



NEWS

390 MARCH 2021

2020 PHOTO COMPETITION WINNER



Rainbow by Julia Lain 4437

If we can find both ends, we may be able to afford another van

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EDITOR'S VIEW

The views expressed by the editor may not be the views of the committee or ASOC

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Welcome to March News

It is a shame we had to cancel the National, but the committee thought this was the right thing to do in the current climate. We still have a rally list for this year. These rely on members who take on the task to run them.

For several months now I have been struggling to fill the pages of News, and thank you for those members who have helped with their items. I know as editor, members expect club information and articles for them to enjoy each month. Just had a few comments on my editorial last month, but...

Colour was introduced to give the magazine a bit more impact, but is this enough? Should we be rethinking the magazine or as some call it, a "newsletter".

DARK DAYS - LIGHTER MEMORIES - FAR HORIZONS

— Ailsa James —

I am reminded of a clever camping establishment's sale slogan 'Now is the winter of our discount tent'. In the dark days of winter our spirits are usually boosted by the thought of forthcoming holidays, but of course, in these Covid days we find ourselves thwarted by what seems an impenetrable brick wall through which we simply cannot pass. Our motorhome remains on the drive, a picture of dejection; tyres deflated, forlorn and forgotten, gathering dust, nowhere to go except Argate and Paignton – ah, woe is me, with self-pity, but that's ENOUGH!

This long, interminable lockdown has hit us all in different ways but it is particularly hard when you have reached that point in your lives when you are footloose and fancy free only to find yourselves fitted with concrete overshoes going nowhere fast. Like many of you no doubt, we have spent the last few months polishing, cleaning and tweaking our little home from home, desperate to get away. Hoped-for plans of a Spring Break in Europe seem to be fast disappearing and even the possibility of a break in this country a distant prospect. Still, the vaccine looms and, if there is one thing the Grey Brigade have in abundance, it is years – which puts us at the forefront of that miracle jab that will set us all free. In the meantime, we find solace and warmth in the memories of holidays past which will hopefully sustain us until we can wander once again. So, to keep those warm thoughts going, I will regale you with the tale of a trip we were able to take last year.

Being 'Retirees' we can pretty much come and go as we like and, as we are frequent travellers to France, we joined Brittany Ferries 'Club Voyage France' many years ago which gives us 30% discount on their crossings and a free breakfast to boot. What's not to like about that eh? We like it so much that, in a normal year, we do it at least three times a year. We live in North Devon so our crossing of choice is really a no-brainer and we take the overnight Brittany Ferry from Plymouth which lands in Roscoff at 8.00 in the morning. Last September we scraped through by the skin of our teeth, running the gauntlet of the possibility that the French would impose a two-week quarantine on our arrival. The ferry port was practically deserted - picture tumble-weed bouncing through the car-park which had all of one caravan, three motorhomes and about 50 cars – and this for a ferry which usually carries about 800 people! The ferry was extremely covid-secure – full credit to Brittany Ferries for that – but was eerily quiet with so few of us onboard.

Roscoff with its beautiful, solid Bretagne architecture is a welcoming sight and a great destination in itself but for us it's but a stepping-stone. Our destination was Biarritz, 540 miles away in the South West of France, with a couple of stops en route to break up the long journey.

Aah, France – it has that certain *je ne sais quoi* that can draw you back time and time again. A country so diverse, so large, that you need never travel the same road twice, with a strangely enticing, unique aroma of gallois and sewers mixed with the tantalising smell of pine forests and freshly baked baguettes, stirred with that all too essential ingredient – sunshine!

We took an overnight stop at a delightful campsite, La Pindiere, in Heric, which is open all year. It's extremely handy being just 181 miles from Roscoff and 3 miles off the N137 north of Nantes. This site has large, flat pitches and a delightful swimming pool, very welcoming on a hot afternoon.



River Charente in Saintes

Saintes is situated on the banks of the gently flowing River Charente and is a delightful city rich with roman architecture, including an amphitheatre. The Municipal Campsite in Saintes is easy to find and well sign-posted when exiting the A10 at Junction 35. Simply follow the signs, initially to 'Saintes-Centre Ville' and then 'Camping Municipal'. Camping Au Fil de l'Eau nestles by the side of

the Charente and has large generous pitches laid out underneath a canopy of tall, ancient oak trees which provide pleasant shade in the hot sunshine. For a municipal site it has very good amenities, including a bar and restaurant with an excellent menu if you don't feel like cooking. It also has a small swimming pool in which to dunk yourself at the end of a long hot day. A pleasant walk along the riverside will take you into the centre of this beautiful Romanesque city which welcomes you with its enticing bars and restaurants. The Roman amphitheatre is also an easy walk away. It's one of the oldest and largest in existence in France, dating back to 40AD and well worth the modest €4 entry fee. During its heyday it held 12-18,000 people who came to watch the glory – or should that be gory? – of Rome. Stand in the middle and gaze around at the worn terraced stone seating and it's not hard to imagine Roman Legions acting out their battles and gladiators fighting with wild animals and slaves.

With our brief sojourn over we hopped back onto the A10 heading for Biarritz.



Saintes - Roman Ampitheatre

The campsites

La Pindiere
102 La Denais,
44810 Heric.
Pays de la Loire
Tel: +33 2 40 57 65 41
Email: contact@camping-la-pindiere.com
www.camping-la-pindiere.com

Saintes: 2 nights @ €20 per night
Camping Au Fil de L'eau
(214 Emplacements)
6 Rue de Courbiac
17100 Saintes
Tel: 05 46 93 08 00
Mobile: 06 75 24 91 96
Email: campingaufildeleau@sfr.fr
www.camping-saintes-17.com

Paenge/tolls: From Nantes to Biarritz = £58.00

PART TWO NEXT MONTH

Sad News

Brian Smith died January 2021. Brian and Sylvia joined the Club in 1995. Brian joined the committee in 1999 as Chairman of the AGM Sub-committee and as a sub-committee member the following year. In 2001 Brian became the Clubs' Press Officer for five years and vigorously promoted the Club in magazines such as MMM. Brian and Sylvia assisted at many rallies, he was a true gentleman.

Ozzie Jones, Club Secretary

Sad news

Alan Guest. It is with sadness that I wish to tell members of the death of Alan Guest. He was an early member of the Club with a membership number of 1362.

He will be remembered by those of us who attended his rallies at the Burn Gliding Club (Pudsey Plonkers) in the early years of the Club. He attended National Rallies where he was an ever present volunteer. Latterly Alan & Josie became firm friends and regularly attended many rallies together all over the country and abroad.

Neil Rogers

2021 the long road back to normality

There is no denying that last year was a disaster.

My sister in law's view is that it was a total waste of a year and at our age we don't know how many we have left; so we should be allowed to add it on at the end.

The only consolation we had during the first lockdown was the fine weather that afforded many of us the opportunity to catch up on those little outstanding jobs that we managed to put off for so long.

When lock down lifted we thought we were on the mend but the second wave hit us and it all changed again. The second lock down hit harder because of the run up to Christmas, shorter daylight hours and then the same old, same old on ▶

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008 with little man motif

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TV did nothing to relieve the monotony.

There is a limit on how much rearranging of the garden, decorating, jigsaws, DIY or knitting we can cope with before we start climbing the walls.

I spent some time digging out old quizzes and updating or revamping them where possible and then posting them through neighbour's doors. We have an active (normally) Neighbourhood Watch Group, but have had to postpone all social evenings, gatherings, and lunches for obvious reasons.

I did try to pick the easier quizzes to send in for our club newsletter and hopefully some of you found them a brief respite from the monotony of lockdown. Our editor John Morris, took some of the quizzes, worked with them and added his own creative twist converting questions to crosswords. I actually had to cheat on some as I had forgotten the answers.

In this third National lock down, Linda and I have probably been more fortunate than many as we have easy access to seven miles of beach. Those of you who have attended our carnival rally in the past will also no doubt remember our walk along the prom, the river path and around the lakes of Apex Park. Although they have attracted many people, I have to say in fairness that most have been sensible and social distanced.

Having a dog (Lucy) is also a legitimate excuse and a reason to get out for walks with our flask of coffee and biscuits. (not a picnic your honour). ►

Like most of you, we had hoped to make an early start with rallies but that seems unlikely now so roll on April and May.

With luck and easing of the lock down we should see some changes later in the year although still with some caution.

Until then, stay safe stay, well and all the best

Brian and Linda Ellis 2360

With regret

It has been with much regret we have had to make the decision to part with our lovely old Auto-Sleeper Anniversary Clubman.

Unfortunately, we have only been able to camp closer to home over the past few years, owing to Ken's ongoing ill health, but eventually we knew it was going to be too much to continue camping.

We wonder, therefore, if you would be good enough to let all our friends and members know of our decision. We both wish you all continuing enjoyment together in the years to come which, hopefully, will not be too far away, with all the problems of the past year. Take care and keep safe.

Jan & Ken Redman

WANTED

The front locking plate for the passenger seat safe of early models of the AutoSleeper Symphony/Symbol.

Alternatively, if someone local to Bradford can loan me a locking plate, or can send a photo I will try to have one made.

John Calf
jmcalf@gmail.com,
07443 933554

Dear Editor,
Congratulations on producing the magazine, upgrading it to its present form, and keeping it going through this pandemic. Sometimes we have difficulty with the website or with opening the email: we love receiving both editions and the colour on the email edition is superb.

We belong to ASOC because we want to, and, the news from the Club and Auto-Sleepers. Your technical pages, your lists of rallies (and whether you, have to cancel them). We are overwhelmed by the size of your membership and your numbers at rallies so we do not attend - and also we are much engaged with CHMC and other travels, and have been for many years

The general cheeriness of your magazine, the sense of belonging, the ease of contacting you all (save occasional electronic glitches) and news of views and travels of other Auto-Sleeper members.

Piers and Frances Brereton

TV reception

We have a 2014 Broadway. When we first had it TV reception was not good through the outside point. It would only work on a few sites. The problem seemed to be attenuation rather than of a broken connection. Auto-Sleepers remade some of the connections and it has worked reasonably well ever since. The van external aerial seems to work well.

There is also the issue that the internal connections to the various outlets in the van (3) seems eccentric and the instruction book does not have a suitable diagram. I am slowly getting

to grips with them and they have a certain logic. It would probably be better and cost less to provide only F type sockets and provide a few F to TV adaptors.

Robert Strawson

Re your editorial and for the avoidance of doubt, this member does read the magazine and does open the electronic version!!

As regards the future, the received wisdom is that if a subscription is being charged then the member expects to receive something for that subscription and a physical magazine is the embodiment of that membership. However, more and more are turning to electronic communications because of their ease and safe keeping and at some point ASOC will HAVE to take the plunge and go electronic - but not during the pandemic I would suggest.

I know there are lots of member benefits but the visible strong link to the factory is arguably our best Unique Selling Proposition.

Christopher Macgowan

I enjoy receiving the magazine and it's a good read. I can't remember how I discovered ASOC but am glad I did. We bought our Old Lady 3 years ago and took our first trip & oh what a learning curve that was. I have learned a lot since then and a great deal of that is from reading members' adventures, dilemmas and, of course, the library & fact sheets are helpful. I could use the monster (pc) in the corner more but would not get the same satisfaction.

Colin Baker

This month has been very quiet as far as technical enquiries re concerned – I guess because of the continuing protective restrictions on travel means we are still in “storage mode” with our motorhomes. For this reason, I unapologetically recycle the advice from Sargent for owners of motorhomes fitted with the EC700 electrical control system and long-term storage.

Sargent EC700 shutdown and long-term storage considerations

When the EC700 is completely shut down, the vehicle battery is maintained by the solar panel on the roof. The Tracker (if you purchase the subscription) is powered by the leisure battery and will notify you if the leisure battery gets low. In this instance, a second leisure battery, on standby duty at home, could be taken out to the motorhome and swapped out, the low battery being brought home for charging. As stated here, the load of the tracker is less than the self-discharge rate of many leisure batteries which should be good for months.

Q&A replies and advice from Sargent

1. When stored with no hook-up, should the main display panel and the controller be left switched on or not?

When in long-term ‘over-winter’ storage we suggest shutting the system down. This leaves solar maintaining the vehicle battery and only the tracker drawing from the leisure battery. The leisure battery voltage can be checked on AS monitor (on the map pin or on the history screen) and the customer can also setup email/SMS alerts to be notified if the leisure battery gets low. For shorter term or summertime storage the system can be left powered up (with the control panel power turned off) which does have the added benefit of remote temperature, humidity, water level and vehicle battery monitoring.

2. How is power to the tracker derived / controlled? From the vehicle battery or the leisure battery?

The tracker is powered from the leisure battery, but also has an internal backup battery that powers the unit should the leisure battery be disconnected. The tracker also monitors the leisure supply and alerts the monitoring station (if there is a valid tracking subscription) and the customer if email/SMS alerts have been turned on.

3. What is the EC700 system load when switched on and when in standby?

With the PSU switched on and in standby (12V power on and control panel power turned off) the system uses around 200mA. This quiescent load is taken from whichever source (charger, leisure battery, vehicle battery) has the highest voltage.

4. What is the tracker load (in mA/uA)?

This is extremely difficult to quantify, but is very low. It all depends on local variations in mobile network signal, GPS satellite availability and what the tracker is doing at the time, and a conservative average would be around 2 to 10mA on the 12V side.

In practice, average lead-acid batteries and lead-acid derivatives (AGM, gel etc.) will often naturally discharge at a rate faster than that caused by the load applied to them by the tracker.

5. Is solar charging dependant on the EC700 system being turned on?

With the PSU switched off (system shutdown) all of the solar charge is directed to the vehicle battery (unlike your EC500, which directs it to the leisure battery) and at the same time the Mains charger is directed to the leisure battery. The PSU / system must be turned on for the smart charge system to be enabled (choosing the target battery automatically) or for the leisure battery to be manually selected for solar charging.

6. Can the leisure battery be disconnected during vehicle storage without compromising security (tracker) performance? (Many members store off-site without power).

No. The leisure battery must be left fitted for the reason highlighted in point 2.

7. Are there any parasitic loads, as built when new, if the EC700 system is turned off?

No. The EC700 does not cause any drain on either battery when the system is shutdown. The tracker is the only thing drawing from the leisure battery at this time.

8. I understand that Auto-Sleepers fit a Sterling split charging system during build. Does this contribute to any parasitic load that may need to be accounted for in low power storage of the motorhome?

This is only fitted to Mercedes based vehicles, due to problems caused by the smart alternator operation. The Sterling unit is switched into use when the engine is running, and then disconnected again when the engine is stopped, and, therefore, does not place any load on the system during storage.

Summary

It is interesting to note that when the EC700 is in complete shutdown, the battery charger is still able to maintain the leisure battery if the van is connected to a mains hook-up. These modern chargers will allow for permanent maintenance charging of leisure batteries preventing the danger of over-charging and avoiding the life- limiting deep discharges that

sometimes occur when the van is stored. I understand this is not the case with the EC500 and earlier Sargent systems. Despite all of this, if I had to store my van off-site with no hook-up, I would (and do) have a small engine starter which is powered by internal Lithium-ion batteries. This amazing gizmo is small and rechargeable and will start a big diesel engine from cold. I had cause to use it in anger on my car (faulty battery), which has the same engine/gearbox as my motorhome. Mine is similar to this... on Amazon.



https://smile.amazon.co.uk/BUTURE-Starter-20000mAh-Portable-Battery/dp/B08VN999DS/ref=sr_1_2_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=jump+starter&qid=1612975379&sr=8-2-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExVE9WTUtFWdK4UURHJmVuY3J5cHRlZlRlZmVlcnR1bWVudVJmVU90aW9uPWNsaWNrUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGljaz10cnV

TV Reception

I had a couple of enquiries arising from last month's mention of TV reception. and was able to describe the addition of streaming TV services using an Apple TV box that I already owned and that is linked to my iPhone to allow me to stream the likes of iPlayer and the other live and streaming TV services available online. It was fairly easy until I realised that if I was not on mains hook-up, there was no power available for the Apple TV. Following a search and taking inspiration from a chap on the internet I was able to convert my Apple TV to 12V operation. I did not document what I did, but for anyone with the urge to try it, here is a summary of how I did it and what I used...

In brief, what I did was to use an Apple TV (the version that is in the small black case, not the older, larger versions) and stripped out the power supply inside. I then drilled a hole in the back of the case and glued in a 3.5mm power adaptor socket which I wired up to a tiny Chinese DC-DC converter bought off eBay that takes 4.75 to 23VDC and drops it to between 1-17V adjustable for the 3.4V required by the Apple TV. The 3.4V is regulated, so is safe for the Apple TV. The wide input voltage range means almost any plug-in adaptor, such as a phone

charger will power the Apple TV from the mains if you wanted to use it in the house, or from your van 12V system for when you are away.

This all requires some decent soldering skills and, this, of course, will void any warranty that might be outstanding on the Apple TV. The modification should include a suitable fuse in the connection from the new power input socket to the DC-DC converter. The DC-DC converter is quite smart and self-protecting, but all of the protection electronics built into the original Apple internal power supply ends up in the dustbin and to be on the safe side, a small 1A fuse should be included in the modification. Here is a link to the "teardown" of the Apple TV...

<https://www.ifixit.com/Teardown/Apple+TV+2nd+Generation+Teardown/3625>

And an article describing the process...

<http://i-marineapps.blogspot.com/2014/04/appletv-5-volt-usb-conversion.html>

This link describes using a USB power source, but the DC-DC converter has a very wide input range so almost any plug-in mains converter or DC power source can be used.

The DC-DC converter I used is this one...

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/10Pcs-Set-Mini-360-DC-DC-Buck-Converter-Step-Down-Module-1V-17V-4-75V-23V-/152944141109>

It is rated at 1.8A continuous and 3A peak. The Apple power supply is rated at 1.75A continuous. You get 10 of these little miracles for less than a fiver!

Of course, you undertake this work on the understanding that the information is given in good faith and no liability for consequential loss can be accepted if you choose to proceed. Basically, you do it at your own risk.

Although the Apple TV can be expensive, they are commonly available second hand. My brother-in-law found one on the recycling website Freegle and got his for free!

I hope this keeps someone amused during the lockdown.

MISSING LINKS *compiled by Brian Ellis*

Three words in each of the following clues have a fourth - a four letter word in common
For example: if you had Moon - Navy - Royal the missing word could be Blue

1 Beat - Market - Tumble

2 Board - Christmas - Sharp

3 Back - Egg - Slide

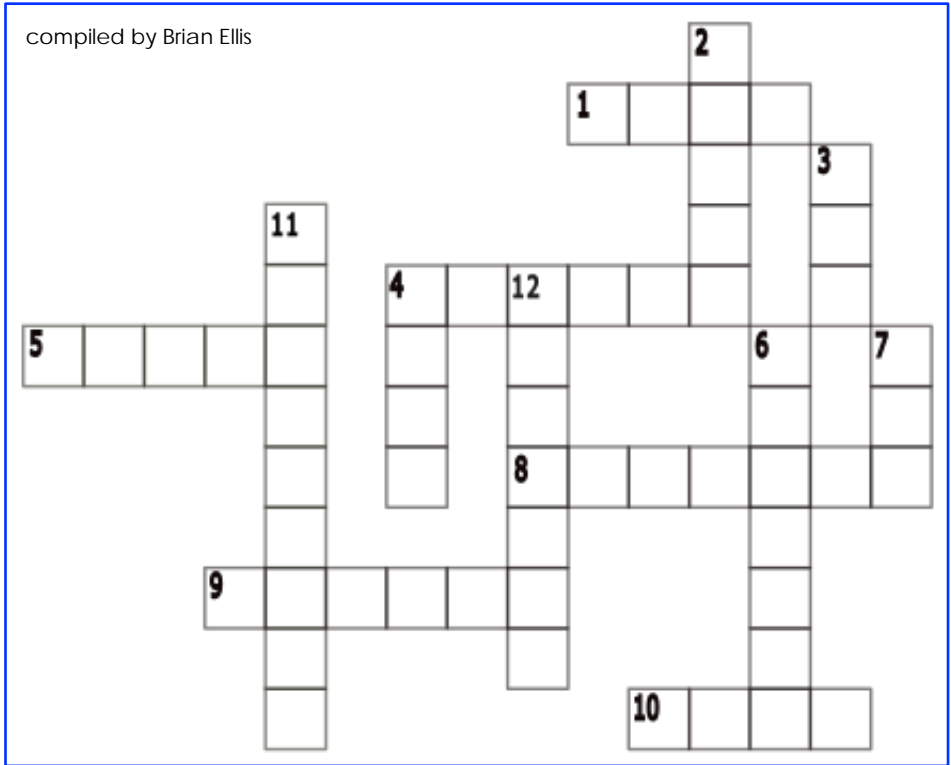
4 Eaten - Gypsy - Clothing

5 Ladder - Side - Two

The third letter of each of the 5 answers makes a five letter word

CROSSWORD NUMBER ONE

We all know a baby cat is a kitten and a baby dog is a puppy but what about the following babies



ACROSS

- 1 Deer is called
- 4 Swan is called
- 5 Turkey is called
- 8 A young hare is called
- 9 What is a baby hamster called
- 10 Kangaroo is called

DOWN

- 2 Owl is called
- 3 A baby shark is called
- 4 Whale is
- 6 Young pilchard is called
- 7 Beaver is called
- 11 Crocodile is called
- 12 Goose is called

COVID CAPERS with Wanda

Lois and Alan Parker



Lidalia

Late August 2020, and we decide to isolate ourselves in our tin box! We looked at maps and campsites and decided to head North. Our first stop was at a friend's CL in Tissington, Derbyshire. It's a beautiful spot and ideally placed for walks around the village, and cycle rides on the Tissington Trail. We had one bright and sunny day, so we ventured up the trail to Parsley Hay – about 10 miles each way. Thank goodness for E-Bikes!

We moved on up to Carlisle staying at Englethwaite Hall CAMC site, which is surrounded by beautiful woods and lakes. So, plenty of walking without meeting too many people. Our next stop was just within the Scottish Borders in a small village called Newcastleton, which was an absolute gem. Above the campsite were woods and ravines, and there were circular walks from there back along the riverbank, and through the village. We were not in a Lock- ➡

Where we stayed
Tissington CL CAMC
Englethwaite Hall CAMC
Lidalia Campsite (CAMC Affiliated)
Beadnell Bay C&CC
N.York Moors CAMC



Bamburgh Castle

down at the time, so several of the small shops were open. It's quite a historical place too with information on the actions of the Reivers in that area many centuries ago.

From Newcastleton we drove North East through the Kielder Forest and across to Beadnell Bay on the Northumberland coast. It was so wild and windy there that we reckoned the Covid virus didn't stand much of a chance! Whilst there we visited Bamburgh Castle, which was open under Covid restrictions but still very interesting. We had a walk into Seahouses and followed the one way walking around the town.

Time to drive South now, down the coast and inland to North York Moors CAMC site. Again, we were surrounded by woodland, with several different walks. We were also close enough to drive into Whitby, for a quick wander around the harbour, before the crowds of people frightened us away again. But before we left, we had fish and chips sitting in our van in the car park.

A beautiful moorland run the next morning across to York, and then back down to the Peak District, to Leek CAMC site. From here we were able to visit Buxton and have another cycle ride on the High Peak Trail, plus a day relaxing in the sun. Then it was time to head for home in Leicestershire.

We were away for 21 nights, staying on Club campsites under Covid Restrictions, and we found that everything was organised very well, and we felt very safe.



TRAVEL

FRANCE

La Venise Verte

A once impenetrable area of marshland between Niort and the Atlantic coast has been transformed into a mellow landscape of serene beauty, equal to the Pont du Gard and the Camargue.

Around 8,000 years ago the inland site on which the town of Niort was founded overlooked a huge bay – le golfe des Pictons—which gradually silted up as the Autise, Lay, Sèvre Niortaise and Vendée rivers deposited alluvial debris carried from further upstream, the Atlantic added its own clay like silt known to geologists as ‘bri’. Niort is now some 100km from the sea.

The resulting huge area of marshland (marais) remained dangerous and largely impenetrable. Co-ordinated drainage began around the 11th century when Benedictine monks brought the land under cultivation, creating three canals: le Bot-Neuf, le Bot de Vendée and the 11km long canal des Cinq Abbés. The local labourers were rewarded with commoners’ grazing rights, some of which are still held today.

During the Wars of Religion (1562-1598) maintenance was abandoned but was resumed in the 17th century with the Dutch engineer, Humphrey Bradley designing and building a series of dykes to keep the sea safely at bay. Slowly the waterways turned from salt to fresh water and reclaimed coastal areas were transformed into fertile landscapes. A legacy of this is a canal known as la Ceinture des Hollandais still channelling storm waters of the Vienne and Clain into the Sèvre.

The once-inhospitable marais had been transformed into two altogether more manageable areas: wet marsh (le marais mouille) and dry marsh (le marais desséché). On the coast further sandy deposits were encouraged by the digue de l’Aiguillon, a slender breakwater extending 6km from the northern tip of the Baie de l’Aiguillon above La Rochelle, which again was conceived by Dutch engineers.

Creating the drainage channels had been a huge task, their effectiveness would, and still does, depend on careful management

using a complex system of devices like locks (écluses), sea-locks/flood-gates (portes à flot), sluices (bondes) and aqueducts (aqueducs) which have become part of the local landscape. Many more natural looking features, although not obvious, are essential components of the system giving rise to a landscape fashioned by man. Lines of poplars (peupliers) resist winter winds, providing useful timber, while the roots of the countless pollarded ash trees (frênes têtards) planted beside the canals during the 19th century stabilise the banks and prevent them from collapsing.

As tourism began to develop, just about anywhere with a waterway network played the Venice card in its marketing. So it was not surprising that le Marais Poitevin should adopt the romantic-sounding name of La Venise Verte. Given the size and complexity of the waterway network, it's perhaps not as fanciful as it sounds, particularly in summer when it's profusion of greenery is wonderful. You can enjoy a trip in a punt, a traditional flat bottomed barque, which for centuries was the most practical means of transport, ferrying people, livestock and produce to and from otherwise inaccessible locations. In fact, here and there you will come across tiny forgotten ports tucked away beside villages which once relied on them for their day-to-day survival.

Today it is easy to get around the 100,000 hectares; you can see almost all of the tourist sites by road but you can better explore an extensive and varied network of signed cycle routes into and through the peaceful heart of the marais.

A good starting point is Coulon, just west of Niort, an attractive riverside village (and notional capital of 'la Venise Verte') which offers a good campsite, a large aire, (push the timber pole to one side and go through, closing the pole after you), free parking, boat and bike hire, plus restaurants, tourist office (factfile panel) and all of the usual local services.

Another area you should visit, go westwards to the Baie de l'Aiguillon, 4900 hectares of protected Réserve Naturelle Nationale.

Here the constantly changing landscapes comprises of mudflats, salt-marshes and sandy beaches providing a stopover for migrating birds. It will also give you an idea of what the marais looked like before it was managed by man – something to contemplate as the sun sets over the outline of the Ile de Ré with a glass of wine in hand!

Mike Valentine

www.parc-marais-poitevin.fr

www.reserve-baie-aiguillon.fr



Eagles and Serendipity

Piers and Frances Brereton

Our Bourton helped us travel for three exciting weeks in the Outer Hebrides during May and June 2019. It is barren and beautiful, sunny and stormy, the islands are fascinating and driving is courteous, but wider patches of road are strictly for passing oncoming vehicles. There were many interesting moments but the highlight was finding eagles around us one afternoon on South Uist.

In a glorious break in foul weather and having scrambled the Bourton up to seaward on a narrow road where every other opening was the sacred "passing place", we spotted an eagle, it was a white-tailed sea eagle, we watched as it drifted over an inland cliff and disappeared.

We stayed, intent on an impromptu lunch. The eagle returned and rested on a rock just 50 yards away, it then glided towards us over the cliff and dropped to an unnoticed ledge and a huge pile of old sticks.

There, to our amazement, where she had landed, two fluffy white/grey chicks popped up and she began to feed them. She tended them very carefully, then flew away, after a short delay returned to continue to feed the chicks, this happened several times in half an hour.



A second eagle circled gently then settled on a clifftop post: "our" hen rose and settled companionably opposite for a while before resuming her duties. Her mate sat on his post for a long time, and then we noticed a lump of some prey in his left talon. Eventually he reached down to tear at this with his beak. Then it occurred to us he was not eating it, but shredding it.

His mate clearly understood his male awkwardness, and when he finally dropped over the cliff to the ledge and nest, she moved aside to encourage him in.

He then moved to the middle of the nest turning slowly round and round, until finally just dropping his contribution and left the nest. The hen continued to feed the chicks.

Two herring gulls appeared, ridiculously half her size and in their boldness dared approach her and finally attempted to "buzz" her. She had regally ignored them but at this she turned her disdainful glance briefly upon them, they never returned.

In the distance, five kilometres away, a lone golden eagle was circling Hecla, Uist's most splendid single peak: then his mate appeared and joined him in a steady patrol extending to Hecla's long ridge.

Six eagles in one afternoon is serendipity. When we got home and printed our pictures, one clearly shows not two chicks, but three - seven eagles in one afternoon.



taken from an article previously published in CHMC

INCLUDES DELIVERY

018 SCREEN BADGE £1.20



PITCH RESERVATION BOARD



019 without vehicle registration £5.40

020 with vehicle registration £8.40

012 BUDDY BEAR £12.50



with ASOC tee shirt

017 TWO ASOC PENS £2.50

Payment required is by bank transfer, email your order to regalia@asoc.uk.com

We will confirm your purchase together with our bank details, and a reference number to be used when paying by bank transfer. It is important to use the reference number when transferring as we require it to deliver the order

TRAVEL TO EUROPE – THE NEW RULES

Many of you will have barely moved out of the confines of your own home in the past year. Others made a dash for freedom as soon as lockdowns and tiers allowed. It's suggested that for the foreseeable future staycations will be the thing. We'll all discover this brilliant country of ours and that's a good thing. Some of us, though, will be itching to get across the Channel to the European mainland for sun and sangria, cheese and wine, or maybe just a bit of different culture. But before you go, things have changed, so do some checks starting at www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021 and make preparations. Here is a checklist:

EU COUNTRIES: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.	
PASSPORT	Minimum 6 months validity but less than 10 years old. Ireland – valid as long as your stay.
VISA	Not required for tourist trips less than 90 days in any 180-day period.
HEALTH CARE	For state healthcare at a reduced cost or free - EHC in date or obtain new, free GHIC (Global Health Insurance Card) from www.gov.uk/global-health-insurance-card N.B. EHC/GHIC cannot be used in Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, or Switzerland, but in Norway a UK passport can be used to get medically necessary healthcare. Plus your own travel insurance.
DRIVING	UK Driving Licence – Photocard.
	Green Card (proof of insurance).
	GB sticker on rear of vehicle (number plate version not acceptable).
	International Driving Permit needed? YES - If paper driving licence. YES - If licence issued Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey or Isle of Man. YES - For countries other than EU, Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein.

SNIPPET

The UK have now have a replacement for the EHC card. GHIC "Global Health Insurance card". The EHC card is still valid as long as it is still in date, the GHIC card can be applied for when it runs out. More information on the government website.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-launches-global-health-insurance-card>

PETS	Animal Health Certificate (AHC) required, valid for 4 months from issue, new AHC required for each trip – see your vet. Tapeworm treatment for travel directly to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Northern Ireland, or Norway Min. 24 hrs Max. 120 hrs (5 days) before travel.		
	On return – AHC plus tapeworm treatment, by a vet (but not if returning directly from Finland, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway, or Malta). Min. 24 hrs Max. 120 hrs (5 days) before travel.		
	EU Pet Passport no longer valid for travel to an EU country or Northern Ireland.		
	Travelling to a non-EU country – check with your vet.		
	Check www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-and-from-great-britain		
DUTY FREE LIMITS On return	Beer	42 litres	
	Wine (not sparkling)	18 litres	
	Plus either:	Spirits etc over 22% alcohol	4 litres
	Or:	Fortified wine (e.g. port, sherry), sparkling wine and alcoholic drinks up to 22% alcohol	9 litres
	Or:	Mix and match e.g. 2L Spirits plus 4½L sparkling wine	
		Cigarettes	200
		Cigarillos	100
		Cigars	50
		Tobacco	250g
		Tobacco sticks (electronic heated tobacco devices)	200
		Other goods	Up to £390
	Check www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods/arriving-in-Great-Britain for updates.		
VAT, customs duty and excise duty must be paid on excess declared.			
FOOD	You cannot take meat, milk or products containing them into EU countries. There are some exceptions for medical reasons, for example certain amounts of powdered infant milk, infant food, or pet food required for medical reasons.		
	Check the EU website ec.europa.eu/food/animalproducts/personal_imports_en for the finer detail.		

This is intended as a guide, but do your own checks because the devil is in the detail! And enjoy your adventures!

Rob Corcoran 9539

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Our first visit to Spain in our A-S Talisman2 was in Jan/Feb 1999, when we attended the annual ASOC rally at Los Gallardos Mojacar, always organised by Geoff & Betty Scholey. At the end of the 1999 rally, however, Betty & Geoff asked if someone else would take over for the following year, because of their declining health.

Dorothy & I volunteered and were privileged to be able to run a 4 week rally over the period Jan/Feb 2000. The fifty-nine ralliers (and a dog!) in the photograph are enjoying the glorious warm winter sunshine. As also are those on cycles going for one of the rides up country.

As this is the 21st anniversary of the rally, we would be very interested to know if any of the ralliers are still in the Club? If so, we would very much like to hear from you, by email, through the courtesy of John our Editor, editor@asoc.uk.com please.

Dorothy & Baz Wellard



PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2021

submit up to four photographs

Closing date for entries 31 March 2021

All members per motorhome can enter
Size 6 x 4 inches or 7 x 5 inches unmounted



This year's subject for photographs
What did you get up to in your motorhome
during and after lockdown

Entries should be sent with your name and membership number to:
Rita Tubb 70 Charnwood Crescent, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire, SO53 5QL

CROSSWORD NUMBER ONE babies answers
ACROSS: 1 fawn, 4 cygnet, 5 poult, 8 Leveret, 9 kitten, 10 joey
DOWN: 2 owl, 3 pup, 4 calf, 6 sardine, 7 kit, 11 hatching, 12 gosling

Missing Links Answers
1 Down 2 Card 3 Flip 4 *Moth 5 Step Five letter word WRITE
*as in *Theola bisseillia*, known as the common clothes moth

EVENTS

Neil C. Rogers, Rally Coordinator
5 Emerson Court, Carmel Road North,
Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 8JB
Telephone: 01325 954508
Email: ncr@mypostoffice.co.uk

Applying for rallies: You may only apply for rallies by post using a Club rally slip. Under no circumstances will marshals accept bookings by telephone. Always carry your membership card when attending rallies. Inform the marshal if you plan to bring a car, tent or trailer.

All rallies start at 12 noon unless otherwise stated in the rally information.

RALLY INFORMATION MARCH 2021

WHITEMEAD RALLY 8 - 12 March 2021

Due to the current Covid restrictions it has been decided that it is not sensible to continue with this rally.

NATIONAL RALLY & AGM 29 April - 3 May 2021

CANCELLED Full details on how to participate in the meetings will be in News

BRIARFIELDS RALLY 17 - 24 May

This rally has been postponed until 19 -26 September 2021

Rallies 2021

20 - 25 June 2021 Wigginton F.C. York

8 - 13 July 2021 Leons Field, St. Ives

15 - 19 July 2021 Beacon Park, Lichfield

24 - 29 July 2021 Stafford Boat Club

19 - 23 August 2021 Whitby Regatta

23 - 27 August 2021 Winchester, Symondians Cricket Club

MULTI SITE SCOTTISH RALLY 1 -16 September 2021

cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control

6 - 10 September 2021 South Lychett Manor

19 - 26 September 2021 Briarfields, Cheltenham

24 September - 4 October 2021 ACCEO AGM

Shows that may take place

16 - 18 April 2021 National Motorhome Show, Peterborough (no ASOC rally at this show)

20 - 22 August 2021 Great Western Show, Malvern (we have a marshal)

10 - 12 September 2021 South West Show, Shepton Mallet

24 - 26 September 2021 Seasons Finale, Lincoln Showground

Details of further rallies will be published if and when current restrictions allow



Carters Steam Fair

One year at the Lichfield Rally we shared the park with Carters Steam Fair. One of our club members were invited inside one of the vans to see how they lived when they are on the road. They only stayed two days and then on to the next town. www.asoc.uk.com/vid/fair.mp4



photos: ©John Geeson