

# WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



**MARCH 2020**



## CHAIR'S FOREWORD



Its spring and the floods have receded for the moment only to be replaced by coronavirus and for me that's meant a positive diagnosis even though I've not suffered the main symptoms as advertised – so no temperature and no cough. Just sleeping, not eating and consequent 4Kg weight loss, taste & smell has disappeared which adds to the desire not to eat. So eating has become my "medicine". I'd even got back on the Blood Bike list for Severn Freewheelers but that'll have to wait until I can get out again.

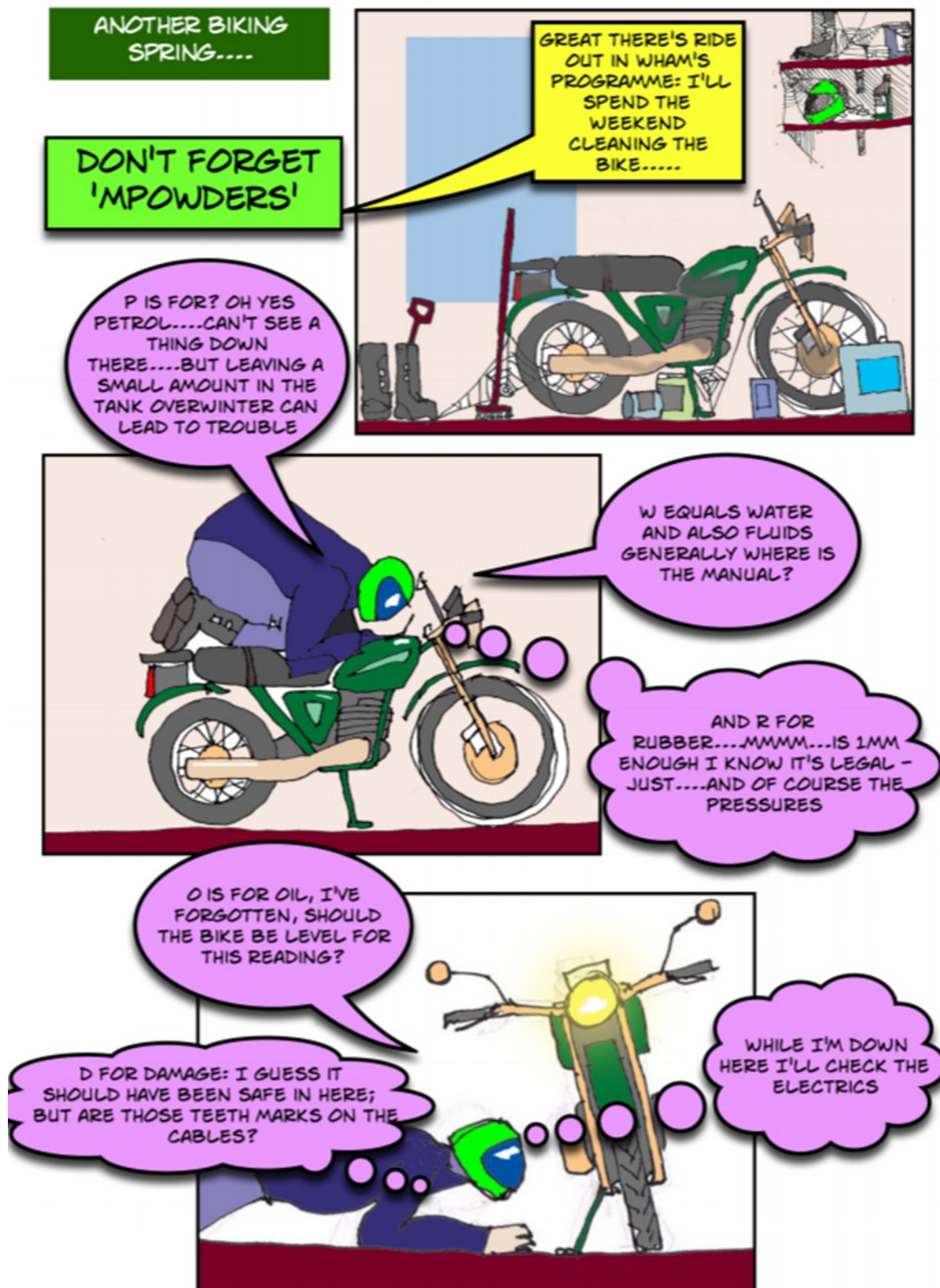
As you all know WHAM had to call a halt to all of our activities so we've included a list of possible web-sites to check out – see below.

Apologies for the short article this month but in the meantime some good news: many congratulations to Rob Edwards and his associate Phil Lambrakis. Phil passed his advanced test in early March before the IAM stopped all assessments.

Ant Clerici  
WHAM Chair

## CHAIRS FOREWORD CONT'D

And for when we get going again let's all look forward to a spot of tinkering...



## SUSPENSION - RICHARD HEWITT

When I was a young man I had a part share in a 1984 1.3 Vauxhall Nova rally car. We did quite well in the Midlands section of the ACU's 'clubman' rally championship and in one year even finished in overall third place. At the time this was quite an achievement for two twenty-something oiks from Birmingham.

Anyway, I learnt some things through the car build that have stayed with me and have been useful now and again when I've been considering fine-tuning, shall we say, my motorbikes.

The car started out as little more than a shell with standard factory running gear. After all the windows had been replaced for plastic, electrical systems upgraded to have a manual in-car cut-off, full roll cage and racing seats with 5-point harnesses added (these did little for ones privates but were useful when we found ourselves upside-down once) we turned our focus to the engine! We obviously wanted to extract THE MOST POWER from the unit and had a budget of five-thousand pounds to breath fire into the cylinders in an obvious attempt to replicate the efforts of Messrs McCrae and Burns.

However, I remember feeling deflated when pitching up to the engine builders only to be told it was a waste of time spending any money on the engine until we'd upgraded the brakes and suspension. The thought process was, why have an engine with real power if the brakes and suspension could not cope with an increase in horses. I'll admit I was both sceptical and bored by the idea of spending yet more cash on new springs, dampers, braces, discs, etc etc blah blah blah...!

But, upon further reflection and reading it made sense and so both brakes and suspension were attended to. From memory that was the best part of another four-thousand pounds spent. But boy what a difference! It turned, stopped and rode like nothing I'd experienced before and the engine, as still standard, felt like it had been detuned. However, in all actuality what had happened was that the suspension and brakes were now of a standard that the maximum could be extracted safely from the engine. To finish what's been quite a long, yet necessary, introduction; we had the engine work done and boy did that little car boogie!!

So what's the relevance for us and our motorcycles? In my experience Suspension is one of the most overlooked, misunderstood, element of buying, owning, and getting the most out of any machine. Most of us won't blink an eye spending a small fortune on luggage, heated grips, etc yet probably won't consider beyond a test ride the quality and possibilities of suspension settings and potential upgrades.





# SUSPENSION - RICHARD HEWITT

## 1) self-help, adjustments you can make yourself:

Without being critical, how many of us spend any time checking the standard settings on our bike are at factory recommended settings when we buy a new bike? I'd estimate maybe one in ten of us even bothers to make those checks. The brand new 2017 Africa Twin I bought, upon checking, had the three-way adjustment on each fork leg 50% wrong against factory settings and different in each fork leg. The rear was set-up ok. I asked the dealer why this had not been spotted at PDI and apparently these settings aren't part of the Honda PDI routine. Mr Showa & Co. had spent much R&D budget building something that, when adjusted correctly, was nigh on spectacular on the Africa Twin; a really lovely ride that smoothed out all but the roughest surfaces.

Yet this comes to nought if the man with the spanners and screwdrivers on the production line can't be arsed to set it up right. And you, as a rider will not be getting what you've paid for and might not even like what you've got; blind to the fact the issue is a human one rather than mechanical.

So, when you get home from picking up your new bike, and better still before the first good ride follow this routine:

- \* Read the section in the owners manual on suspension settings
- \* With some quality tools (nylon sockets are best) back off all settings to minimum
- \* By slowly increasing the settings, most probably hearing/feeling a click once a setting has been 'passed' you can set-up as per the manual. As I say if you do it slowly you will feel and hear the settings as you pass them to reach the desired.

It really is that easy, take your time...



## SUSPENSION - RICHARD HEWITT

### 2) Further self-help—deviation!

Now, this isn't 'deviation' as in something Tony D or Matt D do in their man-caves late at night; it's about taking the manufacturers settings as a base point and using your brain to improve them. Whilst I've not got the skills and experience of a suspension tuner I do know a little. And that little won't hurt any of us or damage our bikes. If what you tinker with here doesn't work for you return to step 1 and start again. As examples:

- \* If when riding the rear seemingly bounces several times before regaining it's composure you're probably running not enough rebound damping and/or preload for your weight
- \* If the opposite is true and the wheel seemingly leaves the floor you are probably too light for the standard settings or the standard settings are not right for the type of road/riding you are doing. A Sports bike with expensive semi-active suspension meant for the track never really makes sense on the roads that WHAM rides on. Best case here is back off the damping/preload a bit.

I could go through settings front and back with you yet ideal settings for you and your bike will be completely different to what works for me, at my weight, and you with a different bike. The key is to make small adjustments and test ride to see what works for you. As I said you can always return to factory settings.

Online owner forums are a good source of information for things like suspension yet my advice here is make sure you filter out comments from idiots. If a post has been shared, commented on, referenced by a bunch of people you're probably onto something positive.

### 3) Go see a specialist

Den Osborne put me onto Revs Racing in Halesowen. They only do motorbike suspension, have been doing it for years and know what they are talking about.

They can service what you've got, set-up what you've got and advise on the value for money of upgrading some or all of your suspension components.

Some of you will know I spent a few quid recently swapping out the suspension on the Crosstourer. I loved the bike yet didn't love the suspension. For me, after I'd followed steps 1) & 2) I still wasn't getting the ride I wanted. From the owners forums this was a common complaint with the Crosstourer and came with the side effect of making the sensitive ride—by-wire throttle even more sensitive.

After getting a fork service with new zero-friction progressive springs, new oil and motocross fork seals fitted, together with a rear shock manufactured for my exact weight and riding style, the bike is transformed. But this wasn't cheap and the best advice Revs gave me was only go to this expense if you are going to keep the bike for a while. You will not get this money back if you sell it on after 12-months.

I hope this has been useful to you and sparked some ideas in your mind about how you can get the most out of your suspension and hopefully, more out of your riding.

## NEW HELMET DESIGN—ANT CLERICI

If you're still maintaining a sense of humour into what now looks like a longer than three week isolation period Ant thought his satirical take on potential new lids might make those of you with a slightly darker GSOH laugh. For those of you that are not in this category, please don't shoot the messenger— *The Ed*.



What do bikers do when they aren't riding?

Well, some trawl the internet for....er...interesting stuff. So here's a selection from an Associate who joined us recently and another contribution from an observer. There's so much material out there, some good and some awful.

First Matt Sheen's contribution

YouTube Channels:

To find these channels on YouTube simply search for the creators names.

Mostly filmed on GoPro Cameras or Drift cameras, these channels have a variety of content, from tour series, vlogs (Video Blogs) new bike reviews, kit corner or the amusing BBB ( Budget Bike Battle).

## BIKER VIDEO SOURCES—ANT CLERICI

These channels listed below should offer something for everyone....

### THE MISSENDEN FLYER:

With over 150,000 subscribers worldwide, one of the most popular UK Channels.

You will find all sorts of content here. TMF became popular with vlogs regarding his BMW GS, but has over time developed his content to include tour series, new bike reviews ( he regularly has access to bikes from leading manufacturers such as Ducati, Triumph and BMW to name a few), kit corner, how to videos and even biker friendly café reviews.

### TEAPOTONE;

Became popular on YouTube by riding his GSXR 1000 around the world and filming it on GoPro. He produced a series covering 74,000 miles and 54 countries. Bruce Smart aka TEAPOTONE was until recently a serving police officer in the MET. He produces weekly vids, usually bike or kit related, and also films his tour company trips with Chickenstrips.

### 44 TEETH:

A motorcycle channel created by Al Fagan (former fast bikes magazine, TT racer, BSB racer) and Chris Eades AKA Baron Von Grumble. Content includes their popular Top Gear inspired BBB Budget Bike Battle, racing and track day content, bike reviews and vlogs.

### ITCHY BOOTS:

A vlog from a female motorcyclist called Noraly. She quit her job, sold all of her belongings and set off to travel around the world, solo and unsupported on her Royal Enfield Himalayan. She is currently riding and filming her trip from Argentina to Alaska, producing 2 videos a week.

### LYNDON POSKITT:

The Malle Moto Dakar man has a popular channel. Content includes “Races to Places” a series of videos including his Dakar efforts and a trip around the world on his KTM Dakar racer. Most recently he has produced a series called “ team Races to Places” where he built and organised his own race team entered in the Africa Eco Rally Race.

### ADVENTURE BIKE TV:

Top Gear inspired show with 6 series on YouTube and now moving to Amazon Prime for season 7.



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

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR  
THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



## BIKER VIDEO SOURCES—ANT CLERICI

### LAMB CHOP RIDES:

Motorcycle reviews, kit and gear reviews, tours and garage based modification builds.

### PODCASTS:

Available from wherever you get your podcasts from, I use Spotify, but can be found elsewhere.

### ADVENTURE RIDER RADIO:

The worlds most listened to motorcycle podcast.

Adventure travel stories, riding advice, and interviews with famous over landers and biking celebrities.

### FULL TANK MOTORCYCLE PODCAST.

A UK based show, usually monthly, discussing the most interesting bike related news.

### FULL THROTTLE

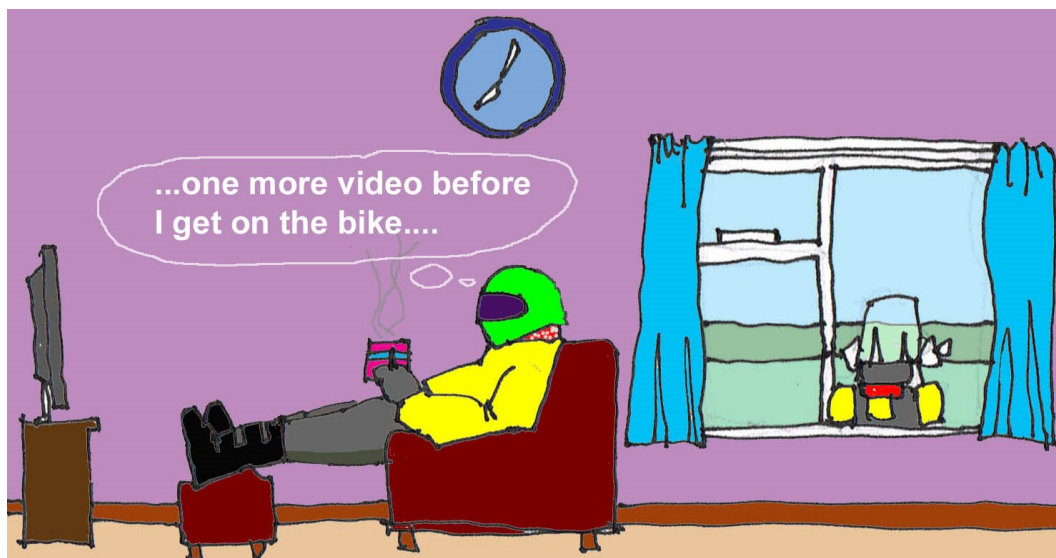
Bike racing news and interviews from Greg Haines, the Eurosport WSB commentator. Includes interviews from top racers such as Shakey Byrne, James Whitham and Leon Haslam.

And from Tony Reusser

### POLICE COMMENTARY

I think the attached video is excellent.

<https://youtu.be/ITldr-rAKk0>





# BRAKING AND CHANGING GEAR—DEL BRITTEN

## Using the gears

The way you use your gears can make or mar your riding. Correct use of the gears depends on accurately matching the engine speed through the chosen gear to the road speed and using the clutch and throttle precisely. This gives you smooth gear changes and greater stability.

**Avoid** selecting a lower gear instead of the brakes to slow the machine down.

The sequential gearbox on a bike does not allow intermediate gears to be missed when changing up or down. When speed is lost through braking, multiple changing down of gears is often required. There are two techniques which can be used to do this:

⇒ **During the later stages of braking, hold in the clutch lever and change down the gears until the appropriate lower gear is selected, then release the clutch.**

This technique allows rapid movement through the gears but depends on correctly choosing the appropriate gear for the road speed and accurately counting the gears. If you select too low a gear, there is a risk of locking the rear wheel and causing a skid.

⇒ **As speed is lost during braking, work down through each gear, engaging the next lower gear as its optimum speed range is entered.**

At each stage, accurately match the engine speed and gear to the road speed. This promotes smoothness and avoids locking the rear wheel.

With this technique, the engine braking helps to slow the machine. The appropriate gear for the speed is engaged throughout and, because the drive is engaged except during the changes, the bike remains stable. You also have the option of immediate power if required.

You should be able to use both techniques but whichever you use, it must be properly incorporated into your riding plan.

# BRAKING AND CHANGING GEAR—DEL BRITTEN

## Factors that affect acceleration and engine braking

Engine configuration affects acceleration and engine braking. For example, a twin-cylinder four-stroke engine will give more low-down torque (pulling power) but will be less free revving than a four-cylinder engine. The twin will also provide more engine braking when you close the throttle.

## Releasing the throttle – engine braking

When you release the throttle, the engine slows and through engine compression exerts a slowing force on the wheels. This causes the engine to act as a brake, reducing road speed smoothly and gradually with little wear to the machine.

The loss of road speed is greater when you ease off the throttle in a low gear.

Engine braking allows you to lose speed in conditions where normal braking might lock the wheels. It is also useful on long descents in hilly country.

Engine braking operates only on the rear wheel, but it is a very effective way of losing speed. Remember when you use engine braking that this gives no brake signal to the traffic following you.

In normal riding, engine braking can only be used to produce *gradual* variations in speed.

## Key points

- 1) Recognise when to change gear by the sound of the engine.
- 2) Choose the correct gear for the road speed.
- 3) Develop good coordination of hand and foot movements.
- 4) Changing up a little early reduces fuel consumption.
- 5) Brake in good time to slow to the right road speed as you approach a hazard and, passing through the intermediate gears, select the appropriate gear.
- 6) Match the revs to the road speed for the new gear to be engaged – blip the throttle.
- 7) Use the brakes rather than engine compression to slow the machine (except during downhill descents).