

GO BETWEEN

Oxford IAM Group Newsletter

October 2006



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<http://www.iam-oxford.org.uk/>

Chief Observer's Observations

Cars

Welcome to my first article as Car Chief Observer, having recently taken over the role from John Lang to allow him more time to concentrate on the Motorcycle Observers.

We currently have almost thirty Car Observers in the group all giving their time to help Associates to prepare for the Advanced Driving Test. These Observers are supported, in groups of 4 or 5, by one of our Senior Observers. Each Senior Observer is also responsible for providing pre-test check drives for all Associates. In addition they also provide the training and mentoring for all new Trainee Observers. The Senior Observers meet every three months to review progress

The Institute continues to refine the requirements for the training of Observers. Its latest initiative is a pilot scheme called "The National Observers Training Scheme". This requires us to complete a structured training package for all new observers consisting of various units and core skills. The Senior Observers are currently evaluating this scheme and will provide feedback to the Institute. This feedback will hopefully influence the final scheme. Oxford Group will take a pragmatic view of the outcome, recognising that we are already putting an effective training regime in place.

Current Observers will be aware from the last Observers Meeting that we intend to complete the transfer of all our observers from "Group" to "Qualified" Observer status as soon as possible. In order to achieve this, the next Observers Meeting in early November will focus on preparation for and completion of the written test.

We continue to need new Observers. If you think that you can spare a few hours each month to help other prepare for the test then please contact me.

Clive Stayt
Car Chief Observer

Motorcycles

On the motorcycle front, we've had a steady flow of new associates coming to the group through the summer period. Our Observers have been able to offer runs quite quickly to new joiners, with only a very short waiting list.

Congratulations to our two newly qualified motorcycle Observers, Helen Deeley and Chris Barras, who have both completed the full IAM qualification process and passed with flying colours!

We are still working on motorcycle Observer training and there are plans for a shared-learning event in the near future.

We do have several existing members expressing an interest in becoming Observers and this will strengthen our position going forward.

Group organised weekend runs have continued to be successful, but we always need volunteers to organise & lead the runs. If you are a full member and interested in helping with this, please let me know. We will send out run dates by email, so please be sure to let me know your current email address, unless you are receiving regular run reminders from me already.

All communications to motorcyclists, other than in issues of "GO" are by email; this is simply the most cost and time effective method for those people running the group & does suit the vast majority of our members. However, if you have no email, please just call me regularly to catch up on runs or other events.

Best wishes and safe riding,

John Lang
Tel: 01280 823111 Home
John.s.lang@btconnect.com

Congratulations to our new Members

CARS: Brian Stoneley 13/06/06 (with Tony Chalkly)
David Cadywould 29/07/06
Heidi Cleaver 11/09/06 (with Mark Reddin and Tony Chalkly)
Pat Watson
Tim Collinson

BIKES: Steve Silk 04/09/06 (with Helen Deeley)

More Advantages of IAM Membership

During a recent drive with a 23 male Associate, he commented that his journey to and from work could present the greatest difficulty for him. Several of his colleagues used the same route and he felt he could be embarrassed by driving correctly. He was normally the driver when the team went for local refreshments.

I suggested to him that as we were driving every other week he might try a comparison between his 'normal' driving and driving according to the System. One week he drove 'normally' and his journey times to and from work were about 22 minutes and his fuel consumption was about 30 mpg. His car was a Renault Clio Sport. He carried a stopwatch on the dashboard and this drew comments from his colleagues as to what he was doing.

The second week his journey times increased by about 1 minute – not significant – but his fuel consumption changed to 38 miles per gallon. This is a significant improvement and if we relate to numbers it means he is driving to work for four weeks but only putting the equivalent of 3 weeks fuel. A saving of £10 per tank full of fuel.

Some of his colleagues have started to ask about advanced driving.

Other Associates have also commented that getting to advanced driving standards have improved their fuel consumption by 10 to 15%. A husband of an Associate also commented that 'he did not seem to be putting as much fuel in the car'.

Driving according to the system improves enjoyment of driving, aids fuel efficiency and we can get there just as quick

Tony Chalkly

SKID-PAN EXPERIENCE

Searing temperatures, the allure of cold beers and something called the "World Cup" could not prevent eleven die-hard Oxford group IAM members and associates descending on the Castle Combe skid pan track on Saturday 1st July. Apparently eleven other people were involved in a kickabout somewhere in Germany against Portugal, but that concerned us not. Finding the skid pan itself was not too difficult - about an hour and twenty minutes from Oxford, and took you through the magically named and tiny village of Tiddlywink. The Castle Combe circuit is signposted all the way from the M4, so I had no excuse as an Observer for getting lost, which I did the previous year. Maybe it was due to the trepidation. As it turned out, I was the only person who had been the previous year, though this seemed to confer no advantage whatsoever to my skills! The skid pan session itself lasted about three hours, and was given by three very able instructors. Our group had a just retired Traffic Officer named Adrian, who certainly knew his stuff. There was thankfully little in the way of briefing before we clambered like excited schoolchildren into the two cars, a Rover 214 and a BMW 3 series. Both were reassuringly ancient, and both were covered in copious quantities of black gunk from the morning session. The initial session was just to get a feel for how the cars were handling, and to make them skid, which we certainly managed to. Then it was into the classroom for some instruction on the theory of skidding, the difference between front and rear wheel drive, understeer, oversteer, and all the rest of that good stuff in Roadcraft, plus then some. What surprised and embarrassed me was how much I had forgotten since the previous year. It was then out again on to the track to attempt to turn the theory into practice. Attempt is the important word here. Some of the fun of aimlessly sliding around on the track out of control was removed. You had to actually try to work out which way the wheels were pointing, remember to drop the clutch, resist a tap on the brake, resist putting on more lock in an understeer, try to rock the steering and remember to smile at the instructor as he jumped out of your way, all at the same time. It was quite a challenge. This was a skid pan using a surfactant powder. It would be interesting to compare this to the experience of a skid cradle, where a hydraulic system lifts one or more wheels from the ground to induce a skid. It was difficult to tell sometimes if your actions, or the mere fact that a wheel had left the wet area, had corrected a skid. After a few laps in both cars, it was back into the classroom for a discussion on braking, loss of directional control, cadence braking and ABS. Then back out on the track out instructor first demonstrated all of these to us, and then sat in the car with us while we tried to avoid or stop before a cone having just accelerated right at it, to simulate I suppose a last minute change of heart. My cone survived, but many other unfortunates did not, to the amusement and cheers of the IAM spectators. The day ended with a time trial, which involved getting around the course as quickly as you could, throwing in for good measure a couple of oversteer tricks round a cone, and a high speed reverse. The handbrake in the Rover was almost pulled out by the end. The best combined time for both cars was duly rewarded, not with a magnum of champagne as some had hoped, but with a baseball cap sporting the DriveTech logo. My time, as last year, was poor, owing to my irrational loathing for innocent cones. For eighty quid, the half day was certainly worth it. I would say it was a good balance of fun and education. Everyone had a good time, and much discussion was had among members and associates, many of whom had just met.

Mark Reddin

Did You Know About.....Crossings

“If you want to cross across a road, cross across a crossing”, so said PC George Dixon (Jack Warner) of Dixon of Dock Green for a Public Service film in the late 50s or early 60s. At that time I think there was only the Zebra Crossing in use. Since then 5 other types of crossing have been introduced.

Zebra Crossing

The zebra crossing was first used in the UK in 1949 (the original form being alternating strips of blue and yellow), and a 1951 measure introduced them into law. They are now alternating black and white stripes bounded by studs and marked with Belisha beacons on either side of the road. These beacons are black and white poles topped by flashing orange globes. They are named after [Leslie Hore-Belisha](#), the [Minister of Transport](#) who introduced them in [1934](#). Pedestrians have right of way on this kind of crossing once they have put a foot upon it; vehicles and cyclists must then stop and give way, if they can do so safely.

Panda Crossing

The Panda Crossing was an early attempt at a signal-controlled [pedestrian road crossing](#). The introduction of such a system was desired to replace the [zebra crossing](#) which had warning signals (in the form of [Belisha beacons](#)) but no proper controlling signals. The first trial installations started in [1962](#). A complex system of flashing [traffic lights](#) was used to dictate when vehicles should stop, and pedestrians could cross safely. The system proved unwieldy, and was superseded by the [pelican crossing](#), introduced in [1969](#)

Pelican Crossing

The Pelican (**PE**destrian **L**ight **CON**trolled) was first introduced in [1969](#). The crossing is marked with traffic lights for the vehicles, and green and red icons illuminating to show pedestrians when and when not to cross. Pedestrians only have right-of-way when the green icon is lit or if they entered the crossing while lit. The traffic light sequence has a flashing amber light whilst the green icon is flashing. The length of time for pedestrians to cross remains the same. Pedestrians should not start to cross when the green icon is flashing, Cyclists should dismount and push their bicycles across. Traffic can proceed on a flashing amber as long as there are no pedestrians on the crossing.

Puffin Crossing

The [puffin](#) (**PE**destrian **U**ser-**F**riendly **I**N**T**erface) can be identified by the sensors above the lights. The traffic light sequence is the same as normal traffic lights, viz there is no flashing amber. Cyclists should dismount and push their bicycles across the road. The time period is variable being controlled by the movement of pedestrians across the crossing; the more pedestrians using the crossing, the longer the time period.

Toucan Crossing

The toucan (**two can** cross — a joint pedestrian and [bicycle](#) crossing) has the same sequence as the Puffin crossing and the differences being an icon for bicycles and that cyclists can cycle across the crossing. A "green bicycle" is displayed next to the "green man" when cyclists and pedestrians are permitted to cross. It is useful to observe for any cycle tracks, joint cycle tracks with a pedestrian footpath alongside the road as errant cyclists may suddenly cross without using the crossing lights knowing that when the lights are green for crossing, they have right of way.

Pegasus or Equestrian crossing

The Pegasus crossing is a type of Pelican crossing to accommodate riders of horses, (usually outside race courses). They have two control panels, one at the normal height for pedestrians or dismounted riders, and one two metres above the ground for the use of mounted riders, and the "Green Man" and "Red Man" icons are replaced with horses. Additional features include wooden safety fence, and a wider crossing so that the horses are further away from cars than normal. If the crossing is to be used by pedestrians and cyclists too, then a parallel Toucan crossing is placed next to the Pegasus crossing.

If a pedestrian pushes the button to cross and then crosses before the lights change, the pedestrian is technically committing an offence of obstructing the highway. This would be when the lights change to red for vehicles and no one crosses the road.

In The News

A new law comes into force on 18 September 2006, which the government says could save up to 2,000 children per year from death or injury in road accidents. All children under the age of 12 will have to use some form of child car seat, unless they are taller than 135cm (4ft 5in). However, the Department for Transport recommends that children should continue using booster cushions or booster seats until they are 150cm (4ft 11in) tall. Up to now children aged between three and 11 have been obliged to use the appropriate seat or cushion "if available" - now they have to use it full stop, with only a few exemptions:

Children under 12 and less than 135cm tall may not travel in the front of a car without an appropriate seat or cushion, under any circumstances

Children under three may not travel without an appropriate seat, whether they are in the front or the back, except in the rear of a taxi

It becomes illegal to use a rear-facing baby seat in a front seat protected by an airbag

Police can impose a £30 fixed penalty, but the maximum fine is £500 if it goes to court.

THE KNOWLEDGE- ADVANCED RIDING

In future issues of Go Between we would like to have a short piece on Skills and aspects of Advanced riding. It can relate to seasonal changes in weather and conditions, techniques use by members for applying aspects of the system e.g. rear obs. links. We would very much like members to submit these to either of the editors, contact detail on back page. They may be a few lines or paragraphs and we may run more than one each issue depending on the number submitted. We hope this will be useful to both Associates as well as members. Who knows it might even promote discussions on aspects of safe riding. To start things off, in this issue we will look at night riding.

RIDING AT NIGHT



The summers nearly over and the days are fast drawing in, for those of us who are none seasonal motorcyclist, we now have the added challenge of riding during dark hours as well as those every day hazards, so what things do we need to consider?

Besides the obvious which is to ensure all our lights work and that we have spare bulbs on board, that our clothing is of a reflective design and our visors, mirrors and light lenses are clean and in good condition, we need to consider our eyesight! Is it really up to standard? Should you consider paying a visit to the optician just to be sure?

Riding to the system and enforcing effective riding plans have never been more important, the amount of information we have to work with at night is much reduced, and the distance and time we have to see and process and react to it is also markedly shorter; Generally speaking our limitations are dictated by the distance our lights reach, so high beam when ever possible! ***(You should always be able to stop safely on your side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear).***

Combined this with road signs that are often obscured by over grown hedges or traffic grime and poor contrast of objects against backgrounds due to a lack of colour. Road markings/signage become even more important and are generally more visible because of their reflective properties and the contrast against the black tarmac; but we also need to remember the importance of reflective studs or cats eyes. These are a good source of information of what's ahead. So dig out that *Highway Code* 'make sure it's up to date' and do some familiarisation, and remember the old adage, more paint/ Cats eyes the greater the hazard.

Beware the dazzling effect of on coming traffic, this bleaches a riders retina causing temporary blindness, not a good situation to be in, to avoid this look beyond the oncoming lights or to the nearside edge of the road, slow down or stop if necessary. Use other peoples lights as an indicator of severity of bends, on coming traffic, slowing of traffic ahead. But remember it is impossible to judge speeds accurately at night. If in doubt exercise restraint.

Fatigue sets in far quicker because of the extra strain and concentration that is required. fatigue causes reduced concentration, poor judgement, reduced reaction times, ineffective riding plans.

Heighten your awareness of pedestrians, cyclists and potential for nocturnal animals, most of these have little reflective attributes.

Having said all this I find night riding an exhilarating experience due to the increased concentration and demands on my skills.

Happy, safe riding..

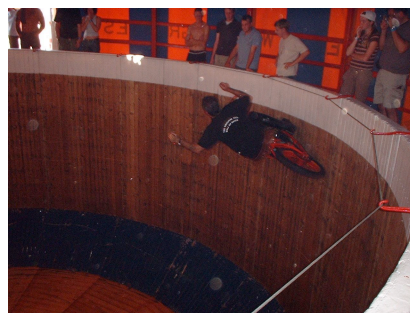
Chris Burras

Bloxham Steam Fair

The Bloxham Steam Fair on the weekend of the 24th June brought back fond memories for many, with the Palmer's family ' Wall of Death' I have it on good authority that this is one of only three similar wooden fairground attractions left on tour. The bikes include a 1970's paired down Honda 175 and a 1920's Indian.

The bikes and go-kart shoot round the timber cylindrical wall often only inches away from the top edge, impressive enough until the rider lets go of the handlebars! I also been told that the show operates with out insurance, other than a private fund to cover inevitable injury, (to the riders I suspect). The amazing thing is that such a show can operate at all in our current nanny state. Good on them I say, and let's hope they have many more years to come.

Anon Contributor



Advanced Motorcycle Training By Dave Gilogley

I have been press-ganged into doing a piece on my recent excursion to Wales with Rapid Training and although writing articles is not my strong point I think it is probably worth sharing this particular riding experience if just to show that us Senior Observers still undertake training. For those of you that have not heard of Rapid Training, they are a small but highly skilled motorcycle training company set up to promote safe motorcycling through advanced techniques both on race tracks and public roads. All their instructors are serving police officers which are coveted class one police certificate trained. In short the best of the best.. These are the guys that examine us IAM riders so needless to say the riding standard set for this weekend was going to be very high, and our aim for the weekend was quite simply to fine tune our own riding skills.

Initially the course was booked back in May as a joint venture for myself and fellow IAM rider Chris Burras, which just shows the demand for this particular course. We both feel very strongly that as advanced motorcyclists one should always be trying to improve your riding skills and that this two day excursion into Wales run by Rapid is designed to do just that. Alas, two days before we where due to leave Chris had to drop-out due to a back injury sustained while moving, would you believe, 'a Dinosaur!' One of the perils of working in a Natural History museum I suppose. So this left me riding alone with our instructor, 'No pressure then!'

I meet up with my instructor one Dave Bruguier at Cleevley services, Dave's choice of stead was a Honda CBR 1100 and of course, I was on my trusty Pan 1300.

After a short discussion about the weekend ahead, we navigated some of the better roads in Oxfordshire starting on the B4494 to Wantage, then the A417 over to Farringdon and on to Lechlade, then the A361 north through Burford, all these roads I encompass in my own observation rides and so know them well. I'll spare you all the road numbers on the journey but we rode through some lovely villages and used good mix of road types. Our first stop for brunch and mid-briefing was in Chipping Norton, then moving swiftly across country to Stow, Tewkesbury, Ledbury, Leominster and then to our next



waterhole at Crossgates for a nice spot of afternoon tea (very civilised). As I was the only one being assessed this weekend it was some what intensive and on a couple of occasion I had a rest while Dave took the lead on a demonstration ride, this is always useful. After tea we attacked the last leg of the journey for that day, a run of about 70miles to the Hotel. namely Brynafon Country Hotel,

<http://www.brynafon.co.uk/>

I thought rather appropriately, it was once a workhouse. The accommodation was very comfortable and the food was excellent, the staff also very friendly, just what was needed

following a days intensive riding. My only criticism was the noisy wedding reception being held in a marquee set up on the front lawn. The music (if you could call it that, Simon Cowell would have had a field day!) went on until 0115hrs, consequently we were some what jaded for the following days excursion. On the return journey we passed through a few of the same villages, but using different roads, I have to say, I was most impressed with the choice of roads and scenery was exceptional as was the weather. Due to the late night both Dave and myself were starting to flag, so we called it a day at 1530hrs, after-all we had covered nearly 500miles of excellent and quite demanding roads. We only came across 2 gatsos,



not surprisingly, when we returned into Oxfordshire. All in all the standard of instruction was very good, Dave's comments where helpful and gave me food for thought. I was please that Dave felt that my riding was of a high standard with little room for improvement. It just goes to show that if you put the effort in it really does pay off.

In total the course and accommodation was £360.

If you would like more info on this course for next year either give me a call or go to the Rapid's own website at: <http://www.rapidtraining.co.uk/e/home.htm>. They also do short breaks for larger groups 5 riders at £199 each perhaps this is something we might do as a club next year if anyone is interested?



Dave

Diary 2006/7 to date

November 1st	AGM Followed by Ralph Grant from Kidlington Highways, on “Preparing Oxfordshire Roads for Winter”
December 6th	Quiz and mince pies
2007	
January	No Meeting
February 7th	Paul Montgomery from St Johns Ambulance- “Blues & Twos”- Advice on what to do to assist Emergency Vehicles
March 7th	Steve Bush from the Highways Agency, “ The Role of the Highways Agency Traffic Officer”
April 4th	TBC

All welcome- tea, coffee & biscuits provided. Meetings start 8pm at Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Committee Members

Mark McArthur-Christie (chair)	Alex Glowacki
Janet van den Berge	Chris Burras
Roger Pickering	Jane Olds
Clive Stayt	Helen Deeley
Tony Chalkly	John Lang
Duncan Jones	

All Contributions will be gratefully received, however Editors decisions on content are final, & we reserve the right to edit articles.

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