



**MINUTES OF CLUB 80-90 SYNCRONAUTS
4TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on
THURSDAY 29TH OCTOBER, 2009
ONLINE**

Present:

Clive Smith	Chairman
Kevin Horler	Secretary
Jenny Sippings	Treasurer
Doug Brett	
Roger Crocker	
Richard Haslock	
Russel Johnston	
Andy McClements	
Pete Pollard	
Matt Sandall	
Glen Sankey	
Patrick Townsend	
Dai Williams	
Mark Williams	

Kevin Horler(Secretary) welcomed everyone to the online meeting.

1/09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Richard Haslock, Mark Williams, Aidan Talbot

2/09 Chairman's Report

Clive Smith reported:

Welcome to the AGM...

As this year has just demonstrated, there is no denying that a renaissance in the popularity of our favourite vehicle has really taken hold. It has to be said, that so many more are really cherishing their Syncros whether they be vans, pickups, campers or caravelles. And more are seeking them out with a view to long term ownership, even if considerable refurbishment is on the cards.

It's good to see this is the case with both first time Syncro owners and also those who have

had a longer term relationship with them - albeit sometimes on and off!

The level of innovation and enthusiasm in all its guises never ceases to amaze... and no more so than in the quality of engine installations, or further refinement of the original factory fit. Then, we have those who've committed considerable time to the design & provision of Syncro-specific parts, add-ons and custom developments. More services than ever across the country are being offered to help with repair, maintenance and modification. A lot of work has been going on, and from what I've seen this year particularly, some really good quality and diverse approaches to further improving these vehicles has been taking place. Also, it's good to be able to report that recent worries about basic spares availability are either resolved or looking to have a solution in the near future.

This last year, our site-events and club activities have attracted considerable new blood, again, some coming to Syncros or more serious off-roading afresh. Hopefully, each of our main site-based events have a flavour of their own, with the earlier meets focused towards refreshing skills, giving some guidance and encouragement to others as well as uncovering weaknesses and faults needing ironing out. Being able to attract owners and whole families from all corners of the country to one or more meetings a year means we must be doing something right – maybe it's rumours about our convivial campfires? Syncropendence 2009 achieved our biggest attendance yet, so please, read on to see what we got up to...

== **The Synchronauts' mission** ==

The **Objective of the Synchronauts** remains to encourage ownership and off-road driving of our VW Syncros, the latter being through the organisation of off-road site events and green-lane driving in various parts of the country. Also to make these meetings sociable and as good a place as any to exchange ideas, see other Syncros in action and hone driving skills; wild-camping skills and a bit of fun always plays a part too.

A further effect, though not an explicit aim, is that our group enthusiasm for these vehicles encourages better general support from within the trade and stimulates the production of custom fitments and components relating to many aspects of their usage. Having now a developed, mature organisation and membership, also gives us an International presence and allows us to play our part in such activities described below, the 2010 25 Year celebration in Germany.

==**The Synchronaut Year 2009**==

Synchronauts 2009 Calendar – this was produced rather late due to myself and Jenny setting up an updated forum for Club 80-90. We eventually sold about 50 calendars – generously sponsored by SyncroNutz & AidanTalbot - Thanks. We aim to produce the calendar earlier this year and garner further corporate orders and support.

This year has had a big focus, something that has developed and gathered a lot of momentum as the months have gone by – The **25YearSyncro celebrations** next year... Although we were anticipating a big meeting sometime, somewhere next year, Mike (Busman) Plompen kicked this off again back in January with a timely Yahoo forum for potential organisers to discuss possibilities and garner international interest.

We suggested one role we could play would be to help with the forum and website side of things. Having got a proper interactive forum setup for better communications, we volunteered Treasurer Jenny's skills to design & build a pukka 25YearSyncro website. This has been a quite major task, getting the look just right, incorporating videos and recently making it multi-lingual – I think she'd rather not know how many hours has gone into it! Many thanks Jenny - <http://www.syncro25years.eu/En/booking.htm>

Henning Gramman who organises the annual Mammut Park meet in Germany has become the de facto group leader.

At **Vanfest** this September, Aidan, Henning and Mike organised a face-to-face meeting to agree some priorities and a preliminary programme. This was successful with several Synchronaut Committee Members in attendance as well as some of the lowlanders. Recently, our Secretary Kevin Horler, represented us at a meeting with VW PR staff, at Hannover, again with promising and positive outcomes.

Please read the various reports for further details. UK booking through Synchronauts.

Dubfreeze – sold some stickers & calendars & enrolled 1 or 2 new members. Overall thought by Club 80-90 not to be as successful and well attended as last year, possibly due to the raised ticket prices. Thanks to Doug and others who helped setup and man the stand again

Shipston – our first Spring event.

Thanks to Doug who recce'd this site and with help set up the trials etc. This turned out to be an inspired choice of venue, our first time there, and our first time at a site providing such fun playthings as a see-saw and girder-bridge. The campsite was good, weather fine for the weekend itself, and everybody seemed to find the driving and challenges sufficient and good fun. The Dodoka was brought by Pete, got plenty of use (and abuse no doubt) and John Morrill kindly agreed to drive it back to Cambs with an ailing clutch – he didn't get half way, but stuck with the recovery – thanks John!

What was encouraging was the attendance (over 20) and the number of first timers to a Synchronaut meeting. It was particularly good to meet some of the Irish contingent for the first time and as touched upon in the intro, was obvious that a lot of work had gone into their Syncro campers.

Although Jenny and myself had recce'd some Oxfordshire lanes it proved too wet giving bad visibility. Those routes are still in the book...

Again choosing our favourite Llanfyllin farm site for **Syncropendence 2009** was the largest turnout of any event to date – well over 30 vehicles, and I can report that we just about kept everything ticking along, with a nice trial near the camping area (Doug again!).

The campsite field was thought by all to be the best yet, with just a small challenge upon entry ☺

Lewis brought the Dodoka, the Range-Rover Special (yup, same one as 2006) was brought by Nigel, and a lot of good site driving was had by anybody who wanted. I thought it was particularly pleasing to see Muna and Jenny getting some driving (and making some good steep climbs and descents in the Dodoka).

Aidan organised some local lanes again for the Monday, which about 5 or 6 of us stayed for.

Since CJ had wrapped up his Syncrospares business in Devon and moved on, it was in the spirit of maintaining the tradition of the **August Devon Event** that a handful of diehards decided to 'go there and do it, anyway'.

We drove some known lanes Saturday, including one requiring a good team effort with picks, spades and waffle boards. Sunday was a different outing altogether, a drive through Exmoor, finding some really lovely and very ancient ways buried in the Devon landscape. After a rather grand tour along the North coast, cream teas at the Valley of the Rocks rounded it off well.

Several took the opportunity of driving up to South Moulton to introduce themselves to the owners and staff of the New SyncrosparesUK on the Monday, before departing for home. A friend (and Synchronaut associate), Brish Dutt, offered to cook communal curry for Friday night, several others helped with assorted side dishes and everything went down so well, that noises were made (!) about repeating the idea next year.

Next year will hopefully see the event restored to its full former glory!

On the syncro forum, Neil (Axeman) mooted a **Salisbury Plains Lanes meeting**. Neil found a friendly farmer near Wilton where about 10 units camped riverside; the weekend chosen was the end of August bank holiday, quite the best time as the British Army are on holiday all of August.

This was an excellent chance to see the plains and surrounding army training areas close-up driving many of the carriageways and getting some superb vistas across vast swathes of valleyland between ridges. Tip: Take a good pair of binoculars if you drive the plains. A fair bit of on-site maintenance went on with several CVJs being knocked out...

P.S. Julia brought her best carrot cake, Jenny lots of jars of home-made jams, plums & greengages. Doug delivered countless sets of waffle boards, all meticulously cut to size and packaged to order – all in all, a very enjoyable and quite different event.

Our final (we think!) meet up this year, an informal gathering arranged by Secretary Kevin, was near Hope in the **Peak District**, using the same campfield arranged by Paul (Blurb55) two years ago. Being late September, things can get a bit chilly, so the farmer even provided a large pile of wood for our campfires.

he Saturday was a cracking bright day, two groups taking in much the same routes of a year earlier, but enjoying the beautiful Peaks landscapes with the much better visibility.

On the Sunday, things got a more serious, with stone step climbs and descents being tackled by just a few – one vehicle destroying a wheel and tyre in the blink of an eye!

Apart from permission for a campfire now being almost mandatory at our wild camping fields, it seems on our laning meets, a pub lunch on one or other driving days is often a planned stop...

==The committee and thanks ==

Thanks to all the committee members, working well together this year with plenty of discussion on whatever diverse subjects warranted their time and making quick decisions as and when required.

Thanks to the club's officers Doug as Vice Chairman, Kevin as Secretary and Jenny as Treasurer again who carried out their work efficiently behind the scenes and giving good support and advice throughout. They are key to making sure things happen as they should, throughout the year..

52 members renewed their memberships this year – most of these attended events, but 17 didn't.

Thanks to all our members then for supporting us, many of whom contributed in their own ways, to making our meetings successful and pleasant events.

Thanks to Matt for organising stickers with the new logo design early in the year, PrinterAl for producing them and Dai and Mark for design input.

Replacing our normal Spring event Next Year of course, at the end of April, many will be travelling to Mammut Park and are already booking and making travel plans.

The grapevine also has it that a secret/surprise Whitsun Bank Holiday event is being planned...

Now that Club 80-90 forums have been updated and consolidated on their own servers, progress is being made by Jenny re-writing the **Syncro website**, which hopefully will allow a more interactive experience, as well as an easier task of updating its content.

Please visit and let us know what you think of the new look website, and any idea you may

have, for inclusion: http://www.syncronauts.org.uk/?page_id=16

Finally, note that AOB includes an item suggesting we consider making PrinterAl an honorary member his readiness to always help with artwork and production of labels and stickers.

Till next year brings more to see and do Syncrowise,

3/09 Accounts

The accounts were available for the membership to view and are attached to these minutes. No questions were asked about the accounts and they were approved by those present.

The club's finances are in a healthy state which means we can purchase further equipment as needed and if necessary can bankroll or subsidise future events if the need arises.

4/09 To receive any nominations for officers/committee members

Kevin Horler Secretary

Jenny Sippings Treasurer

Doug Brett

Roger Crocker

Russel Johnston

Matt Sandall

Clive Smith

Aidan Talbot

Dai Williams

Mark Williams

5/09 Resignation of the existing committee

At this point in the meeting the existing committee all resigned their posts.

6/09 Election of officers and committee

Kevin Horler and Jenny Sippings were elected unopposed to the positions of Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

As only 8 people stood for the committee they were declared elected unopposed.

Doug Brett

Roger Crocker

Russel Johnston

Matt Sandall

Clive Smith

Aidan Talbot

Dai Williams

Mark Williams

7/09 Future Events

Discussion took place about the possibility of a Welsh 'top to bottom'. Doug expressed his willingness to recce the southern part of the route.

Keve raised the idea of doing another northern navigational scatter event, with sponsorship to raise money for charity.

08/09 Syncro 25 years event

Key reported that he had attended a meeting in Hanover with VW Commercial in October 2009. This was organised by Henning, with a view to seeing if we could persuade VW to support the 25 year event.

On the whole the meeting was very positive, the 5 guys from VW with whom we met seemed to share our enthusiasm for these amazing vehicles. They are currently in the process of putting a case for supporting us to the VW Commercial Board of Directors.

Jenny posted a link for registering for the 25 year event and Mark asked about whether we were planning to make a block ferry booking and travelling together. Others thought this was a good idea.

09/09 Any Other Business

Thanks was expressed to PrinterAI for printing the stickers for us. A suggestion was made that he should be made an honorary member.

Mark expressed his thanks for the Chairman's reports and the accounts. He thanked the committee and in particular Jenny & Clive. Clive thanked the whole committee and members for their input and support.

Doug posted a report for discussion from GLASS about an Asda supermarket delivery van driver in Lancashire crashed his vehicle on a narrow footpath after his satellite navigation sent him the wrong way.

10/09 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 10.40 p.m.