

IT'S
CAMPING

According to
Simon

Disclaimer

Everything contained in this book is accurate to my knowledge and experience and is largely based on my observations, therefore I take no responsibility for you proving it wrong or having different outcomes to that I have described, it will be your choice to follow and use the contents.

I will not guarantee the safety or the success rate of the information you will read.

I will say that I too worked as a camping courier and have had many successful and enjoyable seasons, so take that how you will.

Please also note that nothing contained within this book is hypothetical, what you will read has either been done by myself or personally witnessed.

Contained within are swearing and sexual innuendos just be aware the content is not for children or people easily offended.

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Introduction

Hello all.

Firstly I will introduce myself, my name is Simon, and I have worked as courier for a few major camping companies for several seasons now. I have worked in many different areas, working on small, medium and large sites. I have experienced a lot and what this book is designed to do, is to help you get the best out of your season, based on my observations and opinions.

But that is all, it is solely based on my observations, views and opinions, so it is therefore up to you if you listen or believe what I say, the decision is always yours.

To get it out of the way now, if whilst reading this book you decide I'm chatting shit and you choose to ignore what I've said and in fact it turns out to be correct:-

I TOLD YOU SO!!

I'm not gonna go on about my experiences, tell you about my stories or even who I've worked for, with or where. They are my stories, and very shortly you will have your own stories to tell, with your own adventures and tales, so it is best not to compare with each other.

This is basically a guide to get you through your first season, which incidentally will be your best. It will provide you with all sorts of information to help you save money, prevent companies taking the piss and most importantly will help you to have the greatest summer yet.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Enjoy your season

Courier mission
statement

WE ARE ON HOLIDAY

Remember days will come when you feel down and lonely, you will miss your home, friends, family, possibly pets, the heat and work will get to you, living in a tent will seem too much, on days like these just ask yourself.....

What would I be doing if I wasn't here?

I reckon that will cheer you up!

For Those in Supervisory Roles

This small section is for those of you aspiring to go further in a company or who have already reached a supervisory position.

Basically all I'm gonna say is that in the next few pages you will read my views on the job and how you should behave, and I can assure you that the chances are you will be thinking as you read, *this guy is chatting shit, he's got it so wrong, that's not how it is, maybe that's a couriers view*, and then the thing I'm really worried about, *I'm not gonna read any more of this bollocks*.

Please, please be patient with it. You probably won't agree with the next few pages but the book doesn't continue with the same attitude. If you choose to continue and either skip or ignore the next few pages you will find yourself reading very useful information that will help you and provide you with knowledge to get the most out of your job and summer life.

Perhaps begin from the back and work forward to prevent any doubts or judgements from the start.

But please do read it all, you will honestly benefit.

It's up to you!

The Job of a Courier

As a bog standard courier, your job will basically be a cleaner. You clean tents, mobiles, white furniture, and reception. Chances are you will be working alone to clean, so as long as you let your mind and thoughts take you away you will be fine, a cd or radio helps no end.

On a small site or working for a small company, or even if you were mad enough to accept a promotion to a supervisory role, you are now responsible for liasing with staff, customers, campsite owners and area managers. It is your job to fill out all paperwork, accounts, booking charts, etc, ensure orders and faxes are sent in time and customer accommodation is prepared and ready for the arrivals.

Everyone will take their turn on reception, dealing with customer problems and complaints, showing them in and providing local information and answering any questions they may have.

Reception duties can be long and boring so set yourself tasks and projects to keep yourself occupied. This book was my reception project.

Night duty, often referred to as shite duty, officially involves staying in uniform, staying on site and not drinking booze, you are the person who deals with emergencies for that evening. Everyone takes their turn on night duty and it's not unusual for it to be used as a punishment for being late in the morning or for not doing your job correctly or satisfactorily.

As I said the rules for night duty are quite strict if you follow them to the letter of the law, but why not push them as far as you can get away with? If there are just two of you on a site who's to know that you have been drinking on night duty? Why wear the full uniform? Will a T-shirt not suffice? Do use your common sense and don't blame others if you get caught out, you do need to take the rap if necessary. Remember the worst they can do is sack you.

You will find yourself working long hours, at times doing hard possibly stressful work, but it is a great lifestyle and you will enjoy it providing you listen to these comments. They are only my views but from what I've seen I believe them to be correct. I think you need to not take this job seriously and treat it as a paid holiday; use the company you work for and don't let the company use you. Don't get stressed or worked up it's not worth it and you're certainly not paid enough. You must get off site on your days off and do something, go to a museum, Water Park, any sort of tourist attraction as long as you feel you have done something with your day. Don't waste it, otherwise you'll find yourself getting cabin fever. Shy away from all responsibility, remember you don't want to be responsible on your holiday, you want to be carefree.

Montage and **Demontage**

This truly is taking everything to extreme, working, drinking, staying up. It will test your body immensely!

If you do decide to take part in montage and/or demontage, you will find yourself working in a team of round about 20 people. You will work, eat, drink, socialise, sleep together. And if you're lucky, maybe even more. They will probably be the only English speakers or possibly the only people you will meet for the next one or two months. So you best get on with them!

Ok I will talk about and refer to montage but demo is the same just instead of the setting up and opening of sites, it's the shut down and closure of sites. Your day begins somewhere between 8 and 9am, depending on deadlines and schedules. You will have your breakfast and receive a brief of the tasks you will be performing that day. This could be anything from distribution of tents, white furniture, inventory, tent units, tpu's, and bikes, or you could be asked to montage clean, erect tents, install electrics, dig cables, level kitchen units, prepare stores, prepare reception etc. The list just goes on, but that covers many of the tasks.

You will be working until at least 6pm, and that is if you are very lucky! Don't be surprised if you find yourself working until 10pm, if you're a driver you may even be asked to continue and take the team to the next site.

But yes your day will end, well what next? Basically drinking happens next. From the minute you stop work you will start consuming booze, and lots of it.

You will be drinking usually footballs or stubby's in huge quantities every night till midnight maybe even 1 or 2 in the morning. Every night is a party; your mix and mingle, drink and socialize together, and even freeze together in the cook tent. You find yourselves chatting shit about how crap your day was, how the company is exploiting you, and about the lack of talent, but believe it or not these are great times and most people really enjoy it.

The best thing about all this drinking is after only having a mere 4 or 5 hours sleep, if you're lucky! Some how (don't ask me how), you wake up fine and hangover free!

A washing up and cooking rota will have been set up so each person in the team will take it in turns to cook and clean. Cooking works on a team basis, you have large numbers to cook for with limited kitty money available, so people cannot be fussy. Meals are cheap and simple with people eating what they are served or they go hungry. Sorry but that's how it is!

You travel round many sites living out of a suit case but you get to see the area your working, and obviously you do still get your days off - make the most of them!

Remember to bring warm ruff clothes for montage and demo, and particularly remember a warm sleeping bag, trust me it will get cold.

Becoming Part of the Group

In the environment that you find yourself in, people do form strong bonds and get extremely close to one another. If you join the group a little after most of the others, at first it will seem uncomfortable and you will not feel very welcome, you will be an outsider in this tribe-like community. But do not fear you can join and be part of this tribe, but it will take a while, their attitude, as yours soon will be to new comers is, *I've made my friends why do I need to make any others.*

What you need to do is be yourself, don't act up or try and be something you're not, be social and join in (even if you don't feel very welcome), go for drinks with them, mingle and chat, start to get to know them and let them get to know you in their own time, make sure your presence is known.

Do not bad mouth people or begin to throw your weight around the minute you arrive, others will dislike this and possibly feel intimidated which is bad news. Be patient, you may find it taking a couple of weeks before you feel part of the group, but it will happen and they will all become your buddies, hopefully!

Don't give up or feel down, all you're experiencing is what everyone else has had to go through, but equally try and bear all this in mind when a new member joins the group after you. Imagine what they are feeling and relate it to how you felt in those first few days/weeks. Make them feel welcome and make their life easier, the more friends you gain the better.

All I have been saying in a long, round-about way, is don't let it bother you that at first you are not made to feel welcome, everyone experiences this, and it does change. This is when you really start enjoying things and make your friends.

Drinking Games

AKA Socialising exercises

The essential way to socialise and get fucked. Here I will name but a few to help you on your way.

- First, not strictly a game but it will get you pissed. The chances are you will also need to perform a TC (tactical chunder), best to have 3 or 4 stubby beers or a bottle of wine open and ready to go.

The game is called Roxanne, and what it involves is playing the famous tune by the Police, and every time Roxanne is said, all the girls playing the game stand up and drink. Every time red-light is sung, all the lads playing stand and drink, good luck!

- Drink While You Think:- one of my favourites! Someone starts the game with a name such as Al Pacino, the next person starts to drink until they can think of a famous persons' name starting with the first letter of the previous persons' surname, for example, Al Pacino was said, so the next person could say Peter Andre.

There are all sorts of rules that can be added, but one other standard rule is if the following person said Andre Aggassi, the direction of the game reverses, as the first letter of both the fore - and surname are the same. So, if the game went clockwise, it would now go anti clockwise and be back to the person who said Peter Andre.

It sounds complicated but believe me its not, it will all become clear once the game gets going. If you can't think of a name you have to take a penalty, usually down a bottle.

The game does get harder when playing internationally, i.e.. You have Dutch and Germans playing, who will know Celebs you don't, in these situations it usually has to be that at least two other players must know the said celebrity.

- The Fuck Me game:- very hard to get to grips with or maybe that's just me. All the players must first have fuck me names, and everyone needs to remember them, so you could have, Great Fuck, Simple Fuck, Britney Fuck, anything really.

You then chant

“your fuck name e.g. Great Fuck,
what a fuck,

I wanna

‘someone else’s fuck name’ e.g. Simple Fuck”.

Then the person you said has to carry on the chant, and use another persons name, drinking happens as a punishment for getting the chant wrong or by using a name that doesn't exist, or even hesitation.

Everyone in the group is clapping their hand or tapping their knees with their hands to the chant.

Here is an example

Great fuck – tap knees to the word “great” then to the word “fuck”

What a fuck – clap hands to the words “whata” then to the word “fuck”

I wanna – tap knees to the word “I” then to the word “wanna”

Simple fuck – clap hands to the word “simple” then to the word “fuck”.

The person with Simple Fuck as a name then must continue the chant but remember the beat is kept by the knees and hands so mis-timing and hesitation results in punishment.

- I Have Never game:- very good for finding out stuff about other couriers. Starts by someone saying “I have never (for example), pulled someone in this room”, all the people who have pulled someone in the room must then stand up and drink, identifying themselves. The game continues in a clockwise direction with the next person saying, “I have never.....”
- Centurion:- drinking 1 egg cup of beer, wines or spirits every minute, or 30 seconds depends how hard-core you are, till you reach a hundred shots Sounds easy, try it.

As I said I am only gonna name a few to get you started, I am sure you are aware of a few yourself. Every drinking game has one basic rule and that is if you opt to play you abide by the said rules and complete forfeits as they come, you can't pull out half way through. Remember the aim is to get drunk and have fun so play the game how it is intended. It is a good way to get to know people and a damn good way to start or end an evening, but do remember there's a good chance you have to work the next day.

The Site Sizes and Experiences

So you know what to expect or what to look for in a site you're working on, I've listed very briefly and vaguely the differences and experiences you will have on varying size sites.

It is impossible to say this is true in every situation, but what I will say is it is true in most situations that I have experienced.

Don't judge an allocated site on this basis, wait and see what it's like when you arrive, you can always ask for a transfer or find alternative employment later. Give it a chance, you may be surprised !

You find it will be the people that make it.

Small Sites You'll probably be left alone, and left to get on with it. You will have a good opportunity to improve your foreign languages. You'll build a good rapport with the campsite owners and bar staff and should receive a good discount. Customers will be more likely to tip, it can be a very easy life. There won't be much of a party atmosphere, and you will need to get on with other staff to make it bearable.

Good for older more mature people, or those who generally just want an easy, quiet, and generally relaxing holiday.

Medium Sites Can go two ways; either you all get on really well, become a big family and truly care for each other; or you all dislike each other and constantly argue and fight, you will hate your experience.

Its good for making life-long friends, you'll probably receive a good discount at the bar and take-aways etc, there will be a good party vibe for a smallish group, loadsa sex to be had, you will need to all get on and be accommodating, you will not be able to escape each other. If it works it will be the best time of your life if it doesn't, the worst.

Good for younger people, maybe a little shy, first time away from home. All being well, your work should be easy and you'll be left to your own devices.

Large Sites Very much work hard, play hard. You'll be working long, hard hours to quite high standards, then partying all night every night. Lots of different people, so not constantly in each other's faces, you can swap and change groups of friends.

Relationships form quickly but people tend not to get as close to each other as on smaller sites. Big time party atmosphere, good for loud hyper individuals, maybe a bit more experienced than the younger ones, although good for bringing people out of their shell.

Drink prices will be expensive and managers will be breathing down your neck, carries more of the 18-30 rep style attitude.

The Companies

Finding work on a campsite is easy. The companies are crying out for staff all through the season, so don't be afraid to quit if you feel you're not getting what you want from the season. Even if you end up getting sacked, do not fear, you do not have to go home.

Simply get in touch with other area managers from other companies, say you're available and already in the area and no doubt they will snatch your hand off or certainly be able to help you out, and you can complete your summer season.

Each company is ultimately the same, you clean and get paid pittance, they make shit loads and take the piss, but you will obviously see differences in the way you get treated:- your pay, living conditions, etc, but what will make the summer for you will be the team you're working with, your colleagues will make or break a season.

On top of the camping companies there are also other options to stay out, if you find a couriers life isn't for you.

There's a company called ESL, European services, a company based in Leeds that installs and maintains mobiles across Europe.

You will get paid reasonably well, have a base, usually it's a house/flat, van and phone. But you will always be on the move and not stay in one place for too long, most of the time you will find your working alone.

Another option, which we shouldn't forget, is the campsites themselves. Get yourself to a large site and they'll be looking for entertainment, bar staff, reception, and of course cleaning staff. Here you will be put on a local contract, which also means you're subject to local laws and minimum wages, and yes it will definitely be more than you were getting as a courier.

Then, the last option I'm gonna talk about is, if you don't fancy any of these, you will inevitably find an English/Irish bar nearby, which will often employ staff solely for having an accent.

You will find this is very good money with a great social life, but remember it will be down to you to find and pay for your own accommodation.

There are hundreds of other options available to you, I have just listed a few to help you, if you would like other options web addresses and telephone numbers there are a couple of good books out, *Work your way around the world*, and *Summer jobs abroad*, these go into far more detail, and give visa advice, they cost around fifteen pounds each but are a sound investment. The books and authors are listed at the back of this book, in the bibliography chapter.

Cooking On A Budget

Ok, one of the more important chapters in my book.

You will be working and living, for a reasonable length of time, on limited funds and with only a tent cooker to use. You need to get the right balance between eating well and still having enough money to get pissed and go out frequently on.

Good things to buy to start are:- well firstly, matches or lighter (or nothing will get cooked), things like salt, pepper, curry powder, mayonnaise, chilli sauce, ketchup, bbq sauce, basically an array of condiments. These truly are essential, they turn a bland dinner into a gourmet meal.

I know they sound obvious and basic things to buy but you'd be surprised at the amount of people that think they can save money and live without them.

Food to buy:- steak haches(burgers) are great. They are cheap, can be healthily cooked from frozen, and have a hundred and one uses. You will be eating a lot of them, and you can have them on their own or even in a bun. Great for BBQ's, you can dice them, cut into chunks and they can be grilled, fried or BBQ'd. Good in curry's, shepard's pie, and of course, spaghetti bolognaise.

Another good buy is Lardons. This is like a diced bacon/ham product, good for lunches or dinner, usually fried; good with pasta.

Tinned cous cous meals are easy and cheap. Throw it all in a pan and heat up, you get the meat, veg and cous cous as a kit - very filling.

Frozen stir-fry meals are a bit more expensive but very nice and easy to cook - nice for a change! Throw in a frying pan straight from frozen and twenty minutes later, you have a lovely meal.

Forget the Atkins diet out here guys, you will be living on carbs – pasta, rice, and bread, with the odd spud thrown in. In the supermarkets look out for their own brands rather than the named brands and search out the deals, often you'll find reduced fresh meat perfect for BBQ's. Serve with pasta or potato salad, washed down with a few stubbys of beer blonde. Don't forget you can freeze fresh meat approaching the use by date to use whenever, as you can with bread.

Don't scrimp and save on fruit and veg. They are reasonably expensive, but for health reasons, essential items. Not to mention mushrooms, garlic, onions and sweetcorn add great flavours to many meals.

For lunch you have things like ham, salami, cheese. Things that really go without saying, but on top of that omelettes are a good lunch, if you find you have random customer finds like the odd slice of ham or sausage. Just cut it up, mix it in with a couple of eggs, add a bit of cheese and cook in the frying pan. Add spices for personal taste, serve in a pain(baguettes) - guaranteed to enjoy.

You haven't got an oven or microwave, but remember you do have mobiles to use, as long as you leave them tidy and clean after using it, no one will mind. You can get round not having an oven on certain things such as pizza, just grill the top and fry the base, does the same job.

You can still eat plenty and well on a tight budget.

Bon appetite!

Example Meals

- Tinned cous cous meals 1 tin serves 2
- Frozen stir fry meals 1 bag serves 2
- Curry - chicken, turkey, beef 1 jar sauce serves 2
1 bag rice serves 1
2 steak haches serves 1
- Spag bol
- Chilli
- Sweet and sour just meat, rice/pasta and sauce
- Fajitas bit pricey, nice treat
- Carbonara
- Shepard's pie
- Salads e.g. Caesar
- Fresh Meat Meguez sausages, kebabs etc

All served with veg and spices, depending on personal taste.

Creating A Home

Making a double bed

All couriers should have a double bed, and it definitely should be well used! I always say aim for three shags a season; it is a reasonable figure, which isn't shameful, yet can easily be beaten to make for those bonuses.

You may be lucky enough to have a proper double bed already, but do not worry if you haven't, there are many ways around this.

- Firstly you have a double bed frame, but no legs, easy, use 4 crates, 2 at the foot and 2 at the head of the frame.
- No double mattress, take 2 single mattresses and stuff them into a double mattress case.
- No double frame, take two single frames, ideally remove the legs. Lash frames together with guy ropes, again 4 crates, same procedure as before, if crates not available original legs will have to do, place a single mattress on each bed with a double on top, perfect. Have fun trying it out.

Sofa making

Basically, take a single bed and tie a double bed frame 90 degrees to it, so as to have a back rest, put a single mattress to sit on then one to sit back on, use a blanket as a throw, job done, can also be done using a single bed as a back rest.

Other tips

- Blankets can be used as rugs.
- A normal table will be too high for your new sofa, so drop the legs and use crates underneath the table as legs, perfect height.
- Magic tree style air fresheners are always handy to hide those strange odours.
- A beer fridge is a must and no food may dare enter it.
- Posters, photos, pictures, etc can be hung to inners by placing a couple of layers of sticky tape to each corner, then stitch, using needle and thread, to the tent, inners, whatever, trust me it will hold. For framed pictures use paper clips, hang picture one side of clip and pierce tent/inner with other end. Try it, it does work.

Leadership Tips

Here I will advise supervisors in what I've seen gains respect from staff and helps you enjoy your season and be a good supervisor.

Firstly as I've already said (although many people will disagree), I would strongly advise turning down all positions of responsibility. The best job is as a courier, no matter what anyone says. Those in supervisory roles get shit from all angles, their staff, their managers, the campsite, and the customers.

The head office that you work for truly doesn't care about you or the season you are having, as long as your scores are high; if they are not you'll be blamed for that too. You may think the company that you are working for are treating you well and gradually you are working up the ladder, but the time will come when you find a season doesn't go your way and things go wrong. The company will write you off forgetting your previous efforts, and I have witnessed this as high as area managers, it does and will happen!

I know that if a position of responsibility is offered, it is hard to turn it down, and what I've said will be ignored, and rightly so:- it's your life and your decision. But at least now you are aware of what could happen.

Anyway you now have your new job and with it comes all this extra cash! But also loads more responsibility and tasks, your work load increase. How should you treat it?

Well, you can not ever get stressed, or worked up, you are definitely not paid enough to ever get stressed about this job. Please don't lose track of why you do the job; you do it because you enjoy it, it's fun. The moment it stops being fun and enjoyable is the moment to quit, don't ever forget that! You owe the company nothing, it's your season and you must enjoy it.

In this kind of job its very hard; during the day you need to be the manager, then in the evening you will need to eat, drink and socialise with your friends - you can't escape each other. There must be a clear separation, during the day they are colleagues and your staff, and in the evening your friends, this is where it is hard work.

I advise you to be fair, issue punishments where due and that fit the offence, don't make up silly rules and definitely do not create silly pointless jobs to keep your staff unnecessarily busy. Remember during quiet periods to give them plenty of time off, then during busy periods and high season they can't moan about doing the extra hours. They will be more willing to help you as you helped them. Do not constantly pull rank, especialy out of working hours, do your share of the work and lead by example, don't show favouratism, however attractive they may be!

Do not get walked over by those in higher or lower positions than you - if you believe you're right, stick to your guns. Deal with problems and situations yourself as much as possible, it shows weakness in your character and ability to lead if you constantly seek help from others.

You need to make it clear that you are the boss, but in such a way that you have respect; you will know if you've done this by the way the staff behave towards you and the tasks you set them. If they seem happy and willing to work for you during the day, and then in the evening you feel like you are part of the group, you are a succesful manager. If you don't get these responses perhaps you need to address your leadership method.

It is an extremely hard and difficult environment for leaders, and is almost impossible to train or prepare for. I think you either have it or you don't, but if you're having a bad time and season, please don't ruin it for others. It's better you quit and let others enjoy their time than to soldier on and wreck everyone else's time.

After working on a few sites over a few seasons you will see the facts in what I have written. Don't ignore what you have read as it could be the difference between a long enjoyable employment and a short lived fad.

I hope you do get to the position and level that you desire, but do not get there at the cost of others' enjoyment, don't be selfish, just bear this in mind.

Basic Maintenance

Here I have listed a few common maintenance problems that can usually be easily solved; it will aid you in giving a customer a false impression that you are aware of what you are talking about and save you constantly calling the maintenance team. Although I think most of you will need to have some form of practical ability to use this section to its full potential.

If you can not follow my directions or a problem arises that isn't listed I find bullshit is the best policy, feed the customers a lie until you can get help or advise from the maintenance team.

- **Mobile/tent electrics not working.** Check the trip box inside the mobile, if the circuit breakers (the little switches) have gone off, flick back on and power should return. If it doesn't, or if in fact the switches were fine all along, it is the campsite electrical box which has turned off so you will need to see the campsite. It also means that the campsite fuses are rated lower than that in the mobile - this needs changing.
- **Toilet constantly flowing.** Circular plunger inside the system is not seated correctly, remove and refit, should be ok.
- **No gas.** Is there gas in the bottle and has the bottle been turned on? Remember the little button underneath the regulator (the brass disk that connects the bottle), needs to be depressed, and also persist in lighting the boiler as the air in the system needs bleeding.
- **Gas leak from the bottle.** Check and ensure the screw threads on the bottle are ok and not damaged and the small black washer/seal inside the regulator is still there.

- **No water.** Has the main line from the campsite supply been turned on? Check the valve on the mobile is turned on too, the tap like object on the outside underneath the mobile.
- **No hot water/water pressure low.** Firstly is the gas supply ok? It probably is, in which case there is a lime scale build up in the boiler – a job for the repair team.
- **Tent gas hobs not working.** Check and ensure the little brass outlet inside the hobs is clear from obstruction, if not using the pin from your name badge will clear it.
- **Fridge overheating/frosting up/blowing electrics.** Turn dial inside fridge to the number 3 or to medium, depending on fridge type.
- **Electrics in tent/mobile regularly blowing.** Ask customer to stop using high amp appliances, such as TV's, hair driers, heaters, etc.
- **Fridge in a mobile has stopped working.** Check all the electrics in the mobile are ok, ensure the temperature dial inside the fridge hasn't been switched to de-frost, and finally check the fuse is ok. This will normally be found in a socket - looking plate near to the unit itself

Top Tips For The Sacked **Employee**

Ok, my previous chapters talked about the companies, how they treat you and how you should treat them.

This chapter is as the title states :- top tips for if you're about to be sacked or have already been sacked.

First things first, don't get down about it all. These things usually happen for the best and are a blessing in disguise. You definitely can find work (it's just a numbers game), you must persist in calling companies and asking for work.

If you believe that there's a chance you could be dismissed, or you play a dangerous game, make sure you are aware of a campsite or some form of accommodation nearby that's cheap and that also has availability.

Get yourself a cheap tent, any supermarket usually will sell them. This will then become your base and you now have a place to get your head down during the job hunting stages.

Use the internet, this book or to buy the books I mention in the bibliography chapter. Work through the company telephone numbers one by one, take pen and paper with you so you can make notes of the outcome. If you've left a message, ensure you made a note of this and chase it up :- keep trying and don't get down. State you're already in Europe, you have experience and are willing to travel anywhere to work. Try and get the UK offices to give you the area manager's mobile number, the managers in the field are more likely to give you work as they will be more aware of positions available and have more contacts. They will generally be able to help you far more than the guys sitting in a UK office.

You will need to be notified of jobs that arise, and will inevitably be asked to leave a contact telephone number so the managers and/or companies can get back in touch with you, therefore you will either need to have taken your UK mobile phone, or to have purchased a local phone/sim card. If you have a UK phone ensure the credit is kept topped up so you can receive calls, make sure you leave the correct number and it is important to include the relevant prefix, ie 00 44 or 00 33, as required.

It will obviously be easier if you have your own transport, but if the company wants you they will arrange public transport. Try and work in a different area to that which you have been, although you are now working for another company and another manager, it is best not to rub it in your old managers face that you're still out working.

Some of the people you ring may ask for an up-to-date copy of your CV, my advice in this situation, and in fact in any situation, is that you should always have an up-to-date copy of your CV on your email account, it is easy to do.

Type up your CV for the travel industry using a word processing program, save it on the hard drive of the computer that you're using, log into your email account, start a new email, address it to yourself and add attachment, browse the hard drive until you find your CV, attach this to your email and send it. You now should have received an email from yourself with your CV attached, create an inbox call it Personal, CV, whatever you want and save this email in it. You will now have constant access to your CV whenever you access your email account.

To stay out and find work after you have been sacked will involve spending money, so you must have some cash in reserve for such circumstances. You will need to buy food, possibly pay travel expenses, buy phone cards, access emails and pay for accommodation; but the job hunting process should all go well and hopefully before long you will find employment, so not a vast amount is needed.

Last thing is:- do not boast or draw attention to the fact you have been sacked, it will make others dubious of you, keep it under your hat and you'll be fine.

Contacting The Companies

This is a list of companies, contact numbers and web addresses that employ staff for the travel industry for camping couriers in Europe.

When calling, things to ask are rates of pay, bonus or retainer allowance, if transport expenses are covered, and hours of work.

3D Education and Adventure www.3d.co.uk	01305 836226
Acorn Adventure www.acorn-jobs.co.uk	01384 446057
Al Fresco www.shgjobs.co.uk	0161 7964 727
Canvas Holidays/Camping life www.vrgcampingrecruitment.com	01383 629018
Carisma Holidays www.carismaholidayjobs.co.uk	01923 284235
City Cruiser Holidays www.harryshaw.co.uk	024 76455544
Club Cantabrica Holidays www.cantabrica.co.uk	01727 866177
Eurocamp/Keycamp Holidays www.holidaybreakjobs.com	01606 787525

European Services	0113 2361577
Fleur Holidays www.fleur-holidays.com	01253 593333
French Freedom www.french-freedom.co.uk	01724 290664
Haven Europe www.siblu.com	01442 203970
Ian Mearns Holidays www.ianmearnsholidays.co.uk	01993 822655
Mark Hammerton Travel www.markhammerton.com	01892 525456
Matthews Holidays www.matthewsholidays.co.uk	01483 285213
Select France www.selectfrance.co.uk	01865 331350
Simply Corsica www.simply-travel.com	020 8541 2227
Solaire Holidays www.solaire.co.uk	0121 7785061
Venue Holidays www.venueholidays.co.uk	01233 629950

Useful Information

What you won't be told !

Pre Departure and Packing

- Pack Speedo style trunks, many campsite pools won't allow swimming shorts in the water.
- Pack or buy out there a duvet, you are in effect living there, have some creature comforts.
- Take with you nice smartish clothes, you will be going out of a night hoping to pull, so look sharp and be successful.
- CDs and a stereo are a must.
- Set up Internet banking before you go, makes checking your account a world easier.
- Nationwide do not charge the user a fee for overseas cash withdrawals from ATMs.
- Photos from home will help reduce homesickness.
- Ensure all email addresses, normal addresses and phone numbers are all up to date and you take them with you in an address book.
- Check your bankcard doesn't expire whilst you're away.

- Pack a montage/demo case, have specific clothes for the job in there with a wash kit and towels and limited going out or nice clothes. This will mean your main case will remain packed and you only need to unpack and travel with a far smaller case.
- Always worth taking a multi socket.

Car Drivers

- Taking a car makes life a lot easier and will help if you've been put on a bad site - at least you can escape and do things.
- If you go fully legal on your car insurance, you can usually only get 90 days European cover, the only company that I'm aware of that issues a 12 month green card is called Stuart Collins & co: telephone number 01792 655562, although I know of a French company that issue a policy to British cars written in English with a 12 month green card. The number is 00 33 6 25 45 84 62 or 00 33 4 67 98 30 92.
- If you have taken your car, charge others petrol money for lifts, supermarket runs, days off etc.
- Fuel from supermarkets is cheaper than service stations.
- Have stickers in your car indicating what side to drive on, where the curb should be, direction around roundabouts, and what way to look at junctions.

Health And Safety

- It's recommended you have 3 litres of water a day. Remember it's more than likely to be hot where you are working, especially when cleaning tents. You will be sweating and probably dehydrated from the night before, take plenty of fluid to compensate.
- Too much sun and beer could be messy, think about it.

Life in a Tent

- To warm a tent, use the cooker hobs with a fan beside them to circulate the hot air and prevent it going straight to the ceiling.
- A slice or two of bread in the fridge, for a couple of days will get rid of nasty odours in there.
- When beanies are not available use crates on their side to stack clothes and personal belongings.
- For staff tents with centre poles that are not connected, put a potato on the fitting where the pole goes to prevent head injuries.
- Tin foil covering the cooker hobs prevents having to constantly clean them, just replace the old dirty tin foil.

The Job

- You are generally only contracted for a 35 hour week, don't work to hard!
- You are entitled to 1 and a ½ days off a week.
- You should be entitled to some holiday if you do a full season, make sure you find out how much and that you take it.
- All site phones, phone cards etc are there to be abused, blagg it, there is no way of proving you abused them.
- What others don't know won't hurt them, i.e. should you do a deal such as a cash on site booking, who knows if you pocket the money, or share with team members. Ensure none will grass though.
- If it looks clean, it is, forget hygiene, just get the job done.
- On montage/demo always opt to sleep on the pull out bed in the living room when staying in mobiles, it's the one nearest the heater.

Random

- Take plenty of photos, but get them developed when you get home to the UK - it's a lot cheaper and easier to carry.
- The key to a good BBQ is wafting/fanning. Forget lighter fluid, use 3 or 4 solid starter blocks, build a charcoal pyramid round each one and begin to fan, bin lids work best.
- When staying in a mobile, and the heater is on, place a bowl of water in the room to humidify the air and prevent it from getting to dry.
- For girls, and certain boys, make up should be stored in the fridge, it's also better if camera films and sun cream are too.
- Warm beer reaches optimum drinking temperature after 2 hours in the freezer.
- If you're near apple trees, cider can be made. Get a load of apples and a large container (big water bottles are ideal), wash and dice the apples, put into the container with water and sugar and leave for 2 or 3 weeks, releasing the pressure occasionally. I'm unsure on the alcohol content but others will be impressed with your efforts.
- Lemon juice in your hair mixed with sunshine will bleach it blonde over the summer months.
- If you're going out with friends or partners, ensure you are still social and mix with the others in your group don't set yourself apart from them.
- Allow partners space and don't get caught up in things. Take steps back and constantly communicate problems and issues

Questions and Answers

- **Is the work hard?** Yes, can be, particularly on busy days, but then you also get very easy lazy days. I have always found that it doesn't feel like work anyway.
- **Are 1 and a ½ days off enough?** Yeah, 1 day a week always get off site and do something, then officially you have another ½ day together with loads of other free time to head to the pool, bar, beach, whatever.
- **Does your money last?** This depends on how tight you are, my advice is to have a bit of your own money in reserve, the basics you need are food, drink, alcohol, money for days off and maybe fags, this does all mount up. And be prepared for sudden unexpected trips to cities, concerts, sports games, you want to make the most of your time so don't miss out on anything. Rule out saving cash, ain't gonna happen, to do this will mean you work, eat basic meals and go to the campsite pool on days off and free time - certainly not the experience I wanted, or had!
- **Are there better sites or areas?** No, each site is different each year, and the best sites are those where all the staff click and are all like-minded. Everyone wants to head to the South but believe me, the North is just as good, it's all down to your colleagues. Don't judge anything until you arrive on site and have been there a week or two.

- **Are valuables safe in my tent?** Generally yes, campsites are very safe places and people do respect each others' property. The constant comings and goings makes it hard for thieves, although it does happen occasionally, so don't make it easy and leave valuables on show.
- **Can I cope without a TV?** Yes, you won't miss it at all.
- **What will my colleagues be like?** They will be like-minded people of a similar age to you from all over the UK and beyond. All up for the same things, best people you'll ever meet, remember to stay in touch.
- **How is living in a tent?** Fine, the tents are big and spacious, just like having a studio flat minus water and toilet facilities.
- **I've never been away from home, will I be ok?** Yes, a great opportunity for you - it will teach you many life skills and to be independent. You'll learn plenty from others in the group.
- **What's the best company to work for?** There isn't one, they all pay similar amounts and treat you in a similar way, its just personal preference.
- **Will I get plenty of sex?** If you want it, it's there for you.
- **Cleaning doesn't appeal to me.** Forget about cleaning, no one likes cleaning that's not why we do the job. Think about the days off and evenings.
- **What if I don't like my site or colleagues?** Ask for a transfer or change companies.
- **Will I be exploited?** Almost certainly, your work hours well exceeding your contract and you have to perform tasks above and beyond the call of duty, but at least you now expect that and it will come as no surprise. The lifestyle and social side is great.

- **How will I get around, days off, shopping etc?** Public transport if you're lucky. If you have your own car no worries. Otherwise I'm afraid it's asking favours for lifts from colleagues and customers, or hitch hiking. Maybe a chance to get fit and walk and cycle places.
- **Can I progress for the company I work for?** Yes if you want, and work hard enough together with the all important 'face must fit', it's very easy to climb the ladder.
- **How is it taking my partner with me?** Ohhhh, it's fine, be prepared to argue a lot and test your relationship, remember you're with each other 24/7.
- **Am I too young/old to be a courier?** No way, one of the best things in this job is that there is no ageism. You can be any age and enjoy the job just as much, although you must be over 18 years old.
- **I can't cook, what will I do?** Learn.
- **I can't drink, what will I do?** Probably throw up.
- **I have never washed my clothes before, what do I do?** Separate whites and colours, remember if, for example, you have a white t-shirt with a red stripe on it, it still is classed as a white. Set machine to 40 c or medium on temperature setting, add washing powder and money, start cycle, hang to dry.
- **Is driving in Europe hard?** No not really, you do need to be quite confident with a little experience.

- **How do I get a job for the next summer season?** If the company you worked for wants you to return next year, they will usually be in touch by Christmas, otherwise start filling out those application forms.

- **Are the companies well run and organised?** You must be joking – organised chaos!

- **Should I believe what I'm told?** Never! Believe it when you see it, trust no one.

Working After the Summer

Right, you loved your season, job, colleagues and experience, can't wait till the time of year comes round again, what to do in the mean time?

Some of you will return to your studies, some will have proper jobs lined up, but if you have nothing in the pipeline and you enjoy working in Europe there are a lot of options available to you. Once again refer to summer jobs abroad, they have winter jobs too, working your way round the world and of course the internet. A lot of this section will appear similar to that you have already read in previous chapters.

Probably the best, most obvious, option after completing a summer season is, yeah you guessed it, a winter season! Working on the ski slopes. Things to bear in mind - the winter season is usually November through to April with interviews carried out in October. Best to apply in about June, on-line. These dates do clash with montage and demo so you will need to sacrifice one or the other I'm afraid.

Most positions are for 21 year olds or older, and the money is often worse than on a summer season. When applying, check out what the company provides, things like insurance, ski passes, equipment, transport and of course uniform, if you have to get these things yourself it will prove costly. Many people prefer winter seasons, there are more positions to apply for, days off are spent snow boarding and/or skiing. You are more likely to suffer an injury, but fuck it, you could be hit by a bus tomorrow, I would definitely recommend a ski season.

What else is available? Well ESL, who I've previously mentioned, employ all year round installing and uninstalling mobiles across Europe, won't go on too much about these.

Head to a University town or city and search out Irish/English bars. Quite often the majority of their trade will be more from students than tourists, so they are more likely to employ in term time, as opposed to holidays. Again, already mentioned so won't go on.

Last few options I will talk about, try talking to the campsite staff and owners. They will generally have their fingers in many pies, have lots of contacts and could help you out. You know, 'knows a man who knows a man', that kinda thing. Even the campsite itself needs staff over the winter months. Lets not forget the camping company you've been working for, speak to your area manager as there may be positions in the UK offices for you. Not Europe, but will be accommodating getting you back out for the following season. There may even be work in their warehouses, which are based in Europe.

Please also bear in mind that all countries in the EU that have job centres or equivalent are just as obliged to find Non-Nationals from other EU countries work as they are to finding there own Nationals work. Having a foreign language will virtualy guarantee you work, but even without, there are still plenty of jobs out there.

Remember don't get down or disheartened, if you want to stay out in Europe 'till the summer season starts up again, you must keep trying numbers and companies, try building up some contacts, eventually you will get lucky.

My Close

As I said at the start, this book is solely based on my views and opinions, and should you disagree or find any of it incorrect, I did warn you, but I believe you too will find out for yourself that what's contained is correct.

I hope you've enjoyed reading my book and found it very informative, feel free to pass it on and the information contained within to help and assist others in having a great time. Perhaps this will inspire you to write your own, better book - well good luck.

The main thing to remember is have a great time; forget about money and your worries back home, you're here to have a great carefree time. If you're lucky enough to find the right site, with the right group of people, you will have the best time of your life.

You will find in a very short space of time you will get extremely close to the people you're living and working with, you will say goodbye to your best friends frequently, but will meet many more. My advice to you is to ensure that you make the effort to stay in touch with them whilst away, and when you return home, pay them a visit every so often. It is hard, I know, but believe me it is worth it.

I'll let you go now and begin with your adventure, which perhaps one day I may be sitting down reading about.

I hope you get all you want out of this experience.

Here's to your summer

Cheers!

Glossary

- **4 Week rule** Can't go longer than 4 weeks without a shag – under no circumstances.
- **After 11 rule** After 11pm everything is ok and allowed and nothing can be said.
- **Anal** Taking things to seriously.
- **Beanys** Shelves used by couriers in their live tent.
- **Bed/mattress of France** Phrase used to describe the area of France called the Vendee.
- **Beer blonde** Stubby cheap lager bought from supermarkets.
- **Bridge-ing** The setting up of a tent, installing electrics and levelling units.
- **Courier Christmas** 25th June, 6 months before the real Christmas, all couriers can celebrate it together.
- **Courier tan** A tan in the shape of your uniform, i.e. brown lower legs and arms.
- **Demo** Demontage, period when tents get taken down and everything is closed down and stored for winter.
- **Footballs** 5 litres of wine sold at about 5 euros.
- **Gimping** Punishment for falling asleep anywhere apart from your own bed, examples, eyebrows being shaved.
- **Inner** Bedroom part of the tents.

- **It's camping** Couriers excuse for everything.
- **Lardons** Diced bacon.
- **Montage** The setting up of the campsites for the summer season, erecting tents etc.
- **Mucky Whore** Muscador, a rose wine, a couriers preferred brand.
- **Nokin in the cokin** Only Dutch everyone knows, means fucking in the kitchen.
- **Random** A couriers word for everything, can be used in just about any sentence.
- **Remork** Courier trolley.
- **Retainer** Money deducted from wages each paycheck and paid as a lump sum at the completion of the contract.
- **Space minge** Wire wool used to clean pots and pans.
- **Standard 3** If you score of an evening, you have a shag when you get back home, one in the middle of the night, and finish with one in the morning before you leave.
- **Steak haches** Burgers, main ingredient in a couriers meal.
- **TC** Tactical chunder, usually used after a drinking game to throw up and make more space for beer.
- **TPU** Tent power unit, Lights and electricity in a tent.
- **Walk of shame** Walk performed when returning to your own tent after spending an intimate evening in another's.

Bibliography

Here I list books and web sites which I mention in this book and which I have used many times myself to seek employment and advice on employment around the world, maybe they will be of some use to you.

- **Summer Jobs Abroad** *Written by* Victoria Pybus & David Woodworth *Published by* Vacation Work Publications.
- **Work Your Way Around The World** *Written by* Susan Griffith *Published by* Vacation Work Publications.
- **The Gap Year Book** *Written by* Joe Bindloss & Charlotte Hindle *Published by* Lonely Planet
- **The Virgin Travelers Handbook** *Written by* Tom Griffiths *Published by* Bloombury

Now for some useful web sites:-

- www.anyworkanywhere.com
- www.careerintravel.co.uk
- www.cheekyholidayrep.com
- www.coolworks.com
- www.gapwork.com
- www.gapyear.com

- www.gap-year.com
- www.jobsabroad.com
- www.jobs-in-europe.net
- www.natives.co.uk
- www.payaway.co.uk
- www.pickingjobs.com
- www.resortjobs.co.uk
- www.seasonworkers.com
- www.thetravelcv.com
- www.traveljobsearch.com
- www.travelvocation.com
- www.voovs.com

And of course not forgetting this handy little site

www.campingcourier.com