



SWIFT

**MOTORHOMES
OWNERS CLUB**



Newsletter No 138 - Winter 2024



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RALLY PROGRAM 2025

Feb	12 th - 19 th	Foxtail Holiday Park (Chirk, LL14 5DJ)
Mar	12 th - 19 th	Pinecones Caravan & Camping (Kings Lynn, PE31 6WL)
Apr	9 th - 16 th	Thornbrook Barn (Thornton in Lonsdale, LA6 3PD)
May	7 th - 14 th	Bridge Villa Camping & Caravan Park (Wallingford, OX10 8HB)
	15 th - 19 th	The Southern Motorhome & Campervan Show (Newbury, RG18 9QZ)
	26 th - 30 th	River Valley Holiday Park (County Wicklow, Ireland)
May/ June	30 th - 3 rd	Blarney Caravan & Camping Park (Blarney, County Cork, Ireland)
	3 rd - 7 th	Glenross Caravan & Camping Park (County Kerry, Ireland)
	7 th - 11 th	Nagles Camping & Caravan Park (County Clare, Ireland)
July	16 th - 23 rd	Bagwell Farm Touring Park (Chickerell, DT3 4EA)
	24 th - 28 th	Netley Marsh Steam Fair
Aug	7 th - 14 th	Aberystwyth Rugby Club (Aberystwyth, SY23 1HL)
	14 th - 18 th	Malvern Country & Western Show (Malvern, WR13 6NW)
Sept	10 th - 17 th	AGM Rally, Lickhill Manor Caravan Park (Stourport-on-Seven DY3 8RL)
	18 th - 22 nd	The Motorhome & Campervan Show Season Finale (Lincoln, LN2 2NA)
Oct	8 th - 15 th	Canterbury Camping & Caravanning Club Site
Nov	19 th - 26 th	Christmas Rally - York House Caravan Park (Hawsker, YO22 4LW)
Dec/ Jan	29 th - 2 nd	New Year Rally - Riverside Caravan & Camping Park & Country Club (South Molton, EX36 3HQ)



CHAIRPERSONS CHAT

Hello everyone, this year has been another great one for the club, with lots of new members joining our regulars on rallies.

My thanks, as usual, go to our Marshals who make our rallies the success they are and to our new band of co-marshals. These co-marshals have now dipped a toe in the water and done a fantastic job, so I hope they have gained the confidence and experience to stamp their mark on a rally as Marshals. Whilst our Marshals organise many activities during rallies and get a lot of support from those attending, please remember any member can suggest things to do, such as organising a walk, a visit to a local attraction, a celebration or just an impromptu drink outside your motorhome. I'm sure our Marshals would be very open to any ideas.

As I write this, our final rally of the year, another first for the club, a New Year bash at Milestone Caravan Park, is coming up. Andy and I look forward to seeing you there, with hopefully a quiz, a few visits to the local microbrewery, lots of food and a great celebration to bring the New Year in.

In 2025, we have a fantastic diary of rallies with a number already open for booking, so please try and join us when you can, we would love to see you. Although our focus is now on 2025, we are also starting to look at our program for 2026, so if you know of any sites that may be good candidates for a rally, please speak to Andy (Rally Secretary) or me. Where possible, we do try and find sites near public transport. (For example, at the Christmas rally, a local pre-bookable bus picked up members from the site entrance) a local town and a pub (especially in the winter months) however, occasionally, it is not easy to find all three, especially at a reasonable cost, although we do certainly try.

Whilst on the subject of rallies, it is worth reminding everyone that although our guaranteed booking deadline is usually 6 weeks before a rally's start date (something we do to be fair to the site and to ensure that the club is not exposed financially) we will try our best to squeeze people in. So if you haven't booked in time, or your circumstances have changed, please get in touch with Andy and he will see what can be done. Please also note that if you book a rally and for any reason you must cancel, if the club has had to pay out to the site, you may not get your money back, although in most cases, the sites are very reasonable and do reimburse us.

All that's left to say is I hope you had/have a fantastic Christmas, with lots of fun and celebrations and for all those who I will not see at Milestone, have a great New Year and a great start to 2025. We would love to see you at the February Rally at Chirk, although you will need to be quick to secure your place!

Heather Hartell (Chairperson)

**A very warm Swift Motorhomes Owners Club
welcome to our new members**

**Phil Horsley - 3618
Simon & Alison Randall - 3619
Robert & Suzanne Skinner - 3620
Paul & Sandra Carter - 3621
Edward & Marva Duncan – 3622
Paul & Sofia Best - 3623**



SWIFT
MOTORHOMES
OWNERS CLUB

Swift Motorhomes Owners Club - Code of Conduct:

1. Be kind and courteous:

- o We are all in the club together to mutually enjoy the pastime of Motorhoming, so we should always create a positive, welcoming and inviting environment.
- o We should treat everyone with respect and dignity, whilst healthy debates are natural kindness should prevail.

2. No hate speech, bullying, physical or verbal abuse:

- o We should always make sure people feel safe. Physical or verbal abuse or intimidating behaviour of any kind is not allowed and degrading comments about things like race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.
- o Instances of such behaviour should be challenged and reported.

3. Respect everyone's privacy.

- o Being part of a club requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make groups great, but they may also be sensitive and private.

Inappropriate behaviour by a member which causes (or could reasonably be expected to cause) offence, embarrassment or disruption to the Club or other members, shall be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Club reserves the right to suspend or permanently exclude any member who breaches the Code of Conduct, along with all other members directly linked to the same Membership.

EDITORIAL

As winter approaches and the nights are drawing in the motorhomes are still cosy and warm. We still plan to go away every month at least.

Well where do I start as this will be my first editorial edition!! All help appreciated, with Andy Hartell helping and trying his best to teach me on what to do!! I think this is going to be a massive learning curve with a new web programme to learn how to navigate. I am sure Andy will go grey with trying to show me what to do!! Also more importantly thanks to Ray Collinson (previous editor) who is still going to sort the printing out with the help of his lovely wife Carole, who post out the newsletter to you all to enjoy.

With doing the winter edition at least I will have all the AGM to fill in the newsletter, so this will be a good trial.

Just to give you a little background on how I got into this role. Well Andy was doing so many jobs and he kept on trying to persuade me to do this role. What have I done was my first thought when nobody else put there name forward for this role. Now I am no expert with newsletter building but I do have a little computer knowledge. Been a nurse tutor in my 'day job' and editor now for the club. It is an honour that I have been given this role, well that is what I think at the minute. That might change! But it is a privilege to be able to have a go and see what I can bring to help the club. Without the members and the committee the club will not function. The newsletter will not be a newsletter if we did not get the stories from members about their travels with the club, for all those that cannot attend to enjoy.

If you have been somewhere interesting please send in the pictures and a little story of your travels, as we all like to hear about the adventures that you have been on.

Next year, we have a very full calendar, with rallies spanning most parts of England & Wales. Wales being the place where we live, hopefully we will see many of you attending the rally here in Aberystwyth this year. Marshals are also a vital part of the rallies and we rely on our members to do these roles. Have a go and somebody will support you in doing this, it is enjoyable and gives you the opportunity to mix and get to know your members.

Sadly Andy has handed this over to me and as he seems to be going to miss doing this you never know I might decide that I do not want to do it anymore!! (only joking Andy, don't panic yet), Happy Christmas and New Year to all members.

Enough of my gabbling on Sue

(Newsletter Editor)



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Foxtail Holiday Park

Chirk, LL14 5DJ

12th - 19th February 2025

Foxtail Holiday Park has breathtaking views on its doorstep and some lovely walks, such as along the Llangollen canal or the Chirk Aqueduct, both of which are part of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the Llangollen Canal World Heritage site. Plus a short part of the canal, leading through Chirk Bank to Gledrid Bridge is also an Ancient schedule monument in its own right.

Conveniently located within a short distance of many places to eat and drink, you should find something for everyone, from Takeaways, Cafe's and lite Bites and Traditional Pub food, to some of the finest dining in the area.

The towns of Oswestry, Chirk and Wrexham are easily accessible by an hourly bus service nearby. So you can easily explore this lovely area on the English / Welsh border.

Onsite there is a bar serving a range of Draught Beers, Wine, Spirits and bottled drinks (currently open 3-10pm Friday's and Saturday's).

All pitches include EHU, fresh water & grey waste drainage and access to free superfast Wifi throughout the site.

Pitch Fee: £28 / unit per night (inc H/S & EHU)

Rally Fee: £1 per person (Guests £10 per unit)

Rally Marshals: Andy & Heather Hartell

Closing Date for bookings: Wednesday 1st January 2025

No arrivals before 12.30pm on any day



Halfpenny Green Winery Rally: 5th - 9th September 2024

On arrival we were greeted by Martin who along with Pauline, Heather and Andy were the Rally Marshals.

For the record, this year in particular I have got some dates wrong by turning up to a Rally a day early (sorry Nick and Anne when we went to Bath). Yep, you guessed it, I did it again to the amusement of Martin. I quickly started to make some feeble excuse in my error. I came up with a couple of conspiracy theories, obviously I'm not taking any blame or responsibilities. I began the conversation in saying it's the Calendar's fault because it must of mysteriously erased the dates or it may have been done by my pooches to make sure they had an extended time away. I'm not sure, but I think Martin's expression concluded he didn't buy any of that baloney.



After getting a grip of the situation we soon settled in and made time to look around our surroundings. The views across the vineyard were stunning and peaceful. The pitches were really spacious, loads of room for an awning and car and even better we were altogether as a group. The following day was a private guided vineyard tour including wine tasting followed by afternoon tea. The tour itself was very informative and interesting. We were told that the vines spread over

30 acres and comprising of sixteen different varieties. The winery also carries out contract winemaking and bottling for over 80 vineyards around England and Wales, winning many regional, national and international awards. Some members including myself bought a case of wine, well, it had to be done.

In the evening we gathered for social chit chats and catch up time and to make plans for the following day.

Some group members opted to go sightseeing, looking around the local area including the museum in Telford and National Trust premises and yes, you would need transport to get around. For others including me went on a county walk, headed by Andy with his trusted App. The walk started at the back of the vineyard leading down county lanes (one being very muddy) to a beautiful local pub, it would have been rude not to sample the local ale and grub and, it did not disappoint. Since we all had the time in the world, we walked and talked at a gentle pace back to the vineyard, plus we had to tackle that muddy lane for the second time. Now, I know what your thinking .. impressive.



Later that evening Martin and Pauline arranged of us to have fish and chips and I must say, I gave a big thumbs up as did others.



The next day a traditional Roast Sunday Dinner at Halfpenny Green Restaurant was arranged and I can say that it is highly recommended. After lunch we took a stroll around the on site craft village, shop and deli, also on site was a wild zoo and fishing pools. The restaurant provides daily meals for breakfast and lunch. On the last day Alistair and I, on the recommendations from Heather and Andy had a full English breakfast- delicious.

Sadly, our four day jam packed full of fun with entertainment to Halfpenny Green Winery Estate had come to an end but if you are visiting the area or passing though and you're with Britstop it is free or if not its £6.00, its well worth it.

Impression: It seemed to be popular place with both locals and visiting people enjoying the restaurant food and to visit the

site craft village. The pitches were spacious, water and Elsan point were provided at the top end of the site . Dogs were welcomed with endless country walks to delight any pooches with their human friends. The Deli shop is certainly worth a visit. To get about you do need your own transport.

The Rally provided a great time away, with lots of meet ups, plenty of chats and laughter. In such a relaxed environment sharing time with like minded members gave everyone the time to talk about their daily adventures. Now, some went hunting to explore areas of interest, some decided to do absolutely nothing, others decided to do double nothing but all appreciated and enjoyed the same thing; loving the freedom of van life. It just proves that you can do anything to nothing but you're never alone and can just have a brilliant time away.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to Martin, Pauline, Heather and Andy for being Marshals, in making us feel welcomed and for the well planned rally. To all other members, thank you for making it possible in having a great time away. **Gwen Smith (3418)**



AGM RALLY, West Midlands Showground, Shrewsbury 10th - 17th September 2024

BATTLEFIELD CHURCH VISIT

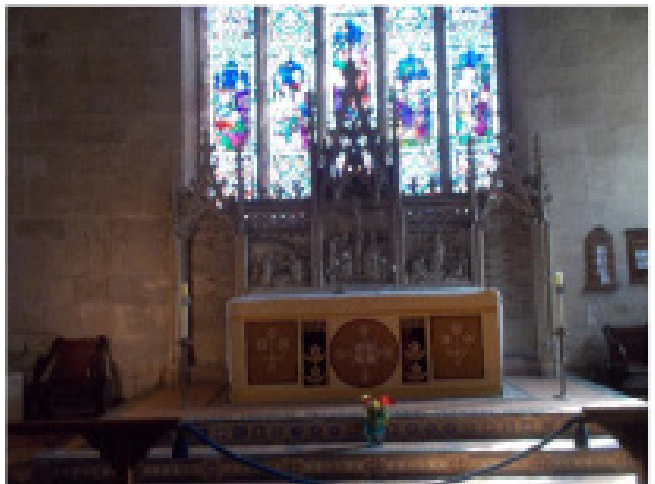
Whilst attending the Club Rally at Shrewsbury in September Esther, myself and Betram (SMOC Bear) came across the church of St Mary Magdalene in the village of Battlefield which, as the name suggests, is dedicated to Jesus' companion Mary Magdalene.



The church was built in 1406 on the site of the Battle of Shrewsbury, which was fought on 21st July 1403 and waged between an army led by the Lancastrian King Henry IV and a rebel arm led by Henry "Harry" Hotspur Percy from Northumberland. The battle, the first in which English archers fought each other on English soil, reaffirmed the effectiveness of the longbow and ended with the death of Henry Percy and his challenge to the King of England.

The church was originally intended

as a chantry, which is a place of commemoration for those killed in the fighting. It is believed to have been built over a mass burial pit which is thought to have around 600 bodies buried in it. It was originally a collegiate church staffed by a small community of chaplains whose main duty was to perform a daily liturgy for the dead. Roger Ive, the local parish priest, is generally regarded as the founder, although the church received considerable support and endowment from Henry IV in thanks for his Victory.



After the dissolution of the college and chantry in 1548, the building was used as the local parish church. Due to the small congregation the building suffered from serious decay with several attempts at rebuilding from the mid-18th century.

Today although it is a redundant Anglican church a liturgy is held twice a week for the dead of the 1403 battle. This short service is open to the public.



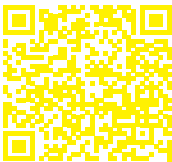
suffered from serious decay with several attempts at rebuilding from the mid-18th century. A restoration in Victorian times was controversial in detail, although many original features remain.

Stephen & Esther Scull (3245)

NEW DEDICATED CLUB FACEBOOK PAGE

If you haven’t already, don’t forget to join up to our clubs new Facebook Group. So far over 85 of our members have signed up but that still leaves a lot that are still to take the plunge.

To join simply scan the QR code below, answer the 3 qualifying membership questions and accept the group rules.



Shrewsbury Showground Rally and AGM Continued - September 2024

As we had previously been on the rally at Halfpenny Green Vineyard, we were able to pay for an extra night at Halfpenny and an extra night at Shrewsbury. On arrival we were pleased to find a new portable shower and toilet facilities which were very clean with lovely hot showers.

The following day we headed out to the supermarket to replenish our supplies. That evening after everyone had arrived, we were all warmly welcomed at the meet and greet by our first time rally marshals Gwen and Alister (assisted by Heather and Andy) where we all enjoyed some tasty snacks and lots of jovial conversation. Later that evening everyone congregated for a social gathering at the showground Pavilion which provided us with a large function room and a kitchen to prepare food.

The club had hired the pavilion for the AGM meeting on Saturday morning and the get together in the evening. But as the rooms were not booked, they allowed us to make use of the room several evenings whilst there. The showground and pavilion are used for private hire and host many events throughout the year, Half marathons, Music festivals, Concerts, Dog shows and a Weekly Car Boot Sale.

The Berwick presidents pavilion was opened by her majesty Queen Elizabeth on May 21st, 1975. Sadly, over the years the buildings have been hit by flooding multiple times the showground is not insured against flood damage due to its riverside location, therefore they depend on the local help and support to keep the buildings up and running.

Saturday morning there was a good turn out of members for the annual AGM meeting, where everyone present had the opportunity to ask questions and put forward suggestions. The club is for everyone so always feel free to get involved and share any talents you may have which could interest others. The Marshals and Committee Members put in many hours of unpaid work behind the scenes to make the rallies successful.

Afternoon was the preparation time for the ploughman's meal in the evening, how many gloved hands make light work (lots), Sue with her chopper sliced and diced a mass of fruit for the fresh fruit salad, lots of us prepping cutting ham and cheese, washing salads, pork pies, slicing cucumber cutting bread, then placing all the ingredients onto individual plates covering them all in cling film ready to serve.

On the Saturday evening, we were all invited by Alister and Gwen who at no cost to the club had arranged delivery of a barrel of prosecco which they generously shared with everyone, before we all moved over to the pavilion for an evening of mystery and murder organized by Heather, who had brought along an array of props to help distinguish the character. The mystery continued throughout the evening in between courses, Nibbles followed by a ploughman's supper, and delicious fresh fruit salad with lashings of cream. Many thanks to Bill, Bob, Ann, Ester, Bridget, Gill, Robert and Andy (the Murderer) for the wonderful somewhat humorous renditions of their roles which caused many laughs.

Robert and I took a pleasant riverside stroll into Shrewsbury to watch the annual coracle races, they hold these races each year to raise funds for many local charities. A coracle is a small, rounded, lightweight boat of the sort traditionally used in Wales by the fishermen who at the end of the day would carry their coracle home on their shoulders along with the day's catch of fish. The coracle's structure is made of a framework of split and interwoven willow rods, tied with willow bark. The outer layer was originally an animal skin such as horse or bullock hide (corium), with a thin layer of tar to waterproof it; today these have been replaced by tarred calico, canvas, or fibreglass.

During the evening, we celebrated two birthdays Ann had brought along delicious cakes to share with everyone on her birthday. We then surprised Bill with a card and cake to celebrate his 90th birthday. It was lovely catching up with Bill and Phylis and celebrating his 90th birthday. Bill has been an active committee member of SMOC for many years and always the life and soul of many a rally, wishing them both many more years of happy travels.

On the Sunday a large group of us went for a very enjoyable lunch at the Bird in Hand pub which was about half a mile away.

One evening we were all invited to Gwen and Alister's for hot dogs, as always, we congregated bringing our own chairs and drinks to spend an evening of general chatter.

It was a lovely warm and sunny afternoon, when members were invited by Ann to meet at her motorhome to join her for tea and cake, lemon drizzle, scones with fresh cream and strawberries, brownies, fruit cake and a never-ending supply of tea.

Just to prove we don't spend all of the time together eating, A group of energetic campers and their dogs took a walk to Hencote Vineyard, about 3 miles away, on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, sadly when they arrived the Vineyard & Winery were closed so unfortunately, they were unable to taste Hencote award winning wine or sample the exquisite food, but not to be deterred they all enjoyed their walk and the wonderful views. Hencote overlooks the vineyard, town of Shrewsbury and Shropshire Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty. The restaurant boasts 180-degree panoramic views and features seasonal menus, creating high end food with a modern twist, with nearly all ingredients sourced locally within Shropshire.

Bridget Hubbard

Vice Chair -- 3177



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Pinecones Caravan & Camping

Kings Lynn, PE31 6WL

12th - 19th March 2025

Established in 2015, Pinecones Caravan & Camping is an award winning site located on the doorstep of the vast Sandringham estate, a private residence of King Charles III. The Sandringham visitor centre is just a 25 minute walk away. Further afield you can walk to Snettisham beach a bird watchers paradise. Or alternatively why not try out one of the many cycling trails, the site hires out bikes.

There are nearby bus stops in Dersingham with routes to Hunstanton and Kings Lynn. The village also hosts two pubs within a short walk, both are dog friendly and a supermarket, takeaway, and coffee shop.

The site, nestled in six acres of pine trees has an onsite bar and shop (please note that opening times may vary)

With its dramatic cliffs, charming seaside towns, starry night skies and miles of golden sandy beaches, The Norfolk Coast AONB is the perfect place to enjoy a relaxing break for couples and families alike.

Explore the wider county and you'll discover stately homes including the palatial splendour of Holkham Hall and the Royal elegance of Sandringham Estate, and historic market towns with café and boutique-lined boulevards.

Pitch Fee: (inc H/S & EHU)

Basic H/S: £27

H/S with picnic hut: £29

Rally Fee: £1 per person (Guests £10 per unit)

Rally Marshals: TBC

Closing Date for bookings: Monday 27th January 2025

No arrivals before 1pm on any day

34th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WEST MIDLANDS SHOWGROUND, SHREWSBURY, SY1 2LP
SATURDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2024
MEETING MINUTES

Present: Heather Hartell, Bridget Hubbard, Andy Hartell, Robert Hubbard, Ray Collinson, Jane Steward, Ann Halford, Keith Morgan, Bob Mason & Pauline Hayward.

Apologies: Marilyn Miland.

Chairperson - Heather Hartell welcomed all SMOC members to the 34th Annual General Meeting. 35th Anniversary of SMOC – celebrations planned for this evening.

Apologies for Absence

Geoff & Theresa Green via Chairperson.

Graham & Barbara Ball via Chairperson.

Glynn & Rachel Webster via Chairperson.

Marilyn & David Miland via Secretary.

Meeting minutes of the AGM 2023 - Saturday 16th September 2023, accepted by all SMOC members in attendance.

Matters Arising from the Minutes (published in Newsletter 134) – None, all SMOC members in attendance agreed with this motion by a show of hands.

Chairperson's Report:

Welcome to the 34th Swift Motorhomes Owners Club AGM here in the lovely town of Shrewsbury. It should be our 35th but COVID scuppered that one.

This year has been a great one for the club, we have enjoyed some lovely rallies, all over the country and further afield. We added two firsts in our program, well at least I think they are firsts. The Newcomers rally, which was run by Jane and Anthony turned out to be a very special weekend with 7 rally newbies gathering in Leicestershire for a great weekend. And a New Year's rally at Milestone Caravan Park, where 2 of our new members who went to the Newcomers rally are booked to attend.

We introduced a whole bunch of new travelling companions, i.e. the SMOC Teddy Bears, which came about as an idea from one of our members, Margaret Cannon. This growing family is now up to 43 and you can follow the travels of many of them on our new club Facebook page.

It's great to see how many of our members have embraced the Facebook page, which provides a wonderful way to keep in touch with the club, and its activities and share your adventures with other members. If you haven't already joined don't forget to do so.

As you will appreciate recruiting new members is an important part of what we do and this year we ran a stand at the Newbury show, which proved to be a success as we recruited nearly 20 new members. As always, a big thank you to Jane & Anthony for all their hard work in organising this and also to the band of "willing" volunteers who helped out during the weekend. The only disappointment at Newbury was that we didn't have enough of us to hold a rally together, however, that didn't stop 6 of us from meeting up outside the venue and travelling in together, so we still had a great weekend.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the committee, as without their hard work and dedication, often unseen by members, we would not get to enjoy the club as hopefully we all do.

I also have to thank all of our marshals who give up their time and other things to ensure we all have a great time on rallies and those who help out, either by baking cakes, providing bacon rolls, running raffles or just helping to wash the pots. thank you.

So now to our members, which we all are, the club is for all of us and whilst we try to deliver things we hope our members want, we are not always perfect. So, if you have any ideas for rally sites, activities on rallies, social activities or anything else regarding the club please do let us know.

Finally, meeting new friends and seeing old ones in the great outdoors is what this club is all about so long may it last. Thank-you

Heather Hartell
Chairperson

Treasurer's Report and presentation of the Annual Accounts:

Another year has passed in which there were several new activities which caused a few small headaches for the Treasurer, but generally, things have gone to plan, and our accounting system works very well.

The 2023 French Rally presented a few problems, as the banking system keeps making changes that requires a little patience, and the French never make things easy!

Web-Collect

When an order is placed by a member using one name and payment made by someone using a different name it can be quite a challenge to work out what the payment covers. An email would be useful in those circumstances.

I would ask members to use the event Order ID. rather than the Web-Collect “unique number” as their Reference when making BACS payments. It does make my job a lot easier. If a Bank Payment is made covering more than one activity, please let me know by email as it can be quite time consuming trying to work out what the payment is actually for.

Go-Cardless was briefly trialled but shelved for now as it was confusing and would be too costly to use as our main payment tool.

The Accounts were Audited by Carol Collinson, and everything was deemed to be satisfactory.

I should like to thank Carol for being our Auditor and hope that she will repeat the process next year.

I have produced two Documents that detail the SMOC Current Financial Status.

The Cash Balance Statement: Clearly shows the Financial Position as of 31/03/24 and signed off by the Auditor.

The Income & Expenditure (I & E) Sheet details exactly how our Income is derived and expended in Year 23/24.

Should any member wish to view/examine the Accounting Spreadsheet, they are welcome to do so by arrangement with me.

Finally, thank you for your patience and are there any questions.

Bob Mason

Hon Treasurer – Swift Motorhomes Owners Club

Appointment of Financial Examiner for the Accounts, Carol Collinson has kindly offered her services, therefore appointed for 2024/2025 – committee thanked her.

Membership Secretary's Report:

We have approx. 167 Members and rising slowly.

77 Members left from 30th August 2023 to 1st Sept 2024.

Main reason: - sold van - ill health - bought a non-Swift – Rallies are not near us.

We have 2 Life Memberships, and another is being proposed (Mike Still has now been honoured as a Life Member)

15 New Members joined us at the Peterborough Show 2023 from the April Promotion, out of them, 11 Members have not renewed or paid in May, all from April 2023 members who signed up at Peterborough.

3 reminder letters went out to them, each stating their membership is overdue, the last letter stating their details will be removed and now have been removed on 1st September, I have not had a single reply from 10 of them, even though I asked all of them to reply,

3 members has cancelled their membership and did let us know. We had 15 members join us at Newbury on Janes sales drive, of which 6 of those joined Jane & Anthony for a newbie rally at Lime Tree Caravan Park, Warwickshire. I believe 2 or 3 are at this rally.

Robert Hubbard

Members Secretary

Rally Secretary's Report:

Since last year's AGM we have had 15 rallies with an average of 14 Motorhomes at each rally (15) We have once again explored parts of the UK & France, as far North as Bakewell, as far West as Cardiff and as far South & East as Isère.

In total members have booked a total of 1,213 nights (1,108) since the last AGM. In this current year i.e. 2024 we have had a total of 210 individual bookings from 69 (61) members, representing 38% (35% - 2022/23) of our membership. Of these 2024 ralliers, 26 (15) were first timers with 9 (6) of these coming back for more. We are certainly seeing a different mix of ralliers now.

Of the 69 members (61 - 2022/23) who rallied in 2024 a total of 24 came for 4 or more and this group made up 78% (69%) of our rally bookings this year. So, a big thanks to all those members who rallied with us because without you our rally season wouldn't fly.

Bookings and payments for rallies are now exclusively conducted via the "Members Portal" with 207 online bookings/BACS payments made and just 3 paper bookings/cheque payments (2 members only)

Last year's rally season closed out with rallies in Cardiff, followed by a very enjoyable and well-attended Christmas rally at Milestone Caravan Park, who stepped up at the last moment when our original site announced they had been bought by the Caravan & Camping Club and the site was therefore closing for refurbishment.

This year started with a great rally at Woodland Waters (I think Woody's Bar must get the vote for this year's best Fish & Chips) followed by rallies in Charmouth, Cromer (we will get good weather in East Anglia one day) and then Bath.

In June several club members had a terrific time in France and a massive thanks must go to Ray & Carol for organising and marshaling this trip. Also in June, we had a first, a Newcomers Rally, which brought together some existing club members who had never rallied before with some who had yet to sign up but were invited to try out the club. This event organised by Jane Steward was a resounding success with 7 newcomers enjoying a weekend on the Leicestershire / Warwickshire border and already 5 have booked to come on other rallies.

Since the French trip, we have also visited Salisbury, where we enjoyed this great little city, had fine weather and enjoyed the club's 35th-anniversary celebrations, the only pity being that more members couldn't join us. This was followed by Bakewell, where again members had a great time and the ever-popular Malvern Show.

The only real downsides this year have been the Newbury Show and the Cardiff Vintage for Victory Festival.

At Newbury, we failed to meet the numbers to be an official rally, although that didn't stop an intrepid few, who met at the services and all managed to be pitched together, albeit in general camping. We did, however, still run a recruitment stand and that was very successful due to the efforts of Jane & Anthony and her band of volunteers.

The Vintage for Victory Festival was unfortunately a big disappointment with only 3 units booked for the weekend.

Following on from this rally, we have the Lincoln show, which despite a slow start finished up with 16 booked for the weekend. Then we have Southport, there are still places remaining, followed by our Christmas rally at Thornton's Holt, Slimbridge and a first to my knowledge, a New Year rally, which is now full I'm afraid.

So now looking to the 2025 program we once again will try to move around the UK and overseas as much as we can. Unfortunately, prices continue to rise and the days of getting sites

for sub £25 are rare, but we do try to make sure that we gain discounts on the usual site rates. Hopefully, you will agree that we have a varied program in terms of geography and type of site/venue, and we look forward to seeing you at those rallies.

The overseas rally is in the Republic of Ireland, and we still have one place left. If you want any further details, please speak to Heather or me. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank-you to those members who have volunteered to marshal rallies over the last 12 months, without you, one of the core reasons for our club's being (our rallies) would not be possible. So, it remains just to say we "Need You!" for 2025, and any other members who would like to give it a try, it really is great fun! So, if you want to have a go or even co-host one, please, please, please let me know.

Andy Hartell
Rally Secretary

Newsletter Editor's Report:

Although only stepping in a stopgap after Ray's tenure as Newsletter Editor finished, I am now on my 8th edition, although I am hopeful of handing over the reins very soon!

As you will appreciate any newsletter is only as good as its content, so without your contributions, whether that be rally reports, technical articles, funny stories and most importantly great pictures we wouldn't have much to read, so thank you. I want to take this opportunity to thank Ray Collinson who continues to liaise with our printers and carries out (ably assisted by Carol) the fulfilment task, ensuring you all get your newsletters.

As you will know we have several companies that advertise with us and the support these companies provide us as a club, particularly the newsletter, is very welcome as it allows us to produce our newsletter 4 times a year, so many thanks to them.

So what would help, firstly more pictures, please. Members take lots at rallies and these non-formal images bring our club alive to the reader, remember that still over half of our members have never been on a rally. These pictures don't have to be just of the group but also of things you see on your travels during the rallies.

Also, if you are on a rally and the request goes out for a willing volunteer for the rally report please don't shrink into your seat, stick your hand up as it can get a bit stale if its only the world according to a few report writers. That said thanks to those who do and please don't stop. Plus, if you have any area of knowledge or interest relating to our hobby then send in an article,

you might think we know everything, but we certainly don't. Remember it's your newsletter so any ideas or suggestions of what you would like included, or not are always most welcome.

Whilst I do hope this is my last report, I would just like to say that I have enjoyed the task, honestly!

Andy Hartell
Newsletter Editor

Secretary's Report:

Good morning everyone, I joined SMOC committee at the AGM 2023 as a co-opted committee member, initially this was to support/assist Andy Hartell with proof reading of articles for the SMOC newsletter and anywhere else within the committee.

In March this year, due to unforeseen circumstances my predecessor left the role of Club Secretary earlier than expected, I was then approached to step into the position of Honorary Secretary with the support of the committee up until the AGM

forward and submit their nomination – general practice.

I would just like to thank Val Dobbin (my predecessor) for her contributions to the role of Club Secretary over a number of years.

The majority of SMOC members should have received AGM Agenda via email, with only 4 required to be posted out to SMOC members without email addresses.

Pauline Hayward

Honorary Secretary

Election of Management Committee:

Position	Chairperson	Vice Chairperson	Treasurer
Name	Heather Hartell	Bridget Hubbard	Bob Mason
Proposer	Jane Steward	Jane Steward	Val Dobbin
Second	Bridget Hubbard	Heather Hartell	Phyllis Simcock
Position	Secretary	Rally Secretary	Newsletter Editor
Name	Pauline Hayward	Andy Hartell	Sue Morgan
Proposer	Gwen Smith	Sue Morgan	Bridget Hubbard
Second	Bridget Hubbard	Jane Steward	Heather Hartell
Position	S M O C Membership Secretary	R e g a l i a Organiser	NEC Events Organiser
Name	Robert Hubbard	Keith Morgan	Jane Steward
Proposer	Andy Jones	Heather Hartell	Bob Shaw
Second	Andy Hartell	Bridgett Hubbard	Carol Collinson

All current committee members removed themselves from their posts, (seats), SMOC members were asked to vote, all hands raised in agreement of each proposed committee post. All SMOC committee members past /new returned to their posts (reseated).

Proposal of Motions

Proposal to include the following section on the flying of Drones at club rallies or events. This would be inserted in section 11: Rally Code

11.4 The flying of Drones (capable of taking photographs or not) requires the permission of both the site and all members attending the rally or associated events.

Members flying Drones (which must weight under 250g) must have both operator and pilot licences issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) / The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) as applicable. All pilots are solely responsible and liable for their drone, its safety, the privacy of people and any damage to property.

Proposer: Andy Hartell (3243)

Seconder: Ray Collinson (2576)

Proposal - All SMOC members in attendance agreed with this motion by a show of hands.

Time and date of the next Annual General Meeting.

**Saturday 13th September 2025 at 10:30 hrs – Stourport on Seven –
SMOC look forward to rallies in 2025 & the AGM.**

Close: Chairperson - Heather Hartell thanked all SMOC members for attending and closed the meeting.

Rally Musings, Southport Rally - Oct 2024

It was our first time at Southport, so not sure what to expect from the area. We found Victoria Park, our home for the week, easily enough and were met by a smiling Trevor and Sheila, our marshals, who showed us to our pitch. The weather had been pretty wet, so the ground was somewhat damp. We, therefore, parked close to the roadway, so we had less chance of sinking in the mud. Unlike some of our fellow Motorhomers with their large Kon Tiki, who sank a little and had a bit of fun getting out of it. All the fun of camping! Whilst on the rally, as well as more rain, we had a hailstorm; it's great at times like these, being nice and cosy tucked up in the motorhome and just enjoying a relaxing day.

There were lots of places to visit in Southport, Lord Street, which is a mile long and a Victorian boulevard with lovely gardens and lots of shops to visit. Southport is known for its jewellery shops. We wandered with the dogs to the second-longest pier in the UK, which opened in 1860. The Pier is unusual in that a fair amount of it is over dry land. Sadly, most of the pier can no longer be walked on for safety reasons. A Southport claim to fame is a film called Mr Love, in which the Pier featured.

Southport is allegedly by the seaside, although the sea is so far out at low tide you often wonder! On a good day, you can see Blackpool in the distance and also Lytham. The sands are generally not safe to walk on, as some visitors have found out and had to be rescued, I must add that these were not SMOC members.

After a few days of browsing the local shops and wandering along the promenade with the dogs, it was nice to take a trip out to Crosby Beach with Robert & Bridget to see the 100 statues scattered across the beach and a mile out to sea. Each statue, weighing 650 kilos - is made from casts of the artist's own body standing on the beach, all of them looking out to sea, staring at the horizon in silent expectation.

As well as the statues, Crosby Beach is the picturesque beginning to 22 miles of Sefton Coastline and we have wonderful views across the sea to the Wirral and North Wales hills. We even witnessed one of the huge container ships leaving the Port of Liverpool, although Robert was so engrossed in the statues he almost missed it!

The Burbo Bank offshore wind farm can be seen from the shore and adds to the unique coastal/industrial/artistic landscape that makes Crosby Beach so unique.

As always, Sheila and Trevor made everyone welcome and ensured we all had a lovely time. Many members frequenting the local Wetherspoons and Brewers Fayre, with some going for Sunday lunch. A few of us tried out Penelopes on the Park, a nice restaurant just 10 minutes walk from our pitches.

During our stay, we celebrated Ray Cannon's birthday and we all braved the cold to wish him a happy birthday and enjoy some cake.

On Sunday, we all enjoyed our usual get-together for the raffle. Many thanks to those who donated, although someone, unfortunately, did get a prize with corroded batteries. (please ensure all gifts are unused). The Sunday morning get-togethers are an excellent time for all our members to socialise with other members and pass the time of day.

Trevor and Sheila had managed to organise some reduced-price tickets for the Comedy Festival, which was running in the park during our stay. So, on Sunday night, most of us went to see Paul Sinha, AKA the Sinnerman from The Chase. I say most, as Andy, Alistair and Martin got a pass out and went into town to watch the England match! Unfortunately, the Sinnerman's comedy style and content was not something I would return to see, although I will still watch him on The Chase. A few of our members also had their photographs taken with Paul.

We left the rally a day earlier as we had arranged to visit Castleton, but we did manage to leave the pitch ok despite the weather and so did everyone else the day after, although some had a few problems with the ground.

Once again, another lovely rally with big thanks to Trevor and Sheila for doing a great job as marshals in what, at times, were quite trying conditions.

Heather Hartell - 3243

Thornbrook Barn Caravan Site

Thornton in Lonsdale, LA6 3PD

9th - 16th April 2025

Nestled on the border of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Thornbrook Barn is located just over half a mile North of the entrance to the breathtaking Waterfalls Trail and is just a leisurely stroll from the charming Dales Village of Ingleton. In the village, there are numerous pubs, a microbar, and an array of eateries, providing a delightful blend of local flavours. The village is also home to independent shops, adding to its quaint charm.

A couple of minutes walk away, opposite the site entrance, lies Country Harvest, featuring a quality food shop and coffee shop, complemented by its bakery and butchery department.

Thornbrook Barn serves as a gateway to the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the Lake District, and the Forest of Bowland. A short 10-minute walk from the site is the quaint hamlet of Thornton in Lonsdale, with its enchanting church of St Oswald, where Arthur Conan Doyle tied the knot. Right across from the church is a dog-friendly pub, the Marton Arms.

Please note that only two dogs are permitted per pitch.

Pitch Fees: (inc H/S & EHU)

Standard: 4 -6 nights rate: £26.20 / 3 nights or less: £29.00

Rally Fee: £1 per person (Guests £10 per unit)

Rally Marshals: Robert & Bridget Hubbard

Closing Date for bookings: Monday 24th February 2024_

No arrivals before 1 pm on any day

Bridge Villa Caravan & Camping Site

Wallingford, OX10 8HB

7th - 14th May 2025

A picturesque family-run touring park beside the River Thames in Oxfordshire, on the edge of the village of Crowmarsh Gifford and just a short five walk over the part-medieval bridge, with its 19 stone arches, from the market town of Wallingford.

Wallingford, once King Alfred the Great's largest fortified new town, was granted its Royal Charter in 1155. The town boasts an excellent range of independent shops, restaurants and pubs, as well as the regular Friday, Farmers and local produce markets.

The site is situated close to two National Paths, The Thames Path and The Ridgeway and is only on the Thames Valley section of Route 5 of the National Cycle System. So its a perfect for exploring the upper Thames Valley, the Chiltern Hills and Berkshire Downs and visiting Oxford, Henley and Windsor. Cruises along the Thames depart daily from the bridge between May and September. Day boats can also be hired locally.

Please note that a maximum of two dogs are permitted per pitch.

Pitch Fees: £29 (inc H/S & EHU)

Rally Fee: £1 per person (Guests £10 per unit)

Rally Marshals: Ann & Nick Halford

Closing Date for bookings: Monday 26th March 2025

No arrivals before 1 pm on any day

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