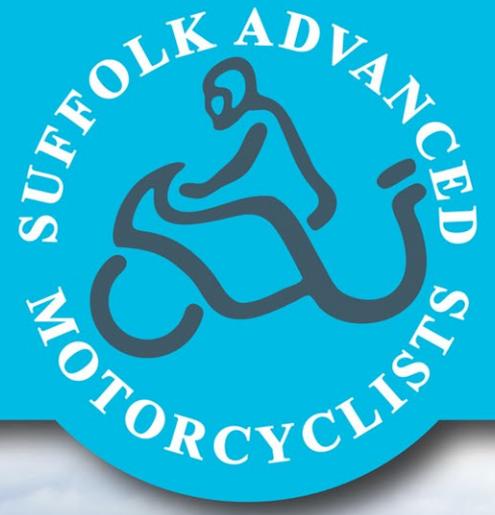


The SAM Observer

July 2020



Registered Charity No. 1067800



IAM Group No. 7219

The cover picture was taken by Graham Parker and is of his Moto Guzzi Brevia V11. The photo was taken overlooking the river Orwell.
The bike's name refers to the 'Wind from Lake Como'
Mike Roberts also did the digital editing.



View along A838 Lakes route
Les Smith, My write up is on page 6

YOUR COMMITTEE

No Calls After 21:00 Please

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NEXT ISSUE

Closing date for copy – **Monday after club night**. Send via e-mail or on a USB memory stick (which will be returned) or even hand-written, not a problem. The Editor reserves the right to edit, amend or omit as he feels fit.

WEBSITE ADDRESS

<http://www.suffolk-advanced-motorcyclists.com>

SAM is a registered Charity ~ No. 1067800

All Official Correspondence to:

The Secretary, Eric Aldridge,

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



Hello everyone, As I sit down to write this month's chat, Boris has just announced further easing of lockdown measures to take effect on 4th July. I haven't fully worked out yet what the changes might mean for us in SAM but there's nothing immediately obvious. By the time you read this, there might be more detail emerging and things may be a bit clearer.

However, the good news is that, acting on the previous rule changes, the social ride team have devised a way of organising some formal club social rides while complying fully with all government rules and guidelines. I'm banking on this being agreed by the committee imminently. It won't quite be 'life as we know it Jim' but if like me you're not an out and out lone rider, it will be good to ride in a group again. Stay tuned to the forum page on the SAM website to find out the details when they are finalised.

The one thing I did pick up in the Boris announcements is that hairdressers will be allowed to open again. That must be welcome news for all our lady members, but also for us men as well (or at least the less follicly challenged amongst us). We can now avoid the home haircut scenario. I thought my ever growing locks were developing a certain style similar to say, Richard Branson or maybe Billy Connolly, but apparently, according to family, the style was more like Compo in Last of the Summer Wine, so I had to have the home haircut. Have you seen that sheepdog in the 'should have gone to Specsavers' advert? Well, say no more. At least I can wear a crash helmet when I go out!

I'm pleased to hear that our SAM observers are back out and busy helping our associates improve their riding skills and get 'test ready'. I've also heard that there has been a good take up on the SAM HAM challenge. There's still plenty of time to enter if you want to do it.

As I said earlier, we're working out ways of getting members back out riding together, albeit in smaller groups. The only thing still missing is the group night and breakfast run scenarios where we can partake in the essential art of social banter, which I'm sure we all miss, and in my view is a crucial part of what keeps the club alive and kicking. Here' hoping a Covid 19 vaccine or an effective treatment is not too far away.

Cheers for now. Martin

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to our most recent Associate members:

David Pratt Simon Baker Suvanne Harding Rob Stanes
Stephen Field Warren Griggs Jonathan Marriott
Jeremy Duszynski

If anyone else has joined us and not had a mention yet, let the Editor know and he will put your name in the next Issue

IAM TEST PASSES

Congratulations to the members who have passed their
Advanced test this month.

Dave Roxburgh	his Observer was	Nick Braley
Kevin Bolton	his Observer was	Geoff Scott

When you pass your advanced test please let
Paul Ballard or Geoff Scott know.

NORTH COAST 500 SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS MAY 2018

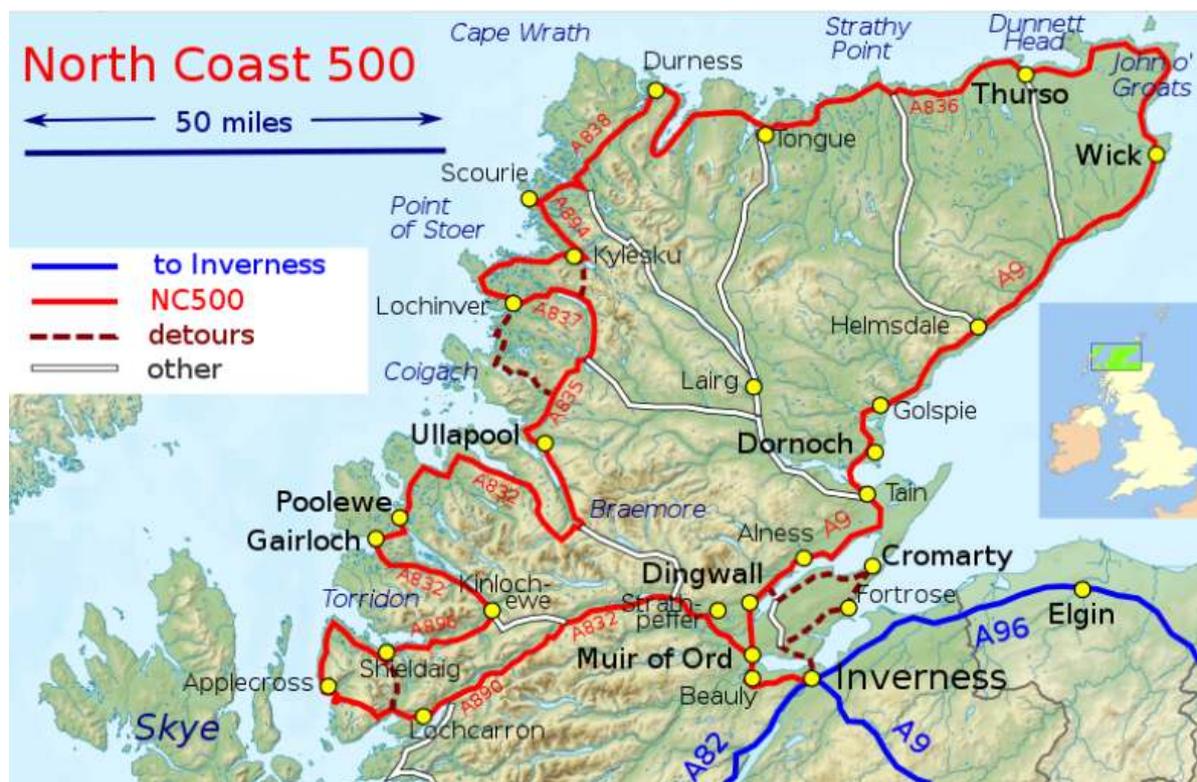
As we are still all pretty much limited to what we are allowed to do during the COVID 19 restrictions, I am once again trawling motorcycle trips from previous years, to keep up morale, and help Felix to fill these pages.

Back in 2018 I decided that I wanted to ride the North Coast 500 route in Scotland, although without the need to keep packing and unpacking the bike along the way. My simple solution to this was to find a small property to rent for a week somewhere central to the NC500, and to complete the route in loops from this base, with the added advantage of getting to ride even more of the roads in the highlands.

Decision made I consulted the map and decided that Lairg would suit my purposes perfectly, as it connected to all parts of the NC500. Onto the Airbnb

website and a suitable (very reasonably priced) bungalow was quickly booked for w/c 19th May 2018.

With the dates and accommodation sorted out, I spent some time with the maps, planning routes for each day, although without deciding on a final timetable, given the variable weather that can be found in the Highlands from one coast to the other, I also planned out my route and stopping points along the way to Lairg and back, leaving copies with my better half back at base, just in case I failed to check in when expected.



Some of you may recall that Saturday 19th May 2018 was the date of a royal wedding, as well as the FA cup finals in both England and Scotland, which had not been taken into consideration when I chose the dates for the trip, but which meant that I set out onto virtually empty roads at 06.00 on a dry and sunny Saturday morning.

Stage one was from Home to Ferrybridge Services along the A14 and A1, some 177 miles and 3 hours riding later I drove into an almost deserted service station for a much-needed coffee and to refuel. Stage two took me further along the A1, over the A66 and onto the M6, leading onto the M74 to Annandale Waters Services, another 3 hours and 160 miles covered

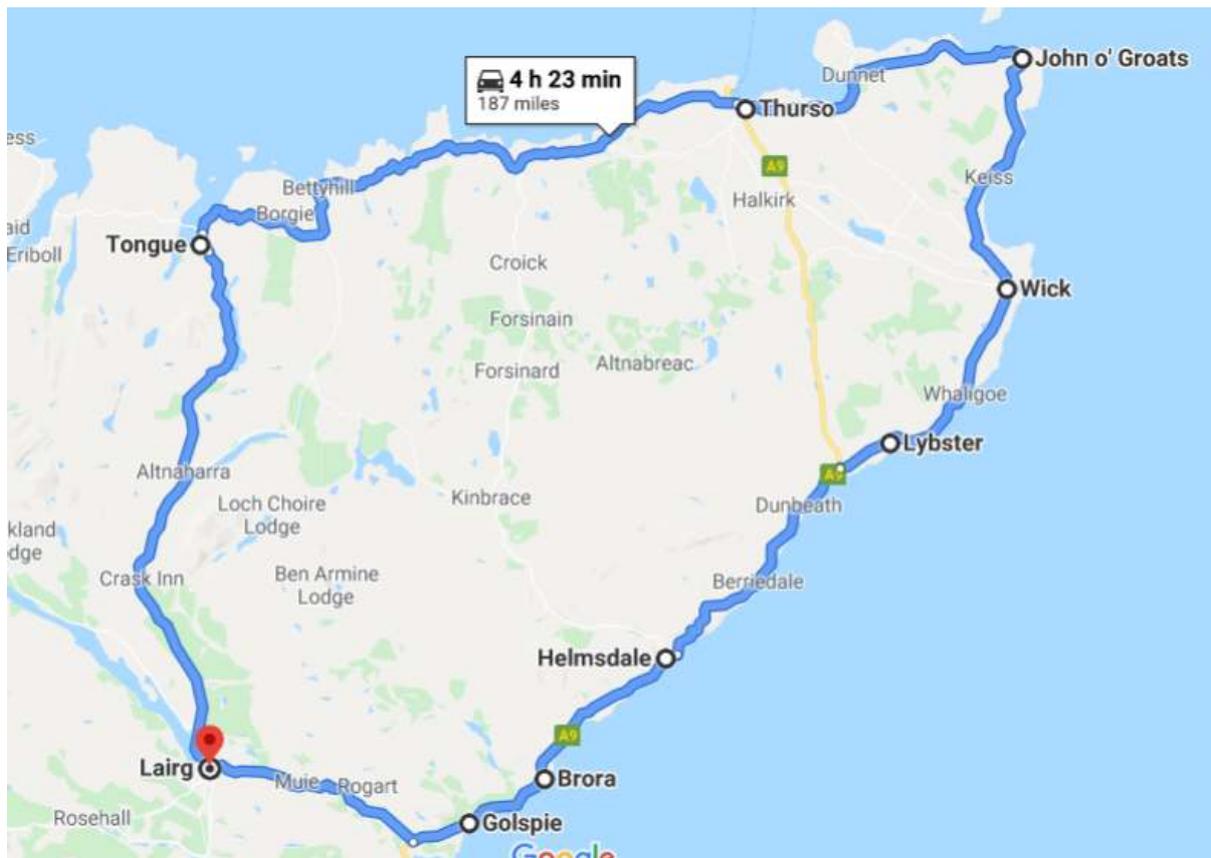
Another 2 stops and another 5 ½ hours later I finally arrived in Lairg. Sunday 20th dawned grey and overcast, although no rain was forecast, so I decided on a loop around the North East, via John o'Groats

A836 North from Lairg to Tongue

Right on A836 across the top to Thurso and John O'Groats
A99 South via Wick, and Lybster to join the A9
A 9 South via Dunbeath, Helmsdale, Brora, Golspie
Right on A839 to Lairg

Total of 187 miles - around 5 hours riding

As advertised, the NC500 route is really scenic, great views, great roads, and not too much traffic, although it is getting busier every year, with lots of Caravans and Camper Vans on the roads, which can be quite narrow in places, so overtaking opportunities need to be planned and taken whenever possible.



As is often the case in the Highlands, the weather forecast for Monday 21st was awful, torrential rain all day, but checking the weather map a bit to the South and East the sun was shining, so on went the rain gear, rode just over an hour down to Inverness and out of the storm, into glorious blue skies.

As I could be totally flexible, due to staying in one place for the duration, I headed into the Cairngorms for the day, route below, it was around 300 miles, further than I really wanted to go in one day, but so worthwhile, more great scenery, empty roads, even found a decent coffee stop.

A836 from Lairg back down to the A9
A9 south to Inverness
A96 east to Nairn

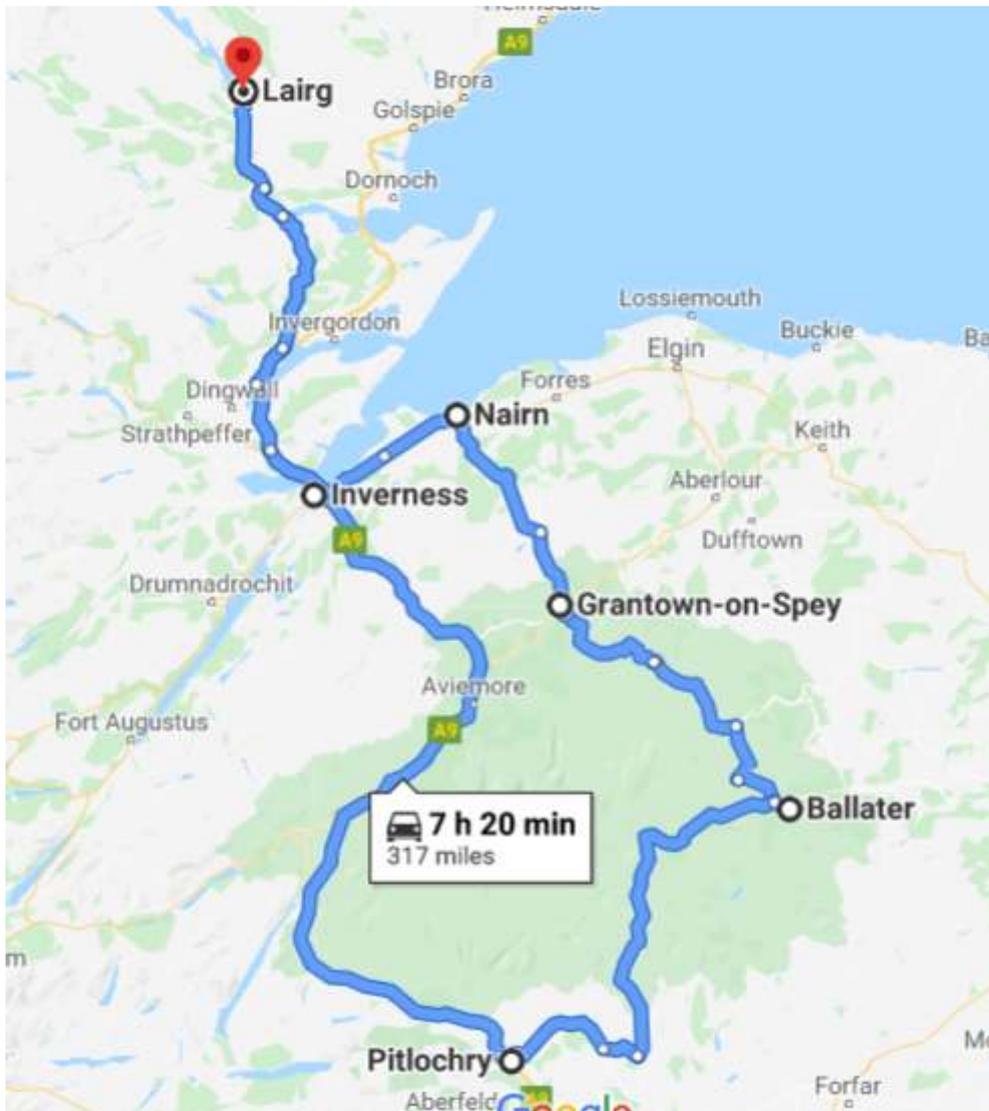
A939 south via Granttown on Spey to Ballater

A93 to the A924

A924 back to the A9 at Pitlochry

A9 back to the A836 via Inverness back to Lairg

The rain was still falling when I got close to Inverness, so back into the rain gear for the last few miles of the day.



The weather can change dramatically overnight, on Tuesday 22nd the sun was out in the highlands again, so I decide to cover the South Western loop of my 3 loop NC500 plan, covering the route below.

A836 and B9176 south to the A9

A9 towards Inverness

Pick up the A862 to A835 to join the A832 west to Achnasheen

A890 to Lochcarron

A896 to pick up the pass known as Bealach na Bà in Gaelic (the Pass of the Cattle) over to Applecross

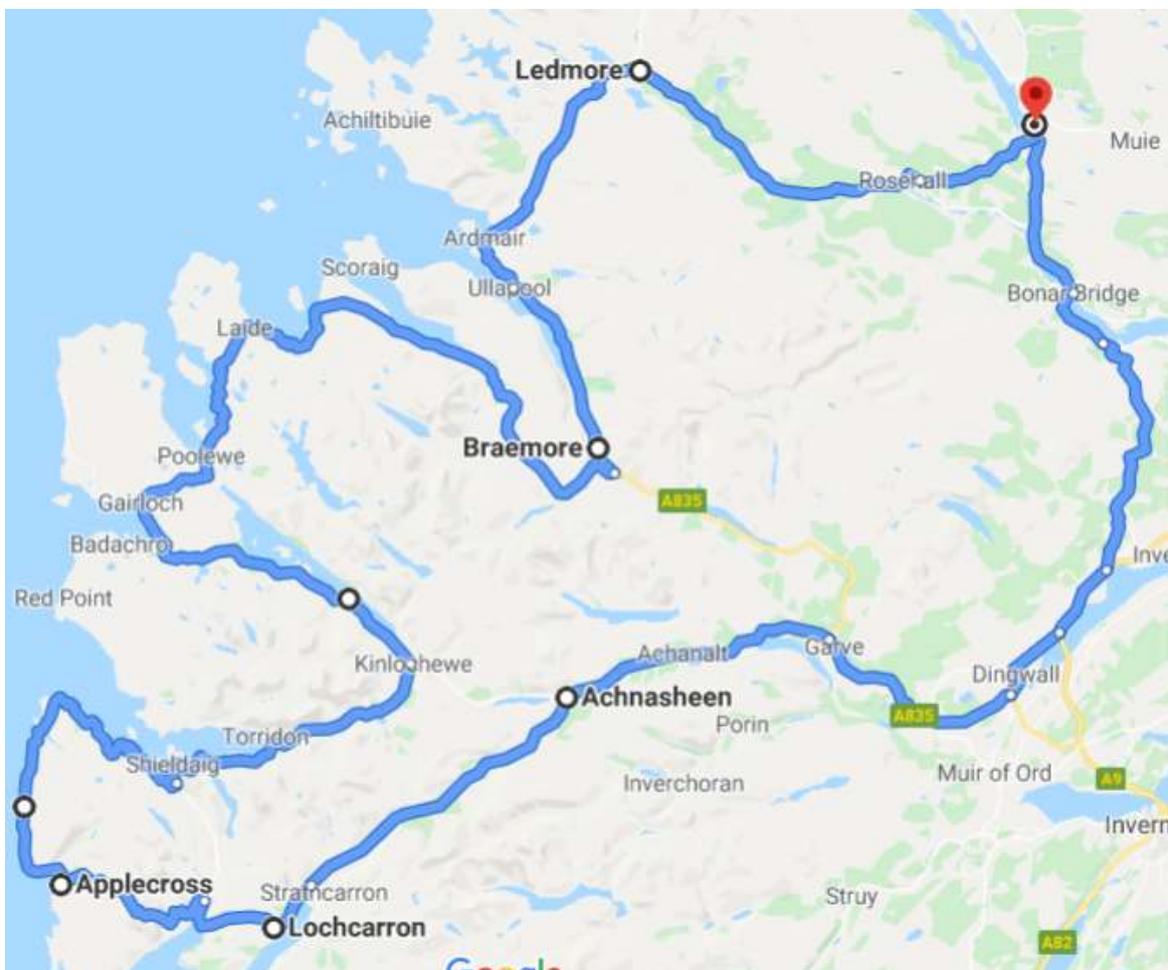
Coast road north round the peninsula to pick up the 896 again to Torridon

Pick up the A832 north round to Braemore
North on the A835 to Ledmore
A837 back to Lairg

The first part of the day was the least interesting, down to Inverness again, and then across to the West Coast, but things really improved from Lochcarron onwards, over the single track pass to Applecross, hairpins along the way, down to a lunch stop at the Applecross Inn.

After that the joys of the narrow coastal road around the peninsula to Torridon, a route I have actually ridden before, and look forward to riding again sometime, this is some of the most scenic, and remote parts of the NC500 route.

Finally, back onto some slightly wider roads for the end of the days trip round the coast via Ullapool to Ledmore and finally back down to base in Lairg.



Wednesday 23rd was my last day to complete the NC500, so the North West section was foremost in mind, but at the same time I wanted to explore some of the other roads around the area, especially the road past Ben Hope, and the A838 which goes past a few lakes along the way, and on a sunny day (like this was) was a great way to close out the trip, so I planned a figure of 8 (ish) route to cover it in both directions, route was:-

North West on A838 to Laxford Bridge

Follow the A838 round the north coast to Tongue - (to finish the top part of the NC500)

Reverse direction back to Hope then down an unnamed road past Ben Hope to Altnaharra

South on the A836 back to Lairg to complete the first loop of my figure of 8

Stop for a nice lunch in Lairg ☺

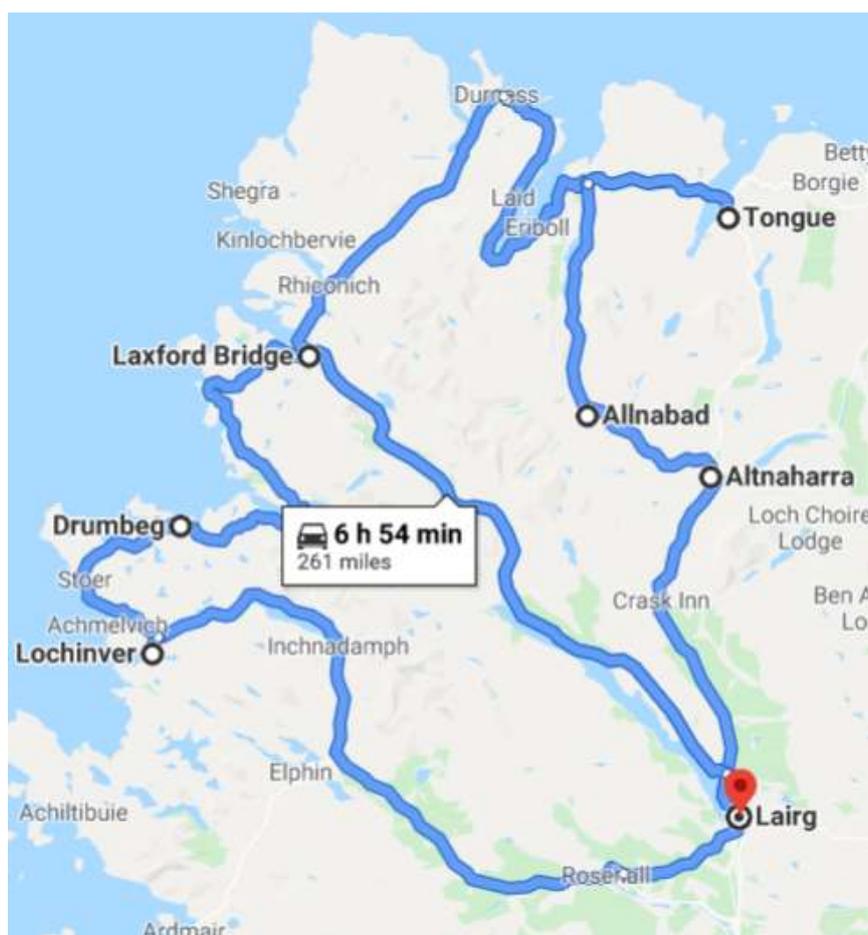
A839 and A837 west to Ledmore then A837 to Lochinver

B869 round to join the A894

A894 to Laxford Bridge

Then finish up back down the A838 to Lairg

Total of just over 260 miles.



After all the fun of the NC500 plus, at 06.00 on Thursday 24th, I set out for the long ride home, took pretty much the same route home as on the way, finally ending up at home around 18.00

I would heartily recommend the NC500 as a great bike trip, especially if we remain restricted on any travel outside of the UK for a while, although I would suggest you allow at least a week for the trip.

Les Smith



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SUFFOLK ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS HAM CHALLENGE 2020

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Right, who had the bright idea to organise a SAM Challenge in 2020? Ok, it was me. It had all started off so well. I'd found 25 villages with their signs, on Google, all nicely spread around Suffolk and Norfolk. The anagrams and clues were prepared and I had my launch speech all prepared for the March group night.

Then along came a virus from miles away to change everything.

The group night got cancelled but at least I could rely on the SAM magazine and the online forum to inform you all that there was a Challenge for you to amuse yourselves with during the summer.

Early signs were good as over 30 people signed up and managed to make a start before Boris told us all to stay at home. During this time it was brought to my attention by Bryan, who was keen to get off to a good start, that 2 of my chosen signs had been removed. Why can't people just leave things alone?

Undeterred by this, Bryan soon found a couple of replacement items in the same locations to take their place. So now we had 23 village signs, a wooden notice board and a "Village of the Year" sign to find. Then everything went quiet as bikes were left in their sheds as we all did as Boris asked. Daily briefings were closely watched as pointless questions were asked and never really answered. I watched intently hoping in vain that Laura Kuenssberg would actually ask

something worthwhile like when can we all get back on our bikes and recommence the Challenge. Sadly she never did.

Eventually Boris said we could go out if we were careful as long as we were home by bedtime and some businesses could reopen if they were able. This was good news. Requests for registrations for the challenge started to arrive as you decided that it was time to get out once again.

This brought a different problem because in my original instructions I had asked that you visit the premises of our sponsors, Reiten Motorrad, as part of the Challenge. However, as they were unable to fully reopen their premises, their director David Halsall, politely requested that we did not just turn up as they were working strictly to a by appointment only system for sales and servicing and they wouldn't be able to cope with extra visitors just to take a photo. Once they can fully reopen then we will all be made very welcome to enjoy their excellent hospitality once again.

I know that the lack of facilities that are open may be deterring some of you from venturing far, especially in the tea and wee departments, but I have already started to receive some completed entries. These are handed over to Judge Judy for checking before names are put in the prize draw. She's very thorough so make sure everything is in order!

At the time of writing we have 3 names in the draw and over 50 names registered to enter. I would prefer to stick to the original finish date of 31st August but if we cannot have a presentation night in September this date may get extended. Things are changing on a daily basis and by the time you read this, then circumstances will have moved on so please bear with me. I will put an update in the August magazine.

So to recap, if you would like to participate in the 2020 SAM HAM Challenge and be in with a chance to win either £150 or £50 of vouchers to spend at Reiten Motorrad or a special priceless third prize of a day out with yours truly at a race meeting of your choice at Snetterton, then please contact me and I will send you all the information.

Enjoy your riding and stay safe.

Nigel Chittock
nigel.chittock@btinternet.com

SAM HAM Challenge organiser

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SAM THEORY EVENINGS

Watch out for updates as the club is planning to hold Zoom meetings further details as they become available

As most of you know, on the 3rd Thursday evening every month, SAM holds its monthly Theory Evening. Based on an ever revolving subject list of important rider skills these nights are an informal evening of facts and lively banter all aimed at improving your ride based on the information in the Advanced Rider Course Logbook.

Each session covers one of the four main topic areas;

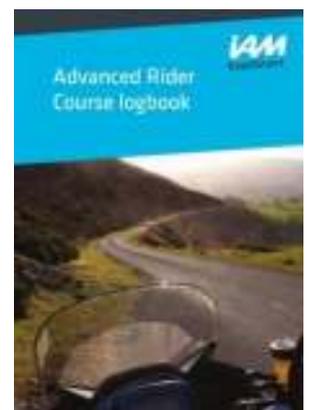
Overtaking	Planning & Positioning
Cornering	Gears & Acceleration

Mainly aimed at Associates going through the course, these evenings are also a good way for full members to brush up on their theory and add their experiences and questions to the session.

The great benefit of attending these sessions in the classroom means it saves time on the road, covering theory and has the added advantage of an opportunity to discuss any issues you may have generally on your Advanced Rider Course.

Paul Ballard

SAM Chief Observer



THE ACE CAFÉ REMEMBERED

The lock-down has given us all lots of time to do all the things that we have been putting off. There's not a door that has not been re-painted, a blade of grass that has not been cut or a bike that has not been polished to within an inch of its life! Out of sheer boredom, I took to looking through back-issues of the SAM magazine and came across a report that I wrote almost ten years ago about a SAM Sunday ride-out to the ACE CAFÉ.

Because of the passage of time that has passed, the turnover of members that any club experiences and the fact that our esteemed editor is always banging-on about a lack of articles, I thought that in the absence of actually being able to physically go there, I would mentally revisit the place.

Now there cannot be many people who have not heard of "THE ACE"? Closed in 1969, reborn in 2001 it now holds all manner of motor car/motorcycle related events; all far removed from its original concept and previous life.

For me, THE ACE CAFÉ filled an important part of my teenage years. Although we also used to frequent the "Dug-out" at Golders Green, "The Cellar" at Windsor, the "Salt Box" at Biggin Hill and "The 59 Club" in Hackney Wick/Paddington, Saturday night was reserved for either (or both) The 59 Club or "The Ace".

Undoubtedly, as a thirteen year old, the initial draw of The Ace was the overwhelming sense of danger that seemed to emanate from just being there. The frisson of electricity and tension in the air was palpable; would somebody try to "Beat the record on the juke box", i.e. ride from the café to the Neasden roundabout and back before the record ended? Considering that most records of the era were little more than 2 minutes long, not an easy task. Before an age of centre reservations on dual carriageways, any mistakes and you either crossed over into the oncoming traffic or collided with "suicide bridge" (the iron bridge over the railway line halfway between the two).

All very exciting! However, the original concept of the Ace Café was much less glamorous. The A406 North Circular Road was created in the mid 30's to carry traffic from the A1, A10, A11, A12, A4 and A5 to London Docks without the need to drive through the centre of London. Aimed, primarily, at long-distance lorry drivers who needed food and a bed away from home, situated half way between Hanger Lane and Neasden, the ACE CAFÉ was built as a Cafe/B&B in 1938 and was the Holiday Inn/Travelodge of the day.

As with the M25 in 1986 some two generations later, prior to its construction in 1938 the entire length of the North Circular between Ealing around to Wembley and on to Woodford was still green fields!

Bombed out in 1940 and re-built in 1948, The Ace Cafe was adopted in the mid-fifties by the newly emerging category of people called "teenagers". Prior to WW2 you were either young or an adult - the concept of being stuck in a twilight zone between the two ages was a new phenomenon that the authorities had yet to recognise or cope with. The Ace became a Mecca for North London motorcyclists until, along with the British motorcycling industry and motorcycling in general, it came to a grinding halt and closed in 1969. It re-opened as a garage a few years later but was re-born as the Ace Cafe again in 2001.

Whilst I am possibly not the only SAM club member to have frequented "The Ace" in its heyday, nor the only member to have visited it since it re-opened, I cannot think of another person who frequented the cafe in the very early sixties, worked there when it re-opened as a garage and now re-frequented it in my 60's and 70's after its re-launch as The Ace Cafe again!

The Ace Cafe and similar venues up and down the country became representative of an age. After the privations of the Second World War and the food rationing that seemed to go on forever, Britain was a very "grey" place indeed. Wanting a thrill from riding a motorcycle must have seemed the most obvious thing in the world to many teenagers to relieve the boredom. As it was quoted in a book written about The Ace and the people frequenting it, "If you feel you've nowhere to go, you go there as fast as you can"!

Having a place to meet like-minded people must have been an easy alternative to staying at home watching your black and white TV - if you had a TV at all, that is? In many ways it was a much more simple age. Many are the hours that I spent sitting on the front wall a mere pavement's width from the busy North Circular watching the bikes fast past, or wandering endlessly up and down the rows of bikes with my friends discussing the merits, or not, of the various machinery. The heated discussions of whether it was better for a gearbox to be one-up and three-down or one-down and three-up would go on for ages. But it kept us happy and, thankfully, out of trouble.

For me, like "Kevin the Teenager", full of teenage angst and rebellion, places like The Ace were my escape, refuge and salvation from a world full of Presidential assassinations, Cuban missile crisis's and the Cold War.

I could bore the pants off of you regaling you with stories and anecdotes, but as with anything to do with nostalgia, you really had to be there to appreciate it.

You know what they say about the “sixties” – if you can remember it, you weren’t there!

It is a shame that today, no matter which route you take, there is no “easy” or pleasant way to get there as it’s almost impossible to NOT have to use dual carriageways and motorways. But whilst they might be holding a car meeting or some-other non-biking event, it’s always worth a visit if only to say that you’ve been there.

It all adds to the tales to tell your grandchildren?

Bryan Duncan



View from Applecross Inn. Les Smith



LINGS



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LINGS

WHERE WERE YOU ON 30TH JULY 1966

I know' most of our readers were not even born, anyway, Jean and I were watching the rerun of the 1966 World Cup final between England and West Germany when, due to the shortage of things to write about thanks to the pesky lock down I wondered if some of our intrepid readers may be interested in our first motorcycling holiday, so here goes.



First, I will take you back to the early spring of 1966 when we were talking holidays with best friends Dick and Pat, "what about a trip away on the bikes ?" "that sounds like a good idea" but where to go! "how about a ride down to Southampton" chimes in Dick, "we can stay with my Aunt Myrtle and Uncle Ben (how innocent we all were) use that as a base and go out from there".

So it was agreed, permission granted from the various parents after some persuasion in some quarters and so the plan was hatched. Spring turned to summer, the bikes were fettled and prepared, Dick's 500 Triumph 5TA and my 500 BSA Shooting

Star, no mean feat in those days when a trip to Snetterton was a long ride and a run to Yarmouth was an adventure, luggage was packed and despatched direct to Southampton (and returned) by British Road Services (Dick's dad worked for them), (couldn't make it up could you), had to have smart clothes to go out in those days.

As I remember the morning of the 30th dawned and we set off I guess, around 9am, A12 to London, pick up the North Circular around the city, A30, A34 and down to Southampton arriving at Dick's relations in time to see the second half of the final and England's victory and as I remember get cleaned up and after tea out for a few drinks, Babycham for the girls and beer for us blokes.



Sunday, a ride to Portsmouth where we spent the day and yes it rained (Jean's coat we found leaked) and walking along the prom with all our kit on seeing the look on the holiday makers faces was a joy, I think they all thought "the rockers are coming" which wasn't true, we sought refuge in a pub which had Old Time Music Hall on which was interesting!!.



Then a wet ride back me following Dick's reflector as his rear light had failed. Oh the joys!.

The rest of the week was spent with trips to Bournemouth by train where we bumped into Jean's mum and dad (yes they had decided to holiday there I wonder why), watching liner Queen Mary come into dry dock in Southampton, a trip on the ferry to the Isle of Wight with the bikes for the day nearly missing the ferry back (would have done if we had been in a car, they let us through with the bikes), a ride into the New Forest where Jean and I visited the Beaulieu Motor Museum and our friends went off somewhere else and another trip to Bournemouth this time on the bikes where some "lovely" person nicked my rear view mirror (funny how you remember things like that).



Saturday dawned and our return trip beckoned, we rose to an overcast sky and a steady drizzle, first a walk into town to get Jean a new riding coat (a Belstaff Trialmaster waxed jacket no less) and a new rear view mirror, cases had been dispatched back and prepare for the off. Bikes checked we said our goodbyes and thanks to Aunt Myrtle and Uncle Ben, we left Southampton I guess around 11am in the rain with "our cloud" following us all the way home. Trying to dry out a wet magneto on the North Circular to cure a misfire was fun (oh the joys of motorcycling), it took some 8 hours to get home and we were wet!!, I think Dick fared worse than me as he had stuffed his camera up his coat which allowed the rain to blow up the front, Jean and I turned off at Copdock as I lived in Sproughton, we couldn't figure out how we had missed Dedham only to be told that the bypass had opened while we were away. As I said we were wet and cold but hot baths and a change of clothes soon sorted that out. Well, our little adventure was over, we had had a smashing time, Dick's aunt and uncle were lovely and we all got back safely, what a great experience. Both Dick and I married our respective better half's the following year and have been together ever since, remaining good friends going on several holidays together over the years, and still into bikes.

Sonnie Westley.



BREAKFAST RUN

First ride out Sunday 23rd August 2020

THURSDAYS CHIPS

Cancelled until further notice

COVID 19 RESTRICTED SOCIAL RIDE

The first Covid 19 affected Social Ride will be held on Sunday 23rd August 2020.

-  Any SAM member wishing to take part in the ride MUST text Richard Ockelton using the number given in the magazine.
-  The closing date to send texts will be Friday 14th August 2020 (noon)
-  From received texts Richard will allocate the rider with a ride leader
-  Richard will contact the riders to confirm their ride leaders, starting point and time.
-  Each ride leader will have a different route from start to finish
-  Only the ride leader will be issued with the route (all of which are now tried and tested) and there are 8 available.
-  Richard will use a 'spread sheet' so that if this process needs to continue into September riders will not be allocated to the same route twice.
-  Any rider not allocated a ride leader cannot take part on a ride.
-  Any rider arriving late and missing the briefing will not be allowed to join the ride.

It may be possible to stop for refreshments during the ride so bring these with you. Please note if the ride leader deems social distancing and Covid 19 rules cannot be maintained then there will not be a stop

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Please check the SAM Calendar and SAM Forum on-line for last minute changes/cancellations. On the Forum you will also find the routes as text, route cards, and on Google Maps / Streetview, along with a photo of the destination, so you can familiarise yourself with the route before the day.

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HOW THE COPDOCK INTERCHANGE AND A14 WAS BUILT

Well now for something completely different.....and you only have yourself to blame!!!

Rather than bore you with another one of those car road trips I thought some of you may be interested on how one of those roads you travel on regularly was built. (How wrong can I be???)

For those who don't know I worked for 48 years in the construction industry on various projects in the UK and Zambia. These included Heathrow and Stansted Airports, British Steel Complex at Redcar, Monsanto Petrol Chemical Teeside, Excel Centre Approach Road and on motorways like M25/M23 interchange etc and in East Anglia - A12 Chelmsford by pass, Gorleston Relief Road, A131 Clacton Bypass, Caister Sea Defence etc etc

But one closer to home was the A12/A14 Copdock Interchange and the associated roads. Still awake?

The A14 road (initially labeled the A45) and Orwell Bridge were designed as the southern link to relieve the traffic congestion in Ipswich plus reducing journey times to/from Felixstowe docks and the A12 east coast routes.

Cementation Construction was awarded the contract for the road and bridges from the old A12 at Washbrook (past the Copdock Hotel) towards the Orwell Bridge. The road from the eastside of the bridge towards Felixstowe was constructed by Costain. The bridge started construction in October 1979 by a dutch company (Stevens Construction) and had been planned since 1965 with construction of the bridge starting October 1979. The bridge was well under construction when the road contracts were awarded (a minor oversight) and both Costain and Cementation had 12 months to complete the bridge approaches. For Cementation this included the temporary roundabout with the A12 Washbrook, Grove Hill over-bridge, an access bridge to Thorrington Hall, rail-bridge, Wherstead Interchange and triple armco (steel)-culverts. Each one of these had to be constructed before the main 280mm thick concrete carriageway. There were 700,000 m³ of material to be excavated and 500,000m³ used as fill. (note the surplus material).

The fencing was erected at the site limits. On clearing the hedges we found several planks with holes over ditches we assumed to be a farmers toilet in some bygone era. We also disrupted wildlife with hares scattering for cover every morning.

The surface water drains, (generally were one per side and in the central reserve with ditches on embankments) were installed first. We used plastic corrugated drainage pipes for the first time on a major project. Normally, a 'mandrel' is pulled through the smooth pipe to check for blockages but this would have 'snagged' on the pipe corrugations. Instead we improvised with a ball water jetted between manholes. If the ball didn't appear our 'operative' waiting at the receiving manhole had a 'spare' to show the inspector and 'prove' it was clear..

The existing substrata for the road was for the most part a sandy soil with gravel. This allowed a huge saving for both Cementation and Costain in their tender. Cement was spread over the substrata, the sand/gravel/cement/added water was rotavated to 300mm depth and then compacted to the correct level and finally the surface was sealed and left to cure for 5-7days. The carriageway concrete could then be placed on this prepared surface (sub base) and meanwhile it gave a good haul route through the site.

Keeping the locals off the site at night proved tricky. One individual from Grove Hill used to regularly ride his motorbike along our site and through the service tunnel of the Orwell Bridge. There are access shafts over the bridge bearings at each pier if a cover had been left off I found this out when I employed him as a quantity surveyor at Gorleston some 9 years later. (At last a mention of a bike)

The concrete road construction could not start until the continuous length from start to finish was available with all bridges available for site traffic. The concrete road was placed using 350mm deep rail screeds at the edge of the 9.3m wide carriageway to support the machines and fresh concrete road. These rails were supported by pins driven (by hand) through the cement bound subbase. The concrete could only be laid April to September due to the temperatures/weather. Every 5.5m is a construction joint in the slab. This has dowel bars mid depth at 300mm centres across the joint fixed on a cage to ensure they remain level and parallel within the slab. There is a polythene sheet laid on the subbase. This breaks the bond between concrete and subbase and allows the concrete to slide as the temperature changes and the dowel bars have a sleeve (a large condom) over one half to enable the concrete to move between bays. Any displaced bars will resist movement and within 3 days there is a crack in the concrete normally 2m from the joint. Every 30m a fibre contraction joint is pre-placed the full depth to allow for 40mm contraction/expansion.

The concrete is of a very strong mix (40N) that sets within 1 hour and is delivered in trucks on the opposite carriageway to the first machine. A concrete truck must arrive every 10 minutes to ensure the spreading machine is moving continuously. Any time it stops a small bump in the surface occurs requiring

hand levelling later by men on the support board. The concrete empties from the truck and travels up the conveyor to a hopper that traverses across the 9.3m width spreading and vibrating the concrete. The second machine levels the surface with a levelling screed across the carriageway to within a 5mm tolerance. A support board for 2-3 men follows checking the surface, inserting blocks for cats eyes and checking box-outs for gullies, inserting a plastic 40mm deep strip at 5.5m joint. The next machine brushes the surface to create the 3mm grooves to give transverse skid resistance and water run-off. Finally, the surface is sprayed with an aluminium curing compound.

If inclement weather is forecast the concrete is cancelled. If it starts to rain on the completed uncured surface a rolling cover on a framework also running on the rails is placed the full width of the carriageway. Besides the weather there is plenty of room for other problems. Material shortfall at the concrete plant: mechanical breakdown at the concrete plant, trucks or concrete train equipment.

Any cracked bays were removed and new joints and concrete placed by hand. Any rain affected surface could be re-grooved but expensive. Excessive bumps can be ground down and re-grooved. Once the surface was cured and approved the plastic joint strip was removed and joint sealant applied. This gives that constant 'bonk' when travelling along the carriageway. Once one 9.3m carriageway was complete the machines were lifted onto the rails on the other 9.3m carriageway for the return journey. After each shift the rails were removed and placed ahead of the concrete train for the next day often into the night and all at the correct level.

The concrete train is only applicable for construction of constant width carriageways so asphalt is used on slip roads bridges and roundabouts. Concrete roads were expected to last for 20 years without remedial repairs. Although repaired in places 38 years and counting isn't bad value for £10m.

The bridges were all reinforced concrete and built insitu with the road realigned over the new bridge.

The railway bridge deck was constructed offline and slid into place onto the new abutments over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

At the time (1981) I was working for Cementation Construction and was transferred from the A66 Stockton to the site offices at Wherstead. The industry was very transient and the key workforce were expected to live in caravans, B&B, rent or move. We were allowed to stay in a hotel for the first 2 weeks whilst accommodation was arranged. There were 19 of us in the Post House (Holiday Inn). Unfortunately, the wooden Suffolk Punch in reception suffered a broken leg when it was mounted late one evening.

I was in a rented property in Hintlesham (not the Hall) with 4 others with The George becoming our local watering hole. It was a former farmers cottage with no carpets a coal fire in one room and little else. We were keen gardeners and had a weed that entered through the wall that reached the ceiling after the 12 months we stayed there. I only stayed there temporarily so I slept on a camp bed. At weekends I went back to Teeside in the company Renault 4 Utility (yes with the walking stick gear change) and every Monday on my return it went into the workshop for treatment (R&R). The working hours were long 12 hour shifts (more when the 'concrete train' was operating)-for the staff and workforce and I left home at 2.30 am Monday morning ready to start at 7am. Eventually I rented a house in Lavenham just in time for the birth of our second son. After a further spell in Hintlesham we eventually sold our Teeside home and moved to Waldingfield - only a temporary move (38 years ago).

The staff were from all over the UK with most travelling home each weekend. One worker on the caravan site used to 'bathe' each night in a water filled oil drum in winter and summer. Showers were provided for the others. On April 1st somebody decided to bury a 'decoy bomb' in a trench to be excavated. The machine driver was stopped just as he reached a phone box to call the police/bomb disposal.

The concrete walls across the Orwell Bridge are designed to reduce the impact off cross winds. The design of the structure only permits a maximum thickness of asphalt surfacing of 50mm. This is insufficient to tolerate the cold winters and needs regular resurfacing.

The surplus material mentioned earlier was placed in a stockpile north of Wherstead Interchange (see photo).

We and Costain completed our contracts before the Orwell Bridge was ready. The next tender to build Copdock interchange and the A12 northwards to the Holiday Inn and south to Capel St Mary was issued.

Cementation were the successful bidder and immediately removed the surplus material from Wherstead to construct the roundabout/embankments to Copdock Interchange by hauling the material along the unopened A45 (A14). As the road wasn't opened or fully paid by DoT legally Cementation 'owned' and insured it. All other tenders would have had to haul through town probably from the same source. We worked 18 hour shifts under floodlights to complete the earthworks before the bridge was ready to open. (The new road and Orwell Bridge were opened 17th December 1982 in a grand ceremony).

For the second contract we used asphalt instead of the concrete carriageway designed for the A12. This enabled construction of the road through the winter.

As a result this contract was completed 11 months early. I was told by our director it would look so much better if the signs had said 'opened 1 year early'. Praise and remuneration were not on his agenda. The opening of Copdock Interchange and A12 was a low key affair at 5am 18th July 1984. I went from here to the Chelmsford by Pass for another 'quiet and relaxing contract'.



Eric Aldridge

EDITORIAL



In answer to Sonnie Westley question? I was 4months old 😊

Well it's been a very emotional month for me and some of you would have noticed the magazine is late this month...

Long and short of it is that my poor old father had declined rapidly from the point of being able to walk to bedridden in a week, so my brothers

and I had a rotor system to help out mother and the carers look after him. I had been given a laptop so I thought I could work on the magazine while on duty, Except... this laptop didn't have word on it, I tried downloading a free version but that didn't work. So I tried Fathers PC, well passwords where missing and I'm not sure what system he was using... anyway I gave up.

Some of you might have seen, he passed away on Sunday morning. I have since learnt that a few more members have had a resent bereavement in their families, I feel your pain and my thoughts and prayers go to you at this difficult time.

I have just about completed the clues for our SAM HAM challenge, hopefully I'll get a few days to complete the rides. My front tyre was getting a bit thin so had that changed, I've only taken the bike out once since my dash to Cambridge last month.

It's nice to see things are beginning to open up. My current job is down in Kent so I was going to drag the caravan down so I didn't have to drive back, campsites are now opening up and a few of our members are taking advantage of this already.

Safe Riding **Felix..** Editor

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Tel: 07712649860

editor@suffolk-advanced-motorcyclists.com

THANK YOU

To all the members who have contributed to this month's magazine. 😊
But.... what about the rest of you.... 😞

CLOSING DATE FOR COPY MONDAY AFTER CLUB NIGHT

If you'd like to help save the Group on the printing and postage costs of your monthly 'hard copy' of the 'SAM Observer' by opting to receive an email notification instead, then please give me your email details on Group Night or send me an email.

I hope that you have been enjoying the reports that members who go on ride outs have written, and as you can see, it doesn't have to be a wordy passage, so feel free to scribble a few words down, a few pictures and next month you will have another great magazine to read

Don't forget to take your cameras and a notebook to record your trip then you can write a nice article about it for your favourite magazine. I have a word template if anyone would like it, email me and I'll send you a copy which has all the formatting re-set on it. Please remember that we use Times New Roman as the main font for the magazine at a size 16 so that when the printer converts the A4 pages down to A5 the font looks like a 12. I like pictures to be separate to your articles because I can make them bigger or small to fill the page

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Contact details of SAM's Committee & Observers, complete with photographs so you can recognise everyone.

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Our online calendar with relevant links which can also be linked to your smartphone. Contact: Mike Roberts

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FORUM

All the latest news and discussion on all things SAM and motorcycle related. Have a read, and then register to join in. Contact: Mike Roberts

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SAM EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

ALL EVENTS AND RIDE OUT HAVE BEEN CANCELLED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

NOTE FROM EDITOR

Please check the SAM Calendar, Forum & Facebook page for further details and for any changes after going to press. Especially in winter months when the weather can be unpredictable

DISCLAIMER

The articles published herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Institute of Advanced Motorists or the Suffolk Advanced Motorcyclist Group. They are the opinions of individual contributors and are published with a view that free expression promotes discussion and interests.

Any comments please email the editor.



View towards Ben Hope. Les Smith

SOCIAL RIDES

Please note that it is you, the rider, who is deemed to be in control of the vehicle at all times during an Observed Run and during all other Group activities and that the Committee of Suffolk Advanced Motorcyclists cannot and do not accept any liability whatsoever for any injury to person or damage to vehicle occurring in the course of any rally or other event organised by the Group. Any member attending such an event does so entirely at his or her own risk and must maintain their own insurance to cover any said injury to person or damage to vehicle and must be riding a road legal vehicle, having valid road tax, insurance and MOT certificate (if applicable).

Participants on S.A.M social rides are advised of the Events Committee's guidelines as follows:

-  You will be expected to provide a suitable means of carrying a map of the route
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-  Have a FULL tank of fuel
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