

THE TRECKER



Issue 87

September 2020

Editor's Corner

By the time you read this, many of you will have attended at least one of the limited number of summer rallies we have available and started to experience the "new normal". Having taken part in a couple of them myself I have to say that rallies under Covid guidelines seemed a bit odd at first, but it's surprising how quickly we all got used to it and it's an awful lot better than no rallies at all.

The club also adapted well to challenges of remaining relevant during the lockdown period, with regular 'Zoom' coffee mornings hosted by Monty Toplis and a successful 'virtual' AGM, also by the medium of Zoom. We've also recruited a few new members this year.

The safety of our members always must be paramount and we still face an uncertain future with the possibility of a 'second wave' of Covid infections as we head into the winter. The club will continue to plan future events, assuming that these will be able to go ahead safely, but with the provision to call a halt whenever it is deemed necessary. Despite no longer having a winter rally organiser, we can still offer a limited winter rally programme and Monty has already finalised his plans for next year's continental rallies, as you will be able to read later in this issue.

Finally Steve is now embarking on next year's national rally programme, as he starts what will be his final year in the role. Just to remind you. Steve plans to step down at the 2021 AGM for a well-earned rest, after what will be 14 years in the job. Finding a suitable replacement is now one of our biggest challenges as Suntreckers couldn't function without some one to replace him. If that's not a plea for a volunteer, I don't know what is!

Geoff Heyes - PPO

National Rally Organiser's News

Just a very short message to all our ralliers.

This seems like the second half of the Trecking season where the pandemic was winning the first half. But we are fighting back and have 11 rallies up and running with several of those rallies full. That being the case I hope everyone going to them has an enjoyable time with good weather.

At the end of August I will be starting to book rallies for 2021. I am ignoring Covid-19 and hoping for the best, but of course the safety and health of our members is always at the forefront of the committee's mind and so will be guided at all times by government advice.

I know Monty, our Continental rally organiser, will have a fantastic rally programme for you which you can read later in this issue of *The Trecker*.

To those of you who are still hesitant about attending rallies, I fully understand, but can tell you that all the rally officers are, like yourselves in receipt of the Covid-19 guidelines produced by our committee to ensure that you are kept safe, and also so that you can enjoy the rallying whichever rally you choose to go on.

The winter rallies are more problematic in that we do not have a winter rally organiser but we've still managed to arrange a simple programme which again, you can read about later in this issue. This is probably a good place to remind you all that 2021 will be my last rally programme, so we could really do with someone volunteering to take my place.

Steve Wagstaff - National Rally Organiser.

2020 AGM

Sadly there was no gala rally this year but the club still managed to hold an annual general meeting using the Zoom video-conferencing app, on Sunday 26th July as originally planned. There were 59 attendees using Zoom as well as 15 proxy votes, so quorum requirements were easily achieved.

Both resolutions were approved, namely the appointment of Terry Gascoyne as a director of Suntreckers and the extension of all Suntrecker directors' tenure of office by twelve months with no need to seek re-election.

Presentations

Ken Webster Trophy - no competition in 2020 because of cancellation of the gala rally. The theme for next year will be the one we had planned for this year, namely Travel.

Long Membership Awards

10 years

Brian & Sylvia	Caldicott
Joe & Karen	Grun
Colin & Emmie	Hardwick
Eric & Crystal	Hill
Paul & Lynne	Lambert
Harold & Christine	Owen
Malcolm & Betty	Wiltshire/Bryan

15 Years

Richard & Sally	Cheshire
Brian	Delamere
David & June	Ellis
Ian & Patricia	Holdsworth
David	Poole
David & Margaret	Rose

20 Years

Barry & Pat	Alston
Malcolm & Maureen	Burland
Roger & Libby	Cook

25 Years

Edward & Christine	Colman
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30 Years

Phil & Marion	Boarder/Halsey
Howard & Carol	Claridge
Donald & Linda	Clark
Graham & Sue	Crofts
David & Pam	Forster
Michael & Janice	Goodall
Graham & Shirley	Hicks/French
Alan & Jackie	Ingram
Ray & June	Jones
Paul & Judith	Kirby
Eric & Denise	Webster

35 Years

George & Anne	Rickels
Ron & Ann	Twining

Chairman's Awards

Malcolm and Maureen Burland for organising winter rallies for several years.
Monty Toplis for hosting Zoom coffee mornings during the lockdown periods.

Most nights on rallies / most rallies attended

Terry Gascoyne - 55 / 13
Peter and Jenny Chapman - 53 / 12

To Spain and back (just!) 3 - Mike and Sue Betts

Reading about Ian Sinclair and Mike and Wendy Clarke's Spanish exploits in the June edition of *The Trecker*, inspired me to share a few notes about our own winter fly-camping adventure to Spain.

Leaving Blighty via the Eurotunnel and driving the van through France, we settled for a particularly enjoyable few days at Serignan Plage at the end of September. The facilities are excellent, including the lovely new natural naturist pool; the weather was perfect and we only reluctantly left when the resort closed for the season. Our third visit, but it is one of our favourite French naturist sites.

Early October saw us crossing into Spain heading for El Templo del Sol, where we were once more fortunate to have fine weather and a stunning sea-view pitch. After five pleasant days and with storms forecast, it was time to make our way steadily down the coast to Alicante, using a couple of textile overnight stops on the way.

At Alicante it was directly to a commercial storage facility - Chris Parking - where we left the van safely tucked up indoors and were transferred to the airport five minutes' away. Then home to Bristol courtesy of easyJet. And a couple of weeks later at the end of October, it was back to Alicante to pick up the van and drive just over two hours down to Camping Cuevas Mar to park up in the naturist section. The campsite is at Palomares, Almeria, less than a kilometre from the northern end of Vera Playa nude beach.

The pattern was set, and throughout the winter we were backwards and forwards roughly every couple of weeks or so, with about a fortnight at a time in Spain. Unusual, perhaps, but it worked well for us. Pre-planned and purchased air tickets to Alicante were good value - best fare £36.50 return. And we live less than ten minutes from the local airport at home. No luggage required, with everything in the van. It was the second winter we'd adopted a fly-camping approach.

At Cuevas Mar we enjoyed meeting up with Adey and Clark, whose photo featured in the last edition. They suggested we join a group of Brits for a social and quiz night in the bar. I think there were more than 40 snowbirds there, both naturists and non-naturists and, to our total amazement, partnered with another couple, we won the quiz! We also briefly met Mike and Wendy Clarke at Cuevas Mar.

It was all going so well, with lots of warm sunny days under the Iberian sun. We flew to Bristol on 5 March, with our final flight to Spain scheduled for 18 March, ready for another couple of weeks in Almeria and then driving the van back to the UK. Readers will probably guess the unplanned outcome - we were safely at home as the pandemic took hold, but with our last flight cancelled by the lockdown, the van was trapped in the garage at Alicante!

By late May and beginning to get twitchy - for a variety of reasons - we bit the bullet and had the van transported home in mid-June. Expensive, yes but all dealt with professionally and we were simply glad to recover the camper and get all of our belongings back! And, ready for some British summer naturist adventures...

Rally 53 - SWOC

Well it might be listed in the Yearbook as Rally 53 but nothing about 2020 is normal is it? This was actually the first of our summer rallies to take place so quite an occasion really. I arranged with the host club and rally officer to attend a couple of days early to give the rally officer, David, a hand with preparations, a bit of grass mowing and re-laying the boules piste.

When the ralliers started arriving in sunshine all was ready. Socially-distanced rallies are strange phenomena, for example just making yourself a drink and not offering to make one for others feels quite selfish, likewise with offering help to get set up, etc, but for now, Covid rules rule. Although the weather was on the whole kind to us, some clouds did leave us

warm but sunless at times, and occasional short showers dampened the ground but not the spirit.



Preparing the boules court

With so many Suntime units and SWOC members in attendance a boules tournament with Covid rules was arranged, and won by Karl and Carole. Covid rules prevented the host club providing its usual afternoon tea on the lawn so a socially-distanced teddy 'bare' picnic took place instead with people bringing their own picnics and a prize awarded for the oldest teddybear, which just happened to be a 60 year old monkey!

Although the clubhouse was out of bounds due to the pandemic, good weather and warm evenings allowed us to sit out chatting and putting the world to rights, (as we do) well after the sun went down.



Looks inviting - just need the sun to come out.

Covid has changed how rallies proceed, but the banter, laughter, and that special Suntime camaraderie far outweighed any downsides. A big thank you to our rally officer, David Poole, and to the host club for making this SWOC rally another one full of happy memories. If you have never been to SWOC before, do give it a try. It's a lovely little club with great members in beautiful surroundings.

Ian Sinclair

Rally 56 - Greenhill Park

We arrived around 1pm on the first day of the rally (early by our standards) only to find that we'd been beaten to it by most of the other ralliers. I guess this just shows how keen most of us were to get rallying again after such a long absence. As is often the case at this site our rally officers were Terry and Lesley, but this time without their mega awning for us to pile into whenever it turns a bit chilly.

It's surprising how quickly we all got used to the "new normal", with socially-distanced coffee mornings and boules sessions. Ken and Wendy even managed to organise a Quiz Night (won by Robert and Pauline) and a Bingo Evening and Terry and Lesley put on a 'spot the intro" music quiz, won by Will.



Socially-distanced boules

The weather during this rally can probably be described as British summer at its most varied, with hot sunshine one minute and thunder, lightning and torrential rain the next. Sunday afternoon was particularly wet and by 9pm, site owner Andy was becoming increasingly concerned about the level of the stream at the bottom of the field. The forecast was predicting heavy overnight rain and those of us pitched in the danger area at the bottom of the field were advised to move to higher ground. Easier said than done when there are awnings, gazebos and tables and chairs to take down or move when it's pitch dark, but with lots of us pitching in to help it wasn't long before those who needed to move were all in a safer place.

Our climate is of course anything but predictable so, almost inevitably, we didn't get a drop of rain overnight and the danger area was perfectly dry the next morning. However, the

following night was a different story. Greenhill Park had little if any overnight rain, but somewhere further upstream clearly did, because by 4am, the stream had burst its banks and the bottom half of our field was rapidly turning into a lake.



"Lake Greenhill"

What happened next involved a stroke of good fortune. Micaela and Philip's caravan had developed a water pump problem, forcing Philip to wander out to fix it. Luckily even though it was still dark he noticed that a couple of units were in imminent danger and was able to warn them in time. It's not every day you find ralliers moving caravans and motorhomes to new pitches in the early hours but as Andy said, flooding in August has never happened before. Finally it's worth noting that the picture above was taken well after daybreak, by which time the water level had dropped considerably.

Geoff and Eileen Heyes

Continental Rallies

The itinerary for next year is essentially the same as the one we had intended to follow in 2020, but without the early rally in Spain at the start of the season. There is of course great uncertainty surrounding what we will or won't be allowed to do regarding foreign travel and of course members have to make up their own minds about what they feel comfortable doing. My opinion at the moment is that I'd only be happy to take part if and when we have an effective Covid-19 vaccine.

Early Summer Continental Rallies.

Centre Naturiste Devèze, Guadonville, Gers, Midi-Pyrénées.

Tuesday 25th May, depart Friday 4th June, 10 nights.

Rally Officer required.

Domaine de la Gagère, Luzy.

Monday 7th June, depart Thursday 17th June, 10 nights.

Rally Officer, Monty & Trina Toplis.

Club du Soleil de Touraine, Cléré-les-Pins.

Monday 21 June, depart Thursday 1st July, 10 nights.

Rally Officer required.

Autumn Continental Rallies.

Lous Suais, Cheissoux, Huat-Vienne, Limousin.

Friday 3rd September, depart Sunday 13th September, 10 nights,

Rally Officer, Monty and Trina Toplis

Le Couderc, Naussannes, Dordogne.

Tuesday 15th September, depart Saturday 25th September, 10 nights,

Rally Officer, Roger and Libby Cook.

Monty Toplis

Winter Rallies

Unfortunately, nobody has volunteered to take over Winter Rally Organiser duties so this year we are proposing a limited programme with locations in the Midlands and the east of the country. It would be great if someone would take over as organiser and find new sites in the south and north west to give us a better balance.

You will notice that we are not returning to Watlington in October this year and are replacing it with a second winter rally at Greenhill Park, as this will give us more opportunities for socialising in the current environment.

Greenhill Park

9th - 12th October

Rally Officers Geoff and Eileen Heyes

Tel: 07770 388622

Site fee £10 per night, no EHU. Indoor get-togethers with social distancing in the "Chicken Shed" may be arranged, this will be subject to an extra charge depending on the numbers taking part.

Greenhill Park Early Christmas

4th - 7th December

Rally Officers Terry and Lesley Jackman

Tel: 01635 529823 or 07505 997533

Site fee £10 per night, no EHU. In addition to the site fee a top-up will be required to pay for the use of the "Chicken Shed" for our fun-packed pre-Christmas activities.

Telford Naturist Club

22nd - 25th January

Rally Officer Terry Gascoyne

Tel: 01773 513230 or 07974 558573

Site fee £18 per night including EHU. Club room and bar will be available, but no toilets or showers.

Stoney Stanton

Stanton Lakes, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire LE9 4JA

12th - 15th February

Rally Officers Malcolm and Maureen Burland

27 Cadle Close, Stoney Stanton LE9 4HD

Tel: 07946 575105 or email mjandmjb@hotmail.com

Last year's site fee £20 per night (+£1 per dog), including EHU and use of toilets and showers. Note: Toilets and showers may not be available depending on guidelines prevailing at the time.

A deposit of £5 per night is needed by the site in addition to your rally fee. This must be sent to the rally officers with your booking form. Alternatively online bookings can be accepted, subject to a promise to pay £5 if you decide to cancel.

Windmill Farm, Baston Fen

Windmill Farm Caravan Park, The Fen, Baston, PE6 9PX

5th - 8th March

Rally Officers Brian and Barbara Morgan

Nil Desperandum, Tongue End, Spalding PE11 3JN

Tel: 01775 670356

Last year's site fee £12 per night including EHU

Some sad news

We heard at the end of July that Ron Wragg had passed away. He and his wife Rita had been members since 1992.

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 ppo@suntreckers.org.uk

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