



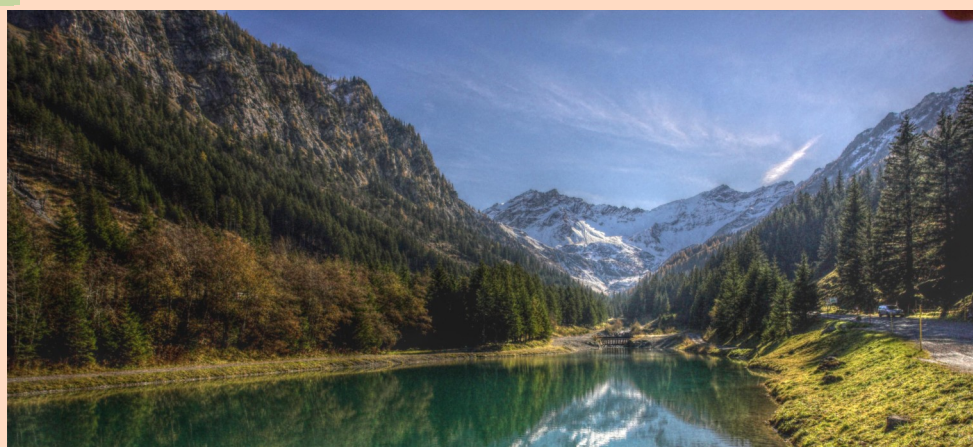
December 2020

In this month's edition:

- Highlights of the Year!
- Travel in 2021 update.
- New edition to the Crossings Team.
- COVID Guarantee to continue through 2021.

Plus our regular features:

- Another great recipe from Dave.
- Keep in touch.



From the editor

Welcome to the December edition of the newsletter. There is some good news on the horizon this month with the prospects for travel in 2021 looking better than they have done all year. Read the latest on Page 2.

We would remind everyone that whatever happens next year we continue to offer our COVID-19 guarantee. A reminder of this is on Page 3.

Regular readers will know that we normally do a round-up of the highlights of the

touring year in the December edition. I've decided to go for it anyway although the top 10 is not what I anticipated it might have been.

We also have some good news with a new addition to the Crossings Team. We don't think she will be available until the 2038 season though. Pictures on page 5.

Having just helped someone buy a van last month, this month's motorhoming tips are all about buying a

used motorhome.

We have another great one-pot recipe with a winter-warming stew.

As always, we continue to thank our key workers, as we know that most of you (and us) have friends and family on the front line.

Oh, and Merry Christmas.

Bob (and Wendy).

Dave & Sue, Colin & Sue, Gary & Eleanor, Ian & Linda.

Travel in 2021



Happy memories—last year in the Pyrenees

So some good news at last. At the time of writing we had three vaccines that were looking good with a vaccination programme starting as early as the end of this month.

We are probably all too long in the tooth to count our chickens, but it would seem that there is a degree of confidence that one or all of these vaccines will start to make a difference.

Obviously this great news for everyone and will allow some normality to return.

With a fair wind (and some good weather) next Spring we are

hoping that we can resume normal operations for the start of 2021 season.

If there is one thing this year has taught us is that the old adage: “hope for the best and plan for the worst” could not be more apt.

Consequently we continue to offer our COVID-19 guarantee and this will stay in place for the whole of 2021 regardless of what happens with the vaccination programme.

This means that you can book to ensure your space, but retain the option of cancelling if you are not happy with the COVID

situation next year. Full details on the next page.

In light of the positive news, we have seen an uplift in enquiries and bookings, which has given us a bit of a boost here after a bad year.

We have really missed touring this year and (like many of you) can't wait to get back across the channel and on the road.

“...there is a degree of confidence that one or all of these vaccines will start to make a difference”.

COVID– 19 Guarantee

Our COVID Guarantee

1. If **we** cancel the tour at any point, you are entitled to a full refund. This refund will be paid promptly— usually within 7 days.
2. If **you** choose to cancel the tour we will convert the money paid at that point into a voucher that can be used on any other tour in the same year or the year after.

By accepting a voucher you would not be entitled to a cash refund should we subsequently cancel the tour and the voucher has no cash value at any point. It can only be used to book onto another tour.

Transfers are subject to there being spaces available on the tour of your choice, although as we have added more spaces in 2021, availability would not



be normally be a problem. You also need to give us a month's notice if you wish to cancel.

This guarantee applies to everyone who is booked already onto a 2021 tour and will apply to anyone who makes a booking from now on. This constitutes a change to your Ts and Cs in your favour. Full details are on the website.

Essentially, the guarantee means that you will either get a full refund, or be able to transfer if COVID continues to be a problem into 2021. Either way you will not lose any money due to COVID.

We would remind you that all monies paid to us are held in a secure

Client Account and are not spent until your tour returns. We **never** use your deposits and final balance payments as 'working capital' so the money is always on tap should we need to repay it.

Everyone entitled to a refund has received one this year within 7 days.

Details of all 2021 Tours are on the website. Please contact us for availability.

“Essentially, the guarantee means that you will either get a full refund, or be able to transfer if COVID continues to be a problem into 2021”.

Highlights of the Year 2020

Obviously this section is going to a bit different to what we anticipated but we decided we would put together our top ten of the year.

Last year it involved gondola trips in Venice, train rides through the Alps and wine tours in The Dordogne. This year, well...

In reverse order:

10. Gardening. As someone who spends the spring and summer abroad, gardening has never been a thing in our house. However, our "landscaping"

project in May proved to be a great success. Top tip, don't drive a stump grinder into a chain-link fence.

9. Online Shopping.

We know lots of you do it already, but have you ever done it so much? Amazing how much stuff there is on Amazon that we never knew we needed? And when you are on lockdown it's nice to have someone to talk to even if it is a masked delivery man, who only has another 130 parcels to deliver after you've kept him catching.



7. Abandoned

hobbies. You all know what I'm talking about here. I will admit to buying a keyboard, trying to learn Italian and attempting pencil drawings. All of these lasted about a month. I would like to say the results were mixed, but they were just plain awful. (See cow picture above).

6. Human pac-man.

I've mentioned this one before but this year we got very good at walking in very strange patterns in order to avoid other human beings. This is something we will continue to do long after COVID, so do not



"I will admit to buying a keyboard, trying to learn Italian and attempting pencil drawings".

...continued

be alarmed when you see us zig-zagging off to the toilet block on tour next year.

5. **Social distancing.**

This might sound miserable, but I like social distancing. The idea of everyone having to stay 2 metres away is generally quite appealing. Wendy is still insisting on me staying 2m away from here although I suspect she is deliberately mis-interpreting the rules.

4. Keeping fit / over-indulging. Two sides of the same coin here. I have spent the year trying to keep fit in our "home gym" (it's a shed). At the same time I have eaten my own body weight in ginger nuts. The net result is that I have maintained by athletic figure. When I say athlete, I mean female Russian shot-putter.

3. Zooming. Who had ever head of Zoom before this? It has been

a bit of a god-send really with us being able to chat with family, friends, customers and fellow tour leaders. The great thing about zoom is that you only have to look presentable from the neck up.

2. Support from customers and fellow tour leaders. A serious one now, but we have been genuinely touched by the support we have received from our customers (food/ alcohol parcels always welcome) and from our very patient tour leaders who have

been stood-up and stood-down more times this year than is fair. Thanks to all of you.

1. **Time with family.**

Another serious one to finish. It has been great for us to slow down a bit this year, see our grown-up kids and for our grand-children to actually start to recognise us.

On that note, meet the new Crossings Team member, our new grand-daughter Penny.

"I have eaten my own body weight in ginger nuts".



Coq au Van: the amusingly titled recipe section

Bean and Pork Stew

Cooking Method:

Ingredients:

1. 2 tbs olive oil
2. 125g mild salami, chopped
3. 2 x 350g pork fillets, trimmed, cut into 3cm pieces
4. 1 each carrot, red onion & celery stalk, chopped
5. 2 garlic cloves, crushed
6. 6 thyme sprigs, leaves chopped
7. 2 sage leaves, finely chopped
8. 1 1/2 cups (375ml) Massel Chicken Style Liquid Stock
9. 250g baby roma tomatoes, halved
10. 2 x 400g cans butter beans
11. 400g can red kidney beans
12. 100g baby spinach leaves

1. Heat 1 tbs oil in a casserole over high heat. Cook salami, stirring, for 2-3 minutes until crisp, then remove from pan with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel. Do not drain oil from pan.
2. Season pork. In 2 batches, cook, turning, for 2-3 minutes until golden. Remove from pan and repeat with remaining pork.
3. Reduce heat to medium and add remaining 1 tbs oil.
4. Add the carrot, onion and celery, and cook for 3-4 minutes until softened. Add garlic, thyme and sage, and cook for 2-3 minutes until fragrant. Add the stock, tomatoes and beans, bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes or until flavours have infused. Return the pork to pan and cook, stirring for a further 2-3 minutes until pork is tender. Add spinach and stir until wilted. Remove from heat. Scatter with crisp salami and serve with toasted ciabatta



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.

Email: bobandwendyreeves@crossingsmotorhometours.com

Web: www.crossingsmotorhometours.com

Phone: 01522 861715 or 07957 745434

Facebook: [crossingsmotorhometours](https://www.facebook.com/crossingsmotorhometours)

Instagram: [CrossingsMotorhome](https://www.instagram.com/CrossingsMotorhome)

Calls to our landline will automatically bounce to our mobile when we are away at no cost to yourself.

Motorhoming Tips

There have been a lot of people buying vans this year and we also know that many of you have been changing vans too. Here's my top tips for buying second hand.



1. Never buy anything that does not have a recent habitation check. Pay particular attention to damp readings. If it does not have one, walk away or ask to get one done before you buy.
2. Check out what extras have been added. One of the advantages of buying second hand is that someone has gone to the time and expense of adding things like: solar panels, bike racks, additional leisure batteries, satellite dishes etc.
3. Don't buy it without a test drive. If it's more than three years old then only buy something with a full MOT. It's a sign that the seller is serious if they put it through an MOT just before advertising it.
4. Buy from a recommended dealer. We have found that prices for private sales are about the same as through dealers. With a dealer you will get some come-back if you have problems.
5. Buy from a local dealer if you can. This way any problems do not involve a trip to the other side of the country.
6. Typical mileage for a motorhome is around 5k a year. Higher miles is not necessarily a problem as long as the van is well-maintained. Higher miles should be reflected in a lower price, or at least it gives you some haggling room.
7. Check the tyres (but don't kick them!) Expensive brands like Pirelli and Goodyear indicate someone who is prepared to spend money on the van. Check they all the same brand. Four different tyres usually means someone has been maintaining the van on the cheap.
8. Take your time. Do not be rushed into a sale by pushy sales people.



TIP!

"Never buy anything that does not have a recent habitation check".