



CHRISTMAS 2020 NEWSLETTER



From the chair

Well, what have we all been up to?

Lock down, socially isolating, working, furloughed Riding?

This year no doubt will be one to remember for different reasons. Covid has affected us all in our work, home life and hobbies, one of course we all share, our passion for riding.

The internet has become our friend as we trawl through the new motorbike releases, yet to be seen in the flesh and the information on cancelled Motorbike events like the TT.

The motorbike dealers have however, put in place an acceptable way forward, to help us keep our bikes healthy and on the road and for those whose pockets are weighing them down, ways to purchase that new bike!

As a group, we have done as much as we can to keep the group working. We have been able to continue our observing when we have been permitted to, which for the IAM car side has been almost impossible.

I want to convey my thanks to our amazing observers who continue to make a difference for the group in these testing times. I know once on the road the freedom we all feel is our tonic.

As Christmas draws closer and we find ourselves facing the new year with more restrictions, I hope with the strength and determination we have always had, we look forward and not back.

May I wish you all a Happy, healthy and petrol fuelled Christmas and new year.

Helen Seller

Chair



Goals for 2021?



Taking your riding to the next level

Every year I set myself a target to achieve, sometimes it may be a trivial thing, sometimes it is a formal task such as the Diploma in Photography that I completed two years ago. This year, of all years, I took on a target that turned out to be the toughest, yet most rewarding challenge that I have given myself, the IAM Masters.

My journey started in January when I signed up with IAM Roadsmart to join the **Masters** programme. Within days I was allocated a Mentor, Max Webber.

As an experienced advanced rider, and National Observer, I thought I was a pretty good rider and that I would have a check ride with Max and put in for my test...WRONG!

My very first lesson was that I learnt was that no matter how good you think you might be, your riding will deteriorate without a regular, at least annual, check ride with a member of the group.

But the **Masters** is more than that. It is about taking your riding to the highest level through observed rides, structured and honest feedback, a thorough knowledge of Motorcycle Roadcraft, and most importantly... practice, practice, practice.

My first ride with Max was a real eye-opener for me and, I suspect, a "what have I let myself in for" moment for Max.

Now one thing the **Masters** is not, is being able to ride like a bat out of hell. I didn't know this on my first ride, so when I looked in my mirror along the Fulking

(yes Fulking, you might have mis-read it!) to find that I was on my own, I turned around to find Max waiting patiently for me and then politely explaining that disappearing up a narrow road at speed with little heed to safety was not the Masters' way. Well, that is the sanitised version of the conversation!

So it wasn't going to be a check ride and apply for test then!

What followed was a series of rides with Max (interrupted by lockdown) which took my riding to a level which enabled me to make safe, legal progress in all types of conditions. To be able to ride to plan by being in the correct position, at the correct speed, and in the right gear to deal with hazards.

There is so much more that I learnt (not least how to ride slowly with confidence) on the **Masters** journey, too much to list here, which made me a much better rider and led to a successful test in September, achieving my Masters.

My key message to the group is that you are never as good as you might think you are and get your riding checked at least annually. Secondly why not take your riding to another level, it is bloody hard work with loads of practice and reading, but you will not regret it.

Lastly, my sincere thanks to Max for his knowledge, encouragement, and patience.

Rob Bright

Committee staff

<u>Tests October 2020</u>			Observer
	Seamus Fenton	F1rst	T Lamb
	Geoff Robinson	Pass	K Cullern
	Simon Bryant	F1rst	A Cuthell
	Neville Thurlow	Pass	R Bright
	Martyn Young	Pass	H Seller



ASSOCIATE OF THE YEAR 2019



Not all roads are black – Part 2

This article continues on from the last one earlier in the year about my experience of learning how to ride a bike away from the black stuff...

So, I was clear I needed more training and booked onto the last training weekend of the year late November at Sweetlamb Training Academy in Wales. The weather was looking cold and wet, but I arrived at my Welsh B&B excited and looking forward to the weekend. Saturday morning arrived, and as I ate my full cooked breakfast, so did the snow. An hour later all was white and I had to make my way to the centre. I discovered riding on freshly fallen snow was actually ok and made it to the centre. There were 2 others with the remainder of the course having cancelled due to the weather.



After a theory session we went outside and practiced how to weight the bike and develop traction. I came off the bike a lot and by the afternoon was frankly struggling. We went up into the hills with minimal visibility and I made it through the afternoon.



Luckily, they let me leave the bike there as there were freezing temperatures overnight and we had a good night in the pub, with a lift back up the next day. Now the ground was frozen and I was terrified. I literally couldn't walk outside, let alone ride. Despite this we did some training before heading out into the hills for an extended forestry ride. I knew I wasn't up to it but after talking it through agreed to give it a go. After 30 min riding a KTM Instructor asked me if I would prefer to go back and carry-on training at the centre. YES PLEASE!! Another rider on a GS800 joined us and we then had an excellent session with Mark Molineau and his fellow trainer. It all came together, helped by the fact we were riding in slush rather than ice! By 2pm I was done and headed back to Sussex, having overcome many fears and learnt some of the skills I needed.



After some more money being spent fixing it up I went out onto the lanes and realised this was fun....a lot of fun. Yes, I still came off, but much less and could pick the bike up with ease. With proper trail tyres I could relax more and the smaller engine matched my small level of ability. Finally, I could see why people loved greenlaning so much.

Back out on the trails in Sussex I had a great day out with the Chairman of Sussex TRF and my confidence was building. Then the next ride I had a sharp crash near Offam and I was back to square one. I just didn't know what had happened. It was at this point I nearly hung my gloves up. I wasn't having fun and could not relax on the bike.



Then, just as lockdown began, a barn find came up, a 1989 225 Yamaha Serow for sale. I just knew this was what I needed to get my confidence up. 100Kg lighter too! I went over to have a look and fortunately he had a field I could ride it in. The seller sat on his patio with his wife while I rode around a freshly mown field. After 4 crashes and breaking the indicators they still sat there calmly watching me sipping their drinks. Fair play to them, I must have looked like a complete lunatic smiling and waving shouting "I'm fine" as I picked the bike up again. I somehow managed to ride over to them and after some negotiation we agreed a price. Well, the indicators were broken after all!

On the next instalment I finally make progress. Training with Patsy Quicks Desert Rose Training Academy, a TRF Enduro training day and finally my dream of a mini adventure on the Great Western Trail.

John



Still available,
Those interested,
just contact Rob
rob.bright@btinternet.com

Fun?

You may like this, but actually do not want try it yourself, have a look

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PahaRI9XwD4>



Thanks to those who have responded to our appeal for help.
If you have any articles that may be of interest to other members,
please forward them to me.

Cheers
That's all for the moment

Helen