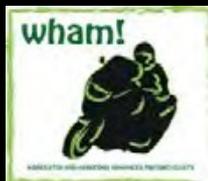


Worcester & Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists



September
2016

The Chairman's Notes



Welcome to the WHAM Newsletter.

This month's issue of WHAM News sees a few changes and quite a number of great articles. The natter night evening rides are at an end, but don't despair! There are a number of interesting speakers that have been lined up. September is a discussion on a bike dynamics so check the website and come along to find out more. Although WHAM is a rider training organisation, it has a very active social side with regular Sunday rides and trips planned, including the trip to Peak District – It's not too late to sign up.

It was a stroke of genius, by Tony Davies, reversing the Beacons day ride for the final day ride of the year. Roads can be so different ridden in the opposite direction. Great to see so many members out, new and old. Hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

The biking season will soon be changing and our riding will need to adapt accordingly, to changing road and weather conditions. We also endeavour to support new members who have recently passed on Sunday rides and adapt our rides to suit.

HTBBR states 'knowing when to use your machine's power and when to ease off are skills every good rider must master. Power is nothing without control.'

If you are a new member, recently passed, or one that has not been out on a Sunday for a while, please come along and have a ride. Talk to an Observer, in Hereford or Worcester, and we can tailor the ride to suit your experience and requirements.

I recently experienced a check ride, which provided me with development points. It highlighted a habit developing to turn in early on right handers and a need for more discipline following vehicles. Every day is indeed a school day and I will take this on board as I endeavour to further improve my riding and seek new qualifications.

Look out for an email to all members in the near future regarding a celebration WHAM Dinner. We are busy finalising plans.

Are you interested in getting more involved in the club? If you are considering Observing or becoming involved on the Committee please talk to members of the committee or me on a Sunday/Wednesday natter night, or contact me on wham.worcester@gmail.com.

The Committee and Training Team are very proud of the club – seeing riding groups on Sunday applying group riding principles was impressive and puts motorcycling in a positive light.

Finally.... Congratulations to Lynn Sherwood who has her photo on the front of RoadSmart magazine and is part of the a celebration article

Enjoy the read - Paul



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

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR, THE IAM OR THE WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



WHAM Group Riding – back to basics

By Ant Clerici

Most of us ride in groups. WHAM recognises that this activity becomes more enjoyable and safer if group riding is practiced with an awareness of the issues. Our guide sets out the principles for safe group riding.



You can go to our website

http://www.wham-motorcycling.org/obslibrary/group_riding_guidelines2.pdf

but first take a minute to read this.....

Awareness and attitude

We know the greatest concern for riders in Groups is about the behaviour of fellow riders. There are two issues:

- The anxiety to “keep up” can lead to rash decisions with potentially disastrous consequences.
- The frustrations experienced when having to ride with others who do not match your ability or style can produce the same results.

GROUP

Know your fellow riders and what they are riding (it's not always a GS!)

Have their mobile phone numbers

ROUTE

Know the route and planned stops

<http://www.wham-motorcycling.org/route-info/>

but always check out the programme

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

OPEN ROAD

Follow the 2 second rule for all traffic, group riders included

Adopt the overtaking position if wanting to pass other traffic or a group rider

Be aware of those in front and behind

At turning points allow the rider behind to see which direction you take, wait for them to appear if not in sight.



Wait in a safe place

If leading, slow down to get your group together for more complicated navigation through towns etc

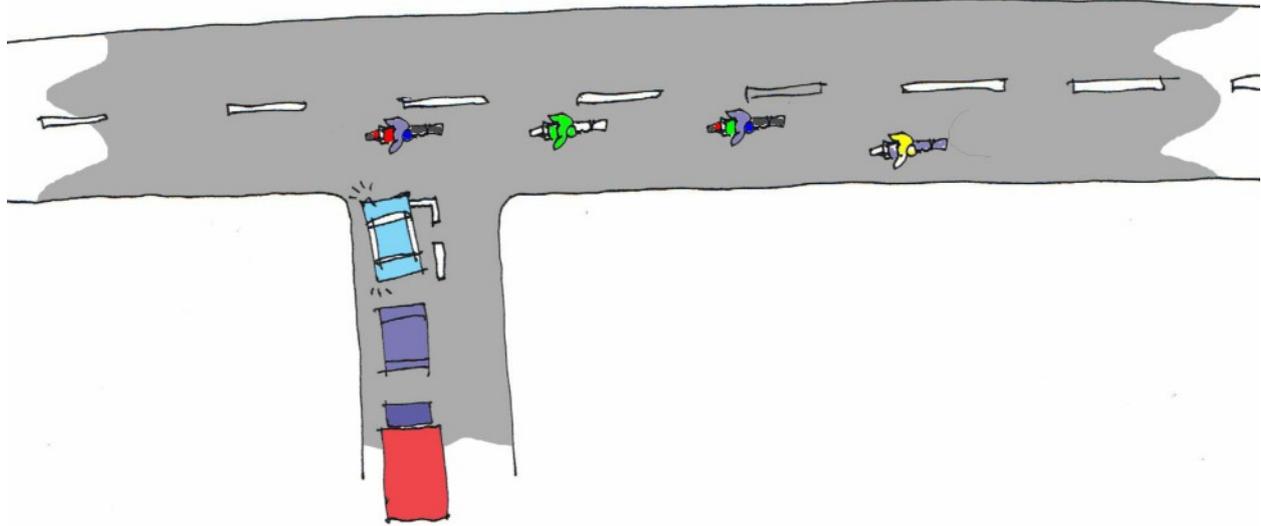
Allow

- faster riders to overtake you,
- a quicker group to overtake your group.

URBAN

Close up to keep the group together, use a stagger formation if safe to do so.

Allow space for others in your group to join you at lights and in traffic queues.



Stagger & keep close

PROTOCOL

Ride for yourself at all times

Be courteous to other road users

Always ride within your capabilities

Let others know if you intend to leave the group

GROUP RIDING

Advice and on the road sessions available on most Sundays – just ask!!!!

Wasp Attack

By Richard Stilwell



Wasp attacks have never really bothered me when riding, they come along, annoy you for a very brief amount of time and then they disappear but what happens when you get a swarm of wasps? Well that happened to me today.

I was leaving the Honey Cafe and noticed that there was a swarm that was forming but didn't take too much notice. Off I go home and a few miles down the road noticed in my mirror the swarm heading in my direction. Fortunately as I left the 40 MPH section I executed a nice overtake and found myself behind a very progressive Mazda sports car whose interpretation of ACPO guidelines was loosely based on my thinking. However all was not well behind me as within a few minutes I could see the swarm madly swirling all over the road, and then it was on us. The Mazda driver had a real problem as the guy on the Street Triple nearly took his bumper off as he swerved in on the unbroken white lines to avoid the oncoming 4x4.

Within no time we were engulfed by bikes whose idea of a smile and a grin on a ride seemed to be that of people whose day out involves coming close to either dying or killing someone else. My estimation of the two muppets on Ducatis who appeared to be towing each other with the shortest invisible tow rope ever was a speed of around 120 MPH and yes their brakes lights worked well. (So did my ABS when they decided that the Mazda driver was slowing for a car turning right).

But it all passed and within 3-4 minutes both Mr Mazda and me were happy to proceed progressively together with not a care in the world. Until..... We got to the dog leg on the way back to Leominster where the wasps nest had stopped at the left hand turn to wait for their two numpty mates who had got delayed which gave Mr Mazda the opportunity (much to my amusement) to compliment the wasp nest on their wonderful riding and me to overtake them all. And then we turned right and I caught sight in my mirror of the the swarm starting off again.

Fortunately for me a few hundred yards down the road there was a caravan and a couple of cars and one of those moments where you get the anticipation, the view and the overtake spot on and I bade farewell to Mr Mazda and all. But what about the swarm?????

It is a good training question. I now had distance and the infuriated swarm would have been going berserk behind me. But what do you do knowing that you are being pursued by a mad demonic plague? Do you find the first layby and let them pass or do you say b***er this I'm not delaying my journey because of these idiots. A good question indeed as I was so annoyed by their idiotic and stupid riding and all I could think off is that some of you might be track heroes but I bet some of you are just trying to keep up.

Well at Leominster my mirror was clear until I got to the T junction and suddenly two wasps appeared. I turned right and looked back, nobody else, not a sausage. What happened? Who knows? Do I care? Of course I care as these idiots taint our hobby. What would you have done.....?





IAM pass - Andrew Williams

Observer - Ian Rivers



IAM pass - Simon Raitt

Observer - Paul Whitcombe



What does WHAM do for me.....?

By Ant Clerici

1. Trains bikers to **advanced test** level
We have a pass rate above 90% which reflects the ability and skills of our observers.
2. Runs a **slow riding day**
Perhaps the best event of the year!
3. Organises **Sunday rides** all year with routes and breakfast stops
Tony our routemaster and others carefully craft routes that take you on some of the UK's best roads. They also test the quality of the breakfasts – such dedication!
4. Trains **group observers**
Without this training we wouldn't have such great observers. We all benefit as they are not only there to train associates but also are able to give advice to full members and refresher rides.
5. Offers **'biker down'** courses
And/or first aid courses
6. Publicises WHAM to attract new associates
Organises **rider skills days** with sponsorship from Safer Roads Partnership or, as in 2016, runs **free taster sessions**.
7. Publishes a **monthly magazine**
Better than MCN, more informative than The Mail - WHAM's mag is an essential read.
8. Liaises with **IAM** regionally and nationally
We share best practice. Send delegates to the regional forum and national conference.
9. **1st pass** training
10. Has not one, but two **Facebook** pages: a WHAM only page and a public page.
- 11 Free 'Last Wednesday' **natter nights** with speakers
Sometimes a quiz!
12. When its warmer **Summer evening rides**
Fun routes to The Falcon where we meet for a chat.
13. Has a **training team**
Who guide our training, monitor observers and associates, set the standards and organises the Observer rides and training day.
14. A **network** of likeminded riders
15. Has a great **Xmas dinner**



16. Goes to other biking experiences: **speedway, off road** and **track days**
17. Has a **committee**
Who monitor our funds, programmes events etc Organises the AGM
18. Owns DRIFT **cameras** for training
19. Runs **observer training**
20. Helps with **IAM Masters** training
21. Goes **go-karting**
22. **Group riding** policy and advice and on the road training
23. Offers advice for riding with **pillions**
24. Has a web based **library** of useful stuff: past copies of the magazine, training material etc
25. Positive local **publicity** for bikers
26. Issues **observer packs** to our observers
27. Arranges longer **trips** over weekends and overseas
28. Organises **radio** training and issues observers with radios
29. **Tweets!**
30. Has a great **website** where you can access most of the above
<http://www.wham-motorcycling.org/>

FROM THE WEB

[Benefit of counter steering](#)





The chairman gives clear instruction ...



Can't beat a brew.

...then gets distracted!



Hopefully no trains required today.

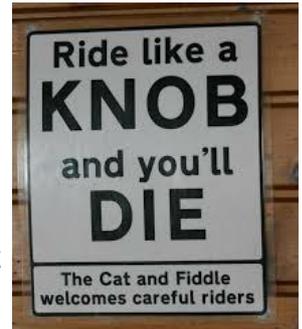
What a turn out!



The Cat and Fiddle

by Will Morgan

You have all heard of the Cat & Fiddle road haven't you? Well if not, it's the A537 over Goyt's Moss Moor between Buxton and Macclesfield and named after pub at its summit 1690ft above sea level. Recently during a short visit to the Peak District I going to have a chance to sample this notorious road for the first time myself. Well it would be silly not to see what all the fuss is about wouldn't it?



It is regularly claimed to be one of Britain's best biking roads and one of its most dangerous. It's about 12 tempting miles of sensational rollercoaster switchback bends that as an unfortunate consequence has a truly horrendous accident rate. The majority of accidents involve motorcycles, and the majority of these do not involve any other vehicles. By deduction this means they are almost all due to rider error, principally excessive speed and vastly misplaced over-confidence in their ability. I won't sicken you with the stomach-churning figures, but in comparison to this road's grizzly accident statistics racing in Isle of Man TT sounds very significantly safer.

After a cool but dry journey from Herefordshire we arrived in Buxton in drizzle. We parked and headed straight for the museum & art gallery. Karen and I are never shy of a little cultural edification but its attraction today was its close proximity, free admission and shelter from the weather - the drizzle had matured into a fully-fledged downpour. Inside, in a prime position and rather incongruously displayed in the middle of a contemporary art exhibition, was a 1980s Wankel Rotary powered Norton police bike, courtesy of the Derbyshire Constabulary. Was this a cutting edge conceptual art installation? If so I shall await this year's Turner Prize entries with interest.



The next day we explored the Peak District, discovering picturesque villages and delightful rural byways down in the valleys, steep twisting ascents around rocky outcrops and up escarpments onto the bleak barren windswept upland moors. Here potentially fabulous rider's roads with open sweeping bends and clear lines of sight ahead are restricted not only by a blanket 50mph speed limit but also almost continuous solid double white lines. So if you get stuck behind slow traffic there is little prospect of making progress legally, and if all that wasn't enough the local authority was enthusiastically top dressing mile after mile of roads with stone chippings – and I hate riding on loose gravel with a vengeance. To top everything off in the late afternoon the rain came back, also with a vengeance.



By coincidence that evening the local Vintage Motorcycle Club branch was due meet at the country pub where we were staying. Karen reckoned no one would turn up in the rain. I argued we were 'up north' where they breed them tough and resilient with plenty of grit and determination, not like us southern softies. She was right, I was wrong, and only one 'Billy-No-Mates' showed up – riding a bike that looked suspiciously like it had the same previous owner as the bike in the art gallery. It was white, and as they used the same fairings could have been either a 1980s BMW RT or another Norton, but I wasn't going to get soaked outside just to find out.

In the morning we set off for home via the Cat & Fiddle. It was another lovely British summer's day – pissistant drizzle, a blustery wind and gloomy sky. Before we had reached Buxton things got



A537 CAT AND FIDDLE
28/08/2016 *07:47:44

worse with heavier rain, stronger wind and thickening mist. At the start of the Cat & Fiddle there is a prominent sign announcing 50mph average speed cameras for the length of the route. This was surreally optimistic as the crosswinds were now gale force and visibility was down to 30 metres. Conditions were extremely treacherous to say the very least and got even worse as we climbed towards the summit. I hoped that it would be better on the other side as we descended towards Macclesfield. I hoped in vain – it was every bit as bad.

It was distinctly disorientating riding such a twisty road in such dense mist. Without any visible landmarks or horizon any natural sense of direction was lost and I couldn't tell if we heading north, south, east or west. Every bend became a challenge, anticipating which way the fierce wind would try to send us. Into a ditch, a dry stone wall or down an unfenced precipice? Or alternatively across the white line into the path of barely visible trucks looming out of the mist and quite possibly on our side of the road to straighten a tight bend? I felt extremely vulnerable - if I could barely see them, could they see us? The Cat & Fiddle Inn itself was passed as just an amorphous roadside blob in the periphery of my vision and I never did see the car on its roof in a ditch that Karen spotted - I was too preoccupied trying to read the road ahead. Have you ever tried riding a motorcycle by Braille?



So as for its qualities as a great rider's road I will have to plead ignorance and withhold judgement. While it was an immensely challenging ride, in absolutely no way was it an enjoyable one. One day maybe I'll get to ride it again, preferably when I can see where I'm going. Apparently it is a very scenic route with panoramic views over the Cheshire Plain and Greater Manchester but for all I know it could have been the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Pyramids of Giza, although Arctic Tundra and the Gulags of Siberia felt rather more likely. By the end of the 50mph average speed camera zone I guess we had actually averaged less than half that at the very most – any faster and I probably wouldn't be here to write this! Without any doubt my memories of this road will be of its dangers - but entirely different dangers to those on which its grim reputation is founded.



Dangerous or disruptive traffic

Richard Stillwell's article in this Newsletter poses the question "What would you do" if faced with other drivers or riders who are dangerous? Let's look at this from two points-of-view: our tried and tested System (IPSGA) and the newly introduced Human Factors elements:



The System Approach

Starting as usual with Information we can quickly spot bad behaviour on the road and anticipate what may happen next. On a bike it is essential to keep self-preservation firmly in mind; we do after all know who is hurt if there is an incident. Don't allow anger to cloud your judgement, this really is a time to "Keep Calm and Carry On" – or in our terms keep the focus or concentration going!



We all use the concept of our safety-bubble; we manage that to minimise the risk posed by hazards. It's probably worth repeating a hazard is anything with an element of actual or potential danger. Our physical separation from those hazards varies as we judge the risk. Other traffic behaving erratically, say they're on-the-phone, is one level of hazard. Kevin in his supercharged Astra half a meter off your back wheel or Richard's "Swarm" is at an entirely different level of risk – they are wilfully irresponsible and prepared to risk their safety and yours for their selfish gratification. Just how close would you like to be to such aggressive behaviour?

Our first duty on the bike is to look after our own safety – that's why we train as we do. We might wish for a police presence and appropriate action but that is rare, so it is up to us to make the right decision for our personal safety. It isn't a competition; if we treat it as such we're every bit as bad as them.

The Human Factors Approach

The Human Factors elements recently introduced are:

- The Rider
- The Motorcycle
- The Journey
- The Wider World

The rider is the key element for dangerous or disruptive traffic. The rider should always put safety first, remain calm and considerate, maintain concentration, manage any external influences (including changing their immediate plans) and learn from their experiences. Learning means having the humility to change behaviours for the better after experiencing an imperfect ride (and we all have those – or maybe not so frequently for you?!).





Of particular interest to dangerous or disruptive traffic is [Betari's Cycle of Conflict](#) – a model showing how another's attitude and behaviour can affect your own. (The reference has a more detailed explanation of how we can be affected).

The Motorcycle is neutral in this scenario (as it always does exactly what you tell it to do – doesn't it!).

The purpose of the ride, or journey, might well have started out as “enjoy the ride”, “be home for lunch” or “practise acceleration sense”. Dangerous or disruptive traffic forces a re-think. A 15-second pause in a layby would then allow you to continue with the plan – and you didn't have a train to catch after all.

The wider World is a nebulous concept but it basically boils down to other outside influences which might affect how you ride. A good example is peer-pressure in group riding: “I have to keep up!”. You've heard frequently within WHAM that we expect you to “ride your own ride” and we have Group riding protocols to ensure we do all arrive at the Café (and they're mostly successful!). Out on our own any other traffic might become an influence; as advanced riders it falls to us to make sure there are no negative influences on our ride. Dangerous or disruptive traffic is something to avoid. If it is slow relative to our pace look for the safe overtake. If it is clearly fast relative to our pace let it go and continue with the plan.

In summary:

Don't allow dangerous or disruptive traffic to upset your judgement about your own ride. If you have concerns about your immediate safety or if their presence is distracting you from your own riding decisions then you need to take action to restore the calm of your ride.

Aggressively fast traffic is best in front – let them pass. It may be tempting to think you're better than them and perhaps you are; but does your competitive spirit extend to having similar disregard for the dangers posed by stupid speeds? What might start as a little faster may be ratcheted upward if they remain with you. For the blokes that can be a dangerous testosterone-fuelled escalation game; the girls have much more sense (of course they would!).

Aggressively fast traffic is best in front – don't obstruct. Yes, maybe they shouldn't be driving or riding like that but don't engage; that could well prompt even more dire behaviour putting you at greater risk.

Del.

