



Southern Sporting Motor
Cycle Club

CONTACT

MARCH

2013

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President's piece

First I would like to thank all the people who turned out for the AGM. It was certainly a quick one thanks to the expert chairperson of the meeting (me!).

Congratulations to all the people winning awards, plus there were some special ones for this year.

First Rob Wood for his continued service of 25 years to the club and scheme. He was also given Honorary membership – well done, Rob.

We also had three [yes three] other people on 30 years' service to the scheme: Ian Slater, Richard Barnett and Richard Goldschmidt.

We are very lucky to have this type of support – well done, all three.

With the four of them the scheme has one hundred and fifteen years' service!

First run out this year is on Sunday March the 24th, going to Brighton, leaving Box Hill at 10.30am. The April run out is on the 14th, going to Hayling Island.

Remember if the scheme is running it will be out of the garage.

See you out and about.

John Mason – Chairman

Editor's piece

As I write this, the thermometer is still hovering just above zero and today even saw a flurry of snow in London. But the days are gradually getting longer and we can start looking forward to springtime and club runs, so hopefully from next month Contact will be including more on-road action.

Note that 'Dates for Your Diary' runs from March to November So no excuses for not planning ahead and joining in with some of the social activities and club runs!

This month, however, we can report on the AGM, complete with a nice selection of award-winning photos (thank you, Snowy!). Doug has also written a lively article on the February bowling night, and an excellent article on the traumas and perils of becoming a bike instructor. I'm delighted to say that the Bits and Bobs section this month includes a new edition to my own collection of motors. I've resorted to one of the regular victims for this month's caption competition, but could do with more contributions from our readers!

As always, please send any suggestions, pictures, reports etc. to me at:
a.whitaker@nhm.ac.uk

Amoret – Editor.

Bowling night

On Saturday 2nd February the Big Lebowski came to London in the form of the first SSMCC bowling night of 2013. It was a great turn out, so after staring each other out and flexing our fingers we hit the lanes for the type of strike action



the French could only ever dream of. After the previous bowling events there were some hard acts to follow, so we split in to 3 lanes and went for it...

We even had our own spectator fan club with John and Joy Mason cheering us on.

I'm not sure if I'd accidentally drank holy water or eaten a 4-leaf clover in my salad (and before you say anything, yes, I do occasionally eat salad!) but by some miracle I managed to hit several strikes for a total of 162 in my first game, giving everyone else something to aim for. I then went and sat on the smug step with a pint of Guinness and waited for the professionals to step up.

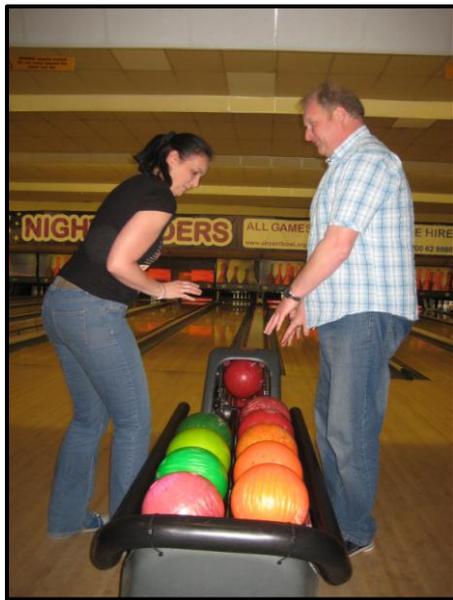
The first lamb to the slaughter was our former champion Steve 'Mini Me' Lock, who we watched with baited breath as he donned his shoes and picked his balls (ahem). However, it would appear that the pressure of expectation combined with 'NGF' (New Girlfriend Fatigue) syndrome meant he was well off his game. That opened the door for Steve Gill to demonstrate the power of



experience and consistency, racking up 3 impressive games to achieve the 2nd best overall game average of the night.

Flossy, another former champion, also got off to a poor start. Being fashionably late meant he was always playing catch-up, but he was

getting in to his stride towards the end and I think he definitely has more to



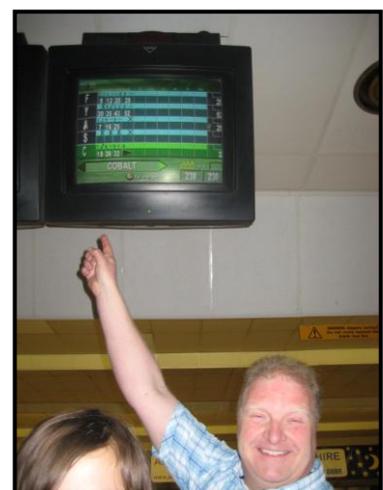
give next time around. There's going to be some fireworks at the next bowling night, as I can't see Steve and Flossy letting this lie... Oh no, they wouldn't let it lie!

Tony's boys did an excellent job, especially Fish (Tristan) who, midway through the first game, sullenly complained that he'd never managed a strike and then promptly followed it up with two in a row! Tony was pretty impressive himself, as he amazed the crowds with his versatility... left handed... right handed...

backwards... and that was just drinking his pint! He's obviously got skills though, so there's another one to watch at the next event.

Don't imagine for one second that this was some sort of testosterone-fuelled man-fest though, despite Kathy submitting that request earlier in the week (I can feel the punch already - ouch!). There was more glitz and glamour than the BAFTAs red carpet, starting with Amoret continuing her trend of doing things when people aren't looking (after her secret Ice Skating fall). This time she carefully waiting for everyone to be looking in the opposite direction before scoring a strike. Any more such stealth action and she'll be crowned the 'social ninja'.

The lovely Heather represented the Wallace clan for the evening and it was nice to see Mick drop-in between drop-offs to give her some moral support. We also had the pleasure of Russell's lovely Sharon, who although a bowling novice has promised to up her game for the pool night in March. Russell's got a mean cue action himself, so there's a team to keep an eye on.



But, in true awards style, I'm leaving the best 'til last. After 2 games the highest score was 162 and the next highest was 134, so the smug seat was getting

pretty comfy and I had a sofa and 50" TV on order for delivery the next day. I could therefore barely believe my eyes as Spanner 'Popeye' Slater squeezed 2 tins of spinach in to his pipe, gave his Olive Oyl a kiss and promptly hit 4 strikes in a row to start his 3rd game like a man possessed.



He went on to score 184 in a very impressive game, so very well done Ian. Not only was it the highest score of the night but it also delivered the highest average total, so a double champion on the night. I hope you didn't celebrate too hard!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to making it the great night that it was and I think we need to get the rematch booked in pretty soon. Keep your eyes peeled for details in Contact and your inbox,

but before I go, the award for 'best question ever asked in a 10-pin bowling alley' goes to Angus with... "How many pins are there?"

Sorry Angus... but that was too good to keep to myself...

Anyway, the scores on the doors Miss Ford...

Rating	Name	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Average
1	Spanner	134	89	184	135.67
2	Steve Gill	134	125	129	129.33
3	Doug	162	89	123	124.67
4	Floss	-	118	114	116
5	Russell	79	133	122	111.33
6	Tony	82	123	113	106
7	Steve Lock	96	114	93	101
8	Angus	-	96	104	100
9	Heather	101	101	89	97
10	Kathy Frost	91	111	73	91.67
11	Amoret	90	85	86	87
12	Fish (Tristan)	93	75	92	86.67
13	Cobalt (James)	71	96	84	83.67
14	Sharon	65	62	69	65.33

I look forward to seeing you all again soon! **Doug**

75th AGM round up and awards

Yet again another star studded AGM, for those who didn't attend it's your loss, hosted by our very own master of ceremonies Mr John Mason (El President). It might have been the 75th Anniversary edition but that didn't faze John, oh no, the serious business of annual reports was dispatched in under twenty minutes, probably an all-time record.



Next was the awards ceremony. First in the line of fire was our very own Dave (Grump Hard with a vengeance) Regan who had a runaway vote to be awarded the Enthusiast Cup for his sterling work with under privileged young bikers.

To rapturous applause the Road Safety Award went to Heather (Hot Fuzz) Wallace, for being very safe and taking care of very under privileged instructors and their pupils.



Shock award of the evening was the Bateman Cup for contributions to the club mag to Richard (Bucket list) Barnett, who is now writing this article with masses of guilt.

Thanks Amoret!

As you can tell by my face how delighted I was to receive the Scheme Supporters Shield, which will take pride of place under the stairs for the next year.



Not before time our very own Robert (Goldmember) Wood received the Gibber Award from Michael (Thunderball) Wallace. Goes to show how Bond villains always stick together. Nepotism?

The Twisted Spanner award went to John (Silence of the Lambs) Mason with nice Chianti, (not really) for throwing his machine on the floor outside the cafe one Saturday. Were still not sure if it was an accident or a tantrum?



A well-deserved Photographic Award went to Amoret (CSI Brentford) Whitaker for picking the choicest pictures for the caption competition and club runs.



The ten pin bowling award went to Steve (Lock stock and two smoking exhausts) Lock. For someone who says he's not very good at bowling he wiped the floor with most of us.

Well done No.2 son!

(Most people adopt a tiger, I get a son!)

Sasu (French lieutenants' woman) won the Pritchard trophy for her efforts at the club trials, not for her baking skills.

To be fair she was thrown in at the deep end as competition secretary not even knowing what a trial is all about. So well done, Sasu!



Our very own Rob Wood was awarded an engraved plinth for 25 years of service to the club, plus an honorary membership.

There are not many jobs Rob hasn't done within the club; he is the rules and reg's guru on CBT, DSA and club matters long may he reign!



Last but not least the two old fogies as seen above (and on *Crimewatch*) were both awarded engraved beer mugs for 30 years' service to the club. No wonder I've got grey hair!

I hope this round up of the *AGM* has been a bit different and hope to see you all at some point this year.

Richard (Snowy) Barnett.

Bits and bobs

Five on a bike – can anyone beat this?



EDITOR'S NEW BIKE!

She's a Kawasaki ER500

Originally from Australia

Named "Lucilia" after the greenbottle blowfly

Needs lots of love and attention!



Biker Thought for the Month ...

You can forget what you do for a living when your knees are in the breeze.

Instructing

On a sunny, Saturday afternoon in 2012, at about 4:20pm, I wrote out, signed and issued my first ever DL196. Now, being a member of SSMCC you should all know what that is, but just in case you don't, the DL196 is the CBT certificate – i.e. the first rung on the biking ladder (although I suspect many of your first rungs involved a steam engine and a slate certificate).

It was a landmark moment in my SSMCC history and made me think about the journey I'd taken to get to this point. I learnt to ride about 10 years ago and after being an instructor of various things over the years (drill instructor, music tutor etc.) becoming a bike instructor was something that had appealed to me since I learnt to ride.

I moved to Whitton several years ago and used to walk my dog on a Saturday morning, often past Sam's cafe. I'd regularly seen a random collection of bikes lined up outside but thought it must be a ride out or something. Then, one fateful day, I popped in to find out more.

And that was my introduction to SSMCC ...

Getting started ...

The main thing that struck me about the SSMCC training was the focus on quality and belief in doing things properly. I must admit that I remember very little about my own CBT course, it was over in a flash. However, it's a very important introduction to not only the physical act of riding a motorcycle, but the many safety aspects that go with it such as protective clothing, maintenance and the many hazards that exist out there.

The ethos of the team was an important driver in my decision to pursue instructor training. I think there's something particularly noble about doing something for the benefit of someone else, without trying to make a 'fast buck' or wanting anything in return other than satisfaction. The sense of history, tradition and the fact that everyone does it out of love, yes, love, played a big part. I can't think of any other word that encompasses why we donate our Saturday afternoons to teach people to ride, other than that magical combination of bikes, camaraderie and a job well done... and perhaps getting out of shopping with the other half ...

Yes, I really believe that after experiencing the 'standard' 1-day training myself, and seeing the results in other riders, the quality of training we provide is fantastic. Joining the fray was indeed a daunting prospect, but if the instructors were prepared to invest their time to teach me then it's something I was determined and excited to do in equal measures. I knew it was going to be a challenge though, but if it was easy it wouldn't be worth doing. Anyway, I digress, so forgive me.

Going round the bend ...

And so the journey began. It obviously started with getting qualified on cones, which is a pretty tough test. There are so many, in a variety of shapes and sizes. I wondered how I'd ever remember where they all went. Even the carefully painted hieroglyphics didn't always help and, to make matters worse, just as I'd cracked it a whole new set were introduced. Green ones, blue ones, yellow ones. I started dreaming in cones and couldn't buy an ice cream without first making a little white mark on my hand to ensure I was holding it in the right place!

Then there's the 'white tape' test, which should be introduced on 'The Apprentice' as a test of one's ability to make a bend without flipping, twisting or simply going insane through the apparent life of its own. My advice is simply not to roll it out unless you have the guts to take it on!

And so, down to the serious business of the CBT course itself.

Me and my shadow

After I'd cracked the cones code and discovered the location of the Holy Grail ...

Seriously though, I started by 'shadowing' to get a feel for what it meant to be an instructor. This involved sitting in on the various stages of CBT training (5 in total) and observing the syllabus being delivered by an experienced instructor. I could then move on to delivering the syllabus myself, gradually learning the contents of the various modules and wrapping them up in my own style (or lack thereof), whilst being cognisant not to omit anything and tailoring the whole thing to the needs of the pupil. That's actually harder than you think, as there are 3 modules which are pure information delivery.

So, when your pupil speaks little or no English it's time to get creative!

It took a little while to get to a stage where I was comfortable delivering the course in a cohesive manner, whilst being shadowed by Rob, which is actually quite scary in itself. You're never quite sure what he's doing behind you! But just as I was getting comfortable talking about helmets, boots, gloves and fuel taps it was time to tackle the most frightening part of all ...

Letting the student ride!

It might sound a bit strange after volunteering to become an instructor, but it's not the first thing you think of until you're in the thick of it and, to quote the TV show, it has the potential to be a complete omnishambles! Fortunately I had the pleasure of teaching the 'student from hell' on several occasions beforehand. The 'SFH' is a fictional character played by Ian Slater who deliberately simulates many of the mistakes he's experienced over the years, from the obvious to some quite subtle but equally important details (e.g. 2 fingers on a brake lever).

This provides an invaluable opportunity to see what real students do, because with throttle, clutch, front brake, rear brake and gear lever (with 5 gears) ... that's a lot of potential combinations for catastrophe.

Get your motor running ...

The most nerve wracking moments has to be the first time you teach a student to pull away on a geared bike. You can do all the theoretical explanation and demonstration you like, but the moment you have to stand back and watch ... well, that feeling of abject helplessness hits you like a rock.

Obviously, there are several key things to keep an eye on that make it safer, but you never quite know if you're about to be a casual observer to the next Darwin Award candidate. Fortunately though (and I hope this isn't tempting fate) we haven't been entered for any such awards at the time of writing.

Once the pupil is moving under their own steam (assuming you covered 'how to stop' as well as 'how to go' and they're still in one piece) it's time to address the plethora of things they must master before getting out on the road, from slow riding to emergency stops. This is the area that probably took me most by surprise and reminded me of an exercise we once did at school.

Imagine an alien has just landed and found some shoes. Your job is to write down how to tie a shoelace. There's no limit on words and you can assume

that the alien has been spying on us and has a good grasp of the language, so all you have to do is write down how to do something that we all do as second nature. Then, read out your instructions and watch 'the alien' follow you quite literally to the letter.

Well, when it's someone sat opposite with a pair of shoes it's quite funny, as they end up with something that doesn't resemble anything other than a pile of string. However, when it's someone sat astride a motorcycle it takes on a whole different context. Fortunately the 'student from hell' had prepared me extremely well and over the months that followed I learnt the building blocks of turning a complete novice in to a biker, albeit a novice one.

It also gave me my weekly workout, running round the playground developing slow riding skills! That was most welcome after the weekly donut deliveries from Estelle. She recently had a flat tyre and I believe she's now using a run-flat Dunkin' Donut, complete with white wall, or 'frosting' as they call it.

Sorry, tangent again ...

My journey was an eye-opener in not only how difficult it is to describe what we think of as the most natural of things, such as progressive braking, but also how little of the course material I'd actually been taught myself. It was almost like learning to ride again, but properly this time. For me, that extra attention to detail really stands out as an example of what makes us different and how we go the extra mile to deliver an exceptional quality of CBT.

This importance of this foundation in bike control and road simulation (with OSM PSL) can't be overstated, as this is what the rest of someone's riding career will be based on. Keeping that in mind we practiced through the weeks and months and after several months of watching, teaching, shadowing and being shadowed, with fantastic support from the 'instructor instructors' I finally got to grips with the playground or 'off road' training.

It was now time to hit the mean streets of Isleworth.

Head out on the highway ...

I spent many weeks following other instructors out on the road, with a radio so I could hear what was being said to the trainees. This was the real 'holy grail' of training, transferring those important off-road skills to a road environment and helping each pupil to develop their skills whilst managing their safety.

I think people often forget that the purpose of CBT is to take a complete novice and teach them to ride. And when I say novice I mean potentially someone who has:

- Never ridden a motorcycle
- Never driven a car
- Never even ridden a pushbike
-

When you take that in to consideration and think how long it takes many people to learn to drive a car, it's actually quite remarkable what we do every week. I'm digressing again, but this is an important consideration when first faced with a newbie on the road.

How much experience do they have? Just how capable are they going to be? If something is going to go wrong there are no dual controls, so it's essential for not only the pupil to be confident (which many are, perhaps misguidedly at first) but for you to be confident that they're not going to put themselves or you in danger. It was this first foray in to the unknown that really stuck home the responsibilities involved in teaching someone to ride.

That probably explains why we laugh and joke so much when we're back as base ... Relief!

Another important consideration as an instructor newbie is actually planning where you're going to go and how you're going to get the student to go there. I learnt the mistake of inadequate planning after accidentally turning someone down a dead end street. Still, it was a good rehearsal for their U-turn. I also learnt about assumption when taking a pupil from Isleworth towards Twickenham stadium.

What I said: "Take the first exit from the roundabout"

What they did: Rode straight in to Tesco car park ...

I won't be doing that again, but they say that prior planning prevents **** poor performance, or 'the 5 P' for short. Yeah ... planning ... and this coming from a Project Manager ...

Onwards and upwards

It's still early days and at the time of writing I can count the number of DL196 I've issued on one hand. It's been an amazing journey so far though, in several

ways. Obviously, learning a new skill is always rewarding and it continues to be challenging, enjoyable and occasionally terrifying every week. Yes, I love it!

It's also been a very personal journey and one that I believe has helped me to grow as a person, especially around the waistline (back to those pesky donuts). So, to round off I'd like to say a huge thank you to all of the instructors and training scheme crew who were involved in the long and sometimes arduous journey of qualifying me as an instructor. That actually means all of you, because you all contributed at some point and continue to do so.

So, thank you for everything, you've all been and continue to be brilliant and I hope I can do you and the scheme proud in the years to come.

Doug Chaney



Caption competition



1st choice:

Thought I should come 'out' but changed my mind, so I'm just popping upstairs to go back in the closet again.

2nd choice:

Tony was surprised whilst inspecting his new one piece race suit from India when the belly dance attachment deployed!

3rd choice:

Tony's limited edition glow-in-the-dark biker onesie also came with a built in shammy leather.



March's picture ...



Send your suggested captions to me at: a.whitaker@nhm.ac.uk

Dates for your diary

2nd March	Pool night – Riley’s Pool and Snooker Club – 7:30pm start
24th March	Pioneer Run to Brighton
30th March	Easter Saturday – no Training Scheme
14th April	Club run to Hayling Island
12th-13th May	Club ride to Ypres, Belgium, including overnight stay
9th June	Club run to Straford Upon Avon
22nd June	John Mason’s 40 years instructor celebration
7th July	BBQ @ Sheila & Dave’s
28th July	Club ride to Lechlade Trout Inn
18th August	Club ride to Bathampton
15th September	Club ride to Ogri Café, Sussex
6th October	Club ride to Arundel
3rd November	London to Brighton Veteran Car Run