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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

A Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: Orchard Works, Willersey, Nr. Broadway,
Wores., WR12 7QF. Registered No: 4616969



NEWSLETTER 182 NOVEMBER 2003

Hello.

I began to believe that this might have to be a somewhat shorter Newsletter than usual, what with the postal problems and an apparent shortage of input. But not to worry, YOU finally came up trumps and sent in sufficient for me to fill this month. Thank you all for that.

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Oops!

Last month I printed a revised telephone number for *Andrew Entwistle*. I copied this direct from his letter and, unfortunately, I did not check with the head of the letter. In fact, when typing the telephone number further down the page, *Andrew* accidentally confused his new number with the old one.

To set the record straight, his new telephone number is

014 2284 7550

I have asked him to telephone the lady whose number was given and make his apologies. She apparently was getting a bit irate because of the number of calls she was receiving.

Also, my flying fingers accidentally transposed a couple of digits in the telephone number I gave for *Norma Caley* on page 2 of last month's Newsletter. *Norma's* correct telephone number is as shown on the back page. Page 2 should have read **017 7263 2734**. It was the middle two numbers of the last group of four which were the wrong way round. Sorry about that!

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New Year at Hidden Valley

What are you doing to celebrate this coming New Year's Eve? Is it something that we have said or did *Sandra and Bernie* exhaust you? The decision whether or not to hold the rally **MUST** be made by **7th November**. Some would obviously like to celebrate together from the deposits already received but the rest are dragging their feet - or should that be motorhomes?

If the idea appeals, then get your rally slip and cheque to us **NOW** please. If the rally should be cancelled due to lack of support, then we will telephone and advise all on our list as soon as possible. You will, of course, be reimbursed. Unfortunately, the Club would have to pick up the cancellation fees both of the site and the booked entertainers. We, and other members, have tried our best to encourage you to join in. Here's hoping that a few more of you will be tempted.

Mo and Mike Valentine

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Spare wheel Saga II

Like the *Williamsons* (October Newsletter) I too rounded off the spare wheel nut and winding handle on our '99 Duetto. So I set about improving the set-up. First of all, I had an old $\frac{5}{16}$ " Whitworth hexagon nut welded into the spare wheel carrier to replace the square one already there.

Then I made a new shaft of $\frac{1}{2}$ " rod and welded a $\frac{5}{16}$ " Whitworth socket on one end and a $\frac{1}{2}$ " drive "square" socket on the other end. The whole lot is $18\frac{1}{2}$ " long, so it just stood proud of the bumper. Then, with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " drive socket brace I have a much better winding mechanism.

Also it is a good idea to replace the screw jack with a 2 ton hydraulic bottle jack. My old jack fell apart.

Sorry about all the imperial measurements, that's all that I know! I am sure that drivers who are "over 60" have some useless old British sockets in their sheds.

Mick Ryan

What do you mean, British sockets "in their sheds"? Mine are still in my tool kit, alongside the metric ones!

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Prague

My husband and I [where have I heard that before? - Ed] have camped for 50 years. I wrote an article some months ago about our disastrous non-trip to Prague because of the floods. We were actually in Dresden last year and hoped to spend maybe a week there before moving on to Prague. We hadn't been in either city before but, unfortunately, after three lovely sunny days in Dresden it rained and rained for two whole days. Beautiful Dresden was flooded; the border to Prague was closed and the owner of the site we were on advised us to get out as the emergency services would be blocking the roads. So we had to return. However, like true campers, we were determined to try again this year and WE MADE IT!! We stayed on the Mosel first, then on to Dresden but only spent three days there. With the memories of what happened last year we pressed on to Prague. It really is a beautiful city but this year we were almost burnt to a crisp in temperatures of 110° . I understand that the weather in England during August was very hot. We then made our way to the Neckar Valley, then to the Rhine and so home to recover before, hopefully, spending some months in sunny Spain during the winter months. We have no time to get bored even

in our late seventies. By the way, we have a Symbol and she behaved beautifully in spite of the very hot weather.

Alice Buttery

This is a much better story than two others I have heard recently. One member went across in that general direction and had to be flown home after a pretty severe operation; the others had their van broken into and passports, credit cards and cash stolen. Incidentally, isn't it a small world? *Alice* is a relative of another friend of mine whom I met several years ago through the use of CB radio.

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Charity Choice - 2004

Members may remember that every year the Club selects a charity to benefit from the fund raising at the Club and Company Rally. The selection is made by the Committee from nominations received from Members. The criterion is that it should be a lesser known national charity from which you, or a member of your close family, has benefited. Nominations remain anonymous to the Committee until the selection has been made.

If you would like to nominate a charity for 2004, please write to me at 24 The Close, Hampstead Norreys, Thatcham, Berks., RG18 0RY by the end of November, with full details of how they have helped you. Please enclose 15 copies of the charity's leaflet for distribution to the Committee. I will make the necessary copies of your letter. It would also be helpful if you could obtain confirmation from your charity that, if selected, they would be able to set up a stand at the rally (9th - 11th July 2004) and that a representative would be available to accept the cheque on the Sunday morning.

Andy Cavell

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2005 - AGM

Now that I have most of the planning completed for the 2004 AGM my thoughts are turning to the next one. I am considering returning to Banham Zoo or possibly going to the Fakenham Racecourse in Norfolk. I should like members to contact me with their thoughts because having re-read all the correspondence after the rallies at Banham in 2000 and 2001 it seems that almost all who attended would like to return. The Banham site now has roads built making it easier to park but I have yet to investigate the

facilities at Fakenham. The latter venue was suggested by the caterers who put on such a good meal in 2001 and they will cater at either place.

I must have comments by January 2004 to enable me to book any dates we would want. Please contact me at 15 Langley Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, WV3 7JN or by telephone or fax on 019 0233 2105.

Nora Venables

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Pump Mystery

We own a recently purchased 1997 Duetto which, on our last trip, failed to deliver water to taps etc. On removing the inspection panel, it was clear that the pump motor was running although no pumping was taking place. We called in at a well known and respected motor caravan dealer while returning home and were very efficiently dealt with. The verdict was a torn diaphragm and the pump was replaced and the water supply consequently restored.

The old pump was returned to me. I stripped it down and could find no fault with the diaphragm or valves. I set up a test rig with a spare car battery as the power source and some tubing to pump water to bucket. The pump whirred as before but delivered no water. However, when I trickled water down the inlet pipe - hence priming the pump - it started to work and now appears to be fully functional.

The mystery is why did the pump stop delivering water when in the van when it is supposed to be self-priming? The tank in the Duetto was at least a quarter full on the gauge. Was there an air-lock and if so - so what? The pump is supposedly self-priming. Any answers to the mystery?

Bill Cameron

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Club & Company Rally

My wife and I were astonished, on tendering our membership cards at the entrance gate, to be told 'Oh, you don't need those - everyone pays the same entrance fee whether you're a member or not'.

Why is this? Why should members of the public be admitted to our rally at the same price as members of ASOC? I hope some differentiation can be decided upon for next year's rally. Those with membership cards should surely be admitted at a lower price than non-members.

John Gibson

I presume that this refers to the day visitors to the rally. I am sure that you will appreciate the difficulties which might arise if the entrance fee was variable for whatever reason. To try to make the whole weekend as enjoyable and as simple as possible, for everyone who attends whether working or not, the day visitor charge applies to day visitors - irrespective of membership.

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SATELLITE NAVIGATION

With regard to this subject, mentioned in the last Newsletter, we have a Garmin portable system which, personally, drives me mad when I am driving and I hate it. I find it such a distraction. *Keith* is slowly getting used to it. We did operate it in France but depended, totally, on *Tim's* convoy. In any event, *Keith* found it was "taking us across fields" from Amiens to Calais and must get it updated for Continental use. I am sure we will find it very useful in time - so everyone tells us - and we must learn to trust it. I guess I will still be hugging my motoring atlas for a very long time.

Rita A Jones

I'm with you, *Rita*, I think I prefer maps - if they are reasonably up to date. I once tried out the computer route finding programme. I specified that I wanted to go from London to Durham but did not want to travel on motorways. The result would have taken us to the coast, on a ferry to the continent, up into Norway or Denmark and back on a ferry to get to Durham. Our maps showed us a better way.

Rita also submitted the description of "What is a Senior Citizen?" This was published some time ago in the Newsletter.

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WINTERISATION

The notes below are purely a guide to assist you in the winterisation of your Auto-Sleeper and to allay any fears that you may have. Briefly, the only facility requiring winterisation is the water system. You should have no concern with regards to the freezing of the system other than the water heater, since the water tanks are manufactured in a material that can cope with the expansion caused by freezing, although, of course, if your vehicle is being left unused for several days in freezing conditions, it would be prudent to drain the system fully. Surface freezing of the water in both fresh and waste water tanks will not cause any damage to the tank. The operation of the fresh water system may be affected since

the fresh water is drawn off the lower part of the water tank, underneath any layer of ice that may have formed.

It is important that during prolonged freezing conditions, and at times when your Auto-Sleeper is left unused, the water system is drained. Our models are fitted with either the Truma Ultrastore or the Carver Cascade/Rapide and instructions for draining and isolating these units are as follow.

1. Truma Ultrastore. On current Auto-Sleepers, and those models that are not fitted with an isolation tap, the complete water system should be drained. There is a dump valve that allows the Ultrastore to be drained of water and this is found in different positions on different models. The instruction manual clearly identifies the location of this dump valve and should it be used and left open when your Auto-Sleeper is left for prolonged periods in freezing conditions. If you continue to use your Auto-Sleeper in such conditions, we suggest that the retro-fitting of an isolation tap in the water circuit would be a wise move so that the water heater can be isolated while retaining the cold water facility. The Motorhome Service Centre at Willersey (013 8685 3511) will be happy to supply a tap and / or fit this should your require.

2. Carver Rapide. This water heater must be isolated in prolonged freezing conditions, since if the stainless steel cylinder is allowed to freeze it will stretch the securing bolt, blow the seals and cause leaking into the interior of the vehicle. For the last four years, during the time that the heater has been fitted, we have supplied each vehicle with an aluminium isolation tool. Once the water heater is drained this tool should be fitted into the lower, left hand, externally accessed chamber on the outside of the water heater, concealed behind the large screw in the lower left-hand corner. Inserting this tool, narrow end first, will lock the non-return valve preventing the filling of the water cylinder. The upper drain screw, immediately above the aforementioned upper screw, should be left open for a good length of time to allow any residual water to drain out. If you do not have this isolation tool these are available at a cost of £2.50 inclusive of carriage and Vat from the Motorhome Service Centre as above. The Carver Rapide water heater may not, on early models, have the screw on the top left-hand area of the gas module cover previously mentioned and therefore the isolation tool will not be able to be used. In such instances the complete water system must be drained, or as advised with the Truma Ultrastore, an isolation tap retrofitted into the system to prevent the water cylinder from filling.

For older vans fitted with the Vaillant water heater, you should ring the Motorhome Service Centre who will advise upon the course of action to be taken. It is possible that on this heater the lower diaphragm module can become warped through freezing, preventing the heater from operating correctly. There is an easy and simple way of rectifying this - please seek advice from us.

Questions are often asked with regards to the winterisation of the Thetford cassette toilet. Since these are positioned well in-board on the van and are well insulated, under normal working use in winter conditions no winterisations is required. If necessary, you may wish to put into the flushing tank a small amount of Glycol or similar anti-freeze to allow the toilet to function in extreme conditions. This is available from the Motorhome Service Centre or alternatively a call to Thetford on 024 7632 2700 who will give any further advice required.

Other than those mentioned above there are no other precautions that need to be taken in respect of the conversion side of your Auto-Sleeper. If your vehicle is being stored in the winter for prolonged periods it is always wise to remove the detachable cushions / scatter cushions and keep these in your home. The fixed ventilation in each Auto-Sleeper will allow the vehicle to breathe over the winter months, although it would be sensible, perhaps fortnightly or three-weekly, to thoroughly air your Auto-Sleeper. Perhaps by using the Ultraheat / Carver Fanmaster to heat the interior of the vehicle to evaporate any residual moisture.

On the automotive side, advice should be taken from your local base vehicle commercial dealer with regards to any specific instructions or indeed from the automotive section of the Motorhome Service Centre. But it is, of course, always wise to ensure that prior to the winter your coolant is checked for anti-freeze content and to make sure that the specific gravity is of the correct reading. This can, of course, be checked and rectified by our automotive section at the number shown above. They can also carry out a Winterisation Service on your base vehicle at a cost of £31.12 + VAT.

Another sensible precautions would be to disconnect the 12-volt electric clock, if fitted, and the base vehicle and conversion batteries should be charged periodically to maintain them in good condition. If using your Auto-Sleeper in particularly harsh conditions, we always advise the use of Propane instead of Butane for the gas supply since this has a superior low temperature performance.

If you have any fears in respect of the winterisation of your vehicle, do please let us know. We are always happy to discuss any concerns that

you have, together with the retro-fitting of a frostat - a 12 volt heater in the fresh tank, which is a popular option for some owners. We would be pleased to fit one for the cost of £217.55 + VAT. We hope that the above answers any questions that you may have - a call to us at any time will allay any other fears that may arise.

Charles Trevelyan

Motorhome Service Centre - Willersey

Note: Costs quoted were those which obtained in January 2002 when this item was written. Due to the way things have changed in the last eighteen months or so you would be wise to get an up-to-date quotation.

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Radio Thoughts 2

In the March Newsletter I shared my thoughts on being able to listen to BBC Radio 4 whilst travelling in Europe outside the normal long wave radio range. At the time, the most promising option was to take our home TV satellite system away with us. With the right satellite receiving dish we should have been able to receive not only that programme but everything else that we could normally see at home. I invited members to share their experiences, particularly in relation to the dishes.

I received three responses, suggesting that the issue was not of great interest to members or there was little experience to share. One member had been using satellite in Europe very successfully. Another had invested in all the right equipment but had abandoned it due to lack of success. The third said he had successfully used an inexpensive short wave radio to access the BBC World Service.

Whilst on holiday in Italy I discussed satellite TV/radio with a motor-homer who had travelled fairly extensively through Eastern Europe. Even there his system had worked reasonably successfully using an 85cm dish. He had, however, lost all BBC programmes in July following a critical development since my original article.

The BBC is now broadcasting its radio and TV output on a different satellite and this has severely limited how far into Europe it is possible to receive their programmes. I am unsure at present whether the radio coverage using satellite will be any advantage over long wave and I may be better off reconsidering short wave and the BBC World Service.

The change of satellite has been for various reasons; political, financial and technical. Politically it has become less dependent on Sky. Financially the new arrangement means that it is saving money which it can invest in other improvements. Technically it is now transmitting its

programmes unencrypted. Although you will still need a satellite box to receive the broadcasts you now longer need a viewing card for the “free to view (listen)” programmes. Some “free to view” programmes on ITV1, Channel 4 & 5 are still encrypted on the Sky satellite. It used to be possible to obtain a free card from the BBC but they are no longer available. It remains unclear whether other broadcasters will move to unencrypted transmissions.

Although Sky Digital point out that they do not have a licence to broadcast outside the UK it is still possible to receive Sky output across much of Europe provided you have a viewing card. On the basis that it is impossible to police it, it seems likely that people will continue to take their digi-boxes and cards on holiday to Europe.

I feel frustrated on two fronts. Firstly I thought we were going to be able to listen to Radio 4 using satellite when we were in Europe. It now seems very unlikely unless we stay near to the UK or carry a metre plus dish with us! Secondly, on the domestic front, in the short term at least it looks as though I will have to continue subscribing to Sky to watch the encrypted “free to view” channels. We can still view ITV1 and channel 4 on analogue but not Channel 5. Hopefully the satellite broadcasting problems will be resolved before the government switches off analogue.

I am indebted to *Albert Brown* of the ASOC Tiggers Group for his help in compiling this article and to David Sullivan for his excellent Web site “www.satelliteforcaravans.info”. I am, however, wholly responsible for any incorrect information and I would be grateful to learn if I have anything wrong or you can add to my understanding of the current situation.

John Agate

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Part 2 - Norway

Before I launch into part 2, there are many ways to theme a visit to NZ - scenery, wine, cheese, architecture, American trucks etc., and a few remaining preserved 1960's British motor cars. There's also 50 ways to do yourself permanent harm via death defying stunts!!

Norway

We chose this destination some time ago not believing that we would actually get there when we first explored the idea of a motorhome. Sleeping above the Arctic Circle was a bit of a pipe dream. We took our time from Berkshire to Newcastle for the ferry so that we could stop at the Morrisons supermarket in Boroughbridge (just off the A.1) for roast beef



November 2003

Rally Supplement



30th. December 2003 – 3rd. January 2004 (4 nights). New Years Rally, Hidden Valley C.P., North Devon.

4 nights on hardstanding with electric hook-up, centrally heated toilet block. All EVENING meals and 3 nights musical entertainment.

Cost per van & two adults £280.00 incl. VAT. Cost per van & one adult £185.00 incl. VAT. A £75.00 deposit will secure your place. Balance by 1st. December 2003.

If you are interested in attending this rally please contact: Mo & Mike Valentine, 11 Hamilton Close, Langstone, Havant, Hants. PO9 1RP. Tel. No. 02392 482 818.

7th. (Friday) – 11th. (Tuesday) November. (4 nights). Somerset Carnival Rally, Burnham on Sea Holiday Village, Burnham on Sea, Somerset.

Emergency Tel. No. 01278 783391 (Site), 07711 375 323 (Marshals' mobile) or marshals' home Tel. No. 01278 784 524

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

Site Fee: £ 31.00 (incl. VAT) This includes electricity & "Euro" pitches with hardstanding plus toilet block. Rally Fee: £2.35 (incl. VAT). Total cost £33.35. ***Please pay by mid October.***

Sorry ***NO pets*** allowed, site rules.

Rally slips & cheques to: Brian Ellis, 52 Golf Links Road, Burnham on Sea, Somerset.

TA8 2PP. Tel. No. 01278 784 524. ***Rally starts at 10.00 a.m. Friday 8th. November.***

The carnival is probably one of the best "Free" shows you will ever see and raises thousands of pounds for local charities.

6th. (Sunday) – 13th. (Sunday) June 2004. Delfse Hout Caravan Site, Delft, Holland.
Rally starts at 12 noon Sunday June 6th. & closes Sunday June 13th. 12 noon.

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

Members **MUST** book for the full 7 nights. Rally Fee: £15 non refundable.

Approximate site fees 17.50 euros per night, all pitches have electricity and hard standing. You will be contacted when a deposit is due.

Insurance cover is required for van and personal illness etc. It is important to fill in and take a valid E111.

There will probably be a couple of trips booked and a meal one evening, all subject to sufficient numbers.

Buses run from the site entrance to town (10 minute walk away) and tram stops & railway station. Getting around is very easy using tickets bought at reception or shops.

Biking around the lovely flat countryside is very easy.

Please send rally slips to: P. M. Pratt, 3 Grafton Road, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. DE15 9DN. The closest ferry is Hoek van Holland-20miles, Europort about 30 miles.

17th. June – 1st. July (14 nights) Le Bohat, Sarzeau, South Brittany, France.

Rally Marshals: Dorothy & Baz Wellard, Jill & James Bertlin & Brian Thomas.

Site fees (based on 2 people) 15.20 Euros, Electricity 2.80 Euros (approx. £11 + £2 standard rate per night respectively, subject to exchange rate) payable direct to site management. Bookings only accepted for the **full 14 nights**.

Rally Fee: £15 non-refundable unless unsuccessful. Please do NOT arrange to arrive before 10.00 on the 17th, to give us, and site management, time to prepare. If you wish to stay on after the rally please advise us.

Camping Le Bohat is a 3 star site where a rally was successfully held for 33 units in 2003 (details available on Club website). It has full facilities plus a swimming pool and is only 1.5 miles from Sarzeau village and 14 miles from Vannes.

The journey distances are 225 miles from Cherbourg, 400 miles from Calais & 120 miles from St. Malo.

If this is your first drive on the Continent and you require advice please let us know. Fuller details to those applying in due course.

Applications on rally slip only – NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE - with a SAE & a cheque for £15 payable to Mrs. D. Wellard, 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants. PO16 7UF. LIMIT 33 VANS.

*If you wish to run a rally in 2004 please contact me to check dates **before** booking with a site. To be included in the provisional rally list for 2004, issued with the January 2004 Newsletter, please contact me before the **end** of November 2003.*

A "Guide to New/Possible Marshals is available if you would like one please contact me, details below. 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:.....

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..... 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.....

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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 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

and all the trimmings. A 'must do' if in the area as the food is superb; two freshly cooked dinners and a pot of tea for less than £7.50 is not something you can get in your average motorway service area.

The ferry boarding was uneventful, even a little tedious as there is a 3 hour check in. But the van was secured (including a 'Defen Door' exterior deadlock for the rear door fitted by Essanjay in Poole) and we found our way to our cabin. There is plenty of on board catering at differing levels of cost but none are particularly cheap. This was an issue that would re-occur at frequent intervals once in the land of the 'midnight sun'. We had stocked up with canned food and a good supply of PG Tips and Nescafe before leaving the UK; even a bit of milk and butter survived the 25 hour crossing locked in the fridge.

I've never driven on the 'wrong' side of the road before, so leaving the docks at Bergen was a bit daunting particularly because it was raining. It was a bit like when your parents removed the stabilisers off your bike for the first time. There was no way I was going to turn left or right and kept on the southbound E.39 for quite a few miles, knuckles getting a little white, and I don't remember breathing out either!

Eventually we pulled up in a lay-by so that I could catch my breath and get our bearings. All bus stops on the main roads have lay-bys so a u-turn eventually put us on the right road for Loan Camping for our first stopover. The lay-bys are also ideal for letting faster traffic go past. This campsite has 3 areas of hard standing, but as is customary in Norway no parked pitches - you just find a space. I'd taken an extension electric lead and a continental adaptor as well as a reverse polarity lead, although one Dutchman advised me just to turn the plug upside down!! I will say, though, that a right-angled continental plug was not a good choice as it didn't always fit in the cut-outs in the electric post cover, a straight plug would have been better. Having come from the nights getting dark at 5.30 pm in New Zealand, the constant daylight throughout the night took some getting used to. Each trip to the bathroom an excuse to peer out of the window to experience, albeit dull, daylight at 2.am, 3.am etc.

We made our way up the E.39 via numerous tunnels and ferries to Alesund over the next few days, drinking in the spectacular views. Scary moment number 1 occurred when a group of boisterous 'East European' men decided to come across the campsite and sit at a picnic table next to our pitch. Nothing happened, but the cab doors were strapped together through the armrests that night! I carry a ratchet strap for these kinds of

moments, much safer than a chain and padlock as the strap hooks can be released quickly in an emergency.

Fortunately, our Executive is under 6 metres long so we didn't get penalised too heavily on the ferries, any vehicle over the magic 6m mark would get stung pretty heavily. Each ferry ranged from £6.00 - £10.00 one way and as we used 9 in total, plus a few toll roads/tunnels/bridges, around £100.00 was added to the cost - but you know that before going so it's no use complaining. We then made our way towards Trondheim but as we had vowed to avoid all big towns and cities headed for Flakk Camping, a sloping site that needed a tactical retreat, along with the other Brits, to the high ground where it started 'precipitating felines and canines' for the next 12 hours.

Our next destination was to pick up the northbound E.6 to Nanskoggen en route for the Arctic Circle. We took a circuitous route to join the E.6 starting with the ferry on our doorstep in Flakk. There is insufficient space to describe the scenery which includes mountains, fjords, waterfalls and rivers at every single turn of the road. I must comment on the roads. The back of the Executive, although diligently silenced as much as possible by myself by adjusting cupboard catches and the liberal application of Duck non-slip matting and much reduced with Air-ride suspension, can still let itself be known. (Carver Fanmaster - grrrr!)

As soon as we hit the standard Norwegian roads the noise disappeared. Combined with a 50 mph speed limit they led to a very relaxed drive. Road works to repair winter damage are something else though as the top surface is simply ripped off leaving a very dodgy surface during the works. To cut a long story short, we made it to the Arctic Circle, 15 degrees lower in temperature than Bergen and snow still at shoulder height in places even in mid-June. It was a magic moment! We claimed our 'Blue Nose' certificate when we got home.

Our return journey was almost trouble free (bucket loads of scenery though) until we went over Sognfjell, the highest mountain in northern Europe. The road was narrow and twisting, snow piled high up at the side, require a lot of dabs on the brakes. When it came to the descent things really hotted up as smoke started to billow from the front wheels. We stopped just before yet another hair-pin bend and a whoosh of hot smoke misted up the wing mirrors! After a cooling off spell we continued downwards in 2nd and 1st rather than higher gears with a lot less use of the footbrake - phew! No lasting damage. Scary moment number 2.

In summary, Norway is definitely a place to visit, but just as we found in New Zealand, it is a big country and trying to do more than 100 miles in a day and see the sights is not recommended. Unless you particularly want to visit the Arctic Circle or Nordkapp right at the top (along with hundreds of other motorbikes and campervans heading there) for the midnight sun in June. All the essential scenery is within a 150 mile radius of Bergen.

We were away for just under 4 weeks and had 3 weeks at home to prepare for the Tour de France leg - more of which later. This is when owning an A-S really comes into its own. There are always going to be 'wear and tear' items that need replacing especially after a trip such as ours. A quick phone call to the factory and the parts arrived in the post a few days later. There are not many marques that can offer that kind of service. I even had a call from *CT* himself on one issue, a point pressed home to owners of continental makes whenever the opportunity arises.

This was our first trip and we are by no means experts. But if anyone is thinking of going and would like to get in touch our e-mail address is as shown last month (terry.hammond@yahoo.co.uk) or the phone number - 011 8962 8030 - but in the evenings please!

Patricia & Terry Hammond

There will be, I hope, another item about the Tour de France trip in a later issue.

---====oooOOOooo====---

PARISIAN TRIP

We have just returned from this wonderfully organised trip. There are so many people to thank for getting us from Calais to our destination and back again. Personally, we would never have made it without so much guidance from Delia and Tim Clarke, our Team Leaders. We have made many new friends in the Club as well as catching up again with *Sylvia & Brian Smith*.

We ended the holiday by spending an enjoyable evening, on Friday, in the company of *Doreen and Colin Hunnisett* on a camp site in Folkestone before leaving for Telford at lunch time on Saturday. We even made time to go blackberry picking near the beach!

Many thanks, once again, to all concerned for ensuring the holiday was a great success. We await details of the next trip!

Rita Jones & Keith Taylor.

#####

We wish to express our thanks for the tour arranged by the Club through G B Privilege Ltd from which we have just returned. This was our first overseas trip in our Clubman and was initially entered with some trepidation which proved totally unjustified. The journey, from start to finish, went smoothly and we only lost our directions once. And that was on the RER train returning from a visit to Paris! (65 square miles).

Following our visit to the Club and Company rally, which was excellent but overwhelming due to the multitude of Club members, we were able to spend time with many of the fifty odd van owners (or should I say approximately fifty van owners) which was very enjoyable and entertaining, sharing experiences and making new friendships, some of which will be lifelong.

Once again, thanks to the Club for arranging this trip, and we look forward to possible overseas trips as organised by our Club during 2004.

Sheila and Ken Fairbairn

#####

This was the Club's first association with G B Privilege and was backed by the Committee as an experiment. A successful experiment it proved to be.

The Committee expected that some twenty to thirty members might participate, but in fact some forty units gathered at Black Horse Farm, the Caravan Club site at Folkestone on Saturday. Sunday saw us crossing by various P & O and SeaFrance ferries and, on arrival in France, we motored to 'Camping du Port de Plaisance' at Peronne. The experienced travelled solo whilst the 'first timers' elected to go in convoys led by G B Privilege leaders Bob, Wally and Tim.

At Peronne we met with another 27 vans who had come direct, making a total of 57 - or 60 including the G B P gang - 118 souls in total. A large number of folk had never been on an ASOC rally of any description, whilst a few had just been to the Club and Company Rally. They were now busy making friends.

Monday morning, and the convoys set off for Paris, but some individual travellers explored Peronne or visited some of the World War 1 battlefield sites which abound as this is in the Somme sector. Everyone arrived safely in Paris at 'Camping Paris Est Le Tremblay' after some adventures on the approach and some hold ups on the Motorway. So what's new?

Included in the prices was a five course dinner on Monday evening, but things went a bit pear shaped here. The camp site has a gate which leads

onto the river bank some 100 yards from the restaurant. This short cut saves a walk of about a mile. Unfortunately, they'd lost the key. We waited and waited, luckily it was warm and dry, the renowned ASOC patience was wearing thin when, after forty minutes, the key was found. The meal could have been better and two waiters serving 118 people five courses ensured that it wasn't finished until gone midnight - the coffee never did arrive.

Tuesday dawned an hour late, as it does in France, but it was worth waiting for - it was glorious. Most folk took off for the city but some elcted for the local market. The bus stopped right outside the gate and took us to the station where a train after half a dozen stops dropped us in the centre of Paris. We walked to Notre Dame and later caught the 'Red Tour Bus'. This visits all the major sights and one can get off and on as desired. The ticket lasts for two days and costs 22 euro - good value. We got off at the Arc de Triomphe and then walked to the Eiffel Tower. The view from the top was magnificent, the sky was clear blue and you could see to the horizon all the way round. Returning to camp everyone had their tale to tell of how they had spent their day and most, after the previous late night, fell into bed exhausted.

Unfortunately Wednesday was dull and it rained until afternoon when it brightened a little, but you can always find somewhere dry in a city and some visited the Louvre or one of the other museums. Thursday we said farewell to Paris and battled our way through the traffic to the countryside once again. This time we were heading for Condette, just south of Boulogne, and 'Camping Caravaning du Chateau du D'Hardelot'. This was a very pleasant site in a very prosperous area, very clean and tidy loos but **remember to take your own paper!** Friday morning was time for 'Goodbye'; 'See you next year' or 'See you at the Club & Company'. Then it was off to the boats and dear old Blighty.

So what did we and other 'old timers' get from this trip that we couldn't have done for ourselves? To be honest, not a lot. But we have introduced a lot of people to rallying; we have introduced a lot of people to travelling on the continent and, most of all, we have introduced a lot of people to what this Club is all about.

Brian Smith

--===oooOOOooo===---

From the Factory

As we are sure you are all aware, the annual Caravan and Outdoor Leisure Show, held at Earls Court, takes place on the 4th - 9th November. As usual A-S is taking a large stand where a wide selection of our 2004 range will be on display. This year will be our 35th Earls Court Show and we look forward to seeing many ASOC members on our stand (No. 124). The show will be your first opportunity to view our new range and this year we will have a new fresh look to the stand to complement the vehicles.

As well as a number of significant specification changes to current models, there will also be a number of new vehicles on display: The Peugeot Inca, our first wide-bodied motorhome; the Peugeot Midas, which has undergone considerable review after feedback from journalists, customers and ASOC members; and the new Volkswagen Trident - the first A-S vehicle to be built on the all new Volkswagen transporter.

In addition, we will be selling our extensive range of A-S outdoor clothing. The range includes hats, fleeces, T-shirts and jackets. This range of clothing was launched at Earls Court last year and has proved very popular. As an additional bonus, don't forget that ASOC members get a 5% discount on the whole range! Just state your membership number when making your purchase.

We are hoping that this year's show will be even more successful than last year and would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the stand and give us your feedback.

Anna King

-----oooOOOooo-----

MORE ABOUT SPARES

I am reminded of the caravan companies who provided legendary after sales service but have closed or sold out because the sale of new vans did not cover costs. Would it not be uneconomic to keep all moulds, particularly those for vans produced in small quantities? Volume producers such a Peugeot limit the supply of low volume or slow moving parts. Ford expects one to go to the open market for a reversing sensor if one has a towing bracket on a new Transit. Incidentally, I wonder how long it would take somebody, who presumably would have to be taken off productive work, to search for and identify the appropriate mould and then make the part.

Some years ago members recommended Derek Findlay (I thank them for the introduction) praising his Express gear change linkage. Since then there have been various favourable mentions in MMM etc. He has also cured windscreen and Luton leaks for me (Swift, not Auto-Sleepers!). As

I remembered seeing a Kon-Tiki spoiler at his premises, I telephoned him (012 0284 0749). He says that if members telephone with a problem he would be happy to discuss a solution.

David Maddison-Roberts

In case you may be wondering, *David* has been a member of the Club for a long time but is now one of our "Newsletter Only" people as he has moved to a different make of van. The gist of this letter was sent to *Charles Trevelyan* who has kindly sent me a copy of his reply.

#####

Many thanks for your letter. I am most grateful that you should have sent us a copy of your letter. With regards to the retention our moulds, we do retain these in the interest of customers and vehicle damage/insurance repairs. However on vans that are either quite old and which were manufactured in smallish numbers, through constraints of space and storage expenses we cannot keep each and every mould of all the models we have produced.

We therefore, regretfully, have at times to authorise the destruction of the lesser used moulds in the interests of space, economy and storage. However, high volume vehicles, for which there is demand on such items, the moulds irrespective of age are retained by us. The above refers to moulds for the glassfibre body. We can, however, cater for most customers' needs in respect of ABS and other associated plastic panels.

Charles Trevelyan

---====oooOOOOoo====---

TIPS FROM THE WEBSITE

Unfortunately, viruses through e-mails continue to flourish, to be a real menace and are becoming more devious. At my last check there are 65,217 known viruses - and no sign of them reducing in the future. The old practice of not opening attachments to prevent infection is no longer good enough.

However, good and disciplined practices can help avoid infection. I strongly recommend, for the sake of your own computer and ALL those in your address book, that you adopt the following:

Ensure you have a reputable anti-virus software installed that protects your e-mail.

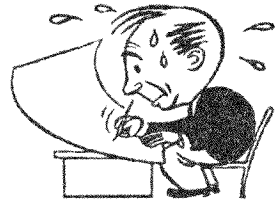
Ensure that you REGULARLY update the software by down-loading updates from the web. (Some offer automated updates.)

When you have been away or have not used your computer for a while, ensure that you update your anti-virus software BEFORE downloading your e-mails. This is a practice that many people have not yet adopted and therefore slip up.

---====oooOOOooo=====

Chairman's Chat

It was with great pleasure that I was able to write recently to new members to welcome them to the Club. Slightly unusual, you may think, but when I tell you that it was to **Membership number 5,000** you will realise just what a milestone it was. Since the back end of 1988, when the first ad-hoc committee was formed with a view to starting the Club, we appear to have recruited over 300 members each year, or more than 6 every week on average. Obviously, we have not retained all of them for various reasons but it does seem to me to be quite an achievement.



At our recent Committee meeting we were able to have a chat with Ian Capes, the C.E.O. of Auto-Sleepers Limited. Part of the conversation revealed that many of our members are using the e-mail service direct to him with various complaints and/or suggestions for his consideration. So many, in fact, that he is inundated with them and cannot really give the proper attention that they should receive. He has asked, therefore, if all members would send their comments, suggestions etc to the Technical Information Group who will be able to analyse them, avoiding duplication, so that a full list can be sent on to him perhaps broken down into the various subjects which may be covered.

So in future, please direct your communications to the Club website so that *Baz Wellard* can do the required work.

Harry Henthorne

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For Sale



Peugeot Boxer 1.9 TD Symbol, 1999 'T' reg. 2 berth. 22,000 miles. MOT & taxed Feb '04. Non-smokers, no pets. Extras. Reluctant sale. £19,995.00 ono. Phone Joseph Mills on 019 7835 4853 (Wrexham).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Duetto 2.5 diesel. 'M' reg, August 1994. Back box, free standing awning, Silver Screens etc. Two owners from new, non-smokers. Well cared for. Only 35,000 miles. Full service history. MOT to June 2004. £13,500.00 ono. Contact Don Rippon on 013 8881 6560 (Spennymoor, Co. Durham) or by e-mail on dm@tudhoevill.fsnet.co.uk

Thanks for the donation.

Omnistor 5000 awning, as new. £200.00. Tel: Norman Brice on 014 8356 2986 (Guildford, Surrey).

#####

Peugeot Talisman GX, 2.5TD. 'W' reg, 2000. 1 owner, as new condition. Alarm, immobilizer, bike rack, 2 Beeny boxes, Captain's seat. Serviced by Peugeot. Full MOT. 14,000 miles only. £26,500.00. Phone Dennis Clarke on 012 0638 3415 (West Mersea, Essex).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Ford Amethyst automatic 2.4 litre TD. 'W' registration, March 2000. 15,000 miles approx, FSH, 1 owner, non-smokers & no pets. Excellent condition. Usual comprehensive A-S specification and refinements. 2/4 berth arrangements, Freesia velour upholstery, 2 x cycle rack. Taxed & MOT until 2004. £28,750.00. Contact Brian Maddox, e-mail bmaddox@onetel.net or phone 012 2577 7322 (Trowbridge, Wilts.)

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Legend GL 'G' 1989. 2 litre petrol. 66,000 miles. MOT June '04. New engine, clutch, tyres, shock absorbers, discs, rear door mortice lock etc. Sale due to Sciatica problem. Reasonable offers please to Eddie Smith by e-mail to edsmith@tiscali.co.uk or phone 0161 973 0955 (South Manchester).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Silver Screens for Medallion. £50.00. Ron Mitchell 012 7458 2806 (Shipley, West Yorks).

#####

Peugeot Talbot Talisman 2.5L diesel, 'D' reg. 55,000 miles. Harrison de luxe free-standing awning with additional attachment bedroom. Air-ride, Thetford cassette toilet, shower, hob, grill, oven, 3-way fridge. 3 x cycle rack, canopy, Silver Screens. £7,000.00. Tel: Bob Wood on 013 5386 0658 (Ely, Cambs).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Duetto, 2.5 Turbo diesel, automatic, December 1998. 43,000 miles. Full service history and handbooks, taxed and tested. Immobiliser, PAS, alloy wheels and security bolt, new tyres, Silver Screens. Many extras including free standing awning/inner sleep compartment (as new). Full A-S spec. £18,000.00 ono. Tel Clive Judson on 019 2440 8848 (Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Surflo water pump from Duetto. Six years old but still serviceable. Replaced in error (see item earlier in Newsletter). Model No. 2095-204-413. 4.5 amps/30 psi. £50.00. Buyer collects or can arrange transfer at a mutually convenient location. Contact Bill Cameron on 012 7449 1046 or 07 752 648 787.

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