



Issue 1 January 2010

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Welcome to the first edition of Massif (pronounced Massive!) News, THE newsletter to get you through to August with all your training needs and information. Massif News will be a monthly publication, by e-mail and on the Massif pages of the County website.

Where are we going then?



Aveyron, with Rodez at its centre, is perhaps the least-known département in France, one of the biggest and most sparsely populated. "Even in the summer," local people say, "there are still more cows here than tourists." Few have heard of it unless they remember François Truffaut's film *The Wild Child* which was based on the true story of Victor of Aveyron, a young boy who was found in 1798 in the forest, hirsute, naked, and mute. This is la France profonde, the heartland, which Parisians seldom visit and cannot understand, where there is some of the world's most stunning, geologically diverse countryside, much of it unspoiled. Aveyron is in the rugged Midi-Pyrénées region in the south, and

part of the Massif Central, a huge elevation formed by fire and ice. Peaceful lakeside resorts are an hour's drive from vertiginous peaks, waterfalls, and mind-blowing chasms, under which flow subterranean rivers. Deep valleys alternate with eerie and vast limestone plateaus, or segue into undulating meadows, peat bogs, and hot springs. Some of Aveyron's caves are big enough to shelter the Rodez cathedral.

There are a thousand castles, more than a thousand megalithic tombs, innumerable Gallo-Roman ruins, and some of the most remarkable Romanesque architecture in Europe, Aveyron has five bastides, planned walled towns that were the first urban experiments, built in the 13th century, and 304 communes (more or less equivalent to counties), some a mere handful of houses hanging on to a cliff, others nestled among the caves where prehistoric people lived, still others clustered near thermal baths or scattered downhill from a 12th-century fortress. Ten villages in Aveyron (the highest concentration in any department) meet the 30-odd criteria required to be officially included among the "Most Beautiful Villages of France."



We will be based at Millau, the site of one of the most remarkable constructions this century, the Viaduct of Millau on the A75 motorway; the final link in the French motorway system leading to the south and to Spain. This great engineering

feat was designed and overseen by British architect Norman Foster. The world's tallest bridge, the highest point of this multi-span cable-stayed viaduct reaches 343 meters above the valley floor.

We will be camping at Les Rivages, on the outskirts of Millau, on the side of the River Dourbie, a tributary of the Tarn, a popular canoeing river, ideal for expeditions; you can investigate the facilities at www.campinglesrivages.com

Health and Travel Insurance



You will need to have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) (it looks like this picture). This provides evidence of your entitlement to treatment, if required, within the French National Health Service. To obtain your card go to the NHS website www.ehic.org.uk and fill in the online form; your card should arrive in about a week.

In addition we will be arranging health and travel insurance through Unity Insurance Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Scout Association. A summary of the health cover (in addition to that provided under the EHIC) is as follows:

- Personal Injury – up to £5,000
- Medical and Emergency repatriation expenses - up to £10,000,000.
- Hospital stay benefit abroad - up to £400

The main items covered in the Travel section of the policy are as follows:

- Personal Belongings - up to £1,000 (**limit of £250 for valuables/£250 any one article, pair or set**)*.
- Money - up to £1,000 for Scout Party leaders, £200 for other Insured Persons aged 16 or over and £150 if aged 15 or under
- Credit Card Misuse - up to £1,000
- Loss of Passport - up to £1,000
- Disruption - up to £1,000 for any one journey (maximum £75,000 for all Insured Persons any one Journey)
- Travel delay - up to £60
- Missed Departure - up to £500

- Personal Liability - up to £2,000,000

* Please note the limits on personal property; think carefully about bringing items such as digital cameras, phones, etc. that might exceed the values above.

You can find a summary of the key facts on the Unity Insurance Services website at

<http://www.unityins.co.uk/scouts/documents/PAMedicalPolicySummary.doc>

Passports

Everyone will, of course, need a passport for this trip so, if you already have one, get it out and check the expiry date. If you don't have a passport, or it expires before the end of the expedition then you should start the application or extension process shortly in order to ensure that you have your new passport in plenty of time. You can obtain full details on how to do this at www.direct.gov.uk Travel and Transport, Passports

If you will be applying for a 10 year adult passport (over 16) for the first time, bear in mind that you may be asked to attend an interview; our "local" interview office is at the Elephant and Castle in London and the process can easily take 6 weeks or so.

Help! I don't speak French!

[Pronunciation of the phrase is in brackets]

Do you speak English? - **Parlez vous anglais?** [par-lay-voo zan-glai]

Good morning / day (used until about 6pm) - **Bonjour** [bon-joor]

Good evening (used after 6pm until you go to bed) - **Bonsoir** [bon-swahr]

Good night (used ONLY when you are going to bed) - **Bon nuit** [bon nui]

How much is it? - **Ça coûte combien?** [sa koote kohm-byern]

Yes, please - **Oui, S'il vous plait** [wee, seel voo play]

No, thank you - **Non, merci** [non, mair-see]

And just in case:

AH LA VACHE!

Oh, my Cow! (English translation - Good God!)

Meet the Leader Team

Each month we will feature a short profile of a member of our leader team.

Bob Meldrum - Expedition Leader



Bob Meldrum

I moved to Newbury in 1989 with my wife and children when the Health & Safety Executive transferred me to London. Currently, I manage a team of Health & Safety Inspectors covering Berkshire & Oxfordshire.

I have been in Scouting since I was a Cub and I am currently the Assistant County Commissioner for Activities in Berkshire. As a Venture Scout I gained my Queen's Scout Award before going on to Cambridge where I was an active member of the University Scout & Guide Club. There followed both Section and District roles in St Helens and then Norwich before my move to Newbury.

Most of my experience has been in the Scout section and in leader training. Over the years I have been involved in running camps of all sizes as well as helping at several

International Jamborees. I led the County's adventurous activities expedition to Spain in 2006 and the French Alps in 2008; this will be my 5th major international expedition.

My active interests include sailing and hill walking and recently I have been learning to paddle a kayak.

Expedition Training Programme

Watch this space over the coming months for details of our D of E training programme and of the kayak and canoe training evenings at the Wokingham Waterside Centre.

We will also be providing suggestions for the kit you will need to take with you.

Payment Details

A reminder of the payments schedule:
£50.00 with confirmation
£100.00 per month; January thro' June

By mail to:
Massif 2010, 52 Loosen Drive, Maidenhead, SL6 3UT
Cheques payable to: Berkshire Scouts Expeditions

By electronic transfer to:
Barclays, Sort Code: 20-59-14
Account Name: Berkshire Scouts Expeditions, Acct No: 40801607
Please use the participants' name as a reference and advise by e-mail to bill.carter@ukgateway.net

Should you wish to discuss the payment schedule please e-mail and I will call you back.

For any comments, questions or feedback on this newsletter please e-mail bill.carter@ukgateway.net