

Worcester & Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists



October
2015



The Chairman's Notes



Welcome to the Newsletter.

WHAM has had a busy month, despite the clocks going back and the leaves covering the roads. What a difference 2 days can make this time of year. One day I am in West Wales on dry, clear roads, the next I am being tested by surface water and sticky leaves, in pouring rain on new tyres – all good experience!

There are still a few places left for the Christmas Dinner, as I write this. Please see the payment link on the website if you intend to come along. If you are not paying by PayPal please reserve your place by contacting me on wham.worcester@gmail.com and let me know how you would prefer to pay. If you are not in time to secure a place you will be put on a waiting list. Thank you for your replies regarding your dietary requirements. Your final choice will be made on the evening but it is helpful to let Sylvia at the Falcon know any specific needs. Dress code is smart please.

Roger Brooks and I met Derek at this year's IAM Conference, held at Aston University. It turned out to be a very worthwhile day, showing how well the IAM central team had developed their strategy. This included showing a well written Observer/Associate/Examiner logbook and competency sheets, for roll-out next April/May. A lot of the good practice from clubs all over the UK has fed in to its development. It enables a standardised and consistent approach from when an Associate buys a SFL package to when an examiner meets them for test.

Over 500 delegates attended the event over the 2 days. The format focused primarily on workshops where you were able to offer opinions and ideas to compliment a clear strategy to move IAM and WHAM forward. Themes included riding standards, Observer recruitment and succession planning, communication and group engagement and IAM strategy. A particular area for discussion was attracting new riders, following the very successful launch of the Under 17 Car Club.

A few facts and figures for you:

- IAM currently has 18,000 bike members, 4,000 of which are joint car/bike
- The average age of an Observer is 55-60yrs old (I break the mould! Do you?)
- 81-90% of Observers are male
- One club's Chairman is younger than 30 (no not me!)
- Quality of driving data shows motorcyclists make safer drivers
- Biggest killer on the roads is distraction



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

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- To date bike sales in 2015 have exceeded 138,000
- Congestion is set to double in the next 6-7years
- Motorcycling is seen as a positive aid to reducing congestion. Some Counties are changing lane policy in cities and having positive motorcycling initiatives
- There is clear differentiation between perceived Police levels being used and the IAM national driving standards, including F1rst and Masters.

If you have any innovative ideas regarding attracting new riders, especially younger riders, then IAM would like to know about it. Please e-mail, tweet, Facebook or even phone to share good practice or offer ideas. Have a look on their website. It was evident that IAM had listened to members since last year and acted on it. Delegates were able to have opinions and offer ideas, whilst IAM officers were able to get their key messages across. It was a well-planned and fully inclusive day which will help WHAM reflect on current practice and be fit for purpose in the future. It served to reinforce that we have quality observers and a healthy, vibrant club, which is young at heart – Well done all.

It was a privilege to see so many of you at the National Arboretum to pay your respects to the fallen. Thanks to Roger Brooks for spotting the Arboretum being closed for refurbishment, hence change of date. Please check out the photos below. It was our last day ride but please keep an eye out for our Sunday rides and let's hope for some crisp dry days.

Our AGM will be on the last Wednesday in January so please let me, or any member of the Committee, know if you would be interested in being more involved in the club or would like to organise an event (RH – Go karting??).
On the same evening Will Hopkins and Angel will be showing the premiere of their short film of the Slow Riding Day. It's an exclusive, before its put on YouTube!

Safe Riding folks,

Paul



From the web:

John McGuinness on 'That Moment!@='

URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITK5iVw_GfE

courtesy of Derek McMullan



Observing

(I can't stop and it's becoming a real problem)

by Ant Clerici

I don't mean "observing" with an associate or even another observer on our 'Observer Training Days'; my problem is every day; day in, day out. When riding, driving or just walking into town....
I need help!

Many of us can usually predict when a rider/driver in front is not concentrating on driving....when they are about to turn, if they've suddenly been distracted.....

Obsessed

And that's my problem, it's not relaxing and it's becoming a bit of an obsession.

It's easy to spot other bikers who haven't gained the skills that we take for granted. I usually reckon 10 seconds is long enough to see if they are 'one of us' or not.

For some, there is an over confidence in themselves and a blind faith in other road users that would make a religious fanatic jealous.

There's the obvious lack of the right clothing, especially in summer, when gloveless, wearing trainers and even shorts shows a lack of respect of the unforeseen. Then there's the riding....too close, too fast, thoughtlessly following a mate on an overtake, the wrong line, crossing solid whites because they interrupt the "racing line" but also at the other end of the confidence scale, not 'using' the bike! Bikers stuck in the traffic, usually in the centre of lane 2 when the motorway is stationary when I'm happily filtering, keeping the wheels turning, or seeing them sat at the back of a long queue waiting for the distant lights to change.

Why?!

I could go on.....oh I will.....

Everyone's to blame

Unfortunately my problem has extended to include other road users.

All of them!

Texting pedestrians, even parents pushing buggies whilst "on the phone", cyclists who seem to always ride on the pavement – not looking ahead and relying on others to move away as they approach, head down, intent on punching out that last 'LOL x'

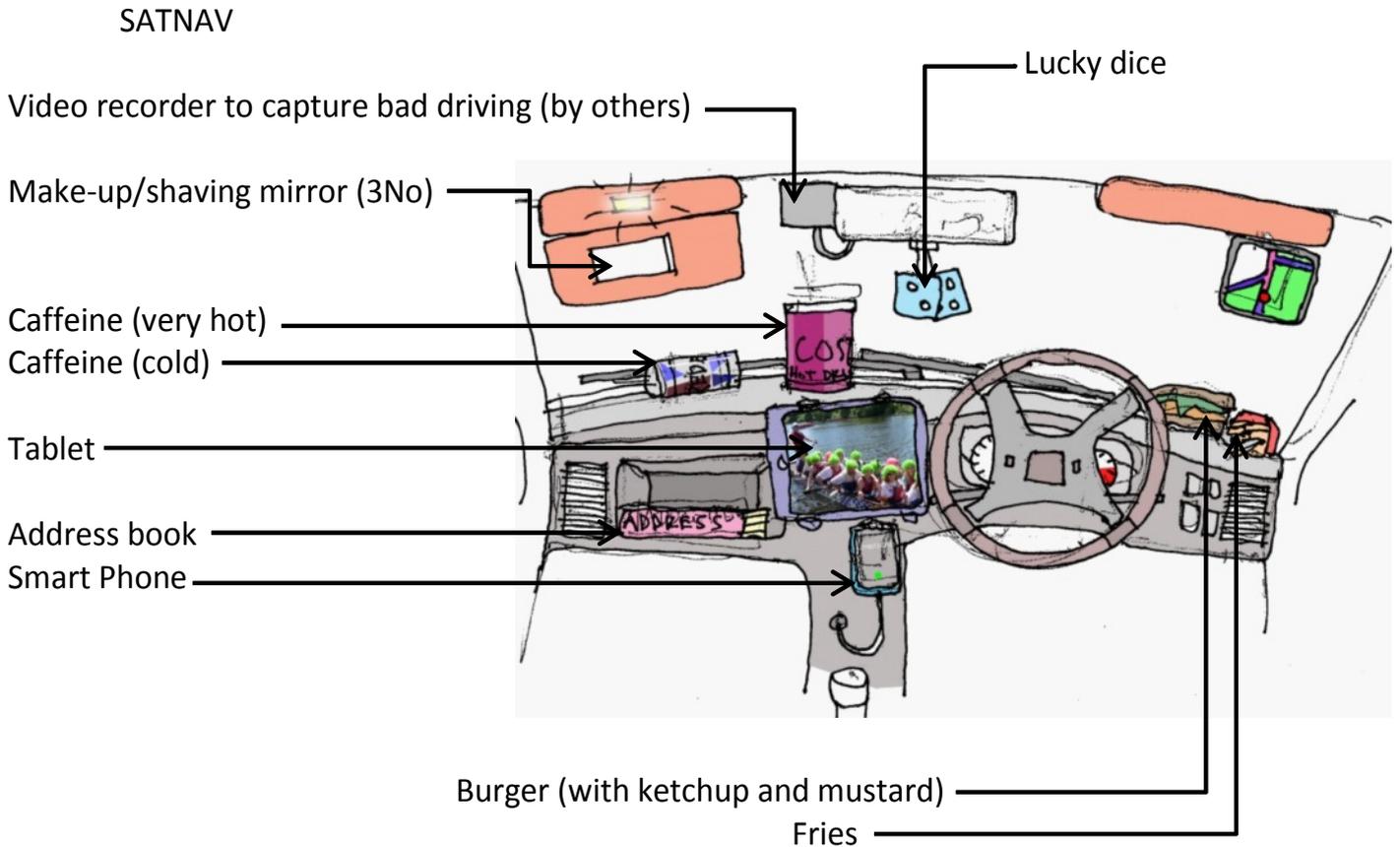
But it's those with the reassurance of 4 wheels who take the biscuit.

Well, eating the biscuit, sandwiches, yoghurts (now that takes planning), baguettes and MacDonal-d's. Drinking from bottles, Costa coffee cups or cans. The phone conversations that go on for mile after mile, those who hold the phone away from their ears because that doesn't look like they are on the phone (doh!), the texts that are surreptitiously made in slow moving traffic or on the motorway – you can spot them looking down whilst not holding the steering wheel.....after all you need both thumbs to text properly.

When riding my bike the slightly elevated position allows fantastic views of drivers reading maps, holding address books on the steering wheel whilst dialling the number, looking at their passengers when talking....looking at the kids in the back....



I could go on.....oh I will...the panic lane change as the satnav tells them to bear right, the endemic lack of signals, those who don't understand the word "average" when used with "speed cameras".....I could go on.....but I won't.



It's time to think about what can be done. It's time to consider how the IAM might change its poor perception of late middle aged conservative drivers tut-tutting at cars booming out the base (surely that's not music?) or double parking....**the IAM must become relevant**

What is the driving test about?

What are insurance companies doing to encourage better standards?

The driving test

Perhaps learning by tick boxes isn't learning how to drive: just how to pass the test?

Do instructors teach new car drivers about those of us on 2 wheels? That all two wheelers benefit all car drivers. We reduce their journey times and shorten rush hours: true!

If we were to revert to cars there would be grid lock.

Cyclists need to be given space and not thought of as an imposition.

(Let alone proper investment in separation of cycle lanes.....a different soap box)

Motor bikes are not understood by most car drivers because they've never experienced bikes or never been taught things like...

- We are allowed to filter
- Can accelerate quickly (Lamborghini/Ferrari territory)
- Will not delay a car
- Don't have reverse gear

eg I recently met an oncoming car on a single track road. The driver was slightly annoyed at having to back up – he didn't know bikes don't have reverse gear.

Overtaking by car drivers is a lost art that's been replaced by tailgating.

Insurance

And insurers haven't really entered the skills debate, rather looking to technology to solve the lack of skill with GPS tagging (just like criminals on probation) and stats that support rising premiums. And don't forget there are those who want to dispense with human drivers entirely!

Maybe we should get better at adopting best practice seen elsewhere in the world; for example to focus on reducing the risks for the inexperienced by imposing restrictions whilst valuable experience is gained. This will take generations to come through when we need a change in attitude...NOW!

Our biking is more risky because of bad standards of driving, lack of concentration and poor awareness.

SMIDSY we know.....perhaps SYIMPC (sorry you interrupted my phone call) or SMIWE (sorry mate I was eating) or SMIWT (sorry mate I was texting) it all adds up to Clarkson's YSBIAC.....(you should be in a car)

The answer?

Keep riding but keep learning.

Be self-critical, ride with good riders and continue to have the most fun on 2 wheels

A revolution is required.

Let's have a more assertive IAM.... Let's get "attitude" and really challenge bad driving & bad riding.

My list of campaigns?

1. Driving instructors to ensure car drivers understand about cyclists
2. Driving instructors to ensure car drivers understand about motor bikes
3. Actively protect younger/newly licenced drivers by imposing constraints
4. Create real reward for advanced driving (Could the IAM establish its own insurance cover?)
5. Insurers should encourage overseas qualified drivers take a UK driving awareness course
6. Research into motivation for improving your driving



Duck on Tour

by Mick Peakman

Those of you paying attention will recall that some time ago I undertook my first trip to Scotland on the RT. Well, now I am reporting on my second trip, this time to the Dolomites in Northern Italy.



Packed & Ready

So it was that early on Sunday 13th September we set off for Folkestone & the Channel Tunnel. There were two of us packed with general clothes for two weeks, plus Via Ferrata gear (more of which, later). We had the Tardis that is the top box, plus a pannier each & a 15Litre Tank Bag, otherwise known as a man-bag containing all essential equipment that no self-respecting man can do without. Robyn, my pillion & significant other, also had one of her collection of handbags worn back to front to hold passports, money & many other unmentionable things that ladies appear to be incapable of being without.

We took the M5 south, then across on the A417/419 past Swindon to the M4 then all the way down to the M25 & around and down to Folkestone. Of course, it rained, lots, so we were well pleased to get inside the terminal building for a while. We had arrived a good hour early but unfortunately couldn't get an earlier crossing than the 15:30. No matter - BK for lunch!

Eventually we loaded & found ourselves in a carriage with 20 or so other bikes, all of which were French, comprising Triumphs, BMWs & a couple of nice Yamaha Sport bikes.

As we left the train I noticed a warning light on the dash indicating that a bulb had blown somewhere - I suspected the headlight but as I hadn't memorised the icon code from the manual (who reads the manual for heaven's sake!) had to wait until the next service station to confirm my suspicions - yep it was gone, but not to worry, I had the driving lights on & we would be at the hotel long before dark.



Duck in Belgium

Our plan was a quick 120 mile hop to Mons in Belgium which went without incident except that it rained, lots, well, until about 10 minutes from the hotel when the sky cleared & the sun came out.

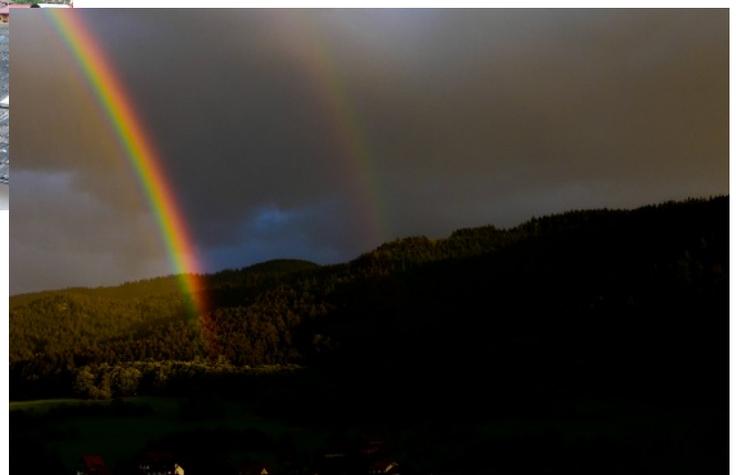
Day 2 was a long day of 300 miles down to Seebach in Germany, mostly because I wanted to ride the B500 - more of which, later. Early on in the day it rained & rained & rained, so much so that we decided to pull over for an early lunch & watched as the water ran down the windows like someone had turned a hose on!

Eventually it slowed enough for us to make a dash for it, but soon enough it rained again, harder & harder. This was not good for two reasons; it is no fun in the rain, & secondly I had promised my pillion good weather. Oh yes, thirdly, her visor leaked so she was getting both her face & her hair wet - I was in serious trouble! Eventually the rain cleared & we found ourselves in bright sunshine & as a bonus on a section of unrestricted Autobahn. I didn't realise at first but two things gave it away; my Sat Nav gave no speed limit & a number of cars & bikes came past like we were standing still & we were doing about 80mph. Ok, let's go for it. I slowly wound the speed up to 120mph which the RT coped with no problem. I could have probably gone a little faster but there were vehicles ahead & at that speed, they come up fast & I was beginning to feel a pain in my side where my pillion was 'informing' me that slowing down was in order! I eased off to a steady 80mph. I discovered later that Robyn had been buffeted about by the wind at the high speed which surprised me as I thought the windshield on full extension would have protected her, but seemingly not.



View over Seebach

German Rainbow



Seebach is in the Schwarzwald & is quite beautiful. We were staying at Pension Williams, run by a British couple who were extremely welcoming &, as it turned out, knew more about riding the local roads than anyone & gave me lots of advice about BMW dealers & the B500 (more of which, later).

That evening we dined at the nearby hotel & enjoyed a very quiet night, praying for no rain the next day for the big ride.

The day dawned clear & bright & after a good breakfast & a final briefing on the B500 we set off in search of the BMW dealer. I say 'in search' but all I needed to do was to program the Sat Nav to take me to the nearest dealer which turned out to be about 10 miles away!

We found it easily enough, but sadly they didn't carry the bulb I needed but gave me the address of the next nearest dealer on our route & even phoned them to confirm we could get it done. As luck would have it, the dealer was at the other end of the B500 - result. They did, however, sell crash helmets & so Robyn, now thoroughly fed up with her leaky helmet & broken sun visor, decided to treat herself to a shiny new Schubert C3 helmet, same as mine but silver instead of matt black to avoid confusion. I was dispatched to remove the intercom from the old one which we left with the dealer to dispose of.



The start of the B500

We set off in the direction of Baden Baden, the start of the B500, but as we arrived at the top of the hill, we discovered we were actually on the B500 & had been advised by David Williams that the first section was not so brilliant, so turned right & headed off. The road, known as the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse (Black Forest High Street), it seems, had been built in conjunction with the German Motorbike police as a road they could use to practise their high speed chases & as such, almost every bend could be taken at 70mph, probably faster by Sports Bikes or those that knew the road. Those that required a slower speed were well marked. The fact was, approaching a bend could be done fast knowing it wasn't going to tighten up suddenly & some of them were just beautiful, sweeping off into the distance right, then left downhill, up the other side - all roads should be like this! It improved the further South we went to the point where I thought every bend was fantastic & then another even better bend came up that was even more fantastiker! The road is also wide enough in places to overtake even with oncoming traffic, although care should be taken of course, as it should when approaching the view point car parks as we discovered early on where we came upon a mini-bus in the middle of the road! Thankfully, having recently attended the WHAM slow speed day which included speed braking I stopped well within the distance & was able to show my disgust to the driver even though I don't speak German!

We continued without further incident & without dropping below 70mph & times a little higher. The tarmac is perfect with that light brown colour & excellent grip & the rain had held off which was even better. Too soon we got to the end & I begged my pillion to allow me a second run, but we still had some miles to go & a bulb to replace so reluctantly continued on our way. I'll be back!



At the second dealer, the bulb was soon replaced by a mechanic who seemed to have elastic arms & did it without recourse to removing the cover or anything. The bill was just €30 so I was happy with that & we headed off towards our destination of Ulm, some 140 miles from Seebach where we would have two nights to break the journey.



Ulm is a nice city, boasting as it does, the highest steeple in the world at 162m. For €5, you can climb it which of course, we had to! The view from the top was excellent & we spent some time taking photos & having a breather before heading down again. Both up & down are spiral stairs & after 162m of walking in a downward spiral, both felt a little giddy so concluded the best thing would be to go for a beer or two to settle our heads which rather amazingly, did just that.



Leaving Ulm, we headed down to Innsbruck on our 226 mile ride to Corvara, enjoying some Austrian rain which it seems is nowhere near as heavy as either Belgian or German rain so barely noticed it.

From Innsbruck we headed south into Italy and the Dolomite Mountains where the roads narrowed & twisted & turned with hairpins designed to test the skill & observation of the rider. The scenery improved mile by mile & the last hour or so was just amazing as we rode towards our destination of Corvara.

We had an apartment booked for a week for walking, Via Ferrata, some riding & generally chilling out.

Corvara is centrally located & on the popular 'Sella' circuit which circumnavigates the Sella group of mountains, Piz Boe being the most famous. The route is popular with bikers as it takes in the Grodner Joch, Pordoi pass, Arabba, the Falzarego & Valparoli passes & can be done from any starting point & features more hairpin bends than you could reasonably be expected to throw a large BMW at. It also features multiple fuel stations so that even thirsty Ducatti riders can get around without recourse to syphoning.

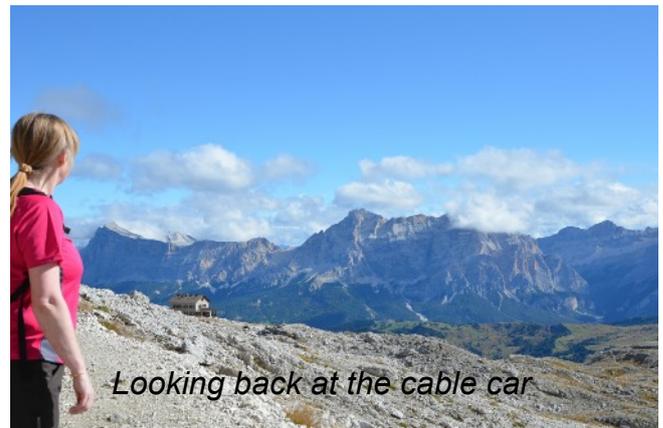




View from Corvara

Our first day saw us ride over to the Falzarego Pass the long way to explore the Lagazuoi tunnels - famous tunnels from the First World War, then back via the shorter route making a nice walking day out & a nice ride - the weather had improved remarkably & the roads were a joy to ride.

A second outing took us up on the local cable car to climb Piz Boe which at 3,152m high was a good day out with the normal spectacular views & even boasted a hut at the summit serving food & drink - why can't all mountains be like this?



Looking back at the cable car

Piz Boe Summit



I'd been keen to climb a Via Ferrata so set aside a day to climb Pisciadu via the Tridentina Ferrata. In case you don't know, Via Ferrata are wired climbs & require some specialised equipment but not as much as for traditional rock climbing, basically comprising a crash helmet, harness & a piece of equipment called a Zyper; a special friction device that attaches to the climbers harness and the wires & protects in case of a fall. The wires are bolted to the rock wall periodically & whilst a fall could easily be three or four metres, it would be painful but not fatal & means that climbers with limited skills (but skills nevertheless) can undertake climbs that would otherwise be out of the question.

The routes require a good level of fitness & an excellent head for heights combined with a reasonable rock climbing ability. On the Tridentina the route is several hundred metres vertically above the ground & in places very airy and exposed. I didn't hang about (excuse the pun) but it still took me two hours of near vertical climbing to ascend to the hut, followed by almost an hour down by the descent path which also has its inherent difficulties.



On the Via Ferrata

Other shorter walks were done & of course the week just flew by & before we knew it, we were packing for our return trip. The day before our departure, the worst thing happened; it snowed! Fearful that we might not be able to leave, we constantly checked weather forecasts, all of which assured us that the snow would stop mid-afternoon & the following day would be gone – let's hope so!



Coffee stop in the Valparoli Pass

Our departure day dawned & our first job was to look out of the window - thankfully, the snow had all but gone from the roads & pavements, replaced by light rain - that was good, it meant the air temperature was above zero & the puddles of water on the road meant the road temperature was also above freezing. Good news!



Packed and ready to go!



We left by 10:00am as our first day was a big one; 300 miles of mostly motorway from the Dolomites to the Black Forest. There is only one sensible way out of the Dolomites & that is towards Innsbruck which we followed, noticing that the temperature increased from a cool 4 degrees in Corvara to 10 degrees by the time we hit the Motorway North, not dipping until we crossed the Brenner Pass where it dropped again to about 5 degrees & made us both feel quite cold. Heated seats & handle grips on full power!

Grateful to get to the end & Innsbruck we turned West along the Motorway, thinking it was all over bar the riding, when we came upon a diversion that took us through St Anton & the Arlberg pass which was nice but also worrying in case of ice as it rose to over 5000 feet. As it turned out, the minimum temperature we experienced was 10 degrees so it was ok.

At one stop, we met other UK bikers who had been touring Austria & had to turn around on one pass because of bad weather & wait for snow plough so we considered ourselves quite fortunate.

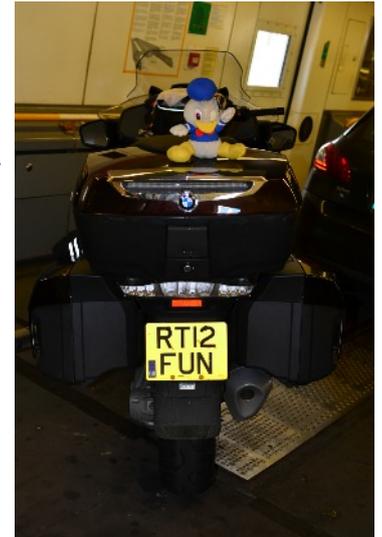


Hotel in the Black Forest



Day 2 saw us ride up to the B500 again for a second run at it, which if anything was better than the first as the road was familiar & I knew the bends were good. From the end, we drove through Strasbourg to Verdun in France & Day 3 was a very boring ride across France on Peage from Verdun to Saint Omer & finally Day 4 the short 20 miles or so to the Tunnel & the crossing. Interestingly we saw no evidence of immigrants or the trouble that is seen on the news.

By mid-afternoon on the Sunday we were home. Our total mileage was just over 2,100.



If you :

- **Have an article/story that you may think other will find interesting.**
- **A forthcoming event to advertise**
- **A motorcycling item for sale**
- **Or just seek advice!**

Email Stuart Poole at [Mail: whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com) and we shall endeavour to include it.



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.

<http://www.wham-motorcycling.org/wham-shop/>



Mods n' Rockers

by Alex Hoyle

The other month Joy and I went over to North Norfolk for a week's break, and on the Sunday morning we drove up to Hunstanton by the sea. Now, as it was Sunday morning I was thinking about all my WHAM chums who were riding over to Crossgate on route 08. So imagine my complete shock and delight when I got to Hunstanton and realised that you had all ridden over to meet me.



Here's Del on his new bike, with Gerry on the back. All the mirrors are so he can constantly keep looking at himself in the mirror.

All my WHAM Chums.



In fact, it was the annual Hunstanton Mods and Rockers Weekend, and yes there were literally hundreds of bikes, scooters, and trikes on show.

Worcester & Hereford Advanced Motorcycle club (WHAM) – Annual Remembrance ride out to the National Arboretum

Paul Whitcombe, the club's Chairman, led the annual laying of a Remembrance wreath, at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire on Sunday 1st November. Over twenty members of the club rode out from locations in Worcester and Hereford on a dark cloudy over cast day.

The Remembrance wreath was laid by committee member Eric Reynolds, on behalf of the club. This year's wreath laying ride-out was made more poignant as the club also organised a First World War trip to Ypres in September.



This is an annual November ride out for the club and one which is always supported well.

'LEST WE FORGET'





Observation links

Observations links are clues to physical features and the likely behaviour of other road users. Aim to build up your own stock of observation links, which will help you to anticipate road and traffic conditions as you scan the environment:

Observation links:

When you see a cluster of lamp posts in the distance, look out for a probable roundabout ahead.	When you see a single lamp post on its own, look out for the exit point of a junction.	When you see no gap in a bank of trees ahead, look out for the road to curve to the left or right.	When you observe people standing up on a bus to the front of you, consider it will stop shortly at a bus stop.
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Some more observations links:

When you see ...	Look out for ...
A railway line beside road.	Road will invariably go over or under it, often with sharp turns.
A row of parked vehicles.	Doors opening, vehicles moving off. Pedestrians stepping out from behind vehicles. Small children hidden from view.
A bus at a stop.	Pedestrians crossing the road to and from the bus. Bus moving off, possibly at an angle.
Cyclist.	Inexperienced cyclist doing something erratic. Cyclist looking over shoulder with the intention of turning right. Strong winds causing a wobble. Young cyclist doing something dangerous. On coming vehicles moving around a oncoming cyclist.
A gap in the traffic.	Cars emerging between queuing vehicles.
Recently laid road surface.	Loose chippings causing loss of traction.
Tractors working in nearby fields.	Mud on the road especially in and around rural villages and by gaps in hedgerows where tractors having be turning on to the road.

Local road Knowledge

Increasing your local road knowledge of the roads can help your riding, but never take familiar roads for granted. Loss of attention is a major cause of collisions – don't let your attention wander on roads you know well.





2 out of 3 crashes happen on roads that drivers are familiar with.

Town riding puts heavy demands on your observation, reactions and riding skills, and you need to be alert at all times. At complicated junctions where it is important to get into the correct lane, local knowledge is useful. But even when you know the layout of main road junctions, one-way streets, roundabouts and other local features, always plan on the basis of what you can see – not what usually happens.

Del B
CO

Congratulations



Duane Sanger on passing his IAM test.

Observer - Del Britton