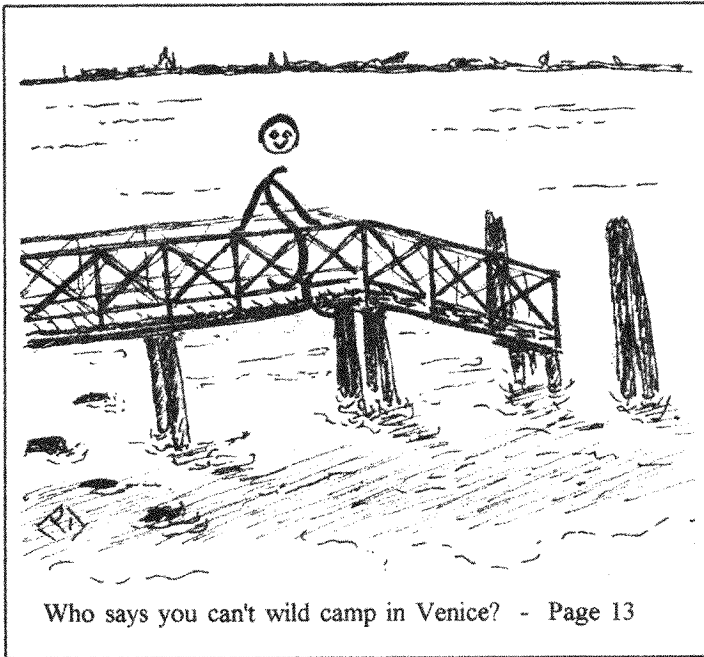




AUTO-SLEEPER  
OWNERS' CLUB

# Newsletter



Who says you can't wild camp in Venice? - Page 13

**No. 157**

**October 2001**

## **We can help**

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE seems to be dying out now, with fewer cases being reported and for that we will all be grateful. Unfortunately its effects will continue to be felt for a long time to come, and not only by the farming industry.

The damage done to businesses that depend on visitors and tourists for their very survival is just beginning to be brought home to us all. Much that we have always taken for granted about our countryside and pleasant places is now threatened by the financial fact that without money coming in, facilities will be lost to those of us who can only visit rural areas, not live in them. Not only are small farms with certificated locations likely to be sold up and the CLs lost, but commercial caravan sites will also go because the expected numbers of campers on which they'd based their budgets didn't arrive. Shops and restaurants in towns and villages, too, will close, especially in places where tourism is the lifeblood of the economy. Wayside pubs, petrol stations and countless small craft businesses are also likely to be victims.

Faced with such a great problem it may seem that there is little any of us can do to help prevent the loss of countryside facilities we have enjoyed, sometimes for many years, and that may be true. But we can all do something. If we usually lay our vans up for the winter around this time of year, we can put off doing it until we've made at least one more visit to a favourite area. If we use our vehicles all through the year, we can fit in an extra weekend away.

Most of us will not have to travel very far to an area hit by foot and mouth disease, where our visits will do the most good. Every pound we spend will help a bit by feeding a little funding into the economy of that place. Perhaps just as importantly, the fact that we have made the journey will help encourage people who are going through bleak times to recognise that there is still a future for them.

Without local people providing facilities for us, we would not be able to visit the many places of beauty and interest spread throughout our countryside. We need them and they need our support - now.

*Ian Day*

**See both sides**



IF YOU TAKE a strip of paper, twist it once and glue the ends together, you will find you have made an object which appears to have only one side!

Most things have at least two sides - including questions, discussions, opinions. Reading the letters in September's *ASOC Newsletter*, it is clear that there were two sharply different views of the Club and Company rally this year.

As always, Barbara and I found the rally a most a enjoyable weekend. Members were really friendly and most smiled or spoke as we met them on the field or in one of the halls. The entertainment was varied, with something for everyone. I could not fault the traders, nor the Company shop where there seemed to be an enormous range of spare parts and fittings. Perhaps there were fewer off-cuts of timber and plywood than in past years - although that must be a good thing, meaning that more economical use is being made of raw materials.

I feel that members sometimes forget that this rally, like all Club activities, depends on the willing work of volunteers. Without the volunteers there would be no Committee, no Sub-committees and no rallies.

For some of the volunteers, their work is done during a few hours once a year. For others it is a continuous task. As soon as one of our two main rallies is over, planning for the next (and even the one after that) begins - it has probably in fact begun even earlier.

If you have a complaint, you are, of course, right to voice it. But bear in mind that there is another side which you have not yet seen, and make your comments constructive.

**Ray Whiley**

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I think that I shall never see  
A billboard lovely as a tree.  
Indeed, unless the billboards fall,  
I'll never see a tree at all.

- Ogden Nash

*From the Membership Secretary*

### **Nearly that time again**

PLEASE DON'T have harsh thoughts of your Membership Secretary, but your renewal of membership is almost due. This year, with the approval of the Committee, renewals will be accepted from 1 November. The membership year remains the same - 1 January to 31 December. Renewal forms will be sent out a month earlier and will reach you with November's Newsletter.

With the weight of Post Office mail starting to arrive at the beginning of December it would help if I could receive your renewals that little bit earlier. This will also help those members taking holidays away from home or abroad as they will have their new membership cards before Christmas.

*Norma Caley*

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*From the Chairman, Club and Company Rally Sub-committee*

### **Choosing a charity**

EACH YEAR the Club supports a lesser-known national charity at the Club and Company rally. Charities are nominated by members and the nominations passed on to the Committee and Sub-committee, who decide which will be supported.

If you or your close family have benefited from such a charity and wish to nominate it for consideration, please send details to me at 18, Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants PO16 7UF by the end of November. I pass on all submissions. The names of nominators remain anonymous.

So that each Committee member can consider nominations in private, I would appreciate 14 copies of all the charity leaflets. I will make copies of your covering letter. Because it is expected that a representative of the successful charity would be able to attend the rally to set up a stand and to receive the cheque on the Sunday of the rally, confirmation is needed from nominators that that is acceptable to the charity.

*Baz Wellard*

## Last words on Club and Company rally

ON LEAVING the Club and Company rally this year we said that we really must write to say how much we had enjoyed the weekend. Being 60-somethings, the Tony Strudwick Band was just perfect and, hopefully, we will see them again in the future.

We agree with the previous correspondents who expressed the view that it is not necessary to strive for improvements each year. Surely most members come for the camping, to exchange ideas and tips with like-minded people, perhaps discuss a problem or two, and generally enjoy the ambience.

Whilst we appreciate that it is an Editor's job to strike a fair balance in publishing 'for' and 'against' views and comments, we would suggest that unless the 'whingers' have something really constructive to say, the silent majority would probably prefer it if they kept quiet.

*Lionel and Irene LeVie*



IN REPLY to Frank Briggs' letter in the September issue of the Newsletter. We have only been members for two years and have been accepted and made a lifetime's worth of friends.

As for the rally, it's a gathering of like-minded people. The entertainment is a bonus and the trade stalls sufficient. Many thanks to the Committee and our friends of Auto-Sleepers for a fun weekend.

*Rhona and Lewis Bull*



WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY 'Thank you' to Baz and all his helpers, and to Auto-Sleepers and all their workers. As usual the Quiz and entertainment was first class.

This was John's first rally this year, and it was very enjoyable.

*John and Barbara Cox*

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*Definition:* Corner steady - a prop-er wind-up

## Welcome to Willersey

AUTO-SLEEPERS are holding an Open Weekend at their factory at Willersey, near Broadway, Worcestershire, on the weekend of Saturday and Sunday, 13 and 14 October. All Club members are invited to call in.

The weekend will give members curious to see the place where our vehicles have been developed and put together an opportunity to explore the factory as well as the new state-of-the-art Service Centre facility.

We are assured of a warm welcome, but if you intend making a weekend of it, please bear in mind that you will need to book yourself into a site because there are no camping facilities at the factory.

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## Flagging results

UNFORTUNATELY, CIRCUMSTANCES have conspired together to prevent us from being able to announce the results of the Flags Competition which appeared in the July issue of *ASOC Newsletter*. We are sorry about this, but the winner's name and the answers will appear next month.

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## No rally fee discrimination

SINCE BARBARA AND I were the Marshals of the rally referred to by Harold Cartwright (August issue), I felt I should perhaps explain how we decided what rally fees to charge.

This was our second rally this year as Marshals and in each case we carefully calculated costs before advertising the rally, and tried to set fees which were fair to all.

There is a certain cost for each motorhome attending a rally, irrespective of how many people use it. The overheads include the costs of a rally plaque, the list of members attending, a programme and perhaps a competition. The cost of prizes must be included, and at our rallies these are given not to an individual but to a van.

Our 'AGM Follow-on' rally was for three nights. In addition to a plaque, we provided a programme including very detailed information about local facilities, a list of ralliers and a competition. We asked for £1.80 singles and £2.30 couples to cover the cost of those and prizes for the competition and a lucky programme number, plus the VAT we have to pay Customs and Excise, through the Treasurer. This left 50 pence per adult to cover the cost of refreshments. For this we provided an evening 'mardle' (Norfolk-speak for a chinwag) with tea or coffee - including milk and sugar - and biscuits on the three evenings (buns on one evening, chocolate Penguins on another), with similar refreshments when the coach party returned from a day in Norwich. Members would have paid at least twice the 50 pence in Norwich for just one cup of coffee!

Our June rally at North Runcton (referred to by Harold) was for five nights. Again we had a 'mardle' with the usual refreshments each evening, and asked 60 pence each. Overheads for plaque, printing and prizes came to a similar sum as before.

We do not take any expenses from the rally fee, and pay our own rally fee like everyone else at the rally, together with any extra night needed for setting-up. If we make a profit, it goes to the Club. If we make a loss, that is our fault for not budgeting carefully enough. Any income received from selling raffle tickets, we use to buy more raffle tickets or contribute any surplus to Club funds. Incidentally, thanks to the generosity of members, at North Runcton we had twice as many raffle prizes as vans!

I'd ask Harold to accept that there is no discrimination against single members, as I am sure all marshals set their rally fees to ensure that all pay their fair share. Finally, may I invite Harold to come to our next Norfolk rally (watch the Rally Supplement) to see for himself whether he gets value for money?

**Ray Whiley**

*Thanks, Ray, for this clear account of how rally fees are calculated. Some misunderstand how it is done and also have the false impression that marshals are somehow 'paid' to run rallies - It ain't so - Ed.*

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'We do not regard Englishmen as foreigners. We look on them as rather mad Norwegians.' - Halvard Lange (a Norwegian).

## Becoming a Company?

I HAVE just read through the August issue of ASOC Newsletter for the second time this month - it's so interesting to read them over again.

The article on 'Becoming a Company?' interested me when it originally appeared and upon re-reading it this time I am of my original thought - that it is farseeing and wise to become a Company Limited by Guarantee.

'Farseeing' in that even advertisements on television are designed to encourage us to claim for damages. 'Wise' in that you realise this modern trend and are actively prepared to protect the Club and, more importantly, its members' interests.

I feel proud to be a member of such a professional Club.

**Jack Bamber**

*This is one of a number of letters our Chairman, Ray Whiley, has received. After this issue went to press the Committee was to have CLG status explained to them by a solicitor. Report next month - Ed.*

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## Topaz clutch trouble

I HAVE A 1994 VW Topaz with which I am very pleased, but I have one problem that is causing me stress. When I've done a long stretch on a motorway without needing to change gear, I find it almost impossible to do so. It's as if I haven't depressed the clutch enough. Pumping the clutch sometimes helps, but not always. I've had the gearbox oil checked and the hydraulic fluid changed and, although most of the time the gear-change is as sweet as a dream, it still occasionally causes me to have to struggle, usually at a roundabout with traffic right up behind me.

Has anyone had the same trouble? If they have, perhaps they could let me know how it can be cured. I'm sure some kind member will come up with the answer as most queries put in the Newsletter seem to be.

**Alan Butler**

*We've passed Alan's question on to Auto-Sleepers, but if you have an answer, he can be contacted at [alan@morvich.freesev.co.uk](mailto:alan@morvich.freesev.co.uk) - Ed.*

## **Paint advice wanted**

WHO CAN HELP? I've been trying to get the right colour code numbers for my 1993 VW Clubman T4. I need to know them for the white and for the gray trim around the base. No-one seems to know. I'm told the white is made by VW and the gray by Rover - it's all very confusing. I asked Auto-Sleepers and they gave me the codes, but I can't find them in the shops. Can any members with the same van and who've managed to solve the problem, let me know the answers, please?

I'd also like to know whether the shower head with a press button on the hand grip, fitted in the new Clubman, can be retro-fitted to my van.

My phone number and e-mail address are 07947 343571,  
roger.mason2@btinternet.com

*Roger Mason*

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## **Carver question**

REGARDING ALAN DOGGETT'S letter in August's ASOC Newsletter, the heater in our four year-old Symphony also stopped working. It had to be returned to Truma and cost us £155, including dismantling and re-installing. The workman told us that in his experience those heaters are not reliable and that in motorhomes they are often installed in too small a space. In our Symphony he advised leaving off the wooden end plate as it was covering the cooling fins, thus creating more air space. He also advised running the heater once a month if it was not otherwise used.

*Jean Fowl*

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## **Rally thanks**

WE ATTENDED the Lichfield rally. This was our first and we would like to say how much we enjoyed it. The weather and location were perfect and the other ralliers made us feel really welcome. A special thanks to Trish and her gang of helpers for all their hard work and for making the weekend so special. We've since booked up for two more rallies.

*Joan and Dennis Gripton*

## Awning leak

I ALWAYS GLANCE WITH FEAR at the letter headings and comments in *ASOC Newsletter* just in case my motorhome is heading for any of the problems related by members.

I've had a Fiamma awning fitted and had never heard of them having any problems until I turned to page 9 of the July issue. I had another fright when I read in the July *MMM* magazine a reader's letter describing water ingress to the interior of a motorhome when a Fiamma awning had been fitted to an Executive.

It appears that the GRP custom-made A-S fittings for the Fiamma brackets fill with water even though they have been sealed with mastic. The problem occurs when the water level reaches the fixing bolts and runs along them into the motorhome. I feel members should be aware that this could happen and look for damp areas inside. If only the day would come when accessories can be fitted without causing long-term damage or problems.

*Eric Jones*

*Wilf and Ann Cooper's piece in the July issue described a way of closing the gap between an awning and the van side. It's only a problem if you use your awning for anything other than a sunshade. Water will not run along fixing bolts if they have been properly bedded in mastic - Ed.*

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### **Handy Hints**

#### **Put aside childish things**

A child's safety catch on the wardrobe door can stop it springing open when you go over potholes

A pram-handle hook, shaped like a 'W' is useful for hanging a rubbish bag from the grab-handle at the side of the door. In hot weather these hooks can also suspend fruit and vegetables from the awning, using the type of plastic bags oranges come in. You can also use these hooks to peg small items to the ladder, out of sight.

Nappy pins are invaluable for filing credit card receipts.

*Margaret Thornton*



## **OCTOBER 2001** **Rally Supplement**



*Because of the Foot & Mouth outbreak please check with the relevant marshals, who will be following DEFRA guidelines, as to whether a rally is taking place. If you are attending a rally and the site becomes an infected area then you may find that your van may be placed in quarantine for a period of time.*

If you are planning to run a rally in 2002 then please let me know before the end of November. This will mean that your rally will be in the provisional rally list that is circulated with the January Newsletter.

NEW Rally. 5<sup>th</sup>. - 7<sup>th</sup>. October. (2 nights) Bass Museum of Brewing, Burton on Trent, Staffs.  
Details later in supplement.

NOTE Change of dates. Somerset Carnival now 9<sup>th</sup>. - 13<sup>th</sup>. November ( 4 nights).

31<sup>st</sup>. December - 2<sup>nd</sup>. January New Year Rally. Hidden Valley, North Devon. If you are interested then please contact Sandra & Bernie Wisely at 2 Mount Pleasant, Bishops Itchington, Southam, Warwickshire. CV47 2QE. Tel. No. 01926 614 194

**2<sup>nd</sup>. - 4<sup>th</sup>.October ( 3 nights ). Hartsholme Country Park,  
Skellingthorpe Rd.,Lincoln.**

Emergency Tel.No. 077 68 16 45 22.(Marshal's mobile).

Rally Marshals: Janet Sutterby & Eileen Kellard.

Site Fees:£9.60 per night including electricity & VAT.Payable to the site warden on arrival.Rally Fee:£2.00 incl.VAT. payable with booking slip to Janet Sutterby,3 Bilsby Road, Alford,Lincs.LN13 9EW. Tel.No. 01507 46 24 49.

Cheques payable to Janet Sutterby.

**Attractions:**Small site with toilets & showers.Part of an extensive park and nature reserve with lakes and footpaths.Visitors Centre and Cafeteria.Local shops.Good bus service to city centre.A room is available for social gatherings in the evening.

**Directions:**Take the A46 Lincoln by-pass.Turn towards the city centre on the B1378.Watch for the Country Park sign on the **right** ( easily missed!).Keep **left** inside gates. Arrival time - 12 noon on the first day. Numbers limited.

**5<sup>th</sup>. - 7<sup>th</sup>.October ( 2 nights). Bass Museum,Burton on  
Trent,Staffs.**

Rally Marshals:Tricia & Ted Pratt ( Tel.No. 01283 538818) assisted by Barbara & John Cox ( Tel.No. 01262 671762) & Greta & Eric Dunn.

Site Fee:£7.00 per night,includes VAT & entrance fee to Bass Museum during opening hours.. Rally Fee:£2.35 (incl.VAT). Cheques payable to P.M.Pratt.

Booking slips to P.M.Pratt, 3 Grafton Road,Stapenhill,Burton on Trent,Staffs,DE15 9DN. Tel.No.. 01283 538818.

Arrival time Friday 12 NOON NOT BEFORE.

All hardstandings,toilets available 24 hours.

**Attractions:** Walking distance to Burton Town Centre, Leisure Complex, Bass Museum entrance fee included in site fee.

Saturday evening: Meal in Bass restaurant with a choice of meals from Bar Snacks to full meals. Please state on booking slip if interested.

**NO DOGS.** *Limit of 30 vans.*

**Directions:** Bass Museum is signposted around Burton on **brown** visitor signs, it is on the A511. **DO NOT ENTER BY MAIN ENTRANCE** Please turn the corner into GUILD Street and use the Trade Entrance. Take care this is a Car Park Exit. Turn immediately **Right** into Car Park.

For further details of directions or confirmation of availability of places please send a SAE to P.M. Pratt with your rally slip.

\*\*\*\*\* **NOTE Change of dates** \*\*\*\*\*

**16<sup>th</sup>. - 19<sup>th</sup>. October. ( 3 nights ). Park Cliffe Camping & Caravanning Estate, Windemere Cumbria.,**

Site Tel.No. 015395 31344.

Rally Marshals: Jill & James Bertlin & Sue & Peter Coward.

Site Fee: £8.00 per night (incl. VAT). Electricity, if required, £3.00 per night. Rally Fee: £2.35 (incl. VAT).

Booking slips & cheques payable to Mrs. J. Bertlin, The Rockeries, Lindale, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria. LA11 6LQ

Tel.No. 015395 34500 (**N.B. We will not be contactable between 12<sup>th</sup>. Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>. Oct.**).

**Attractions:** Situated in 25 secluded acres of fell land. Ideal location for walking, golfing & sightseeing or just being lazy! There is a fully equipped launderette, heated ladies & gents shower/toilet block, electricity to all pitches. Squirrel's is a small licensed restaurant & bar with a take-away service and well stocked licensed mini market.

On Thursday night a special meal will be arranged at "Squirrel's".

**Directions:** Leave the M6 at Junct. 36, follow A590 to Newby Bridge, then turn **right** at roundabout on to A592. After 3.3 miles turn **right** at signpost for site. Entrance to site is 1/3 mile on right. *Warning: Approach from Bowness-on-Windemere is not recommended as the turn left to Park Cliffe is difficult to negotiate on busy main road.*

**25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> October. ( 3 nights ), Eastham Hall C.P., Lytham, Lancs.**

Site Tel.No. 01253 737 907. (Emergency only).

Rally Marshals: Kath & Norman Benyon, Barbara & Vic Kaye.

Site Fee: £10 per night. (Incl. VAT). Includes electricity and use of centrally heated hall.

Rally Fee: £1.50 per van + 75p per person. (Incl. VAT).

Booking slips to Mrs. B. Kaye, 14 Firthwood Rd., Coal Aston, Dronfield. S18 3BW.

Cheques payable to: B & V. Kaye. Tel.No. 01246 412 679.

**Attractions:** All the fun of the sea-side at Lytham, St Annes, Fairhaven & Blackpool. **Thursday.** Coffee Evening. **Friday.** A coach to Todds Motor Caravans for a social evening including refreshments. Large accessory shop. Cost between £2.00 - £3.00, per person for coach. DO NOT send money for coach. **Saturday.** Fish & Chip Supper in the Hall. We also exchange Christmas cards with friends (saves postage). Bring any spare camping equipment for a Bargain Table. Raffle Draw & Quiz. Please indicate on Rally slip if you wish to go on the coach trip also if you want Fish & Chips. **Sunday.** Coffee & biscuits - rally ends.

**Directions:** A 584 to Lytham. On entering Lytham at first mini roundabout turn **right** over railway bridge to next roundabout. Turn **right** s.p. Kirkham. Site on **right** after ½ mile.

\*\*\*\*\* NOTE Change of dates \*\*\*\*\*

9<sup>th</sup>. - 13<sup>th</sup> November. ( 4 nights). Sedgemoor Carnival  
Weekend, Burnham on Sea Holiday Village,  
Somerset.

Rally marshals: Linda & Brian Ellis & Sheila & Ivor Barnett.

Site Fee: £31.00 (incl. VAT) for 4 nights. To be paid by mid October please.

This amount includes electricity & Euro (hardstanding) pitches plus toilet block facility.

Rally Fee: £2.35 (incl. VAT).

Booking slips and cheques to: Brian Ellis, 52 Golf Links Road, Burnham on Sea, Somerset. TA8 2PP. Tel. No. 01278 784 524.

Sorry NO PETS ALLOWED. (We tried but the site is bound by a contract clause).

**Attractions:** Site as last year, Burnham on Sea Holiday Village is on the sea front and about 5 minutes walk from the town centre, 2 ½ miles from M5 junct. 22.

Firework Display Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>. on Burnham sea front.

Carnival Monday 12<sup>th</sup>. in Burnham Town Centre.

**Directions:** Junct. 22 M5, Burnham on Sea exit. To the large (Edithmead) island, turn **left** and follow signs for Burnham Holiday Village, (Taunton A38) approx 1 mile, straight over island (A38). Over railway bridge then turn second **right** signposted Burnham Holiday Village. To mini island by petrol station, turn **left** towards Burnham town centre and holiday village.

**RALLY LIMITED TO 35 VANS.**

*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](mailto:ncr@nasuwt.net)*

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

**E & O E**

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!**

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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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-----

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!**

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 14 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:

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.  
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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 14 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,IF POSSIBLE PLEASE**

## Well-met in Krakow

*Extracts from the diary Tim Pritchard kept of a trip to Eastern Europe.*

WE ARRIVED IN KRAKOW by midday and drove out the other side to the suburb of Wileska where my old friends live. They were away.

Back in Krakow we found an excellent little camp site. I told Margaret to dress up and we would find a nice restaurant. The campsites everywhere are the safest places to leave the camper as they have gates or barriers to keep out the unwanted.

Another city, another transport system to learn. We found the bus stop and correct bus with difficulty. As we approached the centre, Margaret inquired where to alight. A young man who spoke excellent English said he was going to the Old Town and would take us. You have to be on your guard, but when we suggested a drink and he offered to pay, he was obviously genuine.

We spent the evening with him. He showed us around and we learnt he worked in a bank. It was dark by the time we arrived at seven o'clock and the Old Town and huge square were magical. On the hour a trumpeter played the sombre *hajnal* melody from the tower of St Mary's Church. Kris, our friend, explained that the trumpeter played from the eight windows of the church and each day at midday it is transmitted on local radio. The legend is that the trumpeter played during the Tartar invasions to warn of attack. He was struck in the throat by an arrow and therefore the tune played ever since stops abruptly at that point.

It was a lovely evening. We learnt a lot and Kris was delighted to practice his English, but we laughed when we got back home - we'd been dressed for dinner, but Kris recommended a sausage and roll at a barbecue in the square and a pint of beer, which cost under £4 for the three of us.

The gothic St Mary's Church was fantastic - the most beautiful we have ever been in. The decoration, ceiling and windows are wonderful. The majestic high altar is the biggest in Europe and took twelve years to carve. It is incredible.

Krakow is lovely. It mainly escaped war damage, so all the old buildings and parks and flowers create a lovely atmosphere. Margaret was

enraptured by it - so was I.

**Tim Pritchard**

*If members would like a copy of the full diary of this trip, or of Tim and Margaret's 1982 journey to Russia, copies are available for the cost of postage. Phone them on 01934 852568 - Ed.*

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## **Have wheels - will travel**

Motor caravans are magical: they can transform a holiday into an *adventure*. In them you can reach places you never knew existed, discover medieval villages, ancient churches, hidden valleys and tranquil lakes, just by allowing the journey to become the holiday. The secret is to start out each day with just a general idea of direction, a good map and a determination to avoid motorways wherever possible.

Our first camping van was a DIY effort on a Workabus. We put in a transverse seat/bed for us and the six-year-old, folded down the pram handle and lifted baby in through the back doors. A frame tent was more suitable for growing boys - until we found ourselves putting the tent up and down fourteen times during a three week holiday to Spain.

Back in a motorcaravan, there was a glorious holiday when we saw mock-medieval jousting in Bruges, the site of the Battle of Waterloo, the Ardennes and Luxembourg. On we went to Strasbourg, Freiburg, the Rhine falls, Lake Constance and Liechtenstein (for postage stamps!). Our journey took us to Klosters, St Moritz, the Italian lakes, Venice, the Dolomites, Salzburg and Oberammergau.

When we retired twelve years ago, we took off for five months' travelling in Turkey and Greece. It was most memorable with the extra bonus of a three-week visit from our youngest son, the house and garden minder.

There are endless holiday themes you can follow - in the steps of Tess of the D'Urbevilles, the Civil War, the *bastide* villages of France, the pilgrim road to Compostells, even the Tour de France. But if you choose adventure holidays, you must be prepared for the 'X' factor - the unexpected surprises or setbacks which can give you a good laugh when you recall them.

We have enjoyed a lifetime of motorcaravanning and have had seven camping vans, including our present Clubman. To those whose main concern is whether a shower is necessary in an Auto-Sleeper, we recommend our Geriatrics' Outward Bound Tour of the Hebrides (in a Trident).

***Eric and Margaret Thornton***

*Now there's a couple who've really 'got a life' - Ed.*

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## **Wat-er to-do**

*CLINTON GRANT started something when he asked whether shower units should be optional in motorhomes. Here are extracts from three more letters from a large post-bag, including one reviving the wild-camping debate and two on drinking water supplies - Ed.*

LAST SUMMER my wife and I spent eleven weeks touring Italy in our Talisman GL. In that time we each had a wonderfully refreshing shower in the vehicle almost every evening. During the tour we used camp sites on five nights, mainly because of my wife's wish to use campsite washing machines. On one of those nights she came back from the shower rooms and insisted on having her shower in the van. You can guess why - the facilities were in a disgusting state and unfit for use.

I can guess what a lot of those who read this will be thinking: 'Wild campers. Ugh!' We prefer to use the facilities that Auto-Sleepers built into our motorhome. They made it to be self-contained for extended periods and we don't need campsite facilities. We always get a level area to park on, usually with a wonderful view, and always have a peaceful night's sleep - you don't often get those on campsites.

I accept there are times when a campsite is necessary and more convenient, for example in Assisi or Venice. Even so, we spent four nights in Venice, the last two *not* on a campsite. While I am neither poor nor mean, I do object to having to pay for things I don't want or need. Our motorhome provides us with all the facilities we need. We eat and drink well, and always stay clean. Without our wonderful shower and toilet we would have to start using campsites on a regular basis.

We sterilise our onboard water tank regularly, but never use it as a

source of drinking water. For that we have a five gallon water container filled from a tap where we think the water is good, otherwise we buy bottled water in five litre containers.

*Tom Claxton*



WE PREFER showering in the warmth of the van when the weather is colder, rainier, or otherwise less pleasant. Also the warmth of the water in the showers at many campsites in the UK leaves much to be desired. On the few occasions when we venture into the sea in this country it's pleasant, and sometimes necessary, to return to the van for a hot shower.

One other reason we use the shower is that it is the easiest way to clean the shower/toilet compartment, especially on sandy forest sites.

However there is one improvement we think Auto-Sleepers could make. Why ever do they use water-absorbent curtains like the one in our Symphony, which dips into the tray and takes a day or two to dry out afterwards? In our previous Holdsworth van there was a nylon curtain which served the same purpose but dried out overnight. We are now trying to find a similar artificial-fabric curtain of the right size. Does anyone know where we can get one?

*Stuart and Eileen Coverley*



WE'RE SURE there's no easy answer to this, nor a correct one - one man's meat, etc....

We have a Symbol complete with shower and toilet compartment, having previously owned a Harmony, then a larger (non-A-S) coachbuilt, both of which were similarly equipped. Whilst it is perhaps nice to have the shower - at least, the compartment - we don't find it practical to use the facility for a number of reasons. Although we did use it on occasions in the coachbuilt where there was rather more room to swing the proverbial cat, the effort required afterwards to ensure that all water and (more importantly) condensation were removed pretty well outweighed the value. We almost always stay on sites with such facilities which, at the end of the day, we are already paying for. The main drawback was surely the need to carry, in whatever manner, the fresh water, then

dispose of it later as waste water. What might have been more useful, especially in the heat of the Continent, would have been the ability to use the shower externally. Regrettably the piping and tap position, coupled with the lack of an opening window in the Symbol precluded that.

We do find the compartment is more than adequate for the very essential cassette loo and, without using the shower, doubles up as very useful extra storage space, including hanging for longer clothes, coats, etc. - something rather lacking in a van conversion.

As for drinking water, most of the time in the UK at least, we have used tank water, often treated with purification tablets. Frequently there was a residual unpleasant taste. Abroad we've used bottled water. This year we bought a water filter jug. Although we usually fill it directly from site taps, if necessary it can be filled with tank water and we have found this extremely effective. The taste produced *via* the filter has been pleasantly refreshing and we will now be using it at all times for drinking water in the van. Just back from nearly six weeks in France we've found a further benefit - where previously even with bottled water the kettle furred up regularly, we've not had to descale it once in all those weeks.

*Keith and Bev Taylor*

*Most filter jugs sweeten the water, but make no claims to deal with harmful bacteria - Ed.*

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## Thanks for the help

I'D LIKE TO LET YOU KNOW of the amazing response in answer to my question about a swivel seat for my Talisman (August issue). I'd not even received my copy when I had a phone call from our Membership Secretary, Norma Caley, telling me she'd had a call which would be of interest to me. I rang the name and number she passed on. A couple of days later we met, a deal was done and the swivel duly purchased. I was able to install it in the Talisman the following week in time for our holiday in Devon, and have to report that it is every bit as good as I had hoped.

Thanks very much, ASOC!

*Alan Schofield*

*One of many successful appeals for help and advice appearing in ASOC Newsletter. Don't be afraid to ask - the chances are one or other of our members can help - Ed.*

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## **Best of both worlds**

I READ ASOC *Newsletter* with interest and although I may not be the type to visit rallies and the like, I feel in touch with Club activities. May I give a few reasons for once again being a motor caravanner?

From 1971 to 1985, a 1970 Richard Holdsworth conversion Transit supplied my family's holiday needs, but a grown-up family and vehicle ageing saw the end of such expeditions.

Around 1985, and by chance, my wife and I stumbled into canal boating, loved it, and have built up to a new 40 ft narrow boat, now four years old. It still remains our first love. However it isn't possible to sail to Scotland, the Lakes, Cornwall, etc. Having both fully retired at the turn of the year, we decided a motorhome would be the ideal means of carrying us and the dog to our chosen places. Canal boating can be as quiet as you wish. With other boating friends falling by the wayside over the years, and with a liking for open spaces, we find ourselves lone sailors most of the time. Thus we are now the type of people who would travel by car to a rally, be it motorhome or boat, rather than be in the middle of so much activity. But having said that, I do look at the rally listings on a regular basis - so you never know.

How did we choose our vehicle? I wanted a van able to travel and park anywhere that a car could and not be troubled by car park barriers. In addition, engine size and economy were very much a consideration. The VW Trooper fitted the bill ideally, and I have returned an unbelievable 39 mpg since this year's holidaying started. My luck was in when I found a three months-old 'X' reg. with 400 miles on the clock. On site an awning stores all non-essential baggage so that we are able to tour locally in a lightly-laden mode.

***Howard Marshall***

*As part of his letter, Howard sent details of Carver heater problems he has had. They've gone to Auto-Sleepers for attention - Ed.*

## Heavenly Devil's Bridge

WE WOULD LIKE to record our thanks to the rally marshals, Margo and Peter Lumb, and Gill and Bill Hopkins for a brilliantly organised rally at Devil's Bridge. As well as giving details of the local attractions at Devil's Bridge and the Vale of Rheidol steam railway to Aberystwyth, the marshals provided much optional entertainment, including a treasure hunt, a boules competition, a number of quizzes and an *al fresco* communal supper. There was no need to leave the site, although many ralliers managed to do everything, including seeing the local attractions. It was a thoroughly enjoyable rally, made more so by the great bunch of ralliers attending.

The only downside was the attack of midges dogging us in the evening. Although we suppose we have to expect them at this time of year, these seemed particularly nasty. New bites suggest that we've brought some home with us, despite using insect repellent - of which Dave has about 100 varieties.

*Pat and David Mayne*

*Jim Andrews' hint in the September issue might help - Ed.*

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## Sites seen

**'Les Genets d'Or', Bannalec.** For anyone visiting Brittany looking for peace and quiet on an orchard site, may we recommend this site which is halfway between Quimperlé and Concarneau, and about 25 minutes' drive from some lovely beaches.

There are about 50 large pitches, sheltered by laurel hedges, spotless facilities, free hot showers and a very warm welcome from British owners, Judy and Alan Thomas. We booked in for two nights and stayed seven - definitely one of the best sites we've come across in many years. Site fees in August were FF57, plus FF15 for electricity, with discounts available at other times.

Anyone wanting more details could phone us on 01903 782 810, or the site direct on 0033 0298 39 54 35.

*Pam and Derek Hockley*



## For sale

**RENAULT ROMERO 2000 2-BERTH**, high Top. 'N' reg., 42,000 miles, PAS, VanBitz Foxguard alarm/immobiliser, Omnistar awning, Service record. No pets/smokers or children. Immaculate condition. One lady owner/driver. **£11,000**. Phone Marjorie Hulme 0121 705 6060 (W. Midlands).  
*[This appeared last month, but without the price. Sorry, Marjorie - Ed]*

**DUETTO 2.5 DIESEL 2+2 BERTH**. 'N' reg., May 1996. 42,500 miles. Omnistor 5000 awning and brand new Harrison drive-away awning erected once only. New front brakes and discs, new ball joints, new exhaust, new tyres in May 2001. Habitation checked May 2001. MoT to July 2002. Service record. Excellent condition. No smokers or pets. **£19,500**. Phone Noel Crook 01426 814703 (Beds.).

**SYMBOL 2.5TDI**, 'W' reg., Mar. 2000, 6,000 miles. Extras incl. Omnistor awning, step, 3-spd roof fan, solar panel, alarm, 2 swivel cab seats, 2 leisure batteries, Status aerial, CD player, tow bar. Non-smokers, no pets/children. Current warranties. Too many extras to list. Also matching trailer on Al-Ko chassis incl. storage box and m/cycle rack negotiable. Excellent condition: **£26,950** ono. Phone Mike McLaughlin 01425 619961 or mobile 07790 588684.\*

**SHERBOURNE 2-BERTH** 'W' reg., 2000, 6,500 miles. Alarm, extractor fan, Omnimax awning, rear forward seat with safety belt. Excellent condition. **£33,000** ono. Phone Andy Collin 018907 50308 (Berwickshire) or mobile 0771 4258571.\*

**EXCELSIOR 2.5 TURBO DIESEL**, 'R' reg., Aug. 1977, 10,750 miles. FSH. New MoT, Waxoyl treated, Fiamma canopy and bike rack, Status booster TV aerial, swivel passenger seat, Silver Screen. Excellent cond. throughout. **£24,500** ono. Phone Haydn Makin 0192 5725989 (Ches.)\*

**JIVI SYSTEM 2000 AWNING**. 3.5 x 3.5 mtr complete with motorhome or caravan joining extension and room tidy. Used once. Cost £1,200, will accept **£650** ono. Sale due to ill health. Can deliver Staffs. area. Phone Harold Thomas 01782 660633 or 0771 1843432 (Staffs.)\*

**YAMAHA ELECTRIC-ASSISTED 4-SPEED PEDAL CYCLES**. Top of range, 3 months old. Gents cost £900, accept **£500** ono; Ladies cost

£800, accept **£400** ono. Sale due to ill health. Can deliver Staffs. area. Phone Harold Thomas 01782 660633 or 0771 1843432 (Staffs.)\*

**DUETTO 2.5D.** 'N' reg., 1996, 22,000 miles. Centre locking, electric windows, alloys, all the usual A-S goodies, plus Vanbitz alarm/immobiliser, Fiamma backbox. Taxed/MoT July 2002. VGC. **£19,000** ono. Phone Yvonne Rowlands 01454 885826 (Bristol).\*

**RAVENNA 2.4 TD,** 'Y' reg., 2001. Only 2,000 miles. 2-way 3-speed roof extractor. Blown air, Status aerial, reversing sensor, Fiamma Zip 50 + Safari awning, alarm/immobiliser, satellite navigation system, radio/CD. Silver Screen. **£32,000** ono. Genuine reason for sale. Phone Pat or Shirley Ashdown 01323 740320.\*

**FIAMMA BIKE RACK** for Volkswagen T4. Suitable for 2 to 4 bikes. Very good condition. **£80** or very near offer. Phone Jean and Alan Schofield 0161 292 2658 or 07980 959925 (Cheshire).\*

**TALISMAN, TALBOT EXPRESS 2-LITRE PETROL 4-BERTH.** 'K' reg., 1993, 37,000 miles. Averaging 25 mpg. Air-assisted suspension, Fiamma awning, swivel seats with armrests, adjustable lumber support. Usual extras. Good condition. Stored under cover. No pets or smokers. 12 months MoT. Taxed to December 2001. **£15,000.** Phone Rosemary Deeley 01752 880815 (Devon).\*

**EXCELSIOR 2.5TD 4-BERTH.** 'V' reg., Oct. 1999, 9,000 miles. Two bench seats, quality alarm, swivel seat, Omnivent extractor fan, TV aerial. Immaculate condition. **£26,000** ono. Phone Roger Granger 01474 702263 (NW Kent).\*

**EUROVENT DRIVE-AWAY AWNING** suitable for van conversion type motor caravan. Used 4 times only. Cost £355, for sale at **£150.** Phone Don or Beryl Walker 024 7667 2110 (Coventry).

**TRIDENT 2-LITRE.** 'M' reg., 39,000 miles. Frost protectors and large stand-alone awning. Excellent condition. Full service history. No smokers, children or pets. **£14,500** ono. Phone Matthew McKean 01273 509773 (Brighton).\*

*Note: Advertisements followed by a \* mean that the advertiser has made a donation to Club funds. To each we say 'Thanks for the donation' - Ed.*

## Contents

We can help	2	Becoming a Company?	7	Well-met in Krakow	11
See both sides	3	Topaz clutch trouble	8	Have wheels - will travel	12
Nearly that time again	4	Paint advice wanted	9	Wat-er to-do	13
Choosing a charity	4	Carver question	9	Thanks for the help	15
Last words on C & C	5	Rally thanks	9	Best of both worlds	16
Welcome to Willersey	6	Awning leak	10	Heavenly Devil's Bridge	17
Flagging results	6	Put aside childish things	10	Sites seen	17
No rally fee discrimination	6	Rally supplement	Centre	For sale	18

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