



The Borders Observer

Newsletter of the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists
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Office Bearers

Chairman Raymond Black
☎ 01890-882677
✉ Raymond@bordersiam.org.uk

Vice-Chairman Peter Sandison
☎ 01896-758634
✉ Peter@bordersiam.org.uk

Secretary Mike Dall
☎ 01578-750379
✉ Mike@bordersiam.org.uk

Treasurer Charlie Dodds
☎ 01835-822171
✉ Charlie@bordersiam.org.uk

Committee Members

Membership Bob McKendrick
☎ 01896-752540
✉ Bob@bordersiam.org.uk

Events Vacant

Publicity Mary Davison
☎ 01890-820556

General Alistair Dodds
☎ 01361-850269
✉ Alistair@bordersiam.org.uk

Motorcycles Glen Guthrie
☎ 01896 757012
✉ Glen@bordersiam.org.uk

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Editor: Peter Sandison
☎ 01896-758634
✉ Peter@bordersiam.org.uk

Please address any comments or contribute articles to the Editor. These would be gratefully received!

Reflections on the first season of the Motorcycle Section

2003 absolutely shot past and it was an exciting, interesting and challenging year for Glen, Norman and myself. Hopefully our associates Rosie, John and Nigel have enjoyed themselves too.

Our approach to the first year of “business” was fairly laid back. We felt from the outset that we should allow events to unfold at their own pace and that we should watch what happened and use this experience to build our plans for the following year.

We started off our season early, refreshing our Observing knowledge and developing our riding skills after the winter lay off. Norman continued his Observer training with us and very soon we took on our first Associate, Rosie.

We spent several Sunday sessions riding as a group interspersing training with “fun-runs” to various destinations. We’d like to thank Rosie for her patience in allowing us to use her as a “guinea-pig” for our early training sessions. Our membership of existing “full” members living in the area built up during the first part of the year also and we took the opportunity to include these full members and their friends in a couple of excellent runs. We should extend our thanks to these guys for lending us their support in this, our first year. Thank you very much!

A further new Associate, John Shepherd, joined us mid-summer. John is an acquaintance of Rosie’s and joined at her suggestion. John lives near to Norman and so Norman took over the responsibility of acting as John’s Observer. His

training is coming on apace.

Our latest new recruit is Nigel Carrick. He and I have been out together twice so far but had to curtail our “on-road” training at the end of the riding season. We may develop an “over the-winter” training package to keep our Associates interested and active during the worst of the weather.

No one is ready as yet to go forward for the Advanced test but all three will provide us with a series of test successes in the this spring without a shadow of a doubt.

Glen set aside some time preparing for the Senior Observer Examination during the season and passed this with flying colours. Glen also reached the finals of the Edinburgh and District Advanced Motorcyclist’s Laidlaw Trophy, finishing in second place. This is a prestigious annual event. Glen has won this once before and has been runner-up once before also.

We also represented the Institute of Advanced Motorists and its Borders Group at the British Motorcyclists Federation event at Kelso last summer. It was a fantastic day weather wise and the show was very well attended. We collected a large number of names at the caravan from interested parties and have subsequently written to them all and sent them each a membership package. If they all apply to join we will be snowed under!

Contributed by Mike Dall

Programme notes ...

First Tuesday in April (6th)

Please note that there is no “regular” monthly meeting in April—its place is taken by our meeting with Alnwick on **Sunday** April 25th (see below).

April 25th—Alnwick Group

Date for another of our ongoing series of friendly competitions against Alnwick, our neighbours across the Border. The Competition will take

place in and about the Village Hall in Cornhill-on-Tweed, by Coldstream. If you are available that Sunday, do consider putting yourself forward to compete, to steward, or to spectate. It’s a good way of meeting other Group members and finding out the ways of our English neighbours! Please contact the Chairman or Secretary if you are interested.

May 4th—AGM

Our AGM, in the Buccleuch Arms Hotel, St. Boswells. This is your opportunity to help shape the future development of the Group! After the AGM there will be a presentation by Inspector Sandy McLaren, of Lothian & Borders Police. **Please do come along—this is the most important meeting of the year!**

Chairman's Comments

I hope this newsletter finds you all in good heart!

The way in which the Winter edition of the newsletter was distributed seems to have found favour with the membership and more of you are requesting to be kept informed via email updates.

The central role of the group is to encourage members to work towards and undertake the I.A.M. Advanced Driving/Motorcycle Test. We have just held a very successful car driving course, on 27th March, and have had an article published in the local press about the motorcycle section (see adjacent column).

This season the monthly meetings on the whole have been excellent and well attended, but the Committee are fully aware that some meetings have fallen through at the eleventh hour. This has understandably disappointed some of the membership, and I can only extend my apologies for any inconvenience caused. We are hoping to re-schedule some of the meetings, such as the visit to Border Toyota, in the forthcoming programme.

I wish to emphasize that new members joining prior to attending a course are most welcome to come to any of the monthly meetings or events, as are members of the public. I look forward to meeting the new and prospective members and would be delighted to see more of the core membership throughout the year.

Contributed by Raymond Black

Motorbike Riders set to advance in Borders

The start of 2003 saw The Borders Group of Advanced Motorists expand its field of operation with the introduction, for the first time, of a Motorcycle Section. This was an exciting milestone in the Group's development and underlines its ongoing commitment to road safety issues in the Borders.

The visible increase in the number of motorcyclists in the Scottish Borders over recent years has been reflected in the number of enquiries to the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists for an Advanced Motorcycle course. Until last year, motorcyclists applying to take the Institute's Advanced Motorcycle Test had to be referred to the Edinburgh Group of Advanced Motorcyclists (EDAM) for assistance, but for many this was just simply too far to travel..

The Borders Group recognised that this unmet demand could be satisfied locally and used the previous winter's months to plan and develop their resources to provide guidance locally.

The course for two-wheelers is conducted by a team of seasoned and mature IAM Motorcycle Observers, who are all based in the Borders. Although road safety is a serious matter, they carry out all their guidance in a friendly, relaxed and positive manner, and all new Associates can be assured that they will be dealt with professionally and carefully at all times. Riders of all levels of ability are welcome. Any rider would benefit from this course which is aimed primarily at making motorcyclists safer, more aware and more skilful.

The Borders Group of Advanced Motorcyclists will commence its 2004 programme this spring, and the number of applicants wishing to join the course and become Associates is expected to be high.

The course runs for between eight and twelve weeks, and Associates will normally be expected to sit the Advanced Motorcycle Test at the end of it. It will require a high degree of commitment from participants, but will guarantee enormous fun and satisfaction! Associates will have to be prepared to put some serious mileage on their machines whilst under training supervision and will be encouraged to take part in regular "fun-runs". It is also envisaged that the Borders Group will once again take part in some of the annual National events and tours that are occasionally co-ordinated between local Groups. Membership of the Borders Group of Advanced Motorists Motorcycle Section will give access to all the other activities and benefits which other Group members - both two and four-wheeled - already enjoy.

Applicants wishing to become Associates should be aware that they must already be full motorcycle licence holders and that their machine must be capable of sustaining the national speed limit on motorways. If there is sufficient demand, a course specifically designed to cater for scooter riders may be developed in parallel with the motorcycle course.

Motorcyclists who feel that they would perhaps firstly like to join the Borders Group as a "Friend", in order to benefit initially from being in the Group, will find that this category of membership is also available.

If you wish to obtain further information about the The Borders Group of Advanced Motorcyclists, we can be reached through our Motorcycle Membership Coordinator, Glen Guthrie, on 01896-754012, or by email.

Contributed by Mike Dall and published with minor changes in the Southern Reporter of 1/4/2004, p. 6

South East Forum Inter-Group Driving Competition

Richard H Scott represented the Borders Group in the South East Forum Inter-Group Driving Competition. Held on Sunday 30th November 2003. The venue was Fife House Car Park, Glenrothes Fife. Fred Davidson, Fife Group, won the day with almost top marks. The competition consisted of five elements, Highway Code, Roadcraft, Manoeuvring, and two Assessed Drives. Each contestant got a practice round in a Ford Fiesta prior to undertaking the manoeuvres section for real. They then changed over into a Ford Mondeo to complete the challenge.

The two road drives were done over the same route, the second drive in the opposite direction. Unfortunately Richard did not win but had a great day out and was delighted to have had a go at the competition!

Contributed by Raymond Black