

# The Coaster



The official newsletter of the Pacific Coast Owners Club U.K.

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## Midlands Coasters -The return to France

*Or The Ride of Valkeries PC Holiday continued....  
Continued from Issue 10 (January/February 2002)*

Chapter 7. During those out of the saddle moments.....

Back at the chalet, many hours had been spent perfecting our Boule technique on a gravel path, much to the amusement and interest of the French head grounds man. The second week saw Phil and Ted venture to the public Boule court. On one of these occasions the grounds man appeared and started watching, helping to score and offering advice on the rules (he doesn't speak English and we don't speak French so many gestures were used). After finishing a game we asked him if he would like to join in and Phil offered him 2 of his own Boule to play with. The grounds man muttered something and with hands waving wildly, disappeared. We thought we had insulted him and started another game when suddenly he returned with a big grin on his face, proudly clutching a very old and well-used set of Boule. The challenge began. You would have thought this was a world cup match with the Brit's sweating and questioning their ability to take on what may have been the Obi-Won Kenobi of Boule. The situation became more tense when a car full of locals, and friends of Obi, who had turned up to play on the next court became more interested in our game than their own when they realised two of the players were English playing their game on their courts. The match was close, the grounds man's technique was good and we were so relieved when his wife came through the hedge waving a tea towel and screaming something at him in French. We were thinking she was going to drag him away but she didn't and we reckon she probably said something like

"Where the bloody hell have you been, your dinner has been on the table for hours - oh you're playing Boule with those English fools, just make sure you beat them, the honour of Bidart and France rests on your shoulders!"

And off she went back through the hedge and the match continued.....

Chapter 8. The match continues.... The score was as tight as a Scotsman's jockstrap. The Brit's were leading, day old French baguettes were being raised in anger and Phil and Ted were sweating. Was this the pressure of the match or the thought of how fast they might need to run if they beat the French?

Obi Wan marched up the court to survey the position, kicked his boules towards the garden (its very hard to kick your own boules!) turned (limping) and congratulated us. Britain was again victorious just like 1966. The spectators were noble in defeat and the baguettes were sheathed to be used another day. We staggered back to the chalet drunk in our victory only to find the others sprawled out sleeping on the porch, but we soon woke them up and spent the rest of the afternoon recounting every precious moment. They enjoyed listening to it the first time but by the tenth the snoring returned.

The next morning found Phil and Ted still on the porch and still debating the finer moments of their victory. When the others surfaced they tried to distract us with talk of swimming and surfing so we bought some body boards and power flippers and then tried to figure out how we were going to carry them on the bike - aren't pillions useful! All kitted up and ready to leave the bloody grounds man turns up smiling and waving at us. He probably thought we were going home, but he was wrong. The PC handles well considering the wind resistance of the pillion carrying a body board, but Ted found gear changes a bit hard wearing his power flippers. Biarritz is surfing country because of the strong tides so we decided to find a beach with several lifeguards on, just in case. Having found a suitable position on the beach and leaving the babes oiling themselves and ogling the talent, Phil and Ted flexed their six packs then decided to leave them cooling

under the towel, and slunk off into the surf only to be chased out of the water by a lifeguard because Power flippers were not allowed in the swimming area marked by the green flags. Babes and six packs were repositioned, Phil and Ted tried again this time with the body boards and back he came again, this time to tell us that we could not use a body board in the surfing area marked by the blue flags. This was rather hard work as neither Phil nor Ted can see bugger all without their glasses and were now paranoid about going in the water at all. We thought of asking where we were allowed to paddle but it was too embarrassing so we all sat and got sunburnt instead. That evening as many others, was spent in one of the splendid restaurants Biarritz has to offer and one that hadn't heard of Phil and Ted's Boule victory.

#### Chapter 9. Operation Toilet Seat.

The chalet was well furnished, equipped and clean and having paid an 800 Franc deposit everything was well until one evening Tina came out of the toilet clutching the toilet seat to her bosom having snapped the plastic fittings. Keith and Val were dispatched to the public showers equipped with soap, towel, screwdriver, pliers and broken toilet seat fittings. Their mission was to remove good fittings and to leave the broken fittings in a public toilet in such a way as to not arouse suspicion. This proved to be a success the first time, but when Tina came out the following evening clutching another broken toilet seat and the mission had to be repeated we were concerned that the French owners may start thinking that someone was taking the p~#s, or as the French might say le oui oui.

Later that evening Delta Force 2 was dispatched under cover of darkness wearing motorcycle balaclavas on another replacement mission. This couldn't be covered by a towel and was far more dangerous. Phil (big as a house) Manton had demolished a plastic patio chair. Others were stacked outside empty chalets but which ones were empty! This required the stealth of a snake, the speed of a cheetah and the cunning of the fox, so why on earth we sent Ted god only knows, but he managed it and surprise, surprise, we got our deposit back. We were quite worried when the only place they checked in the chalet was the toilet.

#### Chapter 10. Homeward Bound

All too soon our holiday in Biarritz was at an end and all that was left was a 2- day journey back to Cherbourg. Whilst some of you with iron butts may have done this trip in a shorter time, we were planning to take in some sights on the way back with an overnight stop at Angers. On arriving at the peage at Bayonne the thought of the expensive journey ahead was lost when we only had to pay 12 Francs per bike, which was eagerly passed over. Phil and Val were discussing how cheap this was from Bayonne to Angers, only to find that twice round a roundabout and 6 miles up the road the peage finished and we were back on a normal dual carriageway to Bordeaux. More peage booths appeared, this time tickets were issued and we continued to Angers at a steady pace, not seeing more than 30 vehicles on the whole journey. We were quite happy to pay about £12 for all 3 bikes for 645 kilometres of hassle free riding.

Our stop had been booked at Angers at the Formule 1 and we arrived to find the manager had reserved parking spaces for the bikes directly outside our rooms, even though Phil almost ran his pet poodle over. Washed and refreshed we needed to eat, and after much confusing discussion with the manager and his wife, he arrived at the front door in his car and gave all of us a lift into town (2 journeys).

The following morning, after a pleasant evening in Angers we said farewell to our hosts, dog and most of their family who had come to wave us off.

The 300 kilometres or so from Angers to Cherbourg seemed to take an eternity compared to the previous days' ride, French roads although very pretty, can be painfully slow.

We arrived in Cherbourg as miserable as the weather and fell into the nearest café to get away from the rain. Madame and the cook behind the bar appeared to be having a competition for the longest attached cigarette ash as they worked, but we stayed and had one of the best meals of the holiday (with no ash!).

With bellies full, we boarded the boat, ditched our gear in the cabins, found the bar and began discussing where to go in 2002 (Phil and Ted found some poor soul to tell their victory story to).

The End.

## Your Response.

May I say a big thank you for all those who have sent me articles for The Coaster, if your article does not appear yet, be patient it will in the future. It will save you from the boring stories I warned you of in the last edition.

## N.I. Club-Euro Tour.

Ian Whithorn of the Irish PC owners club has asked me to ask if any of our members would be interested in a tour of Europe. Any interested parties can contact Ian via their website or by writing to him at an address I can supply.

### Ted and Phil's Handy Hints for First Timers Abroad

Take your own straps for tying your bike down on the ferry. The boat rope is rather grubby and the staff don't like PC's because of all of the Tupperware.

Rolling your clothes rather than folding them saves space and doesn't crease as badly.

Have a go at some French, however bad you are, as they seem to appreciate the effort and are more likely to be helpful.

Keep your petrol tank full especially at evenings and weekends. Petrol stations that are open can sometimes be quite hard to find.

Try the Formule 1 hotel chain or similar. They are basic but clean and cheap, but try to book in advance as they are very popular in France and fill up quickly.

Don't be worried about the cost of the peage (toll roads). What you save in time and stress is well worth the pennies.

Be aware that the French just frighten their meat with a lighter. If you would rather it was not running around your plate and are squeamish about the sight of blood ask for steak Anglaise.

The French toilets (hole in the floor) are interesting when wearing leathers. If you don't feel up to the challenge use the disabled loos.

Dover to Calais is short and fast, but if you have long journeys on both sides of the water, try Portsmouth to Cherbourg overnight.

Don't worry too much about road numbers; you are often safer navigating by town names, as these don't seem to change as frequently.

In Spain, only the tourists seem to stop at traffic lights. Beware of the local drivers even when your lights are on green.

In France and Spain, when on foot be very careful at pedestrian crossings. The traffic will only stop

when you are on them, so it's often better to treat them as an ordinary road.

Try the cheap wine, it can be very good, but sometimes a bit scary, but at the price of a can of Coke, who cares.

As long as you are not causing an obstruction or danger you can park almost anywhere in France. One restaurant owner was even willing to move the tables and chairs so we could park undercover.

Take old towels / T-shirts etc., and bin them for your return journey - more space to bring back important things.

If you like tea - take your own teabags.

## Cause for Concern.

At a recent Midland Group meeting the topic of organised runs was discussed and the fact that the organisers could be held culpable in the event of a person attending the run being involved in a collision. Apparently there was an article about this matter in the BMF magazine, outlining the possible repercussions. It would appear that the club may have to take out some form of insurance to protect itself against civil action in the event of such an occurrence. Your views are appreciated.

## Optimate.

Having problems getting your bike started after having not used it for a while. Well Optimate could be the solution. Mike Dean, informs me he has been using an Optimate battery condition monitor on his bike for the last 18 months with out any problems. The manufacturers advertise in most bike magazines and I believe they supply all the connection leads etc.

## **Four Candles? Fork Handles? No Fork Seals!!!!**

Whilst thumbing through on eof my bike mags the other day I came across an advert for leakproof fork seals!!! Lifetime guarantee!!!! Sounds too good to be true I thought. I bet they don't do them for the PC? So I rang the suppliers a firm called Motorhaus on 01256 704909.

Yes they do stock them for the PC, 2 different types, standard and a new rubber/moly blend which they claim reduces friction (ooh Matron) by a further 25 per cent.

References numbers and prices as follows;-

Standard - Ref. No. 7247 - £16.99

Pro-moly - Ref. No. 5247 - £19.99

## **Irish O.C. Rally.**

Ian Whithorn has been pleased at the response he has received for the Irish Rally, He urges anyone interested in attending to book quickly as places are going fast for the ferry and accommodation.

## **Irish O.C. Affiliation.**

Ian Whithorn has also stated that the N.I. Owners Club would like to become affiliated to ours. I have at this time said it would be something for discussion at our next rally. Any one with a particular view point can either raise it then or in writing to myself or any of the other committee members. Personally I feel it would be an asset to have them.