

# Slipstream

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August 2020





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# FROM THE LAPTOP

are you getting out and about?

Well I have finally coaxed my bike out of the shed! I thought it about time I joined one of our six-person runs. It was long overdue and great to be back in the saddle. So now time to start organising some runs as I promised the ladies in Girl Torque some rides out earlier on in the year before all this Covid stuff happened.

So the UK is opening up as regards to travel and many of you are taking advantage of the fact. I see plenty of run reports coming in of 6-person rides from round the teams, all enjoyed as morning, day or evening runs. This has been giving members a chance to flex their muscles with a spot of run leading hitherto untried, easier with a small group and a little less daunting. In pretty much all cases I believe the Buddy System has been used, so keeping an eye on the rider behind you and making sure they are aware of every turn you make with no need to put down markers at every junction.

I have seen a number also venturing over the Channel to enjoy the French roads, hospitality and cuisine! We hope that unlike Spain, France will be open without the quarantine repercussions. This month's magazine invites you to take a trip there before too long, or maybe a little further into the future if on the cautious side. If you just fancy a few days away, Alan Mossman's long weekend route will provide you with a fair few miles to enjoy, or perhaps this is your first foray there, in which case for both you as a first timer to France or even an old hand, a checklist of what you may come across or may need is provided in detail from A-Z by Bob Harrison.

Whatever riding you are doing I trust you are having a great time and sincerely hope that next month will see Covid numbers down and run numbers able to increase a little, and perhaps, even an open-air St Crispin's on the cards - or is that too much to wish for?

*Sally G.*

**Slipstream Editor**

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Letters to the editor  
slipstream@tvam.org

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# TVAM Roll of Honour

## New Members in July 2020

Kay Allsopp	Andrew Cockburn	William Harper-Jones	Luke Schofield
Douglas Anscombe-Stephen	Mark Conlon	Grahame Hennessey	Stuart Scriven
Christopher Bethell	Derek Conner	Juan Hernandez-Luis	Anthony Tomkins
Christopher Buzzard	Daniel Cossette	Matthew 'Matt' Poole	Brian Waters
Ian Catlin	Jamie Davies	Mark Robson	Jeffrey White
	Christopher Dunn	Richard Roper	David Williams

## Test Passes Achieved

<b>F1RST Pass</b>	<b>Jonathan Ager-Harris</b> Mudassir Ansari	<b>Mick Goodall</b> Geoffrey Pretty
<b>F1RST Pass</b>	<b>Dennis Barratt</b> David Clifton Julie Davies Martin Carruthers Denholm Syme	<b>Dave Parsons</b> Ian Dickinson Coral Lambert Paul Naish Andy Smith

## Retaken Test to Achieve F1RST

**F1RST Pass**    **Nick Rubio**

## National Observer Validations

Ian Gaitley

## ST CRISPIN'S ONLINE MEET

We will be online once more for a virtual meeting and chat from 9am to 10am on Sunday morning. We have some test passes to announce. Members of the Training Team and Committee will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. If you're interested in becoming an Observer then you can discuss the programme in a breakout session.

We hope to see you there. Details of the Zoom meeting are below and when you join, don't forget to enter your full name so everyone knows who is who.

Topic: Virtual St Crispin's

Time: Aug 16, 2020 09:00 London

Join Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89321810446?pwd=cHR3dzFTNFF1UWdvY3FYWWFkNktZUT09>

Meeting ID: 893 218 10446

Password: 6746511017

# FROM THE SADDLE

Hi everyone

And welcome to another Covid-19-government-guideline-friendly *Slipstream*!

Whilst there have been some adjustments to the government guidelines for Covid-19, the changes have had little impact on what we can do as a club. In England, we can still conduct social (and socially distanced) runs for up to six people, and we can carry out observed runs for up to three people, so Trainee Observers can participate too.

The smaller groups for social runs have continued to be very popular and teams are organising multiple runs to cater for demand. This has only been possible because so many have stepped up to volunteer as Run Leaders. If you would like to have a go at run-leading then have a word with your team leader – this is a great time to start. Smaller groups mean less pressure, and shorter runs are very popular. There is lots of help available within your team and any Full Member can lead a run. And you make a lot of friends being a Run Leader too!

The smaller groups are proving so popular that we are intending to continue to allow Run Leaders to restrict the size of their runs even when we exit the Covid-19 world of guidelines (whenever that may be!).

There is an article on page 7 on Membership by Portfolio. You will read that Membership by Portfolio provides an alternative route to full membership of IAM RoadSmart and TVAM for those that are put off by the prospect of a formal test. Nationally, around 50% of Associates that embark on an Advanced Driver or Advanced Rider Course never actually take their test, so the portfolio route has been introduced to improve this. If you know someone that hesitates to join TVAM because of the test, then please let them know about this new route. It's worth noting that we expect to keep the standard as high as it is via the test route!

Other activities, particularly face-to-face social meetings and most of our trips and courses, including Look, Lean, Roll continue to have to take a back seat for the time being. Local teams are conducting video meetings and the virtual St Crispin's meeting at 9am on the third Sunday is gaining in popularity – we even have test pass announcements now too as IAM RoadSmart has re-commenced the advanced tests. The virtual St Crispin's also has 'breakout sessions' for the Trainee Observers and for those interested in becoming an Observer. See details on page 4 for the link to join the virtual meeting which is also on the Groups.io calendar.

Traffic levels are building, and not everyone on the road appears to have fully adjusted to the them, so do take time to apply the advanced riding principles – and have fun!

**Chris Brownlee**  
**Chief Observer**



*Slipstream* is your monthly magazine and its content depends on your input. If you have something to say: items to discuss; kit you want to recommend; bikes you want to wax lyrical about or content you wish to suggest - don't hesitate to get in touch, we need your input - it doesn't all happen by magic! You'll reach us at [slipstream@tvam.org](mailto:slipstream@tvam.org)

**Salli G - Editor**



# Direct to National Observer

Ever since IAM RoadSmart introduced the IMI qualifications for Observers (and did you know that Observers obtain an Institute of Motor Industries recognised qualification?) the route to becoming an Observer has been:

1. Apply to the Observer Training Programme, and become a Provisional Trainee Observer
2. On completion of the initial steps, and the first assessed ride, become a Trainee Observer (with a yellow badge, because badges are important, aren't they?)
3. Complete a series of rides and some further assessed rides.
4. On completing an assessed ride successfully, become a TVAM Local Observer, and get that coveted gold badge (because badges are important, remember...)

Once a Local Observer, then many Observers decide to go for validation with IAM RoadSmart and become a National Observer. A National Observer can observe with any IAM RoadSmart group (like TVAM) subject to the approval of that group.

In TVAM, National Observers get a burnished gold badge (as I keep saying, badges are important...)

TVAM is recognised by IAM RoadSmart, and other groups, as having a gold-standard Observer Training Programme and our thanks should go to the Training Team for creating this programme and its ongoing development.

As part of that recognition, IAM RoadSmart is offering our Trainee Observers the opportunity to validate directly as a National Observer. Instead of completing their final assessed ride with a TVAM Local Observer Assessor they will carry out this assessment with an IAM RoadSmart National Observer Assessor. If successful they will become a National Observer without going through the Local Observer step.

We consider this to be a strong recommendation from IAM RoadSmart of our Observer Training Programme and the quality of Observers we develop.

If you'd like to find out more about becoming an Observer then drop an email to [observerinterest@tvam.org](mailto:observerinterest@tvam.org) or come along to one of the 'Observer interest' sessions at the virtual or real St Crispin's meetings on the third Sunday of the month.

**Chris Brownlee**



Membership by Portfolio (MBP) is a new way of achieving full membership of IAM RoadSmart – without taking the advanced test. It has been recognised for some time that not everyone performs well in artificial test situations and, in order to attract those Associates that would be otherwise put off by a test, IAM RoadSmart has introduced Membership by Portfolio, currently near to the end of very successful pilot testing in selected other groups. National statistics show that around 50% of those who sign up to complete an Advanced Rider or Driver Course never actually go to test.

In order to achieve Full Membership by Portfolio the Associate, working with a National Observer, must build a portfolio of qualifying evidence of riding competence, a little like an NVQ in advanced riding. The Associate must complete a minimum of at least six observed runs with a National Observer, and the last two runs must have all areas of competence graded at '1' or a '2'. No grades of '3' in the final two runs can be allowed for qualification, and whilst there is a minimum of six runs required, the actual number can be more, remembering the last two runs must meet or exceed the advanced standard in all areas.

Any Associate can elect to take the portfolio route rather than the test route and they can take an advanced test with an examiner in the future if they wish, such as a member's reassessment. Members achieving Membership by Portfolio are full members of TVAM and IAM RoadSmart in exactly the same way as someone qualifying by the test route. There is no distinction in the type of membership and all options, such as becoming an Observer or taking the IAM Masters, are open to all full members.

IAM RoadSmart anticipates that the majority of Associates will elect to go for the test route and that a minority, who are put off by the prospect of a formal test, will elect for the portfolio route.

The fees for both routes are the same.

Within TVAM, we will implement this as follows:

- Any Associate joining TVAM will be offered the portfolio route if they express any concerns about taking the advanced test. They will be allocated to a National Observer.
- Any Associate who commences the portfolio route can swap to the test option if they wish.
- Associates on the test route can apply to swap to the portfolio route via the application form on the TVAM website ([www.tvam.org/forms](http://www.tvam.org/forms)).
- Associates can start to build their portfolio of runs once they have been accepted on to the portfolio route. Previous runs will not count towards the portfolio.
- Although a minimum of six documented runs are required with a National Observer, we will encourage Associates on the portfolio route to go out with Local Observers and a variety of National Observers. As an example, limitations at St. Crispin's (when we get back there) may mean that National Observers cannot always be allocated for St. Crispin's Sunday runs.
- Portfolios should include documented runs from more than one National Observer.
- Portfolio Associates should retain the top copy of all their run report forms and when they have completed their portfolio these should be submitted to the Chief Observer as pdf files.

The portfolio of runs will be reviewed by a Local Observer Assessor in the first instance and then submitted to IAM RoadSmart for approval, who will then decide whether to award full membership.

• The advanced standard is in no way diminished by the portfolio building route. TVAM Observers, as opposed to examiners, become responsible for upholding the standards.

We're looking forward to welcoming more Associates to TVAM that may have been put off by the prospect of an advanced test; if you know of such candidates, then please let them know and we will be happy to explain the process.

**Chris Brownlee**

## Associate Engagement and Training

We hope that all Associates are fully engaged in TVAM and a key role of each Associate's assigned Observer is to ensure that they are.

Associates should be encouraged to attend team meetings (virtual or real) and to take part in social runs. Are all the Associates you know fully engaged in these activities?

Groups.io and Slipstream are the only official routes for TVAM communications. So if Associates are participating in other WhatsApp, Facebook or email groups etc. do they know that these may include non-TVAM members and may not carry the TVAM messages accurately?

In order to improve Associate engagement we're embarking on a series of steps to improve the Associate Training Programme, including:

- Make more material available via online systems, including presentations, videos etc.
- Remove inconsistencies in theory understanding and delivery
- Improve the visibility of Associate achievement
- Encourage attendance and participation in the Associate Red Zone
- Monitor the frequency of rides and prompt where necessary

The aims will be to improve Associate engagement in the club and potentially reduce the time it takes for Associates to achieve Full Membership.

Do you see engagement of all the Associates in your local team? Why not encourage the Associates you know, especially the ones you don't know well or see very often, to participate more? We have a lot to offer as a club and participation is key!

**Chris Brownlee**



**A-Z GUIDE TO  
MOTORCYCLING IN  
FRANCE  
page 15**

**FRENCH TASTER  
ROUTE MAP  
page 18**



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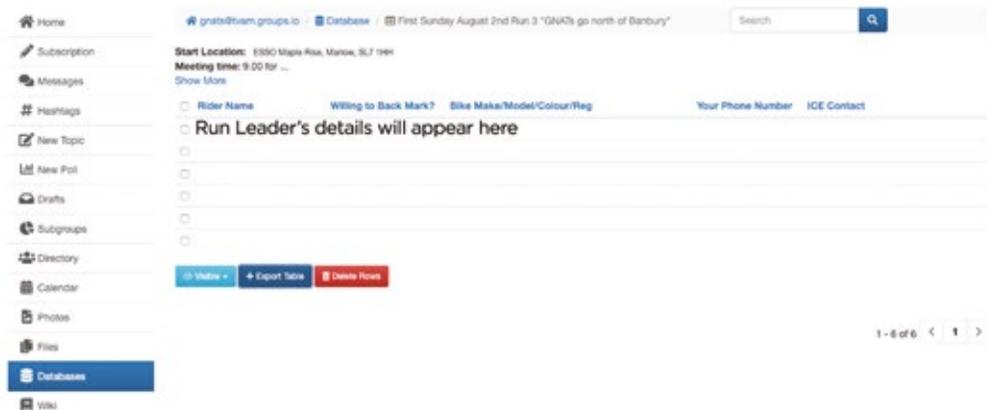


Finance options available..

# Social Runs During Covid Times

Whilst we are still limited to 6 people in a run many of you have been on numerous evening and weekend rides, and are enjoying the small numbers. In case the rest of you weren't aware all the local teams are running social runs at various times in the week, or at weekends, or both.

To find out when and where, most of the teams have a booking system in groups.io under your local team entry. In the menu you'll find databases listed and current runs are entered there by each run leader with 6 slots in total - first come first served. If runs fill up and another run leader is available, more runs will be added depending on demand. Hopefully you can get on a ride and if not, get in touch with your team leader. If your group is using a different system, again, check with your team leader to find out how to register for a ride.



## GNATs Mid-Week Social Rides

With the current, in my opinion daft rules for no more than 6 meeting outdoors, Team GNATs have risen to the challenge to put on several mid-week runs for up to said 6 people. With the occasional pillion only making 5 bikes allowed, not everyone gets to join the run of their choice and it is very much a first come first served affair.

Several new run leaders have come forward and coped very well given the support and encouragement from established RLs. The small groups and limited daylight available in the evenings has probably encouraged the newbies to give it a go. This may be because the logistics of sorting stopping places for the obligatory tea and cake ceremony, that normally populate the longer Sunday runs, are not required. Some runs have made stops at fish & chip shops or pubs but if the weather has been inclement the run has gone full distance, without break, allowing participants time to get fed and watered at a reasonable time of the evening.

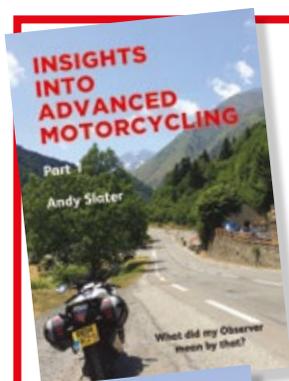
As for the actual organisation of the run, the first week after the full lockdown was relaxed we relied on John Stevenson to muster the RLs and he put riders into groups on a first come first served basis. This was not an easy task and I tried my best to implement the system that Ally McCulloch of SAMs had suggested. I spent 2 days on the PC trying to get the system to work as I wanted pillion riders easily included in the groups of 6. I eventually gave up and fortunately Keith Miller came up trumps with the Database solution to our problems. Initially it worked very well and then flaws were discovered but resolved in latter weeks. Then came the 'Template' which made the database even easier to rollout for a run and after passing on the 'How to do it' email to the GNATs group, the run leaders were able to take

total control of their run leaving me to relax knowing that the social runs are no longer reliant on me communicating with the RLs and then posting the signup database.

Historically the GNATs Wednesday Night Rides were John Stevenson's baby, along with Peter Dowlen and John Rodda. The runs always started in Marlow and mostly finished there. The biggest issue with Team GNATs is the sheer size of the area to which we need to cater. With the advent of the small group runs and the need for visible social distancing, the various group of 6 started their runs from different locations, again in the same south Bucks area. It was then we realised runs could start elsewhere for those who don't live close enough to make the 6pm starts. So, runs from Peartree Services, north of Oxford, and also H-Café became start points and have been reasonably well attended in the weeks that we had RLs available in those areas. Fortunately Nigel Taylor hasn't said he wants to join in but he's more than welcome to list a run in Yorkshire!

The next issue was making the decision to add yet another run when we already had 5 full runs filled. Do we pull a rider from one of the runs and ask them to lead a 6th or do we just say we're full? We do have run leaders that will step up at short notice to be this type of 'volunteered' run leader, but it's not fair to keep relying on the stalwarts of the team.

With 6 bikes, all the runs have been using the Buddy System and there have been a couple of times riders were lost from the group. The issues range from riders not being fully aware that they are responsible to make sure that the rider behind them follows them at a junction, to other bikes, not part of our run, joining in. We had one run with 5 GSs in the group and unfortunately the rider who was not on a GS led 2 total strangers, also on GSs, and wondered why they went straight on at a set of lights when the group turned right. The correct GS riders were found a little later and the run completed with all riders that started it. Earlier on in the same run another group of 6 joined us at a roundabout splitting us in two. Fortunately our group turned left shortly after and so the distance that those at the back had



## Insights Into Advanced Motorcycling Parts 1 and 2

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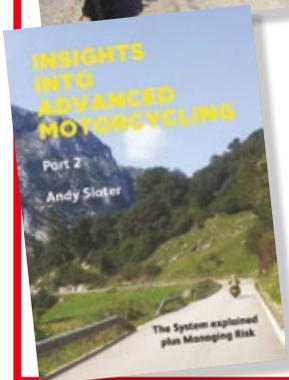
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to look forward for the RL was short and we all made it back into just our group.

Some riders have commented that they like the small groups and it certainly makes food stops easier to organise in these testing times and I suspect that they will be all that we can offer for some considerable time to come.

With just a few weeks left of available daylight to complete a run worth joining, I'd like to thank all the run leaders, new and existing, for their efforts and of course to the back markers who mostly volunteer for the task of ensuring the whole group stays as one.

**Gaz**

## In at the Deep End!

In the last few months all my riding plans have been upended. I was going on the 40th 7W's trip but that got cancelled. I was going for a training course in Scotland in May – which got cancelled. I was also going with TVAM to Germany this August and of course that also got cancelled. Basically, all major rides I had planned for this year have been cancelled or at least postponed.

But there have also been new opportunities. Learning how to attend video conference calls, get more involved in local club activities and to lead rides. I'm one of those that has found the thought of leading a ride a bit daunting, but an unexpected opportunity showed itself in the new restricted rules on social gatherings. The thought of leading a ride of maybe 20 bikes for a full day does feel quite different than to go out for a short ride with only 5 other bikes.

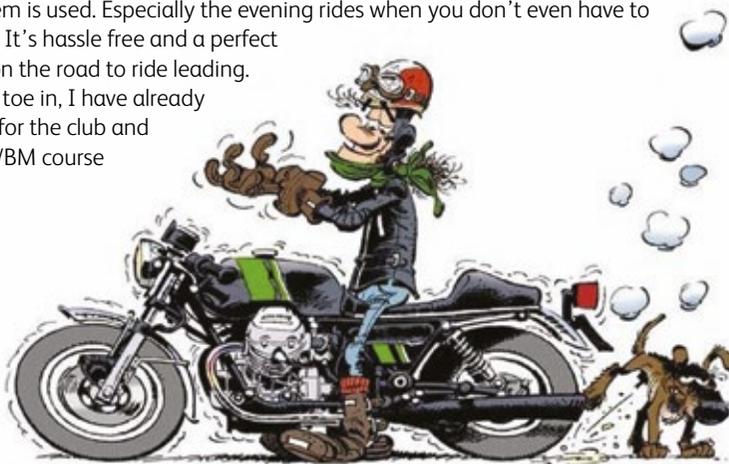
So that's what I did. I offered to lead a group for SAM's Tuesday evening run. To make things easier for myself I chose a little route I know quite well, made a short description and sent it to the team leader. SAM uses Groups.io databases for sign-up sheets so I could keep an eye on registrations and didn't have to take down any rider information at the start of the ride. Thankfully a few members signed up, some that I already knew and some that I didn't.

A very quick brief at the starting point explaining the route, the buddy system and for everyone to remember to ride their own ride was all that was needed and off we went. The ride was enjoyable, went without incident and nobody was bothered by the semi-goat track I took them on! It was literally just a group of likeminded folks going out for an afternoon spin!

I can absolutely recommend anyone interested in leading a ride to have a go now that the rides are smaller and the buddy system is used. Especially the evening rides when you don't even have to sort out a place to get food. It's hassle free and a perfect opportunity to get started on the road to ride leading.

Now that I have dipped my toe in, I have already agreed to lead another run for the club and will be signing up for the RL/BM course when they start again.

**Bjorg Arnadottir**



# Nick Robinson

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# AN A-Z GUIDE TO MOTORCYCLING IN FRANCE

**A**ccidents – Those things that only happen to other people – hopefully. But if you do come across one be aware that there is a legal duty to “assist persons in danger” so theoretically you could be prosecuted if you don’t stop and help.

**Accotements Non-Stabilisés** (Unstable Verges) – Like it says, don’t stray off the black stuff.

**Alcohol** – They make it very easy to get hold of alcohol, and very hard if you drive with some inside you. The permissible limit is much lower than UK, random tests are common and if caught you can be arrested on the spot, your licence taken away and your vehicle impounded (see Justice). Enough said.

**Autoroutes** – Mostly as boring as UK motorways but at least a bit quieter and quicker. Most are Toll, except close to Paris and other large cities where they form part of the ring road network. Direction signs to autoroutes normally indicate whether it’s a toll (péage) one, and similarly show when you are entering a toll zone (Section a Péage).

**B**icycles – A national sport, so cycles are treated more tolerantly by other road users than in the UK. Allow 1.5 metres clearance (1 metre in town) when overtaking. At weekends large groups of “cyclotouristes”, (un)suitably clad in full team lycra, take over the roads, keeping up a fair old pace. For major races the roads are closed - for the Tour de France in July they are barriered off, and you could wait for several hours while the whole circus passes through. In mountain regions the passes may be closed for days, and even when opened again will be full of German campervans and drunken Danes.

**Bison Futé** – Real-time information on road conditions throughout France (in English) - <http://www.bison-fute.equipement.gouv.fr/diri/Accueil.do?langue=en>.

**Bis-Routes** – Alternative routes using secondary D-roads intended for holiday traffic. Useful for making reasonable progress with better scenery, often include a few entertaining stretches. Look out for yellow and green “Bis” direction signs.

**Breathaliser** – It is compulsory to carry one, but the fine for not doing so is not currently being enforced – Gallic logic?

**C**amping Equipment – Size matters (the smaller the better), so e.g. an air bed is more compact (and comfortable) than a foam roll, a sports chammy is smaller than a towel and can be packed away wet, etc. See Luggage.

**Camp Sites** – Plentiful but, apart from a few holiday areas, most only open for the peak holiday period. Those that are open earlier and later cater mainly for a steady stream of caravanning or campervanning Dutch pensioners. Municipal sites are good value and have adequate facilities if you’re in transit; private ones are more geared to a longer stay. In July and August sites in popular areas (including near Channel ports) can get busy so book ahead if possible. Info and bookings via <http://www.campingfrance.com/index.jsp?lg=uk>. Pick sites in easy walking distance of town/village centre, or with on-site bar-restaurant, so you don’t have to get kitted up to go out for a meal (and you can have a drink with it – see Alcohol) and to fetch the compulsory baguette and croissants for breakfast; some sites may have a baker who delivers in the morning. Anywhere near water can suffer from biting insects early in the season. Many sites are on soft sandy soil so don’t forget a decent “puck” to put under the stand. You’d think this would make it easy to push the tent pegs into the ground, but the sand is usually only about 5 cm deep before you hit the rocks beneath. Unfortunately, in these economically difficult times, sites in or near industrial towns may have a significant population of what the French term “SDFs” (sans domicile fixe – no fixed abode) i.e. homeless people, sometimes in casual jobs who may work (and come and go) at unsocial hours, as well as giving the site an uneasy ambience.

**Chambres d’Hote** – Bed, breakfast and evening meal, but don’t be late (see Eating).

**Chaussée Déformée** (Bumpy Road Surface) – A rare sight nowadays, and often no worse than your average UK road.

**Code de la Route** – Several non-government concerns, e.g. Michelin, publish an illustrated book with this title. Sort-of equivalent to our own Highway Code, but with added test questions, so more a primer for people taking the theory test. Copies available in hypermarkets or newsagents/booksellers e.g. Maison de la Presse, but at 15€ a throw and upwards they make ours look something of a bargain.

**Corner-Cutting** – A bad French habit, which they aren't about to abandon just because some Brit biker is riding for a view (or because there's a solid line down the middle of the road, for that matter). Remember SSV, and be prepared to give up some of that view on blind right-handers in case something suddenly looms into view on "your" bit of road.

**Crit Air Vignette** – This air quality certificate is a vignette issued to show a vehicle's compliance with European emission standards and is required for some of its cities. To find out the latest requirements and buy one for €3.62 if needed visit <https://www.certificat-air.gouv.fr/en/>

**Currency** – A sore point at the moment, and not likely to get much better in the near future, so it's even more important to find the best possible deal. Get a few Euros "float" from the Post Office before you go, but for best rates go to a cash point in France using a cash card issued by e.g. Nationwide. Some credit cards, including those from Nationwide and Halifax Clarity, also give the spot market rate but charge a cash withdrawal fee, and also charge interest from the day of withdrawal. Most other cards take an "exchange fee" of around 2%, which may still be better value than bureaux de change in the UK or on a ferry. Pay for as much as possible (petrol, hotels, meals etc.) with a credit card (Carte Bleu or CB) to minimise the need to obtain cash. Inform your card issuer(s) of where and when you are going to avoid the possibility of the card being refused. Failing all that, at current exchange rates you could always sell your bike for a profit at the end of your holiday and hitch-hike home.

**Customs Checks** – Quite common on roads near land borders, but possible almost anywhere. Unlikely to be an issue when you're on a bike, unless you bought a lot of cigs or whisky in Andorra.

**Département** – Equivalent to a county in UK, but with greater autonomy in certain respects. Often referred to by its number, e.g. 62 is the Pas de Calais – see a road map for the full list.

**Direction Signs** – Generally clear and consistent. On autoroutes signs show distances to the final destination(s) and one or two intermediate major towns/cities; separate signs also show the places served by, and the distance to, the next exit. As a rule, on N-roads signs will show a major destination (which may be quite a long way away) and the next town, plus intermediate towns if appropriate. Signs on other roads usually only show the next couple of places, with sometimes a longer-distance destination, so navigation using D-roads generally requires more detailed route planning.

**Documents** – I.d. (passport), driving licence, V5 and insurance certificate (and probably MoT - there is currently no equivalent for bikes in France but you may need it if you stray further afield) must be carried at all times. Also carry EHIC (European Health Identity Card - at least valid until 31st December 2020) and travel insurance document (see Health). Take backup photocopies packed separately, and/or scan documents and post to an accessible site. I also carry scanned copies on a memory stick. See also Other Paperwork.

**D-Roads** (Routes Départementales) – Where the fun starts (possibly). Sort-of equivalent to UK B-roads, but cover a much wider range, from stretches of almost motorway standard, through fast and open to extremely twisty or just one damn village after another. When planning a route using D-roads check on a reasonable-scale map if you want to make decent progress. D-road numbers are often not shown on direction signs, only on Km posts on the verge. Note that a D-road's number usually changes when it crosses from one département to the next; surface quality often changes abruptly too. See also Bis-Routes.

**Eating** – That's one of the main reasons you came to France, right? But it's just as easy to get mediocre food in France as anywhere else – try to eat where the locals do. Menus translated into English rarely bear any resemblance to what finally arrives on your plate – better to get the French version and use a phrase book. Set menus are always better value than a la carte. Most of France strictly observes standard mealtimes – 12:30 for lunch and 19:30 for dinner – arrive much later and you risk being turned away.

**Emergency Phone Numbers** – The French have traditionally had separate numbers for fire, police, non-emergency ambulance etc. but to keep it simple the standard European emergency number, 112, will get you through to the Pompiers (fire brigade and first response team).

**Emergency Kit** – Contrary to what ferry companies would have you believe when trying to sell you an overpriced “continental touring kit”, it is not compulsory to carry a warning triangle, first aid kit or spare bulbs on a bike, but carrying (not wearing) a hi-vis bib has been compulsory since 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2016. Nonetheless, it is good practice for at least one member of the party to be suitably prepared – see Tools and Spares.

**Eurotunnel** – The quickest, but not the cheapest, option. Ride on, stay with the bike, ride off, simple. Take a stout rubber band to tie the front brake lever back to prevent the bike shifting due to the movement of the train. Disadvantage is you don’t get a chance to have a rest and a meal or a coffee like you do on a ferry.



**Falling Rocks** – The danger is not so much of a rock falling on your head (though it has happened), more of finding a pile of large, razor-sharp lumps lying across the road, waiting to shred your tyres or worse.

**Ferries** – Old hands will probably prefer to strap their own bike down but newbies may want guidance – some companies are more helpful than others – P&O now says it’s your responsibility. When tying down in the usual way with a single ratchet strap, put the bike on the sidestand (never the centre stand) and put your weight on the seat to load the springs as you ratchet it down. Not all the straps provided have a pad to stop it digging into the seat, so be prepared to use something like a folded-up pair of jeans (protected by a plastic bag) for this purpose.

**Filtering** – Although filtering is officially a no-no, (except for a few areas where it is under review), French drivers actually expect bikes to filter and overtake at every opportunity, and many will helpfully move over even in the most inappropriate places. So if you just want to go with the flow make your intentions clear by staying well back. See also Roundabouts.

**Gendarmes** – See Police

**Gloves** – It has recently become compulsory for riders and passengers to wear CE-marked gloves. However, any proper bike gloves should be OK, unless a gendarme is having a really bad day.

**Gravel** – The French are even worse than UK roadmenders at not sweeping up excess gravel after resurfacing. They also have a bad habit of scattering loose gravel onto roads where the tar is in danger of melting in the summer. Usually there will be warning signs but it can’t be guaranteed, nor is it easy to tell when the danger has passed.

**Hazard Warning Lights** – Should be used when there’s a sudden reduction of speed ahead.

**Headlamps** – Motorcycles must use dipped headlights which should be adjusted if necessary so as not to dazzle oncoming traffic – stick-on beam adjusters are normally unnecessary so long as you can adjust by other means. The law also says the dipped beam should illuminate the road at least 30 metres ahead. In practice there shouldn’t be a problem.

**Health** – The EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) will allow you to get emergency treatment at any hospital or clinic affiliated to the French national health scheme – at other clinics you may have to pay and claim back later. With Brexit it is valid until at least 31st December 2020. You will probably also get a bill for the extra treatment cost over and above the official minimum, plus other things like an ambulance if required, hence it’s wise to take out top-up travel insurance that will cover these extras. Be sure the policy covers motorcycling as most insurers consider it a “hazardous activity” and load the premium.

*(continued on page 22)*

# French Taster

Route by Alan Mossman

Distance: 450 miles

This route was planned for a weekend to introduce some friends to the joys of riding in France. Around 450 miles 'over there' plus getting to Eurotunnel makes for quite a full-on weekend, but it's worth it!

We left at lunchtime on Friday to catch the 4.20pm shuttle, which meant that once we lost the hour, we would be on the road from Calais around 6pm.

Starting off on the lovely scenic coast road in the direction of Boulogne we then headed inland after Ambleteuse on lovely minor roads, to our first stop Le Clos Dessyag, Montcavrel, 50 miles away. Greeted with drinks, showered, changed and fed with a fantastic home-cooked meal, we declined the hot-tub that we originally thought sounded a good idea, in favour of a reasonably early night.

Saturday was divided into 4 sections of around 1.5 hours each and each stop had been planned using Streetview. In between morning coffee and lunch we passed close to the Somme battlefields of the Great War, so visited a British cemetery in Dernancourt and, as always, were amazed at how well these are cared for. The day was under 190 miles, all on great roads of all types, finishing at Le Relais De Fleurette, Pontavert.

The Sunday morning ride passed through the walled town of Laon, approached by a series of hairpins and rewarding you with magnificent views in all directions. A town to return to sometime! We used a stretch of motorway after the coffee stop just to munch some miles, but don't equate French motorways with ours – just think of them as empty dual carriageways without roadworks!

Lunch in Arras, then an hour or so of the D939, unfortunately now with speed cameras, before calling at Montreuil-sur-mer, a delightful walled town with a cobbled centre edged with cafes. The final stretch uses the coast road again to reach Eurotunnel (209 miles). We aimed for the 5.50pm shuttle, which, after gaining the hour back, enabled us to get home by 9pm after a break at Cobham services (similar to a small town).

Whilst we would highly recommend the two places we stayed at (using Booking.com), there will be other options. If you didn't want the long ride home on Sunday evening, you could find somewhere near Calais or Folkestone to stay an extra night. Just go and enjoy yourself!



Garmin and Tomtom are in the groups.io/all members file section. If you have a favourite ride you would like to share on these pages, please get in touch to add it to this series - slipstream@tvam.org

# FRENCH TASTER

From route pages 18-19



Day 1.  
First night bikes securely parked at  
Le Clos Dessyag, Montcavrel

Day 2.  
Visit to the  
British Cemetery  
at Demancourt



Day 3.  
Approaching the walled  
city of Laon, capital  
of the Aisne department  
in Hauts-de-France

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**Helmet Reflectors** – 4 reflectors of a certain minimum size, placed front, rear and either side of the helmet, are compulsory. However, I've done a lot of miles in France without, and never had a problem. Cheaply available on ebay etc.

**Hi-vis Riding Gear** – It was proposed a while ago to make this compulsory, but for the time being at least it has been dropped.

**Hotels** – Budget chains (Formula 1, Premiere Classe, Ibis Budget, B&B etc.) are usually cheapest but do not have restaurants (though there may be one in the vicinity) and parking is often not secure. Hotels affiliated to Logis de France ([www.logisdefrance.com](http://www.logisdefrance.com)) are often not much more expensive and many serve top quality food. Many small family-run hotels close for at least one day per week, especially out of season.

**I**ndicators – Used sparingly and don't necessarily mean what Brits might think they do, so best to ignore and play safe. The exception to this rule is on dual carriageways/autoroutes, where the left-hand indicator is kept on angrily throughout a passing manoeuvre, particularly when pushing hard behind someone else in the overtaking lane.

**Insurance** – Your UK insurance will, as a minimum, give basic third-party cover for the EU – possibly fine for a quick day trip to Calais but not enough for a decent touring holiday. Check your policy gives adequate cover, for the necessary length of time, and inform the company/broker of the dates when you'll be away. Make sure you have the emergency number to ring (NOT a UK 08....number).

**J**ustice – The French legal system is very different from ours. They have only recently adopted the principle of innocent until proven guilty, which is nice, but can still be a bit trigger-happy in locking up anyone suspected of a serious offence, including those relating to road traffic. Make sure your travel insurance includes legal cover.

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Custom Paintwork

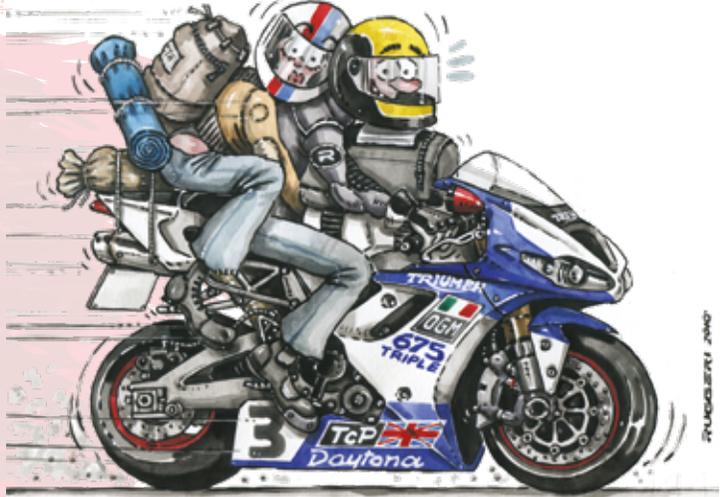
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**K**it – If you’re planning to go somewhere a bit warmer, a tricky one. Even if the UK is in the grip of a heat wave when you leave, you can be sure it will be back to normal by the time you get home, and northern France can be just as inhospitable as England. But standard UK kit will be uncomfortably warm in the 30°-plus you’ll be hoping to find down south. You won’t have the space to pack a second, lightweight, suit while leaving enough room for the bulkier items in your luggage when you change, so the best compromise may be a ventilated touring suit or leathers (or a mixture) together with a waterproof oversuit, plenty of layers and the essential spare pair of gloves – do make certain there’s somewhere to put everything when you take it off or switch from one outfit to another. Black absorbs the sun’s heat, so choose a lighter colour if you’re buying kit specially for this sort of trip. A lightweight neck tube will stop insects from buzzing down your front. Of course the locals ride around happily in T-shirts and flip-flops, and no doubt the hospitals are expert at treating gravel rash, but you wouldn’t want to put them to the test, would you?



**L**uggage – No point in covering this in depth here, you may well already have some for your bike and if not you’ll have a good idea of what’s suitable. So just a few comments. Firstly, do a thorough “shake-down” run with all your intended luggage, suitably packed, well before you set off. This should not only sort out any issues with the luggage itself and make sure you (and your passenger) can live with it, but also show up any handling problems that might arise when the bike’s fully laden. Secondly, respect load limits stated by the manufacturers of both the bike and the luggage. Thirdly, stuff you need “en route” must be readily accessible. Finally, pack everything in plastic bags or waterproof liners, even if you have hard luggage.

**M**illau Viaduct – Famous toll bridge carrying the A75 autoroute over the valley of the Tarn, bypassing the eponymous town. A magnificent structure, best appreciated from below. A layby with a good view has been built on the old road as it drops down into Millau from the south. Further north on the A75, but equally impressive considering its epoch, is Eiffel’s Viaduc de Garabit carrying the railway over the River Truyere – excellent view from the Garabit service area on the A75, accessible from either direction.

**Mobile Phones** – As in the UK, use of a hands-free mobile is permitted but a hand-held mobile is not. In recent years the law has changed to outlaw any in- or on-ear devices (headphones or ear buds) except for those built-in to the helmet. This applies also in Spain, where even earplugs are, I’m told, illegal. As in the UK, the law is widely flouted – it’s common to come round a bend on a twisty mountain road to be confronted with someone attempting to steer one-handed while concentrating on telling the wife what to cook for dinner. For now we are still able to use our present calling plans at standard rates.

*(continued on page 26)*

# TVAM Calendar

## SOCIAL RIDES, T-RUNS, TRACK DAYS AND OTHER EVENTS IN 2020

### St Crispin's Sunday - Monthly Meet - Observed Ride

Every 3rd Sunday of the month. Meet 9am at St Crispin's School, Wokingham (see p32 of *Slipstream* for map). All those currently involved in observed runs will be allocated an Observer. Slow riding skills practice is available. Social runs available for full members start at 10am if run leaders are available on the day.

If you are willing to lead a run please email [greenteam@tvam.org](mailto:greenteam@tvam.org) or contact Alan Hudson at [alantvam@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alantvam@yahoo.co.uk)

## COVID-19 NOTICE REGARDING RUNS AND TRIPS

MANY TEAMS ARE VENTURING OUT IN GROUPS OF UP TO 6 ON SOCIAL RIDES AS LOCKDOWN RULES ARE ADJUSTED AND SOCIAL RIDES LISTED HERE ARE PLANNED ACCORDING TO RIDE NUMBERS ALLOWED UNDER THE COVID-19 GUIDANCE. PLEASE CHECK THE GROUPS.IO CALENDAR FOR CHANGES MID AUGUST GOING FORWARD. PLEASE CONTACT ORGANISERS FOR MORE UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON ANY FUTURE TRIPS. FOR RUNS THAT HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, RUN LEADERS MAY LIKE TO RE-BOOK FOR DATES LATER IN THE YEAR - PLEASE CONTACT [SLIPSTREAM@TVAM.ORG](mailto:SLIPSTREAM@TVAM.ORG) or [SOCIALRUNS@TVAM.ORG](mailto:SOCIALRUNS@TVAM.ORG)

## SEPTEMBER 2020

SUNDAY

16

### ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - OBSERVED RIDE

See top of page 24 for meeting details.

## SEPTEMBER 2020

THU - TUE

3-8

### WAGS IN FRANCE

WAGS will be heading off to the lovely town of Lamballe in Brittany to explore the fantastic sights and roads of France. Sailing on the evening of Thursday 3rd September from Portsmouth to St Malo and spending 3 nights in one hotel before returning on the overnight sailing on the Monday from Caen to arrive in Portsmouth on the Tuesday morning. This is a fantastic weekend for any TVAM member with a choice of rides on the Saturday and Sunday and if you are an Associate, plenty of Observers to give you some feedback! Have fun whilst improving your skills! **Contact Mimi Carter Jonas - [mimiceej@hotmail.com](mailto:mimiceej@hotmail.com) for any information.**

TUESDAY

8

### CASTLE COMBE SKILLS DAY

**We have only 48 spaces available for this date @ £120 per person.**

TVAM circuit skills days at Castle Combe are ideal for all levels of experience from cautious riders and circuit novices through to more experienced riders who've done circuit-based days before. This is the ideal opportunity to improve your riding skills in a safe and controlled environment, in the company of like-minded TVAM members. The day provides the opportunity to explore the acceleration, braking, leaning and steering capabilities of your motorcycle. At Castle Combe we provide our own Circuit Guides available for one to one assistance within the Novice groups, as well as an on-site Instructor for tuition in the Intermediate and Experienced groups. In addition, we will set up a small course in the car park area where riders can practice positive steering and braking exercises. (Subject to availability on the day).

Think of the day as an observed ride on a smooth surface with elevation changes, slow corners, fast corners and technical corners that are tough to master. With the opportunity to experience each corner around 60 times during the day you will have lots of time to improve your skills. Because we restrict the numbers, we get lots more time on the track too.

Each 15-minute session is limited to 12 riders on the track, plus Circuit Guides, so there is plenty of space to work on improving confidence and skill levels without feeling crowded or intimidated. As it's a TVAM-exclusive event, the whole day is very relaxed with no pressure to over perform. Each group will have 7 sessions on track during the day.

**For full details and to book your place go to the web shop on the TVAM website - [www.tvam.org](http://www.tvam.org)**

WEDNESDAY

9

**MID-WEEK DAYTIME RUN (Short ride to place of interest)**

Ride out from H Café in Berinsfield, OX10 7LY - 10.30 departure. Possibly rain check for earlier 2020 run - watch this space **Contact Ken Jeddere-Fisher at [midweekruns@tvam.org](mailto:midweekruns@tvam.org) for details or to join the Midweek Runs mailing list.**

SUNDAY

20

**ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - OBSERVED RIDE**

See top of page 24 for meeting details.

**OCTOBER 2020**

SATURDAY

10

**T-RUN (T) HOSTED BY BAR**

Meet at former Little Nellie's Diner, Newbury Rd, Kingsclere, RG20 4TA at 9am for a 9.30am departure. Led by Ian Colville this training run is open to all Associates, Observers and Full Members. Heading to Billingshurst with briefing stops en route and a great venue for lunch. A marked ride on the return finishing at Conkers in Basingstoke around 3.30pm. Dependent on Covid-19 guidance. See groups.io calendar.

WEDNESDAY

14

**MID-WEEK DAYTIME RUN (Short ride to place of interest)**

Ride out from H Café in Berinsfield, OX10 7LY - 10.30 departure. Possibly rain check for earlier 2020 run - watch this space **Contact Ken Jeddere-Fisher at [midweekruns@tvam.org](mailto:midweekruns@tvam.org) for details or to join the Midweek Runs mailing list.**

**TVAM Run Ratings**

- A: Skilled/progressive for confident riders on all types of road. Aimed at smaller groups.
- B+: More progressive pace for the confident, focused rider. Overtaking permitted.
- B: Medium paced, relaxed ride. Overtaking permitted.
- C: Leisurely pace - NO overtaking within the group. Suitable for first timers or those looking for a slower pace.
- T: Team Training Run - observed/social ride with an element of coaching run by each of the local teams

**By supplying your details for entry on these pages you are agreeing to them being publicly available.**

 Social Runs

 St Crispin's

 Track Day/Training Run

 Events

 Green Team

**Check the latest calendar at <https://tvam.groups.io/g/allmembers/calendar>**

**For any TVAM courses - please check on groups.io and the web shop as we are not sure when these will be restarting.**

(continued from page 23)

**Number Plates** – The French system of vehicle registration changed from a local to a national one in 2009. Up to that date the last two digits on the number plate indicated the vehicle's home département, which could be useful for gauging likely driving styles – cars on their home turf may be driven much more aggressively than when they're away. Parisians are notorious for this, excelling at carving through the capital's traffic but holding everyone up on twisty mountain passes. There was an outcry in the provinces when the national scheme was announced, along the lines of "How are we going to tell who are the plonkers from Paris if they don't have a '75' plate?" The new-style plates, which now stay with the vehicle throughout its life, do normally have an indication of where they were issued, but it's much harder to read and may not be relevant to the current owner. Also the plates will have been issued the first time the vehicle changed hands after 2009, so are no indication of the age of the vehicle. Number plates can also be useful to spot other nationalities, the following being a somewhat biased guide to what to expect:

**Andorran** – Total nutters, wrong side of the road, crazy overtakes, the whole works – give as wide a berth as possible

**Austrian** – We used to rule the Hapsburg Empire, you know, so don't mess with us!

**Belgian** – Oops, we've taken our camping car up this narrow mountain road and now we can't turn round and go back

**British** – Timid unless driving a big 4x4, in which case "Get outta my way, Johnny Foreigner!" (said in a Jeremy Clarkson voice).

**Danish** – Bringing home the bacon - carefully

**Dutch** – The caravan shtopsh ush sheeing the long queue behind ush, sho we'll jusht pretend it'sh not there

**German** – Fast but usually disciplined – the least-worst drivers in Europe?

**Italian** – Not as loony as their reputation would suggest, at least once they're away from home territory

**Polish** – You should know by now

**Portuguese** – Is anybody actually in control of that car?

**Spanish** – Similar to Italian

**Swedish** – My headlights are on and I'm going quite fast enough, thankyou

**Swiss** – Opposite of Italians – so repressed at home they go bonkers once they're let out, nearly as bad as Andorrans

**Other Paperwork** – Books, maps etc. are generally pricier than in the UK, and if you want guide books in English you probably need to get them before you go anyway. A one-sheet 1:1 000 000 map of France is handy for long-distance route planning but not much use locally, and a full 1:200 000 road atlas is a bit too bulky on a bike – the IGN or Michelin 1:200 000 sheet maps of individual regions are a good compromise. Depending on your choice of accommodation you may need campsite or hotel information, either from the web or as booklets. Local tourist information offices are a useful source of (usually free) leaflets, often available in English. Finally, take a copy of the owner's handbook for your bike, in case you need to change or adjust anything, and for the alarm if it has one.

**Overtaking** – see Filtering

**Petrol** – As in the UK, least expensive at supermarkets, rip-off on autoroutes. Plenty of 24/7 self-service card-payment stations – most can now accept UK credit/debit cards, though there's no way of telling until you put your card in the slot. Generally most supermarket fuel stations will have a choice of 95 or 98 octane, the latter being only a little more expensive. 95-E10 (10% ethanol) is becoming common, and at some pumps has replaced ordinary 95, so check if your bike will be happy with this stuff. Apart from service areas on autoroutes and a few other major trunk routes assume manned opening hours will be 09:00-12:00 and 14:00-18:00 Monday-Saturday, with only a few private garages open on Sundays. Travelling any distance on Sunday away from the autoroute network, or towns with supermarkets large enough to have 24/7 pumps, can be a bit of a lottery.



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**Poids Lourds** (HGVs) – Often subject to deviations to avoid town centres etc. Ignore such signs.

**Police** – There are three separate police organisations – the military gendarmerie and the civilian police nationale together enforce traffic laws, while the police municipale look after things like parking. Gendarmes' vehicles are dark blue, while police cars are white or light blue with a "Police" stripe on the side. Police motorcyclists always travel in pairs.

**Priorité à Droite** (priority to traffic from the right) – Still the default rule at junctions that aren't otherwise marked. Slow down and give a wide berth to any junction or entrance on the right-hand side that doesn't have an obvious stop or give-way line, in case someone (usually an older person who has been driving since the liberation) shoots out. See X Sign and Yellow Diamond Sign.

**Queues** – Contrary to rumour, French queues are usually fairly orderly. But as can happen anywhere, the locals may try to get one over the visitors, whether French or foreign.

**Radar** – Fixed cameras may be forward or backward facing, are sometimes preceded by a large and very obvious sign or a display of your speed, and often have a reminder of the limit in force as well, so really no excuses for getting caught by one of these, even if the camera box or post itself is not always easy to spot. Mobile speed traps used to be mostly found just outside the local café in the middle of villages on main roads, but now crop up almost anywhere – happy hunting grounds are typically the edge of a village, a three-lane stretch with plenty of pent-up overtaking and of course autoroutes, often using what looks like a broken-down estate car half-hidden up a slip road. On the autoroute you may not know you've been nicked until you're pulled over at the next toll booth. On-the-spot fines are the rule for foreigners. Being flashed by oncoming traffic usually means a mobile speed trap ahead. Your SatNav is not allowed to have camera warnings in France - most software adheres to this.

**Rappel** – Thought by some to be the most common place name in France, actually just means "reminder".

**Recovery** – May be included with your insurance (e.g. Carole Nash), and if the bike is new it might come with full recovery including continental use – check the details. Otherwise shop around for the best deal for the features you need.

**Région** – Just what it sounds like, a group of Departements, also with considerable autonomy (France is a big place).



**Roundabouts** – Unless otherwise signed, rules here are basically as UK, i.e. give way to traffic already on the roundabout. Frequently a sign on the approach stating "Vous n'avez pas la priorité", and/or a cancelled Yellow Triangle, supplements the standard "Céder le Passage" (Give Way) sign on the actual junction. But despite a good quarter-century of practice, many French drivers still haven't quite got the hang of roundabouts. On a two-lane entry it is common to find the outer (left-hand) lane empty, which can be a good opportunity but be prepared for a vehicle intending to turn left actually entering in the right-hand lane and tiptoeing all the way round the outside. Sometimes the left-hand lane may actually be closed off on the approach and exit, either by hatching or a physical barrier. Indicators, if used at all, are as often as not misleading, the favourite being to indicate left when actually intending to go straight on. Mini-roundabouts are starting to make an appearance – be prepared for traffic to go either way around these.

**Safety Wear** – A helmet to EC standards is compulsory, and now EC-approved gloves are too; other gear is not, at least not yet (though you do need to carry a hi-vis bib to wear in emergency).

**Secours** (Help in Emergency) – e.g. "Au secours!" = "Help!", Poste de Secours = First Aid Post.

**Security** – Down to common sense, and no different from what you'd do in the UK. The French as a whole are pretty law-abiding but there's always a criminal element on the lookout for easy pickings.

Alarms are only useful if you're close to the bike, e.g. at motorway service areas. Take a decent lock and chain if you're planning on leaving the bike in city centres to do some sightseeing, otherwise a good cable is easier to carry. Also consider how secure your luggage is in these circumstances. If using hotels, try to avoid having to park on the street – vandalism can be just as much a problem as theft. Keep essential documents and keys, including spare ones, on your person at all times. Campsites are usually no problem – just chain the bike to the nearest tree or lamp post (and tell the dog-walkers to steer clear).

**Service Areas** (Aires de Repos) – On autoroutes full service areas (i.e. with Petrol and at least a coffee shop) are spaced every 50 Km or so, with one or two simple rest areas (w.c. and picnic tables) in between. Signs indicate the facilities available. There should be at least one tap for drinking water.

**Shopping** – A few food shops (bakers, butchers, small convenience stores) are open on Sunday mornings; most others, including the big supermarkets, are closed (except in the run-up to Christmas). Some shops also close on Mondays, either all day or just the morning. Only larger stores, and some city-centre shops, stay open over lunchtime.

**Speed Limits** – Very simple rules – unless otherwise posted by a red-circle sign it is:

50 in towns and villages (starts and ends as you pass town/village name sign)

80 on single carriageways (recently dropped from 90)

110 on dual carriageways (100 in the wet)

130 on motorways (110 in the wet)

Interpretations of the meaning of “Wet” vary considerably.

Posted 70 limits are common on the edges of major towns and through hamlets on through-routes. Some town/village centres have 30 zones (with or without other traffic calming measures). Limits may be qualified and only apply to specific types of vehicle, e.g. over a certain weight,

caravans, even bikes (“Motos” – these most often where crosswinds are a problem), so check whether a limit applies to you or not. The end of a posted limit, particularly 30 zones and temporary limits for roadworks, is not always signed as such. What we in the UK know as a NSL sign (black diagonal line on white circle) just means “end of” in France, e.g. at the end of road works with 30 limit in town it means revert to 50, NOT NSL.



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Leeway allowed over the limit is less than UK – 5 Km/hr or 5%. A vehicle exceeding the limit by more than 50 Km/hr may be confiscated. See also Radar

**Tolls** – Apply on major bridges and most autoroutes. A pain for bikers (and solo drivers of r.h.d. cars). Best way to pay is by credit card, acceptable even for small amounts, though Maestro is NOT accepted. Increasingly exit tolls are unmanned so you may have to pay (at the car rate) by card. Useful non-toll autoroutes and major dual carriageways (other than ring roads) include:

A16 Boulogne-Calais-Dunkirk-Belgian border

N225/A25/A23 Dunkirk-Lille-Valenciennes (for Ardennes region and southern Belgium)

A28 Abbeville-Rouen (for the south-west and to skirt around the west of Paris via the A154)

A154/N154 South of Rouen-Evreux-Dreux-Chartres (for Orléans or Chateauroux)

(Parts of) A77/N7 Fontainebleau-Nevers (for Magny Cours)

A20 Vierzon-Chateauroux-Limoges-Brive (but toll thereafter – something to do with Mme Chirac being from Brive)

A75 Clermont-Ferrand-Beziers (to pick up Mediterranean coast road) – except toll over Millau Viaduct

**Tools and Spares** – As an absolute minimum you should be able to deal with a puncture and change a bulb in the headlamp, indicators and stop/tail lamp, so you need a bulb kit, a tyre repair kit and inflator, plus a decent compact torch. Other basics include chain lube, insulating tape, bits of wire and cable ties, spare fuses and a few basic tools, even if only enough to re-adjust levers and mirrors if you're unfortunate enough to drop the bike. Hand wipes are also a good idea. Beyond this you will probably need to rely on your Recovery service. If travelling in a party it makes sense for these essentials to be shared out. And don't forget a spare set of keys for ignition/luggage/security lock.

**Tunnels** – Usually have a lower speed limit (and radar), headlights must be used even in short ones.

**Urgence** (Emergency) – The word to look for when searching for a hospital casualty department etc.

**V.L.** (Véhicules Légers – Light Vehicles) – Used e.g. where a deviation is only suitable for such vehicles (as opposed to Poids Lourds).

**Voie Rapide** – Literally “Quick Road”, denoted by a blue sign with a symbol of a car. Often, but not always, dual carriageways. “Motorway rules” apply, i.e. no stopping and no slow vehicles, cycles or pedestrians.

**Voiture Sans Permis** – literally “Car without Licence”. We have our Reliant Robins, the French have these stunted two-seaters (under)powered by a small single-cylinder diesel. The name says it all, really.

**Waving** – Other bikers (but not teenagers or locals on small bikes or scooters) are acknowledged with a nonchalant horizontal extension of the left hand. Drivers of cars who have moved over to let you through are thanked by a wave of the right leg. It takes a bit of practice to perfect this manoeuvre while accelerating and changing gear.

**Weather** – Detailed forecasts available on <http://france.meteofrance.com/?LIEUID=FRANCE>.

**Wine** – Another reason why you came, n'est ce pas? Just don't expect to find much, if any, “foreign” stuff in the wine department of a provincial French supermarket. The more expensive wines from well-known regions such as Bordeaux, Burgundy or the better-known appellations of the Loire and Rhone are often not much cheaper than your local Sainsbury's, while the cheaper stuff from those areas can be, shall we say charitably, an acquired taste. If you're after real value you will probably do better elsewhere – Pic St Loup, St Chinian and Cotes du Roussillon Villages from the Languedoc-Roussillon region are reds which rarely disappoint. Also look out for the supermarket's own recommendations. In a wine-growing area it's nice to visit a vineyard or co-operative and taste some of their product, but don't be surprised to find the same wine somewhat cheaper in the local supermarket.



**X Sign** – Does NOT (necessarily) mean crossroads, it indicates that *Priorité à Droite* applies at the junction ahead. This could be any junction with 3 or more ways, so beware! For junctions where you do have priority a different sign is used, which can also apply to 3-, 4- or more way junctions.



**Yellow Diamond Sign** – Indicates that the road you are on has priority. Conversely, if the diamond has a slash through it you no longer have priority; i.e. you may be approaching a major road or a Roundabout, or be about to enter a zone where *Priorité à Droite* applies.

**Zip-Merging** – Frowned on. At the first sign of traffic backing-up on approach to a lane closure everyone will move out of that lane, while police, if present, will enforce this and lorries will straddle the white line to enforce “le fair-play”. Fortunately bikes seem to be exempt (see Filtering).



**Bob Harrison**



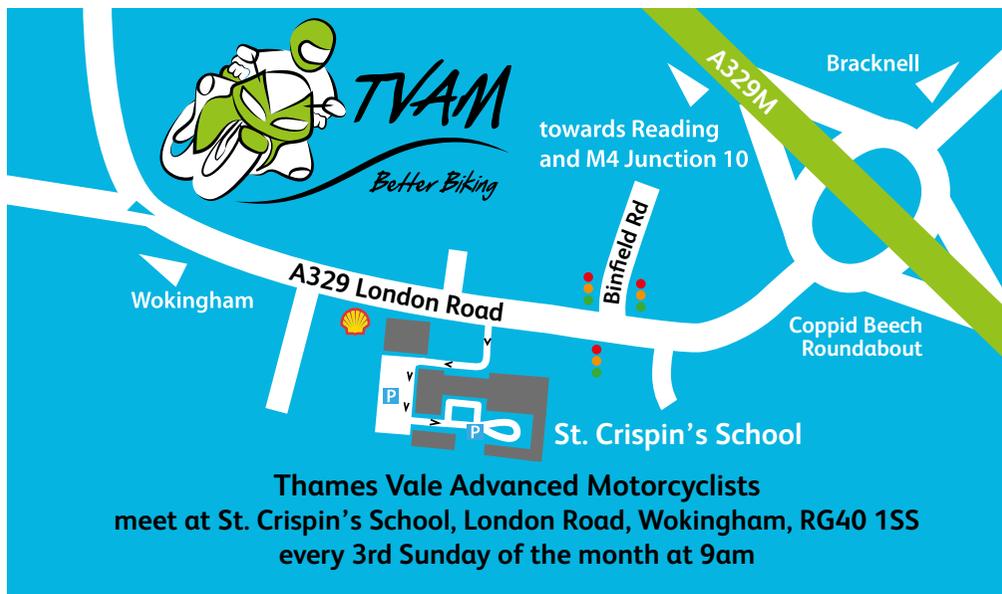
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## CLUB MEET - During lockdown there is no monthly meeting

Monthly meetings are held at 9am on the 3rd Sunday of each month at St. Crispin's School, London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS. Observed rides for Associates and first time attendees, social runs for Full Members.



## LOCAL TEAM MEETS - Many have gone online during this period - contact your local team

### 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 of the month, every other month  
Where: The Bee, School Road, Bagshot, Windlesham, GU20 6PD  
Time: 8pm (Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec)

### Great Northern (GNATs)

Meet 1: Saturday before St. Crispin's - check with [wycombe@tvam.org](mailto:wycombe@tvam.org) for location  
Meet 2: After each St. Crispin's for coffee at The Farm Café, Ashridge Manor Garden Centre, Forest Road, Wokingham, RG40 5QY.  
Meet 3: Rideout first Sunday of the month.

### Reading (RAMs)

When: First Tuesday of the month  
Where: Fox and Hounds, Theale, RG7 4BE  
Time: 8pm

### Slough (SAM)

When: First Saturday of the month  
Where: Jenners Riverside Café, Ray Mead Road, Maidenhead, SL6 8NP  
Time: 9am - Contact [slough@tvam.org](mailto:slough@tvam.org)

### Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)

When: Second Wednesday of the month  
Where: Ye Olde Red Lion, Green Lane, Chieveley, Berkshire, RG20 8XB  
Time: 7.30pm

### Wokingham & Bracknell (WOBMOB)

When: 3rd Tuesday of the month  
Where: Binfield Social Club, Binfield, West Berkshire, RG42 4HP  
Time: 8pm

### Green Team (Full Members)

Meet 1: Last weekend of the month - see *Slipstream* or web calendar for social run information.  
Meet 2: Wednesday following St Crispin's at The Crown, The Street, Swallowfield, RG7 1QY at 7.30pm - Contact [greenteam@tvam.org](mailto:greenteam@tvam.org)

## OBSERVER RELATED CONTACTS

Aardvarks	Simon Whatley	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 - 22nd September, 24th November.

Held in Binfield

Basingstoke (BAR)	Steve Dobson and Dennis Lutley	basingstoke@tvam.org
Camberley (CLAMs)	James Bates and Doug Brown	camberley@tvam.org
Great Northern (GNATs)	Gary Jackson	wycombe@tvam.org
Reading (RAMs)	Vanessa Turner, Andy Boudier	reading@tvam.org
Slough (SAM)	Ally McCulloch	slough@tvam.org
Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)	Keith Miller	wantage@tvam.org
Wokingham & Bracknell (WOBMOB)	Andy MacWalter, Ian Gaitley	wokingham@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)	Vanessa Turner, Andy Boudier	reading.social@tvam.org
Slough (SAM)	Ally McCulloch	slough.social@tvam.org
Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)	Keith Miller, Mimi Carter Jonas	wantage.social@tvam.org
Wokingham (WOBMOB)	Andy MacWalter and Ian Gaitley	wokingham.social@tvam.org



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Editorial team: Kathy Drogemuller, Nick Tasker, Robin Hennem

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

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# TVAM CLUB CONTACTS

## President:

(Position under review)

## Vice Presidents:

Nigel Fowler 1996, Richard Tickner 2005, Nigel Taylor 2010, Charon Willis 2016

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

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

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

Next Meetings: (M - Marlow / Internet), 8th September 2020 (I), 13th October 2020 (I) - all meetings normally on second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm and generally alternate monthly between Marlow and Internet meetings.

## Special Roles:

Advertising	Salli Griffith	advertising@tvam.org
Advanced Bike Control	Chris Caswell	advancedbikecontrol@tvam.org or abc@tvam.org
Bike Maintenance	Phil Ryan	bikemaintenance@tvam.org
Bike Craft	Di Woodcock	bikecraft@tvam.org
Café and Stopover Database	Chris Brownlee	cafedatabase@tvam.org
Advanced Plus (previously EAR)	Mike Walden	advancedplus@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	Karen Joy	llr@tvam.org
Merchandise	(to order items away from St Crispin's)	merchandise@tvam.org
Midweek Runs	Ken Jeddere-Fisher	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 Run Co-ordinators	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](http://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.



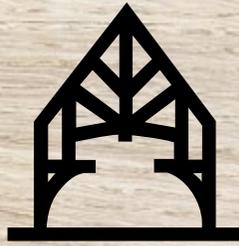
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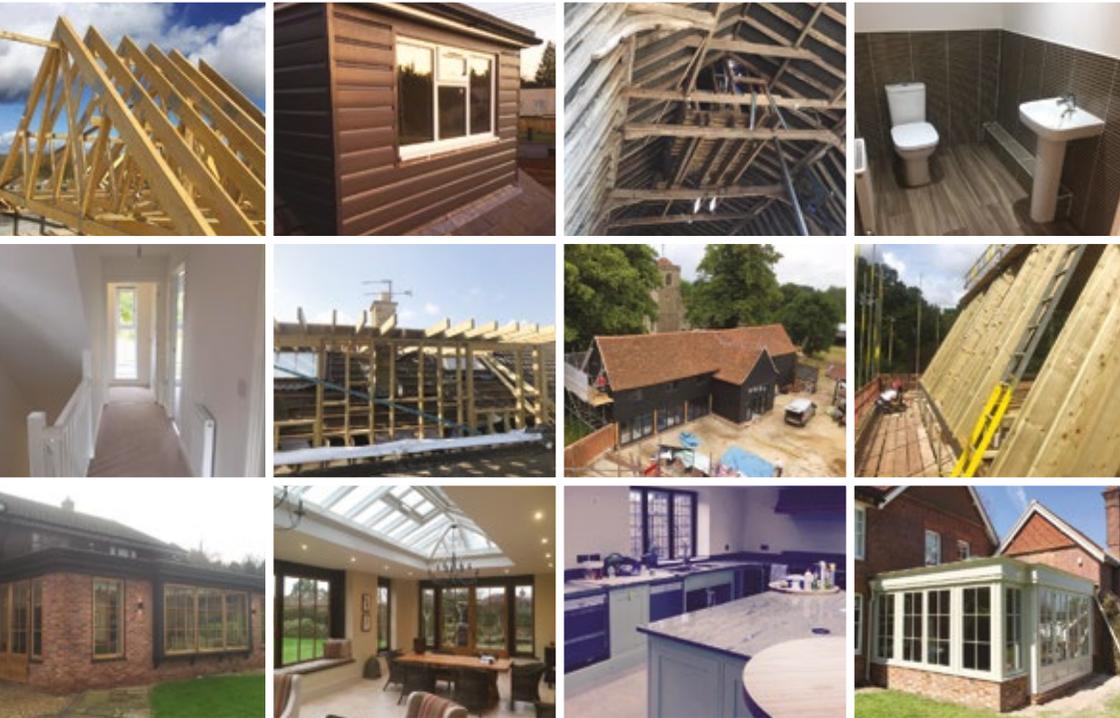
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