



## ***CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER***



### **Chairman's Chatter Spring 2013**

Hi there everyone, well another camping season dawns, and the sunshine over the last few days has certainly whetted our appetite for getting out there into the Countryside, Seaside, Towns and Cities, where ever it takes you, you are never far from a C.L., 5 Van, Club Site or Commercial Site to park yourself up and enjoy your outfit.

I know some members will have upgraded their outfits. It always amazes me that you think you have everything and out comes another model with something new to help you enjoy your camping. Improvements recently, particularly on Caravans, include, Wheel locks onto the Chassis, Panoramic Windows, that let in so much light, Wet Heating Systems that circulate hot water round the van even through a towel rail in bathrooms, the emergence of 2 single bed layouts, even bigger fridge freezers, Caravan T.V.s with satellite receivers, DVD players, photo card readers, etc. All included in one set, self starting generators, Vans with factory fitted Solar Panels, not to mention even bolder graphics and upholstery etc etc the list goes on and on....

Sorry the "chatter" is bit shorter this time but being pushed by our publication team, so I'll say bye for now and see you all on the rally field.

Happy Camping and best wishes to all.

*Tony*

# Meets 2013

Members have discussed three meets for 2013.

1. **Peterborough** – The National Motorhome Show 18 – 22<sup>nd</sup> April. This is the meet at which we hold our AGM, usually about 4.00 p.m on the Saturday to give any day visitors a chance to attend. To pitch up with the club and get a small discount you need to book in by 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Google The National Motorhome Show to book on line. If anyone requires a paper booking form, contact me on 01302885826.
2. **Exeter** 14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> June – Midsummer Event at West Point Arena. This is a new venture and we hope to attract and meet up with some of our West Country / Southern members. The intention is to be more of a rally with some “activities!”.
3. **Lincoln** – Season Finale Motorhome show where we get together to share our adventures during the year before some members migrate to warmer climes for the winter.

Further details about all of the above will be circulated by email nearer the event.

Bill Lowes

## Fun with words..... (Courtesy of Burton)

- How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.
- Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!
- A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.
- I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.
- Haunted French pancakes give me the crêpes.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- I tried to catch some fog, but I mist it.
- They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Type-O.
- Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- Broken pencils are pointless.
- What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.
- I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.
- All the toilets in New York's police stations have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.

## Andrea and Kevin's Portugese Winter Trip

We left the UK in the middle of November, after a weekend of birthday celebrations, (several of our family have winter birthdates) combined with an early exchange of family Christmas presents.

Fortunately we had a calm crossing from Dover to Calais (always the cheap option when booked via the Caravan Club), and decided to head to Rouen and the Municipal site there, for our first overnight stay, having used it three years ago. That was our first mistake! After congratulating ourselves on a good journey and finding our way in to the campsite with ease, we were confronted by closed gates and a very desolate scene! Oh well, not to worry we will travel on to Ranville, which is north of Caen, to another "preferred site"(Les Capucines), having telephoned Madam to ensure she was open and had vacancies . This should have been a straightforward journey using roads and motorways known to us, but we didn't count on the local road works and ensuing road closures!! We eventually arrived at Ranville, after a journey in the dark and drizzly rain, which included some very narrow and winding lanes, where oncoming drivers were not expecting to meet a motorhome travelling in the opposite direction!

We spent a couple of days at Ranville, which is a lovely village, where there is a British War Graves Cemetery, and the site is within a mile of the Pegasus Bridge and its Museum. The local people are very friendly and there is a small supermarket and bar/café. This site is also good for touring the local beaches and for trips to Caen and Bayeux, with its wonderful tapestry.

Feeling refreshed, we prepared to leave at 10am for the next leg of our journey, but the engine decided otherwise and refused to start! The first time in seven years that Knausy has let us down. After a call to our breakdown service a very jolly monsieur arrived with a big transporter within forty minutes. With much gesticulating and broken French, he put his head under the bonnet, did a bit of tweaking and then started it up! It seems that there was an air lock in the diesel line and he showed Kevin how to deal with it, should the situation arise again. We were on our way within an hour of our initial call which we thought was pretty good service.

We stayed at Rennes for a few days, at a very much updated municipal site, and which is conveniently situated for the trams into town, before moving on to a rural at Bilos, near Salles, just south of Bordeaux. This site is situated on the edge of the Pine Forests, and is a good walking and cycling area for us mature folks, as it's fairly flat!

From Bilos we travelled our usual route down the west coast of France, where it was pretty wet and cold, and across Northern Spain, staying one night just south of Miranda at a wonderfully named site-The Monument Al Pastor-- complete with a huge monument depicting a shepherd and his dog, which can be seen for miles around, before heading towards

## Portugese Trip (cont)

Plasencia and the campsite at Parc National Monfrague.

However this next stage of the journey took a little longer than anticipated due to the fuel problem rearing its ugly head!!! Not only was the air lock a nuisance when starting the engine, it had affected the fuel gauge readings! (Unbeknown to us of course!) So there we were confidently heading for our scheduled fuel station, when the fuel warning light showed---no problem we thought as we have only a few kilometres to go, but hey presto, almost immediately the engine died!!! There was much muttering and a red face or two, as Kevin usually knows to the last litre/kilometre and plans our journeys to ensure we re-fuel at the right time!!! So it was yet another call to the breakdown service, because you are not permitted to walk along the autovia, as often there's no hard shoulder, and anyway the Spanish style of driving can be a bit worrying! We were well looked after by the Spanish equivalent of the Highways Agency Services, while awaiting the arrival of a transporter to give us a lift to "our" garage, and all was well when we filled up with diesel (still on the back of the transporter, as the driver/mechanic wasn't taking any chances on Knausy not starting up again!). After offering our profuse thanks to this nice Spanish mechanic, we progressed as planned.

The rest of our journey to our winter site in the Lower Alentejo passed without any further problem, but we both hold our breath when starting up Knausy, and have agreed to top up with diesel at the quarter empty mark rather than relying on the gauge, until we have the fuel line and pump checked by our regular Renault dealer.

So here we are in Portugal, feeling very lucky to be missing the cold and snow of the UK winter, and not at all worried by the lack of sunshine this winter, because the torrential rain showers here are filling the reservoirs and encouraging masses of wild flowers all around us, as well as encouraging new grass for the cattle and sheep to graze on, after a year of severe drought. We have had a wonderful festive season here, enjoying the traditions of the locals and our fellow Dutch campers, who had great difficulty in understanding the rules of "pass the parcel", especially with two parcels going round the table in opposite directions!!!

We look forward to returning home after Easter and hope to meet up with you at the Peterborough Show. We are already planning to spend some time in Devon following the Mid-summer show being held this year at Exeter Westpoint ground in June, so if we don't see you at Peterborough perhaps you'll join us at Exeter.

*Kevin & Andrea Hamblin*

## Reflections on France – Rave or Rant?

**Malcolm Evans**

It is mid-October - we have just returned from a month touring in Provence and there are some things which have to be said. The scenery (both countryside and villages) was spectacular, the sea was clear and warm, the local produce in the markets mouth-watering, the rosé plentiful and ideally suited to the climate, and the civic pride (epitomised by the themed gardens on roundabouts on the edge of towns) a delight. But it isn't that.

It isn't even that the condition of the roads (especially RN and smaller) has deteriorated, presumably due to the economic crisis – so have ours! Or that whole towns suddenly become closed and totally deserted (except for bemused tourists) on the stroke of 12.30 (for fear of being struck down by a bolt from the God of Lunchtime Adherence?) – there is something to be admired in a country that is prepared to stick two fingers at the headlong global rush towards 24/7 commercialism. Or even that more and more restaurants seem to be moving towards the 'pizza' or 'grills' variety (or even the dreaded international brands), rather than the glorious individual 'menus' we have come to expect. British food may have been on an upward trend in recent years but we are still in no position to criticise the culinary traditions of others – and great food can still be found with a little more effort than previously (unless it is a Monday night of course when the whole country seems to indulge in a voluntary fast until Tuesday lunch). No, it's none of that, but there are few things which can rapidly lead to a total sense-of-humour loss.

Firstly, if the answer to a question you have asked starts with the words 'c'est compliqué' take a deep breath and prepare for your patience to be tested. 'Where does the footpath to xxxxxx go from here?' 'C'est compliqué.....' Well it wouldn't be if the footpath signs which had been quite good to this point actually carried on rather than disappearing at a roundabout in the middle of nowhere! How much will it cost to rent a car for 3 days? C'est compliqué'..... Why? Your rates on the internet are quite straightforward? Ah, but we don't use those rates, we use these (which require degrees in mathematics and perverse logic to calculate a price approximately twice the internet rate)! At this point the choices are: a) Scream and rant; b) resort to violence; c) go away, reserve a car via the internet, return the next day and hand the pre-paid voucher (with a broad smile) to the person you were talking to the day before. This is accepted politely – accompanied by 'le shrug' – which takes all the fun out of demonstrating that it shouldn't be so \$%\*&!\*# complicated!

Another word to beware of is 'déviation' - no not that deviation (whatever you were thinking) - the 'Déviation' displayed in large letters on a bright yellow sign, normally accompanied by a large number of red cones stretching into the distance, but no sign of any actual 'travaux'. The alternative route normally takes you through the centre of town – a bit slow, but no problem surely? But there are also conveniently timed road works in the town centre, necessitating a double diversion which directs you out of town, under the by-pass

## Reflections on France – Rave or Rant? (cont)

traffic jam primarily caused by the local traffic which was completely ignoring the diversion, slaloming around the barriers and driving through the centre of town! Admittedly, this was the worst example but there were several others nearly as bizarre (and infuriating).

And talking of deviations, what is this fetish the French have suddenly developed for ‘le speed bump’? These objects of torture obviously have their place, but it seems that every town and village is in some sort of race to introduce as many as possible. They seem to have become some sort of status symbol to keep up with the neighbouring villages on little more pretext than to ensure the Mayor’s ‘grand-mère’ isn’t disturbed by traffic noise during her post lunch snooze!

The icon of the French Riviera is St. Tropez – unfortunately this once delightful town is now overcrowded, grubby, expensive and the habitat of some of the grumpiest waiters on the planet. It has become a sort of theme park – people visit either to be seen (the exhibits) or to observe (the customers). The exhibits (alternatively description ‘oligarchs’) normally have an array of accessories to amuse the customers, including mega-yachts, helicopters, wet-bikes, prize-wives (sorry partners) and security guards. The exhibits take their yachts a few miles around the corner and moor off to the glorious Pampelonne Beach for the day – mine is bigger than yours really counts here! They occasionally come ashore and promenade along the beach (accompanied by security guards) to display their ultra-tans (often covering mega-paunches). The bizarre thing is that no one actually knows who or what these exhibits are, so they are really just showing off to the other exhibits! In the late afternoon, with a roar of multiple diesels, they return to St Tropez harbour, probably using as much diesel in 30 minutes as we would for the whole journey from the UK. Me, jealous? No! We won’t be going back, but if you haven’t been it is almost worth a brief visit during opening hours!

Another trend observed – including in St Tropez - is the increasing number of small ‘handbag/shopping bag’ dogs, suggesting that the French may actually have something in common with the Americans after all. This leads me to one of those things which really really has to be said – doggy-do etiquette (small and large) in France simply has to improve. The French seem immune to the example set by visitors from other European countries who are normally assiduous in cleaning up after their canine companions. This necessitates a return to the precautionary ‘eyes down’ approach when walking through many villages, a technique we thankfully no longer have to employ in the UK! Surely this would be a suitable subject for EU legislation – if only that applied in France!

Great holiday – we’ll be back next year in June to see the lavender fields.

*Mr Grumpy (aka Malcolm Evans)*

## Names to Faces or Faces to Names? Knaus Club committee members



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Keren Nicholls (liaison) [liaison@knausowners.com](mailto:liaison@knausowners.com)

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.  
I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.  
PMS jokes aren't funny; period...  
(Burton's jokes cont.....)

Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.  
We're going on a class trip to the Coca-Cola factory. I hope there's no pop quiz.  
I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.  
When you get a bladder infection urine trouble.



**A news sheet for the Knaus Owners Club in the UK**

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The Club website

[www.knausowners.com](http://www.knausowners.com)

Is where Kevin Hamblin would be happy if you could e-mail your experiences to him for others to share.

There is also a Discussion Forum where you can post questions or put up subjects for discussion. Why not log on and see?

Thank You.

*Items for the Newsletter are always required. Don't be shy – tell others about your experiences*

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

**Mike and Jill Dixon** – It is with great sadness that we report to members that Jill passed away on Easter Sunday 2012 after 2 years of fighting bone cancer.

**Ann & Richard Gregory** – It is also with great sadness that we report Richard passing away 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 of heart failure.

Our sincere condolences to all concerned.

**Des Fisher and Lynn** – Lynn suffered from a stroke in October and she is making steady progress. Des was hoping she would be home this month.

**Tony Roots**— is quite poorly and is currently having chemotherapy. Bett says they have sold the motor home as they do not think they will ever be able to have that type of holiday again. A very sad time to see it go but they send their best wishes to all the members.

Our “Get Well Soon” wishes go out to Lynn and Tony.

## FOR SALE

After 5 years I have now sold my Knaus Sun Ti and I have the following parts for sale.

- Taylor Made long line External Silver Screen with fold down centre panel for Renault Cab -for sale at £50
- Set of Locking Wheel Nuts for a Renault based SUN Ti fitted with Allow wheels- For sale at £25
- Renault Master one piece rubber mat to go across the cab - genuine Renault Part which protects the carpets in winter- For sale at £20

If anyone is interested in any of the above, then please contact **Alan Rumney** on 07929 353240 in Warwickshire or email [alanrumney@talktalk.net](mailto:alanrumney@talktalk.net)

**Keren** is buying a Van Ti and so is selling her 2006 Knaus Sun Ti 600LF automatic (18,000 miles) with solar panel, Fiamma awning and 2-bike rack for £28,000 ono. If interested please telephone 01282 850586 or 07552460527 or e-mail [liaison@knausowners.com](mailto:liaison@knausowners.com)

## More of Burton's one-liners!

- I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.
- Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
- I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.
- I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.
- This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.