

Shell Travel Club Newsletter

ISSUE 357 September 2020

Chairman: Robert Jenkins

Email: robert.jenkins@hotmail.co.uk



Dear Shell Travel Club Members,

I hope that this finds you and your family and friends well and staying safe. At least restrictions on us have been relaxed but no one knows quite for how long!!

As you are all aware, all the trips and holidays we had arranged for 2020 post lockdown were cancelled. This has put a huge amount of pressure on those tour leaders working with our providers to try and get the money paid to them refunded. I am pleased to report that this effort proved successful with Steve and Frieda getting the money back we expected for their Montenegro and Peak District trips. I managed to get a full refund for the Potters trip and a large amount of the money back which had been paid to the many providers in France for the Champagne & Wine Tour. The only one who didn't refund us for this trip was the Holiday Inn in Reims who will hold this money on account for when we next run it. Bruce managed to get his river cruise in July deferred until September, 2021. I would like to thank all those Committee members for all the work they put in to recover funds for members. Another person who needs mention and a huge thank you is David Dungate, our new Treasurer. If there was ever a time to take on this role, it wasn't during the last 6 months! David has worked tirelessly from when he joined the committee, firstly arranging with our bank, TSB, so that we could make direct BACS payments from our account and secondly, making the massive number of refunds to members for the various trips, most of which were also by BACS payments. A big thank you David for all your hard work during these difficult times.

On the subject of banking, once we start to organise trips again, members will be able to pay funds directly to our bank account rather than send cheques. This is much easier, as well as cheaper as no stamps are needed and the whole process is more streamlined. More details will be provided in the fullness of time.

With the continued uncertainty surrounding Covid-19 and the local restrictions placed on locations in the UK and Europe and further afield, we have decided not to try and organise any trips at this time. Social distancing remains a problem especially as many of our members would fall into the vulnerable category. However, your Committee continues to meet remotely every 2 months to assess the situation. Again, once we believe the time is right to plan trips, you will be the first to know. At this time, we are still hoping to be able to hold our AGM on Wednesday 10th March at Silvermere, Cobham.

One thing we have been discussing is the members who receive their newsletters by post. There are now very few as most have opted to receive it by email or simply read it from our website. However, we realise that receiving this document by post is the only way some members can get it. All postal subscriptions expire during Q1 2021 and from that time, subscription to this service will be annual. A booking form will be sent to all postal members in January 2021 to complete and return with the subscription of £4.00 for the year. Should this not be returned to us by 28th February, their postal facility will be cancelled.

As already mentioned, the only firm trip (at this time) for 2021 is Bruce's river cruise which has not only those members who were booked on the one in July on it but also a number of other members have signed up which is great news. Hopefully some of you may wish to support Bruce and book a place. Bruce has asked to include the following words regarding this trip:-

Cologne to Luxembourg River Cruise

Are you bored with all the lockdowns, cancelled holidays, face masks and restrictions? Well let's dream on to better times next year and let's look forward with some optimism and enthusiasm to our already arranged Fred Olsen river cruise in September.

How about cruising up the Rhine and Moselle with their stunning vineyards nestling in beautiful valleys? Experience a scenic journey with architectural and cultural highlights such as the fairy tale Castle Reichsburg. Then enjoy a visit to Luxembourg which is rarely visited by river cruises and finally visits to Koblenz and Cologne with its stunning cathedral. Don't wait you might miss the boat!

Full details of this cruise are on our website and/or contact Bruce at bruce75@gmail.com for more details.

Lastly, the uptake from members on the offer to purchase Champagne directly from Etienne Lefevre, one of the houses we visit regularly on our Champagne & Wine trips was far better than we expected. Our total order was in excess of 550 bottles! Thanks to all those who supported this initiative.

On behalf of all the committee, stay safe and well and we look forward to seeing you all again soon,

Kindest regards,

Rob