

THE TRECKER



Issue No 97

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Editor's Corner

As I reflect on my relatively short time as a Suntrecker member (8 years) and try to look to the future, I can't help but think that the winds of change are beginning to blow through our great club. We've had a couple of difficult years, with low rally attendances and many cancellations. If the same happens this year we can no longer blame the pandemic, although I accept that it may have encouraged some of our older members to "retire" slightly earlier than they would have done otherwise.

There's no doubt that the average age of our membership has been creeping up over the years and if we're not careful, it will become very difficult to attract the younger members we so desperately need to safeguard the club's future. I'm encouraged that the committee are clearly embracing this topic and Geoff Cooke's article later in this issue makes very interesting reading. I would encourage all of you to study it carefully and let Geoff have your views.

One area where we're definitely seeing a change this year concerns the continental rallies, where the European camping and caravanning holiday company Alan Rogers has been asked to help with the organisation. As you'll know by now, they've come up with a relatively short trip to Luxembourg and Holland, with a week in each country. It clearly doesn't suit everyone, as the mid-August departure is earlier than we would normally start our late summer continental rallies. This does mean slightly more expense than we may have been used to but, in my opinion, the package is good value for what's on offer and both Eileen and myself are looking forward to it very much.

Finally, almost every time I read a newspaper these days I seem to come across an article extolling the virtues of spending time outdoors, emphasising how good it is for our physical and mental wellbeing. So as the days get longer and the weather warms up, let's all get out there as much as we can and aim to spend more time on some of our excellent rally sites. What are we waiting for!

Geoff Heyes
Editor

Chairman's Chat

The Summer season is soon to commence and with much content in this Trecker I will keep my bit here short. While you are out and about, don't make Suntimeckers the best kept secret, tell people about our club and encourage them to join and have fun with us. I wish you all a great season meeting old friends and making new ones and with some rallies getting full don't miss out by booking your places now. Enjoy everyone.

Alan Ingram
Chairman

Rally Organiser's News

Just a few changes to the Yearbook, please note amendments below:

Rally 4 Liverpool – Change of Rally Officer, now John and Janet, Tel 01535 654123 / Mob 07502 198341.

Rally 8 Sungrove – Date change to Thursday 11 May to Tuesday 16 May, Rally number stays the same.

Rally 21 Cam Bridge Barn – Address on rally page should be 'Temple Bridge, Temple Cloud', not 'Stoke Holy Cross'

Rally 25 White Rose – site fee is £27.50pn.

Rally 43 Wansford Grange – Showers not available.

Rally 44 East Midlands – Rally Officer telephone number amended, now Tel 01535 654123 / Mob 07502 198341.

Rally 45 Cam Bridge Barn – Address on rally page should be 'Temple Bridge, Temple Cloud', not 'Stoke Holy Cross'

Rally 53 White Rose – site fee is £27.50pn

Rally 57 Sungrove – Date change to 31 August to 5 September, Rally number stays the same.

Martin Hodgson
National Rally Organiser

Gala Rally

The entertainment has been booked and should be great again. We plan to have some new things this year starting with a visit from a chip wagon and an on-site wine tasting with a limited number of places. The rally programme is filling up and promises to offer something for everyone. Also this year it is a 5 day event rather than the usual 4 so even more time to have fun. Look forward to seeing many of you there.

Alan Ingram
Gala Rally Officer

Online Rally booking

Do you book your rallies online via the Suntrecker website? If not, then why not as it is the simplest and quickest way to do it. Once you have entered your details on the web profile these then are automatically entered on the subsequent booking form for you which just leaves a date, time and a few tick boxes to complete the process. No paper form, cheque deposit, stamp or envelope. If the details need changing you can edit your profile on the web at any time. (Note your profile on the web is not linked to the membership database so if anything needs changing there don't forget to let the membership secretary know.) If you encounter any problems on the website then please let me know, call or email me at webmaster@suntreckers.org.uk

Alan Ingram
Webmaster

Urgent Committee Vacancy

I am sorry to have to tell you that Anita Hodgson has resigned as our Company Secretary and from the committee for personal reasons. The committee joins me in thanking Anita for her support and we all wish her the best in her future endeavours.

It will be necessary to appoint another company secretary at the end of March in order to satisfy our legal requirement and I would be very pleased to hear from anyone willing to fill this interesting position. Some experience would be an advantage, but this is not essential as other committee members will be willing to assist with advice whenever this is needed.

It is not a hugely onerous job but one of vital importance and a requirement for Suntreckers to remain a legal entity.

Please contact me or any committee member if you feel you may be able to help, or if you have any questions or concerns. Contact details are in the yearbook or you can contact any of us via the committee page on the website.

Alan Ingram
Chairman

We survived the first 40 years, what about the next?

This article has been written by Geoff Cooke to consider the possible future of Suntreckers, it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the committee or other Suntrecker members.

In 1984 a group of young naturists decided to form a club to facilitate getting together at rallies. With 40 years experience we can look back and reflect on our successes, the friends we have made and the many wonderful rallies we have attended. We can also look forward to envisage where we would like the club to be in 40 years' time and reflect on whether we are heading in the right direction. Change is inevitable, ignoring it can lead to our demise but embracing it may allow

the members celebrating our 80 year anniversary in 2064 to look back at their experiences as fondly as we do ours.

The average age of members in the first ten years after the club was formed was 48 years. The average age across the past two years is 71. It may be encouraging that members have stayed for many years and they have, of course, aged, but does that dissuade younger naturists from joining? Many of the intrepid first members were young enough to look forward to the next 40 years of rally fun, but given our present average age we should consider the future of the club itself.

Suntreckers has one purpose – we offer rallies with a relaxed dress code. We like getting together for a few days to chat, drink coffee or other suitable beverages, have a game or two and some fun in the sun. About 70 rallies are organised each year to achieve this, no mean feat as they are primarily in the warmer summer months. One of these rallies is the Gala, different from the rest and the one that all Treckers should attend. Other rallies that stand out as being different are those that happen in Europe. Suntreckers has been built on these activities and their success has endured, but as time passes new members may have different expectations.

We are only as strong as our membership. Our average age is not a problem in the short term but it could reach a tipping point when the rallies we offer become less appealing to younger naturists who will be the bedrock of the club in future. We need to view everything we do with this in mind and ask ourselves if our plans are geared too heavily towards our own interests to the detriment of younger members and those who have recently joined.

Any reluctance towards a move to electronic media should be treated with caution. It is unlikely that younger members will ask to be paper based, but they may find it frustrating if information is held back to satisfy the wishes of a few who are reluctant or unable to embrace the new way of doing things. We live in a world of instant communication and may die if we ignore that fact. Present members who cannot work with electronic media need to be considered, but if communicating with them costs more it may be reasonable to adjust their membership fees accordingly.

It is for those younger members to chart the course that they want the club to navigate, but the opportunity to show interest in diversification should not be ignored. We should look at the way things have been done in the past and ask if they are still best practice today. There may be other 'blue sky' ideas, particularly from younger members, but we could explore offering rallies that focus on an interest in addition to going naked, such as art and photography, nature walks, singles, rambling, yoga, music or rallies for specific caravan or motorhome types. We could look even further with a tour to the USA or other far-away places. In the next forty years such ideas may have merit, but first we need to nurture what we have and do all we can to make them as appealing to our membership as we can. One possibility is to appoint someone to the committee who is from the pre-retirement age group with the task of protecting and developing the interests of younger members. Another may be to have someone delegated to look after the

interests of the many members who travel alone, making sure that their interests are taken care of and possibly identifying specific rallies as “great for singles”.

It is harder to enrol a new member than it is to keep one, providing you offer something of value to them. Do we maintain contact with new members to make sure that they are benefitting from our rallies and if not, why do they find it difficult to do so? It may only take a phone call to find out why a new member has not interacted with the club and whether we met expectations. Consolidating responses may steer us towards a more productive future.

Is the way we promoted events in the past still fit for purpose? Excellent work is done by dedicated committee members but sometimes it is better to make changes that are dictated by resources and expectations. No-one agreed to be the Continental rally organiser this year, and it was being proposed that they should be abandoned, leaving members to simply team up on visits overseas. This would have diluted the appeal of Suntreckers and created small groups within the club that would not benefit most members - not a good outcome for the club. Instead, a commercial tour operator was asked to coordinate a rally programme with the requirements laid out by Suntreckers. This has resulted in a rally to Luxembourg and Holland that has booked well and a structure for future years that can be used to reduce the administrative burden on the club whilst offering quality experiences.

The Gala Rally was also facing challenges. It is a popular event but it recently became necessary to find a new venue and this has met with some resistance. A programme has been developed that gives an assurance that the events held over the five-day event should outweigh any concerns about the venue, it remains to be seen if this attracts good attendance. Consider another open-air event genre, music festivals. It is unlikely that many attendees go to Glastonbury for the lines of portaloos, the mud or the sea of tiny tents – they go for the music programme. The Glastonbury venue has become iconic, a must attend event for devotees, but it offers more than a farm field that happens to lie on some ley lines.

If we want to move forward rather than backwards, a development plan should be prepared that gives existing members a focus on what can be achieved within their anticipated years of active membership. It may be practical to consider a five-year plan, leaving the longer-term development for a younger team that should emerge from the plan if it is successful. A membership drive can focus on resetting the age balance without impacting on the interests of existing members. With the right mindset and a target to attract new members from the pre-retirement group as well as those already retired, we should be able to encourage a larger membership with a lower average age. Maybe we should set our target at an average age of 48, as it was forty years ago.

As these thoughts pass back and forth we can all do one thing right now – encourage new members, particularly those that are one generation younger than you. If every member does that, many of the suggestions that I have made here could become superfluous. All it needs is for every one of us to accept that being a member of Suntreckers has many benefits, but there are also responsibilities and the greatest one of all is to ensure that the club prospers. **Geoff Cooke PPO**

Rally Reports

Rally 82 – Greenhill Park Pre-Christmas Rally

Once again we gathered at the popular Greenhill Park site at the beginning of December to celebrate our “early Christmas” and once again, Terry and Lesley were our hard-working hosts. I’m not sure if even they can remember how many times they’ve run this rally for us, but sadly they told us this would be the last time. They’ll obviously be a hard act to follow, but hopefully someone will step in later this year to keep this enjoyable tradition alive.



Lesley with her prize and winning entry

We welcomed a new member to the fold, Satish (known as Sam), quite a bit younger than the rest of us and a lot hardier – he came with a tent! He also took advantage of the now centrally heated ‘Chicken Shed’ and felt warm enough to strip off. I’m afraid to say not too many of us followed. Sam was only able to stay for one night but got on well with everybody and seemed to enjoy himself so hopefully it won’t be too long before we see him again.

We enjoyed all the usual activities where Friday evening became Christmas Eve, Saturday Christmas Day where we gathered for lunch around 3pm and Sunday became Boxing Day until the evening, when it morphed into New Year’s Eve, albeit with Auld Lang Syne sung well before midnight. Fittingly, Lesley won the competition for the best “Christmas in a box” decoration.

Rally 2/2023 – Stoney Stanton

We returned to this site in Leicestershire after a gap of a few years to find considerable improvements, as electric hook-ups and impressive hot showers have been added. The rally was arranged and hosted by Malcom and Maureen, who live in the village, and an impressive job they did of it too.

Fish and chips were on offer on the Friday evening. On the Saturday, Malcolm and Maureen kindly invited us round to their bungalow for the afternoon and early evening, which became the official “coffee morning”. We could also enjoy a soak

in the hot tub as well as a few games of naked shove ha'penny and bagatelle. And yes, they did turn the central heating up for us!

Food was on offer in the form of a takeaway, with both Chinese and Indian menus available. Food was also the Sunday's highlight, with a trip out to a local eatery with an impressive carvery for us to choose from. All in all an excellent rally and a great way to finish the winter season. Roll on summer!

Geoff Heyes

Preparing for the Ken Webster photo competition

The Ken Webster Photo Competition is held every year during the Gala Rally. This year you can enter two categories, a general category where two of your favourite pictures that feature any subject (the competition rules outline a few restrictions) and a second category that has 'Birds and Butterflies' as a set subject. The competition will be judged by members attending the rally but you do not have to attend the gala to enter, just send your prints to the organiser as explained in the rules on page 55 of the yellow book.

Most Suntrecker rallies occur in places that offer an abundance of photographic opportunities. Local towns and cities can be explored, historic sites from castles to stately homes can be visited and a wealth of fun experiences can be had. All of this offers an opportunity to get your camera out and make a few memories, we want to see your best results.

You do not need expensive equipment, your phone's camera will do just fine. The pictures will be displayed anonymously, no-one will know which one is yours unless you win an award.

Do I have the right camera?

The right camera is the one that you have with you. If you see something interesting and worthy of a picture, do not forget your smartphone. Whatever camera you use, the first 10,000 pictures you take will be your worst! Do not be afraid to try, try and try again – it costs nothing and the delete button will permanently hide your failures. The general section of the competition can inspire you to take anything that appeals and you never know, Treckers attending Gala will be your judges and they may agree with you. The set subject section may prove a little more of a challenge, but you have time to get it right. If you have never done anything like this before the simple principles that I have outlined below may help to get you started.

Birds and butterflies can be challenging to photograph and your camera and lenses may change what you can achieve, but using a phone camera does not stop you from taking eye-catching photographs.

Birds in flight can prove difficult if you are using your smartphone because you do not have a telephoto lens that brings the action closer to you. Instead, look for pictures where the birds come closer such as the swans, ducks, coots and moorhens in wetlands. Head for parks where these birds are fed and they will come right up to you, allowing you to make good use of the camera's wide angle and close-up functions. If you are up for a challenge, look for birds that that can

be harder to photograph, but are rewarding when you get results, such as kingfishers and birds of prey. If you have a camera with a telephoto lens you will be better equipped to look for birds in flight, I will look at how to do that later.

How about butterflies?

Gardens in spring and summer are excellent places to look for butterflies. Your own garden may be a good choice, particularly if you have flowers that attract them like Buddleia. Visiting formal gardens, stately home estates or your local park or woodlands can also be rewarding. Butterfly farms can give good opportunities with the additional benefit that they can more easily be identified. One of my favourites is at Stratford Upon Avon where you can get up close to species from around the world against a backdrop of equally exotic plants.

Concerned about composition?

This is your photograph, if it looks good to you it is good! However, if you want to create the best impact and get decent marks in the competition there are a few guidelines that can help you achieve good results without getting too technical.

1. Give space for the subject to fly or look in to. A bird with ample space in front of it gives a more satisfying impression.
2. The rule of thirds works well. Draw imaginary lines over your picture like noughts and crosses, two equally spaced lines vertically and horizontally. Where the horizontal and vertical lines cross over each other should be one third of the way into the image and either one third up or down in the horizontal plane. Put your subject, or in close up, the eye of your subject, where a vertical and horizontal line crosses.
3. Do not try to get too close, the environment is important. If the bird is in a nest, make sure that you can also see the nest.
4. Birds in flight look best when they fly from left to right (the way we read). Take the picture either way, you can normally flip the image on your computer later if you want to.

A little technical stuff

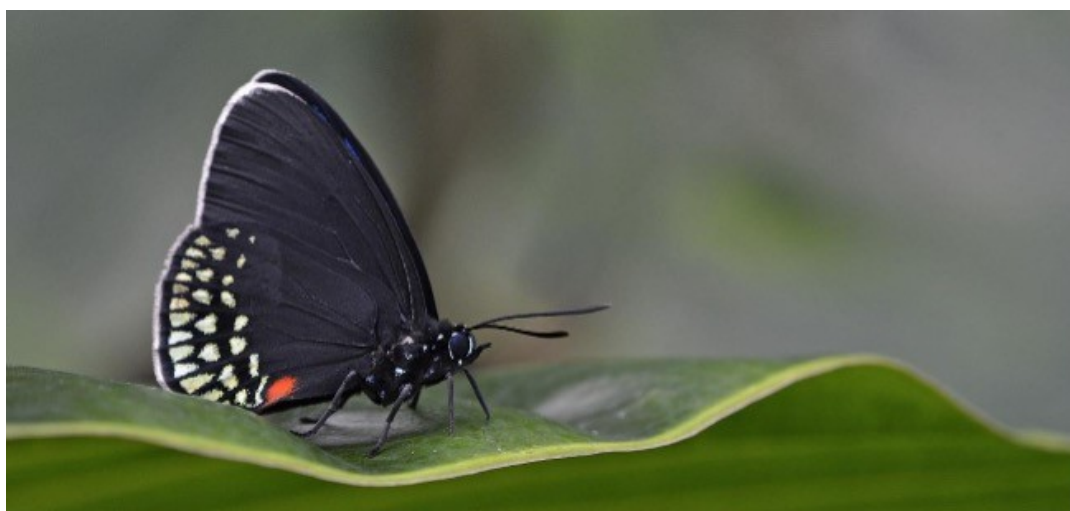
1. Shutter speed: If the bird is in flight, speed is important. Try for 1/2500 of a second to freeze the wings. If the subject is standing still, 1/250 should do.
2. Focus: This is also important. A picture taken out of focus, or with the focus in the wrong place, will have limited impact. If you focus manually, aim for the eye. If you select automatic focus on your camera, try to select a small area or spot focus option.
3. ISO speed: It is best to keep the ISO on your camera low, but this is the least important of the three adjustments you can make. Setting too high an ISO rating can add grain and noise to your photo, but this is easier to deal with in post-production than is shutter speed and focus.

Getting it printed

Any sized print up to A4 can be entered but for best impact, make your print as close to A4 as possible.



If you have a colour printer at home and use gloss photo paper, good results should be possible. Photo booths are a good option if you do not own a printer, you can find them in high street stores such as Boots the Chemist. Another option is to send your picture to an online print business like Vistaprint.co.uk or Bonusprint.co.uk. Search for the level of service that you want, some offer post-production (photoshop) to maximise your print, others simply print what you send them.



An interesting picture is more important than a technically good one

This is a fun competition, anyone can win! Don't be put off by the tech stuff, head out with your camera and enter your best results. The rules are simple and they can be found on page 55 of your yellow book.

If you need any help, I am happy to assist.

Geoff Cooke. ppo@suntreckers.org.uk

“Baring all” in chilly March 2023 on behalf of the British Heart Foundation

In one of the regular Friday newsletters from BN in early January this year was a request for volunteers to “bare all” in a photo shoot to be used as publicity material for a forthcoming Naked Heart Walk in the grounds of Powderham Castle in Devon on behalf of the British Heart Foundation. The photo shoot was scheduled to be on January 21st but the Castle authorities had to postpone it and rescheduled for March 11th. As one of the organisers said ‘at least it should not be quite as cold in March’.

As a member of Suntreckers and being prepared to volunteer, I thought there would be the opportunity to talk with other participants about the benefits of being a Suntrecker and, if anyone was interested, could pass on the details of suntreckers.org.uk

The photoshoot took place on Saturday 11th March with some three dozen naturists taking part. Tim Linter was the official BN photographer but was also there as registered First Responder and it was in that role that he modified the arrangements. He explained that with it being just 6 degrees, rain falling plus a stiff breeze let alone being very muddy underfoot he was concerned for the welfare of the participants and, as such, would only make use of the castle courtyard, entrance gatehouse and approach roads.

We registered our attendance, signed the Disclaimer form allowing photographs taken may be used by BN and BHF for promotional purposes. We also knew that there would be opportunities to take our own photographs when the official photo shoot was finished.



Powderham Castle is a fortified manor house and is the seat of the Courtenay family, Earls of Devon. We met in the Old Riding School and it was here where sincere thanks were extended for our use of the facilities as it allowed our clothes to be kept dry plus there also being a large urn for tea and coffee plus a large assortment for biscuits. As you can imagine it was good to get back inside for a hot drink after being exposed to the elements – albeit in a good cause.

I talked to some eight people about Suntreckers. Two were aware but were not members whilst the others showed considerable interest and were appreciative of the background I gave them. Hopefully they may follow it up.

The whole experience of the photo shoot was most rewarding, if a little chilly. There was a great feeling of camaraderie and enthusiasm

amongst the naturists plus others who had accompanied them – hence my picture credited to @CJAWellness. My only regret is that I will not be able to take part in the next walk as I will be out of the country on Saturday May 20th.

Alan Flux

A warm welcome

The following members have joined us since 13 October 2022 and we hope to see them all on lots of rallies in future!

Dick R	West Midlands	Bill & Gail S	Cumbria
Clive A	Dorset	Richard W	Shropshire
Richard A	Wiltshire	Gary & Mary S	Powys
Sean Q	Suffolk	Kevin C	West Sussex
Chris L & Denise P	Warwickshire	Peter & Beryl S	Berkshire
Russ P & Ros P	Ceredigion	Ken & Glenice D	Wiltshire
Adrian B	Northumberland	Barry K	North Yorkshire
Stewart & Heather P	Lancashire	Tom & Beryl L	Warwickshire
George & Hilda C	Cumbria	Rob & Delaine W	Norfolk
David & Betty C	Surrey	Steve O & Myrtle S	Buckinghamshire

And a fond farewell

As usual at this time of year, there are several long standing memberships that have not renewed for various reasons. Some of the members that have been in Suntreckers for more than 7 years are listed below and no doubt many of you will know them.

Member(s)	Years	Member(s)	Years
Neil & Christine Fenton	38	Neil Sutton	18
Barry Jennings	37	Gregory Carr	17
Donald & Beverley Dixon	34	Cliff & Diane Sutton	17
Michael Murray	32	Ian & Patricia Holdsworth	16
David & Pam Forster	31	Ernie & Rita Frost	14
Les & Eveline Todd	28	James Hose	13
Steve & Pat Wiltshire	27	Paul & Lynne Lambert	11
Foncie & Joan McKelvey	24	John & Sue Muscroft	10
Jim & Iris Montgomery	22	John & Lesley Ferguson	9
Fritz Henning & Maria Frank-Eiffert	20	Roger Brain & Maggie Miller	7
Tom & Joan Calverley	18		

Several of them sent their regards and good wishes for their friends in Suntreckers, with David and Pam Forster especially wanting to say this:

Sadly, we shall not be renewing our membership in 2023. Our caravan did not turn a wheel for some 2 years and some of the sites we customarily rallied at closed their doors for various reasons. These were also the sites at which we were habitually Rally Officers: indeed during our membership of 30+ years we were Rally Officers over 100 times and loved every minute! Our regret is that our first 60 or so plaques were stolen along with our caravan in 2008. All good things come to an end I guess. Our very best wishes to you and the Committee and a big thank you for keeping the show on the road. Yours aye, David and Pam

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.