

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



JANUARY 2021



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Here we are with longer days at last, and the hint of a little warmth in the air making us eye up that summer riding kit with some anticipation, it can't be long now!

This month we have some great content for you, the chairman's foreword is next, and then we have the chief observer's contribution starting on page 2, - interesting observations on how it's relatively safe to ride motorcycles; it doesn't include a comparison with horse riding, where it seems you are 17 times more likely to get injured on a horse - which doesn't deter most parents from condoning this risky pastime while banning their daughters from bikes!

On page 4 you'll find a detailed and epic biking history from WHAM member Paul Jury, many thanks to Paul for that, it's a great read!

Finally this month (P9), we have a tale of woe from observer Rob Edwards (great man who made my preparation for test last year so enjoyable) regarding his experience with the apparent fragility of new BMW adventure bikes.. Shock Horror!

We all need more tales of member's experiences/wisdom/misfortune.. so, if you'd like to put something back into this excellent club please give me a shout at whamnewsletter@gmail.com

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD April 2021

We are nearly back out on Group rides! And I am still frustrated!

I have often said WHAM is a motorcycle club containing some very odd people. No, no, I have often thought that privately, and have now said it, damn...

Try again; I have often thought WHAM is a motorcycle club containing people of independent mind. People who will forgo a belly full of beer on a Saturday night in order to get up early on Sunday morning, whatever the weather, and go out and ride with their pals to somewhere nice for a belly full of breakfast (Alex).



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WHAM members possess great team spirit and see Sunday mornings as an opportunity for some adventure to be injected into the humdrum of work and running a home.

And that is why I think I, we, are still frustrated. The powers that be, the fun sponges, have decreed that we cannot go out in an orderly fashion and ride into Wales. And heaven forbid we may need the services of the NHS after a tumble; you will be about as welcome as a fart in a space suit if you end up in A&E after a motorcycle accident during C-19. But do not worry, just as soon as C-19 is under control (isn't it?) if you ever find your way to A&E you will be able to yet again jostle with the usual collection of drunks, Friday night fighters, and that chap that thought it appropriate to climb onto his roof in the pitch black to adjust his TV aerial (before falling and breaking his arm).

I do not want to be that man that ends up in A&E whilst a pandemic is in full swing; but neither do I think motorcycles are inherently dangerous. If you subscribe to that train of thought you would be selling your bike and leathers.

This is reading like a rant, isn't it? Well yes! And the purpose?

We should be out riding, it's perfectly safe, but 'The Man' says no; and so, as Chair, I'm having to fall in with 'dem rules.

I have had messages, whispered conversations, from members who have found a way to get out on rides. Some, with other members. And good on 'em I say. You carry on. We just cannot get routes and rides up on the Club website just yet. All being well the relaxing of restrictions on May 17th will allow us to recommence our activities. It will be very nice indeed to see you all in person once again.

The CX is mended. Messrs Barnes and Reusser bought it back to life and it is now having a suspension and exhaust system upgrade ready to hit the road. I have even ordered a satnav for it. So, if you see someone that looks like me, trying to coax an old blue CX around a corner without ending up in the bushes, it is me.

We are back Observing now. We have been allowed to do that and so anyone waiting to have their training re-started should hear from their Observer soon. If you are in a holding pattern waiting for an Observer to be allocated to you, please bear with us; Alex is doing his level best to get people into training just as quickly as he can.

Be safe out there, and (start) to enjoy yourselves again. There is more to making it through a pandemic than having to hole up in your house for a year.

Yours in sport.

Richard Hewitt

WHAM Chairman

Motorcycles, safer than almost everything

Well, I have always been told that riding a motorcycle is inherently dangerous, but perhaps I've been misled.

This article is courtesy of [Steve Rose](#) from Bennet's Insurance, so it must be true.

Fact. You are twice as likely to die having sex as riding a motorcycle. More than twice as many people in the UK are killed by sexually transmitted diseases each year as they are falling off motorbikes. And yet, the media and advertising industry continue to bombard us with messages that getting grindy is the single most important thing in life. It's disgraceful. Even worse, twice as many of us die after falling down stairs than riding a bike and yet the Government still encourages house builders to include at least one set of these killer wooden deathtraps in the very homes where your children will sleep. Given the hysteria surrounding something as relatively safe, in comparison, as motorcycling, this is tantamount to infant genocide.

Now, you might argue that a lot more people have sex and climb stairs than ride motorbikes so the numbers are bound to be higher, but maybe these people would think twice about such dangerous activities if they'd been exposed to the kind of continual, negative publicity that surrounds motorcycling.

A story on the news last night explained how commuting drivers spend between 24 and 74 hours a year sitting in traffic jams. It was clearly not researched by anyone who actually drives to work because that works out at between four and nine minutes a day. My recent experience (I did a month commuting by car just before Christmas) would suggest that, even in rural areas it is ten times that. So why aren't more haggard commuters staggering into their nearest bike dealer?

Talk to any non-motorcyclist about life on two wheels and the first thing you get is some kind of horror story about someone they know whose son-in-law's head came off while he was looking at a photo of a FireBlade... or summat.

I've spent a lot of time in meetings with the bike industry and after the question 'How do we get more people into biking?' comes 'How do we dispel the fears?'

Well, for starters, here's a list of everyday things that are far more dangerous than riding a motorcycle in the UK.

Smoking (300 times more annual deaths),

Alcohol (100 times more deaths)



Passive smoking (30 times more)

Falling over (ten times more)

Catching flu (ten times more)

Medical errors in hospitals (20 times more)

Obesity (three times more)

Violent assault (equally likely)

The industry bodies representing those other things on the list must look at motorcycling with envy at its superb safety record.

I'm not a fan of negative advertising, but maybe what the bike industry needs is a campaign where a concerned parent sits their teenager down and begs them not to climb any more stairs to have sex with an overweight smoker after going to the pub, but to go for a nice healthy ride on their motorbike instead.

As someone who's enjoyed thirty-five years on a bike, climbed many stairs, drunk a few pints, smoked for a while, eaten many pies and enjoyed the odd snuggle, that just leaves flu, assault, or a medical error to finish me off. I've never tried falling down stairs, but I can't see the appeal from up here.

So, motorcycling is not only relatively safe, but practical, economical, and inspirational as well. Can you imagine the impact if the bike trade had the same money to promote the brilliance of what we do as the drinking, smoking, sexing, and eating industries do on their irresponsible and dangerous killer products? My suggestion to the bike trade would be to blow the whole budget on one crazy, spectacular advert showing biking as it really is, thrilling, smart, life-changing, and actually not that dangerous. No other product in the world, no matter how big the ad budget could even come close to that.

Count me in... As soon as I get down these stairs.

Alex Hoyle

WHAM 3260 Chief Observer

READER'S LIVES - PAUL JURY

From 1994 to My V4

I was speaking with a friend and fellow member of WHAM recently regarding giving something back to the club in appreciation for the input and time that had been given to me. Time has been at a premium these last few years, so I suppose this article and with it some motorcycle self-indulgence, is intended to be my small contribution to the cause but also a reintroduction of myself to fellow club members. I passed my advanced test three and a half years ago after my love for riding and confidence was shaken after the birth of my daughter.



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Its 1994. The Oasis Definitely Maybe album had been released and with it the brit pop revolution had begun. My uncle owned a 1990 Honda Blackbird and a friend's dad was smashing around on a Honda NC30. All these references are relevant because I'm a big Oasis fan, and these two bikes are my earliest memories of motorcycles. As a teenager I had the typical pin up posters of the time taking pride of place on the bedroom wall displaying the ZX10's of the mid 90's and GSXR's with photographed rider striking a stereotypical arse up, knee down race-track pose whilst bending gravity to negotiate right hand apex. We've all seen them at some point, probably some typical MCN centre page pull-out. Once I hit 16 years a of age, the CBT came soon afterwards and then followed the mighty Honda City express.



Now obviously this isn't quite the GIXXER of my dreams. It didn't exactly win cool points up against friends riding their MT50's and Suzuki TS's but it was my key to freedom, nonetheless. Rain, sun, winter, summer, it did not matter. I was off! Occasionally in the literal sense of the word until my understanding of physics caught up with the realisation that the city express and its cross-ply tyres did not have the superbike corning potential that was in my mind. I did own a car once I passed my driving test but 18 months later I did revert back to the bikes for a short period after I purchased a beauty of a 2-stroke Kawasaki AE80. A 1987 model with a 6-speed gear box which I came to learn was very rare, it was capable of a semi comfortable 55mph on the flat. This was only achievable though through regularly decoking the exhaust once a month by removal of the exhaust, filling it and leaving

to stand filled with Gunk degreasing fluid before flushing out the jet black 2-stroke resonance. Quite the effort but worth it for the extra few mph.



My mates had stopped riding their mopeds by 2001 and with the introduction of girls, booze, mortgages, and various situations that followed, there was a full 12-year gap before I got back to riding. I credit this next chapter to my now wife Claire whose attitude to most things is if you want to do something, stop wishing and wingeing and just do it.

How many of us take for granted that biking can be a selfish hobby and an expensive one at that? It didn't take long after this agreement (in principle) that I dived onto

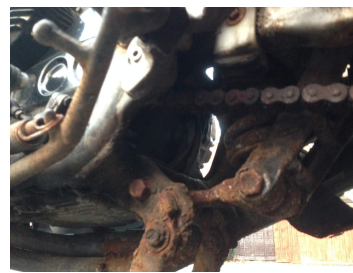
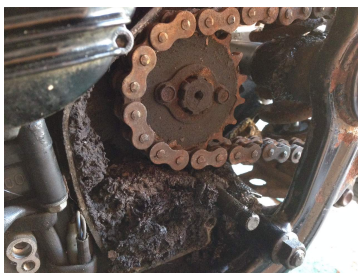
Ebay. It took all of 36hrs before I brought my first "big" bike. I introduce the 1994 Kawasaki GPZ500S.

The Kawasaki GPZ 500S is in my opinion a highly underrated motorcycle. The 50bhp twin cylinder motor is forgiving, the bike is light and agile enough to breed confidence and has an engine tone over 7000 revs often described as sounding like a screaming banshee. I'm 6' foot tall so arguably long rides were slightly uncomfortable and overtakes required a little more foresight and preparation with most maneuvers requiring a double drop in the gearbox to find the sweet spot in the revs. Everyone has a favourite motorcycle they have owned, and this machine would be my choice. What an absolute belter! Was difficult to part with it when the time came to move on to other things and several opportunities have presented themselves to buy her back which I have resisted, just about.



Alongside owning the GPZ I was very kindly given a 1991 Yamaha PRE-Diversion 600 by a colleague at the time. It was the previous owners everyday commute machine and as such had many years of weathering. I am a toolmaker/machinist by trade so always considered myself half handy with the tools but there's always room for further education so over a period of months, I ended up using the bike as an education for myself in how to look after these machines. The results and hard work were well worth the effort. Forgive the

barrage of photos that follow below as I take a moment so show off the results, but I feel these are the only way of putting across how far this bike came in what was only a few short months over a winter.



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Majority of the rear end was completely stripped back, shot blasted and repainted. All the serviceable parts were replaced or serviced including plugs, air filters, oil, clutch, brake callipers stripped and rebuilt. It was as full a self-taught rebuild experience that I could have hoped for. It was an invaluable project and I thoroughly enjoyed it and got much satisfaction for getting it road worthy again.



I didn't ride the bike all that much after the work was completed so there isn't a huge amount of riding experience to comment on apart from to say it was my first time riding an inline 4-cylinder machine and couldn't believe how smooth the power delivery was, coming from the twin cylinder GPZ. The additional weight and general handling were also a significant leap forward which I wasn't expecting. I dare say if I had kept it I would've had some happy miles on it but I had other ideas.

Now, although my wife's view on bikes is pretty lenient in that she gets why I enjoy it. I have never chosen to test this to the extreme with the money and therefore I recognise that financing this hobby whilst trying to renovate houses isn't always an ideal mix, so steps forward in my motorcycle journey have been measured carefully to maintain the balance of life. Sunday afternoon in the summer of 2014, Facebook marketplace presented an opportunity for me that I could not walk away from and was the chance to own the bedroom pin up from youth.



The 1998 Suzuki GSXR 600 SRAD. This was the game changer that shaped everything to come. Including my move into the world of WHAM. What a machine....

100bhp and weighing 170kg it was sensational compared to what I had experienced before. Even though others around me were riding fuel injected ninja's and yam's it didn't matter to me. This is still the best-looking bike I've owned. Not because it was particularly pretty compared to modern takes on the 600 super-sport range. The tail-end is still quite controversial and when you dropped the boot it got a bit twitchy in the higher rev's as you passed through the second kick of power above 10,000 rev's but it was the pin up MCN centre fold that shaped my desire to ride and it now lived in my garage.

I don't consider myself to be a fast rider. I very much respect and recognise that I don't have a huge amount of natural riding ability and approach riding with caution. I will admit that this machine scared me on several occasions and was a constant reminder of the what ifs.... I remember riding it a couple of weeks after the birth of my daughter and it just didn't feel right. Everything about the speed and the vulnerability of motorcycling was clouding my judgement and taking my focus off the road and I turned back around after 20 miles and returned home, parked it up and did not ride it again for nearly 6 months. It was late that summer that Duane Sanger started promoting the idea of WHAM and not for the first time. We had had several conversations about the group over a couple of years but this time I was listening intently to his praise of the

group, common mindset for the love for bikes, and the quality of teaching.

So on a wet and greasy Wednesday evening in August I pulled up at McDonalds on my GIXXER in full 2-piece leathers & track boots to be met with an impressive array of BMW GS's and textiles! Yes I stood out quite a bit from the crowd but met with Alex Hoyle and began my nervous, wet and rather slick first observed taster ride out to Bromyard. I couldn't had picked a worst night to get back on the bike. The rain gave way after 15 minutes only to be replaced with brilliant eye watering sunshine whilst we headed west out towards Norton canon and I remember being in a position where I couldn't see up the road more than 50yards, the road just reflected back at me, but I made it in one piece to The falcon. We all know and respect Alex's riding ability and teaching methods, so I am not going to say much more on this other than a massive thank you to you Mr Alex Hoyle. You were an instrumental part of helping me to get back my riding enjoyment.

Whilst in the process of completing the advanced lessons I changed my bike again and moved away from the super-sport and onto the sports touring league and purchased my current motorcycle.



A 2008 Honda VFR 800 VTEC. Those who know just know and appreciate the V4 heritage behind these machines is legendary. The 6th Gen incarnation I own is a great motorcycle and gives me all I need. Refined and cruise-able but with very usable power when you ask for it. All the 800 VTEC's from 2006 onwards were remapped to eliminate the frowned upon jerkiness as the VTEC opened so this isn't an issue on my model. Just smooth and progressive V4 loveliness. I think one day the adventure style motorcycle will come my way as a natural progression but for now this is my ride. With a bit more time on my side hopefully for this coming year, I look forward to getting some decent use out of it.

If I've managed to keep your interest to the end and you're still reading I thank you. I am a quiet character so if you see me on a Sunday morning, please say hello, and I hopefully look forward to

getting to know the club a little better and enjoying a few miles this coming summer.

All the best and keep safe everyone.

Paul Jury

WHEELIE NOT GOOD. WHEELIE WHEELIE NOT GOOD – Rob Edwards



After becoming the proud owner (well owner at least) of a 2021 BMW 1250GS tractor (I've heard they can plough and spread muck) I mean Rallye, all was going well and I was enjoying it. I managed to get to almost 600 miles within 5 weeks after putting it on the road. It had sat in the garage for quite a while with lockdown stopping us getting out. I took it to North Oxford BMW for its running in service as that's where the bike came from.

A day I was looking forward to, a day out with a couple of good mates, nice weather and a good ride there and back, the scenic route. Freedom at last.

All was going well until we stopped for fuel. I noticed the left fork seal was leaking. BMW = brings more woes! We get to the dealers, the bike is taken away by a mechanic (they call them technicians, the hourly rate for a tech is far far more than for a spanner monkey).

A fella comes out and says: "I'm very sorry, I've got some bad news for you." To my horror he informs me my front wheel is badly damaged and beyond repair. He claims I must have hit a bad pot hole in the road. It couldn't be replaced under warranty as it was damage not a faulty part etc.

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I can't remember hitting anything with enough force to bend the wheel! Ever so slightly annoyed to say the least. I said: "It's a GS, built for off road. Ewan and his famous mate (what's his name, sold more bloody books than Ladybird) got around the world on one and you're telling me the wheel is completely knackered from a pot hole in the road. That can't be right."

I asked to see it so he took me into the workshop where the mechanic (sorry £echnician) showed me my wheel. Sure enough the rim was bent and you could see fractures in it. I asked how he'd found it as it was quite small. I was surprised he noticed it. He told me he was checking the spokes, two were loose and one couldn't be tightened so on further investigation he found the bend and the fractures in the wheel.

They deemed it unsafe to be on the road, I deem it unsafe off the road!

With no other options left I had to take out a mortgage for a new wheel (BMW = batters my wallet). They got me the only gold wheel in the country (so they said, think the bugger must be 52 carat let alone 24). An eight hour wait and a hefty four figure bill later I was heading for home wondering are these things really built as good as they're made out to be? About half an hour and quarter of a tank later, in dynamic pro, the big stupid grin was back on my face.

It was either the new pro mode or my much lighter wallet that seemed to make the GS really shift on. After buying the wheel I can't afford to run the GS in dynamic, it consumes petrol at the same rate Alex does breakfasts! On the plus side it gave me the opportunity to try out the GS's fancy new headlight in the dark. Very impressive.

Check your spokes and wheels closely people because I had no idea of any issues at all. I even washed it the day before, spent what felt like hours trying to get the gold wheels clean.

Can just about see the two fractures in the photo from the outside of the wheel (tyre removed obviously) and there were two more on the inside that my camera couldn't pick up very well.

