

WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



JULY 2019



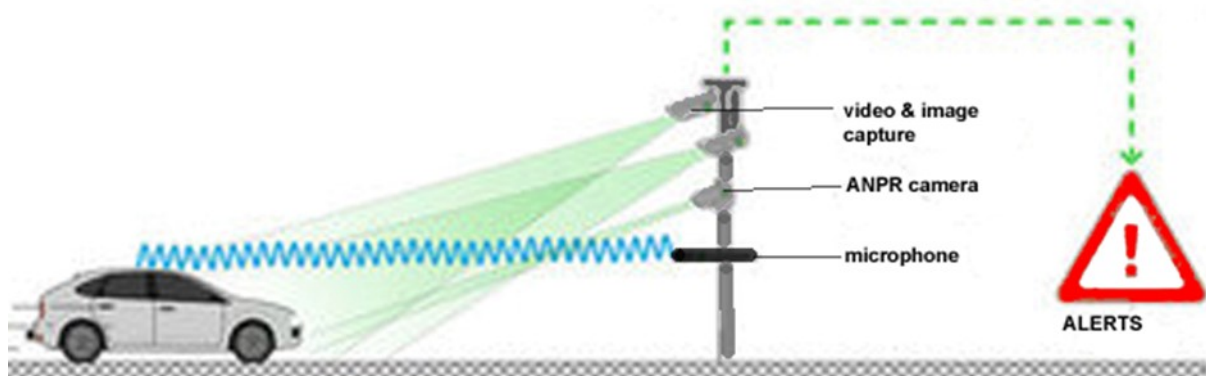
CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Riding back from Gloucester yesterday my Africa Twin's temperature gauge showed 32C. This was fine as long as the wheels kept turning and the air could circulate. So a good test of looking ahead and planning especially as I navigated Worcester City centre at rush hour. The only issue was filtering past a car whose driver insisted in flicking cigarette ash out of the window, what's next...the fag end in my lap? (See Highway Code rule 147).

OK rant over, but did you see the recent announcement for an "acoustic camera" trial?



<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-noise-camera-trial-to-crack-down-on-illegal-vehicles>



My thoughts immediately went to -Roger Brooks and his Harley, because on the last trip to the Ardennes he provided the sound track with his exhaust providing the music punctuated with scraping sounds as it touched down on bends. I hope they don't run the trial anywhere near Bromyard.

On the other hand with forward facing cameras.....perhaps no problem! (see above)



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CHAIRS FOREWORD CONT'D

Our slow riding day was another success due to all those who helped set up and run the event – see further on for separate article.

We continue to be a busy group. At the moment, WHAM has 8 new associates waiting for observers to become available and this is a concern because we feel pressure to enable every associate to get into their training as soon as practically possible. If you are one of our new associates please be patient. However, I've discovered our neighbouring IAMRoadsmart groups are in a similar situation so that's reassuring that more local riders want to become "advanced riders".

I'm hoping to make the most of the heatwave by getting out on the bike. And you should too!
See you on Sunday!

Ride safe..

Ant C
WHAM Chair



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SLOW RIDING DAY 2019 —ANT CLERICI

What a day!

I counted 31 bikes basking in the Throckmorton sunshine.

We all improved our riding one way or another! And the feedback on WHAM's Facebook page had a number of positive comments and 'likes'. Although I thanked a few people on the day, it's worth reflecting on how many people it took to organise and stage our Slow Riding Day.

So THANK YOU to.....[Safer Road Partnerships](#) for supporting the day

[Dennis Osbourne](#) for liaising with Brian Marshall (owner) and organising the portalo.



[The set up team](#) (above) who swept the runway and laid out challenges: Adrian Wheeler and his dog, Tony Davis, Andy Chambers, Gary Barnes, Ed "the blower" Price, Ian Barnard, Eric Reynolds, Stewart Poole and his dog, and Martin Wedd



[The observers](#) who guided, advised and coached: Alex Hoyle, Eric Reynolds, Tony Davis, Adrian "off road" Wheeler (without his dog), Dennis Osbourne, Andrew Culley, Gary Barnes, Andy Chambers, Stewart "stoppy" Poole (without his dog)



Scrummy [catering](#): Alison Davis assisted on the day by Anne Culley. THANK YOU ALL!
(Sorry If I've missed anyone)

And congratulations to Mark Bonnes, a new associate, who won the Slow Riding Race and claimed the "Richard Mundy" Cup. (NB the new cup is being organised)

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THE PYRENNEES —ADRIAN WHEELER

Once again our WHAM route master Tony Davis was to thank for putting together what turned out to be a truly epic biking trip - partly based on the routes that John Conway's trip used last year with a massive injection of fun and frivolity from 'Lairy' Matt Dent (Masters with Distinction!).



However the main change for 2019 - the trip would be condensed into just over a week. This was in part achieved by shuttling the bikes directly to Toulouse via overnight lorry whilst we flew down, returning via Toulouse a week later.

Bikeshuttle depot Northampton- yes the KTM Super-Duke was chosen over the BMW GSA 1200..



THE PYRENNEES —ADRIAN WHEELER

The next morning, our bikes had already arrived and been unloaded by the time we finished breakfast- however so had the torrential rain!

We headed out of Toulouse towards Spain in the rush hour to the beautiful city and of Besalu.

After an hours riding the weather dried up and that was the last time we saw rain - altogether what lay ahead surprised us all - the “hell heat “

Lunch stop half way up the French side of the Pyrenees..



With temperatures rising Matt took on the role of chief water finder - and like a shot was in his shorts and splashing about whenever the opportunity arose - as temperatures escalated this became a daily theme for us all!

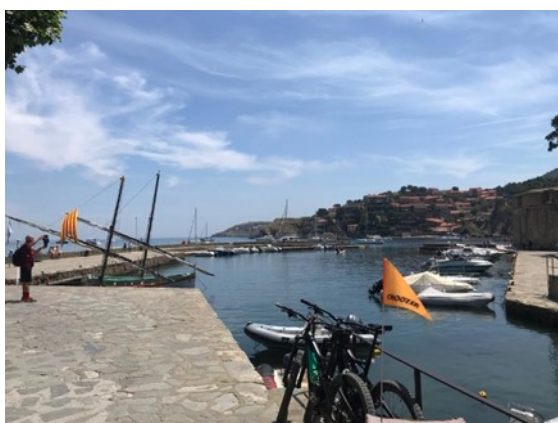


Perfect roads and stunning scenery were also plentiful.

THE PYRENNEES —ADRIAN WHEELER



We also planned in a – ‘day to the sea side’ to Matt’s family childhood resort of Collioure on the French Coast.



Suffice to say a swim in the sea was needed before we headed back to Spain

The next day’s riding was again superb and we stumbled across a lake side camp site for lunch .



The coming weeks temperatures looked to be hotting up....



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THE PYRENNEES —ADRIAN WHEELER

Typical roads and scenery - although I will have to let Tony explain the exact routes..



The grip on most of the main roads was incredible-although occasionally there were running repairs on the mountain routes - molten tar with a sprinkling of gravel - much care and attention needed!

There were also some quite severe pot holes - Andy managed to hit one mid corner and buckle his front rim in process!

There were a couple of times on the more remote roads that the GS would have been in its element - but overall the KTM was superb on the sweeping

bends and never once failed to instil confidence in grip.

Loving the tapas in Aínsa-Sobrarbe...



View from Col de Nargo



Watch out for horse dung on the passes!...



...and sheep droppings

If biking on some of the best roads in Europe wasn't enough the adrenaline fuelled wham gang Also took on one of the longest zip wire runs in Spain!



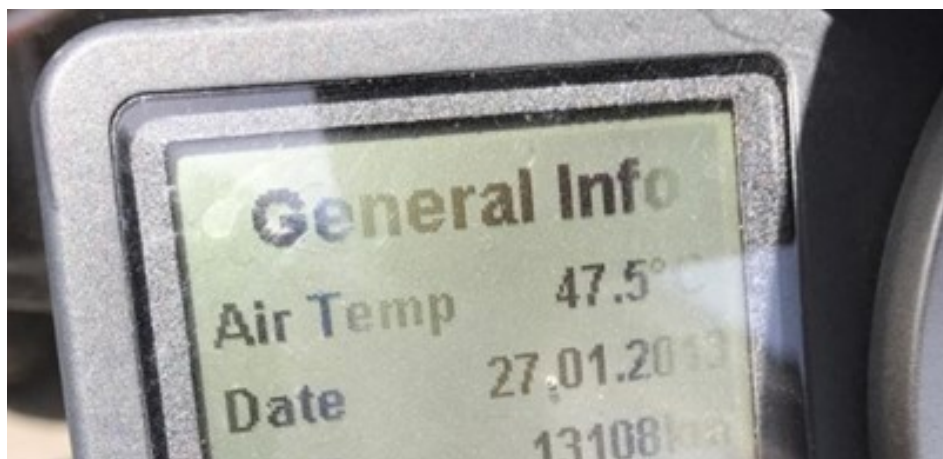
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THE PYRENNEES —ADRIAN WHEELER

Back on the bikes and over the famous Tour-de-France passes (Aubisque, Aspin, Soulor and Tourmalet). What a superb trip and without a doubt I would happily do it all over again next year.



Yes that's 47.5 degrees



KTM 1290 r - fit to tour? Yes, as long as you don't have to ride it there and back!

WEATHER—WHAT WEATHER?



12-13 May

So this is what 4 degrees looks like in southern France. To be fair, it *was* Foix, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, and it *was* 8.00 am this morning. But in the interests of a balanced report, I should add that yesterday in [Pau](#) it had been 26 degrees. A really hot day, in a truly picturesque city with stunning views of the Pyrenees. And to cap it all, we'd arrived in time to see the opening of the F3 Grand Prix of Pau.

Today – quel difference! Plus, quel nasty surprise. Here is the evidence: the Pillion today with wet helmet in bitter cold, coming through from Foix to Narbonne; and the Pillion sitting on the Pau funicular the day before, wearing a sundress and feeling really warm, well into the evening.

PETE & JAC ROGERS—THE ORIENT EXPRESSO TOUR 2018



Today's ride should have been super. The landscape of mixed deciduous trees and conifers, everywhere very varied, changed as we neared the coast to silver-grey olive trees and stunted but venerable grapevines. The road curved beautifully, and was in excellent condition. It could, should, have all felt very Mediterranean. And then we hit the really bad weather. 60-mile-an-hour winds, gusting from all directions. Near lethal, and much more like Arctic conditions than Mediterranean.

The Tigger is exceptional, and stable in almost all circumstances. But she is quite tall, and has a largish front wheel. Even with all his experience and years of biking, the Rider confessed to me later he was feeling nervous as hell.



PETE & JAC ROGERS—THE ORIENT EXPRESSO TOUR 2018

He couldn't see the gusts coming, and had to both try to relax, and keep full control of the bike – really challenging. It was 30 kilometres of the scariest riding we've ever done. By the time we arrived at the ancient Roman city of [Narbonne](#), we were both frozen and utterly exhausted.

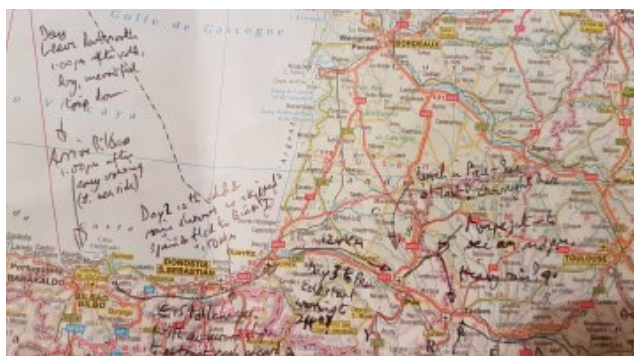
Fortunately, we lucked out with our accommodation (the [Hotel Residence Narbonne](#)), a little faded but still charming, and both well-located and reasonably priced; and tonight's dinner choice. We can highly recommend the relaxed and convivial [Brasserie le France](#), where we dined like lords on a three course menu du jour for €17.50. It doesn't get much better than that.



Then back out, reluctantly, into the wind and cold, where we immediately felt right at home again.

From the Front Seat

I've attached here photos of my notes on the map so far. On previous trips I've noted incidents of some sort most days. This time it was day 5 before we had a biggy....



Day 5 13th May: Taking the mountain B and A roads from Foix to Narbonne via the 'Parc Natural Narbonnaise'. Leaving Foix in cold and wet (6°) was okay-ish, though on wet, rough curvy country roads had to take it easy. Roads improved after lunch as we chased and caught 3 Spaniards on BMW GSs on open sweeping moor before a fantastic limestone gorge. Soon after however, as the rain dried up, it started to blow. As we approached the coast it came from behind so that we felt none at 60mph!

Then we turned north on to the Leucate causeway. Big mistake. Side winds were horrendous! Wind surfers next to the road were flying – literally – past us. The Tiger, even with two of us and all our luggage weighing us down, was blown all over the carriageway, which with a lot of traffic and several raised sections and bridges became positively frightening. Crawling along at 25-30kph in 2nd gear didn't help. Going faster felt suicidal. So I wobbled, swayed and sweated (in spite of the cold) with Jacq gripping me tighter by the kilometre, for 30km until we could find meagre shelter on the mainland, where I pulled over to have a swear and calm down.



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PETE & JAC ROGERS—THE ORIENT EXPRESSO TOUR 2018

The last [20k of A road](#) to Narbonne wasn't a whole lot better, especially with heavier trucks coming the opposite way breaking the side wind for just a second.

The problem is that you can't see the wind. I tried predicting gusts by the terrain, the waving of trees, etc. but on an open causeway with nothing but stunted bushes there was no telling. TBH it was the worst, longest, hour of my time in the saddle ever. The fact that Jacq was still speaking to me when we stopped is testament either to her remarkable fortitude or faith in a higher power that she has never previously admitted.



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OBSERVATION LINKS—DEL BRITTON

Observations links are clues to physical features and the likely behaviour of other road users. Aim to build up your own stock of observation links, which will help you to anticipate road and traffic conditions as you scan the environment:

Observation links:

When you see a cluster of lamp posts in the distance, look out for a probable roundabout ahead.	When you see a single lamp post on its own, look out for the exit point of a junction.	When you see no gap in a bank of trees ahead, look out for the road to curve to the left or right.	When you observe people standing up on a bus to the front of you, consider it will stop shortly at a bus stop.
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Some more observations links:

When you see ...	Look out for ...
A railway line beside road.	Road will invariably go over or under it, often with sharp turns.
A row of parked vehicles.	Doors opening, vehicles moving off. Pedestrians stepping out from behind vehicles. Small children hidden from view.
A bus at a stop.	Pedestrians crossing the road to and from the bus. Bus moving off, possibly at an angle.
Cyclist.	Inexperienced cyclist doing something erratic. Cyclist looking over shoulder with the intention of turning right. Strong winds causing a wobble. Young cyclist doing something dangerous. On coming vehicles moving around an oncoming cyclist.
A gap in the traffic.	Cars emerging between queuing vehicles.
Recently laid road surface.	Loose chippings causing loss of traction.
Tractors working in nearby fields.	Mud on the road especially in and around rural villages and by gaps in hedgerows where tractors having be turning on to the road.

OBSERVATION LINKS—DEL BRITTON

Local road Knowledge

Increasing your local road knowledge of the roads can help your riding, but never take familiar roads for granted. Loss of attention is a major cause of collisions – don't let your attention wander on roads you know well.

2 out of 3 crashes happen on roads that drivers are familiar with.

Town riding puts heavy demands on your observation, reactions and riding skills, and you need to be alert at all times. At complicated junctions where it is important to get into the correct lane, local knowledge is useful. But even when you know the layout of main road junctions, one-way streets, roundabouts and other local features, always plan on the basis of what you can see – not what usually happens.

TEST PASSES & NEWS —RICHARD HEWITT

We've now got a nice picture of Mark Cooper with Will Morgan as his Observer on the very last day of May and so belated congratulations to you both for Marks test pass.



Steve Gladwyn passed with Andy Chambers as his observer on the 27th June and so well done to you both too...

...And finally, bringing up the rear, as usual, Matt Dent guided Jason Kemp to a test pass on 30th June. Well done Jason not only for passing your advanced test but also for enjoying Matts "amusing ways" whilst he trained you...

HOLD THE DATE(s)

WHAM CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION—The Falcon in Bromyard has been booked on Friday 20th December for our annual get together. Please save the date with more details to follow shortly.

WHAM SUMMER BBQ— On Sunday 25th August, somewhere in Worcestershire, there will be a 'free' members BBQ—more details to follow.



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TRIUMPH EXPLORER TEX—KEN ANDERSON

Triumph Explorer (TEX)

This will be the second item I have been asked to write and it isn't one of my favourite tasks so I've been a bit tardy with it. (sorry Rich).

Having ridden both Pan variants and found them great, but heavy bikes to move, I arranged for a test ride on both the 800 and 1200 Triumph Tigers.

The first obstacle was that having arranged the rides, two weeks before, I thought it would all be plain sailing. Unfortunately the helpful Wolverhampton dealer kindly lent the 1200 out for the day of my test ride.

Undaunted I took out the 800. I really enjoyed the test which was on a mixture of country roads which it handled with ease. Having had the ride I tried to find out from the dealer when I could test the 1200 only to be told it wasn't available for the next three weekends. As I worked 8.30 - 5 Monday to Friday I couldn't do the week day.

Instead of booking it I chose to head into the dealer in Birmingham, now gone, who kindly lent me the 1200 Explorer. The biggest problem here was that getting country roads took a little longer but hey I had a few free hours so headed out towards Stratford.

Well it didn't take long to discover that it is a phenomenal bike. Good power, good comfort, manoeuvrability on the move and it felt really planted on the road. After spending nearly an hour and a half riding the bike I returned to the dealer keen to see if I could do a deal on a second hand one they had in stock. Suffice it to say that they offered me a deal which, after discussions with "the boss" I took them up on, trading in my 1300 Pan.

The Explorer is a heavy beast, not a lot of change from either of the Pans in that department. It also carries it's weight high, especially with a full tank and luggage, add in a pillion and it is a meaty beast. As Denise, "the boss" will tell you I took to the triumph right from the off. She came with me to pick it up and I think was a little more than surprised at how happy I was to use it's abilities so happily after picking it up.

It handles great, yes it takes a bit more effort on the flip flop roads we sometimes take on the ride outs, but it is manageable. In regard to the weight the Explorer is a bit like the Pans, the weight isn't noticeable once you have bike under power. Just don't have a stationary put down (I did in Germany when a small stone caught me off balance) it took three of us to lift it up, it was fully laden at the time. Fortunately no damage to plastics due to the installed crash bars.



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TRIUMPH EXPLORER TEX—KEN ANDERSON

So far the TEX has done several European journeys, the first was not long after picking it up, and it hasn't caused me any troubles except for the twice I have had punctures, so not really the bikes fault. It has also done trips to Scotland without any issue. It's latest expeditions have been to Belgium(not a substitute for the planned Portugal but a broken ferry saw to that) and another to Scotland. In total I covered between 3 and 4,000 miles in June.

The TEX didn't skip a beat once and unlike some of the other WHAM members experience I have been fortunate in that I have, so far, had no major issues (touches wood).

I did have to replace fork seals on 1 fork twice, yes I replaced both forks but only one leaked, the second time I bought the updated fork shims and that was last year and seem ok at present.

To sum up the positives, for me, of the Tex are manoeuvrability, comfort, tank range, load carrying ability and it's fun factor. I very rarely finish a ride without having a smile on my face, although keeping up with Tony can be more of a challenge.

And the not so positive, it is a heavy bike to move around the garage and even if you are gifted with longer legs getting it on the centre stand, especially when loaded up, is a challenge. The service bill for it's valve clearance check, at 20,000 miles is a tad high. I was quoted £800. This is due to the effort needed to get to the valves. The tank needs a special tool to get it empty. I managed to reduce the cost by doing most of the work myself and removing all the bodywork I could, as well as doing all the fluid changes. This brought it down to a more acceptable £230 for the valves and carb balance.

I know the original TEX variants had issues, like most new machines, but I have been fortunate Tony D can give you a different story.

Would I have another, yes but I don't tend to get the same bike twice so only time will tell.

The Tex had only covered just under 28,000, before recent trips, so has room for more fun besides which I don't know what I would have to replace it. GS, KTM 1090 Adventure or something else, lighter if not smaller to accommodate my weakening body.....



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THE TAIL ENDS— BY MR ALAN RIDER



*****Alan is away for most of July and August on his yacht in the Med and so we'll just have to await his return refreshed with re-invigorated in September. I understand the title of that piece will be— "Pleasure" , Oh Lordy... Ed *****