



AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk



It may be winter now

But Spring and Summer are not far away!

NEWSLETTER 171 DECEMBER 2002

Hello.

Apologies first. Remember the article last month about TOWtal (air suspension fitters) sent in by *Alex York*? I copied it word for word (and letter for letter!) from what he had sent me. But the address should have been in STROKE-on-Trent, not as shown. If you are interested, the telephone number for the firm is 017 8241 4454. Sorry about that.

Thanks to all of you who keep sending me various items. And thank you for your comments about what you call "my" Newsletter. It isn't mine, it is **YOUR** Newsletter. You write it, all I do is put it together and send it to the printer. If you don't write stuff, I certainly cannot fill 20 pages per month. So keep it coming, on any topic you like connected to our great pastime.

By the way, your Committee would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and hopefully prosperous New Year for 2003. *Sheila and I* would like to send our good wishes too.

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STOLEN VAN

Please be on the lookout for a **Duetto**, registration No. **M 858 SRB**. This van was stolen on November 5th from storage at Preston Patrick, near Grange over Sands in Cumbria. If you have any information, please contact *Leonard Fleming* on 015 3953 4566 or any police station.

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Questionnaire Response

Everyone at A-S would like to thank members for the astounding response to the questionnaire that was sent out in July. 989 of the 1500 sent out were returned. The winner of the prize, a habitation check from our Service Centre was won by *Derek Marshall* of Canvey Island, Essex.

The answers are still being analysed, but to show our appreciation, here are some of the interesting results. There were an amazing 51 different models owned by members. The Executive and Clubman being most popular at 11% each followed by the Duetto and Talisman at 9% each. 91.3% were either delighted or satisfied with their motorhome with 84.8% indicating that they were either 'likely' or 'very likely' to choose A-S for their next motorhome. These figures combined with 85% of you perceiving A-S as having a reputation of producing 'quality and reliable' motorhomes illustrates the loyalty of the Club to A-S. 70% also stated your perceived reputation of A-S as being a manufacturer of visually appealing motorhome and also having strong customer relationships.

Regarding the characteristics of members; 79% are retired and 72.3% are 60+ years of age. 45% have been members of the Club for up to two years, 28% for two to four years and a significant 27% for seven years or more. The most popular "other" club was the Caravan Club at 80%, the Camping and Caravanning Club at 60% and the Motor Caravanning Club at 6%. The four most regularly purchased motorhome magazines were MMM at 65%, Motor Caravan Magazine at 12%, Which Motorcaravan at 9% and Practical Motorhome (a fairly new publication) at an already respectable 8% of respondents (78 people).

The final area that we consider would be to your interest were the features you felt most important when purchasing a motorhome. The most important was the vehicle layout, followed (in order) by the reputation of the manufacturer, the price, the interior design, the specification of the vehicle, the dimensions, the engine type, the chassis manufacturer, the berths of the vehicle and, the least important, the design of the exterior.

A-S were pleased to see the reputation of the manufacturer was the second most important feature to you, especially as you indicated such positive perceptions towards us. The information you provided will be analysed and referred to so that we can ensure that we both maintain and improve the products and service that we have to offer and for that we are all extremely grateful.

Dan Meredith - Marketing Department

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Shoreham Air Show Rally

The weather was great, the flying excellent and the 'on ground' entertainment the best ever. Our rally attendance was the lowest since we started in 1996. However the members who came contributed the princely sum of £830.00 to the Shoreham R.A.F.A. Which helped them reach a terrific total of £100,000 plus for the charity work.

Due to the decreasing numbers we got into a huddle to discuss whether we should continue, knowing that if we pull out it could be the end as other clubs are waiting to take over. So we decided to carry on - here's to Shoreham 2003

Lyn & Tony Fowler - et. al.

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Having attended the rally I would like to place on record the delight and pleasure that both *Maureen and I* experienced. From the moment of

arrival we were made so welcome and nothing was too much trouble for all the marshals.

The organisation was first class and the food put on by them on the Saturday was excellent. Lots of little touches made it a special rally, thoroughly enjoyed by all, including the air displays and exhibitions. A rally not to be missed next year. Well done everybody involved.

Maureen & Cedric Jones

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Leighton Buzzard rally

For some time now we have been looking to run a rally in the southern parts near to us. When we thought about it the logic was to do it in our town. We were lucky enough to book a very central location for the same weekend that Leighton Buzzard does its "Living History" day. The rally went extremely well and, as usual, it was the ralliers themselves who made it extremely easy and great fun to do. None of us had any problems dealing with the VAT side of things, made easy by planning the buying - mainly in one lump. Although we were slightly short on numbers (3 sickies and 2 others who were coming then couldn't and a useful last minute booking) we actually made a tidy profit due to the generosity of those partaking in the raffle as well as providing additional prizes. So well done all of you. We had a great weekend (thanks for the cards and letters!) and have already got the feelers out to get the Scouts field at the same weekend as next year's "Living History" day - always with a different theme.

Running a normal type rally is very easy if you pick the right place with something of interest to those attending, depending entirely on local circumstances, naturally. We have been to quite a number of excellent rallies this year, so it was nice to put something back, and painless too!

Pat & David Mayne

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We wish to say thank you to *Pat & Dave Mayne* and *Marion & Ian Wood* for a really successful week-end rally. Congratulations to them for their first rally.

Pam & Bob Wood

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Club Website

www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk

This has now been running for a trial year and the Committee have approved its continuation, as well as my continued appointment as

Webmaster (no - it does **not** mean wearing coloured tights and a cape - just my Akubra hat & shorts!). The website is designed to complement the Newsletter and to provide information to prospective members. The Newsletter remains, and always will be, the main communication channel with the membership.

Have you been one of over 2,200 visitors to the website? If not, it is quite easy even if you do not have a computer. Most libraries, or Internet (cyber) cafes, are only too willing to help if you give them the above address.

If you have not yet visited, perhaps it may be useful to tell you briefly what it contains on the various pages.

Contents - all the pages plus guidance on the latest update

Home page - an introduction to the Club and the website itself

AGM - aspects of the meeting

Application form - available to new members

Club & Company Rally - background and photographs

Committee - details of the main and sub committees

Constitution - latest version

Enquiry - provides information for prospective members

History - a potted history of the Club from 1988

Rallies - general details regarding rallies and photographs

Rally list - all the rallies approved for the current year

Regalia - Club items currently available

Stop Press - latest important information and general photos

Technical Information Group - (under development)

Plus direct links to the Auto-Sleepers' website

Finally, may I again repeat all early requests for members to ensure that they have virus detection software installed on their computers and, most importantly, that it is kept up to date. I suggest at least weekly. It is Club policy that committee members will **NOT** open any attachments - but some viruses are so sophisticated that they can be hidden within the e-mail itself. **BEWARE!**

Baz Wellard

I will echo what *Baz* has said about viruses. You have all probably read about the latest offender which, if allowed into your machinery, can both extract details of your credit cards etc and allow hackers, clever computer people with the wrong slant on life, into your machine via "the back door" to create whatever havoc they wish. As a matter of fact one of our members sent me an advert by e-mail. About a month later another

e-mail arrived, purporting to be from the same person, but with a suffix of "VE" instead of "UK". But the virus checker spotted that there was a virus in it and warned me so that I could quarantine it without causing more problems. Yes, virus checkers cost money - but how much will you save?

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Alternative Fuel

I have a 1992 Clubman, petrol driven on a VW T4 base. For reasons of economy and the protection of the environment I am considering adding the alternative fuel source of Autogas.

A local supplier has examined my vehicle and assured me that the conversion can be done and has given me a price for the job. I know that my miles per pound coin will increase and feel that, given the associated environmental gains, the conversion will just be worthwhile, especially if we go for longer holidays in the van which is our intention. I have checked on availability of gas stations and there seem to be plenty and the number is growing rapidly.

Why do I hesitate? It is simply that my local mechanic has a fund of horrendous stories about folk coming to him with converted vehicles (no A-S vans yet!) where the running and tuning of the vehicle has been a major problem, sometimes requiring removal of the added systems. Does anyone have any experience of such a gas conversion? I would be pleased to hear from you about the good and the bad to help me through my hesitation.

Yours in hope.

Ron Daniel

I shall be very interested to hear from anyone with information for inclusion in a later Newsletter. Also any information on the rather similar subject of running a diesel engine on vegetable oil which is apparently possible although probably not cheap, judging by the cost of a bottle of oil in a supermarket! One company was using rape seed oil as fuel but from what I understand has given it up. I can imagine a future slogan of "Put a Sunflower in your tank!". What I'm really looking for is a way of running any engine on a fuel made basically of plain water!

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Storage

By the time I read the letter from *Audrey Goldsmith* it was too late to reply for October. However, I was quite surprised that no-one had put forward a solution to the problem of storage in the kitchen cupboards. I use

a "foil and cling film caddy" from Betterwear (under £4.00) for storing 3 small bottles of sauce, oil etc. This is fixed to the back of the cupboard with a combination of Blu-tack and sticky fixers, so no holes needed. I also use elastic stretched very tightly across the front of the cupboard, about half to two thirds down and held with drawing pins (a tip from another ASOC member). This stops taller items from falling out. The bathroom cabinet was also a bane of contention. A tip given me by the same member was to put into the cabinet small storage containers, e.g. empty margarine cartons or, in my case, small fruit punnets. Items can be stood in these which would otherwise fall over and jam up the doors. More items can be stored in the cabinet with this method.

I know that by now the Club and Company Rally is in the dim and distant past, but I'd like to take the opportunity to say how much we enjoyed the weekend. It was our first time (at any rally) and we thought we might be a bit isolated, knowing that most members would be meeting up with their friends. However we were more than pleased to find everyone so friendly. We made new friends who we hope to meet again. It really was a fantastic weekend and we look forward already to the next one. When is it, by the way?

Mavis Yallop

As "they" say, "Watch This Space". The dates will be revealed later on when things are a bit more final. We have an A.G.M. to sort out first!

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In reply to *Audrey Goldsmith's* enquiry regarding the rear overhead lockers in her Talisman, many other A-S owners including myself were complaining about this design some 9 - 10 years ago. Haven't they managed to put this problem right yet? It would appear that the designers are not final users and, as my wife says, "Must have been designed by a man!" I know that some owners have adapted the cupboard by putting in a new base and bring forward the door profiles. To me this seemed a major undertaking and I opted for a more simple solution. This was to install a piece of 1/8" angled clear plastic for each cupboard, the length being slightly less to cater for the door stays. The depth of its base to fit the base of the cupboard and the angled upright some 4" high. We store behind these structures all our condiments, washing up liquid and, in 'Oxo' or 'Bovril' square jars, such things as coffee, sugar, gravy mix, dried vegetables etc as these fit in nicely. To date we have had no accidents on opening either of the doors.

There have been a number of enquiries about cruise controls and I have had one in my Executive, for very many years. I find it an enormous boon and use it continually except when driving in towns. It is a great relief to one who has back and leg problems. One can move one's legs without any adverse effects. It has foolproof overrides on both the brake and clutch and becomes inoperative immediately one uses either of these controls. Mine is an electronic version which connects directly to the end of the accelerator cable at the butterfly end. Other connections required are to the ignition, brake and clutch via switches. There is also a connection to the distributor. This design avoids having to fit magnets to the drive shaft which are subject to movement and damage by stones etc.

Bob Fryer

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Cruise Control

I would like to thank all those members who answered my request earlier in the year for information on cruise control. Some, like me, wanted more information but all those who had already fitted it were high in their praise of its advantages and it persuaded me to go ahead with it. They mostly seemed to have used one of two suppliers - Ultimate Designs of 37 Pytchley Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 6ND (015 3651 4400 - E-mail sales@ultimatedesign.co.uk) and Conrad Anderson, 57 Sladefield Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 3PF (Freephone 0800 279 6939 or E-mail steve@conrad-anderson.co.uk and website www.conrad-anderson.co.uk).

They both supplied me with comprehensive literature about their products and offered follow-up help, in particular to those on fitting the equipment themselves. Conrad Anderson also supplied a copy of an article from MMM (June 2002) of the step by step fitting of their vacuum controlled electronic model which is quoted at £189.95 for dash mounted command module. Fully electronic 'professional' models cost from £229.95 and can have extra items such as stalk mounted command modules. They also supply a fairly basic 'mechanical' throttle control model at £39.95 to £49.95. An article on fitting one of these is in MMM (July 2002) and no doubt CA will now also supply a copy of this. Ultimate Designs prices range from £145.00 to £399.00

I had almost decided to go for CA's £189.95 kit and that I would leave the work to my local garage. I had given them the literature I had received for a final opinion when I received a call from Harry Wright of Adroit Services, Grovelly House, Swineshead, Boston, Lincs, PE20 3LR

(Tel/Fax: 012 0582 0004) who had been given my name and details by *John Sawyer* of the Emac stand at C & C Rally. (He is a member and fitted me with an Emac.) Harry explained that he would come to my door and fit a fully electronic model, which he advised would be better in my case (Peugeot 1.9 TD Ravenna) than a vacuum model, for £429.00 plus an adequate supply of tea! He followed this up with a letter giving full details of the pros and cons of the different systems and saying that he had fitted hundreds of systems, many to models similar to mine.

I passed this letter to my garage for comment and the net result was that they, who had another customer wanting a cruise control fitted to a car, negotiated with Harry to do both jobs in the comfort of their garage and at the same time one of their staff could gain a few wrinkles on the best procedures. It seems they also negotiated that he would supply them with kits for them to do future fittings themselves.

So anyone within range of Dorchester Motor Company, Alington Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1EX (013 0526 1111) can now have it done locally. I have yet fully to test it out (the same with the Emac, although I do think that on my journey home from the C&C rally I didn't have to change down gears as early as I had before it was fitted). I must say it looks very neatly done with the command module, which looks very like the Ultimate Design model, fitted just below the right hand centre vent handy to the dash mounted gear lever.

If anyone wants further information, please contact me on 013 0578 2082 or E-mail f.milward@which.net.

Ken Milward

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You have been Warn(er)ed!

We were interested to read the item about the Peterborough rally, but not surprised. My first thought was "Oh dear! Warners have upset someone else; not doing very well, are they?"

In March 2002 we booked for the Midsummer Music and Leisure Show at Lincoln which was held from 19th - 21st July and organised by this company. Unfortunately, on arriving in Cornwall for a holiday on 27th June, the very next morning I slipped on the grass by our Topaz and sustained what turned out to be a bad spiral fracture of my right femur. This led to 2 weeks in hospital in Truro, followed by transfer to our main hospital in Brighton where I spent another week. I was not allowed to put any weight on the leg for the first eight weeks. Obviously, we were unable to get to Lincoln and

the same weekend that the accident happened *Betty* wrote to Warners, returned the tickets and explained why. No acknowledgement was received.

As nothing was credited to our credit card account either, I wrote to Kathy Sleight, the Exhibition Co-ordinator, on 4th September again explaining the situation and requesting re-imburement of our £36.00 site fees. On 24th September she replied saying that they were sorry to hear that we could not attend owing to an accident and stating "unfortunately it is company policy tickets are non-refundable".

On 7th October I had another try, pointing out that nowhere in their advertising features or letter which had accompanied the tickets could I find any reference to this policy. Also we considered in view of this they should either make it apparent or preferably change their policy, and that we would think twice before again booking in advance for one of their company's shows. This produced a reply on 18th October re-stating the policy that tickets are not refundable but "as a gesture of good-will we will transfer the money paid for Lincoln 2002 to Lincoln 2003" and hoping we would be able to attend.

As a warning to ASOC members who may be thinking of booking in advance for a show organised by Warners, you can say goodbye to your money if unfortunately you can't make it. Will we take up the "offer"? We may very well do so just to get what we've already paid for but to advance book again in the future is very doubtful to us.

Betty & Terry Burgess

Copies of the Warners letters were enclosed. All I will say is that, apart from the policy, the attitude contained in the wording leaves something to be desired.

---ooOoo---

Chairman's Chat

What is an Auto-Sleeper? For some forty years, the answer to this questions was easy: a motorhome manufactured by Auto-Sleepers Limited of Willersey.

Then Auto-Sleepers Limited began making a small number of models badged as "Marquis". At the same time, Marquis began marketing, also under their own name, at least one model made by another UK manufacturer, and an A-class imported from Italy. Owners of the Marquis models with "county" names, although made at Willersey, were not eligible to join the Club.





December 2002

Rally Supplement



Seasons Greeting to all our members.

31st.December 2002 - 2nd.January 2003. 10th.Hidden Valley New Year Rally.

All those who are interested in attending this popular rally please send a SAE to: Sandra Wisely,2 Mount Pleasant,Bishops Itchington,Southam, Warks.CV47 2QE. Tel.No. 01926 614 194.

We will require marshals for this rally next year.If you are interested please contact the Rally Co-ordinator.If no volunteers are forthcoming we will lose this rally as there are many other clubs waiting to claim both dates and location.

8TH. - 15th. June.(7 Nights Sun.-Sun).Delfse Hout Caravan Site,Delft,Holland.

Rally marshals:Tricia & Ted Pratt & Jan & Vic Hicklin.

Site Fees:£ 11.50 approx. per night. Rally Fee:£15.00.

Fuller details will be available to those booking the rally. Bookings will only be accepted for the full 7 nights. Please send an SAE, rally slip and cheque for £15.00 payable to P.M. Pratt,3 Grafton Road,Stapenhill,Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.DE15 9DN. Tel.No.01283 538 818 Limit 25 vans. Spaces still available.

19th. June -3rd.July (14 nights).Sarzeau, South Brittany,France.

Rally Marshals:Dorothy & Baz Wellard,assisted by May & Derek Armitage & Brian Thomas..

Site Fees:circa £9.00 per night,Electricity circa £1.64 per night (subject to exchange rates) payable direct to site management.Rally Fee:£15.00 non-refundable unless unsuccessful.Please do not organise to arrive early,however extensions can be arranged with the management when on site.

Camping Le Bohat is a site at which Dennis & Eleanor Oxley have run successful rallies before,and has full faciilities plus a swimming pool.Le Bohat is 225 miles from Cherbourg,400 miles from Calais,11 miles south of Vannes and only 1.5 miles from Sarzeau.Fuller details direct to those attending in due course.

Applications,please, on a rally slip with an SAE and cheque for £15.00 payable to Mrs.D. Wellard,18 Greenwood Close,Fareham,Hants.PO16 7UF.

NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE. LIMIT INCREASED TO 35 VANS.

13th - 15th February (3 nights).Grouse & Claret,Rowsley,Nr.Matlock,
Derbyshire.

Details of this rally are not yet available so please wait for further
information in the January Rally Supplement.

MARSHALS REQUIRED for the following shows.Contact the Rally
Co-ordinator if interested.

New Show 28th - 30th March, The Showground, Driffield, East Yorks.

9th - 11th May Thames Valley & Motorhome Show, Newbury Showground.

18th - 20th July. Midsummer Music & Leisure Show, Lincoln Racecourse.

**The provisional Rally List for 2003 will be distributed with the January
2003 Newsletter.**

*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, there will be no Public Liability
Insurance.*

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

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

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Names of Adults.....

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

Extras: Please indicate which you would like, if available
Electricity: Yes No Evening meal if arranged: 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

At the York show in September, it was noticed that the Marquis specials built at Willersey were now leaving the factory carrying "Auto-Sleeper" badges, and this change of designation was subsequently confirmed in writing. At their October meeting, members of your Committee discussed this change of policy; we had to ask ourselves who was best placed to know what was an Auto-Sleeper, and by a majority vote we decided that owners of these specials must now be given the opportunity to join the Club. After all, there have been a number of A-S specials in the past, and some may be produced in the future for other dealers. Apart from differences in specification, the Marquis models are identical with other A-S models. Of course, no Marquis specials made by other manufacturers will be badged as Auto-Sleepers.

There remained the question of the Marquis specials produced at Willersey before this change of name took place. After careful consideration, we decided that if these too were recognised by the company as Auto-Sleepers and were rebadged to avoid any problems with the terms of our Exemption Certificate, their owners might also be admitted to membership of the Club.

The Committee will, of course, continue to be vigilant to ensure that only owners of Auto-Sleepers are admitted to membership - I myself have seen several vans with an A-S badge which were never made at Willersey!

Barbara joins me in wishing all members - old and new - a very Happy Christmas.

Ray Whiley

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CLG Progress.

At the time of writing (7th November) we are fairly confident of being able to sign the documents setting up the Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) at the Committee meeting on 16th November.

Two "subscribers" are needed to register a company. This does not imply that they have to pay anything - the word is used here as a legal term, with its original Latin meaning, and means the two who sign their names "undemeath". The Committee are delighted that our two Founder Vice-presidents, *Rita Daley* and *John Cox*, have agreed to act as subscribers. It seems very fitting that two of the few who met to form the Club should lead us into the future.

Ray Whiley

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Eden Camp

At 12 noon on 1st November 2002, the Camp Commandant, *Jan Hicklin*, commenced checking in the 44 vehicles containing the prisoners. Issued with Standing Orders and instructed to attend the first parade at 1900 hrs, guards *Vic Hicklin and Ben Mansfield* marshalled everyone to their place within the barbed wire perimeter fence. Once settled most decided to make the best of the captivity - and had a brew up!

It was probably much the same as this sixty years ago when several hundred Italian and German prisoners of war first arrived at the camp, although they were housed in rather opulent stone and brick built huts rather than A-S motorhomes. The advertising blurb for the camp say "The only modern history theme museum of its type in the world", and very good it is too. Some 29 huts are crammed with artefacts, photographs and stories of World War 2. Army, Navy, RAF, Civil Defence, Womens Land Army, Fire Service, Bevin Boys, Special Operations etc., etc., all have their place. For those interested in this time of strife you could spend a week there and still find something new. We were fortunate to be able to come and go at will throughout the time of the rally.

1830 hrs - that's half past six to you lot - on Saturday was the time for the big parade. An American Supper and an invitation to wear 1940's dress. The table was laden with a selection of food the like of which the POW's, or us either, would not see until 1947 or later. Corporal Jones, from Dad's Army, brought a string of sausages that looked manky, and Mrs Fox, who looked delightful. There were several army types, a couple of land girls, two yanks, Naval Officers, and a brace of airmen who looked like those idiots from 'Allo 'Allo. There was also a Japanese soldier but nobody was really sure how he got there and two 'doodle bugs' - nobody was sure about them either!

We were finally released on Sunday morning after coffee and a raffle. Well done everyone, a jolly good weekend.

Brian Smith

One small question. Are you sure that the 1940's dress was specially procured for the occasion? Or did our lovely members just wear their usual clothes which often could be 1940's anyway! ('Scuse me while I hide!)

-----oooOOOooo-----

THANK YOU

Shirley and I would like to thank all the members who telephoned us with ideas on how to improve the comfort of the beds in our Duetto.

Judging by the number of calls we had, fifty three in all, the problem must be much larger than we thought. We hope A-S take note!

We found the answer to our problem was to have our bed cushions re-foamed with a good quality softer foam. This was also the answer to quite a large number of members who telephoned us. This operation was very efficiently carried out by The Caravan Seat Cover Centre, Cater Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 7TW. Nothing was too much trouble for Jon Redish, the 'Boss' man.

We spent over an hour at the showrooms lying on different grades of foam. With Jon's help we chose a softer foam. The completed job being returned to us two days earlier than agreed and no charge for the carriage. We have just returned from seven nights away, sleeping on our softer foam cushions, and what a vast difference it made. We intend to use our Duetto a lot more next year. Thank you, members.

Shirley and Michael Connington.

Several years ago I recall a somewhat similar letter from members who found that their beds were not firm enough. And one who preferred the harder bed in the van to the soft divan at home. So really it all boils down to individual choices. One thing that gets me, however, is why on earth do we still have those buttons all over the cushions? So far as I am concerned they seem to serve no useful purpose since we got rid of horse hair and similar stuffing and are only traps for bits and dirt. Many years ago when I was refurbishing another van, I had cushions made and covers provided. The firm sent me buttons to put in but I left them flat. Much better!

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GATCOMBE PROBLEMS

I would just like to mention a few problems I have encountered with our VW Gatcombe 2.5 TDI that have reared their ugly head during our 2 years of ownership from new. We picked up our new van on 1st Sept 2000 and set off to Cornwall for a week's holiday to try it out. It proved a very nice vehicle to drive with good fuel consumption. We booked into the C & C site in Bodmin. Not long after we had pitched we noticed that the carpet in front of the oven was soaking wet. I traced the problem back to the vanity unit above the loo. It turned out the Jubilee clips had never been tightened around the pipework to the shower taps. Not long after this the screw that retains the twin stainless steel exhaust pipe extensions sheared. Fortunately I noticed this when I was hooking up

to the site electric's, both pipes were laying at opposite angles and held on only by the clamp screws that hold them on to the exhaust proper. I have since modified the rear fixing arrangement by making and fitting a stainless steel 'U' bracket and attaching the pipes to this via stainless steel screw and nuts rather than rely on the screw alone to take all the stress.

Another problem I have had is with the plastic wardrobe catch retaining bracket shearing on 2 occasions whilst on the road, I am at present trying to find a metal one which I think will solve the problem.

I have a gripe with the Terry clips in the Cocktail cabinet being fixed to the hardboard false back. This is very flimsy and it requires great care in removing bottles from the clips for fear of these detaching themselves from the hardboard back. It only required a piece of timber for the clips to fix to behind the hardboard. Apart from the above we have been very pleased with the vehicle.

Can any member identify the paint type & colour of the dark grey skirt that runs either side of the Gatcombe from the top of the bumper downwards? I did ask my supplying dealer and Brownhills. The best answer I received was go to Halfords and find the nearest match! When I had my Trident the A-S handbook had a section which identified the vehicle colour and code along with the coachlining colours and manufacturer. My Gatcombe handbook has no such section. We have only just joined the club and hope to meet other members soon.

Alan & Gill Martin

-----oooOOOooo-----

SPORTY TRAILERS

Following on from *Sean & Rosemary Holland's* praise for this company in the October issue I would like to add my praise too. How refreshing it was to deal with a company who were so friendly and caring and actually listened to what you were saying and taking note. Mr Gordon Holmes was the epitome of charm itself and as for his PA, Sylvia Smart, what a 'Lovely Lady'. I would recommend the company to anyone contemplating having a box or other kind of platform fitted to their vehicle.

On the subject of the Scam Warning, sorry *Ian Wood*, you were taken in with this story like an awful lot of others. It sounds so feasible, doesn't it? However, it is just not true; it never happened. The story originated from Luton Police Station. A Police Constable was given the tale and without verifying it he immediately sent the warning out to all the Constabularies. When it was discovered that the incidents never happened,

the PC concerned was given a heck of a ribbing and I am informed that he is still in hiding! If you should doubt me, just check it out with Luton!

Vic Patterson

====oooOOOooo=====

Talisman - Auto Clutch & Spain

We own an 'H' reg Talisman and have recently been considering the possibility of having an Auto Clutch installed. Having read several articles over the years about this mechanism they are always related to new installations. Has anyone in the Club experience of extended use of such? How has it performed over the years? Does it deal well with steep hills? And so on, any advice would be very welcome,

Having spent some time in Spain during the winter months in the last few years we have found that many of the camp sites are now becoming quite full and last year several folk we met had to wait in car parks attached to the sites for a vacant pitch. It seems that the popularity of chasing the sun is now such that many are booking from year to year at their favourite destinations. We will not be going this winter but perhaps during the next year Club members who do might like to report on how they fared.

Margaret & Stuart Hankin.

My only knowledge of any form of auto clutch goes back to when Standard produced their Standrive. This had a button in the top of the gear lever to operate the clutch, presumably electrically. I believe that there was some difficulty with the mechanism breaking down from time to time. Any information can be phoned to *Stuart* on 017 2681 3440 (in Cornwall) or E-mail stuart.hunkin@virgin.net.

====oooOOOooo=====

A.C.C.E.O.

As mentioned in November, we were two who did not know what these letters meant on the renewal forms. We searched our back numbers of the Newsletter and other related publications but found nothing.

I decided next time I was using our computer that I would look on the internet and straight away found three meanings! (1) Alliance for Californian Current Ecosystem Observation; (2) Association of Caribbean Chief Education Officers and (3) Association of Caravan and Camping Exempted Organisations. So, as we say so often, "you learn something new every day". We were quite torn between belonging to (1), (2) or (3)!

Winifred & Roy Townsend

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I was interested to read about ACCEO - a refreshing change from the somewhat negative article and ensuing correspondence which appeared not so long ago. I attended the ACCEO AGM at Stratford upon Avon in October as the Delegate from another Club and was very surprised that ASOC was not represented. I was told by our Chairman, the week before at Quorn, that it clashed with a very important committee meeting. That is as maybe, but surely a Club the size of ASOC could have found somebody to represent their interests at such an important event. Or is it that no-one was asked? I certainly did not see any request for someone to attend on the Club's behalf.

The five day rally was held on the racecourse, which gave plenty of opportunity to visit the town and tour the surrounding countryside. The AGM was on a par with most AGM's I have attended but the Saturday evening entertainment was, as usual, first class (and I won a flagon of whisky in the raffle). The event will be held at the same venue next year but you may have to book early to make sure of getting in to the entertainment.

I am sorry, *Pat & Roy Pethers*, but unless the Editor of MMM has a very short memory you do not have much chance of getting a "Tenner for a Tip"! That is where I got the idea and I have been using it for a few years now.

John Hallett

-----oooOOOooo-----

Fillers

Like *Pay & Roy Pether* I used to fill the tank using a funnel and a short length of hose. I tied a piece of string to the funnel and a bag containing a large stone to the other end of the string. Passing the stone through the window kept the funnel in place.

Then I discovered that the tap end of an Aquaroll hose could be pushed into the outlet of the water container and pulled tight to give a water-tight seal. I now use this, cut to a reasonable length (about 12") to fill the tank. Of course, the hose can still be used for its proper purpose.

Ray Whiley

-----oooOOOooo-----

Another Thank You

We would like to say 'Thank you' to everybody who came to our Lytham Rally. We are very sorry about the cancelled coffee morning on Sunday due to the terrible weather conditions. We hope you all arrived

home safely. We were very worried about you all. We didn't get to say goodbye to many people as we were in the hall heating the boiler and putting out biscuits when the coffee morning was cancelled.

We would also like to thank everybody for their cards, telephone calls and good wishes when *Norman* was ill. They were a great help at a very worrying time. At least now we know what the problem is and can adjust our lives to it.

Thanks to everyone. It is a lovely Club to be in.

Kath & Norman Benyon

Not for the first time it shows that we are A Society Of Carers!

-----oooOOOooo-----

Obituaries

We have been advised that the following have recently died:
Brenda Bailey, wife of *Ted*. Died 16th October.

Rosalind McNeice, wife of *Donald*. Died earlier this year.

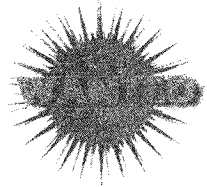
Our sympathy and condolences are offered to *Ted* and *Donald* and to the respective families.

-----oooOOOooo-----

WANTED

Motor caravan with solid-sided elevating roof and rear access (e.g. Sportsman or Rimini). Good price paid for low mileage model in clean and rust-free condition. Preferably used by non-smokers with no pets. Can anyone help? Tel: Margaret & Ray Greenaway, 015 0757 8456.

Thanks for the donation.



-----oooOOOooo-----

FOR SALE

All the following for 1998 Amethyst, 6 dinette cushions 'Freesia' material, excellent condition. £10.00 each. Oil and fuel filter, fan belt, P.S. Belt, workshop manual. £25.00. Tel: Gary Baxter on 013 9445 9170 (Woodbridge, Suffolk).

Thanks for the donation.

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Screen by Taylor Made with fold down flap. To fit Peugeot Boxer. This is the 6oz insulation model. Current price £88.00 plus £6.50 delivery. £45.00 plus postage. Ring Peter Whittaker on 011 6270 8318



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'Tenby Recovery' A-Frame, also magnetic pads. Used once. £250.00 ono. Tel: Ian Gregory on 07 798 764 419 or write to 'Izzanerzz', 8 High Street, Kilburn Village, Derbyshire, DE36 0NS.

#####

Ford Legend, 1998, 2.5 TDI, 'S' reg. 19,000 miles. One owner. Full service history. Age and our other commitments force sale. North East Wales, but happy to travel to meet serious buyer. £25,000.00. Tel: Mike Skuse on 018 2470 2973 (Ruthin, Denbs).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

"NR" deluxe motor chalet, free-standing annexe. Good condition. £75.00 ono. Tel: Harry Lomax on 012 0488 2332 (Bury, Gtr Manchester)

Thanks for the donation.

#####

DUETTO 2.5 TURBO DIESEL. 1997 35,000 miles. One owner, immaculate condition, full service history and handbooks. Taxed, MOT. Thatcham Cat 1 Alarm with central locking, electric windows, PAS, Status aerial, gas bottles/regulator, Silver Screens, A-S crockery. Full A-S specification. Many extras. No pets or smokers. Genuine reason for sale. £19,995.00. Phone Dave Bull 011 8961 1853 (Reading) or email DavidBull@NTLWorld.com.

#####

Talbot Talisman II, 1989 'F' reg. 43,000 miles. 2ltr petrol + LPGas (dual fuel). Omnistor awning (new), towbar, T & T, V.G.C. £11,750.00 ono or exchange for a smaller van. For more information ring John Hutton on 014 9522 9544 (Gwent).

#####

Internal Silver Screens (windscreen, cab doors, sliding door and rear doors) for previous model Ford Transit Duetto. Also Ford Perspex Headlight Protectors plus Haynes Service and Repair Manual for Diesel Transit 02/1986 to 1995 ('C' to 'N' registration). £50.00 the lot or sell individually. Telephone Bill Tait on 0131 669 6038 (Edinburgh) or e-mail btait@lineone.net".

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VW Topaz, 2.4 diesel 5 cylinder. 2/4 berth, shower, toilet, W.H.B., 2 ring hob & Grill, fridge, blown air heating. 'N' reg, Sept. 96. 12 months MOT. V.G.C. £17,500.00. Tel: Allan Garner on 013 6987 0331 (Dunoon, Argyll).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Interior Diamond Silver Screens for Renault Traffic, Unused. £40.00 plus postage. Exterior Silver Screens for Talbot Express Executive (1993 model). Little used. £35.00 plus postage. Tel: Norah Mellor on 012 2971 7306 (Eskmeals, Cumbria).

Thanks for the donation.

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VW Medallion 2.3 TDI, 'W' reg (June 2000). 13,000 miles only. 4 berth. 4 burner hob cooker, 3-way fridge, Truma gas/electric heater, Omnistor awning, fiamma 4 cycle rack, Status aerial, extra 13 amp sockets, Silver Screens. Over 2 years transferable warranty. Non smokers, no pets. Immaculate condition. Very quiet and comfortable top of range motor home. £32,000.00. Tel: Dennis Leeson on 019 4473 8616 (Malton, Yorks). Thanks for the donation.

#####

Ford Duetto, 2.5 turbo diesel. 1996 ('N'). 46,000 miles. Electric windows, central locking, P.A.S., alarm/immobiliser, bike rack, tow bar, Omnistor awning and many other extras. F.S.H. £19,000.00. Phone Allan Leaver on 012 4358 2477 (Bognor, West Sussex).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

NR 'Motor Chalet' free-standing awning for hi-top conversion, eg Symphony / Trident. Only used once. £140.00. Heavy duty cycle cover for 1 or 2 bikes, unused. £50.00. Silver Screen insulated windscreen cover, suitable for Peugeot / Fiat / Citroen van. £50.00. Padded TV bag, 11" x 11" x 15", as new. £10.00. Change of van forces sales of these 4 items. Please contact John Bralant on 014 3087 9892 or 078 0392 7231 or e-mail john_bralant@lineone.net.

Thanks for the donation.

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Committee Members

President	Charles Trevelyan	013 8685 3511
Chairman	Ray Whiley	016 0345 2593
Vice Chairman & Rally Co-ordinator	Neil Rogers	013 2537 4540
Secretary	Janet Sutterby	015 0746 2449
Treasurer	John Tidbury	012 3553 8593
Membership Secretary	Norma Caley	017 7263 2734
Minutes Secretary	Mike Hall	017 7382 4565
Chief Rally Marshal	Ben Mansfield	017 2336 9769
Chairman, AGM		
Sub-committee	Nora Venables	019 0233 2105
Chairman, Club & Company		
Sub committee	Andy Cavell	016 3520 1976
Regalia Officer & Chairman		
TIG Sub-committee	Andrew Entwistle	014 2284 3057
Press Officer	Brian Smith	014 8784 1786
Newsletter Editor	Harry Henthorne	020 8808 9112

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