



The BMW Club
United Kingdom & Ireland



The BMW Club Southern Section

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MEGATOUR de France 2026 – A Belgian Adventure

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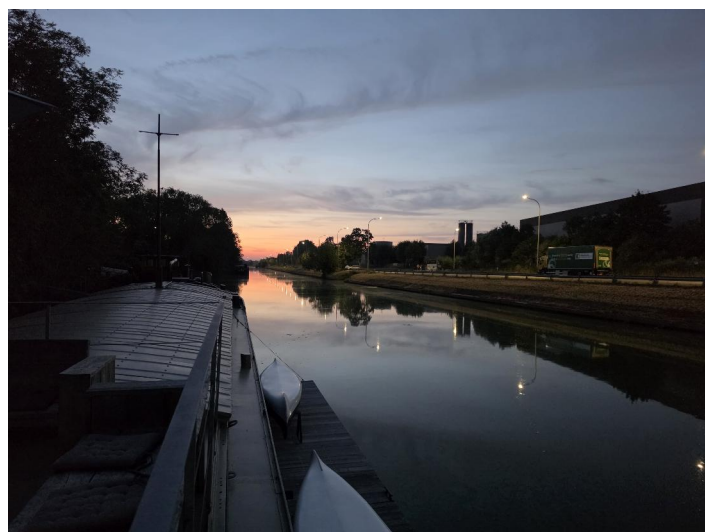
Date: 23rd July 2026

Every now and again an invitation comes along that's simply too good to turn down, and this was certainly one of those occasions!

Four members of the Southern Section were delighted to be invited by our good Belgian friends **Lene and Mario** to take part in the **MEGATOUR de France 2026**, organised by the **MTC Vrijbos Motorcycle Club**. We didn't need asking twice!

Day One – Crossing the Channel

On **23rd July**, we set off for Belgium, travelling on **Le Shuttle** from Folkestone to Calais before making our way to the beautiful city of **Ypres**.



Our accommodation for the weekend was something a little different—a beautifully restored barge called **Bed in Boat**. Moored just a short stroll from Ypres' stunning central square, it proved to be the perfect place to relax after a day's travelling and was an ideal base for exploring the city.



No visit to Ypres would be complete without visiting the magnificent **Menin Gate**. Officially known as the **Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing**, it commemorates the British and Commonwealth soldiers who lost their lives in the Ypres Salient during the First World War and whose graves are unknown.

Every evening at **8:00pm**, the **Last Post Ceremony** is held beneath the Gate—a tradition that has continued for decades. It is an incredibly moving experience and one we would highly recommend to anyone visiting the area.

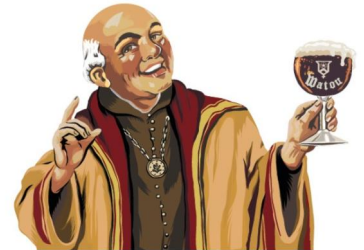
Day Two – A More Relaxed Pace

With the Megatour not starting until Saturday, Friday gave us the perfect opportunity to swap two wheels for four and enjoy a little sightseeing.

Our destination was the [St. Bernardus Brewery](#) in **Watou**, where, after learning a little about the brewing process... it would have been rude not to sample some of the local produce!

Sitting on the brewery's beautiful sun terrace overlooking the hop fields, enjoying a cold Belgian beer in glorious sunshine, was a pretty good way to spend the afternoon.

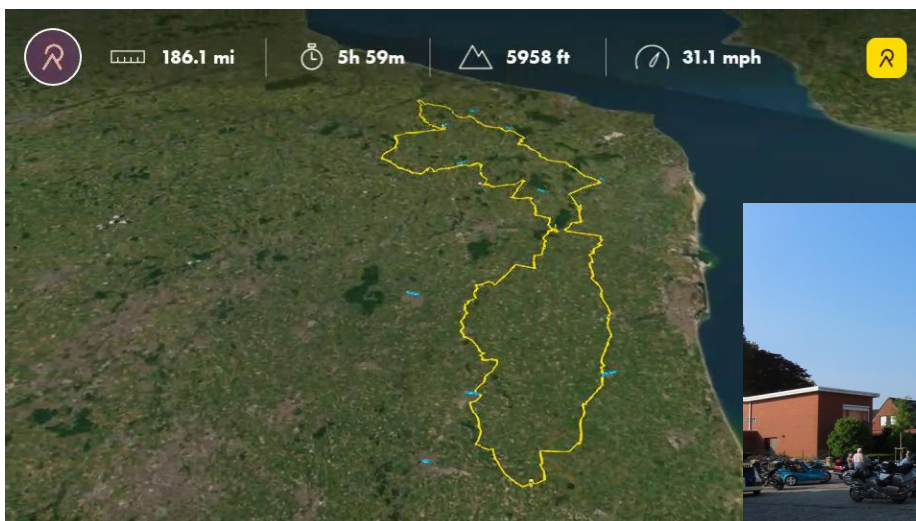
St. Bernardus[®]
WATOU



Day Three – The Main Event

Saturday finally arrived, along with wall-to-wall sunshine and hardly a cloud in the sky. It was perfect motorcycling weather... although by the afternoon the temperature had climbed high enough to remind us that plenty of cold drinks would definitely be required!

The **MEGATOUR de France** starts and finishes in **Merkem, Belgium**, following a circular route through northern France before returning to Belgium. Along the way, riders collect stamps at three official checkpoints to prove they have completed the route.



The roads were simply superb. Mile after mile of smooth, flowing tarmac, beautiful countryside and hardly a pothole in sight—quite a contrast to some of the roads back home!



Our first stop was at Muncq-Nieurlet, where we enjoyed a well-earned drink, stretched our legs and chatted with fellow riders before continuing our journey.



More fantastic roads led us to our second checkpoint at Hucqueliers, where we unpacked our lunches and enjoyed a leisurely picnic in the town square beneath the watchful eye of a rather impressive town hall.



By the time we reached our third stop at Watten, everyone was beginning to feel the effects of the summer heat, so a refreshing cold Coke was exactly what was needed before setting off on the final leg back to Merkem.

With all three stamps safely collected, we completed the route and returned to Merkem to hand in our completed cards and catch up with friends before the journey home.



Over the weekend, **nearly 800 riders** took part in the event across Saturday and Sunday, making it a truly impressive gathering of motorcyclists.

Our little group was made up of **Mike and Lesley** on their ever-reliable **BMW R1250 GS Rallye**, **Chris and Alison** aboard the equally capable **BMW R1250 GS Ultimate Edition**, while our hosts **Mario** rode his **BMW R1300 GS** and **Lene** her **BMW R1250 R**.

The Megatour itself covered approximately **186 miles**, and by the time we'd finished we'd certainly earned our evening meal. We wandered back into Ypres for a superb steak dinner, accompanied by a well-deserved Belgian beer (or two!) while reflecting on another wonderful day on the bikes.

A special thank you must go to **Mike and Lesley**, who once again did a fantastic job of leading us throughout the trip, making sure we always headed in the right direction and arrived exactly where we were supposed to be.

Day Four – Homeward Bound

All too soon it was time to say our goodbyes.

After one final breakfast and a farewell to Lene and Mario, we made our way back to Calais for the return crossing on **LeShuttle**, arriving home with wonderful memories of another fantastic adventure.

Our sincere thanks go to **Lene and Mario** for their warm hospitality and friendship, and to everyone at **MTC Vrijbos** for making us feel so welcome and allowing us to take part in this brilliant event.

It was a wonderful few days of great riding, beautiful scenery, excellent company and plenty of laughter. We can't wait to do it all again next year!

Until then... **tot volgend jaar!** (See you next year!)

