ESTABLISHED 1986
Forty years.
Still taking the scenic route.

The Sam Gazette

BIRTHDAY EDITION
Written by the people who know him best.

VOL. XL NO. 1 | 40TH BIRTHDAY SPECIAL | SATURDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2026

HOME NEWS / A MILESTONE WORTH PRINTING

Local Man Turns Forty, Still Cannot Find Own Keys

Partner, mother, neighbour and friends confirm the shortcuts remain unreliable, the table still wobbles and the coffee is reliably made before anyone else is up.



Chocolate cake, as requested for years. Rosa reports her cakes always leaned a little; the biggest slice was always his.

MILESTONE

Coffee Made, Keys Missing, Bench Occupied

GAZETTE STAFF, WITH JO, ROSA, NINA, MO AND FINN

Sam is forty. His partner Jo greets the news with the appropriate scepticism: "sam is 40 somehow??" The evidence suggests he has not slowed down. He still makes coffee before Jo gets up. He lost his own keys three times last week, yet, Jo reports, knows where everyone else's stuff is.

His mother, Rosa, can supply the background. For years he always asked for chocolate cake. Her cakes, she admits, always leaned a little, and he always asked for the biggest slice. Forty years on, her verdict is unchanged: "Still my lovely boy."

Others describe smaller, steadier things. Before a presentation that terrified her, work friend Nina says Sam sat with her and rehearsed it twice, then texted "you've got this". Next door, Mo had flu and found soup on the doorstep, accompanied by no big speech, only "bowl back whenever". Rocket the cat also rates him highly, though Mo concedes this may be snack related.

Finn had a rough year. Sam came and sat with him on a park bench. He did not try to fix it, and he did not suggest a run. He just stayed. Finn says that "means more than i can say". Of everything submitted to this edition, it was the shortest instruction manual: turn up, sit down, stay.

LETTERS TO SAM

“i was terrified before that presentation. sam sat with me and rehearsed it twice, then texted 'you've got this'.”

NINA / WORK FRIEND

“soup on my doorstep when i had flu. no big speech just 'bowl back whenever'.”

MO / NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOUR

“sam just came and sat on the park bench. didn't try to fix it or tell me to go for a run. just stayed.”

FINN / FRIEND

NOTICES & SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS

GOOD HOMES WANTED FOR SPARE SOCKS

Lost

LOST: Keys, belonging to Sam, three times last week. Owner knows where everyone else's things are but not his own. Finders please contact Jo, who will be up after the coffee.

Returns

RETURNS: One soup bowl, possibly still at Mo's next door. No deadline applies; terms were agreed at the doorstep as "bowl back whenever". Rocket the cat available for snack-based references.

Wanted

WANTED: One map, suitable for rides described as "a quick spin". Applicants should be able to tell ten miles from thirty-two. Reply to Dan. Chips will be provided, on past form.

Furniture

FURNITURE: Flatpack table, declared structurally sound in 2019. Mild wobble is a feature. Findings not open to review. Viewings by appointment with Ben, who will ring; the assessor always answers.

Happy fortieth, Sam. Coffee's on you, as ever; we'll find your keys.

The Sam Gazette

SATURDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2026 / PEOPLE, PLACES & DISPUTED DISTANCES

THE WEEKEND PAGES

Reports From the Field

Five friends file reports on shortcuts, furniture, weather, mileage and one song played twice.



Croissants at a Paris bakery, in the spirit of the one Priya and Sam found twice in 2008 via a shortcut.

TRAVEL

Shortcut Ends Where It Began

REPORTED BY PRIYA, COLLEGE FRIEND

Paris, 2008. Sam told Priya, a college friend, that he knew a shortcut. Forty-five minutes later the pair were back at the same bakery. Priya's capitals on "SAME" suggest the moment has not entirely faded.

A lesser navigator might have apologised. Instead they bought another croissant and called it a walking tour, a rebrand of which any city tourist board would be proud. The route has never been published, which is probably for the best.

Asked for a review some eighteen years later, Priya was unambiguous: "honestly would do it again". Whether Sam would take the same shortcut is a question this paper has chosen not to put to him.



A kettle, a campsite and pancakes, imagined here rather less burnt than Alex remembers from that wet weekend.

OUTDOORS

Pancakes Burnt, Tent Soaked, Socks Dry

REPORTED BY ALEX, CAMPING FRIEND

Alex, a camping friend, remembers "that wet camping weekend!" with the fondness usually reserved for good weather. The pancakes were burnt. The tent was soaked. Conditions, by any reasonable measure, were poor.

Yet Sam somehow had spare dry socks for Alex. How they survived a weekend that soaked the tent has never been explained, and Alex appears content not to ask. Dry socks in a soaked tent are worth more than most luxury accommodation.

They then ate the least burnt pancakes round the kettle. Alex's overall rating: "10/10 terrible holiday", a review that somehow manages to be both accurate and glowing.



Bikes and chips: the second item is the reason Dan and Sam are still friends after thirty-two miles.

SPORT

Ten-Mile Spin Runs to Thirty-Two

REPORTED BY DAN, CYCLING FRIEND

A quick spin, he said. Ten miles, he said. Dan, a cycling friend, reserves his capitals for the final figure: THIRTY TWO MILES.

That is an overrun of twenty-two miles, or a little over three times the advertised distance. In most professions this would prompt a review. In cycling it apparently prompts chips, which Sam bought afterwards.

Dan confirms that the chips were decisive: "so we're still friends". He has one request for Sam's fifth decade, offered in the spirit of road safety and his own legs: "bring a map for the next decade pls". The paper notes that Priya, of the Paris walking tour, may wish to second the motion.



A handwritten mix CD in the style of the one Ella still has, Mr Brightside included, possibly twice.

MUSIC

Mr Brightside Appears Twice; Sam Claims Intent

REPORTED BY ELLA, COUSIN

When Ella, his cousin, got her first car, Sam made her a mix CD for it. Ella still has it. That alone would be worth reporting, but the tracklist contains an irregularity.

Mr Brightside was on it, in Ella's words, "TWICE". Sam claims it was deliberate. This paper is in no position to dispute the claim, though it does note the similarity to a certain table that is also, officially, exactly as intended.

Ella's closing request is addressed directly to the birthday boy: "sam please never become cool". On the evidence of the second Mr Brightside, the risk appears manageable.

HOME AND GARDEN

Table Inquiry Remains Closed

REPORTED BY BEN, YOUNGER BROTHER

In 2019 Sam pronounced a flatpack table "structurally sound". His younger brother Ben reports that the table is still wobbling.

Sam, according to Ben, has refused to revisit the findings. Seven years on, the original assessment stands, as, more or less, does the table. Few government inquiries have shown such commitment to a conclusion.

Ben does not, however, wish to lodge a formal complaint against the engineer himself. His summary of Sam is "best big brother though", with a supporting detail any sibling will recognise as the real test: "always answers the phone". The table, presumably, will keep wobbling quietly in the background.

> *"still makes coffee before i get up."*
>
> JO, PARTNER

CONTRIBUTORS Jo · Priya · Ben · Alex · Nina · Mo · Ella · Dan · Rosa · Finn / Made with love, for Sam.