

The

LAIKA[®]



CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN



NEWSLETTER

www.laikaclub.com

ISSUE No 72

Summer/Autumn 2020

Your Laika Club Committee

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

Chair's Chat

What a strange year it has been and still no sign of normality. At least we have now been camping on 2 rallies with Rotary and to Carsington Water in South Derbyshire at £8.50 a night, a good potential for a rally with nearby pub and walks. We've also stayed a few times at my brother's in Anglesey: he has 2 ehu pitches in his grounds alongside a millstream and lake (www.pandycymunod.co.uk).

It's hard work trying to guess what will happen for the rest of the year. We have no definite plans to go away yet but my wine supply ran out a while ago so we must at least go shopping! We may be tempted to a long UK trip, perhaps Scotland. It does seem a shame though to lose the opportunity when our time in Europe may well be limited by the dreaded Brexit.

On the positive side, Teversal site has confirmed that we are welcome there for our Christmas AGM rally, but until nearer the time I cannot confirm arrangements for the pub dinner booking.

With so many cancelled rallies I wondered whether people would be interested in informal rallies – booking a pitch yourself on an agreed date and destination?

I hope you are all well and coping with the frustrations of this year and look forward to meeting up in a field some time soon!

Katrina Lancaster

Apology from the Editor

Sorry this edition has taken so long to put together

Tim Sheppard

Our Thule Awning Tent

With all the restrictions of social distancing we started to think about how we would be able to sit outside and entertain camping friends at the motorhome without doing serious thermal damage to our proverbials when the sun's not shining, or it's pouring with rain. Our solution proved to be of great interest to many passing motorhomers when we ventured to the CAMC New Forest Site in mid July, so we thought it might be of interest to fellow Laika Club Members.

Our new motorhome is fitted with a Thule Awning, and there was no adaptor kit to use the old Fiamma equipment from the previous model, and we didn't really want to "bodge" it. Ideally, we wanted a "Drive-Away" configuration, but we'd previously tried awning sides and drive-away awnings, but somehow they were drafty or seemed dark and heavy, we really weren't happy bunnies!

We contacted "The Journey Centre" in Rotherham (Thule Dealer of the Year!) to discuss our options and were guided towards the **Thule Quick Fit Awning Tent** as a possible solution (pictured).



Configured as a kind of Caravan Awning, the 'tent' attaches beneath the roll-out awning to a rail fitted to the awning frame and hangs from the front cassette box of the extended roll-out awning. It comes complete with a skirt to stop drafts from under the van.

Once erected (about 20 minutes) it forms a cosy enclosed "tent" where you can seat 4 people "Socially Distanced" for a comfy evening away from the elements without guests needing to enter your van to keep warm and dry.

Not forgetting to angle the main awning to throw the rain off, all sides can be lowered and/or removed, and each side has a mosquito net panel at the top for ventilation.

The “Tent” is available in various widths and there is a model for Fiat Ducato type van conversions. We needed to get the rear garage doors open with the tent erected, so a bit of measuring determined the 3.1m wide version would do the job perfectly.



OK, so it’s not “Drive-Away”!.

We initially tried to use the drive-away double Keder strip, but the next gust of wind peeled the tent away, so that idea was going nowhere! Nice try, and it entertained our neighbours, but re-fitting the tent directly to the awning rail was our only option. If all else fails, follow the instructions!!.

It’s relatively easy to dismount, so we’ll just use it as intended, we were more than happy to sit in comfort and watch the rain!

Ian and Anne Allard

An electronic rear view mirror

When we bought our Laika EcoVIP310 motorhome, it came with the standard Fiat rear view mirror, but the only window in the rear wall of the vehicle is a narrow one above the fixed bed so the rear view mirror is of little use apart from potentially spotting low flying aircraft approaching from behind !

The reversing camera is mounted high up on the rear wall so gives a great view of anything immediately behind the van, but nothing beyond that.

We have happily driven some 50,000 miles like this, but recently Katrina's brother mentioned he had installed an electronic rear view mirror which gave a permanent view of the road behind whilst driving and we decided to investigate further.

The mirror unit contains all the electronics and clips over the existing internal rear view mirror with a small camera which is mounted on the rear of the van and plugs in to the mirror unit. The mirror unit also has a forward facing camera which acts as a dashcam to provide a recording of any accidents etc.

The display is a partially silvered LCD display which shows the view from the rear camera, but also reflects the internal view of the van – our eyes quickly got used to focusing on the closeup reflected image or the long distance rear view.

The unit came with a 5-metre lead for the rear camera, but since our van is 6.5m long, I had to get an extension lead. The camera plugged into the mirror with a 4 pole 2mm audio connector so I ordered a 4 way cable with what appeared to be matching connectors, but we could not get the extension lead to work. We then realised that there was another connector close to the camera which has a small 4 pin connector similar to the old DIN Audio connectors, but smaller and entirely plastic. A quick search on Amazon identified a suitable 2.5m extension and with Amazon Prime next day delivery, we were up and running.

I mounted the rear view camera high up on the rear wall of the van so it looks over following vehicles and also doesn't get affected by headlights at night, then ran the cable across the van roof, down a channel above the cab and in above the driver's door.

Finally, I wired a small 12v module into the wiring for the cigarette lighter socket so it comes on automatically when the van starts.



The quality of the rear view is amazing and well worth doing. Because the mirror is a much wider aspect ratio than the camera, you can effectively pan the rear view up and down with your finger on the touch sensitive screen. The dash cam can also save a snapshot of the forward view when travelling by tapping the screen.



We purchased the unit on Ebay with delivery from China as a ‘10in Car DVR Stream Media Dual Lens 1080P Full HD Dash Cam Rearview Mirror’ for £45 – it claimed to have GPS capabilities, but it doesn’t. The 4 pin camera extension cable and power module came from Amazon and cost just over £20 so the total was under £70 – great value.

If anyone want’s more details, let me know.

Tim Sheppard

Rallies in 2020

The ongoing coronavirus situation means that the club cannot run any rallies until there is a change in government guidance.

Where members do meet up anywhere, it has to be on the basis of individual site bookings and nothing to do with the Laika Club.

A number of members are meeting in Bradwell on Thursday 8th October at Eden Tree Caravan Park. A number of members have also booked direct with the site to stay at the Teversal Camping and Caravanning Club site.

Laika Owners Club AGM

This was scheduled for Saturday 5 December at 1600hrs during the Christmas rally, but it is not likely to happen. The Government has yet again changed and confused the rules but it is definitely not possible to hold an AGM at Bradwell this October.

The choice is between a ZOOM meeting and a postponement to whenever. For those who have not yet used Zoom you would get a link emailed to you on which you click to join a video meeting at the stated time. It is really simple and would enable us to elect a committee, and vote on the proposal not to charge a membership fee next year to existing members (we have the £ available). I believe that this option would clear the formalities and help us move forward into hopeful normality sometime next Spring.

Feedback from members has indicated that a Zoom meeting is preferred so a Zoom invite has been sent out for Thursday 26 November at 8pm on the basis that it is before any Xmas events

I have previously had notification that both Jacqui and Charles were resigning their posts as Membership Secretary and Treasurer respectively, and that Eric too has wanted to stand down, although in these difficult circumstances, they are willing to carry on for now. My term of office also ends and I am not able to continue as I have taken on another voluntary post with effect from 1 September on the basis that my term of office would end in December. Traditionally the Vice-Chair takes over, so we are also seeking a new Vice-Chair.

We are a small Club so it is crucial that we all take a turn at being on the committee – please consider volunteering for a post. The current postholders will be happy to enlighten you as to the duties.

The Membership role has been made much easier with the introduction of a custom built (by Tim) database instead of the former spreadsheet. It is now just a matter of entering details onto a form on the screen which requires no knowledge or experience of databases. It's as easy as on-line ordering.

Katrina Lancaster

Rallies for 2021

I hope you have had some use out of vans this year even if it has meant parking it on the drive having a brew up and a bit of lunch inside. Our first trip out this year to Cirencester was on a big site with 200 plus pitches. All full but good social distance protocols in place. We used our own facilities for a whole week for the first time ever as we usually use on site facilities. So we felt entirely safe. That bodes well for our Rallies next year.

I like to look forward to trips booked a long time in advance, I am of the philosophy that a large part of any trip is as much the anticipation as the actual experience. So looking at next year's Rally Calendar we have nothing firmed up but perhaps those of you who kindly agreed to run a rally in 2020 would like to reschedule for similar dates and locations next year. So please e mail me so that I can start to pencil something in before our AGM in December. I think we just have to hope that there will be a vaccine that works well before Spring 2021 and life can return to a degree of the New Normal.

I have been in touch with Wicks Farm Chichester and in principle they would be happy to host us, but with Easter being earlier next year and to avoid school holidays, we are looking at a rally from [Thursday 25th March to Monday 29th March](#) 4 nights. Wicks Farm won't take bookings until they have this year out of the way but we are on their calendar. Costs are not fixed yet but assume c£80-£85 for 4 nights. If you would like to join Karen and I, do send me an e mail please to indicate your interest but no money at the minute. This will give me an idea as to how many pitches to book.

Jacqui and Charles are proposing a rally in Ludlow from [Tuesday 6th to Saturday 10th July 2021](#) 4 nights. Ten pitches have been booked of which six are already reserved. They are 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). Costs expected to be £28 per night, £1 per night for each dog. (It is height of season). A deposit of £25 per unit is required.

Katrina and Tim are proposing a forest and city rally on the Camping and Caravanning Club site adjacent to Delamere Forest (972 hectares) from Thursday 29th April to Tuesday 4th May 5 nights.

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/>

I look forward to hearing from any members who would like to organise a Rally in your neck of the woods or somewhere you have enjoyed and want to share with your fellow members.

All the best and enjoy your trips out.

Murray Chisholm

A quick staycation!

Suddenly getting the news that Tim would be hospitalised in 2 weeks for his postponed knee replacement, we thought we had better get away whilst the going was good and headed for North Yorkshire last Saturday.

We had a great stay at the Stonetrough Inn at Kirkham Abbey, alongside a Laika and 2 other motorhomes.. Excellent food in the pub was the price for our stay. We had interesting starter of tempura gherkins and bread with balsamic oil followed by excellent steaks.

Driving down Sutton Bank, a 25% hill forbidden to caravans, kept our hand in for alpine descents and gave us some excellent views of the countryside. We parked up at Big Bear Cycles right in the centre of Pickering opposite Lidl where we purchased fresh pastries for breakfast and a few items (as you do) from the middle aisle. The day was spent on the North Yorkshire Moors railway travelling by steam from Pickering to Sleights where we were hooked up to a diesel for the final section into Whitby for a pleasant afternoon. We actually stayed on a site that night – Hill Top Farm above Leyburn – for the princely sum of £10 – with a stunning view out to Whernside.

We then meandered over the moors via Richmond, checked out our eyes at Barnard Castle and then had a wonderful journey across to the Ribbleshead Viaduct. It was a stunning day with bright sunshine illuminating the dry stone walls, green fields and of course the sheep, but also quite a lot of cattle. Our bed for the night was on the car park at the Station Inn looking straight out to the nearby Ribbleshead viaduct. Another excellent meal with a very meaty steak pie and a 14oz gammon with 2 eggs then crumble and sticky toffee pudding washing down with 2 J20's and half a bottle of wine for £50. Why spend £20 - £30 on a Club site and then have to cook. Both pubs were dog friendly.



Definitely our preferred mode of camping—Katrina Lancaster



Camper UK

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



Whitby courtesy of Peter Elliott

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.