



## March 2020

### From the editor

#### In this month's edition:

- 2021 Expressions of Interest.
- NEC February Show.
- Spotlight on: Brittany & Normandy.

#### Plus our regular features:

- Another great recipe from Dave.
- This month's motorhome tips.
- Keep in touch.



Honfleur, Normandy, France.

Welcome to the March edition of the newsletter with a hearty hello to everyone who signed up at the NEC last week. As you now know, you can't just pick up a brochure and escape!

In this month's edition we have a brief show report. It's a funny time for the motorhome industry with one thing and another and this was reflected at the show. See more on page 2.

It's that time of year again where we start taking expressions of interest for next year's (2021) tour schedule. Find out more on Page 3.

We continue our series of previews on this year's (2020) tours. This month the spotlight is on...Brittany & Normandy.

We have another great recipe from Dave. Last month it was something fishy and this month it's something crabby.

This month's motorhoming tips are all about safely packing up your motorhome.

And finally...another word on Brexit (as many people were asking at the show). **There are no changes to any EU travel arrangements in 2020 as a result of Brexit.**

*Bob & Wendy, Dave & Sue, Colin & Sue, Gary & Eleanor, Ian & Linda.*

## NEC Motorhome Show (sort of) review

It's been a funny start to the year for the motorhome industry in general and this was reflected (a little bit) at the NEC Show last week.



“People want to travel and they want to go motorhoming and nearly 90,000 people attended the NEC over the last week demonstrating this fact”.

There was a bit of doom and gloom at the start of the week as all the traders have been very worried about Brexit and about the increase in vehicle excise duty (road tax) on new motorhomes.

Regular readers will know that we don't 'do politics' here at Crossings. In fact, we have a policy on tour: “No religion, no politics and no mucky talk”. It leaves some of us with very little to talk about, but rules are rules!

So politics aside, the new vehicle excise duty is having an impact as £2500 is a significant chunk of money to add onto the cost of your new motorhome.

However, many of the dealers are finding ways to avoid the increased duty, or in some cases are paying it for you in the first year. If you are buying a new van then you need to ask your dealer what they can do for you.

Many dealers have unsold stock from 2019 (or even 2018). In many cases, they have pre-registered this stock as the new excise duty cut in for new registrations from September last year. Therefore you can get an unused van which is less than a year old for £2500 less.

With all this surplus stock the dealers seem to be willing to do deals, so in many ways now is a good time to

buy, especially if you are not looking to trade in.

Brexit still lingers on but in the short term there are no implications for foreign travel.

So as the week wore on it became apparent that despite a few challenges to the industry, life goes on. People want to travel and they want to go motorhoming and nearly 90,000 people attended the NEC over the last week demonstrating this fact.

Thanks to everyone who came to see us over the week. We had a lovely mixture of existing, new and potential customers and talked ourselves hoarse over week.

## 2021 Expression on Interest

Regular readers and customers will know that we plan a loong way ahead here at Crossings and that our 2021 Schedule is now out.

The 2021 previews leaflet was sent out with your email reminder for this very newsletter. If you didn't get it or are having trouble opening it please email us and we will send it to you again.

At this stage, these are just the previews with full details becoming available via the newsletter over future editions.

We plan to open the bookings officially around May/June this year and of course, as newsletter readers, you will hear about it here first.

In the short term we are taking 'Expressions of Interest', which means that you can have first dabs on the 2021 tours now.

# 2021

If you see a tour you are interested in, please let us know by email. Then prior to opening the bookings, we will contact you to see if you want to take up the space. There is no commitment on your part to go on and book, it just means we come to you first.

If you wish to take up the space we will then take a deposit to secure your place on the tour as usual.

We strictly limit the number of units to 12 per tour. If we reach 12 expressions of interest on any one tour we will open the bookings early for that tour.

In a nutshell, in 2021 we have two new tours designed specifically for first-timers: Our Three-Country Starter Tour focussing on Holland and our

Four-Country Starter Tour that includes France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

We also have tours to The Italian Lakes, Croatia & Slovenia, Scandinavia, Budapest, Prague & Vienna, The West Coast of France, The Pyrenees from Biarritz to Barcelona, Provence & The Ardeche and the Swiss & Austrian Alps.

All of the above are confirmed and we are also planning a brand new tour to Bulgaria & Romania. The jury is out on this one at the moment and whether it goes will depend on how much interest we get over the next few weeks. Watch this space as they say.

If you have any questions about any of the tours, please feel free to contact us via email.

"In the short term we are taking 'Expressions of Interest', which means that you can have first dabs on the 2021 tours now".

## Spotlight on...Brittany & Normandy

2020 will be the third outing for our Brittany & Normandy Tour in June.

We usually get a mixture of first-timers and more experienced motorhomers on this trip as you can get into the heart of France without having to rack up too many miles.

In fact the total tour mileage is less than 1000 miles over the two weeks.

Our first stop is the picturesque seaside town of Honfleur famed for its row of colourful houses overlooking the harbour. It makes a great place to while away a few hours browsing in the shops, walking on the seafront and taking in a bistro.

You are only a few miles from the D-Day Landing beaches on this stretch and many guests incorporate a visit to the various visitor's centres and memorials in the area.

On the route, you can pop into the iconic Mont St Michel where you can visit the small



Mont St Michel.

island commune topped with the magnificent abbey.

We stay a little further west close to the walled port-town of St Malo. Imposing granite walls surround the old town and offer a glimpse of a by-gone era of seafaring (and pirating).

There are a couple of other towns of note including Dinan and Dinard where you can expect medieval buildings and cobbled streets lined with restaurants and boutiques.

For those fancying a bit more of a drive it is possible to go right around the peninsula of Brittany or cut through the rolling countryside. Either way, you can expect a pleasant (usually quiet) drive.

We then spend some time on the southern coast of Brittany close to the popular destination of Concarneau. This is a quintessential seaside town with the added attraction of the Ville Close, a medieval walled town that sits just off the main harbour.

The beaches in the area (by the way) are sandy and easily accessible for those who fancy a swim or a walk.

We then head inland around Rennes and onto Fougères. As well as being a lovely little town to spend a couple of hours, there is one of the finest intact fortress castles in France.

We still have spaces available on the tour for 2020. Please contact us.

“This is a quintessential seaside town with the added attraction of the Ville Close, a medieval walled town that sits just off the main harbour.”.

## Motorhoming Tips: Safe Packing

This month's motorhoming tips are all about the best way to pack your motorhome. We are not looking at what to pack, so much as how to pack it.

1. However, the first question is always: Do you really need it. If not, ditch it.
2. Next, pack all the heavy stuff as low to the bottom of the motorhome as possible. This will improve handling and be safer when removing things from upper lockers.
3. Compartmentalise. i.e. Keep similar stuff in the same lockers e.g. clothes locker, books/ maps/ DVD locker, food lockers etc.
4. Put the frequently used stuff at the front / on the top in each locker.
5. Do not pack so much stuff that you have to take everything out every time you need to get one

item out. This might means leaving lockers half full.

6. Check weight payloads on wall-hanging lockers. Some have 5kg or 10kg limits particularly if attached to a pull-down bed.
7. Check that your total payload does not exceed the maximum weight allowed for your motorhome. You need to go to a weighbridge to do this.
8. Also check that you have not overloaded the back. Motorhomes
9. Use soft items (tea-towels, socks etc) around items that might rattle. Rattles are soooo annoying .
10. Keep your emergency gear (hi-vis jackets, warning triangles etc) as close to the driver's seat as possible so you can reach it quickly if you need it.

have weight limits per axle as well as overall. (See the plate under the bonnet for yours).



“Also check that you have not overloaded the back. Motorhomes have weight limits per axle as well as overall”.

## Coq au Van: the amusingly titled recipe section

### Crab and Fennel Spaghetti

#### Ingredients:

- 1 Bulb of Fennel.
- 150g dried spaghetti.
- 1 fresh red chilli.
- 160g ripe mixed-colour cherry tomatoes.
- 160g mixed brown & white crab meat.

#### Cooking method:

Put a large non-stick frying pan on a medium-heat. Trim the Fennel, pick and reserve any leafy tops, then halve the bulb and finely slice it. Place in the pan with 1 table spoon of olive oil and cook with the lid on for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a pan of boiling salted water accord-

ing to the packet instructions, then drain, reserving a mug full of cooking water.

Deseed and finely slice the chilli, stir into the fennel pan and cook uncovered until soft and sticky, stirring occasionally. Halve the Tomato's and toss into the pan for 2 minutes, followed by the crab meat and, 1 minute later, the drained pasta. Loosen with a splash of reserved cooking water, if needed, then season to perfection with sea salt and black pepper, sprinkle over the reserved Fennel tops and drizzle with 1 tea spoon of virgin olive oil. Enjoy.



## Keep in touch

We are very happy to hear from newsletter readers throughout the year. If you have ideas for features, questions, motorhoming tips or questions about any of our tours, please feel free to get in touch at any time.

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