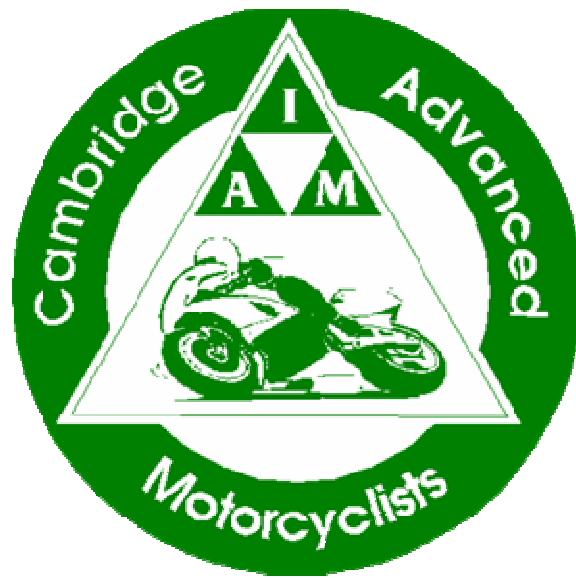


CAMunicate



The Newsletter
of
Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists

www.camsiam.org.uk

Registered Charity Nos. 1085377

IAM Group No. 7221

Volume 10 Issue 3

May / June 2009

Contents

Editorial	2
Assessment Day – Sunday 10th May	3
Annual General Meeting	4
BikeSafe – The Show	6
Senior Observer – Should I - Shouldn't I?	6
Skills Day – Sunday 31st May	8
Meldreth Manor Show – Wednesday 17th June	9
The trouble with bikes	9
Riding in Hazardous Conditions.....	12
Riding in the Wet	13
The Journey	14
Committee Feedback	15
Test Passes	16
Useful Information.....	16
OBSERVER'S CONTACTS.....	16
CAMUNICATE CONTRIBUTIONS	16
GROUP CONTACT.....	16
DIARY OF EVENTS – 2009	17

Editorial

With the AGM completed this issue of CAMunicate includes an account of the meeting and the names of the new committee. I am pleased to say that I will be able to remain editor for a further year and will do all I can to bring you interesting and informative articles.

The CAM events calendar is now getting into full swing and we have our first Assessment Day on Sunday May 10th. This edition contains a description of what it is all about and many members may have attended one prior to joining CAM – so can you all please have a think about any non-members you know who might benefit from a free assessed ride and tell them about the day.

On the 31st May we are holding our Skills-Day and as we had to unfortunately cancel our 2008 event there must be significant demand from recent members who would like the opportunity to practice some of their bike control skills in a site away from the public roads. Again this edition contains an article providing some additional information.

The AGM took place in Orwell on the 27th April and we now have a re-organised Committee and some new faces. So it's a big thank-you to David Parnell for being our Chairman for the last couple of years and who has now decided to stand-down from the Committee – though he remains actively involved with the club as a Senior Observer (see his account of Senior Observer training later in this CAMunicate). Also thank-you to Ian Beeby who has been Secretary & Treasurer for eleven years and has been a key part of building the club up to what it is today; Ian remains on the Committee and is also one of our Senior Observers.

For those of you who were not at the AGM may I reiterate the appeal that I made for input to this newsletter. To maintain an interesting club magazine I need interesting input from the membership as it is the inclusion of activities and experiences of the membership which provides the variety within CAMunicate. Without your stories CAMunicate defaults to being a

updated calendar of events and account of club procedures and meetings. Within the AGM article I provide some ideas on what you could write about.

Towards the end of February the club put on a special course entitled 'Riding in Hazardous Conditions'. This was attended by 25 members and the interactive discussions covered many hazardous situations and the mitigating measures that could be taken. A brief article is included to provide an overview of the course.

Building on the Hazardous Conditions course we have the first of what I hope will become a series of articles from Observers that provides insight to some aspect of safe riding. David Schindler outlines some views and ideas regarding riding on wet roads and has included some practical advice on what to look for and to think about. There will be a slot in future CAMunicates for similar articles from others within the Observer community so please give some thought as to what you might be able to contribute. As with all we do information is provided to increase awareness and all riders need to take personal responsibility for how they incorporate into their own riding approach.

The unpleasant weather conditions of January and February are fortunately behind us and the days are warmer and the roads dry. But we will have the legacy of the frosty times with us for many months, perhaps longer, in the form of seriously degraded road surfaces. This manifests itself as both broken up top surfaces and also pot-holes. The responsibility for maintaining local roads is split between the various Local Authorities and the Highways Agency according to the nature of the route. Both organisations make the argument that unless they are informed by users of surface problems they cannot be expected to know where to repair – accordingly we, as users, need to report problems.

Assessment Day – Sunday 10th May

Attracting new members to Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists is a vital part of the club's activities as it is taking new Associates through the IAM process to test standard and full membership that defines our purpose.

Accordingly the assessment day that will take place on Sunday 10th May is an important event and the assistance of the membership is requested to help make it a success. Please inform friends, colleagues, riding buddies etc who you think might benefit from some additional road-riding training about the Assessment Day and encourage them to attend.

Details are shown below;

Date	Sunday 10 th May 2009
Time	First observed ride 09.30H Last observed ride 12.30H
Location	BT Building (front car-park British Telecom Site Long Road, Cambridge CB2 2HG GPS : N.52.18050, E.000.11988 Grid Ref : TL 45036, BGN 55705

The format of the day is quite straight-forward in that attendees are invited to have a free, no commitment, observed ride that covers about 20 miles and takes 40 minutes or thereabouts. After the ride they receive comprehensive feedback and a written report covering the various aspects of advanced riding.

The rider can act on this feedback in whatever way they choose; they may ignore it, or accept it and try to build this immediate information into their ongoing riding and finally,

ideally, they will recognise that there may be areas of their riding that could be improved and sign-up for our IAM Skills for Life programme.



We will be supported by the Road Safety Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council and one of the casualty reduction officers from Cambridgeshire Police. They will bring with them their mobile exhibition caravan with its video screen, exhibitions and tea & coffee facilities. We will have our new CAM liveried gazebo so there will be plenty of places to rest and to provide feedback etc.

We have organised the site, the Road Safety caravan, our Gazebo, Observers are arranged to do the rides so all we need are attendees. Help spread the word so we have a good turn-out.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists was held on the 27th April at the Orwell Pavilion in Orwell.

These notes are not intended to be the minutes of the meeting but rather to give readers an overview of proceedings. Those interested in obtaining the formal minutes should contact the Club Secretary for 2009/10 as listed below.

In the weeks prior to the meeting an official notification pack was sent out to all members including details of the meeting, its venue, timing and purpose. Also included were nomination forms to enable the membership to put themselves, or others, forward for Committee positions

Meeting Agenda

- Chairman's opening address
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- Voting for Committee Members
- AOB

Chairman's Address

David Parnell, the Chairman for the 2008 period, thanked the members of the Committee for their support and energy during the year and for 'running the club'. It was pleasing to note the number of new people attracted to join the club and who, after following the programme, had passed the IAM test. The events of the Headway Charity Ride, All Day Rides, Sunday Rides and Assessment Days were all successful but it was unfortunate that the 2008 Skills Day had to be cancelled due to venue problems and that the Maintenance Day was withdrawn due to insufficient interested participants.

For 2009 the venue issue for the Skills Day has been resolved and the event will take place on the 31st May in Royston – places are going fast. A new evening course on 'Riding in Hazardous Conditions' received positive feedback and this encourages us to repeat again in the future. The First Aid & Accident Management Course in the Autumn 2008 was not well attended, in fact the club failed to cover its costs. This is most unfortunate as it is a very relevant activity and a real opportunity to brush-up on vital first-aid skills outside of an accident scene!. It is hoped that the 2009 event will be better subscribed.

The Chairman thanked the Club Observers and noted that these are 'the face of CAM'; their high professional standards have ensured that the Club has maintained a high pass rate (100%). The Club also has an active Observer training programme and congratulations are extended to those who have qualified as Observers during 2008.

In closing David Parnell wished the 'best of luck' to the new Committee and proffered the advice 'keep the good bits of what has gone before, work on the bits that are not quite right and in doing so things will continually improve'.

Secretary's Report

The club currently has 73 full members of which 17 are Observers plus 39 Associates. The membership year runs from / to end March and all club dues need to be paid by the AGM at the end April. Members who do not pay their dues for the year will not be entitled to participate in club activities.

It should also be noted that as CAM is the local motorcycle branch of the IAM it is expected that members will also maintain their membership of the central IAM.

Over the 2008 period the club attracted 28 new members and achieved 24 passes of the IAM test.

Treasurer's Report

Over the 12 month accounting period the club had an income of £3020 derived from direct membership subscriptions and IAM credits associated with Observers and the Skills for Life programme. During the year the club purchased a liveried gazebo plus accessories that will be used for events such as the Assessment Day and a lap-top PC with projector for use in training. All other expenditure was used to cover operational expenses such as room hire, test fees and similar. Due to the capital expenditure the club consumed £252 from cash reserves built up from previous years.

The accounts as maintained by the Treasurer have been independently verified and will be included in the Group Annual Return (GAR) sent to the IAM. The club has been able to provide the facilities and services to the membership within the available budget due to the activities of the volunteers who help to make the club what it is.

The New Committee

Following the election process the following were confirmed as the Committee for the 2009/2010 period.

Position	Name
Chairman	Stephen Bradshaw
Vice-Chairman	David Nobel
Treasurer	Peter Burge
Secretary	Adrian Peters
Committee Members	Mark Aldridge
Committee Members	Stephen Alsop
Committee Members	Teresa Bradshaw
Committee Members	Julie D'Alesandro
Committee Members	David Schindler
Committee Members	Ian Beeby
Committee Members	Phil Pearson
Committee Member	Lynn Peters

Any Other Business

CAMunicate

The editor of CAMunicate (David Nobel) thanked all those members who had made contributions to the magazine over the last eighteen months and emphasised the importance of an ongoing supply of material to keep the club magazine interesting.

Articles from members can cover any subject that is of potential interest to the membership, some ideas include;

- Accounts of tours, all-day rides, events visited, holidays, track-days and similar

- Your bike – why you have it, what you like about it and what you don't. Things you have done to it, changed, modified, repaired.
- Your opinions, views, comments on issues currently affecting biking
- Biking books & films that you have read / seen and think might be of interest to others
- Interesting stories or anecdotes

Without the input of the membership there is no CAMunicate so you are all asked to think about what you can contribute.

BikeSafe – The Show

Did you go to 2008 BikeSafe show at Hendon? It was excellent. The show is run from the same place for two years then it moves. Take the opportunity while it is in our area to visit. Not often you get a free show.

See <http://www.bikesafe-london.co.uk/nationalbikesafeshow2009.html> if you have web access. If they repeat what they had last year there will be manufacturers and accessory suppliers' stands, some touring stands and one selling books. You can also book a test ride on the machine of your dreams or maybe just one you fancy trying out.

If you want to try a bike then my advice is to book up as soon as you arrive. You can schedule your ride for later in the day if you don't want to go straight back out having just ridden down there. When you go out you do so with a police escort (one to one). I had two rides last year – a Honda Pan European and a Harley Street Rod (just for the experience you understand). They each lasted about 45 minutes and covered a wide variety of roads. When you get back your escort will give you tips on what you might think about to make riding safer.

The show last year included a dirt bike circuit (I pitied the grounds-man when he came in on the Monday morning), stunts, formation riding and all sorts of offers and other 'attractions' some of which were very nice.

Anyone with a fetish for police bikes will never see so many in one place. The Harley Road King from the Northern Ireland Force did make me wonder what sort of criminals they had over there that could be apprehended by such a tractor. Each of the Forces in the UK sends representatives so there are bikes of every hue.

David Parnell

Senior Observer – Should I - Shouldn't I?

After going out for yet another practise ride and coming back only to complain about my slow riding abilities my wife asked me why was I putting myself through this. Good question I thought. I tried to answer it for myself.

Firstly I enjoy riding. Observing for IAM/Cambridge Advanced Motorcyclists adds a special purpose, introduces me to fellow bikers from all walks of life and challenges me to ride better myself and try to work out how I can help them. But 'going' for Senior Observer was a challenge which I thought would be interesting and might make me a better rider. I anticipated that whether or not I made the grade I would still be ahead simply from trying. Besides – why not? Finally I believe CAM needs more Senior Observers to help us do what I think we do very well (but could do better) – help fellow bikers to improve their riding usually, but not always, by preparing them for the Advanced Test.

The IAM has recognised the need to put more effort into training observers to be senior observers. The reason is simple – the need to demonstrate to the DSA the quality of the service. The Driving Standards Agency is responsible for ensuring quality of all driving/riding instruction and recognises the quality of the work of all observers because of the cascade by which it is managed. The DSA recognises the quality of the IAM Staff

Examiners – all ex police trainers/riders and monitors the standard they apply to testing Senior Observers . Those Senior Observers are expected to share their knowledge with Observers and Trainee Observers having been shown, by demonstrating their riding and communicating abilities to the Staff Examiner, the standard that the IAM is seeking.

The Group didn't manage to get anyone on the IAM's course for aspiring Senior Observers but Steve Bradshaw put his recent experience of passing the SO test to good use by preparing notes and a three Sunday morning training course to help prepare six of us for a test. The attendees included our two long standing Senior Observers since SOs must be re-tested at 3 yearly intervals – first by a fellow SO and then by a Staff Examiner.

Our course comprised:

- description and discussion of what is looked for on the test followed by a slow riding practise session
- a role play in which, in pairs we went through the briefing, road sessions in which we tried to replicate faults we were given on a role play card (as opposed to the ones we do naturally!) and then work out how to feedback the person and give them a plan which might help them improve; followed by slow riding practise
- back in the classroom we studied the sort of riding characteristics that observers meet and exchanged views on how to tackle them; followed by slow riding practise

The thing to note, apart from the hard work that Steve put into structuring the course was the extent of self help we gave each other. This extended beyond the sessions Steve organised because Mac offered me help in overcoming my apprehension at tackling slow riding. Mac, Steve A and I met one Saturday morning and spent our time making good use of an empty car park. With this tuition behind me I went out each day for several weeks and included in my run a slow riding session. I'm not sure about the adage 'practise makes perfect' but, in my case, it certainly made a difference.

The test application form was filled in and the fee submitted. CAM pays the £30 fee for the test (which the IAM stresses is heavily subsidised – as it turned out you get half a day of 'quality time' with a real expert and very useful comments on your riding/observing so I think in value terms it is excellent). Actually, it is even better value as the Group pays the fee because it expects to call on its SOs all of whom, just like the Observers, are volunteers.

The test is in three parts:

- meet the examiner, sort the paperwork and do the number-plate eyesight check
- perform a complete observed ride with an Associate (or if no Associate is available the Staff Examiner will play the role) on the assumption that you have never met the individual before. It should include: meeting and briefing, ride, slow riding session, feedback, written record and action plan. The choice of route is also assessed.
- perform a demonstration ride at a standard appropriate to giving guidance to an Observer including a slow riding session if not adequately covered in the session with the Associate. This may end with questions.

Then you get the result on the spot. This is followed by an extensive debrief. For me this was the most useful part of the day.

And that's all there is to it! Thanks are due to Steve B, my fellow course mates and to Peter Howes for being my Associate on the day.

I would encourage all members of the group to consider the challenge of being an Observer and for all Observers to progress to Senior Observer. You will be assured of the support of your fellows and the opportunity to do that which you enjoy – getting out on your bike.

David Parnell

Skills Day – Sunday 31st May

The Skills-Day is the premier event in the CAM calendar as it has been demonstrated to provide real useable skills that members can put into practice in their daily riding. All members are encouraged to attend at least one of these events as it allows the training and practice of skills in a way that is not possible on the public roads.

Due to problems with securing a suitable venue during 2008 no event was held so it is hoped that we will have a strong demand from the members who have joined CAM over late 2007, 2008 and 2009. This year we will be holding the event at the Royston Goods Vehicle Test Station which is a location we used several years ago. It is a site that provides wide areas of good tarmac, a covered area and facilities to make tea & coffee.

Details are shown below;

Date	Sunday 31 st May 2009
Time	Start Time 10.00H End time – late afternoon
Location	Royston Goods Vehicle Test Station Orchard Rd, Royston SG8 5HA GPS : N. 52°03.13.20, W 0°02.03.21 Grid Ref : TL349413
Price	£15 per participant
Book with ...	Mac Lewis (mac@lewisonline.org).
Lunch	Bring a packed lunch – no local shops to use.

This will be an action packed day that will help you to improve your handling of your bike at slow speed and will also enable you to practise other activities such as active counter steering, swerve avoidance techniques and safe emergency braking.

Without wanting to defuse the excitement of the day and wary that some aspects of the course might be varied, the following is a brief description of what you can expect to be doing.



Slow speed control based on weaving between a line of cones and then, as riders become more accomplished, moving the cones closer together. Once a few runs have been done then doing-'U-turns' and manoeuvring in car-parks will be a 'piece of cake'.

Ride up to a line on the road, bring the bike to a complete stand-still and then pull off again – all without putting a foot down. Great skills to use as you pull up to traffic lights that are in the process of changing.

Counter steering seems to generate all kinds of mystique but it's a vital part of bike control and we all use it, whether consciously or not. On the

skills-day the shape of a truck is drawn on the ground and avoiding action is practiced. If you don't quite get it right at first then you get to have another go; much better than trying it out with a real truck in an unexpected road situation.

Controlled braking is a skill that needs to be developed and motorcycle brakes are generally very powerful if used properly. Get it wrong and the wheels can disappear away from under you, get it right and the tyre will give you great grip. In the safe area of the Royston site the skills-day team will show you techniques and then help you to practice – you know in advance that there is no traffic around and what the road surface is like so you can concentrate on progressively using the brake controls and developing that braking performance. Again better to practice this before being in the situation where you need to do it for real on the road, 'don't let your real emergency stop on the road be the first time you have felt how your bike behaves'

Many of the exercises sound fairly straight-forward when described but are often challenging to implement. The team who run skills-day are committed to helping participants to get the best out of the event and the whole event should be informative and enjoyable. By the end of the day all participants will almost certainly have increased their slow and medium speed riding skills and this can only contribute to overall bike control.

Meldreth Manor Show – Wednesday 17th June



**ROYSTON & DISTRICT
MOTORCYCLE CLUB**

**24TH ANNUAL CHARITY
MOTORCYCLE SHOW**

**WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE
GATES OPEN 6:30PM**

**MELDRETH MANOR RIDING SCHOOL
SG8 6NN**

ENTRY £4

CHILDREN UNDER 14 FREE



for more information go to
roystonmotorcycleclub.co.uk



The Meldreth Manor Bike Show as organised by the Royston & District Motorcycle Club (RDMC) will be taking place on the evening of the 17th June and CAM will once again have a presence.

This show has been an annual event since 1986 and attracts several thousand bikes from all across the region. It is a charity raising activity with proceeds going towards the Meldreth Manor School which is a Scope residential and day school for disabled students. Over the years additional recipients of donations have included MAGPAS (Mid Anglia General Practitioner Accident Services) and East Anglia Air Ambulance.

The show is generally a mix of trade exhibitors, particularly local firms, and a large number of bikes on display ranging through classic British and European machines, current models and the occasional custom. If previous years are anything to go by then it will be a super evening out in a very friendly environment so if you are free on the 17th June you should try to get there.

The trouble with bikes

My love of motorcycles started when I was about 11 or 12 years old. Grand-dad owned a succession of fairly small capacity bikes and I would take every opportunity to jump on the back and to go for a ride, even if it was just down to the local shops just over a mile or so away.

No crash helmets, no protective gear, apart from the long great coat, flat cap and leather gauntlets he always wore when riding. Oh, and he always had a rolled up fag stuck to his bottom lip, ultra cool my grand-dad. I'll never forget the way he shouted at me as we rode around corners. 'For Christ's sake sit still' he used to shout.

The tighter they were, the more I would try to get the bike right over on its side. If the shouting failed to tame me he would use his elbow to calm my enthusiasm.

I was so bike crazy that I used to skive off secondary school when the weather was good and grand-dads' bike was in the garage at the top of the garden. I would roll it down the garden path, backwards, to the front gate, rev the engine as hard as I dared and drop the clutch to see how fast I could get up to the top of the garden again. This became an obsession with me and I used to play about like this until the last possible minute, just before grand-dad would come round the corner and drive up to the house in his old Ford Prefect.

I became so good at these rapid starts that I soon found the limits of the bike and began to search for faster ways of getting off the line. I discovered that by using the flexibility of the wooden gate I could utilise this springiness to launch the bike so fast that I could only just stop at the end of the garden. I was that good. One particular day I was pushing the little 250 Honda to the very limits of existence and the inevitable happened. The front gate finally got its own back on me for all that constant bouncing, abuse and the rapid starts I had subjected it to. It gave way just as I was about to make my fastest run ever. Me and the bike went backwards, down the step, onto the path and fell against the gatepost, you know, the gatepost with the metal latch in it. The pristine red and silver fuel tank took the brunt of the incident. It now sported a dent the size of a house brick, right on the top edge. I later found out that I had broken my left ankle but that didn't seem very important at the time.

I had to act fast, he would be home within the next five or ten minutes. There was no way that I could lift the bike off the gatepost, not with these feet.

What could I do?

Enter Davey Jones, Monkey as we called him, he was walking home from school and had come round to see why I was off school again. After telling him that I was off with a broken ankle we both managed to get the bike up off the post and back into the garage but I still had a big problem. I had started to feel decidedly sick by this time as I was in a lot of pain and my ankle had swollen so much that I couldn't see the sides of my left shoe, it was nasty but I had to keep going or a broken ankle would be nothing, I'd probably have a broken neck as well.

Suddenly it all made perfect sense. I got Monkey to remove the front gate and take it up the top of the road where one of the houses was being renovated. Didn't know where he put it but it would come back to haunt me shortly.

In the garage was a small stack of bricks, granddad was a brick layer and was planning on building a wall with some bricks that he had been gradually acquiring from work, he had been collecting these bricks for about two years. I decided to line the bike up perfectly and push it over against the stack of bricks, making it look like it had accidentally fallen off the side stand. I'm a quick thinker me and bright with it too. Yes it was devious, dishonest and scheming but I was scared, really scared, and my self preservation instincts just took over. Did I mention my ankle?

That was hurting too and I was very nauseas.

The bike landed perfectly. The damage was made a bit worse if anything. We had done a really professional job and no one would ever know what really happened. It was just an unfortunate accident grand-dad, honest.

Have you ever noticed how one episode of deception and lies leads to another series of lies and deception?. Tell the truth, that's what I say.

Grand-dad noticed the missing gate and a few splinters of wood on the ground as soon as he got out of his car. 'What's happened here then'?, 'Where's the bloody gate gone'?

'I think it must have been the gypsies grand-dad, I saw them leaving the street in a van when I came home' I said. 'Why would they nick our gate?' he said, 'It was nearly knackered and I was going to replace it because the slats were all loose, it's been on there for over twenty years you know'.

Don't ask me why he believed me, I wouldn't have done. It was nonsense.

I also convinced my grandparents that a dreadful accident had happened while I was contesting the ball and running the length of the pitch to score a try in a school rugby match and I had been crushed, unfairly, by the biggest boy on the other team after scoring. I laid it on really thick, in for a penny, in for a pound

'How did you get home?' Nan said. 'Did they stretcher you off?' asked granddad. 'Why didn't they take you to casualty?' said Nan. 'At least you won't need a note for the school' granddad said. 'Bloody gippos, nicking a gate, they must be hard up' he said.

I thought I'd got it sussed. Three hours at the hospital in Haymeads Lane, Bishop's Stortford, a quick slap of plaster of Paris and loads of sympathy. Perfect, whoa, yeah!

The next evening granddad got home from work, gathered a few nicked bricks out of the boot and carried them up to the garage. Yes, that garage.

I remember it really well; I was watching Nationwide, Hugh Scully I think, foot up on the stool, drink on the coffee table. I tried very hard to ignore the swearing and shouting that was emanating from the garage.

'What have you done to my bike you little ba--ard'?, 'Have you been playing about with it again'?, 'How did you do that with your leg in plaster'?, 'Boll—ks; that's how you broke your ankle isn't it'?, 'Lying bas—ard' he shouted.

Just at that moment I was temporarily saved by a loud knocking coming from the front door. Nan went to the door and called granddad almost immediately. 'Who is it' I said, hoping it would be someone that might stay for a while to take the heat off me. 'It's one of the builders from up the road and he's got our front gate back from the gippos' said grand-dad.

I don't have to spell out what happened to me next but suffice to say that I didn't go out, apart from going to school, for the next two months. I also had to cough up £14:10/-6d for a second-hand fuel tank and a new side panel. Never paid anything for the gate but I had to help put the new one on when I could get about.

It became apparent that I hadn't been as smart as I had thought when staging the bike 'accident'. A couple of factors conspired to spoil my story;

It would have worked if Monkey had put the broken gate on the bonfire that was burning when he went round to the building site at the top of the road. Instead, he left it leaning against a ladder. He was never the sharpest boy. One of the builders had noticed that our front gate was missing and thought we had dumped it on the building site. So they brought it back. It might have worked if I had not tipped the bike over in the garage the wrong way. In my confusion, caused by the pain and the sickness, I dropped the bike onto the undamaged side of the fuel tank. Fool.

It might have worked if a neighbour hadn't heard the front gate break and hadn't seen me fall onto the pathway, trapped under the bike. He asked my grand-dad the next day, as he got out of his car after work, if I was OK. Nosey neighbours.

This episode taught me some hard lessons. I did not go on the back of my grand-dads' bike again for 12 months. I really kicked myself because he bought a Triumph Trident next and I was desperate, really desperate. I didn't even get much time off school as grand-dad used to come home and take me, not that he didn't trust me.

Mmmm..... I wonder how fast I could get that Trident up the garden path.

Anon

Riding in Hazardous Conditions

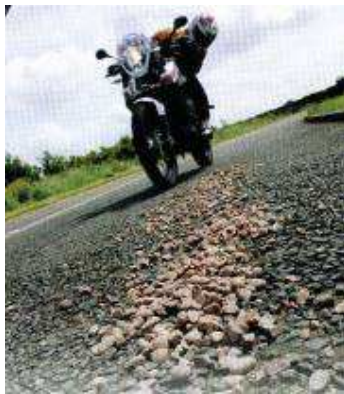


For some riding their motorbike through all weathers and conditions is a key part of biking, for others getting caught in hazardous conditions are something that happens by exception rather than design. But when it does its good to be prepared and the course run by CAM on the 18th February was intended to raise awareness and to give some guidance on what actions to take.

For the purpose of the course hazardous conditions were defined as the variable factors that come to bear to change the level of danger. A poorly designed junction or tight bend after a long straight is inherently dangerous and specific actions can be taken to ameliorate the danger. But add in poor visibility, a degraded road surface, faulty bike and tired rider and the fixed level of danger associated with the radius of the bend has now been multiplied by several unknown quantities to a significantly higher level.

Appreciating this change in danger level is what this course was about.

As with many courses much of what is said is common sense but pulling together the various strands of the argument and arriving at a memorable 'take-away' message is key. To achieve this, an interactive approach based on a mixture of presentation and group discussion was adopted and there was active involvement from the audience.

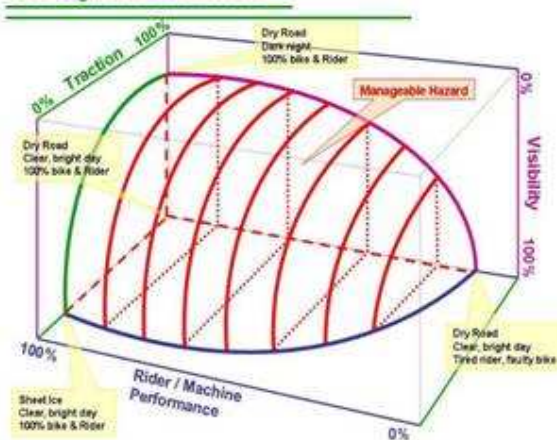


Several hazardous scenarios were investigated including darkness, reduced visibility, degraded road surface, defective machine and sub-optimal rider. Each scenario was explored through group discussion and then the various actions that could be taken to reduce the risk were identified. The objective was to translate the hazard into several key actions that the rider could take to reduce the potential danger.

The session was summarized by considering the hazards in terms of visibility, traction and performance. It came back to the fundamentals of advanced riding; more time and space is required as slowing and stopping distances increase as the road surface deteriorates and reduced visibility limits the amount of time to hazard.

And of course there will be other road-users experiencing the same set of circumstances and some of them may be very unfamiliar with how to deal with it. They may well be posing more of a danger than the actual conditions themselves.

Manageable Hazards



The course concluded by presenting the variables of traction, visibility and preparedness as a three dimensional graph where the area within the shape represented a manageable combinations of hazards whilst on the other side of the line the combination of hazards were no longer manageable and the best advice is to stop riding and wait for things to improve. The inconvenience of an accident must out-weigh any benefit of the journey. It is intended to repeat the course again and if the above account has whetted your appetite then please say so the Committee has some idea of ongoing demand.

Riding in the Wet

Most people hate riding in the wet. Bikes are perilous enough without a thin layer of water spoiling the cosy contact between road and rubber. As soon as you see those threatening speckles of rain on your visor, you don't want to brake, you don't want to accelerate, you don't want to go round corners, and basically you don't want to ride your bike anymore. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Surface Tension

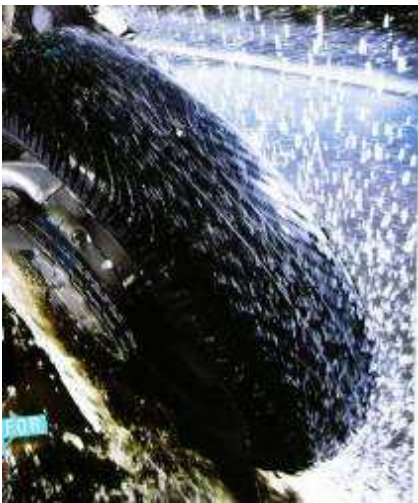


The problem is psychological. You assume it's more slippery than it is and that makes you drop your vision and look at the road surface just in front of the bike, searching for anything that looks horrible." Sound familiar?

When you're fixated like that, anything remotely unusual will make you tense up. Even in the wet you need to relax and look as far ahead as possible.

You may have ridden at night when you didn't know the surface was damp and kept up a decent pace because you were relaxed and riding normally. Once home, you might have noticed the damp, surface and thought you would have ridden much slower if you had known. That tells you it's all in the mind.

Cornering



But it's true that the quality of the road surface is much more important in the wet. A surface that's okay when dry can be lethal in the wet, such as those polished areas where the tar has risen to the surface, or mud on the road like the farm on the Kimbolton road. You do need to scan ahead and aim for the bits that look grippy, or slow down to get past the hazard.

The normal road lines that offer the best visibility around bends should be sacrificed for the lines that offer most grip.

Judge the grip by the feedback through the bars and the seat, as a general rule the more rumble there is from the road, the more grip you've got.

Don't ride in car wheel tracks because the surface is more likely to be more polished, ride between them.

However there is a point that the middle path is oily from oil leak from cars. But fewer cars leak oil these days

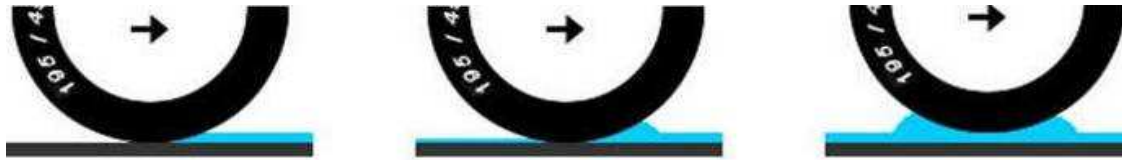
Be ultra aware of your surroundings. Raised banks by the side of the road can mean gravel or mud will be washed down and then piled up by cars. Trees can drop sap onto the road, which becomes very slippery when wet. And where the road is usually dusty, say by a farm entrance it will be slimy when wet.

Use all this information, and tackle corners in the same way as in the dry. Slow down to the right speed for the bend, throttle on smoothly once the vanishing point has started to move away from you and you can clearly see the road ahead of you.

You can still carry really good corner speed in the wet, but let the tyres concentrate on one thing at a time-don't break in the corner. And use a higher gear for smoother power."

Aquaplaning

This happens when standing water lifts the wheels off the road. It's unusual on the bike because tyres are relatively narrow and pointy so they cut through water, but can happen if you go fast enough



The fatter the tyre, the more prone it is to aquaplaning, ride a Harley to experience this And the less tread you have to disperse water, the more likely it is too. If you do aquaplane just let the bike ride through it without trying to steer, brake or move the throttle. Try and relax

Braking

Be smooth and try not to use your brakes too much, do most of the braking with the front, but use the back to give you some idea of how much grip there is. Be smooth and progressive, giving the front tyre a chance to bite before increasing braking force. Put a light pressure on the brake to push the tyre down through the water and begin getting grip on the road. Once this has begun you can brake a little harder - but always smoothly. And get off the brakes before you start a turn.

Tyres and suspension

Tyre pressures should be the same as normal. Lowering pressures does not work and causes the tyre grooves to close up and limit the amount of water dispersed from the road. Touring biased tyres are often better in the wet because they are designed to work at colder temperatures, this allows the tyres to grip better as there still relatively warm.

The softer the suspension the better. In the wet there's less cornering force to make the suspension work, so the tyres are working harder and/or doing two jobs.

David Schindler

The Journey

I passed my bike test on 10th April 2008 and joined the IAM about 3 weeks later. The reason I joined was my husband was a member and he was keen for me to ride safely as I was commuting to London twice a week at the time. I had been out as a pillion on the Sunday runs a couple of times and to be quite honest the thought of joining the group terrified me.

When you pass your bike test it is hard to be told that actually you know nothing. A line is just something that you hope will not come to an abrupt end around a corner and as far as forward planning goes, getting there was objective enough! I used to get home and describe my near misses to my husband and he would go through it all with me and try to make me understand why it had happened so suddenly to me which is why I guess I was persuaded to join the IAM.

However, I joined the group and started going out with an observer in no time. I did improve quite quickly from going out with my observer and my husband took me out regularly once I got my own bike. To start with I rode a Fazer 600 which I used to not rev enough hence it would cut out 50% of the time when I stopped. My husband then got himself a Kawasaki Z750s which I took a shine to and soon he was on the look out for another bike! All of the sudden, I felt I could ride - no more nasty "where has the power gone?" moments.

We travelled to Magny Cours for a long weekend and I decided that actually I was no longer a danger to myself or the public on the bike and so would not bother with the test. Looking back I think I was just worried about swapping observers as things were not going too well and worried about failure in the test. A friend offered to take me out and see how my riding was and having taken me out for an observed ride, he convinced me to go for the test. I went out a couple more times and was then told to take a pre test ride which I did on New Years Eve. The road surfaces were shocking on the day- there was a film of gunk everywhere. It went well and I was told I could go for my test. I posted my form and waited for the phone call with a test date. It finally was arranged for Friday 13th February- for some reason that was the only date he had free- no one else wanted it! I didn't really worry about it

again until Thursday 12th February when it started snowing in the afternoon. I got a phone call that evening "Sorry, no test. Will re arrange next week" Disappointing or what. I did get another phone call and the test would now be Thursday 26th February, 1.30pm meeting at the Park and Ride, Trumpington.

Thursday 26th February 9.30am

I feel so nervous. I was fine up until about 8am this morning and then all of the sudden it hit me what I had done. I seem to suffer terribly with nerves - I failed both my first driving and bike test through nerves. I forgot about them briefly whilst writing the first part of this but now I feel sick in the pit of my stomach (not that there is actually a pit in your stomach!) I am worried about letting everybody down who has supported me along my journey to become a safer rider. My husband has said not to worry and I wouldn't be the first to fail if I did and no one would think any less of me and I am a good rider etc. But I don't want to fail. I feel that if I do, I am going to let myself down big time. I know that I am ready and that I can do it I just hope I don't do anything REALLY stupid. I went out for a ride yesterday and there is loads of mud across the roads- what if I get a lump stuck on the side of the tyre and then fall off around a bend? The examiner would have to follow the smear of mud across the road to find which bush I had landed in. Or worse still - go to pull off at the start and just drop the bike? I could trap myself on one leg and the examiner would have to call passers by to help pull the bike off me. I have fallen off the bike stationary twice now! I have been through about 20 worst case scenarios now - even a hare running off a field and getting mangled up in my front wheel and having to scrape flesh from my brakes with a stick "Sorry, it won't take long - I think there is just a bit of cartilage stuck...". I wish my test was earlier as it would put a stop to all the nonsense in my head at the moment. I still feel sick.

11.10am

I think I should be OK. When I have exams I am always like this but I do usually calm down when the time comes to start. Big breaths, no... bigger big breaths. Just put my driving licence, insurance and mobile phone (in case of emergencies) in my jacket and got my kit ready to put on - even fresh disposable plugs. So far I have resisted the urge to get my bike out and polish it - bit worried if I overdo it I might slip off! Similarly I have decided against polishing my boots just in case I get boot polish on the sole and my foot slips off the back brake presuming I remember there is a brake there. Big breath.

I have planned my route to the park and ride and will get there nice and early to avoid being watched approaching and getting into a flap before the test even starts.

12.30pm

OMG what have I done? I have got to get ready now but feel really sick...

And the verdict is....I PASSED!!!!

I did not fall off the bike or get road kill tangled up in my bike. I felt like I had an iron rod along my spine and my arms really ached from where I had gripped hold of my handlebars so tightly! I was actually surprised when the examiner told me he thought it was a really smooth ride. I am really pleased with myself and I am so grateful to my husband and my observers to have got me to the stage of riding I am now at.

Lynn Peters

Committee Feedback

Since the last issue of CAMunicate a Committee meetings was held on the 30th March and 27th April (after the AGM)

Discussions at the meeting of the 30th March included;

- Ongoing preparations for the Annual General Meeting including the administration of the various nominations and review of the documentation required by IAM Central for the CAM Group Annual Return (GAR)
- Review of the output of the sub-group considering membership – a key action is to produce a guide as to what the club can offer to those who have passed their test.

- Observers – it was noted that it is an IAM requirement that Group Observers maintain their ongoing IAM membership
- The organisation of the Assessment Day for the 10th May is ongoing and promotional information now needs to be circulated.
- The Skills Day scheduled for the 31st May is being finalised.
- Review of Observer / Associate allocations – updated with recent ‘joiners’
- Treasury & Secretary reports

The meeting of the 27th April followed the AGM and discussed;

- Assessment Day event – organised
- Skills Day – organised
- IAM Region 7 Forum – attendance agreed
- Update of Observer – Associate allocations
- Actions arising from the AGM
- Plan for the preparation of the GAR

The notes from the AGM are described within an earlier article.

If there are issues that you would like to be considered by the committee at a future meeting can you please send an outlining e-mail to Stephen Bradshaw sbofnewport@btinternet.com

Test Passes

Congratulations for passing the IAM test to Michael Dales.

Useful Information

Observer’s Contacts

As CAMunicate is now accessible from the public pages of the website the contact details of the Observers has been removed. A separate listing will be maintained in the password protected section accessible by members.

If an Associate has not heard from his or her Observer then please use the list to make contact. Any problems then please get in touch with Steve Alsop or Ian Beeby and they will sort things out for you.

CAMunicate Contributions

Please send all contributions for CAMunicate to David Nobel at the e-mail shown below.

Alternatively if you have some ideas that you think would make a good article but would prefer not to write yourself then call me to discuss.

Name	Location	E-Mail	Telephone
David Nobel	Cambridge	dn.cam@ntlworld.com	01223 510559

Group Contact

If you require information for a friend about the Group’s activities or have other queries please contact:

Adrian Peters
Club Secretary
 121 Highfields Road
 Highfields Caldecote
 Cambridge, CB23 7NX
 07967 270252 / 01954 211189
adrian@peterstrio.co.uk

or visit the website on;

www.cambsiam.org.uk

Diary of Events – 2009

Date	April Events

Date	May Events
3 rd	Sunday Group Ride
10 th	Assessment Day
13 th	Theory Session
17 th	Sunday Group Ride
17 th	All Day Ride
18 th	Committee Meeting
31 st	Skills Day

Date	June Events
7 th	Sunday Group Ride
15 th	Observers Evening
21 st	Sunday Group Ride
21 st	All Day Ride
28 th	London Morning Ride
29 th	Committee Meeting

Date	July Events
5 th	Sunday Group Ride
11 th	Ladies Ride
16 th	Theory Session
19 th	Sunday Group Ride
19 th	All Day Ride
27 th	Committee Meeting

Date	August Events
2 nd	Sunday Group Ride
16 th	Sunday Group Ride
16 th	All Day Ride
24 th	Committee Meeting
30 th	Observers Ride

Date	September Events
6 th	Sunday Group Ride
13 th	Assessment Day
20 th	Sunday Group Ride
20 th	All Day Ride
21 ^s	Theory Session
28 th	Committee Meeting

Date	October Events
4 th	Sunday Group Ride
18 th	Sunday Group Ride
26 th	Committee Meeting

Date	November Events
1 st	Sunday Group Ride
11 th	Theory Session
15 th	Sunday Group Ride
18 th	Observer Evening
29 th	Observers Ride
30 th	Committee Meeting

Date	December Events
6 th	Sunday Group Ride
20 th	Sunday Group Ride

Diary of Events – 2010

Date	January Events

Date	February Events

Date	March Events

For the latest information see the main calendar on the website at www.cambsiam.org.uk