



WHAM! NEWS

March / April 2009

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Introduction

Welcome to the March / April 2009 edition of WHAM!NEWS.

After a relatively quiet start to the year, the group has now received a big kickstart in the form of a hugely successful Rider Skills Day in Hereford on April the 19th. The day went without a hitch, brilliantly organised by John Hodges and his team and aided by some rare warm April sunshine, we took 49 riders out and have so far signed up 13 new Associates. Please see John's note later in the Newsletter for more detail and acknowledgements.



The Worcester Rider Skills Event takes place on Sunday 10th of May at Worcester County Hall. As with last year, the day is being organised by Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. WHAM will be there and our Observers will be taking riders out throughout the day and running the slow riding course. John has the planning well in hand but if you would like to help out please contact John directly.

Our program for the rest of the year is coming together nicely. New events announced since the last newsletter include a long weekend in South Wales, more full Sunday ride outs and an additional date for an air unit visit organised by Barbara Dalloway. See the website for full details.

Regards & safe rding,

Tony.

Successes

Two WHAM members were presented with their certificates by their respective Observers at March's natter night:



Tony Walsh & John Nixon



Rob Stevens & John Hodges

Well done to all.

Based on our success at recruiting new Associates so far this year I hope to be dedicating a whole page to test passes by the autumn!





Mid Wales Trip Sunday 17th May - Numbers required

Dennis Osborne is organising a day out in mid Wales on the 17th May. The day will include some of the best roads in the UK with a good mix of A roads and B roads. He is planning a lunchtime stop and needs some idea of numbers so that he can book.

Please let Dennis know if you are planning to come along, email him on info@domemSPORT.co.uk so that he can estimate the numbers.

More information including the route will be posted on the website nearer the date

Chairman's note..

Spring and everything starting to grow! Better weather, lighter evenings and WHAM too is growing.



John Hodges and his team worked extremely hard to put on the recent Rider Skills Day at Sutton St Nicholas. They were royally rewarded with a brilliant Spring day which tempted 65 bikers to come and see us. 49 of those took an assessed ride and we signed up 13 new Associates on the day! We also had a lot of publicity with the local newspapers and radio picking up the story. Thanks to John and his team for making it such a resounding success. We have another Rider Skills Day in Worcester on Sunday 10th May and look forward to similar success there.

To my delight my new bike arrived in March – it's a cracker! This time I've taken Diana's word that she will never ride on the bike and so I've gone for the bike I wanted last time around when, living in hope, I bought a nice big comfy 12GT and the 12R (just for fun!) . The 13S will certainly cut down my wardrobe when we go on tour – the two panniers are of similar volume to one of the old tourer's - and that had a top-box! So there have to be some plus points....

There is another 136 cc of capacity making the K13 a "genuine" 1300 at 1293 cc. That also pours in a few extra horses so now it's 175 hp. These differences are academic but what really smacks the rider between the eyes is the torque. There is only a 10Nm increase in

max. torque but the way it is delivered over the engine speed range is a revelation; there is always quite startling "grunt" immediately available. The bike is definitely different to the K12 range in being always "eager". The electronic suspension adjustment now genuinely changes the spring rate as well as the damping and there is traction control to keep the rear tyre on the tarmac.

Like all our bikes there is no way their performance can be assessed on the road. So on St George's day I set off for one of the IAM's Mallory Park training days. We were fortunate again to have a nice warm sunny Spring day but the track surface needed a little cleaning in view of recent rain carrying in fine desert sands – nothing 60 bikes couldn't shift in 20 laps or so of familiarisation. The handling of the bike is very accurate and neutral. Norman Hossack's innovative Duo-lever front-suspension has been lightened on the K13 and now feeds back exactly what's happening at the front tyre. Being used to the almost 300kg 12GT this bike feels light and is easily flicked from side to side at Mallory's "Bus-Stop" chicane. Coming off Devil's Elbow the traction control comes into its own and I can really wind on more than I'd ever dared. On the straight the bike shouts out its outright speed capability but I'm quickly on the brakes to set up the long sweeping Gerrards curve. Just as we say on the road slow-in, fast-out and coming off Gerrards the back straight is only fleeting as the tricky Edwina's hove's into view; another chicane but faster and so the site of many "slip-ups" at Mallory. Again the bike is so willing to steer, flick, steer and to rocket away from Edwina's exploiting the traction control on the Es-sess. The final hairpin allows me to get a good feel for the power of the brakes before seeing how far it will lean into the turn and setting up again for the Bus-Stop. The joy of Mallory is the small circuit allows many laps and the opportunity to try the same corner again and again gradually exploring the envelope in a safe environment.

...and the verdict on the bike? Fantastic - it just needs a capable rider!

Derek



SFL Increase

Don't forget that the Skill for life price from the 1st of May is now £139. The special deals are now finished so all new sign ups will have to pay the increased fee.

Enjoy it while you can

The road sign on the right is becoming very familiar on our favorite motorcycling roads. The good news is that the government have recently rejected a proposal to reduce the National speed limit on A and B roads to 50 mph and enforce it with a new generation of average speed cameras, however they are encouraging local councils to impose more 50 limits where they deem appropriate.



The problem is that the imposition of 50 limits seems to be an knee jerk reaction to local complaints and higher accident rates. Little consideration is given to the real reasons for accidents or the (more expensive) measures that could be taken to reduce them.

How much difference a 50mph limit makes to the actual speeds travelled is also debatable, where limits are set that drivers see as inappropriate, such as long straight stretches with no hazards, the limit just causes frustration and the potential added dangers associated with frustrated drivers. In these circumstances there is evidence that drivers are more likely to ignore the speed limit and lose respect for limits in general.

It is heartening to see that Peter Rogers, the IAM's Chief Examiner is supportive of this view (which I think is held by the vast majority of Motorcyclists). Please see the text from a recent IAM News Release below with Peter's view on the Government's ten year road safety blueprint:

Ambitious Government proposals for road safety targets over the next ten years – with important new targets to save lives - have been greeted by the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists), the UK's largest independent road safety charity. "The Department for Transport's new targets are impressive. There is no hint of complacency here and we believe that the declared aspiration - to have the safest roads in the world by 2020 - is excellent," said IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger. "We can expect a more rigorous examination of what works for road safety, and what doesn't. "Reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured by 33 per cent will take a formidable effort, but it's good to hear that the will is there,"

said Mr Rodger. But earlier suggestions of a blanket 50mph speed limit have been dropped from the proposals, with an emphasis instead on targeting.

"No two rural roads are the same - there are places where it makes no sense to reduce the limit," said Mr Rodger. And moves to help new drivers tackle the difficulties of rural roads are particularly needed. "While 20mph zones outside schools may seem a simple fix, there is little evidence that children get run over there. To explore careful use of 20mph limits in primarily residential areas makes a lot more sense," said Mr Rodger. "Conversely, deaths and serious injury on the UK's rural roads are the top road safety issue facing authorities and road users over the next ten years, as we have argued for some time." Research by the IAM and EuroRAP (European Road Assessment Programme) in 2007 showed that rural roads can be star-rated for safety and appropriate speed limits applied at the worst locations. Those roads with bends and twists, hidden junctions and poor overtaking opportunities should be the prime candidates for a wholesale review of speed limits. "A detailed review by local authorities to assess every mile of rural road should not result in a simple application of an arbitrary lower speed limit that conveys no obvious message to the driver," said Mr Rodger. "Even at 30mph some rural roads can be lethal – while others are perfectly safe at 60mph." "A joint programme of road improvements, campaigns to raise awareness, more enforcement, encouragement to take extra training and including rural roads in the new driving test will ultimately deliver results."

Concerned? Consider joining the Association of British Drivers - website <http://www.abd.org.uk> They argue realistically about the constant lowering of speed limits.

Tony.





WHAM Clothing.

You too could look like This!



As part of the Rider Skills Days we have commissioned some WHAM clothing. Included is a T shirt, as presented by our resident male model above, and a WHAM Fleece. Both are black and feature the WHAM logo in green. They are available in Small, medium and large, John is wearing the extra small above as he says it shows off his physique better. Its up to you though.....

Contact John if you would like to order one.

WHAM Weekend Trip to the Holy Land

Steve Edwards is organising a trip round South & West Wales in July. Starting at Worcester on Friday the 24th July the route takes in the familiar A44

then skirts round the Brecon Beacons and ends up in Tenby for the night.



Tenby

Saturday takes in the spectacular Pembroke National Park to St Davids on the Coast, up to Aberaeron for lunch then on through Aberswyth and Dolgellau to Harlech for the night.



Harlech Castle

Sunday Back home via Nasareth, Dolgellau and the familiar roads to Welshpool, Churchstoke etc.

For more details, any queries, or to book your place please ring or email Steve Edwards, sales@damp-proofingman.co.uk or 01989 765 765 evenings.





Hereford Rider Skills Day Sunday 19th April 2009

Perhaps one of the best aspects of the Hereford Rider Skills Day was the wonderful contribution made by so many members of WHAM and, indeed, their wives and partners. It was an excellent club event and was only possible, because of the efforts of so many people. The Committee would like to thank all those involved.

- Event Controllers Steve and Barb Dalloway
- Route selection Steve Edwards, Guy Jenkins, John Hodges, Tim Hutt, Guy Butcher, Tim Wynn
- Route maps Ant Clerici
- Think Bike Den Osborne
- Radio and press Derek McMullan
- Poster distribution. Route selection team plus Paul Cooper, Michael Mable, Colin Storey
- WHAM Café Diana McMullan, Ali Davis, Matty Hodges (plus Jeannie Reynolds for her cake.)
- Design of adverts. Tony Davis
- Helpers and briefers Jonathan Richards, Lynne Wilkinson, Gary Barnes, Tony Walsh, Paul Cooper, Kay Wadwell, Colin Storey
- Video and Hall manager Paul Whitcombe
- Finance Eric Reynolds
- Assessment Sheets production Richard Stilwell
- Event coordinator John Hodges
- Observer coordinator Tim Hutt
- Observers Steve Edwards, Guy Jenkins, Guy Butcher, John Nixon, Richard Smith, James Dickson, Ant Clerici, Tim Wynn, Tony Davis, Den Osborne, Davis Curzon, John Hodges, Eric Reynolds, Tim Hutt, Derek McMullan.

The Worcester Rider Skills Day on 10th May 2009 is our next major event and we look forward to another successful day but, once again, this will only be possible with the support of our members.

The WHAM Committee



WHAM Bikes

Your Editor's Suzuki Hayabusa.



The 'busa has been part of the family for almost two years now. That is surprising in itself considering the bike was purchased on a bit of a whim, I fully expected it to be totally unsuitable for purpose (touring Europe 2 up with luggage, Observing etc.) and imagined that the novelty would soon wear off. At the time I just fancied a change and wanted the experience of owning the one time fastest production bike on the planet and a motorcycling icon to boot.

So, after a solemn promise to the Wife that I would stop smoking to pay for it I picked the bike up from Cardiff on a wet night in July. I remember pulling away for the first time, I must have looked ridiculous as my feet were flailing around looking for some foot pegs, these are mounted 3 or 4 inches higher relative to the seat than my old ZZR 1200... I eventually found them somewhere up around my arse and settled in to a steady pace on the M4 heading home. One thing is for sure on the 'Busa, it's as solid as the proverbial rock in a straight line and, you don't need telling, open the throttle and speed is gathered at an alarming pace. I pulled into the Services before Monmouth for one of my last ever cigarettes and waxed lyrical to the Wife about how good it felt (the bike *and* the smoke).

I left the drudgery of the dual carriageway at Ross and headed off towards Ledbury, a road I know well and a biker's favorite. As the first set of bends approached I was buzzing with excitement, if it felt that solid on the motorway is has to feel good in the bends eh? On the brakes, I started to tip it in to the first corner with a light nudge of the bars. Nothing much happened, we just carried on in a slightly modified straight line. Another slightly harder nudge on the bars improved matters

but we still had not deviated much from the straight ahead. I was beginning to get a little nervous by now as the armco was looming, so, the nudging of the bars was replaced with an all out heave and the old bus duly lumbered round the bend. A little perturbed, I managed to man handle the beast to the top of the Malverns where I stopped for another smoke (and a well earned rest). The 'busa sat there in the drizzle pinging away, staring me out with it's ugly one eye. I felt a bit sorry for it and vowed to overlook its heavy handling, get used to it and fool myself into believing I had just spent nearly 6 grand on a lovely bike. The ride home was uneventful and I arrived just as the heavens opened.



Time to give the bike a good checkover. It was so well looked after and immaculate that I never imagined that something as basic as tyre pressures would be out. Checked the rear first - 30 psi, a bit low that but not horrendous. however, the front had just 23 psi, even my nicotine ravaged lungs could manage more than that. Out came the old foot pump and up went the pressures to the recommended 42 psi. After a couple more smokes and a good cough off I went for a test ride. Transformed!! What a difference, the bike now turns like a dream.

It was now time to start modifying with a vengeance. After the ZZR the bars felt a touch low and, as mentioned before, my feet were too close to my nether regions for comfort. These niggles were easily remedied by fitting some foot pegs from one of those "Sporty Harley Davidson" Buell thingys. This gave me an extra couple of inches between the seat and the footpeg. I then invested some more money (that I was supposed to have saved by stopping smoking) in some helibars. These replace the standard bars with items that are raised 1 5/8" and pulled back 2". It doesn't sound much but it makes the whole bike a lot more comfortable.

Next was a centre stand (£50 for a new genuine Suzuki item). Apparently they do not fit a centre stand as standard as it has a detrimental effect on the aerodynamics and prevents the bike reaching 200 mph. I have not felt the need to remove it. Once the stand was on off came the fairings, out came the black and decker drill and on went some R&G crash bungs, a very very sound investment, mind you, drilling 25mm holes in the side of your pristine new bike is stressful. Nothing a few smokes cant relieve though.



I've added a number of mods since then, including mirror extenders (your elbows are never going to rear end you or overtake at an in appropriate moment so why do most bike mirrors give such a good view of them?). Heated grips (luxurious, wear summer gloves all year round). Lower rear footpegs (nothing is too much trouble for the Wife). Givi rack and quickfix Givi pannier racks. A Scottolier keeps the back wheel and number plate nicely lubed and a GPS mount. One really novel mod is the Stebel airhorn, usually fitted to lorries, it does a great job of scaring sheep away on the mountain roads in Wales. Best of all was when the MOT tester tried it and the other mechanic ran out of the workshop, priceless!

I recently replaced the rear shock absorber with an adjustable Hagon job and had the front suspension rebuilt at Revs Racing in Halesowen. In terms of value for money this is probably the best mod I've done on the bike. Handling is vastly improved and the ride is smooth as silk. More on that in a later issue.

I intend to keep the bike for a while now, the only thing that could tempt me away at the moment is a later Hayabusa or, if I win the lottery maybe a BMW K1300S, that way I could justify starting smoking again, I've always secretly fancied smoking a pipe.

Tony.

Very relevant to the previous article - Dennis Osborne has sent me some tips on tyre pressures.....

Tyre Pressures.....

Just remember tyre pressures are a compromise, there is no perfect pressure . Manufactures give settings for Mr Average. He generally wants something that he does not have to think too much about and will cover travelling to work, carry a pillion, winter or summer and he can be 17stone or 10 stone . The manufactures recommendation will always provide a tyre which has reasonable grip and stability. Remember tyre pressures also affect the suspension on the bike because the side wall of the tyre is part of the bike spring. It may mean that if you are a light person on a bike designed for two up touring you can reduce the pressures slightly to give a softer ride. Do not go too far as it may increase grip and ride but introduce other areas of handling you did not expect. Do not be afraid to try different setting but write things down and always use the same gauge. Always check pressures from stone cold . Just a few road miles will generate enough heat to alter the pressure. Buy your own gauge and keep it on the bike as we all know garage gauges are never spot on. If you do happen to do a track day then the pressures need to be reduced by 6 or 7 pounds as the heat generated is far greater than you would introduce into the tyre on the road. If you have ridden to the circuit add the pressure back before riding home. Always check your own pressures with your own gauge after a service or having new tyres fitted . Remember you probably do not check you car tyre pressures from week to week or until you notice the car is handling strangely . Check your bike tyres regularly do not wait until you are in the hedge thinking I'm sure it has been steering oddly all day!!.....

Den





Chief Observer's notes.

Our new Chief Observer Tim Hutt will be contributing much needed riding advice and articles on Advanced techniques as discussion points in this and future issues. Please read and let us know if you have any comments, conflicting views etc. The idea is to generate discussion so feel free to comment.



Food for thought...

Scenario – a queue of vehicles waiting at a temporary set of traffic lights, on a road with double white lines down the centre of the road. As a motorcyclist, it is possible to make progress to the front of the queue, but in doing so the white lines would be crossed. Is it legal to cross them?

Rule 129 in the Highway Code states, “ Double white lines where the line nearest you is solid. This means you **MUST NOT** cross or straddle it unless it is safe and you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road. You may cross the line if necessary to pass a stationary vehicle...”

Well, that seems to be saying that it is ok to pass the vehicles in the above instance, as they are all stationary. But is it? Note the use of the word necessary; is it necessary to overtake the vehicles in this instance? Would you think it ok for a car to do this in similar circumstances (unlikely I know, but not impossible)?

A follow-up to this question will appear in the next issue. In the meantime, if you would like to air your opinion please feel free to email the Newsletter Editor or myself at the addresses provided at the end of the newsletter.

Tim



Oops!

Oops makes a welcome return this issue Read, laugh and learn!!

Deisel Damage...

I suppose I should have expected it – the signs were there. All the advice is in Roadcraft and is what ‘Advanced Bikers’ should not only **know** but **act on** that information...but I’m blaming one person – and that’s me.

First the rider: I’ve been working quite hard recently and was **tired**, in fact I had used both the car and trains for some trips to London and Cardiff because I was too knackered to enjoy the long bike journeys. “What a wimp!” but it’s important – ride only when fit enough. And I was **late** for a meeting so not exactly rushing but certainly keen to make progress through the traffic in Cardiff city centre.

The bike: a courtesy bike from BVM, so a **strange machine** – my first ride on an 800GS. Great machine but without a proper screen the Severn crossing and M4 were battered by cross winds – no fun. It’s a bike with a tall seat, making the ground just that little bit further away than on my 1200GS. The bike is lighter and livelier than the 1200 and I was still getting used to it.



The journey: not Stroud to Cardiff but this leg was from Atlantic Wharf to the centre. A short trip, so **cold tyres**. My usual parking bay was unavailable due to construction work so I had to negotiate a **new route** which meant a left turn from a dual carriageway across a bus lane.

The weather: **drizzly rain** (you might have guessed)

The “oops”: I had got up to 20mph from some lights I had filtered through to the front: I had to turn left and cross a busy bus lane with lots to observe – pedestrians running for the bus, cars behind, a bus close by, what’s ahead, check its the right turning; I had space in front of a bus at the bus stop and turned across it into the small side street. I lost the back wheel (**diesel** in the bus lane), corrected, it gripped and I dropped the bike right hand side down. Fortunately the speed was approaching 0mph and I was OK just damaged pride.





I didn't panic and certainly didn't rush to pick up the bike. I saw a van had stopped behind me so I was in a safe place. The driver helped me get the bike upright and I rode the last 70m to the parking bay. A good and relatively cheap lesson!

Ant Clerici

It's a Classic!

Early one morning - but not quite at dawn - I was heading out of my lane onto the A46, a busy arterial road. I was intending to turn right and join the last of the "travel to work" traffic heading South to Cheltenham. In the car I stopped at the junction and saw traffic approaching in both directions so I had to wait. My judgement said the traffic from the right was due to arrive first - three cars - and from the left there were just two cars to clear the junction and then I could go. Sure enough the traffic from the right cleared and then one,,, two cars from the left and I pull out of the lane. Fortunately for me there is a central refuge for traffic turning right and I took that last look left before joining the Southbound lane as the car's A-pillar was clearing from my view.

There in the gutter was a pristine black Velocette with a suitably liveried rider in black leathers, regulation grey pudding-basin helmet and aero goggles.

As befits a classic built without a decent alternator there were no lights showing. Nor did the intrepid rider believe in any of this pansy day-glow reflective materials - it simply doesn't fit the image! Having seen him - just - I stopped in the refuge to let him pass and then pulled out behind him. A cheerful wave of "thank-you" for not taking him out just made me wonder how often this happens? More often than I think it does to any of our Advanced riders; not only do we have the benefit of lights and more visible clothing but - critically - **we ride well out in the carriageway and present ourselves to be seen by any offside traffic.**

Derek M



Ride the road you can see...

Riding down the excellent A483 the other week I was overtaken by a KTM Adventure. I was moving along at what I thought was a fast pace, the limiting factor as always was being able to stop in the distance I could see to be clear. However, the KTM was flying, the rider obviously knew the road well and looked very competent & smooth. I stayed with him for a couple of miles before he took on a couple of overtakes that I could not follow and then he was gone.

We arrived at Crossgates a few minutes later and the KTM rider was there. Turns out he is a local and rides the road regularly. Richard Stillwell had been following me and was very critical of this Guy's riding - he reckons that some of the overtakes were dangerous and he was too fast.

It was strange how we had such conflicting views. I discussed it with John Hodges later on and he pointed something very significant out, the fact that this Guy was **riding the road that he knew, NOT the road that he could see.**

That's a good phrase to keep in mind. I was seduced by the smooth riding style of the KTM rider, the reason he passed us was that we were limiting our speed by the golden rule, always be able to stop in the distance you can see to be clear, whereas the KTM rider was making assumptions that the road was clear ahead, just like it was last time he rode it. Keep that in mind when you are riding familiar roads and don't ride the road you think you know!

Tony.





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