



From a Pillion Perspective

by Corinne Gibb, Motorcycle Group member

21 intrepid motorcyclists in Austria – there's a thought to conjure with.....

When plans were made, routes plotted & overnight stops booked, the tour seemed an age away. Bill & I knew time was getting close when the participant list arrived containing names of some old friends & others new. Then, all of a sudden, we were packed & making our way to the Tunnel, liaising with 2 other bikes en-route.



What a massed gathering of vehicles in the Folkestone car park. As we were early, we'd hoped to be allocated a train prior to the one we were booked on. However, after waiting & queueing, we were eventually ushered onto one even later. According to a marshall, it was due to volume of traffic (Le Mans & Euro 2016 perhaps?) but the empty carriage behind us wouldn't have helped.

Once in France, we were comprehensively soaked en route to our first overnight hotel. Good start. The next day passed in further kilometre munching style, interspersed with fuel, coffee & toll stops. Poor J fell foul of a soggy toll ticket & was marooned in between barriers for some while as he waited for an official to drive down to set him free. By the end of the day, the sun had broken through as we arrived at our 2nd hotel to be greeted by our affable hostess in true German fashion. She explained our menu choices which we all voted very tasty as we ate al fresco.

Saturday saw bike cramped riders arrive at the Enzian in Landeck to be met by Klaus in his inimitable fashion. Of course, in his post dinner welcome talk, he blamed us for bringing the UK weather but promised it would improve by the end of the week. Dinner was a buffet BBQ with locals amassing to watch Austria's Euro match via the big screens in the marquee. As our room was overhead, we could hear every partisan goal & missed opportunity!

Sunday was wet with low cloud over the mountains. Unsurprisingly, most, if not all the group left their bikes alone. 3 of us walked to the cable car & rode to the top of the Krahberg Mountain. At 2208m, the scenic restaurant was deserted & no views to be appreciated although J managed to find some of his favourite soup. In the rain, we walked a relentless hairpin track all the way down & back to the hotel, hoping our legs wouldn't complain too much the next day.



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All back to biking with renewed vigour on Monday. 5 of us on 4 bikes set off on one of the hotel tour routes, although the satnavs wouldn't agree despite all having the same hotel download. Was there ever a subject which occupied so many hours of discussion by intelligent adults? Traffic at an early roundabout split us into 2 groups, never to rejoin that day. We had a good ride & lunched at the base of the Garmisch ski jumps.

Klaus led some of the group on a 310km ride to include a new bike museum on Tuesday, while we went with some others on the pretty Silvretta toll road with 34 hairpins. Beautiful valleys, spectacular views, reservoir & alpine chalets. Back to base for an Italian buffet & feedback from Klaus's trip. Always useful to hear of others daytrips. Tales of derring-do?

The weather was improving & by Wed the temperatures were up to 32C. On 3 bikes, we did another of the rides from the hotel roadbook. During a very warm lunch stop, several smart, old tractors passed looking as if they were on a rally. Amazingly, one was carrying elderly relatives on a sofa positioned behind the driver.

Over dinner, we learned others in our group had gone up the cable car. We had a birthday boy that day & a couple who were celebrating milestone birthdays & 40th anniversary over a period so cakes & songs were required together with the obligatory tour photocall as some were departing the next day. Another Austrian football match!



Thursday, 4 bikes went to the new Timmelsjoch museum on a scenic route via grassy ski resorts of Sölden, Obergurgl & Hochgurgl. Up the hairpins & through the road resurfacing, when a futuristic building hove into sight, situated at the toll on the Italian border. One minute there were logjams of cyclists, motor bikes, sports cars etc each side & the next, all was clear. Spectacular views of the valleys from the 2175m vantage point. Opened in April, the museum had 200 classic bikes together with auto rarities, all beautifully displayed.

As we queued back through the roadworks on the outskirts of Landeck, one bike registered 42C!

Having been asked about it at most stops during the week, on Friday we awoke to the referendum results. Nuff said.



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3 of us walked to the Venet cable car again. With the fine weather, it was heaving with 4 coachloads of orange wristbanded, senior Dutch walkers with rucksacks & walking poles. We just clicked it as they marched to the lift so spent some time queueing in the heat to get up the mountain. Why does nobody queue like the British? Those poles were dangerous! We walked to the next peak – Glanderspitze at 2512m. At that height it was a pleasant 20C. We descended via the cablecar, only to encounter the orange wrists again! The temperature in the lift was nothing in comparison with the heat in the carpark.

On Saturday twas time to bid farewell to the others & start the homeward journey. 2 overnight stops with yet more rain soakings.

Arriving early at the Tunnel, we still had to wait for our booked train. Reached home to find a jungle awaiting our attention.

Having done all the planning, it was a shame our tour leader's illness prevented him from coming, but experienced Ron stepped in most capably.

I hear next year's trip is already planned to another hotel in the Motorrad group which we've used previously. Fancy it?

