

# LADAM Newsletter

September 2022



*Congratulations to ...*

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Robert Reeves and Observer Nigel Vernon  
Dave Gratton and Observer Mark Franks

*Who have passed their Advanced test since the last newsletter*

Stuart McFarlane and Zoë Eastwell and  
Observers Les Congdon  
Tony Potterton and Observer Jenny Jordan

*Who have passed their Advanced test with a First*

*And to James Rushton who has passed his Local Observer Assessment*

## *In this Newsletter*

Welcome to September's newsletter. It's been a busy summer! Lots of Advanced Tests, pre tests and group rideouts. There have been day trips, Saturday rides, Fish & Chip rides and LADAM trips to France and Wales. And still more to come, with a September Fish & Chip run, a trip to Miami Beach and advance notice of next year's tours. Read on for more information, including on how to reserve your place on the tours.

Many thanks as always to all the contributors this month.

Feedback and stories always welcome, contact [zoe@ladam.org.uk](mailto:zoe@ladam.org.uk) or [ian@ladam.org.uk](mailto:ian@ladam.org.uk)



## Summer Tuesday Night Ride Outs

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*August's* route was courtesy of our hard working and brilliant Secretary, Bill Morris, who led the ride across country to Stamford on a glorious summer's evening. It really was a sublime evening – the weather was perfect, the route was varied, the fish and chip shop was the best in Rutland and the company was fantastic. Starting from Birstall heading towards Market Harborough along the B6047, Bill took a left hander just past the Langtons across country towards Rutland, including the excellent Medbourne to Uppingham road, which has the only hairpin bend in Leicestershire. From Uppingham the route led past the Harringworth Viaduct towards Stamford.



Greg led the ride back via Oakham as the twilight turned to night, setting a cracking pace towards Rutland Water and then through the back roads from Oakham to Tilton on the Hill, where we split and went our separate ways. The photo doesn't do it justice, but the moon was extraordinary.

There will be a final chippy ride on Tuesday *13<sup>th</sup> September*. Remember you don't need to book, just turn up. The rides are open to everyone, including Associates and there is no limit to the number of riders. You will need to be prompt, however, as the rides will leave at 6:30pm sharp. As the nights are drawing in, this might be a shorter ride, but you may still get in some night riding practice.

In October we will resume our *Winter Programme*. The venue will be the Fosse Riders Clubhouse and you can expect an excellent series of talks arranged by James Rushton, including the Helmet Inspection Company, Kieran Sangha, MCA and more. Look out for more information on Facebook, by email and in the newsletters.



## Day Trips

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There were no Day Trips in July or August due to the planned longer breaks to France and Wales. However, Greg Garner will be leading our final day trip of the year to Miami Beach, via New York. Get excited, but not too much, as it's near Mablethorpe. The ride will be around 200 miles and will be on *Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September*. As this is a club Saturday, the ride will replace the usual Group ride and will be open to everyone, including Associates. If you're interested, please complete this form so we know who and how many are joining.

[I would like to join LADAM's trip to Miami Beach.](#)



# LADAM on Tour

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All hail Mike Anthony. He has done a fantastic job organising two trips this summer, the first to France in July and the second to Wales this August Bank Holiday weekend. Over to Mike for the write up on France. (I was gutted that I couldn't go, but have already booked my place for next year!)

## LADAM France 2022 Bike Trip

In 2020 I volunteered and organised a weekend away to Wales. By all accounts it seemed to go well and subsequently I agreed to organise another trip away, a 4-day trip over to France. Whilst I have many years' experience of riding in France, planning hotels, and finding suitable routes, adhering to IAM guidelines was challenging. The group size of eleven bikers also became something of a learning curve.

### *So how did it go?*

The week before departure I booked my bike in for a service, only to find the rear shock wouldn't last the trip. Fortunately, one was sourced and thanks to Kieran of Sangha Race & Restoration, the bike was ready to go. Here is my diary of the next few days.

### *Thursday*

Today is a packing day and for those who want to ride as a group down to Folkestone, a 13:00 departure from Grove Park. The weather forecast for France is looking pretty good, 25-28°C, sunny and no rain. It'll be summer riding gear and waterproofs, although I tend to take far too much: Puncture repair kit; Air compressor; First aid kit; Visor cleaning kit; Disc lock & heavy-duty chain; 4 pairs of gloves; 2 neck tubes and enough ear plugs to last a month. Then iPad and a roll of Gaffer Tape. I can't pack light so that's two full panniers, plus top box and tank bag. (Though the routes are in my satnav, I do like to have the route written and visible, hence the tank bag.)

We take a leisurely ride down the A5, joining the M1 around Luton, then M25, over the QEII bridge and M20. Apart from the car on the M25 doing a full 360° turn and hitting both centre and hard shoulder barriers, the motorways are boring and soulless as we make our way to the hotel for an overnight stop.

### *Friday*

Up early to catch the 09:20 train, which means check-in at 08:20. The group all meet up in good time, but it seems that every man and his dog is going to France via the same train. I have never, ever had to queue for so long! We eventually board the train and then re-assemble on the other side.

Our destination is Soissons, our base for the next three nights. The ride down is split into three stages. The first, a nice easy ride down to Hesdin, is about 50 miles, and according to Google Maps it'll take about 90 minutes.

My experience of Northern France is straight, boring roads, however, this first stage could not be more different. The roads are super smooth and as we approach what looks like a nice sweeping bend, it begins to tighten and really focuses the mind. As a result, although we've made great progress, it has taken much longer than expected.





The second leg takes us to Peronne for lunch. Again, progress has been good on the more challenging roads and we find a nice square with a café and order lunch. However, one thing I haven't accounted for was how long we'd need for lunch. The French don't do anything quickly. The food is excellent, but the 45-minute lunch stop quickly becomes 90 minutes, and despite our best efforts, we are running behind schedule.

We finally reach our hotel shortly after 6pm, some 2 hours later than planned. We may have only covered about 170 miles, but they've been challenging, and it's been extremely hot. Bikes parked safely, a quick shower and cold beer for us all. Some of us eat at the hotel, and others take a stroll into town looking for possible restaurants which could accommodate us all later. Finding a good hotel is as important as finding good routes. This one will do very nicely, secure underground parking and friendly staff.



### *Saturday*

Today the planned ride-out is to the medieval town of Provins, a World Heritage Site. The original plan was a circular route of about 160 miles. However, the previous day's ride has taken its toll on us all. The route is revised (which quickly becomes a theme) and now the plan is to arrive in Provins for lunch and then take a more direct route back to the hotel. Again, the roads are superb, and the bends just go on and on.

Due to the revised route, we hadn't planned where to stop for coffees, so we divert off into the small town of Sezanne. Everyone seems to be enjoying themselves and coffee then becomes a very long lunch. We now go to "Plan C". After lunch we ride the few more miles to Provins, have an ice-cream and then back to the hotel. Tony and Sue have found a great place where we can all eat together. There's definitely something special about a group of bikers all coming together, eating, drinking, and talking about the day's ride.



### *Sunday*

Today we head towards Reims and then onto Epernay for lunch. It's about 160 miles and should take about five hours. However, during our morning briefing it is decided we'll have lunch in Epernay and then decide the best route back to the hotel (plan B). If you've never ridden through the vineyards of France, I'd suggest you do. The scenery is awesome.





However, this is France and it's Sunday. All the bars and cafes are shut and it's hot. We stop in a lay-by for a drink and someone suggests a diversion to a McDonalds not too far away, so he leads the way. This is where we came across the famous Pits of "Circuit Reims-Gueux". Sadly, we lose one of the group, Tom. Not exactly lost, we know where Tom is - heading the wrong way along an Autoroute.

There was nothing Tom could do about a quick and late lane change at a roundabout. He had no choice and took the safest option.

After McDonalds we regroup in Epernay for lunch. As time is pressing on and it's getting hotter, the hotel swimming pool and cold beer meant Plan C came into force. Straight back to the hotel, avoiding Autoroutes. Another fuel stop, another McDonalds for refreshments and all safely back. Again, thanks to Tony & Sue another restaurant for us all. And from us all..... a special thank you to Tom.



### *Monday*

Sadly, today is the day we make our way home. The original plan is to take country roads to Arras, and have lunch, Then, depending on time, either Autoroute or country roads to Calais.



Again, this plan changes many times, and we end up with 50 miles of country roads to Saint-Quentin, then about 100 miles of Autoroute all the way to Calais for an early train. The French Autoroutes are nothing like our motorways. They are quiet, smooth tarmac without potholes, and the French are so disciplined. No lane hoggers, so progress is brisk.

On reflection, it has been a fabulous few days. Planning and organising a trip like this takes hours of work. But for me it isn't a chore, and I enjoy doing it, it's my way of giving something back. We've ridden some great roads. grinning from ear to ear. Riding within a large group of Advanced Riders is a great experience with a sense of unspoken trust. We got to know each other so much more than a quick chat every other Saturday. We left as eleven LADAM members (and pillion Sue) and returned as twelve friends. Everyone played their part, and for that I thank them.

### *What have I learnt?*

Well, I didn't need four pairs of gloves and two neck tubes. Or enough ear plugs to last a month. The gaffer tape did come in handy when my satnav came loose. I didn't need the first aid kit, puncture repair kit or compressor (but they will always come with me just in case).

Riding in such a large group means everything takes longer to do, even when making progress. Fuel stops take so much longer when there are eleven bikes and coffee and lunch stops take so much longer when there are twelve of you.

It's all in the planning and then throwing that plan away - being flexible.

### *What would I do differently?*

Instead of the group meeting at Folkestone Eurotunnel, meet at a hotel on the other side. That way you get a much better start on the first day. Sorry Rob you were right. And then, for the last night, consider using a hotel nearer the train terminal the other side. This then reduces the mileage on the last day.

### *Would I organise one again?*

Without hesitation!!

*Thanks Mike for all your hard work. There wasn't quite enough time to get a write up of the Wales trip into this newsletter, but we can look forward to reading about that next time. As a trailer, it was a fantastic weekend– the weather in Wales was kind and the scenery and roads were spectacular. Great company, lots of laughs and the Burton Hotel in Kington did us proud again.*



## 2023 TOURS

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Mike is already planning next year's trips – further details will be shared in due course, but book the dates:

- Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May to Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May – The Forests of France, Belgium and Luxembourg
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August to Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August – Yorkshire Moors & Dales.

To put your name down, [click here](#). Please note that details may change and putting your name down is not a commitment, not is it a guarantee of a place on your preferred ride.



## Club Saturday Rideouts

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On most Saturdays there is a group rideout. These used to be led by Rodger, who did a fantastic job of planning routes that usually ended with a cup of tea and bacon butty – or cake. Rodger is no longer able to lead the rides and so Bryan Pigginn and others have taken up the mantle.

However, we need more volunteers to lead the group as Bryan is set to become a Trainee Observer. You don't need to be an Observer, but you do need to know how to plan a route that has key elements of advanced riding and how to manage a group of riders, working with a Tail End Charlie. If this is something you are interested in doing, but feel you may need some guidance, please talk to Steve Rowthorne, or email him on [steve\\_r@ladam.org.uk](mailto:steve_r@ladam.org.uk).



## Tips from the Chief Observer

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*This edition, Steve continues the journey through IPSSGA, the cornerstone of the IAMRS System. This time he concentrates on G and A.*

### *G is for Gear*

How do we know if we're in the right gear? Well, that really depends on the situation and the action you want to take. Having already applied I, P and S, you should have worked out your riding plan, including accelerating, decelerating, cruising, cornering, filtering and so on. This is where practice is essential. The more miles you do and the more you try all of the above in different gears, the more you will learn about your bike and what works or doesn't work for your particular machine, as not every bike is the same. Just because one bike can do a bend in fifth, doesn't mean yours can.

Cornering is a great example where the correct gear makes a world of difference. Go and find a favourite bend and take it in the gear you would normally select. Then do it again in a gear higher and then a gear lower to see how it feels. You may be surprised! Getting the gear right means you have more control and can come out of the bend already accelerating.

### *A is for Acceleration*

Acceleration is an interesting one. What does it actually mean? Let's take a look. Most motorbikes can out-gun other road users pretty easily in normal road situations and it is perfectly acceptable and dare I say it, expected, to use this advantage in every situation to make progress. This can include pulling away from junctions or traffic lights, for instance, or making overtakes that wouldn't be available in any other vehicle. We can also use the throttle to get ourselves away from danger, which may be more effective than using the brake to avoid it. The trick is to identify as early as possible when and by how much to use the throttle, because too much acceleration in the wrong place or at the wrong time can go very wrong, very quickly. That means observation and using the Information you take in.

When you think about it, acceleration sense also applies to decelerating using your throttle control. You need to use your observation skills to understand when to slow down to reflect the situation as well as speed up. Throttle control isn't about using your brakes, but judging your speed to reflect the situation.

Please feel free to get in touch with Steve to discuss further on [steve\\_r@ladam.org.uk](mailto:steve_r@ladam.org.uk).

## Using Observational Links

Both Gears and Acceleration rely on Taking in Information, Using it and of course, Giving information in return to alert other road users of your actions – the three parts of the acronym TUG.

*So, what is an observational link? Greg Garner gives us some valuable guidance below.*

Observational links are clues to potential hazards, be they permanent (physical features), temporary/moving (other vehicles, people, animals etc.) or variable (weather, road surface). Having a bank of observational links in our mind will help us to quickly anticipate road and traffic conditions as we scan the environment.

Examples of observational links:

What you see	What to anticipate (not limited to the examples)
Mud on the road surface in a rural location.	Slow moving vehicles with potentially a line of vehicles following, large vehicles turning in/out of gate ways.
Single street lamp	Side road/junction opposite.
Dustbins on the pavement	Refuse vehicle and/or the refuse collectors working in or crossing the road.
No gap in the treeline ahead	Upcoming bend or T-junction
A gap in a line of traffic	Cyclist, exit/entrance, jogger.
Dog on a lead	Reaction of the dog on the lead or other dogs in the vicinity, other animals running away.
Occasional fresh twigs, leaves in the road (from overhanging trees or bushes along that road)	Large vehicle travelling ahead

Of course, we shouldn't just rely on our vision, we have four other senses where we can collect additional 'linkable' information, for example:

- Hearing – Sirens from emergency vehicles or thunder
- Smell – Fresh cut grass or fuel (petrol/derv)
- Taste – as a sense it links with smell
- Touch/feel – imminent mechanical failure or slippery road surface.

See if you can work out the links from the images.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Answers (including but not exclusively):

- Image 1
  - Horse manure – Potential for horses ahead
  - Footpath off to the left, nothing on the right, so potential for pedestrians in the road ahead
  - Vehicle on the right (opposite big tree)
  - Curvature of treeline showing road sweeps to the left after right hand bend.
- Image 2
  - Road closed and/or diversion signage – Erratic driver/traffic behaviour due to various reasons such as drivers not knowing where they are going, or the diversion causing them to be late (or later!).

- Roadworks – potential for large vehicles or industrial machinery heading to or from the area.
- Image 3
  - Driveway to the left, potential for oncoming vehicles to be turning right so they may be up against the centre line as they approach from around the bend.
  - Bridleway off to the left, nothing to the right, potential for horses or pedestrians in the road ahead. Also, oncoming vehicles could be moving out to pass anything on their side of the road.
  - Curvature of treeline shows sweeping right hand bend.
- Image 4
  - Double yellow lines on a rural route, along with the very short wooden posts in the grass verge, accompanied by the rown road sign on the right. All lead to the potential for a very busy tourist location, expect queuing vehicles, entrances and exits to car parks, pedestrians, cyclists, horses, drivers not knowing where they are going.
- Image 5
  - Blind gateway to the left, shown by the circular mirror on the opposite side of the road.
  - Bridge around the bend, no grass verge, so pedestrians may be in the road, or bridge could block your view of anyone coming out from behind either side.
- Image 6
  - The road bends sharply to the right, farm buildings on the right, with bunting, potential for entrance around the corner, which may be busy due to farm shop or other attraction, parked vehicles on the road, vehicles turning in or out.

Remember, all of this helps us to build on the first part of IPSGA, in the form of 'INFORMATION' gathering. If we want to take this to the next level, go back over the links whilst looking at the images and ask yourself 'so what would that mean?' in terms of Position, Speed, Gear and Acceleration. Creating/strengthening the neural link between what our senses tell us to what our reactions could likely be, will build on our unconscious competence, so we will be able to apply the skill without consciously thinking about what to do.

For more information on Observational Links and applying them within your riding see;

- IAM RoadSmart Course Manual – Introduction to IPSGA or
- The Police Riders Handbook, Motorcycle Roadcraft – Chapter 4 - Anticipating hazards in the riding environment.



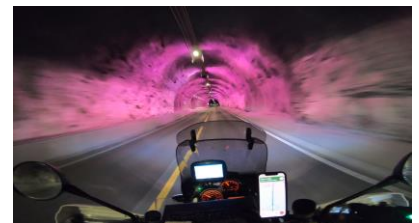
## Epic Adventures

*If you are on Facebook, you will have seen that Stan Hulme set out on 27<sup>th</sup> June on a journey to the Arctic north, in support of the Leicestershire charity, Alex's wish. His 6,000 mile, solo motorcycle adventure took him to the Children of the Earth monument at Nordkapp, 500km north of the Arctic circle and Europe's most northerly point. Here is his update on the ride.*



Little did I know what I was letting myself in for, when I set off from the Fairfield pub in Wigston, supporting the Leicestershire based charity. Alex's Wish. I'd created a small collection of places on my wish list to pass through during the journey North, with the mid point being 500km North of the Arctic circle, at Europe's most northerly point Nordkapp - the location of the iconic 'Children of the Earth Monument'.

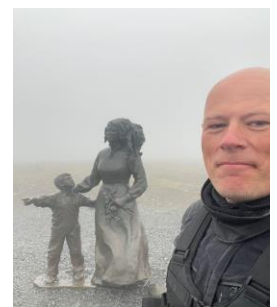
My goal for the Scandinavian segment was to follow a route less travelled, where I'd leave it to chance and the people I met along the way to help shape my journey! One thing I'm certainly grateful for is the investment of time in advanced rider training. Scandinavian roads and the wilderness, although stunningly beautiful, with jaw dropping vistas, hold plenty of technical challenges including never ending curves and one particularly memorable section consisting of 27 hairpin bends down a 1000m mountain face, two of which were in a dimly lit fog filled tunnel!



The weather was also demanding, from riding in a continual hair dryer of sizzling heat (France to southern Denmark) to a real "all four seasons in one day" with 20C temperature changes within thirty minutes.

One, entirely bike unrelated, challenge almost ended the ride in Sweden. Despite an 'all clear' checkup with my dentist before leaving, I found myself in urgent need of a dentist. This turned in to a mini saga of losing a temporary filling, having an exposed nerve, and not being able to find a dentist above the arctic circle. It was a bad idea to get a DIY filling from a pharmacy and it all resulted in needing an emergency dentist in a hospital on my return Swedish leg.

The highlight was reaching Nordkapp, which was an emotional but eerie moment. Thick freezing fog engulfed the Nordkapp Plateau and as midnight approached, even with the midnight sun, visibility was reduced to just a few meters. That wasn't in the forecast!



In addition, the arctic winds had changed direction and I now faced a full on storm at sea 'on land'. This made the two hour return journey the most focused ride of my life, with no option to stay or shelter in place. Fortunately a local biker, I'd met at a gas station had invited me to stay at his cabin, where he promised me a hot sauna, whatever time I arrived. It was 2am when I finally arrived and Ben not only had a hot sauna prepared, but pizza and beer – confirming my belief that Norwegian hospital is legendary.

After nine countries, 29 days and 6,121 miles, my 15 year old GS and I returned to our starting place just after 11pm, after a day that started at 5am near Kiel in Germany, 700 miles earlier.

Of course, this was a ride with a purpose. We have raised nearly £1,300 so far for Alex's Wish and would naturally love for that to be more! In addition, the publicity and awareness created has been a tremendous boost for Alex's Wish.



## And in other news...

### The World's Largest Female Biker Meet

This took place at the Triumph Factory in Hinckley on the 24<sup>th</sup> July. The intention of the organisers was to break the record for the greatest number of female bikers gathered in one place on one day. They already hold the record for an event at the Raven's Café a few years ago, but wanted to increase it to make it more difficult for groups in other countries to beat.



Although they fell short of the 2,000 bikers they were hoping for, they smashed the record with 1,549 riders being counted between 10am and 3pm, raising £6,000 in the process for Leicestershire Bloodbikes and the Air Ambulance.



LADAM paired up with CWAM to man the IAM Roadsmart stand and saw a steady stream of riders interested in doing advanced training, many of them sent across from the Bike Safe stand. The IAM had provided leaflets with a special discount, along with a good supply of pens and wristbands. We haven't had an update with the number of people who signed up using the discount, but will share this in the next newsletter. From what some of the marshals observed, quite a few of the ladies who were riding

could do with advanced training!

Unfortunately, the event was marred a little by a spate of bike thefts from local hotels and at least twenty bikes were stolen over a couple of days. Bike theft does seem to be on the increase locally, so please be aware of this and take steps to protect your bike.

### *The Helmet Inspection Company*

You may recall from the last newsletter that I sent my helmet off for testing with the Helmet Inspection Company as I wanted to make sure that it wasn't damaged after my accident. It looked perfect on the outside, but I knew from a previous helmet incident, that damage may not be visible and that it's usually advisable to get a new one after a bump.

However, having only bought the helmet in January and having been told that there were none available locally until December, I decided to see if it was possible to get it tested. Moto Central in Hinckley recommended this company based at East Midlands Airport and so I contacted them via their website.



It cost £40 for the inspection and return postage and I needed to arrange for secure packaging and postage to them. In the end, I took their recommendation and bought a huge and sturdy box from Amazon and added padding around it. With the pick-up courier service booked via Package2Go, it cost me around £75 all in.

I received an acknowledgment when they received my helmet and they kept me up to date as it progressed through their checks. Details of how they test helmets and why can be found on their website <https://helmetinspection.co.uk/>. I'm glad to say that my helmet passed all their checks and no damage was found. That saved me a significant amount of money for buying a new one and has given me the reassurance to continue using my very comfortable helmet.

James is currently speaking to the team at The Helmet Inspection Company about presenting at one of the winter events and also about the possibility of arranging a visit to their laboratory. Watch out for more information on this.

I can thoroughly recommend their service. It takes around 4-5 days and could save your life. There's a thought.

## *IAM RoadSmart*

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



## *Contact Details*

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

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

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

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If you would like to provide a story, maybe about your journey with LADAM or an event coming up, please contact Zoë or Ian. 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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