



Graham airs top-box on the SAM/RoADA run, well clear of the sensitive noses of other SAMmers



# Advance

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# Journal

of the Severn Advanced Motorcyclists

December 2005

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## Route Napoleon, Autumn 2005

**Terry Henshaw**

Highlights of a Tour of France and Spain in Autumn 2005.

Thanks to having a foot in plaster I was unable to join the SAM trip to the Western Loire in France but was determined to tour France with the intrepid five who did the France - Spain tour in 2004. Sadly one had vital appointments which could not be changed and another a new job with a limited holiday entitlement. The remaining three decided to go regardless. The plan was to take a ferry to Le Havre and head down the eastern side of France following country routes avoiding cities, motorways and other major roads to emerge somewhere on the eastern Mediterranean coast of France then turn west towards Spain crossing the Pyrenees to Pamplona and finally return to Portsmouth from Bilbao.

A few days before departure we were reduced to two as Roy Bunce contracted a serious illness. As hotels and ferries were already booked changes were hastily made to amend

the reservations and avoid cancellation charges. Just before departure Nick Twissell noticed an article in the October issue of "Ride" magazine giving the result of a reader survey to identify the best biking routes in Europe. The article lists the top four roads but top of the list was the Route Napoleon. As we intended to pass near the area we decided to amend our intended route and go for the experience!

The Route Napoleon is the RN85 from Grenoble to Grasse. The best section is 185 miles long and passes through Gap, Sisteron, Digne les Bains, Castellane and

ends at Grasse before going on to Cannes. The N85 effectively begins at Eybens to the south east of Grenoble and the start proved frustrating and difficult to find. There are a few signs to the Route but these proved to be isolated and misleading and led to areas where there were no signs at all.



When finally on the N85 your initial frustrations are quickly forgotten and are rapidly replaced by concentration. Within a few miles you are climbing quickly and things become very three dimensional. The road has everything you could wish for as the Route Napoleon holds you hypnotised as you weave, swoop and climb around descending and ascending bends. The scenery is fantastic the bends flow geometrically and the road surface is consistently excellent with good clear markings and signs. The standard sign for a bend means a very sharp bend - they do not display a sign for each bend or there would be a forest of them.

There are 180 degree mountain hairpins with steep gradients, open fast sweepers plus everything in between and more. The scenery is enormous and fills so much of your view. A note of caution as the first section from Eybens to Gap is used by large articulated lorries. It is impossible to overtake but leave at least five times the usual gap as the trucks sometimes meet each other on a sharp bend and may stop suddenly and reverse!

The least dramatic section is from Gap to Sisteron but just after Digne les Bains the road goes crazy again and the trucks disappear. When you think it cannot get any better the road passes through a small arch in the rock face into the spectacular mountain top area known as the "Clune de Taulanne". The safety barrier is a low stone wall which if contacted at any speed would catapult the rider over the top into the valley – far below. The views down into the valleys are stupendous and a few stops to soak up the scenery are recommended. Look for the little church perched on the top of a cliff on the long winding and spectacular descent into Castellane.



Millau Bridge: British design, old chap!

The route is named after Napoleon Bonaparte who, in 1815 escaped from captivity on the island of Elba and attempted to once again seize power. He and a few of his

supporters landed at Golfe Juan and to avoid royalist towns set off over the mountains to Lyon. His journey took six days but we completed the route with stops for lunch and to absorb the wonderful scenery in around five to six hours.

We endorse the result of the Ride magazine reader survey as the Route Napoleon is by far the winner. Incidentally, the other selections were the N240 / N260 from Andorra to Pamplona, the Isle of Man, the A2 from Larne to Portrush in Northern Ireland and the B258 from Aachen to Koblenz. Perhaps next year?

A second detour from our intended route led us to the new viaduct over the Tarn valley at Millau. This spectacular bridge was opened in December 2004, completing the A75 auto-route from Montpellier to Clermont Ferrand. It was designed by Sir Norman Foster and is a most impressive feat of civil engineering. It is currently the highest bridge in the world!



Keep to the right, right?

The viaduct is built on a curve and carries two dual carriageways each 270 metres high. The roadways are suspended from seven slender concrete columns the tallest of which is 350 metres high. The road over the bridge is enclosed by high safety barriers and wind deflectors so the view is rather restricted. After crossing the bridge we descended into Millau for lunch and then after viewing the side profile of the viaduct, passed under the

bridge in a westerly direction towards Toulouse passing through some superb countryside. The scenery along the A75 is great and a visit to see the viaduct is highly recommended. There is a visitor and information centre at the base of the bridge but we had to defer a visit.

The final stage was to cross into Spain over the Pyrenees from Pau to Pamplona and then on to Bilbao to join the ferry to Portsmouth. The mountain route equals a few of the

sections on the Route Napoleon but some of the bends are very tight and don't flow. First gear was used more often and in many parts the road surface was broken with large potholes. It

ensures concentration and adds to the occasion!

The route is very scenic and the steep sections are heavily forested. The long descents towards Pamplona have spectacular views and have been recently upgraded. When leaving Pamplona keep a good lookout for the Red Kites soaring above.

The total distance covered was 1960 miles and included many interesting areas not previously visited ♦

## DAM Busters revisited, 18 Sep 2005

### Sal Charlton

From over the misty Cotswolds cold  
Through Stroud, Nailsworth &  
Sodbury Old  
They made their way, at break of day,  
"SAM-RIDERS" - daring, daunting,  
bold.

Bradford-on-Avon saw them pass  
With courtesy and not too fast  
Took turns to stay, To mark the way,  
With Brian, sweeping, coming last.

Near Somerset the sun shone bright,  
They stopped for coffee - what delight  
For everyone, To chat in sun,  
The bikes – a splendid gleaming  
sight.

Then on, it's Frome they're heading  
for  
And Shepton Mallet some miles more  
Mendips flowing, distance growing,  
Under Glastonbury's Tor.

Skip past Taunton, heading west  
Bends become more of a test  
Left and right, both fast and tight,  
The road is empty – just the best.

More cloudy now this Devon sky  
Who's complaining? Roads are dry  
Its afternoon, Bampton comes soon,  
The lunchtime stop is just nearby.

DAM riders' bikes are everywhere  
SAM riders pick their place with care  
Both groups well met, then lunch they  
get,

The carvery's beyond compare.

Now John's in front to lead the way  
All will enjoy next part of day  
A well-planned ride, & superb guide,  
Bike after bike sets off to play.



*DAM riders so skilled they can eat  
cream tea with eyes closed, like this*

Through wooded valleys dark & deep  
On moss and gravel wisely creep  
Then climbing high, to touch the sky  
The bends are tight, the hills are  
steep.

Then out across the endless moor  
What wild and lovely sights they saw  
Ahead looks fine, with bikes in line  
A memory to take and store.

They reach the coast and turn until  
They're heading east across the hill  
And down below, as on they flow  
The silver sea gleams calm and still.

Change gear, hook back, they leave  
the sea

And inland turn behind JT  
The lanes sink low, and hedges grow  
As on they wind past field and tree.



*Here's the route over Exmoor...*

Slight diversion - leader gone?  
Bike behind not following on??  
Soon sorted out, without a doubt  
He always knows the way does John!

We know they'd ride until they drop  
But from this point it's just a hop  
To welcome grub, at village pub,  
Where cream tea brings them to a  
stop.

So, finally goodbyes are said  
SAM riders rested and well fed  
Turn north once more, M5 for sure  
Past Taunton they are once more led.

As planned, SAM riders scatter wide  
In ones and twos and threes they ride  
On motorway, at end of day,  
No need out front to mark and guide.

.....  
I've left them all, I'm on my own  
Due west and into Wales I've flown

But memory strong, will linger long  
Of roads we shared and friendships  
grown.

Brian sweeping at the back  
Graham moving though the pack  
And in between, a brilliant team  
Dropping off to mark our track.

And as I drift off into sleep  
Lights of friends on bikes still peep  
In my mirrors.... welcome shivers  
Special memories to keep.

*My thanks to all who came out on the  
SAM-DAM run this September and  
made it such a good day! ♦*

## Abergavenny Bus Stop, 2 Oct 2005

### Graham Bailey, Ride Leader

Weather: cool but dry and entertaining, duration 1000 – 1430 approx, distance 115 miles approx (mostly intended).

Pilot	Bike
Steve Wood	GSX750F
Bernie Wood	GPZ500S
Brian Charlton	KTM 950
Sally Charlton	650GS
Terry Freeman	1200 Bandit
Mike Barrett	FJR1300
Dave Preest	850 Guzzi
Tim Cutmore	R1150RT
Lawrence Morgan	Transalp
Eric Bush	R1100RT
Graham Bailey	1200GS

'10 lovely riders', (well 8 actually, 2 were skulking in the woods somewhere waiting to surprise us on route) and myself of course!, all bright 'n bushy tailed and eager to cover 'black top'.

And this is where it went slightly wrong at the outset, the planning stage! Read on.....

You see, I had inadvertently revealed my intended route to 'fast Sal' the evening before, only to be persuaded on the morning by Dave 'Scout' Preest to take a more entertaining and alternative route! (Wise choice)

This resulted in the surprise 'photo' ambush intended by the Charltons en-route, becoming nothing more than a lonely and boring roadside

vigil, (for them) and an exchange of rare expletives when we all eventually met up at Aber, some 90 minutes later. (Well how was I supposed to know!! I don't have crystal balls you know! Stop it Brian!)

Nevertheless, our alternative route there turned out to be just as Dave had promised, invigorating, scenic and very demanding at times, as we left Chepstow on the B4235 towards Mynydd Bach, Llangwn, Usk, and Llanover before eventually swooping into Aber like a 'tight' squadron of 'top guns' dropping below the hard deck for a radar-evading landing. (good this innit!)

With Brian and Sal now part of the flight, we departed Aber after a much

needed 'bacon buttie' and coffee, via the ever entertaining and technical route through Skenfrith, towards Ross and eventually Gloucester. At this juncture, our inevitable separation always take place like a bag of spilt Maltesers!(if you know what I mean!)

Abergavenny never fails to provide a level of satisfaction, and today, with the present company (with the exception of Brian of course!) the ride out turned out

to be yet another worthwhile occasion 'not to be missed'.

My sincere thanks go to everyone that made the effort to attend, with a final word going out to:



*All together again*

**Bernie** for taking part and showing great promise for the future (honest!).

**Tim** your level of 'progressive riding' over Skenfrith has amazed me, well done.

**Lawrence** again you take your riding level up a peg on every occasion, nice one mate, keep it up.

**Dave** is always there to quietly put me right when I stray from the straight and narrow!

**Mike** for creating road presence far and above my own. (Stop it!)

**Terry** for bringing money with him this time!!

**Steve** is always there doing it right after listening once, and once only.

**Eric** for entertainment, no matter what, you always make a difference to the ride out Eric.

**Brian** you ride a KTM!, what can I say, get a life .....Bri!

**Sal** is dynamite on wheels, never in need of nitro!!

That's it for now folks, if your

name's not up there, it means you've just missed out on a real 'roller coaster'.

So if you want to be written about, ridiculed in print, or just happy to practise u-turns behind me!, then be there next time! (go on.....you know you want to!)

*'Follow if you dare, pass if you can'. ♦*

## Club night, 11 October 2005

### Graham Bailey, our very own Captain Canary

22 full, 10 associate and 3 social members all 'pushing and shoving' in an attempt to purchase a 'winning' raffle ticket, having got wind that the visor wipes and 'nut locker' were back in circulation. (Well... sometimes it's good to fantasise!)

Our evening's guest speaker was Martyn Cook from Riders For Health. He gave us all a brief insight into the very essential past and present achievements that this organisation has managed to perform, by using the very humble Motorcycle in distributing very much needed aid around remote parts of Africa.

Martyn's presentation was, for me, very informative with a delivery that would have had even the least interested individual paying attention all the way through. 'Well done Martyn', a very big thank you on behalf of the club for taking the time out to visit us and for providing a level of education for those present.

As a token contribution to the cause, a cheque for the sum of £30 from the Club's coffers is winging its way to Riders For Health as I write.

**John Deal.** Nice to see 'Jolly John' with his infamous 'radiant smile' back again, albeit a certain Kerry has something to do with it eh.....John!

**Jo Tring.** Welcome once again to SAM, Jo. We all hope that you enjoy your involvement in the Club's events with or without your SV650, for a great many years to come.

**Paul Cowburn.** Nice to see you again Paul, same applies as young Jo, lets hope we get to see the R1150GS Adventure (limited edition version!). Us BMW riders need to show them the way! ('stop it Budge'.....I know you feel jealous!).

**Terry Henshaw.** Nice to see Terry 'out and about' again after what seems like an extended period of convalescence. Terry has been suffering from an inappropriate application of stainless screws and plates within the region of his left big toe. Although this hasn't actually stopped him from riding, it has made him a lot later on the down shift into corners, thus providing his dear wife with a much heavier wash load than normal!! (Look on the bright side Terry, at least you don't ride an 'Onda'!!)

Cheltenham Motorcycles Fairview, see either Stewart or Luke for some amazing deals on everything in the clothing dept, they tell me that at this time of the year, they are prepared to do a deal on anything, with amazing reductions!! (Christmas is coming!) ♦

## SAM/RoADA run, 16 October 2005

### Graham Bailey, Ride Leader

Destination classified (should have been there!), mileage 100 approx (with no U-turns! shame), weather absolutely 'spot on', duration 1000 – 1430. Numbers: 15 SAM (hooray!), 14 RoADA.

#### Pilot

Lawrence Morgan  
Mike Barrett (Martin to his mates!)  
Rigar 'n Reo (Budge/Di)  
Nick and Taammjasmie!  
Bill Carter  
Alastair Lord (gadget boy the ed!)  
Tim Cutmore  
Terry Freeman (with money this time!)  
Steve Wood  
Bernie Wood (strawberry blonde!)  
Steve Reeves  
Geoff Poland  
Graham Bailey (not last for any reason!)  
Plus RoADA RIDERS

#### Bike

Transalp  
FJR1300  
Silver Bird  
FJR1300  
Fazer Thou  
VFR750 [*replete with gadgets – Ed*]  
R1150RT (with clutch!)  
1200 Bandit  
GSX750F  
GPZ500S (looks good from behind!)  
Proficient PAN  
600 Hornet  
GS1200  
12 bikes, 14 luvly individuals.

'Twas a moving moment as all 13 SAM bikes arrived at the chosen assembly point: The Longford Inn. Their entrance could be likened to that of a visiting raiding party of Sioux Indians as we circled the astounded RoADA members all huddled together in the car park, obviously in awe of such a commanding arrival. (Good this init, and I've barely started!!)

Dave Brazener, our host leader, was so amazed at the turnout that he temporarily lost his voice! (Or so he said) which rendered him unable to

address the growing throng in his usual manner!! (sounds like nerves!)



Group hug

Undeterred and after a 'brief' from a fellow member, Dave led the way out of the car park (much to the amazement of the passing Sunday

drivers) and on towards a very entertaining and rural route which saw us exit the A417 in a very clock wise direction taking in such villages as Upleadon, Much Marcle, Mordiford and Sutton St Nicholas before arriving at our tea stop at the very picturesque Brockington Golf club at Bodenham.(on the A417).



*"And another thing..."*

After a lovely pot of Earl Grey and a Kit Kat (thanks Terry!) out on the sun-trapped veranda just a few yards from the first tee, (I wish I'd brought me sticks now!) we all got together for the obligatory 'group hug' before saddling back up, and resuming our epic journey.

The home route saw a very similar calibre run, with such villages as Pencombe, Bishops Frome, Castle Frome, and the town of Ledbury all experiencing our passage, (stop it Budge!!) with our final resting place being Staunton Court, an ideal location to say our farewells and depart with the usual rapidity of

'scattering field mice' as the house cat makes its entrance.



*"One day, son, all this will be yours"*

Today, I hope, was the first of many SAM/RoADA ventures together as indeed it turned out to be a very successful outing, albeit aided by the fabulous October weather no doubt, but truly enjoyable as a pilot run in the union of two great bodies. ('sounds kinda sexual uh'...!)

With thanks sent and received by return from RoADA's Dave Brazener, it leaves me with only one task left to perform, and that is to endorse just how successful this event had become only through the very attendance of the listed members above, to which the club as a body should always be grateful.

Thanks again you motley lot of 'black top burning, petrol headed Sammies'.



## Club night, 8 November 2005

### Graham Bailey, he's the Chair don't you know

With a 'capacity crowd' close to infringing upon the local fire officer's advice, all 43 of us clambered into the club lounge in an attempt to be one of the first to get a back row seat.

This element of planning was thought to be our only defence in preparation for the no expense spared, low budget good old salty Sampan's intended presentation.

Although to be fair, his talk was very interesting, expertly delivered, and highly entertaining as it reflected upon his most recent escapades in command of a tall ship full of nubile ship mates.

(Sounds like a Capt Birdseye advert to me, with a splash of port hole

pudding and a slice of navy cake thrown in for good measure)



*Members prepare for Dave's presentation; some are still awake*



*Dave in full flight; Members dozing*

The evening really went extremely well (once Dave's talk had finished!) with a number of pass certificates to hand out, namely Les Stewart, and Tom Stevens, 'well done' once again to you

both, fine effort. This was followed by a brief confirmation by Budge that the North West 200 for 2006 is now fully booked. (Great early commitment and participation by the members concerned)

With 11 lucky raffle prize winners (one person left theirs behind... shame!)

all going home with a gift of a value much less than their investment! The last and final club night for SAM of

2005 came to a relaxed and satisfactory close.

**Tom/Lesley-Ann Stevens.** An extended warm welcome to you both, nice to see you at the club night, and on the Craven Arms run, well done both, lets see more of you in 2006.

**Ian Spring.** Out and about on his lovely FJR 1300 on the Craven Arms run, so long a member, yet limited FJR exposure, still good to see you Ian, keep it up.

**Brian Charlton.** Nice to see you out there flying the flag for 'Black Top'n'Mud' coloured KTM's.

We are still not sure who's purchased the other KTM that's been sold in the UK yet!!!!

**Dave Bainbridge.** Has been seen and heard within the four walls of Frasers, apparently stroking the black paint of a gleaming FJR, and reputed to have said upon his return from only pushing it around the car park, 'oooooh, this is a bit quick isn't it!' Needless to say, Dave's decided to stay put with his beloved arm chair on wheels, the Pan. And put the money

into having climate control fitted to it instead. (its residual value has now doubled!)

**Simon Forryan.** Has recently become an avid explorer by default. Let me explain. Having recently acquired a four legged friend, (called

Sat-Nav) his walks through local woods have had such a disorientating effect on his sense of direction, that he has now taken to 'kitting up' with a rucksack complete with hot soup and a copy of the Beano just in case!! (all existing dog

lovers commend him on the duration of his dog walks.

'ULTRASEAL'. Those of you that have received such fine goods from the club's last shipment, please rattle your memory cells again as there is still a small quantity that has been handed out that remains unpaid for.

I thank all of you out there in anticipation of your honourable response. ♦



*Congrats on test passes!*

## Craven Arms, 13 November 2005

### Graham Bailey, Ride Leader

Weather: Absolutely Fab, distance 150 miles approx, duration 1000 – 1530.

Pilot	Bike
Graham Bailey	1200GS
Budge/Di	Bird
Tim Cutmore	R1150RT
Steve Mason	GSX750F
Geoff Polland	600 Hornet
Pat Lush	CBF600
Nick/Jazz	FJR1300
Dave Howell	SV1000
Alastair Lord	VFR750
James Coombs	F650
Tom/Lesley-Ann Stevens	Bird
Nick Twissell	Varadero
John Jacobs	FJR1300
Steve Roberts	PAN
Ian Spring	FJR1300
Sal Charlton	650GS
Brain Charlton, Mike Donovan	KTM Adventure
Dave Preest	1000GS

'Bl\*\*dy hell', was my first thought as I pulled into the car park at BEW having glanced at that lot listed. My second was 'and I've only booked a table for 10' at our intended breakfast/dinner stop at the above.

As I 'powered down' and removed helmet 'n plugs my mind was in overdrive, 'but this is November' how can there be such commitment at this time of year! More's the point, where do I put the rest whilst the first 8 and



*Ready for the off*

Budge/Di are tucking into their freshly cooked breakfasts!!

In true Chairmanship style and without further ado, I was on the 'dog n bone' to the café with the latest numbers and apologies to boot, as I could only grimace whilst listening to the words of reflected disbelief at the other end of the phone, yet problem solved!!

After a 'quick' good morning and a briefing that lasted until 10.20am! I eventually led the merry throng away from BEW happy in the knowledge that at least no one was going to get left behind on this ride out, as I figured that we've probably got enough in attendance to mark every turn off from BEW to Craven without anyone having to mark twice!.

Gloucester to Wainlodes allowed us to pick up Geoff as we swooped down to almost river level as we glided alongside the already swollen

banks of the Severn. Tirley made way for a cross country route taking in Pendock, Ledbury, Bromyard, and Tenbury Wells before we eventually stumbled (all planned you know) across the A49 just south of Ludlow.



*Tired James rests bonce on fence post*

With 12.30pm approaching, and a sense of hunger within the ranks of 23, 'yes 23'!! Craven Arms came into view with the timing of a well rehearsed military operation! And a shout from one or two of 'about time too' (wasn't Budge or Di, they were already inside!)

With the usual hustle and bustle associated with

any large bunch of kids, we all eventually settled into the warmth of Station Café. There was a level of contentment as the first tranche of freshly cooked breakfasts began to arrive upon the tables 'hooray'!

1.15pm approx, and the certainty of a dwindling sun coupled with a promise of lower temperatures to follow, gave

us all the inspiration to about-turn and head off in the general direction of good old Glos. This time following the A49 towards the tea room at Brockington Golf Club on the A417 for a pot of Earl Grey, and a wedge (golfing term!) of coffee 'n walnut cake (sorry Heather!).

After a reluctant group hug shot (eh... Di!) in the last of the afternoon sun, courtesy of snapper Steve Mason, who has yet to master the time delay facility on his super duper



*Jas shovels it in, Nick knows to stay clear*

mega pixel thingy (see group shot with Steve's rear end effort!). **[On website – Ed]** We all set off once again on the last and final stage of this very memorable and special November 13th, a day never to return.

The weather, company and atmosphere were fantastic, ride outs like these really don't get much better (except for temperature perhaps!) and my heartfelt condolences go out to all that failed to be there, it certainly was an occasion.

Pat yourself on the back you lot, you made it happen! (p.s my humble apologies to 'Gadge', for my miserable attempt at being his waitress!!) **[I told him I loathe baked beans. So what'd he ordered me?! Pah! – Ed] ♦**

## Stratford (not), 27 November 2005

### James Coombs, Ride Leader

A bit damp and fresh, 1000 - 1300 hrs, distance 50 miles.

Pilot	Bike
Tim Cutmore	BMW R1150RT
Ian Hudson	Honda Deauville
Geoff Pollard	Honda Hornet
Alastair Lord	Honda VFR
James Coombs	BMW DakarName Bike

SAM's last of 2005! - Run to Stratford (A.K.A a bacon butty and a brew at Greasy Joe's in Cirencester!).

I rolled up to the club at 10am on the dot, to see four bikes in a row, but five riders. Now

normally I would have deduced that somebody would be riding pillion, but on closer inspection I notice the attire of our Chairman Graham Bailey (and lead for



*Graham looking rough; no more than usual...*

the run to Stratford) was not what I would have expected for a chilly November morning. Unfortunately Graham was not well enough to take us on the ride out. But, he had dragged himself out of his sickbed, against Doctor's orders (okay, I may

be pushing it a bit now) and driven over to tell us that the run was cancelled.

As a group we decided that we would forge a route to somewhere new and after at least 3 or 4 minutes of deliberation we settled on a run over to Greasy Joe's in Cirencester for a brew. I was lucky enough to be volunteered as the lead for the run and following a

quick discussion with Graham on an interesting route he had found we set off for Cirencester.

Our route saw us climb Birdlip Hill and then onto fairly decent B roads through The Camp and Bisley. A quick navigational exercise between

our group, a car, horse, pony and a massive Irish wolfhound.

Then came the interesting "road" between Oakridge and Frampton Mansell, which Graham had told me about. This was not for the fainthearted! It was basically a long windy extremely narrow downhill stretch, which was then followed by an equally windy uphill route. I think our associates (and to be honest the full



*James demonstrates Advanced Hand Waving worthy of his Ride Leader status*

members too) wished that they had another gear below 1st to help control their bikes. Personally I was extremely pleased to be on a GS, but everybody made it through and we duly found the A419 for the remainder of the run in to Cirencester.

After a warming brew and a filling bacon butty at Greasy Joe's, we decided to remain as a group and ride back towards Gloucester. Unfortunately that meant a rather boring whiz along the A419 towards Stroud (that's if a 40 limit can be described as a whiz), and then it was

entertaining climb up on to Selsey Common where the Kamikaze roaming cows lined the edge of the road, but it's worth it for the views along the top overlooking the Stroud valley. We then dropped down through the multiple bends of

Frocester Hill (are you seeing a recurring theme yet?) and then onto the A38 and back up to Gloucester.

The small group enjoyed the run and I enjoyed being the lead for the

first time, but I must say it's harder than it looks. Unfortunately I didn't keep the ride out to the same format as Graham in that we only travelled over a single stretch of road once and had no U-turns!

I will have to try harder next time! ♦