



South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Newsletter

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In this month's edition:

- Chair's and President's messages
- Six of the best - part 5 - Chris Steel's Scandinavian adventure continues
- Updates to the Highway Code

Chairman's Message

Is it really a month since the last newsletter? Well having received an email from Ed asking for this month's contribution, it seems it is! Is it me or is this year going more quickly than normal? The summer is certainly disappearing fast judging by the weather through August.

The summer course is progressing well. Thank you to all the Observers who have helped out - the associates are all well on track for good results.

This month, with the resumption of cycling competitions I've been able to get out on my BMW R1200RTP (affectionately christened 'Beluga' by Neil Jewell) to marshal the events with Bike Marshals North West. The SSCBB riders amongst you might recognise an ex-blood bike 'Bundy' enjoying its retirement with one of the group.

Earlier this month I also joined Andrew Bloomer, one of our Examiners to shadow and observe a test. I've been an Examiner for cars and bikes for RoSPA for over three

years, so I thought it would be interesting to make comparison between the two organisation's approach to testing, in particular the respective grading.



I'm sure most will know that RoSPA have Gold, Silver and Bronze pass grades whilst IAM have simply Pass and F1RST. In my opinion, an advantage of the RoSPA system is that every candidate aspires

to achieve a Gold pass and if they receive 'only' Silver they'll often continue training hoping to reach Gold standard. Despite Silver being a very creditable pass. I wonder how many IAM Roadsmart members go back to try for a F1RST? I know of only one. This is something we aim to remedy with our Continuous Development Program.

The disadvantage, is that having achieved Gold there is no further advancement required and even RoSPA Diploma holders are only required to achieve Gold standard for their ride.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of RoSPA members are positive towards IAM Roadsmart and indeed many are members of both organisations, there is always a minority on social media who regard RoSPA Gold as the pinnacle of civilian advanced riding and compare it to IAM Masters.

For me, that a gross over estimate of the Gold standard which I equate to being equivalent to IAM F1RST and well below Masters.

Is there much of a difference between RoSPA and IAM standards? In my opinion, no.

So, in pouring rain a couple of Saturdays ago, I joined Andrew on his assessment of a candidate (from another group I hasten to add). After the usual briefing and disclaimer we set off from Let's Eat Cafe on wet derestricted single track roads and it was immediately obvious the candidate was very good. He initially made excellent progress. His positioning was good, as was his assessment of open corners and bends. On a couple of tight bends with restricted views I wondered though, would he be able to stop within the distance he could see to be clear. I felt a little more restraint would be prudent given the wet conditions. The test route included a mix of rural roads, more open derestricted roads, built up areas and a short Motorway section and took about an hour.

As the test progressed, concentration became an issue, areas requiring development began to show. Instead of maintaining the speed limit where safe to do so, the speeds dropped to consistently 5 mph below the limit, unnecessary shoulder checks were performed and unnecessarily early and potentially confusing signals given.

These were however, very common, small errors in an otherwise excellent ride, due simply to losing concentration. **The things to remember is that you must concentrate totally for the entire test and from the moment the Examiner sees you, he is assessing you.**

There then followed a couple of Highway Code questions, a debrief of the ride, questioning the candidate's riding plans to demonstrate knowledge of IPSGA and the test was completed.

My assessment was that the ride was well up to Advanced standard, had it been a RoSPA test I would have awarded Silver, so I was interested to hear Andrews opinion.

I'm glad to say Andrew was of the same opinion, a very good and creditable pass but a couple of minor errors meant it just dropped short of a F1RST but nevertheless a very good performance.

So, is there much difference between IAM and RoSPA standards? In my opinion, no. Since both are based on Roadcraft it shouldn't be surprising that although terminology might differ, the standards are very similar with each organisation having areas the other could learn from. Ultimately, both organisations are improving the standard of riding and contributing to road safety which is the number one priority.

Dave

President's Message

Here we are September already, where has the time gone? Not a lot to tell you about this month. I have been sticking to my healthy eating, salad with everything. Hopefully the cholesterol level is coming down, but I have not had any blood tests, and now there is a shortage of the tubes they use for the tests I doubt I am a priority. I will just keep working on the fact it is improving.

I have been doing some observing and that has been enjoyable. I also took my National Observer re-qualification, which was more traumatic than I remembered. It was good to have an examiner take an unbiased look at my ride, and highlight areas where I have slipped.

Ian Cunning, Phill Hamilton and myself are attending a bike event at Chester on Sunday 5th September promoting the group and IAM Roadsmart. Short notice, but if anyone wishes to attend and help out in anyway, it will be nice to see you,

Not having had any holidays this year, I am off with Ian and John to Scotland in October for four days, I will put an article together for the newsletter when I return.

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

Chris Steel
President

Changes to the Highway Code

There are changes to The Highway Code, as reported in the 'i', are due to be receive parliamentary approval this autumn, which will attempt to shift cycling and walking into a position of priority in the hierarchy of road users - currently pedestrians of all ages and drivers of heavy vehicles are treated as if they are equally responsible for their own or other people's safety.

These proposed changes will attempt to redress the imbalance, placing more responsibility with those in charge of motor vehicles, with the responsibility shifting proportionately according to the size of the vehicle. Road users who have potential to cause most harm should take the larger burden of responsibility to mitigate risks that they pose.

There will be more on this subject through press and official government channels as the proposals pass through parliament in the coming weeks and months. For now, there are various reports on the subject through media outlets - here a link to the RAC's take on the matter

SIX OF THE BEST PART FIVE By Chris Steel

Wednesday 6th another beautiful day, sun up, not that it ever went down and clear blue sky. We performed the same routine that was becoming second nature to us. We had breakfast then packed and loaded the bikes, today's journey was a mere 290 miles, nothing to John Brady or Dave Coomber - to us mere mortals a full day. The fact that we had no set plan apart from getting to Steinkjer meant no pressure.

We left the hotel and set off for the next overnight stop. The first section was about half an hour, then the road came to a halt at the edge of a fjord. We had to wait for a ferry - this was going to be the format of the day - the beauty of this was that whilst on the ferry we could have a drink, and food in Brady's case, toilet break then not have to worry about finding restaurants, only a fuel station.

As with every day so far the scenery was breathtaking and the ferry trips were anything from a thirty minute hop to an hour. John demonstrated his talent to catch twenty winks whilst waiting for the ferries.

Although we had 290 miles to cover they just flew by, we arrived in Steinkjer by about six and our hotel was in the city and we had to park the bikes outside the hotel. We were assured by the receptionist that as they were by the entrance the night porter would keep an eye on them so there was no need to worry about security. The hotel was well up to the job.



We decided to go out for a meal as opposed to eating in, having unloaded and got ready we rendezvoused

outside the hotel. When I got down Dave Nixon and Don Wood were inspecting Dave's Pan European - apparently he was experiencing some brake problems, as Don's VFR had the same linked braking system they were comparing notes. Dave explained that the rear brake efficiency was poor to none existent and had been since the UK but said nothing in case we said he could not come. It was obvious that when Dave had had his machine serviced prior to coming away something was not right following the brake fluid change. Front brakes were working perfectly, the rear not a lot.

Dave was busy looking at his Honda dealer list for Norway, Don was fiddling with the brakes, we came to a unanimous decision that as the front was working ok and had been for six days, they should be ok for the next three. It was better to live with what we knew than try and bleed the system and make it worse. Dave would just have to be in front of everyone.

We took a walk round the city and found a nice Chinese restaurant. Having had a good meal we did the usual, had a walk, a drink then an earlyish night.

Thursday and yet again weather beautiful, today's mileage to Alesund was 264 and three ferries as with the day before we used the ferries as our refreshment and toilet stops and just got on with the road sections at a nice leisurely pace and as before it seemed no sooner had we started when we

were arriving at our hotel for the night. The hotel was located right on the harbour waterfront absolutely stunning. This is where the Cruise ships come to when they are cruising the fjords, having gone through what now was routine autopilot we met in the bar and had a drink.

John Bailey and Brady were in conversation with a member of staff, who had told them of a fish restaurant who specialised in the local fish dish, I can't remember what it was called but it was like a fish hotpot. We went to the restaurant and John Bailey by means of a thank you for allowing him to join our trip said he would pay. I am not a fish man and decided to have muscles followed by a pizza. I was met with an uproar of protest to the effect of how can you come to a fish restaurant and have a pizza?



I decided to order the fish hot pot with the rest. Don started with raw whale meat, I declined a taste, preferring my food cooked, but Don informed us it was delicious. I can see him now ordering that in his local Stoke restaurant. The mussels were good. Then my fish hotpot arrived,

we have all been in the situation, we order something, and when it arrives we instantly know we have done the wrong thing. Every one else thought it was great and wolfed it down. I was not so impressed, when I was younger I once got a fish bone stuck in my throat and nearly choked so I have an innate fear of it happening again. When I saw huge bones in the fish I was somewhat nervous.

The sauce was spicy and I managed some of the potatoes but the fish was eaten with caution - then abandoned.

Having finished the meal we went for a walk round Alesund. It is an absolutely stunning place, there are lots of boats in the harbour, the buildings are beautiful, it had a great atmosphere. I can recommend Alesund to you all, if you go to Norway visit the place and see for yourselves.

Friday morning, and another glorious day, today we are going to Forde a mere 136 miles away, and only one ferry to contend with. The route took us over a spectacular mountain where the snow was deep and the water the clearest blue I have ever seen. As the mileage was so short we

spent a lot of time stopping and admiring the view. We had lunch in a beautiful village located at the foot of the mountain. The sandwich was a work of art.



Having satisfied our hunger we carried on. Whilst at one of our sightseeing locations we met an elderly couple, they must have been in their late seventies. He was riding a Honda 250. It was quite old, how old I am not sure but he and his wife had obviously been doing it for many years. They had just what they needed, unlike us who packed everything but the kitchen sink. I hope when I am his age I am still touring round on a motorcycle.

We carried on our travels and came into a village called Fosnes. It had a visitors centre and being mid afternoon we stopped for refreshments. Having dismounted Dave noticed a woman struggling to

start her lawnmower, Dave being very chivalrous offered assistance, got it going and carried on mowing the grass for her. Such a nice boy.

Having mown the lawn and had a drink and rest we continued into Forde. The hotel was fit for purpose.

Having got changed we met in the bar where the barman was an Englishman who had originally come to Norway as a sheep shearer, met a local girl whom he married and was now working in the hotel. He recommended a place to eat and we went and had another pay once eat as much as you can meal. John



Brady always gets his money's worth. We took a stroll round Forde but it seemed pretty dull compared to Alesund.

This was our last night in Norway for tomorrow we were going to Bergen and catching the ferry home, not quite the end but nearly.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Items requested...

SCAM is a members' organisation and the newsletter tries to reflect this, through contributions from its members. If you have anything to offer from the following list, we'd love to hear from you.

Do you have?

- ***A recommended route***
- ***Account of a recent ride-out or tour***
- ***Review of a motorbike or some motorbike gear***
- ***Items for sale***
- ***Items that you might be looking for***
- ***Anything else that could be of interest to the members***

Email them to: southcheshirebikenews@gmail.com