

# Club run to the Loire, 3-8 May

This trip can only be described as first class: good roads, good food, good weather and excellent company. Total mileage 930

## Pete Craddock

### Thursday

So we all arrived at Membury Services for our epic journey. Obviously Captain PAN had forgotten to put the stabilisers down on his ST 1300 when waiting to board the “boat” and required a little assistance in picking it back up. No damage caused, one hour on and off to “bed” (aka lounge floor).

The Charltons came prepared with camping mattresses. Snoring apart, the majority of SAMmers achieved a couple of hours sleep.



*Red Leader poses next to war relic*

### Friday

We departed Le Havre on time and full of anticipation – crossing the “Pont due Normandie”. We stopped for coffee in Neuboure; the owner



*Fab buildings: SAMmers do jiggy jiggy*

believed he was going to make a fortune until Simon and Nigel re-arranged the glass with their derrieres. SAMmers were all heard to say “Ah Monsieur, accident!”.

We all converged on Blois following excellent weather which had continued to be very kind to us following a brief prayer by Red Leader (Pete Craddock).

The bikes parked and rooms allocated we wandered across the road to the hotel Renaissance where Pascal looked after us. Sammers all happy and suitably “watered” all fell into bed.

Whilst slowly dozing off Pete Craddock was awakened by a knock on his door. Being a gentleman

**[must be a different Pete – Ed]** he dressed and answered the door to find “Fast Sal” (aka TTS) in her



*Blondes having more fun*

“doctor’s role”. Eric had cut his toe and urgently required a plaster. First aid box at hand the emergency was soon “sorted”.

### **Saturday**

After a good breakfast consisting of bread, bread and more bread, the sun shining on the righteous, the local market became a natural magnet for the elite SAMmers shop-a-holics, Ashley clearing out the local jewellery store and several persons buying passport/document bags.

Everyone “shopped out” – it was time for our first ride out to Chateau De Chenonceau – a distance of 36 miles. Being short of money meant we had to try for the group discount. After several head counts (ranging from 19 to 24) we eventually entered this wonderful “house”. In the evening the

group split up in order not to overwhelm any local restaurant.

Mike Barratt decided to try a local delicacy of pig’s trotter. His face was a picture when a piece of gristle, fat and bone arrived.

Having walked the majority of Blois centre, other members found a restaurant. Nigel Sandall was convinced he had been kidnapped and tried to inform Dave Graham via mobile phone as to why he was missing. Photographic evidence may prove “beyond all reasonable doubt” that he had been free to leave at anytime.

During the “sweet course” members were elated to find out just how wonderful the local “bras due chocolat mousse” was.



*Wine glass too small for thirsty Budge*

### **Sunday**

This was the big one – 200 miles on empty country roads. We set off in

our groups with the intention of coffee at Montbason. Dave Graham's group after numerous verses of "magic roundabout" and practicing their slow riding skills, left the local elections and boot market toward Chinon. After several minutes of "nagging" in his left ear from "Mrs C", Pete Craddock took his group for coffee in Monts. Onwards to Chinon with a progressive ride, members arrived in good time for lunch.

The red group left Chinon with "I'd like to break free" being played for the benefit of Nigel Sandall and Mike and Paula Newman.

Out of Chinon towards Richelieu and back towards Blere. Perfect conditions, empty roads meant a "more progressive" scenic ride. We stopped in Amboise for an ice cream and to gather our thoughts and slow our heartbeats.



*Budge has blonde moment*

Back into Blois for a shower and then another visit to Pascal. We were

joined by Eric and Maggie Moody, our French SAM members.



*Red Leader crash lands*

Unfortunately, Eric had sold his bike the day before and so drove his car to meet us – dedication. The evening meal in a local Brasserie (pre-arranged thanks to TTS) allowed all tourists to come together to "party". After a wonderful meal (with the usual trimmings" and speeches) it was back once again to visit Pascal who opened his bar especially for SAM. At this stage SAM had now successfully made "international connections".

### **Monday**

More shopping in the morning with several members resting. The afternoon saw members taking a short 80 mile ride around the Chambord region. We visited Pascal to say our goodbyes and receive praise from him for the way we had "made his hotel more happy" (probably due to the amount of Euros we had spent!!!)

## Tuesday

More bread! Early start – 8.30am with wet roads and heavy drizzle. A decision was made to journey on the “route nationals” back to Le Havre due to the weather and time restraints. After 70 miles both groups managed to find a service station to refuel bikes and bodies.



*Roger Red Leader, back to Blighty!*

Onto the motorway and across another bridge back to Le Havre.

This time motorcycles were seen to be leaning over 45 degrees and not due to cornering – more as a result of severe gales.

Finally we arrived for our last fuel stop – security was at its premium with members having to leave security (money, credit card) before being allowed to refuel. Some members decided to “dine” at the fuel stop whilst other members carried on into Le Havre for a more refined casual lunch. The ferry back will be

remembered for the polite, courteous, LOUD French children on route to dear old Blighty – Bon Voyage.

Saying of the tour – “There can only be leaders if there are followers!”.

Thanks to all for your contributions – we must do it again sometime – May 2008? ♦

## Welsh Perry & Cider championship results

This year’s championships were held at the Clytha Arms near Abergavenny (<http://www.clytha-arms.com>).

Congratulations to Stewart Lucas of Blaengawney Cider (and one of Eric Bush’s clan!), who won a silver medal in the sweet cider contest with his National Treasure cider.



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