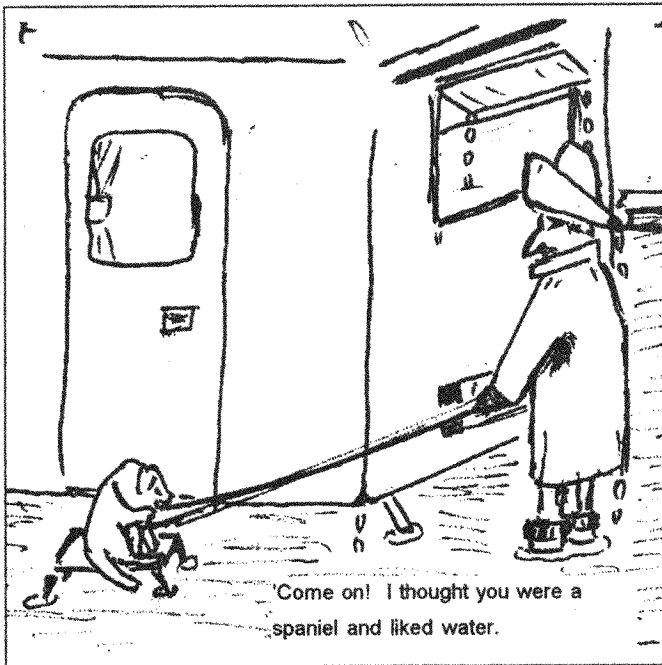




AUTO-SLEEPER
OWNERS' CLUB

Newsletter



No. 149

February 2001

Rela...a...x

AM I MISTAKEN, or are people getting more uptight and demanding about this hobby of ours? Not so long ago caravanning in all its forms was seen as a good, healthy, way to get out and about in the countryside or as a means of seeing parts of this country or the Continent comparatively cheaply without the hassle of pre-booking accommodation. All that was asked of sites was a clean water supply and somewhere to dispose of rubbish and toilet contents. Even then, if a friendly farmer loaned a corner of a field, caravanners were not upset at needing to carry water a distance from farm buildings or having to use the shovel no-one went without, to dig a hole.

Times changed. Sites on the Continent went sharply up-market, followed by commercial sites here, and began to provide electric hook-ups, hard-standings, heated toilet blocks, laundries, restaurants, take-aways, heated swimming pools and even guided tours. The major Clubs' sites improved greatly. Vehicle-ownership grew as motorhomes got more bells and whistles. A new breed of caravanner appeared in turbo-assisted, PAS, retro-vision fitted vehicles equipped with central heating, television, satellite dish, microwave ovens and cocktail cabinets.

There's nothing wrong with progress, of course. I, for one, wouldn't like to go back to routinely using overcoats and the dog on the bed at night to keep warm, and replacing broken gas mantles every time we stopped. But it seems to me one effect of all this is that numbers of our fellow-travellers have lost the plot, appearing to have no interest in the countryside, expecting everything to be on hand within a 10-yard radius of their pitch, to have their slightest whim catered for and complaining if it isn't. While that may sometimes be justified on large and expensive commercial sites, on smaller ones, and at rallies, it's not. It's a real world out there. Things can and do go wrong. But isn't caravanning about being pleased when things go right, and happy when they don't? It's very rare indeed, I find, for site operators and rally marshals not to work hard at making stays trouble-free - often taking considerable pains. It's not their fault if the sun doesn't shine, if the site slopes or you can't light the barbecue. Perhaps we should run a Club campaign encouraging caravanners to relax and be laid-back - we'd all enjoy our hobby more.

Ian Day

Chairman's Chat



Keeping the wheels turning

FOUR OR FIVE times a year, the Caravan Club site at Moreton-in-Marsh sees a number of Auto-Sleeper motor-homes on pitches which are usually close together.

These motorhomes belong to the members of your Committee who meet (together with our President, Charles Trevelyan, and Founder Vice-President, John Cox) in St David's School in the town to discuss the management of the Club and make decisions which affect every member.

Each weekend meeting involves Committee members in travelling a total of some 3,500 miles, and for the sake of economy it is usual for any Sub-committee meetings to be held on the previous day. Other Committee meetings are held during the Club and Company rally and on the afternoon of the Annual General Meeting - it is at that meeting each Committee member's responsibilities for the coming year are decided.

Why do we do it? I suppose that although many of us are 'retired', we still enjoy being active and feeling that we have something worthwhile to do. There is also the satisfaction of being able to contribute to a Club whose activities we so often enjoy.

Each year at the AGM, six Committee members are elected for the following year. They may be existing members who offer themselves for re-election; they may be newcomers who offer to serve on the Committee for the first time.

There is still time for any member who is interested in joining the Committee to get information on what is involved from the Secretary, together with a nomination form. Although we need to elect six members each year, it is healthy when more are keen to serve and a ballot is needed.

To quote a slogan from a recent television series - 'If not you, who?'

Ray Whiley

Free translation: Camping Bella Vista = Site for Sore Eyes.

From the President

'One stop shop' coming

HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all. I hope you had a most enjoyable Christmas.

On our return from the Christmas break, Neil Hunt, who worked alongside me in the After-Sales Department, moved to join Stephen Cant in our Sales Department. His new title is Account Executive and he will shortly be joined by a further new recruit to the department. Together they will assist Steve in looking after our dealer needs throughout the country. This enlarged sales team will continue to play an important part in the organising and running of the Club and Company rally.

Candidates to replace Neil are being interviewed and the successful person will have a much broader rôle. In the middle of 2001 he will be assisting me in moving our After-Sales Department to our unit currently occupied by the Drawing Office and Styrofoam body panel press, both of which will be moving to the main factory. The enlarged After-Sales Department will occupy the whole unit. We will be fully self-accounting and will look after all warranty, repair, insurance and after-sales matters. We will have an increased number of fitters and will therefore be able to offer a much more comprehensive service to all A-S owners. In the long term, we wish to make the After-Sales Department a 'one stop shop' facility - meaning that A-S owners will be able to bring their vehicles back to us for whatever work is necessary: automotive, coachwork, upholstery, trimming, or anything to do with the conversion - which will be looked after by our own, fully-trained, in-house staff.

We intend that this department, with its own receptionist and full clerical support, will be able to serve A-S owners in the most efficient way possible, will be a showpiece for both the Company and the motorhome industry, and set an example for other workshops to follow.

Prior to Christmas and over the holiday itself, much rebuilding work took place in our administrative block to form new offices for the enlarged Accounts Department (which now services Marquis accounts as well as Auto-Sleepers) and new offices for additional staff. Stuart Johnson, our Financial Director, will now have an office of his own, having had to make do with a corner of the Board Room up to now.

In late November we held the first of our annual dealer conventions at a hotel and conference centre in Ascot. It was very well attended and we were able to brief our dealers and others on advances we have made in production and quality, and at the same time give an insight into our plans for new vehicle development. It would clearly be wrong for me to disclose much of our development plans, but as an appetite-whetter we can promise a new vehicle with a novel and most exciting layout early this year, followed not long after by the first of the monococque glass fibre models on the new Ford Transit chassis. These Fords have been enormously well received. As a result of some very sensible ideas from dealers and owners, the specification of the new Ford Duetto has been further increased, with results you will shortly see in dealer showrooms.

I continue to attend Club Committee meetings. To say the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club is in good hands would, perhaps, be an understatement. I am always most impressed by the professional way in which the Club is managed. For example, at each Committee meeting, all members are asked to give a clear and succinct report on their areas of activity. Recently the Constitution and the Club insurances have been reviewed - all of which is to ensure that we are as up-to-date as possible in our Club administration. I enjoy these meetings enormously. Not only does it give me the opportunity of hearing all the Committee discusses, but also updates me on the very positive moves the Committee is making in the running of the Club to cater for all contingencies.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the AGM - if not before.

Charles Trevelyan

Against ACCEO

THANK GOODNESS someone has at last 'blown the whistle' on ACCEO. I could not agree more with your item in the January ASOC *Newsletter*, which confirms the views I have held for several years.

What I find particularly disturbing is the ACCEO Executive Committee's attitude that they know better than those responsible for Certificates of Exemption, what they mean and how they are to be applied - the DETR. In the Chairman's report, he indicates that an offer from the DETR to make a presentation to members was turned down.

ACCEO's dictatorial attitude and inability to control their finances are also worrying factors. Out of curiosity I became an individual member last year and received (by mistake, I suspect) a copy of their June 1998 Accounts. How any Chartered Accountant was able to put his signature to their Audit Report has never ceased to amaze me.

Recently, I have received the Winter 2000 issue of *ACCEO Matters*, and it makes very worrying reading. John Rowe[the Chairman]'s 'A view from the podium' gives an intriguing report on the proposals from the Knowsley Club which are referred to in your commentary on the AGM. The formation of the ACCEO Companions [individual members' group - Ed.] seems to indicate unrest amongst the membership.

I do hope that your very controlled report on the ACCEO AGM will alert members to what I consider is an organisation which we should not support.

John Normandale



AS CHAIRMAN of the Knowsley Club (who is also a member of ASOC and tows the van with my Topaz), I was in attendance at the ACCEO AGM and was very impressed by your report in January's ASOC *Newsletter* and appreciate that you feel the same as us.

We have been the only Club putting forward any motions to the ACCEO AGM for at least the past three years and have had a lot of trouble getting them past the Committee to get them on the agenda. This year delegates did not get the chance to vote separately for the sections we thought most important. The only good thing coming out of the discussions was that there were some suggestions that the Committee should look into some parts of our proposals.

Alan Butler

Good to hear from Alan, and a shame the Knowsley Club have not, up to now, had more support. Most Clubs seem to be voting with their feet - only 33 out of more than 200 were represented at that meeting - Ed.

'That money talks I'll not deny
I heard it once - it said "Good-bye." - Richard Armour

It's a gas - Mark 2

ALAN CURRY concludes his explanation of the gas systems in A-S vehicles, begun in last month's issue.

The demand of a gas system is measured in kW of heat input and our systems are typically about 12kW. The cylinder suppliers provide us with a chart of the 'offtakes' of their cylinders, enabling us to simply look up the size needed. The convention is to choose the cylinder that supplies at least the maximum system demand or the next size up, so in this case we need a 13 kg propane cylinder, which would provide sufficient gas to operate all the appliances flat out for an extended period (an hour or more). Fortunately we are allowed to reduce it by about half because it's unlikely such demand will happen. Under normal conditions one or two systems only will be operating at any one time which means that instead of having to fit a 13 kg cylinder, a 6 kg will be enough. Please note, however, that if the smaller cylinders are used, we must use propane and not butane because, while butane cylinders hold more liquid, it evaporates at about only half the speed of propane.

All cylinders are housed in steel-lined compartments which are intended to give twenty minutes' protection in the event of fire. This works in both directions - from the cylinder into the van and, more importantly, from the van to the cylinder to allow time for it to be removed before it gets too hot.

For the pipework we use two materials - copper and neoprene. The copper is soft annealed. If it is necessary to bend or cut it, use a proper bender or cutter rather than bending it over a knee or hacking it off with a saw. Cut neoprene (which we always call 'rubber') using a knife. A saw will fill the tube with bits of material which end up jamming the appliance jets. Note that the tubing is stamped with the date of manufacture, *not* the date it was installed. It should be changed every year.

All the space heaters, refrigerators and water heaters are described as 'room sealed', meaning that they take air for combustion from outside the vehicle via inlets, mix it with gas in the combustion chamber, burn it and return the combustion products to the outside atmosphere through a flue. Thus none of the products of combustion (usually called by owners 'fumes' - a word with all sorts of sinister connotations we avoid using at all costs) are mixed into the vehicle's atmosphere.

Combustion products from hobs and cookers, which are un-flued, mix with the air inside the vehicle and are discharged into the atmosphere through the roof vents.

For combustion to take place we need fuel and some air. The amount of air needed is determined by how much fuel we are trying to burn: a candle needs only a little air, but a furnace needs a massive amount. LPG has specific needs: 1 volume of propane needs five volumes of oxygen to burn. As air is about 20 per cent oxygen and 80 per cent nitrogen, 24 volumes of air produce about 25 volumes of flue gases. If combustion breaks down, acid, carbon (soot) and carbon monoxide (CO) are produced. The first rots the flue, the second makes a mess and the third kills because the haemoglobin in the blood absorbs CO in preference to oxygen. As blood absorbs the CO, these symptoms appear:

<u>% of CO in blood</u>	<u>Symptom</u>
0-10	None
10-20	Mild headache, yawning
20-30	Headache, dizziness
30-40	Severe headache, irritability, possible collapse
40-50	As above, plus collapse on exertion
50-60	Loss of consciousness, coma
60-70	Coma, weakened heart and respiration
Above 70	Respiratory failure and death

The blood saturation levels shown are produced by surprisingly low concentrations of CO in the atmosphere:

<u>% Volume of CO in the air</u>	<u>Blood saturation over time</u>
0.01%	4% in 1.5 hours 15% with indefinite exposure
0.03%	10% in 1.5 hours 20% in 4-5 hours
0.05%	20% in 1.5 hours 40% in 4-5 hours
0.4%	60% in a few minutes

To prevent CO building up we put fixed ventilation in the vans. Roof flights and ventilators and low-level vents in cupboards, bed-boxes and vehicle doors allow air to circulate and disperse the gas. Carbon Monoxide is very dangerous and kills several people in home-made motor-homes every year. For that reason it is vitally important that you do not block up a hole in your van unless you are sure why it was put there in the first place.

Anyone thinking about working on gas systems should be aware that they must comply with the law. Failure to do so can lead to prosecution. Fines for contravening the Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations in particular can be very severe - often exceeding £10,000. Be sure you know what you are doing before touching the gas system in your vehicle.

To summarise: Check your rubber hose and change it if it is old or shows any signs of deterioration; check that all roof and floor vents are clear and not obstructed by that sock you lost in Spain last June; change to propane for winter use.

Alan Curry

We all experience problems with our gas installations from time to time, as items in our pages show. This article and the one published last month will go a long way toward helping the non-experts among us understand the 'whys' and 'wherefores'. Thanks Alan. Here are a couple of questions the first article raised. We'll try to publish answers next month - Ed.

WE WOULD LIKE to know why gas cylinders have to be stored and presumably [carried] in transit in the upright position. Will the regulator fail, and with what result?

Joy and Nigel Wilkins

I UNDERSTAND the reason for the use of propane at low ambient temperatures where butane would not evaporate, but would it be possible to outline the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two gases? I use butane at present but would like to know if there is any reason why I shouldn't change to propane on a permanent basis.

Allan Ross

Whoomphers and wooshers

THE DISASTER experienced by John Johnson (December issue) is similar to an incident experienced with our Amethyst. The gas on the hob refused to light. Wisely, Christine stopped trying. On investigation, one of the igniters wasn't working, but the remaining three were banging away happily.

The flame failure override device to enable gas to flow is activated by pressing down on the control knob. Releasing the control will allow the flame failure device to operate, unless it stays down due to 'gunge' sticking the control in the override position. Gas will then continue to escape and, with repeated operation of the igniters, gas will eventually reach one of the sparks that is working, with a disastrous 'whoompher'.

The way to check that all igniters are working is by looking for the spark at each burner, and making sure that each control knob returns to the correct position [lifts - Ed]. If a control is sticking, clean it thoroughly, preferably before it's too late.

With regard to the fire extinguishers supplied, it is doubtful if they would have much impact on a running gas fire. It is important to turn the gas off at the bottle if you can.

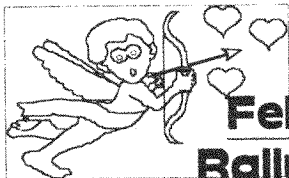
John's extinguisher probably didn't work because the powder it contained had compacted, due to vibration while the vehicle was travelling. Annual servicing by a qualified person is essential, not just looking at the pressure gauge. The servicer should release the extinguisher's pressure, empty it, refill it and recharge it. Turning them upside down occasionally also helps.

Jim and Christine Taylor

Scandinavian gas

FOLLOWING Brian Green's item in December's *ASOC Newsletter*, we have had a note from George W. Hinton, Deputy Editor of *The Caravan Club Magazine*, sending photocopies of the information on gas supplies and cylinder exchange arrangements in Finland, Norway and Sweden contained in that Club's *Caravanning Europe* directory. Also included, but not endorsed by the Caravan Club, were details of a depôt in Finland reported by CC members to offer CampinGaz cylinder refilling. Propane is the norm because of low temperatures.

Our thanks to George for making that information available. It would be interesting to know how many of our members, who are also members of the Caravan Club or other Clubs publishing Continental handbooks, make a point of getting up-to-date issues when planning their trips. Are there any other sources of information you have found useful?



February 2001 Rally Supplement



Please remember that only Club members are allowed to attend rallies and membership cards should be carried.

Both sides of the Rally Slip must be completed before sending to the appropriate rally marshal with the rally fee & site fee,if applicable.

An application form for the National Motorhome & Tourer Show to be held at Peterborough in April is in this Newsletter.

Proposed Rally in France 11th.-22nd.June 2001,Camping Les Deux Vallees.

The application list for this rally is now closed.

Please remember that if you are interested in attending this rally then you will have to book your own ferry places as well as arranging any insurance that is required.

15th.-18th.February.(3 nights) Grouse & Claret,Rowsley, Nr.Matlock,Derbyshire. THIS RALLY IS NOW FULL.

Directions: On A6 between Matlock & Bakewell.

NEW RALLY Mid week rally.

6th.-9th. March.(3 nights) White Water Caravan Club Park,Stockton on Tees.

Site Tel.No. 01642 634 880(Emergency only)

Rally Marshals: Pauline & Neil Rogers.

Site Fee:£6.00 per unit per night.(inclusive of VAT)

Electricity:£2.25 (incl.VAT) (*Electricity fees payable to the Warden on arrival*).*Do not send with site fees.*

Rally Fee:£2.35, Singles £1.20.(both incl.VAT)

Hardstandings at the discretion of the site warden.

Booking slips to: N.C. & P. Rogers,3 Appleby Close, Aldbrough St.John,Richmond, North Yorks.DL11 7TT.

Cheques payable to : N.C.& P.Rogers. Tel.No. 01325 374 540.

Attractions: Family room available for use of all on site.Beefeater Restaurant just outside site,Tees Barrage,14 screen cinema, bowling_alley plus 50,000sq.ft. of retail shops and fast food outlets close by.Stockton market on Wednesday can be reached by bus or walk by river.Bus stop nearby.Hartlepool Historic Quay & Jacksons Landing Factory Shopping Outlet.National Glass Museum at Sunderland,approx 30 miles.

Directions: From South on A1(M).Turn off at Junct. 57 signed Darlington & Teesside.Follow A66 for approx 16 miles.About ¼ mile *past* A1045 junction turn off *left* via slip road at signpost Teesside Park.In 200yds at end of slip road turn *left* at traffic lights,signed Barrage/Teesdale.**

In ¼ mile at roundabout continue over Barrage bridge.Follow caravan site signs onto White Water Way to site.

From A19(South).turn off via slip road onto A66(s.p.

Middlesbrough,Stockton & Darlington).Turn onto A66(Stockton) and stay in lane,then take left slip road signed Teesside Retail Park Turn right at traffic lights_signed Teesdale/Barrage.Then as above from **.

20th.-22nd.April A.G.M. Banham Zoo,Norfolk.A booking form was enclosed in the January Newsletter.Please return before the closing date.

**23rd.26th.April.(3nights)Applewood Caravan & Camping Park,
Banham Zoo,Norfolk.(A.G.M. follow-on rally).**

Site tel.No.01953 888370.

Rally Marshals: Barbara & Ray Whiley.

Emergency Tel.No.07899 853988(Marshals' mobile,8.00 to 10.00 am & pm.

Site Fee:£3.50 per night. Electric: £1.50 per night.(both inclusive of VAT).

Rally Fee:£1.30 per van plus 50p per adult.(inclusive of VAT).

Booking slips to:Mr. & Mrs. R.E.Whiley,21 Elcar Rise,Eaton, Norwich,Norfolk.NR4 6HR. Home Tel.No. 01603 452 593.

E-mail: rewhiley@waitrose.com

Cheques payable to: R.E. & B. Whiley.

Attractions as for the A.G.M.

This rally is offered to enable members to enjoy a longer stay in Norfolk before the Peterborough Show.Those taking part will remain on the AGM rally field for the Sunday night and move to the five acre rally field,which has 50 marked pitches on grass with electric hookups before 12 noon on the Monday.

Please state number of nights on rally slip: early booking would be appreciated.

**26th.-29th.April.(3 nights) National Motorhome & Tourer
Show,East of England Showground,Peterborough.**

Emergency Tel.No.07714 091 349(Marshals' mobile on 8.00-10.00 am/ pm).

Rally Marshals:Pauline & Neil Rogers,Evelyn & Ben Mansfield, Jean & Ian Sellers & Joan & Ray Young.

Please use the booking form enclosed in this Newsletter if possible.If you use forms from the magazines please mark the form

ASOC and note the special Club site fees: Arrive Thursday: £25, arrive Friday £23, arrive Saturday £21.

Please note that ALL booking forms **MUST** be returned to the organisers by **30th March** if you wish to rally with the Club. After this date you will be sited with the public.

The rally finishes at 12 noon Sunday but you may remain on site until 12 noon Monday.

Then you must also complete a Club rally slip and return it, with the Rally Fee of £1.75 couples, £1.20 singles (both inclusive of VAT) to: N.C. & P. Rogers, 3 Appleby Close, Aldbrough St. John, Richmond, North Yorks. DL11 7TT
Tel. No. 01325 374 540. Cheques payable to N.C. & P. Rogers. Please collect the **Club** rally information pack from the marshals before parking.

If you book using the special Club fees then you must rally with the Club.

No arrivals before 2.00p.m. Thursday.

Advance Notice

17th-21st May. (4 nights) Motor Caravan Jamboree, Detling, Kent.

Emergencies only please. Tel. No. 07879 473434 marshal's mobile.
Rally Marshals: Dorothy & Baz Wellard. Rally Fee: £2.00.
GREEN FIELD SITE.

Site Fee £25 to be sent, *with application form available from marshals, direct to organisers. Rally slip rally fee (£2.00) and SAE to Mr. & Mrs. Baz Wellard, 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants. PO16 7UF. Tel. No. 01329 231 259.*

Cheque for rally fee (£2.00) payable to Mrs. D. Wellard (DO NOT include site fees) please.

Attractions:The Motor Caravan Jamboree & Leisure Show is reputed to be Europe's greatest indoor and outdoor exhibition of Motorhomes together with a superb entertainment package that is absolutely free.The show is held at the Kent Showground on the North Downs,with easy access to the Garden of England and Channel ports- for a day visit!

Directions:From M2 leave at Junction 5 and go South on the A249 following signs to showground.From M20 leave at Junction 7 and go North on the A249 and again follow signs.

Closing date:Closing date for rally slips to reach marshals is 11th.April 2001.

10th-17th.June.Three Counties Show,-Working Rally,Malvern, Worcs.

Emergencies only Tel.No. 07879 473434 marshal's mobile.

Rally Marshals: Dorothy & Baz Wellard. **NO SITE FEES.** Rally Fee:£2.00.GREEN FIELD SITE.

As a result of our close relationship with the Three Counties Management,they have again asked if the ASOC could help them in the running of this year's Champion Dog Show (11th.-14th.) and the County Show (14th.-16th.).Members will be selected for either show (or possibly both) and will be paid,at least, the minimum wage(taxable).For insurance purposes members must be under 75 years of age.Hours are from 0700 to 1900 each day - with breaks.Duties are likely to include:dog show checkers,pay booth attendants and safety stewards.We can have the use of Teme Hall,in the evenings,if required.

Rally slip and cheque to: Mr. & Mrs. Baz Wellard,18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants.PO16 7UF. Tel.No. 01329 231 259. Cheque for rally fee (£2.00) payable to Mrs. D.Wellard.

Closing date:Closing date for rally slips to reach marshals is 11th.May 2001.

If any Club member has any Club equipment,ie rally signs etc. please let me know.This information is required for insurance purposes.

We depend on volunteers within the Club to act as rally marshals.If you know of a suitable site why not think about running a rally.It is not difficult and help is available.

It is important that all potential rally dates and venues are checked with me first as,**unless they are approved by the Club, no rally can be held.**

Please note that **ALL** information concerning rallies,dates,booking of sites and rally details for the Newsletter should be sent to the Rally Co-ordinator at least **3 months** before the actual rally.

*Neil C. Rogers,
3 Appleby Close,
Aldbrough St. John,
Richmond,
North Yorks,
DL11 7TT.
Tel./Fax. No. 01325 374 540
E-Mail. ncr@nasuwt.net*

Local assistant: Jerry Haxton (01483 223 476) Woking,Surrey.

E & O. E.

Is this your first ASOC rally? Please tick box. Yes No
Number of people in your van: Adults..... Children.....

Names of Adults.....

Names of Children (including ages).....

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, if available:

Electricity: Yes No Saturday night meal if any: Yes No

Have you any special needs? Yes No If Yes please specify:-

Full payment MUST accompany this slip-cheques payable to the marshal.
POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,IF POSSIBLE PLEASE!

Is this your first ASOC rally? Please tick box. Yes No
Number of people in your van: Adults..... Children.....

Names of Adults.....

Names of Children (including ages).....

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, if available:

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Have you any special needs? Yes No If Yes please specify:-

Full payment MUST accompany this slip-cheques payable to the marshal.
POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,IF POSSIBLE PLEASE!

Rally : Date:

Your name and address(Please PRINT)

.....

..... Post code:

Phone No.: Van Reg:

Membership No. Day/Time of arrival

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

Name Phone No

Please complete both sides of the form!

.....

Rally : Date:

Your name and address(Please PRINT)

.....

..... Post code:

Phone No.: Van Reg:

Membership No. Day/Time of arrival

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

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.....

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Phone No.: Van Reg:

Membership No. Day/Time of arrival

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

Name Phone No

Please complete both sides of the form!

Christmas competition winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Cecilie Wingate of Dorset, the successful winner of the Christmas Competition. A New Year hamper will wing its way to her shortly.

There was a very encouraging response to the competition and each and every answer was carefully checked to ensure they were totally accurate. Some interesting answers were given and (without disclosing names) here are some of the more amusing efforts:

One member believed there were 4 Horsemen of the Acropolis (not the Apocalypse), another felt there were two Tired Sods at Auto-Sleepers, whilst someone else believed there were 2 Time Switches at Auto-Sleepers, and another felt there were 2 Toilet Seats at Auto-Sleepers. Bearing in mind that we employ almost 175 people, the latter would surely be rather less than would be desired! A further member believed there were only 2 Top Sellers at Auto-Sleepers (but didn't say exactly which), another felt there were 2 Technical Supervisors at Auto-Sleepers, and someone else believed there were 2 employees named Terry at Auto-Sleepers.

Whilst many entrants correctly said that there were 1,000 legs on a Millipede, one answer suggested that number of legs belonged to a Centipede (a shame Latin isn't taught much now).

There are, of course, 32 pieces on a Chess Board, but one member felt, perhaps not wrongly, that there were 32 Compass Points on a Board, each of $11\frac{1}{4}$ degrees.

The competition undoubtedly gave everyone the opportunity for much mind-searching. Of the 16 who didn't get all the answers correct, the majority stumbled with the answer to the last question where 2 Trevelyan Sons at Auto-Sleepers was, of course, the correct answer, with Siblings equally acceptable.

Ian Capes and his family devised this competition and are now working on another quiz for later in the year. Our thanks to each and everyone who sent in entries, and congratulations again to Cecilie Wingate, the winner.

Charles Trevelyan

No longer permitted to drive

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS that I write to tell you that I'm forced to leave ASOC.

The DVLA say that my eye test doesn't meet with their requirements for driving, which means that I can no longer drive either the Clubman or the car. I can't tell you how devastated I feel.

Jock and I attended so many rallies and made so many friends, who have been very supportive since Jock died last year. I tried to come out alone, but 'the powers that be' have decided otherwise.

I know the Club is growing, and may it continue to do so. You all gave Jock and me so much pleasure - the best of luck.

Doreen Hammond



Reluctant leavers

WITH VERY GREAT REGRET we have now sold our Auto-Sleeper. John's illness last year meant we were unable to use the van and, as we are both no longer in the best of health, we reluctantly came to the decision to give up camping.

We have had seven good years in the Club, attending 62 rallies during which we visited many places new to us and we have so many happy memories - Brecon, Lichfield, Bala, Chester, Mersea Island, Canterbury and East Horsley, to name a few. Then there was Ireland with John and Barbara Cox, Brittany with Dennis and Eleanor Oxley, Jeff and Barbara Worley's New Year rallies at Hidden Valley and, of course, the Club and Company rallies at Malvern. We have really appreciated all the hard work put in by the Rally Marshals and Club officials.

We will continue as members so that we can keep in touch through *ASOC Newsletter*, and we wish the Club every success in the future.

John and Josephine Barrett

We all feel for each of these members. It is good to know they all want to keep in touch by continuing to receive ASOC Newsletter - Ed.

Sad Symbol

LAST MONTH we mentioned that Geoff and Sheila Hunt had listed difficulties experienced with their 1999 Symbol. We sent the list on to Auto-Sleepers and both Charles Trevelyan and the Hunts have kept us advised of progress. Solutions are in sight for all the items (some of which were quite small) have been done or are in hand.

Two of the problems and their remedies may be of general interest. The first concerned the windscreen on the Peugeot base vehicle. It had fractured and so had its replacement. On investigation by A-S, it was discovered that a small batch of windscreens prone to cracking had been made, and that it was likely the second screen fitted (not by Auto-Sleepers) was from that batch. The first was replaced under warranty and Peugeot have agreed to pay for the other replacements.

The window over the sink developed a leak which was reported to Marquis when they carried out the van's first annual habitation service. A replacement window was supplied by Auto-Sleepers when the trouble persisted. The problem turned out to be a poor seal where the two sections of anodised aluminium met in the top centre of the frame. The window suppliers in Luxembourg have been advised of the fault by Auto-Sleepers, whose own production people now put a secondary seal on this join in new models.

Symphony storage

I HAVE RECENTLY obtained an annexe for my Boxer Symphony by going to Glossop Caravans and buying a flood-damaged one. When I took it home, assembled it and washed the mud off, it was as new - and, at half price, I think it was a bargain, especially since the curtains and poles hadn't been in the flood.

There is just one problem. Where do I store it whilst in transit in the Symphony? Is it possible to have it slung underneath in a specially-made drawer or compartment?

Any suggestions (except one) would be appreciated.

D. Cadman

News from the Frozen West

WE WOULD LIKE to express our thanks to Sandra and Bernie Wisely for a well-organised New Year rally at Hidden Valley and for all the other extra little touches that made it special.

The new owners of the site, Dawn and Martin, and their staff did a terrific job supplying great food and the entertainment on all the nights was just right. Considering that we knew only two others of the members there, it was great that we all jelled quite happily to enjoy the festivities. We made a lot of new friends whom we hope to see on other rallies.

The venue was ideal for us, with buses from the front door and some pleasant local walks. Having collected this year's brochure, we were pleased to note that Hidden Valley TP is very reasonably priced for a visit in more pleasant weather and has reduced rates for the over-50s.

As fair weather 'campers' it was a new experience travelling through the snow and ice to find that Hidden Valley had also suffered from the bad weather, but that did little to spoil a great weekend, especially as the site is quite sheltered from the wind.

Pat and David Mayne

That 'jelled' suggests they all shivered together - s-s-surely not - Ed.

Corroded brake discs

MY 'R' REGISTERED VW TRIDENT has had to have new brake discs and pads after just 19,600 miles and 35 months from purchase as new. After smoke from the rear wheels was noticed, the brake discs were found to be badly corroded and pitted. This was despite regular annual servicing by VW and regular use - it does not stand idle for weeks on end. VW's view was that the corrosion was possibly due to the relatively low mileage of the vehicle.

Has anyone had similar problems or ideas as to possible causes?

Roger Barrett

Good navigation prevents a lot of ups and downs - G. Bennett

Sloping off in Brittany

THE FRIDGE PROBLEMS of John Francis (December ASOC Newsletter) reminded me of one of our fridge adventures. Back in 1987 on a tour round Brittany, we discovered a good beach and parked on a sloping road alongside. It was very hot and on our return we discovered that the gaz had run out and the fridge ignition was clicking. We changed the cylinder and went off to the camp site. The next day we were there again. This time there was a distinct smell of scorching on our return. Yes, we knew all about keeping the van level, but it was such a good beach - and anyway, we'd parked there the day before, hadn't we?

Consulting the documents, we found the nearest Electrolux repair place was at Rennes, 50 miles away. Eventually, after a thorough exploration of an industrial estate and several half-understood conversations, we found it. The fridge was taken out without difficulty and the scorched bit of tubing brought to our attention. We called back later and the fridge was put back into place. Except that it didn't work. I remembered that as the *électricien* had taken the fridge out, some loose wires across the top of the metal casing had made a little spark. 'Non,' he couldn't help - he didn't know anything about electronic igniters.

Fortunately, we were only a day or two away from our return through Cherbourg on a Friday evening. A phone call to Willersey told us Auto-Sleepers were open for a couple of hours on the Saturday morning, so we drove north from Portsmouth and slept in a lay-by on A34 north of Newbury. We arrived at Auto-Sleepers' about ten o'clock, where someone did, indeed, know about ignition on fridges and repaired it.

Moral: Never park on a steep slope unless the gaz is about to run out.

David Matthews

I think I'll stick with the first bit. With my luck it wouldn't only be the fridge that shorted out - Ed.

*'February fill-dyke, be it black or be it white;
But if it be white it's the better to like.' - Old proverb*

The dykes are already full! Should we petition the Almighty?

Handbooks wanted

TIME AND A FIRE at the factory have combined to make Auto-Sleepers' collection of vehicle handbooks less than complete, which means they are sometimes unable to supply copies or information to inquirers.

If you have a handbook for one of the earlier A-S models and no longer need it, Charles Trevelyan would be pleased to receive it for the files. If you have one you want to keep, but are happy to let Auto-Sleepers see it, they will take a copy and return it to you. It would be an idea to drop Charles a line to see whether you have one A-S need, before putting the book itself in the post.

Cool, clear, water

IN NOVEMBER'S ASOC *Newsletter*, I read with interest of the problem Michael Mawer had when his water pump ceased to operate on a rally and he had no water for his medication.

It is many years since I've used the inboard water supply for drinking or cooking. The system is only used for pot washing and teeth cleansing after it has been sterilised. The reason for not using the water supply is because in one motorhome I owned it was possible to inspect the interior of the water tank - and it was not a pretty sight.

I carry two five-litre plastic containers for water that fit nicely under the sink of my Executive. This water is filtered before use through a 1.8-litre capacity Kenwood jug filter. All impurities are filtered out and that makes the water taste better. The water jug is the slim model that fits on the door of the fridge and the water is always cold. The cost for this safer water is about £9.99 for the jug and filter. A filter lasts me a month and three replacements cost about £7.99.

I wonder how many other members are fussy about drinking water?

Eric Jones

All of us, I hope. A-S recommend not using tank water for drinking. We carry plastic bottles like Eric and have a jug similar to his. The water tastes good and it's handy to use. I kept this contribution back to see if there were any other reactions to Michael's predicament - Ed.

Wizard wheezes

Keeping Silver Screens warm: We went to buy some internal Silver Screens, but instead were told it was so much better to just fit our external ones to the *inside* of the screen. This does, indeed, work very well, using the visors to hold them in place, with the corners fitted over the doors.
- *Celia Matthews*

Gas pipe sleeve: On our Gatcombe the gas locker has the flexible gas feed pipe running low down on the floor. When travelling, the pipe is subjected to rubbing by the bottles, which could be dangerous over time. To cure it I've cut a 25cm length off our water filler pipe, slit it along the length, opened it out and slid it along the gas pipe, covering that like pipe lagging. It saves the scuffing, is still flexible and gives peace of mind.
- *Chris Ward*

Revolving Campingaz cylinders: We've made a circle of hardboard the size of the cylinder and put ball-bearing wheels on the base so that the cylinder can be rotated while the valve is held steady to tighten or loosen it. The light and slim wheels were intended for heavy plant pots, and enable the base to fit beside the cylinder and not under it when travelling.
- *Celia Matthews*

Loading list: I keep a couple of cards with a list of all we need to put in the van each time we go away and check items off as we load. Pretty basic this, but a great memory aid and time-saver.
- *Jean Day*

Do you have handy little tips (I daren't write 'wrinkles') you think might be useful to other members? Please send them in - Ed.

Repairs recommendation

NEEDING A REPAIR done to the van recently, I remembered Neville Jelfs, who now runs his own business near Evesham. He did a really good and efficient job, as those of us who have known him over the years would expect, and can be thoroughly recommended. He spent many years with Auto-Sleepers and knows the anatomies of our four-wheeled leisure market investments inside-out. His phone number is 0138 683 2777.

Janet Sutterby

Wanted

BACK BOX, Fiamma 360 or Brutsaert Carry-All-Box 150. Phone Doug Wood 0194 475 8474 (Nth Yorks).*



For sale

RENAULT RECRO 1.7L PETROL. 'K' reg., Sept. 1992, 25,000 miles. 2-berth. Fiamma awning. Two new tyres, exhaust & battery this summer. Usual A-S fittings incl. Propex blown-air heating. Blue upholstery. Excellent condition, full service history. Non smokers; no pets. **£11,000** ono. Phone Val and Clinton Grant 0124 378 5248 (W. Sussex)*

VW TRIDENT T4 2-LITRE PETROL, 'K' reg., Aug. 1992. 31,000 miles. Alloy wheels, Hope Safe-T-Bar, Kenwood CD system, blown-air heating, mudflaps, car bra. Comprehensive service history. Absolutely as new and immaculate. Garaged from new. One owner, non-smoker; no pets. Summer use only. One of the best Trident campers. Available at **£14,495**. Can garage for winter if required. Phone or e-mail Kelvin Chambers 0172 232 7594 (Salisbury) evenings. kelvin@chambers56.freeserve.co.uk

AMETHYST 2.5TD 1997, 12,000 miles, PAS, 2/4 berth. 'Strike Back' alarm, awning, cycle rack. Other extras. Non-smokers, no pets/children. Immaculate condition, **£25,500** ovno. Phone Don and Beryl Walker 0247 667 2110 or 0771 125 6245 (Coventry).*

DUETTO 2.5 DIESEL, 1996 'N' reg. 29,000 miles. Super condition. Alloy wheels, electric locks and windows, 4 seat belts. Other extras include drive-away awning. Non-smokers, no pets. Reluctant sale: **£19,500**. Phone or e-mail Derek Robbins 0140 327 4533 (W. Sussex) robbins.ws@talk21.com *

VW CLUBMAN GL 2.4 Tdi DIESEL. 'M' reg. 33,900 miles. Taxed, MoT, recent full VW service. New main battery, new alarm system, new Fiamma awning, 3-speed fan. Usual A-S spec. Well maintained; excellent, clean condition. Non-smokers, no pets. **£20,750** ono. Phone or e-mail John Mount 0179 547 3800 (Kent), johnme10@cs.com *

TALBOT EXPRESS EXECUTIVE 2.5 DIESEL TB Turbo intercooled. 'L' reg., Sept. 1993. 17,500 miles. PAS, Air-ride suspension, alarm/ immobiliser, blown air heating, Status tv aerial/booster, Omnistor 5000 awning, Omnibike Plus 2 bike rack. Other extras. Non-smokers. Vgc; garage serviced. **£19,500**. Phone Mike Bull 0797 497 2225 (Herefordshire)*.

*Note: Advertisements followed by a * means the advertiser has made a contribution to Club Funds. To each we say, 'Thanks for the donation' - Ed.*

Sitting on the Step



Seigfried's line

Down in Brittany last summer, we pulled into one of those sites with a pernickety owner. Day we arrived I dare say she wasn't at her best, for her neck was in one of those surgical collars, making her turn her whole body to look at you. Mind you, she was all right with me all time we were there. After I'd booked in, she pointed out pitch on plan on wall and other places too. I took in toilets and swimming pool, but she must have decided I looked a bit gormless. Coming from behind counter, she took hold of my sleeve and marched me off down site, leaving my Martha and van behind.

Site were on two levels, with a road winding down through tall shrubs to bottom bit where she wanted us. On t'way she pointed out t'toilet block then went on past a clearing with lines and props for drying clothes. As we got towards end of road and you could see pitches, she stopped in her tracks, shouted 'Zut alors!' or some such and stomped off at a rate of knots to a big German trailer van opposite our pitch and hammered on the door. I stayed where I were. No-one answered. Then penny dropped - there weren't a car on the pitch, so owners must've gone off. By that time she was steaming and called me over.

'Interdit! Verbotten! Not allowed!' she shouted, and pointed to lines of washing hanging between the van's grab handles and a tree. She undid one end, then pointed to the tree. The lines were tied too high for her, so she made me undo them. When I passed them down she just dragged the whole heap across ground and let them drop on van step.

I can tell you, Martha were right upset when I told her what'd happened - she takes her washing to heart - and neither of us wanted to be about when neighbours come back. As it happened, I'd just started broiling bangers on barbecue when they turned up and I'd nowhere to get out of t'road, though Martha shot inside our van smartish. What a carry on. Madam were out of car first and shouted when she saw her lovely laundry. Husband got out then - a reet big, bull-necked feller. He let out roar and steamed off up road to office. Ten minutes later he were back with owner, between a pair of strapping French lads, mopping bleeding nose. They packed up and left with some sharp words - and you didn't have to know German to understand, either. We've not been back.

'Enoch'

Contents

Rel...a...x	2	No longer driving	12	Cool, clear water	16
Chairman's chat	3	Reluctant leavers	12	Wizard wheezes	17
'One stop shop' coming	4	Sad Symbol	13	Repairs recommendation	17
Against ACCEO	5	Symphony storage	13	Wanted	18
It's a gas - Mark 2	7	News from the frozen West	14	For sale	18
Whoompers & wooshers	9	Corroded brake discs	14	Seigfried's line	19
Scandinavian gas	10	Sloping off in Brittany	15		
Christmas comp. winner	11	Handbooks wanted	16		

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