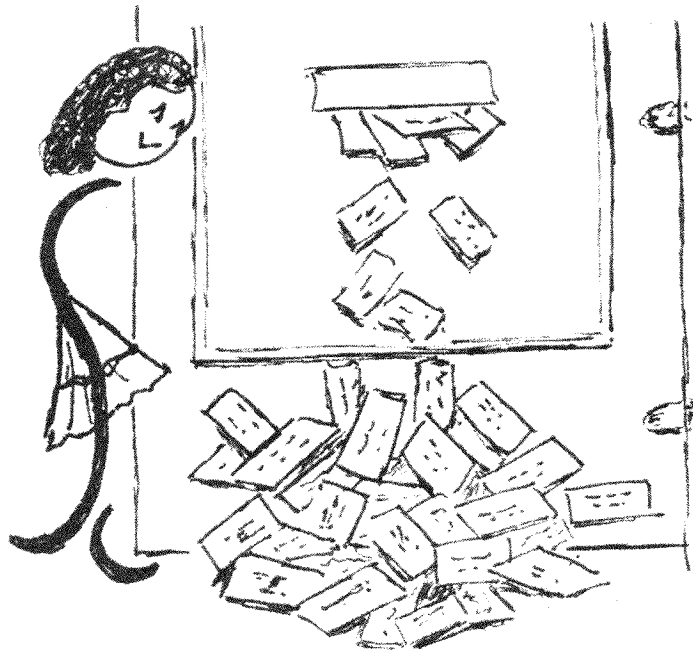


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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

*A Company Limited by Guarantee
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Registered No: 4616969*



**January 1989-2009
Happy Anniversary**

NEWSLETTER 244

January 2009

From the Editor (S)

This is the 3rd anniversary of Chris and I starting to edit the Club Newsletter (following a very long double stint by Harry Henthorne) - our first was for January 2006 - and as since then there will have been well over 600 new member vans in the Club I thought it time to re-introduce ourselves. Firstly however I should mention that after our first year we welcomed a Deputy Editor in Dudley Woodhams supported by his wife Kathleen and for each of the last two years Dudley has taken over complete editorial responsibility for two issues. Dudley plans to do the same for us in 2009.

Chris and I prepare the Newsletter jointly although Chris does most of the actual production work. Jill Bertin our Membership Secretary prepares the address labels each month and sends them to our printer who attaches them to the envelopes for despatch and Neil Rodgers the Rally Co-ordinator prepares the Rally Supplement. The content comes mainly from yourselves the Club Members along with information from the Committee about Club matters.

Chris and I are still relative newcomers to motorhomes (with no previous experience of camping or caravanning), first starting 5 years ago. We live in Cheadle, a small town in North Staffs with our two cats and without our respective adult offspring.

I wouldn't get far on Mastermind in this subject so don't test me but I have read all, from the first, Club Newsletters cover to cover. There are several subjects that re-appear on a regular basis, this is important because of the turnover in Club membership but can also be a turn off for longer term members, for many of whom the face of the Club is the Newsletter. Nevertheless, if you are a newish member and you do have any query at all, do get in touch - it may be a new subject for us all to debate or a timely reminder to return to an important one - and if it isn't I can always put you in touch with someone to provide an answer.

UK Winter Use

There is much information available on winterising your motorhome to prevent damage whilst not in use. Here are a few thoughts on using the motorhome in UK typical freezing conditions. These are just my ideas, they might not work for you and I expect to receive more ideas in response to this piece.

Firstly when you arrive home in winter, whatever the time or weather drain all water tanks, drain the water boiler, open all taps (for single control mixer taps keep the lever in the middle) and remove the shower head. If you have the ability to 'hook up' at home a 500W oil filled electric heater is a safe and economic way to keep the van aired - don't forget to leave the bathroom door open so that it benefits too.

Whatever you do on site you can't guarantee that a pipe won't freeze preventing the flow of water that may not itself have frozen; therefore always keep enough water in a separate container inside the van for a drink, basic wash, flush toilet, etc. Keep the grey

water drain open with a bucket under it if necessary, the idea being that waste water leaves the van before freezing. Keep the fresh water tank full as it is harder for it to freeze. Double the amount of additive in the toilet flush tank to reduce the chance of it freezing.

In winter don't stint, always carry plenty of propane. Butane is no good as it does not produce gas in even cold conditions. Don't forget to put the proper covers on the Fridge Vents - a lot of cold can come that way.

If you have a hook up on site:

- On arrival switch on a 500w oil filled electric heater and leave it on till you depart site, leaving bathroom door ajar so it gets the benefit too.
- On arrival switch on the water boiler and leave it on, this stops it freezing (and if the pump is located in the same space, that as well) and means you have hot water if a drain freezes.

Use the standard heating installation to keep the van at your comfortable temperature when inside

When no hook up:

- Do everything you can to save the leisure battery as it is needed to operate the controls for most gas appliances.
- On arrival switch on the water boiler and leave it on, this stops it freezing (and if the pump is located in the same space, that as well) and means you have hot water if a drain freezes. The boiler is well insulated and takes very little propane to maintain temperature.
- Use lights on a one on, one off basis - do not use multiple tube 'surround type' light installations at all
- Be very thoughtful about using gas or diesel fuelled fan heaters as they discharge the leisure battery
- Don't use hob burners as heaters - unattended they are a fire risk however the oven is useful for getting the temperatures up (and with a little ingenuity many meals can be prepared entirely in the oven). Don't forget that motorhomes have a lot of ventilation built in to make them safe. Don't block vents to stop drafts!

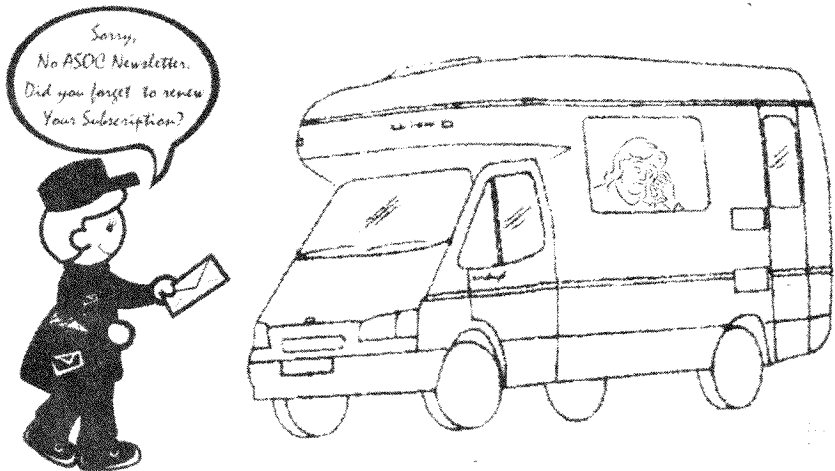
If you have a gas space heater (no electric needed) and two 13kg propane bottles you can stay as warm as you like 24hrs a day for at least 10 days.

Finally if you have a wind out awning don't use it. If anything freezes on it, it increase the thickness of the cover and it can't be rolled back in and you can't go anywhere!!!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Have you forgotten?

This will be your last edition of the ASOC Newsletter unless your subscription has been renewed.



One more thing....

Please remember to include your Club membership number in any correspondence to the Club as it saves time and avoids confusion between members with similar names. Your number is on your Membership Card and is also added to the address label for your Newsletter each month.

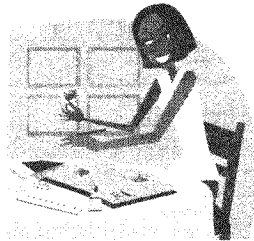
The National Rally

**APRIL 30TH TO MAY 4TH 2009
AT THE NEWARK SHOWGROUND**

Now that the festive season, which I hope you have all enjoyed, is over I hope you will start browsing the 2009 Rally Sheet to organise your motorhome holidays. Also enclosed this month is the application form for the National Rally. Please put the date in your diaries and get off your application forms as soon as possible.

We commence as usual, at mid-day on Thursday. Hobbyists can arrive from 9 am to set up. Envelopes will be available as normal from the Cedric Ford Pavilion from 2 pm. The meal on Thursday is at 6.30 pm, followed by the Quiz. The proceeds from this go towards the chosen charity so if as many members as possible come on Thursday it will boost the funds.

The Stuart Goodwin Pavilion will open at 10 am on Friday; visit the hobby tables and maybe purchase items on offer, you can also enjoy a chat and a cup of coffee with friends. **There are a few vacant tables so anyone interested in showing their hobby please get in touch with Jim Henwood Tel: 01642 805237. Rita Tubb Tel: 023 8026 7294 is hoping to receive entries for the photographic competition which will be on display in the Stuart Goodwin,**



Friday afternoon is Autosleeper's day and this year the Question & Answer session will be in the Cedric Ford. Please note there will be no Craft Classes on Friday or Saturday afternoon. There will be a meal available at lunchtime, but the evening will be the **20th Anniversary Celebration** starting at 7 pm with the welcome speech and ending with the Cake Auction, the proceeds of which also go to the charity.

Saturday and Sunday will be as usual, with the A.G.M. followed by the Open Forum, with the Dinner Dance and raffle in the evening. The entertainment will be by the Swing Commanders, a group seen and enjoyed by many members. The Stuart Goodwin will again be open on Saturday afternoon.

The Salvation Army Service will commence at 10.30 am on Sunday in the Cendric Ford, followed by coffee and the Carvery at approximately 1 pm. There will be **ONE CARD CLASS AND ONE BEADING CLASS** commencing at 2 pm. It will have to be first applicants who are successful. Forms for these classes will go out with the acknowledgements of your rally applications.

On Sunday evening we have Nigel 'Boy' Syers. I have not heard him but he has been highly recommended by several members who heard him at Norwich.

I am assured by Brownhills that they will again provide transport and cream teas for anyone wishing to visit their showrooms on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Weather permitting I hope there will again be the traditional fun Boules, if not the Stuart Goodwin will be open.

After a rather frightening experience at the Brewood Rally when a car burst into flames, it really brought home the reason why we park our motorhomes at least 20 ft. apart. If you have access to the web go onto the Club Website and click on 'Rallies'; to read the report.

Anyone wishing to bring a car to the National Rally please contact me at 15 Langley Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton WV3 7JN or ring 01902 332105 so that I can arrange a suitable parking area. **CARS WILL NOT BE PARKED BETWEEN THE MOTORHOMES.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Sub Committee members, they too work hard to put on a good rally and we hope you enjoy it.

Nora Venables

Welcome to New Members



Martin & Christine Yardley	Ilford	Nuevo
Roger Theobald & Do Rhodes	Southport	Symbol
David & June Williams	Wetherby	Nuevo
John & Penny Kearns	Reading	Nuevo
Colin & Elizabeth Davies	Cowbridge	Rambler
Dave Williams & Sue Sutton	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Executive
Jo Kerslake & Mike Hobson	Doncaster	Zeta
Marilyn & Brian Hendy	Fishbourne	Executive
Barbara Glassey	Castletown	Mezan
Eric & Margaret Thornton	Oxford	Nuevo
Richie Conway & Bruna Maxia	London	Trident
Siân Sweeney & Peter Cobley	Worcester	Trident
Dave & Jenny Beasley	Torquay	Symphony
Bill & Chris Steel	Chesterfield	Clubman

Our Deputy Editor Dudley comments on the e-newsletter: "Generally from my end there does not appear to be any *[problems with]* distribution and apart from the unavoidable fact that it does not flow quite as well as the paper version because that's what it was designed for I don't think I have any problem with it, **EXCEPT** that it's content should be **identical** to the paper version. If you have extras like photos in this edition they should be exhibited on the web site where everybody can access them or not, but it is their choice, the receivers of electronic newsletters should not be seen to be privileged. As you can gather I feel quite strongly about that which means these extras should either be on the web site only, or completely left out."

Dudley refers to some extra photographs of the new models supplied by Auto-Sleepers that for space reasons couldn't be included in the paper version of the newsletter but that I added into the electronic version.

Rally News

Burnham-on-Sea

Barbara & Al Buckett

We are on our journey home from the Burnham Rally. This is the first year we have been able to attend this event and although the weather was bad (we had to be towed off our pitch by a tractor) the rain did hold off for the fireworks on Sunday and then again for the carnival on Monday.

The beauty of this Club is that we have made some very good friends, some of which we met again at this rally. It was also good to see Cedric on form at the centre of things, making us all laugh, of course supported as always by Maureen.

Ivor and Sheila were a big help with advice for getting on and off our pitch, Linda and Brian obviously spend all year wheeling and dealing with the owners of the venue and the camping supplies shop for discounts, preparing the quizzes and gathering the raffle prizes. Planning the whole thing to make it a full and fun rally.

It was our Ruby Wedding Anniversary whilst we were there and we couldn't have wished for a better way to spend it.

Thank you to everyone.

And from Brian and Linda Ellis

We would like to say a big thank you to all who attended this rally, especially to Ivor and Sheila who marshalled for us and Mo and Cedric for their help with the raffle and the coach. My thanks to you all for your help, tolerance and understanding with the alternate parking arrangements due to the water. We had one or two problems, but true to Club spirit, there was always someone to lend a hand. For us, there were many familiar faces although we couldn't put names to them all. There were also new members who I hope felt welcome and made new

acquaintances. Remember, a stranger is just a friend you have yet to meet - and they don't come much stranger than our crowd!!

As for the Burnham Carnival Rally 2009, you will be pleased to know that the site manager assures me that they intend to continue with the touring section and will be adding drainage and probably additional hard standings for next year.

Incidentally if you want an official Carnival DVD please contact Mrs Paul on 01278 784607, price £16 + £1.99 post and packaging.

Our First Rally

David and Marilyn Leal

In September on the channel ferry we met 2 couples with Autosleepers who were on their way to France for the rally at Chinon. They so impressed us with their enthusiasm that we decided that we should join the Club.

When we received our first newsletter we saw the advert for the Burnham on Sea rally which sounded exciting! We managed to get the 64th place out of 65, were we lucky or what!

The forecast for the weekend was awful! But undeterred we set off on the Friday in the sunshine. Everyone was very helpful and settled us in the mud and on the road. The trip to Clarks Village on the Saturday was very enjoyable and we even managed to sit in sun for some lunch.

Sunday was great weather for ducks but we were lucky that it stopped for the fireworks in the evening and started again just as we were walking back to the van.

The wind and rain overnight were exciting, but we are glad we stayed for the coffee morning and raffle on Monday morning and of course the answers to the quiz, we are now experts on sweets! The rain stopped in the afternoon and luckily stayed dry for the evening carnival on the Monday night which has to be seen to be believed – 2 hours and 97 floats – amazing!

Everyone was very friendly and helpful and we hope to experience more rallies during next year.

Ulverston

Don Bland (with comments from the Editors)

I have an announcement to make! (*sorry but you had to be there*) from the third successful Ulverston Rally.

It seems from all the comments that a great time was had by all and congratulations to Dave Hollingsworth for winning the 'Best Dressed (or perhaps we should say 'costumed') Male' in the towns competition. Here he is resplendent as 'Fagin'.

The wonderful sunny Sunday (*where the walk was the intended mileage and not Don's usual interpretation of it!*) more than made up for the foggy Saturday (*have you ever seen fireworks in a fog....*) and I won't even mention Thursday and Friday.

The meal, the raffle, the games and the visiting speaker all made for a great rally but most of all the members who attended were the best.

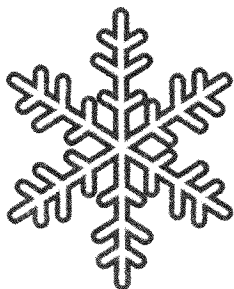


Stone

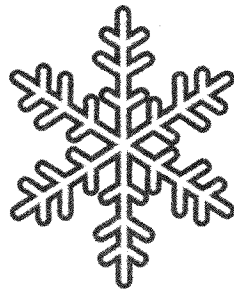
Don Bland

With regard to a wonderful rally recently held in Stone, I was surprised that nobody had written about the great location, Club House and the Food & Drink Festival. The writer of many rally reflections was a rally marshall. Well done to all concerned.

Thank you Don, it was said to be a 'belter' of a rally and we're glad everyone enjoyed it. Special thanks too to Liz Irvin for helping us out.



January 2009
Rally Supplement.



A Happy New Year to all members.

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

*****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/unsucessful 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.

Friday, 26th June to Monday 6th July 2009. (10 nights) Camping Rudesheim am Rhein, Rudesheim, Germany.

Rally starts and ends at noon. Marshalls: Liz Irvin assisted by Peter Brown and Chris Mawdsley. Members *must book for the full 10 nights*. Rally fee £15 (non refundable) to be sent with rally slip and SAE for reply, to Mrs E Irvin, 43 School Lane, Kirk Ella, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU10 7NP. Cheques payable to E. Irvin. Tel. No. 01482 658345. E-mail irvin@irvin.karoo.co.uk Site Fees expected to be €24.30 per night for 2 adults, €19.00 for 1 person, inclusive of electricity 10 amps. Dogs €3.00. Showers €1.00 supplement.

The site is easy walking along the riverside to Rudesheim. For local attractions please see November newsletter. I plan to organise an evening Rhine in Flames cruise on Saturday 4th July, including a 2 course dinner (traditional German main course with meat, supplements and dessert) estimated €50.50 per person. I will need to know numbers for the cruise as I am now aware of another Rally at the campsite and places may be limited so please confirm your interest in the cruise with your application. A deposit for the cruise booking may be required in advance of the rally. You will be expected to make your own arrangements for travel and insurance.

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

THIS RALLY IS NOW FULLY BOOKED.

*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.

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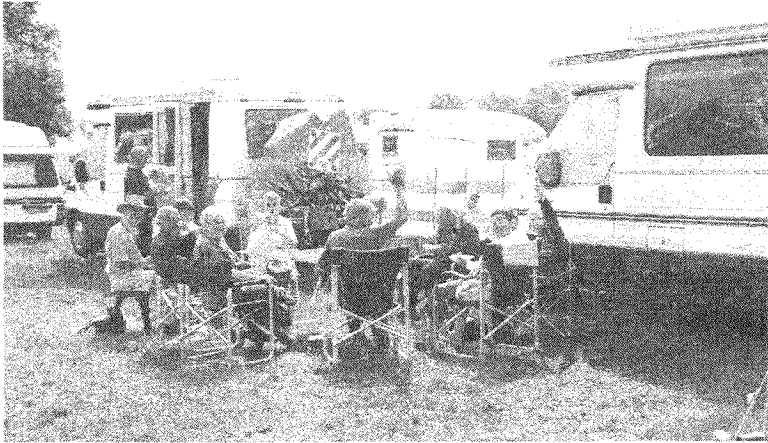
Electricity: Yes No Evening meal : Yes No

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

.....
Full payment MUST accompany this slip-cheques payable to the marshal.
POST FORM TO REACH MARSHAL 14 DAYS BEFORE EVENT,if possible.
Enclose a SAE if confirmation is required..

Shepton Mallett ***Bobbie & Beatrice Gordon***

In September every year we go to The Bath and West Showground in Shepton Mallett for the Motorhome Show and always stay with the Autosleeper Club. We have always received a very warm welcome and we would just like to share with you Jan, Vic and the gang (not forgetting Irene) enjoying themselves in the sunshine.(2008)



Bobbie and I would like to wish everyone a prosperous New Year.

Royal Windsor Racecourse Rally 2009 ***Valerie & Robin Gardner***

We have booked the Royal Windsor Racecourse for a rally from Tuesday 14th to Sunday 19th July 2009. There are many attractions in the area including Windsor and Eton towns, Windsor Castle, Eton College. See a show at the New Theatre, ride in the Windsor Wheel or have a swim at the Windsor Leisure Centre. Take a boat ride from the racecourse, a trip on an open top bus or a horse and carriage ride around the town. Walk by the Thames or in Windsor Great Park (which includes Saville Gardens). Runnymede (where King John put his seal to the Magna Carta), Hampton Court and Legoland are but a short journey

from the town centre plus frequent trains to London Paddington and/or Waterloo.

The site is a fixed fee so the site fee we charge members is dependent on the numbers attending. We did a mini presentation at the Burnham Rally where lots of members showed interest, so it looks like it's going to be a popular rally.

So that we can work out the approximate fees could anyone interested please contact us by phone or letter ASAP. Marangu, 13 Carrington Avenue, Flackwell Heath, Buckinghamshire HP10 9AL Tel: 01628 522363.

This is not a confirmed booking, which will have to be made in the normal way, so see the May edition of the Newsletter.

Thank you

They say things tend to come in threes, well we would also like to say a big thank you for all the get well cards, phone calls and messages we have received since the start of our problems.

In the early hours of 30th October Ottery St Mary suffered severe flooding as a result of freak weather conditions. Unfortunately, we were one of the houses badly hit and the whole of our ground floor was rapidly immersed in 18 inches of filthy, contaminated flood water. To make matters worse our car and new Auto-Sleeper had to be written off as a result of the flooding, together with virtually all of our possessions downstairs!!

As a result we have had to leave our house for around 5-6 months to allow drying out before the remedial building work can be carried out. BUT even worse was to follow.... Alan had been feeling unwell for several days and visited his GP 2 days before the floods when blood tests were taken. As a result of these tests respiratory and cardiac problems were detected; so with Pauline up to her knees in mud Alan was whisked off to hospital by emergency ambulance!!

Alan spent 10 days in hospital and heart problems have been detected,

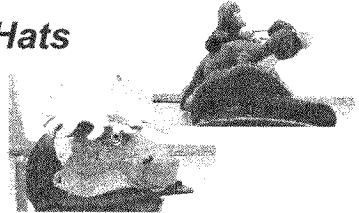
though regrettably the doctors can offer no real explanation as to why. Further tests are planned and at the moment Alan has been prescribed a cocktail of 8 tablets a day.

We are currently staying in a static caravan at Kennford International Touring Park, we are unable to attend rallies until another van becomes available and to top it all we have had to cancel our Cruise to the Caribbean.

But once again, thank you all and best wishes.

Alan & Pauline Haydon

The Great Sale of the Funny Hats **Robin Gardner**



Over 10 years ago Cedric Jones started to wear his funny hats to ASOC rallies and these have become his trade mark during the years.

Creations made by his wife Maureen have raised many smiles and we have now come to expect some new creation at each gathering, which of course has increased the collection and taken up more space at *Castle Jones* with redundant hats getting buried by new models. In fact one room in the West Tower has been dedicated to *Funny Hats* but it is now overflowing into the passage. A crisis was looming in the Jones household and the straw that broke the camels back, or should I say the hat finally blocked the passage; Mo had had enough and put her foot down with a firm hand!!

"CEDRIC" she cried "You have to do something about this!" "What's the problem my love?" said our hero. "Don't you 'my love' me...it's either them, you or me; one will have to go!!" "Not my lovely collection of hats??" bewailed an emotional Cedric, but it was a rhetorical question; no way could Mo go (Cedric knew when he was on to a good thing) so the hats would go. "AND if you don't get rid of some of them NOW, I demand we move to a bigger house in Stockport."

That galvanised Cedric into action; he knew when he was beaten. But how was he going to get rid of them, in a skip? Cedric knew all about skips and what went into them! Then, like a bolt of lightning an idea - why not sell them? But where? A second bolt struck, why not at the next rally? Then a third, why not have an auction? Who said lightning doesn't strike twice.

So it was on 8th November, on a wet and windy evening, our intrepid 'Man of Many Hats' and 'Auctioneer in Chief' held *The Grand Sale of Funny Hats Auction - 2008*. A number of us acted as mannequins and paraded up and down the *Dog Walk* (as Roy Loveys preferred to call it!) and with tears in his eyes sold the first hat for £10 before the bidding had even started. After that bidding was brisk with some hats making double figures and some being bought by first time ralliers, who hadn't a clue about Cedric and his hats - nice to know they're as mad as the rest of us.

I expect you'll now see a lot of Cedric *Look A likes* at rallies.

And not only was the evening great fun, but it raised **£100.01** which will go to their local Marie Curie hospice. So very well done to Maureen and Cedric from all of us who were at the auction, what a great way to support a local charity and the evening will be a talking point for some time to come.

Wouldn't start that journey from here!

Rob Corcoran, Skye

Living in the far north-west of Scotland has many advantages and as I type I can see the finest mountain range in Europe, the air is fresh and the sun is shining. But if you seek a warmer climate - using your mobile accommodation (an AS Symbol) - the disadvantage is a 750 mile trek to the south coast of England for a ferry or a tunnel.

Now Elizabeth doesn't do sea journeys, so Eurotunnel it has to be. Since she wanted to tour

Brittany that meant a 300 mile journey down from Calais instead of a nice 6 hour cruise to Roscoff. But as a philosopher once said "It can be better to travel than to arrive".

It is certainly true of travelling down Europe on the older roads with beautiful scenery, ancient architecture and - okay I'm being honest here - a patisserie in every village! What can be better than choosing a fabulous pastry creation

to be enjoyed in your vehicle with your favourite freshly brewed coffee?

So we were off down the old N1, the original "Route Nationale". Satnav users should note that it starts as the N1 but then it becomes the D901, then the D1001! It's all due to the French government deciding that central ("Nationale") responsibility for certain roads should be moved to regional ("Departmentale") responsibility BUT it's up to the regions when they do it.....

Starting with a stay near Caen – actually next to the Pegasus Bridge where D-Day started in 1944, Les Hautes Coutures is a lovely site with heated pool, restaurant and bar. There is a Boulanger/Pâtisier near this site for the early morning croissants too!

It was then less than 100 miles to St Malo for our first site in Brittany, though calling at Mont St Michel on the way is an absolute must. There is a massive car park outside the walls with a specified motorhome parking area where I reckon there were around 100 of us – it's a busy place, probably to be avoided in July/August.

Le P'tit Bois was our site just a couple of miles from St Malo, with good facilities including another fabulous outdoor pool. We drove into St Malo the following morning and soon found a motorhome friendly car park. We are well

catered for in France, with clear signs to suitable (i.e. no height barrier) car parks. The old town walls give you panoramic views of the bay with its small islands and stunning sandy beaches. It has plenty of history although 80% of the buildings have been re-built in the old style after the devastation of the war.

St Malo sits on the east side of the Rance and there is a really interesting visitor centre at the tidal barrage which provides the crossing to Dinard on the other side. Further down the river is ancient Dinan with its beautiful timber framed and multi-coloured buildings.

We moved along the north coast to the quiet L'Abri Côtier site north of St Brieuc next. The town did not impress as we drove through so we only stayed one night, but there is a fabulous beach a short walk from this site – the local BMW dealer was doing a Mini Adventure the evening we strolled down there!

As we didn't have enough time to make it to the far west of Brittany we headed south to Carnac with its truly awesome standing stones or "menhirs" (hundreds of them!). Elizabeth reckons it's an ancient work experience scheme as there's no other explanation for them.

Carnac-Plage is the seaside bit of the town and the site we chose there was Les Menhirs – very smart, though costing 50% more

than the other sites. Some facilities were closing down as it got later in September but it was a short walk to the long beach, shops and restaurants.

I should report at this point that our consumption of croissants (breakfast), patisseries (elevenes) and baguettes (lunch) was right up to par. As long as I had the occasional Tarte au Citron I was happy but Elizabeth reckoned that we had polished off 10(!) different types of the Patissier's art by this stage.

We needed to get back to central Brittany for Saturday night as a traditional dance – called a Fest-Noz – was on in Pontivy, and we were keen to get to one. If you get the chance, go! Just watch or if you feel brave, join in – it's continuous circle dancing with sometimes simple, sometimes complex footwork. Pontivy's municipal site is close to the pleasant town centre, next to Napoleon's canal that links Nantes and Brest.

Our next stop, effectively heading back to Calais, was Rennes, the capital city of Brittany. It was a quiet Sunday as we followed the historic trail around the older parts of the city and we joined crowds of Bretons streaming into one of the beautiful parks after lunch. The municipal site is in a large sports field area close to the city.

North-east of Rennes, also in the homeward direction, is Fougères

and you are still just in Brittany here. What an amazing castle, considered to be the finest fortification in France. It's on part of a really well thought out historical walk too, so you get to see the best of the old town as well. We stayed at our third municipal site here, just a mile walk from the centre – and even closer to the Boulangerie which opened at 6am every morning!

On our way back north we needed to do two things – see the Bayeux Tapestry and take Alfie Westie for his Pet Passport check (24 hours before Channel crossing). So we travelled up, after breakfast on fresh croissants of course, to Bayeux and its municipal site very close to the centre.

We were able to walk to the Tapestry Museum and it's fascinating to view this amazing record of William the Conqueror's (prior to this he was actually William the B*****d!) story.

Bayeux's more recent history is very much tied up with the Second World War, especially the D-Day landings, and we visited the museum dedicated to this major event. It's as graphic as the Tapestry, both depicting battles nine hundred years apart – though it's particularly poignant in its setting next to one of the many War Cemeteries.

Leaving Bayeux we took the coast road towards Ouistreham/Caen

and of course you are looking out onto the beaches – Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha – where all the action took place. So beautiful, so peaceful on a warm sunny day.

We headed back to Les Hautes Coutures site via the Vet's in Ouireham and there, we started ringing Eurotunnel. You see, the fire had taken place after we travelled over and we didn't know if we would get back. There were no straight answers from them so we decided to head to Calais to check the situation face-to-face.

Seems Eurotunnel had managed to frighten everyone off and though we were due to travel the following morning we were offered a place on that evening's 8pm train, with just an hour to wait (and spend our last bits of euro small change).

We got to the Folkestone CC site that evening which gave us an extra hour or two for the journey home the following morning. Just another 750 miles to go!

It was a total of 2,500 miles, in 2 weeks, and we managed 8 days in Brittany. But the weather was wonderful, usually round 20C and it was a good taster. Sites were generally very good and though we hadn't planned on using "municipals" they were always well positioned and decent quality. Our other sites came from one of the Club schemes – Freedom Camping, which gives you a guaranteed discounted price for the cost of the guide book.

Can't wait to get back, if only for another Tarte au Citron or fresh croissants for breakfast. Must dash, it's haggis for tea. Cheery!

Technical Group & Website

Baz Wellard

Chairman, Technical Group & Webmaster



Insurance: The 'traditional seven-day' period for production of an insurance policy may no longer be an automatic right. It could therefore be worthwhile checking that your insurance is correctly registered by going to www.askmid.com - which is what the Police will do if you're stopped and you do not have your certificate with you. In one reported case the Police impounded a motorhome for non-compliance. If you're not on the database contact your insurance company.

X250 – Is there a resolution?

The MMM have reported that:- Peugeot's Public Relations Manager, Ian Sedgwick, has made the following statement on behalf of Peugeot:- *"We have recently released a software download which improves the engine's 'torque' output*

at lower revs. *This improves the take up of drive but if it does not resolve the issue fully, a new lower reverse gear is also available*". I have reported the preceding before but what is new, and welcome, is that he continues by stating that *"Both the above upgrades are covered by the vehicle's warranty and any customer with a concern should contact their nearest Peugeot dealership"*. Although this is not strictly a re-call situation - a number that may help is the Recall Helpline 0845 2001234.

Ideas Sheets:

A further 4 Ideas Sheets have been approved. For copies please send an SAE to:-18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants, PO16 7UF. Please quote your membership number.

No. 172	Doubling the available auxiliary battery in a Duetto
No. 174	Storage ideas for a Duetto
No. 175	Raised levelling when on site
No. 176	Improvement to a Duetto's rear vision

Spare wheels:

I have collated the result of the spare wheel survey in last month's Newsletter and these have been sent to Geoff Scott, Auto-Sleeper Chief Executive, for consideration and discussion. I have to report that the response was very poor - with only 10 being received! Of those 8 definitely wanted a spare wheel whilst 2 were content to accept a sealant system. It did reveal, however, that VW (*Sandhurst*) are also being sold without a spare wheel! I will feedback any developments in due course.

Club's technical library:

Bill Beatty, who has now left the Club, has kindly donated the following technical books to the Club's library: - Talbot Express "up to 1991" and "from 1992 onwards". If you wish to borrow any of the Club's books, please contact me. If you have any manuals or other literature that would be useful for the Club, perhaps you could send them to me, please?

Overweight?

Geoff Scott (CE Auto-Sleepers) has kindly advised me that VOSA (Vehicle & Operator Services Agency) will be targeting caravan/motorhomes owners in 2009 with respect to weights. They did stress that at this stage it is purely advisory and not a revenue raising opportunity:

VOSA currently has around 12 automatic cameras on motorways (sensors are in the roads) that measure a vehicle's weight. This is linked directly to DVLA to compare a vehicles actual weight compared with that permitted. Vehicles then could be pulled in by VOSA. One to reduce the weight or in extreme cases impound the vehicle.

VOSA are planning more automatic cameras as well as increasing the number of mobile units out on the road.

VOSA are trying to encourage drivers to get their vehicles weighed, purely in an advisory role. However, they did stress if they found the vehicle to be overweight and "dangerous" they would impound the vehicle.

VOSA believe that any motorhome carrying a scooter/motorcycle on the rear will need to have a twin axle on the rear.

And finally:

There may be a delay in responding to your requests and enquiries - please be patient and I will reply as soon as I can. However, should you have any urgent matters, and do not receive an answer in the time scale you wish; then Charles Trevelyan has very kindly agreed you can contact the Service Centre on 01386 853511.

WANTED EXCHANGE

AS Talisman or similar in exchange for 1993 AS Harmony 1.9 diesel plus cash. The Harmony is in good condition throughout and done 46,000 miles. **Contact Neil or Shona 01332 660160 (Derby) or 07805 328507 (mobile).**



AS Legend Ford 2.5 Turbo diesel. Dec97
Excellent Condition
38,000 miles. Taxed and Tested. Alarm, central locking, cd, radio,

cassette. New tyres, new cambelt & service. New brake discs & pads. Top box and Tow Bar. Air suspension. **£17,995 ono (part ex. Considered)**
Contact Rae & Philip Gledhill 01484 654180 or 07831 456689

(Hereford).

RAVENNA 1999 – Ford Transit 2.4 turbo, 38,000 miles. MOT to July 2009. 4 berth L shaped lounge. Cycle rack, wind out awning, full cooker, three way fridge, gas and electric heating and hot water. Radio and CD player, new leisure battery and charger. Good clean condition, no pets or smokers. **£17,750.**
Contact David Leal 01903 205519 or email david.leal@ntlworld.com

Taylor-made insulated windscreen cover with fold down front for VW T4 **£30.**
Tubular table leg & folding tripod base (to use table out side) **£12.** **Contact J Hasling 01489 574115 (Fareham)**

Thanks for the donation

VW Sandhurst coachbuilt August 07. 2.5 tdi 174 ps 6 speed 2,500 miles. Alloy wheels, swivel cab seats, remote cab locking. Oven, hob, fridge, heating, TV, radio, separate shower cubicle. Fiamma awning. Always kept in secure storage. Taxed to July 09 immaculate. Illness causes change of plans **£35,500.**
Contact Jane Pratt 01432 340510

Erde galv camping trailer 4x3 approx, with cover as new only done 150 miles **£100.00 Contact Mike Shelton on 01159 744745 (Notts)**

16 pc dinner/tea set blue. Never used. From AS Talisman. **Offers. Contact Alan Upston 023 9251 3655 (Gosport)**

Pescara Dec 99 4 berth rear kitchen 42,000 miles. FSH. 1.9 diesel. CAM belt replaced spring 06 at 34,500 miles. New Fiamma awning, solar panel fitted autumn 07. Bike rack, Permanent LPG cylinders with external filler. Non-smoker, no pets **£16,999.** **Contact Jeanne Hall 01773 778016**

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