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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

A Company Limited by Guarantee
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Registered No: 4616969



Shut down for winter?? No chance

NEWSLETTER 221

February 2007

From the Editor ^(S)

I was fortunate at last years National Rally to meet Rita Daley. Many current members will not know (as I did not) that Rita and her late husband Phil were founder members of our Club and that in recognition of her work the Club voted to appoint her to the role of Founder Vice President. One of Rita's very early contributions to the Club was the creation of the 'little men' seen in many of the cover sketches of the Newsletter to date as characters formed from *ASOC*. In the February 1990 issue of the Newsletter the then Editor (husband Phil) suggested that a sweepstake should be run on when Rita would run out of ideas for sketches.... [Although we have stolen one of Rita's earlier ones for this months cover.]

At the National Rita offered to give me her complete archive of Newsletters going back to the first in September 1988. I willingly accepted her offer and we managed to effect the handover a few months ago. I've taken the opportunity of time available over the Christmas break to read the first 51 (to December 1992) and to have a quick look at the back cover of the rest. I expect it will take me several months to read the rest but I will do so. I have read many things that interest me and I shall pass some of it on as and when there is space or it seems appropriate, indeed in this issue I have reproduced an article written by our Treasurer John Tidbury about a skiing trip he and his family took in their Talisman over the Christmas holidays 1991/92 - intrepid is not enough to describe that family of travelers!!

An overview of what I have elicited from the archive so far:

- Phil Daley (Rita's husband) started and set the tone for the Newsletter. It was excellent reading from the start and its production must have been a major contribution to the establishment of the Club. I never met Phil but from his writings feel he was a kindred spirit of mine. In the first year of the Newsletter Phil managed to be censured by the Club Chairman for comments he made in the Newsletter and elicit a complaint from Autosleepers for publishing letters of criticism from members about the companies' products and services!!
- Phil edited the Newsletter for 2 years and then Harry Henthorne took over. With the exception of a 2 year break when Ian Day was editor (apologies Ian but it will be sometime before I get to read your issues) Harry was editor until Chris and I started a year ago. That is an exceptionally long stint for such a time specific and intensive commitment, plus Harry and his wife Sheila did many other things for the club as well! *(do not expect Chris and I to do it for so long and don't forget we are looking for a volunteer assistant editor to work with us now)*

- The content of the Newsletter fell very quickly in to the five categories that exist now:
 - Communications to members
 - Technical information exchange
 - Tales of members travels
 - News of Club Rallies
 - Contributions from Auto-sleeper

- Every issue, complaint, expression of views, etc. that Chris and I have seen/heard since we joined the Club was aired in the first three years. I could give dozens of examples but just one - Club rallies are always held in the wrong part of the country.

- I've always wondered why the longer serving club members had such affection for the company, Autosleepers. I now see from my reading that in the beginning Autosleepers supported the Club extensively, both financially and by making facilities available for the Club to use. The company provided extensive input to the early National rallies and then jointly developed and organised a significant portion of the Club and Company rallies that then ran for many years. (This is over an above the unstinting support that we still enjoy today from our President Charles Trevalyan)

I think that's enough for now and will come back to the archive at some time in the future.

We've had a response from Brenda Barnes to the 'From the Factory' piece in the December Newsletter:

With respect to the LCD control panel being installed in some vehicles Brenda wonders if, as presumably the panel has a clock, can the panel be turned off or has it to be on all the time? *[I would hazard a guess that it is on all the time the leisure battery is connected to the van]*. Brenda also mentions that she had another make of van 20 years ago that had a charging system that performed all the functions described in item 5 of the explanation.

Whilst writing Brenda mentions a couple of other things that may be of interest; she doesn't camp in the winter but during that season does take the van out for runs to charge the batteries and to leave it on a different area of the tyres.

She also mentions that when camping she does not have water in the van tanks as (she is in her seventies) she is unable to open the outlet tap on her waste tank and her Dealer says he can't 'ease' the tap

National Rally 2007

4th May to 7th May

All members will now have received the application form for the rally and I hope most of you will have booked the dates in your diaries. There was an article in the December Newsletter stating the plans we had put in place. I will now give you an update.

The meal on Thursday will be at 7pm with the rest of the evening giving time to relax and catch up with friends and meet new members. Friday morning the Stuart Goodwin Pavilion will open where you can view the Hobbies and maybe purchase items which take your fancy. There will be a 'for sale' board where you can advertise goods for sale; in the March Newsletter there will be an item giving the details. Tea and coffee will be available and photographs entered in the competition will be on show. Donations from these activities will benefit the Charity. The Stuart Goodwin Pavilion is also where cakes for the competition will be accepted. See the March Newsletter for the recipe.

Also on Friday in the Presidents Suite will be the Question and Answer session with A/S employees and the Club Technical team. The evening starts with the meal at 6.30pm, the official welcome by our President Mr. Charles Trevelyan followed by the Quiz. The cakes entered in the competition will be auctioned at the end of the quiz. The Bar will be open until 11pm on Thursday and Friday.

Saturday commences with the A.G.M. at 10.30am followed by the Open Forum. The Stuart Goodwin Pavilion will open in the afternoon and in the evening the Dinner Dance starts at 6.30pm. The Bar will close at 10.45pm.

On Sunday at 10.30am we will have the Salvation Army Service followed by coffee followed by the meal at approx 1pm. On Sunday evening we will be entertained by the Mike James Sound & Singers. The Bar will close at 10.45pm.

Craft classes will be in the Cedric Ford Pavilion on Friday and Sunday 2pm. to 4pm.

The Charity which was nominated by a member and has been chosen by the committee is The Guillain Barre Syndrome Support Group. I know very little about this group but was impressed when I read about it. There will be leaflets available explaining the work they do. I hope you will give as much support as possible.

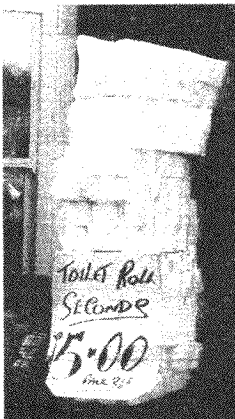
On Friday and Saturday there will be on site a Dometic Engineer willing to carry out any warranty work required and also other repairs. A representative from Mastertrim will also attend the rally giving advice and showing goods.

I want to emphasis again that having all or some of the meals on offer is optional; everyone is welcome to all of the functions. All I ask is that members not having meals wait until the meal has been served.

I have been informed that over the past couple of years some members have been saving places for friends vans, this is not acceptable or fair and it makes life very difficult for the marshals, if you want to be parked by your friends you must arrange to arrive together.

Will Members booking a disabled pitch please write to me (Mrs. N Venables, 15, Langley Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, WV3 7JN) enclosing an A5 addressed envelope, stating if an electric point is required. There will only be a small number available and at present I have no idea of the cost. I will require this information by February 23rd

Nora Venables



Own Sanitation Advisable?

Just had to take a photograph of this shop display in Norfolk. Wonder what they mean by seconds?!?

Suitable caption anyone?

Steve Earnshaw

A SKIING TRIP BY AUTO SLEEPER

(From Newsletter No 44 - May
1992)

Last Christmas my company extended the holiday - actually they took a day off the Easter break - so I could make a longer holiday by adding a few days leave. We decided to take our Talisman to France and try our hand at skiing. We had visited the Alps in winter before and, knowing that temperatures can drop below -15 C, we chose to rent a studio flat for one (skiing) week and then do some touring in the van before returning home.

Plans made, we prepared the van for the cold weather. We had to live in it for 36 hours as we travelled to our ski resort (Flaine), and then park it for a week before using it again. We decided that the safest way was to drain all the water systems (hot, cold, pump and cassette flush) as if winterising the van. Then we added a few gallons of fresh water to the main tank - being careful not to switch on the pump. All our water for the journey came from a separate one-gallon container which could be refilled from the main tank drain tap if necessary. Special anti-freeze for the cassette Porta-Potti is available; at about £16 a bottle we decided not to use it, but to flush the toilet from a plastic bottle (4pt milk container).

On Thursday 19th December we set off (with some trepidation as force 9 gales were blowing) for the night ferry from Portsmouth to Le Havre. Despite a late start we had a reasonable crossing arriving on time, at 7 am. We drove to Rouen

arriving just as dawn was breaking. Then it went dark again as a thunderstorm approached and we were treated to lightning, rain, hail, sleet and snow. We found that our way out of the town went up a steep hill - even having hairpin bends. A car coming down slid on the snow but managed to keep out of our way. We went slower and slower as we lost traction and finally stopped only yards from the top. This was a good start to the day - 500 miles to drive and here we were, stuck after only 50 miles! With the use of a spray called 'Liquid Tyre Chain' (and the thawing snow) we soon made it to the top. A few miles later the snow thinned out and we were able to make good progress - after a stop for breakfast.

The most direct route took us through Paris so we used the Boulevard Peripherique late on Friday morning. We shan't make that mistake again: it was stop-go in places! By late afternoon we were well south and stopped to buy some 'moon boots' ready for the cold and snow. Later still the children and Heather kipped down on the double bed while I drove on towards Geneva. Approaching midnight, I felt that I had driven enough for one day (despite an earlier nap on the van floor while Heather was driving) so found a large lay-by and stopped for the rest of the night. Early in the morning I woke with severe stomach pains and a bout of diarrhoea. As I staggered back to bed, Heather opened a curtain and said it was snowing hard with two inches of snow already lying. Robert and Nicola greeted the news with a cheer - I could hardly manage a groan.

We decided to get going and have breakfast later. Having seen a car slide off the road, we set off slowly and carefully hoping that the road would clear soon. Unfortunately it got worse so we stopped to fit the snow chains - not my favourite job while still feeling weak. A few miles

further on we came to an access to the Autoroute Blanc (A 40) and we took this hoping to make faster progress. It lived up to its name, but the snowploughs were keeping it open and we soon reached Cluses, where we made a quick stop for food supplies. The manager was announcing the bargains, using a leek for a microphone!

It was still snowing heavily as we reached the road up the mountain to Flaine and we didn't need the road sign to tell us to refit the snow chains. The snow was now about 3 inches deep and we had to climb 4,500ft in 20kms of very twisty road. This journey was extremely difficult and most of it was in 1st gear with the front wheels alternately spinning and gripping - an action which would shake the gear lever out of gear and make the steering wheel snatch from side to side. Higher up the hill the snow was bad enough to make a virtual white-out and we were guessing where the road went. The lack of visibility did help in that we couldn't see the sheer drops as we slid across the road and back! On two occasions the children came and crouched between the front seats to try and get more weight over the driving wheels. Although we didn't stop once it still took one and a half hours to complete the 20kms, but we made it and only just in time as the road became impassable a few hours later.

After a late lunch we booked into the resort and unloaded all our gear into the apartment. By Sunday morning it had almost stopped snowing; we heard that there had been more snow during the previous 36 hours than the whole of last winter. The Talisman looked very strange with an extra high roof caused by 18 inches of snow on top. When we moved the van a lot of the snow came sliding down over the front and we had to dig it out before going any further. We later discovered that our

borrowed roof box had collapsed under the weight of the snow, luckily this was the only damage caused by the severe weather. We were glad we had booked the apartment for two main reasons: on Sunday it rained (skiing in the rain!), we got soaked to the skin and it needed all the extra space to get four sets of clothing dry. Secondly, Heather had a bad fall and tore the muscles in one leg so was confined to the room for three days.

The children thoroughly enjoyed skiing and were quite good by the end of the week. I found it very tiring (mostly due to carrying the heavy ski equipment around) and rather scary as I lost more and more control on the steeper and steeper slopes. Even so the three of us managed to ski down the 3,000ft mountain on the last day and we all enjoyed it enough to want to have another go in the future.

At the end of the week we repacked the van, trying to remember where everything had come from. The roof box was stuffed to hold it back in shape while large amounts of sticky tape held the shattered plastic ends together. We then took a last trip up in the cable car to show Heather the view from the top (8,000ft). She thought that it looked to be a gentle stroll over the snow to Mont. Blanc, but actually it was about 40 miles away and twice the height of where we were standing - such is the effect of the very clear air.

The drive down the mountain was easy as the road had been almost completely cleared and we could enjoy the views; we even found that we had driven up through quite a large village/town without seeing it! At the bottom, the snow of the previous week had virtually disappeared. After a quick shopping trip we booked into a camp site where the owner took great delight in putting us next to the swimming pool and suggesting that we go for a swim in the

morning - despite it being well below freezing and the pool had its winter cover on. The next day we drove, down to Annecy and caused much amusement to the locals as every time we stopped or turned a corner a pile of snow fell off the roof onto the completely clear road. Heather still could not walk very far so we drove down the side of Annecy lake on a very quiet Sunday afternoon. Near the southern tip of the lake we ran into thick snow again, though the roads were clear. At an all winter camp site we found one French way of charging for electricity: you pay for the current you want and they fit the appropriate overload trip to your supply - so if you are using an electric fire etc you need to work out what power you need. Here we also discovered how hard the snow was, walking on top of a foot of snow did not leave even a mark in it.

Next morning we went into Albertville and saw the preparations for the Winter Olympics - actually this was by luck as we had gone to find some shops. We also noticed that the clear air of the mountains did not extend into the valleys; the polluted air seemed to be held down in the valley though I would have expected it to be warmer and therefore rise. Heading north again, we climbed up to Megeve, passing a 'caravaneige' campsite to which we returned to spend three nights. This site was over 3,250ft high and the temperature ranged from +1C in the day to -7C at night. We kept snug by using a small fan heater when we were sitting in the van and the gas fire on low during the night. Even so there was frost on the inside of the double glazing when we woke in the mornings - obviously the blinds provided good insulation as did the Silver Screen.

During the day the clear, still and sunny weather made it very pleasant. Robert and Nicola enjoyed themselves tobogganing, though the snow was very bumpy and still

so hard that even the toboggan did not cut through and threw them off before they had got very far. Some Dutch people camped next to us were having great difficulty digging themselves out of the snowdrifts around their vans especially when the spade handle broke trying to break through the hard crust! Thursday saw us back on the road heading home, through Cluses for the third time. The weather was still cold with a lot of freezing fog giving picturesque hoar frost on all the grass and bushes. Again the fog was confined to the valleys so there were strange views from high ground of a sea of fog with hill tops rising through it. The last of the snow finally melted from the van roof at lunchtime. The remainder of the journey home was as tedious as the northern part of France always is at the end of a holiday. We arrived back in Le Havre on Friday evening in good time for the ferry only to find that it was again blowing a gale. While we waited, another Talisman was unloaded and gave us a very cheery wave as they drove off into the night. We didn't recognise the occupants but if it was you, you now know who was waving back!

In contrast to our summer holiday when the toolbox was in constant demand [*another cracking good tale from John and Heather printed in an even earlier Newsletter*], it was only used twice on this trip once to repair the roof box and once to change the gas bottles. The family voted it a great holiday; now I have got to find enough time to go again and enough money to pay for the skiing.

John, Heather, Robert and Nicola Tidbury

From the Factory

Welcome back to 'From The Factory' and firstly I would like to start by saying thank you for the overwhelming response to the monocoque research project and all your constructive emails. I have collated your comments and submitted them to Ian Capes (CEO) and Stephen Small (Chief Engineer), both of whom have agreed to incorporate many of your ideas and eliminate most of your complaints, in the new monocoque design. However one conclusion we can take from the research, particularly where layouts are concerned, everyone has very individual preferences and I'm afraid as much as we would like too, we can't satisfy everyone's every need and sometimes a compromise has to be found, which I believe Auto-Sleepers continues to excel at.

The new monocoque model, as I said in last months newsletter, is still in it's early stages and the earliest we can expect to see a finished model rolling out of the factory is Spring next year. In the meantime please keep sending your thoughts and comments to the factory via email or post.

Moving away from the monocoque research, we are happy to announce that all the old Ford Transit and Peugeot Boxer chassis have been sold and we are now only building on the award winning new Ford Transit and Peugeot X250 chassis. Unfortunately Ford are no longer offering us a Durashift option and therefore, for the time being, we will only be producing vehicles with an automatic option on the T5 VW Transporter.

Just to quickly update you, the new Peugeot Sigma EK and EL are both still

on track for launch at the NEC and we are still hoping to bring out, not only the Luton variant, but also a stylish low profile at the show. Although at this moment it's a case of watching this space. We will unfortunately not have a competed Symbol on the stand at the February show, but we will however be displaying an early prototype, which from the exterior perspective, will be identical to the finished model. We will be taking orders at the show and will also be running a special NEC launch promotion, so snap one up before we fill the order book. We have scheduled the Symbol to be in full production by as early as April/ May 2007.

With the departure of Tim Hughes and Steve Cant, we are taking the opportunity to re-align the sales department with internal promotions and an external recruitment. We are fortunate to have a list of highly skilled applicants, who will be interviewed over next few weeks. Which leads me on to finally say that I will sadly be departing Auto-Sleepers in January and moving onto pastures new. Ian Capes will be taking over the 'From The Factory' article, until a replacement is found, but I'm told they have drawn up a short list and will be making a decision shortly.

I would like reiterate how thoroughly enjoyable it has been, meeting all the club members at the rallies and shows over the past year and a half and wish you and the club all the very best for 2007.

Adrian Clews

Bavaria & Black Forest Tour

ASOC members will love Bavaria & the Black Forest, as it is not only very clean - as you would expect, but the natives are very friendly. The area boasts beautiful mountain scenery, picturesque villages and historic towns, as well as excellent beer, good food and interesting wines. In fact, the only things missing are graffiti and litter.

GB Privilege is offering a 2 week tour exclusively for ASOC members, which starts on Sunday 26th August 2007. The trip incorporates a tour of Munich with lunch in a traditional cellar restaurant; an evening at a genuine German beer festival, where all of the food and drink is free; a tour of part of the Black Forest and a trip to the incredible "Eagles Nest" at Berchtesgaden. Various other meals are also included, as is a trip to the beautiful Rhine Falls. Full details will be published in a later edition of the newsletter, or you can get them direct from GB Privilege Ltd. telephone 01953-789661 or e-mail gbprivilege@yahoo.com. The price for a motorhome with 2 people will be £950.

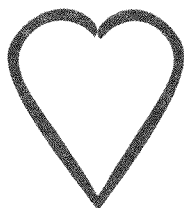
From the Willersey Service Centre

I trust that you will have been impressed with the scope of the monthly News from the Factory article, not least since it is considerably broader and more informative than what hitherto was admittedly our rather narrow view from the Service Centre here at Willersey. Indeed, even when we read it, we glean some information of which we were not aware!

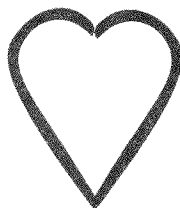
You may have heard that the Motorhome Service Centre, Willersey, was the runner-up in the recent MMM Awards under the category of Production/Service of the Year. Indeed, talking to the judges we narrowly missed an outright win, which is indeed credit to all concerned, our technicians and administrative staff together.

The overall winner was Fiat Assistance - a much larger organisation than ours - supported strongly by Fiat and a worthy winner indeed.

To be a close runner-up was a tremendous accolade and we now have a framed certificate in our reception, which is a reflection of the efforts of all concerned. The Product/Service of the Year Award was not just open to motorhome service centres - workshops such as our own - but to the likes of



February 2007 Rally Supplement.



All rallies start at **12 noon** unless otherwise stated in this supplement.

Please remember to notify the marshals if you wish to take a car, trailer or tent to a rally.

All rallies, with the exception of the National Rally, are applied for by using the rally slips sent by post to the relevant marshals.

26th.February – 2nd.March 2007 (4nights).Whitemead Park,Lydney,Gloucestershire.

Emergency Tel.No. 0845 345 3425(site office).

Mobile phone reception is poor to nil on site but there are pay phones.

Rally Marshals:Jeannette Jones & Graham Fortune:Helen & Geoff Gray.

Fees inclusive of hook up,hard standing,hire of room for two evenings,use of all leisure facilities,rally fees & VAT **£58.00 per couple,£53.00 singles.**

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

Send booking slips & 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 & gym.So bring your swimwear even if you don't swim.

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

(i)

Walking and cycle paths direct from site into The Forest.
Limit 22 vans which could be spread around site(it is a Civil Service membership site and they have to keep some pitches for members).

If you are accepted on a foreign rally please remember that you will have to arrange your own ferry bookings as well as vehicle,health & recovery insurance before leaving the UK.

19th May – 2nd June 2007 (14 nights) 'Italy in the Spring'

One week each at sites on south shore of Lake Garda and close to Florence. ~~Those attending must commit to both~~ sites and arrange their own ferry or car hire. Rally Mars enables, Wendy and Bill Ellington.

THIS RALLY IS NOW FULL.

Rally Fee: £5 per person. Probable Site Fees: €400 incl. electricity.
Non-returnable deposit: £30.

Rally slips with deposit and SAE to Jean & Ian Day, 10a Kingsley Rd, Harrogate, HG1 4RB. Cheques payable to E.J. Day.Tel. No. 01423 889143. **Limit of 22 vans**

Friday, 1st June to Saturday 9th June 2007.(8 nights)

Camping Alkmaar, Alkmaar, Netherlands.

Marshals Mike & Jeanne Hall assisted by Lionel & Hilary Walker.

Members must book for the full 8 nights.

Rally fee £15 – non refundable to be sent with rally slip with DL (22mm X 11mm ish) sae for reply to advise you of the success or otherwise of your booking. Please send completed rally slips to Mike & Jeanne Hall, 45, Bunyan Green Road, Selston, Nottingham, NG16 6GF. Cheques payable to M.T. Hall. Tel.No. 01773 778016.

Site fee €18 per night for 2 people, €16 for one person (Approx. £12.67 and £11.27) including 4 amp (800 watts) electricity.

A 50% deposit will be required in January.

On rally slip please complete the "length" box as the site has several hedged areas. Our rally will occupy two so longer vans will be in one and shorter ones in the other. Please also state whether you are bringing a dog (no extra charge but a maximum of one per van) or a

(ii.)

trailer or a free standing tent or awning.

The pitches are smaller than UK ones, only 6 metres wide (in total) but this is acceptable to Dutch regulations.

The site is a friendly, family run site who speak excellent English and can order you a loaf or hire you a bike. By the time we arrive the site will have a new ablutions block but the one we saw this year was clean and pleasant – the showers were free but you needed to take your own toilet paper.

Attractions. The site is 25 minutes walk to historic Alkmaar or take the bus from outside the site. The centre is a shoppers' delight and there is a self guided historical walk and, of course, the celebrated cheese auction on Friday mornings. We hope to organise a 2 hour boat trip to Zaanse Schans (a living museum of many traditional crafts), two hours there then two hours back. We also plan to have a cheese and wine evening, a walking and/or cycling orientation tour followed by coffee, apple cake and cream.

You can bike the 6km to Bergen, the 9km to Egmond, both by the seaside sand dunes with many scenic bike rides on them. You can also take the bus to them. You can even take the train to Amsterdam for €11.60 return.

The site is 77 miles from Hoek van Holland - all on pleasant to use motorways. You will be expected to make your own ferry, insurance and rescue arrangements but we will give you easy to follow directions and will be pleased to give any further advice you may need.

Limited to 30 vans.

June 17th - 24th 2007(7 nights) Delftse Hout Caravan Site. Delft Netherlands

Rally starts at 12 noon June 17th and closes 12 noon on June 24th 2007

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

Members must book for the full 7 nights. Rally fee: £15(non refundable)to be sent with rally slip and SAE envelope for reply.(A small envelope will do for first reply).

Site Fees 18.50 euros approx £13.50per night all pitches have electricity.

I will contact you upon receipt of your booking to let you know if you are successful/unsuccessful in booking this rally,(on my return from holiday).

A 50% deposit will be required in January 2007.

There will be at least one coach trip out , one bike ride, and a meal arranged on site one evening. All subject to sufficient numbers booking.

Buses run from the site entrance to town where you can catch a tram or train to anywhere you wish to go. The town is only a 10 minute walk away. Biking around the flat countryside is very easy. This site is about 25 miles from the Hoek of Van Holland Ferry or Europort.

You will be expected to make your own way on the ferry and to Delft, but I will send you directions.

PLEASE SEND RALLY SLIPS and deposit to P.M.PRATT. 3 Grafton Road, Stapenhill, Burton on Trent, Staffs DE15 9DN (01283538818) or mobile (07713186508).

12th - 15th April (3nights) 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 Tel.No 01283538818 (If not available ring Jan on **01246236157**).

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 on Saturday evening in the Albion Hotel 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.

26th.-29th.April.National Motorhome Show,East of England Showground,Peterborough.

Emergency Tel.No. 07922049714 (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:£35,arrive Friday £32, arrive Saturday £29.

Please note that **ALL** booking forms **MUST** be returned to **Warners**, the organisers, by **Monday 2nd.April** 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 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.

3rd.- 7th.May National Rally & AGM,Newark Showground, Notts.

Please note the closing date for bookings is 2nd.March.

(v.)

If you wish to run a rally in 2007 please contact me to check dates before booking with a site. This prevents any clash of dates.

New rallies will be previewed in the Rally Supplement as they are booked.

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.

I have some sites that have offered a rally site, they have not been vetted as to the suitability for rallies, please ask if interested.

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

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!

8

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!

8

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

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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!

Eberspacher, Truma, Spinflo, Shurflo, indeed all the major component suppliers, many of whom were short-listed in the final 15.

We were most pleased that in such a relatively short time - we have been in existence less than five years - we should have received such an accolade. I understand that this is based upon letters of acknowledgement of good service written by customers to MMM and on the basis of these, judging is undertaken. So, to any of you who wrote to MMM in respect of the service that we provide, my thanks, as you can well imagine we are delighted both here at the Service Centre and throughout the Company as well.

On the Service Centre front, we have been remarkably busy up to the Christmas period. We have recently rebuilt and replaced the complete rear of a Vivanti 4 due to traffic damage as well as the rebuilding of fire damaged furniture of a Swift Sundance 520. With this vehicle, and bearing in mind that no new units were available, we manufactured bespoke furniture in pine, to match the other units in the motorhome, and once finished and polished, the result was indeed most pleasing, not least that the new units were almost indistinguishable from the old. The customers were absolutely delighted with the work that was carried out, as indeed were we.

We have recently also rebuilt a Symbol, again due to severe impact damage at the rear as well as re-trimming and rebuilding a Volkswagen T4, which had experienced a fire due to a model aircraft battery being charged and subsequently catching fire.

It is interesting that, with the relatively mild weather, business has been so brisk - the telephone calls, even over the winter months, have only abated a little and indeed as our reputation becomes more widely known, we seem to be busier than ever.

Another interesting aspect of our business is that customers are now looking to have their vehicles refurbished, preferring their newly enhanced Auto-Sleeper to a new model. We believe that this may become a more major part of our business as our reputation continues to grow, an interesting side to our business, one that we did not expect.

Enough of our ramblings - might all of us here at Willersey wish each of you a very enjoyable New Year, trusting you had a good and relaxing Christmas and are able to use, hopefully, your Auto-Sleeper to the full, irrespective of the weather, and currently very bad fog!

Charles Trevelyan

And we have more from Charles, though on a completely different note....

CALL MY BLUFF

Just imagine – summer holidays looming, a family raring to go to sunny South Devon, and the thought of a massive hotel bill. Having married one used to the best hotels (her previous life with British Airways was based largely on the best resorts worldwide), an immediate problem loomed. A call to the bank manager, not surprisingly, elicited no sympathy at all, so a call to Marquis was the only alternative – and useful too if you know the Managing Director! Only too happy to help, some glossy brochures were promised, and at this stage I rather hoped I would hear nothing further. However, as they say, my bluff was called!, as the said Managing Director appeared with a tempting array of literature from which I was offered a wide selection of stunning motorhomes.

I opted, hesitantly I add, for a Mobilvetta Top Driver S71 – I have to say not realising its size, both in length and width! However, a seven berth model had immediate appeal (there must be somewhere to hide in it, such as its cavernous proportions) and, superbly presented, our motorhome was delivered to Willersey. It was beautifully prepared, two full gas bottles, toilet fully serviced, cutlery and crockery provided, and ready to go. *[And before you all rage at such treachery the reason Charles didn't use a Auto Sleeper was because they were all out when Charles wanted one.]*

So off we went, having packed all our worldly goods on board, heading for Devon and a campsite at Chillington. At this stage, I had grave doubts – I didn't feel I was the communal shower and chemical toilet type, but, as the Devon border loomed, I realised there was no going back! I was initially taken aback by all the other motorhome owners waving at me – surely I wasn't that well known, but wave I did, even if it meant taking chase of vans to whom I may have missed the initial return wave! So after at least 50 waves – I cruised into Chillington Camp Site.

It was actually here that our holiday began and what a holiday it proved to be. On arrival we sat in our deckchairs looking at the delights of Dartmoor in total peace and quiet, each with a mug (note: not cup and saucer!!) of tea. The camp site showers were excellent and my dear willing wife produced a super dinner, all freshly cooked on the Spinflo Caprice cooker. I have to admit that, once I had mastered the complexities of the electrical control panel, everything worked perfectly – plentiful hot water, first class heating, massive fridge/freezer, indeed everything functioned as it should.

Having been allocated my bunk (by our 12 year old daughter – decision making is different in our family!) I was allocated the rear lower one, being deemed physically unable to climb up to the upper one! Wife Angela had the luxury of the Luton (allegedly haunted according to our daughter) and Piers, our son, happily slept on the lower rear bunk – he being of the age when he can sleep anywhere – even in class, so I'm told!

In passing, we also met our fellow campers – none in a motorhome so luxurious as ours (good news) but being called "mate" was initially damaging to my pride (bad news!). However, we soon became good pals and discussed readily the virtues of the Thetford Cassette 200 CW whilst doing our ablutions!!!

I suppose fresh air, good food and constant waving made me extremely tired, anyway to sleep we all went and off to Devon (via Cornwall, but that's another story) the next day. The 2.8 diesel Fiat chassis drove superbly – extremely potent and bags of torque resulted in an easy and extremely rattle-free drive. All too soon we became enormously fond of our new home and enjoyed our adventure enormously.

Devon – Salcombe in particular – was magical. We parked (or pitched I'm told) in a small field on the opposite side of the estuary, fifty metres from a mooring where our little rib was kept, and far, far away from the noisy tourism of Salcombe. It was quite magical, just perfect. At night the owls hooted and the noise of nightlife had to be heard to be believed (nature nightlife, not our own, children on board remember!). Each morning Angela produced a fantastic fried breakfast, better than any hotel and each evening we had fresh fish from the local fishermen. Mackerel was £1.50 for four (beat that Tesco!!) and even a Monkfish tail appeared with fresh local vegetables. Gone was the claustrophobia of a hotel, smoke filled bars and constant traffic, in its place an idyllic setting into which we adapted so readily.

Days passed in blissful luxury and I exaggerate not. We sailed extensively (in our Salcombe yawl) and commuted to and from Salcombe in the rib to stock up with food. Such was our luxury and comfort that only twice did we go out for an evening meal – we were quite happy to eat "on board" with lights out at 10.00 pm after the news on our Roberts wireless – not a CD or Ipod in sight.

All too soon, it was back home, with sadness, to empty "our" Motorhome and hand it back to Marquis. And our overall impression? It was quite the best holiday yet, the most fun and for the children something really different. The Motorhome was outstanding – no rattles, leaks, failures – everything worked excellently, indeed it was a real holiday to remember. Did anything go wrong? Well, not really, but we did have two snags. When emptying the toilet cassette, our (darling) daughter had failed to empty the bowl. Enough said, but I was not too pleased with the unexpected and unwelcome arrival – and it was left to me to clear it all up!!!

The second was my fault insomuch that I damaged the rear bumper by reversing, lightly, into a wall. However, it's who you know that matters and it just happened that a new part was instantly available from our SEA/UK headquarters at Honeybourne, so a quick repair was carried out (to the Motorhome – not the wall!!!) after which all was again as new.

Next year? Well, perhaps I might ask the friendly Managing Director again! I'll certainly be very nice to him and help in any way possible. He's even on my Christmas card list already!!!

And finally, my thanks to:

Mike Crouch

Managing Director, Marquis Motorhomes, for the loan of the Motorhome.

Service Centre Staff

For wishing me well, in the belief that I would loathe it, and, of course, for repairing the bumper, and for hiding their amusement so well as I drove off into the sunset!

Shaun Watson-Bryant

For endlessly explaining how things worked, several times over, with extreme patience and understanding.

My wife Angela and our children

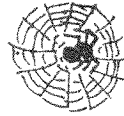
For keeping me in good humour, especially cleaning the loo!

The ladies at the Service Centre

For receiving and replying to my nightly text messages reporting progress (**transmitted by our daughter**) and replying sympathetically to each.

Technical Group & Website

Baz Wellard
Chairman Technical Group & Webmaster



Ideas Sheets: I have had only one more Ideas Sheet recently and this was for the fitting of 'deadlocks' to monocoques submitted by Alvar Thorn – Ideas Sheet No. 134.

4,320 Ideas Sheets have now been issued - so interest remains high. Do you have any ideas you wish to share with other members? A full list of the Ideas Sheets will be issued with a later Newsletter.

I have completed the annual analysis of Ideas Sheets issued and this has been sent to Auto~Sleepers Design Division for their information and consideration for future designs. Briefly the top 3 individual subjects are:
- 1st Security issues (524); 2nd problems with blinds (260) and 3rd prevention of grey water smells (202).

Boxer fuel caps: The above statistic on security reminds me of the October Newsletter (*page 5*) wherein Maureen and John Cullin kindly brought our attention to the problem of Boxer fuel caps being stolen and subsequently a key being cut which enables motorhomes to be stolen. It would appear from reports in monthly magazines that this practice continues. If you are concerned please take their advice and purchase a new fuel cap, which will have a differing key to your door/'ignition' locks. It is a small price to pay for additional security.

Web updates: Update No. 1/07 contained: - 2007 rally programme; vehicle review of Topaz (1999); Sirius (2007), the new Peugeot/Fiat chassis X2.50 and photos to accompany the Ulverston rally report. The website has now had well over 44,000 visitors.

Membership number: On a personal note I would appreciate if members would please include their membership number on any e-mails and letters please. It makes it so much easier to identify members' requests as against non-members.

You may remember Barbara Kernahan's article in the September Newsletter, where she fell whilst walking her dogs and had to have a full hip replacement. Consequently she thought she would have to sell her Nuevo to get an automatic. Well, we have an update.

Having recovered from my broken hip, but unable to drive my Nuevo, I had to make up my mind to sell it and look for a second-hand automatic. However, I had a phone call from Andy Cavell.... "Wait a minute, don't you know you can have an automatic clutch fitted?"

Andy gave me Alan Selwood's phone number who had used this particular device for three years. I then contacted a firm in Christchurch to collect the van and fit the new clutch and an electric step. Wonderful - and at a cost of £1550.

I have managed the Chichester and Taunton rallies and two visits to Moreton..... I still have to practise hill starts though!!

Many thanks to Andy and Alan.

Barbara Kernahan

Can anyone advise me?

Brian Leonard

We have a 2004 Rienza on a Ford chassis which we don't use in the winter months and I have been considering various options for taking the weight off the tyres during this time. We keep our motorhome on the drive, which slopes very slightly up towards the house.

I have been looking at Transleisure's Leveltronic system, which employs a system of hydraulic jacks, one at each corner, but was a little put off by the fact that the company requires a survey and money up front. This could mean a long drive to either Leeds or Newark and the possibility that my chassis may not be suitable.

Does anyone have any experience of this system or have any other suggestions. This system is fairly expensive although it does have the benefit of self levelling on site.

Contact Brian on 01634 234694

Tyres and things

I am aware that towards the end of last year a couple of club members had tyres deflate on the Motorway, the consequence was extreme delay and discomfort. Added to that in one of the cases the deflation was explosive causing the van to spin 360° round the middle lane of a busy M1 – how the van stayed upright and was missed by other vehicles is amazing but thankfully that was the case and they were able to pull over to the hard shoulder with only the van damaged.

I am about to suggest you check something but must make it clear that this was not the cause of either of the above incidents – I just use them to describe what can happen!

The carcass of a tyre has a finite life during which it can be relied upon not to fail. In the case of irregular use (as is the case with most Motor Home users) that life is considerably reduced and will almost certainly expire well before the tyre tread reaches the legal minimum depth. As you think about re-commissioning your van for the 2007 season (or if you use it all year – now anyway), I suggest you contact the maker of the specific tyre you have on your van, explain the sort of use you put the vehicle too and ask his advice on the reliable life of the tyre carcass.

Peter Brown

Since purchasing our AS Amethyst new in March 2003 we have experienced problems with the rear tyre valves on 3 separate occasions. On the first two the tyre deflated slowly so we were able to get the valve replaced, but on the last occasion the valve split and the tyre was damaged beyond repair.

An item in the January 2007 issue of MMM entitled 'Tyre Valve: Ticking Time Bomb?' suggests that rubber tyre valves are not suitable for use when tyre pressures exceed 70 psi (our rear tyres are 69 psi) and should be replaced by metal ones. Hopefully when we get ours replaced we should expect no further problems.

John & Janet Deacon

Stephen Small of AS comments: We have a Michelin tyre fitment booklet and that specifies that all tyres that can be inflated to 65 PSI or above should have metal tyre valves. We use that as our guide.

Chairman's Chat



I suppose I shouldn't be surprised at the various attitudes to motorcaravanning I come across, and the number of different uses people find for them, but somehow someone always seems to be able to surprise me!

This all came about because I took my van to Auto-Sleepers' Service Centre to get a small problem sorted out. Whilst I was in the waiting room I met the usual assortment of people and as always the conversation was about motorhomes. One chap, who was not a club member, hated the whole idea of rallying. Apparently he goes away in his van almost every weekend to get away from people – the last thing he wants to do is socialise.

Another charming couple extolled the virtues of their small VW, which they had owned for several years. They obviously took great pride in it and enjoyed the freedom it gave them. It was only as the conversation progressed that we discovered they had never actually spent a night in it, they only used it for days trips and picnics!

I also realise that many people use their van primarily as a base for their hobby and have met skiers, walkers, photographers, bird watchers etc etc who swear it is the ideal vehicle for them. And I am sure it is. However my interest was particularly aroused by an article in one of my model railway magazines by a chap who had built a layout to fit in a locker in his motorhome. What a splendid idea thought I! The plans were drawn in a few minutes and all was going splendidly until I mentioned it to Angie. Apparently we don't have a spare locker!!!

Anyway, all those of you who do have a hobby, and lets face it most of us do, how about putting on a display at the National Rally. The hobby show is always very popular so if you would like to take part please get in touch with Ozzie as soon as possible. The full contact details are: - John Osland-Jones, 14 Doveridge Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0LU. You can phone him on 0121 744 8065 or email to oslandjones@aol.com

Andy Cavell

Fair-trade

Just over a year ago we made the decision that we would use Fair-trade tea and coffee at the rallies we organised.

Millions of farmers world-wide depend on selling crops to survive and a price drop can spell disaster. Fair-trade products guarantee a fair and stable price for farmers, covering their costs and enabling them to invest in a better future. Workers will earn a decent wage and children get a real chance of a longer and better education.

Though the cost of the products is marginally higher, by buying Fairtrade products we are doing something to empower people in some third world countries to make improvements and choices about their lives.

Perhaps other Marshalls would consider using fair-trade products at their rallies.

Liz Morgan

Wanted

Silver Screen for VW Clubman **Contact Pat Briggs 01626 775397** (Devon)

2004 AS Clubman (53 reg) VW 2.5 TDi. Limited Edition. Top spec with large Heki roof light, dual fuel cooker and blown air heating. Bathroom/shower. Status aerial. Includes Cat.1 alarm, 3m canopy awning & twin bike rack. Many other extras. 10,100 miles. Beautiful condition **£28,000** ono.



Also for sale **Fiamma 3 metre 'Privacy'** awning to fit Fiamma F45 Plus & F45i canopy awnings. Extends to 2.5m. Includes poles, curtains, pegs & ties. Used 3 times. Cost £460 will sell **£225** ono. **Contact Duncan Grundy 01286 830974** (North Wales).

Gelert Annex H200cm. 200 x 180. New **£50**.

Thanks for donation

Fiamma Carry-bike for rear door. New. **£60**
Contact Pat Briggs 01626 775397(Devon)
Thanks for donation

AS crockery 4 saucers, 2 side plates, desert bowl. (Biltons pottery with pale pink freesia). **Khayam** rack & bag (they fit into tow bar) **Safari Awning** to fit Symbol. **Khayam** tent—free standing but can attach to Symbol. **Offers**
Contact Rita Marshall & Karen Kinger evenley@tesco.net (Uxbridge).**01895 823291**

AS Executive 1998 S reg. Peugeot Boxer 2.5 TDi 47,000 miles. All usual refinements, just serviced, 1 year Tax & MOT. Excellent condition. £18,750 ovno
Contact: Mrs Morrell 01538 304509 (Staffs)

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Committee Members

President	Charles Trevelyan	01386 853511
Chairman	Andy Cavell	01635 201976
Secretary	Janet Sutterby	01507 462449
Treasurer	John Tidbury	01235 538593
Vice-Chairman	Mike Valentine	02392 482818
Chairman, AGM Sub-Committee	Nora Venables	01902 332105
Rally Co-ordinator	Neil Rogers	01325 374540
Minutes Secretary	Mike Hall	01773 778016
Chief Rally Marshal	Ben Mansfield	01723 369769
Webmaster & Chair, Tech.Group	Baz Wellard	01329 231259
Regalia Officer	John Jones	01623 627903
Membership Secretary**	Norma Caley	01772 632734
Newsletter Editor	Peter Brown	07771 827711

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**Norma Caley's address is 17 Rydal Avenue, Freckleton, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 1DJ, e-mail is normacaley@tiscali.co.uk.