

The

LAIKA

CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN



NEWSLETTER

www.laikaclub.com

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Chairman's Chat

Summer here in the UK seems to be drawing to a close after the one week of glorious weather in mid July and I'm sure many of you will be looking for warmer climates elsewhere?

Chris and I will be heading across France to Italy and hope the reception we get from our European neighbours is a little more cordial than the one Nigel Farage received from his fellow M.E.P.'s after the referendum vote!?

We're looking forward to the opportunity to explore the Tuscany region - an area we are not familiar with and hope we can leave all the 'ups and downs' of liaising with Laika over the factory visit firmly behind us in the car park near Folkestone better known as the M20. We would have liked to stay away longer, (as we always do), but, I'm sure, like so many of you, something always seems to bring us home sooner than we'd like – a wedding, a funeral, a special birthday, hospital appointments, the boiler blowing up, etc., etc.

Someone recently told me that the trouble with being retired was that you didn't get a day off! I know what he meant.

I'd like to give a personal mention to Brian Shaw and Ann Lister for organising the Puy du Fou Rally in June. I'm sure many of you have been before and know it well. Brian seems to think it's OK as this was his sixteenth visit, but it was our first and we were awe struck with the whole spectacle. The event was made so much more special and enjoyable because of the in depth knowledge, preparation and planning Brian and Ann exercised throughout the rally.

On the subject of Rallies, we have 2 more this year – Southport in October and Teversal in December for the AGM. Numbers are low so if anyone is interested, contact Ian and Lesley Dewey and Gill and John Stevens respectively.

Richard has already planned Rallies for 2017 and has monthly sites booked from March to July, September, October and December. See the website and/or the Newsletters for more details.

I think I've mentioned before that I seem drawn to motorhome accessories I very soon realise I don't really need. If you are the same, don't throw them out, bring them to the Teversal AGM rally in December where we will be having our annual 'Boot Sale' – I'm sure that for everyone who has an item they no longer want, there will be someone who will find the item useful. Hopefully it won't be me in every case?

Mark

Welcome to New Members

Christine and George Handson, Skegness, Lincs

Rally report for June at La Bretèche and Puy du Fou

In 28 years of visiting various parts of Europe, we have never experienced so much rain! Despite this the meet and greet at La Bretèche was held successfully. After rain earlier in the day, the evening became one of the best whilst we were there with very welcome warm sunshine. All units expected arrived, despite the threat of strikes by various French unions.

The area is great walking country and two walks were undertaken by most present. The first, about 9km, took us round the perimeter of the Grand Parc de Puy du Fou from where you could look over some of the show venues and up at the birds. Just to complete the picture, there was very heavy rain for the last kilometre. The second took us over about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Sevre-Nantaise trail, which was completed without rain intervening.

On the Wednesday, 14 camping cars moved from La Bretèche to Puy. Ann had some sore knees after spending the night on the prayer mat prior to our transfer to the Aire at Puy. It worked! The first and third days were rainless and the second day had 2 heavy showers. Some of us missed the first one because we opted for an indoor venue just as the heavens opened. The sun was shining brightly as we emerged although it was very wet underfoot.



La Bretèche



Out walking



Vikings



Le Secret de la Lance

The late night 'Organs of Fire' was spectacular. The following night was the Ciné Scénié and we were blessed by a cool, dry night to watch the wonderful exhibition played out before us. Even though we had some of the best seats in the stand, all were pleased they had been advised to take cushions.

Everyone we spoke to praised the quality of the entertainment and felt the late night Ciné Scénié was unparalleled for presentation. It was an emotional experience of French history beyond the capacity of anyone's ability to describe. It is something you must see.

At lunchtime on our last day in the Grand Parc we all met at La Halle Renaissance for a very good Medieval type meal with entertainment throughout. It formed a fitting end to our time at Puy du Fou before we moved to other destinations in France, or back home.

Myfanwy and Richard celebrated birthdays whilst we were at La Bretèche, and Charles celebrated his on the Aire at Puy, when the quiz was also decided. Myfanwy and Doug won whilst June and Peter were just behind.



Medieval Banquet

We also gained two new associate members, so welcome to Chris and George Handson.

A great time was had by all.

Ann and Brian

Rally report for July at Malmesbury

12 vans attended the Rally hosted jointly by Richard and Ruth Moss assisted by Eric and Dee Gould where we were able to book places in an area so that we were all together without inconveniencing other site users. This worked particularly well aiding communication and our new members were truly integrated into our Group. Although it was Katrina and Tim's first rally it seemed as if they had been longstanding members after only such a short time, and indeed they have booked to visit the Laika Italy rally and showed interest in the AGM.



The meet and greet on the first day went down well on a lovely warm summer evening under the watch of the Club flag and plenty of space to circulate. The facilities were adequate although on grass pitches and included electric hook up and opportunities to visit the area were detailed. The site is on a hill and overlooks the beautiful town with access by footpath in a ten minute walk. A supermarket is close by and there are shops with character and adequate pubs and restaurants nearby.

We arranged a visit to Abbey House and Gardens where we were briefed about the origin and planning of the enormous gardens in a talk by one of the owners. There is a possibility to have the introduction and participation NAKED for those who dare but none of our Group were brave enough. We were given a plan and written introduction and there was a photo of the lady who briefed us and she looked really quite nice! When she took me aside for a chat I wondered what was in store for me!!

The gardens have 1300 years of history and the first King of England is reputed to be buried somewhere in the gardens. Being on a hill the Town enjoys a tranquil haven and rare and beautiful views. The Abbey was established in the 12th Century and it is set in public parkland.

Saturday was a free day and most people just visited the town or sat and chatted in the summer sun, but in the evening we had a meal pre booked at the Smoking Dog Pub which was a short walk from the Campsite.

The last full day included a 5 mile walk, by the river around the Town led by Peter Elliott and circulating the area so we could view and absorb every aspect, completed of course by a visit to a local hostelry.

We were particularly pleased to see Haydn back in the Club after his recent loss and enjoying the company of Doug and Myfanwy

Thanks to everyone for their support at this Rally and particularly the site Warden helped to make this a success

Richard Moss

[Email](#)

Hi Richard

We really enjoyed the rally and look forward to future events, not least the Italian trip. We were made to feel most welcome.

Thank you

Katrina Lancaster and Tim Sheppard

NOT ONLY ARE THEY NEW MEMBERS, THEY HAVE ALSO WRITTEN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE.

Buying a new Laika motorhome in Germany
By Tim Sheppard and Katrina Lancaster

This story started back in 2013 whilst caravanning in Holland for the Zundert Flower Parade. We were considering a motorhome and were recommended to visit the Dusseldorf Caravan / Motorhome show as it was only an hour or so away. We couldn't do that at the time, but remembered the advice when thinking about buying our present van. If you join the Dusseldorf Caravan Salon Club, which is free, you got discounted entry and site fees on the show site. €50 for 2 days show and 2 nights camping. Great food stalls and cheap breakfasts.

We were very impressed by the efficient organisation – vehicles were all parked in lines with space between the rows for sitting out and BBQs etc. The scale was staggering: pitches for over 4000.

The show was huge, and was well laid out in distinct halls. Late on the second day we saw the Laika EcoVIP310. I was immediately struck by the internal headroom and it ticked every other box on our wish list and room for both dogs. At €62k against approximately £60k for the chosen model and options - a coffee and a think was needed.

At €1.33 to the £ we could buy a new van for less than we would have to pay in a couple of years second hand! My German, the dealer's English plus an English options list, enabled us to define the options we wanted, including right hand drive, and we shook hands on a deal. Amazingly the exchange rate continued to improve and at €1.43 to the £, we purchased the necessary euros.

Meanwhile we researched how to import a motorhome into the UK. An early discovery was paragraph 2 of the DVLA leaflet stating it is illegal for a UK resident to drive a foreign registered vehicle in the UK ! However, it is legal to drive an unregistered vehicle to a pre-booked MOT or vehicle inspection. We booked an inspection at our local MOT centre and relied on this to cover us driving from Folkestone to Derbyshire ! We needed an inspection to formally confirm that the van had a speedo calibrated in both miles and kilometres per hour, that the headlights dipped the correct way for the UK and that the reversing and rear fog lights conformed to UK requirements

Germany has an Export Vehicle Registration scheme whereby you buy a temporary registration including Third Party insurance in Europe. The Caravan Club, who had insured our previous motorhome, were happy to insure it for 2 weeks damage on the (VIN).

We flew Easy Jet (using Emirates air miles). Our luggage was electric cables, bedding, basic cutlery and crockery. We had heat and light but we had to eat out! We collected the van on 29 March and the handover went smoothly. I rang Caravan Club Insurance to give them the VIN, updated the Eurotunnel booking and our Dart Crossing account with the German registration number.

Our first night was at a site about 40km outside Hamburg. Next day we drove across Germany and into Holland enjoying a visit to the Keukenhof Gardens. We found a nice ASCI registered site (Camping Le Parage) nearby with a great pancake restaurant next door. Next to Guines near Calais for an excellent meal at La Bien Assise, before a late night Eurotunnel to Folkestone and overnight at Folkestone Services.

THE OFFICIAL STEPS

- notify HMRC of importation as soon as you arrive in the UK
- Vehicle inspection to confirm the headlights, speedometer, reversing lights and rear fog lights were correct for the UK.
- Paperwork for Vehicle Certification Agency, enclose the original European Certificate of Conformance and the inspection invoice, and post it with the required £100 fee. This may not have been necessary as the European Certificate of Conformance said that the motorhome was suitable for UK Registration. The VCA were very efficient and within 1 week we had the Individual Certificate of Conformity.
- Receive secure email from HMRC advising amount of VAT and pay.
- After 2 days check with HMRC Personal Transport Unit on payment.
- Complete DVLA first registration application using details from EU Certificate of Conformance and post to DVLA with original documents and correct fees
- Seek refund of German VAT (19%) once VAT certificate arrives
- Receive registration number
- Order legal number plates

The process of importing the motorhome ourselves was somewhat tedious and took a little longer than we expected. We learnt that you have to be scrupulously consistent in completing the HMRC and DVLA forms, and that you must have an HMRC login with no previous VAT history. It is important to verify German VAT numbers before leaving the dealer, to be consistent with Vehicle Identification Numbers and to check that our chancellor hasn't changed vehicle duty before you submit paperwork to DVLA !!

However, savings are significant. We were very lucky with the exchange rate which meant we saved nearly £15,000 by buying a continental van from a German dealer at the Dusseldorf show instead of buying from a UK dealer, but even at €1.2 euro to the £, the saving would be £7000 to £8000.

Getting it back to the UK cost us about £800: €450 for the temporary German Export registration, Eurotunnel shuttle fare, 860 miles fuel and 2 site fees, but we used the trip to see the Keukenhof Gardens and get used to the new van. We have had to replace the gas connector and because continental vans have limited mains sockets, fitted a UK motorhome mains consumer unit and extra mains sockets - total cost about £400.

Laika provide a European wide warranty so we should be able to get warranty work done in the UK, but the savings are such that we can afford to be pragmatic if necessary.

We are delighted with our new motorhome, and plan to keep it for many years. Would we do a self import again? Yes, without question. Email us for the full story!

Motorhoming in Germany – low emission zones.

Currently Germany has over 60 towns and cities with low emission zones (LEZ). There are differing views on the need or not to obtain an Umwelt Plakette. This is a licence rather like a tax disc (do you remember them?) that you fix inside the windscreen. It lasts the life of the vehicle but is destroyed if you try to remove it for any Reason.

The don't bother view is that you are unlikely to want to drive into city centres and if you do you are hardly likely to be stopped and fined. But if you are more cautious and/or law abiding then you will wish to obtain one of these licences. You can do this in Germany at a TUV (MOT) station or local town hall for the cost of between 6 and 15€. They will need to see your V5 and evidence of your vehicles euro-rating category. This may appear on the V5 or the vehicles certificate of conformity. If you do not have this document then I know if you have a Fiat they are very good at providing one if you contact them with your engine number.

There is another way that in my view is easier and means that you have the licence before you arrive in Germany. Do it on line. It is very straightforward to do and the turn around is usually only a few days.

Log onto the following website:

<https://www.berlin.de/labo/mobilitaet/kfz-zulassung/feinstaubplakette/shop.85047.php>

It translates itself into English and is easy to follow. You will need to scan your V5 etc. and pay the 6€ fee by credit card.

Eric Gould

iPad and satellite navigation.

I am a fan of using my tablet as a satnav in my motorhome for a number of reasons

- The large screen is easy to read
- It is faster at calculating the route than my old TT
- It meant I complied with the motorhomers rule that everything you carry must have at least two uses .

All worked well when using my old Samsung tablet and so when I got a new iPad I was happy to pay for a new version of the satnav app (Co-pilot) to run on the iPad. The new software downloaded and installed without a problem and sat at home it would identify my location quickly. The routes I planned loaded ok but once I got more than a few yards from home it lost its sense of direction. Occasionally as I was driving it would suddenly find itself again only to lose it within seconds. This had me puzzled for ages until I learnt that not all iPads come with a GPS chip. In fact only the slightly more expensive versions that accept a data sim have such a chip. I found this amazing given that all but the very cheapest android tablets have a GPS chip.

So why did it work at home and randomly? It seems that whilst connected to Wi-Fi the satnav could work out from that its position. So at home it used my Wi-Fi connection and whilst driving it would occasionally find a stray Wi-Fi signal that it used until I drove out of range.

There is no way to upgrade an iPad so if you're planning to buy one think carefully about what you need it for. If you want GPS built in then pay the extra for the version with it, as the cost is similar if you go onto to add an after market GPS dongle.

And it was an after market dongle that I bought. I firstly tried a Bluetooth device that did not seem to be able to hold a steady connection to my iPad. And so I exchanged it for a plug in dongle that worked perfectly. The company that I obtained the dongle from, Mendelssohn Pilot Supplies (www.gps.co.uk) really was excellent on both service and price.

Now my iPad fulfils all (almost) my satnav needs. I still need to work out how to download campsites as POI's (points of interest) and upgrade to Co-pilot caravan so I have length, width and weight parameters for routing. I will let you know when I have cracked those problems

Eric Gould

2016

October 13 th to 17 th 4 nights	Willowbank Holiday Park	Rally Stewards Lesley and Ian Dewey 01256 322508 0780 235 8287 John Pilkington	See further on for details
December 1 st to 5 th (4 nights)	AGM/Christmas Rally Teversal C CC site Teversal	Rally Stewards Gill and John Stevens 01949 20396 07902316762	See further on for Details. £20 deposit required

October: [Southport](#), [Thursday 13 to Monday 17 October 2016](#)

Willowbank Holiday Park,
 Willowbank Coastal Road
 Ainsdale
 Southport
 PR8 3ST
 01704 571566

10 places have been taken. Final places to be given shortly to the site. If you haven't booked and would like to go contact Richard NOW.

5 miles from centre of Southport, 5 minute walk to bus stop to Southport and Liverpool. Within walking distance of National Trust and Sefton coastline. Walking and cycling facilities Member has checked it out Sparrowhawk Venue has reasonable meals and bar within reach. Shop nearby.

www.willowbankcp.co.uk

www.sparrowhawk-formby.co.uk

Cost £17.40 including hardstanding electric and all facilities £1.50 booking fee per booking

Please send your deposit of £10 to

Christmas Rally and AGM 2014

December: [Teversal](#), [Thursday 1st to Monday 5th December \(4 nights\)](#)

Teversal Camping and Caravanning Club Site
 Silverhill Lane
 Teversal
 Notts
 NG17 3JJ

The venue for our annual meeting and the club AGM has easy access to the M1 and other main routes, (CCC Big Sites Book). It is set in six acres on the outskirts of Nottingham. Derbyshire is just over the border and there are regular bus services to the surrounding towns of Chesterfield and Sutton in Ashfield. There are several walks around the Country park opposite the site and further afield for the more energetic.

This is a return visit for the club and a local venue for us. We were most impressed with the site, the welcome and help from the franchisees and the toilet block is to die for!! The local pub, the venue for our meal and the Scout Hut next door where we will hold our welcome meeting and AGM, are a short walk down the road.

The cost is £16.80/night including electric, 20 pitches have been booked, deposits for 13 have been received. The Christmas meal (which was excellent last time) will be round the £20 mark. The program is still in the planning but the meet and greet will be on Thursday so do try to arrive on this day.

2017

March Thursday 16th Leaving on Monday 20th (4 nights)	South Lytchett Manor CC Park Lytchett Minster	Rally Stewards Kath and Peter Elliott	See further on for Details. £10 deposit required.
April Tuesday 18th Leaving on Sunday 23rd (5 nights)	Ambleside Aire Millers Field Ambleside	Rally Stewards Jill and Steve Brindle	See further on for details,
May Thursday 11th Leaving on Monday 15th (4 nights)		Suggested dates Gower Penninsular Being organised by Andrew Spark	Details in December newsletter
June 12th to 24th	Three centre Rally in Germany	Rally Stewards Richard Moss Ian Dewey Eric Gould	In the planning See further for latest details.
July 10th to 14th Monday to Friday (4 nights)	Greenhills Holiday Park, near Bakewell	Rally Stewards Kath and Peter Elliott	No dates confirmed as site will not take booking until next year
September Monday 11th Leaving on Friday 15th (4 nights)	Orchard Caravan Park Quantock Somerset	REQUIRE RALLY STEWARDS	£11/unit Details to follow
October Thursday 12th Leaving on Monday 16th (4 nights)	Riverside Caravan Park Stratford upon Avon	REQUIRE RALLY STEWARDS	£20/unit Details to follow
December Thursday 7th Leaving on Monday 11th (4 nights)	Barnstones Cand C site Great Bourton Near Banbury	REQUIRE RALLY STEWARDS	£11/unit Details to follow

March, Lytchett Minster, Thursday 16th until Monday 20th (4 nights)

South Lytchett Manor Caravan and Camping Park
Dorchester Road
Lytchett Minster
Poole
BH16 6JB
01202 622577

**WILL NEED THE FINAL BALANCE OF
PAYMENT BY THE END OF JANUARY
2017**

We visited this site a few years ago. A lot of development to the site has happened since. It has a good web page but some of the key points are as follows

- Fully stocked shop and off licence
- Free wifi across the park
- Cycles for hire
- Games room with pool table and TV
- Good facilities

Two buses stop at the main gates, no 40 which travels between Swanage, Wareham and Poole. The Coast LINX653 which travels along the Jurassic coast to Weymouth. Time tables can be downloaded.

The cost is £16.50/night inc electric. Booked for 10 pitches initially. £10 deposit will secure your place. Please send cheque payable to **BOOKINGS MUST BE MADE BY THE END OF JANUARY.**

April, Ambleside, Tuesday 18th to Sunday 23rd (5 nights)

Ambleside Aire
Miller's Field
Ambleside

This is a green field site which only Clubs can use providing they have the necessary certificates, which we have. The site is level with water and toilet disposal. No other services but the site is secure and only 3 min walk from the centre of Ambleside which has a large selection of shops and cafes. Remember your bus passes to get to Keswick and other parts of the Lake District.

The cost is £10/night and the numbers are flexible up to 24 vans. The site will be padlocked until 12 noon on Tuesday but Jill and Steve have offered to get there early if anyone wishes to arrive before 12. We have to leave on Sunday morning as there is another rally following us. All in all a golden opportunity to visit the Lakes. Please register your interest with Jill and Steve and let them know what time you hope to arrive.

May, Wales

Hopefully this will be sorted by the December Newsletter.

June

Romantic Rhineland and Mosel Valley, Germany

12th to 24th June 2017 (12 nights)

We are planning a trip to Germany to include one site on the Mosel and two on the Rhine each of four days duration.

It is organised so that Ralliers could travel to Trier and finish up in Rudesheim to head south (wherever they please).

This is to be stewarded by Richard Moss, Eric Gould and Ian Dewey and each of us taking a site with a different aspect but cooperating overall.

Site 1 Eric Monday 12th to Friday 16th June

ACSI 739 near Wittlich on the Mosel, Camping Erden at Erden 54492

Situated on the River and Mosel cycle path and where the best wine is produced

Site 2 Ian Friday 16th to Tuesday 20th June

Camping Rhein Mosel in Koblenz Lutzel 56070

Adjacent to ferry to Koblenz and cycle track. Saturday market

Site 3 Richard Tues 20th June to Saturday 24th June

Camping Platz am Rhein, Rudesheim 65385

Pleasant 1 Km walk/cycle way to town, bus 500m

Highlights

We intend to include

Cruise along Rhine from Koblenz to Rudesheim

Wine tasting on both Rivers in Vineyard areas

Visit legendary Lorelei Rock and view castles along the Rhine

Experience historic charms of Koblenz

Visit Drosselgasse in Rudesheim (bring your lederhosen)

We need an indication of interest **NOW** and the group is limited to 12 motorhomes.

Priority will be given to the date of your e mail response and costs will be finalised early next year with deposit details.

Please send your response to

Richard Moss

I'VE LEARNED.....

THAT LIFE IS LIKE A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER. THE CLOSER IT GETS TO THE END, THE FASTER IT GOES!

You will be glad to know that due to son's wedding and visiting family (which includes 2 year old triplets), I'm too tired to type anymore jokes!!

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.

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.