

Hobby Times 'free as the bird'

I.A.H Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Pat Miller

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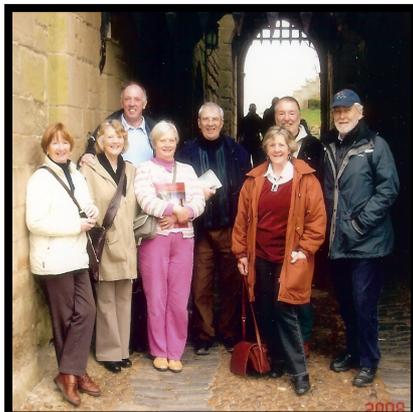
Letter from the Editor

As I write this letter, I gaze out of the window onto a rain-sodden garden, a blanket of grey cloud obscures the view of the river below - it is the middle of July for goodness sake! I hope by the time this reaches you the sun will be shining and summer will have arrived. However, Hobbyists carry on regardless of the weather conditions and have met up for get-togethers in small groups as well as the organised rallies.

Lickhill Manor, Stourport-on-Severn and Warwick (29 March - 3 April)

Lickhill is a large site situated alongside the River Severn, with all the necessary facilities e.g. electric hook-ups, toilet block etc. and the town of Stourport only a 10-minute walk away along the river bank, with a canal basin full of boats. Our next site was at Warwick Racecourse on a tarmac surface next to the race track (no horses!), only a few minutes walk away from the centre of town. We booked tickets in advance to visit Warwick Castle where we all had a very enjoyable time exploring this historic building and its extensive grounds. There is a great deal to see and do here - one day is not quite enough - beautiful rooms depicting the past life of the castle with Madame Tussaud type figures in authentic dress. Lots of armour and weapons to please the boys, a ghost tower to scare the fainthearted, (our screams could be heard for miles!), beautiful gardens and a lively display of birds of prey.

By the way, did anyone spot my 'deliberate' mistake in the last newsletter when I referred to our Chairman as Mike instead of David (oops!)? Well, here is a puzzle for you - a photo of our Chairman and Accountant in the stocks and 3 photos of David and Mike with their wives at Warwick - do you know which is which and who belongs to who? This is definitely not a case of wife-swopping - just a bit of fun!



Norfolk Rallies:

Kings Lynn, North Runcton (4/11 June) & Deers Glade, Hanworth (11/18 June)

We were late arriving at the Kings Lynn campsite due to having to attend a family party on Saturday evening in London. It had apparently rained continually the previous three days so when we arrived on Sunday at midday in glorious sunshine we were very lucky, and that it remained so during the rest of our stay. It was a very well-kept site in a pleasant residential area, a large lawned field shaded by mature trees, with small, immaculate toilet block - there was even soap and towel provided - who could ask for more? We joined the rest of the group as they were preparing to walk to the nearby pub for Sunday lunch - traditional roast or crab salad - then a leisurely saunter back along the lanes and an afternoon spent relaxing with the newspapers (and a quiet kip).



The following day was even hotter as six of us set off on our bikes to explore the highways and byways of this part of the Norfolk countryside. What bliss - no hills! We sailed through farmlands, fields of broad beans, and country cottages, stopping briefly on the bridge over the River Nar to watch a male swan preening himself and putting on a show for our benefit as there were no other swans in sight. We stopped for a picnic by the river next to a village pub and the church, where a flower festival was in full swing, then made our way back to the campsite for a well earned rest - after all we had done 12 miles in the heat of the day! Early in the evening, while the sun still shone, we all pushed our tables together in the centre of the field, barbeques were lit ready for our communal supper and there we stayed chatting while the sun went down and the dew soaked our feet - the end of a perfect day.

The following day was not quite so warm so took advantage of the private bus service, which runs past the campsite on Tuesdays and Fridays, taking local people to Kings Lynn. There is a modern shopping centre here, but we turned our backs on it and set off to explore the old town, which has many interesting historic buildings and museums as well as a very fine church. The old Customs House on the quay had been in use up until 1989 overseeing this important dock for the last 1,000 years. Many explorers had set off from this ancient port to navigate uncharted waters and discover new lands. We met some interesting people on our walkabout (a former town guide and a disabled lady- who took us through the building where she lived and showed us parts of old Kings Lynn we would otherwise never have seen). They gave us a wealth of information about what to look out for both in the church and its surroundings. Time was running out so off to the market for provisions before catching the bus back to the campsite.

Tony Charity had organised a meal at the local Chinese restaurant that evening, we had a marvellous meal - all you could eat for £13!! This was our first Chinese meal since our trip to China 3 years ago when we felt we would never be able to face a bowl of rice ever again! Len Browning and Vera Watson went for the Spicy King Prawns in a big way - in fact Vera threatened to bite the hand of anyone touching 'her' prawns - so Tony Charity and I took one just to see if she would!

The following day we all moved on to our next campsite at Deer's Glade, Hanworth not far from Cromer, where we met up with more of our members. Four of us made a detour to visit Holkham Hall, home of the Earl of Leicester and his family. A very interesting stately home with an awe-inspiring marble entrance hall and staircase leading up to the state rooms, resplendent with new luxury carpets which visitors were free to walk on - no ropes keeping the public at bay. The guides were friendly and helpful, giving information on the history of each room and the people who had lived there. The men were more interested in the museum of agricultural implements and the collection of vintage vehicles, including an Airstream caravan which had belonged to the previous Earl who was President of the Caravan Club.

It was late afternoon by the time we arrived at the Deers Glade rally field, tucked away behind a wood, quiet and peaceful with only the birds to watch and the occasional deer wandering past - a good site for dog owners. The next day some of us went to Cromer, the wind was cold and very blustery as we made our way down to the beach. We watched as John Anderton and Len Browning skimmed pebbles into the sea until a huge wave soaked John's feet and trousers - and Len fell over - it was very funny! (In fact, all the excitement was a bit too much for them - see photo). On the way back we visited Sheringham, a pretty town with a little rail track and steam train, lots of little shops - every other one an ice-cream parlour, so we had to have one - it was freezing!

Another day was spent exploring Norwich and its historic cathedral. There are many interesting places to eat here - being a university town - we found a lovely Tapas restaurant for our lunch. Most people divided into groups to explore other places so they will have different stories to tell. In the evening we all went to the Spread Eagle pub where a meal had been booked in the function room. It was a large empty space but 18 of us soon made plenty of noise to make up for it - a bit of competition for the duo playing in the main bar. After the meal we joined everyone else listening to the music, which was fine until the landlord said our minibus would not be returning as the driver had been taken ill! This proved to be a hoax (Tony Charity's idea of a joke) - panic over - our lift arrived on time, but on arrival at the campsite John Anderton realised he had left his coat and van keys back at the pub. Luckily, he found he had their 'phone number on his mobile (fortunately not in his coat pocket) and was able to catch Tony and Jan before they left in their car. Barbara was envisaging a night spent in someone else's van and how inconvenient that would be! She was not a 'happy bunny'.

The sun shone on the last day for our trip along the coast to Wells-next-Sea and Holt. We had a picnic lunch on the beach, then on to Blakeney Quay, where the boats were waiting for the tide to come in so that the seal watching trips could leave the harbour. This stretch of coast is very attractive with its pretty villages and unique character. Holt is a Regency town with interesting shops, which were just closing as we arrived, otherwise we might have been tempted to buy more than we did. Instead we discovered a tiny Bistro down a cobbled alleyway and sat on the patio in the evening sunshine enjoying a drink before returning to the campsite to cook our last meal before returning home. We all gathered in John and Barbara's new van for a farewell drink but they were experiencing electrical problems and having to resort to their 'ambient' lighting - small stick-on LED lights - ideal when you have no electrics. In fact, as we left the following morning all we could see were the legs of various men folk sticking out from under their van trying to cure the fault! They have had a few problems with their new luxury van (not always the van's fault). The first being an unfortunate occurrence when taking their grand-daughters away for the weekend as a treat. Barbara had wrapped the cooking pans in a roll of plastic to stop them rattling inside the oven, and never gave it a thought when she switched on the new grill to cook some bacon for breakfast. It didn't seem to be heating up so she switched on another grill sign and started cooking the bacon - the next thing they knew the van was filling with acrid smoke - when she opened the oven door flames and black smoke belched out, with molten plastic dripping onto the new carpet! Grabbing the fire extinguisher, the interior of the van was soon plastered in white powder, causing more mess than the fire. The girls were not happy as they had to forego their bacon 'sannies' while a major clean up had to be done. (These signs on oven doors have a lot to answer for!).

We look forward to our next rally when more exciting things might happen! This would have been the AGM but this meeting has now been postponed until 27th September.

Chainbridge, near Usk - 16/23 July

This is a site we have returned to for many years and is an old favourite. The rally field is alongside a river and opposite a pub serving good food, accessible over the chain bridge. Further up the road is the Golf Club, a good venue for a special meal. This is an ideal site for relaxing and enjoying each others' company or exploring the lovely countryside - we have had many a hair-raising cycle ride along the canal towpath!

For further details: Contact: Toni Browning, Mobile No. 07938687045.

Ireland - 28 August - 15/16 September

Ferry from Cairnryan to Larne

Campsites - contact David Jackson

See the MMM magazine 'Touring Guide to Ireland'. Website: www.camping-ireland.ie or pick up the Caravan & Camping Ireland brochure at your local tourist office.

Chairman's Ramblings

Hello, old and new friends alike!

Well, since March, Ann and I plus other members, have spent a lot of time searching for a venue for this year's Annual General Meeting somewhere in the Midlands, as we have members throughout the country. We did come up with one but this was cancelled due to poor access for larger vans, with only 10 days to go, so now, after much more diligent sourcing, have come up with another at the later date of **27 September** at The Redbrick House Hotel, nr. Edwinstowe, Mansfield, Notts. NG20 0EW, 24-28 September. Approach from junction 28 M1. If using the M1, I will send a local map to interested members - please e-mail me!

It is pleasing to note that the damp meter is getting used; I will have it with me at the AGM so that anyone can use it there. Something to consider - some of our members are changing their Hobby's for caravans or 5th wheelers - can they still be F.O.H. (Friends of Hobbyists)??

Looking for sites did have its compensations, allowing us to meet up with fellow members at Broadway, Hanley Swan, Stourport-on-Severn and Warwick (where some of our ladies got a little scared in the castle), however, the weather was kind to us and we placated them with some retail therapy and meals out.

I try to put our meetings with other members on the website and anyone is welcome to join us although they are usually at short notice, like the other week when some of us went to Doe Park at Barnard Castle where we met up with David and Christine, Ed and Vera, Dot, John and Barbara, Mike and Margaret. We were there from Monday to Friday. A theme of ABC tours was continued, combined with garden centres, and a local hostelry, provided some sustenance. It would be good if you did the same! Some of us attended Toni's rallies in Norfolk and I believe a good time was enjoyed by all, as the photos show - also Toni is now a happy lady as she has a new dog called Miska - good luck.

Are there any more members interested in a trip to Ireland this year? If so, please contact me (Tel.01530 832585

e-mail >d.jackson16@btinternet.com<). Departure on or about Tuesday, 26th August returning on or about 15th September, via Cairnryan to Larne ferry. First stop Bushmills (distillery and Giants Causeway) then on to Donegal and down the west coast - with the possibility of a free campsite!!

David Jackson.

A Trip down Memory Lane (Tony Charity)

I received a call from Dave Jackson the other day to say that the AGM date had to be postponed due to certain circumstances and it started to make me think about all the problems of being on a Committee and was it worthwhile? I then started looking at photographs I have collected of some of the events, which then reminded me of the fun I have had and some of the wonderful characters I have met along the way. Had I not been a member of the IAH then my memory space would have been far greater now, but far less quality to call upon. If you care to read on I will take you on a journey using my memories and some photographs. I apologise to anyone I have left out (no malice meant) and therefore reminding us all what doors our vehicles open.

I will not bore everyone how the IAH started but I do have fond memories about our first AGM at Rex and Joan Wade's house. It was in North Wales and access was through a forest, two fords (which turned into rivers after torrential rain) and a bend which could not be traversed by the larger vans without first entering Rex's yard. The entrance to the field was through a mud patch, guts, skill and determination were needed to get through without requiring Rex's pulling power. Because it could be confusing going through the forest with so many diversions and the number of people that balked at the ford crossing, I acted as a guide on my scrambling motorbike. I must admit I enjoyed observing the fear on people's faces. I remember Richard and Nicky Tidbury who had just purchased their motorhome and I am sure they would have gone home upon reaching the ford, but there was no way back. I think this gave members a lot of confidence and extra skills in using their motorhomes.

On this rally I recall Audrey and Denis Kearns along with Chris and Arthur Vine. Denis begged for a go on my motor cycle and, against my better judgement, let him. Denis immediately tried to scramble up a large grass bank and then I saw him rolling back down followed by the bike. This resulted in his metal knees becoming more flexible and a bollocking from Audrey (I stayed out of her way). The reason Denis gave for the accident was: a) there was at the time, a slight variation in the earth's magnetic field causing a shift of the North Pole and of Rex's farm field; b) Denis being a nature lover swerved to avoid an ant; c) the back wheel suffered a considerable amount of 'tension of the dilithium crystals' which righted itself just after he fell off. The bottom line was that he was too 'bloody old' and showing off. Denis had brought along his electric organ and we all mucked in to ensure that he had power as we sat round the evening bonfire. This rally was renowned for the vicious midges enabling Arthur to replace Denis and earned the nickname 'Arthur & the Midges'.

Unfortunately Arthur Vine was very poorly and passed away, but not before introducing us to the karaoke world at the Upton Water Festival Rally. Denis and Audrey are no longer in the IAH but they are hoping to join us on some future occasions. Denis has kept us entertained over the years with his musical abilities and his cross dressing (refer to pictures). His literary skills are evident as an ex-Hobby Editor. Denis & Audrey have kept us speculating in what van they were going to turn up in next, closely followed by John Anderton.

Is it widely known that Ed Watson didn't get his nickname as 'Mr Flash' from his photographic skills, but the fact he was caught in his birthday suit by not pulling his curtains!



We seem to have had a number of members with musical talents, John Anderton, Len Browning, Malcolm Lees and of course the Lazy Lobos consisting of John Anderton, myself and Jeff Lunn, although I think most people would discount myself and Jeff from that category. We also had in our midst a wonderful but modest talent in Derek Bridgehouse (deceased). I knew Derek was very talented in his engineering background and his skill in model shipbuilding, but was amazed when he played his harmonica to everyone's delight.

I enjoyed the company of Jeff Lunn and Elaine Linsky who had bags of energy being younger members and were always up for a little mischief. Dot Bridgehouse, who would never say no to any dare, participating in races with the invalid carriages, going up the Mendips on the back of my motorbike, and sometime later found herself in a microlite. I remember the rally at the International Balloon Fiesta at Ashton Court, Bristol, organised by Denis Kearns. I found it truly amazing having never seen so many hot air balloons of all shapes and sizes taking off from the field at the same time.

I had fond memories of Loosehill in Derbyshire, where we have visited twice, decorating our vans at Christmas time and having a meal at an Italian Restaurant where the waiter participated in the fun with a fancy face mask. I loved the walks at Loosehill with the two German Shepherds (Baz & Max), John Derham and Jim Walton. The dogs finished by swimming in a pool and then sat in front of a fire in the local pub, steaming, while the three of us tried to kill the pain in our aching limbs. Having mentioned the name Walton, it was Dawn and Jim who organised the German rally and I have missed the enthusiasm of Dawn and the opportunity of a quiet pint on an evening with Jim, down at the nearest local. Dawn did a great job on the newsletters (with the help of her family). They are sadly missed.

I recall the hospitality of Steve and Mary Phillips allowing us to use their farm field for a rally - what a beautiful setting. Hazel and John Morgan purchased a suckling pig and roasted it. This proved great fun but unfortunately a suckling took too long to cook and then provided very little sustenance. Fortunately Jim Walton had brought back some pork scratchings from the local pub. The Hobby People are a forgiving lot, suffice to say the Quartermaster was told he would have a more menial role next time, polishing the cook's boots.

I recall the rally at Ullesthorpe near Lutterworth organised by Pauline and Norman Selby. This was where a handsome ex-Newsletter Editor (Denis Kearns) was helped up onto an exceptionally large chair then left high and dry.

I remember the very warm welcome given by Toni Browning at the Chainbridge rally dressed in traditional Welsh dress, supplying cakes and tea. Her husband Len (a special character) who will always be in my memory, wearing his brown coat and gloves to empty the ablutions and getting locked in a portable loo at York, which was nearly taken away with him in it!

I could go on for much longer, but we have all got our special memories which will stay with us forever and that is why we should support our Committee and I for one will offer my services at the next AGM if required, so that I may have the opportunity to meet more 'special people' and add to my 'memories'.



Gutsy Lady High on 'Spirit'

I thought I would take time out to write about the adventures of Angela Wood, who we all know is always full of 'spirit', but on this one occasion, she had to dig deep.

You are all aware that I now own a Microlite and that during my training I developed a bad back and was unable to fly with my Instructor, Phil. It was during the Water Festival rally at Upton upon Severn. Did I receive sympathy? No! I was trampled over during the rush by some of our members, to take advantage of the offer to fly in the available Microlite which, I am glad to say, everyone enjoyed and will know what it is like to sit in an open cockpit with your legs dangling out of the side at a few thousand feet.

Angela has been hankering to do this for some time and after many dummy runs travelling up from Ross, I finally managed to get her strapped into the rear seat. I can say with honesty that she was the most nervous passenger that I have ever carried. Not that I have ever been crushed by a Boa Constrictor but I can now imagine what it must be like, after having Angela's legs wrapped around my waist!

The plan was to fly over Angela's house, but each time we hit a thermal or turned, Angela thought our time had come and burst into some operatic song. (I'm being kind she was screaming!). This prevented me leaving the landing strip area until she calmed down. At some point she started to enjoy the flight but preferred to stay within sight of the landing strip, which we did. On an uneventful landing Angela stated that she really enjoyed it. But, all said, a great deal of credit must go to her as she was terrified of flying this way and it took a great deal of guts to go through with it, which can never be taken away from her. Well done Angela!

Tony Charity

Joke: The Bunny and the Snake

Once upon a time, in a nice little forest, there lived an orphaned bunny and an orphaned snake. By a surprising coincidence, both were blind from birth. One day, the bunny was hopping through the forest, and the snake was slithering through the forest, when the bunny tripped over the snake and fell down. This, of course, knocked the snake about quite a bit. 'Oh my' said the bunny, 'I'm terribly sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you. I've been blind since birth, so I can't see where I'm going. In fact, since I'm also an orphan, I don't even know what I am.' 'It's quite ok' replied the snake. 'Actually, my story is as yours ... I too have been blind since birth, and also never knew my mother. Tell you what, maybe I could slither all over you, and work out what you are so at least you'll have that going for you.' 'Oh, that would be wonderful' replied the bunny. So the snake slithered all over the bunny, and said, 'Well, you're covered with soft fur, you have really long ears, your nose twitches, and you have a soft cottony tail. I'd say that you must be a bunny rabbit.' 'Oh, thank you, thank you,' cried the bunny, in obvious excitement. The bunny suggested to the snake, 'Maybe I could feel you all over with my paw, and help you the same way that you've helped me'. So, the bunny felt the snake all over, and remarked, 'Well, you're smooth and slippery, and you have a forked tongue, no backbone and no balls. I'd say you must be either a team leader, supervisor or possibly someone in senior management.'

(Supplied by John Anderton)

Eric's Snippets

Brownhills (former Hobby Agent)

I was surprised to read that Brownhills Motor homes (Newark) Ltd were bought out on April 25th appointing an administrative receiver. On the same day, Brownhills Motorhomes Limited completed a management buy-out valued in excess of £46 million. We are told that the buyout secures 365 jobs within the group and that the new management has undertaken to honour all previous Brownhills warranties and deposits already paid on vehicles.

Lowdham Leisureworld

I understood that Lowdhams were to be the new agents for Hobby Motorhomes, with branches in Huddersfield, Nottingham and Reading. So I was interested to see the [Alan Kerr Leisure](#) of Paignton, Devon, advertisement stating that they are the newly appointed Hobby Motorhome Dealer for the south west.

Donaghey Motorhomes

I note that Donaghey Motorhomes Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, Ireland, are the Hobby agents in Ireland and have now opened a new depot at Victoria Bridge, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

Michelin's Tyres

Michelin have recently launched a new range of Agilis II camping-car tyres called: Agilis Camping, which I understand supersedes the Camping X which has been in difficult supply for some time. The new 'Agilis Camping' has a wider footprint than the previous generation of Agilis with less rolling resistance and has sidewall protection zones against kerbing.

Michelin recommends that only metal tyre valves should be used with camping tyres. All camping tyres display the CP mark, indicating that they are certified for use on campervans, also carry the M&S marker, indicating their suitability for occasional use in muddy or snowy conditions.

More information may be found at www.michelin.co.uk (search for Agilis Camping, which will also offer a dealer locator).

WORLD'S EASIEST QUIZ

(Passing requires 4 correct answers)

1. How long did the Hundred Years' War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get cat gut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What colour is a purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. What is the colour of the black box in a commercial aeroplane?

Answers to the Quiz: [Remember, you need 4 correct answers to pass!]

1. 116 years; 2. Ecuador; 3. Sheep and Horses; 4. November; 5. Squirrel fur; 6. Dogs; 7. Albert; 8. Crimson; 9. New Zealand; 10. Orange (of course!)

What do you mean, you failed? Me, too.

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**Disclaimer:**

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The publication has been put together by Pat Miller (contact details above).

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