

## WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



March 2022



## EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

Here we are with the clocks going forward at any moment and already the spring equinox is behind us!



At the end of February we had a wonderful natter night enjoying a very interesting presentation by Ian Rivers of his solo row across the Atlantic from New York to St Mary, the Isles of Scilly. There was a short glitch as the tech crew removed some gremlins from the sound system, but it all went well, complete with an exciting raffle. Of course Ian did the whole trip for charity, and I'm pleased to report that WHAM contributed a total of £440 to his effort. As you can see from the photo above, it was very well attended and enjoyed by all present.. (thanks to Ant for the photo).

Here's a thought: advanced riding (or driving) is all about thinking about what we are doing, and not just acting like automata to a pre programmed script. This leads to a lot of interesting discussion about indicators, and when we need to use them. The wisdom seems to be that if someone could benefit from a signal then give a clear one in good time. That makes sense doesn't it, if no one sees a signal, does it have a purpose? Which leads me to this: I was told by a very senior observer that I must turn my indicator on when intending to leave a motorway, at the first

countdown marker. Other advice I've had, which seems sensible, is that an indicator should give at least 8 flashes before you carry out an intended manoeuvre. At 70mph, indicating for 300 yards will give about 20 flashes. To me that seems excessive, indeed, an indicator flashing for a long time may make other drivers think it's just been left on inadvertently, what do you think?

This month's volume is fairly slim; we do of course have our usual contributions from the Chairman and the [Chief Observer](#), but also we have another treat from the excellent [Sam Furminger](#) about Sunday rides, a big thank you to her! Oh yes and a short piece from yours truly about [hillclimb racing](#)

Don't forget to keep up with your club's events via the [website](#), Coming up soon:

SUN March 27 @ 9:00 am - 1:30 pm

Sunday Ride – McDonalds Malvern to Bronllys  
Honey Cafe – Route 49

### April 2022

SUN 3 April @ 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

Sunday Ride – Starbucks Wooferton to Kinlet via  
Bromyard – Route 52

SUN 17 ElanValley @ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

WHAM Day Out – Easter Sunday Elan Valley

There's also a WHAM weekend coming up which promises to be a stormer:

APR 29 AT 3 PM – MAY 1 AT 4 PM

WHAM Weekend to Exmoor

Ralegh's Cross, Exmoor

The pub is now booked out, but get your google head on and find somewhere to stay nearby and you can still join in all the fun!

*(Ride outs are for full members only, but if you're an associate you can come along provided you bring your observer!)*

How's your first aid? What would you do if you're out with a mate or 2 and someone hits a bit of overbanding or a drain cover in the wet and bins the bike? It could be very handy indeed to have some basic knowledge of what to do in such a situation, and here's a free short course to give you some confidence: <https://ross-on-line.co.uk/free-biker-down-course-in-ross-on-wye>. There are several of these courses available, not all in Ross on Wye, so why not give it a go if you're not already a first aider? You could save a friend's life..

And of course, The monthly natter night at the Falcon Bromyard on Wednesday March 30<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm

Jim Rolt [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com). **PLEASE CONTRIBUTE! :)**



## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

It feels like Spring has sprung early for our little club this year. The two Sunday rides I have been on have enjoyed lovely weather and been very well attended by members new and old. Tony, as usual, has tweaked start points and indeed routes and I have had some positive comments from those who have spoken to me about a Hereford only start point, now and again, being a worthwhile addition to our riding programme.

As a Worcester rider it was indeed nice to start from somewhere new with Hereford riders that knew the routes a lot better than I did.

On the training front the test passes are starting to come through again (passes of course!) and the Observers are starting to have their qualifications quality assured by IAMRS examiners; all passes there too thankfully.

The Observer training day is now firm in the clubs diary for Saturday 9th April and planning for this event so far has run to a classroom exercise delivered by Del going through some of the vagaries/detail of Observing and then we've got Marcus McCormick, our Midlands IAMRS examiner, coming to both ride with us and answer our questions and give a brief presso to clear up some of the misconceptions we might have as to what he's looking for in terms of "test ready associates".

If you've an inkling you would like to be an Observer this is an ideal occasion to find out more and so please do contact Alex to book yourself on this half-day session. It goes without saying if you are already a WHAM Observer, please do your best to attend.

When I started Observing I made the mistake of thinking it was all about the riding, my riding. I could not have been any more wrong. Yes, an Observer should be able to deliver a First standard of demo ride and not make any system faults; but the essence of Observing is all about communication skills.

Communication skills as in not going on broadcast. Communication as in getting your associate to feel comfortable, to open up, to take information in bite sized chunks and use it and feel happy to ask questions and even tell you what they are not good at/worried about. These are the skills we are looking for in new Observers.

Lastly, the Exmoor weekend at the end of April is fully booked at The Raleigh Cross however there are members staying somewhere else locally and joining in on the rides. You can of course meet up just for the rides and so please do join in.

Yours in Sport

Richard H

WHAM Chair





### Alex Goes to Normandy

I found this story in my articles archive, anyway it's from 2013 a very long time ago, on one of the first trips when WHAM went over to Normandy. I hope you enjoy this blast from the past.

The phone rings it's Del. "Hello mate I'm organising a trip to Normandy in September do you fancy coming over with us? To help keep costs down you can share a room with me, Paul and Roger". "Fantastic, that sounds great, book me in". I put the phone down and my heart sinks, I haven't shared a room with three other guys since I was in the Scouts. That was 1970 and I must have been around eleven or twelve. I'm going to be so far out of my comfort zone that it's frightening to think about it.

That said, I've paid my money and booked the ferry so I'm going, come hell or high water. A group of us meet up at Trumpet Cross for the journey down to Portsmouth. Also, really good to see some WHAM biker chicks coming on this tour; as both Ali and Gill and Annie came on their own machines. It's a pretty straight forward journey and we make it in good time. The crossing takes around four hours, and this is my next worry as I'm not very good on boats, particularly when they start to rock and roll a bit. The trips I've done with the group to Spain are a much longer journey time, so I always book a cabin. That way if it gets rough at least you have direct access to your own loo to keep you company. I need not have worried as both crossings were pretty calm.

We arrive in Caen at around 9.00 o'clock in the evening, it's pitch black, and we have no real idea of which way to go, so it's trust in Garmin time again and hope it works properly this time. Del takes the lead and true to form after a few miles we end up going up a dirt track across a field. You know the best bit, like lemmings we all followed him to a man, eventually we get back on track and arrive at our B&B in Arromanches. We are shown to our room and as planned I'm sharing with Del, Paul, and Roger. A quick tip, make sure you take your ear plugs in with you, as if one of the guys you are sharing with snores for England then ear plugs might mean that you get at least a partial night's sleep.

To be fair to the other guys and to my utter amazement nobody did really snore, Del AKA Mr Snuffles, does in fact snuffle but it's not too bad. Perhaps I'm the one who snores as I did not hear anyone else. The first morning arrives and it's the Continent so prompt at seven o'clock in the morning the faithful are called to prayer, bells are ringing and clanging, it's mayhem. The bad news



is the local church is about 300 yards from our room. So, forget any notion of a lie in.

The accommodation is run by a British couple Adrian and Karen and was very good. The rooms are a sort of bunk house style but are clean and tidy, the full English breakfast was to die for, far more than I could manage, which did surprise a few people, myself included. The evening meals were also very good with copious amounts of beer, cider and red wine being consumed as the evening went on. Paul, I think it was, had instigated some tee shirts to mark the trip, and true to form overnight I became Mr Hungry.

It's a very short walk to the beach at Arromanches and the Mulberry harbours are still visible. Now I'm from a generation that has never had to go to war, so the enormity of what went on here on D Day is hard to comprehend. Over the course of the next few days, we visit many other sites and some of the war graves and cemeteries. It is very sobering and hard to get your head around just what went on here back in June of 1945 suffice it to say that many men and woman paid the ultimate price for our freedom, you can't fail to be moved by it, and it does bring a tear to your eye.

The roads around this part of Normandy are excellent biking roads and Del had planned some trips out and about so that we could see a bit more of the countryside. The trip out to see Pegasus bridge was a truly fantastic day out. So if you do get chance to go over to Normandy jump at the chance; you won't be disappointed.

The riding plan for most days was to go out to see some sites and places of interest, enjoy the riding, and the roads, and stop for coffee and lunch when you felt like it. Once we got back to the B&B its change and then to the bar for a few, or in some cases a lot, of beers. There was a large refectory table outside in the courtyard which doubled as the bar, a fridge full of French bottled lager was close to hand. Which was restocked every day. Now by the time we ended up going in for the evening meal this fridge was nearly empty, there are some images around of a lot of dead lager bottles if proof is needed.

The Bear. Now in most rooms there was a teddy bear, and our room was no different. Some of the things that happened to this poor bear over the course of our stay, I dare not reveal. The four of us have sworn an oath not to say any more on the subject. Perhaps in a few years time and under the Freedom of Information Act all may become known, but until then silence is golden.

However, there are photos to hand of said bear with my helmet and gloves on, eating a Ginsters pasty and other depraved acts which I will not dwell on. All I can tell you is that bears can fly, in the dead of night at around three or four o'clock in the morning, bears can fly.

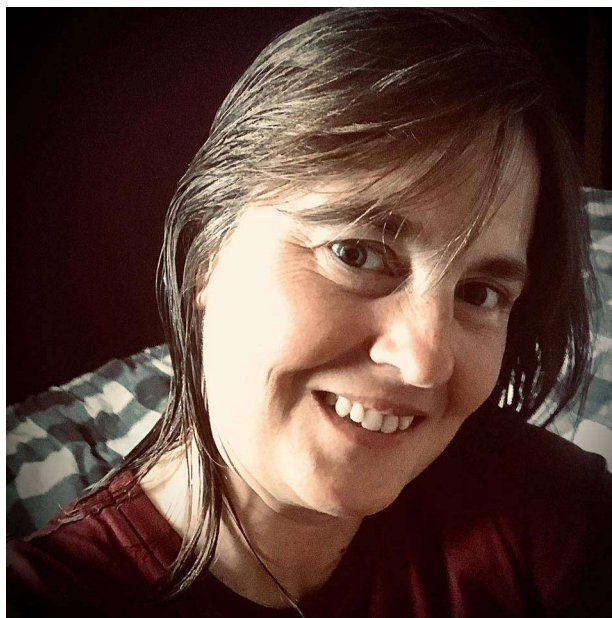
Before you could say mine's a large red wine, we are on the way home. Thankfully the crossing was calm and at around 7.00PM we arrive back in Blighty. Now on departing the ferry I got split up from Del and the gang so made my own way home. Now here's the freaky thing, I arrive at Trumpet Cross and look over to my right to see Lawrence who has just arrived at the same crossroads from the other direction. Both of us came different ways and both of us arrive at Trumpet Cross at the exact same time, how weird is that.

To be fair to Del, Rog and Paul sharing a room with three of them wasn't actually that bad after all. There was a pretty good team spirit and by the end of the trip it was difficult to keep a straight face. For days after I got home, I would think of something that went on in our room, or on the trip, and then burst into spontaneous laughter. Which can't be bad.

And the moral of my little story, well perhaps it does you good sometimes to get out of your comfort zone.

## MARCH RIDE OF THE TIGER – SAM FURMINGER

It's March, and by the time you read this, Spring will have well and truly sprung! The daffodils are out, the clocks go forwards at the end of the month, and the milder temperatures have arrived, it's definitely time to ride more. After being wrapped up for winter, I fired up my V-twin Honda Shadow Spirit for the first time, and had forgotten the glorious bassy sound of her engine, having got used to the Tiger's shrill of the triple over winter. So we went for a little warm up, shake down pootle, readjusting myself to the more laid back seating position. It was great to be back on her. I look forward to taking her to one of our weekend rides.



Attending the WHAM weekend rides is something I want to do more of this year. I am a firm believer that no one is the perfect rider, and it's always good to ride with other advanced riders to keep skills honed and gain further experience. Some of us have just passed our test, others may have passed their Advanced test twenty years ago. There's always a better rider than you, whatever your level; we all dream of being like Rossi don't we..... or is that just me?

As a female rider, we are a minority in this motorcycling world, but the number of ladies sacking off the pillion position, to be at the pointy end has increased significantly in recent years. I will never forget attending a female gathering where nigh on 3000 lady motorcyclists turned up, riding



some pretty swish machines too! Whether you like it or not, and there are differing opinions, it's no longer just a boys' sport.



I had the joy of joining my WHAM friends for the Malvern to Crossgates via Dolfors route. An early start as I set off from the Gloucestershires. One wrong turning and I ended up wading through a fully flooded road even before arriving. Little did I know, that it wouldn't be the last large puddle of the day. Around 15 turned up, from 5 different counties (I gather), to enjoy the delights of route 46.

We set off in our groups. For some of us it was the first time we had attempted this route, for others, they were old hands. The more you practice and all of that.... I had an Italian, an Indian and a crossdresser in my group so I was very excited of what was ahead. We were the 'steady' group; Mark was scrubbing his knob-ley tyres, Donna was on her start of season warm up ride, and Rich... kicking back for the craic. I was just on muff watch, easily distracted as always.

We had some rain en route, but it didn't spoil the wonderful scenery and the joy of riding with friends. Yes in a rather childlike fashion, I did raise my legs up as I sung, 'whreeeee' through the

deep puddles and I insisted saying 'meeeeowwww' every time I accelerated – I know, I know, but it's only me in my helmet, and you didn't have to endure the back catalogue of One Direction on Bluetooth comms, did you. My time, my fun, my humour!

Some roads were more technical than others, but that's what makes it fun and challenging; applying the advanced process and pushing yourself a little more each time. When we arrived at Crossgates, feedback was shared and I will take that away, practice more, and try again for that 'skill perfect' ride next time. I had a great few hours out, the bonus of a sausage sandwich, and the joy of catching up with friends.



The Welsh countryside did not disappoint and I encountered sheep in the road on the way home. I know, drama eh?! What I love about WHAM rideouts, is that it gives you the chance to try roads you may never have tried before, and visit places which are a little further from home.



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The Tiger got its run, and I got out the house. What's not to like? If you haven't been on one of our rides yet, do give it a try. They're a friendly bunch, even when I rocked up on my first ride as a random female at a McDonalds car park, I was greeted and put in a group. You only have a first time once, so when you do it, then you're already one ride ahead someone who hasn't joined us yet.



## LOTS OF FUN WITH YOUR CLOTHES ON – JIM ROLT

The other month at one of our many meetings I noticed Alex, our chief Observer sporting a rather nice paddock jacket emblazoned with the words 'Loton Park'. It reminded me of days not so long ago when I used to be rather familiar with that place, and many others of a similar ilk. In case you don't know, Loton Park is one of the Midlands' premier hillclimb tracks, along with others like Shelsley Walsh and Prescott.

Hillclimb racing is one of the oldest and most pure forms of motor sport, and indeed the Shelsley Walsh track, just down the road from Bromyard, is the oldest motor sport venue in the world! The reason why it's a pure form of sport is that you race alone against the clock, so

- Nobody gets in the way

- Nobody scares you half to death
- There's nobody to chase
- It's hard to work out where you are fast and where you are slow

The great thing is, the biker crowd are fantastic fun and everyone helps each other.. the car people think we are nuts, and perhaps they are right, but although there have been injuries, I don't think anyone has failed to survive hillclimb racing on a bike! Oh, and it's relatively cheap to do, there's even a road legal class where you can run your everyday bike. That's where I started, but it wasn't long before I got drawn into the faster equipment, settling into a 250 Honda CR (converted MX bike) which served me well



Here I am having plenty of fun at the Gooseneck, Isle of Man on my everyday Harley which some of you may have spotted.. This bike was clocked about a mile past this spot at 121mph.. not bad for a 'comedy' bike! :)

The Isle of Man was a rare treat, but Loton Park has always been one of my favourites, quite close to home and a fairly long hill with a bit of everything, - fast bits, technical bits, and scary bits! The Hagley and district Light Car Club are kind enough to invite the NHCA (National Hillclimb Association) to two or three events a year and there are always plenty of takers.

Unfortunately I don't race any more, the increasing years make the time taken to recover from a crash exponentially longer, to the point where it just isn't worth it any more! Of course you don't have to fall off, but if you don't occasionally then you aren't trying very hard, and I doubt I could just go for a pootle.. However I have lots of nice memories and shelves full of mementoes and I heartily recommend it if you're anywhere under 60! It also will also much improve your road safety and confidence as you learn what the capabilities of your machine really are!



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