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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

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



It's a new model

NEWSLETTER 208

JANUARY 2006

A Note from Charles

I know that members will be deeply saddened to learn that recently Harry and Sheila Henthorne experienced a very serious fire at their home. The good news is that neither of them were hurt nor indeed were their pets. Unfortunately, severe damage has been caused to the rear of the house and furthermore virtually all of their possessions were either destroyed or damaged by water. On behalf of all of us, I send Harry and Sheila our very deepest and heartfelt sympathy for such a dreadful incident, wishing them well for the future and trusting that soon comfortable, alternative accommodation is found with the minimum of delay.

Charles Trevelyan



Ringing In The Changes

Hello

We are Peter Brown and Christine Mawdsley and we will be editing the Newsletter in the future. I'm afraid it's all a bit sudden—the plan was for us to start in February, but due to Harry and Sheila's recent disaster we have to take over a little early. Although relatively new to ASOC (2 years) we don't think it would be presumptuous of us to thank Harry, on behalf of everyone, for all his hard work and contributions in the past. We know he's been Editor more than once and has done a sterling job.

So, who are these upstarts! Well we live in Cheadle, Staffordshire (we moved from Nottinghamshire in May of this year), we are in our middle 50's and Peter still works full time(ish). We will jointly carry out the task of editing the Newsletter.

We both have adult children who don't live with us and three cats who do! Chris has in recent years been an Administration Manager although for the foreseeable future she intends to spend her time re-modelling our new home. Peter had a thirty year career as a telecommunications engineer then as a property and facility manager for a national telecommunication company and currently works as a property and facilities consultant/project manager.

We both enjoy walking and that is what led us to motor caravanning as a means of extending the reach of our walking territory. We chose a van that was the right size and performance for our perceived requirements and that was exceptionally well built, at the time the fact that it was an Auto-Sleeper was irrelevant. Nearly two years on we are now certain that our Duetto was the right choice and expect it to remain so for several years to come.

We found the ASOC web site via a link from the Auto-Sleeper company web site and we were tempted by the pictures of members relaxing at rallies, to both join the Club and try a rally. Our first rally was Blue Lias in May 2004. We were given an exceptional welcome and felt at home from the start. We have since attended a further 9 rallies including this year's AGM and the Dordogne.

From joining the Club we have enjoyed receiving and reading the Newsletter. We noted Harry's search for a replacement Editor last year but felt we needed to know more about the Club and about motor caravanning in general before volunteering. At this year's AGM we talked to Harry to understand what was involved and following that we agreed that should the Club find us suitable we would volunteer to take over from Harry before the 2006 AGM.

And here we are!!! Contact details on page 20.

Technical Group & Website

Baz Wellard

Chairman Technical Group & Webmaster

Recalls

Auto-Sleepers have very kindly agreed to co-operate to ensure that the club members, and others, are aware of any safety recalls affecting their conversions. This information, along with vehicle safety recalls, is now available on the club website.

Summary of the first three Auto-Sleeper recalls are:

- R/2005/060: Swivel seat
- R/2005/080: Mains wiring
- R/2005/081: Spinflo cooker

These recalls, inclusively, cover the following models: - Nuevo & ES; Symbol & ES; Palermo; Pollensa; Ravenna; Rienza Lancashire & ES. Inca EL & EK; Sussex; Dorset & Midas & Vivanti

Full details of both conversion and vehicle safety recalls are available on the Club Website under the "technical" – "recall" page. For members who do not have access to the web you can either ask your local library to access it for you (free), or write to me, with an SAE at 18 Greenwood Close Fareham, Hants PO16 7UF, and I will print the information for you.

Dealers (Don't we love them all?) Ricky and Ann Smith

As a follow up to Pauline Porters letter in December's issue of this excellent magazine, I felt I should stand up for the large majority of dealers Ann & I have encountered in our search when an upgrading to our leisure vehicle was contemplated!

Living in Malvern for the latter part of the last century most of our purchases were from 'Cotswold Motor Caravans Churchdown' and in all our dealings with Frank Williams, and his partner in his early years, we had nothing but gentlemanly service at all phases of the transaction. In the intervening years, at their annual 'Show' where we eagerly viewed his new additions from Auto-Sleepers and others, consumed their excellent refreshments and bent various ears with requests for, and gave adverse comments on, the layouts/fittings of the new models on display, all this with them knowing full well that at that moment in time we had not the slightest intention in the purchase of a new vehicle. But, as I have said to Frank and many other dealers, we may not be in the market for the latest incarnation but if people like us were not desirous of a pre-owned model their stock levels would quickly saturate. Frank on his part, whenever he encountered us, would put himself out to satisfy our questions and requests for access to his display.

Our latest acquisition did not come from them but from 'Countrywide Motorhomes Wimborne' from whom we received comparable treatment when during our initial visit to view their stock, Ian, David Carpenters brother, gave us his undivided attention for over 2hrs, nothing being to much trouble (including a mug of very welcome tea after our 3hr+ drive down).

Although, like all salesmen he pressed for a closure then and there, he was more than sympathetic to our needs to check out other vehicles we had on our list to view that weekend and, paramount, our need to obtain a viable part exchange on our current vehicle. (We also called at Marquis Dorset, Hampshire & Dorset Motorcaravans, West Country Motor-

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caravans & Cotswold Motor Caravans that weekend!) Needless to say on our return home his brother David and I exchanged 'phone calls to come to an amicably agreed sum in order to conclude the deal, payment to be by Bankers Draft or Building Society cheque on hand over subject to my valuation of our current vehicle being in agreement with theirs. On handover we again were impressed with their professionalism, Ian again spending well over an hour explaining the well fettled vehicles intricacies and his brother David taking a like time to go over the paperwork!

The Duetto LE has lived up to our high expectations of it and though turboless performs well enough to return approximately 35 mpg.

So there are good dealers out there but I would never buy from a Show, one does not know who has crawled all over it after you!!, also in my opinion Owner dealers seem to exhibit a more professional attitude.

National Rally 2006

Yes I know this was in the December issue, but Nora has asked us to print it again this month and please note the corrected telephone number.

At the A.G.M. this year and again as a result of the Questionnaires, I had requests for tours around Newark. I have explored the possibility and have made provisional bookings for the following.

Sherwood Travel have a 15 seater coach with a tour guide and are prepared to run 2 tours on Friday, Saturday and possibly Sunday. Each tour will last approximately one and a half hours and there are one or two places where it is impossible to take the coach so it does mean a little walking. These tours have to be booked and paid for in advance and quite early; the cost will be £5.00 per person. The sum is non-returnable.

Will interested members please contact me with a rally slip giving details

of Names, Membership No. and the preferred day of the tour, together with a cheque made payable to Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club for the appropriate number of seats to be reserved. The first 90 seats booked will be successful. After that I may have to renegotiate.

The provisional booking that I have made lasts only until 31st January 2006. If you wish to book, my address is 15 Langley Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, WV3 7JN. Telephone/fax: 01902 332105

Nora Venables

Subsequent to receiving this from Nora I understand there has been such a response that the application form will be going out with this Newsletter, rather than waiting until February.

Chris

Help Required

I have received a very pretty green Christmas card with a reindeer on the front but no signature. I am wondering if it should have contained a booking slip and cheque for the trip to Newark during the National Rally. If you recognise this description please contact me immediately, the trips are filling up.

Nora Venables

A Light Bite

Elderly Mr Jones had a serious hearing problem and his doctor arranged for him to have a set of hearing aids. These proved 100% successful.

A month later Mr Jones had cause to visit his doctor again. The GP said to Mr Jones "Your hearing is perfect, your family must be really pleased that you can hear again." "Oh, I haven't told my family yet," said Mr Jones, "I just sit around and listen to their conversations. I've changed my Will three times already!"

[Contributed by Bob Linard]

ON A SERIOUS NOTE

I've been made aware of a new car-jacking scam.

You walk across the car park, unlock your car, get in and start the engine. You select reverse and look into the rear-view mirror. Stuck in the middle of the rear window is a piece of paper so you select neutral put the brake on and get out of the car to remove the obstruction.

When you reach the back of the car the car-jackers appear out of nowhere, jump into your car and take off with the car, probably your hand-bag, housekeys, briefcase... They may also find something with your address on it.

If you find yourself in this situation just lock your doors and drive away.

The warning is currently doing the rounds via e-mail, but I thought it worth mentioning for anyone without access.

Chris

Renewal of Membership

Thanks to all the members who have renewed their membership, the first three arrived on the 30th September!

If you have not found the renewal form it was the centre page of the October Newsletter but my 'reminder' did not appear until the November Newsletter.

So if you do not have a form, write your details on a piece of paper and send it with your cheque for £15.00 - made payable to the Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club to me.

Norma Caley
Membership Secretary

Route Finders

Mike Coles

I am glad that Rita has found her navigator so useful. I am a single motorcaravaner and when my wife died I found navigating and driving in strange areas rather dangerous. Very dangerous in fact! May I offer her two suggestions.

1. NEVER program for the shortest route always the fastest route. That will stop being sent down lonely overgrown and narrow lanes like I was on one occasion (an old lane at the back of some houses!).
2. After setting up the route ALWAYS check the overview with a 'real' map.

Last season I was going to a site in the borders and on this occasion I never bothered to check the map. In the end I realized that something was wrong and found I had passed the site by 20 miles. When I contacted the Warden he told me that a number of his customers had also been routed via the north pole or something like that!!! Oh dear.

I would like to emphasise Mike's warning. The route planning portion of navigation software often gives an inappropriate route—always do a sense check with a map BEFORE YOU START.

Peter

Goodbye and Thanks

We would just like to take this opportunity of sending our condolences to Roy Anderton after reading of Ann's death in the December magazine, and to say thank you as they were two of the first people we met on our very first rally and their enthusiasm and warmth were very much appreciated.

Chris & Peter

From the Factory

Auto-Sleepers Procurement Team

The working day for the team starts at 7-30 Monday to Friday though one or two of us are in by 7-15 to get the important jobs done, such as making the first brew of the day. The team of three consists of Rebecca Harding Hudd (Becky), Mark Williams and myself Phil Bennett.

Becky has worked for the company for almost nine years. She started working in the unit preparation area and as her flare for organisation soon became apparent she moved on to join the procurement team in 2004. Becky is responsible for ensuring the supply of seats, cushions, GRP and coach tapes as well as ordering replacement parts for our base vehicles and after sales and warranty departments. For Becky working at Auto- Sleepers is something of a family affair. Some of you may have come across her husband Tim who is a technician in our service centre. Her father is Pat Niblett who is our Warranty Co-ordinator and her brother and stepbrother both work on the styrofoam line. Becky and Tim are keen cyclists and bike to work when the weather permits.

Mark Williams joined the company in January 2002 and is responsible for procuring most of the rest of the parts that we buy. He phones the suppliers to ensure deliveries are on time and if necessary will bring orders forward or push them back depending on our production requirements. Mark also looks after our JIT (Just in Time) system, which consists of five sets of blue containers placed strategically throughout the factory and contain various nuts, bolts screws and washers. The supplier of our JIT delivers directly to the factory floor and visits two or three times a week to ensure all the blue containers are topped up. Mark lives in Cheltenham with his wife and two teenage daughters.

I joined the company back in the early eighties and started as an electrician's assistant on the panel van line before moving into the stores in 1987 and in to the Purchasing Office (as it was called then) in December 2000. I am responsible for ordering all timber and plywood and placing scheduled orders with our foreign suppliers. Recently I have been heavily involved in the implementation of our new computer system. I have lived in Willersey since the late seventies and can walk to work in around 6 or 7 minutes. My youngest daughter Mandy, who many of you would have met at the Club and Company Rallies, works in the trim department and makes the over carpets for the rear of our vans.

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January 2006



Rally Supplement

A Happy New Year to all members

Proposed Rally in the West of Ireland 24th. May – 8th. June 2006.

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

A rally on 2 sites. Limited to 24 motorhomes. **SORRY NO DOGS ALLOWED.**

Eagle Point Co. Kerry. 24th. May – Mon.

29th. May
Island. The

This rally is now FULL.

& Garnish
to the marshals in

March 2006. We will give you a sterling rate when we send the site guide mentioned below.

Fossa Caravan & Camping Park, Nr. Killarney, Co. Kerry

. Mon. 29th. May – Thurs. 8th. June. 10 nights €165 incl. electricity. Nr. Ring of Kerry, Gap of Dunloe, Dingle Peninsula.

Bookings only taken for the 15 nights. We have secured site fee discounts on condition that you pay for all 15 nights.

Rally Fee is £15.50 & includes a Caravan & Camping Guide to Ireland 2006 to be sent to you when published. If you are offered a place and you accept then the rally fee is non-returnable. Please send a cheque for £15.50, a rally slip and a 9X6 SAE to: **B. Morgan, 44 Mersey Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 3DJ.** Tel. 0161 432 4869. Mobile 07890876859. Nora & Ven Venables 01902 332 105. An information pack together with confirmation of booking will be sent to you.

20th. – 24th. February 2006. (4 nights) Whitemead Park, Parkend, Lydney, Gloucestershire.

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

Rally Marshals: Jeannette Jones assisted by Helen & Geoff Gray.

Fees inclusive of hook up, hire of room for two evenings, use of all leisure facilities, rally fees and VAT: -£56.00 couples, £51.00 singles.

Please include a SAE for confirmation and directions with your booking slip.

Send cheques payable to Mrs. 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, Jacuzzi and gym so do bring your swimwear even if you don't swim.

Pleasant restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Small shop on site.

Limited to 22 vans which could be scattered across the site (it is a Civil Service membership site and they have to keep pitches for members).

*If you wish to run a rally in 2006 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

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!

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After the first cuppa of the day we all get down to work on our various tasks; for Mark this consists of visiting the stores and checking on any shortages that may have arisen since the previous lunch time. Becky checks that the daily delivery of GRP has arrived and is correct, whilst I check that the computer backup run at 11pm the previous evening has been successful. Mark then moves onto phoning suppliers chasing any shortages and pending shortages and Becky will do likewise with her suppliers. I in the meantime will check with our CNC and wood shop to ensure they have no problems.

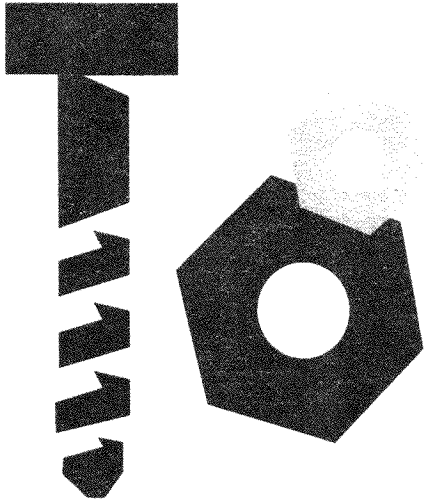
At 9-30 every morning we have a meeting with our Operations Director Anthony Trevelyan and our Production Manager Brian Cross to discuss any problems we may have and the solutions to overcome those problems. The rest of the morning is spent phoning suppliers checking reports from the computer system and taking any necessary actions.

Lunch break arrives at 1.00 pm where I have to suffer the embarrassment of the Sudoku challenge. For those of you who don't know this puzzle game it is rather like a crossword except that instead of letters and words the clues and answers are numbers. The challenge consists of Becky and I trying to finish the puzzle before the others. So far in nearly three months I have managed to win just three times and one of those was by cheating.

The afternoon follows the same pattern as the morning or should do but life is never that simple. Problems can arise from the most unexpected quarter. Suppliers, no matter how good, have problems of their own, parts can arrive damaged or a short delivered. The blockade at the French ports, bad weather in Northern Italy, the boat with the plywood late docking are all challenges that have been put before us in the past. Other staff at Auto-Sleepers say I have a book of excuses for late deliveries hidden in my desk. I am not prepared to confirm or deny whether or not that is true, but my desk is always locked before I go home.

Happy Motor Caravanning

Phil



ASOC Web Site

Auto-Sleepers Owners Club



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Webmaster
Baz Wellard

Last Update - 23rd
November 2005 (16/05)
(Plus addendum dated 26th
Nov.)

November 26, 2005

<http://www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk/> (1 of 3,03/12/2005 11:03:09)

Welcome to the Home Page of



Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club

Introduction

A full list of available pages is at [Contents](#) & latest updates at [update](#)

The Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club (ASOC) is the largest single-make motorhome club and is only open to current owners of Auto Sleeper motorhomes. These motorhomes are built by [Auto-Sleepers Limited](#), and the models applicable are listed on the [Technical Group](#) page.

The objects of the club are to:-

- Arrange meetings, [rallies](#) and social functions for members
- Facilitate exchange of information amongst members on all matters of mutual interest
- Provide any additional services which may be of benefit to members

As from the 1st January 2003 the ASOC became:- "A company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Orchard Works, Willersey, near Broadway, Worcestershire, WR12 7QF. Registered No. 4616969". Accordingly:- Members agree to contribute such amount as may be required, not exceeding £1.00, to the assets of the club, in the event of it being wound up whilst members, or within one year of ceasing to be members.

The club's [Articles of Association](#) is progressively developed from proposed amendments from the members or the committee at the

ASOC Web Site

All of those reading this Newsletter will have heard of the club website but I think it a strong possibility that a few of you have not had the opportunity to view the site and therefore have little idea of what to expect if you did so. On the adjacent page is an image of exactly what you would first see when the computer was instructed to access www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk - the unique internet address for the club website

The first time you access the Internet you ideally need to be tutored by a competent relative/friend/librarian who is familiar with the machine and its interfaces of keyboard and mouse (a device that allows you to move a pointer around the screen with buttons that you press when the pointer is above an actionable point on the screen). Don't be concerned that you haven't a clue yourself and ask all the questions you want. The first time I used a keyboard as an engineer I spent an hour trying to work out how to put a space between words. In the end I had to ask, only to find out that the biggest by far button on the machine was the Space Bar!!!

Once the computer has used the website address to guide you to the site of your choice you will find you are in an environment dedicated to your chosen topic. If you were using a book you would use the index to find the number of the page that interested you and then would turn to that page. On a website the equivalent of the index is the 'Home Page'. The contents of the site are listed on the Home Page and pressing a button on the mouse when the pointer is over any set of words that are underlined (see example page) causes another page that contains the information you want to see to be displayed.

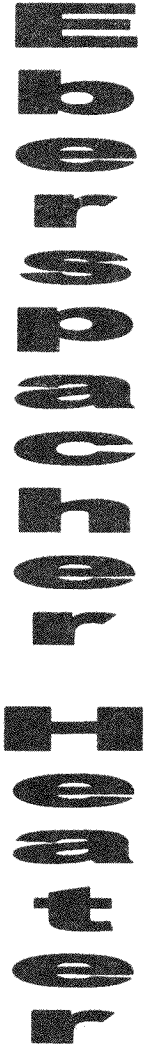
You navigate your way through the contents of the website by following links that take your interest. There is a very useful button like image towards the top of the computer screen called the 'back' button. This is your safety net. It takes you back to the last page you were on so that you can have another try if you went to the wrong place.



If any of you would like to know a little more, please write to me and if there is enough interest in a particular topic I'll address it in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Peter

I was rather curious what this Eberspacher heater was and thought I might as well pass on what I found. If anyone has expert knowledge as to the differences between the exhaust characteristics of diesel and gas fuelled heaters I'll be happy to pass that knowledge on via the Newsletter. *Peter*



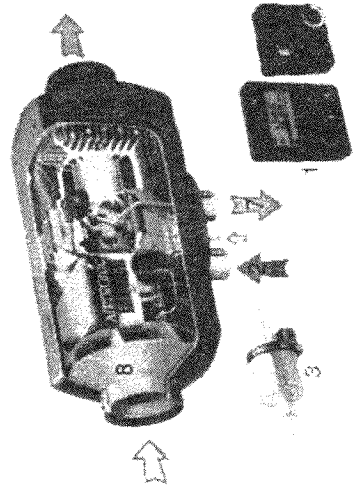
The air heating system

How the Airtronic works

A control switch (1), or a 7 day timer will start the heater operation. The heater's motor will operate the fan (4), drawing in air for the combustion chamber (2) to mix with diesel. This is delivered by the remote factory set fuel metering pump (3). This draws the fuel for the heater from the tank.

A glow plug (5) ignites the fuel/air mix and combustion is established. This heats the heat exchanger (6), and the products of the combustion (7) are passed out of the heater and on through flexible stainless steel tube to the exhaust outlet. The heater is not connected in any way to the engine.

The fresh air fan (8) draws in cold air for heating, quite separate from the combustion process. This air passes over the sealed, finned heat exchanger (6) and under pressure, passes through the duct work. This delivers the warm air which is automatically controlled to give your desired temperature.



Why Rally?

When we joined the club we were not only new to Auto-Sleepers but to caravanning and indeed any form of camping. In hindsight I reflect on how blessed we were that we didn't know what we didn't know (if you know what I mean) because if we had known then I'm sure we'd have stuck to day trips.

We were fortunate in two ways, firstly before we bought our van I had the cheek to visit our nearest Caravan Club site, at the time Clumber Park, and asked the wardens what I should know about using a motorhome. They gave me the basics; get electric cable, hosepipe, levelling blocks, etc; don't drive onto soft grass, be careful not to flatten your vehicle battery and other such things - enough for us to survive a night on Brownhills park at Newark and our first stay on a Caravan Club site. The second way was that we managed to pluck up the courage to try an ASOC rally.

I was really concerned about the prospect of turning up among a crowd of seasoned motor caravanners and embarrassing myself because of my inexperience in dealing with the (shall we say) Thetford process, what to do with grey water (I'd read what that was in a magazine) and whether I was allowed to/should use the awning, how to level the van in practice and just about anything else you can think of. I must be honest, the thing that actually convinced me that I should risk the embarrassment and attend a rally (just one to see what happened) was the number of photographs on the ASOC web site showing members relaxing around outside tables stacked with bottles of wine - I thought we must find a kindred spirit or two among that sort of company - and for once I was right.

We were last to arrive (early morning the day after the rally started) but a space had been set aside for us and most members kindly stayed in bed with the blinds drawn

until we'd positioned ourselves and activated all systems (gas and water on). As the day progressed just about everyone called to see us and introduce themselves, we joined in a walk, snacked at a pub and then got back to the rally site in time to go to another pub. We had a really good time and have attended as many rallies as we could get to since including two weeks in France with a wonderful group of club members.

However just as good as meeting all these nice new people was finding the vast range of knowledge available (and so freely given) on how to get the best out of motor caravanning. I learned that the spaces under the Thetford cassette were for storing chemical bottles and that the space under the legs in the third seat of our Duetto was for storing wine bottles! I learned how a tool box could double as a bedside table and a cable reel as a footrest. If nothing else on our first rally I learned how to virtually double the storage space in the van and still make it seem empty.

Since then at rally after rally I keep meeting new interesting people and learning more about how to make best use of our van. I guess that there are many new (and probably some not so new) members who are unsure about how they would get on at a rally - I really do recommend that you try it but two tips - start with a small rally where you are not lost in the crowd and if on your first rally it pours with rain all the time and everyone stays inside, try a second anyway.

Peter



FRANCE PASSION

January seems a good time to look back to June and July 2005 when we were too hot as we toured France - and wish we could trade in a little bit of the warmth to dilute the winter cold!

Last spring, we chose to book for the Dordogne rally but decided to stay in France for six weeks. Several people had mentioned France Passion to us so we decided to join it and experience that aspect of France. We actually joined it about this time of year by logging on to their website: france-passion.com and paying the annual fee (€27 in 2006) by credit card.

The scheme allows owners of fully equipped "camping cars" to stay for one night on a farm or vineyard subject to the maximum number of vans stipulated. There is also the rule that you cannot pre-book. There is a hinted suggestion that you buy a little of their produce.

About Easter we received the bi-lingual directory, map and windscreen sticker and started to plan the areas we would like to explore.

At last, June arrived, we crossed the channel and thought we would speedily head south until, a little south of Tours thought we would try our first France Passion. We headed for a general produce farm and duly following the local France Passion

symbols arrived at a charming little small holding where the arrows showed us where to park and the sticker on their front door confirmed that they were 2005 members but despite walking around the farm several times we found no sign of any occupants! We spent a couple of hours deliberating as to whether we were doing the right thing and eventually convinced ourselves that, with the symbols pointing to the "parking" area and the current year's sticker was on the door - we decided we must be correct in camping there.

We settled down to camp for the night when, about 8pm, a car drew in and the driver went to the house, came out and came to the van and, in broken English, said, "You OK there, me OK you there!" and then drove off. We then felt completely comfortable to stay in the garden of that lovely farmhouse with the beautiful views over the valley.

In the morning, we headed south, stopped at an Aire de Camping Car to fill with water, empty the waste water and empty the toilet and, in due course, arrived at our next France Passion site. The farm was well off the beaten track but we easily found it and were greeted by the co-owner who showed us where to park. We had a small field to ourselves surrounded

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(Continued from page 16)

by a beautifully picturesque but empty house, trees to two sides and the farm 100 metres ahead.

An hour later, our host returned to show us around his Pate de Foie Gras farm and showed us the pens where they would force feed the geese then the processing, cooking and storage area. Finally, he took us to small shop where he showed us and explained about the different products. He also sold wine which was produced by a neighbour and invited us to try one particular bottle adding that we could pay for it the next morning but only if we liked it! We told him about our previous night's experience and he reassured us that, if the site was in the current year's book, there was sufficient space and we parked in the designated area then we should do so with complete confidence.

The next morning, having liked the wine, we called in to buy some more and also some pate. Just as we were packing up the van, we realised that we hadn't paid for the one we had enjoyed last night so we returned to pay for it and, as we did so, met the producer of the wine who was calling to replenish their supplies.

The following day, we joined the rally for 2 weeks and then, at the end of it, started looking for further France Passion sites; the next being the vineyard of Chateau Fayan at Puisseguin where an employee moved her car so that we could park and spread out our chairs, enjoying the shade of the magnificent tree whilst we gazed over the owner's vineyards below, beside and above us.

After spending two nights at a campsite at St. Emilion (and thoroughly exploring the town), we found the vineyard of Vignobles Morandiere at St. George des Agouts

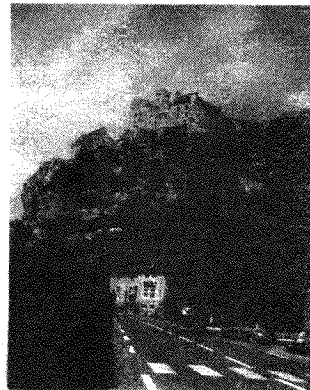
where, once again, the owner showed around and we were very impressed with his brandy distillation plant and also all the storage and processing rooms for producing his wines and told us that he was the third generation still living on the vineyard.

In all our time in France, we stayed at many more France Passion sites and had the most memorable experiences of seeing producers of melons, honey, general farm produce and, of course, more wines!

We found no difficulty in finding Aires de Service de Camping Car in between farms and, of course, we stayed at several camp sites as well. Quite often we struggled with our limited French and, by their nature, all the sites were in the country but we were happy with them as, having explored all day, we were content to settle down in the evening to drink in the beauty of the countryside and enjoy our books.

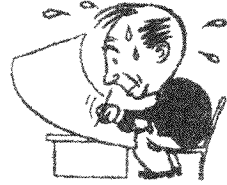
We had a most enjoyable time staying on these farms and seeing a different, a more rural side of France - but please, we have one request. Don't tell anybody!

Mike Hall.



(Vice-)Chairman's Chat

Best laid plans



I believe there is a saying about the best laid plans! In the last newsletter, Harry announced the appointment of our new editorial team and the plans for them to take over the newsletter from February.

Unfortunately, no sooner had the newsletter gone to the post, than we heard the sad news that Harry and Sheila's house had been severely damaged in a fire. I am happy to say that they are both OK, as are their cats, but the house is so badly damaged that they will be in temporary accommodation for six months or so.

We all send Harry and Sheila our best wishes, and hope that they will soon be back home but, under the circumstances, Harry has been denied his final edition - there was no way he could produce it. Peter and Chris kindly took on the job a month earlier than planned and we bid them a warm welcome to the editorial chairs.

We must also take this opportunity to thank Harry, and Sheila, for editing the newsletter for so long and so successfully. Harry has had two lengthy stints as editor because, believe it or not, having got rid of the job once he later volunteered to take it on again.

The newsletter is our main means of communication with our members and the outside world, so it is important that the standard has been so well maintained. The commitment to produce it every month is quite onerous, and I suspect there have been times when Harry had to write the whole thing himself! Anyway, now he can lay down his red pencil and take a well earned rest from Club activities – after all he's only Chairman now!

Finally, can I repeat Harry's regular appeal – it is your newsletter so please keep the items coming for Peter and Chris. Their contact details are on the back cover, and the last date for submission is the 10th of the month.

Andy Cavell
Vice-Chairman



Ford Rienza 2.4 TD 2002. 2 berth, very good condition £25,500 ono. Only 9,500 miles. Toilet, shower, unused grill oven, 'fridge, TV and drinks cabinet, good quality wood. 'U' shaped rear lounge, good space for two. Accomplished vehicle, good economical drive, ample power. Any test welcome. Selling due to relocation. Must sell so keenly priced. Tel: Arne Park on 0141 660 1303. Eskbank, Dalkeith, Midlothian. E-mail arne817@fsmail.net

Sorry!

I'm sure by the time you get to this section of the Newsletter you will be well aware of the unfortunate circumstances associated with our take over of the Editorship and understand that your submissions for advertisements may well have gone astray, or indeed been completely destroyed. Please accept our apologies for that and resubmit your advertisements as quickly as you can so that we can include them next month.

Peter and Chris

Hobbies

You should have noted from the insert that came with the December Newsletter that there will be a display of members hobbies at the National Rally. If anyone would like to write a piece on their (none caravanning) hobby perhaps we can start a Hobbies Forum to exchange ideas and information?

Chris

Regalia

If anyone mislaid the price list/order form that was included with the December Newsletter please call John Jones (contact details page 20) and he will gladly mail another.

Peter

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Items for the Newsletter **MUST** reach your Editor by the **TENTH** of the month. You may post them to 5 Kenilworth Walk, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent ST10 1WA or e-mail to: petercb1952-asocnews@yahoo.co.uk. The Editor reserves the right to edit or omit items. Advertisements for items to be sold or wanted by members are published free of charge, however, small donations to Club funds are appreciated and will be acknowledged. No guarantee can be given that any item will appear in the next, or any, issue of the Newsletter. Cheques should be made payable to 'Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club' and NOT TO ASOC.

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