# WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS





## **FEBRUARY 2019**

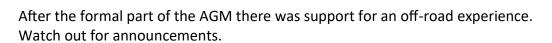


## **CHAIR'S FOREWORD**

At our AGM we looked forward to 2019. The committee is more or less as it was but with Duane Sanger taking over Ali Whitcombe's role as events organiser. Welcome Duane!

This year's Observer Training Day is already scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> May so our local and national observers can "*save the date*". We have invited observers from other groups to ride with us and share best practice: so far both SAM and SAMM have accepted.

This year we will repeat the Facebook campaign for new associates but will manage this through specific skills days.



Richard Hewitt reported 16 have already signed up for the autumn trip to Brittany - our base is at Le Fosso and has plenty more space! Deposits via PayPal (webpage soon to be up on the WHAM website—Ed).

Ian Barnard, someone who became an advanced rider a decade ago, talked about being recently observed and how this has refreshed his riding. This conversation led to the article how to progress from advanced rider to Masters and into observing - See page 7.

Finally, we agreed to name the slow riding race trophy in memory of Richard Mundy.

Ride safe

Ant Clerici



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### ULTIMATE OFF ROAD EXPERIEMCE—ADRIAN WHEELER

Following the interest expressed in an off-roading day I am pleased to invite any interested club members to join a group of 10(max) on the Mick Extance off Road experience.

Full details are shown on the link below,

#### http://www.mickextanceexperience.com/ultimate.php



in summary this coached/tutored full off-road day will start at 9 AM and finish at 3PM. Included is the bike, fuel, all off-road equipment, Training / coaching at a cost of £240 per person.

The dates are filling up quickly so I need to know as soon as possible who would like to join so could you please express your interest directly to myself Adrian Wheeler via email to <u>adrian12wheeler@gmail.com</u>, after which I will collate numbers check available dates.





## **REVIEW— BMW S1000XR SE — PAUL HAYES**

IMHO the BMW XR is a great bike, so much so I am awaiting delivery of my 3<sup>rd</sup> XR on 1<sup>st</sup> March, and yes, its another red one – I like red, and it's a no additional cost colour, and matches my very expensive BMW panniers and top box. I did look at other bikes – a GS 1250 and a Honda Crosstourer, but then I went for a ride on my XR and wow - I was in love again.

I change my bikes every 2 year just before the warranty runs out, by which time they have done around 15k miles. After that things can start getting expensive with new chains & sprockets, discs and disc pads all of which are not cheap from BMW. There is also a very expensive service at 18k miles which costs around £750. So if you deduct all of that from the price to change, and factor in an extended warranty at £450 per year, that represents around half the cost to change horses. BMW bikes now come with a 3 year warranty so I may keep the new bike a little longer, who knows.



The bike, like the previous one, has been a great bike, its well made with quality materials and after 15k miles runs really sweetly – some of you old GS brigade will probably say it's just run in and they would be right. I have had absolutely no trouble with the current (2<sup>nd</sup>) bike, or the previous 1<sup>st</sup> XR - it always starts on the first push of the starter and roars into life. Maintenance is minimal, it never uses any oils, or cool-ant and only the chain requires regular cleaning, lubrication, and occasional adjustment. Shaft drive would have been nice but that is not normally fitted to sports bikes as it apparently reduces power output. The second bike has been touring to the Black Forest (achieving an easy 140 MPH on the autobahn), and also to Spain in 45C heat and has never missed a beat.

The XR is really a tall sports bike, which BMW classifies as a sports adventure bike. It's not really an off road bike. The XR comes in 3 packages – a base XR (£12,890), XR Sport (£14,240) and a XR Sport SE. A Sports SE has a RRP of £15,250, although you can normally negotiate at least £1,000 off the RRP. As with all BMW products, there are various packages available at considerable additional cost to tempt the unwary to part with even more cash. I am quite happy with the standard SE specification which has everything that I need – centre stand, heated grips, sat nav mount (although you need to buy a very expensive BMW Navigator 5 or 6 (yours for a mere £600) or it won't fit), rack for the expensive BMW panniers and top box (available at additional cost), quick shifter, ABS Pro, electronic suspension, 4 riding modes, LED daytime running light. Colours available are red (no cost), black £240, or the Motorrad colours and package – around £480.



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### **REVIEW— BMW S1000XR SE — PAUL HAYES**

The XR is quite a tall bike in standard form so it's not for the short arse, tip toe dancers. But if you are vertically challenged, you can specify a factory lowered unit which costs £185, or buy an aftermarket lowering kit.

The best thing about the XR is the engine – a 999cc in line 4, producing up to 165 BHP and 114 Nm of torque. The engine is based on the RR engine but without the high lift cams, fuel mapping and intake / exhaust system – although BMW has now launched a new RR with a new engine which is rumoured to be fitted in modified form to the XR and R in 2020. The engine revs up to 12,000 RPM and makes a very nice noise at high revs. Although it is a high revving in-line 4, the torque curve is reasonably flat so you can ride around quite happily at lower revs. It is really a Jekyll and Hyde bike – happy to drive slowly, or, drop down a coupe of gears open the throttle and engage the warp drive. The gearing is fairly close ratios with a fairly high first gear, but a low geared 6<sup>th</sup> gear. You can do almost 65 MPH in first, but at 80 MPH in 6<sup>th</sup> gear you are revving at 6,000 RPM. Some folk do fit smaller rear sprockets to reduce revs but that does make 1st gear a bit too high. The engine is fairly thirsty (43-48 MPG) so you can (in the right hands) pass everything other than a petrol pump – I think the XR does actually use more fuel per mile than my SUV. BMW also recommends super unleaded - so definitely not for the cost conscious GS rider.

There are 4 riding modes: Rain, Road, Dynamic and Dynamic Pro. I use either Road or Dynamic. Rain reduces the power and torque considerably, and Dynamic Pro is positively dangerous unless you like wheelies in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear and no ABS or traction control – strictly for the posers and nutters, and not the safety conscious WHAM rider (not sure how IPSGA fits with that). I use Road in the winter as this provides early intervention of ABS and traction control, and Dynamic in the summer with dry roads. The ride quality may feel a little hard for the pipe and slippers GS riders, but you do get used to it.





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## **REVIEW— BMW S1000XR SE—PAUL HAYES**

There has been a lot of talk about excessive engine vibrations felt on the handlebars with some blurring of mirrors, and some fragile folk complaining about hands going to sleep etc. – I think that's just them holding the handlebars too hard in an effort to hold on. I purchased some larger bar ends for my first XR and have fitted these to subsequent XR's and have had no problems with vibrations. Whereas there can be some vibrations with new bikes this does reduce to almost zero with miles. I removed my larger bar ends the other day prior to trading the bike in and did not notice any vibrations - so in my view its not a problem - but it can apparently vary from bike to bike. BMW did produce a vibration fix for the 2016 XR but this does not eliminate vibrations entirely. The problem is that XR has no additional balancing shaft to reduce engine vibrations.

Pros:

SE specification has everything you need.

Well made, high quality build.

Fantastic engine and performance

Great handling, electronic suspension, 4 riding modes, smart traction control, anti-wheelie, anti stoppie (although you can turn off if you like a thrilling (dangerous) ride.

Powerful linked radial disc brakes with ABS

Remote control of sat nav from handlebars

Good residual value, and cheaper and much faster than a GS.

Also, and most importantly, avoiding that ubiquitous 'Old Guy GS rider' stigma (completed of course with the excessively large and square panniers and top box, and off road spokes and tyres, spotlights, crash bars, video cam etc.), and that old technology clunky boxer engine and gearbox.

Cons:

Higher fuel consumption.

Higher revving on the motorway when cruising

Heated grips could be hotter

No locking sat nav mount, just take it off and lock in your top box.

Needs more powerful LED lights if you regularly ride at night

No TFT screen at the moment, if you want that sort of thing

Need to fit larger bar ends for a vibration free ride

Maintenance and shorter life (20k miles) for chain compared with shaft drive

Hope you enjoyed the article, if you are interested ask me, or go for a test ride, and just teasing about the GS riders.



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## **BIKER DOWN—SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP**

Bikers across Shropshire and the wider area are invited to attend a free 3.5 hour 'Biker Down' course in Shrewsbury, offering potentially life-saving skills. Four courses are available, over the weekend of Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2019:

- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March AM (09:30 to 13:00)
- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March PM (14:00 to 17:30)
- Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March AM (09:30 to 13:00)
- Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March PM (14:00-17:30)

The Biker Down course is 3.5 hours long, and each course is limited to 20-25 attendees. Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. All courses will take place at Shrewsbury Fire Station but places *must* be booked in advance. It is only necessary to attend one of the listed courses. Full details will be provided to course attendees once their place is confirmed.

The Biker Down course is being delivered in partnership by a number of organisations who all have a vested interest in reducing motorcycle-related casualties and reducing the severity of injuries sustained, including: Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Safer Roads Partnership in Warwickshire and West Mercia, West Mercia Police, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) RoadSmart and Midlands Air Ambulance.

Designed for motorcyclists of all ages and abilities, Biker Down is a free course which offers bikers the chance to benefit from essential first-aid training and advice on what to do should they find themselves first at the scene of a collision where a motorcyclist is injured, as well as learning practical skills to help avoid being involved in a collision. The course is made up of three modules: Collision scene management, Basic first aid and casualty care (including CPR and helmet removal) and 'The science of being seen' – advice on visibility and positioning. Biker Down is a national course which originated in Kent, and has already been adopted by numerous other areas across the UK including Gloucestershire, Dyfed Powys and West Midlands. 2019 courses in Worcestershire and Herefordshire are currently being arranged and dates / venues will be promoted accordingly.

To book a place on one of these courses, please email <u>Roadsafety1@westmercia.pnn.police.uk</u> with your details (name, email address, contact telephone number, preferred course date / time) as soon as possible. Or call 01905 331323 if you have any queries.





#### Your journey...

Ian Barnard raised an interesting point at the AGM which is the inspiration for this note. We have a clear structure for improving our skills and for being able to help others, through observing, make progress from their advanced test to Masters.

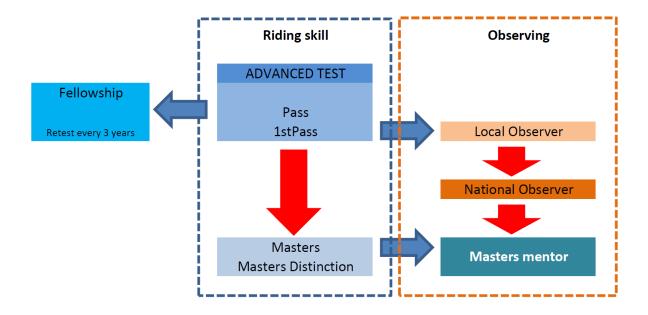
Here it is.

#### How does it work in WHAM?

Anyone can speak to us about what's next for their riding. We can arrange everything from check rides to a structured journey towards a higher qualification, becoming a local observer and beginning the route to National observer and even a Masters mentor.

Check rides can provide an 'informal in-house' assessment by one of our observers. We can help with specific issues such as "I've not ridden for a few weeks and feel a bit rusty" to "I have a real problem filtering" etc These rides can be on a Sunday morning part of one of the group rides or at a time to suit you.

If you have a pass we can help you tackle a 1<sup>st</sup> pass, and if you want, we can take you towards Masters either through a WHAM masters mentor or, as I did, with someone outside the group.





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## **NEWS—RICHARD HEWITT**

February's weather (well misty weekends anyway..) hasn't yet delivered a cloud and frost free Sunday for us to start enjoying 2019's Sunday ride programme. However, the intrepid duo of Alex Hoyle and Andy Chambers ventured out on WHAM route 8 (Crossgates via Dolfor ) on the 10th February and in recognition of their stoic effort to get a full-breakfast in their tummies (well Alex anyway) please see below a couple of pics to confirm they are both certifiably hardcore motorcyclists...





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## PEARLS OF WISDOM (MAYBE...) — BRIAN MORGAN

Hi everyone. Richard Hewitt has asked me to write up a brief article on the IAM test as seen from the examiner's point of view – what he actually asked for were some 'pearls of wisdom' but – I generally struggle to write anything for WHAM that doesn't involve having a go at Tony Davis, or of appearing wise, however I'll give it a shot:-

So – you turn up for the test and wonder what the examiner is thinking -- -- Well, the fact that you have paid for training and undertaken observed rides, then submitted yourself for a test, won't be lost on him/ her (generally around here it'll be a him). My point is that a great many riders are only too happy to use high powered machines on our roads, in blissful ignorance of what might happen next. The examiner will have dealt with the aftermath of this ignorance on more occasions than they can remember so will be pleased to meet someone with a bit more sense. If an individual makes an independent choice to improve their riding skills and put themselves through a test, the examiner will happily do whatever is possible to help further your progress. They will really want to recommend you for full membership (pass the test) and understand that there is no benefit in trying to add any pressure or 'trip you up'. The book the examiner has slept with is called 'roadcraft' – not 'witchcraft' – we are all simply bikers who want to stay alive, so the examiner will be on your side.

Everything that the examiner will look for is contained within your training material – and WHAM observers know it back to front and inside out - so stick to what you've practiced. I have found that it is the behaviours, as opposed to the abilities, that have caused the problems. My advice is to just keep it simple and stick to what you know.

On test you will probably make a mistake somewhere – If you start dwelling on it, you'll make more so just get on with the ride. The examiner will see it for what it was and make allowances. They will look at the whole ride and make a decision based on what was good. I can absolutely guarantee you that the examiner will have vivid memories of having made the same sort of mistakes over the years.

Don't waste your time trying to work out what the examiner is watching for or what they are thinking – you've got a motorcycle to ride, on test, on a public highway – that's more than enough to occupy the mind of the average human being so just get on with it. Keep it simple – the tests that I enjoyed the most were the ones where the associate said they'd relaxed and were having fun! If you like, just think of it as a ride with a mate.

Don't go looking to pull off some brilliant manoeuvre to impress – the examiner will be massively experienced in dealing with human behaviour and will spot it straight away – in any event it generally goes wrong, and you'll end up clipping a white line or speeding. Again, keep it simple. If an opportunity presents itself to overtake for example, stick to what your observer has taught you and get on with it if it's safe. If something about it doesn't feel right – the examiner will undoubtedly have the same feeling so don't be afraid to abandon it. Such decisions are useful talking points at the debrief. Even if it was the wrong decision, the fact that it was made for the right reason (safety) will justify it (live to fight another





# PEARLS OF WISDOM (MAYBE...) — BRIAN MORGAN

There has been various riding 'bibles' used over the years and they tended to be 'of their time', whilst I don't doubt things will continue to develop, what we currently have is more fit for purpose than some of what we had. Over the years we've thankfully seen an end to the 'grid system', off siding, mandatory hand signals and the bloody Hendon shuffle. These changes came about mainly due to the improvements in motor vehicle technology so what we now have is a more sensible set of guidelines that allows you, the rider, to make your own judgement calls with some degree of flexibility. Whilst we have had some administrative changes in recent years, the basics of advanced riding are pretty much the same (Safety Position, Limit points, etc) and I can't see that changing much.

So – what is the examiner looking for? The bottom line is that he/she wants to see a 'thinking' ride – and what does that mean exactly?

Well – look around and be aware of anything that is, or might be, a hazard. Decide on what <u>you</u> feel is the safest piece of road to use, what is the safest speed to travel at and which gear is best suited to that speed.

#### How to make that decision?

Remember TUG – Take, Use, Give information. Riding plans are made on the correct assessment of the ever-changing scene ahead, and to the rear of, the rider (that's a very old theory but still applies). So, take in as much information as you can by using your senses and your experience to anticipate what might happen. Use that information to help you make a decision. Based on what you decide to do, consider giving some information (for example, signal if needed, maybe even a hand signal to reinforce an existing signal or give a horn warning). It will very often involve a change in position or speed – even a minor change can make a big difference. On test, making slight changes in position/speed etc also shows that you've seen the hazard, evaluated it, and done something about it.

The Information phase of IPSGA endures throughout all the other phases (Eric Reynolds produced a brilliant graphic to explain that) but, simply put, it means that whichever of the phases of IPSGA your undertaking, the one thing that will keep changing is the world around you and you need to constantly evaluate that information.

I have also been asked about the various do's and don'ts - which is where it can get very messy. Human nature being what it is, many people like a set of rules to follow so they know what to do but – people can tend to take things too literally or to put their own interpretation on what they hear, which is where myths start to form, and spread. The WHAM website has a really useful 'common confusions' document which might clear up some of the myths and I know that the training team have regular meetings and keep on top of it. Also, at the start of every 'season' the observers get together for some training and recalibration to make sure that there's just the one hymn sheet. This is complimented by 'check rides' where observers, in effect, check each other's associates.





## PEARLS OF WISDOM (MAYBE...) — BRIAN MORGAN

Clearly, there should be one standard and the IAM have tried hard to make this the case. Having said that, common sense dictates that there will always be slight variances in how individuals view things. This applies to examiners as much as anyone else so you're always going to get slightly different comments from different examiners during the debrief. I think it's safe to say that these don't result in 'fails' but are bits of advice given in an attempt to make you a better rider (my personal favourites were people riding too close to oncoming traffic or not using the 2 second rule) so please take on board any feedback you get because it is all meant to help.

An advanced test pass in no mean feat in itself but I feel it is best to see it as a step in a process. Bear in mind that Police grade 1 riders not only get to (have to) practice their skills every day, they still need to attend refresher courses periodically to help diminish the effect of bad habits – yep, everybody develops them including you, so never be afraid to ask your observer for a refresher occasionally. Then consider further training to maybe obtain a masters certificate. Keeping the right company helps too.

I have recently stepped down as an examiner and hope to have the time to attend more WHAM events and rides this year (providing I can avoid Tony Davis of course) and I look forward to meeting up. In the meantime – thanks for reading, take care and have fun.

Cheers.

Brian.



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# THE TAIL ENDS— BY MR ALAN RIDER

Wide, Wider, Too Wide!



Now I'm not particularly slim of build but I recoil in embarrassment at my son referring to a person of ample proportions as a 'wide load'. Very rude, but that's teenagers for you. However, I'm beginning to get exasperated with traffic, parked cars, my car, my bike and myself. Perhaps I need counselling to deal with my state of mind when on the roads but I reckon I'm at the more balanced end of the road rage spectrum.

Motorbikes are reputed to have an advantage over other forms of travel. Faster than your pedal pusher, more fun than a trike, more maneuverable than a car, easier overtakes and, well, that's about it. Cheaper to buy, not really. Cheaper to run, again not really. More mpg, nope!

One of WHAM's illustrious luminaire's recently admitted to suffering an attack of 'wide load'. Picture your colleague arriving at the back of a queue of traffic and being oh-so-aware of his depleted wallet resulting from indulging in a new H\*\*da. "I'm on a bike, it's freezing, my fingers could chill a gin 'n ton, I'm hypothermic but I'm gonna filter to the front to make up for all this pain", thinks Our Man. "Oh no you're not" says Slim Wallet, "you're going to stay right where you are. You're riding a WIDE LOAD with your 'oh \*\*\*\* it's fallen over' engine protectors **and** your 'wider than a wide-mouthed frog handlebars' **and** your 'never mind the kitchen sink, I've a bath in my panniers' rear end **and** <u>YOU WILL NOT FIT</u> to the front of this queue!" Just as this common sense is gaining ground in the ice crystallising brain of Our Man, a Series One 1100cc Pan whistles past faster than a cop chased moped mugger to front of said queue and is hull down on the horizon in the time it takes you to say "what the \*\*\*!"





# THE TAIL ENDS— BY MR ALAN RIDER

My point is that we are all getting a bit obese. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for a bit of comfort versus speed. But for different ends. The stick insect of the bike world is really a trials bike. Nimble, embarrassingly agile, utterly lovely, but not everyone's choice. What we are being told to get hitched to are ever plumper models. Take the one of the many GS in our midst. Svelte? I think not. So, I put it to you...have we lost our advantage in today's crowded roads? In Q2 of last year 741,000 NEW vehicles were registered! (DfT). *On* our roads in 2018 there was a *growth* of 640,000 vehicles, and that has been the case roughly every year since the Second World War ...(racfoundation.org)....since WHEN??!!!

So, here we were in 2018 with 38.2 *million* vehicles on a road network in the UK (excluding NI) of just 262 thousand miles approx. (source: Wiki). Even with my schoolboy maths that's 262 thousand divided by 38 million equals ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY FIVE VEHICLES PER MILE OF ROAD in round numbers, and sorry for the shouting. Taking the average vehicle length of c.15.5 feet and putting all 145 vehicles end to end leaves a little over half a mile of clear road per mile. Put another way you can only go half the distance you thought you could in twice the time you thought it'd take. Because most of the time you're passing or being stymied by vehicles. We need that advantage I'm talking about.

In a nutshell, people are wider, cars are wider, bikes are wider but the roads just aren't! So let's crack that nut open for a moment.

As I say, you ain't got a load of space in front of you or behind, for that matter. Now we can look at the wide load issue in more depth, or breadth to be more precise. Lane width in the UK varies typically from 9' to 15' (wiki). Regulations state that passenger cars must not exceed 5' 9" width , yet they do - read on dear reader.



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# THE TAIL ENDS— BY MR ALAN RIDER

Now take a bus (full of little horrors) route of a typically 22' residential road width (mocktheorytest.com) and deduct a typical Mom's tank (sorry, feminists) on the way to, probably, public school being an Audi Q7 at a gigantic 7' 3" wide including the mirrors, which is blocking your way and a not-so-pacy-looking Jaguar F-Pace (same school, different Mom) on it's way back on t'other side at a plump and smug 7'1'' the car not the Mom. Now add say a meagre 12" scuff space between expensive alloy wheel and kerb, times 2, and space taken up by totally unnecessary, depending on your point of view, vehicles - (and what's so wrong with the bus?) - totals 14'4" plus 2' making 16'4" from 22' thus leaving 5'8" or 68 inches. (It really is much easier in metric, but we are leaving the EU and will return to pounds, shillings and pence if some politicians have their way). Divide 68 inches by 2, on the assumptions you are skilful enough not to wobble even a eyelash width off the centre line, your bike is *nil* wide and you have just 34 inches either side to knife your steed through. This gap on the equally wholly unlikely assumptions that our Moms are perfectly parallel - which they won't be, not brain scrambled by warring kids - which they will be, and blocking your rightful lane; nor whacking lippy or painting eyebrows on the opposing lane; or if it's Dad's turn on the school run, exercising a beard trimmer on a 3mm designer stubble setting. Now take your GS 1200 Adventure at 3'3" or 39 inches wide, thus leaving 14 and a half very tight and potentially very expensive inches each side for you to squeeze through. That's tighter than the Ed's wallet at Chateau Impney!

So there you have it. Solution. Buy a moped, become a mugger. Pays better.

(Views expressed by Alan Rider are not endorsed in any conceivable way by the Editor, the IAM or anyone else for that matter. He's mad. OK? - Ed.)



