

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



AUGUST 2023



EDITORIAL

Greetings to you all! We have a great day for everyone to participate in coming up very soon in the diary, none other than your very own (fanfare) WHAM Slow Riding Day..

This is very much a participation event, a day where we can all have a go and improve our riding skills in a safe environment. For those of us (including me) who haven't been before, Richard Hewitt, our Chairman, [has written a piece](#) which describes what is on offer; it looks like its going to be a load of fun - with the added attraction of FOOD, and possibly, even CHIPS..



I do know the highlight of the afternoon is the slow riding race, the winner of which gets to take home the trophy pictured here on the right, I am definitely going to win it..

This year's event is on the August 5th, and starts at 10:30am prompt. It is at Madley Industrial Estate, which can be found south-west of Hereford here: <https://goo.gl/maps/PhDtJkrrSSCVDNdt9>

As ever, we also have the [Chief Observer's report](#), as well as Richard's usual [Chairman's letter](#).

Finishing off, a reprint of an article by the [irrepressible Alan Rider](#), from 2019, on the joys of trying to keep your bike clean.. (particularly appropriate this year when the roads have scarcely dried all season!)

A big shout out to the excellent Andy Chambers who ably took the reins of this publication for me while I was off doing some solo sailing in the [Jester Challenge](#), thanks Andy!

You may notice that this isn't a huge issue. Well, you've only got yourselves to blame. For this newsletter to be a thicker volume we need content, and that's where you come in!

I think we all have an experience, opinion, or handy tip we could pass along and share, so please grab a moment or two and send something to me, Jim Rolt, via whamnewsletter@gmail.com

Stop press! Reader's ads: [Denali BMW kit](#)



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

As we are now into full swing Observing and Sunday riding, I thought I would start by thanking all our lovely Observers, led by the ever-reliable Alex, for all their hard work this spring and early summer. I've not the stats to hand whilst typing this on the train to old London town yet from memory we've three Masters with distinction, several Firsts, and then some solid test passes to celebrate so far this year. I was pleased that one slightly overenthusiastic fail converted to a solid pass with just a little more tuning.

Remember, the 'test' is not a race; associates are not on a pursuit ride. All the examiner is looking for is good safe progress and courtesy to your fellow road users.



Sunday rides are getting reasonable attendance; if you have not been out on one yet because you've either question, issue, complaint, I would like to hear from you. Post Covid seems to have dulled attendance on Sunday rides, and I am a loss to understand why?

Upcoming we've the [slow riding day](#) on the 5th August (see piece on this latter on this newsletter), the [WHAM go-karting event](#) on the 19th August (both on the website); and I've pleasure to provide a teaser for the October natter nite at the Falcon where our events committee member Mark Saxton has only gone and booked Vanessa "[The Girl on the Bike](#)" to come and give us a talk. If you have not seen Vanessa's output, see [YouTube](#) for details. Explained quickly, Vanessa had an awful accident in 2014 and has comeback fighting, putting much zeal and effort into all things motorbike.

This autumn we will also have a natter nite with a serving Copper from West Mercia's Traffic division, he is going to dispel some myths and provide some words of wisdom from his over 20-years traffic duty. This will include a Q&A and we are encouraged to ask whatever we want.

I have also heard a rumour that Donna Saxton will be organising a ride down through the Forest of Dean via Chepstow and Tintern Abbey to the Silver Fox café where a Carvery exists! This may well be a 10am start on a Saturday and please do watch our Facebook page and the website for details as the plan forms.

In conversation with Duane, we were wondering if there's appetite for a return to Betws-y-Coed this Autumn? Ireland was just too much of a logistical challenge and so I am afraid that is off for 2023.

Anyway, enjoy your riding wherever you do it and hopefully see you soon.

Rgds

Richard

WHAM Chair



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Written on a PC, but not necessarily so.

We all have perceptions and misconceptions about certain types of people, and I always joke, at least by saying when I'm referring to people who ride Harley Davidsons, "fat blokes on Harleys, riding in the middle of the road." Now, of course, that's not necessarily true, and it's not right to tar everyone with the same brush.

One summer, I went to the Ardennes with some friends on our motorbikes, and we went through the tunnel. However, when we arrived, there were literally hundreds of other bikes, and most of them were ridden by Hell's Angels.

There had been some kind of Hell's Angels get-together or bash down at Brighton (I use the word bash fairly liberally here), and all of these guys were now trying to get back home. Yes, some of them were overweight, and most of them were riding Harley Davidsons. But when you took a closer look, all of these bikes were well cared for and seemed to be in good condition. As we chatted with some of them about bikes and where they had been, we soon realized that they were just ordinary folks like you and me. In fact, most of them seemed to be businessmen who, on the weekends, don their Hell's Angels gear and go out riding with their friends, just as we do. I'm pretty sure you could have washed most of the tattoos off.



To reinforce this, I have just returned from a few days away in the Lake District. We got chatting to the folks on the next breakfast table, and once again, the subject turned to motorbikes. This person was telling me about when he had recently been to America and had gone out for a drink in the evening to one of the local pubs, where there were three immaculate Harley Davidsons parked outside. He started to have a look around these bikes when three rather large chaps in Hell's Angels gear appeared from nowhere. Now he's wondering if this is going to turn into a scene from Deliverance. But as ever when he starts to talk to them about their bikes and how clean and shiny they were, it simply turns out that these guys are three solicitors from Tucson in Arizona.

So where is this going? It is just to say that sometimes we get stuck in our ways, and we have ideas and misconceptions about other groups in society. We make our decisions sometimes based on bias without really having good knowledge of what these other people are about.

This translates to the road and our motorbike riding when we find somebody in front of us who is driving very slowly or someone behind us who is tailgating us and trying to push us along and force us into doing things that we don't want to do.

In situations like these, the best thing you can do is simply pull over and let these people go. I always say to associates: remember that you control the bike; the bike doesn't control you. You can make a conscious decision while you're riding to defuse these situations simply by stopping the bike, pulling over to the side, and taking a few minutes to cool down. Now it's not an easy thing to do once the red mist starts to flow, but you will achieve far more by pulling over and letting things cool off. So, remember: you should never let those around you dictate your ride. One of the sayings we often use is "The Betaris Box Model."

"My Attitude Affects My Behaviour Affects Your Attitude Affects Your Behaviour." It's imperative that you keep control and do not take the bait.

One of the classic situations we see all the time in the UK is encountering drivers who insist on driving at 45 miles per hour, regardless of the speed limit. You often see this as you approach 30 mph zones or enter villages where you have to slow down. You end up with Mr or Mrs 45 mph behind, who try to push you along. If this happens, simply pull over and let them go.

However, if all else fails, you can always just get off your bike and deck the other guy. (Just kidding!)

SLOW RIDING DAY, AN INTRODUCTION – RICHARD HEWITT

Slow riding, off-road skills, machine control, skills day; what are they all about then?

Well, I do not know why we have had so many titles for the same thing, or even why it is so difficult to explain clearly what it is WHAM does once a year on a trading estate somewhere near you.

Thankfully for the gang of us that gets the enviable job of setup on the day we no longer have to sweep the entirety of a disused runway before we reach for the cones and tennis balls. Nowadays, thanks to Andy Culley, we have for one day only, sole private access of a semi-rural perfectly tarmacked trading estate in Madeley. We even have running water and toilets! How things have changed...



Put succinctly, in this private environment we have the ability to lay out a number of 'courses' that are meant to simulate real world scenarios where slow speed machine control is needed. Whether that be clutch and rear brake combined usage at slow speed, or whether it be slowly manoeuvring with full steering lock engaged. We've courses to practice all sorts of scenarios without any pressure from the great unwashed in their cars, on their bicycles, or on their horses.

Full instruction and encouragement is provided by WHAM's Observer corps. and the pace with which you complete courses and how many you attempt is entirely governed by you. It is ok to observe and talk and then gingerly head out and have a go. We carefully monitor courses to ensure that each member is negotiating a course by themselves with no one else "in their space."

The above consumes the morning and the time goes by quickly and enjoyably. Personally, seeing frowns replaced with smiles as skills grow is what gets me smiling each and every year.

Lunch!

My long-suffering wife Sue, together with Mrs Ali Davis always puts on a good spread of food on the day. The night before, Tony and I will have sat patiently, drinking beer, providing helpful encouragement whilst Sue & Ali get the rolls filled with all sorts of tasty fillings. Homemade cake will have been baked by some of the ladies Sue attends to whilst working out in the community, and if we are lucky Adrian Wheeler might be on hand to go down to the chippy too. Tea, coffee, squash, and water is on-hand all day; just ask for it nicely and the Ladies will keep you hydrated. Ask for it rudely at your peril as both these two lovelies are not short of a withering stare or two...

The afternoon session takes on a slightly different tack.

This year we are, well Mark Saxton anyway, is going to demonstrate how to recover a motorcycle that has "found its way onto its side on the floor;" ahem. This is an important skill and one that needs to be completed without putting your back out or ending up under said machine when the weight gets too much.

We then have the option for attendees to spend some more time solo on their favourite morning course or try some high-speed braking. This can be done at whatever speed you like. Yes, you read that right; we've a perfect tarmac surface to really get some speed up and get those anchors nice and hot. However, we usually start with 30mph, then 40mph, then 50mph. Without riders having to worry what others will be doing you will be able to practice emergency stop techniques, explore the true capabilities of your machine and also find out quite how quickly you can come to a stop against what the highway code notes. Once riders have built up and honed both technique and confidence, if they then want to try their hand at a 100mph+ stop that is just fine. My abiding memory of this particular feat as demonstrated by Stuart Pools on a KTM will never leave me!

This only leaves me to describe the main event of the day, the slow speed race. Mike Straughan won last year, much to the ire of Anne-Marie, who unfortunately put a foot down whilst winning. Four or five riders line up together and on command take as long as possible to ride straight forward to a finishing line. It sounds simple yet anything below 3mph is quite a challenge to maintain.

Mike will, may, be relinquishing the trophy this year. If you win the slow speed race it goes on your fireplace for the year.

I hope to see you there on the 5th of August. My single piece of advice for the day is – rest when tired and stay hydrated.

THE TAIL ENDS— BY MR ALAN RIDER

"The other man's bike is always cleaner...."

Cue Pet Clark...

Not so very long ago when bikes were bikes and men wore shin guards, I was visiting the TT and I got depressed. Not clinically

you understand, even that condition wasn't so well understood back then, but well...miserable. Why? Because I had

polished my spokes till they sparkled like the centre stand on a certain member's middle-aged GS you're probably familiar with. And despite hours of finger-shredding polishing, pallets of Autosol Solvol and disgusting Swarfega-stained hand towels all testifying to my superhuman effort and knee numbing crouching, my bike looked old, tired and distinctly sub-prime against the shimmering, RayBan-challenging aurora of glittering machines on Douglas Promenade.





My mate, less seduced by bling than me, had little sympathy. His Tribsa was eternally scruffy but irritatingly nippy and annoyingly cool with a fibreglass tank which was legal in those days, low and angled downwards clip-ons, neat single bump seat and rear set pegs that you had to lift to kick start the brute. All very trendy back then. "There's always someone with a shinier bike" says northern, Tribsa-toting Mate, as he sinks back into his Black Velvet pint, breaks nauseating wind but subtly, and opens another bag of Walkers salt 'n vinegar. Black Velvet my dear reader is a vomit inducing concoction that I believe to be a quintessentially northern habit of combining draught Guinness with bottled cider. A gaseous combo conceived in hell and swallowed in dark recesses north of Bootle.

How true his insight still is. Unless of course you my reader are more obsessed than I am. I kept it up for many a long year with other so-called mates chastising me and telling me "All it needs is a wipe-down with an oily rag!" And "I don't want to clean it with a toothbrush" - an item I personally found invaluable to scrub up those spoke nipples. Along with "A film of oil keeps it from rusting." How true. In reality, keeping oil on the inside of your bike back then was about as futile as keeping toothpaste from gracing the sink on your morning ritual.

So what are we to do about all this bike cleaning? You already know I'm on the tighter side of careful 'cos I wouldn't spend out on summer gear. Well I'll let you into a secret. I spend more sovs on bike and car cleaning gubbins than billionaires do on being first to die on Mars. Bit OTT but that's how it feels! Doesn't matter if your bike is new because you have to keep it that way.

Doesn't matter if it isn't. Because you pitch up at McDonald's, Natter Nights and worst of all Slow Riding Days and if it ain't shiny, utterly spotless and without even a whistleblower's hint of scabby, ally corrosion, you feel BAD! Shameful! Yes, it's a matter of pride. (Ed—I'm obviously low on 'pride' then as mines always seemingly caked in crud...)

So let me leave you to hum to Pet Clark, but with my lyrics and sincere apologies to Jackie Trent

and Tony Hatch

The other man's bike is always cleaner
The rag shines brighter on the other side
The other man's bike is always cleaner
Some get lucky, some do not
Just be happy with what you've got
Bikes are never what we want
Showroom new is there to taunt
And purchase that shiny machine to like
But finance starts to fret the mind
It's hard to dump it all behind
And make believe it's just another bike

Someone else has what you dream
You wish you made enough to buy it too
You'd eat your neck warmer so's not to scream
But would you really if you thought it through?

So, don't go and moan, ditch ideas of a loan
It's much better by far to keep what you own
The other man's bike is always cleaner
The rag shines brighter on the other side
The other man's bike is always cleaner
Some have money, some do not
I'm just saddened I can write this rot



READER'S ADS

GREETINGS WHAMMERS FOR SALE

A DENALI Generation 2 Cansmart controller with two DENALI D4 lights inc mounting bracket, a DENALI 120db sound bomb horn and all wiring harnesses.

This system is suitable for BMW R1200LC SERIES/BMW 1250 SERIES

This system is a plug and play installation where you only need to unplug the bikes tyre pressure monitor.

There is no existing wires to be cut and a full set of instructions included.

Turning on the spot lights is done using the wonder wheel for on/off and brightness. NO third party switches.

The Gen 2 Cansmart is fully programmable for interactive on/off with indicators, hazard and horn.

All the above is currently available from Nippy Normans site at a total of £815

I am asking for £350

Please contact me, Gary Barnes, on 07899 948596 if you have questions.



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