

**October 2017**

*for all car and bike members of the Oxford Area Group of Advanced Motorists*

## Thirteen Miles in First Gear!



*For the third consecutive year, OAGAM bike members played an essential part in the Virgin Sports Oxford Half Marathon on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October.*

No, they weren't competitors but provided invaluable support as motorised marshals.

What did this mean in practice?

First of all, early in the morning of the event, the team travelled the route the runners were to take, checking that everything was safe for both runners and spectators. Then, after breakfast and a final check, our bikers assembled in front of the start line. They had all been issued with radio communication equipment so they could act as eyes and ears for the officials in charge of the race. In addition, David and Harry had GoPro cameras fitted to their bikes so the event could be filmed.

Rob, Jason and James set off and, as advance riders, had to keep half a mile ahead of the field to make sure the route was clear. They were ready to shepherd stray spectators away from the track and deal with any other obstructions that might have appeared.

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Then Paul and David led the wheelchair competitors ahead of the timing car – a car with a big clock mounted on its roof for the runners to see.

Finally, Daniel and Harry led the main field of runners around the course. It was hard to believe, but the fastest runners managed to reach impressive speeds of up to 15mph. Though, as Harry observed, 'It is not every day you ride for over thirteen miles in first gear only!'

With the high level of professionalism from Virgin Sports and OAGAM experience from previous years, the motorised marshalling went like clockwork. Also as in previous years, the group expects to receive a generous donation towards the purchase of training equipment and materials for the advanced courses which form our core activity.

And, of course, the day's work was an excellent advertisement for OAGAM and the IAM.



Well done and huge thanks and to the following bike observers and full members who supported on the day: **Rob Archer** (organiser); **James Henton; Jason Hopgood; David Lisk; Paul Thompson; Daniel Timmins;** and **Harry Schoetz.**

## November Meeting – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November Exeter Hall + Kidlington 7.45 pm for 8.00 pm start



**Advanced Driver/Rider test report**

Candidate information			
Surname	First Name		Associate No
Date	Time	Eyesight test	
Advanced test <input type="checkbox"/>	Members re-assessment <input type="checkbox"/>	Declaration <input type="checkbox"/>	Eyesight test <input type="checkbox"/>
Vehicle information (tick and delete as required)			
Car <input type="checkbox"/>	Motorcycle <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial (Heavy/Medium/Light) <input type="checkbox"/>	Bus/Coach/Minibus (with trailer) <input type="checkbox"/>
Reg no	Make	Manual <input type="checkbox"/>	Automatic <input type="checkbox"/>
<small>This must be brought to the attention of the Driver</small>			
<small>* As the driver you are deemed to be in control of your vehicle at all times including responsibility for safety</small>			
Competence Levels: 1 = Commended 2 = Satisfactory 3 = Requires Development			
Safety and legality	Gear changing	Cornering	
System	Use of gearbox	Overtaking	
Observation	Acceleration/sense	Restraint/progress	
Planning & hazard management	Mirrors/rear observation	Human factors & concentration	
Anticipation	Steering	Courtesy	
Vehicle sympathy & eco driving	Braking	Slow manoeuvring	
Positioning	Signals	Smoothness	
Spoken thought	Knowledge	OVERALL RESULT	
Comments			
Examiner name		Number	
Signature			

### Meet the Examiner: Stuart Brown

Our speaker in November will be IAM RoadSmart car examiner Stuart Brown.

Stuart introduces himself: *I am currently an Advanced Police Driving Instructor, a role I have been doing for the past 14 of my 30 years service. I have worked all over the UK - mostly in the London area. I am actively involved in improving driver training standards and am an examiner for both the IAM and RoSPA.*

This will be an ideal opportunity for members to hear about what the examiner is looking for in an advanced driving test. It will be particularly interesting for associates who are coming up for test soon – and their observers, of course!



## Vehicle Security

### How alarmed should we be?

*The September meeting featured a presentation by OAGAM member and cybersecurity expert John Walker. His talk explored the ways in which modern vehicles, which are so dependent on their in-built digital systems, can be vulnerable to hackers. John, who describes himself as a 'white hat hacker' set out to explain how vehicles are attacked and – more significantly – to think about why we let it happen.*

In essence, John's message was that car security is still generally quite poor but it doesn't have to be. We happily prioritise convenience over security, when we ought to be demanding both, especially as the amount and level of automation incorporated into car design is increasing so fast. At the moment, most criminals don't have the motive or technical skill to hack into a vehicle's digital systems. Such attacks are much more likely to be mounted by terrorists or fraudsters against high profile targets, but it won't be long before common car thieves are in on the game.

Basically, the on-board computer in a modern car has virtually no defence against malware and can be relatively easily infected by a knowledgeable hacker armed with a smartphone and a bit of technical know-how. As well as obvious things like lights and radio, the accelerator, brakes and some steering functions can be affected.

The data held in electronic car keys can also be read, so the hacker is able to open your car, start the engine and drive away without even damaging the paintwork.

John and his colleagues are working hard to persuade manufacturers to make the digital systems in their vehicles safer from attack by determined hackers. They could go a long way to achieving this quickly by using [open standard systems](#), trusted encryption processes and [two-factor authentication](#).

And, in the meantime, what can we do? Well, we could stick to just driving old cars.

After all, you can't break into a Morris Minor using just your smart phone.



### **Who needs digital?**

*As most of the images in this month's newsletter feature motorbikes, I thought I'd redress things a bit by including this picture of my brother's Austin Healey Sprite, which he got on his twenty first birthday in 1961. A couple of years later, he set off in it to India, then drove it across Australia and finally settled in New Zealand. (Ed)*

## September Test Passes

*We offer our warmest congratulations to members who passed the advanced driving or riding test last month.*



### ***Paul Semple, F1RST Advanced Rider***

I'm a relatively recent convert to motorcycling, having passed my full test in 2015. I work for the University of Oxford at their Headington Campus. The lack of parking there, the volume of traffic and often unreliable public transport, combined with a fifteen mile commute from a village north of the City, meant that a motorcycle seemed like the perfect solution.

I've always been impressed with the standard of riding shown by Police motorcyclists, and I was drawn to the IAM as the training they offer is based on the roadcraft system which forms the basis of Police riding. I also have a young family and, conscious of the fact that motorcycles don't have crumple zones, wanted to do everything I could to stay safe.

My observer, Paul Thompson, was a great mentor, passing on years of experience and guidance and, with his help, my riding has become far more enjoyable. Using "The System" I'm able to anticipate problems before they arise, and position myself and the bike to minimise danger. I'm a safer, more confident, smoother – and faster - rider since completing the course.

For a relatively small fee the IAM Skills for Life course is exceptional value for money and I'd recommend it to any motorcyclist.

### ***Rob Edwards, Advanced Rider***

I'm a self-employed carpenter in the Oxfordshire area. I first started riding when I was 17 but gave up in my early twenties and didn't ride for over twenty years.

I got back into biking a year or so ago and am loving it. My wife also enjoys being a pillion on the back of my Kawasaki Z1000SX. I signed up for the programme because it had been so long since I'd been riding and I wanted to improve my skills as much as possible, especially after transitioning to a more powerful bike. I thoroughly enjoyed the course and had a great instructor in James Henton.



Congratulations are also due this month to **Siobhan Rochelle**, who achieved a F1RST in her advanced driving test.



## Car Drive Outs – Any Thoughts?

*Each year for many years, once the evenings begin to get lighter, bike members have enjoyed a summer season of monthly ride-outs. They meet up and together follow a route chosen for its interesting roads and scenery. All in all, a pleasant experience - especially if the weather is good and a suitably hospitable destination has been chosen for a chat and some refreshment.*

This summer, led by Chief Car Observer Alex Lewis, we thought we'd try to set up something similar for car members. The aim was to build on the regular demonstration drives that car observers have offered in the past and to develop a range of ways for members to share and discuss practical aspects of advanced driving.

The new format drive outs were a great opportunity to:

- meet others in the group
- enjoy driving on some interesting roads
- maintain and develop your standard of driving
- and engage in some constructive discussion about any challenges encountered.

The invitation was extended to all car members, including associates in training, as well as our growing team of car observers.

Alex provided maps for a selection of drives of different lengths. Those interested were invited to meet at the Peartree Services in the early evening of the third Wednesday of the month. And we took it from there.

Over the summer a number of successful arrangements evolved:

- Observers paired up and demonstrated their driving and observing techniques to each other.
- Associates had an opportunity to practise and discuss their advanced driving with a different observer.
- Long time members had a chance to polish up their driving skills.
- Extra support was offered to associates who were finding the advanced course quite a challenge.
- Members who own unusual or particularly exciting vehicles had an opportunity to show them off and give others a chance to try them out.

As drivers returned to Peartree, there was time to compare notes over a coffee at Starbucks.

We plan to arrange drive outs for car members again next year, when we'll build on this year's experience. We'll certainly expect to repeat the activities described above but are open to new ideas as well. For instance, would car members like us to organise a couple of drive outs over the winter, perhaps on a Sunday or in the evening to practise night driving? And perhaps we should meet up and round off the evening at a venue that is a bit more congenial...

If you have ideas for activities, thoughts about winter drive outs or suggestions for a more suitable meeting point, we'd like to hear from you. Please write to Alex at [oxfordiamcars@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordiamcars@gmail.com) or send your ideas to [newsletter@oagam.org](mailto:newsletter@oagam.org).



Here are a few tips from Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart Head of Technical Policy, to keep you and your 21<sup>st</sup> century car on the winter roads with everything working the way it should.

**Washers.** Yes, fill the washer reservoir with washer fluid and check the spray nozzles are clear, but don't forget the headlamp washers. If your car has Xenon lights (also called HID), there will be high pressure washers, usually under a flap in the front bumper. These must be working, otherwise you risk dazzling other motorists when the lens gets dirty. To check them turn on the headlamps, operate the windscreen washers and get a friend to watch the lights or look for the spray which you'll see over the front of the bonnet.

**Light level switch.** Talking of dazzling other drivers, if you don't have Xenon lamps, you will probably have a headlamp level switch, usually numbered 0 to 4. You're supposed to turn the switch according to how the car is loaded. Many of the complaints about dazzling headlights are because people forget to adjust the level. 0 is usually just the driver and no luggage, 4 is for a full load, but check the handbook for your car.

**Leaves.** Leaves never used to hurt a car but they can now! Lift the bonnet, look in the engine bay around the area of the bonnet hinges. You'll see a chamber on each side that collects water as it drains from the windscreen. These chambers have drain holes in the bottom to keep them dry, but leaves can block the drains. If water stays in the chambers it can leak into the car, often soaking sensitive electronic bits, leading to very expensive repairs. Get any leaves or other debris out of the chambers and if water is present, root around until you find the drain holes and unblock them.

**Steamy windows.** Get some soapy water and kitchen roll or a clean microfibre cloth and clean the insides of all the windows. Getting them squeaky clean will dramatically reduce the glare from the low autumn sun on morning and evening drives and it will make the windows much less likely to mist up in damp weather. It also means you'll waste less fuel because you won't need to turn on heated windows and air conditioning in a bid to clear them.

**Cabin air filter.** Today's cars have a filter for the air entering the car through the heater. Often called the pollen filter, it can often get overlooked at a service and if it's full of dirt, your heater will be much less efficient. Worse still, if it's wet – which can happen if you don't clear those leaves out of the chambers – your windows will constantly mist up as the heater pumps damp air into them. Changing the filter is usually a simple DIY job - look in the owner's handbook – and the filters are quite cheap and widely available online.

*Adapted from IAM RoadSmart Inform: Weekly News - Issue 163*

# Another cracking biking weekend



*Eight bikes and ten bikers met early on the morning of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September and set off from Oxfordshire heading north to the Lake District and Keswick, on a three-day trip, led by **Ted Tattersall**. Ted and **Paul Thompson** report.*

The weather forecast for the weekend, up north, was wet, wetter and very wet!! But the predicted wind and rain was staying away for the time being as we set off on our planned 283 mile journey. Ted chose a great route that took us up through the Peak District and over the Snake Pass, after which we stopped for lunch in Glossop. Also included were several fuel stops as our bikes don't have the same range as cars.

At Skipton, in the Yorkshire Dales, our number went up to nine bikes when we met up with Mark Jones. Mark, one of our ex-observers, had ridden across country from his new home in East Lincolnshire to join us for the weekend.

On arrival in Keswick, we were greeted by Rod & Denise, owners of Portland House B&B, which was to be our home for the weekend. Rod and Denise provided a warm welcome, good humour and plenty of tea and cakes. The rain had caught up with us by the end of the ride so the first job was to hang up our sopping wet gear before we went out for a few well deserved beers and a fabulous Chinese meal.



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After breakfast on Saturday, before heading out for the day, Jed Ramsay found that his Ducati's rear tyre had a puncture. We pumped it up and David Lisk expertly carried out a roadside repair at the local filling station.

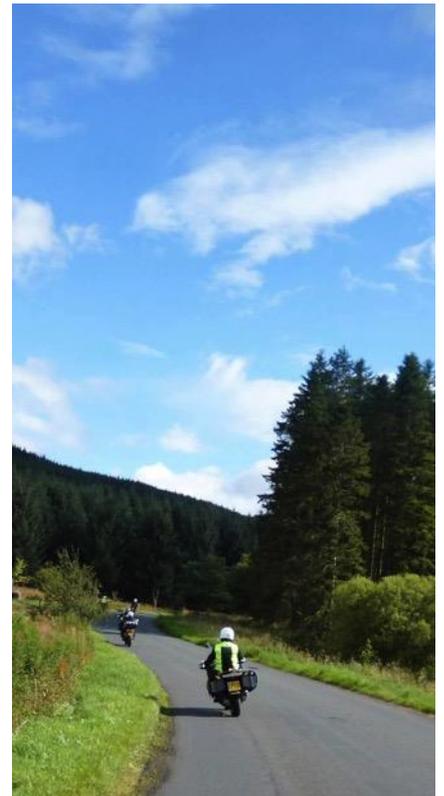
As we had managed to fill all their rooms with our group booking, Rod and Denise were free to come out with us on Saturday. Rod is a voluntary blood biker as well as an advanced rider and knows the roads in the North of England well. Once Jed's tyre was fixed and we had all refuelled, Rod led us on a truly spectacular ride up into the Scottish Borders and over to our first coffee stop at the Olive Tree Café in Newcastleton. We rode a lovely nine-mile single track road over the moors between Langholm & Newcastleton.

After that it was west through the Border Forest Park, down into Northumberland and on past Kielder Water and the wonderfully serene Kielder Forest. Kielder Water is the biggest man-made lake in the UK and the Kielder Forest is the biggest man-made forest in Europe.

Our lunch stop was at the Simonburn Tea Rooms, a little gem tucked out of the way. After some more Ducati tantrums (!) we headed back towards the Lake District via Haydon Bridge and up a twisty-turny mountain road to the heights of Hartside Summit.

The sun shone, the roads were free of traffic, the views were amazing and we all came back feeling a little bit better about the world. After our 170-mile ride, expertly led by Rod, with the bikes safely parked up, everyone headed up to their rooms for a quick shower, before preparing for another night out in Keswick.

The day was topped off by Denise taking some of us out for a lakeside walk by Derwent Water, watching the sun set over the mountains from Friars Crag.





Sunday brought the wind and rain that had been threatening all weekend. After discussing the pros and cons of various scenic routes home over a breakfast of scrambled eggs and smoked salmon, bit by bit we loaded the bikes, said our farewells and headed back to Oxfordshire in pretty awful conditions.

The Witney boys and Steve & Kate headed off first from a wet and rainy Keswick, aiming to hit the M6. The rest of the group, led by Paul, were going to head back to Oxford, planning to avoid the motorways. As they rode south towards Kendal, the rain gods unleashed their fury and the plan to avoid motorways was abandoned. Mark pointed his GS towards Lincolnshire and the rest headed onto the M6, where it was every man for himself.

Later that afternoon, the messages started coming in announcing everyone's safe arrival, back home.

Ted sums up the trip: *The rain on Sunday didn't dampen any of the joy of the weekend away. I got to know all of the members of the group a bit better, enjoyed some lively banter, rode some fabulous roads, and some of us even ended up having a boogie to live music in the small hours! Doesn't get much better than that.*

Paul's verdict: *It was another cracking biking weekend... great accommodation, excellent hosts, great company, good roads, friendly banter, and mainly dry... happy days.*

Big thanks to everyone involved in putting this weekend on, planning the routes, the coffee and lunch stops: event organiser, Ted Tattersall; hosts, Rod & Denise from Portland House; and the awesome OAGAM riders and pillions.





## Brushing Up...

*Rachel Rivers successfully completed the Skills for Life course with OAGAM a few years ago. Here she tells us why she has decided to re-join and seize the opportunity to polish up her advanced driving skills.*



It took a little while to get ready for my Advanced Test, but it was well worth it. It has helped me to become a safer driver, and better at spotting hazards further ahead. Driving is more of an occasional event for me since I walk to work, so I usually use the car for longer journeys like going back to my parents in the East Midlands or visiting friends elsewhere.

I was never that keen on the running commentary aspect of the Test, but I sometimes still practise it during these longer trips - which I find very handy for keeping up concentration levels!

I took my Advanced Test a few years after I learnt to drive back in 2013. My dad is an IAM member: he has always been enthusiastic about it, and he convinced me it would be worthwhile. Now a few years have passed, I've been thinking I could do with brushing up so I've booked in for a refresher drive in a couple of weeks. I'm looking forward to giving my skills a boost!

### OAGAM Group Scorecard

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

<b>Test Statistics</b>				Status: 02/10/2017
<small>(over the last 12 months)</small>				
	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike	Region Avg.
	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
<b>First</b>	10	4	6	3.3
<b>Pass</b>	34	16	18	10.7
<b>Fail</b>	9	5	4	2.2
<b>% Pass</b>	83	80	86	86