

LADAM Newsletter

November 2022



Congratulations to ...

Chris Ratcliffe and Observer Greg Garner
Stephen Pickering and Less Congdon
Observers Richard Withers
Stan Hulme and Observer James Rushton

Who have passed their Advanced test since the last newsletter

Alan James and Observer Steve Tamsett

Who passed his Advanced test with a First

In this Newsletter

Welcome to November's newsletter. Where has the year gone! The past two months have seen some great weather and some pretty dreadful weather, but having ridden past some reservoirs recently, the rain is exactly what we need, even if it's not conducive to riding. Although there is a saying that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear. I'm sure that some of our Winter Programme presenters will agree and be able to help with that!

I love Autumn, but wet weather combined with leaves on the road can be pretty slippery. And with the clocks changing, everyone driving home has forgotten how to drive in the dark – so be wary!

Read on for details of the last of the formal day rides and Tuesday evening Chip Shop rides, as well as details of what is lined up for our Winter Programme.

Many thanks as always to all the contributors this month. Feedback and stories always welcome, contact zoe.ladamorg@gmail.com.



2022 Ride Outs

We have had some great organised rides this year, starting back in April with a ride down to Burford and finishing in September with a fantastic ride across to North East Lincolnshire. While the evenings have been long enough, we've also managed to arrange a ride out on the second Tuesday of every month, starting at Birstall and including fish and chips from a variety of restaurants – including McDonalds!

A huge thank you from the Committee to everyone who has volunteered to lead a ride this year and to everyone who has joined us. We know that it's difficult for many of you to get to Birstall for 6:30pm for the Tuesday night ride outs, so while we will definitely do this again next year, we may look at some other options too. Providing we have enough leaders, we will also offer some longer rides again on alternate weekends to Club Weekends.



Day Trip to New York

Greg Garner led the final day trip of the year to Miami Beach, via New York at the end of September. As it was a club Saturday, the ride replaced the usual Group ride and was therefore open to everyone, including Associates.

The final full day Group Ride for 2022 took place on 24th September. At 9.30am, with the glorious autumn sun shining on our faces, nine LADAM members set off travelling east, from Birstall heading for Miami Beach, via New York. "EAST?????" I hear you cry. Surely the States are to the west.



Leg 1 of the East Coast tour took us through the smallest county of Rutland taking in the picturesque villages of Teigh, Thistleton and the Withams, and on to South Kersteven, where we made our first stop for a top value breakfast at the Colsterworth Truck Stop.

Our next leg was the longest of the day, Colsterworth to Miami Beach, taking us along the Fen lanes, which many years ago were the main routes out to Boston. Barely the width of 2 cars in places, but so much more fun to be had than riding along the 50mph Lincolnshire A roads.

Late morning, we rode in to New York, where we stopped for an opportunistic photo. Unlike the USA version, this smaller version of New York is only named once. Mainly because if you tried to write the name twice, you would have been out of the other side of the village before the sign ended.





Setting off again, we took to the bottom end of the Lincolnshire Wolds, and arrived at Miami Beach around 1pm, where following another photo opportunity, we sampled the culinary delights of Fish and Chips, in the glorious sunshine, with a breath-taking view of the North Sea wind farm.

Fully rested, we headed off North Westerly, on our return journey, this time through the more testing undulating twisting roads of the Lincolnshire Wolds, passing Cadwell Park race circuit then turning south heading towards Sleaford, where we had our final rest stop of the day.

Unfortunately, the final leg of the ride was in the rain, but nonetheless, we stuck to the planned route and enjoyed the scenery as once again we took in the back lanes of South Kerstevan and in to Leicestershire, finally arriving back around 5pm.



Summer Tuesday Night Ride Out

September's ride was the last Chip Shop ride of this year and was led by me (Zoë). We were very lucky with the weather as we set off from Birstall heading towards Melton, turning right across country towards Ashby Folville, then up and over Burrough Hill to Somerby. We then took some smaller roads further into Rutland and then past Launde Abbey. Luckily, or perhaps disappointingly, the sheep that usually roam across the road in front of the Abbey had already gone home for the evening.

From there we took more twisty and challenging roads through the very pretty villages of Loddington and East Norton, crossing the A47 and onto Hallaton, one half of the infamous Bottle Kicking contest. It was then a few more twists and turns onto Market Harborough and the Blue Wave Fish & Chip shop. After the huge portions of fish & chips, the group then split up and headed into the dark homewards.



Leicestershire is often under-rated for its scenery and roads, so I hope that this ride showed up some of the best of the county. Unfortunately, I didn't get any pictures though!



Club Saturday Rideouts

On most Saturdays throughout the year, there is a group rideout which is open to all members. This leaves Birstall at around 9:30am and finishes around lunch time, usually taking in a cup of tea and bacon butty or cake. We also encourage all Associates to join at least one ride as part of their training.

To maintain the regular ride, we urgently need more volunteers to lead the group. You don't need to be an Observer, and we can give you guidance on how to plan a route which includes key elements of advanced riding and how to manage a group of riders, working with a Tail End Charlie. There will always be an Observer on the ride with you acting as TEC and if you've never done it before, they will be able to support you.

If this is something you are interested in doing, either regularly or occasionally, please talk to or email Steve Rowthorne.



2023 Tours

Both the France trip and the Wales trip in 2022 were organised by Mike Anthony and proved extremely popular. See previous newsletters for more details.

Mike has already confirmed two tours for next year:

- Friday 26th May to Wednesday 31st May – The Forests of France, Belgium and Luxembourg – FULLY BOOKED
- Saturday 26th August to Monday 29th August – Yorkshire Moors & Dales

The interest has been really positive and the Franch/Belgium tour is already fully booked, with people on a waiting list.

However, there are still places available on the three day Yorkshire tour, which will be over the August Bank Holiday. Don't wait too long to book through as there are only a few places left. Let us know if you're interested by completing the form [here](#). Note that details may change and putting your name down is not a commitment, nor is it a guarantee of a place if the tour is over subscribed.



Winter Programme

During the Winter when evening rides are not so easy, we run a full programme of events on the second Tuesday of every month. Held at Fosse Riders, they start at 7:30pm and are open to all of our Members and Associates.

October saw the start of the Winter Programme, again ably organised by James Rushton. Dean Ellison, well known to many of our members and former WSB racer and advanced track rider coach, gave us an insight into how he uses technology when training on the track. Using a camera mounted securely on his motorbike, he is able to play a ride back to the trainee, identifying where improvements can be made, both in positioning on the track and body position on the bike.



Dean knows most of the circuits around the world and shared his knowledge and training techniques with us, using the videos he takes while following a trainee. While his session focused on training specifically on the track, many of the improvements that can be made to track riding can also apply to riding on the road. Look where you're going, move with the bike, use the full width of the road and above all, plan your next move. Small changes can dramatically improve your ride and using video effectively can highlight where these changes can be made.

Many thanks to Dean and MCA for a really interesting talk.

Future events include a talk from The Helmet Inspection Company, "How safe is your helmet after a drop?". They'll be teaming up with MCA who will be talking about how to fit a helmet. January sees the return of Jim Sampson, ex Police Motorcyclists. Last year's talk was fascinating and thoroughly recommended. Kieran from Sangha Race & Restoration will also be returning with a Motorcycle Maintenance Q&A.

The next evening event is on **8th November**, where Alex Hathaway, IAMRoadSmart Examiner, will join us again to answer questions on advanced riding and the Advanced Test. This will start at 7:30pm at Fosse Riders and will be preceded by the **LADAM AGM**, which will start at 7:00pm. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Watch out for further information on these and other events via email, Facebook and the newsletter.



Tips from the Chief Observer

In this edition, our Chief Observer, Steve, considers the benefits of Self Analysis.

One of the key skills of an Advanced rider is the art of self analysis, but what does this actually mean?

Well, every time we get on our bike, no matter where the journey is to or the reason for riding, it will be a unique experience. The roads we travel may be roads we have travelled hundreds of times before, but not with the same vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists etc, etc, doing those particular things, all at the same time, with exactly the same weather conditions. That's why motorcycling is so exciting and why we need to constantly assess the information around us and make decisions to maximise the progress and enjoyment of the ride. On the vast majority of rides, we make the right decisions, but occasionally we make the wrong ones – we are only human after all.

Every time we get it wrong, and we learn from it, we improve our own standard of riding greatly. The first big thing is to fully accept you screwed up, but it's human nature to make excuses to yourself for getting it wrong. Here's a few that I've heard and even used myself:-

- My tyres are new/ old
Usually used when going particularly slowly in wet weather or losing grip mid corner. If they are brand new, it is true new tyres do not offer as much grip as

in the wet but is only reduced by around 5%. The flip side is that if the tyres are that old and worn that the tread is not moving the water, then they shouldn't be on the bike in the first place.

In my own experience I would say slowness is down to a lack of confidence in the wet, especially if you rarely ride on wet roads. A lack of grip mid corner usually means the information available has been misjudged.

- My bike is too powerful/ not powerful enough
What we have to remember is that we are riding on the public highway and adhering to all the laws of the land. Every single bike I have ever seen used by members of the club are designed to work on the public highway efficiently and safely – even in the wet. This means all the bends we come across and all the potential safe and legal overtakes are completely possible no matter what machine you are on. The emphasis is on us, the riders, to work out exactly what it is we need to do to make it happen.

Unsurprisingly information is the key, so make sure you get it all in plenty of time. Get into position in time for the manoeuvre you want to make. Consider your speed, gear and acceleration – these factors will vary depending on the bike you are on, but get the balance of these right for your own bike and we can all do exactly the same things.

- Drifting wide or braking mid corner
The list of excuses for this is endless but I pretty much guarantee it will be down to human error. Not concentrating, not thinking, wrong gear, too fast, etc, etc...

Don't get me wrong the unforeseen can and does happen, however, the more we plan, think and anticipate when we ride, the less chance it will. But always, always ask yourself, what did I do wrong? What could I have done differently? But fundamentally don't lie to yourself.

Please feel free to get in touch with Steve to discuss further on steve_r@ladam.org.uk.



Training Feature

Is it worth going Off-Road?

Bill Morris, LADAM Secretary shares his experiences of Off Road training and his conclusions.

For my sixtieth birthday in 2019, I asked my wife Karen if she wouldn't mind getting me an off-road experience rather than a pair of Velcro shoes more befitting a man of a certain age, and a not unreasonable request seeing as the last time I ventured off-road was on my dad's Mobylette in the back garden when I was about 14 years old. I was duly presented with a voucher to attend a KTM experience organised by enduro legend, Ady Smith.

It just so happened that biblical levels of rain fell during the week before I was due to attend, and with great credit to the course organisers, they contacted me to say that, whilst I was still welcome to attend, the course was not in great condition for a beginner and probably more challenging (dangerous!) than usual. I decided to postpone... and then there was Covid.

I turned 63 this year and that off-road 'itch' was still there needing to be scratched. Having joined the vast multitude of BMW R1200/1250GS owners a couple of years ago, surely it was time to test the off-road credentials of this amazing motorcycle? So, the conversation went something along the lines of... "darling, you remember that KTM off-road experience (that I am still owed), how about, for this birthday, we convert it to the BMW Off Road Skills (ORS) course in Wales? It's only a few bob more (a white lie!)." To cut a long story short, I signed up for the 2-day, Level 1 course based at the BMW Experience in Ystalyfera, near Neath in South Wales.

Uncannily, I spoke to Steve Rowthorne, LADAM's esteemed Chief Observer, just a couple of weeks before I was due to join the BMW course. Steve had just completed the Ady Smith, KTM Experience and he took some delight in telling me that it was easily the scariest thing he had ever done in his life and that every bone and muscle in his body ached as a result of just 1 day on the foot-pegs: "You will fall off... multiple times, and it hurts!" said Steve, which I translated to mean: "you should know better than to even contemplate going off-road at your age! What were you thinking of when you booked this, you mad old fool?"

Undeterred, albeit with some trepidation, I set off to my overnight digs at The Crown Inn just 10 minutes from the meeting point the following day. As I contemplated what a 2-day, off-road experience might feel like, City lost 2-1 to Southampton and the heavens opened- well I was in Wales. Was this a monumental mistake? After a hearty, and not too healthy full Welsh breakfast, I set off to the meeting point and to my delight, this is the sight that greeted me: 40 identical R1250GS's, just like mine but with knobbly tyres. Mine was called 'number 54':



After kitting-up (off-road boots are mandatory), around 40 adventurers set off in the drizzle for the Welsh hills to the BMW Experience: 5000 acres of privately-owned, reclaimed, industrial waste-land (formerly a huge open-cast coal mine) with over 100 miles of assorted fire tracks and logging roads. Now I understand what an adventure playground should look like!

We were split into groups of 8 or so depending on previous experience and allocated our instructors who would put us through our paces for the next 2 days turning us from absolute novices into off-road, riding gods (and 2 goddesses!). Number 54 quickly became my friend and after learning how to get on and off both sides, balance the bike in an upright position using 1 finger, pick up 250 kg of Germany's finest without slipping a disc, stand upright on the pegs and steer by shifting our weight from one side to the other, we headed off into the post-apocalyptic landscape to practise our new-found skills.





When you spend close to £20k on a modern adventure bike with all the trimmings, I would argue that very few of us are brave enough to actually take it off-road and utilise even a fraction of its off-road capability through fear of damaging it and having to foot a very large repair bill. If the bike belongs to someone else, however, anything goes!

Never in my wildest dreams did I believe that a bike of this sheer physical size could cope with this type of terrain and with such consummate ease: boulders-pah! puddles and mud-pah! rubble-pah! 1in4 slopes made from loose shingle, rocks and tree stumps-pah! Me and 54 did it all and more... riding along a fire track in 5th gear at 50 mph with no hands on the bars, steering with feet on the pegs; emergency braking at 40 mph on loose gravel and mud, front brake only... and so on.

Throughout the 2 days of some of the highest quality motorcycle training and coaching I have ever experienced, my confidence and competence rose exponentially. I felt like I was back in the garden on dad's Moby, without a care in the world, taking on any challenge that was put in front of me.

Mere words cannot adequately describe the sheer joy and exhilaration of being out in the wilds of wind-swept Wales with a bunch of like-minded bike fanatics, honing around in the mud on somebody else's bike.



Huge congratulations to those clever German engineers for putting together this remarkable piece of machinery that really does seem to be able to do anything (they're quite good on the tarmac too). I met some great people on this course, some of whom I hope to meet up with again next year having already signed-up for Level 2.

All in, with hot lunch provided, morning and afternoon snacks, evening meal, bike hire, insurance, boots and off-road kit (that's me on the left in the little red number)- it cost around £600 for the 2 days, plus 2 night's accommodation. I have progressed from a very low starting point (basic!) to a reasonably competent off-roader, and the best thing of all, is the confidence that this experience has given me. Confidence in the mud does translate to confidence on the road, and I now understand what my own bike is capable of. I have learned that body position, deftness of touch and manual dexterity in the use of brakes, clutch and gears equates to smoothness and efficiency.

Roll on 2023; I can hardly wait!

Thanks Bill. It sounds amazing, although we should state that other manufacturers' experiences are also available for those who don't ride BMWs...



My LADAM Journey – What a Ride!

This month we feature another LADAM journey. Stuart McFarlane recently passed his Advanced Test with a F1rst. Initially IAM RoadSmart training was a route to becoming a blood biker, but read on for his experience.

Having ridden Bikes for over 20 years off and on, I thought getting back on after lockdown would be “like riding a bike”. Well, it nearly was, but after a trip around the NC500, I thought it was time to get some additional training. Having changed my BMW RT for a GSA, I looked at BMW courses and also stumbled across the Leicestershire & Rutland Blood Bikes, (LRBB) and thought what a way of giving something back and enjoying myself at the same time. Now all I needed was some advanced rider training.



I decided I would do the IAM thing!! I paid my fees in January and was told by Bill it would be March before I could start. “Fine”, I thought, “it might warm up by then, I can do a couple of sessions and then I’ll be done and on the blood bikes!”

March came and I was allocated Zoe Eastwell as my observer (“the chair, ho god!!” I thought). We met up and went for an assessment ride which sort of went ok, until some idiot threw their milkshake out of the car window into my path. After that, following Zoe for a while, I realised maybe this may take a little longer than I thought!! Over the next few months, I was guided to a different, safer, faster way of riding – with an accidental spot of green lane riding thrown in for free!!

Just as I was getting there, disaster struck when Zoe was off the bike for at eight weeks. Fortunately, I stepped Les Congdon as my new observer and after a number of further lessons, we decided it was time for a pre test. On the given Saturday the temperature was 26 degrees and rising, but the two hours with Les went to plan. So off I went on a pre test with the temperature rising further and my concentration waning with my winter gear on. A couple of hours later and the inevitable “sorry you need more training” was uttered. I was gutted that blood biking was not getting any closer, although the training to be a blood biker was still booked.

For the following weekend I had booked a long weekend of training in Wales which would include 700 miles of riding, giving me the extra preparation that I needed. Unfortunately, it was cancelled at the last minute. I was at a low point thinking that this could go on forever, but after a long conversation with Les, we decided to get additional sessions in during the week as well as the normal sessions. At the same time Steve Tamsett stepped in with an offer of an 8 hour all day ride to help get me up to speed and to compensate for the training weekend lost.

Early on a hot and sunny Monday morning, I met with Steve at Birstall and off we went – what a day! I was seriously glad that had invested in new summer riding gear so all I had to worry about was showing what I could do. The day went well, although I still don’t know how Steve managed to arrange for a car to pull out into our path, seven miles of freshly gravelled road and horses around a blind bend. After all that, and a positive debrief, Steve agreed to put me through for my test.

In the meantime, I had continued with the Blood bike training and so was now a blood biker, but could only drive a car !!!! I decided to do the DSA exam as a way of getting on the blood bikes quicker whilst waiting for my IAM test, and the dates came in for with DSA on the Tuesday and IAM on the Wednesday.

I booked a final session from Birstall with Les, who suggested that we just go for a ride. We set off at 60 mph, but, looking far ahead into the trees, we could see that something was not quite right. As we pulled up, we found a tree right across the road - this was a big lesson of reading the road and the surroundings as the tree was in the shade and very hard to see.

After lots of encouragement from the guys from LADAM, I was ready for my tests. Tuesday went ok, nothing special and with the DSA passed, phew I could at least get on the blood bikes now!!

Wednesday dawned and it had been raining all night – not a good start! I met up with Alan Wright at McDonald's in Market Harborough and he told me that he would be looking for actions that he wouldn't see from a normal rider. As we drove through the 20 and 30 ever changing zones in Harborough, all I can hear is Zoe telling me not to speed creep; off into the countryside around sweeping bends where all I can hear is Steve telling me to look far ahead, get over early, keep off the brake and as we hit the roundabouts in Corby, all I can hear is Les telling me to pick my lane early. That last piece of advice worked a treat as I picked the right one and lost my examiner for the ride back to Harborough.

Back at McDonalds I answered the highway code questions (Bill said he would ask these three questions and he did). Then the shock news hit me as Alan told me that I had passed and that he was going to award a F1rst. What a result.

During this journey, I have discovered that this wasn't just about getting the result to get on the blood bikes, but more importantly LADAM was a club with friendly like- minded people that enabled me to get out on my bike more, whilst continually looking to improve. It has given me a thirst to carry on training and get out with LADAM friends and enjoy the ride. I've already signed up for trips next year!



And in other news...

LADAM Logo

First of all, the eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted that we have a new logo, courtesy of Nigel Vernon. It was felt that the old logo looked dated compared to other clubs and too much like a sports bike, which didn't fully represent the membership of LADAM.



The new logo is more conceptual, with clearer letters which are more modern than the previous version. It will soon start appearing on LADAM emails and communication.

Many thanks for Nigel for his work on this. We hope you all like it.

Volunteers Needed!

To continue to offer events and to promote safe riding, we are heavily reliant on volunteers. If you can help with any of the following, we would love to hear from you:

- Leading Rides – this can be anything from a Group Ride on a Saturday, to a full day's tour. We have a small group of volunteers to plan and lead rides, so if you have a favourite ride to share, or can help plan a ride, please let Bill know. You don't need to be an Observer although you do need to have passed your Advanced Test. An Observer is required for every official ride, so you will always have support.
- Events Co-ordinator – we urgently need someone to help us co-ordinate events, so they can run smoothly for our members. We have a full programme of events for the year ahead, but we need someone who can manage the details. Please speak to Bill or Zoë if you can help.
- Marketing and PR – we rely on IAMRoadsmart for recruitment, but we would like to identify further local opportunities to promote safe riding. This includes management of our www.ladam.org.uk website, which can be the first place to find out more for new members. If this is something you can help with, please contact Zoë.



We are very grateful to all of our volunteers, which includes everyone on the Committee and all of our Observers, who work very hard to develop safer and more confident riders.

IAM RoadSmart

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



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 Tamsett – treasurer.ladam@gmail.com

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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