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# PRONTO

The magazine of the **Ducati Sporting Club UK**



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IN A DAY**

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# 1,000 MILES IN A DAY

ESSEX Club member Andy Hind was offered the chance to join Chairman Antony on the World Presidents Meeting Tour, ending up at WDW. One thing was stopping him: having a Ducati that was up to the 1,000 miles ride there and back again!



I'm buying a bike for the sole purposes of going to WDW, it seems extravagant beyond reason but I'm excited about getting there and seeing what its all about. Antony has helpfully located a low mileage ST4s with all the goodies within my budget (well my old budget plus the extra bit he's persuaded me its worth spending to get it). The ST4s isn't the style of bike I would normally choose but all the Multistradas I've drooled over for the last 2 weeks are way beyond my means or selling under my nose at the last minute and my options with less than 2 weeks to go have run out. I head to Leeds from Essex the same day that the Tour de France visits Leeds on its way to Essex, like my impeccable organisation so far this strikes me as a monumental mistake on my part as I get off the train in Leeds, the only man dressed in red in sea of yellow and looking for a man who has come to sell me his bike.

Stewart arrives shortly afterwards on his gleaming Kawasaki and scares the crap out of me on the way to see his old Ducati, I hate being a pillion at the best of times and instantly regret telling him that as we pull away from

Leeds station and my feet leave the pegs for the second time in a minute. I'm also grateful I carted up my gear in a bag that, now that its empty, resembles a parachute on my back. 15 tense minutes later we arrive at his house and I'm able to unclasp my fingers from the grab rail.

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***I've forgotten to bring ear plugs so am forced to listen to the Termis growl as I pootle round on what is essentially still someone else's bike***

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Immediately on arriving I see "the bus" in all her glory, she looks pretty but I'm still not turned on by her - Sports Tourers are for old men aren't they? A short test ride later and I'm being turned, I've forgotten to bring ear plugs so am forced to listen to the Termis growl as I pootle round on what is essentially still someone else's bike, she feels heavy, very heavy and the modified radial brakes are so

good I'm nearly caught out by how sharp they are. I don't really need the test drive as I've run out of time and I know this is the bike I'm going to Italy on but Stewart insists and then insists on filling her up for me as well as part of the deal.

Paperwork done and money exchanged and I'm on my way down south.... via Bristol (long story).... to Essex, the bike performs fantastically, has awesome power and is so easy to ride on the motorways. 379 miles later I'm home and aside from sore shoulders caused by being 6'2" and riding a bike with a standard screen I feel comfortable enough to do it all over again, which is handy really because in 4 days time I'll have to.... and more.... except its after midnight so that means in 3 days time....

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***Having said farewell to the long suffering Kirsty who on the face of it puts up with too many of my crazy adventures I head off to Folkestone ready for the 01:20 departure***

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2 days till departure and Ebay yields a "Zero Gravity" sports touring screen, after a quick chat with the shop selling it confirms it will arrive in time for my departure I pay for the

24 hour courier service, deal done and its off to the post office to pick up the parcel containing my sat nav mount so that Antony can wire it in for me!

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***Departing Munich in rush hour on a bike that I've basically only ridden on motorways since I bought it 4 days ago and that feels as wide as a bus is interesting***

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24 hours later and the screen is on, it looks wonky as soon as i test ride the bike and whilst the buffeting around my head has decreased i can still feel the wind on my shoulders, otherwise I'm packed and I'm ready to go. I head to my Girlfriends for dinner via Antonys for his opinion on the wonky screen and the ice cream tub ailerons I've fabricated to gaffa tape each side of the screen in the hope they'll give my shoulders a break, in typical Ant style I leave 30 minutes later with a pair of winglets on the fairing that are made from offcuts of plasticard he had laying around which he's now cut and moulded to the existing fairing bolt holes - pretty they aren't but they look sturdier than my ice cream tub! >



Caption...

Having said farewell to the long suffering Kirsty who on the face of it puts up with too many of my crazy adventures I head off to Folkestone ready for the 01:20 departure the sound of the Termignonis resonating through her housing estate. I arrive with time to spare and I'm waved on to the earlier train, I'm in France by 01:00 with Vienna plumbed into the satnav as my destination. It rains non stop throughout France, Belgium and Germany, the bike is immense and whilst I welcome each fuel stop and the opportunity to get out of the rain for a coffee it isn't because I'm uncomfortable its solely because of the miserable riding conditions. just north of Nuremberg I decide I've had enough and need some sleep, Vienna is a stretch too far so I head for Munich and the promise of a city hotel.

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***Looking at how far I've come I'm seduced by the prospect of ticking Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia off my "list of countries I've biked to"***

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737 miles after setting off I reach my revised destination, its the early afternoon and the restaurant isn't open so I sit in my "executive suite" and study my European map for inspiration, tomorrow only requires me to cover 260 miles to Vienna ready for the start of the WPM tour, or does it... Looking at how far I've come I'm seduced by the prospect of ticking Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia off my "list of countries I've biked to" and 10 minutes after I've noted the possibility I've decided that is where I'm headed, if I make it to Bratislava I'll be less than an hour from Vienna and my appointment with the DOC Presidents. Realising that this decision requires me to cover 600 odd miles I have an early dinner and head for bed.

Departing Munich in rush hour on a bike that I've basically only ridden on motorways since I bought it 4 days ago and that feels as wide as a bus is interesting, its still raining and despite the pinlock insert visibility isn't great as I juggle

between looking at where I'm going and looking at satnav to decide where I should be going. I enter Austria and head straight down for the Slovenian border, as I fill up with fuel it dawns on me I have no idea what currency any of the 4 countries I'm about to visit use.

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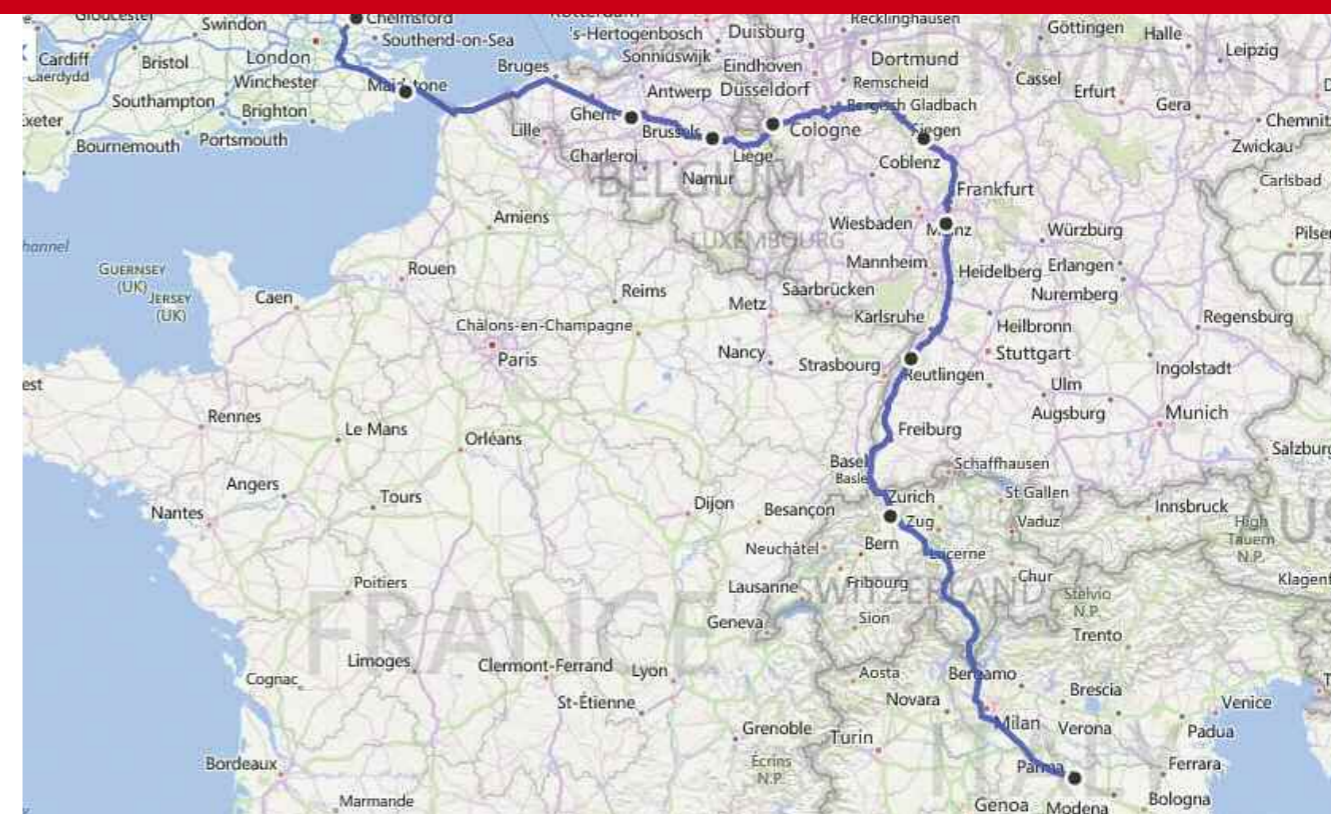
***I'm on some of the best biking roads I've ever ridden and to make it even better have gained to company of a GSXR750 to show me the way!***

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Departing Austria by one of the longest tunnels I've ever been in I'm delighted firstly to see the sun for the first time in 2 days and secondly to see that the fuel prices in the first Slovenian petrol station I come across are quoted in Euros, I'm less excited to find out they too have a vignette system of road tax and a Slovenian policeman in the queue behind me so buy one when I'm asked if I need it. Its taken far longer to get here than I anticipated so using my paper map I devise a route that will allow me to just nick the corner of Croatia on my way to Hungary whilst I eat my Slovenian sausage and chips. After eating I promptly forget to tell satnav to forget everything I told it in Munich and head for Ljubljana.

I realise my mistake just before entering the capital and head left on the first main road I come across towards the mountains I know are near the border, the main road quickly becomes a B road and I'm on some of the best biking roads I've ever ridden and to make it even better have gained to company of a GSXR750 to show me the way! Before too long the gixer rider gets bored with the tourist in his mirrors and disappears.

I'm on my own again as I pull up to a border crossing I wasn't expecting to see so soon and have to ask which country I'm about to enter. The border guards like the Ducati and use hand signals to ask for a demonstration of what it sounds like when revved - the "chief" border guard



who is holding my passport is not impressed so I tuck it back in my pocket and head off as quietly as possibly, just round the corner and out of sight from my previous location is the Croatian border post I thought I'd just been at, it seems the Slovenians check you out before the Croations let you in!

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***I started to think about the magic 1000 miles in 24 hours required to be certified by the IBA (Iron Butt Association)***

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The roads out of Croatia were good, immediately I hit Hungary everything felt more "Eastern Block" with big potholes and an interesting resurfacing strategy. Generally there seem to be 3 types of roads in Hungary, roads with potholes, roads with deep furrows caused by HGV traffic or the latter with the ridges graded off so you have 2 parallel lines of asphalt separated by a rough subsurface. Neither I nor the ST4 liked any of them so I headed back to the Austrian border after an hour or so in search of some decent tarmac!

From Austria I made good ground and arrived in Bratislava at about 19:00 with 531 miles more on the clocks and only 50 miles from where I needed to be by 13:00 the next day.

Having covered over 1200 miles in 2 days I started to think about the magic 1000 miles in 24 hours required to be certified by the IBA (Iron Butt Association) and whether I was physically able to cover that distance and on the ST4, I needed to be back home from Italy in the morning

of Saturday 19th July for personal reasons , the day after WDW started, and it had been in my mind before I left that if I still felt good at the end of the week long WPM tour I could at least make the first half day of WDW and still make it home in time to be a good dad and take my daughter on holiday (bear in mind I actually missed her birthday to go to Italy in the first place!)

I know Antony has covered the WPM tour that precedes WDW, suffice to say it was a great experience and I'm glad I was available to take up the offer of being his room mate for the week. It was great to meet representatives from the other official Ducati Owners Clubs and seeing how keen Ducati themselves are to support the DOC structure was an eye opener!

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***The Italian and German motorways were easiest purely due to the fact that nobody obeyed any speed limits, passing through Switzerland on the other hand was taxing...***

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As the President of the South African DOC was also an Iron Butt official for South Africa he agreed to verify my odometer reading and sign the required paperwork and so at the Misano circuit I was waved off at about 13:00 Italian time by a South African and Englishman and Nick and Nigel from the DOC Nelson in New Zealand. Part of the Iron Butt rules state that whilst you have to validate your odometer reading your official start time and starting location is taken from the receipt you provide with your first fuel stop so on leaving the circuit I actually headed south to put a bit more distance between myself and home! ➡



Captions...



The rules also state that if you choose a route that is not the most direct available then you must obtain a timed fuel receipt from each "corner" of your route to prove you'd been there.

As you can imagine a ride of this type doesn't allow for many twisty B roads and the biggest single obstacle I found was boredom, the Italian and German motorways were easiest purely due to the fact that nobody obeyed any speed limits, passing through Switzerland on the other hand was taxing because of the lengthy tunnels and every drivers desire to go exactly at the stated speed for the road. Stretching on the ST whilst on the move was relatively easy and my only physical issue was my right lower arm felt numb towards the end of the trip simply because I didn't have time to let go of the throttle to stretch it out.

Other than a minor panic that I wasn't going to clock enough miles whilst I was in the middle of Germany which resulted me heading east on a road I hadn't originally planned on using just so I could see my distance to destination INCREASE on the satnav, and stopping for petrol for a receipt before heading back, the journey was uneventful. I won't lie and say I didn't feel tired at any point because I did, there were a couple of times where I thought I might have to call it a day as coffee simply wasn't doing its job any more but on both occasions a slightly longer stop and a walk around the efficient German rest stops soon had me ready to go again.

My final European fuel stop in Belgium to the French tunnel entrance was the longest drag by far and despite best efforts I know I set off a camera in the closing miles in my eagerness to get to the train, I'm hoping nothing will

come of it, the internet suggests it won't. Having waited 20 minutes to board my train I found myself in a compartment with a Swiss couple and their two dogs, seeing the dogs settle down for a nap in the back of their estate car was too much for me and I decided I'd have a lay down too, I woke up as the train arrived in Folkestone and am probably one of few people ever to sleep on the floor of Le Shuttle!

**Overall I've covered just over 4000 miles in the 14 days since buying the bike and it didn't let me down once**

True to form it was raining as I hit English soil and for the first time since I left Italy I was acutely aware of how squared off my tyres had become, the ride home wasn't comfortable simply because it was wet and miserable, physically I felt surprisingly fresh after my snooze on the train floor. In the end I arrived at my local petrol station and filled up to signify the end of my ride, I'd covered 1132 miles in 18 hours and 21 minutes with 11 fuel stops in total including my first in Cattolica, Italy and my last in Chelmsford, England.

Overall I've covered just over 4000 miles in the 14 days since buying the bike and it didn't let me down once, other than requiring a 500ml oil top up in Italy before the return journey all she needed was fuel and now she's up for sale, after a brief holiday romance I've returned home and she just doesn't do it for me any more, I'm sure we could have more adventures but by this time next year she'll be another year older and I'll still be lusting after that younger Multistrada with the nice cans!

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