

Pan Talk

Issue 13 - July 2016

The Occasional e-Magazine of The Northern Pan Riders



The Cover Photo



Foxton Locks, 3 April 2016

Taken outside the restaurant alongside the canal after a great run down with Anne and Richard.

8 Bikes

Suddenly its the middle of July and over 3 months since the last Pan Talk. It seems forever since I wrote many of the articles, which I knew I had to get done before the round of trips and holidays prevented me from doing so.

Nevertheless, content is a bit thin this quarter - no recommended route, no trip report, no riding skills

But we have had 3 excellent rides since April and surprisingly, all largely on dry roads, and reports and photos are included, along with some other bits and pieces from my own farkling.

We have a lot coming up in the next few weeks, not least of which is the BikeWise event at Durham Police Headquarters and the Barbecue and the weekend trip to North Wales. These will all go into the September issue along with any photographs that people take !

As always - please keep the contributions coming in.

John

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Richard & Anne's Ride to Foxton Locks

3 April 2016 - 165 Miles

It took the sun about 2 hours to clear the murky fog that greeted us when we set off from home at 6:30. It wasn't raining, but the roads were wet and the taste of salt from the overnight gritting was heavy on my lips. By the time we left Squires at 9:00, the mist was becoming brighter and by the time we left Jayne's place near Bawtry there were patches of blue sky and the sun was threatening to make an appearance.

8 bikes and 16 members were out on bikes - Richard & Anne, Nigel & Jessica, Dave & Cath, Dick & Ruth, Alex & Ann, Dave & Kath, Alan & Netty, John & Lynne

Richard had plotted a course which would whisk us down the A1 before heading off onto some of the more enjoyable roads. The target was to get to Foxton Locks in good time for the table reservations at 12:30 and this was an excellent compromise. By the time we got to the more enjoyable roads, we had brilliant sunshine and the roads were bone dry.

Foxton Locks is a delight. The food was excellent and we had plenty of time for pottering around, walking up the steep incline beside the locks and sitting around in the sunshine nattering.

The return journey took a swing to the east through Melton Mowbray but followed a broadly similar line to the route down along some excellent Nottinghamshire roads before hitting the A1 north again.

The return journey involved an impromptu stop at MacDonalDs at the Ollerton roundabout, and people heading peeling off in different directions to make their way home. Some just peeled off because they thought that bike in front was the leader. Oops !

An excellent day and a good turnout with a number of members whose bikes were out of action turning up in their car to join in the fun, and not all who arrived went back with the group, some deciding to stay around little longer.

Thankyou Richard & Anne and to Alan & Nettie for back marking.



Club Ride Out



Foxton Locks. John caught snapping saddles for PanTalk.



Dick, Ruth, Alex, Ann, Dave & Cath turning into Foxton Locks.

Ann, Ruth and Alex, completely unaware that they are the subject of this edition's caption competition.





John & Lynne - North Wales Ride

8 May 2016 - 176 Miles

The sun was out at Chester services when we set off at 10:00. We had a good turn-out with a warm welcome extended to Steve & Jenny on their first ride out with the club. John & Lynne lead off, Richard & Anne back marked and Dale, Alan, Stephen & Jenny, Andy & Tracy, Alan & Netty and Bill rotated the duties of marking junctions along the way.

15 minutes of dual carriageway took us to the A494 which quickly left all of the traffic behind and became the wonderful fast flowing sequence of bends all the way to Ruthin. It continues like this towards Corwen, except there is a little known B road - the B5105 - which is infinitely better, and rarely used as a main route. From the map it seems to take a more direct line, but this belies the undulations, the sweeps and curves and the height climbed alongside and through the Clocaenog forest. It is a delight, although this morning, the sun hasn't quite cleared the rain from last night and under the trees and in the shadows, the road is still a bit slippery.



Dale takes the first hairpin as we descend towards Ruthin

A short detour down the A5 to our first coffee stop and then we retrace our step to take the roads north into the Denbighshire hills. These are superb riding roads, starting off fast and sweeping and becoming narrower and twistier as we complete 3 sides of a rectangle towards Llanrwst and Betws-y-Coed.

Betws is probably heaving with bikers and tourists, but we don't care much. We ignore it completely and head for the tight junction off the A5 and onto the A470 through Pont-y-Pant and Dolwyddelan. This used to be a narrow nightmare of a road and was only just wide enough for two cars at road level. At head height



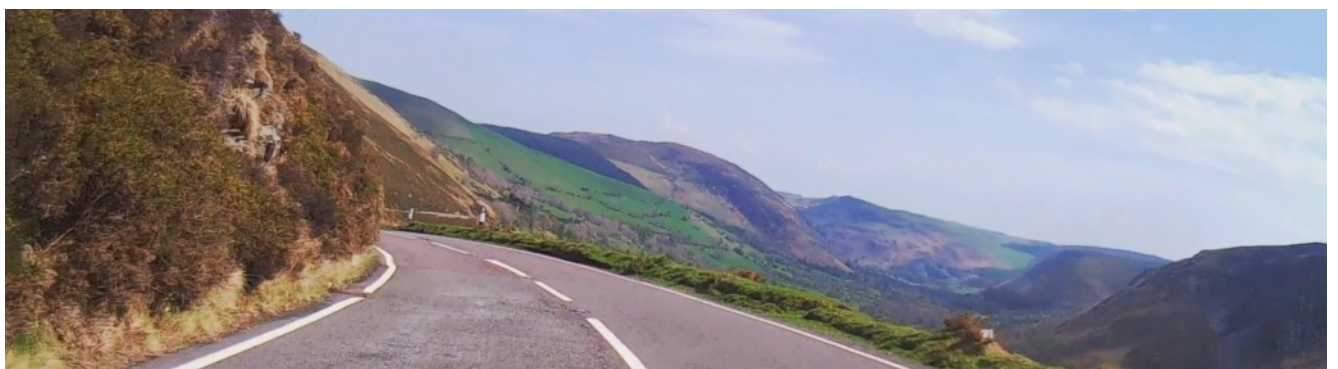
Steve & Jenny at a junction on the A543 N of Cerrigydrudion

however, it was much narrower and riding near the centre line was the best option. It is now much improved, and although the tail of the group get stuck behind traffic, the road soon opens out into the fast, wide climb up the Crimea Pass.

Blaenau Ffestiniog is a town waiting for a landslide to happen. Millions of tons of waste from the slate quarry is stacked high on the hillsides all around, waiting for the fatal day when someone pulls out the wrong piece from the bottom. We don't hang around, and head to Llan Ffestiniog and the sharp left hand turn under the Ffestiniog Light Railway which

marks the start of another little used mountain road. Members who came on Anne & Richard's trip to Caernarfon in March last year may remember this road, but you will not recognise it. On that day we were treated to the true Wales - very windy, rain designed to test the best of waterproof gear to its limits and fog so thick that it was difficult to see the bike in front, let alone any scenery.

But today the sun is out, it is dry, the views are excellent and it the road is grippy. It is a delight and a load of fun, but you won't find me identifying it with a road number here.



We arrive at the Red Lion at Bala almost on time, although the hotel thought we should have been there at 1:00, so they were getting worried. The carvery meal was excellent - really excellent - and we enjoyed a good hour and a half there before setting off again.

We head south-east from Bala on the B4391 roughly in the direction of Oswestry. The road starts off in typical welsh fashion - alongside a river, surrounded by fences and trees, but this quickly changes with a couple of easy hairpins and we pop out into a mini alpine-style adventure. The road is fast and climbs rapidly, and throws in the occasional sharp bend to cross a stream, a few sheep deciding to cross the road in front of us and even a car which has run off the tarmac and into the ditch at the side of the road. The descent is hewn out of the side of a steep valley, with a drop to the valley floor on the right hand side and views of the valleys and mountains ahead to die for.

I can't find a name for this mountain pass, although Cwm Sian Llwyd would locate the place easily enough, with Foel Cwm Sian Llwyd being the hill top which is easily accessible from the top of the pass.

We continue in an east / north-east direction along roads which were dead quiet a week before, on the day I did the recce. They were quiet today too, except for a single transit van, which unfortunately was in front of us for much of the way. Eventually, a couple of us got past, but there were not enough opportunities for everyone to get past.



The A5 and A483 whisked us back to the start point via a multitude of roundabouts. We pulled up at Chester Services in glorious sunshine at around 16:20.

Its impossible to get decent photographs of the rest of the group from my bullet camera when I am leading a ride, so for today, I mounted a 2nd camera on the side of my top box, facing backwards. It turned out to be a stupid place - the top box bounces around all over the place - hardly noticeable when riding to me or to anyone riding behind, but its enough to completely ruin the video.

However, the video captures images quickly enough to allow individual frames quite clearly, without any noticeable blur. So the couple of images on thee previous page and the 7 on the next page are of members as they road up close enough to frame a half decent picture.

Many thanks to everyone that came out, and especially to Richard and Anne who did their usual excellent job of back marking, and keeping us all moving along fluidly. It was a good day.

Richard's View from the back is available on the club website, or by clicking [this link](#).

John

Club Ride Out



Andy & Tracy lead Alan & Netty and Dale on the quiet, twist A548 towards Llanrwst



Alan, mid afternoon near Llagedwyn in the Tanant Valley



Andy & Tracy - A5, Cerrigydrudion



Alan & Netty lead Dale on the superb B4391 mountain road NW of Bala



Bill negotiates the tight left hander on a slippery road surface at Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr - B5105 before the first coffee break.



Bill marks the junction, Alan & Netty ride by with Steve & Jenny waiting. Cerrigydrudion, after morning coffee



Catching up - Alan leads Bill up the Crimea Pass - A470, SE of Betws-y-Coed. Moel Siabod (872m) in the background.

Andy & Tracy - Dales, Cumbria & Trough of Bowland

A new route on superb roads - 12 June 2016 - 180 miles

We had a good turn out for the middle of June as often people are away on longer trips or on holiday. 8 Bikes and 11 members rolled up to the McDonald's car park just south of Skipton - Andy & Tracy, Richard & Anne, John & Lynne, Alex, Nigel & Jess, Steve, Lee. In spite of the overnight rain and thunderstorms, it was a perfect day for riding - not too hot, not too cold and dry roads.

Andy & Tracy led out with Richard and Anne taking up their usual role as back markers.

The run towards The Moorcock Inn at Garsdale Head on the A684 between Hawes and Sedbergh was delight. Heading north through Grassington, Kettlewell and Buckden, we had beaten the normal rush of sunny Sunday tourist traffic and made good progress. From Buckden we take the most direct route to Hawes along single track lanes through Langstrothdale with its delightful sheep-nibbled pastures and the stream alongside the road flowing through its limestone bed. In summer months, the stream often disappears underground.



The road to the top of Fleet Moss - the highest road in Yorkshire - has been in a bad state of repair for years. It is normally gravel strewn, riddle with potholes and the road edges had collapsed ready to catch you out as you pull over for oncoming traffic. But Andy seems to have got this sorted. It is now smooth, flowing and the steepest, twistiest mile to the top has been completely resurfaced. Never in 30+ years of riding and driving on this road has it been as delightful as this.

The Moorcock Inn at Garsdale Head is our first stop. Taken over by new management at Easter this year, it looks really pleasant and welcoming and is kitted up for serving coffee tea and cakes as well as the normal liquid refreshments. Plenty of parking at the rear, quiet and a nice seating area inside - although we stayed outside in the sun. A much better option than the crowded bustle of Hawes. I'd only ever stopped here once before and it was a dump. The new owners have really turned it round and deserve to do well.

After a pleasant break, we set off once more towards Kirkby Stephen and then head west on the wide A685. After Tebay the road narrows slightly and becomes a superb twisty roller coaster. If you've ever driven north on the M6 after the A65 junction and spotted a quiet country road clinging to the hillside to the left, this is it. Quiet and a load of fun.

Lunch at Newby Bridge was at The Swan - we were able to park in a line outside the hotel and we sat in the dappled sunlight under the trees alongside the river, keeping an eye on the bikes.

Setting off one and a quarter hours later, we head towards the coast overlooking Morecambe Bay - Arnsdale, Silverdale and Carnforth - delightful little villages, now largely cut off from passing traffic by the M6, but clearly these were once popular tourist destinations. Somewhere along here, Andy pulls over because it has started to rain and this gives us the opportunity to don weather proof gear, close the cooling vents and change from summer gloves to waterproof ones. A thoughtful move.

We take the M6 south for a couple of junction, and hit slow moving traffic through the road works. We filter, but get split up by a few drivers who choose to close the gap to prevent bikers getting past. Why do they do that? Most drivers spot us and generously move over to make it easier. It tends to be the bigger 'status symbol' vehicles that like to demonstrate their inadequacies in other areas by closing the gap.

Anyway, we get separated a bit, but spot the Garstang exit (good job we listened to the briefing) and join up again a few miles down the road. A brief ice cream and comfort break at 'The Barn at Scorton', cramming

Club Ride Out

Ascending Fleet Moss -

ourselves into every available corner of the tiny car park, and we set off again to find the road that leads across the Forest of Bowland, through the Trough of Bowland, a brilliant road, but one which is well used by cyclists, classic car enthusiast, motorcyclists and sheep in roughly equal proportions. Today, extra care is needed as the roads are newly wet and the fine rain and low airflow is causing our visors to mist. Good fun, nonetheless.

On hitting the A59, some members head off in a homeward direction, but 7 of us head back to the McDonalds on the Skipton by-pass before heading off in our separate directions.

An excellent ride. Many thanks to Andy & Tracy and also to Richard and Anne for back-marking.



B6259 - Wild Boar Fell & The Settle Carlisle Railway

Langstrothdale



Lee, on the Newton Fells



Trough of Bowland, near Dunsop Bridge



A Bike Ride in The Balkans

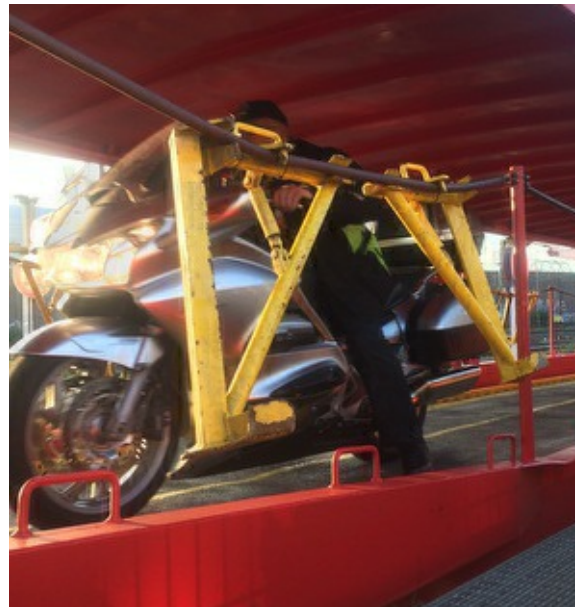
Alex & Ann and Dave & Kath take a 21 day tour in June 2016

After our return from the Netherlands Gathering in September 2015, Ann and I began thinking about a possible taster tour of some of the Balkan countries. We discussed the idea with our friends Kath and Dave who readily agreed to join the venture.

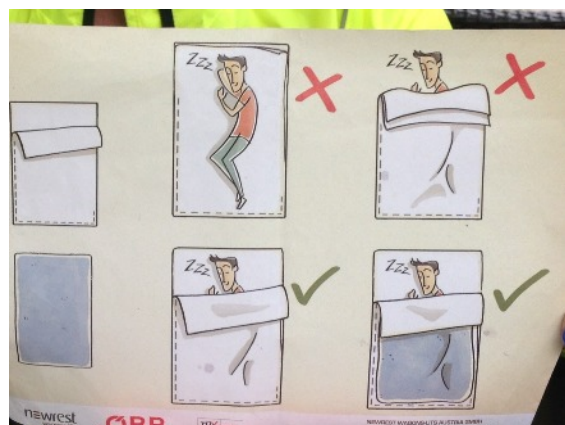
After several months of route planning whilst hunched over maps of Europe and the invaluable Google maps, we agreed a broad itinerary to include Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia. Having covered most of Western Europe on various tours in the past, I started looking at motorail options to cut down on travelling time. Unfortunately, a lot of the routes, such as those starting in the Netherlands, have been discontinued and those leaving Paris are limited to destination in France. However after some website browsing I found a service operated by Austrian Railways (OBB) which runs a daily overnight service for cars and bikes from Dusseldorf to Vienna. For the cost of about £45 per bike and around £75 per couple, including couchette accommodation, we could save ourselves a ride of some 600 autobahn miles and an overnight stop. A no brainer, so I booked. More about that particular travel experience later in this article.

We had agreed, as a foursome, to include tourism breaks during the trip and decided to spend a few days in Zagreb, Split, Zadar and Rijeka in Croatia and Ljubljana in Slovenia. Overnight stops were arranged at approximately 250 miles intervals to give our old bones a chance to recover and to see something of the locale of our stay. Overall the tour was planned to take 21 days. It was decided to make an intermediate stop in Veszprem in Hungary, after the motorail journey, whilst en route to Zagreb. After Ljubljana stops were planned in Salzburg, Stuttgart, Verdun and Calais. Using my old friend Booking.com we arranged what appeared to be suitable hotel accommodation and an apartment in Split. Our travel plans were completed with bookings on the Hull to Rotterdam ferry and the Shuttle.

On Friday 6th May 2016, Ann and I loaded the Pan and headed off to Hull to meet with Kath and Dave at the ferry terminal. The next day dawned bright, sunny and hot and we disembarked for the first leg of the journey which would take



us to Dusseldorf. We arrived at the railway station in the city centre and after some bike control manoeuvres we found an obscure siding with no sign of human life. We managed to get into the concourse of the main station and eventually found an information desk manned by someone who had some idea of the loading arrangements. Up till then the stock answer was that it is an Austrian train that uses the facility once operated by German railways (DBB) and we do not know anything about their timetable. We eventually ascertained that vehicle loading would take place at 8.00pm for a 9.00pm departure. At the appointed time a couple of operatives arrived and under the supervision of a young woman, who would turn out to be one of the conductors, we were told to remove all loose equipment from the bikes such as tank bags and top box rack bags. Shortly afterwards the vehicle carrying rolling stock was backed up to a loading ramp and Dave and I were told to ride on. The headroom was so low we could not stand up, or sit up straight on the bike except when stationary, so I made a passable imitation of Agostini and crouched over the tank and hoped for the best. We were efficiently tied down by the loading team, after which the young lady told us to take our gear



and join the train in the main station. We found our compartment which was about a standard size for a train, but had 6 couchettes folded down and little room for luggage storage. A short while later a male conductor arrived to tell us we had been allocated the 2 bottom and the 2 top bunks. We expressed our collective amazement as I remember booking a 4 person compartment. He was unimpressed by our protestations and stated that a passenger would join in Cologne and another in Frankfurt. The couchettes were about 2 feet wide and were provided with a sheet, blanket and pillow, along with a pictorial notice telling passengers how to use and not use the bedding.

Our first fellow traveler duly arrived at the Cologne stop carrying a large suitcase and a rucksack. He was a personable youngish man who explained he was a comic book review editor who was returning home to Vienna after a convention. With great enthusiasm he showed us his publication and advertising banner, after which we had a long reminisce about comic book characters we could recall from our youth, about which he was a mine of information. Fortunately, he was amenable to taking one of the top bunks. At Frankfurt the final occupant joined, a young woman on her way home to Graz after visiting her sister. She was exceptionally pleasant and understanding of the problems of advancing years and so agreed to take the other top

bunk.

The train journeyed on into the night and we all slept fitfully on the rather firm couchettes. By about 9.00am the train arrived in Vienna and the non vehicle passenger got off at the main station after which we were shunted into another siding. Instead of backing up to a vacant ramp, as expected by the unloading team, the train was diverted to join some empty wagons, which were about twice as long as those attached to our train. A more protracted Agostini impression then became necessary.



From Vienna we headed off in the general direction of the Hungarian border and being a Sunday morning we encountered very little traffic. The weather was again sunny and very warm and we enjoyed riding through rolling wooded hills and picturesque Austrian villages. We crossed the border without any problems and continued our journey on non motorway roads. Although the main routes were in reasonable condition most of the back roads were in need of repair or resurfacing which made for some lumpy riding at times. In most of the villages tall posts with platforms on top had been erected by the roadside to enable the visiting storks to build their nests. It was an amazing sight to see those statuesque birds looking regally down on all they surveyed.

We arrived in Veszprem in the mid afternoon at the height of the heat of the day and were looking forward eagerly to a shower and cold drink. The hotel was in the town centre and had recently undergone a major restoration, thus creating some excellent facilities, including a pool, wet room and sauna. Suitably restored, we headed towards the walled medieval heart of the Veszprem and walked directly into a major carnival following the crowning of the Queen of Veszprem. The square in the centre was crowded with partying Hungarians and on a raised stage was a man in a white jump suit imitating the King. Elvis had not left the

municipality. We had a great time sampling the local food and drink and atmosphere, but with an exchange rate of 350 forints to £1 prices sounded frighteningly high. However, in reality costs were very reasonable and the four of us struggled to spend £50 worth of Hungarian currency during our 2 days stay in the country.



From Veszprem we headed off towards Zagreb via Lake Balaton, which is a huge body of water, and at around 50 miles in length is more like an inland sea



than a lake. We followed the northern shore line, but all the “seaside” towns were all very quiet as May is very early in the tourist season. After riding on more roads of variable quality we gave Slovenia a glancing below before crossing into Croatia. Although we entered the country without difficulty the border was manned and our passports were carefully scrutinised. The minor roads in Croatia were marginally smoother than in Hungary, perhaps on a par with many in North Yorkshire. Unfortunately, they were much busier and the nearer we got to Zagreb the heavier the traffic became. This slowed our planned progress and caused us to arrive in the capital at the

peak of the rush hour with our hotel on the other side of the city. I offered a prayer to Garmin, the god of navigation, and we managed to negotiate the usual hazards of any inner city without incident and arrived at our destination hot and tired.

The Hotel Laguna was a large building and something of a relic of the communist 1970s. The facilities, although acceptable, appeared not to have been modernised over the ensuing years. However, it was conveniently located close to a bus route which provided a regular 15 minutes service into the city centre. The suburbs of Zagreb contain buildings of mixed architectural heritage, ranging from those built in the 19th century, the majority of which now look care worn and in need of significant renovation, and those constructed in the mid decades of the 20th century which are in the main utilitarian, uninspiring and typical of their era. The heart of the capital, by contrast contains numerous well preserved historic public buildings and some excellent bars and restaurants that provide a major draw for visitors. Even in the city centre there were signs of poverty and deprivation, with many local people scouring bins and skips for any items of value.

The next leg of our journey would take us to Split on the Adriatic coast. We planned to go via the D1 route which goes through the Plitvice Lakes and National Park, a place of outstanding natural beauty which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Unfortunately the weather chose to intervene and on leaving Zagreb we were confronted by torrential rain and a low cloud base. As the intended route was through some high hills where the visibility would be very poor, we chose to take the motorway direct to Split. As we approached Split along the Dalmatian coast the cloud lifted and blue sky appeared over the sea and by the time we reached our destination the sun was out. We met the landlord of the apartment we had rented for 4 nights outside the sumptuous Hotel Radisson Blue, where it had been arranged that our bikes would be garaged for the duration of our stay. The apartment was very well appointed and had a balcony with views over to the mountains. Here we were able to hang our soaking wet biking gear and make use of a washing machine. We also enjoyed the home comforts of fridge, satellite TV and dishwasher.

Split has a history dating back to the Roman period, with a number of well preserved buildings, including the palace of Emperor Diocletian, who ruled the empire for 20 years in the late third century AD. Split is a popular tourist destination and the old town and harbour area were filled with visitors from across the world who had travelled mainly either by cruise ship or by air. It certainly had the atmosphere of a resort town with numerous open air eateries and drinking establishments and with expensive yachts and power boats tied up in the marinas. As expected, seafood was plentiful and good and in those restaurants



away from the sea front and old town, reasonably priced. Whilst we were in Split we took the opportunity to visit the island of Brač, which was about a 50 minute trip. We arrived in the picturesque harbour in Supetar and walked into the centre of the old town. It was Sunday and it seemed that the whole of the population had congregated on the piazza in front of the parish church. There was a lively festive atmosphere as the young people had taken their first communion during the Mass to celebrate Pentecost.



From Split we rode north for about 100 miles along the coast with some breathtaking scenery. Our next stop was a beachside hotel in the village of Petrcane, near Zadar. It was a major tourist hotel with guests predominantly from Germany and Austria, consequently many towels were to be found on sun beds. Following our tradition of parking the bikes and going in search of the local sights via public transport, we found a bus stop where we boarded a dubious looking bus for the 15 km ride to Zadar. We were rewarded by a magnificent looking town built on a peninsula laid out in a grid system reflecting its Roman heritage. It was home to the Byzantine fleet in the Middle Ages and was variously ruled by Venice, Hungary and Italy before coming part of Yugoslavia in 1947. Again we were treated to another local festival as the pupils of the town's high schools celebrated their graduation. They seemed to have the run of the town with the obvious approval of the authorities, engaging in mass flour, egg and water fights in the parks and seafront. It was all very good humoured and it was good to see the youth letting off steam in a non-destructive manner. Memories of college Rag Days came back to remind me of innocent carefree times. The peninsula contained numerous well-preserved Roman remains and some excellent cafes, bars and restaurants.

The next leg, again northwards, towards Rijeka involved riding on some spectacular bendy roads that hugged the Dalmatian coastline. The bends, some sweeping but mainly tight, were too numerous to count over the 150 miles of the ride. The views were spectacular with craggy cliffs dropping into an azure sea under a bright blue sky. Its popularity as a riding road was clearly evident by the number of other bikes going in both directions, mainly German and predominantly BMW R1200GSs. Our hotel in Rijeka was a tower block in the centre of the city. We were accommodated in a room on the 12th floor. Not good for vertigo sufferers, but with a brilliant view over the city, sea and hills.



The city was a disappointment, with a rundown old town centre undergoing some restoration and a nearby area dominated by docks, rail yards and industry. A strategically important port supported by essential land communication links, it became a vital part of the Hungarian economy in the 19th century and it remains so for the Croatians today.

Shortly after leaving Rijeka we crossed the border into Slovenia, and having given our number plates a cursory glance the guards waved us through. Hotel Katrca is located on the fringe of Ljubljana city centre and close to Tivoli Park, a large open space with excellent recreational facilities. The heart of the centre is very picturesque, containing a castle on a hill, a cathedral and some attractive medieval buildings located along narrow cobbled streets. The warm and, at times, hot and sunny weather certainly gave the place a festive air and drew large



groups of tourists and local people to the cafes and bars. The local cuisine was simple, but substantial. One of the "delicacies" we experienced was a whole loaf of bread which had been hollowed out and filled with goulash. At a market stall we were given a taste of local cured meats, including bear salami, a definite first. The centre was very clean and showed a clear commitment to environmental protection with multiple roadside recycling bins. The local inhabitants are obviously very health conscious with groups of joggers and innumerable cyclists who presented a major hazard to unwary pedestrians.

Leaving Ljubljana we headed for Austria and an overnight stop in Salzburg. The journey took us into the mountains of northern Slovenia and then into the higher Alps. It was an excellent ride avoiding motorways and sticking to the windy routes. The roads were clear, but there were still some piles of snow on the verges.



Member's Tour



Member's Tour



We hit Salzburg at the height of the evening rush hour and to add to the experience the rain came down with a vengeance. Our hotel, the Meininger, was of the budget variety but comfortable and with the benefit of an underground garage. The receptionist was extremely help and directed us to a nearby hostelry which specialised in local food. It was full and had a great atmosphere and a good time was had by all.

Next day we set off for Stuttgart, our next overnight stop on the return journey. For time reasons only we stuck to the autobahns, but our ride was severely hampered by the volume of traffic, road works and heavy rain. It was a tedious ride which we were glad to end with several drinks and a good Italian meal.

The next leg took us over the border into France, to the town of Verdun. It was made famous as the location of a bloody and protracted battle between the French and Germans during WW1 and, by coincidence, we arrived during the week that marked its 100th anniversary. The hotel was called Privilege, and although pleasant and homely, it did not quite justify that title, particularly in the plumbing department.

Our penultimate leg brought us to Calais and a budget Ibis hotel close to the Channel tunnel terminal. The hotel had a large contingent of Police Nationale CRS personnel who were based there for the dual purpose of policing the immigrant camp called the "Jungle" and for sorting out French industrial strikers. Shortly after our arrival Richard & Ann and John & Sue appeared and we enjoyed a fun evening together before they and Kath and Dave left for the Pan Clan "Tickleur" in Normandy and our journey home.

The ride from the Channel Tunnel home was absolutely appalling. We had made the mistake of deciding to travel on the Friday of the late May Bank Holiday weekend and the start of the school half term holidays. We rode along the M2 to the M25, through the Dartford Tunnel, then more of the M25 and on to the M11/A14 to the A1 north and home. The traffic was horrendous and the only saving grace was the ability to filter, which

we did for about 20 miles on the M11. On one section we tagged on to a group of VSOC bikers on their custom tractors, which had the benefit of noise to warn the stationary traffic we were coming through.

The holiday was excellent, great riding on some interesting and unusual roads, interesting stopover locations and apart from a couple of days of heavy rain excellent weather. I can certainly recommend the tour and Ann and I intend to make another trip to the region to see more of the countries we visited .

Alex Hargreaves



Pockets, Top Box & Panniers

What do you Keep in Yours ?

I thought that club members might find this interesting - an insight into what goes into our various top box and pockets on our ST1300. It is not a definitive list by any means - far from it - this is just the stuff that I elect to take with me most of the time. Different people have different priorities and mine have developed over many years of hill walking, particularly with groups of students. I'm a belt and braces person and I prefer to have things with me just in case of emergency.

I like to keep panniers empty as much as possible - if we stop off somewhere, its nice to be able to get out of riding gear and walk around in normal clothes, so we will have stuff in addition to what I am showing here. Whether all of this comes with us depends on the trip and the available space.



- 1 Tool kit
- 2 Ductape
- 3 Tyre Inflator
- 4 First Aid Kit
- 5 Emergency Shelter for 2
- 6 Thick Woolly Socks
- 7 Intercom Leads
- 8 Bag of Bits
- 9 Spare Gloves (underneath)
- 10 NPR Hat
- 11 NPR Neck Tube
- 12 Microfibre towel
- 13 Clean rags

Hidden underneath is a holder for spare bulbs.

Toolkit (#1)

Basic stuff, but reasonable quality. There's nothing worse than being at the side of the road struggling with tools that are not up to the job. Sockets 8, 10, 12, 14 mm; 2 Allen wrenches for fairing and for front brakes; screwdriver; JIS driver; 3/8" ratchet wrench; 3/8" to 1/4" adapter; tape; 12v continuity probe; rubber gloves; cable ties.

It's enough to replace a brake lever, take out pads, remove bits of fairing; fix a basic electrical problem.

We hope to never use it, but it has been used to fix a brake problem in the Alps; re-attach wing mirror and indicator which got knocked off; Switch out a relay for heated gear.



Ductape (#2)

More useful than you would imagine, for all sorts of things. Including holding together a front mudguard after setting off with the security cable still attached. Apparently.

Tyre Inflator (#3)

It's either this, or call out the AA. I have compressed gas cylinders too, but they are hardly enough.

Emergency Shelter (#5)

Probably the first thing to go if room is limited, but emergency recovery services can take hours to arrive, and if it is raining and you are in the middle of nowhere There's a small broly under there as well, somewhere.

Intercom Leads (#7)

These are just chucked in the top box when they are not in use. I much prefer the wired communication to Bluetooth - although it is now some time since I tried a decent Bluetooth kit. Why would I, the Autocom kit works just fine - until it gets wet - hence the spare leads and the headsets.

First Aid Kit (#4)

Enough in there to stop bleeding, crate a sling and to deal with small cuts. Then there's the stuff to deal with everyday incidents - Piriton; sprains; cracked or blistered heel; antiseptic; sterile non-stick wound dressings; microporous tape; hand gel; nail scissors; eyebath; heat reflecting blanket; tablets for common travelling ailments. This kit gets transferred to the rucksack when we go walking anywhere.



Bag of Bits (#8)

All sorts stuff kept in place in a handy, zipped, mesh bag. 'Stop & Go' puncture repair kit (mushroom type plugs); a few cable ties; spare laces for riding boots; a few rubber gloves; charging leads for ipad, camera and phone; spare headsets and leads for the autocom; 3 leads for heated jackets - one each and one spare; pen.



There would normally be a length of wire with male/female connectors attached and a breathalser kit.

Spare bulbs

Required in most European countries, I have a well padded H4 headlight bulb and two tail/stop bulbs which can also be used for indicators. Also a selection of spare fuses, standard and micro.



Thick Woolly Socks (#6)

Something I always forget to pack, but may need in Scotland or the Alps. They stay in the top box in winter.

Spare Gloves

Few manufacturers make gloves large enough - mine are a tight fit at the best of times. If they get even slightly damp, I cannot get them back on again. Hidden away under the leads is a pack in which I keep a spare pair or two. In summer I will have my thin Summer gloves.

Hat & Neck Tubes

It can be remarkable cold when walking around after the crash helmet has been removed. The NPR hat is perfect. There is also an NPR neck tube and another waterproof one.

Towel

Always handy to have - in case hands get wet prior to putting on gloves in the shelter of the top box lid !

USB Charging Socket

Fitted to the inside left corner of the top box, I can charge Ipad, phone and camera on the move - hence the leads in the bag of bits.

Also in the well under the top box mat at the other side is a set of compressed air canisters and my earlier puncture repair kit. Its more useful to have them with me than sitting at home in the garage.



Fairing pockets

I use the pockets for stuff that I am likely to need access to while Lynne is on the pillion. Often things that I forget to do just before setting off or things that I might need while I am sitting on the bike.

Right hand pocket

A tatty old glasses holder. I wear photo-chromic bifocal lenses for riding which have a slight prescription in the top half, but which allow me to read the speedo and the satnav through the lower half.



I can still read number plates at the requisite 20.5 metres in good daylight without glasses, so my driving glasses go back into the right hand pocket at the first sign of rain.

Also in there - a tyre pressure gauge, the remote for the garage door and a thick rubber tent guy for securing the front brake lever for parking on slopes. I keep a set of keys that open the top box, left fairing pocket, panniers, petrol tank, padlock in here as well when I am riding. This also gives me hours of amusement while riding, trying to work out what the source of the annoying tinkling that is apparently coming from the right hand side of the engine.



Left Hand Pocket

..is much deeper, and less useful since it is locked - but the keys in the right hand pocket are easily accessible. Wrapped in plastic and a chamis cloth are a pair of spare levers - brake and clutch. These are stowed away right down at the bottom, just in case a silly tip over snaps a lever - something that could ruin a holiday. It has never happened to me, but it happened to a friend once.



Also - spare dry cloths, a load spreader for the side stand and some factor 50 sun cream for my face. I like to leave plenty of space in the left hand pocket for locking away bits and pieces when I leave the bike for a short while.

Things not Pictured

Some other things get stowed away according to the trip that we are taking. A long steel cable and padlock is a much more flexible security device than the heavy chain that I have in the garage. I also have a couple of wire mesh 'bags' and black bin liners which allow me to secure things to the outside of the bike. Not foolproof, but they have been a sufficient deterrent so far.

We have a fold-away rucksack which screws up into a small pocket - which is very handy for walking around places when a layer of clothing needs to be added or removed.

Although it looks like a lot to be carrying around, it doesn't fill the lower part of the top box. Most of the top box space is actually in the lid, and will easily accommodate my heavy biking jacket should we wish to leave the bike for the day. Boots and over-trousers in one pannier, jacket and Lynne's over-trousers in the top box, Lynne's gear in her pannier and helmets secured with the cable and padlock and protected from the elements and dogs in plastic bin liners.

For European trips I have European Accident forms, part complete. These are sealed in plastic covers and laid flat under the carpet in the top box. Stashed away in rarely used jacket pockets are copies of insurance and vehicle documents, driving licence and passport. I only take the originals if I am going abroad.

Stop it Popping Out

A Fix for the Service Panel in the Air Deflector

No matter how careful you are getting on and off, somehow that grey inspection cover in the fairing deflector kit manages to get itself out of position. The lower end is still held by a weedy push rivet, but the top end is no longer tucked in behind the main fairing, and is making a bid for freedom. Price them up and you find that bit of black rubber like



compound about £34. Plus VAT. Each. That is about half of the price of the entire fairing deflector.

It's not the rider's knee that causes this panel to become dislodged. If it was, it would be pushed in, not out. It's as if the panel is being blown out by the force of the wind hitting it at speed. But I am confident that it is not this - surely the technical team would have tested accessories that are designed to manage the flow of air, in a wind tunnel. So it can't be that. There must be some other explanation.

So we don't know how that panel gets itself into that awkward position. It's one of life's mysteries, like how wearing boots manage to turn your socks round so that the heel is on top of your foot, or how it is that you only ever drop your bike keys when you are standing directly over the grating of a roadside drain.

Anyway, I have a fix. It's not my own idea - well it was, but when I started looking around I discovered that someone else had had the same idea first.

It involves a short metal dowel and a hole.

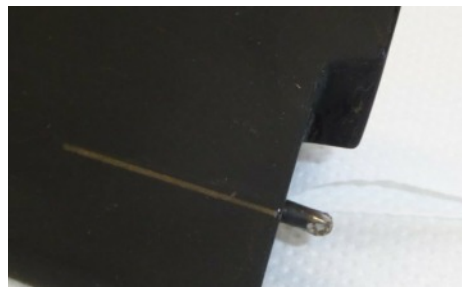
What I did involved a bit of grinding, a bit of drilling and a bit of adhesive. At one point I ground a point on the dowel temporarily so that I could press the panel against the main deflector to mark the position of the locating hole.

The pictures might be enough to show how I did it, but after that, you're on your own. This is really technical stuff, and fraught with danger:

- Drilling the hole at the wrong angle and inserting a pointed dowel the wrong way round could lead to serious discomfort in the kneecap region when riding.
- Inadequate precautions when using cyanoacrylate may result in the rider's fingers being permanently attached to the bike's fairing, seriously affecting their ability to control the motorcycle.
- Disabling the inbuilt safety mechanism which should allow the fairing panel to pop off harmlessly when the speed and wind pressure reach a predetermined safe maximum, could seriously affect the handling of the motorcycle and could result in an accident.
- Adding extra metallic structures to the extremities of the fairing could affect the motorcycle's centre of gravity, possibly resulting in the inability of the rider to negotiate a corner safely.

You have been warned. I've only just done this modification for myself, so it hasn't stood the test of time. However, I reckoned that as it would cost me half the price of the fairing deflector to replace the panels, it was worth the effort - and if it turns out that the rod doesn't stay in place, or the locating hole gets larger over time, then I'll just go back to fixing it in position as it was.

In the meantime, it will be fixed much more securely than it has been for the last few years.



Using a Mobile Phone with the Zumo 590

...and Autocom.

Using a mobile phone through the headset should be dead easy. With the Zumo 550, I simply hard-wired a very basic phone to the input and output sockets on the satnav, and I could control the phone from the satnav and accept or reject calls from the Zumo screen.

That's what I wanted to do with the Zumo 660 - but never quite managed it. I tried a number of times, but the best I managed was to have the phone connected by a lead to the autocom and have it automatically answer the phone. I had heard that the 590 solved the phone issues that I was having with my 660.

But once again, I found that Garmin were less than helpful with precise details about anything that was slightly different from the printed scripts. I talked to Autocom, and they were equally vague - "Yes sir, that should work". The word 'should' immediately triggers an automatic translation facility that I have developed over the years - "Sorry, I don't really know the answer, but I'll make a guess and take your money anyway."

Then I remembered Sam Wray at Chainspeed. Sam apparently used to work at Autocom before Autocom changed hands, and has much knowledge about the inner workings and what is and isn't possible.

Apparently what I need is a special lead that has been developed - part number 4066. It has a stereo 3 pole 3.5 mm jack and a mono 2-pole 2.5mm jack at one end, and a 4 pole jack at the other. Built into the lead is an isolation device - which is now considerably smaller than the size that these devices used to be.

He commented that satnavs nowadays have an EU imposed restriction concerning the strength of the signal that can be sent from one device to the other. As a result, it may be that the signals from my phone to my older analogue Autocom unit (the Super Pro Avi) would be much weaker than if they were talking to one of the new digital Autocom units. He hadn't tried my particular setup, but he reckoned that it should work, albeit with a reduced volume. There's that word 'should' again, but with an explanation from Sam which have always been spot on in the past, my inbuilt translation facility does not kick in.



The Zumo 590 has quite an array of cables coming from the cradle. These are: a waterproof USB socket for charging the phone, Mic In, Audio In, Audio Out and each is labelled clearly. The two connectors at one end of the

Autocom 4066 cable plug into the Mic In and the Audio Out sockets of the Zumo harness. You can't get this wrong - one is smaller than the other.



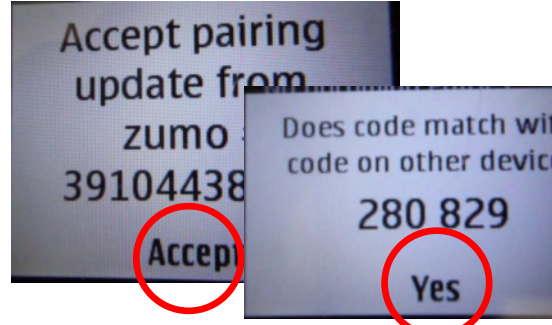
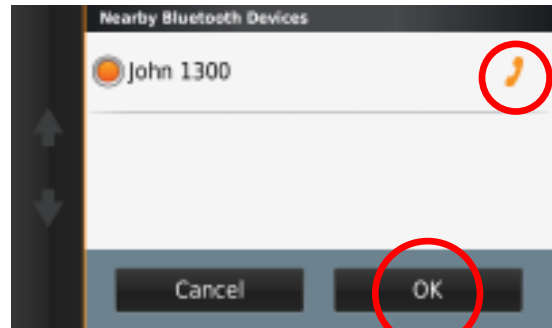
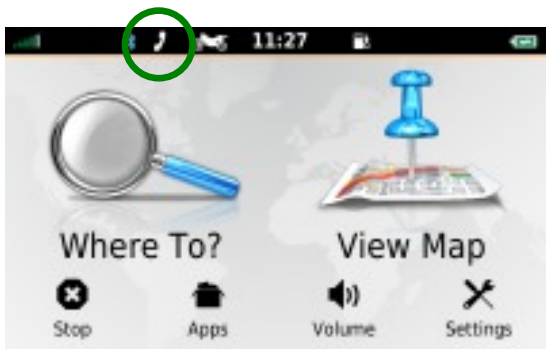
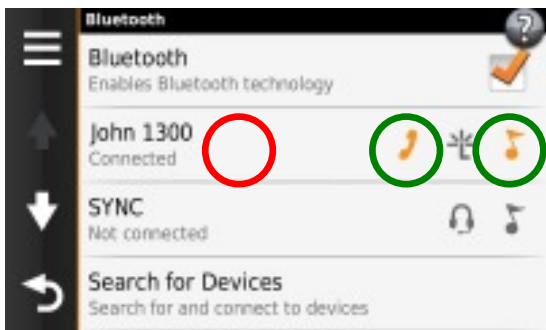
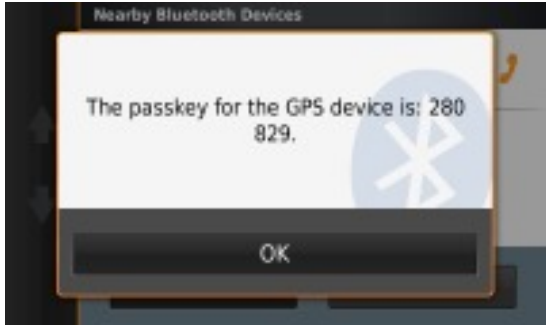
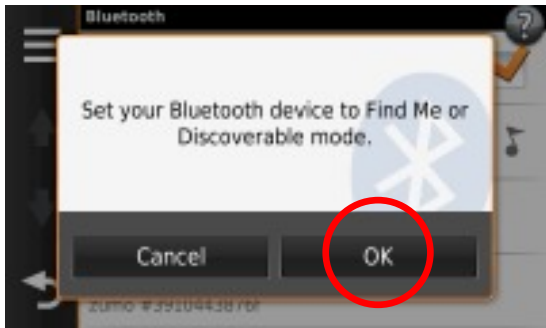
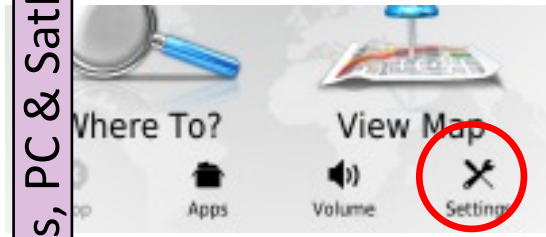
This effectively connects all of your audio out (satnav instructions, MP3 music files and output from the phone) to the Autocom - the 4-pole connector at the other end of the 4066 lead plugs into Aux-2 of my Super Pro Avi - the one designed for phone connections. The 4066 replaces any existing lead that you may have from the satnav.

I give the satnav navigation and music output a quick test with my helmet on, and all output so far is coming through into my helmet, crystal clear. I have to say that the MP3 player on the Zumo 590 is much cleaner than it was on the 660. I hadn't noticed anything wrong with the 660, but when I got the 590 - well it was like switching from cassette tape to CDs. So much crsiper.

Ok - so now to get the phone working. This is going to be paired with the Zumo 590 by Bluetooth. The 590 does not have an inbuilt mike or speakers like the 660. The car cradles has speakers, (and I guess a mic), but the bike cradle has neither. Because of this, some of the next part of the setup will not work unless the satnav is plugged into the cradle and it has power, because the satnav recognises that there is no mike available and turns all of the phone options off. This could be awkward if you have to have your ignition on to provide power, as the headlights will flatten the battery within about 10 minutes. I like to have my small accessories powered up with the ignition key turned to accessories because of this.


The following sequence of pictures describe the process of pairing the 590 with a Bluetooth phone and it gives a bit more insight to the options available on the satnav. Note part way through the sequence that there is the option for the phone volume to be controlled independently of the navigation and music volume.

Pairing a Zumo 590 with a Phone



Select options as appropriate
Phone Calls and Smartphone Link are only available if Zumo is in a powered cradle.

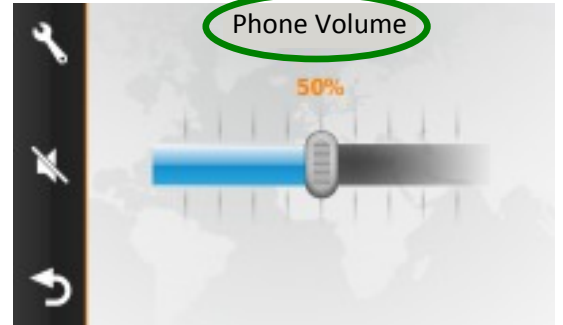
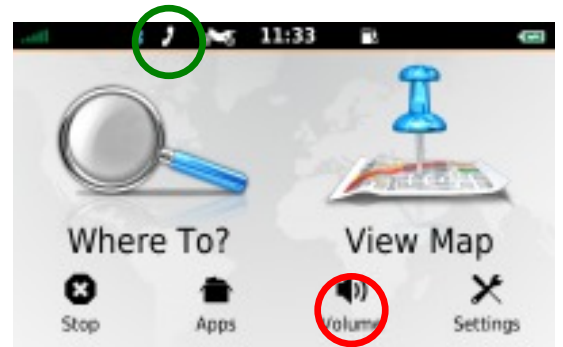
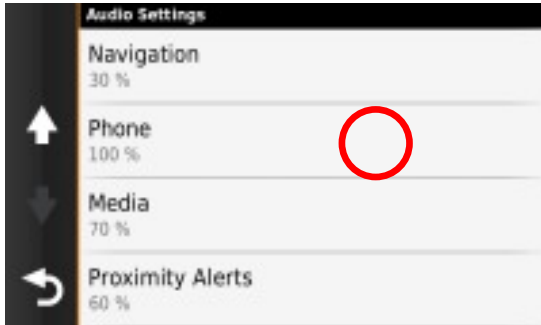
Key:

 Option to Click

 Information to Note

Setting the Phone Volume

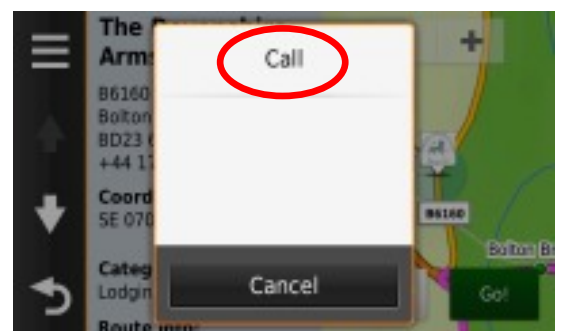
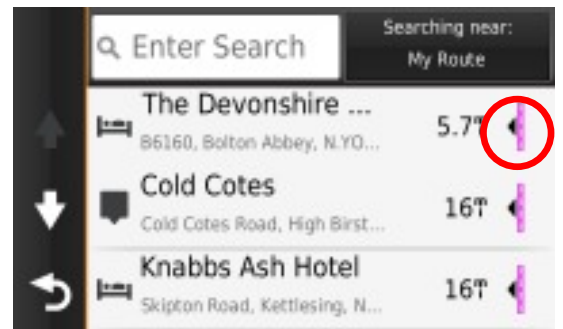
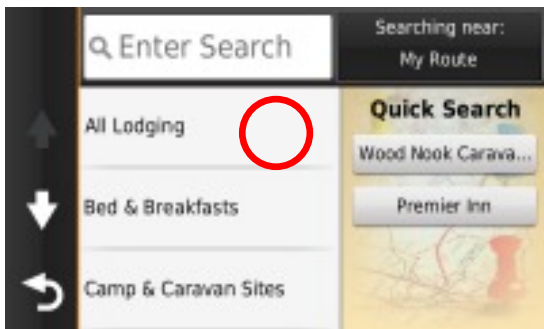
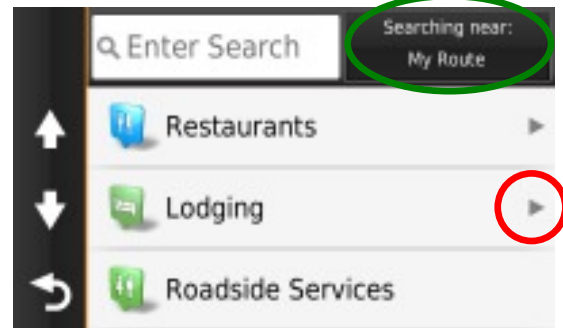
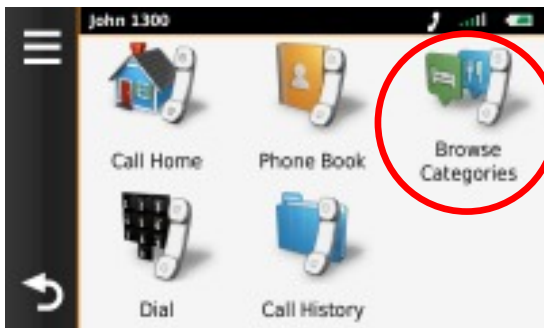
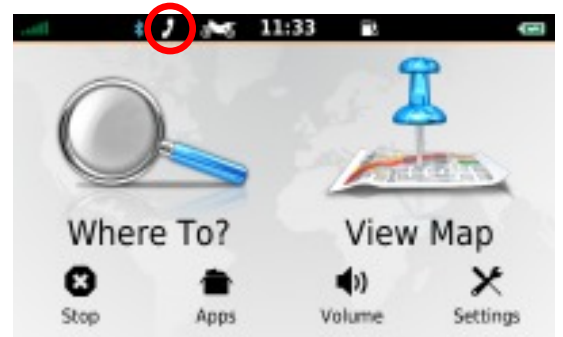
As well as having a Master Volume, the Zumo 590 can control 4 other setting independently. I found the phone volume to be plenty loud enough, both for talking and listening.



Other Features

Full access to the phonebook and call history is possible, as well as some phone related features which are relevant to the route currently being followed.

Eg - here I searching for lodgings near to my current route. Options are listed in order of distance from my current location and a call can be placed directly.



Various ST1300 Saddles

Snapped at Foxton Locks

Clockwise from right:

Dave & Cath, John & Lynne, Alex & Ann, Richard & Anne, Nigel & Jessica, Dick & Ruth, Alan & Netty

Such a variety - talk to the owners if you want to find out more. The only ones I know are 1 and 2. 1 seems to be a standard seat with a non slip cover for the pillion; 2 is a Corbin Dual Canyon Sport heated seat.



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PanTalk is an occasional magazine produced by and for members of Northern Pan Riders - a motorcycle touring club for owners of touring motorcycles.

Suggestions for articles are most gratefully received, and we are always looking for tour reports; your favourite roads; technical articles; simple modifications to your bike; your own brief riding history.

Photos help make articles more interesting about 1280 pixels wide works best for me. I can produce a map of routes taken using gdb (Mapsource / Basecamp) or gpx (log from satnav) format.

Please contact pantalk@nprclub.co.uk with suggestions or articles

Many thanks to:

Alex and Ann for the brilliant report on their ride in the Balkans

Andy & Tracy, Richard & Anne, John & Lynne and Alan & Nettie for the club rides - leading and back marking.

Dick for photos from Foxtan Locks.

John for the ride reports and the various Show & Tell and SatNav articles.

Further Information about the club, can be obtained on our website:

www.northernpanriders.co.uk

www.nprclub.co.uk

Previous copies of PanTalk can also be found on the above site.

Also, random notices and comments on Facebook:

[Northern Pan Riders Pan European](#)

