



MAMM Autumn Newsletter : November 2024

A message from our MAMM Chair : Tony Lunnon-Wood

Greetings to you all.

Autumn is now with us and the nights are drawing in. Time for most motorcyclists to put their bikes into hibernation and wait for the spring. It seems that the shops break out the Christmas decorations earlier every year. I personally feel Christmas decorations before Halloween should be banned. But then others will say I am just a grumpy old git!

Thanks very much to our secretary, Myra, for collating the information for our newsletter, provided by our members. I am sure you will enjoy some light reading about bike and car tours. We owe Myra a huge debt of gratitude for giving up her spare time to produce our MAMM newsletters. We would love to hear from any of our MAMM members about adventures big or small local or international.

It has been a busy year. You will read the statistics in this newsletter. Vince Dobby and Billy Johnson have worked tirelessly to facilitate the smooth running of the 2024 car and bike advanced courses, as well as organising and facilitating the upgrade to national observer (NO) from local observer (LO) for some of our observers. This now means an observer award can only be awarded by an accredited IAM examiner and renewed every 5 years. It entitles the national observer to mentor anywhere in the country.

Unfortunately one of our biker fraternity, Mike Duff, was badly injured when a car pulled out in front of him, at a point when he was well inside the braking distance with no escape. Mike is happy to share his experience with MAMM members as a salient reminder to all drivers to ensure we do a proper clearance before pulling away from a junction. It is a fact the human eye looks for familiar shapes like a car, not motorcycles. Mike spent many weeks in ARI with multiple serious injuries and I am sure you will all join me in wishing him a speedy recovery and hopefully a pain free Christmas.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy safe New Year.

Safe riding/driving

Ciao for now,

Tony

MAMM Updates

Bike section

As of 22nd September this year, we have had 16 bike associates undertaking advanced motorcycle training. Observers have been working hard to support our associates, resulting in 6 successful passes so far and 2 associates awaiting their tests. The remaining 8 associates will continue their training into next year.

In addition, training for the national observer standard is underway. So far, an associate who recently passed the advanced training, has also passed the national observer standard. Another local observer is awaiting their national observer test soon, while another local observer continues with national observer training.

Car section

Our Spring 2024 car course in Elgin library lasted two weeks. It was uneconomical to continue with only one new associate. The lack of new car members has been a worrying situation for a few years and the committee decided to cease advertising courses due to increasing costs. So, you will not be seeing us in Spotlight anymore. Observing is now done on a one-to-one basis and we have been coaching five associates this year, two of whom had particularly good test results, another is awaiting a test date.

We are pleased to welcome John Bromehead back to the fold once again as an observer, increasing our number to seven.

Congratulations!



The chief examiner of IAM, Richard Gladman, on the right of the picture, visited Moray and carried out national observer (NO) renewal on Tony Lunnon-Wood, MAMM Chair (middle of the photo).

Congratulations to John Rees, on the left, who passed his national observer assessment and received his NO first issue from Richard Gladman.

TOM IRELAND : Motorcycle for sale

Tom Ireland, one of our committee members, is selling one of his motorcycles and wonders if any MAMM member might be considering switching to a different machine or knows someone who might be interested.



It's a **2016 BMW R1200GS** and Tom is advertising on Marketplace and Gumtree. Further details can be found by clicking on the links below where you'll find a video and photos of Tom's bike.

Facebook

Marketplace: <https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/1022787069572797/>

Gumtree: <https://www.gumtree.com/p/bmw-motorbikes/2016-bmw-r1200gs/1487254763>

A recommendation from a MAMM member

One of our MAMM members came across the Glenrinn Community Centre Café when they were out on their travels one Sunday morning and wanted to share this with MAMM members.



The café operates every third Sunday of the month, all year. We're told the food is fantastic and great value for money. You can choose from filled rolls from £3.50 and breakfasts at £4 and £7, with a drink included.

The drive to the Community Centre down Glenrinn valley is beautiful. Our biker fraternity might also enjoy the many bends.

If you happen to visit the cafe, please give us some feedback.

Happy Travels by Car

Driving around Europe : Bob Drysdale

Driving in Europe is second nature to me. It was only a few weeks after passing my car test that I found myself emerging from the Hull-Rotterdam ferry one October morning in my VW 1303 on my way to take up a one-year post at the Ruhr Universität Bochum, during which I drove many miles in Germany, Switzerland, France and the Netherlands. 50 years later it is always a relief to get back on the correct side of the road and I aim to be driving on the right at least twice a year, every year.

Normally, the spring trip would be to the Mosel valley in Germany, which then always includes visiting relatives in the area. Because I aim for a village near Trier, the trip will always include forays into Luxemburg (the country) and occasionally I fall into Belgium.

This spring, however, I decided to start the trip by spending a week in France because I needed to persuade myself that my French is still up to coping with being in France for a week. I started off my trip with a journey to Devon from where I would take the ferry from Poole to Cherbourg. It was all booked before my daughter, who lives and works in Vienna, threw the first spanner in the works with her question of “Dad, you do know it is Pfingsten on 20th May?”. No, I didn't. Whit Monday is a public holiday in many countries in Europe and of course it moves around with Easter, which was rather early in 2024. I won't make that mistake again. It was while I was doing some research on things to do on my planned trip to Caen, Honfleur, Rouen and Reims that more bad news hit the fan. 8th May is a public holiday in France – every year. Even worse in 2024, 9th May was Ascension Day, another public holiday. Somehow or other, I had managed to hit 3 public holidays in this one trip. So, my friends, track down the public holidays in Europe before you book a trip!

Roundabouts in France can be a nightmare because the French are not renowned for lane discipline, signalling, paying attention to other drivers or bothering about dents in their car. I very much am. I arrived at the first roundabout in Cherbourg and oh, it all looked so familiar. So the plan was note the details of the roundabout, make sure you know what exit you want, keep all your eyes open for other vehicles, decide when to go, hit the accelerator, head for your exit and give yourself praise if you make it to your desired exit in one piece. That was the worst roundabout in 7 days in the country, although generally, I found French drivers considerate at roundabouts and driving was a delight.

The speed limit on ordinary roads in France is 90 km/h and most of my driving was on ordinary N roads. Of course, when you are in a town, you have to remember that the light sequence is green-amber-red-green but it seems that the days have gone when failure to start moving 0.01 seconds after the lights have changed result in a blast of the horn.

The plus side of the two public holidays was the lighter traffic in Caen. The downside of the two public holidays was that it appeared the whole of Paris had decamped to Honfleur for a long weekend and there was not a parking space to be found anywhere. So, my advice to all readers is, stay clear of Honfleur on a public holiday. On the other

hand, if you have a desire to drive down the Champs-Elysees from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde and back up again, do it on a public holiday – I did in the late 1980s and (a) lived to tell the tale and (b) was elated!

Many, but not all French motorways are fee-paying – you get a ticket when you drive onto the motorway and when you decide to leave or just run out of motorway, you cough up the required fee. Some motorways are free. I did try to avoid fee paying motorways (autoroutes) but I failed when driving from Caen to Rouen and ended up paying 4 euros. In exchange for this, the road was fairly empty, it had almost no HGVs on it, it was of superb quality and you can drive at 130 km/h.

In due course the 7 days in France had gone; I could still speak French and it was time to get to the real destination, Germany. I was letting the satnav do the heavy work, but I knew that I was heading for Luxemburg, the only country I have ever driven right across in 30 minutes! What I did not know was that the satnav had decided to play a dirty trick on me. In a small French town, it told me to turn left, which I did, and within two minutes I had left France and was in.....Belgium. Not just that, I was on what must have been one of the worst roads in the country, which just reinforced my previous feelings about driving there. Driving at 60 km/h on that road was more than uncomfortable but eventually things improved. I moved on to better quality roads and before long, I had left Belgium and was bowling along the free Luxemburg Autobahn at 130 km/h and then across the Mosel at Grevenmacher onto a German B road I know like the back of my hand.

One thing you need to know about Germany is that there are no speed limit signs when you enter a built-up area. As you enter a village or town there is a yellow sign with the name of the place only. That is, in fact, the sign which indicates to you to slow down to 50 km/h. At the end of the town there is another sign with the name of the place, but this time with a diagonal line through it; that means you can speed up again to whatever is allowed on that road, perhaps 70 km/h, perhaps 90 km/h maybe 100 km/h.

During my week in Germany we had one day of torrential rain which resulted in Hochwasser, i.e. flooding. I had never seen this in the flesh as it were and it was amazing. The day after the floods I visited Bernkastel-Kues and here are a couple of photos of car parks.



I parked in an underground car park (on high ground) and the sign as I left instructed me to turn right which I did, only to find this.....

Here I had a quick case of manoeuvring the car to ensure that it was facing in the direction from which it had come and heading up the hill and out of the town!



Two days later I was sitting in dazzling sunshine in a vineyard drinking some of the local juice. That is how quickly the weather can change! Then it was up to the Netherlands for a couple of days in Utrecht, but the Netherlands can be a story for another newsletter!

Happy Travels by Bike.....

Thank you MAMM ! : Cathy Francis

When I opened an envelope last Christmas day with a voucher for IAM, I must admit, my first thought was, 'Is my driving that bad?' After some explanation from my well-meaning husband and then some reading of the IAM website, I realised that, once the weather turned better, this was going to be an exciting and perhaps somewhat indulgent opportunity to meet other bikers and ride out with my very own expert chaperone!

April came, and I went to a short series of weekly meetings held in Elgin Library. I had my interest in biking and road safety in common with these chaps (yes, they all were!), but I was distinctly junior in terms of riding experience. Nonetheless, I was welcomed by all and the friendly banter began! An introduction to the IAM 'system' was presented in an accessible way by Billy, and much credit was given to the experience in the room. I met the chap tasked with being my observer (that was Tony) and was immediately struck by his enthusiasm...he hadn't seen me ride yet!

Tony and I met several times over the next few weeks and I learned something new every time. The bottom line was that I was safe (this was good) but not yet an advanced rider (not so good). No, seriously, riding out with Tony and talking and texting with the small community of Elgin bikers built my knowledge and confidence immensely. At our debriefs, generally over a coffee and a bacon roll, Tony was direct yet kind; he was succinct but would then thoroughly expand upon any query I had. He spoke my language, and we shared the same goal: nail this test!

On the test day, to say I was nervous was an understatement. I am used to being an examiner at university during my day job, but I was a student here. My examiner took

time to put me at ease, and I have to say, from the moment I turned on the ignition of



my trusty RT, I thoroughly enjoyed the whole morning. Ok, so it wasn't perfect (which ride ever is?), but to say I was delighted to be told I had achieved an F1rst, would be an understatement. Following the ride, the conversation with and notes from the examiner afforded me yet another valuable layer of feedback and guidance. His follow-up e-mail a couple of days later gave greater clarity to my recollections of this conversation, which is good because several weeks later, I was still buzzing!

I would like to say thank you to everyone involved in the process: my observer, my biker peers, the presenter Billy (you'd make a great lecturer!), and, of course, my examiner. What a fantastic set-up Moray Advanced Motorists and Motorcyclists is! I felt welcomed and valued from the start, no matter my age, sex, or experience (or the fact that I have pink hair!). Finally, thank you to 'Father Christmas'...I wonder what he will bring next year. A shiny new bike?

Touring in Europe : John Rees

2024 – End to End Focused Motorcycling – and enormous fun!

I joined the IAM Moray Branch in February of this year and since then I have been committed to gaining the requisite qualifications to add value to the organisation, whilst enjoying my recent retirement after 40 years in the Royal Air Force.

I've been a keen motorcyclist since the early 80's, but career commitments had always precluded contributing time to voluntary organisations; now that time allowed I decided to grasp the 'bull by the horn' and get involved.

I undertook the advanced rider programme with Tony Lunnon-Wood and achieved my pass in April. The mentoring was superb and ironed out both the faults that I knew I had and those that I was unaware of but had crept in over time.

In July I undertook a 'Battlefield Tour' ride for 10 days to the Netherlands, Belgium and France, visiting sites commemorating events from both the World Wars. Starting in Arnhem and culminating in Normandy, two friends and I covered about 1,800 miles: the riding often providing respite from the poignant and sobering visits to War Grave Cemeteries. The scale of the operations, the national commitment and the individual acts of heroism is brought home by being in the landscape where the events actually unfolded. As an alternative, or indeed addition, to a pure road trip, it is thoroughly recommended.



Normandy



Menin Gate Ypres

After some focused national observer runs, again under the expert eye of Tony, I undertook my assessment in August which was successful. I was fortunate enough to be evaluated by Richard Gladman, IAM Chief Examiner; a thoroughly decent individual with a huge wealth of experience and the wit and guile to pass it on in the most genial way.

In September, my better half (Louise) and I undertook a ride to the Dolomites to catch the last of the summer sun whilst travelling on some of the most demanding roads in Europe. Transiting through the Mosel Vally in Germany, to Austria and entering the Italian theatre through the famed Grossglockner Pass, we rode through over 100 switch back bends to a height of 3,798mtrs (12,460feet). The scenery was breathtaking, and the sun shone; well, for the most part.



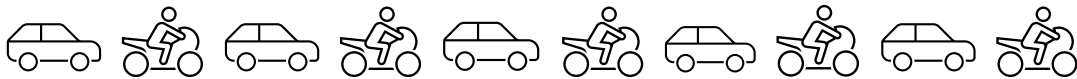
Dolomites

We moved on to Lake Garda for a little rest and relaxation before transiting the Timmelsjoch Pass to arrive back in Germany. On the way back to catch the ferry in Amsterdam we rode the B500 through the Black Forest, another iconic road. Once again, a highly recommended road trip and an adventure into a motorcycling mecca.

Now, I am still routed in the world of motorcycling as a Blood Rider, CBT Instructor with Moray Motorcycle Training and of course a National Observer. Who said retirement was boring?



Blood Rider



Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed to our autumn MAMM newsletter and made it possible.

If you have a memorable driving or motorcycling trip you would like to share with MAMM members, please send your article to the MAMM Secretary at this e-mail address.

MAMMsecretary24@hotmail.com

Happy driving and biking