

VIBRATIONS!



March 2021



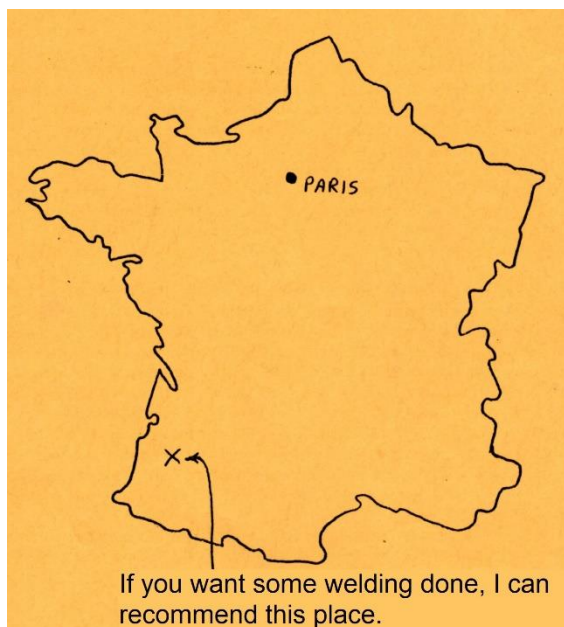
Triumph Owners M.C.C.

Northants Branch



Scribblings

With the vaccine roll-out and the four steps out of lockdown things are looking far better than they have for 12 months. Let's hope that steps proposed for 8th March, 29th March, 12th April, 17th May and 21st June stay on schedule. Some events in the early part of the year have allready been postponed but those for July onwards should give us all something to look forward to.



With the lack of any new articles in my editorial folder I've resurrected part 1 of the account of a trip to France and Spain back in 1988. Parts 2 and 3 to follow.

As you read through that you will come to realise that I'm no mechanic!

Before that though there is a message from Chairman Phil on page 3.

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New Members

Welcome to the following new Branch members, who have joined in the last couple of months.

Michael Mosley of Rushden
Mick Vokes of Kettering

Arron Ward of Kettering

Membership Renewals

If your club membership is due for renewal here are the best ways of dealing with it...

- 1) Renew on-line via tomcc.org/Home/Membership with a credit card, debit card or PayPal account. You can also get a £2 discount using this method.
- 2) Fill in the membership form that was sent to you, then post it direct to the HQ Membership address at Horley, as shown on the form. Include a cheque made payable to Triumph Owners MCC.
- 3) Fill in the membership form and hand it to the Branch Membership Secretary at a club night. Payment by cheque or cash. Memberships renewed this way are only sent to HQ a couple of times a month, so will take longer to process than 1 or 2 above.

Don't worry about the money as the Branch receives the same amount per member regardless of the method used to renew.

Northants Branch Info and News

From the Branch Chairman

It is disappointing that we still cannot meet up as a club or have our ride outs . Pubs will not re-open until May 17th with restrictions, which means we will have to postpone our AGM for the second year, I have pencilled in June 16th as a possible new AGM date. I would like to assure our members that the committee has been working away behind closed doors so we are ready to restart our club when restrictions are eased .

However, several events have been postponed or cancelled... The National AGM has a new date of June 6th; the Stafford Classic Show for the weekend of July 3rd/4th, Trifest Somerset CANCELLED until 2022; the MCN show postponed new dates September 4th/5th. The MCN Show will now clash with Trifest in France! Ton-up day and our Triumph day: no dates confirmed as yet. Founders Day on July 18th could well be on, as could Brackley on August 15th.

Skegfest is on and several of our members have already booked; let's see if we can have a good turn-out for this event as we are sponsoring the bike show and supplying the Trophies. We will have to fill in our events list as restrictions are eased, hope things will get better and we can all get out on our bikes again.

Keep safe every one

Best regards

Phil Barton.

	Events List
All Northants Branch events cancelled until such time as the steps out of lockdown permit.	
1 st -3 rd May	Trifest Somerset Postponed until 2022
15 th -16 th May	MCN Show at Peterborough Postponed until 4 th -5 th September
Sun 23 rd May	Distinguished Gentlemen's Ride: New date
June	Isle of Man TT: cancelled
Sun 6 th June	Triumph Owners National AGM at Llanberis (provisional)
Wed 16 th June	Northants Branch AGM (provisional)
Sun 18 th July	Founders Day Rally, Stanford Hall
Sun 15 th August	Brackley Festival of Motorcycling
3 rd -12 th September	Trifest France
Sun 5 th September	ABF The Soldiers' Charity Motorcycle Ride, with Milton Keynes TOMCC. Charity ride to the Triumph Experience. See next page. https://soldierscharity.org/events/abf-the-soldiers-charity-motorcycle-ride-2021/#event
8 th -11 th October	Skegfest

Branch HQ:

The Crown, High Street, Hardington, Northampton, NN4 6BZ.

The main access to Hardington village is from the roundabout at the junction of the A45, A508 and A5076 (ring road). Other access from the Newport Pagnell Road (B526).

1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, starting at 8pm.

Northants Branch Info and News

Pure Triumph:

Our local Triumph dealer is based at The Embankment, Wellingborough, NN8 1LD. The company's website can be found at www.puretriumph.co.uk.

On production of a current Triumph Owners membership card, Pure Triumph at Wellingborough will give a 10% discount on the following items: Clothing, Oxford Products, Helmets, Oil products, Labour on Servicing.

The Branch on the Internet:

Our website can be found at: www.northantstomcc.org.uk. Most pages are public but there is one small section that is restricted to branch members only, accessed via the password that is advised separately.

We also have Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/northantstomcc/

Other Internet Links:

Triumph Owners MCC national website: www.tomcc.org

Triumph Owners MCC events website: www.tomccevents.co.uk

Triumph Owners Clothing: www.tomccmerchandise.com

The club also has a page on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/4526704577/.

British Motorcyclists Federation: www.bmf.co.uk

Triumph Motorcycles: www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk

Northants Branch Clothing Range

The range of Northants Branch clothing: T-Shirt, Polo Shirt. Sweatshirt, Hoodie, Fleece, Business Shirt and Baseball Cap; can be purchased on-line.

Some items can also be done with a large back-print for an additional fee.

To order click on this link:

www.customkit.co.uk/northants-triumph-owners-club-52-c.asp

Club Night Ordering: If you would prefer not to go on-line you can place an order with Les Barras at one of our club nights. Your selection should then be ready for collection at the next club night.

The Soldiers' Charity Ride

This event is being organised by ABF-The Soldiers' Charity, Milton Keynes Triumph Owners and The Triumph Visitor Centre in Hinckley. All the money from registration goes directly to the charity.

Registration opens next week. Open to all bike owners not just Triumphs. REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW to be the first to know.

Only 1000 tickets available and an early bird discount for first 300 riders registered.

All registration fee goes to the charity as this is being organised by the Soldiers' Charity and members of Milton Keynes Triumph Club.

Hope to see you there!

Jacqui Sage-Passant, Milton Keynes TOMCC

The Spanish Incursion (Part 1)

Prologue: In February 1988 Phil Short asked me if I was interested in a two-week ride down to Spain and back. I said yes tentatively as the Bonnie hadn't turned a wheel for over twelve months and needed quite a bit doing to it. "No problem" said Phil. If I got it over to his place, he'd strip the engine down and help with the other stuff. Before I could go over to Phil's I needed to do a bit of work on it like clean all the spiders webs off and put the front wheel back in and try and get the spindle for the rear brake lever freed off. Well, February and march came and went but I was just not fit enough to do anything as I was still recovering from various broken bones and torn ligaments sustained the previous October when I got knocked off my Honda. By April I felt fit enough to get started on it, but every time I approached the shed it turned cold and wet and my shoulder ached something rotten.

May approached still wet but not quite so cold and I managed to get some work done to the little bits that could be carried into the house. So that I could get about Phil lent me one of his spare bikes: "Lucifer's Lust" which had started out. as a Bonnie Special. After six months without any transport and a year without a Triumph it felt really great to get back onto a bike again. I was a bit concerned though that, after longish rides of 50-60 miles, my right hand started to ache (another legacy of the accident) and I did wonder if I was going to be fit enough to make the trip.

Four weeks before we were due to leave, I announced to Phil that my bike was ready to be carted over to Rushden. "Too Bad" he said, "I'm off to Ibiza for a fortnight!" The result of all this was that we started on the bike just seven days before we were due to leave and, after several very late nights and no engine strip-down, the bike was MOT'ed on the Thursday and taxed on the Friday. After eight weeks or so of Lucifer's Lust, with its cut down seat, high bars, extended forks and fat back tyre my UK spec T140E felt really weird. The actual events of this last week, with their many frustrations, would take up a chapter in themselves but they did include my clutch falling off on the way to the MOT; Phil's sister turning up unexpectedly from New Zealand for the first time in twenty years; having to cure oil leaks on Phil's Executive Bonnie; and me trying to ruin my push rods whilst adjusting the inlet valves. No doubt Phil could tell this bit better.

On the Friday night I rode over to Rushden and gave Phil a cheque for what I owed him for bits and settled where we would meet on the Saturday. As I rode home, I could hear the right-hand exhaust blowing, apparently from the push over stub in the head. "No problem", I can fix it in the morning with some muffler paste before we set off.

Saturday 16th July: Today's the day! Up earlyish, everything's packed in the panniers ready to fit to the bike and I've got my money, passport, insurance, etc, out. First thing to do is to fix that leak in the exhaust. I remove the right-side downpipe and silencer as one and then I curse. It's not leaking from around the stub at all. The downpipe has fractured just where the lug is welded on for it to bolt onto the steady bracket to the crank case. Buying that stainless exhaust system was the worst decision I ever took. Both silencers fractured on welds within 200 miles of fitting and now this has to happen today of all days. And of course, the downpipe is stuck solid into the silencer. Half a can of WD40, and much pushing and shoving later, I get the downpipe and silencer separated.

The downpipe is too far gone to be fixed and there's no way I can get over to Rushden to get one from Phil. A phone call to Hick Hemmings tells me that he has a pair in stock. I quickly grab my chequebook and rush out to get them. 80 minutes later a knackered Sarge returns and sets to work again. With the trouble I had removing the right-hand pipe from its silencer I just decide to replace that one and leave the left side alone.

On my way into town, I'd stopped off at a workshop to get some bits of a cross-brace welded up – that was now fitted onto the pannier frame. The panniers were then fitted. I phone Phil to say that I am ready but he's not. He's still putting the final touches to his Exec: petrol tank, throttle cables, etc. It's about 12 o'clock by now so I head off to the King Billy for a pint, which is also, conveniently, where we've agreed to meet. As well as Phil and I, a chap called Pete from the Rushden Historical Transport Society is coming on a BMW R100RS. Pat Templeton from the club was also supposed to be coming but his mother has been taken ill. Pat's place has been filled at the last minute by Brian, a friend of Phil's from Bedford way who has just bought a BMW K100RT.

The only thing that is organised about this trip is that the ferry is booked for tonight. It is our aim to ride through France and Spain to Gibraltar, stay there for a couple of days then head east across the south of Spain to a place called Altea – where Derek and Val, a couple of our friends are staying.

The Spanish Incursion (Part 1)

They have invited us down sometime but they don't know that we're on our way yet. By closing time there is still no sign of the others so I phone Rushden again. Phil says that they are just about to leave but Brian needs an International Driving Licence, which means a visit to the AA Shop in Northampton first. I tell them where the nearest bike park is to the shop and agree to meet them there. The three of them get split up in Northampton and although Phil finds the right bike park the other two don't. After a bit of running around we get the licence and we're ready to set off.

It's getting on for 4 o'clock and it has started to rain; also, the brace that I fitted earlier for the panniers has fractured at one of the welds. Oh well, it's too late to worry about it now. I'll just have to hope that the pannier frames hold without that extra support. We finally set off down the A43 to Oxford, stopping there for petrol. Then it's down through Newbury and Winchester to Eastleigh, where we join the M27 for Portsmouth with rain all the way. The other three have got fairings on their bikes but not me and I'm getting very wet, cold and miserable. Just what's needed to start the holiday. About half way down the M27 Brian overtakes me and pulls into the hard shoulder. He tells me that my right-hand rear indicator has come loose. It's a good job that he pulled me over when he did as the mounting bolt had vibrated loose and bounced down the carriageway; it also happens to be one of the two that holds the actual pannier frame onto the bike. If we'd gone any further my clean clothes might have gone bouncing down the motorway as well! I could have sworn that I'd tightened up all those bolts before we left.

After taking a spare bolt from elsewhere, I take a luggage straps and wrap that around the two pannier frames to use as a brace. We carry on again and we finally get to Portsmouth about half an hour before the ferry starts loading. 134 miles from Northampton all in the rain and my shoulder's beginning to ache from the cold. I'm not very happy at the moment. When we get on to the ferry: the "Pride of Brittany"; we see the bikes tied up securely and find our cabin. Cramped isn't the word - there's just enough room for one person to unpack at a time. Still, we all feel a bit better after a shower and a meal, then it's in to the bar for a couple of drinks before hitting the sack (that's what the bed felt like, a sack).

Sunday 17th July: The ferry is due to land at St.Malo at 8.15am French time and, despite losing an hour in the move forward from English time, we are all up early enough to have breakfast whilst watching the boat dock. It's still raining and none of us are looking forward to setting off as most of our riding gear is wet despite wearing waterproofs yesterday. We fill up with petrol just outside St.Malo at a petrol station that is a bit on the expensive side (it's the first one you see after leaving the port so obviously everybody fills up there) then it's onto the N137, heading south through Rennes and Nantes. Around here the style of the houses is almost like England and the illusion of still being at home is reinforced by the hedges along the roadside and the crops that are growing. It's only the fact that we are driving on the right that tells us that we are in a foreign country.

As we make progress south the rain gradually dies away and we begin to feel happier. The architecture is getting more "foreign" and the crops such as maize and sunflowers are getting higher. Yep, it really feels like we are holiday at last. We stop in Nantes to check the map and, while we are doing that, I discover that my left-hand silencer has fractured in exactly the same place as the right hand one did on Friday - oh shit! The crack is about a third of the way around the circumference of the pipe so it will hold for the time being if we take it steady for the next few miles. The best solution that we can come up with is to find a petrol station that sells exhaust bandage and some Jubilee clips to hold it together.



We try a couple of places on our way through Nantes but no luck. Like petrol stations in England about the only spares they carry are things like bulbs, oil and spark plugs. The rest of their shelves are full of sweets, travel rugs, cassettes and stuff like that. We carry on down the N137, keeping to around 55-60mph, for about another 35 miles and we find a BP garage to fill up at. Brilliant! The place also sells good old Holts exhaust bandage and jubilee clips. Trying not to burn myself on the downpipe, I spend the next ten minutes wrapping it securely with the bandage while the others have a smoke and take photos of me.

The Spanish Incursion (Part 1)

Still on the N137, which is a mixture of dual and single-carriageway. Through La Rochelle, where we get a glimpse of the Bay of Biscay, and then through Saintes. The sun is shining and me and Pete are really enjoying the ride. I look back to find that Brian and Phil are no longer with us. I stop Pete and we wait by the side of the road for a couple of minutes then turn back. We find them about a mile and a half back up the road, under the shade of some trees having a drink and a smoke. They moan about us young 'uns who don't need to take a rest occasionally.



We stop there for about ten minutes and discuss where we should start looking for a place to stay and also get something to eat. It's now about 5.30 in the afternoon and we've not had anything to eat since we left the ferry. I check my exhaust and it seems to be holding out. A few miles further on our eating problem is solved as we find a lay-by cafe. We get some beers in and try to decipher the menu. There are two items on it that we can't work out so Brian has one and I have the other - his turns out to be a hamburger and mine is some sausages tasting not unlike spare ribs. So much for continental cuisine.

The people at the cafe don't speak any English but with our limited French we manage to ask them if they know of any pensions or cheap hotels nearby. They give us directions to one a few miles down the road and when we find it, it looks alright. Pity it's full. We carry on for another ten miles or so and find a few more but they're all shut. Eventually we find one in the village of Le Pontet d'Eyrans and we pull over in front of the "Hotel des Voyageurs". Brian goes to see if they have any rooms. Success; one twin room with shower which Phil and Brian share (the room, not the shower!) and two singles for me and Pete, with a shower just down the corridor.

After a shower and a change of clothes we spend the rest of the evening outside polishing off some bottles of locally produced wine (we are only about twenty miles from the city of Bordeaux). We discuss the day's journey and looking at the distance we have travelled. Just under 300 miles.

Had it not been for the problems with my exhaust pipe we could probably have got south of Bordeaux today but as we've found a very decent hotel, we couldn't give a damn at the moment. When we convert the prices into English money the rooms work out at about £6.80 per room and they are charging us £1.20 per bike to park in the locked garage. Very reasonable. The manager speaks pretty good English so we ask him about breakfast. Phil wants a full English: bacon, eggs, sausages, etc. With a bit of translation on our part (the hotelier's English didn't stretch to eggs) we managed to convey what we wanted. Everything could be supplied except the eggs, causing an exclamation from Phil! which was to become the catch-phrase of the trip "Wot no oeufs!".

Monday 18th July: We didn't get up too early and none of the others seem to have any enthusiasm for breakfast (too much wine last night I reckon) so I go down for coffee, rolls and croissants while the others drag themselves out of bed. After a bit of map reading to work out the route for the day (copies taped to everybody's tank) we pack up and set off a bit later than we had wanted to as we would have liked to get past Bordeaux before the traffic got heavy. As it was, we didn't set off until about 10.30 with Phil in the lead, Pete second, me third and Brian bringing up the rear on the K100. my clutch starts slipping at anything above .60 so I'm having a job overtaking all the trucks.

The Spanish Incursion (Part 1)

I can see Phil and Pete hacking off into the distance but there's not much I can do about it. A few minutes later Brian overtakes me and I assume that he's going to catch up with the others to tell them that I am having problems. I expect to find them waiting for me a few miles up the road but no. As I carry on there's no sign of them. About ten miles north of Bordeaux the N137 joins up with the N10 and the A10 (A roads are motorways in France and N roads are the equivalent of our A roads) and there is still no sign of them.

On the plan we had worked out we were going to use the N10 until we got to Bordeaux and then hit the motorway to get around the city. Of course, while I'm still looking for the others, I miss the N10 and, by the time I realise my mistake, I'm already on the motorway. It's time for another dark mood to come on. I've lost the rest and I'm on the wrong road, but then again, they might have taken the wrong road as well so they could be just in front of me as all of the signposts for Bordeaux pointed this way. Whilst I'm contemplating this the motorway has reached an enormous bridge to cross the Dordogne river and I forget my problems for a couple of minutes to marvel at the sight as the road is about 130 ft above the water and it must be as wide here as the Thames is at Dartford. On the other side of the bridge there is a slip road and I take this, cross under the motorway and stop to check the map. I decide that the best thing to do is to head back north to the N10 and then go south on the right road again. So, it's back onto the motorway, back over the suspension bridge over the Dordogne and onto the N10. Of course, this road crosses the river about half a mile upstream so I'm probably one of the few people to have crossed the Dordogne three times in twenty minutes.

I know that I'm now way behind the others and the fact that my clutch has stopped slipping isn't much of a consolation (the clutch was to trouble me from cold throughout the holiday). I press on and get to the A10 where it becomes the Bordeaux bypass, with the intention of heading for the Spanish border as I know that the others can only cross it at one point and if they stop somewhere for petrol or a rest, I might have a chance of catching up with them. My only worry is that south of Bordeaux they might continue on the motorway to make good time as I know that this is what Brian really wanted to do. Me, I dislike using motorways on holiday. I'd rather travel at a lower average speed on the ordinary roads so that I can look at the places I'm going through. Phil doesn't see it this way – he thinks that I'm just too stingy to pay the tolls.

On the journey around Bordeaux, I had resigned myself to the fact that I'd probably seen the last of the others but what the hell, I'd carry on anyway. I'd said that I was going to Spain and I'm going even if I can't speak any of the language (At this time I was still under the impression Phil could speak a bit of Spanish as he'd been twice before - that was another idea that was to bite the dust). According to the map, Junction 16 should put me back on the N10 south of Bordeaux and take me straight to the border, so I left the motorway there only to be confronted by a T-junction controlled by traffic lights. There were no signposts except for local areas so I just took guess and turned right. After travelling on for a few miles I saw a milestone (kilometre stone?) by the side of the road which indicated that I was on the N10. Fair enough, but was I travelling north or south? I carried on until the next sizeable village: Gradignan; and stopped to get the map out.

While I was looking at the map Phil rode up. Evidently, when they realised that they had lost me they had decided to aim for the next point on our route maps which I had to take whether I'd gone into Bordeaux on the N10 or A10, or even if (like Phil ended up doing) I'd gone through the city instead of using the motorway to get around it. They'd headed for Junction 16 and, so they tell me, they'd had seen me pull up there and I'd ignored them while they waved and shouted like mad men. Honestly lads, I didn't see you there, I was more interested in working out which way to go. As it happened, I had taken the right direction from Junction 16 so I waited there while Phil went back to fetch Pete and Brian. All together again we re-joined the trail south and it's really getting warm now. The N10 at this point consists of 2 or 3 miles of dead straight road followed by a slight bend then another few miles of dead straight road. Obviously, a Roman road because the age of the tress down either side tell us it's not just a recent road improvement exercise. After a stop for a drink, we carry on and the N10 joins up with the end of the A10 and becomes a dual carriageway. We pull in at a service area as I'm a bit worried about the left-hand exhaust – it looks as if it's starting to work loose again and I thought that the bandage was giving up. No, the bandage is fine but it's obvious that the pipe underneath it is gradually fracturing more and more.

The Spanish Incursion (Part 1)

Setting off once again I leave my sunglasses behind at the services - what more can go wrong? The answer comes a few miles later when the downpipe goes completely. Luckily the foot extension on the centre-stand stops it from dragging on the floor.

We see a sign pointing off the dual-carriageway to a Renault garage so, as it's certain to have a workshop of some sort, we head off to find it. It's closed for lunch, so we scratch around in the rubbish outside for some wire to hold the silencer in place. This done we head for the bar across the road for a beer and to get out of the sun. The garage opens about half an hour later and me and Pete push the bike over the road and leave it outside the workshop. My idea is to get a sheet of metal, wrap it round the downpipe and hold it in place with a couple more jubilee clips. If this can keep the two parts of the downpipe together while the wire supports the silencer then we could go straight to Derek's place and do repairs there before heading for Gibraltar.

Unfortunately, the garage owner doesn't speak English at all and my French isn't good enough to describe what I want. We show the him the fractured pipe and, from his actions, we work out that he wants us to take it off the bike and he will weld it up for us. We get the tools out and set to work but perhaps we should have pushed the bike into the shade first. Every time we pick up a spanner it's bloody hot from laying in the sun. We get the pipe off and one of the young mechanics takes it from us to weld. Luckily, he can't speak English either as Pete tries to tell him that it's aluminium and not stainless steel! About half hour later the pipe has been welded up a treat and refitted to the bike, the only niggle now is that the balance pipe blows a bit but you only notice this on the overrun. Keeping an eye on the newly welded pipe for the first few miles we finally get going again. As we get nearer to the Spanish border the temperature gets hotter and the roads also get more crowded.

Through Bayonne and bypassing Biarritz, we catch glimpses of the sandy beaches and we long to stop and dive into the sea, but we resist the temptation as we really must get into Spain today. We cross over the border at Hendaye. All the way down Phil has said that the Spanish Border Guards are tough on documents, especially the green cards, so we make sure that we have them ready. As it is, they just wave us through to keep the traffic moving. Just past the border post we pull into a car park as Brian needs to get some Spanish currency. Well, we've made it, we're in Spain at last. It's about a quarter past five and we are on the edge of some hills. "That'll make a nice photo" I thought so I got my camera out and walked over to the edge of the carpark. As I pressed the trigger, I heard this whistle behind me. It was one of the Spanish Border Guards and he's beckoning to me.

Oh God, I've only been in the country ten minutes and I'm going to get arrested! I walk over to him and he graphically shows me that, if I take any more photos near the border, he and his mate will rip the film out of my camera (but not maliciously you understand). After meekly saying "si" in the right places he lets me go and I return to the others – who are laughing their heads off. We head for a bar just round the corner for a beer and to discuss the route ahead.

The photo that nearly got me arrested.



The Spanish Incursion (Part 1)

From Irun (the village on the Spanish side of the border) we head south on the C133 into the hills. It's a nice twisting road and, just like yesterday, I'm at a stage where I could carry on riding for ages but it's getting late and we really need to find a place to stay. After about 15-20 miles we come to a village called Oronoz Murgaire where we find the Hotel Urgain II.



The main building is really old but there is a modern extension out the back and we get two twin rooms for 3,500 pesetas per room. Yes, it sounded expensive to us as well but it worked out to just over £8 per person. The beds were nice and comfy; the showers, sinks and toilets worked and Phil & Brian's room even had a TV. We arrived at about eight in the evening and one of the first things I saw when I opened the curtains in the room that Pete and I were sharing was a swimming pool. Great, dive in! I had another look and found that it actually belonged to the house next door. Very disappointing. After the obligatory shower we went down into the restaurant for dinner. Pete left his Spanish phrasebook in the bedroom so we couldn't translate the menu and none of the people in the hotel could speak any English, so we settled on the house menu. This turned out to be some sort of pasta soup, followed by steak & chips, then ice cream or cheese. Not bad for four quid. Phil, Pete and I went into the bar afterwards for a drink but Brian went back to his room. He's not feeling too good and the heat appears to have got to him during the day.

We've managed 217 miles today according to my tripmeter not as much as we would have liked but this is obviously due to me getting split up from the others this morning and the hassles with the exhaust pipe in the afternoon.

Sarge

