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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR TVM MEMBERS

MARCH 2021

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FROM THE LAPTOP



CONTENTS

Roll on 29th March and getting out on our bikes! It's been a strange old year. Although we had some respite last summer, thank goodness, at last we are seeing a light at the end of a very long tunnel! I'm grateful that I was kept busy with work through the winter, but I so missed visiting my family in California.

And with good fortune, a fair wind and a sensible approach to our new stages of opening up, we may be gathering at St Crispin's on a 3rd Sunday this summer.

With the 29th March in mind we are going to be pretty rusty getting back on our bikes, so you'd better have a read of Barrie's piece on page 9 for some wise words to support our approaching biking activity. Get in touch with your Observer and your local teams to see what they are planning to get you back out there.

Damien and Marije round off the article on their Balkans trip giving us all a taste for travelling, and I'm hoping they will give us more of their travels hinted at in the present piece, with reference to their follow-up trip to Morocco which seems to be a place gaining in popularity for bikers.

Jon Case appears to be progressing well on his bike restoration project and Trevor Warwick gives us the rundown on becoming an Observer. Take care out there, we're all going to need to be extra vigilant.



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Sally G.

Slipstream Editor



TVAM ROLL OF HONOUR

BETTER BIKING

NEW MEMBERS IN FEBRUARY

Simon Cooper

Charles Leigh-Dugmore

Peter van den Broek



GOODBYE WINTER - HELLO SPRING

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to my first 'From The Chair' piece. As I take over the reins from Andy Slater, I'd like to say a huge thank you to him for all of the years of service that he has given to the Committee. Andy's achievements have been an inspiration to me and I hope that I can continue to steer the Club in a forward thinking manner for the benefit of all.

One of the Committee's aims for 2021 is that we become more visible to you. We are Club members too, the only difference is that we have offered our services to a role in the Club that will benefit everyone. Whilst we can't meet you face to face at St Crispin's just yet we can see you within your social groups at your virtual meetings and allow you and us to put the faces to the names. I thought therefore that I would take this opportunity to tell you a little about myself and my journey in motorcycling.

Like a lot of teenagers, I started my riding career messing around off road as a kid on old bikes that my mates had cobbled together. Safety was of no real importance as we messed about in the fields around my home. In March 1986 I progressed to riding as a learner in London, (where I worked) and Kent, where I returned at weekends on my Honda Superdream. Training was limited in those days and the words, "Here are the keys, good luck", were all that you needed to be allowed onto the road as a learner rider. I passed my full motorcycle competency test in October 1986 and I have had a bike ever since, riding as often as possible.

My introduction to the IAM, and subsequently TVAM, was whilst working my day job as a designer in the late 1990's. I was involved in the design of the IAM's Headquarters in Chiswick, under the watchful eye of Christopher Bullock who was the CEO at the time. I used to ride into Chiswick once a week for design meetings with Christopher and his team. At the official opening of the building, in 2001, Christopher awarded me with a Skills for Life Package and his words, "You have the best IAM bike club on your doorstep and you should join them and take your advance test."

It was four years later, in 2005, with the voucher expired, that I finally walked through the doors of St Crispin's. I went to an open day in May of that year, where I met Andy Hunter. We had a short chat and then went out for an observed ride. I was immediately hooked by the professionalism and friendliness of the club and signed up that day. Simon Whatley was my Observer and guided me through to my X-Check with Steve Huckins. I went on to pass my IAM test in February 2006.

I started on the programme of becoming a Trainee Observer (TOB) immediately, only having to set that aside as I started my own business and didn't have the time to commit. I went back to that in 2012, gaining my gold badge in 2013. As a sideline, I became a down-trained CBT Instructor in 2010 for a friend's motorcycle school in Surrey. In 2018 I set myself three targets to develop myself. First, I took and passed my National Observer assessment. Second, I joined the Training Team. Third, I became a fully qualified DVSA CBT and DAS instructor after assessment at Cardington.



Last year, in all of the negativity of the pandemic, a new opportunity arose of becoming Chair of TVAM for which I thank you all for your votes at the AGM in January this year.

So that's a little bit about me. My journey has been progressive, developed over many years, and it's one that I have genuinely enjoyed. There's nothing like riding and socialising with other motorcyclists and I look forward to, later this year, riding with and meeting as many of you as possible.

Have fun and stay safe everyone.

Barrie Smith
Chairman

EVENTS TEAM ZOOM SPRING SEMINARS FOR THIS APRIL



MOTOLEGENDS

Wednesday 7th April

7.30pm – 45-60 mins plus questions

Motorcycle Apparel - Clothing
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Guildford based Motolegends started in 1994, and are now the experts in motorcycle clothing. The brands stocked tend to be the more prestigious and stylish that the market has to offer, many of which are exclusive to them in the UK.

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KEVIN WILLIAMS

Wednesday 28th April

7.30pm – 45–60 mins

plus questions

A magician knows that the 'world' we see has been built entirely inside our brains. The magician knows that the audience about to attend the magic show understands that they are going to be fooled, yet still can't spot the tricks. When we ride a motorcycle or a scooter, we become the magician and the drivers and other road users all around us are our audience. One of our magic powers is invisibility, but there are a couple of extra deceptions involved. Yet the motorcyclist isn't aware that he/she is a magician and about to fool the audience. And the motorcyclist's audience of drivers doesn't know the biker is a magician

either. The 'Science Of Being Seen' (SOBS) presentation reveals the secrets of our very own motorcycling magic show.

The 'Science Of Being Seen' (SOBS) presentation was originally written over the winter of 2011/12 as a proactive accident prevention module for the pilot BikerDown courses developed by Kent Fire and Rescue Service. The initiative was awarded a Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award at the end of 2012 and an insurance industry award in 2013. BikerDown has since been picked up by most fire services in the UK and a version of SOBS is used by many BikerDown teams. As well as delivering SOBS to clubs and rider groups around the UK, in 2018 and 2019, Kevin was one of a team of international speakers on the nationwide Shiny Side Up rider safety initiative in New Zealand. In 2021, he was a virtual speaker at Shiny Side Up. Right now Kevin is in negotiation to develop a regionalised version of SOBS for 'BikerDown North America'.

There's a free-to-access website at <https://scienceofbeingseen.wordpress.com> which gives the background research into each topic covered on SOBS, including references and a short paperback which acts as a reminder to the presentation – the cost is £9.99 which gets ploughed back into the research and hosting costs:

www.lulu.com/en/gb/shop/kevin-williams/the-science-of-being-seen/paperback/product-1wrmmen4.html?page=1&pageSize=4

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Back



With the light at the end of the tunnel looking more like it is daylight, rather than something else coming the other way, the Training Team has been thinking of what we need to consider to ensure we get back to biking safely.

The end of March will have seen us in lockdown in England for at least half of the previous 12 months, with considerable restrictions placed on travel for almost all that time. This has meant that for most of the time our Club activities have been severely limited and, with the latest two lockdowns occurring over the winter months, many of us have not ventured out on the bike since last October.

We have what could arguably be described as 'a perfect storm' coming as we venture back onto the roads. With motorcyclists not being a common presence on the road for the last five months, other than the odd essential journey, it is unlikely that the average motorist will be looking out for them. Could we therefore see an upsurge of the SMIDSY (Sorry Mate I Didn't See You) incidents where the motorcyclist almost always ends up coming off worst?

The problem for us 'Advanced Motorcyclists' is easy to see but how do we plan the safe return and try to mitigate the risks for every member of the TVAM family? This is not something that just concerns us within TVAM but IAM RoadSmart as well. Safety is our greatest concern, however we also need to consider how we recommence training and ensure that we avoid 'burnout' of our Observers.

Burnout is where Observers may rush, with good intentions, to get all of our Associates back out on the road and up to the level they were at before we had to stop riding. The risk is that we have huge intensity in the first 2-3 months, which

to Biking...

then radically drops off as Observers become fatigued. If we can come back to training in a planned and steady manner, it is likely to be far more sustainable as we progress through to the end of the riding season.

So, what can we all do to help a safe return to full Club activities?

The Training Team wishes to share its thoughts on a possible structured approach we should all consider to enable us to get back on the road safely and reengage with Club activities, as and when we are allowed.

One of the easiest things that we can all do is to go out for a short, local, ride with another rider and spend a little time just following each other and discussing what you see with each other. This is just two 'likeminded' riders doing a short trip to help each other. Remember that it may take a ride or two for us to get back to the level that we were at before lockdown.

Associates – Until we're allowed to carry out observed and social rides again, take a look at the Advanced Rider Course (ARC) materials and books again. Perhaps have a look at the online quizzes, (there are links to them in the allmembers Wiki on Groups.io), to test your knowledge.

IAM RoadSmart has introduced new e-learning modules called CHOICES that are accessible only by Associates. The link to these modules was sent out to all Associates by IAM RoadSmart in the Associate Newsletter on the 12th February. You could also get the bike out and do your Pre-Ride checks and take a look at your protective equipment to ensure it's ready to go when you are. Contact your Observer and arrange your next ride with them, however, please do allow them

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time to ensure they are happy with their own riding before coming out for a ride.

Full Members – It wouldn't be a bad idea to use the next couple of weeks to refresh yourself on the theory side, just until we can get back on the road. Consider booking the Advanced Plus. This is a half or full day, maybe with another full member, with an Observer who will do a ride to see how you compare to the IAM RoadSmart test standard. They will then assist you to identify and work on any issues that you may have throughout the session. Contact details are in the back of Slipstream.

Observers and TObs – You guessed it, take another look at those books and even the online quizzes whilst you have the time. Don't be too proud to ask another Observer to go for a short ride and give you feedback. Perhaps then swap over so you can critique them. We can all learn from one another and you'll probably have fun giving the advice if not receiving it! If you're in line for an Aardvark then get it booked (arguably one of the best days riding you'll ever have). Remember our friends at Rapid Motorcycle Training are likely to get very busy as the weather improves.

All Members – We have an abundance of courses, delivered by the Training and Green Teams, that had to be put on hold during lockdown. As soon as possible these courses will start to open up again for booking. Keep an eye on Slipstream and Groups.io for when these will happen.

Our excellent BikeCraft team is currently delivering their course online over a period of six weeks. By the time you read this they will have commenced their second online course, being delivered over three Sundays in March, and we cannot thank them enough for their efforts to redesign a classroom style course for delivery online. Well done team.

If you do use your bike currently for volunteering or work, then just take a little extra time to fully evaluate what other riders and drivers are doing around you and make sure that you're not caught up in someone else's incident.

For all of us getting back into riding, remember to apply The System and keep the pace to something comfortable. We can get back to the higher levels of skill in time, when the concentration levels, muscle memories and experience have been carefully built up.

For those of you that are not aware of what The System is, we refer to IPSGA (Information, Position, Speed, Gear & Acceleration) as the system at the core of Advanced Riding. The purpose of IPSGA is to promote safety and prevent collisions by encouraging riders to adopt a systematic approach to any hazard. Refer to the books again for further information.

In summary, don't be afraid to ask for help, at any level, and take your time to settle into your riding before setting off on that full day ride you all have planned as soon as we're allowed out to play.

Stay safe everyone.

Barrie Smith
TVAM Training Team

TVAM OBSERVER TRAINING

At the end of 2019 I found myself retired from work a bit earlier than I'd expected, so I had more spare time to do something bike-related.

I'd learnt to ride at the end of 1999 in preparation for a new job that was going to involve a painful commute that would be much quicker by bike. My first bike was a Honda and, at the time, Honda were offering a subsidised "Motorcycle Appreciation Course" to new bike buyers. This was a couple of days of 1:1 advanced training, which I think they'd created in an attempt to try to stop born-again bikers throwing their brand new Fireblades into the nearest hedge at high speed, a major problem at the time.

I really enjoyed the MAC course and that got me started with advanced riding. I joined the Herts & Beds IAM group and passed my IAM test in 2001, then joined TVAM when we moved back to Reading. Over the years I'd done quite a few of the popular TVAM courses, many social rides and several 'Enhanced Advanced', now 'Advanced Plus' observed rides to try to keep my skills active.

Returning to 2019, I decided that I wanted to put something back into advanced riding, since I've benefitted so much from it and thought I'd find out more about becoming an Observer.



At a St Crispin's meeting, Barrie Smith, our new chairman, gave an overview of the whole Observer training programme. As you would expect from TVAM it is well structured and organised, with many milestones along the way and lots of help available, although each trainee is responsible for their own progress. I knew it would be a challenge, but came away feeling enthusiastic and keen to give it a go.

The first activity is an online test to check knowledge of the Highway Code, Roadcraft, TVAM and the Advanced Rider Course. You're allowed more than one attempt at this and the pass mark is 80%. With that out of the way, the next thing is a Riding Skills Check, which is to ensure that you're capable of riding at or above IAM test standard for an extended period of time, taking in

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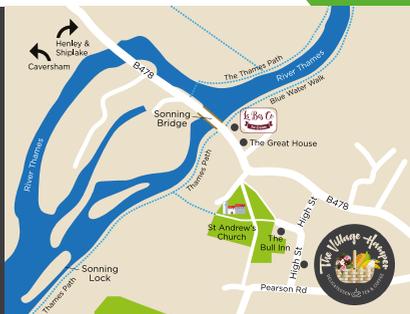
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all the different road types. I went out with Chris Bowler one chilly December day on very wet roads. I didn't manage a perfect ride, but Chris was happy with what he'd seen and OK'd me for the next step, which is...

Core Skills Day. This is a full day for a group of new Trainee Observers (TOBs) to do a mixture of classroom and interactive sessions. It's run by the training team and a group of qualified Observers to provide feedback and help with the interactive parts. It's a very wide ranging day, going beyond the basics of how to conduct an observed ride. Lots of time is spent on interpersonal skills: how to quickly build rapport with a new Associate; how to give feedback effectively; different learning styles and how we can help develop 'thinking riders'. We were given a 30 minute exercise to fill in a Run Report Form, which seemed like way too long. 45 minutes later I hadn't finished... All in all it was a very useful day and we left with a much better appreciation of what we were aiming to achieve.

Next comes the slow riding coaching. Slow riding is a key part of advanced riding, but lots of people don't seem to enjoy it much. So the training team put a lot of emphasis here, making sure that all trainees have learnt how to coach it effectively. We all attended St Crispin's one frosty morning and tried to find sunshine to stand in while watching Si and his team work with a group of Associates. I'd also done the course as a participant a few months earlier, which definitely improved my slow riding and I'd firmly recommend it.

Following on from this is the first assessed ride. Over the course of the training there are typically three of these, one at the start, one in the middle, and one at the end when you hopefully get signed off as either a Local or National Observer. The aim of these assessments is to show that the trainee has developed their skills to a level of competency over the course of the programme, which can be documented as required by the IAM.

My session was done with a GSR (no, not a middleweight Suzuki but a Group Support Rider: a green badge who is willing to help out with training - we'll call her Louise) and Si Rawlins from the training team. Could I put into practice everything I'd learnt so far?

I found the actual ride observing part was a little easier than I expected, and I was able to spot some issues that both Louise and Si agreed with. After the final debrief, and Louise had left, it was Si's turn to observe my riding over a 20 minute route and give feedback as in a normal observed ride to ensure riding standards are being maintained.



Overall the result wasn't terrible, but there were plenty of '4: Needs Improvement' on my TOB sheet, a lot of it to do with getting the briefing and Run Report Form right. My own riding assessment was actually the easiest part of the day, even though Si had still come up with some very pertinent comments on where I could do better.

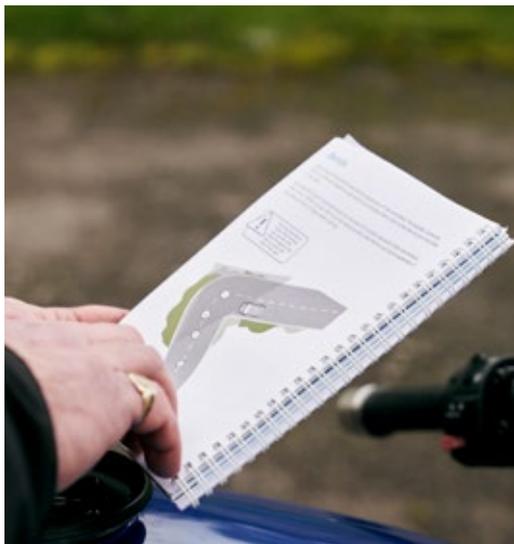
With the assessed ride done, and now in possession of a yellow badge, you're finally allowed to take Associates out under the supervision of a qualified Observer. To help with this next phase, you're allocated a mentor, in my case Mick Goodall. One of the potential challenges of Observer training is getting enough opportunities to go out, in order that a mentor can help out with their own Associates, as well as providing a lot of useful advice. In fact I didn't have any problems with getting rides, as I found that the WAGS Observers were really helpful and happy to offer opportunities.

I managed a couple of rides before the Covid-19 lockdown, and then everything was on hold for 3 months. I spent quite a bit of time watching Youtube videos instead. There is a particular series done by a guy who documented his whole IAM training process that I found very helpful, both from the point of view of assessing his riding and also the way his Observers interacted with him.

When observed rides restarted again, I was determined to make up for lost time and do as many as I could. I went out with Mick and his Associates and also took part in the monthly 'swap shop' events that Cliff Rose organised for WAGS. With practice, my TOB reports were starting to improve. I learnt to pick better routes and stopping places, my road positioning was more effective, demo rides were more useful, and the briefings and feedback were more polished. The Associates seemed to feel that they'd had useful sessions, despite various rough edges, and I was always grateful for their willingness to have a ride with a TOB. Mick as a mentor was really helpful and I learnt a lot from watching what he did and from his advice.

Going out with different Observers was invaluable, as I was getting consistent feedback on the areas where I needed to improve, but also understanding some very different styles of how to run an observed ride.

Overall I think the biggest lesson I learnt was to be flexible. It's great to have an interesting and fun planned route in your head, but if the Associate turns up and says they want to do slow riding and town work, you need to forget your plan and quickly work out a different one that will meet the Associate's needs. After doing a



number of rides over the summer, and then reviewing my training log with Mick, he was happy to put me forward for my second assessment.

So that's how I came to be at the spiritual home of all WAGS observed runs, Chieveley Services one Saturday morning to meet Barrie Smith who'd be assessing me, plus a real Associate this time, who we'll call Dave. The briefing went as well as could be expected given social distancing requirements and I picked up that Dave needed to do some motorway riding. Remembering that big lesson, I mentally binned a really nice section of my route and replaced it with the M4 from J14 to J13. We set off through Newbury, stopped for some slow riding in a car park and then tackled some lanes before a stop at a garage in Hungerford to debrief. Then some bigger roads before the hotly anticipated M4 section to get back to Chieveley for the final debrief. We went through the RRF and Dave then left, with my riding assessment being the next part.

I'd prepared a route back towards Reading that I knew pretty well, so was confident that I was making my life as easy as possible by having practiced it a few times. Then we got to Hermitage and found the main road closed by an accident. Doh! So I had to quickly come up with an alternative. The new, unpracticed, route took us to a café for the final debrief session, where Barrie went through in great detail how the day had gone and we discussed how a few things could have been handled differently.

He then gave me a big surprise by saying that he was satisfied that I was now able to conduct an observed ride to the required IAM standard, and he'd be able to sign me off as a Local Observer. That was definitely a big grin moment! I knew that some people had been signed off on the second assessment, but hadn't really expected to be in that category. Afterwards I said farewell to Barrie and rode home with the big grin now hidden under my lid. There's an option to go straight on to take the National Observer assessment, rather than being first registered as a Local Observer, but I decided I'd get a bit more experience under my belt before going for that.

Reflecting on the process, I had learnt a lot in the roughly nine months from start to finish, not only on how to be an IAM Observer, but about my own riding, which is definitely better than it was beforehand. Overall the experience has been very worthwhile.

Since qualifying, I've now got an Associate assigned to me and have done quite a few ad-hoc rides with other Associates. I'm really enjoying the process of observing so far, and am currently waiting impatiently for the latest lockdown to finish so I can get on with doing more.

Finally I'd like to thank the training team, Mick Goodall, the Associates and Observers who agreed to go out with me during the training process. Needless to say, I couldn't have done this without your help.

If this article has piqued your interest, you can email observerinterest@tvam.org as the first step to finding out more.

Trevor Warwick

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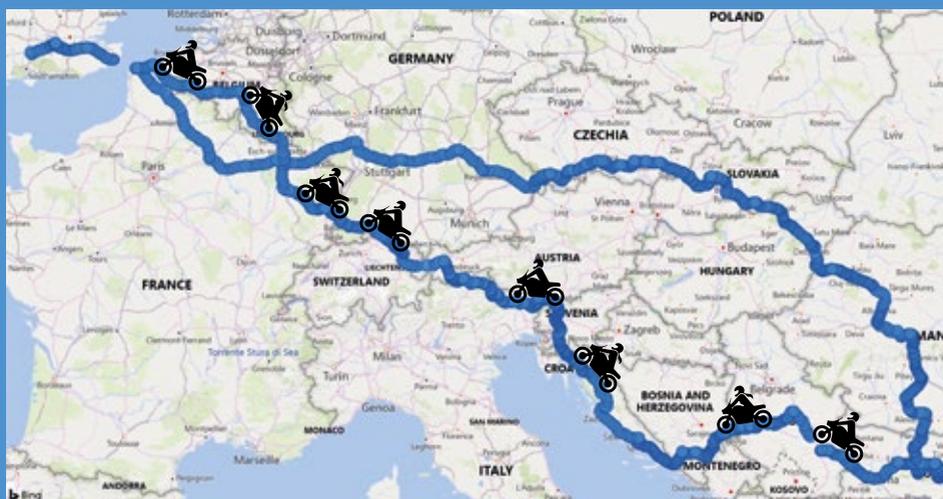
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THE BALKANS TOUR

PART TWO



What could go wrong indeed... Dave had spotted us riding through Idilevo, straight past the entrance to MotoCamp and turn up the farmers track. He expected to see us reappear moments later but after a couple of minutes decided to jump on his scrambler and check we were ok. Apparently no-one had ever ridden so far up the side of the hill as I did that evening and Ivo laughed when Dave told him where he'd found me.

As we unpacked the bikes Ivo asked if we'd eaten and we said no. There was nowhere nearby for food but they had ordered pizza which had just arrived and they gave us one of the boxes, we were very hungry and very grateful. MotoCamp has an outdoor kitchen for anyone to use and an honesty system where you can take beers or ice creams and note it in the book, settle up when you leave. Our bar tab rose steadily over the evening with no plans to ride anywhere the following day.

Over the course of the evening we met several other travellers, notably Ken and Carol Duval who have spent over twenty years riding around the world. I messaged Graham Field who inspired our visit and lived in the village, he popped down to meet us the following day. Although we only spent a couple of nights there it was extraordinary and we keep in touch with the people we met, even hosting Ken and Carol in the UK as they passed through on their now COVID curtailed journey.

Ken and Carol had recommended visiting the town of Nis in Serbia so we finally turned westwards and said our goodbyes to Ivo and the friends we'd met at Motocamp. They all came out to wave us on our way.

The ride to Nis was around 250 miles which is a good distance to cover for one day, enough time to stop and look around without making it into a long day. Serbia is not in the EU so we had to go through a border. There was a long queue when we arrived with the border guards making it clear there would be no filtering to the front. It was slow progress but a quick passport check and we were through. It's worth noting that some UK insurance will include cover for Serbia and some won't but the border officials didn't check.



The apartment we'd booked in Nis was in the town centre, next to the river and fort. As we pulled up on a side street a man came jogging over to invite us to the bar in the square behind. He must have seen the surprise on our faces at being addressed in English as he quickly told us he'd seen our GB stickers, his wife was English and he was the owner of the bar.

Dejan directed us to park on the pavement alongside a row of Vespa scooters, in front of



Meeting Graham Field, Ken and Carol Duval, Ivo and the others at Motocamp

the aptly named Vespa bar. Dejan introduced us to his friends and had drinks and snacks brought out to us. We talked about the trip and he told us about some of his adventures, the biggest being a 7500km ride he and two other members of the Vespa Club Naissus had done through Greece, Italy, France and to York in the UK to visit imperial cities. It just goes to show that the bike you love is the bike for your adventure.

After chatting for a while Dejan insisted on calling our apartment owner to come and show us the way. When we went to leave he wouldn't accept anything for the drinks and snacks, hopefully we can return the hospitality one day as we remain in contact through Facebook.

The apartment owners' son had turned up and opened a garage for us to lock the bikes away. The apartment was on the fifth floor with no lift so he helped us carry our gear up, recommending that we visit the fort as it was still open for a couple of hours.

The weather had remained warm and sunny throughout the trip and the temperatures were now in the low 30's. In truth, the Richa jackets and trousers we wore were just a bit too warm. By opening all the vents and wearing merino wool leggings and tops underneath to wick the sweat away, kept us at least comfortable.

The ride today from Nis to Gradac in Croatia would be a long one, over 350 miles, crossing into Bosnia and Herzegovina and out again. The border control was a much smaller setup but here they checked everything. Our bike insurance's didn't cover Bosnia and Herzegovina so we were directed to an insurance hut to buy temporary insurance while the border guard held our passports. Twenty euro's each for third party insurance that would last 28 days. We needed just six hours!

The road we took through Bosnia hugged the side of a valley with a river running through it. The road surface was well maintained with pretty but not spectacular views which made for an enjoyable few hours of riding, interrupted only once by a car overtaking another around a blind bend forcing me to the side of the road. I'm surprised I didn't get his wing mirror with my panniers he was that close. I must have been fairly relaxed as Marije only heard a calm "flippin eejit" over the intercom. We passed through Mostar with its famous bridge but didn't stop, another one to revisit.



Slovenia, coming down from the mountains the road gets wider and we can stop for pictures

We stopped at a viewpoint near the coast in Croatia but rather than find accommodation online Marije was determined to find us somewhere by word of mouth. It was late in the day as we parked up in Gradac, the nearest town. I stayed with the bikes as Marije walked around but after a few minutes she was back. The very first person she had spoken to, a German lady stood on a balcony having a smoke also rented out rooms in an apartment. She showed us the room and shared kitchen and we checked in, she even moved her car from the drive so we could park the bikes then blocked them in for the night.



Lake Bled, Slovenia

A moonlit walk on the beach, cold beers and dinner by the ocean made for a pleasant end to the day. Marije had been filming the trip and as we sat in the restaurant, the sea lapping the sand just a few feet away, she pointed the camera at me and asked where we were. Croatia, exactly where I don't know but it's great, and that's really all I need to know.

The sun continued to shine as we headed north towards Slovenia, the coast roads of Croatia having spectacular views over the Adriatic. Our intention was to stop at Lake Bled in Slovenia but to make it interesting we put a route into the sat nav that would take in some of the small passes over the mountains on the way. Depending on your head for heights this was either genius or foolhardy. The roads are all single track with no barriers and steep drops if you come off but the scenery is spectacular. The houses and chalets are picture postcard, the livestock with cattle bells and it appeared that all the grass had been mown that day.

Lake Bled is a popular destination with its fairy-tale castle surrounded by water. It's also surrounded by tourists so it's busy even in September. We rode around it until we saw a large restaurant with outside seating and several bikes parked up. As we stopped a small group came over, they had flown into Europe from Malaysia and hired BMW bikes to tour around on despite owning Africa Twins at home. One of them described how although he loved the Africa Twin it was quite tall for him. Mine's lowered and he tried it out, I think he planned to order the parts to lower his that evening!

Later that day we rode into Italy, the twelfth country on our trip, pausing for lunch in the Dolomites and headed for the Timmelsjoch high mountain pass, climbing 2509m on superb roads with the surrounding mountains as a backdrop. I'd highly recommend riding the pass but get to the top early so you can take advantage of a visit to the motorcycle museum. As it was late in the day we didn't, but we still had to pay the €15 fee per bike that is used to maintain the road and gives access to the museum. Another reason for us to return!



Lunch stop in the Dolomites

Our route took us back through Western Europe where we passed through Austria and Switzerland where daily costs were five times the amount we'd spent in the eastern countries. Even using the roads had costs, with Slovenia and Austria needing vignettes, around €8 for a week even though we used them for only one day. The Swiss motorway vignette would have been around €36 per bike and if caught without one a fine of around €185 each, so we avoided the motorways, just cutting into Switzerland to get into Germany and onwards to France.

The last day of the trip started in drizzle as we left a small French town and headed towards Belgium where the heavens opened. Torrential rain followed us all day and we saw several cars that had hit standing water and spun off the road in the ditches being helped by recovery services. Our Richa gear was outstanding and kept us largely dry, letting in a bit of water around the neck and our gloves once soaking letting some water in up the wrists. At the service station for lunch we followed the trail of water to find a big group of bikers in leathers wringing out gloves and pouring out boots.

Our booked departure at the Eurotunnel was 5pm but we arrived by 3.30pm. Being cold and wet we just wanted to board the train and head back to Blighty, we asked to board an earlier train but were told no, too busy. I put the card with the letter G printed on it in my tank bag and we headed towards the terminal. At the roundabout the guy in full waterproofs asked for the card and I just pointed at my tank bag, he asked "E?", "No, G", so he pointed us towards terminal building. As we rode on I looked up at the board, F – delayed, G – Delayed, H – Delayed and so

on. I rode around the car park and back towards the train only to be stopped by another employee – “E” I said loudly and he waved us on, at the next booth I could see the lanes to board the train, dozens of bikes lined up. “E” I said again and asked if I should join that lane and the barrier went up. Homeward bound.

In retrospect

Looking back we think that the people we met really made the trip. We still keep in touch with some of them and look forward to seeing them again once we can all get back to touring.

The trip proved the bikes, I didn't have to touch the toolkit once even though I carried spares such as inner tubes, tyre irons, brake pads and oil as well as tools that would allow me to service the bike, all being used in the garage at home before the trip.

The costs once out of Western Europe are incredibly low, around a quarter and we weren't going cheap either. We went too fast - fifteen countries in fifteen days - we could easily have spent two months doing this trip rather than two weeks! The internet makes travelling much easier but we really did miss it in Serbia and Bosnia where mobile data, although available, would be hugely expensive as they aren't in the EU, so we turned off our phones.

We packed too much! Even on our next trip to Morocco in 2019 we took too much, so we're still fine tuning our packing.

Damien Murray and Marije Schillern



Timmelsjoch



Homeward bound on the Eurotunnel



Marije packed too much!



Confessions of a First Time Restorer

PART THREE - THE EXPENSIVE BIT

First things first – I'm still here to carry on. I was in the room when my wife read last month's article and it was hilarious when she suddenly stopped reading, walked directly to the conservatory, immediately came back and said, 'You've got my heater, you git!' I was laughing for at least a couple of hours. She then gave me 'the look' when she got to the part about the oven. One hundred lines – 'I must act like a mature adult'.

When I signed off last, I'd completed the stripdown and I needed to get restoration work done before I could start reassembly. Lots needed doing – January was going to be expensive. Therefore, the rest of this article could just be two words long, but I'm hoping you'd want more information than that. Those two words? BUDGET SMUDGET.

I'd given myself a 'finger in the air' budget of £2k. To be fair to myself the £2k was a total guess based on zero knowledge, so I'm not surprised that it was wrong. I now think about £3k..ish. This is more than the actual value of the bike. But, as it is in memory of Peter, my Father-in-Law, I don't really mind. When it comes to the second bike I'm going to see how good I can get it for as little as possible. I will be able to get costs down with new skills that I have learned.

Before going any further though I should mention something I forgot to note when I started stripping down the bike in November. I wear glasses. I have been short-sighted since I was a kid up North. But now I'm becoming the 'old git' that my kids have always called me. I don't need reading glasses (yet); however I do need to take off my 'seeing' glasses to look at things closely. So when working on the bike, I frequently take off my glasses so that I can see what I am doing. At first I'd pop them on the ground next to me whilst I did that bit of work. I'm sure everyone can guess what's coming. Yup, one day, I'm working on the bike and take off my glasses and put them down on the ground. I then realise that the spanner I've got is the wrong size and get up to change spanner. Crunch! I stood on my glasses. Numerous swear words were spoken with great feeling. I had not broken a pair of glasses since I was at school over 30 years before. Fortunately, I had a spare pair so was able to carry on – until the next day when I did exactly the same thing with my spare pair! The swear words had great volume as well as great feeling this time. To use a good Northern word meaning a

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Smith's magntic speedo



Powder coated parts

stupid person (also, really satisfying – just try it) that my Mother and wife regularly take great pleasure in using about me – what a wazzock! Glasses weren't part of my budget.

Anyway, back to January. Due to Covid we had gone on to a rota system at work, so I didn't need to be there all the time. This gave me loads of bike time. The first thing I needed to do was to get on the computer. I didn't know where to get things restored. The BSA and TVAM Facebook pages yielded recommendations for most things, so it was just a matter of researching them and choosing one of each.

Firstly, I settled on Classic Speedometers in Mansfield to do a full service on the speedo. Not many people in the country work on Smith's magnetic speedos and I have to say that Stuart did a wonderful job. It looks fantastic. A true craftsman.

Next, I wanted to look at the frame and tinware paint. The consensus was that this should be 'two pack' for greater originality. Ideally, I wanted to keep the original paintwork and having it restored rather than have everything repainted, even if some imperfections were noticeable. I had narrowed down my selection to two firms and decided to go and visit them. However, times being as they are, I wanted to be sure that this was allowed and that we could keep it safe.

Government websites confirmed that visiting these businesses was legal. As these businesses could be open, customers may visit. Due to the specialised nature of these businesses, it also meant I could travel to visit them. Both also confirmed that these would be socially distanced meetings outside.

The first visit was an eye opener in a couple of respects. One – it wasn't the original paintwork. It was the same colour, but a not-very-good-quality repaint. No point, nor a good idea, in keeping this paint. Two – two pack was flaming expensive. The quote from the first place was over £3k just for the frame and tinware. I knew from their website that this place was going to be expensive but £3k was a non-starter. That wasn't happening. I felt disappointed about the paint not being original, however it did mean that I didn't need to two pack and could consider methods that are modern and

less expensive yet also yield great results. It also meant I could powder coat the frame and other relevant parts which was a lot cheaper.

The second person I visited was Mike at Triple C Paintwork in Burghfield. I had been recommended Mike by a couple of people in different Facebook groups (and have also since found out that he advertised in Slipstream last year). It was one of those situations where you just feel it is right. Mike was open and engaging, answering all my questions (even the dopey ones) without any hint of an agenda. He showed me examples of his work at various stages and explained my options, both traditional and modern. I came away feeling Mike wasn't doing a hard sell, he wanted what was best for me and my bike. I decided to go with Triple C using modern methods at a much more reasonable rate. The only negatives were that it would be March before the work could be done and they don't powder coat. However, I could see the positives in the wait. His work must be good to have to wait that long and these parts of the bike would be the last to go back on. Regarding powder coating - Mike recommended Tadley Powder Coaters. I called in on them the next day and they took most of the parts there and then. They couldn't take the shock absorbers as I had not been able to take the chrome collets off, nor the footrests as the rubbers were still on. A week later I had the frame and parts back. They looked lovely. It was starting to get very real!

The next part was the engine casings which needed to be vapour blasted. Recommendations on BSA Facebook groups led me to RD Cox in Reading. For the petrol and oil tanks, Andy Kennett at Dynotech in Bramley (where I take my Yamaha), recommended a gentleman called Jeep in Waterlooville. Only the petrol tank needed work, the oil tank is fine - some money saved! The shiny bits have gone off to AK Moto in Goring - more on that in a sec. Small privately-owned businesses whose work is their calling card and their future business, apart from Jeep, who I assume does it as a hobby during his retirement. I am eagerly anticipating the return of all these items as I will then be able to start re-assembly.

I had another 'spreadsheet' moment when it came to the chrome parts. I was quite shocked when I got the quote through. It was significantly more than I expected. Some parts were excellent value, others way more than I thought. It was actually cheaper to buy new for several parts. This was disappointing as it would have been nice to use the original parts, but sense had to prevail - first time for everything.

The other parts that needed looking at were the wheels. These needed a decent amount of work. I especially wanted rid of that horrible red paint on the rim that someone had used a paintbrush to throw on. I settled on Mike at Salisbury Wheel Builders. You may remember that I had broken off a bit of the rear wheel hub when I managed to get my left and right mixed up. This did turn out to cost, but fortunately not as much as first feared. Mike took one look at the rear wheel and said I needed a new hub. I managed to source an original one on Ebay and had it delivered direct to Mike. The hubs were cleaned and painted, new rims and spokes and one week later, what a result. Tyres and tubes have been ordered.

So that was all the bits in and some back. However, I could not start any re-assembly yet. I needed the engine casings back to start anything on the engine and I needed

the chromed parts to be able to start putting anything of significance back on the frame or wheels. But I did have other things that needed doing. I took apart the carb and put all its bits through the ultrasonic cleaner. They have come up looking fantastic and as spotlessly clean as I believe they need to be. The forks needed properly taking apart. I'd had trouble separating the oil seal holders – a soak in petrol and the club hammer sorted that.

I was also watching a series of programmes on YouTube by a guy called Michael Waller from Britannia Motorcycles. A Yorkshireman based in upstate New York, he was restoring a C15. These programmes are great for me as I can actually see things being done. I can heartily recommend this guy to anyone interested in British bike restoration. He has made videos of many bikes and not only is he very informative but he is thoroughly entertaining. His videos, in conjunction with the Rupert Ratio books are fantastic resources for a newbie like me.



Restored and powder coated frame



Restored rear wheel

Then there were the bits that I couldn't leave at the powder coaters as they weren't fully taken apart, the shocks and the footrests. The shocks had chrome collets holding the spring in place and a special BSA tool was required to remove them. Of course, this tool was not to be found anywhere and is no longer manufactured. I needed the collets off to get them re-chromed and the shocks powder coated.

Fortunately the beauty and generosity of those on the Facebook BSA C15 Restoration Group came to the rescue. A guy called Steve had made this tool himself and offered to loan it to me..... without knowing me from Adam – how cool is that? Steve posted it to me and off came the collets just like that. As soon as I get the re-chromed collets back I will get the shocks put back together and post it back to him. Thanks Steve.

So the collets were off the shocks, the rubbers removed from the footrests and these parts needed re-painting. I considered taking them to Tadley Powder Coaters, but as there were only seven bits I decided to try re-painting them myself. Earlier I had bought a can of chrome spray to 'chrome' bare metal parts, but to be frank, this looked pants. I bought some new attachments for my drill so I could polish up bare metal parts, even screw heads and washers (OCD, I greet you!). I could also remove old paint back to metal, hence me getting the idea to re-paint myself. I have primed and coated all these parts, and in my personal opinion they look fantastic. The light fixture in the lounge came in really handy.

I think this looks great but my wife wasn't overly pleased with this, especially when my son started re-spraying his car grille in the conservatory at the same time. That solvent smell wafted through the whole house.



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Crank sleeve removal

Towards the end of the month I needed to address the crank sleeve that Jim Bates had pointed out to me in December. This was firmly (as it is meant to be) stuck in place. As usual a special BSA tool that is no longer available was required to remove it. Advice varied from cutting it off, drilling holes and inserting bolts into it to pull it off or sending it to be removed by Mr Ratio himself. I ended up adapting a sealant gun with Allen keys attached to move it a bit, then got tyre spoons under it to move it a bit more, until I could get a gear puller under it. Off it came. True lateral thinking. And then I could only source the replacement from a British bike specialist in Austria.



Fork trousers in place

Finally, there was a very exciting moment in the month - 'First Assembly'. I had all the parts needed to do my first bit of assembly - the steering head and fork trousers. They all went on a treat and were promptly removed due to the chrome spray mentioned above looking rubbish. Chrome spray removed, metal polished, re-re-assembled and it looks great. A REALLY satisfying moment - look at that shiny finish!

So, where are we now? Waiting. Waiting for engine casings, chrome, petrol tank and March for re-painting. There's going to be stuff to do in February, although I don't think there will be that much to report as I'm back at work full time as well. We'll see though and I'll let you

know. In the meantime, stay healthy and safe. Roll on the vaccination programme and good weather.

Jon Case

ROUTE PLANNER RETURNS - TYRE

I'm a little overdue on this news as I was passed the information a few months back by member Bryan Symons. You remember the route planner TYRE, used by many pc users before MyRoute-App (now MRA Routeplanner) was launched? For those of you who have missed Jan Boersma's TYRE, he has launched a new version, now improved and still absolutely free. So, you have the option to use either TYRE or MRA (if you are a pc user) and can import and exchange routes between the two.

A good number of us (especially Mac users) are happy to have access to MRA Routeplanner, and many thanks to Will Brooks for recently posting a set of videos explaining how to make the best of it for those who need a little more assistance. You will find his post in the allmembers section in Groups.io. For those who have missed TYRE, head over and download - <https://www.tyre2navigate.com>

Editor

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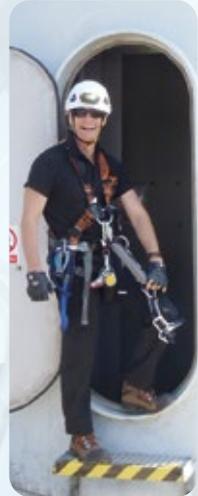
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TVAM CALENDAR

SOCIAL RIDES, T-RUNS, TRACK DAYS AND OTHER EVENTS IN 2021

MARCH 29TH - COVID-19 NOTICE REGARDING RUNS AND TRIPS

WE ARE OPEN AGAIN FOR 6-PERSON RIDES FROM MARCH 29TH! CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL TEAM FOR ORGANISED RIDES AND ASSOCIATES CHECK IN WITH YOUR OBSERVERS TO RECOMMENCE YOUR OBSERVED RIDES.

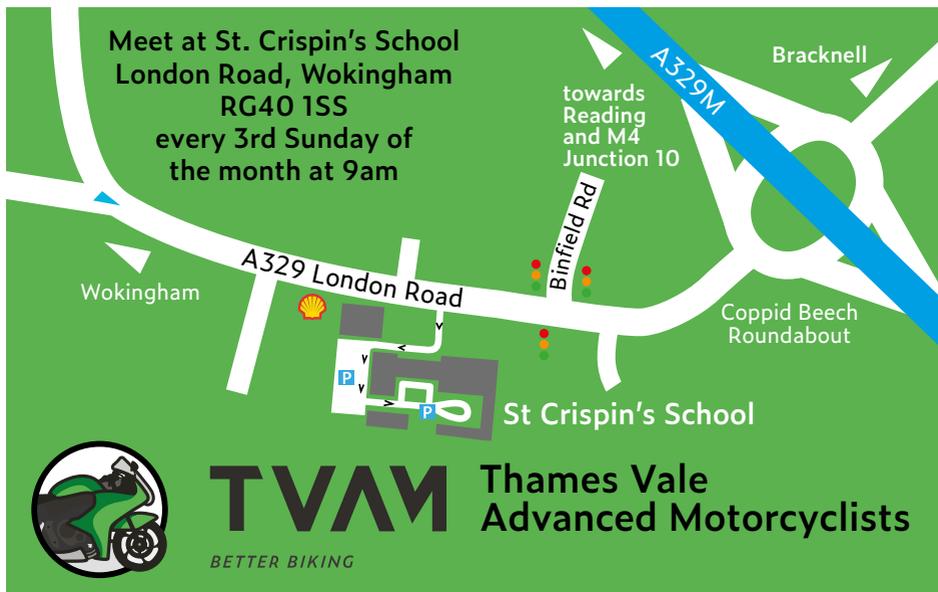
MARCH/APRIL 2021

ST CRISPIN'S SUNDAY - ONLINE ZOOM MEET 9am

See the allmembers/groups.io for full details and link.

CLUB MEETS - Online Zoom monthly meeting only at the present time

Monthly meetings were held at 9am on the 3rd Sunday of each month at St. Crispin's School, London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS. At the present time we have a Zoom meet on that Sunday - see groups.io or Slipstream for joining details.



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

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

Basingstoke (BAR)

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

Camberley (CLAMs)

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

Great Northern (GNATs)

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

Reading (RAMs)

When: First Monday or Tuesday of the month
March/Tuesday; April/Monday etc.
How: Join us - sams@tvam.groups.io
Time: Zoom call at 8pm

Slough (SAM)

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

Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)

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

Wokingham & Bracknell (WOBMOB)

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

Green Team (Full Members)

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

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Cross Check link		www.tvam.org/cross-check-request
Observer Health Checks	Andy Wedge	observerhealthchecks@tvam.org
Observer Interest	Andy Wedge	observerinterest@tvam.org
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OBSERVER FORUM (mailing list):

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

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TEAM LEADERS (teamleaders@tvam.org): Quarterly meetings - Held online - Tuesday 27th April

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Wantage & Newbury (WAGs)	Keith Miller	wantage@tvam.org
Wokingham & Bracknell (WOBMOB)	Andy MacWalter, Ian Gaitley	wokingham@tvam.org
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CLUB CONTACTS

Honorary 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

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Slipstream Editor	Salli Griffith	slipstream@tvam.org
Events & Promotions	Phil Donovan	events@tvam.org
Green Team Leader	Alan Hudson	fullmembers@tvam.org

Committee Meetings: These are held at James House, Mere Park, Dedmere Road, Marlow, SL7 1FJ
Next Meetings: (M – Marlow/Internet), 9th March 2021 (I) – all meetings normally on second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm and for the present all are Internet meetings. If a member wishes to attend they should contact Adrian Ellison – secretary@tvam.org before the meeting date.

Special Roles:

Advanced Bike Control	Chris Caswell	advancedbikecontrol@tvam.org or abc@tvam.org
Advanced Plus (previously EAR)	Mike Walden	advancedplus@tvam.org
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BikeCraft	Di Woodcock	bikecraft@tvam.org
Bike Maintenance	Phil Ryan	bikemaintenance@tvam.org
Café and Stopover Database	Chris Brownlee	cafedatabase@tvam.org
Carbon Offsetting	Nigel Winstanley	carbon-offset@tvam.org
Events Diary (non-run events)	Phil Donovan	eventsdiary@tvam.org
Girl Torque	Alie Ball, Salli Griffith	girltorque@tvam.org
Groups.io Support	Andy Wedge, Chris Brownlee	groups.io@tvam.org
Incident Reporting	Training Team	incident@tvam.org
Leaflet Supply	Phil Donovan	leaflets@tvam.org
Look Lean Roll		llr@tvam.org
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Offroad Riding	Clive Marsden	offroad@tvam.org
Pillion Rider Course	Alan Hudson	prc@tvam.org
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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.

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, Dukess Ride, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6LS. Registration Number: 03556042. Charity Number 1069767.

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