

Every year, the Club's National Feast of Lanterns becomes a showcase for the Club and indeed camping and caravanning in general.

We invite many members of the national and local media along to enjoy the event although many of them will never have been in a modern caravan. Last year it was an even more important event, our Centenary, and it attracted more press and TV than usual so we decided to go for the ultimate hospitality unit – the Rolls Royce of caravans – the Carlight Commander.



It was the right decision. Our reporters and television producers were certainly impressed with design and build quality, but mostly with that indefinable "I didn't think caravanning was as luxurious as this."

The dedicated Wedgwood china helped – just £468 extra, but that does include the teapot. Engraved glasses, too, gave an upmarket air (£202). But the largest gasps came when we mentioned the price. You could probably buy a reasonable curry with your change from £30,000.

As you would expect from Carlight, outside and inside styling was restrained but elegant. Construction was old-fashioned but none the worse for that. Some journalists positively clucked with delight over the dovetailed drawers. The end shower room offered a huge wardrobe and a luxury circular shower. We enthusiasts tutted at the electric flush toilet that draws water from the internal and external tanks. What a waste.

Those more experienced caravanners who came to look at the Commander were more impressed with things

like the side locker that opens to reveal all the service points you need (left), easily reached and labelled gas taps; an inboard water tank fill point; and there is a large bore waste pipe ready to empty into the wheel away waste tank that comes with the vehicle.

The huge bed was comfortable, once you had worked out how to make it up, everything fell easily to hand in the kitchen (left), but best of all, this was an ideal, comfortable

sitting room to share a gin and tonic with the lady from the BBC and to convince her what a great thing caravanning today really is.



Carlight Commander 184EW

<i>Price as tested</i>	£28,985 on the road plus china and glasses
<i>Cooker</i>	Stoves domestic four-burner hob, grill and oven
<i>Fridge capacity</i>	Electrolux PowerFridge with full-width freezer
<i>Heating</i>	Truma 3kw gas/electric with ducted blown air
<i>Water system</i>	Truma Ultrastore heater; in-board fresh water tank
<i>Gas system</i>	Front locker takes two 6kgs propane or two 7kgs butane cylinders
<i>Washroom</i>	Swivel-bowl cassette toilet with electric flush from main water tank; adjustable showerhead; en suite washbasin and mirrors
<i>Specification also includes</i>	Smoke alarm; on-board water tank; awning light; mains and 12V lighting; door flyscreen; tilt-and-slide skylight; Omnivent roof vent; TV aerial; exterior access locker; stereo radio/CD; infra-red security system; Al-Ko stabiliser
<i>Internal length</i>	5.6m
<i>Length x width x height</i>	6.12m x 2.16m x 2.53m
<i>Berths</i>	Four
<i>Bed sizes</i>	Front double 1.92m x 1.5m or twin singles 1.92m x 0.68m; two bunks 1.75m x 0.68m
<i>Mass In Running Order</i>	1,460kgs
<i>User payload</i>	209kgs
<i>Maximum Technical Permissible Laden Mass</i>	1,800kgs
<i>Warranty</i>	Three years, factory-backed
<i>Consider also</i>	Staying in a five-star hotel
<i>Plus points</i>	Carlight kudos Build quality
<i>Minus points</i>	OK, it takes a while to save £30,000 Spare wheel optional We should also tell you that the pan door on the cooker fell off in towing, normally it wouldn't get a mention but when there are so few faults it needs telling

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Carlight has a great following among many Club members. Here, long time Carlight owners and club members, Jim and Rita Pass, are being interviewed about their new Carlight, our test Carlight and the previous Carlights they have owned, for a meridian TV documentary on the history of caravan holidays

