

CHAIN REACTION SDC Newsletter August 2026



21 Squares Dance A1 at EC2026



Di Green and Hanna Tenebaum calling at EC2026; Barmstedt, Germany

A Trip to European Square Dance Convention: Germany July 2026

On Friday 3rd July we drive 116mls via M6/M61/M60/M62 leaving the M62 at Goole and to Drax Sports and Social Club. Nestled beneath the 12 totally silent gentle giants of Drax power station (the largest power station in the UK generating up to 2676MW of electricity). Parking on the field behind the club we spend the weekend, Friday evening to Sunday afternoon at an English dancing/contra camp-out, with callers Liam Binley & Lynne Render. At the end of the evening when we return to the motorhome it is not quite dark, the cooling towers are illuminated in a dramatic pale blue and navy sky, with a huge Good Luck England coat of arms. As is fairly standard we dance morning and afternoon workshops both days with an evening dance on Friday and Saturday.

Around 4.00pm on Sunday we leave Drax driving the 34 miles to Hull ferry terminal and check-in for our evening crossing to Rotterdam. Arriving around 9.00am the following morning it takes an hour to go through customs (fingerprints and facial recognition on their new system). Finally on our way we drive 150 miles across the Netherlands almost to the German border staying overnight at the delightful village of Overdinkel, Dinkel translates as spelt, as in the cereal-growers. Tuesday 7th July another 100 miles across Germany to the town of Cloppenburg where we visit the outdoor Agricultural museum housing over fifty 16th – 19th century reconstructed farm buildings. Here we stay overnight as it is free to stay on their car park.

Another 124 miles on Wednesday 8th July arriving at Barmstedt mid-afternoon, we park up in a small, paved courtyard under large lime trees giving good shelter from the midday sun (and cover us with sticky residue from its flowers)! As it happens the next motorhome to arrive is Trevor & Chris and they park behind us.

Several more motorhomes arrive and there are about 20 of us around courtyard. We have our own toilets, drinking water and sufficient plug-ins for all who want them. In the evening we go to the Barmstedt club night of Basic & Mainstream. It is fun to join with the local Germans who are very welcoming.

Thursday 9th July, the day is free to explore the town of Barmstedt and we find a lovely 17th century Farmhouse, identical to those at the agricultural museum at Cloppenburg with a delightful allotment garden & orchard. Chris & Trevor explore Barmstedt castle and gardens. Registration begins and dancing starts with an evening Trail-end dance, also Basic & Mainstream.

Friday 10th July is hot, we have a quiet day using the time to plan our weekend of dancing. There are 5 halls for squares: Basic/Mainstream/Plus/Advanced/Challenge, 2 more halls for rounds and contras. We, together with Trevor & Chris attend Advanced all weekend. We start early evening with two 1½ hour A1/A2 workshops, one of which our



Motorhomes double-parked between halls



European Convention Barmstedt, Germany 2026



Colourful Banners on display

own Di Green is calling, then the evening dance (at the same level) finishing at 10pm.

Saturday 11th July a full-on day dancing with back to back workshops, 10 callers rotating the halls, all levels across all the same halls. We stay with A1/A2 workshops, again no breaks between, so we could have danced all day without a break. But... it was 28°C outside, much hotter in the hall with 200+ people and no air conditioning! Somehow, we all danced, perspired profusely, cooled down outside and danced some more. Later in the evening there was after-party (or showers and bedtime)!!

Sunday 12th July: another full day: two morning workshops A1/A2 for us and an afternoon Farewell Dance for everyone (Basic) with all callers. Another hot day, 28°C outside and hotter in the hall with several hundred people (no air con).

Perhaps the highlight of the whole weekend was triggered by one square laughing and shrieking so much that it fell apart, then the next square, the caller joined and everyone stopped dancing as they saw a rat (poor thing) that had come to join the square!

Before we left we managed to get photographs of our own club people but not a group photo of the 20 Brits. Back at our motorhomes we sit outside in the cool, under the shade of those lime trees, seven of us, Germans & Brits and have our own relaxing after-party.

All 1600 people and 80+ motorhomes depart leaving just five motorhomes who stay overnight. On Monday we go our separate ways, Chris & Trevor to Osnabruck, we north through Denmark and a ferry from Hirtshals to Bergen.

Text Gill Chard; Photos Alan Chard

C1 at Trantum Strand, Denmark

The early hours of Wednesday 15th July [2026] saw Val and I taking a train to Manchester airport, en route to Brovst, in Denmark, for four days of C1.

Last year's journey to Brovst was something of a disaster, thanks to KLM!, but we felt confident things would go smoothly this time: after all, they say lightning doesn't strike twice. Unfortunately, it turns out that people who say that probably haven't travelled with KLM!

At the airport, we cleared security quite quickly - but then faced our first hurdle: at the departure gate for our KLM flight to Amsterdam we were met by a passive-aggressive KLM attendant who insisted we put our hand luggage into the hold - even though we'd booked to have it in the cabin. Our protest that we had a short transfer in Amsterdam were all in vain: moreover, she warned that if we boarded with hand luggage and there was no space for it, the cabin crew would remove it to the hold, the resultant delay meaning we'd be personally responsible for the pilot missing our 'slot' for take-off. So we boarded without hand-luggage - and sat and watched with annoyance as other passengers carried on huge bags and cases! Especially annoying was the fact that several lockers above us were empty.

The flight to Amsterdam went smoothly, as did our onward KLM flight to Aalborg airport in Denmark. However, as we'd feared, our luggage - and that of many other passengers - remained in Amsterdam. Thank you, KLM.

We then had to queue for nearly an hour with the other passengers in order to register our missing luggage (Thanks again, KLM!), before we could collect our hire car. It seemed things were going from bad to worse when we were told that the car I'd booked wasn't available. However, good news quickly followed: the hire company had upgraded us to a nearly new Mercedes.

The drive to Trantum Strand (where the course is held) only takes thirty minutes, so we had time for coffee. We didn't have to unpack anything - no luggage! - so we had chance to relax before our evening meal and the first dance of the week. As well as C1, there are also workshops for C3B and C4 dancers, and they all danced C1 with us on that first evening, so the hall was full and the dancing was fast.



Dancing on the first evening

After the dance, Val and I drove back to the airport, as we'd been told by airport staff that our luggage might arrive on a later flight. I'd had several vague texts from KLM about our luggage, unhelpful to say the least, so we weren't confident we'd have fresh clothes for the following day. However, two very helpful young men on the Customer Service desk interrupted their viewing of a World Cup football match to go and search - successfully! - for our cases.

The following days comprised of morning and afternoon workshop sessions, then C1 dances in the evening. [photo next page]

The three callers - Vic Ceder, Thomas Bernhed and Ett McAtee - worked with each group on rotation, and kept us on our toes by calling figures from unusual starting positions. Definitely challenging, so the evening after-parties were a welcome time to unwind. Here's Val, [following page] after one demanding day's C1, adding a bit of orange to her half pint of gin for some much-needed stress relief.....[photo next page]

The food was good and plentiful: one evening there's a 'sausage party', where everyone grills



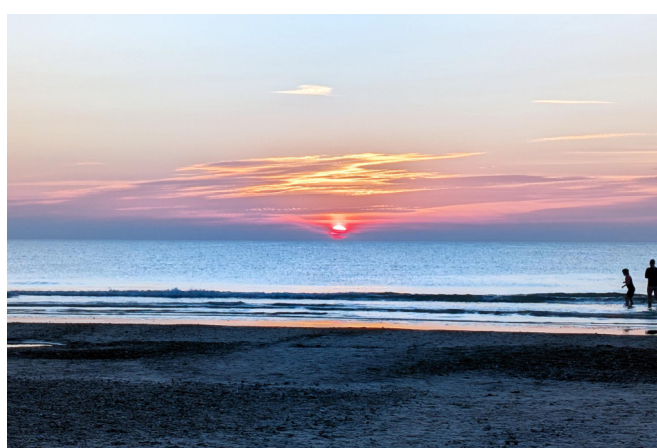
C1 Workshop



Beach visit



Stress relief



Sunset at Tranum

sausages for hot-dogs before adding all the trimmings. Very tasty. We also had time to visit a nearby beach to swim and enjoy the sunset:

On the Friday, Gill and Alan dropped in to have a coffee with us: they'd been camping just up the road from us, and stopped by in their very

impressive motorhome on their way to catch a ferry to Norway.

We enjoyed our time at Tranum Strand – the other dancers were friendly and we all laughed a lot – and the final session seemed to come around very quickly. Below a C1 group photo.



C1 Group photo

In the photo, (Vic Ceder and one of the other dancers are holding the 'brains' that we sometimes needed!) After lunch, we set off to the airport for our return flight to Amsterdam – no problem with hand luggage at Aalborg airport! We were delighted that there had been an upturn in our fortunes with KLM flights – but our delight was short-lived: our flight to Manchester from Amsterdam was delayed several times, involving three gate changes before departure – which meant that KLM got us to Manchester airport just in time to miss the last train to Blackpool! A final 'Thank you', KLM!

All that aside, we had a great time at Tranum Strand, and we've registered our interest in returning in 2027. Third time lucky, KLM? Watch this space!

Text and photos David Walker



David Walker in Sister Act

Sister Act Critically Acclaimed

Last month featured photos and information about a theatre visit to see a performance of Sister Act; below is an excerpt from the Noda critic's review.

"The outstanding male for me was David Walker's 'Monsignor O'Hara'. David just looked like he was living this part... great character created, loved his facial expressions and his mannerisms... be very proud David, best O'Hara I've seen and I've seen a few! "

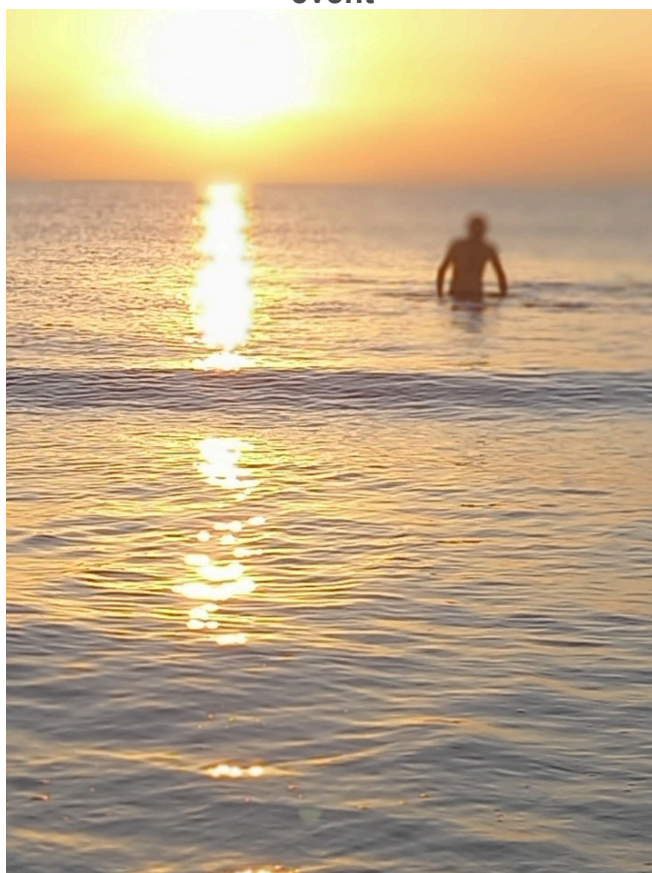
Congratulations, well done David. We certainly all enjoyed the evening. Quite a novelty to see you surrounded by nuns instead of square dancers.

Val Pemberton

Additional photos from Tranum



Ett, Vic and Thomas, the callers at the C event



Unidentified bather seen at Tranum Strand during the C event.

Photos by Val Pemberton

Summer Holiday Contributions

Norway 2026

Immediately following EC2026, Gill and Alan Chard drove north through Germany and Denmark then took the ferry to Bergen in Norway for a motorhome tour.

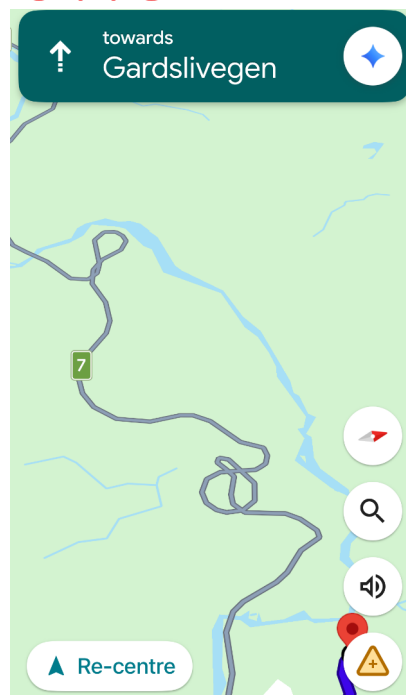
As we drove through Denmark we took the opportunity to stay at a campsite near Tranum Strand and meet with Val Pemberton and David Walker who were attending a C event.



Gill and Alan spent a week touring Norway, taking in the scenery. Progress is not fast in Norway, the roads are narrow, seldom straight, flanked by metal crash barriers and have low speed limits. During July and August the concentration of caravans and motorhomes is extremely high.

The biggest surprise was the number of road tunnels, and their length, up to 8km. In one case there was a complete roundabout underground.

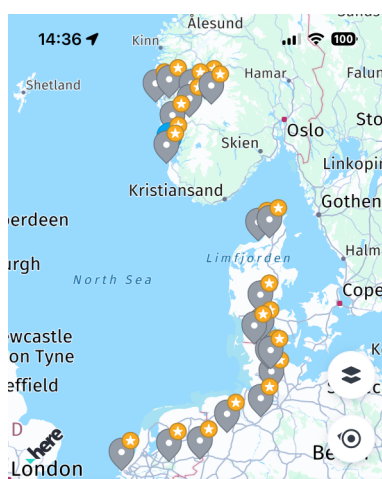
Travelling towards Gardslivegen we ascended the spiral-shaped tunnel that helps vehicles ascend to the Hardangervidda plateau.



Convolutd tunnels through mountains - from Google sat nav



Near Ølen, Norway



Our route from Rotterdam



Tunnels up to 8km long with steep gradients

Driving a large motorhome was challenging to say the least, especially when many of the other motorhomes and caravans were rental vehicles whose drivers were clearly unfamiliar with their vehicle.

Keeping cool

More heatwaves are expected this summer due to a combination of climate change and a super el Nino. Hands, feet and ears have dense concentrations of arteries, veins and capillaries. Placing these areas into cold water can cool large flows of blood. [but take your boots off first!]

Norman Wilson



Visualisation by AI*

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Newsletter contributions to Alan Chard, please use the chainreactionsdc@gmail.com email to avoid being put in the junk folder.

Please keep your contributions to this newsletter coming, send by 20th August 2026 for the August edition.



Sandra and David Eagland

Visitors Attend Chain Reaction

We were delighted to welcome David and Sandra Eagland to the club recently. They were on holiday in Harrogate and drove over to dance with us – via a good meal at a well known fish and chip shop!

Before they moved further south they were regular supporters of the club and it was really nice to catch up with them again. We hope to see them again when they are in the area.

Text and photo: Val Pemberton

A Kind Of Humour . . .

Arguing with a woman is like reading a Software License Agreement. In the end, you ignore everything and click 'I agree'.

"DO NOT TOUCH" must be one of the scariest thing to read in Braille.

It's OK if you disagree with me. I can't force you to be right.

Yesterday I saw a really old person; then I realised they were in my class at school.

If you eat well, get lots of sleep, do lots of exercise and drink plenty of water, you'll die anyway. So, open the wine.

* An asterisk indicates image enhancement or production by Google Gemini, chatgpt or other AI.