

The MURVI Club Newsletter

Summer 2022



A Murvi in the Pyrenees
(See Page 4)

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Editorial

In moving to four editions a year it is perhaps not unexpected this is a thinner edition than normal but I hope that makes it a more manageable read! It's the usual mixture of trips and tips but starts off with a description by Alan Major of the new Event Booking Form. Alan will welcome feedback from anyone who uses it.

Forms and Yet More Forms...

Alan Major

Anyone attending an event within the last 12 months for which the Club has collected the rally fees will have encountered an Event Booking Form. This has been introduced to streamline the process of collating attendee details and tracking the collection of rally fees.

Working from a series of emails is potentially error prone and unless both the Organiser and Treasurer are copied in on all emails leads to confusion. By completing the Event Booking Form the attendees are providing their details in a standard format which can be automatically collated into a single spreadsheet on which both the Organiser and Treasurer can collaborate.

This combination of Event Booking Form and spreadsheet can be used entirely within a browser so needs no special software which means it is easily used on any device, from anywhere, by anyone involved in the organisation of an event. So if anyone has been tempted to organise an event but has been deterred by the thought of the administration associated with tracking attendees and payments then that is no longer an impediment.

As the Club learns from this initial experience it seeks to improve the process for everyone's benefit. One such change will be to the reference used for payments. For some members the need to use a specific reference for each event requires them to setup new payee details rather than amend existing ones, so going forward a standard individual reference will be used for all future payments.

There is one aspect of the process which continues to challenge the Club and that is ensuring that its emails arrive in their intended recipient's inbox. Single emails sent to multiple recipients are easily sent but are the most likely not to arrive so the Club is using a Google based system which includes extensive security protection to mitigate the workload associated with the sending of individual emails to single recipients. This means that these emails have to be sent through a Google account and will come from a Gmail address. Members are therefore advised to check that their email systems have not been inadvertently set to treat Club email, and specifically email from murviclubevents@gmail.com and murviclubtreasurer@gmail.com as spam.

During this initial period a couple of questions have frequently arisen and are answered here:

Q. Why do I have to provide the same details for each event, surely the Club has them already?

A. Asking you to provide them for each event ensures that they are current for the event and avoids the need to require the login that would be required for data protection reasons if the form was to be populated with details from the Club's database.

Q. Why do I see details of a Google account at the top of the form?

A. Sadly this is a 'feature' of Google Forms and cannot be turned off. (The Club hopes you can agree that it is a small price to pay for the convenience gained).

If you wish to make any comments on your experience with the booking system please submit them to murviclubevents@gmail.com.

All Year Touring

Keith and Lyn Ross

I'm curious to see if we can be away in our Morocco every month of this year and so far, we're on target. Murvi meets starting in January kept us going until April, then we did our own thing for May and early June. Looking ahead we have trips in the pipeline up to and including November, apart from October.

Early on we decided to forgo any trips abroad for this year, despite being keen to visit France again. Ferries were booked in 2020 for Brittany and they've been deferred ever since. They're valid to summer 2023, so here's hoping we can get back next year.

Like many others we have wanted to explore Scotland and this year we managed our first foray north of the border. When en-route our preference is to avoid camp sites as to us they seem expensive for an overnight stopover, instead we make good use of our BritStop membership "recovering" the annual cost in the first 2 nights.

From our home in Southend on Sea, Essex we gently made our way along the A1, taking the opportunity to visit the amazing Beamish Museum in County Durham where we spent a very interesting day (www.beamish.org.uk). Following this we ambled across country following Hadrian's Wall as closely as possible, with stops at the main sights. Having crossed to the west side we used

the M6/M74 towards Glasgow. On this section we used a Brit Stop at Ledhills (not far north of Moffat), apparently the highest pub in Scotland. From here we discovered the Crawick Multiverse, near Sanquhar. This is a huge land sculpture, think of a modern day take on Stonehenge - from reclaimed mining grounds, the vision of Charles Jencks (www.multiverse.co.uk). The drive over,



along, up and down from Ledhills was an introduction to the narrow hilly roads to come later in our trip – we discovered a wild camp area that is full of understated raw nature in a lovely valley, this place is the Mennoch Pass on the B797 – even a brief picnic stop is tranquil (in late April), albeit I understand from the locals that it becomes very busy in the high season.

We continued north heading for the Loch Lomond and Trossachs parks where our first campsite was an ex-Camping in the Forest site at Cashel on the east shore of Loch Lomond, a beautiful location next to the waters edge and the West Highland Way passes by, so some interesting walking available. Having read about the Forest Drive, north of Aberfoyle, we decided this was a good opportunity to try some more wild camping courtesy of a £7 per night permit (next page). Each permit gives use of an isolated single ‘pitch’ in the forest and sometimes beside one of the numerous lochs – totally quiet at night with no light pollution.

Having spent a week in the Loch Lomond/Trossachs area we started the move west with the intention of seeing the Isle of Mull. We deliberately chose the scenic route including a long climb along the A83 in Glen Croe (note: not Glen Coe) to a viewpoint called “Rest and Be Thankful” and for those using ancient means of transport it must have been a welcome rest place. After this we paused at Inveraray with a stroll around the castle, the base of the Clan Campbell. Eventually we reached the coast north of Oban at Benderloch and spent 4 nights at a small campsite again beside the loch with peaceful surroundings. We hadn’t intended to stay that long but the weather became somewhat wet, so we delayed the crossing to Mull.

Finally we took the plunge and used CalMac to ferry us from Oban to Craignure on Mull. The weather was lovely, and we again took the slow road this time to Tobermory, by using the loop

clockwise around the upper part of the island from Salen along the B8035 and B8073 via Killechronan, past the small isle of Ulva, Killinian, Dervaig to Tobermory. This was about 40 miles, and I decided the 30mph speed signs had been positioned as a challenge to see if anyone could get up to that speed – the road was just wide enough to fit the Murvi on the tarmac with a few inches to spare each side, thankfully there are many passing places along the hilly, twisty road - eyes on the road was a definite requirement, stopping to admire the many views. We encountered some long-horned Highland Cattle walking along the road, and they (eventually) were graceful enough to move over to allow us to pass alongside them. 40 miles took about 4 hours, a very picturesque worthwhile journey, but demanding driving.

Wet weather returned so we cut short the stay on Mull and headed via another slow route back to the mainland towards Fort William. This time we used the “turn up and go” short ferry from Fishnish to Lochaline then over more remote glens heading for the shortest ferry at Corran. We had intended to use the Brit Stop beside the ferry, but it was full so instead by luck we overnighed at Strontian. If that word sounds familiar its because the element of Strontium was first found there in 1787. Another beautiful location with the best coffee shop so far at Ariundle.

Please print this permit or save to your mobile device



**LOCH LOMOND
INVERUGLAS**

PERMIT NUMBER
5131819



START DATE
25 May 2022

END DATE
26 May 2022

NAME
Mr Keith M Ross

Inveruglas



KEY

- Permit Area Boundary
- *** Paths
- A Camping Permit Area
- M Motorhome Permit Area
- C Canteen
- T Toilets
- P Car Parking

Sitting within a wooded area on the banks of Loch Lomond with great views across the loch to Ben Lomond, this permit area is part of a busy destination for visitors, coaches and loch cruises. There are toilets that are open during the day (March to October) and the Scottish Scenic Routes viewpoint, 'An CeannMòr' - an 8m high wooden pyramid structure that provides elevated panoramic views over Loch Lomond. There is also a permit area for camping.

To find the motorhome permit area, when you go into the main entrance for Inveruglas take the immediate left into the Long Stay Car Park and then turn right into the area with four designated motorhome bays, marked with small signs.

We recommend that you print and display your permit in your windscreen upon arrival.

Getting there: The site is accessed directly off the A82, opposite the Loch Sloy power station.
Grid reference: NN323099
View in Google maps: <https://goo.gl/pvFZe3>
Grade & terrain: The parking bays are a combination of tarmac and loose aggregate.
Drinking water available: No.
Fishing permit information: Available at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/angling

Toilets nearby: Yes. They are open 9am – 5pm (1 March – 31 October) and closed 1 November – 28 February. Please note that motorhome chemical toilets can't be emptied at Inveruglas.
Litter: Keep the permit area tidy and take all your litter, rubbish and food waste away and put it in a litter bin or recycling point. Leaving litter is an offence and could lead to a fine of up to £200.
Fires: Wherever possible use a stove or fire bowl. If you have an open fire keep it small, on a surface that can't be easily damaged, under control, supervised and bring your own wood, or other kindling. Place Portable BBQs on a surface that can't burn. Make sure any fire and/or BBQs are extinguished when you leave and remove all traces.
Further information: <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/needtoknow>

The Corran ferry took us to the posh campsite at Bunree another place well sited to give the best views. Whilst there we used the Corran ferry again, free as foot passengers to visit the pub, which turned out be closed during the day!! Never mind, Google maps showed a micro-brewery a few minutes' walk alongside the loch at Ardgour, lovely beer brewed on site and great bacon butties followed by homemade cake an excellent outing – that is until the rain suddenly came down with a vengeance. Luckily, we were under a large canopy so sat back and ordered more beer until the rain eased off. By good chance on the other side of the loch at Bunree camp only a few spots of rain fell so the mass of washing we had on the rotary airer was OK.

Our usual travel plans require to some extent a make it up as we move along process, no hard and fast plans, just see how the weather was first - good idea but the weather was damp quite a lot of the time. So the Isle of Skye entered the grand plan and just to be different we eschewed the ferry from Mallaig and took the overland route via the bridge at the Kyle of Lochalsh at which point although dry was extremely windy high up on the bridge. We had read about a highly rated remote camp at Glenbrittle (below), so obviously that seemed the place for us - this time at the end of a 7

mile dead end road, another narrow surface requiring good road manners from drivers in both directions, which fortunately was the norm. The drive was worth it as the camp was idyllic, but came

with a large culture shock – no mobile signal, no wifi , no internet, no Google searches - just peace and quiet. Our 1-night plan turned into 3 nights including my 75th birthday. Eventually we decided we should re-enter the world and visit more of Skye and took in another clan HQ, this time at Dunvegan Castle the home of the MacLeods. We ended our short trip to Skye with 2 nights wild camping then the ferry to Mallaig.

The drive to Fort William completed a 400 mile circle taking in yet more great scenery and is the route of the steam train The Jacobite. For those thinking of using this iconic train beware the fare this year is over £50 return each – a less expensive option is to use the standard BR train at about £12. At Arisaig the beaches are white soft sand. We headed to Glen Coe staying at the CCC campsite for 2 nights before beginning the long journey back home via relatives in Yorkshire and a meet with our grandchildren and family in Norfolk for the Jubilee weekend.

A round trip of 1800 miles and 30 nights.

Now we are off to Murvi meets at both Crickhowel and Wareham for our June/July “ration”.



A Journey to the Source of the Garonne

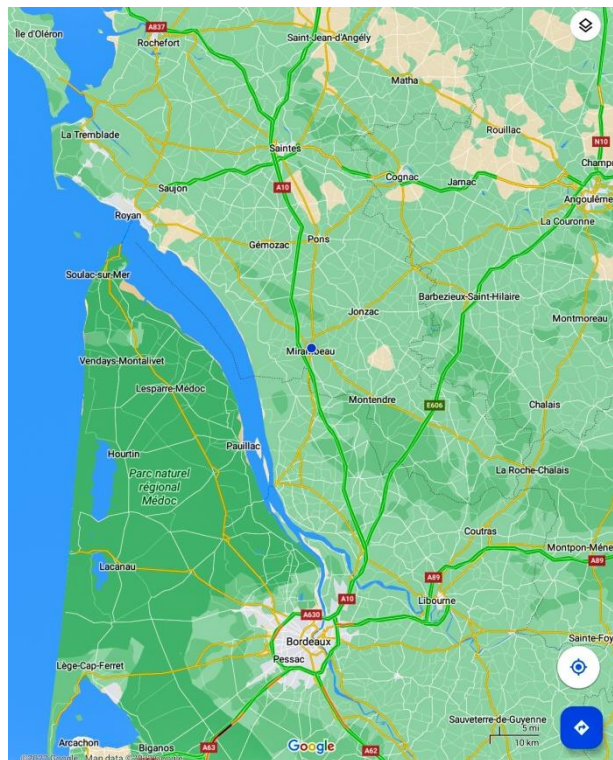
John Laidler

We have had several trips through France in our Murvi Morocco where for at least part of the trip we have followed one of the major rivers. Our first took us from the mouth of the Loire to its source in the Massif Central. The Loire is of course a very popular destination and deservedly so as there is much to see along its banks. Another year we followed the Lot downstream. I must confess we didn't start exactly from its source which is a marshy area reached by a longish walk but the river was narrow enough at the point where we started that you could step over it without jumping. More recently we followed the Meuse in north eastern France for a large part of its length. There were some interesting stretches but it lacked the pretty villages you find along the Loire and Lot. This year we followed the Garonne from sea to source and this account is a record of our journey.

We started, as we almost inevitably do, from Roscoff in Brittany after taking the overnight ferry from Plymouth. Our choice of ferry route is largely driven by the Plymouth ferry terminal being about a fifteen minutes' drive from our home!

Our ferry ticket was originally booked for March 2020 but fortunately it was a flexible ticket and I was able to defer the sailing two years. The only change to previous crossings was we needed an Animal Health Certificate for our dog, which cost £150 from our vet. Ideally, we need to get an EU pet passport for him but the French have tightened up their rules and visitors like us cannot now get one. However, Spanish vets are more helpful I have heard so at some point we need to return to Spain and find a helpful vet. With an EU passport the AHC is not required.

We spent about two weeks in Brittany, an area we know quite well and love, and this was a useful period to simply get back into the swing of European touring. But the draw south was impossible to resist and we didn't try to resist too hard as it got much warmer the further south we went. Brittany is a fascinating place but it does get roughly the same sort of weather as we experience in the south west of England.



Our first challenge was to find the mouth of the Garonne. This isn't as simple as it may seem. A little north of Bordeaux the Dordogne and the Garonne join before flowing into the Atlantic at Royan. But this is not the mouth of the Garonne as the combined rivers are called the Gironde. For completeness we did stay a night at Royan and saw the mouth of the Gironde but to find where the Dordogne and the Garonne met we followed a route called the Corniche de la Gironde which was an interesting drive, following the right bank of the Gironde south. The Michelin road atlas shows a

view point overlooking the confluence but it is a small scale map and we weren't exactly sure where it was but we finally stumbled on it after almost giving up. This was the view. We were now deep in wine country as you can see in the foreground.

The spit of land between the two rivers is full of oil storage tanks. The mouth of the Garonne is the other side of them. The Dordogne is nearest to the camera.



The Garonne flows through Toulouse so from Bordeaux our direction was south east. Our journey in that direction was interrupted by a short detour up the River Lot to allow me to operate my radio from the summit of a hill in pursuit of my

interest in Summits On The Air (SOTA) but I will spare you an account of this activity!

Our first night beside the Garonne was on an aire at Saint Nicolas de la Grave opposite where the Lot flows into it. This was one of the Camping Car Parks (CCP) aires which are becoming very numerous now in France. They are run by a commercial company and entry is through an automated barrier system. An increasing number of former municipal campsites and aires are being added every year as towns and villages hand over the management of them to the CCP organisation. Inevitably the price goes up but CCP often upgrade them adding electric points where none might have existed before. We found the electricity particularly useful on this trip as our leisure batteries are coming to the end of their life and will need replacing soon.

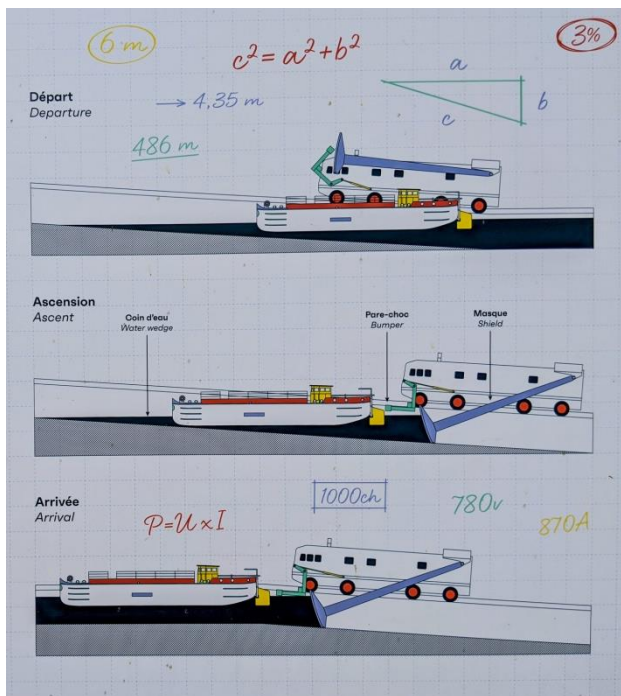
The next night saw us a little closer to Toulouse at Montech and beside the Canal Latéral à la Garonne.

This forms part of the Canal des Deux Mers which joins the Atlantic at Bordeaux to the Mediterranean near Narbonne. It is a popular cycling route and we saw several bikes loaded with panniers on the tow path.



A couple of kilometres from the aire is a strange construction. The Water Slope of Montech is fairly recent, it was inaugurated in 1973 and was

built as a novel alternative to a flight of locks. A notice explained how it worked.



Two large engines pushed a movable dam up a 486m long slope and on the wedge of water floated the barge. At the top of the slope were lock gates which opened to allow the barge to move out into the canal. The engines are now part of a static display and a small museum in a

former barge. They looked to me as if they had escaped from one of Tintin's adventures. The colours are of course not original and seem to come from a closed paper mill, where the tourist office now is, which produced at one time brightly coloured paper.

The next day we drove through Toulouse. It was late morning and there was a lot of traffic but no hold-ups on our way to Rieux Volvestre south west of Toulouse and of course another CCP aire next to the Garonne. It was a longish walk from the aire to Rieux Volvestre but it was worth the effort as it has some interesting old buildings, especially the church. It was warm and Charlie would have loved a swim in the Arize river, which flows around three sides of the town but one look at its green waters scotched any thoughts of a swim. Agricultural run-off I suspect.

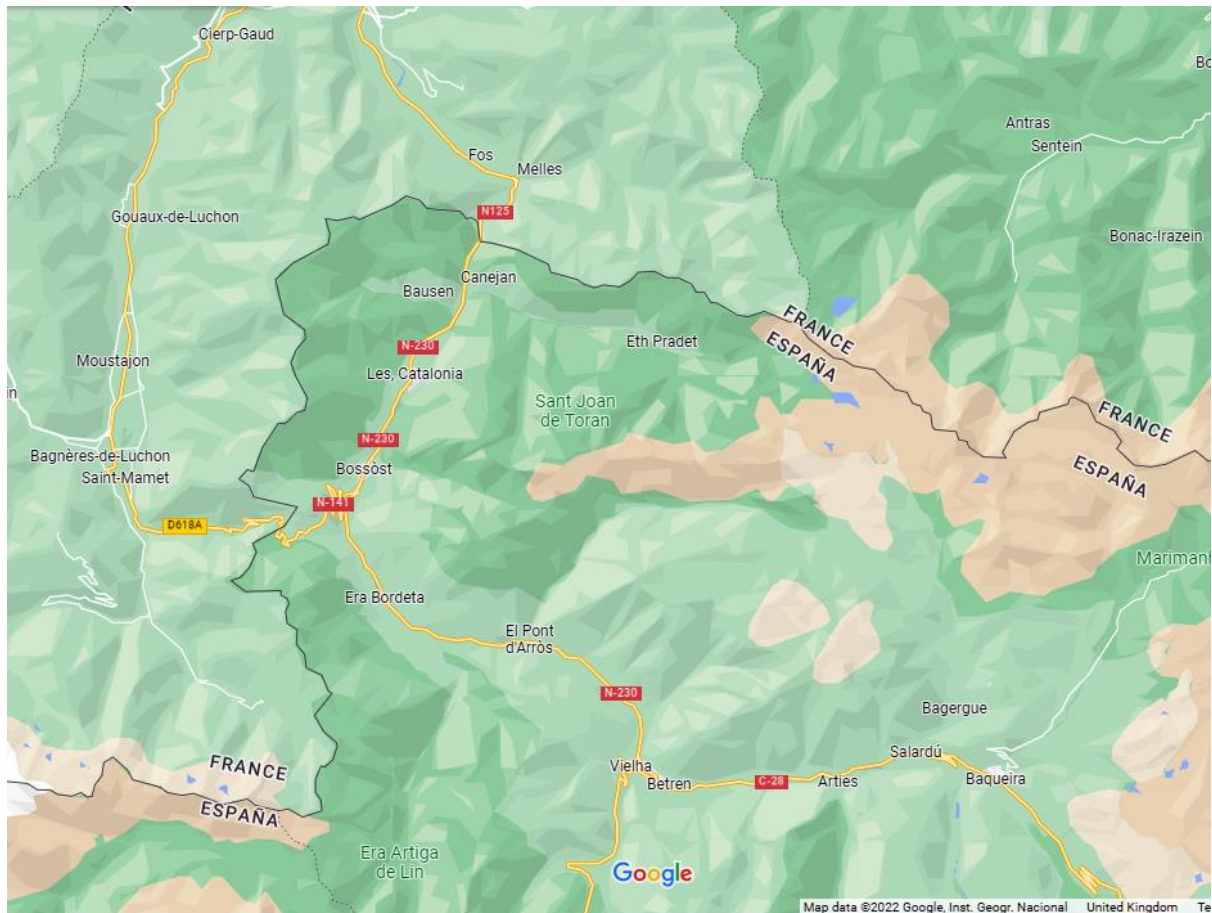


From Rieux Volvestre we drove for all of twenty minutes to Camping Le Moulin at Martes Tolosane. At the previous place the Garonne was very wide because there was a hydroelectric dam further downstream but here it finally began to look like a normal river.

The stumps sticking out of the water are the remains of an old wooden bridge.

Martes Tolosane looks impressive in aerial shots as the centre is made up of streets running in circles but I found it impossible to take any photographs which showed how the plan of the town looked at ground level as everything was so close together.

To reach the source of the Garonne we had to cross over into Spain.



From Melles at the top of the map we drove south to Vielha then east to Baqueira, which you might see near the bottom right of the map on the right. From here a very wriggly road goes north east. This is what the road looks like looking back after a long climb up from the valley floor.



After all the bends the road levels off and you can park near the source of the Garonne. Or at least



the most widely accepted source. There are at least two others which claim to be the source but this one has a fence around it and a sign so it will do



for me. Impressive this source isn't but the clear waters bubbling out of the spring are on their way to the Atlantic 529km further downstream.

So was it worth it? Before I set out I looked on-line and in our French guidebooks but could find very little about the Garonne. This warned me not to expect another Loire or Lot and in a sense I was not disappointed. There were some attractive stretches but the main interest for me was because it isn't a great tourist attraction we visited places a little off the beaten track which made this an enjoyable trip.

News From Murvi

John Laidler

I had a quick look at the Murvi website recently and was pleased to see they now have a new website which is a lot brighter than the old version. Speaking to Rex he said it has been live for about a year so for many this may come as old news! I also noticed for the first time there is a Gallery section where owners have posted photographs of their Murvis. I thought this was also new too but Rex informed me it was present in the old site although I can't remember every seeing it.

Chatting with Rex I asked if he had any plans for new models and he mentioned the Pimento XL is new. You can find this on their website but in summary it is perhaps unique in having the rear storage found in the 6.4m long Murvi XLs but in a vehicle a shade under 6m in length. MMM have done a review of this vehicle recently which can be found in the link below.

<https://youtu.be/bfHBCKwglrs>

Hints and Tips

Levelling Up?

Dick Constable

This is a simple gadget to show if you are level. It isn't fitted permanently and is kept in the glovebox when not required. The trick to making it was to find a piece of closed-cell foam which was just the right size to fit into the dashboard cup holder. I found a swimming noodle was a perfect fit and after ensuring the Murvi was parked level, by checking with the spirit level on a work surface, I cut the angle required on the upper surface so that the level read correctly when placed on it. This was done by simple trial and error but did not take long.



Murvi Club Newsletter – Autumn 2022 Edition

The Autumn edition of the Newsletter will be published at the end of September. Input from members is of course essential and the Editor would be very grateful for items to be submitted by 25th September, 2022. As usual Word format is preferred and because of the way I am putting the editions together now the images can be left embedded in the document. They do not need to be sent as separate files.

Recipes, trip reports, hints and tips or anything else you would like to share which is linked, even vaguely, to Murvis and their enjoyment will be very welcome. I would also like to put together an article about any storage tricks members may have devised. For example, in our Morocco I've found an excellent place for books and maps and I am sure there must be other ideas around. They may well be specific to a particular model but that doesn't matter. All ideas are welcome. Just a photograph and a few words of explanation will be enough.