



In Touch

With the CWG membership
and the industry

SPRING 2010

A new year, a new decade and a new challenge!

AS the latest in a long line of newly-appointed Chairmen of the Guild, I am patently aware of the honour bestowed upon me... and the pretty big boots I have to fill. But I wouldn't have accepted the position unless I felt I could continue the sterling work already achieved and, perhaps, add my own contribution to the growth of the Guild.

My first duty must be to thank Jonathan Lloyd, who had to stand down through ill health, for his year in office. In that time Jonathan managed to surpass his Mission Statement of "doing as little damage to the Guild as possible"; "blaming any errors on the hon. sec."; and "drinking only the finest ale".

In reality, he can be proud of his tenure which has seen a steady influx of new blood resulting in a record number of members and friends. He also hosted some interesting events, including the Guild Day at The Lawns, the Chairman's Event at Woodhall Spa and visits to Lowdhams and BCA Leisure. I would also like to mention Flora for her unstinting support. I am now looking forward to working with our committee of Jonathan, Doug King, Terry and Alison Owen and Terry Acreman.

Changes and improvements

Since I joined in February 2005 I have seen a number of changes and improvements to the facilities and benefits enjoyed by members. These include better press facilities at the major shows, the introduction of the R&R room at both NEC shows, a new website, credit card-style photo membership cards, and the publication of new booklets for *Members* and the *Press Guide*. There has also been a significant growth in younger journalists joining (as with myself!) and

NIGEL ROSSER presents his first Chairman's Chat

greater support from the industry through our Friends of the Guild.

But one of the most significant signs of our rising status is the fact that there is a buzz about our two annual Guild dinners. Word had it at last month's NEC show that attend-

ance at our dinner was the "hot ticket" of the show and "the place to be". I'll let you draw your own conclusions.

So, how can I make a difference? Well, on the premise of "new blood, new ideas", I intend to look at ways of future-proofing the Guild and increasing awareness and benefits of the Guild throughout the industry as a whole.

Obvious first steps would be to continue the advances already made by the Guild in appealing to younger journalists across a broader base; seeking to improve the already significant member benefits; and highlighting the enormous talent available through Guild members in the form of editors, writers, broadcasters, photographers and publishers.

As a life-long camper – I've spent over 50 years camping, caravanning and motorhoming – I am now looking forward to giving something back to the industry that has given me and my family so much pleasure.

As is customary with new chairmen, I have chosen a charity for my term of office. It is The Christie, which dedicates itself to working towards a future without cancer. In addition to helping cancer sufferers directly, the charity is involved in extensive research to develop more effective treatments and in providing better standards of care.

I must say I am so grateful for the generosity shown by members and friends at last month's dinner at Stonebridge Golf Club when over £615 was raised. Thank you!



Nigel Rosser with the chairman's gavel following his election at the AGM at the NEC in February.

February Guild Dinner a sell-out

JUDGING by the comments of some of the guest who attended the Guild dinner in the Stonebridge Golf & Conference Centre Bridge Restaurant on the second evening of the February show, the event has become one of the highlights of the week.

There was a full take-up of all 78 seats and we also had a waiting list.

The guest of honour was Trevor Watson who will be retiring shortly from his post as director-general of The Caravan Club.

As well as proposing the toast to the Guild, Trevor had brought along some of the more amusing letters he had received over the years from club members.

Amongst these was one from a lady who asked for a pitch near the campsite toilets because her husband had recently had a knee replacement and was a bit stiff in the morning!



Happy diners – the Chairman's table at the Guild dinner (above) and the seven other tables.

The Guild's new chairman, Nigel Rosser, had chosen a cancer charity, The Christie – based in Manchester, as his charity at the dinner and thanks to the generosity of the Camping and Caravanning Club, Dometic and Whale Pumps which supplied some superb prizes for the raffle, and all the guests who dug deep, the sum raised was £615.

We are also extremely grateful to Nikki Nichol and The Caravan Club for sponsoring the pre-dinner drinks and the wine at the tables. With such generosity from so many a simple thank you hardly seems to be adequate.

Plans are already in hand for the next dinner which will be held at Stonebridge on **Wednesday 13th October**.



Guild AGM and general meeting at the NEC

THE Guild annual general meeting and the general meeting which followed were held in the Guild lounge at the NEC on Tuesday 23rd February. Following a review of the constitution by David Ritchie and Peter Frost, a number of amendments which had been circulated to all members with the calling notice, were passed unanimously.

The main change was the addition of a new rule which allows the executive committee to co-opt any full or associate member with specialist knowledge which the committee feels will be of benefit to the Guild. As a result of the adoption of the rule, immediately following the general meeting, the committee co-opted Alison Owen as our hon. treasurer.

The accounts, which had been audited by our hon. Auditor, Chris Perry, were presented to the meeting by the then acting treasurer, Alison Owen. These showed that the Guild is in a very healthy financial position with no debtors and no creditors at the year end. As a result, Alison was able to say that there was no need to increase the subscriptions for the coming year.

As there was only one nomination for each of the offices on the executive committee, there was no election. For the year 2010-11, the executive officers are: chairman – Nigel Rosser; secretary – Douglas King; treasurer (co-opted) Alison Owen; membership officer – Terry Owen; member without portfolio – Terry Acreman.

The general meeting which followed the AGM was short, sharp and sweet!

Minutes of both meetings will be mailed to members with the calling notice for the 2011 AGM.

Mary Marchmont

Members will be sad to learn that Mary Marchmont, who with her husband John attended various Guild events over the years, passed away peacefully in February. She and John had been married for over 60 years and our sympathy goes to John and his children in their sad loss.

CWG Forthcoming Events

With the exception of the AGM, spouses, and partners and Friends are welcome at all CWG events. Children are welcome to attend the Chairman's Events and R & R weekends.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME 2010

6th-13th June

Guild Visit to Ireland

Sponsored by Stena Ferries, the Irish Caravan and Camping Council, and Whale Pumps who this year are celebrating their 200th anniversary.

(Note: this trip is now fully booked)



Guild lounge at the February show again proves very popular

The Guild lounge at the February NEC show was once again very popular with Guild members, journalists and Friends alike.

The room was provided by the organisers, Ocean Media, the furniture was sponsored by the Swift Group and the food by the Irish Caravan and Camping Council in the persons of Nora Heraty. Thanks also to Margaret O'Toole who prepared the food.

We are also grateful to Whale Pumps who provided a bottle of Bushmills whiskey for the business card draw – winner, Phil Clark, Powr Products.

Alison Owen oversaw the arrangements for the room and was assisted over the three days by the wives and partners of a number of members to all of whom the committee offers its sincere thanks.

Alison sent out some 200 invitations and reports that 50 members, staff from 23 Friends, eight editors, four potential members, and eight others visited over the three days.

In the past, virtually anyone has been allowed in the room, but for the October show the committee has decided that because of security requirements by the NEC, only Guild members and their spouses and partners, Friends and invited guests will be allowed to use the room.

Full details will be published nearer the time.

16th-20th September

Guild visit to Dometic Ltd, Blandford St Mary, Dorset, combined with an R&R weekend.

Details being circulated by the membership officer.

12th-17th October.

Caravan Show, NEC Birmingham

The Guild will once again be running an R&R lounge for members of the press, Friends and invited guests.

2011

Possible sponsored trip to Germany

(Provisional; details to be announced later)

Membership reaches a new record

SINCE the last issue of *In Touch* membership has continued to rise and has now reached an all-time high with more applications in the pipeline. On behalf of all the members we'd like to welcome the following new members:

Andy Jenkinson

Andy is no stranger to the Guild as he was a member some years ago. He says he likes the direction the Guild is now taking and was keen to come back. Andy is perhaps best known as a touring caravan and holiday-home historian but he is eager to point out that he is active in many other areas including RV, holiday-home and site reviews. Andy also publishes an attractive range of specialist caravan greeting cards and calendars.



Dave Newell

Dave has been technical consultant to *MMM* magazine since the early nineties and for the last five years has written the Diamond Dave technical column for *Practical Motorhome*. He has carried out a number of van conversions before holidaying in them with his family. In 2005 he started a business installing accessories for motorhomes and caravans as well as carrying out servicing work. The experience gained here stands him in good stead for his technical writing.



Nicola Prior

Nicola is an independent PR consultant with 22 years' experience in consumer and business PR and over five years working for clients in the lodge, park home and park industries. She contributes articles, briefings and press statements to many publications within our industry. Every few weeks Nicola broadcasts on PR issues for BBC Radio Leeds as its West Yorkshire PR guru. She is an Accredited Practitioner of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations.



Membership Officer TERRY OWEN introduces six new members

Ray Quinton

Ray is a photographer of long standing having joined the National



Magazine Company in 1957 and participated in launch of *SHE Magazine*. Later he worked on *Vanity Fair*, *Harpers* and *Good Housekeeping*. In 1967, with his wife, Ann Somerset Miles, he launched a publishing and printing company specialising in educational magazines. When this was subject to a voluntary wind-up in 1997 Ray turned freelance to support his wife with photographs for her many articles. These have now appeared in several caravan industry magazines as well as other publications.

Ann Somerset Miles

Ann ran an educational magazine publishing company for many years before turning to freelance writing in 1999. She is prolific writer who is passionate about history, the environment, gardens, plants, places, birds and other creatures. Her work has appeared in various food, garden and craft magazines. More recently Ann has had work published in *Practical Caravan*, *Caravan* and the *Camping and Caravanning Club* magazine. As if that wasn't enough, Ann and husband Ray are currently working on a series of books based upon the reclamation of their 16th century farmhouse and garden.



Mark Sutcliffe

Mark has some 20 years' journalism experience gained in local newspapers, trade and consumer magazines. A former editor of *Which Caravan* and managing editor of *Which Motorcaravan*, Mark turned freelance in 2008 and now contributes to a range of caravan, motorhome and outdoor magazines. Married with two small children, he says he knows roughly which end of the camera to point at the scenery and enjoys regular caravan and motorhome adventures at home and abroad with his family.



One of the ways of promoting the Guild is for all members to include the CWG logo as part of their letterheadings, business cards, etc., and to put the CWG press sticker on their windscreens. If any member doesn't have a high resolution digital image of the logo or the car sticker, please contact the membership officer, Terry Owen, or the secretary, Douglas King.

Taxing times

A timely warning from the treasurer...

MY accountant tells me that the tax authorities are continuing to launch enquiries into taxpayers' affairs, many on a purely random basis. The average frequency has been once in six years but he believes this is now being exceeded.

Guild members might be interested to know that it is not just businesses with a high turnover or large profits that are being investigated. In 2001, 66% of investigations were into businesses with a turnover under £100k and profits under £30k.

What's more, in April 2009 HMRC was given enhanced rights. These mean it can inspect the records in any premises deemed to be used for business purposes, with little or no notice. Also anyone can be investigated at any time, HMRC no longer needs a reason.

Even though you may be wholly innocent, the cost of defending you and your business against these enquiries can be substantial. The average full enquiry takes over a week of an accountant's time, and professional fees to deal with an enquiry could easily exceed £4,000.

With this in mind, many accountancy practices are now offering fee protection insurance to cover the cost of professional fees to defend you. In my case the fee payable is just 3.25% of my annual accountancy fees – a small sum to pay for the peace of mind it brings. It could

Catching up with an old acquaintance...

Douglas King chats to the UK's most famous caravanner at the CL of the Year Awards in the House of Commons

IN February I was invited to attend The Caravan Club's CL of the Year Awards at the House of Commons.

Amongst the other guests were the most famous caravanner in the country – Margaret Beckett MP, and her husband Leo. Some members may recall that they were my guests at my Chairman's Event some eight years ago. They are still enthusiastic caravanners and it was good to spend a few minutes with them chatting about our favourite pastime.

The event was hosted by Eric Illsley MP and David Amess MP, both of whom speak for The Caravan Club in the Commons.

well be worth asking your accountancy practice if they offer a similar scheme.

Those who handle their own tax affairs can go directly to an insurer for cover but the cost is likely to be much higher than through an accountant.

– Alison Owen (Hon. Treasurer)

The Executive Committee

Chairman: **Nigel Rosser**

Immediate Past Chairman: **Jonathan Lloyd**

Honorary Secretary: **Douglas King**

Honorary Treasurer: **Alison Owen**

Membership officer: **Terry Owen**

Committee member: **Terry Acreman**

Independent Honorary Auditor: **Christopher Perry**

Applications pending...

DUE to an oversight at the AGM a further important amendment to the Guild constitution was not put to the meeting for a vote. So what? We are going to implement it anyway.

In future all applications for full or associate Guild membership as well as all requests to become Friends will be published in these columns for consideration and comment by you the members. Here is the current list.

Full Members

An application from Christine Pratt of the Bullying Helpline has been delayed as Christine cannot find the e-mails nominating and seconding her.

A spokesperson for the Guild committee has told Christine, "Don't worry luv, we'll soon have you in. This organisation has a long tradition of welcoming Pratts into membership.

We have had a flush of applications from the world of Westminster. Alistair Campbell, Damian McBride, and Jo Moore from the Labour side are all expected to become full members.

The Tory Head of Communications, Andy Coulson, ex editor of the phone tapping *News of the World*, has applied both for his own membership and for "my old mate Clive Goodman, as soon as he gets out of chokey and gets his mobile phone back".

Speaking on behalf of the whole group, a spokesman (Ed. Can you dig around and see who actually said this. If that's a problem just pick one at random.) "When we heard allegations that the Guild was a bunch of lying, expense fiddling and lazy bullies we just wanted to be part of it."

John Terry, from the world of football, has applied for full membership. "No one has done so well as I have getting my name, my story and my pictures into newspapers and magazines," he told the committee. In line with the new trend of partners applying for full or associate membership of the Guild, Mr Terry has asked for and completed some 20 associate member application forms. "I'll let you know who it will be nearer the time," he told *In Touch*.

Lastly, the membership application from TV funny

An anonymous contributor takes a (slightly) tongue-in-cheek look at some possible new members of the Guild

men Ant and Dec caused some consternation among your committee. But all became clear when The Caravan Club issued its updated release on the DG position stating that applications for a job share would be particularly welcome. The membership secretary is expecting to hear from Richard and Judy and Jordan and Peter any time now.

Businesses wishing to become Friends

RBS Royal Bank of Scotland

The application states: "Frankly at the moment we need all the Friends we can get and as we see it being a friend of the Caravan Writers' Guild would be a real bonus – and do we love bonuses!"

Toyota

Members will know that Doug King and John Wickersham and a third journalist were secretly flown to Japan to write heavily embargoed features on a revolutionary new "sticky floor mat".

While there, senior management told them, "We have just a few things on our mind at the moment but when we have dealt with that, if we still have any money left we'll definitely cough up and become a friend."

We approached the third journalist for a comment but apparently he had just left a briefing at the Honda offices and was on his way to speak with Mazda.

Hummer (still part of General Motors unless you fancy taking it over).

A Governorator speaking from California said, "Hey, when all those wide, wide, caravans start coming in from Germany you Limeys are going to need some wide, wide tow cars.

More information needed

It is not clear whether the next application is for Friends status or full membership. Can any member throw any light on this application that arrived in one of our committee member's inbox?

"Hello, my name is Natasha from St Petersburg, very much I enjoyed our intercourse in the chat room last night. I am hot and your friend I very much want to be."

Lastly, the application from Ivor Betton, well known Gambling Correspondent of *Caravan Industry & Park Operator* and the author of this very column, has been refused by the committee.

Our secretary wrote to Ivor: "You can bet a pound to a penny we'll never have you as a member, Sonny. Some of us just couldn't stand the competition! We won't allow the Guild to become a one horse race."

IN TOUCH

Editor – Douglas King:

All photos used in this issue are courtesy of Terry Owen.

Copy date – Summer issue 2010

The copy date for the Summer issue will be Wednesday 30th June.

Thoughts on joining the CWG

As many members will already know, having met her in the Guild lounge at the NEC, Ann Somerset Miles has become a member. Here she tells how she feels on becoming a full member of the Guild. Her husband Ray Quinton has become an associate member.

Hello: I am a new member of the Guild and delighted to be so. Reading the latest issue of *In Touch*, which was in my membership pack along with a bright pink shirt, I had the feeling that I now belong to a friendly and supportive organisation where every member counts and has something valuable to offer.

But if it weren't for Alison Owen and the R&R lounge at the NEC, I wouldn't be writing this now. My introduction began in early 2009 when I was invited to discuss some articles with the features editor of one of the magazines for which I had already done a little work.

Encouragement

"A good place to meet," he said; and it was, though I did not then realise its significance. A return visit in October 2009 set me thinking, and it was Alison who explained the work of the Guild and encouraged me to apply for membership.

The process was speedily and efficiently accomplished

– my thanks also, therefore, to Terry Owen who eased my way through what was needed, and to Nigel Donnelly (editor of *Practical Caravan*) who proposed me.

Members' Legal Helpline

Full members of the Guild who require expert legal advice should contact law firm Rickerbys, Cheltenham.

Rickerbys has expertise in matters ranging from copyright and intellectual property matters to contracts of employment.

Members are entitled to two free consultations of up to half an hour each in any one year. Any further advice sort will be subject to payment to Rickerbys by the member concerned.

The contact at Rickerbys is Matthew Clayton: telephone 01242 246497. E-mail:

Matthew.Clayton@rickerbys.com

Members contacting Rickerbys by telephone or e-mail must state that they are CWG members and give their name and membership number.

Rickerbys is one of a small number of solicitors in the region who have achieved Lexcel, the Law Society's quality mark.

Please note: The free service relates only to work-related issues.



Friends of the CWG

At the end of February 2010, the Friends of the Guild are:

Adria Concessionaires
Alan Rogers Guides Ltd
AL-KO Kober Ltd,
The Auto-Sleeper Group
Auto-Trail VR Ltd
Bailey Caravans Ltd
BCA Leisure Ltd
Calor Gas Ltd
The Camping and Caravanning Club
Caravan Guard
Coachman Caravan Co. Ltd
Dometic Ltd
Elddis
The Irish Caravan and Camping Council
Lunar Caravans Ltd
Maxview Ltd
Milenco Ltd
The National Caravan Council
Normandy Caravans Ltd
Outsmart the Thief Ltd
Paintseal Direct
Pitchup.com
Salop Leisure Ltd
The Swift Group Ltd
Thetford Ltd
Truma (UK) Ltd
Vantage Insurance Services
Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles
Whale Water Systems
Willerby Holiday Homes Ltd
Witter Towbars

The Guild gratefully acknowledges the support of these companies and organisations. Full details on Friends, including how to join, are available from the membership secretary, Terry Owen, e-mail terry@atconsulting.co.uk.



**CARAVAN GUARD
(TOP)
AND OUTSMART
THE THIEF ADS**