



## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2021

### From the Chair

So, as we approach the longest day of summer, I think we all thought that the lock down that has become part of our daily lives would be lifted and finally we would all rise like the phoenix from the ashes, twist the throttle and ride into the sunset.... Or not. At the time of writing this piece, it appears that the final parts of lock down will be postponed another four weeks.

I know many people have arranged trips and holidays away and some have even managed to get away overseas. Some have been able to meet up with friends and family they have not seen for many months too. If any of our members have managed to get away, we would love to hear from you, so we can brighten up the newsletter with your journeys and perhaps write a short article about it to share.

It is really pleasing that quite a few members have managed to take up the offer of a check ride and looking at the postings in face book, everyone has enjoyed tweaking areas of their riding.

The success of the slow riding events has also been a real benefit to those that wanted to improve their skills.

Unfortunately, we are still not free to have our committee meeting and social get togethers at Dial post village hall, but as soon as we can, we will let everyone know. In the meantime, we will continue to run group ride outs, obeying covid rules and social distancing.

That's all for now,



Helen

Chair WSAM

## Off Road Skills

When I retired at 60, I planned to travel round Europe on the bike. And where I had an 1150 RT those days, I decided to get me a young second-hand GS A. A GS was allegedly the bike that could take you everywhere.

I took the bike as far as the Greek border in Albania the first year and returned via Italy.



And yes, this was a bike that could do most things, but the person riding it needed some technique to do it on roads that were not exactly motorways. So, there was a need for training.

I was aware that BMW organised off-road training on Walters Arena in South Wales. Walters Arena, also known as "Seven Sisters," is widely regarded as the best and most varied off-road site in the UK and was a massive 4,000-acre opencast coal surface mine. It is now the Welsh piece of countryside where the renowned Paris-Dakar

competitor, Simon Pavey, has been running the BMW Off Road Skills (ORS) since 2000.

So, some years ago I participated in a Level 1 course. At that 2-day course, for complete novices, a group of some 8 people is taught by 2 instructors. One learns how to lift, balance, and manoeuvre the bike in difficult situations including slow riding with brake and clutch control. One is also taught how to brake on gravel and ride up hills, but also down, making sure that the back wheel keeps rolling. In between the more difficult exercises there is time for relaxed trail rides around the impressive area.

A year after my level 1, I saw an advertisement on the ORS website indicating that there were some rare places remaining on the 'Brecon Beacons Adventure'. Starting at the ORS HQ we took the bikes north into the Brecon Beacons on muddy lanes, open moorland and through private forestry. On Day 2 of the adventure one not only has flowing lanes, but also the final stretch swooping over the breath-taking open moorland and the Old Trecastle Road.



Bikes at the Metropole Hotel Llandrindod Wells, a place not unknown to some WSAM members...



Arena followed by a slalom round cones. A break with time to drink and a snack is taken and thence the groups of 7 or 8 participants with an instructor are constituted. Amongst other exercises, one rides from one big stone to another, stopping at each one resting one foot on the obstacle, once left, once right, and from there going to the next rock to master the brakes.

Slowly but surely the trails and tracks become more challenging, and advanced downhill braking is introduced. Shallow ruts were also on the programme. Lunch is included, and day one normally ends with a dinner in the evening in a local pub where one can reflect on the day, but was because of covid restrictions, replaced by a covid-safe outdoor barbeque, after which the whole group joins the ORS base again at the Woodlands Business Park. I can assure you that one had no difficulty finding sleep once in the B&B.

Once again it became clear that the bike could do it, but the person on the bike? Deep ruts and slippery mounts were a challenge in Welsh weather

Thus, I decided once again that some training would be appropriate. I booked a level 2 foundation course for last year March 2020. We all know what happened then, and after a second postponement this year in March, I went to Wales on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May.

Every year BMW provides ORS with some 50 new GS bikes. This time mine had 210 miles on the clock. This means no worries about how to get home after ruining your own motorcycle.

This intermediate level tries to consolidate the skills learned on the first level and attempts to refine them. Focus is on the core skills such as body position, and the mastering of the clutch and throttle. Vision is another important item since one should learn to read the trail. On day one we started with a relaxed trail ride around the Walters



Day two starts with some physical exercises to loosen the muscles. To prove that one controls the clutch, one learns riding off, up to in 5<sup>th</sup> gear without touching the throttle whilst not stalling the bike. And to address the position on the pegs, and the mastering of these 250kg GS's, one also rides on the gravel trails without hands. The game with the throttle and the gears, whilst reading the trail is put into practice on muddy roads. To finish the day, one has a go on a part of the trail where Land Rover tests its new vehicles.

The goal is that by the end of this course, one should have the tools to deal with anything you find on the open trail safely, in control and, most importantly, with a big smile on your face. It's the perfect way to step up to Level Two, so you can get the most out of the additional challenges.



I had the pleasure of having some arguments with the Welsh soil during the 2-day course, but luckily it was friendly to me. Nothing the washing machine could not deal with.

It was fun.

Frank

### A "Thank You Note"

*Just a quick note to say thanks to Peter Oakley who Observed my Check Ride yesterday. I requested one as it was 3-4 years since the last outing, and I was concerned about the erosion of skills and attitudes.*

*Boy, was I right!*

*Peter provided a gentle but brutally honest discussion and written report on a myriad of things on which I now need to refocus.*

*This was a thoroughly worthwhile exercise, especially since Covid disrupted our lives, and I would recommend a Check Ride to all; a very valuable experience.*

*Now, I must go and Smooth out my Sparkley bits....*

Mark



## Wet Weather Riding Kit

I wanted to let you know about the kit I use for wet weather riding which is an affordable way to be comfortable on the bike in wet conditions. This article was prompted by a recent trip to the west country on a very wet and windy weekend, good old British summer! Let's start from the top, with visors.

You can use products to shed water, Rain seal is the best known one but there are concerns about using it on plastic visors. Also, Nikwax do a visor proof spray which can help. For me, just having a clean visor inside and out is the best remedy. Pinlock, while preventing fogging, can be a problem if you open the visor when it is wet, for example, in town, or at the petrol station. The water gets onto the pinlock insert and then as it's a very delicate porous surface cannot simply be wiped clean with a cloth. I prefer to simply crack open a visor to demist and use Bob Heath Anti fog spray in the winter.

The main expense is my jacket is an Alpinestars laminated one which while expensive does do a great job shedding off the rain. As I ride year-round for work this is invaluable. I don't find I need heated inners as the laminated effect prevents chilling. I have tried cheaper jackets and oversuits but ultimately, I think you have to bite the bullet and pay for laminated.....or wait for the rain to stop.

For gloves, obviously a Gore-Tex glove should do the job. I have also used Bark buster blizzard handguards which give fantastic protection from the elements. One of the annoying things about wet hands is putting gloves back on. Using the blue maintenance gloves as inners overcomes this, and you can use the plastic ones at the petrol pumps too. On long wet rides I sometimes take a spare pair.

While my boots are 'Gore-Tex' they are also getting on in years and do start to let water in during heaving prolonged wet riding. So, I thought I would try out the Oxford Waterproof over boots. They slip over your bike boots, zip up and away you go. I used them all weekend through hours of heavy rain and have to say they did a great job keeping my feet and boots dry. I have in the past only relied on Sealskinz socks which are good, but you still end up with a soaking boot.

Off the bike they were a little awkward and I wouldn't want to walk far in them, but on the bike, they were fine, gear changing and braking no problem. For prolonged rides in the wet, I would recommend them, and at less than £20 a good bit of kit to back up my boots when the weather is very poor all day. They pack up small too! I am a size 10 boot and the XL size easily goes over, but check the sizing guide.

Here is a link to Sportbikeshop to see the product:

[https://www.sportbikeshop.co.uk/motorcycle\\_parts/content\\_prod/262306](https://www.sportbikeshop.co.uk/motorcycle_parts/content_prod/262306)

I also use Berghaus Deluge overtrousers as my waterproofs over leathers or jeans. They are lightweight, breathable, zip all the way up so easy to put on/take off and most importantly, they work. I have ridden all day in heavy rain and only had some ingress where my knees push against the fabric. I have used these for years and highly recommend them. For around £40.00 I am waterproof and flexible as I can delayer later, much more affordable than some of the expensive waterproof trousers offered on the market.

[https://www.outdoorgb.com/p/Berghaus\\_Mens\\_Deluge\\_2\\_Waterproof\\_Overtrousers\\_Regular/?s=10966&tc=7614&sc=10724](https://www.outdoorgb.com/p/Berghaus_Mens_Deluge_2_Waterproof_Overtrousers_Regular/?s=10966&tc=7614&sc=10724)

As mentioned before, Sealskinz socks are excellent and a good back up when riding in cold wet conditions.

[https://www.sealskinz.com/collections/socks?gclid=Cj0KCQjwh\\_eFBhDZARIsALHjIKepZQZucNALi\\_6uJqixEkn1FcKfX2vy5DwV7KNsc6PFIwnKeYJVCIIaAs0pEALw\\_wcB](https://www.sealskinz.com/collections/socks?gclid=Cj0KCQjwh_eFBhDZARIsALHjIKepZQZucNALi_6uJqixEkn1FcKfX2vy5DwV7KNsc6PFIwnKeYJVCIIaAs0pEALw_wcB)

I hope you have found it useful. Being comfortable on your bike is crucial to maintain alertness as well as enjoyment and part of your consideration when planning a ride.

John

## FTT Somme does Wales

A few years ago, I attended a talk at Dial Post WSAM with the guys from French Training Tours (FTT) who were talking about their advanced motorcycling tours based on the Hendon Police Motorcycle training. My interest was sparked, and I signed up for the next available tour. This turned out to be many years later, made even longer by Covid, and finally the time came on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of June 2021.

None of the usual pre tour niceties were available, replaced by emails and Zoom meetings, but I finally set off, not for Dover and the ferry to France, but Oxford and the gateway to mid Wales.

Four Mentors and eight clients were duly introduced at the A34 / A40 services, paired up into two clients to one mentor, and we headed off, 3 minutes apart on our 850 miles tour over 3 days travelling the glorious roads of mid Wales. Based in Llandrindod Wells, each day, including the Friday from Oxford, had 5 legs of about 1 hour each. In between each leg was refreshments & food stops all covered in the price. I only ever paid for my drinks in the evening.

Each day was your turn to lead 2 or 3 of the legs, with a different mentor, and perspective, following you through every twist, turn and overtake. The mantra of 7/10ths, slow in, fast out, planning and execution with no effect on your fellow road user, was drummed into

you. With this came the smoothness and the speed that left you feeling totally in control of every double apex and plummeting decent and efficient overtake. These roads are fast and twisty and a far cry from the Sussex restrictions that most IAM riders are used to whilst being observed. There is nowhere to hide if you anything but confident with positive progression. When you mentor gets off their bike after your session of a super challenging hour at the front, with a big grin and slaps you on the back, you can't help but feel you've reached another level in you're riding ability.

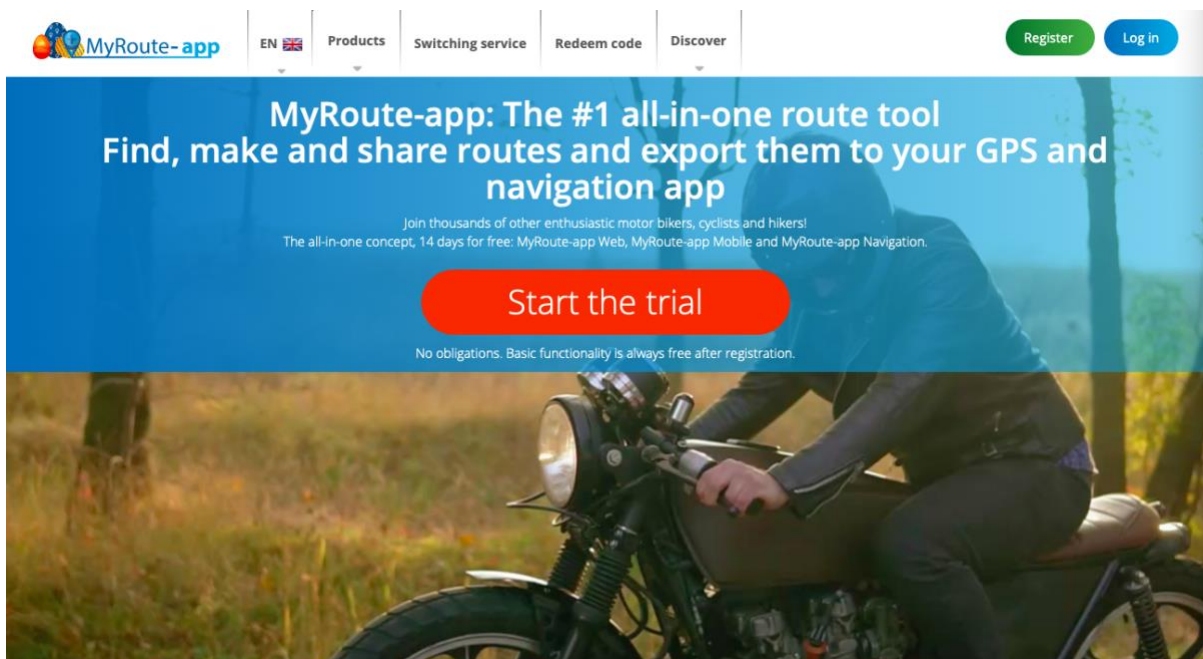
I'm already in the waiting list for the four days tour in France for 2022, where even more refinement is promised.... can't wait.

Brad Nicholson

## French Training Tour

MyRouteapp.com

**“The #1 all-in-one route tool. Find, make and share routes and export them to your GPS and navigation app.” (sic.?)**



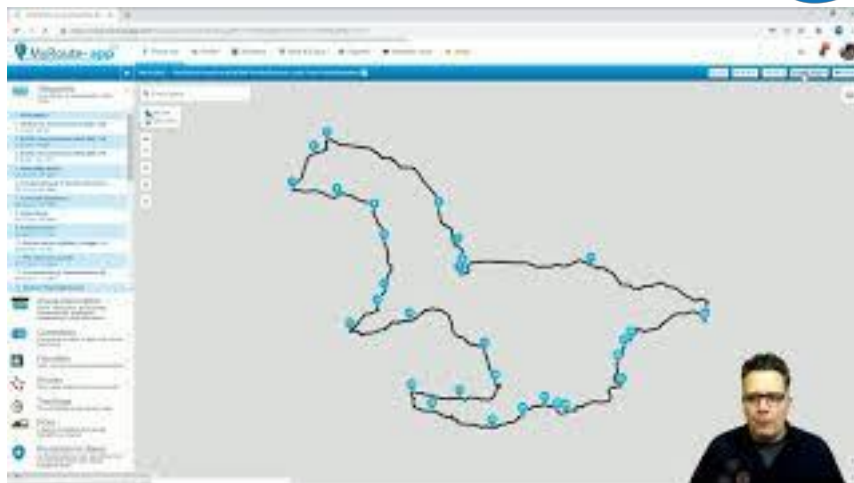
The screenshot shows the MyRoute-app website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the MyRoute-app logo on the left, followed by links for 'EN' (with a UK flag), 'Products', 'Switching service', 'Redeem code', and 'Discover'. On the right side of the navigation bar are 'Register' and 'Log in' buttons. The main content area features a large blue banner with the text: 'MyRoute-app: The #1 all-in-one route tool Find, make and share routes and export them to your GPS and navigation app'. Below this, it says 'Join thousands of other enthusiastic motor bikers, cyclists and hikers! The all-in-one concept, 14 days for free: MyRoute-app Web, MyRoute-app Mobile and MyRoute-app Navigation.' A prominent red button labeled 'Start the trial' is centered on the banner. Below the button, it states 'No obligations. Basic functionality is always free after registration.' The background of the banner is a photograph of a person riding a motorcycle through a field.

Over a year ago Stuart asked every group to provide a volunteer that would participate in a presentation of the programme by the creators.

Well due to things happening round us, the event became a virtual presentation on 27<sup>th</sup> March.

The navigation app can be accessed online by typing MyRouteapp.com and start a 14 day free trial of the MyRoute-app.Web, MyRoute app Mobile and MyRoute-app Navigation. You have to register. After the 14 day “Gold” period, the basic functions are still available.

Once you are in, short video tutorials are available, and allegedly after watching the 6 lessons, which would take you some 40 minutes you should have a good idea of all you can do with MyRoute-app. It also has a comprehensive support page.



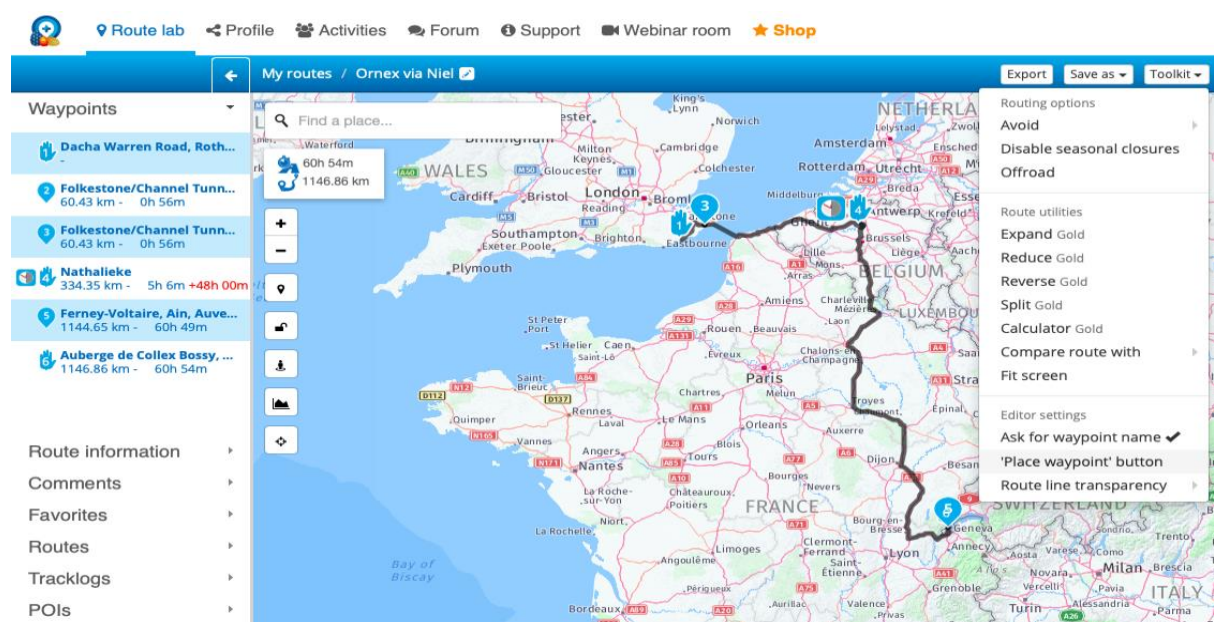
**The app also has a large library of existing routes** that can be downloaded, adapted, saved, and transferred to the different navigators available on the market, such as TomTom, Garmin and others.

From previous presentations on navigation tools, we remember that a route is made up out of a starting and an end point with waypoints in between, and a track only has a start and endpoint.

What is new to this app, is that one can compare routes between different maps by using overlays and still see through the different layers, e.g., one could use the Michelin layer to use their green "scenic" routes or use hybrid Google maps.

One can also create groups in the app and share routes and events. One can even send a route by email. The app also has a function to create round tours, which might be useful for observed or group rides.

**The app further comes with a toolkit.**







As for most navigation tools, one has to check by zooming in, that one is on the correct lane and in the right direction of a dual carriage way. Adding details, colours (e.g., red for a break, green for a photo opportunity) and notes to a waypoint, is also possible. As is moving them by "hold and drag". Putting waypoints away from junctions and roundabouts helps to stay on the preferred side of the road.

**I am not a sales rep, but the app seems to do what's on the tin.**

Frank

### *Rob says;*

*Having "played" with the My Route App, I have found it useful to be able to plan, review and more importantly export these routes to my Tom Tom Rider. This is something I have struggled with in the past using Tom Tom's MY DRIVE. I do like the option of comparing routes planned by different systems to the personal route planned, this is very useful if planning to share route for a group ride amongst people with different Sat Nav systems.*

*The Garmin basecamp seems a lot more flexible, and from what I have seen contains most, but not all, of the My Route App.*

*I would consider buying the My Route licence as long as I use Tom Tom Rider, but I am leaning towards Garmin for my next Sat Nav purchase.*

At the time of writing the Government had just added a month to the COVID measures. We will monitor all guidance we receive from the IAM, act accordingly, and keep you updated both by e mail as on our Members Facebook page.



## Club Activities for 2021 and more...

### Tests

At the time of writing, we had 1 test planned, we wish our WSAM associate all success.

### A cracking start:

So, a quick Easter quiz question....

Q: How many S's are there in Wales?

A: Well in 2022 there will be five.... Safe, Systematic, Smooth, Speed and Sparkle.

Yes, the moment we have all been waiting for...something to look forward to :-)

As many of you will be aware the WSAM Training Team sadly had to postpone our planned training event to sunny, yes "**Sunny**" Wales this May due to some little thing called COVID? (I looked in Roadcraft for the mnemonic, but I cannot find any reference to it anywhere, suggestions on a postcard please?)

Anyway, the great news is that in 2022 your hard working WSAM Training Team (we are guv, honest) has successfully secured a training event in Wales between 11th - 15th May 2022.

We will again be staying at the wonderful Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells, set perfectly in the heart of Wales with access to the most amazing roads and scenery.

Further details will be published soon but the event will be open to both WSAM Observers and Full Members and we be held over two consecutive two-day sessions.

There will be Bed, Buffet Breakfast, Evening Meal, refreshments and Welsh Cakes!!! all included for the princely sum of £192 single occupancy or £162 per person double occupancy for a 2-night stay, excluding bar bills! (Rumour has it the first round is on Boris?)

Places will be limited, so please register your interest with our Group Treasurer Rob Bright ([rob.bright@btinternet.com](mailto:rob.bright@btinternet.com)) asap and we will publish further details on securing bookings with deposits etc in due course.

Stay safe and patient, we are nearly there....

*Love, the WSAM Training Team*



If you have any articles that may be of interest to other members,

please forward them to me. ([frank@wsam.org.uk](mailto:frank@wsam.org.uk))

*Cheers,*

*That's all for this time*

*Helen*



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