

Dumfries & Galloway Group of Advance Motorists and Motorcyclists

Chairman's Report May 2006

The last year has been another good year for the Group, with many outstanding achievements, one of the most important of which is that we now have a new name, the Dumfries & Galloway Group of Advanced Motorists and Motorcyclist. I hope this new name will last us well for as long as the last one, namely 29 years, to reflect our wider geographic sphere of operation as well as demonstrating that we have a growing motorcycle membership.

Beyond the name change, one of the most important developments is the Group strategy, which is called "A Strategy for Growth," and is available on our updated web site for anyone to see. This Strategy is being used to drive all our activities, and the expectation is that our membership will continue to rise much faster than the national average.

I said last year that our aim was to achieve 100 Members by this time next year. I would have been able to say we have achieved this target had it not been for the fact that we had 10 Members who failed to renew their annual subscriptions to the Group. At the time of writing this now brings us back to a membership of 87. This loss of membership is not uncommon in any IAM Group but we plan to address the problem by introducing a direct debit facility at some time in the future. We have also made a special offer to our Members of free annual membership if they introduce an Associate who goes through the IAM Test.

Your committee is working hard to deliver the set of actions, which are linked to the Strategy for Growth. A number of examples of which are: -

We now have a Group President, a well-known local figure, Tommy Jardine, and on your behalf I am pleased to welcome Tommy to the AGM. As well as being a local celebrity, Tommy brings with him a wealth of experience of involvement in charitable activities, the most noticeable of which is his Cash for Kids appeal. Tommy wants to be actively involved with our work and I for one believe his involvement will provide us with many benefits over the years.

At the IAM's National Conference in October 2005 our Group won the Best Newsletter Award for any car Group. This is an important recognition for our Group. Clearly, our searching out of local sponsorship has enabled us to afford a better quality publication and through our sponsors we have been able to afford to send copies to every doctors and dentists surgeries throughout Dumfries & Galloway, so as to further publicise our work to improve road safety, as well as to encourage members of the public to join us. Our thanks also go to Graham Watson, without whose efforts the Newsletter would not be published as well as to our sponsors, who make it possible for us to afford to publish the Newsletter.

With the £150 we won with this award we have sponsored a road safety competition on our web site, with a cash prize for the winner. I'm pleased to say that our 1st competition was won by Maureen Robertson of Annan, and she has agreed to use her £50 cash prize towards the cost of enrolling with us as a Group Associate.

Part of our plan for growth was to increase our public presence, and to this end we have been active in achieving greater publicity in the regions newspapers. I hope you have seen some of the many articles we have had published. In addition to newspapers, we have also appeared for the first time in the Dumfries & Galloway Adult Learning brochure. We have had a broadcast on South West Sound radio and we are featured in the Dumfries & Galloway Road Safety Plan. All these publicity opportunities are helping to make as many people as possible aware of our presence in the region.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the IAM and we here in Dumfries are using this as an opportunity to make this a special year. We have been fortunate recently in gaining an Award for £3250 and we will use this to train 50 young drivers and riders to IAM Test standard free of charge. We have already had many more applications for these places than the 50 we have available. Sadly, we will have to refuse this offer to a number of young people.

On the 13 May we are meeting with the regions MP's and MSP's, as well as other civic dignitaries and sponsors. Our aim is to make them aware of the IAM and the work we do in terms of helping to improve road safety. We also want to enrol their help in gaining additional funding so that we can train more of the regions young drivers and riders, at no cost. We will complete the day by giving them a Demonstration Drive or Ride so that they can appreciate the high standard of the IAM Test.

We are also planning to run a course for members of the public entitled, Hazard Awareness and Accident Avoidance. This will also be free, and will aim to educate participants about the 1st 3 elements of the System, namely, Information, Position and Speed. Anyone attending will be offered one of the IAM's new Drive Checks, or the existing Public Assessment Ride.

Our monthly meetings have resulted in some very interesting presentations by a variety of speakers, as well as a number of visits. We started our first annual motorists vs. motorcyclist Quiz this year, which was won by Anne Lind and we look forward to Graeme McColm and his team setting next years Quiz. We also held our first Manoeuvrability challenge last year, and congratulations to Jim Hunter for winning. We plan to open this event to members of the public this year as part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

We were asked to speak at the Scottish Regional Conference during the year to explain to other Groups about the work we are doing and it is particularly pleasing that Andrew Bird has accepted the position of Chairman of the Scottish Motorcycle Forum together with Graham Abrines as Secretary. This is all helping to put the Dumfries Group, and the work we do, on the IAM's map.

Finally, it is necessary to say that all these activities have only been achieved by the support, commitment and dedication of a wide group of people. I particularly wish to thank the committee for the work they have done for the Group throughout the past year. To Helen Cameron for all her hard work in keeping us on track and to Allan Graham for keeping our finances in order. Please forgive me if I have missed naming anyone, that does not mean your efforts are unappreciated.

Alan Jones