

THE TRECKER



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Editor's Corner

I know it's not like me to be serious for too long, but as we approach the end of another year I've been reflecting on how different things are to when we first joined Suntreckers back in 2014. Little did we know then that by now we'd have left the EU and there would be a limit on how many days we can spend in Europe. We've also lived through a global pandemic, have a horrible war in Ukraine and are now facing unprecedented energy costs and a cost-of-living crisis.

In times like this, family and friends become even more important. Luckily, we've had no Covid restrictions this year, the weather has been mostly good and we've been able to take full advantage, attending several rallies in both UK and France and meeting up with friends old and new. There's much uncertainty surrounding our continental rallies as we have no volunteers to take over from Monty, but as you can read later, we have an exciting proposal from Geoff Cooke, our new PPO, which involves working with a professional travel company to organise naturist rallies in Europe in future.

The new continental rally programme isn't finalised yet and so doesn't appear in the provisional rally list for 2023, which potential rally officers will have by now. Let's try to make next year a bumper one in terms of rally attendance. Martin has put a great programme together, so please make the effort to be a rally officer somewhere if you can and, above all, let's get the attendance back up and avoid all the cancellations we suffered last year.

Geoff Heyes
Editor – The Trecker

Chairman's Chat

Well what a year it has been. Clearly the lows, with great sadness, was to see the unusually high number of rallies cancelled due to lack of attendance. These included rallies that previously have been oversubscribed. Many suggestions have been put forward to explain this and I doubt there is one single reason. However, I really hope it will not be repeated in 2023. On the positive side several rallies were fully booked, we had a great 40th Anniversary Gala Rally and fantastic weather for the majority of the summer. I have been on several rallies this year chatting to many people and seeing them enjoying the Suntrecker spirit. It is a great disappointment that more members were not out there to enjoy it with them. The Rally Organiser is busy putting together the 2023 schedule and I appeal to you to make the most of it so we do not repeat the number of cancelled rallies. Planning for the 2023 Gala is in progress, with some changes in that it will be a 5-day rally with a very full programme. Details will be shared as soon as we can. It will start on Wednesday 19 July 2023 so put it in the diary now to make sure you can be there.

Alan Ingram
Chairman

Rally Organiser's Report

The rally list is now complete and I will be contacting the sites again later this year to try to get the most up to date charges for the Yearbook. Following a recent committee meeting there will now be a standard rally fee of £7 per unit for rallies, with no distinction between couples and singles.

We have a new rally site close to St Ives thanks to Rae Argent. All the rallies are numbered in time order therefore if you choose a rally to be the Officer, which is not the most difficult thing to do, the number of it shouldn't change. It's been an interesting challenge for me because we only joined in 2020 and haven't been to many of the sites yet. However, the ones we have visited were all very enjoyable. This year's weather was excellent for getting an overall tan, let's hope next year is similar and many of you get booked on rallies, which is what the club exists for.

Unfortunately, there are no continental rallies on the list because no one has volunteered to organise them, but we can announce an exciting proposal for a new way of handling the club's European travels starting in 2023, which you can read about in the next article from Geoff Cooke.

Coming back to the provisional UK rally list, as this goes to print I have 24 positive responses and several "can't do's", which is not very encouraging. Remember the only way to guarantee that your favourite rally goes ahead is for you to volunteer to be the rally officer, which is as easy as you wish to make it. Putting on one coffee morning is the only requirement, after that it's up to you.

Martin Hodgson
National Rally Organiser

Europe 2023 update

As we no longer have a Continental Rally Organiser, the Committee has agreed that we ask Alan Rogers Ltd, a travel agent involved in both naturist holidays and the organisation of international caravan and motorhome rallies, to work with us to offer something in Europe in 2023. This will replace the continental rallies that the club has arranged previously and it will give us an international product with a new dimension. We will then have something to offer next year while we consider our options for 2024.

There are many benefits of working with a professional agent. They have a stronger negotiating power than we do, they are insured and ABTA bonded, and they have a permanent office to deal with the ongoing and sometimes time-consuming planning process. I started working as a professional tour operator in 1986 and retired earlier this year, placing me in a strong position to work with the Alan Rogers team, and to ensure that we have a good continental offering. Sheelagh and I have agreed to act as Rally Officers to maximise the benefits we will accrue from the new working method. If the rallies are a success, Suntreckers will be in a strong position to recruit a new continental rally officer who can continue working with Alan Rogers to prepare and run a spring and autumn international season in 2024. Information about Alan Rogers and their rally group can be found on their website at: [Alan Rogers Rallies](https://rallies.alanrogers.com) (<https://rallies.alanrogers.com>).

A big advantage of working with Alan Rogers is that any rallies they organise for us would be promoted on their website. As these would be their only naturist rallies, we would have a good opportunity to recruit new members.

Having listened to the comments of a number of Treckers who have attended recent continental rallies, we are planning a 16-night holiday that will visit three campsites. It is anticipated that five or six nights will be spent at each location, and they will all be located

near to attractions that can be accessed either by bike or public transport. These arrangements should work equally well for both caravan and motorhome users with adequate time on each site to relax as well as explore. The distance between the sites will be a comfortable drive, and the journey will start and end a reasonable distance from channel ferry ports or the tunnel. The rallies will be bookable with or without channel crossings, and channel crossings can be arranged on a preferred departure that fits in with the rallies or changed if you prefer to extend your stay. The dates selected are from 16 August to 01 September 2023, starting in high season but ending in the shoulder season, striking a balance between cost and weather. They may change by a day or two, but we will do our best to hold them so that you can plan accordingly. This programme differs from the greater distances that have been travelled in recent years, with shorter stays at each site, an appropriate way to develop the new venture, with the opportunity for more distant destinations later.

The camping season in Europe recently came to an end, and most of the campsite staff are taking a well-earned break. This is delaying our planning as some of the locations we would like to include are not contactable until January. As soon as we can finalise availability and prices for our preferred sites you will be sent comprehensive information.

Please keep these plans in mind as you plan your overseas trip for next year. It is important to maintain our continental offering and this can only happen if the 2023 initiative succeeds with at least ten units booking. Sheelagh and I will be first on the list, we look forward to welcoming you on-board.

Geoff Cooke
PPO

UK Rally Reports

Rally 67 – Heritage



Tree-hugging walk

A number of us arrived at the Heritage gate under very black clouds and a heavy rainstorm, but as we have learned this is part of the joy of Suntrecker rallying. Greeted by our Rally Officer David at the gate we were guided through the Heritage registration process, which appears to be more complex than most. Once on our appointed pitch we were supplied with a very welcome cup of tea and biscuits by Noreen. Heritage rallies are always a very relaxed affair, but just to keep us on our toes David came around with a multiple picture quiz to get the brains active during our stay.

Heritage has a heated outdoor pool which is always well used, also a large glass conservatory attached to the club house, very useful in inclement weather. A very welcome afternoon tea was held in the conservatory one afternoon, as usual the weather was unsettled.

The obligatory Boules competition was arranged in knockout form carried out over three days. It came

as no surprise that Lennie and Yvonne were the overall winners.

A Suntreckers Quiz arranged by David was held one evening with Heritage members invited to join in. A good number of teams enjoyed a varied-subject quiz. The winners were declared to be a table of Heritage members, an evening enjoyed by all.

David considered that we had been too relaxed during the five days so arranged a morning walk on the last day around the forest that surrounds the site. A tradition of these walks is tree hugging around a suitable tree selected by Noreen. The photo shows members connecting with nature.

Our thanks must go to David and Noreen for running this rally, a very pleasant and relaxing five days.

Tony and Hilary

Rally77 – Woodside Field

Our second rally at Woodside Field was attended by six units. We were blessed with reasonable weather for the end of September.

The owners Brian and Helen are very welcoming and helpful, providing us with a very good gazebo, complete with lighting and the ability to boil an electric kettle, where we had our meetings which included a Nostalgia Quiz, Beetle Drive and a Boomwhackers evening, all of which was enjoyed by everyone. We even purchased fresh eggs on site which were lovely.

Woodside is a very attractive new site, very secluded with excellent well-kept grass. We would urge anyone who might be thinking of going there next year, please do because we need to get the attendance up so we can maintain our welcome. Incidentally this is a CL site, open to all, so you can visit at any time, subject to availability of course. Plus we are sure you could strip off there - just speak to Brian or Helen and of course no textiles on site.

Have a look at their website: www.woodsidefield.co.uk

Terry and Lesley Jackman

Rally 78 – Telford Naturist Club

Thanks to rally organiser Terry for a good weekend away at Telford club, TNC on the weekend of 23rd to 26th September. This lovely site is very popular. Very scenic, nice walks in the wood and an undercover pool, a jacuzzi, (which was not in operation during our visit) and big sauna in the old brick windings building. As on previous visits we were welcomed and well looked after, with an excellent value fish and chip supper on offer on Friday evening, bangers & mash for Saturday night along with a singer, evening entertainment & a roast pork Sunday lunch. A couple of games of pétanque were held over the weekend and the weather was good enough on Saturday to enjoy a coffee morning in the sunshine. An enjoyable weekend away.

Trudi Pike

Continental Rally Reports

Rally 66 – Lous Suais

A well-tanned, naked man stood in the parking area. "The reception is over there." He responded to our confused look with a strong Dutch accent. We had arrived at our first French Suntrecker Rally having driven six hours from an overnight stop near Paris with PK, our caravan. Having found reception we were pleased to meet Gilles, the congenial owner of the Lous Suais naturist camp site in the Haute Vienne region of Southwest France, near the city of Limoges.

Our impressions were favourable as we took in the spacious hillside site. No toast rack camping here, pockets of level ground were large enough for a few caravans, other pitches were more suited to tents with limited vehicle access. A selection of rentable tents and

cabins seemed adequate to suit different tastes. The only potential downside was the slope down to the public area and lake, that could be a problem if you have mobility issues and no motor transport. The lake is an attractive feature, swimming is possible and some braver Treckers tried the rentable pedalos that proved to be less watertight than desired.

The two ablution blocks were clean and tidy. We noticed that our friendly French campers had a habit of reserving wash basin space with their toilet bags when they went for a shower, Germans and towels on sun loungers came to mind.

Two caravans, four motorhomes and a smaller van with one person gathered for the rally. A fun group of Treckers that got on well with each other.

The campsite offered coffee mornings to all guests, which made this part of the rally officer's task easy. Monty Topliss did, however, add value one morning by baking fresh scones that were enjoyed by all, he also arranged evening get togethers that were congenial and well attended. Monty will not be organising European rallies next year and we wait to see who will take on this challenging but interesting task. Thank you for your efforts Monty, enjoy your "retirement" and maybe future travels through Europe.



Monty shows of his baking skills for one of the coffee mornings.

We arrived at the end of high season, daily meals had stopped but as a group we could request what we wanted, this included breakfast on one day and a raclette dinner on another. Gilles demonstrated impressive knowledge and a keen interest when he hosted wine tasting one evening.

At the end of our eleven-night stay at Lous Suais Sheelagh and I moved on to Domain de la Gagère, another site used by Suntreckers. This was our first European naturist holiday, and we could compare the two sites as well as decide how the ten-night rally suited our needs.

Our time at Lous Suais was congenial, the site owner was excellent, and we had the privilege of sharing the rally with a group of friendly Treckers. To counteract this, we were the only British campers at Domain de la Gagère, with all the others being Dutch. The site was well organised and better equipped than Lous Suais, but we preferred the comradery that Suntreckers provided. The only negative observation taken away from the rally was that it was too long for a site in a fairly remote location and most participants did not stay for the full number of days. Sheelagh and I like to explore the nearby attractions, but with little to attract us in the immediate area we found ourselves wondering what to do as the rally moved into its final days, it may have been appropriate to offer a shorter rally, or two shorter ones at different locations.

Overall, we had a great holiday that gave us insight into the Suntreckers European rallies as well as a part of France that we had not previously visited. Being with other Treckers added immensely to our holiday and we both look forward to future similar experiences.

Geoff Cooke

Rally 73 – Le Couderc

We arrived at the site to find it completely full but were assured our rally site would be free on the 14th September as arranged. This proved to be correct and the Suntreckers arrived during that day.

We held a get together on the first evening to introduce ourselves and enjoy a glass (or two) of the excellent local wines and also to suggest activities we had in mind for the next ten days. On Thursday evening we had a quiz which was won by Roger (not me)!



Boules winners



Evening meal

Coffee mornings were held daily and we enjoyed afternoon tea on the Sunday. One evening we had a Beetle Drive which was good fun and won by Tanya. There was also a cheese and wine evening with contraband cheese and an evening when we played the game Right, Left and Centre. A small boules competition was also held which was won by John and Alan. Suntreckers entered le Couderc's pub quiz one evening and then on the Thursday evening we had a communal meal which was excellent and enjoyed by everyone.

Roger and Libby

Winter Rallies

Greenhill Park (Christmas Rally)	2 nd – 5 th December
Rally Officers Terry and Lesley Jackman Yew Tree Cottage Oxford Road Donnington Newbury RG14 3AG Tel: 01635 529823 / 07505 997533 Email: jackman.lesley60@gmail.com	Site fee £10 per night It is expected that the 'Chicken Shed' will be used on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at a cost of £40 per night. All attendees will be required to pay an equal portion of the cost.
Telford Naturist Club	26 th – 30 th January 2023
<i>Rally fully booked with waiting list.</i>	
Fortway Farm, Stoney Stanton LE9 4JA	23 rd – 27 th February 2023
Rally Officers Malcolm and Maureen Burland 27 Cadle Close Stoney Stanton Leicestershire LE9 4HD Tel: 07946 575105 Email: mburland50@gmail.com	The site has electric hook-ups, toilets and showers and probably some hardstanding this year too, although we've never had a problem getting on or off the grassed area in the past. Site fee 'from £11/night (2022 rate). Site requires individual booking so please contact rally officers first so they can confirm that the rally is "on" before you book with the site.

Gala Rally Raffle 2023

Tickets are now on sale at the same price as last year, £1 per ticket / £5 per book. Just to whet your appetite, here are the main prizes:

1. A Red Letter Day voucher
Grand day out for two, choose from 2,095 experiences
2. A multiplex D2 DAB + FM Digital radio, with rechargeable batteries
Perfect for your van
3. A Red Letter Day voucher
Luxury Tea for Two, choose from 405 venues throughout the UK.

A warm welcome

We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to the following members who have joined us since 14th June and we look forward to seeing them on many rallies in future!

Peter T	Yorkshire	Nick and Jane A	Wiltshire
Mary C and John G	Hampshire	Tim D and Karen M	Hampshire
Jim B and Julia B	Berkshire	John M	West Sussex
Barbara and Michael G	Leicestershire	Charlie and Jenny H	Norfolk
Kevin and Chris S	Essex	Kevin and Alison B	Devon
Des and Gillian P	Wiltshire		

Adventures of Fiona the Fridge

Fiona was feeling sad. She had been giving her poor owners the run-around for a long time now, probably too long. She felt totally justified at first as they had been badly neglecting her, although, unknown to Fiona, they had little choice at first as they were not allowed to use their camping unit because of something called “the lockdown”.

She was also starting to suffer a bit herself and was no longer in control of things. Her owners had called on the services of a mobile engineer, who had now visited them twice, first to fit a new thermocouple and then to replace her circuit board. When she first started playing up, Fiona had been able to stop and start working more or less at will, just to annoy her owners. However, the interventions of the service engineer had not gone well. Her new circuit board wasn't functioning and Fiona was now no longer able to work at all, even on mains electric.

Fiona's owners were beginning to panic. They were due to go away again soon and had already paid in advance for one of the sites they planned to visit and were starting to worry about how they would manage without a cold beer in the evenings.

Meanwhile the engineer had better news. He had been in touch with the fridge manufacturers who admitted they had made a mistake and sent the wrong part. A new circuit board was on the way to rectify the error.

The new part arrived in the nick of time. The engineer returned, yet again, and this time worked his magic. After what seemed an eternity, he announced that all was well, and the van had a fully functioning fridge once again! Fiona's owners were so pleased they didn't seem to notice the engineer's final remarks before he left: “These automatic three-way fridges are really good, *when they work properly...*”

But Fiona had taken this to heart. At first, she had enjoyed the extra attention she was getting from the service engineer, but she had found his last two visits rather unpleasant and was now feeling a bit sore after having her circuit board removed and replaced on more than one occasion. She resolved to try really hard to be good, at least for the time being.

Anonymous

And finally...

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

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

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