



The Environment
Boosting the Economy
Eco Credentials
Discover Touring

The FACTS

Motoring
Membership Benefits
UK Tourism Success
European Connection

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Caravanning and The Caravan Club – a success for UK tourism

Caravanning is a pastime that has brought pleasure to many over the years and today it is the most popular paid-for leisure accommodation choice in the country, accounting for 19% of all holiday nights.

It is a £3 billion a year (largely domestic) industry, employing some 90,000 people and contributes more than £1 billion a year to local economies and in VAT and motoring taxes to the Exchequer.

The Caravan Club, founded in 1907, is Europe's premier touring organisation representing one million caravanners, motor caravanners and trailer tent owners. With over 200 sites, The Club operates the UK's largest, privately-owned sites network with destinations ranging from cliff top to deepest countryside, and from city centre to National Park. When taken together with the 2,500 smaller Certificated Locations (known as CLs, each with a maximum of five pitches) on farms, beside pubs and in the grounds of country estates, The Club provides more than 20 million 'bed nights' a year. In addition, The Club's dedicated Travel Service works with over 200 sites in 15 European countries, offering members a wide range of services and advice when touring farther afield. The Club also encourages inbound tourism – with members overseas and by running campaigns to attract caravanners across Europe using multi-lingual promotional material.

Caravanning is a mainstay of the UK's tourism economy, providing much needed income to many smaller businesses and traders. Caravan Club members spend over £380 million a year (off site) when caravanning, on purchases such as eating out, visiting local attractions, fuel, buying food from local shops and farmers' markets and gifts for friends and relatives. Many rural communities rely on the financial contribution of caravanners and many events up and down the country, from music festivals to motor sports and from agricultural shows to the London Marathon, all rely on caravans for the provision of accommodation.

The Caravan Club has a well-deserved reputation for the high quality and cleanliness of its sites, and this is reflected in the official gradings they receive from the national tourism bodies (90% of Club sites graded have achieved 4 or 5 stars, denoting excellent or exceptional status).

So caravanning, and The Caravan Club in particular, are a true tourism and economic success story. Club membership continues to grow and the freedom and flexibility offered by this wonderful leisure pursuit is appreciated by its members from all walks of life, with their varying interests and different holiday requirements.



A Club with a conscience

Sustainable tourism, carbon footprint, green initiatives, biodiversity – these are all words of the moment, but for The Caravan Club they summarise the ethos of caravanning and the organisation since its creation in 1907!

“... absolute priority has always been given by The Club to the need to respect the countryside and to avoid at all costs harming the environment. In the forefront of all Club activity is the realisation that the rich heritage of these islands is there for all to enjoy”

THE STORY OF THE CARAVAN CLUB (1960)

Responsible development

In the last eight years The Club has invested around £100 million on site acquisition and development. The maintenance and development of sites is carried out using local suppliers and contractors wherever possible, and The Club ensures its facilities are of consistently high quality. Developments are carried out with the emphasis on landscaping which complements the surroundings and with advice from professional ecologists who recommend planting schemes using native species to promote biodiversity. Land reclamation has become an area of expertise for The Club, with many sites developed on ‘brownfield’ land such as worked-out quarries, former railway stations and ex-service camps. For this reason, it is now a highly regarded partner for local authorities when looking to revitalise municipal sites.

Sustainable sites

A major commitment to eco-friendly caravanning was made by The Club in the recent development of its Poolsbrook Country Park Caravan Club Site. Just outside Chesterfield, this five-acre site on reclaimed colliery land benefited from a £1.8 million investment where a whole range of energy and water efficient technologies (geothermal, solar panels and photovoltaic cells, heat recovery ventilation system, wind turbine, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling) are being trialled and monitored for possible roll-out to other sites. Caravanners staying on site are able to see just how effective these technologies are on display panels in the site reception.

The Club also has a number of policy initiatives operating across the sites network including:

- using biodegradable and environmentally-friendly products
- building with timber from sustainable sources
- shredding tree prunings on site to use as mulch
- using low-energy lighting wherever possible



Grin Low Caravan Club Site



Poolsbrook Country Park Caravan Club Site

Boosting Biodiversity

The Club’s expanding Boosting Biodiversity programme – now operational on over 40 sites across the UK – is another way in which it is at the forefront of caring for the natural environment. These sites have checklists and displays showing which species of flora and fauna might be found on the site and in the surrounding area. Younger wildlife enthusiasts can take part in The Caravan Club Nature Hunt in association with the Woodland Trust’s ‘Nature Detectives Club’, or enter the Wildlife Art Competition.

The Club is implementing a Corporate Biodiversity Action Plan (CBAP) which sets objectives and actions for promoting biodiversity and makes recommendations for encouraging and maintaining 20 specific threatened species and habitats. These CBAP species are highlighted on the Boosting Biodiversity checklists so that members can get involved and help with this important recording task on behalf of the UK’s wildlife. With a recent survey revealing that for 94% of Club members, spending time in the natural environment is important, and nearly 90% believing there should be even more space for wildlife on Club sites, the interest is assured.

Successful working relationships with complementary organisations such as the RSPB (where The Caravan Club is Species Champion of the Song Thrush), the Woodland Trust, the Historic Houses Association, the Campaign for National Parks, and Sustrans, allow The Club to provide additional interest and activities for members on and around sites.

Sustainable touring

With over 700,000 vehicles owned by its members, The Caravan Club offers advice about fuel economies and eco-driving techniques. For towing, information is provided to ensure vehicle and trailer are correctly matched for maximum safety, and loading guidelines promote fuel efficiencies wherever possible. Articles in The Caravan Club Magazine ensure members are up-to-date with latest developments such as the use and availability of alternative fuels.

The Caravan Club successfully demonstrated in the Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile’s (FIA’s) EcoTour of Europe, using a lightweight Lunar caravan teamed with Ford’s latest fuel-efficient diesel hatchback, and practising eco-driving techniques, that a family touring holiday can be an economical and eco-friendly option. The car/caravan combination returned an average consumption of over 35mpg when ballasted to represent the touring requirements of four people, and had the least CO₂ emissions per person when compared with other modes of holiday travel, including coach, plane or even train.



Working on behalf of members

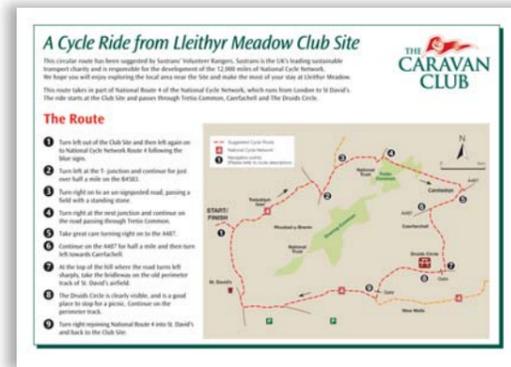
Representing a million members, The Caravan Club has established key roles with several complementary organisations to ensure members' interests are respected. In some cases, a formal alliance brings mutual benefits to each organisation and its members. The Club has had such an association with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds since 2004, and the RSPB holds events on sites and guided nature walks from those with particular interest in the vicinity.

The Club's alliance with Sustrans, operator of the 12,000-mile National Cycle Network, matches the sites network with nearby cycle routes, and recommended routes for walking and cycling are available from site reception and in downloadable format from the Club website.

Closer working relationships with the Highways Agency and the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding with them is already proving beneficial in promoting towing safety and journey reliability.

The Club's involvement as a Council Member for the Campaign for National Parks demonstrates its reputation of care for the countryside, and 20 Club sites have been allowed to be located within the UK's National Parks.

The Club also works very closely with the National Motor Museum Trust, which houses its archive, and members enjoy discounted admission to Beaulieu in the heart of the New Forest.



Whinstone Lee Tor in the Peak District



Parliamentary business

The Club is involved with legislative matters – at a regional, government department, national and European level. It retains parliamentary advisers to ensure the interests of Club members are protected. It is regularly consulted on issues from planning guidelines to driver licensing issues, and from the implications of climate change laws to motorway service areas. Every year The Club hosts parliamentary receptions in Westminster, Holyrood and the Senedd, to ensure those in power are aware of the importance of tourism to national economies, and the crucial role that caravanning plays.

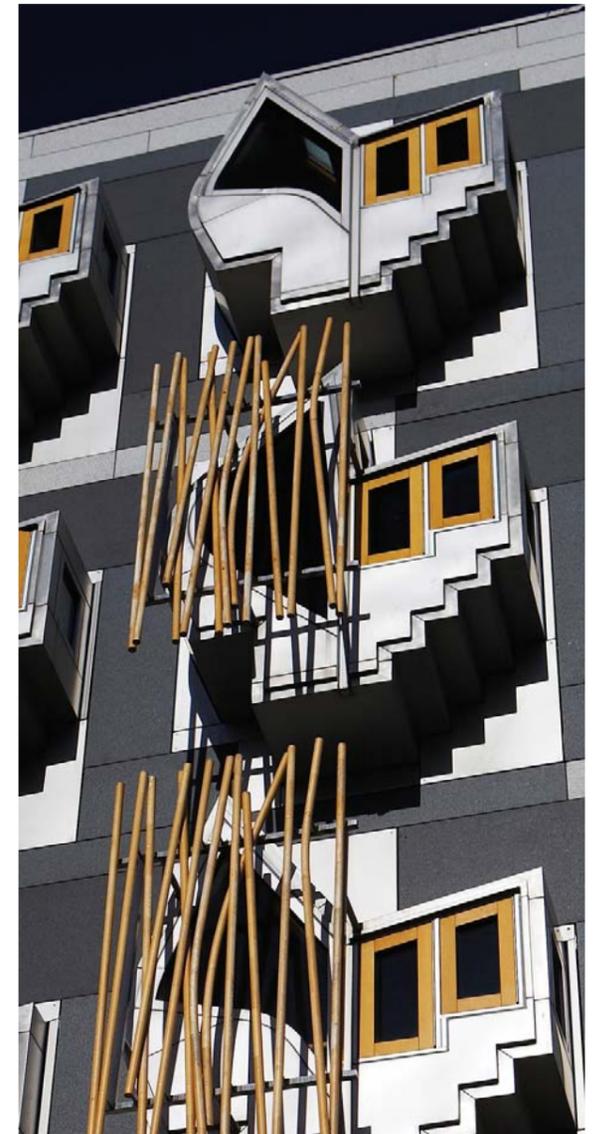


Wales Tourism Reception at the Senedd, Cardiff

At a European level, The Club is represented on Fédération International de l'Automobile (FIA) Working Groups looking at wider transport, legal, consumer and mobility issues being debated in Brussels, and it was one of the founder signatories of the European Road Safety Charter.

The Club's membership of PACTS, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, ensures the voice of members, whether towing or as solo motorists, is heard.

The Club works with VisitBritain, VisitScotland, Visit Wales and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and is an active member of the UK's main tourism bodies including the Tourism Alliance, the Scottish Tourism Forum, the Wales Tourism Alliance and Tourism for All. It also has representation on various high level advisory panels and industry committees.



The Scottish Parliament building, Edinburgh

Why is caravanning so popular?

If you had to define the spirit of caravanning in one word, 'freedom' would be a good start. Ever since Dr William Gordon Stables embraced the great outdoors with the world's first-ever leisure caravan 'The Wanderer', in 1884, caravanning has captured the imagination of those who like to explore.

The flexibility of being able to move with the good weather, change the view from your window and pick the perfect location from literally thousands of sites across the country, while avoiding the stresses often associated with hotel bookings and air travel, are all compelling arguments for touring holidays. A fact underpinned by the 1.7 million people who comprise the UK's caravanning community and the 40% rise in advance bookings that The Caravan Club is seeing year on year.

A typical caravanner?

Caravanning has a broad appeal to people from all walks of life and all age groups. Retired people who are unrestricted by such considerations as annual leave can 'holiday' when the mood takes them. Families are also rediscovering the delights of outdoor adventures – from rock pooling to den building, and family expeditions on bikes or on foot, with picnic treats at the ready. Festival goers too are finding out that having a part share in a caravan or camper van offers more comfortable accommodation than tent camping and a good way to avoid the mud!

A bright future

Although the spirit of freedom and independence has not changed among caravanners since The Wanderer's heyday, modern caravans and motor caravans are a far cry from their esteemed ancestor. They now boast the sort of 'mod cons' and home comforts usually found in a quality hotel, including state-of-the-art kitchen facilities, luxury shower and toilet, fixed beds, heating and air conditioning and in-house entertainment.

Caravanning is also a very affordable option once the initial investment has been made – the average cost of pitch fees for a family of four, during peak season, is around £22 per night. So it is not difficult to understand why year-on-year more people are discovering touring.



DISCOVER TOURING – a Caravan Club campaign on behalf of the industry

A major marketing campaign, 'Discover Touring', to highlight and promote the benefits and joys of touring in caravans and motorhomes was funded by The Club on behalf of the caravanning sector. Endorsed by television personality Carol Smillie, 'Discover Touring' is designed to encourage more people to get out and explore the great outdoors, and gives them clear guidance about all the options available.

An easy to follow and highly informative website, www.discovertouring.co.uk, provides all the information that a prospective tourer needs. To complement the online information, a 68-page, full colour, 'Discover Touring' magazine, packed with ideas and inspirational photography, is available at caravan and motorhome dealers, via request through the website or by response to the national advertising campaign.

DISCOVER touring

Carol Smillie says "You'll love touring!"

"As a lover of the open air, I know that touring with a caravan or motorhome is a brilliant way to explore the British landscape. I hope 'Discover Touring' encourages just a few more people to get out there and discover the great outdoors, as it really is a rewarding leisure activity. Nothing beats the pure joy of walking and discovering new places. Touring holidays are a great way to appreciate the richness of our lovely country"

Touring in a caravan or motorhome brings you all the freedom, fun and flexibility that you could want from a holiday...

There's no better way to explore the country than in the total comfort of your very own home from home

If you love this country's beautiful landscape and unique heritage, there really is no better way to explore than in a motorhome or with a caravan. Touring opens up a whole new world of freedom, because you write your own itinerary, you decide what to take with you, and you decide when to go. If you change your mind when you arrive, you can choose another destination and go!

So, what better way than to pack your belongings into your very own home-from-home, and get up and go?

Stick a pin in a map and there's a good chance that close by, you'll find a caravan site. There are literally thousands of them, but they're so well screened and beautifully landscaped that you've probably passed by without noticing them.

Today's touring caravans and motorhomes are as luxuriously equipped as many homes...

With modern touring vehicles you won't miss the creature comforts you've become used to at home. Central heating, flat-screen TVs, sophisticated cookers and showers are the order of the day.

There's no better family holiday than caravanning...

Everyone, from grandparents to toddlers, will really love touring. Children especially enjoy sleeping in cosy bunk beds, and they'll probably even help with the washing up. The great thing about it is that you can all join in the fun, including the dog!

A decent second hand family caravan can cost as little as £5,000, and can probably be towed by your existing family saloon. That could be less than the cost of one long-haul flight for a family of four, and you'll have the caravan for years of leisure and pleasure.

FREE magazine packed with advice to get you started go to discovertouring.co.uk phone 0800 294 6895

THE CARAVAN CLUB

Welcome to Discover Touring

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [You'll love touring](#) [Where can I stay](#) [Getting Started](#) [Home Comforts](#) [Useful Information](#)

Welcome to Discover Touring

Everything's here that you need to know about the freedom, fun and flexibility of touring holidays

Good news about touring

It's a fantastic way to explore Britain & Ireland and further afield too.

Beautiful locations

Stay in the most breathtaking places in the country. Discover touring shows you where you can stay in your caravan or motorhome.

There's loads of advice

TV presenter Carol Smillie tells us why she thinks touring is such a delight...

Carol Smillie is one of television's most experienced and versatile presenters, fronting TV programmes such as Wheel of Fortune, The Travel Show, the award-winning Changing Rooms and many more. Carol has also acted, produced videos and is a supporter of many charities.

Watch the video to discover more.

Membership benefits

The Caravan Club is by far the largest touring organisation of its kind in Europe and members have access to over 200 top quality sites in Britain and Ireland, as well as a further 2,500 member-only 'CL' sites.

Caravan Club membership offers a range of benefits including:

- access to all Club sites, many exclusive to members
- access to around 2,500 Certificated Locations (CLs)
- Advance Booking Service for Club sites online and by phone
- Britain and Ireland Sites Directory and map
- free monthly Caravan Club Magazine
- 'Great Days Out' offer booklet giving discounts on attractions
- a range of member-only insurance products
- free expert advice from The Club's Technical Advice and Information Service

The Club abroad

The Caravan Club's expertise and reputation with ferry companies and continental site owners make it the holiday operator of choice when members consider touring farther afield. The Club's dedicated overseas Travel Service offers access to more than 200 continental European sites plus savings on ferry bookings.

Its two-volume Caravan Europe guides cover nearly 8,000 sites in 22 countries and are packed with essential country-specific advice to help members drive safely and legally. To complete the offering, The Club's unique Red Pennant overseas holiday insurance has been protecting members since 1967 and is the only cover that really considers the needs of the caravanner when touring in Europe, making the necessary arrangements to allow them to complete their holiday whenever possible.

Online

The Club's website at www.caravanclub.co.uk grows in functionality and use year-on-year. It typically hosts over 4.5 million visits with 50 million page hits and around 350,000 online site bookings made each year. The site has more than 230,000 registered users.

The Caravan Club is a successful business that turns over £100 million a year, and is run for the benefit of its members. It is constantly seeking ways to ensure the enjoyment of these one million individuals whenever and wherever they caravan, and encouraging others to give it a try.

It is truly a tourism success story for the 21st century.

