



Wiltshire Centre Newsletter

≈ The Caravan Club ≈

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Welcome to this, the last newsletter for 2008.

My how the time flies!! It's October already, AGM time with Halloween just around the corner, rapidly followed by Christmas!! They say the days go by much faster, the older you get!! I must be getting old in that case!

I would just like to say a huge **thank you** to ALL those people who wrote the rally reports and sent them to me. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading them all. I have also enjoyed being the newsletter editor and wish my successor "Good Luck" for the future.

May I ask that if YOU have asked someone to write a report for your rally, give them a reminder to do just that! If YOU volunteer, please write it up as soon as possible after the rally, and send it in by post or email, that way we all get to read them. They are here for you to enjoy.

If you have any items or articles of interest, items for sale etc, or even some funny anecdotes or stories, please pass them on.

Signing off.....

Chris ☺

Exeter House School, Salisbury

29th Feb - 2nd March 2008

Our first Wiltshire Centre rally of 2008, and what a good choice it was. This is a very clean and tidy school site, about a mile from Salisbury city centre, and located in a quiet residential area that is easily accessed from the ring road. A warm welcome from the rally officers, Mike and Norma Stone and David and Jean Fray, set the tone for what proved to be a very friendly and informal rally.

Saturday's beautiful sunshine tempted many ralliers to indulge in their favourite pastime (shopping!) in Salisbury or Wilton, followed by a snooze in the afternoon to catch up on the sleep lost during the buffeting of the caravan in the ferocious wind of Friday night. The social on Saturday evening was a real treat - no dressing up or loud music, just lots of indoor games requiring varying degrees of skill and dexterity. While waiting their turn to throw sticky balls at a Velcro target, lob foam darts into a net, and play fairground hoopla, carpet bowls, mini golf and numerous other silly games, everyone enjoyed the opportunity to mingle and chat with everyone else, and catch up with all the latest news and gossip. The hula hoops gave us a chance to prove just how unfit we were - I think Ann Holdway was the only one who could actually do it!

The rally letter had invited us all to bring a wine glass for a surprise celebration - as the champagne was being poured and the cake distributed, Mike explained that he and Norma had celebrated 50 years of wedded bliss the previous Tuesday (26th Feb). Many congratulations and many more happy years, Mike and Norma!

The rally statistics announced at flag revealed that there were 16 vans/motorhomes onsite (14 plus 2 rally officers). This included 6 past Chairmen and the current Chairman. There were also 3 cancellations and one non arrival (who later confessed that they'd forgotten they had booked the rally!) The rally officers had been keeping score on Saturday evening's games, and the runners up were Lesley Shorthouse (by one point) and Tony Haines, with the winners being Sue Greenfield and Doug Haddrell. The winners of the rally competition were Sue and yours truly, who managed to decipher all of the jumbled up names of famous people.

Exeter House is a special school for disabled children of varying ages, and the Chairman paid tribute to the achievements of the children that were displayed in the hall. The ralliers obviously felt the same, and the raffle generated the excellent sum of £45 for the school. Also of great interest was the beautiful framed photograph of all the staff and pupils which had been presented to Mike & Norma in 2005 in recognition of the transport services they had provided to the school.

We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of a weekend that was excellent in every respect. Many thanks to our rally officers, who may have to squeeze in some extra vans next year when others realize just how good this rally is.

Steve Greenfield

Luckington Rally, Badminton Horse Trials,

30th April - 5th May 2008

The final Wiltshire Centre rally for this event after 29 years as the Rally Officers.

We left Swindon on Wednesday morning to drive through a cloud burst, mid floods, just past Brinkworth to arrive at the rally field, to find Steve and Sue Greenfield sat in the sunshine, a taste of what was to come! The weather was good for most of the days with just short light showers until after "Flag" and coffee on Sunday morning when heavier rain settled in until early afternoon when the sun came out for a lovely, warm late afternoon and evening, just right for all the BBQs. I think the rain was really tears for all of the nineteen vans from eleven different centres, at this last rally for this event, The reduced numbers have made this not viable for the owner any longer. Some of those in attendance had attended the majority of the Wiltshire rallies with just one, a past Chairman of the Somerset Centre, Tony and Sue Owen being at all of our rallies.

Unfortunately no one was available from Committee to officiate at our flag, but with two Past Chairman as Rally Officers we joined forces for a very happy event with coffee and biscuits, A retirement card to mark the occasion and special thanks on behalf of all the visitors over the years was given by Mr John Munslow of the Devon and Cornwall Centre.

The competition organised as usual by Sue was "Name the Logo" and won by Mr and Mrs Collins of East Kent Centre.

Thanks must go to Steve and Sue Greenfield for their loyal support for the past eleven years and to previous Rally Officers for many years being Reg and Sheila Townsend, Phil and Irene Kirk plus several who came to learn how to run rallies. Cliff and Hazel Merryfield, Tony and Bev Eagles and Pete and June Newton who carried on to become Chairman of the Avon Centre. But we must not forget our old friend, now no longer with us. Bob West with his "Bumblepuppy" Landrover who came every year after we had to tow out all 200 plus vans, with just one borrowed 4 x 4 at the end of the rally.

What memories we have, the original owner Bill Spencer who always came to flag to interrupt with his "country" comments, all sorts of weather from snow to heat wave and of course the MUD so much mud at times. The Fish and Chip van stuck and pushed out by the gang celebrating 40th birthdays and didn't realise the amount of mud until the next day. The unusual events - the orphan lamb who kept escaping when left in our care to bottle feed, when his owners were at the event - the visitor who arrived with his mate because his car had "fallen apart" a few miles back could we help?

Luckily the 4x4 borrowed that year had a small crane mounted just behind the cab, we towed his van and went back for the car to find it had indeed fallen apart - body off the chassis, it also came into the rally behind the 4x4 held together like a big parcel with strong tow ropes. It was welded on site and left at the end of the rally. So many memories and so many fellow caravan folks we have met from Centres all over Great Britain.

I feel we have been the lucky ones.

Jose Kirk.

(Chairman of Wiltshire Centre 1978 -1981)



All Cannings - Junior Fishing

25th - 27th April 2008

Well where do I start..... this being our 1st rally **and** our 1st rally report. After many years of not wanting to rally, we gave in and bought our 1st van, with much help from dad and mum (Dave and Sandra Lush).

On Friday 4.00pm we arrived on the rally to be met by John and Ann Harris looking at each other saying don t know who these people are until Ann spots our son Connor in the back, and the penny dropped who we are.

What a lovely site and a lovely view. Thanks to Joe and John for siting us overlooking one of two lakes. Set up and went for a wander, met loads of old faces (from my younger caravanning years) and many new ones. Everybody said hello which made us feel very welcome, as you don t get this on a normal campsite. After the wander, Reece says he's going fishing but the temperature drops so it s back to the van, light the fire and cook tea. Played cards, had an early night as the fishing draw was to take place at 8am (no lie-in this weekend).

Saturday morning, all juniors draw peg numbers from the hat, set up their peg and fishing commenced at 9.30 with the signal from Ken Levers whistle! This has to be the best start to a Saturday morning this year. The Juniors must have given the rally a good omen as the sun showed us its smiley face. Fishing finished at 12.30pm when everyone met at peg 1 for the weighing process to start. Weights ranged from a 3lb bag - 15 lb bag. Nice to see that all juniors caught fish putting some adults to shame. 1st day winner was our son Connor. Connor said that the reason he caught the most fish, was due to the fact grandad wasn t with him, so him didn t end up in the hedge so much!! Early evening a communal bbq to meet more new faces ending up chatting till 10ish, outside as it was a lovely warm evening.

Sunday morning again no lie-in, fishing the same as Saturday. Lake not fishing so well today as the fishermen tell me, too much cloud (didn t know fish came from the sky!) The girls in the bottom corner doing really well, boys not so good. Then all of a sudden Connor's float has disappeared. After a long fight he lands a 7.8oz sturgeon. What an ugly fish! Ugly or not it helped Connor to take the second days fishing as well.

Flag took place at 2pm and was taken by Chris Riley with Fishing results announced 1st Connor Searle 2nd Paul? 3rd? visitor winner ? Had a go at the photo competition with no luck congrats to Nigel and Chris who showed us how to win well done. Several people received plaques for certain achievements not sure what.

Enjoyed a 1st rally so much we will be back for more fun and laughter, thanks to all who made our 1st weekend - the start of many rallies to come. Have told all our friends about rallying and perhaps we might be able to encourage a few more new ralliers in the future, many thanks to John and Ann, Joe and Lyn for all their help on our 1st rally and once again what a fab weekend.

Reece, Sue and Connor Searle



Bath Race Course

9th - 11th May 2008

Friday arrived to the best weather we have had this year. B-B-Qs all fixed up, food cooked and eaten, we all went to the hall for a natter and a few games of cards etc. The rally officers sat, talked, drank and did nothing. Then all hell let loose. A thunderstorm and rain, as good a show as we have seen in a long time.

Saturday: A day for shopping and walking or doing what the rally officers did..... i.e. nothing.

Saturday evening communal B-B-Q. Then off to the hall for a repeat of Friday night.

Sunday weather again brill. Flagpole saw the Berch family clean up on all the competitions. Rally officers at work at last to announce the raffle winners.

Thanks to John and Lesley and John and Wendy for a great weekend. The weather and venue made it a great relaxing rally, and we look forward to a repeat performance next Easter

Many thanks, **Dave and Sandra Lush**

The National Rally

23rd to 27th May 2008

The National Rally this year was held at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, which is the ancestral home of the Caravan Club president, Viscount Coke.

He and his young family joined the rally, using his Airstream caravan supplemented by an adjacent tepee. In his amusing speech at the opening ceremony, he said that he had drawn the short straw and spent the night in the tepee, but had gone home in the morning for a hot bath! Many of the ralliers took the opportunity to visit his stately home over the weekend, making use of the rally two for one offer, so we all had a good look at his bathroom.

What is the National Rally like?

It is basically the ultimate caravan rally – you are sited in Centre lines, so it is very much like an ordinary weekend rally inasmuch as you are amongst your fellow Centre members. But there are also around 3,000 other outfits onsite in their respective Centre lines – there is a real sense of occasion with hundreds of flags flying amongst the vans, and the friendship and camaraderie has to be experienced to be believed.

The National Rally is always located in the grounds of a stately home, as they are the only ones able to provide the space needed – not just for the vans and motor homes of the ralliers, but also for the sports areas, the main arena, the marquees which house the evening entertainment, the trade stands, the caravan dealers, and so much more. It is a great way to see different parts of the country – we usually turn the National into a mini holiday by arriving in the area the previous weekend and staying on a nearby Club site or CL, before making the short trip to the National itself on the Friday morning.

This year just 8 Wiltshire outfits attended the National – 7 regulars in the Wiltshire Centre lines, plus one other Centre member who was located elsewhere. Each Centre has a Centre Liaison Officer, who arrives on the Thursday and is responsible for putting out Centre signs within the rally to direct their members to the correct area, for siting the vans on the pegs previously laid out by the rally working party, erecting the flagpole, and arranging and hosting the Centre closing flag ceremony.

The CLO task this year was carried out by Pete & Gill Wiltshire, who worked hard to ensure that we all enjoyed a happy and successful rally. Not only were they ready to greet new arrivals from seven in the morning on the Friday, they stayed on duty until eleven that night waiting for the arrival of the last person on their list (but who turned out to be a no show with no thought for the CLO who was waiting for them – a simple phone call would have been courteous and much appreciated!)

Pete & Gill also laid on a superb cheese and wine social on the Sunday afternoon, held in their awning due to the slightly inclement weather that day. This afforded an excellent opportunity for all those attending to get to know each other better, and we left having reinforced old friendships or having made new ones.

Our Chairman made reference at flag to the only competition that our Centre had entered – the Inter Centre Quiz in which we were knocked out in the first round! Note for Committee – please could the Centre be entered in more events next year? We had ralliers who would have enjoyed participating in events such as boules or lawn darts, but the requisite forms had not been submitted in advance as is required. We later heard that the Birch family had been successful in the dog show, with Fran and Lucy taking second place in the “best 6 legs” category!

The two youngest Birches, Louise and Michelle, represented the Centre at the opening and closing ceremonies, where they were most efficient in raising and lowering the Centre pennant. They must have been very cold standing around in the strong wind waiting for their cue, so thank you girls, and well done!

One of the highlights of any National Rally must be the evening entertainment in the marquees – this year we had the pleasure of watching and listening to Herman's Hermits, The Searchers, and Marty Wilde on Saturday evening. These were the original bands, so nearly 4 hours of great music for just £10 a head – fantastic value

Other acts on offer over the weekend included tribute acts (Abba, Take That and Celine Dion) plus a selection of other music and some excellent comedians.

It proved to be a very expensive weekend for some ralliers, with two of our members striking good deals with one of the dealers on site, and purchasing a new caravan and a new motorhome - we wish you many happy years of rallying in them.

All too soon the rally came to an end – the National Rally weather of recent years was much kinder this year – some light rain and a very cold wind, but also a lot of sunshine and predominately dry.

This meant that no-one had any trouble getting off the rally site – the only problem was the 10 mile queue of caravans a few miles away from the rally site, waiting at the T junction to join the main road.

Still, the police who were directing the traffic did a good job, and we were all happy to wait and take our turn when it came.

The 82nd National Rally will take place next year in the grounds of Prestwold Hall, Loughborough from the 22nd to 26th May 2009 – look out for details and booking forms towards the end of the year in the Club Magazine.

Sue and Steve Greenfield



Merley Court

6th - 13th June 2008

There were 33 vans plus 2 Rally officers, consisting of centres from Devon and Cornwall, West Kent, Sussex, South Wales, West Hants, West Dorset, West Warwicks, Leicester, Somerset, Durham and 12 from Wiltshire.

Weather was beautiful all week, great for sightseeing. Wednesday evening the rally officers provided us with a lovely meal, cooking for 70 of us with Shirley breathing a sigh of relief when the last were served.

Friday 27 of us had a meal arranged by the fab four at the bar on site.

Many thanks to Tony, Shirley, Graham and Valerie,

by the way, if you get the chance sample Treacle Sponge made by Valerie

Yummy !!

Keith and Sandra Pankhurst

Upper Lambourn

23rd - 26th May 2008

Arrived on site as the rally opened for a change to be greeted by Jim who sited us which was easy as we were first it sure beats turning up at gone half eight at night. After putting up the sun canopy said hello to the rest of the team for the weekend Linda, Dave & Sandra. Spent the rest of Friday with a beer and book watching people arriving, the sun was shining after tea went for a walk into upper Lambourne then at night time a drink and natter with Ken & Brenda.

Saturday morning spent reading the paper while Barbara and Brenda went for a power walk, in the afternoon a game of knock out Boule and at the same time you were given a score card to keep for a game of skittles which I managed to put all balls through the gaps. A game of Lawn Skittles which I scored slightly better 3 points. This was followed by a communal BBQ with plenty of friendly banter about the games in the afternoon. After washing up, into the party tents which were supplied by the site owner. During the night we were given punch by Sandra. A night of quizzes and a game of Mr & Mrs . Well done John and Pam Harding, Phil and Ange Sambrook and Graham and Valerie Greenhill , a great night was had by all.

Sunday, not so sunny today, read the Sunday paper delivered to the caravan by Jim. In the afternoon the Boules was finished off and at the same time even more games. This time a game of Hoops over Bottles, Toss the Horse Shoe, and trying to put a Tennis Ball into a bucket or a bowl. It sounds simple but my score card was not worth while putting in.

Back into the party tents at night time for more quizzes. During one of guess the pictures Sandra got caught out with the children over Kellogg s Rice Krispies and Kellogg s Frosties but Sandra had the last word Rice Krispies. We also had one game of Mr & Mrs as the site owner had asked Dave if he could try it. We had a good laugh with them. Another good night thanks to our rally officers. The weather was now wet and windy.

Monday morning wet and miserable just after breakfast knock on the door, help was required as through the night the party tents roof had sagged with water and some poles were bent and broken. With a lot of help these were taken down with everybody soaked to the skin. By this time flag was nearly due so it was not worth changing into dry clothes, flag was taken in the pouring rain with the wind blowing as well. Shelia was in the dry under Jim s awning taking flag I think she forgot about us in the rain and went through all of John s notes. The raffle was a laugh as the ticket strips were stuck together with the rain and then started to disintegrate.

I would like to say we had a lot of children on the rally and how well behaved they were.

After flag as everybody was wet people packed up for home. This was the only down side to an excellent weekend of fun and entertainment put on by are Rally Officers well done, Jim & Linda and Dave & Sandra

Derek and Barbara Owen (What s happened to the sunshine?),

Stourhead

6th - 8th June 2008

What a lovely weekend, I think summer has arrived at last.

This is an ideal site for a rally especially when the sun shines nobody wanted to go home! We hadn't been to Stourhead before and were amazed just how beautiful the gardens, the house and the surrounding areas are, typical picture postcard!

There is a National Trust shop which sells some unusual goodies, gardening books, tools, household china, etc it was great. Also a cafe and Pub adjoining. The Rally was well signed and we were shown to our pitch to settle in and enjoy the weekend.

The Officers had put up a few gazebos for a get together after a BBQ on Saturday evening so everyone had the chance to join in. There were three new ralliers attending this rally and they enjoyed the Wiltshire hospitality so much they have booked more rallies already!

Pete and Gill Wiltshire were presented with their 100th Rally Plaque by Chris Riley who was taking flag, Well done to you both may you continue to enjoy many more rallies.

I hope this Rally will be in next year s program, Thank you Nigel and Helen Ballamy and Phil and Ange Sambrook for organising this Rally and a very enjoyable weekend.

Lesley Shorthouse



Pentewan Sands

7th - 21st June 2008

On arrival at Pentewan we were warmly greeted by Brian, Mary, Christine, Sid, Ray and Heather, and were offered welcome cups of tea. We were shown to our pitch which had a lovely view over the beach and sea.

On Sunday we all went to flag. We were treated to a talk from Brian telling us about site and surrounding areas and also about a walk with Sid. We were given the weeks competition which was on Olde Thyme Music Hall. This was a good competition to ponder on and for some of us to try and sing through (not very successfully). Also a Children s Competition which found us trawling the beach for a crab s claw and following a bus to try and get a used bus ticket, this competition was great fun as we had a number of articles to find. Our first week flew by in a haze of hot sunshine and visiting some interesting places. On Thursday we were treated to a bingo night and entertainment laid on by Pentewan sands. It was a very enjoyable evening.

On second flag was totally different weather. This time juggling with umbrellas, prizes were given out for those lucky enough to win the competition and a new competition given out. This one just as interesting it gave us an excuse to go to Pentewan Village and look at all the houses, scanning each and everyone for a house name to match the clues of the competition. What a lovely village it is too. One which we might not have gone to see if we hadn t had the competition. We were also scanning the sea with binoculars waiting for the arrival of the Marines. These eventually arrived, but with only two landing craft, as two had broken done en-route. This certainly aroused a great deal of interest with those on site.

Thursday night saw us all in the Clubroom for the Final Flag and an American supper. This was enjoyed by all. We were all told about three of the rally members that had been ill while on site. Our best wishes were sent to them all. Brian kept us amused with his jokes.

All in all it was a very enjoyable two weeks, made even better by the organisational skills of all the Rally Officers. A very big thank you goes to them all.

The site was great, Rally Officers were great, beach was great, but one word of warning beach shoes a must for a very recommended Holiday Rally

Christine and Kevin, with Sue, Julian and Kian

Welcome back, how lovely to see you back on the rally field. This is what everybody said as we arrived. We were greeted and sited by the lovely rally officers.

We set up and said hello to everybody properly, and then Mark went to sign on. I was going to drive myself, but because I am so young!!!! and have not been driving for more than 9 years I was not allowed to tow, so I had to make do with co-driving, a very important job I was told.

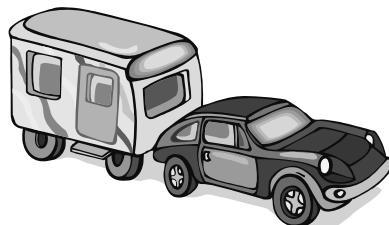
Saturday morning arrived and the competition started. The nerves kicked in and then before long it was our turn. We did what we had to do and hoped we were good. As I couldn't drive I was given the even more important job of wearing a yellow coat and marshalling and even though I say it myself, I did quite a good job, although I did get shouted at a few times if I was not on my corner in time!! (You know who you are!!!!hope to see you on the rally field soon). We tidied up after everyone had finished and went off for a well earned cup of tea.

Now Sunday morning came and we thought we would see if John Holdway had slowed down in 9 years. Apparently not, he did very well, congratulations John... ..but watch out next year!!

Now for the moment of truth, it s time for flag did we do it? The rally of f icers did t heir "bit s" and t hen "Yes! "Mark had won the Trophy, after 9 years with the opposition we were back and Mark did good!!!! Now I don't know if **everybody** was still saying Welcome Back, but I hope so.

We had a great weekend and can we just say Thank you to the Rally Officers for putting on such a great rally, and to the ralliers for making us feel so welcome.

Mark and Tracey Hinton



Fairford, The Royal International Air Tattoo Rally

9th - 13th July 2008

Coln House School is a lovely new site on which to spend the weekend. Once we set up and despite the changeable weather, we were able to watch some of the aircraft practice for the show.

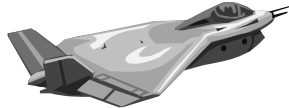
Thursday evening we showed a bit of that old wartime spirit and came to the aid of some of her "caravanners" from another Rally, who were unable to get onto their waterlogged site. All thanks to our hardworking Officers.

Friday was the day of the Queen's visit to Fairford. Her majesty was there to present New Colours to the Royal Air Force on the momentous occasion of their 90th Anniversary. Right on time the sun shone and we were able to watch the brilliant flypast from the comfort of our caravans. Later we were informed that the Air Tattoo had been cancelled, the first time ever.

Not to be deterred on Saturday we had our own Air Display, with a paper plane race, and who could forget the "Red Barrels" ... camouflaged as aqua rolls ... great fun.

Congratulations to Tony and Shirley Haines who were celebrating their 25th Wedding Anniversary. Many thanks to our Rally Officers and we hope to have a return visit next year.

Mike and Pat Davis



Longleat

18th - 20th July 2008

Longleat needs no introduction and 25 members including 7 visitors thought the same.

On arrival on Friday the weather was not too good and Jim and Dave had a job finding level pitches especially for the motorhomes, but most people were happy with the site and the views of Heaven's Gate and Longleat house.

Saturday and the weather was fine and sunny and most people either walked or took their car to the house and all the attractions. We and several others went on the safari bus and having not been for a few years it was very enjoyable but we were pleased we were on the bus when we saw what the monkeys were doing to some of the cars. A good day was had by all followed by a Bar-B-Que in the evening.

The competition "songs and singers" was won by Marion and Dave Beakhurst and the children's "Guess the No of sweets" was won by Ellen Bartlett of East Dorset.

Thanks for all your hard work and another great rally; Jim and Linda and Dave and Sandra

Mike and Norma Stone

Bibury, Western Hog Roast

25th - 27th July 2008

Derek had the day off school so we arrived about 12.00 pm with permission from Michelle. We helped put up the party tents and gazebos along with others as they arrived. Time for tea then into the party tents for a few drinks. This time I was not the last person to go back to my caravan.

Saturday morning with the sun shining Linda, Gary and I went for a walk down into Bibury, had dinner with them. Back into the party tents with Linda to help with the food preparations for the evening. My job was to grate the carrots with Linda who said I was not very quick as she was doing 5 to my 2 but hey who's counting. The Hog roast is going round the spit and smells lovely. Salad all prepared, cheese board and new potatoes done, all the soup needs is just warming up.

Time to watch the old and young have a go on the bucking Bull, had a good laugh at Michelle mounting the Bull, a good time was had by all who took part.

Then sat and watched the volley ball, a game that started off as a laugh but got more competitive as the afternoon went by. It was nice to see the younger ones enjoy themselves in the sun the Barnett family had a small pool for the children to keep cool. The rally was just the way it should be all outside fun with the sun shining. Night time into the tents for the 3 course meal. Well done the rally officers and their parents Jill, Pete, Pam and John, the scene on the wall and the table decoration was good.

After the meal games using a bouncing ball - a laugh from the beginning to the end. My team won but there was a lot of cheating going on. The rest of the evening was the junior disco well done to Megan & Chloe.

Sunday another sunny day all hands on deck to dismantle the gazebos and the sides of the party tents, leaving the roof still on for shade while flag was on.

After flag it was volley ball practice for the Wessex good afternoon of fun on the rally field. Well that's my report done. Hope it's not too long before we are back on this lovely site at Bibury.

Well done to Michell, Nigel and Helen

Barbara Owen



Rowdeford School**8th - 10th August 2008**

We arrived in pleasant sunshine and soon had our legs down, our sun shade and chairs out, enjoying chatting to our neighbours over a cup of tea. The Rally Officers, Doug and May, Tony and Shirley had the rally planned to leave Saturday free to do as we please and to join them at 5.30pm for a group BBQ followed by a competitive game of Curling.

However, the weather intervened and thoroughly disrupted their plan, by heavy rain descending on us all day Saturday, making it impossible for us to sit outside. The rally officers, not deterred, quickly brought in another action plan and made arrangements for the School Hall to be opened for the Saturday evening, each van donating towards the cost of the Hall by raising £50. At 8pm we all gathered in there for an evening of Fun & Games and a noggin and a natter.

A noisy game of Caravan Drive soon had the Hall in a buzz followed by two games of Knock out Bingo with everyone competing with their neighbours. Ann Holdway was one of the lucky winners and immediately donated her £20 winning prize to the School. What fun we had!

The rally officers took the opportunity of using the Hall to hold the Flag ceremony, where the Chairman, John Holdway, was pleased to introduce new ralliers, Steve and Sandra Berridge to the Centre. The raffle was duly drawn with the lucky recipients claiming their prizes. The money proceeds of the raffle going to the School.

Sunday morning brought back the sunshine! At 10am, out came the Curling apparatus and soap-suds and we all gathered around (some with their breakfast in their hands) to watch and compete in the Curling Competition. Two extremely nice Trophies were waiting to be presented to the lucky winners. There was an exciting finish to the Ladies competition which three ladies sharing 2nd position. The winner of the game with a 270 score was Linda Gilchrist. Well done Linda! Equally fought over was the Gentleman's game. Ray Kirk was the winner with a score of 350. Well done Ray!

What could have been a disastrous weekend turned out to be resounding success for the rally officers who we thank very much for their hard work and look forward to next year's Curling rally.

Sheila Dunn**Wessex Practice****15 - 17 August 2008**

This summer it was my first time in camping. I have never been camping before you know. I liked it. It was quite fun and interesting. It is very good that people here do everything for having fun with friends. I want to say, that I found here friends too. Thank you all but most of all I would like to thank my host family (Fran and Graham) Luc and Richard. Thank you guys without you camping might be boring. Thanks to all my neighbours. 8 weeks passed like 1 hour. I think here I met a big family which is friendly and warm. For the last rally I would like to thank Luc and Richard. When my neighbour went home I was alone but they made me feel better. Thank you for your positive and goodbye. I hope I'll visit you again. See you. Bye. Have a great time ! **Kisses from Masha from Russia XXX**

Milton, Hampshire

29th August - 21st September 2008

What has 280 legs is wet and windy?..... 140 happy campers enjoying their late summer break at "Bashley Park" in the depths of the New Forest. Yes! It was a time for wellies and umbrellas. Remember in days of yore when we had glass windows in caravans (that leaked), gas mantles (with a hole in) and outside toilet tents (that also leaked) now that was camping, but with today's modern caravans, an excellent toilet block just yards away a little drop of rain (seemed like 200 inches plus) did not dampen the spirits of the Wiltshire Group (and other centre guests) from having another successful rally. One of the happy band of campers said that it was the worst weather in 25 years, and that lady was from Cornwall, they know about rough weather down there! so much for global warming!

With thanks to the Rally Officers, Tony and Shirley Haines, Doug and May Haddrell along with other helpers the 3 weeks unfortunately went too quick. Books to read, old friends to meet and hear the latest gossip, newspapers and magazines read from front to back, games to play and television to watch, what's a little damp weather to bother with, at least my caravan was cleaner at the end! The car smelt a bit iffy, but that was the fish and chips we had whilst watching the rain spatter on the windscreen at the seaside. There were high spots during the three weeks, and the ever popular mid-week lunch "get-together", (cooked in the field) was blessed with sunshine on all three Wednesdays. It rained each day before and after the mid-week bash. *Me thinks that the Rally Officers (especially Tony) have a certain divine path of communication to him upstairs.* On the last 3 days of the rally the weather turned warm and sunny ready to dry the awning out to de-camp. **Our Raffle, with over 90 gifts supplied by rally members and other donations raised £402 for the Air Ambulance.**

On a more personal note I tend to snore more whilst on holiday especially in the caravan, so on this rally purchased an electrical device from the local chemist which straps to ones wrist at night. This produces a slight tingling emotion (set to minimum input) which helps prevent snoring. Yours truly set the device to maximum, to get the greatest effect. During the night my eyes lit up and I was jolted twice out of the bunk smashing my head on the overhead locker, whilst my wife slept through it all! Next morning she said "That's the best night sleep I've had in this van". One can't win!

The date has been set for next year s "late summer break" and 95% of the campers said "see you in 2009", just to emphasize that once again the rally was enjoyed by one and all. On the way home with the sun shining through the windscreen, my wife was scanning the sites directory, for our next trip, rain, mud, wind and my snoring quickly forgotten, but many happy memories and a few digital photos of our recent late summer holiday. The doctor said that the bumps on my head should be gone by Christmas.

Edward Porter



Wessex Rally 2008

21st - 25th August 2008

Home 2 days, after 18 glorious days in France and we were off again..... this time to the West Woodland Showground in Somerset. Time again to lock swords with our Wessex neighbours, to vie for the much coveted trophies, that are again up for grabs.

We arrived on the Monday afternoon, just 4 days before the ralliers start to arrive AND a whole 10 days before we could go home again!! We arrived in the wind and rain with both of us thinking that we were in for a rain-filled and really muddy Wessex. The men arrived to start building the marquee, what a job they had on their hands. It was very windy and the rain fell in torrents. Regardless, it was all up and looking good despite the weather.

Tuesday dawned and things were looking a lot brighter. Nigel, myself, John and Wendy had work to do. The men of the working party set off to Shepton Mallet where all the staging, materials and kit were stored. They had to bring it back to Frome as Shepton Mallet didn't want us to store it there anymore. Ian Lever had arrived and was soon given work to do! He helped (supervised!) Wendy and myself mark out the pitches and make refreshments for the workers inside the marquee.

When the men arrived back from Frome, the articulated lorry was unloaded quite quickly. Time to stop for lunch..... or so we thought. The lorry had parked a little too close to the marquee and had sunk. Well, it was pulled, it was pushed until eventually Dave Lush was phoned, help from a tractor owning friend was needed! Whilst deciding whether or not the tractor would be used, Ian, John and Adrian decided to have one last go at pulling the lorry out backwards. Armed with several very strong tow ropes and a lot of horse power, the lorry eventually loosened its grip on mother earth and a very relieved driver left the site!! Stage building could now commence. We were going to go without lunch but Mary Blake, bless her, made us sandwiches and gave us homemade cake. It was yummy. Thank you Mary.

Unfortunately, the sound proofing mats needed cleaning. Rats had managed to get into the storage unit and had well you know! It stunk!! The ladies from the D&C s were able to re-use most of the material for the stage backdrops. Job well done. The usual banter was flying around. Very good natured lot, the

Wessex working party. 7 o'clock came and that was it. Time for dinner and a drink! Over the next 3 days, tents were put up, pegs and pitches marked out, paperwork read and read again, sports arenas marked out, netball and football pitches white-lined. Well done Little John (West Hants) He was 6ft tall when he arrived..... 5'6 when he left! He walked miles and so did Sharon, his wife, and their young son and friend. Thank you. Thursday night a get-together in the gazebo, after the meeting, was a good laugh. You really get a "feel good" factor about this rally when you mix with this bunch. They made us welcome anyway.

Some ralliers had already arrived on the Thursday with the remainder to arrive on the Friday. As rally officers, the 4 of us busied ourselves with welcoming OUR centre members to the Wessex. And so it was that all the centres ran races, had made cakes, had sewn cross stitch pictures, knitted dolls, crocheted cardigans, made cards, masks, mugs racks and boot removers..... all in the name of the Wessex Rally. We did very well on the handicrafts! 21 points in all.

The Miss Wessex on the Friday night, had the most entrants I have ever seen in all the years we have attended the Wessex. Sandra King from the Av, Avo, Avon, AVON centre making her debut as the hostess for this event. She did a good job, I think! She ought to do it next time too! The young lady from the East Dorset centre the ultimate winner. Well done. Thanks should also go to our lovelies, Megan Davies and Chloe Chamberlain. You did us proud.

The sports events well I have to say, again we were brilliant and at this time if I don't say that WE WON THE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL!! I'll get lynched. Super job, guys. WELL DONE! We also did well in the family sports.

Centres Entertain was another good evening of fun and laughter. Another brilliantly executed performance from the lads and lasses in Mary Poppins. Thank you Lesley. Most events over, time for the Walking Tableau. Right from the word go I had a good feeling about this event. I had hardly seen any of it, so had no idea what to expect. Well, I was not disappointed. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT. I have to admit I cried when it was announced that we had won. A brilliant end to John Holdway's term as Chairman and director and a great result for all those who took part in it and those who made the props etc. Well done you Wiltshires, you excelled yourselves and did us proud!

Closing Flag and the announcements were made, of the winners of the cups. We came 2nd!! Well for a while anyway. Adrian Burton had made a mistake when adding up the scores, and in fact it was West Hants who had finished 2nd and not us. So close and yet so far!!

I am very proud of our centre and I have no doubt that we are a force to be reckoned with. We always give 110% willingly. It will come to us one day, that beautiful cup and I don't think that day is too far off!

Thank you to all those who came to the Wessex and gave whatever support you could. It's a great rally to attend and a great one to be Rally Officer on. I would also like to thank John and Wendy for their company, and their help and guidance, especially for Nigel, who was the "new boy" as a Site Marshall.

Roll on 2010!

Chris Riley



Cuckoo s Rest , Fishing Comp 2nd Leg

29th - 31st August 2008.

This venue is for the 2nd leg which had to be cancelled earlier this year because of bad weather.

I arrived at Cuckoo s Rest at about 3pm on the Friday and was welcomed by Julian who directed me to my pitch just as Ken pulled in so he showed him to his pitch as well. While we were setting up Julian went and made us both a cup of coffee which went down a treat (other rally officers please note).

We then sat and had a chat for a while, then went and helped Ken put out the fishing peg markers, the weather at this point was quite warm and muggy so we went and sat down and chatted for some time while other ralliers were arriving. Later in the evening we all had a get together and draw our peg numbers for the next day, so it was 11pm before we all retired to our beds.

The following morn the fishermen were up by 6am and down onto their pegs setting up ready for 7am kick off. It was just my luck to be with Mick on one side and Ian on the other, so you can imagine the amount of barracking I had to take during the competition. (All in good spirit I might add). About midsession some of us were supplied with a bacon sarnie made by Mick s wife Bev, which went down quite well as my Carol, Ian s and Ken s wives was not with us this weekend. (Rally Officers please note again). After the comp finished we all went back to our vans and got cleaned up and changed and I personally went and had a lay down for a spell because it was very hot this afternoon.

In the evening we were all invited to a barbeque at the rally officers caravans because it was Julian s birthday on Tues 2nd September and what an evening it turned out to be all laid on by Julian s wife Sue with the cooking done by Mick & Julian.

On Sunday morn we were all up and fishing again only this time the weather had changed and it was very misty and by 8am it had started to rain and thunder but that did not stop us and once again we all had a good time.

We had flag at 2pm and the winners were presented with their trophies Points are awarded over the 2 tournaments. The winners were as follows:

I won the singles on the Saturday and the Shield overall.

Ian Barnett & Dave Staffel won the pairs on Sunday and the Shield.

Also Ken had donated a crystal cut trophy as a one off for the biggest fish caught on the Saturday, and I am now the proud owner of it with a 12lb 9oz carp (Proud ain t the word for it). It just leaves me to say a big thanks to Julian and Mick for standing in at such short notice to arrange this venue and make such a big success of it, it was a great rally.

So a big thank you again to Julian, Sue, Mick and Bev. Well done.

Twinkle

Pentewan Sands

6th - 20th September 2008

We have just had the great pleasure of attending the Holiday Rally at Pentewan Sands run by the Wiltshire Centre - and what a wonderful time we had too.

Having caravanned for over 30 years, this was a real experience, in fact just like caravanning was, as we used to know it in the early days - entertainment on the field!

Everyone was so friendly and helpful, such wonderful camaraderie across the whole site. We didn't feel that we were visitors from another centre, more like regulars!

We cannot thank the Marshalls; Mike, Margaret, Pete, Marion and their helpers enough for all their hard work, kindness and helpful approach to everyone.

The English weather could have been better, but the entertainment in the Club House and the organisation of the bus trips was faultless (even if Mike did get the bus drivers name wrong)!

Sincere thanks to you all and we'll certainly come again next year if you'll have us.

Carol and Harold Mabbott

Lincolnshire Centre



Pentewan Sands

6th - 20th September 2008

We would like to thank Mike and Margaret, Peter and Marion, and all the people that have made these two weeks so very special for us. As it was our first rally, we did not really know what to expect.

We were made to feel so welcome by everyone - nothing was too much trouble - everyone was so friendly. We would like to think that this rally has given us the opportunity to stay in contact with fellow Caravan Club Members, and look forward to meeting old friends and new at next year's rally.

To run a rally such as this must take so much work, but we can only say from our point of view that it was a great success.

Thank you again to all those involved
With our very best wishes

Vanessa and Ron Milton

(Plymouth)



Pentewan Sands.

6th - 20th September 2008

Having chosen the Pentewan Sands holiday as our first rally we arrived for the second week not really knowing what to expect.

We received a warm welcome from the Rally Officers, Mike and Margaret Harris and Peter and Marion Davey. Briefing us over tea and biscuits, we were supplied with our information pack, a "word search" competition and an apple pie. We then had expert help and advice to erect our new awning.

During the week the Rally Officers arranged two social evenings in the club house and a riverboat trip on the Thursday which was excellent. We were collected by coach and taken to Truro from where we were transferred by "double decker" bus to the boat which was moored at Malpas on the Truro River. Cruising downstream we joined the River Fal and arrived at Falmouth about an hour later. In the afternoon the coach met us in Falmouth and about thirty people took the opportunity to visit nearby Pendennis Castle. The remaining members of our party stayed in Falmouth.

Our free days during the week were spent walking the coastal path to Mevagissey, playing golf at Porthpean and visiting surrounding towns and villages of interest.

Flag was held on the Friday evening in the club house with competition results, a raffle and musical entertainment provided by John Etherington. Most importantly Mike and Margaret and Peter and Marion were thanked for organising and running the rally so well.

They were still busy on the Saturday morning offering help and advice to see people safely away.

Our overall view of the week was that it was very good and well run. We met some very nice people from all over the country. This first rally experience will not be our last.

Peter and Wendy Sayer.



West Woodlands, Frome Show

12th-14th September 2008

Arrived on Friday evening to a lovely site right next to the entrance of the show so not far for everyone to enjoy on Saturday.

Thanks to our Rally Officers that had managed to get a entrance fee reduction so for days country side entertainment. £6.00 for adults or children under 15 for free, a great start to the show, lucky the rain had stopped so everyone I think managed to set up on Friday evening in the dry!!!

Saturday morning arrives, weather ok so fingers crossed it wasn't going to rain for the show. Lunch time came and out came the sun and stayed for the rest of the rally. Show great day for all the family, livestock shows, side stalls and arena displays, what a great entertainment, plenty of free cheese and cider samples floating about went to the fair and Connor had a go on the archery not a gold fish to be won oh well better luck next year.

Up Sunday morning for flag. Hot dogs for everyone and cups of tea and coffee all round. WOW what a raffle - good job Gary Davis wasn't there ! Ha-ha sorry Gary but I think you missed out on a good one.

The raffle made a profit of £76.34 in aid of Critchill special needs school well done and thank you to everyone for your contributions.

Once again thanks to our Rally officers Dave and Sandra, Jim and Linda for a great weekend.

Reece, Sue and Connor Searle



Hendra Holiday Park

12th - 26th September 2008

When we arrived at Hendra some of the pitches were on the soggy side and then the sun came out to dry us all out. We were treated to glorious sun during the day and on several nights we were amused by our rally officers in the party tent. There was lawn skittles, and a boule competition enjoyed by many including a seagull who swooped down and pinched the jack !!

Lots to do at Hendra, plenty of places to visit in Cornwall.

We had visitors from several different centres and I'm sure if they are like us, can't wait to go back to Hendra again (hoping for fantastic weather again)

Thanks to Sheila and John, Pam and John.

Keith and Sandy Pankhurst



Pewsey Carnival

19th - 21st September 2008

Here we go Helpppppppppppppppppp

Friday 19th - Arrived approx 4pm to a very warm welcome. Being first time ralliers, we were not sure what to expect.

By the time we got settled it was time for tea. Big notice showing Fish and Chips over the road at the Pub saved me cooking. Very nice Fish and Chips.

At 8pm we went into the pub for skittles. What fun we had. Our son Jake won the children's game which really made his whole weekend. As we walked back to the rally site in the dark, all we could see were beautiful white rows of caravans and motorhomes shining in the moonlight, very quiet and peaceful. It was lovely.

Saturday was a late rise from our beds to beautiful sunshine which we had all weekend. Helen and Nigel came over with Chris and introduced themselves properly, made us feel again, very welcome. After a lazy day we made our way to Pewsey carnival. What a splendid show of floats, very enjoyable.

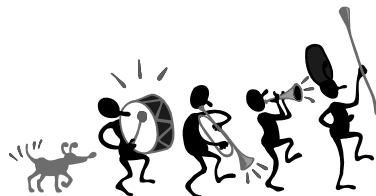
Sunday morning getting ready to depart slowly, as weather was sunny again. Flag was at 11 o'clock where we were introduced to everybody as first time Ralliers. Jake was given a prize for winning the skittles. Then the raffle, Jake won first prize and then again.

Then it was time to go, everybody waved goodbye to us as they left.

As it was nearly time to go we noticed Nigel and Helen s dad Pete, helping a fellow rallier, as he had a flat tyre. How very kind of them, above and beyond their duties.

Many thanks again to everyone who made us feel very welcome and we all look forward to our next rally.

Regards The Wadley Family (Kevin, Lorraine, Jake & Charlotte)



No Rally Reports were received for the following rallies :

Frome - Somerset 2000th Invite
Brinkworth - Fishing 1st Leg
Bushton - Cheap, Tacky and Tasteless
Witney - Junior Link Up
Great Somerford - Observation tour
Saltford - Avon Valley Country Park
Oare Chairmans farewell

Rally reports were received by e-mail for these rallies but due to a computer problem the attachments disappeared, and have not been recovered:

Langley Burrell - Junior Rally
Shrewton - Music in the Park

