

# LADAM Newsletter

March 2023



## *Congratulations to ...*

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Richard Harper with Observer Zoe Eastwell

*For passing the Advanced test since the last newsletter*

## *In this Newsletter*

Welcome to the March Newsletter. The weather over the last few months has been rather wintery and so we've missed a few weekends but hopefully you've managed to get out.



Unfortunately, we've been unlucky this year with our winter evenings, as Jim Sampson was unable to give his talk in January. Fortunately, Mike Anthony and John Adderley stepped in, details below. Hopefully we can book Jim for another time along with the Helmet Inspection Company which was cancelled last year. Read on for the review of the evening/

Also in the newsletter, Mike Anthony gives us a glance into life as DVSA Examiner; Steve Rowthorne is on the case with useful videos and we have another LADAM journey.

Advance notice that we will be relaunching our website in the next few months and will be establishing a blog, which will supplement this newsletter, for those who like their articles in bite sized chunks.

Many thanks as always to all the contributors this month. Feedback and stories always welcome, contact [chair@ladam.org.uk](mailto:chair@ladam.org.uk).



## Winter Events

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Jim Sampson was unable to join us for January's talk, and the February evening was cancelled so that it didn't interfere with any Valentine's Day commitments.

Fortunately, in *January*, Mike Anthony and John Adderley were able to step in at short notice and, following our Chief Observer's article in the last newsletter, gave a talk on "Safe Filtering".

The talk covered such areas as the benefits and risks; the difference between overtaking, undertaking and filter; the legalities both in this country and some other European countries, and the consequences of getting it wrong.

By all accounts, it was a successful evening. Both Mike and John would like to thank all those who attended for their participation and for the, sometimes tricky, questions. What is rewarding is seeing a group of advanced riders being able to discuss a subject with open minds and agreeing on safe and progressive riding techniques.

In *February*, to make allowances for Valentine's Day, the meeting was moved to Wednesday and was for Observers only. We have an Observers' Only training event in April on motorways and Steve Rowthorne had put together a presentation on motorway riding, which provoked much debate and discussion.

As is so often the case, the answer to any debate is situational, "it depends on ...." No two riders will ever have the same set of circumstances in the same place at a different time. I think the phrase is "no one ever steps into the same river". As Advanced Riders, we should all be thinking riders, able to adapt to the changing circumstances.

Many thanks for Steve for the presentation and to all those who have spent hours on the motorways planning the route for April. Thanks also for the pizza, which I'm sure helped the debate!

In *March*, for the last of the Winter Evening events, Kieran Sangha from Sangha Race & Restoration will be with us again, for a talk on all things maintenance.

Many LADAM members have had their bikes serviced and fixed by Kieran and his enthusiasm is great to see. Last year was a great evening, with Kieran answering questions from the audience with a great depth of knowledge, experience and humour.

If you have any questions you would like to ask, please send them to [secretary@ladam.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ladam.org.uk) in the next few days and then turn up at Fosse Riders on 14<sup>th</sup> March for the answer.





## Return of the Spring/Summer Rideouts

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In *April*, we will start our Spring/Summer day-long rides, which will take place on a Sunday, usually on a weekend where there is no Club Saturday. Zoë will lead the first of these on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April, with a route through the Cotswolds taking in Broadway Tower and Bourton on the Water down to the very pretty town of Burford, stopping for lunch at the Burford Garden Company.



The route takes in a variety of roads, from the Fosse Way to somewhat smaller minor roads, all of which will be taken at a fairly leisurely pace (ie keeping to the speed limit). The ride will leave the Elms in Lutterworth at 9:30am sharp and is limited to 12 riders only.



If you would like to take part in the ride, please complete the booking form by clicking [here](#).



## Return of the Chippy Rideouts

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*April* also sees the first of the Fish & Chip rideouts. These replace the Winter events on the second Tuesday of every month throughout the Spring and Summer. This first ride will leave from Leicester North Services in Birstall at 6:30pm on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April.

At the moment, the destination has not been confirmed, but it will definitely be a fun ride. Given the time of year, there is likely to be some night riding.



The first ride of last year ended up at McDonalds, but hopefully this year we'll actually manage a chip shop! Destinations last year included Grantham, Daventry, Stamford and Market Harborough, so it could be in any direction.

You don't need to book to join the ride, just turn up and be ready to leave at 6:30pm sharp.



## Club Saturday Rideouts

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For all members who have passed their test, there is the fortnightly Saturday Rideout, which leaves Birstall at around 9:30am and finishes around lunch time, usually taking in a cup of tea and bacon butty or cake. Associates will get a chance to join at least one ride with their Observer as part of their training.





## *So what's it like being a Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency Motorcycle Examiner*

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*Mike Anthony reveals some of the ups and downs of being an Examiner for the DVSA.*

After spending many years training and promoting road safety, I had the opportunity to join the DVSA as a Motorcycle Examiner. In those days new examiners were sent to Cardington in Bedfordshire for their training. First, they had to qualify as a normal car examiner, and if successful, go onto qualify as a motorcycle examiner. The motorcycle examiners course would normally be for about four weeks, it took me an extra two. They obviously saw potential, as I could ride to their very high standard and I had the ability to correctly assess the riding skill of whom I was assessing. Unfortunately, I had trouble doing both at the same time.



But eventually I mastered it. There I was, a qualified DVSA Motorcycle Examiner. I'm now riding a brand new fully funded BMW and being paid for it.

I passed my motorcycle test back in May 1978 on a Honda CD 175. In those days we rode a figure of 8 on a housing estate and if whilst the examiner was watching we didn't fall off or run the examiner over after he jumped into the road, you got a pass certificate. How things have changed. I think it was back in 2009 the new Part 1 & Part 2 motorcycle test came into force. Part 1 involves the candidate demonstrating slow riding skills and if successful, Part 2 consists of going out on the road being followed by an examiner. The candidate is fitted with an earpiece and the examiner gives directions.

Here are some of the many questions I get asked.

*"Has anyone ever fallen off whilst on a test"?*

Unsurprisingly the answer is yes. I remember one guy who came to take his Part 1. He arrived as a pillion on his friend's brand new R1. I asked him to ride through a speed measuring device at a minimum speed of 32kph and when I raised my hand, stop as quickly and safely as possible. Well, I'm guessing he was showing off. As he came through the speed measuring device at more than twice the required speed, he applied a fist full of front brake, resulting in the inevitable. Don't think his friend was best pleased seeing his R1 sliding down the tarmac.

Again, whilst I've been following a candidate on the road, occasionally they have fallen off. Fortunately, none of them have been seriously hurt. But one occasion will stay with me. A candidate who was so obsessed doing unnecessary blind spot checks he wasn't looking where he was going and didn't realise the slow-moving car in front had actually stopped.

*"Has anyone been stopped by the police"?*

This is another instance that will stay with me. The candidate was in front, and I was being followed by a marked police car. As we approached a temporary set of traffic light which had clearly been on red for some time, the candidate didn't stop and rode straight through in the path of oncoming traffic. On came the blue lights and I thought.... Well, you'll be coming back.

*"Have I ever lost someone whilst on test"?*

Twice!

The first: When approaching a roundabout, I asked the candidate to follow the natural road ahead (which in this case was the second exit). Without warning the candidate decided he'd take the first exit which was clearly signposted the M40. Because of my position, my only safe option was to continue round the roundabout and join him as soon as practically possible. The safest thing to do was to follow him to the first safe place (which was the next junction), terminate the test and get his instructor to collect him.

The second was totally my fault. Part of the on-road test is what's called an "Independent Ride". At the beginning of the test, I asked the candidate to "Follow the signs for Daventry, and continue to follow these signs till I say otherwise". This part of the test would normally take about 15-20 minutes. However, this was the same as my normal route home. Whilst following the candidate I was thinking.... This rider is riding quite well, and my mind started to wonder and for a moment I forgot I was conducting a test. As he approached a roundabout, he quite rightly followed the sign for Daventry. I on the other hand followed the sign for Brackley... because that's where I lived. Took quite a while to catch him up and I don't think he was any the wiser.

Like most jobs, there is an up-side and a down-side. For me meeting a candidate who has been well trained and rides with confidence, then issuing a pass certificate is a great feeling. I have met some lovely people and it has been great to see some of them join LADAM. Unfortunately, politics and consistent poor management got in the way.

*Thanks Mike, for this great insight! If anyone else has a story related to their biking career please share it.*



## *Tips from the Chief Observer*

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*In this newsletter, our Chief Observer, Steve, talks about YouTube and other Social Media Motorcycle Experts*

For this article I'm going to talk about taking advice from so-called experts on YouTube and other Social Media outlets. We often get sent links to these videos under the heading of "look at these they could really help the club.", which is great because it's amazing that everyone is so engaged in improving their skills that they look for every avenue open to them.

However, we have reviewed these individual videos and some of the other ones by the same "experts". What is incredible and frightening is the volume of absolute rubbish there is out there even by professional driving and riding instructors. The trouble is these videos are often very well edited and the presenter talks with such assurance and detail that it's virtually impossible to not take them as gospel. As anyone who saw Jim Sampson talk last year, that is clearly not the case.



*Why are we (LADAM) right and they are wrong?*

That is a valid question to ask. In response I would say that we are directed and assessed by IAM RoadSmart which is the industry standard for advanced riding and driving. As a club we carry out regular Observer training to ensure all our information and training is to current standards. Many, not all of the “experts” I have seen on Social Media do not have the training we have. Even some of those who do have IAM qualifications demonstrate techniques that are not advised by IAM RoadSmart nor the HWC.

*So how do we tell what is good and bad?*

I hear you shout, which is a very good question and to be completely honest, I cannot give you a definitive answer. I cannot give you a link to the video library of perfect Advanced riding, because it appears there isn't one.

So, what we propose to do is *create our own*, including footage from our own helmet cams and footage from the good examples we can find on Social Media. This will be accessed from our own website for all members to use.

And this is where all members can help, **can I appeal for anyone who has found good quality IAM Road Smart worthy videos on social media to please send us the links, also all those who have their own footage. We will then try and piece this video library together?** We will review everything that is sent – if it's great we'll say why it's great and if it's bad, we'll also say why.

*These will go onto our website, which is being updated over the next few months, so please send any Videos or links to [steve\\_r@ladam.org.uk](mailto:steve_r@ladam.org.uk) or [chair@ladam.org.uk](mailto:chair@ladam.org.uk) and in the meantime, feel free to get in touch with Steve to discuss any suggestions.*



## My LADAM Journey

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*This month, I failed to get a volunteer in time for the newsletter, so here is my own (Zoe's) LADAM journey.*

Like many of our members my first experience of motorbiking was in my teens, but as a pillion with my boyfriend at the time rather than as a rider. I confess that it was probably through necessity rather than choice and we quickly traded in the bike as soon as we could get a car. In the years where we did have a bike, we covered a lot of miles, including a very wet ride from Leamington Spa to Fort William on a Yamaha RD200. It had an extremely small seat, we were well loaded, and I spent most of the week mostly struggling to walk!



*Figure 1 Not the actual bike*

Fast forward to 2016 when I got a job at Triumph Motorcycles in Hinckley, working on their customer database. After a year as a contractor, I was offered a permanent role, which included a fully expensed Staff bike. I'm pretty sure they thought that they would never have to actually give me a bike, but in February 2018 I did my CBT, followed by Mod 1 and Mod 2 in May.

To have a staff bike, you have to do a test with an in-house instructor, which is equivalent to the DVSA Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS). Usually, you also have to have been riding for at least a year.

In September, I persuaded them to give me some additional training and after several Sundays out with the instructor, I took my test. As back up I also did the ERS with Phoenix in Market Harborough, which was just as well because the day of the test, I was riding an unfamiliar bike in extremely strong winds and didn't ride particularly well! That passed, I waited until the following April before I could actually get my first company bike, a rather lovely Street Twin, which I thought was a pretty safe option.



*Figure 2 Also not the actual bike*

Doing the ERS, I realised pretty quickly that passing Mod 1 and Mod 2 does not mean you can actually ride a bike! So I did a Bikesafe course, where they recommended doing further advanced riding and in May 2019 I signed up for IAM Roadsmart. I also had an ulterior motive to meet some other riders as none of my friends, nor my husband, ride a motorbike.

Les Congden was my Observer and over the course of the next months he took me through the handbook and improved my riding enormously. After 6,000 miles I handed the Street Twin back and switched to a Speed Twin, which has a bit more oomph! I took the test on this bike in December, passing with a F1rst, despite my nemesis – ride hand bends.



*Figure 3 The actual bike*

Still wanting more training, I signed up for my Masters, but then Covid hit and we were grounded. In May, along with more than 200 others, I was made redundant from Triumph, and had to hand the Speed Twin back, albeit with nearly 8K miles on the clock.

The silver lining was that as part of the redundancy package, I was able to buy my current bike, a brand new Tiger 900GT, at a pretty respectable discount and from July tried to get out as much as possible. I took my Masters test on 6<sup>th</sup> November, literally days before the entire country shut down again for Christmas, and passed with a Distinction.



The next step was to train as an Observer and in March 2021 when we were finally allowed out again, I started my training with Steve Tamsett. In the same year, I joined the trip to Wales and after a great ride and fantastic company at dinner was persuaded to join the committee. In the time since then, I've passed the Local Observer and the National Observer assessments and, somehow, become Chair of LADAM.

I can honestly say that I've absolutely loved the journey and found every part of it rewarding. I love being out on the bike, whatever the weather, and while I haven't yet ventured abroad, I've added nearly 24K miles to the bike (despite Covid and a three-month period in 2022 when it was "unavailable" - the less said about that, the better!). I continue to learn how to be a better rider and have met a great group of friendly, approachable and like-minded bikers (although we could definitely do with balancing the male:female ratio a bit).

I hope that I can continue for a long while yet and encourage others to take up Advanced Training and help at least some of them directly through Observing.

Thank you to everyone I've met and who has helped me! It's been a great journey.

*If you would like to share your journey, please email me at [chair@ladam.org.uk](mailto:chair@ladam.org.uk).*

## *And in other news...*

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### *Mystery Sign*

On a recent ride into Lincolnshire last month, one of our observers encountered quite a number of these “Red ER Out” directional signs. they seemed to be repeated at every junction for about 10 miles, then they just disappear. If any member knows what they are for, Please email Mike at [events.LADAM@googlemail.com](mailto:events.LADAM@googlemail.com).



### *Rider Awareness Course*

A couple of weeks ago Dave Preece of [Totally4bikers.com](http://Totally4bikers.com) gave a talk to our Chief Observer, Chair and some other committee members introducing his 2023 programme of dates for the Advanced Rider Awareness (ARA) scheme. The brochure for this is sent as a Word document alongside this Newsletter.

The Advanced Rider Awareness courses are delivered on excellent roads in Wales over 3 days, including two nights in a good quality hotel. All of the trainers for the courses are either IAM Examiners, Masters Mentors or National Observers. Therefore it is a very high standard of coaching. LADAM are being offered a heavily discounted price of £599 , of which £300 is for the hotel accommodation on a B&B basis. This represents excellent value for money and will hugely benefit Associates who are nearing test readiness. However, some of the major benefits may be for those LADAM members who have passed their test some time ago and worried about “skills fade” or those who are considering going for the Masters qualification. Please take a look at the brochure and the dates to see if any of them suit you. If you have any questions then either speak to Steve Tamsett or call Dave Preece directly on the number shown in the document.

### *Ride Leaders*

Not really news, but another plea for ride leaders. To continue to offer events and to promote safe riding, we are heavily reliant on volunteers. If you can help with leading anything from a Group Ride on a Saturday, a trip to an amazing chip shop, or a full day's tour, please let us know. You don't need to be an Observer although you do need to have passed your Advanced Test. An Observer is required for every official ride, so you will always have support.

If you're interested contact any of the committee. Details at the end of the newsletter.



## *IAM RoadSmart*

The latest IAM RoadSmart News is [here](#), their tips and blogs are [here](#).



## *Contact Details*

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Website: <https://www.ladam.org.uk/home>

Facebook Private Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LADAM>

For future events check out the [Calendar Page](#)

Chair & Newsletter Editor: Zoë Eastwell – [chair@ladam.org.uk](mailto:chair@ladam.org.uk)

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If you would like to provide a story, maybe about your journey with LADAM or an event coming up, please contact Zoë. If we don't get any volunteers, be wary, you may be volunteered! The same applies to ride leaders. You have been warned!

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