



RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders North Wiltshire Group

www.northwiltsroadar.co.uk



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Newsletter

March 2009

Secretary:

Mrs. Monica Graham
114 Marines Drive
Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 7UG
Tel: 01367 242377
secretary.nwg.roadar@googlemail.com

Dates for Your Diary

Monthly meetings are all held at
Liddington Village Hall opposite
the church.

Saturday 28th March
Driving Day

Saturday 18th April,
8.45am to 5.00pm
First Aid Course

Monday 11th May,
7.15pm for 7.45pm
Meeting: Dave Jones, author of "Not
the Blue Book"

Monday 8th June,
7.15pm for 7.45pm
Meeting: Colin Reeves, Bike Safe

**Do you have a Topic you would
like discussed, or know of an
interesting speaker? Please
contact Monica!**

RoADAR South Central Groups' Advisory Panel Meeting



We recently hosted the annual South Central Groups' Advisory Panel Meeting which was attended by staff from RoADAR Head Office and members from other RoADAR groups. The meeting was a big success and gave the Committee the opportunity to exchange ideas and raise issues with others.

Pictured (from left): Gerry Griffin (RoADAR South Central GAP representative); Liz Wragg (RoADAR Customer Care Officer); Jayne Bartlett (RoADAR and DFS Development Manager); Geoff Summerling (North Wilts RoADAR Chairman); Monica Graham (North Wilts RoADAR Secretary)

Forthcoming Meetings

Note there is no meeting in April as it falls on Easter Monday.

Monday 11th May, 2009 7.15pm for 7.45pm: Dave Jones, author of "Not the Blue Book".

Monday 8th June, 2009 7.15pm for 7.45pm: Colin Reeves from Bike Safe.

Events

Driving Day - Saturday 28th March: Our first driving day will take place on the 28th March 2009, providing an opportunity to drive with others, compare notes, and have some fun! More information is available on the Web Site forum.

First Aid Course - Saturday 18th April, 8.45am – 5.00pm: First Aid Course relating to car accidents. To be held at Liddington Village Hall. Weather permitting some training will be done outside. Cost £60 to include tea and coffee breaks, lunch and a contribution to the cost of the hall. This is excellent value and well worth doing. **£60 could give you the confidence to save someone's life!! We have had one or two members drop out from this and we are now short of numbers. We are very keen to run it so please consider taking part. Family/friends would be welcome. Places must be booked quickly within the next few days by sending your cheque to Monica.**

Welcome!

Welcome to the following new members who have joined the group recently...

Colin Pugsley (car)
Jillan Campbell (bike)
Vernon Hickson (bike)

Bike Ride-outs: Don't forget that regular Bike Ride-outs take place on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Check the Motorcycle Discussion section on the Web Site Forum for more details.



Wanted!

The raffle that we hold at the monthly meetings is a valuable source of income for the group and we always need more prizes. If you have any unwanted items that would be suitable then they would be gratefully received! Please pass them onto Monica.



Les Alley: Motorcycle Instructor!

On the 5th March I attended the DSA establishment at Cardington, Bedfordshire to be assessed for my Direct Access Scheme (DAS) qualification to enable me to teach students preparing for their big bike test.



The assessment is split into three modules: module one is machine familiarisation for the big bike; module two requires me to fix faults that the examiner has told me he has since buying this big bike; then module three contains three on road scenarios which involve me in instructing him in various exercises which ends in a debrief. All this time the examiner role plays as a new biker who has upgraded from a smaller bike to a bigger bike which was a BMW RT so I was on familiar ground.

Last November I attended Cardington for my Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) certification. This course was over two days and involved the different elements that we have to teach to new riders. During this time we are also assessed on our ability to teach other instructors, and I was lucky enough to pass both parts of this course.

In conclusion I am now a fully qualified Motorcycle Instructor with a RoSPA Gold Standard. Pretty cool eh!!!

One final note: I was originally observed by Tim Read who has also Passed Cardington so feel very proud to have done well. It is a testament to his skill and good advice in those early days that has help me through. I therefore credit this qualification to him.

Les Alley

Congratulations to Les Alley who has obtained his DAS qualification last week. This means he can now take new riders from CBT to full licence.

DAS stands for Direct Access Scheme. He has been to the DSA Headquarters in Bedford and scored highly in two very difficult trials. It has taken months of training, practice and preparation to be successful; most people fail the tests. He is now able to take a brand new novice student right from getting on a bike for the first time through to passing their full motorcycle test. It's probably the most challenging thing he has ever done and I know he is extremely relieved and happy. I work with Les at Abbey Rider Training and have done some of his training.

Rob Fox

Outlet Centre - Saturday 7th March 2009

It would have helped if I had remembered what time we had to be at the Outlet Village to set up. 8.30am seemed VERY early to me, especially as I had all the things needed to set up our stand and I was in Faringdon. I had arranged to meet Mark Sealey at 8.30am and was on my way when I realized I had forgotten the banner. Quick dash home to collect it and off I went, arriving half an hour late! Many apologies to Mark and Bill who were waiting for me at the back of the centre where we had access to park and get in through the coach passengers' entrance. We should have arranged to meet at 9.30am!

Each time we set up the stand we always try to make improvements, and today was no exception. Photographs had been enlarged and laminated, but needed Velcro on the back to make them stick to the display boards. We also had some new logos and headings to go on the boards and when it was all together it was a vast improvement from the last time it was used. We set the table up much the same as for meetings, complete with a tub of free balloons and pens to give away. Our banner was in competition with the yellow crane in the centre, and with the necessary two chairs we were ready long before the public came. Time for a coffee!

It is always difficult to talk to the general public about what we do. Driving is a taboo subject, "I can do it, have done for years, never had an accident, why should I do an Advanced Drivers or Riders Course?" are frequent replies. This is off putting to say the least. But tackled from another angle, "When did you last have to, or how often do you update your information or skills in your employment, suddenly puts things more into perspective. "When did you last update your driving skills?" You often get a pause and you can see the thought process going on. This hopefully will lead to an opportunity to give out our leaflets and information. We all make errors and pick up bad habits. If nothing else they have a leaflet with all the information on and perhaps sometime they will come across an incident that may make them think...perhaps I do need to improve my driving/riding skills?

The under twenty-fives pose a different problem, not long past their tests, a bit "oh that's for older people." We can gently point out to them that they are in the age bracket that has the most accidents. We could help them to be more aware of what is going on around them so they can try to protect themselves and their passengers from danger. They are always concerned that it will cost a fortune, but when it is pointed out that this is not the case it gives them food for thought.

Saturday was a long day for a few of us, but we gave out many more leaflets than previously, and to all



ages groups. We had quite a lot of interest from people coming voluntarily to the stand to talk to us. Many asked for Membership Application Forms to take away. Many more were interrupted in their shopping duties by me! It is difficult to say you do not drive when paying for a parking ticket! And some men thought anything is better than hanging around outside the shops waiting for their other half! All in all I think it was a profitable day. We will not know how many new associates we get for some time. The public are beginning to know of our existence and we have been invited to have a stand again this year.

I hope that you may find a couple of hours to help.

Monica Graham



We are always looking for more articles, ideas and news for the newsletter. If you attend any group events then please remember to take a camera and send us your pictures!



Chris Gilbert - In Car Tutoring

Nick Carrington's contacts with the Advanced-Driving.co.uk internet forum brought ten non-RoSPA attendees, including seven of us Bristol IAM members. Chris Gilbert had visited our group last year and delivered a talk based around his commentary DVD, but for this talk he focussed on Observing skills, covering the whole subject with the addition of some entertaining diversions into other areas. Chris' career included 22 years instructing at Hendon, so he should know a thing or two about the subject.

Some of the aspects he covered were:

When introducing an Associate to a new part of Advanced Driving, use these five stages:

- Explanation - describe the what, how and why of the technique
- Demonstration - show the technique in action
- Controlled Practice - the Observer 'drives the car from the passenger seat'
- Prompted Practice - the Associate does it themselves, with minor prompting
- Validation - when they've got it right, give encouragement and praise - enough to motivate, not enough to cause over-confidence. Some Associates will need more than others.

Limit Point Analysis is a subject that works well with this technique, but the prompted practice stage requires careful timing of instructions. Chris recommended that observers rehearse this first with each other before trying it on Associates.



Chris in full flow!



A good turn out!

To get most effectiveness from observed runs, taking two or three associates at a time is better. Chris acknowledged that this is easier to achieve in Police training as the trainees aren't juggling crowded social schedules to be there, and they have the advantage of sharing the same vehicle so they don't have to return to the start point to swap cars at changeover time. Despite the organisational effort involved, it might be worth pursuing in IAM or RoSPA training as it brings

benefits - non-driving associates learn through other's mistakes, and it makes better use of Observers' time.

For all Associates, the ideal session length should be limited to around an hour, as research shows most people have a maximum concentration span of around 45 minutes. If you allow five minutes for them to 'warm up', that gives 50 minutes of useful driving time before a debrief and homework allocation.

Associates follow a learning curve, which isn't a smooth progression. The initial stages involve discarding their established practice and starting again - they should be made aware that, because of this, they may get worse before they get better. Associates not expecting this can become disheartened and may be more likely to drop out.

Observers also need to be aware of this process, and that it can create a dangerous time mid-way through the course, when the transition from old ways to new techniques is taking place. The danger comes from 'Perception Overload' - new things are not sufficiently embedded to be automatic, leaving limited capacity for things like smoothness and observation. I've had associates that made fairly serious mistakes at around the half way point (coincidentally both involving poor observation at roundabouts) and I've now realised that this was almost certainly due to perception overload.



The two Chrises (Gilbert and Gleed) chat over a coffee

In future I'll be more alert to this, and instead of relaxing a little as they seem to be getting the hang of things, I'll actually try to step up my supervision - Observers have a responsibility not to put associates into situations that they can't handle safely.

Chris suggested that Observers should be aware of what point on the curve the associate is at, and moderate things accordingly. If they're on a downward part of the curve, easing off on new things and doing some revision of previous topics can be good as it is counter-productive trying to get them to learn new stuff when they're already struggling.

In conclusion, it was a very worthwhile evening. The presentation brought together many aspects of good Observer practice, and has made me think about what more I can do to get the message across to my Associates in the way that works best for them.

Tony Gilbert (no relation!) - Bristol IAM Observer

It was good to see Chris Gilbert again at Liddington Village Hall. A packed room saw members and welcome guests from neighboring areas, all keen to hear what Chris had to say on the subject of the art of tutoring/observing. The audience was full of tutors/observers hanging on to his every word, trying to find some insights into how to improve their techniques.

Chris went through the process from the initial assessment drive, including identifying faults from mistakes, making allowances for being under the 'evil eye' and loss of concentration, praise/criticism and getting the balance correct, and whether to chat to the associate or not.

This was followed by how to go through the teaching process, prompting and validation, getting the associate to own up to their errors and talking through situations encountered on the drive. Chris also introduced concepts such as passive learning, which gave us all food for thought.

The evening was scattered with anecdotes from Chris' career to illustrate concepts under discussion. The evening ended with an enthusiastic question and answer session. I am sure that everyone that attended will be reconsidering and improving upon aspects of their tutoring techniques, and the evening will not be forgotten by those that attended.

Andrew Robbins - Gloucester RoADAR Group