



GO BETWEEN

Oxford IAM Group Newsletter

August 2009



From the Saddle

Thanks to Helen's prompting, I'm sitting writing this in a cafe on Frideswide Square, doing a bit of work before my next meeting. Having the concentration span of a gnat with ADHD, I'm spending rather more time looking out of the window than working. What I see seems a bit like a microcosm of Oxford's - and the UK's - transport problems.

First, the cyclists. From where I'm sitting, I can see the traffic lights. Actually, wherever you sit in Frideswide Square you can see traffic lights. That's because OCC bought a whole boxful at a car-boot sale and scattered them across the entire square. But back to the plot... I've just watched five cyclists in succession run red lights. Despite the doomsayers, they're still alive and they did it in perfect safety. You'd have to be even dafter than some Oxford's dimmest cyclists to run a red with a bus coming the other way.

Then, the buses. Most of the time, I can't see Said Business School because there's a wall of buses in the way. They're spending quite a lot of time hooting at the drivers, the bikers, the cyclists and pedestrians. Driving a bus in Oxford has to be a seriously tough job - these guys deserve medals. Stop-start-stop-start-lights-stop-start.

The pedestrians are pretty much cowed and corralled onto the pavements. That means they have to cross (I think) about eight lanes of traffic to get from here to the station. And Oxford is supposed to be pedestrian-friendly? The ones that aren't crossing are waiting for buses. One couple has been there ages.

The rest of the traffic is just getting on with it. People aren't anticipating the lights so they're taking far too long to get away, holding up the people behind them. They're queued too close together and I've already seen three near miss rear-end shunts.

So, in this little bit of Oxford we've got the same things that are messing up the transport system and road safety in the rest of the country. People ignoring rules that have gone too far (you know, there are 24 sets of traffic lights between my house and the centre of Oxford? No wonder people have started running reds). People not thinking at every level from transport planners down to riders. And systems that don't work anymore. We really do need to rethink the way we understand road safety and transport in the UK. The individual on the ground has the best view and position to make transport choices ranging from 'is it safe to go' to 'should I take the bus or drive?'

Too much centralisation isn't good for anyone.

Mark McArthur-Christie

Member Benefits

IAM members who are not currently AA members can now get a 30% joining discount on the membership fee for the majority of AA membership levels. IAM members who are already with the AA can transfer into the IAM renewal scheme at any time to qualify for their next 25% renewal discount. Full details of this benefit can be found on the Institutes website in the member benefits section of the member's only area. This is a telephone only offer and can be booked by calling 0800 048 0075 quoting 'IAM405'



Garmin have just provided us with very attractive new discounts on four of their most popular units. These prices will be valid through until Christmas and will be revised in the event that Garmin alter their own pricing in that time. Take a look at the models and offer details by visiting www.garmin.com/iam

GROUP NEWS

Autumn/ Winter Programme

It doesn't seem like 5 minutes since we were planning the Summer meetings, but it's come round again! September marks the first of our evening talks at Exeter Hall, & there is a great programme lined up. We start with Gary Baldwin, who is a Collision Investigation Officer with the Police & also a keen biker- he is one of the founders of Rapid Training. He's always a very entertaining speaker, so get along if you can!

Summer Meetings

The drive-out meetings went well, if a little on the quiet side. This really is a great opportunity for Associates or Guests to get out with an Observer for an informal Demonstration Drive. If you are an Observer & can help next year by giving 2 or 3 passengers a demo drive, please let Clive know. You can also talk to Clive if you are a member who might like to become an Observer & help other people to achieve IAM test success.

Calendar

2nd September	Gary Baldwin -Police Collision Investigation Officer & one of the originators of Rapid Training
7th October	Ian Lewis- Thatcham-Crash and Security.
4th November	OAGAM AGM & Roger Allen-President Iron Butt UK Long-Distance Motorcycling
2nd December	Christmas Quiz Night and mince pies

Recent Passes

Congratulations to Helen Barrett, Amy Biggs, Emma Gibbard, Tony Barrett, Gemma Lang, Pascal Dolan & Steven Richardson who have all passed their tests recently. Well done to them & their Observers!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Skid Pan

We have provisionally booked a skid pan day for November 7th. We need a minimum of 12 people to make this viable, and there are still places available. The cost is £135, this gets you a two hour session in a group of 3 participants, using the most up-to-date equipment in the country. You will be able to experience understeer, oversteer, front and rear wheel skids, Non ABS Braking, ABS Braking, Traction Control Systems, ESP systems, Driving in Adverse Conditions and Aquaplaning. It really will pay off should you be unlucky enough to get into difficulty on the road. (Note from Ed: I cannot emphasise enough how valuable this training can be: it saved me when I hit a diesel spill on a roundabout because I knew what was happening & how to get out of it. Its also very good fun!) If you want to go please contact Helen & Ian Jeffs at iamoxfordevents@hotmail.co.uk by the end of August

Off-Roading

We are still looking at finalising a date for the 4x4 event. This will be run at a venue near Denham and will cost £75 per person and includes lunch. The event will start at 10am and finish approx. 4pm. You will need to bring with you waterproofs and a change of clothes as it can get very wet!



Up-Coming Bike Rides

- Sun. Sept. 27th Foxton Locks near Market Harborough led by David Bissell
meet at Bicester Little Chef Services at 10am (Half Day Run)
(postcode is OX26 1BT)
- Sun. Oct. 4th TBA led by John Lang
meet at Bicester Little Chef Services at 1.30pm (Half Day)

Sammy Miller Run June 28 2009

I would like to say a big thank you to Duncan for a great ride out. The pace all day was very good, the venue spot-on and well worth the ride. I know, sorry knew, nothing about older bikes but thanks to Sammy Miller and especially with Duncan there to tell us so much about the really old bikes he had owned from new! I now know so much more. Imagine doing the TT at speeds approaching 60mph with just rubber bicycle rim brakes.



After Sammy Miller's it was on to the fish and chips, again a top notch venue with the food almost worth the ride alone.

I do hope the rest of you had a good weekend and a pity you couldn't join us, the Harley lot seemed to be out in force, all I can say is you missed a good one. *Regards, Richard*

Beaulieu Run

Sunday 9th August a bike ride was organised to Beaulieu as it was holding a 'bike friendly day'. Starting point was Bicester services and it was a fine day so yours truly decided to go along. My machine is a Yamaha Dragstar 650 (cruiser style a la Harley Davidson but much prettier!). Everyone else had some sort of proper bike for going fast. 70MPH on mine is top whack as the wind pressure makes it almost impossible to hold on any faster. Well it was dual carriageway or motorway almost all the way so it was 70 almost all the way! Thanks to all the guys (yes, all men and only 4 others) 5 in total with David Bissell leading for not racing off a high speed and leaving me trailing behind. It took 2 hours to get there and about 100 miles as we went up and down the M27 more than once as David tried to read his car sat nav to find the correct exit. All most enjoyable though!



Not an IAM ride-out....(stillimage.net)

Plenty of bikes at Beaulieu Motor Museum and only £10 for us as we had not had time to register earlier. Lunch in the restaurant and then a good look round the museum. I had not been for years. The monorail still runs through the roof of the museum. Top Gear had a tent with a lot of the vehicles they have cobbled together over the years. We left about 2.30 and had a good run back, again about 2 hours. I was last to arrive back but made it in one piece. Then home - but I did manage to get the peg down and scrape on the ground as I turned into my road - so it just goes to show how slowly cornering needs to be taken on these beasts! Just remember that John L if we ever go out! I was exhausted and had to go to bed at 9pm! Still a great run out which I enjoyed immensely.

We just need to get more bikers out together! Hark at me - this is the first run I managed in 2009!

Regards,

The fair-weather biker.

Notes from Ed



My latest venture- sidecar racing!

It's been another busy year for me, with all the motorsport I do- and apparently I'm not the only one! I recently received this write-up from a new marshal- the orange-clad people without who motorsport would not happen. I'm always looking for contributions for the newsletter so if any of you want to write about anything vehicle-related please do. Likewise, I'd be grateful for any photographs I can use. Please email anything to bikerfloss@hotmail.co.uk

Marshalling

I have taken up marshalling at Silverstone (premier racing circuit UK and home of F1 - well it was.) This involves getting up really early to be on site by 7-7.30am on race days. By the way all marshalling in this country is by volunteers. People give up their free time to participate and motor racing would not be possible without such dedicated people. I am only a part timer by comparison to some who seem the live circuit side.

Last race meeting I attended was the Formula 3/ GT. Was it crowded? No. Marshals outnumbered public! This is a sad state of affairs for non F1 racing in this country.

Formula ford also had a race there and Graham Hill's grandson (Damon Hill's son) was racing and wearing the familiar rowing club marked helmet his grandfather made so famous.

There was also a Lamborghini challenge which is a new race. A warning about following other drivers not only applies to the racing circuit but also normal roads. One Lamborghini spun off and the one behind just ran off the track as he had been following for a while and just followed him off!

Marshalling though can be uneventful at times and apart from that one incident we had nothing to do all day. This does not mean sitting down doing nothing as one has to be standing and ready to act. Be careful though to the approaching cars and not the race! There is also very little time between races to sit down and have a rest as between races the marshals check the track for objects that could cause punctures or damage to cars or people and after that the next race will be already lined up.

This particular weekend one Ronnie O'Sullivan (who you say? He is one of the most famous snooker players of this country and in the world!) was in his first ever race (a VW race). And yes it did include a van!). He qualified last though and even worse did not manage to finish even one lap! Don't give up the day job just yet Ronnie! Which just goes to show how difficult motor racing can be.

However there was a silver lining to the cloud - a hog roast after racing finished. And boy was that good - crackling like you have never tasted before! Home by 9.30pm. Bed.

Marshalling is also a good way to meet new people - especially 'characters' and there are plenty of those. Having said that they are dedicated and on the whole very competent and take it very seriously.

Yours, N.M- a new marshal.

Committee Members

Mark McArthur-Christie - Chair

Clive Stayt -Vice Chair & Chief Car Observer

Tony Chalkly -Vice Chair & Secretary

Duncan Jones - Membership Secretary

Nick Morse - Treasurer

Chris Caspell - Car Associate Co-ordinator

Ian Jeffs - Events Manager

John Lang - Chief Motorcycle Observer & Co-ordinator

Mike Roberts

Janet van den Berge

Peter Ingram

Helen Deeley - Newsletter Editor

All Contributions will be gratefully received, however Editors' decisions on content are final, & I reserve the right to edit articles. Any opinions stated are personal unless otherwise noted.

Contact me: Helen Deeley- bikerfloss@hotmail.co.uk