

WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



JULY 2020



CHAIR'S FOREWORD

At last some real biking in the sunshine!

The "Roof of Wales" attracted 25 riders who departed the (closed) OK Diner, Leominster in small groups. We touched base at the two planned stops but missed out on the sit down breakfast because the queues were out the door and socially distanced service was dead slow: something we have to get used to! My favourite part of the route is the climb out of Abergeswynn and the run around the reservoirs. Thanks again to Andy Chambers (organiser) and Richard Hewitt (briefing) and Tony Davis (route) for providing a dream day. And there's more to come!



There is even talk of trips to Europe as lockdown lifts and the ferries get going.

ASSOCIATES

WHAM is a popular group so at the moment we have more Associates than we have observers. It's good to see most observers have logged some hours since lockdown has lifted; our current 'star' is a Group Qualified Observer – Rob Edwards - who has 73 hours to his name!

As we work through the summer we should be able to get many of you to the test before the winter.

FREE RE-TESTS

We have again secured a grant from the Safer Roads Partnership. They have supported WHAM for many years and this year it has enabled us to offer a free re-test for anyone wanting to go for a 1stPass. It's a great way of refreshing your riding skills and we can help you brush up on your technique.

Ideally all full members should consider re-taking the test every 3 or 4 years.



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CHAIRS FOREWORD CONT'D

NATTER NIGHTS

As many of you know, WHAM Natter Nights offer a chance to get together once a month on the last Wednesday. Covid-19 precautions have meant we have had no meetings for a while. In the summer our Natter Nights include a ride to The Falcon, Bromyard where we chat over a soft drink before making our way home. The committee is looking to relaunch our summer evening rides when GOVERNMENT ADVICE ALLOWS. We know we can meet and get going in our riding groups whilst maintaining social distance and The Falcon is happy to host.

As far as a Natter Night programme for the autumn and winter is concerned we have to wait for the same reasons. If I'm being optimistic I hope the Xmas meal can go ahead as planned: we will publicise details once the event is confirmed.

RECENT TEST RESULTS

Congratulations to.....

Phil Lambrakis who achieved a 1stPass

Observer: Rob Edwards

And passes for:

Thomas Cocker Observer: Gary Barnes

Colin Abbott Observer: Rob Edwards

Andrew Jones Observer: Gary Barnes



Tony Reusser our Hon Sec has your certificates. Please arrange for a presentation – ideally with your observer and a camera to capture the happy moment. We look forward to seeing you out on Sunday rides.

Ride Safe

Ant Clerici

WHAM Chair

SIGNS OF THE TIMES—ALEX HOYLE—CO

O.K. this month's my ramblings are about road signs and some Highway Code questions. We all study the Highway Code in order to take our Advanced test, and then more or less forget about it.

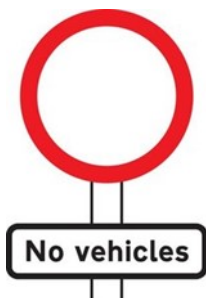
For this month's article I am going to put up a few signs and questions from the Highway Code. Now, do you know what they mean or stand for?

So, no cheating, try and answer the questions from memory if you can before you go for your copy of the HWC to hopefully confirm that you were right in the first place.



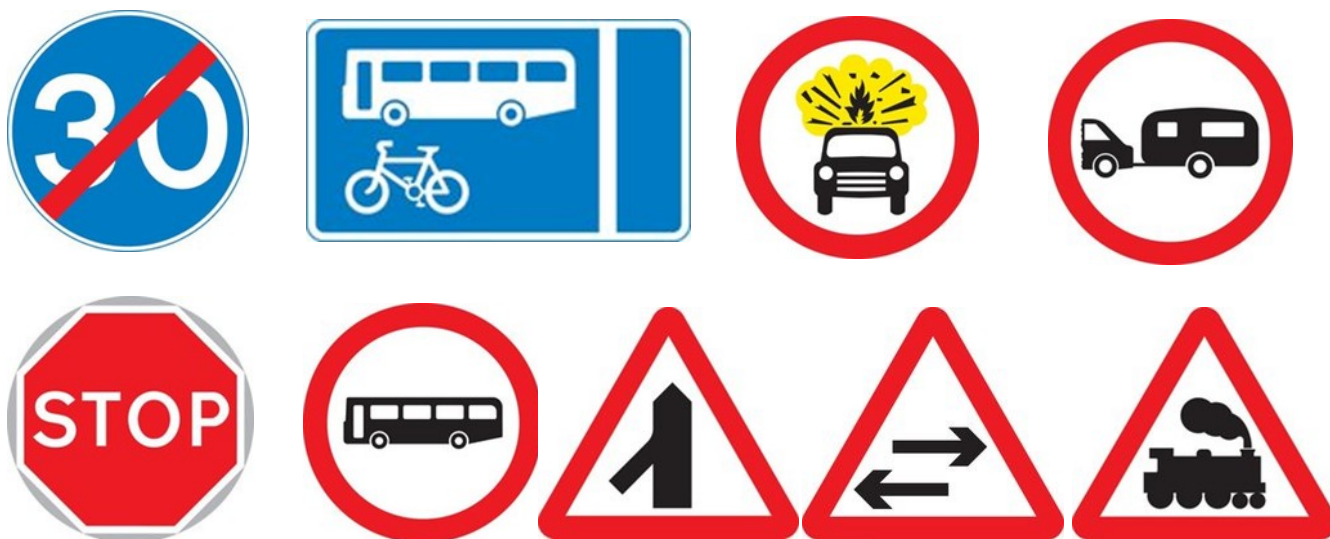
I have included this one and will answer the question for you, because one of our group observers was riding with others a few weeks ago and several of the riders did not stop at this sign.

It is a mandatory stop sign, and you must stop. It is there for a reason, normally because it would be dangerous to just pull out, so remember you must STOP. On the continent the police wait by these signs to fine anyone not coming to a complete halt.



No Vehicles, except what?

SIGNS OF THE TIMES—ALEX HOYLE—CO



Rule 129 of the HWC says

Double white lines where the line nearest you is solid. This means you **MUST NOT** cross or straddle it.

However, there are several occasions when you can do so, what are they?

Rule 132 of the HWC says

Reflective road studs may be used with white lines.

White studs mark what.

Red studs mark what.

Amber studs mark what.

Green studs mark what.

Green/yellow studs indicate what.

What is the current fine for picking up your mobile phone and using it in your car whilst it is moving, so not hands free?

In England and Wales, you **MUST NOT** drive with a breath alcohol level higher than ?? microgrammes/100 millilitres of breath.

What is the legal tyre tread depth for a Moped?

O.K. that's it. If after checking with your copy of the HWC you got all the answers correct, then you are a genius, and should be doing my job as group Chief Observer.

If you have lost your copy of the HWC and want to know the answers to any of these signs or questions then please drop an e-mail to: alexhoyle@trackdown.co.uk or call me on **07870 949102**

Regards

Alex W Hoyle, WHAM Group 3260 Chief Observer

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON

Hello my fellow Whammers. Thank you if you've found this interesting enough to stay with me on my, let's not deny it, *challenging* journey to build a satisfying sidecar outfit.

You'll remember, those of us escaping early onset, I left you looking forward (?) to hearing how the concealed steering design played out. Well, in a nutshell, it didn't. The apparatus laid bare in front of me was steering with cables.

What I'd like you to understand is that my happily misspent two-wheeled adolescence careered through the '60s with cables operating all manner of things on motorbikes and scooters. From brakes to gears, clutches, chokes, throttles, valve lifters and so on. Frequently they failed. Inevitably at the side of the road, in the dark and raining! Cables? No thanks.

Anyway, come September 2018, two (private road) tests of the presented system revealed that driving the rig was like gripping the tail of a stabbed alligator with the imminent prospect of being whiplashed back and forth before a seriously debilitating finale! Tank slapper?....picnic mate!!

To cut to the chase, the Engineer and I had a major disagreement over this, culminating in my ending the contract.

So there I found myself in November 2018 with a machine in my garage that had no effective steering. What to do! First, I concealed it from my view with an old car cover, had a stiff drink(s), pondered a solar-powered, three-wheel zimmer alternative and then slammed the garage door on it.

Come the afterglow of Christmas and feeling heroic psychologically, I wrestled the odious cable steering off and binned it. Then my mate Gren called and said he'd like the two super heavy-duty, several metre long Bowden cables for his yacht! He's so welcome, I couldn't give them to him fast enough!

Feeling mild enthusiasm for this never ending project beginning to return, I installed an uprated rear shock fitted with an 80% stronger spring to cope with the additional sidecar weight; courtesy of Mike Capon (he lives in France so his name clucks, n'est-ce-pas?) who runs the Shock Factory. Not only is he a really sound chap, he supplies a lot of sidecar racers including my geographically distant French mentor and inspiration 'Jean-Louis', sidecar builder extraordinaire. If only my Engineer had been prepared to copy his.....

In due course I started to think of my options. Should I take a welding course? Should I buy a CNC machine? What the 'eck was I going to do. Who did I know who understands sidecars and its oddball steering geometry. I thought of Johnny Luebke proprietor of WAS and Dirty Weekender Adventure Vans of Worcester himself an ex sidecar racer. He contacted Trevor Ireson of F2 Sidecar building fame...known to many as sidecar god! That didn't go forward.

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON



Photo Caption:

The late Phil Dongworth and passenger at the TT on the Worcester Auto Services Ireson F2 outfit. Photo: courtesy of Bengt Eliasson

Johnny also knew of the Birchall Brothers. Sidecar champions and builders of racing sidecar outfits. He was good enough to approach them but again, this didn't lead anywhere.

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON



Photo Caption:

Birchall Brothers at the 2019 TT. Photo: Autosport

A mate suggested Cameron Engineering & Motorsports Ltd might be interested to help. My email got a swift invitation to visit their works in Malvern and discuss my problem. What a set up they have! They make replica JAP engines for Morgan 3 Wheelers among many other gorgeous things like restoring motorcycles. Absolutely beautiful work. Simply breathtaking. Making entire V twin engines from scratch. *Oh! Oh! OH! Suits you sir!* The owner Ewan Cameron admitted he wasn't a sidecar man and I got the sense that the job wasn't really for him. By the way, he races three wheels for sure but not configured like sidecars. Again, this lead didn't develop into anything.

Who else might help?

- * Watsonian? Not an option, they build their own.
- * Simply Sidecars? Not the sort of sidecar I'm into.
- * Charnwood who built my Suzuki? They have sold up.
- * Merlin from up North? They are no longer. and anyway, all of these built, or build in Watsonian's case, their own outfits. You see the problem? No one in the UK currently builds commercially what I consider to be a super sport road outfit and definitely not one with hub centric steering, at least as far as my extensive research goes. This is what I was 'angry' about back in Poitiers with Derek, if you remember. No surprise, says You (perhaps), no one wants a sidecar. Well I like 'em!

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON



Pic Caption

I'd rather be riding my outfit!

Pic Caption

Old Poitiers central square with Derek.

Why didn't I go to Jean-Louis for a chassis built on the left side and get a body made in UK. Good idea! I most certainly thought about it back in 2017. I got a price from Jean-Louis *and* got tentative prices from fibreglass manufacturers here but when the local Engineer came across with such immense confidence and the agreed price was less than going the 'French' route, what was there not to like? Moving on....



Pic Caption

Hindsight's a wonderful thing!

Jean-Louis KTM chassis and subframe

Back to the web thinking: '*who knows about sidecars that's still in business in the UK*'. Much trawling around and I came across Lumley Engineering. They build F2 sidecars and race them. So I drafted the email explaining that I had an unfinished sidecar project and would they be interested in helping me at all...at all....bated breath!

Surprise! A lightning nanosecond after I hit 'send', the phone rang and Paul Lumley was on the line. "Yes, *I might be*" says he "*I'm often picking up other people's projects!*" I could hardly believe my ears. "*But I can't do anything until after the TT in June next year (2019)*".

That was not a problem to me. This project was already 5 years on from that first speedway evening with you all. Around Christmas 2018, Paul visited my home to see the outfit and at once he admired the sidecar. He loved the look of it (nice one Pete!)

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON

That tickled him enough to accept the challenge. We discussed using a different bike, one with conventional forks rather than the Hossack type on the K as being possibly easier to build linkage type steering. The issue being the centred shock on the K getting in the way of any linkage. *"We could move it to the side like Jean-Louis does"* says I. *"Hmm, maybe"* says Paul. He explained he was very familiar with leading link fork set ups for sidecars having made many, but 'hub centric' was new to him. Nevertheless, a challenge he was keen to rise to.

Pic Caption

Paul gets to grips with the whole shebang.



Photo Caption: *Paul Lumley – ace at making things.*

Sure enough, I got a call after the TT in late June and it was Paul saying he was ready to receive the outfit. Joy? You bet! So with a mate who rides an immaculate Honda SP1 and total landscaping genius, we loaded my steering-less machine onto his trailer and set off to Bridgwater, home of Lumley Engineering Ltd.

Pic Caption

Loading up to take to Lumley Engineering near Bridgwater.

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON



We arrive, unload and staff come out to look at it. Lovely, they all agree. “That won’t work” says Ricky son of Paul and CAD design engineer extraordinary as he gazed at the remnants of the cable steering. “No, it didn’t!” says I.

Pic at Paul’s



Photo caption: *LtoR – Paul, Ricky, Jordan, Dan*

SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON

Part 9 the last is coming soon and just to satisfy you, hopefully, here is a pic(s) of it last Friday 24 July 2020 on a shakedown or as I prefer 'shakeapart' ride with Del, Rog and Derek, the latter a faithful and supportive 'Nutter' to the final result.



NEWS—RICHARD HEWITT

In amongst the continued gloomy period that is C-19 in 2020 there have been some green shoots of good news here at WHAM.

As Ant mentioned in his foreword we had a very enjoyable and well attended socially distanced Roof of Wales day-ride with several small groups heading of at different times along what I think is the best route our Routemaster Tony D has put together. Alex H captured in two pictures what I believe to be the essence of this ride:



Caption: a very happy chappie (Will Morgan) on his new rocket ship stopped for a pic somewhere in the second section of the run.



Caption: This grabs the essence of Tony's route. Empty roads in beautiful scenery for us to share with 'us mates in WHAM. Here's looking forward to the next one.

NEWS—RICHARD HEWITT

Now that the powers that be within IAM towers have been able to lift access to Examiners post lockdown we've had some passes!

Simon McGowan

On the 26th of this month Simon, under Alex H's tutelage achieved a first pass with Examiner Andy Lamb. Alex had bought Simon out on a few of the Sunday runs to polish his form and it appears to have paid off. Well done both.

Andrew Jones

On the 17th July Andrew passed his advanced test with Marcus McCormick on what will have been a typical challenging route around the West Midlands. Gary B Observed Andrew to this achievement and from Marcus' test report I can see Andrew was a whisker away from a First. Maybe something to re-test for in due course Andrew? Well done both.

Thomas Cocker

Another associate for Gary through to test success this month. On the 6th July Thomas passed, again with Marcus. Well done both.

Colin Abbott

Ok, this is quite a tail to tell. On the 11th July Colin tested with Andy Lamb and passed. Observed by Rob Edwards Colin felt this wasn't quite the outcome he was satisfied with and so then on the 22nd July he submitted himself again to the preparation, nerves, and testing by Andy Lamb and came away with a First! Quite an achievement and whilst this isn't for everyone it certainly shows commitment to the highest standards WHAM has always promoted. Well done both!

Sunday rides

It would be fair to say your committee have had some quite 'open' debates about what is and isn't possible under Government Guidelines within C-19. We haven't always agreed yet in my opinion this just shows you have a bunch of people in your committee that care about your enjoyment *and* wellbeing, as Club members, and therefore I remain happy to co-ordinate the minutiae of Sunday runs out on a weekly basis. If you've settled into riding with the same group of people every Sunday and are managing that yourself, that is absolutely fine. However, I'd ask you to consider there might be enjoyment for you and other members you've not seen for some time mixing up the groups and I will happily co-ordinate riding Groups of like minded riders.

Can I just ask though, can you communicate you wanting to ride *before* Saturday afternoon please. Mrs H is getting a little miffed with me having to break into our Saturday afternoons re-jigging riding Groups. Thank you.

Richard H WHAM Vice-Chair.



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