

The Journal of the Norfolk and Norwich Group of Advanced Motorists

affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorists

Winter 2024



NORFOLK & NORWICH GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS 59th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held at **The Pavilion**, **Oakfields Road**, **Cringleford NR4 6XE**. on **Wednesday 8th January 2025 starting at 7.30pm prompt. Buffet provided on the night**.

Proposed AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence
- 2. AGM Minutes of 2024
- 3. Matters Arising
- 4. Chairmans Report Ian Cain
- 5. Secretary's Report Elke Martin
- 6. Treasurers Report & Adoption of Accounts Greg Chandler
- 7. Election of Officers:

Election of Secretary Election of Treasurer

The following committee members are willing to stand for 2025

Ian Cain	Chairman
Elke Martin	Secretary
Greg Chandler	Treasurer
Martin Woodhouse	Membership Secretary
Keith Mace	Display Unit Manager
Vacant	Display Unit Administration
Vacant	Associate Scheme Coordinator (cars)
Paul Southwell	Associate Scheme Coordinator (bikes)
Kevin Smith	Observer Training Coordinator (cars)
lan Cain	Observer Training Coordinator (bikes)
Vacant	Social Events Secretary / Coordinator
Vernon Clarke	Magazine Editor
Vacant	Rideout Coordinator

- 8. Presentation of Awards
- 9. Induction of committee
- 10. Close of Meeting / Open Forum

Any nominations for the Committee and any items wishing to be included within the Agenda as printed above, must be notified to the Group Secretary/Membership Secretary by Wednesday 18[®] December 2024. Committee Nominations must be in writing and signed by the *Proposer, Seconder & Candidate*.

Your Committee

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You can visit our Facebook page too https://www.facebook.com/nnam.org Or our Instagram page @nnadvancedmotorists Membership Secretary Martin Woodhouse 18 Soame Close, Aylsham Norfolk. NR11 6JF 1263 732997 E-mail; membership@nnam.org.uk

If you find any mistakes in this edition of WHEELS, please consider that they may well be there for a purpose. We try to include something for everybody and some people are always looking for mistakes!

The group (Norfolk & Norwich Advanced Motorists) accepts no responsibility for products, goods or services that may be advertised or referenced. Publication of any advertisements or loose inserts in the magazine does not imply endorsement by NNAM. All prices, advertised or provided, are accepted in good faith as being correct at the time of going to press. The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of either IAM RoadSmart or the Norfolk and Norwich Group.

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The Motor Ombudsman was busy in the beginning of this year, with the public having 1,600 disputes over repair work and servicing.

The Geneva Motor Show is no longer. Its dead.

The new Government has said it will bring back the date for the sale of all new cars to be electric to 2030. This was increased to 2035 by the previous government



Scan the QR code to navigate directly to the NNAM website



Clyde Brown, a long standing member of the Group and an Observer for many years is retiring. He has helped many associates to test success. The Committee would like to thank him for all his efforts over the years. "*Good Luck for the future Clyde*"

Another Summer over and here we go into Autumn and Winter. As I write this we've not had any bad weather, in fact it's still quite mild. Let's hope it continues like this.

By the time you read this, Kevin Smith and I will have attended the IAM Roadsmart Eastern Region Autumn Forum on the 26th Oct. This is an opportunity for "Head Office" to let us know what they plan for the future, to listen to our feedback, and for us to meet representatives of other local Groups. There will be a separate report on this elsewhere in the magazine.

The agenda for the AGM is on the cover of this magazine. We still need volunteers to fill some Committee posts - car observer co-ordinator, group meetings speaker co-ordinator, ride out co-ordinator, and **MDU administrator.** The Committee are working to find volunteers to fill these posts, if anyone would like to offer their services please contact either me or the retiring post holder for more information.

A bit of consumer news. One of our bike members had a breakdown during a rideout. He phoned the RAC for assistance at about 1200, a patrol man arrived within two hours, but could not help (they can rarely fix bikes), so he requested recovery. At 2300 despite many phone calls, our man was still waiting. He was later picked up by a friend and taken home. His bike was recovered and delivered to his house just before midday the following day. Nearly 24 hours later. When you next renew your breakdown cover, think about who might offer you the best service.

Finally, let me be one of the first to offer you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.





Secretary's Desk

A hearty warm welcome!

It's been a colourful year overall with our great committee diligently supporting our charity by way of their time, enthusiasm, speciality and commitment.

As we reach another end of year calendar and almost a year on since my appointment as Secretary, I've witnessed a good number of new associates joining, coupled with engaging events, all in all a positive direction!

Inside, you'll find some tips, news and events. How great it is to see associates achieve exam passes - thank you amazing members, associates, observers & coordinators!

Why not join us at our monthly group socials for 7:30pm @ The Pavilion Cringleford. You're just in time for **Wednesday 11th December** which sees Sandy Gourlay from **Norfolk Blood Bikes** who will be giving an insightful and fascinating talk about the incredible work their splendid charity does.

A brief word about our upcoming **AGM**, please do join us, all our members and family are at the heart of what we do. Your voice, together with our resources make and shape the group and help maintain good governance. We'll have a light buffet available too so please save the date! - **Wednesday 8th January 2025** for 7:30pm prompt.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a festive December and January. Watch out for roaming deer and pheasants along the road!

Make sure to take time to do something you enjoy! This time of year can be exciting but also quite lonely for some, please look out for your neighbours! Stay safe.

With warm Christmas wishes,



It's been great to hear of so many test passes, and especially a number of Firsts, since our last edition. It is particularly gratifying that, given the shortage of observers we are experiencing, those we do have volunteering for us are doing an excellent job of coaching and mentoring their associates.



To those of you on our waiting list, I thank you for your patience. We have at least one new volunteer whom we hope to have operational as an observer in the new year. Please do get in touch with us if this is something you are considering. You must be an existing member to be an observer but training will be given.

As we come to the end of 2024 I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all our incredible volunteer observers for dedicating their time and energy to mentoring our associates. Their commitment and patience has not only helped individuals develop crucial driving skills but have also contributed to safer roads for everyone. Their dedication and experience are deeply appreciated. Thank you for making a difference.

Finally, with Christmas on the horizon it's good time to remind you that an IAM Roadsmart driving course makes a great Christmas gift!

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM in January

NEW ASSOCIATES	NEW 🔊 ASSOCIATES
Mr. Ryan LingwoodScarningMr. Ian HallamMarshamMrs. Gina KerrSwaffhamMr. Andrew MorganKings LynnMr. Brendon EddisonStalhamMr. Leslie EddowesTacolneston	Mr. Guy Hughes Kings Lynn Mr. Richard Craig Kings Lynn
TEST SUCCESSES	TEST SUCCESSES 👸 OBSERVERS
Mr. Elliot Steadman - Aslacton - Clyde Brown Christna Scales - Colton - Terry Vincent Brian Simmonds - Saham Toney - John Walden Philip Comer - Saxthorpe - John Elwin John Ware - Smallburgh - Graham Watson Mr. John Harris (1st) Wells-Next-the-Sea - Graham Watson	Jessica Smith Sedgeford Ian Cain Alasdair Bland Saddlebow Paul Southwell Joanne Jutsum Heacham Paul Southwell



Warmest congratulations to all the above Associates and their Observers on successfully reaching the high standards of The Institute of Advanced Motorists.

All New Associates and New Members are welcome to come along to our Group Meetings, we have some interesting talks lined up.

Bikes: Paul Souyhwell: Lara Slater - Associate Coordinators

I decided to buy a new car about a year ago, and chose a Suzuki Jimmy. On the basis that this would be an ideal vehicle for driving in and around Norfolk. The Jimmy has quite a following and I had to wait a year before one became available.

There were a few raised eyebrows among friends and family because I was 89 at the time. However, I like to look to the future rather than reflect on the past. The Jimmy is rather a quirky vehicle, certainly not sophisticated and with many fewer technical enhancements than most new cars: this, for me, is a positive. I have driven a Toyota Yaris for the past 14 years which has a higher spec, and much **higher performance**.

The Jimmy performs much differently to the Yaris. I am an enthusiastic driver and I decided that some driving tuition would be helpful. I passed the IAM advanced test in 1965 but much had changed during the past 59 years: the development of cars, the roads, the volume of traffic and, of course, myself.

I looked online and discovered that the Institute of Advanced Motorists had become IAM Road Smart. I contacted Head Office to make enquiries and when I was asked my age, I detected a slight change of voice particularly when I said that I wanted to take the test. The immediate response was: 'would you prefer to do an assessment drive?' I was insistent that I wanted to take the test.

Eventually, I was allocated to my Observer, Graham Watson. I gained the impression that whoever allocated me to him, had almost apologised. Much has changed since I took the course in 1965. Then, I was taught to make much use of the gears rather than the brakes. There was no mention of the System **Information, Position, Speed, Gear and Acceleration. (IPSGA), t**he core of the program. My first session with Graham, did not go particularly well: my fault. I had been driving both the Yaris and the Jimmy, and the Jimmy being quite new to me, I was not quite used to driving it.

I cannot speak too highly of Graham. I had about 10 sessions with him. His effort, skill, knowledge, enthusiasm for driving and his patience, were impressive. I had good days and then would regress to my old habits, but he quietly but firmly kept me going in the right direction. When he decided that I was ready he made the arrangements for the test; but before that I had a mock test with Kevin Smith, Observer Training Co-ordinator. The feedback that I received from both Graham and Kevin proved to be really useful. Naturally, I wanted to pass the test but even if I had not passed, I felt that the experience was worthwhile and had made me much more aware, more confident, more competent and a much safer driver.

On the day of the test, I felt a little apprehensive but as soon as I met my examiner, Soji Ojelade, he immediately put me at ease. At the end of the drive, I was delighted to be told that I had passed, but even more delighted to learn that I had passed with a FIRST.

One thing that I found was common to the three people who have sat beside me during the various stages of the coaching program was that none of them missed a trick. Their sense of awareness of the road, the traffic and the often erratic behaviour of other road users was really impressive.

Peter Rodger, in his article in the Advanced Driver Course Logbook, defines what he regards as the Thinking Driver. My Observer has helped me make a big step towards becoming such a Driver.

So, if you are a driver reading this article, even if you an older driver, who would like to become a safer, more competent and confident driver and who is considering taking the course: I have no hesitation in recommending the IAM RoadSmart driving course to you.

John Harris

IAMRoadsmart Eastern Region Autumn Forum

On the 26th Oct 2024, Kevin Smith and I attended the Autumn Forum for IAM groups in the Eastern region at the Bedford Lodge Hotel in Newmarket. I have listed most of the points raised during this forum below.

- IAM RoadSmart has approximately 72,000 members. Not all of these are active Group members.
- As a road safety organisation IAM RoadSmart has a number of ways of promoting road safety, not all of which involves the Groups. As an example they are currently marketing a Driver Improvement Course for non members which will be carried out by Approved Driver Instructors (ADI).
- Almost all IAM RoadSmart products made a loss in 22/23. The organisation is looking at ways to save money, including looking at staffing levels. Membership prices will be kept under review and the organisation hopes to at least break even within two years.
- There are 3,964 Observers. Although there are more car Groups than bike Groups, there are more bike Observers than car Observers. Overall Observer numbers are dropping.
- More products will be introduced to support young drivers and riders with the intention of recruiting younger members. The organisation is working with various social media organisations to try and spread the road safety message.
- Development of DARTS (the membership database) is in progress with the intention of having a portal where Observer resources can be accessed and associates will be able to see drive/ride reports through passworded access.
- Discussions are taking place about motorbike insurance with a broker called Bikesure. This is part of the Adrian Flux insurance brokers who are based in Kings Lynn. Car insurance may follow this route. The hope is that IAM members will get improved insurance offers this way.
- There was an open forum at the end where attendees were invited to offer suggestions, especially about keeping volunteers. Free corporate clothing, free corporate items for display units were among some of the things raised. These suggestions will be taken away for consideration.
 I have made no personal observations about any of these points. I assume a full report will be issued by IAM RoadSmart in time, probably on their website

Jan Cain





Bob Tash - Speaker Secretary 07415589110 norwichevents@nnam.org.uk

First of all, an apology for the late cancellation of the visit to Gridserve which should have taken place on the 9th October. I found it particularly annoying that having checked with my contact at Gridserve a couple of weeks before that everything was set for the visit and was reassured this was the case, to then find out at very short notice that not only had my contact left the company, along with several other senior managers, but that the visit could not take place. Nobody it seemed had the courtesy to let me know the situation. Very disappointing.

However, I think everybody who attended the enlightening talk by Dr Anne Edwards about 'The History & Work of the John Innes Centre', which was hastily arranged instead, really enjoyed the Speaker and the subject. So many thanks to Anne for stepping in at the last minute.

This is likely to be my last contribution to our magazine, at least in my current role. We hope to have my successor in place from the AGM in January.

During my time as Social Secretary I have arranged for some 67 Speakers to come along to our Group and I am pretty confident that most, if not all of these were enjoyed by our members. I am sure this will continue after the AGM so please continue your support for these evenings as it is a vital part of the social aspect of the Group.

GROUP MEETINGS

Cringleford Pavilion, Norwich. NR4 6XF

The Speaker events take place on the second Wednesday of every month at 19.30 at the Cringleford Pavilion, Oaklands Road, Norwich, NR4 6XE apart from August, when there is a break for holidays and January when we hold the AGM. It is easy to get to and there is plenty of parking. I would ask you all to support this activity as much as possible and please feel free to bring along friends and relations. We even supply tea, coffee and biscuits at the end!

Please keep an eye on our website for any event changes or updates for upcoming Speakers

11th December - Sandy Gourlay - Norfolk Blood bikers

Norfolk Blood Bikes primary purpose is to transport urgent or emergency blood & blood products between hospitals and other designated sites as part of the Alliance's Blood Transfusion Service. Norfolk Blood Bikes is registered with the UK Charity Commission. Formed in 2011, to fulfil the need of an 'out of hours' transport service for blood, samples and any other items that require urgent transportation.

Some of you may recall a previous presentation by the Blood Bikers back in Sept 2019. That was five years ago so I thought it was time for an update. Thanks to our Chairman for this contact which should turn out to be a fascinating evening of the work carried out by this valuable group.

Next AGM 8th January 2025

Starts at 7.30 prompt. Agenda on front cover. No talk this month but a <u>buffet will be provided on the night</u>

From Norwich :

From the Ring road take the Newmarket road out of Norwich. Take the slip road down to Eaton. Over the traffic lights, follow the old Newmarket Road (From Bluebell Road turn right at the lights). Over the bridge, take the first left (Intwood Road), in about 280yds turn left (Oakfields Road) and down to the end. Turn left to the Pavilion car park.

From the A47 :

Take the A11 towards Norwich. Just before the flyover take the slip road signposted Cringleford. At the 'T' junction turn right over the flyover. Turn left at the next 'T' junction and folloow the road round a slight right then slight left. Take the first right - acute right (Intwood Road), in about 280yds turn left (Oaklands Road), down to the end and turn left to the Pavilion car park.

Kevin Smith Observer Training Co-ordinator

I recently attend the IAM RoadSmart Autumn Forum in Newmarket with Ian Cain, our chairman. I was lucky to be invited, as previously the forum was limited to the chairperson and secretary, but this time it was decided that chief observers would be invited.

Although the forum primarily consisted of the organisation's vision and plans for the future, there was some content that I felt was particularly relevant for us as observers. Below is some of the content, in no particular order of importance, which I think is of relevance to us.

- 1. The titles 'observer' and 'associate' have been with us since the organisation began in 1956. Are these titles still relevant today, assuming they ever were relevant? To me, they've always seemed rather odd titles and didn't really explain what they are. Would the terms mentor or coach be better than observer? Are associates really trainees or candidates?
- 2. Are observers accessing the dashboard on the website to avail themselves of the resources? It was suggested that not all observers are either aware of or using the dashboard to best effect. I've used the dashboard, although it's not the most intuitive website to navigate and this was something the attendees at the forum mentioned and which the representatives from the IAM acknowledged, saying there would be efforts made to improve its functionality and accessibility. If you're not familiar with the dashboard I would encourage you to log on to the website and have a look at the resources available.
- 3. It was said that observers are still giving too much instruction and not enough coaching. There is, incidentally, a webinar on the dashboard on coaching, which is about an hour long. Those of you who are or have been masters mentors may also recall that we were advised to read *Can Drivers Really Teach Themselves? A Practitioner's Guide to Using Learner Centred and Coaching Approaches in Driver Education*. Unfortunately, this publication is no longer in print and a search on Amazon results in a used copy on offer for a staggering £49.92. Coaching is something that has to be learnt, which is not that easy if the resources or training are not readily available. Supporting the development of observers was something the attendees highlighted as being an area where the IAM could do more.
- 4. There will be a move to using DARTS to produce run sheets. I think many of us already use the editable pdf or MS Word run sheet and this will eventually become part of the DARTS system where run sheets can be uploaded or created and which will help with compliance with data protection regulations.
- 5. The role of local observer will end early next year. Any local observers who wish to continue will need to pass the national observers assessment before April 2025.

Those are the pertinent points for us as observers. I'd be interested to hear your thoughts on them.

Kevin

YOUR OPINIONS

We receive many letters and E-mails from members but only a few are considered for publication. Please include your full name, address and membership number, even if you are contacting us via Email. Any letters published are done so in good faith and we reserve the right to edit them where necessary. No E-mails or letters are retained.





Please dont forget :

Please don't forget that there's a hidden army of oldies who still learn from articles produced in wheels, we read it with interest. note modern adaptations to vehicles. However some of us through age or disability cannot attend the most interesting evenings with speakers whilst we would like to. Reading about these events is still good news for us, we are unseen, we no longer contribute. However with 55 years plus membership we are still important to

road safety. We try to aspire to good use and the principles of advanced driving. So just because we can't attend meetings doesn't mean we are not interested. I cannot ride a motorcycle anymore, I could ride it and stop it but I won't be able to hold it up; knees are shot...I enjoy reading of the trips the guys and girls take on their wonderful modern machines but the magazine is always interesting and usually I learn something new or maybe forgotten. **John Wilson**

Thank you for your comments John. You may not be able to attend but your membership is still appreciated. (Ed)

The Latest Wheels :

Many thanks for a most interesting edition of "Wheels". Lara's request for Observers - I used to be one, but I had so few associates - and their preferred days to drive always seemed to clash with other commitments - that I eventually gave up. It was a shame to read the chairman's summary of the planned events which didn't take place because of little or no interest. I don't know what the residential distribution of members is, or the age range, but in my own case, it's mostly age related! Although I still enjoy driving, I tend not to drive long distances very often (and I hate the journey to Norwich!), and a lot of the meetings and activities of NNAM are obviously close to where the majority of committee members, or other members live. I am no longer in the best of health, so anything which might involve walking or standing for long periods of time I tend not to participate in - and I'm sure that a lot of members are probably in similar situations. (The cost of fuel, although now reducing, could also play a part for some). The distances involved are the reason that I never participate in meetings or other events of NNAM - particularly if they are evening timings. I was interested to see that the bikers met at Bircham Windmill - only a few miles from here - if I'd known, I might have dropped in (although I doubt if my husband would be enthused, as a definite non-biker) - however, I doubt if they'd have been too interested either, in a 76 year old female who hasn't ridden a motorcycle since 1979 when I sold my Triumph Tiger 100, and now couldn't even get onto one!! I was interested by the article about hand position in the steering wheel. I have always used ten-to-two, and find it very comfortable - but I suspect that a lot of the positioning is down to one's distance from the wheel, and height relating to the positions of seat and wheel while driving. I often look at my husband clenching his steering wheel, and wonder why, as he is a relaxed and capable driver! I feel that by comparison I hardly touch mine, and certainly feel very relaxed. I have to say, however, that it was never of any assistance when other drivers either rear-ended me (about five of them!), or hit me head on, in a situation with nowhere for me to go - although I'm pretty certain that however I held the wheel would have made no difference whatever. Pamela Austin

Glad you found the magazine interesting. (Ed)

Verges :

I recently wrote to our MP, James Wild, on the subject, saying how many blind left hand bends (apart from anything else) there were in the local area. He replied, saying that he would talk to Highways, and within about a week, the verges through our village had been cut at the road edges, and a couple of weeks later, the high growth towards the back was also cut - and the same is true of many more roads within the area. Of course, it remains to be seen whether they are done again this year...!! - or next! **Pamela Austin**

They were all late being cut this year. It could be to do with nature or conservation or fuel cost cuttingnot verge cutting. (Ed)



Membership matters

Please note this is the only notice of your Group Membership renewal. We do NOT send out individual reminders

To **ALL FULL MEMBERS** - it is that time of the year again, to remind you that ALL group FULL membership fees are due on January 1st each year, current fee is £15.

To try and avoid some confusion on membership fees, the following only applies to FULL MEMBERS.

1.NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP - Payable to IAM RoadSmart. A reminder should be sent, but this does not always happen so please check your National membership.

2. GROUP MEMBERSHIP - £15 payable to us on the 1st January, no reminder sent.

If you have any questions on membership please speak to $\ensuremath{\mathbf{ME}}$

I will be at the AGM in January so if you do not pay by standing order I will be pleased to speak to you then.

If you pay by Standing Order [SO] please check that it is for the correct amount of £15

Although Group costs are being constantly reviewed. in an effort to keep the membership fee down the group annual subscription had to be increased from January 2024. Unfortunately several members did not amend their standing orders. Although we have honoured their membership for 2024 we do need you all to make sure that you pay the correct fee. So please check your standing order as only you can amend it.

We need your membership if we are to continue promoting Road Safety in Norfolk, so please renew for 2025. It is less then 30p per week and remember we are a registered charity and no one in this Norfolk & Norwich Group gets paid. We get no central funding apart from £40.00 for each new associate so it is your membership fee that enables us to continue our work in promoting Road Safety in Norfolk.

PLEASE tell ME your new address when you move

IAM RoadSmart Head Office does not know if you are a member of this Group so informing them of a change to your personal details does not reach us, but I can change your address on the IAM RoadSmart main records so notify me and I will tell them. If you are NOT a fully paid member of the National IAM RoadSmart you cannot be an Observer or committee member

I haven't moved so all correspondence please to;-

Special Note!

If you would like us to contact you by e-mail with up to date news and changes to speakers etc And you do not already receive an e mail from me before each meeting.

Please send me a copy of your current e mail to:-

martin.nnam@btinternet.com

It will **not** be passed on to anyone else

iven t moved so un correspondence pieuse to,

Martin

Martin Woodhouse 18 Soame Close, Aylsham, Norfolk, NR11 6JF E mail <u>martin.nnam@btinternet.com</u>

<< DATA PROTECTION >>

As part of your membership contract with the Norfolk and Norwich Group of Advanced Motorists (NNAM), we will contact you with information on training, committee, and social events, together with newsletters/magazines relating to the Group and road safety.

Pictures, videos and written updates of NNAM events such as training, committee, and social events at which you may be in attendance or referred to will also be regularly published on social media sites such as Facebook, and group newsletters/ magazines and group related websites.

NNAM also shares information with IAM Roadsmart in order to administer membership activities.

You have the right to withdraw from receiving or participating in any of the above by contacting the Membership Secretary by email at membership@nnam.org.uk giving your name and membership number.

Your personal details will not be shared with any third party other than IAM Roadsmart and will be held securely by the Membership secretary. Your details will be deleted when you cease to be a member of NNAM.

It must be said that although I had planned a trip to South of Naples in Italy, it was all cancellable thanks to Booking.com. I hadn't finally decided to go away on holiday at all until I had the bike serviced and made the decision to have some new tyres fitted. That was on the Thursday, and the following Monday I bought insurance and Eurotunnel tickets, and set off on the Tuesday.

Now, I had always told my children that I would not go on a bike holiday if it was raining on the day that I was leaving. I am 70: I don't like getting wet. It didn't just rain, it poured down all the way from Fakenham to the Channel Tunnel. Oddly I had said to the lady when I booked that if it was raining I might change my mind and she jokingly said she could guarantee it won't be raining in the tunnel. And she was as good as her word because in the tunnel was the only place it wasn't raining all the way through from Fakenham via France to Belgium.

If you are wondering how Belgium is on the way to Italy, the answer is simple: it's not, unless you want to avoid paying French motorway tolls (peage) which I do. It costs you as much to travel on pay motorways as it does petrol. True, they are fast, but the getting there has always been part of my holiday, and hotels and B&B's are a part of the fun.

The crossing was booked at 2.20pm. So I left home at about 9.45am., filled up with petrol at Tesco Junction 10 of the M20, checked in at Eurotunnel, waited about 15 minutes for the train to be called and headed out – still raining, apart from the tunnel, (12 cars and me on the train!), all the way to my first stop in Belgium 250 km later. It was ok: it did what it said on the tin but it was just a hotel, and you had to put down a €29 deposit if you wanted to borrow the hairdryer: I don't have enough hair!

An admission. My trip lasted 81 days: there's no point in being retired if you don't make use of it! It would have been longer had it not been for those people who voted for Brexit, so you are only allowed 90 days as a third world citizen in the EU now without a visa. If anyone wants a full write-up, please feel free to contact me, as I have written it for the Fakenham Talking Times: this is really just a short summary of where I went on my Honda NC750.....

It did stop raining on Day 3, and I was very lucky with the weather after that. I stayed in many places along the way: some for just a night, none for more than a week. The journey took me along the France/Belgium border, down around Luxembourg, then down to Tallard, a beautiful mediaeval village near Gap.



Not a Norfolk window view

My European BikeTour Andr

Andrew Davey



Then it was over the Alps - Colle della Maddalena - out of this world and quite a few of the many hairpins! - to Cuneo, South to Genoa, then a rather tortuous route up



and down amazing roads made for bikers via Modena, Florence, and back down to near Rome, before hitting the Coast Road, bypassing Naples, to my Southernmost stay in Agropoli.

Dolomites

I took in stretches of the SS1: what a road that is, first made up by the Romans, so they say, and beautifully maintained. The Cilento coast was spectacular – and unlike the Amalfi, no tourists!!



Cilento Coast

There are two great things about biking in Europe. The first is the respect that other vehicles give you, unlike here where we have to remember that saying we heard when learning to ride: 'Just assume they are all out to get you!' Over there, bikes (motos) are kings of the road. The other is that it seems there are no rules for bikes: traffic – what's that?, white lines – what are they? A word of warning, though: they have discovered speed cameras with a vengeance, and even started installing them at traffic lights!



French Farmers revenue

Around I turned, and headed back up via sight of the Adriatic Sea, near Perugia and back Northeast to Ravenna - had to see the mosaics - before heading through Switzerland to Koblenz and up the famous German B500, staying at Todtmoos, on the way home. (11 cars, 2 bikes on the train!)

There you have it, in so few words. Of the 23 places I stayed in, only 2 didn't have those dreadful black flat screen monstrosities glaring down at me, full of evil intent. I hadn't actually seen a television switched on for nearly 3 months! Also, in that time I hadn't spoken to anyone whose first language was English. I read 6 real books, and thanks to electronic wizardry and Norfolk library 33 ebooks: the wretched mobile does have a use after all !

From day 2 onwards I had not seen a UK number plate until home minus 1. I travelled 7067 kms, or 4391 miles, at an average fuel consumption of 91.3 mpg. Total cost per day was £52.33. It feels really lovely to be back in Fakenham with no scorching sun and cooking heat: alright, I made that last bit up - if it weren't for those idiots who voted for Brexit I would start planning my next trip, but thanks to them I will have to wait nearly 6 months before I can even contemplate going again, as without a visa you can only spend 90 days in any 180 in the EU. Oh well, something to look forward to, something to keep me happy. And the bike passed its MOT without even an advisory of something needing doing.

Last words: if you think you can't do it - think again. And if you need advice on the simple way to plan a trip (doesn't have to be taken) just ask me!

Andrew Davey.

Enjoy. Stay safe.

Fen Riders

Ride out calendar 2024/2025

2nd (short) and 4th (long) Sunday of month March to October 9am start, Nov to Feb 10am start

	Month	Date	Destination	
2024	Nov	24	Krazy Horse Bury St Edmunds	
	Dec	8	Norfolk Motorcycle museum	
	Dec	22	Beach Café Wells	

	Month	Date	Destination
	Jan	12	Lynford Arboretum
2025	Jan	26	Walker's Cafe, Barton Mills
	Feb	9	Bawdeswell Garden Centre
	Feb	23	Sheringham Cliff Top Cafe
	March	9	Whitwell Station
	March	23	Byards Leap Cafe/Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre

<u>27th October</u> <u>Vine House Farm Shop</u> <u>& Cafe</u>

Fifteen bikes turned out for a frolic through the fens. Our original destination was to be the Iron Horse Ranch House in Market Deeping, unfortunately this venue has recently closed down. Alarmingly there does appear to be a malaise currently affecting the motorcycle industry which has also led to a number of large dealerships going into administration, with more I fear to follow. However I digress, the revised location was to the Vine House Farm Shop and Café located in Deeping St Nicholas. The route remained roughly the same so splitting up into three groups we made our way down the A17 as far as Sutton Bridge where we hung a left heading towards the Tydd's and Whaplode's and onto our destination. It wasn't too far which was probably a good thing given the endemic state of disrepair of the fen roads. It's probably not appropriate to use expletives but some of the roads are downright dangerous with massive subsidence just waiting to divert the unwary into the adjacent dyke.

Anyhow the venue was great. As well as selling home grown organic produce, Vine House also have seating for 70 patrons inside with a further 30 outside located on the deck overlooking the wildlife garden and pond. There is also ample parking. We were served by a very pleasant mature lady who had just passed her motorcycle Compulsory Basic Training and was full of enthusiasm for everything 2 wheels. Sitting outside with the sun streaming down we spent a very convivial hour or so enjoying each other's company.

The ride back was the usual bomb burst when the destination is so close but I would like to thank Ian, Mel and Bob for leading their respective groups. This will be my final report as the official ride out coordinator but not the last time that I will be attending Fen riders' events. If you feel that you have the time to take over this role (perks are you decide where we travel to and how we get there) please let our chairman or secretary know and I will be happy to assist where required.

The next ride out is a **10.00am** start on the 10^m Nov to the Good, the Bad and the Hungry at Wingfield just past Diss, it was still open last time I looked.

Drive and ride safe *Dave Cusdin*

<u>13th October</u> <u>Poppylands</u> 1940's Tea Room, Horsey

Nine hardy individuals gathered at our meeting point with another two to be collected en route. Splitting into 3 groups we set off to the sunnier climes of North Norfolk. The outward route involved a lot of the B1145 which runs all the way from the hospital roundabout to the coast at Mundesley. On the route at Litcham stands The Bull Inn, a 17th-century coaching inn of which some parts date further back to the 14th century. The Bull provided the first change of horses on the old coaching route out of King's Lynn to Great Yarmouth. We went as far as Reepham before cutting across country to Buxton then on to Stalham, ending at Sea Palling a short distance from our destination at Horsey.

Poppylands tearoom offers an immersive experience, complete with staff dressed in Second World War costume. Tea is served in



teapots adorned by cosies and drunk from green Woods ware teacups. Upstairs a vintage television plays episodes of Dad's Army and all over the restaurant there are artefacts from the 40s. As you enter the gravel car park you pass a sentry box and barrier. Step through the door and you enter a street scene from the Blitz. Which is what it sometimes feels like if they are very busy. Ian's group were turned away as they were apparently full so he made the decision to go down the road to Sea Palling where there are a couple of cafes and a sea view. A destination for the future perhaps? Notwithstanding this slight hiccup everyone was eventually fed and watered.

The ride back took a different route using a variety of unclassified and B roads and was uneventful, even Dave Rs Triumph behaved. Thanks to Ian C and Euan for leading their respective groups. Next run out is to the Iron Horse at Market Deeping on the 27 Oct 24.

Cheers for now

Dave Cusdin

<u>23rd September</u> <u>Keysoe equestrian</u> <u>Centre</u>

It's the Autumn equinox and the sun is shining in King's Lynn. 10 of us are gathered for the ride out to Keysoe international equestrian centre located near Bedford on the B660. Splitting into two groups of five we set off on a pre-planned route via Friday Bridge, Whittlesey and Kimbolton. We got as far as Whittlesey before the rain started and it didn't stop until we got back home. I find myself now trying to avoid any puddles in the road as you never know what they are hiding and fluid filled potholes and motorcycle cast wheels are not a good mix. One feature of this particular route is that you have to cross the East coast main line just before Holme. I don't think I have ever managed not to get stopped at the crossing and today was no exception, my group only had to wait for one train, lan was not so fortunate and was delayed whilst 5 trains traversed the road. The B660 is very popular with motorcyclists as it is technically demanding and has not yet been strangled by punitive speed limits and although we had to cope with the inclement conditions this did have the bonus of reducing the Lycra brigade to very small numbers.

Arriving at Keysoe we parked up and were just about to make our way to the café when we heard a whistling noise coming from one of the bikes, this was accompanied by a pungent smell of sulphur. We quickly traced it to Dave Rs machine and whipped off the battery cover to find an extremely hot battery venting a steady stream of noxious gas. It was clear that the battery had been over charging for some time and given its proximity to the fuel tank Dave prudently decided to get recovered home. Its 19:30 as I write this and it wouldn't surprise me if he is still there given the recovery company's abysmal response time.

Keysoe International is an equestrian and events centre complete with Indoor Arena, International size Outdoor Arena, Cross Country Course, Barn Style Competition Stables, a Café and bar. More importantly it has ample parking and does cake. It's a very pleasant place to have a chat outside under cover although I'm sure that the gloss has worn off for Dave.

The trip back was wet but uneventful and I'd like to thank lan for leading his group.

Dave Cusdin

NORFOLK AND NORWICH ADVANCED MOTORISTS

<u>8th September</u> <u>TTT Motorcycle Museum</u> <u>Sudbury</u>

Seven riders dodged the showery fringes of a Yellow Warning of Rain to assemble in Sainsbury's car park. The majority were wearing clothing with some degree of waterproofing, with only a single optimistic soul opting for denim. As it turned out, it was his lucky day.

Two groups formed for the ride to TTT Motorcycle Village in Sudbury, our second visit there.

The rain stayed away for our ride along the back roads to Bury, with the road being almost completely dry by the time we reached the challenging, twisty, hedgerow-lined Suffolk lanes. After a short stop for a closer look at the scenery and only a single, minor navigational error, we arrived intact at our destination.



TTT is a funny place - an Aladdin's Cave of fantastic machinery from the 1960s onwards housed in a leaky, nondescript, ex-industrial unit, complete with buckets on the floor and puddles where there should be one. It's advisable to keep a tight grip on your wallet, lest the influence of nostalgia take over. They also have a Dalek and a pretty good cafe - a cup of tea felt well deserved. It's a deservedly popular place.



The ride home was warm and dry, near perfect conditions. The route, however, was a little frustrating taking in an interminable string of villages with their associated 30mph limits, with few all-too-short faster sections between them. Turning onto the A134 at Thetford to find it surprisingly lacking in traffic was a welcome release.

We made an impromptu second stop at Browns Cafe in Mundford, sitting outside in the sunshine, then contentedly went our separate ways.

www.nnam.org.uk

Dave Robins

<u>25th August</u> <u>Amici Cafe</u> <u>Sandy, Bedfordshire</u>

Gosh it's quiet, Sainsbury's car park before the supermarket opens. No boy racers or myopic car drivers fixated on getting their McDonald's fix. Our revised starting location has a lot going for it.

I was greeted by 3 smiling faces ready to start the journey to a new destination on our calendar - the Amici Coffee house near Sandv in Bedfordshire. We picked up a further 2 riders en-route making a total of 6 participants. Just about manageable as a one ship given we had comms between 5 of the riders. Mel had kindly put together a route that kept us off the majority of A roads, unfortunately my sat nav didn't like it so I need to thank Dave R for leading today's trip. Taking an anti clockwise route we headed towards Queen Adelaide then past Papworth before looping around Chalton to the coffee house. The Amici, according to social media, is a popular biking destination but I was a little disappointed at the lack of parking spaces and seating within the café. However Bob said his veggie breakfast was good so I'll give them the benefit of doubt.



After our refreshments we continued on our route still as one group,



skirting around Cambridge we passed through Mildenhall and on to our relative home

destinations. I called in via Swaffham to visit the stalwarts manning the MDU. This time last year the heavens opened and everyone got soaked, this year although overcast we got away with it.

I can't sign off without commenting upon the parlous state of our minor roads; potholes, extreme subsidence and overgrown foliage are hazardous to all road users and it brings home just how important using the system of IPSGA contributes to a safer journey. Until the next time *Dave Cusdin*

<u>11th August</u> <u>Wymondham windmill</u> <u>Melton Mowbray</u>

11 bikes and 1 pillion met at Sainsbury's car park in King's Lynn (our new meeting place) on a beautiful morning for a ride to Wymondham Windmill near Melton Mowbray. We've been there before, it's a lovely spot with interesting riding roads on the way there. As usual we split into smaller groups which makes life easier for the leader, is safer, and doesn't upset other motorists. Also, as usual, the group I lead came across a closed road near Pinchbeck with no diversion signs. However, my unerring sense of direction (!!) soon got us back on track.

Once at the windmill we managed to get enough tables and chairs for us all to sit outside in the shade of a large tree. Lots of drinks but not as much food as usual (too hot?) were consumed as we chatted in the sunshine. It was Steve Cholerton's birthday so an impromptu singing of "Happy Birthday" broke out, much to his embarrassment.



The place was getting really busy as we left; more motorbikes, cyclists and a few nice convertible cars arriving. It's the sort of place that draws in bike, car, and cycle clubs.



As usual people made their own way home. I lead my group via Oakham and Stamford then onto the A47 to take us home. Thanks to those who attended for their company, and to Dave Cusdin, who couldn't join us today, for choosing another great destination.

Ian Cain

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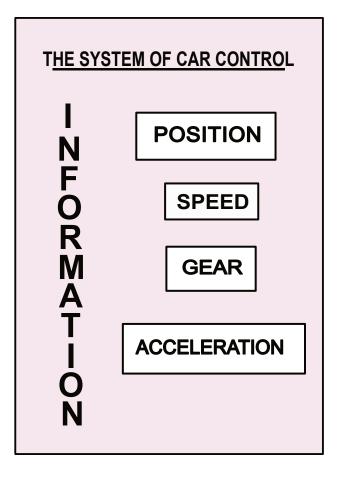
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