



A favourite activity for club members.....

.....this time at the Liverpool meet

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EDITORIAL

Wouldn't you just know it! There was I thinking "Oh dear, it's looking a bit thin on the ground this time round." Well, I shouldn't have worried, should I? One reminder from me and the articles came flooding in from all directions. So, thank you to all of you who felt my pain and responded so generously.

So, another summer's over, but only just it seems; the warm weather seemed to go on and on didn't it? Hopefully you took full advantage of the glorious summer to go off wandering the length and breadth of Europe (of course, including the UK for now, at least).

Sadly Karin and I didn't get as far afield as I would have liked this summer. Apart from a rather curtailed trip to France, we were limited to a few forays in the UK. But who's complaining? There's plenty to see and do on our home turf isn't there?

Along with a group of Murvi friends (and a few hangers-on) we spent a delightful August bank holiday weekend at the Shrewsbury Folk Festival. The Shrewsbury Showground is rapidly becoming a must-visit destination for Murvi trips, what with Vince's article on page 7 about the flower show there and it's also the venue for next year's AGM.

The great thing about the showground is its proximity to the town. It's only about a 15 minute walk into the centre of town which is full of interest – and shops, of course. During the Folk festival weekend the whole town becomes part of the festival with Morris dance teams at every turn and a

dancing parade through the town centre on the Sunday morning.

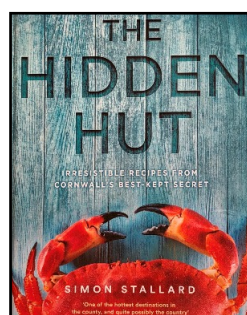


Morris dancers at Shrewsbury Festival

Now we're looking forward to a few late autumn trips. Coming up next weekend there's the meet at Port Eynon on the Gower peninsula with our new tour leader, Brian Biffin. Brian is taking over the organisation of our annual November meet from Roger Pepper, a hard act to follow after Roger's superb organisation and choice of locations over the last 7 years. Let's hope Brian has inherited Roger's knack of ensuring fine weather!

Then there are a couple of pre-Christmas Murvi meets to look forward to. There's the inaugural Northern Christmas Meet at Seahouses from 26th - 30th November and the Southern Christmas Meet this year at the Spinney campsite in Alresford in Hampshire from 5th – 9th December.

The foodies amongst us (and who isn't?) may be interested in a book recently spotted in Waterstones – a recipe book from the Hidden Hut in Cornwall. Those of you who have been on the couple of Portscatho meets we've had will



know how delicious their food is, so this could be a welcome addition to your cook-book collection.

A couple of useful tips I've been sent. The first from Keith Ross who says "I did a silly thing and drove away with the EHU cable still plugged into the van, from laziness in not following full checklist." The November MMM magazine carried a similar tale of woe and an electrical warning solution duly provided by Clive Mott. Keith's photo shows an alternative low tech warning system. The notice is laminated and is stored with the EHU cable when not connected, then easily



attached to the steering wheel via a short length of velcro when the EHU is connected. Makes it harder to be careless next time.

The second tip comes from Bob Eley who says "I recently had the need to change a blown fuse and had a horror of grovelling in the wardrobe to find the duff one. I was however delighted to find that Murvi have recently started to fit the new "smart fuse", which is marketed by Halfords as the "LED blade fuse". As indicated, when the fuse blows, a tiny LED lights up and makes it unmistakable as to which fuse has bust." I gather that Murvi now fit these fuses on new vans.

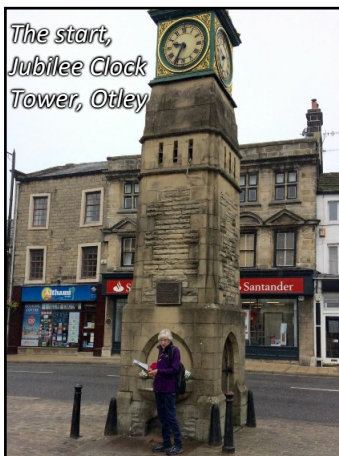
And finally, a plug for a charming Murvi children's story by member Christine Flitney, to be found [here](#) on the club website.

The Six Dales Trail runs from Otley in West Yorkshire for 42 scenic miles due north to Middleham in North Yorkshire. It passes through the Nidderdale AONB, traversing the 5 watersheds that separate: Wharfedale, the Washburn Valley, Nidderdale, Colsterdale, Coverdale and Wensleydale. A journey taking in the towns at its extremities, plus riversides, reservoirs, fields, woods and moorland.



Stepping out

I have long been a fan of the long distance walk, having completed many of the UK's famous hikes as well as those in far flung places from the Alps and Andes to the Himalayas. The aim of this walk however was to initiate my younger sister into the pleasures of this wonderful pastime.



The start, Jubilee Clock Tower, Otley

We arrived in Otley by bus on a dull and drizzly weekday which did not augur well for convincing sister Sue. However by lunchtime we were eating our sarnies basking in sunshine above Nether Timble looking back down the Washburn valley at the seven or so miles we had already covered. A red kite circled low overhead. We finished day 1 well north of Thruscross having covered sixteen miles. Sue - buzzing

with exhilaration - had enjoyed every step.

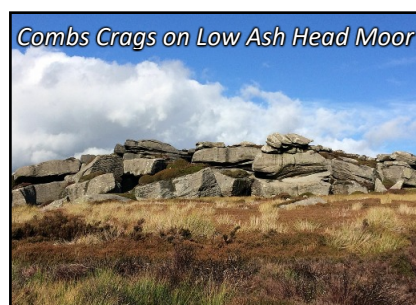


Dob Park Packhorse Bridge

The weather on the second day was again a poor start but eventually rose to the occasion as we lunched again in the first glimmers of sunshine by the bandstand in the park in Pateley Bridge. We left behind the shores of Gowthwaite reservoir, bare and tide marked after the dry summer, and climbed steeply up to the top of Fountains Earth Moor; a wild forbidding place with ne'er a soul to be seen for many miles. As we reached the summit we were taken aback by the stunning



views across the Vale of York to the Hambleton Hills while directly below us shimmered the twin reservoirs of Roundhill and Leighton - a stark contrast to the seemingly endless black moorland on which we stood. Navigation from this point was rather tricky for a while, descending then ascending to the far side of the valley; the path being overgrown and less well walked. Despite this, and a field of frisky cattle,



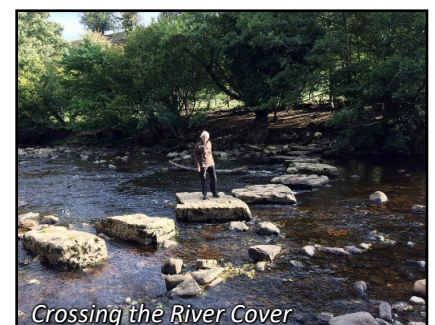
Combs Crags on Low Ash Head Moor

we arrived weary but happy at our day 2 destination - the Pott Moor High Road. Later, a good soak in the bath, a hearty stew and a glass or two of vino were all that were required to revive us but, Sue was already talking about the next long walk!



Honouring the Fallen Leeds Pals

Our final day was full of interest. A short detour in Colsterdale was in order to pay our respects to the Leeds Pals at their Memorial. It was built to honour the memory of the friends and relatives from Leeds who volunteered together, trained together in this remote spot then fought and died together in the Great War. Many of them died at Serre on the first day of the Battle of the Somme - "... two years in the making and ten minutes in the destroying". We are Leeds native so this was very poignant. Onward towards our goal and returning to 'civilisation' we passed through parkland, close to the ruins of the Cistercian abbey of Jervaulx by the River Ure in Wensleydale. Being sure not to miss the confluence of the Ure with the Cover, we then passed over Cover Bridge with its 16th century coaching inn and followed the river for a mile or two. At this point I almost lost Sue as, walking behind me, she tripped on a tree root



Crossing the River Cover

and was catapulted past me, grabbed a tree branch and, with gymnastic prowess, stopped herself from taking a quick dip in the river. Unhurt and undeterred we now turned our backs on the Cover and climbed the bank. Now scenting success, we marched on and a few minutes later the horizon was pierced by a fluttering flag. It was suddenly there, looming large and very close - the grand sight of the 12th century Middleham Castle - childhood home of Richard III and sadly left to fall into ruin in the 17th century.



Middleham Castle

Our journey was coming to an end and it only remained for us to make our way to the Market Cross for a photo, a high five and a commitment to further travels together. Job done - we are

now planning the next one... watch this space.



Celebrating the end of the Trail at Middleham

MY ENGINE REQUIRES AIR CONDITIONING!

By Andy Embling

Off we go on holiday for a few days in Wales. We stopped en-route at a great National Trust house (Tyntesfield not far from Bristol). Weather was great – rather warm in fact, and the house still having the ambience of a friendly comfortable family home. It was a very pleasant day but by 3pm it was time to head into Wales and find a site. The van was like an oven of course so open the windows, grab a quick drink from the fridge, turn on the cab air-con, put the outside vents back on the fridge and off we go in our trusty 5 year old FIAT Murvi Morello. After about 50 yards a light suddenly appears on the Dashboard, “INJECTION SYSTEM FAILURE”. Well as it was still making a noise I know it was still running! So back round the car park, park again and get out the manual. After many minutes of searching it unhelpfully says something like “Proceed at reduced power, and visit your FIAT dealer”. As the next day was a Saturday, I was unlikely to get anyone to investigate further until at least Monday and we were coming home Tuesday, so we abandoned the holiday and set off home. There was no need to reduce power – FIAT had kindly told the electronics not to let me go faster than 35mph! After a scary one junction on the M5 we came off and potted down the A38 where I was less likely to be rammed up the rear.

Well we got home and after the weekend I rang my local garage who normally services it. They are not a FIAT dealer but service many FIAT vans. They

hooked up to their diagnostics, but it was not terribly conclusive. They eventually decided that it was telling them that a second fan somewhere had failed, but they needed a wiring diagram which only a FIAT Professional dealer had. So they gave up and put it all back together – cost £100.

My nearest FIAT Professional dealer was very friendly, but said they were fully booked for 8 weeks ahead. I phoned another one and they offered next week – seemed like a better deal – even if it did mean driving for about 90 minutes at up to 35mph!

We took it in to them first thing and walked into town. But by nearly 4pm we hadn't heard anything. So a quick ring – they couldn't find the cause of the fault and had referred it to FIAT HQ as a Technical Case (or some such term). The following exchange then took place.

Me: Er – OK – but will that be resolved tonight?

Garage: No Sir, very unlikely.

Me: Well can I have the van back to go home please.

Garage: Well its in pieces – we'd have to put it back together and we'd have to charge for the labour.

Me: Well let me have one of your cars to get home please.

Garage: We've not got one we could lend you I'm afraid.

Me: I live 40 plus miles away – what do expect my wife and I to do tonight?

Garage: (Muttering in background) Actually sir we cannot let you have

your van back. While it is a FIAT Technical Case we have to have the vehicle in the workshops. The only alternative would be to cancel the Case with FIAT, put your van back together, you come back tomorrow, we take it apart again, take the diagnostics again tomorrow and resubmit the Technical Case.

Me: (Not very politely) You must be ***** joking.

Garage: (Muttering in Background) Err – we think we may be able to find a car to lend you.

Me: (Still prickly) With some fuel?

Garage: Yes sir – with fuel.

Me: We'll be back with you soon

So back to the garage and we get the smallest thing on 4 wheels I've ever driven. After a couple of crashes of gears (we normally drive autos / Comfortmatic) off we head home – it did go faster than 35mph at least, although it's a bit scary so close to the road!

To finish the story off the following day FIAT HQ came up trumps – the message meant that the Air Conditioning Fluid was low!!!! So the garage filled it up, put it all back together, we potted back and picked the van up together with a bill for labour of £300. They didn't charge for Air Con fluid!

LESSON LEARNT – Get my AirCon serviced regularly – probably would save me £350+. Obviously FIAT think low AirCon fluid is a pretty serious failure but don't like to let on about it!

My husband loves islands, so come September with the weather still warm, intrepid travellers that we are, we crossed the 2 miles from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. Our base was Adgestone Camp Site and we decided to explore nearby places with one longer trip to Osborne House in the north.

Adgestone Camp Site is on a Quiet Road, shared with horse riders, cyclists, pedestrians and cars which should drive at 15mph. The IOW has numerous countryside walks: one just outside the Site entrance led up a hill from where we had a gorgeous view of Sandown and the red and white cliffs of Culver Down with the Yarborough Memorial on top.



At Sandown we parked in a car park opposite 'The Old Comical' Pub, easy to recognise because of the painted faces on one wall. Like many Victorian seaside resorts, Sandown has a Pier, which appeared to be full of gaming machines. What could be better than walking along the Esplanade in the sun? People were baking on the sand, cooling off in the sea or eating the (obligatory) fish and chips, the sky was bright blue and the far cliffs red.

Further towards the cliffs were numerous little bathing huts with quaint names such as 'Ace of Huts' and 'Some like it Hut'. One proud owner/sunbather was enlarging and insulating his. Perhaps he was thinking of downsizing? His hut had originally been under the cliff but he had been forced to move when part of the cliff fell down.

Culver Down, of the red and white cliffs, was on the opposite side of the bay. It is easily identified by the tall Memorial to Charles Anderson-Pelham, the 2nd, then 1st Baron Yarborough, founder of the Royal Yacht Squadron. We parked on the cliff top, hoping to find a path down and asked a young couple if there was one – he did not know and she was busy

polishing out scratches on her car which had been vandalised somewhere in town. Polishing with a View! Access, she said, was only via the beach and could be dangerous at high tide.

Brading Roman Villa is also close to Sandown and is very posh with a new build (2004) protecting its excellent mosaics. It is well presented and we particularly enjoyed the figures of a Roman-era mosaic workman set against a Victorian archaeologist discovering it. And of course, the mosaic of 'Gallus' the cock-headed, 'cocky' Gladiator Trainer showed Roman humour.

A 100ft/24m well, discovered at the villa contained Roman pottery and bones, thereafter rubbish and infill. The water table is low, unlike several sites we know in West Sussex, such as Fishbourne Roman Palace and Bignor Roman Villa, where the mosaics are suffering from algae.

'Wight' derives from the Roman name 'vinca' for the island. The Saxons who came later, could not pronounce 'V', so it became 'Wiht' and the rest is history.

An oddity of this Museum is the permanent exhibition of Puppets and Masks from around the world including our own Punch and Judy. Puppets are a realistic way to tell stories of gods and goddesses, events and even politics (see the large Russian dolls). The little puppets are beautifully dressed and their faces show strong emotions.

Shanklin Chine seemed difficult to find as there was an absence of locals around. We found signage is often good from one direction only and if you come a different way, you might have problems. The carpark near the Cliff Lift is the place to aim for with Shanklin Chine just around the corner. The Lift is a replacement for the very rickety-looking Victorian one and was also on our 'to do' list.

Chines are narrow ravines and a feature of the south coast of the IOW. Shanklin Chine is well-publicised and houses an Aviary for rescue birds, tea room and small museum in the Heritage Centre. I admired a whale bone and baleen there but there was a problem with the shrilling Fire Alarm so we did not stay long. Elsewhere PLUTO (Pipe Line Under the Ocean) bringing fuel to the IOW is described.

The Chine itself has a micro climate, growing fuschia trees and lush vegetation. There are several waterfalls but the water level was low due to lack of rain. Many a famous person has trodden the Chine paths: Jane Austen, Keats, Turner, Tennyson were some of the notables – and us!

At the top of the Chine is the Old Village, a group of thatched cottages nestling together offering refreshments to weary sightseers. Apparently one is also the home of Fairies and it is easy to believe as it's so quaint and 'old worldly'.

We failed to find a parking place in Ventnor to hunt fossils so carried on to Niton and the Buddle Inn, the haunt of smugglers. A quick drink and then a walk down to St. Catherine's Lighthouse whose warning beam must have put a lot of smugglers out of business. We booked for a tour up the lighthouse but changed our minds as time was getting on and donated some of our ticket price instead. It is a working lighthouse, controlled from the mainland by Trinity House.

The steep walk back (no vehicular access) was helped by numerous ripe and juicy blackberries on either side of the lane. Again, views were superb but the wind was Force 5.



Godshill boasts a Model Village and is, itself, a pretty village full of souvenir shops and places to eat. The car park is free but was filling up fast by late morning.

The Model Village is styled on places and people of the 1930s and was very green with patches of grass and hundreds of small trees. Shanklin Chine featured but was oddly much less verdant than today but the Old Village was recognizable above it. A tease was a model village within a model village. Best of all was an orchard scene with real, small, red apples on the tree.

Continued overleaf

Worth a visit is the 14thC Church of the Lily Cross up the hill, just as in the Model Village. The murals of Christ Crucified on a Lily and a Consecration Cross had been painted over during the Reformation which has helped preserved them. The church also has a replica rood screen with Mary and Jesus. Returning down the hill we found a shop selling lovely artisan bread, a must for our lunch.

The Donkey Sanctuary was on our return to Site. Donations of £5.00 (or more) are welcomed. They keep around 100 donkeys; some have sun allergies which affects eyes and skin, some need special diets and others were surplus to requirements. The donkeys are in great demand at Christmas and earn many a carrot or two.

Appuldurcum House, a large English Heritage property was on our route but, unfortunately for us, was closed for a Wedding. Phone before going!

Queen Victoria spent many holidays and died at Osborne House and you will need a day to see everything. We missed the turning to East Cowes and found ourselves on the ferry on the west side of the Medina River. That was certainly unexpected! Beware the steep slope driving off the ferry which could well ground a larger or low-slung vehicle at low tide. Someone had not taken tides into consideration with the design!

Osborne House was redesigned by Prince Albert in the Italianate Style and has many original furnishings and decorations, the most sumptuous being the State Dining Room. Here much of the intricate design is made of papier-mache. There are emblems of India, such as elephant trunks in the swirls while Ganesh the elephant-headed god of luck presides over one door. There are a great many portraits of Victoria and her family and a section with paintings of both ordinary and Royal Indians. The Royal Nursery was delightful with a row of little cots, wooden toys and small chairs and tables for the children, set off by a gaily-coloured carpet

Lunch was taken sitting on the cafe verandah, overlooking the Solent, next to the Queen's Bathing Hut. All that was needed, we felt, was a nice Planter's Punch. 15 mins on foot from the Bathing Hut is the children's Swiss Cottage where they played, had small vegetable gardens

and learned to cook. My husband was horrified as cooking would require working over naked flames. What if the Royal children went up in smoke!?

Carisbrooke Castle was a poorly-signed attraction, something to do with the Highways Authority apparently and we went wrong several times. The castle was full of scaffolding as the walls were being cleared of weeds, such as valerian whose roots can loosen stones and eventually destroy the Castle. The wind on the top rampart was a 'two hatter' meaning I needed to hold my baseball cap on with the hood of my raincoat but there were superb views over Carisbrooke town and countryside.

Charles 1st was imprisoned at Carisbrooke Castle for 18 months and his young daughter, Princess Elizabeth, aged 14, died here, possibly of TB. There is a copy of a picture of Charles at his trial. He has bags under his eyes and does not look happy. He must have known the outcome was a foregone conclusion.

In the Museum was a large, chiming clock which duly chimed at 1200 and a wonderfully ornate 17th century organ with one foot pedal. Rod also discovered a seismic graph machine which had belonged to John Milne, the famous IOW earthquake researcher who had married a Japanese lady.

Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, lived in Carisbrooke Castle when her husband was made Governor of the IOW. This was a little ploy by Queen Victoria who was living at Osborne House, to keep her daughter nearby.

The highlight of this visit, for us, was watching a donkey work the water wheel. There are several donkeys who take it in turns to turn the wheel by stepping inside it and walking up the side. In the Middle Ages prisoners were used, but they could not pull up enough water so they trained donkeys who worked 16 hrs a day. The



Donkey on the waterwheel

present donkeys have contracts and are only allowed to work for up to 6 mins per day. The well is so deep it took 7 seconds for a pebble to plunk into the water.

We drove on to the Needles and Alum Bay, following road signs which seemed to wind all over the place. The car park charged £8.00 per day and there were no 'half-days' and no NT car park. A bus shuttles to and from the Needles and Battery but we walked the three-quarter mile each way. Alum Bay has a chair lift down to the beach but there was no time to investigate it.

Alum Bay cliffs are famed for their colouring, red, white, yellow, brown due to different minerals. Away in the near distance is a beacon on a spit of land which is part of England. It seemed close enough to swim across but is probably treacherous and the shore is mud flats.

The Battery belongs to the NT and there are exhibitions of life in it during WW2 showing the Ammunition Store and Laboratory for making the ammo. (no metal or fags allowed because of sparks). A very narrow, spiral staircase led down to a corridor and searchlight so close to the Needles only two of the three stacks were visible.



Tunnel at the Battery

Waitresses in the small tearoom wore 1940s-style head scarves and the china was authentically from different sets. Luckily, realism did not extend to having war rations and soya milk was available for me so we enjoyed a much-needed 'cuppa' and snack.

We hope that our experiences whet your appetite for a visit to the IOW. Apart from well-known places and multiple attractions, there are hundreds of footpaths and good cycle paths. Being cut off from the mainland, it feels just that bit foreign and yet everyone speaks English!

As a birthday treat for our nine-year-old grandson we decided to take him for a trip in our 2006 Murvi Morello. We borrowed a bench seat cushion from our narrowboat and by turning the front seats to face each other we made him a bed by laying it across them. With six younger siblings, foreign travel was not a viable option for his family but we thought we would widen his horizons and take him abroad – to Scotland. For our first foray into the wild unknown we centred our trip around Linlithgow which is only a couple of hours drive over the border.

We camped at [Beecraigs Country Park](#) which is run by West Lothian Council. There are 23 hard pitches all with 16A hook-up, rare breed cattle at the farm, fishing in the lake, woods to walk in and lovely views over the Firth of Forth. Oh yes, and there is an adventure playground and a café.

A short drive down the hill is Linlithgow with all the usual retail services plus the birth-place of Mary, Queen of Scots (and six other Scottish monarchs) at [Linlithgow Palace](#). Phone: 01506 842 896



Linlithgow Palace from across the Loch

Although this is partially derelict it is still interesting for adults and children. There is an entry charge. There is much to see in the town and a heritage trail leaflet is available from the town hall. Our interest led us to the Union Canal and to the discovery of some wartime prefabs. These had all been fitted with new windows and clad in brick but two of them still had Anderson Shelters in the garden employed as sheds.

A short drive up the hill from Beecraigs is the Scottish Korean War Memorial.

The Memorial is an arboretum of 1,114 native Scottish trees, one for every man who died, and a shrine surrounded by two mounds in the shape of the Ying and Yang on the South Korean flag. The shrine

is built in the traditional style of a Korean shrine and contains name boards listing



Korean War Memorial

all the men who died. I believe it is the only memorial in the UK dedicated to the Korean War that does this.

*Landranger Map 65: Grid ref: 987727
Signed from Linlithgow Town Centre
From M8 follow signs for Beecraigs
Country Park*

Our interest in canals soon took us on the 30 minute drive to the [Falkirk Wheel](#) which lifts boats from the Forth & Clyde-Canal to the Union Canal.



Forth & Clyde Canal - Falkirk Wheel

This amazing structure replaced the flight of eleven locks which were in use during the canals' commercial freight-carrying days. (the locks were about a mile to the east and are now buried beneath blocks of flats). The wheel is free to visit but can get busy at weekends. There are boat trips up to the Union Canal and back. We parked on a nearby housing estate and walked along the Forth & Clyde Canal towpath which is paved and has information boards at frequent intervals.

On the way back from Falkirk we visited Helix Park to see [The Kelpies](#).



Kelpies in Park setting

These monsters steal children and often appear in the form of horses. We have now visited here on three occasions and the policy on car parking has changed each time. On our last visit, in the evening, parking near the entrance was free and campervans were permitted to stay overnight. The Kelpies must be visited both in the day and at night to appreciate them fully. There is something magical about wandering through Helix Park in the middle of the night as others are doing and wondering at these majestic sculptures which are illuminated from within.

Nine-year-old boys cannot get enough of castles so we had to visit [Blackness Castle](#) on the river bank 15 minutes drive from Beecraigs.



Blackness Castle

This is little changed from its 15th century origin and is very popular as a film location. We arrived there on one occasion to find it closed to the public as an American outfit were filming *Mary Queen of Scots* there. On a windy day it is not hard to imagine yourself defending the Firth of Forth from invaders. Beware the low doorways and very rough courtyard but enjoy the views. The entrance charges are the same as at Linlithgow Palace and, on a pure comparison of size, do not appear good value but the views alone make up for any lack of rooms.



Beecraigs Highland Cattle

The unanimous verdict on this trip was 'we must go there again'

Well, it seems it falls to me to submit my humble contribution to Adrian's newsletter. Why should that responsibility fall to Vince you may ask? Simply because Christine and I were the only Murvi couple to respond to Nick and Yvonne's invitation to join them at the Shrewsbury Flower Festival. So just two vans to a Murvi get-together you respond in astonishment!

Well yes, a little sadly, that pretty well sums it up. So now it rests with me, as per Nick's request, to convince a few more members that you may have missed out on something you might have greatly enjoyed.

Well I have to admit that the idea of two whole days at a Flower Festival might not immediately enthuse everyone. And again the added attraction of rows and rows of jars of honey, awaiting judges' decisions, may appeal to our in-house bee and IT expert, but not necessarily to the run-of-the mill Murvi Club members typical of me!

Ah yes but, Adrian asks for photographs to generate interest. Great! I have dozens. Now here's one of rows and rows of chrysanthemums and another of rows of gladioli and rows of geraniums and rows of oh dear not even a well-focussed shot of a single jar of honey or the odd bee. Sorry Nick!



So did we all enjoy two days of flower show festivities you may ask, possibly not without some pessimism? Well yes we did, especially after Nick had repeated the information, with great patience, because it had already been circulated, that the Shrewsbury Flower Show does not take place at the Shrewsbury Show Ground. Well yes, that's obvious isn't it!? In fact it takes place at a much more appropriate venue called The Quarry. Shrewsbury Show Ground is where Nick, being a VIP, as he convinces the gullible (that's me), has set up camp in a secluded

and exclusive area. However I am allowed to be equally exclusive as we set up our Murvi next door to our VIP friend.

Well, if you are still with me, I hope you will read on, find out what happens at the Shrewsbury Flower Show and, who knows, swell numbers next summer?

So getting from the Showground to the Quarry? An excellent free shuttlebus. The first one at 8.00 am, last one back from Shrewsbury itself, or from the Show, as late as 10.30 and never a wait of more than 10 minutes. Christine and I were the only show-goers on the first 8.00 bus. Yes indeed we were at the show by 8.30, ready for a free coffee and a quiet preview before the gates opened to the general public a couple of hours later. So you two were also VIP's the gullible may ask? Well not quite: such exclusive privileges were purchased by way of the two day combined admission and membership ticket, which not only made a saving on day tickets but also provided exclusive use of the members pavilion and outdoor eating area which overlooked the main arena. Oh! So there was an arena for all the flowers you enquire? And you spent two days watching the flower action, at a distance, from the members' pavilion you continue?! Oh dear, am I not being very convincing? Do please read on and bear in mind that once admitted all entertainment is included in the admission price.

So actually, in the arena, we were able to enjoy show jumping, a falconry display, a quack pack (ducks and sheep dogs), the pony club musical ride, several military bands, a jousting display, WW1 heroes and horses display, an Abba tribute band, The Red Hot Chilli Pipers and the Massed Bands Finale display. When the showers came we were able to retreat to the 'lecture' marquee where radio and television gardener celebrities were providing demonstrations on a range of gardening



matters from fruit growing and managing pests and diseases, to flower arranging and advising us about our own problems (gardening ones only!) during a gardeners' question time. Panellists including Margaret Thrower: yes of the Percy Thrower family fame.

There was restful seating around the bandstand with an ongoing programme of choirs and military and civilian bands.

Then, with a growing appetite, we visited the food marquee where we were spoilt for choice. Here again we could also choose from a range of food demonstrations by celebrity chefs. We then spent an hour or two admiring all the show entries, involving a vast range of crafts and garden produce simply too numerous to list and – of course – flowers! For a little peace and quiet and a rest we descended to The Dingle admiring the meticulously planted and colourful gardens overlooking the small lake. Handy seating, under the shade of the trees, to nibble on a purchase from the food hall and to quench our thirst.



Then back to explore some 200 or so trade stands which even included a piece of the Ffestiniog Railway, complete with its steam locomotive, a couple of carriages, a short length of track and free rides. A treat for old and young alike though the latter could already find plenty of entertainment in the children's arena with its variety of animals including ducks and chickens, a little rascals disco dome, a giant inflatable obstacle course, a rugby skills area, soap carving, a craft tent, face painting etc. etc. as well as a succession of children's entertainers. No wonder Nick doubled the numbers of our Murvi contingent by arriving with his daughter and her partner and two grandchildren! (They in a tent, not Nick and Yvonne's Murvi!)

Continued overleaf....

Still lots of activity at 10.00 as we waited with anticipation for the fireworks display. Provided by the ex-chemistry teacher firm of Kimbolton Fireworks. That's right, the market leader that has fired London New Year Displays, not to mention the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2012 London Olympics. Needless to say the spectacle did not disappoint.

Moving towards 11.00 the shuttle bus crews wait patiently for us to make sure no one is left behind and we are ready to catch up tomorrow on everything we have missed today and relive that fireworks finale one more time.

And of course there is Shrewsbury itself, invitingly right next to The Quarry Showground. It's



The Firework Display

worthy of a visit in its own right, pleasantly situated by the banks of the River Severn, and you can't help but note that Charles Darwin began his education here. You can easily nip into the town for a break from the show. We stayed an extra night to give us a little more time to explore the town and its shops, pubs or cafes. Then, yet again, we were spoilt for choice as we located a suitable venue for a late evening farewell meal.

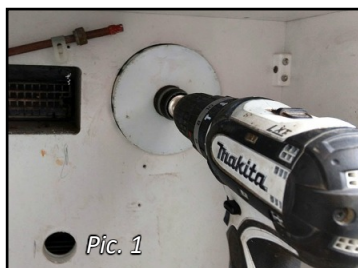
See you next year Shrewsbury. Put us on your list Nick. See a few more Murvi Members too? And if you have caring duties for little ones during the summer months why not bring them with you? Nick makes a brilliant baby sitter – now that makes him a brilliant VIP too!

CONVERTING AN OLDER MURVI TO A GASLOW CYLINDER

By Tony Gumbrill

With an extended trip abroad on the horizon a few months back I decided to convert our 04 Morello to a Gaslow system.

The first problem to overcome was where to place the fill point. With the Gaslow recommendation in mind that the fill pipe should not pass through the living area, a direct access to the gas locker was required. After a bit of investigation and a test hole (later to be resealed), I concluded that the best place would be where the original regulator was located and hopefully the fill point would be alongside the top vent for the gas locker (pic1&2).



Pic. 1



Pic. 2

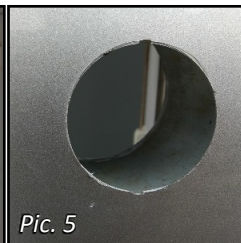
So out with the drill and cutters, all was clear, next task was to put a pilot hole through the outer skin of the van from the inside, then cut the filler hole (pic3&4), after cutting the hole it needed a small notch top and bottom to locate the filler (pic5). I then cleaned up and painted the bare metal edge to help prevent corrosion.



Pic. 3



Pic. 4



Pic. 5

Because the filler and connection was passing through the insulation void, I had to make a gas tight sleeve for this, I used a short piece of 110mm drain pipe, this was bonded in place with CT1 sealant (<http://www.ct1td.com/>) (pic6, 7 & 8). As the cutter I had was slightly bigger than needed, I cut a short piece of pipe and split it to make a spacer. When using CT1 I would



Pic. 6



Pic. 7

also recommend a light spray of Multi Solve spray to enable you to get a smooth finish.

Then I bonded in the filler point with black CT1 (pic9&10), and positioned the bottle and assembled the pipe work leaving provision for a second bottle to be added if required.



Pic. 8



Pic. 9

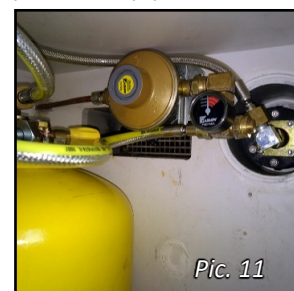


Pic. 10

The new regulator was fitted as high as possible, ideally it should be above the bottles (pic11), if below the top of the bottle, this can cause problems such as funny smells when the gas starts to run out. The gauge shown in the picture can be used to test the gas system for leaks.

Following Gaslow instructions, simply prime the pipe work then turn off the gas supply, the gauge should show green, if it shows any red within 10mins you have a leak.

If anybody wishes to do this with their van I am happy to be of assistance if required



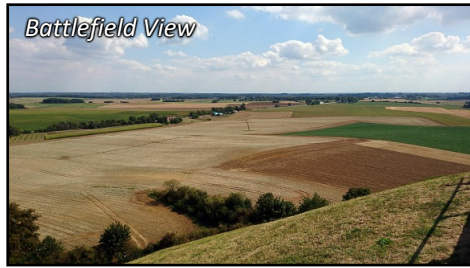
Pic. 11

Three years ago we were lucky enough to go to Waterloo for the re-enactment of the famous battle so, this year on our way to our GB Motorhome Tours holiday in Croatia we thought we'd go back to see Waterloo at our leisure.

We arrived at Waterloo but couldn't find any parking so we didn't visit the Wellington Museum in an old coaching house. Signposts to the battlefield were non-existent so Google maps came to the rescue and we arrived at the Butte du Lion near the battlefield. This is a memorial to the Prince of Orange who acquitted himself well during the battle, he was on Wellington's staff. There is a café/bistro on site plus adequate parking.



The visitor centre is underground and is fascinating, with lots of info on the battle plus soldiers uniforms displayed on models and there is access to the Butte



Du Lion which has 226 steepish steps. It is worth the climb for the view, though it does make the battlefield look rather flat.



After the climb back down we visited the Panorama, painted in 1912, it portrays a 360 degree view of the great cavalry charges during the middle of the battle.

Finally, a visit to Hougement Farmhouse, a free shuttle bus will take you there and back, but there is a pathway which only takes about 20 minutes each way. It's a very significant part of the battle with a

visual presentation in one of the buildings. We took about four hours to see everything.



There aren't any nearby campsites, we found one about an hour away, but wouldn't recommend it.

<https://projecthougomont.com/visiting-waterloo/>



A FOCUS IN FRANCE

By Lin Powell & Wendy Palmer

We don't really need an excuse to go to France. We love it. Be it to visit the War graves, Battlefields, Beaches, Bayeux tapestry, Wine, Provence, Food, Pyrenees, Alps, Friends, Le Tourwe could go on and on. We usually spend a month or so there every year one way or another.

This September we cheerfully set off ostensibly to look after our friends animal 'sanctuary' for 9 days for what in itself, is fast becoming an annual occurrence. Now this is no hardship. The animals are



'interesting' and the farmhouse a joy to live in. It did however give us a chance to stay a little longer and to continue our travels around the Languedoc region and once more we found ourselves heading off towards the 'Cathar Castle Country'.

Visiting the castles gives us a good and interesting focus to our travelling around this beautiful area of the French countryside and combines our love of hillwalking with an amazing and unique part of French history.

'Who were the Cathars?'

The Cathars were a religious group who appeared in Europe in the eleventh century, their origins something of a mystery though there is reason to believe their ideas came from Persia or the Byzantine Empire. The religion flourished particularly in the *Languedoc region*, broadly bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, the Pyrenees, and the rivers Garonne, Tarn and Rhône. Cathars

believed in two principles, a good god and his evil adversary (much like God and Satan of mainstream Christianity).

Cathars maintained a Church hierarchy and practiced a range of ceremonies, but rejected any idea of priesthood or the use of church buildings. Basic Cathar Tenets led to some surprising beliefs for the time. For example they largely regarded men and women as equals, education for all and had no doctrinal objection to contraception, euthanasia or suicide. By the early thirteenth century Catharism was probably the majority religion in the area. Many Catholic texts refer to the danger of it replacing Catholicism completely. The head of the Catholic Church, the somewhat ill-named Pope Innocent III, called a formal Crusade against the Cathars of the Languedoc, appointing a series of military leaders to head his Holy Army. Simon de Montfort

Continued overleaf....

now remembered as the father of another Simon de Montfort, a figure in English parliamentary history, was the most prominent. The war against the Cathars continued for two generations. From 1208, a war of terror was waged against the indigenous population of the Languedoc and their rulers. During this period an estimated half-million Languedoc men, women and children were massacred as The Crusaders killed the locals indiscriminately usually by way of horrific torture eventually wiping them out. The Cathar history has become an immense and popular tourist attraction for the region with a huge amount of literature available as well as tours of 'everything Cathar'.

Most of the main "Cathar Castles" are actually castles re-built by the French after the Cathar Crusade, and used to defend their new border with Aragon. There are a few genuine remaining Cathar Castles, Carcassonne probably has the best claim to be a Cathar Castle followed by Foix. There are also many later French Castles built on the site of Cathar strongholds and there are a number of sites of Cathar Castles, where almost nothing remains. Generally speaking the castles are built on top of



Gracie, Wendy & Lola at the remains of Chateau De Montailou

'pogs' (mountain tops) affording magnificent views particularly the castle at Queribus where the views encompass vineyards, the foothills of the Pyrenees and the Canigou Massif.

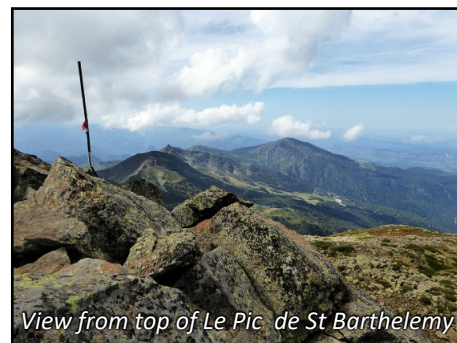
Using the Cicerone 'Walks in the Cathar Region' by Alan Mattingly as our guide and staying in local village and town Aires, we have visited many sites and never tire of the excellent walking, beautiful countryside, and this fascinating part of French history. Although a bit dated now (2005) this splendid little book not only gives excellent walks but a fascinating precis of Cathar history for each walk and castle.

This time we set our sights on Foix, Monsegur and Le Pic de St-Barthelemy (2348m). Foix is a lovely town, well worth a visit on its own with special 'campingcar' parking together with a really well conserved castle.



Foix and its Magnificent Castle

However, the highlight of this latest trip was Wendy's climb of Le Pic. With Lola the dog she strode off embracing 1350 metres of ascent along the way to finally reach the splendid views afforded from the top into Spain, Andorra and the valley of the Ax. A tired Wendy, but still bouncing Lola, were met eight hours later



View from top of Le Pic de St Barthelemy

at the van by Lin and their other dog Gracie, who had remained to take in the gentler walks around the village of Monsegur and its hilltop castle. *Le Pays Cathare*, as it is known, covers a fairly



Monsegur castle on its 'pog'

large area of South west France and is highly recommended for its beautiful countryside alone. For those not up to walking or climbing to some of the castles, most of them can be reached simply by driving there. Peyrepertuse and Queribus are two of our favourites, although you may find yourself needing a glass of that lovely French wine when you eventually stop in the delightful little village Aire, as the unguarded road can be a little scary in places. Bon Voyage!

THE VELODYSEE

By Penny McCallig

The Velodysee is a cycling route through France - across Brittany, along the Atlantic and Basque coasts to the border with Spain. Mostly traffic free paths and flat, with campsites and motorhome aires along the way, we had a great couple of weeks, starting at La Tranche sur Mer and travelling south to Hendaye.

The towns of La Rochelle, Rochefort and Bayonne were easy to navigate on bikes, and Bordeaux made an interesting visit a tram ride away from a wine chateau stop-over.



Chateau Ahon, Blanquefort, a vineyard aire

You can even start in Ilfracombe as it links to the 'Coast to Coast' in Devon, take the ferry from Plymouth and pick it up again in Roscoff.

We can't wait to go back and try some of the more northerly stretches.

A great website - in English - describes each section in detail:

<http://www.velodysee.com>



Riverside parking at Marans near La Rochelle