BAILEY OWNERS CLUB – MATLOCK RALLY

Visit to Unesco World Heritage Site - Cromford Derbyshire 13th - 18th August
Rally Marshals - Alan & Faye Bannister
Assistants - Steve & Wendy Helmer

As a new member of the Bailey Owners' Club and armed with our Bailey Endeavour B64 it was with some trepidation that we signed up to the Matlock Rally in August 2025. After all, we didn't know anyone and had never been off grid before, and we were due to have our Wedding Anniversary in the middle of this weekend.

You may think that having our Anniversary at an off-grid rally is bonkers, but we have both always been well up for an adventure and if it had been awful, we could always make our excuses and leave early.

We had nothing at all to fear as from the moment we arrived on site at the Matlock Rugby Club field where we were made to feel very welcome, to the point it was almost as if we'd being doing rallies with these people all our lives. We were met by Alan (Marshall), who Julie had been communicating with in the run up to the rally, and were directed to our spot.

Alan was very reassuring and explained what would happen starting with a meet and greet. Once we'd settled in, we grabbed our camping chairs, wine glasses and went over to the Organiser's Van where we met Fay (Alan's better half), and after a glass of wine was thrust in our hands, we were introduced to some of the other members.

We felt right at home apart from the usual trying to remember everyone's name, not that this fazed anyone and Alan introduced us as newbies.
Good company, conversation and laughter ensued and before we were aware the evening came to a natural close.
Day one concluded and looking forward to the next day. However, that is when it got interesting as our brand-new van underwent a glitch with its battery and we had little to no power. Although this might sound like a catastrophe, all was not lost as many of our new-found friends, in particular Debbie & Martin, Bernard & Shiela, Angie & Tony, not forgetting Alan & Fay literally rallied round to help.
Lots of knowledge and experience was in abundance, as well as solar chargers and a generator that got us up and running again. If we were being totally honest, we are eternally thankful that our first off-grid experience was at an organised rally among good people as if we'd tried by ourselves, it is likely we'd have packed up and gone home on the first night.
With all under control, and feeling very reassured, we were able to relax into the rally. The site at Matlock was beautiful, situated alongside the Cromford Canal where we walked the next day, being famous for the development and integration of commercial freight trains at the end of the use of canal boats for transportation.

Most of the days, everyone occupied themselves, followed by another, informal this time, evening of good company, conversation and of course a couple of glasses to stop our throats from drying out.
In addition, we were unable to keep our Anniversary quiet, and it was lovely to be congratulated by so many new friends.
The rally was generally relaxed with just a few organised events, and on the Sunday, there were bacon buns, coffee and an afternoon of gentle sports. Although we were a close second place, we were happy to bow out to the winners of the Boules knockout these being Bernard Cooper & Sheila Walker, but we look forward to seizing the trophy from them next year.
With great disappointment, we had to leave a day early due to work commitments, and so missed out on the Flag which was held on the Sunday, with the 'lucky van' prize being won by Debbie & Martin Smith.
Since then, we've had another adventure with the Club at the New Forest and have already signed up to three more rallies for next year.
If you are a member and haven't experienced an off-grid rally, then we highly recommend that you seize the day and take the plunge. They are a lot of fun, laced with good company and we are blessed to have already made some new friends. We are looking forward to meeting up with them and many others in 2026.

Julie & Alasdair Ross