

## Lake Vyrnwy, 10 July 05

**Greg Sullivan, Gwent Group of Advanced Motorists**

*[Budge's most excellent report on this run featured in our previous edition. The kind folks from Gwent GAM offered their report, and since it contains a lovely pic (taken by Budge!) and a detailed route description from the ride leader (which I have since followed – see p.36 for my gushing!) I thought you might enjoy it - Ed]*

Date: 10th July 2005 Duration: 09:00hrs –18:00hrs  
Distance: 230mls Conditions: Sunny and warm, 28°C

Rider	Bike
Greg Sullivan	Triumph Sprint ST (Ride Leader)
Steve Williams	Yamaha Fazer 1000
Mark Jones	Honda VFR Vtec (Tail ender)
Mike Odelet	Honda Blackbird
Tony Morgan	Honda VFR (Tail Ender)
Lee Clarke	Honda VFR Vtec
Mark Gornicki	Suzuki Bandit 600S
Peter Skelton	Yamaha Fazer 600
Richard Higgs	Moto Guzzi Le Mans V11
John Probert	Yamaha Fazer 600
Derek & Julie Lee	Kawasaki ZZR600
Gareth Davidson	Suzuki GSXR 600
Budge & Dianne Burrige	CBR 1100xx4
Tim Rodway	Yamaha Fazer 1000
Simon Rolfe	Honda CBR 1000

The longer daylight and better weather during peak summer enables the group Sunday Rideout to depart earlier (9am) and reach a peak in terms of distance travelled. With Peaks in mind the destination for this ride was Lake Vyrnwy via Wales's highest road pass.

Excellent weather encouraged 15 riders to turn out for this trip some

joining and exiting the ride at various stages. The usual stalwarts were in attendance and a few riders also attending their first Sunday group Rideout, not the easiest ride to select to start with but all coped very well and hopefully enjoyed the day enough to encourage them to return.

Also in attendance for the first time were Budge & Dianne Burrige and

Tim Rodway from the Severn Advanced Motorcyclists (SAM) of the Gloucestershire area. It says something about the IAM when riders can come together like this and all ride to the same system and high standard, in fact all looked as if they had ridden together for years.

After a quick chat 10 riders left Edlogan Way using the drop-off marker system with Mark Jones propping up the tail-end. Taking the direct route to Abergavenny bus station we met Tony Morgan and Peter Skelton and headed out on the A40 towards Brecon. Lee Clarke joined the group at Tretower and we headed over to Talgarth and on to Builth Wells. Pulling in to the little chef at Builth, the riders from the SAM group had just finished breakfast as planned and were waiting to join the group - having a chat while everyone else took the opportunity to take in some much needed liquid.

Onto the A470 we headed for Rhayader making good progress as the roads were unusually quiet, Peter Skelton headed back from this point while the rest turned right on the B4518 for Saint Harmon, a smooth open road with panoramic views working our way to Llanidloes.

With the B roads getting tighter and the scenery even better we continued

on to Llyn Clywedog pulling into the car park for a short break.

***Llyn Clywedog is a man made reservoir owned by Severn Trent and boasts the highest concrete dam in Britain at 236ft (72m) high and 750ft long. Holding back 11,000 million gallons of water it is up to 6 miles long with a maximum depth of 216ft.***

On we pressed to Staylitttle turning left through Dylife Gorge along an unnamed road. This is smooth single track for approx 10mls that chops and changes left and right that can be difficult to concentrate on when there is yet more great scenery to appreciate. Dropping down into Machynlleth we turned right towards Welshpool and pulled in to a garage in Mallwyd so that all riders could fill up and have a full tank for the return trip. More drinks were consumed whilst other bikers warned us of spot checks in the Barmouth area that were taking 30mins to clear.

Thankfully we headed the other way towards Dolgellau again on the A470. Within a few miles some variety was introduced by going into the car park of a community hall where good slow speed control meant a perfectly executed synchronised "U Turn" by 14 riders. With the Olympics 7 years away surely this could be introduced instead of the synchronised swimming.

Back onto the A470 we took the next right for Dinas Mawddwy (correct one this time) on un-named roads passing through Llanymawddwy. From this point the roads become narrower as we tackled some hairpin corners climbing the 1:5 incline to reach Bwlch y Groes.

***Bwlch y Groes is the highest road pass in Wales with views to the Arran Mountains and the Dyfi Valley that during medieval times was used as a Pilgrims route from North West Wales to St David's in the South. Thick black lines on the edge of the mountains show the sections of peat bogs worked by those in less affluent times.***

Setting off again we aimed for Llanwddyn on what proved to be the narrowest section of road with Lake Vyrnwy soon coming into view. Thankfully a number of cars made use of pull in areas and allowed us all to pass with the Lake looming larger and larger during a long slow descent.



*John, Gareth, Derek, Julie, Mark J, Simon, Richard, Steve, Tim, Dianne, Greg, Tony, Lee, Mike and Mark G, with Budge behind the camera*

Arriving in Lake Vyrnwy it was over the Dam and a case of park wherever we could, then straight into one of the local cafes for a lengthy rest.

***Lake Vyrnwy in the heart of the Berwyn Mountains was created by the Victorians as a water supply for the growing city of Liverpool. The village of Llanweddyn was lost when this first large masonry dam in Britain was built to create the lake. The dam is 357m long and 35.5m thick at the base and the perimeter road is 11.75 miles long being used for annual half marathon races.***

Four riders needing to get back early departed while the others relaxed a while longer and then gathered themselves for the return route.

With Tony Morgan volunteering to go tail end we passed through Llwydiarth and Llangadfan using the excellent B roads which unfortunately had been recently relaid at one section.

On through Llanfair Caereinion we turned for New Mills and eventually reached Newtown for a toilet stop.

Newtown to Llandrindod Wells must be most riders favourite and the group became more strung out as we enjoyed the fabulous A483 to return to Builth Wells and take a rest in the grounds of the little chef.

Everyone regrouped at this point as we did throughout the ride hence the Drop off system worked as intended without losing any riders. All took the opportunity to take some more liquid which was the purpose of the number of stops planned, this being necessary for a mixed group before any section became too uncomfortable for any rider possibly causing a lack of concentration.

The guests from the SAM group offered an invite for us to attend one of their rideouts and bade us farewell. The route home was well known for all remaining riders, so we all made our own way back - some going straight home and a few finishing up at Abergavenny Bus Station at 6pm.

A good turn out for a good day riding to a new destination with a bit of variety, so hopefully something for everyone to enjoy. ♦

### **Editor's postscript**

I missed this ride-out, and I reckon Welsh goat tracks can't be beat. When Greg sent me this write-up, I reckoned I could replicate the route from his notes. So the very next day the Viffer and I went exploring...

Here are some pics that Greg & co might have taken if they weren't so busy enjoying the ride!



*Llyn Clywedog reservoir; easier to find than to spell*



*Spooky; I swear the VFR started creeping up the track itself*

And finally thanks to Greg for the warning about the sheep. They were abundant and particularly nervous of human contact. **[Coz of Welsh farmers – Ed] [Enuf crass Welsh cracks! – Ed] [Sorry – Ed] ♦**