

## Central North Island Newsletter – June 2016 (Issue 1)

### **Communicating with members**

With the strong growth of IAM in several regions, good communications are essential to keep members informed of developments. The main IAM website (<http://iam.org.nz/>), IAM regional Facebook pages and the quarterly IAM newsletter are all part of the communications package. With the formation of a Central North Island (CNI) region in the current financial year, it's a good time to periodically do something specific for this group in addition to the CNI Facebook page. We hope that you enjoy this first issue and would love to receive feedback, together with any suggestions or contributions for future issues. You can contact me at [geoff.james74@gmail.com](mailto:geoff.james74@gmail.com)

In this first issue, we cover some background to the development of the CNI region and some of the people who will play a key role in its early development. At present, the newsletter only covers the Motorcycle Division.

### **What area does the CNI cover?**

It's hard to give an absolute definition because of the huge geographical area. However, a broad indication would be Waikato, B.O.P and King Country. As membership grows in each province of the CNI, it's likely that they will each set up in their own right but for now, grouping them together for administrative purposes makes good sense.

### **Where are we?**

We currently have members in the Tauranga, Rotorua, Taumaranui, Hamilton, Te Awamutu, Te Aroha, Te Kauwhata, Paeroa, Pokeno and Coromandel areas. Nine are currently active - either mentoring, working towards the Advanced Test or undertaking Observer training.

### **Resourcing our growth**

In order to maintain sustainable growth and support, the priority is to establish mentoring capacity capable of servicing the geographical spread of members without the need to travel big distances. By way of example, it's roughly a 2 hour haul to Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga from my home in Coromandel before even taking someone for an observed ride. Total distances per ride often approach 500 km. Travel relative to mentoring time is a bit excessive!

Consequently, the immediate focus is to have more Observers located closer to the main population centres. Progress suggests that there could be at least two more qualified Waikato Observers within the next 12 months or so. In the meantime, the Auckland region has generously

offered assistance where possible with mentored month-end rides etc. For the time being, the CNI waiting list will not be increased so that existing Associates receive all the attention available within current resource limitations.

With the Bay of Plenty only having one Observer who presently has substantial commitments outside IAM, assistance will be given as resources permit from the Waikato to riders from that region. Membership requests from the area are currently low. We will talk some more about this in the coming months.

### **Introducing the CNI Observing Team**

Before introducing the individuals, the common theme is that all of us had big skill gaps before joining I.A.M but we all came to realise before it was too late that we needed to lift our game. Both Lloyd Hollis' and Glenn Berridge's colourful histories on two wheels might resonate with a few of us! It will also hopefully demonstrate that with the right attitude and support from organisations like I.A.M, skills can be lifted to levels which were not previously thought of as being attainable.

### **Geoff James – Senior Observer**



Retired mechanical engineer living at Coromandel Harbour. Got my first bike, a Suzuki 50, in 1964 (eek!) and spent a lot of time in the early years falling off. Going over the handlebars of a 350cc Triumph 3TA with my sensitive bits forcefully connecting with a steering damper knob on the way out remains firmly etched in my mind, particularly as I spent a week walking like John Wayne in one of his Western movies! Have owned a whole range of road and trail bikes and successfully raced a supercharged Triumph drag bike when living in the UK. Upon arriving in NZ in 1975, I was without a bike for 12 years on account

of building a career, raising a family and getting into competitive sailing. Window-shopping in 1987 whilst picking up a yacht sail in Auckland started it all off again with a Honda GB400TT and as the saying goes, the rest is history!



I currently ride a Suzuki GSX-S 1000 naked sport bike, the previous 2 bikes being a Triumph Street Triple and a Honda Super Blackbird.

I joined IAM in 2011 to safely prolong my riding career as I aged, particularly as it took way too long to realise that I was massively short of talent. Thanks to patience and huge skill base of Philip and the Observers who personally mentored me, the improvement was immense. After passing the Advanced Test, I started Observer training to pay it forward and continued from there. Isn't it just the perfect outcome to continuously up-skill and to help others at the same time?

I would also like to mention the "no-ego" culture of IAM. This provides an incredible climate for riders to flourish in, where there is so much support, patience and no such thing as a daft question.

My current role is to establish a stronger IAM presence in the CNI to reduce the reliance on Auckland region for mentoring. I'm currently coaching a number of Associates in the CNI as well as a Trainee Observer, plus an Auckland-based Trainee Observer. I also maintain close links with the Auckland region and when required, take Associates for pre-Advanced Test cross-checks and Trainee Observers for their full Observer Test. I'm also involved in helping to deliver the formal Observer training course in Auckland. This year presents a tough schedule for me in terms of the time committed to IAM but hopefully, 2017 will see a region with more qualified members.

If I'm not riding, I'm sea fishing and travelling with my wife Jennie or trying to subvert our 5 grandkids!

## Glenn Berridge – Observer



Hi all,

My background is that I served with the S.A.S and with regard to time lines, dates etc, my memory is not the greatest with numerous concussions, exposure to chemicals, explosives "over pressure", parachuting into trees! In addition, there has been trauma to the head from sports which experts are all talking about at present. It's true - I am one of the victims!!

### Riding history (or lack of):

My riding history is not like some of you with vast experience and massive time behind a set of handle bars. My exposure started in 2007 in Thames when I took my farm quad bike into Thames for servicing. My mate suggested I buy a new red Hyosung 250cc naked bike and I agreed. The only catch was I have never ridden a street or dirt bike, although I consider myself a bit of a "gun" on a quad having traversed numerous 4x4 tracks, walking tracks and simply bush bashing with a quad, through pine plantations and various jungle in the Coromandel peninsula, even riding from Puriri via the Neavesville through to Broken Hills (ex mining settlement) over the Kopu – Hikuai mountain range via old logging and mining trails in the bush. I arrived fatigued and soaked. Being too cold and miserable to consider cooking, I elected to ride through to Pauanui for fish and chips before returning to Broken Hills for the night.

After trying to teach myself to ride road bikes along with a mate who was slightly more advanced, we elected to go to the Big Smoke and sit our handler's certificate with Philip McDaid at "Riderskills". I managed to bumble through the test after much practice and direction from Phil on the day, vowing to return for an advanced course as I was very, very average and I was much

impressed with Phil's and Ian's patience, professionalism and skill. Sadly this never happened for a raft of reasons.

I bumbled along in Thames, managing to write off my 250 on a popular riding circuit from Thames via Whangamata. This I later learned was target fixation, I was staring at "stuff" which was imbedded in the road surface, a car had caught fire prior and melted the tar and this had been repaired but bits of aluminium or similar was shining through. I would like to think I was looking for I.E.D's (improvised explosive devices) in the surface as I have had considerable exposure to this overseas and this would save face but it was just dumb riding and lack of experience! The bike was a write-off as I ended up ploughing into a rock bank. However, I was saved by my gear with just a small injury to my foot.

My next bike was another Hyosung 250 (because they are large). I now started to read books, watch videos and buy every Brit motorbike magazine written, because most of them had monthly riding and maintenance tips. 2009 saw me purchase a Triumph Street Triple and continue to bumble along, getting slightly better now joining track days and Auckland Motorcycle Club A.R.T (advanced rider training) days to improve and develop my skills. This was a long and slow process.

I am a driving instructor for heavy motor vehicles and cars and was contracted to various agencies when back in NZ so the Roadcraft side of things was not particularly difficult for me but the bike dynamics were challenging as my entire life I had relied on physical presence, strength and speed to get me through. This doesn't work on a bike and it took me considerable time to appreciate it. Talk about a slow learner..... I crashed my Street Triple at Pukekohe (too much rear brake) at the hairpin. The result was a broken neck, broken collar bone, punctured lung and a few other bits and pieces (bike landed on me). I continued to bumble on, buying the Speed Triple in 2010 to develop, advance and refine my skills. (A better fit for my size). I actually prefer the Street Triple and honestly believe it to be the better and faster bike over twisty roads - ask Geoff!

My next venture was to seek out some expertise on riding, I Googled the I.A.M and made an appointment to catch up for an observed ride, not knowing it was the legendary Phil from "Riderskills" who was honchoing it. After some constructive criticism and feedback, I elected to join the I.A.M and learn some good skills. I attended regularly for a couple of years before venturing out as a motorbike instructor, contracting to a couple of entities who have the "Ride Forever" ACC contract. I consider this my opportunity to try and steer a few lost souls who are where I was years ago, bumbling around our

roads and falling off. The concern here for me is the abysmal skill level (like I was), the complacent attitude to training and "image over expertise" displayed by some riders. More kilometres, track days, training days and reading ensured some skills were starting to take shape and I had a greater appreciation of dynamics and slow riding.

My move to Tauranga and my commitment to the "Ride Forever" programme has seen my attendance drop at the I.A.M. A return trip to Auckland combined with an observed ride is now proving difficult and challenging in time. I have been trying to assist Geoff in a very limited capacity in the establishing of a Central North Island branch and this is slowly taking shape.

In conclusion, to those active members - give yourselves a pat on the back, you are making a difference. Wise people do appreciate your time and commitment to keeping people safe out there on the road. On a personal note there is always a bed (Queen) at my place here in Tauranga and any bike mad person/s passing through are most welcome. [Berridge45@hotmail.com](mailto:Berridge45@hotmail.com)

#### Lloyd Hollis – Trainee Observer



**Lloyd and his TDM 900**

Living on a sheep / arable farm in Mid-Canterbury, I started riding the farm bike at the age of 13. My Dad bought a Yamaha AG100 and what a wonderful machine. My brothers and I clocked up 3000 km in the 1st couple of weeks. It was great to learn on and we gave it death right from new! Many tests were performed; such as how much lean and speed I needed until skid out, when cornering on the asphalt surface of the home roundabout (with the knobby tyres on of course).

How close I could get riding alongside the running sheep until one decides to sharply change direction and head butt the front wheel was another event! How much air time I could get over jumps made from an aging pile of dead pine trees, clay and soil etc was also great fun.



Then there were the unintentional spills with a head-on crash into a mini car when I was riding down the farm driveway. The one that really caught me by surprise was when riding along the track when fencing wire got wrapped around the back wheel. The first I knew about it was when I came to a very sudden stop and came off of course. I guess I was very lucky through those times and come out unscathed. They were all relatively low speed with usually a grass surface and fortunately, the helmet was always worn.

After leaving school, I moved north to Christchurch to start my apprenticeship, so it was the Healing 10-speed around town there. My next move was to the Waikato, as I transferred to Huntly Power Station to complete my apprenticeship.

This is when I purchased a Honda 250 twin 'Super Hawk'. It took a bit of getting used to riding a road bike for some reason, but soon grew to enjoy the commuting and the occasional ride to Coromandel. The riding was mostly uneventful, but safe and reliable, which was good I guess. In the early 90's I changed jobs to working shifts at the Power Station and carpooled with colleagues, so I sold the bike.



About eight years later I took my friend (Roy Price) in the car to Tauranga where he picked up his new bike. A Suzuki GN 125, I gave it a test ride and suddenly realised that I needed to get another bike. I decided on the GN 250, since it would the extra power for my weight ;-). It was a Chinese model which got me around both North and South Islands with very little trouble. I just had to get the alternator re-wound at approx. 40,000km. I ended up doing 86,000km and I reckon it would do the same again without too much bother.



After several years on the old GN, my mate Nicolas and I decided we would jointly search the bike models and buy one each. We settled on the massively huge Yamaha TDM 900 (parallel twin). He bought first, then me, when a red one came available. Both of us really love this model and have done lots of touring throughout the country. I usually go to Christchurch and Wanaka to visit family and have been to the 'Burt Munro' challenge a couple of times in Invercargill. All good fun, I especially love the Central Otago area and through the Buller gorge / West Coast on route. I've currently done 174,000km on it and I really don't want to part with it. I recently needed to replace the alternator, but can't really complain too much, I just love it. My ideal holiday is touring around the country and staying in backpackers and going to events like the 'Burt' and the 'Air shows'.

Staying safe on the roads is a big priority these days, as I've had a couple of incidents. One guy failed to give way as I was going around the Huntly West roundabout, where I was very lucky to avoid contact. One other time while waiting at the lights in Hamilton a car bunted into me from behind, luckily with just minor damage. Now that I'm using the IAM Roadcraft system of early hazard identification and avoidance using IPSGA (Information, Position, Speed, Gear and Acceleration) I'm far more aware. How I came to get involved with IAM was through doing a work sponsored one hour driver training session with Duncan Seed, IAM Examiner from Rangiora who runs a training business. The tips I received that day that stick in my mind were to look ahead at least twelve seconds watching for potential

hazards, making use of window reflections to view around corners and to work on estimating the decision point when approaching traffic lights. We talked quite a bit about bike road safety and at the end of the session Duncan came over to the bike shed and checked out my bike. He then told me about IAM and gave me details how to get in touch. It was just what I needed to improve my road skills. I've enjoyed meeting like-minded fellow bikers who've shown to be really enthusiastic and friendly people. IAM group rides are well-organised and have a very good system in place where responsibility is shared and nobody gets left behind or separated.

One day I would like to do some touring in Tasmania, then in North America, maybe to the Sturgis bike week in South Dakota. It would be fun to go with a fellow biker or two!

### **Other CNI Activities**

#### **The near future**

We also have several Associates in the CNI who have made excellent progress and are close to taking the pre-Advanced Test cross-check. Great work everyone and hope to see you enter Observer training in due course – crucial for the growth of the region. To the Associates who haven't yet got a dedicated mentor, thanks for your patience – we're working on options!

#### **Social runs**

Lloyd Hollis organised an excellent social ride in December last year, starting at Te Kauwhata, out to Raglan for fish and chips via the back roads and return. There was a great turnout of CNI and Auckland riders over fantastic riding roads.



**Meeting at Te Kauwhata**

Auckland region run regular social rides which are advertised on the IAM Facebook pages and elsewhere. CNI members are always welcome to take part. If any CNI members wish to organise a social run, please let us know. There is an excellent IAM written procedure available for running them. We'll see if we can organise a social ride round the Coromandel Loop in the coming months!

### **Annual IAM Conference**

Last year, Wellington IAM hosted the National Conference and social weekend at the National Police College. Attendees had a fantastic time with a wide range of social activities to suit everyone, including partners who came along.



**IAM Conference 2015**

This year, Christchurch IAM is hosting the event from 9-11 September. Registration details are here:

<http://iam.org.nz/2016-agm-and-conference/>

It doesn't matter how people get to Christchurch - ride, drive or fly. Not to be missed if you're able to make it!

#### **Trackday**

In February, the Auckland team arranged a track day for members at Hampton Downs. It was an amazing occasion for bikes of any type or size. Everyone who attended was absolutely fizzing, having been given the opportunity to go as fast or slow as they liked in a totally safe and well-organised environment. Hopefully, there will be another one next year.



**IAM riders in action at Hampton Downs**

We hope you've enjoyed the first CNI newsletter and an overview of what's happening. We'll try and get one out every couple of months or so with more updates and profiles of members in the region. Don't be surprised if you're contacted and

asked to contribute something as IAM success  
depends on everyone doing their bit!

Don't forget that feedback or anything you'd like to  
contribute!

Best regards,

Geoff James  
Senior Observer, CNI