

**ROSPA**  
Advanced Drivers  
and Riders

# Suffolk Riders



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## Chairman's Update



It's great to finally say we're re-starting some group activities following the notification from RoSPA that we are now allowed to continue with one-to-one tutoring and activities including no more than 6 persons maintaining social distancing. However, it is up individuals as

to whether or not they chose to join in. So please respect the decisions and perception of risk of the tutors, members and associates alike.

I intend to ride with my associates early in July as long as they are up for it, but nobody should feel obliged to do anything they're not comfortable with: we all have our own reasons why we may want to get out and re-start training, socialising, etc., just as we may have reasons why we may not be ready to do so.

We've had excellent weather over lock-down, though it has deteriorated recently - ironically just as we can meet in gardens and have BBQ's with friends. Such is life. Relaxation on restrictions could not have come a moment too soon for many and I've enjoyed time with family and friends in the last few weeks. I have also managed a few ride-outs to the coast with friends for fish & chips which has been a rare treat.

The roads are starting to look normal unfortunately, with the morning commute becoming the rat-race it always was. For a short while it seemed like the ratio of cars to bikes had reduced by an order of magnitude - but now we're outnumbered so do be careful.

No decision yet on whether to hold annual BBQ this year but we are making plans, e.g. a venue and people to manage the event just in case we can go ahead. The relaxations make it look likely, unless there is a second peak, or risk thereof in the next month or so, I don't see why we couldn't. I sincerely hope we can, it would feel like a re-union and would be a great way of re-starting the social aspects of the group. I know how much some, including me, have missed the monthly get-togethers. So fingers crossed we'll all be able to meet up then if not before. Stay safe, see you soon, *Jon*

# July Activities

The Events Sub-Group met to restart ride-outs following the latest relaxation of restrictions. Our first social ride-out under the current government guidelines will take place on the 4th July. Restrictions mean that no more than six riders can attend a single ride and, in the case of multiple rides, none can start or finish at the same place. We will, therefore, have two groups riding to and from different locations, enabling up to ten riders to participate in addition to the two organisers.

Registration must be with either of the organisers by email and acceptance will be on a first come, first served basis. If one group fills up relative to the other, there may be an opportunity to transfer to the other group. If you wish to accept the alternative to your first choice, please make it known in your email. NB pillion riders are welcome, but if you intend to bring along a partner, you must state that in your email and that person will be included in the total number. Only those who register will be told the starting point and route.

1. Group Ride A - fish and chip lunch at Horncastle with Keith Gilbert.

Departing 9.00 am. *NB at the time of writing all riders have been allocated.*

2. Group Ride B - fish and chip lunch at Melton Mowbray with Brian Carter. NB there is also a pork pie shop near the car park.

Departing 9.00 am. *NB at the time of writing all riders have been allocated.*

We agreed to try out an evening ride for Tuesday 28 July. This was to have been the evening of the treasure hunt; we agreed at the committee meeting that we would postpone the treasure hunt until we can do it safely within the social distancing and group size rules, so let's use the evening for a summer ride-out. Four members have volunteered:

Vini Evans – (Southwold)

David Wood – Diss (Fair Green)

Brian Carter (Attleborough)

Phil Sayer (Aldeburgh)

The destinations will be fish and chip shops, but if anyone does not want to buy fish and chips, they are of course welcome to take sandwiches or whatever they like.

Both Southwold and Aldeburgh chippies are open till 8pm and both towns have public loos open near the chippies.

An email will go out to all members with details nearer the time. The group will meet again in August to review the outcome of the above rides and plan the next steps – by then the rules may have changed too.

# Member's Forum

## *My first foray across the channel on a motorcycle. Cont'd – Brian Carter.*

We may have reached Ventemiglia I can't remember. If we did, looking at the map, we would have entered Italy twice from France. On the map Cuneo was the next large town so we headed north I remember it becoming more mountainous and the roads more twisty, for a flatlander like me the excitement began to rise, it was great fun. Stopping for petrol, I never ran out again after those first few days lesson learnt, a small Italian lad only about eight years old was on the pump in this small village, he was so excited from the sound of my reverse cone megas he just wanted me to keep revving the bike, the Italians love the noise of engines.

This may sound strange but the campsite we found was in Turin itself, I can remember having some very nice food there, probably my first ever Italian meal, and the young girls were very attractive. Heading north the next day – are those the Alps I see? Blimey, what an awesome sight, mountains anywhere still excite me today. We obviously crossed borders and they must have been painless as I have no recollection of problems. Looking at the map again we had a choice, The Grand St Bernard pass or tunnel, I chose the pass and I am so glad I did, an experience I have never forgotten even though nowadays I am not interested in these types of roads, preferring sweeping bends to continuous hairpins.



Riding from the Swiss Alps north we came upon a campsite at Lake Thun near the town of Thun. We probably had a rest day and then set off to explore the area, we hadn't gone many miles when suddenly there was a horrible noise from the engine and I immediately killed the engine and coasted to a halt. Checked to see if the primary chain was still intact, it was, then removed a spark plug. Oh dear, it's not supposed to look like that, it had taken a hammering. It can only be a dropped valve, luckily there was a farm just down the road and the farmer allowed me to leave the bike in a barn. We hitched back

towards a village we had passed through and there was a bike shop with all the Japanese manufacturers names prominently displayed. I entered the shop and the chap behind the counter asked if he could help, I told him what had happened and he asked for the make of my motorcycle, when I replied Triumph he just said we don't have anything to do with them. We sat on a seat outside the shop wondering what the next move would be when a young lad who had overheard the conversation in the shop sat down beside me. He had a map and told me there was a machine shop in Steffisburg who may be able to help. He pointed out where the railway stations were that we should use and gave us the map in case we needed it. Leissigen was the station nearest the campsite so thumbs out, off we went, found the station and arrived in Steffisburg late in the afternoon. Found the machine shop, it was massive and the machines inside were doing rebores and crankshaft regrinds on what looked like lorry or maybe marine engines. My immediate thought was these people don't mess around with motorcycles. We found the boss, explained everything to him and, to my relief, he said if I bring the parts in he would rebores the cylinder barrel and do whatever

needed doing to the cylinder head. He offered us a lift to the station as he was leaving off shortly, and I remember he had a British Racing Green Mark 2 Jaguar, I had never been in one of those in my life.

Next morning we hitched to the farm and I began to strip the top end of the engine with the toolkit provided by Triumph, a valve head

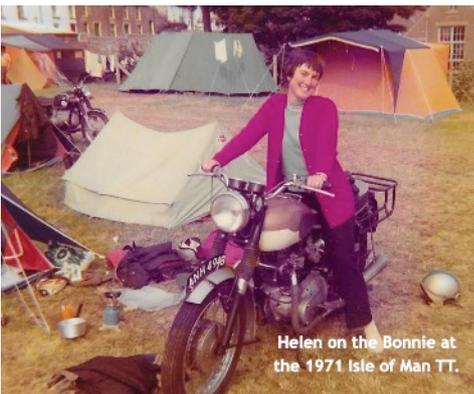


Jaguar Mk2



was embedded in the top of the piston. With the engine parts we again hitched to Leissigen caught the train to Steffisburg and delivered the parts to the boss, he said it should be ready in two days and we caught the train back to Leissigen and the campsite. Two days later we caught the train again to the machine shop only to be told everything was done but they were waiting for the valves to come from Zurich, hopefully tomorrow, which was Friday giving us two days to get to Calais for the late Saturday flight to Ramsgate.

I collected the parts Friday morning and this is where the RAC breakdown insurance saved my bacon, using their cheque book I wrote a cheque and everyone was happy I would pay the RAC when I returned home. I was on



Helen on the Bonnie at the 1971 Isle of Man TT.

the farm by early afternoon and by late afternoon I had nailed it together, it started almost straightaway and we rushed back to the campsite in the dark. I explained to my long suffering wife that we had to be in Calais late Saturday afternoon and the only way we could do that was by riding through the night and all the next day to be there on time. Have I mentioned that we were virgins at this game. Later I

realised that I could have got to Calais on Sunday and still have caught the Hovercraft, I learnt a lot from this maiden trip and I am still learning today. We left the campsite using Joe's (Lucas Lighting) finest illumination, I remember going through Pontarlier and stopping in any French village with street lights so I could check for oil leaks and make sure nothing was about to fall off. It rained a lot on the Saturday and I remember being passed by Citroen DS cars at high speed and the spray making it almost impossible to see. We made Calais on time and caught the flight we were booked on arriving home late Saturday night ready for a good night's sleep. Sort things out on the Sunday, back to work on Monday with a head full of memories.

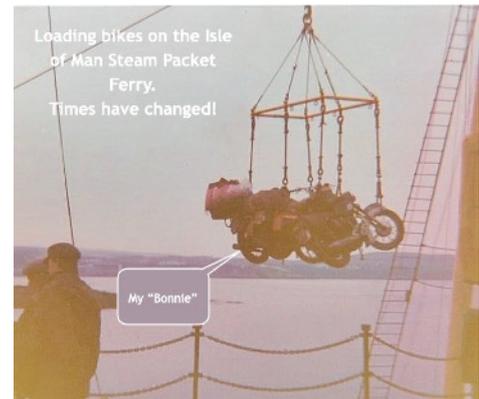
Lloyds Bank Currency Converter			
AUSTRALIA \$ to £	1.50	100 £	150.00
BELGIUM 100 B to £	36.36	100 £	3636.00
BRITAIN £ to £	1.00	100 £	100.00
CANADA C to £	1.25	100 £	125.00
FRANCE F to £	6.55	100 £	655.00
GERMANY DM to £	3.36	100 £	336.00
IRELAND £ to £	1.00	100 £	100.00
ITALY L to £	2036	100 £	203600.00
JAPAN ¥ to £	160	100 £	16000.00
NETHERLANDS 100 G to £	36.36	100 £	3636.00
NEW ZEALAND \$ to £	1.50	100 £	150.00
PORTUGAL 200 Esc to £	200	100 £	20000.00
SPAIN 166 Ptas to £	166	100 £	16600.00
SWITZERLAND S to £	70	100 £	7000.00
U.S.A. \$ to £	1.00	100 £	100.00
YUGOSLAVIA 100 D to £	100	100 £	10000.00

Remember this?



I ran the Bonneville for another two years without any trouble, so the farmyard rebuild was successful, and traded it against Triumph's finest a [750cc Trident](#), this was the last British motorcycle I ever owned, maybe another lesson learned. Call me a Luddite if you must, but I still use maps when I travel. I can't get on with Garmins, maybe sometimes I am travelling down the road and think I am not sure if I am heading in the correct direction, and, if I am not, there is always another road to ride down –getting lost can be fun.

*Brian sent in an additional photo, which, although not germane to his article, certainly is to the period he describes, so it's included – and I liked it. Ed.*



*I have seen the future and the future is .....*

Electric bikes! Not quite as profound and prescient as [Arthur C Clarke](#) (worth watching, since he was talking in the 1960s). There can be little doubt that the petrol/reciprocating engine has reached its zenith and the next evolution of high-speed, two-wheel travel will be electric. I have neither the pedigree nor the foresight of Clarke, only basing my opinion on a single ride (actually 3 bikes) of these incredible machines. Keith G invited me along to photograph and record a ride he and Lee G were making, for the newsletter, on the latest electric bikes at [English Electric Motorcycles](#). When Alec Sharp, CEO the company, came to demonstrate a [Zero](#) at a club night last year, I couldn't even touch the floor, the seat was so high, so I was happy to oblige. While we were in the sales office cum workshop, it was suggested that I could ride one as well, with a lowered seat. What an opportunity, you only come this way once – I happily agreed.



Alec fitted a lowered seat to an ZF14.4 (an older model, with what I thought was a very hard suspension). NB by the end of our session I had ridden all three bikes and had no problems reaching the floor with my 26" inside leg. I asked Keith and Ian to write up their thoughts of the ride, and you can see them below. I can add little in the way of superlatives, but would say that, for me, it was the realisation of near constant torque across the whole speed range that gave so much confidence in the bike's capability. Although it would require some practice, slow

riding with just the throttle, or throttle and trail-braking came quickly. Would I buy one? On the [Energica website](#), I configured what I imagined would be a good machine for say a 160 mile motorway/ rural journey; the price-£26k, so way beyond what my pension grade. But if money was no object – absolutely. I'm sure the debate over what sort of power plant will win out over the next decade or so,

will roll on and on. Anyone buying on environmental grounds might be a tad disappointed. From what I've gleaned from [searching the web](#), on a worst case scenario, a lithium based car would need to be driven for seven years by an average European motorist before becoming carbon positive and [recycling the lithium](#) is virtually non-existent. An alternative, the fuel cell, is lagging in the race, but also has its pros and cons. No doubt time will resolve, but probably beyond mine. *Ed.*

**Keith Gilbert:**-Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June and thankfully dry roads as Alec Sharp of English Electric Motorcycles has offered his latest [Zero SR/S touring model](#) for test.

Yes, the SR/S does have top box, panniers and a fairing. It weighs in at 230 kilos with a full tank (14.4 kilowatt battery) fully charged and good for 100 miles plus.



Keith on the SR/S

After Alex's do's and don'ts, ride mode selected was BEAST, the fastest with good re-gen (engine braking). I set off with some trepidation, accompanied by Lee Gage riding the SRF, same bike, no fairing etc and Colin on an older model with a low seat.

Once on the road the performance is exhilarating. Throttle control is smooth, light and easily controllable. We were soon overtaking slower moving vehicles and even some faster ones. The power is delivered effortlessly and silently, making it essential to keep an eye on the speedo. On the faster 'A' roads it handled easily and inspired confidence, with engine braking and throttle control dealing with most bends. The suspension which is Showa fully adjustable front and rear worked well on the SRS. A swap with Colin for the 2019 model of which Colin complained the ride was awful, which it was even on the A143. Lee rode all three bikes and he felt the SR/F was overall the best.

You really have to ride these electric powered bikes. It's a real eye opener. *Keith Gilbert*

**Lee Gage:**- Wow, I with two friends have just road tested the Zero SR/F electric bike. Having never driven an electric car or ridden an electric bike I wasn't sure what to expect but like I said wow!! The bike is amazing in most respects. It immediately put a grin on my face and that's what motorcycling is about. The bike has instant response and what feels like bags of torque from just about anywhere in the throttle range. Overtakes are effortless and the acceleration would put most sport bikes to shame up to 3 figure speeds. The bike handles well and I'm sure with some minor suspension tweaks could easily be set up to suit individual tastes. It could do with a small screen just to help a little with air flow. The range for me would be an issue and you can read all about that and recharging rates on their website. ([The Electric Motorcycle Company, Redgrave.](#)) If you've never ridden one, go and have a try, i'm sure like me you will be amazed.



Lee on the SR/F

Having said all that, the ride home flicking up and down the gearbox and listening to my induction howl and exhaust note is what motorcycling is about for me !! *Lee Gage*



With the grins of three Cheshire cats!

## MEMBER PROFILE

### *This month SIMON BEARD*



Simon was my Associate in 2018 and at the time was riding a Honda VFR 1200.

Simon worked for B.T. man and boy, taking retirement 2½ years ago. Married to Jo for 28 years and it was her that got him into motorcycling by presenting him with a CBT course as a birthday present. Jo held a license and currently rides a 125cc scooter.

When Simon isn't on his motorcycle, currently a Ducati MultiStrada 1200S he is a Real Home Brewer, using all the raw materials to brew his favourite tippie – stout. This has to fit in with sailing which he does all year round, the DIY list from Jo and then there's the garden of course (of which he does it all and enjoys).

## Questions and Answers:

Q: Simon, what brought you to Suffolk Riders?

A: Previously tried S.A.M. and pressure from Paul Newman, who I worked with at B.T.

Q: What do you think you gained the most from your training?

A: Riding to a plan, greater pleasure and enjoyment.

Q: What's your favourite bike to ride?

A: My current [Ducati MultiStrada](#)

Q: What would be your favourite ride?

A: Spain – [N260 Andorra to Ripol](#).

Q: What is your favour food/drink?

A: Indian/Thai and a pint of stout.

Q: What music do you like?

A: Heavy rock, [EMO](#), [Slipknot](#) and [Rage Against the Machine](#). I grew up in the Punk era and that's where my roots lie.

Q: Must do?

A: Visit the Southern Hemisphere and [Phillip Island](#). Get on an Off-Roads Skills Course.

Thanks

Keith Gilbert



# Technical Corner

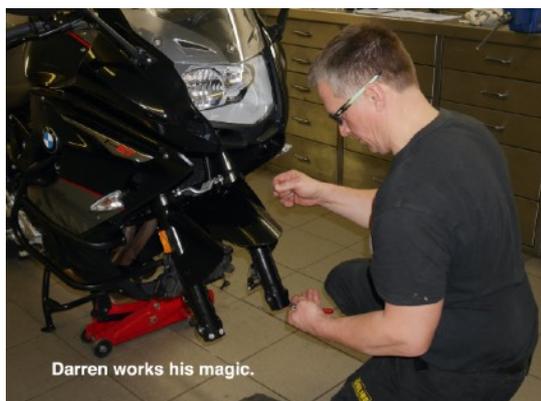
## *A new bike.*

They've been on at me for ages to get a 'proper bike': they being my tutor and various senior members of the club. There must be some antipathy towards cruisers with their long wheelbase, large rake, weight and poor acceleration, but for me, standing 5'6" with a 26" inside seam being able to place both feet on the floor, a godsend. I also believe that if you've never ridden a cruiser, you don't know what comfort on a bike is. That said, after 4 years and 22k miles I decided that, if I could obtain a gold certificate, to heed their advice, but what bike? Unless you are one of these agile people, who can slip their behinds from one side of a bike to the other every time they stop, your only option is lowering the suspension. NB I've seen videos of some tiny ladies doing exactly that, with consummate skill. One other requirement was a shaft or belt drive - no chain maintenance. I've read that a shaft drive is about 75% efficient, a belt drive 89% efficient, and a chain drive 97% efficient: the first two winning out on quietness and ease of maintenance. I opted for a belt, which limited the choice available to two - a BMW F800 GT, and a secondhand one as production ceased in 2019 (seat height 800mm - 31"); and a [Ducati XDiavel](#). The XDiavel would have been perfect, with no need for lowering. However, a request from my insurers for quotes on the two machines produced about a 15% rise for the BMW and a 400% rise for the Ducati - decision made for me; a bonus was a 50kg weight saving on my cruiser. Keith G was, once again, a great source of knowledge and advice. I called Darren at [MCT Suspension](#), who said he could drop the height by about 50mm and buying a pair of [Daytona M-Star boots](#), with the heel 60mm above the ground, would allow me to place both feet flat on the floor.

Darren suggested not buying a model with ESA (electronic suspension adjustment), which would be difficult, if not impossible, to lower significantly. Finding a 2018, ex BMW manager's machine (characterised by an RX number plate) that fitted the bill with 2750 miles on the clock. Williams BMW in Manchester were superb. Sending a few photos of the cruiser (a Kawasaki VN900) and copy of my service book, they offered me a price over the phone for my bike and never deviated at the time of exchange. In early January, my son-in-law helped me load the cruiser into his van and we drove to Manchester, where, the following morning the exchange took place like clockwork, we brought the BMW home. Wearing my Daytonas, the balls of my feet were on the floor, I rode the bike to a local carpark for some slow riding practice. That was an experience: the first time I had ever ridden the model. I didn't realise that the F800 has almost no torque until about 2000 rpm, and I stalled the bike turning out of my drive. Pulling away requires around 2000 rpm. But in the mid-range 4-6000 rpm, I have never known such power and flexibility;



almost the exact opposite of the VN900. While waiting for my appointment with MCT I added some crash protection, imho a worthwhile insurance policy.



Darren works his magic.

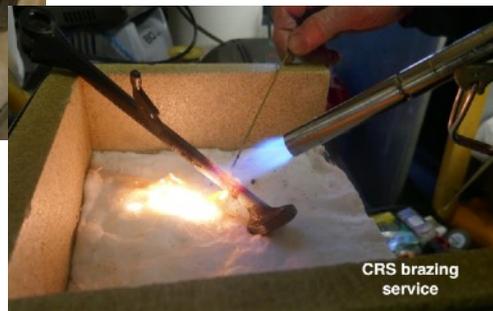
On the appointed day I was at the MCT workshop at 16:00. After a discussion with Darren about my weight and usage, he recommend a new rear shock absorber, a Nitron, tailored to me rather than modify the original with the added benefit that there would be no loss of travel. Darren rode the bike around to the rear of his workshop and when he came in mentioned that the front damping was very stiff (which I had noticed), recording every tiny bump in the road surface and said he would also improve that. All done, I walked back to Keith's house for a cup of coffee and wait for a lift home with my daughter.

Riding the bike home a couple of days later was a totally different experience. The seat had been lowered 40mm and the front forks 10mm, my feet were firmly on the floor, and the ride was so smooth, I had a grin ear-to-ear. However, a couple of niggles quickly emerged, with my knees nearly into my chest, arthritis kicked in, and with my body inclined forward there was a crick in my neck looking down the road. The bike is marketed as a 'tourer', long distances! You'd never get that uncomfortable on a cruiser, so how to make it more comfortable, and safer?



Here you can see my efforts to date. Jon J. let me use his custom lowered seat, but I've reverted to the original (sore backside), and I still lean too far forward for comfort.

Two problems quickly emerged due to the lowered rear suspension; on the side-stand, the bike was only  $5^\circ$  from vertical, and I imagined a slight bump would knock it over: and putting the bike on the centre-stand requires considerable effort. The easiest for me to tackle was the side-stand. I bought a second hand one from eBay and some simple trigonometry, showed that I could get about  $0.8^\circ$  additional offset for each 1 mm reduction in length. The side-stand is tapered so I chose a compromise and removed 10 mm.



The centre-stand can wait for another day. I'm still not happy with the riding position, leaning too far forward, but additional risers would mean extending the front brake line and clutch cable - a job for another day. Jon J. also let me use his Givi windscreen, which I've grown to like (I previously tried a deflector mounted on the original). As well as some deflection of wind about the hands, when riding normally with the visor raised, stick your head up a couple of inches and the visor snaps shut.

# The Last Laugh Word

My thanks again to this month's contributors. I always have this concern that nothing will come in then out of the blue they appear.

We've had another 'Letter to the editor' on the theme of noddors prompted by Bakson's piece.

Dear Editor, I have no idea how I write a letter to the newsletter but would like to say I agree with John Jamin regarding acknowledging fellow riders. We are an 'efnik' minority and should try and support each other as much as possible, we have enough enemies. That's my opinion for the evening.  
Brian Carter

I've taken one step forward in learning to use my new Garmin zūmoXT. It may be obvious to Garmin users but I've just discovered that 'Where to' finds a route to a final destination and the 'Trip Planner' in 'Apps' is where planned routes are found from the stored database. MyRouteApp does not have a 'Connector' for the zūmoXT; however, the technique to transfer routes to the zūmoXT is reasonably simple, requiring a few steps and uses either Garmin's web based [Explore](#), or the computer based Basecamp. I found the former a little less clunky than the latter, but not much. Perhaps I could borrow a 396 model to make a comparison some time in the future.

One of the reasons for choosing the new zūmoXT was the claim that the screen was perfectly visible in bright sunlight, a complaint for all other Garmin's with the exception of the BMW Navigator V & VI. NB another reason was SportsBikeShop's 10% discount offer. Below you can see a comparison



with my Tomtom Rider 400, in full sunlight, just as good if not better imho.

Just as I crack making a planned route on the satnav, the battery in the helmet comms unit - Sena 10U - decides to die, after two-and-a half years. And, would you believe it, there is no OEM replacement, a perfect case of built-in obsolescence. In disgust I sent my opinion in a review to SportsBikeShop, but they have not published it; now there's a surprise. Fortunately, there is a chap on the Sena forum who cut open the battery case and changed the dud for a similar one purchased from China. My China battery has just arrived so I hope to emulate his fix in the next day or so.

That's all for now folks, hopefully one or two members will tell us a little of what they've done in the biking theme for next month. *Ed.*



*"I invested in a few accessories for my motorcycle. The rest of the delivery is coming tomorrow."*