

Slipstream

www.tvam.org



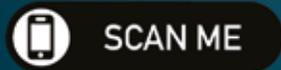
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FROM THE LAPTOP

Not looking forward to a winter in the UK!



Well I was overwhelmed with replies in my appeal for assistance on the magazine - NOT! One offer for proofreading which I was happy to accept to share the checking of articles by the team. The appeal is still out there if you want to lend a hand. With our lack of events, putting the magazine together has become quite a hard task in recent months and hugely time consuming, I would love to spread the load a little. It's all very well giving me ideas for articles but I really need someone to put some together.

Back to riding, and I'm now in Tier2 in Slough - to ride or not to ride - that is the question. Having started riding quite late in the season due to the pandemic I was trying to grab at least one day at the weekends when the weather was agreeable to lead out a Girl Torque run. Now I am in a dilemma as to whether to ride or not, I really appreciated the communication with other members, but if I'm not out there then it's back to a pretty solitary life in my four walls - not good for my mental wellbeing. Those in the lower tier, make the most of it in case you're next.

Without travel to the US available to tourists from the UK, Europe and many other countries it looks like I am set to be here for the duration, for the first time in very many years - and I'm not looking forwards to the UK winter!

December is usually our time to attend the Toy Run as a marshal or rider but sadly with Covid it is cancelled. You can take those much needed gifts to the High Close School in Wokingham, please see page 26. Meanwhile for those who can, keep the rubber side down and enjoy your riding.

Slipstream Editor

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Letters to the editor
slipstream@tvam.org

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TVAM Roll of Honour

New Members in October 2020

Aubrey Bell
Piotr Grabalski
Peter Howatson
Konrad Marciniak
Simon Marlow

Julian Pavitt
Adrian Percival
John Sanderson
James Young

Test Passes Achieved

F1RST Pass

Graham Boret
Mudaser Hussain
James Knight
John Laws
Simon Mack
Nigel Morgan
Michael Morrison
Jas Obhrai
Steven Pearce
Matthew Price

Observer

Andy Boudier
Phil Jones
Christopher Davey
Guy Lipscomb
Graham Bugby
Paul Taylor
James Bates
Geoffrey Pretty
John Stevenson
Rob Perry

Local Observer Validations

Andy Collins

Masters

Mitch Preston - with Distinction

Do you have any good Christmas content - we don't usually produce a December issue and the team and I have a well-earned rest but this year is a bit different, so send me your Christmas cracker groaners or anything that is festive and publishable!

You'll reach me at slipstream@tvam.org

Salli G - Editor



FROM THE CHAIR

For some, November signals the last few weeks of the biking season. However, putting the clocks back at the end of October means that those early runs down to the coast for a Full English can continue to set off reasonably early but it won't be long before even they become 'Brunch' rather than 'Breakfast' runs.

Many of us of course will continue to ride right through the winter and I'm sure it won't be long before we start seeing questions about the merits of using ACF-50 or Scottoiler FS 365 posed in the All-Members message area. Riding in cold weather means taking a few extra precautions for yourself though. Clearly the summer airflow jacket and pants are no longer going to be the best option as an outer layer. Retaining body heat becomes vital to ensure you stay alert when riding, so heavy textiles with thermal layers underneath seem a better option. Just ensure you've still got good movement with all the warm kit on so you can actually ride the bike safely.

The other big change you'll notice is the reduction in tyre grip as the temperature drops and road surfaces become less grippy. Tyres don't warm up the same in winter so are less 'sticky' and wet or salt-treated roads, let alone any ice that might be about, means you probably won't be troubling the edges of your tyres over the next few months - unless you're very brave.

Light levels may also be lower under heavy skies and you may find yourself riding in the dark so make doubly sure all your lights are working and are clean and bright. Bikes are often lost in the confusion of headlights on busy roads at night so give other road users extra time to see you, and for you to take avoiding action if necessary.

However, riding during the winter can be rewarding on those bright sunny clear days when you can see for miles, the coffee and burger taste so much better at the halfway stop, and you get to spend time with your mates. All valuable things for your mental health in these difficult lockdown days.

Of course, many will choose to lay-up their bike for these colder months. There are multiple guides on the best ways to do this as simply throwing a cover over it after the last autumn ride and then expecting it to come out all clean and shiny next spring is probably being a bit optimistic. Look out for a guide to laying-up your bike in Slipstream next month.

As a Club we continue to be active at all levels despite not being able to meet as a Club. The Local Teams are doing a great job organising social runs on a regular basis and also Observer swaps for Associates. We're also having a rush of test passes as Associates complete the Advanced Rider Course. Chris Brownlee is making test pass announcements on the St Crispin's Zoom call each month. Last month he announced 6 test passes, 1 Masters and 4 Observer validations. Also we had 131 riders participate on 24 social runs that were reported using the Social Run form on the website.

Finally, after five years on the TVAM Committee, the last four as Chairman, it's time for me to step down at January's AGM. This of course is only possible if there's a volunteer willing to take up the reins of Chair so I'm pleased that we already have a member who's stepped forward agreeing to be nominated. If anyone else feels they would like to consider the role do please feel free to contact me at chairman@tvam.org for some background to what's involved.

Keep safe in these difficult times

Andy Slater
Chairman





NATIONAL ROAD RALLY 2020

On 12th September, Stef Bellon, Hev Smith and I took part in the National Road Rally (NRR).

Stef and I have completed the rally on previous occasions, on our own and with other people, and we completed the 20hr rally in 2017 with Andy McWalter. This was Hev's first time riding in the event. I appreciate that many of our members have also taken part as individuals or formed small teams of between 2 & 4 people. TVAM members have traditionally done well in the rally with 'Thame Village Idiots', AKA Si Rawlins, Chris Bowler and Martin Cragg, regularly winning the overall team event for many years. Si also tells me that a TVAM member won the overall individual award a few years ago.

I should explain what the NRR entails. The quote direct from the NRR website is, "the National Road Rally is a navigational scatter rally organised in conjunction with ACU and the BMF. The event is not a race and each rider follows their own route, visiting different controls around the country, the only time stipulation is that riders complete their route in the allotted time. The number of controls each rider visits will depend on the award that they are competing for."

Traditionally there are thirteen award categories that riders could compete for: five daytime awards; three night-time awards; three 20hr awards; and two 20hr awards with special assessments involved at the start of the rally. The different awards were calculated based on start times and total points or distance travelled between controls. The matrix gives you a number of points between each control, ranging from 20 to 50 points and these are what you're credited despite how far you actually travel. It's worthy of note that you can only arrive at a control that is linked by the matrix to your previous control. For example, we could travel from Sheffield On Loddon to Winchester to Horndean because they were linked, however we couldn't go direct from Sheffield On Loddon to Horndean because they're not linked on the matrix.

Due to Covid-19, this year the NRR was reduced to an 11hr rally and it ran from 09:00 until 20:00 on the day. The reduced hours did not appear to put riders off. The awards page of the NRR website shows that 590 riders took part this year, compared to 600 in 2019 and 576 in 2018. This is across the whole of England.

As a team, we decided that we would go for the Gold Award, which meant that we had to start between 09:00 and 10:00, finish by 20:00 and visit 12 controls obtaining a minimum of 265 points and a maximum of 280 points.

We arrived at Reading Harley Davidson at Winnersh Triangle at 08:45 ready to get on the road and have a fun day out riding motorcycles around the countryside. Stef had already plotted the route, using

the matrix to create a circular route, meaning that our first and twelfth controls would be Winnersh. Leaving Harley Davidson at 09:00 we knew that we had an unpressured 11hrs ahead of us. The stops that you have to comply with, a minimum of 45mins, happen naturally with re-fuelling and eating so the biggest challenge of the day was avoiding the largest roads whilst still meeting our target of finishing by 8pm.

Stef led us on the first leg to Sherfield On Loddon, a lovely, twisty, typical-Stef road, with the odd emergency stop to avoid him going past the goat track he intended to take next! Plenty of gravel on the road but at least no fords on this occasion. We arrived at the control postcode to find that the old garage had been turned into a hair salon. No use at all to Stef and I and even Hev didn't appear that impressed. On consulting the control details in our rider packs, we found that the garage was still in operation at the back of the salon. A quick walk down the side road and we found it.

In previous years each control was clearly visible, often with a gazebo and people gently beckoning you over to them with the concern that the average rider cannot see a huge tent in the middle of a car park! This year, due to the current restrictions, each control consisted of an A4 size fluorescent piece of paper with the NRR logo and a six-figure control number written on it with a black permanent marker. Unfortunately, not all of these pieces of paper were located in the most obvious position.

We advanced sort of people with our sharpness of observation should have found these easy to spot, or so you would have thought! Ok, we got there in the end and noted the control number and time on our control cards. We were awarded 20 points for the first leg.



CONTROL CARD
National Road Rally 2020

Rider No:
492

Name: Barrie Smith
Address:

NOTE:

- Please read the Rally Regulations and Final Instructions to ensure you meet the requirements for your chosen category
- Note the penalties that might result in disqualification or downgrading
- Ensure you rest breaks are in accordance with clause 3.6

We switched leaders and I led the next leg to Winchester, taking in the A33 to Basingstoke and then the B3046 through the Candovers before picking up the A31 to Winnall, Winchester. Stef and I knew this control well, as it's a regular on the rally.

This Control Card is provided for convenience to record your route. Your final route must be recorded on the National Road Rally website in order to qualify for an award. There is no requirement to post this control card to the National Road Rally organisers after the event.

After a short stop we continued south-west to Totton, which is as far south as we went before heading north-west to Amesbury and Countess Services. Yes, the controls are often in the most beautiful locations! We made this our lunch stop, with a baguette from Subway, and spent about 45mins chatting whilst sat on a nice grassy spot at the back of the services. As I said, there was no real pressure on time and we needed to ensure that we remained fresh throughout the full day's riding.

No.:	Control No.:	Control Name:	Control Code:	Time:	Points from last Control:	Running Total:
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
Total:						

Record your route at www.nationalroadrally.co.uk/nrr/recordroute.php

Our next leg took us west to Warminster and, as the A303 was congested and uninspiring, we

headed north to Durrington before turning west through Larkhill, Shrewton, Chitterne and then picked up the A36 to Warminster. The control was in the services and, struggling to find it, we headed around to the filling station to fill the bikes. Sure enough there was the control poster, stuck on the filling station window.

From here our route took us north through Devizes, another control, and on to Cricklade our 8th Control point. The controls and points were ticking by nicely. From Cricklade the route went through some of the nicest countryside the west of England has to offer, the Cotswolds. We went west through Ashton Keynes and past the Cotswold Airport on our way to Nailsworth, our next control. The control here was at the Weighbridge Inn, the regular place for the control point for the rally and a lovely little pub that I could imagine was heavily frequented by locals eating and drinking in normal times. From here we turned north to pick up the Cirencester road (A419), bypassing Cirencester and crossing the A417 at Quarry Junction. We worked our way east until we picked up the B4425, a fantastic road that cuts through the Cotswolds to the beautiful village of Bibury. We continued north-east along the B4425, through Aldsworth and up to join the A40 at Burford.

The A40 was busy, as we were now late afternoon, and Stef decided to take a short detour, basically the wrong exit, off the roundabout with the A361 that landed him up a dead-end. He realised as he looked to his right to see myself and Hev riding slowly along the A40 laughing! A kind couple stopped to let him across the path to re-join the A40 heading towards Oxford. It wasn't long before we turned down to Carterton our 10th control point. We couldn't avoid a few extra minutes laughing at Stef's error a few miles before! We only had two control points to go now and plenty of time on our side.



The Matrix National Road Rally 2020

Rider No:
492

Name: Barrie Smith
Address:

For the purpose of the rally these points must be accepted as correct. The minimum points between controls is 20. Riders may only travel between controls where a link is shown.



Record your route at www.nationalroadrally.co.uk/nrr/recordroute.php

We headed south past Brize Norton and down to pick up the A417 at Stanford in the Vale. At Challow we picked up the B4001 and headed down to Lambourn and on to Chilton Foliat before picking up the A4 at Hungerford. We had to head towards Marlborough on the A4, as the control point was at Froxfield. With about an hour and a half left, we set out east to return to our original control point in Winnersh, taking the A4 for much of the route to Theale before heading across to Burghfield, Grazeley, Three Mile Cross and Shinfield. We arrived at Winnersh shortly after 7pm and, having completed all twelve control points, accumulated 270 points and done it all within the 11hr timeframe, we achieved the gold award. Our total mileage was just under 300 miles for the day.

We then had to log the controls we visited, the six figure control numbers and the points between the controls onto the NRR website in order to gain our award.

(continued on page 11)



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The team's route to cover all the checkpoints for the 2020 National Road Rally in their quest for gold

The day worked well because we had three riders that worked well together. We changed the leader for each stage and made sure that we rode to the standard we're known for in TVAM. We stopped regularly to refuel ourselves and the bikes and generally kept the day light-hearted and relaxed. We didn't push beyond our comfort zone and, if one of us saw something from another rider that we weren't happy with, we stopped.

Hopefully the 2021 event will be back to the more normal event with manned controls and plenty of fun interaction with the great people that look after those points across the country.

If anyone is looking for a fun day's riding, then the 2021 event is planned for Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th July.

Barrie Smith



WHY I BOUGHT A KTM 790 DUKE



I've had my Suzuki SV650N for 8 years and it was time for a change. I now own a KTM Duke 790 which is fantastic - though not the usual choice for a step up from an SV. What led me to the KTM?

I had been pondering a new bike for a while, as I had outgrown my elderly SV and needed more power. The decider for me was a 250 mile TVAM ride in August in the wind and rain on my underpowered SV650.... time for a new bike.

I wanted a bike with a bit of spirit that I wouldn't outgrow quickly, yet calm and stable, light [not more than 170kg], upright and flickable but would double up as a tourer with a bit of kit on it. I also wanted riding modes, abs, traction control and an up and down quick-shifter, and it had to be narrow and light enough to squeeze through the alleyway to my back garden.

Initially I looked at the F900XR, Shiver 900, Tracer 900GT, Tiger 900GT pro, MT07 and the Street Triple. Although these are great bikes, none of them actually fitted me or my requirements, and I had to be quite disciplined in turning away from them. This was hard.

So what did I need? Well, what mattered most of all [after the squeeze] was that I needed an upright seating position - less stress on the joints. Looking up Cycle-ergo.com and using my SV as a comparison, I was able to see what it would be like sitting on different bikes. I know this sounds rather mechanical but it was actually very helpful, further proven from visiting dealerships to sit on bikes. It was fun going in with my list of what I NEEDED not what have you got, and helped me see through the marketing blurb.

Cycle-ergo.com indicated the KTM naked sports bike Duke range. Power-wise for me, this meant either the 690 or 790. Anything bigger was wider and therefore irrelevant - I know you can get narrow bars for any bike but this was a mod too far for me. I wanted to keep it simple.

So it was down to the KTM Duke 690 or 790. A spin on Chris Brownlee's 690R single was delightful - I came back saying, it's really light I must have said it about 3 times, I was astonished at how quick and nippy it was yet stable and solid. However I wanted more technical gadgets and a twin, so this led me to the 790 and Alan Bradford who gave me loads of helpful tips on his, thank you.

I had first seen the KTM Duke 790 aka 'The Scalpel' in a 'Ride' magazine a couple of years back in 2018. The mere name of it put me right off. Who rides a bike called a scalpel? But two years on I saw it in a different light, looking closely at its features and found that it ticked all my boxes. I was ready to book in a test ride.

I loved it from the start. It was amazing. Light, powerful, flexible and equally at home filtering through town or out on the twisties. A little windy at high speeds and the original seat was like a plank but this was sorted with a touring screen and their comfort ergo seat. A parallel twin and 105bhp but only 169kg - perfect. Great price at £7,500 new for the 2020 version which I recommend, as they have re-designed

and fixed some issues prevalent in the earlier version.

A second test ride confirmed my selection and I was ready to buy.

Early days were spent on local roads, learning all the technology - I had never had anything like this before, not even ABS on the SV. The emissions requirements make it a bit twitchy at low speed but I adapted and it doesn't bother me now - choosing a lower riding mode helps. It is also a bit vibey at higher speeds but not excessive. Everything else is fabulous!

The first 600 miles were running it in so I was careful not to over-rev it. It felt like learning to ride all over again which was a surprise [only my second middle-weight bike]. A little 'red mist' was quickly eradicated by my advanced rider training.

At 1,000 miles, what do I like about it so far? It has had its first service, oil change and the full rev range has been unleashed. This bike just keeps giving and giving, right through the rev range. It accelerates really quickly, is light and fun through the twisties yet stable and not intimidating. I don't feel overpowered by it and love the different riding modes, abs and lean-sensitive traction control. I'm loving the quick-shifter and auto-blipper. Narrow for filtering and lovely sounding - bangs and pops through the exhaust. The suspension, though not adjustable on the forks, feels well set up, and the preload is adjustable. I have it on the comfort setting and it is great. This bike gives me the potential to grow with it. I currently ride in the 'street' mode but am looking forward to exploring the sport and track modes. Would I recommend it? Absolutely! Check it out, what have you got to lose?

Catherine Russell



BIKING ABOUT WITH TVAM



SLOTH ^WMANOEUVRING COURSE

Courses were to be held at St Crispin's on the Saturday before the TVAM St Crispin's virtual meeting (i.e. the Saturday before the 3rd Sunday of the month) until the announcement of another lockdown. Hopefully these will now commence in December, so keep an eye on groups.io for notice of this. Booking will be essential and there will be

four places available each month if the rule of 6 is continued after December 2nd.

Courses should be booked via the TVAM web shop. There is no charge for the course (although candidates are welcome to buy coffee for the course leaders).

TVAM Survey - Social Runs, Trips and Events for 2021

The Events Team would like to remind you about the survey (via groups.io/allmembers) to find out exactly what you would like to see organised for 2021 which was mentioned in last month's Slipstream, along with the outline of proposed trips. This will enable us to plan the right events, social rides and trips that the majority wish to do, and will include all types of day rides, plus weekend trips, week long trips both home and abroad plus any particular events you wish to go to, or speakers you would like to hear in one of our seminars.

So look out for the survey in groups.io – it takes just a few minutes to respond – that's all – so we can plan the things you want to do!

We look forward to receiving your responses.

Thanks for taking the time.

Raj Joarder

TVAM Events Team (events@tvam.org)



ST CRISPIN'S ONLINE MEET

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. We have Test Passes to announce, members of the Training Team and Committee will be on hand to answer any questions you may have and if you're interested in becoming an Observer then you can discuss the programme in a breakout session

Topic: Virtual St Crispin's

Time: Sunday 15th November, 2020 - 9am-10am

Join Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89125716124?pwd=UW9TT3JLY2ZaQUZUN2RmlJbHUrWGcrUT09>

Meeting ID: 891 257 16124

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AGM WITH A DIFFERENCE

We all know that 2020 has been a very different year and the AGM is no different. As TVAM's financial year draws to a close we have to plan for the Club's AGM in January. As many of you know, this is normally held at St Crispin's School after the MotoJumble and usual ride outs. However, as it looks unlikely that we will all be able to meet up in person by then (groan), the Committee have decided to hold the AGM virtually but on the same day: Sunday 17th January 2021 at 10:30am, straight after the virtual St Crispin's.

What hasn't changed is the importance of the AGM. 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.

Andy Slater and Paul Taylor have both indicated that they are stepping down, so we will need to elect a new Chair Person and Treasurer.

To help us plan for the virtual AGM, it would really be useful if you would register an interest. You can use the form here: <https://bit.ly/3odgbdz>

Don't worry, this doesn't compel you to attend at this stage but it allows me to make sure you get an invite to the virtual event.

All the papers for the AGM including the Agenda, draft Annual Report and Accounts, the minutes of the previous meeting, Nomination forms and full details of all the Resolutions, will be published on Groups.io on or before 21st December. Any Special Resolutions proposed by the membership must be submitted in writing to the Secretary by 3rd January. All completed Nomination Forms will need to be sent, also to the Secretary, no later than 10th January. If you have any questions about the AGM please get in touch, otherwise looking forward to "seeing you" there (virtually)!

Adrian Ellison
Secretary

secretary@tvam.org



Scan QR code to take you to the form

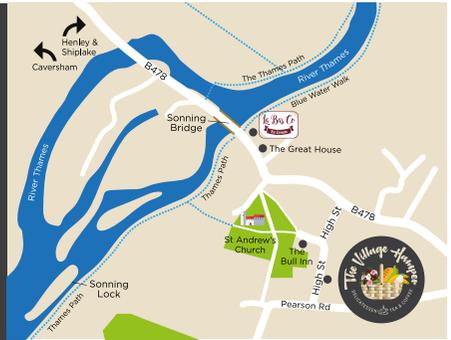
And here's the necessary legal bit...

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 10.30am on Sunday 17th January 2021 via Teams to enable the Officers to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st October 2020, 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.



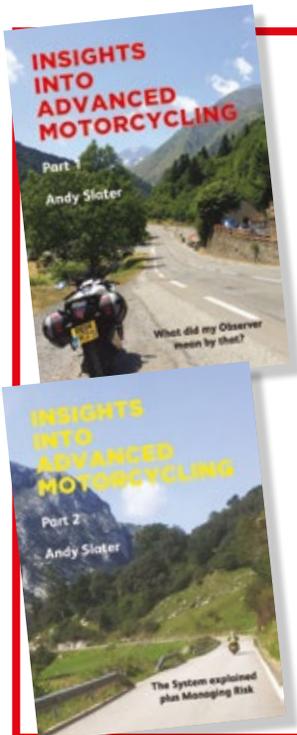
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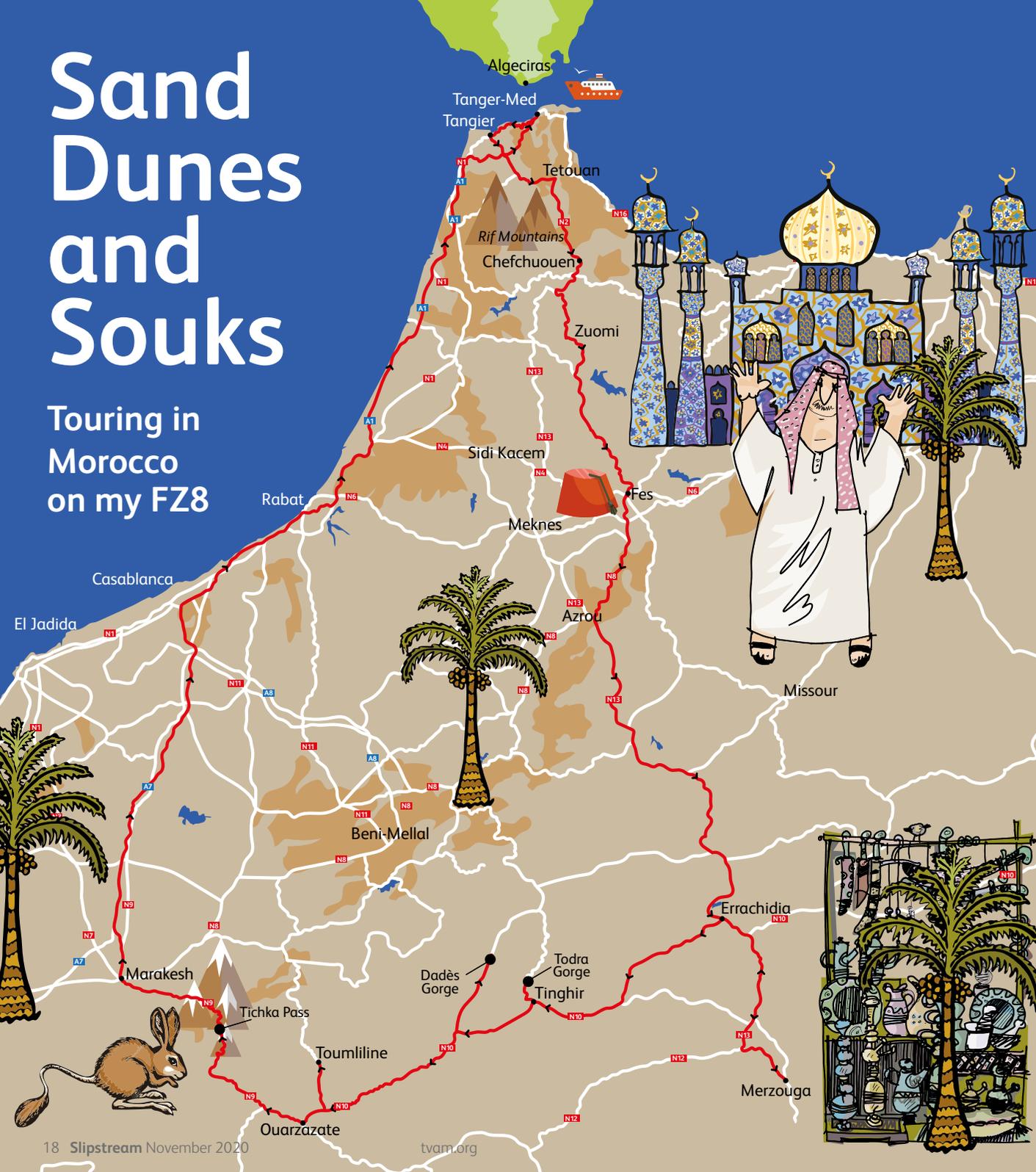
- The System and Managing Risk
- Filtering legally
- The Limit Point and how to gain the 'view'
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- Why improving your slow riding skills enables you to 'make progress'

**Available in the TVAM Webshop
for £4.99 each (inc postage).**

Profits from sales go to TVAM Club funds.

Sand Dunes and Souks

Touring in Morocco on my FZ8



It goes without saying that 2020 has not exactly been the year for international travel, with or without a motorcycle. The world grinding to a halt has brought uncertainty and frustrations to many of us and as a keen motorcycle traveller, who loves nothing more than making a beeline for Folkestone and the Channel Tunnel when the summer arrives, I've certainly felt this. That said, the change in pace has brought its advantages and a chance to reflect on past trips. I recently found myself flicking longingly through photos of Morocco which I visited in September and October 2019 just before all the borders closed. Whether you are a seasoned traveller of the Maghreb, or you have Morocco on the bucket list, I hope you find my experiences of this wonderful country interesting.

Having seen a fair amount of Europe on the bike, I was keen to venture a little further from home. Morocco had really appealed to me for some time, mainly because I had absolutely no idea what to expect. I booked three weeks off work and set sail on the Santander ferry from Plymouth. Not owning a 'proper' adventure bike, the trip was done on my Yamaha FZ8. Absolutely no off-road capability, questionable luggage-carrying capacity, and high mileage from being used as my commuter made it an interesting choice, but it had two wheels and an engine so it was good enough for me. Also, it was my only option!

The first part of the trip was fairly standard, the 24-hour crossing the Bay of Biscay, then making my way down through Spain, stopping in



Rif Mountains

Burgos, Madrid, Malaga and finally in Algeciras. I had made the decision not to camp on this trip so was booking cheap hostels along the way. Algeciras was the destination as it was here I planned to make the crossing to Africa. On approach to the port town there are dozens of kiosks and travel agents advertising crossings to Tangier Med, meaning there is no need to book from home and making it very easy to remain flexible. I was lucky enough to find a very helpful agent who booked me a flexible ticket both ways and even threw in a free bottle of wine. I chose a cheap hostel overlooking the port and took an early crossing the next day.

My first night's accommodation was in Chefchaouen, the 'blue city'. I had met up with another solo traveller on the ferry and we decided to grab lunch in Tangier, a 45km drive around the N16 coastal road from Tangier Med. The first five miles out of Tangier Med make you feel a long way from home - just two hours on a ferry and you have arrived in a totally different world. The crowds lining the sides of the main roads, the small shacks and the barren landscape are a far cry from the relative greenery and affluence you left behind in Western Europe a few hours ago. Shortly after, we went our separate ways and I joined the N2, winding my way through the northern Rif Mountains into the touristy blue town. On arrival in Chefchaouen, and like most major towns and cities, you are unable to get anywhere near the centre with your vehicle, which is where most of the hotels are. Tipping a local to help you find a safe spot for the bike and your way to the hotel is a wise move, as the old streets can be maze like.

One night in the blue city was more than enough. The town that looks so idyllic on Instagram exposed as some old building painted blue in real life, and the small narrow streets are plagued by tourist overcrowding. I took the backroads to Fes from here, avoiding the signposted main roads and opting instead for the R408, a very rural back route. This was a good move as it was quiet, beautiful and full of small communities where you see the real Morocco. Stopping anywhere near these villages attracts a crowd in seconds which at first can seem intimidating, but you soon realise that the locals just want to say hi and be friendly.

Arriving in Fes, I was hailed by a parking attendant and ushered into his car park. This seemed a bit of a con at first, but I accepted, paid and tipped him an extra 10 Dirham (80 pence) to look after my bike whilst I spent a couple of days in the city. This tip turned out to be the bargain of the holiday. On my return he was very proud to show me that he had remodeled his corrugated iron barn around my chained-up bike. Slightly embarrassed of having doubted the man, and humbled by his generosity and

hard work, I tipped him again before loading the bike up and heading out into the Sahara. The cities are full of people who will harass you for money and it's wise to be vigilant to this, but you will be bowled over by how kind the vast majority of people in this country are to travellers. Fes is a fascinating place to spend some time if you want a break from the bike, with plenty of interesting attractions and activity to fill a rest day.

It was after leaving Fes that the fun motorcycling really started. The N13 heads south from the city and is a fantastic road with long sweeping bends that take you into the peaks and give the full view of the vast desert you are passing through. I continued this road to Errachidia and onto Merzouga the following day. The latter part of this turns into long straight desert roads which can be a bit of a slog in the heat, but it is worth heading south to experience the vast sand dunes and rolling desert scenery.

Another must see whilst in this part of the country is the Todra Gorge, with its single-track mountain roads through the vast canyon of the Todra river and the famous mountain pass of Dadès Gorge. Even in peak season, these roads are reasonably quiet and are the perfect playground on two wheels. The scenery will take your breath away around every corner too.

After a couple of days of exploring mountain passes, only to eventually discover they turned to gravel tracks and turning back (on account of my lack of knobbly tyres), I picked up the famous Tichka pass, which takes you north from the Atlas mountains and into Marrakesh. I was looking forward to Tichka, but had unfortunately timed it with some fairly major resurfacing work, meaning dozens of harsh gravel sections which were causing punctures in trucks and 4x4s. Miraculously I made it through without an issue and into the city. Biking through this bustling city in the heat was not an experience I would repeat in a hurry. On approach I was harassed by kids on mopeds trying to sell me directions, something which was made worse when a local crashed into the back of my bike as I stopped to avoid a pedestrian. Fortunately, we were both okay and there was no damage.

It was in Marrakesh that I decided to wander the souk, an experience I would highly recommend. Largely unchanged in format for centuries, the souks are a labyrinth of stall traders and a fascinating insight into Moroccan culture. As I have a love of cooking, I treated myself to a traditional Moroccan tagine. Looking back, buying fragile cookware when you're a thousand miles away from home on a motorcycle, isn't the most sensible thing to do. And in a scene which wouldn't have been out of place



Todra River

in a 'Top Gear' special, I found myself disposing of some of my best Primark apparel to accommodate it in the top box. I was extremely pleased, and shocked when I unpacked it in Reading with not so much as a chip on it.

The day had arrived for me to head for the port and back to Europe. I had seen the best bits and always planned for a day of motorways, it seemed a fair trade off for more time in the Atlas Mountains and rest days exploring the cities. The port at the weekend is far busier and chaotic than during the week, with ferry timetables seeming to go out the window and boats missing their arrival time slots the journey back to Spain took just shy of 12 hours, and I arrived in the early hours of a Monday morning. I had enough time during the final leg of the tour to ride round the Algarve before heading North through Portugal, crossing Northern Spain, into the Picos and back to Santander for the sail home. I arrived back home late Sunday night before dragging the bike back out for the Monday morning commute up the M4 into London, still covered in red Saharan dust.

Fantastic roads, unbelievable scenery, a warm and welcoming culture and great value for money means I'd highly recommend Morocco as a biking destination. One of the best things about motorcycle travel for me is the feeling of how joined up the world really is, and this is hard to ignore after a trip to this amazing country. You can leave your home in the UK, jump on your bike and a few days later be riding past some sand dunes in the Sahara Desert. There are a few ferries and a bit of paperwork to navigate in between but it really is that simple. You do not need any expensive equipment or special vehicle to visit Morocco – I am a firm believer that the best Adventure motorcycle is the one stood in your garage – just a bit of common sense and a thirst for adventure.

Andy Barnes

A few tips for first time visitors:

Motor Insurance and Currency

The Moroccan Dirham is a closed currency, meaning it cannot be bought outside of Morocco. Entering Tangier, you will see kiosks selling the Dirham which is roughly 12 to the Pound.





On arrival the port authority will ask for your V5 and they will issue you with a small card. Use this at a kiosk in the port to buy your Motor Insurance, which cost 30 Euros for 10 days. Periodic police checkpoints in Morocco will ask you for this card so keep it somewhere handy. Most checkpoints wave you through and if they do stop, they are very friendly with no issues.

Accommodation

Accommodation is inexpensive in Morocco. Even in the relatively touristy rural areas of High Atlas and Dadès Gorge, you can get a nice room with breakfast and dinner included for around 25 euros. I was in Morocco in late September and early October, one of the most popular times with travellers avoiding the height of the summer and never struggled with finding somewhere. I tended to book a day ahead online but had a couple of times where I just found somewhere en-route.

It's worth checking out the Riads. These tend to be family run and have 2-3 rooms. The hosts I met were incredibly accommodating, and they were great value for money. A great way to get a more local feel and some delicious home cooking.

Food and Drink

You will find plenty of roadside restaurants, and supermarkets are common in the towns for lunch on the go. For those worried about food hygiene, most traditional Moroccan dishes are slow cooked so I had no real issues. Avoid salads and drink bottled water only. Hotels and restaurants do not serve alcohol, but it's easily found in supermarkets if you want a few cans.



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Local driving

As you can probably imagine, the driving standards are not quite on par with, say, TVAM standards. There are broadly two types of vehicle to watch out for, the 40-year-old Mercedes van with four odd wheels carrying 8 tons of luggage on the roof, and the highly impatient tourist minibuses. Neither want to wait for you, or get out of the way, and neither will factor their vehicle's limitations into their overtakes. Go round every corner expecting the worse and be ready to back off. If you brave the motorway for whatever reason, be extra careful.

The road quality is also worth mentioning. The surface is generally good, however I encountered lots of road improvement works which see you sent out onto a gravel track for a short stretch. I was on road BT023 Battlax sport touring tyres on the Fazer and was fine but keep this in mind, both when riding and deciding whether to pack for puncture repairs. If you are on a bike with off-road capability this should be no problem at all.

Safety

As a precaution I kept my camera in my lockable top box and all my documents, money and phone in my tank bag which I never left behind...exactly the same as I would at home. I took a lightweight lock and used it but rarely felt like it was necessary.

In terms of personal safety, I never felt at risk in the rural areas. Wandering around the cities alone at night is not advisable, particularly in Fes. If you want to go out to a restaurant, your hotel will arrange someone to take you and bring you back.

Navigation

I used my satnav to get about but to be honest it's quite hard to get lost in Morocco, as there are not that many roads. Be careful if you are following a satnav into a city, as the medieval streets are technically roads but you don't want to use them and by the time you realise this it's too late. When you look lost in a city, you will quickly attract the attention of people wanting to sell you their services as a guide, and they will not take no for an answer.

Petrol

Petrol is decent quality and there are plenty of filling stops, even on the desert roads.

Climate

Morocco in the height of the summer is not sensible and most people opt for spring or autumn for their trip. Even so, at points I experienced temperatures of almost 40 degrees and in biking gear this can be exhausting. I took a 2-litre hydration pack and am convinced it saved my life!

Resources

Morocco Overland by Chris Scott is a great book to have whilst planning your trip. Geared up to those going off the tarmac but also extremely useful if you just plan to stay on it!



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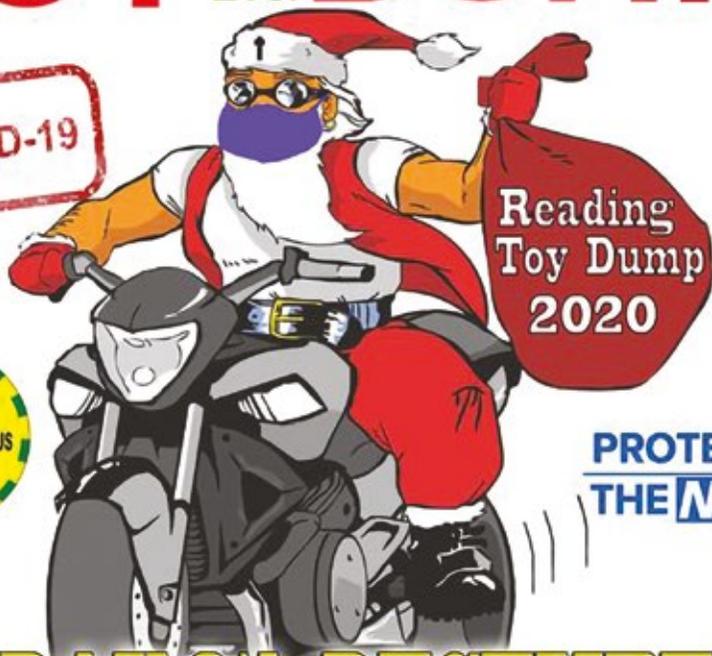
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TVAM Calendar

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

COVID-19 NOTICE REGARDING RUNS AND TRIPS

WE CONTINUE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE WITH NO CLUB MEETS. LOCAL TEAMS ARE ORGANISING SOCIAL RIDES OF UP TO 6 PEOPLE. THEY ARE ALSO ENGAGING IN A KIND OF SWAP-SHOP FOR ASSOCIATES TO HAVE RIDES WITH AN OBSERVER OTHER THAN THEIR OWN, SIMILAR TO A ST CRISPIN'S RIDE. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TEAM FOR DETAILS - SEE PAGE 33 FOR CONTACTS.

NOVEMBER 2020

SUNDAY
15

ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - ONLINE ZOOM MEET

See Slipstream or message in the allmembers/groups.io for full details

DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY
20

ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - ONLINE ZOOM MEET

See Slipstream or message in the allmembers/groups.io for full details

JANUARY 2021

ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - ONLINE ZOOM MEET

See Slipstream or message in the allmembers/groups.io for full details

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING

You will need to pre-register for this (sorry no pre-meeting food!)

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

 Social Runs  St Crispin's  Track Day/Training Run  Events  Green Team

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



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THE TRIUMPH TRIDENT MAKES A RETURN

New look for an established name. Triumph's middleweight for Spring 2021.



This is the first look at the full features of a bike which has been under wraps for the last few months, with few teasers to reveal its size, spec and pricing. October 30th was marked as the reveal date and I was signed up to get the rundown of this new model to compete against my Yamaha MT07 and the Honda CBR and the like and steal some of the Japanese market in middleweight motorcycles.

The Triumph Trident 660 has now been unveiled as a new entry-level triple that by Triumph's own admission is designed to knock Yamaha's MT-07 off the middleweight top spot. Many were thinking it would be a re-worked Street Triple S but for a start the engine is completely different and while they might share the same capacity, the bore and stroke are different as are the rest of the integral parts, so new piston, new crank, new cylinder head, new cases, new clutch, new liners, new camshafts...

We have the great combination of low down torque, a reasonably fat mid-range and a decent bit of top end. The chassis is all new, with Triumph saying that it delivers the typical 'roadster' handling we've come to expect from them. What's especially nice is that even for the price point, it's got nice bits of kit as standard, including 41 mm Showa Separate Function forks, Nissin calipers and Michelin Road 5 tyres.

Where it really begins to look special is in the tech department. The Trident comes with a ride by wire throttle, so it's got two riding modes - Road and Rain, that change the characteristics of both the throttle map and the traction control. ABS is standard. There's some optional extra tech too, including a quickshifter/autoblipper and even tyre pressure monitors.

All of the tech is controlled through Triumph's colour TFT display. Unlike other colour dashes that just give funky colours to the tacho, the dash on the Trident can be paired with a smartphone (if you buy the connectivity module) unlocking phonecalls, music and a satnav if that's your bag and you don't already have it set up as I do with a TomTom and Sena Bluetooth.

To keep running costs down the service intervals are every 10,000 miles, which is a fair bit higher than most of the competition. Then when it does go in for a service, Triumph have made an effort to reduce the time it spends in the workshop, with a service time nearly half that of some competitors. Lastly the Trident comes with a two year, unlimited mileage warranty. And all this for a basic £7,199. I'm very impressed and have my test ride booked when Bulldog Triumph get their test bike in January, and

perhaps before, as December was muted as an earlier date but with the new lockdown who knows!

Now for the important stuff - it comes in 4 colour variants, personally I favour the silver grey and diablo red with a large Triumph logo on either side of the tank. There are plenty of extras already listed for whichever model you choose, with heated grips, tank and tail packs, tracking devices, engine protectors, lasered valve caps etc which certainly mount up the price as I specced what I would like, reaching nearer £8,000.

If you want to see more, head over to the Triumph website - <https://www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk/motorcycles/roadsters/trident> and have a look for yourself.

Salli G

Editor

Information from Triumph, MCN and Jason at Bulldog Triumph.



DUCATI TO LAUNCH 2021 MODELS IN A FIVE EPISODE WEB-SERIES

Ducati has announced it is to release the details of its 2021 range in a five episode online series.

Ducati is rolling with the COVID-19 punches this winter, as it turns to a series of web-events to announce the details of its new models. The online event begins on 4th November, continuing every Wednesday until December the 2nd. The event will be running on a special page on the Ducati website and also across the Italian firm's social media channels.

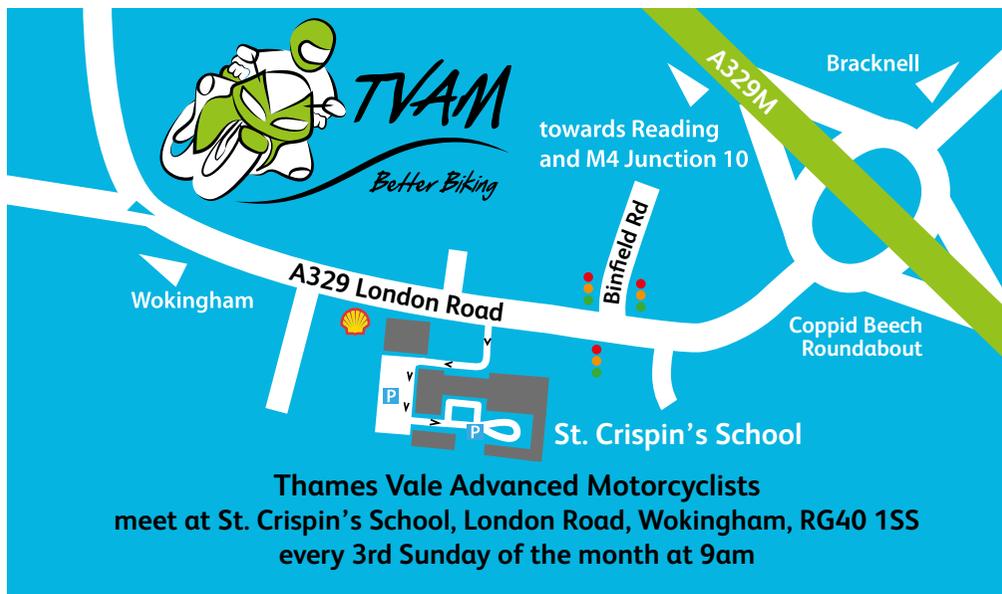
With a distinct lack of any form of motorcycle shows at the moment, we're getting fairly used to this new kind of model unveiling, with Ducati using the method to great success with the recent announcement of the new Multistrada V4 and its Desmo-less Granturismo engine.

2021 Ducati new model reveal dates:

- Episode 1: 4th November
- Episode 2: 11th November
- Episode 3: 18th November
- Episode 4: 25th November
- Episode 5: 2nd December

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 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

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

OBSERVER RELATED CONTACTS

Aardvarks	Simon Whatley	aardvarks@tvam.org
Allocations	Peter Browne	allocations@tvam.org
Assessments	Andy Wedge	assessments@tvam.org
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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 - 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
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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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Slipstream editor and designer: Salli G - slipstream@tvam.org

Editorial team: Kathy Drogemuller, 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 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

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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 December 2020 (I), 12th January 2021 (I) - all meetings normally on second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm and for the present all are 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

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.

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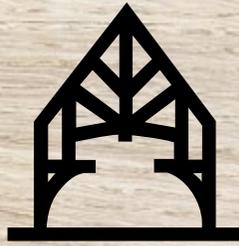


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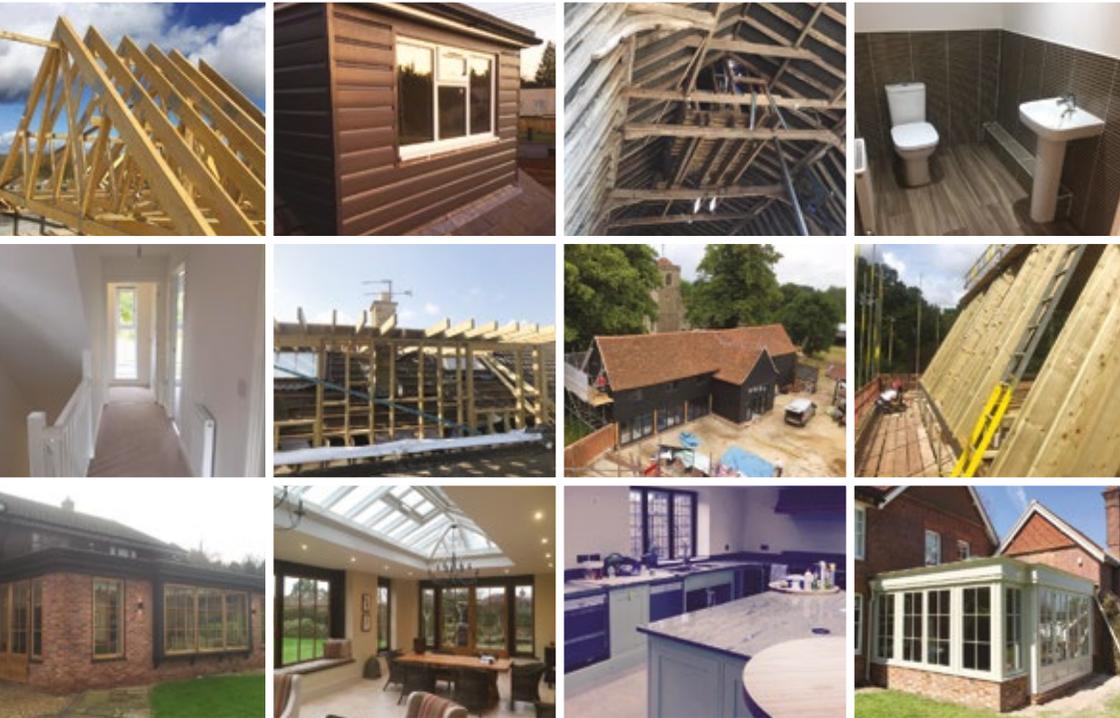
We've got your needs covered with the very latest Triumph motorcycles, clothing and accessories. Our workshop offers servicing and MOTs for all makes of models and uses specialist tools required to keep your machine cutting-edge, and operated by our factory trained technicians your bike is in safe hands.





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Construction to the highest standard



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