

The **LAIKA**<sup>®</sup>



CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN



# NEWSLETTER

[www.laikaclub.com](http://www.laikaclub.com)

**ISSUE No 70**

**Winter 2019/20**

## Your Laika Club Committee

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Katrina Lancaster</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Paul Lawrence</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Charles Chodkowski</b>
<b>Membership Secretary:</b>	<b>Jacqui Chodkowski</b>
<b>Rally Co-ordinator:</b>	<b>Murray Chisholm</b>
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	<b>Tim Sheppard</b>
<b>Web Master:</b>	<b>Eric Gould</b>

## **Chair's Chat**

Sitting in our motorhome at Delamere Camping and Caravanning Club site. Meant to be in Anglesey helping my brother install stair rails, but the delivery team says he was not in (at 7am?) and returned parts to Birmingham, not to be delivered for another 8 days. We were all packed ready to go so decided to check out this site for our October rally and then do a pub stop near Chester tomorrow night, deferring Anglesey till next Thursday.

The site recommended a pub to us, but it was not open (website said it should be). Instead found a delightful Chinese restaurant and had a 4 course banquet for £14.95 which we hope to use for the rally.

At the AGM Jacqui, Charles and Eric indicated that they would be resigning at the end of this year having put in more than their fair share to the running of the Club. One volunteer is considering Membership but we also need a Treasurer and a Web Master. None of the committee jobs are onerous but they do need doing. Have a chat with me or the current postholder to discover what is needed.

Minutes and accounts will be appearing on the website together with draft minutes for 2019.

The bulbs are popping up so let's hope that Spring is just round the corner with no freeze-up in between and that we can get out there enjoying the big outdoors.

Katrina

## **Welcome to New Members**

Dawn & Richard Vaughan

Vanessa & Paul Hipgrave

## **Stratford Rally Report**

**10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019 Riverside Caravan Park, Stratford upon Avon**

Twelve units attended and all arrived on Thursday in time for the meet and greet.

We were on the rally field but had our own personal toilet block, clean and functional, good value site fees at £14.50/night.

The 'Mop Fair' was on in the streets of Stratford as it was last time we visited. We all agreed that if we visit again we will pick a different weekend as although we are young at heart, old bones didn't fancy any of the fun fair rides! Even with the fair blocking the shops there is still plenty to see and do in Stratford.

Peter took members on a short walk on Saturday while I sat with foot up resting a poorly toe which I had clobbered (just about better now after 4 weeks!)

Our rally meal was at the Crown Inn in Tiddington a short walk away (hobble in my case). The food was good, pub staff and service also good, all in all a good night.

On Sunday we woke to a miserable wet day, 3 units were due to leave that day but 4 more joined them. However the weather did improve and we were able to walk into Stratford to the Sunday market. In the evening we all met up in the site restaurant/bar for a good old chinwag.

Thanks to new members Ian and Jan Batkin and Ian and Sue Ross for joining us. We enjoyed your company and hope to meet again soon. Jim and June Rennie also new members had to cancel due to illness at the last minute, hope you are recovering Jim.

Another enjoyable rally. Thanks for coming.

Kath and Peter Elliott

## **John Neve**

By the time this newsletter is out most members who knew John will know of his death at the end of October.

Jill and John have been members of our club for many years and came to rallies even in between John's chemo. He was always cheerful and good company and both would entertain in their motorhome. He was an example to all with how he dealt with his illness.

He will be sadly missed by all of us. Our condolences to Jill and their family.

Kath Elliott

## **What tyres are best for motor homes.**

This question arises from time to time, but not too frequently, as we do not cover large annual mileages as a rule. However, the article that follows caught my eye and may help answer the question.

I must give full credit to the author "Jaws", that is the only name I know as Motorhome Fun forum members only have nicknames published. There are one or two Laika owners on that forum. Guess who is "Flint" and "Jim the Plumber"? But I digress and so onto the article:-

Some may be aware that this year I have been involved with tyre tests for my motorhome.

It all started when I tried to get a pair of Hankooks, but soon found out they were no longer available in the UK in the spec I was looking for.

I tried all sorts of makes (well, given the cost to me was the price of diesel to a tyre fitter it would be rude not to)

Tyre size used are 225/75/R16C

Plated weight of vehicle 5.25t

Tested on various roads and conditions and also firm grassed areas in wet and dry conditions. I am not going to 'slag off' any particular make except for one.. Michelin Camper Tyres were plain horrible. They were the noisiest, the harshest ride, the worst grip under certain conditions and the most expensive.

Other well known makes tried included Avon and Continental, plus there was a couple of oddball ones thrown in the mix as budget end examples The very last tyres to go on were Davanti DX440's (as an aside they are also marked up as mud and snow tyres ).

As soon as they went on the sound level was noticeably lower. About the same level as the Hankooks gave.

We have done approx 4500 miles on them so far .. I would like to comment on the wear rate, but so far there is none determinable, so other than saying it appears to be very good I have little to add.

Grip level is little short of amazing.. Such things are hard to judge under normal road use, as I, like most motorhome users, tend not to drive the van like I stole it. But off road.. Perfect. They are equal or better than even the Hankooks which I raved about for ages.

These last few months have not exactly been arid, and as is the lot of motorhomers (probably world wide ) we have found ourselves in a few soggy, rutted fields.

Not once did I find myself wondering where the nearest tractor was ... Yes, the tyres slipped, but just like the Hankooks, 2nd gear and tickover saw the tyres wade through the goo and dig us out of the goop.

All very nice, but now the most surprising result. It was not on the test list so I never gave it much thought .. until on the way home from Birmingham on Wednesday.

For some time I had noticed our fuel consumption was way off. As long as we have owned the van it has not been great. When I first got it the average was 19 mpg.

I bought a plug in box box from Torquing of Diesels, and with a couple of phone calls re setting it up for best economy saw the average mpg rise to 21.5. Not staggering, but given the miles we do, and the fact most of the time we are fully freighted, I was content.

Over the last couple of months economy suddenly shot up to 25.4 MPG I racked by brains trying to figure out what I was doing that could give such a big jump.

It was not until last Wednesday that it dawned on me.. The tyres. They are the only thing that has been changed.. Now I know that tyres can and do make a difference, but the increase in economy has left me well and truly flabbered.

So for me, the Davanti offerings are hence forth top of the list.. Oh, and as yet another bonus... they were actually on the list as a middle range economy priced tyre. Retail at about £70 a go

Eric Gould

## Winter Driving in Germany

Eric's article above and the mention of snow tyres prompted me to highlight the requirements for winter tyres in Germany.

It is now a legal requirement from October to March in Germany to have winter tyres on all vehicles and not just in the mountains. There are exceptions if you can prove that the tyres were fitted before the law came into force, but otherwise your tyres must have the three peaks and snowflake symbol moulded into the sidewall in the winter months.



Katrina and I decided having 2 sets of tyres and swapping them wasn't practical so we had our van fitted with Continental winter tyres which we use all year round. There is a marginal increase in road noise, but well worth it for the flexibility.

Tim Sheppard

## Escape from Colditz 2019

Our plan for September 2019 was to follow the Danube from its source, but we got waylaid, and our journey evolved into a “visit the relatives in Germany” trip - our Granddaughter in [Göttingen](#), Lower Saxony, and our niece in Regensburg, Bavaria (which is at least on the Danube!), and an impromptu visit to Colditz.

From “The Tunnel”, we made a quick one-night stop near Ghent, then to our favourite Camping Den Driesch in Valkenburg, the Netherlands, with its famous cave-based Christmas Markets, and all things gastronomic. This time we wanted to see nearby Maastricht. Probably best known to Brits’ for a Treaty and André Rieu, this ancient city sits on the river Meuse (or Maas).

Travelling with a dog has its restrictions, so much of our time was spent “people watching” sitting in attractive squares indulging in coffee, food and beer! But the Markt with its Town Hall, and the “Vrijthof” (the main square in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), with St. John’s Church and the Basilica of St. Servatius are certainly worth a visit. Many parts of the old city wall can still be found, and this makes for an interesting circular walk. Information aplenty at the tourist centre.

As Anne’s father was a Lancaster bomber pilot and, having visited the Derwent Dams on the recent Laika Rally in Bradwell, we were inspired to visit the Mohne Dam. Skirting Koln, Wuppertal and Dortmund we arrived at Knaus Camping Hennesee, near Meschede.

This terraced site in a pretty wooded valley overlooks the Henne Reservoir. There is a dam and hydro-electric plant that, along with the Mohne, feeds power to the industrial heart of the Ruhr Valley. Whilst the Mohne Dam is probably the best known, more than 5 dams, including the Henne Dam, were on the target list that night.

The memorial park and monument at the dam are dedicated to “The Catastrophe of the night of 17<sup>th</sup> May 1943”, and it was sobering to realise that over 1500 civilians were drowned that night, most of them slave labourers who lived in Ghetto’s along the Ruhr.

And so, to Göttingen to visit our Granddaughter.

Camping Seeburger See, to the east of the city, is a quiet, spacious site with direct access to a 4.5km path around the Seeburger See. Here you will find a beach, sailing club and lake-side restaurant.

We were able to attend the unique “Theatre of the Night”, a ‘walking act theatre’ where the audience processes around the lake, with various scenes enacted from the story of Atlantis along the way. A huge submarine fish glides along in the fields by the shore path from nearby Bernshausen to Seeburg, and creatures from Atlantis meet Count Isang, all enacted by more than a hundred contributors from the villages.

On the Sunday we moved into Göttingen Wohnmobilstellplatz Badeparadies Eisweise, a 36-place full-service camper-stop near the swimming complex, an easy 20-minute walk to the city centre.

In Medieval times, Göttingen was a wealthy member of the Hanseatic League and today is a University town, who’s alumni include the Brothers Grimm, Otto von Bismarck and, more recently, Gerhard Schroder.

This little city has many churches, and an attractive small fountain with a statue of the Gänseliesel (Goose Girl) in the main square. Tradition dictates that, on receiving your doctorate at the university, you climb the fountain and kiss the girl!



Our next stop was Campingplatz Hohenfelden, near Erfurt, chosen simply because it was a convenient staging post, and a 20 minute bus ride into town.

Erfurt is the capital of Thuringia, and it was from this University that Martin Luther graduated in philosophy in 1505, and later that year he became a monk at the Augustinian monastery.

A 1000km long-distance footpath network named “Luther Way” emanates from here. Also nearby are Weimar, and Jena. Jena is another university town, home of Carl Zeiss optics, and the site of the Battle of Jena, fought by Napoleon against the Prussians in 1806 as he headed towards Berlin. There is a park with a memorial statue on the hills above the town, and the old quarter is good for an evening stroll and a selection of restaurants.

We spotted Colditz on the map, so another change of plan saw us pitched at Camping Park Pahnna, just north of Altenburg. The site overlooks a lake, which in summer hosts all sorts of water sports, but in September is deserted and ideal for dog walks around the lake. There’s a small café and minimal shop, and, lo, the ‘Luther Way’

Originally built as a hunting lodge, Schloss Colditz dominates the small town, as we had expected, but the surrounding landscape was more akin to the English Wolds than the rugged mountainous scene we had visualised.

Reaching the town was easy but finding a way to the castle towering above it was almost as difficult as escaping from it. We eventually spotted tiny signs to the Schloss and manoeuvred the van into a small car park up near the ramparts.



Walking up the ramp and through the gated entrance into the courtyard seemed eerily familiar from the film “Escape from Colditz”. Although recently renovated, the castle is not commercialised – just a ticket hall/gift shop with a coffee machine. However, it houses a youth hostel, and will soon have a hotel.

We took the 2-hour guided tour which principally includes the museum, war time escape tunnels and the loft where the prisoners built the famous glider. The incredible resourcefulness of the PoW’s will never cease to amaze.

A false wall in the officers' wine cellar hid a tunnel that took 9 months to dig out under the chapel, with lights operated by a pedal on the chapel organ. Escape tools and supplies, smuggled in from Britain via Red Cross parcels, were stored in the organ pipes. The music was re-arranged to avoid using certain notes! Pat Reid and Airey Neave were notable escapees from this high security prison. All in all, a definite must-visit place if you are ever in the area.

On to Regensburg, a beautiful city on the banks of the Danube. Azur Camping Regensburg is a well-appointed site adjacent to the Danube, and it's a 40-minute level walk along the riverside to the city centre where our niece has lived for many years.

The medieval centre is a UNESCO world heritage site. Founded in 1275 and completed in 1634, the Cathedral's Gothic architecture is the main work of its kind in Bavaria.

The 12<sup>th</sup> century "Stone Bridge" links the old town with Stadtamhof and until the 1930's, was the city's only bridge over the Danube. The bridge obviously has a complicated history of destruction, rebuilding, alterations and additions, and is a good location for a photo.



Whilst our stay was too short for us to visit them, Wahalla (a costly reproduction of the Parthenon) and the Befreiungshalle are nearby examples of the architectural excesses of the Bavarian King Ludvig I.

Departing Regensburg, we were headed home, and, with a single night stop at Neckargmund near Heidelberg, we were keen to go to Laon in France – that high citadel on a rock just north of Reims, that we’ve passed year after year and kept meaning to visit.

Camping la Chénaie is the municipal site in Laon, and although high above the surrounding area, it’s still a good climb up a metalled path to the walls of the Citadel itself which sits about 100m above the Picardy Plain.

Fortified by the Romans, the Bishopric of Laon was instituted in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and so it became a principal town of the Franks and the present Gothic Notre Dame cathedral dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.



The ramparts are about 7km around, with magnificent views over the surrounding plain. The main pedestrian street is Rue Châtelaine, and there is a good selection of café's.

We stayed a while in the Pl. Mortagne in front of the Cathedral, but there are numerous alleys and 'portes' to be explored. Also near the cathedral is the Museum and Hotel Dieu Hospital, the oldest of its kind in France. The nearby Chapel of the Knights Templar was built in 1140 to the same design as the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. All-in-all worth a short stay.

So, after a leisurely breakfast, we set off on the Route Nationale to Calais and the Tunnel sous le Manche arriving just in time for an evening pub meal at Botolph's Bridge, near the Caravan Club's Daleacres site at Hythe.

Ian and Anne Allard



# CamperUK

PREMIER SERVICE

A family run business with a passion for motorhomes. Offering full sales and aftercare service for over 12 years.

### Why deal with us?

- No pressure selling
- Advice based on experience
- Selection of over 250 new and used vehicles
- Part Exchange facilities
- **10% servicing discount** for Laika Owners Club Members

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES AND LATEST OFFERS CALL  
**01522 411263**



Over 250 New and Used Vehicles in Stock



Combine a visit with a stay at our beautiful Leisure Park



Best Service and Repair Centre in the UK – 10% servicing discount for Laika Owners Club Members



Fantastic parts and accessories shop

## **The Club's Facebook page needs You.**

For the last couple of years the club has supported a members only Facebook page set up as a private group. This means the only people able to access the page are club members who are registered with the group page. This keeps the details of what is posted and who is in the group secure and free from trouble makers.

The website and newsletter are good for keeping you informed but they are only one way, by that I mean you can broadcast your message but there is no mechanism for reply. Facebook offers that interactive element where a conversation can be held.

So far 26 Laika Club members have joined the group but frankly it needs more than that to keep the flow of information and chatter interesting and vibrant. So this is an invitation (appeal) to members who are not registered to join us.

Joining in is easy from your Facebook account, send a request to join and anyone of the existing members can invite you in. If you do not have a Facebook account you will need to set one up so Google "Join Facebook". There is a very simple to follow video that takes you through all the steps including how to open an email account as well.

Don't feel obliged during the Facebook sign up to divulge too much personal information, very little is actually needed to open the account, but if you want to find long lost friends/family, the more you put in the more likely you are to get contact.

Equally the more Laika members we have on Facebook, the more and better, the news will travel.

Eric Gould

Editor's Note

There are several Facebook groups with Laika in the name - the club one is called Laika Club of Great Britain (as one might expect !)

## **Laika Dealer Update**

At the December AGM, Murray Chisholm reported that Southdowns no longer appear on the Laika.it website as a UK Laika Dealer and that he had received emails from both Laika and Southdowns confirming that they were not a Laika Dealer for 2020. Southdowns have stated that they will continue to service Laika motorhomes.

Tim Sheppard

## **Rallies in 2020 and beyond**

I am delighted that we have a diverse Rally Programme for 2020 with 8 very different locations around the UK.

As your new incoming Rally Co-ordinator, my thanks go to Richard Moss for arranging the vast majority of the programme. There have been a couple of changes due to changes in circumstances and I would like to thank all the Rally Stewards for stepping up, some at the last minute, to provide the Laika Club with a great selection of Rallies.

I hope that with Spring approaching, you will start to confirm your attendance, especially at the first few of the year as soon as possible.

It may seem a little premature but I would ask all members to think about considering hosting a Rally in 2021 and contacting me if you need a little help or inspiration.

Karen and I have thoroughly enjoyed a number of rallies since we became members less than 3 years ago and feel it is time we gave something back to the Group with our first rally near home. Rallies are the heart of the friendship of all our members and those friendships are built on regular meet ups. I hope you enjoy attending those you book.

Murray Chisholm

## Revised Rallies for 2020

<p><b>March</b></p> <p>24th to 29th (5 nights)</p>	<p>Cheddar Bridge Touring Park , Draycott Rd, <b>Cheddar</b> BS27 3RJ</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>Eric and Dee Gould</p>	<p>£75 per van for 5 nights</p>
<p><b>April</b></p> <p>23rd to 27th (4 nights)</p>	<p>Wicks Farm, Chichester</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>Murray and Karen Chisholm</p>	<p>£77 per van for 4 nights  Deposit £15</p>
<p><b>May</b></p> <p>14th to 20th (6 nights)</p>	<p>St Margarets House, <b>Woodbridge</b>, Suffolk IP12 3HD</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>David and Wendy Futter</p>	
<p><b>June</b></p> <p>17th to 21st (5 nights)</p>	<p>Swansea - Dunvant Rugby Club</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>Doug and Myfanwy</p>	<p>£12 per night</p>
<p><b>July</b></p> <p>6th to 10th (4 nights)</p>	<p>Little Hereford rally</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>Charles and Jacqui Chodkowski</p>	<p>£28 per night  Deposit £25 per van</p>
<p><b>October</b></p> <p>15th to 19th (4 nights)</p>	<p>Delamere Forest C&amp;C Club, Station Rd, <b>Delamere</b> CW8 2HZ</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>Katrina Lancaster and Tim Sheppard</p>	
<p><b>November</b></p> <p>6th to 8th (2 nights)</p>	<p>Camper UK Open Weekend</p>	<p>Not a formal rally  More an opportunity to meet up</p>	<p>£30 per van</p>
<p><b>December</b></p> <p>3rd to 7th (4 nights)</p>	<p>Teversal, Notts  AGM/Christmas rally</p>	<p><b>Stewards</b></p> <p>Katrina Lancaster and Tim Sheppard</p>	

## **March 24th to 29th (5 nights Tuesday to Sunday)**

### **Cheddar Bridge Touring Park, Draycot Rd, Cheddar BS27 3RJ.**

Website [cheddarbridge.co.uk](http://cheddarbridge.co.uk) not to be confused with adjacent C&CC site .

The touring park caters for those that would prefer quieter surroundings, it is exclusively for adults (over 18) with a comfortable relaxed atmosphere. Cheddar Bridge is a picturesque caravan and camping site in a riverside setting with luxury facilities. It is within close walking distance of the historic village of Cheddar, its amenities and leisure centre, the spectacular Cheddar Gorge and Caves and the Mendip hills. The river Yeo passes through the caravan site with many camping pitches next to the riverbank. Enjoy the wonderful view of the Mendip Hills from the pitches. The site is part of a Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Norman Ancient Monument. Cheddar Bridge is a high quality central touring base for Wells, Bath, Bristol, Weston-Super-Mare, Wookey Hole, Glastonbury, Street, Somerset Levels and its villages.

The club has secured a booking for 5 nights, arrive 24 March & depart 29 March. The fee for the 5 nights with two adults is £75 and includes hard-standing, EHU and up to 2 dogs. For 4 or less nights the fee is reduced to £64 but that sum however short the stay is the minimum payable. Currently we have a reservation for up to 12 pitches and we have 5 already taken. So please if you wish to attend let Eric know by email before 7 February 2020

**Rally Stewards:** Eric & Dee Gould

## **April 23rd to 27th (4 nights Thursday to Monday)**

### **Wicks Farm, Redlands Lane west Wittering West Sussex PO20 8QE**

Website [www.wicksfarm.co.uk](http://www.wicksfarm.co.uk)

The City of Chichester is just 6 miles from Wicks Farm which can be reached by bus in under 30 minutes. This is a small site with around 30 pitches. It is adjoined by a holiday home park. All level pitches.

So much to see in the local area, including Chichester Cathedral, the Roman Villa remains at Fishbourne, the beautiful quaint harbours at West Itchenor, Chichester and Bosham all of which can be reached across the numerous public footpaths and cycle tracks. Beaches at East and West Wittering are within a mile of the campsite.

For those who might want to stay longer in the South East and use this rally as the start or end of a holiday, Portsmouth with its naval history and of course the iconic HMS Victory, the beautiful town of Arundel with its Cathedral and in our opinion the most beautiful Castle in the South and many other sites are nearby. Those who have a Laika bought from Southdown are only 15 miles to their dealership, you might want to pop in!

Wicks Farm has a selection of hard standing and grass pitches, showers and toilet block, washing machines and full Moho facilities. Dog walking off site but very near (unfortunately £1 per night per pooch but they are worth it). On site shop with basic essentials but full of camping and Moho stuff to buy, shops are within a mile and of course there are lots of shopping opportunities in Chichester. 4 pubs within a mile and we will be arranging a Saturday night out at the nearest!

We have reserved 10 pitches all with EHU at a total cost of £77 for 4 nights. I have paid a deposit of £150 to reserve the pitches until 29th February. So if we have tempted you please send me an e mail and a cheque for £15 to secure your pitch ASAP. We look forward to seeing you at our first Rally Stewardship (eeek). Murray and Karen

**Rally Stewards:** Murray and Karen Chisholm

**May 14th to 20th (6 nights Tuesday to Wednesday)**

**Woodbridge, Suffolk**

Details to follow.

**Rally Stewards:** Wendy and David Futter

## **June 17th to 21st (5 nights Wednesday to Sunday)**

### **Swansea - Dunvant Rugby Club**

Dunvant Rugby Club is situated to the West of Swansea and is adjacent to a traffic free pedestrian/cycle track. It is just under 3 miles from the Swansea Bay sea front and it is possible to cycle (or walk) the whole of the bay from the marina to Mumbles. In fact one can cycle far and beyond, even visit the Wetland Centre at Penclacwydd near Llanelli.

The site is a rugby club and has limited numbers of basic showers and toilets. It is shared by Bikeability from whom it is possible to hire bikes ([bikeabilitywales.org.uk](http://bikeabilitywales.org.uk)). Electricity is available, but dependent on the numbers requiring it, sharing may be necessary.

The nearest pub is the Hungry Horse which is less than 1/2 mile away and a regular bus service passes near the site. It might pay Anglo Saxons to purchase a day ticket (currently £4.72 or £4.20 via the app) for the buses as it gives unlimited travel for the day in the Swansea area.

Price is £12 per night

We're booking our evening meal for the Sunday night and need to give the pub numbers plus a £1 Deposit so please let us know asap - choose your meal on the night.

**Rally Stewards:** Doug and Myfanwy Harries

## **July 6th to 10th (4 nights Monday to Friday)**

### **Westbrook Park, Lych Lane, Little Hereford, Ludlow SY8 4AU**

Website [westbrookpark.co.uk](http://westbrookpark.co.uk)

We have been able to reserve a great area, all 10+ vans together, having all weather, fully serviced pitches with 16amp electric, water, tv hookup and drainage point. All this by the river Teme, with half mile river bank fishing.

Extensive dog walk with exercise area and good local footpaths, also short walk to local country pub. (It's just across the river).

We would like some commitment from those who would like to join us. It will be £28 per night, £1 per night for each dog. (It is height of season). A deposit of £25 per unit is required as per recent email.

**Rally Stewards:** Jacqui & Charles Chodkowski

### **October 15th to 19th (4 nights Thursday to Monday)**

#### **Delamere Forest C&CC, Station Rd, Delamere, Northwich CW8 2HZ**

A forest and city rally on the Camping and Caravanning Club site adjacent to Delamere Forest (972 hectares). It is known for its fabulous walks and bike rides. Delamere railway station is adjacent and is 9½ miles east of Chester on the Mid-Cheshire Line. There is an hourly service each way between Chester and Manchester. Bus stop is 1.25 miles.

Chester has the most complete city walls, the oldest racecourse and the largest Roman Amphitheatre in Britain, plus a 1000 year old Cathedral with Europe's finest example of medieval carvings, Roman remains, river with promenade and boat trips, city walls

The Rows are continuous half-timbered galleries, reached by steps, which form a second row of shops above those at street level along Watergate Street, Northgate Street, Eastgate Street and Bridge Street. They are unique in the world to Chester, and nobody is quite sure why they were built in this way. Some original 13th century buildings, including the Three Old Arches.

Visits – Liverpool and River Mersey etc, Port Sunlight model village (Lever Bros fame), Manchester, Anderton boat lift and salt museum at Northwich, Beeston Castle, Catalyst Museum, Widnes (history of the chemical industry)

Final evening meal at <http://delamere-fortune-palace-restaurant.co.uk/>

**Rally Stewards:** Katrina Lancaster & Tim Sheppard

## **November 6th to 8th (2 nights Friday to Sunday)**

### **Lincoln**

We have had an approach from Camper UK who are now Laika Dealers in Lincoln inviting us to their open weekends which are held 3 weekends per year and include a hog roast and live entertainment for Friday and Saturday nights, with free shuttle bus into Lincoln.

They work with other owners clubs and existing customers get a discount.

Their premises are newly built and impressive and it gives an opportunity to meet them and for us to get improved relations with the Laika Company and Products

Attendance is £30 for the 2 days, but free for Camper UK customers.

**Rally Stewards:** Murray and Karen

## **December 3rd to 7th (4 nights Thursday to Monday)**

### **Christmas Rally & AGM - Teversal, Notts**

The detailed programme for our Christmas Rally and AGM is still being planned, but we are returning to Teversal Camping and Caravanning Club site for our 2020 Christmas Rally and AGM.

Good opportunities for walking and visiting historic houses.

Full details to follow.

**Rally Stewards:** Katrina Lancaster & Tim Sheppard

## **Cite Europe update**

Various Facebook forums have reported that the Cite Europe motorhome parking now closes overnight and vans are being directed to the nearby Lidl carpark.

## A fair dinkum trip !!

Our visit to Australia was planned to avoid the heat of summer and we only just missed the horrific bushfires which had just started in NSW.

A stopover in Singapore provided a welcome break from the flight with lots to see and we particularly enjoyed the Gardens built on reclaimed land and the evening Son et Lumiere from the Super Trees and also the Botanic Gardens.



QANTAS were not equal to the task though and we lost 2 days because of a cancelled flight from Singapore to Perth, flying via Melbourne to Perth which was a ridiculous route.

However Western Australia proved sunny, plenty of birds, flowers, camels and kangaroos to see. The roads are long and straight with not much between 'towns', often over 100km apart so we did not go as far north as planned.



The campervan was basic although it did have an electric dropdown bed. We had to use campsites each night as there were no solar panels (in a hot country!) nor inverter and needed power for the computers and the fridge. Flowers and birds were abundant in Perth's Botanic Gardens. Another day we went to Fremantle, a big immigration port with a museum with list of immigrants and biographies.

An artisan market in an old warehouse had lots of temptation and Tim bought me some gorgeous opal earrings for Xmas .

Three days in the Ayers Rock Resort gave us a touch of luxury but also early morning starts, like 4am twice! This was to avoid the heat of the day – the National Park closes trails at 11am for health and safety. We had breakfast

en route at a cattle station and a picnic bag at a lookout for the sun rising over the mountains. We opted for the short walk at Kings Canyon, not fancying climbing onto a plateau, down into a gully and back up in 40C. We treated ourselves to a helicopter trip over the area which was amazing.



We were joined by my niece and her husband from New Zealand in Tasmania. The forests were fabulous and beautiful beaches, and pleasantly warm. We saw wombats and koalas and feel sad that so many of them have now lost their lives. The towns are small and friendly and we had lots of chats with locals .

Our final destination was Victoria. From Melbourne airport we travelled to Geelong and ventured into a restaurant built out into the sea. I'm no fish eater so cheekily asked what they could do which wasn't strong and fishy. No one else was there and the proprietor said I'll fix you a prawn platter. A huge platter duly arrived with king prawns au naturel, in filo pastry and in sauce on a bed of salad. The sun went down over the sea and the Aussie red wine finished off a lovely evening and the bill was insignificant – we hadn't been given a price for our special! Melbourne has an excellent free transport system with a mixture of buses and trams so we went out to St Kilda resort for their famed French patisseries and hopped on and off across the city.

Then commenced our drive along the Great Ocean Road. Wonderful beaches and beautifully carved golden cliffs with convenient walkways. Turning inland we wended our way up into the Grampian Hills for some walking. Serendipity took us up the wrong road and through a beautiful backwater valley. One motel was set round a large lawn and we were awoken by the kookaburra in an adjacent tree and watched kangaroos on the lawn after dinner. Up in the bush we came across a family of emus en route to the wa-



terfall. There was a path down to it but we agreed the view from the top was better than the climb in the heat! Many of the small towns were quite surprising with what they had on offer. In one we came across a shop selling our favourite New Zealand

possum jumpers at knock down prices (and then the GST refund later) and Tim even risked a haircut.

Melbourne was a vibrant city and the riverside area is very popular – we had a hotel room overlooking it. Food everywhere was good and reasonably priced. Breakfasts were magnificent and every small town had somewhere open from 7 am onwards – Eggs Benny were very popular with a great deal of variance, pancakes with fruit and icecream, French toast and always at least 4 slices of bacon with a meal. We had a good sample of the western diagonal of Australia which leaves the Top End, Queensland and New South Wales for another trip, but we might sneak in a return to Tasmania as well .

Katrina Lancaster

## **Printed copy of Newsletter**

As agreed at the AGM in December, all members have been sent this newsletter by email. Printed copies will arrive in a few days for those members who replied to my email of 7th January 2020 requesting a printed copy.

I would like to thank Ian & Anne Allard who generously volunteered to undertake the printing and distribution of the newsletter for those members who want a printed copy.

If any additional members want a printed copy of future editions posted to them please let me know at [Tim@ShepLan.eu](mailto:Tim@ShepLan.eu), but please bear in mind that it costs around £5 per year to print and post 4 editions of the newsletter.

Tim Sheppard



### **More images from our trip Down Under—Tim & Katrina**

Please, please let the rally stewards know as soon as possible if you have to cancel and make sure when you book that they have got correct email addresses and mobile phone numbers in case they have to contact you.

Thank you

The information and opinions in this newsletter are those of the contact name or names given. The Laika Club of Great Britain does not necessarily agree with nor endorse their comments and/or views. It is a totally independent Club, governed by its constitution giving no preference to any Publication, Dealer or other club. This however, does not prevent, with Committee approval, the fostering of mutually beneficial relations.