



Southern Motorcycle Advanced Rider Training

Minutes of an

Annual General Meeting

of

RoSPA Southern Motorcycle Advanced Rider Training
(RoSPA SMART)

at

Southgate West Community Centre
Ditchling Hill
Southgate
Crawley
West Sussex
RH11 8QL

on

Thursday 16th October 2008 at 7.45 pm

Agenda.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of last AGM agreed.
3. Report by the Chairman.
4. Report by the Treasurer and presentation of the accounts.
5. Report by the Membership Secretary.
6. Report by the Chief Instructor.
7. Election of officers.
8. Any other business.
9. Close of meeting.

Meeting opened by the Secretary at 7.45 pm.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the following members:

Richard Strommer, Andrew Adams, John MacKessack, Roger Coe, Tony Gillingwater, Chris Albone, Sue Manning and Ria Harris

Twenty seven members were in attendance on the evening.

Minutes of last AGM agreed

The minutes of the last AGM were agreed (Proposed by Tim Bird and seconded by Max Harris).

Report by the Chairman (Tony Clark)

Tony started by thanking everyone for coming along. He said that we had had a successful year and achieved a lot, although there were things that had previously been done by the group that had not been done in the last year and some things had been done that perhaps should not have been.

There were good whizzes, Ardennes twice, Black Forest and Wales.

There has been a good and steady increase in membership over the year.

The group has been spending money received from a will and has purchased several assets for the group such as an over head projector, computer, radios, video camera and an over head projector screen.

The group attended BikeSafe events at Hendon and the Sussex launch at Bury Hill. A number of members were sourced from these venues.

Two sub-branches are now up and running in Hampshire and Kent. Hampshire currently has 36 members and Kent has 49. Both groups are now well established.

A decision on venues has been made. This is based mainly on costs saving and these appear to be working well and saving money.

The committee is working well as a group and all "singing off the same hymn sheet".

We have a good dialogue with HQ and are discussing issues of standardisation of test, including diploma tests, and Bob Smalley (senior examiner) is coming down to talk to the group in November.

Derek Stewart has now stopped taking tests and is taking a back seat from RoSPA activities for the moment. He has been a stalwart of RoSPA SMART since it was set up and he will still be in contact with the group.

Report by the Treasurer (Adrian Russell) and presentation of the accounts

Adrian issued printed handouts showing the accounts and annual report for the year ended 31st September 2008 and gave the following report:-

The Group has had a reasonably good year financially. Items of capital equipment has been purchased resulting in a decrease in the balance at the bank.

Renewal of membership has now changed to everyone renewing as at 1 November each year and this has resulted in a reduced membership income for the year.

The restructured Ride School is now more frequent and is ran at the Hawth Centre rather than Lewes Police HQ. It is now cheaper per person to run.

Income was £7,813 and expenditure was £10,293 reducing funds from £11,020 to £8,540 although money in the high interest account remains untouched from last year.

The cheques received from HMR&C for Gift Aid payments totalled £2,096.

A large amount of equipment was purchased in the year including:

- two sets of radios to test
- Portable displays
- Laptop computer
- Projector and projector screen

The other main area of expense is that of venue hire.

There were no questions on the accounts.

Report by the Membership Secretary (Roger Manning)

Roger reported that we have had a very good year. 96 new members (up 113% on last year) and he is processing about 10 new member application forms per week

A total of 290 members (217 last year) which is the largest it had ever been and is made up as follows:-

Sussex (main group)	207
Hampshire	34
Kent	49

Renewals are due to be paid by 1 November, but already about 100 cheques have been received. From the replies so far, Roger expects about 10% not to renew for reasons such as moved out of the area or they no longer ride a bike, which will result in about 30 losses (29 members left during last year and 46 the year before that).

	2008	(2007)
Senior Instructors	20	(16)
Instructors	17	(23)
Trainee Instructors	9	(3)
Dormant Instructors	5	
Full members	49	(51)
Trainee/associates members	186	(122)

The new renewal method (ie everyone at the same time) is time consuming but going OK and he expects £3,000 of renewals by the end of November.

Report by the Chief Instructor (Hugh Curran)

Hugh started by stating "You can never please all of the people all of the time".

He defined his roll as: ensuring members get training, manage the Instructors, manage the Senior Instructors, Trainee Instructors, uphold standards, liaison with HQ/Examiners, take initiatives and keep up to date, revitalise and add momentum

Main initiatives taken in 2008:

- Weekly roll-up training, except last Sunday at Tulleys as new venue. Southgate as a meeting centre had been dropped because it was kept mainly for traditional reasons rather than practical reasons.
- Gold-only Instructors (all active instructors now achieved this with Tim Bird's recent Gold pass) and there is now a tighter Instructor test with 2 seniors undertaking all test to a high standard. If anything, trainee instructors are over prepared for the test.
- Units have been set up (more later)
- A new website has been set up and looks cleaner and easier to use. If there is anyone with experience that would like to take over the maintenance/development then please say.
- A new Ride School format has been implemented. Rather than one big event a year with up to 38 instructors required every week, a classroom based theory session is now separate to the on road training. There are less

instructors tied up with the whole event and the trainees appear to be more relaxed in the classroom.

- Change to membership for new trainees to include the cost of Ride School. There is, therefore, no need for trainees to find £95 for the course and as it is paid for on joining they are more likely to participate.

Roger Manning mentioned at this point that the £30 could be taken off the membership joining fee if Ride School was not needed (for example the trainee has suitable past experience such as an IAM pass).

- Branches have been set up in Kent and Hampshire. There have been teething problems, but on the whole they are working OK.
- Radio trial have been undertaken for training purposes. A big thank you was made to David O'Mahony for all the hard work he has done in preparing requirements and testing the equipment. All has gone very slowly but the evaluation work is still ongoing.
- An on bike Camera trial is also being undertaken in order to get footage for Ride School and also for playback during training sessions. Initial tests have been very positive, especially in obtaining footage for Ride School.

Things that did not happen in 2008.

- Slow Riding Day
- First Aid Courses
- Only 1 Instructors quality day. It worked out OK and instructors got a lot out of it, but more regular sessions are needed.
- Too few instructors and senior instructor meetings were held.
- No change to £10 run charge. There is still a dilemma as to costs for instructors and the charitable status of the group. It was felt that the majority of instructors undertook instructing partly as a good deal and also increasing the cost to £15 a run may put people off.
- Seniors did not have enough time to do more quality checks because of the number of trainees causing no surplus in instructors.

Members and test results.

- 100 new members (last year 56)
- 3 Ride Schools (last year 1), for 25, 10 and 20 people = 55 people in total (last year 38)
- 33 Test taken (last year 27) 20 Gold, 9 Silver, 3 bronze, 1 Fail
- 13 of these tests were retests (last year 22) and 20 were new tests (last year 5)
- Out of the 100 new members this year they achieved 9 Gold, 3 Silver, 1 Fail
- 20 New Tests (last year 5) that achieved 11 Gold, 6 Silver, 3 Bronze

Hugh said that the results were very good, but he would like to see nearer 27 out of 33 test result in a Gold pass and he intends to look at why some of the results were not Gold. The Bronze results were all advised not to sit their tests as they were not ready and the fail was for Road Traffic Act offences, but otherwise the ride was to a gold standard.

Max Harris pointed out that we should not be disappointed with Silver passes and Hugh agreed. Hugh added that the three Bronze results were a fair reflection of the ride.

Rosario Henshall said that the new Ride School format was only theory based and that there was no practical element. When she attended ride school she used the

riding session that followed to put into practice what she had just learnt in the classroom. Hugh mentioned that there was sometimes a mini rideout after Ride School, but no formal training as such. In terms of efficiency the new style is much better and people can always attend training sessions with their allocated instructor if they so wish.

Rosario asked if the strategy was for people to attend Ride School and then take the test. Hugh said that this was not the case, but we cannot force anyone to either take or not take the test. Last years ride school had 38 people on it and 7 took their test so now there is a higher proportion of members taking a test and this does not consider that there is still currently a Ride School in progress.

Trevor Shearsmith asked if it was practice for trainees to have a cross check before putting in for their test. Hugh said yes, but some people still put in for the test against advice or do not ask for a cross check. The other issue to remember is that some people want a Gold pass and some just want to take the test to see where they are.

New Instructors

- A new formula, lengthier test has been introduced. Only 4 new Instructors have been tested so far, Sam Davis and Paul Nol from the Hampshire group, Howard Cooper from the main groups and Dene Collins from the Kent group
- There are currently 9 Trainee Instructors (Rob Purvis, Rob Wilkie, Paul Ibbotson, Luke Bartlett, Paul Ingleton, Tristian Knight, Phil Woodhams, Steve Norton and Clive Savage). Some of these are ready for test and getting all past the test will be a top priority in coming year
- Hugh felt that the correct ratio of Trainees to Instructors (about 7:1) is critical. With too many trainees we cannot deal with them and with not enough the instructors get bored.

Trainee Instructors

- Too little achieved with the Trainee Instructors. There is no program in place but Paul Farmer is assisting to define a program and implement it

Instructors

- Numbers have been culled from 21 to 10 to consider inactive Instructors. 4 new instructors have been added and 3 have been proposed for the senior test. The website has been updated to and now reflects the reality of the situation.
- Jon Taylor is going to perform all Senior tests and more Sussex test. In the past it has been less than clear how to become a Senior Instructor and all seemed a bit cloak and dagger. Hugh has been in communication with Bob Smalley regarding the criteria of becoming a Senior Instructor and it has been agreed that any Instructor taking a retest will do a hybrid test (if invited) to do the retest and Senior Instructor test at the same time. Bob Smalley is now changing RoSPA HQ policy to reflect this and make a country wide policy. If the Instructor passes the retest part at gold but fails the Senior Instructor part, then they remain an Instructor and if they pass all then they become a Senior Instructor.

Geoff Cosgrove asked what the difference between a Senior and an Instructor was. Hugh said that it was a quasi qualification and £1,000 cheaper than the diploma. In addition, Seniors can test Trainee Instructors and pass them to Instructors under RoSPA HQ policy.

Marion Barnes said that the policy to become a Senior Instructor was always that the Chief Instructor would recommend people to go to Senior and that there was no cloak and dagger to get Senior. Hugh said that this remains the policy but is now clear and open to all. Marion said that the Chief Instructor should have told Seniors how to become Seniors and Instructors should have known. Hugh said that it was the perception of the old system that you had to be invited by Chief Instructor and no idea when, but now it will coincide with a retest for all Instructors. Robin Brown said that Hugh was correct and that there was no laid down procedure and people that should have been asked to be Seniors were not asked, people did not know how to become a Senior and it was only when people were asked that they found out.

David O'Mahony asked when the hybrid test would be undertaken. Hugh said at the 3 year RoSPA retest. David pointed out that this would not mean that the Instructor had been instructing for 3 years, rather that it would have been 3 years since they achieved a Gold pass. Hugh agreed but said that normally they would have over 2 years' experience as an Instructor.

Max Harris said that the current format was for Seniors to take on groups and if everyone becomes a senior, who would do the training? Hugh said that Seniors can take on groups, but there will be floaters and that will be fine. Hugh added that it would be OK by him if the whole group become Senior Instructors.

Senior Instructors

- 17 Seniors were listed last October and 19 now listed because 5 have been added and 3 de-listed.
- Hugh needs to delegate more responsibilities to Seniors, for example use Seniors more often for quality checking and input with Instructors.

Units

- Hugh felt that he needed to get Units working better with Dave Sparrow's unit being the model.
- Tim Bird is working on web-based spreadsheet that can be viewed by all and editable by Seniors which will incorporate all branches.

Examiners

- Derek Stewart has resigned as an Examiner and Jon Taylor is now taking more of the tests for the main group.
- There is currently a variability of Examiners (ie the recent Radio Issue) and Hugh is clarifying these issues with Bob Smalley.

Max Harris asked if Bob Smalley could get Jon Taylor to set exam standards rather than people have a 'JT Gold' or an 'A N Other Gold'.

Targets for 2009

- Establish a firm Training Program for Trainee Instructors
- Get ratios of Instructors right
- 100 new members again
- Reduce the drop-out rate
- Channel the Ride School candidates to test
- Reward the active Instructors
- Introduce incentives?
- Radios and camera policy
- Engage more with HQ

Hugh especially thanked

- Peter Hayes, Tim Bird, David O'Mahony, Paul Farmer, Dave Sparrow, Roger Manning, Tony Gillingwater, Graham Allen, Dene Collins, Alec Gore and Chris Palmer.

To summarise

- There has been a mixed bag of outcomes, which is not surprising.
- The 'pot has been stirred' but there have been more positives than negatives.
- The groups need to evolve.
- Training is in healthy state.
- RoSPA SMART is a great Group

Election of Committee Members

As the old committee were the only people standing for each of the positions, there was no need for any vote and the committee remained:

- Tony Clark as Chairman
- Paul Reynolds as Secretary
- Adrian Russell as Group Treasurer
- Roger Manning as Membership Secretary
- Hugh Curran as Chief Tutor

AOB

Max Harris asked if there was something that could be done for Golds and Instructors to further their riding within the group. Hugh agreed it was a good idea and asked for suggestions. Max suggested groups being taken out by Jon Taylor for example. Trevor Shearsmith said that Jon Taylor was still only a Gold at RoSPA level but this could be a question for Bob Smalley. Karen O'Gorman suggested further training days could be in the form of off road days such as I2I or RAPID Training days.

There then followed a discussion about the £10 donation to Instructors for training costs. Rob Wilkie suggested that the money was collected before the allocations were made and if there was a 2:1 training session the extra £10 was put into group funds. Trevor Shearsmith said that his local IAM group have just undertaken a study into the £10 fee and it has been calculated that the fee is correct and just about breaks even for the instructors. Robin Brown suggested that a chitty was handed out at the allocations with a note reminding trainees of the £10 donation. Steve Clarke suggested that there was a column included on the green card to say 'Paid' as a reminder when the debrief was being undertaken. Adrian Russell said that all ideas appeared sensible on an individual basis and that they could all be tried individually or together and see what worked.

Robin Brown asked what the latest with the filofaxes for instructors was (as agreed at last years AGM and funded by Tony Clark). Tony said that a volunteer had been found this evening to finish off the great work started by Karen O'Gorman and that the actual filofaxes had been purchased. There are now a few amendments required to consider new meeting places etc, but otherwise they will be very similar to the draft prepared by Karen.

Geoff Cosgrove asked what the latest was on the radios that were being tested. Hugh said that they were still being trialed and that David O'Mahoney has drawn up specs and two sets of radios have been obtained for evaluation purposes. The main snags are range of transmission and comfort of the earpiece for the trainee. Max Harris asked for clarification regarding the radios on the exam as Roger Salmon prefers them and what would be the effect of trainees learning on radios if the test was not conducted by radio. Hugh said that the position regarding the exam and radios was being clarified and that part of the spec being drawn up will include usage and training will be given to instructors who use them. They will not be used to prepare someone for a test but as a training aid.

Tim Bird asked if there was any plans for the two sub branches (Hampshire and Kent) when they grew large – would they stay part of the main group or split and become new groups. Hugh said that the branches are currently still a work in progress and a meeting will be made soon with both sub branches to discuss moving things on but at the end of the day, if a group can split and they want to then good, but we are happy with them under the SMART umbrella.

There then followed a lengthy debate on the pros and cons of moving away from Southgate for social evenings, meetings and monthly training. Adrian Russell said that the Hawth was comparable in price to Southgate and had better acoustics and catering was done by Hawth staff so did not tie up members. It was also mentioned by a few members that the Hawth centre had parking problems if there was another event on. Hugh pointed out that Tulleys training every week has as many trainees as Southgate monthly meeting has and that is the main intention of the group, training. Adrian Russell pointed out the need for volunteers to help keep the Southgate running and that after a request there was not enough volunteers to help. Roger Manning suggested trying the Bob Smalley talk at the Hawth and see how it goes. Adrian said that not all 12 months of booking have currently been cancelled so we will not lose our slots.

The meeting was formally adjourned at 10.30 pm.

Minutes adopted by:

Seconded by: