



RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders North Wiltshire Group

www.northwiltroadar.co.uk



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Newsletter

June 2013

Secretary:

Mrs. Monica Graham
114 Marines Drive
Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 7UG
Tel: 01367 242377
secretary@northwiltroadar.co.uk

Dates for Your Diary

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

Saturday 6th July
Skillshare, Divine Café,

Monday 8th July
Meeting: Alf Gaparro, Helibikes

Saturday 27th July
Calne Bike Event

Sunday 8th September
Emergency Services Show

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

Committee Members Wanted!

In many ways the group is in the strongest position it has ever been in: our membership levels are high, we cover a wider area than ever before, are record of test results speak for themselves and our monthly meetings are well attended. However, the group has become very reliant on a small number of individuals who make up the committee. Most of the current members of the committee have held their positions for several years and, between them, they perform all the tasks that help to keep the group running. Unfortunately, two members of the committee will soon be moving away from the area. Our chairman, Nick Carrington, who has held this role for the last three years, will also be stepping down later this year. Other members are now unable to commit as much time as they have in the past due to work and family commitments, and attendance at some of the committee meetings has been so low that several planned meetings have had to be cancelled. Therefore, we desperately need more members to join the committee and help keep the group running. The group cannot continue to operate without an active committee. All we ask is that committee members try to join us at as many committee meetings as they can to share their thoughts and ideas and help move the group forward. These are held once a month at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday in Liddington. If you would be willing to help please contact Monica.

Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 8th July, 7:15pm for 7:45: Alf Gaparro, a pilot from Thames Valley and Chilton Air Ambulance will be speaking about Helibikes, an organisation that aims to raise rider awareness and improve biking safety.

Merchandise

Due to the group's forthcoming name change, we need to sell off our existing stock of North Wiltshire RoADAR branded clothing. We have therefore reduced the prices on some of our existing stock, for example Polo Shirts are now available for just £2.50! See the merchandise page of our web site for more details.

www.northwiltstroadar.co.uk

Events

Saturday 27th July 9:00am – 5:00pm: Calne Bike Event

Sunday 8th September: Emergency Services Show

Help required. We are hoping to promote the group at the above events. If you can lend a hand on any of these days please contact Monica.

Bike Ride-outs: Don't forget that regular Bike Ride-outs take place on the **3rd Saturday of each month.**

Welcome!

Welcome to the **Stephen Izatt** who has recently joined the group as a bike member.



We recently attended the Swindon Street Cruise in order to promote the group. It proved to be a promising day with several enquiries being made.

June Meeting Report:

Ian Brooks, Road Pilots

Ian Brooks from Road Pilots gave us a talk this month on his work escorting abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) which means loads that can't be made any smaller for practical or economic reasons. He began with a short film showing the kind of thing that is every day to him: a 5.5m wide, 125 tonne load headed for an open cast mine in South Wales and some of the clearances (or lack of) around parked cars and street furniture had to be seen to be believed. Amazingly there is no additional training requirement or industry standard for this kind of work, something which the Heavy Transport Association is working towards rectifying for the safety of all those involved.

They have to submit their chosen route to the police for approval. Thankfully there is a website available that will tell them where all the road restrictions are and notify all of the agencies involved. You may see them travelling with tree surgeons and various utility companies ready to remove/isolate obstacles in their path, all working together to keep it rolling and get to their destination with the minimum of inconvenience. A police escort is not a legal requirement and if they are present it's as a duty of care to other road users. The police do get involved if a load requires a rolling road block or if roads need to be closed to allow safe passage, such as over a bridge with a weight restriction, or through a town centre that has to be used because the by-pass has low bridges. It was noticed that keeping the same police officers with the convoy made best use of time and resources and so now they don't have to changeover at county borders.

Technically they operate outside of regulation but they do apply for special dispensation to bring their 'legalised obstruction of the road' to a town near you and you do have to stop when they ask you to. They have on board cameras front and rear and there was no shortage of clips of the convoy being undertaken and cut up by all types of vehicles. They have a saying that 'bad driving is catching' and the film footage to prove it.

If they need to close a town centre they aim for quiet Sunday mornings but can't work through the night because of a combination of night time road works and the reduced visibility which makes their warning lights more of a hazard than a help to other traffic. Sometimes it's the restricted access at the destination that makes the load abnormal rather than excessive weight or size but they have a good working relationship with the police and you don't go in to this line of work unless you enjoy a challenge. For a



dinosaur like me it was nice to see good old fashioned common sense at work in this risk-averse age!

He said the challenge of the escort driver is to warn (unsuspecting) oncoming traffic of what is coming and there were a number of pictures of them 'lurking' near roundabouts waiting to assemble the necessary stationary traffic before they could allow the load to proceed. It appears to be a balancing act of being near enough to the load to maintain the visual connection (otherwise you are just a bloke in a van) without being so close that it has to come to an unnecessary halt because the traffic hasn't reacted yet.

And finally, when you meet an AIL you should:

- be patient, slow down, be prepared to stop, keep an eye on other road users and how they are responding, remember the lorry may need to use a part of the road you wouldn't expect them to use or have rear wheel steering.
- only pass it when it's safe to do so – always on the right.
- overtake the convoy as one item and don't get in between their vehicles as they won't be able to see you properly and have limited 'emergency stop' capability.
- if you are travelling behind the escort vehicle don't obscure their warning markings from other vehicles in the queue.

Sandra Lawer

Motorcycle gear for sale.

Available for view at the next RoADAR meeting at Liddington 8th July or contact Geoff on 07974 933553.

20% of the sale proceeds to the group.

1. Nearly new Arcon Summer motorcyles gloves, XL £25
2. Frank Thomas Summer gloves, used but in good condition, XL, £18
3. Joe Rocket Summer gloves, used but in good condition, XL, £15
4. Fieldsheer Rain Suit, as new, M, £14
5. Fieldsheer Rain Suit, as new, S, £14
6. Buffalo Rain Suit, used but serviceable, 2XL, £10
7. Black Frank Thomas leather trousers, good condition, size 34, £20
8. Oxford tank bag £10

Ice Cold in Ashbourne

(Subtitled "Four puddings and a Jodrell")

Our first weekend trip of the year coincided with some very late wintry weather that had us all checking forecasts in the run---up to Easter. Nonetheless, Good Friday saw us heading to the Peak District to meet Steve and Clare, Mark and Barbara and Julian and Jo in Ashbourne for a weekend of motorcycling and mastication.

Various commitments meant we all travelled independently, our route taking us via Bosworth Field Heritage Centre and a bike shop where I bought a new jacket specifically designed for very hot weather just in case. We were the last to arrive but still in plenty of time to meet up before kicking the weekend off in fine style with a curry.

Our first day dawned bright and we all enjoyed a hearty breakfast sadly sans black pudding, a fact which Steve made sure the owner understood was completely unacceptable for an establishment in Derbyshire. This was not the first time this weekend we heard the threat to use a weapon of mass destruction, code named "Trip Advisor".

We set off with Andrew leading the group North through Buxton and on to Castleton. Whilst the road surfaces were clear of snow, it was obvious the area had received quite a downfall, with snow banks overhead height on the side of some of the roads. After a practice u---turn we arrived in Castleton for coffee, and perhaps even a cake or two taken under the protection of an all seeing eye.



Our route then lead us to the Derwent dam used by 617 Squadron to practice the Dambuster raids. Unfortunately, road closures prevented us from getting right up to the dam, but we had a very pleasant excursion along the side of the reservoir. From the Derwent Valley we headed along Snake Pass to Glossop for lunch and then started back South to the pudding capital of the peaks, Bakewell. A near desperate search ensued for the "original" pudding shop, which thankfully we found without any onset of malnutrition, and the group duly refuelled on a mixture of the famed pudding

and the tart imposter. With the sun heading down towards the horizon we set off back to Ashbourne, via Matlock Bath. Washed and warmed we reformed and decided to sample more traditional Derbyshire fayre, heading out for a Thai restaurant (the crispy duck in tamarind sauce was fantastic!).



After the meal Mark and Barbara insisted we go to a bar they knew, where we witnessed some rather bizarre karaoke. It was quite educational.

The next day was started brightly again, and this time breakfast included the full complement of Derbyshire delights. However, the threat of WMD's was used again when Steve had a thinner piece of black pudding than me, to which the owner capitulated to blackmail and brought him his own plateful! Duly black puddinged to the brim, we set off as Mark lead us on perhaps the most scenic road of the weekend, which also happens to be labeled the most dangerous in the West Midlands, the A53. The temperature dropped as we climbed to the highest village in Britain, the lowest reading I saw being ---1.5 degrees. It must have been cold as the fuse on my heated clothing blew due to overuse. We dropped down towards Buxton before taking a left onto the legendary Cat and Fiddle.



We made a brief stop at the pub where quite frankly, it was blooming freezing, then headed on a few hundred yards, slaloming around Barbara's gloves before stopping for tea and for the hungry, a slice of chocolate cake.

We then headed down towards Macclesfield and then on to Jodrell Bank to improve our intellectual capacity ahead of the evening entertainment. Leaving Jodrell bank mid--- afternoon, the group, now headed by Steve, headed through Congelton to Leek, where we stopped to make sure no---one passed out from lack of cake like comestibles, before heading back to Ashbourne. Sunday night saw us climb a hill out of Ashbourne to eat at local hostelry and take part in their quiz night. A frankly average performance saw "The White Horses" fail to make the podium despite having twice as many team members than the eventual winners. However, pride was nearly salvaged when Lisa had the chance to win £500 on the turn of a couple of cards.



Sadly she didn't win, but that did mean we didn't have to face the locals who the landlord went out of his way to point out would expect a drink if she won as it was their money.

Monday dawned, and we enjoyed our final breakfast avec le pudding noir. Barbara left us to head North whilst the rest of the group followed Steve through his home county and on to Warwick, where Julian took over as we joined the rest of the world in heading down the Fosseway in a flurry of filtering. A brief stop in Moreton-in-Marsh to fend off the ever threatening onset of food deprivation preceded the group disbanding at Cirencester as we headed for our respective homes.

Overall, a fantastic weekend that we all enjoyed even if it was a little colder than



hoped. Huge thanks go to Steve and Clare for organizing the trip, including the tour T---shirts and riding routes.

If you missed this trip we still have a really cracking trip to the Ardennes jointly with the Gloucester group between 6th – 10th September (<http://northwiltsoadardar.co.uk/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=284>).

Andrew Wilcox

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following members:

Adrian Jordan recently passed his bike test with a Silver grade. His tutors were **Paul Adams** and **Lisa Wilcox**.

Jon Penny recently passed his bike re-test with a Gold grade.

Nick Edwards recently passed his car test with a Gold grade. His tutor was **Monica Graham**

June Rideout Report: Severn Valley Railway

The seven intrepid riders met at the Northern RVP, also known as Greasy Joe's. The group comprised four members, one associate, one Gloucester member and one guest.

During the brief and informal briefing it started to rain quite hard. However it didn't dampen our spirits and we set off fairly close to the advertised departure time.

The route took us to Gloucester where the leader (and author of this report) took us on a Biathlon style penalty loop of the ring road. This is something he picked up on a previous ride and enjoyed so much decided to repeat it.

After the A417 we did another small penalty loop in Staunton and joined some B roads heading towards the Malverns. We stopped at the Inn at Welland for some hard earned



comestibles and refreshments, excellent they were too.

Back on the B roads heading North where we picked up the A449, through Worcester and on to Kidderminster and to the Severn Valley Railway (<http://www.svr.co.uk>).

After some car park shenanigans and a play on the cobbled entrance we eventually parked up in the SVR car park and made our way into the railway station. A near miss saw us change from the tea rooms to the restaurant where we enjoyed a variety of lunches. Despite there being a dance floor and numbers available for scoring the resident RoADAR Come Dancing team couldn't be encouraged to perform.

We didn't have time for a round trip on a steam train so we looked at one and the static WW2 exhibition instead.

When it was time to leave the leaders sat nav failed to start so Mike from Gloucester took over at the front and led us to Stow on the Wold via Evesham.

After a frankly disappointing coffee at one of the many tearooms in Stow we returned along the Fosse Way to Cirencester where we split up and made a separate ways home.

Thanks to everyone for turning up, Mike for being the temporary ride leader and Andrew for being Tail End Charlie and photographer.



Steve Hyde

Driving Day with Chris Gilbert

My first recollection of Chris Gilbert was in 1997 when I purchased the Roadcraft Video (Yes, VHS Video!) when I really started to further my knowledge of Advanced/Defensive Driving.

After passing the IAM Test in 1996 and then obtaining my RoSPA Gold in 1997, I decided that was really the start of it all and I wasn't complacent in any way to think that I was the 'Cat's Whiskers' now that I had achieved those two passes. I went on to assist in starting the RoADAR North Wilts Group with a few other interested guys and my knowledge was then ongoing!

My driving involvement over many years, including being a member of AIRSO (The Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers), IAM, DiaMOND Advanced Drivers and RoADAR, meant that I had accumulated many contacts and two of the most significant I would like to name were Chris Gilbert and Keith Bamford (West Yorkshire Group, who recently passed away). These are two of the most knowledgeable people I have ever met.

Keith Bamford had issued me with his Observer Guides over the years and Chris Gilbert had given me many items to add to my advanced driving repertoire and without them, my knowledge would be somewhat less!

Chris Gilbert has become a very good friend over the years. He previously worked as an Advanced Driving Instructor/Examiner at the police driving school at Hendon. As we are both CGs and I am a year older, we called it a 'Last of the Summer Wine Day'!

I met Chris at a venue just outside of Slough and we began the drive under really wet conditions with very little let-up and so the mind had to be VERY focussed.

Being very complimentary (maybe to encourage my confidence), Chris said, "After 20 minutes Chris, I knew that you were of Gold Grade and with a commentary that was one of the best I have heard for a long time, nicely structured with lots of information gathering...well done"!

We covered many miles with frequent breaks, with Chris (Gilbert) buying the coffee and sandwiches! We covered areas like Great Missenden, Ellesborough, Stokenchurch, (Christmas Common), and past the Prime Minister's residence at Chequers, so covering, Greater London, Bucks, Herts and Berkshire.

Chris liked the fact that the acceleration was smooth and progressive and not 'On or Off' as it gives him a headache when the acceleration is not finely controlled! We discussed how I matched the vehicle ahead to the speed of my vehicle to determine if there was an overtake on and how it focuses one's mind for possible overtakes.

We agreed that positioning to the nearside for the left-hand bend on very narrow roads was beneficial in the way that it put you away from opposing vehicles and made one realise that even moving out to an imaginary 'left of centre' offered very little advantage and, at times, increased the danger.

The principles of cornering were covered and again, we agreed that definitive positioning too close to the verge for the right-hand bend offered very little advantage by way of view so positioning towards the nearside was more than adequate!

We also covered the facts about smooth steering that is needed for bends with the speed correct and in balance through the curve, and when and how to apply the power to maintain that speed through the curve rather than, incorrectly speeding up. The essence of actually WHEN you apply that power just fractionally prior to applying the steering is most important! So when changing gear just prior to the corner, matching the clutch with engine revs prior to steering.

We seemed to have a lot in common, but with Chris being a mentor for me over many years, I suppose that would show.

We covered the approaches to roundabouts and the fact that many drivers approach far too fast resulting in a rushed approach. It works better if you plan as for a red light: Information, all-round effective observation, mirror, signal...mirror position, mirror speed, acceleration sense, cover the brake pedal, apply the brakes smoothly and progressively, early look to the right, splitting vision, look for the gap, take the gear, apply the drive!

I use the terms; "primary objective – looking to the right, secondary objective – looking for your gap" and "planning to stop, looking to go, checking the view till I know"!

Without going on too much, I can assure you that Chris's approach to modern day driving is in a class of its own!

The main point that, again, we agreed on, was the fact that many really good drivers DO NOT use a high enough 'High Visual Horizon' whereby great advantages are to be acknowledged.

In essence, I personally fear that there is too much of 'All Accelerator and Brakes' these days under the guise of being progressive and the actual art of progressive driving whilst utilising the art of smooth acceleration is dying out!

All in all though, an experience that I thoroughly enjoyed! Many others aspire to be the best in their field but, believe me, drive to the Chris Gilbert way and you will never be far wrong! All in all, a great experience!

Chris Gleed