

Associates Only Ride

Within the Observer Corps here at ESAM, we recognise that not everyone – particularly Associates – feel comfortable with group rides and are therefore missing out on a significant aspect of the Social side of the club. To help with this, we have introduced the Associates Only Ride. There are some simple entry requirements and some simple rules to follow, but it is about learning and having fun with like minded people.

The Associates Only Ride has 3 primary objectives:

1. Introduce Associates to social riding in larger groups (currently 10 bikes, but we may increase this in the future) in a controlled manner.
2. Introduce Associates to the “drop-off” marking system used by ESAM.
3. Provide an opportunity for Associates to practice IPSGA and “the system” over a longer distance and without the formality of an Observed Ride.

Okay, so that is what it is about, but what is it exactly?

For an Associates Only Ride, we would normally expect 6 Associates and 4 Observers to form the group ride. One Observer will be Ride Lead (always at the front), one Observer will be the Back Marker (always last bike in the group) with the remaining Observers riding within the group. The length of each ride will vary, but a good rule of thumb is between 90 and 110 mile round trip – comfortably within the tank range of the vast majority of bikes out there – using a whole range of different roads. Each ride will have a defined and pre-planned destination where there will either be breakfast or lunch depending on the timing of the ride. There would normally be a couple of shorter stops too (1 outbound and 1 on the return).

So why Observers on the ride?

The idea is that Associates can feel comfortable knowing that the ride is organised and run by experienced and qualified Observers. The Observers are there to help anyone if they have an issue (bike breaks down etc) and to offer any feedback or advice in a casual/social setting. Additionally, if you – The Associate – come across something on the ride and you want to ask a question, the Observers are there to answer any question you may have and to help in any way possible.

How is this different to an Observed Ride with my normal Observer?

Ordinarily, an Observed Ride is 1-to-1 and, a number of Associates – particularly in the earlier runs – feel less than fully comfortable knowing that there is someone riding behind them watching everything they are doing. This is where the Associates Only Ride can help. Being a group ride, it is not possible for the same person to be behind you all the time. Also, unlike an Observed Ride where you not only have to put “the system” into practice but also watch in your mirrors for navigational queues, on the Associates Only Ride all the navigating is done from the front.

So what are the rules?

The rules for the Associates Ride are really quite straight forward:

1. You must ride safely and legally
2. You must ride your own ride – e.g. read a corner for yourself, plan your own overtakes etc rather than simply following the bike in front
3. You must be a fully fledged ESAM Associate. Riders who have sat and passed their Advanced Motorcycle Test or who have let their ESAM/IAM membership lapse are unable to join this ride
4. You must have had at least 1 (preferably 2 or 3) Observed Rides with your regular Observer prior to joining the Associates Only Ride
5. Overtaking within the group is discouraged though appropriate overtakes of other road users are allowed
6. If you are unsure about some – **ASK!** We are there to help you.

How do I find out more details?

To find out more, to register your interest, or anything else, please feel free to contact Martyn Talbot either on a Club Sunday in Reid Hall or via the details in your Observer Magazine.