WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

May 2024

EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Do you get a great feeling of camaraderie when other bikers give you a friendly wave, or nod, when you meet them on the road? Or is it all a bit embarrassing? I admit it can become a bit much when there is a stream of oncomers and one starts to feel like one of those nodding dogs that some of the more, er, mature members might remember as being popularly sported on peoples rear shelf in their Ford Anglia in the 1960s. I recall the deluxe model had red eyes that lit up with the brake lights..

But I diverge; I have noticed recently a new biker greeting which has been offered to me several times in the past few months, have you spotted it? It's the foot wave, where the right foot is lifted from the peg in greeting. Is this a spin off from MotoGP where leg dangling seems to be all the rage? Let me know if you know the origin..

I think there may still be a chance, if you're quick, to get one of the last places on the up coming WHAM trip to Luxembourg, between the 15th to the 19th May. It's going to be a blast! Please contact tonyzzr@hotmail.com.

The newsletter begins with our usual words from our Chairman who has now apparently become an adult; must be the responsibility of his new post as top club officer! Richard Hewitt, Chief Observer, shares a great thoughtful piece about making the most of all the available information, a very apt offering..

This month we also have 2 articles from the ever controversial conversation starter Ant Clerici , firstly about tarmac and white lines... the important take away from this is of course, S L A P. The second article covers group riding; as you probably know, there has been much work done by several top club members over the last months to lay out the safest and most enjoyable ways of riding together. Check out his words, and you'll find all the relevant documents to back this up on the WHAM website here: https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/library/

A huge thanks to member Chris Richards who shares his thoughts from his long experience, with a discussion of ABS vs Cadence braking.. the latter is uncommon nowadays as we have the automatic advantages of ABS, but it's still a useful skill and well worth learning..

The other weekend the corps of Observers had a day of training and idea exchange at the Falcon hotel and a most informative and interesting day it was, presented mainly by CO Richard and fuelled by an inexhaustible supply of breakfast rolls. Even famous breakfast consumer and ex Chief Observer Alex Hoyle couldn't make a dent in the food, but the opportunity was taken to make a presentation to him of 2 tickets to the BSB at Oulton Park, in recognition of his years of excellently handling the CO job; here he is receiving the tickets from club treasurer Andy Peckston, with Richard and Tony looking on. Thanks to club secretary Andy Chambers for the photo!

Keep up with club events and Sunday rides at https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/events/, this page is always up to date with the latest information and opportunities.

And of course there's always the latest news, gossip, and banter to be found at the Facebook page here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/321150181285607

Don't forget to please contact me with any opinions, ideas, or reports at whamnewsletter@gmail.com.
Have a great month!
Jim Rolt, Editor

CHAIR'S NOTES

Hi all.

I'm a bit worried this month. I may actually be growing up. As many of you know, I purchased a nice new to me Ducati Multistrada V4S last year. One of the things that attracted me to it was the nice sexy Akrapovic full exhaust system. It's a 3K option on a new Multistrada so it must be something really special. It sounds lovely when you start it up, none of that sewing machine whine that you seem to get with the latest EURO 5 compliant bikes, instead you get a deep chest thumping rumble like a proper engine. Ride off and it burbles away, open it up and it sounds magnificent. The best bit is when you open it up and use the quickshifter up through the box, it pops and bangs like a formula 1 car, I am told that flames escape from the end of the can when this happens. Wow, 3 grand well spent eh?

Or maybe not.

Whilst the exhaust was a great party piece, brilliant for scaring sheep and annoying Matt Dent in tunnels, the noise got a bit old pretty quickly. It had the official Ducati EVO map on it which meant that more fuel got squirted into the combustion chambers than was strictly necessary (hence the flames etc). Besides the environmentally concerning aspect of this, it made my garage smell like I'd been running an old Morris Minor in there to keep warm. It also made people following me feel queasy. Added to all of the above, I found that the attitude of my insurance company changed considerably when a non road legal race exhaust was mentioned (don't take any notice of people who tell you not to let on, in the event of a claim the insurance company will check the bike and likely reduce our even refuse any pay-out).

When mine went in for a service, Ducati Worcester loaned me a new V4S with a standard exhaust. It was lovely, none of the fuelling issues claimed by proponents of breathe easy exhausts and expensive remaps. It was quiet and smooth and not in the slightest bit disappointing.

So, that evening I ordered a second hand catalytic converter and standard end can, fitted it and had the standard fuel map reinstated the following week.

There is quite a lot of evidence out there these days that, contrary to popular opinion, loud exhausts don't save lives. They certainly intensely annoy the general public and are not pleasant to live with for the rider. Think carefully before you fit one.

You'll catch me gliding silently along on one of our Sunday rides most weeks. See you there.

Yours, WHAM's grown up Chair.

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

CHIEF OBSERVER – RICHARD HEWITT

Information Information Information….

One of my favourite films provides a great analogy as to why the Information Phase of IPSGA is all pervading and omnipresent.

2014's The Hundred-Foot Journey, starring Helen Mirren and Manish Patel charts the rise of a young Cook come Chef from Mumbai. Starting from humble beginnings, with practical schooling from his mother, Patels Character eventually becomes inundated with phonecalls from top Paris restaurants who want to tempt him into their employ to secure their next Michelin Star.

During one of the ensuing restaurant visits the maître d' forcefully says something along the lines of "And what does the Le Saule Pleureur demand? Innovation, Innovation, Innovation!!"

That section of the film has always stuck in my mind in that for when I really want or need to achieve something, the delivery, the repetition, the emphasis on those same three words usually gives me the lift I need to achieve the task at hand.

For us here within the Advanced Rider Community – Information, Information, Information is our mantra. All the diagrams we see providing an explanation of the I of IPSGA see Information running through all phases. That to me provides a direct read across from the repetition and emphasis I described from the film reference (Innovation) above.

To press the point home, there's a reference from a famous Billy Connolly joke where the joke ends "and tomorrow it all changes so stay awake!" I've obviously removed some of the choicer words Billy uses, but you get my drift; Information is not static.

Enough with analogies. Why am I pressing this point home?

The Advanced Rider needs to be on top of Information collection, collation, and use, 100% of the time. I'll talk about Speed in another article, but for now remember –

"The more progress you make, the more you need to ensure your brain is taking in and dealing with all the information it is getting at a rate higher than the speed at which the information is

presenting itself."

I say presenting itself as there is a difference between information being there, and you, as an Advanced Rider, accessing it. We talk about Speed a lot; yet the start of the "Am I at the correct speed?" can easily be answered by, "Did I see that?, did I use the information I saw?, or was I lucky to avoid issue as lady luck intervened?"

When you're in Advanced Rider training you'll have quite a few new concepts presented to you. Things to read, talk about, understand, try, practice, fail to get perfect, hone, and achieve. If you learn nothing else from the advanced course take away the wonderful gift that is Information processing. When you see everything, when you are able to construct a riding plan, execute a riding plan, and be safe, and courteous, and show you are riding with purpose, you will make the best progress, and most probably achieve your shortest ever journey time (noting safety and legality). This is what can be achieved Taking, Using, and Giving Information.

Whether you've passed your Advanced Rider training or not, there will be times when new skills need to be learnt and deployed. I sat on a Honda NT1100 yesterday and was simply bewildered at the sheer number of tiny buttons festooning both ends of the handlebar. "Simply WTF" sprang into my mind. How many electronic doodahs do we need to enjoy our motorcycling?

I'd offer if I did test-ride one of these I'd be well down on pace; or I should be. Why?, well I'd need to be learning what all this stuff does; and whilst I'm doing this I will be re-directing my capacity to take and process information from the environment around me in favour of glancing at these damn complicated controls. This might last minutes, it might last a handful of hours; but I know as an Advanced Rider I'd be slow on the road whilst doing this. And that is absolutely A-OK!

A new bike, a new skill, a new road surface, demand attention, and for your safety, and for those around you, that usually means we sacrifice speed on the road. And that too is A-OK!

Information therefore should be seen as your friend, your ally, the thing that is going to get you safely to your destination. It matters not whether you are tootling to the shops, heading quickly down your favourite open country road, or blasting down the straight to Gerrards at Mallory Park. A lack of seeing stuff and doing something about it will see you in the dirt.

So, what are we looking to get information on? The course material is fulsome on this yet basically we are looking to see as far ahead as possible to start figuring out what is likely to unfold. Most newbie's need to develop this skill.

You can often see a riders level of knowledge and experience when they do something unusual; like slow down on a road that's inviting acceleration, changing position on a road where at a first glance maintaining position would be expected. I've learnt down the years, from riding with some exceptionally skilled Police Riders, that when I see behaviour like this, the person I'm following has usually seen something I haven't.

I followed an ex-force friend down a wet Welsh lane some years ago. He was on a Gold Wing, and I'd been using all my skill to keep up for most of the day; and then we were doing 30 in a 60. I clearly remember thinking, "he's tired now, thank God we've slowed down," and then an R1 that had been yo-yoing off the back of us simply flew past…

… within no more than 400 meters we came across the R1, separate from its rider who had missed

the tight left hand bend and continued into the lake that was dead ahead of us. The bike had stopped on a small gravel car park, the rider had ended up in the drink.

Both rider and bike where kind of OK. The very first thing the R1 rider asked was how we saw the lake (I hadn't either). My Pal said in his dry Mancunian drawl that he'd seen it when we came over the head of the valley some 3 miles out!

Information, Information, Information!

Don't be afraid to slow down to get more information, don't worry about maintaining a pace, you will be the best rider you can be once you have all the information that is available to you.

Safe riding.

Richard H

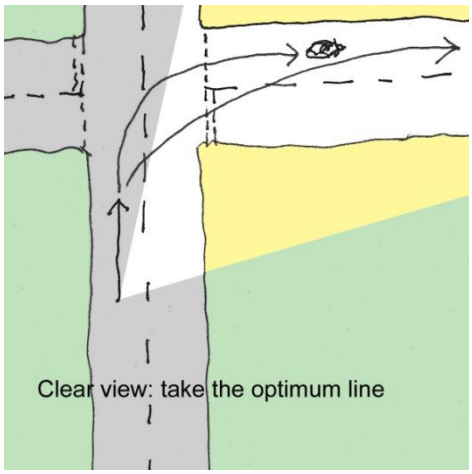
Chief Observer

Worcester & Hereford Advanced Motorcyclists

TARMAC AND WHITE LINES – ANT CLERICI

Tarmac and white lines..... *These are my views and do not necessarily reflect official WHAM or IAM Roadsmart advice*

Let's start with a basic premise: apart from a solid white line on your side of the centre of the road (Rule 129), around hatching (Rule 130), at a STOP sign (Rule 171) or protecting a bus lane (Rule 141) - it's all just tarmac. For other lines the Highway Code talks about "should" rather than "must". This contradicts how we all learnt to drive or ride when our instructors would have promoted lane discipline at all times.

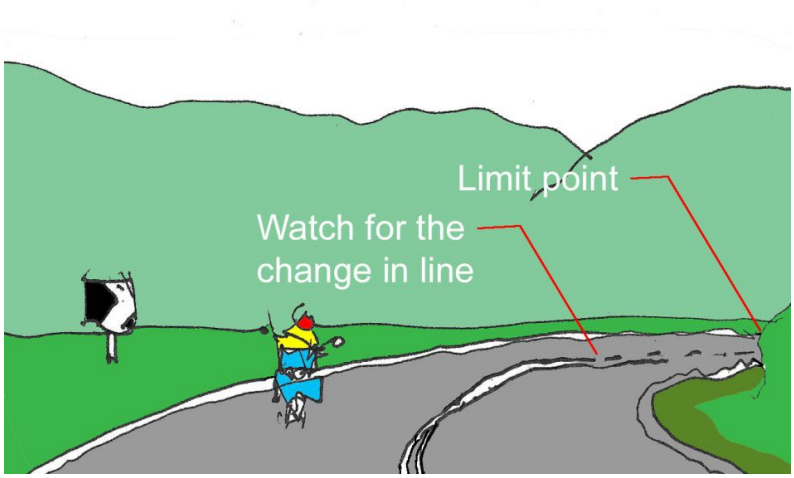


On one of my many advanced tests I was criticised by the examiner for keeping to lane when turning right. "The road was clear, you had good visibility so why not take a smoother line?"

One aspect of riding the 'Bloodbike' for Severn Freewheelers is that our duty runs throughout the night. We often ride on quiet, traffic free roads. (Bliss!) This enables me to practice straight lining roundabouts but also to generally ignore most other white paint such as lane marking described in the Highway Code as "Indication of

traffic lanes".

Highways engineers would have, should have, carried out risk assessments when deciding where to lay down white paint and in which pattern. This can be really useful in our planning because the information is there to read.



An example being when a bend has a solid white on your side, dictating traffic separation where forward vision is limited.

However once the bend opens out there's a point where the solid line becomes unnecessary and our friendly Highways Engineer decides a broken line will suffice.

This gives us the option to cross the line if safe to do so. It also signals where the bend opens so can be used to predict how you can accelerate away from the hazard and that overtaking might be available.

What's the "test" when planning your riding line if you want to diverge from slavishly keeping in lane? There's a nice acronym: SLAP. Ask yourself "is it…."

S = safe.

A clear question and easily assessed in terms of risk: the road surface, forward vision, other road users, hazards etc

L = legal

Is your manoeuvre legal?

As advanced riders we should all recognise what's legal and what's not.

A = advantage.

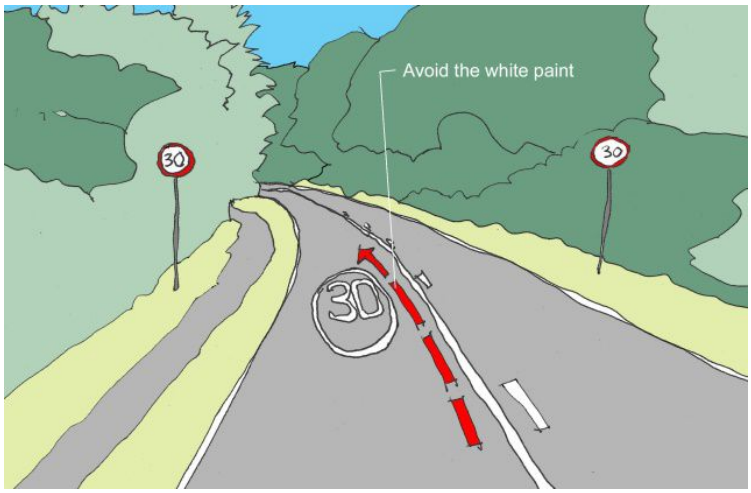
Why bother? Typically if straight lining keeps the bike more upright or helps avoid a hazard then that's worth considering. You might also be able to grab a better view which is always useful.

P = perception (of others of your riding)

Perhaps the most difficult to assess.

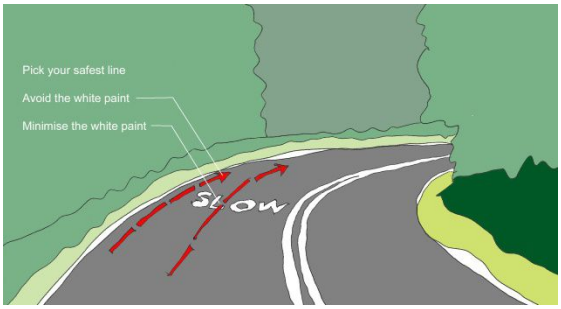
At 3am heading into Worcester Royal Hospital, with zero traffic, where two lanes lead to a small roundabout then merge, it's slow and awkward to follow the lane but not too challenging to pick a straight and upright line.

But in traffic we don't want our riding to be perceived to be inconsiderate or adversely affect other vehicles. However, even in traffic, if you get the timing right, it is still possible to use the whole road to advantage as long as 'SLAP' holds true.



For experienced riders and when safe… if you want to be accurate, really accurate; try and use the space around painted speed limit roundels to guide your line: between the roundel & the centre line for left handers and between roundel & kerb for right handers.

I also practice riding through the "L" of SLOW to minimise the amount of riding over white paint.



And it's the same approach for zebra crossings: take a black stripe in preference to a white stripe.

So in summary:

- Read the lines; they hold a lot of useful information
- Think about how you negotiate lane marking: it's advisory!
- Avoid white lines particularly when wet or potentially frosty
- Occasionally, only when SLAP fits, ignoring the lines provides an advantage.

Ant Clerici

BRAKING WITH TRADITION! - CHRIS RICHARDS

So, this short article is intended to briefly discuss 'Anti-lock Braking Systems, otherwise generally referred to as ABS, compared to the Cadence Braking technique.. The purpose of ABS is well summarised within the Motorcycle Roadcraft manual (p.171). There is also a huge amount of information around that can adequately describe in detail the technical data and different designs etc., which this article is only going to touch upon you will be relieved to see I'm sure, moreover it will just consider the pros and cons of ABS, when compared to, an arguably much overlooked or consciously applied braking technique in these modern times, that of 'Cadence Braking'. Some readers may be more familiar with the technique being referred to as 'stutter' or pump braking.

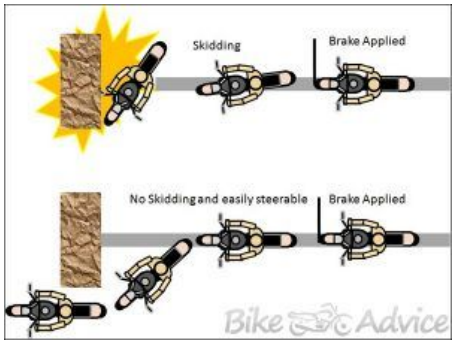
I have recently retired, though for most of my career worked within manufacturing or engineering companies across several sectors, including over twenty years within the braking industry. It was during that time during the mid-80's that I became involved in the production of one of the very first automotive anti-lock braking systems, though was referred to as SCS (Stop Control System) developed by Lucas Automotive. This hydromechanical module system (two modules per vehicle) included no electronics, the design was based on a flywheel sensor, driven through the drive shaft via a toothed belt. Each module controls braking on one front wheel and one rear wheel on opposing sides of the car. This system was initially fitted onto higher performance motorcars such as the Ford Escort XR3 and Sierra XR4.

Over the years of course this system was superseded by far more advanced and sophisticated computer based electronic ABS systems, with sensors on each wheel which are far more efficient,

effective, and much lighter than their mechanical predecessors. Most modern cars and motorcycles are now fitted with ABS. It was in 2013 that the European Union passed laws that made ABS mandatory on all new motorcycles over 125cc. whilst there were some staged homologations, the number of motorcycles on the road with ABS has massively increased over that time.

However, the fundamental purpose of all ABS systems has remained the same, it is a safety feature, constantly monitoring the speed of each wheel (now around 100 x per second), making necessary adjustments to braking pressures, intended to reduce the likelihood of a wheel locking thereby leading to a skid scenario. In most non-emergency driving or riding situations, the ABS activating would be almost undetectable.

In emergency situations, under heavy braking, this is where ABS really comes into its own by enabling the rider or driver to maintain control of the vehicle, by reducing skidding, maintain stability and allowing the operator greater opportunity to control the vehicle, potentially allowing the rider or driver to steer around any hazard. When ABS is deployed in these circumstances, pulsing or greater travel may be felt in the gear lever or pedal.



(Source: Internet images. Bike Advice.)

However, contrary to some thinking, the effectiveness of this feature can be significantly affected by the road surface, conditions, gradient and other external factors at the time, particularly when riding or driving in icy, gravel, snow, and other highly slippery conditions. This is where some contradictions and even misconceptions can often come to play, as unfortunately more inexperienced drivers and riders may believe that as their vehicle has ABS fitted, it provides them with a tool to drive with less concern to changing or worsening road conditions. Another misconception I occasionally hear is that ABS has reduced braking distances, which it can in certain conditions though this may not always the case and again can be affected by several external factors. ABS should never be entirely relied upon and is never a substitute for good riding practice. The principal benefit is that control is maintained to avoid hazards more often. That's said, some insurers claim (Bikesure) to have seen a reduction accident by circa 30-40% when comparing the same or similar motorcycles that are fitted with and without ABS, whereas others (Bennets) have questioned that data and suggest little has changed in the number of fatalities.

Whilst on a car ABS will function consistently whether driving in a straight line or cornering, on most motorcycles (unless specifically fitted with a higher specification and high cost 'Cornering ABS'), the ABS system will not perform to the same degree. Hence, wheel locking is possible in the event of emergency or heavy braking whilst banked over through a bend, which of course is never

recommended. Cornering ABS is starting to become more widely fitted, with Ducati, BMW, Aprilia and KTM fitting to some bikes in their range, though Harley Davidson also. ("Cornering ABS and lean-sensitive traction control, powered by inertial measurement units (IMUs), are becoming the norm even on mundane models, all thanks to tiny electronic components called Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems, or MEMS" MCN review 2019).

So, let's talk a little more about 'cadence braking'. This technique requires the rider or driver to repeatedly pump the brake pedal at a rate and pressure to the point of locking a wheel, then quickly releasing to prevent skidding and so on, thereby maintaining control and steering of the vehicle. This is a skill that can be taught, though largely learned through lots and lots of practice…. which is why its use is more prevalent on the track. In real time driving on the public highway, unless trained and well-practiced, it is unlikely that the rider would have sufficient time or presence of mind to initiate the technique consistently. Cadence braking should not be confused with threshold braking, whilst similar in approach, here the brakes are applied heavily and consistently (rather than pumping!) until such point as to avoid wheel lock and then released, then back on again, and so on until the vehicle is brought to a stop. The general rule of thumb across various technical publications and articles suggests that the maximum braking force is achieved when there is 10-20% slippage between the rotational wheel speed and the road surface. However, in the real world of variabilities and time available to a rider during an emergency situation, it would suggest to me this figure is fairly imprecise. What each publication and article does appear to agree upon, is that to achieve effective cadence or threshold braking, its all about practice and more practice in a safe environment…until such time as the rider is confident and capable of interpreting the feel and noticeable indicators such changes in vibration levels, sound levels or even muscular forces being exerted that would indicate when maximum braking forces have been achieved sufficiently on each braking action to the point of wheel lock, and therefore when to quickly let up and so on until the bike comes to a stop. Whilst cadence braking, the pressure required on each compression may gradually lessen as the vehicle slows down to a stop, moreover the rider should always be looking at where to go to avoid the hazard, rather than looking at the hazard. It is difficult to be more precise regarding when to brake (other than at the earliest and safest opportunity) and how much pressure to be applied on each compression of the brake pedal or lever, beyond that already indicated above.

My Dad taught me to drive and ride a bike back in the late 70's. I remember him teaching me how to pump the brake pedal for two reasons, firstly when air had inadvertently (and all too often !) found its way into the hydraulic brakes on his Cortina MK2 (Which I later bought off him for £75!) then taught me how to bleed them at the earliest opportunity. Secondly, to better control the vehicle during emergencies or heavy braking to prevent a skid. ABS had yet to be developed in those early days. I have certainly used that technique occasionally ever since, and certainly on track days before the onset on ABS.

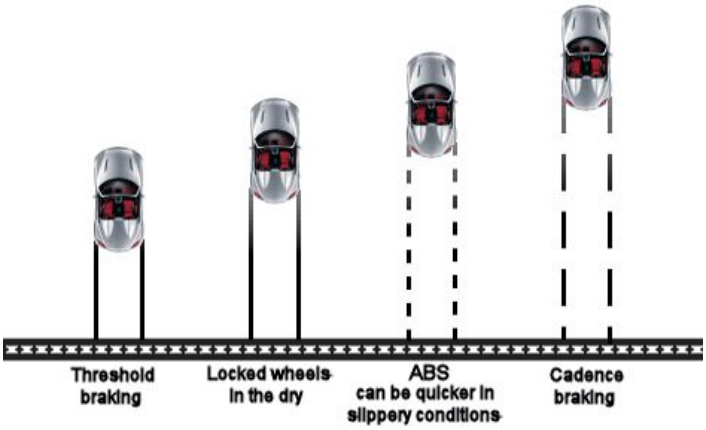
Racing drivers are (or, probably more so back in the day!) particularly skilled and adept at employing these techniques. Again, due to advances in braking, traction and steering technology, their reliance on this method has probably reduced somewhat, though I'm sure to some extent remains a well-used skill in many series classes.

Many of us that have had cars or motorcycles before the world of ABS, would have, and may still occasionally, use this technique to some degree when required.

Cadence braking is not recommended where a vehicle is fitted with ABS, as it can disrupt the system thereby limiting its effectiveness. However, this method can provide the driver or rider with greater 'feel' of how the vehicle is performing under braking, including the efficiency or grip of the tyres which might otherwise be masked somewhat by ABS.

Interestingly, there is no actual mention of the term 'cadence braking' or pump braking specifically within Motorcycle Roadcraft. The manual of course refers to progressive braking, understanding the capabilities of your machine, putting far great emphasis on having greater anticipation of hazards, appreciation of road conditions, maintaining a safe distance and awareness of surroundings to reduce the likelihood of emergency braking.

Similarly to ABS, Cadence braking will not necessarily always reduce braking distances, as so many other factors will potentially come into play. However, what it can do is to potentially maintain more stability and control, like ABS…though typically in skilled hands only. Whilst the following diagram indicates threshold braking to be comparatively effective, this method requires a higher skill level to achieve optimum results, and again a technique often used on the racing track.



(Source: Internet image. Advanced Braking Techniques)

For the most part, during most driving conditions, emergency braking on the public highway should be very much an exception than a regular requirement. If it is the latter, unless you are on the racing track, then it's probably a sign that a chat with an observer and/or revisit to general riding technique may be recommended. Whether ABS or cadence technique, either should be used in effect, as a last resort. It might be argued that on the public highway, good drivers or riders may never use the ABS fitted to their vehicle.

ABS v Cadence:

ABS:

- Main advantage over cadence is that the system is continually sensing, monitoring and adjusting brake pressure requirements for the rider.
- More consistent application in the event of an emergency and avoiding wheel lock.
- Riders can put too much faith and reliance upon the system, thereby being potentially less

attentive to the hazards or road conditions.

- Not as effective should the rider try to employ cadence technique simultaneously.
- Rider needs to ensure that brake application is maintained until the risk has passed, avoiding the temptation to release when pulsing or lengthening brake lever travel is detected.
- Development of cornering ABS will undoubtedly a further safety enhancement, though will come at a cost.
- No ABS system should be entirely relied upon and is no substitute for good riding practice.

Cadence:

- No additional cost, though requires significant practice to master this technique. A far higher level of skill than the norm is required to employ this technique properly and consistently. Threshold braking has arguably similar challenges.
- Rider arguably maintains greater focus and a higher sense of attention and anticipation of potential hazards, whatever the conditions.
- Less reliance given to mechanical aids might allow the rider to be more in tune with the performance of his motorcycle.
- Less consistently applied than ABS in all circumstances, as always reliant on the capabilities of the rider.
- Not recommended to be used with a vehicle fitted with ABS
- Potentially longer stopping distances than ABS

Author:

Chris Richards

Advanced Rider – 24 years

IAM membership number: m00298533

DVSA ERS Qualified Trainer

GROUP RIDING – THE FINER POINTS – ANT CLERICI

Getting started

After April's natter night on Group Riding I felt it would be useful to take some of the discussions and put them under the microscope. They included pre ride briefing, managing your group and how to start group riding in the first place…..

Let's begin with "**getting started**".

WHAM doesn't allow associates to participate on our organised group rides.

That sounds harsh and unfair but experience shows that there are good reasons for this.

It's not that we are jealously guarding all the fun and are trying to keep secret our best routes and breakfast stops but we recognise that there's a skills gap between associates and those who have passed their advanced test. After all that's why associates are on the journey towards advanced qualifications!

Why is that relevant?

Riding with others requires additional skills beyond riding alone; our aim is to arrive safe and sound at the destination. It takes a bit of planning and, crucially, an understanding as to how we manage group riding. We need to avoid new riders trying to "keep up" which can easily lead to poor decisions, poor riding and potentially dangerous riding.

Observers will introduce associates to group riding and WHAM's group riding policy.

Note: although group riding isn't part of the advanced test we will take you through our approach to group riding and offer a chance to join us on the organised rides.

Here it is important to note that we do not support the "drop off" system where route marking can lead to awkward situations. What you will see, depending on how many riders turn up, is that we will create groups of 4, sometimes 3 or occasionally 5 depending on how the arithmetic works.

Initially you will be accompanied by your observer.

So you will normally ride with 3 others.

This gives your group the best chance of keeping together throughout the ride.

A shared experience

Normally everyone has the route which is published on the website in advance with the start time, start point and destination café.

Top tip: it is advisable to upload the route to your phone or satnav; it's even better to also review the route. The events programme with routes can be found here: https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/events/

Once we've gathered together there will be a pre ride briefing. This will emphasise a "**safe and legal ride**" and confirm the route, destination and include any local and topical information. Quite often some of the riders present have local knowledge to share which can be really useful such as road closures, events, flooding, temporary traffic lights etc

Top tip: let others know if you are new to group riding.

You will then have a quick chat within your group, checking you have phone numbers, deciding on the ride order, if you are swapping positions etc

Top tip: you will learn a lot by riding with different people and in different positons, don't be afraid to lead.

We will then set off in our groups with a separation of a minute or two.

Our group riding policy takes care of the rest.

Top tip: read the group riding policy in WHAM's online library

https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/library/

Want to hear more? Or to arrange for a practice session?

Then please contact any of our observers.