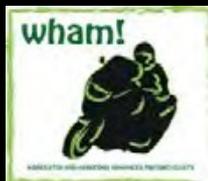


Worcester & Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists



February
2016



The Chairman's Notes

Welcome to the Newsletter. I would like to start by thanking all members who attended and showed support for the Club and the Committee at WHAM AGM. We are looking forward to working to make 2016 as much fun as possible for you and maintain our high levels of training.



On one of our many trips in 2015 a WHAM member commented to me that you never stop learning – “every day’s a school day,” were his words. As an organisation committed to training and advanced riding I am looking forward to working with the Chief Observer Del Britton, and the members of the Training Team to maintain high standards of training and mentoring. The Training Team are experienced riders and are happy to pass on their skills and knowledge. Make the most of them, and the National and Local Observers, who you will have the pleasure of meeting on Sunday rides. If you took your test a few years ago there are many options available to you; consider the IAM options of going for a F1RST or Masters or talk to one of the Training Team about Observing. Group riding on a Sunday is an excellent opportunity to further develop your riding.

The new Committee will be meeting in February to confirm the program of events for the year, including the Rider Skills Day and the Slow Riding Day. I am looking forward to the possibility of participating in a speedway or off-road experience later in the year. The website, managed by Tony Davis, will have regular updates on what we’re up to plus our Sunday routes. Have a route you could recommend? Please share it with us.

A big thank you goes to those who have supported the club in different ways; Phil George and Ian Barnard’s band playing at the Christmas Dinner; Will and Angel showing their films after the AGM, of H’Art and Wham events – Thank you.

As I commented at the AGM – it is great to see such an eclectic range of bikes on Sunday rides, come rain or shine. It bodes well for the day rides. Stuart Poole continues as Newsletter Editor (whamnewsletter@gmail.com). Please pass on stories, photos and interesting articles that can be used in the newsletter.



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WHAM is a training organisation and a social riding club, with extras! It is your club so please could you fill in the Questionnaire which will be coming on-line in the next few weeks so the Committee and Training Team can plan accordingly.

I am very proud to be WHAM Chairman for 2016. I am fortunate to have a highly committed Committee working with me, plus the wisdom of Derek McMullan and Del Britton. I would like to thank Ken Anderson for his hard work as Associate Coordinator throughout 2015.

This year's Committee are:

Secretary: **Alex Hoyle**

Treasurer: **Eric Reynolds**

Vice Chairman: **Roger Brookes**

Newsletter Editor: **Stuart Poole**

Charity and club promotion: **Ali Lewis**

Membership Secretary: **Roger Brookes**

Webmaster: **Tony Davis**

Routemaster: **Tony Davis**

Region Rep: **Ant Clerici**

Associate Coordinator, Hereford: **Stuart Morehead**

Associate Coordinator, Worcester: **Paul Gill**

Chief Observer: **Delmore Britton**

Co-opted: **Derek McMullan**

If you have any questions, suggestions, concerns or comments regarding WHAM then please don't hesitate to contact me at wham.worcester@gmail.com. WHAM is a fantastic club to be part of and I look forward to riding with you throughout 2016.

Celebrate 60 years of the IAM this summer

In case you missed it just a reminder that dates have been announced for the IAM's 60th birthday parties - the bike celebration is on 2 July at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham and the car celebration on 9 July is at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon (pictured). The IAM expects to have some star names and vehicle displays at both events, so mark them in your diaries. More details will be announced in the coming months.





Who will be the victors this time?

If you can think of a better caption - or have a photo for the magazine email:
whamnewsletter@gmail.com

Please note that the e-mail address for the Group Secretary has changed from whamsecretary@trackdown.co.uk to:
whamgroupsecretary@gmail.com



Members' Articles

A Fighter Pilot's Guide to Surviving on the Roads...

What's wrong with you - are you blind?!!

Who hasn't formed these thoughts, or similar, at some point while cycling or driving? Probably in response to a vehicle that had just moved directly into your path - and you might congratulate yourself that only your alertness and superior reactions saved the day. If you were cycling then I expect that you may have even shared your thoughts, loudly, with the offending driver, and if you were driving then I imagine that there would have been some accompaniment from the horn section. Hopefully you were able to prevent the collision.

Now, before we go on, who can say that, at some point in their own driving history, they have not been about to manoeuvre - pull out from a T-junction, etc - when a car or bike seemed to come out of nowhere? Hopefully, it was just a close shave, and no doubt quite frightening. You may have wondered how you failed to see it, and probably concluded that they must have been 'Driving far too fast' or you would have seen them. Perhaps, on such an occasion, you were the recipient of that loud and urgent query, 'Are you blind?!'



John Sullivan is a Royal Air Force pilot with over 4000 flight hours, and a keen Cyclist. He regards himself as 'a simple fighter-pilot' and in this article he describes why collisions can occur and, in layman's terms, how some of the techniques of flying fighters can be used to increase your chances of survival on the roads. All proceeds from this article are going to charity.

Well, here's the bad news - yes, you are. For small but significant periods of time you are completely incapable of seeing anything at all. Most of the time, as I shall explain, this is not a problem. But if it means that you fail to see a vehicle that is just about to occupy the same point in space and time as you are - then this is a big problem!

The good news is that understanding why we sometimes do not see things allows us to adopt some defensive strategies that tip the odds back in our favour. This article then, is a fighter pilot's survival guide to avoiding collisions...

Fighter pilots have to cope with closing speeds of over 1000 mph, and they don't always get it right! But crashes are always analysed carefully to learn the lessons that might prevent future accidents. This article reveals the hard-won techniques that fighter pilots are trained to use.

First some background. We all inhabit bodies that have evolved over hundreds of thousands of years to our environment. We are highly adaptable, omnivorous creatures, which is why we have prevailed when other species, those suited to specific environments, habitats or diets, have not. We learned how to grow crops but we started off as hunter/gatherers - we have eyes in the front of our heads which gives us binocular vision for judging distance to prey, or threats.

Our eyes, and the way that our brain processes the images that they receive, are very well suited to creeping up on unsuspecting antelopes. We are even pretty good at spotting sabre-toothed tigers creeping up on us! We are, however, rubbish at spotting vehicles that hurtle towards us at high speed.

Let me explain why...

Light enters our eyes and falls upon the retina, whereupon it is converted into electrical impulses that the brain perceives as images. Clever stuff. Only a small part of the retina, in the centre and called the fovea, can generate a high-resolution image. This is why we need to look directly at something, by moving our eyes, to see detail. The rest of the retina contributes to our visual experience by adding the peripheral detail - hence peripheral vision. Peripheral vision cannot resolve detail, which prevents the brain from being overloaded with too much information, but it is very good at detecting movement. Any movement, such as the twitch of an antelope's ears or the swish of a tiger's tail, immediately alerts us to something of interest which we can then bring our high-resolution fovea to bear upon. And our eyes move fast, really fast - no doubt spurred on by the motivation to see the slavering chops of our sabre-toothed friend in glorious techni-colour detail with enough time to do something about it.

So what?

Well, first, it is an unfortunate fact that if you are going to collide with another moving object, and assuming that you are both travelling in a straight line, then there is no *apparent* movement between the occupant of either vehicle. That is, to the driver of each vehicle, the other will remain in exactly the same position in the windscreen up to the point of impact. There is no *relative* movement - so our peripheral vision is not suited to detecting it. For completeness, this does not mean that you cannot hit a vehicle that is turning, but as the other vehicle adopts a path that will lead to collision then it will cease to move *relative* to you - it will become stationary in your windscreen.



Remember, our peripheral vision is not good with detail - in fact, just 20° away from your sightline your visual acuity is about one tenth of what it is at the centre. Not convinced? Well, the standard eyesight requirement for driving in the UK is to read a car number plate at 20m.

Go outside, now, and stand just 10m from a car, look just one car's width to one side, and try and read the number plate - *without* moving where your eyes are looking! Try again from 5m. Clinically, you are blind in your peripheral vision.

That's not to say that we cannot see something in our peripheral vision - of course we can. As you approach a roundabout you would be hard pressed not to see a dirty great articulated lorry bearing down upon you, even out of the corner of your eye - obviously, the bigger the object, the more likely we are to see it. But would you see a motorbike, or a cyclist?

To have a good chance of seeing an object on a collision course, we need to move our eyes, and probably head, to bring the object into the centre of our vision - so that we can use our high-resolution foveal vision to resolve the detail.

Now for the really interesting part. When we move our head and eyes to scan a scene, our eyes are incapable of moving smoothly across that scene and seeing everything. This makes perfect sense, just like trying to take a picture without holding the camera still, the image would be blurred. So, our clever brain overcomes this by moving our eyes (really fast, remember) in a series of jumps (called saccades) with very short pauses (called fixations), and it is only during the pauses that an image is processed. Our brains fill in the gaps with a combination of peripheral vision and an assumption that what is in the gaps must be the same as what you see during the pauses. This might sound crazy, but your brain actually blocks the image that is being received while your eyes are moving, which is why you do not see the sort of blurred image that you see when you look sideways out of a train window.



Unless you are tracking a moving object, such as an antelope, then the human eyes are incapable of moving smoothly across a scene; they jump and pause occasionally to take a 'snapshot' of the scene.

Definitely not convinced? Okay, go to a mirror, now, and look repeatedly from your right eye to your left eye. Can you see your eyes moving? You cannot. Now have a friend or partner do the same thing while you watch them. You will see their eyes moving quite markedly.

You couldn't see your own eyes move because your brain shuts down the image for the instant that your eyes are moving. Experiments have shown that it is impossible to see even a flash of light if it occurs within a saccade.

The saccade/fixation mechanism has always served us rather well, and means that we can creep up on antelopes without being overloaded by unnecessary detail and a lot of useless, blurred images.

But it does present us with some shortcomings now that we routinely climb into metal boxes and hurtle towards each other. Our eyes and brains are just not designed for this - our world has changed far faster than our bodies can adapt.

So what?

If you get to a junction and move your head right and left to look for oncoming traffic, you need to understand that you cannot guarantee that you have seen approaching traffic. It is entirely possible for our eyes to 'jump over' an oncoming vehicle during one of the saccades. The smaller (and specifically, the narrower) the vehicle, the greater the chance that it could fall within a saccade. You are not being inattentive, you are physically incapable of seeing anything during a saccade.

Thanks to Tony Davis for this brilliant article, which will continue next month



Charles Scott - IAM Pass
Observer - Callum Rees



Danny Coughlin - IAM Pass
Observer - Alex Hoyle



Wednesday 24th February 19:30 **Natter Night** February's Club night features a talk from Ultimate Ear Protection.

Ultimate was formed as a result of a personal interest in finding good quality motorcycle ear plugs by the owner, Dave Marshall. Dave formed Ultimate in 2003 working initially in the motor sport sector. Ultimate is a UK manufacturer, all products are manufactured in Kent in an ISO9001 production facility. With a combined 50 years of experience in the industry and an innovative design team Ultimate is acknowledged as an industry leader in the product development of custom fit hearing protection.

If you don't wear ear-protection you should. Wind noise on a motorcycle is far worse than most industrial noise-controlled areas. Custom moulded plugs are far superior to disposables; they fit properly and so remain effective and comfortable. See here for more about [Ultimate's motorcycle](#)



Go Karting

Richard Hewitt has organised the second annual WHAM Karting Event for Saturday the 27th of February at 14:30. We have a different venue this year, the [Teamworks Karting track in Halesowen](#).

The cost is £37.00 per driver and we need to confirm numbers by the last week in January.

Please visit the [WHAM Shop page](#), complete the form and use the 'Buy Now' button to pay your £10.00 deposit and secure your place.





Rider's Signals

Using signals may seem to be a basic skill, but many riders don't use the full range of available signals consistently or to best effect. Giving information to other road users is a key part of information processing in the system of bike control.

The purpose of signals

Signals inform other road users of your presence or intentions. Don't just consider those road users who can be seen – also consider those who can't be seen and those who you may reasonably expect to appear.

GIVE A SIGNAL WHEN IT COULD BENEFIT OTHER ROAD USERS

If you decide a signal is necessary, signal clearly and in good time. Always make sure the meaning of your signal is clear. Sometimes a signal is not in itself enough to make your intentions clear and other road users may use your position and speed to interpret what your signals mean. When negotiating a roundabout, for example, your signals may be misinterpreted if you haven't taken up the correct position for your intended exit. When appropriate, consider reinforcing the meaning of your signal with an arm signal.

Key points

- Consider the need for a signal on the approach to every hazard, and before you change direction or speed.
- Give a signal whenever it could benefit other road users.
- Remember that signalling does not give you any special right to carry out the actions you indicate.
- Follow the *Highway Code* – check your mirrors before you signal or manoeuvre.

The range of signals

The signals that are available to you are:

1. Indicators
2. Hazard warning lights
3. Brake lights





- 4 Headlights
- 5 Position of your vehicle
- 6 Horn signals
- 7 Arm signals
- 8 Courtesy signals (for example, raising a hand to thank another driver).

Select the most effective signal for the job. You must give your signal in plenty of time if it is to benefit other road users. Be aware that when you change the speed or position of your bike you are also giving information to other road users.

Using the indicators

The indicators on some low-powered machines aren't very effective because the lamps are of relatively low wattage. This is especially true when direct sunlight shines on their lenses. Check that the indicator lamps on the bikes you ride are bright enough to attract the attention of other road users. If not, consider the use of arm signals.

The *Highway Code* advises you to give a signal when another road user could benefit. Use observation to anticipate when a signal may be needed. This encourages you to be aware of other road users at all times, especially those behind you. If in doubt, it's better to signal than not to signal but always think before you do.

Using brake lights

Use brake lights to indicate either slowing down or your intention to stop. Always check your mirrors before using your brakes unless you are doing an emergency stop.

- Start braking well in advance of an anticipated hazard to alert the driver behind that you mean to slow down or stop, especially if the vehicle behind you is too close.
- Avoid 'dabbing' the brakes: if your brake lights flash on and off but you don't slow down, you will confuse the drivers behind you.
- Avoid resting your foot on the rear brake. This will distract a following road user and may also mean that they fail to react when you do actually brake.



Using the horn

The horns on some bikes have low power and may not be clearly audible to drivers. Check that the horn on your bike is effective in traffic conditions before you rely on it to signal.

Only use the horn when it is necessary to warn other road users of your presence. If you see that another road user is not aware of your presence, first choose an appropriate position and speed so that you can stop safely if necessary.

If you do need to use the horn:

- Use your horn in good time
- Adjust the length of the horn note to the circumstances

Consider using the horn on the approach to hazards where the view is very limited, such as a blind summit or bridge on a signal track road.

Never use the horn to challenge or rebuke other road users. Give a wave of acknowledgement following use of the horn i.e. beep and wave. This helps foster good relations between different groups of road users.

Always listen carefully for other road users' horn warnings and react appropriately – remember that your helmet can make horns difficult to hear.

Using Arm signals

If you need to use an arm signal, follow the *Highway Code* advice. Be aware that many road users may not understand arm signals as they are rarely used.

Del B
Chief Observer