



November 2010

# KNAUS KONTAKT

## Chairman's Chatter



As I write, soon after our return from the Lincoln Show, (more later) the season is almost over, the days are getting shorter and you feel a chill in the air. So let me recall the sun and a wonderful 2 weeks Olive and I had in Devon. We originally booked on a Caravan Club CI site, our experience getting to it was grim, very, very narrow lanes, had to keep stopping, cars reversing, drivers angry, pedestrians and cyclists unable to squeeze past us etc. It took 3 hours to travel 8 miles. When we got to the site it was very poor, not up to Caravan Club standard, so we left. We spent the next 2 hours going back down the narrow lanes and a further hour to find a site that was not full.

This turned out to be great. It was called Little Cotton Caravan Park, a mile and a half from Dartmouth. Family owned and run, the best toilet block I have ever seen, plenty of room, immaculate grass pitches, the warden sited you up with extra blocks and mains cables if you needed them, there were bricks to have your BBQ's on, a fully stocked shop and the Park and Ride situated next to the site. We can thoroughly recommend this site and they have a web site. [www.littlecotton.co.uk](http://www.littlecotton.co.uk). We had a great time visiting all the nearby beaches and villages, we caught the very hot spell, so a wonderful 2 weeks caravanning we had.

This year for the first time we had an organized meet at the Northern Motorhome Show at Knutsford, Cheshire. 11 units attended, it was met with mixed feelings, it wasn't easy to find, not the same trade as Peterborough. It's possible 2 trade shows a year is enough, let us know what you think.

The Lincoln Show was another record for Knaus Owners club with 22 units plus 3 visitors. On arrivals day on the Thursday the Red Arrows gave us an incredible welcome with an absolutely incredible show, they were out training most of the day from the Airfield next to the Show Ground. The weather was possibly the worst for quite a few meets, strong winds and lots of rain, still we were due a wet one.

For the first time we had a Jacob's join on the Saturday, very successful, the spread was incredible, everything from smoked salmon to strawberries and cream. Well done to everyone - a very successful social occasion it was despite the cold. There was the usual trade, but very little new and I didn't notice too many sold signs on the vans either, still it was a great social occasion and primarily that's what our club is all about.

*Tony.*

# Another York Tale

Setting off for a stay on the Rowntree Park site at York, we filled our water tank at home. At the first roundabout, Trevor saw water flowing onto the road, so we stopped to investigate. We had left the filler cap at home! We were too late to turn back, so I phoned a neighbour to rescue the cap and we put cling film over the hole.



On the roundabout at the A1 we briefly noticed (but ignored) a sign saying the A59 was closed. As we drove nearer to York there was less and less traffic and eventually came to a roadblock and diversion. We spent an hour or so traversing narrow lanes, byways and villages, giving way to tractors and squeezing round bends and bridges and scratching hedges before we finally hit the ring road, although on the wrong side of York. It was late afternoon by this time and we wanted to get to the site as soon

as we could, so drove through York – perhaps not the best plan on a busy, sunny Saturday afternoon.

After avoiding crushing several coach loads of tourists and narrowly missing scrapes with buses we arrived at the site safe, if somewhat stressed – hooray! Trevor went to book in whilst Charley dog and I waited in the van. He came out, got into the driver's seat and set off – where are we pitched I asked? “Not here” came the reply – “you booked us in for tomorrow not today and there is no room tonight”. The silence was deafening as we drove back out through the gate.

A few phone calls later we managed to get a pitch for the night nearby and next day drove back to Rowntree Park. The wardens were very busy with new arrivals and I drove to the barrier whilst Trevor once again went to book in. The warden asked if we had been before and I explained we had been yesterday, whereupon the warden, with a relieved smile, said he was very pleased to see me – he said the site warden had told him about the gentleman who's wife had made a mistake with the booking date and had been amazed at his quiet attitude as he serenely muttered “I'm just going out to kill my wife”. Apparently the wardens were worried and were hoping I would turn up in one piece! We were escorted to our pitch as Trevor explained he had decided against a quick murder in favour of a longer torture ...



PS things improved from then and we had a wonderful break in this great city.

*Keren & Trevor Nicholls*

## ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY GAY AND CHRIS ROSE

### **Frying Pans and Fires**

by Gay and Chris Rose (c) Rosec Publications June 2010

Gay is trying to keep the laptop going as she is certain sure that somehow the 'free' Wifi at the camping site at Chalons en Champagne in France has 'messed it up').

Nope - after 6 days never managed to get online with their 'free' Wifi and this year they have NO Restaurant whatsoever and their toilet block is not as well kept as it used to be and we wish they had put a notice on their washing machine to 'close the door firmly' - oh, yes – and told us that the walk to Centre Ville from here takes a good hour and NOT the 20 to 30 minutes they so glibly stated when asked! We know how long it takes because we arrived there for a late (naturally) lunch yesterday, having walked for over an hour in 90 degrees and hardly any shade! They even had the cheek to argue about it when we left!

It's an extremely popular site, as many of you will know, so it's a shame. It's something we find extremely irritating about Sites mentioned in the Caravan Club books. It 'assumes' we have caravans and cars so their 'good restaurants in town' information is totally useless to us. Come on everyone - tell it like it really is! We have a theory. We reckon that there is a rule in France (and probably U.K. too) that all camping sites must be a certain distance away from the town centres. Makes you feel really wanted, doesn't it?

Gone private since 1st May, folks, so best call them ahead if you plan to bring a MotorHome here with no food in your fridge/freezer.

We had planned to stay for over a week as we originally left our house to find somewhere peaceful to work! When we arrived home for an early spring and long summer in our garden in the middle of May we discovered that our new neighbours had gone ahead with the original plans - (passed whilst we were away the year before by the previous owner) for a very large kitchen extension at the back - right next to and underneath our 'study'. They'd promised us that they were only going to bother with a small extension to the side - but that's what our previous neighbour has also told us when we complained we had never seen any plans or been consulted - as had all our other neighbours!

No windows could be opened, no peace could be had in our garden and the noise was

horrendous. We kept going out to play golf or have a few cockles and a beer or two down in Leigh on Sea old town when we really should have been getting on with writing our books!

Firstly, a huge thank you to Kevin Hamblin without whose sane replies to our frantic emails we would not have got this far ☺

Where to start? Gay does so hate it when Chris has gone outside the Motorhome to do something or other and comes in swearing. It always means something dreadfully expensive is about to happen!

February in Calais. Hmm - well this was for Gay's birthday 'cos we have a favourite

restaurant there and thought that a 'jolly' for 3 nights would be in order. As it happened Gay spent her birthday on the ship back from Calais to Dover. We'd arrived in Calais the evening before and had a light meal. Needed a bit of warmth in the MotorHome as it was extremely cold on Calais seafront. We were just watching some TV when all the lights went out! Yep - you've guessed it - leisure battery problems!

So back in U.K., we purchased two new leisure batteries from the chap who looks after our car and these were fitted with no problems and worked fine. We were thankful as we had recently been reading about the problems experienced by certain owners of Knaus Motorhomes and their Calira chargers. Certainly didn't want that expense as well.

We wouldn't trust Lowdhams - we really would not!

In March Chris came in swearing that the door lock had gone AGAIN! Many of you will have had this problem with the Sun-Ti and had the laborious task of having to take it all the way back to Nottingham to have replacement locks fitted under warranty.

Umm - this time it is 5 years old and we no longer have any Warranty and, even if we had, Lowdhams are only allowing one year now on their 'new' Knaus models.

We rang them anyway. They asked questions and we sent them photos of the door part with the panel off. They told us the part number we needed. Thanks to the Knaus owners and our Knaus Club WebSite we heard about Southdown Motors in Portsmouth. What a good idea

we thought. Right next to the ship for Spain.

(Website - [www.southdownsmotorcaravans.co.uk](http://www.southdownsmotorcaravans.co.uk) - ask for Steve in the shop).

Steve ordered us the part that Lowdhams had told us we needed. We arranged to have this fitted about midday on Friday 9th April as we were catching the P&O Pride of Bilbao out that evening. (Pity about P&O not sailing any more to Bilbao after September of this year).

We got there and they had a look at the door and one of the mechanics said "umm - you're actually going to need both bits!" More deposit money exchanged hands and off we went to Spain knowing that we could cope with the door lock not working because Chris had taken off the panel and we'd got quite used to 'clicking' it open. It just needed a tiny spring really. And also knowing that Southdowns' promise to have the other part ready for when we returned in 5 weeks would bear fruit.

The first few days in Spain were lovely. We stopped for a few days in Oropesa del Mar which is quite a favourite with us, even if we are the only English people there, as it is right near the beach and has a good, on site, restaurant.

Around ten days after we'd left U.K. and just before we left for Benidorm, Chris expressed concern about the lights on our Charger Display Unit no longer showing green when we were plugged in. "I don't think our new Leisure Batteries have been charging even though we've been 'plugged in', said he mournfully, "although they are showing green now that we are travelling and the alternator has kicked in".

Oh hollyhocks" we cried - and other similar words. NOT the Calira Charger!

But we knew a chap who lived on site who knew another chap who 'works on MotorHomes and Caravans' and he rang this chap for us. "What he doesn't know about MotorHomes and Caravans you can write on the back of a matchbox" said our friend. One hour later it was admitted by all that said chap had not been able to fix the problem as our Calira Charger needed a new 'relay'. We telephoned and emailed back to Southdowns at Portsmouth asking if they could possibly get one from Germany before we arrived back. Yes, they could.

We then borrowed a 12V battery charger for the remainder of our stay and our friend even let us take it back to U.K. with us and post it back to his sister in U.K.

12V battery chargers are a good idea but you really do need to wrap everything in plastic bags and put it all underneath your MotorHome - which we had just done before that tropical hail storm in Benidorm hit! And if you think rain on the roof is loud ! -

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To cut a long story short we got back to Portsmouth and were outside Southdowns by 5 p.m. and they very kindly hooked us up for the night (even though we were outside the main gates) as they just passed the lead through their fence.

Having ascertained that they would be able to fix both the door and the new Calira charger by around midday they kindly directed us to a superb pub just around the corner where there is also a Morrisons supermarket. We could not believe our luck with the pub and the food they dished out - especially the 2 for 1 in the week! Beef Wellington and Steak plus dishes of vegetables plus wine - all for £14.95! Probably the best we'd tasted for a long, long time! The publican - 'Paddy' (having heard of our problems) promptly told us we could come down at 8 a.m. for breakfast even though they did not officially open until 10 a.m. as it was a 'breakfast club' morning the next day.

So in the morning we left our MotorHome to the mercy of Southdowns' mechanics to have breakfast down at the pub - for 99p. Yes - you did read that right! 'Paddy' even looked after the frozen food we'd purchased at Morrisons while we went to collect our MotorHome.

Ah yes - the MotorHome ..... The door locks were fine. The german mechanic told us he had good news and bad news about our new Calira charger..... It's probably best if we just insert the letter we sent to our friend in Spain when we returned his 12V battery charger!

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Dear

**FOR WANT OF A NAIL!**

Herewith one 12 volt charging unit and many thanks for letting us borrow this as it allowed us to travel back to U.K. with our leisure batteries almost full. We do appreciate it.

However, we did not appreciate being told - once the new charger was fitted yesterday – that all that had been needed was a 2.5 amp glass fuse! As you can imagine we were not too happy at having to fork out over £700 in the cost of the new charger (which had been specially ordered from Germany) and having it fitted. We now have a back up charger to use, should anything go wrong with the new one, but this is really not the point.

We would have thought this was something your 'Mr Fix-it' should have picked up. He told us that we needed a new 'relay' which was why we had to order a complete new charger. The 2.5 amp glass fuse is located through the grill on top of the charger and had he known this (or looked for it) he would have found the problem and been able to fix it then and there. Unfortunately this was the "what he does not know about caravans and motorhomes youcould write on the back of a matchbox" bit.

If we had a matchbox we would have sent this to you to give to him. You might ask him to consider reimbursing us with the 37 euros we forked out when we are next in Benidorm?

Kind regards

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Yes we can highly recommend Southdowns and the Pub round the corner which is known as "The Compass Rose" - Telephone: 02392 673037.  
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As Gay has said before - she hates it when Chris has gone out to the MotorHome for something or other and comes in swearing -----

May 2010 - at home.

"There is a crack in our windscreen!" he moaned.

"Pardon?"

"A crack in -----"

"Yes, I heard what you said but you've only just finished cleaning it! - Did it happen when that bloke delivered another load of bricks for next door?"

"No! Nothing to do with him - or with me cleaning it. I went out there to chat to someone and looked up at windscreen and saw the crack!"

We're not going to go into why our Insurance Company asked us if we were vatable nor about us being charged V.A.T. on the whole job that was done by their Windscreen Replacement lot without so much as a by your leave. Nor the fact that they took 6 days to replace the windscreen! Kevin had already explained the v.a.t. bit, long before an apology came from the Insurance Company. Ohhhh - suffice it to say that if your MotorHome or Caravan is used for 'business', as is ours, then you don't just get charged v.a.t. on the excess you pay - it's the whole of the v.a.t. on the whole of the monies that the repairer (of WHATEVER) charges the Insurance Company! Now - in OUR eyes the Insurance Company, 1. Gets to charge you more p.a. because you happen to 'write' in your MotorHome and 2. Gets you to fork out all the v.a.t. that they would normally have to pay themselves since - 'guess wot?' Insurance Companies cannot reclaim v.a.t. If there is any justice in this

particular little 'rip off' please tell.

Last but not least - (how could a toilet cassette be least??!!)

When we first bought our MotorHome, Gay had this idea that 2 toilet cassettes were better than one. We think she may have thought that, along with everything else, it was better to have two on board in case you used one and then had no-where to empty it!? Don't ask!

Suffice to say that when we finally decided to replace our old one with this new one (because of course we had never used it) this gave cause for Chris to come in the house using those funny words again.

"I nearly took the old one to the tip! Minus the cap of course."

"Sorry?"

"It doesn't fit!"

"What doesn't?"

"The new loo that we purchased at Lowdhams 5 years ago - it's the wrong one!!!!!"

"Why?"

"Because it doesn't fit!"

Eventually we got the numbers and letters from our 'old' and 'new' cassette together with the original bill from 2005.

No, of course, the numbers were not the same - nor the top either for that matter and, yes, Lowdhams called us - once they'd made sure we were safely away in France. At least they have said they are sending a new one. Mind you, we've only just got back from the hottest 2 weeks in June we can remember - so we'll wait and see. Which brings us back to the fact that

**(c) Rosec Publications June 2010**

## ***HALL of FAME***



**Our Chairman receiving his KBS from The Treasurer  
(Knaus Barbeque Set)**



**Lincoln Rally**



**Knutsford Rally**

Congratulations go to Steve and Dee Costin, who celebrated their first wedding anniversary. Also, congratulations to Cracker, who has qualified for Crufts. →



**Steve and Dee with Cracker**

**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 and Steve Brock 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?

## ***BITS & PIECES***

Lakeside Park, [www.donamottparks.com](http://www.donamottparks.com), has invited motorhomers attending Peterborough and Lincoln shows to extend their time away for £8 p.n.(up to 5 nights) inc. EHU. We have had favourable reports from members about this park and facilities. The park will accommodate a rally. Would members be interested in a rally, either after a show or at another time? Feedback please.

There are 2 Items of Interest on the Knaus website which members may like to look at. If you do not have access to the internet please contact Bill Lowes and he will send a copy.

1. Calira Charger
2. Sunliner RHD/LHD Headlight swap not rear as said on the website.

### **A note from Bob & Genevieve Dixon-Box**

October 2010 and we have just returned from the NEC Motorhome Show, unfortunately not a Knaus in sight. Obviously I'm concerned for ourselves and all of the club members because of the effect on resale values in the UK. We are delighted with our Sun Ti 700MG and it lives up to all our expectations. Unfortunately it took Lowdhams 15 months from sale to supply all the parts that we found missing on the new van. Very poor service and attitude.

Fortunately for us we travel on the continent a lot and the dealer/agents that we have been in contact with are all proud to be part of the Knaus network and their very high quality products with fast, efficient parts back-up. So different from Lowdhams, so until a proper dealer network is set up in the UK we will be using the european network shown on the Knaus website.

In 2010 we have had contact and service from the following Knaus Authorized Partners: All contacts phone numbers are on the Knaus website.

Valencia, Spain. Caravanas Ortiz (Maria speaks good english) They helped to repair our habitation door lock. When I phoned Lowdhams for help, they were unable to offer any advice. Caravanas Ortiz knew of this "common" problem and carried out a repair within 2 days.

Granada, (& Barcelona) Spain Caravanas Autostar Granada (Erika speaks english) With the help of Christina Mata, the main spanish importer, (Caravanas Alemanas, Barcelona) they obtained a new replacement plastic window for our dining/lounge area from Germany and it was all fitted inside 7 days from being forced/broken. FANTASTIC!

Augsburg, Germany Wohnmobile Centre Petz (Christian & brother Joachim Petz, both speak perfect english) Our door lock failed again and now it's had a proper german repair! They now have all of our van details etc., on their computer system and will be able to quote us for Knaus specific parts when needed and can ship to the UK.(IBAN/Swift bank transfers only, no credit cards taken). A point of interest, they told me that Calira PSU's can mostly be repaired! No need for replacement with an approx. 10 day repair via. Calira. So you see Knaus is still valued in Europe, there's chance for the UK yet!

### **Knaus Owners Club Polo Shirts**

Keren is taking orders for Fruit of the Loom polo shirts, embroidered with the Knaus Logo and 'Owners Club'. The shirts are a cotton/polyester mix and will cost under £8 each. They come in sizes S, M, L ,XL and XXL. You can choose from white, heather grey, sunflower, red, burgundy, emerald, bottle green, sky blue, royal blue, navy blue and black. If you would like to order one please contact Keren: e-mail [liaison@knausowners.com](mailto:liaison@knausowners.com) or phone 01282 850586. The shirts will be delivered either at the next rally (probably the AGM now) or you can collect yours from Keren and Trevor's if you are passing. (You might also be lucky and get a cup of tea and a biccy). Please don't send any money as Bill will collect that.