

# WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



August 2025

## EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Two things I've noticed about summer riding:

- When the sun is shining and one is riding under overhanging trees, it becomes almost impossible to see the potholes in the dappled shade, especially if wearing sunglasses or using the dark helmet visor. I've hit one, with passenger on board who didn't appreciate the sudden unexpected jolt; luckily it wasn't a deep one and didn't destabilise the bike or do any damage. What to do? I find the contrast is reduced if I flip up the dark visor, anyone got other strategies?
- Riding home through Kingsland the other day, its a 40 limit and as I came round the right hander just before Border Oak, I thought I felt a little slide... strange, I thought, nowhere near pushing it.. then an oncoming car flashed its lights and a little further down the road there was a crop sprayer, with lots of people standing round it. It was standing in a lake of hydraulic fluid! I carefully turned left there, and as I accelerated there was wheelspin, well clear of the spillage. I can confirm that Michelin Road 6 are as good on oil as they are in the wet!



Fabulous content here for you this ~~July~~ August which I am certain you will enjoy:

CO [Richard on clothing](#)

A great [Martyn Hiller Christmas special](#)

Nick Fowler on [riding the System in the Himalayas](#)

[Reader's letters](#), this time from Steve Edwards, with interesting takes on 'progress'

Would you like a longer newsletter? I know we all have a tale to tell, or opinion on something... go on, let me know what you've been up to, don't be shy now and lets share it :) Reach me here:

[whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com)

Don't miss out on events and the Sunday rides, bookmark the events page at

<https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/events/>

Jim Rolt, Editor

Affiliated to the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists. Group No. 3260



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### Fundamentals...

I must say these get harder and harder to knock out each month! There's only so much to say and write about ridin' without regurgitating the entire works of the IAM or indeed, Roadcraft.

But I've got something uber practical this month that you won't find much mention of in either of those weighty tomes.



### Kit...

What part does your jacket and strides play in your pursuit of advanced riding?

Does it matter if you bits and bobs are cool, calm, and collected as you carve some curves on a hot sunny day? Or does it matter not a jot?

Well, I've always found that if you match the right clothes to the right weather, you do ride better, you do make less unforced errors, and you do enjoy yourself more.

This argument not to be conflated with having to buy the most expensive, or the latest (although technology has bought riding kit on in leaps and bounds) kit; rather, the right tool for the job.

However, the real skill, beyond emptying your bank account buying the latest 'stuff,' is having the forethought to study the weather patterns for the days ride, and to have thought about what will be the best outfit to wear. The thinking rider starts here and selecting what's right from whatever you have available can only be done when you know what you might face out on the road.

How many times has one of your buddies said, "Oh dear I've jeans on and it's raining, I'm going to get unfortunately wet"? Well, that guy didn't look at the weather patterns and that happens all too often to not mention here.

The kit you have obviously needs to be what you can afford; but nowadays even inexpensive kit from a reputable UK outlet will be CE marked and more than enough for the leisure rider; which if most of us are honest is what we are most of the time. And that's a great mantra when selecting kit:

"Will it do the job for most of the time?"

I was riding on Sunday and the heavens opened. I did have my best kit on, but I did also decide going and sitting in the Café that had appeared like an Oasis in the desert just at the time when the rain got up to speed was the best option for what was a 30-minutes shower. So much nicer to have a latte in your hand rather than pounding rain eventually running down into your under-crackers.

It's a commonly held view now that layering is the way to go. You can't go far wrong with anything base layer wise that EDZ make (my choice - others available), on top of that thin layers of mid and maybe fleece, or down if it's really cold, ahead of a jacket that isn't trying to do everything for you is the way to go.

In the summer there's now a plethora of mesh jackets and trousers that don't cost a small fortune to wear. I met a plastic surgeon last week who even though he was earning the big bucks, had been into Infinity and bought their cheapest mesh outfit as he only rode out once week. If it's good enough for him...

## The point

If you find out what works for you, what you are comfortable in, you will then be set up fundamentally to be the most comfortable on your bike of choice and therefore have a fighting chance of being the best rider you can individually be.

I read a lot of the magazine reviews and then go and try the latest gear on only for it to feel awful on. That kit clearly then is not for me, or you, and it doesn't matter how many stars, triangles, whatever, it has, move onto something in budget that fits and is a fit for your intended purpose.

Yours in Sport.

Richard H

Chief Observer

WHAM

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## IPSGA and Human Factors at up to 5590 metres in India

### Background

Tour Group = Nomadic Knights

Weather. Predicted 0° to 25°C. Actual 8° to 47°C

2270 km, all technically on road, ie roads are marked on a map, have a number, and 4 wheeled vehicles can use them.

Actual was > 60% of the trip was not bitumen and included 200m in a river knee deep, 50 km in 450 mm deep loose sand, maybe 500 km on 1.5 car wide hills with a 500 to 1000 m drop and no barrier.

This was my 20th trip to India of which 16 were for work in coal mines. None were as intense as this.

My bike – Royal Enfield, Himalayan 450



Start was at 2289m (7,510 ft)



Highest was 5590m (18,340 ft)

## Human Factors: -

- Lack of sleep because of the altitude and a biker/beer team
- Tingling hands from Diamox and HAVS (Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome)
- Very hot at 47c in my summer clothing. Needed just armour and a mesh jacket
- Not wishing to be last (but had to accept it)
- Not hydrated sufficiently
- Stress of facing difficult roads
- More stress after being knocked off by a car on day 2
- Not fit enough to stand up for all the non-bitumen parts

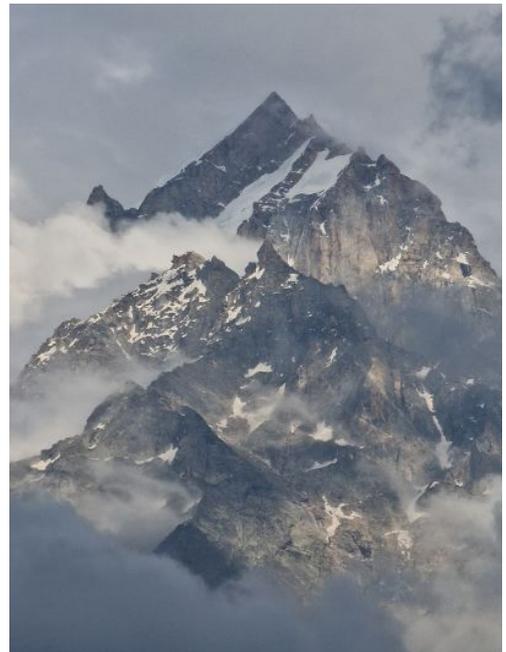
## Information (TUG):-

- Nothing as expected
- So many extreme actions by vehicles that my brain was in shock for days
- Too many stunning vistas that mean stopping to take them in, or risk dying by not looking at the road
- The knowledge that 2 have died and many had months in hospital in India on previous trips
- No one indicates unless it's a right-hand indicator meaning either pass or I'm turning right!
- Brake lights do not work on trucks and buses
- Flashed lights from oncoming vehicles means "f\*ck off"
- Use the horn for every corner, every overtake and almost constantly in villages when children, goats, and cows cross at random



## Position: -

- Keep left or not depending on what is in front of you
- Be ready for 2 or 3 vehicles abreast in blind corners
- Mental conflict between choosing the best road surface versus proximity to a > 500m unguarded drop
- Indian motorcyclists take the best route for them even if that means they pass on the wrong side



## Speed

- 100kmh is too fast when anything is possible including
  - ✓ A dual carriageway becomes an unmade single one on a blind bend, with no signs
  - ✓ A road full of goats with a whistling herder
- The historical hierarchy was private cars are king because they have important people in, trucks are number 2, buses are outliers and do not follow any rules and 2 wheelers are irrelevant.
- The new version is more extreme ie the more expensive the car the more they expect the traffic to part for them. In Kashmir the army are top dogs

## Gear:-

- The RE Himalayan 450 had 6 gears and no one used 6th, very few riders used 5th and most normal were 1st 2nd and 3rd
- Being in the correct gear before eg a sand hairpin turn was critical. The experienced riders used 2nd and 3rd in sand as 1st just caused wheelspin
- Engine braking was encouraged

## Acceleration (sense): -

- Pulling all the information together taken, used and given allowed some chance of riding smoothly.
- There was no real way of riding safely as, in India, 172,000 died on the roads in 2023 of which 75,000 were on “2 wheelers” ie 44 % of the total
- Of the 16 bikes (13 customers and 3 road captains) only 4 did not drop their bikes. 2 were the 2 oldest at 70 and 68 years old. The other 2 were road captains. The tour owner, with his wife as pillion, were knocked off by a reversing truck

## Conclusion



A “bucket list” challenge accepted and completed.

No UK road can ever look as daunting.

Would I do it again? - No

The photo below was taken at the end of the trip. Alex (the boss) said it was the first real smile from me in 2 weeks.

The middle finger was to the trip, ie I beat it. He was very quick to post it on his website and said it showed relief and success.

I am clearly not dead yet!

## MARTYN HILLIER'S CHRISTMAS TALES

Here's another story from the past; once again, late 1980s or so.

My old chum Pc Rod Wells was based at St Marks, a local base station covering that area of Cheltenham, & a Mr & Mrs Logie-Campbell lived nearby.

They were a very public spirited couple, mainstays of the St Mark's community centre, & born organisers of all manner of community events; Cubs, Brownies, Boy Scouts, youth club, the lot.

Anyway, Rod had been persuaded, coerced even, to be "Father Christmas" for the youngsters Christmas party, just a few days before Christmas itself.

Actually, it would be fairer to say that he had been stitched-up by his sergeant, who had volunteered him, in his absence.....

I duly picked him up in a Granada Traffic car, & on arrival it was explained to the youngsters that the sleigh, complete with reindeer, was parked up at the police station so the reindeer could have their supper whilst Father Christmas came to the party. Obvs., as young people say.

Anyway, it was lovely hour or so whilst all the presents were handed out, & to Rod's credit he skilfully batted away a few tricky questions from enquiring, cynical even, young minds.

I clearly remember one ragamuffin who asked "Do you wrap all the presents yourself"? to which Rod answered "Well, no, because there are too many but I do have lots of elves helping me".

Said ragamuffin turned to the assembled throng and announced "That's what he told me when I asked him that last week, in the Co-op". Cunning or what ?





On the way back we called by my house to see my wife, who was about to leave for a night shift at Cheltenham General Hospital, hence the photos.

Once we'd left I detected that Rod was by now very much in role, & reluctant to call it a night, although I did point out to him that if we got a call we'd have to attend, which would leave him potentially dealing with a job whilst dressed as Santa, or taking the costume off, & being in "shirt-sleeve order" in late December.....

We called in at Dean Close School, a public school just off the Lansdown Road, where a staff party was in full swing, & Santa was well received by one & all.....

I was finally driving back to the nick when I thought we had one more card to play, so I called up & asked Control that Cheltenham cells be informed that I had a prisoner, for Drunk & Disorderly.....

We were informed that cells were expecting us, but were not exactly delighted...!

We got to the outer cell door & buzzed to be let in, at which point Rod went from his usual affable self, to "Mr Total Drunken Idiot".

I could see that our reception committee included Pc John Wright, the "legend of Leckhampton", & that our arrival had rendered him less than his usual cheery self.

I managed to strong-arm my struggling prisoner up to the counter, & although I can't recall exactly who the sergeant was that night, I distinctly remember seeing a faint smile that said "I can see this is a wind-up".

But not John, who gamely carried on trying to book the drunk in, & was getting more exasperated by the minute, until Santa calmed down & said "Hello John; Merry Christmas".....

Mr Wells, I salute you c

Martyn Hillier

## READERS LETTERS

Thanks Jim for another interesting newsletter. Richards' explanation of the Masters course was his usual articulate offering. With regard to "progress" I often wonder how each of us would define progress (or advanced riding) in our own words? We can all quote something from the various books at our disposal such as "being in the right position at the right speed in the right gear at the right time", but if you had to find your own interpretation what would you come up with?

My own simple and far less articulate version of progress is "advanced riding is about not being held up when you don't need to be" - which automatically means you can continue making progress, at whatever speed is appropriate at the time.

So what causes us (me included) to get held up when we don't need to be? Bearing in mind none of us are perfect, it maybe a temporary distraction or lack of concentration which means we have not been taking in ALL the information available to us SOON ENOUGH, so we haven't made the RIGHT DECISION soon enough to be in the right position, right speed, right gear at the right time to take advantage of any opportunity to avoid being held up.

My own approach to my masters experience was listen to your mentor, in my case Del, who was excellent, take in what he says, practice as you need to in between rides with him focussing particularly on what he has suggested, and just RELAX!!! Go and enjoy riding your bike for an hour and a half on new roads with someone you haven't ridden with before. No big deal!

Will Morgan's analysis of the new RT1300 was also enlightening, and sums up what many bikers have been thinking for a while, that bikes are getting too big, too heavy and too complicated. It's sadly been the case that for far too long journos have glossed over shortcomings in bike design or spec and it's us the poor punter who has to find things out for ourselves. Is that why so many really low mileage expensive bikes quickly appear on the second hand market?

Ride safe and apply for the Masters!

See you on the road as and when Grandad duties and life in general doesn't clash with group rides.

Steve Edwards



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