



## **Information Sheet 21.**

### **THE ASSOCIATION OF CARAVAN & CAMPING EXEMPTED ORGANISATIONS**

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#### **GOING ABROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME.**

Many caravanners feel a little apprehensive about using their caravans for a Continental holiday.

This is understandable and of course things are different abroad.

Not least amongst the concerns generally expressed are :

- Driving on the "wrong side".
- Funny money.
- The language.

These things are a little daunting, but a few common sense arrangements and you will be away without problem.

#### **The arrangements.**

##### **When**

The months of July and August are busy so try and avoid these dates but if you cannot, don't worry.

##### **Where**

France is the nearest country and is a good place to start.

##### **Getting there**

Depending where you have decided to go, book the most suitable crossing, possibly the nearest and quickest.

Shop around for the best deal with Travel Agents and the caravan clubs, and on the Internet.

It is recommended you also try the Ferry Operators as an individual, you can sometimes get excellent deals.

Try to book a ferry (for your first trip) that arrives at the port of disembarkation during the middle of the day, this gives you some driving time in the daylight.

##### **Sites**

With the ferry booked, you may like to book a site next.

It is not always necessary to book and some seasoned travellers never pre-book, especially in France.

However, you may feel reassured to have something arranged and it is not difficult.

It is advisable to send a stamped addressed envelope for the site owner's reply.

Continental sites vary enormously in quality and amenities and so carefully read the details describing the site.

##### **Document check**

Once the ferry and sites are booked it's time to check that :

- Passports
- Driving Licence
- Car Insurance
- Registration Documents, Visas
- European Health Insurance Card

Other documents which are useful include :

- Maps for the countries to be visited
- Camping Card International (obtainable from Caravan Club or Camping Club).

##### **Insurance**

The next thing, and this is essential, is to arrange insurance for the duration of your stay.

You should consider arranging adequate cover for both Caravan and Motor Vehicle accident and breakdown and for medical cover for all members of your party.

A good example of a comprehensive insurance to cover caravanning holiday requirements is The Caravan Club's Red Pennant. You may wish to use this as a yardstick for comparison purposes.

Check that the car insurance is valid for Continental driving and obtain a "Green Card" if necessary.



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### **Equipment**

As departure time draws near, check that the caravan and car are in good running order.

Ensure you have plenty of gas, as UK cylinders cannot be exchanged, and only Camping Gaz is available universally and is expensive.

A spare set of bulbs for both the car and caravan is essential.

Also take a supply of water purification tablets to be absolutely certain you don't have stomach upsets.

It is essential to have a Continental Adapter for the electrical supply as many Continental sites still have the old two-pin design

An electric hook-up cable of at least 25metres length is required.

You may find that the polarity is different from site to site, but out with the screwdriver and in no time the wires are swapped over. A short polarity reverse lead is recommended.

A Warning Triangle is a vital item and many countries insist that one is carried.

### **Currency**

Obtain some foreign currency and travellers' cheques before you depart.

Try to have some small change in the foreign currency, for use soon after you arrive, as it is not a good idea to tender the equivalent of a £20 note for a small purchase.

### **Getting there**

On the day of departure give yourself plenty of time to get to the docks. It does not matter if you are early; they all have plenty of parking. Embarkation is straightforward; just follow the instructions of the Ferry Crew. Enjoy the crossing and soon you will be off-loading and driving on Foreign soil. Drive on the right at all times. After a few minutes it becomes second nature. The road signs will be unfamiliar and the Traffic Light sequence may be slightly different and there may be flashing lights, which you are not used to (They are normally warnings to be careful). If you have bought a Michelin Map, all the road signs and direction information is explained in detail.

There are many things that will be new but very quickly you become accustomed to them and in no time you will be arriving at your first nights stopover. The kettle will be on and you will be wondering why you didn't do this years ago.

Hope the above will be of help and may persuade some people who have not been abroad before to have a go.  
**Bon Voyage.**