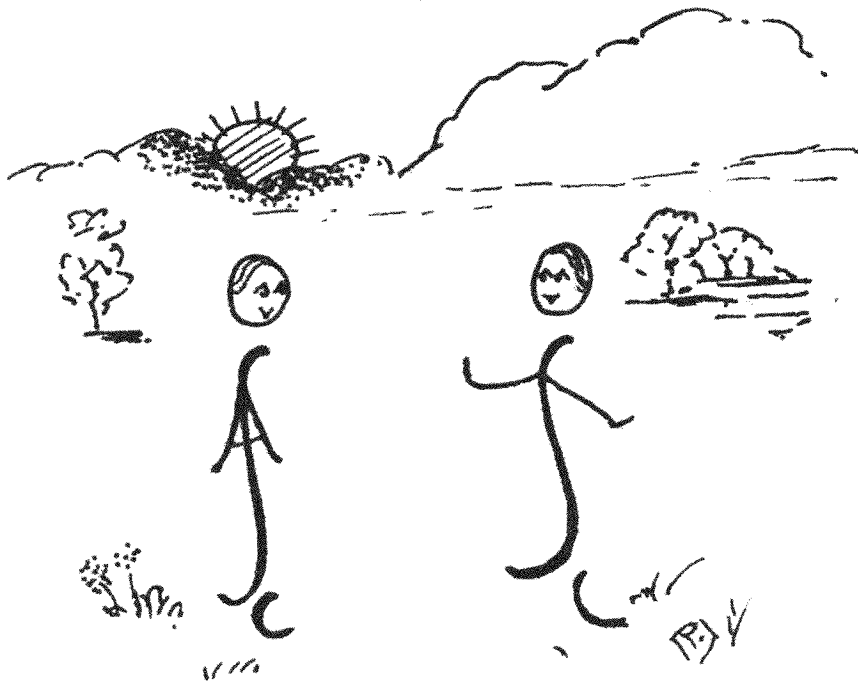




www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

A Company Limited by Guarantee.
Registered Office: Orchard Works, Willersey, Nr. Broadway,
Worcs., WR12 7QF. Registered No: 4616969



With all this Global Warming talk you don't know whether to Winterise your van or
get your bikini out!

NEWSLETTER 184

JANUARY 2004

Hello.

Sorry, folks, I goofed a bit last month. Did you notice? After I had prepared the Newsletter, and after *Sheila* had done the proof reading for me, I spotted a small error which meant that I had to take out one line. I did it and forgot to look through the rest of the pages because some of the text had slipped back a bit. A couple of headlines appeared on the page before they should have done. Must do better this year!

Another apology. I forgot to include the Christmas wishes not only from me but from the rest of your Committee. We all hope that you had a good time and that 2004 will be a very good year for you all. Perhaps not quite so dry and hot as 2003 but a good one none the less.

I don't know just how many of you will spot the difference, but I have decided to try a slightly different typeface for the new year. I have been using the almost traditional "Times New Roman" up to now but I thought that this one, "Franklin Gothic Book" might be just a little bit easier to read. Hope you like it.

I have no real doubt that if you do not like it you will surely let me know, one way or another!

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Market and Show Report

It was good to see those of you who were able to find the time to visit our stand at the Earls Court Camping and Caravanning Exhibition. I am confident you will all agree that the new style of stand, together with the much improved graphics on the vehicles we had on display, took Auto-Sleepers into the 21st Century.

This, together with the all new Volkswagen Trident with its MPV style furniture design and metallic paintwork, together with the wide bodied Peugeot with the built in awning, large under floor locker, huge gas compartment and separate shower drew a lot of attention and orders. As if this was not enough the Midas, which is based on the ALKO chassis and has a rear garage, certainly drew the crowds and was much praised by the public and press.

Despite all of the activities of the show, life at the factory continues on and, as always, we struggle to keep up with the market which in October increased by a massive 28%. The year to date total [End of November] stands at 24.6% with registrations of motorhomes in the UK forecast for the year at 7,318 vehicles.

During November I was lucky enough to meet members of your Committee when they visited the factory and we were able to show them

around. It is always a delight to meet Club members and keep in touch with you all.

Anthony Trevelyan

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The Paris Jaunt

Well, we looked forward to it for a long time and were we disappointed? — DEFINITELY NOT!!!!

We, along with quite a few other ASOC members, had never travelled abroad previously with our motorhomes and this was one reason for our trip. Gloria and Wally Bunting were Tour Directors for our third of the contingent. They kept us fully informed on routes, procedures, etc, giving us confidence until we were in the swing of things, looking out for other motorhomes in our group especially when driving through towns when it was so easy to lose one at traffic lights! G & W made us laugh, always had time to listen to our concerns, however small, remembering when they had felt the same years before they gained their experience of exploring various other countries.

Our first site (not counting Folkestone where some of us met up before the crossing) was in Peronne. All participants met for drinks and nibbles (some more than others) to get to know new friends. The next morning (if only we had had time to sample the swimming pool) three groups left at staggered intervals for the next site half an hour outside Paris. Not the standard of site we expected but nevertheless very convenient for seeing the sights. Paris was all we remembered and more, but will our legs and feet ever recover from the miles we walked! For us the highlight was Le Musée d'Orsay - so inspirational. Fellow travellers had some exciting tales to relate about the sights they had seen.

Our first evening was spent at a guinette (restaurant) sampling the most delicious French cuisine and dancing our cares away. Three days later we were at a pretty site near Boulogne and we wished we could have stayed longer. But after visiting a local auberge to experience good food, wine and even better company, we were heading for Calais. After the obligatory visit to the hypermarket we headed for the ferry. Would the springs of our little home on wheels cope with the weight??

Saying goodbye at Dover to newly made friends was a sad time, but hey, this was only au Revoir, because now we would be heading for more ASOC rallies, only this time we wouldn't be going alone!

Anne and Kevin Rose

—====oooOOOooo====—

Burton - Marston Brewery rally

As always, the marshals met us with a warm welcome. Nothing was too much trouble. They fetched, carried and drove us around; the sun shone; the brewery trip and meals were all fabulous. The double decker bus that *Barbara and I* worked on in the fifties and sixties was very good as was the trip we were taken on. That was the icing on the cake for us.

So to *Trish, Ted, Jan and Vic* and all who helped, Thanks for the memory.

Barbara and John Cox.

It's nice to know that Member Number ONE is still going strong, in spite of recent health setbacks.

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Pump Mystery

I read with interest *Bill Cameron's* letter regarding the Shurflo water pump that required priming. These pumps are, indeed, supposed to be self-priming. The only possible fault I can see with *Bill's* unit was that there may perhaps have been a crack in the water filter. This is attached on the input side of the pump and is a small translucent plastic barrel filter.

On very rare occasions these have cracked and thus the pump finds it easier to draw air through this small aperture rather than raising the water from the tank. Members might wish to be aware of this, just in case over the winter months a small amount of residual water has been retained in the filter that has led to one of these cracks.

Here at the Service Centre at Willersey we hold spare filters. Alternatively they can generally be repaired with a very small amount of Araldite having first ground out the crack to a very small degree to increase the surface area for bonding.

Charles Trevelyan

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Pump Priming

I have found it very interesting reading about people sucking air out of their pipes to get water flowing through the pump.

I may be wrong here (and if I am no doubt it will generate further correspondence) but surely the answer is having removed the faucet from the cold tap nearest the pump is just to pour water down the pipe?

Water being heavier than air it will expel the air and get water to the pump thus priming it.

Brian Green

Two points spring immediately to my mind. To "remove the faucet from the cold tap nearest the pump" is fraught with difficulty in our van. The nearest tap is the one in the sink. The other is that when we had this sort of problem, the trouble was the lack of water in the bit of pipe between the tank and the pump. There would have been a mass of water in the tank and not enough weight in the water down to the pump to expel the air through the tank or back up the pipe.

—===oooOOo===—

From the Factory

It's the time of year again, as we are approaching Christmas, to reflect on our achievements of the past 12 months. It certainly has been a busy year for Auto-Sleepers. 2003 started successfully with the National Boat, Caravan and Outdoors Show at the NEC in February. It was a great event where new and upgraded vehicles were introduced into the motorhome marketplace: the hugely successful Nuevo ES, improved specifications for the Peugeot Executive and Talisman and the EK version of the A-class Luxor.

Another key milestone was the launch of the new Company website. Included with the new look site featuring the whole A-S range, were some great additions: The 'community' page allows A-S owners and motorhome enthusiasts to share experiences and advice, as well as to get links to other useful motorhome websites. The new website also features the A-S clothing range, which can be ordered by printing off an order form online (don't forget that ASOC members get a 10% discount by clearly stating your membership number). Finally, the 'news' page reports on all recent events and stories to keep the users updated about all aspects of A-S, at all times. As a result of these improvements, the site traffic and brochure requests have increased dramatically.

In April, A-S launched three upgraded Volkswagen vehicles: The Trooper LE, Trident Le and Topaz LE. These high specification 'limited editions' were the last T4 vehicles to be produced before the launch of the brand new Volkswagen Transporter later on in the year.

Mid-year - July - and it was time again for the annual Club and Company Rally at the usual location, the Three Counties Show Ground. Many of you turned up to see the wide range of A-S models as well as

a display of classic and vintage vehicles. The glorious weather added to the huge success of the event with a record number of visitors. Needless to say, all who went enjoyed the activities. ASOC Committee members visited the factory for one of their meetings this year, and had a brief tour as well as a question and answer session with various members of the management. The day was useful for all participants and will be considered again in the future.

November was another important month for A-S with the launch of three brand new products at the Caravan & Outdoors Leisure Show, Earl's Court. The star of the show was undoubtedly the new Volkswagen Trident, the first A-S motorhome to be built on the new Volkswagen Transporter. It was revealed on a brand new stand using the latest technology, in the presence of celebrity guest Tara Palmer-Tomkinson. Two new Peugeot vehicles, the Midas and the Inca, were also launched on the same day generating tremendous interest - both customer and media - and showing a new approach to interior design.

Overall, it has been an extremely eventful and productive year for us. What remains to say is that we are now preparing and planning for 2004. Our aim is to build on the developments of 2003. On the basis of the increasing level of interest in our new range of 21st century motorhomes, next year promises to be exceptional - so watch this space!

Carole Domenech

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Fire Precautions

I know that a lot of members will have read the article on fire and how devastating it can be which was printed in MMM recently. We have had items in the Newsletter on this subject in the past but it always deserves a mention.

I know that most, if not all, motorhomes carry extinguishers (or should do!) and I feel that Fire Blankets ought to be an option when buying a motorhome, preferably free. Such fire blankets should also be displayed at rallies and other events.

John Cox

I agree with our Founder Vice-President and I shall be happy to include any article, preferably from one of our members who is or has been in the Fire Service, on this subject. Just as a point of interest, we always have carried a fire blanket which is placed on a hook above the sink when we are stationary (if I have remembered to put it there!)

Above the sink so that if required we can easily get it down without getting to near any flaming thing on the stove!!

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2004 Photographic Competition

A very Happy New Year to all. This is the time of the year when we're all huddled indoors, with the wind blowing a gale and snow two feet thick, to sort out all those prints and digitals we took last year. It is not too early to pick the best of the bunch and send them off to me for this year's competition. As usual, your efforts will be judged at the Club and Company Rally in July.

Rules

1. All pictures must include an A-S motorhome.
2. There are two categories - Standard and Humorous. You may enter either or both, but a maximum of two pictures per class, please.
3. Standard - must be as you see in your view finder, not digitally manipulated.
4. Humorous - change of rules here - may be manipulated.
5. Maximum size 8" x 6".
6. Your name, membership number and a caption must be written on reverse of print.
7. No pictures can be returned and may be used by Auto-Sleepers Ltd for publicity or by me to accompany press reports etc. Pictures may be displayed on the Club's website.
8. There will be no payment other than the usual magnificent prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category.
9. I must receive entries by 19th June 2004. Send them to me at:

9 St Mary's Road
Bluntisham
Huntingdon
PE28 3XA.

Don't wait until the last minute - **DO IT NOW**, please! *Please!!*

Brian Smith

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Jack Extensions

Reference the letter from *Tricia and John Ward*. We too read the letter from *Dawn and Jack Plumbley* in the October Newsletter and wondered how we would be able to change a tyre on the new Ford

Pollensa which we had recently purchased if we should be in the Outer Hebrides, which is one of the places to which we like to travel. We thoroughly searched the Pollensa but could not find anything.

We questioned this with Ford who told us that we really should have a hydraulic bottle jack because of the weight of the vehicle. However, we also wrote to A-S who told us that our dealers (Marquis) should have the relevant jack extension and to contact them in the first place. We asked Marquis where the jack extension was, as we could not find it in the vehicle. They said they did not have it and would therefore get in touch with A-S. The jack extension duly arrived from A-S and when Marquis received it they sent it on to us. Therefore, get in touch with your dealer first and if they say they never had the jack extension ask them to contact A-S. Possibly this is something that gets overlooked when supplying the vehicle?

Elizabeth and Alan Sullivan.

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WINTERISATION

I appreciated the article by *Charles Trevelyan*. DIY is not my forté and I would have appreciated a few diagrams or pictures as I found the text alone confusing.

Also I have still not solved the problem that the spare wheel, underneath the van, is inaccessible to an elderly owner.

Martin Orrell.

I can only insert diagrams when I get them in; I'm certainly not an expert to be able to draw them myself. I too have found difficulty with the spare wheel on the Clubman. The only occasion recently when I have had to get the spare wheel out was when I wrecked the tyre on the front when one of those traffic island things jumped out and stood right in the way. I was not able to loosen the nuts holding the wheel bracket in position. So I called out the RAC and a very nice fellow appeared and did all the work for me. I then took the wheel to a tyre fitter who replaced the damaged tyre and refitted the wheel into the holder underneath the van. Problem solved!

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DRAUGHTS

Having recently purchased a Ford 2.4 TDI Pollensa I wonder if anyone can help me with my problem? We noticed when we bought it that we had air conditioning in the summer, which we thought was nice

when it was hot, which seemed to be coming in through the Heki roof and also the back opening ventilator over the kitchen. We took it back to A-S who looked at the Heki roof and said it was one of those problems that if the roof did not seat properly when it was first fitted it let a draught in. They would therefore put a seal round it, which they did and it seemed to solve the problem.

However winter has come with colder weather and as we drive between Nottingham and Scarborough a lot, having relatives in Scarborough, our daughter and grandchildren travel in the back of the motorhome. Unfortunately we now find that we have to put them into sleeping bags and cover them in duvets as they get frozen after a half hour drive. This is due to the freezing air that is coming down from somewhere near the toilet and in between the seats from the back of the vehicle towards the front, hitting the driver's and passenger's seat. If you put your hand down between these seats you can feel the cold air coming from the back.

Whilst sitting in the passenger seat my right leg is frozen even though we have the heating on full blast. Of course, the heat does not even get back into the rear part of the van. Does anyone know what is causing this? We have no windows or roof vents open and the 'trauma' heater (which is the bane of our life with its rattling wire parts) also seems cold. Apart from crawling on my knees around the van when moving at 60 mph to trace this freezing draught, I wondered if anyone else has had this problem and have been able to rectify it.

Elizabeth Sullivan

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CONTINENTAL HOOK-UPS

In the December Newsletter *Robin Gardner* raised two very common questions regarding the use of electric hook-ups on the Continent. I hope that the following question and answer list will help fellow members through the maze of "reverse polarity".

Q. Will reversing the mains damage my equipment?

A. No. As we are only concerned here with Alternating Current (A.C.), the electricity supplying your kettle, TV, microwave etc actually reverses its direction of flow (i.e. It reverses polarity) 100 times per second. If it didn't your TV or microwave wouldn't work!

Q. I have heard that it is dangerous for U.K. visitors to use our equipment on the Continent even if it appears to work correctly on reverse polarity. Is this true?

A. If your electrical gear is in good order and has not been "repaired" by a cowboy who just might have bypassed a safety device, using it on the Continent is just as safe as at home.

Q. I understood that Continental caravanners are safe because their switches are "double pole" and we only have "single pole".

A. If the European version of an electrical appliance has a DP switch, so will the UK version. If the UK version has a SP switch, so does the European one. It is possible to replace the 13 amp sockets in your van with ones fitted with DP switches, but why not simply remove the plug?

The real difference between our electrical systems is in the way that the mains sockets in France, Germany, Holland etc are protected by a fuse which is rated according to the current rating of the socket. So that if the sockets on your camp site are 5 amp, then that socket will be supplied with its own 5 amp fuse or circuit breaker IN THE LIVE CONNECTION. In the UK the 13 amp sockets on a ring main are all fed from one 30 amp fuse, relying on the smaller value fuse in the plug top to protect the cable to your equipment. That is why it is extremely dangerous to have a reverse polarity on a wall socket or other connector on a UK ring main.

In our '93 Harmony there are two circuit breakers rated at 6 amps and 10 amps. If either circuit was overloaded, the site's cut out would "blow" first. If your van's installation is like ours, and it probably is, the circuit breakers are double pole and made in France!

Albert Brown
(Tiggers Group)

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DIRECTION SIGNS

Seen on the A.90 road between Laurencekirk and Brechin.



Just thought this might raise a laugh!

Bryan Oliver

====oooOOOooo====

Air Conditioned Topaz

As we set off for the South of France last June in our brand new Topaz we didn't realise that we were heading into the most extreme



January 2004 Rally Supplement



**A Happy New Year
to All Ralliers.**

Applications for all rallies, unless otherwise stated in this supplement, are to be made using a rally slip by post.

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.

THIS RALLY IS NOW FULL.

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.

Application 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.

25th. – 28th. March (3nights). Elm Cottage Caravan Park, Little Budworth, Cheshire. (Website www.elmcottage7.freemove.co.uk/site)

Emergency Tel.No. 01829 760544 Emergencies only.

Rally Marshals: Elizabeth & Bryn Morgan, 44 Mersey Rd. Heaton Mersey, Stockport.

SK4 3DJ Tel.No. 0161 4324869, mobile 07890876859 & Nora & Ven Venables.

Site Fees: £7.35 (incl. electricity) Basic pitch £5.25 (excl. electricity) (both per van per night). Rally Fees: £3.00 each person. All inclusive of VAT. We now have to pay for the hire of the barn.

Dogs allowed but MUST be on a lead on site. Please indicate on rally slip if you are bringing a dog. This will assist the marshals in placing vans.

Rally slips & cheques to : Mrs. N. Venables, 15 Langley Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton. WV3 7JN.

Tel.No. 01902 332 105. Please include a SAE for Confirmation of booking, site directions & further details.

Attractions: Nantwich, Chester, Little Budworth Country Park, & the Anderton Boat Lift. There is a cycleway on an old railway line nearby. The Shrewsbury Arms pub which serves food is 400 yards away. The site is well draining and there are two small toilet blocks each with a shower.

There is also a toilet & washroom for the disabled.

We have the use of "Noggins Barn" for our evenings.

On Friday evening we plan to have a slide show & talk about the Anderton Boat Lift

for those who are interested. There will be a charge of about £1.00 per person for those attending so please indicate if interested so we can decide if it is worth organising.

There will be tea/coffee afterwards for all ralliers.

If there is sufficient interest we will organise a coach trip on Saturday to Port Sunlight & Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet. The total cost will be approx. £7.00 per person. Please indicate on slip if you are interested.
DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY.

There will be a pie, potato & pea supper on Saturday evening. Cost to be calculated.

After the rally. We have been informed that the Anderton Boat Lift will re-open on Sunday 28th.

March. (www.andertonboatlift.co.uk). The rally marshals are staying on site for an extra night after the end of the rally so as to visit the boat lift. Why not join us? Those who decide to stay must book with the warden for the extra night. If you are intending to visit the boat lift then you will have to make your own way there & back (10 miles). If there is sufficient interest I will arrange a group booking for admission, the cost would be reduced from £5.25 to £4.40. I MUST know the numbers well in advance so please indicate if interested when booking. Send **NO** money.

26th - 28th March. Motorhome & RV Show, Great Driffield, East Yorkshire.

Emergency Tel. No. 0777 557 0182 Marshals' mobile.

Rally Marshals: Jan & Vic Hicklin.

Site Fee: Special Club prices. Arrive Thursday £28.00 Friday onwards £23.00. Rally Fee: £2.35 (Incl. VAT)

Send rally fees with rally slip & SAE for Show application form by 12th March to:-

Mrs. J. Hicklin, 381 Manor Road, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire. S43 1PP. Tel. No. 01246 236 157.

Return application forms to the organisers, Stone Leisure, by closing date 18th March.

*If you wish to run a rally in 2004 please contact me to check dates **before** booking with a site. 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:

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!

heat wave that the region had known for decades. As the shade temperature started nudging 40° C we found that we were baking as we drove along. Opening the windows just turned the van into a fan assisted oven. It was clear to us that, well equipped though our new van was in most departments, what it needed was cab air conditioning, something we have come to take for granted in our car.

Like most people we had bought the van from the dealer's stock and no air conditioned Topaz was on offer. When we got back from France a month later I started looking for a "retro-fit". I quickly learned that no official VW dealer that I contacted would touch this job.

Eventually I was recommended to Munich Motors of Wokingham, near Reading where we live. They told me that there was a one month waiting list for retro-fit air-con kits and quoted me a price for the kit and full installation of just over £2,000.00. The price matched pretty well what I had been told by other garages that I would be likely to pay. When the kit arrived they phoned me and I left the van with them for a couple of days for the fitting. It was done on time and at the stated price and all seems well. Of course, winter isn't the time to test its effectiveness but we hope that when we get to the Costa del Sol after Christmas we will find it useful. Certainly next summer's planned trip down the Croatian coast should give it a real test!

I don't have any connection with Munich Motors but am happy to recommend them. Their phone number is 011 8977 2236. I gather that the waiting list for kits has grown longer but there is still time to get converted for next summer.

Peter Roach

So - if 2004 proves to be a cold, wet and horrible summer we shall know just who to blame, shan't we?

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Thoughts on Camping

Reading the Newsletter which arrived this morning has prompted me to put some of my thoughts down on paper. I often think that the industry is losing sight of any connection with camping and is trying to burden us all with mobile gin palaces. Life in a small motorvan can be both simple and rewarding. I will divide this diatribe into sections.

Water. Water comes out of a domestic tap with about 3 parts per million of free chlorine. This is necessary to keep it sterile during the journey from water works to house. If you connect a hose and put it in

the tank it will still be sterile and protected. Put a Jabsco water filter under the sink and you have a supply of clean drinking water. The Jabsco filter cartridge should be replaced every year. Once the main filter unit has been fitted (a hell of a job) the rest is easy.

The hot water system is a waste of time, water, gas and money. Take the heater out (a Corgi job) and you have a useful increase in wardrobe space. It is far better to heat a kettle of water as needed, cheaper and quicker. As for the shower, it's not much use anyway; a hot water wash with a flannel and soap is perfectly adequate. Many camp sites have showers.

Heating. The heater installed in the Rambler is noisy and uses a lot of gas and 'leisure' electricity. We got much better results from a small fan heater (cost about £18.00 from Argos). It has a thermostat control and can deliver either 1 or 2 Kw. It is not really needed in the summer and in the winter we were always on a hook-up so it did not cost us anything extra to run.

Cushions. Much of the problem of bed making is in the weight of the cushions, especially as one grows older. We replaced our 4 seat cushions with plastic ones of the same size and which fitted into the same stretch covers as had been made for the originals. The new cushions are a fraction of the weight and have been used for several years; they are perfect. They were made by a local market trader. I can easily lift one with finger and thumb.

Gas. We used 2 Calor cylinders, each with its own Gaslo indicator. This gives a good idea of how much gas there is in each cylinder. When all the appliances have been turned off and the valve on the cylinder closed, the needle should stay still for at least 60 seconds. It does go down eventually but any visible movement in the first minute means that there is a leak. This is a valuable safeguard. In winter we changed one of the butane cylinders for a propane with its own regulator. We found no problem with this.

On our last trip to France we used electric hook-ups all the time and saved 80p per day. Gas is an expensive commodity and a fridge uses an awful lot especially in a hot climate. This also meant that the 2 Calor cylinders were plenty for the trip. I think that I only used one of them.

Security. I understand that a cylinder lock cannot be picked, so I have fitted one to each of the three main doors, and a cabin hook to the inside of the sliding door. I did consider a Van Bitz type of alarm but was advised that a van like mine was unlikely to be stolen and that the cost would far

outweigh any reduction in insurance premium. I accepted this advice and am perfectly happy with our security.

Sanitation. As we bought it there was room for a small Elsan toilet. As soon as possible I fitted a Thetford swivel cassette toilet. This took up most of the shower space but was an enormous improvement. *Dorothy* bought me a Wastemaster for the waste water. Each morning it is just a question of putting the cassette on to the Wastemaster and toddling off to the disposal unit. To my mind this is a far better arrangement than having an inboard waste tank. The morning chore only takes a few minutes.

The fitting of power steering and of the Delphin gear linkage were two of the best things I did. The van is a real treat to drive.

I hope that all of this will be of interest to members and possibly to A-S too. Our 25 years of retirement were the best part of our lives. The last dozen or so with ASOC really were the best of all. It is a pity it all had to end but I fear the van will have to go. It is nothing without *Dorothy*.

Nial Reynolds

Members will recall that *Nial* printed and published "Rambling Recipes", a cook book which from his own experience contained recipes eminently suitable for use when camping. We are sorry to think that he might give up camping now but can quite understand why he might do so.

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Chairman's Chat



As the possibility of problems arising from people doing all sorts of technical things to their vehicles and habitation areas, your Committee has decided that in future any suggestion of modifications will be passed first to the Tiggers who will liaise appropriately with the factory people to ensure that nothing untoward will happen. You may still send your

ideas and suggestions to your Editor but it could take some time before you saw anything in print. I have already passed a couple of items across and no doubt they will come back some time in the New Year with the approval of the experts - or not as the case may be!

The Committee met at Moreton-in-Marsh on December 6th. The meeting was rather shorter than is usual because our President

had invited the Committee and partners to a Christmas Luncheon, kindly financed by Auto-Sleepers Ltd. A very good meal was enjoyed by all in the pleasant atmosphere of the Manor House Hotel in Moreton. It was particularly enjoyable because we were honoured with the presence of *Victoria and Anthony Trevelyan* as our special guests. Our warmest thanks go to the Company for their kindness.

The Club will not have a presence at the NEC show this year. It was decided that the expense incurred was not in keeping with what the Club is about.

I have just been advised that our present Regalia Officer, who is not on the Committee now, has decided to resign the position due to health problems. Having worked with *Andrew Entwistle* for many years now, I am sorry to learn that he feels this way. He has done a lot for the Club in various capacities. I am sure that you will all join me in wishing him, and *Betty* too, a full recovery and then continuing good health and happiness.

Sheila joins me in wishing you all a very safe, happy and prosperous New Year with many happy miles rolling under your wheels and/or feet!

====oooO000oo====

WINTERISATION - AGAIN

Having experienced a water leak due to a cracked pump in our first van, I have since always disconnected the inlet and outlet unions of the water pump. Indeed, the A-S manuals state that this should be done as part of the winterisation process.

However I cannot see how to do this with our present van, a 2003 Symbol/ES. In order to access the pump's union nuts, you must remove its mounting screws so that the pump can be moved about. However I find it impossible to remove the screw located at the back of the pump because access to it is very restricted.

Has any other Symbol owner noticed this problem and perhaps found a way of dealing with it?

Alan Hughes

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Gas

Regarding the article in December about using propane and butane cylinders in the same installation, Gaslow Switch 2 twin Cylinder Gas System (product code 01-5050) allows the switching as follows:'

Propane to Butane: Butane to Camping Gaz: Camping Gaz to Propane and any combination in the low pressure side of the gas system.

While staying at the Peterborough show, my gas ran out at 6 am (I could hear the fridge clicking) and I had to change bottles before I could heat any water for tea or to get washed. As this was not a very pleasant experience I purchased the Gaslow switch and now I can change to the other bottle in a very short time. As I have a '93 Harmony with the gas locker available internally it takes about 30 seconds to switch off the empty cylinder, change the switch, and turn the full cylinder on. I think the switch was in the £20.00 range but it was well worth it as it is possible to remove the empty bottle at a more convenient time.

I hope this information will help *Ron Forsyth* with his query.

Gordon Tye

I presume that this means that each cylinder, of whatever type, must have its own regulator, each of which is then connected to the changeover switch. I wonder what will happen in the newer vehicles when the regulator appears as if it will be more a part of the vehicle than the cylinder. We shall wait and see. Comments from people more expert are invited!

—===ooo000ooo===—

Tips for Beginners

Despite having camped, caravanned and motor caravanned for nearly 50 years, we are still interested in new hints and ideas. But to empty the waste tank into the WASHING UP BOWL is certainly not one we will adopt.

It might save a trip to the service point but it is likely to lead to a visit to hospital with a nasty infection. By the way, where is the washing up bowl then emptied?

Gordon Finlayson

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Winter Offers

Our friends at the A-S Motorhome Service Centre are making a special offer for all bookings during January, February and March 2004 of a discount of 10%. For ASOC members this will be increased to 15% for the same period. As examples, the Annual Habitation Check normally costs £140.00; the Pro-C cycle rack is fitted for £210.00 and

brake fluid change is £25.00. When you take 15% off these prices, and all the others, it can lead to quite a healthy saving.

There are many other offers available so if you should need any work done on your vehicle, from servicing to retro-fitting of almost anything, then the Centre staff is standing by to help you. Why not give them a ring in the first place to see if they will do what you want and to find out the cost? Their phone number is 013 8685 3511 and you should quote your Club Membership Number to obtain the special discount.

Having had recent experience of the service obtainable from Willersey I can honestly recommend them as a friendly, helpful and efficient mob!

Harry Henthorne

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FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

I should like to say a big "Thank You" to the members who have renewed their membership. At the time of writing almost half the members have done so.

If you have not yet renewed and you pay by cheque this will be the last Newsletter you will receive. But I feel sure that you would not wish to miss your Newsletter.

For those who pay by standing order mandate, you will receive your Newsletter as usual.

Norma Caley

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Champagne Tour 2004

Champagne...the very name conjures up images of the good life - la belle époque! On this tour, organised by GB Privilege, ASOC members will have the opportunity to experience a fabulous banquet in a top quality champagne house with virtually unlimited quantities of top class bubbly, as well as making huge savings in Europe's largest factory outlet centres. Club members who are not very experienced in driving on the continent will benefit from having an experienced Tour Director to follow every step of the way, while those with more confidence can simply take advantage of the incredible value. We shall have our champagne banquet in the exclusive "Cave of Bacchus" in the champagne cellars. This setting is only used for major events (it is where the Orient Express passengers used to dine in the 1920's, so

members should feel at home immediately!). The walls include some beautiful carvings which are candlelit and the overall ambience is fabulous.. On one of GB Privilege's previous visits, one of the tour participants described the banquet as "the finest meal he had ever eaten" - and he worked in the "top end" of the restaurant industry.

ITINERARY

Monday, 17th May. Ferry from Dover to arrive Calais about 15.00 local time. A drive of about 100 miles (nearly all on motorway) to our first campsite near Peronne. There will be enough time in the evening for everyone to get to know each other at an informal drinks reception.

Tuesday, 18th May. A drive of about 110 miles, nearly all on motorway so it should be easy. Arrive at the campsite near Chalons sur Marne in mid afternoon giving everyone enough time to visit a supermarket to stock up supplies.

Wednesday, 19th May. A completely free day, but we will be collected by bus in the evening and taken to Epernay, one of the major Champagne producing centres. Our destination is Champagne Mercier. We will be given a tour of the cellars in their "little train" and have the mysteries of Champagne production explained by expert guides. This will be followed by a tasting and then the superb banquet as mentioned above. At the end of a memorable evening we will be returned to the campsite for a good night's sleep.

Thursday, 20th May. Another free day so you can relax and do nothing or catch a bus from outside the site into town centre.

Friday, 21st May. We head back towards the coast and stop at our final campsite at Boulogne, Our drive will be about 225 miles. We suggest you do some of your shopping this afternoon to ensure you have enough time in the morning to buy the fresh produce. The savings you make could pay for the whole trip! In the evening the tour director will organise an optional "last night" dinner in a traditional local restaurant.

Saturday, 22nd May. The port of Calais is less than one hour's drive so you will have enough time for some last minute shopping at a superb indoor shopping centre near Calais where virtually everybody speaks English, but the ambience is definitely French. We board the ferry for Dover at about lunchtime.

Included in the tour price

Return ticket on Dover-Calais ferry for motorhome up to 6 metres.

1 night at campsite near Peronne with 220v hook-up.

Drinks reception at Peronne campsite.

3 nights at campsite near Chalons sur Marne with 220v hook-up.
Bus to and from Champagne Mercier cellar.

Tour of cellar with experienced guide.

Banquet with champagne.

1 night at campsite near Boulogne with 220v hook-up.

Comprehensive route guide and services of experienced GB Privilege tour director.

Price: £435.00 per motorhome with 2 people. Any extra people in the same motorhome will be charged £130.00 per head. Minimum of 40 people required.

You can extend your stay on the continent - ask for details with your booking form.

For a booking form please send your name and address to:

GB Privilege Ltd, 3 The fields, Tacolneston, Norfolk, NR16 1DG. Tel:019 5378 9661; Fax: 019 5378 9519; Email: gbprivilege@yahoo.com

Andy Cavell

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Wanted

Electrolux 3-way fridge. Model No 212 or similar.
Please ring with details. Eric Wilton, 011 7986 0942
(Bristol)

Thanks for the donation.

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For Sale

Slightly odd, this. I have been advised by two people who are not members of items which may be of interest to you. The first is a rear mounting spare wheel carrier from a 1990 Legend in nearly new condition. The asking price is £50.00. Also a brand new, never fitted, exhaust/inlet manifold for 1.9ltr Peugeot petrol Symphony, 'R' reg. Originally cost £130.00 but offered at £85.00 ono.

As a service to members I publish these, because we do NOT accept adverts from elsewhere. If anyone is interested in either offer, please telephone your Editor for the appropriate addresses.

#####

Back box made to fit A-S Duetto but will fit on any Transit back step. It is powder coated aluminium in Duetto colour. 59" long x 10" wide x 7¼" high. Ideal for windbreaks and awning poles etc. £235.00. Tel: Gordon Goodrich on 011 4230 6786 (Sheffield). Thanks for the donation.



#####

Rear glass fibre back box on strong, easily detachable, chassis mounted frame plus mounting brackets + lighting board. Will fit an Executive or any motorhome. £225.00. Also solar screen to fit Fiat/Boxer. £20.00. Tel: Dell Pack on 012 6869 0735 (Canvey Island, Essex).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Reluctant sale of our 1989 'G' Renault Rapport, 1.7 petrol (unleaded). 51,300 miles, stored under cover. MOT and serviced in March 2003 (less than 500 miles use this year). Tax March 2004, Habitation service check May 2003. Three way fridge, Vaillant water heater, Propex blown air heater, elsan Visa potty, two burner cooker with grill, original A-S crockery, alarm, dual battery system, two gas bottles, wheel covers (to reduce u.v. deterioration of tyres). Service record, handbooks (including vehicle) new Shurflow water pump, Fritiders auto-chalet free standing annexe and ground sheet. Near immaculate condition for year. £6,750.00 ono. Telephone Roy Tustin on 012 4260 2893 (Winchcombe, Glos).

#####

Executive 4 berth, 'W' reg, 18,500 miles, usual A-S spec plus Beeny box, Airride, Noisekiller, Defen Door lock. 1.9TD 92bhp, (NOT 85bhp) torque optimised by Van Aaken, reluctant sale due to downsizing. Tax and MOT to April 2004. £24,995.00. Tel: Terry Hammond on 011 8962 8030 evenings (Woodley, Reading).

#####

A rare opportunity to own a Classic Camper. 1979 A-S first coachbuilt motorhome. Bedford CF, CB22. 57,000 genuine mileage. MOT June 2004; Taxed October 2004. In excellent condition mechanically and bodily. Maintained to a very high standard (show winner). £4,500.00 ono. Tel: Roy Hill on 017 0665 7821 (Rochdale).

Thanks for the donation.

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