

Old Gits 2022 – Switzerland

The vast majority of reporting and associated pictures have kindly been provided by Tracey who was keeping a daily diary of the events. Additional pictures have been included from the other members of the trip.

This trip in 2022 was 2 years after the Covid pandemic, but some countries still retained control measures in place to prevent further infections. Although we carried protective masks with us, they were not needed as the stricter regulations had been rescinded during the summer.

Travel Itinerary

Switzerland 2022

Day	Date	From	To	Distance	Duration	Hotel
1	5-Jul-22	Portsmouth	Caen			Ferry
2	6-Jul-22	Caen	Troyes	260	05:38	Hotel Du Cirque
3	7-Jul-22	Troyes	Pontarlier	200	04:50	Ibis Pontarlier
4	8-Jul-22	Pontarlier	Fully	90	03:00	Hotel de Fully
5	9-Jul-22	Sat				
6	10-Jul-22	Sun				
7	11-Jul-22	Mon				
8	12-Jul-22	Tue				
9	13-Jul-22	Fully	Chalon-Sur-Saone	190	05:25	ibis Europe
10	14-Jul-22	Chalon-Sur-Saone	Pithiviers	190	04:10	Comfort hotel
11	15-Jul-22	Pithiviers	Caen	176	04:00	Ferry
12	16-Jul-22	Caen	Portsmouth			

Distances are +/- 5 miles

Duration is a guide only and is dependent upon traffic.

The Travellers

Alex	Harley Davidson Sportster 1200
Eamonn	Honda Africa Twin Adventure Sport
Mike	Triumph Tiger 1050
Tracey	Honda NX750

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Covid Travel Requirements

Entry into France from UK	Fully vaccinated travellers aged 12 and over must continue to provide: • Proof of vaccination. This is done with an NHS Covid pass either via the NHS app or by letter. See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-covid-pass • A sworn statement (déclaration sur l'honneur) self-certifying you're not suffering from COVID-19 symptoms and haven't been in contact with confirmed cases in the 14 days prior to travel. A copy of this document is on the last page
Entry into Switzerland from France	Proof of vaccination. This is done with an NHS Covid pass either via the NHS app or by letter. See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-covid-pass
Entry into France from Switzerland	Proof of vaccination. This is done with an NHS Covid pass either via the NHS app or by letter. See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-covid-pass Most recent vaccination/booster must have been after 11-Oct-2021
Entry into UK from France	No requirements

Your NHS appointment card from vaccination centres is not designed to be used as proof of vaccination and should not be used to demonstrate your vaccine status.

Driving/Riding Requirements

Details extracted from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-the-eu>

Your driving licence	If you have a paper licence (old style) you will also need an International Driving Permit (IDP 1968) available from Post Offices
Your vehicle's log book (V5C)	If you have a GB sticker, cover or remove it before driving outside the UK. You will need to display a UK sticker clearly on the rear of your vehicle
Your Insurance certificate	You do not need to carry a green card when you drive in the EU

Driving rules in France

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/travel/country/france/>

Air Quality Certificate

Not available for vehicles built before June 2000 (Alex and Brian)

Can be purchased from <https://www.certificat-air.gouv.fr/certificat> for less than £5.

If you don't have a sticker and you go into a restricted zone, the fine is £59

So basically we have to avoid any restricted zones if we come across any. The main one is Paris, but local authorities can implement temporary zones depending on their local air pollution conditions.

Driving rules in Switzerland

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/travel/country/switzerland/>

Hotels

[Hotel du Cirque | Troyes](#)

[Hotel in Pontarlier - ibis Pontarlier - ALL \(accor.com\)](#)

[Hotel de Fully - Accueil \(hotel-de-fully.ch\)](#)

[Hotel in Chalon Sur Saone - ibis Chalon Sur Saone Europe - ALL \(accor.com\)](#)

[Comfort Hotel Pithiviers - Hôtel à Pithiviers en France \(choicehotels.com\)](#)

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Day 1

Portsmouth – Caen

The first part of the holiday was to meet up at the Waggon and Horses in Portsmouth for a meal before boarding the overnight ferry to Caen. Alex and Eamonn rode to Portsmouth together from Alex's house near Reading whilst Mike and Tracey rode down from north Kent. Both groups arriving at the pub within a couple of minutes of each other. Mike wasn't feeling too well, but certainly wasn't going to cancel the holiday!



A quick meal at the pub, then on to check in for the ferry – we allowed 90 minutes for the check-in process which we expected to be lengthy due to checks for Covid and more detailed border checks following Brexit. When we arrived at the port, the ferry had only recently docked and was busy unloading the travellers, many of whom had taken their classic cars to an event at the Le Mans circuit so there was plenty to watch whilst we waited to board.



Supposedly a four person cabin



Due to a couple of cancellations we had 3 cabins booked when really we only needed two. The ferry staff said they were unable to refund the price of a cabin even though there were many people

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coming on board who would like one. Given the situation, we decided to get some drinks and start the holiday!



The time came to settle down for some sleep, so Mike and Tracey took one cabin and Alex and Eamonn took one cabin each (thus all three cabins being used). Upon entering his cabin, Alex was surprised to find a woman already in (his) bed.... It turned out that the ferry staff had printed out a second entry ticket and sold the cabin to another traveller even though it was on our ticket! Alex was given a complimentary upgrade to a better cabin with no-one else in it.

A smooth crossing followed and we docked on time, so all was good.

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Day 2

Caen – Troyes



The ferry arrived early in the morning and we disembarked at 07:30. We skipped breakfast on board and decided to find a café on our route out of town for a coffee. This proved more difficult than we first thought due to many cafes not yet open and having found a MacDonalds, the manager advised us that there was no electricity and so they couldn't serve us! We filled the bikes with petrol and our search took us back into Caen where we stopped at small place for coffee and croissants.



In Caen for early morning coffee



Late morning coffee in La Ferté-en-Ouche

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La Ferté-en-Ouche

The extra searching Caen for breakfast set us back by an hour or so, that meant we were playing catch up all day. After stopping just outside Chartres for lunch at Burger King and a fuel stop, we decided to resort to some motorways and tolls to get to the hotel on time. A little dull, but at least we arrived with time enough for showers, beer and dinner.



Lunch in Burger King – Alex was embarrassed....

All in all smooth riding apart from Alex being stung by something that got in his jacket and Mike having a small mishap on arrival at the hotel - his bike was clearly tired after the long journey and decided to have a little lay down after clipping a post. No major damage done though.

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Entrance to Hotel Cirque and the lockable garage provided for the bikes.

With the bikes locked away. We walked into town centre to find a restaurant. The hotel staff had recommended one for us and so we first looked there. The town centre was only 15 minutes walk and we found many restaurants to choose from.



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The meal was good and Troyes medieval centre is somewhat picturesque so an ideal first proper night.

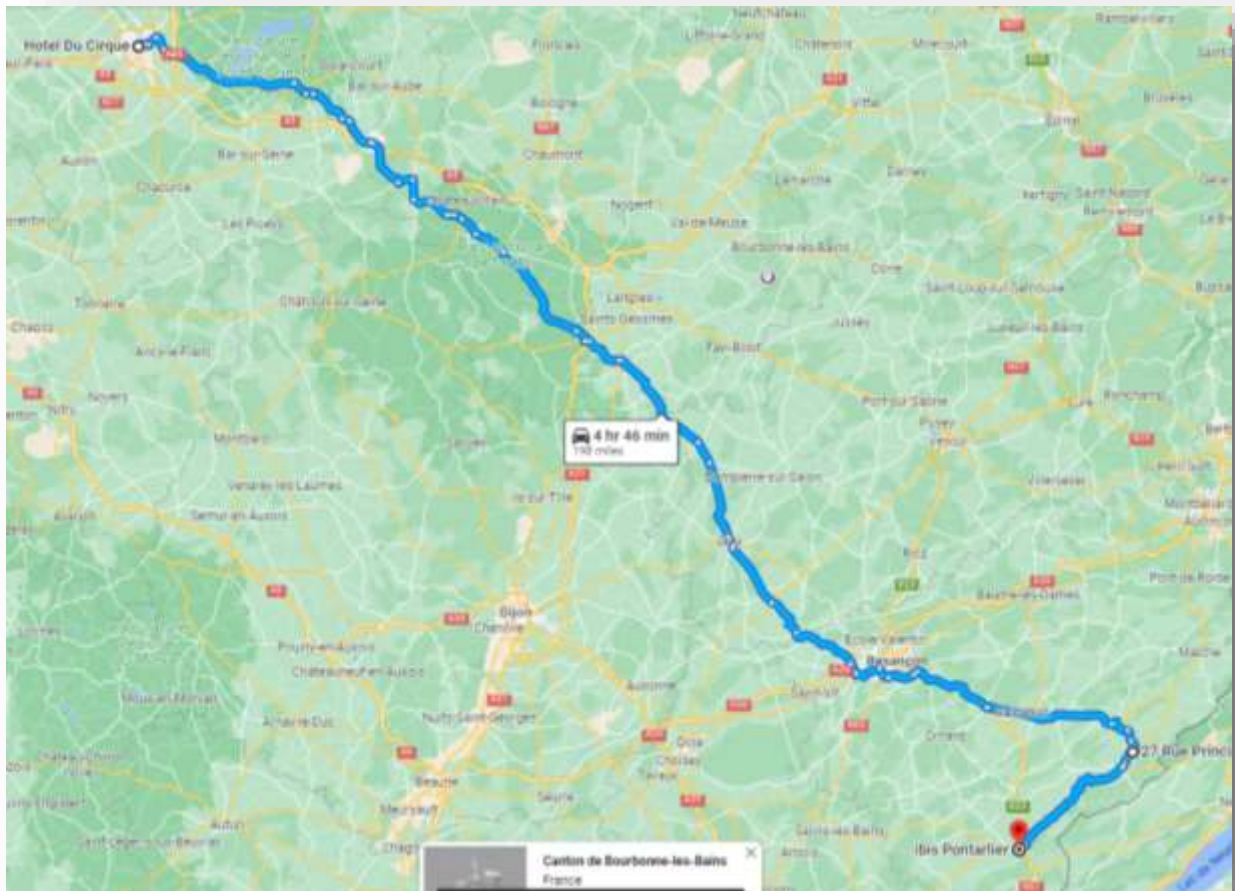




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Day 3

Troyes – Pontarlier



Indicator fixes with superglue and tape.



The bakery at Chateauvillain.



The lunch stop was at a bakery in Chateauvillain where Alex found a replacement for Brian who couldn't come on this trip.

After breakfast and some indicator fixing on Mike's bike, we had a leisurely start to the day and set off towards Pontarlier. It was a much nicer and more picturesque day's ride, sweeping through the French countryside on mostly D roads. Things were definitely turning "Alpy" towards the end though, climbing in altitude and some great swoopy bends towards our destination.



Lunch at Chateauvillain



Afternoon drinks by the roadside in XXX

On our way through some of the forested areas, Eamonn had a wild boar run out directly in front of him followed by 3 smaller boarlets. A sharp dab of the brakes allowed the little ones to safely cross without incident – though it was an "exciting" moment for Eamonn!

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Only two stops for coffee/lunch and we arrived at our hotel on the outskirts of town in good time for dinner and beers in the bar/restaurant. We were all too tired to walk into town to find anything else at that time.

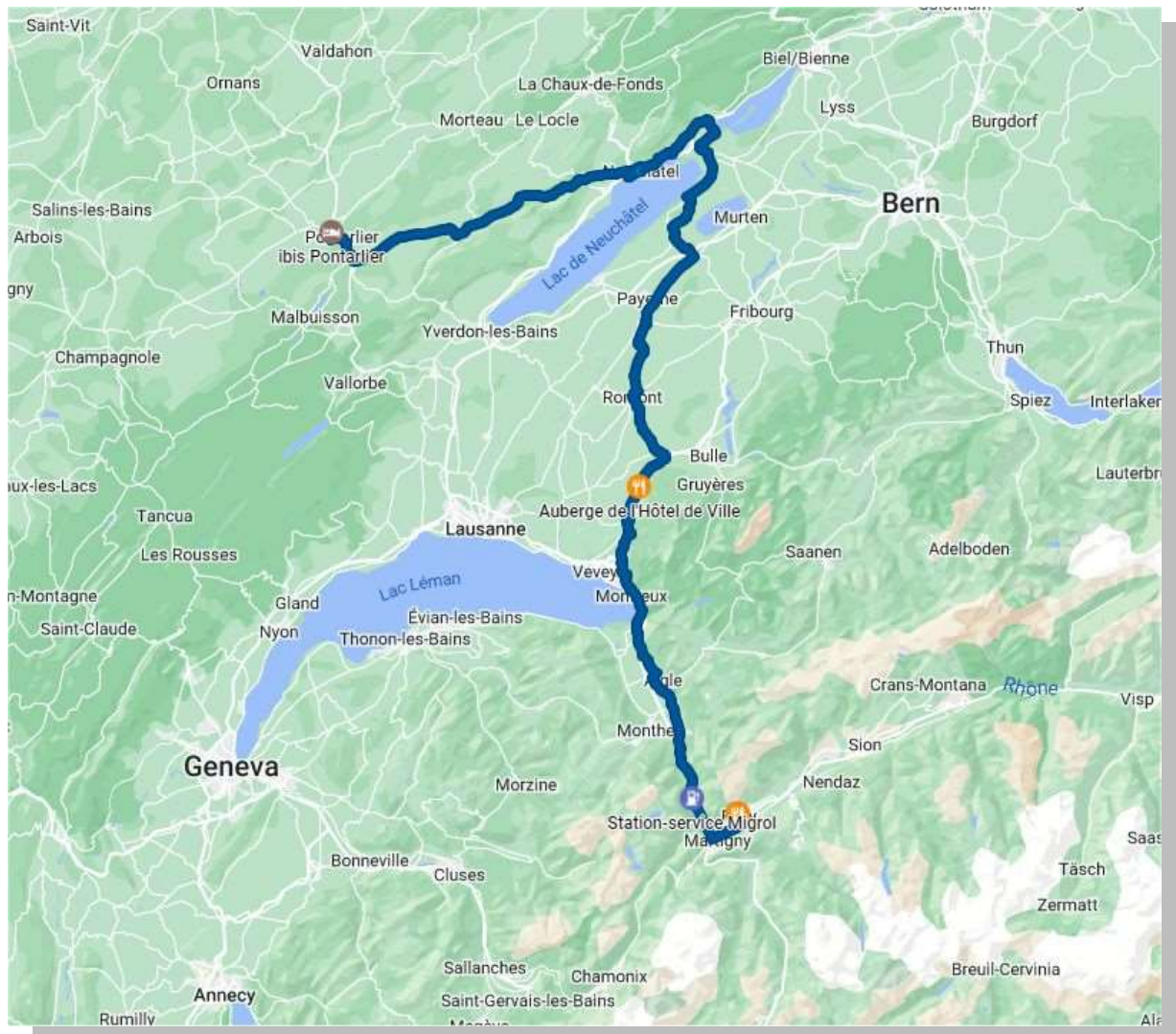


Luckily for Mike and Tracey, they kindly rustled us up some veggie food not on the menu. After the meal, we saw a table football game and the grudge match between Alex and Eamonn versus Mike and Tracey was set up. The team Irving/Constant were victorious in the inaugural Euro Road Trip Table Football Competition! Unfortunately the enormous gold presentation cup had to be left at the hotel as it was too big to fit into the luggage on the bikes...!!!

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Day 4

Pontarlier – Fully



Today we headed into Switzerland. The day started with clear blue skies and our directions into Switzerland. After 30 minutes trying to link up our helmet communications, we gave up and headed off! Ten miles later, the headsets all get connected by themselves...

The journey started warm and was progressively hotter as we travelled into Switzerland.



The change in road quality is noticeable once you cross the border into Switzerland, the roads are just somehow nicer! We're immediately presented with images that could be on the front of your posh Swiss chocolate box!

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Just one of the many beautiful views we found riding into Switzerland

We skirted around Lake Geneva, so decided to stop at a town on the edge called Neuchâtel, we found a parking spot and had lunch in the busy square. Expensive at £21 for burger and chips, but the location is excellent!



A performance with saxophonists entertained us whilst we ate our meal (one is obscured by the pole in the photo above).

The afternoon stop was a small café on the side of the road – cold drinks were the order of the day! An interesting trike turned up and Alex was intrigued....



The church (on the left) was opposite the café.

Continuing our journey, we realised we would be going through Montreaux, Mike prepared us for a joint sing-a-long of “Smoke on the Water” (the original Deep Purple version of course!). However, before we reached the town, the hills above n the approach offered a superb view across the lake and to the distant mountains. We had to stop and take photos...



Our destination tonight, Hotel de Fully, will be our home for 5 nights. Dinner at the hotel was tasty but we were all too tired to wander around Fully. We did however wonder what the long building at the top of the mountain was, and decided that it should be our destination the following day to find out.



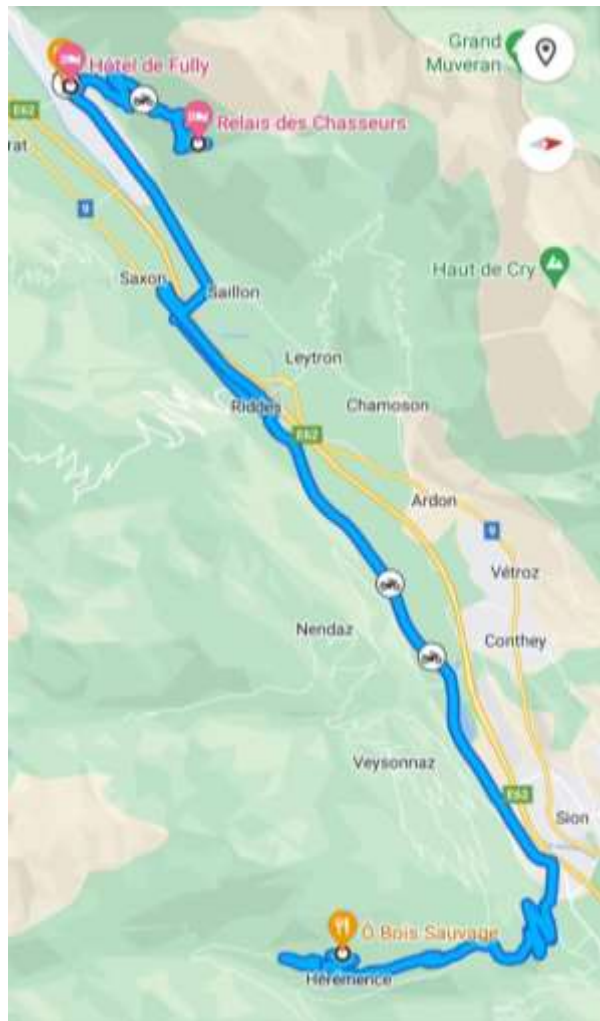
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Day 5

So... the building at the top of the mountain... a route was plotted and after a more leisurely start to the day we set off. Tracey exclaimed she was not prepared for those single track winding roads! Tracey made it up the hills... slowly... but she said that she was really not a fan of u-turns up steep inclines as that's essentially what the bends are like up these mountains - 180 degree switchbacks and tight! Tracey much preferred the swooping bends any day.

The road up the hillside turned into a gravel track before we reached the mysterious building we had seen the evening before, and we stopped for a morning drink and to admire the view. Eamonn took his Africa Twin for a spin along the gravel track to investigate further. The building is indeed... a cow shed! Well, now we know!

The gravel track was bumpy in places, but not too bad. At the end of the track there were a number of cars parked up but no other bikes! It appeared to be a popular hiking area with information boards and walks going off in all directions. Of course the views were amazing!



After Eamonn returned from the gravel track, we sat in the open air restaurant for refreshments and planned the next stop. Whilst making our plans, Alex and Eamonn noted the big juicy steaks being cooked on the griddle and vowed that this would be a good place to return to someday!

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Above: Old barns next to the restaurant
Left: Getting ready to move on



A second route was plotted to another viewpoint that looked less tricky and we hoped to get some lunch at this spot... but we were too late.



Although the restaurant was open for drinks, they had stopped serving food, so after some fizzy refreshments we left – looking forward to a substantial evening meal!



As it turns out Tracey had started to feel a bit unwell anyway, so Mike and Tracey headed back to the hotel whilst Eamonn and Alex continued on to another viewpoint. Tracey said that she felt like she was coming down with something (probably the bug that Mike had on day 1..!) but a quick snooze helped before heading out for some dinner and a wander in town.

Meanwhile, Alex and Eamonn headed further along the road to visit a dam that they had seen in the distance when at the (closed) restaurant. Initially the route was a normal main road along the valley floor, but as we turned off to head towards the dam, the road became more twisty and much more interesting!



Approaching the dam, the guides indicated we could ride right to the top. Sitting at the bottom of the dam, we both thought that would be impossible given the height and how close we were; but we continued along the road which became more intense switchbacks! Corner after corner saw us gradually rising to about half way up the dams face, then suddenly there was a car park – with quite a few cars already in it! A sign at the end indicated the cars were not allowed any further, but busses and motorcycles could continue... so we did...! It was all of another 200 metres before the road was closed off in front of a smaller car park, clearly we were not going to be allowed any further. We could see where the road continued, along a gravel track twisting up the hillside, but we were prohibited from going there.

Instead, there was a cable car that would take you to the top of the dam – so we took it! The view even from the cable car was spectacular.





This is a view of the water being held back by the dam.



Peering over the side of the dam wall.



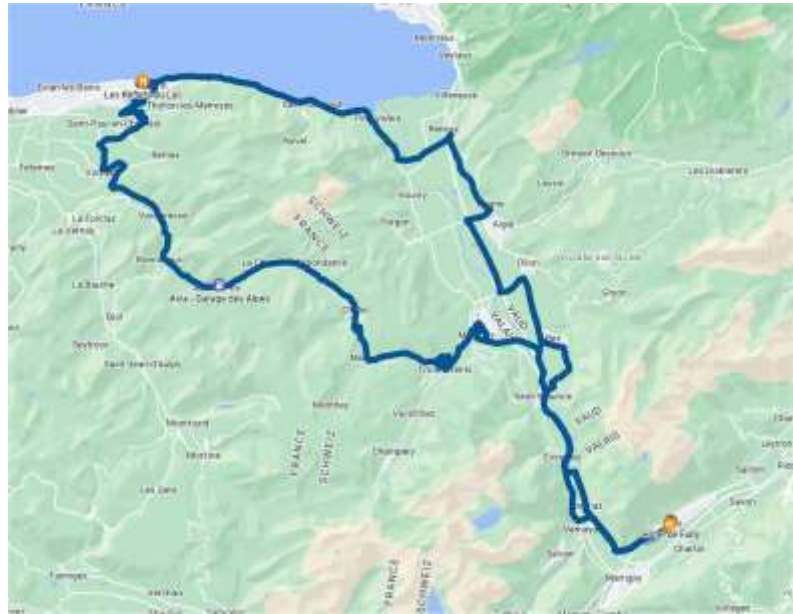
Satellite view of the dam and surroundings,

Turns out Fully is not so Fully of restaurants to eat in, but after Alex and Eamonn had returned we found somewhere nice enough eventually.

Day 6

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Today Tracey confirmed she was definitely coming down with something... feeling rough, and full of cold, Tracey went pillion with Mike for the planned trip out. The original plan was to head into Italy (Aosta) for an Italian lunch - but then we found the only route was via tunnels that charged £15 each to go through. Regardless of the price, sitting in a 5 km tunnel on a motorcycle is no fun at all, so a new plan was hatched.



We're now heading to the southern shores of Lake Geneva via some twisty roads to find somewhere for lunch as the hotel restaurant is closed on Sunday's. The planned route sadly crossed over the Tour de France route so slowed us down somewhat, crazy cyclists everywhere! Eventually we found a lovely spot for lunch at the side of Lake though. Shame they don't know what a vegetarian is round here!



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There were a couple more deviations on the route back, but less cyclists at least.

Back at the hotel, Mike and Tracey managed to see the last set of the men's tennis final and then Tracey crashed out, missing dinner and didn't get up until the next morning! The rest of us, found some beers and snacks to keep us entertained.

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Day 7

Tracey really needed that sleep... feeling so much better today, and back on her own bike for the planned ride out. On the suggestion of the hotel staff, we visited Lac de Derborence and the Sanetch Pass (which you can't actually pass through!) and wow, the views did not disappoint.

The initial route was another single track road through some vineyards. The road was very narrow in places and real tight switchbacks that were extremely challenging. Tracey was unsure of these tight bends (especially with a new automatic DCT gearbox) and decided they were too much, so Mike and Tracey rerouted and found another road up to the lake which was a much more enjoyable ride. Through cave tunnels in the side of the mountains and nice roads... fantastic. Lovely roads and great views!



The car/bike park



A genuine rosti



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After lunch, we carried on our exploration to Sanetch Pass. For the road traveller, this turned out to be a dead end, but for those on foot the route continued over the mountains – this was an ancient path and only part of it had been upgraded to a tarmac road.

However, at the end of the tarmac section there was a café/restaurant so we stopped for some drinks. As before the views were spectacular and the virtually empty winding roads beautiful.





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Day 8

Prices in Switzerland are sky high, so as we missed out on our Italian trip over lockdown, we decided to see if we could make it over the border for lunch - without spending ages in the Simplon tunnel or paying for toll roads. The sky is quiet today, previous mornings we have seen a helicopter moving large bags of something from one part of the mountain side to another. Theories range from waste collection, faster movement of cattle, food supplies to the mountain shops, etc. We never discovered the truth!

We found a cracking route - the Great St Bernard pass with swooping roads, an open sided tunnel and plenty of fantastic views. The cool mountain air was the perfect antidote to the heat and we stopped for a coffee on the way down and made it to Aosta for a pizza lunch.



When we first arrived the parking was empty, but then the bikes started to arrive!



We rode into Aosta and headed for the town centre on the basis that we would find both parking and restaurants to choose from. We did indeed find both. With the bikes parked up, we walked

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through a couple of streets with lots of restaurant choices, but many were already full. We managed to find one with a table outside and ordered our beer and pizzas!



Refreshed with genuine Italian pizze (notice the Italian grammar!), we went back to the bikes and headed back to the Great St Bernard Pass.

This time, heading up the mountain there were very few other vehicles and a spirited ride was had!



As Tracey said, "The swooping roads were even better on the way back!"

When we reached the summit of the pass, we stopped for the usual afternoon refreshment and discussion about how much we enjoyed the road coming up through the pass.

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The statue of Saint Bernard on top of one of the buildings.

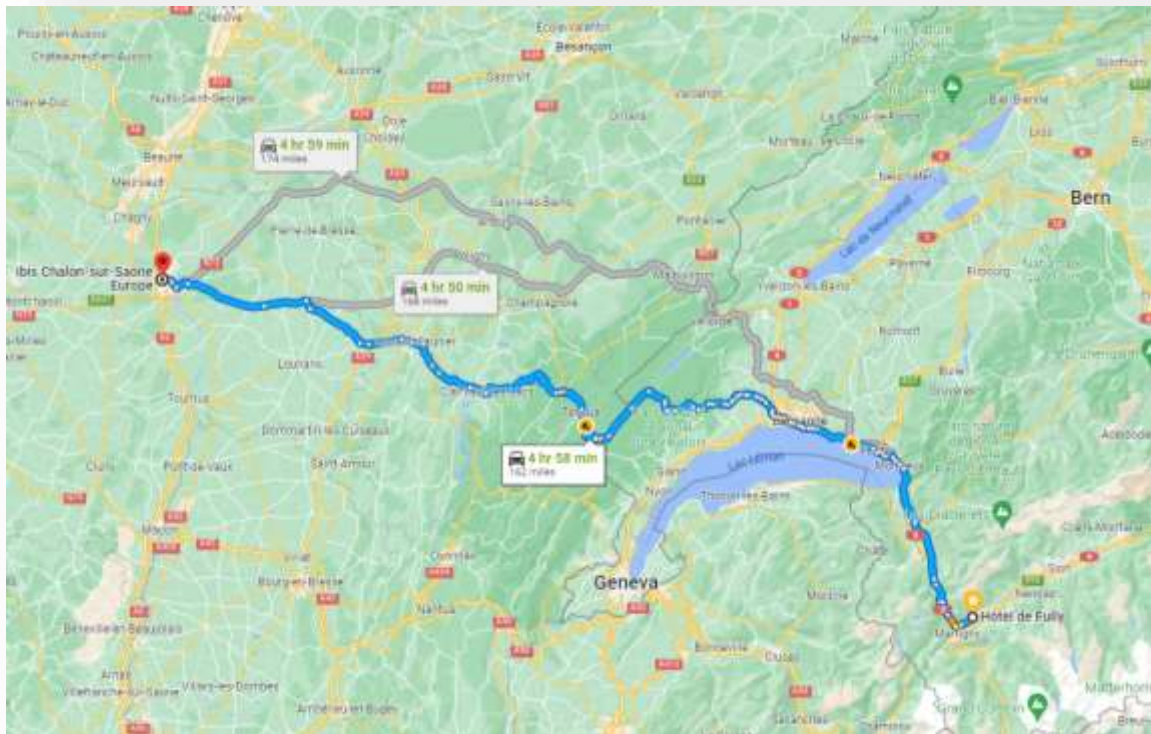
We are extremely grateful to him for such a fine road!

Unfortunately, this was the last night at the Swiss hotel, so dinner and plans were made for the return leg starting tomorrow.

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Day 9

Fully - Chalon-Sur-Saone



Today we left the mountains of Switzerland and headed back into France starting the journey towards home. There were some terrific roads, in between the crazy local car drivers determined to overtake on blind bends and a few gravelly bits, with lots of swooping corners.

Eamonn had arranged to meet up with one of his fellow leather workers (Serge) who lives in Lausanne, and so left the hotel earlier in the morning. Apart from attempting to go down a bus-only road and having to navigate through the centre of Lausanne were various road closures were in place, Eamonn found the café at the agreed meeting point.

Had a really good few hours with Serge and Marquita discussing the history of both shoes and traditional English leather decoration

Alex, Mike and Tracey left the hotel and met up with Eamonn and Serge at the café. We had lunch with Serge, a very interesting character with lots of local knowledge. Unfortunately our time was cut a little short due to the presence of parking wardens only giving us 5 minutes to get on our bikes and go, they were parked outside of the official markings admittedly!! Serge had spoken to the parking wardens on our behalf, but they insisted we get ourselves on the road! Fortunately we had finished our meal and were just talking with no great hurry to leave.

Once out of Lausanne, the sun shone brightly and the temperature increased. We had to stop for another quick drink stop just inside the Swiss border on the lake at Le Pont, as it was so hot, hot, hot!

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The afternoon ride to Chalon-sur-saone did have a couple of problems. Firstly a section of road had been recently resurfaced resulting in a lot of gravel laying on the surface that Eamonn didn't find until well into the corner.... The resulting slide was enough warning to slow down and take things extra carefully for the next few miles.

At the refuel stop, 90 minutes away from the hotel, Alex couldn't get his bike started. This was found to be due to a faulty battery connection. The proprietor of the garage had a go at fixing it, meanwhile a very helpful couple of Dutchmen had stopped in the immaculate Triumph TR4 sports car and assisted with spanners and ultimately they removed a set screw from their car for us to use in fixing the battery! Alex now has a TR4 trim screw holding his battery terminal together and will be taking the battery back under warranty when we get back, let's hope it holds until then!!



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It was now much later in the day and we just made it to our hotel before they stopped serving food.

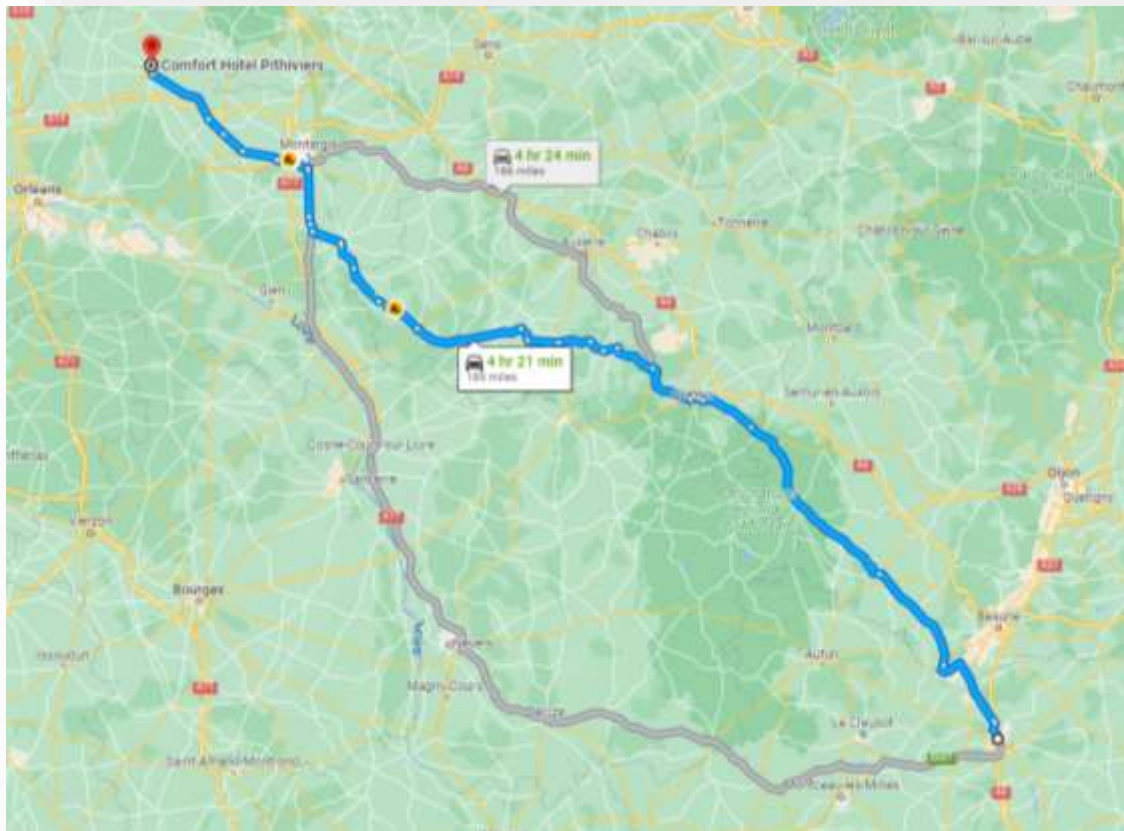


Since tomorrow is July 14th, Bastille day, we may need to replan our route as many establishments will be closed.

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Day 10

Chalon-sur-Saone – Pithiviers



All I can say about this day was hot.... Hot hot hot hot hot

That's it... French countryside, rolling hills and hot

Did I mention it was hot?

Hot when we left, hot when we stopped, hot when we arrived at Pithivier!

On our journey through France, we stopped for lunch in Avalon, in fact it was the same place we stopped at on our 2019 tour! Though this time, there were no extra tables out front of the restaurant and we ended up sitting at tables around the side.

At least we knew where we could park the bikes in the shade!



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We saw a crazy lady in Avalon where we stopped for lunch... something extra crazy about someone shouting at everything in a different language!

A further complication of the day was that being Bastille day in France, everything was shut... including the hotel restaurant!! Most places in town were also closed and all the local riff raff were out and about zooming in their wide boy cars. Wouldn't recommend Pithivier off the back of that, although kudos to the guy at the hotel that sold us some beers under the counter providing we told no-one about it (... oops!).



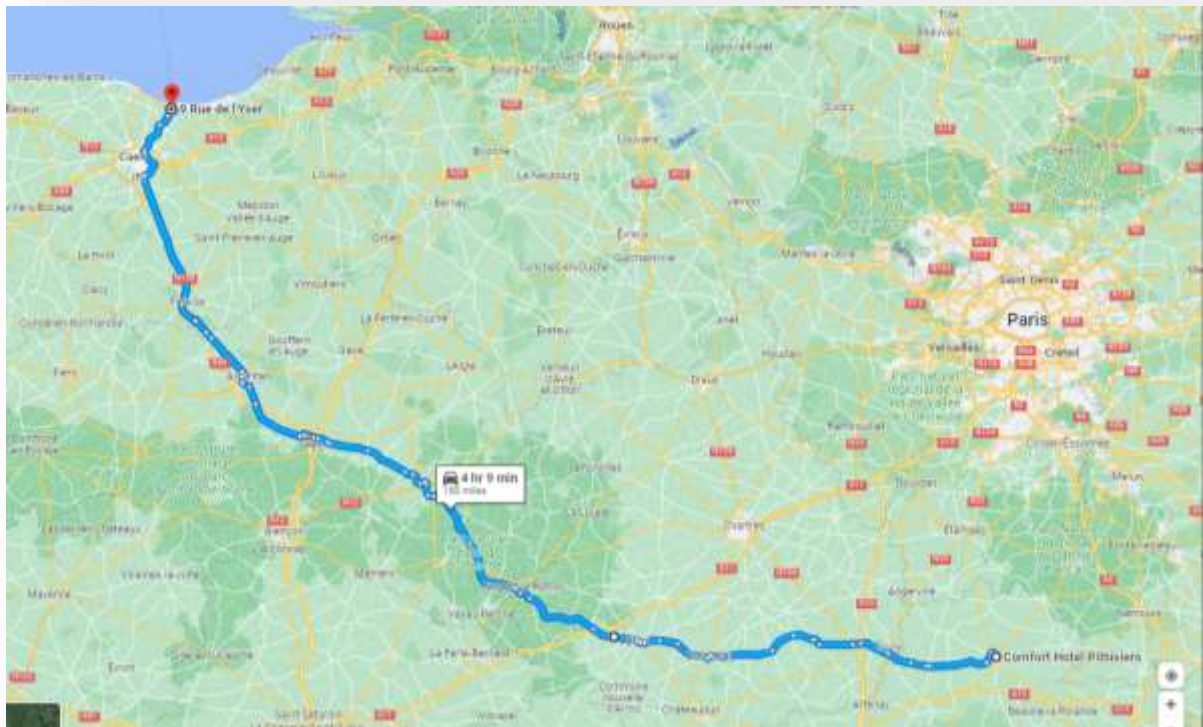
Comfort Hotel was... comfortable(ish), one of the lower budget options of the trip, no air con but the room was surprisingly cave like so we didn't melt!

We found a hotel that was open to providing us with a meal, so we ate at probably the only place open that evening and retired back to the "Comfort Hotel" in readiness for the next day.

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Day 11

Pithiviers – Caen



Last full day of riding... only a couple of stops and we made good time back to Caen ready to catch the ferry. McDonalds for lunch (not ideal but nothing else was open on route that we passed!) and a coffee/juice stop in Vimoutier.



Vimoutier refreshment stop



Once in Caen, we had a few hours before the overnight ferry left so our first task was to find a restaurant. Finding somewhere for dinner seemed another challenge too. We headed to the

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seafront hoping for lots of restaurants but it took a while to find somewhere serving food that wanted four sweaty bikers eating there.

Finally found a place in Lion-Sur-Mer that did crepes, so that was dinner sorted... savoury for mains, sweet for afters!



Ferry crossing was on time and good and no dramas getting back from Portsmouth.



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And we brought the heatwave back with us to the UK.

--- End of Report ---