

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



JULY 2021



INTRODUCTION

I know, the newsletter is late... I'm afraid it seems to be an effect of the time of year, there's so much to do, and so much heat (not for long!), and, well, it's summer and nobody wants to sit sweating over their computer for too long. I'm hoping too, that you will want to get outside and enjoy the dry roads, and won't want to sit reading your WHAM newsletter for hours either, because there isn't very much of it this month! We do have the usual and unmissable pieces from our lovely Chairman and Chief Observer, but that's about it apart from the odd ramblings of yours truly. It's true, the season has also got to our contributors and all my requests and pleas for content have produced no exciting tomes for you to enjoy.

So, please, I appeal for content from you all; without it there isn't going to be too much here.. often people say to me "Oh I don't think anyone wants to hear from me" or "I haven't got anything to write about".. well, this isn't true! We'd all love to hear about your new bike. Or your old bike if you don't have a new one. Or why you don't want a new one.. Or how you fell into motorcycling in the first place... you get what I mean, when you start thinking about it, the wheel begins to turn and in no time you have something that will interest and amuse the reader. Do get in touch with me , either by email at whamnewsletter@gmail.com or ring me on 07792 303037.

In the meantime you'll just have to put up with some more pictures of my ancient motorcycle restoration project.. it could be worse, I might start talking about boats!



CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD July 2021

Well, the Sun has not exactly come bounding out this year, yet I am pleased to report Sunday rides are now back under way, thank you Tony D; we've the Snowdonia trip fully subscribed for August, thank you Duane; and the go-karting event on Saturday 21st August, thank you again Duane, received good interest amongst members with only a couple of spaces remaining. Summer Wednesday evening rides are soon to start, and we are just awaiting a date for the annual Throckmorton off-road skills day.



On the flipside, weekly Sunday member numbers turning out for the Sunday ride have been down and we are not quite sure why? If you would like to come out yet have not as you are concerned about how to join, etc., you will find within the following pages full instructions of how to. If anyone has any concerns I am always here to ask and so, please do drop me an email and I will call you (r70gbo@gmail.com).

And finally, we have had the first two tests this month with both passing!

I have had some lovely emails, conversations, and Facebook messages from members who have enjoyed previous newsletters and so on behalf of Jim and all the contributors thank you for reaching out and expressing interest and enjoyment.

Two recently 'test passed' members have taken the time to speak with me about the First qualification. One member came from the angle that they had not quite achieved a First; and the other having achieved a First but not knowing why...

This got me to thinking that maybe there was some light to shine on this topic in my monthly column.

Firstly, a standard test pass is a superb achievement. Do not just take my word for it, I was speaking with Marcus one of our examiners and he holds the same opinion. He does not give out standard passes unless you are 'right on the money' and so what do you need to do to get a First?

Before I try and answer that question there are three real-world caveats that I would like to offer and for you as reader to consider:

1. Not everyone can or will ever get a First – on the face of it a negative thing to say yet true. In the same way as I cannot ride a motorcycle on a track as Marc Marquez can, we cannot all be top dog on the road and frankly we just need to accept that so long as we have put the effort in, the results will be what they will be. Mental Stamina plays a large part in your First pass potential. Age does not. Your Observer can tell how long you can hold attention for. Your Examiner can too. If your mind wanders off either tired or thinking about more mundane topics your riding will translate into below First standards. You can hone this element of your approach and I find when I am tired making a verbal commentary of what I am doing, and why, can get me back in the game, as it were

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2. 'Type' of machine – I will be careful here and not say a Sports bike is not as good as and equivalent cc of Adventure Bike. However, if you feel uncomfortable on a machine and cannot make comfortable observations without performing some sort of on-bike gymnastics, for example to turn your head around, you will be at a disadvantage to start with. Only a small point this and certainly not to prompt you all to go out and buy a GS (heaven forbid). We've three quick members who have all moved from Sport-tourers to Adventure bikes in the last twelve months and they will all tell you they are faster, safer, and more comfortable cross-country than before
3. Lady luck – she must be on your side in terms of weather and traffic conditions. If it is precipitating down and its roadwork central your ability to shine will be depressed. Some might cry foul here, yet it is the same for the Police rider tests/adhoc assessments and so we must not bleat about things we cannot control. Remember, a standard pass is superb and see's you way more experienced the 99% of your motorcycling chums

The things you can control.

- Vehicle condition – do turn up with a pristine, clean, well-maintained bike. Examiners can cancel tests if an associates machine falls foul of the inspection your examiner will covertly give it. But if you want a First why turn up with tyres that have seen their best? Why turn up with an out-of-adjustment chain that is dry potentially prompting jerky progress? Anything mechanical that might affect either your ability to ride a smooth ride or lowers your confidence puts you at a disadvantage
- Human factors – get-good-sleep. In all seriousness I would suggest two-nights great sleep on the nights preceding the test are a must. You need to bring your A-game, with full concentration; and you will not have this if you are tired. Similarly, if you've a cold, are worried, hungry, thirsty, need a wee, this will all affect your performance, and they are all things you can control. Examiners usually go out of their way to calm your nerves; but how do you deal with nerves?
- Nerves – accept you will be nervous. It is natural; we were all bricking ourselves when we tested and those that are not, at least in my experience, fail!

But how do we lesson the effect of nervous tension? I have two further items to suggest:

The ride there – make it a long one. Take a mixed route to your test, do not just hurry there on the motorway/A-road. Practice with confidence the things you have assimilated in your WHAM mentoring and arrive with ten minutes to spare, already into your riding mindset and ready to navigate to the dastardly place the examiner will already be parked up in. Do not arrive before they do; they like to see you slow ride and park up safely and this is a 100% free-n-easy way to get them in a good position to consider you as test pass ready

It is not a race – you are not on a Police pursuit exam. For the standard test, the examiner is there to see you ride a smooth progressive ride up to the speed limit. They are there to enjoy seeing you make good timely observations and demonstrate an ability to form a riding plan. They are not there to see how well you can high-tail it from point A to B. Better to be smooth and safe than rough yet quick

Advanced riding is a process. Your training and test pass is just the start of a journey. Whether or not you want to become a WHAM Observer, or become a 'blood biker', your test is just the start. Every committee member and Observer at WHAM commits to a test of some sort at least once every two-years. So how do you move on in this process?

Sunday rides are the answer- during our last committee meeting we were ruminating remembering our individual first WHAM Sunday ride. Me personally, I was dry mouthed and for the best part of the ride wanted to be elsewhere. I was in a group of 'riding Gods' who were now seemingly my peers, yet it was obvious that where I thought I could see stuff and react to it, they were two or three seconds ahead of me in terms of observation skills and modifying riding plans. This is normal. If you feel like this on your introduction to the Group rides you are feeling just like everyone else before you. Keep at it. Seek feedback, ask to be put in a group with an Observer and if you ask them, they will give you little pointers that will get you very soon feeling comfortable and able to make progress.

My experience was that over the course of my first year attending Sunday rides my confidence built and after paying my £35 retest fee I easily got a First. After nearly thirty-five years of two-wheeled fun I am still learning stuff from WHAM that helps me improve. So, give yourself a break, be calm, be patient, and above all keep your mind open to feedback and asking questions.

Yours in sport.

Richard Hewitt

WHAM Chairman

CHIEF OBSERVER'S REPORT

My Mate Went, So I Thought It Was O.K.

We always say it, "Ride your own ride", but what exactly does this mean?

A recent Sunday ride was to the Old Mill café at Chipping Norton. I rode with four guys from Hereford; Mike Chandler, Martin McDowell who had only passed his test on Friday and this was his first group ride, Mick Thompson, and myself.

So, we are now at the café and Mike Chandler, who had been leading the group at that point, said to me "I didn't go for the overtake because I was conscious of the group behind me, and I didn't want to split the group up". It was then that I had to point out to him that you always ride your own ride. If you have the chance to go for an overtake and it's safe to do so, then you should go for it, it's up to those behind you to sort themselves out and be responsible for their own actions.



Now this doesn't sound very friendly or chummy, but it has to be this way if all of us are going to make progress. We always say at the start of a ride, you are deemed to be in control of your vehicle at all times, and you are entirely responsible for your own ride, so ride your own ride, and that's how it must be.

You see it all the time, the first guy goes for an overtake and his mate slavishly follows him, not thinking for himself, just assuming because his buddy's going to be OK, that he will be as well.

You should make your own decisions based on what you can see there and then and not just because your mate's gone for it. It may not be safe for you to go as well at the same time. If you think about it, if you had a serious accident, you couldn't really say to the police officer "ah, well, my mate went, so it must have been OK for me to go as well", he's just going to say "you are responsible for your own ride".

As CO, if I'm on a group ride, I always try and get everyone in the group to have a go at the front and take the lead. Now this is not an easy thing to do; you're responsible for the pace of the group, you're responsible for turning off and making sure that the person behind you is there, and of course this puts a little bit of pressure on you, and I appreciate that, but like all these things the more you do it the easier it gets.

I can remember when I was new to WHAM my observer was John Hodges, and once I had my test, I would go out on the group rides on a Sunday morning, knowing full well that he would make me lead at some point. Now this used to absolutely tie my stomach in knots, wondering if I was going to be able to lead the group if only for a short period, would I do all the right things, or would I get a chewing out from John once I got to the café.

I'm at the stage now after many years of doing it, that I will actually rather lead the group than be in the middle or at the back. If I'm at the front I can control the pace and I can do my own thing and not interfere with anybody else.

So please, if you're out on a group ride with WHAM, you must make your own decisions as they happen at the time. If everybody is entirely responsible for their own ride, then the system works. This, tied in with the group riding policy of waiting at major junctions for the person behind you to catch up, means we all get to the café together, and you won't have to do any crazy manoeuvres or overtakes to keep up.

So always "Ride your own ride". Your riding is entirely your responsibility, and I make no apologies, but that's how it has to be for everybody's safety.

Alex W Hoyle

WHAM CO



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THE PROJECT – Jim Rolt

I hadn't quite realised how much corrosion could seep into places that you'd hope it would never go.. the machine didn't look too bad superficially when I started. To be fair I did ride the thing without a lot of mercy some 30 years ago in all seasons, and yes, it was a bit of a workhorse and consequently got put away (in other words dumped in a corner) rather peremptorily, on returns to base, no pressure washers in those days – actually I don't have one even now – so I can see how its all got jammed up with salt. No fear, apply the heat!



So far that's mostly worked, and in several rather grimy stages the dismantling has continued.. Old Brit bikes used to be famous for being incontinent with their oil, usually liberally coating everything with that lubricant, including the rear tyre with sometimes exciting results. You may notice that this engine is so oil tight that it's rusty. I blame 2 things for this. Firstly my apprenticeship with Triumph/BSA, in which I spent some time at the service department at the Meriden Triumph works.

This was where the roughest Friday afternoon bikes were sent to once the dealer had thrown up the hands and given up on trying to fix them. Each of these awful specimens was assigned to one highly trained fitter to strip to the frame and rebuild. There was no time pressure, the only thing that was required was that the machine was never to be seen again. You can imagine this gave me some very good insights as to how to build a bike properly. The second reason they leaked so badly was, poor design/manufacture and NO SILICON! The latter has done more for engineering since its widespread adoption than almost anything else..

So where am I now with this illustrious project? Well, it's pretty much in pieces scattered around my workshop shed ready to be cleaned up and sorted into piles for powder coating, or other processes. I shall be sending the cylinder head away to have the exhaust valve seats 'done' so I can use unleaded fuel.

I'm also a bit stuck right now as I cannot remove the swing arm pivot despite using lots of heat and 4lb hammers. The wretched thing is really well frozen in and I haven't worked out how to free it yet.. the swing arm has rubber bushes so I may have to sacrifice those with a lot more heat. I expect I can get replacements!





Well, that's it for now Ladles and Jellyspoons, see you next month and for heaven's sake rescue your editor from the content drought!