

Hobby Times



'free as the bird'

I.A.H. Newsletter - Issue No. 30 - Christmas Edition 2008



We wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year
(in spite of the 'credit crunch'!)

Letter from the Editor:

It has been quite an eventful summer one way and another for us that is, although we don't hear too much about what other members get up to but we would very much like to hear about your adventures, so how about putting pen to paper - or email (my address is on the back page). Don't worry about your literary skills - I can always tweak it here and there - it is the ideas that matter and the fact that we can all learn something from each other. The Hobby club have met up at quite a number of different venues over the past year and, when I last wrote, we were just about to attend Toni Browning's rally at Chainbridge, 16-23 July, after a rather dismal summer. We were a few days late arriving as we had other prior engagements, the first being a balloon flight from Bath on the 16th at 6 am in the morning! This had been arranged by our family and, after many cancellations due to bad weather conditions, we were finally able to take flight up to the heavens above the city of Bath and surrounding countryside - a magical experience - until it came to landing!! Our 'pilot' was being examined by an instructor, and after two abortive attempts to land, we finally crashed into a narrow strip of land between two railway lines. The cows in the adjacent field were very surprised! Our feelings of euphoria were somewhat dashed particularly when we had to spend the next hour hauling the balloon off the brambles and stuff it all back into a bag which seemed far too small. It was lucky there were 16 of us to help with this daunting task. We had a nice long rest afterwards as we were trapped in a field with locked gates, the farmer having gone to market with the keys in his pocket. The examiner went off to find the farmers' wife who managed to contact her husband and persuade him to return and let us out, but we were still not 'out of the woods' yet as the land-rover which was on its way to fetch us had broken down. This entailed a long walk back to the nearest road and another long wait until rescue arrived - then the driver got lost and took us on a circular route bringing us back to the point we had started from! However, eventually we returned to Bath and made our way home, a few aches here and there but none the worse for our adventure. The next commitment was to help a friend arrange a surprise 65th birthday party which entailed putting up a large party tent in their garden and attending a dance in the village hall. However, we made it to Chainbridge on the Sunday, the weather was glorious, and it was good to meet up with old friends once again - we should have arranged our balloon flight from there instead as we watched them taking off in the very next field. After a few days camping (in tents) with the grandchildren, I was glad to enjoy the relative comfort of our Hobby for the trip to Ireland in August/September of this year in the company of David and Ann Jackson, together with Ken and Lucy Cookson. They both had a headstart as they had arrived earlier in order to visit Donaghy Motorhomes in Letterkenny, but we managed to catch up with them at Dungloe campsite on the west coast, then travelling south we stayed together as far as Doolin, when we parted company with David and Ann who wanted to see something of the lakes in the central part of Ireland whilst we continued with Ken and Lucy down as far as the Dingle peninsular, at which point we then had to leave in time for our return ferry. The weather had been kind to us on the whole but then turned very wet so as we were heading for the ferry at Rosslare, Ken and Lucy made their way back to Belfast and their return ferry home. Lucy has kept a diary which she has shared with us (overleaf). Pat Miller

IRELAND: Lucy Cookson's Diary – August/September 2008



Giants' Causeway

Monday 25-27th August

Antrim

We boarded the 9.30 ferry from Cairnryan, near Stranraer, no problems, apart from being subjected to a full body search with strange bits around the waistline of trousers and across my front bits! What were they looking for!? One and a half hours later we were driving away from Larne, Co. Antrim towards Bushmills, a small town on the northern Irish coast, with a campsite on the outskirts of the town, not far from the famous distillery. It was raining - the 'soft Irish rain' we grew to know and love - but then the sun began to break through, highlighting the many shades of green in the small patchwork of fields, that became so familiar over the next three weeks. The campsite, privately owned, had excellent facilities (we especially appreciated the music in the shower block!) but was expensive by English standards. Bushmills town is not very big, with lots of small shops and a wide main road running straight through the middle, it had an old fashioned feel to it, as though time had stood still about 50 years ago. On Tuesday we visit the Giant's Causeway, (in the rain), the famous basalt rock hexagonal columns rising vertically from the ground, a strange and bizarre sight, almost as though it had been manufactured by man. We cannot walk the circular route, as there has been a landslide (the weather the previous week had been atrocious). The Antrim coast is an area of outstanding beauty, and we were not disappointed. Driving towards Carrick, we came across White Park Beach, and as we walk across the dunes we find ourselves in a beautiful bay with soft white sand as far as the eye can see (about a mile long), and we have it to ourselves! I sat mesmerized as I watched the rolling waves breaking onto the shore. The famous rope bridge at Carrick was our next stop and I felt very proud of myself as I walked across it without holding the ropes, looking down onto the 100ft drop to the sea, as the narrow rope and plank bridge swung from side to side. We drive southwards stopping at Cushendall, to visit a 'not to be missed' Irish pub with traditional Irish music but, being a Tuesday afternoon, it was closed. We were in the right place, as it is a pretty little village, but at the wrong time. However, the coastal drive was worth it, being able to see seven beautiful valleys (or glens), the Antrim mountains, and a forest of pines giving way to rolling purple moorland, as well as more spectacular, deserted beaches. A real feast for the eyes, especially seen with a backdrop of moody grey skies and shafts of bright sunlight. It was our first time towing a car on a long trip, and we were really enjoying the freedom it gave us. Ann and David Jackson joined us on Wednesday, and we went to the Bushmills Inn (a former coaching inn) to eat a very pleasant, if expensive meal, with the smell of a peat fire in the background, very reminiscent of our previous visit to Ireland some 10 years ago.

Thursday 28th August

Donegal

Destination: Letterkenny in Donegal, Southern Ireland, where Ann and Dave's new Hobby is due to undergo its first service. We are to meet them a few miles outside Letterkenny at a pub, where we will be able to park overnight as long as we ate there. Although cloudy, there are sunny spells as we travel past beautiful green rolling hills, until we are diverted by roadworks. Doris (our trusty sat-nav) is having a fit (as usual). It's a bit scary now, as we come across ever narrowing roads in an undulating terrain (the sort of roads we were determined to avoid in our 750 and towing our little Toyota Aygo for the first time). Then disaster struck! Going up a very steep hill, we had to stop for a lorry coming the other way. Then the van doesn't have enough traction to continue upwards. Ken tries, but the van is juddering and going nowhere. He tries to reverse and then go forward again, but still it doesn't want to know. We then try to unhitch the car, but because it is at an angle it is almost impossible. We can't go up and we can't go down. There is also a ditch by the side of the road, as well as the road being quite narrow. To compound our distress, the traffic hurtles past us at a frightening speed, and I have to take on traffic cop duties to avoid any further mishaps. To Ken's great relief he manages to unhitch the car using the jack, and we think all is well, but now the van won't start! I can't believe it! We call the breakdown service and let the van roll back a little, so that we are not blocking so much of the road, but this is difficult and dangerous, remembering the ditch at the side of the road. Help was at hand in the form of a friendly Irishman, who lived just up the hill, he is not at all fazed by our predicament. He tells the breakdown people exactly where we are, directs traffic as though he has been doing it all his life, and seems to know everyone who passes. The little breakdown man eventually comes. He greets us with "Oh, the joys of motoring!" then tries everything, to no avail, telling us that

we would have to be towed to either Sligo or Belfast to the nearest Fiat dealer, either way a distance of approximately 70 miles. Our hearts sink. Ken thinks it must be an electrical problem - an indication when the warning flashers ceased to function - could be a fuse. He changes the fuse, tries the engine and bingo, it starts first time. What a relief! It turns out we were only a few miles from our destination. IF we hadn't been diverted - IF we hadn't met the lorry coming the other way - IF ONLY! Ann and Dave arrived not long afterwards. "What diversion?" they said. The pub where we met up with them had the most fantastic view, the patrons were very friendly, and more than one or two Guinness was supped that evening!

Friday finds us following Ann and David to Letterkenny, to Donaghy Motorhomes, where we also leave our van so that they can check out the engine management system, (it has been blinking a red light since our escapade the day before). Whilst they are doing this, we do some shopping, quickly realising that prices in Southern Ireland are almost one and a half times more than at home and in Northern Ireland. A couple of hours later the van is ready to go, our pockets 80 euros lighter, but what price peace of mind! Ann and Dave still have some business to conclude, so we set off for a campsite at Carrigart, north of Letterkenny, which has been recommended by Gerry at Donaghy Motorhomes. So we are towing once again, and all is well until we end up going along the coast road instead of further inland. Another detour brings us to Milford, a lovely little market town with one main road up the steepest of hills and a feeling of 'déjà vu' as we work our way past cars parked on both sides, and even some double parking (the Irish are rather fond of this little trick). Someone is approaching in the opposite direction. 'We can't stop' I say (or probably scream) at Ken, but due to his brilliant driving, we somehow get through! The campsite is situated on a beautiful wide sandy bay, but the facilities, we find, are not so good.

Later on, when out for a drive with Ann and Dave, we get lost once again due to diversions – we are getting used to this Irish phenomenon! Another recurring sign was 'temporary road surface'. Strangely, they always look as though they have been there forever, and it certainly felt like it too. However, we spend a very pleasant afternoon, exploring the Rossguill Peninsular, one of the many, which form the intricate pattern of Donegal's strikingly beautiful and unspoiled coastline. By chance, which is what tends to happen when we get lost, we come upon Castle Doe, which stands on the inlet of Sheep Haven Bay, near Creeslough, built in the 16th century, it is said to be one of Donegal's strongest fortifications. It is surrounded by the Lough on three sides. We spend a pleasant hour wandering around the grey stone ramparts, the whitewashed keep and other ruins, imagining times past - some of us anyway! That evening we set off to have dinner at the Singing Pub, recommended by the campsite warden. Well, we try to follow the directions given, which seemed pretty straightforward to us accomplished Hobby travellers. But, yes you guessed it, we were wrong. The road climbed higher and higher up the mountain, at the same time getting narrower and rougher. There cannot be a restaurant at the top, we thought, even though we were enjoying the views. However, a friendly local put us straight, and we soon found a lovely old pub, with good food, a cosy peat fire, plenty of Guinness, but no singing - that came later - but a bit too late for us. Ken and I take a walk along the sandy shore and listen to the calm lapping of the waves as twilight descends.

Saturday - we drive through beautiful scenery of mountains and lakes to Dungloe, a small town on the southwest coast. As soon as we arrive, we seem to inherit a small black cat, who immediately curls up on the sofa and makes himself at home. Pat and Eric Miller have now joined our little group of intrepid travellers and we take a walk into Dungloe. The skies turn from grey to black and down comes the rain, we get absolutely soaked. Dungloe is another hilly town, with the now familiar, wide main street and nowhere to shelter. Dinner that night is at the Bay View Inn, and the food is absolutely delicious. Most of us have the lemon sole with red pepper sauce, or the lobster, and all agree it was cooked to perfection. Afterwards, we walk up the road to meet up with Gerry [Donaghy Motorhomes] and his family for a drink at a very lively pub. Having decided to stay another night, we are lucky to wake up to a beautiful day of sunshine. So, out and about to explore the peninsular south of Dungloe to Slieve League, where we see the highest sea cliffs in Europe, then on to Killybegs, an old fishing port.

Monday, we travel south to Ballyshannon through wild rolling hills and mountains, and some pretty heavy rain. Even so, the landscape is beautiful, brooding and startling, with blue grey mountains on the distant horizon. The campsite is by Lake Assaroe and quite expensive at 25 euros per night, showers are extra, and no laundry or dishwashing facilities, this seems to be the going rate in Southern Ireland so far. Exploring Ballyshannon with Pat and Eric, we find it to be a small, hilly town. Not much there really, but quite an interesting Protestant graveyard with some very ancient gravestones, which we came upon by accident; and a very tiny pub, which we found just in the nick of time as the heavens opened up for yet another downpour. We tucked ourselves into a corner (standing room only) with some refreshment as we waited for the storm to subside. As we continue our drive we cannot believe the number of newly built private houses we see dotted about the countryside. This has been a feature since we arrived, and quite the opposite of how we remember the Irish landscape on our previous visit 10 years ago, now, there is hardly an original Irish cottage to be seen, instead, there are luxurious mansions set in acres of perfectly manicured lawns, which in England would set you back a million or two. Who lives in these places, we wondered, and how do they afford them? In Ballyshannon, by contrast, there are many houses in various stages of disrepair. Pat and I particularly notice a once elegant and imposing Georgian double fronted house, now derelict, with vegetation growing through it, and yet on the other side of the road, a similar house is resplendent and lovingly tended. Very odd!

Tuesday 2nd – Friday 5th September

Sligo, Mayo and Galway

We drive to Enniskillen in the car as we are near the border with Northern Ireland, where we find a big Tesco and stock up! We take the coastal road towards Sligo with dramatic views of the Atlantic and the spectacular Darty Mountains, in particular Benbulbin Mountain,

with its prominent tabletop feature sunlit against a heavy dark slate grey sky – awe inspiring. The campsite situated about two miles outside the small town of Ballina, in a lovely countryside setting, has good facilities. The next day, Ann and Dave do some exploring by themselves, whilst Pat, Eric, Ken and I decide to visit Ceide Fields, near the town of Ballycastle, a prehistoric site, where Neolithic people farmed the land and experienced a well organized and civilized lifestyle. Our tour guide made it easy for us to imagine what life might have been like in the Neolithic Age, as there is not very much to actually see in the way of remains. As we stand here, high on the coastal cliff, facing mile upon mile of the Atlantic, in beautiful sunshine and biting cold wind, we understood that not only did those ancient people have an awesome view, but they also had a much more temperate climate along with rich, fertile soil. No wonder they chose this spot to settle. Climate change was also responsible for their demise. We continue around the Mullet and Achill peninsulas to Achill Island. More stunningly beautiful mountain landscapes, barren and isolated against dramatic rain-washed skies, and rainbows, contrasting with the varying shades of purple heather. Back in Ballina we try to find Dillons, a pub which has been recommended to us with music on Wednesday nights. The food was good, but sadly the music was going to be too late for us. Again!

Thursday- we drive south to Cong, a pretty village situated on the border of Mayo and Galway's Connemara mountains, and between two loughs (Irish for loch in case you didn't know!). It's claim to fame being the location for the film 'The Quiet Man' starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara in 1951. The campsite, a couple of miles away is on a quiet road and easy to miss, as the signpost is partly hidden. Despite crawling along at a snail's pace, we just miss it by a few feet, and our second disaster unfolds. Checking nothing is behind us, Ken decides it is safe to reverse, but a couple of feet later, there is a horn blast and Ken hits the brakes hard. I get out and see a woman in a red car right behind, with about a millimetre gap between us! Where on earth did she come from Ken wonders, heaving a sigh of relief that he stopped just in time. But the young lady claims we have damaged her car, pointing to a variety of scratches and bumps. We then point out to her that ours is a brand new vehicle, and there are no matching scratches or bumps, or any sign of red paint on our silver. She ignores these facts, saying that there may be further untold damage to the underneath of her car. She proceeds to phone the Garda, which she says is standard practice, and tells us to move our vehicles to the side as we are blocking the way. Which is true, and by now there is a considerable queue of traffic behind us. But we decide to stay put, as this seems to be getting out of hand, and as we can see no damage we don't understand her problem. Other drivers get out of their cars to come to see what all the fuss is about and walk about shaking their heads. At least it's a lovely sunny day, I think. About 20 minutes later the Garda arrives, and agrees that there appears to be no damage. The lady then accuses Ken of being verbally abusive towards her. Well, we are both speechless, as throughout the whole time Ken has been very calm, only remarking that it had all seemed to be a great waste of time. However, the Garda diffused the situation, and that was that, and so far, we haven't heard anything more, but we have resolved never to reverse again without first getting out and physically looking. Ken is also looking into the possibility of getting a camera fitted onto the car, as the camera on the van shows the car, but nothing beyond, and if someone is too close behind, you can't see them in the mirrors, which is what we think must have happened in this instance. Another learning curve! Later, having bored Ann and Dave, and Eric and Pat recounting our tale of woe we go into Cong, wandering around in the warm sunshine, enjoying the picturesque surroundings, and try to clear our heads a little. After dinner Ken, Pat and Eric go to watch 'The Quiet Man' which is being screened at the campsite Hostel.

Friday – we have good weather again as we drive around Connemara with Ann and Dave, while Pat and Eric walk into Cong. More beautiful scenery, dramatic, wild, and mountainous, with lots of little inlets along the coastline, and below, the deep fjord of Killary Harbour. If you like rugged scenery, Ireland is certainly a good place to be!

Saturday 6th - Monday 8th September

Clare, Limerick and Kerry

Driving south to the seaside town of Doolin, with clear blue skies and warm sunshine, although we hear the eastern side is being plagued by gales and ferry closures. The road to Doolin was full of potholes and lumpy surfaces. Part of this road is called 'Corkscrew Hill' - and they weren't joking – it was full of narrow, dangerous, and nerve racking s-bends, one after another. We find the campsite is near the headland, from where we can see the famous cliffs of Moher in the distance, towering up from the sea. Doolin is a small, touristy place and, as we walked around in the sunshine, with traditional Irish music filling the air from various pubs, there was quite a 'holiday' atmosphere. It is said to be a centre for good Irish music, but again, mostly starting late on in the evening, by which time we are usually good for nothing. All this travelling is so exhausting!!

On Sunday we were sad to hear that Ann and Dave had decided to head back north, as they are both tired and Dave is not feeling too good, so we say our goodbyes. Pat walks to the end of the pier to get a closer look at the towering cliffs as the rest of us had seen them before, but it is well worth the effort to see this dark, sheer, 5 mile long rugged rock face, against the vast expanse of the Atlantic. Killarney is our next destination. The roads are very good, for which we are grateful as we pass through Limerick, the Republic's third city full of traffic and tall glass buildings, slightly surreal after being in so many rural areas. The countryside is looking more lush, resembling the northeast around Antrim, with smaller fields in varying shades of green. Our chosen campsite is not far outside Killarney, and we find Eric dutifully washing the front of his van as we arrive. What diligence!

Our walk into Killarney, a little later, seems to take longer than we anticipated and it all seems so noisy and busy with tourists, people chatting out of open windows and a steady stream of traffic, bumper to bumper. We wander back and forth through the town, finding it difficult to decide where to eat as we want Irish music as well as food without having to wait until nearly midnight. Eventually, we find a pub offering Beef and Guinness Casserole and music too! Although not traditional Irish, the solo singer had a good voice and a varied

repertoire, and we left feeling full and satisfied. The walk back seemed much shorter, and very pleasant in the balmy evening air.

Monday was spent driving around the Dingle peninsula, more rugged mountains, lovely views, sandy beaches, winding roads. Dingle harbour and the town with its gaily painted stone buildings in purples, pinks, yellow and orange make it a very attractive place. We enjoy a tasty lunch in a tearoom-cum-shop selling crystal chandeliers amongst other things, with a photo of a burly biker on a Harley Davidson in the window. An odd combination we thought, but typical of this quirky town. It rains steadily through the evening and all night. The Irish complain that this has been a really bad summer. The Americans aren't buying. We ourselves are finding the prices high and suffering from the strength of the euro.

Tuesday 9th - Wednesday September 10th

Tipperary

Our campsite in the Glen of Aherlow, is surrounded by green hills and rocky mountains, and yet more wonderful views, which we glimpse occasionally through the rain and mist. Good walking and cycling here, though we don't get the opportunity, as it rains continuously. We spend our last evening with Pat and Eric in a cosy, friendly restaurant that was originally an old forge. A phone call from Ann and Dave reveals that they are retracing their steps and dining on Lobster Thermador in Dungloe (again), and intending to catch an early ferry, as the weather forecast is bad. Storms, storms and more storms! The next day proves the forecasters right, as we experience nothing but wild, gusty aggressive rain coming down in sheets, buffeting the van from side to side. We spend a few hours sitting with Pat and Eric, solving the world's problems, coffee and biscuits - at one point Ken measuring our vans to see what the differences are - how to amuse yourself in Ireland in the rain! We say goodbye to Pat and Eric later in the afternoon, they are catching the ferry from Rosslare. We are hoping for a walk in the hills, but the horizontal rain and buffeting winds show no sign of easing, so it's a glass or two of wine, home cooking and early to bed. Tomorrow, we too must be making our way back.

September 11th - 15th

Our final lasting impression as we make our return journey north to the ferry port, was a visit to the infamous streets of Shankhill and the Falls Road, seeing for ourselves the startling political murals adorning the walls and gable ends of the buildings there - a reminder of past troubles in the history of this beautiful country.

Lucy Cookson



Hobby group photo – Eric & Pat Miller, Ann & David Jackson, Lucy & Ken Cookson – Doolin 2008

A Tale of Two Giants – by Philip Watson –

Long ago, an Irish giant named Finn MacCool roamed the north coast, where he could look across the narrow sea of Moyle to Scotland. A Scottish giant, Benandonner, was Finn's greatest rival, challenging his strength and reputation. As the two giants had never met, Finn decided to invite Benandonner to Ireland, to engage in a decisive battle. There was no boat large enough to carry giants, so Finn built a causeway of huge stones across the water so that the Scottish giant could travel on dry land; thus he would have no excuse to avoid the confrontation. However, as big Ben approached, Finn realised to his horror that his opponent was a larger and more fearsome rival than he anticipated. He fled to his home in the nearby hills, and like any sensible man, asked his wife for advice. Oonagh, a practical woman, disguised Finn as a baby, complete with large nightgown and bonnet. She placed him in a huge, hastily made cradle, telling him to keep quiet and pretend to sleep, as Benandonner's great shadow darkened the door. Oonagh brought the Scottish giant in for tea, pleading with him not to waken Finn's child. Looking at the massive 'baby' lying in the cradle, Benandonner took fright, saying that if this was the child, he had no wish to meet the father. He fled back to Scotland, ripping up the Causeway behind him, terrified that the awful Finn might follow him home.

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Here's one for the men – a joke from Ken Cookson – “Whilst on an Irish theme .....

*'Paddy calls Easyjet to book a flight. The operator asks "How many people will be flying with you?" Paddy replies "I don't know – it's your bloody plane!!"*

*A Muslim was sitting next to Paddy on the plane. Paddy orders a whiskey. The stewardess asks the Muslim if he would like a drink. He replies with disgust – "I'd rather be raped by a dozen whores than let liquor touch my lips!" Paddy hands his drink back and says "Me too, I didn't know there was a choice!"*

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RALLIES - past and present

The most important rally of course, was the **AGM** at Redbrick House Hotel, near Mansfield, 24-28th September, a site arranged by our Chairman, David Jackson, which proved to be very successful. The weather was good, which always helps, and although the site was unusually laid out on three levels, the first layer having the advantage of being adjacent to the facilities and the hotel, the second layer shaded by mature trees, and the lower layer with hard standings, flower beds and a large pond, was on the whole very attractive, and those that turned up managed to fill each area! The newest members found themselves all together on the lowest level but I am sure that they enjoyed themselves. The meeting went well, in spite of finding myself having to take the Minutes (with a little help from my friends!). It is a pity John Anderton can no longer serve on the committee as General Secretary, but we shall have a very able successor in Tony Charity, a former Chairman of the Hobby club, and hope John and Barbara will continue to attend the rallies as and when possible. Christine Lawson has been elected to the committee as Membership Secretary, which will relieve our chairman, David Jackson, of the extra work he has been doing over the past year. David was also unable to attend due to ill health but was included as far as possible by a visit from some members to his hospital bedside. After the meeting we all enjoyed a superb meal at the hotel in the attractive dining room, served by their very attentive staff - worth attending an AGM and that's for sure!

York (16-20 November)

This was not a rally as such, just an informal gathering, which Eric and I were unable to attend due to a forthcoming family event (new grandchild who was taking his time coming into this world!). John Anderton gives an account of their time spent in York:

Barbara and I stayed a few days on the Caravan Club site at Rowntree Park at York, where we met up with a few friends from the Hobby Club (David & Christine, Mike & Margaret, Steve & Mary, Ed & Vera). It is only 1 ½ miles from the Park & Ride bus service into York, both the car parking and bus is free to over '60's (and we don't mind the bus driver knowing how old we are!). An enjoyable day was spent in York, sightseeing and shopping, but mainly eating and drinking (coffee of course!). The following day was bright and sunny so Christine and David suggested a trip to Scarborough. There was a similar Park & Ride system on the outskirts of the town and the bus brought us right into the centre of the town where you can head for the shops or turn towards the sea front. A stroll along the promenade looking out to sea was lovely - if a little bracing. All the fresh air and exercise made us hungry and as there were many cafes and restaurants to choose from selling fish and chips - it seemed an obvious choice - in fact, we found one offering 2 for 1 which made it even better. Christine said she knew of a short cut to the shops, but every few yards there were steep flights of steps upwards and as we looked at the climb involved we all shook our heads and said 'no way!'; so we kept walking further and further along the road until we came to a small alleyway with a shorter flight of steps, so up we went and found ourselves amongst a dozen charity shops - the ladies swooping on them with glee whilst the men hung around outside - as usual. I decided it was time to buy a newspaper from a shop over the road and as I made the return trip the handles on my plastic bag snapped and the entire contents spilled out over the roadway (including the new glasses I had just purchased for the exorbitant price of £1 which narrowly missed slipping down a nearby drain). Of course, Barbara and Vera thought this was hilarious - the best laugh of the day after my struggle up the steps - and were nearly crying at my incongruous attempts to retrieve my belongings amid the oncoming traffic. Unfortunately, our visit was cut short due to Barbara's appointment at the hospital the next day, but we had thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, even at this chilly time of year. Not so long ago we always used to put our van away for the winter between October and March - not any more, as there are so many campsites now staying open all year round there is no need to stay at home hibernating and waiting for summer to come.

Now - Something to amuse you Sound Familiar?

*I'm looking for my wallet and my car keys
Well they can't have gone too far
Just as soon as I find my glasses, I'm sure
I'll see just where they are
Supposed to meet someone for lunch today
But I can't remember where, or who it is I am meeting,
It's in my organizersomewhere
I might have left it in the kitchen, maybe outside
In the car, last time I remember driving
Was it to that Memory Enhancement Seminar?
What's that far off distant ringing
In that strangely familiar tone,
Must be the person I am meeting calling me on my
Brand new cordless telephone I might have
Left it under the covers - maybe outside on the lawn
Now I've got just one more ring to go before
My answering machine comes on.
Click!
'Hello this is John and your call means a lot to me,
so leave a message after the tone and I will do my best
to try and remember to call you back when I get home.'
Beep!
John ... this is Barbara and I'm trying not to cry
I've been waiting here for over an hour!
I thought you loved me! This is goodbye!
Well The voice sounds familiar
And the name, it rings a bell
Let's see, where was I
Oh! What the hell!*

(John Anderton)



A Recipe for Christmas Pudding:

Method:

Mix well together 1 ½ lb of seedless raisins, 8 oz mixed candied peel, 8 oz glace cherries, 4 oz blanched almonds, 12 oz shredded suet and 12 oz breadcrumbs. Stir in 8 well-beaten eggs, ¼ pt of stout and 6 tablespoons brandy.

Leave to stand. Butter well three 1 ½ pt pudding basins and divide pudding mixture among them. Cover with a piece of buttered foil and wrap in a clean piece of white linen.

Have a very large pan ready with enough boiling water to come halfway up the bowls. Lay each bowl carefully on an upturned saucer and cover the pan.

Bring quickly back to the boil and keep boiling steadily for 6 hours, adding more water as needed, roughly once an hour. When time is up, lift out the puddings and leave to cool.

On Christmas Day the pudding should be boiled again for 4-6 hours. To serve, turn out onto a heated dish. Pour over flaming brandy just before serving.

FIGGY PUDDING



Broadway: 27th November – 1st December

There were very few places available for these dates mainly due to the fact that it was the Christmas Fair on Friday 28th, when all the shops remained open in the evening, many of them serving wine and savouries to tempt would-be buyers. Although it was cold and slightly foggy, there was a good atmosphere, trees sparkling with little lights, shops brightly decorated and inviting. Santa Claus arrived in his pony and trap (this is the Cotswolds after all!) offering rides to anyone (£2 for adults, £1 each for children). There were ten of us altogether – David & Christine, John & Barbara, Eric and myself (Pat), joined by Ed and Vera who had managed to get a place at the last minute due to a cancellation - as did Gordon and Jenny Sinclair – it was lovely to see them after such a long absence. (Toby, their beloved cat is still going strong at nearly 23!!) Ed and Vera succumbed to purchasing some beautiful oak furniture in one of the Broadway shops, and after much measuring, and keeping John's van on standby just in case it could not be fitted into their own van, they found they would be able to transport it home without having to pay the exorbitant delivery charges. I went mad and bought a brush to scrub my potatoes! It was all good fun and hope the others enjoyed themselves as much as I did. (Pat Miller)

Christine Lawson sent in this story:

‘We were on a long quest to find our ideal reclining chairs – you may remember a pair of green canvas folding picnic chairs we have been using (the type with a pocket for your drinks glass in the arm rest). They had to be blue, lightweight, but not too heavy on the price. We have searched many dealers during our travels in the Hobby this year and while we were at Deer’s Glade in the summer, one of the green canvas chairs actually broke. The pressure was now on!

Our search ended in Darlington, just on our doorstep, at Barrons. When it came to ditching the old chairs, David decided that he would dismantle the metalwork in the hope that he could salvage a length of tube possibly to hold the Hobby door open. The canvas he thought might also come in useful, so I took that indoors.

One rainy afternoon I was toweling Rye (our dog) down after a walk and thought about that canvas, which strangely enough was dog coat shaped. So out came the new sewing machine (that’s another story!) and with a bit of imagination, it was transformed into a coat for Rye. Although it keeps him very dry now, Rye has yet to find a use for the drinks holder! Here is a photo of the finished result.’



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A ‘dog’ joke from Ken Cookson:

*“Paddy and his wife are lying in bed and the neighbours’ dog is barking like mad in the garden. Paddy says “I’ve had enough of this!” and storms off. He comes back upstairs 5 minutes later and his wife asks “What did you do?” Paddy replies “I’ve put the dog in our garden, let’s see how they like it!”*

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From Steve Phillips - more brain stuff from Cambridge University (Waggoners Talk – Autumn 2007)

Olly smat poelpe can raed this.

I cdnuolt blveiee that I cluod aulaclyt y esdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of he hmuan mind, aoccdnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn’t mttar in what order the ltteers in a wrod are, the only iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit a porhelm. This is bcuseae the human mind deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh?yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! If you can raed this psas it on !

ERIC'S SNIPPETS

Beware!

I read an article recently concerning someone who had purchased a Hobby from a local dealer, an importer of Hobby's, who believes that you do not have to convert these vehicles to a UK specification in order to sell them in this country. The vehicle came with a speedo showing kph and with continental headlights. It cost the buyer £275 to get new UK specification headlights fitted as the dealer would not pay the costs. To meet UK Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 1986 and Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989, all vehicles registered in the UK must have:-

1. Speedometers that display the speed in mph, visible after dark.
2. Headlamps that dip to the left.
3. Centre mounted or UK offside mounted fog lamp.
4. Rear view mirrors that provide an adequate field of view in left-hand traffic.

Failure to carry out these modifications means the registered owner is breaking the law by driving the vehicle on the public highway. It recommends that the dealer should be requested to pay for rectifications. If he refuses or ignores the request, the customer should approach another dealer to carry out the work, taking the first dealer to the Small Claims Court.

A snippet sent in by Steve Phillips: (Taken from the International Caravanning Association, November 2008)

Travel Insurance: getting top-up cover for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

(Information given by Gill Charlton, Travel Correspondent, in the Sunday Telegraph regarding travel insurance for older people. There may be concerns about costs, worry that the EHIC might not cover all medical costs and questions about becoming ill during travel to and from the holiday destination.

"EHIC Plus (0845 055 5222, www.ehicplus.com), offered by the Medical Screening Company and underwritten by a Lloyd's syndicate, is a new top-up policy for holders of an EHIC.

"If you become seriously ill in Europe it is best to go to a state hospital, present your EHIC and receive free emergency treatment" said Robert Ince, managing director of EHIC Plus.

"Unfortunately, as readers have told me, tourist hotels are often in league with private ambulances, which take customers to private clinics in the first instance. Aggressive private clinics, especially in Spain, try to overcharge for substandard treatment. Most don't have intensive care facilities or paediatric departments", said Mr Ince. "People should say they have only an EHIC and insist that they are taken to a state hospital. Our policy is a top-up for charges not covered by the EHIC".

"Private ambulances, most outpatient treatment and medication and repatriation are covered. Because EHIC Plus does not have to pay out for private treatment it accepts cover for a wider range of pre-existing health conditions, though the condition has to be 'relatively stable'".

"EHIC Plus also provides basic cover for cancellation, baggage loss, personal accident and missed departure. However, compare its levels of cover with other annual policies on the market to make sure its pay-out limits reflect your needs.

"EHIC Plus's annual European policy for an adult under 45 costs £20; for a family (both parents under 45) it costs £37 irrespective of the number of children; for a couple aged 82 it's £66. However, the per-trip limit is 31 days (a 45-day limit is offered for a supplement).

"For longer stays in Europe (up to 122 days), customers must buy a single-trip policy. A couple aged 68 would pay £217.20 for 112 days; a couple aged 79 and 81, £310.35. There is no upper age limit."

Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire

We will be starting the New Year with a Club Rally at the popular venue of Moreton-in-Marsh which is usually where we have our pre-Christmas get-together. The dates are: **8th-12th January 2009**. Telephone site no. 01608 650519 or 01342 327490. See you there!

The Chairman's Ramblings

Hello old & new friends alike. Well I hope I am on the road to recovery after falling over and dislocating and/breaking my shoulder; it has now been screwed and anchored together. I thank all of you for your good wishes and hope to see you again soon.

I am glad that my arrangements for the A.G.M. were successful on the 27th September at The Redbrick House Hotel, near Edwinstowe, Mansfield. Notts. I trust all of you who attended enjoyed yourselves and may even visit again.

I note that more people are putting meetings with other members on the website and anyone is welcome to join in.

Although we could not come to Broadway in the van we had booked to stay in the Broadway Hotel for two nights but fate took a hand and I ended up in Derby hospital instead, however I am now out and it has not affected me as badly as last time. So I hope you all have a super time and the calendar gets filled for next year. I think those of us who made the trip to Ireland enjoyed it, as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter.

I will post on the website the names of the Hobby dealers for your information as soon as they are confirmed; as for the spares situation please 'phone me.

Here's wishing you all a merry Christmas & Happy Hobby New Year.

Dave Jackson

(Please note my new e-mail address: d.jackson16@btinternet.com)

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\* The Committee and Hobby friends all wish David a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him and Ann in the New Year \*

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## ~~~~~ Disclaimer:

The views expressed in the newsletter are personal and not necessarily those of the I.A.H.

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

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Website address: www.hobbyists.org.uk