

Worcester & Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists



March
2016



The Chairman's Notes



It's March - the sun is out! It was great to see so many of you at Honey Café on our WHAM Sunday ride. I put my bike away without having to wash the salt off. What a fantastic novelty! So, if the big freeze doesn't arrive it will be time to remove the battery charger, check the leathers still fit and get motorcycling in earnest.

If you have been hibernating (and trying to stay dry), as we enter the new motorcycling season, take time to familiarise yourself with your bike. Give yourself time to become bike-fit and zone in to the dynamics of riding a motorcycle compared to driving a car. Please take time to look at WHAM's group riding information. If you would like a refresher ride please contact Chief Observer Del Britton or talk to one of the committee or training team and we'll pass on the message.

The great strength of WHAM is you – the members. If you have any ideas or want to get more involved this year please come and have a chat. Keep an eye out in the newsletter for forthcoming events. Thank you to Richard Hewitt for planning the go-karting, and then sorting out when the venue let us down at short notice. Watch the website for new details.

This year our Rider Skills Day will take place at Sutton St Nicholas School/Village Hall on Sunday 24th April. Please let Roger Brooks or I know if you are able to help out on the day. We are on the hunt for volunteers and tasty cakes! In addition the WHAM slow riding day is planned for the 3rd July.

We have a calendar of events for the natter nights, which take place at the Falcon Hotel, Bromyard, on the last Wednesday of every month. March natter night is being presented by Del and Derek, talking about IAM Track Days. April is the WHAM quiz night, hosted by Tony Davis. You can come as a group or we can sort teams on the night.

I look forward to seeing you at the natter nights and on a Sunday ride in the sunshine.

Paul



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

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WHAM Spring 2016 Special Offer Skill for Life for only £99.00

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM
ADVANCED MOTORCYCLE TRAINING?

IF SO

Save £50.00 on the **IAM Skill for life** by signing up with
WHAM now.

We only have a limited number of places at this price, please
use our contact form, on the web site and we will be in touch
with details ASAP.

Track Days

The Skills day for Mallory Park on the 12th April still has around 30 vacancies for members and non-members to buy. These events are usually very difficult to get on due to their popularity (Plus we have not had one in CE&W Region for some time now). The later dates are booking up really fast, as people no doubt expect the weather to improve, but this is the UK and weather is a hit & miss affair!

The link to the Skills days is:

<http://www.iam.org.uk/drivers/motorists-courses/driving-assessment/skills-days>

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. 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.





Tony raves about his new Triumph Explorer!

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...

(Continued from last month)

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.

Remember the 'Think Bike!' Adverts, where a driver pulls out into the path of a motorcycle? I am convinced that it is the phenomena of saccades and fixations that is *most likely* to lead to this sort of accident.



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.

Motorbikes and cycles, being narrow, are more likely to fall within a saccade. This image represents a driver looking quickly left, and the approaching motorcyclist falls within a saccade and is never seen in high resolution - simulated by the toning down in this image.

It gets worse. The faster you move your head, the larger the jumps, or saccades, and the shorter the pauses, or fixations. So you are more likely to jump over an oncoming vehicle and less likely to detect any movement in your peripheral vision (because there is even less time available for slight, relative movement to become apparent).

It gets even worse. Not only can we not see though solid objects (well, opaque objects, to be more accurate) but research has shown that we tend not to look near to the edges of a framed scene. In plain language, we tend not to look at the edges of a windscreen. So not only do the door pillars of a car represent a physical blindspot, but our eyes tend not to fixate near to it, leading to an even bigger jump, or saccade, past a door pillar. This is called windscreen zoning.



One further point of interest, our ears usually contribute to the process of building up a picture of our surroundings too - the snap of a twig from an unwary paw is another prompt for us to direct our vision towards something of interest. But in our metal cocoons, with the radio or mp3 playing, this is yet another cue that we are denied.

So, consider this scenario - you approach a big roundabout or junction, looking ahead at the junction of course, and the road seems to be empty. As you get closer, you look right and left as a prudent, final check. You see no other vehicles and proceed through the junction. Suddenly, and it's your lucky day, there is an indignant blast of horn and a car flashes across in front of you, missing you by inches and leaving you thoroughly shocked, and confused. Sound familiar?

So what happened? On the approach you did not see that another car was on a perfect collision course, with no relative movement for your peripheral vision to detect - possibly compounded by being behind the door pillar. Lulled into a false sense of security you looked quickly right and left, to avoid holding up the traffic behind you, and your eyes jumped cleanly over the approaching vehicle, especially as it was still close to the door pillar in the windscreen. The rest of the road was empty, and this was the scene that your brain used to fill in the gaps!

Scary, huh?

You were not being inattentive - but you were being ineffective.

Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, there is also the phenomenon of '*expectation*' and your brain is less likely to recognise something that you are not expecting to see. This now enters territory that pilots prefer to leave to a scary breed of creature called the aviation psychologist but suffice it to say that if you *think* the road is empty, you are less likely to register that a vehicle is actually present.

So what can we do about it? Well, quite a lot actually, as forewarned is forearmed.

Drivers:

Always slow down as you approach a roundabout or junction, even if only by 20 mph or so, and even if the road seems empty. Changing your speed will immediately generate relative movement against a vehicle that was otherwise on a collision course - not only are you then more likely to see it, but you are no longer on a collision course!

Never just glance right and left - this leaves it entirely to chance whether you see an approaching vehicle or not - and if you glance quickly, the odds decrease markedly.

Always look right and left methodically, deliberately focusing on at least 3 different spots along the road to the right and 3 to the left - *search* close, middle-distance and far. With practice, this can still be accomplished quickly, and each pause is only for a fraction of a second, but this means that you are now overriding the natural limitations of the eye and brain.

Fighter pilots call this a 'lookout scan' and it is vital to their survival.

Always look right and left at least twice. Not only does this immediately double your chance of seeing a vehicle, but if you repeat the same scan as you did the first time (which, when it becomes a well-practiced habit, you almost certainly will) then an approaching vehicle will have moved to a different part of the windscreen by the time you look the second time and is less likely to be masked by a saccade. Just note that this will not work if you charge into a junction at a constant speed because any vehicle on a collision course will stay in the same position in the windscreen - if you miss it the first time, you will probably miss it the second time too!



Make a point of looking next to the windscreen pillars. Better still, lean forward slightly as you look right and left so that you are looking around the door pillars. Be aware that the pillar nearest to you blocks more of your vision. Fighter pilots say *'Move your head - or you're dead'*.

Clear your flight path! When you change lanes, especially into a slower lane, you should, of course, check your mirrors, and will have undoubtedly been watching the road ahead of you, naturally. Your last check must be to look directly at the spot into which you are going to manoeuvre, otherwise you could easily have missed a slower motorbike or cyclist in that lane.

One that was only in your peripheral vision as you looked ahead, and over which you 'jumped' as you looked over your shoulder or checked your wing mirror.

Drive with your lights on. Aviation research shows that contrast is the single most important factor in determining the likelihood of acquiring an object visually - this is why military aircraft camouflage is designed to tone down their contrast. On the ground, dark coloured vehicles or clothing will result in reduced contrast against most usual backgrounds, and this is why high-visibility clothing (for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) and/or bright lights are so important, in the daytime as well as at night.

While it is generally understood that a low sun can make it difficult to see, it is probably not generally understood why: driving into sun reduces contrast, especially when vehicles and pedestrians fall into the shadow of larger, up-sun objects. You must beware that even large vehicles, and especially motorbikes, cyclists and pedestrians, can become completely impossible to see under these circumstances, and you must moderate your driving accordingly.

This is why fighter pilots attack from *out of the sun!*



This image is taken on an overcast day – what photographers might call a 'low-contrast day'. However, the vehicles in this scene can all be seen easily, and the light coloured top of the scooter rider provides reasonable contrast against the generally darker background.



When objects fall into the shadow of 'up-sun' objects they are especially hard to see – did you see the moped coming towards you in the preceding picture, even with its light on?

Keep your windscreen clean! Seeing other vehicles can be difficult enough, without tipping the odds against you by having to look through a dirty windscreen. You never see a fighter jet with a dirty canopy.

And finally, don't be a clown - if you are looking at your mobile telephone then you are incapable of seeing much else. Not only are you probably looking down into your lap, but your eyes are focused at less than one metre and every object at distance will be out of focus. Even when you look up and out, it takes a fraction of a second for your eyes to adjust - this is time you may not have.

Motorcyclists and cyclists:

Recognise that you are especially at risk - not only are you more vulnerable but the narrow profile of a motorbike or cycle makes it far more likely that you can fall into a saccade. So tip the odds in your favour - always wear high-contrast clothing and use lights. Flashing LEDs (front and rear) are especially effective for cyclists as they create contrast and the on-off flashing attracts the peripheral vision in the same manner that movement does.





In this scene the sun is partly covered by cloud but contrast is still poor and high visibility clothing, in bright colours that are not generally encountered in the background scene, will increase contrast and be detected more easily.



Give yourself a chance! Compare the visibility of the cyclists wearing bright coloured tops, as compared to the cyclist in the centre.



The relatively slower speed of bicycles means that they will be closer to a point of collision if a vehicle begins to pull into their path. Turn this to advantage - when passing junctions, look at the head of the driver that is approaching or has stopped. The head of the driver will naturally stop and centre upon you if you have been seen. If the driver's head sweeps through you without pausing, then the chances are that you are in a saccade - you must assume that you have not been seen and expect the driver to pull out!

Die-hard cyclists are unwilling to compromise their training for such inconveniences as poor weather - I know. But be aware of when the odds are really stacking up against you. If you are cycling into a low sun, have a think about how difficult it is to see the vehicles in front of you. Now imagine that you are also looking through a dirty windscreen, or one with rain beating against it! Are you content that drivers

approaching from behind have a realistic chance of seeing you. Maybe today is the day to take a different route - or time your journey to avoid the sun being straight into the eyes of drivers on that particularly busy stretch of road. Or take the bus. Having a really low heart rate at the point at which you go under the wheels of a truck is rather pointless. This is risk management.

So is wearing a helmet - every fighter pilot wears a helmet, even though it won't make much difference if they hit the ground at 700 miles an hour! It's about reducing the chances of less dramatic incidents causing fatal cranial injuries, unnecessarily. Go figure.

Thanks again to Tony Davis for this superb article



Mark & Lynda Silvester are organising a weekend to the Peak District, staying at the Yorkshire Bridge Inn at Bamford

www.yorkshire-bridge.co.uk

Friday 9th and Saturday 10th September 2016.

There are 8 rooms available on a first come first served basis, the prices below are for bed and breakfast per night.

- Doubles at £85
- Twins at £85
- Singles at £65
- 1 Triple room at £120



A deposit of £25 per person secures the rooms, Phone the Inn to book
Tel:01433 651361 mention Lynda Silvester and Wham to get the discounted rate.
Please confirm your booking to Mark either by Tel: 01789 731226 or e mail
avsp78@dsl.pipex.com to enable further information, routes etc. which will follow in due course.

Tony Davis has kindly offered to do the routes for the weekend, we look forward to some of you joining us for a great ride out.





WHAM's Training Team 'Mission Statement'

WHAM's training team exists to maintain and improve the Riding standards within the group, its principal activities include:

- Training and qualification of Local Observers.
- Advising and assisting Observers preparing for the National Observer qualification.
- Advising in the training development and Riding standards of the group as a whole.

I would just like to take the opportunity within this month's Newsletter to explain and outline what the WHAM training team is; and what we are all about. The Training Team consists of members of the committee who are National Observers and Local Observer Assessors (who train and qualify Local Observers). Soon all of the Training Team will be Radio equipped and trained/qualified. The team: Paul Whitcombe (Chairman), Roger Brooks, Ant Clerici, Eric Renolds, Derek McMullan and Stuart Poole all assist me as Chief Observer in maintaining standards and developing training activity within the group.

As described in the Mission Statement the team exists to maintain and improve the Riding standards within the group, we give up our time on top of being active members of the committee to ensure that riding standards and riding discipline within the club is kept to the highest possible standard. I have no need to remind you that the club won the Ashes regional competition three times in succession – but I will!

The Training Team meet on average four/five times during the year to discuss such issues as:

- Equipment and training support for observers.
- Identify potential Local and National Observers from within the club.
- Conduct the training of Local Observers.
- Allocation of Local Observer assessors.
- The training requirements and needs of those going through observer training.
- Observer training rides, standards and training days.
- Riding discipline within the club.
- Attend IAM training days.
- Assess our own riding standards within the Training Team.

If any member of WHAM has any training requirements or questions please do not hesitate to contact the TT directly or go through your observer. I strongly encourage any member (or Observer) who has passed the advanced test to consider applying for the IAM 'First' qualification; information about the 'First' test can be found on the [IAM web site](#), or ask your observer and or any member of the TT about preparation for the 'First'.

Looking forward to Riding with you soon, I cannot over-emphasise the benefit of attending WHAM Sunday rides. A Sunday ride gives you the opportunity to develop your riding skills in a controlled, planned ride with different riders with varying levels of experience, the breakfasts are great as well (ask our Secretary, Alex).

Del Britton - WHAM Chief Observer





Del Britton



Ant Clerici



Roger Brooks



Paul Whitcombe



Derek McMullan



Eric Reynolds



Stuart Poole

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
ADRIAN WHEELER ON
OBTAINING A FIRST PASS WITH
HIS IAM TEST**

