

The 2018 FIM Motocamp entry forms came out early in the year venue Sibenik in Croatia on the Adriatic coast, and having bought a Burgman scooter at the end of April it seemed a good opportunity for a long distance proving ride.

The Fosse Riders MCA have a tradition of attending the MTC Zedelgem clubs Tenten Treffen near Brugge in Belgium at the end of May and as the Motocamp followed a week later a three week trip was planned,

I left home at 6 am on Thursday May 24 th and filled up 150 miles and three hours later near Dover (65.6 mpg) took the ferry to Calais and arrived in Loppem at 1 pm. Tent erected, signed in and greet the rest of the Fosse Riders who don't do 6 am starts.

Friday the usual bus ride to Brugge, on Saturday I went to Antwerp, roadworks down the middle of the city made life difficult getting around so I didn't stay long, back to the Treffen for our usual restaurant meal followed by the beer, awards ceremony and rock group in the gymnasium.

Packed the tents and away by 8.00 am on Sunday with Richard leading ! the original plan was for me to lead and Richard follow but my sat-nav had packed up over the weekend so the "Garmin magical mystery tour" began, first night a near Karlsruhe at Hohen-Camping, Langenbrand then on to Worth in Austria, national park camping Andrelwirt for two nights with a bus ride to Zell am Zee and back for some shopping and exercise!

The road to Worth does not go anywhere further south so we retraced the route to Zell am Zee and turned left to the Grossglockner pass the first toll we had come across, 26 Euro but you could come back the same day without charge. The Burgman scooter managed surprisingly well, we stopped for a coffee halfway up and shortly before the summit had to wait while a road crew dislodged some loose rocks. We continued south into Italy and Belvedere Pineta campsite near Grado on the Gulf of Trieste in the north of the Adriatic.

Thursday towards Slovenia with a short visit to Trieste (the southern end of the "Iron Curtain") a city certainly worth a weekend or longer to see the sights. Hotel and Camping Ljubljana was a big site close to the city and we asked where was the quietest area and the lovely Ava said "at the far end away from the caravans and camper vans" which was correct until a goods train came by about thirty yards away at 5.00 am followed by another at 5.30. We ate at Luigi's restaurant half a mile away in the evening and again for breakfast (only the name was Italian) On the way towards Croatia a long convoy of military vehicles were going the other way and soon after we stopped at a "Park of Military History" at Pivka

and as we finished our coffee as bus load of very wet teenagers came in, there had been a short cloudburst as they came to the museum from the coach park and our helmets were hanging on the handlebars!! The rain had almost finished and the helmets were only just damp, luckily.

Into Croatia and change Euros to Kuna which we worked out at 8 to the £ for ease of pricing (actually 7.8 ish depending on where you exchanged) and camped at Autocamp Draga in Moscenicka Draga on the east coast of the Istrian peninsula. The site was fairly steep and crowded and the weather was getting hot so we went on to Zadar and booked into apartment Nekic in the old city for two nights (two beds and a shower/toilet but the proprietor did some washing for us and dried it without charge so we bought him a couple of packets of the cigarettes that he was smoking.

Zadar has history pre Roman, Venetian, French, Austrian and Italian, large parts were flattened by allied bombers when it was occupied by the Italians during WW11 and in 1991 Serbian artillery pounded it during the Balkan wars but little trace is left unless you know where to look.

The two most modern sights to see and hear are the Monument to the Sun a 22 meter circle of solar panels set in the pavement which light up at night with a kaleidoscope of coloured lights and the Sea Organ both designed by Nikola Basic. The organ is 35 pipes concealed beneath the marble steps leading to the waters edge, these are connected to blowholes that are in the pavement and the swell of the Adriatic pushes air up the pipes making otherworldly music 24/7 not unlike whale song, ever-changing and ethereal. We walked the narrow alleys doing the tourist thing for a day looking at the buildings and in St Donatus Church came across a 30 foot high white "sculpture" of a naked male figure made of polystyrene, wood and metal with 300 extending shaving mirrors fixed all over it, most odd.

Monday, the opening day of the Motocamp we rode down the coast road from Zadar for a couple of hours to the Solaris Resort a huge hotel, cabin, marina and campsite on the coast south of the city of Sibenik our base for the next five days. The rest of the Fosse Riders arrived during the afternoon having returned to the UK after Belgium and leaving for Sibenik on the next Thursday and they were staying in some of the cabins while Richard and I camped under the trees on gravel with hard tent-peg bending ground!

Tuesday there was an optional boat trip to neighboring islands, repeated on Wednesday with the alternative of a guided rideout to Visovac and the Roski Waterfalls in the Krka national park. Visovac is a monastery on an island in the lake that we visited by boat and returned to the bikes and on to Skradin for lunch by the marina, then on to the waterfalls at Roski-slap where we went halfway down by bus from the car park then hiked down through the forest alongside many cataracts and small lakes until the main waterfall a hundred meters or more wide in several tiers, then back up to the bus and the bikes passing the remains of one of the worlds earliest hydro electric generating plants.

On Thursday a walk along the shore in the resort for lunch at the Dalmatian Ethno Village for lunch in what is really a themed restaurant but very well done.

The Parade of Nations at 10 am on Friday formed up a little way down the road in national groups for a convoy parade into Sibenik (Brits are usually denoted United Kingdom so are right at the back) with junctions closed off by police and marshals the ride went very well with few hold ups and we parked on the edge of the Vezovi moorings spending the rest of the day free to explore the city. I decided on the fortresses overlooking the city The Barone first where there is a cafe and a small outdoor stage then St John Fortress which was closed for renovation. returning down to the old town and up to St Michael Fortress where there is a bigger open air stage and tiered seating.

While we were eating our evening meal there was an announcement that there was a forecast of a storm later in the evening with thunder, lightening and heavy rain so Richard and I asked one of the Fosse Riders if we could move all our kit onto their veranda for the night and just in time we packed up and moved but the rain was so heavy it was coming off the roof and on to the veranda so we moved into the kitchen/diner area for the night. The lightening was continuous for some time like strobe lights and overhead thunder. The campsite was flooded in the morning and the Burgman didn't want to start but after a session with WD40 we were off by 9.00 with a coffee stop near Zadar and another before Rijeka and a short crossing of Slovenia into Italy through Trieste again and on over the Plocken Pass through Lienz and to a hotel in Italy at San Candido for the night B&B and evening meal included.

Sunday morning and north to Augsburg via the Brenner pass and Innsbruck, then to a campsite at Roth, Camping Waldsee for an evening meal and a quite night by a lake.

Monday and head west towards Calais, heavy rain began mid morning and continued almost nonstop through Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and into France during this deluge the Burgman stopped but after a while the warmth of the engine dried out the problem and we continued to Charleville-Mezieres where we found a hotel with undercover parking for the night. In the morning the rain finally stopped around Cambrai and we arrived in Calais around noon. Richard had booked by phone in the hotel but I had to bring my booking forward by a day and by the time that had been done Richard had boarded and sailed.

I arrived home after some shopping at about 8 pm with 3393 more miles on the clock.

Garmin magical mystery tours? these are when you can see your destination or the road signs point straight ahead but the magic box takes you on a diversion usually taking much longer and over worse roads than the direct route, I can remember about 5 or 6 times during our ride.