



Morecambe Bay Estuaries  
Advanced Motorcyclists

MBEAM Member Ben Barden  
at this year's Barbon Hill Climb  
Picture courtesy of  
ianwoodphotography.co.uk



# THE RIGHT LINE



We are the local bike group of the Institute of Advanced Motorists  
Visit our website to find out more about us and to join: [www.mbeam.org.uk](http://www.mbeam.org.uk)

# Welcome !



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Morecambe  
Bay  
Estuaries  
Advanced  
Motorcyclists

## We are the local bike group of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)

By joining us you can participate in the "Skills for Life" training programme which can lead onto Membership of MBEAM and of the IAM.

Successful training leads to better roadcraft and safer riding.

We also offer regular meets, social events (biking and non-biking), ride-outs, meals, long and short break biking holidays, full day rides to specific attractions.

See our "Contact Us" section on Page 18 for details of our web site and Committee e-mail addresses.

## Welcome to MBEAM

- Darren Williams
- John Duckworth
- Tim Livesey
- Ian Wood
- John Howarth
- Steve Newby
- Stefan Milanec
- John Clark
- Colin Moore
- Martin Dixon
- Peter Wilson

## Welcome to the Observer Team

- John Viles

## Congratulations on passing your test

- Dean Ball
- John Viles
- David Blyth
- Bill Lennox
- Martin Dixon
- Dennis Pye

# Chairman's Bit

Angela Young



Welcome to our summer issue. Sorry it is late. Personally I feel as if I have been waiting for Summer to start and here is the end of July without much signs of it. Weather and circumstances have affected our Summer programme.

There would have been little pleasure in conquering the Lakeland Passes in howling gales and torrential rain, hopefully Clive will be able to fix it for another time in more clement weather. Likewise we hope to re-arrange the St Mary's Loch ride. We did have a great day out when Paul Newton took us to the Peak District. The ride there and back on the motorway was surprisingly easy and left plenty of time to tour through the beautiful varied scenery, and to have our regular brew stops. It's many years since I was there and I was surprised to see how much is now 50mph, rumour has it that the Dales may go the same way. All the more reason for us to get out there and encourage safe riding at current national speed limits!

Congratulations to those who have passed their IAM test. Our usual high standard of pass rate is being maintained. It is good to hear from Associates that they are not only improving their riding standard but enjoying

the learning process. This is encouraging for our Observers. Chatting to a pillion rider at Wilf's on Sunday, it was good to hear that her riding experience has improved considerably too since the SFL course began – much smoother riding and now very rare clashing of helmets! I would encourage all Associates to complete their feedback form when their course is finished. We want to maintain a high standard and we need clear and honest feedback to keep ourselves on track.

Just for a change my cafe recommendation is way out of our area, but if ever you visit the Gower Peninsular, this is a must: Maddocks Tea Rooms, Southgate. Delicious home-made meals, cakes and pastries to die for and proper tea in china cups!! If you are into walking there are spectacular walks all around to burn off the consumed calories.



# Events

During the season we meet twice a month from April to October and once a month during the off season.

## Venues:



**Staveley**  
Wilf's Cafe  
Mill Yard  
Staveley  
LA8 9LR



**Lancaster**  
Cafe  
West Quay  
Glasson  
Lancaster  
LA2 0BZ



**Broughton**  
The Square Cafe  
The Square  
Broughton-in-Furness  
LA20 6JA

The Sunday meetings commence from 10.00 and frequently we depart at 11am on an ad-hoc ride out. Please read postings on the Forum for any suggested ride-out routes.

The ride-outs and trips organised by the Group are open to full members and associates.

Non-members by invite only – just email one of the committee.

Details of the events will be posted on the forum as they become available. Events are all on a Sunday unless shown otherwise.

**Glasson Meet**  
Sunday 7 August - 10.00

**Committee Meeting**  
Wednesday 10 August - 19.30

**National Railway Museum Run**  
Saturday 13 August

**Broughton Meet**  
(followed by run to Ravenglass)  
Sunday 21 August 10.00

**BBQ**  
Sunday 28 August

**Kendal/Staveley Meet (Wilf's)**  
(followed by run to Coniston)  
Sunday 4 September - 10.00

**Westmorland Show**  
Thursday 8 September

**Tanhill and Beyond Run**  
Saturday 10 September

**Committee Meeting**  
Wednesday 14 September - 19.30

**Glasson Meet**  
(and tour of Trough of Bowland)  
Sunday 18 September - 10.00

**Broughton Meet**  
Sunday 2 October 10.00

**Haworth Village and Yorkshire Run**  
Saturday 8 October

The forum can be found on a link from our homepage at [www.mbeam.org.uk](http://www.mbeam.org.uk)

# The Big Mac

Paul Goodwin



This is, I am ashamed to say, only the third time I've ridden my bike this year. The last, a track day at Oulton Park, ended in an early bath after an off at Druids and other than a late Spring blast around the Sedbergh/Hawes/Ingleton loop the bike has sat out the back waiting...

...for the Big Mac.

The Big Mac is an annual weekend rideout organised by some of the lads on the Thundercat forum (although these days there's very few that actually own a Thundercat!).

Now in its sixth year, it has become an annual pilgrimage to a two-day blast around the Scottish Highlands and some of the best roads and scenery in the country.

This year it was based in Ullapool, at the youth hostel that faced out on to the harbour and a total



of 26 of us, including six that travelled all the way from Germany, converged on the hostel on the Friday for an evening of beers and catching up.

Saturday's ride was up to John o Groats, which has to be one of the most run-down tourist attractions in the UK, staffed by the man in the little white hut who takes your picture for £12 sporting what looks like a pre-war film camera. October temperatures in July didn't help!

The run back along the A838 was interrupted by the sad sight of several beached pilot wales at the Kyle of Durness. After pausing

for reflection we headed off down the A837 and A835, which was mile after mile of long and fast sweeping corners made out of emery paper, before dropping down into Ullapool to complete a 240 mile day.



Day two was a more leisurely and shorter ride down to Applecross, a remote row of houses and pub that does fantastic fish and chips. Accessed via the Bealach na Bà: a highland pass that looks like it's been transported straight from the Alps, with tight switchbacks climbing up to a majestic view, at one time the only way to get to Applecross.

The Scottish Highlands are a truly stunning place to ride, where it's possible to ride for what feels like hours along glorious ribbons of tarmac without seeing another soul. I'll be back next year, that's for sure.



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# Northern Route

A funny thing happened on the way...



OMG as the current saying goes... the fuel prices are affecting the answer-phone, DSA at the Motorcycle museum, Charlie's had a new transmission and turned 30, goons galore in Morecambe... oooooh, loads to tell... pour yourself a Pimms, sit on the patio and I'll begin...

Good ol' NR HQ is going daft...well, the answer machine thinks so - I usually come in to loads of calls when I finish a lesson! On average, roughly 10-15 calls a day at the mo', and speaking to the callers when I ring them back, it's usually to do with returning to biking to cut the cost of commuting. Obviously I still get calls from 'wannabe' bikers and 16-yr olds wanting their independence (or parents sick of transporting siblings...), but I must write a letter of thanks to Mr Cameron PM for hiking up the cost of living...

I attended a seminar hosted by DSA/DfT/MCITA last week in Birmingham...what a waste of time! Nothing we in the training industry didn't already know... the DSA's 'planned changes' to the testing procedure were at the best described as a joke, I don't think DfT have ever seen a 'bike, let alone ridden one, but the saving grace was Mike

Penning, MP for transport, is definitely on our side. His quote of the meeting which stayed with me had to be, "They work for me" when asked a question about DSA's policy. It was chaired by an independent bod who's been involved in the motor industry for many years - apologies if he's reading this, I can't remember his name - but his synopsis of the meeting was very apt. Basically he said all of the above need their heads banging together, otherwise the whole ethos of 'biking will go tits-up, especially if Europe get their way with the DLD (3) when the step-licensing system comes in....

Aaaanyway, back to things nearer to home.....Charlie (GS) has now turned 30 - that's 30k on the mileometer. Purchased last September with 18 1/2 on, now ten months later and a shitty winter to boot... I've put twelve thousand miles on him/it. Also, it's had a new gearbox and clutch fitted under warranty - I was making some weird noises, so I had Southport Superbikes take a look and they thought it was the clutch...new one in, re-built and guess what? Same noises, so they stripped it again, checked out the gearbox and found that was the cause - a couple of bearings were, shall we say, poorly.....read f\*\*\*ed. Long story short, £2.5k's worth of work done under warranty so it didn't cost me a penny apart from a call to BMW's recovery service

to transport it there....now that's what I call 'dealer service'... I'll wholeheartedly recommend them to anyone who owns a Beemer!

Now then...Gary in Morecambe... he was CBTing in the town a couple of weeks ago when he had a 'nearly' as he calls them. Leaving the roundabout near the cinema heading along the prom, some dozy tart (his words, not mine) decides to go straight ahead from the right hand lane... consequently she clips the handlebars of the first pupil, almost runs the second one off the road to then drop in behind himself! Infuriated, he stops in the road in front of her, goes back and asks her in no uncertain terms what she thinks she's doing... read effing and jeffing - he can be very eloquent when he so desires - and explains the error of her manoeuvre. When he points out to her what she's done, she apologized profusely and when he said he was making a note of her registration to take the matter further, apparently he could 'smell the fear' if you catch my drift... no idea she was in the wrong or that she'd almost taken out three bikes - DSA want to alter the bike test but do nothing about muppets... sorry, car drivers! Ha - to quote Monty Python, "I fart in your general direction!"

Well possums, only five weeks and counting until Herbert hits Ireland again. Yup, nearly time for my yearly 'sabbatical' to the land of my forefathers - I'm sure I mentioned a while ago it's a couples run this time. Tank and Rent Boy can't make it (although they do make a 'lovely couple'....), so it's myself and herself (Garmin and Gallon Gob), Dave and Cat (Capt. Kawasaki and TTNT) so far. I've been taking Cat out on all sorts of runs to get her used to riding pillion, from 'making progress' (ahem) A-roads to motorway bimbles so that she doesn't butt Dave too

often, so now her grip on me has gone from, "I can't breathe" to "Is she still there?"..... we leave Kendal on 1st Sept and return on 9th, so if anyone fancies joining us it's 10.30 at Cairnryan, all round the Emerald Isle and returning via Larne....and don't forget your passport - we are entering a foreign country as Paddy (my mate in Antrim) would say....

Talking of Dave and his bike, if you buy a Kawasaki ER6-F and want to fit Givi luggage to it, make sure you've a workshop full of tools, DeWalt drill, lots of patience and a decent divorce lawyer on hand....what a 'kin nightmare!!! 3 1/2 hours to fit the rear indicator brackets alone.....but the rest of the racks for the boxes went on in just over an hour...three days later when I'd calmed down! Z called me so often when we fitted the signals to Dave's bike I stopped answering the phone...otherwise I'd be living in the office by now, hence the lawyer comment. I was so 'miffed' when I got home she went to bed out of the way...not saying I was angry, but even the dog packed her knotted hankie and the hamster didn't show at all! Still, it's sorted now, I'm still married (just) and the run is definitely on..

TTFN, and as long as we all (this time) make it back on bikes rather than by RyanAir I'll put a read together for the next newsletter...

Until next time

Andy - Northern Route"

# Barbon Hill Climb

Ben Barden



1PM, I'm tired, overheated and hungry, my heart is racing ten to the dozen and I can't seem to position myself to avoid breathing the sharp blasts of exhaust gas that are hitting my face like slaps.

The big CR450 in front is called forward, his lid is checked by the girl in the high vis and big ear muffs and he's sent onward to the start. Now I'm really nervous, as the CR disappears round turn 1, I'm called forward to the line. Visor down, check I'm in 1st, shift my weight over the tank, check I'm in 1st, get the revs to the magic 10,000 where the NC starts to make a bit of power, check I'm in 1st. Light goes green and slip the clutch off the line, got to maintain at least 10,000rpm to keep it pulling.

The 90 degree left comes so fast and I know I can't let off so deep breath and throw it in, no tyre warmers allowed so knee down antics on cold rubber feels really scary but it holds together and I fire out of the 1st onto the short straight. I've built enough rpm to hook 2nd and into the blind long left-hander, I know it's not that tight but not being able to see round as we tip in is terrifying. 3rd engaged and through the speed

trap before jamming on the brakes, knocking down to 1st and trying to figure out where the ball of moss on the side of the track that I was using as my turn in marker for the hairpin has gone. Chuck it hard right and get on the gas to pull up the steep inclined bend, knee is down, then the toe of my boot grinds against the floor, head down onto the tank and head for the timing beam, as I break it I breathe for what seems like the 1st time since the start and catch a glimpse of the timer display, 30.49 seconds. That'll do!

Barbon Hill Climb is a proper institution, it's been run by the Westmorland Motor Club for 51 years in the beautiful parkland of Barbon Manor, just down the road from Devil's Bridge. I've been coming to the event as a spectator for years and every year my step-dad, brother and I make promises that next year we'll have a go, only we never do, but for some reason this time we all managed to get off our behinds, fill in the form, pay the entry and get the bikes prepared.

We had an eclectic mix of machinery between us, my brother Will took his YZF450 supermoto, stepdad Sig his 1990 Ducati 900SS and me, my little pocket rocket Honda VFR400 NC30. I had some spare

bodywork for trackdays but the whole tyre choice was a bit confusing, after a few evenings buried online looking at specialist websites (not what you're thinking you dirty gets!) I decided wets would be the best bet as they would be OK cold but wouldn't rip up over such a short run, the course is only half a mile. A very kind chap on the 400greybike forum sold me a set of wets on wheels with iron disks for less than the price of a set of tyres so I was well chuffed!

So you turn up, sign on, get your bike scrutineered and start your runs. You get 2 practices and 3 official timed sessions. Bikes are set off group by group, 1 at a time, so you're only racing yourself which, after the 1st couple, feels quite relaxed as you know nobody is going to be flying up the inside of you on a tight bend, as so often happens on track days. You can even ride your bike to the track and compete with no modifications at all.

In a biking season that has so far included trackdays at Teeside and Oulton Park, and

a charity ride from John O' Groats to Lands End in 24hrs without using motorways (yes it was bloody hard graft, sponsorship still gratefully received <http://www.JOG2LE-1DAY.com>) Barbon has been the highlight. My little brother typically got the best time out of the three of us, but a supermoto really is the best tool for the job, little sh\*t! Sig managed a 30.9 on street tyres which was a great achievement, especially as he's never ridden on a track before.

Now next year if I can just leave braking until between the 1st and second marker for the hairpin...

The Percy Duff Speed Hillclimb for Motorcycles is run in July annually in the grounds of Barbon Manor, nr Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria, by the Westmorland Motor Club who are always happy to receive help with the running of the event. <http://www.westmorlandmotorclub.co.uk/>

Photo credit: [ianwoodphotographyblog.com](http://ianwoodphotographyblog.com)



# Food for Thought

Andy Griffiths



I was talking to a CBT pupil a while ago when I said something that actually got me thinking.....

They asked what sort of bike they should go for when they passed their test - I gave them the standard reply of, "Ignore everyone, me included - each salesman will try to sell you their bike saying it's the best for your needs. Sit on as many as you can, test ride what they'll let you but think outside the box - don't become too focused on one type, because it may be that when you've bought it, two days later you hate it. Try something completely random that you haven't even considered... who knows, you may like it".

This was really brought home to me not long after when I was speaking to an ex-pupil's mum outside Lancaster Honda. Her hubby had booked a test ride on the new VFR1200, she went along as they usually ride two-up, they got to the far end of the Heysham bypass and she got off refusing to go another inch on it! He had to take it back, collect his bike and then collect herself - she hated it with a passion.....

Okay, the mile-munchers may be comfy..... but is it too heavy fully loaded? Sports-bikes may be quick, but could you afford the time off work for trackdays or use that

power legally on the road? Adventure bikes are the do anything/go anywhere type, but is it really necessary for the three mile run to work?

I've owned most of the above, and ridden all sorts (the one I won't own is a sports-bike - Mallory was great on the GSXR750 Martin Crooks lent me, but 170 motorway miles to get there? My back was in agony when I got off) from two-stroke screamers to multi-cylinder tourers.....all have their plus and minus points.....but why do we change our bikes so often? Boredom? Not what we expected? Not as good as the write-up said? Doesn't tick the boxes you thought it would? Hmm...got you thinking now, haven't I??

It all became really apparent when the GS was in Southport - I used the XJR for work until it was returned and guess what? Although I couldn't see as far ahead as usual, it was more forgiving a low speed (didn't need to use 1st gear as much), smoother (in-line four rather than a flat twin), quicker response (some tw\*t tried to pass us outside the Leisure centre on the hatched area until I exercised my 'duty of care' and prevented an accident) but a lot thirstier - 100 miles around town compared to 180+.....

Then I got to pondering why I'd bought the bikes I've owned. CB750 - first 'big' bike I

owned and still do.....CX500 - old but great for work....R80 - the same - apart from the running repairs....Diversion 900 (2 of) - brill all-rounder, but Zoe hated the pillion position....V-Strom - work again but under-powered two-up...ER5 (8 of) - great training bikes...XJR - awesome power/looks but thirsty....1150 GS - did what it said on the tin...1200 GS - do anything/go anywhere.....

Then I got to thinking which one I'd like to own... the new Crossrunner looked great at the NEC, but close-up there's not a lot of room for someone with long legs. New Tiger, but would it be comfy all day. Ducati, but could I put up with a dry clutch rattling all the time. Ah, decisions.....

The next thing is.....do you fit the bike? Can you reach the floor comfortably? Does your back ache after a ride? Do you struggle to reach the bars? Are the levers and footpegs in the right place? Is it too heavy fully loaded with SWMBO behind ya and all her stuff in the panniers? Does the Suzuki starting procedure annoy you? Do you like the way the Honda feels almost too predictable?

Me? I think I'm Kawasaki shaped... here's why...

The avid readers of our little rag will have noticed one missing from my list - the GTR 1000 I bought new and kept for over seven years putting approx 55000 miles on it. I really gelled with that bike, I could work all day then still want to go for a run in the evening... I had it completely airborne..... got from Todhills service station to Kendal in 40 minutes... toured Ireland countless times without a hitch... it never let me down except when the battery died... started first time every time even in the middle of winter...

Now... how many of you can say that about your trusty steed that you keep on a trickle charge and only get to play on when life allows... ?? Not many I'd imagine...



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# Contact us!

Help us broaden the content by sharing your experience

- Jokes, Biking Tips,
- Road and Ride Reviews
- Bike Reviews
- Accessory Reviews

We're always on the lookout for new stuff for the newsletter, whether it's interesting facts, experiences, reviews or opinions, send them in...

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Group or the IAM.

Any correspondence should be forwarded in writing to the secretary:

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[www.mbeam.org.uk](http://www.mbeam.org.uk)

## Not a member of the FORUM?

Then why not follow the link on the web site and join for access to current MBEAM information and other members?

Let's be safe out there!

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