



**DEVON  
ADVANCED  
MOTORCYCLISTS**

NEWSLETTER 73

Apr - Jun 2023



LOTTERY FUNDED



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# Chairman's Chatter

Dear DAM members,

Well, this is going to be the last Chairman's Chatter from me as I will be stepping down from my role of Chairman at this year's AGM. For the past three years, I have had the honour of leading this amazing group which does so much good in promoting road safety for Devon's motorcycle community.

I am proud of what DAM has accomplished together over this time, how quickly the Observer team adapted to new safety measures so that on road training could immediately resume after lockdown. This includes the start of the Young Rider Scheme and its continued support by DAM's members, those who attended shows, gave taster rides and with unstinting efforts, welcomed 75 new riders each year into DAM.

I want to thank the committee and DAM's members for all for your hard work, friendship, and wisdom over the past three years for making that happen. We even got chance to celebrate DAM's 40th, here's to another 40 more!

Look forward to seeing you on the road again soon. **Nathaniel**



Hi. There are many committee changes afoot and proper due thanks and recognition will be forthcoming. However, I would like to say thank you to Nathaniel for being so helpful to me, so diplomatic and kind in his role as Chairman.



It has been a joy to see the spring flowers appearing...now into the time of stitchwort and cow parsley!

Personally, I cannot wait for the day when I don't have to wear a heated jacket and thermal layers; even though they are so much better than the million jumpers of old it still feels like freedom when you can cast them off.

In this issue we have a couple of off-road articles, one is by my course designer cousin, Johnny D-H. I have never had to do so much editing of swear words before so if it loses something in translation that may be why! Sincere thanks to the famous motox photographer Ray Archer for allowing us to use his photos.

I've been teaching my biker student (16 yrs old) in Shanghai, 'How do you get a licence?', I asked. 'You need a friend who is a policeman...' We've been studying Total Control and did Inherent Balance and Directional Stability today, thanks again DAM for lesson planning help.

I've started doing the ROSPA course. 'Traitor!', you may say... However, it has been a good thing- I know many of you have also done ROSPA and it is interesting to see the differences. I was rather dreading the 'presentations' of Roadcraft, but I always come away thinking I have learned something or at least been reminded of or given a new focus on some important point and it forces you to confront the theory anew. I've only been on a few rides so far but it is reassuring to see that we are all on the same page..and they have been incredibly welcoming and friendly (even when they knew I came from IAM). I am also taking advantage of what DAM offers at the same time. I went on the new format PTTR (post-test training ride) where you can now choose what to focus on, I asked for slow riding help and we had a great ride with some really helpful practice in the middle, thanks Simon J. I am booked on the IGTT (Inter-Group Training Team) day. I'm also doing the IAM Skills Day at Thruxton. I take advantage of as much training as I can: I love biking, it has allowed me to revisit who I used to be and it is still the best feeling ever; I am old and it scares me; I need to be the best I can be and I know I can improve. Of course, my ultimate loyalties lie with DAM. I urge everyone to keep training..things can only get better!



A big shout out to The Motorcycle Co, Newton Abbot, who helped Polly out brilliantly with her puncture the other day. Independent bike shops are important and we are proud to have their advert!

### Nick Biggs has written to us:

I have been a DAM member since 1982, but only just joined the Facebook page. I was DAM chairman from 1998-2004. I learned recently that the DAM Trustees and other committee members agreed to make me an honorary member of DAM.

I would like to thank them and other members for giving me this privileged status. It is very much appreciated.

Stay safe and enjoy your biking  
Many thanks  
**Nick**

**For Sale & Wanted** Please use our Facebook to sell anything from bikes to unused ear plugs- anything motorcycle. Our Facebook page is under-used so please get chatting on it and we might attract some new members.



Search for Devon Advanced Motorcyclists and at [www.devonadvanced.com](http://www.devonadvanced.com)

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## WHAT'S ON **REGULARLY** ARRANGED BY DAM?

**PLEASE ALWAYS** check the [website](http://www.devonadvanced.com) or event co-ordinators for up-to-date information.

Also please double-check times after clock change. [www.devonadvanced.com](http://www.devonadvanced.com)

Date	What	Where
<b>April</b>		
Sat 1	<b>Rookie Ride</b>	See website for details.
Sun 9	<b>Group Ride</b>	9:30am for 9.30 am start.
Thurs 13	<b>Group Ride (full members or associate with observer)</b>	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com
Sat 15	<b>Full Members Training Ride</b>	Contact John Millgate triumphjohn955@gmail.com
Sun 30	<b>Rookie Ride</b>	9:30 am for 9.30 am start.
<b>May</b>		
Sat 6	<b>Rookie Ride</b>	9:30 am for 9.30 am start.
Sun 14	<b>Group Ride</b>	9:30 am for 9.30 am start.
Thurs 18	<b>Group Ride (full members or associate with observer)</b>	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com
Sat 20	<b>Full Members Training Ride</b>	Contact John Millgate triumphjohn955@gmail.com
Sun 28	<b>Group Ride</b>	9:30 am for 9.30 am start.
<b>June</b>		
Sat 3	<b>Rookie Ride</b>	See website for details.
Sun 11	<b>Group Ride</b>	9:30 am for 9.30 am start. <b>TBC -See website for details.</b>
Thurs 15	<b>Group Ride (full members or associate with observer)</b>	See website or contact Les Mosco lesmosco@hotmail.com
Sat 17	<b>Full Members Training Ride</b>	Contact John Millgate triumphjohn955@gmail.com
Sun 25	<b>Group Ride</b>	9:00am for 9.30 am start.



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Tuesday 18 April 2023 7.00pm.**

**To be held at the Swans Nest, Exminster, Exeter, EX6 8DZ**

Notice is given of the above meeting to receive accounts and reports, elect trustees, officers and other committee members and to discuss business of an annual nature.

Officers and committee members retiring as per the rules: Nathaniel Goss (chair), Catherine McKinley (secretary), David Cooper (treasurer), Barrie Dennett (membership secretary), Tony Curley (rider development evening co-ordinator), Rodney Rayner (group rides co-ordinator). All the above are prepared to stand again for election to their existing posts except Nathaniel Goss (chair) and Dave Cooper (treasurer).

Nominations are invited for any of the above positions and for committee ordinary membership on a form available from the Secretary (catgmck@gmail.com), to be returned no later than 7 days prior to the meeting. Nominees, proposers and seconders must be full members.

Proposals of an annual nature must be received by the Secretary no less than 7 days prior to the meeting, showing the name and contact details of the full members proposing and seconding.

Apologies to the Secretary [catgmck@gmail.com](mailto:catgmck@gmail.com) or [secretary@devonadvanced.com](mailto:secretary@devonadvanced.com) or 07713 141892

**DAM is a registered charity No. 1080988 affiliated to IAM, group No. 1113**

## DAM MARKETING TEAM

As you may be aware we have recently been short of an Events Co-Ordinator. Nathaniel reached out to Tim Redman to ask him to take on the role and head up the marketing team. This short piece gives a small introduction to Tim and the rest of the team. You will know them all already and if you don't, make sure you say hi next time you see them.



### Tim –

So, I started up riding about eight years ago, as a treat for my thirtieth birthday. On my CBT I met a bald-headed chap called Duncan Croad, who in turn introduced me to our now Chief Observer. I questioned Simon over his riding positions and his aggressive progressive techniques and he sold me the IAM spiel, which needless to say I fell for. Fast forward to summer 2022 and a fantastic Mid Devon Show where Nathaniel and I were discussing, amongst other things, life at the top of the DAM. I stupidly made several suggestions on how we could encourage new, potentially broader audiences to engage with DAM. This led me to this post. Why don't I think things through!!

Besides riding my Yamaha Tenere 700 on both road and dirt, I volunteer for Devon and Cornwall 4x4 Response aiding and supporting essential services when called upon throughout the year. When I am not either in my truck or on my bike is rudely interrupted by this thing called WORK, something many of our members have forgotten what that is. I work in Construction Management for a national house builder. I have a happy partner (or so she denies) and an array of dogs/cats/horses. I enjoy walking outdoors and doing lots of young person activities such as surfing/climbing/mountain biking. Each year I bugger off to far flung corners of the Alps in my truck for a few weeks to get some truly fresh air and be able to breathe, something which is incredibly important for anyone's mental health.



So if you like what you read, swipe right and we'll see each other soon.

## **David Palmer –**

When I am not out on the bike, I am either taking pictures or gaming. But biking is my main passion and has been ever since I did my CBT when I was sixteen. After moving from Dorset I found that I didn't really go out on fun rides and my bike became more of a tool than a toy. I joined DAM and made lots of friends and now I can often be found on most group rides.

I work in Admin for a tracking systems company and have recently applied to be a blood biker. I believe it's really important to give back to the community when you can and via blood bikes I also get to enjoy riding at the same time.

I curate all the DAM emails you receive, as well as working in the background of the social media development and creating new content for it.

## **Daniel Knight –**

I enjoyed my DAM experience so much I wanted to give back and I have been with the observer team for a while now. I am currently working towards my Masters and am enjoying the challenges that is presenting I am proud to be part of the marketing team working with Dave and more recently Tim.

I grew up with my parents having multiple bikes in the garage so it was inevitable I would be getting one for myself when I was old enough. I am passionate about becoming the best rider I can be and DAM has allowed to take that journey, constantly challenging myself and self-critiquing the last ride.

Through DAM I have made loads of connections, some of which I bump into through my work at Helmet City where I believe I am the chief helmet guru there. I know a lot and have a passion for learning more about helmets, so next time you see me, ask away!!

# THE FEBRUARY THIRD THURSDAY RIDE REPORT

Les Mosco



At last we managed to do the ride that had been called off due to icy roads in December and January. With Les Mosco as pilot and Derek Facey as sweeper, 11 riders started with pickup at Marsh Barton Pit Stop café and Woodleigh Coach House, and via the old road to Okehampton and then lunch at the Roadford Lake café. (Very friendly and welcoming.) The reservoir now a healthier 60% full after dropping to about 30% in the dry summer. After lunch onwards via Launceston, Holsworthy where we had a bit of drizzle, a leg stretch at Hatherleigh until finishing in Crediton, and just short of 100 miles. Apart from one rider reporting a close overtake, a pothole encounter and a SMIDSY car driver there were no major incidents, and some slow final miles to Crediton with no opportunities to overtake a long vehicle chain. But a successful Third Thursday, which now seems to have gathered a core of regular riders. The next few will be 20<sup>th</sup> April, 18<sup>th</sup> May.



The weather deterred all but 4 for the March Third Thursday ride: Mano, Hamish, Derek and Les. A rare 2-all draw between BMW & KTM! So drop off hardly used at all, and despite regular drizzle, we avoided heavy downpours and had a good ride successfully testing our wet weather gear. The ride from Café 53 (Bridge Honda) went via Teign Valley and Chudleigh to Totnes, then on to South Milton Sands Beachhouse café for a very pleasant lunch and warming drink, with great sea views. Afterwards via Dartington, Ashburton and final stretch in the clouds of Dartmoor to Bovey Tracey tea stop. Apart from a couple of Les's usual navigational detours, no incidents, just lots of water and some very nice biking roads. The next Third Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, will be led by Tony Curley, details to follow, all Full Members (and Associates with their Observer) welcome.

# EVERTS CORNER - "LIFE SUCKS, GET A HELMET!"

**Johnny Douglas-Hamilton**



It was the end of summer in 2005 and I found myself sitting in a field of corn that had just been cut. In front of me, the field curled over and draped down into a rather unique three-sided amphitheatre that closed off the top end of a valley. The valley fell down through several

fields towards the Southern Upland Way that lay at its foot. This was a beautiful field, but it was a field nevertheless, and in just under one year it would need to be the all-new venue to host the return to England of largest and most prestigious race in the sport of Motocross, 'The Motocross of Nations'.

'The Nations' as it is referred to, is an annual national team event that follows the conclusion of the world championship. It is the Olympics of the sport and the sight of these numbers of people squashed into an outdoor parkland or hillside setting is truly awe inspiring.

So here it was, just a stubble field on a beautiful 2000 acre shooting estate in Hampshire. We had no way of knowing that in just on one year it would be turned into the scene of one of the most epic events in the sport's history, creaking at the seams with 60,000 spectators and bordering on complete and utter mayhem.

Two years earlier, I had more or less been shamed into retiring from my own attempts to cultivate a professional career in the sport. It was Shaun Simpson that would be responsible for this. A polite, young and unassuming 15-year-old from the banks of the river Tay in Scotland. He would be the one to deliver one of life's hardest lessons to me.

At the Northern Irish round of the 2003 British Motocross Championships I caught and passed Shaun on the final lap of the race for the last points scoring position. Now riding in his first ever adult race of 35 minutes and having come direct from 15-minute-long schoolboy races, he was experiencing a life lesson of his own as he was now so exhausted he was practically riding over his own tongue. I had the misconception

that for years to come me and Shaun would be fellow travellers from Scotland, trading places in national races and race wins in our home country.

A few weeks later at the deep and gruelling sand track of Leuchars near Shaun's home in Fife, I had just holed out the first race ahead of Shaun and a new South African, Neville Bradshaw. Exiting one of the most whooped out 270 degree left handers you could find anywhere in our sport, and having held on so tight I had barely taken a breath throughout, Shaun flew past me so quickly that it almost blew my mind. I could not have been trying any harder and yet Shaun didn't just pass me ....he was in a different gear.

A few more weeks passed and we were both in the south of England, this time at a British Championship qualifier. I somehow holed out all three races on my scandalously fast 125cc Yamaha tuned by the Belgian scientist Guido Deleis from Pro-MX. This merely provided Shaun with three more opportunities to pass me and he did so in ways that would force me to literally reconsider my life options.

You see it's one thing thinking that you're fast, it's quite another to actually be fast. I thought I was fast. Shaun was fast. Thankfully for the sake of my ego, in the long run Shaun would go on to become a full factory rider on the World stage and eventually he would even go on to win multiple races in the blue-ribbon MX1 class. Neither of us knew this at the time however.

That's one of the great things about sport. It instantly regulates how your ego and self-worth develop. As a great boxing coach once said, "there's no room for persona when your being punched in the face". Well Shaun wasn't punching me in the face at the time, but for all the psychological impact it had on me, he might just have well of been.

As luck would have it at the very same time as I was experiencing this unwelcomed ego death, my options were opening up in another area that I never could have expected. In the summer of 1999, World Championship rider Jeff Perret had come to do a photoshoot for the now extinct, 'Animal' clothing company at my private track in the east of Scotland. A beautiful flowing yellow sand track that snaked through the dark green pine trees. Just beyond the trees were vast grassy dunes that would eventually drop down onto a beautiful yellow beach with caves that we had slept in as kids. (NB the Editor rode the author's mother's pony there too....)

Jeff immediately fell in love with the place, stating he thought it was better than some of the GP tracks he'd turned up to. A few years later when Jeff was encouraging the Vectis Club on the Isle of White to run round of the British Championships, who should get the call for the job of building the track? That kid from Scotland with 'that' sand track of course.

So the summer of 2003 wasn't all about my painful reality check at the hands of a 15 year old, it also contained some of my fondest memories and would ultimately shape the next 20 years of my life. Jeff and I spent long days sitting in that gorgeous green valley, soon to be known as Gore Basin, rubbing our chins and dreaming up ideas for sections of track for epic races yet to be held. Luckily for all involved we were actually quite good at it.

The British Championship round that was held on the Isle of Wight later that year was a huge success and spurred on by the resulting accolades, the promoter and local property tycoon decided to stump up the rather eye watering sum of money for the rights to hold a World Championship Round in the 2004 season.



So there we were once again in the early summer of 04, Me and Jeff, a pair of chancers that blagged our way to the very top almost overnight, thinking up new ways to improve our track and how to make the MXGP of 2004 the best on the calendar. By the time the dust settled on the event,

we may very well have achieved our goal. I was soon transported to South Africa by the promoter of the World Championship to try and save the final GP of the year from failure and that's pretty much how I started what would become a 20-year career as a track designer and builder. It's also how I came to be sitting in that field in Hampshire in late 2005.

On one side of me in the warm sunshine of that late summer afternoon was Jeff. This time he was interviewing me as a journalist for the now extinct 'Moto' magazine. Moto was a work of art and a true treasure if you can ever find an old copy today. Jeff was largely responsible for my upcoming position of responsibility as it was me that had been chosen to turn this corn field into a circuit deserving of the greatest race in motocross.

Amongst the praise that me and Jeff were showered with following the 2004 British Motocross Grand Prix, were concerns from more traditional corners of the sport that we had introduced a modern US style circuit into the calendar that had disregarded the more traditional elements that characterised English circuits of the past. The lack of off cambers at Gore Basin, albeit there were a couple, was one of the few criticisms I had the good sense to listen to.

On this yet to be built circuit, not only would I build an off camber, it would be the off camber to rule all off cambers. Below where me and Jeff sat would be a long sweeping downhill left hander. With a 40-meter diameter apex it would curl like a corkscrew, almost turning back on itself. My hero Stefan Everts, the tall stylish Belgian, soon to be 10-time world Champion, would use this turn, I fantasised, to pass the cocky American favourites in the final race of his incredible career and go onto win the race for his home country. I played that image of Stefan making that pass a thousand times in my head and here's the thing, it really happened.

Now let me explain, it didn't happen precisely as I imagined, but what took place was so close that it seems silly to quibble over the details. My vision was of Stefan riding round the outside of Ricky Carmichael, the GOAT of American motocross and who had also just announced his



retirement. Just like Stefan, he would ride his final race at the circuit I was entrusted to create. As luck would have it, Ricky was injured right before the race and the captaincy of the US team fell on the shoulders of the young African American James Stewart. Breathtakingly fast and almost absurdly aggressive, James was arguably even faster than Ricky, but had never quite figured out how to avoid crashing his brains out. A search of 'James Stewart crashes' on youtube is well worth your time if you want some measure of just how fearless and courageous, he was.

As the day wore on at the 2006 Nations event there was an electricity in the air, it was like nothing I have ever witnessed in my life. The crowd for this event was around four times the size of what we had seen at the World Championship round earlier in the year. The whole site had descended into a level of chaos that was essentially one step down from a full-scale riot. The unexpected numbers were completely unmanageable, and the promoter had essentially lost control of the site.

From the security of my position on the infield of the circuit I stared out in astonishment at the mass of people who had crushed into this vast natural amphitheatre, the three sides of this valley now heaving with people standing in the undulating natural grandstands.

The first two races had been epic and entering the final deciding race everything was in the balance between Belgium and the US. My friend Billy Mackenzie, who I grew up just five miles from had found himself on the British team that year, appeared round the first turn of the final



race in second and the entire place erupted. At the end of the first lap Billy had forced his way into the lead and the noise was deafening. As Billy and the Italian rider Phillipaerts traded passes, Stefan and James steadily worked their way towards the front. As the race reached the midway mark and having seen multiple position changes between the two, it was Stefan now stalking James. As they entered the sweeping downhill left-handed corkscrew that had consumed my thoughts for the last year, Stefan went on to make a pass that would christen this turn forever as 'Everts Corner'. He glided round the outside of James, standing on the pegs, his chest over the handlebars and with the kind of style and grace that had come to define his extraordinary 16-year career at the top of the World Championships. He was a newly crowned 10-time World Champion, the greatest of all time and now here he was on his way to becoming the individual MX1 winner of the Motocross of Nations.

The next year, I was driving up the M1 and my phone rang. Looking down at the +34 code my mind raced as to what country that might be and who could be looking for me. I didn't know anyone from Monaco at the time so I picked up to hear a voice say "Johnny?..", yes" I replied, "It's Stefan Everts".... as the blood drained from my face I frantically searched for a chance to pull over. On the hard shoulder of the M1, my van shaking as lorries flew past my door just inches away, Stefan went on to ask if I would come out and look at some land he had in Spain. This was where Grand Prix riders have traditionally migrated to in the winter to train and he wanted to develop a facility.

So that's how I ended up in the back of a hire car sitting next to my hero. In the car with us was the soon to become MX2 World Champion, South African Tyler Rattray and his girlfriend. In the back was some other guy I only remember for having had the most violently obnoxious

breath I've ever smelled, then there was Stefan, his ridiculous thighs spread out on the seat squashing me into the door. Traveling back from the site to our hotel I noticed a pause in the conversation and spotted my opportunity. I had fantasised about how one day I might tell Stefan about my dream and how incredibly it almost played out exactly as I had imagined... now was my chance!

As I breathlessly began my story it was evident within a few sentences that my tired audience was not fully engaged. I pushed on undeterred but as I finally reached the crescendo of my epic tale, I looked across to see if that smell was finally peeling the paint off the inside of the other door and was now forced to acknowledge the unmistakable sight of the 10 time world champion gazing out the opposite window looking at the scenery. It wasn't simply that he wasn't interested in my story, he wasn't even listening.



As I turned to stare at the back of the driver's head, now contemplating the wisdom of eastern philosophy, that life itself is suffering. Knowing then that everyone I've ever known and everyone I've ever loved is certain to die including me, the words of Dennis Leary crashed around inside my head. "Hey nobody's happy, join the ... club! Happiness comes in small doses, it's a cigarette or a chocolate chip cookie, that's it ok, you eat the cookie, you smoke the butt, you go to sleep, you wake up in the morning and you go to work, that is it end of list ok, I thought I was gonna be the starting centre fielder for the Boston Red Sox, life sucks, get a ... helmet!

Wise words indeed. In a world now seemingly descending into chaos, with cowardly self-serving politicians from left right and centre, constantly conjuring new and interesting ways to make your life just a bit more difficult, the importance of appreciating those fleeting moments when sun of life is shining on your back is of more importance than ever before. You see life really does suck, no matter who you are or how successful you become there's a runner up medal waiting for each and every one of us. You really must remember to make time for those activities that reliably make you happy, the things that make you connect with the present. So with that in mind may I add one further thing to those profound words of Mr Leary. When you get that helmet.... do yourself a favour.... go and ride a motorcycle. Just trust me see what happens, you can thank me later.



# NDAM'S UPDATE MARCH 2023

This week I attended an IAM RoadSmart online marketing training seminar where they confirmed 'Facebook' is still leading WhatsApp, TikTok, LinkedIn and Twitter for online advertising.

The NDAM Facebook page even through this winter quarter remains very active.

**MARKETING 2023** - I have pretty much completed our marketing planning & bookings for 2023 for North Devon –

- **BIKE SAFE** in Barnstaple, dates in the calendar.
- **BIDEFORD BIKE NIGHTS** starting 27th April, taking place on the LAST Thursday of each month until 28th September.
- **BARNSTAPLE BIKE NIGHTS** are being held on the 2nd Thursday starting April and finishing in September.
- **IN MAY** NDAM are visiting Chivenor Military Base to conduct a slow riding event followed by Taster rides in and around north/mid Devon.
- **BIDEFORD BIKE SHOW** - Sunday 28th May - the main event of the year for NDAM.
- **BRAUNTON WHEELS** - Sunday 30th July a well-attended car and bike show.
- Awaiting the dates from the committee for the very popular North & South **SKILLS DAY** events, hoping the Barnstaple Rugby Club is available for the North, and Swans Nest for the south.
- **ILFRACOMBE BIKE SHOW** is confirmed going ahead! This year however it will be organised by Satan's Slaves MC North Coast, just awaiting dates to be confirmed by the council – Proposed Saturday 9th September.

Any members who have the inclination / time to help at any of these events, I would be very grateful for any assistance, just let me know please.

I have managed to secure a 'BIKER DOWN' course in Exeter on Saturday 15th April for 18 DAM members, details of which will be shared soon.

Very pleased to report that our Examiner Strawbs has recovered from his knee operation and is currently conducting ARC testing again.

The Coaching Inn at South Molton continues to host 'DAM Training Evenings'



and on Wednesday 15th February Peter Johnston returned to show us his skills in the puncture repair workshop. What an entertaining event this was, attended by 30 members & non-members.

NDAM Observer 'Derek Facey' continues as Northern Rookie Rides co-ordinator, (Everyone is welcome of course) Derek has put together over this winter quite a few rides, both official & unofficial. – BIG thank you Derek.

Thank you to all the new and recent 'NDAM members' who continue supporting the Group rides, Rookie rides & our Observer team up here - Robin, Steve, Andy, Woody, Tim, Derek, Nigel, and me.

Regards

**Martin**

Rushworth, North Devon Team Leader

# DAVE THORPE ENDURO TRAINING DAY REPORT

**Tim Redman**

In December I took delivery of my new-to-me Yamaha Tenere 700 Rally. It is a thing of beauty. No fancy trimmings, no electrical witchcraft. Just simple twist and go. I have intentions of doing some big trips away over the next year or two, which will involve some serious offroad miles. So off the back of this I thought I had better do some training as I had never ventured off the black stuff, except for on a group DAM ride with our chief observer leading. He does like to use the roads with green grass instead of white lines!!

Timed to perfection with this little process going on in my head, DAM invited Dave Thorpe down to the Swans Nest for a talk through his career and where it all started. For those that don't know (I didn't before), Dave Thorpe is/was a world class MX rider. Winning multiple World



Championships before remaining with Honda over the years and now running the Dave Thorpe HONDA Offroad Centre, located just across the county line on Exmoor National Park. He gave quite the talk, detailing where he came from and how he ended up where he is now. It was me sold. I booked on for a Saturday in mid- January.

The day came around and although it had been raining for a week straight, the clouds had cleared that day and it was dry from above. One of Dave's office team had called to amend the meeting point due to the ground being too wet in the planned woods. I headed up past Wimbleball Lake, dodging puddles the size of the Atlantic to finally arrive at the woodland we were going to be using. As I drove down the track a fleet of little red bikes were gathered on side of a forestry clearing, behind which sat a make-do bivouac comprising a box lorry and a Mercedes sprinter with a gazebo tied down between the pair of them. I was directed to the opposite end of the clearing to park up. From this high point in the woods you could see across the Bristol Channel to Port Talbot. After signing in and entering into an agreement that if I crashed/burnt/

died they would call my partner Amelie, who no doubt would say "I told you to be careful", I joined the small huddle of fifteen other folks. Most of these were riders much like myself. The right side of forty, ridden on the roads and competent at it, never ridden off road and had no idea what to do when the back wheel was trying to overtake you. There was a couple older chaps and a lone female. She along with two others, had never ridden a bike, let alone offroad!!

After a short briefing on what to expect, Dave introduced his two instructors Nick and Nick before we were split into groups. Those that couldn't. Those that could. And



those in the middle, i.e. myself. I was given a Honda CRF300L that was to be my chariot for the day and set to following one of the Nicks down over a simple hard packed gravel track down into the woods. At each obstacle, small or large, Nick would stop and explain how to approach and manoeuvre through said obstacle. This ranged on the first loop from simple tasks like turning and how to position weight far forward to enable front wheel to dig in, through to more complicated rutted hill climbs. After this slow speed lap looking at particular obstacles we then followed Nick around in a continuous loop. He then pulled off and we continued to ride around this loop. As my confidence built in each section my lap time was dropping. I was having an absolute blast, until I came off!! The bike got cross rutted and speared off the track into a small copse, leaving me behind. Besides a bruised ego all the equipment Dave had kitted me out in had done its job. I retrieved the bike from the trees and set off for another lap. At the end of the first hour, we re-grouped and Nick led us all back up to the bivouac for a break and a well-deserved cup of tea.

Following our 20 min break we swung our legs back over the bikes and headed back into the woods, as Nick led us towards a different section. This section had much smaller loop which consisted of a long up hill, a short flat section across the top and then a short but very steep downhill singletrack back to the bottom of the uphill. To top that off we also had to duck under a low tree branch at the bottom of the steep. It was great fun. All of us learning to select a low gear and avoid using the brakes, relying on engine braking alone to control the speed of the descent. On one loop around a lad in front had fallen off, I couldn't slow up as the front locked when applying the brakes and I tobogganed into him. This resulted in a comical cartwheel roll into the

brambles off the edge of the track. After picking the bike up and freewheeling to the bottom I then couldn't start it. No matter what I tried it wouldn't start. I checked lead connections and the key barrel itself. I had to send for help!! I flagged Nick down who immediately pointed out my kill button had been flicked. What a muppet!!

After some fun here and our next tea break, we tackled some more obstacles, including a huge, long, steep hill climb on loose dirt. We were told hit it in minimum second if not third and keep it pinned. The third bloke up dropped it, with the following riders all then having to stop. It was carnage getting everyone going again!! But such good fun and really taught you to keep your eyes up the trail to be able to choose different lines.



After our lunch break, we were informed about a format of racing called hare and hound. This is where a rider (the hare) takes off and the remaining riders (the hounds) try to keep up. Nick scampered away up the trail on his bike whilst the rest of us scrambled to find grip. Every junction or turning point Nick would stop and we'd shortly regroup. This also gave everyone the chance to jostle for position, although it wasn't a competition, it soon got pretty heated with the first three riders outrunning the remainder of the pack in their attempts to keep up with the Hare. Thankfully I seemed to have

a natural ability and I was in that top three looking for sneaky passes on the two in front of me.

After a good hour of this fun, we headed back for a debrief. Short and sweet this was as the rain was coming in and everyone was fairly tired out and looking desperate for a beer!!

I would highly recommend this day out with Dave Thorpe's Honda Offroad Centre. The team were amazingly patient and very good instructors. The bikes behaved superbly no matter how harsh some of the drops were. And to be able to turn up in just trainers and jeans and be kitted up with top notch Alpinestars gear was great. I would advise doing this in anything but the bone-dry summer. I feel the summertime trail riding would be too easy and not testing enough if you really want to learn how to ride offroad.

If you are looking for something a little different than the usual Sunday tarmac ride out, I'd definitely be booking here first to ensure you have some confidence when taking your big ADV bike out on your local trails.



# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Nigel Stelfox, Hamish Renton, Dave Benson, David Keegan, Wade Collins, Ross McCormick, Duncan Stock, Kevin Ricketts, Manda Stone, Chris Marsden, Anthony Gray, Jonathan Ward, Nick Evans, Stephen Joint, Trevor Wilson

## Congratulations to the Test Passes

Associate	Observer
Hamish Forward	Dave Grant
Peter Adams	Catherine McKinley
Chris Carr (F1rst)	Gareth Taylor
Locryn Peters	John Millgate
Bob Robinson (F1rst)	Simon Jeffery
Rob Torr	David Page
Helen Couch	Philip Pike
William Woodland	Simon Jeffery
Mark Madden	David Page
Simon Padley	Mark Fouache

# BMW RHINO RALLY FEB 2023

Helen Beer



No storms forecast for this year and we were all spoilt with mild weather (especially good for the campers) some sunshine and dry roads. An early start gathering friends along the way and leaving from Aust for some Western Section Photo Challenge Points. Andrew was at the helm with Martin, Jim, Dave, Andy, Graham and me as tail end Charlotte. Our attempt at the first photo of the weekend was thwarted by a road closure near Chepstow and necessitated a quick replan on the move (I do love that road to Usk 😊 which wasn't on the original agenda). We had a fun day with 4 photos - memorials at Glasby, Llanbadarn Fawr, Trawsfynydd and a sign the middle of the Elan Mountain Trail. Lunch was at The Honey Cafe at Bronllys and tea at Two Hoots at Devils Bridge - both popular biker haunts. Signs of spring along the way and a good variety of roads. Our host at the Tanronnen in Beddgelert loaned us his hose so we could make our bikes legal again... we didn't mind the muck but number plates had to show. In all 10 hours and 273 miles.

An early morning walk along the river then 6 of us headed for Anglesey via Sarn Melteyrn for a photo of the Pottery there and coffee at Abersoch where we

sat outside in the sunshine. We then headed to the Windmill at Llanddeusant then Amlwch Port for a late lunch. Back to Beddgelert via Llanberis with warmed tyres after 152 fun miles. A relaxed evening in the pub catching up with more club members - some attending the rally for the first time.

Another early walk before 10 of us headed out again. We rode for 90 mins for a photo only to be scuppered at the last mile with a road closure. Coffee at the Cross Foxes and then the A494 and B4403 to Lake Vyrnwy with a Boundary Marker picture on the way. Lunch was outside at the cafe at Vyrnwy then off to Gwytherin before returning via Sandy Tudor Llanrwst and Betws-y-Coed. 165 dry miles with temps in double figures all day.

Sunday arrived way too quickly - fond farewells and a plan to get two photos on the way home was scuppered by mud so coffee was taken at Llangadfan instead before a run down the A458, B4385, Newtown, Dolfar and Llanbister to the Honey Cafe for lunch in the sun again. Talgarth, Bwlch, Gilwern, Raglan and a last photo opportunity at the Tintern Foundry before home in the dark 260 miles later.

Many thanks to Jim for organising the weekend - it's a great event and marks the start of a new riding season.







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- If you would like more information I'm happy to help.

**Rodney Rayner  
Group Rides Coordinator.**

# TAKING ADVANCED SKILLS OFFROAD.

**Tim Redman**



I recently did some training at Dave Thorpe's offroad centre (see report on page 20) and following my success there and the new found love for offroad riding I went out on the local lanes with some fellow DAM and non-DAM members for a "novice" day out. It was snowy on the ground and cold in the air. The trails were mostly gentle easy gravel type trails with the odd muddy, slippery track in there but nothing that none of us couldn't handle.

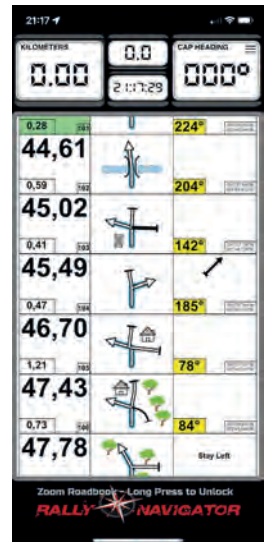
After one day on the trails, I went full Rambo and committed to a weekend of navigational rallying on Salisbury plain. This included a day training followed by a one-day Adventure

Rally Raid. The event was organised by Rally Moto, a small business offering Rally adventures across the UK and Portugal.

Navigation on said rally was done via Tulip drawings, which although look like a child's attempt at aboriginal rock art, are in fact very easy to read. You always read each box on your scroll (roll of paper with the rally notes on) from the bottom. The direction you go from this point is marked with an arrow. It's as simple as that. All the other information does help with knowing distances and any advice on the track conditions, but you don't need that to get going.

The training day included information on installing either a manual scroll reader or installing the digital app on a smart device such as a Samsung Active Tab2. Following this we discussed the several variants of information available on a roadbook rally scroll and how to read them. That was our morning. It was a bit more in depth than that but it wasn't overall interesting, just factual. We had a good cup of tea though!!

The afternoon we were sent on a mock rally on Salisbury Plain from Tilshead village. The terrain was



very easy, just being a mix of gravel tracks and tarmac roads. We covered approximately 85km in three hours or so. After getting back we had a debrief and given our roadbooks for the next day. This including being shown a few more advanced details such as how to highlight the roadbook to make certain information stand out better. On the digital version this is already done. Next job was to make camp, or head for a hotel, followed swiftly by a cider and a walk to the local pub for Salisbury Plain's best pizza and a local cider.

The next day we were entered into a full rally with more people coming along boosting the numbers from twenty to sixty riders. As I had had issues on the first day being held up on some single track by slower riders, I made sure I was first out the gate. Ever cocky in my approach, it worked. With riders leaving at two min intervals, I had time in hand not to be pressured from behind immediately but felt I could quickly build a gap to the ones behind. The road book was 127km and a little bit trickier. But I loved it. Lots of sections where you could safely open the throttle up, lots of muddy puddles to skirt around, lots of camaraderie with other riders and a few near misses when I may have tried to be Pol Tarres out of the gravel corners!!

The results weren't published until later in the week but I knew on the day that I had gained approximately 10 mins on the rider who left after me. The scoring system is not based on timings so there is no pressure to ride quick, although it is good fun pretending you are taking part in a full Dakar Rally!! The scoring is however, based entirely on navigation with points awarded for mistakes made or speeding in controlled zones. When the results were published later that week, I had finished a very respectable seventh out of sixty riders. Something to be proud of!!

I have booked on future events with Rally Moto but they have nothing in the southwest, so to deal with that I have planned a route of 140km around Dartmoor and have invited the Rally Moto team down to trial a route, with a view of a full rally raid event taking place in September when the trails will be at their driest and possibly easiest to navigate. The criteria set out to me from the Rally Moto team is that a novice on a big GS on 50/50 tyres should be able to cope with the terrain and just have to worry about the navigation. Keep your eyes peeled for that event.

To ensure there is a strong contingent of riders in the SW that want to take part in that event I have looked to run a rally raid event of our own in May. This will be purely just for DAM members along with members from the FB page "Devon Trax Trail Riders". The terrain is likely not for complete beginners but is doable on 50/50 tyres for those who think they're capable enough. That event will run from Woodleigh Coach House and finish at the Taw River Inn. We are

hoping this event will be supported by Devon and Cornwall 4x4 Response and by doing so we are not going to be charging any entry fees on this one (I do like a Devon Red cider if anyone asks at the end). If this is successful and we have a good turnout and good feedback I am going to host a small amount of these events over the year with entry fees. These will be events where all profits will go to charities such as Devon Air Ambulance Trust.

The event on the 7th May is on the Facebook events page and it would be great to see a few of you out, showing that the skills we have for on road are transferable to offroad. I'd also suggest looking at the Rally Moto website to see if their days which are likely to be easier for less confident riders attract you.

**Keeping it shiny side up, just got a whole lot harder!!**



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DAM is very grateful to a past member, the late Michael Whitfield, who gifted in his will £32,400 “to be used solely under the direction of Chairman and Committee for DAM Members’ facilities and training”. After a working group shortlisted a number of options to use this fund the main Committee has delegated to a Legacy Committee (Brian Churchward, Les Mosco (Chair), Phil Pike and Rodney Rayner) to decide and manage its effective use of over

the next 5-8 years, concentrating initially on enhanced training for existing Members and gaining more younger (age<30) Members. The first uses of the funds will be publicised shortly. These are likely to include part or full funding for additional post-Advanced test training. To assess demand and to be fair to all DAM Members initial places will be limited (e.g. to the first 10 applicants per initiative) with advanced notification of the booking timing and method (e.g. by email/text etc). The process and range of options will evolve as the pattern of demand emerges. The first use of funds will be an all-day Enhanced Skills Day on 12th August 2023 at Westpoint (the legacy paying for the venue hire and pre-event preparation), which will go deeper than the previous Swan’s Nest car park events, with sessions on bike handling, slow speed and slalom steering, hazard avoidance, emergency stopping (and other fun courses!). Enhanced Skills Day details will follow on the DAM website and emails. More information on the wider use of the legacy will also follow so watch out for DAM comms if you are interested.





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## Social Rides

At any one time, we have up to a hundred people like you preparing for their advanced riding test.



We encourage new members to attend our regular social rides aimed at those new to advanced riding. We call these Rookie Rides, and they take place on **the first Saturday of each month**. You can use the opportunity to compare your advanced riding experiences with other new members.

Once you have passed your advanced riding test, you will be eligible to join our other Group Rides. These tend to be longer, all day, rides, and normally on more challenging roads than the Rookie Rides. You'll be riding in the company of experienced advanced riders and come to enjoy the best riding roads and destinations the county has to offer. Put these regular dates for Group Rides in your diary now: **the second Sunday of every month, the fourth Sunday of every month, and the third Thursday of every month**.

Devon Advanced Motorcyclists also organise a number weekend or longer trips throughout the year to UK and European destinations.

Detailed arrangements about forthcoming Rookie Rides and Group Rides are emailed to members on a regular basis. Contact our Rookie Rides co-ordinator [dnmudge@blueyonder.com](mailto:dnmudge@blueyonder.com) or our Group Rides co-ordinator [groupridescoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:groupridescoordinator@gmail.com) for more information.



## The End of the Beginning

For some new members of, passing their advanced riding test and joining in with the regular social rides is sufficient for them to keep their advanced riding skills honed.

For many more that is just the beginning.

We continually encourage all our members to take opportunities to keep their advanced riding skills up to scratch. Newly acquired skills can (and do) fade remarkably quickly.

IAM Roadsmart offer a **Fellowship** membership status: in return for an additional annual subscription, Fellow members are automatically offered a re-test of their advanced riding skills every three years. What better way to keep you on your toes?

Information about **Fellowship** membership can be found at [www.iamroadsmart.com/membership](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/membership).

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Alternatively, to take your riding skills up another level, you might consider the Masters programme. This provides mentoring support and guidance that will help you attain the highest standard of civilian riding in the country. The coaching encourages the use of professional riding techniques used by police and other emergency services riders.

Information about the **Masters** qualification can be found at [www.iamroadsmart.com/masters](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/masters).

**£299**

If something less formal is your thing, we run a variety of events offering ongoing encouragement of advanced riding.

On the third Saturday of each month, we run **Post-Test Training Rides**. These offer you the opportunity to ride with experienced observers who will offer suggestions for improving and refining your ride. No fee. No obligation. No reason not to!

Contact [triumphjohn955@gmail.com](mailto:triumphjohn955@gmail.com) to book your place on a Post-Test Training Ride.

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To arrange your **Martini ride**, contact [chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com](mailto:chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com).

### **Be a Giver**

The ultimate way you can hone your advanced riding skills is by passing your knowledge along by joining the club's team of Observers. Observers are not only excellent advanced riders, but also possess the personal qualities to coach and encourage others to ride to the best of their ability. You will receive training to a nationally recognised standard overseen by the Institute for the Motor Industry.

If you think you have what it takes to become an Observer, get in touch with Simon Jeffery, your [chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com](mailto:chiefobserver@devonadvanced.com)

# SOME THINGS DON'T DEPEND #9 OFF SIDING

**A billion words have been written about off-siding. I'll summarise it here with just 40. You're welcome.**

If you ride on the wrong side of the road when you have restricted view ahead, sooner or later you will hit a wall of steel at a relative speed of 120 miles per hour.

That will not even hurt.



## Committee and Club Officers May 2023

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<p><b>Rookie Rides Co-ordinator:</b> Dave Mudge; E: <a href="mailto:dnmudge@blueyonder.co.uk">dnmudge@blueyonder.co.uk</a></p>		<p><b>Membership:</b> Barrie Dennett: E: <a href="mailto:membership@devonadvanced.com">membership@devonadvanced.com</a></p>	
<p><b>Observed Rides Co-ordinator:</b> Ian Pruce M: 0779 240 2457 E: <a href="mailto:observedrides@outlook.com">observedrides@outlook.com</a></p>		<p><b>Rider Development Coordinator:</b> Tony Curley E: <a href="mailto:tony.curley@btinternet.com">tony.curley@btinternet.com</a></p>	
<p>If you are a new associate member please contact Ian as early as possible, preferably by email, even if you don't intend to start your <i>Advanced Rider Course</i> immediately.</p>	<p><b>Other Committee Members:</b> Steve Hyde Brian Churchward Jill Payne</p>		<p><b>Trustees:</b> Dave Cooper Catherine Mckinley Nathaniel Goss Philip Pike Terry Dormer Dave Mudge</p>

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