

Central North Island Newsletter – June 2017 (Issue 6)

Mentoring progress

Warmest congratulations to Tony Knight (Netherton) who passed his Advanced Test. Well done for all your hard work in achieving the milestone Tony. Tony is keen to attend the next Observer training course and in the meantime, he is coming along on a few observed rides to experience some of the observing basics such as route planning and execution, commentary coaching etc.



Tony Knight on his Yamaha Tracer

Continuing with the great news, Lloyd Hollis (Hamilton) has just passed the Observer Test in appalling conditions. An outstanding result and a huge well done for his on-going commitment to IAM. Very nice work indeed Lloyd!



Lloyd Hollis

With Lloyd in Hamilton, Rob Van Proemeran at Pokeno, Glenn Berridge in Tauranga, T/O Mark Revill-Johnson in Cambridge and me in Coromandel, we are starting to get the geographic spread which is required to sustainably cover such a huge area. As previously mentioned, it may be appropriate in future to separate B.O.P and Waikato/King Country into two entities but during this early period of growth, it makes good sense to have common administration.

Observer Training Course

No date has yet been set but as per last year, it is likely to be held in late winter or spring, most likely in Auckland for both CNI and Auckland members who have passed the Advanced Test and wish to become Observers. The last one was held over a weekend at the community centre on the Te Atatu Peninsula. Excellent facilities with access to some good roads for the practical component of the course. We'll be in contact when plans become more advanced.

New Associates

A very warm welcome to Chris Smith (Bombay country area) from Passmasters riding school who has joined as an Associate. It's fantastic to see an instructor with Chris' outstanding skills keen to lend support to the growth of IAM.



Chris Smith

A very warm welcome also goes to Chris Nielsen (Hamilton) who has joined IAM as an Associate after an initial assessment in April. Chris joined after attending a number of Ride Forever courses and following in Rob Van Proemerens' footsteps, has started blogging about his experiences so far. Here are the links to his posts:

<http://blacksheepbiker.squarespace.com/blog/2017/4/4/first-blog-entry-joined-iam> and
<http://blacksheepbiker.squarespace.com/blog/2017/5/5/first-mentored-iam-ride-report>

Remembering our first outings, I'm sure that we will all nod knowingly. Nice write-ups Chris!



Chris Nielsen

CNI strategy for 2017

As reported in previous newsletters, the main focus is to ensure that Associates in the region receive regular observed rides to mentor them through to Advanced Test standard in as short a time as is practicable. This is essential in order to train local Observers and achieve a rapid growth.

Special thanks are due to Rob Van Proemerens and Lloyd Hollis for their enthusiasm and support in operating a rotational system to ensure that most Associates are getting out on a monthly basis or thereabouts. Their commitment is really paying dividends. Tony Knight is an example of this and in the coming weeks, there are several Associates who will be cross-checked and hopefully progressing onto their Advanced Test. Peak use of the rotational system should now decline and Observers will increasingly have dedicated Associates to mentor.

Bay of Plenty and King Country areas still require development but with solid growth and more Observers in the greater Waikato, support will become progressively more effective.

By the end of the year, it is likely that CNI will become a largely independent group but it makes sense that CNI and Auckland will continue to share resources when appropriate by virtue of their adjacent location. Sincere thanks go to Auckland for providing cross-check and examining resources when required, it is very much appreciated.

Whilst the mentoring of Associates to Advanced Test standard has been the priority for growth and will continue to be, it is highly likely that a few social rides will be on the calendar from next spring. In addition, all CNI riders are always welcome to join our Auckland friends on their rides which are advertised on Facebook and through emails.

Membership info summary (Waikato/BOP)

Active Observers: 4 (3 Waikato, 1 BOP)
Active Trainee Observers: 1
Active full members: 1
Active Associates: 9

Other items of note

Test locations

Although reported in the last CNI newsletter, it is worth reiterating that CNI members will predominantly be tested in our own province or South Auckland to avoid excessive travel to and from test venues. This will be on a case by case basis and will be discussed with the individuals concerned at the appropriate time.

However, some regular observed rides may take place at other locations if the Observers consider that a particular skill set can be enhanced by doing so. Demonstrating a high level of Roadcraft skill in dense Auckland urban traffic and on the Auckland motorway system would be good examples.

2017 Annual General meeting

Although posted previously and whilst it still has to be confirmed, the good news for CNI members is that the AGM will probably be held at Taupo in late November. For members who haven't previously been to an AGM, forget about it being a boring talkfest – it's an outstanding occasion! The AGM itself is normally completed pretty quickly, but all sorts of social events take place over a weekend for members from all regions to meet each other and have fun, whether it's on bikes or in the car. A perfect time to bring your partners

along too. Too good to miss and hope to see you there!

Meet the Team

We continue the profiling of active motorcycle members within the Central North Island, especially as it's such a geographically large area. This time, it's the turn of Keith Fletcher!



Keith Fletcher (R) and his Yamaha FZ6R

Hi everyone, my name is Keith Fletcher and I live in Hamilton. We have been here for about 7 years now, having spent about a year on the Auckland North Shore, four months in Brisbane and 40+ years in Johannesburg, South Africa.

I'm in the IT industry; employed at Gallagher Group as a Software Engineer, but have dabbled in various roles ranging from electrical engineering, project management, network management, software management, software support, technical writing and now software engineering and development.

What about biking you may ask? It was something I always wanted to get into, but a strict and worrisome mother ruled out any hope of a motorbike as a teenager. Fortunately many of my friends had bikes which resulted in a lot of time spent at their houses 'doing homework'. I guess the upshot was that I got to learn and make mistakes on other people's bikes. The downside is that I probably only ever learned bad habits.

On a slight tangent, the legislation in South Africa at that time (the 80's) forbade learners from riding anything larger than a 50cc, and there was a minimum age you had to reach before you could apply for a full licence. That meant there was a huge market for these bikes and most current models at that time came in a 50cc variant. I don't think that I've seen as many mosquito-sounding, fully-faired sport bikes on the road anywhere else. I've always wondered if that was a peculiarity to South Africa.

After school, I got quite involved in the aviation sports, hang-gliding specifically, so that took all the time, money and focus away from biking. It wasn't until the early 2000's that I got my first bike. It was a crusty old Honda CX 500, and it only took two weeks before I ploughed it into the side of a car. Two smashed wrists and broken arms saw biking take a very firm back seat again for a while. The CX 500 would never ride again but found a second life as a hang-glider winch (Google it!).

Anyway, fast forward to several years ago when I moved to Auckland. It only took 3 weeks of driving over the harbour bridge each day to decide that I should maybe try this biking thing again. I purchased a Suzuki VL250 from Red Baron in Auckland and haven't looked back. I commute to work on a bike everyday, rain or shine, and love it. About a year ago I upgraded to my current bike, a Yamaha FZ6R, which I purchased from Bayride in Tauranga.

Now, the one thing that is glaringly obvious from this is my lack of experience and training. My New Zealand class 6 licence is the first motorcycle licence I've ever held which I am fairly embarrassed to admit. I've become fairly comfortable riding in the morning and evening traffic, as you would after doing it for several years, but I was very much out of my depth on rural roads.

I've read a few books and been on a couple of Ride Forever courses, hoping to fill in my knowledge gaps, and this in turn led me to IAM. I'm very aware of my inexperience and realise that there is a HUGE amount of work ahead of me, but I have already found tremendous value in the few observed rides that I've done so far. All credit to Rob Van Proemerren who has been exceptionally professional and helpful, and most importantly - patient - thus far!

Equipment Corner

Shoei GT Air Review – Rob Van Proemeren



With my trusty Shoei Neotec (4 and a half years) in need of replacement, I had a good look around at what helmet next. Now I'm not a snob or brand fanatic when it comes to helmets, have owned a couple of Arai lids, a couple of Shoei, as well as more budget oriented helmets in my earlier riding days.

Having come from a Shoei Multitec prior to the improved Neotec, both of these being flip front helmets, I had an urge to go back to a proper full face helmet. Combination of reasons I won't write an essay about here.

A topic that was floating around in my (yes ok, XL sized head) was that of photochromatic visors. Or to put it in plain English, a visor that tints in sunlight and goes clear again as the light level drops. So I did my research, and to make it as easy as possible I swung by Motomail in Auckland central to try on some helmets that were on my list.

There were a couple of helmets that I was curious about, a Bell (forgot the model designation sorry) and a Shoei NXR. What these had in common was the option of a photochromatic visor. The Bell just didn't fit me right, with one size being too tight and next size up being on the loose side for my liking. The Shoei NXR was quite a nice fit, but looking at the shape of the shell it looked to me fitting a comms unit was less than ideal. Also the small matter of a \$300 visor added to a \$900 helmet, and not being convinced of the cleverness of the photochromatic visor just yet. This in itself is another essay, and my own findings didn't satisfy me of the fancy visor being quick enough or dark

enough to make me feel comfortable, let's just leave it at that.

To keep an objective outlook I tried on several models from Arai, and here I ended with a similar problem that I had with the Bell helmets. One size too tight and next size up being a little on the loose side. So before too long I simply accepted that for the time being my head is suited to the Shoei shell sizes. The GT-Air was on my list as well, so finding a nice colour scheme came next, and presto I'm now the owner of a lovely GT-Air in a combo of hi viz yellow over black with some accent colours to make it look smart enough for my liking.



How do I like my new Shoei GT-Air then? Well, keep in mind I've had two modular/flip front helmets before this GT-Air; the first two comments are no surprise. The new helmet is both lighter and quieter than both flip fronts that came before, how much difference this made surprised me though. The actual weight difference is modest, yet it feels like much more. The reduced wind noise by not having a flip front is an obvious variation, but this is only really apparent when riding without earplugs, which I rarely do personally. Improved ventilation is a nice touch, as are the deeper recesses for the comms unit speakers.

The internal sun visor is quite common nowadays, the Neotec had this as well, so I'm used to it. For someone new to this feature it may seem like a nice touch, for it now removes the need for either sunglasses or a darker visor. Yeah ok, a dark visor is indeed nice, but the hassle of having to

carry a clear one makes the internal sun visor a nice touch.

Something which also appealed to me on the GT-Air is that Shoei gives you all the bits you need to make this helmet fully functional from the get-go. Pinlock visor and Pinlock insert, breath guard to stop you fogging up your visor immediately, chin curtain to keep air movement controlled.

To make mention of comms units, Sena do a 10U, which is a helmet specific comms set that basically ends up concealed to a large degree thus making use of the aero features of the helmet. No I haven't gone down this route just yet, although it's on my wish list now that I know about it.

So there you have it, my overview of the Shoei GT-Air which I recently acquired. At \$899, it's not a budget helmet but offers all the safety, comfort and features you'd expect from the major brand.

Great Service from Suzuki NZ and Boyds Hamilton – Geoff James

When Chris Nielsen and I bought our Suzuki GSX-S 1000's, it was in the knowledge that the powerplant was based on the legendary 2005-2008 GSX-R 1000 "torque monster" motor, but with revamped internals and traction control. In terms of overall performance, it's what you'd expect from something delivering around 145 bhp at the rear wheel. However, there was one significant drawback – it was as snatchy as heck at low throttle openings or off a trailing throttle. Quite unpleasant in slow traffic or greasy conditions on roundabouts etc! Much of this problem apparently stems from having to meet EU emission testing laws where the bike has to run "artificially" lean relatively low in the rev range for compliance. In a discussion with Simon Meade, GM Marketing for Suzuki NZ, he offered a new ECU to fix the problem at no cost. No ifs, buts or arguments, just deliver the customer a great experience without being messed about – outstanding service!

The new ECU was fitted by Boyds whilst I was having a 24,000 km major service there. What a difference! It's still slightly lumpy at the bottom end as a reminder of its sports heritage but all the snatch has gone and is much more pleasant to ride. Kudos to Boyds too. Their service times and prices are very sharp. They know that I have to travel 160km to their premises and always go the extra mile to make sure I'm on my way as soon as possible.

As a final example of Simon Meade's great customer focus whilst we were chatting, he offered the opportunity to ride their race-prepped

version of my bike at a trackday. This is the bike which an American journalist did so well on at Paeroa last year. However, the prospect of riding a bike with slicks, racing pads and other unforgiving goodies in front of onlookers had the potential for disaster so I politely declined!

Metzler Roadtec 01 review – Geoff James
I've had 3 different sets of tyres on the GSX-S1000. The OEM Dunlop 50 profile D214 sport tyre rear lasted just 3700km. OK in the dry but in the wet, they were awful. The short life also meant that most riders would have an empty bank account in no time flat! They were replaced with 55 profile Michelin PR4's which gave great grip in all conditions and lasted around 12500 km of fairly hard use – a terrific all-round tyre.

Despite them ticking all the boxes, a switch to the Roadtec 01's was made as they had been recently released and had been attracting good reviews, especially for wet weather performance.



Just fitted – November 2016

Initial impressions were that the "feel" was very similar to the PR4, with perhaps a slightly quicker turn-in and marginally better feedback from the front end. However, one definite improvement has been using 55 profile rear hoops compared with the OEM 50, turn-in on both the PR4 and Roadtec 01 is noticeably better. Both dry and wet weather grip has been exceptional as per the PR4. Maybe a more skilled rider could detect a difference in grip levels but I can't!

The tyres have now covered 11,000km and the centre of the rear hoop is close to the 1.5mm rain groove limit. This means that the life is comparable with that of the PR4 – completely acceptable. They'll be replaced in the next 500 km or thereabouts.

The rear tyre has maintained its profile very well. In the last few thousand km, the front has progressively developed "flats" out towards the periphery of the tread face. The photos of both follow. I'm anal about tyre pressures and inclined

to think that the twisty roads I inhabit, coupled with countersteering when “making progress” are contributors to this wear pattern. It doesn’t appear to significantly affect the handling though.



Rear Roadtec 01 @ 11,000km



Front Roadtec 01 @ 11,000 km

In summary, I'd be very happy to fit either the PR4 or Roadtec 01 again as both are fantastic tyres for a wide range of conditions but especially when it's wet. On this occasion however, it will be the Roadtecs fitted again to compare them with current experience.

Tyre prices vary a fair bit between suppliers but for comparative purposes, a fitted set of standard PR 4's (120x70-17 and 190x55-17 sizes) at Boyd's Hamilton are \$605 and the Roadtec 01's are \$641. I never worry too much about tyre cost as they're so integral to handling and staying upright!

Central North Island web page

CNI now has a separate page as part of the IAM national website. There is a short overview of current aims and objectives and also gives access to past copies of the regional newsletter. This is the link: <http://iam.org.nz/central-north-island/> .

Don't forget that CNI also has its own Facebook page as a sub-set of the main IAM Facebook account. This is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Central-North-Island-Institute-of-Advanced-Motorists-NZ-1676712995933499/posts/>

Central North Island contact email

As CNI Co-ordinator, I now have an IAM email address to separate official IAM business from my personal Gmail account. It is: cni.iamnz@gmail.com .

As always, we're looking for suggestions, reviews, questions, or contributions to the newsletter so we'd love to hear from you

Best regards,

Geoff James
Senior Observer, CNI
cni.iamnz@gmail.com