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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: 4618969*



I guess it's Spring then....

NEWSLETTER 260

May 2010

From the Editor (S)

Welcome to the May issue of the Club's Newsletter. Please don't forget that whilst Chris and I are producing the June issue, Dudley Woodhams is producing July and August and that all input for those issues should be sent to him. His post and e-mail addresses are on the last page.

I'm hoping to get this issue in the post a couple of days early so that those attending the National Rally will have it before they arrive and may be able to hand rally slips directly to rally marshals; many of whom are attending the rally.

Our Membership Secretary circulates an up to date list of Club members to the Committee each month. From it I extract the list of new members that we try to include in the Newsletter each month. I often peruse it to see if there are any interesting trends and I used it to produce the list of models owned by members that I included in last months Newsletter. This month I noticed that there are a significant number of members who live in our county of Staffordshire and I was pleasantly surprised to note the number of those who live in and near our town of Cheadle!

I'm sure you will all be pleased to see this issue of the Newsletter doesn't have any pieces written by me so THANK YOU to all who have put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard).

As we have a little space left I'll let you know we have never had a problem with smells from the Grey Water Tank. I'm certain that's because we never drain dishwashing water with all the particles of food and grease it contains into it and that a couple of times a year I fill the tank with clean water that is immediately drained out.

Hope to see a lot of you at the National

Peter and Chris

MIKE CROUCH MANAGING DIRECTOR THE AUTO-SLEEPER GROUP



Mike has spent his lifetime employed in the motorhome industry, only ever having one job interview and never needing to write a CV.

He joined an infant Marquis Motorhomes business in 1979 as the third full-time employee, having previously worked part-time for the company.

At Marquis he helped construct the foundations upon which today's multi branch dealership is built. His early responsibility was to successfully develop motorhome rental from which evolved the Marquis retail business that Mike headed as Sales Director from 1988.

In the millennium year, Marquis was joined by Auto-Sleepers, to form The Auto-Sleeper Group. As newly appointed Managing Director of Marquis, Mike spearheaded the further expansion of the retail division doubling the turnover and number of outlets. In 2005, The Auto-Sleeper Group was sold to SEA (Italy) and became part of the third largest motorhome group in Europe.

In June 2009, Mike and Geoff Scott became equal partners in a successful management buyout of The Auto-Sleeper Group, restoring the business to private British ownership. Mike now operates as The Auto-Sleeper Group Managing Director, dividing his time more or less equally between Marquis and Auto-Sleepers.

Whilst being an experienced retailer, Mike is no stranger to manufacturing having established firm working relationships with all the leading UK motorhome manufacturers and is responsible

for conceiving several popular models. He has a passion for enhanced special edition products, pioneering the one price, one specification policy. His most treasured trophy is the 2004 Motorhome of The Year award for the Marquis Starblazer Majestic, originally designed by Mike and built by Autocruise CH Ltd, that is the only dealer special edition model to ever win such a prestigious award. The current Mercedes County range of motorhomes built by Auto-Sleepers, was significantly influenced by Mike who now sees many exciting future opportunities with Auto-Sleepers.

Mike embraces his job as a 'way of life' and he describes his role and responsibilities as merely to 'keep the wheels turning'. However, he is a 24/7 individual demonstrating a passionate drive and infectious enthusiasm with a strong hands-on approach to business.

He lives in Hampshire, has been married to Dawn for 20 years and has twin 17 year old children; he describes himself as a veteran sportsman but as a qualified cricket coach, spends many hours developing young colt cricketers at his local club. As a Portsmouth FC supporter he showed true emotion when the team won the FA Cup in 2007 but on recent form has given up talking about football for this season!

Mike is a representative on the The NCC Motorhome Strategy Committee that regularly meets to help steer the industry forward and has made several presentations on various topics.

In his capacity as Managing Director of The Auto-Sleeper Group, Mike is looking forward to attending his inaugural ASOC National Rally on Saturday May 1st and will be attending the evening dinner event.

Russell Langley
Auto-Sleepers

Emissions and Bio Fuel

I regret that you will not see me on many Rallies as my prime interest is in my Motor Cruiser with the van in use out of the boating season.

With the loss of rebated red diesel to the marine industry (I know how sorry all you non sailors are....) and the London Emission Zone, I have an interest in running both hobbies as economically as possible.

My yacht club has recently hosted a seminar on the use and supply of Bio Diesel. The principal speaker represented a large commercial company who are closely associated with the eco side of Tesco.

Many suppliers of bio diesel will no doubt disagree with some of the following but my local village garage that supplied bio diesel to the local farmers has had to clean his tanks when they turned to sludge.

Most engines manufactured after 2001 will happily run on Bio fuel or a percentage mixed with mineral diesel, however, filters will have to be changed at shorter intervals due to the high rate at which water is absorbed. Bio fuel being vegetable will absorb half its own weight in water unlike diesel where the water sinks to the bottom of the tank and can be filtered out by an agglomerator. In a boat or campervan which, unlike a commercial vehicle, possibly sits idle for long periods, the main ingress of water is through condensation inside the fuel tank and in boats which can carry several hundreds of litres this means that a high percentage of Bio fuel is a non starter. Commercial fleets running on Bio fuel are, I understand, fitted with pressurised tanks to ensure that no water from condensation or the atmosphere can contaminate the fuel. It was also not recommended to run pre 2001 engines on high percentages of Bio as they relied on a large amount of synthetic pipes, seals and gaskets which are attacked by Bio fuel causing major problems.

Perhaps our members can comment if they are using high proportions of bio fuel with or without problems. In the meantime I am going to continue to run my boat on Red Diesel and pay the higher rate of duty, or perhaps you may see me turn up on more rallies.

Dennis Crabbe

Increasing the Payload

Further to Peter's brief paragraph on increasing the payload of your motorhome, I have just been through the procedure as I realised that the spare payload available on our Talisman was minimal. I contacted a company called SvTech Ltd in Lancashire (Tel. 01772 621800 01772 621800) and they, after checking the chassis number confirmed that my 'X' Reg 320 MWB chassis was ok to be upgraded to 3500kg with no modifications. They then issued a Converters Plate (sticky label) to be fixed to the 'B' post of the cab.

This was not the end of the story though as I had to submit a form (VTG10) to VOSA, Swansea and they then issued a *Design Weight Certificate* after contacting SvTech and agreeing all was correct. The plate under the bonnet still says 3200Kg, but only a Peugeot agent is allowed to change that, so I will consider it "job done" with my (quite expensive) certificates and sticky label !

A last thought, our van doesn't ride on the bump stops and it handles well enough for me without air suspension. It does have two leaf springs on the rear axle where I believe some vans only have one? Perhaps this is a pointer towards the fact that my upgrade was a paper exercise only?

I am however pleased to now be legal for up to 3500kg. Note that if you carry extra passengers (even without seatbelts on an older van) this could also take you over the design weight.

The costs incurred for this exercise were:

- 1 £346.63 to SvTech, I thought that this included the necessary alterations to the vehicle and was somewhat miffed to find that none were needed. An expensive piece of paper!
- 2 £15.00 to VOSA
- 3 £12.00 for weighbridge ticket. This was not eventually asked for but my earlier enquiry indicated that it would be required.

I was also advised that an inspection at the VOSA workshops would be required, this also not needed. So you can see that this is an exercise not to be undertaken lightly. The VOSA engineer said that they also considered the rating of the tyres and the braking capacity, not just the back axle/suspension system when issuing the *Design Weight Certificate*. So, if you are thinking of an upgrade, I suggest you consider well and if you are looking at new vans, check out the payload.

Harry Emblen

Good service!

We have received good service from couple of companies. Firstly, Garmin who readily replaced our satnav with another upgraded model. All this with just a letter to their UK office and a few emails. The whole process from first letter to the new unit arriving took just over a week! Garmin are on the web at www.garmin.com.

Secondly, 'That Leisure' - contact details 0113 253 7068, email sales@that-leisure-company.co.uk. We ordered the new Oyster Caro satellite system at the Birmingham show and were recommended to 'That Leisure' for supply and installation. Andy, their technician, arrived late in the afternoon and worked through very unsettled weather to install the system. He worked late into the evening and completed the job early the next morning to fit the television in the bulkhead behind the drivers' seat using the fitting supplied by AS. The quality of the installation was excellent.

It is good to be able recommend these two companies to members.

Colin Geatrell

Obituary

Sadly I have to report the passing of my husband Harry Briars-Filby on March 16th 2010 aged 83. He is now at peace and out of pain. Many members will remember him especially at the National Rally Newark. Also he still wanted to be part of the Rally last year at St.Ives and attended as much as physically possible. He was looking forward to this year but it is not to be. Can I thank everyone who has already written or e-mailed me for their kind thoughts. I look forward to seeing everyone at Newark this year and I know Harry will be with us in spirit.

Julia Briars-Filby

JABBA would have been pleased!

I started caravanning in 1972 and loved every minute of it. However, it was during a holiday at our daughter's holiday home in the South of France, that we noticed that motorhomes seemed to be more popular than caravans, by a ratio of about 40 to 1. I can remember thinking "what do they know that I don't?" This led to our first motorhome, an Autocruise Starlet 2, a Marquis Special Edition based on the Starburst. It was a low profile coach built on a long wheel base Peugeot Boxer and we loved it. At an overall length of 20 foot, we found it great to live in, but a little difficult when it came to finding parking spots, especially in the quieter, out of the way places we like to visit.

A dear friend and colleague, John Barrett, who had shared our pass time for many years had already made the switch to a motorhome and was a staunch Auto Sleeper fan. He was a remarkable man, one of those people who could absorb facts and information easily and could talk knowledgeably about almost any subject. John unfortunately died from Leukaemia before we could motorhome together but at least he was aware that I had ordered the new vehicle. Later, his wife Kath told me, that from his hospital bed, in response to my news he just said – "he should have bought an Auto Sleeper!" He was a member of the ASOC and was known on the forums as JABBA. Some members may remember him.

After retiring fully, I began to think about the possibility of getting a smaller vehicle, something which could be used as a second car. I also realised that most of our trips were of 3 or 4 days duration with the occasional 2 week holiday thrown in. Long trips are out of the questions as my other half gets home sick for her garden. After a great deal of thought we finally decided to purchase an 18 foot van conversion and narrowed the choice down to the Autocruise Jazz (which has just been voted Motorhome of the Year 2010 by MMM) or the AS Dorset ST. We settled on the Dorset and took delivery on 2nd November 2009. John would have been so pleased that I had moved to Auto Sleeper, based on my experience to date, I am not sure whether I am!

So far the freezer compartment in the fridge failed to work on mains electricity and the van was delivered with a small freezer instead of the full width one listed in the brochure. Auto Sleeper of course reserve the right to change the specification without notice, so we have lost out on what would

have been a useful feature for us.

The low voltage panel had me and the dealership confused for some time. We could not understand why there was a flashing light on the 12 volt control panel when the engine was running. There was no advice in the Owner's Handbook, which has so many errors and omissions that I sent a list of corrections to the Company, but that is another story. Eventually we were told that it was supposed to flash as it showed that the battery was being charged. Personally, I cannot see the point in this, as with the engine off and when connected to the mains with the charger on, the flashing light is conspicuous by its absence! In addition, the 12 volt panel occasionally tells me the water tank is full even when it is empty.

I have also been disappointed by the quality of the materials used to make the double bed frame and also the methods of construction used. As a retired teacher of Design and Technology am I being too fussy? No! The Auto Cruise had a similar bed arrangement but was far better both in quality and construction.

Obviously it is not all bad news. The new Boxer is great to drive and extremely well thought out. So far there has not been a hint of the well publicised clutch judder when reversing up hill. The shorter wheelbase and shorter length as compared with my previous Starlet makes it very versatile and parking no longer seems to be the problem that it once was. I suspect that this model has benefited from years of fine tuning, as it really is a pleasant vehicle to live in. Pity about the fridge though!

I use the MH each month to visit my mother, who lives in a residential home 180 miles away in Swansea. The family home was handed back to the landlord when she moved, so the motorhome is pressed into regular use, not only as a place to sleep but also as a way of taking her out on enjoyable trips around the Gower Coast. She always enjoyed caravanning and it is great to see her still enjoying the motorhome, even if it is only for day trips, at the age of ninety.

My introduction to living in the Dorset, over the five months of ownership, has unfortunately been during extremely cold and wet weather, which may not be the best conditions to find its virtues.

While at the Birmingham Show in October 2009, I had the opportunity to

wish the new Managing Director best wishes for the success of the new company. Despite the problems we have experienced with our Dorset I really do hope that AS go from strength to strength as it is always good to see a British company being successful.

I think it is fair to say that we are finding it difficult in down sizing from the coach built to a smaller van conversion and would welcome any advice other members may have, based on their own experiences. Also, if any other Dorset/Symbol owners would like to compare notes about their pride and joys then I would be delighted to hear from them. My contact details are Home tel: 01344 627928 e mail lynnthomas5@talktalk.net.

Lynn Thomas

GOOD NEWS!

Auto-Sleepers are offering ASOC Membership for up to one year with the sale of any new or used Auto-Sleeper Motorhome purchased through a Marquis Dealership since 1st January 2010. As well as introducing new Members to the Club, the offer applies to existing Members, in which case the complementary membership may be carried over to the following year.

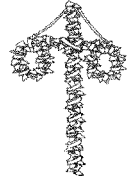
This has been a most successful arrangement with 40 new members taking up the offer in the first three months. As with all our members I do hope they enjoy being part of the Club and continue membership for many years.

Jill Bertlin Membership Secretary

A RELUCTANT WITNESS

I think everyone is aware of the views available from outside when we are in the van at night with the lights on and the Heki roof light open at about 45 degrees?? Yes, well - did you know that if you have the light on in the smallest room and leave the door open you will most certainly cast a near perfect silhouette onto the window blind!!

A reluctant observation at a rally last summer by *Joan & Max Cooke*.



May 2010 Rally Supplement.

Please carry your ASOC membership cards when attending rallies.

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

Applications for rallies must be made on ASOC rally slips by post. The only exception is the National & AGM Rally.

***** New Rally. 7th - 11th. October (4 nights) Conkers Camping & Caravanning Club Site, National Forest, Derbyshire.

***** New Rally 12th to 16th July 2010 (4 nights) Emberton Country Park Nr Olney, Bucks. Details in this supplement.

6th to 10th May (4 Nights) Little Cotton C.P. Dartmouth, Devon

Site Tel.No.01803.832558

This rally is now fully booked.

10th to 20th June (10 nights) 2010 Turckheim, Alsace, France.

Emergency Tel. No. 00 44 (0)7880 53205

This rally is now fully booked.

6th - 13th June (7 nights) Old Barn C.P., Nr. Sandown, Isle of Wight.

Emergency Tel.No. 07730212750 -07

This rally is now fully booked.

****7th - 12th. June (5 nights) Tattershall, Lincolnshire.****

This rally has had to be cancelled for reasons beyond our control.

17th - 20th. June (3 nights) Riverside C.P., Stratford upon Avon.

Emergency Tel.No - 07799660641 (Marshals' mobile).

Rally field on commercial site, some electric hook ups available.

Site Fee:£9.00 per night, Electric Hook up;£2.50 per night. Rally Fee:£2.50. All include VAT.

Rally Slips and cheques payable to: Sandra Wisely, 2 Mount Pleasant, Bishops Itchington, SOUTHAM, Warwickshire. CV47 2QE. Home Tel. No. 01926 614194.

Attractions: Riverside Café, club house, free fishing, river taxi to and from Stratford, riverside walks. Bus stop just outside the entrance to the site.

Please note Tents, gazebos, windbreaks, generators and disposable BBQs are not allowed on the site.

Please note Strictly no arrivals before 1400 hrs.

2nd - 4th July (2 nights) Prestwood Steam Fair, Great Missenden, Bucks.

Emergency Tel.No. 07775570182 or 07749378587.

Rally Marshals: Jan & Vic Hicklin & Margaret & Bob Cleaver.

Fee for the weekend £18.00 per unit. Rally Fee: £1.75 per unit. (Incl. VAT).

NO Electricity.

The weekend fee includes unlimited entrance to the Steam Rally.

This is a GREEN FIELD site- own toilets essential.

Rally slips & cheques to Mrs. J. Hicklin, 381 Manor Road, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire. S43 1PP. Tel. No. 01246 236157.

If unavailable please ring Margaret on 01442 851080.

Directions: From A413 Great Missenden take the A4128 to Prestwood and follow steam rally signs.

NO arrivals before 1.00p.m. Friday please.

4th - 8th July (4 nights) Ledbury Rugby Football Club, Herefordshire.

Emergency Tel.No. 07791582881 (Max) , 07989153109 (Joan).

Marshals: Joan & Max Cooke & Sheila & Ivor Barnett.

Site Fees: £9.50 per night. Rally Fee: £2.35. NO ELECTRICITY.

Drinking water, waste water facilities. Dog walking on site. Use of club facilities – toilets & showers. Bar open each night.

Bus stop outside gate to Ledbury, Ross & Hereford.

Booking slip & cheque payable to J.E. Cooke, The Magnolias, Canon Pyon Road, Hereford. HR4 7RB. Tel. No. 01432 274906.

Please include S.A.E. for confirmation & directions.

Directions: For the rugby club (HR8 2LP) leave the M50 at junction 2 take the A417 to Ledbury. The rugby club is off the roundabout on A449 to Much Marcle.

Limit of 25 vans.

6th - 9th July 2010 (3 nights) Cartmel Park Race Course, Cartmel, Cumbria LA11 6QF

Rally Marshals: James & Jill Bertlin

Rally Fee: £2.35 Site Fee: £25.50 Electric Hookup: £8.25 (15 available)

All charges include VAT and are for 3 nights.

Booking slips and cheques to Jill Bertlin, The Rockeries, Lindale, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6LQ. Tel. No. 015395 34500 (mobile: 07710 200547).

Toilets & showers on site. Rally field slightly uneven in places. Dogs are welcome, but neither they nor Ralliers are permitted on the racecourse track. Long electric leads may be required.

Tables at the Royal Oak in Cartmel Village Square have been reserved for a meal on Thursday evening. Please indicate on Rally Slip if interested Local

Attractions: Cartmel village is a maze of streets, cobbled pavements and picturesque bridges, crossing the meandering streams that wind their way amongst the houses with a Priory, which was founded by the Augustine Monks back in 1190. It has an historic market square, surrounded by centuries old houses and Inns, the ancient fish slabs still survive and also the original Gatehouse. Nowadays Cartmel is full of interesting shops, including the home of the famous sticky toffee pudding.

Close to the Edwardian resort of Grange-over-Sands and within a short drive of the renowned beauty of the Lake District National Park, offering some of the most spectacular scenery in the country with opportunities for walking, golfing, cruising or just sightseeing.

Directions: From M6 Junction 36, follow A590 towards Barrow in Furness. Once past the Meathop roundabout follow the brown attraction signs for Cartmel Priory. Continue through the village to the market square, at the village shop take the right hand road (sharp bend) and continue along to entrance of Racecourse on left.

Limit of 25 vans.

12th to 16th July 2010 (4 nights) Emberton Country Park Nr Olney, Bucks.

MK46 5DB

Emergency Number: 07964532936 (Rally Marshall).

Rally Marshalls: Pat and David Mayne.

Site Fees £9.50 per night (inc VAT) Rally fee £3.20 per couple £2.20 Single (both inc VAT).

Rally Slips & cheque with SAE, please, for confirmation to Mr D Mayne, 27 Mentmore Rd, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 2NY. Tel.No 01525 634824..

Attractions: Emberton Park is situated approx. 1 ¼ miles south of the market town of Olney on the A509. The Park is about 200 acres and the fee includes access to the park and its facilities. Fishing is permitted (free) on the lakes and the River Great Ouse with appropriate rod licences. There is also a boating club. The Milton Keynes Redway system for cycles runs through the site to Milton Keynes, including cycling around the Park. From Olney, there are buses to Northampton, Bedford and Milton Keynes. Train Services from Milton Keynes run to Euston in London for the adventurers!

Olney has a Market on Thursdays and there is an excellent Museum and Gardens (inc tea rooms) celebrating the lives of William Cowper and John Newton. There are a number of shops, pubs, cafes and a supermarket (approx 1 ¼ miles).

We shall be using the small Rally field adjacent to the Great Ouse which has a toilet emptying point as well as Fresh Water and Waste Water disposal. There is a Public toilet in the Park with hand washing facilities (cold) about 200yds from this field.

I intend to run a "Van" raffle only, due to security etc and it is intended that you will decide on your own daily activities as there is a wide choice of interests nearby. If the weather is good we may hold a communal BBQ.

Directions: From South take the A509 northwards from Jctn 14 on M1 until you arrive at Emberton and look for signpost for Emberton Country Park on the left. Report in at Gatehouse then follow signs to Rally fields. From North take the A509 from Wellingborough and 1.5 miles south of Olney, turn right into Park (signed) and do as above.

Rally starts at 12 noon. Limit of 15 vans

15th – 19th July Northern Motorcaravan Show, Cheshire Showground, Tabley, Knutsford, WA16 0HJ.

Emergency Tel. No. Marshalls Mobile 0786 8000 705.

Rally Marshalls: Liz & Roger Spensley, & Eunice & Brian Lockett.

Please use the booking form enclosed in the May Newsletter if possible. If using a form from other magazines mark the form ASOC and note the special club site fees.

Arrive Thursday £38, Arrive Friday £35, Arrive Saturday £32. All bookings for the Saturday evening entertainment must be made with Warners when returning the application form to the organisers by 24th June, if you wish to rally with the club.

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

Return it with the Rally fee of £2.00 couples, £1.50 singles (inc.VAT) to: R. & E. Spensley, 30 Kilsyth Close, Cinnamon Brow, Warrington, WA2 0SQ. Tel. No. 01925 813558. Cheques payable to R. & E. Spensley.

The rally ends 12 noon Sunday but you may remain on site until 12 noon Monday.

19th – 22nd July (3 nights) Fort Paul, Nr. Hull, East Yorkshire. HU12 8FP.

Emergency Tel.No. 07879716576 marshals' mobile.

Rally Marshalls: Jean & Dave Hollingsworth & Liz Irvin.

Site Fee: £6.50 per night. Rally Fee: £2.50 couples, £1.50 singles. (Incl.VAT).

Toilet, waste disposal, NO ELECTRICITY, Greenfield site is in an enclosed secure museum grounds near the River Humber.

Booking slips & cheques to J.Hollingsworth, 24 Norton Grove, Hull. HU4 6HL.

Tel.No. 01482 572682 or 07879716576. Please enclose S.A.E for confirmation, directions & mapping. The site is situated approx. 6 miles east of Hull city centre.

Fort Paul café/bar available for meals, admission to visitor attraction during rally is free where among other items on display is the only remaining Beverley aircraft.

Attractions: The end of the 2009/2010 Clipper Round the World yacht race ends in Hull Marina in the middle of July. Walks along the river, the Deep in Hull the only submerium in the world, a successful Millenium project, the old town museums quarter (which includes a deep water trawler) most of which are free. Wilberforce House, home of William Wilberforce and the Humber Bridge. There will be celebrations commemorating the life of Phillip Larkin and other events around the town and marina where the clipper boats will be berthed. Nearest small town is Hedon, approx. 2 miles away. There is a regular bus service 10 minutes walk away. The coastal towns of Hornsea & Bridlington are 20-30 miles and Beverley about 15 miles away. Spurn Head is the place for bird watching. **Rally closes at 11.a.m. Thursday.**

Please do not arrive before 1.00p.m. on Monday as there will be other ralliers leaving the site that day.

22nd - 26th July 2010 (4 nights) Beacon Park, Lichfield, Staffordshire.

Emergency tel no. Marshals mobile 07713186508.

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

Site Fee £5.50 per night inc. Vat Rally Fee £2.35 inc. Vat.

PLEASE NOTE THIS RALLY IS NOW 4 NIGHTS LONG (WE MUST BE MAD) COME AND HELP TRISH CELEBRATE HER 60TH BIRTHDAY.

Booking slips and cheques Payable to P.M.Pratt,

3 Grafton Rd Stapenhill Burton on Trent. Staffs DE15 9DN PHONE 01283538818.

You may arrive on Thurs. AFTER 12noon NOT BEFORE PLEASE (This is virtually a green field site although there are toilets in Beacon Park.

Sat evening get together includes Jacket potato, dessert and drink - £5.00 per person.
Pay with booking slip.

Attractions Beacon Park is adjacent to Lichfield City centre.

Directions: Beacon Park is situated on outskirts of Lichfield, just off the A51 Tamworth to Rugeley/Stafford Road leaving Lichfield. Follow brown Beacon Park tourist signs. Turn into Walsall Road, then immediately left into Lower Sandford Street. (POSTCODE FOR LOWER SANDFORD STREET NEAREST ROAD TO CAR PARK TO BEACON PARK IS **WS13 6RA**) Follow signs for Car Park, site is through the car park keeping to the right.

29th - 3rd August (5 nights) Leon's Field, St.Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE27 5ER.

Emergency Tel.No. 07716724910.

Rally Marshals: Sylvia & Brian Smith, Julia Briars-Filby & Shirley & Chris Sturgeon.

GREEN FIELD site NO Electricity & NO toilets.

Site Fee: -£5.88 per night. Rally Fee: £2.35 (Total for 5 nights £31.75) Incl. VAT.

Rally slips and cheques payable to B.G.Smith, 9 St.Mary's Road, Bluntisham, Huntingdon. PE28 3XA. Tel.No. 01487 841786.

The site is by the Great Ouse river, 200 yds. from the town centre. Buses every 20 minutes to Huntingdon and Cambridge. Friday and Monday are market days in St.Ives and there are plenty of pubs, restaurants, cafes and charity shops. Beautiful riverside walks and Leon allows us to wander over his meadows.

Please send an **SAE** for confirmation of booking and directions.

Please do not arrive before 12.30p.m. on Thursday . Rally closes 11.00 a.m. Tuesday.
Rally limited to 40 vans.

Do not enter St.Ives Town Centre.

Advance notice.

20th - 25th August (5 nights) Eskdale School, Whitby, North Yorks.

Emergency Tel. No. 07711 271568 (Marshal's mobile)

Rally Marshal: Liz Irvin.

Site Fees £4.70 per night. Rally Fees £3.00 couples £1.50 singles (both include VAT)

Greenfield Site, No Toilets, No Electricity. All Hardstandings.

Booking slips & cheques to Mrs E. Irvin, 43 School Lane, Kirk Ella, HULL, East Yorkshire. HU10 7NP. Tel. No. 01482 658345. E-mail: - irvin@irvin.karoo.co.uk

Attractions: Whitby will be busy because the Regatta dates coincide with the Folk Festival. Whitby Regatta 21st, 22nd. & 23rd. August. Whitby Folk Week 21st to 27th August.

School situated off the Scarborough Road, buses at the school gates to Whitby. Come and explore Whitby's fascinating and historic streets and waterfront. The site is close to the Whitby end of the Moor to Sea Cycle Route with links to Scarborough and Pickering. For walkers the Cleveland Way coastal path is nearby. Visit Goathland where Heartbeat is filmed, or travel on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Directions: From Scarborough on A171, on entering Whitby, after lay-by and 30mph sign, turn left into Eskdale Road and the school is on the left. From Guisborough or Pickering on A171, enter Whitby and continue on the Scarborough road, cross the new Esk Bridge and continue up the hill to the top, Stainsacre Lane. Eskdale Road is on the right, before the industrial estate. Post code YO22 4HS. **Limit of 25 vans.**

(v.)

Advance notice.

**2nd. Thursday – 6th. Monday September (4 nights) Faversham Hop Festival,
Painters Farm, Painters Forstal, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent. ME13 0EG.**

Emergency Tel.No.07818006733.Marshals' mobile.

Rally Marshals Barbara & Al Buckett ,Mo & Mike Valentine.

Site Fees £14.50 for all 4 nights inclusive.Rally Fee £ 2.35 per couple or £1.35 single.

Rally slips and cheques payable to A Buckett please with a SAE for confirmation and directions.Send to Mr A Buckett 16 St Margarets Drive, Walmer ,Deal ,Kent CT14 7UJ
Telephone number 01304 369149.

This is a greenfield site surrounded by orchards and countryside. A pub within 5 minutes walk serves good food.There is a nature reserve within 5 minutes walk. The Faversham Hop Festival is on the Saturday and Sunday.It includes lots of music eg: Jazz Bands Folk Dancers Morris Dancers Pearly Kings and Queens etc.There are stalls and eateries all along the streets of the town. Parking for motorhomes nearby.

Canterbury is about 20 minutes away and has a park and ride for motorhomes to get into the City.

This rally could be a good tag onto either end of a holiday in France.

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.

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

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

*It is important that all potential rally dates and venues are checked with me first as **unless they are approved by the Club,there will be no Public Liability Insurance.***

Nell C. Rogers
3 Appleby Close,
Aldbrough St. John,
Richmond,
North Yorks,
DL11 7TT.
Tel./Fax. No. 01325 374 540

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.

f

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:-

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**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 Compass to GPS

Some of you will be familiar with the activity of Dartmoor letterboxing where people scurry around the moor looking into holes and under rocks and become quite excited when they find 'the letterbox'. For those who have no idea what letterboxing is all about, I will briefly explain. Some people might say that this pastime is enjoyed by anoraks but I'm sure they're referring to the necessary clothing required and not to the obsessive attitude of the participants. Anyway, equipped with anorak, compass, map, rubber stamp, notebook and a set of clues, your object would be to find the letterbox (often a sandwich box or biscuit tin) in which there will be a rubber stamp and notebook. You would stamp your notebook with the stamp from the letterbox and vice versa. The clues can be found in a book which is published twice a year and they involve grid references, distances in paces, and compass bearings from visible (or not-so-visible if the anorak is necessary) landmarks such as farmhouses, tors or radio masts.

With the popularity of the GPS you might be thinking that all the fun has been taken out of the activity. However, that is not the case. The clues may only give 4-figure or 6-figure references so there is still some hunting to be done. Even if a 10-figure reference is given, the chances are that the clue will only give such information as 'under a boulder' or 'plugged beside rock at end by gorse'. On Dartmoor there are a lot of boulders to choose from and plenty of gorse to avoid.

The GPS has also opened up another activity in the form of geocaching. I understand this takes place not only anywhere in the UK but anywhere in the world and all you need is a GPS, an internet connection for the clues and possibly an anorak. As ASOC members are well-travelled then I wonder how many of you have tried geocaching and where you have found 'treasure'. It would be interesting to read in the newsletter about anybody's experience of this 21st-century pastime and perhaps it would encourage some of us to have a go. Who knows, someone might organise a hunt for ralliers.....

Celia Waugh

Technical Group & Website

Baz Wellard
Chairman, Technical Group & Webmaster



Membership Deals – ASG

The first quarter review of the 'membership deal' with Auto Sleepers Group has proved very encouraging:

- **1 Year free membership:**
Jill Bertlin (Membership Secretary) has reported she now has a list of 106 'prospective' members and has sent out papers to first 64 and has already recruited 36.
- **10% discounts:** It's not so easy to quantify the 10% discount on fitted accessories; habitation checks and extended warranty but to my knowledge there have been no problems in administration.

Recent available documents:

The following is now available, either over the internet or by mail. See back page of the Newsletter for addresses.

Insurance comparisons: Up-to-date guide on motorhome Insurance companies

Model reviews: A review of the 2010 Marquis Devon

Website updates:

- Update supplementary 05a/10 – Emberton Park rally added
- Update supplementary 05b/10 – Revised postal rates as from 6th April added.

Changed to LEDs

As a non-DIY type of fella – let alone one who fails to understand the workings of the Inca's engine room, its electrics or indeed, the gadgetry provided by Auto-Sleepers – I was delighted to find out how simple it was, even for me, to replace the four halogen spotlight bulbs.

Last July, I met a charming trader from Keswick exhibiting a mind-boggling array of accessories at the Pickering Motorhome Show, who convinced me [am I gullible?] that the purchase of four MR11 SMD Warm White 12v AC/DC LEDs would indeed be a sensible purchase.

Not only that, I treated "Polly Too" to a Labcraft Nebula Low Voltage (12v) Striplite LED unit for installation above the Hob unit and Sink, an area hitherto in lighting terms, which was poorly designed (an oversight by Auto-Sleepers).

I managed the replacement of the four spot light bulbs without a problem, but admit to having expert assistance (from a member of the family who is a qualified electrician/LED expert) with regard to the fitting of the striplite.

Maybe I am gullible, but am delighted with the end result: all the LEDs are working perfectly -it was all so easy!

If there is a downside, the lighting is possibly not as bright as some would like/need it, but it suits *senior management* which is the main criteria in "Polly Too": there is always the option of purchasing a white/larger bulb.

James Bertlin

Thanks also to **David Maddison-Roberts** for his comments on bulbs.

Rally Plaques

Our ASOC Rally plaques are "blue-tacked" on to a sheet of Perspex attached to the inside of the wardrobe door. Not only do they serve as a reminder of all the super locations associated with such happy memories, they also act as a diary, and if ever in doubt as to when we attended a particular Rally, in amongst the clothes, we find the answer.

A most useful aide-memoire for those senior moments.

James and Jill Bertlin

David Mayne has a dilemma.

My thoughts of buying a new van are marred by the fact that most new vans have an increased weight and as a result the user payload is reduced. I am lucky that my present vehicle (1999 Ford Ravenna) has a max weight of 3500kg (plated by ford) although they are normally 3300kg. This gives me a user payload of 750kg. The present crop of base vehicles seem to have heavier chassis and the end result is a user payload of of about 300 to 500kg on the 3500kg chassis, but of course the one I like is nearer the 300kg mark.

Now my wife and myself would add 100kg before we start as I am nowhere near the allowed driver weight of 75kg! The van I fancy would be a 4 seat/beds for grandkids and they would add another say 75kg. (Possible another 75kg plus for two adults). This doesn't leave much for water (I prefer a full tank and loo flush = 50kg + 10kg) and all the clothing, food & drink, pots and pans and the usual bits that I always carry around(ramps, tools, books, magazines, bedding, chairs, TV and arial, safari room, bikes etc. etc.). I suspect many vans are overloaded anyway.

Of course, I could purchase with an uprated chassis and there lies the rub - I am approaching 70! This would mean that my renewal would not allow me to purchase any vehicle (and trailer) that exceeds a total weight of 3500kg unless I opt to take a doctors medical which involves eyesight, mental and physical capability for which the doctor has to complete an 8 page report form. This costs £115 at my doctors. This would then be required every 3 years, with the possibility of failing the medical and subsequent loss of driving. This would, of course, disadvantage anybody forced to carry a mobility scooter or similar (something we have to bear in mind as we get older). This weight limit would also affect many large caravan owners who need a heavier car to tow it with.

I note, at the last NEC show and on the AS web site that AS appear to have dropped the Ford based vans which were the most heavy base weights although the Mercedes do figure with uprated chassis's, not sure why this is as, like me, there are a lot of Ford fans out there! However I am not likely to want to purchase a new Peugeot based motorhome until they sort the reverse problem out. Also I am concerned with the loss of traction in muddy conditions which never

seems to be a problem with Fords.

So, much as I would like to buy a new van soon, (I particularly like the new motorhomes (at last AS have got it right again!)) I may be forced to hang on to my present one as it does the job very well. But I still have the problem of avoiding increasing numbers of European pollution zones, as the older Ford does not comply. And, of course, the longer I wait, the more expensive the new vehicle will be! Really a Catch 22 situation!

This notice on a bin at Camping Javea in Spain in February tickled **David & Marilyn Leal**. They knew it really meant they had to take their rubbish to the big bins at the entrance, but it made them smile.....



In response to our pleas.....

My heart went out to our Editors in their appeal for contributions, so I sat down to try and think of ideas to encourage people to contribute. All of which I am sure you are aware of and no doubt have explored in the past, but I began by thinking what I would like to read about.

An invitation from readers to say where they have experienced outstanding service, as I did last year at Rose Awnings, or in contrast where satisfaction may not have been fully realised.

What interesting gadgets have been bought that experienced motor-homers consider essential after using them, perhaps like the 'Skillets' that are on sale at most Motor-Camper shows or the FoldTuk Bakeware in this months book, perhaps adding other 'gadgets' that were less than fulfilling in their performance.

Members travel far and wide and their experience of good or otherwise camping sites would be interesting, particularly for newer members. I would certainly like to know more about the 'free' Aires that can be found all over France, Spain and other European countries. What are the do's and don'ts when using them. There are a very interesting set of books available on this topic but nothing is more valuable than personal experience.

I personally would like to know more about my 'expensive' toy. When was it first made and what improvements took place during it's production etc.

Hints and tips about the cheapest Channel crossings or special deals would be appreciated. After searching the Internet this year I managed to get a return crossing to France for £49 in the peak season, which I am sure many others would have been interested in, or did they find even cheaper crossings.

Recently my own question about L.E.D's (already published) was rewarded by a very full and detailed reply (thank you Peter), which brings me to my final point. Each year there is quite a large turnover of members, such as myself, who will be unaware of all the gems published over the years. So new information to us newbie's and reminders to the older hands may already be lurking in the folds of past editions of the A-S Newsletter.

Alan Greenwood

Welcome to New Members



Ken & Pat Pickles	Preston	Suffolk
Keith & Jill Hill	Gloucester	Windsor
Steve & Pam Davies	Yateley	Dorset
Felicity Tack & Sylvia Doble	Brixham	Symbol
Ken & Betty Fuller	Heathfield	Nuevo
Bob & Joan Clifford	Sidmouth	Duetto
Paul & Lynda Lewis	Eastbourne	Broadway
Rod & Sandra Whitfield	Kidlington	Sussex
Christine Martin	Stoke-on-Trent	Flair
Nick Garrod	Ickenham	Frisky
Garry Winfield & Joanne Speight	Castleford	Duetto
Alan & Barbara Alsop	Birmingham	Nuevo
John & Hilary Holland	Swansea	Harmony
Michael & Tina Jubb	Milford on Sea	Warwick
Roger & Margaret Cracker	Seaton	Topaz
Elaine Gowing	Malvern	Trident
Dave & Janice Cutting	Swindon	Ascot
Alan & Glenis Hurst	Bolton	Dorset
Dexy & Babs Wilding	Nr Preston	Symbol
David Crowe & Jane Curzon	Keswick	Dorset
Bert & Dorothy Jones	Kendal	Duetto
Tony & Enid Bushby	Ulverston	Nuevo
Lyn Richards	Plymouth	Trooper
Frankie Pullinger	Helston	Mezan
Alan & Carol Lewis	Bristol	Pollensa
Mike & Pat Stanley	Penrith	Devon
George & Kathleen Smith	Milton Keynes	Nuevo
Preston & Jo Gypps	Braintree	Dorset
Paul Scantlebury	Cullompton	Topaz
Ivan & Pat Down	Crewkerne	Executive

New Members continued....

Alan & Margaret McColm	Glasgow	Dorset
Di Wakeford & Daph Appleby	Newbury	Symphony
Mike & Liz Riley	Dronfield	Trident
Dave Foster & Julie Russell	Exeter	Trident
Pat & Anne O'Mara	Stockport	Clubman
Joseph Gilhespy	Southampton	Symphony
Doug Watt & Sue Lewis	Cheltenham	Symphony
Neil & Liz hunt	Penryn	Nuevo
Peter & Sylvia Flanagan	Hardwick	Inca
Ivor Carter	Huntingdon	Rambler
Angela Aston & Joy Day	Truro	Trident
Mike & Jean McHugh	Cowbridge	Nuevo
Mike & Valmai Selley	Pembroke Dock	Trooper
Vincent & Frances Sammut	Romford	Talisman
Tom & Chris Eaves	Dousland	Suffolk
Ronnie & Yvonne Hadow	Ulverston	Rienza
Ray & Carol Stephens	Orpington	Pollensa
Terry & Lesley Jackman	Newbury	Sussex
Martin & Ann Fox	Thames Ditton	Symbol
Alan & Jo Jackson	Ambleside	Nuevo
John & Sylvia Barlow	Chippenham	Talisman
Stephen & Mary Novick	Welshpool	Clubman
Andrew & Brenda Walker	Peterborough	Dorset
Gerald & Dorothy Young	Northampton	Warwick
Peter Riggs & Susan Scholes	Rushden	Nuevo
Brian & Rita Barnacle	Waterlooville	Symbol
Geoff & Jane Wilson	Bury St Edmunds	Sussex
Peter & Pauline Gurney	Northampton	Berkshire
Keith & Janet Midgley	Dursley	Duetto



Thanks for all the donations

Autosleeper Nuevo softer seating

Attention all Nuevo

owners 2007 onwards. We found that the beds were too hard for our liking so we commissioned a professional motorhome upholsterer to make four complete replacement units (seats and backrests) using foam that was not only thicker but softer. They tone into the colour scheme beautifully (photos available).

Having only just fitted them, we then saw another van we preferred and sold our Nuevo without ever sleeping on the new beds! The four seats / backrests cost us £900 in total and we are asking £400.

Dimensions:

Pair one - Seat cushion is 54.5ins long x 25.5 ins wide Back cushion is 53ins long x 14.5 ins wide, rising to 16ins wide in the middle. This cushion curves upwards towards the middle from both ends (like many sofa designs)

Pair two - Seat cushion is 50ins long x 25.5 ins wide Back cushion is 49.5ins long x 14.5 ins wide rising to 16ins wide in the middle (curved like the other one).

All cushions are 6ins thick and have zips so that the upholstery can be removed if needed. They also have wooden frames with perforations / slats. The screw holes are all in place and it takes only a few minutes to change the old seats for the new ones. If you like a softer bed, you'll

appreciate the difference! **Contact Mike Jubb Tel: 01590 643440 E-mail: mike@milonsea.demon.co.uk**

AS Owners Manuals £5 ea. (as supplied with new vans and now much more from AS)

VW Talent on T4

Duetto 1996

Symphony 1992

Legend GL >1993

Legend (end lounge > 1993.

Contact Ricky Smith on 01776

705628 email

rathlargo@btinternet.com

SURAT CUSHION MATERIAL.

STOCK CODE: CS0100SUR. Very strong rubberised backing upholstery material. 5m long x 54"

width. Purchased direct from

Autosleepers in April 08 at the cost of £93.88. The pattern was used on a

2002 Pollensa. We will send it to anybody for just the cost of carriage, which was £12.50 plus a £20 donation to any recognised cancer charity.

Photos available. Replies please to

Contact Anne Ingram email

mrsaingram@waitrose.com Tel

07768 774788

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