

Derek's News 2000

Another year, another newsletter on a new computer. Of course, that new computer means that I haven't got everything installed and I can't find things that I need and that puts things slower and slower. Aaargh. So I have to apologise for this being so late this year – blame it on the computer!

The wheel turns (the meaning of *Yule* actually) and, as they say, the more things change, the more they stay the same. I really don't have much to report this year. It's like that Jewish curse: 'May you live in interesting times.' reversed. I'm still living in the same place (something of a record for me) and still in the same job with the same vehicle (my Romahome camper). Actually the company has changed hands again and is going through a bit of a change (it could do with more, but let's be grateful for small changes).

So I'm sitting here, with very little time left in which to write this newsletter, trying to think what I need to put into it. Of course, I suppose something of a travelogue would be quite good, because I don't think there is much else.

I started this newsletter last week, and since then I've been to Exmouth on the South Coast for a pre-Christmas break, which was very nice. The weather remains very mild here for the time of year, but wet and windy too. There have been tremendous flooding all over, but it has hardly affected me at all.

Anyway, after coming back today, I should be writing lots of interesting things here for you, but I find it very hard going at the moment: oh yes, I suppose I could write the travelogue, but I think I'm rather tired, and the witty, fascinating text that should be flowing from my keyboard is just not coming at the moment. Did I have such boring holidays this year? Perhaps I did. I did enjoy them as a relaxation more than the normal stimulation.

Of necessity, then, this travelogue is going to be somewhat shorter than it could be, and I'll only be including a couple of pictures. Those of you with internet access can go to the new page that I'm setting up at: www.syrbal.clara.net/travel2000/ and enjoy the full year with me there. I hope that will be finished by the time that I have to go back to work on the 2nd January. I'll be breaking up on Friday 22nd December.

Torremolinos, March

In March, mom and I went to Torremolinos, on the Costa del Sol, Spain for a week. The weather was mixed even there, but it was mostly warm, even in the rain! We had a flat right on the sea-front, overlooking the beach. However, there was quite a climb into the town or for public transport – this really has been a year for climbing and cliffs!

Of course, being March, it was not a time for lazing on the beach, so we did a few trips: into the mountains to the lakes which was fine, and a lovely area. We saw the spectacular scenery from Van Ryan's Express where Sinatra's character got shot in the back. Another day we took the train into Malaga, which is a great city – interesting, picturesque and some lovely, exotic parks. But tiring – aren't all cities tiring?



Cornwall, July



July is supposed to be a warm and sunny month, right? Cornwall is in the south and supposed to be warm and sunny, right? Well, this year wrong on both counts, I'm afraid. It wasn't too bad, but really the weather let us down badly – it was quite cool and windy, not to mention rather too many showers.

Highlight of the week were a trip to Lanyon quoit, Chysauster iron-age village, Gwennap pit (famous 'pilgrimage' spot for Methodist Wesley admirers) and the Lizard point (most southerly in England). Also to Trelowarren park with its rococo chapel and the Haliggye fogou. So an

interesting week if not a warm one!

Weston-super-Mare, August

By August the weather still had not improved. Writing this I realise what a rotten year we have had weather-wise! This time we went on a hotel week-end break – we keep finding these very reasonable offers we just can't refuse. On the Saturday we went down to Minehead and Dunster. Dunster is still as quaint and enjoyable as I remember it from the last time I was there visiting from University in my bubble-car in the late 60's!



Cirencester, August

This was a camping trip for the August bank holiday. The weather was still showery. It was a good weekend though. We went to Tetbury (well known for Prince Charles' house Highgrove), Bibury – a **very** quaint town – typical old Cotswolds place, and Painswick and it's rococo gardens which are very attractive. The photo is of Tetbury.

Algarve, Portugal. October

After all that, there was the main holiday this year. Mom and I flew down to the south of Portugal – to the Albufiera in the Algarve for a fortnight in October. It was nice and warm and mostly dry there and made a really good break. A lot of walking. We had a nice apartment overlooking the sea. Only 500 metres from the sea too, although when we booked they didn't say that 200 of them were vertical!

So, considering the hilly terrain – to say the least – we decided to hire a car. A nice little Nissan Micra too. Made a change from my camper. It's been quite a while now since I drove on the right. I soon took to it again, however, and enjoyed the driving round the Algarve, which really doesn't have much traffic at all. We got caught in a couple of traffic-jams which delayed us for all of 15 minutes!

Highlights of the fortnight were a trip out to the springs of Alte in the hills, and on to the crumbly palace and roman ruins at Estoi, to resorts of Vilamora, Praia da Rocha, Burgau and Salema, ancient Moorish walled city of Silves, several trips to Lagos (*right*) which we love, one to Faro and right down to virtually to last place in Europe, Cape St. Vincent and the fort of Prince Henry the Navigator which was the first navigation school where Christopher Columbus learned his navigation.

So that was the year, and, for now that's the newsletter.

Have a great Yule and a wonderful year!

Derek.

