

Dave and Jan's trip to Harley Days Hamburg June 2016

The weather forecast wasn't good, but we made it to Harwich for the overnight ferry before the rain appeared. A good start, as I hate riding in the rain. Met some guys from the Essex Chapter on the ferry, who were a great laugh and mine of information about Hamburg Harley Days, as they had been 10 times!

The ride from Hook of Holland to Hamburg was easy on great roads, although we did stick to the motorways to get the miles done.

We had pre-booked the Holiday Inn and good job too as it was packed with Harley riders. They have an underground "car" park where you must get a ticket from reception to access, but it's dry and secure.

A word of warning, if you are taking your bike out of the car park, do it singly. My mate was next to me on his Heritage, I put the ticket in the machine and it spat it out, which I thought was because I had put it in the wrong way, only to hear him ride off up the ramp. So, I pulled in the clutch clicked it in gear and as I pulled away the barrier came down on my head and I came off the bike. Apparently, the barrier senses when a vehicle has gone past and is not on a timer!

The great thing about the Holiday Inn is it is within walking distance of the venue for the event, which is the Grobmarket. Just down the road is also a great restaurant/sports bar where all the locals eat and we had this huge Schnitzel for 7 Euros!

The pedestrian entrance to the Harley village is the first one from the hotel, signed Grobmarket, while the second entrance further up the Amsinckstrasse is the bike entrance. You can ride right through the Harley village and there is plenty of parking near the entrance and towards the exit.

The Saturday was very wet so we walked to the venue, and spent the day looking round at the massive array of Harley's, vendor village, food and music. We took a taxi (10 euro) down to the Reeperbann- just to see what it's about and there were more vendors there too, and continual Harleys parading up and down in between the showers, so we sat in a cafe people watching.

Next day was parade day, and this starts from the Grobmarket, with the joining point from the second entrance. This took a while to get going as there were thousands of Harleys taking part. You ride through the village then out onto the open road with marshals directing you, which is good as the first part was a quick pace until we started to bunch up. Going over this massive bridge you are met by the sight of the rest of the parade in the other lane, waiting for everyone to catch up and you do a u turn once over and join back up with the waiting Harleys. Once under way they take you through different areas of Hamburg, but it's when you get down town you can't believe the amount of people who have turned up to watch. The parade ends back at the Harley village, in time for more music, drink and food, and a last look for bargains!

We left on the Monday to ride back and encountered rain after 150 miles, which was on and off for the next 150 miles to The Hague. We stayed at a great hotel right on the beach, 'The Hotel NH Den Haag Atlantic', and just along the prom were some great restaurants.

I don't know if we would ever have found it without a satnav; either that or the satnav was leading us all over the place.

We parked in the hotel car park but could have left the Harleys out front as that was what some scooter riders did. We didn't pay for the car park as there's enough room to ride round the barrier anyway.

Tuesday was a nice easy ride back to the ferry port at the Hook, then back to England and a ride home in pouring rain.

Dave and Jan Smith