



EXHAUST



NOTES

IAM Group: 1250

Summer 2008

www.wabam.org.uk

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As 90% of WaBAM's members are on the Internet, Exhaust Notes has been designed so that it can be viewed page by page when distributed electronically. This is why the format of the paper copies is unusual - turned on its side, so to speak.

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The opinions expressed in this or any other newsletter published by the Wilts & Bath Advanced Motorcyclists, are those of an individual or of the editor. They should not be taken to represent the views of the IAM, its officers or the WaBAM committee unless stated otherwise. The articles are published in good faith and every effort is made to ensure that the details are correct at the time of printing.

Members should seek confirmation of event details prior to attending since, regrettably, last minute changes are sometimes necessary.



The Chairman Rites

Iain Gauld

As this is my first scribbling as chairman, I thought I would begin by thanking Martyn Buckland for his sterling work in the chair over the last 3 years. I hope I can follow in his footsteps with as much enthusiasm continuing the success WaBAM has enjoyed over the last couple of years.

For those of you who do not know me, a little bit of my background. I started riding motorcycles in 1987 when I decided to swap pedal power for a less tiring method of getting to and from work.

After a couple of scary moments and digs in the ribs from my non-too-happy pillion, I thought I should change my riding style. In 1996 I chanced upon a driving day at Landsdown in Bath organised by Bath & District Advanced Motorists.

Approached by a fine gentleman by the name of Harold Wix (whom some of you have the pleasure of knowing),

who arranged to take me on my first assessment ride the very next day.

After a few months of mentoring from Harold I passed my IAM test and joined the ranks of the motorcycle section in Bath.

In 1997 I became an observer and took over as motorcycle co-ordinator for the Bath group.

With the motorcycle section growing in size and taking on a few of the committee posts (I was Secretary, Ken Fryer Treasurer and Peter Hawkes Newsletter editor), there was talk of the motorcyclists going it alone.

So, in 2004 Martyn and I talked about the Bath & Melksham bikers forming a new motorcycle only group, and the rest as they say 'Is History'.

And, here we are 3 years down the line with WaBAM growing by the day, more senior observers, more qualified and trainee observers and new

associates signing up on a regular basis we are now one of the fastest growing groups within the IAM.

It is an exciting time to be taking over as chairman with a keen biker as our new president, Chief Inspector Ian Copus (head of the Road Policing Unit), a full calendar of events and the prospect of further successful recruitment drives at the regional local Bikesafe events.

We have a busy year ahead, especially for our dedicated band of observers and those involved with the recruitment drives. Any support you can offer will gratefully received, in particular assisting Ken Fryer at the Bikesafes.

Thanks again to Martyn and here's to another successful year.

Ride safe

Iain

The Weston Riviera

Les Snelgrove

Who needs the French Riviera when just over 50 miles down the road we have Weston-Super-Mare, nestling serenely on the south coast of the Bristol Channel? A sentiment shared by the majority of people who attended the group ride on Sunday 17th February.

When, bleary eyed, I drew the curtains at 8am I was greeted by an exceedingly cold morning, all the cars in the street covered in a thick layer of icy frost. So I was very thankful that I didn't have to scrape the car

windows before setting off for the morning rendezvous at the Chippenham Little Chef. It was just a case of donning sufficient layers to keep Jack Frost at bay, especially with the anticipated wind chill factor.

As usual I was not the first person to arrive, having had to visit the hole-in-the-wall for cash and then the Esso station for fuel. Twelve other riders were already in attendance, four of them with passengers. What an excellent turn-out for a mid-winter ride.

The route I'd planned was designed to take in some beautiful views, so the fact there wasn't a cloud in the sky bode well for capturing the delights of Wiltshire and Somerset. Unbeknown to me, the fly in the ointment would be the technology. I'd decided to use the itinerary feature on my TomTom. The user manual makes it all sound very easy,

and programming in all the waypoints was very straight forward, but this did not stop problems on the road.

Setting off towards Bath, the route took us to Ford, then across the hills, through Colerne and then into Batheaston. Not very far, but people were glad to stop for a quick defrost whilst we waited for Peter and Wyn. Once warmed through, we were back on the bikes heading west through the city, which although busy, didn't



cause too many problems, apart from being overtaken by a couple of companions who didn't realise it was the lead bike parked by the side of the road waiting for everyone to catch up. This meant having to catch them up and overtake quickly before arriving at the next junction.

Once on the A368 the pace quickened slightly, although everyone agreed that many of the speed restrictions are unnecessary, especially on stretches of rural country lane where there are very few hazards. It wasn't long before we reached our next destination, the Chew Valley Lake café, where people were glad to stop, grab a coffee and defrost in the warm. Although by now the sun was starting to get well up in the sky and was getting warm enough to feel.

Underway again, we stayed on the A368 (suffering yet more unnecessary 30 limits) until reaching Locking where we turned left to Canada Coombe, an interesting stretch of road which at its highest point has a view across the Somerset levels that is quite breathtaking.

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From here we dropped down into Weston where the group scattered in all directions to find lunch etc. It was even warm enough to sit outside. By the time we got back to our bikes, the bike park was overflowing, with machines of all flavours vying for the limited spaces.

It was soon after we set off on the return journey that the TomTom decided to play its joker! The first



waypoint I had programmed in just happened to be on a bend in the road where that stretch had been straightened, so because we didn't pass the exact co-ordinates, the TomTom became adamant that we should go back before moving on to

the next waypoint! Unfortunately, there's no way of cancelling waypoints whilst on the move because the device limits the number of buttons available (to four), none of which tells the programme to ignore a waypoint and to find next one. So I ended up just following my nose and a few signs to get us to Cheddar, and from there the journey back along the B-roads was not only straight forward, but much more free-flowing than the A-roads we were on that morning. And no need for the pesky technology either!!

It was at Wingfield, where I neglected to drop off a marker at the traffic lights that everyone was thrown into total confusion resulting in the group splitting up prematurely. Sorry folks!

Thanks to everyone who turned out for making the ride so worthwhile, including the pillions and of course Richard Karn, who did a sterling job of bringing up the rear!!

Les

Observers in Wales

Bob Pearce

It's Friday afternoon, me & my faithful "old" VFR are wending our merry way to Wales. It's dry & bright, the traffic & miles disappear beneath our wheels, avoiding motorway & Severn Bridge, and I'm having a ball! So where in Wales you may ask?

I'm off to Llandrindod Wells for an Observer Training weekend.

I'd been approached some weeks previously by Ken Fryer (Chief Observer) to represent WaBAM along with other Observers & Seniors from our group.

Meanwhile back on the bike I'm in Wales & the sat nav malfunctions, the one between my ears that is, I know my destination is near Brecon, so I add about 30 miles to my trip, I've got plenty of time, so I just enjoy the ride!

Llandrindod Wells is quite a small town, so I'm taken back a bit when I

ride past this Massive Hotel. I was expecting something more humble so I'm very pleased.

I park up, unload the bike & check in. The Metropole is a "mature" hotel, lots of function rooms, bar, restaurants & well looked after.



I discover I'm sharing with Doug Marshall a trainee Observer (hope he doesn't snore), I get to the room before Doug so obviously get pick of the beds & pinch all the storage space (well not all really!).

I meet Doug at the reception as he's checking in (I was on my way to the bar!) he's just ridden up with Andy

Maggs another Observer, so I show Doug the way to the room & he gets his kit off, NOT what your thinking.

Shortly we're on our way to the bar to meet the other attendees.

The training weekend is for Observers from the whole of Region 1, so there's folk from Wales, South West, & Cornwall, about 40 in total.

I sample some Welsh beer; the double Red Dragon is very nice indeed.

At 21:00 I & the other Seniors have a briefing in an adjacent function room (maybe I'll find out what's going on!!)

Robbie Downing, Staff Examiner, greets us all & explains the course objectives.

- 1 To raise the awareness of the skills required to brief & debrief an associate.
- 2 Further develop & have a better understanding of Communication

Skills

3 Assess & develop demonstration rides to the highest levels.

With the AIM: To enhance the performance of Qualified Observers within Region One.

Well he didn't say it exactly like that, but you get the gist. What Robbie did say, was this was going to be a fun learning weekend with the emphasis on FUN.

The Seniors role in all of this would be after tomorrow's theory session, we would get one or maybe two Observers to mentor in the afternoon on road session.

Lots of routes for us to use had been expertly mapped out & laminated by our very own WaBAM Chairman (well he was then!) Martyn Buckland.

I chose two routes, totalling about 200 miles for tomorrows ride. We then adjourned back to the bar where more mingling & Red Dragon drinking took place, (only enough to be polite!)

All the WaBAM guys are here now,

that's me (obviously), Martyn, Doug, Andy, & two new Seniors who've transferred from Bristol, Richard Kendall & Tino Canoso.

We have a jolly time until its bed time.

Up early for breakfast (Doug didn't snore!) with loads of choice then back to the function room for 3 hours of theory (which flew by). This consisted of a comedy act, with a very serious message, by Robbie, John Taylor (Staff Examiner) & Tim Soper



Regional Motorcycle Advisor.

Between the three of them they demonstrated how & how not to meet, greet, brief, & de-brief an Associate.

This was all done in very relaxed & fun way, but everyone got the message

At 12:00 the road riding session started, I had been allocated Mark an Observer from Cornwall (a 5 hour journey yesterday!). So for the next 6 hours we had some serious riding to do.

Mark & I got on well straight away & the afternoon consisted of role playing, taking turns being the Observer & Associate.

We didn't manage both of Martyn's routes as the first was unexpectedly increased by about 60 miles, (the sat nav again)

The weather & roads were fantastic; I think I'll move to Wales!!

Almost late getting back, debrief, shower & change, down to the Restaurant for dinner.

Doug & I headed for a table for 8 people to be joined by John Taylor & his wife, all the Organising team split up to meet the troops, great idea.

We had a fine dinner, with John reminiscing about his early Police motorcycling with some very amusing anecdotes.

A pint of the old Red Dragon in the bar & then off to bed, a bit tired after 6 hours in the saddle.



The next morning dawns dark & wet with steady drizzle, Yuck!!

Down for yet another good breakfast,

the food & service for all meals is first class.

We meet back in the function room at 0900 for a 3 hr road session. So this is Mark's chance to polish up his demo ride. Despite the rain & murky conditions we have a good session, the road quality is very good & offers amazing grip.

Back to the hotel for a course debrief & open forum, it soon becomes evident that every single person has got something from this course.

Dave Shenton from the IAM explained that this was a pilot course & depending on the feedback, this may be adopted as the way Observer

training will go in the future.

I for one certainly hope it does

I said my farewells to Mark & the WaBAM guys, & made my way home (the way I should have come!)

On the journey I reflected on the weekend, I've been riding bikes over 40 years & yet you never stop learning, meeting other people with different ways of doing the same thing.

I felt lucky & privileged to have attended.

Ride Safe

Bob

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Speed – The Great British Obsession

An Observation of differing views by Iain Gauld

Over the past 18 months I have joined the band of commuters travelling to and from work each day on all types of roads, A roads, B roads, dual carriageways and even a motorway. This has given me the opportunity to observe the various attitudes towards driving and riding, and more importantly to that of speed.....

It has been quite an eye-opener!

We are all taught to the same DSA standard and follow the same set of rules (the Highway Code), in all aspects of driving and riding but there seems to be one overriding subject that obsesses the masses; the government, the media, the police and the road user. To some it may seem like a gripe, but I'm sure every reader will find something they can relate to.

The governments view is probably

the most obvious as there is a political position to maintain as well as revenue to be made for the treasury. Because of their obsession that speed is at the root of all accidents there is the constant rise in the number of speed cameras, more reductions in speed limits on mainly rural roads and a set of new proposals to change the penalties for speeders. Despite the fact found in a recent Bike article; "even though the Department of Transport's own figures show that 50% of drivers regularly exceed the limit – 70% on motorways – excessive speed is a contributory factor in only 5% of accidents".

Surely if we are following the guidelines for setting speed limits, why are so many limits being lowered? But, not only are the speed

limits reduced but speed cameras added at the same location. You would only have to look at the A420 between Swindon and Oxford where there was once a national speed limit, there is now a limit of 50 mph, but, there have also been several speed cameras erected. If the speed limit is thought to be too high then lowering it in the interest of road safety seems quite reasonable. However, if it was felt that road users were abusing the national limit then erecting cameras at accident black spot areas would act as a suitable deterrent and make those locations safer. To introduce both measures seems a little over the top and adds fuel to the argument that cameras are purely there for revenue purposes.

Cameras can be a useful deterrent in the right locations and a more

appropriate use is the 'red light cameras' at traffic lights where the use of speed appears to be a regular replacement for stopping. The Highway Code has always taught the road user that AMBER means stop if safe to do so, but whilst coming to a halt as traffic lights change to amber in both Wiltshire and Gloucester I have been passed by vehicles whose driver and riders feel it is a sign to accelerate rather than be held up for a couple of minutes.

This same need to use speed to avoid being delayed or 'stuck' behind another vehicle manifests itself in the obsession of the British road user to be 'first'. Familiar examples observed each day going to and from work became a subject of amusement and entertainment. Picture the scene at 7.30 am each morning at the end of the A417 dual carriageway at Birdlip where the carriageway becomes a single 40mph road at a roundabout where the dual carriageway ends.

Commuters to Cheltenham and Gloucester making their way at approximately 70 mph are faced with the prospect of not being 'first', whether it be behind a slower car or a large lorry, so they accelerate into first place in lane 2 of the dual carriageway ready to cut in front of that slower second vehicle, many is the time they end up braking very hard to fit in behind the vehicle that has made it to 'first' place or get stranded next to the roundabout unable to be allowed back in line. Patience and a relaxed attitude would alleviate the situation completely. Picture a similar scene at 5.30pm each evening at the end of the A350 dual carriageway into Chippenham, traffic lights and warning signs of the lanes narrowing to a single carriageway allow for planning ahead to 'zip merge' letting all vehicles to continue at a steady flow.....PERFECT. Well no, the obsession with getting to

the front of any queue takes over and the speed demon rears its head. Whilst the majority of drivers and riders move into the left lane early before the right lane disappears into chevrons, there is the minority that speed up sometimes way above the 50 mph limit to get in at some point before colliding with an oncoming vehicle. The comical side to this is twofold, to pass these vehicles on their left as they get isolated on the next roundabout waiting to turn right and when they have to come to a standstill baulked by the articulated lorry that straddles both lanes allowing no one but the politest motorcyclists to drift on past. So what of the motorway, well here is the place where the obsession really takes off. Roads that are meant to aid traffic flow and ease congestion have become car parks and places where multiple queues travelling at warp speed with the 'mobile chicane' – the 'middle lane moron'. Lane three

is the 'fast lane' where tailgating at speed is the order of the day intimidating the road user in front into moving out of the way even if there is nowhere to go.

Joining and leaving the motorway at any speed would appear simple in theory, but joining off a slip road at a speed to fit into the flowing traffic seems to be beyond the majority of drivers or riders, forcing in where there is no gap or almost coming to a standstill at the end of the slip road are common signs of lack of planning. Leaving should be just as easy, getting into lane one with plenty of time to signal (if you're lucky), and prepare to reduce speed to leave the motorway. But, there are some who seem to feel they will lose too much time if they have to reduce their speed below 70mph before they leave the motorway, so they continue in lane 2 or 3 until the last minute then sweep across to the slip road. Does it really save that much time?

In one week I was overtaken four days in a row by a small Blue van whilst leaving a 30mph village into a 40mph stretch! Despite the fact that I accelerated to 40 mph then maintained 50mph to 60mph when the speed limit changed to a national, I next saw the van 2 miles later just as the driver was getting out of his seat to unlock a gate. Did this act of blatant disregard for the lower speed limits save that much time?

There is a flip side to all this speeding though, one of my favourites that seem to be becoming more regular on the rural roads – the '40 milers'. Similar to the 'middle lane moron' sitting in lane 2 on the motorway regardless of speed, road conditions or weight and flow of traffic, the '40 miler' is obsessed with driving or riding at no more or less than 40 mph regardless of the speed limit, road conditions or other road users.

The first sign you get of them is a queue of vehicles held behind them

on a road with a national speed limit where it is perfectly acceptable to travel at between 50 and 60 mph. But, with no overtaking opportunities we are held in line, until we reach a village or town with a 30mph limit and low and behold the '40 miler' is leaving the queue behind and disappearing into the distance. The next time you see them is when you exit onto a road with the national limit again enjoying the flow of the road and the chance to travel at the speed limit you are once again encouraged to reduce to 40 mph and into a queue.

One thing that is surprising is that these drivers and riders are not the stereotypical Volvo driving, BMW riding, flat cap wearing old timers, but road users of all types and ages. So, where does this entire obsession come from?

Is there a feeling of if 'they can do it why can't I'? Of course when I say 'they' I am talking about the Police,

there may be some in the forces throughout the UK that want zero tolerance (chief constable of North Wales Richard Brunstrom 'the Mad Mullah of the Traffic Taliban'), but even on their patch there appears to be one rule for one and one rule for the other attitude.

The chief constable from South Yorkshire, another force, is caught speeding at 90mph in a 60 mph limit and is let off with a minimal fine £350 and a 42 day ban! Three police officers, from amazingly North Wales are caught at 110 mph in a 60 limit are banned for 28 days and fined £380 for costs! Another from North Wales is caught doing 95mph in a 60 limit, banned for 7 days and fined £200. One of the most famous is a police officer caught speeding at 159mph and is let off because he is an advanced driver who is testing the capabilities of his new unmarked police vehicle. Originally dismissed the case was taken to appeal and still

the officer was let off because the case took 2½ years to be finalised and the judge said the officer had suffered enough!

Two officers caught by a Gatso exceeding the 50mph limit TWICE managed to avoid prosecution on a technicality because the warning sign had a black border around the camera logo, which infringed the Road Traffic Regulations Act. For all of these offences, the ordinary driver or rider would be banned, fined and sometimes even jailed regardless of driving standard. Is there any excuse for driving at excessive speed?

So, why the obsession?

Can we put the blame on the media? We've all seen the types of vehicle reviewed on the likes of 'Top Gear', very fast supercars always tested on airfield runways to see how quick they will go and in the hands of expert drivers to see how well they handle at high speeds. Does this urge the road user to try it for

themselves?

Look at the majority of motorcycle magazines and weeklies to show the latest models fighting over the elusive 200mph top speed. Is this yet another temptation to ride flat out just to see what your pride and joy can do?

And what of the new drivers and riders on the roads today, on one hand they are being told speed it is anti social, but to their friends and peers do they want to be seen to drive slow like their granddad? The latest craze or obsession is to post videos of their antics on 'YouTube', the most recent being a teenager filming himself doing 130mph. The police are using this self evidence in their favour to prosecute youngsters. The pressures are enormous, but what of this great obsession with speed. We can arrive safely at a destination without that final rush at the end, wait for a couple extra minutes at traffic lights or even sit behind the '40 miler' a little longer.

WaBAM Mist-ery Ride

Peter Hawkes

April 20th 2008, Spring has sprung, and the birds are singing. It's a pity about the mist that dampens everything, leaving the roads nicely glistening. Still that hasn't deterred the sixteen riders and two pillions waiting for the start of the April Ride. Off we go down the A420 to the Bristol Ring Road, and up the shortest stretch of the M32 to join the M4, for the M48 and over the old bridge to Chepstow. I advertised this ride as one that would use every type of road, and so far had covered A roads, dual carriageways and as short a run of Motorway as possible consistent with getting into Wales quickly. So clearly its time for a change of road, and off we went down the back B road to Usk, and then to Abergavenny. As far as Usk this has been mostly resurfaced and instead of previously using observation skills to select a path though the potholes and bare patches

of tarmac while recognising the bends themselves, we had a road that can be enjoyed for those swooping bends. Scratch B roads off the list, as they have now been covered. And I mentioned bridges mentioned on the website, so include a modern suspension bridge (the M48 over the Severn) and the Chain Bridge between Usk and Abergavenny. Another type of bridge followed later.

At Abergavenny Bus station we stopped for a coffee/bacon butty/refreshment/porcelain interface break. Though there were relatively few bikes there then (perhaps the weather kept the faint-hearted at home) we did have a couple of surprises. Amongst the bikes were two ridden by members of Bristol Advanced Motorcyclists, who had come out on their own after their Group ride had been cancelled. They joined us for the rest of the run. And

at the end of the row of parked bikes was a black Blackbird. Nothing unusual there, except that this Blackbird had a Police bike helmet resting on its saddle and a Police Sergeant standing besides it. This unmarked Police bike was used for Bikesafe and other public events, having neither radio nor overt or concealed blue lights.

The Blackbird had been initially been used on surveillance operations but was now no longer employed on that tasking, so the Traffic Department decided they could find good use for it. The South Wales Police idea of turning up at bike meeting places with machinery most riders can relate to and with a friendly and constructive personal approach is much a better way to get the road safety message across than that most recently used by the North Wales Police - hiding in horse boxes

with concealed cameras to issue automated penalties long after the learning point has passed.

Refreshed, we set off on the next phase, a short stretch of the A465, turning off at Llanvihangel Crucorney (and in need of Nick Atkins familiarity with the pronunciation of such names). In the village we turned left at the Skirrid Inn, said to be the oldest Public House in Wales with a history that can be traced back to the Norman Conquest. Unusually for a Public House it has a room once used as a jail, from which drag marks can still be seen leading to a beam that Hanging Judge Jefferies made good use of.

That road at first looked like a normal B road, but quickly narrowed into an unclassified road. That completed the set of road types. Of course, had the mist held off, we could have seen the delights of the Llanthony Valley and glimpsed Offas Dike that meandered high above us to the left. Instead, the 'road' was wet, which meant that 'Good Welsh mud'



mentioned in the Welsh Tourism adverts was frequently encountered across the surface and was set to 10 in the 0-10 slippery scale. So, together with the puddles and water runoff from the fields, it was better to focus on the safest path along this than to contemplate the rich history of this valley. The width of this best path ranged from several feet to several inches. Naturally, that path sometimes put you in conflict with bits dangling from the hedges. So it was not only the course and state of the 'road' that we had to take into account, but aerial dangers as well. Not to mention wildlife and farm

animals. And the 'road was not only sinuous but had elevation changes to add to the fun, and occasionally bends were both horizontal and vertical.

We passed the Priory and as some may have thought that things could not get worse, they did. We emerged from the mist of the valley floor to begin the climb up the Gospel Pass. This was named for Gerald of Wales who preached the Third Crusade here (1189-1192), and you had you wonder at his sense of picking such a remote spot, or alternatively at the sense of audience that turned up in such a place to hear someone encourage them to leave for a Holy War. Maybe Gerald's unique selling point was the promise of a warmer and dryer climate.

Whatever the weather when he was preaching, it had just got worse as we entered the Pass via a Cattle Grid that was both wet, and therefore extra slippery, and set on a bend. Gone was the now kindly seeming and gentle mist, to be usurped by full

blown low cloud, with visibility never more than about 30m. Of course, just been low cloud would have been too easy, so we had to contend with a strong, gusty and very cold, wind blasting down from the unseen heights to our right. That wind was strong enough to move the bikes about on the path, where, had visibility not been so densely obscured, we could have enjoyed the sense of openness created by the wide open spaces (honestly) and the lack of anything besides the tarmac other than a drop. Then there was the oncoming black 4x4 that the operator had set in economy mode – no lights, to save fuel.

We pulled in to a flat area beside the path to regroup. Two quotes stick in my memory.

“I’ve never ridden for so long in first gear”

“That took a bit of concentration!”

The cloud did, however, have the advantage of concealing the drops for any of a nervous disposition. The fog

lifted as we descended into Hay on Wye. This is a small place, but world famous for its second hand Book Shops, and the Annual Book Festival. On road parking near the town centre is very limited but there is a large Car Park. Powys Council have decided in their infinite wisdom that not only should cars Pay and Display, but so should bikes. Cue much photographing of the tenuously stuck on tickets. Lunch and then a wander round the picturesque town centre took up the paid for hour, and then it was on the way once more, along a B road leading to a crossing over the final bridge type, a privately owned



and operated Toll Bridge (bikes 10p). Privately owned and operated Toll Bridges are unusual, but such bridges that are wooden are even more rare.

The A 438 took us to Hereford and then along the fairly wide A49, turning off on another A road, the A466. This was a totally different kettle of fish, being narrower, curvier and with a range of elevations to increase the interest. From Monmouth we stayed on the A466 to enter the Wye Valley for a flatter, but still bendy, section of road. The ride ended at Tintern Abbey (as someone said “It will be nice when they finish it”).

My thanks to Martyn Buckland for being the Tail Ender.

For any who went on that ride, if you do it again when the weather is better, you will find much to enjoy in the views up the Llanthony Valley and across the Gospel Pass. Honestly.

Peter



Adverse Camber

Martyn Buckland

First off, another quick "Ta" for those who couldn't make the AGM for all your support over the last three years. As I said at the time, you can only make a success of something if you have the help and backing of everyone and I certainly got that from the Committee and Membership of WaBAM. I'm now Chief Observer (something no-one outside the IAM understands) and looking forward to some different challenges:

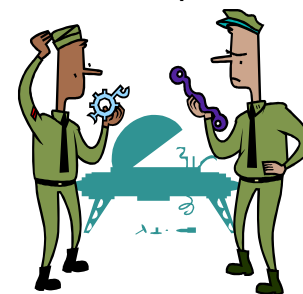
"Yes Mr Bloggs, I am extremely sorry that you failed your test but I can't help feeling that those people on the zebra crossing might agree with the Examiner that making progress shouldn't include picking them up on the front of your bike as you rode through Melksham High Street. At least, I'm sure they will do once they get out of hospital..."

Yup, you know the sort of thing.

Anyway, enough of that. Last time

out, I regaled you with tales of woe relating to my Beemer. Well, since then, I'm pleased to report that I've had 1200 miles trouble-free riding. Well, almost. The final (PLEASE!) saga occurred on 20th April when Peter Hawkes led us up through Llantony Priory to Way on Hye. The bike didn't miss a beat all day during what was a very pleasurable run – thanks Peter! I got home after riding nearly 200 miles and took the luggage off it (I have to reverse it down a tight alleyway – if they ever make that part of the Senior Observer Test it'll be a cinch for me!). Go back to the bike (it's still hot) and hit the starter. It turned over but wouldn't fire up..... classic "wouldn't it run better with fuel in it Sir?" stuff, so, despite "Computer says it's got 50 miles in it", I went and got another 5 litres just to make sure. Natch, it made sod-all difference.

Time to ring BMW Assist! Fortunately it's now permanently linked into my phone network and I know all the controllers by their first names – and their children – and their children's children as well.



Engineer turns up after about an hour (not bad) and, bloody 'ell, surprise, surprise, this guy actually knows what a bike is – and turned out to be an ex-scrambler to boot. Did this stand him in any better position to sort it? Did it hell? We flattened my battery AND his super-duper emergency battery to no avail whatsoever. We called it a night (actually, I called it something a bit different) and left it to the man with the trailer the next day. After it got back to BVM in Stroud it was immediately diagnosed as a faulty fuel sensor and I had the bike back the next day. Apparently "they all do

that sir" and in certain parts of the world, BMW Assist Engineers carry a couple of 'em around with them. Shame mine didn't, eh?

Since then it's been a paragon of virtue apart, from the fact that with my new-found confidence I've been exploring, how shall we put it? - the "upper rev' range" and as a consequence, have melted the rear number plate as a result of the additional exhaust blast! Not exactly a mechanical failure but it makes you wonder how Remus test their products. Not on a UK road-spec' bike obviously!

This article is being put together on the last weekend in May, the week before our trip to the Peaks. Some of us are sticking another couple of days onto the weekend and going up to Yorkshire and back through North Wales - probably over a thousand miles, as I have to go via the New Forest to attend a family wedding - as you do on a fully loaded bike (!?).

I have to say that I'm normally very organized but on this occasion, I'm just winging it, letting everyone else do the arrangements - a strange and

slightly disconcerting experience. I have my maps AND a Sat-Nav (I still don't trust 'em) and a bike. With any luck I may even put some clothes together (I'm relying on my missus to take my glad-rags to the wedding venue).

By the time you read this it'll be history - but I'm really hoping that I'll have nothing to report in the way of mechanical excitement, just good vibrations!

Talking of good vibrations, I'm just putting together a trip to California in September. My good wife and I intend to hire out one o' them Hardly Ablesomes and "do" the West Coast down from 'Frisco via Monterey and Big Sur before cutting back to Yosemite and perhaps Lake Tahoe, depending on how much time we have.

One thing we should have learned from our 2005 trip was not to try and do too much mileage - but it's soooo tempting to stick all those



"must do's" into the itinerary. Best bet is to not commit yourself to a schedule that you may have to forgo.... We're going to hang out in SF before coming home though, so it's a Holiday Inn Points job to get some decent accommodation on Fisherman' Wharf for three nights. See, all those nights away in some of the crappiest towns the UK has to offer, does pay back eventually - when you can get the chance to spend the reward points! (frequent work travelers will understand, the rest will have to surmise).

Gill is currently on the GS'ers web site reading all the Highway 1 reviews. Seems that Beemer riders don't appreciate Electra Glides (the only hireable H-D for a pillion trip) so we may be back on a 'Wing again. Stop Press - seems like some of the folks are actually recommending ditching the idea of a bike altogether !!!! Sod that, time to turn the computer off!

Talking of computers and Sat-Nav's, earlier in the year I bought a Garmin Street Pilot 2nd hand off the GS'er site (look, if it's good enough for

Charlie & Ewan – and yes, I have seen the “3rd Reich” video). I paid just under £400 for the unit and a Touratech mount – about half retail price. It’s good for bike and car so tends to be switched about a fair bit. The spec’ reckons it’s good under water to a depth of 3 metres but I hope I won’t be proving that on the bike! I’m still not sure if a GPS is a good thing on a bike – too distracting by far – but it has helped me on a couple of occasions. Almost as many times as it’s screwed me up.... More of this in another “Ad’ Cam” I’m sure! Finally, a little anecdote from a trip to Orlando from whence I’ve just

returned. Being a business trip, I was looking forward to getting some fresh air (as fresh as 92F with 87% humidity gets) after a long “Convention Day” and asked the hotel reception for their Nature Trail walk route. What they gave me was a circular tour on the perimeter of their golf course – not quite what I had in mind, so I asked if it was OK if I went “off-trail”?

Answer: *“Well sir, we wouldn’t necessarily recommend that..”* (lovely phrase). And why not? *“Our snakes are the best tree climbers in the US. They won’t hurt you none, but shoot, they do give you a shock*



when they drop on yo head!”.

That’ll just be the walk round the golf course then thanks....

Anyway, snakes aside, looks like many of us are in for a good summer

of biking, so let’s hope we get some good weather and we all complete our respective trips without mishap. I hope to report back on my various trips in the next “Ad’ Cam” – till then, have a good ‘un!

Martyn

Congratulations

Congratulations to the following who have achieved a pass in the IAM Motorcycle test, and their observers, without whom our group could not continue to grow and achieve its aims of improving riding standards across our area.

David Charleston

Peter Hawkes

Frank Gould

Jim Thompson

Martin Heseltine

Ken Fryer

William Basara

Lorraine Neville

Paul Johnston

Nick Atkins

Wyn Lloyd

Peter Hawkes

Paul Thomas

Steve Flippance

Stephen Buckthorpe

Kevin Bristow

Andrew Stone

Richard Bayliffe

David Kavanagh

Bill Ferrol

Tim Pointing

Lorraine Neville

Tim Lane

Iain Gould

Riding for Charity

David Blackledge (Trainee Observer)

I am going to planning to participate in the 75th Anniversary, Interphone National Rally, which is a scatter rally undertaken on motorbike, with or without pillion, whilst at the same time raising money for Mencap. See www.nationalroadrally.co.uk for further information.

I have previously done the National Rally, whilst living in Peterborough, both with fellow IAM riders (in 2001) and alone (in 2002). Obviously, doing it with others means that the responsibility for navigation is shared, but equally doing it alone means that the achievement of actually finding the controls and

finishing by the deadline is your responsibility.

On both previous occasions, I achieved the Gold standard. This time, having missed out by a single "control" last time, I am seeking to achieve the Special Gold Standard, which requires, that between 2pm on Saturday 5 July and 10am Sunday 6 July, I navigate between the maximum number of controls, and ride 540 measured miles. Obviously, it is an issue of planning the route, rest breaks (which are mandatory), and making sure I finish before 10am (no mean task).

At this stage I have an outline route, but can only finalise my route when in about two weeks they issue the route matrix, which provides the details of where the controls are, and the possible links between the controls, ending up at Bletchley Park near Milton Keynes.

I would very much like WABAM members and Associates to help me in raising as much sponsorship as possible.

I have set up a sponsorship page at www.justgiving.com/davidblackledge All help much appreciated.

David

Lymington for Lunch

Malcolm Eaglesham

Left Chipp in shrouds of spray and constant downpour. Lots of standing water with the odd 40 tonner laying a booby trap from the opposite carriage way. Down A350 to Shaftesbury. By

this time rain starting to moderate. Up zigzag hill and over Cranborne chase for Coffee in Cranborne garden centre, rain now stopping, sun came out !!!!!. Then via Fordingbridge A338

south, heading towards Christchurch. At Ibsley police stopped all traffic, I informed them of our route and was advised to turn left in the next village. Unfortunately we came across

an Escort van firmly wedged into a wall before the next turning. After a few mumbled words from the local constabulary attending, I politely asked if it was possible to take the path to by-pass the accident, this pleased the GS riders no end. This was agreed and we continued via

Christchurch to Lymington for lunch. Route home was north (cant go south or east you get wet !!) through the Forest via Lyndhurst then onto some B roads for a bit of variation. There was still quite a lot of standing water from time to time and as Bill will testify, water can be quite wet. I'm

sure if you ask him he will enlighten you as to how he managed to get water on the inside of his helmet. Finally via faster A roads via Andover, Devizes to Melksham. Total 185 miles.

Malcolm

Editors Notes

Martyn Jefferies

You may have noticed this issue is a bumper issue. What with a report from our new Chairman, Bob's excellent report from the Observers weekend in Wales As for Iains article on speed, it certainly provokes some thoughts. It's great to know too that Martyn Buckland has promised to continue to write Ad Cam, with all his tails of woe and excitement - He really should have bought a Triumph ;-). Martyn always manages to make his article an interesting read. Then there are all our ride reports. If you haven't been on a WaBAM rideout before, make now the

time to get out there and join in, with all the stories of damp, soggy, misty rides, it must be time for the weather to turn and for the sun to shine on a rideout day.

It's been great to have such a selection of articles to include. However, in putting this feast of delights together the pot is almost empty, so why not put pen to paper, or I guess it's finger to keyboard these days, though we are more than happy to accept hand written reports for those who prefer the traditional method. Don't worry about formatting, we'll sort that out when

we transfer it to Exhaust Notes, so whether it's a tail from years ago, an experience from a recent ride, or anything that would be of interest to our members, let's hear from you.

The deadline for submission of articles for the next edition is 15th August, and don't forget to take your camera with you and send in your pictures to brighten up your article even more.

Once again, a big thanks to all our contributors this month.

Keep riding and keep scribing.

Martyn

Events – Regular or Not

5th July – **Monthly Social** meeting at the King Alfred in Chippenham from 8pm. Come along and meet up with fellow members for a drink and a chat. Discussions are currently ongoing with regard to the location and dates for the monthly social. Keep yourself up to date with progress with regard further socials be visiting www.wabam.org.uk

19th July - Its the **Calne Bike Show** Weekend! Come along and support WaBAM's stand and help to encourage likeminded motorcyclists to take up Advanced Riding. This event is organised by the Calne Rotarians and is a cracking show that almost completely takes over the town with some visitors coming from as far as Leeds! If you can't come a long to spend time on the stand, it's well worth a visit anyhow, just stop by to say hello and see how the guys are doing.

20th July – **July's rideout** will be run

in conjunction with the local RAT (Riders Association of Triumph) group with the destination being **Sammy Millers Motorcycle Museum**. The Museum is holding a Speedway day with Bike Displays, Memorabilia - and it's free to get in.

As you would expect, there will be a huge display of Speedway Bikes from the Douglas's and JAP's of yesteryear to the bikes of today with over 80 Bikes and 50 Riders spanning the years of Southampton Speedway and beyond.

All proceeds go to the Speedway Riders Benevolent Fund and entry to the whole event is FREE.

16th August – Martyn Buckland has very kindly offered to host this years **BBQ**. This year sees a change to our usual BBQ format and will take place at the Bell on the Common, Broughton Gifford on the Saturday afternoon from 15:00 – 18:00. Entry and food - WaBAM Members free

(you'll need to bring along your Membership Card), guests £6. Apply in advance for a food voucher to Nigel (social.secretary(a)wabam.org.uk) by 1st August. Drinks will be available over the cash bar as normal.

17th August – Following a change to the BBQ date, the **August rideout** will be just a ½ day affair, but will **not** be followed by a BBQ.

9th September – Wabam have been invited to compete in a **Quiz Night** against surrounding groups. The Quiz this year is being hosted by the Bath group. Anyone interested in making up a team is asked to contact Nigel (social.secretary(a)wabam.org.uk) by 22nd August.

21st September – Rideout to be led by Peter Hawkes, and at present it is planned to ride to **Exmoor**, over the moors , past Dunkery Beacon and down to Porlock.

12th October – **Octobers rideout** has

been brought forward a week to coincide with the **Weston Beach Races**. This promises to be a great day out, Sand, sun, sea AND Motorbikes. If you attended last year and thought it was good, the organisers are planning further improvements for 2008 for what is now the UK's biggest off road motorsport event. Bigger and better access points to the beach will improve facilities for the fans, while

new improved bridges on the track will make for a safer environment for both riders and officials.

Unless otherwise stated, meet at the Little Chef, A350 Chippenham at 09:00 for 09:30 departure for all rideouts.

Please remember that events are subject to change, so keep your eye on your inboxes for Les's Monthly updates. You can also check out all

the events by visiting the WaBAM website and selecting the events link.

With so much going on, there must be something for everyone. However, if there is something missing, why not get in touch. For rideouts contact our new Rideout Co-ordinator, Nick Atkins, even better if you'd like to lead the ride too. For other social events contact Nigel Lavender.

Our Sponsors

<p>George White Superbike Centre www.georgewhite.co.uk</p>	<p>Athena Avenue, Elgin Drive, Swindon, SN2 8EJ Tel: 01793 716 716</p>	<p><i>Show your current membership card to obtain a 10% discount on accessories, clothing and workshop services.</i></p>
<p>Artdeans Motorcycle & Scooter Centre www.artdeans.com</p>	<p>207 Rodbourne Road Swindon Tel: 01793 574 800</p>	<p><i>Show your current membership card to obtain a 10% to 20% discount on accessories and clothing. Ask for details.</i></p>
<p>Performance Triumph Swindon www.bladegroup.co.uk/triumph/</p>	<p>Elgin Drive Swindon SN2 8DP Tel: 01793 525 125</p>	<p><i>For a 10% discount on selected accessories - excluding painted & carbon parts -, clothing and workshop services, show your current membership card.</i></p>



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