

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



August 2021



EDITORIAL

Last month we had a famine of articles, and perhaps this had a positive effect in general, because this month we have gone directly to a glut! Well, not a glut exactly, but several lovely members have come up with some great content which I am sure you are going to enjoy.

There's a [scary moment](#) described by our Chief Observer, Alex Hoyle.

Have you ever thought about 'doing' the National Rally? Or maybe you don't know much about it at all? Either way, scroll down to [lan Fullwood's excellent account](#) of his ride this year.

If rallying isn't your bag, how about [Sidecar racing at Mallory Park](#)?

Our inimitable sidecar enthusiast and specialist, John Nixon, gives us the lowdown on a wet day's racing recently, with another instalment promised soon!

There's something wrong with the summer months this year for me. There is so much going on, and so many things that have to be done, that the best riding season of the year is passing me by! I haven't had a chance to get on one of the group rides for many weeks now, and I apologise for not turning up and taking the chance to meet more of you.. maybe the autumn will be good weather and some opportunities to get out will appear.

Remember that the group rides and meetings are not necessarily to be seen on the Facebook page any more, so do go and check out the group's website page for the upcoming calendar:

<https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/events/>

Have a great month! And let me have your thoughts and articles for the newsletter, it would be nice to keep the fantastic content we have this month going.. it's up to YOU!

Email me with anything at all at whamnewsletter@gmail.com

Or of course you can ring me to discuss on 07792 303037. Or even collar me when I finally appear on group rides.. I'm the one on the old Hardly Ableson (see above)!

Jim Rolt

Editor



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I've ridden a decent number of miles over the past few weeks. Not quite so many as Mark Saxton, but a good number none the less. The WHAM Day ride out to North(ish) Wales was a great run out although I think the potential for rain and summer holidays did reduce numbers a little.

We've still no date for our off-road skills day yet we will be discussing this at committee this coming Tuesday and so if anyone can propose an alternate venue, paid or free, please do drop me, or any of the committee, a note and one of us will follow-up with you.



The September trip to Wales currently has a couple of spots left and so if you're free on the weekend of 25th September please do get in-touch with Duane and he'll sort you out.

My riding time, particularly the more laid-back times, gives me some valuable time to mull over the 'stuff' in my life. During the Welsh day ride a combination of a steady pace, an array of different bikes on the ride, and a whole day to relax and decompress got me to thinking how lucky we all are to have found motorcycling as a hobby.

The simple pleasure of being able to throw your leg over a bike and disappear into the lovely countryside that surrounds us really takes some beating. However, is there room for contemplating 'stuff' outside of 'that next bend', 'that next potential hazard', within a progressive advanced ride?

Well, I think there is room. If you are continually head down and 'on it' you're missing out. WHAM has had an on/off reputation for 'making progress, must make progress', but lately as new members have come into the fold, not riding the same old Bavarian special, the variety of paces and bikes has introduced a welcome change from the usual.

I mentioned Mark Saxton earlier; Mark did the Wales ride in my company on a not-run-in Indian naked flat tracker. And he had a fine old time. A couple of weeks earlier I saw Messrs Reusser and Wheeler on a Virago and an '80's XT500. And me, well my most enjoyable rides this year have been riding out with my twenty-something Daughter; her on her gleaming new CB500F and me on my '85 CX500. It just goes to show old metal does mix with new metal, and old brakes and not-so-fast acceleration can mix it with the best electronically controlled hardware available in the dealers right now.

If you've an oldy but goody bike in your shed; why not roll it out on a WHAM ride sometime soon?

Yours in sport.

Richard Hewitt

WHAM Chairman



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Never Assume Anything

I had intended to write a completely different article from my last one about overtaking, however circumstances conspired to make me think again.

Joy and I were going over to see some friends who live at Hundred House on the back road to Builth Wells. We had turned off on the road to Pembridge and had just gone past the right hand turning to Eardisland, when we are suddenly faced with a motorbike leant over at speed heading straight for us, Joy's quick reactions were to heave the Freelander in to the hedge, and he just misses us.

For all concerned it was a pretty scary moment, but for the motor biker I am sure he will need a change of underpants when he gets back home.

So, what caused this to happen?

Well, I have taken some screen shots off of Google Maps, so you can start to get an idea of the road layout. Now if you take a look at the first picture you will see that although the road markings permit an overtake, if you look way in the distance where we were coming from, you do not have a complete view around the right-hand bend in the distance, this is about where we were when he went for his overtake.

Also, if you look at the second picture you will see from our direction of travel the road goes around the bend to the left, so we could not at this point see him.

Remember also that we are doing around 55-60 mph and so is he, so the closing speed is approaching around 120 mph.

The bike has just overtaken a line of cars and in doing so is now even further over on to the right-hand side of the road, limiting his view and making the bike much harder to see from our point of view. When we do see him, and he sees us, all hell breaks loose, he is now having to try to stand the bike up, and to accelerate in order to get back in, and Joy is diving in the hedge to avoid him, he just makes it. Personally, I would not overtake at speed when coming up to a major road junction.

I also think the road markings do not help, coming in the bike's direction of travel the road has been double white lined for quite a long while, suddenly just before a junction they change to allow a possible overtake from his direction. This to me seems slightly bonkers, and definitely does not help. And it's not even as if the road is straight, it bends.

So where is all this going, well it all comes back to the fact that you cannot and must not overtake



on the assumption that the road ahead, that you cannot completely see, is clear.

I always remember Derek saying to me, just think of meeting you coming the other way at full tilt, would you be able to react in time, and stop on your side of the road.

For me this is sometimes worse on right handers, as the road can dip inwards, and what may look a straight road is not, there can be a sort of hollow, where a bike or a small car might be hiding.

We always say if in doubt then leave it out. So never ever overtake unless you have a totally clear and unobstructed view of the road ahead.

Alex Hoyle

WHAM Chief Observer



The blue arrow shows the position of the bike after his overtake, at this point we cannot see him, and he cannot see us.



The road ahead goes to the left, you do not have a clear an uninterrupted view.

A Grand Day Out - Ian Fullwood

National Road Rally - 3rd & 4th July, 2021

I had never heard of the National Road Rally before this year, never even thought whatever it was applied to motor-bikers, to be honest I do not know how I heard about it!

The event is not a race and each rider follows their own route, visiting different controls around the country, the only time stipulation is that riders complete their route in the allotted time. The organisers are the BMF (British Motorcycle Federation) and the ACU (Auto Cycle Union) call it a navigational scatter rally which sums it up pretty precisely.

Looking at the website I was intrigued by the thought that you could plan a days ride around what they call the 'Matrix' (although I couldn't see any reference to Keanu Reeves or any other cyberpunk dystopian future - let's stick to Wallace and Gromit then).



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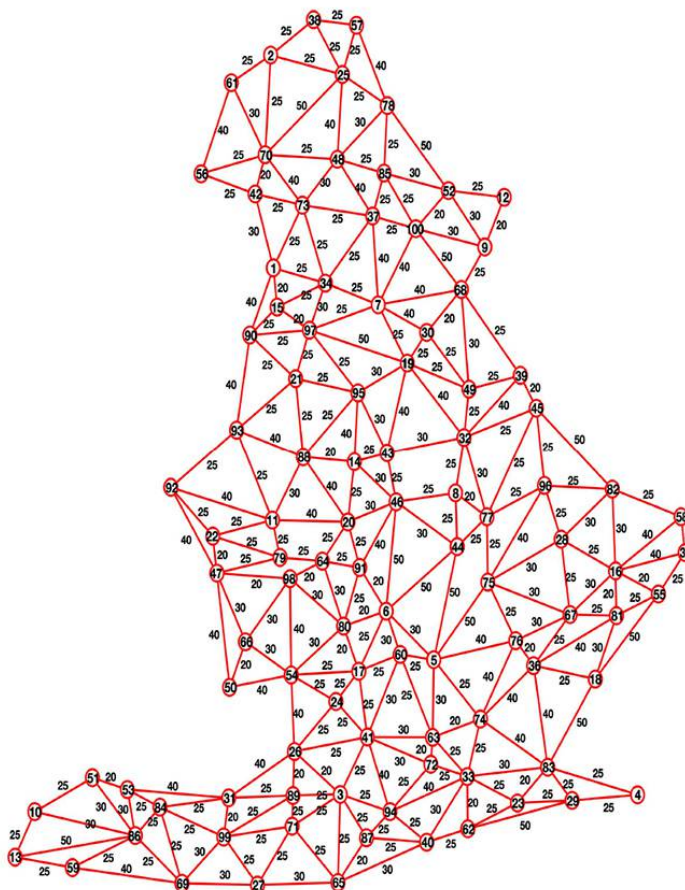


The Wallace and Grommit 'Matrix' comes as part of the instructions from which you plan your route. All of your planned route must connect to the control points shown and there are rules to follow and awards to aim for, the awards are determined by how many control points you choose to visit over a single day or the whole weekend.



THE MATRIX National Road Rally 2021

Rider No:
208



Record your route at www.nationalroadrally.co.uk/nrr/recordroute.php

The awards are:

Chrome (visit minimum 5 controls and gather 120-175 points)

Bronze (visit minimum 8 controls and gather 180 -215 points)

Silver (visit minimum 11 controls and gather 120-175 points)

Gold (visit minimum 13 controls and gather 120-175 points)

Special Gold: Day 1 - 290 to 320 points - minimum of 13 controls - Day 2 - 215 points

Platinum: Day 1 - 325 points - visit 13 controls - Day 2 - 215 points - visit 9 controls

The so called 'points' have the approximate total distances in miles between them but it really depends on which roads you take between them - and NOT getting lost (more of that later)!

Simple, me thinks, what could go wrong? Well, barring punctures and (god forbid accidents) I was pretty confident I could go for Bronze - why so few and wimp out I hear you cry? Well, me and t' missus have not been out for ages due to lockdown and we had arranged to visit some friends for a meal - had to be back for 6:00pm.

So a nice lie in - my first control point was only a mile down the road at Dom's cafe - plenty of time to get this going. Each control point has a unique number and normally you would be 'logged' in as you arrive but Covid restrictions meant you had to log the time and number yourself - best to take photos I thought as a back up in case I wrote it down wrong.



Doms cafe checkpoint - no.1 - apparently some guys from Worcester had already been there and had breakfast (brave chaps).

So my planned route was;

Dom's cafe

Ross-on-Wye - Bennets BP Garage

Nailsworth - The Weighbridge Inn

Cricklade - Town hall

Carterton - Leisure Centre

Banbury - Lay-by on A423

Stow on the Wold - Cotswold Food Store

Worcester - Motorcycle Club Tower Buildings (finish)



Nailsworth - met a guy on a Triumph who had lost his number plate!

All was well until I hit the Nailsworth to Cricklade leg. Through Tetbury - fine, but then I missed a turn, carried on and at some point realised the sat nav was not behaving. Now it would be easy to blame the sat nav but I can't - all the legs were programmed in (I got told off for using a sat nav - but more of that later) and I just missed the turn. So I tried retracing my steps and ended up down a very narrow road, grass in the middle which ended up on a dirt track (not good for an FZS Fazer 600!).

Eventually I ended up back in Tetbury again - not a good sign and added time to the day which I could ill afford. I did make it to Cricklade, met a scooter lad with a Rastafarian hairstyle and Mancunian accent - that's one thing about the rally - you get to meet and chat with a whole multitude of two wheel enthusiasts. I did notice a plethora of classic bikes but being behind on time now I did not have too much time to stand and chat - funnily enough, nor did they!

Cricklade was where I was frowned upon for using a sat nav - all well and good but if you are on your own and not in a group you have some kind of back up. Having said that I will take a map next

time (yes I'll be doing it again - determined NOT to get lost next time). Lunch at Cricklade was a quick sandwich.

Carterton was breeze to get too, the lay-by at Banbury was a sad place next to a bottle bank, not very inspiring, next stop the Cotswold Food Store. I'd like to say that was a breeze as well, but it wasn't, by this time I was getting a bit panicky wondering if I would finish but eventually found my way there - note to self - take a map next time!

The final leg to Worcester was great - down Fish Hill was beauty of a ride and then into Worcester to find the only checkpoint which was manned - The Worcester MC - Tower Buildings (an old RAF airfield building). A cup of tea and a rest was in order - I was knackered, more from the mental agility of finding my way when lost than anything else. made it home with 10mins to spare before the wife was going without me (needless to say we were late for our friends meal).



The final checkpoint - a most welcome sight! Oh - and there is the Rastafarian on his scooter again!

A DAY AT THE RACES – JOHN NIXON

Well three actually.

Venue: Mallory Park Circuit.

Event: East Midlands Racing Association Road Races for Solo Motorcycles and Sidecars.

Dates: 10,11,12 July 2021

Why was I there? Those WHAM stalwarts who have read my project build articles will know I'm a sidecar enthusiast (that's the polite word for it). And the second engineer involved with my outfit is one Paul Lumley of Lumley Engineering....



....and he races an F2 sidecar.



Paul's outfit with new paint!! Note gaffer tape over dzus fasteners – a prudent race requirement.

Paul was kind enough to award me a paddock pass which allowed me to camp in my van within the 'locked down' paddock area itself, where all the teams are to be found, of course. Locked down because of Covid, no surprise there! Normally, spectators can gain entry during race days.

So, come the Friday I was due at the paddock to rendezvous with Paul at around 4pm. I set off from Malvern in my T6 VW van with food and toolbox aboard.



My DW van undergoing build mid 2018

I love my van, a 'Dirty Weekender Adventure' van converted by one Johnny Luebke, himself an ex-sidecar racer. He has an excellent business, right here in Worcester, converting mainly VW vans to a fabulously high standard. What he and his partner Katie don't know about campervans and using them isn't worth knowing. More about Johnny later.



Just arrived at Mallory. Paddock filled up later to very full!

Come about 4.30pm we met up at the circuit and set up camp. A not entirely straightforward process!. Most teams have some kind of pretty substantial awning, which are really mini marquees. Our set up was no different. Really substantial aluminium box section 'poles', which support vast swathes of heavy duty fabric, a sort of plasticised canvas and which make, when fully erected, very roomy accommodation. It has to be, in order to accommodate the racer and toolboxes, along with a welder and tables and tyres and so on, and still allow space to work on the machine.

We just got the awning roof attached to the van when the clouds that had been circling us like a hungry wolf pack decided we'd been getting away with it for too long.



Yup! Pouring down. On left is Andy, sidecar racer mate of Paul's, Paul (centre), and the ear on the right is attached to Lewis, Paul's passenger – race status: novice.

No worries, in time the pack moved on and, somewhat damp, we finished set up.



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A soggy Paul (he never moans – about anything!), passenger Lewis and Lumley Kawasaki 600 outfit. Lumley built sidecar with Kawasaki 600cc engine, modified to dry sump, again by Lumley Engineering. Dry sump necessary due to 'g' forces and risk of oil starvation. And just so's you know, my K1200R BladeSport outfit is dry sump too. Convenient!

Then we walked the 'Motorcycle Short Circuit' which is 1.390 miles or 2.237 kilometers.



<https://www.racingcircuits.info/europe/united-kingdom/mallory-park.html>

Paul and Lewis were busy sorting out the 'workshop' in the awning so I retired to my van, poured a mean looking G&T, and got stuck into preparing my three course supper of avocado, chicken Thai



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with salad on the side, fruit and yoghurt to follow, all washed down with a pleasant Californian red. Roughing it, eh!

You'll begin to gather, it's all about good food (absorbed frequently) for moi.

Paul joined me later for a beer. In between Paul breaking off to chat with numerous passer-by competitors through the van's open side door, we talked sidecars. I have to say it was enlightening to see how many racers, all sidecar men and women, were delighted to see Paul and their respect for him was obvious.

I asked Paul: "Why do people race sidecars? It's such an odd thing to do unlike solos, which are so much more popular".

Paul thought for a moment, scratched his beard and said: " Oh, I don't know. Many race because their father, uncle, brother did. It seems to run in the family".

"Do you think they tend to be oddballs, if you get my drift Paul?" says I.

"Yeah, they can be a bit, how shall I put it... different" he replies.



White Outfit: Driver Wayne Lockey aka 'Bob the Builder', passenger Mark Sayers (Supported by Dirty Weekender Adventure Vans – Johnny Luebke)
 Blue Outfit: Driver Paul Kirby. Passenger: Tom Kirby (not related)

The above are two of the top National racers and if you dear Reader don't think these sidecar rigs look cool and exciting, then I give up on you!

It was getting late so we all retired to our individual accommodation, some more salubrious than others. Take Paul's Mancunian racing passenger Lewis for instance. I casually enquired where he and his girlfriend Steph were kipping, to be told "In the trailer". This meant the box trailer housing Paul's outfit, towed behind his trusty van. Yup! No windows, no bed, no creature comforts at all.

My "Holy Crap!" gets, "Its dry, what more do you want?" from Paul.

I did the customary personal ablutions, retired and snuggled down in my Duvalay (very comfortable) and wondered if I'd ever get to sleep with the near deafening racket from multiple generators which seemed to be not only circling my van like Apache Indians, but getting closer, minute by minute.....

Day Two next time – practice then racing (and food, naturally).