

Editors Ramblings

Well that was a quick month, seems like yesterday since I was last typing in this box! Must have been the great weather distracting me as there was still not a lot of motorcycling going on from myself, still busy working from home (now relegated to the bedroom!) maybe it's the constant keyboard typing, screen staring and "Teams" meetings online has blurred the days into weeks? But hey at least we are not in Leicestershire! Maybe I will just keep looking out the bedroom window, at least the cows are in the fields enjoying the green grass.

Remember we have our Facebook page – please join and contribute on it - Only for club members – any weird names or business names let us know so we can allow you to join the page.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/362204533842150/>

Email me on biker5chef@yahoo.co.uk or 07590596380 for WhatsApp sending pictures or texts or phone!

The Highlander

South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Newsletter July 2020



1994 to 2019



A Word from the Chair

As mentioned last month our Spring Summer course is about to start so the main core of what we are about – motorcycle road safety will be back and not a minute too soon as road users are back with a vengeance, not in as many numbers as yet but just as dangerous if not more so! We will have all seen on various media forms that it is not just the volume of traffic that is the problem but the lack of traffic that has made road users think that they no longer have to think about how they go about on the roads and that they can go at whatever speed they want to go at, with a lack of observation which at normal speeds was sub-standard, is now an even more worrying aspect of the skills displayed on the road!

I have done very little driving or riding these last few months but more cycling than usual as that was allowed and believe me greatly helped keep a lid on frustrations of being cooped up in the house the rest of the time! Have I experienced bad road users? Considering the reduced amount of traffic, I saw a slight reduction until the last month where it has gone back to at least the pre lockdown levels.

Now having done a couple of car journeys of reasonable distance I would not say it takes time to adjust to being back on the road and seeing as the traffic is lighter it should be easier to get back into the swing again, so I can only assume it is peoples mentality that makes them act like that and seeing what we have just gone through what is it going to take to value life on the road or elsewhere?

Thought for the month?

Stay safe - Gordon

Please contact me with any queries you may have 07590596380



Presidents Page

I hope you are all keeping well and safe.

Things are starting to become a bit more relaxed, the Spring/Summer course starts on Sunday 5th we have had to introduce staggered start times in order to avoid having a large group at Costa on Sunday mornings, there will be an initial number of people, but once the session has started we should be in compliance with the regulations, to all the associates on the course, welcome, I hope you find the course informative and educational.

I have been back at work now for a number of weeks, and I never thought I would hear myself saying this, but it is good to be back at work, when you live on your own and you have to isolate for two months, you miss being with people.

Phill Hamilton recently completed his National Observer qualification, congratulations Phill on your success; I will see you on the summer course.

I should have been in Spain this last week, enjoying sun, motorcycling and sangria, alas that was not to be, at least you won't have to endure another article on the event, so every cloud, having said that, just leaves next year's event to look forward to all the more.

Dave Coomber has resumed running the social rides, so at least you can now get out on your machines and get them dirty again, I hope to see you at Costa sometime soon.

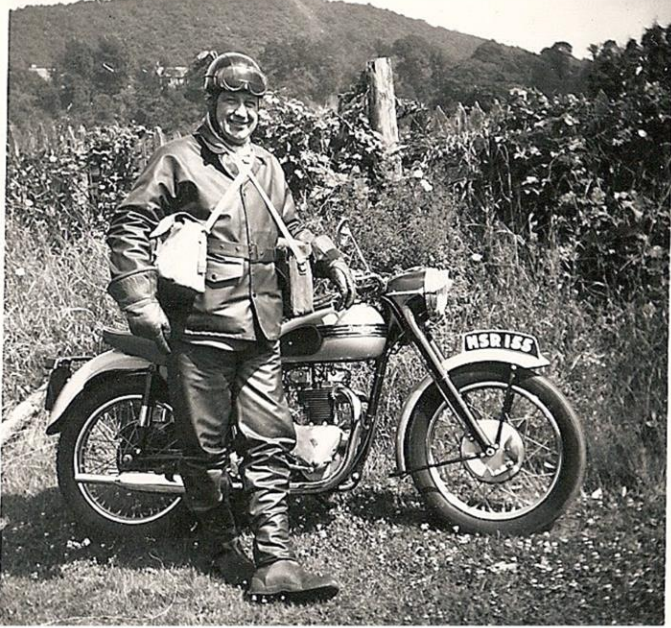
That is all from me for this month, so to you and your families stay safe, until next month, take care.

Chris Steel.

President.



Motorcycle Photo's from Yesteryear



I know where I get my
motorcycle genes from.
(Ed)

Any old pictures you would
like to share?

New Associates

This Month: -

David Hooper

Rob Williams



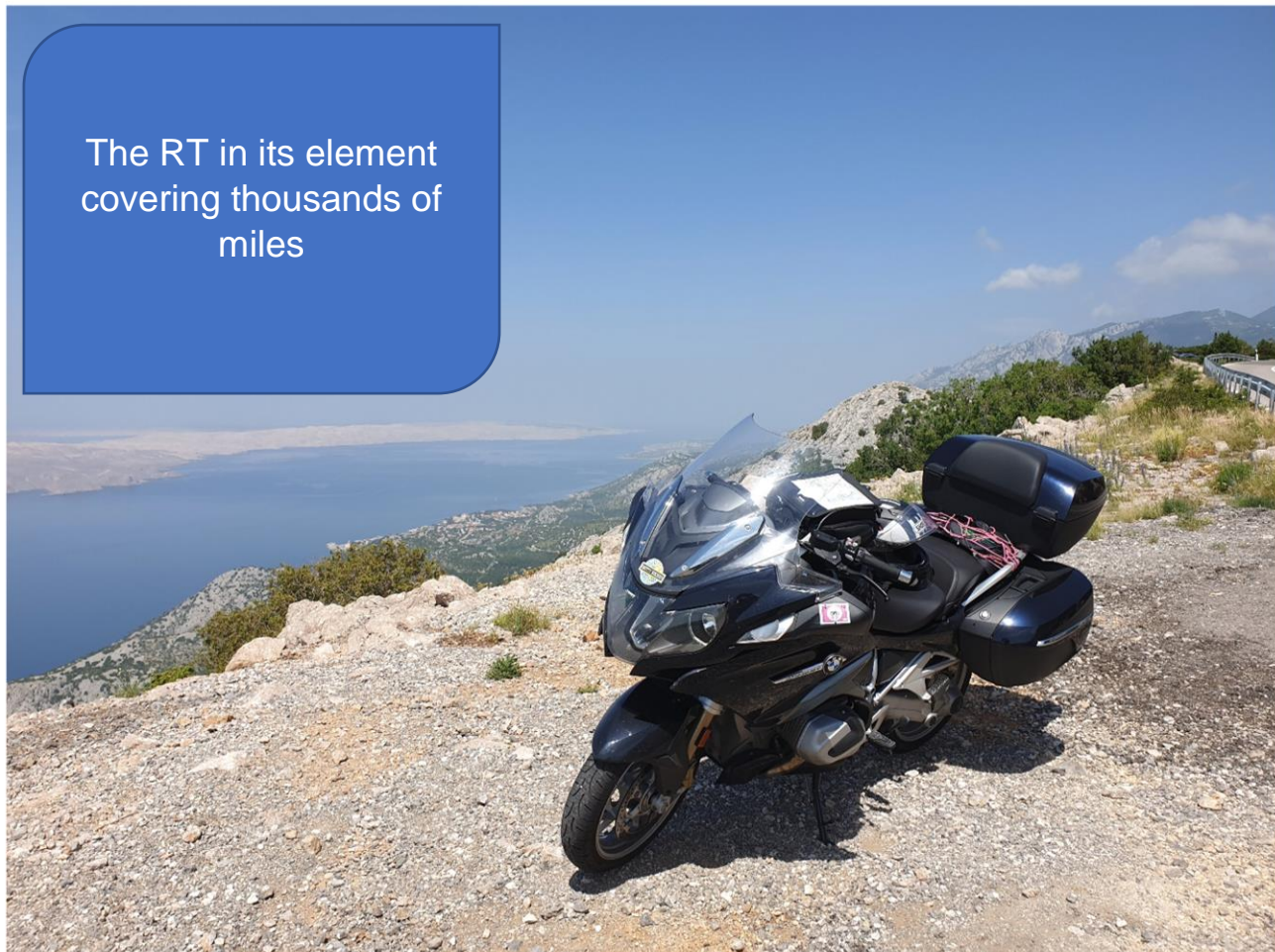
My First BMW – R1250RT 10,000 Mile Review – part One

Well it took thirty-nine years and nearly 450,000 miles but I finally succumbed to the BMW world! These are my thoughts from the first year and miles covered on a BMW R1250RT LE. As a Honda man most of my life with the odd foray into Kawasaki, Triumph and a KTM I have never lusted after the most exotic or fastest machine on the market but after starting with a CG125 in 1980 I grew to respect the build quality of a Honda without the premium cost of a make such as BMW. Over the last ten years I have been trying to replace the love of my Honda Pan European ST1300 with another bike, seeing as Honda has decided not to update the ST1300 I had dipped my toes in the water of Adventure styled bikes with the Honda Crosstourer and KTM 1290 Super Adventure to see if they could satisfy me.

So eventually last spring I gave in to my distancing from BMW's after a test ride on a 1200 with the intention of purchasing a nearly new model seeing as the 1250 was now the current model thinking this was going to be a big saving. Well you know what dealers are like! A seat at the salesman's desk and a sharpened pencil wielded a deal was done on a new R1250RT LE and the compulsory BMW/Garmin Sat Nav – well I needed to find my way home from the dealer!

The bike was ready within a few days but I had to wait on the KTM dealer sorting out my dead 1290 Super Adventure which just needed its CPU software rebooted and a battery replaced with no help from the dealer but emails to KTM customer service to get this sorted. Not the best end to the ownership of a bike and not the best memory of a marque – would I buy another KTM?

The RT in its element
covering thousands of
miles



My First BMW – R1250RT 10,000 Mile Review- part one

So eventually with both bikes ready for the handover I just had to get to Sheffield to pick up the KTM then Shipley for the new bike and home. My good friend the Cardiac Kid was in to give me a lift and also follow on up to Shipley to record the handover – I think he was just disbelieving I would actually go through with getting a BMW and had to see it for himself! KTM picked up it was up to Shipley on the windiest day you could imagine and the journey up the M1 was one of the hairiest I have encountered! Dealer reached in one piece and the handover done the bike was mine I just had to get home on the flattest route possible to avoid the gusty winds. I managed this mostly on sheltered roads while getting used to the new bike with just Holme Moss to navigate. Well I got to the top and stopped to admire the view, well the new bike obviously, who hasn't got a new bike and stared at it as if it was your first born? Oh just me! Getting going was not easy on the loose surface, wind and new bike fear but a positive thrust got me going and down the road and safely towards home.

Fast forward to today and over ten thousand miles on the clock mostly done before November last year, my first BMW has matched my expectations and even exceeded them in some areas. First of all the engine, the boxer engine previously had seemed underpowered to me and this was one of the areas that had kept a BMW out of my garage, the new 1254cc 136bhp Shift Cam engine is a peach, when you are running it in keeping revs below 6,000rpm and your mate keeps questioning your throttle control and speed you know it's a good one. With the peak torque at 6250rpm you don't have to take it too far of this to get serious oomph and rapid progress without bothering the 8,500rpm redline. I would say that I do not use the full rev range as there is not the need too. Along with this on the LE model I have Gear Assist Pro giving faster smoother clutchless gear changes which BMW say it does not matter where you are on the throttle but it works better upshifting on the throttle and downshifting on a closed throttle. So with all this power and torque along with the weight of the machine it was great to do a long tour last June to the Balkans – see previous newsletters for that report, that I averaged 53mpg over 3,500 miles solo but loaded with luggage.

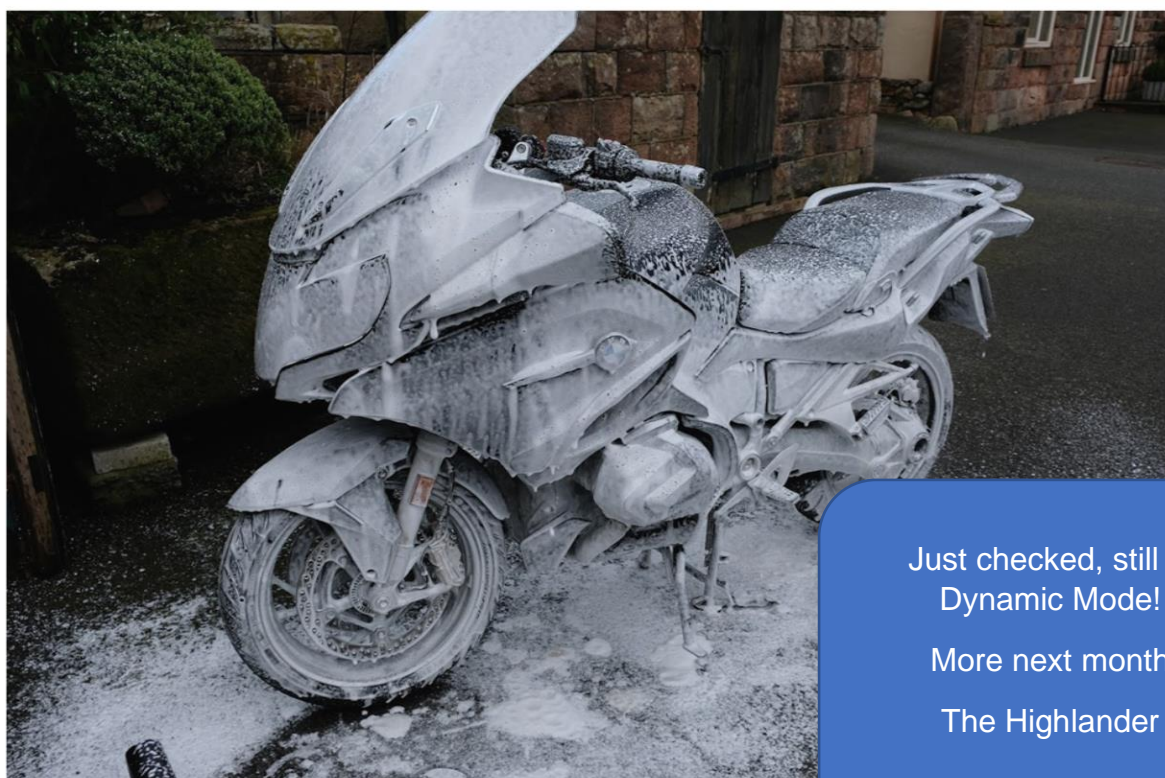


Day trip into Wales
taken in the RTs stride

My First BMW – R1250RT 10,000 Mile Review – part one

One reason for a change from an adventure motorcycle to an RT was the seat height as both the Crosstourer and Super Adventure required a longer inside leg measurement than my thirty-one inches available along with my slightly less than average height! I did have a couple of superhuman efforts where the ground was not quite at the level I was expecting to keep the bike from going past the level of lean I was capable of holding! The RT's seat height means I can get both feet flat on the ground when necessary giving a confidence level way ahead of these bikes and that is with the weight being 615lb, 100lb more than a Super Adventure.

Next up on my wish list was a front end that I had confidence in, the Crosstourer had a basic front fork set up which did not cope with the high up weight and longer suspension travel with the KTM's Semi Active suspension a leap forward in technology it could still get flighty at times through the 160bhp on tap, not a problem when you were doing the miles and dialled into the bike but something that took the edge out of the enjoyment on some rides. So, onto another reason why I had steered clear of the RT was the Telelever suspension and the remote feeling that it was supposed to give. Well with the advance of rider safety aids enhanced by six axis ICUs it was time to put my concerns about this away and after the test ride I had the feeling that I was after going way back to my CBR1000's in the 90's and that planted feeling I like. Some may like a faster lighter feeling for razor sharp steering movements, but this suited me then and maybe it was the many thousands of miles on these bikes and others similar it just feels right. Now with self-levelling automatic adjustment for rider, pillion and/or luggage all you have to do is set the level of comfort and riding style you are wanting to set and Dynamic Pro for me is used 95% of the time and Rain mode for er rain but only when the roads were greasy and really needed a gentle power delivery. Road mode for any long motorway stints and that was only if I remembered to change it as Dynamic for me was spot on.



Just checked, still in
Dynamic Mode!

More next month

The Highlander

South India Tour by Chris Prior – 1st part

Kerala and Tamil Nadu, February 2008

Lush, green and semi-tropical, India's southern state of Kerala is an ideal location for a winter's tour. With 15 others, plus two guides and two mechanics, I toured with Blazing Trails, founded by Suzi Lumsden who fell in love with India some years ago. The Sarovaram Ayurvedic Resort at Quilon, in the Keralan backwaters was our start and finishing point where we were accommodated in bungalows scattered alongside a lake. Taking time to get over any jet-lag – India is 5½ hours ahead of GMT - we refreshed ourselves with cold beer and lounged in the warm humidity, watching fishing boats with their patched sails set out from nearby Quilon. Had it been peacefully quiet it would have been idyllic, but as with just about all of India, except in the remote Himalayas (but that was the following year's ride) it's nigh on impossible to experience silence. At all hours, music was broadcast from across the water. It must have been deafening at source.

Before dinner I had an Ayurvedic massage. The Ayurvedic Centre had a placard over the doorway reading, *May you have Robust Health*. Inside others read, *May you live long*, and (my favourite) *Thou Art Thy God*. As if to hedge bets there was a portrait of Krishna and a reproduction of Da Vinci's *Last Supper*. The masseur began by putting his hands together namaste style while reciting a short incantation. The massage started at my feet, both soles and tops being massaged simultaneously, and then working up my legs. Hands darted over my body and I felt as if I was being massaged by one of India's multi-armed gods. Finally, my head and forehead were anointed with ochre powder. The whole invigorating experience lasted 50 minutes, left me dripping with oil, and cost the equivalent of £12.

Keralan Fishermen



South India Tour by Chris Prior – 1st part

On the following day we were familiarised with our 350cc Royal Enfields and given a demonstration of starting technique using the decompressor. Chief mechanic Jamal did it with little effort and I started mine well enough. Nevertheless, his assistant, Ramji, had to start mine so many times throughout the following two weeks that he often stood by in readiness at start-up time. Twin leading shoes on the front were the only concession to modernity. Otherwise they were just as had come off the Redditch production line more than half a century before, complete with right-foot gear change.

One of the hazards to watch out for on Indian roads is overtaking vehicles, especially busses, coming straight at you on your side of the road. Busses give way to no one and motorcycles are at the bottom of the road pecking order. Truck drivers seem envious and drive as if to supersede busses in this respect. In one village sugar cane had been spread across the road to be crushed by passing traffic. Believe me, it's as slippery as ice. We all had a scary moment or two during the following two weeks.

For refreshments and lunch, we usually stopped at the ordinary roadside places patronised by lorry drivers and locals. Hygiene at some was pretty basic, but no one had to resort to Imodium. On the second afternoon, after a ride of 120km, we arrived at the Marari Fishermen Village, Marapikulam, Allepey where most of us repaired to the beach and warm sea. After a swim I wandered along the beach to where fishermen were inspecting and repairing nets. The little boats were stitched and caulked with coconut fibre. This has to be kept damp to maintain an effective seal, so when the boats are ashore, they are covered with palm leaf to prevent them drying out. The village was scruffy and untidy. As we were to find everywhere, rubbish is carelessly strewn about, often foraged by cattle.



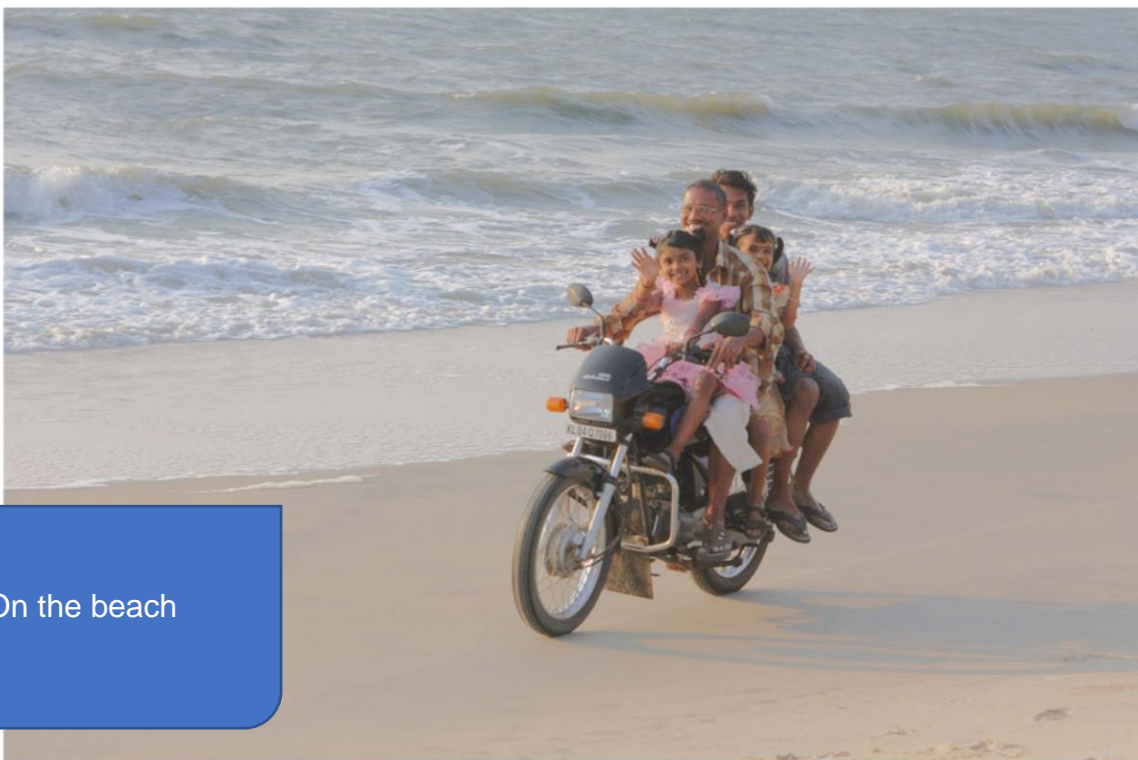
Hauling the catch ashore

South India Tour by Chris Prior – 1st part

I rose at dawn in order to catch the return of the fishing boats. It had begun to rain, lightly at first, and then heavily. Photographically it was a poor experience but otherwise quite interesting. They all seemed to be happy to be photographed, especially the crew who sought my assistance in hauling their boat up the beach. Some of the fishermen went out on rafts. They sat on the front and paddled while the nets were stowed behind. None wore buoyancy aids or carried any life-saving equipment. The catch hardly seemed worth the effort. Traditionally, these fishermen were considered among the lower caste and were poorly paid for their catch. The Keralan government organised them into cooperatives to cut out the exploiting middlemen, but also invested in large commercial offshore vessels that has devastated inshore fishing. Quite a few asked my name, nationality and occupation. Most gave me their names which I found hard to remember or repeat except those who had westernised Christian names. Syrian merchants brought Christianity to Kerala centuries before Europeans arrived.

Wet sand on the roads made riding a little dodgy in places. Women in beautiful clean saris riding side saddle pillion through the puddles. Our first stop was for fresh coconut juice. The tops were sliced off the coconuts from which we drank the milk through a straw. The nut could then be sliced open to get at the flesh. Not all coconuts had flesh, but there was enough to share around. The debris was discarded and littered the area. Later, it rained heavily, leading local riders to put plastic bags on their heads.

Our next night was Cochin, site of Chinese fishing nets. There was only one in use and its catch pretty poor - just one fish in such a large net. The one next to it was doing better by charging tourists to walk along it to photograph. The nets are crudely made devices, wooden beams lashed together. The man who let me onto his structure told me how many children he and his three companions have to support. Things had been particularly bad since the tsunami.



On the beach

South India Tour by Chris Prior – 1st part



Spinning coconut fibre

Backwater trip



Club Events

MONTHLY CLUB NITE

Last Thursday of the month at the Hawk Inn in Haslington by Crewe.

Our own version of Conversation Street, I'm sure there will be plenty of discussion and maybe some of it repeatable too! 8pm onwards all welcome.



CANX

Group Events

AGM – To Be Confirmed

Sunday Ride Outs - Now On with max 6 per group and Social Distancing in play - it's 9am from Costa Coffee at the Grand Junction Retail Park - CREWE - arrive early with a full tank of fuel. Usually 150-200 miles but if you want to do a shorter one, we will not take offence at you turning back early.

Wednesday Evening Ride Outs –

The first and third Wednesdays start from Starbucks, Holmes Chapel Road, Middlewich - next to the Shell garage. The second and fourth start from The Little Chef, Radway Green Road at junction 16, M6. All rides start at 7pm. Try to arrive about 15 minutes beforehand with a full tank of fuel. There are fuel stations close to both start points

Other Events of a two-wheeled nature

19th July – MotoGP – Circuito de Jerez - Spain

26th July – MotoGP – Circuito de Jerez – Spain

2nd August – WSB – Circuito de Jerez - Spain

9th August – MotoGP – Automotodrom Brno – Czech Republic



Piston Points Trophy - Reminder

Back in the day we commissioned this from Crewe Honda so we can reward members for contributing time or effort towards social activities, newsletter articles, attending club runs etc. Points are weighted towards the newsletter so 10 points for a full article and 2 points for each photo published, 2 points for responding to an article. Attending a club run will get 1 point – so lots available throughout the year there. Arranging a social event is 10 points attending one 2 points. Dave Coomber is letting me know who is out on rides so I can count these. If anyone is out on a ride without Dave let me know the date and who was out.



That's all this month

Hope you all get out on your bikes to give us some more stories

The Highlander

