



RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders North Wiltshire Group

www.northwiltroadar.co.uk



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Newsletter

March 2013

Secretary:

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Dates for Your Diary

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

Monday 8th April

Meeting: Rob Jones

Saturday 13th April

Marlborough Spring Fair

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

WELCOME!

Welcome to the following members who
have all recently joined the group:

William Mercer (car)

Gary Franks (car)

Roger Mallet (car)

Ian Harris (car)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to **Babs Grillo** and
Richard Hodge who have both recently
qualified as Car Tutors.

Congratulations also to the following
members who have recently passed their
Advanced Tests:

Michaela Holland (Gold – Car); Tutor:
Monica Graham

Ross Kesler (Gold – Car); Tutor: **Roger
Tamplin**



Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 8th April, 7:15pm for 7:45: Rob Jones, a mobile motorcycle mechanic, will be speaking about motorbike track days and rider safety days at Castle Combe. **Reminder:** This evening will also include a Special General Meeting to discuss the proposal to change the group name. Please try to attend.

Events

Saturday 13th April, 10:00am to 4:00pm: **Marlborough Spring Fair** **Help required.** We are hoping to promote the group at this event. If you can lend a hand please contact Monica.

Bike Ride-outs: Don't forget that regular Bike Ride-outs take place on the **3rd Saturday of each month.** The ride-out calendar is available on the web site.

Free riding assessment

Place: Divine Café, Main Road, Cherhill, Wiltshire SN11 8UU

www.divinecafe.biz / N51 25.709 W1 57.278

Date: First Saturday monthly - April to October

Time: 10:00 a.m. for 10:15 a.m. start of ride

SkillShare is a free ride assessment for any motorcycle rider who would like a chance to find out more about advanced riding. It is primarily a recruiting initiative with the dual purpose of

raising the group's profile within the motorcycle community and attract potential members. Any rider can turn up, without the need to book. They will receive a free BikeSafe style ride assessment with a qualified RoSPA Approved Tutor. We hope the assessment feedback will convince the rider there is more to learn, and that they could improve their safety. The potential benefits for the public are:

- A free assessment ride of about 45 minutes
- An opportunity to get some high quality, safety-based feedback and tips to improve riding skills
- An opportunity to see what advanced riding is all about
- A chance to meet some like-minded motorcycle enthusiasts
- Improved safety
- Reduced risk.

The potential benefits for our motorcycle tutors are:



- Opportunity to practise / refresh tutoring skills
- A chance to meet new riders
- Opportunity for new tutors to accompany an experienced tutor
- Opportunity to prepare for Advanced Tutor test
- Opportunity to enhance skills with feedback from other tutors

The potential benefits for our group are:

- Raised group profile;
- New members;
- Improved income;
- Post-test consolidation for tutors
- Refresh tutor skills.

With acknowledgement to Stephen Wilkinson-Carr for the instigation and preparation of this initiative.



Just read a short letter in this month's Ride magazine and thought it worth repeating as it hadn't occurred to me. It said something along the lines of "Save all your old underwear, tee shirts etc for motorcycle touring, then throw them away each day (or every third depending upon rotation policy), saving washing and creating space for items/gifts collected en route." I shan't have any problem identifying "suicide" clothing all my clothing is old!

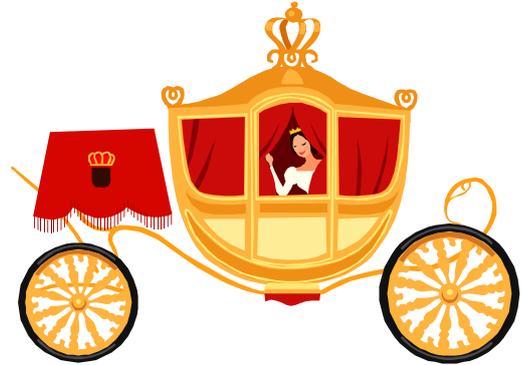
Steve Hyde



March Meeting Report:

Pete Russ, retired Chief Superintendent, Wiltshire Police

Pete's topic was VIP protection driving, an area he spent many years involved with during his service. Prior to his involvement, VIP protection was all done by the Metropolitan Police, but with the escalation of high-profile prisoner escorts and similar duties in the 1970s and 80s, the Met. found themselves stretched, and rural Forces were encouraged to start creating their own units so that when VIPs were on official visits outside London they could be escorted by the local unit.



Pete's initial training was done with the Royal Marines and included checking cars for bombs before driving them, with real booby traps to be disarmed. Apparently a Thunderflash under the seat does wonders for concentrating the mind on searching more assiduously next time!

Pete then took us on a tour through the last few decades with photographs of some of the people and vehicles involved. Many interesting cars were talked about and discussed, leading to some interesting facts coming to light. Did you know:

- Royal cars are built to that strange shape because the Queen has to be able to stand up inside when getting in and out (good job Prince Philip doesn't!)
- The Queen's vehicles do not have to display a registration plate, nor be MOT'd, although of course they are maintained to a high standard.
- Royal vehicles have a small discreet blue light on the roof, which historically was used to show policemen on point duty it was approaching and allow them to stop traffic accordingly.

(More information on royal cars is available on the web at <http://www.royal.gov.uk/TheRoyalHousehold/Transport/Cars.aspx>), and many are housed in a museum at Sandringham, highly recommended by Pete for a visit.

Pete showed us the formation of a typical convoy, with motorcyclists riding escort ahead, principally to control the traffic at junctions, and the Police in escort vehicles surrounding the VIP vehicle closely. Since retiring, his skills are in demand all over the world, and he also showed us some pictures of other convoys where the formation was perhaps not as good as it could have been. Obviously if an attack is made on the convoy, the Police vehicles need to be close to the VIP for their protection.

Interestingly, it seems not all VIPs are as keen on being protected as we might hope. Pete told us about some who would accelerate away from their escort, trying to lose

them, and we discussed some occasions when VIPs had decided to make public visits despite warnings from the Police that particular routes or cars may not be the safest option. Suffice to say that sometimes the VIP gets their own way, but occasionally may come to regret it.

I would like to thank all those who turned up on a very cold night for the meeting this month. Especially those who came from Hampshire, Oxfordshire and the far south of our area...and on BIKES! You must be mad. 😊

Monica

A few humorous anecdotes completed the picture, including the time when, due to a longer lunch than planned, Pete himself had to drive Her Majesty to an appointment at high speed, out pacing the rest of the convoy in the process. Fearing a rebuke afterwards, he was relieved when a few days later a letter arrived thanking the unit for their efforts in making up time so that she had not missed too much of the military event she was attending.

Pete fills his time nowadays as an ADI, teaching young learners, which he finds very rewarding, and providing consultancy and training to regimes worldwide on how to do VIP protection the way it's done here. He's a very busy man, and a very interesting speaker. Thanks Pete.

Nick Carrington

John Lewis

You may be interested to learn that John Lewis in Swindon is currently supporting Swift Medics that came to speak to us at our December meeting. When you spend money at the store you are given a token and can put it in a box beside the entrance doors. After three months, all the tokens are then converted into money and donated to the charity. Not sure if Waitrose stores in the area are supporting them too.

February Ride Report

After the weather put paid to January's ride, this month saw the first ride-out of this year's calendar with a half day ride into The Mendip Hills. This shorter ride format is new for 2013 and intended to provide an alternative to the full day commitment of our usual rides. It was obviously popular with 9 bikes at the start and another joining somewhat later!

The day dawned foggy, at least in Chippenham, though further East the skies were rumoured to be bright and clear. With that in mind, we headed West, across to Keynsham and then onto the reservoirs at Chew and Blagdon. The fog remained with us, though patchy in nature.

I know we went past a lake at one point, but I'm not sure exactly where it was. Our first stop for individual refuelling and a warm up was at the bottom of Burrington Coombe (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burrington_Combe), alleged inspiration for Augustus Montague Toplady penning "Rock of Ages".

By the time we left skies had cleared and we enjoyed a fog free ride across the hills to Wookey Hole where we executed the planned U-turn. Strangely in the car park there was a bike that looked remarkably similar to a certain Mr Hyde's which was a coincidence.

From Wookey Hole we headed back East, passing through Kilmersdon, the home of Jack and Jill. Thankfully we all made it down the hill without any tumbles or loss of crowns. We continued East through the odd foggy patch and associated notable drop in temperature to finish at The Divine Cafe in Cherhill, home of "probably the best coffee and cakes in Wiltshire". Shortly after we arrived Mr and Mrs Hyde arrived to join us. Apparently they had waited for us at Wookey Hole and then tried to find us all along our route back to Calne. I thought that bike was familiar...

