

# WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



MARCH 2018



## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

It's time!

Time to think about this year's biking.

Get your bike ready, check your gear, book those trips and perhaps most important - think about your own riding....

We are all a bit rusty because of the snow enforced layoff and if you haven't ridden much this year then please think about taking it easy for the first few miles. Our observers will take you on a refresher if you want (just ask)! Or you can plan to develop your riding by looking at a 1<sup>st</sup> pass or even Masters. Our observers are there to guide you through the process. My Masters is due for renewal so I'm about to get some tuition and then take the test sometime in the next few weeks.



Biking is a skill that needs practice!

WHAM's committee and training team have been hard at it. The observer training day has been planned and we are about to firm up on the location of the slow riding day. We always need help in setting up the slow riding event – let me, Gary or Alex know if you want to help.

I hope to see you out on your bike soon...ride safe



Ant Clerici

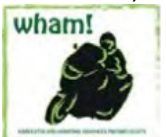
(Ed's note—our illustrious Chairman battling through the snow on Sunday 11th March. In all seriousness this route was 'walked' before ridden)

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## CHIEF OBSERVERS COLUMN—MPOWDERSS

OK so the snow's no sooner gone and you're thinking about getting your bike out and having a go.

However, before you just jump on it and tear off, you might want to consider a quick bike check just to make sure that everything is tickety boo. That's where MPOWDERSS comes in. Most of you who have done some training will know MPOWDERSS from either 'How to be a Better Rider', or Plan on a Page.

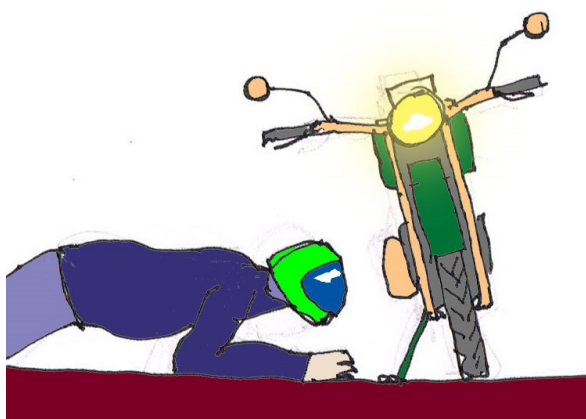
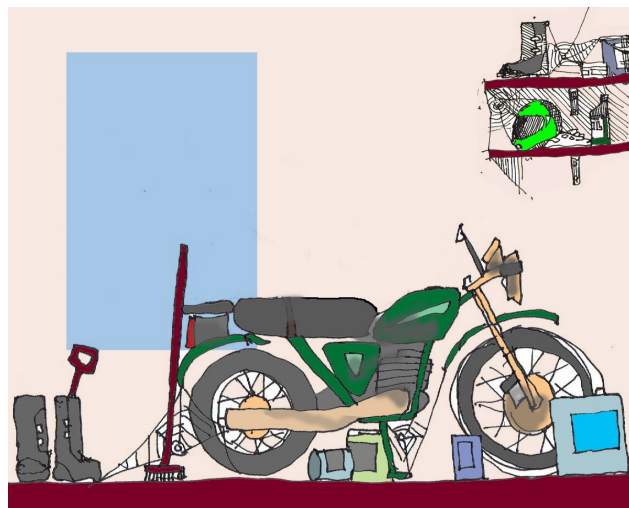
So, what does it stand for? Here goes.

M is for Mirrors, are they clean, do you have them adjusted properly so you can clearly see behind you, can you see the blind spot. Mirrors are funny things I spend hours adjusting mine, to try and improve the rear view, only to go back to square one. Also try putting a little wax or polish on them, it helps keep them clean and stops them misting up.

P is for Petrol, have you got sufficient petrol for your journey, particularly if heading off in to Wales on a Sunday; when many petrol stations are closed. I was competing with a chum at Prescott Hillclimb in a Caterham Seven one weekend, the car was running sweet, until we topped up the fuel. We then spent the next two hours trying to work out why it would not start, eventually to discover that my mate Tim had put diesel in the Jerry can, once cleared out the car was back to normal. So, have you got petrol in it, and did you put petrol in it? Easily done if you have diesel vehicles.

O is for Oil, all engines need oil to lubricate them, so do you know how to check the correct oil level, do you know what grade of oil to use, should the engine be cold or hot when you check it. All this information can be found in your bike user manual, but you do need to know it.

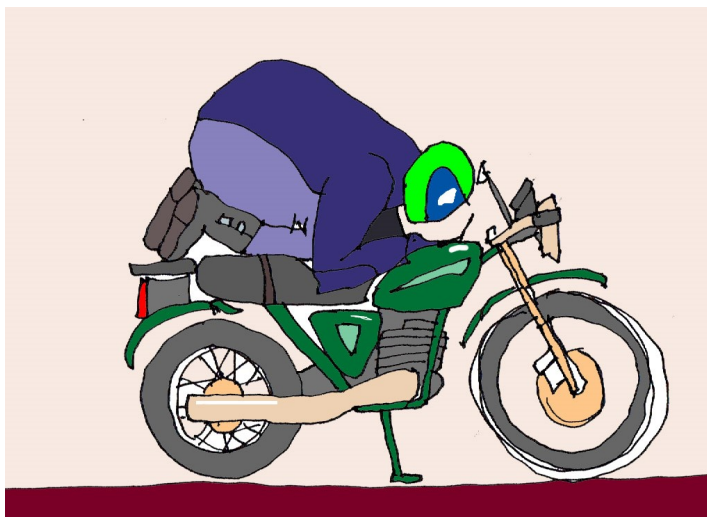
W is for Water, now if you have an older type GS then you won't need water, but the newer versions along with most modern bikes need some form of cooling. This is generally a mix of water and antifreeze or coolant. So how do you check it?, and if needs be, how do you top it up. Oil, Water, Lights, and Tyres are the most common items you will need to check on a regular basis on your bike, so try and see how easy it is to top up the coolant level if required. On my GS I have to take off a side panel, so it's not going to be a 30 seconds job, so be prepared.



## CHIEF OBSERVERS COLUMN—MPOWDERSS

D means Drive and also Damage; drive is the chain on most bikes, or the shaft drive on a GS. With regards to the chain, is it properly lubricated, is it worn, or loose, all these things can affect the drive of the chain, it's important that you keep your chain in tip top order and properly adjusted. With a shaft drive check for worn or torn rubber gaiters where the shaft moves up and down. Damage, have you got any damage on the bike, did you misjudge the entrance way into the Falcon Hotel car park and rip your panniers off your Pan when you turned in, that sort of thing.

E is for Electrics, are your bike electrics in good order, does everything work, are any bulbs blown. You



want to make sure that all your lights work, as well as the indicators, horn and brake lights, etc. The last thing you want is to get caught out late one night only to find your rear light's gone out, or worse still your front light. So, check then regularly. If the ECU packs up, then you're probably stuffed.

R is for Rubber or Tyres, these are the round black sticky things that hopefully keep you on the road. Do you know the minimum level of tread for a Motorbike tyre?, are they in good order?, are there any cuts or nicks in them?, have you got a screw, or a nail stuck right through the middle of the back

tyre? I rode home one day thinking that the bike was handling really badly, only to discover a screw deep in the rear tyre. So, if you have tubeless tyres it always pays to have a can of tyre caribou... moose ...sorry mousse with you, or some of those rubber plugs that you push into the tyre. You can guarantee this never happens near to home, you're always miles away. Incidentally the answer to the question is 1mm

S is for Steering and also now we've added Suspension. So are your handle bars pointing in the right direction?, are they loose?, move them and see if the front forks and tyre all move in sync. Bounce up and down on the bike to see if your suspension appears to be working properly. A lot of modern bikes have some sort of electronic suspension adjustment. To be honest I can't really tell what mode the GS is in, or if it's working properly. Sometimes I think you're better off with an old fashion shocker and a spring, which you can adjust manually. But like most, we all crave the very latest toys and gizmos.

Now the best and simplest way to do an MPOWDERSS check is when you wash your bike. In order to wash the bike properly you have to go all over it with the old soapy sponge, so just run through MPOWDERSS when you're doing it, and you will cover most or all of the pointers I have referred to in this story. It can be quite therapeutic really.

Alex CO Hereford



## MOROCCO BLOG—A WHEELER & CONWAY PRODUCTION PART 2

Adrian and John's adventure to the Sahara Dessert and back

Day 7. Merzouga to Agoudal - short 160 miles

After a traditional Berber breakfast we take a short walk over the dunes before packing up for an 11am start. It's heating up now after being quite chilly. Face scarves on and tinted visors down as we head off into the mid-day sun and wind.



We aim back towards the Atlas Mountains so it gets greener and cooler. We then enter the stunning gorge and stop for lunch.



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## MOROCCO BLOG—A WHEELER & CONWAY PRODUCTION PART 2



30 miles on we start a steep climb up the mountain passes and descents, again made very challenging by the odd pot hole and gravel patch.



Tonight's accommodation the **'Ice Hotel'** is very basic... but traditional.





## MOROCCO BLOG—A WHEELER & CONWAY PRODUCTION PART 2

**Day 8. Agoudal to a Quarzazate via off road track (50miles) and road 100miles.**

Very chilly night, no heating and minus 4 in the room! Really struggled to get to sleep made worse by Johns' snoring – although not as bad as mine (apparently) Note ice on seat !!



We head up the mountain pass - amazing fun but by no means easy on a big BMW GS with road tyres – that said, still made good progress! 😊





# MOROCCO BLOG—A WHEELER & CONWAY PRODUCTION PART 2

Mo Making good progress...



We will be going that way ....



Arrived at Dades gorge after some high speed tarmac with the odd pot hole and loose gravel patch (again) to make things more....interesting.

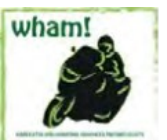


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## MOROCCO BLOG—A WHEELER & CONWAY PRODUCTION PART 2

After lunch we head down the twisty gorge noting Tony's advice to "relax" – although this proves to be one of the easier descents!

Final 100miles push to Quarzarzate we make good progress but temperatures rise to 27degrees as we drop to 1000meters. Arrive at ibis hotel at 5pm - sheer luxury compared to last night.



Time for a shower and rinse the kit before tomorrow's ride to Marrakech - miles to date 1,900 so just past half way.

### Day 9. Quarzarzate to Marrakesh – 265 Miles

We wake to clear blue skies and the expectation of temperatures of over 30degrees as we head south. Very tempted to lose the motorbike gear but for safety reasons keep it on.

As we descend to 600m temp rises to 31 before we head back up the mountains again. We climb for mile after mile of challenging twisty roads with the odd pot and gravel patch (recurring theme).



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## MOROCCO BLOG—A WHEELER & CONWAY PRODUCTION PART 2

Need to always have your wits about and relax - slow in, fast out. When we reach the peak we have climbed over 1500 metres and the temp drops to 15 degrees - tyres are hot and sticky - contrail attack highly recommended! After yet another tagine lunch we head off down with another 70miles to go till we reach Marrakech. Pace picks up as confidence builds but not sacrificing the safety margin. The road turns into a single track so expect a car or lorry around every corner - what a buzz - feel so alive!!!! We re-group at the bottom and head off for the final 40 miles.



When we think it's all over, the best is yet to come! A 10mile new road - sharp right and left over and over and over- ALL with Positive camber!!!. Must have been designed by a biker. Absolute heaven - indescribable buzz. We arrive at our hotel after yet another days thrilling ride. Time for some beers - day off tomorrow!

## CHIEF OBSERVER HEREFORD—ALEX HOYLE

It's a quiet month news wise and so we're taking the unprecedented step of introducing our 'New to the 2018 riding season' Hereford CO, Alex Hoyle.

Alex, of un-complex needs, can be best described with the use of the following few pictures.

### Food:



Taken during the recent WHAM Chateau Impney Evening Reception Alex can be seen here happily sporting his second sweet of the evening. This followed the second starter and indeed second main he managed to avail himself of due to the absence of a members poorly wife that evening. It is unknown if Alex favours food intake before or after motorcycling yet let's just say that all that know him well know better than to disturb him whilst food is present. Quite how he maintains a svelte appearance is a mystery...



### Observing:

A lovely picture taken this year on one of the earliest runs out with a new associate. In all seriousness (*Oh no! - Ed*) Alex has a lovely way about him and genuinely brings the best out in people. Making them feel calm and ensuring they enjoy their riding. He knows his stuff too with a recent IAM RoadSmart Masters pass to his credit.

If you're 'Hereford way' and need either a tune-up in your technique, some answers to a riding question that is bugging you, or just fancy going for a full-English; Alex is your man.

Richard H.




# SLOW RIDING—ANT CLERICI

With the annual WHAM slow riding day soon to be upon us (provisionally booked for Sunday 27th May) a little light hearted look at the programme for the day follows below.

### BASIC CONTROL

**1 BRIEFING**  
- venue, refreshments, toilets etc  
- instruction with demonstration  
- walk the courses

"RIDE / REHYDRATE / REST / REPEAT"



### LOOK AHEAD

**2 STRAIGHT LINE CONTROL**  
observer walks beside the rider checking control

**3 EASY SLALOM**

**4 TIGHTER SLALOM**

**5 FIGURE OF EIGHT**  
Tighten as confidence increases

**6 TURN IN A BOX**

### BUILDING CONFIDENCE

**7 STOP N GO**

**8 RIDE THE PLANK**

**9 STOP ON THE LINE**


**10 ONE HANDED**  
pick up the ball  
place the ball in the funnel  
20m

### THE BIG CHALLENGE

FINISH

The course must be achievable by any bike

START



### BALANCE

**11**

**12 RIDE WITH...**  
left hand off  
right hand off  
standing up  
left leg out  
right leg out

### OOPS

**13 PICK UP A BIKE**  
How to pick up a bike safely

### FUN AND GAMES

### IF SPACE IS AVAILABLE

**14 POSITIVE STEERING**

**15 BRAKING TEST**  
(maybe experience ABS in operation!)

**16 POSITIVE STEERING 2**  
Avoid the cuddly toy on a bend

### ...AND...

**17 A FUN FINALE... A SLOW RIDING RACE**  
50m last one wins, foot down and you're out

Venue will be the fantastic Throckmorton Airfield site and thanks go to Den Osborne and Derek McMullan for making the arrangements.

# MONGOLIA BLOG—BY JEM, MENNA AND LILI PART 1

Well as it turns out we are a real globe trotting collective here in little old Hereford and Worcester. Some fantastic beautiful pictures to follow of another great motorcycle expedition in 2017. If YOU, Yes YOU, want to organise something like this, either on UK soil or abroad, don't be shy, come to a natter nite and tell your fellow members your outline plans.

Mongolia by Shineray Mustang, Jem, Menna and Lili, 2017

Mongolia has long been on our wish list of places to visit; this summer after forging through the bureaucracy of visas and tickets we finally alighted from the Trans-Siberian Railway in Ulaanbaatar. Two days later we picked up our bikes, Chinese 150cc Shineray Mustangs - as used almost exclusively by the Mongolians, from Cheke Tours. Heading off through the suburbs towards the great unknown of the Mongolian Steppes at about 50km/hr we felt very small and vulnerable, overshadowed by huge trucks overtaking us. (We found that the bikes top speed was a heady 60km/hr when travelling downhill, on tarmac, with a tail wind.)



As it had taken us so long to sort out the bike hire, buy provisions, and attach our luggage and the recommended 15L of water, we only had a few hours of daylight left so ended up about 85km west of UB looking for a campsite in a nature reserve. Several km off the main road, along a meandering sandy trail, with no sign of anything like a campsite, we pitched camp next to the dunes.



# MONGOLIA BLOG—BY JEM, MENNA AND LILI PART 1



Instant noodles were followed by a magnificent sunset, then a firmament of endless stars, then a not quite distant enough thunderstorm.



Next morning as we wandered round to explore the landscape and go about our personal business, Lili found a wolf skeleton.



## MONGOLIA BLOG—BY JEM, MENNA AND LILI PART 1



Having studied the map, our plan was to go to a village called Zaamar, about 30km away, where we hoped to be able to buy provisions for the day before heading towards the Orkhon river to camp that evening. Cheke had advised us that the best way to navigate was by using the app Maps Me, rather than a sat nav, which we had duly downloaded onto our phones.



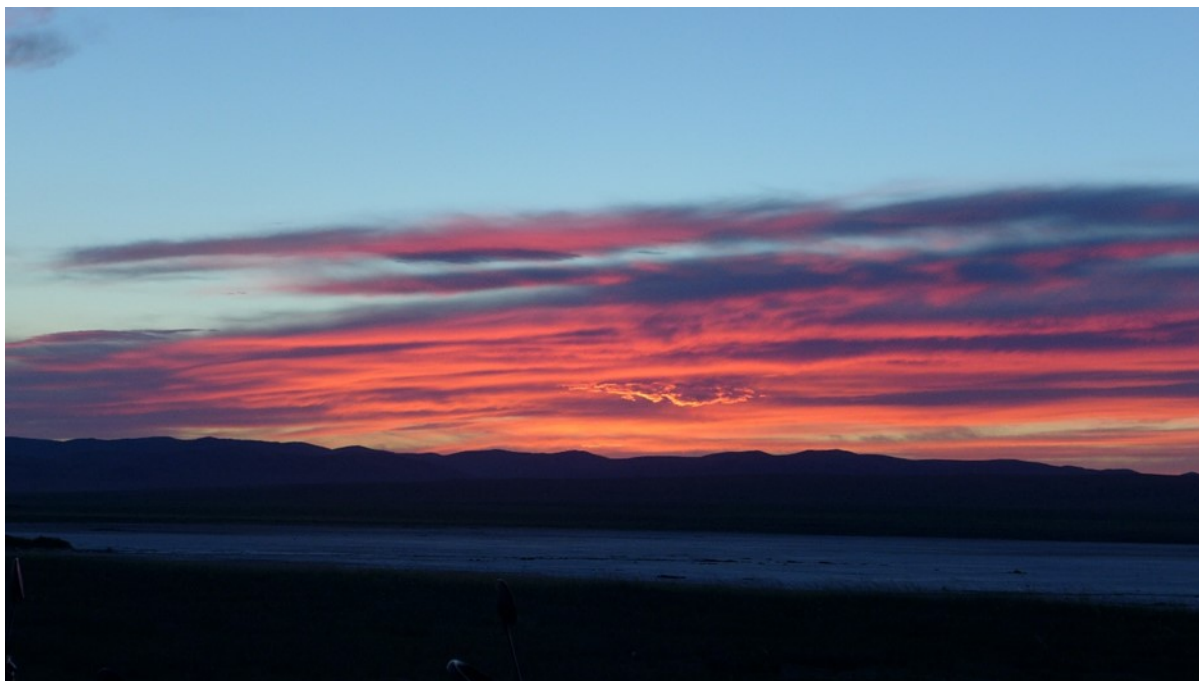
Our route soon turned off the tarmac highway and we happily carried on along a rocky track, admiring the endlessly vast and empty landscape, only to be flummoxed at the first fork.... no direction signs, no help from Maps Me, but a friendly passing motorist set us off towards Zaamar.



## MONGOLIA BLOG—BY JEM, MENNA AND LILI PART 1



120 scenic kilometres later under the very hot sun, still no sign of Zaamar... Our bad Mongolian pronunciation must have been at fault! However we did find a totally different village with mini-market and petrol, and more helpful directions. A team of young South Korean volunteers were toiling in the heat installing solar powered street lighting and were very happy to chat in perfect English. Unfortunately, they didn't know the area and inadvertently took off with our best map after taking a few souvenir snapshots of us.



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## MONGOLIA BLOG—BY JEM, MENNA AND LILI PART 1

Later on, we ran out of daylight by a small lake which turned out to be a shimmering crust of salt rather than water; we set up camp and enjoyed another round of instant noodles and an even more glowing sunset. Following a thunderstorm, the lake was full of water and seagulls by next morning. While we were eating breakfast and packing we were visited by a curious lonesome Mongolian cowboy.



We gave up on trying to reach Zaamar, feeling that it would be nice to find a route recognised by Maps Me, and headed towards where we hoped we would find the road to the town of Bulgan. As we sped along grassy trails in a huge valley between distant mountain ranges we watched tiny scampering hamster-like rodents, counting 'hamsters' per kilometre.

The main road was a collection of converging and diverging rocky and sandy trails with mud and ruts at planked bridges in various states of disrepair.





## MONGOLIA BLOG—BY JEM, MENNA AND LILI PART 1

Since leaving the tarmacked road the day before there was almost no traffic: an occasional car, a few bikes similar to ours, sometimes a herd of sheep and goats, or cattle or horses.



Following the most road-like section we suddenly came to a line of boulders blocking our way so had re-trace our path for some distance. At the road block Menna's bike was suddenly too heavy to manoeuvre – flat rear tyre. It was an inauspicious place for running repairs so we tried pumping it up. All fine, so we turned around and carried tentatively on. With Maps Me now back on track our route took us over a beautiful rocky pass with cloth festooned ovoos (sacred stoneheaps / shrines where offerings are left for local spirits), then through a series of narrower grassy valleys with the occasional white ger in the distance, with tethered horses, Shinerays, pickups and satellite dishes outside.

