

# THE TRECKER



Issue 88

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## Editor's Corner

I really don't want to start on a gloomy note so I've been thinking hard about what positives we can take out of this 'year like no other'. Well first of all the club has continued to run smoothly. The committee has kept things going with virtual meetings using video conferencing and the AGM in July was run very successfully in the same way, so all is well on that front.

Monty Toplis also embraced Zoom technology by introducing online coffee mornings at the end of May. These have now been running every Friday and Saturday ever since. Obviously it takes second place to meeting up in person on a rally, but I'm sure all those who've taken part would agree it's a lot better than nothing, even if you do have to provide your own tea and biscuits. As we head towards the end of the year with a second lockdown about to be introduced in England it's also the only way most of us can meet up now and I would encourage anyone who hasn't tried it yet to give it a go. Just contact Monty at [monty.yoga@yahoo.com](mailto:monty.yoga@yahoo.com) or give him a call on 07931 603099 if you need help to get started. There is a link to the Zoom meeting on the Suntreckers Facebook group if you are a member of that. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/213845182043129>

Clearly the highlight of the year was the brief spell in late summer when we were actually able to run rallies. I think I'm right in saying that nine of them actually took place in the short time between the restart at the beginning of August and the introduction of new Covid restrictions in the middle of September. All our social gatherings required that only those sharing a camping unit could sit together as a "bubble", with at least 2m spacing between each one. They weren't quite what we're used to, but as far as I know everyone followed the new guidelines, stayed safe and had a thoroughly good time.

We've also had an excellent response from the membership in sending in rally reports - we even have a couple of duplications. Rather than combining them we've published them all in full, two for the price of one!

I know that some of you were frustrated when the committee decided to cancel the final few rallies and bring the season to an early close, but with ever tighter restrictions being introduced and with regional variations as well, we just didn't see how for a club as sociable as ours we could ensure everyone's safety and stay on the right side of the law.

By the time you read this Christmas won't be far away and I'm sure we're all desperately hoping the Covid infection rate will come down quickly enough to allow some sort of a family gathering on the big day. The new year is always a time for looking forward and you can rest assured in knowing that Steve has once again come up with an exciting rally programme for next year. It's really important to stay positive in these difficult times and keep hoping that things will improve and we'll be able to start rallying again soon.

Geoff Heyes

PPO

## Chairman's Chat

Hello everyone. Well Jenny and I did manage to get to attend a couple of rallies before we were hit with another restriction of our activities, we were at Tything Barn when we heard that meeting of groups of people were being restricted to six again, we were so disappointed as it seemed we were starting to get some sort of normality back into our lives when it was snatched away again, with the Rally Organiser having to call a halt to what few rallies we had left. Tything Barn was a real bonus the weather was absolutely glorious every day we were there, as I am sure you will read further on in the Trecker.

I feel that there is very little else for me to say at the moment other than wishing that you are all keeping well and your spirits remain high during these trying times.

Hopefully we will all have a better year in 2021. Perhaps a cure for the virus will turn up I for one certainly hope so! I will end by wishing you all the very best for Christmas and hopefully a very Happy New Year.

Peter Chapman      Chairman

## Rally Organiser's Report

I hope you are all keeping well. Whilst typing this I am looking at what now appears to be yet another named storm. Let's hope for sunnier days next year.

I have nearly completed the final touches to the 2021 rallying season, having started the process slightly later this year. I normally start just after the gala rally but that was cancelled due to the pandemic, so what was normal in previous years this is now the new normal.

On the upside I hope to be able to offer you a couple of new sites, but it all depends on their suitability for Suntreckers. Currently I am waiting for seven rally dates to be confirmed by the site owners. If they haven't replied soon then I will send out the list asking for rally officer with those dates marked as provisional.

By the time you read this report in the Trecker you may have received the 2021 rally list, which will have been sent out either electronically or by post. Have a good look at it, fill as many of the vacant rally officer posts as you can, but even if you can't run a rally, would you in any case please

**COMPLETE THE FORM AND SEND IT BACK TO ME IN THE STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE OR BY EMAIL BEFORE 5 DEC 2020**

The next time I'll be in touch with you via the Trecker will be sometime in March and I hope to be able to say thanks for the tremendous response in volunteering and that I have had to turn some of you away, but in any case, make sure you all enjoy what is being offered in way of the rallies for 2021.

Don't forget that I mentioned at the AGM that I will be standing down at the next AGM. So unless anyone comes forward there will be no National Rally Organiser. I have also been informed by the Continental Rally Organiser that he is also standing down at the next AGM. You are also aware from the different Treckers and social media that the Winter Rally Organiser has already stood down. So we now REALLY need your help in keeping the club going.

Apart from that everything is fine.

Steve Wagstaff      National Rally Organiser

## Suntrecker Yearbooks

Just a reminder that you will all be receiving your new rally packs for 2021 early in the new year. Although you should remove and destroy the inserts for last year's rallies, ***you must keep your yellow folders as you will only receive the new pages for insertion in future.*** Replacements are available from the Membership Secretary, but there will be a £5 charge.

## UK Rally Reports

### Rallies 57 and 59 - Turnpost Farm and Lower Poulza Post

Peter and I recently attended rallies at Turnpost Farm and Lower Poulza Post – it was absolutely great to be out and about in the Moho again after all this time, with somewhere worth going. We very much enjoyed our (socially distanced) socialising and some games of boules both of which we have absolutely missed. Been that long since I've chucked a boule I was pleased to discover they were still in working condition, though my right shoulder still objects sometimes! (I remember that...) Whilst we were at Turnpost it was John and Janet's Golden Wedding Anniversary which fortunately John Barnett the Rally Officer had found out. He had brought a card which he presented to them on everyone's behalf and they got a big round of applause from the assembled company. It was also a first rally for two new members, Colin & Maria so they got the usual card and applause too. Despite the wind, John kept it all going as well as possible in the usual manner. We also met a couple who had been members of the same landed club as ourselves, who had moved house to another area and another such club before either of us joined there. They'd also been members of Suntreckers for many years. The field however is not at all suitable for boules, so none of that.

At Lower Poulza though there were no anniversaries or new members we again met some very long-standing members of Suntreckers for the first time as well as reacquainting ourselves with some we've not seen for ages. One couple we didn't think we knew arrived and the four of us all said, "Ooh we know you – but sorry, can't remember your names!". As well as the boules there, we had a couple of coffee mornings, a cream tea and a barbecue and have to thank Eddie & Pat for their hard work in making it so enjoyable. Again it was very windy but there were a couple of areas where it was more sheltered, so they were used for the 'sitting about' things. Where there's a will, there's usually a way!

Jenny Chapman

### Rally 59 - Lower Poulza Post. Wet & Wild

There was a time when the expression "Wet and Wild" would have got the adrenaline rushing. Not this time, though: it was that storm "Francis" who brought gales and rainstorms to our haven in Cornwall, Lower Poulza Post.

With all facilities out of bounds and entry to others' units prohibited it promised to prove a trifle tricky to run a social event. Ha! Not with Suntreckers. Against all the odds and thanks to some serious shower dodging we managed (byo of course) coffee mornings most days, moving our base to suit the wind, and boules most afternoons, although the ground was rather soggy. Unusually, the evenings were quiet.

A let-up on the Saturday gave us the opportunity to have a busy afternoon with boules followed by a cream tea followed by the only barbecue of the entire week - all socially distanced and appropriately sanitised. We also had a fish and chip evening, the local pub, The Old Wainhouse, supplying rattling good food and value. Despite the storm there were opportunities to 'take the sun' and some members even managed to catch a bit of a tan.

We have to thank Tilly Clark, the site owner, for opening up the site against her instincts and for expanding our quota of spaces. Quite rightly, Tilly and Derek, her on-site manager, had issued us with Covid rules and had placed sanitisers everywhere, even at the main gate. I'm pleased to report that Suntreckers complied with all rules and regulations - see you there next year.

Eddie Silk

## Rallies 67 and 70 - Adventures in Wales

Had everything gone to plan this year we'd probably have spent most of September in France, so now it was time for something completely different. We hadn't been to the Principality for a good while so this seemed an ideal time to cross the English-Welsh border instead of the Channel and join a couple of rallies in South Wales.

We took the scenic route to the Dolcoed rally, shunning the M4 and Severn Bridge in favour of the A40 via Oxford, Gloucester, Monmouth and Brecon, with a slight detour through the Forest of Dean for a leisurely overnight stop. Somewhere along the way we realised that one of us had forgotten to pack the wine supply. The person in question then had a difficult choice to make - either endure an extremely abstemious holiday or enter a supermarket for the first time since the lockdown started in March. This led to a very stressful half hour in Aldi, where social distancing seemed to be an alien concept. Wine does have sanitising properties doesn't it?

Our cares melted away when we arrived at Dolcoed, where we were given a warm welcome by Mike the owner and were very impressed with the cleanliness of both the sanitary facilities and the site in general. For those of you who haven't been there, the site is blessed with a large indoor leisure area, with darts, table football and pool, as well as a full-sized snooker table. It also proved ideal for socially distanced indoor gatherings, with plenty of both space and ventilation, just what we needed for the occasional evening get-together as well as the odd coffee morning when the weather wasn't behaving itself.

Rally officers David and Margaret did an excellent job of looking after us in challenging times, arranging social events on numerous occasions. Unfortunately, they had to leave the site to attend a funeral just before the end of the rally but still managed to return in time to bring us all fish and chips on the last night. Many thanks to them both for that, particularly as the food was of a very high standard as well as being served in individual cartons to reduce the need for mingling - a big plus in this Covid environment.

Sadly, the news reports were telling us that the Coronavirus was beginning to raise its ugly head again, with cases rising in several parts of the country and a new lockdown being introduced in the Caerphilly area. There was talk of introducing new restrictions throughout the UK and those of us about to move on to the Tything Barn rally were beginning to wonder if we would be able to continue with it.

We were the last couple to leave Dolcoed on the Thursday morning, having planned our departure time to allow us to reach Carmarthen in time for a 'click and collect' slot we had pre-booked at the local Tesco store. All went smoothly, albeit a bit more challenging in a motorhome than in a small car and we reached the Tything Barn rally in early afternoon. It's a lovely site in many ways but the sanitary facilities don't compare well with those at Dolcoed. To be fair, they've been around for a lot longer and are looking a bit "tired". I'm sure most of us wouldn't mind this too much, but more worryingly the elderly owners don't have any wardens to help them at the moment and there didn't seem to be much if any regular cleaning going on. The provision of hand-sanitiser in a few places would have helped, but we quickly decided to stick with the facilities in our van and get on with enjoying the rally.

Our rally officers Pat and Eddie did a great job of keeping us all amused. There were no indoor facilities for us here but luckily the weather was improving and we were usually able to meet up



*David shows off his kayaking skills*

outside, with coffee mornings in various locations - partly to avoid annoying our non-Suntrecker neighbours too much and partly so we could enjoy the backdrop of the lagoon.



*Pat cutting the cake*

Impromptu boules games took place on several afternoons and on Sunday afternoon our rally officers treated us all to a slice of cake, cut and served under Covid-secure conditions.

By now we had all heard the news that the “rule of six” had been introduced in England and that our committee had been forced to take the decision to cancel the rest of the rally programme for this year. Similar measures were expected to follow in Wales, but on Monday morning we heard that the Welsh Assembly had decided to allow gatherings of up to thirty people outdoors, so we were reprieved and we could continue as before, just making sure that we stuck to our social-distancing guidelines.

This allowed Pat and Eddie to continue with their programme, including an early evening ‘sundowner’ by the estuary at high tide on Monday and a fish and chip evening (kindly organised by Ray and June) on Tuesday. Unfortunately, we had already set off for home by then and missed out, but we did hear later that most people rated the Dolcoed fish and chips more highly so we weren’t too disappointed after all!

Eileen and Geoff Heyes

## **Rally 70 - Tything Barn (version 2)**

Camping, caravanning and motor homing is so much more pleasant inclement weather. This rally followed Dolcoed where they had a pretty grotty week – until the final Wednesday. On that day Pat and I travelled the M4 from Swindon; from Newport to Carmarthen the windscreen wipers never stopped but miraculously by the time we reached Tything Barn it was proper kit-off weather.

Thanks to HM Government reinforcing the Covid rules on the Tuesday evening and to the previous week’s weather we lost a couple of ralliers but we still had 14 units. Now that presented a problem for us; Joe and June Folder, the owners, were now back in control and determined to run the site in their normal relaxed way, one of the site’s charms. Had our full 16 turned up we would have had a huge problem. First, find enough pitches to satisfy the requirement for 100% hook-up. We just about managed that with units in the 3 fields and some having to share a hook-up. Thanks to the previous week’s rain we had a few ruts dug by sinking and spinning wheels but generally it worked out.

Once again activities were restricted to daytime so we changed the routines a bit. We took one coffee morning by the lagoon but didn’t repeat it because one or two were unable to get there. So our tea and cake afternoon was taken among the units.



*A closely contested match at Tything Barn.*

Sundowners at high tide on the foreshore was 100% attended and much enjoyed with a masked-up group photo session. People drifted down there later in the week (and later in the day of course), with high water coinciding with sunset. It really is a beautiful site.

Thanks to Ray and June for dealing with the chippy, most of us eating outside in the fading sun. Again, see you next year, hopefully without masks and restrictions.

Eddie Silk



*Sundowners in the sunshine by the estuary.*

## Welcome!

We're very pleased to give a warm welcome to the following new members, who joined us since 1 August:

John and Sharon E	Dorset
David and Jane H	Worcestershire
Steve H	Norfolk
Roger H	County Durham
Antony and Dawn I	Swansea
Graham G	Cheshire
Alan and Dee S	Surrey
Kim G	Wiltshire

## Your club needs you!

As you will have read elsewhere in this *Trecker*, both Steve Wagstaff, our national rally organiser and Monty Toplis, our continental rally organiser, will be standing down at next year's AGM. We also need a volunteer for the vacant position of winter rally organiser.

There will be a full programme of UK and continental rallies in place for summer 2021, but after that there will be nothing without new people in these jobs.

## 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](mailto: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.