



Worcester and Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists

September 2012

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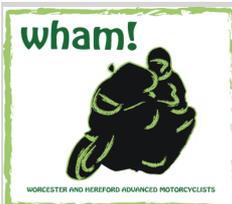
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URL www.wham-motorcycling.org





Concentration assists observation

Chairman's Notes

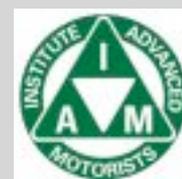


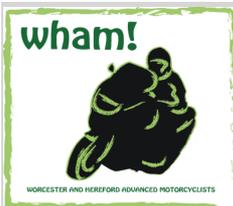
September Natter night.

Calling all pillions - and those who might like to be!

In an effort to enhance the experience (like that?) and to try and tempt some 'other halves' out to play we need to have a bit of a chat about the business of carrying pillion passengers. Many of us have already travelled many miles either as a pillion or whilst frightening one who has chosen to join us for a ride and, whilst there are a number of people who are quite content to sit astride a motorcycle whilst being propelled around the place, there are many more who wouldn't even consider trusting their life and limbs to someone else (even if they really really love him - or her). Similarly, there are plenty of motorcyclists who just don't like to carry a pillion - for various reasons (stop there B). So - it would be of benefit to try and see things from each other's perspective. To help us on our way with this, Ant Clerici came up with the idea of devoting a natter night to the subject. As far as I can tell, there is no intention of having a long presentation about this, rather, the plan is to discuss the issues involved. There are a number of different things for the rider to consider when carrying a pillion - how will the bike behave? - how will the pillion behave (leave it there B)? and we could really benefit from hearing from some of those who have done the miles. Likewise, we need to find out about the concerns that the uninitiated might have. So - If you've had experience as a pillion, or of carrying a pillion or would like to join in but feel a bit apprehensive please try and make our next natter night which will be on 27th Sept. You won't be expected to address the group or speak publicly if you don't want to- Ant and I will do that - we just need your views.

[Continued on next page](#)





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Chairman's Notes



Mini Slow Riding Day.

This is going to be just like the Slow Riding Day - but smaller! It is aimed at our associates and those who have passed the test more recently - plus the members of this year's Ashes team. Den Osborne is organising a 'long morning' of slow riding exercises at Throckmorton Airfield as a follow on from the main slow riding day we enjoyed earlier this year. The plan is to start about 10am and Den will be laying out a number of different exercises for us to enjoy. Directions to the airfield will be available on the website.

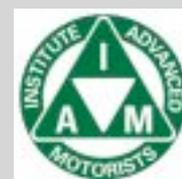
September day Ride.

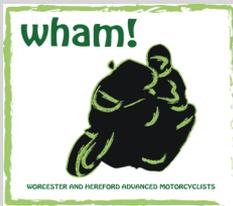
This month's day ride will take place on Sunday 9th. The plan is to meet up at the OK Diner near Leominster by 09:30 and to then make our way down to the Elan Valley visitor centre. A trip around the lakes will follow, leading us to Devil's Bridge then back along the A44 to the Halt café - then back to Leominster. Details and maps will be available on the website (thanks Tony) and I look forward to seeing as many as possible turn out.

I think that's it from me for now.

Keep smiling.

Brian.





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Editor's Notes



It's been a few months since my last notes appeared in print. Nothing sinister, just had nothing useful to say.

You all know that I have retired from active (that means actual riding) motorcycling and now class myself as a driver only. Having qualified as a class 1 Police driver I recently took an assessment drive with I.A.M. to see if my driving was still up to standard, (yes, it was). Get to the punch line, I hear you say, okay, I'm sure most of you drive as well as ride but how many of you have taken the I.A.M. Driving Test? indeed, how many of you have had your riding assessed?

Think about it.

Noticeboard

REMINDER

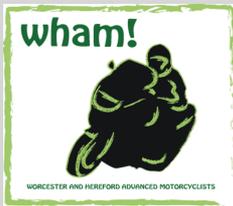
Newsletter e-mail address is: whamnewsletter@gmail.com

REMINDER All articles for publishing to be submitted no later than last day of the month

REMINDER - Photo Competition

We need more entries, please submit by September 30th





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Noticeboard

FOR SALE

Spada - Adventure style suit. Waterproof, armoured and thermal lining make this a good 4 season suit. Enough pockets and ventilation zips to ensure you won't be able to find your keys and you'll curse you didn't close the vents before the rain started! Excellent condition - once around the Himalayas and not worn since - sorry I've washed the high-altitude dirt off.

Size: Large, £100



RST Ventilator 3 - Latest version of RST's very popular all-weather suit. The shell has mesh ventilator panels for any hot summer days we may get

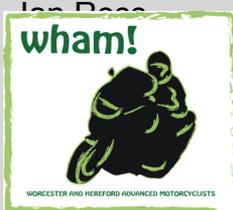
(might be useful another year?) and CE armour. There is a waterproof lining and a thermal lining for summer this year!

Excellent condition.

Size: Large, £100



Contact: Derek McMullan, 07791 102218



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Congratulations

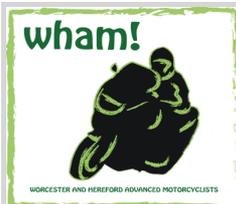
I.A.M. test pass - Dr Richard Sumner
Observer : Richard Smith

I.A.M. test pass - Ken Anderson
Observer : Eric Reynolds

I.A.M. test pass - John Wilshaw
Observer : Annie Morgan

I.A.M. test pass - Karl Lacey
Observer : John Hodges





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Members Articles

A Testing Experience by Dr Richard Sumner

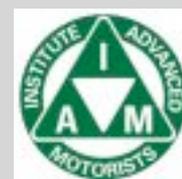
The day starts with me sitting on the toilet trying to do a number 2. The mobile phone rings, a number I don't recognise, I had better answer it, and I have a feeling about this call. It is the IAM motorcycle examiner; I discover a cure for constipation. He is saying it is raining hard where we are due to meet to start the test but after a brief discussion we agree to go ahead.

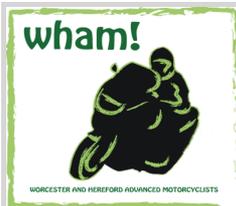
Downstairs into the garage a final check of the bike, remember POWER but I was told it is now POWERD with the D for damage. The bike has been parked in the garage since I checked it last night so I don't think the D will be a problem but I check anyway. On with the wet weather gear and off to meet the examiner in a car park in Cheltenham, in the pouring rain, this is not going to be a pleasant ride but let's get on with it. I arrive early. My chance of impressing the examiner with my slow riding as I arrive at the meeting point does not work as I arrive before him, and then when he arrives he give me a good demonstration of how it should be done. I thought my slow riding was good but his was impressive.

I don't know what it is about policemen, they have an odd sense of humour and they like the sound of their own voices, but I listen. I cannot remember much now, but I do remember "if there is an opportunity to overtake then I don't want you trying to overtake at 61 MPH just get on with it" and "I may not use my indicators at every junction don't be confused I still expect you to indicate and follow my instructions". So I now have a couple of clues how he wants me to complete the ride, don't hang about if there is an overtake and use my indicators. Policemen may like the sound of their own voices but it was worth listening.

We get all set up with headset in my helmet and a couple of policeman jokes about where my ears are on my head as I don't get the loudspeaker in the right place first time. Then off we go, we start on a nice looking bit of road with some nice curves but I get the first instruction, take the next right. I don't even get a chance to settle and we are off down some very narrow roads with lots of bends. Before we get a mile I suffer from cramp (I have had both knees operated on in the past few years) so I have to find a small lay-by stop and do some leg stretches. Is this my first mistake, we will find out later. A few minutes later we are off again.

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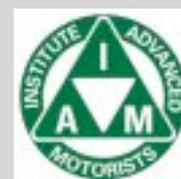
The narrow roads seem to be a feature of this examiner, but I was warned about this on my last observed ride, so I was not surprised. I have no idea where we went, but there was a combination of single track roads and some good fast A roads, no motorways and little town riding. One key issue on the test was the quality of the road surfaces. It was wet and there was a lot of debris especially on corners and junctions.

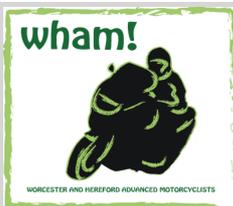
Without going through each stage of the test there were a couple of bits that deserve comment. At one point I remember doing a bit of comfort breaking into a tight bend on a single track road with high hedges. I quickly checked the mirror again and as I could not see the examiner I might have got away with that one. The gravel on the roads was quite bad and one tight left turn from a main road had a full gravel ridge just where I wanted to go, so I had to modify the line, but so did the examiner behind me so that one may be alright. There was an overtake opportunity I did not take as I was not quite ready, so again is this a negative point. Later in the test as the weather was getting better there were two nice overtakes which I felt I took quite well but we would have to see what the examiner thought later.

On each overtake we did not hang about; I remember seeing 75 on the speedo as we went past three cars in what I thought was a nice crisp manoeuvre. Did I overdo the speed, I did come back to 60 when clear of the cars but I would have to wait to see if it was accepted. The test overall was almost in two bits, the beginning was wet and slippery so I took it easier, the end was better weather and I managed to get a better move on. Anyway after what seemed like an age I hear over the headset "Take the next right and immediately left into the lay-by. Mine is a cup of tea with milk but no sugar".

That was the test over, I was told it would be about 75 to 80 minute and we had been actually riding for almost two hours. Had I passed? Well you have to remember the policeman sense of humour. First a cup of tea, then a rundown of each junction of the trip. The stop for cramp was laughed off as not a problem, I had got away with the comfort braking, the modification of line for the gravel was a good move, my slow riding was good. Yes I had missed an overtake but this was thought acceptable as the road conditions were not good,

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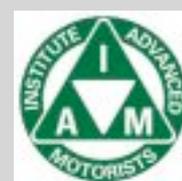
the overtakes I did do were good and I accelerated well, but perhaps I could use a lower gear to get better acceleration, and yes I had passed the test. The closing discussion was constructive and there were some suggestions on how I could have done some parts better but also compliments on the bits I had done well.

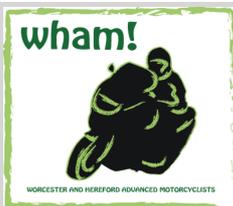
So that was it, only thing now is to get back home. I had no idea where I was so I followed the examiner for a short distance which was interesting in that he took some overtakes I probably would not have done, they appeared quite safe but my lack of confidence would have me holding back a little (I am a biker returning after twenty years away).

Once getting back on track for home and away from the examiner, I was travelling perhaps a bit over the speed limit but in a good road position and I had one of those "Sorry I did not see you mate" moments, a car pulled out of a side road, I discovered a second cure for constipation and pulled the brakes on just as I had practiced on the WHAM slow riding day a few weeks earlier, the front flattens out, the back tyre gives a little squeal (I don't have ABS) and I slow enough to manoeuvre around the car with the driver looking like a rabbit in my headlights.

So what have I learnt so far from my IAM experience apart from two cures for constipation. Well first how to stop or slow a bike efficiently, second is the road position, third that I need to keep my head up and look as far forward as possible and fourth how to overtake quickly and get back to my side of the road. There are lots more but these are the keys for me.

One final comment; thank you Ant and Rich for your time on the observed rides.





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Members Articles

Doing your bike checks, serious stuff - by Roger Brooks

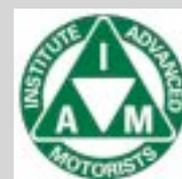
OK, so we all know MPOWDER, well hopefully anyway. By going around your bike very thoroughly every so often can help identify actual and potential problems early, allowing you to put them right before they put you off, if you know what I mean.

I am luckily enough to run two bikes (Don't have a car) The SuperDuke is my pleasure bike which comes out at the weekends and my trusty CB1000 which is used for commuting and general running around. Due to being my main transport it is used in all weathers which recently included riding through some deep water during the recent floods. So once the sun came out so did the tool kit and what I found was scary!!!!

When going around the bike doing my "bike checks", I normally start at one point and work around and keep going until I'm back at the start point again. My start point this time was the chain, seeing it was a bit slack I moved to the rear wheel spindle to loosen the nut and.....it was LOOSE as in I could turn the nut with my fingers, I can only speculate on how or why it was loose but I'll be keeping a close eye on it. Once the chain was adjusted and the rear spindle nut tightened to the correct torque, I moved onwards, oil OK, water OK. During the last few weeks the CB's handling had been getting a little 'fluffy' so off came the front wheel and what I found were some rusty and trashed wheel bearings, they obviously didn't like the floods either!, as chance would have it, there was a full bearing and seal kit in my shed, so after a lot of huffing and puffing the new wheel bearings were fitted and the wheel replaced.

Just by working through my bike checks two potentially deadly problems were identified and easily rectified, so get those tool kits out and get spannering.

Rog





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Members Articles

Del Britton and his armchair ride to Slovenia

Having a discussion with Ken (editor) about the trip I took to Slovenia in July he persuaded me to put something into the newsletter, so here goes:

Background

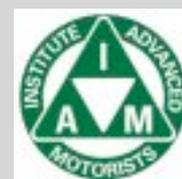
Not being able to spare the amount of time to join the WHAM summer trip to Spain I was looking at planning my own little expedition, luckily a colleague at work said I could use their cabin (free of charge!) in Slovenia. The owner of the cabin had ridden there several times before and said there were some great biking roads around the area of Lake Bled where the cabin was located. This was also confirmed by talking with Steve Edwards who had visited the area some years ago.

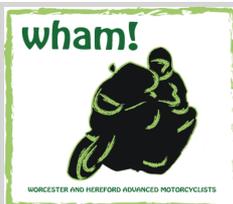
Well that was it then, looking at the distance some 1,100 miles to Slovenia from Hereford with a planned overnight stop roughly half way (500 miles from Calais) just south of Saarbrücken. Then a big push of 600 miles the following day into Slovenia and Lake Bled. A decision to take a northerly route through Germany using the fast autobahn rather than paying tolls and coming up against the French traffic police was taken.

That was the it, 'the plan', from the 11th to 18th July Wednesday to Wednesday, taking in a weekend so only a few days off work. Take two days riding to the cabin - three days riding around Slovenia with a trip down to the Adriatic then another two day trip back, again an overnight stay just over half way using the same Hotel near Saarbrücken a seven day total trip covering around 2500 miles including the three days riding in Slovenia. The forecast wasn't looking that good but one's enthusiasm believed it was bound to be better weather in Eastern Europe in July than in UK 'how wrong can someone be'.

Two friends of mine joined me one riding a BMW R1200GS (04) the other a Suzuki GSXR1000 (06) and I was riding my trusted arm chair BMW R1200RT. We set off early Wednesday morning to get the 10:00hrs ferry from Dover to Calais using DFDS ferries (the cheapest option at the time); this we thought would also give us a rest from the journey to Dover, before we started the 300 miles to the half-way point.

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Summary

My first observation or lesson learnt is to trust the weather forecast more, it started raining in Hereford on the 11th July and apart from one day on Slovenia it rained until we got back on the 16th (not 18th) July, even with the most positive thinking the weather did become demoralising, this was mainly due to the fact we all really thought it wouldn't be 'that bad' but as we all know now the 'jet stream' was sat over UK and Europe for the entire period causing unbelievable weather conditions throughout Europe.

Slovenia

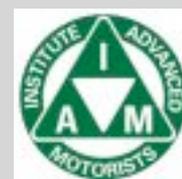
The area around Lake Bled was beautiful with lovely riding roads (in the dry) with mainly friendly courteous local drivers, the infrastructure and look of the area is still very much a reminder of the old Yugoslavia. An area very popular with bikers from Germany and Italy, we sat at one café and watched must have been 50 bikers from a club pass us as a group. Before entering Slovenia you have to purchase a pass (12 euros for 7 days) this can be done at any fuel station prior to crossing into Slovenia.

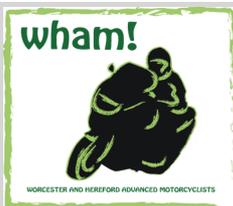
Kit

I took thankfully a one piece Frank Thomas waterproof over suit, under this a set of summer textiles as I believed it was going to be hot riding conditions. Although this kept me dry I did have to turn on the heated seat and grips from time to time after 2 to 3 hours consistent rain riding at autobahn speeds (when that was possible, that is). The waterproof Halvarssons neck warmer was excellent as was the Rukka waterproof gloves, I also took another set of summer riding gloves which proved useful whilst the Rukka's were drying out.

Taking the usual kit for the bike, foot pump, tyre gauge, tyre repair kit, tyre inflating foam, basic tool kit although you can't do much with the RT without stripping all the fairings even to change the front bulb, which is a job on its own. We purchased two breathalysers (approx. £12 for two) on the ferry in case we would ride into France (as we did). High-vis vests, an AA Europe Road map and the GARMIN. I down loaded Eastern Europe into the Garmin to cover Slovenia Northern France and Germany.

[Continued on next page](#)





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Garmin

I was 'Garmin'ed on a couple of occasions! But on the whole considering the overall trip was some 2500 miles I was pleased with the unit (660), we didn't get the maps out much as the weather wasn't favourable enough for that. On reflection though, I should have briefed the others on the Garmin in more depth (neither of them had used a bike GPS before) and how it recalculates a route as they were at times perplexed by the route especially when it was recalculating and getting us back on track, something we all experience on the Sunday rides!.

Having the unit set (display) on 'track up' was the most useful, as this gave a better view and mental picture of the direction and path of the road ahead, at times there was turn and change of direction on hair-pin bends which on 3D view was hard to identify before you passed it, making it difficult to return to (so I didn't).

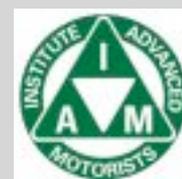
Route

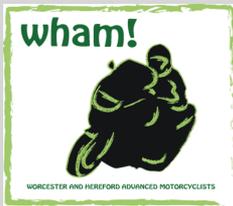
The theory of using the German autobahn to make the journey quicker and less hassle didn't quite work out. Constant traffic hold ups for mile upon mile due to the autobahns not just being repaired but rather rebuilt made the outward journey very frustrating, we had to 'positive filter' for hours at a time to make progress. Thus on the return journey we went through France paying for the toll roads (approx. £10 - £12 per toll) a small price to pay for being on the move.

We had one day without constant heavy rain, so we made a dash for the Adriatic, riding on some lovely sweeping empty roads. Due to the forecast for the rest of the week being so bad we made our way back to UK two days early, such a pity. But a great adventure.



Typical roadside eating house taken on our solitary dry day





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Members Articles

Roadcrafty

Stayin Alive !

Some thoughts on night riding



In common with just about every motorcycle training organisation and motorcycle club WHAM doesn't do any training or organised rides at night and so I'm guessing most of our riding is in daylight hours. The stalwarts who bring their bikes to "Natter" throughout the year, the motorcycle commuters, the "Freewheeler" riders and maybe a few others will all do some night-time riding so how is it different?

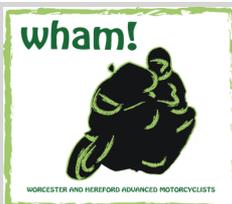
The first and most obvious thing is we cannot see as well. To start with most motorcycle lights tend more towards the glow-worm than the arc-lamp and on top of that as soon as we lean a bike in a corner we are shown less of where we want to go and treated to views of the hedge we could end up in! OK, if anyone's ridden the K1600GT in the dark it is a huge leap forward but even it won't nullify all the risks of night riding.

Despite the fact that most motorcyclists tend to stay off their bike when it's dark the accident statistics show that the incident rate increases and resulting injuries become more severe. So what are the principal risks and, if we either choose to, or have to, ride at night what should we be doing to control those risks?

There are some benefits of night riding, for example there are fewer vehicles on the road so it is likely you will suffer less queuing at junctions and not have so much urban filtering to face. Similarly where there is little street lighting you will have early warning of approaching traffic thanks to its lights. However it is not all to your advantage, here are some of the challenges and pointers:

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Concentration assists observation

Our vision is the primary sense for riding or driving but all humans are poorly adapted to night vision - that's why we use lights on vehicles. Your bike will always be well-maintained and fully functional so no need for me to labour the importance of lights, mirrors and reflectors at night!

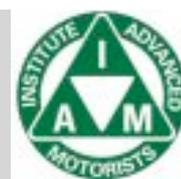
In the animal kingdom our night vision is rubbish (ever seen a Badger with a torch?). If you have perfect sight you're blessed, not many of us do. Night riding (or driving) will find any un-corrected weakness in your sight. Do you find night riding or driving tiring? Do you find yourself squinting or screwing up your eyes to see rather better? Perhaps get a headache? If any of this sounds like you see a good optician, you need the best vision you can get for night riding.

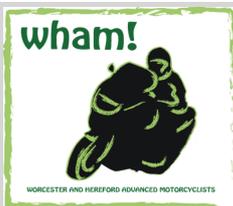
If your spectacles, lenses, visor or goggles are scratched you will suffer secondary glare from oncoming vehicle lights and any road lighting. This, is at its worst in an urban situation when there are lots of light sources and it is raining. In extreme cases it can temporarily blind the rider. All optical surfaces should be in good condition, keep them clean and scratch-free as far as possible. Visor polish is excellent in shedding rainwater but as soon as you start wiping your visor its effect is diminished. Old-fashioned bees wax fills the polishing micro-scratches very effectively and sheds water just as efficiently as modern silicone-based visor polishes.

Do I need to say anything about sunglasses or dark visors? No, I thought not: Darwin does sum it up quite neatly!

At night contrast is generally low, as your sight deteriorates you will struggle more and more to resolve the detail on the road in front of you. When your sight is best adapted to the low-light of the night is just the moment Mr Xenon-discharge Range-Rover (don't they always have double-barreled names?) appears to etch his headlamp pattern into your retina. Unfortunately for WHAM's age profile it is the older riders who will take longest to recover from the brilliant Mr Range-Rover. Time to remember one of our golden rules: look where you want to go - not at the headlights like the proverbial rabbit! If you do look where you want to go Mr Range-Rover's lights assist by providing a little back-light contrast around any road debris between you both

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Concentration assists observation

Speaking of rabbits, they and the rest of the become much more active at night and most of them have colours which melt into the background in daylight! At night you won't see them until they're very close! Every morning we see the night-time's toll of road-kill, clearly not everyone can avoid them so expect such obstacles at night.



Wildlife and road-surface defects are much more difficult to see early enough to plan a smooth avoidance manoeuvre if your speed is appropriate to day-time lighting - so adjust your speed to keep your margins.

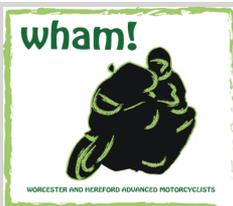
It gets colder at night! Even in summer it gets colder at night. Make sure you have appropriate clothing to keep you warm and dry. Any discomfort is a distraction, the more you ride with it, the more distracting it becomes. Appropriate, well-fitting kit, makes its contribution to keeping you safe. Heated clothing and/or hand-grips might be useful.

High-viz and/or reflective clothing is more important at night: generally it makes you more conspicuous but it is particularly helpful in moving traffic where our single, generally lower-power head and tail lamps may get lost amongst all the twin lights of 4-wheeled vehicles.

Recognize that we humans are "hunter-gatherers" so we're meant to be out gathering food during the day and sleeping at night. Whilst we can amend that pattern with some success we are still not physiologically suited to the small hours. If you choose to, or have to, ride well into the night be aware your concentration will be prejudiced. Short breaks to get some movement and perhaps a caffeine shot or two will help but only in the short term; don't rely on it too often.

A large meal before any ride is not a great idea as it predisposes us to "sleep it off". If you need to eat light snacks are preferred. More important is hydration - the first effects of dehydration are reduced concentration and fatigue! Water is best; I know you won't be drinking alcohol but it and caffeine products dehydrate us. Don't be tempted to skip the drink to avoid the toilet break

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Concentration assists observation

Signals work don't they? A qualified yes: you'll see trafficators, you'll hear any audible warnings, but, for example, the subtle cues you might pick up in daylight hours from a drivers head movement will not be available at night. Likewise if you were to use arm-signals at night don't count on other traffic correctly interpreting your intention. Unofficial road signs are rarely illuminated (mud-on-road, that sort of thing!).

In queues maintain your longitudinal space for an escape route. Keep an eye on following traffic in case they don't see you. Don't be afraid to show your brake-light when you see following traffic come into view.

We position on the strict priority of Safety, Stability, View (SSV) but mostly we talk of positioning for view. At night think before adopting the default position for view - can you get an advantage in view given that it's dark?

Also, how does "position 3" near the centre-line affect your safety at night? If you're the only traffic it's probably OK but if you find yourself in a stream of traffic your single headlight is just where a four-wheeler's offside headlamp would be - don't melt into that other traffic too much! In particular avoid leaving an inviting, just-big-enough, gap in front if you are in position 3 and "cloaked" by four - wheeler lights: for impatient joining traffic it is just too good a recipe for a SMIDSY!

Review the Highway Code and/or the Know Your Road Signs booklet to make sure you know all the carriageway markings which can warn you of hazards, slip road entry/exit points or simply mark out which way the road goes!



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