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'NAM MATTERS'

The Newsletter of Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists Group
7226

(Registered Charity No. 1107148) - www.nammc.org.uk

YEARBOOK - 2023



Members having heaps of fun on Grossglockner, Austria.

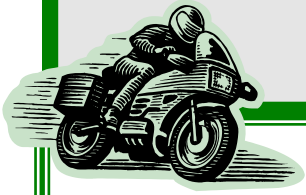
(Why is riding in the mountains so funny?

Because they are Hill Areas! Ed.)

The E-newsletter of
Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists Group 7226

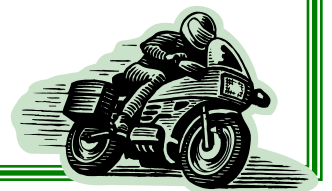
www.nammc.org.uk

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FROM THE CHAIR



Greetings and welcome to the new yearbook. The decision to go from a bi-monthly newsletter to this being made as there are now better and quicker ways of keeping you up to date available to us, most are in use already.

A round up of the year gone and a precis of our hopes and aspirations for the one to come are enclosed. I hope you find the contents interesting and informative, there will be articles and write ups of the groups activities and trips etc, achievements of both the Group and its members and the calendar of events (as we have them up to publishing date) to give you the options to get involved as you will.

As regarding the 'other better and quicker' ways of keeping in touch, please remember we have a 'WhatsApp' group to give any short notice changes—the most recent being a 'Bad weather cancels the ride out' at the time I write this—if you have not been enrolled into this I would suggest you do as it is the most timely way of keeping you informed. Just ask for the joining link and click it!

We also have a Facebook page which is updated at least weekly and we use Mail Chimp to keep you informed of the Groups more social activities (you can opt out of this if you wish) We still use direct emails for important Group news. Belt and braces I think you must agree? (Also lets our Editor have an easier life)!

It's customary and also my privilege at this time of year to thank all those that make this Group work — Observers, Committee, and those 'Good Eggs' that have no defined role but always seem to be there when needed, you have mine, and the Groups, most sincere thanks and good wishes.

Challenges the current times present will get resolved and fresh one's will no doubt arrive but if we all carry on doing what we do as well as we have been doing it, then the Groups future is assured.

Read on and hopefully enjoy.

Here's to a great 2024!

Geoff





Notice Board

NAM Events Calendar 2023/4

Members are recommended to log on to our website to keep themselves up to date on what's on and see fuller details of events, published on the website.

Members' suggestions for ride-out destinations and off-bike activities are always welcome.. Contact any NAM official to discuss their suitability for you. *(Ours are in green)*

The annual pilgrimage to Ventenac-en-Minervois is scheduled for the 7th - 21st September, those who have been before can tell you about this amazing location and the great time we all have there - if interested please let Geoff (Chairman), know as we were full in 23.

Several special events for 2024 have been circulated recently and members are advised to diarise them and respond to the organisers asap so numbers can be known.

Finally, this year -Sunday, 17th December—Year-end group ride—returning to Obelisk for free bacon butties, mince pies and a cuppa, Merry Xmas everyone!

(Note Chairman's alternatives mentioned above. Also check the calendar at any time on our own website or ask an official..)

Editor

Want to contact the Group Secretary?

Our website- www.nammc.org.uk with link to Members' Forum and IAM-
www.iamroadsmart.com or Email:- sec@nammc.org.uk

Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists Group 7226, The Obelisk Centre, Obelisk Rise, Kingsthorpe, Northampton NN2 8UE (where we normally meet every Sunday) Tel. 01604 385082. - (but emails are preferred to ensure a prompt reply)

Important Notice to Members

Members are reminded that, for insurance reasons, membership of both NAM and IAM RoadSmart is required to take part in any NAM activities.

NAM membership renewal is due for all members on 30 April each year – except that any-one who joins after 1 December will have their membership extended until the April after next. Subscription cost is:-

£15 paid if paid by standing order (easiest – you won't forget) or BACS to Sort Code 30□96□09, Account No 01475729.

£16 by PayPal (includes PayPal fee).

Please note – we no longer accept payment by cheque.

N.B. -IAMRS membership renewal date varies by individual. Membership can be renewed via your Dashboard on;- <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/> or by contacting IAM Support.

Recent Advanced Motorcycle Test Passes

Guys & Gals, the easiest way we will get to know if you've passed is if you tell us or another member, like one of your Observers or the Committee,

Recent Test passes to date – Barry Vincent, Jeremy Philpott, Liam Fassam, David Loveday, Simon Cockayne, Jack Foreman, Chris Hurst

National Observer passes 3 - James Heaton, Chris Capewell, Nick Lenton



On becoming a fully qualified member NAM lapel badges are presented at the first opportunity— usually on a Sunday morning) when we hope they will continue to hone their skills by riding out with us! Ed.

Mid-Week Observes 2023/4

Please note:-.The contribution to Observer's exes. is £10

Our official meeting dates are normally only on Sundays. *(See website and Facebook)*

However, for those members who have difficulty attending regularly on Sundays there are a few Observers who are available to conduct these during the week, by appointment, to suit work schedules etc. The Associates Secretary can try to arrange these for you if required. Normally, this would be in daylight hours, *Monday to Saturday - allow for 2/3 hours duration.*

*Observers please note; any such appointments must be advised to the Associates Secretary **BEFORE** the ride. This is to ensure that both parties are protected by IAM RoadSmart's Group liability insurance which otherwise is only automatically in force on our official published ride-outs and events. So let him know if you make any direct arrangements to observe. Notice for observed rides is essential as there is only a limited number who can assist in working hours. Ed.*

Please also note that on reaching the required test standard, in your Observer's opinion, we recommend 2 mock tests before we put you in for test. This is to confirm the necessary standard has been reached and to give the best chance of a pass. This might have to be on a Sunday.

Associates Sec. associates@nammc.org.uk

Ten top tips to passing the IAM RoadSmart advanced test



01 Take the Initiative

This is your decision and your course. You will be the main beneficiary of this learning experience and we'd appreciate it if you would keep us on our toes. Be prompt, chase us if we are not providing enough information and tell us if there is anything else we can do for you. We're here solely to help you achieve success.

02 Read the book

The Advanced Course Logbook contains all the information you will need to know in a simple, clear style with plenty of photos and diagrams. Invaluable reading!

03 Ask questions, get advice

People learn in different ways so please ask as many questions as you need to. Speak to fellow associates, visit forums and request to see advanced skills demonstrated. Your group is here to help pass the advanced test in which ever way suits you best.

04 Don't switch on and off

Advanced road skills need to become embedded as your normal behaviour. You cannot switch between advanced skills and your everyday driving or riding.

05 Ask for help or support

We provide our time to coach and help you pass your advanced test. If we are not meeting your expectations or is something we are not doing for you then please let us know. Speak to your group or call Customer Support on 0300 303 1134 - customercare@iam.org.uk We can only put things right if we know about them.

06 Practice

You will only be able to change and develop your road skills by putting in considerable practice time. The benefit will be from the changes that your passengers or fellow riders notice and comment on— try it and see!

07 Engage with your local IAM RoadSmart group

Your local IAM RoadSmart group is hugely pleased every time one of their members passes the advanced test. As volunteers, they all give their time willingly so that you can pass the advanced test.— make sure you make good use of their skills and knowledge.

08 Set a 'test ready' target date

Possibly our most important tip is to set a 'test ready' date with your group as soon as possible for you to work towards. Your group will help you plan your development to reach "test ready" status.

09 Don't drift away

It's only natural that early enthusiasm and commitment wears off a little as 'real life' takes over. Please try to stay focused and make the effort to attend your observed sessions regularly. Our groups love nothing more than to nag lagging Associates!

10 Enjoy the experience

We saved the best until last. You'll find that you will enjoy and have great fun developing advanced road skills with us. If you love the experience then please tell your family and friends about it.—the majority of our new members come via word of mouth and we'd like that to continue..

We make better drivers and riders

Germany, Austria, Italy.

(and Switzerland, Lichtenstein, France, Belgium).

May/June 2023

Sitting in the pub on one of our 'first Friday' get-togethers. Mihai was describing his visit to a motorcycle museum in the Dolomites at a place called Timmelsjoch. So impressed were we with his description of the museum itself, its contents, the building and its location that, within the hour a group ride had been agreed. This morphed into a ride starting from Baden Baden in Germany and including Austria, Switzerland, Lichtenstein and Italy with a bit of France and Belgium thrown in. To fit in with everyone's availability, the dates were 25 May 'till 04 June; not long for the ambitious ride programme.

All left UK on 25 July. Colin and Bing early, Fred, Jim and Richard mid-day (*all staying in the Campanile, Charleville that evening*) and Geoff and Mihai later (*staying near Cambrai in a small, but very friendly B&B Le Clos Xavianne located in Ribecourt-la-Tour village*). If you follow our route, note that this Campanile is poor, run down and not up to their usual standard. However, there is a Buffalo Grill next door.

Next morning, we rode to Baden using 'Peage' to avoid cities and 'boring bits' and enjoyed lovely Ardennes scenery especially along the Meuse river. Baden was busy and required some "Garmin adventurous routing" to reach an urgently needed petrol station.

The hotel in Baden (*Holiday Inn Express*) was a good choice in every respect; location, staff, rooms and parking. Took badly needed showers (*it had been hot*), drinks at 17.00, Mihai and Geoff arrived about 19.00. An internet search by our tame geeks found a traditional German restaurant (*Biersbrunner*), specializing in beers, about 5 minutes' walk from the hotel. It was excellent in all respects.

After breakfast we left for a ride along the excellent B500, a pleasure now much reduced by signed speed limits, heavy policing and many cameras. We, of course have little to fear since, as good IAM members, we are meticulous in obeying the law. There were times, however, when some discretion was applied, encouraged by the brilliant road layout, surface and sight lines. Had an ice cream stop and look around Waldshut and looked across the Rhein river to Switzerland. No sign of rubber boats. Detoured through Switzerland to our overnight in Lottstetten (*Hotel Holzscheiter*). Had dinner in the village bistro where the food was excellent, good value with really helpful staff. Good breakfast before leaving at 09.30 ish. Into Switzerland again and on to Vaduz (*Capital of Lichtenstein*) and then toward Austria. While passing through Switzerland we avoided motorways and expressways which meant that we didn't have to buy a vignette at a cost of CHF 40 or approx. GBP30.

The morning ride had been very relaxed through attractive villages and towns. The silage harvest is in full swing and hay is being cut. The air is full of grass pollen and dandelion seeds – not good for hay fever sufferers. Skipped lunch since Mihai and Geoff seemed to be on a health kick and have dragged everyone else into it. Some have even started to order salads. The plan was then to go to our evening destination (*Explorer hotel, Otztal located in Umhausen*) via a number of minor passes. However, on our way there we discovered that the Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse pass was still closed by snow (*although advanced consultation of Google Maps suggested that it was open*) and we had to retrace our steps for a couple of hours. And then it rained – heavy scattered showers – but fortunately some of the bendier parts of the pass we did use had remained dry. The Explorer hotel was mainly for healthy outdoor sporty people but let us in anyway. For dinner we were pointed to several hotels in the village of Umhausen a few minutes' walk away. But they must have been fore-warned about us since all declared their kitchens closed. We therefore returned the Explorer for pizza which was good and inexpensive, AND SALAD.



Hotel Refugio

Cont.>>>>>>>>

Page 2>>> Left the hotel for fuel and a short drive to the Timmelsjoch Experience Pass Museum which is a beautiful, largely timber building 2509 meters up the Timmelsjoch pass. The views from outside are spectacular in all directions and the content is a remarkable collection of motorcycles from all ages and many manufacturers. Considering the previous museum burnt down only a few years ago, the size of the collection is impressive. After 2 hours spent at the Museum and the necessary energy and hydration boost – hot choc and apfel strudel with cream and vanilla ice cream (*what happened to healthy eating?*) we paid the 16 euro fee to ride the rest of the pass, which is a private road, crossing the Austria / Switzerland border

Many bends, hair pins, plenty of snow (*not on the road*) and fantastic views. As progress had been good, and the days' planned ride was shortish, we took a detour and moved on to the *Passo Giovo*. We almost completed the pass and stopped at Casateia for lunch, where more health intentions were broken, before retreating to Merano via Passo Giovo. Traffic everywhere is very heavy – many bikes – due to it being a public holiday. Hotel in Merano (*B&B Maya*) is a little out of town so we elected to eat in. Food was good, rooms OK but noisy due to traffic.

We didn't get breakfast at the hotel but bought ingredients from a supermarket and had a picnic by a coffee shop en-route. Riding today was very pleasant; we did quite a few high altitude passes on both side of the valley prior to entering into Dolomite National Park. The weather stayed dry until 16.00. Through alpine pastures, forests and villages. Dramatic Dolomite scenery all day including the high-altitude Lake of Carezza, spring fed through the chalk bottom. An anomaly in this area. Made our wet way to our hotel (*Refugio Monti Pallidi*). Beautiful, nestled at the base of Sella Mountain range but isolated, so dinner in-house. Some went for a further 1.5 hours round trip ride around alpine passes in the surrounding Sella Ronda mountain range.

Heavy rain all night. However, after breakfast (*and having pissed off the Russian hotel owner by starting breakfast too soon*) the rain reduced, we took a group photo in front of the Rifugio and set off at 09:30 in wets and liners. Soon the rain stopped, the roads dried and we had a great day. Firstly, over part of the passes around the Sella Ronda and then via Valparola Pass on to Cortina d'Ampezzo. The Valparola Pass had been a hard battle ground during the years 1915 -1917 of the First World War between the Italian and Austro-Hungarian armies. We stopped at the top of the pass at the Lagazuoi cable car for a rest where we came across a Norway to Italy car rally stop point. Lots of exotic sports cars, but fortunately they were going the opposite way.

We did try to stop in Cortina d'Ampezzo but as we couldn't find a suitable place to park six motorbikes, lack of planning from the organizer, we continued further toward the highlight of the day the Grossglockner Pass.

On the way we came across an underrated pass, Stalle Pass, a borderless crossing between Italy and Austria. To enter the Stalle Pass we had to wait (*half an hour*) at traffic lights which allowed the use of a single-track part of the pass for 15 minutes in the hour. We got in front of cars waiting at the lights and so were not held up on the pass. The top of Stalle Pass marks the border between Italy and Austria. After a brief stop for photos, to admire the scenery and purchase a fridge magnet we said Ciao to Italy and Hallo to Austria once again

Through Austria to the Grossglockner pass which we tackled about 16.00. The fee is now a steep 30 euro for a bike, but that includes a day access to all the amenities. For a solo bike rushing through it is an expensive 45km. On to our hotel (*Amber Hotel Bavaria, Bad Reichenhall*) and dinner at a local pizza restaurant.

Moving on through minor roads we had some enjoyable riding, but progress, in miles, was reduced by the frequency of villages with the consequence that we had to revert to more major roads. We arrived at our overnight stop, Rothenberg ob der Tauber, rather later than planned, but still in time to look around this lovely walled town. Our Hotel (*Zum Breiterle*) was within the walls and even had private parking. For the money, a real find. We agreed to have breakfast at 08.00 to allow time to look at the town before breakfast.



Some rose early to explore the town, and we all left after breakfast. First destination was Heidelberg on the Neckar river. Lovely riding roads through farm land, forestry and villages we arrived and parked in official bike slots by the river

The town centre was busy with tourists but we enjoyed the look around, had an ice cream then a Brat (*wrong order*). Returned to the bikes at 14.40 to be confronted by two parking wardens who pointed out a temporary sign saying parking was dis-allowed after 14.00 and talked about a 40 Euro penalty. The smooth-talking one of our number got us off.

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Page 3 continued—>>

The road from Heidelberg to Meckenheim took us via a loop over some good biking roads, via a biker café and to the Rhein at Lorch. We followed the river over almost deserted roads to Boppard where we crossed by ferry. We had intended to have dinner in Boppard, but a message from two of our number who had gone ahead to Meckenheim said they had found a great café and, since this was our last night together, we decided to join them.

Bright sunny morning somewhat disrupted by pass closures and diversions, but enjoyable riding through high-altitude countryside on good roads. Afternoon provided fast, sweeping, open bends with good forward visibility through flattish countryside with harvest in full swing. Our hotel (*Hotel Blau Gams, Ettal*) that night was adjacent to a huge, old monastery which was still in use and which brewed the beer we drank (*in modest quantity, of course*) with our dinner that evening. Woken by the sound of cow bells, we breakfasted and rode to Garmisch Partenkirchen for a look around this lovely town, then on to Oberammergau. The latter famous for its passion play. A play about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The play uses all local people and is now performed repeatedly over several months every 10 years. It seems to have originated to ward off disease; ironically, its last performance was delayed 2 years because of Covid! That apart, it has been performed regularly over almost 400 years. It is now an important money-spinner for the town although it was not effective against Covid.

This meant a fast run, but we got to the café just 10 minutes before the kitchen closed; and it was a good dinner. After dinner there was a small torchlit parade, with a band, of the local hunting group. Quite good. Our hotel for the evening (*City Hotel, Meckenheim*) was very modern, and very comfortable. The next morning, the end of the holiday, the group broke up. Two left early directly for the Channel Tunnel and the remaining five left about 08.30. The latter group went west through a national park toward Aachen stopping for an hour at a biker's café then using motorways to the tunnel. Two who were staying extra days in Belgium broke off and went their own way.

In summary, a great holiday with great roads and Alpine passes and great craic. Thanks to Mihai for his planning and leading.

Door to door about 2500 miles, all in cost about £1,650 for 10 days.

If anyone wants to do a similar trip, .gpx files are available. **Ends**

Below is the complete route taken by our members





Grossglockner

(The NAM party— except for Fred, who'd gone missing!)

On the ferry to Boppard



The lake at Carexxe

Next page——>>>

Tour of Germany, Austria & Italy -final page

Typical view of Dolomite scenery



Above:- View from Berchtesgarden

Right:- The guys waiting to enter the Stalle Pass >>

(Yes that's Fred in front—he did turn up!)



This concludes the article & Pics provided by Richard Young. Ed.

Harz and Eifel mountains (Germany). Some of the best biking roads in Europe?

This is the outline of a biking holiday taken by four riders (Adrian, Willie, Martin and Richard) which, due to good planning by Adrian and local knowledge from Willie, discovered some stunningly good biking roads and beautiful places. The trip was one week during which we covered 1,800 miles; an estimated half of that was on exciting, twisty roads in good condition.

We met at Dover for the 10.05 ferry to Calais on 15 August 2023 and on arrival used boring roads (mainly E40) via Dunkirk, Brussels and Liege. Boring, but toll free and a quick way to the more interesting roads. We turned off the main road and used Willie's local knowledge to ride attractive minor roads via Spa to Cochem where we had an hotel booked for two nights. (Hegenbarth's). The hotel was high on the steep side of the Mosel river valley and overlooking the river and the town. The hotel was excellent in all respects (except for the up-hill walk from the town) and even had a ceramic tiled floor in the garage. We eat in, had a few drinks and set the world to rights.

In the morning we behaved as gentlemen at leisure, breakfasted at 09.00 and were ready to ride off at 10.40. Willie, had lived in the area, had run race teams at the Nurburgring and had raced there himself. The ring is in the Eifel mountains and we spent the morning riding fast, challenging roads in the areas surrounding the Ring. Lunch was at a real 'petrol head' café frequented mainly - by Petrol heads! After lunch we used minor roads to Koblenz on the Rhine parked the bikes and walked to Deutsches Eck which is the point where the rivers Rhine and Mosel meet. Returned to the hotel at 18.15 having had a day of perfect weather and riding. Then it rained. Thunder, lightning, torrential; and we had intended to walk to town for dinner because Wednesday was the kitchen closed day. We had a few beers, then a few more, then called a taxi. On the driver's recommendation we found an excellent and inexpensive restaurant, had a good dinner and, encouraged (goaded?) by our healthy colleague we WALKED round the old town and back up the hill.

We woke on Thursday morning to find the valley and hills covered in thick mist (the English meaning of the word) but it had cleared by the time we had breakfasted and packed and became a warm, mainly dry day. For the first hour we followed the Mosel river then worked our way across country using roads highlighted green on the Michelin maps. I'm sure the scenery was lovely but I didn't have any observation skills available to see it. More riding in the afternoon and a brief shower which started, conveniently, as we arrived at a café. One of our colleagues took the opportunity to extol the virtues of his new MRP 6 tyres; a theme that was labored to the point of boredom during the week. Twisty roads are less fun in the wet (unless you have MRP6 tyres) but the residual heat in the roads dried them quickly. Our hotel for the next two nights (Qube, Heidelberg) was excellent and had a good underground garage for the bikes.



At petrolhead café—Richard & friends

Friday started in our usual gentlemanly style with coffee in the hotel garden followed by a (not-very-good) breakfast in a bakery shop café and a walk into the old town. Not as attractive as we hoped; busy, hot and humid. Our riding plan for the day was based on the best Michelin scenic roads, but the reality was that they were heavily trafficked. After a light lunch our technical geek asked his TomTom to create a super twisty route. The route it chose was certainly as requested, but with a village every mile or so it became very stop-start. Hot and sweaty, we arrived at our hotel and went directly to the bar to plan (actually, to drink). We again walked into the old town to find a restaurant but the restaurants were busy so we settled for a budget Indonesian / Japanese / Korean place where my education was enhanced by our gourmet colleague who knows a thing or two about these things. (We also heard how good are MRP6 tyres).

Saturday, we rode to Goslar in the Harz mountains where we stayed at the Niedersachsischer Hof. To save riding time for the best roads, we took the Autobahn to about Kassel then a Tom Tom sourced route to Goslar. This time Tom Tom did us proud and chose brilliant roads through lovely fields, forests and villages of timber framed houses (Some genuine, some painted in keeping with the tradition). Goslar itself is a beautiful old, walled town in an excellent state of preservation. Our hotel was classical, in a '30's style and even I began to feel like a gentleman.

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Continued—

Dinner was taken in a pub with a good range of dark beers and traditional food. Two of us had Schweinhaxe; a traditional roast pork knuckle served with a dagger stuck in it; huge. The Harz mountains are the focal point of the German witch (Hexe) folk stories and although we didn't see any, we did encounter the German equivalent of a Hen Party. Extremely well behaved compared with many British Hen Parties, very friendly and giving away small bottles of liquors in return for a donation to the wedding fund. We would have got more involved but we had to get up early next day, Sunday, to catch trains!

Sunday was a no-riding day. We went to the Brocken. The highest point in the Harz; previously in East Germany and used as a listening and intercept location by the Soviets. We took the local train from Goslar to Weringerode then transferred to a steam train that took about an hour and a half to get to the top. Much puffing of smoke. Tragically, the route took us through thousands of hectares of Larch killed by the Larch bark beetle which, sadly, has now got to UK. The foresters are still undecided how to deal with the situation and seem prepared to let regeneration take place which will mean mainly Birch. However, Spruce and Pine seem largely unaffected. We visited the museum and the towers and had a Bratwurst. This area has a special meaning to one of our group who could see his family home in what had been East Germany. Returned to Goslar by train and had a set meal in a town hotel. Town very quiet.



Brocken Loco (where? looks ok to me? Ed)

Monday, we had an early (for us) breakfast and rode to a local dam followed by a Tom Tom twisty toward Dusseldorf on the Rhine. Very fast, bendy roads for the first part of the day followed by Autobahn for the last part. Checked into our hotel (Townhouse) which required much technical computer stuff on our 'phones but we got in at last and it was OK. Special evening. A pub crawl led by a lady who had worked in Willie's racing management team. Pub crawls here in the old town are unusual. Every bar brews its own beer and that is all it sells. You sit down or stand at a table and the server arrives and slams down a quarter liter glass of THEIR beer and marks the consumption on a beer mat. As soon as you have finished, another beer will arrive unless you cover your glass with a beer mat. Unfortunately, we kept forgetting to cover up glasses! For a Monday evening, the town was amazingly busy.

Tuesday is return home day. Plenty of time, so a relaxed start. Had a casual breakfast and a walk. Ferry not 'till 17.20 and only about 260 miles – no problem. But there were problems. Third party accidents, road works speed limits and the usual chaos round Antwerp. Fortunately, filtering is not illegal in Belgium and we had to do miles of it. Inevitably, our group got split up and took different routes. Two of us arrived in Calais in plenty of time and two cut it fine. In the end it didn't matter because our sailing was cancelled and we had to wait until after 19.00. We fueled in Dover, three of us went A20, M20, M26, M25, M40. The other went A2, M2, M25, M1 and the latter turned out to be quickest.

In summary, a week, 1,800 miles, good advice about tyres and a lot of fun. Question, how can we beat that next year?

Pictures continued on next page.



*The dead Larch trees at Brocken
(As described by Richard in his article above)*

Deutsches Eck —————>>>

(Here are the likely lads again –By heck!)



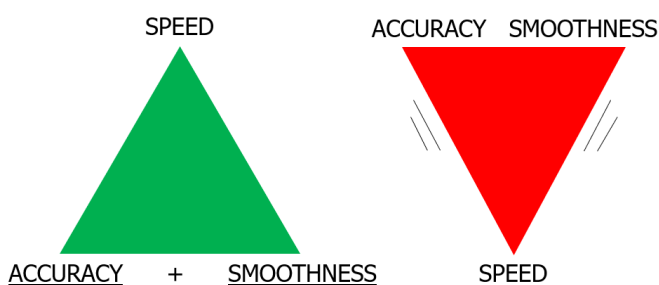
The Hen Party!

*This ends the article on the Hartz mountains. Area.
My thanks go to Richard Young for this interesting stuff. Ed.*

IAM RoadSmart Motorcycle Skills Days

IAM RoadSmart runs around 10 motorcycle Skills Days between April and September each year, using the circuits at Thruxton, Mallory Park, Blyton Park and Croft. These are not track days - the circuit is simply the classroom and safe learning environment where customers can really get to know their motorcycle. The focus is exclusively on road skills development, always under the watchful eyes of a dedicated instructor drawn from the most experienced IAM RoadSmart volunteer personnel. All instructors have a recognised qualification in rider training from the Institute of the Motor Industry.

The aim is to achieve a learning outcome that can be illustrated by 'The Precision Triangle.' A triangle is most stable when it is on its base. If we focus on developing riding accuracy and smoothness, then the speed and confidence will follow. This is represented by the green triangle. If you try to balance a triangle on its point it is unstable; if that represents speed as a primary focus for the rider, then it follows that the rider's accuracy and smoothness will be poor. The aim is to develop accuracy and smoothness in our riding plan.



Customers are split into three groups, according to experience. Each customer rides in a small group of no more than four under the close supervision of an instructor. The customer uses their own fully road legal motorcycle and wears suitable safety clothing. No 'track day' motorcycles are permitted. Riding conduct is strictly controlled and enforced.

During each hourly session, groups spend 20 minutes in the classroom, where a briefing is given on an aspect of riding, then 20 minutes on circuit, then 20 minutes debriefing the session. There are six sessions in total during a Skills Day. Total individual riding time is around two hours for each customer.

The training focuses on:

1. INFORMATION – vision and lines, head up - eyes on main beam
2. POSITION & STEERING - how your riding position/steering affects your control
3. SPEED - brake smoothly and progressively
4. GEAR – be in a responsive gear for the circumstances
5. ACCELERATION – throttle control, plan to be on a positive throttle in bends
6. FULL CONTROL - bringing it all together for the perfect controlled ride

The Skills Days provide invaluable training and are great fun. They are open to both IAM RoadSmart members and non-members, are very popular and tend to sell out quickly. The 2024 Skills Days will begin on 22nd January 2024, so get in early! <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/events/skills-days>

A day out with the Northamptonshire BikeSafe team

Whenever you visit a motorcycle event you can almost guarantee to see a stand promoting BikeSafe and I was curious to hear what advice the police motorcyclists have to offer above and beyond what a NAM observer would. Places on these events go quickly so I put my name on a waiting list and in September 2023 I finally managed to secure a place.

I originally tried to attend BikeSafe in 2019. I signed up but things went wrong, firstly in the form of a twisted ankle which meant I had to postpone my attendance and then it was scuppered by Covid-19. Back in 2019 the course was run over a weekend and consisted of a series of classroom sessions followed by an assessment of your riding. Lunch was provided. In 2023 I was sent links to 9 interactive online modules that were to be completed before attending, coffee (no biscuits) were provided.

The modules I had to complete covered; Attitude, IPSGA, Cornering, Overtakes, Junctions, Filtering, Group riding, Observations and Hazards. The modules were pretty good and in depth and took about 5 hours in total to complete.

Having completed the modules it was then a matter of attending the Police HQ at Wootton Hall for the practical assessment. I arrived at Wootton Hall Police HQ on the designated Sunday to be greeted by the police motorcyclists, they showed me to the kettle and we settled down for the day. The attendees and police introduced themselves, the intention of the introductions was to make everyone feel comfortable and relaxed.

There were 4 police motorcyclists and 8 attendees, it seemed the group I was with was slightly different to the norm and included a number of sports bike riders (apparently it's hard for the police to engage with this demographic), myself, the Milton Keynes IAM Chief Observer and a couple of others. The police were very keen that attendees should continue with advanced riding after BikeSafe (they promoted the IAM, RoSPA and others) and they seemed disappointed Karl would not be at the Super Sausage at lunchtime to hear him promoting the IAM, although during the course of the day it became apparent that most attendees were considering further training.



The ride itself was no different to an assessment with a NAM observer. I was teamed up with the MKAM chap and Dom (police motorcyclist), I'm not sure if it was coincidental or by design that the 2 advanced riders were put together. When out on the road it was really interesting to see how other road users reacted when seeing Dom on the police bike, some road users reacted in an unexpected way. The ride in the morning was a typical Sunday morning ride and uneventful, ending at the Super Sausage on the A5 for lunch. After lunch the ride went a bit wayward when we were hit with a tropical downpour, the ride back to the police HQ was an endurance, especially as we were in summer riding gear and not all had waterproofs. Some attendees apparently didn't normally ride in the wet which led to some interesting feedback, but within my group we rode to the conditions and the feedback reflected this. It was a shame the weather turned as I think the ride was cut short but overall it was a really positive experience, and ironically the sun was out by the time we got back to the police HQ.

So what did I learn:-

1. The police motorcyclists are enthusiastic and supportive bikers. They were approachable and keen to impart their knowledge and experience, although I wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of them.
2. Junctions be aware of the "Looming effect" and "Saccadic masking"
3. When it comes to visibility & conspicuity there is a lot of interesting reading at:- <https://scienceofbeingseen.org/> In my opinion, worth taking a look at.
4. I felt the assessment feedback was no different to that which I would have received from a NAM observer.
5. "Bikesafe" was the inspiration to refresh myself on the "Highway Code", "Roadcraft" and "How to be a better Rider"
6. My quest for the perfect ride continues

At £65.00 I think I would recommend a BikeSafe course but I'm equally confident the NAM observers would have given me the same feedback on the practical implementation of IPSGA so a NAM re-assessment would be a good alternative, and could save you a few pounds. Since doing the BikeSafe course I have attended a virtual BikeSafe conference so it seems like there's more to BikeSafe than just the initial course, how much more I wait and see.

My thanks go to member Jim Payne for this article Ed.

Rallying – The Roast Beef

Those who find their fun on two wheels have through motorcycling unwittingly joined a fraternity and although I make a wild assumption it is something easier to get into than to get out of. Those who do, as far as I can tell are usually forced out of it by old age, infirmity or the 'Grim Reaper' himself, if indeed it is not herself in these modern enlightened times.

There is such a lot to see in the UK but I have been known to wander abroad across the herring pond to visit our kindred in Europe. Sometime ago I joined a group of Brits riding into France to participate in a biker's rally in the centre of that fair land. Since then, I have been back quite a few times always to a different location but meeting up with the same group of enthusiasts, some French some Germans, a couple of Irish and even a Belgian thrown in for good luck. The French rallies are always held over 4 days starting on Ascension Day (6 weeks after Easter) and they are so well organised as to put greater gatherings to shame. Back in the UK there is a 'home' match that happens in the second week in September with 2023 being the first time this could happen since the scourge of Covid put a stop to nearly everything except Downing Street parties.

Some readers of Vibrations may remember my earlier article, 'Camping for Beginners' and my floundering to learn the ropes, at times literally, of living under canvas. Now with the passage of time and graduation to a better tent I can actually say I am enjoying it but twice a year is probably enough for those not accustomed to spending their holidays crawling around on hands and knees.

This year after a cracking break in France, staying in the Pas de Calais last May it was time to consider September and the delights of Somerset. This year the dates chosen for the home match were 7th to 10th September. So it was with some glee that I had loaded up the bike with all the camping essentials and headed off for Tuckers Grave Inn near Frome, deep into cider country.

It was going to be a relatively cheap stay with my ninety-five quid buying me 3 nights camping including 3 breakfasts and 3 dinners. All pretty basic meals but reasonable fare, nothing fancy.



At Tuckers Grave Inn they press and ferment their own cider, some of which is quite palatable and others as rough as the rear end of a Badger (so they tell me). However, I took a liking to a brew called 'Mind yer 'Ed' which at 6.5% lived up to its name. Caution is the watch word if you are going to be riding the bike the following day!!

We had an organised ride out on Friday for 70 miles with about 60 riders in convoy firstly to view the impressive White Horse carved into the hillside at Bratton Camp, Wiltshire visible from Westbury and then on to National Trust property Stourhead House and its famous gardens. The weather was stinking hot so I didn't feel the need to wander far in my leathers and in truth never got much further than the ice cream shop.

On Saturday I was free to do my own thing and as Bristol was so close, being only 20 miles away I took a ride there to view Brunel's maritime masterpiece SS Great Britain, truly a wonder of its time. Worth every penny of the £22.00 entrance ticket that allow access for the following 12 months at no extra cost. Again, the sun was splitting the paving stones and I was pleased to find a bar with air con to enjoy some lunch. Bristol docklands have been renovated and it is a vibrant area with so much going on.

The evenings were spent back at the campsite with our international companions all swapping their stories of past victories and adventures until it was time to open the tent flap and clamber into the sleeping bag. I can only marvel at the sleep-inducing powers of 'Mind yer Ed'.

Sunday dawned with just a sprinkle of rain overnight, enough to make trying to pack up a wet tent more challenging and already some riders with a long way to go were leaving as bikes, mostly heavily loaded headed off site and into the distance.

At home with the tent eventually dried out and my sleeping bag aired, all has been put away for next year. I am told that next May the Rally will be close to the French Alps and Italian border. Its going to take me a while to get down there as it is over 800 miles each way but I know I will have a terrific time in the company of some very friendly people who like me enjoy to ride motorcycles.

Paul Ollett

Somerset Rally Pictures (*taken by member Paul Ollett*)



Tuckers Grave Inn Cider selection
Sunrise from Base Camp

Back Yard of Tuckers Grave Inn



The White Horse (*the one in the distance!*)



Stourhead House



International Bikers' gathering



THE OFFSIDE RULE

When is proceeding on the 'wrong side of the road' safe, and when is it unwise to do so? An IAM RoadSmart examiner explains all

WORDS: SHAUN CRONIN WITH RICHARD GLADMAN

I'm more of a rugby man than football in truth, but my true interest is motorsport and motorcycling. In field sport the offside rule is often discussed, and is the subject of numerous video replays at sporting fixtures. You get the chance to replay the event in slow motion over and over, and often the worst that happens is that the referee blows their whistle and disallows the try or goal. However, on the road, getting the offside rule wrong can have catastrophic consequences.

Straight-lining, apexing, taking the racing line and offsidings are all used to describe being on the 'wrong side of the road'. But what is the 'wrong side'? We pay a lot of vehicle excise duty, so all of that glorious Tarmac is available to us, isn't it? As an advanced driver or motorcyclist we all know we can use it in certain circumstances, and it just depends... doesn't it?

Ask your average road user what they think about seeing a vehicle on the opposite carriageway to their norm, and they'll cry "dangerous". Ah! Here's the first lesson - perception. We must be careful of the perception our actions have on other road users. At best they may wave at us in a less-than-encouraging way; at worst they

may take avoiding action such that bent metal and twisted bodies are the result.

With the help of IAM RoadSmart head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman, here's the definitive guide to this subject.

Just what is offsidings?

It's moving to the offside of the road across either centre- or hazard-line markings on the approach to a left-hand bend where you don't have a view around the bend. Generally it's in an attempt to encourage the limit point of vision to match: open quicker and allow a greater speed of approach.

Issues often arise when a vehicle comes into view and your movement required to adopt a position of safety is sudden and often coarse. The oncoming vehicle could react to your presence, and this may cause a chain reaction behind it.

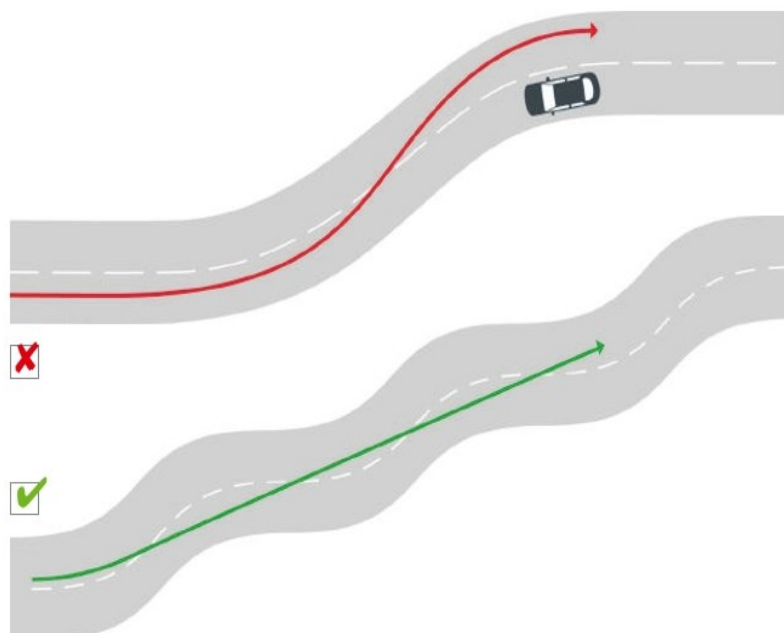
At speeds within the posted limit, the benefit of this extreme offside positioning is all but negated; even in *Roadcraft*, where the focus is on progress for emergency-service drivers, the practice of offsidings is

not mentioned or encouraged. It advocates positioning towards the centre line, and you're encouraged to consider approaching traffic, your effect on others and whether there is any advantage - all very much in sync with the IAM RoadSmart advanced course material. *Roadcraft* finishes by saying: "Don't position yourself in a way that causes concern to other road users."

What is not offsidings?

- Adopting a straight line through a series of bends where we have a clear view of the road and surface (markings permitting) ie: "The road is mine until the loss of vision in 400 yards; my mirrors are clear so I am adopting a straight and stable course."
- Opening up the radius of a bend where vision is available of any potential oncoming traffic or other hazards on a generally open road.
- Moving out to make a planned safe overtake, and then finding yourself with a fantastic view that allows you to maintain your progress before returning to your own side of the road.

"STRAIGHT-LINING, APEXING, TAKING THE RACING LINE, OFFSIDING; ALL DESCRIBE BEING ON THE 'WRONG SIDE OF THE ROAD'"

**SAFE**

Is it safe to do so? Consider the view available and any hazards.

LEGAL

Is it legal to do so? Observe the road markings.

ACHIEVE

Does it actually achieve something? Or are you just showboating?

PERCEPTION

What is the perception of another road user of your actions?

SLAP

This phrase will help you decide when you can apply the offside rule in safety - but I reiterate, we never simply 'offside' on the approach to a left-hand bend.

Picture the scene: I was on a National Observer car assessment with a very good Observer, Alex from the Basingstoke Car Group. I saw the road ahead was weaving like a snake on a mission, the surface was visible for about half a mile and nothing else was in sight, so I asked: "Can I straighten this out?" Alex said: "You need to SLAP."

Clearly I'd slightly misheard him, and thought: "This type of punishment is rarely handed out on test to an Examiner!" He went on to explain that when you're considering straightening out

a corner, but never 'offsiding' and using the other side of the road, you need to consider the acronym SLAP (see above right).

Taking Richard Gladman's clear and unambiguous guidance on when you can cross the paint, then considering SLAP as your guiding principle, you should be able to master the offside rule in complete safety - remembering the *Roadcraft* quote: "Quiet efficiency is the hallmark of the expert."

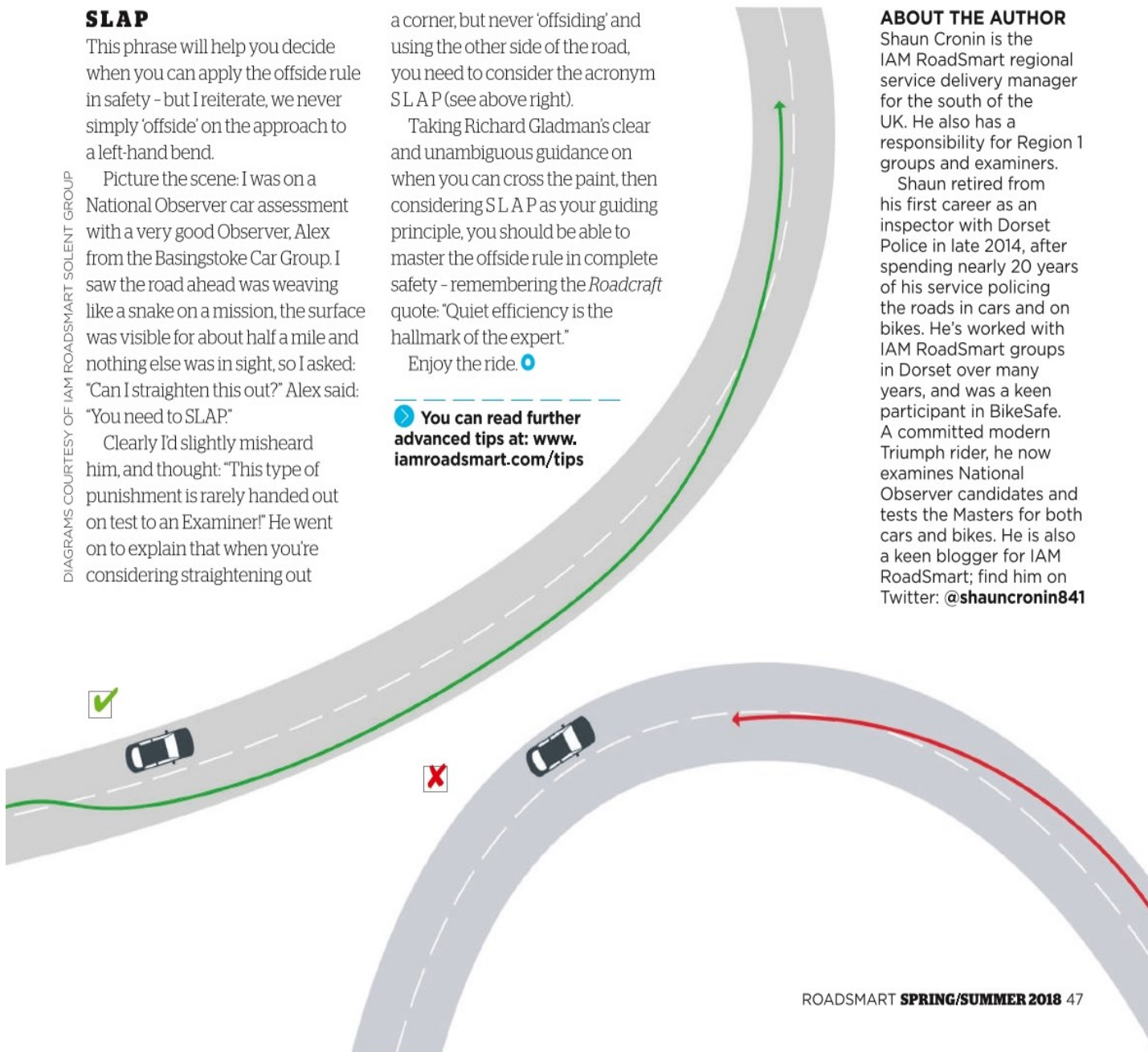
Enjoy the ride. 🚗

👉 You can read further advanced tips at: www.iamroadsmart.com/tips

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shaun Cronin is the IAM RoadSmart regional service delivery manager for the south of the UK. He also has a responsibility for Region 1 groups and examiners.

Shaun retired from his first career as an inspector with Dorset Police in late 2014, after spending nearly 20 years of his service policing the roads in cars and on bikes. He's worked with IAM RoadSmart groups in Dorset over many years, and was a keen participant in BikeSafe. A committed modern Triumph rider, he now examines National Observer candidates and tests the Masters for both cars and bikes. He is also a keen blogger for IAM RoadSmart; find him on Twitter: @shauncronin841



SUNDAY RIDE-OUT DESTINATIONS

We meet at The Obelisk Centre, Obelisk Rise, Kingsthorpe, Northampton,
NN2 8UE (there's a map on our website . Meet 9 am—Leave 9.30am

1st Sunday- Kettleby Cross (Wetherspoons) Wilton Rd., Melton Mowbray LE13 0UJ.

***2nd Sunday-** The Weeping Ash (Wetherspoons), 15 New St, Saint Neots PE19 1AE, or a choice of cafés around the Market Square.

3rd Sunday - The Old Mill Café, Chipping Norton, OX7 5LH.

***4th Sunday-** The Swan, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1EA The car park is to the rear accessed from the mini roundabout opposite the petrol station (turn right & immediately left.) Tel. 01525 380170

5th Sunday (*when there is one*) Group ride for test-passed members + Observes as usual**

**Extended rides usually also start at the same time and place. These are usually limited to Full members and approved Associates. Places to more distant events should be booked with the organiser well before you arrive as this is useful to assess interest and may be needed to organise suitable facilities for the number going. Don't be disappointed, check the Events regularly on website: www.nammc.org.uk for latest details. Associates; if not sure whether you are eligible -ask!

Remember:- 'POWDERS' as your bike check & come with a full tank of petrol, suitably dressed for riding and the weather on the day. Both IAM RoadSmart & NAM memberships need to be current.

** also see note below—>

**Current members are made aware of changes by group-mail but If you are new to the Group and feel we may not have your information, or would like to join us, please email:- sec@nammc.org.uk.

New Committee Members

The Group would be pleased to welcome any qualified member who would like to get involved with its running. It's a good opportunity to help and also continue to develop your own skills & interest in advanced riding in either category. Volunteers do run the Group.

Interested? Good, it's not onerous; just let any Official know! *Editor*

NAM Committee Members 2024

Chairman:	Geoff Russell	chair@nammc.org.uk	
Group Secretary:	Karl Williams	sec@nammc.org.uk	Tel. 01604 385082
Treasurer:	Steve Dawks	Accounts@nammc.org.uk	
Newsletter Editor:	David Harrop	Newsletters@nammc.org.uk	
Dep Secretary;	Geoff Keats	dep.sec@nammc.org.uk	
Associates' Secretary:	John Durrant	Associates@nammc.org.uk	
Events Co-ordinators:	Steve Rawlings & Chris Hurst	events@nammc.org.uk	
Webmaster:	Vitor Fernandes– Neto	webmaster@nammc.org.uk	
Forum Administrator:	Chris Capewell,	forumadmin@nammc.org.uk	
Quartermaster and Group ride out organiser:	- Ian Harris.		
Dep Treasurer:	Rob Corbett		
Dep Associates' Secretary:	Jem Philpott		

Website: www.nammc.org.uk

GROUP OBSERVERS

National Observers: - Andrew Beckett, Colin Buck, Chris Capewell, Richard Debell, Ian Duffield, John Durrant, James Heaton, Geoff Keats, Nick Lenton, John Martin, Mick Nealis, John Page, Tom Palacio, Steve Rawlings, Geoff Russell, Carl Sturman, Dave Wilkinson and Karl Williams.

Observers in Training: - Simon Cockayne, Liam Fassam, Dave Loveday, Jem Philpott.

N.B. -Associates' Observed Ride Contribution- £10 per ride - give it to your Observer

NAM Group Membership & Subscription Rates 2024/25 due next April

(£15/24 if paid by BACS/Standing Order—(also see page 4) -

by BACS—SORT CODE: 30 96 09 -ACCOUNT NO. 01475729

(Payment can also easily be made via our website using PayPal at £16 Single or £25 Joint, - use your IAM RoadSmart no. omitting the prefix letter.—we'll know who you are!

N.B. - Both IAM RoadSmart and Group subscriptions need to be in force to participate in Group activities.

(This is a Group insurance requirement)

(N.B. The Group Treasurer is able to claim Gift Aid on your NAM subscriptions (if you are a taxpayer) as we are a registered charity.)

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor, Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists or the Institute of Advanced Motorists unless so stated.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS 2018

Members are advised that name and address details are held on a computer database. These details are not divulged to anyone other than fellow members. All Members have been advised by the Secretary, in writing, of these regulations, with a contract statement, giving options to members not wishing participate so the Group may not be in breach of these regulations, which came into force in May 2018.



Group Required Contract Statement to Members

Here at **Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists Group** we would like to thank you for becoming/renewing your membership with us, as part of your membership contract with us, we will contact you with information on training, committee, and social events, together newsletters/magazines relating to the group and Road Safety.

Pictures, videos and written updates of **Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists** events such as training, committee and social events at which you may be in attendance or referred to, will also be regularly published on Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc, group newsletters/magazines and group related websites.

Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists also share your information with IAM RoadSmart in order to administer membership activities.

Option to Withdraw from the above

You have the right to withdraw from receiving or participating in any of the above, by contacting **Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists**.

I do not wish to:-

- receive information on training, committee, and social events, together newsletters/magazines relating to the group and Road Safety.
- to appear in or be referred to in or on any group social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc, group newsletters/magazines and group related websites.

Signature: _____

Name (in capitals): _____

Date: _____

Membership Number _____

Please notify the **Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists** by email to sec@nammc.org.uk or by letter to:-

Group Secretary

Northamptonshire Advanced Motorcyclists

PO Box 7124 Wellingborough

Northamptonshire

Post Code NN8 9BA

