



THE



SUNTRECKERS

TRECKER

ISSUE NUMBER 73

www.suntreckers.org.uk



EDITORS COMMENTS

This Trecker is the winter edition, which makes it sound cold and uninteresting, while I am writing this the wind is howling and the rain is lashing down (welcome storm 'Angus'). However, you couldn't be more wrong, inside these beautifully prepared pages you will find our members 2016 experiences with sun, sand, sangria and wine (nothing new there then). A new rally officer tells you how easy and enjoyable he found it. You will also find comments from our chairman, me with my other hat on as rally organizer and from our new webmaster. All in all, a packed Trecker for your delectation.

Well that's about it from me except to say enjoy the Trecker and all of you have a very happy Christmas and a prosperous in every sense new year.

IF ANY OF YOU WANT A PHOTOGRAPH TO BE PLACED ON THE FRONT OF THE TRECKER THEN PLEASE SEND THEM TO ME. THEY SHOULD BE ON A NATURIST THEME, FOR EXAMPLE, PICTURE OF YOURSELVES, FRIENDS ETC WHO HAVE GIVEN YOU THEIR PERMISSION OR OF A NATURIST SITE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TO ETC.

Please let me have for the future Treckers any articles and photographs of your rallies and experiences with Suntreckers please email your articles photographs etc to: ppo@suntreckers.org.uk.

Steve Wagstaff
Part Time PPO

(Cover photograph is of the Manor Farm rally with accompanying geese)

CHAIRMANS CHAT



Hi Everyone,

Well it has been mixed year weather wise, but overall the weather was good for us, and the feedback from the rallies has been good.

Ann and I managed to get to the Luxembourg rally which despite heavy rain at the start turned out to be a great success.

We had great fun with you all at the Gala rally, the weather was brilliant the fun and games as Pirates went down very well, with most of us getting a cooling shower in the water games. We had some very good Pirate Ships in the decorated vans, which made it a hard choice to pick a winner, as they were all winners in my view.

This coming year the theme for the Gala is "Circuses" so I am sure we will see a lot of members clowning around!

Also, this year we have a couple of new rally sites which I am sure will be a success.

By the way like all good clubs we need a full crew to take us through the years ahead, and unlike many organisations we are not cutting back on officers. So we need to recruit and bring on board the committee a Publicity Officer and a Equipment Officer, this would then give us a full team to carry us forward. So if you fancy having a go, just step up and give it a try.

We are always looking for Rally officers too, so perhaps some of you could try running a rally sometime.

Ann and I are always willing to listen to your views and have a chat, even if we are not at a rally; I am usually at the end of a phone.

So, let us all have a good camping year in 2017.

Ron Twining, Chairman.

WEBMASTERS UTTERINGS



It has been a bit of a journey and the learning curve is continuing but I think at last I am starting to get my feet under the table! The website had been a bit neglected over the last couple of years with John Furley doing little bits here and there in between his Membership Secretary role, thank you John.

Some, predominantly windows 10 users, may have experienced slow navigation and page refresh of the website for quite a while, however, now all the updates have been completed (early November) which was the cause of the problem this should be a thing of the past.

Work is now in progress to review and update information on the site. Most is still current and other may need minor updates. Please do email me with any comments or suggestions webmaster@stitreckers.org.uk

Alan

RALLY ORGANIZERS COGITATION

I have now taken my editors hat off and replaced it with my sunny disposition hat also known as my rally organizers hat.

First of all, a quick résumé of 2016 rallies, normally we have to cancel rallies for a variety of reasons and this year is no exception, they range from there being no rally officer to run it, or if there is a rally officer not enough member units want to go, or the site because of external conditions, weather etc play a part. There was however, still plenty to enjoy what with the popular continental rallies very ably organized by Ken Dew our mainland rallies and of course the ongoing winter rallies which Malcolm and Maureen Burland do an excellent job.

The Gala Rally for 2017 will again be held at Nunnery Farm in Rothwell. The theme for the 2017 Gala rally is 'Circus' and the Ken Webster photographic theme will be 'Fairgrounds' which should give all you budding and experienced photographers out there a substantial subject to get your teeth into.

Now you all know the gala rally theme then there can be no excuse for failing to decorate your caravans, tents and motorhomes, there will be a prize for the best dressed unit so can we all make an effort to improve on what has been a disappointing few years in that area.

Again, I come to the issue of rallies that will be cancelled if no one wants to volunteer and be a rally officer and run them. I am always hopeful you will come forward and take charge of these rallies because I would hate to cancel them just prior to the yearbook being published, so have a look take a deep breath and let me know by writing, email or telephoning me that you want to be rally officers. Those of you who have already put your names forward I am eternally grateful and I know I am pushing but if you could do one or two more then I would be even more grateful.

The below 2 pages are all the rallies without a rally officer and will be cancelled if no one comes forward by the time the yearbook is due to be published.

Steve Wagstaff
National Rally Organizer.

Rally No	Venue	Date From	Date To
1	Hyde Farm	Fri 31 March 2017	Wed 5 April 2017
4	Willow Fruit Farm	Fri 7 April 2017	Wed 12 April 2017
8	Heather House Farm	Fri 21 April 2017	Wed 26 April 2017
11	Cam Bridge Barn	Fri 28 April 2017	Wed 3 May 2017
13	St Annes	Fri 28 April 2017	Tues 2 May 2017
19	Sungrove	Fri 12 May 2017	Wed 17 May 2017
26	White Rose	Fri 26 May 2017	Fri 2 June 2017
28	YSS	Fri 2 June 2017	Wed 7 June 2017
29	Mamble	Fri 2 June 2017	Wed 7 June 2017
30	Abbees Roding	Fri 2 June 2017	Wed 7 June 2017
33	Benar Beach	Fri 9 June 2017	Fri 16 June 2017
35	Manor Farm	Thurs 15 June 2017	Thurs 22 June 2017
37	Mill Bank	Fri 16 June 2017	Wed 21 June 2017
40	SWOC	Fri 23 June 2017	Wed 28 June 2017
43	Heather House Farm	Fri 30 June 2017	Wed 5 July 2017
44	Cam Bridge Barn	Fri 30 June 2017	Wed 5 July 2017
45	Tando	Fri 30 June 2017	Fri 7 July 2017
51	St Annes	Fri 14 July 2017	Wed 19 July 2017
52	Gala Rally	Thurs 20 July 2017	Monday, 24 July 2017
63	Hyde Farm	Fri 18 Aug 2017	Wed 23 Aug 2017
68	Bassetts Farm	Fri 25 Aug 2017	Wed 30 Aug 2017
69	Heather House Farm	Fri 1 Sept 2017	Wed 6 Sept 2017
73	Telford	Fri 8 Sept 2017	Wed 13 Sept 2017
76	Tything Barn	Wed 13 Sept 2017	Fri 22 Sept 2017
	Bank Holidays	Gala Rally	

Please Note:- 2017 membership is now due
and renewal details will be emailed shortly.

If you are only signed up for postal communication,
please complete the enclosed renewal form and return it to the
membership secretary ASAP

SPECIAL CELEBRATION



Some people will do anything to get attention, Eric and Denise wedding anniversary at Meadowfleck Farm enjoying rally 82 in Sept. Congratulations to you both and special congratulations to Denise, how on earth have you put up with him for so long?

Ed

MY FIRST RALLY AS RALLY OFFICER



At the xmas rally feeling rather merry I was cajoled into offering to run rally 37 at Hyde farm, thus began the organising to carry this out. I received the year book & waited for the bookings to come rolling in. Was I going to get any? would anybody come to my rally. In early may I had one booking then you wait & hope. Would I have to cancel if no more came in. Terry Jackman had said he would come & help me along with Terry & Kath Gascoyne so I was sure of two units at least. then nearer the date of the rally more bookings came in so rally definitely on now. The day arrived to set off for the rally, car fully loaded with all essentials I could think of. With Terry's help, we set up the marquee & my caravan awning adjoining, so we could accommodate all ralliers as now I had 12 units coming. Now the fun started when they started to arrive I seemed to be boiling kettles & making tea / coffee & of course some arrived together, more tea etc. Hand out the rally programme, did everybody get one. Friday night get together hand out the quiz & site information, I said we would have a tea & cake party on the Sunday for the queens 90th birthday. I had made the cakes beforehand so part of the car load, these consisted of two Victoria sponges one round one square with a union jack & flower decoration on the square cake, also 24 cupcakes. Sunday was a very busy day coffee morning then getting the bunting up prepping the cakes & decorating the table etc.

ready for the afternoon party. Saturday coffee morning is time to hand out the bills for the rally. Did I work it out right? Some changed the bookings some were late booking. Yes, a result, nobody queried their bill so all's well so far. We managed to play some boules in between the showers when the sun came out a few times. The rest of the rally was fine some left after the tea & cakes on Sunday others on various days up until Wednesday. Terry helped me fill in the forms to send to Suntimeckers. I paid the site fee with money collected & all was fine, had some good feedback from the ralliers they said they had had a good time despite the weather being very changeable. special thanks to Terry & Lesley the experienced ralliers. So, come on run a rally its easy there's always someone that would help you out with any problems.

Bryan Bunce

AUG BANK HOLIDAY AT HYDE FARM

Arriving late afternoon on Friday in glorious sunshine Terry showed me to my pitch amongst 16 other units, and invited me for a welcome cuppa which Kathryn prepared for me. Once the caravan was levelled, legs down, aqua roll filled, and the stomach replenished it was soon time for the evening get-together. There was the usual ritual of hello's and hand shaking and catching up, some members there I last saw 8 or 9 years ago, (but felt like only last week) and some members, new to me, that were soon friends in our Suntimecker family. The usual banter, laughing, and putting the world to rights carried on until the evening chill slowly drove people back to their units.

Next morning at the coffee gathering, after the rally officers welcoming speech, etc, enough folk put their hands up for boules for a tournament to be held and at times there were four or more games being played under blue skies with a warm breeze – I've never seen so much action on a rally field except at a gala rally. If a scrap man had driven into the field at those times, there was so much metal on the ground, he could have made a fortune!

Anyway, to stop our happy frolics, by mid-afternoon the god of rain took over for the rest of the day and early evening.

Sunday arrived, the sun returned, and the shouts of nice play, good shot, knock that one up, more wellie, more Weetabix, oo's, ah'h's, and, 'wot, all that for one point', were volleyed around with gusto.

The sun smiled on us all day, through the boules frenzy, the afternoon tea with home baked cakes, and camera's clicking happily for the lovely sunset and the virgin hot air balloon as it sank into the heki of the rally officers motorhome!!!

And so, the rally continued.

To cut a long story short it was a great rally, my thanks to Kathryn and Terry Gascoyne, our rally officers, the cake bakers, the boules organisers and players, the jokers, the story tellers, the oracles of information, and all members that make up a suntimecker rally, much appreciated, cheers!

Ian Sinclair

ALL THINGS CONTINENTAL STARTING WITH:- SUMMARY OF CONTINENTAL RALLIES 2016

The continental rallies this year were very well attended and proved to be a huge success despite a 'not-so-good' start of appalling weather, industrial action around Calais and fuel shortages.

The first Rally was a return visit to **De Reenert** – a lovely site in Luxemburg. 11 units attended including our new chairman. But, it rained and rained and rained....

Nonetheless, all really enjoyed themselves due mainly, to the Rally Officers, Mike and Lynn Ward and their enormous caravan awning. This was the venue for many a happy hour / afternoon / evening. The large indoor heated pool, sauna and steam room were also well attended.

There were dry spells though, during which, (very quiet) trips around the lake in a solar powered boat were enjoyed. The site owner gave many ralliers a grand local tour with his tractor and trailer. Believe it or not, the men found his wood burning biomass hot water system really interesting. From there some left for **La Gagère** in the Burgundy region of France. This Rally had, originally, to be abandoned and did not appear in the Year Book. But, at the last minute two new Sunitreckers, Tony and Glenis Shimmon, offered to be Rally Officers. Nonetheless, they managed 6 units and ran a very good Rally despite numerous 'Routes Barrées's' (diversions), site water problems and inclement weather. For new Rally officers, they did very well. I hope they will run more rallies.

Others from De Reenert made their way over or under the Alps to **Solaris** in Croatia. Solaris is turning out to be an incredibly popular Rally site. Not only is it a fantastic site with outstanding facilities and glorious weather, but the management go to amazing lengths to make us welcome. The Rally Officers, again Mike and Lynn Ward, aided by Maureen and Graham Fox-Dowden, were literally, wined and dined as a welcome. Again, Solaris provided a free barbecue complete with a Chef from one of their restaurants. The aquarobics in what must be, one of the best pools ever was very well attended, as was John Madden's surprise (to only him) 65th birthday party in one of the restaurants.

Solaris 2017 was an experiment. We had already been twice and this was Sunitreckers' first 3-week Rally. It was a huge success with 12 units attending. All ralliers wanted to return, yet again.

Too soon, it was time for the later Rallies, the first of which was **Laulurie** in the Perigord. Sept, and the weather was still hot. The rally quickly settled down as all enjoyed the fine weather, company and peaceful surroundings. This Rally proved to be so popular that it had been necessary to limit numbers attending. Dick Farthing was an ace rally officer and 23 units attended. He kept everything smoothly running. The evening meal get-togethers, first of duck and then our own burnt BBQ offerings, were enjoyed by one and all. Francis and Yonne our hosts (English spoken but not understood – they

said) were celebrating 35 years at Laulurie and they can justly feel proud of what they have accomplished. Locally picked fruit (by Fritz – who else?) blended with local cream made for many a communal snack. The boules however did become a long drawn out affair in the heat. Nonetheless, there were 3 winners by the time exhaustion began to set in! Sadly, though, it was just too hot for Francis's and Yonne's manic country dances. Market day in La Douz was enjoyed by many.

A final evening of laughter and a farewell message (pinned to the toilet door!!) from Francis and Yonne and it was time to depart. Most made the short trip to a very full **Le Courderc**.

Ann and Len Jones were last minute Rally Officers due to George being incapacitated with a broken wrist. But, didn't they do well? There were 23 units. The weather remained perfect, some said "too hot". We lost at boules against the Dutch 3-9. But then, it was so hot.....

The Sunday market at Issigeac proved to be as good as always. There were plenty of coffee mornings and afternoons, swimming. Friends came and friends went, accompanied by warm evenings and plenty of chatter.

Then, no sooner were we complacent than - In the middle of a pleasant communal meal in the restaurant, the heavens darkened and opened and the wind blew. The site's power supply also blew and we were left in total darkness save for some emergency lighting and candles. All good fun.

Nothing could have spoilt that Rally though and everybody left with very warm memories.

2017 Continental Rallying ended in style with another Rally at **El Templo del Sol** in Spain. The Rally Officer, George Rickels - complete with a broken wrist, flew down and rented a chalet. Now there's devotion for you!

13 units attended with yet more beautiful weather! The highlights of the Rally were the day out via rail to Tarragona and a celebration of George and Anne's wedding anniversary attended by all, in a lovely restaurant in Miami Platza. George kindly booked taxis so all could drink. Happy hours were spent overlooking the beach, boules played and quizzes tackled – all in glorious sunshine.

So, there we are. It has been yet another memorable Rally year.

Despite all that Mother Nature may, and sometime does, throw at us, we still persevere and enjoy our rallies.

Which is more than we would do were it not for our wonderful Rally Officers!

I know that we would be hard pressed to better any of them, but we must try. In the main, it's the same old names. We must not forget that it is their holiday too!

So, please, let's have some new volunteers. You'll be alright. After all, there will be plenty of support for you from all these Rally Officers enjoying their holidays.

Next stop, 2017.....

Ken Dew

Suntrecker Continental Rally Organiser

2017 SUNTRECKER CONTINENTAL RALLIES

First early Rally: Relaxnat - Spain

An 11 day / 10 nights Rally with an **arrival day of Thursday 25th May 2017** and a **departure day of Sunday 4th June 2017**.

Relaxnat has immaculate facilities. Hook ups everywhere with water points within a few metres. Pool, children's pool, Jacuzzi, tennis, small shop, bar, snacks. Internet access in leisure room

The surrounding area full of interesting things to see and do.

This part of the Costa Brava is lovely and because of its nature is unspoilt by high rise etc.

There are naturist beaches nearby. Pals is fab, about 20 minutes' drive.

Please see <http://www.campingrelaxnat.com/en/>

I am still awaiting confirmation of details re Relaxnat. Mind you, I do, at least, have a Rally Officer!

Second Early Rally: Le Colombier

This has always been a very popular Suntrecker Rally site. Situated in the south of the Vendée, it is known for its mild climate and long sandy beaches. The rich history of the Vendée is to be traced in a wide variety of historical monuments.

Le Colombier is established in 125 acres surrounding an ancient manorial farmhouse with a tower and several barns, acting as a décor for a marvellous large heated swimming pool surrounded by a huge terrace.

I have arranged for an 11day/10nights Rally with an **arrival day of Thursday 8th June 2017** and a **departure day of Sunday 18th June 2017**. A price of €19 per night has been agreed.

Please see: <http://www.lecolombier-naturisme.com/en/naturist-campsite.html>

Third early Rally: Clérés les Pins in the Loire Valley.

The Club de Soleil de Torraine is a lovely, so typical French club site that gave us such a welcome on our previous visits. (They still talk of Monty's didgeridoo master classes!) Situated close to Tours, it is a wonderfully situated for exploring the French Chateaux of the Loire Valley. This Rally is to help them to celebrate the Club's 50th Anniversary. Should be good!

I have booked for an 11 day/10 nights Rally with an **arrival day of Sunday 18th June 2017** and a **departure day of Thursday 29th June 2017**. We have agreed a price of €17 per night.

Please see <http://www.touraineloirevalley.co.uk/lodging-dining-goint-out/accommodation/camping-naturiste-club-du-soleil-de-touraine-clere-les-pins>

And so, for the late summer Rallies, I have arranged a first ever Suntrecker Rally in the beautiful Provence!

So, the first late Rally to be at: Le Domaine des Lauzons.

Lauzons, is a magnificent naturist campsite. It lies almost hidden amongst rolling hills, lavender, thyme, rosemary and antiquated villages.

It offers a great choice of new, or very recent, accommodations and 150 shaded and exposed sites on about 150 acres of conviviality and sun.

Please see: <http://www.camping-lauzons.com/en/>

I have booked for a 11 day / 10 nights' rally with an **arrival day of Tuesday 22nd Aug 2017** and a **departure day of Monday 4th Sept 2017**. **Rates of €19 per night have been agreed.**

Then, a week's break to allow us to really explore the South of France.

Early Summer Rally number 2 – Le Sérignam Plage Nature

This rally has been cancelled a new rally is in the process of being arranged

I have suggested the above dates mainly because they are still within their 'low' period', and, L'accueil assures me that it will still be plenty hot enough for the most of us! Also, we can have the advantage of cheaper channel crossing and quieter Saturday and Sunday French motorways for the journey south.

Based on 2016 prices, (which do increase somewhat before my proposed dates), I have been quoted approx. €25 per pitch per night.

All I need now is a few Rally Officer volunteers.....

Thanks, all

Ken Dew

Suntrecker Continental Rally Organiser.

LA GAGÈRE RALLY JUNE 2016

Newbies take on Continental Rally Officer Roles for their first Suntrecker rally.

It all began, I suppose, towards the end of 2015 when planning our caravan tour of France for 2016. As fairly new retirees, this would be our third year of touring over a two-month period, and, learning from the first two extended tours, we had decided to join Suntreckers so as to enjoy the companionship that rallying provided.

We had visited quite a few of the French naturist sites over the last twenty years and had noticed that one of these, La Gagère, was planned as a rally site for 2016. This would suit our planned itinerary perfectly! We eagerly awaited the 2016 handbook so that we could book up, but when it eventually arrived we were disappointed to see that it was no longer listed. I enquired with John, the membership secretary, who put me in touch with Ken, the continental rally organiser. Ken told me that it was not too late to resurrect the rally if a Rally Officer could be found. I explained that I had no experience of the role, but would gladly volunteer. Ken put me in touch with a couple of experienced continental rally members, George R and David R, who fully briefed me on what was expected of the RO and gave me useful instruction regarding the administration and planning of the rally. We felt secure that with the support available we were happy to confirm our willingness to undertake the role, which was subsequently approved.

Although details of the Rally had missed publication in the yearbook, Ken was able to contact a number of members who might be interested. To widen the net, I wrote an introduction of Glenis and myself which John kindly posted on the Website alongside of details of the resurrected rally at La Gagère.

Gradually, the bookings started to trickle in – not many, but Ken was encouraging explaining that it was the norm to expect last minute bookings on Continental rallies.

Handling the bookings is not that onerous, but of course requires you to be reasonably organised and on top of such matters. Handling cheques did seem a little archaic having organised all our own household and other financial matters to be online. However, the banks are still handling cheques and so it was simply a matter of banking the cheques, confirming each booking and maintaining a rally folder of the paper work. Bookings and Booking confirmation between ralliers and the RO is mostly carried out via Royal Mail, as there are no electronic booking and confirmation forms. This may change in the future and I was encouraged by one rallier who requested the confirmation by email.

Our 'Tour de France' started at the beginning of June with a fortnight in Le Colombier. Just prior to embarkation, friends of ours, who were holidaying in

Brittany, informed us of widespread industrial action resulting in a fuel shortage which could go on for several months! Not what we wanted to hear to say the least, but a quick calculation showed that if we tanked up before boarding the ferry at Portsmouth, we would easily make the 186 miles from St Malo to Le Colombier at least.

News of the unrest made the BBC news before our departure and it featured video footage of riotous situation on forecourts etc. – disturbing scenes for our ralliers!

Once in France, I emailed the ralliers to give them a first-hand account of the situation which we found, thankfully to be quiet and normal. This was confirmed by ralliers already in the country, but the news reporting, in UK and the Netherlands was such that in Le Colombier alone we heard that about 60 bookings had been cancelled as a result. The weather in France was not brilliant for naturism in early June, thanks I believe to the shift in the 'Jet Stream' pattern over the Atlantic which gave the UK and Ireland some exceptionally warm weather for the time of year. Towards the end of our stay at Le Colombier, we met a lovely couple who used to be Suntreckers and were former Rally Officers. They were keen for our rally to be a success and offered some very useful tips on events to get the ralliers together. After our two weeks at Le Colombier and two nights for a stop-over at Le Petit Brenne we arrived at La Gagère, thankfully with the Rally numbers intact but less one party who, quite sensibly, had decided to back out due to the uncertainty of the industrial situation threatening their ability to be able to return to work in time. From the exchange of messages, I could tell how reluctant they had been to make that decision and hopefully they were able to rearrange their holiday within the UK.

For anyone thinking of undertaking the Rally Officer responsibilities, events such as this show how necessary it is to maintain communications with the ralliers before the event both as a group and individually in order to answer any concerns and relay information. Contact can be by email and text message so it is important to have the contact information with you once you have left home.

On the road from Luzy to the La Gagère turnoff, the final two miles had had its top layer removed prior to resurfacing, although it being a Sunday, there was no work taking place then and the access road to the campsite from that direction was possible albeit a bit 'bumpy'. What we didn't know then was that it would be closed the following day for a week with access only from the Autun direction!



Ralliers Dick & Julie

We were greeted at La Gagère by Betty who then showed us to the pitches set aside for the rally. Yvonne and Jim had already arrived and pitched their tent on a high pitch as some of the lower pitches were 'soft' due to the amount of rain in the preceding weeks. Julie and Dick arrived on the Monday direct from the rally at Luxembourg.

Tuesday was the start day of the rally and we were joined firstly by Malcolm and Hazel and their two well behaved and lovable Labradors, Bib and Tucker. By this time, we knew that access to the campsite road was restricted due to the resurfacing of a two mile stretch of the main road, but lack of a mobile signal and poor internet access meant we were unable to forewarn the remaining parties as they approached. We took a sortie out late morning hoping to be able to send a text to the ralliers en-route with details of the roadworks. Arriving back on site that afternoon, we met with the remaining ralliers, David and Margaret and Alan and Anne. As Alan and Ann had approached from the Luzy direction, the road closure resulting in them having to be diverted an extra five or six miles down narrow country roads, made the more difficult with other diverted traffic going in the opposite direction – not easy when your pulling a caravan! David and Margaret also encountered various 'Route Barree' on the way!



Glenis, Hazel, Malcolm, Ann, Margaret, David, Alan, Tony with Bib and Tucker in the foreground

The final arrivals coincided with the water supply being off due to repair work being carried out by the water utility! When this was eventually restored, it was a brownish colour, which we were assured would clear as water was drawn through.

On the first full day of the rally we were able to get together and enjoy a variety of French pastries at a coffee morning. Ideas were invited for other rally get-togethers and the suggestions included Happy Hours, DIY Lunches, and Raffles etc.

We distributed a tourist information pack to each couple that the local Office du Tourisme, on our request, had kindly put together for the ralliers the day before. We also distributed the rally memento token, awarding ourselves our very first!

A Happy Hour was duly arranged for that evening and despite the coolness of the weather and having to split into two awnings, the anecdotes etc. flowed and the evening went very well. So, too, did the following two or three Happy Hours during the rally!

The water situation got worse before it got better and liaising with Betty, the water utility came and rectified the situation on the third day of the rally. To be fair to the campsite staff, they were doing all they could, but the event does indicate the sort of thing a Rally Officer would have to be involved in on behalf of the Health and Safety of their ralliers.

An idea was muted for a rally picnic on top of nearby Mont Beuvray, but as the suggested day approached the weather hadn't improved much so that idea was scrapped in favour of, you guessed it, another 'Happy Hour' The ralliers nevertheless found the opportunities to explore the area at their own pace and despite the fickleness of the weather, the Suntreckers spirit shone through!

In all, we felt it went very well for us as first time Rally Officers as we were able to enjoy the encouragement and support of all the ralliers and pick up some excellent 'Rally Officer' guidance from Dick and David.

Considering the challenges – threat of fuel shortages, Routes Barree, no water, brown water, excessive amounts of rain, everyone was in good spirits which I attribute to the camaraderie of Suntreckers.

Dick & Julie headed off early to see their new granddaughter as too did Yvonne and Jim. On the final few days, we did enjoy better weather more suited to naturism.

Our rally ended and we stayed on at La Gagère for a few days. The day following the rally another UK couple, Malcolm and Sue, pitched up next to us and we were delighted to discover that they too were 'Treckers and in fact lived only a short distance from us. Interestingly, they told us that had they have known of the rally, they would definitely have supported us, so there's some food for thought – If a cancelled rally is resurrected, how can we ensure that all members get to know of it?

So, there you have it, for us, our first-time continental rally as Rally Officers went well and we hope that our experience would encourage anyone else wanting to take a rally on to have a go.

It involves a certain amount of commitment, so other members can plan accordingly, organisational abilities to handle the bookings and accounting, ability to take on responsibility as and when the need arises and finally a willingness to listen to what ralliers want and organise accordingly. Go for it!



Tony Shimmon

LAULURIE EN PERIGORD RALLY 69

The weather this year was very good, in fact too warm at times, the thermometer did reach the high 30's. There were 24 units for the rally this year, (the third rally to be held here), a mixture of motorhomes and caravans, a mixture of couples and singles, and newcomers and old timers. Although a 7-night rally, it was nice to see some units arrive a day or 2 days early, it then makes it so much easier to place units rather than everyone arrives more or less at the same time!

I arrived early at Laulurie (Julie was staying at home with our granddaughter). By arriving early, it was possible to get in an extra moules/frites meal, as did 2 other couples. "Encore les moules", as some of us went up for our third helping.

The rally officially began on Thursday 1st Sept and that was the Confit de canard night, just about everyone attended the meal provided by Francis and Yonnie (helped by Caroline and Fabrice). We did have pre-dinner drinks outside the rally officers caravan.

Early Friday morning there was a walk with Francis for the more energetic. Francis also did a walk the morning after each communal meal. The following day at the coffee morning we welcomed the new Suntreckers and I explained the programme for the week. On the Saturday was the Laulurie boules competition, which was won by 3 couples from Suntreckers, the sun was shining and we restricted ourselves to 2 courts in the shade.



The communal BBQ was in the evening and everyone attended, various smoke screens were sent up denoting, rare/medium and well done steaks, burgers and sausages.

Sunday was "Fritz quiz night" and erm, did I mention more drinks. There was frivolity and dubious answers along with, when being told the correct answer, aww, I really knew that one. Sue C and her team won by some astronomical amount. After the quiz night, we made our way in to the barn to watch a video of the Laulurie story.

The Suntrecker boules competition arranged by Geoff and Eileen

was closely fought and the winners were eventually Alan and Ann. We had a "Beetle Drive" and there was much laughter and screaming "we need a 6, we need a 5" etc. It was a very close call for the eventual winner, with Joe beating Fritz by 1 point!

One of the reasons I arrived early, apart from arranging things with Francis and Yonnie was to have the moules /frites evening meal, and Tuesday brought it round again, so "Encore les moules" as some of us had three helpings again!

Things were now winding down as we had an afternoon tea on Wednesday and I was very grateful for the help I got from Karen and Liz who portion controlled the cakes and pastries. However, also equally grateful to Bill B who helped me choose what we were going to have for the tea, (I think we chose on what we would like really).

The evening saw us finish the last of the drink, phew.

Stories were told and monologues were given and also a song by Tony and Angela (Tony does look good in a dress).

Thursday morning, we said our “goodbyes” and everyone went on to their next destinations, Le Couderc or further.

Thursday morning it rained just as the rally finished and Francis made a poster for the notice board “Heaven is crying because Suntreckers are leaving”.

All in all, another successful rally for Suntreckers at Laulurie.

Dick & Julie Farthing

WINTER IN THE SUN

CAMPING CUEVAS MAR, VERA PLAYA

David and Noreen invite you to:

We have wintered in Palomares, Andalucía for many years, initially at Camping Almanzora and latterly Camping Cuevas Mar when Almanzora closed.

Cuevas Mar is half naturist and half textile and a short walk to the Vera Playa naturist area with its hotel, restaurants, apartment complexes and fabulous naturist beach. There is a toilet block in the naturist area. Electric hook-ups are available (6 amp) as is Wi-Fi (both chargeable). Long stay discounts are also available.

We shall be there again in January, February and March 2017 and would welcome any **Suntrecker members** arriving at the site knocking on our van if we can help or give information or just to say hello.

In the meantime, if any members are contemplating visiting the area and would like some information before we leave, then we are happy to be contacted.

Our contact details are:

David and Noreen Whitaker

dawhitaker@outlook.com

Home phone 0118 957 4478

Mobile phone 0798 137 5851

The site website is: <http://www.campingcuevasmar.com>

David and Noreen Whitaker (Membership No C13002)

PS. David & Noreen will be FIRST TIME RALLY OFFICERS at white Rose between 25 Aug – 1 Sept so give them your support

FRITZ'S MUSINGS OF HIS YEAR ON THE CONTINENT CONTINENTAL WANDERINGS 2016 THE JOURNEY TO AND CROATIA 2016

4th May

A blank page, a new chapter in my Diary. The winter is finally over and it is time to prepare for my fourth trip across the Alps to the Istrian Peninsula in Croatia. The 3-week rally starts on the 18th of June, so we have plenty of time to meander down through Germany, Austria and Italy. I have chosen to follow the route that we took in 2014, one less thing to worry about.

25th May

Oh, dear, news of a strike affecting petrol stations in France. I will have to change my plans!

AND EVEN WORSE, on returning from some last-minute shopping I noticed that my (newish) electric bike was not in its normal place, chained up in the porch. My bike, stolen on the eve of departure and too late to get a replacement. Regular readers will know how much I depend on my bike to explore the local area when underway. It also comes in handy to do 'top up' shopping – how will I survive. M said not to worry we can always walk, relieved I think, no need to dust down the elderly bone-shaker last used 15 years ago! I gave all the bike details to the police and informed them that the neighbouring garage had CCTV cameras all over the place. I'll leave it up to them to do what they can and not worry! If the police can track down the Yorkshire Ripper one little bicycle should be a doddle. Over to you Fabian.

Thursday 26th

I arrived in Dover in good time and was able to get on an earlier ferry. It was dark on the other side, very dark, and I had no inclination to see whether I could get any fuel before entering Belgium. I spent the night in an Aire outside the town of Veurne and filled up (@ 82 pence per litre) the following morning.

Friday 27th



I have bought myself a new satnav. No longer will I crawl around the Paris Peripherique with maps on my knee and an indecipherable list of waymarks and road numbers blue-tacked to the dashboard. Once I had mastered the mysteries of switching the gadget on (and off) it was plain sailing (or, in my case driving). Actually, the menu is extensive, it plays music, DVDs, carries out calculations, tells the time, converts pecks into litres and, for all I know boils an egg. But I just need it to get me from A to B – sometimes via C. Of course,

a satnav is only as good as the data you input - rubbish in rubbish out! My last one, before being hurled out of the window in total frustration, attempted to navigate me across 400 miles of Germany without ever going on the autobahn – an almost impossible task. It was only later that I realised that to avoid paying tolls in Austria I had programmed it to avoid all motorways. Oh, just found out this thing is useless; you are expected to know your left from your right. I knew there would be a catch - £29.99 from e-bay, what did I expect!

I didn't need my satnav to get me past Cologne but from then on it should earn its keep. Cologne of course is famous for its majestic cathedral the Kölner Dom. As you approach from the west it appears in the distance almost dwarfing everything around it. In earlier days, it must have been awe inspiring and it is still magnificent. I first saw it in 1950, virtually the only building still standing in the centre of the Old Town. We had arrived by train from the east and I was woken in what seemed like the middle of the night and taken to the end of the platform and told to peer upwards. The eerie image reaching tight up to the clouds has remained with me ever since.

I had programmed the town of Wetzlar into the satnav as my overnight stopping place. Just before reaching my destination I saw a sign for a Stellplatze (see below) and was directed to a large space with free electricity and other facilities. After my long day I deserved a hot meal.

The French have their Aires, the German's their Stellplätze, the British have, well nothing. These are places where motorhomers can park up for the night either for free or for a nominal fee. The German's and French do it because (a) they want to attract tourists; and, (b) because they are welcoming. In Britain you have the option of a layby on the edge of the motorway or sneaking into some godforsaken industrial estate late at night. As one can imagine the German Stellplätze are generally spotless and terribly efficient and the French Aires are ramshackled and relaxed. Of course, this is not always true and the reverse can often be the case. Many motorhomers spend their entire holidays on Aires/ Stellplätze saving oceans of money and coming self-sufficient with their own water, loos and gas. Personally, I prefer slightly more from my overnight camping than a cramped gravelled car park with minimal facilities but I do frequently use them when underway.

Saturday 28th

It was only a short drive to Grünberg and I arrived at the 'appointed' time to be greeted by my friend warmly. We were soon walking through a beautiful wooded area on our way for lunch with friends. And in the evening it was more dining this time at a good Greek restaurant to eat, as I joked, sauerkraut and bratwurst with another group of friends. Tomorrow is BBQ followed by kaffee und kuchen, all will gather to celebrate M's forthcoming

Tuesday 31st

A beautiful morning, warm enough to sit out at 7.30 am beside the river Main. A couple of vapour trails cross in a cloudless blue sky. After the recent thunderstorms it is welcome. A herd (= correct!) of swans take their bath as Miltenberg awakens on the far side of the river. It is M's birthday and I have prepared a small geburstag tisch replete with flowers. We take photos of the pretty scene and breakfast in true camping style!

Yesterday, the first day of our travels had been mixed. Quite soon after the 'off' I was having trouble with the clutch pedal. I called at a couple of repair garages to sort it out but was told all looked ok. I hope it is, but it is still a worry with the Alps looming. I shall be careful as we head south. In the evening, we walked along the very pretty main street of Miltenberg and then back along the river, and over the old bridge which had been destroyed at the end of the war to delay the advancing Americans.

Scenes from Miltenberg on the river Main – a favourite stopover

Wednesday 1st June

We are into June, the longest day looms but the weather is dull. We are heading for Rothenberg ob der Tauber one of the prettiest medieval towns in the world. We park up in a pleasant stellplatz (with electrics) not far from the old city walls. Rothenberg is a tourist magnet, there are delightful street views everywhere and everyone is snapping away. Interestingly a lot of the signs are in Chinese and there are several groups of Chinese tourists. It is good to see them as part of the wider world after so much isolation! We roam the quaint old streets; M enjoys visiting old churches and we share a delicious slice of cheesecake in a nice coffee shop. I'm relieved that my clutch pedal did not play up

(but fingers still crossed) and that my satnav did what was asked of it: indeed, it gave me a lot more useful information about possible detours, speed limits etc. most useful!



Delectable Rothenburg ob der Tauber



Some claim that it was Herr Hilter who 'invented' autobahns. They were certainly being built in Germany in the 1930's some 25 years before Mr Marples opened the M1. One can't really travel long distances in Germany without using motorways. In France, it is possible (and usual) to use the free Route National (RN) roads and save yourself an arm and a leg in toll fees. It does help of course if you have 2 months to meander around and not have to cram in 3 kids and the kitchen sink on a 2-week holiday to the south of France. The 'amusing' thing about the German autobahns is the number of towns that are called 'Ausfahrt'. Every few kilometres there is a sign and an arrow directing you to the town of Ausfahrt. Enough of this puerile schoolboy humour! I'm not sure whether there are any maximum speed limits on the autobahns, certainly there are plenty of racers in the outside lane VROOM, quite frightening. But one nice touch at roadworks, instead of the useless 'cone hot line' given to us by John Major we have 'smiley signs' with exhortations like 'Only 5 miles to go' and 'nearly there' etc.



We turn off the autobahn just short of the German/Austrian border with the Alps appearing in the background. The night was spent in the pretty village of Wertach. We had travelled down along the Romantische Strasse (Romantic Road) humming

along to 'Your 40 best Arias'.

Friday 3rd

It was a short hop into Austria but unfortunately, after a pleasant start to the day we were 'confined to barracks by some heavy rain. We are camped near Lermoos, a popular winter and summer holiday area, but the valley was rather spoilt by several lines of electricity pylons marching through. The surrounding mountains still had snow on their peaks. M cooked some banana fritters which tasted good. We walked along rain, drenched paths and found an onion-domed church, quite splendid for such a small village.



The interior was beautifully decorated – if a little too gaudy for my taste. What did attract me was the almost white bleached wooden pews and the well-proportioned windows through which the mountain peaks, including the Zugspitze (the highest mountain in Germany) could hold the attention of a congregation struggling with an over- long sermon. An old lady was replacing candles high up on the walls of the church; no health and safety here, as she clambered laboriously up and down a steep ladder, humming quietly to herself.



Sunday 5th

The weather map for the whole of central Europe (and the world as far as I know) forecasts thundery rain for days to come. Yesterday we caught the afternoon bus into Lermoos, treated ourselves to a super-doooper ice-cream with lashings of this and that and walked back across the fields shielded against the rain by the big umbrella. Every now and then we stopped to stare at the awesome scenery. This morning it was up and over the Fern Pass into the Inn Valley which led us into Innsbruck but not without a couple of navigating errors. Unfortunately, I can't blame Lucy (my satnav) as when she says 'take the third exit' she actually means the 3rd – not the 4th!! One of the navigating problems in Austria is that the 'powers that be' want you to use their toll motorways and NOT litter up their pretty little village streets with great big motorhomes. Hence any signage on the local roads directs you to the town hall or toilets and NOT 'Innsbruck' or the next sizeable town.

One other problem, of my own making, is that I am still nervous of my clutch pedal. It hasn't malfunctioned for a week now but.... Now imagine driving along narrow, steep and winding Alpine roads thinking you are going to lose all control next time you try to change gear – ughhhh.

Having driven gingerly through Innsbruck we treated ourselves to a lovely lunch in a pretty oldie worldie restaurant where, as the only customers we were waited on hand and foot by a young waiter replete in a green apron who insisted on reciting his English. Then it was only a short hop along the Stubaital Valley to the attractive town of Neustift. We camped in sight of the cable car taking visitors to the summit of the Elfer (1,750m)



Neustift church outside and stunning interior towers over a ceiling to rival that of the Sistine Chapel



Tuesday 7th

Up and over the Brenner Pass, quite an easy ride along the old road with the motorway striding alongside or on stilts above. Yesterday we had ventured a short way into the hills for a walk, but otherwise plenty of doing very little. We're now camped on Lake Caldenazzo, Ivor and I had been here a couple of years ago, but a bit further south. Everyone is in bathing gear, let's hope that the weather is now settled.



We've been watching past episodes of

Fawlty Towers, all new (and funny) for M and well worth a second (as in 5th) look.....Manuel..... Que!!

Wednesday 8th

A mid-morning swim in the lake, pleasantly warm (and clean) and then we spruced up the motorhome and ourselves and festooned the place with a week's washing. This is a very pretty spot!

Friday 10th

A pleasant sunny start to the day after heavy rain yesterday. We have moved to the southern shores of Lago di Caldenazzo after a detour to the local town of Pergine to find a Western Union (fruitless) and computer shop. England recovered well in the Test match at Lords with a Bairstow hundred rescuing us (again) from a poor start. The European Championships kick off this evening with France v Romania. Already British hacks are scouring the bars and clubs of France for the only stories that really interest them.... drunken louts misbehaving. We get the press we deserve. We have a lovely walk along the lake path and picnic overlooking one of the many small beaches. We are entertained by the local brass band and then repair for some pizza and lasagne whilst the rain poured down.



A tuneful brass band



A tasty lasagne

Sunday 12th

Wake to find that England could only draw with a mediocre Russian team in their opening match of the European Cup, shades of their early (and embarrassing) exit from the World Cup two years ago!

We find a 4th century church perched on top of a little mound – well its origins were 4thC! It was once a pagan temple dedicated to the Goddess Diana. Coming back along the lake we watched a training session by the local lifeguards – including dogs which paddled out to rescue swimmers (or should I say non-swimmers). Whilst M was at church I had relieved a cherry tree of much of its fruit. Those will go nicely in a pie. We dine in a lakeside restaurant, our quiet tete-a-tete being disturbed by a 15-minute-long parade of motorbikes and cars racing along the supposedly 20 mph road honking and hooting for no apparent purpose. Just as we thought we would have some quiet they came around for a second time!!

Tuesday 14th



Lago di Corlo in the southern Dolomites and beautiful and peaceful spot. We have a morning of domestics and a walk planned for the afternoon. Tomorrow we head back to civilisation and Venice – perhaps we should stay here.

Friday 17th

We drove down out of the Dolomites to the Lido di Jesolo and Venice. Sue, Dave and Jed were already on the campsite – Al Bateo, near the ferry terminal. The afternoon was spent in Venice, it was packed, quite claustrophobic, but nevertheless enjoyable. Several of the buildings were under repair, including the Rialto Bridge. These had been draped with shrouds onto which an image of the building had been painted – quite clever – but the whole thing was spoilt by some stupid advertisement which, no doubt helped pay for the restoration, but in reality, cocked a snoot at the visitors. M bought a striking carnival mask. The following morning, we returned and did the big loop by the valperreto along the Grand Canal and around the back. We stopped off before returning to the centre and wandered through the back streets and squares away from the crowds. In the afternoon, it was England v Wales when England managed to snatch a very late winner which saved a lot of people's bacon. Terrible news from 'home' that Jo Cox MP had been murdered by a 'madman'. The Referendum campaigns were put on hold whilst people came to terms with the tragedy. Other news was that Cliff Richards would not be charged (after 3years and £800,000) – 'insufficient evidence' – his life, reputation and career in tatters.....something very

wrong.



Jo Cox



Ruined

Sunday 19th

Things are settling down; all our group have arrived and we hold our first coffee morning. We have a couple of days of 'iffy' weather but then it's wall-to-wall sunshine; well at least that's what it says in my crystal ball. The site is filling up as we head into the high season but we are quite peaceful in our own little enclave. I went swimming in the Adriatic yesterday – clear and warm, most inviting. Only a few days before the referendum, there is a feeling that it is too close to call but the bookies favour 'Remain' so I get comfort from that.

Tuesday 21st

We get used to our new environment familiarising (re-acquainting) ourselves as to how it all works. As the days are likely (in our memories) to merge into each other I will only seek to jot down a few 'highlights'. Monday was the last of the dull days, matched in the evening by England's bore 0-0 draw against Slovakia. But as Jed pointed out 'we're through and that's all that counts!' Today – the longest day – still neck and neck in the Referendum with both sides (and their supportive media) claiming the edge. There was aqua-

aerobics in the pool for the energetic (mainly women) and an early beer for the spectators (mainly men) followed by the later rounds of the boules competition – won surprisingly(?) by Sue and John. M and I found a secluded beach and a mirabelle tree loaded with fruit. Methinks there will be a return trip for some scrumping soon! The evening was spent under a ‘strawberry moon’ with the wine flowing as old and new acquaintances were made and renewed. England cricketers staged a remarkable comeback to secure a tie (6 off the last ball) v Sri Lanka in the first of the one-dayers.

Thursday 23rd

Referendum today. Due to a late Iceland winner, we are playing them in the next round. EVEN little engerland can't fail there – or can we? A craft workshop for M and scrumping for the two of us yesterday. Earlier in the day a group had cycled out to the caves (Grotta Baredine), a tough uphill ride and a deep descent.

Friday 24th

Black Friday or Independence Day according to your point of view. Brexit wins, Cameron announces his resignation. England (Hales and Roy not out tons) thrash Sri Lanka in the 2nd ODI

Monday 27th

The sun has continued to shine; the big teams and Wales are into the quarter finals. England learn their ‘fate’ v Iceland (!!) tonight. It's BBQ tonight. And the sun will shine again tomorrow EXCEPT if engerland lose to Iceland. AND WE LOST absolutely pathetic words fail!!

Tuesday 28th

Of course, the sun did shine this morning proving that there are more important things than football, although looking at the recriminations flying around in the media.

Maureen entertained us with a Chinese Auction (don't ask). I ended up with a gruesome face mask, enough to scare any ‘trick or treat’ visitor. Friday is fish BBQ night when Maz and Andy host. The days are passing most pleasantly and there are plenty more to look forward to. At Wimbledon one of Jake's tennis chums puts on a creditable display against Roger Federer on the Centre Court. In the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte is sworn in as the new President on the back of ‘a war on corruption’ campaign. Good luck to him.....many have tried before.

Friday 1st July



We're giving some thoughts to our journey home. I think Bovec in Slovenia followed by the Predl Pass into Italy and then the motorway up through Austria to Salzburg. M wants to come with me to the Mosel and then take the

train back to Grunberg from Trier. We will pick up her dog Schiloh on the way through and see if she takes to a motorhome way of life, if she does she can come with us to the Black Forest and France in our autumn trip. We are a growing group!!

Monday 4th

The good weather continued over the weekend and there were plenty of people about, including many more children than I am used to. The semi-finals matches have been sorted, namely: Wales v Portugal and Germany v France. A group went off by boat to visit Vsar and Rovinj and we celebrated John's 65th with a surprise party

Thursday 7th

We made good progress to Slovenia and the Soca Valley this morning, with Jed in tow until the Monfalcone exit. We're parked up alongside the river at Kanal, a site (empty again) where I camped 4 years ago. There is an annual 'diving from the bridge' contest which, as the photo below illustrates is quite spectacular. The town of Kanal itself is peaceful after the crowds at Solaris.

Friday 8th

The 50 odd miles to Bovec took a good couple of hours as we climbed the narrow winding road; the campsite was more crowded than on my two previous visits but it was the start of the holiday season and this is a popular destination for mountain and water sports. A Jazz concert was advertised in the town square for later but this turned out to be folk dancing and music, a pleasant way to spend a warm evening.



Saturday 9th

A long weekend of driving to 'look forward' to. First the climb up and down the strenuous Predl Pass between Slovenia and Austria. Soon we were nearing the German border at Salzburg, but like 2014 a long queue, this time caused by border control.....frightened of refugees up from the Balkans. I knew a back route and sailed across without hindrance. Another long tailback as we neared the Munich Ring....crawl, crawl on a dodgy clutch pedal isn't fun. We spent the night on a Stellplatz at Greding Germany, a pretty little walled town. I counted 10 'eateries' in and around the town square, each of them well populated on this balmy Saturday evening, but how do they all survive on a wet Tuesday in February? We ate ice sugar confections – naughty but nice!

The three hours to M's house in Grunberg turned into 4 after another hold up on the Sunday morning. Again I managed a short-cut but still the delay was annoying. No sooner had we arrived but we were invited to kaffee und kuchen

and whilst I watched the tennis final (Murray v Raonic) and the footie final (France 0 v Portugal 1) the ladies quatsched away.

Monday 11th

Shopping and domestics in Grunberg before a BBQ.

Tuesday 12th

Today was the day that my clutch pedal gave up on us – it had been leaking oil. It could have been worse, indeed thinking of all the dangerous and awkward situations we had driven through we managed to break down just outside a large repair garage (and in Germany not Slovenia)! Soon the kind man was phoning for a spare part, topping me up with oil and arranging for me to leave the motorhome with him the following morning after a stopover on a nice site in Brauneberg by the Mosel. Plans didn't quite work out as the pedal



final gave out just as I was parking up, leaving some awkward last minute driving. But the man has promised to come tomorrow and I hope he is able to drive or tow it away. We shall have to kick our heels for most of the day but it is a pretty location with plenty of facilities in the neighbourhood.

They have carted Cameron's gear from Downing Street and will be moving in May's bits and pieces tomorrow. There is very little sentiment at times like this. We spend the night in a pleasant hotel in Wittlich. On walking, downhill into town, you can't help but notice the vast prison (old and new) which dominates the town and, no doubt provides plenty of local employment.

Friday 15th

And all good things come to an end. The clutch connection was mended at vast expense (€1,250) and we spent the night on the pleasant stellplatz at Wintrich on the Mosel. We ate out in a rather dingy restaurant but the portions were huge so not many complaints. In the morning, I dropped off M to await the arrival of her son and made my way up through Belgium to Watten, just outside Dunkirk, my regular spot to await the Saturday morning ferry.

A very good trip which would have been even better without the clutch pedal problem. But Maria and Schiloh seemed to enjoy themselves and can't wait for the next jaunt which starts for me on the 21st Aug.

"INF-FNI-EUNAT Petanque Tournament".

We arrived at Broadlands Friday afternoon to an already full campsite and when an additional unbooked 8 units arrived the manager and members did a wonderful job shoe horning them all in. There were teams from Netherland, Belgium, France Germany and one pair from Switzerland as well as a good number from the UK.

Saturday morning we all played 3 group games to sort out our ranking. As expected we were in the B competition. While Ken with Nita and Phil with Marion were both in the A competition. Having started just after 8:30 the dinner break was most welcome and as always, Broadlands catering lived up to its high standard. That afternoon we played 2 very enjoyable games and were delighted that we won them both. More food that evening with live music entertainment in the clubhouse. We were shattered and had an early night.

Sunday was an early start again, and after breakfast we had 3 games to play. Disappointingly, neither of us really got our eye in. (or rather our eye saw what was needed, our brain told our hand what to do, then our hand did its own thing) so we lost all 3 matches. After dinner we watched the final between Alan and Pam from UK and a Dutch pair that were in a class of their own and won quite convincingly. The Dutch team also won the team trophy.

At the prize giving we were all awarded certificates: we came 40th out of 52, Ken and Nita came 32nd while Phil and Marion were the highest placed Treckers coming 17th and will therefore retain the Dave Argent memorial shield. What a relief to put our feet up Sunday evening after a very busy couple of days!

Malcolm & Maureen

WINTER RALLY UPDATE

It's pleasing to report that all winter rallies have been well attended during 2016. These seem to be mainly centred around food and socialising, and at the time of writing this we're preparing to be off to the pre-Christmas rally at Greenhill Park. It's 10 o'clock in the morning and the outside temperature is -3 so it looks like another clothes on job with friends and fun!

Merry Christmas and a tecking good New Year to you all,

Malcolm & Maureen