

WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



FEBRUARY 2020



CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This month's chair article comes from the bullet train heading to Tokyo.

Different rules for car manufacture and driving are evident in Japan. The driving test is expensive and it's possible to fail having followed all of the rules of the road. The idea of being courteous to others is strong here so an opportunity to give way or let someone out is the key to success. I've not seen any road rage!

MOT tests are also very very expensive so there aren't any older cars.

Cars with yellow number plates have cheaper tax and more parking places because they are limited by engine size and physical dimensions so when Trump complained about the number of Japanese cars in the USA compared to (huge gas guzzling) American makes in Japan he only has to visit to realise big cars here are a liability. When buying a house a key question is about the size of the parking.



iam
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CHAIRS FOREWORD CONT'D

Japan doesn't have many roundabouts. In fact I saw no roundabouts at all. Their rules for negotiating roundabouts differs from our default of straight lining and only stopping if necessary. They have to indicate left on the approach, regardless of which exit they are taking, then stop at the entry point, then drive around signalling left before the exit.

Last week we met Makoto Ando who is a celebrity environmentalist and birder. We got on well once I discovered his motorcycle collection. His "man cave" would make Gary or Adrian green with envy, two Italian bikes and enough booze on the table for an excellent evening.



His current road bike? An Africa Twin (of course)... "come back in the summer and we'll go for a ride out!" We had so much in common; except he had met Joanna Lumley and I haven't (yet)



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CHAIRS FOREWORD CONT'D

I've seen post bikes delivering in -6C on icy roads and this Honda was close to the famous Snow Monkey reserve 1Km up an icy track!



Ice sculpture in Sapporo



Since returning we've held our first committee meeting. So that's:

Ant Clerici	Chair
Richard Hewitt	Vice Chair
Eric Reynolds	Treasurer
Tony Reusser	Secretary
Alex Hoyle	Chief Observer
Gary Barnes	Associate liaison
Tony Davis	Webmaster, Route master, GDPR manager
Adrian Wheeler	Membership
Duane Sanger	Social + events
Mark Saxton	Social + events
Plus	
Del Britten	Radio manager/trainer

Ride safe

Ant



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HONDA DCT—YES, NO, OR MAYBE? - RICHARD HEWITT

Most of you will know I ran a '17 plate Honda Africa Twin DCT for just over two-years. Some of will know I've subsequently swapped back to a manual VFR1200X.

I covered just short of 15k miles on the DCT AT and thoroughly enjoyed most of them. The highlight being a very agreeable ride back from Luxembourg with our very own Gary "Chugger" Barnes over a long route put together for us by Derek McMullan through three National Parks. At the end of this day the easy-nature of the DCT system saw my gearchanges as smooth at the end of the day as they were at the start.

So, you may wonder, why did I turn my back on the new DCT technology in favour of a return to a manual handlebar operated clutch lever? When I had the DCT I was asked many questions about, interestingly, it's shortcomings; and after swapping back to a manual I still field those questions now. And so I thought an article here expressing my opinion (yes merely an opinion) as to what I thought of the DCT and why I chopped back to a manual might be an interesting read for some.

What does it take to top a Honda 750? Introducing the Honda 750 Automatic.

Another landmark bike from Honda. The Honda CB 750 Automatic offers in a new kind of no-shaft convenience and comfort. With all the performance... and prestige... that make Honda 750s America's most popular motorcycle model.

Naturally, it's a dream in traffic. And on the open road you can just concentrate on having fun. Being with the sights, the sounds, the spirit that moves you.

And you do move. The 750cc four-cylinder, four-stroke engine... insured that. Aided by four carbs and the four intake exhaust system.

There's a new safety system that prevents stalling the bike in gear... and a new parking brake. A long-range gas tank. Disc brake up front. New-style downed fenders. A large, comfort for two saddle with a molded grab bar. New rims and tires. And much more. All at a price that will excite you if you've looked around.

The magnificent new Honda CB 750 Automatic. You owe it to yourself to see it. At your Honda dealer.



HONDA
First. For good reason.

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Automatic transmissions are certainly not a new phenomenon. Deployed on Powered two-wheelers (PTW's) we have had semi automatic operation on Vespa's almost from inception and the CVT gearboxes as fitted to billions of Scooters that most of the world uses as principle modes of transport must outnumber manual gearboxes present on all other PTW's by some margin.

Honda themselves even put into production a 'Hondamatic' version of the faithful CB750 in 1976. To say that most testers at the time thought it, ahem, "poor" was an understatement. If you wanted to enjoy slow progress with limited ratios this was the gearbox option for you...

Recently, and quite a few years before the latest Honda DCT was launched Aprilia were one manufacturer



that had again put an automatic transmission on their 850c 'Mana' motorcycle. I have seen versions of this improved yet further with aftermarket belt-drives; yet again it was not a big seller either here or on the continent and was kinda let down by middling quality componentry, with shocking resistance to UK weather.

It appears us Britishers quite like shifting cogs ourselves.



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HONDA DCT—YES, NO, OR MAYBE? - RICHARD HEWITT

Anyway, back to the point...

...Is the latest Honda DCT any good?

In a couple of words, and to use a term oft used by the always-worth-quoting Mr Martyn Hillier, “it depends....”

2020 see’s version 2 (3 actually but they won’t let onto revisions made in 2017) launched onto the market and this newer version does indeed address some of the points I will make below.

The version I ran had five different ways to engage the gearbox with three of those also having a manual override (of sorts). I estimate roughly 2000mls had to go under my wheels before I became unconsciously competent in using the gearbox and have often remarked to myself that where new converts have decided “manual mode is best” it’s almost always because the hard graft hasn’t been done reaching an absolute level of understanding of what DCT is trying to do in differing conditions. Marc Marquez doesn’t go round-and-around Jerez for weeks on end for his health every spring; he needs to know exactly when the power comes in and even when he is about to come off, and this takes time in the saddle. The reason for mentioning this is that when we say a test ride only gives you a window on the performance of a machine and whether you are going to get on with it, this is amplified quite considerably with the DCT system.

Gearbox modes present are:

D (with manual override) - effectively designed for high fuel efficiency as you will be in top gear at 30mph - most I know never use this as it is, by anyone’s assessment, awful.

Sport 1 (with manual override) - better, much better than drive, pretty much Ok for town work although it does have a habit of crashing into 1st gear from 2nd when drawing up at traffic lights.

Sport 2 (with manual override) - This suits WHAM’s Sunday rides down to a tee. Will hold onto gears both up and down the box, most of the time, for the right period of time and with ‘acceleration sense’.

Sport 3 (with manual override) - Ride with some of our more ‘spirited’ club members and you’ll love this. Doesn’t quite hang onto gears to the redline but not far off.

Full manual - separate up and down buttons on the left handlebar sees you having full control over what happens when. If you really want to get a shift on and be ‘smooth-as’ use this setting.

It should be noted that using the manual override when in an automatic drive mode will only hold for an indeterminate number of seconds prior to your selection being changed by the DCT brain. This is, most of the time, quite a pain in the arse.



HONDA DCT—YES, NO, OR MAYBE? - RICHARD HEWITT

Right, now we've all got some understanding, what are the ups and down or the DCT system?

1. So long as your chain is correctly adjusted you will 'nearly' never feel a gear change. On a 'tour' this is superb and keeps you fresh allowing you to take in more observation both of the road ahead and indeed the scenery.
2. You will win every squirt away from the traffic lights, no matter what you are competing against. You will usually be three or four bike lengths ahead of a GS before they have selected gear and let the clutch out.
3. When 'observing' gear changing is one less thing to think about enabling more share of brain for thinking about what your associate is doing.
4. It will change gear, both up or down, on slow uphill and downhill corners. This is its worst trait in my opinion and I understand V2 in 2020 has addressed this. We'll see..
5. It will change gear mid-overtake which again is sometimes not great.
6. Slow riding has to be learnt from scratch as effectively your clutch becomes your rear brake. You will, and I did, go through rear brake pads more often than a manual.
7. When 'making progress' and specifically getting ready and set for bends the DCT cannot compete with what your brain can do. It cannot, by dint of having no forward vision, get in right gear before a bend. I developed coping mechanisms for this and got used to managing early bend gear changes; something Derek described as 'looking nervous' and quite frankly was the reason a flipped back to a manual. The faster you go the worse this gets....

These were the main points for me. So, why choose a manual instead?

1. Slow speed riding is so much easier.
2. You get the absolute certainty of being in total control.
3. Making progress is so much easier, safer, more enjoyable, quicker.

If you want to tour with a pillion then try a DCT, but be ready to accept you won't know if you've made the right decision for quite some miles. If you want to keep up with Matt Dent on any given Sunny Sunday, get a manual bike....

Richard Hewitt, WHAM vice-chair



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RIDING IN WINDY WEATHER—ALEX HOYLE

Over the last few weeks we have had a succession of storms coming in from the west which for the most part have put paid to the Sunday morning rides. Now riding a motorcycle when it's windy can be a real challenge. And when I say riding when it's windy, I don't mean after a copious amount of baked beans, or a vindaloo, the night before, I mean riding in strong or gusty wind.

If I am honest I absolutely hate it, I would rather ride in torrential rain than in strong gusty windy conditions. The unpredictability over when the wind is going to catch you, and in some cases if it's really strong, completely move the bike off its current course, is very hard to judge.

The only few words of advice I can offer, and certainly what I endeavour to do, is always to try and be extremely relaxed on the bike. As if I'm sat on my sofa at home watching the TV like a complete slob. The moment you tense up it all starts to go pear shaped. This may sound really funny but I'm convinced that the bike, even though it hasn't got a brain of its own, can actually sense the tension in the rider, and this transmits up through the bike frame to make a really uncomfortable ride even worse.

I remember a few years ago a group of us had gone to Spain on the Plymouth to Santander run. We arrived back in Plymouth just as the aftermath of an Atlantic storm was about to hit the area. Unfortunately, we had no option but to set off back up the A38 from Plymouth on our journey home.

If I remember it was possibly the worst three or four hours I've ever had on a motorbike in my life. The nature of the A38 means that parts of the dual carriageway are shielded by trees, whereas other parts are completely in the open, and it's not completely flat either, it constantly goes up and down, wind can gust in from all different directions and it was very hard to read which way the bike was going to be blown off course next. Trying to anticipate this is really hard work and extremely tiring. You have to judge the conditions when you are going for any overtakes and allow for the fact that you might be moved off your course just at the last moment by a gust of wind. I remember seeing Eric nearly getting blown under the back of a tanker lorry, simply because a gust of wind had caught him when he wasn't expecting it.

Sadly, car drivers who don't ride motorbikes have no idea what we're going through, and continue to chop you up, just like it's a warm sunny day in July.

If I'm honest I really don't know if it's better to be on a big heavy bike like a cruiser, notice I didn't utter the words Harley Davidson there, or whether you are better being on a little lightweight bike. All I know is whichever bike I've been on at the time, it doesn't seem to make a blind bit of difference, you still get pushed all over the place.

I remember at the end of the Plymouth journey I got home completely shattered and totally knackered. I put the bike in the garage, came indoors and had a very large Scotch, and went to bed. I woke up the next morning with a splitting headache which I can only attribute to the battering I'd taken from the wind, not from the very large Scotch.

In conclusion it's really not much fun riding in gusty windy conditions, and if it's raining it's even worse, all I can say is just try and stay relaxed, take a very light grip on the handlebars, and just squidge down in the seat, if you tense up you are going to be doomed.

if anyone out there has the definitive answer to this problem please tell me, as I would love to know the real secret.

Alex Hoyle

Chief Observer



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SHROPSHIRE BIKER DOWN

Please note, dates for Biker Down courses in Worcestershire and Herefordshire are currently being arranged and will be advertised in due course.

Bikers are invited to attend an exciting free event at RAF Shawbury, Shropshire.

Four dates are available to choose from:

- Saturday 7th March
- Saturday 9th May
- Saturday 11th July
- Saturday 12th September

The full day opportunity (9:30am-5pm) will consist of a 3 hour Biker Down classroom-based course in the morning, following by a practical slow-riding and machine control session during the afternoon. (*This is new!*)

Events are kindly hosted by RAF Shawbury and Ascent Flight Training, and delivered by West Mercia Police, IAM RoadSmart, Shropshire Advanced Motorists and Motorcyclists (SAMM) and paramedics from Midlands Air Ambulance and West Midlands Ambulance Service, all of whom are committed to reducing motorcycle-related collisions on the roads and reducing the severity of injuries sustained.

The Biker Down course offers bikers the chance to benefit from essential first-aid training and advice on what to do should they find themselves first at the scene of a collision where a motorcyclist is injured, as well as learning practical skills to help avoid being involved in a collision.

The course is made up of three modules:

- Collision scene management,
- Basic first aid and casualty care (including CPR and helmet removal) and
- ‘The science of being seen’ – advice on visibility and positioning.

During the afternoon, riders will undertake a slow riding and machine control session which will be managed and delivered by SAMM. Riders will need to attend on their own bikes as this is a practical training session on an off-road facility, consisting of 6 modules which will be delivered by experienced SAMM observers.

Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. The free event is taking place at RAF Shawbury and places *must* be booked in advance. This opportunity is available as a full-day option only. Full details will be provided to course attendees once their place is confirmed.

To book a place on one of these courses, please email Roadsafety1@westmercia.pnn.police.uk with your details

(name, email address, contact telephone number and preferred course date).



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WHAM AGM JAN '20—TONY REUSSER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday the 22nd of January 2020

At the Falcon Hotel Bromyard Starting at 7.30PM

Item 1	Welcoming Remarks	Ant Clerici
Item 2	Apologies	Richard Hewitt
Item 3	Approval of 2019 AGM minutes and any matters arising from them.	Richard Hewitt
Item 4	Chairman's Report	Ant Clerici
Item 5	Treasurer's Report	Eric Reynolds
Item 6	Election of Committee Officers	Richard Hewitt
Item 7	Election of Committee Members	Secretary
Item 8	Presentation of Certificates	Chairman
Item 9	Programme for 2020	Chairman
Item 10	Any other business	Secretary
Item 11	Date and time of next AGM 27/01/2021	Secretary



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WHAM AGM JAN '20—TONY REUSSER

Present at meeting:

Ant Clerici, Eric Reynolds, Alex Hoyle, Richard Hewitt, Matt Dent, Duane Sanger, Adrian Wheeler, Gerry West, Mark Bonnes, Ian Barnard, Tony Reusser, Phil George, Mark Saxton, Will Morgan.

Item 2 Apologies:

Gary Barnes, Tony Davis, Graeme Middleton, Graham Rivers, Valerie Anne

Item 3 2019 Minutes:

2019 Minutes Proposed by Stuart Poole and seconded by Will Morgan.

Item 4 Chairs report:

I'd like to start with a couple of IAMRoadsmart news items .

First one of WHAM's founder members and past chair, Derek McMullan is now the IAM's Chairman – congratulations to Derek.

Second, Alex and I attended a regional groups motorbike meeting which aimed at spending the monies left over when the former regional set up was disbanded. It looks as if the groups attending will be setting up an unofficial regional group and will spend the remaining cash on Observer training events. Ant will advise further when known.

We've continued our relationship with the Road Safety Partnership, they are part of Biker Down courses and provide a grant to help us with training which we used mainly on the slow riding day.

I'd like to thank the key people who have worked very hard in ensuring WHAM runs smoothly and efficiently; your Committee. Thanks to everyone who is or has been on the committee this year. Many are multitasking.....and just in case you don't know what goes on....

Vice chair Richard for being a great vice chair, who listened and gave sound advice, he has also run the brilliant newsletter and filled in as Secretary when Paul stood down.

Eric who continues in his 12th year as our Treasurer. You'll hear in a minute how we are doing financially but we are looking to spend money on relevant activities or equipment rather than pulling in our belts.



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WHAM AGM JAN '20—TONY REUSSER

Adrian as our gatekeeper for new members.

Alex who with Gary were joint chief observers now it's Alex as chief with support from Gary in his new role as associate liaison officer (a suggested good practice role from the IAM). We had an enjoyable and useful Observer training day and qualified new local observers – more on that in a minute from Alex

Tony has continued as master of both routes and website. This also means controlling our Paypal accounts. He is also our GDPR manager.

Unfortunately cancelled the Chateau Impney: Duane's events – the bar-b-q at Adrian's house and Christmas here at the Falcon were well supported and successful.

However Xmas at The Falcon was so good we've already booked – 18th December 2020

Paul and Stewart stood down as associate controllers; thank you guys for your contribution. Tony, Adrian and a gang of others put on another great Slow Riding Day at Throckmorton.

Here I'd like to mention Dennis Osbourne who secured the airfield again for us. A 'dicky ticker' has stopped Den from riding but he remains a key member of WHAM – so much so we have decided to make Den a Life Member. Thanks also go to Ali Davis and her team for supporting the day with endless cakes and tea.

Slow riding was won by Mark Bonnes. Mark was presented with the new Richard Mundy trophy. You may recall we've named the trophy after Richard Mundy who died a year ago. Richard always enjoyed our slow riding day and rode with a proficiency that most of us only dreamed about.

Brittany saw 16 bikes plus 3 pillions enjoying autumn at Le Fosso. We were pleasantly surprised with the roads, countryside and lunch stops. One road was so much fun the "progressive" group did it twice! Oh yes and the local beer shipped into the venue by the van load! If there was a WHAM prize for the biggest bar bill it would go to Tony Cook – but in fairness he bought rounds too!

We've continued our Sunday rides from Worcester and Hereford, plus a new start point at Malvern.

Chief Observer Report by Alex Hoyle -

Alex reported that had been 12 passes this year and thanked all Observers for their time and effort. The top 4 observer hours for 2019 are shown below:

Observing hours:

1 st Will Morgan	80
2 nd Alex	64



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New Local Observers hours:

Rob Edwards 53

Duane Sanger

National Observer hours:

Tony Reusser 49

2 passes in 2020 already!

Additionally, Alex mentioned that if anyone was interested in becoming an Observer to get in touch with him.

Item 5 Treasurer's report

Presented by Eric Reynolds, proposed by Alex Hoyle and Seconded by Gerry West. Accounts agreed by unanimous show of hands.

The excess was reported as £1200 for the year, and there was £8429 in the bank.

Eric mentioned that this year's expenditure had been on people rather than equipment eg. Barbeque.

A general request was put to members to contact committee members with any sensible ideas for ways to spend club monies and enhance the club and members experience.

Ian Barnard suggested that the club might consider paying for members retests costing £99.

AP1. Ant agreed that the Committee would discuss Ian's suggestion (above) at the next committee meeting.

Item 6/7 Elections

Officer Selection:

Officers Standing down – Secretary: Richard Hewitt

Officers for Election – Secretary: Tony Reusser

New Post – Committee Support: Mark Saxton

Officers Proposed by Alex Hoyle, and seconded by Gerry West.



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WHAM AGM JAN '20—TONY REUSSER

Committee Selection:

Chair (AC), Vice Chair (RH), Newsletter Editor (RH), Membership Secretary (AW), Webmaster (TD), Routermaster (TD), Region REP (AC), Events Co-ord (DS), Associate Liaison Officer (GB), Chief Observer (AH)

Committee seeking re-election, Proposed by Alex Hoyle, and seconded by Gerry West with a unanimous show of hands.

Item 8 Presentation of Certificates

There were no Pass Certificates to be presented at this meeting.

Observers were asked to take a picture of their Associates with their Certificates as Certificates were now sent directly to Associate addresses when successful.

Item 9 Programme for 2020

Ant mentioned the programme for 2020 was still developing, but ideas & content at present included:

A Ducati Worcester evening, A talk by Marcus McCormick, Programming Sat Nav's, Trail Riding, Slow riding event, How gear boxes work, Observer Training, A European Trip.

Item 10 AOB

Wil Outlined a talk he would give at the end of Feb Natter Night on Rally Moto on/off road rally navigation.

Next AGM 27th January 2021.

Tony Reusser

WHAM Secretary



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