

LADAM Newsletter

July 2023



Congratulations to ...

Andy Peers with Observers Clare Bishop & Les Congdon
Steve Moore with Observer Rodger Williamson
Michael Porter with Observers Bill Morris & Stuart McFarlane

For passing the Advanced test since the last newsletter

AND

Adam Monk with Observer Paul Tomkins
Martin Faulds with Observer Steve Tamsett

For passing the Advanced test with a First

In this Newsletter

Welcome to the July Newsletter. It's been a busy few months for group riding, with the LADAM tour of France & Belgium, trips to Lincoln and to the Cotswolds, a Chippie ride and several new leaders for the Saturday morning ride. These have all been very successful, and have given us a few things to think about for Group riding. Steve Rowthorne has given some Hints and Tips on the topic and we are looking at updating our guidance for both ride leaders and riders. Look out for more information in the coming weeks.



I hope you manage all the way to the end as there are some important news items In Other News.

Many thanks as always to all the contributors this month. Feedback and stories always welcome, contact chair@ladam.org.uk.



Spring/Summer Rideouts

Below is the schedule for the Summer Rideouts through to September. You can book now for any of the rides by clicking on the destination to open the form, which will give you full details of the ride (where confirmed), including the starting point.

Date	Destination	Leader	No of Bikes
Sunday 16 th July	Leicestershire & Rutland Tour	Richard Withers	12
Saturday 12 th August	Bangers & Cash	Richard Withers	12
Saturday 16 th September	Mystery Tour	Steve Tamsett & Bill Morris	12

As places on all these rides will be limited, **you will need to complete the relevant form to register your place.** An email will also be sent for each ride with further details, but book now to make sure of your place.

To access the relevant form, simply click on the destination in the table above. Please note that these are Google forms and you may not be able to access them on some computers. Associates are welcome, but please speak to your Observer first.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Anthony or Zoe.



The Lincoln Loop 13th May

Dafydd Prichard bravely volunteered to lead his first ride and led a group of riders up towards Lincolnshire on a warm day back in May. He set an excellent pace along some beautiful roads, across through Leicestershire, Rutland and into Lincolnshire. It was unfortunately not without mishap, due to an unexpected road closure and a closed cafe where we were expecting to take our break.

Undeterred, we found a Starbucks with a nearby Kentucky Fried chicken close to our destination, which gave us plenty of options for lunch. We also met a couple of Observers from the local group – gladly helping them lift a dropped bike in the carpark!

The second man drop off system worked very well on the way up, but came undone in the busy streets of Lincoln on the way back, where the group got split due to the difficulty of marking, and the disappointing performance of Waze as a SatNav option. One group escaped Lincoln and managed to regroup with Greg in the lead, for a cross country ride back to Birstall, where they arrived only slightly ahead of Dafydd, who had led a smaller group around the sights of Lincoln!

It was great to get out and ride with a group of Advanced riders for the first time in the year and many thanks to Dafydd for volunteering. Hopefully there will be another one!



Ride to the Cotswolds 4th June

The rescheduled Cotswolds run took place on a beautiful day at the beginning of June. A full complement of twelve bikes departed from Lutterworth, with a quick run down the Fosse Way to just south of the M40, and a cross country hop to the Touchdown Café in Wellesbourne for a welcome breakfast.

From there we set off to Broadway Tower for a quick break and a photo opportunity. The views are amazing from there, and you can see for miles across the Warwickshire countryside.

From Broadway Tower, it was down the excellent Fish Hill into Broadway itself and then smaller roads all the way via the Slaughters and Bourton on the Water to the very pretty (and busy) town of Burford. We stopped for lunch at the garden centre in Burford and then, escaping the gravel car park unscathed, set off back via the back roads to Chipping Norton and then on to Hook Norton.

The drop off system was put to the test when our Tail End Charlie hit some oil and his bike slid from under him. Unaware of the incident at the front of the group, the leader and the second rider had come to a halt and waited for the remainder of the group to catch up. The way was clearly marked and everyone successfully regrouped and rode on to Southam. A quick check of the panniers on the bike and then the group split and headed their separate ways back either back down the Fosse or across country back to Lutterworth.

Thanks to everyone who joined me! The next group ride will be on *16th July*. Click [here](#) for the form and more details.



Photo Opportunity at Broadway Tower



Lunch in Burford



Chip Shop Rideouts

After the May ride was cancelled due to appalling weather, we were finally able to get out on *Tuesday 13th June* for ride over to Oundle via Uppingham. It was another excellent turnout with fourteen bikes leaving Birstall on a fabulous summer evening. The ride headed towards Tilton and then took an unexpected right turn across country to Uppingham, with some very small roads well off the beaten track (only one had grass in the middle – just as well it was dry for the sportsbike at the back!).



From Uppingham we headed towards Harringworth and had the best view of the Viaduct coming down from Seaton. From there, it was over towards Bulwick, on to Oundle and the Blue Marlin Fish & Chip shop for some excellent fish and chips all round. It was unknown territory for many and the views were stunning across the Leicestershire and Rutland countryside.



The sun was low by the time we left Oundle, for the quick run back via the lovely A427 to unlovely Corby and then on to the A6 Roundabout in Market Harborough where everyone went their separate ways.

It was great to see some new faces on the ride and I hope you'll all join the next one on *Tuesday 11th July*, which will be led by Nigel Vernon. Future dates for your diary are Tuesday 8th August and Tuesday 12th September.



LADAM Tour to Rochefort

Thanks to Mark Franks for the write up of the Tour and to Karen for the photos! The full write from Mark is available at the end of the newsletter but read on for highlights.

When the email came out from Mike about the trip to Belgium, asking if people were interested in a trip to Belgium myself and the wife thought ok let's do it - the first time back in the EU on a bike since covid 3½ years previously.

Mike Anthony organised the trip with great efficiency, including a pre-holiday briefing a week before departure. On the day, after debating whether to wear summer gear or Goretex, we joined the group at Market Harborough and set off enroute to our overnight destination in St Omer, about 30 miles from Calais.



Next morning the group met up to ride to our main destination, Hotel La Malle Poste in Rochefort, Belgium. The distance was about 180 miles with scheduled stops about every 1½ hours. The lunch stop was in a small town where only one café was open. Thrown by the size of the group, it took a long time to serve lunch and we were soon behind time, heading towards Givet for our afternoon break. With only a short distance (40 mins) to go, the group split with some of us pushing on along some lovely roads to the hotel, which was an excellent find by Tony and Sue and highly recommended.

The first ride on Sunday was about 120 miles around the Ardennes region, venturing into Luxembourg. This gave us some great roads, a magic variety of bends, great views and a definite difference in tarmac quality with Belgium road surfaces (rough) and Luxembourg roads (smooth)! The weather was also great - 23 degrees - I was wishing I had come in my vented gear (lol). Given the heat, after lunch the majority of the group opted to go straight back to the hotel for an early beer, leaving just the Kawasaki riders to tackle the more challenging second part.



For Monday's ride out, there was a choice of a longer 100-mile ride or a shorter ride to Dinant for lunch and a walk around. Most of the group opted for Dinant, via a coffee stop in Durbuy. Dinant is very nice with a Citadel, a large church, shops, cafes and river cruises. Monday was a bank holiday, and it was packed with people and a lot of bikes!



Many bikes in Dinant!

Tuesday soon came around and it was time to head back to St Omer via a lovely back road to Arras where we stopped for lunch. From there it was a short hop on to St Omer for our last night.

Tony had booked a local restaurant for our last supper as a group. Wine and beer flowed, and a great time was had by all!



Three Caves Restaurant

On Wednesday morning we all made our own way to the Eurotunnel for the train back to England – what a shock - freezing cold, traffic jams on the M25 and ignorant drivers, welcome back and thank goodness for the Goretex!

We had a great time, got to know people from the club better and had some good friendly banter between the group. The trip has rekindled our desire to do more trips. Thanks to Mike for organising and leading the trip and roll on next year - if you have not tried it you need to - Mike's already planning next year's trip.



Club Saturday Rideouts

Don't forget, as well as trips abroad, Chippie shop rides and full day rides, we also have a regular Saturday ride, whatever the weather. If you have passed your test, you can join the group of regulars and gain insight into how group riding can be enjoyable and help you maintain your riding standards.



Observer Training

Motorway Training

Observer training is an essential part of ensuring that we continue to offer excellent coaching to all Associates and Members and all of our Observers are regularly observed themselves for their coaching and riding skills.

One of our examiners has pointed out that Associates are not always as good on motorways as they could be and so back in March, Steve Rowthorne organised Motorway training for the Observers.

A circular route was devised that started and ended at Leicester North Services and took in the A46, M1, M69 and M42, with stops for debriefing at motorway stations. Observers set out in groups of four, using the traffic lights to set intervals, which gave each group a completely different ride due to the changing road conditions – including roadworks on the M42.

A final debrief was held at Fosse Riders Club House in June, with a lot of lively debate on some of the finer points. Key points that arose included the importance of a good briefing; the definition of undertaking and when you can/can't do it; riding too close to vehicles in front; overtaking techniques and how to handle an Associate that may be too enthusiastic with their speed.

If you are an Associate, you may find that you will be doing more motorway and dual carriageway training, and if you're a Member who feels that they could do with more training, please contact any of the Observers.

National Observer Assessments

Up until now, Observers have been classified as Local Observers (LO) or National Observers (NO). The training is exactly the same, but LOs can be passed by one of our own LADAM Local Observer Assessors, while NOs have all taken an assessment carried out by an IAMRS NO Assessor.

In practice there is no difference to the level of coaching that our Associates receive, and IAMRS have always intended to roll both into an NO qualification, accredited by Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), so over the course of the next two years, the LO qualification will disappear.

The majority of our LOs will be taking their NO assessment next weekend, 8th and 9th July. We are confident that they will pass the assessment, but wish them all good luck.



Tips from the Chief Observer

In this newsletter, our Chief Observer, Steve, talks about **Advanced** Group Riding.

Riding in a group can be very rewarding when done well, but it can also be one of the most frustrating riding experiences ever if not. I'm not going to talk about the details of going on a group ride, but more about the responsibility every member on the ride has.

Where possible on straight roads, ride in pairs in a staggered formation, with pairs two seconds apart. While this sounds close, use a distance of one car length for every 5mph of speed to calculate a two second gap.



In practice this means at 30mph, assuming a car is four metres in length, you should be travelling 20 metres behind the bike in front. At 70mph, that is 66 metres behind. For most of us our mental maths isn't quick enough to calculate that while riding, so use the Two Second Rule. Select a fixed point and from the time the bike in front passes that point and you pass it, you should be able to say "only a fool breaks the two second rule". It's safe to say that most drivers do not leave this distance!

On bends, you should follow the normal positioning rules to maximise your view and smooth your ride — open up the gap between you and the other rider in your pair for the bend, but then get back into position.



Staggered group formation on the France trip

The benefit of everyone doing this is massive. If on a motorway the group rides like this it makes it difficult for other road users to break the group up, which when you're travelling a long distance saves time and confusion, particularly as marking the route is very difficult. On any other road it keeps the group together, reducing any confusion or aggravation to other road users.

To ride in such a formation, you have responsibilities no matter where you are in the group:

The Group Leader should ride to the right of the lane to be able to have the best view, via the right hand mirror, of what's happening with the spacing of the group behind them.

The Group Leader has to plan any manoeuvre well in advance, for instance turning into another road or coming into a town. Ideally, they should slow down in advance of the turning to bunch the group up and, if relevant, apply the indicator in plenty of time, being very aware of surrounding road users to avoid confusing anyone.

The Rider in Position 2 rides one second behind the leader and to their left, as shown in the diagram above. This is to give as much visibility of what the Group Leader is seeing as possible so they can understand what the ride leader may do or is going to do. It also means they will see any direction change in plenty of time and can start planning where they will position themselves to mark the junction for the rest of the group. Good marking is critical to ensure the group can pick up the route if it gets split. (A whole other article!)

The Rider in Position 3 rides two seconds behind the group leader and one second behind and to the right of Position 2. From there they are looking as far ahead as they can see and are constantly working out what the ride leader and Position 2 are going to do. They also need to think if they need to alter their position to allow Position 2 to come out to do a lane change or an overtake. Likewise for marking a junction if the rider in Position 1 has had a lapse in concentration and forgotten to mark it!

This formation, this mindset and this thought process is for everyone in the group all the way back to the last rider, referred to as Tail End Charlie.

Tail End Charlie is always watching from the back over the whole group to see if anyone is struggling for any reason. If anyone does have a problem and must pull over, TEC will stay with them to assist. Once the problem is resolved, they can continue following the route as marked by the drop off system.



As TEC is always at the back of the group, when the Group Leader can see them in the mirrors, they know they have the whole group together. This makes decision making at the front so much easier. TEC whenever possible or practical will also try and ride slightly further out to the right to give the Group Leader as much opportunity to see them as they can. Wherever the drop off system is used, TEC will signal to the marking rider and will then, to a certain extent, control the traffic behind them to allow the rider who has dropped off to pull off in front of them.

As a member of a group ride you have greater responsibilities than when you are riding alone. You must be able to ride at the speed limit when it is safe and sensible to do so and be confident and comfortable riding in relative proximity with other riders. You must think constantly what the riders in front are doing and are going to do in every single situation that arises. It's also important to avoid just following the rider in front, so everyone should pick their own lines within the formation, even within the stagger and particularly around bends.

The beauty of riding in an Advanced Group is that we know everyone in the group should be applying the same thought process as us. We have all had the same training and IPSGA, ride planning and observations should be being applied which means we all know how the other riders are going to ride, the lines they will take in the bends, the considerations they will give to other road users, and when to make the overtake and when not to during the group ride.

There are a lot more nuggets of information I could add but if we all strive for the above, we can look at the other stuff later down the line (see below article on Group Riding Training).

As always please don't hesitate to get in touch to ask questions. steve_r@ladam.org.uk.



Group Riding Training

It's been great to see so many riders joining the different rides over the last few months and as an IAMRS club we will continue to offer a wide variety of options to help our members maintain their riding standards and ride with like-minded groups of bikers.

To allow as many people as possible to enjoy the rides, we will be offering Group riding training for all members who are interested in the group rides. This will introduce riders to the standards expected of a group ride, including staggering, marking the route and riding progressively within the speed limits.

We will also be offering training for Ride leaders on what is required for a good group ride and how to lead a ride without losing anyone!

Look out for more information on this training and read Steve's article above on group riding.





My LADAM Journey

This month, Mike Hampton who passed his test earlier this year, talks through his biking and LADAM journey

My journey – or If I can do it anyone can.

As an associate member, I was both impressed and overawed with the stories some of the full members have posted. I could never be that good! but then I thought is that really the point. My story is more one of encouragement for those associates or those thinking of joining the IAM who want to challenge themselves to become safer riders.

My first experience of motorcycling was in the late 1950s, at the age of 12 when my friend was given a 1929, girder rigid 125cc Royal Enfield with hand gear change. It was rusty and seized, but we managed to free it up and had a wonderful time riding it around the field. We created a short track and timed ourselves over each lap. I graduated to riding through the woods where there was an old quarry on a 350 bullet, which I bought for 30 bob (£1.50). Again, it was a non-runner and the two experiences sparked a lifelong love of automotive engineering.



My first road bike at the age of 17 was a 75cc little Italian two-stroke. Slow but noisy! Handled well in the dry, but seemed to take against me whenever it rained, and I had the pleasure of watching it sliding away from me into a ditch or across a junction on more than one occasion. I guess the fact that it was never at high speed was the saving grace, but clearly as a youngster, I was not exactly sensible.

As a teenager, my heroes were Sammy Miller, who I was able to watch achieving some amazing clears on his home built trials bike, and also Jeff Smith, champion scrambler (motocross) on his BSA, gold star. That's why when I was 19, and had moved to Derby to become an apprentice with Rolls-Royce, I bought a 250 Greaves Scottish to have a go at trials riding. Sadly, slow speed, naddering over rocks or through boggy moorland was not my thing and so it was another 10 years before I touched a motorcycle again.

In the late 1970s, my friend Kev, still an enthusiastic Biker today, suggested we both have a go at motocross. This proved to be definitely my thing and on my 250 Bultaco, blind stupidity and opening the throttle when any hazard came up whilst gripping the tank with my knees, triumphed over skill. Sadly, a couple of wins in the junior class lead to promotion to the seniors where I once again found myself swamped by more able riders and the trophy cabinet remained sparse.



Moving ahead 25 years with nothing but cars in the garage, my interest in biking was sparked again when, looking into buying a kitchen, I spied a Triumph Tiger in the corner of the factory. The owner said he would be using it to tour Spain three months later. It didn't take me long to select a Yamaha Tenere 700 that suited my style, and I joined him and a couple of others for a brilliant couple of weeks, including a lot of mountain riding in the Sierra Nevadas. Since then I have upgraded to a KTM Duke 690 and in 2019 to my current bike, a Husqvarna Svartpilen 701. Whether it is tyre improvement, modern bike electronics and riding aids, or the fact that I'm not quite as stupid as I used to be, I have managed not to fall off any of these bikes.... well not when travelling above 2 miles an hour!

So in the late spring of 2022, we come to my LADAM story where the ever patient, Mike Anthony was appointed my observer. I could say my first ride was memorable, but for all the wrong reasons as, after about 20 minutes, Mike zoomed past me and waved me into a layby to have "a little chat". It then seems that he went yard by yard through the miles we had covered, and to be fair I don't think there were many yards that I didn't make at least one mistake! When I asked him if I was the worst rider he had ever had, his silence spoke volumes.



Was that Mike?

Since then, I have learnt a great deal, and whilst I know I will never be a shining example of an advanced rider, I am much improved, and as the saying goes a more "progressive, safer, and sometimes smoother rider". I am sure that my journey over the last nine or 10 months, has extended my life expectancy and indeed already saved my life in one memorable occasion. It is perhaps worth describing this example.

Mike had asked Sean to observe me for a ride to get his opinion and we were joined by Bryan who was training to be an observer himself. At the point where my life might have ended we were on a B road which had a 50 limit and was relatively straight approaching a crossroads with a minor road that was probably NSL.

Before joining LADAM I would've been doing 50 miles an hour (let's be honest, probably more than that), and knowing I was on the major road, given a quick glance, but continued at speed. Fortunately, my newfound knowledge and skills meant that recognising that bushes and a high hedge obscured vision of the side road I slowed from 50 to possibly 39 or 40 miles an hour moving towards the centre of the road. Looking left, there was no sign of a car, so within feet of the junction, I once again looked forward and was about to open the throttle when a 60mph black streak shot across in front of me! I braked hard and veered left and there was no contact, but it must've been millimetres away. The vehicle was so close and so fast that I couldn't even tell whether it was a car or a small van.

Sean turned right and followed the car, finding the driver several hundred yards down the road with the door open crying as he realised what he done! My heart goes out to him, despite his lack of observational skills, he was not intentionally reckless, and was at the same time, both unlucky and very lucky.

My observed rides continued until Mike said he was recommending me for my test - I was convinced that this was not because he believed I was good enough, but that he felt he couldn't make me any better. Discussing life, the universe and everything with Mike. I commented on the stories I've been reading in the monthly newsletters and he suggested I should write one too. When I started writing I had not taken the test but I am pleased/amazed to tell everyone that, I have now actually taken and passed my advanced motorcycling test!

So, as I said at the beginning, this should be encouragement to everybody that if I can do it so can you.

*Thanks to Mike for his story – and thank goodness that incident didn't end differently!
Since writing this, Mike has led a group ride – he may say that if he can, anyone can!*



And in other news...

Changes to the LADAM Committee

We are very sad to lose Steve Tamsett from the LADAM Committee after many years of support and hard work to get LADAM to where it is today. Steve has been a stalwart of the Committee, previously taking on the role of Chairman and most recently the Treasurer. He goes with our very heartfelt gratitude, but you will be glad to know that he will remain an active member of our Observer team.



Steve Tamsett on his Tiger 1200 on the recent trip to France and Belgium

In his place as Treasurer, we welcome another Steve – Steve Moore. Steve has been with LADAM for a while, recently rejoined after a short sojourn elsewhere and he has just passed his Advanced test (see Congratulations at the top of the newsletter). He is looking forward to developing greater skills and progressing his riding skills further, with the aim of joining Blood Bikes and maybe training as an Observer. He is excited to be joining the committee and be part of growing and developing LADAM further.



Steve will take over this month, also taking over the treasurer@ladam.org.uk email address. I'm sure you will meet him over the next few months as he has already joined several of the group rides – here's a picture of his bike so you can recognise it, even if you don't know him!

Ladies' IAM Taster Day

Do you know any female riders who would be interested in an IAM taster with LADAM? We are planning to offer a free taster to anyone who may be interested. The date is yet to be confirmed but is likely to be in September to take account of holidays. If you know of anyone, please ask them to get in touch with Zoë (chair@ladam.org.uk).

Confused?!!

This one from Mike Anthony this month. Who knew that buses laid track?!

Do you have any examples of confusing signs, videos or instructions that you want to share? Please send any examples you come across to Zoë.



IAM RoadSmart

The latest IAM RoadSmart News is [here](#), their tips and blogs are [here](#).



Full Story – Tour of France & Belgium

So, when the email came out from Mike asking if people were interested in a trip to Belgium myself and the wife thought ok let's do it. This would be the first time back in the EU on a bike since covid three and a half years ago, prior to then we had been all over the EU on bike trips for maybe 14 years but covid stopped it and we had not for some reason restarted.

Mike Anthony organised the trip with great efficiency, sending out details of the proposed routes, which Eurotunnel trains and which hotels to book for the five day trip. The week before departure Mike organised a meeting to run through the holiday, where we were going to meet up and what time to leave and went through the drop-off system he wanted to use as we travelled around.



D-Day soon came, and the majority of us arrived at McDonalds near Market Harborough at the pre-arranged time and set off for the Eurotunnel. A14 – M11 flashed by, although we then had to filter for miles on the M25 due to an accident on the opposite carriageway. The pace picked up again on the M20 and we arrived at the Eurotunnel earlier than expected, so jumped onto an earlier train with no problems.

30 minutes later we were in France, riding on the back roads to our overnight stay in St Omer, about 30 miles from Calais. This was the first time we used the drop-off system, which we would use for the rest of the trip. It worked out brilliantly throughout the trip with the second rider marking each junction or roundabout/turn and, despite there being 13 riders behind Mike, it was surprising how quickly your turn kept coming back around.



First stop on the first day

I say it worked brilliantly except for one day on Sunday's ride out when a certain Kawasaki rider (you know who you are) got mixed up with some foreign bikes thinking he was with us and missed a turn being marked (yes we took the P).

On the second morning, the group met up for the trip to our main hotel - the Hotel La Malle Poste in Rochefort Belgium. The distance was about 180 miles and on some nice roads, with good scenery and a mixture of bends and straights. Mike had scheduled stops about every 1.5 hours so the first coffee stop soon came.

The lunch stop was in a small town where only one café was open. Thrown by the size of the group, it took a long time to serve lunch and we were soon way behind time.



Lunch on Day One

Mike was getting a little stressed by this point, especially as we all needed fuel as well, but we all got fuelled up and carried on. The afternoon coffee stop soon came which was in Givet a nice place by the river, and only a short distance (40 mins) to go, so we pushed on and finally arrived at the hotel which turned out to be an excellent choice (thanks to Tony for finding this).

Rooms were large, with safe parking, swimming pool, large sun terrace, good breakfast. The only down side was that they had no restaurant for evening meals, but five minutes down the road there was a large choice so not really an issue. First night there we all ate together in an Italian restaurant, which was very nice, but for the next two evenings we split up into smaller groups as it was easier to get seated and served

On Sunday morning after breakfast we set off on the first ride out, which was about 120 miles and took in some of the Ardennes region and also Luxembourg. Some great roads, magic variety of bends, great views and a definite difference in tarmac quality with Belgium road surfaces like ours (rough) and Luxembourg roads being like billiard tables in comparison. Again, we had a morning coffee stop, at La Roche-en-Ardenne a very nice town with large square, picturesque buildings and cafes in abundance, followed then by lunch at Esch-sur-Sure by the river, then an afternoon coffee at Saint-Hubert. The weather was also great - 23 degrees - I was wishing I had come in my vented gear (lol)



Road looks like Northamptonshire!

By the time the afternoon coffee stop came a number of us were feeling the strain (tired and hot) so Mike suggested going straight back to the hotel from Saint-Hubert and missing the last quarter of the ride, which apparently was very taxing (bendy), most of us decided to do this with only the 3 Kawasaki sports bike riders carrying on. We all went back and had a swim in the pool and a well-deserved beer or 2!!



For Monday's ride out, we had a choice, a large 100-mile ride or a short ride to Dinant for lunch and a walk around. Again the Kawasaki boys went for the big ride out while the rest of us went to Dinant. We took a short ride first to Durbuy where we had coffee. This place seemed to be a mecca for adventure sports with canoeing and zip wires to name but a few things on offer.

After coffee we then carried on to Dinant, most of us had elected to do the short ride as it was forecast to get up to 25 degrees and it did. What a nice place Dinant is, with a Citadel, large church, shops, cafes and river cruises. Monday was a bank holiday, and it was packed, lots of bikers were out and it was tough to park, but we squeezed in and then split up to explore. As it was lunchtime, we found a nice café overlooking the river, the food was good - it's not all about the riding!! After lunch we did some more exploring then went back to the hotel for a rest and a few beers.

Tuesday soon came around and it was time to head back to St Omer. We took a nice back road route to Arras where we had lunch. Arras is a very nice place with some great buildings, shops and squares with lots of bars/cafes - perfect for people watching and well worth a visit if you have never been. From Arras we made a short hop on to St Omer for our last night.

As it was our last night Tony had arranged a last supper for all of us in a local restaurant in a cellar called the 3 caves, which was brilliant and very well priced. Wine and beer flowed, and a great time was had by all which made a magic end to the trip.



Three Caves Restaurant

Wednesday morning and it was time to make our way back. We all made our own way to the Eurotunnel as some were staying for an extra couple of days and we were again in split hotels. It's just a short hop up the motorway and we were soon on the train and back in England - what a shock - freezing cold, traffic jams on the M25 and ignorant drivers, welcome back!

We had a great time, got to know people from the club better and we had some good friendly banter between the group and the trip has rekindled our desire to do some more trips. Thanks to Mike for organising it all and leading the rides superbly and roll on next year - if you have not tried it you need to, Mike's already planning next year.



Contact Details

Website: <https://www.ladam.org.uk/home>

Facebook Private Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LADAM>

For future events check out the [Calendar Page](#)

Chair & Newsletter Editor: Zoë Eastwell – chair@ladam.org.uk

Group Secretary: Bill Morris – secretary@ladam.org.uk

Treasurer: Steve Moore – treasurer@ladam.org.uk

Chief Observer: Steve Rowthorne – steve_r@ladam.org.uk

If you would like to provide a story, maybe about your journey with LADAM or an event coming up, please contact Zoë. If we don't get any volunteers, be wary, you may be volunteered! The same applies to ride leaders. You have been warned!

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