



WHAM! NEWS

August 2010

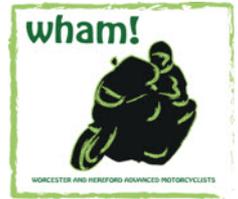


Photo by Peter Austin Photography

John Nixon on a IAM Rider Skills Day - Full Report pages 6/7

Contents

2. Chairman's Notes & Bits and Pieces
3. CONGRATULATIONS
4. Hereford Sunday Rides and Natter Nights
5. Report on North Wales Ride 18 July
- 6/7. John Nixon's Silverstone IAM Rider Skills Day
- 8/9. Angus Mcleod's Solo Trip to Shönnewalde Forest

www.wham-motorcycling.org

Worcester and Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists.

Affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists. Group No. 3260

Contact the Editor: Newsletter@wham-motorcycling.org

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN WHAM!NEWS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR, THE IAM OR THE WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

Chairman's Notes

Countdown

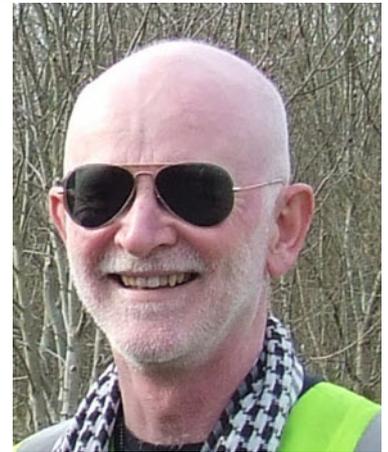
No I'm not going on some TV quiz!

I on a countdown for my trip to the Himalayas, I'm off in a week and wondering if I'll get used to the right-foot gearshift on my Himalayan motorcycle - a Royal Enfield - before the end of the trip.

This has been a long time in the planning and now, as is usual, it has all come around rather quickly. I have my off-road armour, enough First Aid kit to start a MASH unit, a map of sorts (such a shame the British left before they completed the Ordnance survey) and enough clothing layers to be able to cope with the wild variations of Himalayan climate; apparently it can be killer sunshine >30°C to Force 10 Arctic storm, and every shade in between all in a day. I guess if I don't like the weather I won't have to wait long for it to change!

We have another countdown too, I'm stepping down from the Chairman's role at the end of the year and Brian Morgan, our current Vice Chairman, will take over. Those of you at the last Natter will know Brian is already taking a more active role in the running of the Group. Brian is a very easy-going and engaging personality but delightfully modest about his motorcycle experience with the Police. I'll just say we are very lucky to have his extensive experience in the Group.

Derek



Bits and Pieces

WHAM has a dedicated phone number!!

*WHAM now has its own phone number, please add it to your directory - **0300 365 0556**.*

Your committee decided that to help you communicate your ideas, concerns, requests for refresher rides/advice and to volunteer your assistance to the committee, we needed to be more accessible.

We decided on an 0300 number as this is only available to charities and is not usually as expensive as ringing a number beginning 08 from your mobile - costs vary between providers. (I am sure you appreciate none of us wanted our private numbers on the web!!)

The number diverts to the home phone of a member of the committee, so you are more likely to be answered if you ring at weekends or during the evening. (Please ring before 2100hrs, if possible, as some of us have to be up early in the morning and, as those of you who were there on the July Evening ride heard, Brian was keen to point out the advancing years of your committee!!) There is a facility for you to leave a message and we will get back to you within 48 hours.

Obviously this number will be advertised to assist prospective members in contacting the group.

I find 0300 easy to remember, Eric tells me he remembers the 365 because it is the number of days in the year, so if anyone can come up with an easy way to remember 0556 - give us a ring!!

Barb Dalloway

Sunday Morning Rides

Many of you will have noticed that we have recently changed the format of the group ride-outs. Following on from the feedback from the recent club survey, the website now headlines the destination (cafe stop) of each ride and there are two start points; the usual one at McDonalds in Worcester and a new one at the Belmont Road McDonalds in Hereford (see page 4 for more details). We have planned routes from each start point that use some of the best roads in the area, these routes can be found in PDF roadbook and Garmin Mapsource format next to each ride's details in the Programme section of the website. Alternatively, just pick your own start point and meet up with us at the cafe stop, E.T.A. s are published with the routes.

Please also note that the old route list from the website is no longer used. We decided that we needed to introduce some new routes and revise many of them due to creeping 50 limits and closure of some of the cafe stops. So far Brian Morgan and Steve Edwards have made some excellent contributions to the new routes and I welcome any suggestions from the membership, so, if you know a good route from either destination to a decent cafe stop then please let me know.

As ever, any constructive feedback you can give us on the ride-outs is welcomed so please let us know if you think we can improve the format etc.

Looking forward to seeing you on one of our ride-outs soon!

Tony Davis

Welcome

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO REBECCA PURT FROM CHELTENHAM



CONGRATULATIONS

Many congratulations to the following members who have successfully passed their IAM Advanced Motorcycling Test .



Andrew Price
Observer - Tim Wynn



Raf Oya
Observer - Derek McMullen



Colin Telford
Observer - Steve Edwards



Roger Brooks
Observer - Guy Jenkins



SUNDAY RIDES FROM HEREFORD

In response to numerous requests we have now arranged some routes for Sunday rides from Hereford. Routes will be available on the WHAM website (click on 2010 Programme) for every Sunday for whoever wants to turn out but the presence of an organiser can only be guaranteed for 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month for the time being. Anyone wishing to go on a Sunday ride must read the WHAM! "Sunday Ride Policy" which is on the website homepage.

The website gives details of the destination for the Worcester contingent and it is intended that the Hereford routes all start from McDonalds in Belmont at 9am (9.30 am in winter) and direct riders to the same destination. It is also open to riders to make their own way to the destination if they wish so as to meet up with other members for some socialising and the expected time of arrival at the destination will be included in the route information.

Work is still going on to try and design some more interesting routes and these will be included on the website as soon as possible. Everyone is welcome and all members are encouraged to turn out whenever possible so we can make a go of this. Hope to see you there.

Brian Morgan

LAST OF THE SUMMER NATTER NIGHT RIDES

For summer months we combine the Natter nights with an evening ride which is open to all. We have 2 meeting points - McDonalds in Worcester and McDonalds in Belmont, Hereford. Please be there between 6.30 and 7.00 pm. Each group will leave promptly and then enjoy circuitous and interesting routes before arriving and meeting at the Falcon Hotel in Bromyard between 8.30 and 9.00 pm. for a drink, a chat and any club business. This is an excellent opportunity for all members, observers and associates to have a really enjoyable evening ride. If you cannot make it to McDonalds in time, then why not join us at the Falcon Hotel. Please make a note in your



Derek, our chairman, joins the Hereford July Natter Night ride - just for a change!!

diary now for: **Wednesday 25 August – the last of this year's Summer Evening Rides.**

JULY NATTER NIGHT - Another very enjoyable evening!



Colin Telford receives his IAM Certificate from his observer, Steve Edwards



Vice Chairman, Brian Morgan, talked to us about the development of WHAM and the need for volunteers.





14 hardy souls turned up at Leominster for the day's ride.

NORTH WALES RIDE. *There was a very successful North Wales Ride on Sunday 18 July. Many thanks to Steve Edwards for organising it all . This is his report on the day.*

Decent weather held for the off despite some threatening clouds, but I still kept my waterproofs on, just in case. Some lovely sweeping bends, hairpins and great views got us to Bishops Castle (excellent local brewery) where I stopped to take my waterproofs off as it hadn't rained and looked to be clearing up. It promptly rained for the length of the High Street!



Big, bright yellow motorcycle parked on side of road under big brown and yellow sign - CLUE - this is the first tea stop. Everyone rode past! Observation skills? Observation links?!!

More great roads over to Newtown, up into the hills to Llanfair Caereinion for morning tea stop - very well received by all once they had turned round and rode back to it.

Oh dear! Tea, coffee, calorie laden cakes later, a heady mixture of B road bends, hairpins, climbs and dips and we were in for lunch at Llangynog, where by sheer coincidence the Off road party from earlier in the year had stopped for their weekend.

After a great lunch the weather was looking a bit iffy, and as we climbed over to Bala and beyond we were in the mist with a fair old wind blowing - and nothing to do with the lunch! Just before the petrol stop, we saw 3 bikers coming the other way, and gave them a wave. They waved back, and we all thought "don't we know them from somewhere?"

Well done Ant, Eric and Andrew for going a different way.

It really got breezy in the afternoon, and with some damp patches halfway round some great bends, tea and a huge slice of ginger cake draped in hot custard was definitely the order of the day back at Llangynog for mid afternoon tea. Fourteen started the day, thanks to all who made it, and eight saw it through to the end stop at Wooferton south of Ludlow on the A49.

All in all, great roads, great company, and hope to see you all next year for a re run.

Safe and happy riding,

Steve Edwards



Ant turned up "latish" - problems with deciding which power mode button to press. "It's only done 89 miles I'm still running it in!"

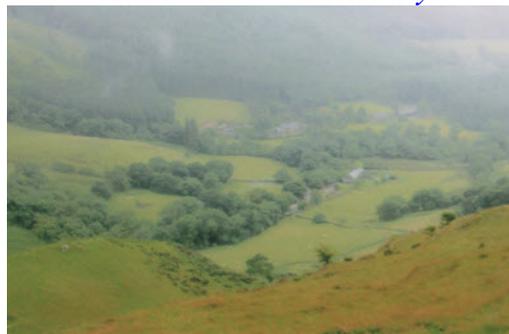


We want our dinner now! Is this the right place?



We've had too much dinner and can't get back on our bikes

The hills were a bit misty



IAM RIDER SKILLS DAY AT SILVERSTONE - 20 JULY 2010

John Nixon

5.30am up, one and a half hours to Silverstone 7.30 check in, seven sessions on track and one and a half hours back is too full a day for safety in my world given the last time I did the Mallory Skills day in 2008 I could barely ride home. I think I got the dreaded 'arm pump' which I think is when you can barely open the throttle because the arm is so tired and hurts. Probably caused by lactic acid build up in the muscles from being tense and gripping too hard.

So an overnight at Home Farm B and B at Caldicot (highly recommended) on the evening before was booked. On arrival at the 'don't be here before 5pm' appointed time, I wandered up to a door thinking, it must be this one, when another opened and a blonde, shapely lady in a white bikini which contrasted vibrantly with her tan, appeared at a door over to my left. She didn't see me standing there in full leathers.

I said 'Hello'.

Shriek!

"I'm so sorry, having a family party, will put some clothes on" and she disappeared.

A very comfortable stay. I was joined by another lad who arrived with an RSV4 on a trailer. He was a real track day junkie who was attending a HotTrax track day at Silverstone using the GP Circuit, whilst us IAM lot were to be on the 1.2 mile Stowe Circuit.

Sign in was well under way by 7.30am and our Chairman was there to welcome me as well. Good for the nerves.

My 'intermediate skill level' group of 5 featured an older Pan, FJR1300, Hayabusa, Blackbird and my Fazer. Our instructor was Kelvin (Police Class 1) on a Firestorm. All of us 'of a certain age'. Having said that I was pleased to see some ladies present and some younger IAM members too. One attractive young lady was riding what I thought was an R6 but turned out to be an R1. Nice!

The Safety Briefing came next and was simply excellent. Clear, comprehensive, firm and detailed. No messing about, no undertaking, no recklessness or you were to be sent home, taillights between legs.

There were 7 sessions on the track with each preceded by a 15 minute 'skills briefing' by an experienced racer (in our case). We started with steady sighting laps, practiced observation – look where you want to go "*where your nose points your arse will follow*", then braking 'smooth on' and very importantly 'smooth off' and then hard braking. Then sessions on gearchanging, then accelerating, then positioning and body position.

Stowe Circuit is quite tight which on the one hand kept speeds low but on the other meant lots and lots of cornering practice. Feedback received by myself was directed on my body position and dragging the back brake unwittingly.



Photo by Peter Austin Photography



Funnily enough this last fault has been something of an odd thing. Ant Clerici noticed it returning from our Slow Riding Day and on an observed ride last month I must have been just dragging it for some time as the brake completely faded as I came into the stop place.

You see, lots of riders in the club use balls of feet on the pegs, not the instep. Well, I was brought up on old 60's machinery and in the 60's I was taught to cover the brake (wrong side in those days) and the gear pedal with the feet, allowing for immediate application. Old habits die hard.

So once again, I changed to balls of feet on the pegs. Actually on the Circuit this became a necessity as on one left hander, my touring boot (rain was forecast) which has no sliders, caught on the track and wrenched my foot from the peg altogether. Bit of a wobble. Gradually I got better at this major change (for me) in riding style. And it paid off. The 'hero' blob on my left hand peg is now ground down a bit....who's a hero now then!

The big learning for me was how to relax in 'extreme' cornering.

The briefings kept saying 'relax' but it was only when our coach said words to the effect of "*to relax, in the corners when you're well cranked over, release your hand grip on the bars and flex your elbows. You'll find the bike stays on line and doing this will show you the difference in being tense and relaxed.*" "*If you don't relax you'll get arm pump and that's horrible.*"

He also said something like "*The only time you need to tense up is when gripping the tank with your knees as you brake. This makes sense as it keeps you from sliding forward and upsetting the fore/aft balance of the bike.*"

The very next time out I realized how tense I was and so decided to deliberately stop trying to go fast and to practice his advice. And it helped. On the afternoon sessions I found myself enjoying it even more and feeling more confident. I think I tense up much too much on the road as well. I got positive feedback from Kelvin that my afternoon riding and 'hanging off' was much better than the morning.

Altogether a thoroughly well organized and managed event. Very safe and very useful for learning. I thoroughly recommend it to all WHAM! members.



Photo by Peter Austin Photography



Solo Trip to Shönnewalde Forest via Harwich – Angus McLeod

I was going to travel with Ian Garrard (former Chief Obs at TVAM) as I have before but this fell through at the last minute, so I went alone. I took the Harwich-to-Hoek overnight ferry, arriving two hours early to be one of the first on board, eating swiftly and achieving a reasonably long night sleep without any conscious awareness of the boat ever moving or docking (Stena-line). And, no, I was not soaked in alcohol!

The Netherlands is rarely of any interest for bikers, the most exciting thing was a solitary seagull – that was it! Most roads are motorway or banded to form very narrow lanes between solid white lines so that filtering is impossible – locals also get upset by filtering towards traffic lights and limits are very slow, down to 30kph in villages and for miles just 50kph (31mph). I took the N344 from west of Anheim to relieve the motorway horror, but found huge roadworks around Deventer. Things got better from the German border



near Nordhorn. The old L60 runs east to Quakenbruck, then north a few miles to Essen (Oldenburg) on the B68 and east again on the L843 for Bahlen and Vechta, continuing east to Goldenstadt on the L881 before heading north for Bremen on the L882. Some of this route is like a B-road, other parts like lanes with exquisite barns (picture). I stayed over in Bremen and decided, weather permitting to return this part of the route on the way back. There are a few cameras but all forward facing which to my mind is not really as 'safe' as our own, where the flash does not take your retinas out.

Bremen is a great City (2nd most populous). Sitting on the Weser River, it boasts a 'Becks Brewery' (though Brit ale enthusiasts will find the phrase tautologous). I spent a pleasant evening with a friend overlooking the river. There is a very large statue of Roland (1404), the 'protector of the city' in the main square as well as the famous Bremen animals: standing on each other are a donkey, a dog, cat and rooster derived from the Brothers Grimm story, 'The Bremen Town Musicians' (1819). If you look carefully enough, you can find a drain cover and an inscription, inviting you to deposit your coins through a slot. At each deposit, one of the four animals makes its appropriate noise. Al fresco eating is popular and the open market has all manner of food and goods for sale.



From Bremen I took the old Soltau road (71) and at Seebenau into



the land of the former, Soviet-controlled DDR and stretches of cobblestones (picture) sometimes for 3-5 miles at a stretch – it can be a bit wearing when rutted! The Havelberg ferry crosses the R. Elbe for about 2 Euros and uses the stream for most of the energy to pass across (picture). I followed the same road all the way to Friesack about 20 miles west of Berlin and then the route 5 to Nauen.

I was headed for the former DDR sector and the Shönnewalde Forest. The whole of the westerly Falkensee road was closed as were large sections of the junctions of the A10 to the West of the capital. These blocks gave an extra 50 minutes on the journey, just when I did not want

it. Fortunately the weather stayed dry, but with traffic building, numerous intersections, traffic lights and speed limits (between 20-50Km), the late afternoon became a damned slog.

The Shönnewalde is beautiful and as with all Germany, is light-years ahead of Britain with cycle paths. There are many hundreds of kilometres of delightful cycling, lakes, canals, river and forest to explore and, if you look hard enough, remains of The Wall, pill-boxes and other evidence of Soviet presence



including dull, basic architecture in uniform grey. The landscape though, is enchantingly gorgeous. I attended an evening of opera (Barber of Seville) in a ruined monastery, both of unimaginable quality - so good that champagne seemed the only appropriate drink. The Kloster Chorin is open on one side now and the roof space is just oak beams, permitting a superb acoustic. Apparently the festival entices master voices to perform for low rates for the privilege of taking part in this wonderful environment. I felt privileged to be there.

I decided to take the 188 back from Berlin, tracking more southerly via Rathenau and skirting Wolfsburg. Much of this has good road and is forested but the 70Km limits on any bend over about 50 degrees is a bore, though cameras are much less infrequent on these Hannover-controlled roads. I then travelled north-west via the lovely Celle (214) to return to my Soltau route and Bremen. The road to Celle is faster and for those men more adventurous than I, you will find 40 or more camper vans with tell-tale red lights in the windscreens, bouffant bleached babes up front (if not working in the rear – pun intended) and traditional relief for the ‘single’ man. These are parked up only a few metres from the road on just about every side-track into the woods. I was travelling too quickly to hear squeaking suspensions.

This was my second visit to Celle on the R. Aller and very worth while a look around (picture) with many biker-friendly restaurants and al fresco eating on pedestrian-only, cobbled streets. For the strong-hearted, Bergen-Belsen is nearby. I always urge people to visit concentration camps (if you are allowed out again freely) and memorial sites;



two years ago I was in Auschwitz-Birkenau (Oświęcim, Poland, near Kraków). At Belsen, the camp was totally razed (unlike Auschwitz), but the mass-graves are a few feet high and grassed over. These vast areas are right-angled raised-lawns of huge size (and there are many of them) and each one has a small plaque as you might find in a garden of remembrance for a single burial spot; here though the inscription may inform, ‘15,000 Jews buried here’. It is sobering. The visitor centre is graphic, black & white photos increasing the emotional impact of the messages. It is a duty to go.

I returned via Bremen and another lovely evening by the Weser. My route back was identical except I took more motorway in Holland. The absence of any opportunity for overtakes and tortoise speed-limits almost make the thorough and loathsome endurance of motorway-travel a delight!

The overnight ferry was again great though the Stena breakfast (unless you dress like a lorry –driver and visit their better restaurant) is rather awful –fake croissants, dodgy sausages and dried up bacon even as the doors open for the first bleary-eyed biker. Take something to eat with you. Dinners are not too bad if you are selective, from smoked salmon to salads or fish and chips.

After the Netherlands, England, with all its bloody cameras and 50 limits is a delight and my heart sang again. Suddenly 60mph felt rather daring and a dry ride home via the old roads was a perfect end to my adventure.

Now, I plan for the Picos in northern Spain for my traditional September extended holiday with friends in a few weeks time. I am looking forward to that. I was told a story about a biker who was pulled over in the Picos mountains by a rare, motorcycle policeman. He ordered the biker off his machine and then sat astride it. He started the engine, threw the keys of his cop-bike to the surprised biker and said in faltering English, ‘follow me’. At first the biker thought he had been booked for riding a bike, somehow not meeting Spanish regulations, or that it was being formally ‘impounded’. The biker fully expected that he would now be escorted to a police station. In fact, the policeman sped off like a bat out of hell and when the biker caught him up, about 30 miles further on, the policeman smiled broadly, swapped bikes and rode off. Yes, I am rather looking forward to leading one of the fast runs in the Picos this year!

