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*Through a Murvi window whilst camped at a Britstop in Devon*

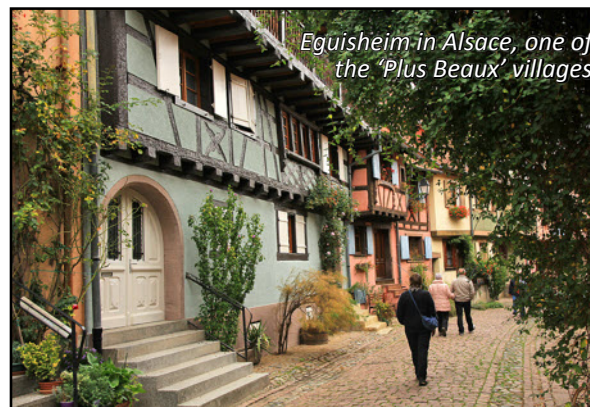
## EDITORIAL

**By Adrian Sumption**

I am beginning to wonder whether this should be billed as a themed issue of the newsletter looking at the contributions I received for this edition. The two travelogues in the following pages are both island themed with Alan and Marilyn Major's article about the Icelandic trip they took earlier in the summer together with Julia Wright and Roger Norman and then Brian and Anne Biffin's article about the Outer Hebrides. It's certainly whetted my appetite to be a bit more adventurous and look a little further afield than the odd trip to France.

Talking of which, Karin and I have just returned from a delightful few weeks in France, and for much of the trip we enjoyed the company of Nick and Yvonne Mawby. In the course of our travels we visited quite a few of the 'Plus Beaux Villages de France', all of which were delightful and packed with interest. The website <http://www.france-beautiful-villages.org/en> lists the villages from all over France with the 'Plus Beaux' designation and gives information (in English) about each village. The ones we visited were mainly in the Auvergne and Perigord where there is the biggest concentration of these villages. We ended up in Alsace which has a good few beautiful but very touristy villages, and, purely incidentally, some rather good wine. Many of our nights were spent on French aires which were, on the whole, excellent as you will see from the item on Page 5.

A short note in praise of Britstops. Karin and I have used a few Britstops (see <http://www.britstops.com/>). All the ones we've used so far have been pubs (I wonder why) but there are many others at farms, garden centres, restaurants etc.. So far they have without exception been very welcoming and provided us with a comfortable, quiet and 'free' stopover for the night. I say free, but you do of course pay for the Britstops directory which effectively acts as your membership, currently at a cost of £27.50 plus £2.80 P&P. And then there is the temptation of spending a few quid in the pub, in fact it would be rude not to given the free accommodation.



*Eguisheim in Alsace, one of the 'Plus Beaux' villages*



*At the campsite in Belcastel*

Finally, some of you will know that Andy Strutt, who was production director at Murvi, took early retirement a while ago. He was due to retire at the end of this year anyway but decided to leave a few months early due to an orthopaedic problem. We offer Andy our best wishes for a long and happy retirement and hope that he makes a full recovery. Should any club members who knew Andy personally wish to send him a card then you can do so via Murvi (but please don't flood them with emails as Rex has plenty to do without having to forward lots of emails!).



Leirhnjukur, IS



Siglufordur, IS



Skeidararsandur, IS

After a number of Murvi-van holidays exploring Scotland, Orkneys and Shetland Isles we felt that now was the time to be a little more adventurous. We had the idea that for our 'first time foreign' Murvi-van holiday we would continue our travels northward, and visit Iceland and the Faroe Islands. After all it did not look to be too much further north on the map!

We were delighted when Julia and Roger decided to join us in our adventure. It was such fun travelling in company, being able to share our experiences as we travelled, and knowing that we were not alone so far from home.

The only way to take a 'van to Iceland is via a ferry from the top of Denmark, and as the ferry to Ejsberg no longer runs we had to take the cross Channel Ferry to Calais. We had time to enjoy our journey through the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark and a week later we caught the Smyril Line "Norrøna" ferry from Hirtshals, Denmark to Seydisfjordur, Iceland, via the Faroes. While moored in Torshavn for a few hours we were able to go ashore, this worked well as we were able to check out the Tourist Office and campsites for our return.

Personally, I think this has to be the best way to travel to Iceland, it makes one realise just how far away this remote country is. "Norrøna" is well fitted and the food is excellent provided the sea is not too rough! We took advantage of the meal deal.

We were in awe at the scenery as the ferry cruised up the fjord to Seydisfjordur harbour. We could not have had a more spectacular arrival sailing past towering mountains with snow capped peaks under a clear blue sky in bright sunshine albeit with a bitter cold strong wind blowing across the deck. After a prolonged very cold spring the Iceland summer season was six weeks late.

Between the three vans we had three guide books, The Bradt Guide, Lonely Planet and Rough Guide, with many maps. We found the Rough Guide to be the most useful for planning but enjoyed reading the Bradt guide which gave an overview and interesting information on many of the places we visited.

On the "Norrøna" we had purchased a Camping Card which gave us access to a number of campsites, some with pretty basic facilities but on the whole not too bad at all.

In the main travel on the tarmac roads was good, while the gravel/unsealed roads could be quite rough in places we were well rewarded with wonderful scenic views by using these, particularly in the Westfjords.

Fearing shops would stock just the traditional Icelandic fare I had filled every available space in the Murvi with staples, tins of peas and fruit, pasta, couscous, lentils, quinoa and spices to liven up any dish I created. In the event shopping for food proved to be no problem at all, and it was easy to adapt recipes to make use of the the pretty good selection of vegetables available. But buying salad other than cucumber, peppers and tomatoes was a problem and there was not the most inspiring selection of cheeses.

The country is full of wonder; we will never forget the magnificence and splendour of the scenery, including spectacular waterfalls, clear pollution free skies, the amazing glaciers, icebergs, mountains, deep blue fjords, volcanoes, geysirs, midnight sun, and a swim in a natural hot spring pool. It is also a nature lover's paradise. We saw many birds on our travels including puffins, razorbills, guillemots, kittiwakes, fulmars, harlequin ducks, Slovenian grebes and Arctic terns.

We enjoyed four weeks in Iceland and felt any less would have made for a very rushed schedule.

We had just ten days to enjoy the Faroe Islands and spent four of these exploring the north east, staying at a small campsite in Klaksvik on the island of Bordoy. This turned out to be an excellent base to visit different islands in the North and North East each day. Driving our Murvi's through the narrow, low, single lane, unlit tunnels through the mountains did not appeal. After checking bus and ferry times with the extremely helpful Tourist Office we decided to make use of the bus service instead, enabling us to enjoy exploring a couple of the other islands stress free.

We also used the Atlantic Airways Helicopter service to fly to the island of Fugloy, an island in the north, and as return flights are not allowed on the same day returned via the inter-island ferry.

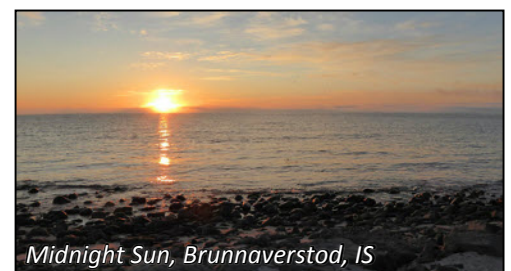
I can confirm everything the tourist guides say about Iceland and the Faroes, they are truly wonderful countries



Glogv, FO



Pollurin Tidal Lagoon, Saksun, FO



Midnight Sun, Brunnarstod, IS



Taking on board Murviite wisdom we set off in May and were rewarded with a total absence of midges, space on every ferry and weather which was brilliant, considering our location. Landing on Barra, we explored Castlebay, before finding the “furthest west campsite in Britain” at Borve. Good facility block, with grey water drain off spot (a facility which I find annoyingly absent from many larger commercial sites). No wild camping options were obvious so we moved on to Eriksay, driving over the causeway to South Uist. Here we got the Britstops book out and picked a winner at Pollachar – beautiful beach, great views and the pub food was good too.

On the northern tip of North Uist we found the wild campsite by the Youth Hostel at the end of the road on Berneray. Another gem, big thank you to John and Mai.

We found Lewis had many brilliant wild camping spots. A public car park at the end of the east coast road north of Stornoway gave us a scenic walk over the Bridge to Nowhere, built by Lord Leverhulme as a new route to Ness, but the road was never completed. It spans a deep gorge - overlooking the lovely Garry beach - one of the prettiest in the Outer Hebrides. We visited the Butt of Lewis, snuck in tight to the lighthouse wall but the wind still rocked us through the night. Up here, the weather takes no prisoners, the Atlantic greets the North Sea and the coastline is brutal. Best campsite was at Cnip on the West coast, spectacular views over the sand dunes and the bay, the site is owned by the Cnip villagers through a community trust. Levelling blocks essential.

The Hebrides were perfect for us, wonderful walks, fascinating history and our border collie fair ran his socks off on all those massive beaches.

*Butt of Lewis**Garry Beach**The Bridge to Nowhere**Pollochar**North Uist Vista**Cnip Grazing***GOING TO BED - MURVI STYLE****By Martin Cox**

Like all Murvi users I have a regular routine for going to bed.

Put up the blinds pull down the bed - switch off lights get undressed and retire for the night.

Unfortunately one dark night things did not go to plan.

followed the routine - clip in the spring loaded Windscreen Blind, removed keys from ignition turned off the lights and undressed ready for bed. Then it all went wrong I trod on key fob set off alarm and flashers, lent over to correct and cancel alarm when the blind came unclipped and shot up into its housing giving full view of van and camper.

No photos available of course..... (That's a shame - Ed.)

The art of washing vehicles has moved on quite a bit since the days of a bucket and sponge. There is now an entire industry built around what is called “detailing” and some new and labour saving devices and products are now available to make cleaning your Murvi a little easier than perhaps you may be used to.

My typical vehicle cleaning used to involve nothing more than a bucket of warm water with a couple of capfuls of Autoglym shampoo followed once or perhaps twice a year by an all over polish with Autoglym Super Resin Polish. When the vehicle was new I also applied another Autoglym product called Extra Gloss Protection. And that I thought was all there was to it until I came across a description of what detailers use written by someone who seemed to know what they were talking about as they do it professionally.

The first thing I learned was a polish is by definition an abrasive and for vehicles polishes are used to remove scratches and prepare the surface of the paint for waxing. If you know what you are doing you can use an electric polishing machine and a fine clay to bring a shine even to quite badly dulled paint but the emphasis here is *knowing what you are doing* because if you don't your vehicle might need a respray afterwards. So I am not going to describe claying as hopefully your Murvi isn't in need of such drastic treatment!

So let us assume you have come back from a trip and the Murvi needs a clean. Put away that bucket and sponge, there is another way which is quicker and more effective but you need to buy a new gadget first – a snow foam lance which fits onto a pressure washer and is used to spray foam onto the vehicle. The foam itself isn't ordinary car shampoo, search on eBay for “UK Valet snow foam” and you should find 5 litre bottles for under £20. The lance you can also get from eBay although Karcher do their own but the one I bought seems much more solid. You just need to be sure whatever lance you get fits your pressure washer.

To use the foam put no more than one and half inches of the liquid in the lance bottle, add a couple of capfuls of Autoglym car shampoo for extra wax and then top up with warm water. Then fire up the pressure washer and spray away – but it is essential not to let the foam dry on the vehicle or leave it on too long. About two minutes is long enough before you need to rinse it off. You don't need to use a pressure washer to rinse but it is probably easier to do so. Because of time constraints it is probably best to do the vehicle in sections – foaming then rinsing each section in turn. I use tall step ladders to reach the roof. The reason why the foam has to be washed off quickly is because it is mildly acidic and if you

leave it on too long or use too strong a solution it will strip off any waxes from the paint.



After rinsing everything off you can use a microfiber cloth to remove squashed insects as the foam will have softened them. After which the traditionalist might reach for chamois leather. Don't, you need a good microfiber cloth instead and the way to test if you have a good one is wipe it on a blank CD, if it marks the CD throw the cloth away! But a committed “detailer” will use another product at this point – a detailing spray. These appeared about fifteen years ago but are not well known. You can buy them online (Meguiars Last Touch is recommended) but you may also find it in your local car accessory shop. These liquids, which regrettably are not cheap, are surfactants which contain chemicals which make the water bead and apply a thin layer of wax as well. You can use them all over the vehicle after you have rinsed off the foam, polishing as you go with a microfiber cloth.

Your vehicle probably looks quite shiny now but if you want to complete the job you need to apply a wax. These will be another online buy and the recommended ones are called Collonite and come in various grades. The longest lasting is 476 but the easiest to apply is 845 but it isn't as persistent.

If you want to read more about this subject have a look [HERE](#) and listen only to what Charlie says!

Finally, if your Murvi windows are scratched from passing branches a product called Peak is very effective at removing scratches, providing they are not too deep.





## RECIPES - FOR YOUR MURVI OR AT HOME!

These two recipes sent in by **Angela Emuss** both require an oven, so maybe they won't suit all of you when you're on the move, but why not try them at home if you can't do them in your Murvi!

### CHEATS CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

(based on an idea from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, River Cottage Veg Every Day)

#### INGREDIENTS

1 cauliflower

Either: double cream/crème fraiche/soured cream

Cheese - grated

#### METHOD

Break the cauliflower into smallish florets and par boil for a few minutes, drain and tip into an oven proof dish.

Mix a few tablespoons of chosen cream until all the florets are coated.

Sprinkle a generous coating of any sort of cheese of choice – I used cheddar as it was to hand – and bake in a hot oven for around 30 mins until golden on top.

### STUFFED MUSHROOMS

I was wondering what to do with these mushrooms, which had been hanging around the fridge for a few days, and having

made the courgette mixture for fritters, I had quite a bit left over, so this is what I did, having made around 4 fritters first. So while I have not done this in Murvi yet, I think it would make a simple supper, with some crusty bread perhaps or even some "cheats" cauliflower cheese.

#### INGREDIENTS

4 enormous flat mushrooms

2 courgettes – grated

2 eggs

Flour

Feta cheese

Handful of fresh chopped mint (if available)

Parmesan

Salt and Pepper

Paprika

#### METHOD

Dig out the centre stalks and place mushrooms on oiled baking parchment on oven tray.

Mix courgettes, eggs, flour (around a couple of table spoons), crumbled feta (as much as you like), mint, salt and pepper. Spoon the mixture into the mushrooms, grate some parmesan over the top and a sprinkle of paprika and bake in the oven for about 40 mins on fan 160 or gas 4 – Murvi oven I should think around 4.

## IN THE AIRE TONIGHT....

*By Adrian Sumption*

Like many of you we like to use aires when we're travelling on the continent. Often free, open all year (mostly), all the basic facilities - what's not to like? In the past we've tended to use the 'All the Aires' books published by Vicarious. However, thanks to John Laidler's recommendation in the last newsletter, this time we used the Dutch ['Campercontact'](#) app which proved to be excellent.

Two of the aires we stayed on I would particularly recommend, both of which were free. The first is at St Cyprien sur Dourdou in the Aveyron. St Cyprien itself is a very pleasant village but the great advantage of this aire is that it is close to Conques, one of the 'Plus Beaux Villages de France' mentioned in my editorial. The Aire itself is very new and extremely spacious with pitches for 12 motorhomes laid out around a central circular grassed area. It has the usual service facilities - waste water and toilet emptying plus water and battery top-up which are both charged for.



*The aire at St Cyprien sur Dourdou*

The other aire is part of the car park for an open air museum at Nancray not far from Besancon in Franche Comte. The museum is the Musee des Maisons Comtoises and is well worth a visit whether or not you choose to stay on the aire - this was our third visit! In many ways it is a bit like the Weald and Downland



*The view from our van at Nancray*

museum at Singleton in West Sussex with a collection of farmhouses from around the region. I guess the aire could be a bit busy in the summer during museum opening hours but when we were there in early October it was very peaceful with very few people in the museum and only one other van overnight. The open view from the aire is wonderful and it has to be one of the most peaceful places we have camped.

My wife's looked at campervans, wondering if they'd suit,  
After all, now retired we'd got a bit of loot.  
So to the Windsor Show we went - to have a good gander,  
Look chaps, you know, you should occasionally pander.

We looked round some and they all seemed a bit naff,  
The dark flowery fabrics gave us quite a laugh.  
But when we came to Murvi in the campervan zone,  
We met a lovely man called Rex Kneebone.

We liked the tasteful colours, fabric walls and fridge,  
So we decided to buy one – and it was off to Ivybridge.  
Each feature of the van Rex was anxious to discuss.  
Two days of detailed talks. Absolutely no fuss!

The van was designed, built and almost ready on time,  
Just delayed a bit as Fiat had crushed the fuel line.  
We collected the van and had the weekend to peruse  
So many manuals - not a moment to lose.

Reading the stuff gave me quite a headache,  
Keep going Phil, for heaven's sake.  
We went back to Murvi with quite a long list.  
Rex was so pleased that nothing was missed!

"There's so much work it'll take all day,  
But when we finish the job will you go away!"  
All was done, and everything was fine,  
Off to the open road to have a good time.

The first few months everything was good.  
But then we broke down and we looked under the hood.  
Towed to garage by the dear old AA,  
"A new EGR and you'll be on your way"

Our son borrowed the van and found some brown rice?  
"Look Dad I think that means you've got mice."  
"Oh God you're right they're eating the insulation.  
I need to find a solution to stop the invasion."

We put in peppermint smells, noises and traps,  
That'll sort the blighters out. I hope. Perhaps?  
Having sorted the issue it was off for a break  
But the van slowed right down. For goodness sake!

The AA man checked, pondered and diagnosed,  
Took out the air filter and found two mice – decomposed.  
"Here's an unconnected air pipe. They've been getting in  
here,  
I'll fit it together so they can't reappear"

We thought that might be the end of our problems but it  
was only the start  
EGRs, toilets, Webasto, charger. We started to lose heart.  
But a new mass flow sensor and service from Murvi  
And as members of the Lovers Club at last we are worthy.

**THE THOUGHTS OF A NEW CLUB MEMBER****By Pat Thomas**

After 13 years of Murvi ownership we have just Joined the Murvi Club. This happened because last Thursday we were on the Murvi stand at the NEC when Julia was showing Rex the MMM letter 'A fixation on fixed beds' that I wrote. Julia does not let the grass grow under her feet and by Friday we were paid up members of the Club.

The first posting we received on the Chat Room was about a Morello, bought second hand from Murvi, with a caravan awning on each side. We think that this is our previous van WJ52TXS on which Rex fitted the awning rails during construction. Our prior experience with roll out awnings with fabric damaged in a sudden thunderstorm and problems with mould had put us off rollout awnings. We purchased an Isobella sunshade that weighs virtually nothing and stores under the seat, that was easy to slide on, could be moved from side to side according to the position of the sun and draped across open back doors when it was very hot.

Before we ordered our first Murvi we had to sell privately a Kontiki, this we did on the afternoon the advert was published in the MMM. Problems sourcing the Ducato because of model updates meant that our June completion date extended until October and we lost a whole summer of travelling. As life is now too short to be vanless, four years ago when Rex had a very good part exchange on an ex-demonstrator Morello that came complete with an awning we took up his offer. We never got round to advertising the sunshade that is in very good condition and going cheap. See the photo on the right.

I follow the News on the Murvi website and in future my husband Gerry and I will read with greater interest as part of the Murvi family.



*The Sunshade - going cheap*

After passing Slaughden near Aldeburgh, the River Alde, instead of breaking through to the sea, flows further south, parallel to the seashore. This continues for about 5 miles, before reaching Orford, where it joins the River Ore, and 4 miles after, the sea.

Orford's unusual geography was the destination for the October 2015 meet, where 8 'vans with fourteen campervanners and two dogs formed a defensive square in the car park opposite the Jolly Sailor pub.

We arrived – of course – by road, not river, along the B1084, which became more traffic free as we approached the town where the road ends. This made it easy and pleasant to walk around this attractive area without being cautious about traffic.

Orford Castle was built between 1165 and 1173 by Henry II to consolidate his power in the region. The well-preserved keep, described as 'one of the most remarkable keeps in England', is of a unique design and probably based on Byzantine architecture. The keep still stands among the earth-covered remains of the outer fortifications.

St. Bartholomew Church is a grade one listed building, reckoned to be amongst the 1,000 finest in England, and stands at the heart of the town. It was first built between 1170 and 1220 and there are some fine Norman remains from that period outside the east end of the church. It was rebuilt and extended about 1220. When we were there, the choir were practicing Ave Maria.

The village also contains two pubs – both serving Adnams, restaurants, a bakery and café, a craft shop, general store, and antiques shop. On the Saturday there is a Country Market in the Town Hall.

On the Saturday evening, we sampled the fare in the Jolly Sailor. We were booked into a separate room, and spent a great evening with excellent company, and good food. I confess to having consumed more whisky that night than in many a year. When we came to leave, heavy rain resulted in a run back to the 'vans. The rain – of course – disappeared a few moments after our return. This was an excellent and enjoyable evening.

But the highlight of our visit was yet to come, when on the Sunday we visited Orford Ness, the spit of land between the River Alde and the sea. This is now owned by the National Trust, and we were ferried across the Alde by their launch for a guided tour.

Orford Ness became the research facility for the Royal Flying Corps in 1915, when the new technology of flight was first being

adapted for warfare. In the following 78 years of use by the military it grew from the development of air combat using hand held armaments to the testing of nuclear weapons – an almost unimaginable rate of progress. I am pleased to report that none of the tests required nuclear detonations, and that no nuclear material was ever used there, so there is no residual radiation.

In stark contrast to its role in warfare and the defence of the realm, Orford Ness is now a nature reserve. We were told that Orford Ness may contain as much as 15% of the world's reserve of coastal vegetated shingle, and the best preserved shingle ridges in Europe. So fragile is this habitat that even walking on it causes irreparable damage. Because of this, access is restricted to defined paths. This also protects visitors from any as yet undiscovered ordinance remaining from previous military tests.

Our tour was on a tractor-towed trailer, which was adapted for carrying passengers, and we visited many of the buildings associated with its previous military role. The most impressive of these from the outside were the so-called 'Pagoda buildings', where vibration, temperature and other environmental test were carried out. Massive banked walls and reinforced concrete roofs were designed to contain and deflect upwards any explosions resulting from test failures. In comparison, the test chamber itself was quite small, covering maybe one tenth of the building's surface area.

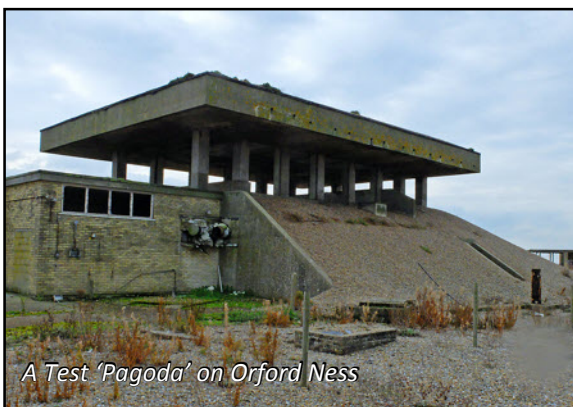


*The Murvi Group on Orford Ness*

This was all from an era before digital electronics and low cost air travel, and it was fascinating to see the technologies and tests being undertaken in those years. Who would have imagined that captured enemy weapons were used to test the defences of allied planes, or that captured enemy planes were tested with allied weapons to determine the weakness and best angles of attack?

Against this background, we admired the unique landscape around us, watched the ferries leaving Harwich on their way to Hook of Holland, whilst we spotted some unusual wildlife. This included Egrets, Marsh Harrier and Chinese Water deer.

The picture shows the group in the Pagoda test building, taken by the Meet's organiser Ian Castle. Our thanks to both him and Joy for organising the event, which gets a 5 Star Murvi Trip Advisor rating. If it is run again in the future, and you want a memorable and entertaining weekend, think Orford.



*A Test 'Pagoda' on Orford Ness*



I suspect that for many Murvi owners the quest for the perfect view as we choose a pitch for the night is foremost in our minds. For me getting a campsite or CL all to myself is the icing on the cake.

Setting off for Iceland with the trio of Murvis in May I was convinced that this would be one country where the perfect view was a given. As we drove into the car park of the Dynjandi Falls I thought that we had found the Holy Grail. Even the name seemed exotic – Dynjandi. Surely more appropriate to India than Iceland? Things looked hopeful for our first Icelandic wild camping experience.

We took advantage of the fact that nobody else was camping to line up the vans for a photo opportunity, the amazing waterfall providing the perfect backdrop. Then a big dilemma – which way to face? In one direction the falls. In the other a near perfect loch. We opted for the falls behind us and the loch in front.



Although quite a few people were visiting the falls, no-one else was showing any interest in camping. Things were looking good. I envisaged settling down that evening to the perfect view and an empty campsite – perfection.

While getting set up we had been approached by a very friendly German, who engaged us in conversation. He spoke perfect English. He had asked if we were staying the night but gave no hint of whether he was thinking of doing the same.

Satisfied with our spot, we set off to explore the paths leading to the top of the falls. Almost at the summit, I turned and looked back. While Alan and Roger were getting excited about their first sighting of the elusive Harlequin Duck, Marilyn and I watched open-mouthed as he who we later called 'Herman

the German' came into the camping area and proceeded to reverse his monstrous caravan directly in front of my Murvi! Bear in mind that the camping area was empty. We couldn't believe he was going to stay there, but he did. And to add insult to injury he and his wife proceeded to get their table and chairs out and set them out directly in front of my bonnet.

By the time we returned, they had at least had their refreshments and packed the table and chairs away. The caravan, however, remained where it was. Seeing us approach 'Herman' came towards us, obviously intending to return to our earlier friendly conversation. Our collective facial expressions probably hinted that all was not well. My comment 'you have taken my view' seemed to cause total amnesia as far as his English was concerned. For a German, he did a very good Gallic shrug, turned on his heel and retreated to his caravan.



How to respond? Group considerations included letting his tyres down – probably a bit childish and likely to provoke a backlash. Moving my van - too much like conceding victory as far as I was concerned. So I settled for the stare. It had little impact as I could only see Mrs Herman in the rear window and she seemed totally unconcerned. I felt better though.

Of course every cloud has a silver lining and for the next few days we had much merriment as we tried to outrun and outwit Herman on roads and parking places alike. While we picked our way gingerly along gravelled roads, he drove like a maniac, seemingly unconcerned about what he was towing, but Murvi honour was satisfied as he never managed to pass us or steal our perfect pitch again.