

**INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**OF HOBBYISTS**

**NEWSLETTER**

ISSUE 11

JANUARY 2003

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恭喜發財



[WWW.HOBBYISTS.CO.UK](http://WWW.HOBBYISTS.CO.UK)

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**Editor's Column**

Firstly may my family and I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Let's hope that 2003 will be a better year than 2002 has been for many of you. Let's hope you all had a wonderful Christmas with your friends and families, as we did.

The first magazine as Editor was, we felt, extremely costly to produce (OUCH!) and therefore too big a drain on the Club's finances. Therefore we are cutting the amount of colour we use to make this newsletter more cost effective. Unfortunately this, coupled with the fact that very few pictures were enclosed with articles, makes for a rather less colourful edition. Could I please ask you all when sending an article in, for a photograph - we'd love to see your faces as well as your beloved Hobby's!

As from the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2003 our household are going on to BT Broadband and therefore my e-mail address will be changing. Could you please stop using my present e-mail address after that time and I will notify everyone who I have e-mail addresses for and publish the new one in April's Newsletter. Please don't forget that we have a Club website, [www.hobbyists.co.uk](http://www.hobbyists.co.uk) where you can find up-to-date information. If anyone is going anywhere and wants company, perhaps you could e-mail Tony Charity at [TonyCharity@aol.com](mailto:TonyCharity@aol.com) and he could let everyone know via the website. I see that Dennis Trumble and Marion Lunn are travelling to Portugal with Ed and Vera Watson early March 2003 and Rick and Nicki Tidbury are meeting up with them there. It's ok for some isn't it?!

Regards  
Dawn

**Disclaimers**

The views expressed herein are personal and are not necessarily those of The Independent Association of Hobbyists. This Newsletter has been put together by Dawn Walton, 11 Avon Crescent, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7EU. All photographs and articles are the copyright of The Independent Association of Hobbyists and must not be copied without their permission.

**FLY SCREEN****Sue and John Rackham**

As you all know, Peter Ellingworth sells fly screen doors at a serious price. Sue came up with this idea; obtain a small adjustable tensioned curtain rail. Argos do packs of 2, gold coloured for £7.99 available from their catalogue for home delivery. Buy a suitable length of net curtaining in the colour/texture of your choice for £2 or so. Sew some weight into the bottom and voilà you have a fly screen for well under a tenner. A short piece of ribbon and a self-adhesive hook to hang it up when not in use and the entrance to your Hobby is enhanced.

*Sue did the work, John was the scribe***MATTER OF INTERPRETATION****Sent in by Pauline Selby**

When I take a long time - I'm slow  
When my boss takes a long time - he's thorough

When I don't do it - I'm lazy  
When my boss doesn't do it - he is too busy

When I do something without being told - I am trying to be smart  
When my boss does the same - that's initiative

When I please my boss - that is creeping  
When my boss pleases his boss - he's co-operating

When I do good - my boss never remembers  
When I do wrong - he never forgets

*Unfortunately little response for a caption from the last issue - maybe the threat of a slapping from JC was too much for anyone to cope with except the hardy! One caption was received as below. - well done Dot!*



*"ahso".  
Dot Bridgehouse*

### A DAY AT THE RACES - MAY 2002

**Raymond Connolley**

Last year, on our way from the York show where we bought a scooter to hang on the back of our 750, we stopped at Uttoxeter Caravan Club site. It is situated in the middle of Uttoxeter Racecourse - a very pretty site and is up to the usual Caravan Club Site standard. The wardens were more than helpful and we enquired about Race Meetings. It seems that the site is often booked up for these events particularly at weekends. We thought it might be worth a visit when we could watch the races and a further incentive was that once you are on the site, there was no extra charge to watch from the centre of the racecourse.

In due course having found out the dates of the meetings, all in the Site Book, we booked in with some friends for two nights in mid May. Arriving on the Tuesday we met up with our friends and had a pleasant afternoon before going out for a meal at a local hotel, which was highly recommended by the warden, and it was good and inexpensive.

The site is only a short walk from the centre of Uttoxeter and so we wandered up there the following morning to find that it was market day, a treat for the ladies. We had been recommended another eating place, the Robin Hood at Bramshall, which was about 3 miles out of Uttoxeter. After some enquiries it appeared that catching a bus was out of the question, one having gone 20 minutes before and the next one would arrive long after lunch had finished. Typical transport for rural areas. In our village we had the bus service cut by 50% a couple of years ago. The bus now only comes at 9.30a.m. on Saturdays. A taxi was summoned and we had another splendid meal, very well served, again without too much strain on the pocket.

Our taxi driver whose nickname was, so he told us --"cheeky monkey" returned us to the racecourse ready for the evenings race meeting. We did pay a further £3 each to go from the centre course to Tattershalls where we could see the horses parade and saddled before each race. Never having been to a UK racecourse before it was all new to the four of us and proved to be very interesting.

Six races later saw me £1.75 better off having picked two winners out of the six. Eileen was about £4 down having hedged her bets by backing each way and John and Pat, our friends, about £6 down. It was a cheap day out when you consider the fun we had and we will do it again. There are other Caravan Club sites on racecourses, some of which seem to have some restrictions on racedays but I doubt if any could match the friendliness and convenience that we found at Uttoxeter.

I would recommend it to all our Hobbyist colleagues.

## **CONTINENTAL HOBBYING**

**David Hird**

### **HOBBY KAMPEERAUTO CLUB**

This is an active association of Hobby motorcaravan owners throughout Holland. Membership conditions stipulate ownership of a Hobby motorcaravan; a sort of IAH with clogs, cheese and baggy serge pantaloons then? The aim is to increase enjoyment of owning and using a Hobby motorcaravan and to promote the development of friendships through a number of social activities and by exchanges of ideas and technical help.

Members meet informally throughout the year to walk, cycle, have a meal together or just a chat, and to explore the surrounding area. One member compiles a register of tips, ideas and handy hints into a written record, which is available to all members.

A Club newsletter "Hobby Post" is circulated periodically to all members.

The Dutch Hobby Club also has excellent connections with the German sister Club "Freundenkreis Hobby" which also organises get-togethers ("Treffen") a couple of times a year. An annual gathering ("Jahrestreffen") of German Hobby owners is sponsored by the Hobby factory at Fockbek in Schleswig-Holstein, and every third year this annual gathering takes place in Holland, when it is organised by the Dutch Hobby Club.

Membership details are available from *Mevr Ina van den Bijlaard*, Roggestraat 4, 7017 ZL VARSSEVELD, Nederland. Annual subscription is 16 euros and there is an initial joining fee of 4.50 euros. I have English translation copies of the HKC application form and information sheet.

### **HOBBY 35 YEARS ANNIVERSARY**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 saw the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Hobby manufacturing name. It was on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1967 that Harald Striewski, with just one partner, founded the Hobby works in Fockbek, on a 120 square metre site. Initial production totalled one caravan per week.

Today the Hobby factory employs 800 workers producing 16,500 caravans and 600 motorcaravans annually; 360,000 caravans and 8,500 motorcaravans have been produced in the company's 35-year history. Hobby now commands 24.4% of the German caravan market.

And Harald Striewski, 66 in January 2003, remains creative head of the enterprise to this day.

## THE 'CAMPING CARS SUR LES ROUTES DE LA SOIE'

**Peter and Janet Milner**

Janet and I have been totally inactive in club terms over the last three years and we apologise for this. We have the excuse of having been very busy coping with redundancy, a major house move involving the complete restoration of a lovely late Georgian house in the Welsh Borders, illness and some of the other vagaries of 'middle age'. Despite all of this, we have also managed to squeeze in four absolutely super holidays in our two-axle Hobby.

Three of these were in France because we belong to a wonderful French club called the "Camping Cars sur les Routes de la Soie et la Monde" or, in plain English, 'The Silk Road Club'.

The aim of the club is to encourage and support long distance motor caravanning and, as I write, members of the club, including several intrepid British couples and individuals are returning from the club's third trip to Peking having travelled approximately 30,000km, much of it over different parts of the 'Silk Road'.

Other groups of members regularly travel to the Central Asian Republics, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, India, the Middle East, North and West Africa and the Americas (using containers to get their vans there and back). With good planning and organisation almost anything is possible and even if your health, imagination, available time, wallet or vehicle do not allow the wilder flights of fancy, a huge variety of exciting trips is still within reach.

Apart from the long distance trips, the "Camping Cars Club" organises one or more 'Balades' a year, mostly, but not exclusively, in France. A 'Balade' is a mobile rally for club members that lets them take an in-depth look at a neglected portion of the country over a period of ten or twelve days. It is usually organised by a resident of the area who knows the roads, campsites, interesting places, countryside and culture. In France, as you would expect, wine and food also play a part in route planning.

I should point out that we do not 'convoy'. People set off in their own time each morning and largely follow their own interests during the day. Although we meet up at various places en-route, we take pains to avoid getting into groups when travelling. The French roads make it easy too for us as they are generally much emptier than English roads.

We have now been on three of the Balades and they have all been excellent. The French are incredibly fortunate, because motor caravanning is actively encouraged by the Departmental Governments and thousands of small villages towns or communes have free or very cheap municipal campsites which provide hard standing, good water, loos and somewhere to dump your cassette.

There are thousands of these sites and you can recognise them by the blue and white sign of a motorcaravan standing over a box-like drain. There is also a guide listing a total of almost 11,000 commercial, municipal and rural campsites in France, which you can buy through the Caravan Club for about £12.

The club balades use the free municipal campsites whenever possible and almost every evening the forty or fifty members on the trip gather, either outdoors or in a village or school hall, for an 'aperitif hour' where they can chat to their friends and recount the adventures of the day. These gatherings are really friendly because, although the French had a reputation for being standoffish, they love foreigners who join in with them and show an interest in their country and traditions.

We thoroughly recommend any Hobby owners who enjoy foreign travel to consider joining our French club in addition to our excellent Hobby Club. It provides tremendous opportunities to see rural France with the French and to come to understand our friendly neighbours very much better.

Apart from that, they, and we, would enjoy your company.

I must tell you that, when we first joined, we only possessed a few vestiges of school French but that now, after three Balades, we have made marked progress and can put across almost any question or idea we want to; though that doesn't mean we can understand everything they say. At the same time most of our French friends make a real effort to understand us and make themselves understood by us and even those who don't have any English whatsoever still give us kisses and greetings every morning and a cheerful 'bon nuit' at the end of the day. If you do come along, the great thing is not to be shy and not to hang together as an English group, but to join in with them.

It has been a wonderful addition to our normal range of European touring.

On a technical note I would say that Hobbies are capable of travelling almost anywhere as long as they stay on tarmac or good gravel roads. By all accounts however, they are not suitable for really bad roads such as those in Tibet. Their two weak points are the front wheel drive (a good winch front and back would be a big help here) and our long stern overhang, which can ground disastrously on sudden changes of gradient. See the website below for more information on vehicle suitability.

The English section of the club has a website at [www.silkroute.org.uk](http://www.silkroute.org.uk). It is full of information and illustrations and the section on the China 2002 Trip, which is being updated regularly, makes fascinating reading. Membership for a couple is currently £29.50 per year and this also provides regular colourful bulletins describing the adventures of club members. English translations are available on the web-site. Membership also gives access to a wealth of 'how-to' information and club members are always willing to help out with advice on formalities, route planning and vehicle preparation. Longer trips are planned in outline at the *Assemblée Generale* each year and interested people then stay in touch until the departure date.

There are plans for two Balades in France next year, one in June in Alsace -Lorraine and the other in September in Picardy and the Pas de Calais.

We hope to go on both of these and have also agreed to organise a Balade in 'Le Pays de Galle et les Marches' (The Welsh Marches) in the early Summer of 2004 and would welcome help in organising this.

I will write about the three Balades we have enjoyed so far in another article but, if anybody would like more information, drop us an email on [peter.ribenco@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.ribenco@btinternet.com) or a call us on 01938 552459.

With best wishes to friends old and new, especially those who have worked so hard to keep the club going.

October 2002

**UPTON-UPON-SEVERN WATER FESTIVAL RALLY - AUGUST 2002**



Our newly designed and made Rally Flag pictured with its creator Hazel Morgan and friends.

Who are these dodgy people caught on camera scrumping?!



*"When I catch up with you, you'll get a good roasting!!!" (Just a joke Joan!)*



### Postcard From Portugal

**John and Sue Rackham**

Visiting the sun in winter is most people's ambition when starting motorhoming. Leaving the winter cold but particularly the gloom behind in the first part of the year has many attractions. Organising to do it takes effort but broken down into bite-sized chunks is manageable. Our trip this year involved an 8 week tour of Portugal, Spain and France. There was extra spice for us as for some time we have had our house up for sale with a view to relocating in France. The week before our trip we had a call from the estate agents to arrange a viewing on the Wednesday before our departure on the following Saturday. The viewers liked the property, so much so that they offered the next day. We accepted and then had to contact solicitors etc. The result was that I was writing letters concerning the house the night before our departure.

Anyway, off we set to Portsmouth from North Lincolnshire with a view to an overnight stop at South Mimms Service Area. However, a £7.50 charge and dodgy security persuaded us to press on to Portsmouth for an overnight stop in the P&O parking area. A smooth cruising on the afternoon ferry got us to Le Havre by 22:00 French time. Adjacent to the ferry terminal is a car park where one is allowed to park overnight at no cost.

First day down to an Aire de Repos at Ste Maure de Touraine, which is right on the N10. A quiet spot in a small town with fresh water and a grotty toilet but plenty of shops for bread etc east of the Aire. As most of you will know, the cheapest fuel is at the supermarkets (at the moment about 0.70 euros per litre for diesel). Most supermarkets close on Mondays but Champion supermarkets are open.

The next leg was through heavy rain. On stopping we discovered we had sprung a leak through the top cycle rack fitting. A quick fix with Vaseline and later with Duck Tape fixed it until it can be taken off and replaced. The feature today was following the green Bayonne signs through the Bordeaux docks. A fairly quiet route but it is probably better to take the A630. Incidentally, we stayed on the N10 all day - not the quickest route but toll free for most the way and we were making the journey a holiday trip so an average of 250 miles a day was comfortable. Overnight was at Aire de Bidert amongst the heavy lorries but secure with all the basic facilities available free of charge.

Leaving the Aire the sun popped out and our friends who were travelling with us had a contre temps with a toll barrier. At least Roz did. She got out to retrieve the péage ticket, her husband Ron drove through the toll and the barrier landed on Roz's head. Thankfully no serious damage, so onward along the A63/AB into Spain.

This is a lovely stretch of hilly dual carriageway with good views to Bilbao. That took us to a campsite open just off the N620 between Burgos and Valladolid. That night we found a leak on the cold water feed to the vanity basin, looking at the set up under the vanity basin it is clearly a candidate for redesign. The wastewater runs away very slowly mainly because the arrangement of the pipes seems to have been done to maximise space in the cupboard. As there is plenty of shelf space the whole system needs lowering - another job to be attended to on return. In the meantime a plastic bowl to catch the drips had to do.

By this time, we had experienced all types of weather including snow flurries but the next day glorious sunshine, T-shirt and shorts weather, diesel at 0.68 euros a litre and an overnight at Caceres, outside a closed campsite next to the football stadium. A really snug position between the camp reception and a tall wall. Very secure with those visits by the local police to check who we were - all smiles and good relations. A comfortable overnight at no cost.

Into Portugal and diesel at 0.62 euros per litre down through Elvos to Evora with baking hot weather. Beautiful, non-toll roads with little traffic. Perfect motoring with the Fiat Turbo purring away like a cat full of milk. Driving like this and talking on the mobile to our estate agent about a survey was a little unreal.

Finally to Albufeira to the Camping and Caravan Club Winter Rally. Huge site with good facilities, plenty of pitches and sun loving Brits there for the winter. Plenty of activities including walks in the countryside and along the beach/cliffs near Albufeira; Cycling; Tennis; Swimming for those used to cold water and plenty of evening activities.

The climate is really superb with sun from about 0800 to 1700 with sunbathing temperatures from about 10am. Little wind and a little thin cloud. Just like a nice spring day in the UK but day after day of it.

To be continued...

*On a more serious note, an e-mail received from Dot.*

### GAS ALARMS

**Dot Bridgehouse**

This e-mail is regarding the "GAS" alarms, used to detect the gas they are using to render us unconscious whilst they rob motorhomes etc., the gas they use has been identified, now they have a deterrent, only a tiny unit which is to be situated near to the bed. Euromotorhomes do have the same alarm @ £125. Butts have one at £100 and I believe Van Bitz have one at around £90. Derek and I have just received one straight from Germany; no hassle total cost 130 Euros, that is £82.59. Fitting the alarm Derek says is simple but he has left it as a free standing appliance. The noise is really, really ear piercing. It works off 12 volt. I would also like to point out to everybody no matter what you do, wherever you are, do not take it for granted you are safe. We did everything we thought we should, well lit area, not alone, within sight of help. But what we did not have was "CLIFFORD" who can be a little temperamental, until you get to know him and extremely noisy, but I can tell you he is more than well worth his keep up to now has taken good care of us. If you want to know more about this fellow... see Jeff Lunn, thanks Jeff!!

**NORMAN AND PAULINE SELBY'S PROPOSED RALLY**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> TO 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2003**

**You may of course stay longer if you wish  
£4 per night plus rally fee, £10 deposit will be required**

**ULLESTHORPE GARDEN CENTRE  
LUTTERWORTH ROAD, ULLESTHORPE  
NR LUTTERWORTH, LEICS LE17 5DR  
TEL: 01455 202144**

I know that some of our members are not into garden centres but there are other things to see. Sir Frank Whittle did the testing of the jet engine here in Lutterworth, the bible was translated into English here too, also we have a small museum.

Lutterworth has several public houses but in Ullesthorpe there are a few anyway, just about a mile away in Bitteswell there are two quite nice eating houses. In Lutterworth there are two Chinese and three Indian that do take away.

There is a large outlet here selling designer clothes at knock down prices, can be very good, new stock comes in virtually every day. We have a Co-op supermarket and Safeway, (no petrol), but there are three garages anyway.

Telephone numbers if required (we hope you will not need them)

Doctor:	01455 5535331	Vet:	01455 552117
Dentist:	01455 552346	Taxi:	01455 559000

Adjacent to the site is a garden centre and aquatics area but they also have a very nice coffee shop which does home made cakes etc plus light lunches.

Usual facilities are on site.

This is our first attempt, so please try to support us.

Please contact us in any of the following ways: -

By post:	16 Willowtree Crescent, Lutterworth, Leicester LE17 4TD,
Tel:	01455 553158
E-mail:	Pauline@Paulineselby.co.uk

**ROGER AND HAZEL MORGAN,  
MARY HINES AND STEVE PHILLIPS - PROPOSED RALLY**

DATE: 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> June 2003 inclusive

LOCATION: Park House, Tilstock Park, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 3NL.  
OS Ref: SJ519372

ACTIVITIES: Hog Roast and Jacobs Supper

PLACES OF INTEREST: Ironbridge Gorge, Llangollen aqueduct, Horseshoe Pass, Hawkstone follies, Hodnet Hall and gardens, Wollerton Gardens, Erddig, Cholmondeley gardens, etc.

FEE: £10 per unit (includes hot roast for 2) plus Rally Fee.

DEPOSIT: £10 (so we know what size pig is needed). Please send to location address above.

SERVICES: Water, waste water, elsan point, rubbish bin.

RALLY OFFICERS: Roger and Hazel Morgan, Mary Hines and Steve Phillips

TELEPHONE: 01948 880228 (Mary Hines and Steve Phillips)

**DATE'S FOR YOUR DIARY**

1 - 5 May 2003 **NEW!**

Norman and Pauline Selbys' Rally  
Nr Lutterworth, Leicestershire

22 - 26 May 2003

Brian and Vera McLeans' Rally  
Beverley, East Yorkshire

6 - 8 June inclusive **NEW!**

Roger and Hazel Morgan, Mary Hines and Steve Phillips' Rally  
Whitchurch, Shropshire

20 - 23 June 2003

AGM in Hanley Swan, Worcestershire

28 July - 4 August 2003

Ed and Vera Watsons' Rally  
Ambleside, Lake District

20 - 27 August 2003

Jan Charities' Upton-upon-Severn Water Festival Rally

Late August - Early September 2003 - Dusseldorf Exhibition **NEW!**

If anyone is interested contact Jim Walton on 01789 299641