

Guidance

The first step is to join us on one of our group training rides on the first Sunday of each month. Here you will acquire the first of your advanced riding skills. These rides are usually one observer to two associates and cover 50 – 100 miles with feedback stops and a break for refreshment and a chat about half way. During this ride one associate will lead with the observer immediately behind them and the other associate following at the back. We try to get you matched with someone at the same skill level fairly quickly to avoid any problems with one associate getting left way behind or alternatively holding the other two up.

As soon as possible after you start the training rides we expect you to attend one of our Chalk and Talk sessions. These introduce some of the theory behind what you're doing on the training rides and help you to understand the standards we are working towards.

The next step is a choice for you depending on how you learn best and what time you have available. By the way, you can continue to come along on the 1st Sunday rides.

Option One is to get assigned to one of our observers for 1-1 sessions. The timing of these is agreed between you and your observer. You should aim to be getting out approximately every two weeks on an observed 1-1 ride and putting in as many practice miles on your own as you can in between. You should expect to contribute £6 per 1-1 session to your observer to help cover the cost of their petrol, or buy them a coffee or breakfast or something – this is up to you and your observer to agree.

Option Two is to attend one of our Fixed Length Courses. These cost £30 (to cover our costs) for 6 weeks. Each week you get a 1 hour classroom session, and a 1 hour ride to work on the skills discussed in the classroom session. At the end of the course you will be offered a Mock Test with one of the group Senior Observers. If you take this up you will be given feedback on your ride and a recommendation as to whether you should go for your test straight away or possibly spend a little longer polishing up specific skills to improve your chance of passing first time.

Even when you have passed your test, you're still welcome on the 1st Sunday training rides but you will be assigned to a full members group. The purpose of this group is to further refine the skills you learned while preparing for your test and get you using the skills you have learned as a matter of course. A good advanced rider finds it difficult to ride to anything other than the standard !

Having spent some time in the full member's group we may ask you if you are interested in becoming an observer (or you can ask us). If you are interested then we will get you on an observer training course before pairing you with one of our existing observers who will help you refine the skills you will need. Over a period of time you will learn and then practice observing skills. When your observer thinks you are ready you will have a check ride with a Senior Observer who will assess whether you meet the standard required of group observers. If you're successful you will then start observing.

And if that wasn't enough

Alongside all of the learning activities the group holds a weekly social meeting at The Fountain Pub at London Road, Loughton, Milton Keynes, MK5 8AF and runs social rides at least once a month on the 3rd Sunday and often on Wednesday evenings in summer. In winter we usually have a speaker in once a month.

There is also a group newsletter, generally sent by email towards the end of each month (but ask about a posted copy if you don't have email), which reports on things that are going on or have gone on, provides useful and interesting articles, recommendations for local suppliers, members adverts and contact names and details for the group senior observers / newsletter editor etc.