

Central North Island Newsletter – March 2017 (Issue 5)

Mentoring

I am delighted to report that Rob Van Proemerer passed his Observer Test in January. Warmest congratulations mate and absolutely deserved! Rob is Pokeno-based and will predominantly mentor Associates based in the northern half of the Waikato. Rob is now mentoring Rex Stentiford (Tauhei) and Mark Ball (Te Aroha) towards their Advanced Tests.



Rob and his stealth Hayabusa



Rob receiving his Observer certificate from Richard Turnbull

Trainee Observer Lloyd Hollis (Hamilton) is also very close to taking his full Observer Test and Mark Revill-Johnson (Cambridge) will commence his practical training as soon as this has happened. Observer Glenn Berridge (Tauranga) is heavily committed with non-IAM activities but is making good progress with Bill Hadley.

The broad geographic spread of Observers is essential for supporting the growth of IAM through the CNI rather than just in small pockets. At

present, there are logistical difficulties supporting the coaching of riders in BOP and south of Hamilton. However, with additional observing capacity planned for Hamilton and possibly points south during 2017, there will be a significant improvement in the current position.

Whilst the number of Observers remains small, each Observer will have direct responsibility for mentoring a small number of Associates towards the Advanced Test. However, we will maintain as much flexibility as possible by using other Observers where appropriate to ensure that each active Associate receives regular coaching.

Using this approach, excellent progress has been made over the last few months. As a result of regular mentored rides and strong personal performances against the Roadcraft standard, there are a number of Associates whom we expect to sit their pre-Advanced Test cross-check during autumn. Congratulations to everyone for putting in the hard yards! The plan is for CNI members to be strongly represented on the next Observer Training Course to be held in the Auckland region.

As a late addition immediately before publication, I'm delighted to announce that Tony Knight has just passed his cross-check with Auckland Chief Observer Richard Turnbull and will now proceed to his full Advanced Test. This was achieved with the flexible mentoring policy mentioned above and thanks also go to Lloyd and Rob for their time. Very well done Tony!

Just a reminder that Rob Van Proemerer has charted his journey with IAM from first joining in 2015 through to becoming an Observer in an excellent blog. It's a refreshingly honest account of both his successes and challenges and is highly recommended to existing Associates and potential new members alike. Everyone goes through similar highs and lows and progress is by no means linear! Rob's first ever post can be found at the link below. Just click on "Newer Post" at the bottom of each page to move forward in time.

<http://robvnpnz.blogspot.co.nz/2015/12/my-background-and-why-iam-approach-for.html>

Following on from Rob's blog, just an observation how our personal outlook can influence progress towards the Advanced Test and beyond.....

Looking back on my initial contact with IAM, there was a certain amount of trepidation associated

with exposing my lack of talent in front of clearly gifted riders. This was quickly dispelled by the ego-free nature of the Observers. It was initially replaced by a personal fear of failure, especially when there were inevitable glitches in progress. At some stage which was difficult to pinpoint, that fear of failure was replaced by wanting to execute a near-perfect ride. It was probably at the time when I started to understand how all the elements of the Roadcraft system fitted together. It's difficult to describe succinctly, but moving from fear of failure/apprehension to enjoying the challenge and wanting to execute a ride that both I and my mentors could be proud of was a massive step towards improving my riding on a consistent basis. It still applies too. I've mentioned this because several Associates have mentioned similar feelings. Something to ponder?

New Associates

A very warm welcome to Hamilton rider Keith Fletcher who recently had his IAM initial assessment and has just joined.

Also, a warm welcome in advance to Hamilton rider Chris Nielsen who made contact with IAM through the recent Auckland Shiny Side Up event. Chris will have his initial assessment in March and we look forward to him joining the CNI group.

We will profile both riders in due course.

Membership info summary (Waikato/BOP)

Active Observers: 3 (2 Waikato, 1 BOP)
Active Trainee Observers: 1
Active Associates: 8
Waiting list: 2

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 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.

Social rides

Social rides are an important part of developing camaraderie among regional members and whilst the intent is to run some in due course, mentoring riders to Advanced Test level and beyond is the highest priority whilst observing capacity is tight. For those who don't mind a bit of extra travel, there are regular social rides organised by the Auckland region and details are normally posted on the IAM Auckland Facebook page.

2017 Annual General meeting

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. Whilst it still has to be confirmed, the good news for CNI members is that it will probably be held at Taupo in late November. Too good to miss and hope to see you there!

Meet the Team

In this issue, we continue the profiling of active motorcycle members within the Central North Island, especially as it's such a geographically large area.

Rex Stentiford (Tauhei, near Morrinsville)



Rex in 2016

Hi Everybody,

Here I am to introduce myself as a newbie to IAM NZ after meeting Tessa at the NZ Motorcycle show. From what she told me, it sounded like you have a really great group evolving here and I am keen to get involved.

My first confession is that I am English; I am however assured that despite this, I can be promised a warm welcome as well as an introduction to some of the best motorcycling roads in the southern hemisphere.

I hope you appreciate the lightness of my intro because it may get a little darker from here as I reflect that my motorcycle bio spans 36 years; or 4 decades, or worse still, 2 centuries. As Pink Floyd might put it; 'and then one day you find ten years have got behind you'. Sorry; I did warn you!

Fortunately, research has shown that chronological age can be offset by a condition known as 'Big Kid Syndrome'. I personally have some experience of this condition having first contracted BiKS upon taking possession of a Honda PC50 on my 16th Birthday, (I think I caught is off the seat).

The PC50 was a REAL moped - by this I mean it came complete with leg guards, windscreen, actual working peddles to assist uphill and rather fetching tartan cloth panniers. To that most easily of embarrassed creatures, i.e. the 16 year old boy, my Honda PC50 represented a perfect dichotomy. Technically it WAS what I had asked for. But, it had arrived in a form that made me want to die. I swear, buying that machine it was a poorly veiled attempt by my father to toughen me up by ensuring sure I would get beaten up at school.

Those familiar with the work of Einstein will be aware that time is a relative phenomenon. In short, its rate of passage varies according to the observers reference frame. Let me tell you that from the frame of the Honda PC50 my personal time slowed to the extent that I experienced the longest six months in the history of the universe. New species evolved, civilisations rose, flourished and fell. Friends met, married, had children and sent them off to College in the time it took me to save up for a 'fabulous', sporty Yamaha FS1M... moped.

In the self deluded way of all 16 year old boys, I imagined the Yamaha would be a huge improvement. In reality 'cool' was not a word that sprang to anybody's lips upon seeing a painfully thin, 187cm tall teenager astride what was still a very VERY small motorcycle. The truth is, to most observers I appeared like some low budget parody of a Circus Clown act. It won't be a surprise when I say; I didn't get many girlfriends when I was 16.

Jan 1981 brought with it a shiny new Honda CB100N festooned with every conceivable extra. After all I was still a deluded teenager. I then passed my motorcycle license test and failed the car test which acted as the perfect excuse to buy a beautiful Honda CB400F in November of that year. At last I had arrived, 'no more clowns under my crash helmet' I no doubt thought to myself!

For many, the 80's are the decade that taste forgot, but for me, it was the decade where I really fell irrevocably in love with the motorcycle. I purchased endless magazines reviewing the latest models, I went to motorcycle shows, shops and rallies that led me further and further afield as my experience grew. I became a Star Rider instructor and qualified up to their gold standard. I

even found time to pass my car test and later took my IAM car test.

Bikes came and went. The 400/4 was replaced with a new GPZ550 Unitrac (the stuff of legend back in 1982) and that year I rode over 20,000 miles. The following year I moved to a BMW R100RS (still the best fairing ever fitted to a bike). Next there came a Kawasaki GPZ900r, a Honda CBR1000F, a ZZR1100D, a Yamaha R1, a BMW K1200RS and a Honda Fireblade. I wish I could have kept them all, even the PC50!



Rex in 1986!

In 2006 I moved to the west Coast of the US for two years and with such a fabulous climate. I arrived with the intention of buying a motorcycle immediately. However, twelve hours after landing at Los Angeles, I stood on a bridge and took a long hard look at the 405 freeway. I looked north and I looked south along an eight lane sprawl that appeared to be governed by laws of physics hitherto unsuspected by anybody not native to the LA Basin. Ten minutes later I went into a car dealership. It should always be remembered that Cowardice is the better part of self preservation!

My self imposed exile from two wheels lasted about 7 months before serious withdrawal symptoms set in. I took to hanging around a large Harley Davidson dealership near where I was living and pestering the sales team to explain the difference between a Sportster Seventy-Two-XL1200V, a SuperLow 1200T and Dyna Street Bob – FXDB. Often they would offer me a test ride just to get rid of me for a while. I admit I didn't buy a Harley but I certainly gained an appreciation

regarding a subculture of motorcycle that had never registered with me before. It also led me to develop my own personal theory of automotive evolution.

Anyway, it seems you can take the overgrown kid out of Europe, but you can't take Europe out of the overgrown kid. I looked at many Harleys and then purchased my beloved Katie (Yes I am the sort of sad shmuck who names his motorcycles).

Katie, a BMW R1200GS started life in Long Beach California and over our eleven years together we have been up and down the west coast of the US, deep into the dirt tracks of the Arizona desert, along the strip in Las Vegas, up above 10,000ft in Bryce Canyon and down below sea level in Death Valley. In 2008 when I returned to the UK there was no question of leaving Katie behind, so we ended up in Scotland together and travelled happily around the UK for three years before coming to NZ.



Rex (r) and his BMW with Lloyd Hollis

A couple of years ago, a purely opportunistic ride on a Honda Goldwing at an open day lead to a renewed outbreak of Big Kid Syndrome (it's a bona fide medical condition ask any married woman!). This outbreak of BiKS just happened to coincide with a good deal on a Victory Vision Tour and so Katie was joined in the garage by Christine; 400Kg of V twin Cruiser with a top case almost big enough to park a Yamaha R1. The arrival of Christine does seem to have put the BiKS into remission for the moment, but I do start getting symptoms every time I see a new Triumph Trophy.

Looking forward, my focus is presently on the IAM test and ultimately I'd like to become an Observer. In the meantime, if anybody is looking for company on weekend rides or maybe wants to buddy up for one the NZ endurance events like the NI1600, I'd be very interested. That is, if you can tear me away from scouring Trademe night after night looking for my next fix.....

Well there you have it. I come to you as a 53 year old Brit, still relatively new to NZ, with a documented 36 year history of chronic BiKS and I currently own two motorcycles because they represent the only sort of ménage à trois that I'm not too old to enjoy.

Here's to my time with the IAM and the next 36 years. ~ Rex

Thanks to Rex for a most excellent and amusing bio. The backgrounds and riding history of IAM members never ceases to educate and entertain!

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

Best regards,

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