

# WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



MAY 2020



## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

There's a good chance that rules surrounding the Covid-19 restrictions would have changed between now and when this newsletter is published. Currently we can ride with one other biker whilst observing social distancing, we can't observe associates, IAMRoadsmart examiners are furloughed and, worst of all, we might be fined if we cross the border into Wales.



But we can ride! And that's great for our mental health and it will allow us to regain those skills which have gone rusty during "lockdown".

My own experience of getting back to biking this month was that core skills of handling and position were quickly regained but more technical aspects of accurate speed control and taking bends with finesse took a little practice. I also feel that driving culture has changed with many used to driving empty roads: their awareness of others (us!) has diminished: there are a lot of cyclists out there!

When riding focus on hazard management and the rest will follow!



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## CHAIRS FOREWORD CONT'D

It's good to see our Facebook includes requests for ride buddies – a good thing in this time of understanding the "new norm". If anyone wants to go out with one of our observers then please contact me.

Whatever happens we will respect anyone's wishes not to come out and play as there are many who, for various reasons, should stay at home or wish to simply wait a little longer before increasing their interaction with others.

IAMRoadsmart has sent out a questionnaire for groups – mostly about how we predict we will manage associates on our return. Our response was managed through another WHAM committee Zoom session.

Finally, an optimistic note: we all have our fingers crossed that the lifting of restrictions will allow us to run WHAM's Slow Riding Day as planned for June 21<sup>st</sup> .....keep an eye on the website for confirmation it's on.

Stay genki

Ant  
WHAM Chair



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## GENTLY, GENTLY—ALEX HOYLE WHAM CO

On Wednesday, the 13th of May the government announced it was lifting some of the restrictions with regards to movement. It was good to see motorcycling included in this as well. The advice to start with is that you should go out on your own, or possibly with only one other person. So, on the Friday, Del and I decided to get out on our bikes for the first time in probably six or seven weeks and go for a little whizz around the Cotswolds.

We went off fairly early in the morning and the ride lasted around four to five hours in total, including stops, and we did approx. 170 miles. So, what did we learn? Well, by the time it got to early afternoon, both of us had had enough, and there is certainly no way on earth I could have done the afternoon session.

Please, Please, if you are going to go out on your bike then best to start off steady and build up to it. It was really weird, at times it was like I had forgotten how to ride a bike, but then you soon get back into it, but perhaps this is the danger that you then decide you might want to do a bit more, so just take it steady to start with.

The second thing; there really is not much traffic about, especially out in the country, so you very quickly get into the habit of pulling up to a junction only to see there is nothing there, and then pulling straight out.

This is a very dangerous situation to find yourself in, and as the traffic increases, this is a habit you are going to have to break very quickly. The third thing; there are lots of people out there on push bikes, some of whom are newish to cycling, and who seem to have no real road sense at all.

There also seemed to be far more people out on horseback, and as always with horses, this is a much more dangerous situation to encounter. Horses can be unpredictable beasts at the best of time, and if spooked can cause all sorts of problems. So again, please take care. I think what I am getting at, is you must not assume because there is not much on the roads at the moment, that there is nothing around the corner, there may well be.

Also remember that all those other people who are out there are all thinking like you, that there is not much on the roads, so it will be all right to pull out without looking, and generally dawdle around. Some are also going way too fast for the conditions.

Social distancing should be fairly easy to achieve on a motorbike, and if you are careful about where you pick to stop, and maintain the six-foot rule, then this should not really be a problem. Although we are not involved with the car side of the IAM, I think it's going to be far more difficult for them to maintain social distancing, and that's why I think the bike side will get the go ahead, well before the cars do.



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## GENTLY, GENTLY—ALEX HOYLE WHAM CO

The government says you can go out, and I cannot stop you, but please take care and be sensible about it. Do try and stick to the government guidelines for the moment and be very careful about your social distancing rules.

The last thing we want is large groups of motor bikers going out into the countryside, and charging about like mad things, creating a bad impression with the general public.

For the time being do try and keep it to yourself if possible, or in a very small group. As soon as we have confirmation from the IAM that it is safe for us to start riding, and to start observing again, then rest assured that we will let you know straight away.

Please keep an eye on the WHAM website where all the current available IAM and government information is posted.

Like I said, a little and often, do not do too much in one go, and go steady to start out with for the first few weeks.

I am sure that in no time at all it will feel like you never been off the bike.

Please take care and stay safe.

Alex Hoyle Chief Observer WHAM 3260



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## SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON

Hi there good people of WHAM.

One or two of you have shown interest in how matters have progressed since Derek and I came back from Poitiers on our 'Two Nutters on a Mission', the mission to find me a sidecar outfit. And you have kept in touch with matters at Slow Riding Days since then, which I appreciate and thank you. And so, for you kind souls and anyone else who may be interested, I am jotting down what has transpired from conception to pregnancy and somewhat painful birth of my outfit, also called a 'rig' – but never, ever, a 'combination', please!

It's been just a few months short of 3 years since I wrote Part 5 of 'Two Nutters' in Sept 2017 and almost 5 years since I penned Part 4 in October 2015!

I wrote at the end of Part 4...

*"...and if I have to wait a while to fulfil my desire, then that is probably 'a good thing' in this western society of instant gratification".*

Ha! Wait? Talk about wait! Would test even the patience of those WHAM Observers who had a (particular) Associate who has benefitted from multiple sessions with multiple Observers over multiple years and **still** hadn't taken his test when I spoke to his current Observer at Shobden some time ago.

To cut to the chase, here we are in lockdown at May 2020 and my 'Blade Sport' outfit is not quite on the road. BUT it exists and it goes really, really well. It would have been finished by now had it not been for Covid19. As I write the frame is due back from the powder coater's works; the second time it's been coated. More on that in a while. And the totally wonderful news is that I'm really enjoying the experience of working with the second and current builder – Paul Lumley of Lumley Engineering near Bridgwater – a total genius and builder of F2 racing sidecars and engines, racer himself and top bloke. Along with his son Ricky, also an F2 racer, they have a brilliant bespoke engineering business serving industry and sidecars are their passion. Again, more on Lumley in later scripts.

But it hasn't always been so enjoyable. Following my trip to Poitiers with Derek and being 'put on the spot' by him as in *"Perhaps you'd better get on with it!"*. Subtext *'if you're going to do this project before you're an old codger etc...'* I commissioned my son Pete Blades, now of Tesla Model 3 fame (proud Dad) to develop his early ideas to a more finished design. My brief was simple. Please design a sidecar that enables passenger participation, simple in concept, maybe something along the lines of an Atom sports car. I.e. a space frame, minimal bodywork and super sports i.e. no need to worry about weather protection, it's not a tourer.



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Just to refresh your memory, this was the first Blades design sketch, which I took and presented to Jean-Louis of DJ Sidecars at Annecy back in 2015.

First ideas:



By this time, after much deliberation, discussion with Derek and research, I decided on a K1200R BeeEmm as the rig's bike-to-be. This for reasons as follows: Lots and lots of power, nice long wheelbase, dry sump, shaft drive, exhaust on the far side of the chair, and oh yes!...very affordable. Bath Road Motorcycles had a 2006 model with only 11,250 miles and in immaculate condition at just over £4000 and this was 2017.

A road test supported the advertised condition along with my eager expectations of power and everything else was fine save for a weave that I experienced at slow speed. It felt like an over-tight steering damper or binding head bearings. Chris at the dealership investigated, blamed the tyres and fitted new tyres along with a full service and delivered the bike in early June 2017. Some may remember I joined a Sunday ride to Abergavenny that month on it with my riding checked courtesy of our Ed.

Even with the new tyres, the weave was still there, but a whisker less prominent. Forum research revealed it was a known issue on the 2004-8 models and resolved on the later K1300R, which had been out of my budget all along. Some K1200R owners simply removed the steering damper, which so say, fixed it. In my case I wasn't bothered as the bike's destiny was to conjoin the Blade Sport and a stiff damper is no bad thing. This became the bike that I asked Pete to marry to the sidecar design.



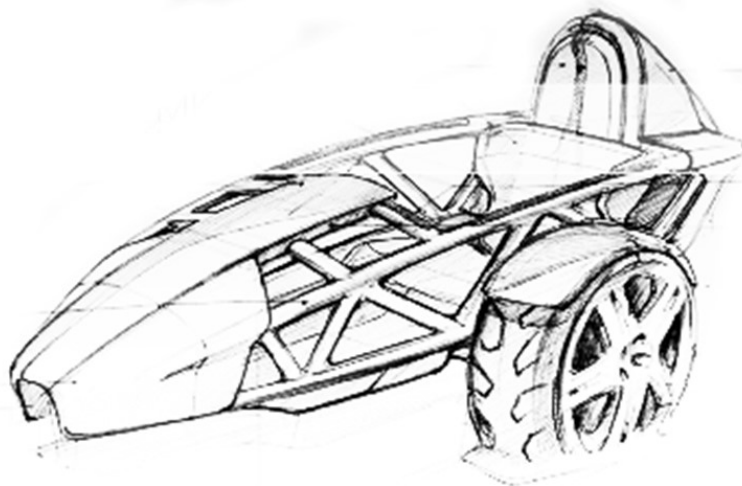
## SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON

I happened to be masterfully crafting some woodwork when the bike was delivered hence the desirably stylish apron! The phone call? Can't remember, so free sidecar experience for the best caption and I'm the judge!



Despite being hectically busy as Lead Designer on the interior of the Model 3 (so proud, so proud!) Pete found a weekend, or so he said, to work up a presentation folio of the 'Blade Sport' sidecar.

Initial sketch:



## SIDECAR OBSESSION—JOHN NIXON

Now, at the time you may recall my Moto Guzzi V11 Sport Ballabio being my steed of the moment, and for which I absolutely, unconditionally, forgive a certain 'Tony' for saying he thought he heard a narrow boat approaching McDonalds one Sunday morning. Well, while caressing this lovely, curvy, sexy, Italian beauty, I noticed a split in her nearside stainless exhaust pipe. My local blacksmith pointed me to an engineer local to Malvern. For £35 this chap did a brilliant weld job and I was delighted. Chatting with him I learned he used to be employed by a local Formula 1 racing team and before that a Rally Team. He had worked on fabrication and many other things.

*"Could you make me a sidecar?" says I.*

*"Like what?" says Engineer.*

*"Something like these super sport continental sidecars with hub centre steering". I led him to Jean-Louis' website: DJ sidecars. "Can you make something like that?"*

*"You've not shown me anything to frighten me", he replies.*

*"Heh! That's great. I'll bring the design folio and see what you think".*

Off I trotted, filled with excitement. In due course I showed him the folio and his considered response was that he couldn't make Pete's design for the budget I had in mind.

*"So what could you make within the budget?" I asked.*

*"Leave it with me and I'll think about it" says Engineer.*

Part 7 coming soon.





## Observer and Examiner - New Guidelines Important update

News for Group Chairs, Group Secretaries, Treasurers, Chief Observers,  
Group Committee Members, Examiners, National and Local Observers  
and all active Group Officials

## COVID-19 Restart Guidance - Motorcycle

IAM RoadSmart is pleased to announce that motorcycle **observed rides can resume from Monday 15 June, in England.**

This decision has been taken in line with the recent government announcement that non-essential shops can re-open from this date in England and our view that this opens the way for non-essential trips. Groups in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should continue to follow the rules as they apply in their nation.

Observed rides will be offered first to those associates who have already started their coaching or purchased a course and been allocated to a group.

IAM RoadSmart **group rides can also resume from Monday 1 June, in England** where six people will be allowed to meet outdoors, as long as social distancing is still observed.

Advanced Motorcycle **tests will resume from Monday 6 July, in England**

In support of this easing of the current restrictions on motorcycle observed rides and group rides, the **Area Service Delivery Managers (ASDMs) will be returning to work from Monday 8 June.**

## IAM C-19 PROCEDURES UPDATE—TONY DAVIS

In preparation for a return to observed rides, all group members, Observers and Examiners are requested to:

- Familiarise themselves with the COVID-19 Restart Observer Guidance - Motorcycle June 2020 and the COVID-19 Restart Examiner Guidance - Motorcycle June 2020, both published on the group dashboard in Running a group, Observer resources and Examiner resources in the forms and documents section.
- Take the opportunity, in line with current social distance advice to undertake one on one refresh rides and cross-checking of skills to ensure all observers are confident to resume observed rides from 15 June. Observers must continue to operate to IMI standards. The LOP and NOP forms on the group dashboard provide a helpful guide.
- Take the opportunity to review regular routes and ensure social distancing rules can be maintained at all times, in line with IAM RoadSmart's COVID-19 Restart guidelines.
- Take the opportunity to find out when and how your associates would like to return to their observed rides.

These arrangements are based on the latest government guidance for England. Some Observers, Examiners or associates will have their own personal reasons for remaining inactive at this time. If any party has concerns, an observed ride or test must not be carried out.

The new guidelines reflect feedback from the recent survey of groups about preparing to return to business. ASDMs will work with groups, Observers and Examiners from Monday 8 June to make sure we deliver coaching and tests safely.

## IAM C-19 PROCEDURES UPDATE—TONY DAVIS

**Observed drives** for associates working towards the advanced driving test are being kept under regular review but at this time, it is not possible to re-start this on-road activity and maintain compliance with the government's social distancing rules.

If you any questions on observed rides or drives please contact [amanda.smith@iam.org.uk](mailto:amanda.smith@iam.org.uk) or [richard.gladman@iam.org.uk](mailto:richard.gladman@iam.org.uk)

Richard Gladman said: "We are delighted to be able to start providing on-road coaching once more, but personal safety still has to be our number one priority. We are grateful to all our motorcycle groups, Observers and Examiners for their continued patience.

"As we start to resume on-road activity, I urge everyone to remember they are an ambassador for motorcycling, IAM RoadSmart and our commitment to improving road safety."