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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



*To ski or not to ski that is the question*

## **NEWSLETTER 209**

## **FEBRUARY 2006**

# From the Editor (s)

Well, we seem to have survived our first edition without too many mishaps and we've had lots of notes and e-mails supporting our efforts. So a big thank you to everyone. We've also had a good selection of articles, news and tit bits for inclusion in the Newsletter which is great, but *please* keep it up.

Things at Kenilworth Walk have been a bit hectic over the last couple of months so we haven't been able to either get on any decent walks or get away in the van - so we're suffering withdrawal symptoms and very much looking forward to our first walk of the year this week-end and our first rally in February.

We'd like to wish everyone a very Happy, Healthy and Rallyful New Year

*A little bit of business:*

*Firstly apologies for not mentioning Arne Park's donation last month - many thanks Arne.*

*Secondly to mention that there will be a delay in banking donation cheques received this month, but please be assured they will be banked.*

*And Thirdly; we're sure some of you are wondering whether you've met us at a rally - here's a clue* →



# Rally Stop Press

NB apologies from Neil, he discovered at the last minute a problem with the rally slips in the supplement not being aligned through the paper; please look at both sides before cutting!!



Couple of notes for you. First of all from Nora Venables to say that all the tours for Newark are now full. Members who have booked will be notified of the day and time they are booked in for during the next month or so.

And from Jeannette Jones to say that the Whitemead Rally is now full and she is off on a 'Big Adventure' to India no less till just before the event. If you need to contact anyone between now and the Rally please ring the Assistant Marshalls - Helen and Geoff Gray on 01656 862423

You will note in the Rally supplement that Neil mentions four additional rallies that have now been organised. Being the editors gives us a chance to plug one of them that we are organising with Mike and Jeanne Hall. The rally field is just at the edge of Rocester, a small town with a Roman history near Uttoxeter in Staffordshire. Mike has arranged a visit to the nearby (1 mile walk) JCB factory for the Friday morning with the option of a lunch in their restaurant.

## THE ULTIMATE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

*Thanks to Andy Cavell for this piece*

The first tour organised for the Club by GB Privilege in 2006 is The Ultimate Scottish Experience, starting on 19<sup>th</sup> June. This is a very special tour, and will appeal to those motorhomers who enjoy the good things in life, as well as the motorhome lifestyle. Many people have taken their motorhome to Scotland, but unless you have experienced the sheer grandeur of our private castle visits and banquets, you have missed the opportunity to really "live the dream".

The tour combines two exclusive, 'once-in-a-lifetime' events with a more traditional Scottish campsite. It should be stressed that the two castle visits are exclusive to ASOC tour participants – they are not open to the general public. The full itinerary is set out below.

**Monday June 19<sup>th</sup> 2006:** We should plan to arrive at our first overnight stopping place, the Castle of Mey, at between 17.00 and 18.00. The public will have left the castle by then and we have been granted the privilege of staying overnight in the car park, with lovely sea views. The car park is on a slope, but levelling chocks will make it acceptable. The Castle of Mey was the private property of HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. She bought it when her husband King George VI died. She spent as much

time as possible at the Castle of Mey, because she considered it to be her true home and she loved the peace and quiet, as well as the beautiful views.

This evening we will walk up to the castle and be welcomed with a glass of champagne before taking a private, guided tour. After the tour we can all stroll back to our motorhomes to spend the rest of the evening in this most exclusive "campsite", with its wonderful sea views.

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2006:** A leisurely drive of about 160 miles will bring us to our campsite at Grantown-on-Spey, in the heart of the Speyside Malt Whisky region. There are many wonderful places to visit en-route, including John O'Groats, Wick, Dunrobin Castle, Inverness, Culloden etc. etc.

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006:** A completely free day so you can do whatever you wish, but we strongly recommend a visit to the Smokehouse, where you can buy some of the finest smoked salmon known to man. It is just over a mile from the campsite. Alternatively stroll into the lovely old town of Grantown. If enough people are interested the tour leader could organise a fish & chip supper in Grantown.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2006:** We have a bus tour this morning which will include a Scotch Whisky distillery visit and various other Speyside places of interest (most of which

have names that are synonymous with top quality Scotch Whisky).

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006:** We continue south this morning with a drive of about 100 miles. We will have the option of taking two different routes, one including Braemar, Balmoral and the spectacular scenery of the Grampians and Glen Shee, while the other will allow visits to the wonderful House of Bruar (Scotland's answer to Harrods), as well as Blair Atholl and the scenic "Queen's View" over Loch Tummel. Whichever route you take, you should arrive at our final destination, the magnificent Glamis Castle in the afternoon. As well as being the setting for the play Macbeth, Glamis was the childhood home of HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother and the birthplace of Princess Margaret. We will park overnight in the coach parking area, which is within 100 yards of the castle itself. In the evening we walk up to the castle for our grand finale. We will be "piped" into the castle and take aperitifs in the Great Drawing room followed by a private tour. While we are in the castle many of the public barriers will be removed, so you will be able to use the furniture instead of just looking at it. At the end of the castle tour we will be piped into the Glamis Castle state dining room for a magnificent Scottish 5-course banquet accompanied by top quality wines and followed by a selection of liqueurs etc. The dinner will include Haggis, which will be presented in the traditional manner. After the superb

meal we will be treated to a floodlit, private display of "beating the retreat", performed by a pipe and drums band. After this the whole group will be piped back to their motorhomes. An unforgettable finale to a wonderful tour.

The price per person, based on the relevant number of people in one motorhome, will be £375 per person for two people or £450 for one. A minimum of 15 motorhomes will be needed to operate the tour, with a maximum of 18 motorhomes. Included in the price is Overnight parking in the grounds of the Castle of Mey. Champagne reception in Castle of Mey. Private tour of the Castle of Mey. 3 nights at Grantown campsite with 220 volt hook-up. Bus tour of Speyside. Tour of Scotch Whisky distillery with tasting. Overnight parking at Glamis Castle. Private tour of Glamis Castle. Drinks reception in State Drawing Room at Glamis Castle. 5-course banquet with wine in Glamis Castle dining room. Haggis Ceremony. 'Beating the Retreat' in grounds of Glamis Castle. Services of GB Privilege Tour Director for duration of 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](mailto:gbprivilege@yahoo.com)*



# Technical Group & Website

**Baz Wellard**

**Chairman Technical Group & Webmaster**

## **Membership Deals**

You may recall that in last January's Newsletter I floated the idea of producing a list of companies/ dealers who would be willing to give discounts/ incentives to members. I did ask if any members had knowledge of such companies and I received one reply. However, I have revived this initiative.

Accordingly, a list of the contributing companies/ dealers should be available on the Club Website (see 'deals' page) by the time this Newsletter is published. At the time of drafting this article the following have already agreed to participate:

- AS Service Centre - 10% discount off work during December 2005 to February 2006.
- Dave Newell - 5% discount on over £100 (e.g. cruise control)
- Oaktree Services - 10% discount for external valeting
- MTH Auto Gas - 5% discount for cash
- Pro-Tec Covers - 15% discount for motorhome covers (to be finalised)
- RV Tex - 10% discount off labour charges - excluding alarms
- Van Bitz - One year's extra warranty on alarms and trackers

A further 10 replies are awaited.

Please **visit the website for full details before proceeding** with any purchases. Members will be required to present their membership card and number for all transactions.

The Club is **not** endorsing or recommending these companies/ dealers; members must make their own judgement before proceeding with any purchase or agreement.

May I repeat my request and ask if you can negotiate any discounts/ incentives with any other companies/ dealers, would you please let me have details and I will follow it up. Please e-mail me or write to 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants. PO16 7UF.

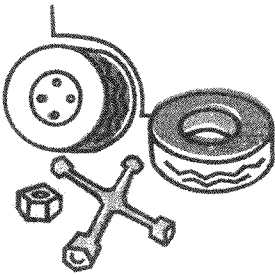
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### A Tip from Geoff Williamson

He has a Duetto and found the scissor jack to be hard to wind up with a flat tyre. Almost impossible for a decrepit OAP (*his words not ours*).

### His Solution

(assuming that you don't have breakdown assistance, are well clear of traffic and other hazards and are on fairly level solid ground)



Drop the spare wheel either in front or behind the punctured wheel and **carefully** drive the van up onto it. The extra height this gives you halves the amount of strength required to turn the jack winding handle whilst the weight of the van is on the jack. For anyone who wants to try a test run put the jack on a house brick. This is about the same height as the rim - i.e. the flat tyre.

*Apparently they did it outside Barcelona on the motorway!!*

## **ASOC we have a problem**

**Tony Janes**

My Duetto was purchased new in June 2004 and is therefore still under warranty. It has had a continuing problem with the hot and cold water supplies to the sink, basin and shower which the dealer has failed to rectify after three attempts to do so. The problem is that the system suffers from 'hammering' if the taps are turned on at anything less than full bore. This is obviously totally impractical, particularly for the basin as water splashes everywhere; it should be possible to adjust the flow according to the need. The 'adjustments' the dealer made to the pump didn't survive the first outing after each attempt and the problem returned. The hammering is very loud and campsite neighbours have complained about it late at night. It is also quite violent and I am worried it will loosen joints in the system and lead to leaks. I was informed by the dealer that the pump installed in the Duetto is too powerful for the short runs of pipework. The dealer said that earlier models had a smaller pump but customers complained that it was too weak and kept failing or didn't provide sufficient flow so Auto-Sleepers upgraded it.

I have written again to the dealer and now also to Auto-Sleepers hoping that the problem can soon be permanently fixed. Has anybody experienced the same problem and does anybody know the solution?

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*Talking of problems we seems to be getting a steady stream of complaints about vehicles, dealers or both. You will remember Pauline Porter's experience (December issue), Sue Tyack writes of a similar experience. Doug Keogan would rather do a round trip of nearly 300 miles (to Willersey) to resolve problems rather than use his supplying dealer. We propose to schedule your complaints over the next 3 months and issue it as a supplement with the appropriate Newsletter. So if you like the idea let us know of your experiences—bad and good.*

*Chris*

## **A Taste of France with GB Privilege**

### **Mike and Mo Valentine**

We met at the M20 Maidstone Services on a grey overcast Sunday morning and after a quick round of introductions, set off for the port. In no time we were in France and covered the 20 miles to our first campsite, Chateau Gandspette. A large site, with lovely facilities and individual pitches. An excellent gastronomic experience was taken in the site restaurant that evening.

Monday morning we set off for Chalon en Champagne. 30 miles on, we realized that we had an extra with us, who belonged to MCC Doggy Tour who left the site at the same time, a quick map consultation and off he left. We arrived in sunshine about 4.00pm, and that evening we held a *drinks and nibbles* get together, introducing everyone and the 'tour boss' Mo laid down a few ground rules for the days to come.

Tuesday morning was hot; we were collected by coach and taken for lunch, wonderful.

We pressed on to Epernay and Mercier, *The Champagne* producer. A tour of their cellars by train, through many tunnels and millions of racked bottles ended with a tasting and a chance to purchase.

On a warm grey Thursday morning, we set off for the Alsace region, reaching Riquewihr around 4.00pm. Within minutes the local stork 'flew in' to greet us, so younger members beware if in the area. The local tourist train took us on Friday morning around the medieval village of Riquewihr and the vineyards. The commentary told of its turbulent history and the different grapes making up the several different white wines and the one red.

In bright sunshine, next morning we strolled into town and into a famous wine makers. The new harvest production limited our tour of their winery. The sommelier, introduced six white wines, everyone joined the discussion before being allowed to taste

and between each, we tried various local cheeses. An excellent lunch in a nearby cellar awaited us, before going our separate ways to explore the most attractive floral town with its cobbled streets, alleys, museums etc.

Sunday morning saw us leave the Alsace for another famous region -- Burgundy. Arriving in Beaune around 4.00pm, a good site but with ferocious hedges. We watched a careless Dutchman rip out the back of his new caravan.

Monday was a rest day, a time to relax and explore a delightful town. On Tuesday we visited a prestigious wine maker and were given a 'tastvin', a shallow metal tasting cup. Following the audio trail through the caves we met our sommelier, who described some of the history and introduced 10 red wines. That evening found us in the site restaurant enjoying a good meal accompanied by wine and laughter.

The longest drive on Wednesday, virtually all on motorways, took us to

Peronne, a pleasant site alongside the canal and within easy walking distance of the town. Most spent Thursday visiting the WW1 museum or sunbathing!

En route to our final campsite, Calais, the Auchan supermarket called. The last supper was taken in a restaurant close to the adequate site. The banter and laughter was such that many were seen with handkerchiefs wiping the tears from their eyes.

Overall the tour was blessed with sunshine and good weather, a great group of people whose humour and laughter made the trip into a terrific holiday and easy for us as the guides.

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### **Kids**

The Sunday School teacher was telling her class about the Ten Commandments. After explaining 'to honour thy father and thy mother' she asked "Is there any commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Yes said a small voice from the back "Thou shall NOT kill!"

# February 2006

## Rally Supplement

\*\*\*\*\*NEW RALLIES.\*\*\*\*\*

*To add to your rally list.*

1<sup>st</sup>.-5<sup>th</sup> .June Springbok Estate,Alfold,Surrey.

6<sup>th</sup> . – 10<sup>th</sup> . July Rocester Football Club,Rocester,Staffs.

14<sup>th</sup>.-17<sup>th</sup> . September Clare Priory,Clare,Suffolk.

23<sup>rd</sup>.-27<sup>th</sup> . November Ulverston,Cumbria.

Rally in the West of Ireland 24<sup>th</sup> .May – 8<sup>th</sup> .June 2006.

This rally is now FULL.

20<sup>th</sup> . – 24<sup>th</sup> . 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).**

**April 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> – ( 3 nights) Marston's Rally. Albion Hotel, Burton on Trent, Staffs.**

**Site behind the Albion Hotel, Shobnall Road. Burton on Trent.**

Emergency Tel. no. 07713186508 Marshal's mobile.

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

Marshals phone no. 01283538818

Site Fee: £4.00 per night, all hardstanding, Rally Fee: £2.35, All inc VAT.

No Electricity. Booking slip & Cheques payable to P.M.Pratt, 3 Grafton Rd, Stapenhill, Burton on Trent. Staffs. DE15 9DN. Tel. 01283538818.

A VISIT ROUND THE BREWERY ON THE FRIDAY MORNING will be arranged. **Cost £6 each, please send cheque with site fees if you would like to participate in this trip.**

**A MEAL FRIDAY EVENING IN THE VISITORS CENTRE AT THE BREWERY AND A FURTHER MEAL SATURDAY EVENING MEAL IN THE ALBION HOTEL PUB will also be available. (WEEKEND OFF COOKING DUTIES LADIES).**

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

Please send SAE for acceptance and further directions.

Dogs are allowed.

**Rally starts at 12noon Thursday. NOT BEFORE PLEASE.**

**14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April (Easter weekend) (4 nights) Peak Rail, 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).

MIKE & JEANNE WILL NOT BE CONTACTABLE DURING MARCH – PLEASE DO NOT USE THE MOBILE NUMBERS EXCEPT DURING THE RALLY. You could send an email to: [mike.jeanne@ntlworld.com](mailto:mike.jeanne@ntlworld.com)

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. Easter bonnet competition.

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 brown Peak Rail signs.

### **20<sup>th</sup>.-23<sup>rd</sup>.April.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:£33,arrive Friday £30, arrive Saturday £27.**

**Please note that ALL booking forms *MUST* be returned to Warners, the organisers by Friday 31st.March 1 if you wish to rally with the Club.**

**\*\*\*\*\*Then you must also complete a Club rally slip, (this also applies to any internet bookings) 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  
marshal **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.**

**27<sup>th</sup>.April – 1<sup>st</sup>.May. NATIONAL RALLY & A.G.M.,  
Nottinghamshire County Showground,Newark.**

**Full details & application forms were with the  
January Newsletter.Please note the closing date for  
camping with meals is March 25<sup>th</sup>.**

If you wish to run a rally in 2006 please contact me to check dates **before** booking with a site. This prevents any clash of dates.

.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.

Committee members are also available to assist if required.

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?

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.....

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!**

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 if arranged: Yes  No

Have you any special needs? Yes  No  If Yes please specify:-

Full payment MUST accompany this slip-cheques payable to the marshal.

**POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 14 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,IF POSSIBLE PLEASE**

# From the Factory

## Random Jottings

A very Happy New Year from all of us at Willersey. As we begin yet another new year, it would perhaps be appropriate to update you on a number of changes and new initiatives that have recently taken place.

A word about new models. In order that we stay ahead of our competitors, and we would be the first to admit that new model development has, in the past, been somewhat slow, Ian Capes has now taken direct control of all development matters, not least to ensure some exciting new models are on display at the NEC in February. He has, in the first instance, formed two teams – the Ford Development and Peugeot Development Teams respectively, eliciting the advice and opinions of those who build the vehicles, those who use them, those who service and repair them (us at the Service Centre) and of course the dealers who sell them.

All of this, in conjunction with our Design Department and Marketing Department will ensure that future models are exciting, refreshing in concept and design and of course meet the demanding needs of the motorhome owner. By drawing together the advice and opinions of all these separate departments, Ian and, of course, all of us, are confident that what you will see at the NEC will demonstrate that, once again, we lead the field in motorhome design.

Ian and his respective teams have listened most carefully to all such opinions and we are sure you will be more than pleased with the outcome. Certainly the views of our own technicians have been considered most carefully – each new model will have been thoroughly tested and assessed before production, not least to iron out silly, niggling faults that so often have caused irritation in the past.

At the Service Centre, changes have taken place too. For those of you familiar with our operation, we have now moved out of our old offices, and into those at the far end of the building. Our old offices are now being converted into two new service bays. These will be used for base vehicle PDI work (we currently carry out PDI's on Peugeots and shortly Volkswagens too) and this, in turn, will free up our existing building for mechanical servicing and longer term repair work.

The second new bay, adjacent to our new offices, will be used for daily bookings, for example repair, refurbishment and maintenance work. To cater for this increased capacity, we have taken on some six weeks ago, an additional technician, Chris Burdett, the brother of Mark, who is already with us. Thus, our total technician strength is five conversion and one automotive. The Reception area will continue to be looked after by Trevor and Carole, adjacent to them will be our new smart waiting room. Further offices will be upstairs for myself and Barbara (who does our typing) with an archive store, to include the ASOC archives that we hold, and parts awaiting specific jobs. All this work will be completed by mid February so do book in and experience our new, enlarged and enhanced empire.

On the SEA front, David Putt has now moved into new premises at nearby Honeybourne. Alan Curry (our former Quality Manager) will become Product Manager, responsible for establishing the workshop, warranty and operation manuals of procedure.

Sean Healey will be working with Alan preparing vehicles for distribution to the newly established dealer network. (Many of you will remember Sean as the bird of prey expert at the earlier Club and Company Rallies).

On the technical front, our Design Department is now working on the seat belt testing programme. This involves seats and seat belts, together with the floor and chassis to which they are attached, being tested mechanically for strength in a controlled environment and in front of a representative from the appropriate

Government body. Having achieved approval, we then have to obtain Conformity of Production which, put simply, means that all vehicles will be built in accordance with the required procedures.

My thanks go to Phil Bennett – our Procurement Manager – for his contribution last month. He, as our Honorary Life Member, sends his best wishes to you all, as does the sterling Neville (Jelfs), also an Honorary Life Member, who regularly keeps in touch with us here at the Service Centre.

Next month, the contribution will come from our Marketing Department. They have much to tell you of interest so watch this space!!

With kind regards from all of us at the Willersey Service Centre.

**Charles Trevelyan**

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### ***Farewell to a Great Club***

Due to health problems over the past four years and to 'anno domini' (86th year), it is with extreme regret that I decided last August to dispose of my Autosleeper, thereby now having to resign my membership of the club after 17 very memorable years.

I wish to thank on behalf of my late dear wife Kathleen and myself, the many members who became and still are, very dear friends, particularly those originating from the first ASOC 'Wagon Train to France' in September 1990. Also those who accompanied us on annual June holidays to France.

If anyone driving their Autosleeper is flashed by a little red Citroen car it may well be me as I cannot overcome the years of habit!!

I wish you all safe and very enjoyable travel.

Sincere best wishes Fred Cleal.

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Thank you Fred for your good wishes. We are sorry not to have had the pleasure of meeting you. Chris

## A Sad Bulgarian Tale

**Rosemary, Andy, Charlotte and Bobby Newton**

It is with great sadness that we have to leave the Auto Sleepers Owners Club. Our beloved Tilly, a 1991 Talisman II, who had been our pride and joy for over 11 years and was still going strong was lost during the summer of 2005.

We had so enjoyed our trip to Romania last year that we decided to visit it once again and continue on through to Bulgaria. The countryside was spectacular, the roads atrocious, the people charming and the food great. We visited the spectacular Belogradcic citadel, the Rila mountains and loved the Rila monastery then on to the charming old town of Plovdiv. We spent the day exploring and as we made our way back late afternoon we noticed everyone standing on the river bank gazing at the vastly swollen river. We had difficulty persuading the taxi driver to take us to the camp site and as we approached we found the whole area under water and Tilly standing in over 4 feet of water.

We were taken to a hotel with just the clothes we stood up in and spent a most frustrating evening trying to get in touch with Red Pennant, the Caravan Club Travel Insurers. It

was Saturday afternoon and their answer phone message was spectacularly useless. Bobby and our friends Janet and Brian in the UK spent hours trying to locate their number and were eventually successful. All Red Pennant could say was "We can't do anything until you get back into the van and know whether it is driveable". The water was up to the windscreen!! The next day we moved to a charming and helpful hotel (without the bed bugs we found in the Soviet style horror of the night before) but there was no water in Plovdiv and we spent the day collecting basic supplies and bottled water. It was several days before we could get back into the van for a change of clothes and still longer before she was able to be pulled out of the mud and on to a low loader. We thought she was on the way back to the UK, instead she was taken to a vehicle compound.

We went to Sofia to catch a flight to Vienna only to be told by customs officials (when almost on the plane) we were not allowed to leave the country. We had come in a motor caravan so we must leave in it! They rang the man who had pulled her out of the mud who became so frightened he denied all knowledge, so customs declared the van stolen and we had to return to Plovdiv to see the police.

The British Embassy found the van and arranged for us to collect it and bring it to the airport on a low loader. The next day was amazingly fraught. We collected the van but at the airport the driver tried to go under a tiny height barrier, then could find nowhere to stop. I ran into the airport building to find an official to be told the office was closed. The minutes ticked away but eventually we cleared the paperwork and got through customs

Our visit to Vienna was wonderful and we gradually drove home only to be arrested in Austria trying innocently to change a dud £10 note in a bank. In the police station the policeman apologised profusely but took a very long statement, even needing Andy's mother's maiden name! (The note was returned to us the other day because after 4 months they decided it had been washed, not forged.) We had a hiccup when we reached the Channel because the car we had been given had to be returned to the tunnel terminal, but we had picked up a car from the ferry port! Also we were given a French car which caused consternation at the Hertz depot in

Salisbury. They would have preferred us to return it to Calais.

We were so heart broken to lose Tilly, who was repatriated after 3 fraught months and with the help of the British Embassy, but was sadly declared a total loss. She has taken us safely 70,000 miles to almost every country in Europe and seen the children grow up. Full details and photos - [www.pippins.me.uk](http://www.pippins.me.uk). We have thoroughly enjoyed the Club and Company Rallies over the years and Bobby, now 20 years old and 6 foot tall remembers with great affection playing with the other children who he met every year. We have tried on every occasion to persuade AS to consider a monocoque van suitable for long term travel with a permanent bed and adequate storage and hope one day to join the Club once more. At the moment we have a Rapido 746 on order.

Will we return to Bulgaria? Absolutely. But not until its officials and government are ready to embrace EU principles - a long time yet.

In the meantime Happy Travelling

**Free to good homes**

Oddments of Biltons china

3 wheel trims

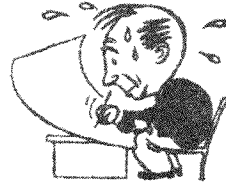
Bed bases for Luton 1991 style Talisman

Long thin cushion infills in blue fabric.

E-mail [andy@pippins.me.uk](mailto:andy@pippins.me.uk) (North Dorset)

## Chairman's Chat

First of all Sheila and I would like to express our grateful thanks to everyone who has, in any way, helped us along through our recent problems. Particularly to Peter and Chris for so ably taking over the Newsletter at such short notice and managing to keep it up to its normal length. We hope that they will continue with such good work. Obviously there are differences, some of which will be noticed by many members who will no doubt comment to them. But in any event, will all members please keep on sending things through to fill the pages.



My thanks to Andy Cavell, my able Vice-Chairman, who wrote in my place and advised you all about the problems. And to Charles Trevelyan for his kind works and to Rita Daley for a very apposite cartoon on page 2 in January. Our only complaint was that she took artistic licence and showed the flames coming through the front of the roof, when they were actually more at the back! *(Or the Editors could have got the picture back to front. Chris)*

Just to keep you all well informed, the reason for the fire was a large upright freezer. From what we have been told it appears that the motor overheated and that set light to the insulation in the cabinet. The flames then spread to the wooden floor of the conservatory, the hardboard lining to the walls and to the wooden parts of the kitchen fittings and shelves which we had installed. To add to the problem we had a polycarbonate roof, which the flames loved and the wind was blowing fairly briskly, but in completely the wrong direction. This added to the conflagration. The Fire Service attended within about 10 minutes of my call to them and they sent in total, four of their appliances to deal with the problem. The Fire personnel were magnificent. They rescued our two cats for us, retrieved my jacket (with my cheque books and various cards in it) and then took us inside to recover a couple of other things, such as my wallet! They even took the trouble to ascertain where we might have our insurance documentation and, Sheila having told them exactly which drawer of which filing cabinet held it, went in and brought it out to her.

They even gave us the name of a boarding up company to try to secure the house.

Now we are in rented accommodation for perhaps the next six to nine months while our house is virtually rebuilt. We understand that most, if not all of the floors and ceilings are to be removed and replaced, together with the wall plaster. Well, we were thinking about redecoration anyway! But this is rather a traumatic way of doing it. Incidentally, if you have sent any e-mails to us since about the middle of November last year, we have not picked them up and we are unlikely to be back into electronic circulation for some long time. So any submissions for the Newsletter should be re-addressed to Peter and Chris.

But enough of our problems. They will be solved in due course. For now we would like to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year with plenty of opportunity to use your motorhomes in some decent weather. Perhaps we shall see many of you at the National Rally and AGM at Newark. We shall look forward to that.

**Harry Henthorne**

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## *Obituary*

It is with regret we have to announce the sudden death of Paul Hector on 3rd December 2005 after a short illness.

Our sincere condolences go to Sue and her daughter along with I'm sure those of the many friends Paul and Sue made over the years.

## WANTED

(repeated with corrected phone no.)

**WANTED** for 1992 VW T4 Autosleeper Trouper Awning/side tent, small Porta Potti, Propex or similar gas heater, cycle rack, manual for base vehicle, silver screens etc. or any other accessory.

**Contact Peter Simpson 01302 782890**

And a response received from **Mr & Mrs R S Russell 01392 257759**:- N R Awings Todmorden produce a Motor Villa. The only manual for a VW T4 1991 onwards would appear to be an A4 paperback by Brooklands Books Limited 01932 865051. Happy to supply further information

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We have an Autosleeper Symphony which needs new curtains. Any information as to how and where and the likely cost would be much appreciated. We were wondering if replacing the front cab curtains with silver screens would be a good option.

**Contact Margaret and Mick Moor e-mail: [ginnel4@free-online.co.uk](mailto:ginnel4@free-online.co.uk)**

Thanks for the Donation

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**Peugeot Pescara 2.5 TD 2000 'W' reg.** 4 berth, 45,000 miles, one owner. Tax/MOT to May 2006 F.S.H.

Over, grill, 4 burner hob. Alarm, electric windows. Fiamma canopy. Insulated water tank. Fridge, heater, toilet, shower.

£21,950

**Contact Bob Cronk 01483 428471 (Surrey)**

Thanks for the Donation

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**Duetto 1994(M)** 2.5D MOT until September. Usual AS fixtures. 56k. Service History; Under sealed; CAM belt changed. Plus awning, removable cycle rack.

**£16,000**

**Contact R W Deamer 01462 454100**

(Herts)

Thanks for the Donation

**Several Items for Sale by Peter and Valerie Beaney**

A Pair of polycarbonate headlamp glass protectors for Peugeot Boxer. Up to 2003 type headlamp Bluster **£10**.

'Gaslow' twin manifold automatic change over for propane gas. A most useful and easily fitted gas connection system for van conversion like Symbols, Duetto's etc. Cylinders do expire at the most inconvenient times. **£30**.

**Contact Peter or Valerie Beaney on 01604 766354**  
(West Hunsbury, Northampton)

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Due to a change of vehicle we have the following surplus items for sale:

2.5 yds x 1.5 yds AS Freesia upholstery fabric

70" x 30" quilted AS Freesia seat fabric

1.5 yds x 48" wide AS Kimberley Green curtain fabric

53" x 43" + 31" x 36" L shaped green lining material

2 pillow shams AS Freesia fabric

2 large square AS Freesia cushions

8 cover buttons AS Freesia fabric

£40 plus postage.

**Contact Chris or Derek Thornton 01332 514681** (Derby)

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Emag 6 for 2.5 to 5L engines £45 (usually £79). Emag 3 for engines up to 1.3L £25 (usually £39). Both new, boxed and with full fitting instructions (and FREE advice if required).

**Contact John Sawyer on 01984 623642** (Taunton)

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**Ford Amerthyst Durashift 2004** condition as new only 7,500 miles. Many extras including 2x6 refillable gas bottles £35,000 ono

**Contact John Wilson 01242 529385** (Gloucester)

Thanks for the Donation

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