

The Lancashire magazine

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May 2011 £1.95

embracing the Lakes, Cheshire and North West

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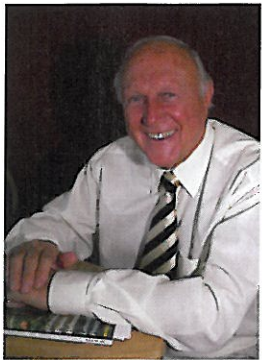
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Carry on caravanning

Stuart Hall gets all nostalgic in a luxury motorhome

Take a Marquis into your home; better still, turn your Marquis into a motorhome. Direct from Preston came the Devon, so luxurious that I became uxorious, the gadgets aboard put my own accoutrements at home to shame. They're not just functional but fantastic quality. I don't know how they do it for the money.

Now, I do read, from time to time, a newspaper. I am informed that we're all skint; a fortnight's vacation is out, folk are satisfied with a staycation (in other words, sit on your own doorstep and weep). But now, wait for it, comes the daycation. We used to have these in those far-off days: a trip to Blackpool, Southport or Morecambe, a day out at Chester, a stately home, or a couple of days in Windermere.

There's nowt new. As a lad we caravanned, towing a shed behind my dad's fabric-bodied Riley Nine. Then elevated to a proper caravan in Anglesey. Nobody apart from VW thought of a campervan, but now the caravan has materialised into a motorhome.

I loved caravanning. The delicious

odour of fried eggs, sausage and bacon on the Primus stove, which always blew up. The delight of rising early, opening the door to dash to the sea, only to dash into two dozen eggs the farmer laid on the step. Scrambled eggs a la Stu. I blamed the local fox, six of the best encouraged me to tell the truth.

Heady, rustic days brimming with golden memories, casting a net and 30 mackerel surrendering themselves. Fresh mackerel and red hot chips, a mug of Typhoon tea, a wedge of newly baked bread and best butter – wonderful!

Decades of memories flood back as I step inside the Devon, a Parisian boudoir compared to the basics I revered as a lad.

Let's look at the engineering: chassis, engine and running gear Mercedes Benz, you don't get better than that. Coach-built body, sleek, purposeful, top quality. Five-speed automatic, or clutch-less manual. Well laid out instruments, loads of gadgets for driver and passengers to play with, everything you expect from Mercedes.

But then the furniture and fittings: the driver and passenger seats swivel and little tables and a big table appear.

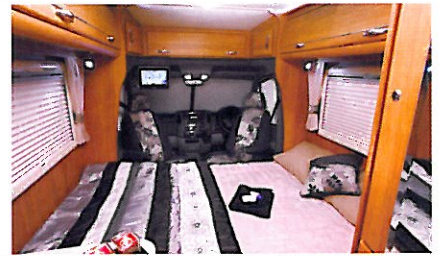
Two large, capacious divans. A proper fridge, proper sink, a microwave oven, lights everywhere. Then the bathroom – capacious. The loo, sink, vanity mirror. Press a button, the vanity set disappears, and, hey presto, here's the shower. Close another door and you're alone in your shower with Raquel Welch, or Ann Widdecombe.

Most gadgets operate by gas, or your own electricity generated by two batteries, and, of course, as most of Britain and Europe has caravan parks galore, you just hook up to the mains.

Your own private domain, the fruits of some superb craftsmanship and engineering that really does knock you out.

Most auxiliaries are out of sight, till you need them; it's an incredible use of space, and ingenuity. When I dwell on my rustic caravanning upbringing, I could imagine my dad, eyes a twinkle at the sophisticated Devon, mum would feel like the Queen Mother.

What's it like to drive? Like discovering your grandma wears French knickers. I haven't had as much fun since Olive Gilbert showed me her lollipop 40 years ago.



Decades of memories flood back as I step inside the Devon, a Parisian boudoir compared to the basics I revered as a lad

It was a Sunday morning, I'd arranged tennis at Reddy Towers, a stately home set in a forest of pines. Alas, it was raining so I took the Devon for a lark. Reddy clambered aboard, and in tennis gear we took coffee at the local Costa. Seated opposite, two damsels of a certain age. I proposed a quick circuit and bump to Cleethorpes in my mobile boudoir, explaining that the advent of spring made the sap rise. Before they could accept, Reddy grabbed my hand and we beat a retreat. What adventures await the owner of a motorhome!

In gales of laughter, I hammered the dual carriageway at 80 mph (it'll do 90), terrorising the Sunday drivers. Might is right, and the sight of a Devon up yer bum makes you quiver. Still in euphoria, I essay down the dark country lanes (dwelling on what might have been). The Devon handles like a luxury saloon, it gave a young buck in his Aston a funny turn on a blind corner. He took the hedge thinking his time was up – I was doing 5mph, he 50.

So, my time with the Devon was up. A great recreational tool. Thousands take to the open road in motorhomes and caravans for the total freedom they offer. Camaraderie exists amongst owners here and abroad, always a helping hand. If you've never tried a motorhome, get cracking, hire one to start with and then build up.

Marquis have hundreds from which to choose and prices start astonishingly bargain size.

Pack up your troubles – get happy.

Dealer profile

Marquis Lancashire has a large selection of new and pre-owned motorhomes and touring caravans in stock and is now the sole supplier of Auto-Sleepers Motorhomes and AS Touring Caravans in the North West. Also on display are the Majestic coach-built motorhomes and touring caravan ranges from Coachman Amara and Swift Lifestyle.

Part of the Marquis Dealer Network, the largest motorhome dealer in the UK, Marquis Lancashire has been steadily growing and is firmly established in the Preston community. During 2010 the site underwent significant expansion and investment to cope with growing local demand and the inclusion of Marquis Caravans.

Service is a key feature of the Marquis Group, and the five-bay workshop has now gained NCC Approval and all the technicians have passed City and Guilds examinations.

Under the supervision of branch manager Lee Morley, who has many years of experience in the motorhome industry, the future of Marquis Lancashire is 'brimming with potential and ambition'.

• For further information on the Marquis Group please call 01772 731 313, or visit www.marquismotorhomes.co.uk

Exit pursued by a bear, and two fraught damsels ■