



Institute of Advanced Motorists



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From the chairman.

Welcome to another fantastic edition of the IAM newsletter. These quarterly publications are a great way to hear from members throughout the country, and I always look forward to reading such a professional magazine. The newsletter is also a great medium for communicating with our members and associates, and I would love to hear your thoughts about what you enjoy, or how you would like to see the newsletter developed further. Thank you to Peter Henson, Mark Revill-Johnson, Wendy Betteridge and Paul Buttell for volunteering to edit, write or source material for the enjoyment of us all.

Well, what a year it has been so far. 2014 has started with a hiss and a roar, and there are so many projects underway at a national and regional level. I am sure that you will hear from the regional representatives in their own columns but from a national perspective we have our fingers in lots of road-safety pies and we are working hard to increase the influence, appeal and coverage of the IAM. We have recently sought out tenders for a new website, and there are some very talented people out there who have come up with some fantastic ideas on how we can really market ourselves online, whilst supporting the needs of our members and serving to promote road safety. The tenders have been considered and we should be starting work on the new website in the next few weeks.

We have a new Twitter page and, for those of you who use the website, you can follow us @ipsganz. You can also follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/65119753776/> For those of you with email, you should have received a newsflash in the last few days. This is a new concept, and will be used to convey urgent messages to all of our members. If you haven't received a newsflash from the IAM, please check your junk email folder or send a memo to the secretary so that he can ensure that your email address is correct on the database - secretary.iamnz@gmail.com

We are in the process of finalising a car observer training programme, which we hope will mirror the success which the bike programme has seen in recent years. If you are interested in becoming a car observer / examiner, or you are one but have never been through any formal training, please contact the Chief Examiner for Cars (Morne De Lange) at cecars.iamnz@gmail.com or ring Morne on (M) **021 174 5091**.

We are also tidying up our constitution, so that it better reflects the IAM of 2014 and beyond...thank you to Keith Bishop and Ken McGrath for all of their hard work with this. We are also working on strategic plans for a number of aspects of the IAM, including an IT strategy which is being led by Ross Gratton. You should start to notice that the appointed officers of the institute, and the regional groups, all have standardised email addresses. A full list will be published in the next newsflash.

However, the most important work which we are currently undertaking is to promote an active social scene within the IAM. Ever since I joined the IAM, I have always asked the committee, "Why should I stay a member?" I can understand the desire to become an associate, and ultimately a full member, because there is an intrinsic benefit to being a safer driver or rider. However, once I have passed my advanced test, and received my certificate and sticker, why should I come back next year? For a long time, nobody could answer that question. I sincerely hope that we are now changing that and, at the same time, helping all of our members and associates to feel that they are a part of the IAM family. Not just in NZ, but across the globe, there is a genuine sense of brotherhood (and

sisterhood) with other IAM groups. Who knows, one day we might be able to do an exchange with fellow members from overseas, and show off our beautiful country then have them reciprocate for us to visit their country too.

In the meantime, we have insurance discounts for members, Government Stores Board (GSB) cards to access discounts at countless retailers, social meetings and rides happening in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, with others in the pipeline for the central north island, and a fantastic quarterly newsletter to read. That's got to be worth \$40 of anyone's money...you save more than you spend! If you would like details on any of these offers, please email the secretary.

I urge all of you to make an effort to attend, organise or support your local group social activities, and invite your family and friends along also. After all, if we Drive Social, driving becomes a much more enjoyable activity.

Finally, the date for the AGM has been confirmed. This year's AGM will be held at the Counties Manukau District Police Headquarters, at 42 Manukau Station Road, Manukau, on Sunday 31st August. We are planning to host a social event on the Saturday night and, if you are travelling into Auckland and require accommodation, I am sure that you will be welcome to stay with Auckland-based members. I hope that we can beat last year's amazing turnout at the AGM. If you have any items which you would like to be included, please ensure that you email the secretary.

Stay safe on the roads over winter, and display the badge with pride.

Yours in motoring

Mark Fleming (President)

Recent IAM observer test passes

Congratulations go to Jarrod Kirk, Richard Turnbull and Neil Mackay for passing their observer tests. Philip McDaid, Chief Examiner for motorcycles, presented them with their certificates.



Editors Comment

Recently we discussed what we should include in the newsletter. Below are some of our thoughts but these are by no means exclusive, and therefore we welcome any articles you feel will be of interest to the reader. So please, feel free to submit articles ready for the next news letter, which due to be circulated by mid August.

- Local, national and international news articles
- Vehicle tests – cars, bikes and trucks
- Favourite rides and drives
- Personal profiles
- Success stories
- Police, fire and ambulance articles
- Events attended
- Book reviews
- Discounts available to IAM members
- Write ups on places to stay motels, hotels and B & Bs
- Local learner driver initiatives
- Contradictory and confusing road signage

Any articles for the next news letter; please forward to Peter Henson at pbh1958@xtra.co.nz, or to Mark Revill-Johnson at mark@rvcdriiving.com by **Monday 4th August** at the latest.

New to the newsletter; is the last section 'for sale' items. If you wish to sell a car, motorcycle, or other items or rent out a batch; please forward the details (along with a picture) to myself, or Mark Revill-Johnson.

Cost of the advert is \$5; a small investment we feel you would agree. Please pay either by, cheque addressed to the Treasurer, Institute of Advanced Motorists Inc, PO Box 26421, Epsom, Auckland 1244, or by direct online payment to ASB Blockhouse Bay. Account number, 12-3011-0759542-00.

Change of role

We recently asked for someone to come forward as the new newsletter co-editor to replace Geoff James. Geoff is currently coordinating the motorcycle division activity and which is growing. As such, Geoff felt he could not devote enough time to the news letter (which he started) and therefore asked if a new co-editor could be found. So many thanks to Geoff for his efforts with and contributions to the newsletter.

About the new newsletter editors

Stepping into the role is Mark Revill-Johnson (pictured below) and as sub editor, Paul Buttell. Below is a short biography about Mark.



I was born in Southport, UK which is a small seaside town that sits on the northwest coast between the City of Liverpool and the more popular seaside town of Blackpool. Currently, I live in Tauranga with my (long suffering) partner, who works in shipping logistics.

Professionally, I served with the Merseyside Police Force in various locations and departments for a total of 18 years, achieving the Class One Advanced Car qualification in 1989. In 2003, along with 80 other experienced police officers from across the UK, I made the move to New Zealand and served a further nine years here working in Auckland City, Waiheke Island, Manurewa, Dannevirke and Masterton.

In 2012, I went into business as a driving instructor. I initially qualified as an instructor in the UK; I worked mainly in fleet training, passing on the benefits of using the System to sales reps, who were massively over-represented in serious and fatal crash statistics in the UK.

I passed the UK IAM test in 1987 and became an active observer with them from that date. I later became a member of the Sefton IAM Group Training Committee, and eventually became the group's Chief Observer, a post, I held at the time when observer qualification was first introduced in the UK.

I guided the group through the Observer Qualification process when it was introduced, and trained the first batch of Senior Observers, and tested all of the group Qualified Observers. I also acted as an examiner for the "other" advanced driving organisation RoADA in order to allow me to continue as an active Chief Observer for the Sefton Group.

In NZ, I am an IAM examiner for cars and a motorcycle associate.

I now work full time as car and motorcycle instructor and provide car lessons in Rotorua and occasionally other locations in the Bay of Plenty, as a licensee under the AA brand. I deliver motorcycle training, Basic Handling Skills Testing, and Competency Based Training and Assessment under my own company name. I am also an approved trainer for AA Skills Control (Crash Avoidance Techniques) Programme, Defensive Driving and Defensive Driving for Experienced Drivers courses.

I am an active participant in a Driving Instructors forum for the Waikato / Bay of Plenty region, which involves regular meetings with NZTA and NZ Driver Licensing.

On the car front I have owned all manner of different vehicles from my first purchase, a 1973 Mark One Ford Escort, through a collection of standard sedans and station wagons

including a 1978 Mini, Honda Legend, a couple of Vauxhall Cavaliers (Holden Vectra) and BMWs, an MG Midget and my first NZ vehicle a “14 seater” Isuzu Bighorn (that should bring a smile to face of our Chairman!). My last privately owned car was a Subaru Legacy Lancaster. Now of course, I have sensible driving school cars, both of which are small Mazdas.

As for bikes, I started on a 1977 Honda CB250T (Dream) then progressed on to a Honda 750 Sabre, BMW R80RT, which saw some serious service throughout Europe, and a Suzuki 600 Bandit in the UK. In NZ, I started on a GS500 and graduated to a Suzuki VZ800 Marauder and now a GSF1250FA Bandit which spends a lot of its time following learner motorcyclists around, and the occasional period carrying me around, while other IAM members of the motorcycle section cause me to gasp in admiration at their extensive riding skills.

Peter Henson



Although born in the UK but spent many of my childhood years living in various countries around the world, due to my father being in the Royal Air Force. From the age of eleven; I settled in Chester, which is located at the top of the Welsh / English border and is one of the five large fortress cities founded by the Romans.

During my working life I have spent three years in the Cheshire police and thirteen years in the Cheshire ambulance service. In the early eighties; I was trained to advanced standard on motorcycles by the Cheshire police and also trained as an advanced driver by the Cheshire ambulance service. During the early eighties; I was also a part-time motorcycling instructor for three years, as part of the Cheshire Council Transport departments plan to reduce learner motorcyclist injuries and fatalities.

I first visited New Zealand for eight months in 1992 and then again for two weeks 2005. I immigrated in February 2006; live on Auckland's North Shore, and work in the field of learning and development and training. Currently, I am an IAM associate and I look forward to the time when I pass my test and can start working towards mentoring others who join the organisation.

Past cars and bikes have been a Toyota Corolla 1.6, Fiat 126, three Renault 11s and currently; a very good condition 1996 Audi A4, 1.8 manual. I started riding bikes at 17; my first bike (if you can call it a motorcycle) was a Honda C50. I passed my test and progressed to a Suzuki GT250, Honda 400/4; two Honda CX500s, and then a BMW R100T, which I used to travel over much of northern Europe; I later changed this for a BMW K75.

When I decided to emigrate to NZ some fifteen years later; I brought with me a Yamaha XJ900 Diversion on which I toured the north and south islands. This has since been changed for my current steed, a Honda ST1300 Pan European (pictured); which I am proud to own.

Links to back copies of the news letter and IAM Committee Minutes can be found at:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vnmh2ho111wxiv4/-Xk_9xFpGD



Motorcar Division

Changing Lanes

It was when I read the IAM February newsletter, specifically Paul Buttell's letter to the Editor – IAM Examiner from Canterbury and the article entitled 'Learn to Drive the AA Way' from the Herald on Sunday by Donna McIntyre, that I felt compelled to add my two-penny-worth.

There's one thing in particular that a large number of drivers do so consistently that I can only put it down to a lack of knowledge, and that's driving in, and staying in, lanes.

I've seen many drivers change lanes on dual carriageways and motorways without indicating and without checking their rear view mirrors first. It's so fundamental to so many manoeuvres on the road and many drivers are downright sloppy about it.

But when it comes to turning, it's too often a free for all. And then there are roundabouts – but that's a story for another day!

When we turn right or left and we're turning from a single lane road into a single lane road, there's usually not too much of a problem. Having said that, many drivers drive too close to the edge on a left hand turn – and 'ride the kerb' - and too close to the centre of the road on a right hand turn – and 'cut the corner'.

My biggest concern is about people who turn from a single lane road (or a double lane road) onto a double lane road.

The turning law has recently changed in New Zealand. Until recently, drivers turning left had to give way to drivers coming towards them who wanted to turn right. With the new law in place, drivers turning left now have the right of way over those coming towards them and turning right. Have you noticed how many drivers turning left onto a two-lane road, drive straight into the right hand lane? Depending upon the knowledge of the driver

turning right towards them, that driver will either wait until there are no more cars turning left or pull up in horror when the car turning left drives straight into their lane.

The other day a friend offered me a lift. At the bottom of our road leading onto the double-lane highway, the lights were red. She waited with her left indicator flashing. Facing us at the intersection was a car with its right indicator flashing.

The lights changed and she began her left turn – heading straight for the right hand lane. The car coming towards her began its turn as well, quite rightly aiming for the right hand lane. She immediately stood on the brakes while the car turning right in front of her drove carefully into the right lane. 'Oh', she said, 'I thought it was my right of way'.

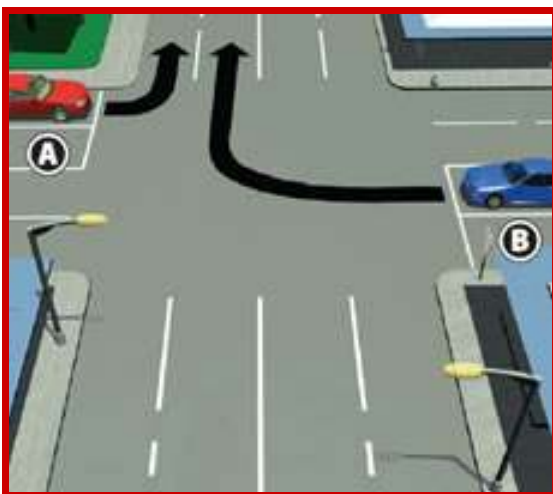
I assured my friend that she did have the right of way into the left hand lane and that if she then chose to move into the right hand lane, she would need to make sure that the lane was clear, indicate, and move across. She was astonished. 'Oh, she said, I never knew that!'

She didn't seem to realise that both cars can make their turns simultaneously, with great care of course. (If, by any chance, the car turning left *does* stray into the right hand lane immediately, then the car turning right *must* give way). And if the car turning right completes the manoeuvre faster, then indicating to move into the right hand lane and it being safe to do so will probably mean going behind the car that turned right (galling, but true!)

Page 126 of the Official New Zealand Road Code 2012-2013 says:

'When two vehicles are turning into the same road at an intersection that has more than one marked lane in both directions:

- Both vehicles must show they want to turn by signalling for at least three seconds
- Both vehicles stay in their own lane throughout the turn, that is:
 - Car A turns from the left-hand lane into the left-hand lane
 - Car B turns from the right-hand lane into the right-hand lane



Are we teaching this to our learner drivers? And if we are, how are they going to influence those drivers who've been on our roads for many years who are setting such bad

examples to those learning? The habit appears to be ingrained. Is there any hope at all of educating the majority of drivers in New Zealand in the correct practice?

Source: Wendy Betteridge

Editor's comment

Yes. They will score a critical error for an illegal action even if no other driver is present, or an immediate fail, if there is another car present that has the rights to the correct lane, in which case they have failed to give way.

One in ten drivers admit to autopilot

The IAM UK is urging motorists to beware of the perils of driving on autopilot following research which shows that one in ten drivers are often unable to remember their entire car journey. The poll of almost 1500 drivers, carried out by Vision Critical on behalf of the IAM, also revealed that fifty-four per cent of drivers admitted to missing a turning because they were distracted. A further 14 per cent of drivers are quite often unable to recall any part of their journey in the car.

Younger drivers (18-25 year olds) are the most likely to be in danger of distraction. Thirty-five per cent stating they couldn't recall any part of their journey, often or quite often. In comparison only five per cent of older drivers (65+) admitted to not remembering their journey.

Driving on autopilot appears to differ by region too. Twenty-two per cent of Londoners are less likely to recall any part of their journey, compared to only 11 per cent of Scottish drivers, and 10 per cent of drivers in the South West.

The survey also found that this behaviour had a significant impact on performance. Fifty-four per cent of drivers admitted to missing turnings because of it.

The IAM offers the following advice to keep you alert on the roads:

- Keep your eyes moving
- Make concentrating on the road ahead your main priority
- Roll down the windows for some fresh air
- Plan your journey to include a stop at least once every two hours.
- If you feel drowsy, stop at the next service area and stretch your legs
- For longer journeys, where possible, share the driving with another driver
- Make sure you drink enough fluids.

IAM UK chief executive Simon Best said: "It's all too easy to get behind the wheel and zone out completely. Being distracted enough that you miss a turning is a sign that driving is a task that has fallen too low in your brain's priorities. While we all have other concerns and stresses in our lives which can take precedence in our minds, the act of driving should remain your biggest priority when behind the wheel."

"The fact is it takes too long to react appropriately if you are not concentrating on driving. Being distracted can have serious consequences, it could mean that you're less likely to see that cyclist or child, running out until it's too late."

Source: IAM UK

Limit proposed on learner licences

Hundreds of thousands of drivers who have not bothered to upgrade to a full licence could soon be encouraged to take the dreaded final test.

The NZ Transport Association has proposed a five-year time limit for all new learner and restricted car and motorcycle licences to encourage drivers and riders to progress to the next licensing stage. The change will not be applied retrospectively.

It would mean that those with current learner or restricted licences would not be able to renew them until their expiry and they would have to sit another theory test to do so.

Just over 40 per cent, or 99,018 learner drivers have held their licence for more than five years while almost half of restricted drivers, 133,421, are in the same position.

The percentages are even higher for motorcyclists, with almost 70 per cent of learners and more than 50 per cent of restricted riders having held their licence for more than five years.

Agency road safety director Ernst Zollner said the proposed five-year time limit aimed to encourage novice drivers and motorcyclists to progress to a full licence within a reasonable period.

"The restrictions that apply to learner and restricted licences are there to ensure that novice drivers gain experience and skills under low-risk conditions," Zollner said.

"Drivers who stay at one licence stage indefinitely aren't demonstrating that they've gained the skills and competence to drive safely, and many offences for breaching licence conditions are committed by drivers who have held a learner or restricted licence for an extended time."

The changes would work together with other recently introduced measures. The measures included raising the minimum licensing age to 16, the introduction of a zero-alcohol limit for teen drivers and more challenging full licence tests, he said.

The agency has also proposed strengthening the identity requirements for licence applications, requiring a verified photo to accompany forms of identification that did not contain an image.

NZTA defends 'diabolical' test system



Despite complaints from frustrated learner drivers, authorities say more than half pass their practical test on the first try.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) said nearly 60 per cent pass the restricted test on the first attempt, and overall the pass rate is more than 50 per cent.

NZTA said the pass rate for teenage drivers was higher than the overall average, at more than 60 per cent.

Nearly 150 parents and novice drivers have contacted APNZ today in response to a story about a testing officer being punched after failing a learner driver at Meadowlands AA in Auckland on Monday. Many were frustrated at failing the test multiple times.

NZTA spokesman Andrew Knackstedt said the more challenging restricted test was introduced in February 2012 to improve safety of young and novice drivers.

"Road crashes are the single biggest killer of teenagers in New Zealand, and with an average of one teenager killed on New Zealand roads every week in recent years our teen crash rates are among the worst in the developed world," he said.

"That's a situation no-one should accept, and New Zealanders are looking for decisive action to reduce this needless waste of young life and young potential."

Young drivers on a learner licence were encouraged to put in plenty of hours of supervised driving and take advantage of free online resources before sitting the tougher practical test.

One parent said his 18-year-old broke down in tears after failing her restricted driving test for the fifth time.

Glenn McLaughlin spent \$670 on drivers licence tests for his 18-year-old daughter Dana, and has three other teenagers who could be in for a similarly costly experience.

Mr McLaughlin said Dana has been driving vehicles through paddocks since she started school, and he had never doubted her capabilities behind the wheel.

He sat in on two of the driving tests to see for himself why she was failing.

"On the morning of her last test there were four other people sitting their tests; two who were teenagers and two who were older. All of them failed."

Mr McLaughlin said he approached the testing officer and asked whether he was simply revenue collecting, to which he replied that Mr McLaughlin should take it up with a manager.

"It is so, so hard. Every single time it's a different reason. If they'd said at the first instance 'here's the reason you failed' then we could take it away and practice."

Mr McLaughlin said the result of failing so many learner drivers is more illegal motorists on the roads. He said he knew of many young motorists driving on learner licences from rural parts of Auckland into the city for work because there was no alternative; and the tests seemed impossible to pass.

An Auckland mother who didn't want to be named said her son had been failed four times at Meadowlands AA. She estimated the cost of the tests and the time taken off work at \$1000.

Another motorist had to sit the test four times. "The thing that struck me was the lack of consistency and oversight between assessors, locations etc.

"I believe the management of license testing process by various third party private companies leads to inconsistencies in driver capabilities.

"I think that driving should form part of the NCEA curriculum and should be taught as part of school as a standardised, national subject."

More responses from readers

Kristina Erzunova: "I recently was doing my full licence test at Meadowlands and he immediately failed me just for not using a middle lane! It would have been alright if I did something wrong, but not using a middle lane when it wasn't needed. "The whole hassle of taking time off work and having to pay again!"

Steve Honeyfield: "It is some time since my son failed his driving test but at the time he was told "You haven't done anything wrong but the car is too small for you". This was driving my wife's Honda City which was manual transmission, as opposed to our larger auto car."

Tom Young: "Could it be that those who have failed the tests and then blame the examiners have been unworthy of gaining a licence because of lack of theoretical or practical ability? Indeed are some of these failing the tests in that group of persons who expect things to be handed out on a silver plate without having earned the right. If that should be the case then I would congratulate the examiners in doing their job and keeping our roads a safer place."

Ampie Vos: "My son failed four times now ... The reasons are very vague - taking too long at intersections. According to me that is the safer option than to put yourself and other vehicles in danger."

Nicky McCormick: "My son failed his licence because his seat was damp, was offered a towel to sit on declined that so failed over that."

David Fraser: "They should establish a set fee paid once for the complete full licence so no matter how many times you sit your learners then provisional then full licence you pay only one fee up front."

Joanne Krietch: "My daughter was failed twice. Once with her restricted and again when sitting her full licence. She was failed for very minor things e.g. not looking down a side road when driving past it, apparently she should have been looking for possible hazards!"

Leo Russo: "I recently took my restricted drivers licence twice at AA Papanui, Christchurch. The first time I instantly failed for not slowing down to 30km/h when seeing road cones. I was in the middle lane of a four-lane 60km/h busy road (Harewood Rd). There was no sign saying to slow down and the cones were related to the curb works. If I had slowed down I most likely would have had a car run into the back of me."

John Rhodes: "Haven't had a problem, but now the testers are getting realistic and keeping the incompetent off the roads, making it safer for all. Some parents should realise that their children may not be capable of ever becoming a good driver."

Natalie: "My boyfriend has "failed" to obtain his full licence three times, the third time being over a year ago. Each time he has failed for a different, obscure and once even blatantly incorrect reason. The most recent time he was at a roundabout in 8am morning traffic (having taken the morning off work no less) waiting for a safe gap to drive through. A car behind him tooted - perhaps late for work - and the testing officer told him that he had instantly failed."

Sue Gentry: "I had accidentally put my current registration behind an expired registration on my vehicle and when the driver tester saw this he walked off telling me it was too late as I had failed to display a current registration."

Vivian: "I have sat both my restricted and full from Meadowlands [AA] and passed first time round for both times. I found the advice and criticism of the instructors there to be fair and I assume that most of those people who failed from there are probably just bad drivers and the instructor saw them as unfit to be on the roads."

Yvonne: "The whole thing is a sham. We are up to \$648 which includes a Defensive Driving Course, two lessons from a professional AA instructor, two failed tests and a third one pending."

Karen: "My daughter failed her restricted test - she was asked to turn right onto a busy four-lane road in peak hour traffic. She asked if she could instead turn left and go around the roundabout 50m down the road as this was a safer option. She was told this was the reason she failed, despite her AA driving instructor telling her to always take the safest route."

Phil O'Connor (ex testing officer): "When Mum and Dad teach their children to drive generally all they achieve in doing is passing on their own bad habits to their children - these are easily recognised to the testing officer."

Source: Sophie Ryan, and Heather McCracken, New Zealand Herald

Editor's comment

In stark contrast to the articles above of New Zealand learners reactions to the recently implemented New Zealand driver testing; a success story from IAM UK (below) shows the benefits that can be gained (especially at an early stage in a young person's driving career) from proper professional tuition that increases skills, awareness and reduces risk on the road.

Success Story – Brothers spur on each other

James Kind aged 20 (below left) and his brother Ben aged 17(below right); have both made quick work of achieving advanced driver status. The brothers joined Huddersfield Advanced Motorists in June 2013 and were observed by Craig Shaw. James passed his test on August 24th, saying: "This was a fantastic opportunity to complete the highest standard of driving. It has given me experience on all road types and made me able to

anticipate other driver's decisions". Not to be outdone, Ben passed his advanced test in November, just six months after passing his driving test



Source: IAM UK

Elizabeth Davies is trying to overcome her 'driving ambivalence'

I spent my Sunday doing something most 24 year-olds would find more than slightly embarrassing. For a couple of hours I sat patiently in the driver's seat of my hot pink, 1993, Nissan March, receiving a driving lesson from my even more patient partner.

According to University of Otago PHD student Aimee Ward, who's studying the travel habits of young people, the world-over has been hit my 'driving ambivalence'. New Zealand is keeping up with the trend with the New Zealand Transport Agency's statistics showing a massive slump in young drivers in the licensing system. In 2003, there were approximately 78,000 drivers on a learner's licence, dropping to around 38,000 in 2012.

Teenagers are citing a range of contributing factors in their decision to not get behind the wheel. Some mentioned environmental concerns but for most the real issues are fear and cost. When it comes to this global trend I was definitely ahead of my time. When I was 15 my dad gave me my first driving lesson. In a panic I smashed into a concrete corner practically writing off his car. I burst into tears and ran for it, as only a terrified 15-year-old girl can do.

Almost 10 years have passed and I'm only a fraction closer to getting my full licence. I'm ashamed to say I've been sitting on my learner's for the last six years. Throughout high school and university, driving just didn't make sense to me. I lived within walking distance of school, and parking at university was reserved for those who could light their cigarettes with fivers and afford to drink wine from a bottle!

The idea of having to pay for petrol, warrants, registrations, services and inevitable parking tickets was quite beyond my small budget, and in some ways still is. It wasn't until I started seriously job hunting that I realised how essential driving really is. I could have been a nanny, but how would I drive the kids to soccer?

I could work at a bar, but how would I get home after a 3am close when most public transport stops at midnight? Now in my mid-twenties my lack of licence threatens my job prospects and also leaves me feeling like a bad girlfriend when I can't pick up my boyfriend after he's had a couple of beers.

While not having a car and licence may save you money in the short run, I'm learning the hard way that it will cost you a lot long-term. I know the obvious suggestion will be cycling

to work but having had those close to me end up in hospital after daring to ride a bike on Auckland city roads, I'll graciously decline the invitation to hop astride a bike soon.

I think in future it's important to separate the idea of having a licence from the matter of owning a car. I desperately wish that I could go back and get my licence when I was 17, even if I didn't own a car until I was in my twenties.

A driver's education system in schools and communities could be hugely beneficial. So, parents, if you have teenage kids, do everything you can to teach them to drive. This doesn't mean buying them a car - but maybe refusing to chauffeur them around so often. They may hate you for it now but they will be sure to thank you for it when they are 18 and sitting at home on New Year's Eve because they couldn't bum a ride to Sarah's Rubik's cube party in Henderson and they now feel like a social outcast – trust me, I know.

Source: The New Zealand Herald, Elizabeth Davies. Elizabeth Davies is a 23 year-old graduate of the Auckland University of Technology post graduate journalism course

Auto ban: How Hamburg is taking cars off the road

For a country which prides itself on having given the world the Mercedes and the Autobahn, it represents a major ideological U-turn: Hamburg, Germany's second largest city; is planning to drastically to reduce the number of cars from its centre over the next 20 years and put thousands of commuters on bikes.

Under an audacious urban development scheme named "Green Network", all vehicles will be verboten in significant swathes of the city by 2034. Instead people will move about the port city, either via public transport or on foot or bicycle along a series of idyllic green thoroughfares which are now being painstakingly created.

"We envision a network that doesn't just help residents to get from point A to B in a sustainable fashion," Hamburg city spokeswoman Angelika Fritsch told the ZME Science urban planning network.

"It will offer people opportunities to hike, swim, do water sports, enjoy picnics, restaurants, experience calms and watch nature right in the city."

A glance at the map of the Green Network project helps to explain what Hamburgs environmental planners have in mind. On paper, the port city resembles a 3D depiction of a human organ. The conurbation is surrounded by green spaces which spawn scores green artery-like paths leading to the city centre.

The impression is reinforced by the mighty river Elbe and its tributaries which feed into the city centre and beyond and in many cases function as additional green waterways also leading to the centre of town. Some 30 city planners are currently working full time on plans for the network which will cover some 17,000 acres.

Hamburg's planned Green Network will cover some 40 per cent of the city's entire area and will connect parks, recreational areas, playgrounds cemeteries and gardens with a comprehensive network of green paths. "Cities like London have a green belt, but the Green Network will be unique in covering an area from the outskirts to the city centre," Ms Fritsch insists, "In 15 to 20 years it will be possible to explore the city exclusively by bike or on foot," she added.

The only major European city to have attempted something similar is Copenhagen which is currently building a network of 26 so-called “bicycle superhighways” which spread out from the city centre to the outskirts. The project is part of the Danish capital’s aim to become carbon neutral by 2050.

In Germany, the exclusively green “Vauban” suburban development on the outskirts of the south western city of Freiburg has managed to completely ban cars. Residents can only walk or cycle about its streets. If they insist on keeping their vehicles they have to rent spaces in a multi-storey car park well outside the centre.

Jens Kerstan, the parliamentary leader of Hamburg’s Green Party describes the Green Network as an excellent idea. “But we are still in the early stages,” he adds. He says one of the main objectives is to adapt the city to climate change, an issue still overlooked by many politicians, who since Fukushima, he says, have been preoccupied with Germany’s commitment to abandon nuclear power.

“Our residents are quite progressive. Many Hamburgers are willing to give up their cars, which is very unusual in Germany,” he stresses.

Apart from making Hamburg a greener, quieter and more pleasant city to live in, the Green Network’s main ecological aim is to help the city absorb Co2 emissions and in the process, prevent storm flooding.

Germany’s Green Party has done much to raise public awareness about the challenge posed by global warming. Although it is a major North Sea port, Hamburg’s median temperatures have risen by 1.2C to 9C over the past 60 years. Sea levels have risen by 20 centimetres over the same period.

Hamburg has invested heavily in a comprehensive flood defence system which spared the city during the recent spate of hurricane force depressions which swept much of Western Europe, but sea levels are expected to increase by another 30 to 110 centimetres by 2100.

For an economic standpoint, the Green Network has its critics. Some have argued that it could take up space that would be better suited for housing and business development. But Dr Sven Schulze of Hamburg’s Institute for International Economics says that the greening of Hamburg may also bring economic advantages “because it will help attract “highly educated and competent people” to the city, he claims.

Source: UK Independent

They just don’t care

A former top police officer is blaming anti social behavior for Selwyn’s “disproportionately high” road toll.

Retired Sergeant turned Selwyn District councilor Jeff Bland said, a change in attitude and better education is required to stem the carnage on the districts roads. Sixteen people died on Selwyn’s roads in 2013; far exceeding the totals in the neighboring districts of Waimakariri (6), Ashburton (4), and Hurunui (1).

Bland said, when people are in the car, they feel insulated and have lost their personal compassion because they have “a steel cage around them”. He refers to speeding and not taking responsibilities such as stopping at intersections, as anti social.

“The reason people have prangs is because they just don’t care about anyone else on the road”. If you get in the car and have been drinking heavily, you’re anti social. If you think, I’m not stopping at that stop sign because I’m in a hurry, you’re anti social. “It’s about attitude” he said.

“The guy in the car that says ‘bloody cyclists’, doesn’t want to see somebody on the road side of the road with a broken leg, but because he’s insulated in his car he doesn’t appreciate the damage he can do. “He’s not a person looking at another person”.

Bland said that when large numbers of people walk across a pedestrian crossing, they manage to avoid each other out of respect for one another. But if you put 40 cars at that intersection, I bet they would never make it across. The whole hub of the thing is your own attitude towards other people”.

Bland found it frustrating that the Government put so much education with smoking and firearm safety, when people are far more likely to be killed on the roads. “You wouldn’t fire a rifle down Colombo Street, but you’ll drive a car down there 90kph and hit somebody; so what’s the difference?”

Bland said it was only a few decades ago that smoking was almost encouraged, but through education and media campaigns that had changed. What’s the difference between thinking smoking is costing billions of dollars and killing hundreds of people. “Yet we tolerate the road toll”.

Source: Mat Kermeen, Selwyn Times.

Driver clocked at 191km/h in thick fog



Police say a driver clocked speeding at 191km/h on a Northland road in thick fog was a "ticking time bomb" that could have obliterated innocent people.

The Holden Commodore car was found without the driver and extensively damaged after crashing off a rural Far North road yesterday.

Northland traffic police Senior Sergeant John Fagan (pictured) said a highway patrol officer was driving south near Taipa in fog when passed by a dark-coloured car travelling in the opposite direction about 7.20am. The police radar clocked the vehicle at 191km/h but due to the speed of the car the officer was unable to get the registration number.

Fifteen minutes later an off-duty ambulance officer reported being passed by a speeding car and managed to get the number plate and hand it to police. Mr Fagan said police checks showed the car was registered to an owner in Parapara Road, north of Taipa. Officers driving along the road came across the extensively damaged vehicle.

There was no one in the car but as the officers examined the vehicle a woman arrived and claimed to have been driving. A 29-year-old female will appear in Kaitia District Court on a charge of dangerous driving. She was also forbidden to drive as her licence had expired.

Mr Fagan said it was one of the highest speeds police in Northland had clocked and such speeds were "ticking time bombs" with the potential to obliterate innocent drivers. "Those sorts of speeds are ridiculous. No matter how good you are at driving you would never be able to react to something happening in front of you. "The risk for everyone on the roads goes up exponentially at these speeds," Mr Fagan said.

The Far North incident comes on the same day police released national statistics showing April was the worst in four years as road deaths reached triple figures. Nationally this year there have been 102 fatalities, including 38 deaths involving speeding drivers with speed and alcohol together accounting for another 48 deaths. It comes only days after police stopped another driver after he was recorded at 156km/h near Waipu, while passing three other vehicles.

National Assistant Commissioner for road policing Dave Cliff said it was frustrating it was still the basics - drinking and driving, going too fast for the conditions and not wearing a seatbelt, or a combination of all three, that was needlessly killing large numbers of New Zealanders on the nation's roads every week.

"While the vast majority of road users are doing things right, some are still making all the wrong decisions, with enormous cost to themselves, their families and other innocent road users," Mr Cliff said. "At the current rate, at least another 200 people will die and another 1900 will be hospitalised for more than a day by the time we reach the end of the year unless all of us do our part, whether as drivers, passengers, mates or family."

Mr Cliff said preliminary reports from police into the 96 fatalities that occurred up to April 30 showed more than a quarter involved an alcohol-affected driver; more than a third involved speeding drivers, and half of all the deaths involved both factors.

In the last five years in Northland, there have been 29 deaths and 149 serious injury accidents due to speed.

Source: Kristin Edge, Northern Advocate.



Gull Fuel Update

If like me, you have been tempted by Gull's high octane fuels (and low octane fuel-prices), it's worth noting what is different about Gull fuel, from say Shell 95 which is pure petrol.

Essentially Gull 98 is 10% ethanol, a bio-fuel component. "Cleans" the engine, lowers emissions, more power - sounds great. But there is a catch. It is not suitable for all cars and motorbikes and can damage a vehicle if incorrectly used. Aden Cartwright, my often used bike mechanic (based next door to RiderSkills in Westgate) has warned me to keep well away from the stuff, as it can eat away at fuel systems from the inside, he says. On the Gull website, there is a list of compatible cars and bikes. So have a look on:

<http://www.gull.co.nz/assets/Uploads/compatibility.pdf>

Safe riding & driving.

Source: Bruce Everett



Motorcycle Division

The police don't just hand out tickets!

On February 16th I was riding home from the monthly Wellington region IAM social ride, riding through Upper Hutt on state highway 2; a policeman appeared behind me. I continued my ride in the usual high standard IAM fashion. Eventually he pulled out to the right lane on state highway 2 near Lower Hutt, and pulled up beside me at a red light. On the green, I briskly accelerated to create distance between myself and the hazard parked up my backside - which was probably faster than he would expect a motorcyclist to do when side by side with a police car...

Moments later he pulled in behind me and on went the red and blues. Even though I was riding to a high standard and wearing my IAM vest, I thought to myself "oh here we go" I also wondered if my bike was a bit loud, as it is a little on the obnoxious side; as many of the Auckland crew and the boys in Wellington can attest to.

I've never been pulled over while riding a motorbike, so I was actually quite nervous to the point my legs even turned to jelly! This does not make for a smooth stop and dismount by the way... haha. To my dismay the first thing the officer said was "It's nothing bad" and proceeded to compliment me on my defensive riding, and that it is refreshing to see a motorcyclist riding defensively. I guess it's things like consistent life savers and indicating when passing merge lanes on the motorway, shoulder checks before moving off at the lights, and speed restraint that sadly NZ's finest probably don't see all that often. He did admit to owning a Harley too, but I didn't hold that against him. Sorry Keith!

Shows that the police aren't just out there to dish out tickets, but do appreciate and acknowledge when they see exceptional riding / driving.



Source: Catherine Merrick

Motorcycling: An Image Issue?

As I write this article today, 18 motorcycle riders and one pillion have died this year. This is 4 more than last year and 6 more than in 2012. It's a number that's going the wrong way. In 2013, 37 motorcyclists or their passengers failed to make the ride back home.

In terms of change, the Transport Ministry's site says that the greatest change in the longer term has been the drop in motorcycle deaths since 1989. The number of motorcyclists killed per year dropped from a peak of 150 down to about 30. In 1988 20 percent of the deaths on New Zealand roads were motorcyclists. This dropped to a low of about 7 percent of the total road toll. However, in the last several years there has been a marked increase in the number of motorcyclists killed and injured on our roads.

Much of this increase parallels the number of bikes registered. More bikes equals more risk. While bikes now are markedly better than the ones many of us rode in the 60s, 70s and 80s, we haven't benefited from the safety systems enjoyed by car drivers. ABS is just starting to become more main stream, and traction control and other related systems are still mainly limited to more expensive bikes. Better technology is coming, but the protection of our bodies at time of any impact is still pretty much non-existent.

Working in the road safety field, I know first-hand that many of the road safety experts see us riders as a bit odd. I guess those who have never ridden see us as someone driving half a car with no safety benefits and no seat belt. An expert I spoke to recently said that road-riding motorcyclists really had no place in a safe system because we can't be protected to any extent. Scary stuff, because I love to ride, and I can't imagine not being able to.

Sitting in my position, counting the deaths and injuries, working on various road safety groups, I can see that motorcyclists have an image issue. Yes, we have drivers that don't see riders and pull out into our lane, fail to give way at intersections, and generally seem intent on taking us out, but there are too many riders taking themselves out at high speed, making poor overtaking decisions, losing it on corners and not riding defensively. MOT statistics show that losing control / running off the road is the leading movement type in

fatal crashes, particularly in the rural environment (40% of fatal crashes over 5 years). Intersections account for 25% and head on 21%. Those that don't like motorcycling see all of this as justification that bikes are dangerous.

Each morning when I ride to work I see bikes lane splitting at speed between cars already doing 70-80 km/hr. When riding at a reasonable clip myself I have had fellow riders rip through the gap between me and a car alongside so close I could have touched them (often smaller capacity bikes with L plates) and quite unseen until they shot through. Those drivers comment about dangerous riders as a result.

I regularly ride over the Rimutakas and from time to time have had sports bikes and cars rip past me at speed across double yellow lines. Again, drivers see this and the sympathy towards riders drops a notch. Every time a rider screams past a car at speed, front wheel slightly in the air, letting the sound of a revved out bike engine echo in the driver's ears; sympathy for us drops another notch.

We need to look at ourselves as riders. I want drivers aware of us, sympathetic towards us, looking for us, not hating us and ignoring us. That won't work. As members of IAM, all of us have a responsibility to challenge our mates who do this.

On a positive note, there's a lot of interest from ACC and Police in how to reduce the number of people injured and it is great to see the promotion of the gold, silver and bronze training, and improvements to the competency based training to get a bike licence.

There's work going on with NZTA to improve the safety of specific bike routes, discussion on improving conspicuity through improved use of daylight running lights (DRLs), and other projects and initiatives. A lot of folk want to help, and the best thing is that many are riders themselves.

Broadly speaking, motorcyclist safety is a challenge. More forgiving roadsides help, but when you look at a map of fatal and injury bike crashes, they are scattered everywhere.

More crash density in more scenic districts, but no single spot to fix that will make a big difference to overall numbers. Riders like the riskier roads: rural, windy, hilly. Great stuff, but hard to fix.

Driver education to look for bikes can possibly help, but as I see it, drivers know bikes are out there and don't intentionally drive out (well, not usually). There's not a lot of evidence on the effectiveness of education here. All of us automate regular tasks (you recall the last time you got home and thought "I don't remember that trip"?) and it's really hard to overcome the issue of inattention. Are we all 100% attentive all of the time?

We can't control the road, we can't control other drivers, but we can control some things - our machine, our gear, our lane position, our conspicuity, our defensiveness and our image to other road users.

Being a member of IAM is a great start, and I actively encourage fellow riders to seek every opportunity to up-skill with training and mentoring. The more members, the more we can spread the safety and skills message, the better.

I often get asked what the target for deaths is (pretty depressing, really). It's easy to think of numbers, and trend lines and estimate where the rate should take us, but if you get a group of people together and ask how many of their family and friends should be part of that total, the answer is always zero. Let's do all we can to make it so.



Source: Carey Griffiths who is the National Manager: Road Policing. He has ridden bikes for over 30 years, and rides daily on a 1250 Suzuki Bandit.

Blind spots

The picture below demonstrates how much more vulnerable bikes are due to their size and their narrow profile, compared with a car. None of the motorcycles in the picture can be seen in the trucker's mirrors; and this is also a problem you might encounter more when you ride a Harley Davidson!! Again, sorry Keith!



Source: Sheri Suckling – Ports of Auckland, Health & Safety Adviser

Motorcycle Advisory Safety Council Coromandel Loop initiative

In the February newsletter, we highlighted a survey through a questionnaire that was being conducted to improve safety on the some of the most popular motorcycle routes in New Zealand; namely the southern part of the Coromandel loop. If you wish to read the latest updates on this initiative; please visit the following link. <http://msac.org.nz>

Perception and Reality of Advanced Riding

We are extremely grateful for the kind permission from Andrew Dalton (pictured) to reproduce his article which appeared in UK Bike magazine. Andrew is a Senior Partner at White Dalton Motorcycle Solicitors in the UK and has 20 years of legal experience. He currently rides a Triumph Explorer 1200. His article is thought-provoking on several levels and has great relevance to all IAM members, not just motorcyclists.



I think learning advanced riding techniques is a good thing but it's not without some downsides. I have represented a number of advanced riders over the years and counter-intuitively, in front of a judge, it almost seems like a disadvantage. The riders are keen to show their road positioning, forward vision and reactions to an unfolding road scenario. This technical approach is all very laudable but then the witnesses pop out, who say "I thought the motorcyclist was drunk, because he was all over the road"; whereas to the advanced rider, he is taking the maximum sight line.

The real issue though is the perception of arrogance. One senior barrister who I know, who I count as a friend, and who I have been against a few times at trial has a very effective line of attack on advanced riders. He basically needles them into saying they think they are very able and skilled riders but then hits the rider with "It says here in Roadcraft that anticipation is key and you didn't anticipate what happened here". And the advanced rider can find himself caught by a sucker punch. Without fail, advanced riders are attacked for arrogance, or believing that they are very skilled and it can be a devastating line of attack.

One of the best responses I heard was from a female advanced rider under hard cross-examination, much of which turned on her being an IAM Observer, who said "I did the IAM because I realised I knew so little. I wanted to learn everything I could to be a better and safer rider. And yes, I do take pride in my riding. I love to ride and I want to get home in one piece. So I made an effort in my own time to become a better rider. I am not brilliant but I am a lot better than when I passed my test". One nil to the lady biker who went on to win her case at trial! Even the judge dropped me a note saying what an impressive witness my client was. So by all means, do your IAM. I have ridden to the system for years. Admittedly, my interpretation of the system has become more liberal but the system has saved my sorry backside a few times. But I don't unthinkingly ride to the system. One consistent problem I come across, are advanced riders going close to the line on a left hander and getting clipped by an oncoming car. These cases are horribly difficult. The rider will quite properly say he was there to look round the corner but is stumped by the follow-up point which is "You look so you can react. You didn't react". Do not think that an IAM or RoSPA advanced qualification carries any real weight in a court of law – it doesn't. But it is still worth doing to reduce your chances of appearing in a court of law.

Andrew quite properly relates his comments to a court of law and they apply equally whether an advanced rider is being prosecuted or is there as an "expert" witness for either the prosecution or defence. The common aspect is that it is far more impressive and sincere to display humility and this extends outside the courtroom to everyday riding and driving situations. Ego or self-promotion of your own riding or driving ability is setting you up for a massive fail. My personal experience with IAM NZ from initial assessment ride right through to the present, is that I've never once encountered the slightest hint of ego from any of my mentors. It's more like riding with a super-talented and helpful but incredibly modest friend. Many of us have heard similar comments from others going through Roadcraft. I think we owe a debt of thanks to the IAM NZ leadership for reinforcing this culture and we have an obligation to perpetuate it.

Andrew's comment about extreme positioning on left hand bends reflects remarks often made by riders on motorcycle forums or similar who only have a passing or theoretical knowledge of Roadcraft, perhaps having read the book but not followed through with working towards the Advanced Test. The general line of argument is that extreme positioning for left-handers exposes you to risk of a collision with oncoming traffic. Along

similar lines, extreme positioning for right-handers exposes you risk of encountering debris, uneven surfaces etc. What's missing from these arguments is context. The system of motorcycle control is applied as a result of continuous information processing and is therefore applied flexibly. It would be a completely wrong interpretation to slavishly apply the broad rules if the end result is to put the rider at risk. As fellow IAM member Jarrod Kirk so eloquently put it when discussing Andrew's article: "To pick on the author's comment: " But, I don't unthinkingly ride to the system..." This sentence is a contradiction in terms - if you are unthinking, you can't ride to the system. The system obligates thought and decision-making in the rider.

Andrew Dalton has done everyone a great service by raising these matters and provoking some healthy debate. It's also of considerable help in reinforcing some of the broader principles of advanced riding / driving and the ideals we represent.

Source: Geoff James

Learner Approved Motorcycles (LAMS)

At a recent committee meeting Peter Marriot (pictured) and I, talked about testing the latest motorcycles available to learners that conformed to the latest legislation. The question was asked "why these" as we are an organisation that tries to promote better driving standards at a much higher level. Correct, but many of the drivers and riders in our organisation have teenage children of riding age, or will become so in the near future and might want to take up motorcycling. Therefore, we felt we should become acquainted with bikes on offer to the learner, and their potential.



In October 2012, a change was made to the regulations within New Zealand governing the type of motorcycle restricted learners can ride. Past legislation meant that a learner could only ride a motorcycle that did not exceed 250cc. The new specifications mean a learner can ride any motorcycle, as long as its power output does not exceed 150kw per tonne (weight is based on the kerbside weight as declared by the manufacturer plus 90kg for a rider and equipment), and a cubic capacity of no more than 660cc. A list of LAMS can be found on the NZTA website at

<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/getting/motorcycles/lams.html>

So Peter Marriot and I decided to test a range of the new bikes on offer to learners. The criteria was to assess which bikes, from a range of manufacturers, were the most user friendly, easy to learn on and value for money. Our reasoning was that a learner needs to settle quickly and feel a part of the bike; thereby allowing them to concentrate on the road and surrounding environment; quickly increase riding skills and thus build rider confidence.

The bikes we chose were from Suzuki, Yamaha, Ducati, Hyosung and Honda. Other manufacturers such as, Kawasaki, Triumph, KTM and Harley Davidson also offer LAMs. However, these were not available at the time of testing.

Test conditions

The testing of the bikes by Peter and myself was done over two days; in clear dry conditions with little wind and temperatures in the low 20s. The route we rode was between Takapuna, on Auckland's North Shore to Whenuapai Village, next to the air force base. In total, we rode a return trip of 40ks for each bike on the same route taking in urban, motorway and semi rural roads with varying road surface conditions. To provide a balanced assessment of the bikes; we swapped riders at the half way point.

The bikes

Honda CB500R and F



Some LAMS are based on larger models with restrictions built-in, either mechanical or electronic. Others manufacturers have stuck loosely to traditional learner capacity sizes. However, Honda has taken a slightly different approach.

Honda offers three bikes with different specifications. The 500R is a partially faired bike with the 500F model unfaired. There is also and 500X which is more 'adventure' in style. The prices vary depending whether they are equipped with ABS.

The bikes we rode were the CBR500R and the CB500F and bar the sports fairing and slightly different handlebar setup the rest of the bikes are essentially the same. On both models we immediately felt at ease, partly due to a riding position that was easy and natural without stress on back, shoulders or neck. This enabled us to quickly adapt to a very different riding position to what we are used to on our own bikes. The seat was comfortable and never felt hard at any time during the ride. The seat also has a height adjustment, which means if a learner is short, they should have no problem reaching the ground.

All the 500s are equipped with a simple digital dash with clear dash lights that were easy to read in bright sunlight, and without the need to lower our head, thus taking our attention from the road ahead; a glance was all that was needed. However, the mirrors whilst clear at all speeds did not have the width to see directly behind the rider.

The engine is a balanced inline twin, which surprisingly, showed little vibration. Pulling away from standstill was smooth, easy and effortless with progressive acceleration; the

bike revving without drama. Performance for overtakes was more than adequate whether in top, or in a lower gear. Although the gear 6 speed gear box was a little notchy; it was precise and typically Honda. However, as we found with all the bikes we tested bar one; the inclusion of a digital gear indicator would have been helpful; especially for a learner.

Manoeuvring through heavy traffic was light and easy which inspired confidence. Out on the open road the suspension is forgiving and soaked up the bumps, with the steering being precise with both bikes tracking well around the bends.

Brakes are very good with plenty of feel and bite. They are progressive and are of the new wavy edge easy clean variety. The F and X versions are equipped with ABS, something that will inspire confidence in a learner. A shame Honda; because of pricing strategy, have not equipped the R with ABS!

Conclusion

The bike was built to the usual Honda standard of quality, this despite being assembled in Thailand. The ride was gentle and the suspension forgiving. It is very easy to handle and is instantly user friendly. There is enough power to get you out of those hazardous moments that appear, without being enough to make you want to thrash it and get into trouble. The build quality and extended service interval make the extra money a worthwhile investment. The low centre of gravity means it's easy to master and, whilst not the most exciting bike to ride, is so simple that it seems in our opinion, to be the ideal learner and commuter bike.

Hyosung 650



Hyosung have sold over 4,000 bikes in New Zealand since 2001 and the Hyosung 250 range are the top selling 250cc bikes in New Zealand. To compliment that the GT650R is one of the top selling sports bikes in Australia.

The V-twin liquid-cooled GT650 we rode combines traditional naked sports bike styling with a dual lateral oval bar frame designed to remove weight and looks the part. However, the bike has a relatively high centre of gravity, in comparison to its competitors, but the riding position was comfortable and without stress on back or neck.

The dash was not that easy to read at a glance, especially in bright sunlight. Although overlooked by many manufacturers in the past, the mirrors were reasonably clear at all speeds with a good rear view of most traffic. The switch gear while very much as standard, is a little notchy to operate. Hopefully, this will ease with use.

Over the course of the course of the ride, the seat was found to be hard and uncomfortable in comparison to others; this really grated and by the end of the ride we were both glad to get off! The suppliers tell us that an after-market gel cushion available for \$80; makes a lot of difference. There is no height adjustment within the seat, but both being of average height, we found it OK.

The bike was not easy to manoeuvre higher speeds and was reluctant to hold right hand turns and difficult to hold in a consistent line. On stopping at the halfway point, close inspection of the front forks, found that the left fork seal had gone. A major concern on a nearly new bike! A few days later we rode the bike again with the seal repaired; this transformed the steering making it easier to direct and provided a more positive response.

The front forks are 41mm upside down units adjustable for rebound and compression. The rear is monoshock adjustable for preload only. They look and feel like budget units, and on the standard setting, gave a very solid ride that did little to assist control.

The Hyosung is a 90 degree V twin DOHC which has an aggressive, not to say raucous, power delivery that may appeal to some. Pulling away from a standstill needs very little in the way of throttle input; giving confidence when pulling away from confined spaces or up hills. The engine has a lot of torque; but power delivery is a little jerky and sudden and requires some attention to bring in a smooth delivery. Rolling off the throttle makes the bike slow very quickly and again requires attention to master. The brakes are very good with plenty of feel and bite and are progressive without any sign of harshness.

Conclusion

We found the bike built to a budget and it showed; complaints of niggling faults and early parts break down are numerous. The ride was harsh and uncompromising with solid suspension. The bike required a lot of handling and in our opinion would not be suitable for someone new to riding. As it is intended as a bike that can be kept after the owner passes their full licence test, there is the option to deregulate it to full power after passing the learner test. However, it looks possible to reset it yourself; and may be a temptation for some learners but we are assured by the dealer, that it is much more difficult than it looks and requires specialist tools. They will do this after the purchaser produces a full licence. This may be for the riders who are on a budget and like their comforts a little raw. But, I would suggest the average learner (if they have more buying power) seek something with a little more refinement.

Suzuki Gladius



Due to work commitments on the day Peter Marriot was not able to test the Gladius; so it was left to me to ride the bike over the 40ks of the test route.

The Gladius was introduced to the market in 2009 with a 650cc v-twin engine and now with an optional restricted model to comply with the latest legislation. The styling is considered by some to be a little 'funky'.

After sitting on the bike, I immediately felt ease with the riding position. The clocks were easy to read with a big clear digital speedometer; clear and easily to read gear indicator, and warning lights that were also bright and easy to read. Mirrors were very good and almost vibration free; with a good all round rear view.

On starting the ride; the bike pulled away smoothly and it was immediately evident that the Gladius is strong performer with enough power to comfortably overtake at motorway speeds. Power delivery is delivered through a 6 speed gearbox that is smooth with a very positive change. As this was the second v-twin I rode after the Hyosung, I was expecting another bike with a roughish engine; but I was surprised. The engine was almost as smooth as a four and compared equally well with the Honda CB500s.

Urban riding was easy as was the riding on motorway and open road. On bends, the Gladius inspired confidence in its cornering ability, with good grip from the tires, the bike tracking well in the direction I pointed it.

Brakes are discs back and front and are progressive with little pressure needed from the brake lever to reduce speed. However, again the Gladius is not equipped with ABS.

My only concern during the ride was the very hard seat which was far more uncomfortable than the Hyosung and pushed me forward slightly until i was up to open road speed. Even after the first ten kilometres; I was fidgeting to try and alleviate the discomfort. At the end of the ride I was feeling very uncomfortable and really glad to get off the bike.

As a side note; this is not just a problem with Suzuki seats; there are a number of world renowned manufacturers who make seats to a budget and therefore sacrifice comfort. McDonald Trimmers in Tauranga do a roaring trade because of this problem!

Overall, I found the Gladius to be well equipped with a finish level that we have come to expect of Japanese bikes; was one of quality. However, it cannot be derestricted once a learner has passed their test. It is easy to ride; inspires confidence in its abilities and feels very much a part of you when you sit on it; something a learner needs. Plus it was fun to ride....but aaahh that damn seat!

Conclusion

The Gladius has been around for a while and is a tried and tested formula that has great reviews in its standard form. The bike was a delight to ride; inspiring confidence in any riding environment and was fun. The only drawback is that it cannot be converted to full power without great expense. Having said that; there is plenty of power on tap to use on the open road! It is in the middle of the pack in terms of price; so if money is not really an issue, then it is very much worth serious consideration for a learner.

Ducati 659



I have never ridden a Ducati; so I was very much looking forward to testing the LAMs version of the 659, which, is another v-twin! In the past, Ducati had a reputation for great bikes but with variable quality control. This cannot be said for the modern Ducati's. On initial inspection of the bike; I found the finish to be of high quality.

The bike has almost flat handlebars; so when first mounting the bike, I found the riding position put all the weight on my wrists and arms. Having ridden a big tourer for some years with an almost upright riding position; I found the 659s riding position an distraction from the riding. This was exacerbated further by the seat, whilst comfortable, was so angled forward, that the riding position was uncomfortable at any speed, putting a lot of strain on the arms and neck. Frankly, I felt as though I was going to kiss the front wheel; the riding position meant I had to lift my head to be able to see forward making my neck and shoulders ache by the end of the ride.

The riding position highlighted another problem. The dash is mostly digital, using a fine lined display. This took time to read and also exacerbated by the need to take my eyes off the road and look down at display; rather than a quick glance.

The mirrors are tinted and give reasonable rear vision at lower speeds; but at open road and motorway speeds, the vibration was so bad I could barely discern what was behind me.

The switch gear was smooth and easy to use with the buttons in the right places but the dash lights were too small to see clearly in bright sunlight.

I found the six speed gear box to be precise and changing up was smooth after reaching second gear but was let down by an engine that although performed well enough, was harsh and not easy to manage on the throttle. Once again, once the learner has passed their test there is not really an option to de-restrict the bike without great expense.

Conclusion

In short, the bike might comply with the latest LAMS regulations but it is not a particularly user friendly bike and not one I can recommend. However, if street credibility is high on your agenda; just after a Ducati and price of \$15,990 is not a problem; then go for it. Having said that, it's debatable if many learners will be prepared to pay the money, when cheaper and easier to ride alternatives are available!

Yamaha FZ6R



During the retest of the Hyosung we were offered a test ride on the Yamaha FZ6R. Yamaha have come at the whole LAMs business from a slightly different angle. They have used a detuned version of the venerable R6 motor. Tried and tested in full power format this engine benefits from the heritage. It is also almost impossible to mess with; being electronically restricted.

A rider in the market for an entry level, or commuter 600cc bike doesn't have to compromise performance or style to get value. The FZ6R is a great combination of performance, handling, and exciting sport bike style, but also with a low seat height that's both adjustable to fit a wider variety of riders and also narrower where it counts, to make it even easier to put both feet on the ground.

The seating position was instantly comfortable; and made riding the Yamaha a delight. The steering head angle is a little more traditional sports bike and may not be to all tastes; but regardless, found it OK and it gave a positive reassurance in controlling all aspects of handling.

The mirrors were very well positioned and, whilst they may look a bit "out there", gave superb rearward vision; a very valuable feature for a learner. The instruments were large, clear and easy to read with just a slight downwards glance.

The front suspension has sturdy 41mm inner tubes providing superior cushioning performance and good front-end feel, but there is no adjustment available on the front forks. The rear suspension is lightweight and contributes to the mass centralization, and is a mono-cross suspension adjustable for preload only. The standard settings felt quite solid and could not be described as soft.

Overall I found the handling of the bike very precise and easy to position on the road and found it easy to ride well, which inspired confidence.

The engine being an inline four; has a very smooth linear power delivery; the engine is easy to control and bring in smoothly. Pulling away from a standstill is easy but you do soon run out of revs. However, as we experienced; this does not mean that you don't have enough power to make safe overtakes

The 6-speed transmission on the FZ6R never gave us a very positive feeling. While not actually causing us to miss a shift, it always seemed like it was difficult to feel the positive engagement when going into each gear. Maybe the gearbox is too good!

We found the response was good from low throttle all the way through the gears, but the engine is a bit buzzy at open road speed. It may have a little too much oomph for a learner but it was perfectly controllable.

The feel of the brakes is quite good at the lever but stopping power is about average. While you will not be mistaking these for race quality brakes, overall performance front and rear is more than enough to get things slowing down when needed. This is another bike that benefits from ABS; again giving confidence in a learner.

Conclusion

The Yamaha is indeed a great bike for the beginner due to its excellent handling in and around town and it's a breeze to ride with its relatively tame but electric-feeling motor. But the Yamaha also offers more than just beginner level appeal. The quality of build and extended service interval make the extra money a worthwhile investment. A low centre of gravity combined with the adjustable seat, mean any learner would be comfortable on it. However, they would have to be a learner with deep pockets, as this is the second most expensive bike tested.

Overall summery

The motorcycle manufacturers around the world have been quick to jump on the LAMs bandwagon, making many models available that comply with the regulations and are easily accessible to the public. Some of these can be adapted to increase the power output, after the learner test has been passed, some cannot without great expense.

The makeup of bikes from the different manufacturers we tested were; three from Japan, one from Korea and one from Italy.

The three from Japan (Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha) are instantly easy to ride; handled very well; are well put together and inspired confidence. Though the price of the different bikes varies considerably, it is a reflection of their differing specifications. You make your choice and pay your money. That said, in general, Japanese bikes do hold their value, and if well looked after, should retain a good resale or trade-in value.

The Hyosung although a solid bike; it is built to a budget and takes a little getting used to. However, once this is overcome, it is a capable bike. If budget, is a priority when spending your dollars; then this bike is worthy of serious consideration; as it is the cheapest by far of any of the bikes currently on the market. Plus, it is easily converted to the higher output with only half an hour of dealer work, thus keeping down costs.

Too many, the Ducati has much street credibility and is well made with an excellent finish. However, after looking forward to riding my first Ducati; I found it very disappointing. It has a riding position that puts strain on the neck and shoulders and seat that is uncomfortable; instruments that are difficult to read and a motor that is harsh compared with the other v-twin tested, the Suzuki. At a cost of \$15,990; it is certainly not value for money when compared with the other bikes we tested, and cannot be converted to a higher power without major expense.

At a glance (The prices below do not include on road costs which vary between dealers)

Make	Model	Configuration	Capacity cc	Power bhp	ABS	Service km	Price \$
Yamaha	FZ6R	In line four	600	47	no	12,000	13,600
Honda	CB500R	In line twin	471	48	no	12,000	10,495
Honda	CB500F	In line twin	471	48	yes	12,000	10,995
Hyosung	650	V twin	647	53	no	6,000	8,995
Ducati	659	V twin	659	50	yes	12,000	15,990
Suzuki	Gladius	V twin	645	47	no	6,000	11,995

Source: Peter Marriot and Peter Henson

Our thanks go to the following dealers for their help in supplying us with the motorcycles, and for providing technical details and advice during the testing.

Dealer acknowledgements

Hyosung Motorcycles

73 Barry's Point Road, Takapuna, Auckland.

Tel: 09 486 2873

www.hyosungmotorcycles.co.nz

Cyclespot Honda

68 Barry's Point Road, Takapuna, Auckland.

Tel; 09 486 1136

www.cyclespot.co.nz

Ducati

46 Barry's Point Road, Takapuna, Auckland.

Tel: 09 488 7149

www.cuclespot.co.nz

Holeshot Motorcycles

65 Barry's Point Road, Takapuna, Auckland.

Tel: 09 486 5187

www.holeshotmotorcycles.co.nz

Motorcycle Central

72 Barry's Point Road, Takapuna, Auckland.

Tel: 09 486 2472

www.motorcyclecentral.co.nz

Book Review – Travelling with Mr Turner

A friend recently loaned me this book and whilst I've been a Triumph enthusiast for the length of my riding career, it's a fabulous read irrespective of where your allegiances lie!

Written by lawyer Nigel Winter, it covers two periods in time. The first is set in 1953 when Edward Turner, Triumph Managing Director, sets out with two colleagues to ride the 1000 miles from Land's End in Cornwall to John O'Groats in Scotland on 150cc Triumph Terriers. There were no motorways in the UK at this time either! The second time period is the 2000's when the author re-creates the original ride on his Thunderbird and contrasts their experiences.

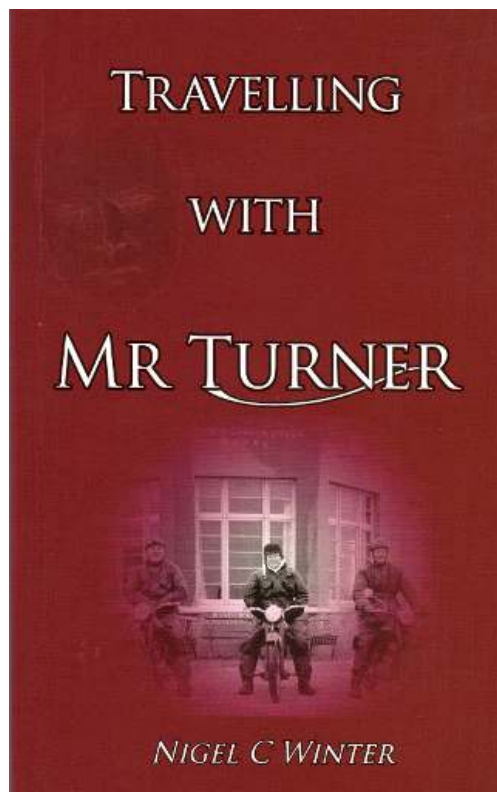
Edward Turner had an irascible temperament but was an engineer through and through, with an absolute passion for motorcycles. The book also chronicles the takeover of the Triumph board by members with ex-private school and military backgrounds who considered themselves born to rule without actually having the competence to do so.

Their actions border on the unbelievable but you'll have to buy the book and find out for yourselves. One of the executives was an ex-WW2 fighter ace and he had an adversarial and feudal relationship with the workers. Clearly still fighting the war, he referred to them as "bandits", as in "Tally-ho, bandits at 10 o'clock chaps..."! Management also dismissed the Japanese motorcycle industry as being of no consequence and stopped early attempts by Triumph to put a large capacity "superbike" into production well before the Japanese did so. The government of the day were scarcely better, giving a strong impression that an economy based on manufacturing was slightly distasteful.

The worker's take-over of the Triumph factory in the 1970's to keep the place running is also covered in some depth and their passion for motorcycles and pride in the workplace comes through strongly with some pretty good motorcycles being produced during their tenure.

Written with a keen eye and a dry wit, the 166 page book is an absolute delight with his keen observations on human nature, the changes in British society from the 1950's and how that contributed to the collapse of Triumph and its eventual rebirth. The rides of both the author and Edward Turner over the length of England and Scotland, the conditions they encounter and people they meet will also resonate with motorcyclists everywhere.

Overall; a cracker of a book, which will set you back about \$30 from Mighty Ape or other NZ retailers. An e-book version is available, but you'll miss out on all the cool photos contained in the print version.



Highly recommended as an informative and enjoyable read!

Panther Publishing, ISBN 978-0-9564975-4-3

Source: Geoff James

For sale or hire

White 2007 Mazda Axela manual 1.5 litre, 130,000 kms. Imported in 2012; only one NZ owner and has been regularly serviced by the current owner. It has a tow bar and a NZ radio and CD player. Price \$9,500 ono.



Contact Mark Revill-Johnson (H) **07 345 3768** (M) **021 217 9996**, or email Mark at: mark@rvcdriiving.com