

THE TRECKER



Issue No 100

Date: December 2023

Editor's Corner

Yes, you read it right, this is the 100th issue of *The Trecker*. It would have been nice to have made it a bumper version, but the timing works against us, as there's not enough going on at this time of the year. I would also have liked to have gone into a bit of detail about its history, but my efforts to find out more have largely drawn a blank. All I have been told is that the early issues were just a couple of sheets of A4 giving rally and other updates, sent out by post as it was a long time before the arrival of email.

A subject that comes up time and again in *The Trecker* is the difficulty in finding rally officers and the number of rallies we have to cancel because of a lack of them. I understand the reticence of members who've never done it before. We had been members for several years before we put our names forward – to run a small, low-key winter rally at a site close to where we live – not exactly jumping in at the deep end.

We're far from prolific rally officers and still have a tendency to go for the easy ones such as at a club site where there are always good indoor facilities and social activities are frequently organised by the host club rather than ourselves. All that changed this month when we took on the pre-Christmas rally at Greenhill Park (you can read about it later in this issue).

There is a bit more involved in running this one. It tends to be popular and as it aims to celebrate an early Christmas there's quite a lot to organise. In addition, Terry and Lesley had stepped down from running it last year and as many of you will know, they're a hard act to follow.

So, what are our thoughts now it's all over? Yes, it was quite a lot of work, both in advance and during the rally. And yes, we were a bit anxious beforehand. But everyone chipped in, the time flew by and we had a cracking good time. We both found it rewarding – something I've heard many times from others who've stepped up to the plate. So what's stopping you? Give it a go, you won't regret it!

I'll sign off now by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on a rally somewhere in 2024.

Geoff Heyes
Editor

Chairperson's Chat

Following Alan Ingram's resignation from the committee and his position of Chairman, a plea to the membership was made for someone to step up and take over until the AGM. We had a couple of offers of help from previous committee members to do that and I'd like to thank them for that. However, as I already held the position of Vice Chairperson, it was agreed that I should take over the Chairpersons job until the AGM in the summer.

I shall try to carry on with the help of my fellow committee members, who will no doubt prompt me when needed. This together with my Treasurer's duties, I shall no doubt be kept busy.

Sylvia Caldicott
Chairperson & Treasurer

Rally Organiser's Report

I'm now into my second year of rally bookings with quite a few lessons learnt from last year. Rallies have been booked for both the UK and Europe, which you will all be aware of through the rally officer request list.

I've been busy sending out lots of emails to the potential rally sites in the UK with some excellent responses welcoming us back for next year, but we still need a few more rally officers to make the programme complete.

The early summer continental rallies also still require a couple more rally officers. If you want to go on them then please don't leave it to someone else to do it otherwise they will get cancelled and you will miss out.

Another late summer rally tour has been organised through Alan Rogers Travel, requiring at least 10 units. Currently only 4 have booked, so if you would like to go, you'll need to act quickly as there is a deadline of December 31st for reservation. You will find more information on the continental rally programme on page 4.

Preparation for the gala rally is also underway and we expect to have news on this early in the New Year. I know next year's rally season still seems a long way off, but they all have to be organised well in advance and your early commitment is essential to ensure a successful programme.

Martin Hodgson
National Rally Organiser.

UK Rally Report

Rally 70 – Greenhill Park

We've attended most of the pre-Christmas rallies at Greenhill Park since they started around ten years ago, but this was a very new experience for us, having been "persuaded" to take over as rally officers after Terry and Lesley told us they would be stepping down at last year's event. Not surprisingly we were a bit anxious at first, wondering how we would ever be able to get anywhere near to the high standards that had been set. However once the ralliers began to arrive and chip in to help us, our fears evaporated and we began to enjoy it all.

Weather conditions were rather challenging – persistent rain for much of the autumn had left the field quite wet and by the time we arrived on the Thursday afternoon it was starting to freeze. Although the grass seemed quite solid, we opted to park on the roadway. A good decision as it turned out.

By mid afternoon on "Christmas Eve" several units had arrived and we had power and central heating in the Chicken Shed, allowing us to start setting up for the evening and trying to make the place look festive. Our first get-together of the weekend followed the usual pattern, with warm winter punch to start things off and an innovation this year when we attempted to sing a few carols.

It was bitterly cold overnight, so hot drinks were very welcome at our first coffee morning, served with some small mince pies – a bit too small for some (the rally officers have taken



Turkey in the Chicken Shed?

note)! It's amazing how the time flies when it's cosy and warm inside and you're chatting to friends and before long it was time for the chefs to return to their vans and start preparing Christmas lunch, eaten together as usual and all very sociable.

Festive food (and drinks) had rendered several of the ralliers rather boisterous and our attempt to organise the first evening game (the A to Z of Christmas) proved rather challenging. I think we managed it in the end, but not before a couple of people had been given a severe talking to by Eileen! The second game, where we asked both teams to write down the words of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" song proceeded in a slightly more orderly fashion, but we decided against asking them to sing it.

By Sunday morning (Boxing Day) the weather had warmed up considerably and it had started to rain. It wasn't long before the grass became very wet and muddy in places making journeys between our vans and the Chicken Shed a bit tricky. There had been some talk of a game of boules, but the weather had put paid to it. Instead, we played indoor Mollky, boys against girls, which the boys eventually won.



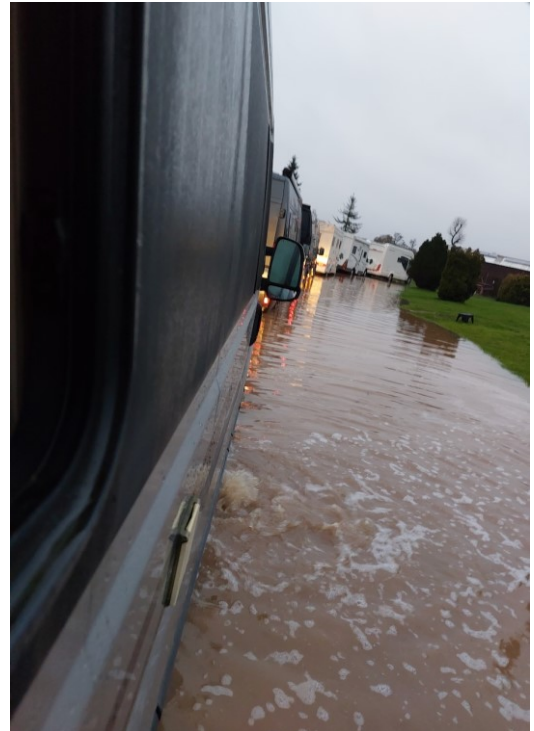
Santa arrives to give out the presents.

We also had a surprise visit from Santa, to give out the Secret Santa presents – we're not sure whether he was delayed by bad weather on route, or it was always the intention to offer presents on Boxing Day as per an old tradition.

Greenhill Park always undergoes a couple of time shifts during the first Sunday of December and by late afternoon Boxing Day had morphed into New Year's Eve. As everyone was due to leave the following morning the mood was a bit less riotous than on the previous evening and it proved a bit easier to get things organised. Mike got the evening's entertainment started with a short quiz and we then had a game of 'Reindeer'. We'd never heard of it before either, but it's essentially the same as a beetle drive, where you draw a reindeer instead of a beetle. Mike then took over again with a couple of card games, one similar to bingo and finishing with a "play your cards right". The second time shift occurred at 10pm, when we heard Big Ben strike 12, prompting New Year wishes, and a rendering of *Auld Lang Syne* to bring the evening, and the rally, to a close.



Freezing weather at the start of the rally...



Much warmer and very wet at the end!

However, the weather had one last trick to play on us. There was no let-up in the rain but because we were all parked on the roadway, we didn't give it a second thought. Until soon after first light on Monday, that is, when the site owner Andy hammered on our door to inform us we needed to move – quickly. The bottom half of the field was starting to flood and the



Needing to move quickly in the early morning twilight!

water level was already up to the wheels of the vans at the back of the line. It's surprising how quickly you can remove windscreen covers and pack things away when you have to and it wasn't long before the first few vans in the line could move to the top of the site. Luckily there were no caravans to hitch up. Things were a bit trickier for those further back in the line though, as the water was now so deep it was impossible to see where the roadway finished and the grass started. There were a few incidents of wheelspin, but Andy came to the rescue by

donning his wellies and standing in front of each motorhome to provide directions. Andy deserves special mention here for his efforts.

Geoff Heyes

Winter Rallies

We have two more rallies planned for this winter; both can be booked online.

Th 25th – Mo 29th January 2024 (4 nights) Telford Naturist Club (Burns Night Rally)
Rally Officer – Terry 07974 558573

Meals available – Friday fish & chips, Saturday bangers & mash with possibly haggis, Sunday lunch roast beef.

Fr 23rd – Mo 25th February 2024 (3 nights) Fortway Farm, Stoney Stanton
Rally Officers – Malcolm & Maureen 07946 575105

The first organised activity will be a chip shop supper and the last will be Sunday Lunch. Anything in-between will depend on the members attending, vehicle types etc.

The current site charges are £14 per unit per night with electricity being metered for those who want it. There are some hard standing pitches which are allocated on, “If there’s one free when you arrive you can have it” basis, but the ground is very firm and help is available should the weather turn nasty.

Any member wishing to attend should contact Malcom & Maureen first (07946 575105) and then will need to book directly with the site. This should be done by the end of January, as site fees are likely to increase after that.

Gala Rally 2024

Some early information about the Gala rally in 2024. The fancy dress theme is ‘Circus’ and the photo competition theme is ‘Wheels’.

Gala rally price has been set at £60 for the whole rally if booked before 31 May 2024, then £70 after that. (EHU extra).

Unfortunately, Janey has had to withdraw from the Gala rally, so we are looking for willing volunteers to run the Gala rally at Candy Farm in July, immediately prior to the AGM.

2024 Continental Rallies

Early summer

Although unable to attend, Monty kindly volunteered to organise three 10-night rallies in France for next year’s early summer programme. Starting near Toulouse in the far southwest and then heading gradually further north should ensure the best chance of favourable weather, fingers crossed! The first site, Devèze was last visited by Suntreckers in 2022 and the other two need no introduction and will be familiar to many of us.

Fr 10th – Mo 20th May Camping Naturiste Devèze, Gaudonville, Gers.

Mo 20th – Th 30th May Le Couderc, Naussannes

Fr 31st May – Su 9th June La Petite Brenne, Luzert

We’ve had a volunteer to run the first one at Devèze, but still require rally officers for the other two. If you need any incentive, a free pitch will be provided for you provided there are at least ten units on the rally.

Late summer

Following the success of last year’s trip to Luxembourg and the Netherlands, we’ve got together with Alan Rogers Travel again and asked them to organise our late summer continental rallies. This time they’ve come up with a longer trip, starting on the east side of France not far from Luzy, moving on to a commercial naturist site near Freiburg in the south-west corner of Germany and finishing at a club site in Bavaria, to the west of Munich. Rally officers are still needed for all three sites and as yet, we don’t have enough bookings for it to be viable.

Please hurry if you are interested as you'll need to book (direct with Alan Rogers) by 31st December. Full details can be found on the Alan Rogers website www.alanrogers.com – you'll need to click on 'Holidays and Services' in the top menu and then select 'Alan Rogers rallies'. Suntreckers can be found under 'Owners Club Rallies'. If you're reading this online you can click on the link [here](#) to go straight to the Suntrecker rallies page.

British Heart Foundation Donation

As reported in the September issue, following our fundraising efforts at the 2023 Gala rally, Suntreckers made a donation in excess of £1000 to the British Heart Foundation, including a sum of £500 from club funds. The British Heart Foundation is BN's chosen charity so as well as giving to a good cause our donation gains us publicity within BN and elsewhere. Below is the content of a letter received from BHF.

Dear Supporter

I'm writing to say thank you so much for the recent gift of £1,109.67 to the British Heart Foundation.

With people like you at our side, we are taking huge steps towards healthier hearts, and keeping people with their loved ones for longer. Put simply, without your generosity we just could not sustain our life-saving work.

I'm proud to say that the money you give helps us to support pioneering research and deliver life-saving care to the people who need it most. Your kindness gives us hope for a future without heart disease - and the confidence that we can be there for those whose lives are affected by it now.

If you'd ever like to change the way we contact you, please call our Customer Care team on 0300 330 3322 or email us at heretohelp@bhf.org.uk. And remember, we're here for you too. So if you have any questions about heart health, or if you need support and advice, just call our Heart Helpline on 0300 330 3311. Both lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Thank you once again for supporting us in the fight for every heartbeat.

Yours sincerely,

Amanda Pullen

Head of Customer Service

Fire Advice

The guidance on firefighting equipment in the 2023 Yearbook on Page 10 is to be amended to align more closely with the current recommendations of the Caravan Club and the Caravan and Motorhome Club, as below:

It is recommended that all units attending a Suntreckers rally be equipped with a fire extinguisher and/or other equipment which is in good working order and everyone in the unit should be aware of how to use it.

On sites or locations where firefighting equipment is not available, it is recommended that a bucket filled with water should be placed outside the unit.

Remember personal safety and that of others around you is paramount and tackling a fire should only be undertaken if safe to do so. Make sure everyone in your group knows what to do if there is a fire and understands the campsite-specific procedures.

Suntreckers Flags

There are currently 3 types of Suntreckers flags, a 60 cm (2 ft) square logo with a green border for committee members, a yellow border for Rally Officers and a 40cm (16 in) borderless flag for any Suntreckers member to fly.



Committee Flag



Rally Officer Flag



Member Flag

The larger flags are given to committee members or Rally Officers to use to identify them on a rally, but the member flag could be flown at any time by a member. Apart from spotting other Suntreckers, the flag is often a great way to start a conversation with other campers and can help introduce new members to Suntreckers.

The member flag is now available for purchase at £4 (£6.50 if you want it posted) from Terry Gascoyne, so if you want one, please see him at a rally, call him on 07974 558573 or contact him by email: tkg@potter5.co.uk.

Please be mindful that some flags, other than Suntreckers, may have unwelcome associations with nations or organisations and certain flags may be considered offensive or inappropriate. Please consider whether you should fly any particular flag together with a Suntreckers flag.

A warm welcome

A warm welcome is extended to the following members who've joined us since September. Look forward to seeing them on a few rallies next year:

Sonia M	Devon
Howard & Sonia D	West Sussex
Thomas D	Leicestershire
Philip & Elizabeth H	Buckinghamshire
Ed & Margaret P	Gloucestershire
Andrew W	Oxfordshire
Dave & Fran M	Surrey

John Furley
Membership Secretary

And finally...

Members' contributions for *The Trecker* are always welcome, as are photographs, which should be sent as separate files and not embedded in a document. Please remember that you need permission from everyone in your photograph.

Please send all contributions to thetrecker@suntreckers.org.uk

Thank you to John for sending this newsletter by email, as well as to John and Lyn for printing and sending out the paper version. Also, thanks to Clive for putting it on the website.