

Barcelona - July 2009

I had booked time off work for a well needed short break. My missus funded the trip (mostly) so all I had to do was find somewhere to go. A little work on Google identified Barcelona as prime candidate as the Barcelona Harley Days event was scheduled for 17 - 19 July 2009. Also during that weekend there was a 24hr endurance race on at the Circuit de Cataluna - only 1.2km from hotel! Lovely!

Day 1 - 355 miles

Ride to from Ayton to Peterborough to mates (Rice Burner) house. A1 all the way and not very interesting...

Day 2 - 538 miles

Not a good day! We rode to Portsmouth through rotten traffic, roadworks and general England shire ignorance. Soooo glad I live in Scotland! Anyhoo arrived late (my fault) I won't go into details and if Rice Burner does on the forum I'll delete it (cos I can). Girly in ferry terminal took pity and booked us on next ferry from Dover. Doesn't look far on map and we got 6 hrs.... Let's go!

Got to Dover with about 15 mins to spare! On fast ferry to Boulogne...

Off Ferry in Boulogne and a fast ride through the night to Alencon - arrived at 3 am! Headlight on Hog is amazing for such a small unit!

Day 3 - 468 miles

The first proper day of holiday, we rode to Pau in the South of France through the Bordeaux region. Pau is gorgeous and a nice town for a restaurant and a few beers. I was introduced to Leffe Blonde. Had some since I've been back... It's not the same.

Day 4 - 393 miles

Finding our way out of Pau in the morning however was not easy. A distinct lack of signpost other than "Centre Ville" meant that Rice Burners method of navigation lead us to city centre, rush hour, summer time heat on air cooled bike stress!!! Hog was a cookin!

It got better as we found the way to Spain. Border of which was somewhere within the 18 Km tunnel we rode thru... Jaca to Huesca road I have done before with the Missus and I remember the circling flocks of Vultures. Found our way on some amazing twisties into Andorra. Sh1T Hole! The best thing about Andorra is the road in and out of it. More "Centre Ville" city centre, rush hour, summer time heat on air cooled bike stress. Hog was a cookin again! I could actually smell paint burning. Stopped in a town called Alp for a posh pizza and then rode on to Montmello getting in at 1am.

Day 5 - 50 miles

Explored the local town on foot and gave my butt a rest. Afternoon took a slow ride into Barcelona. Felt overdressed in jeans and T shirt! It's a Big but very nice city to explore. Not many Harleys about methinks.

I asked at the Tourist Information where the Local Harley dealer was and found that it was close to a stop on the tourist bus route. Got to the shop and asked about event. "Cancelled months ago matey" the dude said in spanglish. "Where you from"?

"Scotland" replied Rice Burner. He's "le grand Ecosse". Gutted! Cancelled!

Guy in shop eventually said that it had been cancelled but that tinsy bit of info was not put on the website!!! I bought a T shirt and blagged a free cloth patch. Oh well Barcelona is a nice city to explore.....

Day 6 - 50 miles

On my own today as Rice Burner was a bit "tired" after sampling the local vino tinto last night. Met up with a chapter of Hog from Italy Bologna and after a brief chat rode along la Rambla and thru the Montjuic hills. Got back to Montmello at 4pm met up with Rice Burner and went along to the Circuit for some free racing at the best track I have ever been to. Makes Donnington look like a shanty town. Never seen night racing but it's great.

Day 7 - 384 miles

Left Montmello and headed for Girona and then back into France to Nimes and up to Gap. I've been in this region before rock climbing but it's awesome on a bike. Tight twisties, open sweepers the lot. Today was my best riding day so far! Loved it Hog not missing a beat!

Day 8 - 431 miles

Gap to Orleans. Another slog day to pack in the miles and get home. I don't want to miss another ferry.

Day 9 - 195 miles

Orleans to La Harve. And that's as far as I got. The Hog broke down after passport control. I stopped it but when I re-started it was popping and farting. Obviously only one cylinder working. Getting some odd looks now cos the front pot was pumping fuel/air into the exhaust and the rear pot was igniting it! V loud!

I called the RAC at Portsmouth. Persuaded Rice Burner to ride on home as he couldn't really help although I appreciate the sentiment! RAC man arrived at 1am and found that the front sparkplug insulator had cracked and fallen down the middle electrode effectively shorting out the spark.

"S'probly got too ot mate". Yeah.... you're not wrong!

He crushed it to remove the ceramic and replaced the plug. Bike runs better but I'm not riding to Scotland with it. Unfortunately there are no HD dealers open at 1am and Portsmouth graduation meant no accommodation either. So the nice RAC put me up in the Southampton Hilton overnight got to bed 1:45am.

Day 10 - 422 miles

8am Called RAC again and had a nice breakfast while I waited. RAC man arrives 30 mins later and takes me to Southampton HD dealer "Dock gate 20". I bought a cloth patch and a couple o new plugs. RAC taxied me back to Hilton, fitted the plugs, made sure it ran ok, which I'm happy to say it did. 9 hrs later I arrive back in Ayton!

Some trip - 3286 Miles in 10 Days! I can't wait to do it again. I'm always looking for mountains and adventure. I'd probably go for longer next time and avoid the Peage motorways but it was great!



France thattaway thru the 18km tunnel



Spain thattaway!



The road to Andorra



A well needed water break!



Big Mountains & great roads



We were at the bottom of that 30 mins earlier



Made it to Barcelona. Nice wee town!



A little of Gaudi's work!



A view of the city



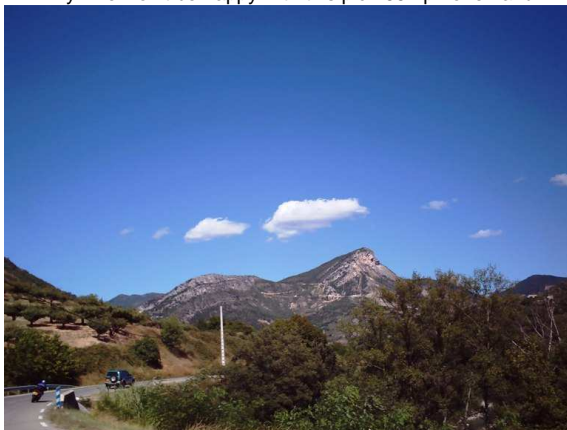
Circuit - 24hr race

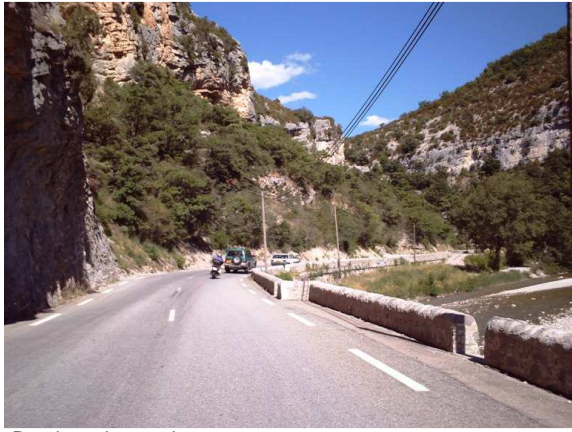


Night view



My wife won't be happy with this pic. 55mph one hand.





Roads to dream about



View from hotel window in Gap



Gap to Orleans





Waiting for RAC man..... Portsmouth 23:45.