

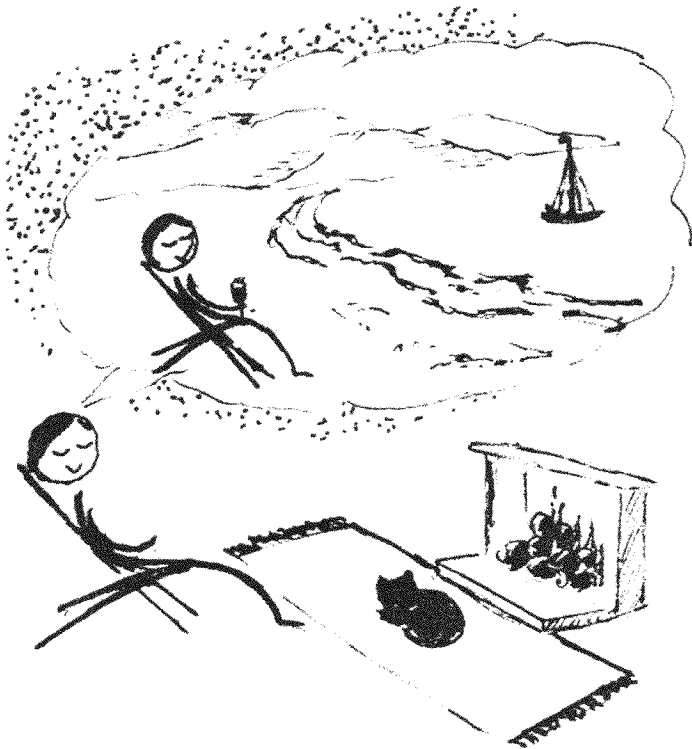


# **AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB**

A Company Limited by Guarantee.

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

[www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk)



**NEWSLETTER 197**  
**FEBRUARY 2005**

Hello.

I get a small impression that the back page of the Newsletter is not read by everybody - or perhaps not by anybody! The editorial address, telephone number and e-mail address is shown there but from time to time I learn that people do not know one or other of them. Never mind, we shall persevere!

It is a little difficult for me to start writing this at the moment. This will be the February Newsletter but today is only December 22nd. I've heard of "Forward Thinking" and I know how much of that has to be done for the A.G.M., Annual Dinner and Dance Rally and, of course, what had also to be done for the Club and Company Rally. But this is me, this is now and this is still December!

This nearly became the issue of the Newsletter that you did not get!! I had some problems with my computer and, at one point, I thought that I had lost every file that I had. Indeed, I have lost many of my files but the Newsletter was not affected.

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## **Cause for Concern**

On reading the item under this heading in the December Newsletter we could have thought that we had written the letter ourselves as it has been our view over the last year to a T! We even put a deposit on a new T.4 only to ask ourselves what we were doing, with the inadequate interior, we may as well keep what we have. So we are in the same boat - stranded.

Even a sales person said that A-S have got this one wrong, putting too much into design changing for the sake of it and not thinking what campers really need. (Are they campers themselves, we ask?) so come on, A-S, back to basics.

*Wendy and Lyn Ingram*

This seems to be a cry which is heard more and more often nowadays. With the wealth of experience available within the Club it is perhaps surprising that some ideas are not put forward for consideration before being implemented. I know, however, that what would please one person would be a complete anathema to another!

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## **Frisky Grille**

I have recently purchased a 1991 (J) Ford Frisky, Transit. This must be one of the last Frisky's to have been sold and has only covered 37,000 miles.

Some years ago I was chatting to a fellow camper who owned one of these vans (a slightly earlier model, an 'E' or 'F' reg, I recall). Interestingly, he had purchased an 'aftermarket' radiator grille that had the later Transit 'smiley' design, but it had been manufactured to fit the earlier, rectangular, headlights and bonnet. If it hadn't been for the registration letter it would have passed, at a glance, to be a later vehicle.

If anyone knows where these grilles can be purchased I would be interested to know. Please contact me: My e-mail address is stopbot.heringme@bigfoot.com and the telephone number is 020 8844 1738. Many thanks.

*Dave Rayment*

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## **Weights - or Overweights**

Further to recent articles in MMM relating to the weight, and more importantly, the over weight of motorhomes, I decided that it was time to weigh my 1999 Legend 4 berth. The plate in the footwell by the passenger doors states MTPLM - 3500 kgs. Axle weights - Front MTPLM 1600 kgs, Rear MTPLM - 2200 kgs.

The actual weight at the weighbridge was as follows 3300 kgs. Axle weights - front 1420 kgs, Rear 1880 kgs. The above weight was built up as follows. Driver (100 kgs), Passenger (70 kgs), full tank of fuel, two full gas bottles, no water, bedding, 50% food, no clothing, tools, Safe-T-Bar, no waste water, television and rucksacks.

The conclusion was that as my wife and I are the only ones ever to use our motorhome by being careful we should always be able to travel within the constraints of the weight limits of our vehicle. It certainly would be difficult if we used it as a four berth.

*Alan Robbins*

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## **Club and Company Rally**

May we take a few lines to thank everyone who has worked so hard over the years to make these rallies such a huge success?

After the 1991 A.G.M. Rally at the Billing Aquadrome, the company decided that due to the logistical problems involved with both the travel and accommodation arrangements, it would stand back from being involved in future A.G.M. rallies.

Came the following spring and we at A-S were all getting withdrawal symptoms. So the bright idea was born, with the Club, of running a small, local rally at the Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse. This

would alleviate any travel and accommodation problems as it is reasonably close to Willersey. Initially it was thought that it might attract some 30 to 40 vans and we proceeded with organising a barbecue. Volunteers were asked for to run a charity stall.

Well, four months later the rally attracted some 250 vans with a barbecue for 700 people. We also had a fairground organ, a show band, a jazz band, the Cadburys Crunchie Flying Circus, a rounders match, a falconry display from the factory electrician, and a new novelty - a Friday evening quiz. What had we started?

The rest, as they can now say, is history. The following year, in 1993, the rally moved to Malvern and things got bigger and better. For many, the next eleven years became an annual procession to the Club and Company Rally. The success of the rally was due to excellent organisation, the wide and varied entertainment programme and the opportunity for owners to buy factory bits and accessories. Much of the success was due to the excellent fund raising and arm twisting efforts of the Club President, *Charles Trevelyan*. He even wrote to the Red Arrows in the belief (and hope!) that they might have done a freebee display on their way back from a nearby air show - thank you, *Charles*.

The Rally was also blessed by having a string of very supportive Club Chairmen and some very capable and hard working Chairmen of the Rally Sub-committees, including *Arthur Irving*, *Brian Hooten*, *Baz Wellard* and latterly, *Andy Cavell*. Each of them gave up vast amounts of time to make sure that everything went like clockwork.

However, the Rally could not have been run without the small army of volunteer members who acted as marshals, ran charity stalls, sold raffle tickets and the numerous other tasks. Many of them undertook the same tasks, year in and year out. All of them essential ingredients to a well run Rally.

We both take away from those years some of the happiest times we've ever had. The 1995 Wartime VE Rally and all those union jacks; the Royal Marines Show Band; the Firework displays; the Ruby Rally and all the colour; the stunning Laser show; the hangovers; and, finally, the friendships made with so many people.

What will July be like without the annual trip to Malvern and even more concerning - what will the Eureka Jazz Band do???

Many thanks to you all for the wonderful memories.

*Neville Jelfs and Phil Bennett*

Because of their involvement with the Company, our two very good friends seem to have omitted mention of the many employees of the Company who all came along to join in, enjoy themselves and help

all our members out in whatever way they could. No, it won't be the same without the annual trip to Malvern, but with the rising costs, how many of us could have afforded it in the future? But rest assured, the Committee is still actively seeking something of a similar nature for future years. 2005 without the rally could be classed as a rest period!

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My wife and I have been "Auto-Sleeping" for some 6 years and have attended the Club and Company Rally approximately four times, along with several Club rallies. All the rallies have been most enjoyable and we have made many friends.

It is sad that the Club and Company Rally has come to an end but I can well understand the reasons for this and fully support such a brave and wise decision. I do, however, have a word of caution that if the A.G.M is promoted into a replacement it may, eventually, also become too large a risk to organize and manage.

Perhaps the Warner's August rally at Malvern might be considered a replacement? Anyway, my thanks to everyone for their hard work in the past and my very best wishes for the future.

*Jack Bamber*

I think that you may have missed the point slightly. We do not intend to enhance the A.G.M. to replace the Club and Company Rally. The reverse is really the case because the C & C came about because the A.G.M. Rally was getting a bit out of hand and the traders who were present did not like to see all the members disappearing for a meeting.

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## *Leaves in the Gutters*

We have just bought our first ever van, a T4 based Topaz. We find ourselves in the strange position of being long in the tooth, yet wet behind the ears!

There is a threefold purpose in writing. First, in the December editorial, you prompted copy from Members and we are ever ones to oblige.

Secondly, *John Jones*, the Regalia Officer, put out feelers about Newsletter binders. We would be very interested.

Finally, and the major reason for writing. We find that our van, parked facing downhill on our sloping drive, attracts leaves like a magnet. This is a particular problem in the side gutters where the glass fibre roof meets the original van body and in the scuttle. We were fortunate in having external "Silver Screen" equivalents as part of the equipment that came with our new purchase and we wondered if it

would be sensible to extend them towards the bonnet to cover the gap at the top of the bonnet lid. It could be clipped to the heater air intake moulding on the bonnet. Our fear would be wear on the paintwork from wind action on the new extension.

We have no idea what to do about the guttering - it does seem excessively deep and with a larch on one side and a weeping willow on the other, we are suffering.

If anyone has experience or bright ideas, we would be most grateful to receive them at [chrismeaden@beeb.net](mailto:chrismeaden@beeb.net) or by telephone to 016 2953 4443. Many thanks.

*Liz and Chris Meaden*

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## **Auto-Sleepers - Today, Tomorrow and Forever**

I understand from *Charles Trevelyan* that he had agreed, and I'm sure was delighted, to write an article on Auto-Sleepers entitled "How it all Began". You will have read this in the December issue. In conjunction with this, I have been requested to write an article entitled "The Company and the Future". We all know who will win the Booker Prize for his article, whose will be the most read and indeed the most flamboyant. You guessed right - and it's not mine! Therefore, I shall not even try to compete and will keep my article factual, informative and brief, although I would like to change the title to "Auto-Sleepers Today, Tomorrow and Forever".

I am now in my fifth year at the helm of Auto-Sleepers. I hope I've made a difference for the good, and genuinely believe we have a stronger business that has made progress. but there is still more to achieve. At the outset, I acquired a business in a fair amount of turmoil. The company wasn't making a profit, its product line was outdated, senior managers were in constant disagreement and above all we had forgotten why we were here - we had forgotten our customers. How things have changed. Today our business is making a healthy profit, we have a modern product line up, and a healthy order book. But more importantly we have a new young vibrant management team all pulling in the same direction and with the same goal - "customer satisfaction". At wholesale we have over the last five years invested heavily, not just in R & D and new models, but in equipment and manufacturing. Indeed in just the last eighteen months I have signed off investments on New Styrofoam Presses, designed to speed up manufacturing processes,

reduce costs, but more importantly substantially improve quality and appearance. Our new CNC Woodshop with three new CNC beds, brings in-house the manufacture of all our cabinets, wall panels, base furniture etc, thus giving us greater control of our own destiny, improving the visual and operational performance of our product and also reducing costs, but once again improving our end quality by a quantum leap. These such projects total in excess of £600,000 of re-investment in our business for the future. Add to this, new equipment such as vehicle lifts, new up to date spray shops, mixing bays, glue machines and other fooling and one million pounds is soon spent. However, in my view a million more than worth investing. Training and personnel too has always been high on my agenda. On arrival back in 2000, I was shocked to find that up to ten staff members a month regularly left, high pedigree, fully trained staff. Why? One word - morale. Today I can boast that other than retirements we lose very little, less than one a month of our fully trained and qualified staff. Again why? Simple, improvement in morale and working conditions. We operate a much happier ship, one where anyone and everyone has a say and I will always listen. We are thorough in our new model creation programme to ensure build complexity is a thing of the past, thus enabling our shop floor workers to create a consistent and pleasing product.

Today I sit in my office, walk around the factory, visit dealers and talk to customers with a degree of renewed enjoyment. However, more importantly I look at the team around me and feel proud yet humble. Today is only a moment in time and we still have much to do, much to achieve and more importantly much more to offer our customers.

In 2000, the year of acquisition, we built and sold approximately 1100 motorhomes. Today, we build and sold circa 1400 motorhomes. For the future, I want to see that number approaching 2000, regain first place in our market and remain the product everyone aspires to own.

Looking ahead to 2005 I have, along with my production team, started a new quality drive. Quality comes in every component, in design, in the build process, all the way through to our own and independent dealer network and into our customer's ownership. We at Auto-Sleepers are working to achieve many European Legislative Standards ahead of schedule. This quality initiative encompasses all our suppliers, their and our processes, thus eliminating annoying and needless errors. To aid this process we have installed at the factory many check procedures including a new rain test booth. This booth is designed to search and find any water leaks, thus ensuring, where possible, every care of build and fitment has been taken to eradicate

water leaks from Auto-Sleeper motorhomes forever. Quality is our trade mark and it must remain with us always.

Support this with, in my opinion, our second to none service, parts and warranty back up and you have a winning recipe. As the owner of one of the largest multi-franchise retail groups, I am aware of the appalling, even lack of interest that encompasses parts and service support within this industry. As far as we at Auto-Sleepers are concerned, that weakness rests with our competitors. We will not become complacent, on the contrary we are striving to improve further and expand our support. I still have, and will achieve my desire to create a one stop, mechanical and habitation support business. To that end I can confirm that we have the approval from Peugeot, Volkswagen and Ford to repair and service vehicles through their warranty period from initial registration. To achieve that, we must however invest to a very high level with each manufacturer to acquire diagnostic and training programmes. Watch this space over the next year for our announcements. I started my article by changing the title to "Auto-Sleepers today, tomorrow and forever". Forever, a massive word and a true belief. More than with any other industry or any other company I have had the privilege to run, I am enjoying my job enormously. I adore our customers, I love their excitement and attitude to life, I watch with pride our staff at work and their belief in that they are creating a product of desire and enjoyment. Naturally it's a competitive market place and none of us have any rights to our position, but if Auto-Sleepers continues to adopt its current business practices, continues to listen to customers and dealers, then forever is a genuine possibility.

For my part, I will continue to push and drive this business for as long as I feel I have something to offer. Then one day, date unknown, maybe tomorrow, next year, five, ten years or more, I can hand over this business to a new owner who I will ensure understands its value and customers. Until such a day occurs I promise I will continue the current journey, improving the product wherever I can and improving our business.

Ian Capes  
C.E.O./Group Managing Director

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Our thanks to Ian for his most informative and very frank article. For the March Issue Rob Axton, our Marketing Director, will be writing an article entitled "Thoughts for the Future in Motor Caravanning". In so doing we aim to broaden the scope of our articles from the Company and in future months we shall be profiling key staff members and

informing you of departmental news in detail. If indeed there are any subjects that you, as Club members, would like to have included do give us a ring on 013 8685 3511.

In ending, all of us at the Service Centre Willersey send our very best wishes for the New Year and of course wish you all happy motor caravanning.

*Charles Trevelyan*

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## **A.G.M 2005 - ANNUAL DINNER/DANCE**

With this month's Newsletter you will have received the booking form for this event. As there will be a Swift Caravan Rally on the show ground over the same weekend, it is essential that all members carry their current membership card at all times.

Members arriving on Thursday and not booking the evening meal will be welcome in the Pavilion after 8.00 p.m. For those who have booked it, the meal will be at 7.00 p.m.

On Friday afternoon representatives from Auto-Sleepers and from the Club Technical Information Group will be in the President's Suite from 2.00 - 4.00 p.m. To give advice and to answer questions. On Friday evening there will be the official welcome and Bar meals will be available from 7.00 p.m.

The Annual General Meeting will be held as usual on Saturday morning and will be followed by the Open Forum, The Dinner/Dance will be held in the evening. As a result of many requests that I received after the 2004 AGM I have again booked Jean Martyn (the organist) to entertain us. The Newark Fire Service representative will be on site for most of the weekend giving talks and demonstrations. At the Air Museum there will be a special display of Military Vehicles and members showing current membership cards will get a 50p discount on entrance fees.

If a group of 20 or 30 members are interested in a glider flight, the Newark Club are prepared, weather permitting, to make two gliders available on the Friday between 10.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. offering members flights at £20.00 per person per flight. Will anyone interested please contact me on 019 0233 2105 by 23rd March 2005.

I am hoping that Brownhills will again provide transport to their showrooms on the Sunday afternoon. On Sunday evening we can all enjoy a performance by the Houghton Weavers to finish off what I hope will be a very enjoyable weekend.

The raffle this year will be in aid of charity. The one chosen is the British Heart Foundation. As a beneficiary of the research financed by this charity I hope that we can support them with a good contribution.

Craft classes will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. You will be sent a booking form for these sessions when you receive your confirmation of booking for the rally.

*Nora Venables*

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## **Satisfaction**

As I received an answer to my advertisement in the December Newsletter I have become "Another satisfied customer" and I have pleasure in enclosing a donation to Club funds.

*Peter Russell*

As usual, thanks for the donation!

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## **Words**

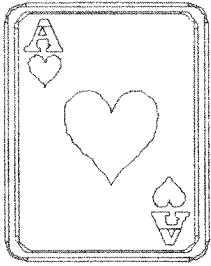
(by Ruth Bath)

Our words are very precious things  
And should be used with care.  
But nowadays, the gift of speech  
Is something rather rare.

Sometimes we ramble on and on  
And often never know  
How much the use of thoughtless talk  
Can hurt and injure so.

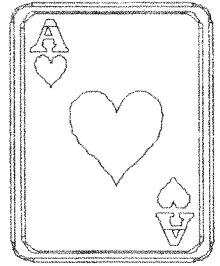
Some words can sound so beautiful  
When one feels good inside  
But when we stumble on our way  
We often tend to chide.

A little thought before we speak  
Can often save much pain.  
A kind word uttered here and there  
Will leave us much to gain.



# February 2005

## Rally Supplement



### Additional rallies for 2005.

3<sup>rd</sup>. – 5<sup>th</sup>. June Blue Lias, Warwickshire.

7<sup>th</sup>.-11<sup>th</sup>. September Essex Steam & Country Show, Billericay, Essex.,.

29<sup>th</sup>. Sept.-1<sup>st</sup>. Oct. Marwell Zoological Park, Nr. Winchester,

Please remove 6<sup>th</sup>.-9<sup>th</sup>. October Whitchurch Cricket Club from list.

### \*\*\*\*\*NEW. Proposed Rally at Camping Les Deux Vallees ( 3 star site) Vezac, Dordogne, France.

10<sup>th</sup>. – 22<sup>nd</sup>. 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 =€10.30 approx

£8.00 per night. Camping Les Deux Vallees require:- €5 booking fee  
plus €10 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.*

**12<sup>th</sup>. – 19<sup>th</sup>. April 2005. Manx Spring Rally. Isle of Man.**  
**THIS RALLY IS NOW FULL.**

**21<sup>st</sup>. – 25<sup>th</sup>. February (4 nights) 2005. Whitemead Forest Park, Parkend, Lydney, Gloucestershire.**  
**THIS RALLY IS NOW FULL**

**7<sup>th</sup>.-10<sup>th</sup>. March (3 nights). Elm Cottage C.P. Little Budworth, Cheshire. CW7 2QJ.**  
**THIS RALLY IS NOW FULL.**

**11<sup>th</sup>.-13<sup>th</sup>. 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 22<sup>nd</sup>.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.

**31<sup>st</sup>March – 3<sup>rd</sup>.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.

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 & futher directions.Dogs allowed.

**Rally starts at 12 noon Thursday.**

**15<sup>th</sup>.-19<sup>th</sup>.April Peak Rail (4 nights, Rowsley South Station, Nr. Matlock, Derbyshire.**

Rally Marshals: Mike & Jeanne Hall & Lionel & Hilary Walker.

Emergency phone No. 07985 021779 or 07939 288586 (marshal's mobiles).

$$\times 2 = 9.40 + 2.40 = \pounds 11.80$$

Site fee £4.70 per van per night. Rally fee £1.20 per person (both incl. VAT)

Water and toilet disposal but otherwise a green field site but station toilets are open during station hours.

There are two electric points for people with special needs.

Booking slips & cheques to Mike & Jeanne Hall, 45, Bunyan Green Road, Selston, Nottingham, NG16 6GF. Tel No.01773 778016.

**Attractions:** In the picturesque picnic area of this enthusiasts steam railway, beside the River Derwent with many miles of walks. 10% off all day tickets for steam train rides into Matlock – ride trains all day or explore Matlock. Within the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site and the Peak National Park. Nearby are Chatsworth House, Haddon Hall, Carriage Museum and Bakewell's famous market. We hope to arrange a meal at The Shalimar Restaurant on Monday evening. Please state on the booking form if interested. (It is a Tandoori Restaurant but has English dishes). Buses to Matlock, Bakewell, Sheffield, Stockport and Manchester.

**Directions:** 3.9 miles north of Matlock (Bakewell direction) on the A6. Going north, turn left onto Harrison Way just after The Shalimar Restaurant and follow Peak Rail signs.

## 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>.National Motorhome Show,East of England Showground,Peterborough.

Emergency Tel.No. 07714 091 349 (Marshals' mobile on 8.00-10.00 am & pm).

Rally Marshals:Pauline & Neil Rogers,Evelyn & Ben Mansfield & Jean & Ian Sellers.

Please use the booking form enclosed in this Newsletter if possible.

If you use a form from other magazines please mark the form ASOC and note the *special Club site fees:Arrive Thursday:£30,arrive Friday £27, arrive Saturday £24.*

Please note that ALL booking forms **MUST** be returned to **Warners**, the organisers, by Friday 1st. April if you wish to rally with the Club.

**\*\*\*\*\*Then you must also complete a Club rally slip** and return it, with the Rally Fee of £2.00 couples, £1.50 singles (both inclusive of VAT) to: N.C. & P. Rogers, 3 Appleby Close, Aldbrough St. John, Richmond, North Yorks. DL11 7TT.

Tel. No. 01325 374 540 Cheques payable to N.C. & P. Rogers.

Please collect the **Club** rally information pack from the ASOC marshals **before** parking.

If you book using the special Club fees then you **must** park/ rally with The Club.

The rally finishes at 12 noon Sunday but you may remain on site until 12 noon Monday.

No arrivals before 2.00p.m. Thursday.

**28<sup>th</sup>.April – 2<sup>nd</sup>. May.A.S.O.C. Annual General Meeting, Nottinghamshire Showground, Newark.**

The application forms for the A.G.M. are with this Newsletter. Please note the closing date for applications.

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

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

**E & OE**

Rally:..... Date:.....

Your name and address(Please PRINT).....

..... Post code:.....

Phone No.:..... Van Reg:..... Length.....

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:..... Length.....

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:-

Full payment MUST accompany this slip-cheques payable to the marshal.  
**POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 14 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,IF POSSIBLE PLEASE!**

Nasty words are usually wasted,  
Kindly deeds are better 'heard',  
For it's possible to say so much  
And yet not speak a word!

This poem was submitted by *Jeannette Cadney* to take up the thread of comments made in Chairman's Chat last month. Thank you, *Jeannette*.

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## **Dogs Abroad**

Can anyone assist, please? We would like to know if any member has used and can recommend a Doggy doc (Veterinary) at the ports. From sitting on the side lines at the ports we have seen various antics and delays taking place.

Looking to the future and considering taking the dog with us, we would appreciate any tips and help. Or maybe our technical group have just such a list. We shall look forward to any information which may be forthcoming in the Newsletter.

A Happy New Year to all members, too.

*Geoff Williamson*

This could become a very interesting topic. We have not considered taking our cats abroad with us although many moons ago one went across to Ireland without any difficulty. That was in the days well before these "Pets Passports" and there was no restriction in taking the dog or cat to Ireland.

-----oooOOOooo-----

## **Cash Deposits - Warning**

I have received another letter regarding this problem. I do not intend to publish it in its original form nor will I include the name of the sender because it may be possible that a court case could result and there is no way in which I would want to prejudice such an event.

Broadly, the individuals are some £2,000.00 out of pocket even though they seem to have been told that there would not be a problem just after they had signed the documentation. What cannot be understood is why dealers take the course they appear to even if there is a valid reason for the cancellation and not just a whim. It is suggested that the European law which permits this course of action with deposits is a very bad piece of legislation.

Do the dealers realise how much damage they do themselves by treating customers in this way? It is suggested that there would be

no return to such a dealer although people would always return to those who understand. The ones that take the view at present being mentioned will only get themselves talked about.

-----oooOOOooo-----

## **Technical Group and Website**

As you will be aware, the Technical Group is always seeking technical literature, reviews, archives etc., for the library. We have been fortunate recently in that *John Normandale* (our first elected Club Chairman) has kindly donated a video tape which I have transferred on to the new DVD format. The video was produced by *Charles Trevelyan* and *Neville Jeffs* in 1988 and is titled "The Making of an Auto-Sleeper". It shows the expertise, care and quality that went into the making of an Auto-Sleeper. This still exists in today's production - making this DVD just as appropriate today, I believe. Subject to the approval of Ian Capes, the CEO of the Auto-Sleepers Group, I hope to make copies available - at a small costs to cover materials and P&P - to members, perhaps sometime in April 2005.

At the close of 2004 we had issued 1,439 Ideas Sheets (2,209 pages) and have around 100 actual ideas. I will be producing a new listing around April. There is always room for more - description and photos or drawing to me, please. You may have seen the full page article regarding the Club web site in the February issue of the Practical Motorhome. It was very encouraging for the Club. Interestingly, we are now approaching 20,000 hits (visitors) to the web site.

*Baz Wellard*

I've got a copy of this video tape too and my first attempt at transferring it to a DVD worked extremely well, except that the result could only be viewed on our DVD player! So back to the instruction book; read it a good bit more carefully; ask *Sheila* what she thought and BINGO!! We got a result! Now the DVD will play on any DVD player and on our computers too. Nice to know clever people, isn't it?

-----oooOOOooo-----

## **Servicing Problems**

We have a Gatcombe on a VW Type 4 2.5TDI Base. The problem we have now is getting it serviced without travelling 40 miles to a VW Van Centre.

We live in Braintree, Essex, and used to get our vehicle service at a VW dealership in Chelmsford. In 2004 they moved to new premises and upgraded all their workshop equipment. But unfortunately they cannot

now service vans due to the service bays being too small and the hoists, which are only designed for cars, are unable to take the weight of vans.

Does anyone know where we can get our van service locally, preferably one that they have used and can recommend?

*Gill and Alan Martin.*

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## Vehicle Design - Etc.

Like a lot of motorhome owners we started camping with a small ridge tent and cooked on a Primus. Then we progressed to a frame tent with a "Bucket and chuck it" - what luxury not to have to trot across a field in the middle of the night! Enough was enough, though, when in Scotland there was rain and more rain and we had to get out of bed into Wellington boots.

Our first motorhome - no, camper van - was a Holdsworth Rainbow. When we thought of buying a camper we went to several caravan and camping shows and each time we saw the Rainbow we liked it more and more, and finally we bought one. That was in 1989 and we kept it until 2004 by which time 'Nellie' had covered over 108,000 miles including trips to Spain and to France, when we drove the 'wrong' way down the Mulsanne Straight. By 2004 the body was showing signs of the dreaded 'rust moth' so we reluctantly decided that the time had come to swap her for something a bit newer.

We found a Leisure Drive conversion at the dealers which seemed to fit the requirements but it did need some work. Some previous owner had messed about with the front of the sideways facing seat behind the driver. They had cut, very badly, a piece out of it to make 2 drawers on runners which was a shocking waste of space. So we bought some of the same faced material and took out the drawers and put it back as it should be.

We had a couple of weekends away in it and then took it back to the dealer to have one or two things done under warranty. While the work was being done we wandered into the showroom where they had an A-S Symbol. The lights were on, the door was open and we went in - well, you would, wouldn't you? As soon as we stepped inside we were smitten. It reminds me of the time that I went into a camera shop to collect developed film and came out with a new camera!

We liked it so much that we went home determined to see if we could possibly afford it. After much discussion we decided that we

could. We went back the next day and put a deposit on it and later that week took the Leisure Drive over as more deposit.

Our first drive home, oh dear, that cacophony of rattles which we were most annoyed about. Most of the rattles were from the blinds but the noisiest rattle was from the oven door and handle. Considering the price we paid we expected better. The rattles from the oven have been put right but the oven door is still not a good fit. The seal round the top part of the door still does not seal. Consequently we are using more gas. Why do A-S use blinds that rattle? The Club does have a solution but I think it should be up to A-S to put it right - or better still, the manufacturers of the blinds.

Why is the mains electric switch for the water heater in such an inaccessible place? The water pump and charging unit have been placed without much thought. The water filter is tucked under some body work and the pump has to be removed to get to the filter. The charger unit is placed next to the water pump in what can be a damp area and over a vent! Lastly the gas locker, again with advancing years, is awkward to get to. Why couldn't that locker be placed somewhere where it could be got at from the outside like the toilet cassette?

Anyway, we got her home and the next day some friends came round with a bottle of champers to christen her 'Nellie 3'. Marvellous thought.

We have been away locally for 2 separate nights to see how everything worked in practice. We tried the double bed one night and had it as two singles the second night. *Phil* found that with his artificial knee joint the single beds were better for him so we can now leave that large cushion at home. I also wonder if people use the shower. It seems to me that it is in such a small space that the shower curtain must seriously get in the way or even stick to you. Also it probably uses quite a lot of water and we've better things to do on holiday than filling up water tanks!

I do sometimes wonder if converters ever use their vehicles for more than one night at a time. Where do they put everything, the bed bits, food, utensils and clothing? The Leisure Drive bed was very comfortable and had one very good point in that the front seat backs laid down flat to make the foot of the beds so that you did not have to carry extra bed cushions. I mean, what do you do with them? During the day they take up valuable storage space and at night you have to get them out to make up the bed - what a bore! And if you do use the double bed the storage problem is even worse with the extra piece.

*Ann* has made up two loose covers for the insert pieces so that they are protected during the day. One fits behind the forward facing passenger seat which we don't use on the move. The other goes behind the front passenger seat, held in place, at the moment, by a bungy cord but I hope to do something more elegant in the future.

On the whole, though, we are very pleased with our new motorhome and we like the power assisted steering and excellent performance from the Peugeot 2.2 litre engine.

*Ann and Phil Sanders*

This reiterates the common complaint or comment about the converters or manufacturers "designing" rather than practically using the resulting vehicles. *Ann* has apparently been the editor of a quarterly boating magazine for the last eight years and found the same problem that I have in getting articles. She solved that problem - she resigned as editor! That's a thought for me!

-----ooOoo-----

## **Cause for Concern**

In reply to *Irene & Lionel Le Vie's* letter in the December 2004 Newsletter. My working life for some 40 years was as a Senior Engineer in the bus industry. Buses in a large city last many years and operate a stop-start life which means the vehicle works harder per mile. A bus receives several overhauls during its life where major components (engines, gearboxes, rear axles etc.) are stripped, rebuilt and made good for another life.

Our motorhome chassis are designed for delivery work, stop-start with variable loads. Depending on the initial cost of the chassis, how you have driven and maintained it, decides its life and reliability. It is possible to extend its life well beyond 100,000 miles; assuming most spares are available, either new or second-hand (welding and metal spraying can do wonders if you go to the correct firms. Decide beforehand what extra mileage you require, either 50,000 or 100,000 as this will affect the cost of the overhaul.

If you ask around in the car and commercial vehicle world you will find an "old-type" engineer - not in the main street behind a flash vehicle sales office, but in a smaller building with vehicles in pieces. A person in partly dirty overalls, big knobbly-knuckled hands with much knocked about and very short nails and with skin impregnated with carbon. Give him your vehicle for a couple of hours, tell him your required extra life and with all the senses God gave him he will tell you roughly what it will cost within a min/max figure.

For consideration:

Engine. What noises are there, and where? Colour of exhaust smoke, blue or black? Oil/fuel leaks and consumption? Rubber mountings and their condition.

Clutch. Does it slip, is it difficult to operate? Do you use the clutch very much?

Gearbox. Is it noisy? Does it jump out of gear? Can you engage gear easily? When you change the oil, the drain plug may have a small magnet in it - what is stuck to it? A black mud is acceptable, metal bits are not!

Rear Axle - if fitted. Noise; oil leaks; free play in the drive.

Wheels. Free play in the bearings and suspension, condition of the brake mechanism; pattern of wear on the surface of the tyres.

Chassis. Where is the rust? Are any parts of the chassis buckled, bent or missing?

Brakes. Hydraulic fluid leaks? Condition of metal and rubber pipes? If the brake pedal is held down for a long time, does it gradually go to the floorboard? This could indicate leaks internally. Check that the brake assistance is working.

Electrical. Seriously consider changing all batteries and bulbs and at the same time check the bulb contacts. Check fuses and condition of the fuse holders. Secure loose wires and fit overhauled alternator and belts.

The above points form the basis of a study of your vehicle for its future life. I don't think Willersey has the ability to do this type of work as possibly the engine and gearbox may have to be completely stripped and various parts sent away for specialist machining etc. The vehicle may have to be off the road for a month and bits around everywhere. There is a difference between patch and mend and overhaul.

I agree, modern motorhomes are built for looks. Not real use! A prototype should be built and we 'users' should test it for a short period and we could then tell the manufacturers where the weaknesses are.

It would be interesting to know what A-S future strategy is regarding design and habitability. Just to drive and sit in it; live in for only one night or many nights? What should be put into the cupboards - for one day or twenty days? Comfort of seating - for 3 hours, 20 hours, 6 days? Making beds - getting in and out - being able to sit up in bed? Eat, drink or read in bed?

In Motorhome Monthly magazine for December 2004 the last paragraph of a comment on A-S new models reads "by launching new models (6 in 12 months) and updating existing popular models Auto-

Sleepers are sure they can provide a motorhome or conversion to suit most people!. Interesting....??

*Rod Langney*

One has only to look at the famous Routemaster Buses in London to see just how long the full overhauls can keep them running. However, finding the type of engineer suggested could be difficult. Perhaps we should try to get a sort of register or recommended people.

-----oooOOOooo-----

### *Chairman's Chat*



Now is the time when we shall all start looking forward to days and nights spent away in our motorhomes. The winter has been a very sobering time with the problems associated with weather, not only in the Asian region but closer to home in Scotland, Cumbria and Devon. Let us hope that, for all our journeyings, the weather will hold find for us.

One of the things that I detest about the winter months is that it seems impossible to keep the motorhome clean. No sooner do you wash the muck off it than you take it out again and get some more road filth upon it. Could somebody please invent either a self-cleaning finish or a non-dirtying finish for the vans? Think how much time, and effort, that would save. No doubt something could be done in this fashion but I dread to think what the cost might be.

Quite a lot has been said recently about the trial of buses in London which are driven by fuel cells. These apparently are free from any poisonous emissions. I wonder how long it might be before such things are available in the market place for our vehicles, what the cost might be and whether any of the parties interested in the production and sale of fuels would do their best to keep such things on hold. It has happened before, I believe, with matches and razor blades so there is nothing new. We now have those "bendy buses" on various routes. According to the Mayor, they are beneficial to the less able in that you can board them more easily. But one thing appears to have escaped his notice. If any of the less able are waiting for a bus on a route which is not served by the bendies, it seems a pound to a penny that the bus required will pull up at the stop behind one or more of them. And it is a long walk to get to the rear of the bendy! It can also be difficult to pass the things because of their length. I suppose that

this is meant to encourage us to use them more than our own vehicles but there are times when we need our own transport.

The decision to stop the Club and Company Rally has left us with a hole in the rally list. If anyone knows of a venue which might be suitable for an alternative, please get in touch with any member of the committee so that it may be considered. We already have some possibilities but any others would be welcome. If you could also give some idea of the costs which might be involved, that would help.

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## Wanted

Ford Duetto, Low Mileage. Tel: Pauline Porter on 011 7969 2806 (Bristol)

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VW Topaz Low mileage. Must be 2.5 Tdi 102 BHP. Private sale, one owner preferred. E-mail [geoffsmith65@hotmail.com](mailto:geoffsmith65@hotmail.com) or tel. Geoff Smith on 017 3735 1721 (Banstead, Surrey.) Will travel to view.

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## For Sale

Peugeot Boxer Symbol - 2 Berth, 2000, 2 litre petrol, P.A.S. 20,000 miles. 3 burner hob, Grill, oven. Blown air heating. Toilet, shower. Fly screens, blinds. MOT to June 2005. No pets, non smokers. Excellent condition. £19,295.00. Contact Alan Blackburn at [alamo@blackburn98.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:alamo@blackburn98.fsnet.co.uk) (by e-mail) or telephone 014 8322 3626. (Woking, Surrey)



#####

Awning - NR Motor Chalet. Approximately 5' x 7', height at rear 7'. Includes curtains and steel pegs.. Little used. Only £60.00 as space is needed. Phone Janet Roberts on 013 0673 1106 (Dorking, Surrey).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

2002 VW Trident, 2.5 diesel. Owned by careful lady driver. Immaculate condition, low mileage. Top A-S standards plus bike rack, side awning,

mudflaps etc. £23,500.00 ono. Tel: Pauline Porter on 011 7969 2806 (Bristol).

#####



Ford Duetto, 2.5 diesel. 'V' reg, Nov. 1999. L.W.B. 29,000 miles. F.S.H., V.G.C. 2 berth, 2nd owner. No dogs, no children, non smokers. All usual A-S refinements plus fitted Fiamma wind out awning and free standing awning used once. Blown air central heating. Alarmed. 2 bike rack. Silver Screens, Briefcase solar panel. MOT till 07.05.2005. £20,500.00. Tel Bryan Jones on 019 4267 1377 (Leigh, Lancs).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Ford Legend GL, 2000 cc, petrol, 1989. 43K miles. Full facilities, including four forward seats (rears with lap belts) that convert into a large double or two even larger singles! With an adult double over-cab bed in the Luton as well as all the usual A-S refinements of fan assisted convection heating, cassette toilet, instant hot water to sinks and shower, fridge, two burner hob with grill and oven and a 4 speaker ICE. The interior has been protected (no smoking, pets or kids) with removable slip mats and seat throws. Externals (with added alarm and deadbolts) have been well cared for showing little signs of ageing. The mechanics have been garage maintained, having in the last year had new tyres, radiator, full exhaust system, brake pads and shoes and other general fettling. This would be an ideal upsize or as a first van for a family. £10,995.00. Reason for change is the need for a narrower van. (Late '90s Duetto wanted). Contact Ricky Smith at fgsmith@qinetiq.com or phone 016 8456 8206 (Malvern).

Thanks for the donation.

#####

Peugeot Boxer Executive, 2.5 diesel, 1996 'P' reg. 2 berth. 42,000 reliable miles. Excellent condition and very clean inside and out. One careful owner from new. No pets, children or 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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