

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



September 2025

EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Greetings to all as I sit inside watching the, in some ways welcome, rain, steadily fall.. well at least it means you may get a newsletter!

I went on a Skills Day at Thruxton the other week, and for the most part it was quite fun. Our instructor was very good, and I think nearly everyone would get some benefit from attending at least one of these events..

For most riders, being able to gradually improve one's confidence in controlled conditions – a familiar layout, no oncoming traffic, excellent surface, and so forth – allows one to explore more of what the bike can do. This means that in a tight situation on the road (these do sometimes happen even to the most skilled Roadcraft riders!) one has a greater margin of safety, in so far as one now has the confidence to use more of the grip and capability of the machine before the dreaded panic freeze up happens.



I hope you'll enjoy this month's content, bought to you by our own wonderful members.

[Chairman Tony Davis](#) on this summer

CO [Richard on posture](#)

Dan Freeth shows us some [DIY maintenance](#)

The Martyn Hillier series continues with a [not Christmas story](#) this month

John Cross relates his day out [trail riding in Wales](#)..

[Test Passes](#); big thanks to Andy Culley for sending in his recent successful associate, welcome to full membership Inga! We have more passes I'm sure – **Observers please let me know for inclusion here!**

Please help me avoid further grey hairs, send in something for the next newsletter to

whamnewsletter@gmail.com

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

Jim Rolt, Editor

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CHAIRMAN – TONY DAVIS

Hi all.

You all know that feeling, where you are rolling along making great progress, achieving your aims and getting stuff done, ticking all the boxes at the right times? Then you have to wait for someone else to do their bit, despite prompting and cajoling you just cant get everything to line up. Well, that's our Newsletter Editor's frustrations, especially where trying to get some content off the WHAM Chairman for his monthly Newsletter. As if putting it together is not hard enough! Sorry Jim.



Anyhow, what a summer we've had. I was talking to Phil George the other Sunday and he was telling me how he did his research at the start of the riding season back in March and chose some new tyres that had claimed great wet weather performance. He had them fitted a few days later and was looking forward to testing them on some wet roads. He'd got all the way to the end of August and had still not ridden on wet tarmac. That's despite a trip to Scotland and lots of WHAM Observing duties. I was unable to make last Sunday's ride to Craven Arms where I understand the rain was biblical, I hope Phil was impressed.

Another Sunday ride story springs to mind. Our longest serving WHAM Member Eric Reynolds is back on the road after a surgeon inserted some more stents into his blood vessels and gave him a new lease of life. It was great to see him slowly returning to riding. He finally made it on a full ride in August, only to be thwarted by a blown oil seal that dumped the contents of his engine all over his back tyre. The bike had to be recovered and Eric elected to have it taken home instead of the dealer, where he set to work and fixed the seal himself. What a bloke, I just hope I am as capable when I get to his age!!

September brings some great WHAM events. Our annual Slow Riding Day is happening on Saturday the 12th, I cant stress enough how good this day is for both new riders, new Associates and old timers hoping to refresh their skills. Our Chief Observer talks about body position in his article this month and the SRD will prove his points excellently, I guarantee you will come away feeling more confident.

Then we are off to North Wales for a long weekend the weekend after the SRD, let's hope the summer returns for both events.

See you on the road.

Tony

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CHIEF OBSERVER – RICHARD HEWITT

Fundamentals 2...

The thoughts below you will find some mention of in Roadcraft and the IAM skills days material; but not so much in the advanced test coursebook.

Observers however may find the concepts useful with certain associates. When I'm mentoring Masters candidates I do refer to the following items and have found them to bring positive results.

Good physical posture on your bike can be the bedrock of a good ride. This is so much more than 'balls of your feet on your footpegs' and starts with maintaining an engaged core.

That sounds quite painful doesn't it? No, what it actually means is that good core strength and posture is not only beneficial when walking about and conducting daily tasks; it's also useful on a motorcycle.

When you engage your core (muscles) it translates into being able to exert the lightest of touches on things like handlebars and footpegs, particularly handlebars. By using the muscles in your core to support your body weight, the 'touch' on the bars is then only needed for control of the machine, rather than to support your body weight. The more forward leaning the seating position, the more maintaining an engaged core will matter as you will stop needing to support yourself by using your arms; consequently getting a better 'feel' for what the machine is doing.

Link the above in with 'arms at right angles' and you have a highly successful combination giving the best opportunity to be set up to control the machine effortlessly. Even on adventure bikes a little lean forward to the bars is usually required to get that magical 90 degree angle between forearm and upper arm, and this sees benefit when making progress, particularly through bends.

For the lower part of the body the practice of 'anchoring' ones legs to the bike is taught on the IAM skills days.

This involves a little light pressure from the inner thighs on the machine and can be combined with light pressure on the opposing footpeg when going into bends. It all works and ensures that all of your inputs to the machine are exactly to the places that require input and no more. Flailing about legs slightly affecting machine stability can become a thing of the past!

Practice makes perfect though and I'd recommend mastering these skills one by one in the order that I've written about them, rather than all at once...

Yours in Sport.

Richard H

Chief Observer

WHAM



Who says watching YouTube videos can't make you an 'amateur' mechanic?

Those of you who know me will know that I don't know one end of a spanner from the other. I would even need some help and guidance in accurate chain adjustment (thankfully I ride a shaft driven GS!). I have never been shown or been brought up to conduct any mechanical work or servicing on either my cars or bikes and have always taken them to a dealer/reputable garage for fear of doing something wrong and causing damage, or worse, being unsafe.

Many members in our group have said to me in the past, 'it's easy' and 'you can't go wrong, have a go'. I have watched endless YouTube videos on how to perform basic maintenance on my bike but still always took it to my local dealer. I even took it to a ride in / ride out tyre dealer for tyre changes.

I have previously helped my Dad remove the rear shock on his GS after it leaked a second time post initial repair and the guy agreed to repair it again under warranty. This was in York, so to save another long trip and due to work commitments etc, we were left with no choice but to remove the rear wheel and shock to send it off by post for repair. This was all done following YouTube video guidance - simple!

Then, before the Exmoor trip and at very last minute I needed two new tyres (my fault for not noticing sooner). I called Chris Mullins tyres in Gloucester who is my go to guy for tyres as he provides a ride in / ride out service and also offers a discount for IAM members. When I called to book it in, the guy that removes and re-fits bike wheels was on holiday and Chris also said he was leaving the business and might not be replaced. I was left with no choice but to again follow YouTube video guidance and finally put my spanners into action to remove both wheels on my GS.

With the bike on the centre stand I used the emergency jacks off my father in law and wife's cars to Jack the bike up and balance it sufficiently. The rear wheel is easy to remove on the GS due to the single swing arm and shaft drive. Placing the bike in first gear, remove the splash guard, five bolts holding in the wheel and off she comes, no rear brake caliper or chain to remove... easy!

I then removed both front brake calipers (two bolts each side) and suspended them from the bike to reduce risk of damage to the brake lines. Loosening the pinch bolts on each side of the front forks and the axle bolt itself, the front axle was free to come off along with the front wheel. Not too bad for a very inexperienced 'mechanic'. The hardest part in all honesty was balancing the bike correctly on the small car Jacks.



I was then able to take my free wheels into Chris Mullins looking all smug with myself (what a knob hey...!?) and got two new conti trail attack 3's fitted. Now to fit the wheels back on ready for Exmoor...

Luckily the bike hadn't fallen over in the garage overnight - bonus!

I firstly re-fitted the rear wheel. Five bolts torqued to 60nm in a diagonal fashion and then re-applied the splash guard. Easy.

I then greased the front axle with Moly grease bought from a local DIY store, and re applied the axle through the front wheel, torqued this and the pinch bolts to spec (thanks to Tony Davis for guidance on these!). Finally I re-applied the two brake calipers and also torqued to spec.

All sorted and ready for Exmoor, and thankfully nothing fell off when we were away! This gave me much more confidence in undertaking some bike maintenance.

On a recent holiday to France at my Dad's place, I agreed to service his GS, a 2005 twin cam 1200. I love the bike - it feels retro to ride and has some signs of patina but is still in good nick for a 20 year old bike.



He had a major service completed last year, so it only needed an engine and final drive oil service. Again following YouTube video guidance, and with the bike on the centre stand, I removed the rear mud sling and rear wheel then removed the engine guard bars and sump guard. After running the bike for a few minutes, I removed the sump plug and drained the engine oil. Next to remove the oil filter (a simple job you might think)..... but here encountered my first experience of DIY mechanics not going to plan.

The oil filter was on so tight that it snapped the tool to get it off. After several attempts to fix the tool, we resorted to smashing it off and eventually made enough space to get grip pliers onto it to twist it off. This took several hours to achieve though, so not ideal!



Anyway you live and learn, and thankfully the new oil filter went on easily (only hand tight!) and so did the oil drain plug with a new crush washer. I filled it up with oil and after refitting the engine bars and sump guard etc. I moved onto the final drive service.

Removing the drain plug, and retaining bolt I separated the rear final drive to drain the oil (the drain plug is different on the old GS's and you have to break the final drive to drain the oil out).

Whilst it was apart, I cleaned the final drive splines and applied Moly grease to both male and female splines, before re attaching and torquing everything back to specs. 220 mls of 75w90 transaxle drive oil (older GS's require more than modern machines) was used to refill the final drive. Finally, I re-applied the rear wheel and splash guard and all was back to normal.

Then for the test ride. The bike was definitely much smoother on gear changes and when rolling off the power, it was running really well. On return, I checked and topped up the engine oil (it took just less than 4 litres in total).

In summary, if you put your mind to it, anyone can complete basic maintenance on their bike, even if you are a very novice DIY mechanic like myself. It might also save you a few quid in servicing costs at your local dealer.

I personally really enjoy it, and it gives me satisfaction knowing what has been done to my bike and the fact that it's me that's done it.

My advice would be to study YouTube videos of how to do simple maintenance on your particular machine and plan what you are going to do - make sure you have all the correct tools and parts to complete the job. Don't expect everything to go 100% smoothly, as inevitably like everything, things might not go totally to plan. However stay calm and you will find a way. Also - take your time!

I have certainly gained more confidence in basic motorcycle maintenance over the past few months and you could too, so 'give it a go, it's easy....!'

Thanks for reading, Dan Freeth.

NOT A CHRISTMAS STORY - MARTYN HILLIER

A thread on a police specific Facebook site caught my eye, on the topic of helping out when a member of the public had problems with a broken down vehicle.

It reminded me of one Bank Holiday Monday, in the 1990's, when I came across an elderly couple stationary in a rather nice Mercedes on the A429 at Bourton Bridge, Bourton on the Water.

They asked me if I could call a garage for them, to change their deflated rear nearside wheel?

Having established that had a spare in reasonable condition, & that it had at least some air in it, I suggested they pull off the carriageway onto a paved area, & I'd see what I could do.

The wife made a great fuss about being asked to get out of the car whilst I jacked it up, but did so with a bad grace.

I was beginning to regret my good nature.....

It didn't take long to remove their nice alloy wheel, complete with flat tyre, & put on their steel spare.

I was just about to advise the driver to call in at the next filling station, a mile or so up the road at Slaughter Pike, & check the pressure of the spare, when he rather rudely grunted "Thanks", got into the car & drove off.

As the Mercedes disappeared into the distance, I looked at the, without doubt, rather expensive alloy wheel, still lying on the verge.....

I placed it well into a nearby hedge for safe keeping, where it quite possibly still remains.

Next time I'm passing, I may even check. 😊

THE WALES TRAIL – JOHN CROSS



THE OPTIONS

ONE DAY TOUR
£320 with bike and kit hire / £120 with your own bike
Tuition in the morning before hitting the trails

TWO DAY TOUR
£550 with bike and kit hire / £220 with your own bike
Day one's the same, but on the second you'll head off for a proper 150-mile adventure across the best trails and Tarmac Mid-Wales has to offer.

THREE AND FOUR DAY TOUR
£550 with bike and kit hire / £220 with your own bike
A continuation of the Two-Day Ténéré Experience, this is one for more experienced riders, which'll see you covering big distances across some of the most spectacular, rugged, and remote parts of Wales.

www.mslmagazine.co.uk

A few months ago whilst flicking through a copy of Motorcycle Sport and Leisure I noticed a piece about the Yamaha Off Road Experience Centre near Llanidloes. The Tenere Experience Day looked interesting but £330 a day was a bit pricey for me. But then I read that if you use your own bike (which doesn't need to be Yamaha) then it is £130. This was tempting.

A pal has a Tenere 700 fitted with 50/50 tyres and I have a spare set of wheels with off-road tyres for my 1993 Suzuki DR800. With the DR wheels swapped we were all set.



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We were greeted at a purpose-built centre that has a reception area, changing rooms, showers and toilets, all of which were impeccably clean. The centre is based at a working farm and was set up over 30 years ago by farmer and former enduro rider Geraint Jones. They use a range of Yamaha bikes for the various training options all of which are provided by Yamaha and renewed every year.

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My intention had been to remove my mirrors on arrival but noticing that their bikes all had mirrors fitted I asked if this was necessary. The response was that they didn't have to pay for replacements so they left theirs on! I decided that seeing what was going on behind me was important so mine stayed put too. Twenty five psi was recommended for both front and rear tyres, so with that sorted and everyone togged-up we were ready for a briefing.

The bikes being used were a range of standard and Rally version Teneres, some of which had lowering kits. Our main instructor was Dylan Jones, Geraint's youngest son and ex-enduro competitor. He started the briefing by demonstrating how to come to a stop on a bike that is too tall for you: Slide off the seat so one foot reaches the ground and leave the thigh of the other leg resting on the seat. Two feet flat on the ground is not necessary.



Tyres were 50/50s which was explained as being 50% bad on-road and 50% bad off-road. I felt more comfortable with my slightly more aggressively treaded tyres. Had the conditions been wet rather than very dry then I think that those on the 50/50s would have found some of the terrain a little challenging. One other participant was using his own bike. Having done the course previously using one of the centre's Teneres, he had decided that his DCT Africa Twin would cope (which it did).

Fifteen of us set off, with the second instructor, Martyn, operating as tail-end Charlie. As well as using local lanes and their own land, the centre pays an annual fee which allows them access to Hafren forest and its network of forest tracks and paths. A gentle road section lead us into the forest and the first stop for instruction. Dylan demonstrated cornering using your body weight in the opposite way that you see track racers do it. Keep upright and lean the bike over on it's left for left hand bends and the opposite on right handers. This worked really well as it was much easier to adjust for a corner that either tightens or opens unexpectedly. Weighting the footrests to turn the bike whilst standing up was also demonstrated. This can be done consciously but to be really useful it probably needs to be automatic, which I suspect needs lots of practice. Other advice was to keep your weight forward when seated to gain more grip at the front. Over the course of the morning we stopped several times for instruction and demonstration. Then there was a 40 minute gentle ride to Llangurig for a pub lunch before heading back to the forest. Later, the group was split into two, with those feeling more adventurous heading off with Geraint and the rest staying with Martyn.

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Back to the centre for 4:30 where the staff got busy washing off the bikes and clothing. They very kindly offered to wash the Suzuki for me but it was only a bit dusty and I am not a fan of pressure washing vehicles. I stayed upright all day but amongst the others there were a few low-speed topples and one overshoot on a downhill slippery corner due to the ABS being left on. The Africa Twin ran into the back of me whilst not concentrating and toppled over. A source of great mirth to those watching. The only damage was pride and a cracked rear number plate on the Suzuki. In all we covered about 70 miles in the course of the day.



With tyres re-inflated I had a 90 minute ride home with the off-road rear tyre on the Suzuki whining away annoyingly.

All-in-all a very good value day out and we are seriously considering one of their longer tours.

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TEST PASSES

A recent test pass, observed by Andy Culley:

"Photos attached of Inga Jegors who passed his test with Marcus Macormack (spelling?) on 23rd August. He was allowed to take a pillion along for the ride!"



I know there have been others. Observers, please send me a photo or 2 and a quick report so we can all celebrate these successes - ED!