

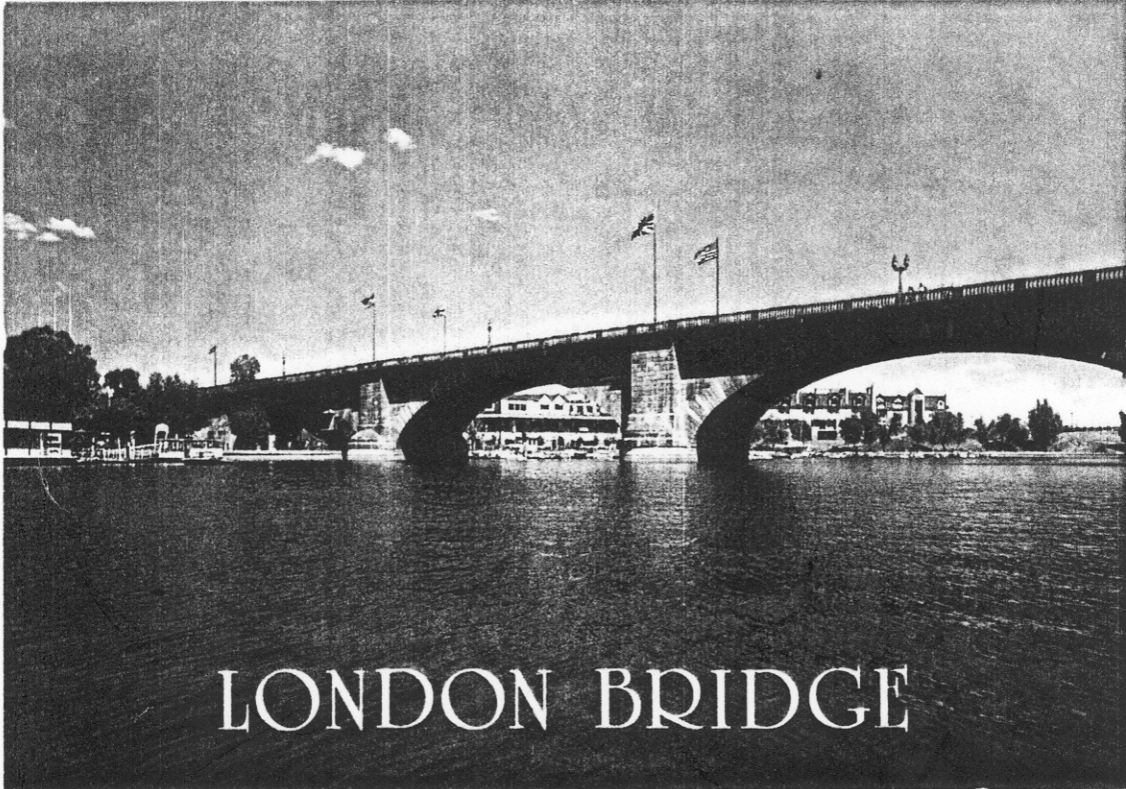
MONTEREY BAY CALIFORNIA UNIT

WINTER CARAVAN No. 47

February 16 to March 7, 1992

Leader: Jack Benjamin

Treasurer: Nina Hadden



# LONDON BRIDGE

## MEMBERS

Jack Benjamin  
Ruth & Lloyd Brown  
Christine & Glen Cox  
Shirley & Joe Gorman

Nina Hadden  
Virginia & Dale Leipper  
Marian & Jay Leith  
Rosa & Bob Oliver

## ROUTE

Los Banos  
Lost Hills KOA  
Barstow KOA  
Death Valley

Needles  
Lake Havasu City  
Yuma, AZ  
Anza Borrago

## MBCU CARAVAN #47

### February 13, 1992 - Los Banos

MBCU caravan 47 has been designated an "Informal" Caravan. Under the newly established rules of "Informal" and "Formal", this means no advance reservations are made and exact itinerary and dates are developed along the way.

Some months ago Jack Benjamen suggested this first Caravan of 1992 Season be a visit to Death Valley, Yuma, and the California Desert. The starting point to be from the MBCU February Rally in Los Banos.

### FEBRUARY 14, 1992 - Los Banos

Jack called a 9:30AM Caravan Meeting. Present were Benjamin, Brown, Gorman, Haddan, Leith, and Olivers. It was reported that Sid Grossman had been in contact to say that reservations were very hard to get in Yuma but he had lined up a place if we could give exact dates. Also, that he had a couple of dinner events that needed to know dates.

Therefore this meeting was called to study the calendar and route into Yuma. Then the exact dates of February 25, 26, 27, & 28th were phoned down to Sid to allow him to confirm our Yuma stay.

Departure time was set for 9:00AM Sunday for our trip South, using Hwy 5.

SUNDAY, FEB 16, '92 - Los Banos to Lost Hills, 136 miles  
We're Off! Heading south on our first day of Caravan 47. We are sorry for those left behind. But some people have to work and then there are other things to be done besides going on Caravans.

An easy drive down to Lost Hills KOA Park. Some light showers and much evidence of the heavy rainfalls of the passed few days.....lakes of water everywhere. Some of the heaviest rain of the recent dry years.

Joe & Bob needed Propane & the Park owner delivered the refilled bottles on his Fordson Tractor. Nice service! With clouds, wind, some light rain, Jack announced a ten minute stand up Driver Meeting and no regular Happy Hour. But, as you would expect, the weather cleared, we all got out our chairs, snacks were produced, and we were soon under way.

MONDAY, FEB 17, '92 -Lost Hills to Barstow, 183 miles.  
Our six trailers filed out at 8:00AM. Weather overcast but without rain. There was almost no wind in crossing Tehachapi Pass or through the Mojave area, and we were nicely settled in the Barstow KOA by noon. In fact, the sun was fully out. This is the warm weather we came South to enjoy.

It didn't take Shirley long to arrange for the upstairs room over the KOA Office. With the remainder of the Roast Beef left over from the Rally's Saturday night dinner, a potato dish Shirley is going to cook up, and a Green Bean Supreme dish Ruth is going to prepare, it should be a very fine dinner indeed.

And what a party it was... more than you could eat. Lots of good cheer, and when things settled down, Jack returned to his trailer for an assortment of after dinner drinks. Rounded out a real fun evening and we all stumbled down the stairs and to the security of our trailers.

TUESDAY, FEB 18, '92 - Barstow to Death Valley, 161 miles  
Left at 8:00AM in fine weather. With one stop in Baker for  
gas refills, we arrived in Sunset Campground, Death Valley,  
by noon. Pleased to find the Leippers already parked and  
waiting for us.

We were soon nicely parked & settled down. In early  
afternoon Christine & Glen Cox arrived and were added to our  
group. How wonderful to have them with us. We are now at  
"full strength" with eight trailers.

A fun Happy Hour that evening. It was real GREAT  
having the Leippers & Cox with us again and many past  
Caravans were talked over. Glen even claimed there has not  
been a trace of snow or cold weather since our "White Sands  
Caravan #39" visited them back in 1989. But we all  
remembered the frozen hoses, the ice & snow we experienced  
on that January trip led by Jay Leith. Glen claimed nothing  
but sunshine ever since.....but you just can't trust  
these reporters!

Christine gave a humorous report of recent trapping  
experiences in their trailer. More than one mouse caught!  
Reminded us of other mouse trapping activities on past  
Caravans.

WEDNESDAY, Feb 19, '92 - Death Valley  
We all know Airstreams are the finest trailers ever made....  
....they are quality built. Nothing ever goes wrong or  
breaks down. WELL, hardly ever. Well, only now and then!

Anyway, the Brown's trailer suddenly developed plumbing  
problems. Mysterious water seepage all over the bathroom  
floor. Neither pump or City water could be left on....an  
almost impossible situation.

Now the hero enters the scene. GLEN COX! With Ruth in  
tears & Lloyd wringing his hands in despare, Glen says - - -  
"Lets take a look at this thing". In less than two minutes  
he found a cheap & shoddy shut off valve in the water line,  
had repaired it, and the Brown's trailer was again as good  
as new. Ten thousand thanks to Glen Cox!

A nice day with perfect weather. Many walked over to  
the store, to the museum, and to the visitor center. At  
noon we all gathered along side the Gorman trailer for a  
Shirley organized lunch. Joe & Jay ran their grills to  
roast the hot dogs. Ruth warmed up the remaining green bean  
dish. Olivers warmed up the buns, and we all ate very well.

Some then observed Siesta Hour. Others rested, and  
Tile Games were soon under full steam! A successful & fun  
Happy Hour wound up an easy going day. Nina reported on her  
phone call to KOA Needles. Could only get partial hook-ups  
and had to be paid in advance by her credit card. Shows how  
very busy these places are in the Winter months. Shirley  
reported she had made the call and reservations were now  
secure at Crazy Horse in Havasu City. But with only limited  
hook-ups. But we are now all set.

THURSDAY, February 20, '92 - Death Valley

Shirley had announced a Waffle Breakfast and had mixed up the batter last evening. Lloyd set up his Coleman Stove and he and Joe cooked up waffles this morning. A pleasant affair in fine comfortable weather. Not too many were burned and at least some were actually perfect.

We continue to give thanks for the ideal weather and comradeship of this fine group. And now and then pause to think of those who are no longer with us. There have been so many fine Caravans over the past twenty years.

Following breakfast we made up lunches and headed off on a sight-seeing excursion. By using the Leipper's, Gorman's, and Brown's car, all were able to ride in comfort. (14 people). WELL, comfort until we hit that wild road into Natural Bridge. Boy, did that shake the bolts loose. And what dust on Joe's recently polished car!

We ate lunch at this stop. Several of the other view points were closed because of recent storms. It is reported that they received their total annual rainfall in the one storm.....about two inches.

At Happy Hour Shirley reported that she had "Scouted" the Furnace Creek Inn regarding our proposed visit tomorrow for lunch. (On our last Caravan this had been a pleasant experience while in Death Valley.) She was "looked down on" and almost thrown out for even suggesting we dirty, dusty "trailerites" would even think of eating in their refinement. WOW! NO - NO - NO! So that date is canceled.

FRIDAY, Feb 21, 1992 - Death Valley

A quiet day. Some visited the Furnace Creek Ranch (not Inn) for lunch, and most returned in the evening for Dinner. The Ranger talk at the Center was well done. We learned of the abundant water supply even tho' here in the desert. Also discussed were the various trees growing here, some native and some imported. And, the two Palm trees, both imported.

At Happy Hour Joe gave a detailed review of the Ranger's talk on the Tarantula. Although of tremendous size, they do not leap and attack, and are not deadly even with their bite.....about the same as a bee sting.

SATURDAY, Feb 22 Death Valley to Needles - 233 miles.

A beautiful drive down to Needles. Weather perfect. Four trailers made the slightly longer drive via Bad Water, Mormon Point, and Ashford Mill. It was new country to all of this group and we arrived at the Needles KOA about the same time as the other half of the Caravan.

We were soon settled down in a nice group arrangement. Propane bottles were filled, laundry done, the dump station was visited,.....AND, long showers were taken! GREAT to have unlimited water again!

On today's drive Glen's Suburban faltered a time or two on those long up-grade pulls. He quickly diagnosed the trouble as a clogged in-line fuel filter. Of course he had a spare with him and replaced this crucial part in twenty minutes once in camp. CLEVER! Would have cost the Browns \$79.50 plus parts, and a half day wait in a garage.

In reviewing today's trip we find that the Leippers stopped in Searchlight for ice cream cones. This is only one of many favorite spots they have scattered around the country. Real experts on Ice Cream.

A pleasant Happy Hour ended a nice day.

SUNDAY, Feb 23 - Meedles to Havasu City - 47 miles. Forgot to mention the Raod Runners we saw several times in the Needles KOA Park. Very tame. And very exciting for we Northerners. One even caught a lizzard for us.....well actually for herself.

A very easy run down to Crazy Horse RV Park this AM. 8:30AM departure, with one hour time change at the border, gave us 10:30 Arizona time arrival.

Altho' Shirley had made the reservations several days ago from Death Valley, the bewildered "keeper of the gate" knew nothing about us. The usual confusion for this place, except, we did enter in half the time it took us on our last visit. He allowed many of us to enter without registering or paying until after we had parked. And the parking was down on the lower level in the same group area we were familiar with. The wind was still blowing and there were many white caps out on the water.

At Happy Hour we had Orville & JoAnn Scott of Bremerton, Wash, as guests. They were parked in their Airstream close by and Shirley had invited them over. The very heavy winds continued to blow and one by one our little group disappeared into the security & comfort of their trailers.

MONDAY, February 24, '92 - Havasu City.

Glen & Chris left us this morning. They have business to handle from Yuma and they will rejoin us tomorrow. The rest of us spent the day shopping, sightseeing, visiting & relaxing. The wind has died down and weather is again fine.

At Happy Hour Shirley gave us a short historic review of the London Bridge. Brought over stone by stone, all indexed & numbered, then erected here in the Arizona Desert. Interesting!

It should be mentioned that Joe's TV Antenna has become damaged and he has been traveling with this stuck half up and half down. Spare parts were found in Bob Oliver's supply box, but further breakage resulted in the repair attempt. Not to be outdone, Jay has somehow stripped the main gear in his trailer's leveling jack. So, we are a somewhat crippled bunch.

TUESDAY, Feb 25 - Havasu to Yuma - 163 miles.

Arrived at the South Mesa Trailer Park before noon. Sid had made these arrangements some weeks ago so they were expecting us. There was some confusion over our exact sites but this was soon sorted out and we were all nicely settled. WELL, NOT QUITE! Bob Oliver had a very tight, closely cropped site, and it took a lot of engineering, maneuvering, and guidance to get him finally parked.

Word has been received that Esther Grossman has been painfully sick, so plans are changed. In the meantime we are told that Helen Weber will be over for Happy Hour this

evening and exact plans will be worked out for tomorrow night. The Gormans left mid-afternoon for a visit to the Marine Base, no doubt to look again at that fateful spot where Joe had broken his hip on our last Yuma visit.

As usual, a pleasant and active Happy Hour. Sid had been over for an afternoon visit but was unable to return for the 5:00 O'clock affair. And, how GREAT to see Helen again. Like old times.

WEDNESDAY, February 26 - Yuma

A nice clear morning although the wind did pick up speed later in the day. About 8:30AM Bob Oliver loaded up his faithful Cad and away we went to the Citrus Fields. Shirley, Jack, the Browns, & the Olivers, then picked grapefruit. \$3.00 per tremendous bucket full! Sure loaded down the trunk on Bob's car. Then onward to the asparagus patch where we added more produce to further load the vehicle down.

At 4:00PM we all left for Helen Weber's home. We were only lost three times but felt better when we learned even Sid (the Yuma resident) had also been lost.

Helen had whipped up a batch of Margaritas and had cheese, crackers, & other goodies out. Sid had brought over fancy frozen Hors D'oeuvres which Helen heated in her oven. Granddaughter Jessica served these skillfully and added youth to the party.

Shirley phoned Kentucky Colonel to order chicken & cold slaw. At the appointed hour Sid (the Yuma Native) drove Nina (the Caravan Treasurer) to pick up the chicken, only getting lost twice on the way. This, along with the WONDERFUL lemon pies Helen had cooked up this morning, finished out a GREAT party. We returned to camp skillfully without getting lost even once.

THURSDAY, Feb 27, 1992 Yuma

Easy going day. Clear fine weather. Some laundry done..... most of us made runs on the grocery stores. Local relatives were visited by Christine & Glen.

Altho' the usual Happy Hour had been canceled it was decided to get together anyway at five. No snacks, however, to be fully ready for the feast promised us at Sid's Country Club tonight. Harry & Lorraine Bardo of the Michigan WBCCI Unit joined our gathering. They were parked close by. He had worked most of his life for Kelloggs Cornflake people and retired five years ago. Real nice people. (Should add that as they were leaving the Park the next morning Harry delivered a freshly baked corn bread muffin to each of us. A thoughtful gesture).

We left camp at 6:00PM to meet Sid at his private Country Club and were pleased to find Esther was there also. And the Club sure put on a TREMENDOUS spread of beautiful food. We lucked out as this was "Northwest Seafood Night" which included Clam Chowder, oysters on the half shell, shrimp, crab, & three kinds of fish. As a special treat they also served roast venison. All this buffet style which means all you can eat. Sid may be asked to resign after the way we gorged!

The only touch of sadness was having to say goodbye to Chris & Glen. They have been a lively addition to the Caravan and leave us tomorrow.

FRIDAY, February 28, 1992 - Yuma

Up at dawn to say our farewells to the Cox's'. But they were already gone! We could only stare sadly at their empty trailer space.

A quiet morning. The Browns & Gormans picked up Helen Weber and took her to lunch. Many old time experiences of former Caravans & Rallies were hashed over, including discussions of former & past Club members. Believe Helen really enjoyed the outing.

Nina, who has been doing a real fine job as Treasurer, collected the second \$10.00 to keep the Kitty solvent. So far it has handled phone calls, part of two Caravan meals, presents for Weber & Grossman, as well as other normal expenses. Nice going, Nina!

The Grossman joined us for Happy Hour and our Pot Luck Dinner. Good to see Esther up and around. So there were fourteen seated at our fold up tables and we were finished as darkness settled in. We said our thanks & farewells to the Grossmans and retired to our trailers.

SATURDAY, Feb 29 - Yuma to Borrego Springs - 146 miles. Slightly overcast. Departure scheduled for 8:30 (7:30 Pac Time) but most hooked up by 7:40.....left at 8:10AM.

Nice drive over to the Overland Junction RV Park located just outside the entrance to Anza Borrego State Park. The usual bunching up due to lack of parking space at the Registration Office. There was much confusion over exact parking sites for each trailer but Jack hurried back and forth and we were soon well settled.

In the afternoon Nina walked down to the Mall (at least two or three miles round trip). Noticed that she did not make the return up-hill climb loaded down with purchases.... understand she only purchased a wine glass.

At Happy Hour we all agreed this is the best park we have visited on this trip. Even shade! As we relaxed we did some reminiscing of the War Years of so long ago. Interesting to hear where people were and what they were doing.

SUNDAY, March 1, '92 - Borrego Springs

Although Church would have done some of us a lot more good, we headed off for a visit to the Stage Stop at Vallesitos. This is on the old Butterfield Stage Route between San Diego and San Antonio. We ate our lunch in the peace & quiet of the little County Park and returned to a restful afternoon in camp. Slightly overcast weather.

For the first time in twenty five years of WBCCI activities, the Browns were late for Happy Hour. Someone had secretly moved up the time to 4:30. Don't know what we missed in those first few minutes.

And the Leipfers too were late. They have been up at Julian visiting Dale's sister Mary. And we missed Shirley

who is under the weather with a cold.....caught of course from miserable old Joe, who has been sneezing, coughing, & blowing his nose for the past day or so.

Tuesday evening has been picked as our final banquet. This is the final stop of Caravan 47 and some will be leaving soon. Reservations will be made for the twelve of us at the restaurant next door. Nice that we can walk over without getting cars & drivers.

MONDAY, March 2, 1992 - Borrego Springs

The first heavy rain of our trip settled in during the night. The morning forecast is heavy rain today, clearing tomorrow & Wednesday, but a new colder storm arriving that night & lasting through to the weekend.

The usual Monterey Bay Caravan Barbershop, Jack Benjamin 1st. chair, Lloyd Brown 2nd chair, was scheduled to open at 9:00AM. Being in an outdoor setting, and with the heavy rain, there was little business done. But by noon, the rain stopped and business picked up.

Quickly clipped were Brown, Benjamin, & Oliver. All looked much better (we think?). Nowhere could we find Jay for his turn at the shears. But at Happy Hour he bravely claimed he was ready and an appointment was made for tomorrow.

Speaking of Happy Hour, the Browns announced that they had changed plans and were leaving for home tomorrow. They did need to get back for business reasons and it seemed wise to grab the two day break in the weather being forecast.

In spite of the colder weather it was another good Social Hour. We simply bundled up in warmer cloths.. What a fine group!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lloyd asked Nina to carry on with the log, and the following is from her hand. Thanks, Nina.

TUESDAY, March 3 - Borrego Springs.

Brown's left early for home. We're sad to see them go. Snow on the mountains across the valley....shining white in the Sun. Rest of the group left at 10:30 to hike up Palm Canyon.

Great excitement when reaching the parking area! It was filled with San Diego County Search & Rescue people. Three hikers had tried to cross the mountains into Palm Canyon. Rains came, their trail turned into a river and they had to climb the rocks. Resulted in shock and getting very wet. All ended well as the helicopter crossed overhead and set down with them in the parking lot. We all were impressed with the job done & equipment set up. Even Salvation Army was there with food & coffee.

Jack & Nina got to where stream crossed the trail and it meant hopping on slippery rocks to go ahead, so turned back. Dale, Jay & Marion waited at the cars and inspected the rescue affair. Others got various distances along the trail. Beautiful flowers.....Desert Lavender, Cat's Claw, Cheese bush, etc. etc. Hills very green. Lots of water in creek. Sprinkles & colder before getting back for lunch. Returned to camp for naps and by 2:00PM there were hard showers in the valley.

At Five had a cold Happy Hour & then adjourned to Les Palmas Grill for a delectable dinner. Huge servings but excellent. Those choosing Mexican Plates agreed it was super. Jack received a new chapeau & our thanks for a great Caravan.

WEDNESDAY, March 4, '92 - Borrego Springs

Wednesday dawned clear as a bell. Leipppers pulled out for Kingman at 7:20. At 10:30 we headed up S22 to circle around to Julian via S2 & 79. Beautiful view over Anza Borrego as we scaled the heights. Then great mountain meadows & scenery. A very lovely drive. Haddin & Olivers were chauffeurs.

Stopped at one apple farm. Bob bought a pie. Then on to Julian, which was swarming with cars & People. Hunted for Mamma's Cafe....up and down streets. Finally Jay spotted it & Nina let Leiths off & went blocks away to park.

Cloudy and cold, should have brought parkas. Oliver's car load ate at Julian Cafe in an old building with quite a history. All agreed food was super at both places. Too cold to window shop or browse so we headed down hill B. S. All in all it was a gorgeous drive.

Leiths & Gormans leave tomorrow....so they are busy hooking up & moving to more level spots for the night where they can stay hooked up. Nina, Jack, & Olivers will be staying one more day. We'll see what weather lets us do tomorrow. Had a cold, windy Happy Hour as we huddled in our parkas & wool hats, eating Shirley's fine tiered Mexican dip & chips.

THURSDAY, March 5 - Borrego Springs.

Gormans pulled out before 6:00AM & Leiths about 8:30. Three little Indians left! At ten we went to Visitor Center to get directions to large display of wild flowers. Went out S22 to Henderson Canyon & found masses of Verbena & Dune Primroses. Further along the Sunflowers are beginning & the yellow haze stretched for acres.

They say its one of the best sunflower displays in 20 years. Green-up began in January following December rain and warm days, 75 - 82 degrees. Feb brought over 3" of rain and it promises to be a spectacular wildflower display.

Afternoon was spent in hook-up chores, dumping, etc. It's been a gorgeous, hot, sunny day. Moved our chairs across the road into an empty space to stay in the sun for Happy Hour. As soon as sun went behind the mountains & it got cold, H.H. was over. We are all positioned & ready for a 7:45 start tomorrow for Victorville.

Snow on mountains melted today and is all gone.

SO LONG Anza Borrego, UNTIL ANOTHER YEAR!

Thanks, Nina, for the help in ending up the Log of Caravan #47. Together, we have jotted down the highlights of an interesting and worthwhile trip through the desert area of California. It is a good group of friends and we all join in thanking Jack for his work & effort in organizing and leading us this past three weeks.

LLOYD

PS: The Browns left Tuesday, March 3, at 7:00AM and drove 368 miles to Lost Hills KOA. Route via Salton Sea, Indio, Yucca Valley, Apple Valley, Victorville, Mojave, & Bakersfield. The next day they drove the 270 miles home.

And, we learn, that Chris & Glen Cox drove all the way home in one day. Left Yuma before seven and walked into their home in Las Cruces at seven that same night. WOW! Must be over 500 miles! They say they were a bit tired.

And, the Gormans left about 6:00AM and drove to Camper World in time for their 2:00PM appointment. Had a new Antenna installed by evening, spent the night there, and drove on to Lost Hills the next day.