



South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Newsletter

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From the editor...

Emerging from the Costa Coffee carpark, a shoal of Observers and new Associates (suitably socially distanced and grouped), took a steady 30mph glide up Macon Way and throttled into the Cheshire plains. Lockdown in the rear view mirror, advanced motorcycling is back.

In this edition, Dave Cox outlines the many **ways to stay engaged with SCAM** and develop your competencies. While the IAM advanced course can be an end in itself, the group offers much more in addition to this which helps members to continue to broaden and improve as motorbike riders. Obviously, there is also a social aspect to the group - there are plenty of members who join for the IAM course and stick around and contribute, practically and socially for years...

We will keep you updated as events gradually open up via the SCAM website, the FaceBook page and this newsletter.

Thanks to the members who have contributed to this month's circular. Please bear in mind, ***this newsletter is made up of contributions from members. You're invited to submit any item of interest related to motorbikes, to this email address: southcheshirebikenews@gmail.com***

Safe riding.

Ed

In this month's edition:

- From the Chairman - routes to continuous development, using IAM and SCAM
- From the President - back out there into the Welsh mountains and, a classic motorbike tour, part 1
- Jed Lloyd considers some of the finer points of control - use of hands and feet in your riding
- Neil Jewell takes a deep dive in to the Dash Cam/ Action Cam

From the Chairman

Now that lockdown restrictions have eased, training has resumed with the Spring Course now underway and the postponed Autumn Course is due to resume on 9th May.

We all, like our new Associates, had our reasons for taking the Advanced Riding Test. For some it was the challenge and for others there were other objectives i.e. to take the test to allow them to or ride blood bikes.

Having taken the test the question is - What next?

As we all know, without continued practice, skill levels drop and our riding standards deteriorate. Current options for a member to develop their riding are limited to:

Members riding assessment

At a cost of £39. This involves a 60 minute check ride from an IAM Examiner to determine if they are still at test standard and with the possibility of achieving a First. No mentoring provided but extra sessions can be purchased at an additional cost.

IAM Observer

No cost. A good way of maintaining knowledge and skills but limited in its ability to enhance riding skills.

IAM Masters

£299 for which the candidate receives 6 x 90 minute sessions with a Mentor, extensive brief/debrief and test preparation. Further sessions can be purchased in batches of 3 at £75 with a retest upon failure. Whilst providing the ultimate challenge many do not see any benefit and are put off by the cost.

Alternative routes to improvement

As an alternative for our members SCAM, supported by the Observer Team is to introduce an in house training programme to provide a pathway to continuous personal development to provide the opportunity to maintain standards they achieved on passing their IAM Advanced test or to provide a further challenge to improve their riding.

Open to SCAM members only, the program is called South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Continuous Personal Development Program and consists of two riding levels and a Masters Taster as follows:

‘...an in house training programme to provide a pathway to continuous personal development...’

SCAM Level 2 Award

Target candidate : The current or lapsed member who may have taken their test some time ago, feels they may have developed some bad habits and wants something more than just a check ride to bring them back to test standard.

Cost £30

Syllabus: 2 x 1 hr sessions with a SCAM Local Observer followed by an assessment ride with a National Observer.

NO provides a thorough de-brief and ride report, an honest assessment of whether test standard has been achieved and advice on a future development plan to achieve Level 1 standard, if necessary.

SCAM Level 1 Award

Target candidate : A current or lapsed member who wishes to ensure their skills are maintained or wishes to improve their riding to a standard above test standard to F1rst level.

Cost £40

Syllabus: 3 x 1 hr sessions with a National Observer followed by an assessment ride with a Masters Mentor.

Masters Mentor provides a thorough de-brief and ride report, an honest assessment on whether F1rst standard has been achieved and advice on future development plan to achieve Masters standard, if necessary.

SCAM Masters Taster

Target candidate : Somebody who is considering taking the Masters but doesn't wish to pay £89 for the IAM Masters Taster.

Cost : £40

Course: 2 x 1.5 sessions with a Masters Mentor who will give detailed feedback, a development plan and an honest appraisal of how you performed , your current skill level and whether they feel the candidate has a realistic opportunity of achieving Masters Standard.

Dependant on the uptake of the Masters Taster, since we only currently have 3 Masters Mentors, places may be restricted to those who have already achieved a good standard (Level 1 Award, F1rst, NO) or possibly following an assessment ride.

By introducing this Continuous Personal Development Programme South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists provides a pathway for continuous personal development for it's members from IAM Advanced Test to IAM Masters, the highest civilian standard available.

If you might be interested in taking any of the levels contact me to discuss your requirements and and I can allocate your Observer/Mentor, depending on your chosen option.

Dave Cox
Chairman

President's Page

Now that Lockdown has eased, and we can get out on our machines, life has opened up some, I have had a few trips out and when Wales opened up I took a trip with John and Ian to Barmouth, somehow we managed to go via a wooden toll bridge, 50p for the privilege, having arrived at Barmouth we partook of some fish and chips, all very touristy, having had our fish and chips it was back home via Betsy Coed.

This years foreign trip is definitely off, and next year might be touch and go, so it will be staycation for the next two years, having been to Scotland before it looks like Scotland again this year, having stayed in Moffatt before it is a good place to base yourself as you can ride to the West Coast and East coasts, taking in good roads and scenery, there is the Scottish 500 to complete also, having done it already I found the West coast more scenic than the East Coast, but that is my opinion, maybe you have a favourite route or trip you can tell us about.

Still on the subject of holidays, I have been in reflective mood looking back over many holidays abroad, and still the best holiday was in Norway, unfortunately the ferry does not run from Newcastle any more so it is quite a logistical undertaking to get there now, you can have your machine shipped over and fly out and meet it, but that involves additional costs, if you ever get the opportunity to ride Norway, do so, it is a spectacular landscape, not cheap, but when you look back on life it will instil great memories.

I have dusted off the original article and submitted it the editor, if he has room for the article you can relive the joy of Norway 2007. (It's in. Page 11. Ed)

That is all from me for this month, so until next month, safe riding.

Chris Steel
President

Controlling the - hands and feet: use and coordination

So... what do you do with your hands and feet when riding? Does it even matter?

All (most) of us sit on our bikes with our feet on the footrests and our hands on the handlebars, for obvious reasons. What you do with your hands and feet once they are there, is up to you. (Interestingly, the relevant law applies just to pillion passengers, who must sit astride the machine on a 'proper' seat, and should face forward with both feet on the footrests.)

Well this is my view, and I'm talking here about machines with ordinary footrests and gear levers on the left, and not with cruiser highway boards or DCT. If your bike has adjustable brake and clutch levers or footrests, then I trust you already have them adjusted to suit.

Feet first...

I have heard rambling debates about whether to ride with the balls or the arches of your feet on the foot-pegs, and of course a valid argument is - do whatever you find the most comfortable, particularly on a long journey, and when on the motorway, where there is less need to brake or change gear.

Another argument is - you get more feedback from the bike and you can exercise more control when turning, by applying pressure on the foot-pegs with the balls of your feet. A downside if you have mobility issues or are plain lazy however, is that you will have to move your feet a little bit further backwards and forwards when changing gear or using the rear brake. If you have very big feet (or just big boots), or you rest the arch or heel of your foot on the pegs, then make sure you don't catch the toe of your right boot on the brake lever, unintentionally illuminating the brake light or possibly dragging the rear brake. Yes, it happens.

Bear in mind that the gear lever needs to return to its original position before the next change, up or down, so in this case consider the resting position of your left foot as well. Machines with gear shift assist systems (quickshifters & blippers) are mostly the same.

Hands on...

So what to do with your hands? Some of us ride with our fingers over the clutch lever - possibly a throwback to the good old two-stroke days, when we anticipated an imminent engine seizure. This doesn't really apply in 2021 (unless you still ride a smoker), but there may be other reasons to cover the clutch lever for an extended period of time, such as when riding in busy stop-start traffic, or in extremely slippery conditions. If it's simply more comfortable to keep your finger(s) extended, then that's fine also, so long as you aren't slipping the clutch at all.

The use of your right hand is a more complicated matter. Surely it makes sense to keep your hand in the best position to apply the front brake as rapidly as possible in response to a situation which may urgently require it – so continually covering the front brake lever is always the best thing to do? Ah well, that depends. The thing is - some of our actions as motorcyclists are necessarily counter-instinctive in order to be the safest and most efficient.

To explain - as advanced riders we should dynamically consider and plan our use of the controls when faced with hazards, rather than rely on instinctive action (although instinct which has been correctly trained by experience is the aim). What is right for one rider may not be so for another. As an example, it is probably a bad idea for a novice to ride routinely covering the front brake, because if they perceive a reason to slow down, there will likely be a tendency to grab the front brake as their first action, particularly if they have only ever ridden a pushbike. This will be a reaction - not the judged response of a more experienced rider. So if their fingers are out of the way of the brake lever

to start with, then there is a momentary but useful opportunity for a thought process to intervene before a vice-like grip on the lever and possible disastrous consequences, especially in the wet.

Experience will however, train our right hand to do what we want it to - applying the appropriate amount of brake pressure at the correct time, hopefully. Racers will return all their fingers from the front brake lever to the throttle after braking because their braking points on track are known, and they are generally either fully on the brakes or the throttle.

As experienced road riders, we know that our requirement for the brakes is far more unpredictable, so it can be argued that gaining any (fractional) time advantage by having fingers already on the lever must be a good thing.

Whilst some riders may never use the front brake and throttle together, it is useful to do so (accurately) when blipping the throttle for a smooth downchange during the speed phase of the system. Experienced riders should be able to use this technique effectively, whereas novices can also pull the front brake and open the throttle at the same time, but that's something different entirely. Again, if it's more comfortable to ride with fingers routinely resting on the brake lever - of course that's fine, bearing in mind the previous.

One more situation when it's necessary to consider the best use of your right hand is when moving away on an uphill incline. Without hill-hold control or similar, hill-starts are best dealt with by setting off from the rear brake only, which avoids a possibly tricky throttle & front brake release combo.

I hope I have raised some handy(!?) and thought provoking points - feel free to discuss further with your observers, of course.

Jed Lloyd
Examiner

Neil Jewell reviews so you can choose - Dach Cam or Action Cam

Cameras are everywhere you look these days. Speed Cameras, CCTV cameras, Dash Cams and also Action Cams. If you are looking to capture your epic events then is an action camera the tool for the job? Superbike mag recently reviewed a motorcycle dash cam <https://superbike-news.co.uk/viofo-mt1-dash-cam-review/> so, which is right for you, an Action Cam or a Dash Cam.

The Ghost X from Drift is a compact action camera that has been designed to be mounted virtually anywhere. It records HD 1080P video at 30fps

It's Drift's budget camera coming it at about £130, it offers a 5 hour battery life which can be extended to 8 hours with the bigger battery unit that is available for another £25. The included 32GB microSD card might need to be replaced for a bigger one as a 10 minute video (1080P) takes up 3.8GB of storage so by my very rough calculations you are probably good for 1.5 hours before you'd fill the card. Not a problem if you change one of the myriad of settings to give you loop recording. The loop interval can be set at different stages between 10seconds and 10minutes meaning it will record at 10 minute lengths until the card is full then return to the start and begin overwriting.

In the box is everything you need to get started. I initially ignored the instruction manual as it looked too thick and technical. I set about figuring the camera out myself. There are only 3 buttons on the top how hard could it be. One button is clearly an on/off as identified by the international on/off symbol. I pressed it, nothing. I pressed and held it for a couple of seconds and the little camera beeped into life.

The back of the Ghost X has the tiniest of screens, smaller than a postage stamp, it had illuminated a pleasant green colour. This is where those with bad eyesight may begin to struggle. The little screen is giving out a lot of information in such a small space but, if you can see it, it does makes sense.

Information such a recording mode; view angle; recording quality; the number of files saved; battery life and remaining card capacity are all shown on a screen size of 132mm²

Staring at the screen I began pressing buttons, The top button, the one closest to you as you look at the screen, cycles the display through the various modes that the Ghost X has to offer, Video, Still camera, time lapse, burst image, settings menu, each one of these comes with its own colour. This will prove useful as you can instantly tell the mode the camera is in simply by looking at the glow and not squinting at the screen. Pressing the button again cycles back to the start. I pressed the middle button and discovered this cycles through the options on the screen being displayed, so in video mode you can alter the resolution to 1080, 960, 720 or WVGA which is probably the same resolution as a typical CCTV camera the advantage being you can up the frame rate to 60fps if you need to. I'm not a keen photographer so would probably need to look up what a lot of the settings do to fully understand the functionality of the Ghost X but then I would probably ignore them all and set it to record video at its best 1080P x 30fps resolution and never touch any settings again.

Cycling through the screens and the modes, I only had to revert to the instruction book once and that was to understand what the K140 meant. I could change it to K90 and K115 but did not

know what I was doing. Reluctantly, I flicked through the quick guide to realise that the K wasn't a K but a symbol to illustrate the field of vision for the recordings. There are three options 90°, 115° and 140°.

Once familiar with the button layout and how the options on the screens cycle through the menu options and back to the beginning, setting up the time and date and other options on the Ghost X was relatively simple. Just click slowly to get to where to need to be otherwise run the risk of cycling through all 28 menu options before getting back to where you need to be. (press and hold the button to go backwards through the menus)

One of the 28 menus was Video tagging, this seems like a very clever idea if you don't want to be recording all day and then have to wade back through hours of footage to find that one time where your mate did something cool. Video tagging is like having the Ghost X set in sleep mode, it's always watching but not recording until you press the record button. Then, depending on the settings it can record the previous 2 minutes and the following 2 minutes. With Video Tagging, you'll never miss that perfect action shot ever again.

I eventually found my way back to the screen that told me the camera was in video mode but how to actually record video? I had one button left to press so pressed it, The Ghost X emitted a little beep, change to a big beep or no beep in settings, and the green glow turned red. It was recording.

Starting and stopping is as simple as touching a button and to check it was all fine I hooked the camera up to the computer using the included USB lead and was impressed at how quickly the device was recognised. Much easier than removing the SD card from a DashCam type recorder. The Camera also charges up while attached to the computer and the little screen glows green when fully charged.

Feeling good that I had worked out all the buttons and squinting at the tiny screen, I was feeling ready. I just one had more flick through the user guide to make sure I had found everything. It was at this point I made the life decision to read the manual first on every new thing I get.

The guide was easy to use and only so thick because it contained all of the languages. It mentioned an APP, of course there is an APP, I downloaded that and looked up how to connect the APP to the camera. It was here that the instruction booklet came into its own. After connecting the APP to the phone via on-board Wi-Fi (easy) you get full access to all the system settings on your phone screen, not one that is 11mm wide x 12mm high. You can see a live image of the camera on the phone to help you set in the perfect location. You live and learn. The APP does a lot more than just system settings you can control the camera, live stream and join the drift community to share videos and experiences.

After fiddling with the menus, it was time to fix the camera to my crash helmet. I already have a motorcycle dash cam on the bike, I didn't want to go full Tellytubby and mount it on the top on my lid so opted for the side. The box contains 2 x 3M sticky pads, one is flat and the other curved. There was a lot of searching for the best location on the helmet to stick it. 3M pads are wondrously sticky so I wanted to find the right place first time. One of the great things about the Ghost X is that the lens can rotate so the camera can be mounted at any angle and the level corrected by simply rotating the lens so that the marker arrow is pointing straight up. Doing this exercise while looking at the image on your phone means you can get it right first time.

As expected from an action camera there are many different mounting option available, the

handlebar mount, designed for mountain bikes, might work on the handle bars or crash bars of some motorbikes. It is made from metal and looks & feels well build and robust. There is a pivot mount that will allow for the camera being mounted any which way; a roll bar mount for clamping onto scaffold sized tube. In fact, wherever you want to mount your camera there is probably a mount designed to do that job on the Driftnnovation.com website.

I wanted a sleek fitting camera so went for the simplest solution of the curved sticky pad and then having the camera clip fitting directly into that. The camera clip is indexed onto the camera with a serrated grooved ring that controls the vertical angle the camera. The horizontal view depends on where you put the sticky pad. Changing the orientation of the camera and rotating the lens can be done without tools making camera position changes quick and easy, something that can't be done with a dash-cam.

The camera clip locks into the sticky pad via a couple of spring loaded plastic prongs. Pinching these together enables the camera to slide out. When not on the helmet the sticky pad socket is hardly noticeable. One thing I would always want to be sure of, though, is that the camera clip is securely located in its socket. Make sure you listen for 2 audible clicks as it locks into place and then try to pull it back out. The last thing you want to see is footage of your camera bouncing down the road, if you ever find it again that is. There are no tethers available on the website to offer peace of mind.

The buttons and the release prongs are easy to use with a gloved hand. Once you have mastered where the buttons are, you can turn the Ghost X on and off and start and stop the recording by touch. Or do as I did and start the camera recording and then lock it into place on the helmet. Remember that colour coded screen? There's a small indicator light above the lens so you can check in a mirror what mode you're in and if you are recording or not just by looking at it.

Out and about on the bike, I didn't notice the camera at all. It's slim enough that it doesn't rub on your shoulder when cornering and light enough that I couldn't feel it. I made a few runs, the first one used the onboard mic and suffered horrific wind noise, maybe the sensitivity was too high. The second run I used the external mic. On returning back to base and reviewing the footage I was very disappointed that the mic had not picked up commentary. I did some checks with another mic and diagnosed a bad connector on the original mic. I've ordered a new one for £10 which fixed the issue.

With the mic fixed and installed inside my helmet alongside my intercom mic, I connected the app to the camera via the on-board Wi-Fi and set off on another test run using the app to alter the settings along the way.

The video is available here. <https://youtu.be/WDiYkKhAGHk>

The Ghost X is not waterproof at least, I don't think it is. It's probably not fully waterproof. you see, I'm not really sure if it is or not but there is a waterproof case that is available as an accessory so, if you do want to go out in the rain then that is probably what you need. I tried in on the camera and was not happy with it. It's good for 40m underwater though! The Ghost XL is waterproof, according to the website, and as it's only another £20 I'd get that one. However there is one annoyance that comes from browsing the Driftnnovation.com website, and that's

the constant notifications that people are buying stuff. I really don't need to know that Karen from Margate has just bought a Drift Class 10 MicroSD card 1 hour ago. I want to know the IPX rating of the Ghost X is please so I can decide to go out in the rain or not. Thank you very much.

Overall, a great action camera, reasonably simple to set up and get going but will need some fine tuning of the settings to get the most out of it. I was happy that it came with a fully charged battery so I could start to mess with it immediately. I later searched the website and found out that the Ghost X is IPX4 rated. This means that you can use it in the rain, but not at high speed in heavy rain.

It has other modes apart from the video; you can take 12MP still images; bursts of up to 15, 4MP images and set up time lapse. These are good to have but I wonder how many times they will be used.

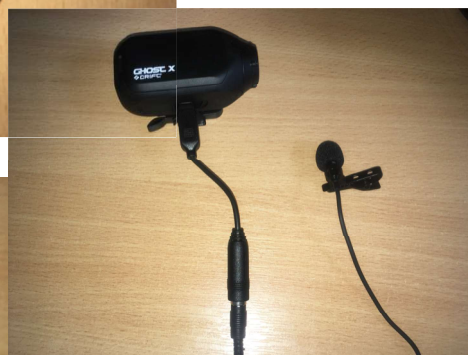
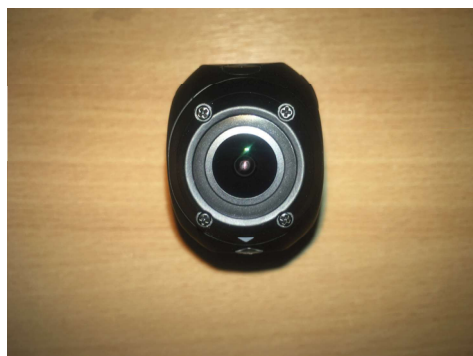
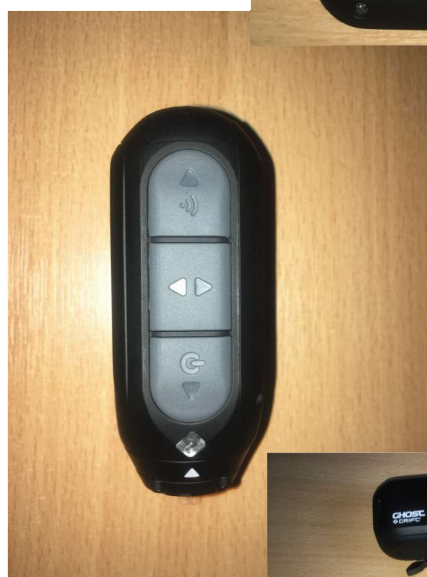
It's certainly less hassle as a camera than a dash cam system, it's compact and easy to access the files with the USB link, the quality of the video is great and it offers more to the video creator because when mounted on the helmet it follows the rider's eye. With the bigger battery and a larger SD card up to 128GB the recording times are comparable to that of a hardwired dash cam system, but ask yourself how often do you ride for longer than 8 hours? Even if you do, grab a spare battery that can be charged up via USB and swap them in seconds. The downside is that it only records in one direction and if something happens behind you you'll miss it.

So which is right for me dash cam or action cam? Well the perfect solution is to have both. The helmet mounted action cam will be used extensively to record live commentary over the top of video for training and feedback purposes and the front and rear dash cam system will be there to record any incidents and as also as back up when, not if, I forget to press the record button.

Definitely a great little camera that looks sleek has a lot of functionality and will absolutely capture your best moments. **You should get one.**

Neil Jewell

Here's what's in the box and, attached to a Shoei helmet, once assembled...



Six of the best

Part one: A quartet of Beemers and a Honda duo

had finally dawned, and the gang had arranged to meet at seven at Poplar truck stop on the M6, by 7.15 we were all gathered, the group consisted of Ian “the power” Cunningham, John “pizza man” Brady, Chris “the chair” Steel, Dave “bob the builder” Nixon, Don “I’ve retired” Wood and John “truck rental” Bailey, some of these names would change as things unfolded, but first we had to get to Newcastle upon Tyne to catch the ferry, Don had a route avoiding most of the motorways, so he led off



to the first stop which would be breakfast at Hartside café on the A686 between Penrith and Hexham, it was a quick sun up the M6 to junction 40 then across the A686, nothing exciting happened, Dave Nixon started to acclimatise to riding on the right hand side of the road occasionally, we arrived at the café just as they were opening, the view from the café is stunning, if you want somewhere to ride to, then go there, the roads are challenging, ask Dave.

John Brady, not one to miss the chance of food, ordered the full English breakfast, as did most of us, having made good progress we had time to chill out and relax as we

were only an hour away from the ferry, we decided to get fuel on the approach to the ferry, that way we could get some distance under our belts when we disembarked, having satisfied our stomachs we continued to Newcastle upon Tyne, we stopped on the outskirts and fuelled up, John Bailey had the ferry terminal locked into his sat nav so he led, as we left the filling station my sat nav said left, as did Ian Cunningham's, but we went right, interesting I thought, we travelled through some very dodgy housing estates and then emerged at the roundabout some 500 yards from the one we had just left, we also managed to become separated and as I and Ian were travelling down a dual carriageway the rest were running parallel on the road to our left, fortunately the road joined the dual carriageway, John Bailey continued to lead, we approached a large sign across the road informing us the route to the ferry was to leave via the junction on our left, you guessed it, we went straight on, at the next roundabout we did a 360 degree movement and got off at the next junction, and followed the signs to the ferry terminal, we were in good time and took up our place in the queue and waited to embark.



As we waited John Brady engaged in conversation with a man who had a caravan, it turned out that he was from Cheshire and many years ago he and his wife used to go touring on a Pan European, we also talked to a Norwegian on a K1200R, he explained that second hand cars were very cheap in the UK, compared to Norway, the sun was shining, the mood was joyous, the company good, what more could we want.

Eventually they started to load the ferry , we embarked and strapped the bikes down, we went and found our cabins, John Bailey and Dave Nixon had the twin cabin, the rest of us were in the four berth, I prayed John Brady had found a cure for his snoring, at 13.00 hours the Queen of Norway weighed anchor and we were off, for the next twenty two and half hours this was home, we fought over who had the top bunks, I pulled rank and had a top bunk, John Brady the other, we unpacked, got changed and set of to explore our surroundings.

TO BE CONTINUED...

