

# WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



June 2023



## EDITORIAL

Right, here we are in proper biking weather and I have no doubt that everyone is taking every possible chance to get out on 2 wheels – including the bane of our lives, those who only (thankfully) come out in the best weather – the Suicide Squad! With their loud pipes, disregard of rules of the road and inability to actually ride. It's a shame that these are the people that other road users remember and we all suffer from that perception.

I went on the [Distinguished Gentleman's Ride](#) with my patient pillion the other week and raised over £100 for men's charities. The day was good fun with lots of posh and silly costumes and quite a few WHAMers taking part too, including some of our charming lady members in fab frocks. It was a very steady ride through the Cotswolds with all sorts of bikes that all fitted into the loose category of 'classic and vintage styled', so the modern Enfields, Nortons and Triumphs were there as well as some proper old gear too



There's some good variety here in your marvellous free newsletter this month:

The [Chairman's Chat](#) is just below featuring some good news about the soon to be announced group riding policy, I've seen a preview and you're going to love it!

Chief Observer Alex Hoyle asks, [should you run a red light for an emergency vehicle](#) – the answer isn't that clear cut and is food for thought..

What do you know about sidecar outfits? I rode them for years from the mid 1960s when I had a Triumph Saint (650cc black police spec bike) with Watsonian GP sports on the side, my main family transport for a few years, - never broke down! Then later I put together an old 1957 T110/A7 Tribsa, again with a GP sports when my youngest son was born. You gotta keep biking! . John



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Nixon is our 3 wheel expert and occasional contributor to this organ, [read his article and learn!](#) I'm not certain about the title though, I think it's probably a metaphor.

Martin (Rocket Man) Ward has a [salutary tale](#) about what happens to tyres when they get old. Read his account of a terrifying experience recently, and find out how to check the manufacturing date of your tyres, which would certainly be handy if you buy a used bike..

Finally, [reader's ads](#)! A cornucopia of used bikes for sale, something for almost every pocket.

If you do have anything at all even loosely connected with biking, I'm begging you to let me have it! Contact me via [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com)

Have a great month!

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Now that the warmer weather is here the general uptick in numbers turning out on Sunday WHAM rides has also arrived. Over the Winter Tony Reusser and Alex Hoyle, ably assisted by a small band of experienced Observers (Gary Barnes, Phil George, and Ant Clerici), have been working on a project to provide our Observers with additional tools to equip associates with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to join member only rides immediately on passing their advanced test.

Tony and the team have put much time, effort, and brain power into developing a suite of documents that I believe will see a greater percentage of riders become active members sooner rather than later. The material will be made available on the WHAM website shortly and all Observers can expect to receive contact from Tony to get them personally up to speed on the new routines.

The committee felt able to sign-off the material in full at the last committee meeting and on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Tony and his project team for their efforts in completing this important project.

Wednesday natter nites now take on a new format in the warmer months. However, we are toying with amending the format for this year. Rather than a circular ride to the Falcon in Bromyard we're going to trial rides to Public Biker nites in and around our patch. Tony Davis, as route master, is going to put some routes together for various published bike nites and the deets will be shared on the clubs Facebook page, and website. I should mention this is quite time consuming on Tony's part and the new routes accompanied by the venues themselves may not be published until the week before the event and so please do keep your eyes on Facebook and the website for information.

Lastly, the Ireland trip in September; I'm afraid this might be in some peril. Ferry times, hotel availability, and time might not be with us. Andy Chambers and Tony Davis have both posted questions on Facebook as to what the membership would like to do and so can I ask anybody



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having a remote interest in attending some sort of weekend away with fellow WHAMMERS to get on Facebook and answer the question as posed by Andy and Tony please.

Ok, so that's it for this month from me. I hope to see many of you out on the Sunday rides; let's enjoy the warm weather whilst it lasts.

My very best!

Richard Hewitt

WHAM

Chair

## CHIEF OBSERVER'S REPORT – ALEX HOYLE

### Should You Run a Red Light for Emergency Vehicles

O.K. this month's subject is, should you go through a red light if an emergency vehicle is behind you with its flashing light on. Some interesting text below from the Telegraph Newspaper, and below that, what the law says about this subject.

However please do try and watch the video below which is from a rider who was not prepared to break the law for a police car using blues and twos, while stuck at traffic lights in London. It's about ten minutes long, but the interesting bit is right at the beginning of the video, if you don't wish to sit through the whole thing.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66q1tXWXU70&ab\\_channel=BeansOnToast](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66q1tXWXU70&ab_channel=BeansOnToast)

If you break the law even if told to do so by a police officer, and then get fined, it's up to you to try and prove your innocence, and this process can take up to a year, and can cost you lots of your time and money for just trying to be helpful. Obviously if you have front and rear bike cameras, this might aid your argument. However, it's up to the courts, and there are plenty of cases in the papers of drivers and riders who have moved out of the way for emergency vehicles, only to be fined and convicted by the courts for running a red light or crossing a solid white line, or similar. Remember that this all happens so quickly, if you do not get the reg number of the emergency vehicle, or the police officers badge number, you may be screwed if it goes to court.



## From the Daily Telegraph Motoring Section

I refer to MB of Guildford's enquiry about what action to take if you are impeding an emergency vehicle on "blues and twos". It's correct that motorists have been fined for, say, crossing the stop line at red traffic lights. At the same time, I read a letter from a senior police officer who said that if he were on "blues and twos" and somebody failed to get out of his way, whatever that took, then he would prosecute them for "obstructing a police officer in the execution of his duty". So, you can't win. To date the Home Office has never clarified this situation.

As I write, if you are instructed to go through a red light by a police officer in uniform, then you must do so. **A liveried police car constitutes a police officer in uniform, a fire engine or an ambulance does not.** It is incredible, though, that they can't get their act together by making a sensible law or issuing proper guidance.

## The Law

According to UK law, if a police officer in uniform instructs a driver to go through a red light, the driver must do so. This includes instances where the instruction is given by a police officer in a liveried police car.

However, if a driver is caught driving through a red traffic light by a safety camera, they should receive a Notice of Intended Prosecution within 14 days, and then have a period of 28 days to return the form with details of the driver at the time of the alleged offence. Failure to respond to the notice or provide the wrong driver details may result in prosecution, six penalty points, and a fine of up to £1,000.

In general, running a red light is an "absolute" offence, meaning that if the police can show that the light was red when the driver crossed the stop line, the offence will be proved. The minimum penalty for running a red light is three penalty points and a fine of £100, which may increase depending on the severity of the offence and other factors such as the driver's plea, circumstances, means, and mitigation.

So, what would you do on the day?

Answers on a postcard to the group CO.

Alex Hoyle

Chief Observer WHAM 3260

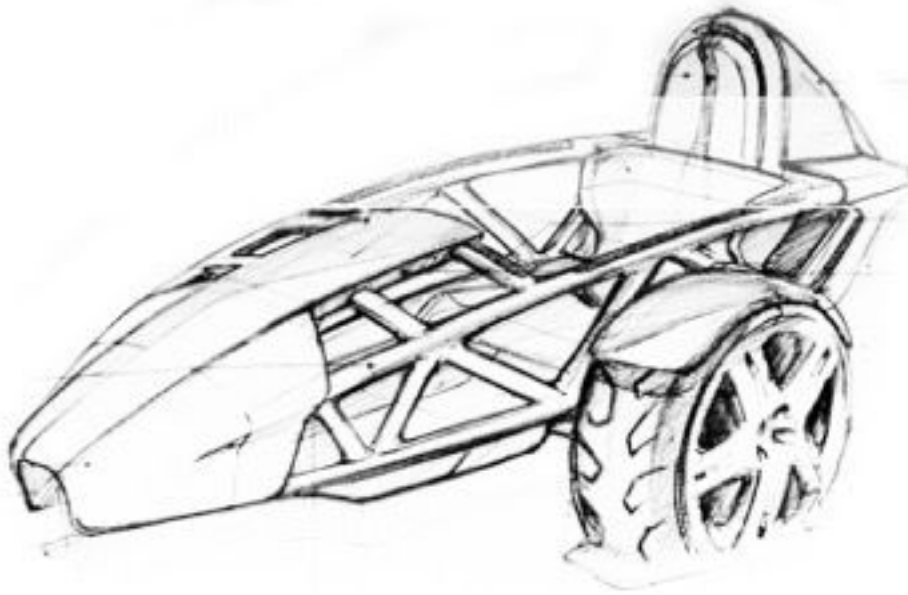


## THE ONLY GAY IN THE VILLAGE – JOHN NIXON

Would WHAM members like organise a collection to give me a pound for every time I've heard:  
*"They're the worst of all worlds, you can't filter, you get wet, takes longer to overtake, you still get hurt in a crash, why would you... etc. etc.?"*

Thank you, you generous folk, that'll easily pay for my substantial and elaborate funeral plans.

You're right of course. No denying it. Kind of misses the point though. Indulge me if you will.



Early sketch © Pete Blades.

Ok, if you've already made the "Get thee behind me Satan!" gesture with one, two or more fingers/hands, don't bother to read on. I don't mind.

It's true. I *really* don't mind what you think, but yes! I'd like you to open your mind, albeit just a teeny, weeny amount. You up for that?



K1200R BladeSport near Kington March 2023. (© John Nixon 2023 )

The fact of the matter is, it takes considerable, perhaps even immense skill to master the only asymmetric vehicle on today's roads. And on that point...how much longer we'll be permitted to build these wonderful and challenging machines is anybody's guess.

Somebody once referred to me as one of the 'Old Timers' of our esteemed club. Well, that's true, if not exactly flattering. I was indeed at the inaugural meeting at the Prancing Pony, flourishing my RoSPA Diploma in an utterly discreet sort of way, on which diploma I'll have you know, I achieved a much better exam score than on my Uni degree (best not go there, John!).



Writer on Fazer Thou', Feb 4 2007 at Prancing Pony WHAM Inaugural.

(© Derek McMullan 2023)

You may think that at my advanced age I need a third wheel to keep me upright, like an old codger with Zimmer frame. Fair enough, but not true. But as a Whammer in a club stuffed with solo riders, it can feel like being 'the only gay in the village!' (Courtesy of Little Britain, 2003 on).

Look, these machines take real skill to ride and the faster you go the more skill they demand. Demand! No Less! Road or Racer, same challenges - just more extreme on track.





© [Tony Rees leads Suzuki Series - Australian Motorcycle News amcn.com.au](http://amcn.com.au)

Crash follows.

Imagine, if you will, attaching to your left leg a heavy iron bar, like a long crowbar, stretching from your waist to just touching the ground. Strap it down the left side of your leg. You can't bend at the knee now, can you. Now... walk as briskly as you can in a straight line. Notice the drag and the tendency to fall over to the left. Pick up the pace and then turn sharply right. Chances are you'll crash over left. Pick yourself up and attempt a faster walk, notice how the weight pulls you left, now stop suddenly.....your left leg will not respond to your brain command and the pendulum effect will have you falling over forwards and probably to the right. As for a brisk run...you up for that?

'Falling over' is precisely what happens when a solo rider first drives a sidecar outfit. The blessed thing will NOT go round a corner and leaving the road is pretty much inevitable. The short of it is *you have to **make** it go round corners*. And in them, every wheel is pointing in a different direction. All three tyres are scrubbing.

Sidecar! So why would you, (rhetorical).

Because it is huge fun.

Not only do you have to use all the advanced riding techniques you've all learned, you have to control a machine on which every single act affects the machine's attitude and stability.





Start 'em young, I say. (© unknown)

Open the throttle, it goes left. Close the throttle, it goes right (Pendulum effect). Change gear up, it dips right then goes left as you get on the gas; change gear down, goes right. Brake front, goes right. Brake back, might go either way depending on the road camber. Sidecar brake – goes left.

All three brakes together, slither to a stop, hopefully straight but not guaranteed.

Shut off on left hander, goes right.

Right hander shut off, goes right (again!)



Oldie but goldie. Watsonian 'heritage' design. (© unknown)

Too fast into a leftie, chair airborne and remember, if you act intuitively and shut off, it'll go far right, like Rees-Mogg. And you'll cross the line that shouldn't be crossed. With awful consequences, just like our incompetent, corrupt government. (Best avoid politics John. Ed.)

Too fast into a right, you'll entertain risk of a spin. Embarrassing! And worse! There's a risk of the whole plot going "ar\*\*-over-t\*t" and you end up kissing said ar\*\* in t'hedge.

So, limit points, entry speed judgement (critical!), stopping in the distance you can see to be clear, right position (yes, despite its width that comes into it), right speed, right gear and accelerate/advance...you know the drill.

An ex-chairperson (pc alert!) and a current member both rode the K1200R/BladeSport outfit on a private road to see what it was like. One said "I see what it's about, but it's not for me", t'other said (later) "I thought it was great!". Both said "What you need is some ballast when you ride sans co-pilot."



Persons you know trying the BladeSport Outfit. (© John Nixon 2023 )

The problem with adding ballast is that the day you ride without it, you are much more likely to fly the chair and entertain disaster. And let's not deny it, meaningful ballast, like our current Chairperson, who had the balls to co-pilot into deepest Wales and back, in the rain, yes! so he did, is a weight of some 70 kg – probably (??). And lifting that weight of ballast in and out would definitely put me on the NHS Zimmer waiting list. Not that I had to lift him in you understand, no, our brave hero jumped in with the alacrity of a teenager on a promise!



Our Current Chair Person about to leap into... the Chair. (© John Nixon 2023 )

The real benefit of the co-pilot is that the design of the BladeSport sidecar encourages you to be Action Man. And yes, our current Person of Chair Status did it so enthusiastically, even allegedly sporting a hangover, that he needed sympathy for his aching stomach muscles, or so he said.

This kind of co-piloting makes a tremendous difference to the whole plot. You can keep the chair down on the lefties (mostly, although not always, as our ex-treasurer might testify) and you move weight to the back wheel in the rights, all at “quite fast” speeds. Yes, he of the number crunching also had the grit to co-pilot to Baffle Haus and back, in the rain... again. And two up the outfit stops better and straighter because the sidecar brake doesn't lock the chair's wheel so readily.

Finally, if you've made it this far, let's cover the issue of speed. Our Chairperson has made the point recently that over 60mph on all but duals and motorways is breaking the law. Believe me, on today's appalling, pot-holed road surfaces, akin to off-road, a sidecar at 60mph feels awful fast.

So, it's true, I'm seldom breaking the law and am fully concentrating and engaged at legal speeds. Not to say it won't go faster. At Castle Combe it did over 100mph with plenty more to come.





Testing at Castle Combe with f'glass, pre-production mudguards, now carbon. (© John Nixon 2023 )

I left Yarkhill Texaco just t'other rare, sunny day, and took the Ledbury road to be immediately overtaken by a BMW sporty M something, which scorched out of sight. My having delicately slalomed through numerous open cast mines on the miles to the Trumpet at legal speeds, said BeeEmm was directly in front of me at the lights. So much for breaking the law.

In my (humble) opinion, backed by experience on both, the major 'making progress' gains of a solo over an outfit are the ability to filter and make easier overtakes. But on UK roads it isn't long before your progress is stopped and we slow(er) coaches catch up, with zero risk to licence. Mind you, if you think Herefordshire surfaces are bad, Nottinghamshire's are worse!!

My dearly beloved asks if outfits require more strength and fitness than solos to ride. My answer is 'yes'.

Upper body strength helps because a wide outfit like mine (to allow co-pilot input) is heavier to turn at slow speeds than a narrower one, where passengers are just that – passengers - and probably scared witless given spirited riding. Wide car tyres add some steering effort too. In my case, being more of the 'sand-kicked-in-face' / Stephen Merchant and not so much of the 'admire-my-super-pecs' / Daniel Craig end of the body image spectrum, I do pratt about with resistance bands in the somewhat forlorn hope of improving on the "scrawny wretch" tag kindly bestowed

upon me by Paul Lumley – famous builder of the BladeSport outfit and builder of race and road outfits.



Paul Lumley's latest superb Honda CB100 outfit road tested by writer this April.

(© John Nixon 2023 )

So, there you have it. Speak to me nicely, buy me a beer and I'll give you a chance to co-pilot. Ladies first because I have entertained more of their requests than fellas (mostly squeamish "no thanks") and because they're so very enthusiastic. Who's got the balls now?

© John Nixon 2023

End

26/04/2003

## TYRE AGE - MARTIN WARD

As most of you may be aware, I updated my Rocket III last May for the newest I could get, and it turned out to be the very last one registered in the UK. First registered on 31Dec17 (the last day before Euro5 regs made them obsolete) - when I bought it in May 22, it had only done 1032 miles in 4½ years ! Now, at nearly 5½ years old, the original tyres have done 4600 miles (3500 miles by me this last year).

I knew my tyres were close to their end, and had already bought a pair of Cobra Chrome to replace them - but couldn't resist getting one more trip out of them as they still had almost 2mm of tread. We (the Chardonator and I) went down to the Ace Café London on Saturday 08Apr23 - the pretty way through the Cotswolds, stayed overnight, and attended "Rockets at the Ace" on Easter Sunday. Coming home we set off for the steady way back, but after an hour boredom set in and the Chardonator suggested we jump on the motorway - which we did (M40) at Banbury. Joining the M42, stationary traffic at J3 made me come off to use the country route home. As I approached the filter lane on the island, I went to turn-in- and it wouldn't turn at all. I slowed to 20mph, and it took all my strength to turn it and miss the kerbs. I'd had tyres go "off" before, but nothing like this. I finally got home at 20-25mph, and was physically exhausted - having to wrestle it around every corner at almost walking pace. Bear in mind the Rocket is heavy to start with, but 2-up, with all our luggage, we're talking about 550kg in all - quite a "challenge".

After the Bank holiday, I took the wheels off and had a set of new Avon Cobra Chrome fitted (that I'd bought late last year in readiness). I take the wheels of myself because not many bike shops have all the lifting gear and brackets required.



When I went to collect the wheels I was told that they could barely get the off the rims, and that the inside carcass had completely collapsed. I checked the manufacture date of the old back tyre, and it was 2114 - that's week 21 (May) of 2014. The tyres were 3½ years old already when Triumph put them on the bike at the end of 2017. That also meant that the tyres were 8 years old when Triumph Stratford sold me the bike, and now 9 years old !



Recommendations from the manufacturers vary greatly, most are 6 years, some 5 years. I would suggest everyone check the age of their tyres, as some could have been in stock on a shelf somewhere for quite a few years before having been sold.

I double-checked the date on the new tyres, which I bought at the end of September – and their date was 3622, just a couple of weeks before I bought them.



So, there is something to learn here – don't take your tyres for granted. Most of the WHAM group have quite modern/new bikes, but some of you also have older ones in the garage. I suggest you check the age of the tyres before you use them next time ?

## MEMBER'S ADS

Mike Bike ads

1984 XR250 Honda - still on original tyres, chains and sprockets. £2,400 ONO



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2018 BMW GS1200 - TE exclusive - 4,400 miles - including panniers and top box and  
BMW sat nav - £12,500 ONO



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2011 Honda Pan ST1300 - 12,000 miles - including panniers and top box - £5,500 ONO



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Many thanks, Mike Franzen