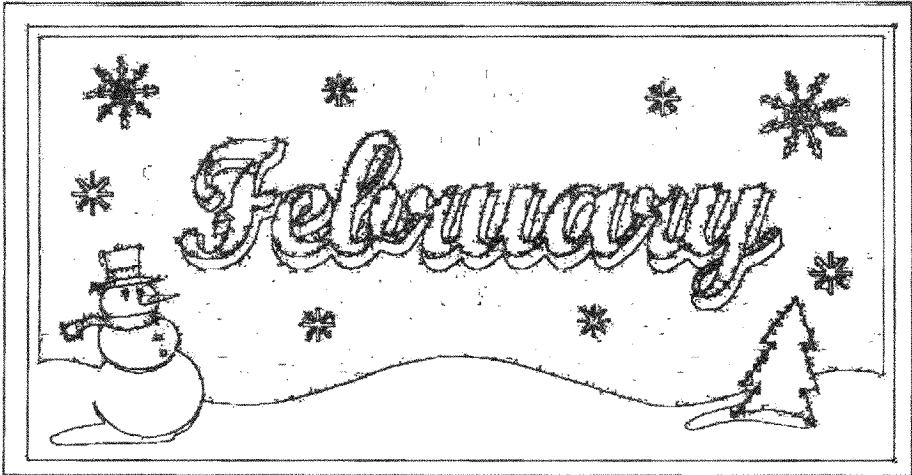




www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

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



Still, there's the rally season to look forward to.....

NEWSLETTER 281

February 2012

From the Editor ^(S)

Can anyone who has experience of using a *GO BOX* in Austria please contact me Peter Brown.

We had an article and New Year message from Ricky Smith which should have been included in last month's Newsletter, however, it made a bid for freedom by attaching itself via paperclip to another article. Having recaptured it we can now share it with you (with apologies to Ricky for not keeping tighter control).

Rain, wind & yet more rain!

Just a line to thank our Chairman for his acknowledgement that we up here have been subjected to more than the usual amount of wet weather in the past few months. We are normally in a sea of tranquilly meandering along with our rain-mates at the ready in case of an inundation, but this year has seen more than the average appearance of the wet stuff along with a fair amount of wind, often together, so brollies no use there then!

That's what makes Bonnie Scotland interesting as a holiday destination, though in fairness when we ventured south, for our Malvern dental visit combined with the Burnham rally, the inclement weather did seem to have followed us, though thankfully it stayed away at the critical times for Fireworks and Carnival.

Still perhaps the wet is preferable to the deep snow and hard frosts that almost the whole of the country, except for a few of the extremities including the Rhinns of Galloway, experienced at the end of last year, the Gulf Stream does have its uses! Roll on Summer, Indian or otherwise.

Here's Tae Us; Wha's Like Us?...
Damn few and they're a' deid!

For the benefit of those south of Hadrian's Wall

"Here's to Us! Who is as good as us?
Damn few and they're all dead!"

Rick & Ann Smith

The National Rally

3rd - 7th May 2012

**A REMINDER TO
COME AND ENJOY A FUN PACKED WEEKEND
AT THE NEWARK SHOWGROUND**

Don't forget to get in touch with **Stuart Wood** if you want to exhibit your **HOBBIES, CRAFTS AND ART** before February 28th so tables can be reserved, on 01484 604133 or email stuwd@yahoo.co.uk

And remember the **PHOTO COMPETITION**; all photographs must be received **by 31 March 2012**. No photographs will be accepted after this date. All photographs must state Category entered for, Title, name, address and membership number of entrant.

Please send your entries to: Jean Hollingsworth
24 Norton Grove
Kingston-upon-Hull
Yorkshire HU4 6HL.

07879 716576 or 01482 572682
e-mail: jaholly1@gmail.com.

General: Photographs must contain an Auto-Sleeper or be taken on a rally.

Humorous: All photographs must be taken at a rally.

Sizes: 6" x 4" or 7" x 5". Only these sizes will be accepted.

A maximum of 4 photographs per member may be entered.



Chairman's Chat

Hooray the skiing season is here at last, Ski Sunday has just been showing the downhill in Switzerland with lots of snow and the forecast gives superb snow conditions throughout the Alps. So by the time you read this, Mo & I will be playing in the white stuff! Must go to the gym tomorrow and keep bending *zee knees and ankles*.



May I remind you that I am still collecting names enabling me to arrange a service for your Dometic fridge whilst attending our National Rally. New vans built since January 2011 will be FREE within the Dometic 3 year scheme and for all other age vans there will be a service fee due, at this time I am unable to state a price but going on our own service last year, it was not excessive, of course this does depend on what might need replacing at the time. Please write or e-mail me during February so that I can make early arrangements with Dometic regarding numbers. The Dometic Sales team will be on site as usual for the whole weekend showing their wares.

Have you seen the 2012 rally list now advertised on the club web-site and noticed how many new venues there are, unfortunately, I do not see many new names amongst the Marshals. Now, if you enjoy the camaraderic of a rally, have seen an ideal site whilst on your travels and feel that it would make a good spot but, shall I say you lack the courage or know-how, can I suggest that you either ring me or one of the other committee members and ask for help? Having done it, I know that you will be pleasantly surprised at how straight forward it is to run said rally, so do not delay, we need more new names to come forward and set up more rallies.

The season is only just around the corner, so do brave the cold and get those niggling little jobs done that you promised yourself during last season. Make sure that you inspect the tyres for cracks and lumps together with all of the other usual checks, particularly levels. Unload every locker/cupboard, clean them out and then **only** put back anything that you have used in the last 12 months. This is a harsh discipline to adopt but it will help to keep you within your weight limit and help with your fuel economy.

It is now time to get those maps out and start planning "where will we go this year?". If you going to France and beyond, do make sure that you start the season within the law by having a reflective vest for every person, a safety

triangle, a spare lamp (bulb) for all driving lights and last but not least the headlight beam-benders that are mandatory for all right-hand-drive vehicles. Remember also that some countries do not sell toilet chemicals, so make sure you carry what might be needed.

Stuart is still looking for more hobbies to be shown at the National rally, please ring him and say what space you will need and I will look forward to seeing you there and talking about your hobby with you.

Mike Valentine

Regalia Update

I have two new items to tell you about and they are **Little Man** stickers, available in 4" and 3"; not exactly new, but these are for your interior mirrors' to give the impression that you have had them etched into your mirror. Also the 6" and 8" Little Man will only be available by special order.

You will find an up to date List/ Order Form in this Newsletter.

Wishing all members a very Happy New Year, and happy motorhoming.

John Jones

Antiques Road Show

Hope you are well and had a good Xmas and New year.

The venues for next year are too far for us to arrange a rally. Details are on Antiques Atlas - Antiques Roadshow Data 2012.



And I could not contact you without telling you our great news. After 22 years together and just 2 minutes into the New Year, Keith surprised me with a marriage proposal. So watch this space!!

Rita Jones

Welcome to New Members



Jim & Stephanie Frost	Chilbolton	Stanton
Peter Messenger	Plymouth	Pollensa
David & Vinessa Walker	Kirkcaldy	Lancashire
David Eynon	Pontypool	Lancashire
Martin & Suzanne Leighfield	Dorset	Northants
Tony & Sheila Salisbury	Woodbridge	Lancashire
Chris & Rachel Page	Elton	Cotswold
Owen & Sue Morgan	Stoke-on-Trent	Clubman
David Robbins & Karen Townsend	Liss	Nuevo
Rodney & Christine Bath	Newbury	Excelsior
Don & Barbara Mason	Shrewsbury	Dorset
Tim & Mary Morris	Mayfield	Lancashire
Mark Vaughan & Christina Shewell	Bristol	Romero
Bernard & Jill Ponsford	Exeter	Topaz
John & Sandra Pendell	Faringdon	Nuevo
Paul & Angela Pitkin	Poole	Ravenna
Cyril & Alice Taylor	Wokingham	Northants
Theresa Mannion	Windsor	Mezan
Dick & Jan Glover	Bideford	Worcester
Colin & Carole Graham	Peterborough	Cotswold
Bill & Karen Stead	Royal Leamington	
Andrew & Janet Wilkins	Spa	Stratford
David & Diane Wilson-Evans	Newquay	Nuevo
Marv & Claire Boyes	Swansea	Kemerton
Gordon & Iris Mitchell	Paignton	Clubman
Mike & Anne Docherty	Gloucester	Stanton
David Henderson	Hazel Grove	Nuevo
Robert & Anne Staite	Glasgow	Broadway
Frank & Nadia Court	Dorset	Pollensa
Michael & Ruth Hayter	Warwick	Dorset
	Epsom	Nuevo

Buyer Beware

I thought that others might be interested in how I bought a *Ringer* and that it might be a warning!

With my wife no longer enjoying motorhoming due to health problems I decided to downsize and settled on a Duetto. I found most dealer's overpriced against their offers for my Hymer, and after viewing various web sites I found a privately advertised T.D. version on Autotrader.

I went down to Feltham to view it having done an Experian AutoCheck. It had an MOT but was not taxed, it was very clean inside and out with Duetto handbook, Status, fridge, Thetford and Carver handbooks, heard the engine running after it started first turn of the key. We agreed a price, and he required cash. When I collected it a few days later I found the throttle linkage stiff and put that 'lack of pull' down to that. At home I put water in the tank, tried out everything and realised that it had not been recently used. I did a few jobs so that we could go away for a few days to see how my wife would be able to cope. I found the engine pretty gutless on hills and on the site compared the engine layout of mine with a slightly earlier Duetto that was T.D; they were different.

I contacted AS to see if it was built with a turbo, but when they checked the engine and VIN no. it came up blank. They then suggested that it could be a ringer.

The seller said he would pay for a turbo to be fitted, but this was not possible. I Googled VOSA/MOT; this shows the MOTs since they were computerised- the current one was there with 59,600 miles as expected but the previous one showed 177,700. I was eventually able to contact the seller and told him to take the motorhome back and refund my money. After stating that he had only taken the van over to sell on and denying any knowledge of it being a stolen vehicle he agreed to pay me back but asked for a few days to get the money together.

This was on the Sunday evening. He collected the van sometime Monday night using a key he must have kept and without disturbing anyone!! The van was picked up by the London Vehicle Registration Number Cameras at around 0800, which was before the police had placed it on the stolen vehicle list.

When I had received the new registration documents, I noticed that the address for the previous owner was not where I had made the purchase and was told they had not changed it when they recently moved as they were selling the Duetto. How much time the Met will spend on this case will probably not be much so it is goodbye to my cash. The insurance refused to pay out stating that the vehicle did not belong to me but to some insurance company that paid out to the original owner.

Ernest Blakeman

Defectors!!

I'm afraid we are into epaulette ripping-off territory here..... the Autosleeper is gone.....worse than that, we fell under the spell of an Autoc****e salesman at the NEC in October!!! The new one arrives in March so I'm afraid that's it – drumming out with kicks to the pants for us – sorry!

Honestly (guv) we went to the show keen to see the new AS Windrush with its extra berths to see if it would suit the occasional grandchildren (OCG) trips we plan to do. As may have been clear we are keen "camper van" types so a 4-berth coachbuilt was out of the question.

So it was a huge disappointment to find that the Windrush imposes permanent bunks blocking the rear doors that we did actually make use of in our Symbol. That's probably fine for a family with 2 kids but for OCG use it's a considerable waste of already limited space.

Our new van will have a dinette to the front – so that's the 2 (small) occasional berths – plus classic lounge at the back which converts to a good double. On a fast solo trip south that could even remain set up as a bed, at least it's optional.

I know already that we will miss the quality of the AS interior, and at the NEC I really enjoyed the feel of the AS Kemerton 2-berth, so luxurious!

And of COURSE we will miss fellow AS owners! Yes I know we didn't exactly fill our diary with rallies but as you are aware fitting things in with full time working (E) plus this remote place we start from didn't help.

So once again – sorry AS, sorry ASOC – hope we get the chance to join again some time. Until then, a fond farewell.

Rob, Elizabeth, champion rallier Alfie Dog (nearly 15 now!), and Lily doglet aged 4. Windy Skye

Talking of pets Andy Cavell has come across some changes to the Pet Passport Scheme with effect from 1st January 2012 which make it easier (in some circumstances) to bring a pet in to the UK. Full details can be found on the DEFRA website:- <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/pet-owners/>

Technical Group & Website

Baz Wellard
Chairman, Technical Group & Webmaster



Toll roads in Portugal:

As from 9th December 2011 changes have been made regarding Portuguese toll roads. Fees for some toll roads are now collected by electronic means only and there are no cash/card pay booths. The passage of vehicles is now detected electronically and users are required to have an 'electronic device' on their vehicle as a means of payment. As I understand it one has to hire the 'electronic device' and pre-load it with Euros. I have asked for more detailed information but have yet to receive a reply. For more details go to: - <http://www.visitportugal.com/NR/exeres/D1F46576-727B-42CA-BA69-C33AFBA3D81C.frameless.htm> , or to the C&CC and CC websites or 'Google'. If you do not have access to the internet go to your local library where access is free and the staff will assist you.

London Emission Zone (LEZ)

As I advised earlier the final (?) tranche of the LEZ came into effect on the 3rd January. Go to www.tfl.gov.uk/lezlondon or ring 0845 607 0009, to check if your motorhome is compliant, and for full details. If your motorhome is non-compliant, and you are diverted officially by the Police into the LEZ, you are likely to receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). I suggest you note the time and route of the diversion, plus any other relevant information - you will then be in a good position to appeal. I have asked the LEZ authority for more details but have yet to receive a reply. I understand the first PCN issued is an advice one only - but I cannot be sure! And finally: - LEZ restrictions are now becoming quite widespread in Europe, and there is an informative article in the February MMM.

Peugeot X250 Headlamps:

Peter Fisher has kindly informed me that headlamp protectors are now available for the Peugeot X250, and they have the 'marks' inscribed where to fit continental deflectors. The Peugeot part No is VAL 315 and cost £49.35 inc. VAT. They may of course be cheaper on the internet. Website FAQ No. 20 has been updated accordingly.

As a reminder FAQ No. 20 also advises: - "Peugeot dealers provide a 'tear-shaped' piece of self adhesive obscure **special** plastic that sticks directly onto the headlamp - Reference No. VAL 284 £10 +VAT. Beware of using 'ordinary' tape as it may irreparably damage the 'plastic' lens."

Auto Sleeper 2012 Models

In the December Newsletter Mike Valentine reported that the February NEC Boat & Caravan Exhibition has been cancelled. If you wish to see the full range of the 2012 A~S models they will be on display at Marquis, Northants, over the period 20th – 26th February. See www.marquismotorhomes.co.uk/event-2012 for full details or ring 01604 402888.

Technical library:

A review on the 2012 Nuevo ES and a report on 'engine chipping' are now available. Contact me by e-mail or by SAE – details on back page.

The library now has collated information on the 'weights & dimensions' of A~S models for each year from 2001 to 2012. The library brochures actually go back to 1984, but the information is more complex to extract. If you have any handbooks, brochures etc you no longer perhaps you could consider donating them to the library, please?

Website changes:

Update 01/12:

- Stop Press: Portuguese toll roads; LEZ update and 2012 A~S model show
- Rally list: 2012 rally list and the rally (printable) spread sheet.
- Annual 'hints&tips' attached.

Supplementary update No. 01a/12:- Rally list - amended dates for the



February 2012 Rally Supplement.

Please carry your ASOC membership cards when attending rallies.

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

****** It is the responsibility of each rallier to ensure that they arrive at a rally on the correct day and time for the start of arally. This will avoid embarrassment to both parties. The marshal is entitled to ask early arrivals to leave and return at the correct day/time.*

If you are unable to attend a rally or will arrive late please inform the marshal.

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

Please inform the Rally Marshal beforehand if you wish to bring a car, trailer or tent to a rally.

Ammendment to rally list. Wichester St. Cross now 13th. – 17th. August.

NEW Rally- 29th March – 3rd April (5 nights) Fishery Creek, Hayling Island, PO11 9NR. Full details in this Supplement.

NEW Rally---5th. – 10th. July Buckler's Hard, New Forest.

15th to 25th June 2012 Zell am Ziller, Austria.

Rally Marshals: Liz Irvin & Jeanne Hall assisted by Angie & Andy Cavell.

Emergency Tel. No. 00 44 (0)7711 271568.

Rally Fee: £20.00, not refundable
cheques to A. Cavell, 24 The C

This rally is now fully booked

Thatcham, RG18 0RY. Please provide your e-mail address if you have one, if not please enclose an SAE.

20th-24th February (4 nights) Whitemead Forest Rally :

Parkend, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 4LA.

Site reception. 0845 345 3425.

Marshals mobile 07799591550

This rally is now fully booked.

Rally Marshals: Yvonne & Stuart

29th March – 3rd April (5 nights) Fishery Creek, Hayling Island, PO11 9NR.

Rally Marshall; Mo & Mike Valentine.

Home Tel: 023 9248 2818 Mobile No. 07745 522 335.

Rally Fee; £2.50, singles £1.50.

Site Fee; £15.65 per night per unit, including electric. (5 nights £78.25).

Commercial site with all the usual facilities. The park is well maintained and grass pitches drain quickly.

Some pitches need leveling blocks.

Dogs welcome on leads.

Attractions; Walks along beach, (good lunch at Barley Mow 2 miles) local bus to Havant, Chichester Portsmouth, South Downs.

Rally slips and Cheques to M.Valentine, 11, Hamilton Close, Langstone, Havant, Hants PO9 1RP. Tel.No. 023 9248 2818.

Please include **SAE** for confirmation and directions.

Directions; Having followed the Hayling Island signs from the A27, cross the bridge (wave your passport to the man on the bridge) onto the island. Proceed until you come to first roundabout, **first** exit, turn **left** at T junction, follow road round past Ford garage, turn **right** into Fishery Creek, at end of road bear **right** and turn into site.

Thursday April 12th – Sunday April 15th 2012 (3 nights)

Marston's Rally. Albion Hotel, Burton on Trent, Staffs.

The site is behind the Albion Hotel, Shobnall Road, Burton on Trent.

Emergency Tel .no. 07713186508 Marshal's mobile.

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

Marshal's phone no. 01283538818 or please ring Jan on 01246236157 if I am not available.

Site Fee: £5.00 per night, all hardstanding. Rally Fee: £2.50.

No Electricity.

Booking slip & Cheques payable to P.M.Pratt, 3 Grafton Rd., Stapenhill, Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE15 9DN. Please remember your **S.A.E.**

A VISIT ROUND THE BREWERY ON THE FRIDAY MORNING will be arranged.

Cost £6.50p each, please send cheque with site fees if you would like to participate in this trip.

A MEAL FRI. EVENING and MEAL SAT. EVENING will be available. (WEEKEND OFF COOKING DUTIES LADIES).

Directions: The Albion Hotel is situated on the B5017 on the Burton to Uttoxeter road and is on the bus route into Burton on Trent.

Dogs are allowed.

Rally starts at 12noon Thursday. NOT BEFORE PLEASE.

26th - 29th April National Motorhome Show, East of England Showground, Peterborough. PE2 6XE.

Emergency Tel.No. 07922049714.

Rally Marshals: Pauline & Neil Rogers & Yvonne & Stuart Wood. Please use the booking form enclosed in the February Newsletter if possible. If you use a form from other magazines please mark the form ASOC and note the **special Club site fees:**

Arrive Thursday: £42, arrive Friday £39, arrive Saturday £36.

All bookings for the Saturday evening entertainment must be made with Warners when returning the application form to the organisers, by Friday 10th April 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 £2.50 couples, £1.70 singles to: N.C. & P. Rogers, 3 Appleby Close, Aldbrough St. John, Richmond, North Yorks. DL11 7TT. Tel.No. 01325374540.

Please collect the *Club* rally information pack from the ASOC marshal before parking where directed.

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

3rd. - 7th. May National Rally & A.G.M., Nottinghamshire Showground, Newark. NG24 2NY.

Please return the application form by 12th April.

A Guide for new ralliers and a reminder to all ralliers.

All members of the Club may rally but there is a procedure to follow.

If you see a rally you wish to attend advertised in the Rally Supplement in the Newsletter, then complete a rally slip which you will find in the Rally Supplement.

Complete ALL sections on both sides of the rally slip. Ensure that

ALL family members attending a rally are listed on the slip, this number is subject to the sleeping capacity of your Auto-Sleeper. Calculate the amount of money to be sent to the Rally Marshal named in the rally information. This includes site fees for the number of nights of the rally and the Rally Fee. The Rally Fee is a one off payment for a rally, NOT a per night fee.

Return the RALLY SLIP and a CHEQUE for the total amount of the cost of the rally to the Marshal, whose address is given in the rally information. If you wish to have confirmation that you have been accepted on the rally **enclose a SAE. (Stamped addressed envelope)**

Return the rally slip and cheque as soon as possible to the named marshal as rallies are very popular.

If you find that you cannot attend the rally then please inform the Marshal as soon as possible as they may have others waiting to attend. We always try to give a telephone number for the site or the Marshal's mobile. If you are delayed en route please telephone the Marshal on site, if possible.

The only rallies that this system does not apply to are the Club National & A.G.M. & the large show rallies. THE APPLICATION FORM FOR THE National & AGM RALLY IS SENT OUT WITH THE NEWSLETTER. All relevant information is given on the Form /Rally Supplement including closing dates.

For large Show Rallies ie. Peterborough, Northern Motorhome, Lincoln & Shepton Mallet the bookings are made through the Show organisers and payment should be sent to them, using the appropriate forms to be found in Motorhome magazines, before the closing date. Forms for Peterborough, Northern Motorhome Show & Lincoln Shows are now being issued with the Club Newsletter. Special Club site fees are sometimes available and these are advertised in the Rally Supplement in the Newsletter. When you have sent your application form and fee to the Show organisers then send a completed rally slip to the Club's Marshal with the appropriate rally fee. You **cannot** book with the Organisers at the special Club site fee and then rally elsewhere on the site.

REFUNDS. The rally fee will have already been spent so there will normally be no refund. Site fees may only be refunded when and if it is possible to fill the vacant pitch. This will be subject to the terms agreed with the site owner by the rally marshal.

Please remember that rallies start and close at 12 noon, unless otherwise stated. Failure to keep to these times can cause the Club problems with the Exemption Certificate used on green field sites.

Early arrivals can also cause the marshal problems. To avoid causing embarrassment please arrive at a rally **after** the given start time.

Extra items such as trailers, cars (with vans) tents etc. may only be accepted on site with the **prior** agreement of the marshal.

Membership cards should be available for inspection at all rallies.

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 available to assist if required.

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

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

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

Neil C. Rogers
3 Appleby Close,
Aldbrough St. John,
Richmond,
North Yorks,
DL11 7TT.
Tel./Fax. No. 01325 374 540
E-Mail. ncr@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..... Model/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..... Model/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.

Winchester rally

Supplementary update No. 01b/12:- FAQ No 19 - updated advice on pets abroad

Supplementary update No. 01c/12:- Rally list - amended dates for the Bucklers Hard rally.

New Members – London Low Emission Zone.

The LEZ has been mentioned several time in the Newsletter as it has evolved, however those new to motorhomes may not know that such vehicles that are diesel powered and of a certain age are regulated when in the zone. Motorhomes between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes GVW first registered before 1 January 2002 and those over 3.5 tonnes first registered before 1 October 2006 will be regulated. To check if your vehicle is affected, visit <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/lez/>

Peter Brown

EXPOSING SOME MYTHS

The information in this letter is a collection of items about electric hook-ups which have appeared over the years, but I thought if all the information was brought together, it would be more useful, especially for newer members who do not have the earlier copies.

I have arranged the format into two sections. The first part is simply a list of common errors which have crept into the folklore and will no doubt cause some controversy. The second section deals with the why and how and is in more detail. If you just read and remember the first part, at least you will have a better idea regarding the use of mains electricity in your van. I have assumed that all members are familiar with the 13 amp mains plug and know that the three terminals are clearly marked and that there is always a fuse inside. Most members will also know that other type plugs and sockets are used on the Continent and that we all use alternating current (AC):

- (a) Reversing the live and neutral connections in the plug reverses the polarity. Not True.
- (b) Some electrical items running on AC mains are 'polarity

sensitive'. Not True.

(c) All electrical items on the Continent have double-pole on/off switches. Not True.

(d) Wiring the 13 amp plug the correct way means the on/off switch is always in the live pole. Not True.

(e) Using a three pin neon tester plugged into the 13 amp socket in you van to check for a good earth (which is very important) is not 100% foolproof.

Now the Why and How:

(a) Been explained many times, but you can only reverse the polarity of an electricity supply when the supply is DC (Direct Current), which has a pole with a positive polarity and a pole with a negative polarity, like the 12 volt battery in your van or the batteries in your TV remote control. The polarity of the poles of an AC supply reverses at a rate of $2\pi f$ where f is the mains frequency. In the UK and Europe it is $2 \times 50 = 100$ times per sec.

(b) This suggests that an item running on AC meets manufacturer's specification when connected OK, but doesn't meet spec. if live and neutral reversed. When an electrical item is sent to a government approved laboratory for approbation two test procedures are carried out, one is for safety and the other is for performance, which must be equal to or better than the manufacturer's spec. and then all the tests are repeated with the live and neutral reversed. I learned more about the tests carried out when an item of equipment in my portfolio failed, which wasn't that often I glad to say.

I think that in Pete Fisher's example, the fault was probably due to a lack of filtering in the mains input circuit, not "reversed polarity" see (a) above.

(c) This is really a good one. I have explained in (b) above how all equipment is tested with the live and neutral connected correctly and then with the live and neutral reversed, as you would expect surely? Now we have all seen the DFU's (Directions For Use) which tell us how to wire up a 13 amp plug. The 'experts' writing in motor caravan or caravan magazines then tell us that if by some mischance, we connect the wires in the plug the wrong way round, this results in a situation which is

potentially so dangerous, that on mainland Europe, by law, all electrical equipment has to have a double pole on/off switch!!!!

In other words, if they are right, most of the electrical equipment in your house now, and over the last fifty years does not meet the European safety standard for electrical equipment! And where does the Health and Safety Executive feature in all of this? Not a word.

There IS a difference between electrical supplies on the Continent and the UK.

That difference is simply the plugs and sockets. The domestic plugs in Europe are rated at 10 amps maximum and in the UK they are 13 amps as we all know. The big difference is how the wall sockets are connected to the fuse box. The live cable on the European wall socket, no matter which pin it is connected to, ends up at a 10 amp fuse at the fuse box. All the sockets' live poles end up at their own 10 amp fuse, so whether it is a 2,000 watt fire or a 60 watt table lamp they are both protected by their own 10 amp fuse. This system is called 'Radial wiring', and whichever way the poles are connected in the socket or the plug the 10 amp fuse is always in the live pole.

The UK system is much better and safer. Because we have a fuse in the plug the rating of the fuse can match the load much more accurately, 13 amps for the fire, only 2 or 3 amps for the lamp, and whichever way the wires in the 13 amp PLUG are connected the fuse will always be in the live pole. If the DFU did not indicate which way to wire the 13 amp plug, then the user would connect the plug either way round and it wouldn't matter to the user because the item would work OK and it would be safe because it would have passed the tests. Only a qualified person repairing the equipment would be concerned. The fear would be that the unqualified DIY person might then believe that it would be OK to wire the 13 amp wall socket the wrong way and this you must NEVER NEVER do, because the size of the fuse in the live pole feeding the 60 watt bulb say, would be the 30 amp fuse in the 'Ring Main' and this would be very very dangerous.

(d) More and more electrical equipment is being produced where the on/off switch has been replaced by an on/standby switch. The equipment in this case is always 'live' and is also drawing a

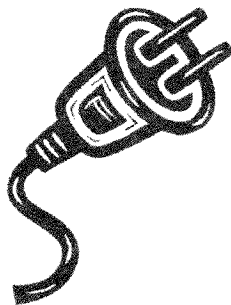
small amount of current all the time. With other items, such as DVD's, VCR's set-top boxes for freeview and satellite and mains/ battery radios, the mains lead is often detachable from the equipment, the end of the lead having a small figure-of-eight connector which can be inserted either way round into the back, thus reversing the live and neutral poles.

(e) It is a very important safety feature that the 'Earth' connection is sound and offers a low resistance to the current in a fault situation. This is why the three pin neon tester indicates 'Earth OK' as one of its functions. Unfortunately it is now possible for the tester to show OK even if the earth connection is missing. This is due to the addition of carbon to the rubber of the tyres and carbon being an electrical conductor provides an alternative path for the current supplying the neon to go to earth. To overcome this problem, you will need a lead as described by Pete Fisher in the May Newsletter, i.e. a blue plug to BS4343 spec. connected to a 13 amp trailing socket. These adaptors can be purchased from caravan dealers for about £6.

Before connecting your van to the site supply, connect the blue plug to the van end of the hook-up lead and plug your neon tester into the 13 amp trailing socket. Now connect to the site supply. If all is well, disconnect from the site supply and reconnect your lead as normal. It just takes a few minutes.

If you should use a site's supply without doing this check, and the tester shows 'No Earth', besides checking for this fault, you should also check the condition of the cable linking the earth wire coming in from the hook-up lead and the vehicle chassis. At the Sedgemoor rally where all the pitches have mains supply, I found that a Boxer, a Transit and a VW all showed earth OK even when the earth cable was detached. All the above

information is derived from my own hands--on personal observations and experience apart from the addition of the carbon to the tyres, which came from another member. It wouldn't matter in practice if the addition was rice pudding, the tyres still conduct electricity!



Albert Brown.

Eberspacher Heater

I read the note in the latest Newsletter about the problem experienced with the Eberspacher heater. I'm not an expert but have had some experience with this make of heater in our 2003 Duetto.

I guess others may have already mentioned the high current drain on the battery from this type of heater. The book for my D2 shows 100 watts during starting, that's about 8amps. When delivering full power heat flow (putting out 2200watts) it's 3amps. Without electric hook-up having the heater on for any length of time will drain the leisure battery - great! We now see the advantage of vans fitted with Truma gas convector heaters that consume little or no electricity. My guess is your heater is even bigger than ours and therefore consumes more electricity.

After we experienced our Eberspacher cutting out, we heard at an AGM that the wire feed to our Duetto had been upgraded to thicker wire in subsequent years - to minimise the voltage drop along the wire. This apparently was the cause of ours not entering the heat delivery phase at start up. I subsequently had the Service Centre at Willersey upgrade the wiring. I also fitted a larger leisure battery, going from 70 to 105 amp/hrs and fitted a 60 watt solar panel. Our heater works but we limit its usage mostly to times when we are getting dressed or undressed.

The bottom line is that this type of heater isn't suitable for using on a van in cold weather without electric hook-up. You can mitigate things to some extent by having a larger capacity leisure battery; another option to consider buying a petrol generator if you have the space.

Unfortunately several of Auto-Sleepers vans even today are only really usable in cold weather if you have electric hook-up. There's a Whale heater AS are fitting to some vans that might have a marginally lower electric consumption but having a Truma convector heater is the ideal solution. <http://www.truma.com/int/en/heating/trumatic-s-3002-s-3002-p.php>

Michael & Gill Moore

There's more...

I have had experience similar to that described in the newsletter with Eberspacher heaters. Perhaps if I tell you what was happening in my case then you will be able to take appropriate action.

My leisure battery was never being properly charged due to internal resistance in the charging wire. This was because the wire was simply too light a gauge for efficient transmission of the current. Thus with a below par battery to start with there was always going to be scope for this fault to arise. When the Eberspacher starts up it takes about 7 or 8 amps for about a minute, then on shutdown about the same. This is quite a hit for the battery in conjunction with all the other demands upon it. So we soon reach a state where, during the start up the battery voltage drops below that which the heater needs. Then the low voltage cut out on the heater makes its presence known, stopping the operation. Now the battery is able to gather it's wits together and the voltage gradually creeps up. Once it reaches the correct value the heater then thinks that there is sufficient current and goes about the start procedure once again with the same result, thereby compounding the problem.

The answers probably lie in the following, first the wiring to the leisure battery and also to the heater needs to be increased in size in order to minimise loss due to resistance and secondly the battery needs to be in good condition or preferably doubled up to provide the necessary current. The longer the run for the cable the heavier it needs to be to avoid too much voltage/current drop. There are charge regulator units available like Adverc which fool the van's own regulator into thinking that the battery voltage is lower than it is until a full charge is achieved. Investment in a solar panel (at least 80 watt would be advantageous, and anything less a waste of money) would be worthwhile. I have now had two vans with 80 watt panels and the best reading I have seen on the control panel is only 13 or 14 watts. This bears out what I was told when I asked about fitments at specialists Conrad Anderson in Birmingham.

It may be worth noting that when my van went to Eberspacher's place in Ringwood it was found that the heater had gone through over one thousand start up or attempted cycles in only 6 months.

I hope that you can make sense of the above and that it is of some use.

Happy new year, Pete Fisher

A note from the Treasurer to Rally Marshals (and prospective Marshals)

When Neil sends your rally pack he will include the new Rally Cash Summary sheet. The second page contains fields in which to enter the rally and raffle cash details and the first page fields in which to summarise the transactions. Neil will also have sent an example of a completed sheet to show the level of detail requested. It will make my task of integrating the information we require into the Club records easy if you do not make any extra notes on the sheet or send information on additional sheets. Please do send receipts for items purchased (they don't need to be vat receipts) and, again it will make life easier, please number each receipt and put the number at the end of the description of the expenditure item.

Whenever you are able to process it, Neil will e-mail you a soft copy of the form. If you enter details of income and expenditure items on the second page, the summary is automatically displayed on the first page. Other information can be entered in relevant fields and the form e-mailed to me.

If the form is opened with Microsoft Office or Open Office the only cells that are accessible are those in which you can enter data, all other cells are protected and therefore the form calculations are secure. If you open the form in Microsoft Works, all the calculations will be performed correctly but cells are not protected so it is possible for you to delete or amend calculation formulae – the form also loses some of its display formatting.

If you have none of the software mentioned above but have a broadband internet connection then you can use Google Documents to view, edit and save the form. If you go to Google home page top menu [More] and possibly additionally [Even More] you will find a facility called Documents. If you haven't previously done so, you will have to sign in to Google but you can then upload and work on the form (and if you are interested, many other type of documents). The form cells are not protected so you have to be careful not to damage calculation formulae.

If you have any queries on the actual use of the form (rather than on rally management that should be referred to Neil), either paper or soft, please contact me.

Peter Brown, Treasurer

Sedgemoor Carnival, Burnham On Sea November 2011

From Rally organisers Brian and Linda Ellis

Another great Carnival and a rally well attended. We must thank Rita Jones and Keith Taylor who kindly stepped in to marshal for us, their help was much needed and equally appreciated. The absence of Sheila and Ivor Barnett was due to family celebrations but we look forward to seeing them during the coming year.

As vans arrived we sited them, and all was going well. BUT THEN, high winds from the hurricane that had devastated America hit our region with enough sting left in the tail to bring a monsoon and within minutes, the whole area was awash with surface water.

Bridgwater, just across the bay from Burnham, closed river bridges because of flash flooding and high water; some homes were evacuated when part of the river defence wall collapsed taking the road with it. Fortunately, the weather passed over by the evening and Bridgwater got the season underway with the first of the carnivals. Sadly North Petherton's carnival on the Saturday was cancelled in respect for the horrendous M5 pile up.

By Saturday lunch time the water had all but cleared and the rest of the weekend stayed dry and mild. We did our Sunday market walk and afternoon cycle ride and enjoyed the Firework display on the evening. Monday was our beach walk to the Berrow pub for lunch, now for this I have to apologise to some of our walkers.

The pub agreed to accommodate us if we let them know roughly how many to cater for. Usually we have about 20 to 30 so I estimated about 30 walkers. I phoned ahead on the day to let them know we were starting out and confirm how many to expect. To my surprise and their horror, seventy five plus did the walk. They had barely an hour before the first arrivals. Extra food was prepared; they were ran ragged serving food and drinks and quickly ran out of most meal choices. We called in to the Berrow pub later with a tin of sweets as a thank you and peace offering, then tentatively asked if we could do it again next year. I think raised eyebrows means yes.

The carnival on Monday evening, had a few delays and one major hold up as a float tried to re-site a street sign - other than that it went well. On Tuesday, everyone got away without any problems and with fond farewells, there ended the 2011 season for us at least.

Thank you all for coming, for your patience and understanding during the difficult periods and your support throughout.

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