



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*



Péage

Go Box

Vignette

?

?

?

Is it possible to use cash?

NEWSLETTER 282

March 2012

From the Editor ^(S)

For those of you who may not be aware Peter is standing down as Newsletter Editor at this year's AGM and David Mayne will be taking over, so all copy for the June Newsletter should be with David by 10th May.

It will be almost 6½ years since we took over the Newsletter, somewhat abruptly, from Harry Henthorne. Like David, we were due to take over at the AGM, but unfortunately, Harry and Sheila suffered a house fire in December 2005 and we had to step in and produce the January 2006 issue.

However, it's not quite time to say goodbye, we have two more issues to produce, so for the time being keep your articles coming and we'll let you have more details in our final Newsletter - May 2012.

Looking forward the Whitemead Rally is imminent and we have our Channel crossing booked for our summer break; honestly they're getting longer and longer, but so much to see, so much to do.....

We are visiting Austria in the summer and I find that as our van is over 3.5T we cannot use a vignette for access to the motorway network but must pay tolls via a wireless Go Box. The toll structure is such that you pay a surcharge for having an older vehicle but get a discount if your vehicle emission class is Euro IV or V (as ours is). Not being fluent in German, I thought it best to register the van as Euro V before arriving at the border and the Austrian Highways authority web site suggested it could be done easily by e-mail! I was told that the completed application form and registration document were insufficient evidence. I had to obtain a vehicle specific EU Certificate of Conformity from Auto-sleeper. From then on it was total confusion through over 20 e-mails before I asked the London arm of the Austrian tourist office to resolve the matter and subsequently received confirmation that our van was registered appropriately.

You will read later in the Newsletter of the sad death of Ven Venables, a lovely man both Peter and I knew fairly well and we, along with many others from the Club, joined his family and other friends at his funeral on 15th February. I'm sure we speak for everyone when we say our thoughts are with Nora at this sad time.

The National Rally

3rd - 7th May 2012

AT THE NEWARK SHOWGROUND

SALES AND WANTED BOARD

This will be situated in the Stuart Goodwin Hall again.

If you would like to place an advert it **must** contain
Motorhome type
Registration Number
Row in which your vehicle is situated.

A mobile phone number would be useful

Please see me in the hall to have it put on the board
A donation for the weekend charity of 50p to place the
advert is suggested.

A further donation on completion of a successful sale/
purchase would be appreciated.

Ian Wood
NUEVO ES

07521 813890
M11MWD

More on The National.....

CAKE COMPETITION

1st Prize £30

2nd Prize £20

3rd Prize £10

GENOA CAKE

175g (6 oz) Butter
175g (6 oz) Castor Sugar
250g (8 oz) Self Raising Flour
3 Eggs - beaten
250g (8 oz) Mixed Sultanas & Currants
50g (2 oz) Chopped Candied Peel
1 tsp Grated Lemon Rind
A little milk to mix

METHOD

Cream the butter and sugar, add the beaten eggs. Add the flour.
Stir in the lemon rind, mixed fruit and candied peel.
Add a little milk.
Pour into a well lined 7" round cake tin.
Bake for approximately 1½ hours in a moderate oven.
Place the cake on a cardboard plate and cover with cling film.

Please bring to the Stuart Goodwin Hall on Friday between 10am and 4pm.

All cakes will be auctioned off for the chosen charity.

Ven Venables

It was with great sadness that we heard of Ven's death. We knew that he was not in the best of health when we saw him last, nevertheless it came as a great shock.

We first met Ven and Nora about 20 years ago at a rally in Fell End, in Cumbria, and since then have spent many pleasant times in their company. Over the years Ven has made a tremendous contribution to A.S.O.C. running and assisting at numerous rallies both at home and abroad. And when Nora became Chair of the A.G.M. Sub Committee Ven was an essential part of the Venables team; giving many hours of his time driving to and from meetings and travelling around the country looking for alternative venues for the A.G.M.

Ven always had time for a smile and a cheery wave and was always willing to give a helping hand to anyone in need. Those of us who had the good fortune to know and spend time with Ven and Nora will remember him with great affection.

Pauline & Neil Rogers

It is indeed sad when one says farewell to an old friend, yet in this case more so, since Ven was not only a long serving Club member, but one who so nobly supported Nora in all her diligent work on our behalf.

It was well over twenty years ago Ven and Nora joined the Club and immediately we were struck by their dedication and hard work on our behalf. With others, they soon became the heart of the Club, and remained so thereafter. Whilst Ven was never a Committee Member, he was always at Nora's side, driving long distances to rallies they had organised, to Committee Meetings and of course to the National Rallies in which Nora played such an important and vital role.

For my part, I found Ven a delightful man and we often had long chats when washing up the cups and saucers after somewhat lengthy and arduous Committee Meetings! Our natters extended through his likes and dislikes of certain models, to his fascination and expertise in making model aircraft in his younger days. We talked all about model diesel engines and much more too, a welcome respite from committee matters!! One only had to see the intricate details in his creations to appreciate his skill and dexterity, his care and attention to detail.

It is his cheerfulness too that we will all miss – he had time for us all and in his gentle, unassuming and unflustered approach to life, he endeared himself to so many of us. So we say with deep sadness our goodbyes to a very special Club member who for so long was part of our lives. Rarely does one meet such a kindly and genuine soul as Ven, and for this alone we shall miss him all the more.

Charles Trevelyan



Chairman's Chat

As I prepare to write this months Chairman's Chat, I have learned of the sad of passing of Ven Venables, Nora's husband, such a gentleman and a very hard worker on behalf of the club. He will be very much missed by so many and my thoughts and prayers go out to Nora and family at this difficult time.

Once again I would like to say a big welcome to all of our new members, I trust that you will all gain something from belonging to ASOC, whether it be meeting and making new friends or grabbing the opportunity of going to rally venues, an area that you either like or maybe are on your wish list to visit. Should you want to know something about the club, have a look on our website www.asoc.fsnet.co.uk where you will find plenty of information relating to our hobby and this club in particular. If you are a handy person, take the time to read the ideas sheets for possible modifications that you 'could do' to your van or alternatively pass your idea to our Technical Officer Baz Wellard who will have it approved, so that he may pass it onto the membership. Should you feel that you would like a particular question answered but do not know whom to ask, pick up the phone and telephone one of the committee, contact numbers are on the back of this Newsletter and ask your question, if an answer cannot be given there and then, I know that the committee member will investigate for you.

I am still collecting the names of members, attending the National Rally at the beginning of May, who wish to have their Dometic fridge serviced whilst attending the rally. Please let me know ASAP and I will add your name to the list. For new members, if your van was built after Jan 1st 2011 then the Gas Safety Check is free for the first three years and for vehicles built before this date, I am unable to give a price but I am sure that it will reasonable and no doubt much cheaper than at your local dealer.

Keeping an eye on all matters relating to our hobby I have noticed that once again France has been changing its "rules of the road" and laws. From the beginning of January 2012 it has become illegal to have a method of warning regarding the positions of either a fixed or mobile speed cameras. Many of us use a SatNav device to help us navigate but by continuing to use such a device, with built in speed camera positions, you risk a fine of up to €1500, see Technical Group notes in this newsletter for further information. Please be advised and careful not to attract such a fine, it *will* spoil your holiday!!

Mike Valentine

Welcome to New Members



Alan & Jenny Uzzell	Charmouth	Talisman
Harry & Chris Evans	Northwich	Symbol
Alan & Maureen Currie	St Asaph	Nuevo
Alan & Mavis Durrant	Cullompton	Broadway
Andy & Carol Dyko	Billingham	Executive
Roger & Wendy Gamble	Plymouth	Sussex
Leonard & Pamela Jannaway	Copford	Clubman
Mark Marshall & Maryann Warner	Wokingham	Pollensa
Ronald New	Crewe	Talent
Ken & Anne Roberts	Tidworth	Surrey
Roger & Sylvia Brown	Crossways	Pollensa
Eric & Margaret Shaw	Coventry	Worcester
Keith & Gail Remfry	Bushey	Suffolk
Paul & Marian Tuff	Newport Pagnell	Nuevo
John & Donnie Farago	Deal	Duetto
Chris Wicks & Jan Russell	Norwich	Executive
Alan & Anne Mount	Romney Marsh	Amethyst
Terry Penny & Joan Wainwright	Tintinhull	Nuevo
Bruce & Janet Roberts	Hayle	Topaz
Roy & Sylvia Hudson	Charlton-on-Otmoor	Warwick
William & Gwyneth Butcher	Liphook	Dorset
Tony & Jane Good	Heswall	Nuevo
Alan & Lois Parker	Leicester	Bourton
Terry & Joan Burrows	Wirral	Symbol
Richard & Judy Caddy	Thurso	Worcester
John & Rose Ann Bell	Bridlington	Legend
Paul & Pam Bullock	Saltash	Nuevo
David & Jill Peters	Newtown	Nuevo
Harold Grain	Oxford	Symbol
Peter & Mary Frost	Halstead	Cotswold
David & Janet Bugg	Ingham	Symbol
Geoffrey Challinder & Sheila McLean	Southampton	Nuevo

More New Members

Jane Hilton-Davies & Mike Davies	Isle of Wight	Duetto
Doug & Sheila Howard	Watton-at-Stone	Nuevo
Malcolm Thacker	Uttoxeter	Executive
Robin & Ann Pape	Grantham	Worcester
Jeff & Margaret Brown	Broadstone	Devon
Colin Harvey & Jackie Randall	Bexley	Lancashire
Howard & Mary Hynam	Pontpool	Duetto
Tony Mosetti & Elaine Ruskin	Dunstable	Vivanti 2
Glyn & Lyn Pingstone	Bristol	Stratford
Julio & Sue Ramos	Northampton	Surrey
David & Lynne Scott	Bodmin	Pollensa
Geoff & Hazel Stuteley	Mullion	Topaz
Roger Marsh	Ceredigion	Executive
Alex & Isobel Meiklejon	Kilmacolm	Devon
Keith Orchard & Margaret Taylor	Warwick	Executive
Brian & Pauline Speck	Barton-on-Humber	Nuevo
Peter & Margaret Steadman	Plymouth	Broadway

Dear Members

For various reasons we have now sold our beloved 'Medallion' and so discontinued our membership of the club. We bought our motorhome, eleven years ago, specifically to take our two little grandsons on short British holidays and to revisit the European countries which we saw briefly on our two "whistle stop tours" in a hired Dormobile in the 1960s. Our grandsons are now approaching 6 feet tall and no longer fit in the over-cab bed!!

We have covered about 70,000 miles touring various areas as far as Croatia. We have only attended a few Auto Sleeper rallies each year but always enjoyed the 'Annual' at Malvern and Newark. We especially remember our participation in rallies at Sarzeau and Chinon in France and also in Ireland; the enjoyable times we had and the friends we made. We would like to thank everyone in the club who has worked, in any way, to ensure that everything goes smoothly and to wish continued success to ASOC. Good bye,

Win & Ray Townsend

Some considered thoughts on “Exposing some myths” in February ASOC newsletter *[please see comment at the end.* *Editor]*

In 1992, after over 30 years as a BT telecoms engineer, I took redundancy and went to retrain as an electrician at a local college. The training was a City & Guilds course based around the newly introduced 16th edition of the Institute of Electrical Engineers wiring regulations – BS7671. I did 3 years training to obtain C & G “C” year qualifications.

The 17th edition regulations came into force in 2008. I did not convert to the 17th but our 2005 Symbol in covered by the 16th edition. The various parts in BS7671 are very structured and a challenge to understand their logic. But in the long term, worth the effort. The IEE wiring regulations have been harmonised for some years with those of other EU countries so, apart from plugs and sockets and a nominal 220 volt supply, there should be very little difference around Europe.

Mains electricity is an alternating current [a.c] at a frequency of 50Hz [cycles per second in old money] at a nominal voltage of 230. Why do we use a.c? Transformers efficiently change a.c voltage for transmission round the country. Generate it at 25kv 3 phase, transform it up to 400kv for distribution and eventually deliver it to our homes at 230v single phase.

Part 6 of the 16th edition covers special installations or locations and sub-section 608 **specifically** covers the electrical installation on caravans, motor caravans and caravan sites. BS7671 requires that a **Residual Current Device [RCD]**, breaking all live conductors [defined as all those energised including neutral], shall be provided in campers, caravans and on the site supply posts. The van wiring system should include a circuit protective conductor [CPC] interconnecting the vehicle electric supply inlet earth connection with the RCD and the 13A socket earth connectors and is also bonded, as required, to the body of the vehicle. When connected to the site supply by your extension lead, that CPC is then connected the site supply earthing. The resistive value of this connection should be very low.

The RCD is a primary means of protection against the effects of electric shock on people. An RCD consists of a differential current transformer measuring the difference between the phase and neutral currents. Any unbalance of currents above the rated trip value of the device will cause the device to operate. The RCD pages on Wikipedia are worth reading.

Our Symbol has an RCCB - a combined RCD and Circuit Breaker. An RCD is usually designed to trip at less than 0.4 seconds at a rated trip current of 30mA. In practice, they will trip at between 0.2 and 0.3 seconds. Periodic

operation of the test button on your RCD device is recommended, however this integral test does not check any part of the earthing or bonding of the installation. Your annual habitation check should include a full electrical check of the RCD, with test results given, using the appropriate testers.

The Circuit Breaker works in conjunction with the spur miniature circuit breakers [mcb] to automatically disconnect the supply in the event of overload or short circuit faults. An example of overload current is if you have 2kw heaters working in two of your van sockets at the same time, the combined current load will be above the rated value of the mcb protecting the socket spur and the mcb will eventually trip.

Short circuit fault current is when a direct contact is made between phase and neutral or phase and earth. Causes can be faulty/wrongly wired equipment, physical damage to cables or overheating causing melting of insulation. From a table in the regulations, a 5amp fuse in a 13A plug will need 14amps to blow in 0.5 second at short circuit.

The IEE Code of Practice for in-service testing of electrical equipment a useful and practical document. Experience in carrying out PAT testing, particularly in engineering workshops, showed that extension leads required the most frequent inspection and the most careful testing due to the conditions where they were used. Are our connection leads lying on a wet grass camp field in a safer environment than those on a dry concrete workshop floor?

The most important piece of equipment in all our vans IS the extension lead that connects our van to the site electricity supply post. At least once a year, more frequent if it has a lot of use, visually check that the sheath, plug and connector are all in good, undamaged condition. Check the condition of the connectors inside both the plug and connector. Ensure that the bared wire connections are not frayed or showing signs of blackening. Re terminate as required and ensure that all connecting screws are tight. Buy a 13A socket test-plug that checks the integrity of 13A sockets. Ask the retailer to test it in their sockets to confirm it works correctly before taking it home. Check your house sockets, assuming they test correctly, you now have a known reference point to check your tester. Connect your van to your house supply with your connection lead and check that all your van sockets test correctly and that the RCB trips when the T button is pressed. This will confirm that YOUR van electrical systems are wired and working correctly. If you are on a site that you cannot in any way detect an earth – DO NOT USE THAT SUPPLY.

The IEE Code of Practice suggests that appliances up to 700W should have



March 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. Winchester 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.

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

This rally is now fully booked

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.

10th to 17th May 2012 (7 Nights) Little Cotton C.P. Dartmouth

Site Tel.No.01803.832558 Fax 01803 834887.

Website- www.littlecotton.co.uk

& e-mail- enquiries@littlecotton.co.uk

Rally Marshalls:- Jill & Richard McAllister with Rita & John Tubb.

Site fees £91.00 for 7 nights including electricity. Rally fee £5

Send application slips with cheque payable to R.J. McAllister together with **SAE** for reply to 'Milesaway' Steart Drive, Burnham on Sea, TA8 1BZ.

Telephone numbers are:- 01278 781976 & Mobile 07840076771.

Attractions: This 7.5 acre immaculate site has all the usual facilities including disabled. **Dogs** are welcome but they **must** use the on site dog walk and be **kept on a lead** while on site.

Very close by are Sainsburys and Lidl. There are regular bus services into Dartmouth and beyond to Kingsbridge, Plymouth, Totnes & Torquay. Cross on the ferry to Kingswear for a steam train to Paignton or a bus to Brixham.

This will be the Club's 15th year attending the Dart Music Festival held from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th May. Enjoy a boat trip from Dartmouth, up river to Totnes or out to sea. There are a number NT properties in the area. Remember to bring your NT Membership cards and also your free bus travel cards.

Please do not arrive before Noon on rally day.

This site is in a lovely area of South Devon with much to see and do; if you would like to extend your stay either before or after the rally please contact the site owners direct on numbers & or e-mail as above.

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.

a 3A fuse and those rated above 700W have a 13A fuse in the plug top. The Code of Practice also gives guidance on the types of equipment that could be connected to the supply.

Class I: - Appliances and tools where protection against electric shock is achieved by basic insulation and also by connecting any metal conducting parts to the protective earth conductor of the FIXED installation. Examples are kettles, irons, washing machines, microwaves etc. Flexible power supply cables must have an earthing conductor when used for Class I equipment.. All extension leads are treated as Class 1.

Class II:- appliances and tools are protected from electric shock by double insulation. There is no provision for protective earthing or reliance on installation conditions. Class II appliances can be identified by a double square logo [one inside the other] on the label fixed on the appliance. Class II items are intrinsically safer than Class I.

Geoff Longmore

This article by Geoff Longmore is technically correct, very informative and emphasises the safety importance of being properly earthed when hooked to the mains. Technical terms are used that many of you may not be familiar with. I did think of elaborating some of the explanations or adding a glossary, but in the end decided to leave well alone. If you have any questions please contact me.

I've googled this subject a few times and haven't found any cases of electrocution in a caravan in Europe in recent years - if at all in doubt disconnect from the mains and then seek professional advice.

Geoff's mention of fuse ratings reminds me that some that are fitted in your van electrical installation may not be of readily available ratings eg 10A. You will probably have to obtain this rating of fuse from an electrical wholesaler, but if you fit a wrongly rated fuse and suffer an electrically caused fire you may not be insured.

Caravan fires are not rare and often caused by a hookup cable being left coiled up under the van whilst an electric fire is used!

Peter Brown

Technical Group & Website



Baz Wellard
Chairman, Technical Group & Webmaster

Toll roads in Portugal* & London Emission Zone (LEZ) Diversions:

In last month's newsletter I mentioned that I would try to find more about the two subjects. I regret to say, at the moment, I have not yet found any further information. If anyone has experience of either matter perhaps you could let me know, please? *Confusingly, new 2012 maps for Portugal still show some roads as being 'toll free', whereas they have now been re-classified as 'toll roads'! So don't rely on maps - too much!

New MOT Requirements:

An interesting article in the February MMM, gave information on changes to MOT requirements from January 2012. These include - stricter controls on headlamps; headlamp washers and levellers (if fitted) must work; catalytic converters & airbags will be checked; battery and wiring harnesses will be visually checked, plus some other changes. More changes can be expected in November 2012!

Sat Nav in France:

Since 3rd January 2012 it has been illegal (*Fr. Decree n°2012-3*) to be warned about the position of fixed or mobile speed cameras while you are driving in France. If your Sat Nav device has the Speed Camera service and you continue to use the service, you risk a fine of up to €1500.

- **TomTom:**
Say "Removing speed cameras is currently not possible for the

following navigation devices: GO 1000 series, GO LIVE 800 series, Via series, Start 20 series, Blue & Me TomTom 2 LIVE, Sony XNV, TomTom Connect, PRO series.” See Club website, update 02/12, for hyperlinks or http://uk.support.tomtom.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/6830/related/1
http://uk.support.tomtom.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/5560/?locale=en_GB

However, further advice from TomTom does give information on “Disabling speed camera alerts”, on some models. See Club website, supplementary update 02a.12, for hyperlink or http://uk.support.tomtom.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/15793/related/1

- **Garmin:** Also a little complicated; - go to <http://www.garmin.com/us/> type “Speed camera in France” in search. Click “Go” then “Support” followed by relevant “FAQ”. Reference is made to a “Cyclops Safety Camera Subscription” download?
- **Navman:** Have produced a ‘patch’ for disabling (some) of their Sat Navs. See Club supplementary update No. 02b/12 for hyperlink or http://service.navman.com/m0100/F0110_Download_Faq.aspx?bullid=101187&faqid=AllFaq

Ideas Sheets:

Ideas Sheet No. 220 “Digging out from snow/ice/mud” - approved.

Website changes:

Update No.02/12 and supplementary updates 02a/12 & 02b/12 – concern use of Sat Navs in France. Update No.02/12 also covers Ideas Sheet No. 220 and Regalia prices updated.

And finally:

We saw this in a Budapest café toilet: - “WC’s usage our guests being on a diet only may use it! Let us say thank you for their understanding!”

Robin & Valerie Gardner have done an analysis on 2012 Rallies

Like a lot of other members we have now identified the rallies we will be applying for and hope to attend during 2012 - 10 rallies in all. On attending these rallies, we will be making 4 trips out, 4 rallies in all. On our first outing, 1 on our 2nd, 4 on our 3rd and 1 on the last. On all rallies we try to reduce the amount of travel (the price of diesel coming into the equation!) and on the 2nd & 4th trips, do a lot of our own thing.

On doing an analysis of all 28 rallies so far announced, the trend is similar over the last few years and their locations are much the same. I divided the mainland British Isles into 3 parts (east/west divide); North (north of Manchester); Midlands (Manchester down to Birmingham); & South (south of Birmingham).

This was the following result of the 28 rallies:

Abroad:	1 / 3.60%
North:	2 / 7.15%
Midlands:	7 / 25.00%
South:	18 / 64.25%

So it appears that those living in the south have the best deal. We are both soft southerners living in the middle of the southern area, so this suits us very well. We are doing 9 Southern rallies and one Midland. With so many rallies in the south, we find we can "do" a lot of follow on rallies together and have a few days in between each one on our own to recover!!!

The problem is the Northern area, only two rallies 5 weeks apart, and the Midlands, three rallies over a period of 25 days in April and two in July that are four days apart.

Why is this so? Do the majority of those attending rallies, prefer the south, or is it something else. It would be interesting having the figures of ASOC members living in these three areas by percentage. It would also be interesting knowing those attending rallies, the percentage that come from each area.

Finally as a club, are we doing enough to promote rallies in the Midlands and Northern areas? We ran Masham Sheep Fair rally for three years, a round trip of 500 miles for us.

The Club have responded

All rallies are run by volunteers who decide where and when they wish to run a rally. We cannot tell members where to run rallies and if we tried we would probably have even less volunteer marshals! We always try to link rallies where possible, to help members save fuel. Whilst Robin decided that he wanted to run a rally 250 miles from his home many other members would certainly not do so as they prefer the comfort and security of running a rally in an area that they know well.

We plan to review the membership list to see if it is possible to break down the numbers of members who live in the North, Midlands and South. We can also review the attendees at our rallies in 2011 to provide details of members attending and where they live.

We know that there are a number of members who live in the North trying to find sites for rallies. However, members are becoming more demanding in their selection of rallies as they want easy access to towns by bus, food available and a distinct preference for commercial sites with electric hook-ups etc. These are not only more expensive but harder to find as many commercial sites are able to fill their pitches quite easily throughout the year.

We will, as always, be absolutely delighted to hear from any member who would like to run a rally anywhere in the country - even if it is on a green field site in the middle of nowhere!

And a final comment from David Mayne

When we joined the club 15 years ago, the rallies were mainly in the Midlands and northwards, including Scotland and there was a hue and cry to do more rallies in the South! It appears to have overturned in the intervening years.

As always we rely on the Rally Marshals to get these rallies going and I suspect that we do not have enough prospective Marshals up North to organise them. I also suspect a lot of members prefer to attend the local area rallies of the 3 main national clubs to cut down on mileage, or they prefer to holiday at club sites.

A New Van Experience

Its that time of year again; the time when contributions to the Newsletter reduce considerably. It does however mean that I get a chance to produce something of my own.

Chris and I recently exchanged our Wilton (on Ford) for a Malvern (on Mercedes). The Wilton was built during the tenure of the previous CEO of Auto-sleepers and right at the start of the campaign by the company to reclaim quality of build.

I didn't write much about the Wilton in the Newsletter as it might have seemed that I was using my position as Newsletter Editor to criticise the company. Simply though it was 13 months from order to delivery with many promises broken on the way, had several major faults including a design problem that took several attempts to correct. On the plus side, everything was corrected to my total satisfaction during the two year warranty period and the last 18 months of use was fault free. I could not fault the performance and driveability of the Ford chassis on all sorts of roads and weather all over Europe. The habitation facilities were exactly what we wanted – that's why we bought it - and we expected it to see us through at least the next ten years, however at the February 2011 NEC show I saw the Malvern.....

Before the Malvern a bit about dealers. For the Wilton we used Cotswold Motorhomes, owned and run by Frank Williams and his family and I (and many other club members) are greatly impressed by the quality of service provided by that company. For us however it was a 200 mile round trip so for the Malvern we looked for a dealer nearer home and chose Motor Plus Motorhomes of Derby with a 40 mile round trip.

Motor Plus Motorhomes are based on the ground floor of a multi-storey car park located on Derby's inner ring road. My experience so far finds the team very pleasant and competent and I'm very happy to spend time with them (not too much I hope). They are 5 minutes walk from the centre of Derby. If any of you feels you would like to combine a habitation service with a holiday in Derbyshire or the Peak District you might like to give them a try.

.....Chris and I had had a quick glimpse of the Marquis Gloucester during the Club's national rally at Newark a couple of years ago and

were impressed but as we are nowhere near a Marquis dealer and I'm not a fan of the Sprinter (having driven vans and minibuses) we thought no more of it. However having the chance to spend sometime in the Malvern (the AS version of the Gloucester) at the NEC I was impressed.

Although very happy with the end lounge layout, we'd always hankered after a fixed bed but not to the extent that we would compromise living space. Additionally being keen all year round ralliers and recent converts to French Aires and German Stellplatz we want a traditional gas space heater and lots of gas bottle space (I'm not sold on the idea of a fixed gas tank using autogas).

The Malvern ticked all of our boxes and we thought hard about whether to have one or not but the prospect of going through a very protracted procurement process again decided us against it, however during our 5 weeks in Europe this summer the knowledge that their was a fixed bed van that would suit our purpose was mentioned frequently!

On returning home we found that the vans were being built. In August we discovered that Motor Plus Motorhomes had a van built to their order ready to leave the factory so we took the plunge – very apprehensively! Well we have it now and have had a few nights in it.

Firstly the Mercedes Sprinter: Geoff Scott Auto-sleepers CEO praises highly the performance and drivability of the Sprinter. I did not expect to be impressed and the fact that at walking pace the vehicle wallows like a flat bottomed barge in a north sea gale along with the auto gearbox being a little 'tight' suggested I was right. I was wrong. We live at the south of the Peak District and are surrounded by 'minor' A roads. The vehicle is a real pleasure to drive, the performance excellent and the handling at speed superb. Geoff you are right to praise the Sprinter.

The bed is superb by any standards. If we'd ordered the van to be built we'd have left out the electrical controls of the bed – glad we didn't because we love them. The bathroom and shower are smaller than those in the Wilton but adequate and very well appointed. The shower drainage is greatly improved. The cooker, fridge, heating, controls etc are all as we are familiar with and like and everything is very well put together. I am very pleased with the quality of build and the specification of the components used.

The all LED lighting is superb – that technology has finally been sorted.

Its hard to run the leisure battery down and I've found that the battery for the bed is wired as a second (unadvertised) leisure battery giving nearly 200AH capacity. Another pleasant surprise was the new version of the power supply unit that has a greatly enhanced charging facility when using the vehicle engine and is designed to accept input from a solar panel that will then charge both leisure and vehicle batteries.

As they say, nothing is perfect. The 3" dia grey water drain is great for a motorhome service point but on an aire or a rally field.... I've made an adaptor for less than £10 that controls that – contact Baz Wellard for the ideas sheet. Being reliant on a hose connection or electrical pump for fresh water filling was of concern but I've found that if I get high enough I can just pour it in (via appropriate connections) from my watering can using gravity. The TV mounting bracket covered the skart and HDMI connectors but standing the set out on spacers sorted that. I've only one bad thing to say, after experiencing sets of superb Auto-sleeper crockery the melamine crockery set supplied is appalling. It matches nothing and can't be used in the microwave (that is a standard fit) – it is now in our local charity shop. We got a lovely 4 serving set of crockery from Dunhelm Mill for £30. I removed the useless chrome plate and mug racks and fitted some AS Velcro ties to hold the crockery in place – simply stacked with none slip mat between each item.

Buying a new Auto-sleeper this time has been (as it should) a pleasant experience and despite the small criticism above we are truly delighted with our Malvern.

Peter Brown [and Chris Mawdsley]

Another sad goodbye and thank you

Reluctantly, due to health reasons, Pam and I have had to resign from the Club.

We wish to thank the Club for the companionship and friendliness shown to us and a special thank you to Cedric, who gave us so much fun and laughter over the years.

Bob & Pam Wood



Thanks for your donations.

FREE (optional donation to ASOC 2012 charity)

Dorema Highlander size 1 (Bordeaux/Grey) drive away awning to give away. It is complete with poles, pegs and also a bedroom which hangs inside. All in good condition. See www.Bowenawnings.co.uk/awnings/dorema/highlander.html.

Contact Colin Haynes 01993771792 (Ducklington, Oxfordshire). I could bring it to the AGM rally at Newark if anyone is interested.

Autosleeper Inca EK £26, 500 on First registered Sep 2006, white, very low mileage of 23,800 miles. Peugeot diesel engine 2800cc. This must be Autosleeper's best kept secret as there are very few of this luxury model for sale. Owned from new by non-smokers. Excellent condition, 4 berth, 4 seat belts, front swivel seats, large Heki rooflight, awning, cycle rack, external BBQ gas point. Unfortunately having to sell due to ill health. **Contact Barbara or Mike 01929-480117 or 07740-906412.**

1999 Talisman GX, Peugeot 2.5TD, 47300 miles, £17950. 2+2 berth, Cat.1 alarm/immob., new cambelt, security locks, safe, Beenybox, 2 leisure batteries, sat & uhf aerials, sat. receiver, cycle rack, rev.

cameras, steadies, 3 belted seats, orig. crockery. FSH & full documentation. 12 months MOT/6m licence. V.g.c.

Contact Tel. (01926) 490897 (Warwick)
keithorchard1@talktalk.net

Laptop HP EVO NC6120 PG825ET plus extra travel battery. Intel 1.86GHz, 500MB RAM, 80GB HDD, 4xUSB, LAN, Firewire, 2xPCMA, Card Reader, Bluetooth, Wifi. HDD reformatted and original Windows XP Professional re-installed and updated to current level. Original manuals and recovery disks. Cost £1,100 in 2005. **£100 includes delivery to you**
pcb7ty@btinternet.com 07771 827711 Peter Brown

Electric Bicycle. 'Batribike Diamond' cost over £900 used for 40 miles only (*damaged shoulder!*) - **£680.** Step-through aluminium unisex frame, with suspension (photos available). Lithium battery, Shimano gears, 26" wheels, 250W motor range up to 60 miles, with assist. Four riding options: - 6 level pedal assist; twist throttle; launch assist & pedal only. Weight 21Kg plus 3.5Kg (removable) battery. For more details see www.batribike.com. **Contact baz.wellard@virgin.net or 01329 231259, after 2nd April.** (Hants)

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