

RMA

ISSUE 30



Retired Members Association

JUNE 2008

Launch of RMA Website

I am both pleased and thrilled to be able to announce the launch of the long overdue official Website of the Retired Members Association (RMA). The website will be live from the 1st of June 2008 at the following address, www.hfrsrma.co.uk.

This has all been made possible by the skills and generosity of Brian Hayes, who retired from the HFRS in 2004. Brian has been building web sites for the past ten years and has become a skilled web builder, if that is the correct term. Brian has also been kind enough to do all this work for me for much less than cost.

The website is in it's infancy and will develop as people use it and come forward with there own ideas and needs. I know one person who will be very pleased (Barry Bloxham), who spoke to me nearly a year ago about a website, with the specific need of having access to e-mail address's of fellow members of the RMA. This is all possible and Brian Hayes will be able to put this in place, if that is what people want.

Below is Brian's opening comments on the Home Page of the website.



'Welcome all former colleagues, friends and families to the new Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, Retired Members Association, official web site.

Let us know your comments and suggestions by using the form on the "contact" page or by email. We can place contact or other information on the

Links page or on the, password protected, Members Only page. All email addresses will be individually encrypted to prevent spam.

This site will not replace the Newsletter but hopefully be used to share additional images and personal comments from members and others. In addition other news where space on the Newsletter is limited and for all to have access, both at home around the world, via the World Wide Web.

Design and day to day maintenance will be done by Brian Hayes and editorial and content by John Potipher.

We welcome suggestions for content like an image section for your old favourite pictures. It's your site, please use it.'

[In thanking Brian Hayes for making the RMA Website possible - I commend it to the members for their use and enjoyment. Let us see what it looks like in 12 months time! Ed]



80th Birthday Arthur Miles

On Wednesday 14th May 2008 Arthur Miles celebrated his 80th Birthday, having shared a birthday tea party with family, friends and colleagues the previous Sunday at the new St Albans Community Fire Station.

Arthur joined the Hertfordshire Fire and Ambulance Brigade at Welwyn Garden City in 1951, cycling every duty day from Cheshunt, (how things have changed). He retired 33 years later in 1984 as Assistant Divisional Officer 'B' Division.

We send our best wishes and warmest congratulation to Arthur on becoming an Octogenarian.(Ed)



Announcements

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THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

I have to report the deaths of four former colleagues . . .

Bob Brown who served as a Fireman at Hemel Hempstead and retired approximately 25 years ago.

His funeral took place at 1230 on 6 March at North Watford Cemetery. I have no further details



Jack Paul. It is with regret that I have to announce the death of former Assistant Divisional Officer Jack Paul, who died on Wednesday 12th March 2008, following a long illness. He was aged 83.

Jack was a Londoner by birth and moved to Hertfordshire with his family as a young boy. Before the war Jack had been a messenger for Hertford Fire Brigade, serving with his father.

Jack joined the Royal Air Force towards the end of the second World War serving as a Flight Lieutenant Bomb Aimer & Navigator, before becoming a Flight Control Officer, serving out his time in Burma.

In 1949, following demobilisation, Jack joined the Hertfordshire Fire and Ambulance Brigade. He became a Station Officer and Officer in Charge of Letchworth in 1959, an Assistant Divisional Officer (ADO) (East Division) in 1964, before becoming a Staff ADO, firstly as Water/Transport Officer and then as the brigades first Communication Officer.

As the Communication Officer he was responsible for the design and installation of the new Control Room on the newly built 4th floor at BHO.

Jack lost his first wife Joan in 1980. He met and Married his second wife Enid in 1982, who has nursed Jack through his long illness.

Jack's funeral took place at 1.15 p.m. on Wednesday 26th March 2008 at Harwood Park Crematorium Stevenage.

Jack leaves a wife Enid, six children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

"I was very sad to hear of Jack's death. I was the LFM on blue watch at WGC when he was my Sub Officer, and we were good friends. A more honest and friendly, keen and professional officer you will not find. He'll be sorely missed, but I know he has gone to a better place."

John Gray

Harold Adams. It is with regret that I have to announce the death of former Assistant Divisional Officer Harold Adams, who died unexpectedly on Wednesday 23rd April 2008, in Truro Hospital, following a short illness. He was aged 82.



Harold was one of the last of the National Fire Service firemen, joining in 1948, before being transferred, first into the Bedfordshire Fire Brigade and then the Hertfordshire Fire and Ambulance Service in 1954, at the Old Stevenage Fire Station at Basils Road.

Harold rose through ranks, retiring as the Assistant Divisional Officer in charge of the Bishops Stortford District in 1976. He and his wife Eileen retired to live in Truro, Cornwall where they have lived a full and enjoyable life.

Harold's funeral took place at 1.30 p.m. on Friday 2nd May 2008 at Penmount Crematorium Truro.

Harold leaves a wife Eileen.



Clr. Peter Lill. It is with regret that I have to announce the death of former Station Officer Peter Lill, who died unexpectedly on Monday 12th May in the Lister Hospital Stevenage, following a heart attack. He was aged 67.

He was Mayor of Royston for the past 12 months and previously in 2003-04 after being elected to the town council for the then town ward in 1998.

This came after the one time when he stood as a Conservative candidate in Royston for North Herts District Council in 1995.

He had been a governor at Tannery Drift School and for a time was a committee member at the Royston branch of the Royal British Legion.

Indeed, Joe McDonald, the branch welfare officer, described him as "a man of the people". "We are really upset and are devastated by his sudden death," said Mr McDonald.

Cllr Lill, who lived in Mackerel Hall, Royston, was born in London's East End in 1941 and it was after the death of his parents in 1959 that he joined the Royal Air Force and was eventually posted to Bassingbourn.

His service took him to places around the world although he said the most memorable was being attached to the Royal Gurkha Rifles in Borneo.

On leaving the RAF, he worked for a year for the Atlas company in Meldreth before joining the Hertfordshire Fire Brigade in 1965. He rose through the ranks, retiring as a Station Officer at Baldock and Letchworth Fire Station in 1990.

Peter's funeral took place at 2.00 p.m. on Friday 23rd May 2008 at the Parish Church of St John the Baptist Royston, followed by committal at the cemetery in Melbourne Road Royston.

Donations to Peter's memory can be made to the Llewellyn Stroke Unit, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hills Rd, Cambridge CB2 0QQ

Peter leaves a wife Wendy, a son John and daughter Angela.

[Picture an article by kind permission of the Royston Crow. Ed]



Get Well Soon & Letters to the Editor

GET WELL SOON

Barry Hillier was rushed into Addenbrookes Hospital on the 7th April, having collapsed unexpectedly at home. He was found to have an aneurism and a brain haemorrhage that required a five hour emergency operation immediately. He was sent home after ten days to recover.



I spoke to Barry on the 7th May and it is quite clear he is making an amazing recovery. The doctors treating him expect his recovery to be full and complete.

In view of his escapades in December 2006 (*See March 2007 Newsletter*), Barry felt fortunate to be at home when this happened and not on a mountain top in Switzerland!

We send Barry and his family our very wishes and for Barry to make a full and speedy recovery. (Ed.)

Honolulu

Hawaii

February 2008

Dear Editor,

Stolen Scarlet Macaw (HowZit) Recovered

"I received the following article from a former colleague Mick Morland, who served at Garston Fire Station a number of years ago, before emigrating with his family to Honolulu."

Barry Bloxham

When burglars broke into a Hawaii Kai home last week, they took something away more valuable than golf clubs, tools and jewellery. They took the family pet.



Mick Morland returned to find things not as he left them. "When I drove up my driveway, the front door was open and my golf clubs were right here, I thought someone has been in my property," Mick recalled.

Burglars had taken memories of his wife, who passed away a few years ago. "My wife's jewellery box was right here, this was all laying on the floor with nothing in it obviously and the drawers were laying on the floor."

As he continued to check the house, he noticed a strange silence. "When I looked out there the cage was empty, I just couldn't believe it. It was as bad enough that the burglars had taken personal items, golf club and jewellery but then to see the family pet gone as well was a shock," stated Mick.

Mick and many friends tracked his scarlet macaw to a man in Waimanalo.

"HowZit has a big vocabulary, he can say a lot of words including

shut up and howzit but when it comes to his captors he's no stool pigeon."

Mick learned that a caucasian couple had sold the bird to the buyer who gladly gave it back. Howzit is still dazed from the heist but is slowly talking more each day. Mick says he is thankful the bird is in good shape and not injured.

Police officers have taken finger prints and are actively looking for whoever broke into his home.

Hemel Hempstead

nrfleming@btinternet.com

May 2008

Dear Editor,

How many times do you get annoyed when you have to phone Financial Institutions, Major Life Insurance Companies and Public Bodies etc. that all use 0870 or 0845 dialling codes.

When you have an inclusive phone package that covers all STD numbers you end up paying for these calls. The word Lo-call is cleverly worded to make you think local but the company actually receive revenue from these calls. So the solution is at hand.

Enter into your search engine "SAY NO TO 0870", it will give you a free website that allows you to enter in the name box, the name of the company, and search for the STD alternative number, guess what! 99% of institutions have one and it is answered almost directly, in a lot of instances without the push button merry go round before you speak to an operative.

They don't always like it but so what! You can then add this number to your files. Even British Gas has one, try it out.

Regards Neil Fleming

Spilsby, Lincs.

May 2008

Dear Editor

During the war I didn't believe I'd reach 21. then after I thought with a bit of luck I might make it to 70 and here I am still steaming along at 84 and life is wonderful.



My best wishes to all. Fred Caldwell

[Fred - Best wishes from the RMA on your 84th. We hope there are many more to come. I will print your joke in the next Newsletter Ed.]

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

All copy for the September Newsletter to be with me by **Monday 4th August 2008**

My preferences:

- a) E-mail attachment. jmbpot@ntlworld.com
- b) Floppy disk.
- c) Typewritten.
- e) Handwritten.

My thanks to all who have contributed to the Newsletter this quarter. Ed.

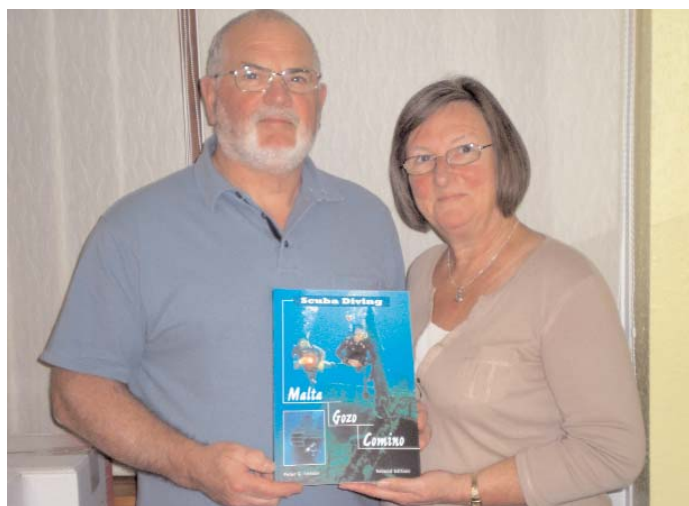




Above me the Waves - 2

In March 2002 an article was printed about me in this newsletter regarding the fact that I had written and published a book on Scuba Diving in the Maltese Islands since retiring from the Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service in 1997.

I am pleased to tell you that this publication has all but sold out, we didn't make a profit but we just about got our capital back.



As soon as the first book came onto the market we decided to prepare for a re-print, but it soon became clear that we wanted to fully re-design the whole book, now, almost six years on, a second edition is in print with a new title, Scuba Diving Malta Gozo Comino With the help of my two main diving buddies, a retired policeman from the UK and a Danish baker who lives in Malta, both trained by yours truly, their photo's now dominate the covers of the new edition. Without the help of a number of friends and especially my wife Sue, it would not have been possible to have completed this venture. Of course this involved a lot of hard work and many

trips to those beautiful islands in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, maybe we are both just a little bit Maltese now.

We found a designer who was prepared to help us out in his spare time, we also found someone to work on the colouring of the plans and maps which I have re-drawn. Therefore the whole book has a complete new layout with more pages new maps, plans, aerial, underwater and land photographs.

We visited the High Commissioner for Malta in London and he kindly wrote a Foreword for the book. (see page 5 opposite).

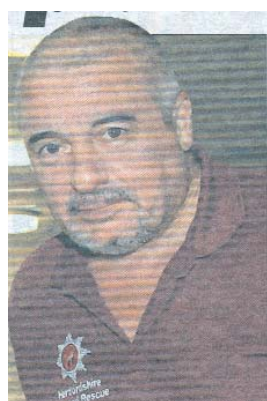
This time we decided to have the book printed in Malta by Gutenberg Press, this way, as we are just pensioners, we were able to save a few pennies! As with the previous book we made the decision to publish it ourselves and again we saw the first pages come off the printing press.

Within just over a week we had complete books in our hands, just in time for us to bring a few copies home. The majority of them have been sent to our distributor in Malta the remainder were shipped here to sell in this country.

If you would like a preview go to www.scubadivingmaltaozocomino.com

Peter G. Lemon

[We congratulate Peter and Sue on the success of their latest book about Scuba Diving in and around Malta. It was amazing to find out that another recently retired colleague, Sid Payne, (see item below) is also setting up in the same business of teaching Scuba Diving, fortunately not on the same coastline! Ed.]



Recently retired Sid Payne, who left the service a month ago, has moved to sunny Majorca to start up a diving instruction business.

The former leading firefighter at WGC said: "I have enjoyed the last 30 years, but it was time to move on and find a different occupation. I have been thinking about retirement for the past five years. After learning Spanish and

German and passing diving instruction qualifications, Sid added that he was now "looking forward to the future". "This is exactly where I want to be.

"I would like to thank everyone who turned up to my retirement party. It was good to see all the characters from the last 30 years."

Sid Payne

[Likewise, we wish Sid every success with his Diving School business venture in Majorca. Ed.]

Picture and article by kind permission of the Welwyn and Hatfield Times.



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

MALTA HIGH COMMISSION

Malta House

36-38 Piccadilly

London W1J 0LE

Tel: 020 7292 4800

Fax: 020 7734 1831

FOREWORD

My most sincere congratulations to Peter Lemon and his wife Sue for presenting the Maltese and visiting diving community with a much enhanced update of their seminal work on Scuba Diving in the Maltese Islands.

Was it simply luck and coincidence that we met again seven years to the day I signed off my foreword to Peter's first edition? Whatever the reason we were glad to renew old friendships as we reminisced about past chapters in our life. For a quarter of a century Peter Lemon has made an annual pilgrimage to our islands, painstakingly gathered information, sketched and measured the best most secluded dive sites and as I had written at the beginning of the third millennium, shared the delights and excitement of his adventures and the underwater discoveries that Malta offers.

This edition contains more than two hundred pages of informative text, pictures, photographs and sketches. More importantly it updates the reader with the latest on wrecks since placed on the seabed and transformed into veritable marine attractions.

Peter and Sue Lemon bring to life a fascinating, twenty-five year love affair with Malta and the azure world that bathes our island home - one of Malta's most successful tourist market niches. They do not keep knowledge to themselves but are content to parade their secrets to anyone wishing to enjoy their favourite pastime and treasure and protect our marine environment.

This publication is yet another gift to Malta, to our country's tourism industry and particularly to the thousands that practice deep sea diving and underwater photography. It is moreover a valuable vade mecum for all travellers to Malta and provides the right level of information and detail to make visitors' stay more pleasurable.

This is a book for all divers, young or old, tyros or experienced, amateur or professional, that I recommend most strongly to first time and regular explorers of the secrets of the marine world around Malta and its Islands.



MICHAEL REFALO
29th June 2007.



Why is Time not measured in Metric Units?



Star Trek: The Final Frontier

When I had my antique clock shop I was asked this question on almost a weekly basis particularly if the EEC had recently brought out another Regulation with what would appear to be another attack on our

"Britishness". Those over a certain age, myself included, generally struggle with the metric system to know how many millimetres long a cucumber should be before it is allowed to curve, or how many grammes there are in two large handfuls of brussel sprouts. And be honest; how many of us now buy our petrol by the cost instead of in the old days by how many gallons you wanted because its too complicated to work out converting litres to gallons with enough accuracy not to overfill at the pumps and slosh it around the forecourt! How some of our peers who have emigrated to France and the like get on goodness knows, AND having to speak English s..l..o..w..l..y every day so that the natives understand . . .


Anyway, so how has the measurement of time escaped the clutches of Brussels and not been converted to metric? Sheer force of habit is the short answer. Astronomers certainly have no qualms about it, and routinely use metric time because it makes calculations a whole lot easier for one thing. The metric timing of celestial events are stated in terms of the so called Julian Date, (JD), a decimal time system invented by a French,(beggar!),scholar called Joseph Scaliger in 1582. This system converts all times to the number of days, (and fractions thereof), that have elapsed since noon on January 1st 4713 B.C. Why 4713B.C. you ask? Scaliger traced three time cycles, (15, 19, and 28 years long), and working backwards found they all coincided in the first year of their cycle in 4713B.C. (Why 15, 19, and 28 years you might ask? Goodness knows!) As 4713B.C. was before any historical event known to Scaliger he assumed time didn't exist before then which could be construed as reasonable logic. However if he'd gone up the road a bit and popped into the local Synagogue he would have found the Jews in disagreement as their calendar marks the start of the world in 3761B.C! By the way Scaliger named the Julian DATE in honour of his father Julius Caesar Scaliger; the Julian CALENDAR is named after the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar----just an unfortunate and confusing coincidence of names!

So back to the plot; astronomers use the Julian Date, and as an example, the Huygens probe to Titan arrived at 10.30 GMT on January 14th 2006 or JD 2453384 point 9375. As well as making calculations simpler the astronomers also avoided the difficulties of converting the months of different calendars in use in different era's and locations. Internet research shows three solar calendars, (Gregorian, Julian and Solar Liberalia Triday), and

four lunar calendars, (Goddess Lunar, Meyer-Palmen Solilunar, Lunar Liberalia Triday and Hermetic Lunar Week). Additionally there's Chinese, Tibetan and no doubt quite a number more calendars including FRENCH! (More about them in a moment!). A quirk of the Julian Date was that time was measured by the interceding NOON (s), but astronomers have tweaked it by 0.5 to conform to the commercial day. This Modified Julian Date was adopted by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in 1957 for the new requirement of tracking satellites. Do you remember 'Sputnik'?!

The Gregorian Calendar, the one we use today, was actually devised by an Italian doctor. A Decree by Pope Gregory xiii in 1582 implemented it because both the lunar calendar had grown conspicuously wrong and the Julian Calendar was slightly too long making it almost impossible to calculate the date of Easter. The Gregorian calendar dealt with this by every 400 years dropping a certain number of days to bring it into synchronisation with the seasons and slightly shortening the average number of days in a year. The next adjustment is in 2100- and you thought the Millennium date was controversial! The Pope's Decree was immediate in Catholic areas but it took some time to be adopted by Protestants. Perhaps surprisingly not all faiths use the Gregorian calendar even today, and almost all Orthodox Churches continue to celebrate Easter according to the Julian calculation. Russia did not adopt the new calendar until just after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, (hence it should be the AUGUST and not the October revolution), but even more surprising is that on 19th January THIS year an Alexander Fomenko put forward to the Russian parliament that the country should revert to the Julian calendar as a way of re-asserting national identity. It has not yet been voted upon.

Whilst all the astronomers have adopted metric time it has never caught on generally mainly because to print bus timetables would be a nightmare. However the French in their indomitable way decided that as they had no buses in 1793 due to the French Revolution, they decreed that time, like all other physical measurements, would be stated in metric- the Calendar of Reason. Thus a month was 30 days, (with 5 or 6 days added at the end of the year), a week was 10 days-hence three weeks to a month, a day was 10 hours, 1 hour was 100 minutes and a minute had a hundred seconds. (Truly I'm not making this up!). I have never seen a clock that shows this division of time; whilst not impossible the gear ratios within a movement would have to be re-designed and the dial would take some getting used to. Fortunately, perhaps, metric time proved to be very unpopular and was quietly dropped 18 months after its introduction with the blessing of Napoleon.

"Metric" time does pose the question that if you are going to devise a new clock why stay with the current divisions of a period. Given that a complete revolution of the earth is what we would call a day and is a fixed interlude of time who says one minute is so long a period; why not have a longer 



Why is Time not measured in Metric Units?

period and less of them in a day? Blame the Babylonians (about 300-100 B.C.)! They did their astronomical calculations in the sexagesimal (base 60) system which is extremely convenient to divide by 2,3,4,5,6, and 10. The first fraction we now call a minute and the second place a second. It's therefore a bit baffling to know why our comprehension and usage of hours, minutes and seconds should suddenly change, (comparatively recently as well), when we measure split seconds into TENTHS!! Why the hundred yards, (sorry 100 metres!) dash in 9 point 2; why not 9 and a twelfth? And yesterday I noticed that an electronic item operated in 4 milliseconds with a reset time of ten nano seconds. Who's counting and how do they know!!!

Another peculiarity you see virtually every day but never give it a twelfth thought is the actual markings on a dial. Firstly if you have Roman numerals why do some clocks represent four with four 1's and others by iv? There's long standing debate about this and the main contenders are as follows. In Latin the Roman God Jupiter is spelt with the first two letters iv (a common abbreviation in Roman times), which translate to JU. Four 1's however are easier to carve or cast; a single casting with a central core would produce 10 1's, 2 V's and 2 X's on each side which is enough for one clock. (A little known fact is the Romans didn't have a zero). Aesthetically a face with Viii is balanced by iiiii. Observations in my shop indicate that only about 20% of clocks and watches stick with the Jupiter theory. Secondly, Arabic num-

bers. I once had a clock in for repair with what I can only describe as peculiar dial markings; almost hieroglyphics. Talking to another customer he deduced that from his experience serving in the army in Egypt that these marks were in fact Arabic. As far as he could remember Arabic numbers bear no relation to what we call an Arabic dial. Any linguist out there shed light? What beggars it all up of course are the 'flash' watches that have no markings on the dial at all; a case of the little hand is half way round and the big hand is coming up towards the elbow!

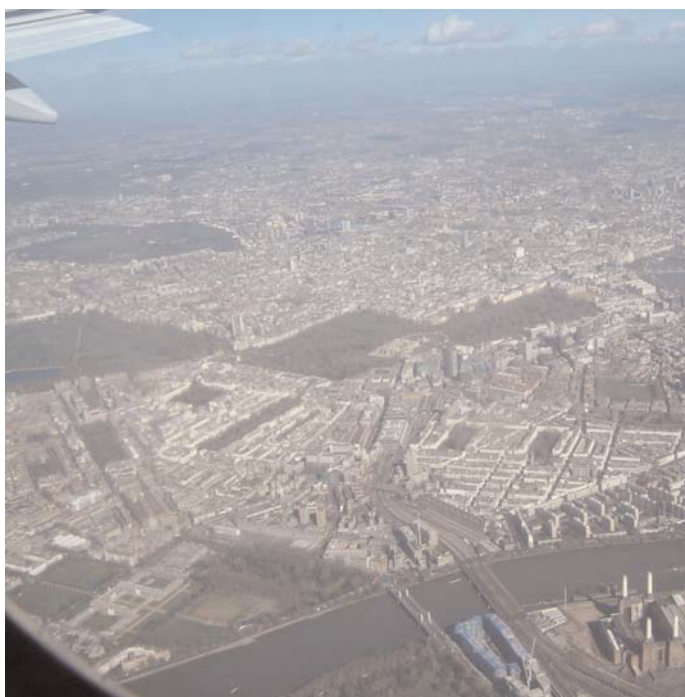
I seem to have deviated a little from the title (s) of this item but as is so often the case it is not as simple as first imagined. In my shop I was also asked about the origins of British Summer Time, (a lot of wives tales abound on this one), and as I touched on earlier, the connection of time with the difficulty of printing of timetables. And of course why do clock hands go clockwise and not anti-clockwise? But that's another story!

P.S. Almost forgot the sub title to this item.
You all know the line off by heart from the T.V. Star Trek series: "Captains Log; 289567 point 00231"
You can now tell your grandchildren that you know all about a Julian Date!

Iayn Thomas

[Thank you Ivan For a most interesting and informative article. Ed.]

From our Roving Reporter North of the Border - Dave Miller



Flying back from the States, this was the view as we came into Heathrow. Battersea in front, Buck House in the middle, Houses of Parliament and London Eye in middle right hand side and Serpentine in middle left hand side. I didn't even have to open the window to take it either!

OFF MOTORWAY SERVICES

I found this brilliant site (I expect most of you know it already), but it tells you of food, petrol and accommodations, all just 5 minutes from any motorway junction. Saves you paying those stupid motorway services charges. No its not me getting Scottish & tight with my money, but I think its a great idea.

www.5minutesaway.co.uk/

Dave Miller

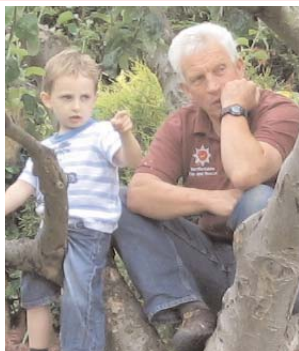


A picture in Spring - A Red Squirrel in Scotland



A Day Trip to France (A Strange Day on Green Watch)

I am not too sure if it was the morning break or at breakfast one morning that, Geoff said. " One of the daily papers were doing a day trip to France for a pound and was anyone interested in going." If I remember rightly it was the Daily Mirror and they were doing a promotion in February to improve their circulation numbers of the paper. Collect a number of tokens plus a pound per person, send them off to them and they would send us back tickets for the ferry from Doves to Calais or it may have been Boulogne, No I am sure it was Calais, it was a long time ago.



There were five takers from the watch, Geoff, Bob, Ian, Robin and myself, later on Bob said his brother Jim would like to come along, so it was decided, we would go for it. The tokens were duly collected, each person put in their pound and Geoff sent off for the tickets. The tickets arrived for our trip for the Monday the something of February, I think. We would be off duty so that would be fine.

It was decided that we would take two cars, Ian would take his car over on the ferry, Geoff would take his car down to Dover with a trailer on the back, (to bring back the spoils of the trip). Bob and Jim would go with Geoff, Robin and I would go with Ian. Meet at the fire station at 5.30a.m. to catch the 8.30 a.m. ferry from Dover to Calais. All was arranged ready for our day trip to France. See you Monday morning 5.30 don't be late was the cry as we went off duty at the end of the shift.

Monday morning arrived but on the Sunday night it had snowed, not too heavy about 125cm. (5ins. old money) had fallen through the night and had drifted in places. We all met up and set off. As Geoff was going to leave the trailer at the fire station in Dover and meet us at the ferry port they set off early. We made our way around the M25 and down the M2/A2 to Dover, the road was not too bad, we got there with little time to spare. When we got to the ferry port we checked to see if the others had arrived and seeing Geoff's car in the car park we assumed that they were already on board. So we drove on just as the ramp was being taken up. Ian parked the car and we all went up on deck to find the others. Just as we got to the rail out on deck, the boat was pulling away from the quay. It was then that we saw the others running down the quay. JUMP!! Said someone. Better not said someone else. And there they stood.

See you on the next ferry!!! We shouted as we sailed away. What went on in England while we were in France in I don't really know, but by now the tone of the day was set. Geoff, I think spoke a little French, mainly through his catering course, the rest of us not very much at all. So with him in Dover and us in Calais we had to make our own way.

On arrival in France we soon found out why the tickets were only a pound, the shops do not open on Mondays. What were we going to do until the next ferry; something to eat and drink would be a good start. That meant finding somewhere open and speaking French. I think we had, ONE OF THOSE! ONE OF THEM!!! And SOME OF THAT!!! But I am not too sure.

What do you do in a strange town when you don't speak the language, it's cold and everywhere apart from a small supermarket is shut and you are waiting for your mates on the next ferry due in at 2.30p.m? When now it is just turned 12 O'clock. Well you play cricket, using snowballs as a ball, a bollard on the quay as the stumps and what ever you can find as a bat. I must admit I do not think it will take off as an international sport.

2.30 p.m. came and went still the ferry had not arrived, we could see it on the horizon but it was not moving. It finally arrived an hour later and we met up with the others, who I think were just as surprised as we were that the shops were not open.

Well let's go to the hypermarket anyway that should be open. By now it was getting late and we had to be back at the ferry for a 6.30p.m. Sailing. This gave us about two hours to do the shopping. The hypermarket is quite a way out of the town, with the 6 of us and Geoff's shopping list all in two hours." I'm not going " said Robin. The rest of us all piled in Ian's car (a Skoda) and made our way to the store. At the store we all went off with our trolleys trying to find things to bring home. Our shopping lists varied in length mine I have to say was quite short, cheese, bread and a coffee jug to replace the one I had broken a few days earlier.

Back at the car we had 5 persons and about 4 trolleys loads of stuff. With the back seat down we could get booze and wine in, Ian in the drivers seat one in the passengers seat and one laying on the beer it would leave no room for two of us. Two said they would walk back. I cannot remember who said they would walk but three of us made our way to port, where Robin was still waiting.

They have just called, "Last passengers" he said " We have got to go and get the other two they are walking." " You haven't got time ". "Yes we have." Came the reply and back we went to find the other two. Ian and I will go back to fetch the others, you two go on board, we'll see you when we get back. With Ian driving and me looking out for the two walkers .we made our way back to the hypermarket, luckily we met them walking along the road. And with them lying on the beer in the back we made it back to the ship just as they were taking up the ramps.

"That was close." Said Robin, as we sat down in the bar. As the engines started up ready to leave, we were ready for some thing to eat we hadn't eaten anything other than the sandwich and a cup of coffee that morning. Great it was 6.30 p.m. and we were on our way back to England. That's what we through all of a sudden the engines stopped. "What's going on?" Was the murmur going around the ship? The crew has gone on strike, and there we stayed until 11.30 p.m. when the engines started again strike over we were heading for England. We arrived in Dover, we still had not had anything to eat, and so we decided to find something, which is not easy at 10'clock in the morning. At last we found a fish and chip shop, probably the worst I have eaten.

I finally got home at 3.30 a.m. Tuesday morning and sat in bed eating French bread and smelly cheese. In hindsight perhaps Monday is not the best day the go shopping in France and



Derek Gilder