

H.A.B.

WEEKLY NEWS

Harrogate Advanced Bikes:

Meet on second Monday of every month.
September to March:
Bilton Cricket Club. Bilton Lane. HG1 3DQ.
April to August;
ASDA lorry park. Harrogate Superstore,
Bower Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DE
Website.
www.harrogateadvancedbikes.co.uk
E-mail
secretary@harrogateadvancedbikes.co.uk



17thrd
November
2012

H.A.B. Happenings.

November: Monday 12th

Tony Carter of McMillan Williams Solicitors visited us and gave a very informative address about accident investigation from the bikers corner. We learnt a great deal about some of the pitfalls ahead of us in the insurance claims business. The best is to always ride so that we reduce the risk of becoming one of Tony's customers.

November: Saturday 24th November 2012.

Observer Meeting; 09.30 to 12.00 at Bilton Cricket Club,

N.B. No meeting in December!

2013

January: Monday 14th.

First meeting of 2013. Bilton Cricket Club.

January: Saturday 19th

H.A.B Annual Not-the-Xmas Dinner. New venue, new format.
We will be going Italian. Please make a note in your new diaries:-

Saturday January 19th 2013 Luigi's in Harrogate.

Please contact Steve "Busby" Briggs.

stephen.briggs@openreach.co.uk or 07932813155

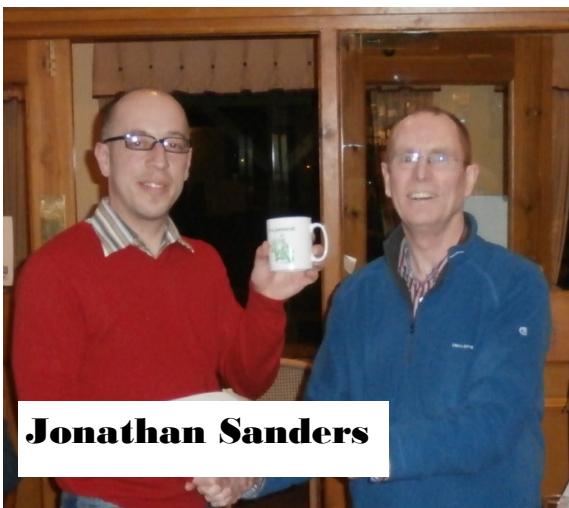
Steve will be collecting final names and money at the January meeting (Mon 14th) .

**Luigis Ristorante & Pizzeria
1a Valley Drive
Harrogate
HG2 0JJ**

Congratulations!!

Bob had a busy evening when test pass certificates were presented.

Test Passes.



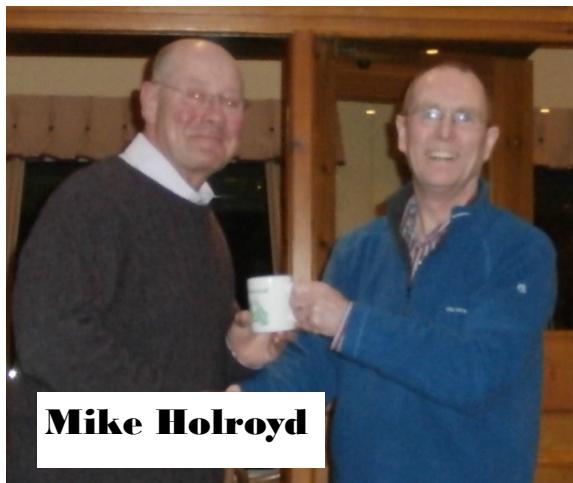
Jonathan Sanders



Greg Robinson



Nick Cahill



Mike Holroyd

Qualified Observers.



Steve Corson



Tim Simms

IAM Conference

By Doug Masterton.

On Sunday 7th October, Bob Hill and I attended an IAM Conference for group officers held at the University of Warwick. Some of the contributions were very interesting and so I am attempting to share something of what we learned.

Workshop on Test Requirements

This was led by Simon Best the IAM Chief Examiner who attempted to address some of the myths surrounding advanced tests and the criteria for achieving a pass.

At a Stop sign (as opposed to the more common Give Way), the bike must stop i.e. the wheels do not go round. There is no requirement in law or in the Highway Code that says that a foot must go down since it is often possible to stop momentarily without needing to do so. If the traffic and visibility allows for this kind of stop it is acceptable. However, it was stated that it would be prudent to put a foot down if only to demonstrate positively that the bike had become stationary.

When overtaking on a single carriageway road there is a myth that it is acceptable on the advanced test to exceed 60 mph for a short period and to a limited extent in order to execute the overtake cleanly and quickly in order to return to the safety of the left hand side of the road. Exceeding the speed limit is a traffic offence and is a reason to fail the test. It was accepted that approaches taken by different examiners were not consistent and perhaps the only way to be sure is not to exceed 60mph.

Changing down through the gears as a means of applying extra engine braking and trying to avoid justified use of the brakes is not advanced riding and will result in a fail.

The national pass rate for car and bike tests is around 85%. Most test failures are not due to a traffic offence but arise from the non-use of 'The System' (IPSGA) in various situations.

Subject to agreement by both the associate and the examiner, an observer can tag along during a test providing they take no part in the test procedures. This can be useful experience for the development of observer skills.

For the associates preparing for IAM test the key book is 'How to be a Better Rider' and not the

Police Riders Handbook. Detailed knowledge of the latter is more appropriate for observers seeking to become qualified or move to the Senior Observer level. Some groups have been able to get support from local police for improving the skill of senior observers.

All observers, but particularly qualified and senior observers should have a much more detailed knowledge of the Police Riders Handbook and the Highway Code that currently many of them are able to demonstrate.

Examiners are looking for progress up to the speed limit and overtaking, where it is safe to do so. Progress is not just a question of speed but also using opportunities such as a neat overtake at the exit of a roundabout where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

The absolute rule is that safety must never be sacrificed for any other advantage.

The question and answers at the session revealed just how widespread were the misconceptions about some of these issues.

Introduction of National Observer Standards

This is a process that will significantly change the way that the IAM trains and accredits its observers. The introduction of the Institute of Motor Industry (IMI) standards will remove the autonomy of groups in accrediting observers but it will potentially result in a much improved and nationally consistent level of competency. Future accreditation will be acquired in a way that has much in common with NVQs and it will also be valid, recognised and respected outside the IAM.

Much preliminary work has been undertaken to develop and document the standards that will be expected although these are not yet finalised. The range of advanced skills has been organised into modules and these may well shape the way that associates are taught as the scheme rolls out. Qualified Observers and Senior Observers will be changed and in future there will be Local and National Observers, the latter having responsibilities for qualifying local observers outside the home area. The criteria for achieving a chosen target standard will be exactly documented in levels and sub levels so that candidates will be able to make accurate self assessments of their acquired skills alongside any guidance or instruction that they may receive. This will work as a traffic light marking scheme, highlighting those areas where competency and knowledge are secure and showing where more work is needed.

There will be a window of transition for existing senior observers in order to kick start the new regime. After that time every observer will be required to follow new qualification routes. Some pilot work is being undertaken to identify difficulties before the scheme is rolled out.

One of the few pieces of documentation concerning the new system that was provided was the list of proposed performance standards for a national motorcycle observer.

Required IMI performance Standards for National Observer - Motorcycle

1.1.1 Expand and develop the entry level attitudinal skills required of a Local Observer

2.1.1 Expand and develop your capability to Ride at a standard higher than that of the IAM entry level Test standard

2.1.2 Demonstrate that you can carry out low speed manoeuvres, safely and under control

2.1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of How to be a Better Rider; Highway Code and Roadcraft

2.1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the way in which a motorcycle responds to various rider inputs or environmental conditions

3.1.1 Demonstrate advanced riding techniques and practices to an Associate

4.1.1 Operate a "customer centred" approach at all times, addressing the concerns and needs of the Associate above all else, in a flexible and helpful way

4.2.1 Operate to a higher standard than that required of a Local Observer, when giving guidance to Associates

4.2.2 Evaluate the Associate's riding competence and offer guidance to bring the Ride to IAM entry Test standard

4.2.3 Demonstrate a flexible approach to learning

4.2.4 Offer advice to Local Observers if they seek assistance with SFL

4.2.5 Apply knowledge gained from a thorough review of publications and other sources of information relating to the techniques and practices of Advanced Riding

4.2.6 Acquire experience of a variety of different motorcycle types and compare their characteristics

4.3.1 Operate to a higher standard than that required of a Local Observer, when debriefing Associates on completion of a guidance session

4.3.2 Develop your ability to give an effective debriefing

4.3.3 Improve your ability to produce a Development Plan that addresses the needs of the Associate

4.3.4 Develop a "customer centred" approach when debriefing Associates

5.1.1 Operate to a higher standard than that required of a Local Observer

6.1.1 Self-evaluate your performance

Regional Operations Managers

The IAM is seeking to improve its effectiveness by employing a group of full time regional operations managers to pursue its mission. As well as helping the IAM achieve its targets on membership and income, the regional managers will undertake those tasks that volunteers are unable to attempt including:

Liaison with local authorities

Liaison with local emergency services

Securing local publicity and display at local key events

Securing more effective operation of IAM groups which might include mergers of some of the very small ones in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency

Acting as mentors for group officers and securing other mentors if needed.

Spreading good practice between groups e.g. extending the progress made by one IAM group that attracts a grant of £1000 each year from Bike Safe.

Alerting groups to national issues being highlighted by the IAM where local press might seek members or group views.

Negotiating discounts for members from local commercial 'friends' of the IAM

Producing and sharing copy that can enhance the content on group web sites or in group magazines. (Some groups have very professional magazines.)

As they are introduced they will support groups by: -

Providing personalised publicity materials

Meeting the officers of groups on a regular basis

Bringing group members into IAM HQ when this

might be valuable

Helping with local press and publicity

Offer the hosting of group web sites within a general IAM domain



What an RAF pilot can teach us about being safe on the road



Sorry mate, I didn't see you". Is a catchphrase used by drivers up and down the country. Is this a driver being careless and dangerous or did the driver genuinely not see you?

According to a report by John Sullivan of the RAF, the answer may have important repercussions for the way we train drivers and how as cyclists we stay safe on the roads.

John Sullivan is a Royal Air Force pilot with over 4,000 flight hours in his career, and a keen cyclist. He is a crash investigator and has contributed to multiple [reports](#). Fighter pilots have to cope with speeds of over 1000 mph. Any crashes are closely analysed to extract lessons that can be of use.

Our eyes were not designed for driving

We are the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. Our eyes, and the way that our brain processes the images that they receive, are very well suited to creeping up on unsuspecting antelopes and spotting threats such as sabre-toothed tigers. These threats are largely gone and they've been replaced by vehicles travelling towards us at high speeds. This, we've not yet adapted to deal with.

Why?

Light enters our eyes and falls upon the retina. It is then converted into electrical impulses, that the brain perceives as images. Only a small part of your retina, the centre bit called the fovea, can generate a high-resolution image. This is why we need to look directly at something, to see detail.

The rest of the retina lacks detail but it contributes by adding the peripheral vision. However, a mere 20 degrees away from your sightline, your visual acuity is about 1/10th of what it is at the Try this scary test to see quite how much detail you lose in your peripheral vision

1. Stand 10 metres away from a car.
2. Move your eyes and look just one car's width to the right or left of that car.
3. Without moving where you eyes are now looking, try and read the number plate of the car.
4. Try the test again from 5m.

The test shows you quite how little detail you are able to truly capture from the side of your eyes.

That's not to say that we cannot see something in our peripheral vision – of course we can. As you approach a roundabout, you would be hard pressed not to see a huge lorry bearing down upon you, even out of the corner of your eye – obviously, the bigger the object, the more likely we are to see it. But would you see a motorbike, or a cyclist?

Here's when things get really interesting.



When you move your head and eyes to scan a scene, your eyes are incapable of moving smoothly across it and seeing everything. Instead, you see in the image in a series of very quick jumps (called **saccades**) with very short pauses (called **fixations**) and it is only during the pauses that an image is processed.

Your brain fills in the gaps with a combination of peripheral vision and an assumption that what is in the gaps must be the same as what you see during the pauses.

This might sound crazy, but your brain **actually blocks the image** that is being received while your eyes are moving. This is why you do not see the sort of blurred image, that you see when you look sideways out of a train window.

The only exception to this, is if you are tracking a moving object.

Another test to try

If you are not convinced, try this test.

1. Look in a mirror.
2. Look repeatedly from your right eye to your left eye.
3. Can you see your eyes moving? You can't.
4. Repeat the test with a friend and watch them. You will see their eyes moving quite markedly. You can't see your own eyes move because your brain shuts down the image for the instant that your eyes are moving. This is called [Saccadic masking](#).

In the past, this served us well. It meant we could creep up on antelopes without our brain being overloaded by unnecessary detail and a lot of useless, blurred images.

However, what happens when this system is put to use in a modern day situation, such as a traffic junction?

Why we miss motorbikes and bicycles

At a traffic junction all but the worst of drivers will look in both directions to check for oncoming traffic. However, it is entirely possible for our eyes to “jump over” an oncoming bicycle or motorbike.

The smaller the vehicle, the greater the chance it will fall within a saccade.



This isn't really a case of a careless driver, it's more of a human incapacity to see anything during a saccade. Hence the reason for so many “Sorry mate, I didn't see you” excuses.

The faster you move your head, the larger the jumps and the shorter the pauses. Therefore, you've got more of a chance of missing a vehicle.

We are effectively seeing through solid objects, with our brain filling in the image.

Additionally, we tend to avoid the edges of the windscreen. The door pillars on a car therefore create an even wider blindspot. This is called [windscreen zoning](#).

The danger of playing music

Our ears help us build up a picture of our surroundings. However, inside our cars or with music playing, our brain is denied another useful cue. Additionally, bicycles are almost completely silent, so won't be heard by car drivers.

How accidents happen

Let's say you are driving along. You approach a junction and you notice a lack of traffic. You look left and right and proceed forward. Suddenly you hear the blast of a horn, as a motorbike flashes in front of you, narrowly avoiding an accident.

What just happened?

On your approach, you couldn't see there was another vehicle on a perfect collision course. With a lack of relative movement for your peripheral vision to detect and the vehicle being potentially hidden by being near the door pillar, you miss it entirely.

Lulled into a false sense of security you looked quickly right and left, to avoid holding up the traffic behind you, and your eyes jumped cleanly over the approaching vehicle, especially as it was still close to the door pillar in the windscreen. The rest of the road was empty, and this was the scene that your brain used to fill in the gaps! Scary, huh?

You were not being inattentive – but you were being ineffective.

Additionally, if you didn't expect there to be a cyclist your brain is more likely to automatically jump to the conclusion that the road is empty.

Now that you've been warned. What can you do?

Forewarned is forearmed, so here's what we can do.

Drivers:

- Slow down on the approach of a roundabout or junction. Even if the road seems empty. Changing speed will allow you to see vehicles that would otherwise be invisible to you.
- A glance is never enough. You need to be as methodical and deliberate as a fighter pilot would be. Focus on at least 3 different spots along the road to the right and left. Search close, middle-distance and far. With practise, this can be accomplished quickly, and each pause is only for a fraction of a second. Fighter pilots call this a “lookout scan” and it is vital to their survival.
- Always look right and left at least twice. This doubles your chance of seeing a vehicle.
- Make a point of looking next to the windscreen pillars. Better still, lean forward slightly as you look right and left so that you are looking around the door pillars. Be aware that the pillar nearest to you blocks more of your vision. Fighter pilots say '*Move your head – or you're dead*'.
- Clear your flight path! When changing lanes, check your mirrors and as a last check, look directly at the spot which are going to manoeuvre.
- Drive with your lights on. Bright vehicles or clothing is always easier to spot than dark colours that don't contrast with a scene.
- It is especially difficult to spot bicycles, motorbikes and pedestrians during low sun conditions as contrast is reduced.
- Keep your windscreen clean – seeing other vehicles is enough of a challenge without a dirty windscreen. You never see a fighter jet with a dirty canopy.
- Finally, don't be a clown – if you are looking at your mobile telephone then you are incapable of seeing much else. Not only are you probably looking down into your lap, but your eyes are focused at less than one metre and every object at distance will be out of focus. Even when you look up and out, it takes a fraction of a second for your eyes to adjust – this is time you may not have.

Cyclists and motorcyclists:

- Recognise the risk of being in a saccade. High contrast clothing and lights help. In particular, flashing LED's (front and rear) are especially effective for cyclists as they create contrast and the on-off flashing attracts the peripheral vision in the same manner that movement does. There's nothing wrong with leaving these on during the day. (Especially if they are [rechargeable](#))
- The relatively slower speed of bicycles means that they will be closer to a point of collision if a vehicle begins to pull into their path. Turn this to advantage – when passing junctions, look at the head of the driver that is approaching or has stopped. The head of the driver will naturally stop and centre upon you if you have been seen. If the driver's head sweeps through you without pausing, then the chances are that you are in a saccade – you must assume that you have not been seen and expect the driver to pull out!
- Recognise that with a low sun, a dirty windscreen or one with rain beating against it drivers are likely to have less of a chance of seeing you.

Cycle instructors have been saying it for years: Ride in a position further out from the kerb as a driver is more likely to be looking in this location

See:

[**How to make your next bike ride safer than the last.**](#)

What should we do with our human weakness?

John Sullivan's findings and suggestions are excellent. However, they rely on drivers changing well embedded habits. Personally I believe that, unlike RAF pilots, a driver is very unlikely to change their behaviour. Therefore, I'd suggest that this is another reason we should be looking at building safety in to our roads, with Dutch style cycling infrastructure.

Two important takeaways for cyclists:

Increasing your contrast helps you be seen

Think flashing bike lights.

Also, remember the importance of good road positioning.

Tony Carter wrote:-

I hope that I will have the opportunity to come and talk to the group again in the future, but it goes without saying that should you or any member of the group need assistance, even if it is only advice, then they are more than welcome to give me a call or drop me an email, I will be more than happy without obligation to assist where I can.

Tony Carter.

McMillin Williams Solicitors.

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