

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



April 2024

EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Yesterday I spent a good part of the day riding around in storm Kathleen, taking part in the [Wales Round Ribbon](#) bike event. It was moist. Ny article on this [below](#)..

How do you fancy a ride on the finest roads in Europe, nay, the world!? You can do this with fellow advanced riders in this club; I speak of none other than the up coming [WHAM trip to Luxembourg](#), between the 15th to the 19th May. It's going to be a trip to remember and I can confirm that as of now there are still one or two places left. I was all geared up to go, but close inspection of my diary finally revealed a clash of dates, gutted of Bromyard or what! Please contact tonyzzr@hotmail.com.

Coming up later this month, [WHAM Club Night – Group Riding Discussion](#) on Wednesday April 24, 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm.

Free Q&A Session with our Observer Corp about group riding, WHAM's policy and any other questions you may have about Group Riding in general. Held at the Falcon Hotel in Bromyard.

All WHAM Members including associates very welcome. Please arrive at 19:00 for a 19:30 start.

This month's newsletter includes an article from Ant Clerici about the [Acceleration phase of IPSGA](#) (thanks again Ant!). As ever, this is the view of an individual, not necessarily WHAM or IAM Roadsmart and is intended to start a discussion. Please feel free to comment via email or on our Facebook Group if you have your own views, interesting responses will be featured in a future newsletter.

BIG shout out to Jon Powell, who has taken on board my constant whining for content and provided us an excellent account of his [adventures off road in Devon](#). Please don't hesitate if you too have anything you'd like to share with us all.

Of course, the newsletter begins with our usual words from [Chairman](#) and [Chief Observer](#), not to be missed!

Contact me with any opinions, ideas, or reports at whamnewsletter@gmail.com. Jim Rolt, Editor.



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Hi all.

Welcome to spring! We finally seem to have some decent weather and dry roads, what a difference it makes after a wet and often miserable winter.

WHAM exists for a number of reasons, the one that keeps us going and gives the club kudos and legitimacy is our affiliation with IAM Roadsmart and consequentially the Advanced training we do. A lot of time and effort is put into this by our Observers who give their time, petrol and tyre attrition for free in the interests of making other motorcyclists safer.



Another reason we exist is to provide a Motorcycle club with a social element and an opportunity to attend regular ride outs and events with like-minded people. This also takes some effort, we publish a ride out every Sunday of the year and mid-week evening ride during the summer months, try to put on an interesting social evening during the darker nights, arrange a Christmas do every year and publish a newsletter every month. In addition we put on a Slow Riding Day every year that takes a fair amount of organising, arrange a go karting event and some longer trips. Not bad for an all in price of £16.00 per year.

Our ride out programme is the most comprehensive in the region and probably the UK. How many other clubs have a published ride out every week? With a start point, end point and even an interesting route between them? I know our Sunday rides are not perfect for everyone and I apologise for that but the large geographic region our club covers makes it very difficult to please everyone. There have recently been some calls to revert back to having 2 start points and 2 routes every Sunday so that our Members in the further reaches of the region don't have so far to ride to the start point. Whilst I can sympathise to some extent, I am very reluctant to go back to the two start points for a few reasons:-

1. It splits the club - one of the best things that came out of the change to a single start point was the fact that we all got to ride with different people on some new routes. The club feels more like 'one club' instead of the separate clubs we had before.
2. It means that we are limited in our choice of café stops. Some of our more interesting stops are too far for the Hereford start point and vice versa.

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3. It means a lot of work for your Routemaster adding new routes to all of the existing routes, plus the extra time needed when designing a new route.

As I am in the group that lives in one of the more far flung regions of the group (Bromsgrove) I do have some empathy with the concerns that have been raised. Hereford McDonalds is an hour and 10 minutes from my house. Wooferton is an hour. Those rides are some of the best ones I do, what's not to like about riding on that excellent road from Worcester to Hereford in the early morning fresh air with hardly any traffic? We'll often end up at somewhere like the Honey Café when we start at Hereford. It can take me nearly 2 hours to get home from there but I will be doing the thing that I love more than anything, riding my bike. I do sometimes get a little envious of those who had an hour's ride to the start point but then a 10 minute ride home, their bikes are usually cleaned and put away and they have their feet up by the time I've got as far as the A38... but riding my bike has never been a chore, especially since the IAM taught me to ride it properly. See you on a Sunday ride soon ☺ .

Kind Regards,

Tony Davis

PS: My email address is tonyzzr@hotmail.com.



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CHIEF OBSERVER – RICHARD HEWITT

I am writing this on Easter Saturday with the Sun streaming through the window having spent a very agreeable morning pottering around the garden and garage tinkering with stuff. The best news being the hot tub is now back up and running for 2024 after its winter hibernation.

Whilst I was changing the UV filter quartz tube and bulb, and praying it went back in situ without issue there was a slight holding or breath to see if the two water pumps, 39 jets and 7Kw heaters all fired up again without any further tinkering.

And this got me to thinking motorbikes.

Not an obvious segue I grant you; but there is a common thread here with hot tub, motorbike, and indeed rider. Rider being a less obvious but also most important part of the motorbiking activity.

My predecessor Alex has written almost annually at the benefit he gets from honing his skills through the (crappy) winter months. I get this, he is right, time spent grappling with more road debris, variable surfaces with hidden dangers like ice, and toughening up the body to windblast below freezing, are all admirable things to achieve; although with the clothing we have access to nowadays getting cold is much less of an issue than it once was.

So, my winter riding, where have I been? What have I done? The answer is simple; Sod all.

I am one of the less hardy types that gives the bike a good clean on the run up to Christmas, connects up the optimate, puts a nice clean cover over it, loads up the mousetraps underneath it (Country outbuildings being the best home for rodents through winter). And I put the keys away, until about now, or maybe mid-March.

This year, the excellent six-nations rugby championship, with the ensuing accompanying lager or three, kept the bike off the road for a little longer; but now it is time to hit the road again.

Whilst all this sounds fine and dandy, there's necessary prep to do for bike and rider before those wheels can turn.

Firstly, the bike. Oh, and that reminds me; I am toying with how technical to make these articles. Do I write for the technically minded Master with distinction, or do I write for the associate that is at the start of their journey? Given we host these on an open internet site the piece might even get a read by a random motor biker in Bangalore that has no bloody idea what crappy weather we endure in the UK, but still might get something from this. So, I am going to start this year with something hopefully accessible to all (cue several long-standing members moving to the next article). Bear with me.



Right, the bike. Do I:

- a) Blow up the tyres and barrel off down the road
- b) a) above + do a brake check
- c) a) & b) above + check the air filter for rodents

Well, the answer to all these questions, especially where advanced riding is concerned, is, "It depends"

Hopefully, by now you will have already remarked "mPowders you plank!" And you would be quite right.

If your bike has been standing like mine, albeit in a cosy outbuilding wrapped up in a blanket, it will need a full safety check over. If it has been sitting outside with a cover on, you may want to do this check a little bit more carefully. DO NOT be afraid to let your ego slide and get a professional to look at it, give it the once over. Most garages can accommodate this, do not charge so much, just make sure you make an appointment before everyone else does.

I think an mPowders + check is required where a vehicle has been sitting. Something along the lines of

- Roll the bike off its stand – does the stand retract by itself or does it need some grease?
- Is there resistance when you push the bike forward? i.e. do the brakes work smoothly and come off as they should when you release the lever?
- Does the steering turn easily or again has the grease/bearing had better days?
- When you sit on the bike did you put the seat back on 100% correctly after disconnecting the Optimate?
- Put the front brake on, bounce up and down, front, and back on the suspension. Does it all operate smoothly? When was the last time you had your shock serviced or you fork oil changed?
- I would advocate topping up with fresh fuel before you have started up for the first time this year. Use the bullet above on suspension to mix the new fuel in with the old.
- Rotate the tyres running your hand over the entirety of the road facing profile checking for damage/nails. Does the profile feel round? Are the tyres under five years old? Do they feel too shiny? Any visible cracks in the sidewalls? Any of these things being in question sees me biting the bullet and getting new rubber
- Blow the tyres up and use a quality pressure gauge to get the pressure right. Going the extra mile will see me checking the integrity of the valve stems. Anything not so good here, get new ones. Give them a wobble and if they do not spring back or are cracked, replace them. Blow outs and sudden deflation is not cool.
- Maybe go the extra mile with the tyres, blow them up one day, then check the pressure again the next day. They are the only thing between you and a visit to A&E

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- Oil – still at the right level and a good, i.e. clear-ish, colour. When was it and the filter changed?
- Same with the brake fluid. Not many of us carry brake fluid tester, or even know what to do with one, but when was that fluid changed and are the reservoirs at the right level?
- A general look round now, do not be afraid to grip stuff and give it a tug/wobble. If it moves and it is not supposed to, it needs attention. A friend of mine only remembered he had not tightening up the bolts on his bikini fairing when it sailed over his head once up to speed. Again, no one is infallible in the memory stakes.

Right, now it is time to fire up the beast.

Clutch in, neutral light showing, give that starter a prod.

Many of our bikes have ECU's that can be 'soft reset' with a simple little procedure. The procedure also informs the rider if some other stuff is working and not seized.

Start the bike and do not touch the throttle at all. Run the bike until the fan has come on and off and then switch off the bike. Most of the giant electronic ECU manufacturers have set-up these miracles of electronics to run this cycle and make ever so slight calibrations, or a reset, back to factory settings. As I said, you also get to find out if your fan bearing is free to operate. Better to find that out now than when you are on your summer road trip.

We are on the homeward straight now. Lights, mirrors (tightened?), horn, kill switch, satnav mount powered up?, auxiliary dazzle lights (the type any good Adventure tank has nowadays, at least one set with a million candles), does the brake light go on, and off, as it should?

You are ready to go!

But are YOU?

If you are like me, a chap of a certain age, wintertime sees more food and alcohol being consumed. Less, or no time on dedicated exercise, and even less time out walking the fields. My physio told me only last week that once you get into your mid-fifties if you loose any muscle mass its nigh on impossible to replace it with the same effort you used to exert building up those biceps.

The first chapter of the latest Roadcraft training manual talks about "Human Factors," and makes for a damn fine read. At first read it might not be the most accessible chapter you've read in a book, and therefore I'm going to direct you to read it yourself, rather than regurgitate or water it down here; but the central theme is if the individual is off their game, they will put in sub-par performance on the bike.

When you push the bike off its stand as mentioned in the first bullet above, and move it around, in and out of wherever it is stored, if it feels too heavy for you, or heavier than it felt when you put it away, it's usually down to YOU not being match fit, not the bike. Yes the tyres may have lost some pressure, yet when that is dealt with, I would recommend a heave ho around and see how you feel.

Now, I am not advocated changing that massive GS for a tiny commuter bike, but I am asking you to consider whether your first ride is a 2-hour each way at a 'progressive' pace to the Elan valley? Probably not.

Probably, what you need is a nice tootle around for a bit, up to Bridgnorth from Worcester for a coffee at Quatt and ease yourself back into it.

The extra effort you felt you needed to make to get the bike out of the garage will only show itself out on the road should you really need to do something drastic; and as I said, you might put in a sub-par performance and not pull it off as you did at the end of last summer!

The Crossdresser always surprises each spring in the acceleration stakes. Whilst I do have a silly little sports car in the garage, it does not reach the horizon quite as quickly as the crossdresser does. And if the horizon is reaching you quicker than you expected this is sure-fire confirmation that you are not used to how quickly your bike is capable of reaching the horizon. It means your forward observation processing speed needs to up its game back to where it was last year. Slow down a little and on that run up to Bridgenorth café it will come quickly back. Do not ignore this step though. Doing so is another great way to find the ever so kind nurses and doctors in A&E.

I hope this has been useful food for thought. The WHAM Observer corp. are all ready and able to provide any member with some mentoring on the basis of "continuous improvement" and if this is something any member thinks they would like or benefit from please do get in touch. And if the member is buying the buttie and coffee at the end of the run I am sure a few check rides into a new riding season as laid out above can be accommodated for too.

Here is to a safe enjoyable 2024 out riding.

Now where is that brake fluid tester?

Richard Hewitt

Chief Observer

WHAM

LUXEMBOURG!

WHAM are organising a tour to Luxembourg & the Ardennes from the 15th to the 19th May 2024.

So far we have 10 rooms booked at a hotel in Vianden from the 16th to 19th May. There are some rooms still available either as double or single occupancy. If anyone wants one of the rooms in Vianden (check in 16th May, check out 19th May) then please contact me directly, rooms will be allocated on a first come first served basis and will need a non-refundable deposit of £100. Please indicate if you want single or double occupancy. Alternatively please feel free to book your own accommodation in or near Vianden, we will ensure that you are included in the group ride outs and events if you let us know where / when you are staying.

Ferry crossing is estimated at £85.00 return. 3 nights in the Hotel in Vianden estimated at £250 per person (there will be a surcharge for single occupancy).

Itinerary for the trip is as below. You will need to arrange your own ferry crossing (recommendations below) and accommodation for the first night in Mons area.

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Itinerary:

Weds 15th May: Meet at Alcester 08:00. Transit to Mons area in Belgium via ferry for overnight stay.

Thurs 16th May: Transit to Vianden in Luxembourg via excellent roads through the Ardennes. Overnight in Vianden.

Friday 17th May: Explore the local roads (routes will be provided in the usual way). Overnight in Vianden.

Saturday 18th May: Explore the local roads (routes will be provided in the usual way). Overnight in Vianden.

Sunday 19th May: Check out of Vianden Hotel and return home.

Luxembourg has probably the best motorcycling roads in Europe. WHAM have done a number of trips there in the past and Vianden is in the heart of the good stuff. It is also a picturesque town in itself with plenty of options of restaurants and bars.

Please note that organising a trip like this for more than 5 or so people is not an easy task, we have to stick to the itinerary published to keep things simple enough to arrange and to ensure that we do not get hit with cancellation charges if people fail to show. For that reason we cant customise the arrangements, however where ever possible we will do all that we can to include you in the transit plans and ride routes etc.

NOTE: This trip is only open to Full Members of Worcester and Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists.

Kind Regards,

WHAM Committee



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WEEKEND GONE - JON POWELL

Having undertaken a couple of days' activities Nathan Millward of Dorothy's Speed Shop, I was on his mailing list. Looking for a second bike around Christmas time (I was sold on getting a 1050CC Triumph Sprint ST) the email came, first from Nathan then from an old school friend Stu, about some 230cc, Chinese built, CCM military bikes that were new but had been in storage for a few years, being sold by Nathan for a stupidly reasonable price. Having discussed green-laning with Stu on more than one occasion I sent off my deposit.

Nathan then advertised a weekend of guided green-laning in North Devon, staying just over the Somerset border in a bunkhouse, for mainly Chinese bikes to celebrate the Chinese New Year. I signed up for that on the understanding that the new bike should be registered, delivered to Nathan and ready to collect in time. I was ninth to put my deposit down, so in the first batch of bikes and ready to collect a week before I needed it.



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My good lady wife offered to give me a lift down to Devon, then Stu had the idea to throw his bike in the back of his partner's horse lorry and take me down to pick up the bike, spend a weekend, and bring me and the bike back to Worcester. And off we went, once I had been plastered with mud getting Stu's non-Chinese Himalayan into his truck.

We picked up my new bike from Braunton, picked up Stu's bike that had fallen over in the back of the lorry, and headed off, via a supermarket for beers, to Northcombe camping barn to meet up with another old school friend, Alex, and a dozen others who had signed up for the weekend. Rustic but homely the bunk house lived up to its name with rooms sleeping 12 on 6 bunk beds. I was in the snorers' room!

Friday night was home cooked cottage pie, the beginnings of new friendships over a couple of beers and an air of excitement with limited knowledge and experience of green-laning to the majority in attendance.

After coffee and breakfast baps at the bunkhouse Saturday started gently (four of us were running in new bikes) heading towards Exmoor. With the new bikes less than 4 miles old we had our first river crossing. Little more than a stream in summer months it was now a fast-flowing torrent, at least to the very green green-laners sat watching others going through and not wanting to be the first to fall. All stayed dry and so started a 130 mile round trip taking in B roads and byways, mud and rocks, water, grass and broken tarmac. The first lane was apparently basic, chosen to ensure that we were all happy. The lightweight CCM MT230 I had bought gave me too much confidence by handling all obstacles even when I shat myself got anxious, lending to me getting drenched going through one puddle too fast. One stretch of green lane, probably a mile long, was muddy puddle after muddy puddle, each seemingly getting longer and deeper, making me feel like the ten year old lad riding his Raleigh Grifter through puddles that I once was.

Lunch was a rather pricey but rather fantastic cafe meal on the outskirts of Woolacombe before taking more B-roads and byways back to the digs via a coffee stop. Keeping the bike to 40mph was a chore when others were pushing on but the new bikes needed running in and the second man drop-off worked with this group of small bikes.



More beers on the Saturday night with a take out Thai meal meant that new friendships blossomed before turning in for the night.

After more breakfast Baps on the Sunday folks started departing with many a promise of 'See you at the ABR'. Whether we do catch up or not, the weekend was great fun, with no falling out, plenty of mickey taking, spills and frills. I can't believe that I waited until I was in my fifties to do this.

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<https://www.dorothysspeedshop.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@nathanthepostman>

https://youtu.be/Stf_HfGAf-U?si=ZKAd4cD4sK2PCZWz

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THE WALES ROUND RIBBON – JIM ROLT



Wales Round Ribbon Ride is an annual one day event.

2023 "Newburger Ring" raised over £10,000 for blood bikes Wales.

2024 "Your Ride Your Route" was in aid of Wales Air Ambulance Charity.

One chooses a start point and then 4 further points to visit before returning to the start. I rode over 200 miles in all, door to door. I have to say it was the wettest ride I've done in the last 25 years or so, but luckily my ancient Frank Thomas jacket proved to be still waterproof! The same sadly cannot be said for my boots, and within half an hour my feet were wet and I was wishing I'd put an Asda bag over each foot before pulling those boots on! My start point was the Black Mountain Lodge at Glasbury, and upon arrival I met the only other WHAMmers I saw during the day, Donna and Valerie. They'd sensibly stayed overnight. It was very tempting to stay in the warm and enjoy the breakfast on offer, but a gap appeared in the clouds and I decided to make the most of it. This turned out to be a forlorn hope as the rain was only saving itself for the moment I put the bike into gear, before resuming with renewed ferocity..

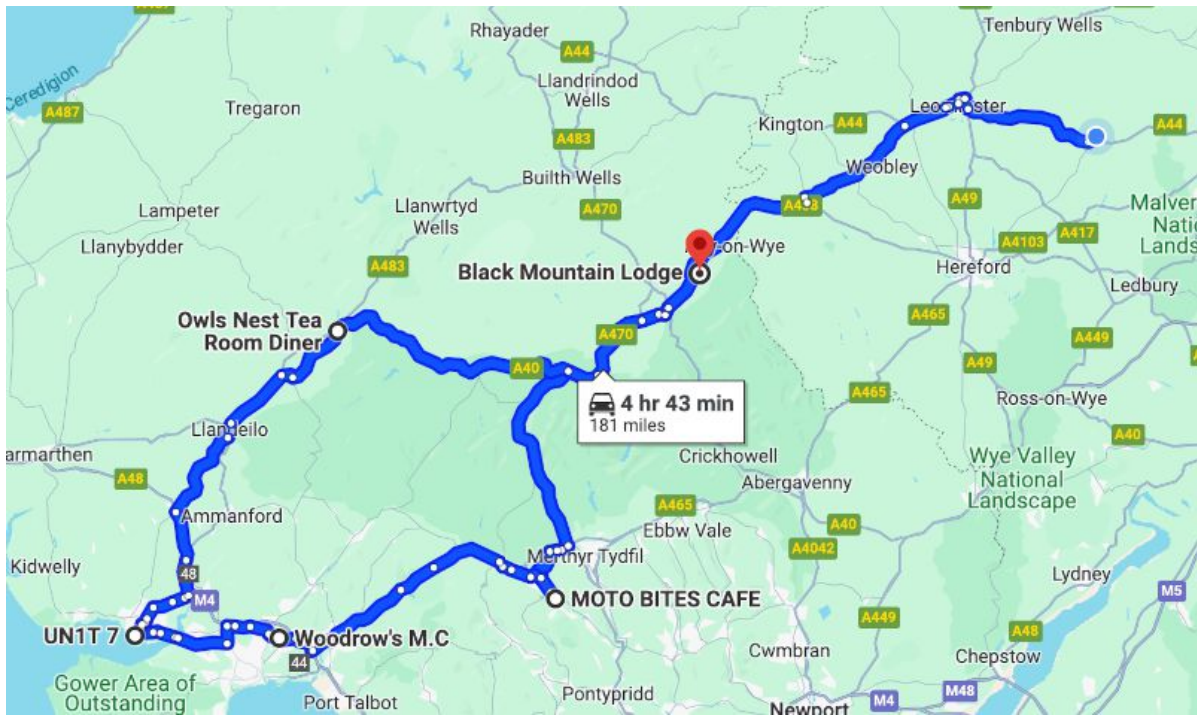
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My route was the shortest I could figure out, and turned out to be a great mixture of epic Welsh scenery and epic Welsh roads! I did the ride alone, and really enjoyed it; One gets used to the conditions, and the more I ride in the wet the better I like it! You may think me strange, (yes, I know), but there it is. Back in the mists of time when I raced, I always did very well in the wet.. again probably cos I was used to it and did a lot of wet road riding. The more you ride, the better you get; and our secret weapon of IPSGA makes it all the more rewarding!



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The stops were all well manned with friendly faced volunteers, and ranged from very posh enterprises to very down to earth cafes. It didn't rain all the time, and I do recall some fleeting moments where there were dry roads. My feet never dried, but my Gerbings electric gloves did a fab job of keeping my hands comfy.

By 1.30 in the afternoon I was back at my start point and ready to collect my prize.. a ribbon key ring! Apparently I was first one back from that start point, no doubt because, being Billy No Mates, I just kept riding and didn't stop to chat at any of the check ins! I did have lunch at the Black Mountain Lodge at the end, where they'd reduced the risks of their gravel car park by providing plenty of plywood squares to rest our centre stands on.

NEXT: The [Welsh National Road Rally](#) on the 11th of May? Possibly.. let me know if you'd like to have a go and rescue me from the loneliness of the solo rider!



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A IS FOR..ACCELERATION – ANT CLERICI

You will all have read Mike Roberts excellent article in our recent newsletter. Here I take the liberty of continuing with the theme of 'A for acceleration'

You will recall he said: “[And that seems to be where System stops for some riders. They forget about the A for Acceleration.](#)”

He goes on to quote Roadcraft: “[Apply the correct degree of throttle to negotiate and leave the hazard safely. Taking account of your speed, other road users, and the road and traffic conditions ahead, choose an appropriate point to accelerate safely and smoothly away from the hazard. Adjust acceleration to the circumstances.](#)”

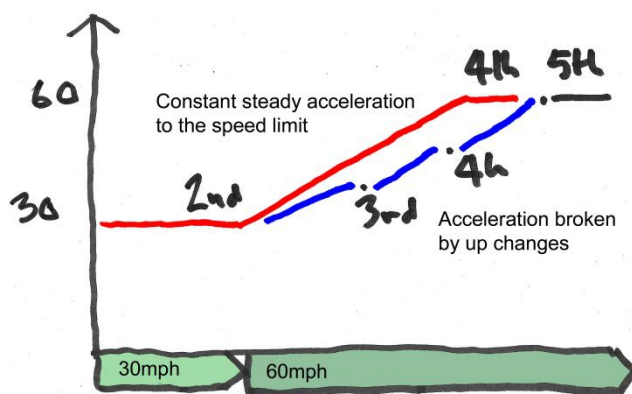
So far so good.

For me 'A for acceleration' becomes merged with 'I for information' for what happens next. We rarely experience circumstances where the lack of hazards in its widest sense allows a free increase in speed. Two issues need to be considered: how to accelerate and 'what's my plan?'

How to accelerate?

I can hear you shouting – twist the throttle!

Yes but there's a tendency to temper your change in speed with upshifts.



Let's say you are moving from a 30mph limit to the national speed limit. You might be in 2nd or 3rd gear. Most riders accelerate then change up, accelerate some more, another change then accelerate before changing up yet again. Arriving at 60mph and 4th or 5th gear.

There's a soundtrack of brrrrrum, bruum, bruum until the speed limit is achieved.

But there's another, and I feel better, approach.

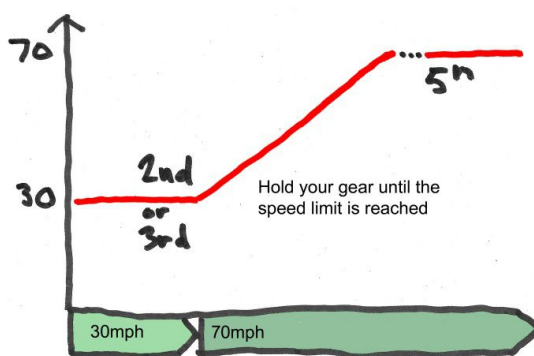
Try doing that twisting the throttle thing but don't change up until the target speed is reached. But

I hear you ask "2nd gear? 60mph?"

Check your bike's power and torque curves (just google the model and you'll get the graph) and see how your engine revs at 60 mph – in 2nd, 3rd and 4th gear.

I bet nowhere near the red line!

Just as Mike advocated, we're not talking wheelies; only controlled brisk acceleration.



On my 1200 Tiger its pure fun to exit a roundabout in 2nd perhaps at 30mph and accelerate holding the gear to 70mph.....wow!

Following traffic become mere dots in the mirrors. As Mike says, this gets you space between yourself and following traffic.

But it's good to practice 'overtaking acceleration' on a regular basis so when you need to pass a vehicle you understand how quickly your bike can respond.

What's my plan?

My second issue concerns "I for information" in deciding on the next part of your ride plan.

'Information' is a constant input across all phases including "A for acceleration"

As you exit a bend and accelerate you can hold the lower gear while you assess what's next. Don't change up as a matter of habit. If there's another bend you can maintain those higher revs with better acceleration sense to control your speed for the turning in point as the next limit point comes towards you. Or perhaps there's a potential overtake? You will likely be in the right gear to execute a brisk and safe overtake.

Make every gear change purposeful and planned.

Imagine a mountain road in the Picos or Alps. As you exit hairpins in say 2nd gear, you accelerate into the straight, perhaps overtaking a slow car, then you need maximum acceleration sense as

you slow for the next hairpin. Changing up becomes counterproductive especially downhill where you want to avoid excessive use of brakes to prevent overheating.

Mike's point about accelerating away when joining a major road is well made. Get up to the speed of the traffic flow or speed limit, as appropriate, without delay.

In my experience, one of the main differences between an experienced skilful rider, let's say with IAMRS Masters and someone less experienced is that the Masters rider will spend more time riding at the speed limit. They won't go faster (*always safe and legal*) but their ability to plan and travel quickly and safely is a key aspect of making best progress. Using the throttle with purpose to get up to speed is one of those skills that should be in your repertoire.

Those with "quick shifters" or even DCT can experience quicker changes without shutting off the throttle: it all helps!

So try it. (*When appropriate conditions apply*)

Hold that throttle without changing up until you've attained the target speed and I bet you'll become addicted to what your bike can do!