



# Hobby Times

The IAH Newsletter

Issue 23

JANUARY 2006

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

## 2006 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### DATE

### EVENT

### CONTACT

Tues 2 May -  
Tues 9 May 2006

Rally at Ambleside

Malcolm & Wendy Lees/John & Barbara  
Anderton

### *NEW*

Wed 28 June -  
Wed 5 July 2006

Rally/AGM at  
Stratford-upon-Avon

Dawn & Jim Walton

Sun 23rd July -  
Sun 30 July 2006

Rally at Chainbridge  
near Abergavenny

Len & Toni Browning

### PROPOSED RALLIES STILL NEEDING A MARSHAL

Date to be decided

Standlake, near Oxford

Mick Orr (Rally Co-ordinator)

Last week of May /first  
three weeks in June  
(to be decided)

Dartmouth, Falmouth  
Plymouth

Mick Orr (Rally Co-ordinator)

*See our website for further details*



## EDITOR'S COLUMN

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**W**elcome to the January 2006 issue of the Hobby Times.

On a personal note, times they are a changing. I have agreed to start a permanent job on 3rd January 2006 so this year will be a little different at our house - no more temping here, there and everywhere - but a more stable 9 - 5 routine! The good news is that I will have one day off every other week, thereby facilitating my need to escape with our many friends for a long weekend!!



**T**hanks go to every one of you who has sent your different articles to me for this and the next Newsletter - could I please ask those of you who use a computer to send these to me (no more than two pages per article please) via e-mail to [dawn@sunset.plus.com](mailto:dawn@sunset.plus.com) together with a couple of photographs? Those of you who prefer to write then I should be grateful to receive the same to me at: - **Temple House, 7B Mayfield Avenue,**

*The deadline for the April 2006 Newsletter is the 1st March 2006*

**Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6XB.** May I just add that if there are any changes to your personal details i.e. address, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses etc then Dave Jackson our Membership Secretary would be grateful to be updated so that the communication lines remain open to us all!

**W**ishing all our members health, wealth and happiness for 2006 and hoping that many more will be curious enough to join in the fun at our Club rallies in the New Year.

*Dawn*

## AND A NOTE FROM YOUR WEBSITE OFFICER...

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**H**appy New Year to you all

In the last Newsletter, we introduced the new website. The response has been mixed, for example, I have noticed that a considerable amount of members have not accessed it yet. The reason could be that some members were away but it could also be that the original e-mail addresses given to Dave Jackson are either no longer valid or incorrect. So if you have not received an automatic e-mail from the website asking you to log on, this could be the reason. I would suggest you e-mail me at [jim@sunset.plus.com](mailto:jim@sunset.plus.com) confirming your precise e-mail address and I can check it and amend if necessary. You will then receive an automated e-mail allowing you to log on. I would appreciate it if all members would follow this instruction even if they do not intend to use it on a regular basis.



**O**ut of all those members who have logged on, many have responded and all have agreed to the principle of future magazines being accessible from the website. I would like to thank all these members for their comments and finally could I remind you all that David Daley has designed this site for you all to input your messages, sales, photo's etc so please let's make use of this! It will make it more interesting for people to visit on a regular basis.

*Jim*



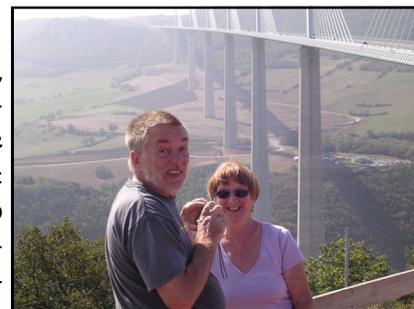
## FURTHER DISJOINTED RAMBLINGS FROM GORDON...



**H**appy New Year to all the Hobbyists - whatever happened to 2005? Will the person who's cranking the years round faster and faster kindly ease up!

First of all, I'm delighted that founder-member Denis Kearns is well on the road back to good health, following his major operation. As you could see from the last newsletter, Den and Audrey's Hobby 750 is up for sale and it will be most interesting to see what they choose for the replacement. Also on the long haul to recovery is our Membership Secretary, Dave Jackson, who discovered the perils of pressure-washing his vehicle. Exactly how this caused him to collide so heavily and painfully with the unyielding ground remains a mystery, though.

Now then, while some of you were larking around in the mud at York, your Chairman, Treasurer, and wives were concentrating on the serious business of testing a prototype 'rolling rally' on the Continent. Granted, the plan was a bit vague. Destination Italy, but somehow taking in the fantastic new *Viaduc de Millau*, because it just had to be done. OK, OK, so that's a 250 mile diversion, at least, and we're all barking mad. Having gleefully agreed on that point, off we went. (I imagine some of you will be harbouring grave doubts about the 'freewheeling' aspects of this trial already!)



*Mike and Margaret  
at the Viaduc de Millau.*

**W**hat did we learn? Well, Mike and Margaret are 'Up and About' people in the morning, while Jenny and I belong to the 'Coffee and Constitutional' brigade. M n' M's fabled good nature was sorely tested during the wait for our faffing around to stop and the day's proceedings to get under way. They also learned not to follow us through the same toll-booth on the autoroute. You see, we were towing our car, M n' M had decided not to bring theirs, some booth operators didn't take a proper look, and - oh dear - the wrong class was charged! Speaking of tolls, there aren't any on the A25, which sweeps down through the majestic Massif Central, except for the viaduct itself. For people who dislike the busy A7 south of Lyon, this route is going to be a popular alternative - assuming that high bridges don't bring on the vapours of course!



*The Sinclair/Woodhead combine at lunch  
on an aire at Lorlanges on the A75 south  
of Clermont Ferrand.*

On the other hand, if tunnels are the pet-aversion, then the A10 along the Italian Ligurian Coast will cause big problems. Margaret counted them and it was well into three figures before she gave up. My introduction to Italy's roads and driving habits was along this very stretch, on a rainy evening in November 1971. I have particularly bad memories of the blot on the landscape which is Genoa. This time, we passed by it in brilliant sunshine. Suf-fice to say: Genoa's an even bigger blot on the landscape in daylight, the roads are still terrible, and the drivers are more aggressive than ever! At the campsite in Piza, we watched in awe as an Austrian motorhome club rumbled in under cover of darkness - twenty or more of them at a guess. At first light next morning, there was a commotion and they were off again, so regrettably no tips were gleaned on the organisation behind this mammoth 'rolling rally'. Rome's version of the M25 - the *Grande Raccordo Anulare* -



is currently undergoing major reconstruction in the north-west quadrant. There are no prizes for guessing where the two principal camps - Happy Camping and Camping Tiber - are located!

**F**lorence was next, and having spent the whole of September together, the end of our 'rolling rally' came when Mike and Margaret headed off to Venice, while we unhitched the car to explore Chianti. It wasn't meant to be the end - they were supposed to rejoin us at Lake Garda for the Bardolino Wine Festival - but the weather intervened. The rain came down in freezing torrents and the festival was a washout. Half the German nation had come - it's a new holiday to celebrate the unification apparently. (Tuck that one away for future reference!) A text came from Venice to inform us that it was wet, cold, and miserable there. We were wet, cold, miserable, and muddy, and my advice to give Garda a glancing miss was duly taken! Their next text was from the sunshine in San Remo. From there, Mike and Margaret went off on an extended journey, ending up in Spain. Homewards took them back over the *Viaduc de Millau*, which they say is even more spectacular on the northerly crossing. For them, the Italy bit turned into the huge detour. (See "harbouring doubts" and "freewheeling aspects" above!)

For us, because it was getting cold, the need to go into Germany was important. We'd been without the Truma boiler for a month - it went rumble, rumble, **BANG** - and all attempts to have it looked at properly in France and Italy had proved to be hopeless. We were advised - by Dave Jackson, languishing back home and confirmed by a German caravanner - that if we took the vehicle to Germany, Truma would send one of their mobile workshops to fix it. This proved to be absolutely correct. Within an hour of our call from Camping Kirchzarten at Freiburg, a cheerful gent turned up and very soon after, we had central heating and hot running water again. We then had three glorious days exploring the Black Forest, making use of the new KONUS guest-card, which the camps and hotels are issuing. It entitles free travel on the public transport in the south-west part of the region. (See: [www.konus-schwarzwald.info/](http://www.konus-schwarzwald.info/)) The 'home run' took in a brief visit to Ernst Caravan, for one or two bits and pieces, and finally the shambles that is Dover Docks. Give me the Eurotunnel any time, except it's so expensive - £200 more for similar midweek crossing times - and that buys a lot of wine!



**Y**ou will have deduced that anyone coming on a 'rolling rally' led by the Sinclairs and the Woodheads, will have to be prepared to go anywhere - if only out of curiosity! (Oh and bring your sense of humour pills.) However, we did discover some things - such as the impossibility of staying together through busy towns, allied to how quickly we lost radio contact with one another. Also, our GPS's had startlingly different notions as to how to get to places: "Where are you going? Ours is saying go right!" "Funny - ours is saying carry straight on!" It's as well that we were 'solo' when our GPS did the biggest 'howler' by trying to get us across the Rhine on a bridge that's not scheduled to open until mid-2006. (How's that for an up-to-date database?) An 'Interesting Time' happened, before we trundled over the narrow cobbled bridge at Rheinfelden, to be stopped by the border guard. As he surveyed the growing traffic jam, he looked me in the eye and intoned: "Ziss vass not a gutt idea!"

Off we go then, into 2006. Hopefully the recent easing in fuel prices will continue. Throughout 2005, filling the vile old tramp-steamer with bunker oil made my eyes water. (Oops - let's be absolutely clear on this - I'm referring to the Hobby!)



## VERA & ED WATSON'S TRIP TO ITALY

### 1 SEPTEMBER 2005 - 11 OCTOBER 2005



*Dusseldorf - The Rhine*

**A**fter enjoying a pleasant four nights at the Düsseldorf Caravan Show we set off south via Switzerland, St Gothard tunnel to Lake Lugano where we parked on the edge of the water. It was very hot and not having air conditioning and wanting to keep the mossies at bay the first few nights were barmy to say the least. Moving on we had lumps and itchy bumps beginning to appear so it was batten down the hatches and be armed with the electric killer bat! Next stop was Venice by the lagoon at camp Fusina. We decided this was to be our last water site. Venice itself was much cleaner than we expected - green water. The waterway we looked out over was a hive of activity and we were amazed

when tankers and massive container ships passed by only about 50 yards from the shore line. After Bologna we headed to Florence, awful road busy with reckless lorry drivers - code is - pull out - then indicate, amazingly there are few accidents. Florence is a well-worn city; all the statues appear to have been shuffled to one corner of the Piazza, many many tourists. Assisi our next stop, good site and we loved the town mostly rebuilt after quake damage. Oxygen would have been an acceptable service here!

Happy Camping was our site for Rome, very good, clean and good transport to Rome centre. Buy a rover ticket £11 for 3 days covers train, metro and bus. Enjoyed the city sights notwithstanding much queuing and walking. As we were running into October, sites open were becoming harder to find so the Amalfi coast was as far south as we went. Staying in Sorrento after another horrendous drive the site there was convenient, but it was overlooking a very active sewerage bed with accompanying aroma! Also very expensive - 35 euros per night.

**H**omeward bound we decided to go away from cities into the mountains - our first love. As we are privileged to live in Cumbria, scenery is important to us and we were not disappointed. Although it was much cooler, Umbria was good and the quiet roads a bonus. We had fathomed out to do long runs at weekends as the heavies are banned. We were the only motor home about, the other residents were a caravan plus shed - or a shed plus caravan not sure which, inexpensive holiday homes with mushrooms for breakfast there for the picking.

San Marino is well worth a visit as was Levanto on the west coast to see the five villages of the Cinque Terre to be viewed either by train, or walking for the fit (or insane)!

We sat in Venazza with an ice cream on the harbour side of a jigsaw Ed did months ago. Last site Camping Mom Barone at Settimo Vittone was at the edge of the Italian Alps (dusted with snow before we left) a family run site with its own vines. We left with 20 litres of wonderful wines - we will return!!



**T**he only Hobby problem we had was in the last two days our shower drain blocked - home and removal of drain found a plastic boss from my line fitting, a plastic price tag tail and several grey hairs. Ed will not be beaten - we now have a custom made mesh drain guard crafted from a tea strainer and rings made from a CD - orders taken at £6 each - free delivery!!

Opinions:- Expensive, mad drivers, food basic, talk funny but worth the trip.





## YOUR LETTERS

### FROM PETER & MARY FROM BOURNEMOUTH

Dear Dawn

Thank you for our recent enlarged "Hobby Times" we received this on one of the worst days for weather. Torrential rain, high winds, blackened skies but receiving and reading the "Times" soon cheered us up and rekindled some fond memories. On reading the article referring to the rally at Rutland Water and the demise of Gordon and Jenny regarding their broken windows, we felt that the enclosed information would be of help to other members in the event of cracked or broken windows.

The Eeco Company have made over 20,000 different types over the years, but do not keep the moulds as this would mean another factory just for storing them in. We found them extremely helpful and very reasonably priced. For example on our Hobby 600 (Blue-Belle) to replace our rear sliding window would cost £150.

Another point I would like to mention is that their sister company manufacture stainless steel exhaust systems for all types of vehicles (guaranteed for life - so I have been informed). This needs to be checked out of course. Again I have been told by other campers who have used them that their prices are a lot lower than the genuine vehicle manufacturer's replacement systems. Hope this information is of benefit to all members.



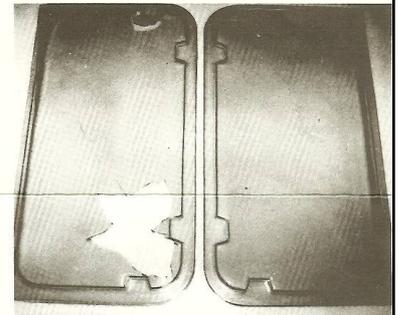
### BROKEN CARAVAN WINDOWS?

**FAST REPLACEMENT SERVICE**

(IN MANY CASES WITHIN 7 WORKING DAYS)

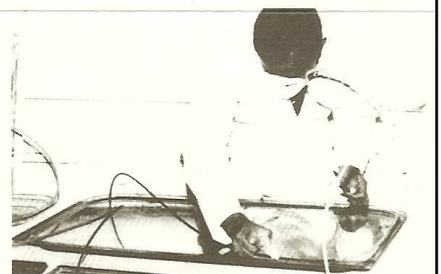
Telephone : 01274 679524/5/6 • Fax : 01274 607344

**THE SERVICE:** Upon contacting us on the above numbers, you will be given an all inclusive quotation based on the details of the window to be replaced. We will then arrange for our carrier to call and collect your damaged unit. Once received we will make the replacement using dimensions and fittings etc. from the damaged unit (it does not matter how badly damaged the original is). The new replacement is packaged and boxed and sent back to your nominated address on our 24 hour service. (Please note : Delivery to Ireland, Highlands of Scotland, Channel and Offshore Islands takes longer).



**YOUR NEW WINDOW:** Is manufactured by us in the U.K. using individual moulds and the highest quality acrylic. Many people are not aware that the colour tint of the original windows fade drastically. EECO carry stocks of many different tints of acrylic and from these, endeavour to match the tint of the window sent and NOT what the original colour was. The hinge bar and catches from the original window are refitted to the new replacement unit ensuring that the attachment to the caravan is quick and simple.

**THE COMPANY:** EECO have been moulding acrylic for over 30 years and have been involved in the caravan aftermarket for 25 years, whilst the replacement window division of the company was established 15 years ago. The personnel in this department have immense experience and knowledge of acrylic caravan windows and the whole department is dedicated to offering a bespoke service and ultimate customer satisfaction.



### CLEARLY THE BEST

EECO LTD ACRYLIC WINDOW DIVISION

WADE HOUSE ROAD • SHELF • NR. HALIFAX • WEST YORKSHIRE HX3 7PE

### A NOTE FROM STEVE PHILLIPS - TECHNICAL OFFICER

One thing that might be worth passing on; Reg Haylings said he had experienced in a previous (non Hobby) motorhome and had also read in MMM that the cause of cracks in plastic sinks can be due to mouthwash.



## ANGELA & RAY WOOD

To any of our members with a Extended Warranty for Motorhomes (Mechanical Breakdown Insurance Policy) issued by Euro Motorhomes, covered by Pinnacle Insurance through MB & G Insurance Services Limited. This warranty is normally a 2 years extension to the manufacturer's warranty. A similar policy is also issued with second hand vehicles.

It may be worth checking with MB & G to see if the policy has been registered. We tried to make a claim on his policy only to find that MB & G have no record of the policy, saying it had never been received from Euro Motorhomes, or paid for. Euro Motorhomes say they sent it to MB & G but cannot prove that it was received and they no longer deal with MB & G. Following numerous letters Euro Motorhomes have stated in writing that they will honour Ray's policy (although they do not cover the parts that he was making the claim for).

MB & G Insurance Services Limited, can be contacted at 21/26 Howard House, Howard Street, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 1AR, telephone 0191 259 0647.

*Since this article was written it has been brought to our attention that Euro-motorhomes has been put into liquidation. Nonetheless, the above information may still be of use to any members it may concern.*



## TERRY & CHRISTINE HECTOR

We are new members to the club being new to motorhomes but not new to touring Europe. We spent last winter touring Germany, Italy, France and Spain in a caravan (now sold).

In Spain we heard many stories of break-ins and people being gassed, mainly in an area of 50 miles each side of the southern France/Spain border. We spoke to two people who were attacked - one still with an arm in a sling after a knife attack!

After collecting our new Hobby from Germany (still with German plates) we visited Van Bitz for a complete security package. Their work is excellent - we are having other work done by them at the moment. We can recommend their services together with their motorhome site at Cornish Way Farm - about two miles from the centre of Taunton, Somerset.

## SUE & TONY BROWN

I have just joined the Independent Association of Hobbyists and I just thought the members would like to know about the new smartphone that's just come on the market. It is an XDA SP from o2, you can use it as a mobile modem for your laptop anywhere in the world. It has also got tri band so you can use it in a America. I don't have a land line myself so it's ideal for me - it costs £16 a month for 25 minutes plus 25 texts plus one megabyte. I bolted on another 5 megabytes for £8 - total costs £24, just a bit more than a landline provider. Plus o2 have just been bought out by the Spanish company Telephonic so it will be good anywhere in Europe. Hope this will be of interest to all the members.



Hi Folks

## *Thank you from Audrey Kearns*

Unaccustomed as I am to putting pen to paper, (or many other things come to that), I feel compelled to come out from under my cosy rock and to say a brief, but very heartfelt, "Thank you" for the wonderful outpouring of support and good wishes that Den and I received before, during and after Den's recent hospital stay.

What a smashing crowd you are. Here's to many more get-togethers. Thanks again. I'll crawl back under my cosy rock now. Thanks again from one very happy bunny.

PS Den says thank you for your support. He will always wear it.

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## YOUR ASSOCIATION - WHO DOES WHAT

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