

The Rallier

West Warwickshire Centre Newsletter

August 2004

www.westwarwickshirecentre.co.uk

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Editor

I am starting to prepare this issue in the middle of August – at least that is what the calendar says it is – as we are suffering from thunderstorms, flash floods and horrible sticky heat, I am beginning to think I am somewhere in Bangladesh during the monsoon season, rather than in sticky Solihull. Still, it has so far not affected the rallying over the last few weeks. I have been fortunate enough to be able to get out to Newlands, Button Oak and Marston Edge in the last three weekends and am intending to get to Umberslade, Blythe Fisheries and several more before the end of the season. Certainly the weather was kind on the ones I have attended so far, so let's hope the kindness continues for the next few weekends at least.

All three rallies I attended recently were very enjoyable, particularly Button Oak, which I thought was a fabulous site. I gather that the worm charming at Marston was also great fun – I missed the competition as I attended a wedding on the Saturday – but not very productive in terms of worms. I understand that it did produce some very interesting photos however, so I hope I will be able to include some of these before publication.

I would like to offer my personal thanks to Peter Hodrien and John Burden who came to my rescue (thank God for mobile phones) when I caught my motor mover on a kerb in Bewdley on my way home, which pushed it into and burst a tyre on my van. Needless to say, my ensuing stay at the roadside had a marvellous effect on the traffic flow through Bewdley on a Sunday afternoon!. Unfortunately, as I had just had the van sorted with a couple of warranty jobs, I had not bothered to carry my normal tool kit, so I had to ring for help to borrow tools to free off the motor mover to get my spare wheel back on. Peter and John came straight out to my rescue and got me going again after an hour or so. Many thanks, gentlemen – your help was very much appreciated.

I suppose my main topic of conversation in this edition should be the forthcoming Stewards meeting and the AGM. As you are aware, we

have had to cancel some rallies this year owing to lack of stewards, so it really is important that we get a good attendance at the Stewards meeting and that volunteers come forward to run next years' rallies. Attendance at recent rallies has been creeping up a bit, so I am optimistic that next year we will be able to run all the rallies we plan. Numbers at rallies are important, we have already seen a number of sites refusing to take bookings unless we can guarantee at least 10 vans. Also, I am aware that a number of members think that our rallies are getting too expensive. This is partly due to the fact that we have to pay VAT on every penny we collect in, even if a site is not VAT registered, but it is also partly due to not being able to negotiate better rates by promising good attendance.

I plan to give a very brief presentation on how we arrive at our charges for rallies during my report at the AGM, so perhaps that will enable members to have a better understanding of why our charges appear to be so high, but make so little profit.

That brings me neatly to the AGM. Please attend the meeting, even if you cannot make the rally. It is important that you show your support for the Centre and also use the opportunity to raise any points that you wish to be discussed.

(Don't forget, if you want any specific item to be discussed, it needs to be passed to the Hon. Secretary by Sunday 5th. September, as per the Rule Book)

Also, this is the opportunity to elect next year's committee. There will be some changes this year, notably that of Mark Wiltshire standing down as Chairman after 3 excellent years, where he has quietly and efficiently managed the overall operation of the Centre. We need your nominations for Officers and Committee members – in fact we need you! So please come along and support us and tell us what you want us to do for the future to make your caravanning more enjoyable. Again, I need to remind you that committee nominations should be handed in by 26th. September, i.e. The Stewards meeting.

Neil Taylor

A Word of Warning

After what I have just said about mobile phones, I think I ought to include this item from a rueful Geoff Canning!

Did you know that if you receive a call to your mobile phone while you are on holiday on the Continent you will be charged by the European service provider? The actual charge will be passed on to and then levied by your own service provider, be it T Mobile Orange or whoever. Voice Mail recovery is also similarly charged.

A casual enquiry from an unknown gent about alternative rallies to the National whilst we were in Brittany cost us £1.52!

Geoff Canning

Centre News.

The Centre has recently purchased a sturdy 10m x 3m Gazebo, with curtain sides. We got it a bargain price and intend to make it available as an alternative to hiring a village hall on smaller rallies. However, we don't expect it will be used every weekend, so we are going to make it available to members to hire out for family parties etc. at a cost of £10 for the weekend. It will be kept at Peter Hodrien's house in Solihull and you would need to collect and return it if you make use of it. If anyone wants to make hire it, contact Peter direct – his address and telephone number are on the Committee page of the rally book.

G.T.S Clarke.

It is with sadness we learn of the death of the Centre's first Chairman, George Clarke. George was Chairman for 5 years, afterwards looking after the Centre accounts as Treasurer for a further 5 years. During that period, he also represented the Centre on the Caravan Club Council. He left the Centre Committee on his appointment to the Caravan Club Executive Committee, a position he held until two years ago when he was forced to resign due to ill health.

In later years, he moved to Yorkshire to be nearer his daughter, joining the local Centre.

Our condolences are extended to his daughter Amanda and her family.

Rally Reports.

Three Centres Rally, Riverside Caravan Park, 25th.-27th. June.

This year it was the turn of West Warwickshire Centre to host this rally, with members from the East Warwickshire and Midland Centres participating. The theme was "Back to School Days" and ralliers were encouraged to dig out their old uniforms. It was amazing what some people produced (What did they get up to at school all those years ago?) No doubt there will be photos for all to see at some time. (See the web site for a sample – Ed.)

The rally opened at 2.00pm in bright sunshine. Some ralliers were able to take advantage of this good weather and walked the short distance into Stratford with the path following the river for part of the way.

Saturday morning was a different story, with quite a lot of rain, but the committee and other helpers were not to be deterred and prepared an excellent cooked breakfast in the "school canteen" for those who wanted it. It was superb, with orange juice, egg, bacon, sausage, black pudding, beans, mushrooms and bread, followed by tea or coffee. And all for only £1.50! The Centre's new 'mini marquee' was put to good use and provided all the cover that was needed.

Unfortunately, the rain continued and the planned school sports had to be cancelled, but the Strawberry and Cream Tea went ahead in the 'canteen' after a gallant team went out and picked the strawberries in spite of the heavy rain. Another job very well done. The evening barbecue also fell foul of the weather but many ralliers again made use of the new marquee for a noggin and natter session until about 11pm.

Sunday dawned much brighter and sunnier so the school sports and games went ahead, albeit a day later than intended. They included running, egg and spoon, sack and wheelbarrow races, followed by a game of rounders which ended in an honourable draw at two rounders for each team. Flag was held at 12.30 at which the usual announcements were made by each Centre in turn and prizes for the competitions were awarded.

Many hands helped in taking down and putting away the 'mini marquee', making it a quick and easy job. We are sure that it will continue to serve the Centre well in the future. It certainly proved its worth during this rally as the venue for breakfast, strawberries and cream and the noggin and natter. These events would have been very much more difficult, if not impossible, without it. It also gives more opportunities to get together, meet with old friends and make new ones. Our thanks to everyone who put such a lot of effort into providing a most enjoyable weekend for all our members and visitors in spite of all that the weather threw at them.

Helen & David Cheshire.

Ash End Farm, Middleton, 16th. – 18th. July.

Once again it was a pleasure to attend the rally at Ash End Farm with a small select group. It was lovely to see Bob & Sylvia Hill who had travelled 200 miles to be with us. We also had visitors from East Warwicks i.e. Roy & Brenda Collins with their delightful granddaughter Leah. Bob & Peggy made us most welcome at the farm and Geoff & Val did a very good job as stewards. The rally started with the usual coffee and biscuits on Friday evening and when it started to get chilly, we retired to Garry & Sue's awning for a few drinks and a good old natter to catch up on all the news.

When we arrived at the rally, we were all handed two pieces of paper and a plan of an aeroplane, which had to be constructed for Saturday afternoon. At the appointed time we all made our way over to the Stewards van where the competition really started. Brian Trubshaw (Bob Webb) judged the Concours D'Elegance which was won by Steve Green. Then the competition on whose plane could fly the longest distance started with everyone having three throws. I won the longest and the shortest flight! It was lovely to see adults behaving like children, you can only get that on the rally field.

Saturday evening started with a communal barbecue after which we retired to what had been Bob's workshop. We had a very enjoyable evening having a few drinks and going back to school with a few quizzes, several of which had been compiled by Bob & Sylvia Hill.

Sunday morning dawned fair and at Flag we learned that Jackie Green knew her flowers by

winning the competition. Peggy offered to take us for a walk to view the new house and garden. We shall miss going to Middleton but we wish them well for their move.

It was only a small rally with 6 vans but we all had a most enjoyable time.

Margaret Wiltshire.



We had fifteen vans booked in but received a telephone call from one of our first time ralliers cancelling because he had car trouble. Neil Taylor's Daughter Sam and two grandchildren along with Veronica and Les Voss and grandson were attending their first rally as West Warwicks Members. The longest tow for the weekend was Brenda and David Whither from the Isle of Wight. They have rallied before with the centre and enjoy the friendliness of our members so they are now thinking of joining us. We also had visitors from the Herefordshire Centre Brenda and Roger Graham who say they have done more West Warwick's rallies than Herefords, we are working on them to join the Centre.

Our rally opened early so people could make it a nice long weekend, and with the weather forecast to be hot and sunny everyone seemed to enjoy lazing around.

Friday night we had a welcome drink and took names for the Worm Charming Competition. We had nine pairs of people register some even named themselves e.g., The Wigglers, The Rigglers, Wrinkles, The Charmers, The Weedlers, The Wormers, The Titchy Wigglers, all seemed very enthusiastic about the event. The evening was warm and sunny so people stayed and chatted while Malcolm kept mixing his secret summer cocktail and Viv and myself kept the glasses topped up. Geoff did his usual PRO. They say women can talk.

Saturday seemed hotter than ever... Just after lunch the Stewards that's Brian, Viv, Malc, Geoff and myself started to mark the plots out and number them ready for the plot draw at four. After everybody had drawn plot numbers they were rushing off with their jar for storing the worms in ready for counting. They were running backwards

and forwards with their watering cans to the tap watering their plots and getting ready.

Some brought umbrellas, some brought radios with music playing, Eileen had wind chimes, some even placed crock worms in their plots, and Ken Smith had incense sticks burning together with a contraption with pieces of carrot hanging under it. After a quarter of an hour spent watering and getting their plot ready the worm charming started, with everyone busy digging in their forks rattling the prongs with spanners, screwdrivers, music playing some even singing everybody was very engrossed in trying to find worms. Mervyn had a garden fork with all the prongs sticking out like one of those garden soil aerators, Everyone had twenty minutes to find a worm but did they? NO, NOT ONE WORM! We could not believe it so Geoff and Viv thought they would have ago, the last time they did it they only found fifteen and the winner found one hundred and twenty six. After spending a short time trying they decided the worms must have something better to do under ground. What no worms in this land or was it just too hot and dry. What a disappointment'

Later on Saturday we had a Noggin and Natter evening where everyone took part enjoying the warm pleasant evening watching someone above us in a hot air balloon.

We passed pen and paper round with the alphabet written down the side of paper and everyone had to write a sentence starting with the next letter, I expect you guessed it The theme got onto worms, it will be printed somewhere in the Rallier for others to read. It was a little bit of fun, and it was really great to be able to sit out until late and be warm.

Sunday already and flag took place with the landowner Mr Hands present and assuring everyone he has worms on his land. He even told us where we would find plenty. (Far too late now)

Children's Competition under fives - Fraser handed in his colouring competition and won a prize of reading books on worms. The Adults competition set by Viv with all the questions on worms was won by Neil and Sam, they won a bottle of Worms Blood with a hint of rotting leaf mould (Rose Wine). For the Worm Charming winner we decided we would have a plot number draw which Mr Hands drew the lucky plot number four out, which happened to be Brenda and David Whillier. For their prize they received a tin of chocolate worms, a garden hand fork and a bottle of wine.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves in a different way this weekend, we must thank you all for attending our rally and giving us your full support in taking part. A big thank you also goes to Viv Malc, and Brian for everything you did, Geoff for keeping us all organised and on our toes.

We were sure as we left the field that there were lots of worms laughing and waving goodbye, or were they?

That's all Folks!!! until next Year

Elizabeth Parker



Recipe Section

Sorry! Nothing available this time. Come on ladies (and gents) surely you have something to share with us!

Members' Adverts.

For Sale :

Eurovent awning to fit Award Brightstar or similar van (awning length 8.75 metre) Excellent condition, 4 zip out panels, polyester 10 cate fabric and no tears or rips.

Best offer over £100 secures, available to borrow on trial if required.

Old Porch Awning, quite serviceable but will not fit a very high van - £10 or best offer.

Also Alko 2000 stabiliser hitch, complete with new friction pads. Easy to fit and adjust on any van with two horizontal fixing points in the draw bar for the hitch. £75.

Contact: for all three of the above items

Neil Taylor, 0121 707 6981 or 07721 426001 or e mail neil.kay@virgin.net

For Sale : CARAVAN SOLAR PANEL, 14 watt with carrying bag.

As new condition – Cost £140, accept £95 o.n.o.

Tel : 07958 599133

(Viv or Malc Griffin)

For Sale : Isabella Porch Awning, 628 Green with Fibreglass Poles. Includes curtains and ground sheet.

Enquiries and offers to Geoff Canning on 747 6525.

Message from our Rally Secretary.

Please don't forget to come along to the Stewards Meeting, even if you can't make the rally for the whole weekend. We have a good programme booked for next year, but unless you come along and take on the running of these, we will be back to cancelling venues again and potentially losing them for ever!

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.

So far the sales are going well, so there should be a reasonable sum to donate to a charity. Come along to the AGM and lobby for your choice.

Page Filler

I have had a couple of things passed to me for this edition. The first is home grown – during the social evening after the Worm Charming competition at Marston Edge, someone had the bright idea of passing round a sheet for people to put on their comments.

I attach the results, exactly as they were written!

Anyway, said Geoff, What are we going to do?

Bloody worm charming – no way.

Can't we get Pxxxx instead?

Drunk do you mean?

Every time I have a tot.

Funny thing these worms, but they aint daft are they?

Gracious no! They were putting up umbrellas on our plot!

Hope this field owner doesn't want to start a worm farm.

If he does, he will have to import them from Worminster!

Just order a dozen and watch them multiply.

Katch me if you can said the worm – ha-ha –ha!

Load of idiots digging for non-existent wriggles.

Mark my words, there have never been any worms in this field.

Now, where was that promised Coach with all those worms?

O Dear, no worms.

Perhaps you have the runs!!

Queer worms don't go out in the sun.

Really, I thought they were up for anything!

Seems they were up to something more exciting underground.

At this point, the participants ran out of steam, or maybe wine? Whatever, it gives all members a chance to review the high intellectual level at which our rallies run!

Thanks also to Geoff Parker for passing the following on to me. It is a sort of variation on the old Blonde jokes, but with the tables turned. Ladies, you should appreciate these!

For the eyes of the fairer sex (and only for men who can handle it)!

He said..."I don't know why you wear a bra; you've got nothing to put in it." She said..."You wear pants don't you?"

He said.."Shall we try swapping positions tonight?" She said "That's a good idea – you stand by the ironing board while I sit on the sofa!")

He said "What have you been doing with all the grocery money I Gave you?" She said "Turn sideways and look in the mirror."

On a wall in a Ladies Room "My husband follows me everywhere." Written just below it "I do not!"

How many honest, intelligent, caring men in the world does it take to do the dishes?
Answer – Both of them!

How does a man show he is planning for the future?
He buys two case of beer!

What is the difference between men and Government Bonds?
The Bonds mature.

Why are blonde jokes so short?
So that men can remember them.

How many men does it take to change roll of toilet paper?
We don't know; it has never happened!

Why is it difficult to find men who are sensitive, caring and good-looking?
They already have boyfriends.

What do you call a woman who knows where her husband is every night?
A widow.

Why are married women heavier than single women?
Single women come home, see what's in the fridge and go to bed. Married women come home, see what's in bed and go to the fridge.

What is the one thing that all men at singles bars have in common?
They're married.

Man says to God: "God, why did you make women so beautiful?" God says "So you would love her." "But God" the man says, "Why did you make her so dumb?" God says, "So she would love you."

Here's something for all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives.

At a recent computer meeting, Bill Gates allegedly compared the computer and motor industries, saying "If General Motors had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25 cars that did 1000 miles to the gallon."

In response to this, General Motors issued a press release, stating
If General Motors had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day.

Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.

Occasionally, your car would die on the motorway for no reason. You would have to pull over to the side of the road, close all the windows, turn off the ignition, restart it and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason, you would accept this.

Occasionally, executing a simple manoeuvre, such as a left turn, would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart; in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.

Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive – but would only run on 5% of the roads.

The oil, water temperature and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single "This car has performed an illegal operation" warning light. The airbag system would ask "Are you sure?" before deploying.

Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio aerial.

Every time a new car was introduced, car buyers would have to learn to drive all over again, because none of the controls would operate in the same way as the old car.

You'd have to press the Start button to turn the engine off.

Finally, thanks to Viv for the following advert spotted in a Why magazine – for anyone towing their caravan with a bicycle I imagine!

SECURE STORAGE

Touring caravan and Raleigh field, near Stratford Upon Avon. Please ring for details.