

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



February 2024



EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

The AGM has been and gone... such meetings are usually dry, dull, and tedious, and that was what was expected... however this one was lively, interesting, and amusing, as you might expect from such a groovy institution as WHAM! The first part ably chaired as ever by departing chairman Richard Hewitt before being taken over by treasurer Andy Peckston standing in for absent new chair Tony Davis, sensibly holidaying in the Canaries.. Andy even made what should have been a dull treasurers report interesting and engaging, good work! Alex Hoyle, also standing down, gave his signing off report ad lib, not having realised he might be called upon to speak! We are all sorry to see such a capable and kind CO departing. There were gifts for the 2 retiring hard working club officials, a rather fetching AI produced portrait for Richard (See below) and 2 tickets to the British Superbike for Alex.



Fancy a ride out? See the [events page on the club website](#). Here you'll find details of the weekly group rides which are always excellent fun with groups to suit every mood and style. Here too you'll find details of other events, such as the Wednesday evening natter nights, summer evening ride outs to different places, and more..

In this issue we have the first monthly piece by brand new [chair Tony Davis](#), a fond [Farewell from CO Alex](#), some thoughts on [winter riding from Ant Clerici](#), and a [guest article from Mike Roberts](#), a National Observer (or equivalent) for the last 22 years and riding 45+ years. He's a member of Suffolk Advanced Motorcyclists – the article discusses the system and IPSGA with emphasis on the A. You'll also find the [minutes of the AGM](#), so check out what happened if you weren't there. Sadly it doesn't include the explanation of Tony's nickname! You had to be in the room to hear that..

Finally, don't forget your newsletter, I very rarely have too much stuff for an issue, so do help out with anything bike related that crosses your mind. Send to me at whamnewsletter@gmail.com. Ride safely and enjoy!

Jim Rolt, Editor.



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Huge thanks to Richard for 3 years in the chair, enjoy your retirement and put that sidestand up!

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

If all goes to plan you'll be reading this in the WHAM Chairperson's column in February's Newsletter.

First thing I have to say is a big thank you to Richard Hewitt for his stewardship over the last 3 years. Richard has always understood the essence of the club, which is to provide an environment that encourages safe motorcycling and, just as importantly, fun. I intend to carry on with that effort.



I bring 44 years of motorcycling experience with me that has been massively enhanced since 2002 when I started my Advanced training with the Kidderminster IAM group. I was there at the start of WHAM back in 2007 and have been an Observer and an active member of the committee ever since. As you all know, I've been the club's webmaster and routemaster for a few years. I'll continue with that job during my stint as Chair as I enjoy it and nothing gives me more pleasure than seeing a decent sized group turn up on a Sunday morning. We've stuck to the same formulae for Sunday rides for years and I do wonder if we could vary the theme a little from time to time so, as ever, I am open to any suggestions to improve things.

We have a great bunch of people on the WHAM Committee and I am looking forward to working with them. You can expect our usual events in 2024 along with hopefully some other surprises. Please remember that WHAM is a members club and if you have any suggestions, questions or comments I am always happy to hear them and help in any way I can.

See you at a WHAM event soon.

Regards

Tony.



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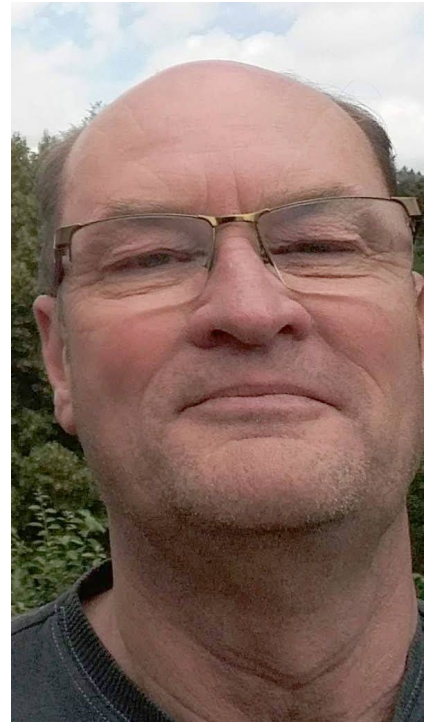
Chief Observer Over and Out

Dear all,

I hope this newsletter article finds you all well and not too stuffed out after Christmas and the New Year.

I'm writing to you today to express my gratitude for your support and friendship over the last four years, as I have served as the group Chief Observer. It has been a truly fantastic experience, and I have learned a lot.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Del Britton, the previous Chief Observer for all the hard work and effort he put in, in getting the Observers trained up to National Observer level, and the standards he set, this made my job as the incoming CO all the more easy.



Please understand I am not leaving WHAM, and if a bit of history helps, then here goes. I joined the group around June of 2010 after passing my bike test in December of 2009 on a cold and snowy day in Newport. So more or less for the whole of my riding career I've been riding with the IAM, and if I'm honest, the learning curve has been a bit steep at times. Within a year or eighteen months of joining WHAM I found myself as group secretary. It was an honour and a privilege, during those eight or nine years to serve three different Chairmen. After the group secretary role finished I then took over from Del as the next Chief Observer, a job I've done for the last four years. I've been on the WHAM committee more or less ever since I came into the group in some way, shape or form, and it's now time for me to step down and let others take up the baton.

I'm very proud of what we have achieved together as a group. The statistics show that we have been very successful in helping candidates pass their advanced IAM tests, and more and more members have gone on to take their Masters. We have also built a good relationship with the local examiners, who have always been very helpful, supportive, and fair. Last year, we also managed to get Phil George, Jim Rolt, Rob Edwards, and Mark Hird trained up as National Observers, with hopefully more in the pipeline for next year.

Over the years, I've tried to ride with every observer and his associate at least once or twice during their course rides. I learned a lot by talking to the observers and their associates, and I got to see

many different riding styles and techniques. I have also tried, where possible, to carry out all, or most, of the pre-test check rides for associates. This helped me build up a pretty good knowledge of what is required to get through the IAM advanced test and what we needed to do in order to get through and to satisfy the different examiners whims. I always enjoyed meeting the new associates and seeing them progress over the course of the training rides. For me anyway, training and riding should always be fun and enjoyable, and I hope over the years I have managed to convey this to others.

By the time you read this article, Tony Davis will be the new group Chairman, and I will give Tony my utmost support, as I will to the new incoming Chief Observer, whoever that may be.

I'm particularly pleased with the way the new venue for the slow-riding day has worked out. Sincere thanks to Andy Culley for sorting this out for the group. The venue at Madley is an absolute dream; we can set things up in about an hour and take things down in less. We have a container to store our equipment in, and we have access to running water, toilets, and all the facilities we need. It's a truly fantastic venue; long may it continue.

I will miss it, but I will still be around as a group member and as a National Observer, helping to train up even more new associates.

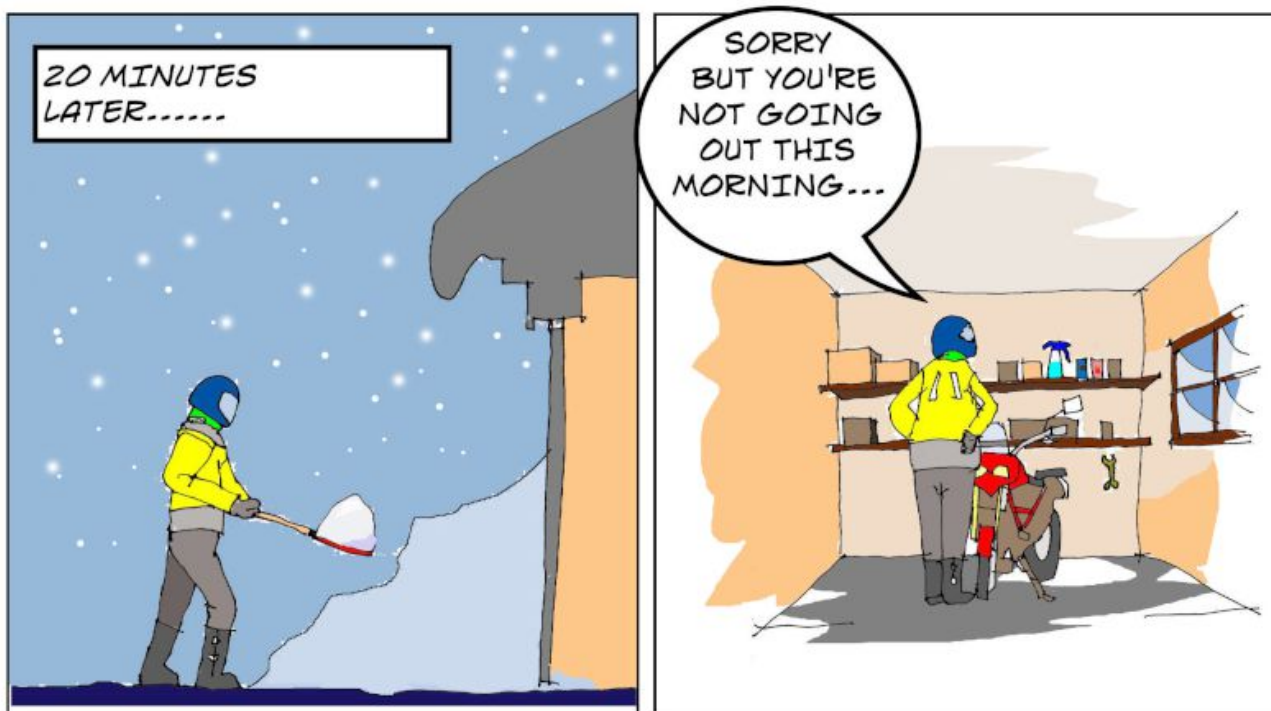
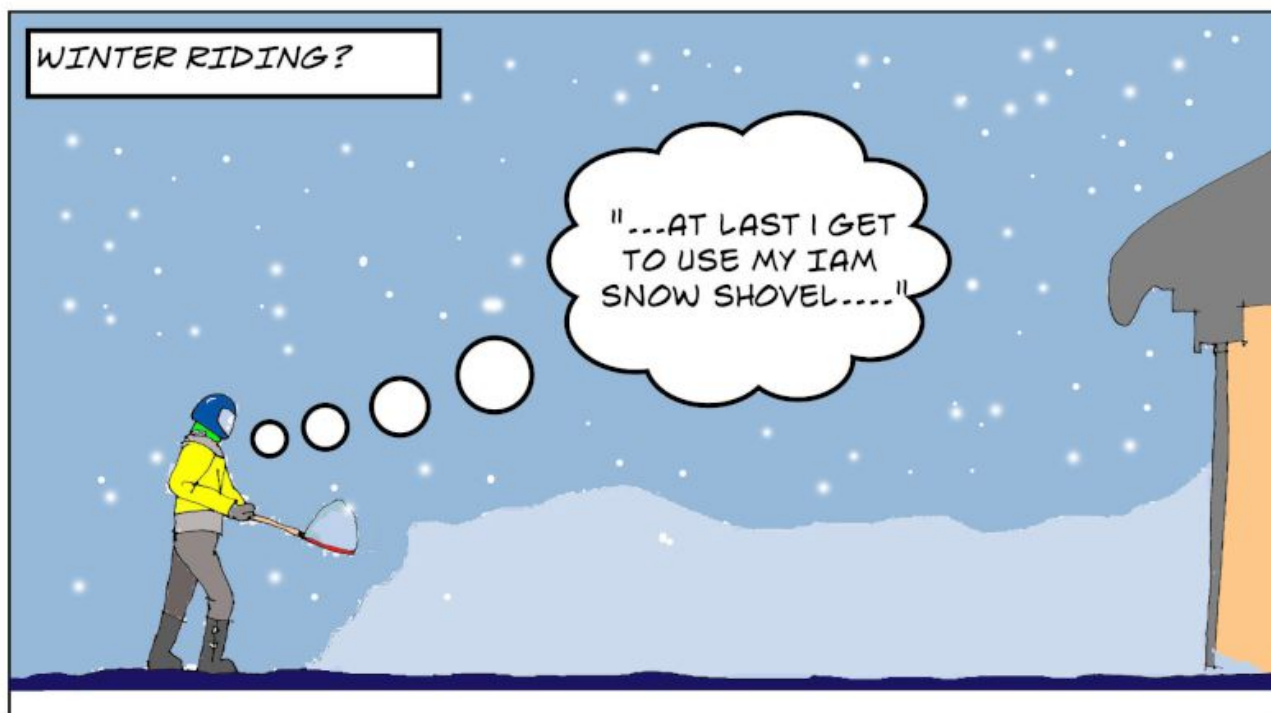
I hope to see you all at our next meeting or event or even out on one of our Sunday morning runs, so if you want to say thanks, then you can always buy me a big breakfast.

Thank you again for everything. It's been a real honour.

Alex W Hoyle

Has been Chief Observer WHAM 3260

WINTER RIDING - ANT CLERICI



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Winter riding?

The good, the bad and the ugly..

Why were there only 3 riders at McDonald's last Sunday and 4 the week before that?



Four Triumphs

January 2024: WHAM's intrepid five (bikers)



Three bikes

I guess there's a lot going on post Xmas/New Year. The sales are on, kids returning to school and the weather becomes challenging. Your bike is locked away, perhaps even SORNed. Your gear hangs forlornly in the wardrobe. Bike mags show off the 2024 models and look to summer tours in faraway, hot, sunny places. So there are a lot of armchair bikers waiting for the spring....

Allow me the chance to make the case for winter riding which has its plus points, several neutral issues and a few obvious downsides.

X Salt means cleaning your bike that day. ACF50 is your friend (other products are available)

X Poor weather can be localised with frost pockets and flooding; also lingering snow and frost can hang about on north facing slopes of minor roads. (See 'Beast from the East' photo below.)



The serious mud picked up through the Cotswolds

✓ Outside of retail parks, roads are generally less busy.

✓ Cafes are quieter with faster service and easy parking.

1. There's a little more preparation for the ride: check the forecast watching for when the temperatures struggle above 0C and local weather warnings. But don't we all check the forecast anyway – it's as relevant in July as December?
2. Routes need to be flexible to avoid road closures for flooding and pre-end of financial year roadworks. But aren't there other events at other times of the year that might modify our routes? Remembrance Day, Bank holidays etc
3. Sort out your warmest gear, check your bike. We all know the right gear is always required as is your MPOWDERS check.
4. There's less daylight and occasionally low sun can be challenging. As can dehydration when it's hot. Different things to think about at different times of the year.

So why get out in the winter?

The rides can be fabulous. The countryside is as beautiful, with great views. More importantly than that, your biking skills will be honed as you negotiate the more challenging conditions. You learn to be super smooth and ride to the road you can see. You'll notice the difference in your confidence and ability as the weather warms after the spring equinox.



Harlech: 29th December 2015
Winter fun



The "beast from the east" 12th March 2018

The right kit is essential: if you are riding whilst thinking how cold your extremities are getting then you aren't focussing on the road ahead. Invest in good gear. When it's a really cold Sunday I wear thermals under my Klim gear (other makes are available), my Keiss heated waistcoat will be "on" max as will be the heated grips and heated seat. Certainly good for a cosy couple of hours riding to Baffle House.

Occasionally we'll meet for the Sunday ride and decide to shorten the route or, if the weather is getting worse than forecast we'll have another coffee and go home. When the Severn was flooded we avoided Upton-on-Severn (Upton-UNDER- Severn) by staying on the A449 to Ross by which time the B roads were fine.

But as the temperatures rise, even a little, more bikers turn up. In contrast to early January the end of the month saw 17 WHAMers taking up most of the Hotspur café at Shobdon.

So come on! Try it!

Ant Clerici



The system of motorcycle control

AND THE FORGOTTEN LETTER

I'm sure if I asked any member what the acronym is for 'The system of motorcycle control' they would be able to rattle off the 5 letters and what they stand for, but I thought I'd write an article on the letter that seems to be forgotten about by quite a few riders.



If you look online you'll find any number of articles and forum posts about **I** for Information. Your observer will have discussed all the various ways to gather information and then go on to use it, and of course how to give information.

P for Position. We talk about positions 1,2 & 3 or, nearside and offside of your lane and middle (sump line for the oldies reading this!). Again, there's a wealth of discussion and articles on how, and why, we position our bikes for safe road riding.

S for Speed. Getting our speed right before the hazard using acceleration sense (use of the throttle with finesse) and the addition of some brakes if needed.

G for Gear. Yes, eventually your observer will hopefully have stopped telling you to select a gear **AFTER** you have adjusted your speed on approach to the hazard.

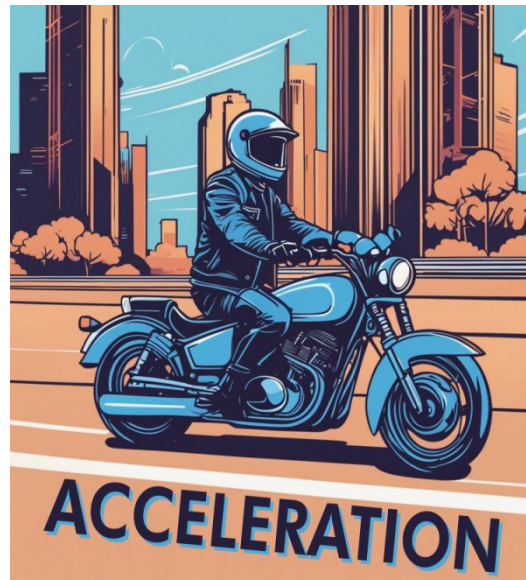
And that seems to be where System stops for some riders. They forget about the **A** for Acceleration. What does Roadcraft say about this phase?

"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."

I've added some bolding to that definition, as that is the bit I see is missing from some riders riding.

Lets' look at some real world examples where I see the A forgotten about:

How many times are you riding along a road and a vehicle pulls out of a side road ahead of you and then proceeds to dawdle away from the junction causing you to slow (probably muttering to yourself inside your crash helmet) and all the vehicles behind you bunch up? This isn't safe for the vehicle that has pulled out, and isn't safe for you, as the vehicle behind you may not be looking that far ahead. Yet I see a lot of riders do just what that exiting vehicle has done! Out of the junction they pull, only to then amble away. Get your observations done and make sure you have the space to join and accelerate away from the junction. This keeps you safe and it also helps with traffic flow. This can help everyone in day to day travel and can also help on social rides where perhaps more than one person can exit the junction. I often find that because the rider ahead has not cleared the junction it isn't safe for me to exit. Just an observation 😊.



Then we have changes of speed limits. How often are you tailgated through 30/40 limits because you are sticking to the limit that is place? Again, get your observations done early, choose a lower gear (if needed) and at the imaginary line between the two limit signs you can accelerate away. This is your opportunity to put some space between you and the tailgater. I'm not talking about massive acceleration waving the front wheel in the air, but some controlled, brisk acceleration. Again, this is improving your safety and aiding traffic flow.

Finally bends. We will have often had to lose some speed on approach to a bend, depending on the view that we have. Once we are through the bend, and the view opens up again, we can accelerate back to the level we were at before (assuming there are no new hazards). Instead I see riders lose some speed for bend one and fail to accelerate afterwards, then do the same at the next bend, and the next. They then suddenly 'wake up' and accelerate. The vehicle behind you is likely to then be too close.

So don't forget that danger can come from behind and sensible use of Acceleration can maintain/create space behind you, aiding your safety and helping with traffic flow. I'm not trying to suggest that everyone should be racing about everywhere, but that they should be using one of

the benefits we have of riding motorcycles, which is that all but the smallest have excellent power to weight ratios. And isn't that one of the reasons we ride them? Next time you are out riding, take some time to re-analyse your use of System and don't forget about the poor old letter A at the end of IPSGA.

Mike Roberts

IAM Roadsmart National Observer

Catch me on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@mikeroberts>

2024 WHAM AGM – THE MINUTES

2024 AGM Minutes – Held on 31st January 2024 at the Falcon Hotel Bromyard.

Apologies – Matt Dent, Matt Sheen, Valerie Northcote, Dan Freeth, Paul Whitcombe.

40 Members in attendance.

Chairs Report – Richard Hewitt

Sunday Ride start point has been discussed numerous times over the past few years, we currently start from Malvern.

Richard suggested that we may like to start using “Whatsapp” to assist with organising Sunday Rides.

Richard reported that WHAM has achieved the highest number of Masters passes in the country.

The overriding opinion of our slow riding event at Madley has been very positive, the venue has proved to be perfect for the event and last year it was very well attended. It also produced a very health £505 donation to Blood Bikes.

Natter nights continue to be very popular and two in particular stood out last year. Tony Davis with his outstanding “How to use a Gamin Sat Nav” and then in October “Girl on a Bike”.

Richard reported that the group is still at around 160 member and that the number leaving, and the number joining was within the normal parameters.

The events calendar for this year is already very healthy and dates have been pencilled in already.

Richard also mentioned how more work might be done to convert newly passed members into regular Sunday ride participants.



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Treasurers Report – Andrew Peckston

Andrew presented a superb presentation to highlight the club balance sheet.

Masters funding is to continue at a 50% payback to willing Master's trainees.

Chief Observer's Report – Alex Hoyle

Alex explained that he would be stepping down following the appointment of a new Chief Observer, this would take place following the next committee meeting.

Over the past year Alex had been very happy with how things have gone regarding new members and test passes. Alex confirmed that there was currently 1 associate waiting for an observer in the Worcester area to become available.

Alex stated that all new associates have come to WHAM via the IAM events and promotions.

Appointments

Chairman – Richard Hewitt standing down. Tony Davis was proposed and elected with a unanimous vote from the floor.

Vice Chairman – Matt Dent standing down. Simon Tibbetts was proposed and elected with a unanimous vote from the floor.

Treasurer – Andrew Peckston remains in post.

Secretary – Andy Chambers remains in post.

Route and Web Master – Tony Davis remains in post.

Membership Secretary – Simon Tibbetts remains in post.

Events manager – Duane Sanger remains in post, and Mark Saxton stands down. Donna Saxton was proposed and elected with a unanimous vote from the floor.

Newsletter - Jim Rolt remains in post.

Chief Observer – to be elected by the above committee at the next committee meeting.

Forthcoming Events

Observer training Day – 22nd March Llandrindod Wells.

Luxemburg – May 15th – 19th (Planning in progress)

Slow riding Day – June 22nd (to be reviewed as it clashes with ABR Festival).

Go Karting – 3rd August (Booked)

North Yorkshire Trip – October 10th – 13th

Christmas Dinner – 13th December (Suggestion of a buffet and disco/party).

Any Other Business

Ian Barnard enquired about the treasurer's report and in particular the expenditure on cameras and radios as the sum was significant. These items were purchased some years ago and had shown significant depreciation. There was discussion regarding their whereabouts, whether they were still in use etc.

Ian also raised the 50% refund for the Masters qualification and wondered why the refund was only made following successful master's pass. Ian suggested that it should be refunded when "Test ready". It was agreed that it should be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Ian asked if member could perhaps claim back 50% of "5-year retest fees".

Ian had spent some time looking at whether we might like to have a club badge similar to the IAM badges available, Ian had looked at a revised WHAM logo and design for the badge which was presented to the floor.

Andy Chambers

Club Secretary.



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