



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk

'Pitch Up and Carry On'... Exhibition at the National Motor Museum will explore and celebrate the role of caravans during the Second World War

Published: August 7, 2025

Author:

Online version:

<https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/pitch-up-and-carry-on-exhibition-at-the-national-motor-museum-will-explore-and-celebrate-the-role-of-caravans-during-the-second-world-war/>



A Home Guard member patrols a caravan colony chosen by evacuees as their wartime refuge, 1940.

The National Motor Museum tells us:

All words from the National Motor Museum; all photographs in the exhibition from the



Museum and © Courtesy of Caravan magazine and Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection

The Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection, in partnership with the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, are to present *Pitch Up and Carry On*, a new exhibition opening 13 September 2025 through to early Summer 2026, that reveals the remarkable and largely untold story of how caravans and their owners supported the war effort during the Second World War.

Drawing on rare materials from the Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection, including manufacturers' records, Club magazines, advertising, photographs and personal accounts, the exhibition, in the Museum's In Focus Gallery, explores how caravans were adapted for military and civilian purposes at a time of national crisis and how the Club came in aid of its members and people taking up caravanning for the first time. From mobile RAF offices and army briefing rooms to Women's Land Army accommodation and even air raid shelters, caravans became crucial tools in Britain's wartime resilience.

When war broke out, The Caravan Club, as it was named then, quickly reacted by decreasing its membership fee and offering practical guidance and remained a key point of contact and community for caravanners across the UK during wartime. Despite restrictions, fuel shortages and the upheaval of evacuation, the Club continued to publish advice, offer support and advocate for the needs of its members. The Club encouraged the ways in which caravans could serve the nation, offering counsel and guidance to government bodies.

Similarly, caravan manufacturers altered their production from leisure vehicles to trailer bodies, supplying the War Office and exploring innovative uses of caravans as first aid posts, mobile canteens and field headquarters. The military responded eagerly, recognising the caravan's practicality and mobility. Units of the British Army deployed caravans as mobile offices, sleeping quarters and command centres and were quick to appreciate their value in the field.

A special video section in the exhibition features period footage and a reading from the



memories of a girl who grew up in a caravan during the war, bringing to life the everyday experiences of caravanners during the 1940s.

Senior Curator, Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection, Sara Riccabone says: "This exhibition, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, sheds light on an overlooked but fascinating chapter of both the Club and wartime history. We are delighted to collaborate with the National Motor Museum in bringing this story to life and showing how caravans, and the community built around them, proved a remarkable resource in a time of need."

Nick Lomas, Director General at the Caravan and Motorhome Club said, "We are proud to have the Caravan and Motorhome Club's archive Collection preserved at the National Motor Museum. This invaluable resource captures the rich history of a much-loved leisure pursuit, showcasing how caravanning has evolved through the decades. By safeguarding these records, we ensure that future generations can explore and appreciate the heritage, innovation, and enduring appeal of this unique way of life."

This exhibition will certainly shed light on a forgotten aspect of caravanning history – a period when the people of Britain pitched in, pitched-up, and carried-on.



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk

ARE YOU SEEKING PEACE IN WAR ?



The fullest and most up-to-date information on quiet caravan sites is to be had only from

THE CARAVAN CLUB

During the Second World War, The Caravan Club promoted caravanning as a safe escape from bombed cities, December 1940.

To book tickets to experience this unique exhibition, please visit
nationalmotormuseum.org.uk

[About The Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection](#)

The Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection is the UK's most significant collection of material relating to the history of leisure caravanning and motorhome holidays. Spanning from the birth of leisure caravanning in the 1880s to the present day, the collection has



been hosted at the National Motor Museum since 2006. It includes a vast array of objects, publications, photographs, film footage, and sound recordings, reflecting the history of Europe's premier touring organisation and the one million caravan and motorhome owners it now represents.

About the National Motor Museum

The National Motor Museum Trust Limited is a charitable organisation founded in 1972, running the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu in the New Forest. Continuing the legacy of the Montagu Motor Museum, the Trust cares for a world-famous collection of 250 vehicles and associated motoring artefacts, displayed in the National Motor Museum. The nearby Collections Centre preserves a vast array of motoring items, including photographs, a specialist reference library, and a film and video archive. For more information about the collection and services, visit www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk.

Visitors to Beaulieu can enjoy a full day out with features including the ancestral Montagu home Palace House, 13th century Beaulieu Abbey, adventure play area Little Beaulieu, and grounds and gardens. Tickets can be bought in advance. For tickets or more information, see www.beaulieu.co.uk or call 01590 612345.

A full calendar of events and exhibitions is held at Beaulieu by the National Motor Museum. Details are available at www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk/events

About The Caravan and Motorhome Club

Championing and helping its members get more from the great outdoors, whether glamping or touring, the Caravan and Motorhome Club represents the interests of over 1.1 million caravan, motorhome, campervan and trailer tent owners across the UK. With over 118 years of knowledge and expertise, the Club has a wealth of experience and prides itself on offering great value and high-quality campsites for tourers and glampers.

Caravan and Motorhome Club membership is just £66 per year and provides members with



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk

access to over 2,700 quality campsites across the UK and Europe. As the UK's No. 1 rated touring club (as rated on Trustpilot) it makes sure members get the most from their membership, saving them money with great value offers whether touring or at home. To check out the range of offers visit [UK holiday deals & offers](#).

The Club also offers a range of escorted European tours which are protected by ABTA. Plus, escorted and independent tours in Australasia, North America and Southern Africa which are also fully protected, either by ABTA or ATOL when a flight is included. All members can take advantage of expert advice, overseas travel services, cover and insurance and exclusive member offers and discounts.