



SERV Chairman Tim Goodman flanked by GEM President Viscount Simon and Chairman Maureen Emms.

KEEPING THE BLOOD FLOWING

An introduction to GEM's recent decision to provide funding for advanced motorcycle training for all SERV riders. David Williams reports

IT'S AN all-too-common scenario across the country. There has been a road collision and someone arrives at A&E, badly injured, in an ambulance. An operation will take place, and blood is required. Elsewhere, there is a need for urgent analysis of a human tissue sample, and transport is needed to a regional testing centre. High-definition X-rays have been produced, but they are needed by a surgical team 40 miles away.

These are just a few of the tasks carried out by motorcyclists from the Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers (SERV). These people supply a safe, speedy and reliable service to local and regional hospitals for the supply of

emergency blood and other products. A network of regional teams provide cover every night of the year, starting at 7pm and remaining available through to 6am. During this time, a phone call from a hospital is all that's needed to activate the service. Alerted and provided with all necessary details of the required collection and delivery addresses, the rider sets off to complete the task, using a fully marked-up motorcycle.

Safety on this kind of journey is paramount. Riders follow pre-determined routes so that their controllers (also volunteers) know where they are at any time on the journey, and can provide accurate ETAs to hospitals.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

In April 1981, in Surrey, Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers was set up to supply a quick and reliable means of Transporting Emergency Blood and Blood Products to the hospitals and medical facilities at night. Prior to SERV, the only means available to hospitals, doctors and other medical establishments for the transport of emergency blood supplies at night were taxi, ambulance, police, courier, or transfusion service vehicle. Taxis and couriers were expensive and not always available, ambulances and police vehicles would have to be removed from other front-line tasks. SERV supplies this service free of any charge, thus ensuring that hospital/NHS funds can be directed towards improved patient care and other vital facilities.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What items do SERV riders transport?

They carry blood, pathology and microbiology specimens, patient notes, X-rays, frozen breast milk, and other medical supplies.

How many calls do you get each night?

We never know. Sometimes our regional teams can have a night without a call. At other times, we may be out all night, responding to call after call for the urgent deliveries.

You say it's a voluntary service, but surely someone pays your fuel and running costs?

No, we do it all ourselves. In a busy week, the fuel bill can top £500, so it's vital that we secure as much financial assistance as possible. The service is being used more and more, so we're getting busier.

What motorcycles do you use?

Each regional scheme is responsible for obtaining its own bikes. Typical models include the Honda ST1300 Pan European and the BMW R1200RT. They may be new, or ex-police models.

Do you have target times for your deliveries?

We typically try to ensure that a delivery is made within two hours of the initial call-out.



GET INVOLVED?

SERV press officer Danny Bateman explains:

SERV is a registered charity and operates all over the UK. The regional branches are always looking for bike and car driving volunteers prepared to give up their time, or just people to help with fund-raising or as controllers. Volunteers have an assessment ride, training for the routes and training on dealing with hazardous spills. It isn't about riding flat out, with flashing blue lights. If you think it is, we don't want to hear from you. It's about helping save lives and getting vital packages from one location to the other quickly and safely. If you want to give something back, please visit serv.org.uk.



GEM'S DECISION TO SUPPORT SERV

GEM's Road Safety Charity decided that a donation towards the cost of advanced rider training would be appropriate. SERV's chairman, Tim Goodman, told us of the need to reduce risks wherever possible on these emergency journeys. "We know we must reduce the risk of actual and potential personal injury road accidents involving our volunteers. Analysis of our data showed that the majority of incidents and near-miss reports involved riders or drivers without any advanced qualification."

GEM is delighted to be contributing towards SERV's worthy goal of ensuring that all its volunteers are offered training for an advanced riding qualification within the next three years. We know this will help enhance SERV's culture of professional advanced road skills across the entire organisation.

ALL DONATIONS, HOWEVER SMALL, HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN IT TO US WITH YOUR GIFT.



CAN YOU HELP THE GEM ROAD SAFETY CHARITY?



We are hugely grateful for any donations, however small. Please complete the details below and return to:
**GEM Motoring Assist Road Safety Charity,
Station Road, Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 5EN.**

1 NAME
 ADDRESS

 POSTCODE
 AMOUNT OF DONATION
 GEM MEMBERSHIP NUMBER (if held)

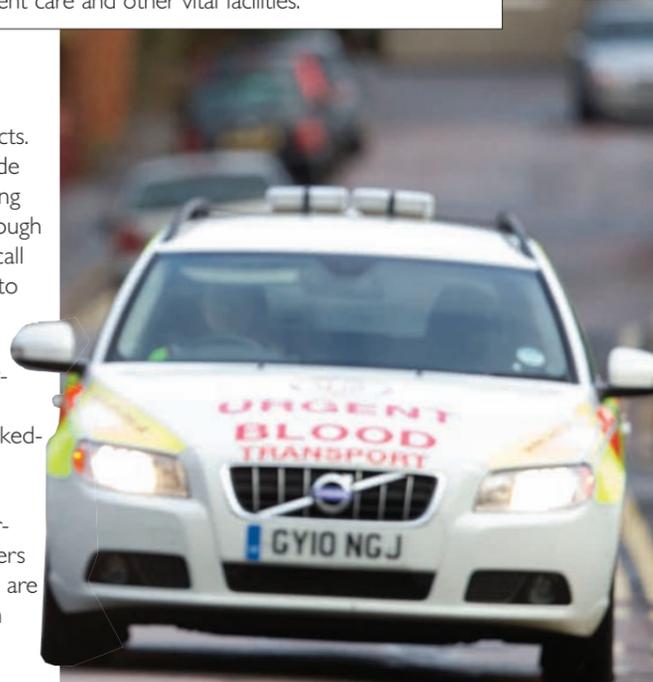
2 I would like to donate to the charity via a direct debit or standing order made payable to GEM Road Safety Charity

3 We would be very pleased to acknowledge any significant donations to the Charity by publishing the donor's name in future editions of Good Motoring. Are you happy that we acknowledge your donation in this way? Yes No

4 You may be willing to include a donation to the Charity in your will. If this is the case, please tick HERE! and we will arrange to contact you.

5 **GIFT AID** If you are a tax payer you can use Gift Aid to increase your donation by 25p for every £1 given. Just tick the box below to allow the Charity to claim Gift Aid direct from HM Revenue & Customs. I would like to Gift Aid this above donation (tick)
 I understand that I must have paid an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax you receive on my donation.

Signature Date



Pics: Peter Whyte