

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

A Company Limited by Guarantee.

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www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk



NEWSLETTER 196

JANUARY 2005

Hello.

First of all, a very happy New Year to you all. I'm sorry that I forgot to include Christmas greetings in the last Newsletter but things got a little bit hectic in the month of November when it was put together that I quite forgot it. But all your committee hope that you had a very good pleasant festive season and did not eat too much. The cover picture was one that I suppose should have been used last month but it will do for now when you are still enjoying the last of the festivities.

I mentioned last month that I was a bit short of items for inclusion in YOUR Newsletter. Many thanks to those who wrote in, particularly those who sent me some interesting snippets which can be used as fillers as I need them. *Chris & Ron Lyon* sent me a collection of sentences which have actually appeared in church bulletins or have been announced in the services. Here are a couple of samples - more to follow.

"Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa."

"The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer conference includes meals."

"The sermon this morning is "Jesus walks on the Water"; the sermon tonight "Searching for Jesus".

I hope they made you smile. Talking of smiling, here is a poem which was sent in by *Howard Marshall*.

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SMILE !

Smiling is infectious -
You can catch it like the flu
When someone smiled at me today
I started smiling too.

I went around a corner
And someone saw my grin,
Then he smiled and I realised
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought a lot about the smile
And realised its true worth,
A single smile like mine
Could travel round the earth.

So if you feel a smile begin,
Don't leave it undetected,
Let us start an epidemic quick
And get the world infected!!

That is in line with a motto I learned many years ago and which I have always tried to keep up. "If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours".

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Vehicle Design

How we agree with *Irene and Lionel Le Vie's* comments regarding the design of the new Auto-Sleepers in the December Newsletter. We too toured the show grounds and showrooms ready to buy a brand new camper to replace our much loved 100,000 miles plus Peugeot Talbot 'H' reg Rambler. Both the new and nearly new vans were awful - all arty-crafty and twee - but with little or inappropriate storage space. We're both walkers and need plenty of room to store rucksacks, boots etc. We often give lifts to fellow walkers and needed something which would take up to four or five people plus rucksacks and boots. No chance with the new vans of equivalent size to our Rambler. So we decided to keep Rosie (what else could you call her?) and make a few improvements, such as installing power steering (what a difference that made!); had the springs changed (Wow! It's like riding on air); took out the water heater, shower unit and heater. Result was a new/extra cupboard, more room in the loo area and no fiddling taps trying to get the water temperature right. No constantly checking the usually inaccurate water tank indicator and fiddly winter pump rescue work/tank cleaning. What do you do for water? Just fill two 1 gallon plastic bottles (the sort you get vinegar in). We used this for years when tent camping. A big saucepan of water on the stove first thing in the morning for washing (if on a campsite we use their showers) and another for washing up. As the water heats the sauce pan acts as a radiator. If particularly cold we use a small portable gas heater so no more need for noisy and temperamental in-build air heater. With that out it doubled the underseat space.

We then arranged for the rust spots to be sorted out, had her completely resprayed professionally by, of course, a good local garage. We finished off by having new curtains.

What a transformation. We still have our beloved Rosie and plan to keep her as long as we can. The complete makeover cost was just

under £6,000.00 - a bit different from the £36,000.00 necessary for a new, unsuitable model.

Go for it *Irene and Lione* (and many other 'old' campervan owners - the vans that is, not the owners!!) who we are sure are in a similar situation. Scout around for a garage who is willing to take your Ilsa on. Think of the cash you will have to spare on another holiday! Good luck in your search. If we can assist, for instance if you would like details of the power steering installers, e-mail us - address is: janfullman@blueyonder.co.uk or give us a call on 014 5441 4022.

When we suggested to our garage recently that maybe we should have a new/reconditioned engine he just snorted and said "It's barely run in - with regular service it will do another 100,000 miles. I'll tell you if it ever needs changing". How about that for professional advice?

Jan and Dave Fullman

I fully agree with the sentiments expressed. What is the point of changing your van - the newer versions do not appear to have anything more beneficial than the older ones. The only problem might be in the provision of spare parts as the manufacturers of the base vehicles seem to get out of stock fairly quickly as they bring "new" models onto the market.

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Cash Deposits - Warning!

My wife and I attended the Earls Court Caravan and Motorhome show on 3rd November and decided to "up-market" our motorhome. We chose the one we wanted, placed a deposit of £1,000.00, and were told that delivery would be in late March or early April 2005. On 7th November we decided that we would make do with the van we have as I am in my late seventies and I found out that my minor heart problem was getting worse. We wrote to the company concerned, explained the situation and requested our deposit back; the request was refused in no uncertain terms. I quote "I don't employ a solicitor to draw up a contract so people can get their !!!!! money back" unquote.

The law forbids me from mentioning the company name, but no doubt the subject will come up in conversation at rallies etc and I will then have to relate my experience of them in fairness to those who have no knowledge of their attitude to customers.

In the first instance, the Office of Fair Trading misinformed me by saying that I could get the deposit back and then contacted me about the new European legislation and said they had to contradict their first advice.

Please may I, through the pages of our Newsletter, pass on a word of warning to anyone who attends a motorhome or caravan show to think twice before signing any contract at the show or on the vendors premises as this is classed as an unsolicited sale. Under the new European legislation NO REFUND of deposit is given under the 7 day cooling off period for this type of contract. As I understand it from the Office of Fair Trading, the 7 day rule only applies if you sign the contract at your own home or if the vendors collects you from your home and transports you to his business premises.

As with most things to do with the European Community the public are not informed of any legal changes until it is too late and we learn the hard way.

Sydney Emmerson

This does seem a bit out of keeping with the normal spirit of our pastime. But, like so many areas today, it seems that money is the only thing in which vendors are interested. Goodwill, service, courtesy - what historic ideas are they? It is a great pity, in many ways, that we dare not name and shame such suppliers but if we were to mention them no doubt their solicitors would be "on the ball" immediately, again with income in mind!

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Burnham on Sea Rally

If you have never been to Burnham on Sea then next year do try to come along. What a wonderful carnival - the atmosphere is electric, its full of colour and music and makes you glad to be alive. Another night they have a firework display, all to music and again on another evening we all went into the hall for a super visual quiz that *Brian* had put together. *Linda and Brian Ellis* do a sterling job even though they cant stay on the campsite themselves as they have two dogs and dogs are not allowed on.

Once onto the site, *Sheila and Ivor Barnett* take over to get everyone settled and deal with any problems. Between them they gave us all a really memorable rally. Thank you for everything.

Maureen and Cedric Jones

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I was going to do this in verse but couldn't find a word to rhyme with 'carnival'! *Linda and Brian*, ably assisted by *Sheila and Ivor* put on a full programme of events, so much so that we had to decline the 5 mile walk over the golf course. The evening carnival procession was

something which had me standing in awe and wonder. My camcorder battery let me down, so I was able to stand and watch the procession without any fiddling with zooms etc.

There is an official DVD/Video being produced which I have ordered so I will be able to let the folks back home see what a wonderful show it is. A big thank you to the rally marshals for a terrific weekend.

Margaret and Brian Green

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Window Problems

Like *Anthony Hughes* (November Newsletter) I too have had problems with my 1991 Trident window 'F' section due to sunlight. They became charred and deformed. After searching I replaced the upright channels with replacement sections and protected them using flat sheet of the same buff colour cut in to the back face of the window glass.

Roger Russell

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Lytham Rally

This year we decided to be different. Because the cost of the hall had increased and we had needed to make the Rally Fee larger and because coaches were putting up their fares so much we decided not to go on any excursions!!

By October the rally was just about full. Meals had been organised and all seemed well. Three days before the Rally started, *Ben Mansfield* rang to say that his van was poorly and that he and *Evelyn* would not be able to make it. *Barbara* really started to worry then as *Ben* has been co-marshal there as long as we have been rallying. "Don't worry", said *Kath* who is unflappable, "*Alan Guest* has offered to help us". A big sign of relief all round.

The next day came with another phone call from *Kath*. "*Barbara*, you know I said don't worry? Well sit down and WORRY! The camp is flooded and we haven't got a hall". Big panic!! Eventually the new proprietors of the camp rang to say "Will half a hall do?" *Vic* and I arrived on Wednesday when I was taken to the "half a hall" The wardens in the camp had worked so hard on our behalf. It was fine, just rather small.

Thursday and people started arriving. Two Good Samaritans called *Les* and *Eric* came to us and said "We know you are short handed. Would you like us to do the coffee?" They did, with *Kath* and

Norman and made a wonderful job of it. Then *Mo and Cedric Jones* arrived. "What can we do to help?" They, with the help of their friends, took care of the raffle. *Cedric* kept us in stitches with his tales and antics. He organised a choir who sang a composition by the late *Marjorie Wilson*. What would we do without him? He is always there to lend a hand. *Tom* gave us some of his monologues which are always popular. The competition for a Halloween Mask proved once again how talented are our ASOC members. *Pauline and Neil* with *Jean and Ian* saw to the Christmas Post and were their usual efficient selves.

This is a big thank you to all who helped on this rally. No one grumbled about the size of the hall and most people seemed to have a thoroughly good time. It is very hard to please everyone all the time but we all did our best. Cheers to you all.

Kath & Norman Benyon, Barbara & Vic Kaye, Alan Guest

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ASOC Tour of The Loire Valley.

A tour to a beautiful and historically interesting region of France, which has been popular with British visitors for many years. This tour has been researched to minimise driving distances, giving the participants lots of free time to explore the area at their leisure. If you haven't already seen any of the Loire Chateaux, you will be amazed at their opulence and architectural beauty. The architects used the river Loire as a design element and their results are sometimes breathtaking. When you combine this man-made elegance with the area's natural beauty and its top class wines, it is easy to see why visitors return time and again to the Loire Valley.

The tour has been arranged for the Club by GB Privilege, and will be accompanied by one of their experienced tour directors. The itinerary is set out below.

Sunday 22nd May 2005: We catch a ferry from Dover in the early afternoon and arrive at Calais at about 17.00 local time. A drive of 40 miles (nearly all on motorway) will bring us to our first campsite near Boulogne. This evening we will be taken by bus for a really good dinner with wine in a local restaurant.

Monday 23rd May 2005: Today we have the longest drive of the whole tour, a distance of about 170 miles, but nearly all on motorway, so it should be very easy. We will arrive at our top class campsite near the town of Moyaux in Normandy in mid afternoon. The campsite has its own restaurant, so the cook can take a holiday if you wish.

Tuesday 24th May 2005: A completely free day to relax and maybe explore the local area.

Wednesday 25th May 2005: A drive of about 155 miles today will bring us to our first campsite on the Loire, in the town of Angers. There is no food on site, but shops are about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away.

Thursday 26th May 2005: A free day to relax or explore as you wish.

Friday 27th May 2005: A short drive (about 50 miles), along the river to our next campsite near the town of Saumur. There will be enough time to fully enjoy driving along the banks of the River Loire and making the occasional detour to visit an interesting-looking village or Chateau. The campsite restaurant will stay open for us this evening if enough people want to use it.

Saturday 28th May 2005: A free day today.

Sunday 29th May 2005: After a well deserved lie-in, we will move on to our next campsite near the town of Onzaine. The distance is only about 65 miles so there will plenty of time to visit some local attractions en route. These could include Chinon, Azay-le-Rideau, Tours, Chenonceaux and Amboise. The campsite has its own restaurant and take-away and there is a supermarket within 2 miles.

Monday 30th May 2005: A completely free day, but if enough people are interested the tour director can organise an optional bus to the Chateau de Chaumont, where the French national garden exhibition is held annually. This is very different to Chelsea, as it basically comprises many gardens designed by garden specialists from around the world. Inevitably they range from the sublime to the ridiculous, but they are certainly interesting! The chateau is only a few miles from the campsite and the package we will offer includes entry to the gardens and small selection of stands, plus a typical, long, relaxing French lunch to help maximise your pleasure of this fascinating day.

Tuesday 31st May 2005: We start to head for home today, albeit at a leisurely pace. After a drive of about 120 miles we will arrive at our penultimate campsite near the river Seine at Poses. You can stroll along the tow path and visit a local restaurant in the nearby village if you wish.

Wednesday 1st June 2005: After today's drive of about 100 miles, we will arrive at our final campsite near the village of Villers-sur-Authie. This evening we will be taken by bus to a good quality local restaurant for our farewell dinner. This will comprise 4-courses, with wine, and should be a fitting end to a relaxing, but interesting tour.

Thursday 2nd June 2005: The tour ends this morning, so it is time to head for home. Calais is about 65 miles away and you can make your own

way there or follow the tour director. Don't forget your last minute shopping and also cheap diesel at Calais. Alternatively, you can take advantage of the "open" return ticket and stay in France for another few weeks.

The GB Privilege tour director will stay the night of Saturday 21st May at Black Horse Farm campsite near Folkestone. If any group members want to meet up with him there, they can do so. The booking and payment for this site are the customers' responsibility. It is not part of the tour.

PRICES:

TOUR PRICE PER PERSON, WITH THE RELEVANT NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN ONE MOTORHOME. A minimum of 15 motorhomes will be required to make the tour viable.

5 pp	4 pp	3 pp	2 pp	1 pp	Price per metre over 6 metres
£192	£218	£260	£345	£600	£25

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE

"Open" return ticket on Dover – Calais ferry for motorhome up to 6 metres

1 night at campsite near Boulogne with 220 volt hook-up

Bus to local restaurant

4-course dinner with wine in local restaurant near Boulogne

2 nights at campsite near Moyaux with 220 volt hook-up

2 nights at campsite in Angers with 220 volt hook-up

2 nights on campsite near Saumur with 220 volt hook up

2 nights on campsite at Onzaine with 220 volt hook-up

1 night at campsite near Poses with 220 volt hook up

1 night at campsite near Viller-sur-Authie with 220 volt hook up

Bus to local restaurant

Farewell 4-course dinner with wine in good quality traditional restaurant

Comprehensive route guide

Services of experienced GB Privilege Tour Director for duration of the tour

Further details, and a booking form can be obtained from GB Privilege

Ltd., 3 The Fields, Tacolneston, Norfolk NR16 1DG. Phone 01953 789661

or Fax 01953 789519. Their email address is gbprivilege@yahoo.com

Andy Cavell

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Assistance Sought

We are new members with a 3 year old Pollensa which is doing rather fewer mpg than claimed. Could members with any advice please contact us regarding adding LPG or changing to a diesel engine. Companies not too far from Hereford, and any possible costs/benefits. Looking around for a ladder locking-plate, the Fiamma ones don't fit the

Pollensa. Any ideas? Contact us by e-mail to afharrison@clara.co.uk or telephone 019 8956 7001.

Also why don't A-S put a light switch by the rear door to make it a bit easier to see when you get into the van? There is a step light but it is not too good to find one's way to the panel. It would be a good idea too to put the door catch on to an area of the door with a batten behind it to prevent concave results.

Teresa & Alan Harrison

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Club & Company Rally

I imagine that the shock of reading that the Club and Company Rally is being discontinued will cause many of you to write in horror, but it is necessary to consider how far we have come from the start of the Club. The first Club & Company Rally was held at Stratford in July because neither the Company nor the traders could come to our AGM that year - a more important trade event at Brands Hatch clashed with the date. We didn't know about this until a few weeks before our AGM and it was very disappointing, so the Stratford event was arranged in a matter of two or three months. No marquee or inside events, and our fingers crossed that the sun would shine. It worked!

The present Club & Company Rally requires planning starting from the end of one rally until the next, and tying up the loose ends afterwards requires almost as much effort. Those who started the event grew into it as it developed, but those who have run it for the last few years have taken on a job equivalent to running a small business with all the arm twisting, letter writing, telephoning and pure groundwork organisation, the responsibility for which lands on the C & C Chairman's shoulders. I am sure that those who have retired from their previous employment, and are so-called "retired", do not want to take on the huge and increasing responsibility involved, so the committee have obviously decided to stand back and ask "Where are we going?"

As I said, it was a great shock when I learned of the plans to stop running this event, but sober reflection tells me that we could not have gone on in the same way. A lot of the regular helpers are feeling they have done enough, and new people are reluctant to come forward for such demanding jobs. I hope we can find another way to have a popular summer rally, and perhaps more people will come to the AGM rally to meet friends. There are entertainments arranged during the AGM week-end; it is not all business. Hope to see you there.

Rita Daley

January 2005



Rally Supplement



A Happy New Year to all members.

The provisional rally list is included with this Newsletter. Please note that as it is a provisional list dates & rallies may change. Extra rallies will be advertised as and when they are arranged.

*******NEW. Proposed Rally at Camping Les Deux**

Vallees (3 star site) Vezac, Dordogne, France.

10th. – 22nd. June (12 nights). 2005.

Rally Marshals: Sheila & Ivor Barnett – Nora & Ven Venables & team.

Site Fees, bookings taken for the full 12 days only.

Pitch fee 2 persons plus electricity (6 amps) plus tax =E10.30 (approx £8.00 per night).

Camping Les Deux Vallees require:- E5 booking fee plus E10 pitch fee – approx £12.00 Rally Fee:-£15.00 non-returnable.

Total required £27.00 cheque payable, with rally slip to:-

I.C. Barnett, High Level, Farden, Bitterley, Ludlow, Shrops. SY8 3HU. Tel.No. 01584 890 428.

Please enclose a 9X6 SAE.

The camp site is not on a bus route, the village of Beynac is approx. 20 mins walk. Sarlat is 5 miles away.

Site fees payable to site - Credit Cards are accepted.

Full facilities plus a swimming pool, bicycles to hire, camp shop, restaurant, bar and take away.

Proposed coach trip, subject to numbers, BBQ, boat trip, evening meal and boules.

Approx. mileage Calais 520 miles, Cherbourg 435 miles & Le Havre 435 miles.

If friends wish to be parked together then please arrange to arrive together. Please *do not* arrive before 12 noon.

You have to arrange your own ferry bookings and any relevant insurance.

*****ADVANCE NOTICE

12th. – 19th. April 2005. Manx Spring Rally. Isle of Man.

Proposed new rally at Nobles Park, Douglas Isle of man. Site offers usual facilities plus a large meeting room for our sole use. Easy bus access to Douglas for all parts of the island.

Rally Fee: £70.00 including site fee and electricity (Incl. VAT).

Ferry cost – Heysham (Dep. 14.15 hrs, sailing time 3 ½ hrs.) to Douglas and return - we anticipate about £175 for van plus two persons.

As soon as we receive sufficient numbers (20 vans) we will negotiate a Special ferry cost and confirm the rally when the balance of fees will be payable. We will also supply a special ferry booking reference code and details so that individual tickets may be purchased – extended stay on the island before or after the rally may be available within the ticket cost.

Please, therefore, register your interest by completing a rally slip, *noting the length of your van*, and returning it

URGENTLY with a **£10 deposit** (which will be offset

against rally fee) to:-

W.J. & C. Slark, 121 King Edward Road, Onchan, Isle of Man, IM3 2AX Tel.01624 625818.

Cheques payable to :- W.J. & C. Slark.

We look forward to welcoming members to this beautiful island but do need a **SPEEDY** response please so that we can confirm the rally and costings.

21st. – 25th. February (4 nights) 2005. Whitemead Forest Park, Parkend, Lydney, Gloucestershire.

Emergency Tel.No. 0845 345 3425. Mobile reception poor to nil on site, but there is a pay phone.

Rally Marshals: Jeannette Jones & Helen & Geoff Gray.

Fees include electric hook up, hire of room for two evenings, use of all leisure facilities, rally fees + VAT. **£55.00 couples, £50.00 singles.**

Please include a SAE for confirmation of booking with your booking slip & a cheque made payable to:- J.L.Jones, 30 Royal Close, Henbury, Bristol. BS10 7XF.

Tel.No. 0117 909 9816

Attractions:-Leisure facilities on site include a lovely warm swimming pool, steam room sauna, jacuzzi and gym. So do bring your swimwear even if you don't swim!!

A pleasant restaurant serves breakfast, lunch & dinner.

There is also a small shop on site.

There are cycletracks & footpaths for walking direct from the site.

Only postal bookings will be accepted, no telephone calls.

There is a limit of 17 vans because of the wet season.

7th-10th. March (3 nights). Elm Cottage C.P. Little Budworth, Cheshire. CW7 2QJ.

Website www.elmcottagecp.co.uk

Emergency Tel.No. 0182 976 054.

Rally Marshals: Elizabeth & Bryn Morgan & Nora & Ven Venables.

Site Fees:£ 7.45 per night (incl.electricity).

Rally Fee:£3.00 **per person**. VAT included where applicable.

We now have to pay for the hire of the Rally Barn.

Dogs allowed but must be kept on a lead on site.

Rally slips and cheques payable to B.Morgan.

Send to Mr. & Mrs. B. Morgan, 44 Mersey Road,Heaton

Mersey,Stockport.SK4 3DJ. Tel.No. 0161 432 4869.

Mobile 07890876859.

Please include a SAE for confirmation of booking,site directions and further details.

Attractions:-Nantwich,Chester, Little Budworth Country Park.Also a cycle/walk trail on a disused railway nearby.The Shrewsbury Arms serves food and is 400yds.from the site. The site is well drained and there is a small toilet block with 2 showers.There is a separate toilet and washroom for the disabled.We will have the use of the Rally Barn each evening. If there is sufficient interest we will organise a coach trip to the Lowry Arts Centre and the Imperial War Museum North situated on opposite sides of the Manchester Ship Canal. There is a retail outlet adjacent to the Lowry. Cost approx.£7.00 each.Please indicate on rally slip if interested but do not send money.

We may organise a meal in the Rally Barn one evening, further details will be given on the confirmation letter.

There is a limit of 35 Vans.

**11th.-13th.March Motorhome & US RV Show,
The Showground, Great Driffield,East Yorks.**

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

Rally Marshals: Jan & Vic Hicklin.

Site Fee: Special Club prices. Arrive Wednesday £33.00,

Thursday £28.00 Friday £23.00. Rally Fee:£2.35(Incl.VAT).

Send rally fees with rally slip & SAE for Show application form by 22nd.February to:- Mrs. J. Hicklin,381 Manor Road, Brimington,Chesterfield,Derbyshire.S43 1PP.

Tel.No. 01246 236 157.

Return the application forms to the organisers ,Stone

Leisure,address on form, by the closing date **1st.March.**

✓ **31stMarch – 3rd.April.(3 nights).Marston Brewery Visit
Burton on-Trent,Staffs.**

N.B. Not Bass Museum.

The site is at the Albion Hotel,Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent.

Emergency Tel.No. 07713186508.Marshals' mobile.

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

Paid £13.35

Site Fees: £2.50 per night, all hardstanding. Rally Fee: £2.35 all incl. VAT. NO Electricity. Booking slips & cheques payable to P.M. Pratt, 3 Grafton Road, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. DE15 9DN. Tel. No. 01283 538 818.

A trip round the Brewery on Friday morning will be arranged cost **£6 each, please send money with slip.** A meal Fri. evening & a further meal Sat. evening will also be available.

Directions:- The Albion Hotel is situated on the B5017 Burton to Uttoxeter road and is on the bus route into Burton.

Please send SAE for acceptance & further directions. Dogs allowed. **Rally starts at 12 noon Thursday.**

If you wish to apply for a rally and are unsure of the correct procedure please consult the sheet "A Guide for new ralliers". This sheet can be found in the pack sent to new members after joining the Club.

If you wish to run a rally in 2005 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 & 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 & OE

I feel compelled to respond to the Club Committee's decision no longer to run the Company Rally, Our re-action was disappointment as it has been the only rally we have attended, We have been at Malvern on two successive occasions and enjoyed them both, the photo competitions, the entertainment both inside and outside. We were able to buy items of trim for our vehicle from the factory outlet and even materials to replace our curtains. We went on to explore Tewkesbury, Pershore, Broadway etc.

But most of all we had attended an event where we had experienced - no bad behaviour, no drunkenness, no thefts or violence. No one was too proud to speak or overly concerned about their physical appearance. Wow!

We fully understand the financial problems but we hope you will find a suitable alternative in the near future.

Roger Russell

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I am writing to say how very sad we were to hear that there will be no more Club and Company Rallies. Although we are not by nature rallying people, this rally has always been part of our annual programme and indeed part of our children's growing up. We remember with great affection the games the children used to play (along with *Charles Trevelyan's* children) around the site. It was always a wonderful feeling to know that they were safe to wander over such a wide and secure area. Friendships were renewed every year. The children have now flown the nest but we have still always enjoyed the relaxing break and looked forward to when we shortly retire and could offer to help a little more.

I cannot help thinking that the company will loose a great deal of good will by the loss of the rally. There must be many people like ourselves who feel about A-S almost as family. Without this rally and the chance to talk to the firm the Company will doubtless loose many loyal supporters.

Surely it is for this reason that they would be wise to keep it alive. I hope you can be persuaded to reconsider your decision.

Rosemary, Andy, (Charlotte and Bobby) Newton

These two letter writers seem to think that the Auto-Sleeper Company were responsible for this rally. Such is not the case although it is a popular misconception. The Company fully supported the Club, but it was the Club who organised the whole affair. And the responsibility, including the financial responsibility, was borne by the

Club. If you will re-read the item in the December Newsletter you will see the reasons why the Club committee decided that it would not be a good policy to accept the possibility of a heavy loss of Club funds. As a further consideration, the latest quotation received for the use of the showground increased the prices required and would have cost the Club probably a further £5,000.00 or more.

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If I'm not prepared to run it I suppose I can't complain,
That the Club and Company rally is not to be again.
I volunteered my help to be a Steward in the Hall,
It was a way of meeting folk and not too hard at all.
Throughout the years it's grown in size that's evident to see,
But the money spent around the stalls was raised for charity.
Auto-Sleeper vans were there for all of us to view,
Some were old I will agree but most of them were new.
We could wander in and out the vans without a salesman's spiel,
And find out what it would be like to sit behind the wheel.
You could even buy that little bit you needed for the light!
And get that piece of carpet that matched your van just right.
I hope that something similar can be thought of by and by,
So we can meet together and keep flags flying high.

Brian & Margaret Green

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Photographic Competition

As there will be no Club & Company Rally in 2005 the Photographic Competition will be held in suspense. This does not mean that you should stop taking pictures.

As soon as a suitable venue can be found it is hoped to hold another rally, perhaps a "Hobbies" rally or a "Charity" rally, where it will be possible to display your efforts.

The Rules will be:

Standard Class. No change - All pictures must include an Auto-Sleeper Motorhome and may not be digitally modified. In other words - what you see in the viewfinder must be the picture.

Humorous Class. No need to include a van, but pictures must be taken at an ASOC event and may be digitally modified.

Brian Smith

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Your Committee

During this last year, appeals have appeared in this Newsletter for 'new blood' to come forward and join the ASOC Club Management Committee. After some deliberation I decided that I could and would put my name forward. I mentioned my interest to one of the current members of the committee and shortly afterwards received a letter from the Secretary, inviting me to view a routine meeting.

We met at the beginning of November in the Church Hall at Moreon-in-Marsh, starting promptly at 9.30am. I, together with another invitee, were formally welcomed and given the agenda with 15 items listed. I thought to myself "This could be a long day".

With each officer reporting on their particular domain, the meeting proceeded quickly in a very light hearted manner. Indeed, at times "Minute *Mike Hall*" had a job to keep up with the rate of discussion. Two or three of the items were debated at length with an amicable conclusion being reached. No doubt, I can imagine there must be times when these debates get very heated but are eventually resolved by a majority decision and without individuals "throwing their toys out of their pram" and leaving the committee. The time moved on quickly, with coffee and lunch breaks being called at the appropriate times. After everyone had had their say, including the invited guests, the meeting was closed about 3.00pm.

In the past I have been on numerous committees and our Cub committee does not appear to be any different. Currently it is made up of 13 interested and committed individuals bringing their own skills to the management of the Club. This makes sure that this organization runs on, year after year, giving the members hours of pleasure in meeting with like minded people in a host of different venues, that we may not otherwise visit.

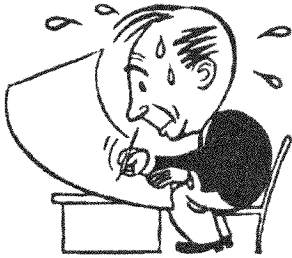
Make sure that ASOC goes on; give your name into the Secretary, *Janet Sutterby* and help the Club stay alive.

Mike Valentine

I thoroughly agree with *Mike's* last comment. We do need new blood coming forward otherwise the Club will cease to exist. In one way it is rather fortunate that the Club and Company Rally will no longer be a drain on committee resources so the reason to expand is not quite so pressing. But we do still need volunteers.

-----oooOOOooo-----

Chairman's Chat



As is our custom, the committee met just before Christmas and had a brief morning meeting. The reason was so that we could all go to a Christmas Luncheon together with our President and his family, and our partners/wives/husbands. This small function is kindly provided by A-S and we thank them for it. We invite a couple of guests and this year it was decided to invite two of our Founder

Members. So along came *Dilys Stinchcombe* (membership number 0002) and *Rita Daley* (membership number 0003). Many of you will not be acquainted with either of these ladies, so let me give you a brief introduction. *Dilys* with her late husband *Frank* formed part of the original ad hoc committee. *Frank* became our first Treasurer and *Dilys* was the Regalia Officer. Together they provided a lot of the original mugs, pens, ties etc together with the very famous (in those days) *Frank's Scrap Pads*. Nowadays *Dilys* keeps herself very busy with her music; she is both a pianist and an organist and I don't mean those small keyboards but rather the big church organs with lots of stops and pedals.

Rita, also part of that ad hoc committee with *Phillip*, became our first Membership Secretary and Secretary. *Phillip*, her late husband, thought that he had got away with it but, in his own words in issue number 1 of the Newsletter "I didn't duck in time" and got the job of Editor. They went on to do all the secretarial and membership work together with preparing, printing and sending out the Newsletters. They kept up most of that work for a good number of years until finally they found a printer who would take the job on and that printer still does a marvellous job for us today. *Rita* now has a little time in which to indulge another great hobby of hers which is painting. If you were to see some of the paintings she has done, you would not be surprised as you will have got used to seeing her work on so many covers of the Newsletter.

Now, with regret, a complete change of mood. Unfortunately, with the season of goodwill upon us, a rather disquieting fact has come to my notice. It seems that within the Club we have one cowardly soul. This individual had the temerity to send an unsigned card to another member which was, to say the least of it, insulting.

I am fully aware of and agree with the old adage that "When friends are in company, insults become compliments". But that always means that the people who are "insulting" each other are together and

doing it in a sense of fun. It can also include a "rude" card being sent from one to another but such cards are always signed. When an insulting card is unsigned it seems to me that the individual who sent it is reminiscent of the school bully who is, in fact, a coward at heart and would not stand up in front of the recipient to make such a comment. I hope that the vast majority of members, probably all except perhaps the perpetrator, will join me in saying "Shame on you".

-----oooOOOooo-----

EARLY DAYS AT AUTO-SLEEPERS

Or How Things Began

Long, long ago, when *Neville Jelfs* was the Works Manager, he and *Charles Trevelyan* began a series of Dealer Workshop Instruction Courses. As part of each course, technicians were given a handout, explaining how the company began. There follows, with a small amount of updating, this article which was written by John Hunt, the former Editor of *Motorhome Magazine Monthly* in the late 1980's. So read on, and you will learn how it all began!

From Little Acorns

Once upon a time (or rather thirty years or more ago to be precise) a mother and a father were seeking, with their two sons, something a little different from the usual bucket and spade holiday. They were fond of motoring but wanted to escape from hotels and did not relish the thought of lumbering along with the trailer caravanners of those early days.

A Morris J2 van was purchased from BMC (The British Motor Corporation), then the leading light in the British motor industry, with the idea of making it into some sort of mobile accommodation unit. Evenings were spent designing a layout on the drawing room floor of their Cotswold home. The boys were aged 12 and 17 and therefore rather too large to be accommodated within the van's 6ft x 9ft interior - if their parents were to have any comfort in bed at all!

Thus came about the first of the rear extensions which were to prove popular among early builders of small motor caravans. A large folding box could be extended from the rear door and, supported by the step, it made a bedroom for the boys. When laid out, this folding bed opened out into the form of a tent, with the box base forming the insulated and draught proof floor.

The design of the interior was finalised and a cabinet-maker in Cheltenham was employed to do the woodwork. (Even the cabinet-maker was unusual, specialising in the carving of church pulpits and

pews!). The cushions were made in Bristol and the mother sewed the curtains. Proving trials during a holiday in the South of France (where the younger boy learnt to swim) highlighted several design shortcomings. The most annoying was that, once the bed was made up, access to the storage accommodation was very restricted (a fault perpetuated for several years by other motor caravan builders, including the author with his own first conversion).

An Austin 152 van (similar to the J2 but with a different badge) was purchased and a new model built. This proved most successful on the next holiday; by then bucket and spade holidays had run their course and the attractions of retirement beckoned. The vehicle was then sold to Henlys of Bristol – who promptly expressed interest and placed an order for five similar models!

This posed problems. The drawing room was needed for its original purpose and subcontracting was a laborious business. What's more, the factory of the original cabinet-makers had closed.

Then occurred a set of circumstances, which were to change the story of motor caravanning in Britain. One who was involved in the building of an extension to the family, was named Bob Halling, far sighted enough to recognise the potential.

Bob took the plunge, left his building job and began constructing the motor caravans in his uncle's garage in the village of Willersey. Meanwhile, father retired at the age of 48 from the steel industry, where he was a metallurgist, responsible for sales of Firth Vickers stainless steel.

The older boy embarked upon a career in the hotel industry; the younger one was still at school but, on the beach in France, had dreamt up the name 'Auto-Sleeper' to describe the family's unusual camping van. He ultimately joined the Army to experience a different, yet more comfortable, form of camping!

It was mother who was the driving force (in more ways than one; before marriage she had raced her Climax engined Morgan at Le Mans). Mother was responsible, with Bob Halling, for forming the company we know today as Auto-Sleepers Ltd, although both parents took active interest in the progress of the firm until their deaths. So, in 1961 the name was incorporated, and Auto-Sleepers truly began.

....Mighty Oak Trees Grow

Meanwhile Bob Halling devoted his efforts to building motor caravans in that Willersey garage and father and mother found they had a business to run which was becoming deservedly more successful every year. Perhaps the biggest single step forward was the invention of that unusual elevating roof. In the days when early motor caravans

had to put up with flapping canvas, owners of Auto-Sleepers could remain snug and comfortable, isolated from the elements by a roof canopy with four solid walls.

The Commer van was heralded as a great advance when it appeared. People liked the lighter steering and easier gear change. For many years, it was the sole vehicle converted by Auto-Sleepers and remained on their lists until, as the Dodge, it was finally pensioned off by its manufacturers.

By this time, other suitable vehicles had come on to the market. The Bedford CF had its engine beneath a front bonnet rather than between the seats and, for the first time, Auto-Sleepers were able to provide convenient access between cab and caravan. This design became the norm on all their motor caravans, which were also to be based on the Ford Transit, and later, Freight Rover Sherpa, Renault, Talbot and Volkswagen.

An experimental coachbuilt on the Bedford chassis proved popular and was followed by a revolutionary monocoque glass fibre model designed by William Towns (responsible for the shape of the Aston Martin Lagonda). This shell has been successfully grafted on to the Talbot Express and remains one of the best looking motorhomes available to buyers anywhere in the world, and continues to be so, now fitted to the Peugeot Boxer and Ford Transit chassis cabs.

.....Happy Accident

The birth and growth of this successful firm was not planned. If the Trevelyan family had been content with hotel holidays, if Bob Halling had not been around at the right time, if space had not been available in the village garage, if young Charles had not thought of the name, if Anthony had not abandoned hotels to head the company ... there might never have been an Auto-Sleepers Ltd.

Charles Trevelyan

Now there's a coincidence. My first "motorhome" was a very second hand Morris J2 which we "converted" (and I use that in the loosest possible sense) into something in which we could travel, eat and sleep. It lasted for about three years before the rust took too great a hold.

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FROM THE FAR NORTH

While using our Nuevo last Hogmanay we had a freeze up in Glencoe. The temperature over night plunged to -8°C. We were still cosy in our van but in the morning the water pump burst into action but no water came from the taps. Later that day, after the sun started to shine, water started to flow again. I was not convinced that the frozen water was in the water tank, so on returning from our adventure I investigated to see what might have caused the freeze.

The pipe work from the water tank into the van looked very vulnerable to frost. After it leaves the tank it takes a slow bend under the chassis before disappearing up into the floor of the van. I suspected that the water in this bend, and not the tank, had frozen. To hopefully stop this happening again I insulated the pipe with household copper pipe insulation (which had been left over from another project) wrapped in kitchen tin foil (left over from the Christmas festivities). Total cost of this modification £0. 00. Time on the job about half an hour.

Incidentally on the morning of the freeze we had a fantastic sun rise while we were walking in the hills of Glencoe. The colours, yellow and red, reflecting in the snow were wonderful. We are going back to the same area this year and if the weather is the same it will be interesting to see if my modification has worked.

Ron and Wilma Forsyth.

We shall look forward to hearing whether or not this tip has worked. If the weather was as cold as that, I sincerely hope that the piper was not playing in the middle of the pass, as I have seen in the summer time!

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Technical Group and Website

I am hoping to produce a list of suppliers, dealers etc., who are willing to provide a discount to the Club. Members will still have to make their own decisions based on their research, as neither the Club nor the Technical Group will be actually recommending any specific supplier/dealer.

If you have knowledge of any dealer(s) who will give discounts, perhaps you could send me their details. If all goes well I hope to publish the list in about April 2005.

Baz Wellard

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Thanks

Marie Skinner and family would like to thank all the friends who kindly made donations in loving memory of *John*. The magnificent sum of £660.00 has been raised for the Poppy Appeal.

-----oooOooOoo-----

Obituary

We have been advised that *Lee Mather* died on 21st November 2004. We extend our sincere condolences and sympathy to *Jean* and his family. *Jean* wrote to thank all their friends for the cards and kind words.

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Wanted

16" wheel trims for 2.5T Talbot Express 1993. Bolt on type as fitted to Executive / Talisman. One or the set. Tel: Pete Russell on 020 8953 5206 (Borehamwood, Herts.



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For Sale

Fiamma F45 Plus 3.5m roll out awning and fixing brackets. Hardly used. £230.00. Tel: Don Morris on 07 901 532 401 (Erith, North Kent). Thanks for the donation.

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Internally fitted padded Silver Screens for Ford Transit cab (not new model). V.G.C. £25.00. Phone Tony Daniels on 016 0475 4816 (Northampton).

#####

VW Topaz, 2.5TD with 102 BHP. 2nd owner. Registered Dec 2000. MOT until June 2005. Air conditioning, bicycle rack. 47,000 miles hence price £20,900.00. Call Ken Button on 015 2253 4415 (Lincoln). Thanks for the donation.

#####

Peugeot Boxer Executive 2.5 diesel. 1986 'P' reg. 2 berth. 42,000 reliable miles. Excellent condition and very clean inside and out. One careful owner from new, no pets, or children, non smokers. Recent cam belt, leisure battery, tyres and MOT. Driverite rear suspension aids. £17,500.00. Please call Roger Green on 018 4384 4989 (Birchington, East Kent).

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