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EDITORIAL

By Adrian Sumption

Does your enthusiasm know no bounds? Rally fever has struck the Murvi Club and members are coming up with new and exciting ideas right, left and centre. The momentum has continued to grow for all kinds of meets - small select groups, large gatherings, themed meets - and seemingly always in delightful locations. For me the great joy of these meets has been the new friendships which have been struck up and the generous help and support which has been so much in evidence - oh yes, and of course there's the eating and drinking.

It must be something about Murvi owners but nearly all the ones I have met seem to be enthusiastic walkers. Now, I will admit I have a certain reputation for leading people over hill and dale, through thick mud and just occasionally via the odd pub, but I wouldn't want our meets to become exclusively walking festivals. Any other ideas for shared activities would be very welcome. Do you have a particular hobby or skill that you would be happy to share with other members? Then why not make it a part of our next rally? Given our shared love of eating and drinking then a cookery plus wine and beer making meet might tick a lot of boxes. Seriously though, what about any art or craft skills, or maybe photography?

In another bold move, two groups of Murvi Club members have met up to have Christmas lunch together (see page 6) so this could have the makings of a new club tradition - that's right, more eating and drinking.

On a sadder note Wilf Harris, a Club member, died on October 17th at St. Luke's in Plymouth. I only met Wilf on a couple of occasions but I found him to be a wonderfully warm and humorous character. Bob Eley has written an obituary for Wilf which you will find on page 8.

Looking to the future you will no doubt be aware that there is already a considerable head of steam building up (apologies to the Dorset Steam Fair) for more meets in 2015 with four meets already confirmed - see below.



Rallies planned for 2015

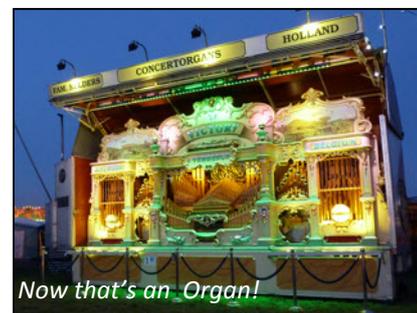
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|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 26 th Feb. - 2 nd Mar. | Dorset Mini-Meet at Ansty | click here for campsite details - now fully booked |
| 2 nd Mar. - 5 th Mar. | Ullwell (Nr. Swanage) | click here for campsite details |
| 19 th Mar. - 23 rd Mar. | Murvi Club AGM in Cheddar | click here for campsite details |
| 9 th Apr. - 13 th Apr. | Roseland Peninsula (Cornwall) | click here for campsite details - now fully booked |

There are also rumblings of a possible meet in the Yorkshire Dales in early September and then in October a possible repeat of the meet we had in Orford back in 2013. And of course we will all be anticipating fine weather for another of Roger's meets by the sea come November. So that's February, March, April, September, October and November covered - how on earth are we going to fill our time throughout the rest of the year? I expect you'll come up with something. Be sure to keep an eye on the website for all of these events once details become available.

Driving to our pre-arranged lunch venue took us past the show site affording us a glimpse of what lay ahead. The road was awash with mud and any vehicle emerging from the site was thickly coated in the stuff.

On parking at The Farquharson Arms in Pimperne which was our assembly point for lunch and a drive in convoy to the campsite at GDSF we were met by Tony and Chrissie Gumbrell. As exhibitors of a 1958 12hp Hatz tractor they had already parked at the show ground and were able to provide a further insight into what lay ahead of us. In addition to the six vans booked in to the show we were also joined for lunch by Andrew Shewan and Penny McCallig.

After an excellent lunch enjoyed by all, Jean Brill adorned in her yellow high viz vest did her best to marshal the assembled company of Murvis into the stream of slow moving traffic heading for the show. Despite the reluctance of the car drivers to cooperate we all managed to join the traffic without being too badly separated and headed towards to the show. Although setting out with us Andrew and Penny decided to abort and left the queue. Fortunately on arrival at the show ground we were all directed to an alternative entrance which meant that instead on crossing a field of heavily rutted mud we merely had to traverse a porridge of mud that was the check in area. After being processed by the check in team we were directed to our designated camping area and our final arrival challenge – a steep uphill run across a field of stubble. Sadly at that stage we all had to accept the assistance of one of the many tow vehicles on site and then with Jean's further assistance and negotiation with the stewards we managed to site ourselves together in the corner of our camping field. Plans were then made for a visit to the Real Ale Marquee that evening.

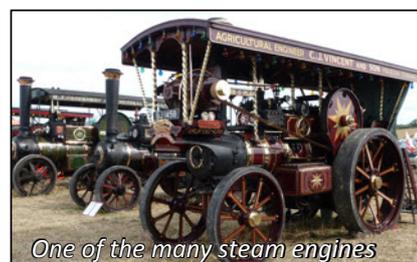


As we all gathered ready to walk to the Real Ale Marquee, Yvonne confessed that she had not brought any wellington boots with her and was therefore wearing her slip on clogs as they would be easy to clean. On reaching the deep stream of mud slurry that was the show site's main perimeter road Yvonne decided to walk bare foot rather than lose her clogs claiming the mud would be beneficial for her feet.

The following two show days saw a mix of weather conditions and at times the ground started drying to produce mud with the consistency of contact adhesive and only too ready to catch the unwary off balance or retain their footwear. Sadly the conditions in the excellent recreation of the WW1 trenches that were part of the centre piece WW1 commemorative exhibits were out done by the conditions in the more heavily trafficked areas of the showground. However the general consensus was that despite the challenges we had faced it had been worth camping at the show for the unique experience that is the Great Dorset Steam Fair.

Oh and by the way, as well as the mud we had seen a great many exhibits from steam engines of all types and sizes, heavy horses, a sheep show, working dogs, country crafts, historic vehicles of all types, a tractor pulling contest, right down to awnings full of many weird and wonderful collections such as Optrex eyebaths, nut crackers and petrol cans!

Attendees: Alan & Marilyn Major, Alan & Jean Brill, Julia Wright, Nick & Yvonne Mawby, Pete & Di Johnson, Andy & Liz Bawn, Tony & Chrissie Gunbrill, Andrew Shewan & Penny McCallig.



A FAVOURITE CAMPSITE

By Pat & Ian Johnson

We dare not tell you how long we have been going to one of our favourite campsites in the Pays Basque but it is many years....! We first went when our children were very small (didn't own a Murvi then ...) and now they are both married but still turn up there occasionally to rekindle happy memories.

It's on the Atlantic coast near Biarritz and we have a pitch overlooking the ocean, where we are lulled to sleep by the sound of the waves. It is a surfing and body boarding area – a bit too strenuous an activity for us now – but still a lovely sandy beach to walk along and at low tide plenty of rock pools to explore and with little pools for children to play in and build castles. It can be very wild at times though and as the Pyrenees are so close it has its own micro climate and there is always a chance of a fierce storm for added interest.

We always carry a motor trail bike on the back of our Murvi motorhome which enables us to get about freely with no parking problems. Although we have been going for years we always manage find new interests and places to explore. We love the markets, villages, walks and the local restaurants as well as relaxing watching the beach activities and the waves.

Our journeys to and from this location are a delight as we can meander slowly staying overnight on small sites or with French Passion – now that sounds a real treat – maybe parked up in the grounds of an auberge or many pitches are in vineyards amongst the vines or on small farms and of course there's always a chance to sample the goods....! Can't wait for the next trip

As newcomers to Murvi Owners Club meets we were fascinated to see what happened when a pile of eccentrics who had bought Murvis got together. We weren't disappointed.

Kath, as a retired (!) university lecturer, was teaching for the three days of the Dulverton pre-meet on the edge of Exmoor. Our Morello XL was due its first annual habitation check so Roy took the opportunity to go solo to Dulverton and spend a morning at Murvi in Ivybridge as part of his trip.

A caravan tigger friend had spoken highly of the site and surrounding area and she wasn't wrong. Dulverton is a charming and attractive village with a fully stocked Co-op, fine baker and butcher, and a very welcoming pub nearby. The campsite is in the grounds of Exmoor House, the headquarters of Exmoor National Park. The Murvi group was all together arranged in a sort of circle, more like a wagon train expecting an Indian attack than your normal linear camping pitches.



As habitués of GB Privilege we'd heard rumours of a Murvi owner called Julia, and, sure enough, Roy had barely hooked-up when an attractive woman with a pleasant Cornish burr came and introduced herself – it was the legendary Julia Wright. She welcomed Roy and asked if he would be joining the party for drinks and dinner at the Bridge Inn. These turned out to be truly friendly occasions and the food and local beer was a revelation.

Roy had intended doing the twelve mile round hike to Tarr Steps but wiser heads prevailed. A minibus taxi was hired to take us to Tarr Steps and we walked the six miles back. Arriving at the pub at Tarr Steps for lunch at 11:30 with more than a dozen walkers caused a minor crisis but the kitchen showed splendid flexibility and initiative. Roy understood that Roger Pepper's presence guaranteed us fine, sunny weather, and so it proved. A few sharp hills and flooded streams didn't detract from a delightful walk along the Exe valley. Arriving back on site, our XL caused some good-natured humour: 'That's the model with the walk-in wardrobe, isn't it?' 'If it's misty, can you see the fridge from the driver's seat' 'More storage means more junk.' The other source of amusement was that only two Murvis have been fitted with the VB-Full Air levelling and suspension system, ours and the Majors'. Both were at Dulverton and a flatter site you will not find anywhere. What a waste!

Kath joined Roy, courtesy of Network Rail, and we went to the meet at Hidden Valley campsite, near Ilfracombe where we were joined by more than 30 Murvis. Facilities were top notch and the owners were friendly and accommodating, though wandering into the Gents and hearing loud female conversation was a little disconcerting until you realised that Heart FM was being played through speakers.

On Saturday evening we had an excellent meal together in the campsite restaurant and Roger had printed out what we had ordered so there was no argument. We did our best to drink the bar dry – the draught lagers were soon exhausted and cans had to be substituted. The final evening again saw most of us join together for another excellent meal in the restaurant and an auction of beautifully turned wood pieces made by member Nic Nicholls in aid of Children in Need.



There was a walk organised each day and the bus stop at the site entrance was fully exploited. Roger was with us on all the walks so, again, the sunshine was sub-tropical (but not the temperature). Day 1 was a limbering up of about six miles in the vicinity of Croyde Bay. Huge breakers had brought out the surfers and the walk over the cliff tops was exhilarating. Roger hasn't yet managed to tame the wind, and the walk to the end of Baggy Point in a raging gale was not for the faint-hearted or sufferers from vertigo. Lundy was just visible in the distance, seemingly getting the rain that Roger had frightened away.

Day 2 we took a long bus journey to Westward Ho! and another six mile walk. Again the wind was fresh and the surfers were out but this time we had clear views of Lundy Island, some twenty miles away, and Hartland Point. Roger worked his charm on a rather grumpy pub owner who allowed us to eat our sandwiches in a lovely garden area if we purchased drinks and crisps. The final part of the walk was along a dismantled railway on the cliff tops and was laughably easy and very popular with other less energetic visitors. Obviously not Murvi owners, then.

Day 3 was Adrian's walk and the one we were working up to. However Roger's weather magic doesn't work underfoot! We had an eight-mile squidge through freshly minted Devon mud, not deep but at times wonderfully slippery, especially on the steep bits. Roger worked his charm on the landlord at a pub in Berrynarbor with a lovely garden and plenty of tables and chairs for us all. The village is notable for the varied and amusing Bill and Ben sculptures spread around.



We lead busy lives, despite our retirements, and it isn't always easy to get away, but our experience of these two very friendly meets was wholly enjoyable and we hope to get to more before long.

It doesn't take much to make me happy. Give me a few butterflies and birds to look at, maybe some dragonflies and bees, and I'm in my element. Of course, all this has to take place somewhere warm and sunny and preferably on a campsite which is not just any old campsite, whilst spending relaxing days of leisure in Audrey, our Morello.

In September in the Dordogne this state of relative bliss was achieved. Having travelled south via a couple of sites in the Loire region we revisited the aptly named Camping Le Paradis, a beautiful sub-tropical garden of a campsite with large shaded pitches and immaculate facilities. Leaving behind the mosquitoes which had feasted on my blood at Loches, we didn't encounter any at Le Paradis, in spite of its direct access to the River Vézère, which flows alongside the site. Here I was able to indulge in close up viewing of shiny violet-black carpenter bees as they busied themselves amongst the colourful flowerbeds on site. These solitary bees are alarmingly large and make a loud buzz as they swiftly fly between flowers, seeking out pollen. One of the many I saw was smothered in it. They rarely sting and nest in dead wood, hence the name. In bee-spotting mode, I watched a red tailed bumble bee, also busy with pollen. The black and yellow furry stripes on its abdomen made it look as if it was wearing a frilly ra-ra skirt.



Carpenter bee in pollen



Bee in a Ra-Ra skirt

Lush vegetation abounds on site and we came across a hibiscus plant bearing giant flowers the size of a dinner plate. In addition to the many different kinds of bees, the flowerbeds at Le Paradis are visited by hummingbird hawk moths, fascinating day-flying moths which hover as they collect pollen through a long proboscis. They resemble real humming birds, have beige furry bodies and black and white striped rear ends. They're a delight to watch but are difficult to photograph as they move so fast. Time can stand still just observing these insects go about their daily life.



Adonis Blue

There were plenty of butterflies to keep me happy as I walked along by the Vézère with views of the historic Roque Saint-Christophe on the opposite bank. This large prehistoric dwelling has numerous rock shelters on five levels, which have been hollowed out from the limestone cliffs. Earliest traces of occupation go back 50,000 years. Having been to this ancient site on a previous visit, it was the butterflies which demanded my attention this time. Adonis blues darted across the nearby fields, in and out of the long grasses, and sometimes visited our pitch. They look like bright jewels in the sunshine. Meadow browns were everywhere, mostly where it was sunny, whilst the speckled wood butterflies preferred the shaded areas along by the river. I spotted a few bright yellow cleopatras too; one visited our pitch, sending me lurching

for my butterfly ID book to make sure I was seeing what I thought I was!

The piece de résistance for me was spotting a lesser purple emperor butterfly feasting on horse dung in a field not far from the campsite's community herb and berry garden (all are welcome to take a small helping to enhance dishes being rustled up by campers). Seeing this large and rather beautiful butterfly as it tucked into what might be considered a disgusting meal, the interconnectedness of the web of life was demonstrated while its wings reflected a purple sheen like shot silk.



Purple Emperor on dung



Shield Bug

One morning, when we rolled the blind back over the Heki, a shield bug was sitting dead centre on it, sunning itself. I couldn't resist taking a photo of its underside. And then, of course, there was the snake. Walking along by the river bank one day, I'd stepped off the path to get a better view of the water as it flowed over some reeds.

"Why are you standing next to that snake?" asked Barry. Executing a backwards leap that would have had a ballet master shouting "Bravo!" I managed to take in the lazily curled length (50-80cm according to my research) of this smooth snake (rapidly researched when we got back to the van together with its status – non-poisonous), before it quickly slithered into the nearby undergrowth. No photo of this I'm afraid; I was as busy getting out of its way as it was getting out of mine!

We did tear ourselves away from the flora and fauna to go to Sarlat, well worth a visit, but decided to give the Lascaux 2 caves in Montignac a miss this time around. The lure of the leisure time in the sun was just too strong to be ignored!

We stayed at : Campsite Le Paradis (5 star, certified EU Ecolabel site), La Rebeyrolle, F-2490 St-Léon-sur-Vézère, Dordogne, France - www.le-paradis.fr



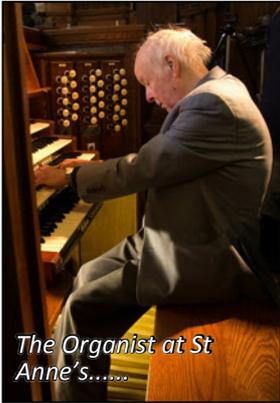
Roque St Christophe



On the Metro

Well, who'd have thought Manchester City centre could be so interesting. I lived there for 8 years as a nurse but never knew anything of what our guide, the amazing Steve Little, told us over the three days we experienced with him in September (mind you, as an 18 year old I don't think the history and architecture of my location was a top priority.)

The locals looked on as if aliens had landed at our nine vans parked in The Griffin pub car park in Didsbury. It turned out to be a great location, not just because of its proximity to the pub, but only 5 minutes walk to the metro which whisked us into the city centre in no time.



The Organist at St Anne's.....

I'm not going to repeat all the fascinating info Steve gave us but just to say what a fab 3 days it was (despite the rather persistent downpours) and the biggest thanks to Steve for all the organising he did from arranging lunch for us in The Portico Library and in The Teacup restaurant in Ancoats and for trying his best to get us up to the first floor of the Town Hall.

As a church organist (reluctant) myself, a highlight was going into St Anne's church just at the end of an organ recital and having the organist give us a talk on the building of the organ with a little demonstration of the sounds it could make. Just wish we'd been there for the recital. (Editor's note: It turned out that Peter and Elaine who were with us recognised the organist as he had played at their wedding)



The Portico Library

So where next?



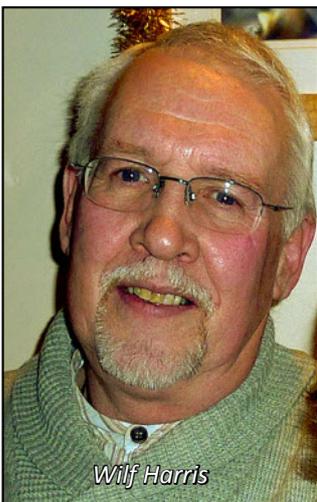
The Assembled Group



Castlefield Basin

WILF HARRIS - OBITUARY

By Bob & Maggie Eley



Wilf Harris

It is with sadness we report the death of Wilf Harris at the age of sixty-seven in October 2014 after a brave and strong fight against cancer. We offer our condolences to his wife, Debbie, and son and daughter, Noel and Zoe.

Although Wilf and Debbie were new to campervanning, they were certainly not new to camping. When Wilf retired, they took the brave step of selling their house and "taking to the road". They bought a caravan and toured for five years before Wilf's cancer was detected. They then put down roots in Devon hoping against hope that Wilf could be cured and they would have a base to come back to.

Wilf and Debbie bought their Murvi Morello (2006 model) approximately two years ago and straight away joined the Murvi Owners Club. Because they live fairly near us in Devon, we got to know them and were able to pass on a few Murvi tips as well as enjoying their company. Because of Wilf's illness they have not been able to come to many of the Club meetings. The first one they attended was at Setthorns in the New Forest in February 2013 when only about half a dozen vans turned up. The weather had previously been atrocious but we were blessed with sunshine and fine weather for that meeting. Wilf and Debbie (and Frank their large long haired four legged companion) were not as blessed as the rest of us as their domestic boiler leaked on the first day. Many pairs of hands and knowledgeable brains were soon on the case to help out. They then attended the AGM at Peachley Touring Caravan Park, Lower Broadheath, near Worcester in March 2013 – the year it snowed and turned icy the day after the first arrivals. They have not been able to attend any Club meetings since then due to Wilf's illness, which he bore bravely and without losing his mischievous sense of humour.

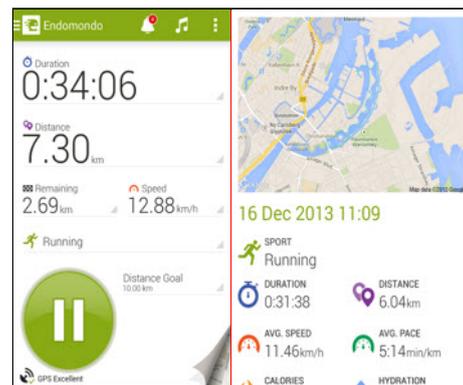
SMARTPHONE APPS - you may find these ones useful

Endomondo - Available for iOS and Android.

Endomondo is one of the many fitness tracking apps available for smartphones which can be used to track your achievements. It can be configured to monitor many different activities and additional tracking services are available from a companion website for a fee. While tracking a favourite Murvi rally activity of walking it accumulates distance, pace, ascent, descent, calories, elapsed time and many other statistics. A selection of these statistics can be relayed to a paired smartwatch and if a heart rate monitor is available cardiac statistics can be captured too.

We were recently introduced to this app at the Hidden Valley Rally and have installed it on both our phones (iOS and Android) plus a Pebble watch. Like many apps it needs a little investment in time to familiarise yourself with its capabilities and options to get the best out of it. At the end of a walk it is great to see the route plotted on a downloaded map and look through the additional statistics available in addition to the standard distance covered. So far very happy with it and it does not seem to be too much of a battery hog.

• Contributed by Alan and Marilyn Major •



Screenshots of the Endomondo phone app

[Editor's note:- I have used Endomondo for a couple of years and use it for multiple activities. It's FREE and can be set for hiking, running, cycling and a host of other sports, even dancing! The other good thing is that it links to the Endomondo website where you can login and view details of all your activities including a map of exactly where you have been.]

Red Cross First Aid - Available for iOS and Android.

Ironically this is an app I hope I never have to use! But if I'm ever landed in that nerve-racking situation where I'm the one who has to administer first aid, then help is at hand in the form of this phone app. It's an invaluable prompt of what to do in a wide range of emergency situations, whether it be bleeding, broken bones, heart attack or a simple sprain. It offers answers to common questions which might arise when you are treating somebody who has suffered an injury and can help to reassure even an experienced first aider that they are doing the right thing.

• Contributed by Adrian Sumption •



If you have a favourite smartphone app that you think may be of interest to other members then why not let me know about it for the next newsletter?

CHRISTMAS LUNCH WITH THE MURVI CLUB

By Contributor



This year a couple of groups of members have met up with fellow members to share a celebratory Christmas lunch. What nicer way of celebrating could there be than being amongst like minded friends and eating and drinking together - something we seem to do particularly well as a club! One group - shall we call it the 'South-West Chapter' - met at Woodbury Park, whilst the 'Southern Chapter' met at the Red Lion in Chalton near Petersfield.



Julia writes: *Twenty-two Murvi Members had an excellent Christmas lunch at the Woodbury Park Golf Club near Exeter. We had beautiful views from our function room and the food proved to be excellent. I have no doubt that this will become an annual event. Thanks once again to all who came to the lunch and to John Day for his help with organising.*

Lunch at the Red Lion in Chalton was a more select affair with eleven of us enjoying a delightful meal together. The get-together was organised by Martin and Penny Sweet, for which many thanks, and it was especially nice to meet up with Nick and Audrey Goulden again who sadly are no longer Murvi owners.

Hopefully this will become a tradition to be taken up by other groups around the country. Watch this space!



*As ever, it was a very sociable affair**Buckler's Hard Village*

Our Meet at [Buckler's Hard](#) in September was blessed with excellent weather and twenty-eight vans joined us there. The campsite is only bookable by organised groups like ours and is understandably popular because of its ideal location right next to the fascinating historic village of Buckler's Hard.

Not surprisingly much time was spent relaxing and chatting, (*and eating and drinking! Ed.) probably because the weather was so conducive. Despite the undoubted attraction of spending lazy days socialising at our vans we did nonetheless manage to stir ourselves to take a boat trip down the Beaulieu River. With 47 of us signed up for the trip, we were able to book a boat to ourselves so we didn't have to expose members of the general public to the inevitable Murvi banter. The trip took us past a host of moored luxury yachts and out towards the estuary with the inevitable singsong commentary from the the boat's crew.

On an even more energetic day a group of us cycled to Lymington, a honeypot for yachties and for day trippers like us. Lymington is a picturesque and lively old town boasting a host of welcoming pubs and shops and a thriving Saturday market. We deliberately chose to go there on a Saturday as we knew the market would be there so that those with a market addiction were able to indulge themselves, whilst others enjoyed wandering round the quayside and the rest of the historic town. We all got together again for lunch at the Bosun's Chair, a friendly pub in a quiet backstreet serving Pieminster Pies, before setting off back to the campsite at Buckler's Hard. For the most part our route followed the Solent Way which made for very quiet, safe and enjoyable cycling taking us past the huge [ancient tithe barn](#) at St. Leonard's Grange. This barn is reputed to have been one of the largest barns in Europe being 300 feet long and over 50 ft wide..

Keen to have yet more exercise some of us cycled (others let the side down and took a lift from generous Murvi owners) to the Turfcutters at East Boldre for lunch. It was great to find a traditional pub with good food and a very welcoming landlord. They had even said they would be happy for the odd van to overnight in their car park round the back of the pub, a great location right on the edge of the New Forest.

There was plenty of opportunity to take in the local attractions, including Beaulieu village and motor museum and the maritime museum at Buckler's Hard. We were there at the same time as the Beaulieu car jumble, a huge event which attracts people from all over Europe (and probably further afield), so some of the car junkies among us were able to spend their time sifting through the mountains of obscure car parts.

*The Boat Trip**Buckler's Hard from the river***A CHILD'S BUNK BED****By Dick Constable***The bunk bed in place across the front seats*

I made a single Child's bunk across the front seats. Ours is a '99 Morello (on a Fiat). It's made from 2 ally kayak paddle shafts, some ally angle and nuts bolts and pop rivets. The fabric is a HD nylon, hemmed with 2 sewn pockets for the poles. It all lives under the bed when not needed and is easy to assemble.