

# News & views

## PLEASE BOOK CONSIDERATELY

THE LAUNCH of a new season always serves to bring the Club's booking policies and pitch availability to the fore, subjects we know are close to members' hearts.

The vast majority of members who enjoy staying on the sites they book, amend or cancel with consideration for others, may not be aware that the Club monitors the number of non-arrivals on a continued basis. It contacts those who have not turned up on more than one occasion, and has found that this is contributing to members being more considerate in their booking behaviour.

However, 'no-shows' account for a relatively small proportion of bookings – less than 1%. Sadly, the proportion of cancellations is much higher and is reducing members' access to pitches.

The Club is aware of this, and in the early part of the year wrote to a small but significant number of members who had made a considerable number of bookings for 2010, but were known to have cancelled a high proportion of their bookings in the previous year. Only 135 members fell into this category, and this number will hopefully be lower in coming years when this activity is repeated.

The Club also now asks members who are unable to take up their bookings to give as much notice



In brief

Jean and Gary, the Wardens at Old Hartley Caravan Club Site in Whitley Bay, would like to thank members who helped them raise £220 for MacMillan Cancer Support through a book exchange.

as possible when cancelling – a minimum of 72 hours before their arrival date. This message is being featured on our website and in publications for 2011, and reminding members that persistent late cancellations and non-arrivals may result in membership suspension should provide other members with greater opportunity to book that pitch.

You won't be surprised to know that the Club is exploring other ways of reducing the number of late cancellations and non-arrivals, to avoid having to write to members in such a way at all. UK sites policies arrangements was the topic of 'Club Matters' in February, providing

members with the opportunity to give their views – thanks to those of you who took part. As you'd expect, this generated a diversity of views, opinions and levels of satisfaction with our current arrangements. Interestingly, while many members would like to see a change in the Club's booking policy, a fairly equal proportion appreciate the current, flexible, first-come-first-served approach.

The introduction of booking limits, charging non-refundable

deposits and reviewing advance booking arrangements were topics raised. All the alternatives are being given careful consideration, but there is no perfect solution to this issue.

For example, the introduction of non-refundable deposits would bring considerable administrative and system development costs to the Club. Calls times would be longer, making it harder for members to get through. There is also the likelihood that the number of people who do actually cancel with notice will reduce – some might not

feel any compulsion to cancel if they won't get their deposit back anyway. The Club is also aware that most members who need to cancel their stays do so with consideration, and for legitimate reasons, and it doesn't want to penalise those unduly.

It's true that a number of popular sites and key dates do book up quickly, but there remain many Club sites and CLs that don't. So while the Club continues to explore the solutions, please do make use of our online 'Late Availability' tool or try a new location – there are pitches available even in peak season.

## Sites Directory & Handbook

YOUR COPY of the new *Sites Directory & Handbook 2011/2012* should be with you soon. Providing all the information you need to enjoy the Club sites network, it contains full details of fees and opening and closing dates for 2011 to help you plan your trips. Choose from Club and Affiliated sites, commercial sites and, of course, Certificated Locations (CLs) – of which there are now more than 2,500.

The *Handbook* also provides a wealth of information about the range

of products and services offered by the Club, including insurance and financial products, Club Classifieds, holiday cottages and much more.

In December 2011, you'll receive your *Sites Directory & Handbook Supplement*, which provides you with prices and opening and closing dates for 2012, along with details of new sites and CLs for that season.

The 2011/12 *Handbook* is kindly sponsored by Dometic, leading manufacturer of products designed to

provide additional comfort in your caravan or motor caravan. No matter whether it is refrigeration, windows, air conditioning, sanitation, mobile power or kitchen solutions, every item is created with the requirements of mobile living in mind. To view a full product list, visit [dometic-waeco.com](http://dometic-waeco.com).



## West Central Q&A



West Central Region officers for 2010/11 (left to right): Tony Lloyd (Honorary Secretary), Steve Holdsworth (Chairman), Mike Tolley (Vice Chairman) and Ann Webb (Treasurer)

THE WEST Central Region's Question Time session will be held on Saturday 19 March 2011 at 2pm at the Daresbury Park Hotel, near Warrington (just off Junction 11 of the M56).

Panel members will include Club Vice Chairman Rodney Lambert, Director of Membership Services Brian Savage and representatives from a caravan

manufacturer and dealer. There will be a free buffet, tea and coffee on the day as well as a raffle. For tickets, contact Tony Lloyd at 13 Avondale, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7LP. Alternatively, text your name address, postcode and number of tickets required to 07743 467675 or email [tony.lloyd@gassaferegister.co.uk](mailto:tony.lloyd@gassaferegister.co.uk).

## NATIONAL RALLY CALL

IT IS not only the venue – Sledmere House, East Yorkshire – that is new for the 2011 National Rally which takes place from 27-30 May. The organising team has pulled out all the stops to bring you an even more varied programme of events.

If you are under 17 years old, make a beeline for the main Mayday Marquee, where you will be able to try your hand at graffiti arts and mixed crafts, hone your DJing, rapping and Samba drumming skills or learn new Diversity-like street and break dancing moves. This marquee will be open for the disco during the evening, too.

Parents can bring younger children to their own marquee, where Gary the Clown will be staging circus workshops and hands-on science sessions on both Saturday and Sunday. On Monday, come and see the animal display and even get to handle them. The ever-popular climbing wall will be available in the outside play area together with laser games.

Are you a Take That fan? We will be staging our very own homage to the band with the help of tribute group, The Magic of Take That. They will perform in the Swift Marquee on the Sunday night alongside Tony Edwards and his ultimate tribute to the late, great Michael Jackson. To guarantee your seats, you'll need to buy your tickets in advance via the entertainment booking form that is sent out with your booking confirmation letter.

Spectacular arena entertainment has been arranged, from the daredevil antics of Amanda Saville and her

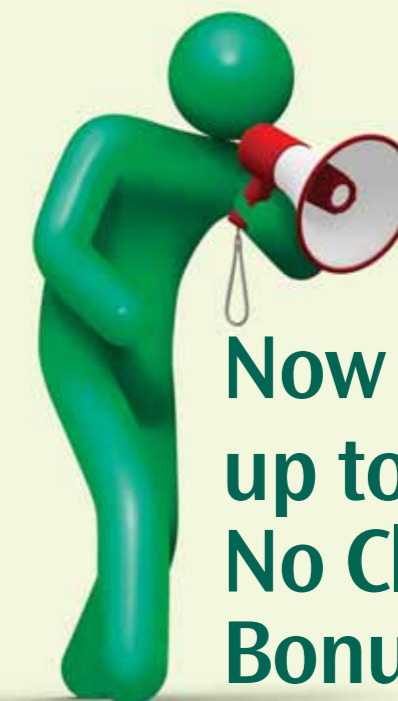
Chariots of Fire ponies to the riding skills of the young people of The Imps Motorcycle Display team and the stirring sound of the Revolution Show Corps marching band. You can join in the fun by dressing up for the Carnival Parade before the closing ceremony.

If you'd rather play sport, then contact your local centre and put your name down for the team competitions that take place during the rally. Whether your talent lies in football, netball, volleyball, lawn darts or tug of war, there is an event for everyone.

It is easy to book your pitch at Sledmere – just log onto [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk) and follow the prompts for the on-line booking form. Alternatively, call the Events team on 01342 336778 and a booking form will be sent to you.



## CARAVAN INSURANCE



Now with up to **35%** No Claims Bonus!

Give yourself something to shout about – get an online quote now!

We've worked really hard on behalf of Caravan Club members to create an excellent package of superb cover and competitive premiums, tailored for caravanners just like you. That's why more people insure their caravan with our **5Cs caravan insurance** than any other UK scheme.

And with up to **35% No Claims Bonus** and the host of other discounts available, you could **save up to 65%** on your premium!

You've nothing to lose by getting a quote from us, so let us prove how much thought we have put into our caravan insurance. Why not go online or call us today and compare a Caravan Club **5Cs caravan insurance** quote with your current insurer's offering?

- No claims discount up to 35%
- 10% discount for corner-steady or tilt alarm\*
- 10% discount for an approved tracking device\*
- 5% discount for completing a Club caravanning course
- 5% discount for storage at a CaSSOA Gold site or Club secure storage
- 10% discount for an AL-KO Secure or BPW Diamond Wheel Lock\*
- 10% discount for an AI-KO ATC or BPW iDC trailer control system
- Up to 15% discount for choosing a voluntary excess



See how Club insurance works for you

Phone 01342 336 610 quoting MAGJAN

Lines are open Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.30pm. Calls may be recorded  
or get a quote online at [www.caravanclub.co.uk/caravanins](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk/caravanins)

Visit the Club website to join, [www.caravanclub.co.uk](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk)  
\*Security discounts not available if we make fitting the device a condition of the insurance. Twin-axle caravans must have two AL-KO Secure or BPW Diamond Wheel Locks fitted on the same side. The Caravan Club acts as an intermediary in making your insurance arrangements. The Caravan Club Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.



# NEC site satisfaction

THINKING OF visiting the Boat & Caravan Show at Birmingham's NEC from 22-27 February 2011? Then why not stay at the Club's temporary site, just a few minutes' walk from the main arena? To book call 01342 336779 or visit caravanclub.co.uk. Below are the views of freelance journalist Mark Sutcliffe, who enjoyed our facilities at October's NEC show:



"I'm not going to make it," I muttered frustratedly under my breath as I trundled through yet another set of roadworks on the M6 and the clock on the dashboard ticked over to 10pm – the cut-off time for arrivals at The Caravan Club's temporary campsite at the NEC.

So my first ever night in my shiny new motor caravan is going to be spent

without hook-up in the late arrivals section of a car park at the NEC. Hardly an auspicious introduction to the joys of touring. I roll onto the NEC campus at 10.15pm and sheepishly crawl up the access road to site reception. But what's this? Lights are on and people are still about.

Before I know it, a cheery chap is beckoning me to follow him to my

pitch. Creeping down the lines of neatly-parked campers and caravans, I'm surprised to find our paddock is well illuminated and surrounded by trees. The cheery chap helps me reverse on to the pitch, then points out the nearest facilities – which include electric hook-up, piped fresh water, grey water and chemical loo disposal points. The Club makes it clear that the

temporary site at the NEC isn't quite up to its customary high standards, but believe me, I've stayed on worse sites.

I plug in and gingerly fire up the systems one by one – surely with so many caravans in one place there aren't going to be many Amps to go around? Well, there are enough to illuminate the caravan, work on a laptop, chill my beer and boil a kettle – what more could a man want?

Wandering over to the facilities block the next morning, I catch a whiff of full English sizzling in the on-site restaurant and can't resist picking up a bacon buttie on my way into the show – which is only a seven-minute walk away or two-minute ride on the regular shuttle buses. I know where I'll be staying in February. See you there!"



Club Chairman Grenville Chamberlain (far right), Director General Nick Lomas (left) and SCC Editor Alistair Fisher (second right) present the Alba Shield to Neil Valentine, the winning photographer at the SCC AGM

## Valentine's Day

NEIL VALENTINE of the East Scotland Centre was presented with the Alba Shield for photography at the 65th Scottish Caravan Club AGM in October. Neil was given his prize by the award judges, Club Chairman Grenville Chamberlain and Director General Nick Lomas, who chose from a grand entry of 52 pictures. The winning image of a huge tree dominating a rally site can be seen on the SCC website at thescottishcaravanclub.com.

## Caravan Europe 2011 on sale now

THE 2011 edition of the Club's indispensable guide to all aspects of caravanning and campsites in Europe will be hot off the press at the end of December.

If you're aiming to beat the winter blues or want to start planning next summer's holiday, then order your copy of *Caravan Europe* now from our website – caravanclub.co.uk/caravaneurope – or call us on 01342 327410.

*Caravan Europe's* two volumes cover 22 countries and special prices for Club members are £9.50 for *Caravan Europe 1* (France, Spain, Portugal and Andorra) and £9 for *Caravan Europe 2* (the rest of Europe and Scandinavia), plus £2.50 p&p per order.



### Central Region Members' Question Time

THE CENTRAL Region Members' Question Time will be held at Kegworth Whitehouse Hotel, Packington Hill, Kegworth, Derbyshire DE74 2DF on Saturday 5 March at 2pm.

If you live in the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Staffordshire, Warwickshire or the West Midlands, this is your opportunity to put your queries, comments or suggestions to Club staff, caravan industry

representatives and members of the emergency services.

Doors open at 1.15pm with tea and coffee available. A light buffet will be served afterwards. Admission is free but, to assist with the catering arrangements, please return the form below to request tickets. Address the form to the Central Region Chairman, Dave Waring, Emyleen, 19 Ambleside, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 1JB. You can also call Dave on 01788 569252 or email dave.waring19@btinternet.com with ticket requests.

#### Central Region Members' Question Time Ticket Booking Form

Please forward ..... tickets for the above event on 5 March 2011 starting at 2pm

Name .....

Address .....

Membership no ..... Tel .....

Email address .....

### SHOW TIME

#### JANUARY 2011

**6-9 – MILTON KEYNES:** Milton Keynes Touring Caravan Show, Middleton Hall, the centre:mk, Milton Keynes. (Central Exhibitions, call 01908 305123 or see centralexhibitions.co.uk)

**7-9 – SHEPTON MALLET:** The Motorhome Show, Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. (Stone Leisure, call 020 8302 6150 or see themotorhomeshow.com)

**14-16 – CARDIFF:** Welsh Caravan, Motorhome and Outdoor Leisure Show, Cardiff International Arena, Mary Ann Street, Cardiff. (Call 02920 364220/01446 774747 or see welshcaravanshow.com)

**20-23 – MANCHESTER:** Manchester Central Caravan & Motorhome Show 2011, Manchester Central, Manchester. (Clarion Events, call 0844 209 7351 or see caravanshows.com)

**21-23 – BELFAST:** Belfast Telegraph Caravan & Motorhome Show, King's Hall, Belfast. (Business Exhibitions, call 00353 1 295 7418 or see businessexhibitions.com)

#### FEBRUARY 2011

**3-6 – GLASGOW\*:** Scottish Caravan & Outdoor Leisure Show, SECC, Glasgow. (QD Events, call 0844 395 4000 or see caravanshowscotland.com)

**11-13 – EXETER:** South West Caravan and Motorhome Show, Westpoint, Exeter. (Appletree Exhibitions, call 01395 277002 or see appletree-exhibitions.co.uk)

**22-27 – BIRMINGHAM\*:** Boat & Caravan Show, NEC, Birmingham. (Ocean Media, call 0844 581 3000 or see boatandcaravan.co.uk)

**Note:** details subject to change – please telephone event organisers in advance for up-to-date information. \*Indicates shows at which the Club will have a stand

#### SITES DIRECTORY UPDATE

#### ROUTES – AN IMPORTANT NOTE

Routes provided by autoroutes or sat-nav systems may include roads unsuitable for vehicles towing trailers or caravans. There may also be specific weight, width or height restrictions. For caravan-friendly local routes to Club sites, CLs and commercial sites, we advise using the standard directions published in the *Sites Directory & Handbook* and on our website.

#### NEW CLS ENGLAND NORFOLK

**KING'S LYNN** (7m SE) – Mr H Barber, Pentney Abbey, Abbey Road, Pentney PE32 1JT. 01760 339969, 07795 844940; howard.barber1@btopenworld.com; pentneyabbey.com. 132:702120.

1 1/2 ac; quiet; wc; cold water only; recycling fac; m'vans by arrangement; coarse fishing adj; dep req (£16); adv bkg req BH or 5n+ stay; £8.

#### UPDATES

**IMPORTANT:** Nightly fees may differ from those published in the *Sites Directory & Handbook* due to change of facilities or ownership. It is therefore essential to confirm current fees when enquiring or making a booking.  
**438p WROXHAM** – now Mr D Sheriff, Poplar Farm. Email: domreag@hotmail.com

#### CL SITES

See also the CL section of the Club website (caravanclub.co.uk) for the most up-to-date information on all Certificated Locations.

### FEEDBACK WANTED

WE WANT your views on the models listed for our 'Buying Used' features. Just call 01342 336804 (please be ready to quote your membership number) or write, fax or email (see p3) for an appropriate questionnaire and prepaid return envelope. Please specify the vehicle you wish to report on. Closing dates for return are highlighted.

**MAY 2011:** Fiat Doblo 1.9 Multijet diesel (Dec 2005-2010) v Citroën Berlingo Multispace diesels (pre 2008) and Peugeot Partner Combi equivalents, by **10 January 2011.**

**JUNE 2011:** Enthusiasts' two-berth caravans – Coachman Pastiche 460/2 v Lunar Clubman 475 CK, by **8 February 2011.**

**JULY 2011:** 4x4 variations: BMW X3 (2.0d and 3.0d variants preferred) v Volvo XC70 diesels, by **8 March 2011.**

# QUINTESSENTIALLY ENGLISH

THE ENGLISH Caravan Company is a new business that concentrates on building classically-styled vehicles with hand-crafted and locally-sourced components.

Set up in May 2010, the man behind it is Richard Stark. "I wanted to get back into a joinery shop environment where I once spent many happy times working with my dad who was a master joiner," says Richard. "I've always had an interest in and have owned several caravans over the years, but always loved the old, quintessentially English styles of years gone by. I refurbished a friend's caravan and then thought that I'd actually love to do this for a living.



Working out of a barn in the Hertfordshire countryside, Richard builds each caravan by hand "using real woods with real character and real passion".

To take a look at the company's two-berth 'Tilly' teardrop design and more, visit the extremely polished-looking website at [theenglishcaravancompany.com](http://theenglishcaravancompany.com).

## Update: speed stickers in France

THANKS TO one of our members living in France and the Automobile Club de France (ACF), we can bring you further information on the use of speed stickers in the country.

It has been confirmed that cars towing caravans and trailers are not listed in the original legislation that requires vehicles to display speed stickers.

However, from a safety point of view, members may still like to consider attaching them as they alert drivers behind that you are limited to a lower speed (although speed stickers are not required, the lower speed limits for cars towing a caravan/trailer with a gross train mass of over 3.5t still apply). Further information can be found at [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk) by clicking on 'Practical advice' at the top of the home page, followed by 'Overseas advice' on the left-hand panel.

## Dometic launches fridge servicing scheme



DOMETIC UK has launched a scheme offering three years' free servicing on new absorption refrigerators. The offer applies to owners of factory-fitted Dometic fridges in selected new, UK-manufactured caravans or motor caravans bought after 1 January 2011. To take advantage of the scheme, you must also be a member of the qualifying manufacturer's owners' club.

Dometic undertakes to service the appliance free of charge, once a year, for three years, potentially offering significant savings. The servicing will be carried out by a

specialist from the Dometic Approved Network (DAN) of engineers at designated owners' club rallies.

"This pioneering scheme represents a significant investment by Dometic," said Tim Shaw, Dometic UK's Managing Director. "The initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to ensure our products are not only safe and efficient, but that they also enhance the overall caravanning experience."

Full details and qualifying criteria for the scheme can be found at [dometic.co.uk](http://dometic.co.uk) or email [3yearsfree@dometic.co.uk](mailto:3yearsfree@dometic.co.uk).

## Cheep holidays?

CARAVAN CLUB members are huge wildlife fans according to the results of a new survey. Birds of prey (especially golden eagles) are firm favourites with nature lovers – 11% of those responding said spotting one would represent a perfect holiday wildlife discovery.

The Club's Director General, Nick Lomas, said: "We believe that caravanning is the perfect way to pursue a hobby as it is so flexible. You can go wherever your hobby takes you and you have instant accommodation. We teamed up with TV wildlife presenter and Club member Simon King to spread the word about using a caravan to pursue your interest. Simon travels the world as a wildlife filmographer and uses caravans and motor caravans to do so."

### Obituary

## RHONA ROBERTS

THE CARAVAN Club is sad to report the passing of Rhona Roberts, wife of Club Chaplain the Rev Canon Steph Roberts, on 18 November, at the age of 81. Rhona and Steph, together with their young family, joined the Club in 1972. Soon after, they signed up with the West Hampshire Centre and attended their first rally at Locks Heath.

Since 1972, Rhona has supported Steph in his role as the Club Chaplain, representing our organisation in an impeccable manner at many official functions and events.

At her funeral in Southampton, Club Chairman Grenville Chamberlain gave a beautiful eulogy. "Rhona was, of course, diminutive only in height," said Mr Chamberlain. "She had an

enormous heart and was a tower of strength, especially when Steph was unable to drive recently and she had not only to drive them both around to fulfil their daily needs but also to tow the caravan to their many destinations, both near and far."

It was Rhona too who took control of the family holidays in France, seeking out the best ferry prices and plotting the routes to the sites she had chosen. Their friends were given the route at the port with strict instructions for timings.

Rhona's final act of generosity was to make provision in her will for a donation to be made to the Club Chairman's Charity, which this year is Help for Heroes. "I can think of no more fitting manner in which to



commemorate her life of service than to bring help and support to the brave young men and women who have sustained such dreadful injuries whilst fighting for our Queen and Country," said Mr Chamberlain.

Our thoughts are with Steph and the Roberts family.

## Identity parade

IN THE November 2010 issue we reported on the South West Region's 21st Rally of Wessex, but neglected to include the names of the individuals in the accompanying photograph. Pictured with their gifts commemorating attendance of all 21 Wessex rallies were Margaret Thorne and Brian and Jacqui Churcher of the West Dorset Centre, with Vic and Helen Cave of East Hampshire Centre. Also pictured were Club Chairman Grenville Chamberlain with his wife Liz, Wessex Chairman Peter Blake with wife Mary, and Miss Wessex 2008 competition winner Hannah Wallis of the East Dorset Centre. Our apologies for the omission.





# Club Website EXPLAINED

If you rarely use the Club website, make 2011 the year to get yourself online to take advantage of the many benefits available to members. E-Commerce Executive **Mark Solomon** outlines what's on offer



### Ask us a question online

Got a question you would like to ask the Club? Then make the website your first port of call. Simply open 'Ask a question' from any page on [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk), type in your query and hit 'search'. We have posted answers to hundreds of members' enquiries, so it's highly likely you'll find what you've been looking for – and it'll save you time and the cost of making a phone call.

### Registering online

Many of the key areas on the Club website are for members only, so require you to register or log in to gain access.

For example, you need to sign in to make use of the online UK or overseas bookings function, to manage your membership details (including renewing online or setting up a direct debit), to obtain technical advice, to place a free classified advert, to view the *Great Days Out* attraction offers or CL information and to take advantage of numerous other member offers.

All you need to register is your membership number and a valid email address – it takes only a few minutes.

### Viewing videos online

More and more video content should be available on the Club website over the course of the year. If you have trouble viewing this, simply download a free programme called Adobe Flash (it should take just a couple of minutes). See [caravanclub.co.uk/site-help](http://caravanclub.co.uk/site-help) for more information.

### Club emails

Want to be the first to know about Club news, offers and promotions? Our email newsletters are packed with inspirational ideas on where to stay, what to see and what to do in the UK or overseas while touring. They also feature helpful advice and tips on caravanning and exclusive member offer information. It's a fantastic way to ensure you are kept up to date.

To take advantage of this simply access 'My Club' on the Club website and set your email

**Having trouble registering or logging in?**  
Then see our 'Help' section at [caravanclub.co.uk/login-trouble](http://caravanclub.co.uk/login-trouble) for step-by-step advice and for contact details of the Club's web team.

preferences to choose exactly which type of emails you would like to receive.

### Outfit matching

If you're looking to buy a new caravan and/or car and want to know whether the combination you have in mind is suitable and safe, then you'll be interested to know that we will introduce a new 'Outfit matching' tool on the website

shortly. It will provide detailed information on any make and model of caravan and car, allowing you to make an informed buying decision.

Look out for further details of this exciting new function in a future issue of the magazine. If you need outfit matching advice in the meantime, please call our Technical Advice team on 01342 336611.

**Technical advice**  
Check out our wide range of information leaflets for a wealth of valuable advice and guidance. Click on 'Practical advice' and then 'General advice' to find out more.

**See [caravanclub.co.uk](http://caravanclub.co.uk) for all your caravanning needs**