

Oxford Local IAM Group Newsletter September 2018

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

Group Events and Activities 2018-19

As explained in the last newsletter, the group committee is still asking members for advice and help with devising and organising group activities, especially the monthly meetings held from October to April.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to mount an attractive programme of monthly meetings and nothing is planned for the next advertised meeting on 3 October – so that meeting has been cancelled.

- If you would like to take on the role of Events Coordinator, please let us know of your interest and what you think you could contribute. If you're interested but not sure whether it's right for you, you may prefer to start on a trial basis for a limited period, to see what's involved. The role of Events Coordinator does not necessarily require full committee membership.
- If you have an idea for a monthly meeting, please let us know. This could be a particular speaker or organisation that you know of or simply a subject that you think members would be interested in.
- If you have an idea for a meeting and would be prepared to organise it, the Committee would be delighted to offer support and help.

One meeting that has been fixed is the group's **Annual General Meeting** – see page 2. As well as the scheduled agenda items, we would like to include – under any other business - discussion of the future of the monthly meetings. If you have ideas, please be ready to offer them at the AGM – though we'd like to hear before then about any specific ideas you have so we can consider putting them into the programme.

If you have helpful ideas or suggestions – even of the most general kind – on the subject of local group activities and meetings, please write to Group Secretary, Harry Schoetz (<u>secretary@iamoxford.org</u>), or Newsletter Editor, Andrew Carter (<u>newsletter@iamoxford.org</u>).

The usual format: a presentation at Exeter Hall



Annual General Meeting 2018



Group officers reporting to the 2017 AGM: Chair, Rob Archer; Secretary, Harry Schoetz; Treasurer, Paul Thomas

Don't forget that the group's AGM this year will be held on **Wednesday 7th November 2018**, from **7.30pm**. The venue will be **Exeter Hall, Oxford Rd, Kidlington OX5 1AB**.

The Oxford group is a registered charity and is bound by charity and company law. The main purpose of the AGM is to enable the trustees of the group to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 for approval by full members of the group and to conduct an election. It is also an opportunity for members to ask questions and discuss the activities of the group during the previous year. Questions from Members will be invited following each report on the agenda.

All Group Full Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend but **only Group Full Members may vote**.

A Member entitled to vote at the AGM may appoint a proxy to vote in their stead.

Note: a proxy need not be a Group Full Member! Postal votes are not permitted.

AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Minutes from the previous year
- 3) Matters arising from the Minutes
- 4) Amendments or adjustments to this Agenda
- 5) Chair's Report
- 6) Secretary's Report
- 7) Treasurer's Report
- 8) Election of Group Officers and Committee
- 9) Address by New Chair
- 10) Any Other Business

You will have received full details of the AGM via an email circulated on 16^{th} September. This included the following attachments:

- OAGAM Notification AGM on 7th November 2018

- Final OAGAM Accounts 2017-18

- OAGAM 2017 AGM_Minutes

- OAGAM_ProxyVoteForm_AGM 7th November 2018

High Emotions at Road Rage Roundabout

A couple of years ago, when the new IAM RoadSmart Advanced Driver Course Handbook was published, it was interesting to see a whole chapter devoted to what was referred to as 'Human Factors'. More than six pages replaced the single captioned photo in the previous handbook headed 'It's a jungle out there!'

In 'Human Factors', we are told that an advanced driver should 'remain calm and considerate of others at all times' and 'recognise that the road space needs to be shared' and that 'this is most successfully achieved when everyone communicates and cooperates'.

So, we were intrigued to read on Wales Online of drivers who regularly use a particular stretch of road asking, *Am I the only one who wants to yell 'cheating scum'*? Others report they have experienced *angry motorists beeping, flashing their headlights and swearing* at them.

Not exactly a spirit of sharing and consideration.

What's causing this unpleasantness? It's a roundabout in the town of Llantrisant which gets extremely busy during rush hour. The two lanes that lead into the roundabout become a single lane on the other side.

The trouble arises because some drivers bypass traffic queueing in the inside lane by using the outside lane, before cutting in at the exit.



Not everyone is very happy about this system, with people at loggerheads over whether they should queue or cut in. Taking to social media, many users have expressed their frustration at *queue jumpers* and *inconsiderate drivers* who merge at the last minute.

A typical post reads: Am I the only person this really bugs? There is always a queue of cars that is caused by cars zooming up in the right hand lane and then squeezing in at the last moment by the roundabout. Is it even a filter lane by the roundabout or is it a case of 'you're in the wrong effing lane and NO you're NOT pushing in! We are all going in the same direction. What gives you the right to push in!

Once or twice I have done it, in a hurry thinking everyone else is doing it but the guilt and the injustice I felt made it so not worth it. Am I the only one who wants to yell 'cheating scum' as they fly down on the right lane and then expect to be let in?

Meanwhile other drivers, who regularly use the outside lane, say they have experienced angry motorists beeping, flashing their headlights and swearing at them. Some have even found themselves in a position where drivers hog both lanes and travel extremely close to the car in front to prevent cutting in.

So, what do you think? What are the rights and wrongs of the situation?

Now turn to page 14 for the official answer.

Summer Test Passes

We offer our warmest congratulations to members who passed the advanced driving or riding test Jun, July & August.

Vernon Cannons, who has recently passed the Advanced Driver Test, is full of praise for his Observer:

The most significant part of my Advanced Driver Course was the help and encouragement I received from my Observer, Brian Layt-Williams. It was a great day for me when he said, 'I think you are ready for a check drive'.

I bought into the 'IPSGA' system from the start but after 70 years on the road it was difficult to break the old habits but gradually we got it together. I think the turning point was when Brian did a brief demo run. When I first started driving there were very few traffic lights and roundabouts but I recall there were numerous T shaped signs that indicated 'Halt at Major Road Ahead'.

As you probably know, driving tests were placed on hold during the war and like many others I took full advantage of the situation. My first experience on a bike was 150 cc Francis Barnett (2 speed, hand change). The first car was a 1932 Austin 7 - it had very little to go wrong: no indicators, no stop lights and no wing mirror. The brakes were reserved for emergencies and engine braking was a must. I drove many vehicles over the years and at one time was driving around 25,000 miles a year. I currently drive a Zafira and my wife's Fabia and very occasionally my pride and joy which is a MK 1, 1966, 850 cc Mini - no tax, no MOT and a very low insurance premium.

My road to IAM started when the media covered an elderly gentleman's motoring problem. This resulted in calls for annual tests when people reached the age of 70. Well, I was much older and still taking family and friends to the various hospitals and driving the grandchildren as and when necessary. Although I was confident to continue driving, I decided to check out the various possibilities and thought the IAM Mature Driver Review was the ideal path to take.



I had an excellent hour with Ade Larner and the resultant report indicated that I was a safe and courteous driver but there were many aspects of my driving that needed development. I thought the Advanced Drivers Course looked good and booked in. At the time I thought perhaps it was a step too far for me but it would be an ideal Christmas present for my sons or grandson. Harry Schoetz kindly agreed to place me in the pending file, then as the weeks went by I thought why not just do the course, improve the driving and not worry about taking the actual test.

The check drive with Geoff Ayres was similar to a drive out with Brian - little helpful comments and tips. I will always think of

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Geoff when I hear the name Eynsham. Geoff thought my 'creep and peep' was OK, but I missed the stop sign high up on the wall – there aren't many stop signs to be seen in Oxfordshire. When Geoff endorsed Brian's view that I should take the test, I had to step up to the plate and of course I'm very pleased I did.

I would encourage people of all ages to take the IAM course. Everyone was most helpful and it was an enjoyable experience.

Robbie Roberts has passed his Advanced Driver Test at a truly venerable age – a tremendous achievement:

My name is Brian Roberts (better known as Robbie). I was born in Preston Lancashire in 1931, which makes me 87. People of my age had to do National Service and for mine I joined the RAF in 1950 where I succeeded in being selected to train as a pilot. After completing pilot training, I spent six years flying Meteor Fighter Jets in Fighter Command.

In1957 I joined BEA (British European Airways) later to be amalgamated with BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) to become BA (British Airways)

I finally retired from the flying world in 1998.

In my retirement I noticed that drivers who had an accident after the age of 80 were often headlined as if it was age to blame for the accident, so when I reached the age of 86 I decided to apply to IAM for an assessment. That went well but I was somewhat surprised when the examiner suggested doing the Advanced Driver Course.

I signed up and after several observation drives it was decided that I was ready for a test which I failed. To be honest, after 65 years of driving I don't think I took the whole idea seriously enough. Anyway after a few more observation drives which I took more seriously I managed to pass the retest.

My general feeling is that the high standard of the observation and tests showed me that my driving was not as good as I had thought it was. I hope it has now improved and I look forward to making further improvement.

I must say that I very much enjoyed the whole experience.



Robbie is congratulated on his pass by his observer, Tony Chalkly



Nik Moore, who is already a qualified motorcycle instructor, found he still had things to learn from the Advanced Rider Course:

I passed my motorcycle test back in 2004 and, as many new riders do, considered myself to be a decent rider. After the three years minimum time required, I took a course through BSM to become a motorcycle instructor with a mind to set up my own training school. Then 'bike-moore' was launched. Ever since then, I've been running the school and training everything from Compulsory Basic Training to full licences and advanced riding. I know for a fact that I've taught many members of our group over the years.

I think we should always aim to improve, even after this many years and I always aim to reflect back on each ride-out for any learning points. Nevertheless, it had been some time since my riding

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was 'quality checked' by someone at advanced level, so I signed up for the Advanced Rider Course.

I went in with an open mind, half hoping my ride was already good enough but being prepared to learn some new techniques through the way the IAM interpret the Roadcraft handbook.

I was quite pleased that following my initial induction ride my observer Steve said that everything was as it should be. Obviously I'd swatted up beforehand – there's no point turning up like a school boy on first day of high school. I'd demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the IAM method and delivered a high standard ride. With little else he could do, Steve said he'd like to have his opinion validated with a cross check by Paul Thompson. The cross check went the same way, though Paul did mention that my FJR1300 was very wide on the back with the panniers fitted and advised that I should perhaps stay a little more left on my lefts. Apparently breaking records after just an induction and a cross check, it was time for the test!

I now remember what it was like and how my students feel having someone who knows what they're doing watch every move and every decision, right or wrong. It was a relief when John Lang my examiner told me to 'relax, you've passed'. I'd like to say it was a perfect ride but there were two points of discussion.

Firstly, I'd missed a change down of speed sign over in Bicester. I was actually looking for it as I recognised the situation changing but it was only confirmed when I rode over the big 40 painted on the road at 47mph. At that point I continued to ease off - well there was no point in braking was there? I pointed at the floor and shrugged my shoulders to John, who was no doubt smiling at my discovery.

Second was a suggestion as to how I could knit a couple of the double bends together better. Whilst on the bike you might think you're doing it right, but from behind it's *soooo* much easier to see where an improvement can be made!

Result: I passed with a F1rst!

Some of you may be thinking, 'Well why did you bother doing the test if you already ride at that level?' In reply I'll go back to what I said earlier: we should all be looking to learn from every ride, improving our understanding and ability. The IAM test reassured me that I ride to a good standard and what I teach others is in line with IAM thinking and I shall continue to do both for many years to come.

Thanks to Steve, Paul and John for their time.

David Tanner recently passed his Advanced Rider Test. Here, he puts his pass into perspective:



I passed my Advanced driving test over 25 years ago and only really returned to bikes two years ago, primarily to commute from beyond Witney into central Oxford.

After 25 years in the military, I have chosen an altruistic career finale and now work at Oxfam GB as a Procurement Manager. My biking history is erratic and whilst I retain fond memories of my old 1972 Norton Commando MkIIA Interstate, my current BMW is perfect for the commute. The BMW suits my height and accommodates my bad back).

The next stage maybe to sign up as a SERV blood biker, although that will have to wait until the JR render my left hand fully operable after a minor operation that's coming up shortly.

My other interest is my 1960 Land Rover Series II, which is the primary from of transport at weekends to potter in the Cotswolds.

Paul Wood, recommends the Advanced Riding Course:



David Smith, sings the praises of IAM training after passing the Advanced Rider Test:

Originally from Leeds in Yorkshire, I am a musician. I currently work as Head of Instrumental Studies at the Dragon School in Oxford, where I teach saxophone, clarinet and conduct ensembles. I also play professionally when time allows!

I started riding motorcycles in my youth; I actually rode pillion on the back of a variety of bikes as a child with my dad. I passed my motorcycle test at the age of 23 and have had a number of bikes over the years.

I stopped riding five years ago following an incident on my VFR 750 that could have been fatal... a reckless young car driver overtook on the inside of me then pulled in front of me and braked. A stoppie at 70 mph is not advisable!

To cut a long story short, a year or so ago I wanted to ride again and saw a 1998 VFR 800 in superb condition and bought it! As my father sadly suffered a serious motorcycle accident and another family member suffered a fatal accident on his bike, I decided that I wanted to be as safe as I could be and the IAM course seemed a good way to improve.

Training for the test has transformed my riding. My skills on the bike - and in a car - have improved. I feel more in control and am much more aware whilst I ride.

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I know I have lots still to learn but my thanks must go to Jason Hopgood and Paul Durrands who gave so freely of their time and knowledge as well as Rob, Harry and John Lang who had a part to play in me passing the test.

I have already promised to pay for both my children to undertake IAM courses once they have passed their car tests. Need I say more?

Stay safe!



Andrew Russell, who was delighted to pass the Advanced Rider Test, found it a really positive experience:

I was quite late coming in to biking. I used to ride an old Francis Barnett around my friend's farm and was never allowed by my parents to have a motorcycle on the road.



I got into motorcycles purely motivated by my eldest son who turned up at home one day with a moped. He was going through the usual teenage issues and we agreed to do our motorcycle test together in order to improve our relationship and as a sweetener to get him out of some "bad habits."

We both passed - me eventually! - in 2011.

After that, we attended a bike safe course and both bought larger motorcycles. I started off on a Yamaha Fzs600 and then, after a few years riding, purchased a Yamaha Tdm 900. I eventually upgraded to my current bike - Yamaha Tracer - which I bought new in 2015.

I attended the Cassington bike show in 2017 and happened upon the IAM display and chatted to those manning the stand. I had got to a point in my riding where I was confident

and was really enjoying it, commuting to work as well as pleasure riding whenever I could. But niggling at the back of my mind was how well was I riding and was I doing everything possible to stay as safe as I could on the road.

I went out on a taster ride with Paul Thompson, not really knowing what to expect, but was so impressed with the taster ride and subsequent feedback that I went home and signed up straight away.

The whole training experience started in late autumn. I was really impressed with the way the course was structured, the training materials and the observers' skills in watching my riding and feeding back to explain where improvements could be made.

My confidence has improved as well as my concentration and full use of the road width. In summary: a brilliant experience.

Neil Roberts gained a F1rst in his Advanced Rider Test. Neil is an aircraft engineer working as a project manager on the RAF's new transport aircraft:

Although I learned to drive when I was 18, I didn't learn to ride until I was 29. After growing up around bikes while my dad raced at the Isle of Man, I saw the attraction of riding but never got the opportunity to learn until later. In my first year of riding I attended a Bike Safe course run by Thames Valley Police. Spending a day riding with the Police gave me a much greater appreciation of road positioning and forward thinking while riding.

Since my Bike Safe course, I knew I wanted to learn more and become a better rider. I had two main reasons for joining IAM and becoming an advanced rider. First of all I wanted to improve my riding and to become a smoother and overall safer rider but secondly I wanted to give something back to the community by becoming a SERV blood biker.

Having now gaining a F1rst, this has given me the confidence and knowledge to ride further afield from my local routes, ride roads I would usually avoid and spend time touring a little more of the UK.





Martin Williams, who passed the Advanced Rider Test, traces his love of motorbikes back to his schooldays. Martin recalls:

It all started so long ago...

A schoolfriend acquired a BSA 250 for £15 - I think it was a C12 although we could not be really sure. He said if I helped him fix it I could have a go!

Many long weekends later we finally got it to start. It went for about 500 yards before the head gasket blew oil everywhere; so after much application of hematite gasket sealant I managed to ride it, just round the block. And that's how it started.

I think I have got through about 15 machines since then. I used to spend many happy hours riding to work in central London filtering through the traffic on the A40 from West London. I have only ever "written off" one bike in all that time: a small Honda, which was no great loss, on an icy corner one November. Today 40 years later I am still riding to work, though only in the summer!

What's my favourite bike? I am often asked this. I think it was a very comfortable CX500. The worst was another Honda, this time a "Fireblade" that would never start, despite having much attention from the main dealer.

I am looking forward to joining you all for some ride outs and as the knees start to creak perhaps a bike a bit more longer in the leg might be more appropriate!

Kind regards to everyone who helped me over the last year - particularly Paul and Chris.



Other passes this summer include the following:

Advanced Driver Test

Dawn Breach

Thomas Deabill (F1rst) (below)

Thomas Hatt

Gerald Roseman

Advanced Rider Test

Stephen Fellows

Clifford Orchard

David Pilbeam

Ray Smith (F1rst)

...and Jane Kennedy-Hill. Jane says:

My reasons for wanting to take the advanced driving course were many but, predominantly, I wanted to ensure that I still had the necessary skills to drive safely. I had noticed that a couple of my peers had become worryingly unsafe at times but did not think there was a problem with their driving and I wished to reassure myself that this was not the case with me. As a bonus, there were a number of things that I learnt and some that I had forgotten.

I feel I gained a great deal from the course.



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Visit to Thames Valley Air Ambulance HQ



Thanks are due to OAGAM member, Biz Carter, who arranged a visit last month to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance Service HQ, based at RAF Benson.

TVAA provides emergency medical care 365 days a year, up to 19 hours per day, for around two million people who live, work and travel in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The Thames Valley Air Ambulance is one of the busiest air ambulance services in the country and is renowned for the professionalism and dedication of its crew –the pilots, paramedics and doctors. They flew a total of 1,186 total missions last year.

Each day, an average of three people will find themselves in a life-threatening situation that requires urgent and advanced pre-hospital medical treatment.

On a sunny August day, the group of sixteen were show around the top of the range EC135 Eurocopter T3 and its equipment and systems.

I had a very interesting and geekily enjoyable morning at Benson yesterday and thanks to everyone who organised it, Jane Rackley

Really enjoyed the visit, and thank you for the link, Caroline Duchesne

I found the visit to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance highly enjoyable and informative. A big thank you to all who organised the event on the day, Robert Magill

That visit to TVAA was superb. My thanks to Biz Carter for organising. I really enjoyed that, the talk was very interesting. Many thanks indeed to all involved, Alan Jones







Thanks to Jane Rackley and Paul Thompson for their photos.

Summer Monthly Car Drive Outs A Successful New Development



This year the Oxford Group initiated a series of monthly car drive outs that took place over the course of the summer. Car Associate Coordinator Geoff Ayres reports:

The drive outs this year involved a broad range of participants. We welcomed observers, group members, associates and members of the public coming along for a taster session. The programme has been a roaring success.

In preparation, Chief Car Observer, Alex Lewis, spent time planning a variety of routes round the Oxfordshire countryside, starting and finishing in Kidlington but varying in length. On drive out nights, participants met at Exeter Hall; observers, members and associates were then paired or grouped in varying combinations, before taking it in turns to drive and observe each other over one of the set routes.

Vehicles ranged from sedate family cars to high performance sports models – I have to say, there's nothing like being driven through the summer countryside in a Porsche with the top down!

Being able to observe and be observed by a good natured 'critical friend' was a really beneficial experience. Having exchanged quite a few do's and don'ts, we have all come away as better advanced drivers.

Not all went to plan needless to say. On one memorable evening I was demonstrating how to overtake a tractor on a not very wide minor road, while keeping within the 60mph limit. Tractor wheels are massive these days and we had an excellent close up view of this particular one as we passed at just over 60mph - all right, at 70mph - and I failed to give the tractor a little toot as we went by!!!!

Thank you everybody who came along to help make the meetings such a success.



The Road Rage Roundabout: what are the rules?

Regular users of the roundabout in Llantrisant are at loggerheads Who do you side with – the early queuers or the queue jumpers?

Drivers in merging lanes are expected to use both lanes to advance to the lane reduction point and merge at that location, alternating turns. But often drivers who change lanes too early do not like to see other drivers continue until the end of the drop-away lane, even though this is sometimes encouraged by the authorities to reduce traffic.



The approach to the exit at the roundabout in Llantrisant is signposted with a red and black split merge road sign. According to the Highway Code, this sign means "Dual carriageway ends", suggesting vehicles should take turns to merge in to the single lane.

According to the local council's highways department: Motorists are able to use both carriageways on the approach to the roundabout and then merge in turn... This really relies upon the courtesy of all road users to work smoothly.

Last year, the RAC also published guidance on what they called "zip-merging" - the act of cars passing you in the outside lane while you wait for a lane-closure up ahead. The phrase was coined in the US and is a traffic flow measure which drivers should adopt when a motorway

lane or dual lane closes leaving only one lane available. The idea is that drivers should merge at the point of a lane closure instead of indicating early and merging as soon as possible.

Information published by the RAC argued that those who choose to move into an empty right hand lane before the two lanes merge into one are actually doing the right thing.

A study in 2008 by a US work zone engineer found that the three primary benefits of zip-merging are:

- A reduction in the difference in speeds between the two lanes: without the urgency to move over, the traffic is travelling at roughly the same speed in both lanes, making the merge easier and safer.
- The length of queue is reduced by up to 50%, which is critical in areas where you find junctions and slip roads.
- When nobody has a perceived advantage, the potential for 'road rage' is reduced significantly.

In the UK, the consensus is the same although things are a little less clear this side of the Atlantic.

The best solution of all - ride a motorbike!

Adapted with permission from an article by Tyler Mears, published on the Wales Online website.

2018-19 Events Checklist

Wed 3 October 2018

7.00pm for 7.30pm - Monthly Meeting **This meeting has been cancelled.**

Wed 7 November 2018

7.30pm - OAGAM Annual General Meeting Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 5 December 1018

7.30pm - Christmas Social (tbc) Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 6 February 2019

7.30pm – Monthly Meeting (tbc) Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 6 March 2019

7.30pm – Monthly Meeting (tbc) Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 3 April 2019

7.30pm – Monthly Meeting (tbc) Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 1 May 2019

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 5 June 2019

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 3 July 2019

7.00 pm for 7.30 pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 7 August 2019

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Wed 4 September 2019

7.00pm for 7.30pm - OAGAM Drive-out & Ride-out Meeting Meet Exeter Hall, Kidlington

Check for updates of this list by visiting http://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/oagam



and finally...

OAGAM Committee: Contact Us

General enquiries or comments

Rob Archer, Chair

Harry Schoetz, Secretary

OAGAM subscriptions and other financial questions

Paul Thompson, Treasurer

Enquiries from or about car associates & observers

Alex Lewis, Chief Observer Cars

Geoff Avres, Car Associate Co-ordinator

Enquiries from or about bike associates & observers

Paul Thompson, Chief Observer Bikes

David Lisk, Bike Associate Co-ordinator

Bike Rides & Events

Ted Tattersall, Bike Rides & Events Coordinator

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Phil Hine, Membership Secretary

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Group Scorecard

The group scorecard is published each month and shows the test statistics for the previous twelve months. After a particularly busy summer of passes, here are the scores for August and September.

	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike	Region Avg.
5	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
First	11	7	4	3.6
Pass	33	14	19	10.7
Fail	9	5	4	2

over the la	st 12 months)		Status: 04/09/2018	
	OAGAM Group	OAGAM Car	OAGAM Bike	Region Avg.
	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
First	11	7	4	3.6
Pass	32	14	18	10.6
Fail	8	5	3	2
% Pass	84	81	88	88

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