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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

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



Happy Christmas

NEWSLETTER 243

December 2008

From the Editor (S)

We've had a short note from Peter Pipe who "fully concurs with Peter's comments in his article 'Living with the Wilton', specifically regarding the Cotswold Motorhomes team, expertly led by Frank Williams. Over the years we have purchased 3 motorhomes and though we live in Shropshire we would never contemplate buying from another dealer. We are always made welcome by Frank, Gina, their 'boys' and Peter in the Servicing Department. It is not without just rewards that the company recently received MMM's top award."

The floods in the Lake District caused us to divert a recent weeks holiday to the Blackmore site near Malvern and gave an opportunity to collect a part that Frank Williams had been holding onto for me for some time. Arrangements were made for the collection to be made on the Friday on our return home.

On arriving back at our van after a whole days walk at 4.30 pm on the Thursday we found that the electric ring on the hob had been switched on (no idea how but assume a rucksack strap caught it on the way out) and had caused the glass hob cover to shatter and one of the hinges to melt.

Before even taking my rucksack off I rang Pete Curry at Cotswold. He didn't have the parts in stock but, despite being very busy, went the next morning to the AS factory and brought the parts to Cotswold for me to collect, which I did later that morning. The next day at home I replace the necessary parts (the hinge not that easily) cleaned the hob and (nearly) as good as new.

Thanks very much to Cotswold and Pete Curry in particular.

Situation Vacant

As a result of the sad loss of Mike Hall, we are now looking for someone who would be willing to take on the role of Minutes Secretary. As an acknowledgment of Mike's own comments that it was impossible to take minutes and participate in the meeting, the committee have decided that the new role would not involve becoming a member of the committee.

What would be involved is attending the AGM, three committee meetings and a similar number of sub-committee meetings each year to take the minutes. Subsequently the minutes have to be written up and circulated.

If you feel you could help the Club in this way, please contact Andy Cavell on 01635 201976, by email to andy.cavell@tesco.net or snailmail to 24 The Close, Hampstead Norreys, Thatcham RG18 0RY.

Thank you

I would like to say thank you to our many friends who sent messages of love and goodwill by phone and cards (many of them hand-crafted). They gave me not only great pleasure and assurance but a wonderful feeling of affection. I know it also helped Maureen to get over the shock and through a most difficult time for her.

I have now been 're-plumbed', 're-tuned', back to normal and raring to go!!

On a cautionary note, I was lucky because the paramedics got to me quickly (2 minutes!). It crossed our minds what could have happened if we had been in a field somewhere without the knowledge of a postcode, which is what the emergency services rely on to find a location through their 'sat-navs'. Take our advice, write it down when you arrive on site and have it handy by your mobile just in case.

Best wishes to you all, see you on the rallies.

Cedric & Maureen Jones

Joan and I would like to thank you all for the many cards, phone calls and messages we have received since the start of my illness. The support we have felt from you all has helped us through what would have been a much more difficult time. Treatment is going very well, over half way there now.

Sorry we are unable to attend rallies at the moment but we are looking forward to seeing everyone in the new year.

Lots of love

Dennis & Joan (The Grippos)

Welcome to new members



Geoff Helliwell & Brenda Chalmers	Hampshire
Mac & June McArthur	Sandhurst
Peter & Rosemary Burton	Mezan
Ros Taylor & Susan Harwood	Gatcombe
Bob & Marjorie Biddle	Nuevo
John & Alison Pay	Trophy
Don & Barbara Walker	Nuevo
Steve & Nikki Webb	Duetto
Don & Kath Hutsby	Pollensa
Alan & Susan Hopkins	Nuevo
Bill & Janet Garner	Nuevo
Ike & Barbara Dawson	Medallion
John & Linda Whitlock	Symbol
Jim & Maureen Samuels	Surrey
Tom & Maureen Chandler	Surrey
John & Susan Poole	Rambler
Peter Tilling	Talisman
Kenny & Belinda Fettis	Nuevo
Nick & Suzanne Mayled	Rambler
Victor Kitts	Symbol
Bob & Margaret Upston	Clubman
Stuart & Janet Hickman	Executive
David Parsons & Sarah Parsons (daughter)	Duetto
Michael & Wendy Hogan	Symbol
Arthur & Joyce Tooth	Clubman

Charity 2009

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who sent in nominations to be chosen as our Charity of the year at the National Rally in May 2009. If you were not successful please remember you can still nominate next time.

Out of all the nominations received , the one chosen was sent in by Jeanne Hall (3267) and it is **Crossroads Macmillan Carers Support Service**, working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support.

As you may or may not know, Jeanne was the wife of Mike Hall, our Minutes Secretary, and was looked after by the Macmillan nurses up to the end of Mike's life. So we hope you, the members, agree with our decision on this occasion.

If you need any more information on Macmillan cancer support, you can visit their website at www.macmillan.org.uk or telephone 0800 500 800 or 01623 658535.

Once again thank you all.

*John Jones
Regalia Officer*

Update

We have received an update from Rita Jones and Keith Taylor relating to their unfortunate experience at the Penrhos Caravan Club Site on Anglesey.

Having failed to receive a response to the first three letters they wrote further informing the Club that if no response was received to this letter they would be contacting the Welsh Tourist Board. This prompted a telephone call from the Regional Manager, who entirely agreed with their comments and informed that that new rules were to be implemented on the site which would include issuing keys to late arrivals.

However, because of their experiences they have decided to relinquish their membership of the Caravan Club, but hope that in future ASOC members arriving at the Penrhos site after 7 pm are greeted with the respect that was so clearly absent on their arrival.

Water Ingress in a Gatcombe

Earlier this year we wrote to you about 'condensation in a 2002 Gatcombe'. Since then we have resealed all round the bike rack fittings and the light clusters but while we were in the Lake District in September/October we were unfortunate enough to have a heavy down pour that lasted almost two days.

During this time our 'water leak' appeared and was reluctant to go away! We eventually tracked it down to the roof rack bars where they enter the top of the motorhome. Michael was only able to repair the leak with duck tape while we were away but on returning home has done a proper mastic repair to all four corner posts plus the back ladder fixings. We are now confident that we will have no more leaks.

Previous to all this, the wind-up Heki roof light also leaked and we took the whole thing out and resealed it. We have had no more problems with that.

We have put our heads together and decided that all our leaks are down to the fact that the workmen who put the solar panel on the roof were very heavy handed/footed and upset all seals.

Many thanks to all who corresponded with us.

Michael and Jean Shaftoe

The French NHS

Having read Baz's item regarding the EHIC, I can relate some information on the French system as I have been there! (Reported in the newsletter at that time.) It was in 2000, so my figures and some details will be out of date.

I had need to visit a Doctor in Brittany, had the Doctor visit me, and then be taken to Quimper Hospital. I was told at the first visit to the Doctor (showing my E111) that the French claim back fees from the government. Each visit cost me about 40 to 50 Euros before I went to hospital, luckily by an English owned car as I couldn't drive (or else I would have to go by ambulance).

Having spent 2 days in hospital and been operated on, I pleaded to be released although the hospital doctor wanted me there another day. He agreed finally and told me that I needed to visit a SRN Nurse each day for dressing replacement, and provided a stack of prescriptions to give to the nurse. The campsite owners located the nurse near the local pharmacy and I went along, she popped out and got the prescription items and told me to go to the pharmacy after to pay! Duly treated I paid up and the pharmacy again said claim from the government. The Nurse cost 70 Euros a visit but varied as I ended up in Dinan before getting the Ferry back.

However, on the money side, I contacted the DHSS on the assigned telephone number on return and was sent the form. The lady there fully explained the French system. The completed form with all the receipts (doctor, nurse and prescriptions), was sent to them and they dealt with the French side and I got about 80% back. This actually worked out cheaper than paying the prescription charges in England as there were a number of items needed - drugs and dressings etc. I eventually got a refund after 2 months. The Hospital was free on producing the E111 but some 4 months later I got a bill direct from the hospital to pay for my stay there based on a daily rate of about 10 Euros! All French have to pay this, presumably for food (excellent). I contacted the DHSS and they advised me to contact a particular gentleman at the French embassy who told me to send him a cheque for about £13 (even a good rate at the time), and he would pass the money on.

So, keep all your receipts and contact the correct DHSS dept on return, although you can claim whilst in France if your treatment is concluded. If you look at the back of the Advice for Travellers booklet there are some details which appear to be different from above so the refund may not be as great. The good news is that the French medical services are extremely helpful, finding English speaking doctors and nurses but a bit of French on your part helps and at the time the French NHS was rated third in the world and we were a lowly 28th.

At the time I contacted my travel Insurance company as there was a likelihood of claiming on that, but I had no need as the final total was below the first £50. Luckily I was just about able to drive after a week, but I could have required their services, so it's worth contacting them if its a possibility. I hope this helps assure any ralliers to France that they will be well cared for, but do make sure that you have some extra cash in your current account in case of emergencies, and keep all the paperwork you get for claiming!

David Mayne

With reference to Dorothy Wellards EHIC claim, I had reason to use the EHIC whilst in southern France last June. Having suffered with tooth ache I made an emergency appointment with the local village dentist, who diagnosed an abscess under a cracked pre-molar, 32 euros. Off to the pharmacy for 10 days worth of anti-biotic 4 euros, then back the following week for the extraction, 53 euros.

After returning to the UK I applied for the necessary form from DWP, duly completed same and sat back to wait. Two weeks ago I received a cheque from France via the DWP for £32.21, so the system does work although it takes its time.

Incidentally the village dentist had some of the most modern up to date state of the art equipment I have ever seen.

John Geeson

Rally News

Remember the Rally Marshals

As Christmas approaches and the 2008 rallying season comes to an end, I would like to thank all those members who volunteered to act as marshals this year. Due to their hard work and dedication the Club has been able to offer a varied selection of rallies at locations, both at home and abroad.

Rally marshals play a very important part in Club activities by organising rallies both large and small. They give us the opportunity to visit places we may not otherwise visit and to take part in a wide variety of activities. Indeed it would be a dull season if all rallies were exactly the same.

The secret of a successful rally is in the organisation, prior to and during the rally. Marshals receive a guide to running rallies which gives a framework upon which they can then develop their rally. Anyone who is interested in running a rally can have "A Guide for New or Possible Rally Marshals". Just contact me.

We have over 1200 vans in the Club, so if you wish to go to a rally it is vital that you apply when the information first appears in the Rally Supplement. I know that some members have problems with the receipt of their Newsletters, but your Committee have found that delivery two days after posting is the norm.

When applying for a rally you can help the rally marshals by completing both sides of the rally slip. This information is very important and helps the marshal in many ways. For example, planning the marking out of pitches and the positioning of vans according to length, particularly those who have indicated on the rally slip that they will have a car or trailer with them.

Please do not arrive at a rally before the stated start time as the marshal requires time to mark out the pitches. The length of a rally is governed by a strict interpretation and use of our "Exemption Certificate". Arriving

early at a rally and leaving late can compromise this certificate. It is also important that when the marshal has given you a pitch you do not move to another without consulting the marshal first. If you are leaving early please inform the marshal before you go.

Sometimes you may not be able to get to a rally on the day that you indicated on your rally slip. If this happens please let the marshal know as they will be concerned about your non appearance. I also ask that you contact the marshal if you cannot attend a rally as they may be able to fill the vacancy from their waiting list. Day visitors are welcome at rallies but again let the marshal know if you are expecting any.

Many thanks again to all the marshals and their assistants and of course to the ralliers for supporting the Club rallies in 2008. We hope to see you in 2009, when again there will be a wide choice of rally venues for you to visit.

Neil Rogers
(Rally Co-ordinator)

A note from Rita Daly

I loved the forthcoming rally notices in the recent Newsletter, but rarely read the rally reports. Would it be an idea to get the marshals to do a write-up on their future rallies for the newsletter? I feel it would be a helpful contribution and give a livelier feel to the Newsletter.

And speaking of Forthcoming Rallies

Ken Bolton is thinking of running a rally on the Isle of Wight in 2009 and would like to know what interest there would be. The cost cannot be calculated until the ferry companies have published their fares, though Ken understands Wightlink take Tesco Clubcard points towards the fare.

So if you would like to visit the Isle of Wight next year let Ken know on 01983 402059 or email bonky3444@btinternet.com.

Stop Press : The Whitemead Rally is now full.

Barbecues, Insurance and Walks

I've been asked to write something this month to try to clarify the position regarding the use of barbecues at Club rallies. Firstly though I would like to explain that none of what follows arises out of any desire on my part to be awkward or spoil people's fun, but I seem to have sleepwalked into the role of organising the Club's insurances and with it a need to interpret the limitations placed on us by the Club's Insurers.

Please remember also that I am talking about the Club's liability for negligence by someone acting on its behalf and any costs or damages which arise from that action. I am not talking about the actions of individual members which are entirely their own responsibility.

The problem with barbecues first arose because I became aware that, at some rallies, the marshals were either cooking meals for members, or arranging mass barbecues where members cooked their own and other people's food. Since any provision of food and drink was excluded by our insurance we had to arrange for the policy to be extended and our insurers imposed a number of conditions. One of these was that all barbecues must be at least 5 metres from any van. Some members have interpreted this to mean, for example, that they cannot use a gas barbecue which connects to a socket on the side of their van but this is not the case. The rules relating to an individual member using a barbecue have not changed, these rules only apply to group barbecues organised on behalf of the Club.

I appreciate that this may cause a little inconvenience, but if we are going to have insurance we have to consider these requirements. It is not easy for a club like ours to obtain insurance these days because we are a small organisation and do not fit easily into the categories of risk understood by Insurance Companies. There are group schemes available, but perversely these seem more attuned to the smaller clubs and our enquiries in the past have revealed that they do not meet our requirements. Now that the Club is a CLG we could choose not to bother with insurance at all and simply wind it up if we are sued but I know that your committee as directors of the CLG would not be prepared to consider that option.

Incidentally, if you think the problem with barbecues is making a mountain out of a molehill, there is a new exclusion this year relating to the organising of any "walking events on public roads". After three months of negotiation I'm still trying to sort that one out!

Andy Cavell
Chairman



December 2008 Rally Supplement.



A very Happy Christmas to all members.

Please note my new e-mail address is ncr@mypostoffice.co.uk

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

If you wish to take a car, trailer or tent to a rally, please ask the marshals if this is possible.

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.

*****Please remember that you have to arrange ferry bookings and any insurance required, health or vehicle, for any foreign rallies.

14th to 21st June 2009 (7 nights). Delftse Hout Caravan Site, Delft Netherlands.

Rally starts at 12 noon June 14th. and closes 12 noon on June 21st. 2009.

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 for reply.

(Small envelope will do for first reply).

Site Fees 20.00 euros approx £16.00 per 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.

A 50% deposit will be required in January 2009.

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.

PLEASE SEND RALLY SLIPS and deposit to P.M.Pratt. 3 Grafton Road, Stapenhill, Burton on Trent, Staffs DE15 9DN (01283538818) or mob. (07713186508) or contact Jan on 01246236157 if I'm not available

23rd - 27th February 2009 (4 Nights), Whitemead Forest Park, Parkend.

Lydney, Gloucestershir@

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

Rally Marshals: Mike and Mary Bardsley, assisted by Liz and Bryn Morgan.

Site/Rally Fee to include hard standing pitch, electric hook-up, hire of room for two nights and use of facilities:Couples £66, Singles £63 (including VAT) .

Please send rally slip and cheque with SAE for reply and directions to: Mike Bardsley, 8 Hepburn Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0SU Tel. 01922 451964 (home), 07900677269 (mobile).

Attractions Enjoy a keep fit winter break in the heart of the Forest of Dean. Facilities include heated swimming pool, Jacuzzi, steam room, sauna and gym together with bar, restaurant, health and beauty salon and small shop, all on site.

Good walking and cycling from the site, with plans for a guided walk and bike ride. 30 pitches available.

If you wish to run a rally in 2009 please contact me to check dates before booking with a site. This prevents any clash of dates.

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

*******NEW***** E-Mail. ncr@mypostoffice.co.uk**

E & OE

Rally Date

Your name and address (Please PRINT)

.....

..... Post Code

Phone No. Mobile No.

e-mail Membership No.

Van Reg. Length Arrival Day/Time

In the event of an emergency at the rally whom should we contact?

Name Phone No.

Please complete both sides of this form.

.....

Rally Date

Your name and address (Please PRINT)

.....

..... Post Code

Phone No. Mobile No.

e-mail Membership No.

Van Reg. Length Arrival Day/Time

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.

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..

From the Factory

Auto-Sleepers 4 new models

Warwick Duo

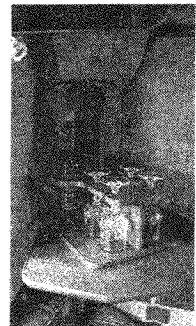
The Warwick Duo is a new addition to the already successful Warwick model. The biggest difference between the existing Warwick and the Warwick Duo is the layout option of 2 x single 6'3" beds or 1 x double in the rear. This was designed to accommodate taller people who felt the bed size in the existing Warwick was not big enough, although limited to the width of the van. The next big addition is the new refillable gas tank - which eliminates the need to deal with gas bottles. The vehicle also comes with some new touches such as LED lights, a security safe set into the floor and a carbon monoxide alarm, all of which are standard.



a 4 berth or 2 berth low profile option. Along with this there is also the option of a twin bench layout or a dinette with a single bench opposite. The vehicle interior holds the biggest difference to the Sigma with it's teak finish providing a warm, cosy and quality feel. The exterior also sees a new fresh and flowing design on the graphics. LED lights are standard in this model as is the carbon monoxide alarm.

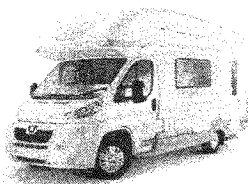
Broadway EL

The Broadway EL like it's EK sibling, is a successor and refined version to the Sigma EL. It comes with the same classic end lounge layout and still holds all the attributes that helped it win best coachbuilt in it's category at the Caravan Club Motorcaravan Design and Drive awards. The majority of the redesigned interior of this model follows the theme of the EK, although the end lounge also comes with some ingenious space saving ideas in the form of 3 "drop downs" in the lounge corners. These are completely concealed when pushed up, and drop down neatly with the release of a small clip to allow for a drinks cabinet, TV holder and other general storage.



Broadway EK

The Broadway EK is a worthy successor to the Auto-Sleepers Sigma EK. Like the Sigma the Broadway EK will also come with the choice of both



Trooper Lowline

This model has been updated slightly with the all new manual Reimo roof. Whilst the idea of the previous electronic roof was an enticing one, our Design dept were keen to simplify things and with a view to longevity and reliability, the much revered Reimo roof was the obvious choice. The

Lowline is now also available as a 4 berth option with a neat drop down bed again on a Reimo engineered variant of the Lowline roof. This model is also offered in the more adventurous "Inca" style of fabric in addition to the 5 new fabrics offered for 2009.

Russell Langley
Marketing Executive

Comments on the Electronic Newsletter

I do not agree with Rob Corcoran, but every family will be different. My wife very rarely reads the newsletter, so having it on the computer makes no difference to her. However it opens up new opportunities for me.

The newsletter contains a lot of information that will be useful one day if not now. But how does one remember when that vital piece of information appeared? In my business I send out a newsletter each month and in addition I have an index by subject matter. So everything to do with a particular subject is noted in one place. As the newsletter is sent out electronically, those who receive it do not have to search through lots of paper copies for something that might have appeared two or three years ago. They can look it up on the index and go straight to the electronic copy on their system. After a while items in the newsletter become out of date. With an electronic copy one can reduce each issue down to what one needs to keep. I now intend to use this system with the club magazine. (Interestingly, at least to me, is the fact that I also issue a manual to my clients. However I have noticed over the last nine months that fewer and fewer are keeping them, they are just keeping an electronic copy. This is probably because storage space is at a premium.)

There are other advantages to the electronic system as you have proved. Think of all those photos taken at rallies. Most have probably been taken on a digital camera and all are in colour. Some can now appear in the newsletter. Then of course diagrams or maps can be scanned and put in the newsletter.

Lastly there is the matter of finance. The reason I have converted my newsletter to an electronic version is that it now costs me nothing to send out to my clients - no paper, no envelopes, no postage. Any club has to consider its finances and this is a great way of keeping the costs down. However, there will always be people who do not like computers and I cannot blame them. I still have two clients who receive my newsletter by post and I charge them appropriately. Perhaps the same idea can eventually work within the club ... but not yet!

Michael Wainwright

With reference to Rob Corcoran's e-mail his inference is that women are not computer friendly (which is far from the truth) and that it is not as good as reading a hard copy. Has he no printer then, as I would have thought it easy enough to print, show the finished article to Elizabeth and enjoy reading it whilst drinking his coffee!

Mavis Broad

I am one (female!) member who does read it 'on screen' the day it arrives, along with my other emails which I check daily. So far I would say the pros are:

The pictures and graphics are much clearer and sharper.
The text is also very clear.

As the text can be enlarged to fit the screen I would have thought this would be a boon to any member with weak eyesight.

John and I had both read the November newsletter when it arrived last week so were 'up to speed' on latest ASOC news when we attended the Brewood rally and were chatting to other members. On our return from the rally the paper copy had arrived and will be used to refer back to when away in the van.

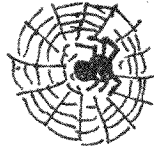
On balance I like the electronic version but as yet cannot foresee the replacement of the paper copy with its rally supplement, especially with the current low number of members participating.

Helen Greenwood

Among other comments was one from **Jean Hollingsworth** who prefers to receive it electronically, whilst Dave prefers the hard copy (he not being too computer literate); and from **John Geeson** who said he was originally interested but has since had second thoughts as it's certainly not like reading 'the real thing'.

Technical Group & Website

Baz Wellard
Chairman, Technical Group & Webmaster



Spare wheels:

Recently I wrote to Geoff Scott (Chief Executive Officer - Auto~Sleepers) expressing concern that the new County Models on the Mercedes Benz chassis are not provided with a spare wheel or even an option to have one retrofitted; but now have a 'sealant' process instead.

My concern is that it is not unknown for 'sealant' to be inadequate for 'large' punctures or when the tyre is damaged/shredded and/or the wheel is damaged.

I explained that it is not the Club's intention, or role, to dispute Auto~Sleepers policy but I hoped that they would be open to listening to user comments. However, I did say that I believed it was the Club's role to inform members of any important factors, of which they may not be otherwise aware.

I had asked if it would be possible to be advised of the future general policy regarding provision of spare wheels and, particularly, confirmation that all prospective purchasers are made fully aware of the absence of a spare wheel and that the cover being provided by Mercedes Benz is for only 3 years. Members can then make their own informed decisions.

Geoff Scott has kindly replied and his response is as follows;

"Dear Baz

The vehicles to which you refer are the Mercedes Benz Sprinter chassis cabs, which do not carry a spare wheel. Instead Mercedes Benz supply a compressor and tyre weld composition to enable a safe recovery to a nearby garage or mobile tyre fitter. It should be pointed out that Mercedes Benz have sensors in all the wheels and have the 'assist' management system which displays various readings on the dash board for the driver and will highlight any issue of deflation in any of the tyres, in addition an audible sound will be heard in the cab requesting the driver pull over.

A lot of companies are moving this way and it is an evolution in car and vehicle design which reduces weight and emissions and increases payload for the user. It is worth pointing out that organisations such as Tesco and Sainsbury's use these vehicles and they are more than satisfied with the lack of spare wheel despite needing to be on the road within an hour

of having a puncture.

In reality these days very few people carry out their own spare wheel changes and prefer to call either mobile fitters or take the vehicle to the nearest repairer.

I note your point concerning what happens to the vehicle outside of the 3 year Mercedes Benz warranty period and would suggest that all owners take out cover such as RAC or AA to cover this eventuality. This is something that Auto-Sleepers will take on board and will advise customers. [N.B. Not all recovery services cater for large motorhomes so ensure you are fully covered for home & abroad - Baz]

I have read the extracts from the AA & RAC which you have enclosed, and I think they are self explanatory. For example the AA clearly states that if the owner does not carry a spare wheel if provided by the original chassis manufacturer, then he is responsible for any consequent recovery costs. They will provide cover where the spare wheel is not provided by the chassis manufacturer.

As I said in my recent e-mail to yourself, what would be extremely useful for us to understand, and maybe you could help with a survey of your members, is the incidence of punctures where the owner has carried out the spare wheel change himself. I would be grateful if you could provide any information from your membership on this matter. [See below - Baz]*

I take on board your comments vis-à-vis formally notifying prospective owners that the vehicle is supplied without a spare wheel and I appreciate your feedback and concerns on this matter.

Once again, thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and as always, if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Geoff Scott C.E.O"

Geoff Scott has responded to further correspondence and the following is an extract:

"Regarding the future policy of Auto-Sleepers on other makes [models] I cannot preclude it although at this stage we have no plans on the drawing board. Suffice to say we are constantly trying to reduce weight and emissions and will continue to do so."

*** Your turn:** If you have any comments, views or experiences - please send them to me and I'll collate and discuss them with Geoff Scott. Please try to keep them short and to the point and send them to baz.wellard@virgin.net or 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants, PO16 7UF; with your membership number. Early response would be appreciated.

Broadway spare wheel:

You may recall that in December 2007 I raised the issue regarding safety when using the spare wheel fixing for the Sigma. Auto~Sleepers responded by developing an adaptor. Auto~Sleepers have since made a further improvement and re-introduced the Peugeot wind-down mechanism for the Broadway (*replacement for the Sigma?*). Interestingly the Broadway, and the Warwick Duo, will be also supplied with an extension to the spare wheel valve in order that the pressure can be checked without owners getting dirty. See also Club Ideas Sheet No. 129!

Recalls:

The following is as a result of correspondence with Auto~Sleepers (*Build numbers are found in the glove box - if in any doubt contact your dealer*):

- **Symbol** - The refrigerator flue pipe extension has not been connected correctly to the upper grill vent, and exhaust fumes could make their way into the habitation area. (*July 2008*). Build numbers affected are: - *P3507; P3373; P3452; P3406 & P3410*. VOSA reference: *RSPV/2008/012*.
- **Duetto** - In extreme circumstances the seat latching system could fail to hold the seat in position. (*April 2008*). There are 552 build numbers and too many to list in this article - so go to the Club website (*don't forget the free service in your local library*) click on technical and then 'recalls & reworks', or send me an SAE. VOSA reference: *RSPV/2008/001*.
- **Nuevo ES** - Weight Upgrade (*August 2007*):- The rear axle bump rubbers have not been changed in order to uprate the chassis to 3500Kg MTPLM and 2000Kg allowable rear axle load. Build numbers affected are: - *J2313; J2373; J2388; J2470; J2500; J2568; J2310; J2325; J2348 & J2430*. There is no VOSA reference as all the vehicles were either at Willersey or at the dealers and should have been corrected.
- **Peugeot X250** - (*August 2007*):- Some Peugeot X250s fitted with alloy wheels have a bolt which is unsuitable for the steel spare. The recall corrects the problem and will also include a wheel brace for removing the alloy wheel bolts. Build numbers affected are:

P2690; P2702; P3360; P2748; P3280; J2666; P3347; J2616; P3317; P2670; P3403; P3387; J2614; P3499; P3466; P2752;

P3396; J2716; P2710; P3198; P2679; P3500; J2621; P2729; P2623; P3385; K1096; P3433; J2662; P2587; J2742; J2688; J2577; K1145; J2770; P3480; P3361; J2589; P3453; P3477; J2771 & P3566. VOSA reference: RSVP/2008/021

- **Ford Transit:**

The high pressure connection to the power assisted steering pump could detach. Should this incur loss of assistance would ensue. Additionally hydraulic fluid could leak onto the exhaust with the attendant risk of fire. No idea of numbers involved so contact your dealer. VOSA reference R/2007/184.

Why not Norway.....?

Where were all the Auto Sleeper Motorhomes during May to August? Barry and I took our beloved Luxor to Scandinavia during this period. 12 weeks in total travelling 5,800 miles and despite seeing hundreds of motorhomes during our travels, we did not see one Auto Sleeper during that time.

What a treat you are all missing. Wonderful scenery, weather as good if not better than the UK, miles and miles of deserted roads and last but not least most people spoke very good English and all were very friendly and helpful.

We crossed the North Sea via the (now defunct) DFDS ferry from Newcastle to Bergen and came back via Calais to Dover.

Yes food is more expensive, but we took plenty of tins, powdered milk, crispbreads, etc., which helped out with the shopping bills, particularly as milk and bread were expensive. There were plenty of shops to enable you to replenish stock as and when needed. Fuel at the time was more or less the same as here, but we did make sure we never let the fuel tank go below half as sometimes garages were few and far between and we did get expert in using payment machines as often the pumps were unmanned.

The sites are about the same as most Club/ Private sites in the UK although we only used sites about a quarter of the time as wild camping, particularly in Norway and Sweden is an accepted practice with plenty of places for recharging water supplies and emptying the loo and greywater.

For a lot of the time it never got dark and I in fact, read past midnight with no need of any lights. We were lucky enough to see the midnight sun in several

places one of which being the North Cap. We did meet several people who had made the long trip up to the Cap, but had not been as fortunate to see this particular phenomena.

At the beginning of the holiday we saw plenty of snow and frozen lakes, but as the weeks went by it became less and less. All the roads were open although we understood that some had only been opened a few weeks since the winter. At one time there were a lot of small ferries over fjords and rivers but over the last few years a lot of these have been replaced with some very splendid bridges or tunnels, most of which had no toll fee. A particular experiences was going through the longest tunnel in the world at 24.5 km long, just outside Flam.

Driving was very easy as there was little traffic, although Barry pointed out that it takes a long time to do a short distance in some parts as you are continuously going up and down mountains or along fairly narrow roads, and of course, constantly stopping to admire the views!

We really would recommend a Scandinavian holiday and cannot wait to go back ourselves maybe in 2010. See you there???

Barry & Jean Brunsten

Some more thought on the Wilton from Mike & Liz Harris

Yes procurement was protracted - 13 months due to Ford being unable to provide a chassis with cab aircon and passenger aid bag.

We have done just over 5,000 miles over 69 nights and averaged 23.9 mpg at an average speed of 31 mph.

The Transit chassis has 1 vehicle starting battery and 1 auxiliary battery. AS then add a leisure battery. The starting battery does just that—starting. The auxiliary battery maintains the alarm, immobiliser, computer, clock etc. and Ford say it is not really a leisure battery, which is why AS fit their own. To this we added a 110 watt solar panel, changed the 80 amp battery for two 110 amp batteries which gives us

more than adequate power for long weekends and run the Eberspacher.

We have little time to watch TV at home and consider it a treat do so so in the van so we have an automatic satellite dish and LCS swing out TV/DVD and we're still within our weight limit - just!

Amongst other things we changed the CD and Noise Killer pads reduce cab noise. A reversing camera is invaluable and a water filter means chlorine - free tea. Call in for one (MH 08EAH)

Under warranty we needed to have the slats under the cushions replaced with solid board, a new window fitted and the pull out kitchen unit refitted using more substantial fastenings.

This 'N That

Paul Warner has recently acquired a Gatcombe and can only find limited information on it. Could anyone provide any tips/ information on this model. Contact him at photoartpaul@tiscali.co.uk.

A member has resigned who has a complete set of Newsletter available. If anyone is interested please contact Jill Berlin our Membership Secretary (details on back page).

Baz and Dorothy Wellard met some old friends, Lyn & Clive Denton (they first met in 1995) at Angie & Andy's Bugatti rally. You may know Clive better as the Punch & Judy Professor, and over a cup of tea Clive said his autobiography entitled 'Right Place Right Time' had been published and would I like to read it. On briefly looking through the 390 pages it was obviously too long to read there and then, but Dorothy, knowing my penchant for autobiographies asked Clive to sign the book and gave it to me as a birthday present.

Having read the book after our French rally I can do no better than use Clive's own footnote to describe it as "*funny, nostalgic, sad, romantic ups & downs of life; a glimpse of times gone forever, viewed through the eyes of a lucky, optimistic soul who was always in the right place at the right time*". If you are interest in the book contact Lyn Denton 34 Charles Knotts Gardens, Southampton SO15 2TF or lyn.denton@bluebottle.com.



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Thanks for the donation

Rob Corcoran's W reg 2000 Symbol and
Phil Gledhill's 1997 Legend are still for sale -
see the details in the November Newsletter.

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