

## Trail riding in France – Part Deux

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June , after the obligatory full English breakfast at Ridelimousin, we set off for lanes a little bit further south.

After another full English “snack” we said our farewells to Torsten and Rowena and set off to Stephen Dunne at Le Mas de Forsac where we had booked to stay in a cottage.



On the way down we visited the village of [Oradour-sur-Glane](#) in [Haute-Vienne](#) in then [Nazi occupied France](#) was destroyed, when 642 of its inhabitants, including women and children, were [massacred](#) by a [Nazi Waffen-SS](#) company. A new village was built nearby after the war, but [French president Charles de Gaulle](#) ordered the original maintained as a permanent memorial and museum. A very salutary experience.

Although we were self-catering our host Stephen made us very much at home even down to making us a very nice curry for supper.



Tuesday would be our first days trail riding from Le Mas de Forsac and it was a cracker! The temperature a bit cooler so not so tiring. Stephen took us out for a "wobble", as he called it, around his manor but it was far from that!



The amazing thing about our trail riding experience in France is the proportion of unsurfaced to tarmac roads. Probably only about 5% tarmac on Stephen's runs.



We were getting into the French way of life under Stephen's expert tutorage and had an hour and a half lunch stop with a 4-course meal at a popular "routier".



Wednesday dawned and, although the weather didn't look too brilliant, the overnight rain had just nicely settled the dust and softened the lanes a tad. First stop of the day was at the memorial to [Violette Szabo](#) to pay homage. Szabo was a [Special Operations Executive](#) agent during the [Second World War](#), and a posthumous recipient of the [George Cross](#). On her second mission into occupied France, Szabo was captured by the German Army, interrogated and tortured, and deported to Germany where she was eventually executed at [Ravensbrück concentration camp](#). Stephen brought her story to life by showing us the actual spots at which things happened prior to her capture.

What followed was another epic trail ride led by the master.



Beautiful sunken lanes and even some mud and ruts to remind us of home.



We finished the ride in a bar by a lake with a man-made beach. Perfect for kids and adults alike!



We packed and loaded the bikes on a fairly relaxed basis on Thursday morning. It has to be said that everything at [La Vieille Ferme](#) was relaxed and put us in proper holiday mode.



We bid farewell to our host and set off further south to Rocamadour doing some sightseeing on the way.



Stephen had used an old contact to book us in at the Lion d'Or where they had a lockup for the trailer and bikes so that we could go off gallivanting in the car – ideal!

We visited a fantastic cave system at [Gouffre de Padirac](#) where we travelled along the underground river in punts to see the fabulous limestone formations further along from the entrance. We went for dinner at a lovely medieval town called [Domme](#) set on a promontory overlooking the Dordogne River where I treated myself to goose gizzards and ducks livers as a starter!

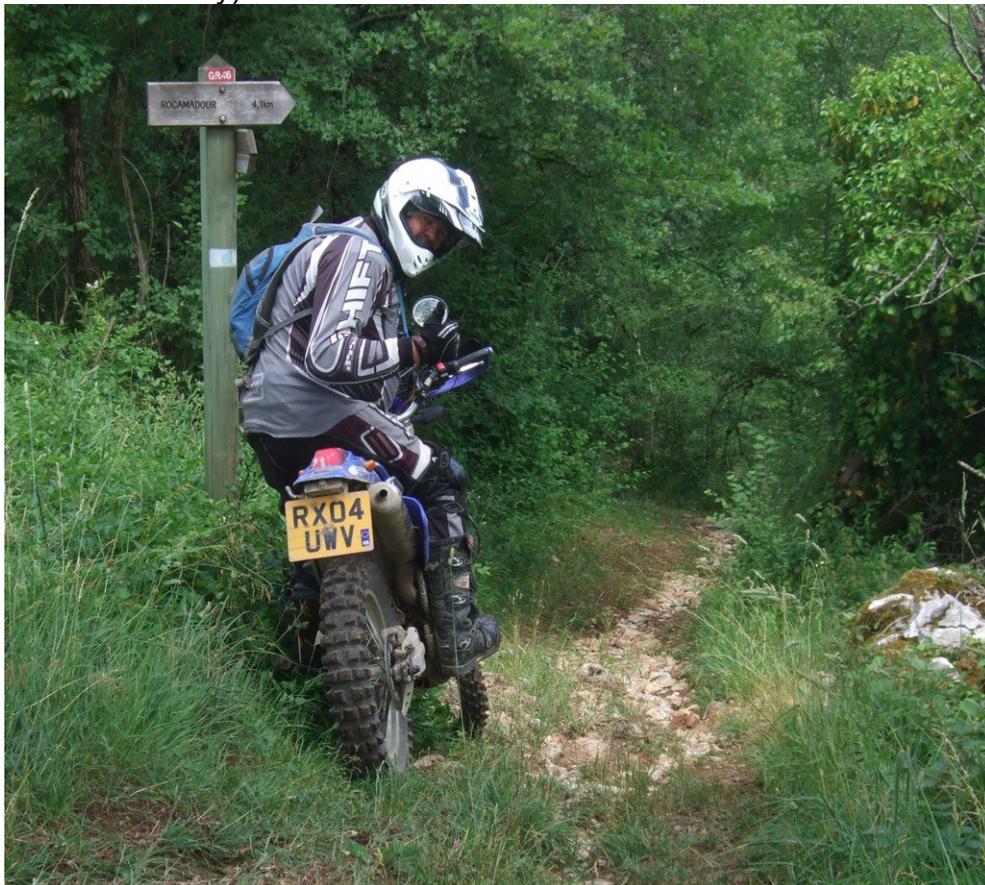


Friday 12th June was our last day of trail riding in France and Trev's 60th Birthday Bash! The reason we went to Rocamadour was that we had been given a recommended route by Big Jim which took in the lanes in the area. What a fantastic route it turned out to be with a wide range of lanes that made us smile, pant, think (on the very tricky bits) and panic!

This little house rocks!



There were some steep rocky climbs and descents, a couple of lanes where we got into 6th gear and one fabulous single track lane that was nearly 3 miles long (this was one that Olly was keen to show us and we fully understand why).



All in all another bit of French trail riding heaven.



Did I say that rural France is practically empty????!!! We met only one quad on the lanes and maybe 2 or 3 cars all day on the tarmac in 5 days of riding. But we were riding quiet TTRs so wouldn't have disturbed anyone anyways.

If you like roads, lanes and little villages to yourself then France is THE place to visit - or to live if your name is Geoff, Stephen, Torsten or Rowena!

Brian

Brian Sussex – June 2015

**Contact details for Stephen Dunne:**

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