

The Rallier

West Warwickshire Centre Newsletter

April 2004

www.westwarwickshirecentre.co.uk

Issue 2/2004

Editor

Well, Winter is on its last legs and there are definite signs of Spring. Now's the time to get the 'van sorted for the new season (if you haven't been out already) and sort out those daft little problems that always seem to arise over winter – it always seems to take me at least one change of microswitch each year before I can get all the taps to work properly.

Hopefully, that will become a memory for me as Kay went round the Show while I was on duty on the Caravan Club stand and bought us a new caravan. We were very lucky, because although we had an original promise of a build in early July, we had a call while we were on the bus leaving the Exhibition Halls to tell us that they had made a mistake and that there were still a couple of unallocated builds in early March, so would we like one? Obviously, we said yes, so I am writing this bit near the end of March, having just returned from a two week holiday in Malta, waiting with bated breath for a call to go and collect the new van.

The daft thing is, because of various family commitments and Kay's choir concerts etc. it does not look as if we are going to have many weekends free until late July, so we are going to have to go some towards the end of the season to get our 10 rallies in again. Still, we are hoping we will be able to use the van during the intervening weeks, if not at weekends, so we should get some use out of it during the Spring and early Summer.

Anyway, that's enough about me so I'll just say how much we enjoyed the Social events that we were able to attend over the Winter. The Annual Dinner Dance was superb, although less well attended than we would have hoped and we thoroughly enjoyed both the Skittles and the Fish and Chip Supper. The Centre owes a big thank you to Margaret Wiltshire, our Social Secretary, who put so much work into their organisation and made them such a success. We must also thank all those willing helpers who supported her both at these events and also the Christmas Party,

which I was unable to attend, but understand went equally as well.

One sad bit of news – Bob and Brenda Munnoch have had to give up caravanning for the time being for a variety of personal reasons. I am sure you would all want to join me in wishing them all the best for the future, and to hope that we will see them both out again some time in the future. Bob has been a loyal member of the Club and a long-standing Committee member for several years. His cheerfulness and willingness to help anyone at any time will be very much missed.

Finally, I think we should all take note of Geoff Parker's report on the St. Peter's Rally. His closing remarks are unfortunately very true and we all need to heed them if we want our Centre to continue.

Neil Taylor

More Thanks.

Our Chairman, Mark Wiltshire has asked me to thank, on behalf of the Centre, all those who helped man the Caravan Club stand at the February Show at the NEC. I personally thoroughly enjoyed my 3 or 4 hours, meeting a lot of very nice people and even managed to persuade some newly signed-up members to apply for Centre membership (unfortunately, not one of them was in the West Warwicks area)

The following Centre Members all covered at least one shift at the Show, so many thanks for your contributions:-

Geoff Canning, Derek Chalmers, Jane Clarke, Steve & Jackie Green, Peter & Carol Hodrien, Phillip & Eileen Howitt, Geoff & Liz Parker, Neil Taylor and Roy & Margaret Wiltshire.

We must also thank Dave Varley and Vic Cotton for organising what proved to be a successful and enjoyable ramble in the Lickey Hills – more about this later.

Event Reports.

Annual Dinner & Dance at Drayton Manor, Valentines Day.

A few weeks before the Dinner Dance, Margaret had got very concerned because we had received only about 40 firm bookings and as we were committed to a room where we had to pay for at least 100 covers, things were looking very much as if we might have to cancel. However, this would have still resulted in a substantial loss to the Centre, so true to form, she went into vigorous action. I don't know what her phone bill must be like, but after a lot of calls, she had got the numbers up to around 80 and negotiated a change of room at Drayton Manor to a smaller area with a lower commitment to the numbers attending.

It is a little sad that from three Centres with a total membership of around 3000 we can sell less than 100 tickets for such an enjoyable event. I know a Dinner Dance may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it is an opportunity to put your glad rags on and meet up with old friends. I had great evening, and as Kay will be the first to tell you, I am most certainly not a dancer – she normally manages to get me on the floor only for the last waltz if she applies enough torsional pressure to my wrist.

Peter and Carol Hodrien had done a great job of running the rally side of things, especially as they had to contend with a change of site from the Coach Park to an area of hard-standing that was not really quite big enough for all the attending vans. Thanks are especially due to them because they offered to run the actual rally even though they were not themselves attending the Dance.



The Hall looked marvellous, thanks to Margaret's careful attention to detail and the tables were beautifully prepared. The food was good, nicely served and piping hot and came with a sensible gap between courses that gave you enough time between courses to chat without getting to the stage of wondering where the next course had got to!

After the meal and some short speeches, the Group swung into action with a really good selection of music, with enough variety to suit everybody. I know how successful it was, because nearly everyone was still sitting around chatting well after 12.30. As the Bar had shut at 11.30, this was a real testament to the success of the evening.

In summary, a great evening, which could have been even better had it been supported by more people. Nevertheless, everyone seemed to enjoy it, so congratulations Margaret.

Neil Taylor

Rally Report – St. Peter's School, 27th. – 29th. February

When the members were asked what they would like to see regarding rallies, i.e. venues etc. one of the things that got a high vote was winter socials at venues where we could also rally. – So, the Social and Rally Secretaries got together and came up with St. Peters.

Being the first Centre Rally of the year after the Dinner Dance (which was poorly attended by West Warks) Liz and I both thought that this would be a well attended rally; after all, the members had asked for it!

Surprise, surprise! We arrived around 5.20pm. to see the stewards and.....no-one else. Alan came excitedly to us with a look of relief and after exchanging hellos, I asked if he was saving a place for Pauline and Geoff, pointing to a rather large gap between his caravan and Jane's car. "No", he said, "Pauline is not well and they are hoping to get here tomorrow". "Where do you want us to go then, and how many are coming?" "We had 7 vans booked in, but 2 cancelled during the week."

"Pauline and Geoff are hoping to get here tomorrow, as are Betty and Alex and a couple from East Warks with four children" he said.

Sadly, Pauline was not well enough to come with the 'van, Batty had a fall and could not make it and the family from East Warks never did show up, so the large attendance all got together in our van on Friday night and got rid of the best part of a bottle of whisky and a few beers. The evening only came to an end at around 11.15pm. when we heard snow falling on the roof.

Saturday morning dawned nice and bright, if a bit cold, but we made the short walk into Solihull, shopped, had lunch and a couple of drinks before walking back to the site at 3.30 to be informed that we had won the slip draw!

There was some light-hearted banter at the well attended social on Saturday evening (Where were their 'vans Some even thought we were mad to be out with caravans at all, though we failed to see why when we have been out in not only colder, but worse weather than the weekend in question.

Sunday morning was again bright and cool and we were able to reflect on a few facts, some of which were that it must have been the smallest rally in Centre history and also the only rally where all the ralliers got together in one van, sitting on four seats. Also, the sad fact that here was a rally at a venue that could hold a social and yet the members ignored it.

The saddest fact of all is that we as a Centre, need to be aware that if we continue to trouble landowners to open up their venues, whether it be a school or a farm field, then turning up with a very few vans as is happening all too often, or cancelling them because of lack of stewards or ralliers, then we will lose our venues. No landowner is going to bother with us on this basis. I approached a landowner where we had rallied several times before. He said it was not worth it for him to go to the trouble of moving out livestock for several weeks beforehand and ensuring adequate supplies of water etc. for only 15 – 20 caravans to show up. In our case, it is more likely for 5 – 15 caravans to attend, if the rally takes place at all!

I make no apology for saying this because we are getting to the stage where as I see it, we either start to use the Centre regularly or we should maybe think towards seeking a merger with East Warks Centre, something that has been talked of in the past and something that we have to seriously consider.

So beware folks, we are on a very slippery slope.

Our many thanks to Jane and Alan who went to a lot of trouble, not only on the weekend, but leading up to it. I am just sorry that they were not supported.

Geoff Parker

Fish & Chip Social **- 28th. February.**

The social held at St. Peter's School proved to be very popular, despite the fact that it was a very cold evening 56 people attended. Unfortunately there were 7 who failed to attend (5 of these were a family of visitors from another Centre who had also promised, but failed, to attend the rally)

Alan saw everybody into the car park and then directed them to the warm 6th. Form Common Room. Roy & Alan drove off to get the fish & Chips that Margaret had previously ordered (I don't know if Roy's car still smells!) They were very quickly devoured by everyone and followed up by a selection of gateaux. Margaret had prepared a number of quizzes that seemed to cause a lot of head scratching and deep thought. A raffle was held which raised £52 to go to supporting our social activities.

The only damper on the evening was when someone decided to take a potshot at one of the windows. The police were called and did a quick search of Tudor Grange Park but to no avail. IIT was a bit embarrassing for me as I work at the local Police Station and knew the officers who came out. Luckily, no-one was injured and the chatting continued.

Thanks to everyone who attended, it was really nice to see a lot of faces that many of us had not seen for a long time; hopefully we may be able to repeat the event again next year. There were also two very new faces: Neil and Kay brought along some of their family, including their brand new grandson and Gail and Mark's son Shaun had his second introduction to the West Warks Centre. Hopefully he will soon be a hardened rallier just like his older sister Nicola.

Many thanks must go to Mr. Williams the caretaker from St. Peter's School for providing us with the facility, also to Alan and to Allison & Dave Varley for their help throughout the evening, but most of all a big thank you to Margaret & Roy for organising the whole event.

Jane Clarke

The Winter Ramble

On Sunday 22nd. February, 14 fit looking walkers set off on our winter ramble in the Lickey Hills, a five and a half mile walk. We were comprised of a mixed bunch from West Warks, East Warks and two lady visitors who had picked up a flyer that Dave had put out at our Christmas Social.

It turned out to be a fine dry day, unlike six weeks earlier, when Dave & Allison Varley and Rosemary & myself set out to sus. out the walk in rain and ankle-deep mud – the ladies kept saying how good the mud was for their complexion!

We set out at about 10.00am from the Visitor Centre which gave us a nice down-hill start. Everyone was enjoying the nice views and the very varied terrain. There were a few good inclines but everyone coped OK without complaint – it's just nice to get out in good company and blow out those cobwebs after a gruelling week at work.

A lot of work has been put in on the Lickeys to make these walks as firm under foot as possible, which we found out as we descended the 100 wooden steps (some only counted 94) to get to the road and time for our refreshment stop at the Poachers Pocket Pub.



Guess who?

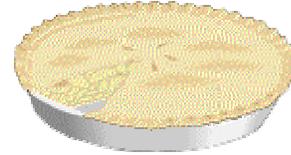
After a good meal and a drink we set off on the last section of the walk. Everyone was given the option of going back to their cars via the steps or to carry on, but nobody gave in, which was great because they were able to get to the highlight of the walk. The path led to the Lickey Rocks, where you could see right out over Birmingham and the viewpoint had arrows on the brass plate pointing out all the landmarks. We proceeded back to the Visitor Centre for a cup of tea and a cake. It was about 4.30pm. by then, so we said our goodbyes and dashed off home in time for "Songs of Praise" on the telly and a good nights sleep.

Why don't more of you join in next year and perhaps we can try the Clent Hills?

Pic Cotton.

Recipe Section

I think it is time I let Mrs. Glasse out of her pantry again. I hope you will excuse me if I go for a modern version (you have no idea how long it takes to go through and change all the appropriate s's into italic f's).

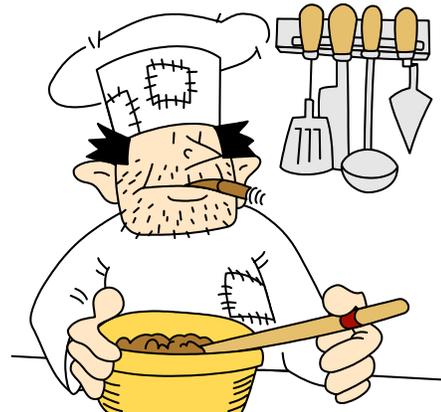


I found this one for a buttered (apple) Tort.

Take eight or ten large codlings (apples) and scald them, when cold skin them, take the pulp and beat it as fine as you can with a silver spoon; then mix in the yolks of six eggs and the whites of our, beat all well together; squeeze in the juice of a Seville orange, and shred the rind as fine as possible, with some grated nutmeg and sugar to your taste; melt some fine fresh butter, and beat up with it according as it wants, till it is all like a fine thick cream, and then make a fine puff-paste, have a large tin-patty that will just hold it, cover the patty with the paste; and pour in the ingredients. Do not put any cover on, bake it a quarter of an hour, then flip it out of the patty on a dish, and throw fine sugar well beat all over it. It is a very pretty side-dish for a second course. You may make this of any large apples you please.

This actually sounds like a practical recipe to me – how about a competition? A bottle of my best Damson liquid Dyno-Rod for the best Tort cooked to this recipe, to be judged by the stewards at the August Bank Holiday Rally.

I have come to the conclusion that Mrs. Glasse may have been an excellent cook, but she could have done with some lessons in punctuation – just check out the first sentence in the above recipe!



Something for our more Senior Members.

I don't think anyone would argue with me if I said that there is a high proportion of our members who are not exactly in the first flush of youth – and I include myself amongst them. (By the time you read this, I will have passed the point where I have to pay for my prescriptions and am entitled to my half-price Bus Pass)

Vic Cotton suggested that I should publish the following as an item of information for our more mature members.

Stay Warm from Powergen.

Did you know about this scheme? It is designed for any household where at least one member is 60 or over to enable you to pay an agreed fixed sum and you can use as much gas or electricity as you need. You can pay by cash, Direct Debit or cheque, exactly as you do now. No worrying about the house freezing up when you are on an early or late season rally; just leave the heating and a few lights on. The amount you pay is based on the number of people living in the house and the number of bedrooms and where you live.

The price you pay will be fixed for a year when you sign up. To find out more or confirm your personal price, phone 0800 1694 694, - 8am. to 7pm., Monday to Friday, 9am. to 4pm. on Saturday. Before phoning make sure you know your Post Code and have a copy of your latest Gas and Electricity bills to hand – Stay Warm

Vic Cotton.

(Ed. There are obviously a few conditions to this – they don't expect you to be heating a swimming pool or a large greenhouse as part of this set-up. Full details of the Terms and Conditions are available from Powergen if you ask. I know a number of households who use the scheme and have found it a real benefit if used responsibly. I am sure that if you went mad and kept your house like an oven all year round, you would very quickly find your next year's price being a lot higher.)

Members' Adverts.

For Sale :

Tow Bar and 12N Electrics for Land Rover Freelander.

Official Land Rover item, not a cheap copy. Easy to fit (15 minutes including electrics)

Price £50

Contact: Patrick Taylor, 0121 708 0521.

Wanted :

Isabella Awning, 975 cms. With IXL Poles. Must be in excellent condition.

Michael Higginbotham, SSCC.

Telephone 0121 544 8023 (Nr. Birmingham)

Message from our Rally Secretary.

Many thanks to Ray & Dee Roberts who have kindly agreed to steward the rally at Elmdale, Studley on 21st. – 23rd. May. They can be contacted at 19, Lyndon Rd., Olton, Solihull on 0121 706 7155.

Thanks also to Liz & Geoff Parker who have volunteered to take on the National Alternative at Mount Farm, Ratley over the Bank Holiday weekend of 28th. May – 1st. June. Contact them at 17 Campden Close, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, worcs. B97 5NJ, or on 01527 541057.

There are still 3 rallies without stewards; we have already had to cancel one because nobody volunteered to steward them, so your help would be greatly appreciated. Please contact a committee member if you are interested in taking either of them on.

The rallies still needing stewards are:

Greystone Farm, Blockley, 4th. – 6th. June. This coincides with the Dover Games at nearby Chipping Camden.

Umberslade Childrens' Farm, Tanworth-in-Arden, 13th. – 15th. August. (Unfortunately, the original stewards have had to drop out.)

Unfortunately, the proposed French Rally that was mentioned in previous Ralliers has also had to be cancelled for the same reason. If anyone

would like to consider running a foreign rally in the future, please contact the Rally Secretary for help and advice.

As often happens, there are a few minor errors in the Rally Booklet – the main one is the date for the 3 Centres Rally, which is in June and not July as stated in the book.

Forthcoming Rallies.

The 3 Centres from 25th – 27th. June is to be held at Riverside Caravan Park, Tiddington, Stratford-upon-Avon. 27-29th. It's our Centre's turn to host this event, when we will be welcoming East Warks and Midland Centres. The theme for the weekend is "Back to School Days". A number of events are to take place, but they are still in the process of preparation. As this is an important rally for the Centre any help and support would be gratefully received. Please contact either myself, Mark Wiltshire or Dave Varley.

Jane Clarke.

Charity Book Sale

During the season Gail and Margaret Wiltshire will be selling books -
Paperbacks 50p and Hardbacks 75p.

All moneys raised will be going to the Centre's charity which will be chosen by a ballot at the AGM in October. Donations of books in good condition will be gratefully received.

The Funny Bit.

Prison vs work

Just in case you ever got the two mixed up. This should make things a bit clearer.

IN PRISON.. you spend the majority of your time in an 8 X 10 cell.
AT WORK... you spend the majority of your time in a 6 X 8 cubicle.

IN PRISON...you get three meals a day.
AT WORK...you only get a break for one meal and you pay for it.

IN PRISON...you get time off for good behavior.
AT WORK...you get more work for good behavior.

IN PRISON...the guard locks and unlocks all the doors for you.
AT WORK...you must carry around a security card and open all the doors for yourself.

IN PRISON...you can watch TV and play games.
AT WORK...you get fired for watching TV and playing games.

IN PRISON...they allow your family and friends to visit.
AT WORK...you can't even speak to your family.

IN PRISON...the taxpayers pay all expenses with no work required.
AT WORK...you get to pay all the expenses to go to work and then they deduct taxes from your salary to pay for prisoners.

IN PRISON...you spend most of your life inside bars wanting to get out.
AT WORK...you spend most of your time wanting to get out and go inside bars.

IN PRISON...you must deal with sadistic wardens.
AT WORK...they are called managers

Have a Great Day at WORK !!



Guess who this time?

Have you ever wondered?

Why women can't put on mascara with their mouths closed?

Why you don't ever see the headline "Psychic wins Lottery"?

Why abbreviated is such a long word?
Why Doctors call what they do "Practice"?

Why you have to click on "Start" to stop Windows?

Why lemon juice is made with artificial flavour, while washing-up liquid is made with real lemons?

Why the man who invests all your money is called a Broker?

Why there isn't mouse-flavoured cat food?

Who tastes dog food when it has a "new and improved flavour"?
Why Noah took pity on those two mosquitoes?

Why they sterilize the needle for lethal injections?

Why they don't make the whole plane out of the material they use for the indestructible black box?

Why sheep don't shrink when it rains?

Why they are called apartments when they are all stuck together?

Why they call the airport "the terminal" if flying is so safe?

In case you needed further proof that the human race is doomed because of its stupidity, here are some actual label instructions on consumer goods.

On a Myer Hair Dryer – *Do not use while sleeping.*

(Damn it, that's the only time I have to work on my hair)

On a bag of Chips – *You could be a winner. No purchase necessary. Details inside.*

(The shoplifter special?)

On a bar of Palmolive soap – *Directions : use like regular soap.*

(and that would be how?)

On some frozen dinners – *Serving suggestion : Defrost.*

(but it's just a suggestion!)

On Nanna's Tiramisu dessert (printed on the bottom) – *Do not turn upside down.*

(Ah, well, only a bit late)

On Marks & Spencer's Bread Pudding – *Product will be hot after heating.*

(and you thought???)

On packaging for a Wal-Mart iron – *Do not iron clothes on body.*

(but wouldn't this save me more time?)

On Boots Childrens' Cough Medicine – *Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this medication.*

(We could do a lot to reduce the rate of accidents in the construction industry if we could get those 5 year olds with colds off those forklifts)

On Nytol Sleep Aid – *Warning : May cause drowsiness.*

(and I'm taking this because???)

On many brands of Christmas lights – *For indoor or outdoor use only.*

(as opposed to what?)

On a Japanese Food Processor – *Not to be used for the other use.*

(Can somebody out there help me with this. I'm a bit curious.)

On a packet of Peanuts – *Warning : Contains Nuts.*
(How about that for a Newsflash)

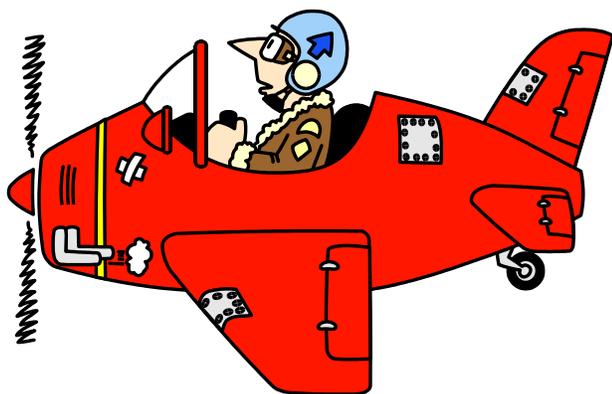
On an American Airlines packet of nuts –
Instructions : Open packet, eat nuts.
(and I always thought cellophane was really tasty.)

On a Child's Superman Costume – *Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly.*
(I blame the parents.)

On a Swedish Chainsaw – *Do not attempt to stop the chain with your hands or genitals.*
(Was there a lot of this happening somewhere?)

Aussie Aircraft Humour.

Qantas is the only major airline that has never had a serious accident. It may have something to do with the way their ground crews operate. After every flight, pilots log any mechanical problems they have encountered on a sheet of paper, pass it to the maintenance crew, who correct and respond. Here are some actual logged problems and solutions from Qantas. Ground crews obviously have the same sort of sense of humour as me!



Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.
Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.
Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

Something loose in cockpit.
Something tightened in cockpit.

Dead bugs on windshield.
Live bugs on order.

Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.
Cannot reproduce problem on the ground.

Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
Evidence removed.

DME volume unbelievably loud.
DME volume set to more believable level.

Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
That's what they're there for.

IFF inoperative.
IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

Suspected crack in windshield.
Suspect you're right.

Number 3 engine missing.
Engine found on right wing after brief search.

Aircraft handles funny.
Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

Target Radar hums.
Reprogrammed Target Radar with lyrics.

Mouse in cockpit.
Cat installed.

Oh, well, that's probably enough nonsense from me. I'm looking forward to getting out with the van and meeting lots of you at rallies later in the year. Providing Kay is still well enough, we are now planning to help Liz and Geoff Parker at the Ratley rally while the National is on.

I don't know why really – Geoff is always such a misery – there's never much fun when he's around! (If you don't know Geoff and Liz, this is the most outrageous lie and I will almost certainly be made to regret it!)

If you come to Ratley, I can guarantee you will leave with aching sides and I can probably ensure a hangover or three if anyone wants to try some home-made plonk.

Have a good Easter everyone, hopefully for many of you it will be on the Rally field – and I will see you soon.

Next Rallier should go out around end of July/early August and I would welcome any contributions – if you don't send anything in you will have to rely on my drivel and no-one wants too much of that.

Neil Taylor.

