

### July 2004

Welcome to the Summer 2004 SHOT newsletter, and I am now back on dry land. It has been a busy few months for Donna and I, and a few other members of SHOT with weddings, births, birthdays and a few trips aswell. Please note Chris and Rachel's party for new born Emily in September(see Dates for the Diary), and Donna and I will be holding a house warming BBQ on the 14<sup>th</sup> August as a housewarming party and your all invited.

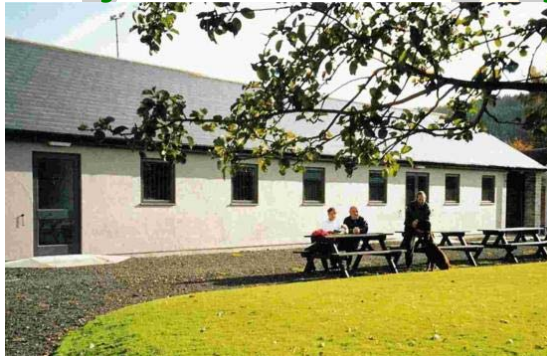
### Subs

Its that time of year, the yearly subs, again like last year they are £4 per person, please send cheques to myself, or I will see you in Wales this October.

Subs are normally spent on subbing less popular/more expensive trips to keep costs down, also tea/coffee/biscuits/cakes, and finally a small amount on admin(web hosting/printing/postage).

[Nigel](#)

### Friday 22nd October - Sunday 24th October Brecon,



Brecon Beacons 'Student showed a superb, all-encompassing understanding of the subject material. Questions were answered succinctly and lucidly, with in-depth analysis, a wealth of appropriate references and examples from an obvious rich and experienced background. An ability such as this is extremely rare to find, and one which would naturally lead to a very successful career either in the chosen field or in

senior management. Truly excellent.' Yeah, well, we can all share Yvonne's dream of completing another set of exams in time form, and help her to commiserate on the passing of yet another birthday. A weekend trip to help Yvonne let her hair down and overcome a double whammy of traumatic experiences with Bailey's Nos. 1, 2, 3 etc.

The Canal Barn Bunkhouse on the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal near Brecon Town Centre is the venue for the Autumn SHOT trip. This is a purpose built, fully equipped bunkhouse including 6 bedrooms (1x6, 4x4 and 1 x2). Make sure you bring a sleeping bag. The bunkhouse has a large sheltered garden with duck pond. Despite its name it is not canal side, but lies behind the owner's house called Ty Camlas. Further details can be accessed from their website [www.canal-barn.co.uk](http://www.canal-barn.co.uk).

To reach the bunkhouse follow the A40 from Abergavenny and meet the Brecon by-pass at the large roundabout with the A470 to Builth Wells on the east side of Brecon. Follow the old main road, now the B4601, towards Brecon Town Centre and

watch out for Safeways and a garage on the left. Immediately before Safeways turn left between it and a house and shortly cross a canal bridge. Turn right in front of Ty Camlas and then left before some houses and then immediately left again to reach the bunkhouse. Grid Reference 052279.



Rising to the south of Brecon are the Brecon Beacons with summits like Pen y Fan (2906ft) forming part of an impressive scalloped escarpment overlooking Brecon and the Usk Valley and dipping down to Merthyr Tydfil and the Welsh valleys to the south. Further east are the much less frequented mountains of the Fforest Fawr group, and still further east Black Mountain and other outliers of the

Brecon Beacons National Park. Canal side walking towards Talybont and its reservoir provide low level alternatives.

Opportunities for kids include pony trekking etc at an activity farm less than three miles away, and a 'play barn' at a caravan park about one mile away. McDonalds, Burger King, Pizza Hut and other family friendly rip-off joints are located in or around the town centre. There is also the regimental museum of the South Wales Borderers made famous by their exploits during the 19th century Zulu Wars and also by Michael Caine in the best film of all time. And not a lot of people know that. The grown ups have a selection of 15 pubs in the town (nearest 400 yds) and alternative eating establishments.

To book a place or room please

Send Gustav the usual £5 deposit.

The cost per person per night is £12.50.

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## Scotland New Year 2004-2005

### NEW YEAR TRIP 2004/5

Since we've been to the western side of Scotland for the last three New Year trips I decided that it was time we headed a bit further east - and not too far north - so this year's trip is to a bunkhouse called the Adventurers Escape in Weem, less than a mile outside Aberfeldy in Perthshire.



The dates are 27th Dec 2004 - 2nd Jan 2005, 6 nights (Mon. 3rd will be a public holiday since the 1st falls on a Saturday).

You can find full details of the accommodation at <http://www.adventurers-escape.co.uk> and <http://www.hostel-scotland.co.uk/hostels/index.asp?ID=136>, but here are the vital statistics:

- Comfortable new bunkhouse (just completed in January) with a dining area big enough to comfortably seat 20, and, according to [www.canoeslalom.co.uk](http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk), "great drying rooms and excellent facilities"

- Dorms in bunkhouse (all described as very spacious): 2 x 4-5 beds; 1 x 8 beds; 1 x 2-3 beds (2-3 means a double and a single)
- Additional accommodation (but unfortunately no separate kitchen facilities) available in studio: 1 x 3-4 beds and 1 x 3 beds - good for families.
- Pub next door and another 400m away, not to mention the wider choice in Aberfeldy

Besides the obvious mountain walking, the area is good for rafting, mountain and road biking, canoeing and rock climbing.

Local attractions for the less energetic among us include the Scottish Crannog Centre (a reconstructed Iron Age dwelling), Castle Menzies, the village of Fortingall, the Falls of Moness, Aberfeldy Distillery, a restored water mill and Cluny Gardens. (I can't guarantee that these will all be open when we're there though!) Pitlochry is only eight miles away, Crieff 17 and the relative metropolis of Perth 23.

The accommodation is perhaps a little on the pricey side, as bunkhouses go, but we are getting six nights for the price of five and studio beds, usually more expensive, for the same price as bunkhouse beds. It's £75 per person for 6 nights over New Year, or £15 per night if you don't stay for the entire duration. Price includes bedlinen. I did try to negotiate an additional discount for children but unfortunately wasn't successful, as each one still takes up a bed (unless in a travel cot).

At the last count I had a total of roughly 20 people who said they were more likely than not to come along, including most of our family members. Please email or call me ([lynne@tanukihouse.com](mailto:lynne@tanukihouse.com) / home 0121 744 2427 / mobile 07720 707749) to confirm your interest; a £20 deposit sent to me at 269 Baldwins Lane, Birmingham B28 0RF will secure a bed. Families might want to get in quickly with those deposits to make sure you get the best rooms for your needs! I've already had to put down a £300 deposit and the balance is due by December 1st so I'll be looking for payment in full before then.

For those who want more general local information, try these sites:

<http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/towns/townfirst140.html>  
<http://www.scotland247.co.uk/aberfeldy2.htm>  
<http://www.scottish-towns.co.uk/perthshire/aberfeldy/>  
<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/areakill/> and  
<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/aberfeldy/aberfeldy/index.html>  
<http://www.perthshire-scotland.co.uk/aberfeldy2.htm>

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## Dates for the Diary

### September 18<sup>th</sup> 2004

Hi Folks.

As you probably know, on April 17th, Rachel and I had a baby girl - Emily.

To celebrate this event, we will be having a welcome party for Emily on Saturday 18th September. Date - 3.30pm onwards Saturday 18th September. Food to be served from sometime after 5pm . Address - 16 New Farm Avenue, Bromley Kent, BR2 0TX Phone 07932 621860/1 (Mobiles) - 020 8402 7047 (Home)

Now, I know Kent is a long way to come for everyone to come, and suspect that many of the guys may need some additional inducement to travel all this way, SO:-

By a strange co-incidence, this is also the weekend of the Biggin Hill Air Fare. It's only 6 miles from where I live, and is the biggest privately run air fair in Europe. This years one promises

to be especially good, since as well as the Red Arrows, the US Air Force display team are also there.

Check it out via the link below:- <http://www.airdisplaysint.co.uk/>

If you would like to come, please let us know so we can cater accordingly. Overnight accommodation is available, courtesy of our floor and sofas.

Hope to see you there,

Chris and Rachel

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## Congratulations

### Mark and Zoe

As avid readers of this newsletter you will see that Mark and Zoë had respective Stag and Hen nights, this means they are married, so congrats to another SHOT/Salford Hiking romance making it down the aisle, or in their case a waterfall in Hawaii



### Chris, Rachel and now little Emily

Congratulations to Chris and Rachel on the arrival of the latest SHOT junior member, Emily Lilian McCarthy born on the 17<sup>th</sup> April. They will be holding a party on the 18<sup>th</sup> September in her honour, see Dates for the Diary above for more info



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## Reminiscences of Pembrokeshire

### *By an Old Git*

As only those SHOT members who've been incommunicado in an Amazon rainforest for the last year won't know, I was 40 on June 20<sup>th</sup>. As this coincided with the usual SHOT midsummer trip it seemed a good idea to combine this with an event to celebrate this milestone.

After a certain amount of "consultation" it was decided that we would stick with the original plan, which was to take a 3-day trip to the Pembrokeshire Coast. We were booked in

to Caerhafod Lodge near the village of Llanrhian from Thursday to Sunday (my actual birthday).

After a certain amount of confusion over who was actually coming, Gustav's desire to watch the England – Switzerland game and the photocopier in Tesco's we finally left Marple just as England scored their first goal. We arrived at Gobowen to find Mr Postans, looking suitably miserable and lonely, stood outside a pub. "Why didn't you go inside to wait, Neil?" we asked. "I thought that if I went in and bought a pint you'd turn up 2 minutes later". A few minutes later Neil was banging on the inside of the car window and shouting, apparently at a young lady walking down the pavement. "One of my colleagues" he claimed. After a pleasant meal at Berriew, near Welshpool, we reached Aberystwyth at 10 p.m. We then passed a sign saying "Fishguard 65". "Where we're staying is 10 miles beyond that" said Gus. No last orders at the pub then. We finally arrived at midnight to find that most other people had also arrived late. In fact Mark and Anna were so concerned at the complete absence of anyone but themselves at 8:30 that they phoned up Andy to check if they'd got the right weekend.

Breaking my usual habits I woke up on Friday morning at 9 in an empty dorm. I reached the kitchen a few minutes later to be greeted with comments of the "glad you've decided to join us" variety. I was then informed that everyone who hadn't already left would be on the northbound bus, which departed at 9:42. A mad scramble then followed which culminated in me running down the drive of the lodge with the ingredients for sandwiches in my bag and a half-eaten croissant in my mouth. The plan, recommended by Mr Rees (the proprietor of the barn), was to take the bus to Strumble Head and walk back along the coast path finishing up in the Sloop Inn at Porthgain, a mile from where we were staying. This was, according to Mr Rees, a 4 to 4½ hour walk with plenty of stops to admire the view. Friday would also be the ideal day to do it, he said, as the forecast for Saturday wasn't too good. The bus journey took forever, as the route appeared to take it along every road and past every house in northern Pembrokeshire. When finally we arrived at Strumble Head, Gus left to do his own circular walk and 6 of us set off back along the coast. To start with the sun shone and I was able to assemble my sandwiches whilst we all admired the glorious scenery. As we moved southwards it got gloomier and gloomier until by the time we reached Trefin (pronounced Trevine), 5 hours after we'd left Strumble Head, it was raining. At this point we decided to cut the walk short and take the road back to the Lodge. Mr Rees then made the mistake of showing his face, allowing Mr Baker to ask a series of pointed questions about his expertise in estimating walk timings and weather forecasting. We then remembered we'd said we would meet Gus in the Sloop and Chris Musson volunteered to go down and meet him (it was a tough job but someone had to do it, Chris).

Slowly everyone else arrived back from bird watching, Coasteering & cycling to be greeted by copies of my fiendishly difficult 40<sup>th</sup> birthday quiz, of which more later. The bird watchers (Mark, Anna and Bernie) had tried to visit the island of Skomer, south of St. David's, but had failed because the sea was too rough for the ferry to cross. We decided to spend Friday evening in the Sloop – causing me to worry that Eddie Austin, making his first appearance on a SHOT trip in 10 years, wouldn't find us. A series of abortive mobile phone and text messages followed before I solved the lack of signal problem by resorting to that triumph of 1930's technology, a phone box. Eddie and the other Friday arrivals found us successfully though the non-arrival of the advertised D. Bagnall wasn't explained until I read an email he'd sent on Thursday on Monday morning. Also in my inbox was a note from Donna asking if it was all right if Justine came. She turned up anyway and occupied Darren's bed.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny, staying like this all day, and after Eddie had arrived from his B&B in Trefin, I, Gus, Andy and Eddie set off for St. David's whilst most of the others had decided on a walk along the coast to the north of St. David's. After a short discussion in the car park three of us decided that Gus's walk was too long in too little time. Its promoter set off with warnings about being left behind if he didn't get back by quarter to six ringing in his ears. The rest of us opted for a more leisurely walk along the coast to the south of St. David's. Eddie, who had been telling us how little he'd been out walking on account of his wrecked knees, scampered off into the distance leaving Andy and myself in his wake. Along the way we got an opportunity to witness Coasteering at first hand. This

confirmed my initial reaction when Nigel had said he was going to try it - "no chance". A group of about ten people were stood on top of a rock at the bottom of a cliff. They were then expected to jump off the rock and fall about 15 ft into the water. Everyone did this, except one - who was left standing on the rock - "that'd be me" I thought. Just before we reached Whitesand Bay we met Gus who was, for once, making good progress. We spent a few minutes chatting before going our separate ways. "That's cost me 10 minutes - see you at 5 to" was Mr Dobrzynski's parting shot. He finally made it back at 5 past.

Arriving back at the barn I had a chance to check up on how people were getting along with the quiz and Nick and Susie had a chance to check up on the joys of parenthood first hand when young Master Gilder was sick all over his mum to the barely concealed glee of his big sister. A quick shower and a change of clothes and we were ready for the off. Birthday boy managed to get a lift with Nick and Susie (as Susie couldn't drink on account of her condition) while everyone else had to walk the mile to the Artramont Arms for my birthday meal. A decent meal was followed with the answers to the quiz.

There were questions for every year from 1964 to 2004. In order to try and give the younger entrants a chance (and to ensure Gus didn't have a runaway victory) I'd handicapped the quiz causing some people to worry they'd not manage to get positive marks. A certain amount of collusion between entrants ensured this didn't occur although the person who thought Gary Lineker had won the Golden Boot at Italia 90 managed to get his incorrect answer onto nearly every sheet (The correct answer, incidentally, was Salvatore "Toto" Schillachi). Unfortunately I'd also made an error on a multiple choice question about Bob Willis's bowling figures at Headingley in 1981 when the correct answer (8-43) didn't appear. Messrs Postans & McLoughlin managed to spot this and get themselves extra marks. The answer to the 1993 question: - "If the Rev A.E. Robertson is No. 1, J. Rooke Corbett No. 2, and No. 284 is unknown, who is No. 1146?" wasn't very amused when told that he hadn't got the bonus mark for spelling his own surname correctly. When the marks were added up there was a tie at the top between Neil and Chris Turton. A tiebreak question resolved the matter in Chris's favour and he selected the bottle of Sangrantino di Montefalco as his prize leaving Neil with the M&S vintage Champagne and third place man Tim with a bottle of red. The booby prizes (a 93p bottle of Tesco sparkling Perry and four cans of the legendary Tesco Value bitter) went to Mark & Zoë and Justine. Yvonne missed out on the opportunity to win anything as your correspondent forgot to give her a quiz sheet.

Then came the bit I wasn't expecting. Gus had arranged a quiz "Who wants to be a Juliannaire" for me. The prizes were increasingly valuable miniature bottles of Whisky starting off with a Famous Grouse and ending up with a Highland Park. Some of the questions were somewhat obscure (e.g. The score in a FA Cup matching involving Rochdale in 1927) but it soon became obvious that members of the audience had been briefed as to the answers and that, even if my lifelines were used up, Tecwen Whittock style coughing would be used. I've now got ten more miniatures in my collection.

Sunday was another sunny day and most of us had time to stop off and take a stroll round Dinas Head. Afterwards we dined in an excellent little Inn there on such delights as pan-fried scallops in garlic butter washed down with home made lemonade. Gustav also put in an appearance, in the middle of a walk from Fishguard, before spending the next week walking along the coast from Cardigan to Portmadog. We all then set off on the long journey home.

I arrived at work on Monday morning to find an enormous banner above my desk, balloons & a large number of (not terribly flattering) photographs of me plastered over seemingly every vertical surface in the building. I'm still finding "40" confetti in my desk & computer.

Thanks again to everyone who came and made it such an enjoyable weekend.

**Julian**

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## The Post Wedding Hen Night

### The Stagettes Hit Shropshire – Donna reports



The Law of the Stagettes

"Well", I said to Yvonne, if the boys are marking the occasion I think we cannot pass by the opportunity to help Zed celebrate the prestigious occasion of a SHOT wedding, even if it is after the great event!! In that case we had better get organising Yvonne said, well volunteered I said, you better get inviting, oh and don't forget to pass the idea by Zed!

One sunny afternoon a few weeks later I get a call from Yvonne. Right all booked, have paid a deposit etc, excellent I say, can't wait!! There's one more thing I forgot to mention, what's this, I shall be in Cambodia on that weekend!!! So if you wouldn't mind taking over the organising!! Agggghh knew it would all backfire somewhere, me an organising trips!!!??? Haven't organised a hiking trip since, well I had people to do it for me!,

All the essentials purchased and a Justine collected from the station, off we set, our destination, a bunk barn just on the outskirts of Bishops Castle in Sunny Shropshire.

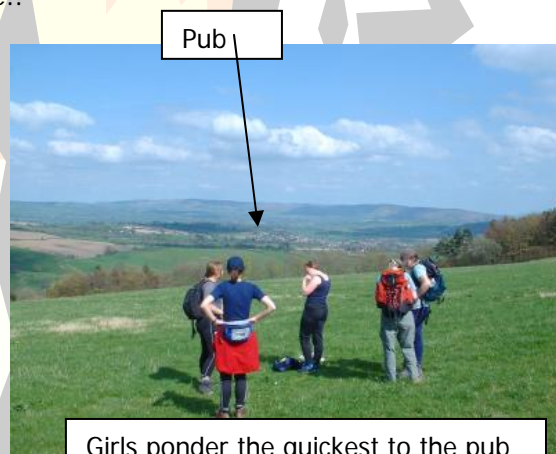
We were not the first to arrive due to a small detour around Bishops Castle town centre trying to find the bunk barn! Sandra and Marie-Ann. and Zed had beaten us to it, so of we set to investigate the local pubs, and luckily find Anna before she attempted to find the bunk barn! We made our way back to the bunk barn, to wait for Lynne and more importantly to open a few bottles of grape juice and peruse over the wedding album(s)! At this point we were getting a little worried about Lynne, was she still coming?, she did eventually arrive at around 11pm after catching up on the all important marking, sure none of my teachers were so dedicated to the cause!!

Next morning, after Kate (Zed's friend) arrived, preparations for the evening meal began; well dessert anyway, it is the most important part!! It consisted Of Justine, (the all important calming the nerves cup of coffee!), packs of Jelly, a steamy kettle, vodka, Gin, and fruity fizzy vodka based stuff.

Where shall we walk today then? What do you mean I have the only map therefore have to plan, map read, choose the lunch stop, and not get us lost!!

We were very luck there was a blip in the weather that weekend and we had the most glorious day, we even had the get the sun cream out!! A description on the walk, honestly!! Well we walked up some hills, gossiped a bit stopped for a long lunch, gossiped a bit more. After lunch we made our way back to Bishops Castle and we sampled the local beer in the two micro breweries, and we bumped in to Nessie who had already been sampling the local brew!!

Kate our new recruit, (after an extended sales pitch of the value to be gained in joining our exclusive club, for only £4 per person a year, a bargain!)and Maz decided to opt out of my





really hard walk, due to injury! And put their time to much better use, shopping!. I have to say they excelled themselves with the produce from the local farmers market in Ludlow they returned with and the interesting stories from the experiences with the fortune teller!!

On the Saturday evening we all mucked in and made a feast of food, to be topped off with Justine's Jelly and cake for dessert, some of us got a little too excited! Luckily we had Kate on hand with her first aid skills. We were all most

impressed with the fizzy jelly as well. We ate and drank and lots more gossip was exchanged, all of course were sworn in under the law of the stagettes, so no idle comments can be exchanged here I'm afraid!! Let's just say the girls were on top form as ever!!!

On Sunday morning, not too early, we set Kate as our newest member the club initiation test. Could she get us lost on the local farmers field walk? The answer, yes, so she obviously passed with flying colours!! After another lengthy lunch break, and a bit more sun cream, we all headed off back to our cars to head off homeward bound!!

Thanks to Yvonne for organising the trip, and indeed to Mark for marrying Zoe so we had a reason to celebrate!!!!!! We all had a great time even if Yvonne had a better offer!!

Here's to the next girl's weekend or indeed the next hen weekend!!!

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## Then what happened on the Stag do Sunny Days in Spain better than Snow in Snowdonia? – Gus Reports

Zoë and her two sisters had planned a pre-nuptial weekend in Spain back in February allowing Percy a rare opportunity to savour one of his last moments of bachelorhood before the rigours of married life ahead. Seizing the moment Chris Turton, hastily gathered together a fine group of like-minded men and hey presto Percy's stag weekend to the Eagles Inn, Penmachno near Betws-y-coed was organised.

The deepest snow of the winter greeted everyone as they drove exceedingly slowly towards the Eagles only to find that Howsey, who had driven the furthest, already in residence with the news that this was a pub that sold beer and no food. Just what a stag weekend should be thought Curly Chris on his arrival.

Next morning dawned sunny and cold revealing the extent of the white stuff all

around. Turton had his shades on in a flash and Gustav, fresh from his shorts wearing trip to Tenerife, not quite ready for this climatic change.

Percy needed some exercise prior to his big night as we all did after the previous night's extended beers, so 'Stockport's Highway Specialist' Nick Whelan and his magic pointing finger as pictured in the local rag, was delegated to transport us over the snowy wastes to more beer at Y Gwydwyr at Dolwyddelan. Floundering through deep snow across a pathless moor was slightly less engaging than fighting a way through a forest to descend into a miniature gorge on a fixed rope. Meanwhile, Big Mike and Thin Neil, who had fuffed around so much in the morning, took another shorter route which they claimed had deeper snow.

Luxuriating in the pub and not particularly relishing a return snow plod, the expert



eye of our 'Highway Specialist' spotted a bus parked conveniently outside. This was a Rail Replacement Bus Service, which was quickly utilised by most of the weary group for more beers en route at Betws-y-coed.

Refreshed and reinvigorated for the evening, Percy was introduced to a ball and chain, his companions for the stag night. The 'Highway Specialist' deemed it safe for us to drive to Betws-y-coed on iced up roads for the all important intake of food prior to another extended session of beers at the Eagles. In the separate bar, Gustav produced a particularly revolting bottle of whisky (well, it did cost E3!)'a-lid after a bit more lubrication Percy

was taken outside and handcuffed to a traffic sign. He was then detrousured in the time honoured fashion, photos of which are available for a certain price from Curly Chris, and left to the amusement of passing traffic.

Perhaps because of the freezing conditions outside, someone felt a slight tinge of pity for the predicament of Percy's manhood, and as a result the owner was released from his ordeal. Back in the bar Percy sat still, his teeth chattering away for ages in some form of Morse code, which the non-experts roughly translated as "She is not worth it, she is not worth it." and a possible "Never again, never again."

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## Update from Explorer Penny

Since deciding to leave RR in January I have been applying to a few leading adventure travel companies. After an interview, which was more like an interrogation, I successfully gained employment with one of the biggest - Explore Worldwide. In May I attended an intense week long training course at Aldershot where some of their training techniques had been perfected on the local squaddies! Then in June I went on a two week training tour in the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) where I had a chance to be a tour leader for the first time, if only for a day. It was a little scary but great fun. All the clients thought I did a good job but then I did organise a free concert and arranged some spa treatments for them all.

Now I am a fully fledged tour leader and getting paid for it. My first series of tours during the summer will see me taking Families down the Dordogne by canoe, bicycle and foot power. My biggest concern is that the kids will race past me and show just how unfit I currently am. It should be a lovely trip with beautiful scenery, caves, castles and medieval

*Penny*

villages. I hear the wine is good too! I just hope the weather is kind as we will be camping.

In September, after only a one week break, I will be off to Morocco to run a series of tours there called Imperial Cities and Deserts. The title should be enough to indicate the type of trip this is. Don't expect to see any photos of me on a camel though.....and no requests for carpets please. I'm supposed to finish this series at the end of January 2005.

So, don't expect to see me on any trips soon, unless you are planning the Xmas trip to Marrakesh. And check out any holidays you book with Explore, just in case I may turn out to be your Leader!

If you want to keep up with my travels the I will be sending out regular e-mails. Let me know if you want to be included on the mailing list.

If you want to see exactly how hard my job is then book a holiday with Explore ([www.exploreworldwide.com](http://www.exploreworldwide.com)) and help pay my wages.

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