

## South-west trip September 2013: Proper job!

By twoshedspete Sept 2013

### Saturday 7 September

Up at Dunkery Beacon Ba proudly showed us visitors the extent of his Somerset kingdom – Exmoor, the Brendon Hills, the Quantocks, the remarkable Somerset levels and the distant Mendips. Ba's visitors comprised the Vanamondes, Plantbossman, Shaz1, Dramaqueen, myself and Ba's friends Bernard and Diana on their sparkling



Bernard and Diana

BMW 800GT which seemed to make light work of the bends and hills. But there was so much more from the highest point in Somerset: a magnificent view of the Bristol Channel towards the Severn Bridges with the two small islands of Flat Holm (Welsh) and Steep Holm (English) slap in the middle of the Severn and a wonderful view of South Glamorgan with Llantwit Major and Barry (yet another one...). A truly magnificent spot with the views helped



by what seemed to be a mostly sunny day. We were impressed that the short drive from Taunton already had showed promise as a good biker's road.

Porlock entertained with its infamous hill with two seriously steep hairpins. We then followed the coast (and a criminally slow motorhome) into Devon and down to Lynton along an unusually high coastal road for UK with stunning views towards the Gower coast in South Wales. As a kid I must have looked across to the mighty hills of Exmoor thousands of time from the Gower beaches so it was good to see the view back.

The Atlantic Highway continued to offer wonderful views as we entered Cornwall and its dramatic beaches. Boscastle was a gem with its village nestled in a steep valley and a convenient bridge gave us the opportunity to unfurl the Ulysses flag for the group photo. We tried to find a parking place in Tintagel but it was too busy.

The oddly named "Scrumptious" B&B in Bodmin involved a steep drive leading off an even steeper road. Are there no flat parking places in the southwest? The day was finished off with an Indian meal in Bodmin. Thanks to Ba for taking us on such excellent roads and for organising such a good deal in the Holiday Inn Express at Taunton.



## Sunday 8 September

Bodmin locals Plantbossman and Shaz1 took over as guides today and whizzed us off to “Padstein” where we took advantage of the first example of Plantbossman’s local fixing to get all the bikes onto the end of the harbour with yet more stunning views.



More fixing took place at Perranporth where we managed to get into roads closed by a triathlon to park outside a tea shop. Then we carried on

down the Atlantic Highway with startling sea views over a very rugged coastline pointing out towards America. We

decided to forgo the commercial delights of Land’s End and instead we were taken to the Mimack Theatre, a small amphitheatre built into the cliffs overlooking what must be one of the best beach views in UK at Porthcurno – a surprise to many of us who hadn’t heard of it before.



More local chats with the car park guy at Mousehole took us again to the tip of the harbour wall for a tea stop in yet another stunning Cornish fishing village.

More car park buttering up from Plantbossman and we stopped at St Michael’s Mount for photos before heading back to negotiate the slopes of

Bodmin.

In the evening we were fortunate to be joined in the pub by Keith and Ellen who are on an on-going project to drive their Transalp two-up from New Zealand to England the “Right Way Round” via Australia and then through Asia. Have a look at their site [www.rightwayround.net](http://www.rightwayround.net) for an excellent blog with some fascinating photos. They do two stages a year and are shortly back to Indo-China for their next adventure.



## Monday 9 - Tuesday 10 September

Dramaqueen and I parted company with the rest of the group at Gunnislake where we stayed with friends for a night, again involving a steep drive off a steep hill.



On Tuesday we set off across the mighty Dartmoor which seems to have its own climate as well as fearless wandering sheep. The austere walls of Dartmoor prison reminded us not to be *too* disgraceful as we grow old. Again the roads were wonderful for biking – plenty of bends and hills. Most of the country's gravel seems to have ended up in Cornwall, usually where the tight bends are. At the delightful small town of Moretonhampstead we met Keith and his father Bobby at a tea stop, Keith on his Tiger and Dad on his large scooter. A Ulysses GB promotional leaflet was duly

handed out.

After Exeter we took the motorway to Gloucester where we stayed at the Edward Hotel, an eccentric small hotel which was excellent value for money and close to the centre. It will go in the forum as a recommended stopover. A walk to the historic docks finished off a wonderful trip to the southwest ably led by our tours guides Ba, Plantbossman and Shaz1.

