

Suffolk Centre Summer 2026 Newsletter



Chairmans Update

by **Paul Fitch**

Time flies when you're having fun, and I can hardly believe I'm already halfway through my first year as Chairman! Diane and I have been hitting the road as much as possible, and it's been a joy to see so many of you on the rally field.

You might have noticed our rally book looking a bit more 'crowded' lately—and that's by design! We're working closer than ever with our neighbours in **Norfolk, South and North Essex, and Mid Anglia**. By cross-promoting our events, we're not just filling up our calendars; we're ensuring that rallies stay viable and vibrant.

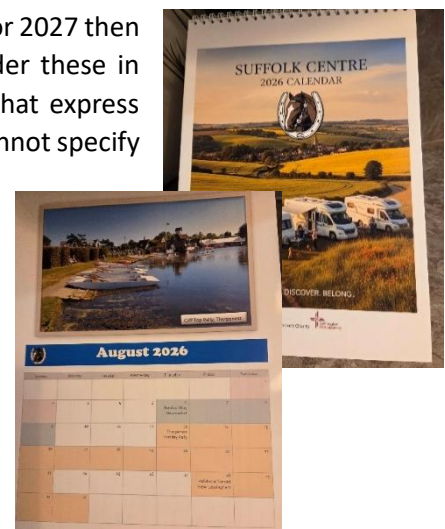
With the number of centres across the country shrinking (we have already lost several), our goal is simple: **Stay strong, stay active, and keep growing**. But I can't do it alone.

If you have an idea that can make our centre even better, come find me on a rally field, drop me a line or give me a call. My door (and my phone) is always open!"

Centre Secretary Update

by **Diane Fitch**

If anyone is interested in pre-ordering a Suffolk Centre Calendar for 2027 then please drop me a line. If we get enough numbers we will order these in advance of the end of year once we confirm cost with those that express interest. Unfortunately, until we have an idea on numbers, we cannot specify a definitive price but we hope these will be around £8-10. Please see my earlier Facebook post of an idea of how they will look. Also, if you have any wonderful rally pics for the calendar to use that would be great. Email: secretary@suffolkcentre.co.uk



Reflecting on 200 rallies

by **Kim Berry**

So, Nigel and I have just collected our 200th rally plaque. A significant achievement? Well yes, but when you realise that we started when our eldest son, Jack, was just 18 months old and he's now 25 years old you can see it has taken a while to reach this milestone! Our youngest son, Max, was born in 2006 and received his first rally plaque at just 12 weeks old.

Nigel didn't rally, but his family did have a caravan, and they spent many weeks in the South of France. I rallied with my parents in my teenage years. My Mum and Dad were incredibly involved: running rallies and Dad served on the committee for many years, including 3 as Chairman. I spent time on the Junior Committee. Weekends were all about hoping our friends would be on the same rallies that we were going to. I had some great adventures but the holiday rallies to Switzerland that my parents organised and long weekends at Orwell Park will always remain my favourites.

As you get into your teenage years, the appeal of caravanning with your parents lessens so I spent a few years away...

Until 2002 it made sense that we would join the Suffolk Centre when we were lucky enough to have a caravan of our own. With Jack, we ventured off on our first Suffolk Centre rally. There were so many people I knew from my teenager years.

Over the years, and like my parents, we have tried to get involved as much as possible—fully appreciating that the club relies on the spare time and dedication of its volunteers. We started off slowly by attending rallies, then we got involved with marshalling, assisting for the first time, before taking the reins and organising our own rallies. Over time, we have organised quiet weekends at Alton Water, themed weekends over bank holidays, and even a couple of holiday rallies to Holland. An Oktoberfest rally has been one of my favourite ones to organise and we would love to bring that back. Nigel was on Committee for several years and held roles such as Rally Secretary and Vice-Chairman.

Like me, both boys made friends through caravanning. With history repeating itself, the teenage years arrived along with reduced enthusiasm for rallying with Mum and Dad. We faded away into the background for a while, opting to use some of the CL sites.

This year we are organising the Apple Pie and Cider Rally at Weeley. Some might suggest our rallies usually have involve an alcoholic beverage or two ... a claim we can neither confirm nor deny!

Reaching 200 rallies feels like a significant milestone. We have made great friends, created wonderful memories, and are now on our third caravan—each one taking us to new places along the way.

Easter at Trinity Park Rally Report(s)

Double whammy! We had 2 lovely reports on the Easter rally so I've included both.

by **Ron King**

I don't think there are many places I could go with my wife, dogs and a caravan over an Easter weekend, consisting of a four day stay, with Electric Hookup for £130. Including food, entertainment and games.

The Easter Rally at Trinity Park, Ipswich was such a place, run by Suffolk Centre, with invitations to other centres within the Anglia Division, CAMC. Also attracting other centre members and non-centre members from various counties within England.

On arrival we were greeted by enthusiastic marshals, who saw us to our pitch for the weekend. Once the van was sorted, we collected our programme for the weekend and was presented with two miniature cream eggs.

A varied programme had been arranged for the four days stay, starting on Thursday evening in the hall with a natter and chatter, including tea/coffee and table quiz. A Photo Booth was erected for people to take pictures of those memorable moments over the course of the rally.

Friday morning, we had the traditional Hot Cross Buns, tea and coffee. Rest of the day was do as you please. The music that night was provided by A1 Disco.

Saturday morning an organised gentle stroll took place around the local countryside. In the evening we settled down to a two-course meal, cooked by the marshals. Once the dinner was over, we were entertained by our live music for the night, Three Steps to Heaven. In the interval an Easter Bonnet parade took place, with the band members picking the winners.



Sunday soon came around and the children had the traditional Easter Egg Hunt. Lunchtime, we were treated to homemade soup which was served with a piece of french stick. In the afternoon, Bingo was played and raised a bit of money for the Chairman/Centre nominated Charity, East Anglian Air Ambulance. The evening brought a first for us, Pig Racing, where light-hearted betting took place. To help the night through, every table was served a platter of cheeses, pickles, crackers and crisps. Money was also raised for the charity. The Charity over the weekend received £179.85, Thank you for all those that contributed to the cause.

A bonus, other events were taking place at Trinity Park for people to get involved in. Giggle City, mainly for the younger people. Also, a flower show, dog show and a car boot was also taking place.

In all a great weekend and the weather was kind to all.

by **John Skinner**

We had an exceptional weekend at the Easter Rally ran by Mark, Debs and their team. Starting with hot cross buns and fish & chips Friday. Saturday night a lovely cooked meal and live band to dance the night away. Sunday, we had homemade soup followed by Bingo in the afternoon. Finished off the weekend with a huge cheese and biscuit platter and pig racing games. Also the benefit of Trinity Park putting on the Garden Show and Dog Show over the weekend. Don't forget to book early for next year. Great weekend.



Sad News Received

by Diane Fitch

Since the last newsletter we have had the sad news that Brian Southgate, a past centre chairman, passed away in January. Many centre members attended his funeral which showed how many friends he had within the club and will be missed on the rally field.

Our condolences also go out to the Mrs Folley and family following the loss of Richard.

Fellowship Awards

by Diane Fitch

Quick note to congratulate Julian and Donna Fincham-Jacques on being awarded the Don Alcock Trophy for the most rallies attended during 2025. Sarah Fincham-Jacques scooped the Junior trophy for most rallies.

There were 15 members awarded a Fellowship Plaque for attending 8 or more rallies last year. So well done all. If you attend more than 8 rallies this year you will be eligible for a fellowship plaque. These must be rallies listed in our rally programme. The plaques and trophies were presented at the Winter Warmer rally on the Sunday.



Rally Secretary Update

by John Meyrick

Please remember that the "Relax at Manor Farm IV has been cancelled.

The diary is open for marshals to book rallies in 2027 and if anybody wants to get well ahead, I will take reservations for 2028. If there are any members out there who have any thoughts about running a rally, please do contact me by email or any committee member on the rally field and we will advise you on the process. There will always be help available from the committee to you run your rally.

Members, please book your rallies as early as possible especially the bigger rallies, there is no reduction for late bookers. The earlier you book the more confidence the marshal has to commit to booking entertainment and providing food.

If you are booking within the 14 days, please ensure you contact the marshal before sending a rally slip to ensure there is space. Also remember that if you are booking this close to the rally there may not be a plaque available for you.

If unfortunately, you cannot make a rally, for any reason, please advise the marshal as soon as possible. As per rule 4 of the centre rules, if the marshal is only aware within 14 days of the rally or you fail to arrive, he will advise the committee. The committee have the discretion to request a non-attendance fee.

Have a good summer caravanning!

E-mail is: rallysec@suffolkcentre.co.uk.

Upcoming Rally Events May to August

by [Diane Fitch / John Meyrick](#)

Below is just a selection of rallies taking place during the next few months. For a full list refer to your rally programme or the centre website.

22nd-26th May Bank Holiday at Garnham's Field, Needham Market

WHAT TO EXPECT: This is a relaxing do as you please bank holiday rally, giving time to either relax on site or explore the local area. Located near Needham Market Suffolk, beside Stowmarket Road, Garnham's Field is a 48-acre site just a 10-minute walk into the Market Town of Needham Market, which is host to a vast array of shops, pubs, and restaurants. The site is also on routes for many walks and bike rides. Needham Lake, where you can feed the ducks and children can play in the park, is a 15min walk away. Within 30 minutes' drive you can visit Felixstowe, Bury St Edmunds, Woodbridge, Stowmarket, and Ipswich. The site also benefits from its own battery powered barista coffee van which sells hot food as well. This is open 5 days a week from 8am – 2pm. For fishing enthusiasts, Garnham's Field benefits from a well-stocked day ticket fishing lake, which is on site and fenced. Further details can be found at www.garnhamsfishing.co.uk

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Email slip to **Julian Fincham-Jacques**, Email for rally slips/enquiries: garnhamsfield@suffolkcentre.co.uk

22nd-26th May Clubfest, Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens, Market Harborough

WHAT TO EXPECT: Get ready for an unforgettable ClubFest 2026, as we take the celebration to the Northamptonshire countryside and the stunning 18th-century estate of Kelmarsh Hall.

With its rich history, breathtaking views, and sweeping parkland, Kelmarsh Hall is the perfect stage for our incredible live on-stage entertainment, community vibes, and everything else that makes ClubFest the ultimate summer celebration.

Whether you're dancing on the lawn, exploring the grounds, or relaxing with friends under the open sky, ClubFest 2026 will be one for the books.

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: See Club website: www.caravanclub.co.uk for full details

4th-7th June Apple Pie & Cider Rally, Homestead Park, Weeley

WHAT TO EXPECT: Own sanitation preferred. Toilets and shower block available. Local shop and pubs in village or visit Clacton-on-Sea, Frinton-on-Sea, and Walton-on-the-Naze. Local car boot sales over the weekend, also a café and accessory shop on site. Rally field is adjacent to a commercial site. Fishing available in the lake, extra charge payable. Rally bookable for 1, 2 or 3 nights. We are hoping to organise a social on Saturday night with apple pie and cider.

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: contact/email slips to: kiml.berry@hotmail.com

24th-28th June Return to the Swann's Rally, Swanns Nursery Bromeswell

WHAT TO EXPECT: £6.00 per night plus sundries and admin. Spend some time in the beautiful Suffolk countryside, including an organised walk to the local hostelry on the Saturday. Sutton Hoo, Orford, Woodbridge and other places of interest not far away. Own sanitation essential

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: slipS can be emailed to midsummer.sccc@btinternet.com. Ron's contact number is 07771 542328

9th-12th July Up by the Abbey Rally, Applefields Caravan Park, Leiston. Holiday Rally

WHAT TO EXPECT: Bookable for minimum of 2 nights, site fees to be advised. Events to be arranged nearer the time dependent on weather etc., those booking will be updated. Site has full amenities – toilets, showers, kitchen, wash facilities, dog wash and is within easy walking distance of Leiston and the Abbey. Further afield are coastal resorts such as Southwold.

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Post slip to Mrs J Dobson, details in rally book.

Contact number is: 01026 851996

24th-27th July Clare Priory, Clare

WHAT TO EXPECT: A quiet relaxing do as you please weekend in the grounds of this beautiful historic Augustinian Priory. Time to relax and explore Clare and the surrounding area. Subject to availability, there may also be an organised tour of the Priory. Many lovely walks from the rally field. Own sanitation essential. No electric hook ups. Within walking distance shops, cafes, pubs, restaurants & fish & chips

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Email slip to: Julian Fincham-Jacques: clarepriory@suffolkcentre.co.uk

31st July – 2nd August Shotley Rose Pub Rally, Shotley

WHAT TO EXPECT: Do as you please weekend. Own sanitation essential. Lovely walks, village shop nearby. Eat and drink in the pub with entertainment on both nights from 9 p.m. Friday night we have Rekoveryed and on Saturday night we have Jamie Clarke.

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Post your rally slip to: Mrs C Harbottle, details in rally book.

Contact details: Phone 01473 715049

6th – 9th August Ladies & Gents Return Again, Rowley Mile Racecourse, Newmarket

WHAT TO EXPECT: Site is within walking distance of the town centre. Dog owners are politely asked to keep their pet on leads at all time and exercise off field. We also ask members not to put up flags or flashing light poles as young nervous horses do come down past the site. Those up early enough can see them race each other past along the course.

Bookable for 2 or 3 nights. Social get-together planned over rally, full details nearer the time

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Post slips to: Mr T Reed, details in rally book. Home: 01502 740105

13th – 23rd August Thorpeness Cliff Top Holiday Rally, Thorpeness

There are just a **few spaces left** for our Suffolk Centre holiday rally in Thorpeness. The marshals have been very closely monitoring the coastal erosion in the village and luckily the rally meadow is unaffected so thankfully the rally is going ahead.

We have a large marquee and a full programme of activities lined up from inflatables for the children and kids club with craft activities to movie night with popcorn, four live bands, family quiz night and a fishing competition which are all included in the rally fees. We also have the return of the legendary cheesy bingo (cheese and biscuits supplied) you just buy the bingo tickets! The rally field has direct access to the beach and so swimmers and fishing fanatics are well catered for all for £20 per outfit per night!

The rally coincides with Aldeburgh carnival which is within striding distance and also Thorpeness boating regatta (walking distance) both of which usually conclude with spectacular fireworks!

It is a very special rally which has been in our programme for 55 years and many multigenerational families return each year. You will be warmly welcomed if you wish to join us there is something for everyone!

WHAT TO EXPECT: Own sanitation essential. Café, antiques, pub and boating lake in village. Shops and supermarket in Aldeburgh (2 miles) or Leiston (4 miles). Rally co-incides with Aldeburgh carnival and the Thorpeness Regatta and fireworks. Marquee on site with included entertainment all week such as live music, cheesy bingo, family quiz night, cinema night and more. Table top sale and entertainment for the children with crafts, bouncy castle and tie dyeing. Full programme will be sent out to ralliers a couple of weeks before rally.

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Email Julian as Booking Marshal for a booking form.

This rally is pre-paid, and terms and conditions will be clearly stated.

Julian's contact details are thorpenessccc@btinternet.com

PLEASE DO NOT USE EMAIL FROM PREVIOUS YEARS BOOKINGS.



28th August – 5th September Holiday at Sunset View, The Star Inn, Lessingham, Norfolk

WHAT TO EXPECT: Relaxing week in the Norfolk countryside. Possible breakfast and other events, tea and coffee daily, all in keeping with a holiday. Detailed programme nearer the time

HOW DO I BOOK THIS: Bookings to Janet Dobson. Post rally slip to 8 Craven Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9BE or email to jan_dobson@btinternet.com. Telephone enquiries to 07843488511 (Janet)

Other Committee News

by **Diane Fitch**

Thank you to Dave Sanders for his time on committee. Dave has decided to step down for personal reasons and we would like to thank him for his time on committee as Publicity officer.

Without volunteers on the committee the club would not run. If anyone would be interested in possibly joining the committee in any capacity then the committee nomination forms are in the rally book or if you just want to know more please reach out to me for details.

secretary@suffolkcentre.co.uk

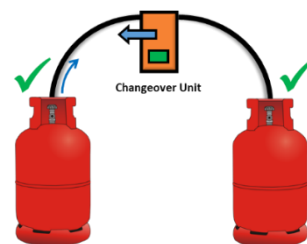
Did you know... Useful Tips and Tricks

by **Diane Fitch**

Recently I learned how the gas change over system operates. I have had various caravans with this system and never knew how the system worked in detail. As a result, here is an article I found that explains the process well.

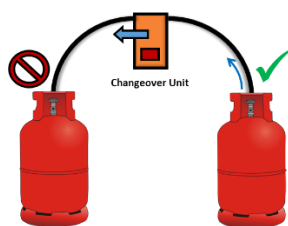
Gas Changeover Explained

On the changeover valve there is a black lever situated on the front of the body. This lever indicates what side the gas is being drawn from. The changeover will automatically use the gas from the indicated side until the cylinder is empty.



Once empty, the changeover will automatically begin to draw the LPG from the reserve gas cylinder, ensuring no interruption in your gas supply.

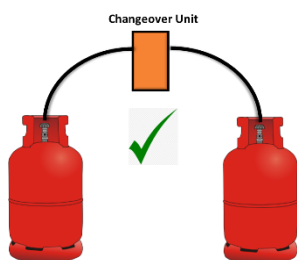
The changeover will give you an indication that it has had to switch cylinders by displaying red on the small window on the front of the valve. This is telling you that you now need to re-order your replacement gas cylinder and arrange for it to be fitted.



Only switch the lever over to the other cylinder when the new cylinder has been fitted.

This helps you to remember you have an empty cylinder and which one requires replacing.

Once you have the new cylinder installed and the lever is re-positioned to the side it is currently drawing from, the indicator in the window will turn green, ready to indicate red for when it has emptied.



How To Correctly Position A Gas Changeover

Making sure your changeover is correctly positioned is very important. Below is a diagram showing how your changeover should be mounted. Sitting the valve below the level of the cylinders can cause condensed LPG to collect in the pigtails and body of the valve.

Hidden Brush & Dustpan

It was some time before I spotted that inside the lid of the usual caravan door bin was a slide out small brush and dustpan.

Do you have a tip to share? Email secretary@suffolkcentre.co.uk

Caravan Wordsearch

by Diane Fitch

W	F	E	U	Q	E	B	R	A	B	G	A	E	T	J
R	I	T	O	W	I	N	G	M	I	R	R	O	R	S
A	R	N	R	A	P	L	A	Q	U	E	W	F	X	U
M	I	H	E	S	D	I	S	C	O	B	Z	R	E	F
B	A	A	L	T	S	S	B	Z	A	I	T	I	L	F
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E	M	W	K	D	X	S	O	C	I	A	L	A	A	E
P	E	M	O	H	R	O	T	O	M	I	W	R	C	Y

Alko

Chair

Laughs

Solar Panel

Aquaroll

Coolbox

Motorhome

Suffolk Centre

Awning

Disco

Pegs

Tea

Bands

Elsan Point

Plaque

Television

Barbeque

Flagpole

Quiz

Towbar

Bingo

Friends

Ramble

Towing Mirrors

Boule

Gas Bottle

Rally

Wastemaster

Camping Table

Hall

Social

Wine

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