

Masters Test Report – Andy Anderson

Andy passed his DSA motorcycle test in 1978 and after a break returned to motorcycling about 10 years ago. He is a member of Solent Advanced Motorcyclists and became a Group Observer in 2011 and recently qualified as a National Observer. Andy is also a RoSPA Diploma holder and has tremendous enthusiasm not only for his own development but also helping others stay safe and learn appropriate skills.

For this test Andy used his BMW R1200GSA.

Weather conditions for this Masters Test were very poor. Heavy rain had stopped only minutes before the test started which left considerable surface water in places and autumnal debris / mud.

Traffic flow conditions were fairly light. The test was conducted over a variation of A,B and unclassified roads in urban and rural areas. The test mileage was 47miles and duration of 90 minutes.

From the outset it was a clear that Andy is a rider who is able to demonstrate a smooth and safe ride with a good balance of progress and restraint always linked to the poor conditions. The ride was with just a few exceptions, systematic and throughout Andy demonstrated courtesy to other road users where they had afforded us priority.

On this occasion I am pleased to say that Andy demonstrated the skill level for a Masters pass

We discussed the following areas at the final debrief:

System: There were 3 occasions where Andy had reduced speed and selected a lower gear as he approached a hazard followed by a speed change but then selected another lower gear before entering the acceleration phase. Two of these were approaching acute bends at lower speeds and one was at a junction. Other than that Andy clearly has a good working (and theory) knowledge of the system.

Cornering: Andy complied with the key principles of safe cornering throughout and taking into account the road conditions. His positioning for the bends was correct but he could have moved into position earlier on occasions. This would have afforded him an earlier view of the limit point and bend, critical in the poor conditions. We also discussed how his “breakaway point”, when he moved from say a right to a left hand bend could have been a little earlier. A possible reason for this may have been not always applying the right amount of acceleration as he left the bend which would then have an effect on his ability to move the machine into position for the next bend.

Positioning: Good use was made of positioning to avoid surface water and other rural deposits. Andy was always taking into account the position and movement of other road users. He reacted well to a pedestrian on a rural road giving them maximum safety as he passed. Additionally he positioned the machine well where the road surface condition was poorly surfaced and could easily have been slippery.

Rear Observations: I gave Andy directions via indicators and with just two exceptions he was picking them up really well thereby confirming his appropriate use of mirrors. On the two occasions he didn't I cannot be critical of that as road conditions dictated that his observations should be forward.

Legality: Andy remained within all speed limits with one exception where he just allowed the machine to creep up above a 20mph limit

Signals: Andy gave courtesy signals as required and also made use of arm signals to reinforce his indicators and brake lights. A left turn signal was used to good affect which enabled another road user to exit from a particularly difficult junction. We did discuss how timing of arm signals is critical to avoid braking or gear changing with one hand off the handle bars.

Progress v restraint: To Andy's credit he had to exercise restraint due to the poor conditions. However during the latter part of the test conditions had improved and he then adapted his progress accordingly. Unfortunately there were no opportunities to demonstrate overtaking – Andy followed two vehicles for a considerable distance which was a good example of appropriate restraint.

Future development: Andy is keen to further develop his skills and achieve a Masters Distinction in due course. We did discuss that to achieve that level will require perhaps a brisker ride with perhaps more "urgency" as we move from a 30 mph limit to the national for example. He did answer the Highway Code questions correctly but may need to consider further reading to demonstrate a better knowledge of Motorcycle Roadcraft

Summary: Overall despite the weather this was a really enjoyable session with a rider who has much to offer with his enthusiasm and commitment to Road Safety

Congratulations !!

Robbie Downing

IAM Staff Examiner