

THE TRECKER



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Editor's Corner

We have a bumper issue for you this time with a good selection of UK rally reports and for the first time in three years news of what it's like to travel in Europe again as the early continental rally season gets underway. I'm writing this from Domaine de la Gagère at Luzy, in the granite heart of Burgundy, where rally 29 is in full swing. The sun is shining and life is pretty good at the moment. We can also look forward to the return of the gala rally and our 40th anniversary celebrations, which you can read about on page 2.

However, I do urge you all to read Eddie's report on page 2 carefully, as he has given us a very lucid description of the difficulties we are facing this year, with far too many rallies being cancelled at the last minute owing to a lack of bookings. I wouldn't normally use this column to plug an individual rally, but in view of Eddie's analysis I'm going to urge you think about booking rally 48 at Liverpool Sun and Air, which starts shortly after the gala rally finishes. Despite being a great club with good facilities, where we're always made very welcome by the members, it's yet another rally in danger of falling by the wayside. As Eddie has said, "Use it or lose it."

I want to finish by paying tribute to Steve Wagstaff, who recently had to step down as chairman because of health problems. Not only did Steve organise all our UK rallies for more years than I've been a member, he and his wife Tess also ran our annual gala rally on many occasions. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing Steve and Tess very best wishes for the future and let's hope they're able to join us on a rally again before long.

Geoff Heyes - PPO

Chairman's Chat

Well, I never expected to be writing this! Many of you will have read or heard a few weeks ago that Steve had to announce his immediate resignation as Chairman due to health issues and that Tess would also stand down as Company Secretary. I am sure you will agree both Tess and Steve have given a lot to Suntreckers over the years and their input will be sorely missed. We wish them well and hope some improvement to Steve's health is achieved over the coming weeks. So that is why I am "standing in" and Anita Hodgson, who was waiting in the wings to take over as company secretary at the AGM, has very kindly agreed to start the job early – welcome Anita.

It has been a very odd year thus far. The committee has kept the cogs turning and Eddie as NRO came up with a fabulous 2022 rally programme. On a sad note, we have seen far too many rallies poorly supported resulting in several last-minute cancellations. However, I remain optimistic that the remaining rallies will be better attended and the year will go out on a high.

The Gala Rally, Suntreckers 40th anniversary, will be a great weekend – read more about it below.

Wishing you all a great summer 2022 with friends new and old on a rally or two.

Alan Ingram - Chairman

Chairman

Rally Organiser's Report

Your Club - Use it or lose it!

This is my last piece for the Trecker as your NRO before I hand over to Martin. It's been a difficult, rewarding yet disappointing year. Of the 77 rallies arranged for the summer season, 7 never got off the starting blocks because no-one would take them on as Rally Officer. At the time of writing we are up to rally 32 and already 5 rallies have been cancelled owing to lack of support and others are at risk of going the same way.

Those who came forward to run rallies for the first time have enjoyed the experience and are keen to do it again. If you don't believe me just read the report on the Woodside rally on page 7. It's a lot less daunting since I've cut the paperwork to a minimum and it really is very rewarding, so please, let's be overwhelmed by the response next year. A couple of clubs agreed to early rallies but failed to tell me their facilities would be limited owing to their 'season' starting later. To those who were inconvenienced I apologise and will pass a warning on to Martin.

Why do venues open their doors to us to the exclusion of others? Because there is – or should be – a financial advantage. But if we continue to fail them by cancelling bookings to which we have mutually committed or by failing to turn up in adequate numbers, we'll lose them, one by one. New venues are unbelievably difficult to come by; this year we have two, Woodside Field and Wansford Grange. Woodside, rally 25, was well attended and loved by all. Wansford follows on from the Gala rally and I hope it too will attract a good turnout.

Here I owe an apology to those new members who booked their first rally only to see it cancelled; not a good introduction but I hope you'll end up enjoying a fulfilling membership.

The Gala rally and AGM are at Candy Farm, Doncaster, quite a way north of our usual venue which is no longer available. I hope the distance (for some) won't deter you from coming and enjoying the event and in so doing encouraging the committee and helpers who work so tirelessly on your behalf.

Don't forget, use it or lose it.

Eddie Silk - National Rally Organiser

News from the Webmaster

Nothing much to report to the members this time other than to say that any rally changes or updates since the yearbook was printed can be found on the website, just follow the link at the top of the rally list page.

Alan Ingram - Webmaster

Gala Rally and AGM 2022

After a hiatus because of you know what the Gala Rally is back and what a Gala we hope it will be to mark the 40th Anniversary of Suntreckers. Bookings can be made online or on paper and some electric pitches are still available.

It will be held at new site this year. We will have a building for our use throughout the weekend, with a stage and gantry lighting for the entertainment. We must remember though that later in the year it will be used as a grain store, so it is imperative that no glass or breakables are taken anywhere near it.

The theme for the weekend is Harry Potter, which is a carry-over from the 2020 event which couldn't go ahead. There will be activities familiar from previous Galas and some new ones to ensure you are fully entertained!

We have live music booked for both Friday and Saturday evenings. On Friday we have “True Vintage”, a rock-and-roll male duet, then on Saturday we have “The Beat and The Bear”, a three-piece professional band to entertain us all.

There will be the usual Grand Raffle where we have a Cadac gas BBQ, Kindle and a set of competition boules as the main prizes. Tickets bought in 2020 and 2021 will still be valid.

So here’s a quick reminder for those who will be attending.....

- Don’t forget to bake a cake and bring it for the cake competition.
- Bring your photos for both the Ken Webster (this year’s them is ‘Travel’) and general photographic competitions.
- Additional donations for the raffle.
- Books, CDs and DVDs for the book-sale stand, not forgetting a large bag for taking home the ones you buy.

If you haven’t booked already then do it now. Strictly no arrivals before noon on Thursday, the start of the Gala Rally.

UK Rally Reports

Rally 4 – Broadlands

Having been to most of the recent winter rallies we were really looking forward to the first “summer” one of the year for some time. So we got a bit of a shock when we came to set off in driving sleet. We endured a rather unpleasant journey to Norfolk, with the motorhome being battered by frequent showers and strong winds, making it necessary to travel at reduced speed on the motorway.

We were quite relieved to get to our pitch at last and get the kettle and heating on and make ourselves comfortable as the sleet showers continued at regular intervals, always short-lived, and usually quickly followed by bright sunshine.



Is this a summer rally?



or a winter one?



One of our rally officers enjoying a drink and getting to know the site warden.

Experienced rally officers Mary and Kevin had organised a full programme for us, with coffee mornings on Friday, Saturday and Monday as well as afternoon tea with cake and a quiz on Sunday. We were also well entertained on Saturday evening, when the Broadlands members had organised an “All Saints” disco for everyone. This was actually a rearranged event, as the St Patrick’s Day disco planned for the usual date had to be cancelled at the last minute as the DJ had contracted Covid.

The rally had been our first visit to Broadlands and we definitely intend to return, preferably with real summer weather and at a time when the pool is open.

Geoff Heyes

Rally 9 – Liverpool Sun & Air Society

We had a very good rally at Liverpool Sun & Air Society (LSAS) over the Easter weekend, with some lovely warm sunshine (and a few cloudy, breezy moments). As Rally Officers, Ray and June had organised a full programme of events and meals for Suntreckers and the LSAS club members. June is also Social Secretary of LSAS, as well as helping to cook the meals for everyone over the weekend.

Good Friday started with a coffee morning and hot cross buns, then later the option to order a takeaway meal, with the hot tub and sauna in use all evening. The LSAS members included us in everything they were doing, so that made us feel very welcome.

Saturday started with coffee and more hot cross buns, as well as biscuits, so the diet plans were somewhat disrupted and there was no respite in the evening, with a three-course meal served in the clubhouse. The raffle after dinner was well supported and Suntreckers managed 3 prizes, so that was fair.

It was especially good to see some LSAS families enjoying the facilities and games. The club is a perfect safe haven for the children and they were enthusiastic about the Easter egg hunt, egg rolling and sports organised by Ray and June on Easter Sunday. Yet more calories were consumed that afternoon, with tea and home-made cakes, accompanied by ample Prosecco supplied by LSAS members Nick and Jane (ex-Suntrecker), who were celebrating their ruby wedding anniversary.

Monday was competition day, with boules and shuffleboard in the afternoon following yet another meal at lunchtime from the club. Suntrecker Margaret and Alan made it to the final of the boules, but just lost to Anne and Dave of LSAS in a very close match.

Overall, a very good rally at LSAS and I am sure we will rally there and enjoy their excellent hospitality and facilities in future.

John Furley

Rally 17 – Sungrove

We enjoyed a lovely rally at Sungrove during the early May bank holiday weekend. It was so nice to meet up with friends again after the winter and dare I say it, maybe the start of a more normal rally season.

While at Sungrove we celebrated my birthday. I'm now as old as The Beatles song, "Will you still love me, when I'm..."

Richard and Stella the rally officers worked really hard to make it a very social event and we enjoyed lots of cosy gatherings in the clubhouse.

Micaela Stafford



Rally 21 – Cambridge Outdoor Club

We had an enjoyable Rally, with reasonable weather, and as usual the club was very welcoming, and provided us with an excellent meal on the Saturday Night. Another bonus was that the pool is now heated, and I for one had a swim every day.

The boules competition was won by an excellent team, Joe and myself! However, as I thought it inappropriate to present myself with a prize, I handed Joe a half-full bottle of red wine! Strangely enough, he didn't seem impressed, but I did have a full bottle secreted behind my back!

The Chinese Auction was its usual mayhem, with people trying to hide coveted prizes under the table, and everyone enjoyed the barbecue, then on the final evening we had fish and chips, followed by a quiz, won by Joe, Karen, June and Francis, with an impressive 29/35, and yes it was quite difficult!



Worthy winners of the boules competition



Figure 1 Quiz night

I would like to thank the club for its hospitality, and the Treckers for being a lovely group. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves.

Kathy Genn

Rally 25 - Woodside Field

Being new members of Suntreckers and only having attended 3 rallies before, we had allocated our bookings for this year including Rally 25 at Woodside Field, Old Sodbury, a new site for Suntreckers to be run by Eddie and Pat Silk, who we had met previously and were really looking forward to seeing again.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, we found this rally was likely to be cancelled as Eddie and Pat had to pull out unexpectedly, so we decided to come out of our comfort zone and step in to run it at the last minute. We had absolutely no idea what was expected of us and as Woodside Field was a new site to Suntreckers, no-one was able to give us the heads up!

Running two businesses and generally having very little time to ourselves, we felt we were really not yet ready to run any rally and to be honest, we were finding it all a bit daunting, but now we can honestly say we really enjoyed the experience!



On our arrival at Woodside Field, having had problems with the business and struggling to get away early on Wednesday, we met Brian the owner who showed us around the beautiful CL site. We then got stuck halfway up the slope (as we were not going fast enough), so not a good start!

We soon got settled and could admire our beautiful surroundings, took our dogs Millie and Lottie for a walk around the field and through the woods, but to be honest we were both not particularly looking forward to our stay and running the rally and setting out the rally field. However, by Thursday afternoon the majority of units had arrived and settled in and our lovely quiet field soon became our first rally.

Yes, it took us out of our comfort zone, but everyone was happy to give us advice and support us. There is actually very little organisation to sort out and everyone was so friendly and helpful. We were also extremely lucky to have two days of beautiful sunshine and the owners Brian and Helen were both very friendly and accommodating, even selling fresh hen and duck eggs.

We are now very pleased we ran this rally and are looking forward to returning to Woodside in future and even running more rallies. It really isn't as frightening as we thought and there is a lot of help if you want it.

There are also some added bonuses:

- a). You get to have the pick of the pitches even if you find out later you didn't get it quite right. Ann got the best position for all day sun!
- b) The best bit... You actually get to know everyone.
- c) You get to meet the owners too
- d) We also enjoyed having the field to ourselves at the beginning and at the end, being the first on and last off the site.

All in all, it was a great experience and one we hope to have again!

Dee and Alan Stannard

Continental Rally Report

Rally 23 – Deveze

As this was our first venture abroad with the campervan since the dreaded Covid and Brexit changes kicked in, we did wonder how smoothly things might go. In fact, it was an absolute 'doddle'. The only extra documentation needed for France being the NHS Travel Covid Passes which we had already uploaded to the Channel Tunnel website as part of the API (Advanced Passenger Information) that now seems standard for all foreign trips.

We ensured we had no meat or meat products, milk, or milk products on board as these are now not allowed into France but nobody at the tunnel terminal actually checked our van. The only inspection done was the usual pre-tunnel gas check. The passports were given a cursory once over but were stamped IN by the French border control so we will need to ensure that we get them stamped OUT when we leave the EU, in our case via Bilbao in Spain.

It seems the Brits are still being cautious about returning to France as we saw only 2 UK registered motorhomes from Calais all the way to Deveze, far less than we would have expected based on our last venture to France pre-Covid. However, the Dutch seem far less concerned – we saw a lot of them out on the road. The situation 'on the ground' is very similar to that in the UK, most people aren't wearing masks, but some are so if you are going into a shop or market & still feel happier wearing a mask, you can do so and not feel the odd one out. We can only say we felt just as comfortable in France as at home, possibly more so as France is a big country with lots of space and if you visit the supermarkets in the lunch hours they are virtually deserted.

The site at Deveze was lovely, with views over open farmland and although the weather on the first couple of days was a bit 'iffy' it settled down to warm sunny weather from then on with 25-31 degrees each day except for the last night and morning when we had some light rain. Both Mylene & Jean-Pierre who run the site speak very good English and are very friendly. This meant the checking in process was stress free despite our lack of French.

The site itself is on a sloping hillside with terraced pitches, the pitches we used having views over the adjacent valley. The toilet/shower blocks were kept scrupulously clean and the hot showers were free. There is a bar selling drinks and ice creams, but the grocery shop and restaurant isn't normally open until later in the season. However due to a large French Naturist Motor Bikers Group visiting for the weekend the Restaurant was to be opened up for them on

Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We were invited to join them for the three meals, all of which were to be local/regional dishes. As Thursday's menu was to include andouille sausage, known by us all as shall we say, 'an acquired taste', we universally decided to give Thursday a miss but joined them for the other 2 days.

For us personally the meals proved the high spot of the rally. Although the meals were supposed to start at 7.30pm in truly Gallic style the aperitifs started at 8.00pm, the meal at 9.20 and we finished the 4th and final course at 11.45pm, all washed down with an unending supply of red & rose wine included in the fixed price menu! The bikers were in high spirits (in both senses of the word!) with lots of noise and laughter. Having finished the meal, the tables and chairs were cleared away and they started the disco! You've got to give it to the French for stamina. We however, being replete with French cooking and wine, staggered back to our camper and went to bed where we slept like logs, untroubled by the disco which was too far away to disturb us. But then again it might just have been all the wine!

We had been concerned at having 50+ bikers joining us on site, wondering if we were to be visited by the local Naked Chapter of Hells Angels but not so, these guys and gals turned up with some very exclusive rigs – usually a big expensive motorbike in a trailer towed behind a motorhome. It made for some extra interest and contrary to what might be expected, no great noise even when they went off late morning for a tour round the local area.

As our contribution to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Thursday was put by for our own street party with suitable Union Jack bunting, tablecloths, napkins etc and Monty resplendent in a red, white and blue bowler hat. The day started with Monty doing a full English breakfast for the party goers with Jeff & Val putting on a cream tea in the afternoon. No doubt the French thought we were quite mad but that just made it even more fun!



Regretfully all good things come to an end and Friday saw us splitting up and going our separate ways. Before leaving home, if we had any concerns about how this first continental trip and rally might go, these proved groundless. The weather was better than back home, the company was great, driving on the French roads was a pleasure – what's not to like? Suffice to say we are now thinking of changing our plans for September and coming back for more of the same.

Jeff & Val Pearce

BN National Pétanque Tournament 2022



Team Suntreckers

Two pairs of Suntreckers competed at the BN National Pétanque Tournament, which took place over the weekend of 29 April – 2 May at Blackthorns Sun Club in Bedfordshire. The competition is normally held every year (pandemic permitting), where teams of 2 people, either BN members or members of affiliated clubs can compete for the BN National Petanque trophy. This event is also a qualifying event for the INF International Pétanque competition, which is held annually in various naturist clubs all over Europe. This year the INF event in September will be hosted by Sonnensee, near Hanover in Germany.

Blackthorns made us all very welcome, with meals available from Friday evening until Monday morning, an evening quiz and an entertainer. The competition was played across 11 temporary pistes of somewhat variable quality, with 5 games on Saturday and

3 on Sunday morning. Saturday was cool to begin with, but once the sun shone, we were happy to play as naturists should. The main final was played by the two top pairs on Sunday afternoon with spectators from Blackthorns and the other players braving the very cool temperatures and the strong breeze to watch a closely fought match between Lee and Jane of Blackthorns and the eventual winners, Phil and Marion (ex-Suntrecker).

There were 20 teams competing this time, each one representing their own club for the honour of winning a 'Best Club' trophy. In the past, this trophy has been won many times by Suntreckers, but on this occasion we could only manage 3rd place as several Suntrecker members elected to represent their own clubs. The overall club winner was Springwood, who always field a very strong team.

The best Suntreckers team was Rae and Ken, who were placed 8th and won the Suntreckers shield. Lyn and I were 16th, but we won 3 games, did not lose any games with zero points and overall had a very good weekend.

For any BN members, there are numerous photos in the BN Gallery at: <https://www.bn.org.uk/gallery/album/6146-bn-national-petanque-competition-2022/?page=2>



John Furley

Suntrecker Flags

There are currently 3 types of Suntrecker flags, a 60 cm (2 ft) square logo with a green border for committee members, a yellow border for Rally Officers and a new 40cm (16 in) borderless flag for any Suntrecker member to fly. In the past, they have been hand made by members, particularly Ian Sinclair most recently, for which we are very grateful, but we have now found a very reasonably priced commercial source of flags for Suntreckers.

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

The member flag is now available for purchase at £4 (£5 if you want it posted) from the Equipment Officer, Terry Gascoyne, so if you want one, please see him at a rally, contact him by email: equip@suntrecker.org.uk or see his contact details in the Yearbook. Terry will be bringing some flags to the Gala Rally at Candy Farm in July, so if you want to save on postage, order one now and collect it at the Gala. If you bought a flag and introduced just one new

membership to earn the £5 renewal discount, you could recover the cost of the flag and have a pound for yourself!



Committee Flag



Rally Officer Flag



Member Flag

John Furley - Membership Secretary

A warm welcome

We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to the following members who have joined us since the end of March and we look forward to seeing them on many rallies in future!

John L	Lincolnshire
Paul & Debbie J	Essex
Simon W	IOW
Connor B	Shropshire
David & Anne F	Devon

Adventures of Fiona the fridge

We left Fiona in a menacing mood at the end of the last issue, where she would run normally on both mains and 12v electricity but liked to make up her own mind when it came to running on gas. A habitation service had failed to improve matters as Fiona enjoyed the extra attention and behaved impeccably.

However, on her first outing, she was up to her old tricks again. Her gas burner fired up automatically not long after switching off the engine on arrival at her first rally of the new season, only to stop working sometime later, on this occasion in the early hours. There was no EHU at the site, so her owners woke up to the sound of dripping water from the contents of the rapidly defrosting freezer section.

A phone call to the habitation service people brought only an apologetic "Hmm, we don't normally mess around with automatic three-way fridges, they can be very awkward." However, progress was made soon after Fiona's return home, when her owners located a mobile service engineer who seemed happy to tackle fridge problems. "I can call round tomorrow and take a look. Probably only needs a new thermocouple. They're not very expensive so I could fit one if you like".

Good as his word, he arrived the next morning and set to work. Not long after he announced "I have good news and bad news. The good news is I've located the problem. The bad news is it wasn't the thermocouple. I'm afraid it will be rather more costly. Don't worry though, I won't charge you anything until I've fixed it." *To be continued...*

Anonymous

Death of a member

Sadly, we have heard that Steve Hess, who joined Suntimeckers in August 2020, died suddenly in May this year after a short illness.

Advertising in the Trecker

The question of members being able to advertise in the Trecker was discussed at the last committee meeting when it was agreed that we should allow this, strictly for members only, subject to the following guidelines:

- Editor to decide on whether there is sufficient space remaining in the Trecker to allow publication.
- The title/heading should fit within a single line.
- Maximum of 100 words including contact details.
- No repeat of the same advert within approximately 12 months, allowing for variation in Trecker publication dates.
- Acceptance subject to editor/committee approval.

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 to John and Lyn for printing and sending out the paper version. Also, thanks to Alan for putting it on the website.

Mates Rates for Accommodation at Costa Natura, Spain

We have a one-bedroom self-catering apartment in Costa Natura, near Estepona in Southern Spain, which is let and serviced by the resident agency. Open all year, on site there are restaurant, snacks kiosk, pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, boules, volleyball etc. To enjoy this entirely naturist Mediterranean beach-side paradise, we can arrange discounted lets to members of Suntimeckers.

Fly into Malaga or Gibraltar.

Check out the website www.costanatura.com then Apartment No 16 for all details and calendar.

To book, first ring Pat and Eddie Silk, 07833 896608 or 01793 871216