



Murvi clubbers on top of the world! (Well, Brent Knoll)

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THE EDITORIAL BIT

By Adrian Sumption

What a winter it was. It seemed as if it was never going to end. That's not to say that we've all been in hibernation over the winter. Some of us threw caution to the winds, donned the thermals and headed out into the snowy wastes with true British stoicism. Meanwhile others just headed south to warmer climes till the small inconvenience of winter was over.

Well, the good news is that summer's on the way at last. I have incontrovertible evidence of this because, as I write this, it has been raining solidly all afternoon. And if further proof were needed, my gloveless fingers were numb after cycling home from our allotment earlier this afternoon. Don't be confused by the inexplicable anomaly of a bank holiday that was HOT. A sure sign of the approach of summer is weather that swings from sub-tropical to arctic in the space of a few hours.

It was thanks to one of those unseasonably warm weekend that we had such a great time at our AGM at Greetham near Rutland Water recently. The fine weather meant that we were able to discover some of the hidden gems in this part of the country – the delightful small town of Oakham, the superb architecture and colourful street market in Stamford, walks to Fort Henry and Exton, Isaac Newton's birthplace at the nearby Woolsthorpe Manor.



Stamford houses

Some of us even threw caution to the wind, leapt on our bikes, and headed off to cycle to Rutland Water in the sunshine. And yet, despite the warm weather during the day, the final evening saw many of us seated in a circle in the middle of the field huddled under blankets, stargazing and trying to identify the planets in the clear night sky.



Picnicking near Fort Henry

I guess it's the unpredictability of the British summer that is one of the reasons why so many of us head abroad each year. That and the joy of discovering new places. So, where to next?

With Brexit fast approaching we surely should make the most of the European

opportunities on our doorstep before it all becomes a wee bit more difficult. France is always a reliable choice, as is Spain, but why not a bit further afield? I never cease to be surprised by the spirit of adventure of some of our Murvi Club members - Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, North Africa, Iceland – you name it, somebody will have been there in their Murvi. That means that there will almost certainly be someone out there eager to offer you help and advice when it comes to planning your personal adventure.

If you want to further enhance your adventure, how about sharing it with a fellow Murvi owner or maybe even a group of us. Twice the enjoyment and half the worry! Help is always at hand from the committee if you want to organise a rally.

Many of the trips Karin and I have made in our Murvi, both in the UK and abroad, have been with good friends who just happen to have a Murvi as well. One of the delights of these shared journeys can be that your travelling companions may have differing interests from yours and so introduce you to places and experiences which you might otherwise not have considered or even known about.

Wherever it is that you head to this summer, whether it's to the far reaches of Europe and beyond or just to your local country park, do have a great time.

Roger Pepper's November rally brings anticipation of a bitter sweet experience - *Oh no it's winter already, demanding hills to climb and doubtless plenty of mud* - on the one hand with the promise of feeling a smugness at completing the climb, savouring a pint in a fine pub with good company and safe in the knowledge that the surroundings and housekeeping essentials will be 'just right', on the other. This year's Dorset meet certainly lived up to expectations.

Following on from Julia's splendid Wiltshire pre-meet where memories of a crazily long flight of locks and the unique charms of Devizes lingered, some 38 vans found their way to a cliff top site with exceptional views of Dorset's Jurassic Coast along with the soft rolling hills. Highlands End Holiday Park in Eype provided easy camping with want-for-nothing facilities.



Each van was welcomed and crossed off the list of attendees by the Roger/Wendy team; part of the organisation that ticks away below the radar. It just happens.

Being mindful of a casual get-together around the bar later many of us stretched our legs with a look around West Bay, Bridport, a stroll along the cliff top or beach. The blue sky and low sun was too much of a pull not to get out about and get our bearings.



Later, amongst the general catch-up chit-chat at the bar we became aware of Roger and Wendy having to deal with a family problem; Roger's elderly sister being hospitalised. By coincidence the sister was close by and could be visited without abandoning the meet. However,

it did mean Roger would not be available to guide us along the planned 6.5 mile route on Friday. The role was seamlessly handed over to Alan.

Friday morning was sunny!



Our path followed the coast,



Those that felt the need to view from the highest point on the South West Coastal Path made the extra effort of climbing up Golden Cap.

The views gave a great feeling of contentment, and maybe a little bit of smugness. Hard to think it could have been viewed in better conditions. We were lucky.



Our lunch stop was a roadside, very roadside (A35), pub in Chideock. It proved a most 'satisfactory' stop over. We were expected and made very welcome. Would have been all too easy to call it a day and spend the afternoon there! Roger had done his homework well.

Our return took us inland where we were able to appreciate that rolling landscape first-hand.

Another fine walk.

What makes us Murvi folk tick? Well, we all seem to prioritize our leisure time in a way that lets us see those places and things others are deprived of. We pay handsomely for the privilege of getting in and out of nooks and crannies, surviving (and enjoying) adverse conditions and being self-sufficient. Our need is not satisfied by lumbering about, but by nipping about. And we do set a high bar to deliver 'satisfaction' whilst nipping about



our Murvi.

Friday evening sees us gathered together to share some of those experiences. Eight of the group answered the call to bring along their 10 favourite photos showing their Murvi enabled adventures. The film show centres around memory stick technology and someone organising the kit and venue to exploit it; Roger. It would be fair to say that as a group we do get about! Very rewarding for those reliving memories and very inspirational for those yet to tread these paths.

Saturday was a do your own thing day. With Weymouth just around the corner, West Bay and Bridport a stroll away, stunning scenery in abundance, a swimming pool on hand and a Murvi to relax (and maybe entertain) in; options were plentiful. We planned a trip to the Maldives, strolled into a very different Bridport than the down-at-heel one remembered from many years ago and watched them lose a game of rugby to Dorchester on our way back. An interesting day.

The Saturday evening group meal was provided by Highlands End in a very pleasant setting. No opportunity to get confused over what you ordered some months ago - Roger had it recorded. A glance around the room showed the random seating to have a subtle showing of not being quite random. The committee members were well dispersed, ensuring inclusion for all. The show of hands for new faces gave very a healthy sign for the club with a record number of newbies at a rally. Coupled with the exceptional quantity and quality of the food this made for a most enjoyable evening which was topped off with the news that Roger's sister was anticipating returning home.

Our number was increased by the welcome inclusion of Wendy and Roger



on our Sunday walk prepared for us by local lad, Tony Gumbrill. This took us East, through Bridport and up onto the coastal cliffs. Rain had been evident overnight and threatened to visit again. Some of us decided to be prudent and start with over trousers. Just as well, as 'sitting' in the mud is then much less of a problem! The opportunity of washing down our packed lunches was provided by the excellent pub, known only to locals(?), whose garden we filled. We enjoyed the views and a good blow on the high ground before dropping into West Bay, with its seaside attractions, and on up to our camp site. Those with the means of measuring such things reckoned we had covered about 9 miles. Enough to make one feel virtuous.



After a wash-and-brush-up and some food we gathered for our last night together. We took the opportunity to pick the minds of those that have been that way before ... Portugal. From what was said at the film show it appears we are somewhat remiss in not having experienced this part of the world. Soon to be rectified.

And so it ends. Monday sees the early birds set off first thing and the not so early linger on. We still get a kick out of seeing all these oh-so-rare machines collected together and look forward to the next such gathering. This particular parting is something of a landmark. Roger (no doubt aided by Wendy) has organised a meet at this time of the year for as long as the club has been in existence and this is his last. On behalf of all us who have experienced and greatly benefited from his good humour, diligence and organisational skills put to good use for our enjoyment, we say



Thank You.

SKIING FOR FREE

By Brian & Anne Biffin

While taking our annual extended break in the Southern French Alps, we have just spent several amazing days based at St Véran, the highest perennially populated village in France (at 2,200m maybe in Europe?) Daytime temperatures reached 22°C but -10°C at night, so we made good use of the Webasto. To be on the safe side, we kept the water tank empty, and used a plastic jerrycan. Refilling was never a problem, with spring water fountains at almost every street corner, in true French mountain village style.

In the aire at St. Véran



Nordic skis clipped on, we explored the Vallée de la Blanche and l' Aigue, but did not quite get as far as the Réfuge. It was the first time ever our border collie, Calvin, was unable to keep up with us, occasionally sinking waist deep into the snow, but loving every minute.

Valée de l'Aigue



We met only one other British couple who were madly jealous of the Morello. How did they recognise us as Brits? Not the van, not any overheard language, nope, but the poo bag we were carrying, a uniquely British custom, I gather!

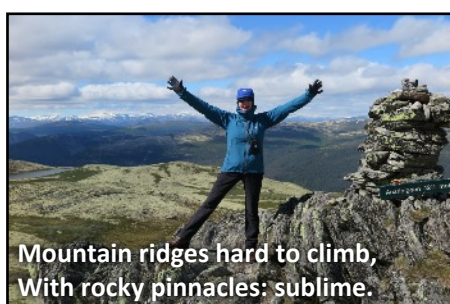
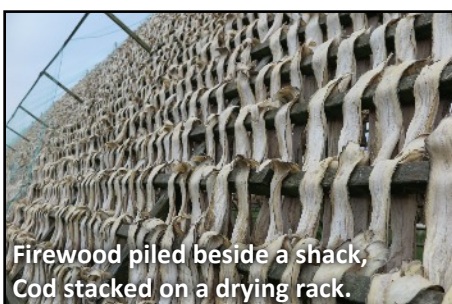
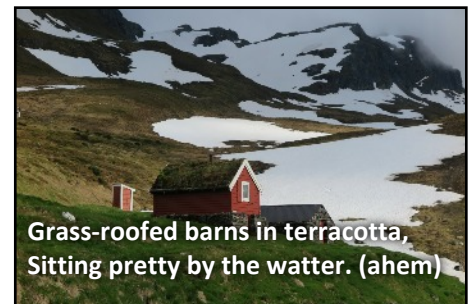
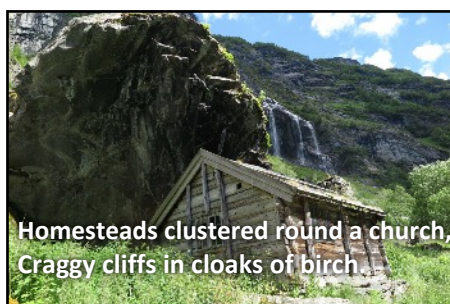
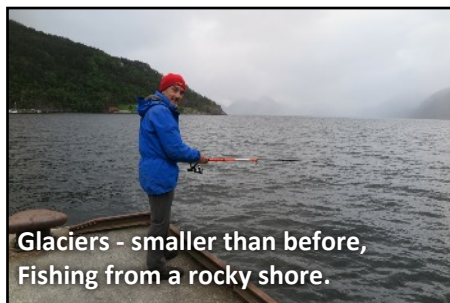
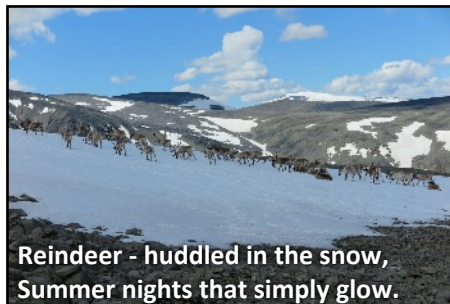
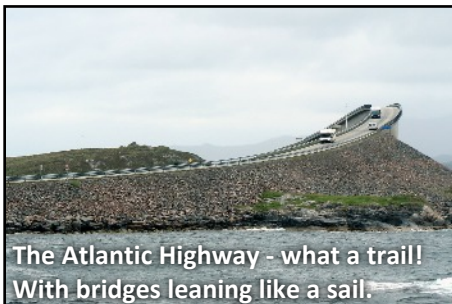
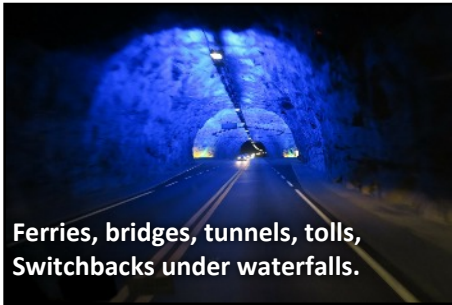
Note: In France, once the Easter weekend has come and gone, the pisteurs no longer groom the Ski de Fond pistes, passes are no longer sold, so everyone can enjoy skiing for free, especially as there is an exceptional amount of snow this year.

St. Véran Aire



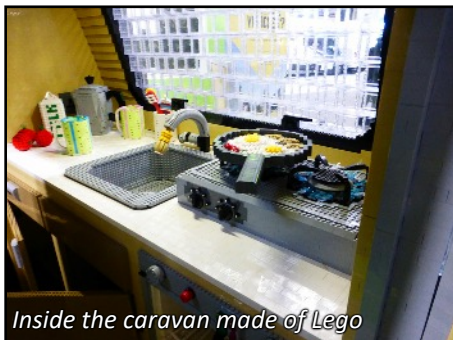
Above St. Véran





Clent Hills campsite is in the countryside and quite pretty though we did not explore around it. We chose it because it was open in October and only about 28m drive from the NEC, Birmingham. There were plenty of motorhomes to check out at the Caravan and Motorhome Exhibition but, after looking at hundreds, Murvi quality still stood out. Our Rex was there manning the Murvi stand and was pleased to see us.

We loved the tiny Eriba caravans and another one made entirely of Lego bricks with its own rather bored bodyguard.



Inside the caravan made of Lego

Many motorhomes now feature garages or extra storage space at the back.

At this show we found we were members of ACCEO without knowing it and had coffee and biscuits with other equally bewildered members-who- did- not-know- it.

The countryside beckoned after the rigours of a day at NEC. At Kinver Edge are the only Rock Houses in Great Britain and amongst the finest in Europe. They are carved out of natural sandstone caves from 280-250m years ago. People lived in them quite cosily till the 1960s when they were deemed unsanitary with

no running water (bucket privy outside) and no electricity. All such mod.cons. are now available at the charming NT café on site.



Kinver Edge Cave Home

After leaving the caves at Holy Austin Rock we walked through the woods to Nanny's Rock, a five-room cavern, once inhabited by Meg-o-Fox Hole who made herbal potions. She died in 1617. Another des-res cave further on was fenced off.

In the woods we met a group searching for a 49 year old man who had left his car in a nearby car park 6 weeks ago and totally disappeared. No trace of him has ever been found. I am not certain if dogs were ever used as away from the path it is very brambly.

After much puffing and panting we reached the summit of an ancient Hill Fort along with the tail end of Storm Brian. Rod was all for admiring the view through lashing rain and howling wind but I was grateful to return to 'Murvina' for a hearty lunch. This walk was only 3 miles but felt more like seven!

Sunday, our going-home day was dry and sunny but with a bitterly cold North wind. Waddesdon Manor was on our 'to

do' list for the homeward drive. It was the home of Baron de Rothschild who earned his wealth in banking. The house was built in the 1870s with little turrets, in the style of a French chateau and inside has many French features, tapestries, Louis 14th chairs and enormous chandeliers as well as many English, Dutch and Flemish 17th Century Masters. An elderly Rothschild still lives in the grounds and sometimes entertains in part of the Manor. The Rothschilds still own almost 10,000 acres while the National Trust has 150.



Waddesdon Manor

Walking back to the carpark, we realised we had left our rucksacks behind at the Information Hut and had a steep trudge back to collect them. We took the bus back to the van as time was getting on and it was a good 20 minute walk away.

All told, that was a particularly eventful couple of days.

Clent Hills CCC Site
Field House Lane, Romsley,
West Midlands, B62 0NH
Tel.: 01562 710015

Email: www.myccc.co.uk/clenthills

Open: 29/3/18 – 5/11/18

TWO GO TO ITALY

By John Laidler

Some three years ago I wrote my first book, covering our travels in Spain in our Murvi Morocco. Now after two explorations of Italy the second book has recently been published. Two Go to Italy doesn't begin to cover everything you can find in Italy but it should give a flavour of what it has to offer. Our second trip included four weeks travelling around Sicily, an island we absolutely loved. Mad drivers, potholed roads and the sheer length of the country could be

reasons for avoiding Italy but I would urge you to go there. The Italians we met were universally friendly and the history



to be found almost unparalleled. There are paperback and ebook versions available. Sadly, due to costs the paperback has to have black and white illustrations but the eBook is in full colour with 299 photographs and maps. The following link should take you to the book.

<http://amzn.eu/cJ8sP8p>

Having read about John Young's experience and seeing the pictures of his van after having some welding done, we have also had to have some work done on our van as the sills were showing signs of rust and I wanted to find a company that could carry out repairs to a standard that you could not tell the van had been repaired, so with this in mind I trusted our Murvi to <http://www.trickettweldingltd.co.uk> which is a company based in Poole Dorset and do a lot of vintage car restorations.

I thought I would share our experience with fellow Murvi owners. We had sections of the sills cut out and sections made and fitted in and resprayed and the under seal/rust proofing touched up, also as the front bumper had gone very blotchy and none of the little tricks would work, so they also resprayed it, all done to a very good standard. Before they commenced any work we were asked to remove the bed/seat arrangement so that in case of heat damage they could monitor the interior of the van.



Finished work on the sills ...



.... And the bumper

THE LATEST GADGET

By Jane Jones

My husband loves a gadget so was suitably enthusiastic about the small parcel that arrived this week ahead of our trip to France. With some caution I asked what it was, to be told excitedly that it was a 'laser measure' for measuring the height and width of bridges?! Do we need one of those, you may well ask, as any experienced Murvi owner knows the height of the van (even allowing for 'Rogers' satellite dome) is no more than 2.8m.



However, I was quickly reminded that we rarely go anywhere without a canoe on the roof which makes us 3.2m and, of last summer's near disaster whilst meandering through the plains of Zamora. As we wound round the country lanes, in close to 45 degree heat we nervously approached a somewhat narrow bridge. After some 'entirely harmonious' discussion about why it wasn't marked on Google maps and why we didn't want a 50-mile detour to avoid the bridge, we cautiously edged forward, breathing in to make us seem smaller. All seemed to be going well when we heard the roof scraping on the bridge and we envisaged the embarrassment of being stuck under a Spanish bridge in the middle of nowhere. Bravely we reversed back and emerged unscathed. So.. now.. we got the retractable ladder out, took the bikes off the back, took the canoe off the roof, drove through the bridge, carried the canoe through, slid it back on the roof, put the bikes back, re-stowed the ladder

and drove away- marginally quicker than the detour.



So, having carefully researched our French trip we had decided on Chateaufort for our first night stop, a mediaeval walled town, one of France's 'Beaux Villages'. And, my forward-thinking husband had got the new gadget because he had failed to mention that there was a medieval arch to get into the town. I can see the canoe manoeuvres starting already, gadget or not...

We had planned to camp at Devizes with Adrian and Karin Sumption for the New Year, but this was cancelled due to us getting a "bug", so was rescheduled for early March. In the meantime, we gathered a few more interested parties, so Kate Foster and the Mawbys joined us.

And then the snow came!! Not to be thwarted, we were booked to arrive on the Friday, but the prediction of heavy snowfall on Thursday prompted us to bring forward our arrival and at the same time we suggested to Kate she might like to do the same. We didn't mind the prospect of being snowed in, but to try and travel in thick snow would not be sensible!



As it happened, it was incredibly cold, with that bitter wind from the East, but dry; the roads cleared sufficiently for Adrian and Karin to arrive on Friday, and Nick and Yvonne sailed through from "oop north" to arrive on Saturday.

Several meals were arranged in the very accommodating pub, "The Three Magpies", almost next door to the site, (The Camping and Caravanning Club), even though their chef was unable to return, living in Peterborough as he did! They

rustled up enough to keep us satisfied. We met up with Bob and Maggie Eley, who live in Devizes, and were able to catch up with them too.



We enjoyed walks along the Kennet and Avon Canal, which adjoins the campsite, and marvelled at the snow drifts against a narrowboat which was moored at the foot of the Caen Hill Flight of locks.



Earlier, with Kate, we had gone for a recce to another pub, "The Barge", but on arrival and bursting for the loo, found it closed for redecoration! However, Kate and I (Angela) persuaded the decorators to let us in – whew, great relief!! Later in the stay, we took Yvonne on the same walk, and bless her, she was expecting to see "a barge" – not realising it was the name of the pub! (Sorry, Yvonne, I thought it was hilarious!)

Another circular walk took us over the canal and up behind the "millionaires" houses at the back of Seend village – spectacular views over the surrounding countryside, back through Seend and return via the canal and that closed pub!



Monday saw some of us on the bus into Devizes, whilst the more energetic among us – Adrian, Yvonne and Nick - walked in. A certain amount of "retail therapy" and a very tasty lunch at the café in the square, run by one of Karin and Adrian's nieces, rounded off a very enjoyable stay.

By this time, most of the snow had melted, and all return journeys were undertaken without mishap.



PASTIES R US

By Adrian Hitchman

It started with me asking 'what shall we take to the AGM shared supper', bearing in mind we would be on the road all week beforehand. Theresa said we could do small Pasties, take frozen meat with us and get ready made pastry nearer the time. So it was that on the Saturday afternoon we were in the van turning out Pasties, using a gas oven we're not used to and a Halogen oven, We cooked 32 pasties for the AGM and a couple of extras for friends who were coming over on the Sunday.



They turned out okay, not as good as Theresa makes at home but a lot better than the objects Ginsters sell as Pasties.



When Adrian suggested we might share our ideas of Paradise with other members I immediately thought of a site we discovered last October which I have described that way several times. I'm sitting writing this on a Scottish site which compares very favourably with that spot. The only sounds I can hear are of the sea breaking on the clean white sands and skylarks ascending in the blue sky. So; one suggestion for those travellers who will go hundreds of miles on their journeys and one for those who stick closer to home.

Camp Palme, Kuciste, Peljesac, Croatia



If your destination is Dubrovnik you have to travel a very short distance through Bosnia Herzegovina (unless you're coming from Greece!). We had no insurance to cover us for this so opted for the alternative ferry and drive along the Peljesac peninsula. Thus it was that late in the day we fetched up at an ACSI site at Kuciste (pronounced Kooshiste).



It's only a small site with no pool and a bar which seemed to be open spasmodically, BUT it sits alongside a long pebble beach

with excellent swimming and views "to die for" across the sea to the setting sun.



(Cue endless opportunities for searching for that perfect photo). Inevitably the majority of campers seemed to be Germans, many of whom come regularly and stay for lengthy periods but we did spot some Croatians too which is always a good sign! We spent lazy days doing not a lot except swimming and loitering along the shore admiring the beachside houses but we did spend a lovely day on the opposite island of Korcula and drove to the end of the peninsula at Loviste. When we left, the rather formidable "Madame" who ran the site presented us with a bottle of locally-produced wine to thank us for our stay. We hope to go back one day, although twelve hundred miles is a rather long way!

Mellon Udrigle, Gruinard Bay, Highlands, Scotland



We've known about this camping ground for decades but never stayed before. We had one night to spare between Coigach and Poolewe but loved it so much that we came back for another two nights en route for home. It has limited facilities, just fresh water and waste disposal and for those who know Fidden Farm on Mull it is quite

similar. The sea is a marvellous deep turquoise and I can see snow-capped mountains across the water. It's easy to spend time doing nothing except playing with the dog on the beach and listening to the sea on the shore.



Can you hear it? ... When we stirred ourselves we enjoyed a lovely evening walk from the site to the nearby headland. Another day we parked the van a mile or so up the road and trekked across to Slaggan Bay where we watched seals at play offshore.



Mountains and sea are the two elements that link these two slices of our particular sort of Paradise. When I considered each of them I was surprised at how similar they are though one has a somewhat better weather record! Coincidentally that famous motorhome writer and photographer, Andy Stothert, writes fondly of both areas. He describes Mellon as "Peace and Quiet Big Time." If you value peace and majestic beauty with no great regard for bustling facilities then these are places to be sort out and treasured. I guess that sharing our discoveries with you fellow travellers will not mean kissing goodbye to our Paradise.

A RASPBERRY PI BATTERY MONITOR

By Alan Major

Over the winter I completed a project to design and install a display which would give a full systems overview of my battery system on a single screen rather than having to scroll through the data element by element using the single line display fitted as standard. There is nothing here which is unique to my setup so it maybe also be of interest to others with more conventional battery technology.

The article I wrote has been published by Victron on their Blog site . You can find the article at <https://www.victronenergy.com/blog/2018/04/11/homemade-pi-open-source-raspberry-flavour/>

You can also find my own blog article at <https://www.chronicle.me.uk/victronPi/>

As our footwell mats were in need of replacement I decided to look around at what mats were available on the market to suit a Fiat Ducato cab. We had never been big fans of the loose fit items provided by Murvi so I had previously tailor-fitted a pair of 'dirt stopper' style door mats but ultimately the lack of a reinforced heel pad usually found on vehicle specific mats had been their downfall. So time for something more suitable.

I decided on the Ducato specific carpet style mat from Fiat's own range of accessories. This looked as if it should fit around the seat bases fitted by Murvi so I

decided to order one and see. When it arrived I tried it for size and very quickly found that the tongue that was intended to fit between the seats was too wide. As the fit in all other areas was perfect I decided to remove the tongue and found a local Carpet Overlocker who agreed to whip the raw edge 'while I waited'.

The adapted carpet replaces the Murvi fitted cab carpet and has purpose designed pegs/clips to securely hold it in place. A secondary benefit of using this carpet rather than the Murvi one is that access to the vehicle battery is much easier. Ultimately it was the fact that the Murvi provided footwell carpets were

loose fit that was the biggest concern due to the possibility of them fouling the pedals and so any alternative had to be secure.

Despite the initial concerns over the fit the photos show that the replacement carpet integrates perfectly with the Murvi carpets and nicely delineates the 'business end'.



RAMBLINGS ON MY ELECTRIC BIKE (AT THE AGM MEET)

By Nolan Clarke

A light-hearted look from a newcomer!

Part 1. From Greetham Village there is a trail, the Viking Trail, leading to Rutland Water but the path turned out to be a footpath way. It was narrow and steep for the initial mile resulting in a very hard push until some path diversions eased the way to Exton where a most welcome drink at the pub restored energy. (Lesson one: Read the map more carefully and ask a local!)

Part 2. The route from Exton to Rutland Water was easy but beware! The place may be full of tourists who have no awareness of bikes and may be found wandering across paths without looking.

Part 3. Onward towards Oakham Town, following the A606 using a great pathway for cyclists to my goal, a visit to the Museum and the Castle. Both are recommended but be aware of closing times.

Returning on the B668, having taken local advice and used the excellent CO-OP superstore, the cycle path was good and well-marked but soon deteriorated unfortunately. Soon it was a game of avoiding the ruts/potholes and large vehicle tyre marks plus unanticipated horse s***t. After a mile I had a front wheel puncture, and yes, I did not have a puncture kit!

After another mile of pushing I found a garage, but they had nothing for cyclists. They suggested I find a local shop, whilst

searching I found two locals gossiping over their gardens. Seeing I had a problem one invited me to his garage where he produced a kit. He was a Cycle Angel and after 15 minutes I was back on the road to Greetham and good and early for the Murvi AGM. Feeling the need to be helpful to someone else I had a few early beers and assisted with setting out tables.

Lessons to learn:

- Make sure all necessities are checked before setting out.
- Don't give up there are still angels about, and
- use freed up time positively.

Total trip miles 21.

A CAUTIONARY TALE FROM DEVIL'S DYKE, EAST SUSSEX

By Jo Romero

But first some words of advice: Pay unexpected visits to friends when the weather is bad as they are more likely to be in which leaves you free to sightsee on good days.

We had not formulated this rule at the time so found we were visiting Devil's Dyke on a bitterly cold, soggy day in January because it was part of our 'to do' list for that weekend. At least fog is atmospheric!

Parking in a small, not overly frequented National Trust car park we went for a

slushy walk along the rim of the Dyke and into the main NT car park with pub from where there was said to be a most glorious view but today was thick, white fog. Descending into the ravine we trudged along admiring the steep slopes until we had to clamber up one of them back to Murvina. Rod managed but he had to haul me up the last few feet as I was starting to slide back down.

Warming up in the van with tea and sandwiches, we noticed the driver two cars down watching our van intently. He

then left and another man took his place and just stared and stared at the side door, presumably thinking we would soon be off on a walk. When we left, he also drove away.

My advice, therefore, is to stay in the main NT car park at Devil's Dyke or risk losing wheels, catalytic converter or even your van, especially when there are few people about.