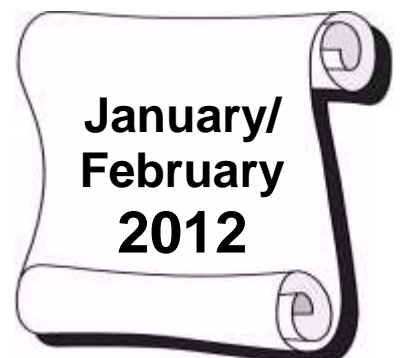


Chain Links

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE LINCOLNSHIRE ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS
IAM GROUP 7176, REGISTERED CHARITY 1049955, SUPPORTERS OF THE BMF



Dave Hall's Triumph Tiger 800 on the road to Mont le Saint Michel in Normandy



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|---|--|------------------------------|
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| | | |
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Group Web Site <http://www.l-a-m.co.uk>

Webmaster Scott Healy Email: Scott@helium.plus.com

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month starting at 8pm
at the Crown Inn, Glenthams

Glenthams is on the A631 about 2 miles east of the A631/A15 junction at Caenby Corner

The next issue of ChainLincs will be in March 2012.

Please provide any copy to the editor, Mick Smith, by Friday 24 February 2012 at the latest, earlier is better. You can send copy by email to

mick.carron@btinternet.com



WANTED YOU!

To help Lincolnshire Advanced Motorcyclists we need members to:

Join the committee

Sell advertising in ChainLincs or the web site

Put on a social run

Help out at an event where we have a stand publicising the group
IF YOU CAN HELP PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER
HELP THE GROUP SURVIVE

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the January/February 2012 edition of ChainLincs and Happy New Year. Like me I hope you have all been making best use of your bike over this unseasonably warm winter we seem to be having. It has been a bit chilly (only freezing point) the last couple of days but looks like it is going to break again for a few more days with the temperatures very pleasant for the middle of January. For me it is a complete change from last winter with all the snow and ice early on, and then I was away for 3 months, so I am making the most of it. Hope you have been too.

This month I have included the first part of Jim Rendall's (thanks Jim) article about his trip to Norway and that will continue for a few more months. Dave Hall's article on his long weekend to Normandy last June is also included and I think he should be getting commission from JtheB's Biking Weekends! Its looks like a good time was had by all riding around Normandy. Thanks Dave.

My usual reminder now to send me in anything you have that could be used in ChainLincs, it doesn't have to be written by you but could be something you have found elsewhere that the other members maybe interested in.

Don't forget the first monthly social meeting of the year on 1st Feb at the Crown Inn followed by a group observed run on 5 Feb from Hartsholme Park. Please note that it will be a prompt midday start so plan to get there for 1130 hrs. Dave Hall has also organised the Group Annual Dinner for the 18 Feb at the Beckett Arms in Corringham. Details are on page 7. It would be great to get a large turnout for this event for the beginning of a, hopefully, successful year for the group.

Finally, with Lynn Watson's help we are planning a publicity event at The Podium in Scunthorpe on Sat 3 Mar. The plan is to have the group gazebo and display material with a few of the member's bikes out on a busy shopping day to see if we can drum up any business. So if you can spare some time bring your bike along, mingle with crowd, hand out some group leaflets and let's see if we can encourage a few more members this year.

Mick

CHAIR'S CHATTER

Hello to 2012! On behalf of myself and your committee may I wish you all a very happy, peaceful productive and prosperous New Year! As the Chinese New Year (of the Dragon) has also just begun its 'Kung Hei Fat Choi!' (Happy New Year!) to you too!

I'd like to take this opportunity, as we reflect on the last twelve months, to reiterate my personal thanks to all of you who have helped out in any small way, to the ongoing success of our group. Whether you are a Senior Observer, Group Observer, Committee Member or simply volunteered to go that 'extra mile' when called upon, I salute you all.

Harsh economic times will remain with us for the foreseeable future and the road ahead is still therefore likely to be somewhat rocky, but if we continue to pull together as we/you have been, we can survive and grow.

Andy Trevithick and co, over at Lincoln LRSP/Bikesafe have been vociferous at regional level and beyond about the positive, professional and helpful nature of our group, so let's keep it going. Against this harsh economic background, and in order to protect the longevity of our group I look forward to any and all suggestions and initiatives to attract new associates and also to best fulfil the needs of all existing members.

At the last committee meeting of the year, held on 14 December, Rob Gregg-Herrett very kindly took on the role of Associate Co-ordinator and I'm sure he will be keeping in close contact with all Associates and Observers to keep everything on track, give a strong and hearty welcome to all newcomers and drive Associate Training along at the best possible pace. Again can I make a plea to all members to actively promote our group and to proactively pursue every opportunity, wherever you are and whatever you are doing, to introduce/invite prospective new joiners.

I was recently at a local model aircraft flying club in Bardney where I immediately found two people interested in joining our group one of whom lives in Lincoln, pitches up on his 1000cc Varadero but had no idea that we exist(!) Another gentleman used to be a local Senior Observer in the 1980's and has many a tale to tell!

Likewise if you have been involved in an interesting adventure or other (vaguely!) bike related activity, come to a group night and give us a brief presentation/talk all about it! Nobody will bite and we'll all potentially learn something new! Please drop me a line if you would like to do this. There are lots of local, regional and national events going on this year so if you have any ideas/proposals/ride outs, etc, please send them to any committee member in the first instance.

For instance, from 2 to 5 February, The Carole Nash MCN Motorcycle Show 2012 is coming back to ExCeL, London where you will be able to get up close and personal with the world's hottest new bikes of 2012 and Classic Bike of the Year's top ten finalists, receive massive savings on kit and accessories, meet biking stars from MotoGP, BSB, WSB & the Isle of Man TT, plus watch British racing legends go head-to-head in the action-packed 'Revolution' stunt show! I will definitely be going down. Anybody want to come, or already organizing a group ride down? (The advanced ticket hotline closes on 30th January 2012 so don't dally!) Please make contact with me and I'll spread the word. Likewise the MotoGP and the British Grand Prix (Bikes and Cars!)

Furthermore, Lincoln Bikesafe have confirmed their 2012 dates and this is an excellent opportunity for Observers to rub shoulders with expert police riders and the general public in order to cultivate potential new members.

Farther afield; four out of a maximum of ten bikes have already signed up for this year's early summer, ten night tour incorporating overnight ferry to Santander, then through the South of France, the Italian Lakes and Passes and returning via Switzerland, France and UK via the Chunnel. Taking place between Sunday 13 May and Wednesday 23 May 2012, inclusive, the tour will 'go' with a minimum of six bikes. The tour will utilise well and lesser known routes incorporating some of the best biking roads in the world. Accommodation will comprise good standard bike friendly motel and guest house with an expectation of single occupancy (or whatever you require!) and the whole tour

will be 'at cost' – usual around £1,200. Any seriously interested parties please contact me by Friday 17 February 2012 so that travel and accommodation bookings can be finalised.

Looking to the future, I would propose to start giving some support to a nominated charity, which might be changed to rotation/consent on a yearly basis, e.g. the Air Ambulance or Help for Heroes, and would suggest that we might start doing this in a modest way by , for instance, having a raffle on Group Nights, etc, with some modest/donated prizes. This not only provides excellent assistance to the charity of (your) choosing but will also allow us to forge new links with other organisations, charities and 'friends'.

One last thought... Please Help! Has anybody got/seen the Barry Heath Memorial Trophy?! Its misplacement is causing a great deal of stress to the committee, not to mention sadness to Terry Heath, Barry's brother and Chair of Scunthorpe car group. It must be somewhere! Even if a ransom is required (!) Can anyone remember the last place it was definitely seen? Has it been left on a shelf at a former venue or meeting place? Has someone who had it moved house/left it in their pannier/kitchen/ garage, etc? – It may still be 'boxed up' somewhere? Please check your car boots/bike panniers and everywhere else. It is only a 'little' thing but it is very important to Barry's relatives who donated it in the first place. (It has Barry's original IAM badge on it together with a plate showing the names of all the previous winners.) Has anyone even got a picture of it?

That'll do for now, so I wish you Happy, Safe, Smooth and Systematic biking in 2012 and look forward to meeting you all at Group Nights and Ride Outs!

Best wishes,

Andy Greenslade
andyg313@hotmail.com

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Group Web Site: www.l-a-m.co.uk

One new group member to welcome this month as follows:

| Member | Observer |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ady Crane from Lincoln | Joined as Full Member |

I have one test pass to report – well done to both candidate and Observer.

| Member | Pass Date | Observer |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Mike Buckley | 9 December | John Harrison |

Group membership currently stands as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Full Members | 82 |
| Associate Members | 12 |
| Group Friends | 1 |
| Total Group Membership | 95 |

That's all for this month, ride safe:

John Cheetham

OBSERVATIONS

Unfortunately I am still without a roadworthy bike. Time seems to be in increasingly short supply, quite apart from the garage being a damp uninviting place at this time of year.

I had thought that I might pick up a trail bike that a friend of mine in Arran is selling. You might remember Nigel from my series of articles on bikes I have ridden. Nigel sold me my Trident and checked over my TR6R before I bought them. He was also involved in purchasing my Bantam for his good friend John Donnelly. I must remember to ask if they ever got it going. I saw both Nigel and John at the New Year, and also said trail bike, a grey import.

Unfortunately Nigel wanted a little more than I was prepared to pay and it seems that the IAM insurance scheme will only cover off road bikes third party only. What with transport to here from Arran it was all getting just too expensive. Especially since Mary and I picked up our new Skoda Yeti just before Christmas.

We should soon be seeing lighter evenings appearing so I must try to get something done about a working bike soon. Though it looks as though I will be globetrotting again in the next two or three months, so I apologise if it turns out that I am unable to give the LAM Chief Observer role the attention it ought to get. A little worrying as we are getting new members in the Scunthorpe area and are rather short of observers here just now. I'm sure we'll cope, but we may need to ask some observers to work out of area a bit.

All the best anyway, and take care on the current greasy roads.

Enjoy Safe Riding

Iain

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Lincolnshire Advanced Motorcyclists.
Annual Dinner – 18th February 2012. - 8.00pm
The Beckett Arms, Corringham, Gainsborough, Lincs.

Start 8.00pm

Menu

STARTER

- PORTABELLA MUSHROOM STUFFED WITH CHEESE, GARLIC PEPPER & TOMATO. VEGETARIAN
- HOMEMADE LEEK & POTATO SOUP.
- PRAWN COCKTAIL.
- CHICKEN GOUJONS.

MAIN – CARVERY

- ROAST BEEF.
- ROAST TURKEY.
- ROAST BUTTERNUT SQUASH. VEGETARIAN

DESSERT

- CHRISTMAS PUDDING & BRANDY SAUCE.
- HOMEMADE TRIFLE.
- HOMEMADE RASPBERRY & WHITE CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE.

Tea or Coffee.

Would you please let me know A.S.A.P. if you wish to attend with your payment of £15 per person and choice of menu by 12th February, as I have to give numbers and menu choice on 13th.

Dave Hall. 14 Buttery close, Lincoln, LN6 8SL

Tel: 01522 274989

e-mail: lincolnian@talktalk.net

THANKYOU.

A HOLIDAY WITH A DIFFERENCE *by Dave Hall*

Back in early April I was looking on the internet for "Motorcycling Touring Holidays" to see what was being advertised, one which caught my eye was a French long weekend, Thursday - Sunday in lower Normandy run by an English couple Paul & Sandra Minton under the name JtheB's Biking Weekends.

They do numerous weekends with a variety of themes, like visits to some of the American WW2 sites around lower Normandy, or a Ride to Carnac to see the famous Standing Stones, another one is to the "Madone des Motards" in northern France where 20,000 bikers turn up to have their bikes blessed, before an 80km ride out.

The one I opted for was a "Twist & Go" weekend which catered more for the experienced rider as the routes chosen were on more twisty and demanding roads. The first date I chose was fully booked; there were spaces on a weekend in mid-June. I booked their only single room; they also have 4 double/ twin rooms plus a dormitory which sleeps ten.



The weekend - Thursday to Sunday, Breakfast / Evening meals with free wine, beer or soft drinks as much as you can drink. Ride outs on the Friday & Saturday, departing on Sunday. I opted to book an extra night (wed) which would allow me to have a day exploring the area on my own. I booked a sailing from Portsmouth to La Havre which would give me 134 miles to ride in France, mainly motorway. The only problem was the ferry sailed at 8.30am so would mean an early start from Lincoln.

I decided to take the Triumph Tiger, giving it its first longer run, I had fitted a small top box and to supplement that I strapped a small holdall onto the back seat, which worked out fine. I had looked at the weather forecast on the Tuesday evening, it looked as if I would get a dry ride to the ferry but may get a shower once in France.

On Wednesday June 15th I was on the road by 2.30am, still dark, my route was simple A46 - A1 - M25 westward M3 and A3 into Portsmouth. I was surprised how much traffic there was about even around Lincoln at that early hour, as I progressed south on the A1 it began to get light around 4am, by 6am the traffic was quite heavy but I had an enjoyable ride, or at least as good as you can on the A1 and M25. I arrived in Portsmouth around 7am, filled up with petrol and made my way to the docks, there were other bikes on this ferry, one larger group heading down to Brittany to stay at a friend's place which has lots of space, and this was an annual trip.

After a 3 3/4 hour trip I arrived in Le Havre, it was dull and overcast but dry and not that warm for mid-June. I had told Paul that I would arrive around 5pm, although I had plenty of time, I would stick to the motorway at least to Caen, and then see how much time I had left, as the afternoon wore on the temperature improved slightly but remained cloudy, South of Caen it looked as if it may rain, and sure enough I ran into the edge of a rain shower a little further on, but it only lasted for a few

Kilometers before running out of it. The sky looked as if I may get some more at any time, so I decided to go straight to Paul and Sandra's rather than find a more scenic route for the last few Km, Paul's instructions were to turn off at junction 32 then follow the narrow roads for a few km to his village (La Daviais) Hamlet is more apt as it's not on any map. His instructions were spot on and I arrived at just after 4pm to be greeted by Paul.

Arriving early I had caught them on the hop, as they were not ready for me. we spent a few minutes chatting, he had not seen an 800 tiger before, I was then shown to my room which was on the ground floor which was a separate building from the main house, both buildings were ruins when they bought them, but having spent lots of money and time, have done a great job restoring the house and converting the large barn into a kitchen, Dining room, games room and guest rooms, there is a small swimming pool outside but was too cold to use this weekend. As there were only to be 5 people (the smallest group they have had) Sandra asked if I would prefer an upstairs twin room, as there was a loo and shower room on that floor, so I moved my gear upstairs, Sandra would make up my bed while I put the bike in the garage, as I did so it began to rain heavily and continued to do so all evening. I had made it just in time!!

Paul and I had our evening meal together, keeping me company, while Sandra had hers with their teenage daughter, before taking her to a friend's house. Paul reminded me of Freddie Garretty who was lead singer with the group Freddie and the Dreamers of the 1960's curly hair and spectacles. Paul informed me that the "others" would arrive around 12 noon and would take them to a creperie for lunch about 1/2 hours ride, so if I wanted to go off on my own in the morning (as he had some paperwork to do) and came back then, we could go together.



Thursday morning started sunny and warm, so I went to look around "Mont le Saint Michel" approx 16 km away, this is the most visited "Tourist Attraction" in France outside Paris. I arrived about 10.00am it was already busy with a number of coaches and lots of cars in the car park. To get to the Abbey you have to pass over a causeway, the car parking area gets flooded every high tide, but not the causeway. It was an interesting place to visit, a walk around the walls which gave good views over the countryside.

Motorbike gear isn't ideal for walking up the steep cobbled streets, I was getting rather hot. The streets are lined with cafes and small tourist shops selling the usual postcards and religious memorabilia, etc. It cost 9 euro's to go in the upper part of the Abbey and I didn't have a lot of time so opted not to go in (in retrospect I think I should Have) but there was lots to see elsewhere. Returning to my bike, I bumped into 2 couples who I had met while waiting to board the ferry in Portsmouth, one of the young women was French (living in England) they had stayed overnight close-by and then they were off to visit her parents in Brittany.

On returning to Paul and Sandra's there were 2 Triumphs parked up, one a blue Sprint GT the other

a white 1050 Tiger. their owners soon appeared, riding the GT was Dave and his wife Jill, on the Tiger was their son Simon with his partner Rachel, Observers with "Thames Vale Advanced Motorcyclists" IAM group.

Paul has a brace of Honda's, an 1100 Pan European and an old CB500 which is the bike he uses locally, a high mileage bike with a rorty exhaust, he had taken his IAM test with the TVAM group, so being IAM and having local knowledge of the roads makes for a quick rider, even on a CB500 !!

We had a good steady ride to the Creperie for lunch, it is situated in the country and is part of a small Chateau complex, the Chateau and outbuildings sit behind a fancy wrought iron gate and fencing and



are now flats. It was warm and sunny so we sat outside enjoying a drink, Ah this is the life!! as soon as the plates of food were put onto the table, a black cloud appeared and it started to pour down with rain, so we had to grab them and our gear and dash inside. The crepe is a square like pancake with in my case ham and eggs inside; the corners are then folded over to encase them, and salad, tasty and good value at 7.50 euro. By the time we were ready to leave, it had stopped raining and the sun was out again, although the roads were very wet, a couple of miles down the road, the roads were dry and we had a good ride around the area, before returning to "La Daviais" for drinks and to get to know each other better, there

was a pool table which got lots of use during our stay. Later we met up in the dining room where Sandra brought us another lovely meal so the 7 of us spent the evening together; again the wine was flowing freely.

It had rained during the night and was still raining lightly as we set out for our days ride, Saint James (pronounced San Jam) is the nearest town approximately 4 km away, this is where we filled up with petrol, a supermarket on the outskirts, 1.46 euro per litre, this was the cheapest that I saw, some was 1.60 euro. We rode through Saint James to a large American WW2 Cemetery where 4,416 soldiers are buried; this is one of the smallest in France, (by now it was raining heavily) this is typical of American Cemeteries, immaculately kept, with a chapel, inside on the walls showed maps of the conflict, there is a visitor Centre by the entrance, one noticeable thing that makes American Graves different is that none give the age of the soldier (an American thing), the simple headstones of marble does have a sign to indicate if they were Christian or Jewish.

From the Cemetery on the outskirts of Saint James still raining heavily we rode to the town of Pontmain, the large and impressive Roman Catholic Cathedral in the centre is a mecca for pilgrims as some children are reputed to have seen a vision of the Virgin Mary here on 17th January 1871) as there was a service being held, we went to cafe around the corner, by now the rain was



bouncing off the road, so we stayed a while, there were some English women customers here who had bought holiday properties in Pontmain, some of our party spent some time talking to them, as the rain eased we headed for the Cathedral to look inside. We had light rain to our lunch stop, a large old cabin which was decorated in the 1950/60's style near Verzins, there were Formica covered tables and juke box, looked like an old transport cafe, at one end was an area with bric-a-brac for sale, at the other end was a room completely covered in the same wallpaper, Floor, walls, ceiling, mantelpiece, ornaments, chairs, table, even the standard lamp, this room is for show not for use, two women run this cafe, one is a folk singer, and was to sing at a show the following night at a nearby outdoor venue, the building is set amongst trees in a valley on the side of a lake (owned by EDF Energy) it was a most bizarre place. We set about lunch, another crepe with a different filling this time; salad etc., there was also other things on the menu. Sandra joined us coming over in the car, if the sun was out it would have been a lovely setting. Luckily it stopped raining by the time we were to leave, the roads were drying in the more open areas, the countryside is pretty around here, with rolling hills and grass fields some having cows or horses in them. Generally the road surfaces were good, after having a good ride as brisk as the conditions allowed, the sun came out and it got a bit breezy especially on the higher and more exposed parts.



Our next stop was the town of Fougères, which has a large and imposing 15th century Castle where we spent a pleasant hour looking around, taking photographs and sitting in the sunshine at a café it was mid-afternoon, more riding before stopping again in the small town of Tinchebray where the café proprietor is a motorcycle racer, before returning to “La Daviais”. On our return, a game of pool or two and a drink before showering and changing for another delicious dinner.



The following day we had a ride to Dol du Bretagne for the Saturday Market where they sell the usual, clothing fruit, fish, meat and live poultry. From there we rode to Dinan where we had dinner at a small café down by the river, while here we had a shower of rain, after the rain we then had a pleasant walk around the town, including stopping off at an ice cream parlour which had a large variety of flavours on offer, where Jill treated us all -Thanks Jill. Continuing our ride we entered a more flat landscape, after a few kilometres we came upon a village built on top of a huge rock called Mont Dol, it is similar to Mont Le Saint Michel in size and has roads, like any village, at the top is a tower, where you can see Mont Le Saint Michel in

the distance, and a small church where we had to take cover from yet more rain, close by is a café and a windmill, before the rain started a Bridal couple were having their photographs taken in front of the windmill. We made our way to the café and waited for the rain to stop, it took a while so had 2 cups of coffee, before riding back to Paul's on wet roads.

That evening Paul held a quiz with mainly a motorcycle /motoring theme for the coveted award of "Anorak of the weekend" which yours truly managed to win, and was presented with a certificate the following morning. It was a great weekend despite the rain but good company makes the difference. Thanks Dave, Simon, and the lovely Jill and Rachel for your company. I would like to thank Paul for showing us what Lower Normandy has to offer and Sandra for the delicious food etc. and of course their company.



Dave.

THE ELUSIVE BARRIE HEATH TROPHY

Does anybody have possession of the Barrie Heath Quiz Trophy? We had it at Dave Capells at the November meeting in 2010 and also at the February meeting last year. Andy Kitchen remembers somebody taking it from there for safe keeping but can't remember who. If you have any idea of its whereabouts or have it in your possession please give Andy a call.



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PINING FOR THE FJORDS (PART 1) *by Jim Rendall*

I was sitting in the dentists' waiting room nervously awaiting my turn with Doc Driller when I began casually flicking through the pages of a well-thumbed, once glossy, magazine. After watching the pages fly past my eyes glimpsed a picture of a twisty road. Turning back a few pages revealed a brief article extolling the virtues of motoring in Norway and a couple more fabulous photographs. The twisty road in question even had an evocative name 'The Trolls Staircase'. It turned out to be one of those rare occasions where my check-up ended with the words "Your teeth look ok, see you in six months" rather than the usual "You need a little work in there, see you next week". I was on a high and returned home to enter the words "Norway tourist information" into Google.

In the weeks that followed I became more and more convinced that this beautiful country would be the perfect destination for our next motorcycle tour. All the web-sites show Fjords, snowy mountains and smiley happy blond people. There are National Parks to explore, glaciers to walk on and Nasjonale Turistveg (National Tourist Routes) to ride along. The Norwegian Government have designated certain roads as Turistveg and are promoting these to visitors. Alongside these routes 'Art Installations' and viewpoints have been, err well, installed. It was time to run the idea up the flag pole to see if the troops would salute.

Mention Norway to most people and the response will probably feature, cruise ships, Fjords, Northern Lights and "Bloody Expensive". You may also hear they have zero tolerance of speed so you can only go 40 mph and if you're really lucky a rendition of Monty Pythons Norwegian Blue dead parrot sketch. Show some of the pictures of the roads and scenery the place has to offer and most of the negatives are quickly forgotten.

I began to place the various Turistveg on a map and then tried to join some of them up with some of the 'must see' highlights around the route. Next came the hotels, a nice selection to choose from and then the ferry. Ah, bit of a problem there. You see, at the time of writing there are no direct ferries between the UK and Norway. For sure there used to be one from Newcastle to Bergen but it was withdrawn in 2008...Bugger. There has to be a way to get us all there with our bikes.

A shipping agency offered places on a cargo vessel out of Immingham sailing to Gothenburg in Sweden but the price was over the top. The best way seemed to be to go from Harwich to Esbjerg in Denmark then via another ferry to Gothenburg before riding up into Norway (where there's a will there's always a way). At this stage Dan decided he thought the whole venture too expensive and too ferry bound and so backed out. Such was the lure of the photographs we had seen and the promise of some truly exceptional roads the remaining three of us elected to 'Go for it' (ironically three people fit into one hotel room, making the whole trip cheaper!). So that was it, booked, sorted and in the midst of another cold British winter all we had to do now was wait for June to come round.

Friday. As is the case with such things the wait seemed endless but next we knew we were sat outside the petrol station rendezvous bikes laden with various trussed up baggage and we were off. This year's ride to the Harwich ferry terminal would take about four hours so our lunch time departure gave us plenty of time to settle into an unrushed journey south bound. The weather also played its' part by being kind enough to keep warm and dry. Our route took us through some beautiful Lincolnshire Wolds before we had to use some of the much busier routes towards Kings Lynn. The A17 was particularly busy following an accident but we used the filtering potential of our bikes to great effect gently caving past the miles of stationary traffic. Towards Thetford we chose to keep away from the 'A' roads and enjoyed good progress through the Norfolk countryside until the inevitable last few miles of bustling 'A' roads again into the port of Harwich.

Arriving with time to spare we stopped off at the conveniently placed Morrison's supermarket for some vital supplies to take onboard the anticipatedly expensive ferry. At passport control we experienced a full helmet off scrutinizing before shuffling forwards to await the call to board. While waiting we encounter Britain's best dressed cyclist. A wiry well-spoken gent whose dress sense

seemed to have been inspired by UK comedy series 'It ain't half hot mum' complete with calf length cream socks and open toed sandals (Jesus Boots we used to call 'em). In conversation he tells us he is to spend two weeks cycling around Denmark and we wish him well. Finally we are beckoned forth by a man in a florescent jacket and head over a bridge to board the ship persuaded by 'Lofty'. In the twilight bowels of the vehicle deck we find ourselves with another bike tying down system to work out before re-emerging back into the light of the accommodation labyrinth.

I find it hard to pack all of what I consider essential into my tank bag and therefore end up dragging tank bag, roll bag and crash helmet up stairs and along narrow corridors dressed in full leathers clearly not designed for such activity. This year I have managed to leave my soft luggage panniers attached to the bike, but they only contain changes of clothes and some footwear. Kryten and especially Festa have no such hang ups and perform the task with consummate ease bringing only what is needed for the sea voyage in neatly packed tank bags. The windowless cabin is fairly typical of our voyages so far but has the welcome addition of a firmly secured TV.

Motorcycle attire stowed away we make our way to the outside decks briefly stopping to experience the breath taking price of a pint hand pulled by a less than cheery bar lady. Harwich and the rest of England are slowly being left behind as our ship cuts a stately path through the calm flat waters of the harbour. Following announcements made in impenetrable Scandinavian languages our captains thinly accented tones inform us that the ship is now in the open waters of the North Sea and all ships time will be in Danish time, one hour ahead of UK, the adventure begins.

Our ship is the DFDS vessel Dana Sirena, built in 2002 she is capable of carrying 400 cars and 600 passengers but it soon becomes clear her main function is to carry containers. It is not possible to walk round far outside as there are only small outside areas. The passenger part is located at the front, focsule, bow, pointy end and although fairly lively it appears small compared to our previous vessels. Looking back over the rear, stern bit the open decks reveal numerous multi-coloured containers.

We have soon experienced pretty much all the ship has to offer and sit watching the on board entertainment. This is a guy sat on a stool with a guitar. He seems like a seasoned pro and has some well-rehearsed witty lines that he delivers to a largely unresponsive audience. At the end of one song he asks if anyone has any songs they would like him to play. People either look at their shoes or go about their business as if nothing has happened. Kryten can't contain himself and asks if he knows Rudy by Kenny Rogers. Our guitar hero scratches his head and says he doesn't know that one as it is probably the Gay version of the song he does know correctly titled Ruby which he proceeds to play extremely well.

There's only so much banter one can enjoy with a jolly guitar fellow so we leave the public areas for the small screen football based entertainment on offer in our cabin. It's world cup time and some team I'm not bothered about is playing another team I don't care about, still Festa and Kryten seem amused by it. I fall gently to sleep and fail to catch the final score as I apparently drown out the TV with contented snoring.

Saturday. I've no idea at what time I woke up but I do know our vessel is encountering a little swell. I lie, for a while, in the darkness of the windowless cabin trying to anticipate the next roll and then decide to search for the seasick pills, which makes me feel worse. To tell the truth the ship isn't really moving that much but neither is it sailing on a mill pond. Cruise hardened Kryten descends from the berth above mine and heads out for a turn on deck. Festa puts on some tunes but elects to stay in his bunk. None of us feels much like accepting the breakfast invitations we are by now receiving over the ships 'annoy'.

Eventually the rocking subsides as we enter the more sheltered waters leading to the port of Esbjerg. It's a cool, grey day with a very strong gusty wind that greets our mid-day arrival in Denmark. Passport control seems pretty much non-existent and we are soon riding into town looking for an art installation (proper cultured us lads yer know). Man Meets The Sea is a public sculpture by Sven Wiig Hansen. Created in 1995



entirely from white concrete it is comprised of four nine meter high male figures that sit rigidly facing the waves. Today they are joined on their windswept pedestal by three, somewhat shorter, individuals for their first brief photo opportunity of the trip.

There's not much else to see and the four blokes have little to offer in the way of conversation so we retrace our route back into town and join the E20 motorway. As with all motorways the E20 is a fairly dull affair, as is the E45 that takes us all the way north past Aalborg to our next ferry at Frederikshavn. It's a three or four hour motorway stint made more arduous by the constant buffeting of the wind and the ever present threat of rain but we make it in good time and join the queue to board with full fuel tanks.

Tonight's is a three hour crossing of Kattegat Bay (no I'd never heard of it either) to the Swedish port and city of Gothenburg. Tonight is also the night of the start of England's bid for World Cup glory as they play the US of A. We eventually find a seat that Kryten is happy with, i.e. directly in front of the huge screen TV, and the match kicks off, enough said.

From the deck of the ship Gothenburg looks like a nice place, even though it's now eleven o'clock at night and it's raining, it has a kind of welcoming glow. In this dark wet night we must attempt to find our hotel "a short easy two kilometre journey from the berth" the advert had said. I had taken the precaution of Googling the route and had a look with the street view. This made the fairly complicated route, on the wrong side of the road in the dark, easier to follow and we soon found the inviting lights of the hotel and the warm smile of its well-spoken receptionist. The small road that lead down to the underground car park was wet and covered in leaves so we ended up a bit sideways at times, which has the effect of livening up proceedings somewhat. Warm, dry and with a clean set of clothes on we sit in the bar and enjoy a well-earned glass of expensive Swedish beer until the wee small hours.

Part 2 next month

CURRENT DIARY OF EVENTS

Contact point: Dave Hall 01522 274989

The Sunday morning Group Observed Runs are open to all members. Also non-members considering advanced training may have an assessment ride. The prime purpose is to provide guidance to benefit associate members, although assessment rides for full members may be available depending on observer numbers. The runs last around 2 hours, usually with a refreshment stop, starting at the following venues.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Brigg Leisure Centre parking area | South side of A18 |
| Willingham Woods picnic site | A631 east of Market Rasen |
| Hartsholme Country Park | South side of B1378, Skellingthorpe Road (off Lincoln Bypass) |

Social runs will incorporate café stops unless an alternative is specified. Please try to arrive at the meeting point in good time and with a full tank of fuel. Please note that due to an IAM directive regarding insurance cover for affiliated groups, Social Runs are for group members only. Guests are welcome as pillion passengers.

FEBRUARY

Weds 1st - Monthly evening meeting at the Crown Inn, Glenthams (A631) at 8.00pm.

Sun 5th - Group Observed Run from Hartsholme Country Park. Meet 11.30am for 12.00am. Prompt start.

Weds 8th - Committee Meeting, Offices of LK2 Architects, Nettleham. Prompt start at 7.45pm.

Sat 18th - Group Annual Dinner, Beckett Arms, Corringham. 8pm. Contact Dave Hall ASAP if interested.

Weds 29th - Meeting for Observers and those interested in becoming Observers. Venue TBA.

MARCH

Sat 3rd - Group publicity event at The Podium at Scunthorpe Market. Details TBC but help required and members to turn up on their bikes to mingle with the public and promote LAM and the IAM

Weds 7th - Monthly evening meeting at the Crown Inn, Glenthams (A631) at 8.00pm.

Suns 11th - Group Observed Run from Brigg Leisure Centre. Meet 9.00am for 9.30am. Prompt start.

Weds 28th - Meeting for Observers and those interested in becoming Observers. Venue TBA.

Sat 31st - Lincoln BikeSafe. Observers who are able to assist please contact Don Ford.

APRIL

Weds 4th - Monthly evening meeting at the Crown Inn, Glenthams LN8 2EQ (A631) at 8.00pm.

Sun 8th - Group Observed Run from Willingham Woods. Meet 9.30am for 10.00am. Prompt start.

Weds 11th - Committee Meeting, Offices of LK2 Architects, Nettleham. Prompt start at 7.45pm

Sun 15th - Humberside BikeSafe opening event at Humber Bridge north bank parking area. Time 09.30 to 15.30. Access available for setting up from 08.00. Contact Iain Johnston if you are able to assist.

Weds 25th - Meeting for Observers and those interested in becoming Observers. Venue TBA.

Sat 28th - Lincoln BikeSafe. Observers who are able to assist please contact Don Ford.

MAY

Weds 2nd - Monthly evening meeting at the Crown Inn, Glenthams LN8 2EQ (A631) at 8.00pm.

Sun 6th - Group Observed Run from Hartsholme Country Park. Meet 9.00am for 9.30am. Prompt start.

Sat 26th - Lincoln BikeSafe. Observers who are able to assist please contact Don Ford.

Weds 30th - Meeting for Observers and those interested in becoming Observers. Venue TBA.

ANYONE READY TO OFFER TO PUT ON A RUN OR OTHER EVENT TO LIVEN UP THE CALENDAR PLEASE CONTACT DAVE HALL ON 01522 274989