The Towns Times

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We have been invaded

By our reporter Keith Towns

And they came in their hundreds

Our peaceful little piece of Portugal has been invaded; by the retired.

There is a Camping and Caravan Club Rally due here in a few days time. People who go on these rallies have spare time, no dependants, no need to work and like a regimental lifestyle. Some of them have come early to get the best spots, which just happen to be around us.

These are experienced caravaners. They get their outfit perfectly aligned with the sun and then stake out their pitch with washing line. If I had known a washing line could be used as such a weapon I would have positioned mine with much greater care.

Everything is cleaned on a daily basis. Caravans, clothes and awnings are made pristine every morning. As I type I can see female underwear that no man under 60 should be exposed to.

We now spend our time continually repeating, good morning, afternoon, evening or what a lovely day. A walk to the water tap used to take a few minutes. I can now be gone for hours.

I am learning the art of 'small talk'. This is a language I have tried to avoid in the past as it seems to have no positive outcome for either party. But give me a pensioner with something to lean against and I can discuss the merits of English car wax over the cheaper Portuguese alternative for at least 30 minutes, repeating each salient point at least 3 times.

And this is just the advance party….

The Environment

Before we left England it could be considered that I am not environmentally friendly. My idea of being kind to the planet was to remember to water the grape vine.

You see I am a little sceptical that some requests for saving the environment are really economical and someone's pockets are being lined somewhere along in the process.

For example, when I worked for BT the coffee shop (which is independent) had a big sign up saying 'RECYCLE YOUR COFFEE STIRER' and had a place to put the stirrer in when you had used it.

The paper cup that the coffee came in goes straight in the bin, as did the china cups they refused to use following staff cuts as they had to be washed up by someone. But these plastic stirrers, that they have to buy in especially as the spoons are not long enough, are thought to be so essential to the planet they deserve to be washed and used again (I know this is extreme and I am grateful to all those who do make the effort).



The fit (and green) family

Anyway, enough of my ramblings, back to the story. I am now converted to a 'Save the Water' campaigner. Needless to say, I will not be joining Greenpeace or the Green Party, I will just campaign in our caravan.

Every drop of water we use has to be carried to the caravan by me. Not only that, I have to carry it away again.

If anyone has a glass of water I will have to get water to wash the cup, carry the washing up waste away AND take the drink away once it has worked its way through the person's body. Not only that, but I have to supply the water to wash the body as well as take the dirty water away!

So, I have created a few rules:

1. If you have to drink, sweat as much as possible afterwards. Evaporation will reduce the amount expelled and may aid in washing off muddy faces.

2. Eat light foods. Human waste is very heavy and I do not want to get a bad back.

3. Enjoy drinks as if they are a fine wine - sip gently, gargle and spit out in the bin (Debbie empties the bins).

4. Join in the pensioner plod to the site toilets. These are frequent and slow. On the way you can discuss such topics as June and her dodgy hip, or Mike's funny prostate.

So, save water all of you. That is unless you are connected to the mains……

The Pie Man and his friend the Bread Man

There is a tradition in the campsite that everyone gets a nickname. It's a little like being in the fire service, without the pay, or the engines, or the fires.

We have met the pie man who takes orders for home made pies, the sky man who sets up your Sky dish for €10, the bald man who is folically challenged and the bread man who does not sell bread.

We now have our own nicknames. It all happened when I decided to dig a small trench around the awning to stop the flooding we had experienced on Christmas Day.

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It was our sunniest day yet and there I was, digging away with my newly purchased shovel.

Bread and bald man walked past and asked me about my Dutch past. I required further explanation before I could feel insulted and it soon came. They explained that as I was building a water barrier they had named me Dick Van Dyke.

It got worse. They took Debbie with them as they were going to view the inside of a holiday chalet. Apart from wanting to sell Debbie to the locals for 6 camels (apparently the camel market is very depressed at the moment so they can get a bargain), they decided it would be easier if my nickname was grouped to include us both.

So I am Dick and Debbie is my Dyke. Never mind, we are only here for another two months.

Incidentally, there are quite a few 1960's pop stars or their offspring here. The other night at the Karaoke we were treated to Crispian St Peter singing 'you were on my mind'.

Sorry but…

We are experiencing absolutely fantastic weather. As I type I am sitting in shorts with no T-shirt in the sun. It pops up over a hill at around 8.30am and sets at 5.30pm.

There is not a cloud in the sky and no wind. The only problem is I get dew on my feet first thing in the morning as I wear open sandals.

It does get a little chilly after the sun has set, so trousers and a light jacket are the order of the evening. But that is more than made up for the next morning when you wake up and see a blue sky.

As I said, sorry……

I have succumbed

Those of you who read newsletter number 2 will have seen my article on satellite dishes.

Well the lure of being able to boast about the size of your dish, how many channels you have and how quickly you set it up has got to me.



New and Old

I am now the proud owner of a 1.2 meter dish. Women look at me with a twinkle in their eye as they pass my caravan admiring my proud beast. Unfortunately their eye is either false or has cataracts as they are pensioners on the Rally.

Did you know?

A Dead Ringer is someone who looks exactly like another. But did you also know where the saying comes from? In medieval times the medical profession was not as good as it is now. Many people who were in a coma or deep state of unconsciousness were buried only to be dug up later with their fingers worn to the bone where they had tried to claw their way out.

On finding out about this, the gentry buried their loved ones with a string attached to a bell above the grave. This actually saved peoples lives and upon being seen on the street startled acquaintances would say 'That looks like Jack Jones, I thought he was dead' for which the reply would be 'Yes, he must be a dead ringer'.

Gallery



Dinner made by the children



Home made paddling pool



Fresh fish for dinner



Ready for the party

All the best

Keith, Debbie, James and Hazel