

Trail riding in France – Part Une

12 days, 1,370 road miles, 4-course meals that didn't help the waistline, beautiful countryside, friendly locals, an excellent travelling companion and more lanes than you could shake a stick at!

It was my brother Trev's 60th birthday on 12th June and the plan was (i) to meet up with an old drinking mate (Geoff) who moved to Brittany and (ii) do some trail riding using the homes of Totally TTRs' customers (Torsten and Rowena of Ridelimousin) and a "never met in person" internet forum acquaintance (Stephen Dunne) as bases.

It took a bit of planning and a lot of help with maps and routes from Big Jim and oodles of advice from Cap'n Paul to make it all come together. It worked as not a day was wasted!

Initially we were going to travel with Olly Cooke in his big van with the three bikes but sadly Olly had to pull out because of poor health a few days before we set off. Trev's VW Passat estate and two-bike trailer were quickly serviced and fettled for the French action along with our TTR250s.

We had a calm crossing on the ferry to Roscoffe on Wednesday night 3rd June. We found Geoff's place at Seglien no problem - aren't GPS great! We explored the area on Thursday including a weird emptied reservoir. Geoff & Perla made us a nice evening meal and we slept like logs overnight.

It seems that when you buy a property in rural France you end up with a small hamlet. Geoff certainly isn't short of space with his barns and big garden!



We set off early Friday morning to arrive at Ridelimousin (Les Hommes near La Souterraine) at just after 6pm. Very hot for us - apparently temps hit 34 degrees. Had a good chat with Rowena and Torsten before a lovely 4-course meal and bed.

Torsten showed us around the estate and I spied that he had 7 (I think) TTR250s 4 of which are available for hire. He can either lead groups or supply GPS routes – which is the option we took to make it more of an adventure!

Saturday was our first day's trail riding in the lovely Limoges countryside using one of Torsten's GPS routes.



The countryside was lush and green with loads of trees, copses and woods plus lovely stone houses and barns. Very medieval!



As I do the leading at home, Trev volunteered to do all the leading in France – ideal! It got a bit hot (around 30 degrees) after midday but not enough to spoil the great riding.



We did about 50 miles (with a high proportion of that being on lanes) by about 4.30pm and realised that we weren't going to get to the end of the outgoing route at Bourgneuf so turned on the road GPS and asked it to navigate us back to base so as not to miss the evening meal – obviously. The biggest

surprise of the holiday was meeting Cap'n Paul and Lynn popping out of a lane that we were just about to go down! They were staying in the area and were happy to accept an invitation to join us on the following day.



Sunday started well with a full English breakfast. We covered 106 miles with lots of breaks but this time reached our destination of Ambazac. We used another of Torsten's great routes installed on our SatNavs and Trev did a brilliant job of leading, especially bearing in mind the sun on the screen made it difficult at times. It took us nearly nine and a half hours from start to finish. Got a bit warm again around the middle of the day but lots of woods riding to keep cool.



Paul and Lynn were great company and we finished off back at base where Ro soon appeared with a couple of mugs of much appreciated tea followed later by another of her fabulous meals.



Unlimited dirt roads through forests, woods and fields with no-one else on them! Hardly any traffic on the tarmac roads either. France is a bit like North Devon without any people. The weather was kind and it was nice to ride with just armour and race shirt and no heavy jacket...

Brian

Brian Sussex – June 2015

Contact details for Ride Limousin:

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