



Terry's Travels

TT11-1 Le Mans - but NOT 24 hours 22/05/2004

With the winter dirt washed off Mercie the Motorhome, the tanks topped up and the larder provisioned (thank you Di) I was out of bed at just after 3am (remember in Yorkshire we say "its a poor man that can't get up to lake (play)"). I picked my pal Neil up at 5am to head South via the M1 - M69 - A34 to Portsmouth. Simply lovely weather and with the English countryside looking wonderfully lush and green made for a very pleasant journey. Neil took over driving and enjoyed Mercies' 6 speed auto box with cruise holding 110kph. There was one hold up and a half hour greasy Mini Chef breakfast and 296 miles later we were looking across the sunny Solent on England's South coast. This left plenty of time for a cuppa and a walk round the shops. Neil bought a little pot man to accompany us (later to be a present for his wife).

Neil got us a free day cabin (thank you P&O) and we both had a sleep during the calm 5 hour crossing. We cleared Le Havre FRANCE around 9pm local time and there was just enough daylight left to see the magnificent Seine as we crossed the spectacular bridge before wild camping in Honfleur beside a canal.

The drive South along both D and N roads plus a bit of pay motorway was a delight of different sights and smells and we were soon at the famous Le Mans circuit collecting our 3 day tickets for the Motorcycle Grand Prix that Neil had bought over the internet. The perfect weather continued and amazingly there was a power pod in the free camping area - and it worked, so the fridge looked after all the goodies that we had bought at a LeClerc supermarket. Our noisy neighbours were friendly - even returning the key I carelessly left in the Kawasaki 250 that lives behind Mercie. After the racing four of Neils pals turned up for a cuppa. We had a siesta whilst the crowds left the circuit after some great racing and then started heading South down the N138. The traffic built up approaching Limoges so I turned down a country road towards a camp site. The road was barred - bummer - but I parked beside a graveyard and we investigated. We had been led to a wine and food festival in a charming little village!!

Of course we joined in and then ate with the locals at a marquis that locals were manning to provide food and therefore raise money for the local school. It wasn't hard to be a do gooder with a four course meal with superb salmon for 20 pounds with a good bottle of wine - for two of course. Sleeping by the graveyard was peaceful - and cost nowt.....this is living.....

Terry - Castellon, SPAIN





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TT11-2 Sanitaire 23/05/2004

Leaving the graveyard wild camp, it was so much better to find the road through Limoges with much less traffic early in the morning. Neil fancied going to Andorra, the small country between France and Spain in the Pyrenees mountains. We used the toll roads A62 and headed around Brive and Cahors. Lovely rolling countryside with many Chateaux standing near the Loire and later the Dordogne giving reminders of how much wine comes from the vineyards in this fertile area.

You maybe didn't want to know - but our loo needed to be emptied. We followed a sign to an Aire (rest area) and found a blue cubicle. It needed a token costing 2 Euros for 10 minutes use to allow emptying, flushing and then from a different hose a pressure filling of our water tank with (claimed) drinking water. You can also be plugged into power during all this - an excellent service called a Sanitaire. I still use bottled water to ensure that our cuppas taste OK.

We headed onwards around Toulouse and took a new road to Foix in the foothills of the Pyrenees. A delightful campsite called Du Lac was well worth paying for and just at the edge of the small town. The local ducks gave us a great welcome and were rewarded with a stale flute bread). They rewarded us with a great display of squabbling. The males are stronger but the females are much quicker so they all ate well. I got the slow cooker doing the veggies and the gas barbie for the entrecotes. A great meal with a local French Rose and then a red and we were sitting outside very happily until well after dusk. I had been appointed the role of chief cook - so Neil became chief bottle washer.

Neil drove us up to Andorra the next morning which allowed me the chance of enjoying approaching the snow capped mountains with verdant pastures and clear streams everywhere. The houses were now chalet style, many of wooden construction. We crossed the border and drove around without finding a parking space. We re-crossed the border, parked and walked back into Andorra to have a look around the shops

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