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Newsletter No. 129

Autumn 2022

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson : Heather Hartell

12 St. Boswells Close, Hailsham, E Sussex, BN27 3WB
Tel : 07887 426453 Email:heather.hartell@btinternet.com



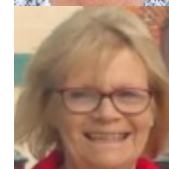
Vice Chairman : Bridget Hubbard

43 Oaklands Drive, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0NW



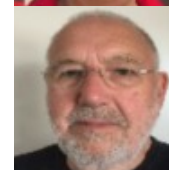
Secretary : Val Dobbin

4 Ranleigh Drive, Newburgh, Lancs, WN8 7NA
Tel : 01257 462433 Email : valdobbin@sky.com



Treasurer : Bob Mason

Capen Hurst, West Camel, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 7QX
Tel : 01935 851120 Email : bob@bobmason65.plus.com



Rally Secretary : Andy Hartell

12 St. Boswells Close, Hailsham, E Sussex, BN27 3WB
Tel : 07733 222027 Email : smoc.rallysecretary@gmail.com



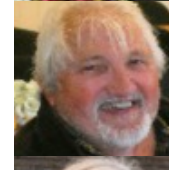
Newsletter and Website : Heather Hartell (Chairperson)

Tel : 07887 426453 Email:heather.hartell@btinternet.com



Membership Secretary : Robert Hubbard

43 Oaklands Drive, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0NW
Tel: 07799 533434 Email : smoc.members.secretary@gmail.com



Regalia Organiser : Marilyn Miland

Peelers, Bayford, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9NR
Tel : 01963 34297 Email:smocregalia@aol.com



NEC Events Organiser : Jane Steward

Walton House, Brigstock, Kettering, Northants, NN14 3HH
Tel : 01536 373269 email : j@janesteward.co.uk



Co-opted Members

Ray Collinson

80 Minsthorpe Vale, South Elmsall, West Yorks, WF9 2PQ
Tel : 07876 506744 Email : rcolli4139@aol.com



Keith Morgan

Gwel yr Afon, Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth, SY233EE



Ann Halford

30 Bean Oak Rd, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 1RL



NEW CHAIRPERSON'S CHAT

I am writing this at a time when we have just had a new Prime Minister Liz Truss and in the same week, we have lost our wonderful Queen Elizabeth II. God Rest her soul. I have only ever known our Queen, who has dedicated her life to our country and people. May King Charles III reign be a great one.

The AGM took place at Pembridge in Hereford, which is where the black and white houses and villages are to be found. As the new Chair I wish to thank the members that attended the AGM and voted onto the committee both new and returning members. I certainly hope to continue the good work the committee do and help to move the club forward. I also wish to welcome our new Vice Chair and our new co-opted members to the committee

I personally wish to thank our outgoing Chair (Ian) and our Newsletter Editor (Ray) for all their sterling work with the club over many years. In recognition of this work both them and their wives were presented with gift vouchers at the AGM on behalf of all our members.

We have a very full and varied rally list for 2023, you will find it in this edition of the Newsletter, and I look forward to meeting new and regular rally members soon on one of these rallies. A big thank you to all those members that continue to marshal at rallies, without you they wouldn't happen. Anyone wishing to run a rally please contact the Rally secretary, I'm sure he will be delighted to hear from you. We have the Christmas Rally coming up at Poston Mill Hereford in November so please come and join the fun, a full programme will be provided

On another note we have the NEC Motorhome and Caravan Show (18th-23rd October 2022) where we will have a Swift Motorhomes Owners Club stand which Jane Steward (NEC and Events Coordinator) is kindly organising. If you are going to the show, please come and chat to potential new members as your experience of the club is valuable and if you could spare an hour to cover the stand it would be greatly appreciated.

All that is left to say is I hope you continue to enjoy rallying together, we are a very sociable group and for those that have not yet rallied with us, come, and give it a try, it's you that make us a great club.

Best Regards

Heather (Chairperson)

Letters and other contributions published in the SMOC Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or of the SMOC Committee. It is a condition of publication that all contributions may be edited for grammar, length and/or clarity

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Newsletter. We have just returned from the AGM at Pembridge where various changes to the Committee took place.

After serving for 3 years as Vice Chair, Heather has now taken over as Chairperson, succeeding Ian who completed his 3 years in the role. Heather has also volunteered for the position of Editor, as we have no-one available (at the moment) to fulfil the role that I have left after 8 years.

We welcomed Bridget Hubbard to the position of Vice Chair and 2 new people have been co-opted by the Committee. They are Ann Halford and Keith Morgan. I have also been invited to stay on the Committee as a co-opted member.

Bill Hoggett, who has been our Photographer since before Adam was a lad, will remain as Club Photographer but in a non Committee role.

As per usual, next year's Rally Programme was revealed at the AGM and details can be found in the middle of this Newsletter.

The Swift Group Rally and Factory Tour, which was cancelled 2 years ago due to Covid, has been re-organised for March. If you want to see how our motorhomes are produced then this is your chance!

Another major rally is our Foreign Rally, which is scheduled for June and will visit Northern Spain and France. It will take place from the 5th to the 23rd. Details are still being finalised, but more information is included towards the end of this Newsletter following the reports for this year's French Rally. If you are considering joining us on this rally please email Andy to register your interest. This will ensure you receive updates as soon as they are available and will help with planning.

It just remains for me to say my farewell as Editor. After producing 31 editions over a period of nearly 8 years, this is my last Newsletter. I want to thank everyone who has sent me items for publication over this time. Without your supply of Rally Reports, Amusing items, Travel Reports, General Information and Photos it would not have been possible to produce the Newsletter.

Please continue to send in these items to Heather. They are needed and much appreciated.

Ray (retired Newsletter Editor)

A Warm SMOC Welcome to our New Members. **We look forward to welcoming you to our Rallies**

Chris & Kacey Guy & Niccola Brayshaw	Morecambe	3456
Tom Smith	Linlithgow	3457
Brian & Patrice Tipping	Malvern	3458

Jugon les Lacs, Brittany, France. 6th - 10th June 2022



Water Park of the Campsite

On arrival in Brittany, our first venue was Jugon-Les-Lacs. The site was very nice, with a water park for adults and kids, and an indoor swimming pool. There were some lovely walks too, which were not far from the town itself, with cycling paths around a large lake with lots of wildlife.

On the first night, in the restaurant, our group were welcomed by the staff. We had a pre-arranged Breton Meal of galettes, crepes and cider. Although the main course was a sausage wrapped in a galette, accompanied by a huge portion of frites, the evening was a great success. The staff were so kind to us, and we were all given a free canvas bag of goodies to leave with (including a bottle of wine).

The following day, we had a guided tour with a lovely lady (who's English was excellent), around the lake and into the village of Jugon-Les-Lacs.

We had a walk around the village, and visited a church called Eglise Notre-Dame et Saint-Etienne, which was built at the end of the 12th Century by the monks of Marmoutier, the style was originally Roman, but in between the 14th and 15th Centuries, a Norman bell tower was added. The church had the most amazing stained glass windows, very beautiful, and one of them traces the history of the founding of Jugon.

The church organ was kindly donated from our very own Great Britain!



Start of our Walk

We had lunch in the village but the group had to be split into two, as the restaurants could not accommodate all of us together. We went at the same time to two different restaurants, where we all had lovely food, and would definitely go back there again.



Liquid Lunch

The next day, we had an organised coach trip to Dinan, a really lovely town not far from Jugon-Les-Lacs. The town is famous for its cobbled stone streets and half timbered houses, which were beautifully built, and a site to see.

There is also a fourteenth Century castle which overlooks the Rance river and the lower town, built in Medieval times. It was quite surreal, and looked like a film set.



Dinan Lower Town

Whilst walking around this enchanting town, we came across a crane type lift up to a third storey window. This is, apparently, the way the townsfolk remove their furniture, (or install it), as the buildings are so high, and quite inaccessible. It was fascinating to watch.

In the heart of the town we saw another type of lift, the firemen!

Some people were visiting the bell tower there, but one man felt ill while he was up there, and couldn't walk back down the stairs. He had to have the cherry picker cage sent up with a fireman in it to rescue him, which drew in quite a crowd.

Happy to say the man was ok, according to some onlookers, so all ended well.





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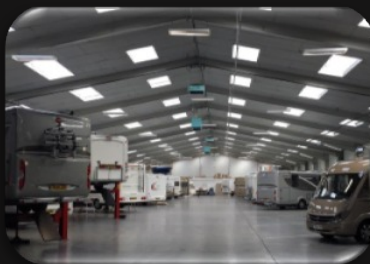
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Everyone enjoyed the trip, especially the excellent 3 course lunch (with wine and coffee) that followed in a local restaurant, Le Longueville.



Next day was a free day, to relax before moving on to La Guyonniere in St Julien des Landes, Vendee.

Thanks to Carol and Ray for all their hard work organising such lovely places on this trip, we enjoyed them all so much, certainly a holiday to remember.

by Ian & Sharon Matthews (2620)

La Guyonniere, Vendee, France - 10th to 14th June 2022

After a long drive from Jugon les Lacs, (167 miles) we arrived at our second rally site, Village De La Guyonniere, in the Vendee region. We were soon directed to our pitches where we quickly set up camp. This site is large with plenty to do on site and has a Snack bar, Restaurant, Shop, water park and, most importantly, a bar and happy hour each evening with music and entertainment (many of our group could be found here every night). The camp site is owned by a Dutch family, the Father Pierre and his two sons Thys and Piet who have been running the site for 30 years. The first evening we all congregated in the restaurant, where we were greeted by Thys and Piet. They gave us a warm welcome and then proceeded to serve our welcome meal, three courses with wine and coffee. The food was excellent, very tasty, and service was very good.



The following day we took a coach to the vineyard Saint Nicholas where they grow and produce organic biodynamic wine, working with nature. After a talk on how they grow, produce and bottle their wine, we had a guided tour around the vines and wine presses.

Then came the serious business of tasting their wines along with a selection of Hors d'oeuvres and Appetizers, after which we were free to buy whatever wine we wanted. I believe we all left having sampled many different wines, a little light headed and having spent quite a few of our precious euros.



Later that evening we all had a get together outside Ray and Carol's motorhome. Several folks were planning a bike ride to the coast the following day, to Bretignolles sur Mer. After much discussion, and looking at the route they would take over several glasses of wine, it was decided by eight of them that they would head out around 10.30 the following morning on, allegedly, a 15-16 mile round trip. Sensibly, I had decided to have a quiet time back at the camp with few glasses of red wine.



Eight intrepid explorers started out; Ray, Carol, Ian, Sharon, Robert, Graham, Heather & Andy, but apparently they came across one or two problems. They started off on the road, then took a rough uphill track causing Sharon to take a tumble. Then, not to be left out, Carol managed to topple off a couple of times. Fortunately there were no injuries.

Upon arriving at Bretignolles there were no signs of the beach, so two cyclists decided to go off searching in different directions, leaving the rest to stand on a street corner waiting and wondering where they were. Ray decided to go looking for them. Once they were all together and at the beach, it was time for refreshments before starting the ride back.

Distance calculation was somewhat out. Overall it was a staggering 26 miles. Luckily, all the batteries on the electric bikes lasted the distance. Robert's & Graham's were getting low on power but held out to get them safely back.





The next morning we took a coach trip to a lovely seaside resort with a magnificent beach, Les Sables D'Olonne. Heather, Andy, Robert and I took a stroll along it; it was relaxing and beautiful. A long promenade Le Remblai runs along the beach with a multitude of restaurants and cafes. Like several of the group, as we were only there for three hours, we decided to forego the guided tour of the old town and look around ourselves.

We walked along the river and found that every four years the town hosts the departure of the Vendee Globe, single handed, round-the-world yacht race; non-stop without assistance. The plaques all along the harbour wall show the time line of the winners.

Those on the guided tour were shown around the old town with it's narrow streets and fishermen's cottages of L'ile De Penotte, the oldest quarter of the old town.



Houses of the Old Town



Nautical themed seashell mosaics adorn the houses of L'ile Penotte

We went on to La Chaume, the old fishing quarter and yachting port. All day long, a ferry travels from one side to the other side of the river. Now, a quick snack overlooking the beach and run to catch the bus back. The stay at Village de la Guyonniere was for 4 days, which went very quickly.



Harbour Entrance at Les Sables

Les Sables d'Olonne



Next morning, everything was packed up, and most motorhomes had left the site by 10.30am heading to L'Isle Verte, Montsoreau in the Loire Valley which was a journey of 132 miles. Robert said it was the longest 132 miles he had travelled in the motorhome.

by Bridget Hubbard (3177)

CAKE OR BED ?

A husband is at home watching a football match when his wife interrupts, 'Honey, could you fix the light in the hallway? It's been flickering for weeks now.'

He looks at her and says angrily, 'Fix the lights, now? Does it look like I have 'Powergen' written on my forehead? I don't think so!'

'Fine!' The wife says, 'Well could you fix the fridge door? It won't close properly'. To which he replied 'Fix the fridge door? Does it look like I have 'Frigidaire' written on my forehead? I don't think so!'

'Fine!' She says, 'Then you could at least fix the steps to the front door, they're about to break'. 'I'm not a carpenter and I don't fix steps', he says, 'Does it look like I have 'Taylor Woodrow' written on my forehead? I don't think so!'

I've had enough of this, I'm going to the pub!!!!' So he goes to the pub and drinks for a couple of hours....but he starts to feel guilty about the way he treated his wife, and decides to go home.

As he walks up to the house he notices the steps are fixed. As he enters the house he sees the hall light is working. As he goes to get a beer, he notices the fridge door is fixed.

Honey, he asks, 'How'd all this get fixed?'

She said, 'Well, when you left I sat outside and cried. Just then, a nice young man asked me what was wrong, and I told him. He offered to do all the repairs, and all I had to do was either go to bed with him or bake him a cake.

The husband said, 'So what kind of cake did you bake?'

She replied, 'Hellooo....., Do you see 'Mr Kipling' written on my forehead?'

I don't think so!'

WHY I'M DIVORCED

Last week was my birthday and I didn't feel very well upon waking that morning. I went downstairs for breakfast hoping my husband would be pleasant and say, 'Happy Birthday!', and possibly have a small present for me. As it turned out, he barely said good morning, let alone 'Happy Birthday.' I thought.... Well, that's marriage for you, but the kids.... They'll remember. My kids came bouncing down stairs to breakfast and didn't say a word.

So when I left for the office, I felt pretty low and somewhat despondent. As I walked into my office, my handsome boss Rick, said, 'Good Morning, lady, and by the way Happy Birthday!' It felt a little better that at least someone had remembered.

I worked until one o'clock, when Rick knocked on my door and said, 'You know, It's such a beautiful day outside, and it is your Birthday, what do you say we go out to lunch, just you and me..'. I said, 'Thanks, Rick, that's the greatest thing I've heard all day.

Let's go!' We went to lunch. But we didn't go where we normally would go.

He chose instead a quiet bistro with a private table. We had two martinis each and I enjoyed the meal tremendously. On the way back to the office, Rick said, 'You know, It's such a beautiful day... We don't need to go straight back to the office, Do We?'

I responded, 'I guess not. What do you have in mind?' He said, 'Let's drop by my place, it's just around the corner.' After arriving at his house, Rick turned to me and said, 'If you don't mind, I'm going to step into the bedroom for just a moment. I'll be right back.' 'Ok.' I nervously replied.

He went into the bedroom and, after a couple of minutes, he came out carrying a huge birthday cakefollowed by my husband, my kids, and dozens of my friends and co-workers, all singing 'Happy Birthday'.

And I just sat there.... On the couch.... Naked.



Three blonde men are stranded on an island. Suddenly a fairy appears and offers to grant each one of them a wish.

The first blonde asks to be intelligent. Instantly, he is turned into a brown-haired man and swims off the island.

The next one asks to be even more intelligent than the previous one, so he is turned into a black-haired man. The black haired man builds a boat and sails off the island.

The third blonde asks to become even more intelligent than the previous two. The fairy turns him into a woman, and she walks across the bridge.

Christmas Rally, Poston Mill, Herefordshire, HR2 0SF

Wednesday 23rd November – Wednesday 30th November 2021

www.postonmill.co.uk

Our club Christmas Dinner is booked for Saturday 26th November at the Mill Restaurant at 7.30 p.m. Further details will be provided on the “Members Portal” in the booking section for Poston Mill, where you will also be able to make your menu selections. For those members who book rallies via post / email we will contact you to discuss menu options once we receive your completed rally form.

Please note there are only 12 fully serviced pitches available

Pitch Fees for Less than 7-night stay

Standard Pitch: £21 per unit per night (includes EHU)

Fully Serviced Pitch: £22 per unit per night (includes EHU)

Pitch Fees for 7-night stay

Standard Pitch: £17.50 per unit per night (includes EHU)

Fully Serviced Pitch: £19.50 per unit per night (includes EHU)

Rally Fee: £1 per person (Guests £10 per unit)

Marshals: Heather & Andy Hartell

Closing Date for bookings: Friday 7th October

No arrivals before midday on any day

Christmas Meal 2022

Starters

Prawn Cocktail

Goats Cheese Salad with Cranberry Dressing

Duck Pate

Mains

Turkey with seasonal vegetables with all the festive trimmings

Beef with seasonal vegetables with all the festive trimmings

Leek and Mushroom Crumble

Puddings

Black Forest Gateaux & Cream

Christmas Pudding

Mince Pies

Tea or Coffee

2 Courses: £19.50 3 Courses: £21.50

Booking and menu selections are available on the “Members Portal” or alternatively by emailing the Rally Secretary with your choice(s)

Payments can be made either via BACS or cheque – made payable to Swift Motorhomes Owners Club, please quote Christmas Meal with your payment

2023 SMOC RALLY PROGRAMME

<u>Feb</u>	14th - 21st	Wyton Lakes, (Wyton, PE28 2AA)
<u>March</u>	9th - 16th	Harrogate Caravan Park, (Harrogate, HG2 8NZ)
	29th- Apr 5th	Swift Group Rally and <u>Factory Tour</u> Driffield Showground (Driffield, YO25 9FB)
<u>April</u>	20th - 24th	National Motorhome Show (Peterborough, PE2 6XE)
<u>May</u>	10th - 17th	Briarfields Touring Park (Cheltenham, GL51 0SS)
	18th - 22nd	The Southern Motorhome Show (Newbury, RG18 9QZ) <i>(Follow on meet – Please book independently)</i>
<u>June</u>	5th - 23rd	Overseas Rally (France & Northern Spain) <i>(Details to be finalised in late October)</i>
<u>July</u>	12th - 19th	Minehead Rugby Club (Minehead TA24 6TR)
	19th - 24th	Uphill Marina & Touring Park, (Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4XR) <i>Follow on meet – Please book independently</i>
	27th - 31st	Welland Steam & Country Rally (Welland, WR13 6NG)
<u>Aug</u>	6th - 9th	Morton Hall Caravan & Camping, (Edinburgh, EH16 6TJ) <i>(Meet only – Please book independently)</i>
	9th - 16th	Alnwick Rugby Club (Alnwick, NE66 1BE)
	17th - 21st	Malvern Country & Western Show (WR13 6NW)
<u>Sept</u>	1st - 4th	Truckfest, Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6QN)
	6th - 13th	AGM Rally, <i>Venue to be Confirmed</i> <i>Possibly Townsend Park (Herefordshire, HR6 9HB)</i>
	21st - 25th	Lincoln Motorhome Show (Lincoln, LN2 2NA)
<u>Oct</u>	10th - 17th	Cardiff Caravan & Camping Park (Cardiff, CF11 9XR)
<u>Nov</u>	22nd - 29th	Thorntons Holt Camping Park (Stragglethorpe, NG12 2JZ)



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Camping l'Isle Verte, Montsoreau, France, 14th – 22nd June 2022

After leaving our 2nd rally site at La Guyonniere, and the friendly goats, we ventured Northeast for a couple of hours eventually arriving at the delightful village of Montsoreau. It's one of France's prettiest villages, nestled alongside the mighty Loire. The journey, in convoy with Robert & Bridget was somewhat uneventful, I don't even recall circling any roundabouts more than once!

Camping L'Isle Verte is nestled amongst neatly laid out hedges and trees, which whilst a little compact in places did provide some much-needed shade as the temperatures began to soar throughout the week of our stay. The site sits between the main road joining Montsoreau to Saumur, and the River Loire river and is only a short 10 minutes walk from the village centre.

This is where you find the boulangerie/patisserie (selling a range of amazing mouth-watering cakes) and a very well stocked supermarket, described by some as a veritable TARDIS. There's also the local Boucherie and the strategically positioned bar “Lion D'Or or Golden Lion! - although its opening hours became a bit of a rally joke, but more of that later.



After our arrival we got everything set up and prepared to meet up on the terrace with our fellow ralliers once again. We enjoyed a warm welcome from our host Clément, the owner of the site and the President of the C'est si Bon group. This was followed by a Table Grill, a cook your own barbecue with a great selection of different meats and vegetables. On this occasion it would have been difficult to criticise the chef !



The following day we all went on a walking tour of Montsoreau, learning about the commune's history, its culture and way of life, especially the troglodyte dwellings set into the cliffs around the village. The area has always been wealthy (stone, wine, and fruit). The Chateau, the only one built on the bed of the Loire River was also the first to be built in the Renaissance style in France. It's unique position on the river allowed it to direct traders on the river to pass through its inner channels and collect taxes. This became particularly important after the French Revolution when the local tuffeau stone increased in production due to new industrial techniques.



Cave House built into the cliff face

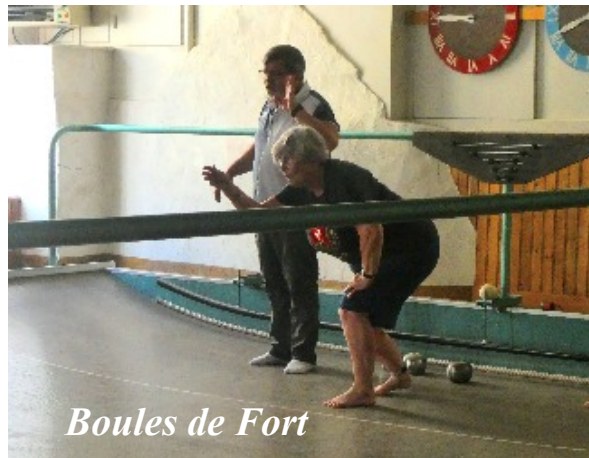


Chateau de Montsoreau and the Loire



As we concluded the walk, we were invited to visit the village Boules De Forte Club, once the preserve of men only and a private members club, which we could enter under the invitation of Clément who is a member.

The game, less well known than Petanque, is traditional to Anjou and played on a curved indoor field with odd, shaped boules often in slippers! That said we all had a go with some surprisingly good ends being played, perhaps some had been practising!



Boules de Fort

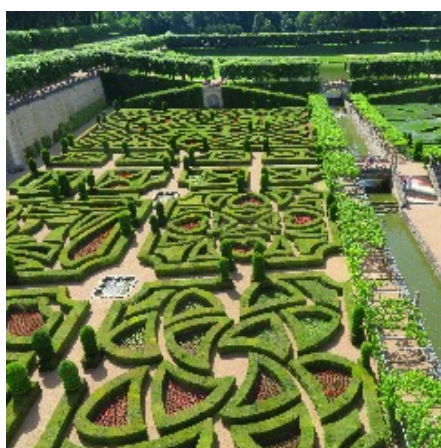


Thursday was a free day and the temperature began to soar, topping 40°C on several days (unbeknown to us this was good preparation for the UK temperatures to come!). A few of us found some respite from the heat in the site's swimming pool. Although for the serious swimmers the sight of 20 plus Brits cooling off and having a good old natter probably wasn't quite what they expected!

On Friday morning we went on a coach trip for a guided tour of Chateau Villandry. This is one of the few chateaux that are still furnished and gives a good insight into the luxurious lifestyle of the French aristocracy. After the visit, we had time to visit one of the local restaurants before rejoining the coach.



Chateau Villandry



Saumur, the local town was just a short bus or taxi ride from L'Isle Verte and many of those on the rally enjoyed a trip or two (or three) allowing us to explore this vibrant white town with its majestic Chateau dominating the skyline. When we visited, along with Robert & Bridget, we took a local taxi in and enjoyed a pleasant day exploring the area, initially by hopping on the little train that trundles around the main sights, including the Church of Nantilly and the prestigious Cadre Noir and its Ecole Nationale d'Equitation (National Riding School).

Then, by walking around the Chateau grounds and returning downhill to the town, where we enjoyed a fabulous lunch, with great food & cocktails. We then explored the Church of St Peter in the main square, before taking a slow amble back to the taxi pick up point.



Saumur

The more energetic amongst us, or to put it another way, the bike riders who had previously managed to not fall off, decided to go on a short 3-mile ride to the Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud. The remains of not just one, but two English Kings (who also ruled this region of France), namely Henry II & Richard the 1st (Lionheart), were held here but it is believed they were probably destroyed during the French Revolution. Given the price to view the empty tombs the intrepid riders decided their money was better spent on a beer or two in the town square.

On Saturday we explored the local Montsoreau market (some went off to Saumur to visit their market) enjoying the experience of trying the local produce and then settling down for a glass of wine or two at the local hostelry. As we enjoyed our drink with friends in the early evening, we were suddenly struck by how fellow drinkers around us were leaving, which is not so strange given it was 7pm. However, then we noticed the furniture being moved inside, then the potted plants and we had visions of one of us being unceremoniously loaded onto the sack trolley being used by the bar staff and dumped onto the pavement outside! Apparently, the Golden Lion goes through this ritual every night and then by 8am on the following day it looks like nothing ever happened, with every item back in its rightful place. When we enquired as to why, the response was crime, with passers by stealing items if left out!! Incredulous for such a quiet little village.

Interspersed between the searingly hot days were some very wet nights with some stunning thunderstorms, with one directly overhead thunderclap literally shaking the motorhome (no comments). The rain did not however dampen our spirits, even when on the Sunday of our stay we all got together and celebrated the 51st wedding anniversary of Graham & Barbara in style with fizz and cake. They did want to do it in 2021 when we should originally have been in France, but COVID got in the way! During the evening, which was hosted by Ray & Carol, we also enjoyed some nice nibbles, more drink, and a hellishly hard music quiz, although I think the difficulty depended on who's team you were in.

As our week drew to a close, we were taken on a very pleasant walk through the local vineyards followed by a visit to a local wine cave. This was a very enjoyable experience as the lovely cool cave was filled with a vast variety of bottles from the surrounding region and beyond, all for us to try and buy, which many of us did. This was followed by lunch outside in the sunshine, of savoury and sweet filled pitta breads washed down with more wine and enjoyed with great company.





Finally, on our last night we were treated to a hog roast on the terrace, prepared and cooked by Clément. This was enjoyed by all and a fitting end to our week in the Loire; we may also have had a little more wine! We also had a small presentation for Ray and Carol in recognition of all the work they had done in organising the rallies in France.



The following morning Au Revoirs were said, accompanied by complimentary Coffee & Croissant on the bar terrace, as we all prepared to depart for home; albeit with many of us spending some more time in France before eventually heading back to blighty.

There is only one more thing to say and that is a massive 'thank you' to Ray & Carol for co-ordinating such an amazing few weeks, we will certainly be back.

Andy Hartell (3243)

SMOC OVERSEAS RALLY 2023



**5th to 23rd
JUNE**



Given the success of our overseas rally this year and following feedback via a recent questionnaire that was sent to all members, we are delighted to announce that it is our intention to hold an overseas rally in 2023.

The destination is planned to be :-

Northern Spain and France (Pyrenees / Dordogne)

We plan to be able to provide further details, including pricing, in late October, so please hold the above dates if you are interested.

As we did for this year's rally, we will be asking for a small deposit (£100) to reserve your place, with a further payment required in late December (at this point deposits will be non-refundable).

A final balance payment will due about 6 weeks prior to the rally commencement date.

It would help us to plan and gauge interest if you could let the Rally Secretary know if you would like more information as it becomes available.

Please email Andy a.s.a.p. at smoc.rallysecretary@gmail.com to register your interest.

Finally, we are open to members joining the rally in part (*i.e. you don't have to come for the full period 5th – 23rd*), although it will be necessary to stay for the full duration, in any one of the three planned locations.

Ambleside Rugby Club Rally - 13th to 20th July

Firstly, I would like to explain that I'm a newbie to rallies, with my better half, and two pooches we set sail to the Ambleside Rally.

First impressions of the site : easy access to the rally field, bus stop outside and a stones throw away from the centre of the town, happy days.

Rally members were welcomed to the first meeting hosted by Robert and Bridget. After introducing ourselves, we played a game called scissors. The game was to determine if the person on your left was opened or closed by using the scissors. The game was well underway when it suddenly occurred to me that I was the only person who had consistently got it wrong. How could this be I asked myself, there had to be some sort of formula. With a smirk on my face, I cunningly analysed everyone's moves, and bingo, formula completed. It had to be the third person who was closed. I waited patiently for my turn and with confidence I shouted out my answer. Oops wrong again. My ingenious formula had serious flaws, I just could not fathom out how the others were getting it right and I was getting it so wrong. After much fun and laughter was told, there is no formula, and told how the game worked, boy did I laugh it was so so funny. Obviously, I'm not going to tell, to find out you need to play the game on your next SMOC rally.

The quiz night was a right hoot. When I looked at the questions my mind simply went blank, to be fair I was clueless, should have done some research first but Fred was bang on, he smashed the answers and took top prize. Mental note taken for future reference.

The weather had been brilliant, and we took the offer to join the group on a day out. The trip included a 90 minute boat trip that went from Ambleside to Lakeside, then a 20 minute steam train ride to Haverthwaite. With a torrential downpour on the planned day, Robert and Bridget rearranged, and it was an amazing day out. When we arrived at Haverthwaite train station, Robert suggested that we try the food at the cafe. We couldn't resist the freshly prepared food and can highly recommend.





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Whilst at the station, a little girl dropped her ice-cream. Tony, from our group, immediately spoke to the staff to inform what had happened and the little girl was given another. Just one of many wonderful acts of kindness that members of the Rally group had done during the week long Rally.

We found that there were so many things to see and do in and around Ambleside, in fact we were spoilt for choice to visit Grasmere, Keswick and Windermere all bustling towns with shops restaurants and café. Within easy walking distance we enjoyed a few amber nectars at the local in Waterside village, and the pooches loved the cheeky paddles in the lake.

Val and Dave invited the group to join them in celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary. Nibbles, wine and beer flowed freely, another wonderful evening. A big congratulations to both.

Gwen Smith (3418)



Photo by Robert Hubbard

Gloucestershire Vintage and Country Extravaganza

Thurs 4th – Mon 8th August 2022

This was the 46th running of this annual show and what an extravaganza it turned out to be, it just gets bigger every year.

David and I arrived on the Wednesday to set out our pitches ready for everyone to join us on Thursday. The sun shone the whole time we were there and although we were some distance from the show it was a shortish walk to the free vintage bus service which encircled the show itself and you could get on and off as you wish, and very welcome it was too in the heat. Also, if you wanted to leave and visit Cirencester there was a bus available so you could explore this Roman town, and several of our party took advantage of this and enjoyed a lovely roast Sunday lunch.

If you have interest in any type of vintage transport there was a huge amount there, from push bikes, motor bikes, cars of every description, steam engines (my favorite being the showmans engines), tractors, heavy haulage, commercial vehicles, miniatures, stationery engines, buses, coaches and military equipment. For those who needed some retail therapy there were trade stands selling everything from rusty auto-jumble to posh sunglasses.



On Saturday and Sunday all the various sections were paraded in the main show area with a commentator giving information about the vehicles. The steam engines had their own separate arena, known as the play pen, where they could run around as and when they were ready to go.

Several of our members had bought their four legged friends with them but I don't think they entered them in the dog show – mind you it was a bit too hot for them as well as us humans. Other animal attractions included The Sheep Show, Ferret Racing and Falconry.



As the show is held on an airfield the facilities were very basic with only non-drinking water available from the taps in the field although the organisers had bought in a supply of bottled water which was for sale at only £1.50 for five litres. I won't mention the Elsan disposal point (perhaps I will – it was a large white cube and those of us who are vertically challenged had to stand on a step to do the emptying!). As we were only there a few days it was not too much of a problem.

Assuming you were not too exhausted there was live entertainment in the beer tent during the evening with songs from the 1940's plus the Lindy Hop dancers. Later in the evening the artists performed newer songs and from 10.30 a disco took over. One evening there was a light display by the commercial section; not forgetting of course the fun fair, some of which was steam driven. Most of us simply sat around drinking wine, discussing travels and generally putting the world to rights.



Photograph taken by Jane Steward which is why she's not there!

All in all it was a lovely few days and we welcomed two first time ralliers and their canine friends. As they said in the 1940's "We'll meet again"

by Marilyn Miland (2378)

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