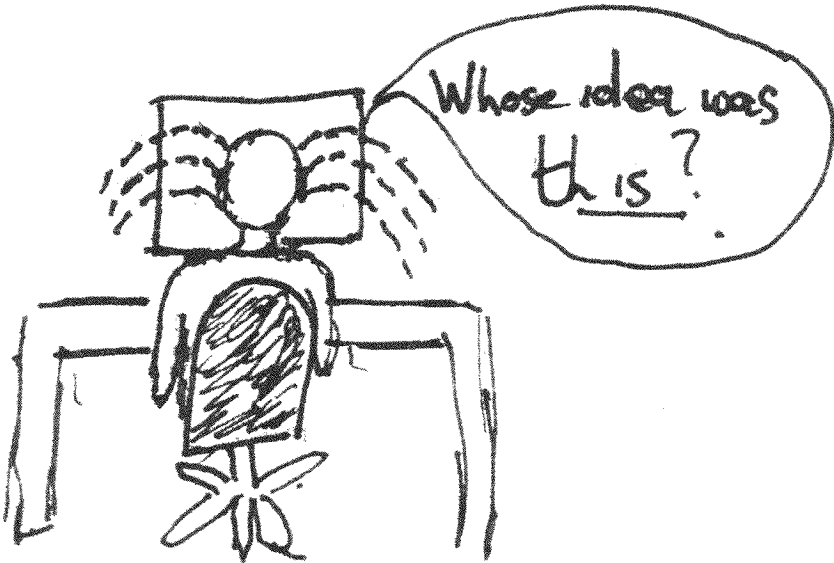




www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

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



*They lied!!
They said this was easy*

NEWSLETTER 230

November 2007

From the Editor (S)

I am the new deputy editor Dudley Woodhams and hopefully with the help and support of my wife Kathleen I shall be producing the next two editions. Please be gentle with me as I have never undertaken any task even remotely like this before so this will be a very steep learning curve that you will have to suffer.

A bit of background, we are in our late fifties, have two grown up daughters, eight grand-children and three dogs. Kathleen is an administration assistant for Gateshead Council and works in a beautiful 55 acre Victorian park where she looks after the park, a community farm and a country park, could you ask for any better settings if you have to work. I am retired through ill health and use a wheelchair a lot of the time but am not tied to it all the time. We love motor-homing and get out and about as much as possible which includes all the rallies we can. We also love beading, embroidery and playing music, badly I might add. Recently at Litchfield and Whitby some poor souls were subjected to my first effort at learning to play the violin, SORRY. Despite this please come and talk to us at rallies. a cup of coffee (or tea) is on offer and if you help me and contribute to the newsletter you can have a whisky chaser. (I'm sorry we only have malt)

Enough about us. When we all belong to clubs the tendency is to moan and criticise about the way things are done but very rarely volunteer or make any contributions or efforts to actually change things. Now I actually like the newsletter and the way it is put together and really enjoy being a member of ASOC and, realising how hard it is to get people involved in any way I volunteered to help with this position to try to ensure that the news letter keeps coming to you. If however there is something you do not like, the range of content, a section that you feel would improve things or anything, Peter and I would be happy to hear your views and you

will not believe how much we appreciate **any** contributions you may make. Without comment or criticism we all become complacent so tell the club if you think there is something wrong, could be changed or even if we are getting it right.

I am sat at the computer on the 30th September with very little input for my first newsletter. Imagine what everybody will say if this turns out to be the first 4 page newsletter, don't panic Dudley we still have another ten days before we have a real problem. See what I mean? Without your input we have a nervous breakdown and you have no magazine to read.

Well we have come to the end of the summer (if that's what it was) so what next? Some of us need our heads reading and continue camping as if nothing has happened, even if we do slow down a bit. But we do have to face the biggest event of the family year, Christmas. The shopping list that makes allowance for the shops being closed for the next six months and year after year we go through the same agonies of what to buy uncle Fred. We all do it to some extent, and we are thinking that perhaps the way to avoid this is to spend Christmas on the banks of a loch in Scotland in the Duetto with the dogs. Last year we did this for New Year and despite the weather we had a wonderful time. Let us know how you will spend your Christmas and New Year, especially if its special or different, but before I land in hot water lets not forget about the real reason for Christmas.

Ok, I have introduced myself, had my say about getting involved, totally depressed you about how close we are to Christmas and those large bills that result and offered a suggestion that might get the brain cells working to find something different to do. All that is left is to say thanks for reading and hope you enjoy our first ever real Newsletter.

Dudley and Kathleen

All Change at Barrons

It may be of interest to some members that Barrons is now Discovery Leisure and this change has happened quite recently. Unfortunately the efficiency of the service department seems to have deteriorated at my local branch but it is early days yet and with new systems, paperwork and so on I hope it is just teething problems. Having said this although the work seems to drag on a bit, it is done in my experience, to a very high standard and with courtesy and consideration to myself and my plans for going away, as it always has been.

Dudley Woodhams

Sorrow at the loss of Vic and Barbara

Vic and Barbara Kaye have to say a reluctant farewell to the best and friendliest club in the U.K. Vic's health means Buttercup has to go. We have been in ASOC since it started (no. 42) and have attended every Club and Co. and AGM and over two hundred rallies, both in the UK and Europe. In 1995 we celebrated our Ruby Wedding at Honeybourne and our Golden Wedding at Burton. We have had some fantastic times, and met many kind, wonderful and caring friends. Our three children say "Joining ASOC was the best thing you ever did". We agree whole-heartedly.

We would like to say a special thank-you to Valerie and Robin Gardener and to all the ralliers at Masham who gave us a lovely last rally send off.

Please keep in touch, and Love to you all,

Barbara and Vic

Appeal form your Deputy Editor

I thought we may have a little fun and feeling next month as a one-off seeing as it is the Christmas edition. I am asking you for amusing or touching anecdotes about this time of year, for example:-

When my brother and I were very little circa 1957, one Christmas eve we were determined to stay awake and see Father Christmas deliver our presents. I, being the youngest, fell asleep, but my brother awoke at the "vital" time and swore that he saw the man in question going down the stairs, or his boots anyway. This we believed for a lot of years until in 1968 or thereabouts my mum revealed that what my brother actually saw was the results of my dad coming home from a works party a little the worse for wear and falling down the stairs after delivering our pressies for the great man. What I s the truth?, I don't know, but I do know that to this day I still try to stay awake and see Father Christmas, and always fall asleep. I do hope that we do not have any non-believers amongst our members, the loss of this great man would be disastrous.

I look forward, full of hope, to your contributions as I think it could be a lot of fun.

Many thanks, Dudley Woodhams

A Tribute to Barbara and Vic Kaye

In 1988, John Cox, through the magazine MMM, asked for those interested in forming a club exclusive to Auto Sleeper owners to contact him. A number of people responded, including Barbara and Vic Kaye who became founder members Number 42. Over the years the club grew and Barbara told us all at the Masham rally that she and Vic went all over this country and listed over a dozen countries in Europe. Not only did they attend rallies but also ran many as well, "We have run more rallies than you have had hot dinners" she said.

Over the past few years they have attended fewer rallies, and as we only became members in 1999, our paths did not cross until 2005 when we met at the July rally at Hereford racecourse. We were well into preparing out first rally at Masham in September at that time and had already received a slip back from Barbara and Vic. Val and I were both concerned that they might find it difficult to walk from the site to the town,

nearly a mile away and partly uphill.

We went to their van and introduced ourselves, were invited in and must have stayed over an hour. There was no problem as her son was going to ferry them from the site to the town. We all got on very well and we found them a charming couple and great company. They came to the rally, enjoyed themselves and sent us a very nice "thank you letter" which we still have.

They did not attend the 2006 Masham rally but we were both pleased to receive a rally slip from them this year. They were one of the first to arrive, driven there by their son. While Val and I were waiting for vans to arrive, Barbara came out of their van and what she said made us very sad. In her own words, "This is our very last rally, I've come to your rally to go out with a bang". It was very disappointing that this was their last rally and we would not see them anymore but we felt honoured that they had chosen our rally but what Barbara meant by *Going out with a bang* we never found out.

At the *Meet and Greet*, I concluded by announcing Barbara and Vic's retirement from rallying and the reaction was of disappointment. We presented them with a plant and a signed card to remind them of their last rally. Barbara then talked about how they joined the club, the number of rallies they had attended in the many countries they had been to with the club and the numerous rallies that she and Vic have run. She sat down to a standing ovation.

Sadly Vic was not at all well and in his best interest they left the next day. A short stay, but we were privileged that they chose our rally as their last.

Thank you Barbara and Vic for all you have put into the club and attending our rally

Valerie and Robin Gardner

My Experience of Bulk gas Tanks

We went back to motor caravanning in 1990 in a Fiat Ducato Talisman. As I am old and my wife has rheumatism, we found the cooker, washing facilities and single beds restricting so in 1993 I asked Mr Charles if there was anything bigger he could put on the four wheel drive short wheelbase Talbot Express chassis cab I had secured. As there was not,

with his blessing, I approached and persuaded Ron Shipp, the Sales Director of Swift, to agree to his company's building a Royale 540 on the chassis. This being the smaller model, items such as the single gas locker were smaller and when I queried this, Mr Shipp suggested a gas tank. In those days there were not many places where a tank could be filled so the 60 litre was usually recommended. The tank came with a frame to attach to the chassis and two plastic covered mild steel straps with adjusters to hold the tank.

About five years later, we heard a loud bang and I saw the tank hanging by one strap. While I was effecting a temporary repair I noticed the plastic covering had trapped water at the lowest point of the strap.

I obtained stainless steel strips from our local fabricators' waste bin and made up four straps to hold the tank and I carry a spare strap which should ensure none of the fitted four breaks.

If their fittings are similar and they do not carry an electric drill, bolts etc, Joy and Nigel Wilkins may wish to benefit from my experience and do what is necessary in the comfort of their home rather than at the roadside. With regard to their last paragraph, a refillable bottle would be my choice in a new van although it would mean reduced external locker space.

David - D J Maddison-Roberts 814N 18 Leyhill Close Swanley Kent
01322 667556.

More on Thetford Cassette Seals

Lubricating Thetford cassette seals certainly prolongs their life and if oil is used it should be olive oil, as Baz Wellard reminded members in Newsletter 229 - certainly not WD40 as was once recommended to me!

However, there is an alternative which is perhaps less messy, may be cheaper and has other uses. Thetford Seal Lubricant is a CFC-free aerosol spray (flammable). I have used this after each emptying of the cassette for nearly nine years without (yet) having to replace the seal, which when I bought a spare "just in case" two years ago cost only a few pence under £10. Thetford Seal Lubricant is usually on sale at shows at a lower price than at dealers. My last can cost £2.95 and it lasts a long time. If the van is not in use for a few weeks I give the seal an occasional spray and work the blade a few times.

This sounds like an advert! - but as they say, I have no connection other than as a satisfied customer. I have also used it to free tight drain taps on the fresh and waste water tanks and the can says it can also be used on door seals, locks, hinges, bicycles, etc.

Ray Whiley

Technical Group & Website



Baz Wellard
Chairman Technical Group & Webmaster

Technical Group & Website

ASOC Flags & banners: Through a kind offer from Emma Franklin at Auto-Sleepers the Club has received enough new Club flags for each Committee Member to carry one, plus 3 spare, and Emma has also kindly provided the Club with 5 banners, one to accompany each boiler and two spare

● If, as a Rally Marshal, you have a Committee member on your rally he/she should have access to a flag if you wish to have one. Otherwise contact Neil Rogers - Rally Co-ordinator 01325 - 374540. Similarly each Club boiler should be accompanied with a banner, otherwise again contact Neil.

Peugeot X250 Radios: I have yet to receive a reply from Peugeot, via Auto-Sleepers, regarding the problem with the radio switching off after 20 minutes. I will advise in due course.

Ideas Sheets: If you have an Idea that may interest other Members please send it to me and I will prepare it for forwarding to Auto-Sleepers for their review. Please send the description, with photos if possible, to 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants PO16 7UF.

Deals for Members: John Fisher (1801) has put me in touch with Van Comfort, (located at Retford, Nottinghamshire) who have agreed to offer a 5% discount to members on all orders, inc mail orders, over £100. The following description from Van Comfort has been published on the Club website:
"Van Comfort was established in 1999, importing and selling German made internal and external ISOMATTEN thermal insulation screens. We now have probably the most extensive range of internal and external thermal insulation screens for motorhome cabs in the UK. We will have a set of screens for your vehicle, and if not, we'll endeavour to make one for you. We offer the UK's only made to measure service for internal insulation screens. We also have many other useful motorhome accessories including wheel traction devices for wet grass and muddy campsites, wind deflectors, vehicle trackers and many other useful products to make life aboard your motorhome more comfortable. Visit our website and take a look for yourself WWW.VANCOMFORT.CO.UK or call us on 01777 700611 or e-mail sales@vancomfort.co.uk."

If any members can identify similar advantages to the Club please let me know. See your Club website for the other offers already negotiated.

Carrying a Motorbike: There is a report in the October MMM of a serious welding failure where a motorcycle rack was directly attached to the motorhome tow-ball. If you have such a fitment, or anything similar, I suggest that it may be prudent to inspect the welded joints. I can provide a copy of the article if you wish to read more details.

Website:

Update No. 10/07 (4th Oct) contained -

Rally reports for Whitby, Wimpole Hall, Bilericay Lancaster and Shoreham Air Show.

Further dealers' offer - Van Comfort are offering a 5% discount (see above)

Listed vehicle reviews - Symbol 2007 added

Appointment of temporary Membership Secretary

Ideas Sheet No. 141 - Drinking bottle stowage in an X250 door pocket

Supplementary to FAQ No. 8 - Updated summary of the tyre pressure advice previously published in the Newsletter.

Tip: If you fit a mirror in your motorhome you may wish to take the precaution against the glass shattering, in an accident, by asking your glazier to 'bond' a 'safety backing' on the mirror rear.

Baz Wellard
Chairman, Technical Group & Webmaster

Rally News

Many Thanks for New Zealand information.

We would like to thank all who sent emails on the subject of touring New Zealand. We have had a dozen so far and all have been full of information and good ideas etc. about this trip we hope to take. If you have written to us and not yet received a reply, I do apologise but we have been touring Scotland. A reply will wing its way to you when we get home, if not before.

Jean Sellers on the Lancaster Rally

Lovely town lots to do.
Alongside the castle what a view.
Near to town hard to ignore.
Cycle lanes miles to explore.
Assorted quizzes to test the brain.
Stay on site or take a train.
Theatre trip, museum and park.
Evening auction what a lark.
Raffle held rally ended.

Thanks Kevin and Don it was splendid

Surprise and disappointment at Billericay

This Year we attended the 21st Essex County Show rally at Billericay for the first time that ran from Fri 7th to Sun 9th Sept. (and we opted to stay until Monday morning).

After our arrival on Friday afternoon we went to the permanent Craft Village (9th largest in the UK) and Farm Centre, all adjacent to the show ground. In the craft centre there were Eating places, glassblowing, blacksmiths (who were undertaking work for Westminster Abbey), pottery studio (where you could paint our own pottery), model shop, candle shop, and wood turning workshop to name but a few. We spent all afternoon there.

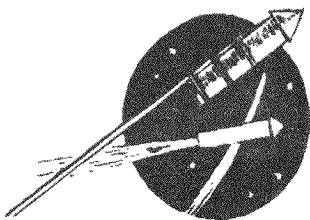
The Farm Centre is next to the Craft Village with all the usual farm animals that all seemed happy to be talked to and petted!

The following two days we spent at the Country Show that had the largest collection of steam traction engines that we have seen in a long time. There were craft stalls and the usual stalls for all large shows. Also there was a fair with a number of steam driven rides. Among the demonstrations and displays were heavy working horses, water rescue from a local pond by Newfoundland dogs, vintage vehicles, stationary engines and many more.

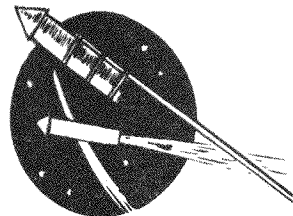
As it was getting dark on Saturday evening most of us gathered by the beer tent for a drink and to admire the traction engines that drove up with lights overall. For the strong they erected a *Ring the Bell* which was better to watch than take part, as far as the ASOC members were concerned.

For what was a superb weekend it was very disappointing that there were only six vans besides the marshals. Stella and Ian Ross had run the Wimpole rally the weekend before and had dashed down to run this rally. All I can say is if you see this rally next year, before you pass it by, think again, I am sure that if you attend you will have a really great weekend, like all of us who attend this year.

Valerie and Robin Gardener.



November 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, must be applied for by using only official A.S.O.C. rally slips sent by post to the relevant marshals.

9th – 13th November (4 nights) Somerset Carnival, Burnham on Sea.

Rally Marshals: Linda & Brian Ellis, Sheila & Ivor Barnett.

Site Fee: £51.00. (Includes electric). Rally Fee: £2.50. Total £53.50. (Incl. VAT). **by the end of September please.**

Rally slips & cheques made payable to Brian Ellis, 52 Golf Links Road, Burnham on Sea, Somerset. TA8 2TP. Tel. No. 01278 784 524. Mobile 07711375323.

The Carnival is on Monday evening. Rally limited to 60 pitches, 45 are hardstanding 15 grass. Site toilets & showers. **NO PETS ALLOWED, site rules.**

Rally limited to 60 pitches, 45 hard standing, 15 grass pitches with electric hook up. Pitches allocated as slips are received.

Attractions: Saturday coach trip to Clarks' Village of Street (shopping) cost approx. £3.50 each. (**DO NOT send payments but indicate interest on slip**). Sunday evening Fireworks display on beach. Monday a.m. beach to pub walk. Monday evening two hour (approx.) Carnival Procession. The Holiday Village is approx. 10 mins walk from the town centre. There is also a Saunders Garden Centre a short ride out of town with parking.

Directions: Post Code TA8 1NQ. M5 junct. 22 Burnham on Sea exit. To large island (Edithmead A38) turn **left** and follow signs for Burnham Holiday Village (Taunton A38). In approx. 1 mile straight over island A38 continue past Caravan Sales, over railway bridge then turn **second right** signed Burnham Holiday Village to mini island by petrol station. Bear **left** towards Burnham town centre. Holiday Village about a ¼ mile on **left**.

Rally starts at 10.00a.m. Friday 9th November.

22nd – 26th November (4 nights) Dickensian Fair, Ford Park, Ulverston, Cumbria,

Rally Marshals: Don Bland, Roy Loveys & John Garlick

Site Fees: £5.00 per night per unit. **NO ELECTRICITY** Rally Fee: £3.00 couples, £1.50 singles.

Rally slips & cheques payable to Mr. D. Bland, 38 Oakwood Drive, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 9JG. Tel. No. 01229 587 937.

Attractions: Ulverston is in the centre of the Furness Peninsular. South Lakes, Barrow, North West Coast, Morecambe Bay.

The rally is being held on the Dickensian Festival Weekend. Victorian/Dickensian dress very welcome. Don't miss out!

A meal can be arranged. Use of Ford Park House – kitchen, toilets & showers.

Directions: Take A590 from Junction 36 on M6. Follow signs for Ulverston, after Booths Supermarket roundabout take **first right** (Swan Hotel). Take **3rd right** (signed Hoad Hill). Sharp **right** hand bend entrance ahead.

NEW NEW NEW Rally in Ireland. 29th May – 18th June 2008. 20 nights

Rally marshals Liz and Bryn Morgan and Nora and Ven Venables.

A rally on 4 sites. Limited to **24** motorhomes.

1. **The Hideaway C & C P. Skibbereen Co. Cork.** Thurs 29th May-Tues 3rd June.
5 nights @ €18 p.n. incl. EHU. Nr. Mizen Head and Baltimore where ferries go to Clear and Sherkin Islands. The site fees of €90 for just this site have to be paid to the marshals in March 2008. We will give you a sterling rate nearer the time.
2. **Fossa C & C P, Nr. Killarney, Co. Kerry.** Tues 3rd June-Tues 10th June. 7 nights @ €20 p.n. incl. EHU. Nr. Ring of Kerry, Gap of Dunloe, Dingle Peninsula
3. **Nagles Doolin C & C P. Doolin Co. Clare.** Tues 10th June-Fri 13th June. 3 nights @ €19 p.n. incl. EHU. Nr. ferry port for Aran Islands and Cliffs of Moher.
4. **Cong C & C P. Cong Co. Mayo.** Fri 13th June-Wed 18th June. 5 nights @ € 20 p.n. incl. EHU. Nr. Connemara. 24 miles from Galway City.

We must stress that if you want to get the most out of this rally you will need to use your own vehicle to get about. There are many interesting and beautiful places within day-trip reach of the sites. Public transport in rural Ireland is limited. Rosslare is 168 miles to first site. Dun Laoghaire/ Dublin Port are approx 210 miles to first site. Last site to Rosslare is 200 miles. Last site to Dun Laoghaire/ Dublin Port is approx. 160 miles. Journey times in Eire invariably take longer than in the UK.

Bookings will only be taken for the 20 nights. We have secured site fee discounts on condition that you pay for all 20 nights.

Rally fee is £16.00 and includes a Caravan and Camping Guide to Ireland 2008, which we will send to you when published. If you are offered a place and you decide to accept then the rally fee is non-returnable. Please send a cheque for £16.00, a rally slip and a 9X6 addressed envelope (no postage) to: B Morgan 44 Mersey Road Heaton Mersey Stockport SK4 3DJ Tel: 0161 432 4869. Mobile: 07890876859.

If you wish to run a rally in 2008 please contact me to check dates before booking with a site. This prevents any clash of dates.

To be shown on the "Provisional Rally List" for 2008 I must receive dates by the end of November 2007.

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 suitability for rallies, please ask if interested

A "Guide to New/Possible Marshals" is available. If you would like one please contact me, details below.

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. Mobile No.

Van Reg. Length Membership No.

e-mail 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 this form.

f

Rally Date

Your name and address (Please PRINT)

.....

..... Post Code

Phone No. Mobile No.

Van Reg. Length Membership No.

e-mail 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 this form.

Is this your first ASOC rally? Please tick box. Yes No

Number of people in your van: Adults..... Children.....

Adults' names (Incl. forenames).....

Childrens' names (incl. ages).....

Cheque enclosed for £..... for..... nights incl. rally fee.

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.
Enclose a SAE if confirmation is required.

Is this your first ASOC rally? Please tick box. Yes No

Number of people in your van: Adults..... Children.....

Adults' names (Incl. forenames).....

Childrens' names (incl. ages).....

Cheque enclosed for £..... for..... nights incl. rally fee.

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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.
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Enclose a SAE if confirmation is required.

The Lancaster Heritage Rally 6th. - 10th. Sept. 2007

As we arrived at Lancaster Football Ground on Thurs. afternoon we were met by Kevin & Don, this was Kevin's first Rally as organiser & as the weekend went on it was as if he had been organising rallies for years.

On Friday Don led a walk alongside The River Lune, on the cycle track to an aqueduct, that takes the canal over the river. We climbed the 86 steps to the aqueduct, then along the canal tow path back to Lancaster, where some went down to the City centre, and the others walked up to Williamson Park to The Ashton Memorial.

In the evening, we met in the Westfield Village Community Hall, for a Fun Auction. A big thank you must go to Neil Rogers for all the fun as auctioneer. The lots ranged from a pair of binoculars, to a used plastic bag.

Saturday morning we were taken on a tour of The Grand Theatre by Kevin, and in the afternoon to TB Turbo who had given an ECU chip upgrade worth £300 as a raffle prize. Then in the evening to Verde's Restorante for a meal, and back to the Hall for real coffee, biscuits & the raffle.

Sunday was a free day but was also Brian Oliver's birthday, (21 again) who brought wine for everyone to the evening get together. Everyone had an enjoyable weekend & hoped there would be another one next year.

Last word from me a very big thank you to Kevin & Don.

Regards

Dave & Trish Robinson (5662)

Could this really be Shoreham?

Strange Rituals.....

By Guess Who? Of course it is Chris, Peter's valiant Support Worker.

Something's moving about in the undergrowth;
It's dusk, now what could it be?
A fox, a badger, a bird?
A person? No two, *no* there's three.

More and more are beginning to gather
and around them a strange eerie light.
What's happened to cause this disturbance
as dusk settles down into night?

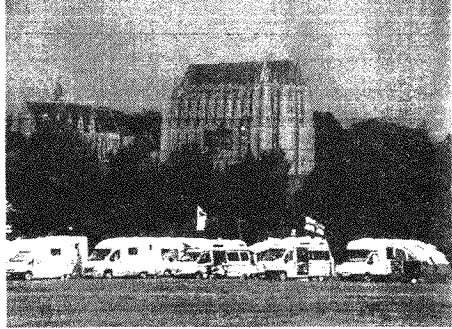
There's music playing in the background
as the throng begins marching away.
What is it this odd kind of ritual
taking place at the end of the day?

Of course! We're down here at Shoreham
and the planes have stopped landing for the day
so the loo run is about to get going
and the lights are to show them the way!

But seriously, we've heard what a superb rally this one is and this year was certainly no exception. Even the weather co-operated for most of the time, only letting itself down on Sunday, when a strong wind made the day quite cold. The site is excellent for the Air Show, being practically on the runway!, and close to the town, where Peter and I took the train to Brighton on Thursday, to have a look around the Pavilion. Others took to the downs on bikes, or walked into Worthing, or just soaked up the sun and watched the comings and goings of the aircraft.

The highlight of Friday evening was a visit to the Police Helicopter Team, whose paramedic talked us through the types of operation they cover, the equipment the helicopter carries and just to prove a point, they were called out on a job in the middle of it all. It was all quite exciting watching them in action.

The Air Show was very good, with a lot of static displays and aerobatics. It was however, marred by the tragedy of a Hurricane crashing during the Battle of Britain display, when unfortunately the pilot, Brian Brown, died. I'm sure the thoughts of all those attending the Show were with his family when this happened.



The supper on Saturday night was, as we'd been given to expect, excellent, and the staff weren't bad either!!! The raffle on Sunday boasted a record breaking 60 prizes and the amount raised by the rally for RAFA was another record £1,400+. So thank you to everyone who contributed, and a special, very big thank you for all the hard work to the Rally Marshalls, Chris & Shirley Sturgeon, Dave & Theresa Smith and Tony & Linda Fowler.

Black Forrest and Bavaria Tour

Eight Auto-Sleepers Vans went on this tour lead by a Hymer (of all things) and in the main most people enjoyed the holiday.

There were pre planned visits to a Tour of Munich, Beer Festival, Dachau Concentration Camp, The Eagles Nest, The Rhine Falls (Switzerland), a Vineyard and several organised meals which were at good venues. The information supplied prior to the tour was good but the information during the tour was limited and hard to find.

There were only three regular ASOC rallying vans the others being newish members and I would like to reassure those who went on this tour our own club rallies both at home and in Europe are extremely well organised and everybody is made very welcome.

Roger Spensley

Anybody Interested?

September 2008 Rally in the Loire Valley

Dorothy and I have taken the opportunity to tentatively book a site for an ASOC rally in the Loire valley for next year. The site is at Chinon which is a lovely mediaeval town on the banks of the River Vienne, (*a tributary of the Loire*), with a Chateau that dates back to the 11th Century. It is approximately 350 miles from Calais with a convenient overnight stop 2 hours out of the port.

The two star site is on the south side of the river and is only a short distance across the bridge to the town itself. We have been offered an area that has the advantage that 24 units can all be camped together. Price this year was around £8 per night, including electrics.

Before we can go any further we need to judge if there is enough support for a 10 night rally - 1st to 10th September inc.

If you are likely to be interested could you please let us know by *Tel 01329 – 231259; E-mail baz.wellard@virgin.net* or by letter to *18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants, PO16 7UF*. There is no commitment at this stage as the rally will be advertised, as usual, through the rally supplement.

For views of the town & campsite you are welcome to visit: www.picasaweb.google.co.uk/bazils2/ChinonSeptember2007

Baz and Dorothy Wellard

From the Factory

Twelve Months @ the Helm

As I contemplate my time with Auto-Sleepers, the fact that astonishes me most, is how quickly time has passed. In many respects people would say it's a good thing; it shows I am occupied and enjoying myself. From a personal perspective, it scares the hell out of me! At this rate my next article will be concerning my retirement.

My timing was perfect (!! **??), I climbed aboard Auto-Sleepers at the point they were just commencing the biggest chassis changeover programme in their history! And after eleven models we are now finally coming to the end. But, although at times it was challenging to the point of insanity, we now have a product range that holds its ground in the market place and in certain instances exceeds expectations. In my early days I did not comprehend how tired our model range had become!!

But enough about Product lets move on to people. It is this element that makes a Company! Auto-Sleepers, like previous Companies I have had the privilege to work for (well most of them anyway!), have a good Team of people. At Auto-Sleepers, the chassis changeover programme demonstrated this, such a schedule of change would challenge the best organisations, but the Team galvanised itself and made it through. We now have a foundation upon which to build an award winning entity, surpassing, dare I say it, even 'the good old days'. Attending Shows and ASOC events has exposed me to the wider Motorhoming fraternity and again I have not been disappointed. The whole community involves an interesting plethora of individuals, the ASOC AGM at Newark was no exception!

My vision for the future is much the same as the recent past, more change, more challenges and even more hard work.

In 2008 we have the launch of some premium-badged product to satisfy your desires, and, less exotic, but still hugely important, we have Whole Vehicle Type Approval legislation to contend with during 2009.

Lastly, I must not forget to state, that **we are** working on the detail! The stuff that guarantees your Motorhoming experience **is** frustration free.

And, finally, Thank you to everyone who has made my introduction to the Motorhoming experience enjoyable.

Simon Vaughan

IN PRAISE OF SQUEAKS

We were going on our summer holiday and driving down through France when we noticed a 'new' chirping metallic squeak from the back of our Talisman. This was a particularly annoying squeak, drowning all the other squeaks and rattles which are normal for our 16 year old van. Eventually Heather could not stand (sit?) the noise any longer and went down to the back of the van to investigate and cured the squeak by the usual percussive maintenance method, bashed the water heater. However the squeak returned a few minutes later.

After changing drivers I went to investigate and the squeak came from the room heater. We had never heard any noise from this before so I was rather puzzled. Then I noticed the back of the van was shaking in time with the squeak and it was most noticeable on the right hand side, where the heater is.

At our next stop I decided to have a good look at the right hand rear tyre but I could not see or feel any bulges on the outer or inner sidewall or tread. Perhaps we had stopped with the bulge at the bottom, so the van was moved forward a foot, still nothing. Crawling back out from under the van a bright glint of metal caught my eye, the steel tread bracing was showing through the tread of the tyre which could have burst at any time! Fitting the spare wheel eliminated the squeak and all was well again.

We still had about 300 miles to go to our destination so we started to search for a replacement. By now it was Saturday lunchtime when everything shuts in France. After having our lunch we found two tyre depots that were open but did not have the correct size of tyre. We found a third but alas closed for the weekend. Luckily the fourth depot was open, had the right size tyre which was fitted quickly and we were off, feeling happy and relaxed that the problem was solved.

So the annoying squeak brought a failing tyre to our attention, a tyre which could have blown while we were travelling at high speed (well 60 to 70 mph – downhill only).

The moral of this story is **DO NOT** ignore squeaks and rattles until you are certain what they really are.

John Tidbury

The Caravan Club Grand Tour 2007

Having retired early at Christmas 2006 I decided to act on the idea of attending the Caravan Club's grand tour in 2007 which was suggested to us by fellow members in the summer of 2005.

A week after the itinerary was published I phoned up to book, only to be told that it was already full! I went on the waiting list and lo and behold before Christmas we were included. *Phew!* The package included eight countries (France, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Germany and Holland) and thirteen different campsites.

There were 20 units booked on the tour and I wondered beforehand how many would be "towing caravans" and how many would be campervans. We all met up for the first time at Camping de la Bien Assise on the 25th May for our welcome evening meal. There were four motor homes and sixteen caravans which surprised me as I thought there would be more motor homes. Three of the motor homes were Auto sleepers, a Nuevo, a Symphony and our Marquis Dorset.

The van performed very well with the only problem being the stitching on the upholstery. The weather by and large was disappointing but we did have some real hot sunshine in Croatia and Slovenia. The route took us down through France and up again through Switzerland where the very wet weather did clear for us to enjoy the mountains on our last day of three. The journey down to Ancona in Italy via Bologna was tiring, busy and wet. I must say the general consensus of opinion of our fellow travellers was that Italy would be avoided in any future trips. The motorways were busy, the services were by and large not big enough to park lorries, cars and caravans safely and the Italians seem to have a death wish whilst driving. We saw more accidents there than on the whole of the trip combined. We ferried across the Adriatic from Ancona to Split in Croatia on an overnight ferry. The sites in Croatia were by the lovely Adriatic and very good. From there we travelled north to Slovenia which I must say was the highlight of the tour for us. The people were wonderfully friendly and the site at Lake Bled was probably the best site we have stayed on. The return leg up through Austria, Germany and Holland was very enjoyable. We loved Austria but the site at Nattersee really did cram you in too closely together, so when we do go back we will avoid that site.

I sang the praises of the Auto Sleepers Owners Club to the Nuevo couple (hopefully they have joined, they said they would!) but I had no need to do the same with the Symphony owners because I spotted that lovely sticker in the windscreen.

So the tour was a great success and the crowd all gelled well to enjoy some very memorable sociable evenings and the five and a half weeks just flew by. The weeds on the allotment were very high on our return but we have some lovely memories.

I have never been to anything organised before (not even a rally) so we may even join an ASOC rally one day!

Peter and Janet Hales

Deputy Editor: I know this is not an ASOC rally but I think occasionally it is nice to hear what our members do when they are not rallying with us.



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