

Club President JULIA BRADBURY reflects on her first three years in officer and the moments she's most proud of in that time

# First lady



**HOLY MACARONI** has it really been three years?

In October 2013 I became President of our wonderful Club and I could never have predicted all the things that have happened in that relatively short time.

As I enter the fourth year of my Presidency, another President – Barack Obama – is coming to the end of his. How quickly time moves on.

In world news three years ago we saw a robotic lander touch down on the surface of a comet for the first time (meanwhile I'm still waiting for a robot that can pitch a tent for you).

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge had their second child, Charlotte, at around the same time I gave birth to my twins Zena and Xanthe (in fact Kate and I were pregnant at the same time before, when

she had George and I had my little fella Zeph – must be something in the water).

And don't forget last year's Rugby World Cup. Oh go on then, let's. What a washout for the host nation. Speaking of which, some of our Club Sites had a washout of their own, especially our sites in Keswick where flooding at the turn of the year caused widespread damage.

But in the true spirit of camping and the Friendly Club, we fought back resiliently and reopened the sites refreshed and invigorated and in good time for the camping season ahead.

I was back in the gorgeous Lakes in May for the Keswick Mountain Festival and it was so encouraging to see how the whole town had responded to another devastating episode. The shops were buzzing, the restaurants were full and most importantly the campers were camping. What a great shot in the arm for the Lake District when it was most needed.

I'm really proud of the Get Kids Outdoors campaign (part of National Camping and Caravanning Week) the Club has promoted this year. We've done some really good work helping to get children away from screens and embracing the outdoors, getting their technology/life balance right, teaching them important skills.

Last but not least, I am delighted to have presided over the largest ever Club membership, with more than 290,000 households now being part of our great organisation. For me that's indicative of the spirit of UK holidaymakers choosing camping as one or all of their holidays for the year.

Let's be ambitious and aim to cross the

300,000 barrier as soon as possible. We're a friendly bunch already but in my opinion, the more folk we can share our pastime with, the merrier we'll be!


Before I sign off this month, I'd also like to say huge congratulations

to the Club's Director General Robert Loudon, who as you'll see from this magazine, has completed his own Duke of Edinburgh's Award Diamond Challenge to walk the four highest peaks in each part of the UK (see page 40).

I too took part in a Diamond Challenge this year, camping on top of London's O2 in a world first. So with Robert as the Club's very own mountain man, I'd like to think we've both done our bit this year to scale new heights and encourage more people to have a go and challenge themselves, which I think is something we should all do at least once in our lives.

Finally, congratulations to everyone who attended and took part in what was another successful National Feast of Lanterns. I'm sorry I wasn't there to share the fun but I hear the celebrations ran high and I was very jealous to miss out on the camaraderie, entertainment and Ali Ray's delicious campsite cookery. I hope you saved some for me Ali!

As always some of the movie-themed costume ideas were extremely creative. I think if I'd been there I would have dressed as the blue tang fish Dory from Finding Dory, a favourite with our family right now. Dory suffers from memory loss every ten seconds or so. Now let me tell you about the Get Kids Outdoors campaign...

Enjoy your camping everyone. 



**Top:** Julia made history by camping on top of London's O2 in May. **Above:** The Club's Director General Robert Loudon completed a four peaks challenge in August