

# Sefton Advanced Motorists

Issue: 305

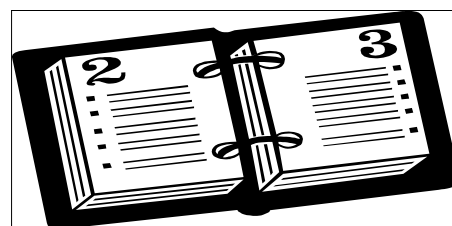
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## Forthcoming Attractions



**Monday 15th February; Gordon May**, author and journalist, will speak on "**Overland to India by classic British motorcycle**".

**Monday 15th March: Martin Cannell**, also an IAM member, will talk about the **Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Club** and his experiences. By all accounts Martin is a very knowledgeable speaker from whom we should learn a lot.

**Please make a note of these events in your diary and try to come along and support our guest speakers who give up their free time to come and speak to us. All meetings are at the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport, unless otherwise stated, and start at 8 pm.**

# Chairman Writes

Hello All,

This month's motoring news is full of major recalls from car manufactures Honda and Toyota. Electric window switches catching fire after getting wet in some Honda Jazz cars; with Toyota having trouble with sticking accelerator pedals on various models. The only regularly faulty component that almost never gets recalled is the rider/driver.

How many drivers on our roads haven't had an eye test in years, use medication that impairs there driving, doze off at the wheel or could do with a brush up on their driving skills.

The IAM has been put on slightly defensive foot after releasing a report on older driver safety. The report is readily available at <http://www.iam.org.uk/images/stories/reports/> . There are as usual some exciting graphs, the recommendation section is fairly sensible, moving the licence renewal age from 70 to 75 being about the most practical. They also recommend some form of regular driving assessment. This no doubt is aimed at the new Drive Check 55 product, costing £35. This gives anyone over 55 a one to one session with an IAM examiner.

As I was approached by one of our members at the January meeting, looking for info on what reassessment options were available. Here are the relevant details to existing IAM members.

## **Driving/Riding Assessment    £25**

- A short briefing
- A period of driving/riding by the member - assessed by the examiner
- A further period of driving/riding by the member - with open discussion about it.
- A full debrief

## **Retake the IAM test            £65**

- Either in the same or different category.

## **IAM special assessment        £60**

- Have been Members of the IAM for one year, or more, at the time of application. Several other restrictions apply.
- This will be test to a high standard with good commentary expected from drivers.
- Six randomly selected driving/riding questions.

Prior to any member embarking on any of the above, don't hesitate to contact the training team for advice and a check run.

Finally please find a questionnaire enclosed with your newsletter. This will hopefully let you get the most from your group and tell us what you think we should be doing. Fill in the form and get it back to us either anonymously or otherwise. This is especially relevant to members that don't regularly attend our events.

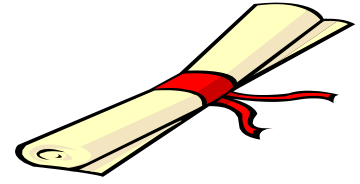
Best wishes

Tom.



# Test Passes

Hearty congratulations go to



**Tony Robinson**

Observed by

Alan Stevenson

## Examiners present Certificates



Dennis Nicholson and Steve Moon, two IAM Examiners assigned to our area, came along to speak at our January meeting.

During the proceedings they took time out to present Senior Observer Certificates to motorcyclists **Jonathan Hall** (left) and **David Miller**.

At the same time, Dennis was pleased to present a certificate to **Keith Mawdsley** who recently passed his IAM Advanced Motorcycle Test.

*Many congratulations to them all and we wish them many years of safe and enjoyable riding.*



## A Nostalgic Afternoon

*(for Malcolm Towler)*

When I saw an advertisement recently for an exhibition entitled "Megaphones & Magnetos: A History of the British Motorcycle", to be held at Prescott Museum, I knew this was something that I had to visit.

I have never visited Prescott Museum before. Indeed, I suspect most people on Merseyside are not even aware of its existence. Easily located, the Museum is only small with two floors, with the ground floor area, on this occasion, being dedicated to the motorcycle display.

The advertising for the exhibition described it as "The displays will include a range of riding gear, photographs, magazines & owners manuals, trophies & assorted memorabilia, as well as a selection of motorcycles". This statement summed up the display precisely.

On the walls of the Museum were display boards detailing the rise of the British motorcycle industry as a mass manufacturer, mainly of ride-to-work type bikes, but with larger capacity machines for the motorcycling enthusiast. One of the more interesting ideas for a ride to work machine was "The Cyclemaster", a 32cc engine incorporated into a bicycle wheel, which you fitted by removing the existing rear wheel of your pedal cycle to provide the power. Certainly the whole assembly looked quite large & powerful to be fitted to a standard pedal cycle without modifications to the brakes etc. I gained the impression "The Cyclemaster" would make your pedal cycle travel considerably quicker than normal, but I would not like to contemplate an emergency stop on standard bicycle brakes!

The exhibition advised that the real decline of the British motorcycle industry began in 1969. Prior to this the Japanese had been importing machines, but mainly commuter type bikes, with the largest machine being the 1965 Honda CB450. For enthusiasts, preferring larger capacity machines, British machines were chosen, until 1969, when Honda introduced the CB750, a four cylinder overhead camshaft bike. This bike was a larger capacity machine for the enthusiast, & much more advanced technically than comparable British bikes.

The range of bikes on display ranged from a 1907 Isle of Man TT twin cylinder, ridden in that race by Rem Fowler, & powered by a Peugeot V twin engine, to a 1991 Triumph 1200 Trophy. In the range were BSA, Douglas, Norton, Royal Enfield & Triumph bikes. Of particular interest to me were the Douglas, powered by a flat twin engine positioned longitudinally in the frame rather than the later transverse location, & the BSA Bantam, a 125cc two stroke single cylinder bike used by many as their main form of transport. These bikes were normally painted green for "civilian" use, but how many members can recall these bikes, painted in red, & being used by the Post Office to deliver telegrams before the universal use of phones etc. It was always said that, if a telegraph boy rode up, something serious had occurred within the family.

One of the Triumphs on display was a 1954 Triumph Thunderbird 650cc bike. This machine, immaculately prepared, was fitted with a pair of panniers, with the "lids" of these panniers matching the profile of the rear mudguard of the bike. Although very stylish, the capacity of these panniers must have been about half of a conventional box type pannier. Interestingly, this arose in that, when Triumph switched to a swinging arm type frame, they had in stock a large quantity of rear mudguards, which, although suitable for

rigid frame machines, could not be used on the more modern swinging arm frames. The then Managing Director sold the redundant mudguards to an accessories manufacturer, who then made panniers from this material, hence matching the profile of the rear mudguards of the bike.

Another Triumph on display was a 1956 Tiger 100, based on the later swinging arm frame, so hence no matching panniers. It must be said that this Triumph did not look like a bike that was over 50 years old, so it must have been exceptionally modern looking when manufactured.

A 1963 350cc Royal Enfield "Bullet" was also on display. You can still buy a version today, produced in India, which looks virtually identical.

A considerable element of the displays involved motorcycle sport, with a Manx Norton bike on show. Used for racing, particularly in the Isle of Man, these bikes were either 350 or 500cc single cylinder machines & fitted with drum brakes. However the front brake was fitted with an air scoop in an endeavour to cool the brake. It was interesting to compare the narrow tyres on this machine with the massive profile tyres used on racing bikes today.

Another interesting comparison was of a video of a period TT race, with all the riders clad in close fitting black leathers & "pudding bowl" helmets, push starting their machines when flagged off. Quite a comparison with today with full face helmets, multi-coloured & reinforced leathers & clutch starts.

One interesting fact was that it was, apparently, Geoff Duke who had the idea for a one piece black leather suit, which he commissioned in 1950 from a shop in St. Helens.

As well as the TT videos, there were also videos on other motorcycle sporting events such as trials & enduros etc.

The more mundane side of motorcycling was covered by displays of motorcycle manuals & literature, in that a rider almost always carried out their own maintenance, due to the requirement for more regular maintenance than today, plus, of course, the comparative simplicity of the engineering of the period.

There was certainly no shortage of specialist magazines at that time, such as "The Motor Cycle", "Motorcyclist", & "Motorcycle Mechanics", copies of which were also on display.

However, it would appear that the British motorcycle industry has not disappeared completely, in that the exhibition advised that CCM, Metisse, Norton & Triumph are producing bikes today, although, I suspect, in very limited numbers.

One photograph that did intrigue me was taken in 1948 when an attempt was made in America on a speed record using a John Edgar Vincent HRD Lightning. Ridden by an American, Rollie Free, clad in his baggy leathers, helmet & boots, he achieved 148.6 mph. He calculated that, if he dispensed with his riding gear he could achieve 150 mph. So, clad only in swimming cap & trunks, & lying prone on the machine resting on the tank & seat & with his legs & feet protruding horizontally behind him, he tried one final run & achieved 150.31 mph. I did check the date on the photograph & it was not 1st April! Obviously no Health & Safety & Risk Assessments on that day.

They say "you live & learn". Years ago certain bikes had Amal carburettors. I always assumed Amal was just the name of a manufacturer, but, apparently, three carburettor manufacturers amalgamated, hence Amal !

By this time it was getting near to the closure time for the Museum, but I just had enough time to view the first floor display. Prescott Museum specialises in the early local industries i.e.. watch & clock manufacture, & mining, & this was covered in the first floor displays. Altogether an enjoyable afternoon.

It is said that you are getting old when items you used to be aware of become museum exhibits. Well, I could certainly remember a lot, but not all, of the exhibits. Still, how long will it be before Sony Walkmans, cassette players & video recorders are on display in a museum?. Not very long I suspect!

### ***Troubled by a Toyota accelerator?***

## **Keep calm and carry on is the IAM advice**

As Toyota recalls millions of its cars due to accelerator problems, the Institute of Advanced Motorists today (3rd Feb) offers advice to drivers on what to do in event of an engineering malfunction.

Stephen Mead, IAM Assistant Chief Examiner, said: "Keep calm – surprisingly the perception of the average driver with a stuck accelerator is that they can't brake either, but this is a misconception brought on by panic.

"Press the brake firmly, then the clutch, disengaging the power. In an automatic, drivers should brake, wait for a reaction from the vehicle and then put the car into neutral. You can still steer, too, so a stuck accelerator isn't actually the disaster it sounds," added Mr Mead.

Look for somewhere to stop safely, indicate and make the manoeuvre as you would under normal circumstances. There will be loud revving in the background and you will probably be in a state of shock, but if you remain calm you can avoid serious danger."

Mr Mead offered this advice for owners of car models subject to recall: "Do look into getting a recall as soon as possible. Surprisingly few people actually approach manufacturers for recalls, which means the vehicles get sold on with the fault going unknown."

#### ***Editor's footnote.***

*I had a similar experience with a Rover 400 diesel car when the accelerator stuck open on an uphill section of the M62. However, once on the hard shoulder even turning the ignition switch off didn't stop the diesel combustion continuing.*

*Answer? Resort to stalling it on the clutch!*



**SEFTON ADVANCED MOTORISTS  
GROUP No. 5143**

## **NOTICEBOARD**

### **SAM shirts available.**

Polo shirts & sweatshirts are now available embroidered with the IAM logo. The red car roundel is illustrated but there are also green ones for motorcyclists.



Cam Cunningham has arranged the supply and orders can be placed with him at any of the Group's meetings or by ringing him on 01704 892816.



#### **Disclaimer**

The Editor and the Group Council wish to make it clear, that the views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter, are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Group or the Institute.

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