WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS





January 2022



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to 2022, it's already shaping up to be 'interesting'! There's a nice mix of content for you this month; we start with our regular contributions from the Chairman, then the <u>Chief Observer</u>, followed by a wonderfully <u>illustrated piece</u> from ex-chair Ant Clerici about being seen, and why not to assume you have been.. There's an intro to an upcoming natter night which looks very promising; <u>Ian Rivers</u>, who recently rowed the Atlantic single handed will be telling us about the experience, definitely one to not miss! Committee member, creator of the Sunday rides, and master of the website <u>Tony Davis tells us next about his newest bike</u>, not a BMW, hooray! Next <u>Dave Beswick</u> gives us his experience and lowdown on tyres,



very interesting; - did you know you can date your tyres manufacture to the nearest week? Neither did I! Finally this month I've included a list of all last year's test passes, a great effort in a difficult year, well done to both associates and observers!

In case you don't visit the WHAM website too often (its <u>here</u>), here is a list of what's coming up over the next few weeks, don't miss the AGM!

Sunday January 23 @ 9:00 am - 1:30 pm Sunday Ride – Shobdon Airfield Cafe – Route 20

Wednesday January 26th @ 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm WHAM Annual General Meeting Falcon Hotel 2 Broad St, Bromyard

Sunday January 30th @ 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Sunday Ride – Malvern to Crossgates via Dolfor – Route 46

February 2022

Sunday February 6th @ 9:30 am - 1:30 pm Sunday Ride, Foodstop Cafe, Bridgnorth from Hereford & Worcester

Sunday February 13th @ 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Sunday Ride – McDonalds Malvern to Queenswood Cafe Hope-Under-Dinmore – Route 45

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Now Christmas has come and gone the new year has been ushered in and if some of the serious, less media present, Scientific bodies are to be believed Covid may well start to be 'normalised' into all the other virus's our bodies and NHS have to cope with. Although I do wonder whether I will still be hoping for/saying that in another six-months or so....

I took over from Ant this time last year as WHAM chair and quite frankly it has not been as I expected. Activities have been curtailed; there's been no skills day, no September French mini-tour, the Observer training was off, and the most obvious activity that was



affected was our Sunday rides where we either couldn't go, couldn't go in any number, or had to avoid the beauty of the Welsh countryside that forms such a valuable part of our annual riding programme.

On the flipside, there have been some superb events that have been well attended by members new and old. The go-karting event that Duane organised was superb; I do not think I have laughed, swore, and winced so much in one hour as I did during that event. However, the event that I believe was our finest moment last year was the Betws-y-Coed weekend. Attendance was high with a diverse group of members coming together having the best time on the road, in the bar, even in the late afternoon sunshine of the hotel garden. It is events like these that I want to think about when I think of WHAM.

When we consider our lot at the start of a new year, we also think about things we could do better or differently in the coming year. The committee took a decision that the best way to achieve that for our little motorbike club was to put out a 'membership survey' via email to members asking some relevant practical questions to garner innovative ideas, improvements, and indeed gripes surrounding what we do and could do going forward. If you have not yet clicked the link and completed the survey, please do so now. We want to give you as much of whatever it is you want in 2022.

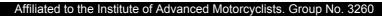
We've an AGM coming up at the Falcon in Bromyard on Wednesday 26th January (deets on the website). It's also subs time and so if you'd like to attend the AGM please do also get online and pay your 2022 subs.

I have not yet rolled the Crossdresser out of the garage yet in 2022. A combination of a busy social calendar and family commitments has prevented that. If this is the same for you then I would suggest that is pretty normal, especially when it is so cold and murky.

Yours in Sport

Richard Hewitt

WHAM Chair







CHIEF OBSERVER'S REPORT – ALEX HOYLE

Clean that Bike Buddy

Just a shortish piece from me this month, as elsewhere in this most excellent Newsletter is an article from Ant, called Have They Seen Me? so please do take the time to read it.

Now those of you who know me well will know that there is one thing I really hate having to do, and that is washing the bike when I come back after a ride.

Being group CO, and with biking holidays, I am normally doing around 8000-10,000 miles a year on the bike, so it does get a bit of a hammering.



Over the years I have tried various ways of cleaning and prepping the bike to go back out on the road. So, this is just a sum up of where we are now. I won't go into the bike washing bit, it's more what I use on the bike to try and tart it up a bit afterwards.

Now of recent I have been using Muc Off Motorcycle Protectrant; this comes in a large aerosol can and provides a really good coating for the bike, which seems to last a few rides as least, and then when you come to wash off the bike it helps to lift all the dirt and grime off with it. The downside is it's around £10-12 a tin, and I can more or less use a complete tin in one go. So, I then heard about FS365, this is a slightly weird product in that it is a mineral oil suspended in water. How's that work Alex, I hear you ask, and if truth be known I don't really know. Suffice it to say the clever chaps at 365 seem to have found a way of mixing oil and water together.

Just pump spray it on as normal and then leave it, the next day the water will have evaporated off to leave a light film all over the bike, and surprisingly this is not really oily. The trick seems to be to keep topping up the coating even if the bike gets a little muddy, the FS365 just soaks into the mud and grime, and when you do come to wash off the bike, it all comes off in one go, leaving a more or less clean bike underneath, which you then just coat up once more with the FS365.

Now nothing is fool proof, and even a lazy git like me will have to set to and give the bike a thorough clean at some point, but it definitely does help. So, give it a try.

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P.S. Last week's ride on the 9th of Jan was my first outing for the New Year. Nine met up at Hereford and set off over to Tuffins at Churchstoke, that said it was pretty chilly to start off with, and I don't think I saw more than 6.5 degrees on the dash, so the heated grips were working overtime. As ever it was a great route and gone eleven by the time we all got there. Me being me, I decided to forgo my normal big breakfast, (are you sickening for something Alex, I hear you all say) no, I went straight in for lunch and the half a roast Chicken dinner with spuds, three veg, stuffing and gravy, all for the princely sum of £5.99, a complete bargain.

Hope to see you all out on a ride very soon.

Alex

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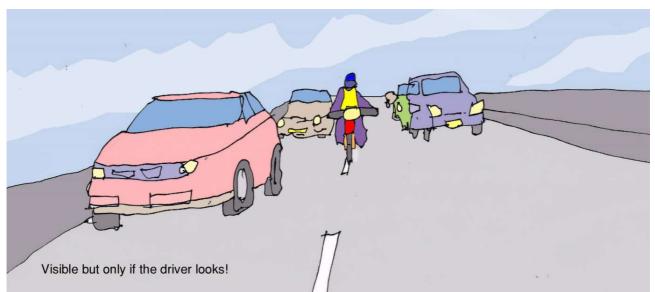
HAVE THEY SEEN ME? -ANT CLERICI

(...or how to prevent SMIDSY....)

I guess we all understand the need to be seen, both the Highway Code and IAMR advocate wearing "hi-viz" but when a recent post showed a car that had driven into one of those flashing-arrow lane-closed trucks at night, having not seen the countdown warnings or indeed the truck then it's clear we have a bit of a challenge to stay safe. A personal example: when cycling on a bright clear sunny Sunday morning in a brand new (dazzling) hi-viz jacket, a car which had seen the bike 10m in front of me still tried to knock me off...and yes the comment from the driver was a pathetic..."I didn't see you....!"



So what can we do?



Yes hi-viz works, and my experience demonstrates there's an incremental improvement in being seen as you move from no hi-viz to hi-viz sleeveless to sleeved tops. However once when riding the Bloodbike on the Hereford road with the full hi-viz and bright headlights a white van still emerged from a side turning. Yes I was moving across the carriageway because movement helps you to be seen and braking because until they stop you should assume the worst! And the worst happened so my cautionary pull on the brakes to scrub off some speed changed instantly to a full 'you've practiced at Throckmorton' emergency stop. I missed him!

The basics of being seen are of course headlight and hi-viz.

Aux lights help as does a bright helmet, clean lights and your ability to think ahead and stay safe.

However you still present a small visual target. So move across the line of sight of the vehicle(s)





you need to see you.

This is relevant in so many circumstances:

- **approaching junctions** use the classic move towards the white line for left hand junctions, or a gentle weave approaching crossroads. Cover you horn button and use you horn if you need to say "I am here"! Actually that applies to all of the following points
- **before overtaking** look for the tell-tale signs that the driver has seen you: a movement of their head as they scan their mirrors, sometimes a move towards the nearside to give you space. If in doubt give them space. And cover you horn etc
- On the open road, particularly when 'making progress' ensure you give the driver(s) ahead time to see you before you overtake. They often don't check their mirrors. They sometimes don't check their mirrors as they start their own overtake.

The same principles apply: position yourself so you are 'in their mirrors', move across the lane and avoid riding in their blind spots.

• when **filtering** give time for the traffic to see you, filtering too quickly will risk you not being seen giving the U-turners and lane changers opportunity to take you out. Watch out for gaps as they allow vehicles to change lanes. Cover your horn etc



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• when **lane splitting** on the motorway be careful as cars slow approaching the queue, often people make last minute lane changes and they haven't appreciated bikes might be filtering. Similarly as the traffic moves again, the rubberneckers will still be gawping whilst others will be using the opportunity to accelerate.

As with any filtering watch out for the gaps. Moving the bike around is more difficult when wedged between lanes 2 and 3, but you can gently weave or briefly move into vacant lanes: this allows your approach to be seen by vehicles ahead.

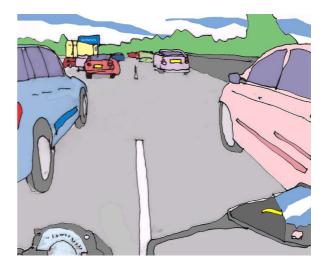
Long queues when traffic has stopped for some time creates another hazard: drivers will stick arms and feet (yes!) out of windows, open doors without thought there might be bikes filtering though, wander around and chat or take kiddies for a wee! Don't be reticent to use your lights and cover you horn etc

At junctions think about the effect of vehicles merging onto a busy motorway, this often leads to vehicles changing lanes to avoid lanes 1 and 2 as they absorb the new traffic.

Merging traffic generates lane changes

Gaps in lanes 2 & 3

Approaching the blind spot of the car in lane 3



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What's your action?

Unfortunately, unlike some other countries, you shouldn't use your hazard lights when filtering.

When else might render you invisible to other road users?

By the way the 'Cover your horn etc' applies here too.

- Poor weather can hinder you being seen: low winter sun when as you ride with the sun behind you there's great visibility but the drivers approaching are being blinded by the glare worse with low sun and wet roads.
- Also rain and, of course, fog.
- At night your headlight will merge into the background of other lights and your hi-viz doesn't work as well as it might. Add darkness with rain over a Friday rush hour then you will be completely invisible.



- Following too close behind large vehicles the bigger the vehicle the bigger the gap is required to see ahead for that all important overtake.
- In car parks often drivers are not concentrating on other vehicles as they look for a space or when leaving as they search for the ticket/do up their seat belt/phone home.
- When rain, snow, dirt etc reduces visibility from inside the car so check it out. If the unclear rear window stops the driver from seeing you then get in their wing mirror, ideally the off-side mirror.
- Rush hours encounter drivers on a familiar journey, familiar roads with a potential lack of concentration that familiarity generates.
- Anyone on a phone (even hands free), texting, eating, drinking, reading, applying make-up



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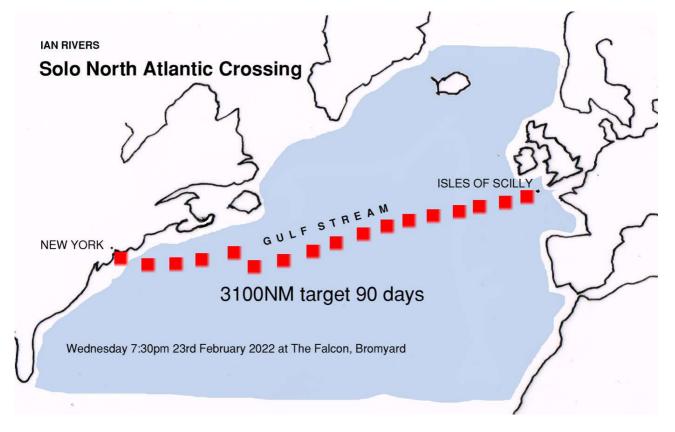
or distracted by the kids in the back should be treated with extreme caution.

In summary, be aware if other road users have actually seen you. If they possibly haven't then do something about it! And ALWAYS cover your horn etc

IAN RIVERS AND HIS EPIC TRANS-ATLANTIC SOLO ROW

For those of you who don't know Ian he is a long standing member of WHAM and one of our observers. He has completed some amazing events but last year he did something that was truly epic.

A solo row across the Atlantic from New York to the Isles of Scilly.



Ian will be talking about the voyage at our natter night in February. We hope for a good turn out so have decided to run ticketing via Eventbrite. The tickets are free but you'll have a chance to donate on the night. 'Other halves', friends and family also welcome.

Book early as we intend to open the event to other local IAM groups – WHAM members have an early booking advantage!

Check out the WHAM events page from 27th January 2022 [it's not on there as of 20th Jan - Ed]

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WHAM BIKES - TONY DAVIS LATEST ATTEMPT AT THE PERFECT BIKE(S).

As many of you know, I've been in the dubious position of owning a BMW R1200 GS for the last five years. Why dubious? Well, everyone hates them, mine is a bit corroded, its ugly, its ubiquitous. Still, I have no intention of selling it 'cos it's got right under my skin and I love it.

Mine has done 38,000 trouble free miles now. It's had the suspension rebuilt and it's as good as new (apart from the corrosion) so I can't see the point in spending thousands of pounds to upgrade it to a newer 1250 GS. Even though the 1250 is undoubtedly a better bike, it's not \pm 12K better.



If I could only have one bike it would be a GS. Luckily, I have more than one bike. In 2020 I used the cash I saved during the first lockdown to buy a Triumph Scrambler 1200. A great bike, the highlight of which was the suspension. Triumph shod it with long travel Ohlins which made it a 'B' road weapon. It has a grunty torquey engine and a comfortable upright riding position. Trouble is, apart from the fact that it looked a million dollars, it was designed to do all the stuff a GS did but didn't do much of it quite as well as the GS.

So, I decided it was time to swap it out for something completely different. I had the following

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criteria: -

- Must be good at B roads.
- Needs to be comfortable for a bloke in his late 50's.
- Has to be exciting.
- Has to cause Duane Sanger to look at it longingly.

I spent hours drooling over YouTube videos and magazine road tests and convinced myself that a naked sports bike was the way to go.

First up for inspection was the Aprilia Tuono 1100 V4 Factory. I once had an Aprilia 750 Shiver and hated it with a passion. I can't tell you why, I just did not get on with it, the electronics felt under developed and it just never felt right. I am sure the Tuono is brilliant (it wins all the group tests) and I've always has an eye on them but the lack of decent local dealers and reliability worries put me off.

Next candidate was the Kawasaki Z900 RS. I looked long and hard at the Kawasaki. I love the way it looks and an inline 4 engine appeals. Trouble is It falls into a similar category as the Scrambler, I was concerned that the retro design of the bike forced some compromises in the dynamics.

Then I looked at the Triumph range and the 1050 Speed Triple (pre the latest 1200RS) it's a belter of a bike, it has compliant suspension that would soak up the bumps on a b road and the triple engine is sublime. Trouble is I've been there and done that (I had a 2011 Speedy for about 4 years).

Next up was the KTM1290 Superduke. I've ridden a KTM Superduke and loved it. Fast, great handling, solid but the V-Twin engine means it's not different enough from the Scrambler or the GS. It's no oil painting either in my eyes....

Finally, I noticed the Yamaha MT10. The MT-10 has a reputation for being mental. It also has firm suspension that bounces you out of the seat on b roads so I almost wrote it off straight away. After a little more research it turns out they do an SP version complete with Ohlins adaptive suspension. So, sophisticated suspension – Tick, sensible riding position – Tick, mental – Tick, exciting - Tick, make Duane jealous – Tick (not difficult, He owns a GS these days). So the Scrambler gets chopped in for a 2019 SP with 2000 miles on the clock and 12 months Yamaha warranty left.

First impressions? The adaptive suspension is not very adaptive. The throttle is a bit lumpy and abrupt. It's very quick. The riding position is perfect for me on the odd occasion that I am not being bounced out of the saddle. The engine sounds fabulous. The quickshifter is brilliant (that was unexpected). It's very quick...

First thing to address was the suspension. I enlisted the help of the Wife and set about measuring static & rider sag. The rear had loads of it, about 50% of the travel. The front wasn't much better. So, I added preload to the front and back, a half hour job – (not counting time waiting for the Wife to finish whatever She's doing in the house for the next measurement) Its counter intuitive adding preload to make the suspension more compliant but that's what worked, the bike was transformed. The way it soaks up bumps on the B roads is unbelievable for a pure road bike, you find the limits on a road such as the Portway on the Long Myynd but the only bikes that excel on

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roads like that are big ugly Adventure bikes like the GS.

The bike handled superbly before the suspension changes and even better afterwards. It tracks like its on rails and turns surprisingly quickly.

Next job was to smooth out that throttle. I considered a Power Commander but I don't have much faith in them on modern bikes with closed loop emission systems, it seems like a bit of a bodge and compromise to me. So, after lots of online research I found a Guy in Preston that has mapped lots of MT-10 ECUs and has a huge library of fuel maps that he is able to take an average from. So, my ECU got posted to Preston and was back with a shiny new map 2 days later. This completely fixed the snatchy throttle (no doubt caused by Yamaha's attempts to meet EURO4 emissions). Fuelling is now perfect, using a 160bhp inline 4 engine in 1st gear through town is usually a nightmare but the mapped MT-10 makes it as smooth as silk.

So, I am very happy with the MT-10. It's no GS and that will get saved for holidays, rainy days and 2 up duties but as a Sunny evening / Sunday blast toy its perfect.



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DON'T CHECK YOUR TYRES!- DAVID BESWICK

Don't check your tyres! "Inspect them". Yes! get down close and personal with your tyres. Just simply spinning your wheels and looking at your tyres go round will not cut the mustard! You need to get to know your tyres, in order to be able to spot changes and abnormalities in them. Get your bike on the main stand, clean the road grit/grime from the tyre, get down and look! Yes, get down and look at the tyre. What are we looking for, I hear you ask! You need to know your tyres in order to spot any changes that may be taking place. The front and rear tyres should be the same make and design otherwise the handling characteristics will be different. Excessively worn and damaged tyres, besides being illegal, will compromise the way your bike performs .

Firstly, condition: is there enough tread to be legal (remember legal doesn't mean safe!). The legal requirement (UK) motorbikes over 50cc, is 1mm across ¾ of the width of the tyre tread pattern, and with visible tread on the remaining 1/4. Some tyre manufacturers have tread wear indicators in the tread (a small bar of rubber in the tread of the tyre). When the tyre wears and the tread indicators become level with the surface of the tyre; hello! its already too late! Yes, the tread indicators are an indication only and may be below 1mm when they are level with the surface of the tyre. Change them when the surface of the tyre gets close to becoming level with the indicators.

The penalties for insufficient tread depth, and or poor condition, including incorrect pressures, are costly! You may be facing a fine up to $\pm 2,500$ and 3 points on your licence (Per tyre). If that's not enough to make you cry, seeing your bike continuing round the bend on its side and you sitting in the road in the pouring rain will!.

Uneven or irregular wear can indicate tyre damage or incorrect tyre pressure. Make sure the correct tyre pressures are used (consult your bike manual or tyre manufactures recommendation) incorrect tyre pressure could result in the tyre wearing unevenly or worse! The tyre will not perform well in cornering and adverse weather conditions. Tyre condition, excessive uneven wear, cuts, heavy impact damage and foreign objects, all affect the tyres' ability to adhere to the road.



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Pictures above are of my rear tyre after a WHAM observed ride out with Andy (Thank you Andrew Culley). On arriving home, although tired, I still checked my tyres before putting the bike away and from what looked like a pinhead fragment in the tyre, I teased out a 12mm long length of wire/metal fragment. I put it on the petrol filler cap to give it a comparison for size. I'm sure it would have worked its way into the tyre, resulting in a slow puncture.

Having removed the wire fragment, I used a soapy wash to check if any air was escaping. By checking your tyres after a ride out, rather than on the day of a planned days ride, will give you more options. You can get your tyres checked by your local bike dealership or tyre fitters, and this will not impact on your planned ride out, - leaving it to the day of the planned outing will result in a frustrating abandoned ride, while you chase round trying to get it fixed/replaced.

The common causes for tyre damage are: potholes, drain covers, missing/damaged cat's eyes, damaged road surface, damaged pavements, debris, and in the countryside, hedge cutting, poorly maintained road surfaces, Ok, I'll stop there, but I'm sure you can add some of your own. We can't control these factors (except by avoiding them!) but what we can control is how we care for and look after our tyres. If you find deep cuts, damage to the sides of the tyre, deformities in the tyre walls or on the surface of the tyre don't gamble or compromise your safety by making a bad judgement call!

You found the defect, now do the right thing and get it checked out by (no not your mate!) your tyre fitter/dealership, who will be able to advise you on possible repair or replacement. Don't go thinking changing your tyres regularly is a bad thing, it's not, I know we all know a rider who's happy to tell you just how long they have made their tyres last. The truth is tyres age and become less effective as they age. The tyre properties change, because of the passage of time, how they are stored and the temperature changes they have gone through and the general pounding they get on the roads. All this adds up to the degradation of your tyre and its ability to remain in contact with the road.

Since the year 2000, tyre manufactures have gone to the trouble of putting the week and year of manufacture on the sidewall of the tyre. Look for DOT (department of transport) then look for a 4-digit number. The first two digits will be the week followed by the year of manufacture IE 2618 = 26th week of the year2018. Tyres manufactured before year 2000 have a 3-digit number (I'm not going there, Throw them away!). If you have tyres 5+ years old and seemingly in good condition, it's advisable to get them checked each year by your tyre fitter/dealership. If your still on tyres 10 + years (then well done!) it's time for a change. Tyre pressures are important and need to be checked as often as possible, but I guess every two weeks is a reasonable period. They should be checked when they are cold (at the beginning of the ride).

You need to use an accurate pressure gauge. Try to use a garage that maintains the Air compressor and keeps it calibrated; if it looks shabby and uncared for, then it's probably not the best. You should keep your tyres inflated to the manufacturers and owner's manual recommendations - this means there's no one pressure for all occasions! The pressure changes according to the load placed on them: 1 person - 2 persons – +Luggage – Maximum load (I've not added pressures! Consult your Manual/tyre fitter/dealership). Correct pressures can extend the life of the tyre and improve fuel consumption. "Kaching" money in your pocket.

If you're still with me, I salute your resolve! We are almost there and the end is near.

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This day and age motorbike manufactures go to a lot of trouble testing different tyre manufacturers tyres, and how their bike behaves and responds to them, and how the different tyre pressures change the way the tyres behave. So, it's a brave man/woman who goes against this advice and goes their own way.

For most of us the motorbike manufacturers recommendations are fine, remembering to scrub in new tyres and take care of them and inflate them to the recommended pressures for each occasion.

I strongly believe that tyres are the most important part of your bike and something you should not take liberties with, don't compromise your safety by taking short cuts, or neglect the only two things that keep you on the road.

TECT DACCEC 000

Article by David Beswick (Bez).

	Test Passes & Fails 2021	Test Date	Test Grade	Observers Name	Examiners Name
1	Pete Juzi	29.05.2021	Normal	Alex Hoyle/Paul Gill	Tim Hutt
2	Keith Clarke	15.06.2021	Normal	Andy Chambers	Tim Hutt
3	Mark Bonnes	10.07.2021	Normal	Adrain Wheeler	Simon Ross
4	Lee Harrhy	11.07.2021	Normal	Tony Davis	Marcus McCormic
5	Bill Downing	18.07.2021	Normal	Phil George	Marcus McCormic
6	Pete James	31.07.2021	Normal	Alex Hoyle	Tim Hutt
7	Mario Carvalho	16.08.2021	First	Christopher Lawton-S	n Tim Hutt
8	Wayne Harrison	21.08.2021	Normal	Duane Sanger	Andy Lamb
9	Jon Powell	21.08.2021	First	Ant Clerici	Marcus McCormic
10	Simon Tibbetts	22.08.2021	First	Will Morgan	Andy Lamb
11	Rob Fordham	18.09.2021	Normal	Tony Reusser	Marcus McCormic
12	Tim Wyles	18.09.2021	Normal	Tim Snelson	Marcus McCormic
13	Tom Lewis Knight	09.10.2021	Normal	Gary Barnes	Marcus McCormio
14	Dave Beswick	04.11.2021	Normal	Andy Gulley	Marcus McCormic
15	Piotr (Pete) Szaj	20.11.2021	First	Rob Edwards	Andy Lamb
16	Sorin Chesa	30.11.2021	Normal	Ant Clerici	Marcus McCormio
17	Charles Richards	14.12.2021	Normal	Del Britton	Tim Hutt

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