



WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2012

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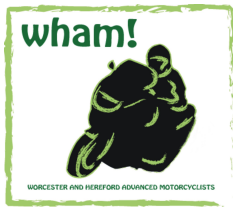
Worcester and Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists are affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists. Group No 3260

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URL www.wham-motorcycling.org





CHAIRMAN'S NOTES



November 2012.

Christmas Dinner.

This year's Christmas dinner is booked for Friday 14th December at The Falcon Hotel, Bromyard. You can find full details of the menu below and, for those who have yet to sample the culinary delights that the Falcon has to offer, I can guarantee you won't be disappointed. The only difference this year is that, by popular demand, we will have some 'entertainment' provided. We managed to rule out a disco (showing my age now) so we will have a singer attending to entice you onto the dance-floor – it's either that or I make a very long speech! The artist in question is Steve Palmer who tells me that his repertoire is suitable for all tastes and is a mix of 60's and 70's songs. Obviously, dancing is not compulsory but Andy Peckston assures me that he will show us all how it's done (I can hardly wait). The cost is **£20 per person** (inc' the entertainment). For my sins I am responsible for the organisation (not the cooking) and I need to sort out numbers attending / seating arrangements as soon as practicable. Also, I would prefer not to be dealing with cheques/cash etc on the night so, if you would like to join in please e-mail me at (bam49@fsmail.net) with details of how many seats you require. I will then respond to those wishing to attend with details of where to send payment and menu choices etc. Places will be allocated on a 'first come – first served' basis so please don't delay.

For those who haven't attended previous Christmas dinners with us, it is a relatively informal event, there will only be one speech (mine) and it won't take long. It is an excellent opportunity to join in, socialise and have some fun with other members of our group so please come along.

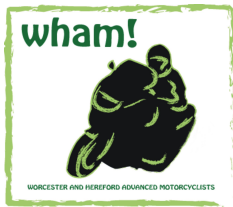
Anyone wishing to book a room will need to contact the Falcon on **01885 483034**

The Ashes.

Team WHAM did it again. Unless you've been on a distant planet for the last few months, you should have a fair idea of what this is all about. The Region 3 Ashes competition took place at Gaydon, Warwickshire on Saturday 13th October. The fact that WHAM won the event last year did put some additional pressure on this year's team. Our team, which consisted of Steve Hackett, Richard Hewitt, Simon Manning and Stuart Poole rose to the challenge and fought off the best that region 3 could throw at them. In addition, Simon Manning was the 3rd placed individual. On behalf of all the members of WHAM, I'd like to congratulate our guys for bringing the shield back home.

[continued on next page](#)





CHAIRMAN'S NOTES



Also, I'd like to thank Den Osborne and Eric Reynolds for making the trip and for carrying out some of the assessed rides, Tony Davis for helping with the machine faults section and Ali Davis who actually let us 'break' her pride and joy so we could use it as a 'faulty' machine. Finally – to all the guys that turned up to support our team – many thanks. Of course – this all just adds more pressure to next year's team but we'll worry about that in the new year!!

Calendar.

As mentioned previously, we are hoping to create a WHAM calendar for 2013 made up from photographs submitted by WHAM members. You will find a link on the home page of our website via which photographs can be submitted for consideration. I have already received quite a few but we could do with more. Generally, the photographs need to have been taken this year but, if you have any slightly older ones that you think should be included please send them in. Albeit they need to be bike related I'd prefer to think of them as being WHAM related and to possibly include some faces if possible and any group photos taken during our rides or other events can also be included. The closing date for submissions is 30th November.

Natter night.

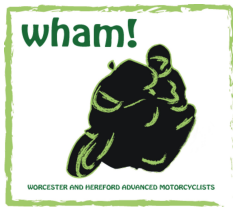
Our next natter night is scheduled for 28th November and it is hoped that we will have a visit from Wayne Harrison. Wayne is a fireman but is also involved in marshalling and incident management at the IoM TT races. This promises to be an interesting and informative presentation and, as always, I hope to see as many of you as possible on the night.

I think that's it for now

Keep smiling.

Brian.





NOTICEBOARD

DEL BRITTON - TRIP TO NORMANDY

I am planning a ride to the Normandy beaches (France) between the 26th to 30 Sept 2013, the plan is to see some of the second World War landing beaches, museums and War graves combined with days riding around Normandy and the outline areas, the B&B location is just three hundred metres from the British D Day landing beach of 'SWORD' with its museum and 360 degree cinema. A more detailed outline brief and costing will follow but if there is any one interested now please email me on VKR1200RT@hotmail.co.uk.

WANTED: 125cc motorbike or scooter anything considered around £400/500

Please contact :Paul Rodway on 01905 357658

FOR SALE: Brand new unused Pinlock Insert 102-clear

- Fog resistant
- Interchangeable
- 100% UV protection
- Easy to clean
-

Contact details are: mob 07971677514 or 01432880799

email alfiemeglewis@yahoo.co.uk

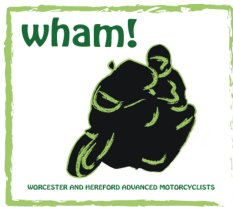
REMINDER

EDITOR AWAY FROM HIS DESK - NOVEMBER 9 - 17TH

REMINDER ALL ARTICLES FOR PUBLISHING TO BE SUBMITTED

NO LATER THAN LAST DAY OF THE MONTH





NOTICEBOARD

SUNDAY RIDE, NOVEMBER 25TH THE ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL

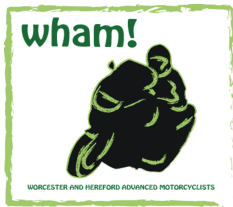
The Armed Forces Memorial, dedicated in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen on 12 October 2007, is a nationally significant focus for Remembrance. It honours the men and women of Her Majesty's Armed Forces who have lost their lives in conflict or as a result of terrorist action or on training exercises since the end of the Second World War.

The Memorial is a stunning piece of architecture comprising a 43 metre diameter stone structure with two curved walls and two straight walls containing the names of those honoured here. Since the end of World War II the men and women of the Armed Forces, often supported by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy, have taken part in more than 50 operations and conflicts across the world, often as part of United Nations, NATO or other international coalitions.

This Ride is not instead of the normal Sunday ride out; If you would like to ride we are meeting at the 'OK Cafe' Leominster at 09.00hrs after a briefing departing at 09.30hrs arrival time will be around 11.00hrs. There is ample parking there and to save walking around the Arboretum carrying your helmet it is advised to take a top box or helmet lock. The cafe is large and comprehensive but a little expensive. The Arboretum is free of charge, donations are appreciated to help us to maintain and develop the site. Individuals can stay for as long as they like and either return as per the route on the WHAM web site or make there own way back, please just let me know if you are departing.

If you are interested in riding email Del B on VKR1200RT@hotmail.co.uk or just turn up at 09.00hrs,

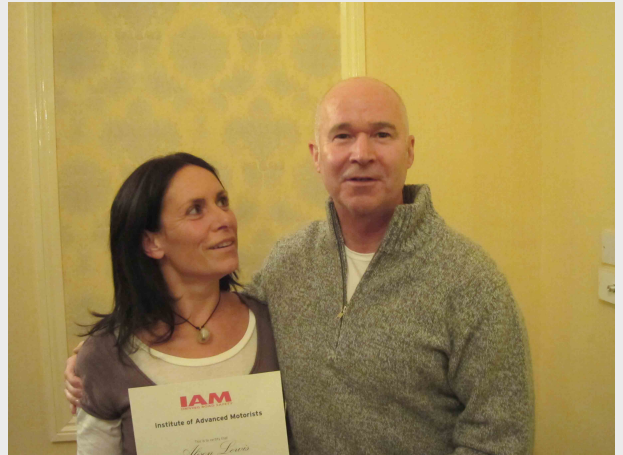




CONGRATULATIONS



Denise Anderson - I.A.M. Pass
Observers - Ant Clerici, Eric Reynolds



Ali Lewis - I.A.M. Pass
Observer - Del Britton



Wham's successful Ashes Team (missing is Richard Hewitt)
Simon Manning, Steve Hackett, Stuart Poole.

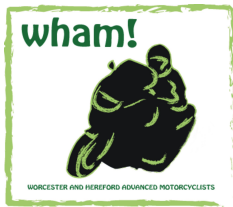


Richard Hewitt - I.A.M. Pass
Observer - Paul Whitcombe

I.A.M.Pass - Alex Baddeley

Observer - John Nixon





MEMBERS ARTICLES

IAM Test Experience. By Denise Anderson

After some gentle persuasion from the multitude of observers that had shadowed me over the last year or so, I know it's taken a long time, I finally accepted that I was up to the standard of taking the test, so Test day was booked.

Friday 19th October, started with a dentist appointment at 9am, followed by a dash home to get ready for the event. Paperwork in order, bike checked, I set off to the biker cafe at Quatt, the roads were damp and it was a bit foggy. I arrived early and parked up so I was facing the exit on the flattest bit I could find, no mean feat when it is quite a slope with a poor surface.

I went into cafe to meet Kelvin (examiner) who was having a cooked breakfast, something I could not have eaten if you paid me!

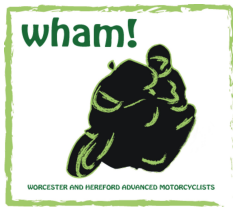
We had a chat about what had brought me to the test point, and what he expected of me during the ride. He explained the route through Bridgnorth, to Shifnal, onto M54 and finally onto A449 in Wolverhampton ending up at McDonalds for the debrief.

My mind at this point is in overdrive as I don't know these roads very well, he assured me it did not matter if I took a wrong turn, just as well!

Before we left the cafe he asked me to do a figure of 8 on the car park, great idea I thought, uphill or downhill and on that surface, in the end you just get on and do it, thank heavens for slow riding days. Into Bridgnorth so far so good, slow control through road works, then a line of traffic, should I filter or not? I did for 1 car but as there was oncoming traffic decided not a good move and slipped into line of traffic. Out onto country roads, relatively clear, good speed and progression then came an overtake - 4 Cars travelling at 50 evenly spaced do I or don't I, as soon as I went I knew it was wrong, as I pulled out, oncoming traffic appeared I should have dropped back but carried on passing one car, it was not horrendous, just not up to scratch. The next overtake could have started earlier and I could have passed 2 cars but only did one, pulled in then did the other, "there was no oncoming traffic so why did I pull in" I mutter.

Next into Shifnal. At a T junction I should have turned right I went left! had to do 1st 'U' turn, all ok. On to a good set of roads, windy and open with a few hazards including a brace of pheasants that said hello as they flew past the front of me. Despite being warned, that immediately before the railway bridge I had to turn left then immediately right, I managed the left and forgot the right, 2nd 'U' turn. Thru Shifnal onto the M54 happy with this bit, good speed, negotiated overtakes well and spotted the 50 mile speed limit in time, the cars did not! [Continued on next page](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Off the M54 onto the A449 Wolverhampton ring road, straight into stationary traffic due to road works. Again do I filter or don't I, big artic on left slow moving cars ahead. I waited till I passed the artic then filtered up slowly, car in front decides to change lanes so I stop go to pull off and stall. The profanities muttered are not repeatable. At this point I think well if I have passed it is a miracle. No time for dawdling, did my checks and set off again. Carry on up to a set of lights on green, cars moving through slowly but also turning right across the road. As I moved forward a car on my right lets a car turn right across our traffic stream. I managed to adjust my speed to allow the car through and carry on. As we approached the next roundabout the lanes merged to one with a big road work lorry blocking the view to the roundabout to the right, slow riding again and off we went.

Negotiating the next 6 roundabouts really well, then I took a wrong exit, into Wolverhampton student accommodation car park. 'U' turn number no3!

Found the examiner again, another 2 roundabouts and turn off into MacDonald's.

As I get off the bike I am thinking no way have I passed, too many uncertainties.

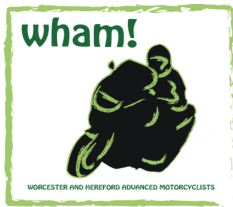
Kelvin asked how I felt it had gone; "honestly" I said "great in some bits and rubbish in others." Well he replied overall I really enjoyed it and you have passed, however you need to work on your overtakes!

The debrief over a Latte was fair and brought up all the bits I thought I had done poorly on. He was complimentary on my positioning and general riding style and gave me good feedback on the areas to improve. OVERTAKING!!

Thank you to all my observers, Eric, Ant, Den, Derek, Brian, Annie and Richard and extra vote of thanks to Den for the slow riding days

I look forward to riding as a bone-fide IAM rider, still with lots to learn and, I hope, many fun hours of improving my riding skills.





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Girl power by Ali Lewis

My journey to taking my IAM motorcycle test started in June 2012 my passion for motorcycling started back in 1990.

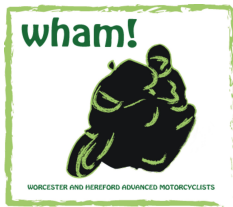
My first bike was a ZXR400 a pretty little deep red wine colour, I then progressed to a ZXR 750 a lovely pale blue colour (not sure if bike colour is a girl thing? I'm sure it's not!) Anyway after five years of freedom and fun on bikes my life changed dramatically. I had children. At this point I decided it was even more important to stay alive, therefore it would be very grown up of me to sell my bike and be a sensible mother. So this is what I did. For a number of years this was OK, I coped well, I didn't actually have time to even think about what I was missing.

Then it happened.... I started having a reoccurring dream (steady, it wasn't like that!) in the dream I had a bike, each night I would search for my bike but I could never find it. I needed help! I needed closure! There was only one way I could have closure on this; I would have to buy a bike, simple!!! Because obviously once a mother always a mother I made another decision, and this was to do my advanced motorcycle training. I knew a little about this because for a couple of years I had come to look at the bikes arriving for one of WHAM'S skills days held in Sutton. I also knew Paul Whitcombe; he had often talked enthusiastically about WHAM.

I timed the purchase of my bike perfectly and didn't have to wait too long before the next WHAM skills day. The weather was horrendous but I wasn't going to be put off (I had waited a long time to do this) and I wasn't going to let strong winds and big rain put me off. So off I trotted to Sutton School to receive my initial assessment ride with a WHAM observer. I was SO excited. When I got there (20 seconds later) I was informed that the day had been cancelled due to the poor weather conditions, I was gutted. This was when I learnt my first lesson and experienced WHAMS high standards for safety. I couldn't go out on my assessment ride with an observer because the weather conditions made it unsafe.. I would like to draw your attention to the fact I mentioned in particular WHAMS high standards for safe riding, as later in my journey to advanced level I witnessed poor riding from another local IAM motorcycle club. Even as an associate I soon could spot serious mistakes made by other riders. At the time I was shocked to see the poor level of riding from such a group.

[continued on next page](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Anyway, my details were taken apologies were made for having to cancel the day and I stayed to chat to some very friendly people. I was told that someone would contact me soon about doing an assessment ride with an observer.(I was really excited again!) I couldn't believe the efficiency of IAM and WHAM, before I knew it I was booked in for my assessment ride with an observer, this time it was for real.

My initial feeling when meeting with the observer was one of excitement and nervousness. But because he (Del) was so professional and lovely I soon relaxed, a bit anyway. Once the paper work was complete I was told to just ride as I normally ride. So I did. At the end of the ride I had my feedback I was told that I was reasonably safe. Good, I thought to myself, job nearly done.

Anyway, I had now signed up for as many sessions that it would take to get me to test level. I didn't have to wait long to get allocated my observer for the duration (thanks Ken) I was so pleased to receive the email informing me my observer was to be Del.

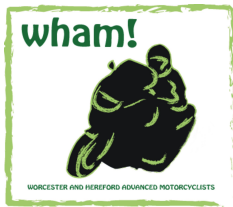
On our first meeting I was introduced to the IAM Hazard management Planned System of Riding IPSGA and the importance of Mpowder (I had never checked my tire pressure before) now imprinted on my memory for ever. We rode our first ride as observer and associate; I then received feedback from Del, we had lots of work to do. I was safe(ish) and Del was pleased about that, but I was safe(ish) because I rode quite slowly. I needed to improve my Hazard Management and quite a lot more to make me an ADVANCED rider. Advanced riding is about making progress using the Advanced riding system of Hazard management using IPSGA. Del talked me through the system (Information, Position, speed, gear, and acceleration) I went home and read some points Del had asked me to read. I had really enjoyed my first observed ride out and looked forward to the next. In fact I looked forward to every single observed ride I had.

After my first observed ride and reading about IPSGA it was now clear what I had to do, but putting IPSGA into practice was a whole new ball game!! I wasn't used to thinking that quickly! At first I would think OK, I've taken in the information, now, how's my position? Yes that's fine. I would go through the whole process but found it a little tricky to get used to continually using IPSGA as a rolling process. I was warned that my riding would get worse before it got better and oh boy did it!!

I'm sure you don't want to hear the details of every single observed ride I had, but amongst other things there was the issue of cornering and overtaking.

[continued on next page](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Cornering for me used to go like this: approach the corner, drop down a gear, gently pootle around the corner then accelerate out of the corner. I was quickly informed that this was safe but not advanced riding. I then learnt the use of 'Limit Point' of vision (I don't need mention the moment I didn't apply LPV, big lesson learnt that day, you go where you look!) head and eyes up looking through the bend riding to the LP - Sometimes on a tight corner I still have to force myself to look up through the bend to my LP.

Previously when entering a corner I would select the wrong gear (to high) therefore if I needed to lose speed on a corner I couldn't. I now select the correct gear when approaching a bend; this has helped me feel so much safer.

Overtaking Poor Del I think I frightened him to death with my erratic overtaking or frustrated him with my hesitation when considering an overtake. Once again the use of IPSGA, knowing my bikes acceleration capabilities, practice and a very skilled, supportive patient observer saw me through this sticky patch.

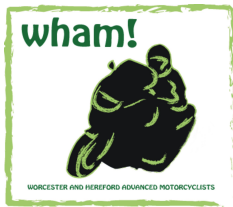
I worked on my positioning, use of gears and speed. Later in my training I found my riding started to improve even more when Del got me to pick up my speed. This made me go through the process of using IPSGA a lot faster therefore sharpening my observation skills to process things quicker and then act upon them. The use of IPSGA has now become second nature.

After hours of observed rides or just a Sunday morning ride out I found I would get really tired. I suppose this was a good thing as it showed how much I was concentrating. Prior to doing my advanced training I would be thinking, what I had to prepare for tea or where I was taking the children after school. I soon learnt (the hard way!) to never concentration levels drop. Hazards are there all the time, people in their cars waiting to catch you off guard, boy racers sneaking up behind you, little squirrels dancing in the road in front of you or willies on your side of the road at the apex of a bend. (I am not sure if observers plant the latter to catch associates out!)

As well as doing my observed rides I also learnt a lot by joining the Sunday rides and Wednesday eve ride/natter nights. The Slow riding day was amazing, I learnt about breaking at speed and how to handle the bike when riding extremely slowly. The day also reinforced the importance of 'you go where you look'. It was also another opportunity to observe some fantastic riding from other club members. I have really enjoyed watching the experienced advanced riders ride.

[continued on next page](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Then one day at the end of an observed ride Del said those words "I would like you to put in for your test" I went all girly and nervous. I had a pre-test ride with a senior instructor, Steve. I felt nervous about having a pre-test ride until Steve calmed me with a few kind words. We did the ride and Steve agreed with Del, I was ready. Test day came very quickly. I made sure my bike looked pretty and went through MPOWDER (this had now become second nature) I had a little pre-test warm up on my own and then 'went for it'. I met my examiner at the leisure centre in Hereford. He was great and made me feel relaxed straight away. I really enjoyed the test. It was a beautiful day, I couldn't have wished for better weather and my examiner was happy to be riding his bike for the last time before he put it away for the winter. After an hour we were back at the Leisure centre and he told me the news I had been waiting for. I PASSED!! I couldn't wait to tell Del.

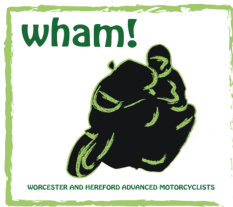
I feel like am talking too much so one final observation.

As a girl in a predominantly male club I would just like to say my experience has been nothing but superb. I have been made to feel very welcome in WHAM. I have met some fantastic people who have supported me along the way, club members and their partners. I have had fantastic advice from different observers and been supported through an RAC issue (thanks again Dereck) I have thoroughly enjoyed myself and understand my learning has just begun. I intend to keep up the skills I have learnt so far and aim to continue learning new ones. I can't thank Del enough for the hours he has put in and to WHAM as a club a BIG SQUIDGY THANK YOU.

Thanks for reading my experience of advanced motorcycle training with WHAM

Ali





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Making progress

Making progress was a new term to me when I began my advanced biking. [What does it mean?](#)

Well I guess saying what it doesn't mean is a starting point.

It is not:

- Behaving like a car e.g. sitting in a traffic queue (when it is possible to safely pass)
- Breaking the law (obviously)
- Being unsafe, a nuisance or scaring other road users (what you feel is "safe" might have terrified an oncoming car driver)

But we all see this on the road. How many times have you passed another biker sat in traffic appearing to be happy to wait for the lights to change for the umpteenth time before they get to the front? On motorways: bikes sat in the queue rather than filtering? Worse are those who overtake across solid white lines or in the face of oncoming traffic relying on luck for a safe outcome.

There have been recent debates about speed, including at the IAM National Conference, where the IAM has underlined the obvious – they cannot and will not endorse breaking the speed limit.

[So how can we "make progress"?](#)

On the open road?

You've caught a couple of cars and you see they are driving at 55mph to 58mph in a 60mph area. Isn't it so tempting to blast past? You'll need a lot of road if you aren't going to speed. However our roads are seldom straight and fast for long. And here is where the advanced biker looks to "make progress" by [planning the overtake](#) – off a roundabout or bend where the cars have slowed.

By planning your ride you can slip past other vehicles safely and without fuss.

After all it's our bike's acceleration that's important here – not sheer speed.

In towns?

It's just the same: it's all in the planning. Look ahead and you'll see the hazards, understand where you'll likely have to negotiate traffic lights, turning vehicles and pedestrians etc. You'll arrive at the front of queues as the lights change to green. You'll pick the correct lane early and avoid last minute manoeuvres that can be rushed. You'll prepare for roundabouts: position, speed and gear. All this will mean your wheels keep turning and [progress becomes a natural consequence](#).

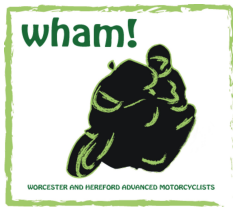
In groups?

Here circumstances are different.

Sometimes it can appear that an experienced rider might be 'going too fast'. They quickly disappear from view after a short run through town and onto the open road -but have they done anything wrong? Or have they simply not missed an opportunity to "make progress": by filtering, by being in the right lane, by making the early overtake and getting up to speed promptly.

See how they are "on the ball" from the off. [Continued on next page](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

However you think you feel, [there is an additional emotional aspect to riding in groups](#) that easily clouds judgement and alters our attitude to “making progress”. Simply keeping up or, if leading, continuing without delay, can easily impair sound judgement somewhere in that Group.

If we follow our Group Riding Code there should be no fear of getting lost (we all know the destination and wait for the rider behind at decision points - don't we?) However, being out-of-sight can lead to a feeling of insecurity for less experienced Group riders and, in consequence, an ever increasing pressure to catch up. We choose to ride in Groups for the camaraderie and perhaps [a chance to “look and learn”](#) from the more experienced riders (not that they're infallible!). The theme which we developed in the Group Riding Guidelines is “Separation and Contact”. We need these opposing elements in equal measure for a safe and enjoyable Group ride.

Making progress is what happens when all our advanced skills come together in a smooth unhurried yet quick and safe ride.

I've learnt such a lot by riding in groups. And “making progress” with others can be a challenge. For example, your mates have got past the Sunday horse box as you come to 2 miles of solid white lines. Patience! You don't know if they are only 400m ahead stuck behind another slow moving vehicle or whizzing off. But I'm happy in the knowledge that soon I'll be past the horse box, they'll probably be a clear road for a while and I'll catch up in a short time. A good leader will have seen this and backed off a touch to allow me to catch up (unless they are intent on getting their bacon buttie first)

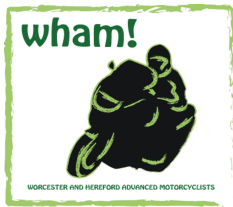
Other more subtle methods for keeping a group together include:

- leaving space in traffic queues for riders behind to filter up and join you
- stopping and waiting (good if you've caught another group). It's surprising how little time you'll wait!
- regrouping at decision points eg waiting at a safe place adjacent to a turning
-

So in Group riding part of “making progress” is restraint and patience just as much as clear planning and incisive execution. [It's pure magic](#) making good progress, safely and with finesse – it's what Advanced Bikers do!

Ant Clerici





MEMBERS ARTICLES

IAM National Conference 7th Oct 2012

Eric Reynolds & Ant Clerici Attending

Ant Clerici was waiting for me at Droitwich even though I was on time, punctuality is a rare beast these days but none the less welcome when it happens. Our plan to enjoy a ride across country on empty roads was spoilt as fog and low sun alternated to hamper visibility.

We arrived at Warwick University for coffee and biscuits and the opportunity to exchange views with 140 plus other delegates. The facilities were excellent and the organisation first class starting with 'meet and greet' where we were given individual information packs. The buffet lunch was very good.

Dave Shenton opened the event with our CEO who then gave an uninspiring address, notable for the absence of any mention that riding a motorcycle well or passing our skills onto others is enjoyable in any way. His message though was that the IAM must change in the next three years and develop to remain financially viable and to become a primary force in shaping road safety. Whilst agreeing with the principles I felt disappointed with the lack of emphasis on the importance of driver/rider training in achieving road safety.

The pattern of the conference was for delegates to attend four of the ten workshops during the day. The theme of these workshops was either to obtain and consolidate the ideas and emotions of the delegates on particular subjects or to inform them of changes such as Observer qualifications .

The closing address focussed on awards made to exceptional individuals and groups

The four workshops I attended were vigorous and informative, their summaries will be published soon but here is a flavour of the workshops I attended.

The IAM in 3 years time.

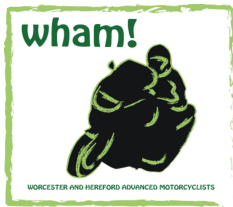
In this session we were invited to brainstorm 10 ways the IAM could be changed for the better. One of the most significant of these was that the motorcycles and cars should have separate organisations.

Forums

This workshop dealt with the communications between IAM and the groups, particularly the content and dissemination of the INSIGHT publications.

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MEMBERS ARTICLES

IMI Update

This was an information workshop and a very significant one. It illustrated the changes to the observer qualification.

The current senior observer qualification is to be replaced by a National Qualification moderated by an organisation called IMI. The requirements are codified in a (very long) document that identifies what we do and produces a tick list to show that we have done it. This document is used by the staff examiners to formalise the senior observer test into the IMI nationally qualified observer assessment.

A similar process will be used for the Group Observers, they will become Local Observers and their assessment will be carried out by Nationally Qualified Observers for the region but not one in the observer's own group.

This change will drive all groups into ensuring the observers are trained to suit the format of their assessment. As it is now a formalised qualification, I do hope we can drop the mealy mouthed, blame avoiding title of being an observer and now be called trainers.

These changes have attracted a lot of adverse comments but I believe the process and scope of observing will be improved and proper training of observers will have to be developed by all groups (similar to that which WHAM does already). I believe it will lead consistently high standard of observing.

Test Requirements

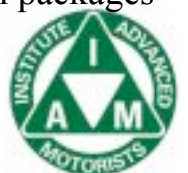
A useful session which clarifies grey areas e.g. permitted speeds when overtaking. The emphasis was "WE PREPARE OUR ASSOCIATES USING H.T.B.A.B.R." and "TESTERS MUST ASSESS USING H.T.B.A.B.R."

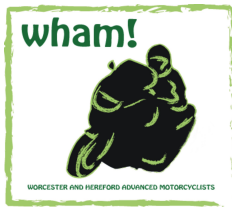
Ant was in a separate session – where they had had a good discussion about "making progress" by planning ahead and riding accordingly, and not about the use of pure speed. The Isle of Man rep led an interesting discussion on speed limits where he felt that given the right conditions "making progress" for him might see speeds approaching three figures (you could feel the jealousy in the room).

Modular learning

Ant was concerned that about the idea of selling "modules" similar to those available for car drivers: motorway driving, parking etc. I could see how certain aspects of riding could be covered: slow riding, braking and off-road skills because they are carried out away from public highways. Any on road module could be difficult – "cornering" is highlighted as a potential module but who wants to spend time teaching better cornering to a rider who hasn't more basic riding skills and machine control? Riding as an holistic experience!

Ant then feels that the IAM needs to have a robust system in place before they offer such packages because he is not convinced we have sufficient Observers/Trainers.





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Regional Observer Weekend – 12th – 14th October 2012

Attending: Derek McMullan, Del Britton, Roger Brooks, Alex Hoyle, Paul Whitcombe

With half an eye on the impending defence of the Ashes happening elsewhere we set off for a South West regional Observer training weekend in glorious Wales; Llandridnod Wells.

Del had confidently informed his wife that we were staying in a simple biker's hotel. I had tried to use the same excuse to justify the free pass for the weekend. How wrong could we be! The accommodation was excellent and to Alex's delight included a 3 course meal each evening: Result!

The car park filled with an eclectic range of bikes which prompted a lot of admiration and discussion. Nothing better than kicking a few tyres. Bikes ranged from a Ducati 748 and Fireblades to Fazers and Pans. There were a couple of BMW's as well. Pre-conceptions were quickly quashed. There were a couple of strange orange bikes which got Roger all over-excited.

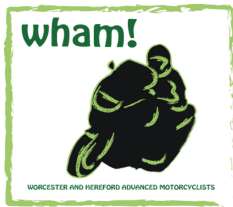
The weekend was well planned and kicked off in earnest, following our first meal, with a briefing. The format for the weekend was that you are put into small groups and assigned a Senior Observer. I was assigned with Dave, an SO from Bournemouth and Pete, a bike paramedic from Cornwall. A chat ensued over a beer to ascertain our backgrounds and club structures. It became immediately obvious that clubs had very different ways of approaching observing and assigning Associates. For me it appeared we all had a similar riding style and outlook, and had a lot in common. I deem myself fortunate because that was not the experience for all. Roger skipped happily into the bar; Good news - His SO rode a KTM! Bad news – He came on the Honda!

Having been up until 3.30am the following night (won't do that again!) I was very pleased to hit the sack ready for a day's classroom activity and riding. However Del was concerned, "I quickly learnt that under that quiet calm external appearance Alex H is quite the fashion icon - walking proudly to the hotel swimming pool wearing special rubber swimming trunks, apart from the noise they made when he was walking down the corridor I was quiet jealous of his fashion sense (why let the truth spoil a good story) 'Alex, sorry couldn't resist it!'"

The Saturday began at 730am with a substantial breakfast to set you up for the day. Alex was first through the doors and led the way for team WHAM to get to the front of the queue.

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MEMBERS ARTICLES

The classroom activities were based around role play. The emphasis was on communication and good practice rather than establishing just 1 way of doing things. Team WHAM contributed a lot, sharing ideas, and it became clear that our training and systems are robust and of a high standard.

We then progressed to the exciting bit!! The prospect of riding roads around Crossgates and Newtown for several hours. However when informed that I was performing the first Test Standard ride it reminded me how an Associate feels when meeting their Observer for the first time – slightly nervous. It focussed the mind and was a good lesson in stepping into their shoes.

On dry roads I led and we made our way towards Newtown making good progress. Debrief was positive and provided an opportunity for someone new to give me a perspective on my riding – Apparently it was very good and a learning point was offered; to give myself another car length when following in the twisties, with double white lines – you ain't going anywhere until the line breaks so keep a 3 sec distance!

Point taken; Feedback was given in a very positive way. Dave re-emphasised the fact that we weren't here to learn how to ride or observe but to tweak our riding, share good practice and reflect and evaluate our approach to both.

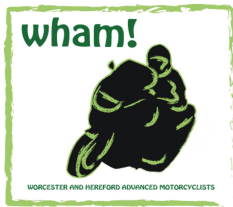
As we chatted huge clouds were building up in the distance which swiftly turned to heavy rain, hail and very different riding conditions. This didn't stop us moving on to role play exercises and fault finding activities though. Indeed, it provided us with the opportunity to ensure our standard was consistent in all weathers. It had become clear that all 3 of us rode to a similar standard which enabled us to progress through the activities in an open and honest way. The banter was developing nicely!

The day finished with a spirited test ready associate exercise. This served to ensure the blinkers didn't come down and you didn't narrow your concentration to just following. The SO suggested a 'Best Ride' scenario, that was a practice in their group, which provided us with a slightly more spirited ride back to the hotel and a warm shower.

Upon entering the bar Del could hardly control his excitement at telling me we had won the Ashes – the texts started coming in. Thanks to those who contacted us – we toasted the success with a few beers!! Well done Team WHAM!

[continued on next page](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

Our discussions with our respective groups and our chat as our own team WHAM, over beers, made us realise that we are working from a very consistent high standard and expectation, which is embedded through our Senior and Observer teams. It also reinforced that the systems we have in place are efficient and well communicated and provide riders with not just a set of lessons and a test, but access to a friendly group of people and a real 'club' atmosphere. Felt pretty proud to be part of it!

Sunday morning greeted us with a blanket of fog and a frost on the bikes –Challenging! Some were reluctant to ride. Del looked smug as he turned on his bike to let his heated seat defrost. We crept up the Elan Valley, wiping ice from the visor. An extended coffee break ensued, providing an opportunity to talk about how we introduce aspects of the system to our Associates. Views of the dam wall in the mist were stunning and it made me realise that compared to other groups we are blessed with great roads in and around our region. Well, that is when you can see them! Upon return I didn't have the heart to tell Roger that there was an RAC van next to a KTM, the mechanic peering under the seat.

Well, was it worth it and what have I learnt?

It is great fun having the opportunity to spend quality time with friends in the club. It is very interesting listening to SO's and fellow observers from around the region and how they operate. It became apparent that there is a range of expectation regarding quality assurance of Observers. On our way to Llandod I could feel Derek grimacing in his helmet as 2 riders performed many interesting manoeuvres to get past us and several cars on the way to the hotel! The weekend provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my riding and consider approaches to teaching Associates.

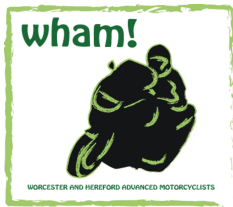
I would recommend the weekend to all Observers. Go with an open mind and you'll have a great time and will return with a greater appreciation of the club you belong to.

Del summed it up, "In my opinion an enjoyable weekend meeting up with like-minded observers from around the country, a friendly relaxed learning environment made the event a most enjoyable one, also a time to get to know other members of WHAM away from the Sunday rides and Natter nights when sometimes time being short you do not always get the time to chat and have a laugh and a laugh we all had."

The only downside was not being able to attend the Ashes bash; however, both Team Whams did themselves proud that weekend.

[see next page for postscript from Derek McMullan](#)





MEMBERS ARTICLES

WHAM arrived in force at Llandrindod. I set out from the Eastern province and met most of the guys en-route but Roger was delayed and so caught up with us at the hotel. These events are about improving the standard and uniformity of Observing in all Groups. It is deliberately organised to make sure no one works with other members of their Group; so the SO and two Observers working with him/her are all from separate Groups.

After introductions on the Friday night the SO should have a clear idea of the Observer conscious needs both in Observing and in their own ride. The Observed runs make up the meat of the weekend and may expose additional needs of which the Observer was unconscious.

Post-event I was particularly pleased to see the feed back on WHAM Observers was very positive, all being recommended as future SO material. Well done guys!



Breakfast

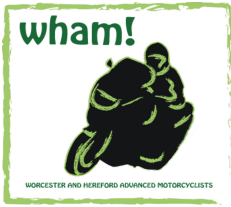


Call that a breakfast, I'm off for a kebab



Push starting a Honda

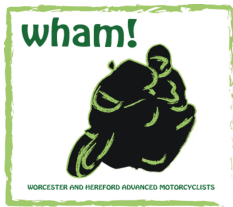




MEMBERS ARTICLES

GAYDON PHOTOS FROM ANDREW BRAZIER





The Falcon Hotel.

Christmas Menu 2012

To Start.

Creamy leek and watercress soup.

Smoked chicken and wild mushroom terrine with hazelnut salad.

Melon and exotic fruit with peach grenadine.

Main Course.

Roast Turkey with sage stuffing, baby sausage and roast potatoes.

Roast Beef with Yorkshire pudding and roast potatoes.

Venison ragout with parsnip chips.

Sweet potato and roasted onion filo pie.

For Dessert.

Homemade Christmas pudding with brandy sauce.

Baked vanilla cheesecake with damson compote.

Apple and cranberry crumble with custard.

Selection of cheeses with biscuits, celery and grapes.

Coffee.

