

# WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



August 2022



## EDITORIAL

It's August already and I notice that the leaves are beginning to turn to their autumn colours... surely it can't be that time so soon? Well, perhaps the lack of rain has had an effect on the early show of colour that we are seeing, but I suspect the real thing is not far behind!

I hope you've managed to get a splendid season of riding in, it can be hard to fit all those summer activities into the time available; - I for one must apologise for not making it onto a Sunday run for ages... the diary is so full..

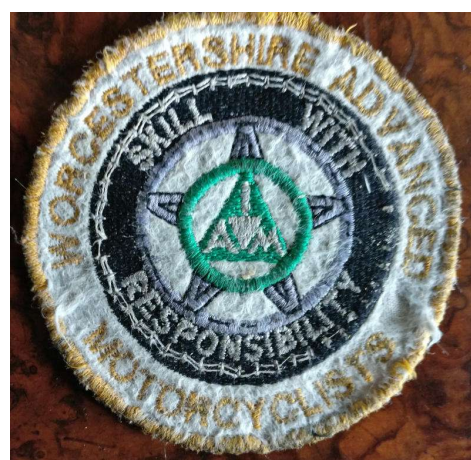
This month of course we have our usual features from stalwarts Chairman Richard and Chief Observer Alex.

Also very interestingly, recent Masters graduate Simon

Tibbetts has agreed to share his experiences of the masters process.. this seems to be swathed in mist and clouds and it's been difficult to get anyone to talk about the actual process of undertaking the Masters course, and what is expected of one. I have decided to take the course myself so over the next few issues I hope to be able to share with you some of my experiences as I go through the process!

Finally, long term God-on-a Bike Del Britten has been off at Thruxton instructing at the skills day there.. he strongly recommends that we all do this to further improve our confidence and skill level. Having ridden tracks a fair bit myself I can only fully endorse that sentiment, the better you know your limits the safer you are!

Check out this [video an IAM skills day](#) from the rider's point of view:



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He also contributes here his article about that tricky and often discussed subject – whether to show a brake light or not... quite a can of worms! I'd love to have your views on this too, please email any ideas to me, Jim Rolt at [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com)

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I do not know whether it is the heat, or the deadline Jim has just reminded me of, yet I am finding words hard to come by today. So here goes, if it's poor I apologise in advance.

Having managed to stay off the sauce for the last few Saturday nights I have enjoyed a few Sunday rides out with many of you. It was great to see and ride with Ken Anderson a week or so ago and I was reminded that smooth is the quickest, safest way, to make it from A to B. This particular Sunday it was wet, yet we still carved through the Herefordshire countryside at quite a lick. I say this as the next week I indulged in a little head down, ass up, (as it were) action and whilst satisfying in the short-term I do not think I was any quicker, and probably eating into safety margins and so as a reminder, follow Kens lead. Look up, look far, and if it is not smooth, it probably should be...

Whilst we are on the 'sayings,' one of Mark Saxton's has stuck in my head; "ride with light and shade". Now on first hearing that definitely falls into the erudite "need-to-unpack" category, but when unpacked, it is quite an elegant piece of advice. The light refers to that perfect traffic free long-distance-clear-view when the taps can come open and one feels like flashing along purposefully with precision and verve. The shade refers to the equally enjoyable action of riding along with one eye to the scenery, taking in some of the air, at a slower pace and with less progress being made.

We may mentor our associates in conducting the safest progressive ride they can but after the training, as in life really, the enjoyment is had at different paces at various times. On your club Sunday rides remember that. The member enjoying some shade needs some time and space to see you before you overtake enjoying your light. And the member enjoying their light, once seen as you serenely take in your shade, needs to be given obvious passage rites, so that the two goals can be achieved seamlessly.

Last weekend saw a number of our ex-Chairs, CO and Observers travel to New Radnor to escort Chris Brown (WHAM MWAM Observer) on his last journey to Hereford Crematorium. One of our ex-Chairs Brian Morgan took the time after the escort to kindly write to me as follows:



"Hi Richard.

Thought I'd send a little feedback on the ride.

From my position at the rear, I had a good overall view of the bikes and I have to say it was very pleasing to observe (with due regard for the circumstances).

In the main, I could clearly see two distinct lines of bikes (mainly staggered). There were two that were out of position on the open road and who therefore left a slightly longer gap but, considering the numbers involved, and the fact that many would either have not known who was alongside etc plus the fact that there were a couple who probably had no experience of that sort of riding, the overall display looked very professional.

I know that the WHAM riders have all had group riding input but it's quite possible that some of those present had not. Nevertheless, they all formed up in pairs as we slowed and it was very impressive to see how the whole convoy moved as one around obstructions, with no fuss and with excellent control.

What was obvious was that these people had been trained and, those that had not, picked it up quickly. What it demonstrated was the thinking riders' approach to riding, and to dealing with hazards.

They were all a credit to their groups.

See you soon.

B."

So, it seems when 23-bikes need to come together for a task like this, the training pays off.

Chris' family were extremely appreciative of us turning out and we all took pride in sending Chris off like this. He was a great bloke, reliable, with a near perfect associate test pass rate and always time for anyone he met. R.I.P. Chris

If this month's newsletter reaches you before the 20th of August do not forget we've our slow riding day on that day. If it reaches you after the 20th, thanks to everyone who made it possible, and I hope all attendees got much out of it.

And lastly, Duane has booked us in to the Glan Aber Hotel this coming 30th September for one last weekend away this year (well I guess it will be). The bunkhouse is booked just for us and so just as soon as Duane gets back from family leave that event will be on the website.

I hope to see you out on the road soon.

Yours in Sport

Richard H

WHAM Chair



## CHIEF OBSERVER'S REPORT – ALEX HOYLE

### Check it Out

(or, there's no such thing as a free lunch)

You very often hear the expression there's never a bus around when you want one, and then two or three all arrive at the same time .

One of the services we offer at WHAM is to carry out check rides, or assessment rides, call them whatever you want, for existing members. Now I haven't done one of these rides with a member for months and months, and then all of a sudden three different individuals within the group contact me about taking them out on a check ride; just to see how they are getting on.

Obviously, I'm not going to mention names here, but one was interested to see what I thought of his riding, another is possibly thinking about retaking his test with a view to try and get a First, and the other hasn't ridden for a little while and just wanted somebody to cast an eye over him to make sure that everything is still ok.



This then poses the question of what do you do, within an advanced Rider group like WHAM, once you have taken and passed your test. Now, I know some members in the group who haven't done any extra training at all, and perhaps they feel that they don't need to, or don't want to. While others, if they have taken their test and just missed out on a First, might want to consider riding for a little while and then think about retaking it.

If you've passed your test and got a First then the next progressive step is to possibly think about taking the Masters, but then, what do you do once you've taken your Masters and got it?

All of us over a period of time develop minor faults within our riding, that's just the way of the world, nobody is perfect, so it doesn't hurt to have somebody else take a look at your riding, just to give you some feedback and pointers, that's all it really is.

I'm going out with these members to cast an eye over them, and to generally make one or two minor comments about their riding, and ways they may be able to improve, or perfect things even more.

This service is entirely free to existing WHAM members, so if you feel you would like somebody to take a look at your riding and offer a few words of perhaps constructive criticism, then please feel free to contact me either by phone or email. As group CO that's what I am here for, and I would be only too happy to oblige.

The downside to this of course, from your point of view, is that I do not take any petrol money for providing these services. My fuel is food, so I will be expecting you to buy me a butty or a big breakfast when we get to the cafe. That's all I ask.

Alex Hoyle

Chief Observer WHAM 3260

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John Cross has recently located to WHAM from BAM, Bristol Advanced Motorcyclists. He is already a National Observer and has now joined our observer team.

Here I am presenting John with his WHAM Observer Portfolio. The second image is of John with his first WHAM associate Paul Johnston. I rode with both of them recently and am happy to report that both our latest NO and his associate are doing very well.



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## IAM ADVANCED TO MASTERS – SIMON TIBBETTS

I passed my motorbike test in 1997, rode until about 2006, always thinking of doing my Advanced but never actually doing it. I then had quite a long gap until changing jobs in April 2020 and needed to commute to Worcester from Hereford, I thought it was about time to get a motorbike again. I commuted through the Winter only missing days if there was chance of ice.

In April 2021 I met Will Morgan (who had just started his Master's course) and started my IAM Roadsmart education. My check ride with Ant was a complete disaster, I think nerves got the better of me, Ant pointed out areas that I knew I hadn't had a problem with on my Observed rides. The "nerves" will come up again!!

I passed my Advanced in August 2021.

I started going out on the club rides and soon realised there was still a lot to learn. However, it seemed that people in the club who had their Masters had left it quite a long time between the two levels.

I didn't want to do this and get into bad habits, so decided I would give it a go. I really didn't know whether I was a good enough rider to even start the process, but I knew I was hopefully going to be a better motorbike rider at the end of it, pass or fail.

There were two main reasons I wanted to do more training: -

1. Become a better motorbike rider
2. Become an Observer, I know you don't have to have a Masters to do this, but I thought it would give me more confidence to teach someone else if I had a higher level of training.

I paid my money, got assigned Del Britton as my mentor and the same day Del contacted me to organise our first meet at the end of March.

Del was going away for the month of May so wanted to get 3 rides in before he went, which we did. Derek McMullan had offered to Mentor me for a ride in May whilst Del was away. Derek had been my instructor at a skills day I was lucky enough to get on to at Thruxton in late April.

I was lucky enough again to get a place on another skills day at Croft, this included riding up with Del on the Wednesday, doing the skills day on the Thursday and riding with Del & Derek part way home on Friday, they were stopping up there. During the coffee stop, Del said I should put in for my test as there will probably be about a 3 month wait.

I put in for my test on the 4th July 2022, expecting another couple of months. However, Robbie Downing (the examiner) had a cancellation for the Monday the 18th, 10 days away!

I spoke with Del and he said I was ready, so I accepted the date.

Between my first ride and my test, Roadcraft & the Highway code became my bedtime reading. Anything on You Tube to do with Advanced riding, Police training and Bike Safe was watched. Anything I was told to improve on was worked on during my commute to and from work, with new roads being thrown in as much as possible as the test is completed on unfamiliar roads.

At the very beginning, Del said he would get me to above the level required so on the day with nerves I should be OK. This is exactly what happened, as you will see from my test report, my



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nerves again got the better of me, but I still passed.

As I have given you a brief timeline of the Masters course, I thought it would be good to show the ride & test reports. Hopefully you can see overtime the progress that was made and the sort of things the Masters level looks at.


### Run Sheet 1

Candidate name:	Simon Tibbetts	Group:	WHAM
Mentor name:	Del Britton	Date:	25/03/2022

Competency	Score	Comments
Safety	1	
System	2/3	IPSGA
Observation	2/3	
Anticipation	2/3	
Planning	3	
Positioning	2	Within the 30 MPH limits
Hazard Management	2	
ECO Driving/Riding	2	
Vehicle Sympathy	2	
Gear Changing	2	
Use of Gearbox	3	
Acceleration Sense	3	
Braking	2	
Steering	2	

Competency	Score	Comments
Mirrors / Rear Obs.	1	
Signals	2	
Cornering	3	Preparing early.
Overtaking	2	Planning.
Restraint	1	
Progress	2	
Smoothness	3	
Human Factors / Concentration	1	
Courtesy	1	
Legality	1	
Slow Manoeuvring	2	
Knowledge	2	
Spoken Thought (Car)		

1/2


**Mentor's Comments**

An overall safe ride in good conditions, dry roads with excellent visibility. Simon conducted three safe overtakes one, having to break the NSL to complete a second was completed just before a fifty mile an hour speed limit and having to slow down the HGV he overtook then caught up with him. Although both completed in relative safety the lack of planning and observation made both overtakes more difficult than they could have been.

General riding position was good, however leaning the opposite way to the bend made cornering harder than it needed to be, leaning in the direction of the bend being in a lower gear prior to approaching the bend and using a positive throttle will assist in smoother cornering, we discussed weight transfer through the bike to the front wheel.

Generally, a safe ride making reasonable progress through out. Thinking about feet positioning on the bike would assist Simon in making smoother gear and break inputs. There was at times the application of gears before breaks when requiring to slow, remember Gears to go and Breaks to slow (use of IPSGA, the system of motorbike control).

Position on the road within the 30 MPH limit, we discussed the pros and cons.

**Self Assessment**

Date	Driving / Riding Conditions
25/03/2022	Good

**Agreed Development Plan**

Read Motorcycle Roadcraft Chapter 2 and page 34 The system of motorcycle control.

Chapter 7 and page 140, Cornering, balance and avoiding skids.

Concentrate your practicing on body position through a bend, preparing early and using a positive throttle through the bend.

Mentor	Candidate
Del Britton	Simon Tibbetts



## Run Sheet 2

Candidate name:	Simon Tibbetts	Group:	WHAM
Mentor name:	Del Britton	Date:	08/04/2022

Competency	Score	Comments
Safety	2	
System	2/3	
Observation	2/3	
Anticipation	2/3	
Planning	3	
Positioning	2	
Hazard Management	2	
ECO Driving/Riding	2	
Vehicle Sympathy	2	
Gear Changing	2	
Use of Gearbox	2	
Acceleration Sense	2	
Braking	2	
Steering	2	

1/2



Competency	Score	Comments
Mirrors / Rear Obs.	1	
Signals	2	
Cornering	2	
Overtaking	2	Rushed, Observe - Anticipate - Plan - Decide - Act
Restraint	3	
Progress	2	
Smoothness	3	
Human Factors / Concentration	3	
Courtesy	3	
Legality	2/3	
Slow Manoeuvring	2	
Knowledge	2	
Spoken Thought (Car)		



### Mentor's Comments

A ride of two halves today.

The first half was rushed with little consideration to the system of motorbike control. Riding too close to vehicles in front and at times intimidating the driver to pull over, this was conducted at a time where no overtake could take place, so no progress was made. Consider the overtaking position further back and if any confirmation is required move to the offside to extend a view you already have. Speed limits were broken on several occasions due to you wanting to make progress and speeding up when approaching an NSL. Using the rear brake when slowing would also give more control at lower speeds and when coming to a stop. Plan to stop, look to go. More self-control and discipline was required during the first half of the riding session.

During the halfway stop we discussed the Human factors in riding and how this may help putting one in the correct frame of mind for a ride out. Its strongly recommended that you consider this before riding in the future and remember there is no rush to impress, using the system to make unobtrusive progress is the hall mark of an advanced (Master) rider. Much smoother on the return ride, good positioning and cornering, good body positioning on the bike a much less rushed ride. Two over taking opportunities was missed but I believe this was due to you readjusting your mind-set after the discussion at the halfway point.

### Self Assessment

A much improved second half ride with some good slow riding skills practiced at a car park. Please read through RC as recommended and practice with out being pressured to ride another person persons ride, ride your own ride

Date	Driving / Riding Conditions
08/04/2022	Good

### Agreed Development Plan

Read through RC page 17 Human factor  
Also Appendix 1 Are you fit to ride? page 280  
Slowing down/stopping page 118  
Chapter 10 Overtaking page 203  
Chapter 6 Slow riding page 129

As we discussed Simon, read through and practice when you can, if going on a group ride don't bow to peer pressure, practice what we are training for.

Mentor	Candidate
Del Britton	Simon Tibbetts

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## Run Sheet 3

Candidate name:	Simon Tibbetts	Group:	WHAM
Mentor name:	Del Britton	Date:	29/04/2022

Competency	Score	Comments
Safety	1	
System	1	Some good use of the system throughout the ride
Observation	1/2	Forward observation in urban environments
Anticipation	2	
Planning	2/3	Overtakes
Positioning	1	
Hazard Management	1/2	
ECO Driving/Riding	1/2	
Vehicle Sympathy	2	
Gear Changing	1	
Use of Gearbox	1	
Acceleration Sense	2	
Braking	1	
Steering	1	

1/2



Competency	Score	Comments
Mirrors / Rear Obs.	1	
Signals	1/2	Courtesy signal when appropriate
Cornering	1	
Overtaking	2/3	Planning - require more thought
Restraint	1/2	
Progress	1/2	
Smoothness	1/2	
Human Factors / Concentration	1/2	'The rider' - there is no rush. Restraint veris Progress
Courtesy	1/2	TUG - Giving a signal
Legality	1	
Slow Manoeuvring	1	
Knowledge	1	Excellent
Spoken Thought (Car)		



### Mentor's Comments

Some good learning points through out today's ride, the question of to filter or not is a judgment call. It all depends. Filtering is a controlled overtake and slow speed. You made a safety call today and decided not to never feel pressured to, Safety always comes first. Reading the road ahead by the use of forward observation enables you to smoothly progress in urban as well as rural riding, being able to anticipate the movement of traffic ahead by observing the traffic flow early allows for a smoother ride. Remember mechanical empathy, release the clutch when waiting in traffic this also enables you to rest your hand.

Good rear observation, use shoulder checks only when required. Good following distance and discipline especially in built up areas (Monmouth), keeping away from congestion to your front was notable. We discussed straight lining remember Safety, Legality, Appropriate and Perception (SLAP). Consider block changing gears after the speed phase of the system instead of changing down one gear at a time. One badly planned and rushed overtake that we discussed in detail, remember thorough planning followed by a positive execution. Extending the view, one already has if necessary, before committing to the overtake.

Good cornering and positioning throughout the ride, progress in 30/40 mph limits sometimes varied, try, and remain at a constant and accurate speed, if safe to do so.

### Self Assessment

Date	Driving / Riding Conditions
29/04/2022	Good

### Agreed Development Plan

Answer the theory questions set.

Look through Chapter 10 Overtaking page 203 in RC.

On the road practice, use out loud self-commentary whilst riding.

Mentor	Candidate
Del Britton	Simon Tibbetts

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# Run Sheet 1

Candidate name:	Simon	Group:	WHAM
Mentor name:	Derek	Date:	18.5.22

Competency	Score	Comments
Safety	1	Very secure.
System	2	Positioning & use of g'box will bring this up quickly
Observation	1	Excellent.
Anticipation	1	Excellent.
Planning	2	A few instances of flashing brake light causes me to question.
Positioning	2	Reinforce intent by positioning L/R at junctions - not middle!
Hazard Management	1	Good.
Eco Driving	2 *	} use gearbox more - more ratios more changes.
Vehicle Sympathy	2 *	
Gear Changing	2 ↑	} OK when it happens! See above.
Use of Gearbox	2 ↑	
Acceleration Sense	1	Good.
Braking	1	Well controlled
Steering	1	Good.

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**Mentor's Comments**

A good ride with only a few small issues stopping it being excellent, I'd like to see more positive (and defensive) positioning at junctions to inform traffic of your intent. More free use of s'box will help with many aspects (Eco, Sympathy, Use of gears etc.) I think we will also see more braking as a result. Good theoretical knowledge.

**Self Assessment**

Date: 18.5.22 Driving/Riding Conditions: Dry. Light traffic except in Stratford.

**Agreed Development Plan**

- Adopt positive position at junctions to reinforce signals. Prevent opportunity for "undertakers" on left turns.
- Use more gears. At NSL cruise you should be in top. That will mean less engine-braking so you will use brakes more (today I didn't see enough braking or gear changing).
- Practice corner entry speed control to be able to smoothly drive through when VP opens. Lose the comfort-braking!
- Roadcraft says "Use your judgement about whether a Lifesaver is required". Your shoulder checks frequently seem unnecessary. Diverting your attention from the forward situation for no real benefit to your situational awareness is best avoided.

Mentor: Jm. Candidate:

## Run Sheet 4

Candidate name:	Simon Tibbetts	Group:	WHAM
Mentor name:	Del Britton	Date:	14/07/2022

Competency	Score	Comments
Safety	1	
System	1	
Observation	1	
Anticipation	1	
Planning	1	
Positioning	1	
Hazard Management	1	
ECO Driving/Riding	1	
Vehicle Sympathy	1	
Gear Changing	1	
Use of Gearbox	1	
Acceleration Sense	1	
Braking	1	
Steering	1	



Competency	Score	Comments
Mirrors / Rear Obs.	1	
Signals	1	
Cornering	1	
Overtaking	1	
Restraint	1	
Progress	1	
Smoothness	1	
Human Factors / Concentration	1	
Courtesy	1	
Legality	1	
Slow Manoeuvring	1	
Knowledge	1	Excellent
Spoken Thought (Car)		

1/2



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Mentor's Comments	
<p>This was a ride of two very different halves. The first, was you rushing to show what you could do, especially with respect to overtakes, we discussed them in detail at the halfway point, we knew you could do better and, you did, absolutely in the second half of the ride out.</p> <p>Second half. Very good restraint riding to the road you could see in front, making excellent progress when the opportunity allowed, good planning allowed you to NOT attempt an overtake which involved three vehicles, but riding at the following distance (2 sec rule). Good control down through cedar gorge with a restricted speed limit using a low gear and moving looking for the best position for view. Remember leaning can still assist at slower speeds especially when there are tight downhill bends.</p> <p>You have demonstrated the aptitude and riding skills required to pass the Master assessment and that I fully support.</p>	
Self Assessment	
Date	Driving / Riding Conditions
14/07/2022	Good

Agreed Development Plan	
<p>Take the Masters assessment.</p>	
Mentor	Candidate
Del Britton	Simon Tibbetts



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Full Name	Simon TIBBETTS		
Date	18/07/2022	Membership No.	51278595
Classification	Master Rider Mentoring and Test	Vehicle Make	BMW R1250RT
Examiner	Mr Robert DOWNING	Total Score	36
Result	Pass	Pass Breakdown	Pass

Vehicle Information					
	1 - Masters	2 - Advanced	3 - Requires	Development	
Safety	1	Gear Changing	1	Restraint	1
System	2	Use of Gearbox	2	Progress	2
Observation	1	Acceleration Sense	1	Smoothness	1
Anticipation	2	Braking	1	Human Factors/concentration	1
Planning	2	Steering	1	Courtesy	1
Positioning	2	Mirrors/Rear Obs	2	Legality	1
Hazard Management	2	Signals	1	Slow Manoeuvring	1
Eco Driving	1	Cornering	2	Knowledge	1
Vehicle Sympathy	1	Overtaking	2		

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"Simon passed his DSA motorcycle test in 1997 but did have a 15 year break from motorcycling before resuming and passing his IAM RoadSmart Advanced Rider test in August 2021. He has a clear passion to develop his riding to the highest level. Simon has completed an off road riding course plus 2 IAM RoadSmart Skills Days.

For his Masters test Simon was riding his BMW R1250RT and has an annual mileage of around 15000. Weather conditions for the test were dry, sunny and unusually hot. Traffic flow was moderate and the route covered A, B and unclassified roads in both rural and urban areas. Total test time was 90 minutes.

I am pleased to say that Simon demonstrated the skill level of a Masters rider. As is often the case, test nerves and over cautiousness does reflect in the ride but Simon was still able to demonstrate the skill level required.

The ride was safe and legal throughout with Simon clearly being "at one" with his motorcycle. His forward observations were good and he shows courtesy and consideration for other road users. Signals were used as required, well timed and informative. Brake application was smooth and slow riding skills were nice and balanced.

I do feel that some of the areas that were identified for ongoing development are linked to the "test nerves". Interestingly, none of the discussion came as a surprise to Simon. He does analyse his ride as he goes – as we discussed, that's fine as long as some self-critic doesn't become self-destructive!

System and cornering: Simon has very good knowledge of the system and demonstrates it well when negotiating junctions and other hazards. However, there is a tendency when dealing with some corners to show a system fault of position – speed (brake if required) – gears then another brake application (speed) before entering the acceleration phase. I am pretty confident having watched Simons use of the limit point that its not the key issue, its more of a late comfort braking issue which actually archives very little and then introduces a system fault. There is some unnecessary overlap of the position – speed – gear phases on some occasions but not detrimental to the ride.

Rear observations: There were a few occasions when Simon was either late picking up my indicators for a turn or missed them. I think this is probably due to him concentrating on the primary hazard ahead (a junction for example) which in itself is not wrong, but he then omits to consider what is happening behind him. Remember the rear observation relates to the area where you are going to position the motorcycle not the opposite.

Anticipation and planning: We discussed how this can impact on most elements of the ride. There are two examples that are worthy of consideration – anticipation of the speed of vehicles yet unseen on roads of restricted width and a plan for dealing with it (unlikely that the oncoming vehicle will think that Simon is coming around the corner) and secondly as you enter a lower speed limit. Late braking will lead to over braking and with it the loss of speed below the posted limit.

Overtaking: Simon did complete a safe overtake but did not capitalise on at least two others. Simon does tend to sit in an extended following position and not make best use of the closer overtaking position. With an improvement in anticipation of how road layout changes, traffic

management and traffic flow he would be in a far better place to consider the overtake. Simon appears to be working with “I see it – I think about it – I do it” whereas he should be in the “I see it – I do it” mindset. It’s all down to anticipation and planning. We discussed at length the benefits of your following and overtaking positions being flexible and also the use of view extensions. Some overtakes can be executed from your own side of the carriageway without the need to extend your view. There are no fixed rules on positioning other than safety - “it all depends”.

Positioning (hazard management): Positioning is based on hazard prioritisation - hazards do not come singularly they come in clusters. Where they do look for common ground that equalises the dangers. If you try and deal with each individually then you will make unnecessary machine movement. That said I do feel that knowing Simon’s knowledge, some of his positioning on this ride was to demonstrate to me that he had seen the hazard and was taking action. By doing this it takes away your normal natural positioning.

Gears: Every gear change was smooth, and Simon does make very good use of block changing down the gearbox. I do think that on occasions he was perhaps in one gear too high for the road speed. This can affect cornering, overtaking and general progress.

Progress and restraint: Simon exercised good restraint where required. The ride, on Simons own admission, could have perhaps been brisker on occasions. The areas mentioned above relating to cornering and overtaking can all impact on the flow of the ride plus of course exercising perhaps a cautious approach due to “test”!

Summary: I know that Simon was not entirely happy with his ride today but he has achieved. I also know that Simon will continue to develop, overcome those test nerves and cautiousness and has the ability to achieve a Distinction in due course. Simon has done extraordinary well to move from a non IAM RoadSmart Advanced Rider to a Masters rider in under 12 months, commendable! Well done, a deserved result.”



### You shouldn't show a brake light', my old associate said!



#### **Thruxton IAM skills day July 2018**

Talking to a member of my group after the first session on the track; I was the instructor for the group, we were discussing braking and to my surprise he still thought 'not showing' a brake light was the credentials of an advanced rider.

The interesting thing was he was also a member of WHAM, his comments were even more of a surprise for me because I was his observer several years ago. After reassuring him that I would not have instructed him to use his gears as brakes and thus not show brake lights I was interested to hear that he thought everyone did the same! And this could be seen on Sunday ride outs.

Many years ago, within the club there was a misconception that not showing a brake light was the credentials of a good advanced rider, this I believe came from an overused and misquoted line in Roadcraft which said, 'an advanced rider uses his brakes less'.

Gear boxes are more expensive to replace than brake pads I reminded him. Using accelerator sense to slow down can be used in some situations but it does not mean you are not an advanced rider if you show a brake light to slow down.

Using good observation will identify hazards early and accelerator sense can sometimes be used however, the use of the brakes is the most effective way to slow

the bike down.

Let's look at the difference between accelerator sense and our use of gears, firstly what is accelerator sense.

### **Acceleration sense**

Acceleration sense is the ability to vary machine speed and response to the changing road and traffic conditions by accurate use of the throttle, so that you use the 'brakes less' or not at all.

**'Using your brakes less' does not mean use your gears to slow down**

There is a misconception that; by not using your brake lights mean you are an advanced rider. Remember **'Gears are for going, brakes are for slowing'**.

### **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 will give you smooth gear changes and greater stability. Avoid selecting a lower gear instead of the brakes to slow the machine down (pages 35 & 104 within Roadcraft)

### **Braking and changing gear**

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 correct gear for the road speed and accurately counting the gears. If you select a 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 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, engine braking helps to slow the machine. The appropriate gear for the speed is engaged throughout and, because the drive is engaged except during changes, the bike remains stable. You also have the option of immediate power if needed.

You should be able to use both techniques but whichever you use, it must be

properly incorporated into your planning.

### **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 an effective way of losing speed. Remember when you use engine braking that this gives no brake light signal to the following traffic.

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

Del Britton