

East Surrey New Year Bash

Mama Mia, we shook our pants with coats on! We were kindly invited to attend the East Surrey Centre's New celebrations so quite a few of us took them up on the offer and I for one am glad I did.

We turned up on Wednesday and the West Sussex crew went out for a meal. After that we joined our Surrey friends and had a pleasant evening. Mark from East Surrey caught me out a treat! He asked whether West Sussex were up for a laugh to which I obviously replied that we were. We then ended up jumping through ever decreasing diameter hoops whilst holding hands with the person next to you! What a laugh that was especially for some of our not so small or supple members! New Years eve was spent in the main hall where we were provided with a lovely buffet and disco. A lot of West Sussex hot air was used in blowing up dozens of balloons. Earlier in the day the heating had packed up but thanks to Dave 'The Power' Wightman it got fixed. As soon as the disco started the West Sussex ladies were up and at it one of whom (Sandy) was wearing a very nice lilac duffel coat. I think the 'Duffel Coat' dance could catch on! New Years Day evening saw us watching the film Mama Mia. We were given pop corn on arrival. Once the projectionist got the film rolling it was apparent that more ladies than men were willing to sing along to the music of ABBA. At a half time break we were given hot dogs. What a lovely treat that was. All in all a great weekend. Thank you East Surrey **Nick Harris**

Valentine Rally Rother College - Midhurst 12-14 February 2010

The rally officially started with a phone call at 17.30 from Sandy asking if the convoy of caravans waiting at the gate could come in, Dave and Geoff sited the vans which seemed to turn up in a steady flow and soon the first tennis court was full and the larger vans were sited in front of the dining room. The remaining vans were squeezed into the netball area. When everyone had settled in, a large group adjourned to the pub at the top of the hill. The end of the evening saw a rush for the kebab house and a few weaving their way back to their caravans. Saturday was a relaxing day and with a large groups' help the dining room was readied for the evening with most people then doing their own thing. With a dedicated team, and veiled in mystery Carol, and Dave (Rudi) prepared their concoctions - the famous Wightman Chilli and the not so popular Rayner Bolognese, ably assisted by Lynne and Geoff Lambe and Dave Wightman, Six o'clock arrived with most people turning up wearing something red and Val Rayner and her daughter, Debbie arriving carrying a Vegetable Lasagne. After the meal and the seconds and thirds, Nick our chairman and Sandy welcomed all those attending, especially the new ralliers and visitors, presenting each with a suitable piece of plastic, before we all danced the night away to Les and his Disco. Laurie Manning, Val Rayner and Zoe and Del Lerwill all had something special to celebrate as Laurie, Val and Zoe all had birthdays and Del and Zoe celebrated their wedding anniversary. Dave Wightman also thinking along the theme of wearing something red decided to air his legs and other bits and pieces by wearing a kilt! Not sure which clan's tartan it was, however we are reliably informed he stuck to the traditional form of attire under the kilt! **Dave Rayner**

White House Farm, Uckfield - 12-14 March 2010

We received a warm welcome from Del & Zoe Lerwill on this, the first rally where they were rally officers. Unfortunately the rally had to be limited due to the ground being waterlogged and the conditions meant we were unable to erect our own clubhouse. So, on Friday evening we all had to go to the pub, damn! Saturday morning was bright but cold so an enthusiastic few went for a walk through the woods with the dogs to get some exercise. Several people went to look at the new Pegasus Caravan range at the local dealers and there was a very mixed reaction, mostly on the negative side. On Saturday afternoon, Zoe had arranged a treat for the girls, (bearing in mind the following day was Mother's day) and we were all given little gift bags with some items for personal grooming and chocolates to indulge ourselves. Tea, coffee, sweet treats and music were laid on and all the ladies enjoyed their afternoon. Whilst we were relaxing and being pampered, the poor men had to endure a pub lunch and more beer, shame! In the evening, Zoe had struck a deal with the local Indian restaurant who had agreed to provide a meal for a set fee of £15.00 per head. So all 31 of us marched off to the restaurant looking forward to our tasty meal. The staff were rushed off their feet and it did take some time to prepare and serve the food, however the food was excellent and we all left with full bellies. With no clubhouse to go to and no van big enough to accomodate those that wished to continue the social activities, everybody was invited back to Dave Wightman's virtual awning for a nightcap (or two). Whilst the brave strong men sat in the virtual awning, the ladies (plus one honorary lady) squeezed into the van for teas and coffees. Nick & Sandy very generously produced a bottle of homemade Sloe Gin from the boot of their car and by the time that had done the rounds, I think there was about a thimble full left for them. It was a lovely weekend and Zoe and Del did a fantastic job organising everything, considering all the hurdles they came up against during their planning. **Carol**

Alderstead Heath, 16-18 April 2010

Hot, hot, hot and not a plane in sight! The weekend saw some very warm weather at Alderstead Heath, near Redhill. It also saw 19 West Sussex Centre vans/motorhomes enjoying the site and weather. As Sandy and I live in Selsey, we do not see planes up close, the usual sight of big planes passing overhead when we are near Gatwick we find quite nice but thanks to a bit of smoke in Iceland, no planes were to be seen. The weekend was very pleasant and quiet with ralliers just doing whatever they felt like doing. Lazing on chairs sunbathing seemed quite popular. Both evenings saw gatherings in Dave and Val's awning doing what ralliers do best, chatting and having the occasional medicinal drink. Sue Massey planned a walk on Saturday. Well, she planned that Sandy, that well known walkaholic, could lead us somewhere and back again, apparently for the benefit of our four legged members. Unusually for our centre, the walk ended at a public house where we thought it would be rude not to boost local business funds by purchasing more medicinal drinks and for most, a pleasant meal. The Alderstead Heath site was very pleasant and a lovely relaxing time was had by all. This rally proves that rally officers do not have to go overboard with organising things to keep us happy. Thanks to Dave and Sue for looking after us. **Nick Harris**

Rookesbury Park, 14-16 May 2010

At last the Browns made the long trip (5 miles) to Rookesbury Park. The sun was shining and it promised to be a great start to their 2010 rally programme. Unfortunately things did not go quite to plan. Having connected up the water, we soon realised there was a problem and discovered that whilst in storage over the winter months, our water filter had split causing water to cascade into the cupboard and out through the wheel arch. HELP! Once again help was at hand in the one and only Mr Fixit, Wally (Dave) who managed to use his skill in making a pump which would work in our van. Nearly three hours have now passed with no beer, wine or food yet taken so our thoughts naturally turn to grazing. Sandy Harris made a phone call and arranged a couple of tables at the nearby Roebuck public house on the A32 just outside Wickham. Fed and watered we returned to the site and visited our rally officer's (Malcolm & Jill Webb) awning for a natter and a noggin. History was made that evening when Jill was heard to state that she actually felt quite warm in the awning. Now that is a first. Saturday morning dawned (we missed it of course as we had to relax) and a few of our members went for a walk, some with their dogs, through the forest and woods surrounding the site. Returning to the site at around lunchtime we were served hot soup and crusty bread. The weather was sometimes sunny and sometimes cloudy but there was still a bit of a nip in the air. Since we were last on the rally field, Mo has acquired a disabled scooter which caused some interest and a few (well one in particular) of our members decided to check it out to ensure her safety! On Saturday evening there was a communal bbq followed by another visit to our rally officer's awning. Sunday arrived (but again we missed it) and we all met for flag and the raffle. It was nice to see the majority of prizes were won by our visiting guests who we hope enjoyed the experience of joining us. We also had a guest from France with us over the weekend, Solene, a personal friend of Carol & Dave is here on an extended stay to improve her English and find out how us Brits really do behave. She now knows we are all raving bonkers. Last but not least, thanks to our rally officers Malcolm & Jill for a lovely weekend. **Bill Brown**

THE CARAVAN CLUB NATIONAL RALLY 2010 AT WESTON PARK

Once again our long term West Sussex member Joan Redman won prizes, this time for baking and not her usual home made wine although both her sweet and dry white wines received "Runners Up". She received a 1st for her Streusel Cake and a 3rd for the Cheesy Apple Pie, both baked in the caravan. Well done Joan. Otherwise that fickle finger belonging to Mother Nature was true to form with Friday being hot but windy – oh those flying awnings! Of course it rained on Saturday morning, very heavily, whilst Malcolm BBQ'd the bacon butties for around 40 people. The butties and tea/coffee were enjoyed by all including our temporary members – the Pegdons from North Lancashire and the Dickensons from East Warwickshire (these two couples always join our lines at the National). The rain also delayed the sports competitions but true to caravanning tenacity all were completed in time for the closing ceremony on Monday. As always the evening entertainments were superb – where we were sited we could hear quite clearly, but after the National Anthem (almost on the dot of 11pm) all was quiet. The stall holders did a roaring trade even in the rain and many new caravans were sold, as were the Kia cars.

The 2011 National Rally will be held at Sledmere House, Yorkshire. We have been asked to organise a team to enter the Centre Quiz competition so if you plan to attend and would like to be part of the quiz team, please let Malcolm & Jill know.

Jill Webb

Basingstoke Canal 28 – 31 May 2010

This site is very pleasant and secure but bordered by acres of woodland. The field is flat as is the walk alongside the canal. There are places to eat very close by so those who are not so mobile are not disadvantaged. Turning on site, our first thoughts were that this was going to be a fun weekend and as usual Sandy, Nick, Terry & Chris didn't let us down. The sun came out and stayed out till late on Friday. The best part of Saturday we had a bit of rain but our hosts managed to put on a dog walk through the forest and back along the canal. Some made their way along to the village. Back on site we all had tea and cakes in the afternoon followed by a quiz in the evening prepared by Sue & Elvis. We had lots of children having abundant fun in the beautiful near-by forest. The whole experience was added to with the Chinese raffle on Saturday night where the children and adults had hilarious fun. On Sunday the sun came out and we had a brilliant breakfast put on by our hosts as a welcome and much appreciated bonus. In the evening we had a music quiz by Nick & Sandy put together by Lynsey & her iPod. It was a real family affair and helped jog a few memories. To finish off, we had the usual gathering in the party tent (thanks to Dave & Carol) with our friends old & new to catch up with the latest news. It was nice to see some new ralliers and a number of visitors and lovely to hear them say how much they had enjoyed themselves and how welcome and friendly everyone had been towards them. Look forward to seeing you all soon. **Dave Massey**

Orchard Farm, Chidham 11-13 June

Mad as Hatters one and all! The rally at Chidham was really good fun. The weather was kind to us and Saturday morning saw a gaggle of us taking dogs out for a walk led by Sandy around the harbour towards Emsworth. One dog who shall remain nameless but is owned by Tony and Gill Nash, managed to dump the Chairman flat on the ground by running over me instead of round me! Saturday we attended the Mad Hatters tea party where copious amounts of sandwiches, cakes, cream scones and gallons of tea were consumed by a wide age group of ralliers. There were various colourful hats on display with Kevin and Nichola, our second time out ralliers, wearing hats that were actually adorned with clues to be solved. When solved the answers were relevant to both the rally theme and the world cup. They were very well done but Kevin was banned from compiling quizzes as the clues were difficult! In the evening we took part in a quiz compiled by Tony Nash who assured us it would be easy. Our team got less than 50% so I am not sure I agree with his definition of easy! Still, it was a good laugh. Sunday was again lovely with most of us just spending time sitting round nattering and making the most of the sun. Terry, Chris, Tony and Gill made the weekend a real treat and I thank them again from me and all those who attended. **Nick H**

Hog Roast, Butcherland Farm, Ebernoe 18-20 June, Invite to East Surrey

We were warmly greeted Friday evening and after setting up and watching England play footsie with Algeria we joined in a "noggin and natter" in the barn to catch up with old friends and acquaintances. It was great to see so many centres together East and West Hants, West Dorset, East Sussex and three outfits from East Surrey! In all I believe over 50 outfits. Saturday was dry but a little cloudy but this did not stop people going out and about the area and early afternoon a few stalls were set up with proceeds going to the Chairman's charity. All the while our supper was turning on the spit ably controlled by Dave Wightman and his team. Saturday evening we were served the hog roast accompanied with stuffing, apple sauce, hot new potatoes and salad followed by fresh fruit salad and cream or a selection of cheeses and biscuits washed down with plenty of wine. The evening kicked off with a visit from Elvis (who is alive and kicking and lives with the West Sussex Centre!!) followed by an excellent disco until the early hours. Sunday morning we all met for flagpole and thanked the many people for a brilliant weekend. In our opinion: EXCELLENT COMPANY.....EXCELLENT FOOD and WHAT GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY! **Report by Julie Suckling**

East Surrey Centre

Thank you to Julie Suckling for her 'outsiders' view. What a brilliant weekend we had with everyone present agreeing that Dave cooked the pig to perfection. I know that there was none left at the end as I served seconds. Apart from seeing everyone enjoying themselves another best part for me was the amount raised by you all for Cancer research. I was over the moon when I thought you had raised nearly £300.00 but after a generous donation from Ivan Wadey and the result of the challenge to win the whisky the grand total you raised is £428.35. Thank you seems a bit lame as I am absolutely gobsmacked at your generosity. Thank you one and all. **Nick H**

Sussex Farm, Partridge Green, 2-4 July

As usual, we were met on arrival with much appreciated mugs of tea and a warm welcome from Carol and Dave Wightman. After setting up at this lovely, flat, quiet spot surrounded by open countryside, Friday evening saw some try out the local pub (purely for research purposes of course), and then gather around the rally office for a natter, fuelled by Malcolm's beer(!). Saturday dawned bright and dry, and as befits the 'quiet weekend' that Carol and Dave had advertised, everyone felt free to get on with their own thing, before we met up in the early evening for a communal BBQ. Some hardy souls carried on socializing in the party tent until fairly late, while some of us lightweights retired to our vans to catch up with a DVD. That's the great thing about rallying, you can get involved as much or as little as you want, no pressure. On Sunday, the weather was still good, and gave us chance to chill out before heading home in the late afternoon. Sussex Farm is a great site for walking or cycling, as the Downs Link to either Henfield or Southwater passes right outside, and with the local pub and shop just across the road, who could ask for more! **Ashley & Kim Cooper**

Dean House Farm, Newdigate, 9-11 July

Small in numbers yes. 11 vans attended but the weather and the treatment received by our stalwart rally officers, John & Anne Lawrence made up for that and made our weekend a success. We were treated to tea and cakes on Saturday which had been donated by them and the monies raised was donated to our chairmans charity. Well done. They also found time to play with the children who were present and whose behaviour was excellent. The fishing competition went well, Malcom Webb winning the adult competition with a total of 13 fish in the 3 hour period. The youth competition ended with Del & Zoe twosome Danielle and Zac both catching 7 fish each and a special mention to young Dean who caught 6 fish in the allotted period. Not bad for someone who had not fished before. Then it was down to the six bells for a beer or two and a chat about the "one that got away". My only moan was those darned bullfrogs who made a racket all night. I felt like waking them up during the day when they were asleep and I was awake. Many thanks to Dave Massey who assisted me in counting the fish. **Bill Brown**

Competitions, Loxwood Club, 16-18 July

Winners Galore! The West Sussex centre competitions rally was held 16th to 18th July at Loxwood. The attendance was well up on 2008 with some 37 units attending which meant we did not have room to do the driving competition! Also we were missing some West Sussex stalwarts for various reasons none of which was particularly good. I mean, being on a cruise was one and not having a caravan another. More dedication required I think! It was really good to see young people on the rally. We had visitors from East Sussex, West Surrey, South London and Middlesex centres too and all were invited to take part and many did. The weather was very kind to us and Saturday saw the outside events taking place in the sunshine. Pete Dales, whilst being involved in his rounds, kindly arranged the children's fun and games assisted by Freda Dales and Fran Phillips and I thank them for their help. There was also a children's colouring competition organised by Sue Nicholls. Saturday evening saw the indoor darts competition take place and various skill levels were apparent during that. Bill Sholl from East Sussex kindly put on a show mainly for the kids but one part saw me laying on the floor pretending to be a German U boat which got sunk leaving me very wet! I guess you had to be there to appreciate it really but everyone said it was very funny. We were then treated to one of Les's legendary disco's which saw a hard core of people shaking their pants sort of in time to the music. You know who you are! At flag on Sunday trophies and certificates were handed out to the winners which is a new idea we have had. Sylvia Martin collected three sets! Later in the day one long term member told me that the weekend had been a really friendly affair with good fun had by all. That my friend's is what we are all about and I thank everyone who attended and made it so. See you soon. **Nick H**

Grandparents, Oakfield, 30 July - 1 August

Father Ted was at his best whilst Ruby was busy doing the tasks he was unable to do. 19 vans attended with lots of children who were excellently well behaved and played well together, their behaviour a credit to their guardians. Lots of water being sprayed about followed by a tea party arranged by Ruby and friends. Weather was good except for Saturday morning when I thought BST had come to an end. On a personal note just as we were about ready to depart I could not find my car keys. Were they in the car, no, the van, no, in the field, no, in the awning, no, HELP REQUIRED. Thank you to all who took part in the search but eventually I had to call reinforcements from Gosport to bring my spare keys. It was heard by a club member that they might be up my posterior. Well on arrival home I sat down only to find that she was of course correct, they had fallen through a hole in my pocket and had made there way to that appropriate part of my anatomy. Thank you all for your help It was appreciated looking forward to the next one in the year 2012.

Bill Brown

Paddock Wood, Henfield, 6 - 8 August

Ashley and Kim greeted us on arrival with the news that the urn was on and tea or coffee was available as soon as we were ready, great news and a lovely start to the weekend. Paddock Wood is situated on Wineham Lane, Henfield. The site was a field behind a beautiful house with free range chickens roaming among the caravans and plenty of sheep in the adjacent field. Our field was a bit lumpy and had rather a lot of sheep droppings but as it was situated in such a lovely area, the positives far outweighed the negatives. 22 vans attended including a couple of visitors from other centres. On Friday night some went out for a meal at Henfield whilst others stayed on site and either stayed in their vans or visited our club house to catch up with friends. Saturday started off a bit muggy but the rain managed to hold off most of the day excepting the odd spit or two. The day was ours to do as we pleased and I chose to stay on site and chill out whilst hubby was out working, according to him, to keep me in the manner to which I am accustomed. The clouds cleared in time for the communal BBQ but then came back again, blacker than they had been all day, just as we all finished eating, phew! Most people came to the clubhouse in the evening for the music quiz that Kim had put together which was really good. The quiz consisted of 4 rounds and snippets of the songs were played and you had to identify numbers, colours, years, artists and titles. Poor Kim was rather hoarse by the end of the evening but the quiz really was first class. Sunday started off a bit doubtful weather wise but cleared just after flag and became extremely hot just as everyone was packing up to go and when you least need it to be hot. The only really bad thing about the whole weekend were the number of wasps around. I was very surprised that only one person got stung as they seemed to be everywhere. This was clearly out of the rally officers control or I'm sure they would have done something about it. It was a lovely, relaxing weekend which I thoroughly enjoyed. Thanks Kim and Ashley, it was just what the doctor ordered. **Carol**

Landford, August Bank Holiday

What a laugh we had at Landford August Bank Holiday weekend. As arranged 4 of us used our vans to make up the edges of the party tent and the infill was the gazebo which smelt of "eau de cologne hog roast" where it was used recently. A blue tarpaulin was used to cover the gazebo and fill in the gaps in case of rain making it very cosy. For those wondering – the party tent was having the BH weekend off as Dave and Carol were in Spain. Fri morning at 6 am saw us out of bed taking the blue tarpaulin down in the rain as the weather had changed and the winds were threatening to make us one big kite. Geoff who is pretty new to this Rally Officer caper complained loudly out of his fixed bed window about the noise we were making. Boy did he have a steep learning curve to come!!! Fri evening was the usual chat in the party tent if you wished – a relaxing evening. Saturday afternoon saw several people joining in with the games Nick's Hagar's Chess being very popular with several close fought games. Luckily the wind dropped just in time for us to reinforce the awnings ready for the evenings feast. Rudy had a vision of providing a harvest supper for almost 80 people and under his guidance that's what we helped him produce. Thank you everyone for supplying your tables so that we could create the restaurant for your supper – everyone had enough to eat so Rudy could relax phew!!!! Thank you Lynsey and Jay for providing the music for the evening. Sunday was a changeable day and more games were played and the forest explored. That evening saw us having flag pole and a game which kept us all guessing in more ways than one. The rally fields were in the middle of grazing horses and they kept us entertained with their antics over the weekend galloping up and down in high spirits. At the end of the track a 5 minute walk away there was a gate into the forest and there were numerous ponies and donkeys with their foals, large cows and even a pig. I think our poodle Denzil thought the pig was his to make up for not being given a share of the hog roast as he fell in love with it and followed it round the woods hopefully! Many thanks Rudy, Val, Geoff and Lynne for making the August Bank Holiday such fun. **Sandy, Jethro and Denzil**

Wylds Farm, Liss 3-5 September

Small but perfectly formed! The rally at Wylds Farm, Liss that is. A total of 10 vans attended the rally which was hosted by Bob West ably assisted by Dave 'Elvis' Nicholls and Sue. In fact this rally was unusual as Dave was the only Dave there. The weekend was really good. Nice and laid back in the middle of nowhere. Saturday Sandy and I missed the games afternoon as we had to attend a retirement party but the game, Hagar's Chess which has appeared at quite a few rallies lately was again put to good use. We got back in time to join everyone at the communal bar be que. Later that evening I finally gave up resisting and learned how to play Bingo. Needless to say I didn't win anything but Malcolm and Jill Webb did. At flag the next day, and I do not know how the smartly turned out Rally Officer arranged it, fairness to all was apparent in that every couple who attended won something! Well, Malcolm and Jill didn't but they had a Bingo win instead. One of the smaller rallies this year but as I said, small and perfectly formed. Cheers Bob. **Nick H**

Muntham House School, 22-24 October

Rain, hail, frost and sunshine, we had it all. Muntham house, Barns Green saw 15 vans and 2 motor homes turn up with most people actually arriving after the 6 pm opening. The theme of the weekend was to relax to the point of being horizontal. Friday night saw some couples go out for a meal and we later met up in the Party tent. Well, it was actually Dave and Carol's awning but it did the job. Early hours Saturday morning we got hit by torrential rain and some of us also got hit by falling acorns from the numerous large oak trees. It would not be fair to name names but Malcolm and Jill looked tired!! Once the rain had stopped Sandy led a group of us on a lovely walk in the sun. This ended up in our taking shelter from another downpour in the rear garden of a local hostelry. Having waited out the rain we walked back to the vans where I for one obeyed the order to relax and had a snooze. The rain reappeared accompanied by hail stones. Saturday evening nearly everyone met up again and set the world to rights. Sunday it started frosty but turned out really warm. Prior to flag and due to good team work we were supplied bacon and egg baps prepared by Chris Jackman and Jill Nash, bacon cooked by Terry Jackman and Tony Nash with Carol and I being in charge of frying eggs. The theme was a relaxing weekend and I have to say it really was. Brilliant thanks. **Nick H**

Pondtail Farm, Brockham, 5-7 November

We arrived at Pondtail Farm in Brockham at around 5pm on Friday and were surprised by how many vans there were – and more came after us. 51 in all. A very decent turnout, considering the weather forecast for the weekend. It was an invitation to us from East Surrey but there were many ralliers from other centres too. It was dry when we arrived, but picking our way around the field in the dark to level up & get our water and walk the dog, we soon discovered that the field had only very recently been vacated by the farm's cows!!! Squelching boots and dogs paws had to be cleaned carefully before entering our van, and in the morning we discovered that the rubber mat we had so carefully been scraping our boots on the night before was sunk deeply in the middle of a wet, squidgy cowpat! In the evening a few made their way to the local hostelry for a meal and/or drinks & a natter and a good evening was had by all. The rain & wind arrived in earnest through the night, keeping many awake, but in the morning it miraculously cleared and we had a beautiful day. Most wandered around the village during the day, looking at all the villagers preparations for the evening ahead and we went for a long dog walk in the beautiful countryside. Everyone made their way to the village green in the evening to watch the torch light procession and the lighting of the bonfire. When we were sure Guy Fawkes was ablaze, some of us returned to the rally field to watch the amazing firework display. We had a great view from there! Afterwards, the rally officers did us all proud with warming cups of soup & hot dogs! We all slept well that night! Sunday morning was again a fair morning, though quite cold. No-one would risk taking their chairs to flag and standing them in something nasty, so we all stood with our coffees & teas for the thank you's & raffle. Nick got us worried when he stepped forward to speak after the rally officers had "closed" the rally and said he wanted to present a gift to the East Surrey centre. We were all curious to know what he was presenting and there was much laughter when it turned out to be 2 East Surrey centre markers that he had found left behind when West Sussex rallied at a site the week after East Surrey! All in all, a very enjoyable weekend.

Diane Penfold