

The Rallier

West Warwickshire Centre Newsletter

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Editor

What a year this has been as regards the weather! When I wrote in March, I was just about to head for the Irish National. Now everyone knows that it always rains in Ireland, so how much did I see – about 3 drops one evening! Then we had sweltering weather in the rest of April and early May until the National – Glastonbury conditions, which have more or less continued ever since! In fairness, there have been some breaks though. I must confess, I was not looking forward to running the Charlecote rally immediately after the National, because I knew how bad it had been at both the National and our own alternative rally at Napton and with a weather forecast that did not look at all promising. However, we persevered and after the first couple of days, we actually had some beautiful dry and hot weather. However, there were quite a few sudden squalls, which made forward planning a bit difficult, but we managed to arrange a couple of get-togethers which seemed to go fairly well.

The last couple of weeks have seen the weather back to its old tricks – flooding everywhere, which resulted for us in the movement of the 3 Centres Rally from Riverside to Wilmcote and a lot of damage across the country, with yet more rain forecast for the next few days. As I write, I am thinking about the Charity rally (at Wilmcote again) which is taking place over the last weekend in June. We really need good weather for this one if we are going to maintain our fantastic achievements at fund-raising. I do hope as many as possible of you will try to come out and support us on the day, even if you are not coming out for the rally. Support for our events this year has not been particularly good, except from the usual groups, and it is a bit disheartening for both the committee and the Rally Stewards to see so few members coming out. Please try and come out a bit more often if you have not managed many outings this year. After all, a caravan is a pretty hefty investment and if you are not getting much use out of it, not a very successful one.

During my last editorial, I had a good old moan about problems with my van. Well, I have to say that the dealers appear to have done a pretty good job, Unfortunately, while sealing the roof against evidence of a small amount of damp in the rear corner, their activities have cracked the seal around the rear roof vent. Of course, as I mentioned before – I went off to Ireland and experienced totally dry weather for the next few weeks, so it did not reveal itself until we had a heavy shower at Mansel Lacy. Anyway, I have

reported it and it will have to go back in later in the season to resolve that and my self-removing fire!

The fire has always had a bit of a tendency to jump off its mountings if I encountered any bits of rough road, but it is now virtually unfixable. Unfortunately, whilst on my way from Rosslare to Killarney, I experienced a blow-out on one of the caravan tyres and by the time I had realised what had happened and was able to stop, the van had had a real good shake-up. I was horrified to find that the gas bottle mounts in the front locker had broken free from the bulkhead, the wheel arch liner had pulled away from the body, the fire was completely off the wall, the body work had been damaged and most of the crockery in the van had rearranged itself, with disastrous results. I was able to change the wheel and drive very carefully across to Killarney, where the group at the pre-rally could not have been more helpful. Within the next 48 hours, with help from a number of individuals, virtually everything had been repaired or made usable and a new tyre had been found.

I knew from my previous trip over how helpful and hospitable the Irish can be but I was truly humbled to see how they all rallied round to help as soon as they saw I had a problem. I was able to have a couple of days to really enjoy the Killarney area by the time everything had been fixed. It really is breathtakingly beautiful, although I would have loved to travel round the Ring of Kerry which everyone assures me is even more spectacular. We moved on to the main rally at Listowell up near the Shannon, where the event was being held on the town racecourse. It was an excellent site as regards the facilities available to us, but marred slightly by the view of a very large dairy processing site, which looked more to me like an oil refinery, especially at night when it was lit up and with gas flares burning off. However, any misgivings about the view were quickly dispelled by the hospitality and entertainment we were offered. Although only 148 units attended, it was a very successful rally. Perhaps from my point of view, it was successful because it wasn't too big! Unfortunately, the end of the rally was marred by the deaths of one of the ralliers, just as he was about to join a group of us on a coach trip and also the death of the father-in-law of the Ulster Chairman, who had to leave rather hastily. As a mark of respect, the final party was toned right down, with no music and none of the planned celebrations. None the less, I enjoyed the rally tremendously and will certainly try to return in the future.

After leaving Listowell, I retraced my steps down to Killarney and spent nights at Blarney, Kenmare and Lady's Isle. All the sites used were beautifully kept,

relatively cheap by UK standards and always friendly. I can thoroughly recommend Ireland to anyone for a caravanning holiday. One word of warning however, although the main routes now are very good indeed, some of the lesser main roads appear to have been finished off by road rollers with eccentric wheels – some of the surfaces seem to have more likeness to the surface of the sea than to a level pavement.

Rally Secretary's Report.

Disappointingly, no-one came forward to run the only two rallies which were left without Stewards, so both Huncote and Pebworth had to be cancelled. Next year's programme is well advanced in the planning, but we will have to make a few changes to this year as a result of Site owner situations – for example, Henley High School have decided that they cannot meet Environmental rules satisfactorily to enable them to host rallies, so a new venue will have to be found for our previously regular rally/social in November. Please think about our rallies next year – why not run one, even if it would be a first time for you? Unless more members take rallies on, we will be forced to cancel more and more venues in the future. If you look through this year's rally book, you will see the same names cropping up in the stewards section time and time again. If you want West Warwickshire to survive as a Centre, take an active part in it or lose it. You never know, you might actually enjoy it! I know from my own experiences over the years, you only get out of something what you are prepared to put into it, so why not make an effort?

Rally Report

The National at Blenheim.

(Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud, as the song goes)

Alan and I arrived on Friday afternoon and had a two mile drive through lovely grounds to actually get to the rally. The weekend started with good weather at what can only be described as a beautiful venue. Blenheim Palace is spectacular.

Saturday morning saw the usual opening ceremony when Nicola Wiltshire did a splendid job of unfurling the flag for our centre. The Duke of Marlborough opened the rally. There were 5000 caravans, and it was estimated the rally would bring £2 million pounds to the local economy.

There were a number of dealers there (no, we did not buy a new van), and many other stalls. Unfortunately by Sunday morning it was raining, so those brave souls from our Centre who had intended to do the fun run decided it was not going to be much fun and withdrew.

We had to have the Chairman's reception in our awning. Many thanks to Margaret, Roy, Gail and Mark for helping with the food, and also to Marion for donating the cheese and biscuits.

Monday just got worse; they stopped all vehicle movement. As we were situated at a cross roads for vehicles moving around the site, we sat in our van and watched cars, vans and motor homes get stuck and being towed. Alan even gave a helping hand. It was a shame that some people do not appear to understand the meaning of the yellow flag (no one from West Warwickshire thankfully).

Tuesday was lot brighter and drier, but the ground was still so bad it was tow ropes out to the ready. Mark and Alan helped a number of vehicles off the rally. Our thanks must go to Margaret and Roy who were the Centre Line Officers once again. They did an excellent job. It was a shame about the weather, as we never got chance to go round the house or gardens.

Next year is at Holkum Hall in Norfolk, hopefully we will have better weather.

Jane & Alan Clarke

Charity News.

As you read this, I hope you will either be at the Charity Rally or preparing to come and visit us for Saturday afternoons activities. For those who do not know, one of our most successful fund-raising events over the last two years has been the ritual leg-waxing endured by Alan Clarke (in 2005) and myself last year. This year we are going one better, with a sponsored chest wax for Mark Wiltshire and Dave Varley. Please support them in their agonies – I know what it felt like having the legs done and I really do not want to think too hard about what having the hairs ripped off your chest would feel like.

Please support your Centre in this – we still need donations for the Tombola and Raffle and cakes etc. to sell. All donations or pledges can be passed to any of the Committee members. We have been lucky as a Centre not to need the services of the Air Ambulance Service – let's hope none of us ever do – but they do provide a very valuable and vital service to the community, especially those who spend their time in "off the beaten track" places. One or two of our rally sites immediately spring to mind – how would you like to try to get an ordinary ambulance in and out of Horley? Anyway, we are determined to raise as much as we can, so efforts will continue throughout the year.

Centre Website

I hope as many of you as have access have had a look at our revised web-site. Dave Varley (with help from Dave Waring) has done an excellent job on our behalf. He would still like to compile a list of members who have e mail addresses, so please drop him an e mail with your address. It will make it so much easier and cheaper to contact you if we have this information.

He can be reached at
webmaster@westwarwickshirecentre.co.uk.

Recipe Section

Once again a disappointment – Margaret did not receive any recipes from you to try and create the WW cook-book, so the idea had to be abandoned. I believe this is still a worthwhile section, but as most of you know by now – I am not much of a cook if you remove my frying pan or curry spices. So, why not have a think and send me items I can either use in the Rallier or save up to use in a future cook book?

Future Social events.

Christmas Party 2007

I know this is a long way ahead, but why not put it in your diary now – our Christmas Party for 2007 is already booked for Saturday 8th. December at the usual venue – Bentley Heath Community Centre. Tickets will be on sale for this and other winter social events for Winter 2007 well before the end of the rallying season.

Sandra Burden.

Future Rallies.

There are a number of good rallies coming up in the next couple of months. The usual Chalmers/Breakspear combination will be running a Rambling Rally at Bourton on the Water over 6-8 July. This is a beautiful location, near the very attractive village and they always put on a very enjoyable ramble.

John and Sandra Burden, with Geoff Fulwell will be hosting the first of our trial 4 day rallies at Puddleduck Cottage on the following weekend. This is another lovely venue, one of my personal favourites and will give us a chance to see whether such events will appeal to enough people without affecting attendance at rallies that are organised on either side of it.

The rally at the Blue Lias Inn, Stockton proved very successful last year, and although I was unable to attend last year, I am assured that as a venue it is superb. Eileen and Philip Howitt will be your hosts, assisted by Jean Moody.

At the end of July, Liz & Geoff Parker and Viv & Malc Griffin will be stewarding at Edge Hill, Warmington. I believe this is a new venue for us, certainly not one I have visited before and I know that this team of stewards always put on an excellent rally.

The beginning of August sees a return to Button Oak at Bewdley, with Geoff Fulwell, Jean Moody and Brian Gunningham in charge. This is another lovely site, with wonderful walks through the woods and Bewdley is well worth a visit. This is the second of our 4 day trials and is in a beautiful part of the country again.

On 10th-12th August we will be back at Ratley, on the very top of Edge Hill. Margaret & Roy Wiltshire are hosting with Philip and Eileen, so you can be assured of a very well run and enjoyable weekend. I think that Ratley is one of our local jewels – hidden away in a fold of Edge Hill, the village is an absolute delight, with a wonderful old pub and church. It is one of those places that really is “off the beaten track” and deserves a visit.

On the weekend of 17th-19th August, the Wiltshire(Senior & Junior)/Taylor team comes together again for the Gourmet Grub event. This is becoming a bit of a tradition now and has always been thoroughly enjoyable, although it may not be quite so good for the figure. If you want to come along and enjoy a really good meal, book in early, because we will need to allocate bits of the menu to everyone. Don't be afraid by that, no-one will be asked to attempt anything too complicated or difficult, especially if there are plenty coming. We do need to plan in advance for this one if it is going to be a success again, so please break a West Warks tradition and book in early!!!!

I aim to get the next Rallier out by August Bank Holiday, so I will not go much further through the rally calendar at this stage, but needless to say, Jane & Alan and Sandra&Jhon Burden will be running an excellent Bank Holiday rally at Forestside Farm, Uttoxeter. This is another new venue for me, so I can't say very much about it, but I am assured it is a great venue.

Finally, I will mention Call My Bluff at Weston on Avon over 4 days at the start of September. Wendy & Mervyn Roberts, with Betty & Alex Reay will be your hosts at this lovely farm site just outside Stratford. Ke4ep your fingers crossed that all the above rallies are able to go ahead without our changeable weather intervening. I suppose in a way we should be grateful that Pebworth was not still going ahead – I dread to think what the ground is like with all the recent rain – perhaps someone up there is keeping a friendly eye on us!

Page Filler

I thought that on this occasion I would start with some contributions from the children of the Centre. They were asked to write a story at the Horley Rally, so here are some of them. The younger ones had a little help with the actual writing, but I am assured they are their own words.

The stories are all about how a Genie made a wish come true For Steve and Garry

From Rosa, Aged 6

Once upon a time there was a Genie called Memie. He was kind. He granted a wish to Steve and Garry They didn't have to turn the pig anymore and could sit with a beer and enjoy themselves.

From Meg

Steve rubbed the magic Burco and out popped a beautiful Genie. The Genie says "I will grant you one wish."

Steve says "I would love a six-pack." Garry says "OK Steve, you can have this wish because looking at you the other night, you need it more than me!"

The Genie said "OK, give me ten minutes because this is a very difficult one and I don't know if I can manage it." and off she goes.

While he was waiting, Steve was getting very excited about how he was going to look. Garry said "Steve, you won't need celery or humous after all."

Just as he said this, the Genie reappeared with a six-pack of Stella Artois! And said "This was quite a difficult job, but I did manage to get you a six-pack!"

From Tansy, Aged 10.

There was a young Genie from Doncaster Town. He wore a gold shiny crown.

The Genie was very weird

And had a long brown beard.

The Genie made a wish for Steve and Garry.

Steve had fun

Sat on his bum

While Garry was happy as Larry.

From Fraser aged 5 ¾.

The Ping Pang Pong Genie.

One day in a faraway place, in a dark and scary forest, Steve and Garry were hunting for food. Garry was hunting for beer – Steve was hunting for pigs for the barbecue. Garry didn't catch any beer but Steve caught two pigs. "How shall we cook them?" asked Garry. "We could make a fire." Said Steve. Steve and Garry didn't know there was a Genie in the forest.

The Genie jumped out and magicked a can of beer down Steve and Garry's pants.

"How did you do that?" asked Garry. The Genie told them he could grant them one wish. Steve wished for a fire to cook the pigs and the Genie did such a good job that they could dry their pants at the same time.

From Nicola, Aged 9¾

One day in a far off land that no-one had ever Heard of before, there were two very weird men. They were called Garry Donald and Steve Green. One day Steve found a large magical cave with big jaws that go Chomp chomp on anyone who tries to enter. But you would have to be brave to go in it. Steve and Garry were silly people who will take loads of risks. This risk was a big risk to find the magic lamp. It had a very powerful Genie inside.

The two men clambered into the cave with five stumbles turning up. When they went further into the cave Garry spotted some crystals, but these were not ordinary crystals. These were magic crystals. If anyone touched them they would instantly turn into a llama. This llama would run around causing 100% havoc.

Garry soon walked on and spotted the most magical lamp ever. Steve picked it up and tried to clean it but when he rubbed it three times a Genie popped up in the corner of the cave. The Genie explained they had three wishes each. Steve wished they were out of the cave with the lamp to live in peace and to eat everything. Garry's wishes were to live without war, to live without poverty and to eat all the chocolate he wanted.

These wishes were granted and the world was a lot happier place (apart from eating unhealthily!)

I can only say one thing - "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings....."

Kids' imaginations are wonderful and it is amazing how perceptive they can be! I have been hoping for some time now that I could find someone to take over the Rallier and I think there are some very worthy contenders coming along!

To be serious, much as I have enjoyed producing the Rallier for the last four years, I am finding that the work load always seems to come at times when my Treasurer's role is at its busiest. I think you need a change after this time and I would certainly like to be relieved of some of the work involved, even though it is not too arduous. If there is anyone out there who would be interested in taking over the role, please let me know. I promise I would help as much as I can and would ensure you got at least one rally report for every issue.

Best wishes to all for the rest of the season,

Neil Taylor.