

# WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



November 2022



## EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Well, the more seasonal weather means I've dug out the electric gloves again and luckily they still work! I have a pair of Gerbings that I have had for about 10 years and they still work a treat. I'm a bit surprised, as one would think that with all the movement and bashing around that a glove gets those fragile little wires wouldn't last too long. But they do, and I can only recommend them, and the gloves they are a part of, heartily!

The only drawback is the wiring.. Threading the cables through the jacket and down the arms, then trying not to lose the connector back up the sleeve! Not to mention trailing the main cable under the skirt of the jacket and forgetting to unplug when dismounting for petrol.. but its all worth it for that wonderful warmth which arrives just moments after switching on.

I know many have fully electric suits these days, I can only look on in admiration at the wealth and dedication of those riders.

Speaking of wealth, I need new tyres on the Thruxton. Already. I won't be getting Rosso 3s again, life of 2000 miles under *gentle* riding; I don't think such radical tyres are necessary for road riding, there are so few opportunities to make full use of a sticky tyre in safety off the track.. I've decided on Michelin road 5 which are reviewed as very good in cold wet conditions with a decent life too. [Chris Mullins](#) in Gloucester is doing the job for me, only a tad over 300 quid for 2 tyres fitted!! (My credit card is now covering somewhere, hope I can find it in time..) He comes well recommended by the WHAM cognoscenti. Also recommended are [Lee Motorcycles](#) in Ledbury, but I think yer man is having a back operation as not answering the phone presently. If you're looking a bit further north try [Stourbridge Motorcycle Centre](#) who are also recommended. Or even [Wheelhouse Tyres](#) in Coleshill if you really fancy a ride up to the frozen north!

Ace Observer Rob Edwards has a new string to his bow, motorcycle detailing.. if your bike's looking a bit tatty he will bring it up to showroom condition in no time. He's done our Chief Observer's bike recently, and I'm hoping to bring you a feature article of the process before long, - watch this



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space! And in the meantime if you'd like your bike to receive some TLC, give me a shout ,and I'll put you in touch with Rob.. [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com).

Hero of the month is Ant Clerici who has contributed not one, but TWO articles, thereby also letting off the CO from doing his piece, with his excellent distillation of [gears vs brakes](#) and how this all fits together with IPSGA. His second piece is a very good summary about the [WHAM group riding policy](#), which should dispel any doubts you may have about how to handle nearly any situation in a group ride.

I'm still working on the Masters course, and theres a brief note about my [experiences this month](#) . Many thanks to Andy Chamber for his account of the annual ride to the [National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas](#).

I was browsing old issues of this newsletter and found an article from 2019 by occasional contributor [Alan Rider](#), - I thought it amusing, I hope you do too!

Finally (at last you cry) don't forget to book the Christmas meal on 16<sup>th</sup> December, do it online via <https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/event/wham-xmas-dinner/>. I'm gutted, my diary is conspiring to prevent me joining in with any number of weekend WHAM events this year.. I hope for better luck next year`.

Even more finally, keep up to date with all the events your committee works tirelessly to put together for you, always up to date at <https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/events/>

And finally finally, please send me your ideas, thoughts, likes and loathings for inclusion in the newsletter. You'll find me at [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com)

Thanks!

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD – RICHARD HEWITT

The NEC bike show has been and gone and that means it must be nearly time for heated jackets, heated gloves, and even heated insoles to come out for our Sunday rides.

Having spent some time on the IAMRS stand at Motorcycle Live I am able to report WHAM will have a few more members activating their e-vouchers next spring to start the associate journey with us. Within this number we have men and women ages young and not-so-young, but definitely all young at heart and ready to get to grips with improving their riding. The common theme was that new members wanted to understand “what they didn’t know” (I think Chugs calls this “unconscious incompetence”), and that they wanted to do that in order to feel more confident whilst riding, in knowing what they should do, practising this, and whether they reached the pinnacle of a Masters or not, they would be armed with the knowledge to be the best they could be. The equation amongst new associates seems now to read:



Knowledge + practice = confidence + enjoyment

There is one key element of the charitable road-safety status/ethos of IAMRS missing in the above equation – Safety. However, as Safety clearly runs through the equation above in the same way the Information phase of IPSGA runs through the whole (and can actually be returned to at any point) it is heartening to know that the promise of safety can be delivered upon within the four more tangible items within the equation as noted above.

Within the Observer corps IAMRS has done much over the last few years to focus in on communication standards being of equal value to riding prowess. This has led to confidence and enjoyment coming along with safety rather than safety merely as a standalone deliverable. As they say, you can catch more flies with honey...

Whilst the bike I really wanted to see was missing from the show (Moto Guzzi V100) it was nice to see all the other major manufacturers having complete ranges of bikes there (apart from Ducati, why was that?) and it was also nice to see the return of peoples children being able to boing up and down on static bikes to their hearts content and also have some access to a fantastic balance bike arena and even a proper electric bike in a little corner of the show. We will get more youngsters on bikes if they start early.

I would be interested to hear our members views on how we can get more new riders onto our courses. The cost does not seem to be prohibitive; the “reputation” however, as a bunch of old fuddy-duddies still pervades. My own appearance is one of the reasons I think I am asked back each year. My long hair at least initially assuages young people’s fuddy-duddy concerns and once into conversation they become as engaged as anyone else. So, the task remains, how do we engage with more younger folk? Answers on a postcard.

WHAM’s Christmas do at the Falcon now has just short of thirty members signed up to attend (see website for details). I would obviously like more of the 160 people we’ve as members there and so please do come along for a night of decent food, music, a slide show from the years riding, and the obligatory banter that seems to accompany a group of WHAMMERS. I did overhear a conversation at one of the Sunday rides that the fact there was no “entertainment” was a reason not to come. This is personal choice and unless those that want this step-forward and suggest something is needed, we are with the formula that seems to have worked previously. I mention this as your committee is committed to delivering what the members want. Not merely what the committee wants. Any of us can be contacted on the QT to suggest things.

However, if anyone has not seen Matt D six-pints in and in full swing and not found that amusing, I might suggest you need to come and experience it for yourself.

Finally, the date for the AGM will be published soon; we’ve spots on the committee for new blood to bring in innovative ideas and so please do step-forward to help direct all that we do.

See you out on the road.

Richard Hewitt

WHAM Chair

## MORE ON GEARS – ANT CLERICI

### ipsGa (or “oh gear”)

First a disclaimer – your bike might perform differently to what is being described here with greater or lesser engine braking or different revs at different speeds; but the principles should hold if you follow IPSGA. If we had F1 telemetry fitted to our bikes what would the ideal graph look like? It's clear that most riders only use a small % of throttle available. A while ago RIDE Magazine tested a normal biker against a Police rider and a racer on UK roads. The normal biker rarely used more than 20% of available throttle; the Police rider was more proactive and, for the racer, it was more of an “ON/OFF” switch.

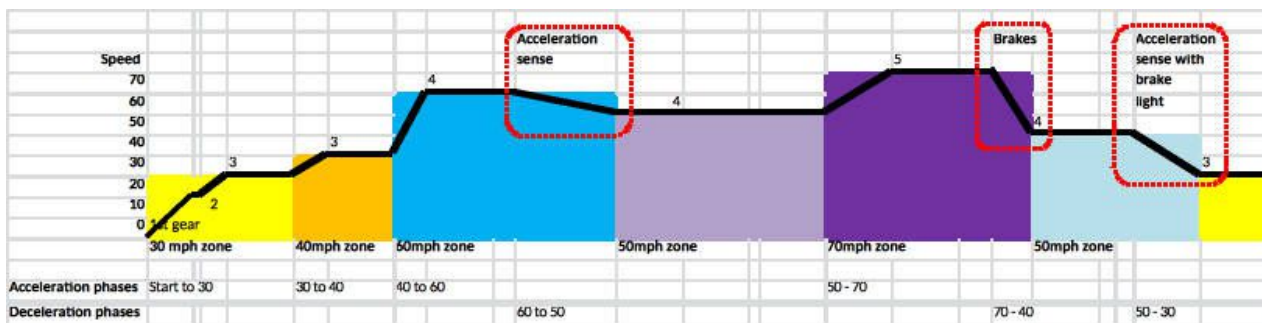
Now gentle acceleration and roll off (acceleration sense) is good for ‘eco’riding (Whatever that is?) But it's not advanced riding? It's not “making progress”. Is it?

So what's our skill here?

First, when slowing do you adhere to IPSGA?

Let's say you are riding at 60mph approaching a 30mph sign; there are 3 options:

1. Use acceleration sense by smoothly rolling off the throttle. Here you need good judgement as to how your bike will slow, on that road, in those conditions and at those revs.



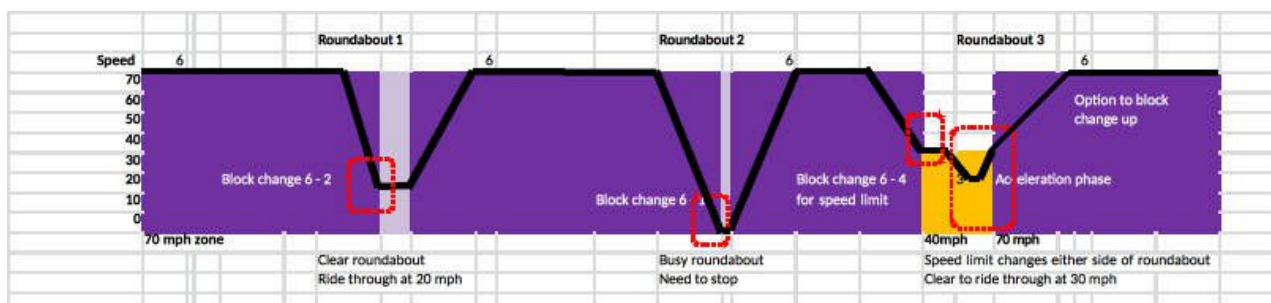
Ideally you hit 30mph as you cross imaginary the line joining the two 30mph signs. Then select the appropriate gear and continue....

2. If you need to slow quicker than acceleration sense will provide then use your brakes. Front? Back? Both? Again a matter of judgement so you reduce your speed without unbalancing the bike, avoid skidding. Again observation of the conditions is key.



3. Finally, you might be able to use acceleration sense but consider if you need to inform vehicles behind you that you are slowing; if so then roll off the throttle and switch on your brake light. Usually a gentle foot on the rear brake is what's needed here.

4. Not mentioned is 'block changing' gears. Here the art is one of timing your changes to ensure smooth progress through the hazard.



What about accelerating?

Does it matter about gear changes?

My personal view is that most of the time you needn't change up until you have reached your target speed. Now obviously starting off on a 50 mph road won't see anyone still in first gear as they hit 50mph! Perhaps even zero to 30mph will see a change into 2nd. But what about 30 mph to 60 mph? Some riders will either be in a too high a gear for the 30mph speed limit and will accelerate to 60 mph without thinking about gears. How often do we hear "my bike has so much torque I can use top gear from 20mph...."

But if you are in 2nd or 3rd at 30mph do you select 4th then 5th before reaching 60mph?

I suggest holding the lower gear, using that wonderful acceleration to leave any traffic behind, then at 60mph change up.....or not...if there's an approaching bend/hazard then the higher revs can be useful to create more control with stronger deceleration.

Typically when descending mountain roads – hairpin to hairpin – exiting a bend in 2nd and holding 2nd for the next bend can be really useful.

Finally, what about changing down a gear (or two) and not changing your speed?

Why would you do that?

The reason is to increase your revs, say, when approaching a bend, to give you more control. If you watch good riders they will often click down a gear just as they set up for the bend ahead. You all know the advice: right position, right speed in the correct gear to allow a positive throttle as you

negotiate the bend (and to be able to stop on your side of the road etc). And as the limit point moves away and you see the solid line change to a broken line you have best possible acceleration as you exit the bend. And if an overtake is available you will have the optimum response from the bike available to you.

Best use of gears is a key skill for making safe progress; if you are like me you need to practice "best practice". As autumn leaves and mud covers our rural roads the optimum use of your gearbox will help you safely navigate these seasonal hazards.

## MASTERS COURSE UPDATE – JIM ROLT

The work continues.. I've been scrutinised again, had a bit of an off day but still enjoyed the ride over unfamiliar roads and visiting unfamiliar biking cafes...

I'm working hard on breaking old habits, this, as you may know can be quite a difficult task as the instant you lose focus there it is again!

The hard one for me is overtaking. I suspect that most of us, when we see an overtaking opportunity, open the throttle in a responsive gear and get the job done. This may result in a few moments spent traveling at more than 60mph (shock horror!). No good for the IAM, everything must be 100% legal at all times. As with the standard test, over the limit = instant fail. So overtaking is done much less frequently and with much forethought and planning, and with luck, finally wafting past the slower vehicle at no more than the legal limit in force at the time. This is somewhat of a new skill, and such concentration is needed in planning the overtake from the safety position, moving up to the overtaking position when a possible opportunity looks like it might be about to develop, and then executing the manoeuvre, that no brain power is left over to pay attention to another fault I was unaware of which has been pointed out: Leave the biggest safe gap between you and what you're overtaking. Constantly after performing a perfectly timed pass, I am thinking 'Dam that was closer than it should have been'. The answer is, of course – constant practise!

I'm also trying to make more use of position 1 on the road. This of course also takes a lot of concentration as the far left of the road is usually in worse condition than the rest of it.. potholes, gravel, road repairs, you name it! So the lazy option is to avoid that part of the road. However there are times when it can be useful to get a better view, and sometimes it is possible when the road surface is good all the way to the edge you use this position to good advantage. It requires accuracy and top observation.. Again – practise makes perfect!

I've got the test provisionally booked for next March, so there is still time for plenty of practise, the upside is, lots of excuses to go out riding :)



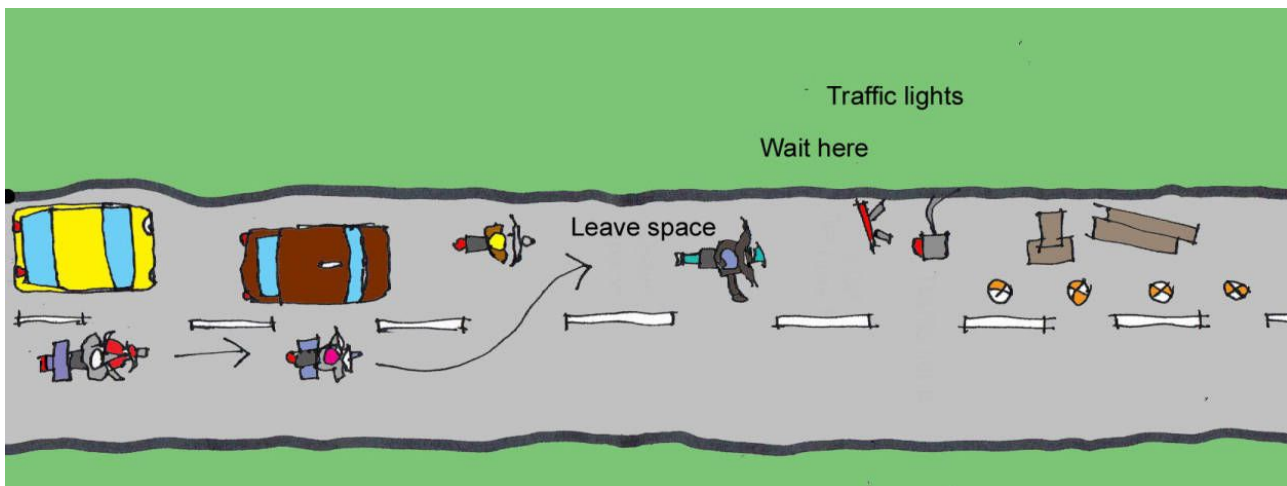
### The finer points of Group riding

WHAM's group riding policy was created not long after the group was founded. We ran a couple of natter night workshops listening to your joys and fears of riding with others; we collated the benefits and highlighted the potential issues. The main results were twofold: first we agreed to drop the '2nd rider drop off' system which, at the time, flew in the face of common practice and even contradicted IAMRS "guidelines" for group riding. We ride in small groups. And second, to only allow full members to participate in our regular Sunday rides. The standard of riding between associates and full members was too disparate and generated problems such as too much pressure to keep up; leading to dangerous riding.

Our group riding system has seen us successfully navigate to cafes on our Sunday rides and across Europe from Mount Grappa (almost Venice) to the Picos (in Spain), we have coped with Garmin's efforts to split up groups and get us lost but had fun in the process.

So what about the finer points of group riding? Here are seven.....do you know of any more?

1. Waiting at red traffic lights: allow space for any riders behind to filter up to you.



2. At junctions where you have to wait for a following rider make sure, absolutely sure, they see where to go next.

**Top tip:** it is often better to slow before the turning to allow time for the rider behind to catch up. In this way you avoid a stop. Unless there's good vision, avoid waiting after you have turned as they will sail past and miss the turn.

3. During the ride swap your order: allow everyone a chance to lead or be “tail end Charlie”.

Obviously if one of your group hasn't got the route then keep them in the middle. [*Or stick them up front and test their ability to follow the indications of the rider behind as per IAM test procedure - ED*]

4. Gather your group together before you enter sections of urban riding or tackle complicated sections of the route. For example, on the A44 approaching Leominster or just before you enter Bridgnorth.

This can become more important on unfamiliar busy roads and on European sections of AutoRoute through places such as Lille or around the always busy Brussels ring road.

5. Follow the bike in front even if your satnav says otherwise.

Remember that the Garmin demons will be trying to separate you and cause confusion!

6. If your group catches another WHAM group on the open road then consider a 2 to 3 minute stop to regain separation from the other group.

7. If the leader of a quicker group is looking to pass you then assist by enabling a safe overtake. Then ensure the rest of that group can safely follow. The longer two groups are mixed up on the road the greater the potential for errors.

The overtaking rider needs to ensure they are seen by the rider in front and shouldn't suddenly blast past or even take away an overtaking opportunity for the “slower” rider.

Be polite, be patient, be considerate!

**Top tip:** I usually plan to allow a quicker rider past me on a safe section of the road.

I might gently back off for a second or two and give a (friendly) wave through.



## **But there's a question.....**

Notes 6 and 7 above conflict...or do they?

If everyone is riding well, making good progress after leaving the start at intervals of 2 – 3 minutes, then groups shouldn't come together.

If you catch another group do you stop to regain the gap (6) or pass the slower group (7)?

It is a matter of judgement.

Understand the reason for catching up? Temporary traffic lights? Are you all stuck behind a slow moving vehicle? Something else?

Perhaps try '6' first and if you catch up again then look to pass.

Above all else be safe for yourself and fellow riders.

Finally, group riding is brilliant for so many reasons; it'll improve your riding and give a shared experience that car drivers can only dream of!

## **New to group riding?**

If you are new to group riding, I and our other observers are always happy to introduce you to your first group ride. Let us know beforehand ([ant@clericidesign.com](mailto:ant@clericidesign.com)) or simply introduce yourself on a Sunday morning.

If anyone is interested in a separate group ride session please contact me. In the past we have run a classroom session followed by a group ride out.

## THE TAIL ENDS – ALAN RIDER



I should warn readers this article has no flash photography but does have language some may find offensive.

I somewhat shamefully recall attending an event featuring a multitude of individuals obsessed beyond any measure of reason with two wheeled powered bicycles at Cheltenham Racecourse a few years ago, a decade plus in truth, called BikeSafe. Allegedly, and I'm assured truthfully, UK-wide events co-developed and delivered by one ex Police Officer Martyn Hillier QPM\*, well known to my readers as one of WHAM's local IAM examiners. The organisers had enlisted some more amazingly enthusiastic members of our Police Service. Nowadays regrettably a rare sight on the streets of our beleaguered, trying-to-Brexit country, these very well-natured and upstanding upholders-of-the-law were eager to provide on-road tuition to closet wannabe-racers like myself.

Given the missive to "do your own ride" and, though for the life of me I fail to remember precisely how such was verbally delivered, the inference I took was that the national speed limit didn't really apply on this occasion. Up Cleeve Hill on a surface that resembled how worn out Roman roads must have been when their local council was likewise denied central funding from Londinium, we crested the mount and swept downhill towards Winchcombe. Now my reader will know of the sweeping left-hander with questionable camber and with a turning to Postlip Hall on the apex. Seeking to impress said guardian of the law, himself following a prudent and respectable distance behind me, I made a point of twisting my helmeted bonce noticeably to the left, ostensibly looking downhill and across the sloping greensward of fields to discern what distant traffic might be climbing towards said hazard, but actually to impress with the scope of my otherwise myopic observational ability.

Come the debrief, and confidently expecting rapturous commendation, perhaps even approaching the dizzy heights of RoSPA Gold nomination, I waited in confident anticipation. But so swiftly banished to be replaced by a humble, downcast sort of shuffle. "So, that look to the left was for my benefit I take it." Or to put it in the vernacular "don't mess with me, you tit!" Obviously, at that particular moment, my right boot strap needed serious adjustment. The point of this particular script is that there can be quite a bit of



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the 'art-of-the-con' in being observed.

This art may be entirely unconscious for those in questionable trades like banking, estate agency and fast food outlets promising organic curry sauce. But for the majority of twits like your scribe, absolute dedication, focussed research, insightful forethought, planning and downright luck are effort worthy in mastering this art form. The latter good fortune playing to my advantage on my IAM test. Mounted stylishly in leathers enviably colour matching the wafer-thin Italian paint job of my near suspension-less machine, I accelerated vividly up the hill that ultimately connects Seven Springs with the A40 near Andoversford. Spying the hugely disrupted road surface suffering from repeated intrusions into its sub-structure, and myself not yet blessed with the, debatable, gift of offspring, I sought to protect my skeleton and its precious equipment from terminal damage by moving close to the nearside. Come the debrief, commendation was swift and sure: "Nice positioning Alan, loved the way you moved to the nearside with those cyclists coming down the hill, excellent observation!" Polite silence seemed appropriate.

So, what other expressions of this ancient art of deception might we contemplate. Beautifully timed twitching of the left foot perhaps, thus satisfying your observer's craving for gearchange evidence despite your mount's 'do-anything-in-5th-gear' capability. And on that same point, why not instigate confusion by staying high but not running wide. Smirk worthy! Then again, judicious and blatant, yet oh-so-delicate application of t'rear brake on wet roads, even though your brakes are linked, is a very sophisticated con, thus demo-ing grip control on a planet beyond masterful. Guaranteed to gain accolade. What about those Jurassic observers' need to witness strategic shoulder checks. Employing an unmistakeable and unnecessary surfeit of these is readily explained away thanks to that involuntary twitch everlastingly bestowed on you from the womb of your reluctant mother. Definitely too politically risky to challenge - excellent! Worst of all, dare I suggest it, yet deeply satisfying, is the utterly outrageous and heinous crime of striding purposefully to your propped steed, swinging leg astride cowboy fashion, seating butt firmly whilst simultaneously swiping prop stand away and urging starter motor engagement. Sure to frustrate the hell out of observer. Pure heaven!

Warning: do not try these antics at WHAM!

\*Queen's Police Medal awarded for outstanding service to motorcycling safety.

## THE ANNUAL RIDE TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM RETURNS ANDY CHAMBERS



Sunday 20th November saw the return of the annual remembrance ride out to the National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas. We also returned to the Hereford contingent starting from the OK Diner at Leominster, and the Worcester contingent from McDonalds at Wychbold.

Nine arrived at the ok diner at 8:30am for a 9am start, we departed the diner in a group of 4 and 5, just 3 leaving the Wychbold start. The journey there was dry and uneventful but saw us pass through Brindley Heath on the north side of Cannock Chase, and then on to Rugeley before reaching Alrewas.

We arrived at the National Memorial Arboretum a little after 11am with beautiful blue skies and quite warm, we were joined a little while later by the Worcester crew, and we all made our way into the visitors centre to partake in some refreshment. As always the food was prompt, and very welcome. The conversation was all motorcycle whilst we devoured our breakfast, but as the breakfast disappeared, we turned to the purpose of the visit.



We walked through the large fully glazed doors out into the arboretum, and made our way to the Armed Forces Memorial, which was stunning set against the blue sky

Everyone spent a few moments sharing facts of lost family members, friends and colleges. Some members of the group having served and had friends and colleges who didn't make it home. We were called into a group to spend a moment or two whilst Del Britton read a verse from The Ode to the Fallen by Robert Laurence Binyon.

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning*





*"We will remember them"*



We made our way back through the visitor centre and readied ourselves for the trip home which promised to be the exact reverse of the journey there, in both the route, and the weather. It was not long before we encountered rain which became progressively heavier. However, I think the day was enjoyed by all, and served as a poignant reminder of the sacrifice that so many people made to give us the lives we live today.

Andy Chambers