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Young Tourers RALLY

You think caravanning's an activity for older folk only? The attendees at the inaugural Young Caravanners Rally beg to differ



ABOVE
YT co-founders Grace and Dan...



BELOW
...and Rhea and Karl

»» "A young what?" I hear you ask! You might have had to read 'Young Caravanners' twice, but trust me they do exist, as we found out last September when Karl, Rhea, Grace and I put on the first Young Caravanners' Rally in association with *Caravan* magazine.

Let's start with a bit of history! Back in February 2018, the four of us met on a group created by Karl and Rhea called 'Young Caravanners'. If you hadn't already guessed, it does exactly what it says on the tin, a group for those who go caravanning, motorhoming or even camping in their 20s, 30s and early 40s!

The group was a great start, but we wanted to take things a step further. We formed Young Tourers, a social media space for others to follow our young-caravanning adventures, as we showcase the benefits, experiences and freedom that leisure-vehicle holidays bring. Our main aim? To inspire and spread the word! And, oh boy, did we get more than we'd bargained for!

The response from both individuals and the industry has been amazing, and it gave us the perfect excuse to host an industry-first celebration event to showcase all things youthful!

Simply named Young Caravanners Rally 2018, or #YCR18 for the techy tourers amongst you, who are familiar with the hashtag trend, the event promised to be something like no other.

It took place over a weekend in September 2018 and was hosted at Lyndon Top Caravan Park, looking down on the shores of stunning Rutland Water, just outside the town of Oakham.

FRIDAY

Friday started rather quietly. Given that the majority of those attending, had spent Friday working, arrivals didn't start to appear until early evening. As more units arrived into the night, the event got bigger and so did our ever-friendly circle of adults, kids... and dogs! Huddling behind the windbreak with a beverage of choice, getting

Words Dan Arnold | Photos Richard Chapman





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to know everyone, it was exactly what we'd dreamed of! And what a friendly bunch they were, too. The presence of a common bond, caravanning, meant that the conversation was soon flowing like the wine!

Time flew, and it wasn't long before we retired to bed, ready for Saturday's main event... The notorious 'Caravan Manoeuvring Challenge'.

SATURDAY

Karl and I were up early to set up the stage for the challenge, supported by Caravelair Caravans. It involved a large field, a lot of pegs and a very, very long roll of marker tape. After a couple of hours and a few last-minute checks, we were ready to go! The course appeared to be something similar to the famous *Top Gear* track, only ours was built on a slightly smaller budget.

Interest was building amongst the camp and the anticipation was keen. It was time to wheel out a brilliantly-tiny Caravelair Antarès 335, kindly lent to us by the fab people at Marquis Leisure.

The rules were simple: one familiarity lap without the caravan in tow, then on the whistle, hitch up and get safely around the course in the quickest time. The back straight, chicane and three reversing elements were just some of the technical challenges to give our drivers sweaty palms! You won't believe how competitive people can be at towing, but the skills on show were impressive, especially when it came to reversing. The little 335 performed admirably. By the end of the afternoon, the results were in, ready to be announced on Sunday morning!

Following on from the excitement and



adrenaline of the track, Saturday afternoon provided more entertainment in the form of our 'Caravanagram' competition, as well as biscuit decorating, treasure hunt and soap carving activities for the children.

By early evening, it was time to spark up the barbecue for a feast provided by the Caravan & Motorhome Club. This was a generous gesture, and it meant a lot to the young folk gathered that such an esteemed organisation had taken an interest in what we were trying to do. The delicious food was just what we needed after an action-packed day at #YCR18. Music, dancing, socialising... oh, and a 'donut eating challenge' meant the evening rocketed by, and we were soon waking up on Sunday with only a couple of sore heads between us!

On Sunday morning, we hosted a bacon butties breakfast for all to enjoy, before our final competition of the weekend, the Maxview Satellite Challenge! You may have seen the brilliant Remora 40 kit that Karl and Rhea have been putting through its paces recently? The kit promises to give you a brilliant satellite picture in seconds. How hard can it be to build and target the portable dish to get a perfect picture? Fortunately, not very, as even *Caravan* magazine's managing editor, John Sootheran, was to prove! (Rude! – Ed).

After a quick demo from Karl, the stopwatch was out once again. Can you really get a satellite picture on an Avtex TV in the boot of a Land Rover? Yes, yes you can! The contestants slotted and screwed the clever dish together in about a minute, before spinning it on its axis to find a good signal. And, boy, was it good. The Avtex »



Young Tourers Rally



ABOVE

The Antares Manoeuvring Challenge – a towing and reversing test against the clock

BELOW - LEFT TO RIGHT

The greyhound is paying far too much attention to the barbecue for our liking!

Winding down after a hard week at work

Adam Stonehill-Hammond will have a clear picture wherever he tours, having won the Maxview Satellite Challenge

television had a crystal-clear image in seconds... every time.

Finally, the results were in, and it was time to announce our weekend winners.

The manoeuvring challenge was highly competitive and we ended up with joint winners on identical times. Adam Stonehill-Hammond and Matthew Farrar both won a pair of tickets to the NEC Caravan & Motorhome Show, courtesy of the NCC and Freedom To Go.

The other main competition, the satellite challenge, was also won by Adam and Craig Stonehill-Hammond, who walked away with a Remora 40 kit, thanks to the team at Maxview Systems.

None of the kids went away empty-handed, either, receiving sweets for their excellent efforts in their challenges.

The small-but-perfectly-formed event was a

great success and really showcased the potential future of caravanning amongst younger people.

I speak on behalf of all of us in the Young Tourers 'committee' when I say we have been truly overwhelmed by the support we've received.

Firstly, thank you to everyone who attended and made the event a success. Our second and biggest thank you must go out to each and every industry partner. The enthusiasm that you guys have for the Young Caravanners campaign is really encouraging, and reinforces the potential future of the industry. Our special thanks must also go to *Caravan* magazine, the Caravan & Motorhome Club, Marquis Leisure, Maxview, Whale, Truma, NCC and Freedom To Go!

If you'd like to find out more about our Young Caravanners' Spring 2019 Extravaganza, or see what happened at #YCR18, be sure to search 'Young Caravanners' on Facebook.

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If you're young and thinking about starting your caravanning adventure... do! You will have so much fun.



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