

WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



February 2026

EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Apologies for the rather tardy arrival of this newsletter, but better, I hope, late than never..

As you can see, I've been putting on my overalls and getting into some home mechanics, more below.

Most people, if I ask them directly, fairly willingly agree to contribute a little piece to this publication.. if only I could work out a way to get the 137 members who don't contribute into a corner and persuade them to help out too, how about you?

Tell you what, if you send me a piece to publish then I won't subject you to another of my rambles on my domestic repairs and fixes?



A big thanks to Club Secretary Andy Chambers for recounting his move from KTM to BMW, and the reasons why he chose to make that leap. I confess I'm not immediately gagging for a bike where it all begins north of 6000rpm.. I've had inline 4s and for me its all a bit frantic and not really quicker in the end..

Talking of fast 4s, fancy a Fireblade on the cheap? Andy Culley has found one a friend has to sell for health reasons, and it looks like a steal, check out the link below.

This month we have:

[Chairman's notes](#) From Tony Davis

[Rear Observation](#) from Chief Observer Richard Hewitt

[Moving on from KTM](#), thanks to Andy Chambers

[Fitting Heated grips](#) from Jim Rolt

[2026 AGM](#) Minutes

[For Sale](#) items

Have a great month, come and say Hi here: whamnewsletter@gmail.com

Jim Rolt, Editor

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



CHAIRMAN - TONY DAVIS

Hi all.

Not much to report this month so I am rambling on about maintaining old vs new bikes...

Back in 2016 I treated myself to a brand new BMW 1200GS as a present to myself for a significant birthday. It cost me just over 15K back then which seemed one hell of a lot of money. Today that would be an absolute bargain. I still own it and its still brilliant. Since the warranty ran out its been serviced easily with the aid of a Haynes manual and some Youtube videos, which has saved me a fortune.



I had the suspension rebuilt 4 years ago at a cost of just over £300 (Haynes and Youtube helped me take the units out of the bike and refit after the refurb). Its now almost 10 years old and has just turned 58,000 miles. It actually went to a dealer a couple of weeks ago and had a new shaft drive fitted, they loaned me a nice F900GS while they did the work, all under a recall program and completely FOC. My only complaint is the state of the paintwork. Its peeling off on the engine, gearbox casings and swing arm and the tank paint has worn significantly. I can put up with those issues, the bike gives me my winter riding fix without the worry that the salt will eat the shiny bits as there are few shiny bits left?

I also own a 2024 S1000XR. Its also great but there is a problem. BMW no longer release workshop manuals or specifications for their new bikes so the chances of maintaining them DIY is now very limited. Coupled with the fact that the dealers seem to be dropping like flies and the waiting list for servicing is getting longer and longer and more expensive Its a bit of a concern for me. Maybe I should start looking at older bikes? Regardless the GS will remain in my garage for the foreseeable future.

Do any of you have any similar experience or concerns? Please do let Jim know as he is always hungry for newsletter content.

I've just got back from a hike and noticed that the daffodils have started to appear, that's a great sign, it means spring is nearly here and we can start to get enthusiastic about bike events again. Following our AGM last month we will be planning some events and filling up the WHAM calendar. Keep an eye on the website vents page for updates.

See you on the road.

Tony

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



CHIEF OBSERVER – RICHARD HEWITT

They're behind you!!

Jim suggested this topic and I'm glad to say upon reflection not only is it an excellent idea, it also provides the opportunity for me to indulge in a little buffoonery and maybe the odd double entendre!!

What Jim suggested I pen an article on was not related to a panto dame as the title above suggests, no, it was about 'rearward awareness', i.e. what might be going on in your mirrors, and importantly, when you might see said activity, and what you might do about it.

Not everything that unfolds behind you (Mr Chambers), should ever be that much of a surprise...



Taking my jester's hat off for a moment, the question, the thought, the musing, from Associates as to how often they should look in their mirrors is a constant one that comes up time and again and is a question that well and truly has the words "it depends" at the start of any answer.

Reminder – I write these not as technical articles, more something accessible, useful, and humorous to aid the digestion of said "Advanced motorcycling" spiel.

We all know when you pull away you give a little shoulder check to see it is 100% clear to pull off. We all know that a shoulder check when entering junctions, whether other traffic is moving or not, is usually the best thing to do, but neither of those scenarios involves the use of mirrors, yet the frequency, or absolute necessity, of shoulder checks is directly governed by how mirrors are used.

Firstly, and crisply, mirrors should be employed at least when something you can see is either changing or can be expected to change. The highway code notes "use your mirrors ahead of signalling, changing direction or changing speed"

Unpacking that, if you're riding along and a junction is signposted/seen, check your mirrors. If you're entering a new speed limit zone, check your mirrors. If you see a signpost for a school, check your mirrors.

The previous paragraph should all be very obvious to those in WHAM, i.e. in possession of an advanced pass certificate. So, why do I still get asked when delivering Masters courses where else to use mirrors?

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



After some thought I always return to “it depends.” If you’ve ever got “it depends” shoot into your mind when out on the road, related to anything really, it’s time to check your mirrors. There is no formula, rather, if you’re unsure of a situation, you need information. Looking in your mirrors is as good as asking a question of someone along the lines of “is it safe to brake?,” “what is that siren and where is it coming from?” Taking in a full 360 degrees of information sees you best placed to survive just about anything.

The next musing of someone hearing that from me usually ends with them asking “Ok, but just how often do I have a little looksee to see what’s happening behind me?” And the answer, again, is “it depends.” Whilst heeding the advice above, on our busy UK roads, you will have been looking regularly in your mirrors. On the occasion when you’re in the Highlands of Scotland on one of those A-roads that are effectively miles of open single carriageway, you still need to have a look now and again to see if you’ve been joined on your travels by a quicker vehicle. Well within each minute in this situation but given most of the time you’re only really moving your eyes, do it regularly.

And whilst we’re on the subject of what goes on from behind (Mr Chambers), if you are caught up by Thomas Twillup in his souped up Volvo T5 in the depths of the night near Wick, do you really want him behind you? No, you don’t!

You might think that’s quite specific, and it is, this did happen to a group I was in a couple of years ago and interestingly we all did the same thing; get out of the idiots way and let him find his own future, whatever that was going to be.

Being rear ended by anyone (Mr Chambers), is to be avoided in all but the most limited situations.. Think bumper cars, obviously.

So, use your mirrors regularly, let fools pass, and keep the damn things clean and well adjusted!

Yours in Sport.

Richard H

Chief Observer

WHAM

A DIFFICULT TRANSITION - ANDY CHAMBERS

So, a little over twelve months ago, in the wake of the news that KTM was in trouble, I decided that a difficult decision had to be considered. KTM were reported to have been in debt to the tune of €2.4 - €3 billion late in 2024, the future looked bleak for the failing Pierer Mobility group. Having had several occasions to make warranty claims from KTM and knowing how difficult their customer care is to deal with, a difficult decision lay ahead.

So, I read up and watched the unfolding stories emerging in the press things were not looking good. In mid-November I started to look for an alternative, so what next? The KTM 1290 is a difficult act to follow, there really isn't anything that ticks every box completely that resides in the same price range.

I had already had a test ride on a BMW GS 1250 which was interesting but not for me at this time, however, what of the BMW S1000XR, I had only sat on one at a dealership a couple of years ago, probably a gen 1 and it was so uncomfortable that I had no feeling for it at all, I did however decide that a bike that looks that good probably deserves a second chance. I made an appointment at Cotswold BMW in Cheltenham to go and ride the 2024 gen 3 version.

I arrived bright and early and checked in. After completing a few bits of paperwork I was escorted to the car park to be greeted by a very nice black XR. After a quick induction I was on my way, first impression was not good, it was very sedate and frankly lifeless below 6,000 revs, but then it wasn't a four stroke powerhouse, but I was an inline 4 cylinder which has totally different engine characteristics to the big KTM. My test ride was almost over before I discover where the fun starts, which is typical of an inline 4, towards the top end of the rev range, from around 6,000 the BMW suddenly turns into a raging bull of a bike, it goes bonkers. 165 BHP delivered to the back wheel means that the front wheel will lift with such ease if left uncontrolled by the BMW safety systems.

Test ride over, I can't say that I was smitten, but my second encounter was a much better proposition. So with my KTM coming up to 15,000 mile and a big £900 valve service not far away I decided to take the plunge. I am not one to dither once the decision has been made and arranged a visit back to Cotswold BMW to have a look at a red S1000XR which was very nice but there was no negotiation to be had on price, and their part exchange valuation for the KTM was very poor, I walked away.

So, the search began for a similar model, It wasn't long before I found the very same model, colour, age, and with less miles, a far better price, and a much-improved offer for my trade in. The purchase was simple and straightforward, but the distance from home was a good ride away. Lings in Norfolk were the dealer, and I have to say they were excellent in the days before, on the day, and the weeks that followed, and they still call me from time to time to check on progress.

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS





I booked a day off work and arranged the hand over with Lings, I set off early and luckily, it was a nice day (for December) so I set off, I arrived at around 1pm and I wasn't disappointed, the XR was stunning, the decision to proceed made very easy. 35 minutes later I am heading home, deal done.

So, in reflection, is the XR as good as the KTM? They are very different bike with very different characteristics, and it is difficult to make a direct comparison so really in my opinion was buying the XR the right decision, yes, it was for me and despite some teething problems initially, which BMW were impeccable at rectifying what turned out to be a faulty coil pack. I know that the same service with KTM would not have happened and it would have been a huge battle.

I conclude that both bikes are excellent, and I would buy both again, both are awesome in their own way.

Andy Chambers

HEATED GRIPS DIY- JIM ROLT

I was frankly stunned and honoured at the Christmas Dinner when I was unexpectedly given a £200 voucher to spend on something bike related, by a committee apparently thankful for my feeble efforts in getting this very publication together.

Some thought ensued, and it didn't take long to realise that I needed some heated grips; my old Gerbings electric gloves are getting long in the tooth (15+ years) and rely on me repairing the internal connections regularly to keep them going. Also, it's a fiddle having to plug the gloves into a loom and plug that into the bike for every chilly ride.



Google showed me that many heated grips are available from various manufacturers, but in the end I decided to go for the official Triumph ones, as I don't like messy wiring dangling around, and I had cash to burn! They are expensive, and without the kind WHAM gift I wouldn't have gone ahead with near a £250 splash, but soon the deed was done..



Delivery wasn't fast, But by mid January I had a posh box of stuff. No instructions. Go online they say. I did, and instructions were duly recovered.. I have to say, if you're not a really experienced tinkerer, get a dealer to fit these! The instructions hand you off regularly to the workshop manual (luckily I have one on pdf).. even removing the tank on a modern(ish) bike needs 2 fiddly electrical plugs disconnecting and a special tool to disconnect the fuel pipe.

These grips are well integrated into the bike, which is designed to accept them, the included wiring loom has its own plug which mates with a ready installed socket tucked away under the tank. The problem of course is getting to it.. Much reference to the instructions and the manual were necessary... The most confusing part for me was routing the cables, the description not being at all intuitive and much head scratching was needed..

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

page7





I finally managed a tidy looking install, but I'm not sure it's exactly as the instructions specify. I only had to use the hammer a couple of times..



And, finally, it all went back together with no parts left over or apparently missing!



The bike Canbus recognises the grips, and pressing the little button on the left grip pops up a message on the left instrument as to whether its off, low, or high heat, very clever..

Do they work? Yes! The last Sunday ride was not stupendously cold, but I definitely felt some warmth and my hands didn't get cold. However, after the heated gloves, I found my fingertips getting chilly unless I kept them wrapped close round the bars, - not perfect, as I prefer to ride with a fairly relaxed grip rather than clinging on for dear life. Maybe I need some of the CO's famous "muffs" to remove the wind chill from the equation..



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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

page9



Conclusions: A nice set of grips that provide adequate heating and nice integration into the bike. A tidy setup, but you will need a masters degree in mechanical engineering to fit them. Are they worth five times more than other quite capable offerings? Hard to say, if you're a cheapskate like me you might not think so, but if you're OK with paying £1000 to have your bike serviced, then sure, why not!

Jim Rolt

FOR SALE



For Sale: 2010 Honda Fireblade in white (mostly!). It has a little cosmetic damage but otherwise in good condition. MoT until September '26 but is currently on SORN. Mileage 33,232. Offers in the region of £4-5,000. Call Karen on 07725 643445. Andy Culley has some more photos for anyone interested - email theodelite1956@gmail.com

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



2026 AGM MINUTES

WHAM Annual General Meeting held on 28th January 2026 at 19:30

at the Falcon Hotel Bromyard.

Item 1 - Welcoming Remarks

Tony Davis opened the meeting and welcomed the room, around 25 members were present at the meeting.

Item 2 - Apologies

Andy Chambers read out a list of apologies which included Ian Fullwood, Duane Sanger, Jim Rolt, Dan Freeth, Andrew Peckston and Mark Hird.

Item 3 Approval of the 2025 AGM minutes.

The room was in agreement that the minutes were a true record, there was no additional comment.

Item 4 - Chairmans Report

Tony Davis delivered a brief roundup of the clubs' activities over the past 12 months and highlighted events including the Exmoor Weekend, Slow riding Day – Richard Mundy Trophy, Alex Hoyle Memorial ride. It was generally agreed that all the events above would be repeated during 2026. Tony talked about how successful the events had been, well organised and executed. It was also suggested that a trip to Normandy might take place later in the year.

Item 5 - Treasurers Report, Tony Davis delivered the contents of the report in Andrew Peckston's absence.

The club current has a balance of around £14,793.51 which is generated from membership fees and fees received for IAM for associates. The detail of the report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Item 6 - Chief Observers Report – Richard Hewitt ran through the stats of last years training, passes, fails and ongoing training. We currently have 14 active observers, 5 inactive, and 2 re-qualifications in progress.

So, this is how it looked in 2025 – there were 9 passes, 6 fails and 2 firsts.

Alan Philpott made reference to Richard Hewitt for his continual contribution to the newsletter.

Item 7 - Election of Officers

Chairman – Tony Davis was proposed by Matt Dent and Seconded by Andy Chambers

Treasurer – Andrew Peckston was proposed by Matt Dent and seconded by Ant Clerici

Secretary – Andy Chambers was proposed by Mick Thompson and Seconded by Gary Barnes.

Vice Chairman – Ian Fullwood was proposed by Richard Hewitt and Seconded by Gary Barnes

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



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

page11



Item 8 - Election of Committee

Newsletter – Jim Rolt was proposed by Andrew Cully and Seconded by Will Morgan.

Membership Secretary – Andrew Peckston was proposed and seconded by the room

Route and web master – Tony Davis was Proposed and seconded by the room.

Events manager – Donna Saxton was proposed and seconded but stated that her attendance to Wednesday Natter nights would be limited due to other commitments.

Members re-elected

Valerie Northcote – remains in post

Anne Woods - remains in post

Members without portfolio

Martin Wood – joins the committee, Martin was proposed by Richard Hewitt and seconded by Will Morgan, the committee welcomes Martin to the committee.

Election of the Chief Observer to be discussed and decided at the next Committee meeting.

Item 9 - Forthcoming events

It is hoped that the group will venture abroad again in 2026 and inquiries have already started for Normandy.

Jon Powell has attended and “First Biker on the scene” course which was excellent and was to provide details to the committee for a possible future event or netter night.

Brian Morgan made comment on the biker down course and being the first on the scene, ensuring that the safety of the first arrival is preserved to ensure help is available for the casualty.

Apparently, Natty Holyoak may have some experience on this that could be useful going forward.

Our Wednesday night ride outs begin in May through to August and subject matter for natter nights is always required and ideas always welcomed.

Events for 2026 will include

Slow riding day – it was proposed that earlier in the year might be beneficial to allow time to rebook if poor weather played a part.

Ian Barnard has offered a pop quiz for the first natter night of the season.

Alan Philpott asked if it was possible to update the photos on the website as certain photos were causing him issues. Photos are to be reviewed and changed where necessary.

Item 10 - Any other business

No other business was recorded.

Item 11 - The date of the AGM - 27th January 2027 time and venue to be confirmed.

Item 12 - The meeting was closed.



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

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF
THE EDITOR THE IAM OR WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

page13

