



SLIPSTREAM

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR TVM MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 2021

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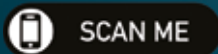


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Fuel shortages are over but the price of fuel is still outrageous! I must admit there is quite a bit of variance that I have come across recently, almost 20p a litre. Work has taken over since 7Ws and I haven't done any riding in October which is a great shame. My plan is to get out for a couple of runs before I put the bike away and head to the USA for my winter sojourn, now back on the cards thank goodness.

This is the last issue of the year having spoiled you with an extra magazine last December during lockdown. This gives me a breather and time to sort out next year's advertising before we hit 2022 with our January edition.

A number of you have been leaving the tarmac recently for greener or muddier paths. Nick Tasker takes a look at some of the smaller offroad bikes he tried on a day out with Dorothy's Speed Shop. Fancy a run round the Isle of Wight – see how a group of members spent their day.

If you haven't signed up as a marshal for the Reading Toy Run there is still time – we need you and it's fun. See page 27.

Next editorial will be from California in the new year. So Happy Christmas!

Keep the rubber side down...

Slip G.

Slipstream Editor





TVAM ROLL OF HONOUR

BETTER BIKING

NEW MEMBERS IN OCTOBER

Andy Blue
Amar Braich
Jennifer Cooksley
Virendra Dalvi
Richard Darnell
Brian Dewis
Graham Feeney

Jon Gittoes
Ian Hatt
Sean McAllister
Mark Powell
Craig Preston
Steve Rawsthorne
Peter Seymour

Ian Soilleux
Mia Steward
Jamie Storey
Brian Tierney
Darren Westbrook
Stephen Wheal

TEST PASSES

Candidate

Stephen French
Ian Hadaway
Neil McDonald
Mark Parkinson
Simon Pinnock
Simon Preston
Richard Rowswell
Ben Stoneman
Eve Tomkins

Observer

Robert Harrison
Paul Kilby
Sukhraj Mattoo
John Stevenson
James Spence
Graham Jones
Paul Naish
Alan Thomas
Paul Naish

With a FIRST Pass

With a FIRST Pass

With a FIRST Pass

With a FIRST Pass

With a FIRST Pass

With a FIRST Pass



Last month's test pass group and newly qualified Run Leaders

FROM THE CHAIR

It was great to see the photographs, the article by Brian Walmsley and the quotes from the attendees of the infamous 7Ws in last month's Slipstream. After being postponed multiple times due to COVID, it's great to see the fun had by so many.

I was lucky enough to spend the last weekend in October as a guest at the Bournemouth & Wessex Advanced Motorcyclists observer weekend. North Devon has some excellent and challenging roads, set in some of the most beautiful countryside. It's fair to say that the weather wasn't completely kind to us and the road conditions required a little extra thought as we rode throughout the two days.

As well as wet roads and the odd piece of tree branch laying in the road, riding at this time of the year means having to contend with a low sun. It's not just the sun in your face, it can often reflect in the wet road surface, in our mirrors affecting our rear observation or piercing through the trees creating a strobe effect across our eyes. This can be distracting at best and disastrous if carrying just a little too much speed or riding close to our limit.

Other hazards to look out for are microclimates. Tree-covered roads may not fully dry out, even on a bright sunny day. Patches of mist or fog can be present when travelling close to water. Icy patches on damp surfaces that are not exposed to sunlight and on bridges where the surface temperature is often lower than the standard road surface. Understanding that these conditions exist and building them into our riding plan is all part of becoming an advanced motorcyclist.

I'm sure you have all heard the phrase, "there is no such thing as poor weather, just inappropriate clothing". So, consider a little more what you wear on a bike in poor conditions; layer up on cold days and change that tinted visor for a clear one, perhaps with a pinlock or similar anti-fog system on your visor.

Shorter days often mean that we are having to ride in poor light or complete darkness. There is a great article in the latest IAM RoadSmart magazine, specifically about driving and riding at night. A range of specialists give their top tips on driving and riding in the dark, with Rhys Hughes, Head of Driver Training for Avon & Somerset Constabulary chosen to speak about motorcycling. He advises how riding at night can be relaxing, warning about not getting lulled into a false sense of security on those nice quiet roads. Further views from an ambulance crew, a highway maintenance worker, a Royal Airforce driver and a racing driver negotiating the Mulsanne straight at 170mph at Le Mans is certainly worth a read. Understanding other people's views can massively improve on our own knowledge.

And that's the point really. As advanced motorcyclists we have a responsibility to continuously improve our knowledge base. The advanced Rider Course (ARC) book has a section on riding in inclement weather and riding at night in the appendices. If you don't want to ride in the wet, low sun or at night-time, consider broadening your knowledge so that you can do it if you need to.

Finally, many of us choose to ride all year round and there are many things that the Club continues to offer during



the winter months. However, if you prefer to lay your bike up for the winter, then maybe take a look at the article by Andy Slater in the December edition of *Slipstream* 2020. There's some great practical advice on how to prepare your bike for winter storage to ensure that it's in great condition when it comes out of hibernation next spring. You can find copies of *Slipstream* in the All Members Section of Groups.io, under the files tab on the left-hand side.

Have fun and stay safe everyone.

Barrie Smith

TVAM Chair

AGM CALLING NOTICE

As we get back to a sense of normality and as TVAM's financial year draws to a close, we are hoping to be able to hold January's AGM face-to-face again at St. Crispin's School on Sunday 16 January 2022 at 12:30.

Should anything untoward happen between now and then, we will have fall back plans in place for the AGM to take place virtually, like we did last year.

Attending the AGM is really important so please do join in. Not only will we have the usual business of presenting the Annual Report and Accounts and electing Officers and members of the Committee, this is your chance to have a say in the running of your club. If nothing else, it's your chance to say farewell to me as Secretary as, after five years in the role, it's time to hand over those reins to someone new.

To help us plan for the AGM and put in place those contingencies for a virtual one, it would help us if you would register an interest. Don't worry, this doesn't compel you to attend at this stage. You can use the form here: <https://bit.ly/3nVWgAq> or by clicking on the QR code below.

All the papers for the AGM including the agenda, draft Annual Report, the minutes of the previous meeting, nomination forms and full details of all the resolutions, will be published on Groups.io on or before 22 December. Any Special Resolutions proposed by the membership must be submitted in writing to the Secretary by 2 January. All completed Nomination Forms will need to be sent, also to the Secretary, no later than 9 January. If you have any questions about the AGM please get in touch, otherwise we are looking forward to seeing you there!

Adrian Ellison

Secretary

secretary@tvam.org

And here's the necessary legal bit...



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Committee that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Thames Vale Advanced Motorcyclists (TVAM; Company Number: 3556042; Charity Number: 1069767) will be held at 12.30pm on Sunday 16 January 2022 at St Crispin's School, Wokingham to enable the Officers to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 October 2021, to conduct an election of Officers and Committee Members as per the Articles of the Company, and to vote on ordinary and special resolutions. All Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend.



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Dorothy's Speed Shop is located in a converted warehouse on an industrial estate.

In 2009 Nathan Millward spent nine months riding a Honda CT110 all the way from Sydney, Australia to London, England. This ridiculous adventure is documented in book form, and Nathan now runs guided tours of North Devon from his new base at Dorothy's Speed Shop in Ifracombe, named after the diminutive little Honda that carried him all the way home from Australia. Nathan's "A2 Adventure Test Days" present a unique opportunity to test seven different motorcycles from his collection while exploring the rugged beauty and muddy lanes of Exmoor national park.

After a good night's sleep we were introduced to Nathan and his menagerie. The day would be largely road-based, as most UK green-laning adventures usually are, but a couple of muddy and rutted lanes would be laid on to allow us to test the bikes in more slippery circumstances. This was ideal, as here in the UK a bike that can't handle a bit of greasy, wet tarmac in between the muddy bits simply won't work for most people.

First up was something rather interesting: Honda's not-officially-available-in-the-UK CT125, the successor to Nathan's own legendary CT110. Essentially a reworked version of the relatively new Honda Cub 125, it was launched to great acclaim and rapturous reception in both Asia and North America last year. Exceptionally light-weight with an engaging semi-automatic four-speed gearbox, massive luggage rack and even a snorkel for river crossings, the CT seemed absolutely perfect as a low-speed trail crawler. With both feet flat on the ground, the complete opposite of the traditional sky-high seat height of most off-road motorcycles, the little Malaysian grey-import Honda was sure to inspire great confidence in slippery conditions.

Also joining us from the Japanese manufacturer were a pair of their best-selling enduro motorcycles, so-classed because of their balance between off-road function and



Nathan's 'Garbage Runs' were popular before lockdown; here's hoping they return!

on-road capability. The Honda CRF250 Rally and CRF300 Rally both gain a little weight compared to their stripped-down 'L' variants, but also feature larger fuel tanks, wider seats and a useful front fairing and windshield to make longer trips in inclement weather more palatable. The newer 300cc version supplanted its less powerful predecessor just a year ago, gaining even more fuel capacity while somehow weighing a useful 4 kilograms less.

The reason the 250 Rally was of interest to most of our party was because Nathan had fitted his example with lowered suspension, theoretically making it a less intimidating machine to approach for those of shorter stature.

KTM joined the A2 adventure party a couple of years ago by wrapping its 390cc Duke/RC engine in a slightly more adventure-y chassis and bodywork. That said, the classically off-road focused Austrians have inexplicably opted for road-based wheels, tyres and suspension to a bike that weighed far more than any serious off-roader would ever tolerate (around 172kg at the kerb). It was clearly a fashion-first machine, rather than a serious all-road contender in the vein of its larger 790/890 Adventure lines.

Worlds away in design terms, but manufactured in the same country as the Indian-made KTM was my old nemesis, the Royal Enfield Himalayan. I reviewed this bike when it first launched to much fanfare and enthusiasm from the world's motorcycling press. The promise was strong: low-tech mechanicals and minimal gadgets paired with off-road-spec wheels and tyres. The reasonable 15 litre fuel-tank even sported a set of front-mounted pannier rails capable of carrying additional luggage in addition to the rear racks, all of which should have made for a genuine do-anything and go-anywhere bike.

Instead, both bikes featured in my review suffered serious mechanical failures and I was unable to look upon the model favourably. It would be interesting to see if Nathan could change my mind.

An interesting addition was another Honda: the commuter-spec CB500X. The 500cc parallel-twin was the only multi-cylinder engine in the group and was also by far the heaviest. But here Honda's modest intent had been subverted by an expensive Rally Raid kit, replacing the cast wheels and basic suspension with entirely new hardware designed for serious off-road work. Despite this, weight would be the enemy here, the chunky CB500X tipping the scales at a portly 195kg.

Rounding out our selection was our host's own CCM GP450, a 450cc single-cylinder adventure bike made by the UK-based Clews Competition Machines. Discontinued a few years ago when the supply of Rotax/BMW engines dried up, my



The little Honda they won't sell you. Behind it the CRF Rally - lighter, more powerful, and not much more expensive than the old 250.



Under-specced, overweight, but apparently capable. Still very cheap, and still cheaply made.

brother still treasures his, its combination of truly light weight and 20-litre fuel capacity making it an astonishingly-capable on- and off-road machine. It's a bike with no real equal on the market today.

Our full-day ride was less than 80 miles, but it felt like far more. Everyone had ample opportunity to sample every bike as often as they liked, with stops every 20 minutes to allow for us all to swap thoughts and keys. My personal predilection for small-engined motorcycles meant that I immediately gravitated towards the semi-automatic CT125 and spent the majority of my first stint learning how to rev-match my gear changes on the widely-spaced four-speed 'box. Despite its small size it featured a wide, comfortable seat and well-placed handlebars. The throttle was smooth, take-up from the automatic clutch was faultless, and once I'd got used to the sketchy-feeling knobbly tyres, it was an awful lot of fun.

At the end of the day, it was the bike that two of us voted as our favourite, with its utterly charming aesthetic and genuinely entertaining ride, but alas Honda UK has confirmed that it has no plans to officially offer the bike in the UK. Both myself and my friend agreed that you could probably have almost as much fun on an MSX125 as, despite the aesthetic, the CT is very much a road bike. It became very wayward in mud especially, and deep ruts and potholes quickly exhausted the limited suspension travel and ground clearance. The four-speed gearbox and low-powered air-cooled engine meant that none of us managed to break 55mph at any point during the day, and the soft suspension and twitchy handling meant that it felt very unstable at those speeds. Getting one imported isn't difficult, but at time of writing imported versions were a difficult-to-swallow £4,500.

Two bikes none of us rated highly as genuine trail bike propositions were the KTM 390 Adventure and the Honda CB500X. Both are much larger, heavier bikes with 19" rather than 21" front wheels, and both engines are clearly designed for road rather than dirt. The Honda sounds great with its 270-degree firing interval and honestly felt a lot like a less powerful V-Strom 650 to ride. The Rally Raid suspension was fantastic on tarmac, doing an excellent job of providing both feel and control, and the riding position works relatively well for both seating and standing positions, helped by the chunky off-road foot pegs.

The KTM sings at revs and carves bends confidently on its road-biased tyres,

though the cheap ByBre brakes are wooden and lack feel. The engine shudders and bucks if you let the revs drop, no doubt a side-effect of the aggressive tuning necessary to get a full 47bhp out of just 390cc of displacement. The KTM also suffered an intermittent electric fault throughout the day, occasionally leaving the hazard lights stuck on for no discernible reason.

The CCM GP450 divided opinion. The more experienced off-road riders thought it was great, though hot-starting issues and a flickering rear tail-light meant that even Nathan admitted it wasn't a bike he'd want to take too far from home. I found it genuinely frightening off-road, its aggressive steering geometry making it handle much more like a road bike both on and off the tarmac. This might be a necessity with a full 50bhp and genuine 80mph capability, but also meant that the front wheel was far more willing to follow ruts and be knocked aside by stones than some of the other bikes. It wasn't the most welcoming machine for a relative off-road novice.

Receiving both universal derision and acclaim were the Honda CRF250/300 Rally twins. The critical factor was the lowered suspension on the 250, which wallowed and swayed on the road, sitting low like a cruiser. Off-road performance wasn't affected as much, but it made for an uncomfortable on-road experience. The 300 however, was voted the bike that the group would be most likely to actually buy with their own money.

It made the off-road sections easy while handling as well as any knobbly-tyre-equipped motorcycle can on wet, leaf-strewn tarmac. The updated dashboard is great, and boasted a believable 100mpg average fuel consumption throughout the day. The ultra-soft suspension meant that the bike compressed down to a comfortable seat height as soon as it was tipped off the sidestand, and the switchable ABS system provided everyone with the confidence to make the most of the surprisingly-powerful front brakes. 8,000-mile service intervals mean that long-distance adventures don't need to be interrupted by oil changes, never mind top-end rebuilds. It's all very, very Honda.

But honestly, that wasn't much of a surprise. The wildcard, and the one that surprised us all the most, was the slightly rough-and-ready Royal Enfield Himalayan. The digital components of the dashboard were unreadable due to condensation behind

the glass and the front brake is so bad that many of the group genuinely thought it was broken.

India has a very humid climate, so I really can't understand how the condensation issue hasn't been spotted and resolved. And the brakes make absolutely no sense. The rear braking system, lower-spec on paper, somehow has bite and power aplenty. I can only assume that either a different pad material (wood? Hard plastic?) has been used on the front, or that the front master cylinder is completely the wrong ratio.



Expensively-modified by Rally Raid, could the CB500X overcome its inbuilt tarmac bias?



Startlingly-clever but sold poorly, and common mechanical and electrical issues dent appeal.

As before, a close look at the welds and materials confirms that this is a cheap bike in every sense of the word, but not cheap enough when a CRF300L isn't that much more expensive. The Royal Enfield also much heavier, the steel frame low-tech components adding up quickly, and just half the power of the similarly-sized KTM engine. That being said, it plugs along just fine, the gear change is smooth and the clutch light. It handles more like a road bike than the CRF300 does, and in

a startling turn of events was actually superior on the muddy green lanes we tested it on. Some quirk of the geometry meant that it refused to be led by ruts or rocks, staying on-course and following the rider's inputs doggedly no matter what.

The rear wheel never tried to come around on the mud, and while deeper potholes and bumps are best avoided due to the relatively meagre ground clearance this also means that paddling over rougher terrain will be eminently doable. Nathan has ridden one all the way across the USA with nothing but a steering head bearing failure (apparently another very common fault) and was happy to vouch for its touring performance provided you stay off the faster highways.

Let me be clear: I could never buy a Himalayan brand new; the build quality and obvious design flaws would be unforgivable to me, regardless of the price. But as a used proposition? Now that's another story. Were I to find a two-year-old example for say, half the price, the warranty having resolved the initial issues, I might be a lot more forgiving. I could fix the brakes, install some good tyres, throw on a duffel bag and hit the trails without a care in the world.

And that, honestly, is where the story should end. A fantastic time was had by all, and we all made it back home warm and dry with not so much as a snapped clutch lever. But follow the thread of light-weight adventure motorcycles far enough and you eventually catch yourself eyeing electric mountain bikes. But that's a story for another time...

Nick Tasker



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05:40, Sunday 26th September 2021. Not exactly the best time for an alarm to go off. But it did and it did its job, tearing me away from the warm embrace of what should be a Sunday lie in.

This is the start of my first “big ride” with TVAM after getting my Green Badge only a week before. The weather report actually looks pretty good, rain that’s been promised all week might not show, fingers crossed.

Coffee, dress, pack and load up the bike. It’s still bloody dark, what am I doing?

Nice crisp ride to Chieveley Services, Keith’s already there with a few other bikes.

There are a few cars starting to queue for petrol, is this the best time to go on a ride whilst the country has been told not to panic buy petrol? Well, my tanks currently full so let’s just wing it.

Keith’s told us individually (and collectively) that he’s easily got enough fuel. The GSA has hundreds of miles of range. That leaves the rest of us thinking about how good the anti-siphon mechanisms are on the GSA, maybe time will tell.

Keith’s (of the massive tank) Isle of Wight Tour September 2021

There’s a couple of drop outs, one (sensibly) stating concerns over fuel the other unfortunately not feeling too well. That leaves 12 of us to set off with one to pick up on the way.

Allie Gane steps up as (trainee) back marker as it should be good practice. Let’s see just how inept/unruly we are and just how much practice we give her.

Ferry is booked for 10:00 from Southampton giving us plenty of time to enjoy a scenic route to Romsey. Sun is coming up, although it’s pretty foggy but the first leg of the ride takes us through some cracking roads and quaint villages,

Hurstbourne Priors and KinGSA Somborne and down into Romsey.

Andy Storey joins us on the way, increasing us to (an ominous?) 13 riders. We stop at the Shell garage in Romsey and amazingly there's not a throng waiting to fuel! We all (apart from those with massive tanks) top up, breathing a sigh of relief that we've at least got a decent amount of riding left to do before the juddering splutters hit.

Keith struts around again regaling all of us about his rather copious quantities of remaining fuel. Fuel's topped off so we head off to Southampton and the Red Funnel ferry. We pull up to the ferry terminal, book in and line up in the loading bay just in time to see the 09:00 ferry depart. With a decent run up I was sure I could jump the gap. But that's not behaviour becoming of a new Green Badge holder.

We had a decent bit of time to grab a brew and have a chat with the other riders and have a poke about each other's bikes. This is my first time taking a bike on a ferry and I'm pleasantly surprised. We got preferential loading, straight in first and right up to the front ready for a quick unload. So up to the lounge for another brew and a comfy seat whilst we wait for the breakfast service.

Ferry pulls in just before 11:00. We all mount up and the ferry loaders let us off first onto nearly foreign shores! The weather has really brightened up now, the sun's out and there's a decent amount of blue sky. Entirely pleasant riding conditions.

This is my first time on the Isle of Wight and I must admit I'm fairly blown away. It's stunning, green and verdant, lots of little villages. Roads are billiard table smooth. Scenery is a mix of rolling hills, farmland, cliffs and sandy beaches. Truly stunning. So much going on in such a small package.

We had a quick stop to admire the scenery overlooking Sandown Airport (but I'm sure it was just an excuse for those on adventure bikes to feel superior on a stony car park) and a quick reminder from Keith that he's got a massive tank and loads of fuel left.

So far the group has been nice and tight, the marker system working a charm and Allie still stoically shoring us up seamlessly. It's off to Sandown Airport (the long way) for lunch.

Keith's a regular there as he often flies into the airfield. Lunch is cracking,



they've got a load of covered outdoor seating and offer a decent selection of burgers, wood fired pizzas and a Sunday roast. My pizza was excellent.

To blow out the after lunch fug, Keith had lined up a treat. We rode the proposed Isle of Wight TT route. First leg was the narrow twisty bit parallel to the Military road. It's tight, high verged and seemingly way too scary for a full on TT blast through it. It then opens up onto the Military Road.

Just. Wow.

Perfect tarmac, stunning views of hills, cliffs and beaches. Very open so visibility is amazing and properly, stupidly fast. I definitely used all the 60 mph I was allowed.

This road is so good we did it twice, first heading southeast towards Blackgang, then a turn around and a wicked blast all the way from the southern tip of the island directly to the Needles on the western point.

This is where we had a slight wobble. In an unfortunate turn of events a random rider had done a U-turn in front of the tail end of our group and stopped at the side of the road opposite a junction we'd previously turned down. One of us saw this as a marker so turned off, causing a slight confusion among the rest of us at the tail end. It's rather odd to see the chaps you've just turned around ride past you again in the opposite direction! By the time I got there the 'phantom marker' had gone so I blasted back down the Military Road again, with that niggling thought that I'd possibly gone wrong. Eventually I caught up another rider and breathed a sigh of relief when I saw a marker on the next junction. Bear in mind that this was a 13 mile leg with no marked junctions!

Once at the Needles we parked up (well, most of us anyway). Keith and Allie did a great job in scooping up the stragglers. We headed into the shops to grab an ice cream. Abject failure! The ice cream (and pretty much all other shops) were closed due to staff shortages. Another brew it was then!

So, once we were all back together again and suitably caffeinated we got ready to set off. At this point Keith's massive tank was still mostly full, but the rest of us were past the point of no return,



we needed fuel. In Paul's case his GSAXR-750 can barely make it into triple figures of range, this coupled with no fuel gauge meant he was squeaky bum on fuel so motion lotion was now a very high priority.

We'd seen numerous petrol stations on our travels, all of which were frequented by nothing but traffic cones. Finding fuel was going to be a bit exciting. We reckoned Paul had about 30 miles of fuel left. Keith's plan had us hitting Newport to find fuel, 25 miles away. So off we went with Paul short shifting to 6th in about 50 meters.

In Newport we found the last remaining open petrol station, with a nicely established queue already formed and only 4 pumps left open. We all (apart from Keith) filled up again with a huge sigh of relief again. It turns out this station only had 30 minutes of fuel stocks left so we were rather lucky. All fuelled up, we headed back to East Cowes as the ferry home beckoned. Again we got preferential treatment, first on and straight to the front. Nice!

Dinner was being served so many pasties were consumed, mainly by a single individual! No names, what goes on on Red Funnel ferries stays on Red Funnel ferries. It's now dark by the time we dock at Southampton. It's been a long day. The plan is to have a marked ride out of the city to the motorway then everyone for themselves. A sound plan but marked rides on busy city roads at night is definitely tricky. One wrong turn from Keith saw us take the long way out of Southampton. We somehow managed to keep it together (nice one Allie!) despite me seeing Keith as a marker near the end and sailing past him! Luckily I stopped and let him through and we all got out.

A cracking day's riding was topped off by a dark blast up the M3/A34 and home. I still can hear Keith regaling people of his massive tank. I don't think he's filled up yet. My first day with a TVAM long ride was a roaring success, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Everyone was great, Keith and Allie did a fantastic job of managing the ride. My first trip to the Isle of Wight will certainly not be my last, the Military Road is just plain epic.

Those in attendance: Keith Miller – Run leader & Massive Tanker, Allie Gane – (Trainee) Back Marker, Andy Storey (that psychedelic top is truly awful Andy), Bob Griffin, David Naylor, Jackie Parker, Jon Wiles, Mark Ward, Paul Gilmore, Paul Tsarion, Phil Donovan, Stephen Cudd and me, Matt Poole.

Matt Poole

Note: Total run was 207 miles, TT Circuit was 11.7 miles. Keith wrote that his fuel tank holds 293 miles, but by the way he was talking it I think he's dropped a digit somewhere.



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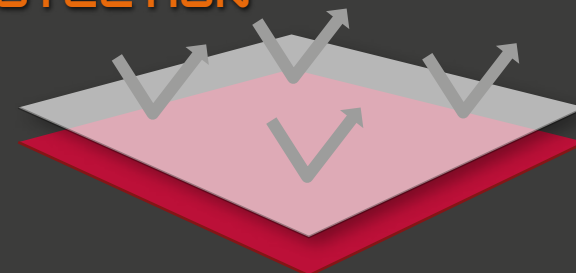


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ASSOCIATE LOGBOOK

As part of an update to the Associate Training Programme, we are introducing a logbook for associates. This article describes what it is, why we are doing it and how it works.

What is the Associate logbook?

New Associates will soon be issued with an A5 light blue record card. This will form the record of the rides they have done, and the key learning points covered at the end of each ride. If you've ever been a Trainee Observer (TOB), you'll be familiar with having a record card with a concise history of your progress.

Why are we introducing the Associate logbook?

The Associate logbook is not intended as a replacement for the Run Report Form (RRF). The RRF remains as the record of the conversation between the Associate and the Observer and is completed at the end of each observed ride. The Associate logbook is intended to be a concise record of the (up to) three learning points covered in each ride debrief. Currently these are recorded in the Associate's own words at the bottom of the RRF. The problem is these are spread across the RRF's and it is up to the Associate to remember what was said, look for any patterns, and tell the Observer what went on at the start of each ride. The Associate logbook is a single place where the ride learning points are recorded so the Associate and the run Observer can look for patterns at the start of each ride and adjust the session plan accordingly.

It also facilitates reflective learning. As the Associate looks back at the learning points raised, they will recall what happened and plan for what they can do differently next time.

How does it work?

At the end of each observed ride, the Associate and the Observer will review the ride and record the learning points at the end of the RRF as normal.

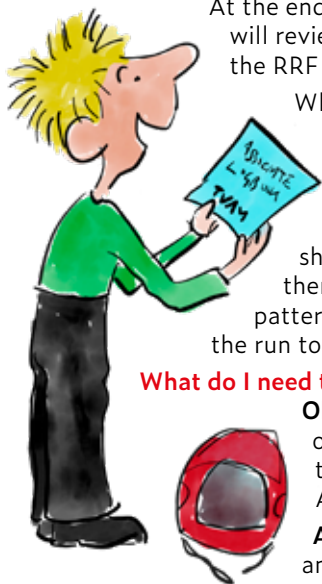
When the Associate returns home, they are encouraged to transfer these learning points to their logbook and review what they have learnt and how it fits with what has been said before.

At the start of the next observed run, the Associate should show the logbook to the Observer. The Observer then reviews the logbook with the Associate looking for patterns in their previous rides. The Observer will then structure the run to cover any issues raised.

What do I need to do?

Observers – Ask the Associate for their logbook at the start of each ride and review it with them. Use this information to structure the ride. At the end of the ride, remind the Associate to fill in the learning points on their logbook.

Associates – Fill in your logbook after each observed ride and review the learning points. Look for patterns in the

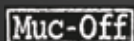
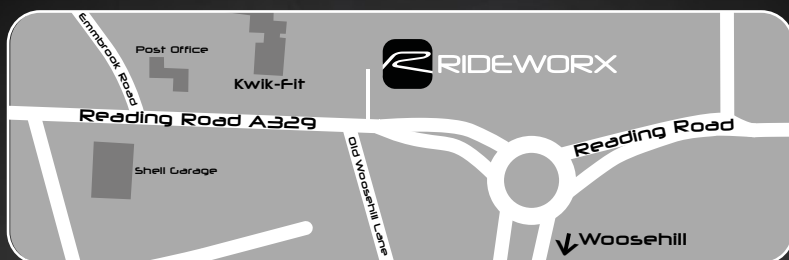




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feedback you have been given. It often takes a while to get some old habits changed and these will show themselves in the feedback you get over several rides. Use this information as you practise riding to the IAM RoadSmart standard between observed runs. At the start of your next observed ride, show your logbook to the run Observer. Talk through what you have learnt and discuss what you want to focus on today.

Logbooks will be issued to new Associates as they join. Current Associates may choose to start using the logbook. If so, you can pick one up from the Training Desk at the St. Crispin's monthly meeting.

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**If you feel you would like to help out with marshalling for this great event, please email:
Chiefmarshal@readingtoyrun.co.uk**

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Craft Sets and Nerf Guns.



Reading
Toy Run
2021

SUNDAY 5th DECEMBER

Benefiting Barnardo's

1pm meet at Wood (formerly Shire Hall) near to J11 of the M4

Directions: From J11 of the M4 take exit B3270 (Signposted Earley) - Whitleywood Lane

Running Parallel with the M4. It may be sign posted Reading FC park and Ride

Please note that you take part in this event at your own risk and R.C.M.

Cannot take responsibility for any Accidents or Loss of Property

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or go to www.readingtoyrun.org**

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23

THE SECRET OBSERVER

ANONYMOUS TALES FROM OBSERVED RIDES

thesecretobserver@tvam.org.

Welcome to the Secret Observer, stories about happenings out on the road. Clearly all names have been removed or changed to protect the innocent (and guilty).

It was a pretty normal St Crispin's meeting to begin with. Turned up to find the car park nearly full with bikes everywhere, found a space and peeled off the kit, had some banter with a few mates whilst walking in, signed-in to take out an Associate, then joined the coffee queue.

It was about then that the Chief Observer of the time (who shall remain nameless) sidled up to me and asked, "How would you like to take a journalist out this morning?" My reply was probably in the negative until he explained they were from a well-known bike magazine (of which there are a few) and were writing a piece about the Advanced Riding Course and TVAM. He thought it would be good for them to go out with a nice, experienced and friendly Observer like myself. Was it at that point I smelt smoke coming from below?

So arm twisted I agreed and was then introduced to a nice biker who had already had a few Observed rides with another Observer from the Club.

We did the normal pre-ride Q&A. How long had they been riding? What bike were they on? What sort of riding do they do (social/commuting/touring/track)? What aspect were they working on at the moment? The answers weren't quite what we normally hear. A few months since getting a full licence – required as they had a job with a bike magazine; a loaned Harley Davidson they were also writing a review on; a bit of every kind of riding and they would like to do some town riding today.

I went through the normal briefing about where I'd be, how to watch for my signals, ignore my positioning, ride for yourself, ride normally, it's not a show, be Safe, Systematic, Smooth and Legal at all times...

Now normally from St Crispin's we try to get out of town quite quickly maybe towards Henley, Swallowfield or Hook. But as the request was for town riding I was going to have to make the route up as we went. A pretty safe bet was to head out towards Reading where we could mingle on the IDR and maybe find some other traffic to play with on a Sunday morning down the Bath and Oxford Roads.

So off we went with the Associate in the lead and me behind (with my ear defenders set to high to reduce the pulsing exhaust note from the bike in front). Overall riding standards were high and we had a good hour or so bimbbling around various parts of Reading before heading back up the Wokingham Road towards Earley. I took the lead at this point to give the Associate a bit of a break and of course to demonstrate how Advanced Riding is really done. Observers call this the 'Demonstration Ride'.

Now some members may already be aware of the cafe on the left as you go up Earley High Street. Myself, not being so familiar with the area but feeling the need for a mid-

ride debrief (and shot of caffeine) spotted this establishment perhaps a bit late. However with super-quick reactions I flicked on the left indicator and dived down the side road immediately before said cafe looking for a parking spot. Quite what the oncoming car thought I'm not too sure but the urgent flashing of headlights and gesticulations through the windscreen drew my attention to the fact this was a one-way road – and I was going the wrong way!

The sound of Observer mystique and pride crumbling could be heard as loud as any Harley's exhaust as I pulled over and looked for my Associate. How to explain this? However they were nowhere to be seen. Had they missed my turn? I'd now parked up and so walked back to the cafe to find them already sitting proudly at a table. Having spotted the no entry signs they simply pulled up onto the pavement and parked outside the cafe. An apparent advantage of riding a Harley is no-one challenges what you do, just in case 20 other mates suddenly turn up also wanting coffee.

Anyway slightly red-faced I explained I didn't know the area too well and even Observers make mistakes and then quickly changed the subject to discuss their ride around Reading.

A month or so later the article came out in said bike magazine and was very complimentary about TVAM and the IAM Advanced Rider course. Thankfully much to my relief there was no mention of Reading or one-way streets.

If you have funny or interesting tale to tell about an Observed Ride with learning points, either as an Observer or Associate, contact The Secret Observer at thesecretobserver@tvam.org



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CARBON OFFSET RIDING

As the world focuses on COP26, we now have two member-led initiatives to help Club members offset the carbon footprint associated with their motorcycle riding.

The first is an update from Nigel Winstanley, following the proposal he outlined in Slipstream a little while ago. It's taken a bit longer than we would have liked to get up and running but Nigel gives an update.

The second is a scheme developed by Andreas Gneist called "Motorcycle Offsetters" and Andreas explains all opposite.

So, if you want to offset your carbon, check out both and see if one works for you - it's your choice. We will post any updates from both projects for your information.

Following the initial work done at the beginning of this year, you may recall that a page for collecting voluntary donations was set up on the TVAM web shop. The aim of this was that individual members were able to make donations which offset a proportion of their annual motorcycle mileage. In return the proposal was to plant trees in our local Thames Vale catchment area. This would have the secondary benefit of improving the local environment and amenity for residents in that local area.

The solution adopted was to search for a local charity with the expertise and experience to successfully oversee this type of project. The Club has recently agreed a plan and signed off on a Memorandum of Understanding, covering how we will work together on this initiative with a local sustainability charity, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, or (TOE for short).

To this end the monies previously donated have now been transferred over to TOE so that they can use these funds to kick off our first pilot tree planting. Members who choose to make further donations will be able to directly to TOE. Work is now underway to identify a suitable site in South Oxfordshire or Berkshire, we will then update TVAM members.

The saplings will take around 5 years to establish, members will be able to ride out to see the trees (forest!) resulting from their efforts. TOE works with local landowners to ensure that the tree types planted are suitable for local conditions and to ensure a long-term sustainable biodiversity is created. These are not just trees planted for commercial forestry later.

An "average large motorcycle" will emit approximately one tonne of carbon in 5,000 miles of riding*. A tree will lock up about one tonne of carbon. Planting a tree costs £10. So, a £10 donation to TOE will offset 5,000 miles of riding and directly result in a new tree being planted.

**<https://www.thrustcarbon.com/insights/how-to-calculate-motorbike-co2-emissions>

Look out for news on how to make your contribution to TOE

You can find out more about TOE on their website at

<https://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/>

Nigel Winstanley



Motorcycle Offsetters



Do you, like us, love motorcycling and, equally, want to help tackle climate change?

How would it feel to know that your passion for riding is directly funding projects that draw down CO2 levels in the air and improve the environment?

Motorcycle Offsetters are leading the way by taking action to turn riding into a force that helps give the planet a fighting chance.

Motorcycle Offsetters are introducing Carbon Negative Riding. By purchasing carbon offsets over and above what is needed to neutralise your CO2 emissions, your investment pulls more CO2 out of the atmosphere than you emit. In short, you leave things better than you found them.

How This Works

When you purchase carbon offsets, your money is spent on projects that, in various ways, improve the natural environment and reduce CO2 levels in the atmosphere. Carbonzero is our partner and offset provider. They are an award-winning, leading provider of high-calibre Canadian and international carbon offsets. Find out more about how your investment funds our project portfolio on the website at <https://motorcycleoffsetters.com>

Your Questions Answered

Q: What is a carbon offset?

A: A carbon offset is a way to compensate for emissions by funding an equivalent CO2 reduction or saving elsewhere

Q: What does carbon negative mean?

A: Going "carbon negative" means that the rider purchases carbon offsets over and above what is needed to neutralise the CO2 footprint arising from his/her motorcycle riding. The incremental cost to the rider to do so is minimal, but the cumulative effect of millions of riders doing so can be astounding.

Motorcycle Offsetters has been set up and is run by TVAM member Andreas Gneist. If you'd like to offset your riding, either on a single trip, for a group ride or annual basis, then head over to <https://motorcycleoffsetters.com> and you can input your motorcycle and purchase the relevant carbon offsets.

LATEST NEWS...



MOTORCYCLE LIVE

Motorcycle Live, in association with Bikesure Insurance, is delighted to announce the show's return to The NEC, Birmingham in 2021. Taking place from Saturday 4 – Sunday 12 December, the UK's largest motorcycle show will welcome back the very best of the industry to delight, entertain and inform bike enthusiasts of all ages.

<https://www2.theticketfactory.com/mclb/online/>

BikeCraft COURSES via Zoom or Face-to-Face

Advanced riding is not just about road miles, but also having an understanding of what is within your skill, power, choice to adjust outcomes.

BikeCraft, open to all members, has an all day face-to-face, interactive session at St. Crispin's, (as an alternative to the Zoom sessions) with a chance to meet and chat with other bikers – novices through seasoned riders between the sessions.

It covers:

Fundamentals:

Setting the scene; including how SMIDSY is a 2-way street.

Advanced riding; application of 'The System', especially the Information phase. Working in harmony with your machine.

How a bike works; effects of brakes, throttle, steering, body position.

Cornering; including using the Limit Point of Vision (vanishing point). Progress is more about 'smooth' than 'speedy'.

Overtaking; planning, preparing, executing, hints and tips.

Filtering and Motorways; considerations to stay safe whilst making progress.

Autumn '21

Zoom course

Over 3 Wednesday evening sessions (10, 17 – so already underway, 24 Nov) 2 topics per session. Free.

Classroom session

Held at St Crispin's; 9am–4pm on 4th December.

Spring '22

Zoom course over 3 weekend morning slots (5, 13, 19 Feb) 2 topics per session. Free

Classroom session at St Crispin's: 9am–4pm on 2nd April.

Booking: Zoom sessions can be booked via rsvp in the groups.io calendar.

Classroom sessions can be booked via the web shop at www.tvam.org – Cost £15

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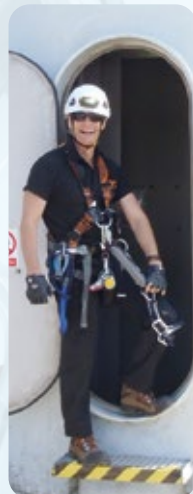
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TVAM CALENDAR

SOCIAL RUNS, EVENTS AND ONLINE SEMINARS 2021/2022

If you have a run for the calendar please send details to socialruns@tvam.org. Keep an eye on the groups.io calendar for the latest news. Also check local teams.

NOVEMBER 2021

- | | |
|--------|---|
| SUN 21 | ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - 8.45am
Members' monthly meet at St Crispin's School, Wokingham. |
| SUN 28 | RAMs FOURTH SUNDAY RUN (C)
Usually a morning run. Details to be posted on groups.io . Contact Dana or Ben with any questions at reading@tvam.org |

DECEMBER 2021

- | | |
|--------|--|
| SUN 5 | GNATs FIRST SUNDAY RUN (B)
Join the GNATs for their first Sunday of the month run. Contact wychcombe@tvam.org for meet details. |
| SUN 5 | WAGs FIRST SUNDAY RUN (B)
Run from 10am of about 100-140 miles. Probable start Wantage Market Square. For details contact run leader Sean Byrne on 07977 22272 or Paul Gilmore on 07527 777500 or email wantage@tvam.org |
| SAT 11 | RAMs SECOND SATURDAY RUN (C)
Usually a morning run. Details to be posted on groups.io . Contact Dana or Ben with any questions at reading@tvam.org |
| SUN 12 | POST WAGGIES CHRISTMAS BASH RUN (B)
Paul takes you on a gentle ride around the North Wessex Downs. Probable start Benson Waterfront Cafe. For details contact Paul Gilmore on 07527 777500 or email wantage@tvam.org |
| SUN 19 | ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - 8.45am
Members' monthly meet at St Crispin's School, Wokingham. |
| SUN 26 | RAMs FOURTH SUNDAY RUN (C)
Usually a morning run. Details to be posted on groups.io . Contact Dana or Ben with any questions at reading@tvam.org |
| MON 27 | LAST BREAKFAST RIDE OF THE YEAR TO THE SEASIDE (B)
120 mile round trip with breakfast at Lepe Country park, return to Basingstoke for 2pm latest. Meet at McDonald's, Basingstoke Leisure Park, RG22 6PG at 8am for an 8.30am departure. Run Leader Mark Spittles 07753 931570. RSVP on groups.io calendar. |

JANUARY 2022

- | | |
|-------|---|
| SUN 2 | GNATs FIRST SUNDAY RUN (B)
Join the GNATs for their first Sunday of the month run. Contact wychcombe@tvam.org for meet details. |
|-------|---|

SUN 2

WAGs FIRST SUNDAY RUN (B)

Run from 10am of about 100-140 miles. Probable start Wantage Market Square. For details contact run leader Sean Byrne on 07977 222272 or Paul Gilmore on 07527 777500 or email wantage@tvam.org

SAT 8

RAMs SECOND SATURDAY RUN (C)

Usually a morning run. Details to be posted on groups.io. Contact Dana or Ben with any questions at reading@tvam.org

SUN 16

ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - 8.45am. AGM - 12.30pm

Members' monthly meet at St Crispin's School, Wokingham.

 Social Runs  Trip  Events  Track Day/Training Run/Training Trip

TVAM Run Ratings

- A: Skilled/progressive for confident riders on all types of road.
- B+: Progressive pace for the confident, focused rider.
- B: Medium paced, relaxed ride.
- C: Suitable for first timers or those looking for a MORE leisurely pace. No overtaking within the group.
- T: More formal training run - observed/social ride with an element of coaching.

Runs for 2022 would be most welcome.

Team leaders/Run leaders please email them to socialruns@tvam.org

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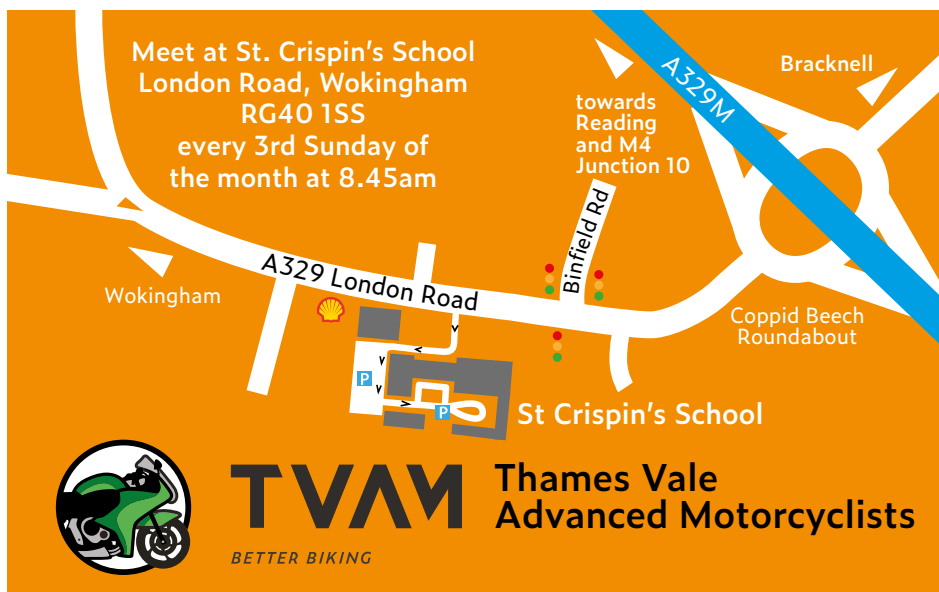
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CLUB MEETS

We meet from 8.45am on the 3rd Sunday of each month at St. Crispin's School, London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS. We welcome any wanting to come for an observed ride, or to see what we are about and just grab a coffee and a bacon roll – and you can join here!



LOCAL TEAM MEETS - contact your local team for online meeting times.

To join a team other than your own, go to groups.io all members and see Wiki – Join a subgroup

Basingstoke (BAR)

When: First Monday of the month
Where: Jekyll & Hyde, Hartley Wespall, Turgis Green, RG27 OAX
Time: 7.30pm

Camberley (CLAMs)

When: 1st Tuesday every other month
Where: The Bee, School Road, Bagshot, Windlesham, GU20 6PD
Time: 8pm (Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec)

Great Northern (GNATs)

Meet 1: After each St Crispin's for coffee at The Farm Café, Ashridge Manor Garden Centre, Forest Road, Wokingham, RG40 5QY.
Meet 2: Rideout first Sunday of the month.

Reading (RAMs)

When: First Monday of the month
Where: Fox and Hounds, Theale, RG7 4BE
Time: 8pm – ride beforehand see RAMs group in groups.io for details

Slough (SAM)

When: First Saturday of the month
Where: Jenners Riverside Café, Ray Mead Road, Maidenhead, SL6 8NP
Time: 9am

Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)

When: Second Wednesday of the month
How: Join us – wags@tvam.groups.io
Time: Zoom call at 7.30pm

Wokingham & Bracknell (WOBMOB)

When: 3rd Tuesday of the month
How: Join us – wobmob@tvam.groups.io
Time: Zoom call at 8pm

Green Team (Full Members)

Meet 1: Last weekend of the month – see *Slipstream* or groups.io calendar
Meet 2: Wednesday following St Crispin's at The Crown, The Street, Swallowfield, RG7 1QY
Time: 7.30pm

OBSERVER CONTACTS

Aardvarks	Chris Brownlee	aardvarks@tvam.org
Allocations	Peter Browne	allocations@tvam.org
Assessments	Andy Wedge	assessments@tvam.org
Bike to bike radios	Chris Brownlee	bike2bike@tvam.org
Cross Checks	Simon Whatley	crosschecks@tvam.org
Cross Check link		www.tvam.org/cross-check-request
Observer Health Checks	Andy Wedge	observerhealthchecks@tvam.org
Observer Interest	Andy Wedge	observerinterest@tvam.org
Observer Training	Chris Brownlee	observertraining@tvam.org
Run Reports	Chris Brownlee	runreports@tvam.org
Test Passes	Peter Browne	testpasses@tvam.org
Trainee Observer Coordinator	Hev Smith	tobcoordinator@tvam.org

OBSERVER FORUM (mailing list):

Observer Group <https://tvam.groups.io/g/observers>

LOCAL TEAM CONTACTS

TEAM LEADERS (teamleaders@tvam.org): Quarterly meetings - Zoom - Wednesday 26 January, 8pm

Basingstoke (BAR)	Dennis Lutley	basingstoke@tvam.org
Camberley (CLAMs)	Jez Brown, Mike Morrison	camberley@tvam.org
Great Northern (GNATs)	Gary Jackson,	wycombe@tvam.org
Reading (RAMs)	Dana Gottschalk, Ben Graham	reading@tvam.org
Slough (SAM)	Ally McCulloch	slough@tvam.org
Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)	Paul Gilmore	wantage@tvam.org
Wokingham & Bracknell (WOBOB)	Andy MacWalter, Ian Gaitley	wokingham@tvam.org
Green Team	Alan Hudson	greenteam@tvam.org

SOCIAL CONTACTS (socialleaders@tvam.org):

Basingstoke (BAR)	Mark Spittles	basingstoke.social@tvam.org
Camberley (CLAMs)	Caroline Harvey	camberley.social@tvam.org
Great Northern (GNATs)	Gary Jackson	wycombe.social@tvam.org
Reading (RAMs)	Dana Gottschalk, Ben Graham	reading.social@tvam.org
Slough (SAM)	Ally McCulloch	slough.social@tvam.org
Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)	Paul Gilmore, Mimi Carter Jonas	wantage.social@tvam.org
Wokingham (WOBOB)	Andy MacWalter and Ian Gaitley	wokingham.social@tvam.org
Green Team	Alan Hudson	greenteam@tvam.org



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Slipstream editor and designer: Salli G - slipstream@tvam.org

Editorial team: Kathy Wright, Nick Tasker, Robin Hennem and Paul Harris

Copy deadline: 3rd week of the month. To ensure your article or information is included please inform the Editor to book space - slipstream@tvam.org at the earliest opportunity, issues are planned well in advance of print date which is generally the first Friday of the month.

Advertisement sales: advertising@tvam.org

TVAM enquiries: 0118 402 4800 TVAM Website: www.tvam.org

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CLUB CONTACTS

Committee (committee@tvam.groups.io): Who are they? Photos on groups.io

Chairman	Barrie Smith	chairman@tvam.org
Chief Observer	Chris Brownlee	chiefobserver@tvam.org
Secretary	Adrian Ellison	secretary@tvam.org
Treasurer	Bjorg Arnadottir	treasurer@tvam.org
Membership Secretary	Dave Simmons 0118 402 4800	membership@tvam.org
Slipstream Editor	Salli Griffith	slipstream@tvam.org
Events & Promotions	Phil Donovan	events@tvam.org
Green Team Leader	Alan Hudson	fullmembers@tvam.org

Committee Meetings: These are held at James House, Mere Park, Dedmere Road, Marlow, SL7 1FJ

Next Meeting: (M – Marlow/Internet), 8th December (M), – all meetings normally on second

Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. If a member wishes to attend they should contact Adrian Ellison – secretary@tvam.org before the meeting date.

Special Roles:

Advanced Bike Control	Chris Caswell	advancedbikecontrol@tvam.org or abc@tvam.org
Advanced Plus (previously EAR)	Andy Wedge/Chris Brownlee	advancedplus@tvam.org
Advertising	Salli Griffith	advertising@tvam.org
BikeCraft	Di Woodcock	bikecraft@tvam.org
Bike Maintenance	Phil Ryan	bikemaintenance@tvam.org
Café and Stopover Database	Chris Brownlee	cafedatabase@tvam.org
Events Diary (non-run events)	Phil Donovan	eventsdiary@tvam.org
Girl Torque	Alie Ball, Salli Griffith	girltorque@tvam.org
Groups.io Support	Andy Wedge, Chris Brownlee	groups.io@tvam.org
Incident Reporting	Training Team	incident@tvam.org
Leaflet Supply	Phil Donovan	leaflets@tvam.org
Look Lean Roll		llr@tvam.org
Merchandise	(to order items away from St Crispin's)	merchandise@tvam.org
Midweek Runs	Alan Hudson	midweekruns@tvam.org
Offroad Riding	Clive Marsden	offroad@tvam.org
Pillion Rider Course	Alan Hudson	prc@tvam.org
Red Zone	Mel Hakhnazarian	redzone@tvam.org
RideOn	Training Team	trainingteam@tvam.org
Run Leader & Back Marker Course	Issy Griffiths	runleaderbackmarker@tvam.org
Social Media	Kyriakos Chrysostomou/Aaron Braich	socialmedia@tvam.org
Social Run Co-ordinators	Alan Hudson/ Salli Griffith/Phil Donovan	socialruns@tvam.org
St Crispin's Sunday Runs	Alan Mossman	sundaysocialruns@tvam.org
Tea & Coffee Bar at St Crispin's	Roger and Marianne Lindsay	coffeebar@tvam.org
Toy Run	Steve Harris (volunteers for Dec Toy Run)	toyrun@tvam.org
Track Skills Days (Training)	Dave Hepworth	circuitsskills@tvam.org
Webmaster	Steve Dennis	webmaster@tvam.org

Website:

TVAM Website www.tvam.org

The website gives you access to the web shop for booking courses, trips, training and track days.

TVAM Groups.io

Groups.io is the system used by TVAM to share details of news, events and much more.

<https://groups.io/groups>

You will automatically be added to the system when you join TVAM so you can get involved in the conversations with other members. There are local team and special interest groups available for you to join also. Get involved and find out what's happening.

Correspondence Address & Telephone: 23 Comet Way, Woodley, Reading RG5 4NZ. 0118 402 4800

Registered Office:

Thames Vale Advanced Motorcyclists is a charitable company limited by guarantee, and is a group within the IAM. c/o Durrants Accountants, 24 Wellington Business Park, Dukes Ride, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6LS. Registration Number: 03556042. Charity Number 1069767.

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