

May 2017

Smiling the Whole Way

Celebrating Our Younger Drivers & Riders

We hear from IAM Roadsmart that they are offering the 'ultimate internship' for 2017-18. It isn't exactly a secret that those who run the IAM have for a long time been worried that the image projected by the organisation is – shall we say – rather middle aged.

The Younger Driver Ambassador's job will be to promote the IAM and its course to young people – a group that probably need and would benefit greatly from acquiring the skills of advanced driving and biking.

In that context OAGAM would like to proudly introduce two of our newest and youngest members: Rebecca Keenan, who recently passed the advanced driving test, and Meg Dixon, who has recently passed the advanced riding test.

Rebecca (above) works in the car industry and as a result gets to drive a number of different cars which, she admits, is something she really enjoys. However, after being involved in an accident on the M40, her boss - who incidentally is also her Dad - encouraged her to do the advanced course.

Rebecca says: As a self-confessed speed demon I apprehensively agreed but I have to say in my mind the IAM was full of old codgers driving slowly - annoying other drivers.

How wrong I was! I enjoyed the course more than I ever thought I would and I have met some great people, who share my passion for driving and made the whole experience very enjoyable. It has had a massive impact on my driving and has given me the skills and techniques to make me a safer and more confident driver. As a result I now enjoy driving more than ever. I would recommend this to my friends in a heartbeat.

IAM RoadSmart is looking for a Younger Driver Ambassador from September 2017 to July 2018 in a competition called *Get In The Driving Seat*. The lucky winner will be touring the country spreading the safer driving and riding message to schools, colleges and apprentice centres.

The role is fully salaried and comes with a company car and additional advanced driving support. The deadline for applications is soon – 9th June.

Full details are on the [RoadSmart website](#).



Meg, an architectural lighting designer, enrolled on the advanced riding course because she wanted to become a SERV Blood Biker – an ambition she is now well on the way to achieving.

Meg (left) says: *I've always been quite a calm rider but now I really keep my feelings under control and stay composed even when I see other road users behaving dangerously or thoughtlessly.*

Now I always try to be fully aware of where I need to be on the road and as a result I think I'm a much safer rider. I wish that more people would have a go at the advanced course and realise that it's not all about going as fast as possible. I've learnt how to ride fast but safely and now know how to deal with potential dangers. My riding is much more pleasurable – I arrive at my destination in one piece, having smiled the whole way!

Now she is an advanced rider, Meg is looking forward to volunteering as a Blood Biker. This will test her new skills - particularly night riding. She is also interested in taking the Masters and maybe becoming an observer eventually, though she is well aware how time consuming that can be. She says: *It's good to know that there are further challenges for me to think about when I'm ready for them.*

Meg is keen to remain a member of IAM and OAGAM as a way to help her to continue to improve her ability to ride.

We asked Rebecca and Meg whether they thought there were particular ways in which OAGAM could support our younger members once they had passed their advanced test.

Meg feels that developing advanced skills is particularly relevant to young drivers and riders but she finds that the young people she knows tend to think that the IAM is not for them.

She says: *I think those youngsters who do complete the course successfully would enjoy events that made them feel part of something. Ride outs and drive outs would be of interest – as long as there wasn't too much sense of exclusivity in the group. It's really important that young members should be made to feel welcome. Or, looking at it the other way, we could organise events for under forties, rather in the way that Lynda Harding has recently advertised events specifically for women riders.*

Rebecca gave us one bit of very firm advice: *OAGAM could definitely do with being brought into the year 2017. I think it would benefit from participating in social media - possibly creating Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts.*

Social media is so integral to life these days, and not just for the younger generation.

continued





Email or Phone Password

Using social media more would not only make it easy for people to keep up with the OAGAM and the IAM's goings on but by its nature would allow members to share with their peers what advanced driving and riding is really like.

That should encourage some new recruits.

Meg readily agrees and adds: *OAGAM could also use Twitter to keep members up to date with what is happening in the group and share ideas for events and outings.*

We do already have a Facebook page but come on younger members, what about getting onto Twitter or starting an OAGAM under thirties Facebook group?

Congratulations to all our April passes

In addition to Rebecca and Meg, April saw four more successful advanced driving and riding test passes...

Andrew Occleshaw was intrigued to find his advanced driving test was booked for the morning of 1st April:

Yes, April Fools Day... so I was careful to check with my examiner that he wouldn't be asking me to complete the test backwards!

I've always enjoyed driving - I once built a car from a body shell, nobody showed or taught me - I just did it. The first left hand drive car I drove was a 6 litre Corvette in Los Angeles. Now I'm on my fourteenth Porsche.

Like a lot of drivers I fell foul of the mobile speed camera doing 36 in a 30mph zone and chose to go on the speed awareness course. Seeing the 40mph sign isn't an excuse for raising your speed in anticipation especially when there's a speed camera just around the bend. But hey, I'm preaching to the converted here!

I've never been great at sitting in a classroom – it feels like being in detention. At the speed awareness course I was appalled to find the majority in the room didn't have even a basic grasp of the rules of the road. The whole experience was a bit of a catalyst for signing up for the IAM course. A few observed drives later and here I was, taking the advanced test.

As I mentioned, it was the 1st April. At the end of the test my examiner congratulated me on passing and gave me a card to confirm it. On the card he'd written f1rst - which I thought nothing of, assuming he was just writing the date. A few days later I got the confirmation from the IAM that I'd passed with a F1RST! I'd actually completed the test without even knowing that there was anything other than pass or fail.

Would it have made a difference if I'd known in advance? Unlikely as I just went out for another drive down the road that day, aware of what was going on around me and thoroughly enjoying myself.

My thanks to Jules Pudner and Alex Lewis for their observing and Stuart Brown my examiner.

Retired nurse **Patricia Hunt** (below) recently passed her advanced driving test. She explains what prompted her to enrol:

I retired from District Nursing 10 years ago and now, typically, I'm busier than ever. I volunteer at Helen and Douglas House doing various jobs and am a Churchwarden at St Mary's Church in Chalgrove.

I came to the IAM through the WI, of which I am President in Chalgrove. They offered a taster day at Gaydon, and after my observed run I was told I should try for the Advanced Driving Test. I received lots of helpful hints on how to make my driving easier and after a few lessons I passed last month.



Andrew Greer (right), who many will remember from his presentation in April about The Bike Experience, has passed his advanced riding test.

Andrew explains: I retired from the RAF in 2011 after almost 32 years as a navigator in the RAF fast jet force, before ending my career at RAF Brize Norton on VC10 transports and air-to-air tankers.

Apart from a spell while I was working in the Middle East, I've been riding almost constantly since I passed my test in 1977. I currently ride a Suzuki Hayabusa, travelling between Carterton and Huntingdon most weekends. I seem to have a problem getting rid of my old bikes, so the "project" collection in my garage now numbers four.

While I was volunteering with The Bike Experience, a fellow volunteer told me that he was planning to join the Blood Bikers. When I did some research online about the local organisation, SERV OBN, I found out that members needed an advanced qualification to join, so that prompted me to apply for IAM RoadSmart. I am shortly to begin my SERV OBN induction training.

I thoroughly enjoyed the advanced course and the cross-check. This was the first bike training I'd ever done - in the 1970s, training involved someone just checking you could ride without crashing or falling off! The IAM test was quite a challenge - in 1977, the bike test involved an examiner on foot, with a clipboard, who only saw you briefly as you rode past. The advanced riding course sorted out a few acquired errors, thankfully none major.



Mike Weaver has passed his advanced riding test. Mike works for the armed forces and tells us he started biking 11 years ago when he was 17.

I started on an '87 Yamaha YB100. I've since owned a Honda CB250, Yamaha Diversion 600, BMW R1100R and my current GS1200LC. I also have a '73 BMW R60/6 and an '89 Honda C90 in the garage - but for good weather only! I completed a BikeSafe course last year. It gave me the gentle push that I needed to go ahead and do some advanced training. It's definitely improved my riding.

Now that he is an advanced rider, Mike has joined other OAGAM members to become a SERV OBN Blood Biker.



Two New Bike Local Observers

Congratulations are due to the latest additions to our team of Local Bike Observers: Ted Tattersall and Chris Finnigan.

When asked his reasons for becoming an observer, Chris (*above*) replies with greetings from the Highlands of Scotland.

He writes: Being an observer keeps my own skills sharp while I help others be safer riders. It's a feeling of real pleasure to watch an associate improve in ability and confidence before achieving the goal of an advanced test pass.

Ted (right) says: I was very proud recently to receive my IMI Qualification for Local Observer. I took the decision to become an observer after several of my biking friends in OAGAM encouraged me to share my skills and pass on the knowledge I have picked up over the last few years.



I'm pleased to say that the experience so far has been tremendously rewarding. I think we sometimes forget as advanced drivers and riders just how much we have progressed from the standard driving level, but this has reminded me how much we have to offer.

I'm also finding it's keeping my own advanced riding levels up to standard at the same time. I'm now looking forward to getting a few passes under my belt!

Motorcycle Rides and Events for June

Wednesday Evening Ride Out – 21st June

Meet at Peartree, departing 7:30pm. James Henton will be leading this one. Ted will be sending out an email reminder a few days beforehand.

Cassington Bike Night – Monday 26th June

Once again the village of Cassington will close its roads and welcome thousands of bikers for an evening of biking related fun. There'll be plenty of classic and vintage bikes to look at along with food, drink and stalls. We may even set up an OAGAM stall of our own - in which case Ted will be looking for volunteers to assist with set-up and manning duties. Look out for an email message in due course with further details.



<https://cassingtonbikenight.wordpress.com/>



At the end of Robbie Downing's presentation at the May monthly meeting, Geoff Ayres, Car Observer Coordinator, leant back with a broad smile on his face. 'That was spot on!' he sighed contentedly.

Robbie's talk about the Masters qualification was less a sales pitch for another new IAM product than a thought provoking and stimulating masterclass in advanced driving and riding. Information about the Masters was illustrated by a wealth of high level advice to help us get our driving and riding up to the Masters standard.

Masters – the basics

The IAM RoadSmart Masters Qualification is:

- an opportunity to explore the finer points of Roadcraft and to become the best you can be by achieving the highest level of civilian riding/driving standard in the country;
- knowledge-based - derived from material in the IAM handbooks, *Roadcraft*, *The Highway Code* and *Know Your Traffic Signs*;
- for those who are already accomplished advanced drivers and riders who can demonstrate a consistently high standard of driving or riding;
- for drivers and riders who are able to apply emotional intelligence to all driving and riding decisions and be wise to the complexities of modern driving and riding environments;
- for those able to proactively make allowances for the mistakes of others as well as their own (and learn from them).

The IAM RoadSmart Masters Qualification is not:

- a Police Driving Course;
- about going as fast as you possibly can all the time.

To gain the Masters Qualification, you must:

- demonstrate safe, legal and consistent driving or riding in line with Roadcraft techniques;
- have a planned 'awake' approach to all possible risks and be aware of mind hazards and their effects;
- make exemplary safe progress within the law.

That means being systematic, polished and courteous. It means driving or riding with quiet efficiency and finesse. It means remaining calm and controlled, continually assessing and reassessing your situation.

The Test

The IAM RoadSmart Masters Test:

- is a pass or fail test with two levels of pass - Pass and Distinction;
- is conducted on roads that are unfamiliar to the candidate, who will therefore be expected to travel to the test meeting point;
- includes slow manoeuvring and theory knowledge and understanding;
- requires a good knowledge of *Roadcraft* and *The Highway Code*;
- uses the same report form and scoring system as the advanced course – no more than 39 to gain a pass, 34 and below for a distinction;
- entitles successful candidates to a certificate, a personalised report, an IAM Master Rider or Driver Membership Card and their name added to the Masters Register;
- costs £129 or £249 with six sessions of mentoring;
- must be retaken every five years – the cost of a retest has not been announced yet.



The Masters Certificate



Robbie's Masterclass on Planning Ahead

*Among the wise words included in Robbie Downing's presentation was a section on the vital part planning ahead plays when driving or riding to Masters standard. Excellent **observation** allows intelligent **anticipation** which leads to sound **planning**.*

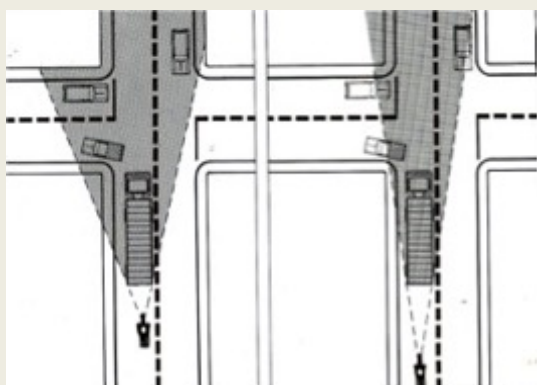
The '5 Wh's'.

As you approach a hazard, identify – however subconsciously – the following:

- What you can see
- What you can't see
- What you might reasonably expect to happen
- Which hazards represents the greatest risk
- What to do if things turn out differently

Try applying the 5 Wh's to this scene.

You're the biker in the bottom left corner of the picture.



While you are formulating your plan, remember you don't always have to be part of the action. It's OK sometimes to be in the audience. Consider the two bikers in these pictures.

The biker on the right has decided not to be part of the action, so she has dropped back. As a result, she has a more informed view of what is going on ahead and can formulate her plan accordingly.

Robbie was quite clear. When things go wrong on a Masters test it is often because the candidate's observation isn't comprehensive enough for them to build and carry out a suitable plan.

If you are interested in going for the Masters qualification, there is more information on the [IAM RoadSmart website](#). Or contact the OAGAM Pantheon of Masters: Kevin Brady or John Lang (Cars); Rob Archer, Lynda Harding, John Lang or Harry Schoetz (Bikes).



Behind the Scenes at the British Motor Museum

***7.30pm, 7 June, Exeter Hall, Kidlington**

An introduction to the [British Motor Museum](#) at Gaydon, near Banbury. The Museum is home to the world's largest collection of historic British cars. Find out what there is to see and what other experiences are available at the museum. Hear about what goes on behind the scenes.

***Note the earlier start time.**

Future Meetings

After the June presentation, the monthly meetings will take a summer break until September. In the meantime, don't forget the drive outs and ride outs on the third Wednesday of the month.

It would really help Ian Hicks, Group Events Coordinator, to get suggestions on what would be good subjects for future group meetings.

If you know someone you think would provide an interesting presentation, Ian is keen to hear from you.

You can reach Ian on:

events.oagam@gmail.com

Ladies International Ride Out Day

In last month's newsletter, Lynda Harding drew attention to a number of events organised for women riders. On 6th May, Lynda and a select group took part in the Ladies International Ride Out Day run.

Their destination was the AV8 Restaurant at Cotswold Airport, Cirencester, where a comforting latte and bacon roll was much appreciated. Before they left, another women's group, also on the Ride Out Day, arrived and a lively chat ensued.

Details of other events for women riders can be found in last month's newsletter: 19th June, IAM skills Day; 16th July, The World's Largest All Female Biker Meet.

Lynda is hoping to set up WhatsApp chat group purely for organising ad hoc ladies ride outs created. If you would like to be included, then please let Lynda know your mobile number by emailing her on bikeac.oagam@gmail.com.





If you have enjoyed a visit to The British Motor Museum...

If your interest in the history of the British motor industry is piqued by the presentation on 7th June, you will probably be keen to make your way to Gayden to experience the Motor Museum first hand.

If you like what you see and want to explore further, here are two other nearby visits you might enjoy.

On 4 May 2017, a new exhibition opened at [Kenilworth Castle](#), celebrating the castle's links with automotive pioneer Sir John Siddeley. The exhibition, *Speed and Power: John Siddeley, Pioneer of the Motor Age* focuses on the motoring and aviation pioneer, J. D. Siddeley, who founded Armstrong Siddeley Motors and bought the castle in 1937. Created in association with the Armstrong Siddeley Heritage Trust, the exhibition includes a selection of artefacts to tell the story of Siddeley's life in the glamorous worlds of motoring and aviation.



[Coventry Transport Museum](#) houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles in the world, and tells the fascinating story of Coventry and its people through the rise and fall of its biggest industry.

See the cars your parents and grandparents drove or explore what you might be driving in the future. Get caught up in the real-life stories of Coventry's innovators and entrepreneurs.



OAGAM Group Scorecard

The group scorecard (right) is published here each month and shows the test statistics for the previous twelve months.

Test Statistics			
(over the last 12 months)			Status: 02/05/2017
	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike
	12 months	12 months	12 months
First	7	4	3
Pass	30	18	12
Fail	8	6	2
% Pass	82	79	88
			Region Avg.
			12 months
			3.1
			10.1
			2.3
			85