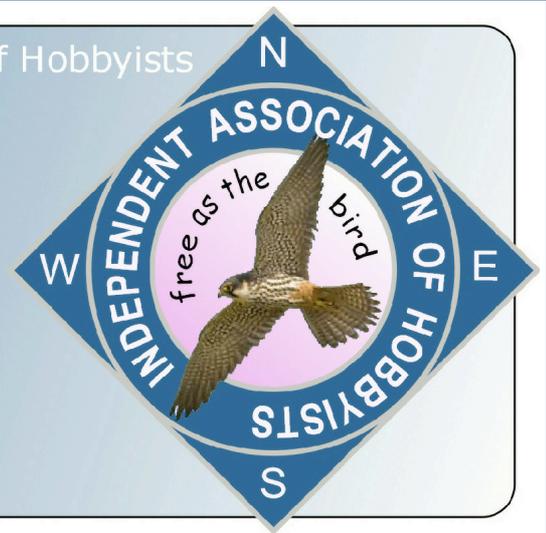


IAH - Independent Association of Hobbyists

Hobby Motorhome Owners Club

The UK's only club for Hobby Motorhome Enthusiasts



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2011

Seasons Greetings to all Members

Well, that's that then, another Christmas come and gone, hope yours was good, and we can now look forward to 2011. Seasons greetings and best wishes, we hope to see you on this year's rallies, all welcome - the more the merrier.

IAH Committee.

PS: How about organising a rally in your area, or perhaps a favourite destination.

Hobby Factory Visit

The proposed visit to the Hobby factory at Fockbeck is planned for the 30th May 2011 with a local campsite being booked from the 28th May through to the 1st June. The factory in northern Germany is 25 miles west of Kiel and some 470 miles from Ostend according to the AA route planner. There is still an opportunity to influence the itinerary for the trip to make into a longer event. Tony Charity will shortly be canvassing with a view to identifying those with a definite intent of attending so that arrangements can be firmed up. If you are keen to go please contact Tony preferably via the website.

Death of Audrey Kearns

Sadly Audrey Kearns, one of the first members of the club, passed away on the 10th December 2010. Our thoughts are with Denis who has asked for the following to be published.

"Denis would like to thank members of the IAH for their sympathy and kind thoughts after the sad death of his wife Audrey. He will try to contact individuals when possible but is not able to do so at present.

Regards Denis Kearns"

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To Contact the Editor

Claire Barden:

Telephone: 01295 812139

or

Email:

editor@hobbyowners.org.uk

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Annual Subscription

It's that time of year again and annual subscriptions are due payment by 31st March. Members are reminded that payment by Standing Order costs less than payments by other means! Subscription by Standing Order £10 Subscription by cheque £12. Our current treasurer, Dave Lawson, reminds us once again that unlike a Direct Debit instruction, the Standing Order method remains in your full control. You are the originator of this instruction and as such are the only person who has the right to start, stop or indeed vary it at any time.

Unlike a Direct Debit instruction, our bank has no facility to start, stop or vary the instruction at all. If you use telephone or Internet banking then you will be able to set up a Standing Order via the telephone/internet whilst for those who receive this Newsletter by mail a form is enclosed for your use.

Dave asks that if you do not already pay by Standing Order that you give this payment method further consideration. As Membership Secretary, Christine has so far made over 40 journeys to different HSBC branches to deposit cheques, admittedly she does try to incorporate these trips with outings to the shops, but this is not always possible. Please remember that the roles of all committee members are voluntary.

Finally, the more observant of us may have noticed a change in the bank address details on the mandate. This is not a mistake. The existing branch at Upton Upon Severn will close on 11th February 2011 and all business will transfer to the new branch at Malvern on that date. I am assured by HSBC that the mandate will remain valid

Canterbury Rally 10 to 17th November 2010

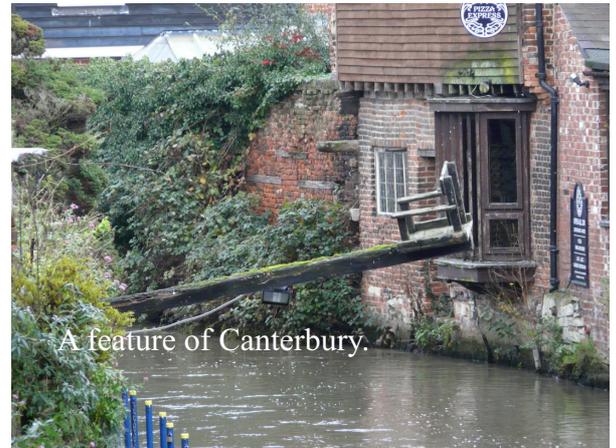
Some 16 souls, four dogs and 8 Units made the pilgrimage to the Camping and Caravan Clubs Canterbury site located an easy walk from Canterbury town centre or a £2.50 return bus ride. The first day of the event was sunny with blue sky's providing pleasant journeys for all, whether traveling from North Yorkshire (Dave & Christine) or just down the road in Kent (Cliff & Jo). But it was all down hill from there on with webbed feet bringing a distinct advantage unless of course exposed to the high winds! For new members Phil and Edna it was their first rally having only acquired their van a couple of months earlier, I hope they enjoyed the experience and will turn out again. Mike and Sue's unit was

something to behold with more camera's and lights than Oxford Street at Christmas, definitely king of the after market gizmos. Denis and Jackie had a sleepless Thursday night when high winds threatened to turn their awning into a kite, however, despite the noise through the night they were pleased to find the awning still there in the morning. Testament to its design, construction and Denis's erection skills. Days out were filled by trips into Canterbury or further afield using the buses or cars that were brought by some and very kindly shared. One vehicle was observed to be sporting the name Betty Boo. It is worthy of note that whilst a return bus trip to



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Canterbury was £2.50 and covered just about 3 miles a £5 explorer ticket allowed unlimited all day bus travel and represented much better value for money for those without bus passes. Canterbury, Sandwich, Deal, Herne Bay, Whitstable, Margate and Ramsgate were visited by some either by car, bus or both. It was whilst in Whitstable the following sign was seen: 12 Oysters and a bottle of Champagne £59.95 - needless to say business was quiet. Cliff and Jo, rally organisers, arranged a meal at the Rose Inn for Saturday Night - good food at a reasonable price which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, but especially by 'he of the raucous laughter' who imbibed rather a lot despite having to be up to catch a ferry the next morning!! This they duly achieved and we all wished Tony and Pam well as they drove away at the beginning of their 12 month European adventure. With no specific plan or timetable we await reports. Those with work commitments who also happen to be Formula 1 fanatics, Mike and Sue plus Denis and Jackie, departed early Sunday to ensure they were home ready for the last F1 race of the year. From memory there was an anti Alonso camp that should be content with the eventual result. On the last Tuesday evening Cliff organised an Indian takeaway delivery for those that remained and Christine and Dave invited all to their van. To finish on a note of caution if you see Jackie at the wheel of a motorhome, probably unlikely, but do give way as she used to be a banger racer and old habits die hard! It was good to see Peter Clark, a new member, who couldn't make the rally but stopped in to say hello.



A feature of Canterbury.



A car named Betty Boo

The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men

The 2010 Hobby Dealer list was printed in the last Newsletter. Unfortunately even before the ink was dry a 2011 list had been published which included multiple changes which I found out the hard way having phoned three of those listed in the 2010 list only to be told they were no longer dealers. To avoid this pitfall a link to the appropriate webpage is enclosed where you can download a Word file detailing current dealers. http://www.hobbycaravansuk.co.uk/news_details.php?newsID=26. If you haven't got internet give me a call.

Chester Rally

As you will all know by now the Chester Rally was cancelled because of the weather. This was unfortunate as Christine had already baked a cake for the event and very nice it looks. But we are lucky people as the event has been rescheduled for 16th to 23rd Feb 2011 and the jungle drums has it there is yet another cake! Look forward to it immensely.



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The Writings of a Man Down Under - Terry Lambrose April 2009

By way of introduction Terry and Kay Lambrose are IAH Members who live in Australia and tend to come to Europe for six months at a time. He has written three articles to be published in successive Newsletters - here is the first.

I was going to start this letter with: it was a dark cold night with the mist rolling in from the sea, enveloping the van and its inhabitants, and an eerie, heightened sense of caution hung in the air as we prepared to cross the English Channel and commence our journey into the unknown.

However that would be quite wrong from at least three points of view:

1. It was not the commencement of our journey (although one needs to pick a point at which such journeys start – what I mean is did our journey start when we retired? or in 2005 when we purchased the van? or when we boarded the plane in Townsville in February?)
2. We had been to France many times before so in that sense it was not ‘unknown’ but since that time we have seen much that we had not seen before so perhaps it was/is unknown.
3. And thirdly it was not that cold. However the mist had rolled in at about midnight and we had parked up in Tesco car park just outside Dover waiting to catch the Ferry which departed at the uncivilized hour of 6 am which meant we had to be leaving the car park at about 5 am.

But let me go back a little to fill in those of you who don't even know we are in Europe or worst still those of you who think we never left Europe in the first place.

After working hard on the apartments and the garden in Townsville with Mal and Peter doing the backbreaking ‘stuff’, Kaye working tirelessly and Terry just making sure that all was going to plan we made the decision to return to the UK in late February. There is still about two years work left to do on the Townsville property so no point in getting frustrated that it is not finished.

On the outward bound journey we stayed in Singapore for four days with Kaye's niece Katie and a friend of hers (Rebecca) who have both taken positions as teachers. They spent about four years in UK as teachers ‘doing’ Europe. NOW they are working in Singapore ‘doing’ Asia. What a great life for young people who are prepared to ‘get off their butt’ and see the world. Anyway we had a great time with them. The highlights included: Sunday lunch at a grand hotel with about a hundred and fifty different dishes to choose from. A smorgasbord indeed fit for a king. Or in our case a couple of old fogies and two beautiful young ladies. A visit to the orchid garden – a must see if you like colour and sense of tranquility. Singapore Gin Sling at Raffles Long bar – far too expensive (so if you go just visit to look and buy your Gin Sling somewhere else like the polo club where the price is less than half and you get a better drink)

The UK was as the UK is at that time of year. Not sure if winter is supposed to be, gone or not, even though Spring has officially started. Cold one day, drizzle the next followed by a glorious day of sunshine. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief that winter is now officially over, they hang out their washing, chat to the neighbors over the side fence (if they live in an area where English is still spoken), take off their shoes and socks and sit on the grass in the parks with their toes pointing to the sun. It is a good time to be alive again except when you go to Halfords (a big department store) and ask where to find the BAR BAR Q's you are told that it is NOT YET the season – BBQ's will arrive in three weeks, we are told. Ah Ha the first hint that winter may yet have the last say. And so it was before we left we had another bout of cold windy cloudy days.

I of course was late in appreciating this fact and stayed in summer clothes. Hoping I guess that it was an aberration. But alas I was wrong and as a consequence converted the cold I had caught from Kaye into a bout of Bronchitis. As a result at least one of the days we spent with Michael, Margaret, Koren and Aiden was spent in bed. Not pleasant for them or me, but I didn't die and we did enjoy their company and some good wine.

The plan was that once Kaye finished work we would go to Poole (South coast of England) to have some work done on the van and then visit Michael (my boss at Enchange) and then cross at Dover. Oh yes; Kaye, in order to keep her nurses registration is required to do approximately 150 hours per year work. Her employer, Princess Margaret Hospital in Windsor (near the palace) welcomed her with open arms as if she had never been away for 11 months. Who did the work when she was away? I don't know, but they certainly used her services and told her how much they missed her etc etc.

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While in the UK between Kaye's work days we were able to catch up with a number of friends. John and Christine were and still remain our main support system in the UK and we had a couple of opportunities to enjoy their company. Including Mother's day - which has now returned to its roots and is called 'mothering day' and is perhaps a more appropriate term when Christine is not really OUR mother. We did bring flowers (actually it was an orchard - influenced, no doubt, by our trip to Singapore) and John cooked a great meal.

We caught up with the two Martins and the Sinclair's always great company. Josh & Rosie are now four with the arrival of twins and Rosie has left the world of business behind and is now engaged in mothering and all its joys. The boys are good looking - but a bit small for me to nurse or play with. Perhaps when we return next year.

We missed on seeing others like Kerry & Nick in Sheffield and Ann & Bob in Wales. They were just too far with Kaye's work schedule. There were others we also missed on seeing, perhaps next time.

I had planned to go straight to Spain/Portugal but when Kaye makes up her mind Well this time I didn't mind that she insisted we travel about 500k out of our way to Avize (a small village where the 'creme de la creme' of Champagne is made). There are only 17 wine makers in Avize and this includes all of the big names. (There are 3000 champagne makers in France). But in Avize we have discovered a fourth generation wine maker who sells enough to be considered amongst the top producers but not enough to be too commercial. His wine is up with the best of them and the price suits our budget. He and his wife don't speak English that much but they have taken to Kaye and me and look forward to our visits. The feelings are reciprocated.

So with our stocks of champagne up to scratch we headed off in a south/westerly direction to Bordeaux country and specifically Margaux where we will stock up on our quota of red wine. But I digress the 'red' will be a subject for another day.

It has been two weeks now and we have not ventured much past the south of Paris. We thought we might 'do' Paris. Perhaps next time. We have however 'done' the two Chateaux of the kings. Versailles and Fontainebleau. Versailles being the grand Chateaux of Louie (14th - I think). In 1994 we had seen the outside of Fontainebleau this time we took our time on the inside (5 hours). Of significance to those of you interested in History Fontainebleau is where Napoleon made his headquarters. Enough heritage of Kings (which he was not supposed to be) but not as much as Versailles - a wise choice. It is also where he made his last Farewell speech before being sent into exile in 1815 which by the way marks the beginning of modern history. I doubt that it will retain that title in the centuries to come but for the time being that is the name. Perhaps we could start a debate. Ancient history, Middle Ages, the Renaissance, have all been taken so they are out and The Enlightenment, even though it is already taken, would hardly be the word to describe our current dilemma. No I think something like 'the age of greed' would aptly describe countries/companies/people as diverse as Hitler and Enron not to mention our own Mr Bond and Mr Skaces. But perhaps we are neglecting the great technological advances of our day if we focused on the greed and exploitation - Oh well another debate another time.

Of course now France doesn't have an absolute monarch so we mere mortals were able to witness the first day of the fountains of Versailles for the grand sum of eight euro's each. Having seen the inside of Versailles in 1994 and taking account of the ridiculously 'gynormous' snake like line of 10,000 people lining up to buy a 25 euro ticket to get in - we decided to join the other 10,000 people and wander the gardens and wait until 3.30pm to see the fountains turned on.

IMPRESSIVE - is a word that comes to mind.

If you must go then they are only turned on every Sunday for the Spring/Summer.

We have also done Meaux. (Pronounced MO) If you care to Google it you will find much of this city's history and great urban landscape. Suffice to say that it is a good place to visit and is not inundated with 10,000 people all hoping to see the same thing at the same time. Our base for that part of the country was an apple orchard on the edge of the village of Vincy-Manoeuver. I should imagine that it will not be on any map but it lies north of Meaux, west of Chateau-Thierry (which is most likely on a map) and 40 KI from Charles De Gaulle airport.

France is the most Camping-Car friendly country on the face of the planet. With most small villages providing free access to water and a place to 'dump' grey water. Many of them have places you can park overnight. There is also the French Passion Club. Of which we are members. It is not what the name suggests. Rather it is a group of farmers (over a thousand) who

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will let you stay on their land (free), provided you are self contained (code for Camping-Car; for the Aussies this is a motor home). You get to meet the farmer and his family and often they tell you the good local places to visit.

At Vincy we met Regis & Sophie and family. The farm started in 1304. He could speak a little English and she taught English at a local school. They invited us for dinner and the next morning Regis took us to the markets near Paris. He told us it was a big market – he said the biggest in the world – Sophie said no. Judge for yourself:

The Fruit and Vegetable section took up eight sheds about 2/3 football fields long and 50m wide. That did not include the Meat, Cheese, Fish or other incidentals like olives, oils, figs, dates, etc. All of these took up their own sheds which were equally as large. We missed on the Flowers which they say has to be seen to be believed. Produce from all over the world is traded at this market. I would call it more like a HUBB rather than a market.

Our current location is another Farm near Corbelles South of Paris and West of Orleans. The owners Ann-Marie and Michel are a little older than us and are supposed to be retired. I know they say the French are easy going but from my experience of just these two farmers they work exceptionally hard. Ann-Marie's schedule has to be experienced to be believed. About 65 she attends English classes, grows and sells saffron, makes dandelion jam, markets her products at small markets throughout the region up to 2 hours drive each way, takes the grand children to sports, runs classes in cooking with saffron, manages a household and finds time to take us sight seeing. Today Ann-Marie is off pressing her walnuts (which she grows) to make oil and she has taken Kaye along for the ride to see yet another historic village. Michel is doing the entire shovel work and is supervising a worker loading barley (for beer) which he sold earlier today to a negotiator. Their son actually runs the farm but Michel still helps out a lot.

Yesterday they took us to the small town of Briare where we saw the longest canal bridge in the world (over 600 meters). Canal Bridge? You ask. Well everyone knows what a bridge is – something that spans a body of water – usually a river – that allows you to walk or drive over the river without getting wet. In Australia I don't think we have any Canals of any significance. A Canal is a body of water not unlike a river but man-made usually a constant width which allows boats to traverse across country where there is no river or where a river might be too difficult for boats and the water in the canal is regulated. Originally, before the time of the steam train, transportation by Canal allowed all sorts of goods (especially bulk goods) to be transported economically from one place to another. So a Canal bridge is a bridge (full of water) traversing a river. Simple concept really. Never the less it was a great engineering feat for its day.

The area around the Canal and the river is very pretty and it is our intention to camp on the rivers edge for a couple of days once we leave Corbelles.

So that brings you up to date.

Kaye keeps herself busy with checking out the best places to see wherever we stay and making sure the pantry is well stocked. I still do some study of the shares and a little trading. (Internet is infrequent in the country). Day to day living, sampling the specialties of the regions be it cheese or wine (or both) takes time. And so mostly we tend to enjoy each day as it comes without any great master plan with milestones for each day that must be achieved.

To all of you our friends we hope to catch up with you sometime – be it on our travels or back in Australia.

We hope that life is treating you well – that the economic crisis is not impacting too much on your life style. We hope that you have something to look forward to each day to make your life worthwhile.

Love and Best Wishes Kaye and Terry

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Yorkshireman's Dilema Tony Charity

When I first heard about the Rally organised by John and Barbara Anderton in Bury at Burrs Country Park, I dreaded the thought of visiting the West side of the Pennines to fall prey to the dreaded holders of the red rose. I left Yorkshire when I was 17 and Bury was only a stones throw away, but far enough not be able to visit with no car (that was my excuse anyway). Bury was a dank dark old town which had no interest to me.

How wrong could I have been and I must thank our Rally organisers for giving me the time to see such a wonderful area with lots to do. The site was only minutes away from Bury which gave JC lots of opportunities to visit the town and the magnificent market again and again and again!!!!!!!!!!!!!! To the point where even I bought some new clothes from the recently built shopping centre. The market offered lots of bargains to fall over er; I mean fill the house for the next few years. The site had a steam railway running along the bottom which provided nostalgic moments for everyone. An outward bound centre (now referred to as team bonding) provided outdoor activities for anyone who was interested.

Ken Cookson, Geoff Oman (New Chairman who we thought we would try and break) and myself were fortunate to select a beautiful day to go for a walk. When approaching our site a large monument can be seen up on the moors (Peel Monument) which didn't look too far and we decided to walk there. Just envisage the last of the summer wine and you have a mental picture of us. The walk wasn't challenging in itself until the last two miles. We followed the River Irwell crossing the railway lines on several occasions which gave us the chance to wave at the engine driver as he whistled on his way past. Local folklore has it that the tower would be open if a flag was raised, so I constantly cajoled the team to walk faster in case the flag came down. On our arrival the tower was open and manned by the local Mountain Rescue Team. The Tower was a monument built to honour Sir Robert Peel which had four/five floors to climb to reach the open top. The views were second to none and gave us the opportunity to view our site in the far distance. On our return journey we stopped at the first pub for refreshments with the knowledge that JC would collect us from Ramsbottom Station if need be.

Our second stop was Ramsbottom Station, which also serves as a museum and in our honour a steam train stopped for water in our presence. After perusing the old carriages, suitcases and signs we decided to be men and walk all the way home under our own steam, a unanimous decision I hasten to add. On our return journey we sat on a bench seat on a platform with the sun shining between the trees directly on to us, sweating and resting our weary legs. The sign adjacent to us gave the name of the station as Summerseat Railway Station. We had covered about thirteen miles and great credit must be given to our new Chairman who survived to tell the tale even though he hadn't been walking for some time.

I cannot finish without mentioning my day out to Salford Quays in Manchester. I had to go into the Imperial War Museum (It was free) but the buildings are worth the visit, Lowry footbridge, Lowry Theatre and a walk round Old Trafford Stadium. All within walking distance of each other, taking me through all the new accommodation around there.

Although not used on this rally I am now the proud owner of an inflatable canoe, which easily fits into the motorhome and is readily available for use. I have used it on Lake Windermere, River Avon, River Usk and my latest escapade on the river Wye during the Rally in the Forrest of Dean. Still that's another story.

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Forthcoming Rallies (to keep abreast of events please check the Club Website):

February 16th to 23rd Northwood Hall, Kelsall, nr Chester. Organiser Christine Lawson.

May - Hobby Factory visit - details to be confirmed. Organiser Tony Charity.

June 15th to 22nd AGM Rugby Club Ambleside. Organiser TBC

Forthcoming Shows (to keep abreast of events and ensure accuracy please check the Internet before travelling):

The Scottish Caravan & Outdoor Leisure Show SECC, Glasgow. **Feb 3-6 February 2011.**
www.caravanshowscotland.com

South West Caravan and Motorhome Show Westpoint, Exeter. **Feb 11-13 2011.**
www.appletree-exhibitions.co.uk

National Boat, Caravan & Outdoor Show, NEC, Birmingham. **Feb 22-27, 2011.**
www.boatandcaravan.co.uk (www.necgroup.co.uk/visitor/whatson/)

Wales Caravan and Motorhome Show Chepstow Racecourse **March 4-6 2011.**
www.appletree-exhibitions.co.uk

The London Caravan and Motorhome Show Epsom Racecourse **March 18-20 2011.**
www.appletree-exhibitions.co.uk

UK Motorhome & Caravan Spring Fair, Newark Showground. **Mar 26-27th 2011.** 01775-723723
www.ukspringfair.co.uk

South Coast Caravan and Motorhome Show Broadlands Romsey **April 8-10 2011.**
www.appletree-exhibitions.co.uk

National Motorhome Show, Peterborough. (Warners) East of England Showground, Peterborough. **Apr 14-17th 2011.** www.mmmonline.co.uk

For Your Amusement

Financial Crisis

Following the problems in the sub-prime lending market in America and the run on Northern Rock in the UK, uncertainty has now hit Japan.

In the last 7 days Origami Bank has folded, Sumo Bank has gone belly up and Bonsai Bank announced plans to cut some of its branches.

Yesterday, it was announced that Karaoke Bank is up for sale and will likely go for a song while today shares in Kamikaze Bank were suspended after they nose-dived.

While Samurai Bank is soldiering on following sharp cutbacks, Ninja Bank is reported to have taken a hit, but they remain in the black.

Furthermore, 500 staff at Karate Bank got the chop and analysts report that there is something fishy going on at Sushi Bank where it is feared that staff may get a raw deal.