

# INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION OF HOBBYISTS

## NEWSLETTER

**ISSUE 14**

**OCTOBER 2003**



Meet Kob—Ed and Vera's guard dog!



The Hobbys have landed!

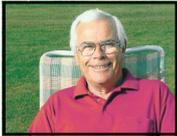
[www.hobbyists.co.uk](http://www.hobbyists.co.uk)

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## Editor's Column

Hi everyone!

Can't believe how quickly this summer has gone. Don't know whether it's a sign of age or just the fact that life is so busy!

The rallies this period have again been great fun and it's good to see that there are more rallies to look forward to in the 'Dates For Your Diary' section. Just a couple of things to mention. Could you all please check your latest copy of the 'IAH Member Details' and let Rick Tidbury know of any amendments. Also, when writing articles for the magazine, I should be grateful if you would limit your piece to two pages (including photo's). Any contributions, should be sent to me at 11 Avon Crescent, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7EU. Alternatively, to my e-mail address, [Dawn@sunset.plus.com](mailto:Dawn@sunset.plus.com) as usual.

*The deadline for the January Newsletter is 15th December 2003.*

Those of you who are having trouble accessing the website, Mick Orr is currently working on the situation.

Regards

*Dawn*

## Dates For Your Diary

### 2003

#### 5th—7th December

Mick and Mandy Orr's Meet at Moreton-in-Marsh Caravan Club Site—Telephone them for more details.

### 2004

#### 31st May—6th June

Ed and Vera Watson's Ambleside Rally

#### 18th—21st June

AGM at Little Merebrook Farm, Hanley Swan

#### 1st—8th July

Len and Toni Browning's Rally, near Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. Details to follow.

#### 12th—16th August

Steve Phillips and Mary Hines and Roger and Hazel Morgan's proposed Rally at Whitchurch, Shropshire. Details to follow.

#### 25th—31st August

JC's Upton-upon-Severn Water Festival Rally

## Ambleside Rally

28th July to 2nd August 2003

Vera and Ed (nothing to do with me!)



It was with some trepidation Ed and I marshalled our first rally. The venue, Ambleside Rugby Club (Galava Park) - is not the zenith of the Rugby Union world, but the site is in a convenient location for the village and surrounding fells, river, and Lake Windermere. Apart from three rainy days the weather was kind, the following week was scorching and the site was covered in mar-quees for the Annual Flower Show. We had many callers during the week Campers, Motorhome people all wanting to stay - we could have made a killing if we had charged them. Brian and Vera gave liquid refreshment to a couple from Czechoslovakia while waiting to catch their bus to London.

One rainy evening we used the Club Room for a Musical Extravaganza performed by Denis (keyboard) Kearns who entertained us for three hours non-stop (is there no end to this mans talents?) Thanks Denis.

Village people (not idiots!!) were impressed by the vans as we know they are the smartest on the roads!!

Members purchased outdoor goods, played golf and walked the fells and Chairman Tony left with a Canadian Canoe.

A fine white marquee was purchased (only missing a cut glass chandelier) by the club for the social gathering of members and was duly officially opened by Audrey Kearns. For those members who have yet to join us, you are missing out on friendship, information and expertise of fellow hobbyists who have usually fathomed out the few problems all vans have from time to time.



As rally organisers you hope you don't end up sitting there all alone, so we were gratified at the response having 18 vans for differing lengths of stay.



We think people enjoyed it, and as we were asked for more, we have booked for 2004. Monday 31st May - leaving Sunday 6th June, a date for your diary.

Many thanks.

## Upton-upon-Severn Water Festival 20th—27th August 2003

Tony and Janet Charity

We had a turnout of twenty Hobbys and the weather was very kind to us yet again. Everyone contributed to the BBQ on the Friday and we again held a raffle, raising £83 for the IAH. A sing-along followed with guest performers. Thanks to Denis Kearns, who was so keen to hear TC and Geoff sing again that he made a special journey home to get his organ. I have realised that we have a lot of musical talent in the IAH. Derek Bridgehouse on the mouth organ, John Anderton (Guitar) and singing and Malcolm Lees (guitar).



The firework display cannot be described by words. Such is the quality of this show, 15,000 people watched it at Upton. I cannot see how it can get any bigger.



Sunday was drinks and a raffle ran by Janet Charity on behalf of Lee our son. 61 prizes were drawn and £3,500 was made. Janet would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported us. We used the IAH new marquee which proved to be an asset. It would be nice if it could be larger but then it would not be practical to carry.

I have now nicknamed John Anderton as TORCHY (THE BATTERY BOY) he flattened his batteries yet again. The first time I met him he had to borrow a generator. Will he learn?

Derek Bridgehouse had problems with his pump and so we mechanically minded people stripped his van down, to Dot's distress. It was replaced and the cause is another story for Derek to tell.

Everyone enjoyed the sing-along so much that the ladies formed a group for the Sunday evening, followed (saved the best till last) by "the three tenors". But nobody could outdo the famous artist Denis Kearns otherwise known as 'La La' or 'Churchill'. He donned his best toga, lipstick and hairdo and gave the performance of his life. Not many things frighten me, but this was terrifying, I am having to turn Spielberg and Hitchcock away.



The final night saw the majority at the Yorkshire Grey for an evening meal. There must have been too many Yorkshire men in the group as it took longer to pay the bill than eat. See you all next year.

*Or maybe 'three for a tenner!'*

## Düsseldorf Rally—The Club's First European Rally!!

Jim Walton



The idea behind this trip was that Dawn and myself were going to Düsseldorf and a suggestion was made if anyone would like to join us they would be welcome. The response started off slowly, but escalated at the last minute to 8 vans + 2 members who went to the show earlier.

Dawn and myself travelled to Dover where we met Rick and Nicki and Barry and Sonia, as arranged and boarded the ferry together. A pleasant meal with wine was an excellent start to the journey. On disembarking we wild camped by the beach at Calais for our first night, had a pleasant drink at the local bar and prepared for bed. Next day, we headed for Holland to meet other members. Approximately two hours into the journey, Barry was failing to keep up with Rick, and after frantic hand signals from Sonia, we pulled up to find that he had suffered with the infamous turbo pipe problem. After a quick repair we were on our way. On stopping for a lunch break, Dawn was distracted by Rick (so she says) and tripped over a large cable (we all think it was the drink she'd had!) luckily just her pride was damaged. Mid afternoon, on arrival at Klein Vink, we doubled our numbers by meeting Dot and Derek, Ed and Vera and Brian and Vera. That evening, needless to say, in true club spirit (!), a good time was had by all in the bar!

Much to everyone's disbelief, we were up and running early, in convoy, to meet up at the services with Hazel and Roger and Ann and Geoff (welcome to your first rally). As is customary, extended greetings followed. After we'd drawn a lot of attention to ourselves, we set off in an even larger convoy to the show, which attracted even more attention on arrival.



The next three days were spent investigating the numerous halls and exhibitors at the show. With a show this size, it is an impressive but tiring experience! I get the impression that the Hobby stand was glad to see the back of us after numerous complaints, mostly about a distinct lack of spares. The evenings were spent discussing each others discoveries and finally, nightcaps at the bar were enjoyed by some! Most people visited Düsseldorf Old Town at various times. Dawn, myself, Roger, Hazel, Barry and Sonia paid our visit Thursday evening and after strolling through the streets paved with bars and restaurants, eventually dined at a beautiful old fashioned local eating house. On arriv-



ing back and discovering everyone else had retired, some members, not me or hazel, decided to give Vera a quick rendition of her favourite karaoke number!

On Friday, we all arranged to meet at Klein Vink and another good time was had socialising before leaving and going our separate ways on Saturday. Many members suggested a return visit next year, so watch this space. Finally, thank you all for making the trip so memorable for us.

## Is it fully winterised?

Gordon Sinclair

Well, it seemed like a good idea. Take the motorhome to Engelberg in January for some skiing (us I mean, not the Hobby). Out came all the summer items and in went the skis, snow chains, engine bonnet cover, etc. Having read the articles in MMM, plus the advice of Jeff Lunn amongst others, we took along extra propane, giving us a total of 46kg. We set off for the Channel Tunnel on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, in glorious weather. Rampaging around in the back was our cat, Toby, press-ganged from his slumbers to embark on his second voyage abroad. Eventually, all his 'on-board comfort items' were re-discovered and merciful peace descended!



The outward journey was via night stops at Mons and at Obernai, just south of Strasbourg. The crystal clear visibility gave us wonderful views as we crossed the Ardennes and the Vosges. Unfortunately, the conditions deteriorated the closer we got to Switzerland. Things were looking decidedly gloomy by the time we skirted Lake Luzern and turned off into the 'real' mountains. The final stretch to Engelberg is up a steep series of hairpin bends. The efficient Swiss had swept and treated the steepest part but just metres beyond lay the white stuff. We scrabbled along, just maintaining traction and made it without having to resort to the dreaded chains. Phew!

Camping Einwäldli comes highly recommended in the Alan Rogers' Guide. The site is attached to a sport-hotel, which has an indoor swimming pool, health spa, etc. For us, the main attractions were the 10A hook-up, a well stocked shop and two decent restaurants. As we got organised on our pitch, the clouds parted and offered a tantalizing glimpse of the stunning scenery. That night - Sunday - it began to rain... and rain. It was still raining on Wednesday, by which time the snow had changed to calf-deep slush. Jenny's venerable après ski boots leaked. A pair had to be purchased - considerably worsening Britain's Balance of Payments crisis.

Early on the Thursday morning, it stopped raining and began to snow. By lunchtime it was a full scale blizzard. This was all beginning to get a bit trying, although inside the motorhome, it was still warm and comfortable. Skiing was out of the question - the lifts were closed due to the high winds! The snow quickly built up on the roof. This wasn't a problem from a weight-bearing point of view but the warmth rising through the skylights and the Heki caused melt water to run down the sides to form impressive sheets of ice. The water also trickled into the gap around the door. There it froze, expanded and distorted the door seal, ever so slightly but enough to let wisps of cold air in. (I should explain here that our Hobby 750 is the 2002 version with the heating thermostat next to the door.) We awoke in the middle of the night to the Truma doing its nut - the cabin temperature was 26°C - except next to the door, of course! The doormat and footwell were encased in solid ice from the water ingress - more heat going up meant more water coming down! A gentle thump on the door confirmed it was frozen shut, as were both cab doors... hmmm. We checked that we could exit through a window if the unthinkable happened, plugged the gaps around the door seal with paper towel, turned the thermostat down a bit and went back to bed.



Next morning, the blizzard had moderated. I gingerly "broke out" through one of the cab doors and took stock. It took most of the day to tidy up. We unfroze the coach door by pointing the electric fan heater, which we had brought along to augment the heating, into the doorspace. We subsequently paid scrupulous attention to the gap around the door, using copious amounts of de-icing fluid, to prevent a repetition. (*Mea culpa*: Jenny had previously pointed out the ice forming. I didn't think it was too important, other than to give it a quick squirt!) Fortunately, the door and seal went back into shape. The ultimate solution, with the snowstorm tailing off, was to get up on the roof and clear it. This was one of the more exciting things I've done recently. Jenny kept a watchful eye from below, muttering the while about not fancying having to drive us all the way back if I fell off and did myself a mischief!



On the Saturday, we awoke to brilliant clear skies but blisteringly cold temperatures (minus 20°). A check on the duty propane bottle, our second, showed the layer of hoar frost which betrays the contents, to be retreating rapidly downwards. The consumption, as correctly predicted, was a startling one third every 24 hours. I learned two further important lessons that day. Lesson One: Don't neglect the engine! Watching the attempts of a Dutch caravanner trying - and failing - to get his car engine started, prompted me to try ours. It started, reluctantly, on the third attempt and ran very rough for several anxious seconds before settling down. I ran it for thirty minutes, daily, after that. Lesson Two: Whilst pondering on the vagaries of winter motorhoming, don't unthinkingly place your ungloved hand on anything cold and metallic e.g. the aluminium handle of the folding trolley...Yeeoww!!

At last, on Sunday, we had one glorious day in the mountains. This included a mandatory visit to the bar at the summit of Mt Titlis (10,000 ft). 'The Highest Bar in Europe'... as were its prices! As dusk fell, it was evident from the sky that another shed load of bad weather was coming. We made a timely departure down the hairpin bends the following morning, as the first snowflakes were falling. The return journey, with an extra night stop at Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg, was in marked contrast to the outward one. In particular, the traverse of the Vosges and Ardennes was a fair imitation of 'The Retreat from Moscow' - both versions - Napoleon's and Hitler's. At Mons, a kind lady vet - and Bürstner motorhome owner - Dr Van Deuren, visited us to do all the necessary and allow Toby back into the UK. Next day, almost within sight of Calais, we emerged from the sleety gloom into brilliant late afternoon sunshine. There was a final bit of excitement at the Eurotunnel pet check-in, where they clung on to Toby's paperwork until precisely twenty-one minutes before departure, to ensure we didn't violate the 24 hour rule! This led to a very rapid beetle round to *Quai 7*, where the train crew were beckoning frantically.

In conclusion: Is it fully winterised? Yes, it would seem so. Apart from the door problems, everything else - the plumbing, heating(!), etc., worked fine. Unless the bottom subsequently falls out, the only apparent damage was a foot-long section of waste-water pipe which snapped off in the cold. We're living successfully with the shortened variety. Next year, on reflection, we think we'll try March, when the sun is higher and the weather, hopefully, not quite so savage!

As a post-script, we set off again down the A26 from Calais on the 10<sup>th</sup> August. This was the day Heathrow finally hit 38°C (100°F) and Paris registered 42°C. Talk about going from one extreme to the other. Yes, Toby came along too... and that's the air-conditioning now fully checked-out!

## Membership Report

Rick Tidbury (Membership Secretary)

At the halfway point in our year, membership has been increasing at a steady rate with 10 new members since our last AGM. We also had a small drop out rate with some members changing vans or just losing contact, our number now totals 76. We now have members in all corners, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, also 2 in France. Still waiting for our first member in Northern Ireland. You can identify these new members by their membership number the date they joined i.e. 170903.

Some of our new members have not received a membership card, reason for this is a new design and production. Our thanks must go to Ed Watson for his wonderful work to achieve and produce our new membership card. Every member should have their new card with this Newsletter, if not please phone me. That's all for now.

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## Missing Motorhome

Pauline and Norman Selby

We would like to say a big thank you to all members of our club who have written to and sent us e-mails since our sad loss.

We are getting nearer to getting a new one (I hope) but it is still in the hands of the insurance company.

It must be bad enough to be broken into (as we were in June) but to lose the van is catastrophic, so much inside that you never remember, try as hard as we have, there are still other things coming to light.

Thanks to some of our members we have received details of new vans from the show, I think we shall have a new one, finance permitting of course.

We are getting withdrawal symptoms now, we have been so busy with trying to sort out all paperwork etc. that we haven't had time to think about getting away at weekends.

We shall see you all some time in the future at one of our rallies.

Best wishes to you all.

*I'm sure other members would join me in wishing Pauline and Norman a speedy conclusion—Ed.*

## York Rally

*This rally report was written by me due to short notice and Mike's personal commitments. Ed*



Mike and Margaret Woodhead hosted our Rally at York this year. Twelve vans were booked in to a fairly tight area, so much so that the marquee that Mike had kindly agreed to store and bring with him was not able to be used. The hardy amongst us then had to face the bad weather and use the beer tent as a social meeting point! Welcome to Christine and David Waterhouse who joined us for their first rally with the club. Along with all the numerous shopping trips, time was still found to have lots of social gatherings, as usual. However, not all the members completed the weekend without an incident of one kind or another.

Ed Watson had a problem with his alarm not setting. Valiantly, Geoff Lunn came to his aid and after spending time checking the whole system for any moisture and checking the door and locker sensors, Ed suddenly realised that he had not re-connected the cable at the back of the motorhome for the electric bikes! You'll never hear the last of that Ed!



Alan and Coral Weeks had a slight problem with breaking a key off in the lock, which meant they couldn't empty their toilet etc so they decided that they would have to leave early. On preparing to leave, they discovered what seems to be a common problem with the plumbing system in the 650's had hit them and flooded the whole van, so the rest of the day was spent baling out.

Denis Kearns had a shock one morning having left his generator out overnight and finding it gone the next morning. Unbeknown to him, his friend Tony (TC) had kindly put it away for him for safekeeping! What a pal! Next day, having hitched up his car to the motorhome he forgot he hadn't taken the ramps out from under the front wheels. On reversing, the car brakes locked on, the heavens opened and fun was had trying to remove them.



The final incident concerns the gentleman in the picture to the left. Len Browning (pictured here in caretaker gear emptying his chemical waste with his newly purchased trolley). Just before leaving the site on the Monday morning, Len decided that rather than making any more work for himself he would go to the public lavatories on site. Whilst he was partaking of the facilities, the toilet door was locked ready for departure from the site! After shouting for several anxious minutes, help was at last found and with the aid of a screwdriver, Len was finally released much to the relief of an anxiously awaiting wife, Toni who shared the moment with an anonymous member (TC) whoops! Needless to say I got hold of the story, (sorry Len, couldn't resist putting this one in!)

So all in all it was an eventful weekend and an enjoyable one, thanks once again to you both Margaret and Mike for the organisation, without which we would not have been able to rally together.

## For Sale

Settee and cushions for 650 similar to Rex Wade's, made by Regency - £300, cost £450, never used.

1. Dahon folding Bikes - £250, used twice.
2. G & H Awning 4½m complete with safari room taken off 750, used once, cost £2000 - £1,000 ono.
4. 1 Gel Battery brand new, cost £250 bought from Brownhills - offers.

If anyone is interested in any of the above then please contact: - Jean and Peter Cooke  
49 Conchar Road  
Sutton Coldfield  
B72 1LL  
Tel: 0121 686 4442

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## Piquant Pasta

John and Sue Rackham

Cooking en camp is all about minimum effort and utilising local ingredients that don't differ too much from ones we are familiar with, so the following should appeal.

You require for 2 very substantial portions which would easily satisfy 3 people.

2 small packs of Lardons - easily obtainable in all French Supermarkets

3 small cloves of garlic

1 small onion or shallot

6 small mushrooms - thinly sliced

1 Dessertspoon of Olive Oil

1 small red pepper

1 block of ready prepared Carbonara sauce - readily available in French Supermarkets. (We use the Amora brand who also make Hollandaise and Béchamel ready prepared sauces.)

Peel, chop and fry the garlic and onions in the olive oil, add the lardons and fry until browned. Add the mushrooms and peppers, cook for another 2-3 minutes. Add the Carbonara sauce into the pan and heat through. Season with salt, pepper, parsley and coriander (optional). Meanwhile prepare some pasta. Tagliatelli goes well with the piquant sauce prepared as above.

Enjoy with fresh bread and chilled white wine.

## ODDS AND SODS/BITS OF INTEREST

Richard and Mary Brocklebank

Quite recently, we were celebrating the first anniversary of a friend's wedding at the Museum Inn, in Farnham, Dorset (fantastic pub restaurant, well worth a visit) and having celebrated slightly too much, spent the night parked on the village green. In the morning we found a note attached to the windscreen which we assumed had been attached by the chairman of the parish council worried about possible influx of new age travellers, but in fact, it was a very polite request for detail of "your wonderful motorhome" from Johnnie Walker of mystery voice fame. It was such a genuine request, explaining a love of RVs enjoyed in America, we sent him an e-mail with photos.

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### Dover CL Site

Hazel Morgan

I was asked to let people know about the CL site Roger and I used at Dover, so I thought why not put it in the Newsletter for everyone to see. It is to be found in the Caravan Club Sites Directory 2003/2004 page 346. (3m NW) MR K BROADLEY, LENACRE COURT FARM, WHITFIELD, DOVER CT16 3HL. TEL: (01304) 821064 Open all year. £3.50

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### Hints and Tips

Hazel and Roger Morgan

- Place some mothballs into the leg of a pair of tights, and seal. Secure to the chassis. This helps to repel rats and mice.
- Cat litter placed in a tray will help to absorb moisture if the motorhome is left standing unused for any length of time.
- Tumble dryer fragrance sheets put into cupboards will keep them smelling sweet.
- To quick dry something small and light i.e. lacy knickers, place them on top of the hekki roof mesh blind. Shut the blind and the sun coming through the hekki will dry them in no time. Make sure the hekki is shut or your knickers could end up on the motorway!
- Always give Roger a bottle of beer when you meet him.
- Always shake a Frenchman by the hand when you meet him. You'll be surprised how affable it makes him. Well, comparatively affable. Well, affable when compared to a very recently hibernating bear!

## A Tourists Prayer

Sent in by Toni Browning

Heavenly father look down on us your humble, obedient tourist servants

Who are doomed to travel this earth, taking photographs, mailing postcards buying souvenirs and walking around in drip-dry underwear.

Give us this day divine guidance in the selection of our hotels that we may find our reservations honoured, our rooms made up and hot water running from the faucets.

We pray that the telephones work, and operators speak our tongue.

Lead us, dear Lord to good inexpensive restaurants where the food is superb, the waiters friendly and the wine included in the price.

Give us the wisdom to tip correctly in currencies we do not understand

Forgive us for under-tipping out of ignorance and over-tipping out of fear

Make the natives love us for what we are, and not for what we can contribute to their worldly goods.

Grant us the strength to visit museums and cathedrals, the palaces and castles listed as 'musts' in the guide books.

And if by chance we skip a historic monument to take a nap after lunch, have mercy on us, for our flesh is weak.

*(For husbands only)*

Dear Lord keep our wives from shopping sprees and protect them from bargains they don't need or can't afford.

Lead them not into temptation for they know not what they do.

*(For wives only)*

Almighty Father, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them to us.

Save them from making fools of themselves in cafes and nightclubs.

Above all do not forgive them their trespasses for they know exactly what they do.

### Disclaimer

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