

## IAM Advanced Rider Training: My Course/Test Experience



Hi there, just wanted to say a few words about my experience of the IAM RoadSmart Advanced course and test. I won't cover what the course is about or offer tips because there's a lot on the internet about this already. But here is my own story:

I took my bike test in the 70s and, like many, have never before had any formal training. I've ridden a variety of bikes, starting small and working up, mainly Hondas, Yamahas and BMWs though. I had a long break from biking and started riding again about 5 years ago when I bought an R1100RT from a mate at work who was emigrating to Canada.

Several things have happened over the last year that made me question my skill level, notably being stopped by the Police for overtaking up Cromford Hill in the 30 limit and also some dodgy moments when riding with friends and working hard to keep up. I didn't want to give up the bike but I realised that I needed to be a lot safer. I also recognised that, being now self-employed, having to take a couple of months off work because of an accident would be very bad news. And it could be a lot worse than just getting injured.

I have found the course, and particularly the observed rides with Geoff, of enormous value and I'm not exaggerating when I say they have transformed my riding. I found the course hard, because I had to come off autopilot and do things consciously, but I very quickly started to see the 'system' working for me so I stuck with it. In particular I'd point to these four benefits:

- Greater confidence at junctions: now I know where I should be on the road so that I can best see and be seen.
- Smoother and more confident cornering: I knew the theory about the best line but I wasn't applying it.
- I adjust my speed much more according to the conditions: often brisker but sometimes a lot slower.
- I find I'm seeing things I never saw before: I'm looking, and thinking, further ahead.

But above all I feel much happier about being on my bike: that's what I wanted! And in September 2016, I was delighted to pass my test on the first attempt.

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