

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



June 2022



EDITORIAL

Hello again fellow Whammers!

As usual we have a varied selection of treats for you this month thanks to our regular contributors..

We begin of course with the Chairman's chat right below this.. Alex Hoyle, the Chief Observer, follows with an [interesting piece](#) about what to do when we find ourselves in unfamiliar and scary territory on the road. It's true that probably the majority of single vehicle bike accidents come down to the rider running off the road simply because s/he has reached the limit of skill and experience and freezes.

Then we have more detail on Rob Edwards' fantastic and brave project to ride [solo to Nordkapp](#), the most northerly point of mainland Europe! He is doing this to raise money for the St Michael's Hospice, Hereford, so check out the article to find out how to contribute and even ride with him for the first leg of the journey!

I'm also very pleased to say that Sam Furminger has come up with another great report on the recent [WHAM weekend away to Raleghs Cross](#).

We finish up with another dig into the archives with a detailed piece about [wet weather riding](#) from 2017 by Derek McMullan..

As ever, I'd love you to contribute something to our newsletter.. if you have any thoughts, ideas, stuff to sell or pretty much anything bike related, drop me a line at whamnewsletter@gmail.com, It would be great to hear from you



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I started with writing about Spring last month. This month, weather wise, if my good fortune is anything to go by, we seem to have 'vaulted' into early summer.

The WHAM Exmoor weekend was well attended and enjoyed by all. Keener participants have already requested a re-run sooner rather than later and so I think the club chemistry that weekend must have been just right. The following weekend I had the pleasure of completing the Welsh National Rally in the Sun with Grace on her splendid CB500f. I threw in some 'itchy boots' style unpaved roads which were not so popular with Grace, yet it just goes to show you do not need an Africa Twin to have an adventure.

The next day was the WHAM roof of Wales ride, which was not so well attended....

...twelve riders left Leominster and completed the epic route and by 10:00hrs. the Sun was well and truly beaming. If you decided not to do this ride and have feedback for the committee as to why, so we can consider amendments (whatever really) please do drop me a note (r70gbo@gmail.com) and I can assure everyone that constructive feedback is always welcome.

Yesterday's Shobdon ride saw twenty-something WHAMMERS head out to enjoy yet another sunny day and a warm welcome at the ace café at the airfield. There were some small snags out on the road with Group riding policy not being quite as well known (on this occasion) as possible, yet a little polite conversation and direction to the policy on our website has hopefully ironed this out.

Now that the riding season is in full swing can I suggest we all take five minutes to refresh our memories on how we run the group rides -

[Microsoft Word - WHAM Group Riding Summary 2021v2.docx \(wham-motorcycling.org\)](#) If you find yourself frustrated in not being able to pass a fellow WHAMMER; or indeed frustrated because you've someone 'up your chuff,' the way to eliminate this frustration is to know the Group Policy.

Evening rides kick-off on the 25th May with start points at Worcester and Hereford ending up at the Falcon in Bromyard at 20:15hrs. for a glass of squash and a natter. If you struggle to get out on a Sunday, maybe try one of these?

Saturday July 9th see's the 2022 WHAM go-kart Grand prix at Weobley. Full deets on this and everything above on the website.



Phew, I am running out of space here yet there is just so much to cram in. Two more things if I may:

1. Our very own Rob Edwards is riding solo up into the Arctic Circle in an attempt to raise as much awareness and money for the fantastic work St. Richard's Hospice do. On Sunday 5th June the WHAM Sunday ride will end at the Hospice at the same time Rob rides off on his travel's. The Hospice are happy for us to join Rob and if you want to ride part of the way with him, please do. Importantly, information and donations can be made here: [St Michael's Hospice | Rob's epic motorbike fundraiser to the Arctic Circle - St Michael's Hospice \(st-michaels-hospice.org.uk\)](https://st-michaels-hospice.org.uk) and [St Michael's Hospice | Rob's epic motorbike fundraiser to the Arctic Circle - St Michael's Hospice \(st-michaels-hospice.org.uk\)](https://st-michaels-hospice.org.uk)

2. 2022 WHAM Slow-Riding Day/Skills Day – this continues to be the event that Covid took from us, that is proving to be the hardest to revive. However, Ant tells me he might have found a solution in Defford, and we can assure you significant effort will be put into this as the venue confirms exact availability

All that leaves me to finish with this month is to sign-off hoping to see you out on the road soon. If there is anyone that remains reticent to join us on a sunny Sunday sometime soon, please get in touch and we can smooth those concerns away.

Yours in Sport

Richard H

WHAM Chair

CHIEF OBSERVER'S REPORT – ALEX HOYLE

If in Doubt Push Even Harder

A few weeks ago, WHAM organised a trip to Devon and Somerset, with members staying at the Raleigh's Cross Inn.

As normal Tony Davies our route master had put down some excellent routes, and stops, to keep us all amused. The first run out on Saturday morning took us over to Barnstaple with a coffee stop at the Fremington Quay Café which was on the site of the old railway line. I had never been here before, and it was an inspired stop, see below. A truly fantastic location and a really good café. Now I know I have a bit of a reputation for my food, so for the benefit of my fellow foodie chums, I limited myself to a luxury hot chocolate with marshmallows and sprinkles, no food this time as I was saving myself for fish and chips at Lynmouth which was our next stop.



Now, I was riding that morning with Will Morgan, Andy Chambers, and Mark Saxton.

However, when we got to the café, Will seemed a little bit off colour, I asked why, and he revealed that he had misread one of the bends on the route and by his own exacting standards had not got it quite right. I immediately knew the very bend he was referring to, as I and a few others also got it completely wrong the first time we went on this road many years ago.

The bend in question is on the A39 near to Arlington Court and it is a very tight uphill lefthander. It's very nearly 180 degrees and it's not until you get right in to the meat of the bend that you realise that it's tightens up and is coming back around on you. Now, if you find yourself in a similar situation, whatever you do, do not go for the brakes, if you push the handle bars even harder in the direction you are going the bike will almost certainly come around.

So, if in doubt push even harder, and stay off the brakes. It was an uphill left hand bend so push hard on the left handle bar. If you are ever in a comparable situation and this happens to you, counter steering even harder will normally solve the problem for you.

Another thing you very quickly learn is that although sat navs can give you a pretty good idea of what is coming, you should never rely on them too much with regards to the angle and severity of the bends.

As we always say, ride the road you see, not the road you know, or that your sat nav tells you is coming up.

It was a really great weekend, and I enjoyed everyone's company and the banter that goes with it. If you have never been on one of these WHAM trips, then do give it a go at some point, you will not be disappointed.

CHARITY RIDE TO NORDKAPP

You would have seen (April 2022 Newsletter) that Rob Edwards is embarking on a solo motor biking trip to the most northerly point of mainland Europe – Nordkapp.

That's over 2500 miles each way including a challenging 500 miles beyond the Arctic Circle to the land of reindeer, Sami and 24 hour daylight.

He is raising money for St Michael's Hospice, Hereford.



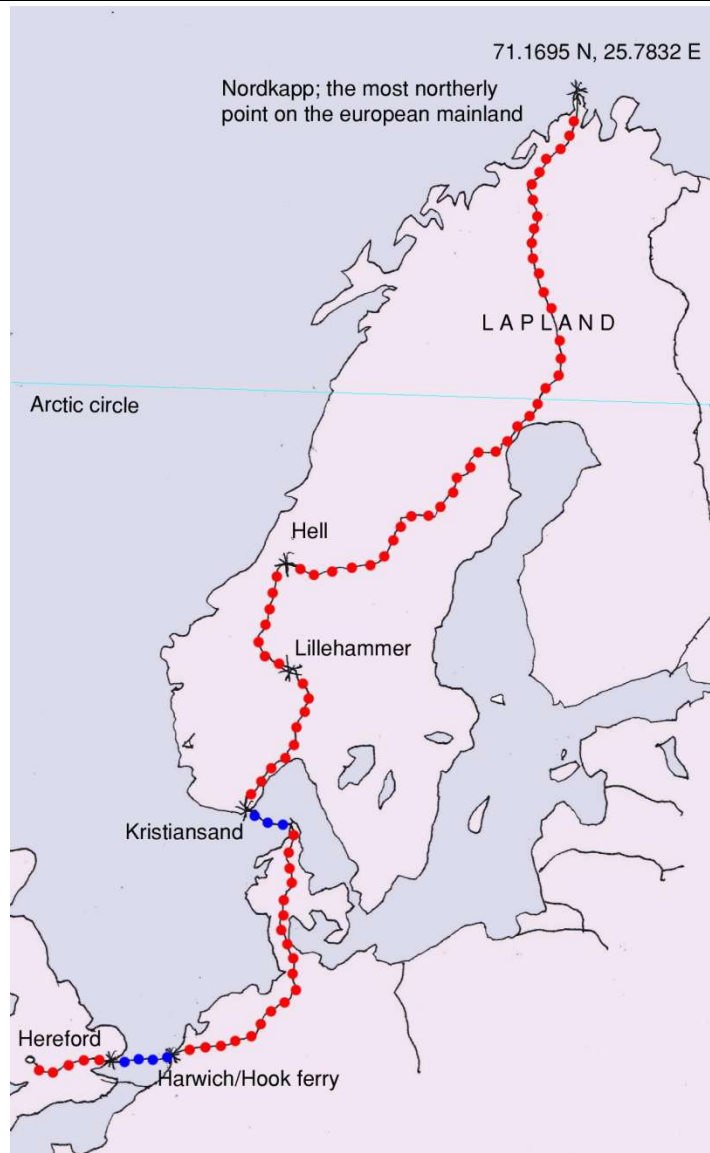
Rob is departing at 1pm on Sunday 5th June from St Michael's Hospice.

If you want to wish him "bon voyage" or even ride with him for the first few miles then please join us at St Michael's Hospice in time for his departure.

You will see that the ride that Sunday is Route 51 with a Hereford start and a Honey Café breakfast with a final extra leg to the Hospice.

Even if you can't make the ride then please think about coming straight to the hospice. I'm hoping to ride as far as Gloucester with Rob, perhaps even further ...?

Here's the important link to his "just giving" page...



https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rob-edwards38?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=rob-edwards38&utm_campaign=pdf-share&utm_term=0b26c234dc67464da5c657e338003be5&fbclid=IwAR2jekfUv7e4fhHkc3h6M4TildsNp9S02XIA3tF6O0oysm4eHEjmcraSV9Y

AND.... Have a look at this YouTube of The Man himself with a lot more detail about the trip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdSKalTa4wg>



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SAM FURMINGER'S HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER



Well, another WHAM holiday under my belt and I live to tell the tale. Speaking to the man of high social standing, Mr Matthew Dent, he said what happens on the WHAM trip, stays on the WHAM trip... so it was a nice weekend, great weather Saturday and there ends the newsletter article.

Speaking to the Newsletter boss Jim Rolt subsequently, that wasn't sufficient, so having scrutinised the social media posts since returning, I think some of the stuff I can mention is fair game and in public domain now! So yes, Matt did pay me to describe him of high social standing in the first paragraph.

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I rolled out of bed on Friday morning to go 15 miles North to meet the WHAM group at Starbucks Ashchurch. As my poor Triumph was in Tiger hospital, I took my emerging classic the Honda Shadow Spirit VT750 for the trip. Stripped of the luxuries we get used to on modern bikes, I knew I had a challenging few days ahead, but to be fair, she is mechanically sound. I was happy to see Tony's older (2003) Yamaha with us too – so the old metal ain't dead yet! It's a different kind of ride with a dose of individualism and character.

So off I went with Donna, Val, Mick and Jude towards Malmesbury. Lovely ride in mild temperatures and dry roads. As predicted on a Bank Holiday weekend, there were plenty of filtering opportunities as we progressed through the busy towns such as Stow on the Wold and saw extraordinarily large lorries squeeze through Cotswold villages! When we reached Jackdaw's Coffee House, I did a lap of honour around the car park and then made my own bike park – on a cruiser, you always get away with abandoning your bike anywhere. Paul Gill joined me in the designated area, so two bikes or more, makes it an official bike park. First stop the Ladies followed by the tea queue. My highlight was seeing Chugs holding a wooden spoon, so of course I saw that as an opportunity to be totally inappropriate.



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It was time to move on and pop the Cheddar Gorge cherry. Once Val and I joined on the intercoms, much chatter and laughter was had. Expressions of wow and wonder as we meandered down the twisties of Cheddar Gorge – such an amazing sight and made us humans feel quite small and insignificant up against such natural beauty. I was disappointed not to be able to buy cheese at Cheddar Gorge, but the sadness was short lived as we headed off on the next leg.

Excuse my French, but bloody Bridgewater.

But once the necessary roads were done, it opened up into the lovely National Park. You could see for miles and pick up pace. My Shadow was sweeping down the bends and I was grinning from ear to ear. She has her own little personality and it had been awhile since I had taken her any significant distance and it just reminded me again, why I can't part with her. If she hit a bump hard, and there were many, my bum would leave the saddle, and as I landed, the feet would go up, and I would then swear into the intercom. I had to apologise to Val and Donna's ears many times – however Val also had to apologise every time she sneezed in her helmet. We were even.

We reached Raleigh Cross, and settled ourselves in our rooms. The bar was calling and it was a lovely summer's evening with friends, sitting at the very sturdy picnic tables. Who knows why Andy Chambers landed on his back with pints of beer and cola in his now sticky nether regions. The weekend shenanigans were starting... Even Will found himself on his hands and knees but I understand from others, he was doing his shoe laces up.

Did Tom, Dick and Harry from table 32 ever get their chicken burger? One chef and around 25 hungry bikers was never going to be a recipe for disaster, but I got three sausages in one sitting, so I was happy. I stretched myself a bit and went for the cheesecake... but then the conversation about various "cheeses" went a little blue, almost stinkin' bishop, which made my cheesecake quite hard to digest. However that didn't stop Ali D ordering extra cheesecake – she's made of harder stuff than me.

Bedtime came, and Val and I retired to our room. I climbed into bed and the whole bed tipped – it was broken. As many may have seen on our social media page, a beautiful rendition of Row, Row, Row your Boat was shared on the most unstable bed ever! The night was fine, so long as I didn't move too much.



Next morning, more sausage set me up for the day, but nothing prepared me for meeting my Dad! The lady behind the bar called Chugs 'handsome' and it looked like it was all going well, until she said, 'I'm going to serve your daughter now.' I was surprised because I am 65 years old, so I felt I should look after Chugs for the remainder of the weekend.



Ali W joined us ladies for the lovely ride to Fremington Quays – saw the bluebells and the awesome views. There's something about turning a corner and seeing a hill up ahead with your road going all the way up it. You can never tire of the views. The sun was out and spirits were high. Mark Saxton got me very excited when he said there was a replica of my bike in the café... it was a blooming Penny Farthing cheeky sod. I think he was secretly jealous of my large front wheel, unique to the 2007 Spirit. It's a really hard life riding such a good looking bike but I style it out well.



Off we went to Lynmouth for chips! The 1:30 descent to the coast was fun but we arrived safe and Val and I went fridge magnet shopping. I got my chips and then onwards we went... We returned to the hotel via the sweeping A39 coast road which was such fun. The gentlemen went out for a final loop for the fun of it, but I swear I hadn't drunk my pint before they were being counted back in.

Dinner time was a more together event with our big tables, so we were able to chat to new and old friends. Chugs (Dad) broke a chair, but I have no idea why or what happened. I just took my eyes off him for one minute. The chat and drinks flowed, and it was all in all a good night. I skipped the cheesecake.

Alas Sunday morning came, and the clouds had rolled in, as had the rain. Val and I decided to take the 'quick' route home via the Quantock Hills and the spray of the M5. At Sedgemoor Services, we said our goodbyes and headed off back to normal life again. Thanks to everyone who made the weekend possible and for all the laughs. It was a blast.

WET WEATHER RIDING - DEREK MCMULLAN

So – You're thinking about riding a bike in the rain – well you must be considering it or you wouldn't be reading this article. The fact of the matter is, if you live and ride in the UK, you're going to get wet at some point so now might be a good time to pick up some tips. This article contains advice on how to make the whole process of wet weather riding a lot safer and, believe it or not, much more enjoyable so get yourself a coffee, sit down and read on.

In reality, it is the fear of what 'might' happen that is the biggest problem. By applying some well known basic principles and having faith in the ability of the machine and its tyres, wet weather riding needn't be nearly as daunting as many people think. Another thing to consider is that learning to ride well in the wet will also help to improve dry riding skills.

The three main things to remember are:-

1. Relax.
2. Be smooth.
3. Look where you want to go.

There's nothing new there, and that is because the principles behind safe wet weather riding are exactly the same as riding on dry roads. These three main elements will apply consistently to all aspects of safe motorcycle control, in any conditions. The main difference when riding on a wet road surface is that any lack of smoothness is more likely to bring about an adverse reaction from the machine resulting in a twitch, slide or even a complete loss of control. A fuller explanation of these three main points will follow but to start with, it is helpful to have an understanding of what the tyres have been designed to do in the wet and how we, as riders, can help the tyres to do their job.

Think of the tread on your tyres as a water pump. As the tread area comes into contact with the road it is designed to deform and push (pump) water to the side. In a bend, the water is usually

pumped to the outside and away from the path of the rear tyre. Because motorcycle tyres are relatively narrow and have a small contact patch they don't have to push the water so far (as a car tyre), this is why the minimum tread depth is less than that for cars. It is also the reason why motorcycles are less likely than a car to suffer the effects of aquaplaning (floating on a cushion of water) – but it can still happen if there is a combination of too much water and too much speed. Also, please forgive the obvious – the less tread there is left on the tyre, the less effective the 'pump' will be, so tread depth will be an influencing factor in the ability of the tyres to find grip.

A very important point to remember is that the tread will be less effective if the tyre isn't subjected to some of the deformation mentioned earlier. If the machine is coasted into a corner, with no throttle applied, the tread will struggle to work. By subjecting the tyre to a sensible amount of cornering force and acceleration (light throttle) the required deformation will take place thereby allowing the tread to do what it has been designed to do.

Let's start by relaxing

A common mistake that many riders have is to tense up and sit rigidly on the bike and to grip the handlebars tightly. The result will be that any rider inputs become less subtle, any slight twitches will be amplified and it becomes more and more of an ordeal. If the rider is relaxed, any little slides that occur will usually sort themselves out without drama and it will often feel that those little

'slides' have actually taken place behind the bike, not under it. Sit naturally (not bolt upright). The hands should rest on the handlebars with a light grip. The arms, back and shoulders should be relaxed and supple to allow the rider to make the best use of feedback from his or her control surfaces (hands, feet and seat). Wear suitable riding kit that will keep you dry and warm but not so bulky or heavy that wearing it becomes a challenge of its own. Good quality riding kit needn't be prohibitively expensive but you should always aim for the best you can afford. Remember to tuck your gloves into the sleeves of your coat- it stops rainwater from running down and filling your

gloves. If you are warm and dry it will be easier to relax. If you are relaxed, you will be much more likely to feel what is happening, you will be more comfortable and, you won't get nearly as tired.

Keep your visor clean and, if it has started to collect scratches, consider whether it is time to look for a replacement. Use a pinlock system or an anti-fogging spray to reduce the amount of misting that can take place to make sure you can see properly – this sounds pretty basic but it can make a big difference to your safety.



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Next – It's smoothness

As you already know, a motorcycle is at its most stable when travelling in a straight line and at constant speed (so a light throttle is being applied). The difficulties start when we need to corner, speed up or slow down. Any change in speed or direction will need some input from the rider and it is these inputs that must be smooth. Clearly, there is less available grip on a wet road surface but the chances of a loss of traction or a skid will be increased significantly if the rider carries out any sudden changes in speed or direction. Select an appropriate gear for the speed and learn to use the throttle judiciously so that the machine settles down and keeps going in the direction you want it to.

Finally - remember to look where you want to go (sound familiar?)

One of the biggest problems riders have is our old enemy, 'target fixation'. Human beings are 'hard wired' to stare at anything they perceive to be a threat. In the wet, with a heightened sense of nervousness, this is even more likely to happen. Whether it's a slippery drain cover, a vehicle moving towards us, or even a small patch of mud in the road – if it frightens us, we will stare at it because that is what nature intended. It follows that if you continue to stare at something, (a hazard), that is exactly what you'll ride towards. It is important to scan the near and middle distance so as to factor any hazards into our riding plan and to plot a safe course but - look for the furthest point you can see and that is where you'll go.

Cornering – Relax - Be smooth - Look where you're going

Follow the basic principles. If you start by relaxing on the machine, follow this by keeping it smooth and remembering to focus on where you want the machine to go, the whole process will become safer and easier. Confidence will improve and this will bring about the 'knock on' effect of helping you to relax further and making the whole process much less of a challenge. If the initial turn in is attempted while the brakes are still being applied, it is quite possible that the front tyre could be overwhelmed by the combination of forces acting on it. Learn to read bends and to judge a suitable, safe speed. Get the braking done before turning in, take the right gear and use gentle throttle to press the rear tyre into the road as you see the limit point moving away. A machine that is being ridden into a bend with the throttle shut off will wallow and become unbalanced. This will only serve to make the rider even more nervous. As mentioned

previously, the tyres need to be subjected to some forces in order for them to work properly. By smoothly applying light throttle and generating some cornering forces, the tyres will be pressed more firmly against the road surface and do what they've been designed to do. Use all round observation to help decide on an appropriate speed and get the braking done before entering the bend. Take in information that can be used to decide on the correct line. Scan the near and middle distance for any hazards that might influence the choice of line or speed but look to the limit point of vision and use it to help you. The main focus of visual attention should always be the furthest point you can see to be clear. If the machine cannot be stopped safely, on the correct side of the road before reaching that point – slow down. The throttle should be rolled on gently to help the bike settle and remain stable. Have confidence in the ability of the bike, its suspension and its tyres to keep you moving in the direction you want to go. Try to turn in smoothly and avoid any sudden changes in direction that might unsettle the bike. Remember – Relax, Be smooth and, Look to where you want the bike to go.

Braking

If you need to reduce speed squeeze the brake lever gently but firmly (much like squeezing a tennis ball) to allow the front tyre to work. This is true at any time but becomes even more important in the wet. Learn the capabilities of the braking system in a safe location. The front brake can be applied quite quickly and squeezed very firmly to great effect but the mistake often made is to 'grab' at the lever. If the front brake is snatched at, the likely result will be that the tyre locks up

before the suspension has had a chance to compress and push the tyre against the road surface. The important part is to apply the brake smoothly and give the suspension time to compress. The compression of the front suspension will press the front tyre against the road surface thereby improving the tyre grip, as it's been designed to do. If the brakes are applied hard enough on a dry surface the tyres will "chirp"; if it's wet the noise will be suppressed. So:

- Relax - there is little to be gained from a death-grip on the handlebars under braking. Use the knees to brace against the sides of the tank and keep the upper body relaxed and "feel" what's happening.

Be smooth – Once again, don't grab at or stamp on the controls. The front brake should always be applied first. This will start the front tyre working for you and will allow you to judge the amount of rear brake you'll need if you intend to stop. If the rear brake is applied first it is quite

possible that it will lock up when the front brake starts working as the weight transfer forward will lighten the rear end.

The majority of braking should be done at the front wheel (just look at the size of the brakes at each wheel for a clue!). On a wet surface whilst there is reduced grip the brakes still work the same way! The front brake has the power to rapidly reduce speed, the back brake is good for slow manoeuvring or in that final few moments of coming to a halt. It is not a great idea to wait for an emergency to happen before finding out what the brakes can, or can't, do. Find a suitable, safe location to carry out as many practice runs as possible. Ensure that there are no vehicles coming up behind you and gradually increase your road speed and learn to apply the brakes smoothly and firmly to bring the machine to a safe controlled stop. If the rear brake locks up, learn to recognise it happening and release brake pressure to allow the tyre to grip again – this practice will improve your chances of dealing successfully with a panic lock up when it's not expected. It is only by learning the capabilities of the brakes and tyres that a rider can develop the confidence needed to improve safety margins in the wet.

Accelerating

Remember that modern motorcycles tend to have plenty of spare horsepower – this asset needs to be used with some thought. If the accelerator is wacked open suddenly, the results can be dramatic (traction control and stability systems are a poor substitute for a skilled rider). Roll the accelerator on smoothly, in the right gear, to make the rear of the machine settle and allow the tyres to work. Selecting a higher gear to blunt the immediate effect of opening the throttle may seem attractive but it won't allow you to develop the required finesse in throttle control and will probably rob you of the bike's performance by constraining the engine to work at too low a rotational speed.

Coarse throttle application can cause the rear wheel to start spinning suddenly; it can happen on dry roads but is more likely when there is reduced grip: wet roads, wet ironwork, etc. In a straight line this is nothing more dramatic than a clear signal to reduce the throttle setting. If cornering however it can all quickly become very challenging! When the rear starts spinning the back end of the bike will move sideways causing the bike to “oversteer” i.e. turn more quickly than required. If the spinning continues the rider may well lose control completely as the bike will slide away into a “low-side”. A panic reaction of closing the throttle too much and/or too late may suddenly reestablish

grip and provoke a 'high-side' which will almost certainly separate rider from machine.

Road Surfaces

Motorcycles are obviously more sensitive to variations in road surface conditions and this is where good observation can help. Scan the surface and try to plot a route that allows you to avoid any surface that offers less grip. The centre section of your carriageway (the bit that the vehicle tyres miss) will often be much less worn and can offer more grip but beware of the fact that this is also the area upon which debris, leaked engine oil / diesel, etc. can gather. Lorries, even modern ones, leak oil and diesel occasionally and this will seriously affect grip when wet or dry. Scan the road surface and look for the clues you need to help you decide on the safest place to be.

Anything that is painted on the road surface (white lines, arrows etc), cat's eyes and manhole or drain covers will offer little in the way of grip either so should be avoided. If you have no choice but to ride over these surfaces always do so with the machine upright. If such a surface is encountered mid-corner then try to avoid it but, failing that, try to get the bike as upright as possible when riding over the offending surface before tipping back into the turn. If possible, avoid riding through puddles – there is no way of knowing how deep they are or what hazards might be lying in wait beneath the water.

Finally – don't put off riding in the wet. As stated earlier, the chances of being caught in the rain are quite high so the sooner that wet riding skills are acquired, the better. Give it a go!