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From the editors

Oct 2018

It's the end of the touring season for us here at Crossings. We finished the year on a high with two great tours out in September. Full tour reports on both are the main feature of this month's edition.

We have another recipe from Dave who is really surprising us with his range. Some people might think he only makes curries.

This month's motorhoming tips are all about awnings. Yes, awnings.

Finally, as Crossings continues to grow, we are on the look out for more tour leaders. See Page 8 for more details.

We hope we might see you at the NEC later in the month.

Bob & Wendy, Dave & Sue.

NEC Motorhome Show reminder

Now that the touring season is over the last major date in the diary for this year is the NEC Motorhome Show.

The show takes place from Tuesday 16th to Sunday 21st October and is the largest show of its kind in the UK.

All of our tour leaders will be in attendance at some point during the show so please get in touch if there is a particular couple you would like to meet.

We will be in Hall 9 on Stand 9.32. Please come along and say hello if you are visiting the show.

Oct 2018

Italian Lakes & Cities Tour Review

Dave and Sue set off for what was their final trip down to Italy before handing over the reins to Gary and Eleanor next year.

sound, which turned out to be an avalanche! This is another first for a Crossings tour. We hasten to add that this was a way off in the

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They have made a few changes to the tour since we started it five years ago including a couple of stop-overs in the Alps, which have proved really successful.

The tour starts with a couple of longer driving days firstly into the Champagne region and then into Burgundy where the group enjoyed a fantastic local meal of Beef Bourguignon (what else?) There was even time for a half day visit to the local Sunday market before heading off to the Alps.

The first major stop was under the mighty Mont Blanc with a two day stop-over, allowing a full day to explore the mountain. The group decided to stay together and all went by bus to pick up the Mont Blanc Cog Railway, which took them up to the Bionnassay Glazier.

After another great meal (some people might think that all we do is eat on these trips), there was an enormous cracking

distance so was there no danger to the group.

It was now time for the main event as the tour moved on, via the Mont Blanc tunnel, down the Aosta Valley and ultimately onto Lake Garda, where it stayed for six full days.

Our campsite on Garda is perfectly located, not only for the attractions around the lake, but also for the public transport to further afield places.

Two of the cities that proved most popular were Verona (the setting for Romeo and Juliet) and Venice. All of the group ventured into Venice at some point with some even staying in for the night and returning the next day.

Attractions around the lake include the steamer boats that zig-zag between the main towns. Sirmione is perhaps the pick of the bunch with its stunning castle and network of cobbled streets although there is plenty to go at on



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this stretch including Bardolino and Battaglia.

Obviously, the food is a key feature of an Italian holiday and our local restaurateur, ‘Jimmy Marco’ did not disappoint, providing a very popular three course meal for the group.

The weather was kind again this year with temperatures consistently into the high 20s and even the low 30s at some points.

All of this of course is great for the outdoor types who took to bikes and boats to explore the lake.

A group of eight decided to take a boat out and all went well until a local plonker on a jet ski decided it would be a good idea to whizz past them and fill the boat with water!

Dave has described the scene vividly as the intrepid eight frantically bailed the boat out with any receptacle that came

to hand. He assures me that they saw the funny side.

After six glorious days on the lake, it was time for the journey home, starting with a drive across the Brenner Pass for a night in the Austrian Alps, close to Innsbruck.

The next stretch is one of Dave and Sue’s favourites as the tour passes close to Augsburg with the option of visiting Dachau, The Eagle’s Nest, Garmisch Parten-Kirchen or The Swan Castle.

In fact, next year we have built in an extra day on the homeward leg to allow people a bit more time to explore some of the more interesting places we pass through en route.

The final stop was back into the Champagne region for an early night followed by an earlyish start to get back onto the ferry and home.

Oct 2018

Croatia & Slovenia Tour Review

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The tour started with three longish driving days as we picked a path down through Champagne country, into the Alsace region and then through Bavaria.

The pace then dropped considerably with a short hop across the Austrian border for a night under the stunning ‘Sleeping Giant’ mountain.



This was a great opportunity for a bit of local walking and cycling into the local Alpine village.

From here we had a superb drive into the Slovenian Alps where we then luxuriated for three nights around the beautiful Lake Bled.

Our guests undertook various strenuous activities ranging from full blown hikes up the Vintnar Gorge, walking and cycling around the lake, swimming in the lake and walking to the bar.

In fact we all had a very enjoyable evening in the campsite restaurant enjoying the local specialities (goulash,

dumplings etc) and in particular the local vino.

The tour changed pace again with a visit to one of our favourite cities, Ljubljana. You can get round this small capital in the day with a particular highlight being the castle and funicular railway.

Ljubljana is a brilliant place to eat out with dozens of restaurants lining the river and the cobbled streets around it.

We also enjoyed an excursion across to the Postjona Caves and Predjama Castle, two of Slovenia’s most popular attractions. The caves are like a stage set as you transverse around 5km of tunnels and caverns via underground train and then on foot. I still think that it’s all made out of polystyrene although it is quite convincing.

We also enjoyed the coach ride, which seemed to take some of our couples back to their school days. There may even have been some canoodling on the back seat although I was at the front so it would be hard to say.

Time for another change of pace as the tour moved onto the coast for what would be a six-day stretch of high temperatures and clear blue skies.

We stayed at two campsites on the coast in Croatia, one close to Pula and another down on Krk Island. Pula itself is rich in Roman history

...continued

and even boasts a complete amphitheatre. Around half the group ventured into the town with the rest simply enjoying the long stretch of Adriatic around 30 metres from where their motorhomes were parked.



We also enjoyed another excursion with a sunset boat trip for a spot of dolphin-spotting. These types of trips can sometimes be disappointing, mainly if you don't see any dolphins. As it happened, we saw dozens of them and were treated to a 45-minute display before a wonderful fish supper.

Thanks to Fred for taking over the skippering from the local 'Captain Birdseye' and to Tony for supplying the skipper's hat. Back ashore, the evening was rounded off with delicious ice-creams.

Our second seaside campsite was even closer to the beach and a very pretty old fishing village that has now become a friendly resort with a line of restaurants overlooking the sea.

We were treated to another excellent group meal here, which was an open buffet of local dishes all washed down with a generous supply of wine and beer.

There was a lot of swimming and general lazing around on this phase of the tour as we enjoyed the tail end of the season on the coast.

The pace changed again as we headed east towards the Plitvice National Park. The park is a mixture of azure and turquoise lakes, which you traverse via wooden boardwalks. As you walk round you are treated to a series of dramatic waterfalls.

We had a lovely day for our park visit with guests using the boats, the land train and their own feet to get around the park.

The following day it was time for our final stop in Croatia with a full day in the capital, Zagreb.

The city is less touristy than most European capitals though is still has a lot to keep the visitor interested. Our highlights are the St Mark's Church with its colourful tiled roof and the sprawling market.

Our group were very keen on eating out and most of us availed ourselves of the local eateries whenever we could.

There was an excellent impromptu evening on our stopover campsite in the Austrian Alps, another in the Vosges region of France and then final drinkies in the Champagne region.

It was zero degrees on our final morning in France, so Autumn had arrived just in time for us to catch the boat home.

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Coq au Van: the amusingly-titled recipe feature with ideas for meals that you can cook within the confines of a motorhome!

Ale Barley Lamb Shanks

Ingredients:

4 lamb shanks (roughly 400g each)

2 leeks

200g pearl barley

1 heaped tablespoon umami paste

500ml of your favourite ale

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 170 C/325 F/gas 3.
2. Place a large casserole pan on a high heat, and fry the lamb shanks in 1 tablespoon of olive oil, while you halve, wash and roughly chop the leeks.
3. Add them to the pan with the pearl barley, umami paste and a pinch of sea salt and black pepper, then stir well.
4. Pour in the ale and 1 tablespoon of red wine vinegar, then cover with 1.2 litres of water.
5. Cook in the oven for 2 hours 30 minutes, or until tender, then dish up.



Motorhoming and Travel Tips & Advice

“Though you get your awning out when its lovely and calm and hot, the weather can change”.

I knew last month’s toilet talk would be controversial! I am a big fan of the Elsan Blue but I should point out that in some campsites you have to use ‘green’ products, which are less harmful to the environment.

Onto this month’s topic. We have had a couple of ‘awning incidents’ this year so it has prompted me to put in a few tips about them.

1. The main tip here is that even though you get your awning out when it is lovely and calm and hot, the weather can change!
2. I simply never leave my awning up overnight. We have seen a couple of awnings damaged or completely destroyed by unexpected overnight storms.
3. Your awning is attached through the side of your motorhome wall so you also run the risk of damaging the van.

4. Get some lashing straps and secure them with large pegs. The little holes on the legs are not sufficient.
5. Consider a tensioning bar too if your awning is not fitted with one.
6. Put one end higher than the other so that if it does rain, the water will not ‘pool’. We have seen awnings broken with the weight of rain water.
7. Get the awning out occasionally to dry it thoroughly. This stops mildew building up.



Crossings dot com

Please note that we no longer have access to our old .“co.uk” email and internet addresses as we have now moved across fully to “.com”

Our email address is:

bobandwendy@crossingsmotorhometours.com

Our web address is:

www.crossingsmotorhometours.com



Oct 2018

Tour leader opportunities

2018 has been our most successful touring year to date and 2019 is set to be even better. We have grander plans for 2020!

We are now starting to plan for 2020 and with this in mind we are on the look out for new tour leaders.

All of our tour leaders have been customers first and subsequently travel with us as co-leaders before taking on their own tours.

All of our tours are fixed for 2019 with our leaders in place. Therefore, we are looking for couples who would be interested in co-leading in 2019 with a view to taking on their own tours in 2020.

If you are interested, the first step is to get in touch for an informal chat. We are at the NEC Show in a few days time, so that would be a great place to express an interest.

As Crossings continues to expand we are very mindful of not losing the personal touch that we know lots of you like.

All of our tours will continue to be run in the 'Crossing's style', with our tour leaders free to stamp their own personality on the tours they run.

We are maintaining our commitment to keep group sizes small and this allows us to offer the personal levels of service that you have come to expect on tour.

