

ESSEX ROSPA ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

ROSPA

*The Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents*

ERAM NEWS

www.rospariders.co.uk

Issue 2—August 2008



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Group Activities

Group Social Night	Essex Police Sports Pavilion, St Margaret's Road, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6DN 7:30pm on the 3rd Thursday every month
Social Rides	Usually Sunday, meeting places / times will be announced at Group Night. Please see our website and/or our newsletter
Newsletter Advertising	Please contact the Treasurer for rates to commercial advertisers on small, half or full page sizes. Please contact the Editor to change contents. Personal small ads are free to members. Please send them to the Editor.

Editorial

Welcome to Issue 2 of the ERAM Newsletter!

Thanks again to all contributors and positive feedback from the last newsletter.

Please don't hesitate to send me your story about your favourite bike or road. I'm also interested to publish write-ups of your latest biking holiday.

Just email me on
news@rospariders.co.uk

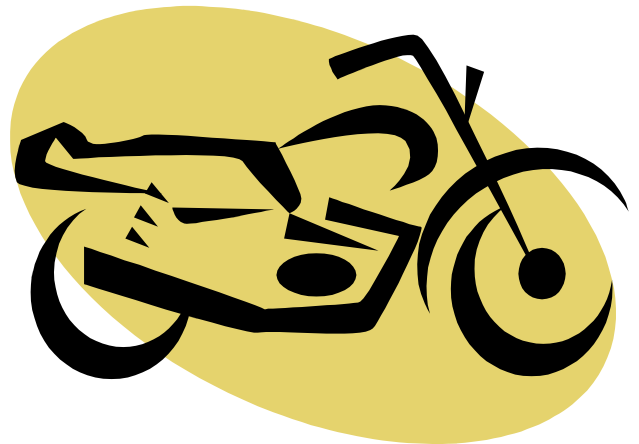


Articles in this issue include:

- Group Ride Reports by Ashley John
- Riding in Groups by Paul Collins
- A Day Out With RAPID Training by Colin Snow

Enjoy the reading,

Elke



Front Cover

German road sign, 'Sturzgefahr' translates to *Danger of Crashing*.

NOVEMBER EDITION COPY DEADLINE: 1st November 2008

Disclaimer Notice: The articles published hierin do not necessarily represent the views of the Essex Rospa Advanced Motorcyclist Group. They are the opinions of individual contributors and are published with a view that free expression promotes discussion and interest.

Chairman's Corner by Ashley John

Hi to all our fellow members new and not so new, this is the latest update which includes details of recent and up and coming events, and will in the future include articles from members, and gallery of ride outs and write ups on activities of the Group.

RECENT EVENTS:

Tutor Training Day

We had 3 Members join us for a recent Tutor Training Day.

The course was well received and included theory and practice on preparing to meet the Pupil and pre-ride brief, Pre Ride checks and motorcycle maintenance explanation. Riding Assessments, Health & Safety.

The course was the first conducted for the Group and following that day two Members will go on to be assessed by the RoSPA Examiner Mick Jones as back up to the training to ensure they are ready to become Approved Motorcycle Tutors for the Group.

The benefit of having been experienced Observers did help the two individuals concerned, and subject to their final assessment and approval we will advise the Group of their names in due course.

The third Member had not previously observed or trained anyone before and it was mutually agreed that in most cases a second day of training would be necessary. In this case the Tutor trainee concerned did very well on his first time out, but agrees he will need that second day to equip him with the right level of training skills and increase his confidence when tutoring.

All those attending felt it was a very beneficial and enjoyable course. Results will be confirmed in due course.

The cost of the course, due to it being a full day is priced at £20. per day. £10 of which will go to the Advanced Tutor teaching you on the full day course and the other £10 will be donated to the group funds to help with future training aids or other group needs.

If you feel you would like to be trained to become an Approved Tutor for the Group and top up your Advanced Skills whilst being equipped to pass those skills on through training others within the Group, then please contact Paul Collins on the contact details below. A number have already expressed an interest and will be booked on the next course.

To become an Approved Tutor you must have achieved a pass at Silver or Gold Award level of the RoSPA Advanced Motorcycle Test.

Chairman continue...

ASSOCIATE TRAINING:

Paul Collins is the Group Training Officer, if you have not yet had an opportunity to begin your Test training with a Tutor, please contact Paul as he will need to check availability of Advanced Tutors who unfortunately are extremely busy with other responsibilities i.e. Family and full time work. They offer their available time freely and receive only the pupils donation towards their petrol and running costs. Although Paul and myself have taken a number of Associates for assessments and follow up training, and four or five of these have now passed their tests achieving Gold or Silver some have undoubtedly not received any training yet for which I apologise.

This is why it is very necessary for Approved Tutors to be trained to help deliver more training to the many Associates that are now members of the Group, your patience is appreciated and we apologise for the delay. Please contact Paul if you have not received Associate Training ASAP so we can arrange your training.

YOUR IDEAS FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

If you have any ideas for events, this could include planning a Group ride out, organise a firework party or run something such as a quiz night etc at a monthly Group night. Organise a trip or weekend away etc. then send your ideas to Peter or Chris at followme@rospariders.co.uk

FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

Please give us any of your suggestions for improvement and feedback during or following events so that we can learn from you and improve what we do for the benefit of all. We'd also appreciate any help you can give in any way in support of your Group.

FUTURE EVENTS:

Sunday 7th September 2008

2008 Essex Air Ambulance Motorcycle Run and Harwich Festival Fun Day.

I booked space for a Group stand at Harwich on the Green, a 3 piece RoADAR display and supply of leaflets have been ordered from RoSPA HQ and delivered to County Hall Chelmsford. I'm arranging transport via ECC & Bikesafe Road Safety Trailer, we will be located next to it. I would appreciate help on the stand from other members.

GROUP Nights:

18 th September	TBC
16 th October	Highway Code / Roadcraft Quiz
20 th November	Road Craft Presentation by Ashley

Ashley John

Check out the back of the newsletter for a complete list of events in 2008 (Ed)

Membership Report by Sandra Murphy

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Andy Heaton
Paul Steggles
Paul Osborne
Paul Bradley
Graham Snow



Another reminder to those of you who have not renewed your 2008 membership... I still have lots of blank spaces against 2008 memberships. Membership runs from January to December, and renewal fee is £15. I'm also receiving a few mail delivery failures on email circulations, so if you have recently changed your email address please let me know by phone 01375 482767 or email secretary@rospariders.co.uk

As at 20th August the membership numbers are:

Associates: 13

Full: 19

Total: 32

**Advertise your company name here
for a small donation
(quarter, half or full page)**

Tried and Tested

Group Members recommending companies and services

Recommendation from Smurf

Wickford Motorcycles 01268 271596

These guys fitted a new chain & sprocket for me, are friendly and took time to clean up the inside of my swing arms after I'd been using a jet wash to clean the bike (don't do it, it causes all sorts of problems). They also offered free advice and treated my bike with care. The downside is that you have to make the tea!

Recommendation from Phil Reader

County Radiators, Basildon 01268 727005

If you get a hole in your radiator don't assume you have to buy a new one. These guys repaired a hole in Elke's Versys radiator for a fraction of the cost of a new radiator.

Previous recommendations:

Sean Davies Motorcycle Services

Honda Trained Mechanic based in Colchester

Excellent Service, Great Value, polite, helpful and all round good guy

Give him a call on 01206 366066

Woods Tyres

843 London road, Westcliff on Sea, Essex

Good service, reasonable Prices. Loose wheels only

Tel: 01702 479234

Group Ride Report— Sunday July 29th—Mystery Run by Ashley John

Only a small group of 4 riders turned out due to this coinciding with a run organised by another advanced group on the same day. Thanks to those that made it and for your encouragement on the day.

I led the small Group of riders from our pre-arranged meeting place at Boreham Services. The weather had been a little unsettled over previous days, however roads were very good on the day of the Mystery Run. The route planned was to be a total round trip of around a 180+ miles with lunch at an unannounced venue where a show and place of interest would also be experienced. We headed off towards Broomfield cutting up past the Channels Golf Course and heading on along the A130 towards the roundabout at Little Waltham, then through Ford End to Barnston and on through to Great Dunmow.

We cut through Great Dunmow and took the B1057 (an excellent road) down to Finchingfield and carried on through Steeple Bumpstead up to Haverhill in Suffolk.

We then took the A143 up to Stradishall, then turning left we took the B1063 to Cheveley and past Ashley on up to Newmarket, Cambridge. At Newmarket we took a right and headed along the A1304 until we stopped and took a well earned tea and p break at Red Lodge.

It was around 11.30 we had completed around 70 miles but had a fair way to go yet until lunchtime, without a clue where they were going my trusting band were led a merry dance North along the A11 and then up the A1065 towards Mildenhall, Lakenheath and then Brandon up into Norfolk via Fengate towards Mundford and then along the A134 across to Thetford then along the A1066 until we turned down some very Narrow B roads down the B1113 toward Rickinghall, cutting across towards Mendlesham and finally onto the A140 heading South towards Little Aspal we then turned left onto Angel Hill along the A1120 to Stonham Aspal.

At Stonham Aspal we entered Stonham Barns and the entrance to the Suffolk Owl and Birds of Prey Sanctuary . Here there are various curio hobby and craft shops, a restaurant and it is a popular local attraction, (I had visited this venue a number of years ago with another motorcycle club, and had remembered how brilliant most of the roads had been on the way) after a nice lunch together we headed over and paid a contribution to the charity to enter the Sanctuary. After looking around at the Birds of Prey, various Hawks and Falcons, Eagle Owls, Barn Owls and vultures were on display, we went to the show. At regular times there is a Bird of Prey Show with close up experiences with various birds in a purpose built display area. It didn't disappoint as a number of birds were each displayed over our heads and sometimes between the audience during the show which had worked out was perfectly timed for our arrival. A good day was had by all four riders, the roads were excellent weather was good and we all enjoyed it immensely.

Around 4 pm we headed back down the A140 to Needham Market, along the B 1078 through Barking (Suffolk) towards Bildeston on down the B 1115 towards Sudbury and then down towards Halstead down the A131 across to Earls Colne then South eventually arriving back at Chelmsford near Boreham.

Approximately 180 miles of good roads fine weather, we had enjoyed a fun day out, with some good progressive riding, especially as to begin with and for most of the day the riders didn't know where they were headed, but all agreed it was good. Thanks to Geoff, Robin and John for their good company. If anyone else would like to set up a mystery ride, just plan a route, make sure there are places for a comfort break and lunch, throw an event or place of interest in the mix to break up the day, and I'm sure members will be interest in joining in and have a great day out in good company also.

I have included the route in this write up as others may like to try it out.

Ashley John

ERAM SOCIAL RIDES

We are looking to hold ERAM social rides on the 3rd Sunday of every month. Please mark them in your diary and support them where possible.

To make these a success we would like to hear from people willing to lead or tail-end these rides. Peter Layley will lead where possible, but there are many others in the Group who have experience and know some absolutely wonderful routes. If you are willing/able to lead or tail-end a ride, please let me know and I'll circulate the details to everyone. Hopefully we can get future rides published so you will have advanced notice of full details, including starting time and location.

BSB, WSB and MotoGP Race Calendar 2008

August 2008

23rd - 25th British Superbike Championship rd 9, Cadwell Park.

29th - 31st MotoGP rd 13, Misano, San Marino.

September 2008

5th - 7th World Superbike Championship rd 10, Donington Park.

12th - 14th MotoGP rd 14, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Indianapolis, Indiana, United States.

12th - 14th British Superbike Championship rd 10, Croft.

26th World Superbike Championship rd 11, Vallelunga, Italy.

26th - 28th British Superbike Championship rd 11, Silverstone International Circuit.

26th - 28th MotoGP rd 15, Motegi, Japan.

October 2008

3rd - 5th World Superbike Championship rd 12, Magny-Cours, France.

3rd - 5th MotoGP rd 16, Phillip Island, Australia.

10th - 12th British Superbike Championship rd 12, Brands Hatch Indy Circuit.

17th - 19th MotoGP rd 17, Sepang, Malaysia.

24th - 26th World Superbike Championship rd 13, Portimao, Portugal.

24th - 26th MotoGP rd 18, Valencia, Spain.

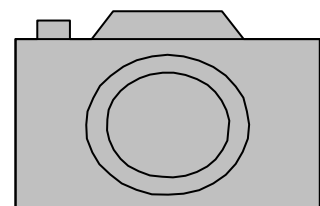
Riding in Groups by Paul Collins

Riding with your mates is great fun and one of many reasons why people ride motorcycles. When the better weather arrives, riders do like to get out on the almost ritual 'summer Sunday breakfast ride out' with their mates. Riding in these groups can be fraught with hidden dangers, here are some hints and tips if you are a **new rider** and **new** to riding in groups.

1. If you ride at the back of the group you can ride at your own pace. The more experienced riders at the front of the group should wait for you where they change direction. If you ride at the front of the group this is fine, but if you feel self-conscious being inexperienced then the first option maybe best. Sometimes the faster riders in the group can get frustrated and want to make better progress and you can feel the pressure.
2. Ride for yourself, don't be tempted to 'chase' the rider ahead, you'll find you're riding at a speed beyond your ability. This is what's known as suffering 'red mist'.
3. The group are bound to ride a favoured twisty road; thake your sharp bends, speed and overtaking places at a road speed and pace that you are perfectly happy with and able.
4. The group of riders should ride to the left or right of each other within the same lane in a staggered formation.
5. If one of the riding group members gets a bit excited it's easy to get aught up in all the bravado. **Don't.**

Before you ride; make sure you have thoroughly checked your machine over and you're riding gear.

Safe motorcycling and ride within the law,
Paul Collins



Take your camera with you and take a few pics and send them to newsletter@rospariders.co.uk (Ed)

APPROVED TUTOR'S COURSE

In the last Newsletter, Paul Collins set out details/requirements for the RoSPA Approved Tutor (Observer) qualification. Paul will be arranging the next Approved Tutor's course for sometime in October 2008, and to help those wanting to become an Approved Tutor we will also be arranging a preparation session. This will aim to cover the basic requirements on riding skills and Roadcraft knowledge so that candidates can prepare themselves fully for the actual course in October.

If you are interested in becoming an Approved Tutor, and would like to take advantage of the preparation session, please let Paul know. Paul's details can be found at the front of the Newsletter or he can be contacted at training@rospariders.co.uk.

Smurf



On a recent holiday Phil and I stopped off at a Biker Cafe near to the Nuerburgring in Germany. As you can see from the picture the Smart car is their way of advertising the Cafe, and what a great name, Cafe Fahrtwind. (Ed)

A Day Out With RAPID TRAINING by Colin Snow

Since Elke asked me to do an article on my experience with Rapid Training I have given it some thought because I'm well aware that there are members of the Group who give professional advanced rider training and by professional I mean they do it for money and / or earn a living from it so I want to make it plain from the outset that I'm not in any way trying to promote a "rival" organisation but simply describe my experiences from a "punters" point of view.

One could be forgiven for wondering why anybody in their right senses would want to pay serious money for this when you can get it for "free" from the Group and I'll try to answer that.

First I'll give you a little of my background with regard to motorcycling. I haven't owned "thousands" of bikes like some folk have, but my current bike, a ZZR 1100, is number six in my life having owned it for 11 years, my previous ZX10 lasted 9 years so I tend to find something I like and stick to it. I never had any formal motorcycle training at the outset just relying on the experience of the cycling proficiency test!! This was in the days when the examiner stood on the corner and you kept turning left or right. After failing the test the first time I knew what was involved and passed OK on the second attempt. The first 3 bikes were "commuter tools" the last 3, all Kawasaki were pleasure use only. I joined the EAMG in 1987 having been to the NEC Bike show and given them my details. After 3 observed rides I was told I was ready for the test & despite some doubt on my part passed it OK. Later I was "persuaded" to become an Observer. However I found having to be on call for work at weekends coupled with some Associates reluctance to come out I packed it in after a few years and have a life of my own. Having experienced some very derogatory remarks on my riding skills in early 2000 – I was told I was "crap"!! After initially dismissing the idea it began to prey on my mind & I began to wonder whether I should be on 2 wheels at all so I decided to go out of the area completely and have my riding looked at by someone who didn't know me from Adam, on totally unfamiliar roads and do it for a whole day and as it turned out some pretty dire road conditions.

I found out about Rapid Training through the Thames Vale IAM group who operate in several counties but are based in the Reading, Berks area. Apparently Rapid Training did all the independent testing of their Observers so I made further enquiries and found out that their instructors were all either serving or retired Police traffic officers based mainly with Thames Valley Police and one or two with the Met.

After having made contact with Gary Baldwin who deals with the admin side of it he allocated me to Mark who lived in Aston Clinton, Bucks. All the road courses start at the instructor's home so full directions were included plus a "Pre – Read" which is 4 pages of A4 describing the System in simple terms plus what to expect on the day.

The appointed day dawned with it pouring with rain, news on the radio that the M25 westbound was blocked so I had to ride through commuter land in the rush hours arriving feeling pretty cold at Mark's house. He expressed surprise that I had come at all saying that it was snowing in Oxford and that some folk ring up & say they've got a puncture!! After warming me up with coffee I explained why I had embarked on this and asked for a general overview of my rid-

ing but I wanted the truth and no bullshit. He kitted me up with a one way radio and after testing it was OK we set off, him leading the way out of his estate. He motioned me to overtake and within seconds the value of the radio manifested itself because I was receiving directions through an earpiece and therefore did away with the usual constant mirror checks looking for the instructor's indicators and therefore ride in the normal way and totally did away with the "are we, aren't we approach" to every turning. He tucked himself into my blind spot, riding really close so I was able to "forget" him and push my vision forward. I took it steady because water was coming out of field gates into the road in mini rivers although it had stopped raining. After about 20 minutes we stopped and he commented that I didn't seem have any problems with that bit of road & that other riders had come to serious grief on some of the bends.

Mark then took the lead and did a commentary demo ride of about 15 minutes which was a bit of a shock to be honest. The amount of information he was processing and prioritising whilst riding at a "brisk" pace was incredible. There didn't seem to be a noticeable pause in the commentary during the whole of the ride. After a stop in a Little Chef & a chat we carried on towards Banbury. I followed a truck for several miles unable to overtake it because of the wall of spray being thrown up being impossible to see through it.

After a lunch stop at Shipston on Stour we headed into the Cotswolds. On the road between Stow & Burford there were cars at about 150 yards apart and as I started to come back after overtaking the first one, Mark said no, stay out on the wrong side of the road, you've got the view & it's perfectly safe. Well I'd never been told that before. The roads were drying out & Mark urged me to pick up the pace as he said my safety margins were more than adequate. After some more ace B roads we stopped for another debrief at Charlbury then headed back & picked up the A41. On the outskirts of Aylesbury, Mark took the lead and terminated the ride at Aylesbury police station where we went up into the social club for a final debrief. Well, he said, I don't know about crap, which was the comment from the Observer that got me down this road, I think you could pass RoSPA gold with a very wide margin and continued to debrief the ride. Riding home I thought well I better reinsure the bike after all. After about a week a full written report on the day came through the post. I am eternally grateful to Mark for restoring my confidence in my own ability.

About 4 years later I did it again this time with Jon Taylor who lives in Surrey. Jon is an IAM staff examiner, and a Nurburgring instructor etc. Again starting at his house he had quite a few racing trophies on the mantelpiece + photos of his time in the police. The day followed a similar format with an assessment ride, a demo commentary ride on his part with the rest of day sorting my problems out. He commented that I wasn't smooth and I said yes that comment has been made before by Observers but no one up to now had told me what I should do about it. He said think of a shark going through the water and then makes one flowing turn, then think of an ant walking along – I was more like the ant so he wanted me to concentrate on my steering inputs. It wouldn't do anything for my safety but would improve the "look" of my riding. Again he picked up that I always put my right foot down when stopping – I do it so I can knock the bike out of gear when stopped but find it very difficult to apply my brain to do it with the other foot. Jon emphasised the need for correct positioning which in many cases removed the need to do a life-saver when turning left by controlling the flow of traffic around one. Although the format was the same as before it was a totally different day to the one four years earlier and I picked up new stuff.

Finally in April this year, again almost 4 years to the day, I had my third Rapid outing. Since the previous one I've had to modify my bike to a feet forward position because of sciatica in my right leg. What caused it I have no idea but it meant that I could just about get the edge of my heel on to the foot peg – anymore was absolutely excruciating – so it was a choice of giving up motorcycling altogether or do something to the bike. I've sat on loads of bikes at shows but none of them offer me the comfort of my now modified ZZR. This has also caused me to change the way I ride therefore I wanted an independent professional assessment of my riding.

Again an email to Gary Baldwin resulted in me meeting Graham at his house in Chatham. Sometimes it's the simple unintended things you can pick up on. At home there is a reasonable slope up to my garage so I always start the bike in it and check the lights & indicators etc because if I find it won't start in the road I can't push it back up the slope again. So as I watched Graham sitting on his bike and paddling it out I thought well if it's OK for him to do that, I can do the same because as I get older I'm increasingly unhappy about wheeling it around. The assessment ride seemed to go on forever and I started to wonder when we were going to stop. Again roads I've never ridden in my life until we pick up the A21 dual carriageway but that lasted for all of 2 miles and on to the unfamiliar ones again when we stopped at Goudhurst for tea & cakes. Unlike the previous two instructors Graham was making loads of notes?? His first comment was – well I was glad to see you weren't taking the IAM & RoSPA lines around some of those bends – the number of people who leave themselves to hang out to dry is unbelievable – methinks my day with Jon saw to that – which has the capacity to hurt more, the oncoming moving hazards or the fixed nearside ones?? He also said I had a powerful bike & wasn't afraid to use its performance – it was nice to see because it didn't often happen. Then with the aid of sketches he prioritised the areas we would concentrate on, one of which was overtaking.

There is a huge difference between having an observed ride and being debriefed at the roadside afterwards and being encouraged to follow your instructor at close quarters whilst he not only demonstrates what he wants but is talking through what he is seeing and doing because it's dynamic and then doing it yourself and again being talked through it while doing it. Analysing my own riding I was beginning to realize that my previous emphasis of "the triangle" has caused me to neglect taking the nearside view prior to an overtake. So we practised the 3 stage overtake procedure. The final stage which Graham called the "decision" phase and said was the bit most people omit & yet is the most important where you do a sideways movement into the other side of the road and hold that position and not overtaking while you take in the view of possible hazards in that position before deciding to either abort or accelerate & do the overtake.

On the way back to his house Chatham was blocked solid with traffic & I just followed filtering through really tight gaps which perhaps I wouldn't have done on my own. We discussed at length the day and he kept taking taking more notes. We talked about an issue I have problems with regarding lifesavers and the need to do an instant risk assessment of the merits or otherwise of doing a lifesaver in a given situation. He advised me that not only do you have to consider the amount of ground you cover whilst not looking where you're going but as you get older the time it takes for your eyes to refocus on the developing situation ahead. Before parting he warned me to take it steady on the way home because he was correct - I was on a high & buzzing!!!

About two weeks later I got an email with a six page report – now I know what all the notes were about – giving me plenty of "homework" to practise on.

It has been recently intimated to me that by paying "serious" money for these courses its "made" to be a fun day out. Well I can tell you that it's extremely demanding and very tiring. Perhaps I make it worse for myself because I do it 1:1 rather than the more usual 2:1 but my view is that I have the guy's undivided attention for a whole day & I'm satisfied that I get my money's worth. As Jon Taylor commented – why do we ride bikes at all – because it's fun.

Colin Snow

HELP!

We need help printing the ERAM Newsletter.

If you know someone in the print / publishing trade that would be willing to print our Newsletter free of charge in return for free advertising space please contact myself or any committee member.

Your help will be very much appreciated.

Elke
Newsletter Editor



EVENTS DIARY 2008

Date	Time	Event	Comments
SEPTEMBER			
Sunday 07 Sep 2008		Essex Air Ambulance Motorcycle Run and Harwich Festival Fun Day	ERAM Group Stand at Harwich on the Green. Contact Ashley for details.
Thursday 18 Sep 2008	7:30pm	ERAM Group Night	Essex Police Sports Pavilion, Chelmsford
OCTOBER			
Thursday 16 Oct 2008	7:30pm	ERAM Group Night Highway Code / Roadcraft Quiz	Essex Police Sports Pavilion, Chelmsford
NOVEMBER			
Thursday 20 Nov 2008	7:30pm	ERAM Group Night Roadcraft presentation by Ashley	Essex Police Sports Pavilion, Chelmsford
DECEMBER			
Thursday 18 Dec 2008	7:30pm	ERAM Group Night	Essex Police Sports Pavilion, Chelmsford

For information regarding training please email our Group Training Officer Paul Collins training@rospariders.co.uk or call 01245 381526

Associates please contact Paul to be allocated a Tutor. You should then liaise with your Tutor to schedule time/place to start your advanced training.

Tutor Training will be provided by the Groups Advanced Tutors on a structured 3 Day training programme. Interested Gold & Silver RoSPA Riders can train to become Approved Tutors and share their skills and help with Associate Training.

The next Tutor Training Course details will be announced by Paul. Entry upon the course will be subject to passing an exam and short presentation.