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Let me begin by wishing you, and your families, a very Happy New Year. After a year like no other, I'm sure that the obstacles 2020 confronted us with will enable us to reflect upon and appreciate some of life's smaller, and often taken for granted, things.

I didn't envisage this time last year the I'd be writing this piece as the newly elected Chairman! But, as 2020 as emphasised, life is all about taking opportunities, following your passions and valuing our communities: those where we live and work, as well as those where we get to enjoy 'me time' and social interaction too. Such values are what ultimately prompted me to stand for Chairman of Suffolk Riders; I will wholeheartedly do my best to ensure our group continues to be successful and a well-spirited community. This will be possible because of all the work that Jon Jamin and Ian Gilder have done; they have been unwaveringly committed to the group, leading with great knowledge, professionalism. It would hereby be remiss of me to not pass on my thanks to both for their dedication and service to our group since its inception, and I know such gratitude is extended beyond myself and is echoed by all our members.

On the theme of thanks, I'd like to thank everyone who was able to join our remote AGM. This certainly didn't happen overnight, taking many preliminary committee meetings to bring it all together. Technology certainly has its place, and it has come into its own this year, but it doesn't replace people. I'd also like to pass on my thanks to those of you who were unable to attend and sent your apologies.

With the events subgroup, my first action as Chairman was to help arrange some social rides over the Christmas period: tier 4 rules disappointingly meant that these had to be postponed. Nonetheless, when rules permit us to rearrange these, I hope you will join us. I should highlight here that I am determined to ensure regular rides and will arrange for the information concerning these to be published on our social media Facebook page, the Suffolk Riders website and in our newsletters too.

Lack of external events has affected our retention and recruitment of new members which is lower than recent years, a situation beyond our control. Nonetheless, please continue to spread the word about our group. An objective of mine will be to ensure we market and promote our group to ensure our numbers are buoyant, whilst also ensuring we continue to have a vibrant collective group with an interest in safe and enjoyable motorcycling at its heart.

With vaccinations seemingly around the corner, hopefully, we will be able to leave COVID-19 in our tyre marks soon.

With my very best wishes, *Chris*.

# AGM 14th Dec 2020

## *AGM – 14 December 2020 - Chris Patten, Secretary*

Suffolk Riders virtual AGM was well attended with 37 group members in attendance from their own homes. The bringing together of this AGM brought up many an issue for the committee to overcome in the weeks and months beforehand. I hope that those of you who attended found that the meeting was easy to join and that what you saw was of interest and a true reflection of the group's activities.

Key points from the AGM are below:

### Chairman's Report – Jon Jamin

- Continually updated modern web presence with constant updating of the website and more regular use of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter
- Refreshers & Try-outs after Lockdown lifted
- Temporary memberships introduced during lockdown with a few converted into associates
- Grown Membership through Social Media & word of mouth
- Continued Excellence in Training despite the restrictions
- Another year of newsletters – lots of member input
- Few Trips & Events

### Training Officer's Report – Ian Gilder

- Train as many associates to RoSPA test standard as possible – *delivered within the constraints of lockdown.*
- Provide any additional training required by the 23 full members who are due for retest – *all members approaching test were contacted. Unfortunately, a number were due to take the test but were not able to due to the second lockdown.*
- Provide monthly training rides for both members and associates, March to December – *training ride provided where possible/appropriate. Unfortunately, this meant only 2 were run.*
- Run a Tutor training course if there is sufficient interest – *it was decided there were sufficient tutors for the number of associates.*
- Provide additional training for the existing Tutors – *this was not delivered at least in part because of Covid.*

- Run one slow-speed manoeuvring event in the season and possibly follow this up with another later in the year if there is demand – *unfortunately, this was hit by the initial lockdown and then subsequent restrictions.*

#### Receipt and approval of the group's account for 2020/Treasurer's Report – John Kerry

John Kerry presented the treasurer's report which shows the Suffolk Riders are in a healthy financial position but without continued growth, the aim to become fully financially self-sufficient will become harder and harder. A question was raised from the floor regarding the groups aim to be self-sufficient. John Kerry confirmed that the group will be able to keep running for several years without any additional income but that growing the group will help the group to become fully self-sufficient.

#### Acknowledgements & Awards – Jon Jamin

- Events Sub-group – for respecting the restrictions and still managing to put on a good number of social rides
- The Tutor Group – for managing to train under increasingly difficult circumstances and getting over 20 tests through
- Stephen & Stephen – for their continued commitment in keeping the training rides running whenever possible
- The Committee – meeting via Zoom over the course of the year, continuing to find new ways of keeping things normal as possible. For keeping communication going and managing to recruit new members against all odds
- Examiners – for moving quickly and running tests when guidelines allowed
- RoSPA – for keeping us up to date with their restrictions and guidelines
- YOU! – our members for being part of Suffolk Riders, believing in what we do, supporting the events and becoming better riders.

#### Election of the Committee

The constitution states that all committee members need to stand down at the AGM but are welcome to run for re-election. The following nominations for the committee positions were received and called by Jon Jamin:

<u>Committee Position</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Nominated by</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>
Chairman	Chris Patten	Jon Jamin	Ben Firbank Treasurer
John Kerry	Chris Patten	Ben Firbank	
Secretary	Ben Firbank	Jon Jamin	Chris Patten
Membership Secretary	Chris Austin	Chris Patten	Phil Sayer
Training Officer	Tony Butler	Ian Gilder	Ben Firbank
Marketing & Social Media	James Myers	Jon Jamin	Chris Patten
Webmaster	Colin South	Jon Jamin	Chris Austin
External Events	Phil Sayer	Ben Firbank	Jon Jamin

All nominees were elected to stand on the committee.

#### Special Announcement - awarding of Lifetime memberships to Jon and Ian.

Ben Firbank raised that following a committee discussion and several nominations (16) from the membership the group would like to recognise the efforts that both have put into the group over a combined 18 years' service to the committee.

Chris Patten formally awarded both Jon and Ian with Lifetime memberships to the group for the above and beyond commitment, they have both put into the group over the years.

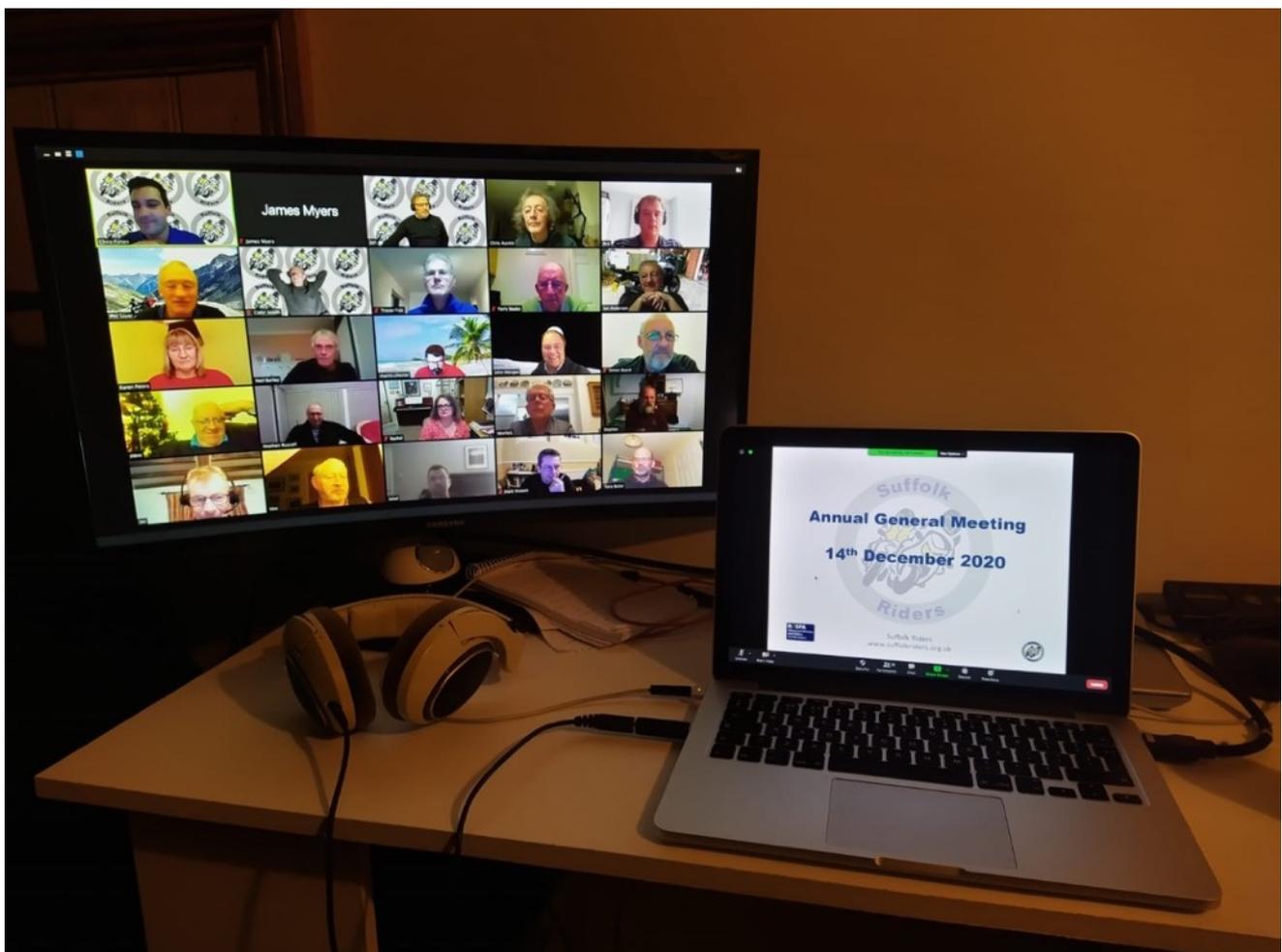
2021 Plans so far... - Phil Sayer

All being well the group plan on running the following this year:

- Breakfast Runs – Saturdays and Sundays
- Training Rides
- Reiten Rideout's
- The Annual Highland Fling
- Refresher Rides
- Romania fly-ride
- Dolomite Trip (September)
- Ardennes Trip (May)

Further information for all of this year's plans will be made available once the committee and events sub-group are in a position to make further plans.

Chris



# December Activities

## [Suffolk Riders Cotswold Canter - David Loney](#)

I'd wanted to join Brian C for a while on one of his outings so when the trip to the Cotswolds was announced I responded right away.

I made it, one of the six who were going. I replied to the emails giving the details of the start time and place and the route. The only thing is that I no longer have a sat nav. Instead I use an app on my phone so I did my usual thing. I didn't have the route or any real idea where we were going and I gave my usual response. "Don't worry about me not having the route, if I can't keep up then it's my fault".

I prepared the day before by checking my bike over and making sure I had a full tank of fuel. On my way to meet at Tesco's BSE I saw Neville filling up at the BP garage. Good, I thought, I'm not going to be the last one there. I arrived to find Lee G and Brian talking and James M was there too. I hadn't seen James for quite a while and as we were chatting Neville and Ray arrived. That's it, we are all here, and I asked if I could ride close to Brian as I like to watch how other members ride. Brian asked me if I would write about the day for the newsletter, which I agreed to (*thanks Ed.*). So off we went. Lee lead the way followed by Brian, me, James, Ray and Neville.

The biggest mistake I made was not to study the route and see where it was going and get some idea of what would be in store. I was unprepared and paid the price dearly. I knew I could not lose sight of any of the group or I would be lost.

We started out on familiar roads and headed off towards Cambridge on the A14 and I was fine until we left the Cambridge area and headed towards Newport Pagnell. Okay I really need to concentrate now. You have to be on top of your game because you are with such experienced riders. Now I'm familiar with Milton Keynes and all the roundabouts, but by the time we reached there I was wondering how

soon before we stop. Then we came to the [Wellington Café](#) at Cherry Lane Garden Centre for our breakfast stop. I only had a cup of tea there because I had breakfast before I left. Everyone else had a good meal and I decided to take a group photo here. I have to say I was glad to stop and stretch. I was feeling it. I haven't been riding as much this year as in other years and my body was reminding me too. It was 88 miles here from my home and I needed fuel soon.

We refuelled and off we went again. A while later I saw the signs for



Middleton Chenery and knew we were still heading away, further from home. I've been to the primary school there for a job so in my mind I was wondering how much further away are we heading. The main problem with not having any idea where you are going is the inability to pace yourself. Particularly, discomfort management.

Sadly this is not a road by road description of the day. Or a list of all the amazing and beautiful villages we rode through. Or the wonderful Cotswold scenes bathed in beautiful winter sunshine. I was truly out of my depth now. When your body is telling you it's had enough and wants a rest but you can't. Even though I had a small, light rucksack on, my shoulders were now aching and pleading for respite. Then my backside was fighting with my shoulders for my attention. I tried shifting my weight onto each cheek in turn for some relief and then laid onto my tank bag to rest my shoulders. "I've had enough now and I want this to end please", I said to myself. Hang on, how come I'm the only one feeling like this. Some of the group are in their 70's and feeling as fresh as a daisy. You know I look at some of the older members of Suffolk Riders who are in their 70's and aspire to be like them in my 70's (if I make it). They are made of stuff you don't see much of these days. Anyway I digress. Back to the trip.



We rode up and down an amazing hill with wide sweeping bends somewhere near, who knows where. (Ask Brian, Neville or Ray). We passed a sign for Gloucestershire and I'm still thinking "When are we going home?"

Time and distance melted together and were wrapped up in discomfort bordering on pain. I had to tell myself that it's too late to do anything about it now you will just have to see it through.

Our final [comfort stop](#) was in Chipping Norton and I could not sit down. Everyone looked so happy and really enjoying the day but I was crestfallen and despondent. I would like to say I was overjoyed to know we were heading back but was too drained to feel much.

At one point during the ride Lee was out front, Brian was next, then me, James, Ray and Neville. Brian indicated left. I followed Lee and I think Neville followed too. Brian, Ray and James went the other way. To be honest the day was such a blur I'm not sure about much, but I have recovered by now.

Once we got nearer to Bedford I was happier as I knew where we were.

Sometime during the latter part of the ride Neville was attacked by a low flying pigeon which exploded into a few pieces. I saw Neville shake his left hand and luckily he was okay. BMW brush guards are pretty effective protection.

I saw three buzzards as well as the kamikaze pigeon and the rest of the beautiful sights.

I got home about 4.00pm in the wet and covered 319 miles door to door. Hang on a minute, that's the sort of distance to my sister's in the Lake District. That puts it in perspective.

Thank you Brian for organising such a great trip. Thank you Lee for leading us out. Thank you Neville for sending me the route. Thank you Ray and James for making it a great day. I must say these Suffolk Riders are hard-core motorcyclists and I'm glad to be a part of them. I'm not saying I'm hard-core it's all relative.

Thanks to everyone for the planning and organising that goes on behind the scenes. Have a wonderful, safe and merry Christmas everyone and a happy and prosperous new year.

David Loney.

*(David provided a waypoint list which I took the liberty of turning into a route on myRouteApp and is available as [No.8 on the Routes & Waypoints 2020 page](#) on club's website. Ed.)*

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### *Hotfoot to Hunstanton, 13 December 2020 – Phil Sayer*

Vini Evans kindly offered to lead a Suffolk Riders social ride to Norfolk Lavender at Heacham, which is just before Hunstanton at the North West corner of Norfolk. It sounded like a nice ride, and I've had some good breakfasts there in the past, so I asked for a place. Then of course we didn't go to Norfolk Lavender at all. Under Covid restrictions we were allowed to meet in a group of 6, but we weren't allowed to eat indoors except as a single family group. Now we could have all ordered our breakfasts and sat at separate tables, but Vini is a gentleman, and didn't want to deprive 5 families from sitting down by taking all the spare tables, so he decided to go to Hunstanton instead, where we could eat our sandwiches overlooking the North Sea. What the Hell, I thought, anything to get out on a ride, so I went anyway.

Chris Austin, Neil Burley, Steve Last and Steve Cook also signed up for the ride. Chris had problems remembering which day it was, and turned out on Saturday the 12th just before 9.00. There was no one at Tesco's, so he thought we must have gone without him, and roared off to Hunstanton to try to catch us up. Needless to say, he never caught us up, 'cos he was a day early...

The forecast for Sunday was dry until lunchtime, but about three degrees ("When will I see you again?") (sorry), and Vini, Neil, Steve and Steve and I arrived in good time at Tesco's Stowmarket. Neil was wearing leathers but thought he might be a bit chilly, so we had to wait while he put his waterproofs on. Still no Chris, so we left anyway. The ride up was uneventful, unless you count sand and mud all over the road as eventful, rather than normal for Norfolk at this time of year. Then the rain started, a bit unfair we thought. We passed Heacham and thought wistfully of our bacon and eggs and a roaring fire, but Steve Cook took over the lead and led us into Hunstanton without a hitch,

where we parked overlooking the cold North Sea, and about a mile of mud as the tide was out.

They had taken the seats away from the bandstand, so we sat in the bus shelter and ate our socially distanced sandwiches and drank our coffee and soup. Vini rinsed out his flask top under a waterspout coming off the roof of the bus shelter and got his gloves wet.



Hunstanton on the North Sea



Bus Shelter - Hunstanton



Vini at 2 metres

In response to the clamour from the members for long rides Vini had plotted a 120 mile return leg via Cromer and Beccles. The Steves made their excuses, but Vini and I set off with Neil and were rewarded by an easing off of the drizzle. Eventually Neil took a short cut home and that left just the two of us. Vini led me at some speed over Norfolk roads that I hadn't ridden before and won't bother with again until the standing water and mud has gone. His sat nav threw a wobbly and we went round in circles a bit getting rather fed up. Fortunately the Jungle Café at Beccles was open and we swallowed our pride and went inside for a hot coffee and cake. We bent the rules slightly by sitting 2 metres apart at either end of one table, but at least we didn't deprive any families of somewhere to sit.

And then to home via Peasenhall and the A1120. In Pettaugh we hung a left and the route led us conveniently past Vini's house in Coddendam. Just after I left him there it came on to heavy, cold, driving rain. I must have been wicked in a previous life. Arrived home after just over 200 miles and the petrol light came on as just as I went down my drive.

Well, the ride certainly blew the cobwebs away, and was great fun. Of course my bike looked like I had been across a recently ploughed field. In the winter in the UK that is par for the course. At least I got out – and as I write I hear we will be in Tier 4 for the foreseeable future, so who knows when the next social ride will be – but I'm pretty sure the weather will be warmer then. Stay safe and hope for a better New Year than 2020.

# 2021 Events

## *2021 Events – Phil Sayer – External Events Committee Member*

At the AGM on 14 December I talked briefly about the plans for 2021 that the external events sub-group has been thinking about. Of course, like no other year our plans are entirely dependent on what happens with the Covid-19 virus and any restrictions that the Government may impose. We will do whatever we can legally and safely, but everything is to be confirmed nearer the date. We are also very keen to hear from you about what you would like to do, so please email me on [phil.sayer@suffolkriders.co.uk](mailto:phil.sayer@suffolkriders.co.uk) to let us know:

*What do you think?*

*Would you participate / go on ride or trip?*

*What suggestions do you have for us to consider?*

### **Plans for 2021**

In 2021 we plan to put on the following:

**Breakfast Runs** – on both Saturdays and Sundays. Several members told us at the 2019 AGM that they would like some Saturday social rides, so we thought we would have a trial to see how popular Saturday rides are. Brian Carter led a ride on Saturday 12 December, which was oversubscribed by 3, so we get the message. There will be more Saturday rides in 2021!

**Training Rides** – Steve Russell and Steven Worrall will arrange monthly group training rides as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

**Reiten Rideouts** – we will support Reiten by providing rides leaders for their weekend rides as we did in 2019, again as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

**The Annual Highland Fling** – We had a great trip in 2020, seven of us went with John Morgan. He plans to arrange this annual staple again in 2021.

### **European trips**

**Romania fly-ride?** – Ben Firbank was planning to fly to Romania, to hire bikes out there and then to ride the Transylvanian Highway in 2020, but it was not possible, and he is keen to try again in 2021. Contact him at [ben.firbank@suffolkriders.co.uk](mailto:ben.firbank@suffolkriders.co.uk) if you are interested.

### **The Ardennes**

I fondly remember my first trip abroad with Suffolk Riders in 2016. I had taken my bike abroad before that, but not with a group. Keith Gilbert was good enough to organise a trip aimed mainly at less experienced continental tourers. So maybe it is time to repay my debt to the group.

I am thinking of organising a similar trip to the Ardennes in May 2021 – Covid willing of course. Maybe it's too soon, but it can always be moved to later in the year. The first item on the agenda would be to see who is interested. I've got two already! If the reaction is positive from members and at least four plus me are keen, then I'll get on and sort it. I'm thinking of riding as 2 groups of 5, so 10 bikes max. David Wood has offered to lead a second group of four riders, so we can take up to eight bikes. The trip is aimed at members who have little or no European touring experience, so they will have priority, but I'm happy to fill the tour up with anyone interested if there is room.

The plan would be very much a rerun of Keith's trip. Out on a Friday via the Shuttle to somewhere like Saint-Hubert, which is about 210 miles from Calais, so not too arduous a ride, but far enough to get to some interesting scenery and roads. Two or three days there, then back on the following Monday or Tuesday. If you don't know the Ardennes then take a look on Google. It's got everything – hills, rivers, steep valleys, pretty villages, and plenty of history too. It was the scene of the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, and there are tank museums to see, as well as the main museum in Bastogne, which has recently been refurbished, and is very good [Bastogne War Museum – The museum of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in Belgium](#). Next to it is the huge memorial to the US 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division [www.101airbornemuseumbastogne.com](http://www.101airbornemuseumbastogne.com). Cost – sharing rooms, about £110 a day all in including rooms, food, & petrol. If you want a single room about £130 a day, plus about £86 for the return ticket on the tunnel, say, £450/£500 sharing/single all in for 3 nights (not including beer and wine!).

In summary:

- 4/5 day weekend trip
- Aimed at members with little or no European touring experience,
- Crossing by Eurotunnel
- Out Friday, back Monday/Tuesday
- Planned days out, or do your own thing
- Limited to 8 bikes (pillions welcome)
- Let me know if you are interested – [phil.sayer@suffolkriders.co.uk](mailto:phil.sayer@suffolkriders.co.uk)

## The Dolomites

The Dolomites has some great riding roads and is also somewhere I've never been but have long wanted to visit. I've also been doing lots of research on Alpine passes! The trip was arranged for September 2020, but we had to cancel it when Covid stopped us from all but essential travel. I'm planning to go in September 2021, leaving here on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

Here's the current plan. If you have any questions or suggestions or are interested in coming, please let me know on [phil.sayer@suffolkriders.co.uk](mailto:phil.sayer@suffolkriders.co.uk). It's an 11 day trip – 3 days travelling each way, a day in the Alps, and 4 days in the Dolomites. It would be hard to do it in less unless you want to spend every day riding long distances, and also to have long enough in the Dolomites to make the trip worthwhile. Cost – sharing rooms, about £110 a day all in including rooms, food, & petrol. If you want a single room about £130 a day, plus about £86 for the return ticket on the tunnel, say, £1300/£1500 sharing/single all in (not including beer and wine!). The outline itinerary is:

Day 1. Leave Ipswich about 7, take Eurotunnel, ride to the Ardennes in Belgium, to La Roche en Ardennes. Around 226 miles from Calais, autoroute for first 100 then cross country to the Ardennes.

Day 2. La Roche en Ardennes to Baden-Baden, via Luxembourg. [Baden-Baden](#) is where some of us stayed in 2019 on our way back from Brno. All on twisty roads. 240 miles.

Day 3. Baden-Baden to [Innertkirchen](#) in the Swiss Alps, via the famous [B500](#) through the Black Forest, Sursee and Panoramastrasse. 255 miles. Short section of autoroute in Switzerland, otherwise lots of panoramic roads. You will need a vignette for the autoroute, which you can buy on-line in advance or when we get there.

Day 4. Innertkirchen. The 5 pass figure of eight. The [Susten](#), [Furka](#), [St Gottard](#), [Grimsel](#) and [Neufenen](#) passes. The Neufenen at 2478m is the highest paved road in Switzerland. I couldn't decide which to cross so let's do them all! About 140 miles, hope for good weather...

Day 5. Innertkirchen to [Cavalese](#) in the Dolomites, riding along the side of [Lake Garda](#). Some autostrada between Como and Garda but then all interesting roads. 310 miles.

Days 6 7 and 8. Three days in Cavalese. The days are up to you. Rest days or ride the Dolomites! I've got three circular rides of varying lengths, and they all sound great:

- the [Sella Ronda](#) "possibly the most scenic days ride in Europe - on some of the best mountain roads.
- the [Passo Rolle](#) "every bit as spectacular as the Sella Ronda, but with half the tourists. Just fabulous."
- [Karersee](#). "A relaxed ride to Lago di Carezza taking in the [Passo Sella](#), [Passo Gardena](#), and [Passo di Giau](#) - some of the most beautiful riding in all of Italy. The title of most spectacularly beautiful and best-to-ride pass in the Dolomites is hotly contested, but for us it's the Passo di Giau" (Ride Magazine).

Days 9. Cavalese to Kirchdorf via the [Stelvio Pass](#). Read all the books, they all say it's got to be done! 75 hairpins, 48 on the northern slope... Ride it early in the day before all the tourists get there... Kirchdorf is 250 miles, some autoroute once down out of the Alps.

Day 10. Kirchdorf to Chalons en Champagne. North along the Rhine valley to Strasbourg between the river and the Vosges mountains, then hang a left across to Metz and Chalons. 300 mile day with some autoroute. Chalons is where some of us stayed in 2019 on our way back from the Pyrenees 'via' the Route Napoleon and Grenoble.

Day 11. Chalons to Calais and back home by Eurotunnel. 200 miles to Calais then 120 back home (Ipswich mileage).

Just to wet your appetite, here's an extract from a couple of articles on Adventure Bike Rider [Adventure Bike Rider | Motorcycle News, Reviews, Features](#) I've put together their thoughts on the 9 passes on our planned trip:

"Riding a motorcycle in the Alps is one of the most thrilling experiences you can have on two wheels. Names like Furka, Stelvio and Grossglockner are steeped in motorcycling folklore, luring us to their silky-smooth twists and turns each year.

Many of us collect Alpine passes like we collected football stickers as kids, proudly listing the exotic names of the roads we've conquered to anyone who will listen. But with that passion comes division.

Which Alpine passes are unmissable and which should be given the cold shoulder on your next adventure is a matter for hot debate. For every lover of the Stelvio Pass' challenging switchbacks, there seems to be a hater of its questionable road surface and popularity with tourists and Top Gear presenters.

The only way to properly judge these roads is to ride them yourself, but with so many to choose from, this often isn't possible on a single trip.

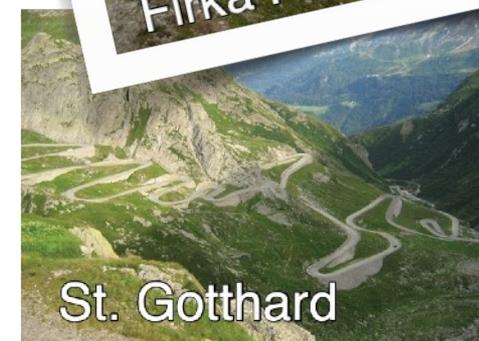
With that in mind, we put our heads together, argued, pleaded and eventually agreed on *ABR* magazine's top 9 mountain passes in the Alps (in no particular order). We hope the list helps you navigate this spectacular corner of the world next time you're lucky enough to ride there.

The three passes of Susten, Furka and Grimsel are in the Alpine region of Switzerland, crossing the Bernese Alps at an elevation above 2000 metres. The passes are generally closed between October and May due to snow.

The Grimsel is a personal favourite due to the multiple well-surfaced switchbacks on the way up, heading clockwise, with emerald blue lakes on the way down. The Furka Pass is higher, at a peak of 2429 metres, and arguably tighter and not as well surfaced, but still an excellent riding road, as is Susten.

Anything else?

Be wary of Switzerland's strict speed limits and try not to get carried away; fines are harsh. Also be wary of busy weekend traffic, and as with all foreign riding, try to keep within your own limits and enjoy the scenery. If you have the time then the Nufenen Pass, just to the south of the loop, is also worth riding.



# Member's Forum

## *First Ride to Asia – Brian Carter*

Reading this month's newsletter, the last sentence made me feel guilty, poor Colin sitting there oh so lonely, so I thought maybe I can contribute something for the next newsletter. So here goes, yes, it's the BoF again.

For many years I had wanted to go to Asia on a motorcycle, my wife and I had been to Russia as far as St Petersburg which is part of Europe, I knew I would be retired in 2009 so started making tentative plans. I knew of a tour company "Wildcat Adventures" that did go to Turkey and I contacted them, they were taking bookings for their next adventure to Turkey. I paid my initial deposit bought maps and did as much research as I thought necessary knowing the tour company would handle most things. Imagine the disappointment when Wildcat Adventures informed me, they were cancelling the Turkey tour as only three people including me had paid a deposit and it just wasn't viable to go ahead with those numbers. Incidentally the owner of [Wildcat Adventures](#) recently retired, so he managed to carry on for another eleven years, nice man.

My wife had agreed that I could go with a tour company as they would take care of any problems, when I suggested going on my own, she wasn't so keen. She then decided that she would come with me and we would make it open ended allowing us to basically stay away until we felt we should return.

We left in early June taking the overnight ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland, this allowed us an early start and we managed to arrive in Southern Germany that evening. Next morning, we set off with the intention of staying fairly close to Venice, which we managed reasonably easily. Now



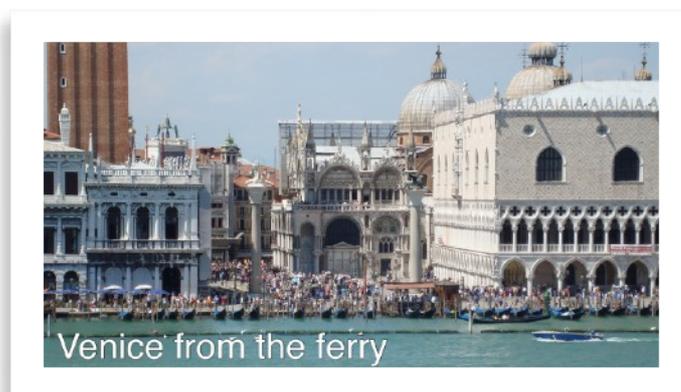
A Pan at rest

before the gnashing of teeth and expletives, I know we didn't see much of Germany and northern Italy by using mostly Autobahns and Autostradas, but we had been to both areas more than once on previous occasions and many times since, the whole idea was to spend as much time in Turkey as we wanted, therefore, the quicker we arrived there the better. I think it wise to mention I was riding a Honda ST1300 Pan European that had around ninety thousand miles on the odometer when we departed, at this moment it has almost two and a half times that many miles registered and still runs very well. I know the comics don't give them very good reviews but in my opinion as a mile muncher they are very good, large fuel capacity and comfortable seating over long distances.

We arrived in the Port of Venice in good time and joined the queue for the ferry, fortunately the weather was perfect, sunny and warm. One thing we noticed was passengers walking up the loading ramp carrying luggage of all shapes and sizes, we would find out why once we boarded. Eventually we

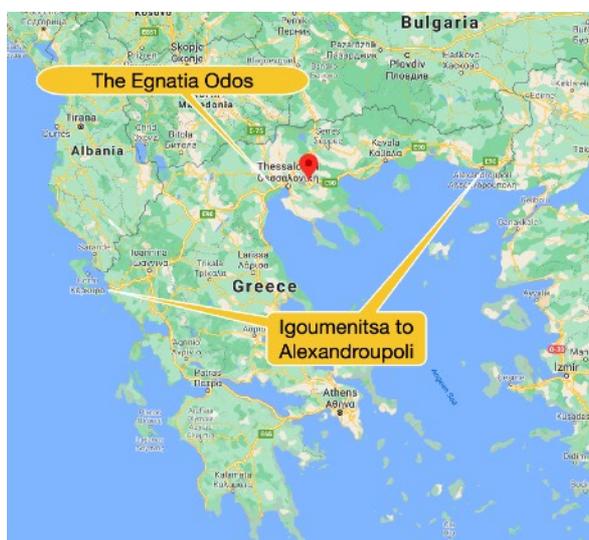
did board and if I am honest, I cannot remember how the bikes were strapped down. We found the office from where we would get the key to our cabin handed over the necessary documents and were presented with two keys. I informed the officer that I had only booked and paid for one cabin, he basically told me to go away and do as you please as he had more important things to attend to. We even had a crew member carry our luggage to the cabins and he proceeded to open both cabins and put our luggage in separate cabins. I thought of sub-letting until my wife reminded me the cabin was in my name and any damage would be my responsibility.

We went out on deck as we left the port and, in our opinion, this was the best way to see Venice, no large crowds and silly prices for food and drink, not that I have ever visited Venice so perhaps you should disregard that comment.



Once underway we explored the ship and that's when we realised what the walk-on passengers were up to: there were tents and hammocks and makeshift shelters on most open decks and the early birds grabbed the best spots. It was quite normal for passengers to sleep on deck, obviously cheaper than a cabin. In the morning we were quite close to the shore, we felt sure we were looking at a trail road we had travelled on three years previously when we passed through Albania on our way to Greece. We arrived at [Igoumenitsa ferry port](#) around midday and after disembarking and packing unwanted

clothing, it was much warmer now. We set off looking for the [Egnatia Odos motorway](#) which hadn't long been open: after travelling single track roads I eventually saw the motorway but didn't see any slip road entrances, there were slip road exits from the motorway and I decided to use one of those! Let me assure you there was virtually no traffic and I had a clear view and, undoubtedly, I wasn't the first to do this. The first thing we noticed were unfinished toll booths and signs telling you to carry on past them. We eventually exited the motorway and almost immediately found a hotel. The plan was to stop the next night at Alexandroupoli which was reasonably close to the border crossing. The reason for this was that in the research I had done, I read that the crossing into Turkey could sometimes take four or five



hours. We reached [Alexandroupoli](#) by early afternoon and looked for somewhere to stay. The first hotel looked really smart and we thought it would have A/C. The chap on reception said we have a room and the cost is ....., but maybe it could be a bit cheaper: I don't expect Ray is reading this, but if he is, I got about 40% discount. The hotel had a very nice pool and we were beside the sea one happy pillion. *(To be continued: next month Brian and Helen enter Turkey and cross the Bosphorus into Asia where society norms are different to ours. Ed.)*

## THE STELLA ALPINA RALLY - *Kieth Gilbert*

It was Phil Sayer's proposed trip for 2021 to ride some of the mountain passes of Italy that reminded me of Stella. It was fifteen years since Maureen, myself and Ray, along with five other S.A.M. members, our own Glen Mures being one of them, set off for [Bardonecchia](#).

When Harry Louis, editor of the Blue 'n ([Motor Cycle magazine](#)) met up with Mario Artusio, Chairman of BMW Club, Italy in 1964 the argument started.

Which is the highest pass rideable to the top? Harry was adamant it was the Stelvio, but Mario was having none of it, claiming the [Col De Sommeiller](#) was at 3,000 metres, whereas the Stelvio was 2757 metres. Harry argued the point that it was not rideable.

The story has it that Mario Artusio and a group of motorcycle mates would meet once a year and ride the Colle de Sommeiller. In 1967 the ride had become so popular it moved to a starting point in Bardonecchia and became the [Stella Alpina Rally](#), which is still running today, usually the second Sunday in July.



From Bardonecchia to the village of Rochemottes is tarmac, from there on loose surface to the top. In 2005, our return trip was over 6 days, 5 nights. We travelled down in small groups with the only pre-booked hotel was in Briancon where we met up for dinner and the following morning set off for Bardonecchia.

My trip was not uneventful. At our first night stop south-west of Langres, Ray had as much oil over his boots as he had in his engine. No KTM in those days, a GS1150 Adventure. So our second day involved a visit to the BMW dealer at Dijon, where we arrived at twelve midday just as they shut for their two hour lunch.

We still made it to St Claude in time to find an hotel to overnight ([St Claude being the home of the Briar Pipe](#)). The third evening saw us in Briancon and meeting up with the rest for dinner. On our return journey we were joined by Simon Phillips and on our fourth night we found a very nice Auberge, Can't remember its location. For our fifth and last night we found our way back to the B&B near Langres and from there to Calais.

I have to admit that I had a pillion who wasn't keen at attempting the off road climb so I only got as far as the tarmac went.



## *Should Italy be your choice? - Keith Gilbert*

And you don't want to ride up the Col De Sommeiller, then head on down to the [Cinque Terre](#) on the Riviera Di Levante. The Cinque Terre consists, obviously, of five fishing villages; i.e. Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corriglia, Manarola and Rianaggiore, which cling to rock faces and are a UNESCO World Heritage site.

It was 2008 when Ray, Shirley, Maureen and myself found ourselves at Manarola for three nights, which gave us 2 days to explore the area and also gave the girls time off the bikes.

The five villages are linked by train or footpath so we had one day at La Spezia by train and on day two we took the train in the opposite direction of Vernazza and walked the footpath back to Manarola. If you ever find your way to Manarola do go to [Dal Billy's fish restaurant](#).

We had time to continue our trip and headed down towards Pisa, but the area is very commercialised and touristy and not for us. So we turned left and inland to [Lucca](#), one of our favourites in Italy, only stopping for coffee this time where we saw a rally of old bikes in the square. We then headed off to Locanda del Gallo (house of the chicken), a boutique hotel at St Cristina near Gubbio. For Maureen and I it was our third visit to this excellent hotel set high in the hills, well off the beaten track. Once again we stayed three nights and Ray and Shirley took themselves off to Sienna for the Sunday, whilst we decided to walk to the local village.

Sadly, after our stay at Locanda, it was time to head for home.

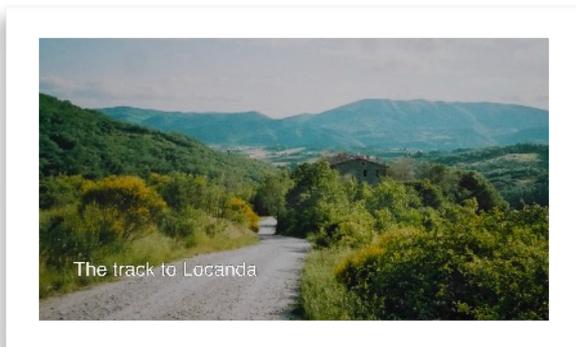
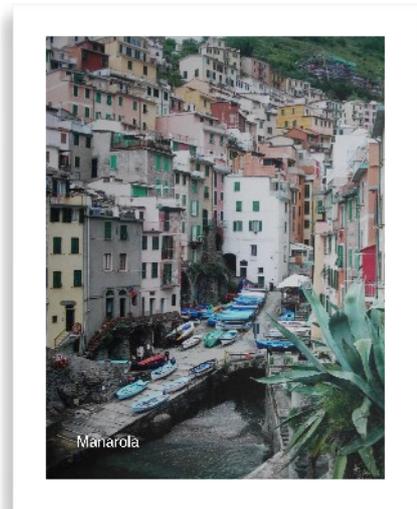
Some facts:

1. Calais to Locanda – 1574 km (983 miles)
2. Calais to Manarola – 1315 km (822 miles)
3. On this trip with Ray and Shirley the only pre-booking was our first night in France. This enables us to get a good day's riding in (keeping off autoroutes)

and not having to look for accommodation.

4. By travelling in small groups of two or three bikes, you are only looking for three rooms. Never had a problem in finding accommodation. On this trip, at Manarola, only on one occasion did we not end up in the same B&B, but just down the road from each other.

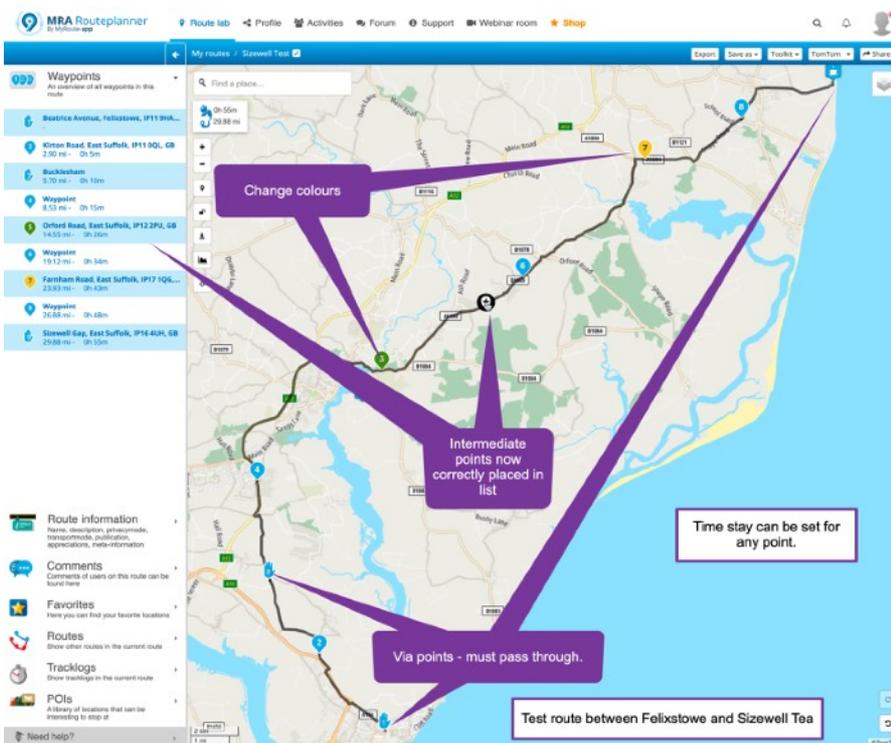
5. Be flexible. On leaving the UK for Europe, obviously, you have a plan for a destination, but by winging it you are free to replan if caught out by bad weather, or, if you like the look of a particular area, you can stay a bit longer. Believe me if you pass through an area where you say, "I'll come back here," you probably never will. – GET TOURING!



# Technical Corner

## MyRouteApp update - Colin South

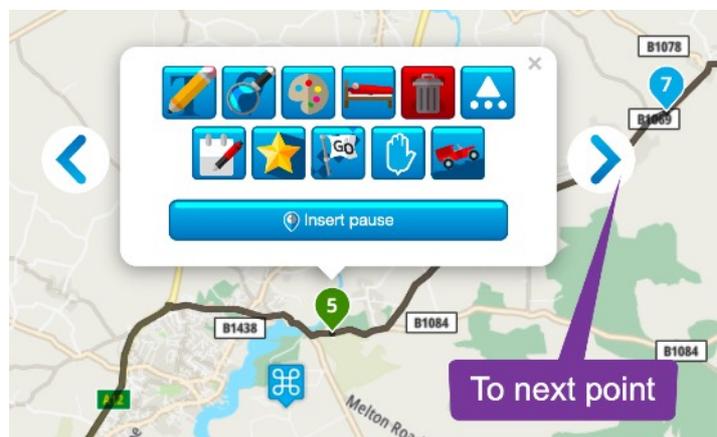
On the 21st November myRouteApp announced a [major upgrade](#), numbered I.I. NB on that page they also list proposals for further upgrades. The new facilities are all associated with waypoints which can now be either ‘via points’, i.e. points that must be negotiated, or ‘shaping points,’ which can be skipped while riding. Until this upgrade, only the start and finish were via points. Also added is the ability to pause at any waypoint for a specific period of time, e.g. to stop for a break. Thank goodness they have now improved the adding of intermediate points between two previously set points: the waypoint is now correctly inserted in the list, rather than at the bottom to be dragged to the correct location.



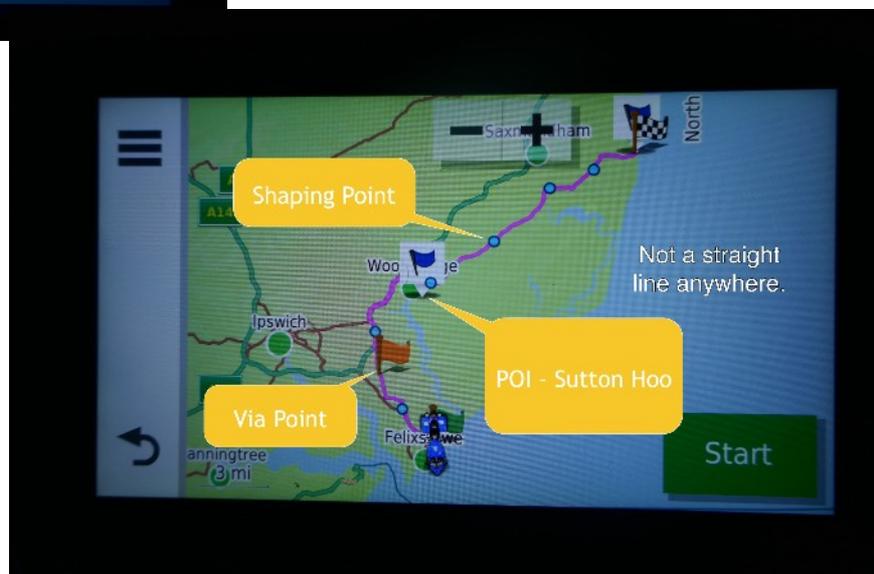
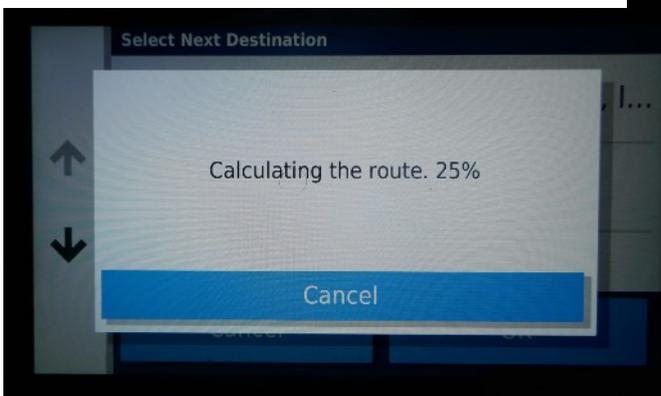
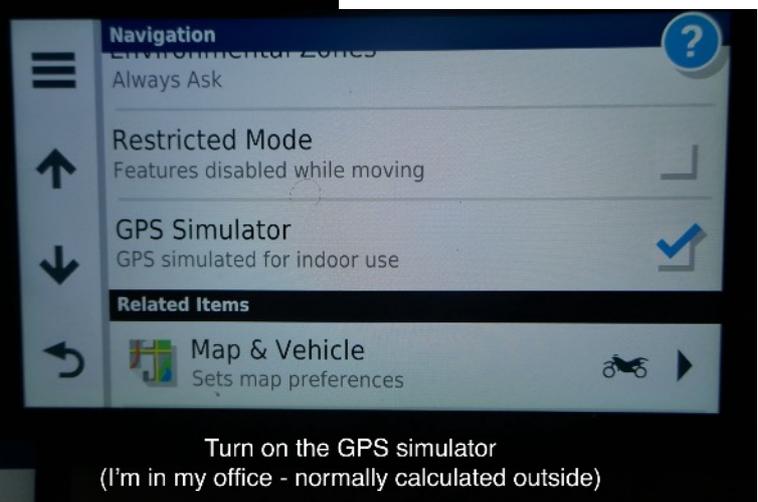
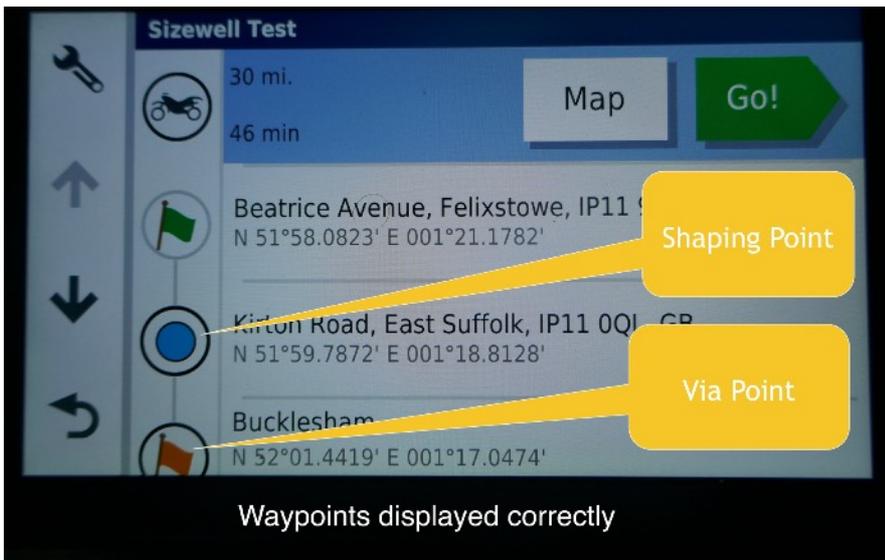
To test the new version I set up a simple route between my home in Felixstowe and Sizewell Tea, with one via point, and number of shaping points. Left click on any point allows you to change a number of parameters, from colour to ‘skip’, useful when the routing software won’t allow you to go where you think you can. I also found it useful to give the waypoint an actual name rather than leave it as a number, making it more obvious when transferred to the sat-nav.

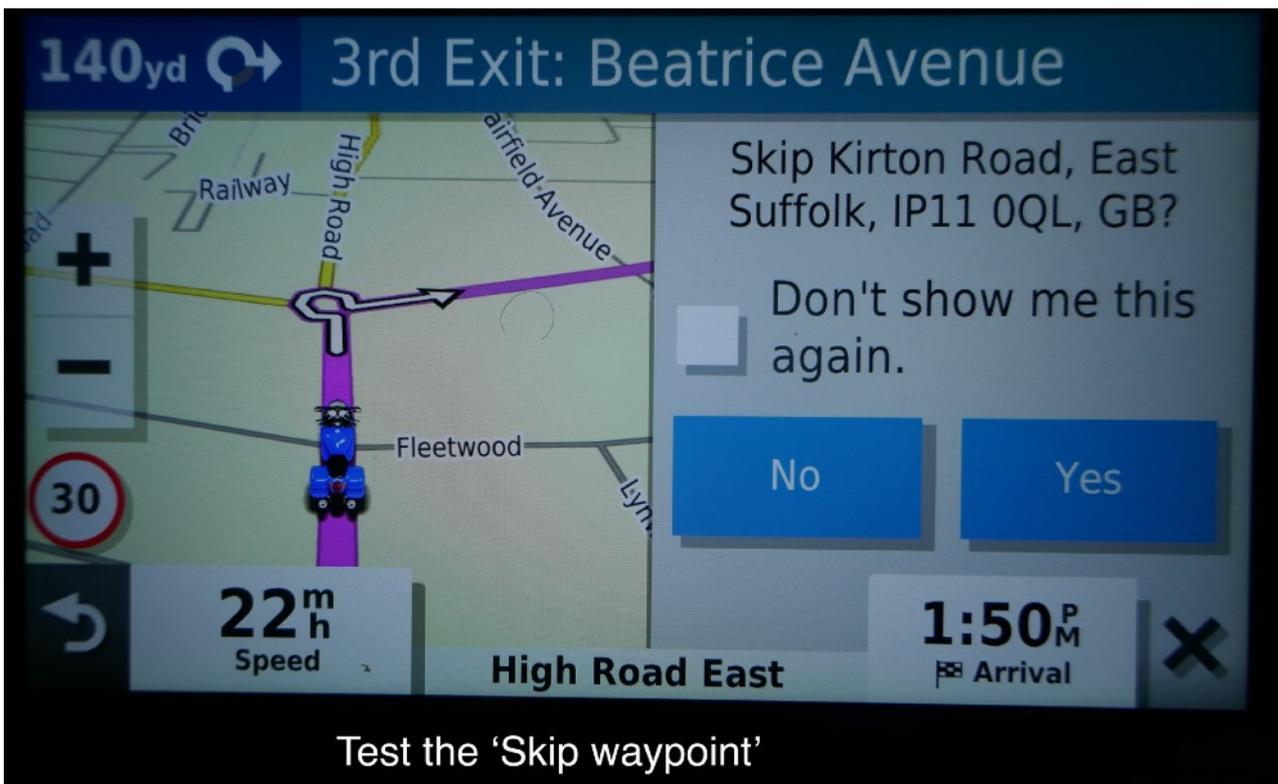
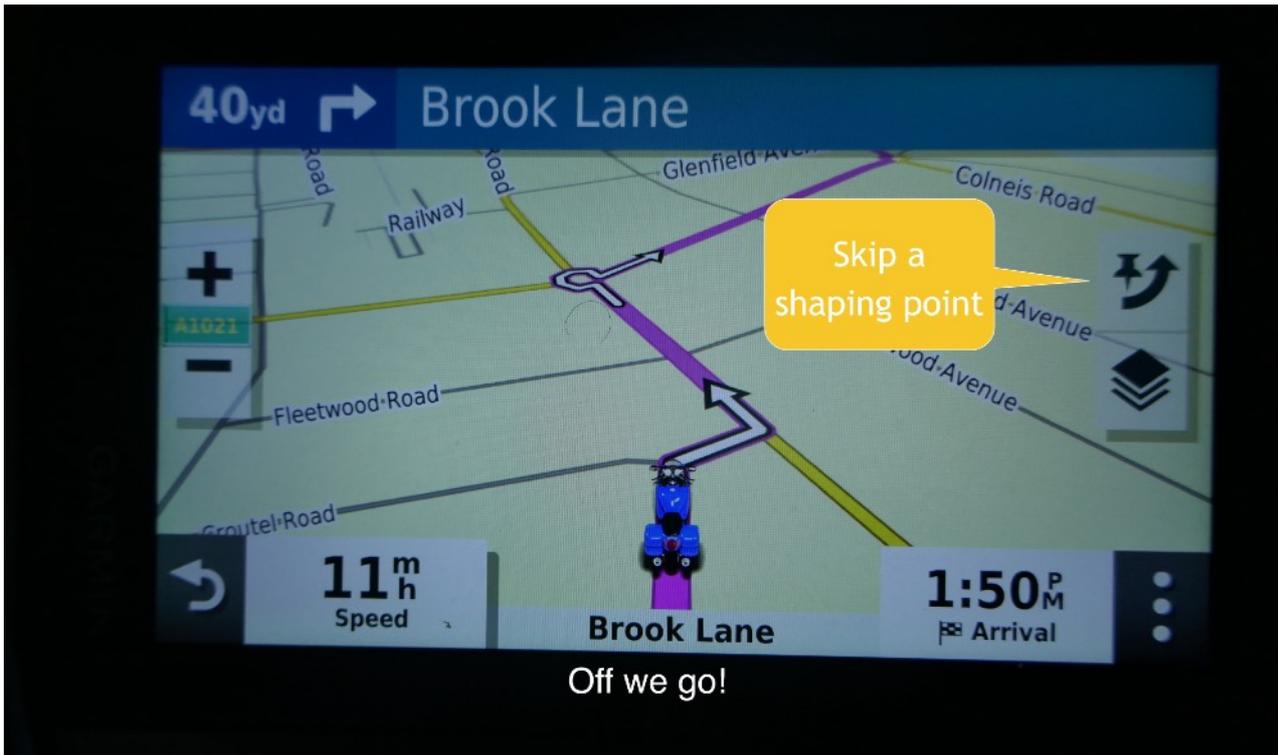
Access to the gpx file containing the updated facilities is via a new ‘Beta’ format under the ‘Save as’ menu. The information tag states that they have only tested this file on a Garmin zūmo XT (that’s what I have), but I can only assume they will test it on other models as comments come in from users.

I’ve compared the two files – gpx I.I (route, track, POI) and gpx I.I (BETA route, track, POI) – and apart from the









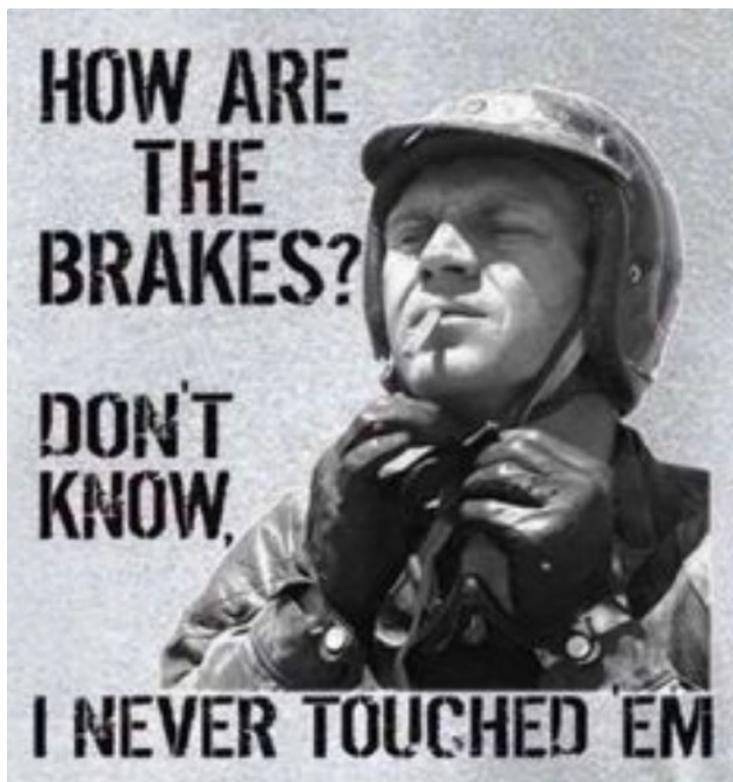
# The Last Laugh Word

I always enjoy reading the articles that come to my desk, and once again the regulars have given me a lot of pleasure, which I hope you enjoy also.

If you're fed up with covid, please skip to the laugh at the end, as I ramble on somewhat. I've almost given up watching the news, as every night it is a more depressing picture of covid-19, with a bit of Brexit tacked on the end, or some poor community suffering a catastrophe. My mind goes into further turmoil when I see people deliberately breaking the rules, I keep asking myself why?

It seems that here in Suffolk we are reasonably careful and law abiding. So, as someone who is deemed 'vulnerable' (I don't think I have any underlying conditions) and who likes to take his daily exercise, either walking or riding a bicycle, I wanted a 'what's my risk' factor, as I walk down Hamilton Road, Felixstowe, to do a bit of shopping for ourselves and some elderly neighbours. Pre-tier 4, on a normal day I estimate that there would be upwards of 1000 people in the shopping area, during working hours. The [latest statistic](#) shows Suffolk to have about 186 cases per 100,000, that's about 2 in every 1000. At this point I give up, there are so many unknowables, so I just slip in and out of shops as quickly as possible, wear an N95 mask (not good but better than the useless facemasks I see littering the street) and wash my hands when I get home, remembering not to touch my face. Stay safe and hope to see some of you again after the vaccination programme.

It's very lonely sitting here so any response would be most welcome. [Colin](#)





## BMW's motorcycle of tomorrow

BMW has reinvented the motorbike with a futuristic concept from Motorrad – BMW's two-wheeled transport arm. The zero-emissions bike has self-balancing wheels to stand upright even at a complete stop

**BMW Motorrad Vision Next 100**

**Smart visor:** Shows data in three display areas. Look straight ahead to concentrate on road, up for rear view mirror, down to check maps. System can deliver optimum speed and banking angle for approaching corner

**Flexframe:** Frame and wheels are single unit. Entire frame alters shape to change direction on turn of handlebars. Flexframe controls resistance during high- and low-speed manoeuvres

**Variable tread tyres:** Adjust to road conditions and provide damping

**Powertrain:** Fully electric

**Suit:** Senses temperature and cools or warms rider. Vibrations in leg and arm sections correspond to sat-nav directions. At high speed, neck section inflates to provide support for head

**Self-balancing wheels:** Gyroscopic sensors – like those in Segway – keep bike stable and upright

Source: BMW Group

Pictures: BMW Motorrad

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