

The

LAIKA

CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN



NEWSLETTER

www.laikaclub.com

ISSUE NO 37

MARCH 2011

Chairman: John Welham

Treasurer: Ken Bradshaw

Membership Secretary: Diane Bradshaw

Rally Coordinator: Graham Tonks

Newsletter: Katherine Elliott

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT - MARCH 2011

The days are starting to lengthen, the place is warming up a bit, so if your van has been hibernating, it is time to get it up, and get yourselves out and about again. The rally programme is just about fixed (at time of writing), so why not have a look and see what appeals to you. The Isle of Wight Rally in May attracted a very enthusiastic response, and quickly filled up; the Cartmel Rally in June is also doing very well in terms of numbers. I think these are both excellent examples of individual members coming up with new ideas for rallies which really appeal to the wider membership. Graham Tonks has come up with a 2 centre rally for August; both near Malvern. The first part in a green field site at a pub, and the second half at the Western Motorhome Show. There are opportunities for side visits, so take a look at the club website for more details. I know I keep saying it, but if you know of somewhere that might be good for a rally, check it out, and get in touch with Graham.

On the subject of rallies, if you read the minutes of the AGM you will see that there was some discussion about the use of the term 'rally'. It was thought to be a specific word used in relation to events on green field sites, and not to use it might invalidate our insurance. I contacted the ACCEO (The Association of Caravan and Camping Exempted Organisations), with whom we have to register for a 'Certificate of Exemption' (which we have) in order to comply with the legislation that enables us to use green field sites. The relevant legislation is:

Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960" provides in Paragraph 6 of the First Schedule that - "a site licence shall not be required for the use of land as a caravan site if the use is under the supervision of an exempted organisation and is in pursuance of arrangements made by that organisation for a meeting of its Members lasting not more than 5 days". Properly constituted leisure clubs whose main activity is Caravanning or Camping may apply to the DEFRA to become an 'Exempted Organisation' and subject to giving certain undertakings a Certificate of Exemption may be issued to that club

You will see that this uses the word 'meeting', but I have been advised by the ACCEO that it really does not matter what we call things, provided we comply with the legislation by being registered. The Treasurer checked with our insurance company, who again, are not bothered about what we call things. So, this means we can call rallies – rallies or meetings, or events, or anything relevant. If anyone has any good ideas, send in an email, and let's get a discussion going.

As I said at the AGM, I have set myself the task of making contact with some outside organisations that might either help us, or be willing to share events. I decided to try the Laika factory as a kick off. Richard Moss visited the factory last summer, and learnt that the company had appointed a new marketing manager for the UK, and that they expressed intent to get things moving again in the UK.

I emailed Richard's contact, and have had an encouraging response. Laika have been actively pursuing the appointment of new dealers in the UK. Initially they want to have an outlet somewhere in the Midlands, (not Lowdham), to get over the problems we all have with Southdowns being located on the south coast. Laika were hopeful that they would be able to sign up at least one new dealer in time for the next October NEC show, but at present they are not so confident that this will happen in time. Dealers are apparently very downbeat about continental models, not only because of exchange rate/price issues, but because the UK public seem to like traditional layouts and fittings, rather than some of the more innovative offerings coming out of Europe. In any event, Laika have reserved space for the October NEC show. Given that for the time being Southdowns will be the only UK outlet for new Laikas, I asked what people should do if they wanted to see a wider choice of models than Southdowns hold. The emphatic answer was to contact the factory (see details below) and they would be more than willing for you to visit the factory to see everything they have on offer. How any subsequent deal would be done I don't know, but I am sure there would be a willingness to arrange something for a potential buyer. If asked nicely, they might even help out with the visit – it would be worth a try.

We also discussed the old idea of a club factory visit. They are thinking that it might be possible to host a relatively small group. I will try and keep the pot boiling on this one and keep you informed.

I also raised the problems regarding spares supply and access to factory approved support. You may know that when Lowdhams were a dealer they would only service vehicles bought from them, (unlike Southdowns who will service all-comers). Any restriction by new dealers would make a nonsense of Laika appointing dealers to improve geographical access. These points were acknowledged by the lady at Laika, but she said that they need first to appoint new dealers before anything will improve.

If you want information about new Laikas that you cannot get from Southdowns, or want to see a bigger range of models than they hold, then the contact at Laika is:

Martina Merlotti
Sales Dpt
Laika Caravans S.p.A.

Tel. Office +39 055 80 58 240
Tel. Mobile +39 335 14 533 13
e-mail: mmerlotti@laika.it
Web-site: www.lailka.it

We are currently making the final preparations for the trip to Morocco. There will be 5 vans in addition to the club group, so we will be able to get to know some new people along the way. The group is meeting up at Tarifa, just west of Gibraltar on 27th Feb, heading for Morocco on 1st March providing there are no political upheavals. We will let you know how it all went in a future newsletter.

John Welham

Welcome to New Members

Frances and Peter Sitch, Gosport, Hants
Margaret and Franco Calistri, Irvine, Ayresshire

POLITE REMINDER

IF MEMBERS HAVE NOT RENEWED THEIR SUBS BY THE END OF APRIL THEN MEMBERSHIP WILL STOP.

GET WELL MESSAGES TO

Kath Robinson, Alan Wilson and Judy Brockbank

As promised in the last newsletter our article on motorhoming in New Zealand.
Make yourselves a drink, sit back, put your feet up and read on!

New Zealand 2010

Our 7 week trip to New Zealand started with a 3 night stopover in Hongkong. A paradise for shopaholics which we are not, but an interesting and vibrant place all the same. We did the usual tourist half day trip to get a flavour of the place, then we did our own thing going on the Star ferry to Hongkong Island with amazing high rise architecture, a cruise to Lamma Island for a seafood dinner, not quite sure what we were eating but fun!

Onto Auckland where we had 2 nights in a hotel by the harbour, visiting Sky Tower for amazing views over the city, a harbour cruise and a visit to the pretty village of Devonport across the harbour with plenty of Arts and Craft shops and cafes, delicious snapper and chips.

After 5 nights in hotels and 2 spent on planes we were more than ready to pick up our motorhome from Pacific Horizon on the outskirts of Auckland. We booked the motorhome through Motorhome Bookers UK on the internet. This firm deal with many motorhome hire companies in New Zealand and manage to offer good deals. If we had booked direct with Pacific Horizon it would have cost us £500 more! Motorhomes in New Zealand are not as luxurious as those we have in the UK but are nevertheless very good for the rental market. Ours was a four berth with overhead cab, rear dinette which converted to a very large double or 2 single beds. We had a microwave, 4 burner hob with grill, adequate work surface, toilet and shower and more cupboards than we knew what to do with. Pots, pans, towels etc were good quality.

After signing the paperwork we were on the road travelling north through Auckland on Friday at 4pm. Manic! The first lesson we learnt very quickly was that road signage in New Zealand is not brilliant, we coped but the G and T's were medicinal on our first night in the motorhome.

We only had a rough plan of what we were going to do and where we were going except that we were advised to spend 15 nights on North Island and 25 nights on South Island in the motorhome and to go where we fancied, true motorhoming.

We continued north east to the Bay of Islands, visiting Paihia, Russell and the picturesque Waitangi Treaty Grounds with the Maori Canoe at Hobson's Beach. We also stretched our legs with a stroll through Mangroves. We camped at the start of the road to Cape Reinga, the most northerly point on North Island and booked a trip to the Cape and ninety mile beach for the following day.

We then travelled via vehicular ferry onto the west coast road to see the 2000 year old giant Kauri tree, Tane Mahuta. As Kauri trees are now protected this road was built around them. The Kauri museum further south was very interesting and conveniently had a campsite next door.

South, back through Auckland, this time we were prepared and cruised by with no problems and headed for the Coromandel Peninsular. By now we had been on the road for one week and still in awe of the varied scenery, the vast areas of bush and trees, vibrant green fields even though they were desperate for some rain!

On and inland now to Rotorua where we stayed for 2 nights allowing us to walk the Waimangu Volcanic valley with steaming craters, hot streams and the ever present whiff of sulphur. Afterwards we visited the Pohutu Geyser and mud pools at Te Puia. The next day we set off for the Tongariro National Park but stopped on route at Huka Falls, north of Lake Taupo and admired the 100m wide



Echo Crater, Waimangu Volcanic Valley

Waikato River which produces 13% of New Zealand's electricity. We camped at Whakapapa at the start of the National Park to walk to Taranaki Falls with good views of the surrounding mountains.

We now crossed country to Egmont National Park on the west. We travelled on the Forgotten World Highway and what a road, single track with 15km unpaved. We met one other vehicle, saw wild goats and pigs, it just lacked the odd tiger or lion strolling across out of the bush. We camped at Whangomomona at a basic site but beautiful location with a friendly warden who seemed well oiled by 7pm!

We called in at the i site in Stratford and as at all i sites were given loads of information from very friendly and helpful staff. It was here we booked our crossing to South Island. We drove into Egmont National park and walked to Dawson Falls again with good views of Mount Taranaki. We then went on the coastal road to New Plymouth, staying there overnight before continuing the circle back to Stratford and south towards Wellington the following day.



[Mt Taranaki, Egmont National Park](#)

We stayed at Wanganui, had a trip on New Zealand's only Paddle Steamer, climbed the Memorial Tower for views over the town.

We arrived in Wellington, the Capital, with sufficient time to visit the museum, Te Papa and take a ride on the cable car to the Botanical gardens and views over the city. Our site for the night was in the centre of Wellington in a car park equipped with portaloos and showers, water and electric. Plenty of road noise but very convenient and only 2km from the Interislander Ferry.

Throughout this holiday we were on the road by 9am and by mid afternoon we would decide where we would like to camp being on site for 5pm. We never booked and had no problems whatsoever but we were there in Spring and early Summer before the busy tourist season. We found lovely rest spots for my driver to have a nap! The weather was good, warm but not too hot, some rain at night, often early morning mist which quickly cleared giving bright blue skies. Each village we passed would have a small shop but with limited choice (chicken delivered on Fridays!) and they shut on Sundays. We generally stocked up at the bigger supermarkets in the towns. New Zealand steak and asparagus were the best we have ever eaten and cheap. Generally food prices are the same as here but not the variety. Eating out is reasonably priced and good quality and Peter found wine in his price range! Some places do not have ATMs, fuel was no problem but we filled up regularly just in case and it was half the price it is here.

Onwards to South Island.

The 3.5 hour crossing was not in the best weather possible but the rain forecast did not materialise, beautiful scenery but if I was honest I would say the crossing from Stornaway to Ullapool in good weather is better. We drove the short distance to the Top Ten Holiday Park at Picton as did many others from the boat but still no problems in getting a pitch.

The following day we headed to the Abel Tasman National Park and as was now the norm passing through beautiful scenery. At our campsite at Marahau we booked a water taxi to take us to Bark Bay so we could walk part of



[Helicopter flight, landing at the head of Fox Glacier](#)

the Abel Tasman coastal path to Torrent Bay where the water taxi would pick us up. The taxi ride at speed on choppy waters was good fun and the nearest we got to extreme sports in New Zealand, no bungy jumping for us. One of the advantages of trips including the water taxi is the interesting local information you are given. Back to base by 2.30pm and on the road heading for the west coast and the Southern Alps. As usual we called at various places on the way such as the Pancake rocks at Punakaiki, north of Greymouth.

We reached the glaciers, walking to the base of Franz Josef. We stayed 2 nights at Fox walking to Fox glacier on the second day. In the meanwhile we watched the cloud come and go until it was clear and sunny for our helicopter flight to Mount Cook landing at the head of Fox glacier. Absolutely superb.

Would it get any better, oh yes.

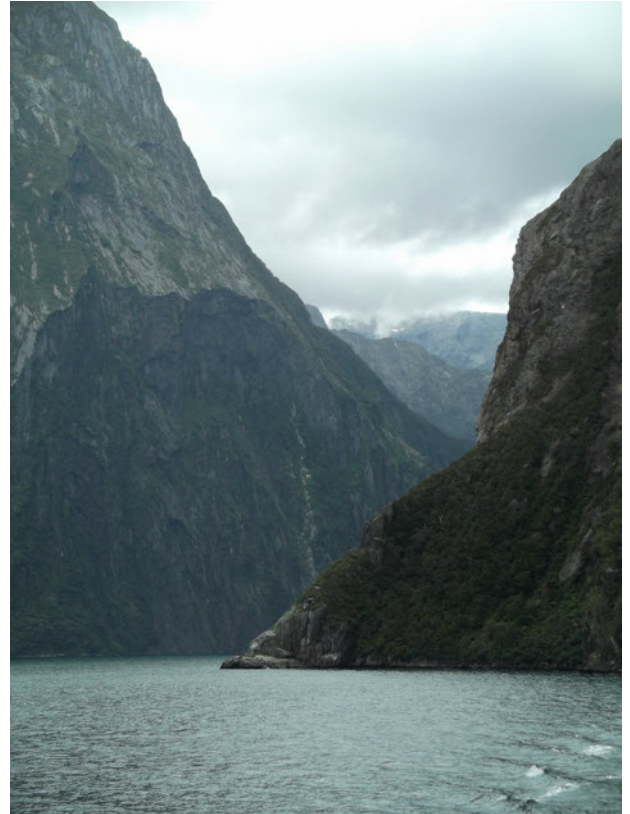
We continued along the Haast Highway calling at various places of interest and the Blue Pools where we had our first encounter with sandflies, definitely worse than the Scottish midge. Onwards passing Lake Hawea, Wanaka to Queenstown and then to Glenorchy. There is a lot of Scottish influence in this area and the scenery is also similar but with much higher mountains and bigger lakes (and better weather).

Onto Te Anau where we stayed for 4 nights to tour the Sounds. As we were undecided as to which Sound to visit we did both! Although you can drive along the Milford Road to Milford Sound and onto a boat we took a tour which included a great meal aboard, local information, photo stops, corny jokes from our driver and a restful, drive free day for my driver! Milford Sound is very dramatic with sheer cliff sides and majestic waterfalls. The weather wasn't bad for Milford Sound, overcast at first but gradually improved and no rain. For Doubtful Sound the weather was wall to wall sunshine. This Sound is inaccessible by road, firstly you cross Lake Manapouri to the power station where you visit the information centre and take a trip underground to the power station. Onto a coach to cross Wilmot Pass to Doubtful sound for a 3 hour cruise. We are still undecided as to which was the best Sound to visit!

On the move again in our motorhome we set off for Invercargill and Bluff and the Southern Scenic Route to Fortrose diverting onto the coastal road to view Sealions at Waipapa Point and a petrified forest at Curio Bay. We had our first New Zealand traffic jam, sheep! Inland again and back to Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula. The landscape was not unlike Derbyshire with rolling hills and rocky outcrops.

North from Dunedin we called to see the Moeraki Boulders, perfect spherical shaped rocks and camped at Oamaru, an interesting town with a Victorian Quarter and home to colonies of Blue Penguins.

We now pointed our motorhome in the direction of Mount Cook Village, stopping at Aburiri Bridge and river with masses of Lupins. Just north of here we went to see some amazing clay cliffs along a very bad unpaved road, not an ideal surface for a motorhome. From here on we had lovely



Milford Sound



Mount Cook Village with Mt cook in the background



Lake Tekapo with Southern Alps and Lupins

mountains views with some cloud formation, good photographic material, all the way to Mount Cook Village. We camped in a Department of Conservation campsite for £6/night. These sites are usually in more remote areas with basic facilities, this one did have toilets and a shelter for the back packers to cook and eat. We had a truly Scottish night with heavy rain until morning and mist to ground level! But the mist cleared quickly giving us bright blue skies. Towering above the site were Mount Sefton and Mount Cook.

The route from Mount Cook Village to Lake Tekapo was awesome, all along we had panoramic views of the Southern Alps, the glacial blue waters of Lake Pukaki and Lake Tekapo and lupins as far as the eye could see in so many different colours. Thank goodness for digital cameras!

We carried on heading north east, passing Christchurch, continuing until we reached Kaikoura stopping along route. We went to Kaikoura peninsula to walk on the headland and see the seal colony; Peter was now fancying himself as a wild life photographer! It was here that we treated ourselves to hats made from possum, merino wool and silk. Mine was worn the second we got off the plane at Heathrow. Although we had a TV/DVD in our motorhome we very rarely had suitable reception and found out about the adverse weather conditions at home from a site warden. The New Zealand people are the most laid back, friendly people you could ever wish to meet. You are always greeted with 'And how's your day been?' 'Where are you from?' UK. 'Whereabouts?' Sheffield. 'You've had a foot of snow at home!' Have we. Well, we could have phoned home but we sat in the sun, with a G and T and the occasional little chuckle!

Inland again to Hanmer Springs, soaking our old bones in the thermal pools. Next day we travelled along Lewis Pass, Lake Brunner to Arthur's Pass, crossing Otira Gorge. We stayed at Avalanche Creek Shelter, the name of the Department of Conservation campsite at Arthur's Pass Village. Rain again during the night but at least it stopped the New Zealand alpine parrot, the Kea from destroying the roof of the motorhome. The following morning the visibility was poor but again cleared quickly to give us a superb day with majestic views of the mountain ranges as we carried on towards Christchurch. The lupins were in abundance. We stopped at Sheffield and bought pies from the 'famous Sheffield pie shop'.

Onto Banks peninsula to the east of Christchurch where we stayed for 2 nights at Akaroa enabling us to walk to the skyline at 806m. We could have done with another soak in the thermal pools the following day. Akaroa is a pleasant place with some interesting historical buildings.

We moved a few kilometres to Purau where we at last wild camped. The campsite had shut but the locals said it was fine to camp by the beach. Now we travelled to Lyttelton, Christchurch's harbour and through a tunnel which brought us to the Gondola for a ride to the top for fantastic views over Christchurch and harbour.

Onto our last site on the outskirts of Christchurch and close to Pacific Horizon depot for returning the motorhome. Now all we had to do was pack and clear the van of food. Any spare food can be handed into the site office where it is offered to other campers especially the back packers. Due to Peter's bad

A word here about the campsites, they cost on average £15/night. There are a chain of campsites, the Top Ten Holiday Parks, where you can become a member for £20 which gives you a 10% discount every time you use a site and also discounts on some entrance fees and tours. You can also join the Kiwi sites for £10 and get 10% discount when you book in. All the sites we stayed at except the one at Kaikoura had good size pitches often with picnic tables and water. All had well equipped kitchens and TV rooms. Toilet and showers always spotless with plenty of hot water. Free gas BBQs. Washing machines cost £1/load and driers £2. Internet was so easy, coin in a slot at £1 for between 10 and 20 minutes, no fiddly codes to enter before access. Oh and the dump stations were ok.

Before we returned the motorhome we visited the Antarctica Centre next to the Airport, a very interesting museum with loads of displays, films, 4D film and a room representing the Antarctic where you are given a parka to wear and then stand in this room while they turn on the wind machine and the temperature falls to minus 30, we were acclimatising for home!

We said goodbye to our trusty motorhome and booked in at our hotel in Christchurch. I write this as I watch the news of the disastrous second big earthquake to hit Christchurch, our hotel was at the back of the Cathedral. Christchurch was and will be again a lovely city, very English with punting on the River Avon, good free museums, large Botanical gardens and the Christchurch trams.

All that was left now was our 26 hour flight home. We travelled with Air New Zealand and we can highly recommend this airline. We did upgrade to premier economy on the way home and it was well worth the extra money.

We landed at Heathrow on 17th December in a window of fine weather, the following day the airport was shut. I looked very smart in my new hat as we sat freezing for 2 hours waiting for our National Express coach back to Sheffield. All that was left to do now was to reduce the 1600 photos down to 300 for the album of a holiday of a life time.

To be recommended.

Kath and Peter Elliott

PS Thanks to the Laika Club members who lent equipment, books and persuaded Peter HE DID WANT TO GO!

PPS A few statistics

Flights including upgrade for the return flight £2737
Cost of hotels including 2 tours and transfers to hotel in Hongkong £829
National Express £78
Heathrow airport lounge £36
40 nights hire of 4 berth MH inclusive of insurance upgrade for nil excess £3280
(this upgrade was free due to early booking, the standard insurance is included in the price but the excess is about £2000).
Campsite fees £600
Fuel £566
Trips etc £1100
Interislander Ferry £176
Food/drink/meals out/gifts etc £2756
Total cost £12158

Distances travelled
North Island 2470km
South Island 4885km
Total 6755km = 4222miles

Laika Interchange

Tyre Pressures

I accept that I'm not a natural mechanic but you would expect that I would use a bit of common sense occasionally. We're off tomorrow on the Morocco trip to meet up with other fellow Laika adventurers (it seemed like a good idea sometime last year after a couple of stiff G&T's). I tell everyone that packing Lucy Laika would be a doddle and I pretend that it's all last minute stuff and I'm just throwing a few clean pair of socks into a bag, but in reality I've been secretly planning for months. "Should I pack the beer in the outside locker or will it get too warm inside". And all those other important questions us men have to think of.

Well eventually Annette sorted it all out. I'm not taking any beer at all. I'm on another b****y diet. (By now the anoraks are all turning over the page and the alcoholics are crying in their beer).

What has all this got to do with tyre pressures and mechanics? Well, bear with me, many moons ago I took advice from a local mechanic about tyre pressures on Lucy Laika and I've been following his pearls of wisdom for the last umpteen years. 62lb in the front and 54lb in the twin rear tyres. Fine. Last year getting ready to travel down to Cambridge to see daughter and grandchildren (yes it's hard to believe but I am old enough to have grandchildren) I was loading my Gilera FX125 scooter (for the anoraks it has two wheels and an engine thingy) but couldn't find my normal tie down straps so I used some new straps with an automatic grip. Job done we set off down the M6.

Just past Stoke there was a big bang and in my mirror I could see debris flying down the motorway. Once we managed to pull over onto the hard shoulder we both thought the worst and expected to find a motorhome minus a scooter. To our relief the scooter was still securely attached to the back of Lucy but one of the offside rear tyres was shredded. RAC called out and he does a great job in very little time. The outcome of this is that I decide it is time to change all the tyres as, although they hadn't done too many miles and weren't too old (I lie they were), it was time to put my hand in Annette's pocket.

Six new tyres later and the bank manager wants to know what's happened to my budget. But he's a nice man and understood and consoled me as I cried into my freshly squeezed, delicious carrot juice.

Now down to the reason to bore everyone with this story. Preparing to leave this weekend I decide to check the tyre pressures and thought it was a good time to confirm the pressures for my newish Avon tyres (Pirelli before). I took Lucy to the local weigh bridge and check both axles. Eureka, they are well within the limits. (God bless Laika for a 4.2 tonne Iveco chassis). With this accurate information I e-mailed Avon and asked if their tyre pressures were the same as Pirelli (i.e. 62lb front and 54lb rear).

The answer was not what I expected. 59lb front. (Not too bad) but 44lb rear. (For those poor at maths that's 10lb less). The second problem was after panicking, my local petrol stations tyre pressure gauge, which I normally use to check my tyres, was out of action. No problem. I will go to my friendly mechanic and get him to check the pressures (a bonus really as the rear tyres are a pig to check).

Shock, horror. All the tyres are 70lb so all these years I've been overloading my tyres by between 11lb front and 26lb at the rear.

So gentlemen, the obvious moral of this story is not to tell your wife where you put the beer in the van.

Happy Laikering
Andrew Spark

Letters

[As a show of our appreciation we gave Tracey Kirkman a small gift at Christmas. Tracey prints, collates and posts with great efficiency our newsletter.]

Dear Laika Members

Just a note to thank you all for your kind Christmas gift which has been used to purchase an electric blanket!

Thank you all and Happy New Year.

Regards
Tracey

Please thank all those who attended the Christmas Rally 2010 and gave so generously to the Alzheimer's Society, keeping Audrey so close to their hearts.

To update members, Audrey suffered a severe epileptic fit at the end on November which necessitated some 5 weeks in hospital. She is now recuperating at a Nursing Care Home some 2 miles from where we live. She can only walk a very short distance supported by 2 carers and has to be fed at meal times. Over time it is hoped we can get her to walk with a frame as she did the last time she attended a rally in France in September last year.

I shall still attend a number of rallies this year but without Audrey, I'm afraid.

So here's hoping the Club has a good year. Best wishes to all.

Brian Shaw

FOR SALE

4 Metre Privacy Room. Brand New.

For details contact

From one of the mags!

Laika strengthens UK customer service

Italian luxury motorhome manufacturer Laika have announced a new addition to their multi-lingual Customer Service team. Martina Boncinelli, who previously worked in the Quality Control Department, will take care of the English, Scandinavian and Eastern European markets.

Laika pride themselves on their solid reputation for customer service and after sales care in their native Italy, so Martina's appointment will only strengthen this aim for the UK market, giving owners and dealers a point of contact.

The team is always on duty and can be contacted by email at service@laika.it

RALLIES

Friday 24th to Tuesday 28th June 2011

Cartmel Racecourse

Cartmel

Grange over Sands

Cumbria

LA11 6QF

The site is in the lovely market town of Cartmel-in-Cumbria in the Lake District.

We have booked the course for a 5 night rally; we will be the only ones on the course and access to the stands for showers. **There can be NO EARLY arrivals** – after 2 pm please - as another organisation has the course immediately ahead of us. The cost including 16 amp hook-up is £12.75 per night.

We are hoping to arrange a trip on one of the lake steamers from Lakeside to Bowness-on-Windermere for lunch and 2 hours (or so) to look round the town. For this we need a good idea of numbers by the end of April please.

We are also hoping to arrange walks to Holker Hall (for lunch) and another into the town of Grange-over-Sands. There is also Cartmel Priory which is well worth a visit.

The course is let on a weekly basis so it is possible to stay 2 extra nights (up to noon Friday) if desired, payment direct to the course office at the time.

Directions --- In the square in Cartmel go to the right of the large CARTMEL sign on the post office this is the road to the racecourse, a few hundred yards on the left. (all the horseboxes and milk tankers use this road.)

Thursday 28th July to Monday 1st August 2011 (4 nights)

Bourton Rovers Football and Social Club

Rissington Road

Bourton on the Water

Gloucestershire

GL54 2DZ

We welcome you to the Heart of England for our July rally, set in the charming village of Bourton on the Water amidst the beauty of the Cotswolds and the Gloucestershire countryside. For the cost of £9/night we have drinking water, toilet, wash hand basins, waste disposal and use of the social club and bar. All this is only a couple of minutes stroll from the charming village through which the river Windrush meanders and all its facilities, local speciality shops, pubs, restaurants, special attractions such as the Cotswold Motor Museum, Cotswold Perfumery (factory tours can be arranged), Model Village (1/9th scale model of Bourton, Cotswold Pottery, Birdland Park and gardens. There is excellent walking locally with all the beauty of Cotswold stone buildings. Bus transport is available from the village to most parts of the Cotswolds. We are not limited to a maximum number of units as there is plenty of room, **BUT WE DO HAVE TO HAVE A MINIMUM OF 10 UNITS** to constitute a Rally and we have to **CONFIRM NUMBERS** to Bourton Club **BY THE END OF APRIL** as this is an extremely busy and popular venue and we have exclusive use of this for the days in question.

Rally Stewards

Trish and Graham Tonks

PLEASE CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE WELL BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE.

SUMMER DOUBLE BREAK IN THE MALVERNS - AUGUST 2011

A SWANN INN at NEWLANDS (NR MALVERN LAKE)

Monday 15th to Thursday 18th August

B WESTERN SHOW at MALVERN SHOWGROUND

Thursday 18th to Monday 22nd August

There could hardly be any better place to spend a few days than in and around the Malverns at any time of the year and the choice of the 2 venues hopefully, will give you all the opportunity to experience a wide range of activities from Hill Walking to Wild West Shoot Outs plus maybe the odd purchase from the show.

A Swann Inn at Newlands

The owner of this pub has proposed that we may hold a small rally in the "greenfield " area behind the pub. He is able to offer water/toilets(in pub /waste disposal but no electric hook up on a free of charge basis, but maybe we would use the pub for one or two meals!! and maybe a small donation. He also is the owner of a micro brewery that we could visit at that time. It is also hoped to arrange a visit to a porcelain factory (£5), or the Morgan Car Factory (£10) for which we would need approximate numbers to arrange in advance for a specific date. Walking is very easy from the site if this is preferred.

Contact Graham Tonks on 01270 524321/07896 121931 email: patandgraham.tonks@yahoo.com

B Western Show

Move the couple of miles from the pub to the "Show" on the Thursday morning , to a Laika Club reserved area in the showground for the duration of the show. As many will know, the theme for this relatively small but interesting show is "WESTERN", and many of the visitors are suitably dressed, and themed shows /music take place during the daytime as well as the evening. There are many RV'S on show and stalls , in addition to the "normal show" stands and exhibits. All in all, it can make for a very enjoyable weekend, in addition to which we would hope to have at least one good BBQ, and organise a good walk in the hills, or into Malvern itself. The Club has reserved an area in the show for app 15/20 vans and we will be receiving the same number of booking forms from Warners at the end of February. We will send one form to each interested van owner upon request, who has to complete the form and return it, together with the appropriate payment **directly to Warners**

Please contact TRISH/GRAHAM TONKS initially to receive the form . There will be a cut off date for booking and we would appreciate receiving your pre-advice (to get the form) **by latest 10th JUNE.**

Contact Trish and Graham Tonks

FRENCH DOUBLE RALLY SEPT 2011

- 1. LA FLECHE (NE of ANGERS)
THURSDAY 1ST TO TUESDAY 6TH (5 NIGHTS)**
- 2. MACHCOULE (SW of NANTES)
TUESDAY 6TH TO FRIDAY 9TH (3NIGHTS)**

LA FLECHE

Camp Municipal La Route D'Or.

Allee de la Providence,

72200 La Fleche.

Tel : 00 33 243 945590.

Site is shown in caravan club book. This site is right in the excellent town of La Fleche (500 mtrs) which makes it handy for all outings (commercial or otherwise!!), and is close to the river for walks etc. It has all the facilities required , plus swimming pool(s), tennis courts, WIFI, cycle hire and canoe hire adjacent. We have reserved 15 to 20 "emplacements" at the moment at 13.10 euros/night for a unit of 2 people + electric hookup.

We need to give the site firm numbers by the end of June, therefore we require your confirmations well before that date.

MACHCOULE

Camp Municipal La Rabine.

Route de Challans.

44270 Machcoule.

Tel: 0033 240 023048.

Site is shown in Caravan Club Book. It is central for this small but interesting town that has an excellent market down the main street on a Wednesday (day after our arrival). The wardens are very friendly and helpful. Facilities are good as are the shops etc in town. Walks and cycling are good from the site. We have reserved 15 to 20 "emplacements" at the moment at 10 euros /night for a unit of 2 people + electric hookup.

We need to give the site firm numbers by the end of June, therefore we require your confirmations well before that date.

To register and and reserve your place for both of the above

DECEMBER CHRISTMAS RALLY AND AGM 2011

Thursday 1st to Monday 5th December 2011 (4 nights)
Barnstones Touring Camping and Caravanning Site
Great Bourton
Near Banbury
Oxon
01295 750289

Due to the disappointing numbers for the 2010 AGM and as discussed at the AGM, we have combined the Christmas rally with the AGM for 2011 and hope that the revised dates together with the central location, will result in a good turnout.

We used the site in 2009 and both the availability of the village hall (for the AGM meeting), plus the local village pub met with a favourable response from all.

We have therefore booked 20/25 pitches at £9.00/night including electricity for the above dates. We have reserved the village hall for the Saturday afternoon for the AGM meeting, suggested time 3.00pm.

We need a £20.00 /unit non refundable deposit to be paid by **END SEPTEMBER 2011**. Cheques to be made out in this instance to **GJG & PA TONKS** and sent to our home address, this way the finances will be simpler to manage. **For those of you who depart for Europe or beyond before the above date please ensure payment is made in advance.**

We intend to arrange an evening meal in the Bell Inn for the Saturday. They will make us "hot pot specials", salads and sweets (very seasonal!!) and costs for this will be advised close to the time when numbers are known. When booking please give your arrival and departure dates.

Suitable local walks will be arranged as usual by Peter/Geoff and we look forward to receiving good support for this new AGM date.

Rally Stewards
Diane and Ken Bradshaw

FRANCE: JUNE 2012
The Puy du Fou Experience
Thursday 14th June to Saturday 16th June 2012

Don't miss the chance of a lifetime to visit the "Grand Parc du Puy du Fou" in the Vendée. Come! Enjoy the sights, sounds and displays in the deep forest by the lake and château. 2000 years of French History slide past your eyes in a kaleidoscope of special shows, themed villages, woodland and lakeside walks.

A large Aire 500m from the Grand Parc entrance, costing €5 a night, awaits your motorhome for the duration of your visit.

The main shows last from 35 to 45 minutes and the spectacles include:

A Roman Amphitheatre, complete with Gladiators, racing chariots and tigers

A Viking Invasion

A display of superb horsemanship by the students and staff of the resident riding academy in a medieval adventure to discover the mystery of the lance.

You can watch the remarkable exploits of Richlieu's Musketeers.

See the incredible 'Dance of the Phantom Birds' (should you have seen hawks displaying with their handlers elsewhere, forget them! How about 250 birds of prey, ranging from little Owls to the Giant Condor going through their displays, in some cases, close enough to brush your head as they glide past. The climax comes with over 100 raptors in free flight. It is a magical experience.

One aspect of Puy du Fou is supreme! Come with me to 'La Cinéscénie', a magnificent late evening performance featuring the largest stage in the world, including a castle, lake, field, working windmill and a road in your scenery. Add horses, cattle, pigs, geese and 1100 actors taking part on that stage depicting the last 1000 years of French history (minus the English bits of course) up to the end of world war II.

A translation headset is available for the shows including the Cinéscénie.

Prior to this, a large level camp site with full motorhome amenities, and a large swimming pool, awaits us to meet up for a few days before the short journey to Puy du Fou.

If you subscribe to ACSI the cost for each night at Camping La Bretèche is €13 this year including 10 amp electric. (€16 a night without ACSI)

The coast between La Rochelle and La Baule is within 1½ hours drive. Cycling and walking routes are available and the beautiful small towns and villages in and around the Sère valley await your exploration.

For 3 days at the Grand Parc and the incredible evening performance of La Ciné Scénic the cost is approximately £56 subject to the Euro exchange rate.

If you are interested in either or both of these ventures please contact me on 01754

Further update and confirmed price for Puy du Fou will be available in the next newsletter in June.

Brian Shaw

May 2012

Whitby

Details to follow.

**Rally Stewards
Alma and Keith Pitcher**

**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**

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of member
Ian Browse.

Ian and Rosie attended several rallies even though Ian was
undergoing treatment for cancer. They last attended the South West
Double in June 2010 and earlier this year Ian was organising the rally
at the Swann Inn at Newlands.

Ian was a quiet, gentle man who will be sadly missed.

The Club has sent a donation to the Head and Neck Cancer Support
in his memory.

Our thoughts are with Rosie and family.

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.