers, cyclists and tourists alike. We all ate outside in the sunshine where everyone was able to have a good catch up and chat about the ride down.



The ride out works particularly well as it uses the 'drop off system' that calls for the rider behind the lead to stop at a junction, if not going straight over, so that all other riders know there's a turn to be made and in what direction. Once all riders have passed the 'visible biker marker', he/she slots back in just in front of the back marker. This ensures nobody is left behind, gets lost or that the group splits.

It also helps make sure that we all arrive at the next allocated destination. Thankfully the café queues weren't too bad on Sunday and we all got served relatively quickly!

We had a great drive back by Keilder Forest in Northumberland, which was stunning and well worth a trip back to explore more, before enjoying afternoon coffee back in the Scottish Borders (Jedburgh). Feeling sufficiently fed, watered and travelled we were soon homeward bound.

It seemed everybody had a truly great ride out with no delays, problems or hiccups on the roads. All-in-all, a brilliant day out with stunning scenery, fabulous company and glorious sunshine making this a day to remember. Hopefully the event will raise a generous amount in donations for this very worthwhile charity – Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance. Now that Spring has officially arrived, I'm looking forward to the next ride out, wherever that may be!



The Rider Perspective: I've recently returned to motorbiking after a break of 15 years and I am now the proud rider of an R1200 GSA. Here's some observations and points of view from an Associate Rider:

As an Associate, group riding on the one hand is a great learning experience by watching others, albeit a little nerve racking when riding with so many other bikers. However, the great thing about riding in a group of advanced motorcyclists is that they're all aware of their own space or 'bubble'. Therefore, you quickly realise that everything you've learned in terms of the 2 second rule is almost nearly, depending on circumstance, followed by each and every rider. This gives you confidence that the theory is being put into practice and makes riding with others not only more comfortable, but also increases the degree of safety between bikes. When learning advanced riding, you are



always encouraged to push on and keep up the momentum within the current speed limit. What's interesting when riding with so many other bikes is that it's important that you learn to ride at your own pace, within your own abilities and within your own comfort zone and not necessarily keep up with the pace of the group. That said, the advantage of doing multiple ride outs with EDAM is that you gain confidence and valuable experience each time which increases your overall riding ability.

In terms of IPSGA (Information, Position, Speed, Gear, Acceleration) when being observed you usually only have somebody behind you watching your riding style, however, in group riding you have the benefit of seeing other riders in front and how they apply the IPSGA approach. This means you are always learning from other advanced riders, on bikes larger and smaller as well as slower and faster than your own.

Most of my ride outs include a pillion passenger which adds in further complexity to the riding as well as additional responsibility having a passenger on board. This is especially true at give way and stop signs when issues such as the road camber need to be considered.

My experiences to date on this bike includes a cornering course at Knockhill and participation in the GS Challenge in Cardiff in 2016. I'm currently doing my IAM training which I hope to complete this Summer.



WHAT IS EDAM? by Glynn Jones

We have had a recent influx of almost 30 new members and it seems to be a good time to explain what EDAM is all about.

IAM Roadsmart acts as an umbrella organisation for the creation of advanced riding guidelines, training material and the administration and ratification of advanced assessments. In order to do this on a nationwide basis it relies on a large number of local "groups" and EDAM is one of these.

So, on the most basic level, EDAM is responsible for delivering the IAM Roadsmart Advanced Rider Course (as it is currently called) to Associates within Edinburgh and surrounding areas. Of course, we do much more than that and consider ourselves to be a 'club' in terms of providing social activities, ride-outs and skills days. In many respects it is these latter activities that appeal to most members once they have passed the advanced test. Membership of EDAM is only open to current Associates and paid-up members of IAM Roadsmart. People who are not IAM members may still make a charitable donation to EDAM and anyone so doing will receive a copy of Twistgrip each month. Ride-outs and most other EDAM activities are open to everyone.

EDAM was the 1st IAM motorcycle-only group in Scotland, formed in 1995, and is a charity registered in Scotland with OSCR. In order to run as a charity and an IAM Group we need a committee of members and officers with specific (and some non-specific) roles. These include: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Associate Secre-



tary, Events Coordinator and Newsletter Editor. We also have a number of charity Trustees who attend committee meetings without a specific role, and 6 Ambassadors whose role is to raise awareness of what EDAM & IAM do as a charity in regard to educating the general public about road safety. The names of the above are available in the minutes of the latest Annual General Meeting held in 20th April 2017.

You probably have had the biggest interaction with EDAM during your Skills for Life or Advanced Rider Course and so this aspect deserves some explanation. Guidance to Associates is provided by Observers who are part of small teams. The Ob-

server teams are lead, unsurprisingly, by Team Leaders and the whole shebang is led by our Chief Observer. Observers are qualified to either Local or National level and some NOs are also qualified to train and assess LOs. New Observers are generally drawn from the ranks of IAM Full Members whom have passed through EDAM as Associates although we also have Observers who became IAM members through other routes. We currently have almost 30 active Observers and a further 7 trainees.

All Observers are volunteers who give their time and use their own bikes because they are passionate about bikes and the safety of motorcyclists. Associates do make a contribution to Observer petrol but this amount does not cover the whole expense of being an Observer. If you don't yet know what's involved in the Advanced Rider Course, I won't spoil the surprise! All Associates seem to fully enjoy the process and EDAM has by far the highest number of Associates sitting and passing the test in Scotland.

Above all, EDAM is a group of like-minded individuals who share common interests and seek to improve their riding and safety out on the road. We are generally a cheery bunch and always happy to see members attending our organised events.

Keep reading Twistgrip and visit our website or Facebook page for the latest information.

