

June 2013

WHAM NEWS

Your Monthly Newsletter

NEWS FLASH!!!

Del Britton gets his motorcycle Masters with the IAM. This is a wonderful achievement by one of WHAMS nicest people! In this issue he gives us the run down in his own words. For those who are unfamiliar with the Masters test, the following is brief quote from the IAM.

"Open to all accomplished advanced drivers and riders, the IAM Masters programme provides true one to one mentoring support and guidance that will help you attain the highest level of civilian driving standard in the country. A Master Driver or Rider is someone who can apply emotional intelligence to all of their driving decisions. This means being aware of the possible motivations of those around you as well as your own. It means you are proactively making allowances for the mistakes of others as well as your own. This is modern driving. The Master Driver is someone who is wise about how the demand of an increasingly complex roadscape creates a necessity to respect the diverse agendas of other road users."



Four of WHAM's finest attended an observer training weekend at Llandrindod Wells, which was hosted by the IAM. And as news editor I duly asked for some photo's and this is what was supplied. I will say no more!
(Brian, Eric, Paul & Del) Rog Brooks

The Chairman's Notes by Brian



Congratulations to Del Britton on passing the IAM Masters test in Surrey recently. I know that Del will be writing something up about his experience and the amount of work involved in preparing for such a challenge but I would recommend it as a means of seriously improving those skills. Well done Del.

The Three Musketeers (and me)!

Somewhere in this newsletter you should spot a couple of photographs of four members of the observing team (Eric Reynolds, Del Britton, Paul Whitcombe and yours truly) who thought it might be a good idea to pose outside The Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells at the end of a gruelling weekend of training.

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



Chairman's notes

After an initial briefing we headed out to run various exercises which involved some 'role-play' intended to help observers identify riding 'faults' and prepare debriefs etc'.

What quickly became evident was that the high standard of observing (and riding) within WHAM is as good as any and better than many. Not that I'm surprised. But what's the photo about? Well -

I did realise, quite early on, that it was fortunate that I had been sent as a stabilising influence over our guys. The Metropole Hotel has a really good bar and, once some use had been made of it, I found myself being regaled by tales of all sorts of shenanigans by the other three members of our group. The phrase 'what goes on tour – stays on tour' was used but, owing to the fact that I come from a very sheltered background, I didn't understand what that meant so – I feel it is my duty to share with you an edited version of events. I really was quite taken aback by Eric's stories of a nude, Eurovision karaoke night (I just can't get a certain image out of my mind now!) and there was another curious tale about a wardrobe that fell over. Then, Paul mentioned, in passing, something about a wet-suit and some strawberry jam (or it could have been blackberry – something about the amount of pips) but Del had a very strange story, from his military past, about the regimental goat and a packet of cream crackers (or it could have been pringles – I'm not sure), further to this, as we were sharing a room, I did notice that his 'bed to bathroom' night vision stealth mode was – malfunctioning! Now, not that I'm judging anybody you understand, but I was visibly shaken by what I heard and I found it hard to believe, as you may do, that such outwardly upstanding members of our community would have those kind of histories but I'm sure they'll expand on them if you ask. I, of course, have no such stories to tell. Hence the fact that I'm holding my head in the photograph – such was the impact on my sensitivities. I learnt a lot that weekend but – remember this – as Del pointed out, one should never let the facts ruin a good story. Thanks guys for great company, some entertaining stories and for doing such a great job representing WHAM.

Slow Riding Day.

Another brief reminder that Den has organised a slow riding day at Throckmorton Airfield on 15th June. The safety briefing will take place at 9am before we get on with the fun and games – hopefully the weather will play its part. Whether you've attended one of these events before or not, I strongly advise you to make every effort to attend, even if you arrive late. As far as the Hereford contingent goes, if you would like company to ride over to Throckmorton, a few of us will be gathering in the car park of B&Q, Holmer Road, Hereford by about 7:45 and hopefully, we'll see you there.

Operation Darwin.

What's this about then? Well Darwin is a Police operation aimed specifically at reducing the disproportionately high number of casualties among the motorcycling community in the areas of mid and west Wales (Powys and Carmarthenshire). Seeing as a number of our regular runs take us across the border we can all look forward to a Police presence that will hopefully bring about a reduction in the number of motorcycle collisions in the area.

That's it from me – for now. Keep smiling. Brian.



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Club Notice Board

Please send notice's to whamnewsletter@gmail.com

Up coming EVENTS

- WHAM Slow Riding Day Our most popular training day of the year, Saturday June 15th
- Natter night with a group ride. Wednesday June 26th. Please check the programme for further details.

Remember to check the 'Programme' section of the WHAM website for the SUNDAY ride out routes. <http://www.wham-motorcycling.org/programme/>

This Month's 'YOUTUBE' moment courtesy of Craig Endicott

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBGwzK6Q1Gg&sns=em>

And from Peter Kellie

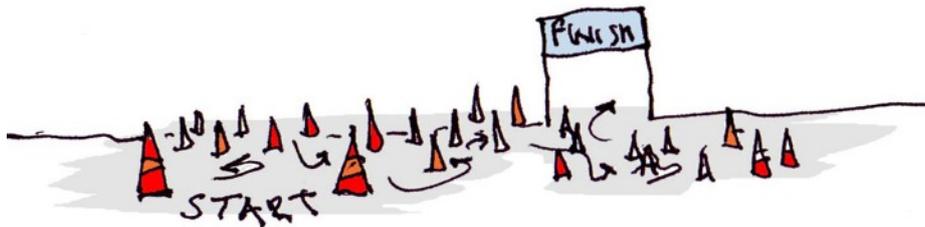
<http://youtu.be/UN14nwPMmrM>

Derek sent this for the BMW fans

http://youtu.be/peQaeU40__pA

E-mail any bike related 'youtube' video's that you want to share to whamnewsletter@gmail.com

A slow riding course



wham! Regalia

Have you bought your WHAM! clothing yet? We've got polo shirts and T-shirts in stock - for £12 and £10 respectively.

You can also buy fleeces and other wham regalia - just let us know what you want.

To purchase wham! polo or T-shirts Please contact: Alex Hoyle.

whamsecretary@trackdown.co.uk



Find us on:
facebook®

To join just login to your Facebook account and type 'Worcester and Hereford advanced Motorcyclists' in the search box at the top of the page, then click on the 'Join Group' button at the top right of the screen - one of our Admins will then approve you membership (we don't just let anyone in, only WHAM Members can join!). And if your not on Facebook, this is a good reason to join.

Members Article's

Please send your stories to whamnewsletter@gmail.com

The Masters test By Del Britton

'Whilst I wait for the answer to a question I have asked head office with reference to one of your riding manoeuvres we will continue with the theory test, no big thing', exclaimed the staff examiner.

With my mind now racing; 'is this fail?' what does 'no big thing mean' if you have to ring IAM head office.

He continues;

'Aquaplaning' explain the action to be taken as explained in Road craft?

This was followed by several further questions on Road craft and the Highway Code, still no answer to his query from IAM head office about this manoeuvre I carried out...not good I was thinking.

The day started at a BP garage forecourt around 10.00hrs a few miles north along the A22 off junction 6 the M25 an overcast day the roads drying out from the evening rain. Jon Taylor the staff examiner explained what he wanted to see during the test, a Police standard ride ridden within the National speed limits and abiding by the Highway Code.

Having seen all my documents, driving licence both copies (in date) and Insurance he then went on to check the bikes electronics, indicators and brake lights this was completed after giving me a full briefing and the outline of the route. This was no different than any other observers' brief, well may be a little more detailed so, nothing out of the ordinary so far so good.

Driving through crowded busy shopping streets leading into narrow country lanes with over grown trees and hedgerows leading out onto open dual carriageways back onto major A roads onto more narrow country lanes with the national speed limit constantly changing from 60 mph to 30 mph and back up to 60 mph, some of the limit points become hard to see due to the narrow over grown hedgerows the road surface wasn't the best. All very demanding riding knowing that when safe to do so the riding had to be at the speed limit, tight twisting narrow roads all good fun!.

After an hour and a half or so riding on these roads completing a few overtakes within the speed limit I was directed back out onto open roads to the M25 where we turned off and made our way to a car park to conduct slow riding exercises. By this stage I knew I was getting a little fatigued through the constant high concentration required riding on the unknown roads showing progress when safe combined with continual rear observation, not wanted to miss any directions given - 'Good job' that I had been doing a lot of miles training with Derek. Sunday rides and an observer weekend training in Wales with Brian, Eric and Paul prior to starting this test (good job I didn't think about the laugh we all had).



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Members Articles

Ken Shaw's schoolings in commentary also helped me focus the mind, talking aloud to myself to keep the concentration up 'change of road surface' – 'oncoming vehicle think about my bubble' – 'speed limit' – 'rear observation' – 'lower gear for flexibility and a reserve of power' all came flooding back as I spoke aloud.

Please conduct a slow riding exercise completing two circles to the left followed by two to the right, do not do figures of eight as these are easier!

I knew my slow riding manoeuvres were a little wider than I could perform but I was playing safe, if I 'go for it' and topple over what sort of impression would that give for a 'Masters test' after playing safe Jon then jumped onto my bike and conducted the manoeuvres within a smaller diameter. He just wanted to see if it could be done better as my RT had the side boxes full of gear and attached. Having completed this slow riding exercise we rode to a garden centre to conduct the theory test.

'Well Del' Jon motioned to his laptop, I have put my scores into the computer and if you look, as long as the filtering manoeuvre was legal you have passed. But I will confirm once head office has informed me.

The ride back onto the M4 was a long and arduous one, my mind was working overtime, well I did my best and if I have failed because of trying to demonstrate riding flamboyancy and flair so be it. Stopping at Reading services I rang Derek to explain the situation when I received a text, on reading it a feeling of great release of pressure and of joy, as it read 'congratulations the ruling went your way, you have passed'.

I can discuss the filtering move in question in more detail during ride outs or at natter nights for those who are interested. From my perspective the training and test has moved my riding confidence and skills up a notch from what it was. The staff examiner was excellent, completely professional throughout being firm, fair-minded and receptive to questions. His debrief was full and complete giving guidance on how best to improve faults.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the training and would like to publicly thank both Derek and Ken for their time and efforts in getting me ready for the Masters test.

Summary.

1. Recommend hours in the seat riding to get bike and test fit, riding at a progressive pace on narrow roads.
2. Get some hours riding within the urban environment practicing filtering whenever possible when legal and safe to do so!1. Over takes, try and make over takes within the NSL by looking at opportunities at right hand bends, roundabouts, traffic light and right turns.
2. Get on top of the slow riding.
3. Study Road craft, HC and HTBABT.
4. Work hard in the training

Train hard fight easy!!

Del Britton



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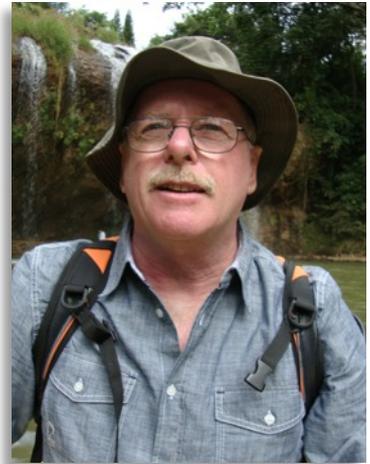
Members' Articles

We have a number of great articles lined up this month. Derek Evans continues with his trip to Vietnam! Bike reviews and a 'Track Day' report. And as usual, I'll make the rest up!

Vietnam Continued by Derek Evans

Flushed with success at having made it back to the hotel we loaded up and set off on our adventure. Before long Mark's bike showed itself to be a problem child losing its chain from the rear cog, losing power and puncturing a rear tyre. All were fixed quickly and cheaply, however, with roadside help from locals and the occasional mechanic.

The road to the coast from Saigon made as big an impression as the city. We were travelling on a public holiday with hoards of motorcycles all travelling very slowly due to the numbers and there were many pot holes, some big



enough to swallow you and the bike. Most bikes travelled on the dirt and sometimes tarmac margins of the main highway but occasionally you had to mix it with faster horn blaring psycho bus and lorry drivers. In general though we were all enjoying starring in our own little road movie.

Both food and accommodation were easy to find and very cheap. We all liked Vietnamese cuisine and had no illness problems. By day three we had made it to Da Lat in the mountains, travelling through spectacular coastal scenery in very strong winds and rough mountain tracks that the bikes tackled surprisingly well. The constant shaking took

its toll, however, and Mark's bike needed a fuel tank repair, my bike lost a chain, my electric loom fell out of its housing and David's gearshift lever fell off (banged back on with a rock). Da lat was well worth the visit, however, and we all enjoyed re-living the trip and our mishaps.

Remaining repairs the next day were easily made by a local mechanic without charge! After visiting the Tien Khuong waterfall we set off again up the coast towards Nha Trang. On route we noticed that Mark's bike had stopped its habit of smoking from its exhaust and a local mechanic decided it needed an oil change.



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Members' Articles

Vietnam Continued.



He set the bike up to drain the engine but no oil came out - much laughter from all around. With a fresh infusion of oil Mark's bike was happily smoking again.

The next few days followed a similar pattern but, as with Top Gear, we realised that our average speed was very low and we would need to complete our journey by train. Taking the bikes proved to be impractical so on day nine in Hoi An we sold two of our bikes for \$300 each to fellow tourists and Mark's to a local for considerably less but a good overall result.

A sleeper bus and then a train took us to Ha Noi and the tour of Ha Long bay arranged in Nha Trang was a major success involving three-day boat trip around the islands and visits to the Vietnam War hospital cave, a night on Monkey Island and the water puppet theatre in Ha Noi on our return



So, in summary, what was it like? An assault on the senses. Spectacular scenery, fantastically friendly people (who seemed genuinely impressed with our holidaying as a family), great value for money, dangerous roads, unreliable bikes and terrific fun

Derek Evans.



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Bike Reviews



This is the section of the newsletter that gives members the total right to brag about their bikes, whether they are new 'Masterpieces' or 'Old' classics. Any bike article is more than welcome, so if you love your bike, drop an article to whamnewsletter@gmail.com.

Nic Martin writes about his spanking new GS followed by Ian Barnard and his GS too. I know Lawrence Arms, Tony Davis, Richard Stilwell, John Hodges, Martyn Newman & Derek McMullan have all got new machines so get writing! Next Month Craig Endicott reviews 'Big Red' his beloved Pan European.

Mucking Fagic by Nic Martin



As an owner of the new BMW R1200GS [TE] I have been asked to write an overview, to inform and assist any potential owners. I have ridden the bike for a month and seen it through its first 600-mile service, and up-to **1000-miles**. I also ride a Sports Bike which incorporates a MTCS (Multi Traction Control System) so the new BMW needs to come-up to the mark. It is that time of year when [like Lemmings] we flood to the bike showrooms, bike shows and Bike Trader pages, to see what is new this year, and ask the age-old question..."should I or shouldn't I."

I purchased a BMW F800GS last May and covered 3730 miles during my first season with WHAM. It is a great bike, but it lacked the technical wizardry I wanted from an Enduro-come-touring bike. Not being that tall, I found it uncomfortable reaching the ground at a stop, the indicators were located either side of the handlebars and the 'cancel button' located elsewhere. As much as I rode the F800 I never really got used to the system, the computer was very poor but it had guts and rode really well.

So I researched the BMW R1200GS TE and sourced a test ride on the Monday after the bike was launched on the 2nd March, I was amazed at how easy the bike was to ride! What did I want from a new bike (?) my preferences were, a seat height that I would be comfortable at, a computer system that gave me fuel information, GEAR SELECTION, ambient temperature WARNING and any electronic assistance that would keep me upright and in control at all speeds. The R1200 also comes with a bespoke Garmin 660LM cradle built into the 'Computer Pro' the GPS can be controlled from a 'control bar' on the handlebars and is perfectly positioned in the riders' eye view behind the adjustable fly-screen.

Although not new technology, the TE has a Daytime Halogen Riding Light, with a 'Booster Light' that can be turned on manually in low light or low visibility conditions such as Mist or Fog. A Tyre Pressure Monitor has also been added to the plethora of electronics. It's easy to park, place on the centre stand and manoeuvre at low speeds. Because of my work, I often leave a bike at locations around the country [including airports] so I needed a BMW Approved Security System. I use a Datatool S4 Red on my sports-bike, but BMW would not approve the same system, so I went for the Factory-Fitted BMW Alarm and Immobilizer that is controlled by the Computer.



Bike Reviews Continued

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It has the same standby modes as Data-tool, an emergency battery back-up and low battery draw. It can be used in 'Ferry Mode' and can be switched-off altogether. No obtrusive 'Key Fob', just the BMW Ignition Key – very user friendly. The battery on my F800 was only capable of holding a charge for about 2-weeks... 'Max' ["ride the bike more I hear you cry..!"] difficult when you work abroad at times. The new bike has a battery that recommends using an Optimate [or similar] charger if the bike is not to be used for up to 6-weeks, which is an improvement on the F800, but not as good as my sportsbike. I will continue to optimise the

battery where possible.

The bike is completely new to the previous 1200GS and has an additional 35BHP, it is now [Partly] Liquid-Cooled, mainly Air-Cooled and has shed a load of weight, which suits my small-ish frame and short levers. I find it very comfortable, adequately powerful and very manageable. The Traction Control has been intergraded with the ABS and can change the range of fuel consumption that the added ASC [Active Stability Control] 'Riding Modes', Road, Rain, Dynamic, Off-road and Dynamic Off-road offer the rider. The Mode you require is easy to select, can be done on the move [if conditions change] and all the road options are supported with a Cruise Control. It rides well, is very stable at high speeds and in the corners, and the throttle response is instant!

On journeys of around 150-miles I am still able to walk when I get off the machine at the other end, the ride is comfortable and I'm sure as I extend my mileage I will have no problems. I have found that the 'Dynamic' Mode quickens up the bike, it responds quicker and give more torque through the gearing, the 'Road' Setting is still very good and saves fuel. Last month the Heated Grips have been handy, the lower setting is adequate and you need to be wearing thick gloves to 'Reg-Out' the second 'hotter' setting. I use an HJC R-Pha Max [Flip] Helmet and an integrated Interphone F5 for my link to the GPS, FM Radio and other riders. I have aspirations of riding in Europe and I'm convinced I have chosen the perfect bike for me to continue my personal biking goals.

The BMW policy is very comprehensive and includes the important additions you need nowadays; Legal, Helmet, Clothing and Accessories, European cover and two-years BMW Breakdown Assistance – with motorcycle recovery! I only had 1-years no claims bonus to carry forward on this bike, and my Comprehensive Insurance Policy was £191.53... It's definitely worth a l@@@k if you ride a BMW.

So, am I happy with my purchase, for a smidgen under 14K (?), I'm ecstatic...

Bike Reviews

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A GS Review By Ian Barnard

Our new editor in chief asked me to write some words on why I like the BMW R1200GS.

Without a doubt the GS is a bike that simply instils confidence in the rider. It is a bit like the Swiss Army knife of the biking world in that it can be used for just about anything. It will cross Europe in all day comfort or it will go to the shops. It will do an enthusiastic Sunday ride or take you for a bumble round the lanes. It will even do a track day with ease although I have yet to try one of those.

Many articles have been written about the virtues of the GS and they not wrong but to say that the bike is perfect would be untrue. However, the beauty of the GS is that there are probably more after market parts available than for any other bike.

There are a few parts of the bike that just don't suit me so I started a period of trial and error and tried to get the bike to fit me better. The first gripe I had was the lack of protection from the stock screen. I have never liked being blown off a bike and the GS was not as good as I wanted it to be. I had heard via the web that it was possible to fit the larger adventure screen and, after trying screens from Nippy Norman, puig, MRA vario and even the tobimators that were supposed to work, and didn't, I went for the adventure screen. I bought it at Oxford Motorrad and fitted it in the car park. The ride home was brilliant with this screen being perfect. Unfortunately, when the 08 model came out the head stock was altered and this gave me some very uncomfortable buffeting that had not been there on the old model. I finally found the solution using an American made screen, the Ztechnik. This originally came in 21" or 23" so I used the lower 21" and then the 19" when they brought it out and this has proved to be the perfect compromise. As I already had the support bar for the Adventure screen I was able to match the screen that retained this and it is a rock solid fitting. I also fitted the winglets that are standard on the Adventure and these keep the blast off the arms very effectively. At just over £50 they are a good upgrade.



The second big area for me to look at was the saddle. From day one I found that my bum does not fit the BMW saddle and serious numbness sets in after about an hour. I first tried the Wunderlich ergo seat. This was comfortable save for the feeling that something was always pressing into the back of my bum. The material was excellent at stopping you slipping but it had to go.

The search moved onto the Sargent seat and I rode down to Sennybridge in Wales to test ride the saddle. The improvement was like night to day and I ordered it then and there. This saddle, bought for £289 in 2007, has now been used on four bikes and still allows me to ride all day without numbness. I am not a great advocate of long distance riding in one day but I have managed over 500 miles and was still able to walk at the end. God only knows what that would have been like on the stock seat.

The beauty of the GS for the last eight years has been that the bike itself hasn't altered allowing parts bought for my first 2004 bike to be moved on to the next model. The current bike has a number of safety aids where I felt visibility of the bike could be improved. To this end the BMW auxiliary LED driving lamps were fitted and these are used day & night.



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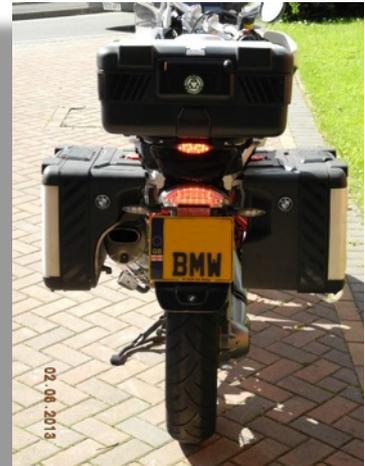


Bike Reviews

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So the parts listed below have been on all four bikes:

Full Luggage, top box & panniers
Saddle
Screen(s)
Secure oil filler cap
Brake pedal extension
Rear fender extension
Rear wheel Hub centre cap cover
Crash bars
Autocom unit
Sat Nav
Oil Radiator grill



I felt the brake light was not very good so sourced a small LED lamp from ebay and now have a sort of high level brake light which I hope grabs the attention of following drivers more effectively.

The bike is currently as near to my perfect ride as I think I can make it. The bike suits me well and, having now covered almost 60,000 miles on GS's, I think it will serve me well for a couple more years at least.

Members Articles

Track days!!! These two words can bring many different thoughts, some might think of 'loons' screaming round others will think 'FUN' however on a well organised and run day, a rider can gain a huge benefit, from cornering & braking to exploring your machines performance in a controlled environment. The IAM host these events, so keep an eye on their website www.iam.org.uk

2013 Cadwell Park Better Riding Day 15/5/13 – by Tony Reusser

This was the 3rd Hopp Rider Training day I've done in 7 years and in my opinion they are a fantastic opportunity to:

- learn more about your bikes performance on a well organised and safety oriented course
- develop your skills to understand your bike's performance potential on a fabulous circuit
- and importantly have instructors and instruction that makes your learn relevant to the road

When I mentioned to Brian that I was doing another Cadwell Better Riding Day in May and that I thought it better than the IAM Silverstone event I'd attended 2 years ago, he ask me to write a short piece for the club.



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Members Articles Continued

Cadwell Park Better Riding Day

So having set the scene, here we go. I've included much of the detail, because if you are anything like me it's the detail that is important, so apologies to those who only want the big picture.

Cost & Getting there.

I travelled the 140 miles from Droitwich to Cadwell Park in the afternoon of the day before. For me it was all about getting the most out of the day, so arriving tired for the Wednesday 7.30 morning start was the last thing I wanted to do. As it turned out it rained all the way there and all morning on the day of the event, so real world riding kicked in from the start.

The cost of the days course was £185, but have a look at Martin Hopp's web site on this link for more details. <http://www.hoppridertraining.co.uk/better-riding-day/>

I found a B&B courtesy of the Web and stayed at Holme Dean, Scamblesby, 5 minutes down the road from the circuit. Great value and hospitality from Phil & Val at £35.

Schedule of Events - Morning

7.30 – Arrive with a full tank of petrol, get noise tested, register in paddock office, bring your licence and HRT forms all filled in. Disconnect headlights or tape them up. Stick numbers and your name on the front of your bike.

8.30 – Rider briefing. Miss this and you don't go out, as much important stuff is covered. Instructors are introduced along with their impressive credentials. Circuit safety and medical facilities covered, marshalling flags explained, 4 X 20 minute sessions explained all lead by instructors in the morning. Cones on the corners mark turn in points and apex. Group set-up is covered, Instructor follow your leader explained in a very clear and fun manner. Use of mirrors and indicators for group riding changes of position are covered. Plus overtaking rules are explained (only on the left on the main straights) when told to do so by the instructor in the morning sessions and covered again in the afternoon briefing, plus of course the black flag! No one was sent home I'm pleased to say.

Martin Hopp also took a very good session about the gyroscopic effect of wheels on motor bikes, using an old wheel from his gran daughters push bike. If you have not seen a similar demo I'll bring one on a Natter night if requested. Basically, with a line attached to just one side of the spindle, he spins the wheel slowly and the wheel revolves at an angle when suspended from the line, but if spun fast it stands up vertically, showing the inherent stability of the wheel.

This point was later emphasised further by one of the instructors in my group during the 4th morning session when he explained the effect of more throttle making the bike stand up on the exit of a bend (opening the ark or path of the bike takes out of a corner) or, closing the throttle (same a light brake application), to tighten a corner if needed.

Instructor Groups and Bike numbers vs. track time

There were 3 groups, A, B & C.

Group A = Advanced riders, qualified with good knowledge and experience of Cadwell.

Group B = intermediates, progressers may be new to Cadwell, but with other track experience. Group C = Gentle tourers, track beginners, biking beginners, seekers of knowledge. Thanks to HRT terminology.

There were approximate 5 to a main group, plus instructor (6) with about 4 min-groups in each of the 3 main groups. So about 68 bike in total on this event.

Group A were out first at 9.00 so had to be a in the main lower assembly area 10 minutes before the off to be briefed by their instructor. There is a 5 minute whistle and a 2 minute whistle by which time the groups are suited and booted to go. The 4 mini groups go out on track at approx 30 second intervals lead by the instructor to spread the mini group around the track.



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Group B go out at 9.20 and again go through the same process with 10 min, 5 and 2 minute signals before going out on track with their instructor. Same for C.

Instruction received in my Group B

Over the four sessions we the following items all of which I'm sure you would recognise as invaluable to any level of experience. Interestingly I found myself thing of IPSGA as a starting point!

Our instructor covered:

Learn the geography of the circuit – It takes a while to know your way round, for example the up hill long right hander from Charlies1 to Charlies2. Getting the line right is key for the correct line onto Park Straight. From road riding perspective, plan your ride, read the road, signs, hazards etc.

How Counter Steering works - Push left to go left, push right to go right etc.

Always let the tyres warm up over the first couple of laps. In the wet conditions we had always use the front brake when up right, don't be tempted to cover the brake in corners.

Style and Vision - Then be smooth and precise. Use your distance and peripheral vision. Look and your bike will follow. Think ahead of your bike. Practice soften your arms and leaning into a bend.

Use of throttle and brakes – Covered above in 7.30 rider briefing.

Group dynamics -

Interestingly, the group I was in were all very supportive with 4 out of 5 of us being IAM trained and/or observers. This was not typical and was totally by chance. Not sure what the collective noun would be, but I'm sure someone will think of something witty! There was only one non-IAM chap in our group who came from a scooter background (we forgave him his sins), who was quite nervous to start with, but everyone was very supportive and he settled in and performed very well. Importantly, Martin Hopp's courses do enable riders to move up or down groups to suit their abilities and instructors looking to ensure the any mismatch is sorted on request or otherwise to maximise learning and confidence.

Incidents –

There was only one on the first lap of the first morning session. One chap went out on brand new tyres in the wet. He was not going quickly, but a wet race track is probably more slippery than the road and down he went at Barn corner at slow speed when the front went away from him. Only his pride was bruised, but it was a lesson for us all. Bed those new tyres in well folks.

Schedule of Events – Afternoon

The track closed for lunch between 1 and 2pm. The afternoon briefing was at 1.30 and anyone missing it would miss the first 2pm track session, whilst they were brief separately.

The sun came out! No really it did. The track dried and everyone was buzzing. This was a sign to be careful!

The format for the afternoon was all about practicing what was learnt in the morning. Riders still went out in groups for 20 minute session as in the morning. This time however, the instructors lead their groups for the first lap only. Thereafter, they could lap within their 20 minute session at will (most stayed with their groups or buddied up), observing all the rules of course for fear of the black flag. To overtake (left side only) you had to indicate left and the rider being overtaken uses mirrors, then acknowledges by indicating right, you could then overtake on the two straights only.

Additionally, instructors were available for 1:1 sessions with is a great opportunity to come under the gaze of a real expert and benefit accordingly.

There are 3 session in the afternoon, however, with a long ride home in prospect I regrettably said farewell, clipped the panniers back on, uncovered the headlights and rode home fully content with a great days rider training at a fabulous venue.

Be skilful – Tony Reusser



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Rick Stevenson, spotted this pony needing a tow on the A417 near Burley Gate!



Guy Genkins



Tim Wynn points the way



Annie Morgan AKA Mrs Smooth



Muppets!



Ant, Ali and Lynne