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# ***AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB***

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Registered No: 4616969*



**Coffee Time at the Sheffield Rally**

## ***NEWSLETTER 311***

## ***August 2014***

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<b>Contents</b>			
		From the Factory	12
Committee Details	2	Senior Moment	13
From the Editor	3	Thetford Fridge	14
Rally Reports	4	An expensive Mistake	15
Pompeii and Lake Garda	4	Whale Fill Up system	16
Italian Rallies	6	BBC Satellite Services	18
Moreton in Marsh Rally	6	Letters to the Editor	18
Hereford Rally Reports	7/9	Coming to Bath	20
Sheffield Rally Report	9	Christmas Shopping Broadway	20
News	10	Tech Report and Web	21
French Emergency Numbers	11	New Members	22
Hands Knees and Umpah	11	For Sale and Wanted	24

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## From the Editor



Another month has flown by and Pat and I have spent most of this in our Broadway. First a holiday to Kessingland and on to Sandringham. Excellent weather except on the last day and it was worst when travelling back. The Broadway got a jet wash on the way back with a seriously heavy downpour at one stage. This was then followed by attending the rally at Prestwood, again in reasonable but changeable weather. We are next looking forward to the Sherringham rally.

A big thank you to all members who have sent in reports or items for the newsletter, too many to fit into one newsletter, but they will be used for later ones. I've even had to delay some rally reports! Don't let it stop you sending reports and items in, otherwise it may dry up again.

As we will be assisting at the Malvern rally, I need to get the August newsletter dealt with earlier than usual so please note the earlier deadline as below.

**Deadline for the September Newsletter will be by first post on 7th August.** Please send any contributions to **daveatasoc@virginmedia.com** or by post to the address below.

Please note that it is important to get the email address exactly right as it will not arrive to me otherwise and I do confirm receipt of any I receive within a few days, unless I am out and about, in which case it could take longer. Enjoy the Summer.

*David Mayne*

Items for the newsletter **MUST** reach your Editor by the **TENTH** of the month. You may post them to 27 Mentmore Rd Leighton Buzzard Beds LU7 2NY or email to **daveatasoc@virginmedia.com**.

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# Rally Reports

## Buongiorno e benvenuto a Pompeii e Lago di Garda

Having travelled from England by various routes, 11 vans arrived at Camping Spartacus in Pompeii on 5th June, to be welcomed by Jean and Dave Hollingsworth (assisted by Peter and myself). Our route took us through Germany, Austria then short stays at Verona and Florence.

The site was a little 'compact' but it couldn't have been more convenient for the entrance to the ruins. It comprised a number of touring pitches for motorhomes and quite a few bungalows, which it became apparent during the course of the week were used for shall we say '*non-camping recreation*'?? which caused considerable amusement among the ralliers.....



For those of you who have not been to Pompeii I think the first thing that hits you about the ruins is the size – its vast, *and* entry is free if you're 65+ so people wandered around at their leisure.

Two guided trips were organised – one to Vesuvius, where we walked to the crater, to Herculaneum where our guide Nancy escorted us through the ruins.....and on to Naples.

On another day we had a boat trip around Capri, where Dave kindly offered to help out (left a bit! mind that boat!!)

Then we were left to our own devices for a couple of hours to explore. Nancy proved a very knowledgeable and amusing guide who enhanced these trips no-end.



We had a communal BBQ one evening and it was great to sit out so late in the evening and still be warm.

The weather remained glorious throughout the week and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, in fact 10 of the 11 vans were moving on to the rally at Lake Garda (the ralliers we were losing had been in the area the year before).

We had 5 days between rallies when Jean and Dave spent some time in Rome and Peter and I chose San Marino and Ravenna, both vans arriving in Lake Garda a little early; which is just as well as we lost part of our hekki during an overnight storm in Ravenna and spent some time at a local caravan dealers trying to get it replaced. No luck, but it gave us no problems and will be fixed shortly.

The weather at Lake Garda was equally hot but a little more humid and it being the World Cup there was gentle rivalry between nations on the site accompanied by some vociferous cheering from time to time (why do they get so excited???). Peschiera is a pleasant stroll along the lake from the campsite and Peter and I took a boat trip to Sirmione, which boasts some stunning roman ruins at the end of the peninsula and a fort in town. After hearing our enthusiasm for the place Dave & Jean decided to visit on the Monday - unfortunately it was closed! Other ralliers hired boats for themselves, or took ferry trips around the lake. One couple cycled 75 km along the river one day, but when we tried walking part of the route we had to give up as we couldn't compete with the hundreds of cyclists.

I think these rallies were fairly unusual in that we had a total of 8 first time ralliers; one couple being fairly new to motorhoming and never having taken it abroad before. Because of this they chose to go direct from rally to rally, rather than touring around, Dee was nervous of going off the main roads.

However, by the time we left them at Lake Garda she seemed more relaxed and I'm sure we all wish them well for the rest of their stay on the continent.

So there you have it, our sojourn in Italy. I think Jean was very brave organising these rallies remotely, on sites she was unfamiliar with, particularly as these rallies followed on closely from one they had organised in Cornwall (about 4 days turn around I think) and both of them were unwell during that time. They breed 'em tough in Yorkshire.....

All that remains is for me, on behalf of everyone on the rallies, to say a huge THANK YOU to Jean and Dave for all their organisation and hard work; these things are never completely stress free. Here's hoping you have time to draw breath before the next rally you've organised at Fort Paull.

***Chris Mawdsley***

## **Italian Rallies**

We left home on 28th May, went to France through the tunnel and stopped at St Dizier. Next morning we set off and passed 1,000 Citroen 2 CV's at a rally while on our way to the french alps near Annecy. Also there were 1,000 Honda gold wings motor bikes. At night they were decorated with lights and flags, parading round the lake. Then on our way through tunnel de Frejus past Turin and Geneva to La Sperzia for a rest, then Bracciano, a camp site on the side of a big lake 8 km from Rome.

Next day it was down to Pompeii, Camping Spartucus for 7 days with trips to Mt. Vesuvius, Naples, Sorrento, Capri and the Amalfi Coast. The archaeological ruins of Paestun and Herculaneum were most interesting.

After leaving Pompeii we went up the east coast over the mountains to Pescara, Rimini and Ravenna and on to our next rally at Lake Garda for 7 days.

We had a boat trip to Garda on market day and a train ride to Venice, going round Venice on the canals by water bus and a walk around the narrow streets, watching the gondolas and listening to the music playing Beatles songs. We returned to site on a double-decker train (Peschiera).

We left Peschiera on 24th June and went to Lausanne in Switzerland, through St Bernard tunnel. Next day through Switzerland to Bern, Basel, stopping at Neuf Brisach, near Colmar. There is an old fort built in 1601 which is star shaped with only 4 gates and walls of 9 metres high and 17 metres thick adjoining the camp site. From here went to Diekirch in Luxembourg for a few days. On our way again through Belgium and on to Calais for our last night before returning home through the tunnel to England having done a total of 2,563 miles.

A big thank you to Jean and David Hollingsworth and Peter Brown and Chris Mawdsley for 2 wonderful rallies.

Alan Guest 1362 and Josie Busby 6484

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## **Moreton in the Marsh Rally**

We would like to say a big thank you to Francis and John and also Rita and John for making the Moreton in Marsh rally so successful. The hard work in preparation for the rally including the rally programme, town map,

brochures of places to visit in the area and the two quiz sheets was very much appreciated.

Coffee time on Sunday evening enabled Francis to highlight the facilities within the town of Moreton including the local market on Tuesday and the bus and coach timetables for possible visits to towns and cities in the surrounding area. Bus stop for Stow on the Wold and Bourton on the Water is located just outside the rally site entrance. Bus stops for other destinations were in the town but within easy walking distance. Stratford on Avon is also possible to visit, but for us there was insufficient time.

The weather over the first three days of the rally was fine and warm with plenty of sunny spells and a visit to Stow in the Wold and Bourton on the Water was easily achieved. Tuesday market day in town was a busy affair with many of the standard type of stall evident, but the favourite for us was the stalls selling local vegetable produce.

A fish & chip supper was arranged on Tuesday evening, but unfortunately the weather turned quite cool and damp resulting in meals being taken in one's own van.

Wednesday dawned with steady rain falling which put the proposed visit to Cheltenham on the back burner, however by 10am the weather cleared with only a very light drizzle, so biting the bullet we caught the 10.16 bus at the stop outside the front entrance of the site. Unfortunately the drizzle turned to a very heavy downpour long before we reached the city and during our time there the rain continued throughout the day. Museums, art galleries and shopping malls were made full use of, as did other members of the rally whom we occasionally bumped into between travels.

Again many thanks to the marshals at the Moreton rally and the other willing helpers.

*Paula and Les (5635)*

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## **Hereford Rowing Club rally**

After five years rallying at Ledbury we thought we should return to Hereford. There were a few worrying moments on our arrival first thing Saturday morning, new location and all that, after the recent wet spell was a riverside location a good idea? Would the ground be ok, not too uneven or the grass too long? Would we be able to fit all the vans in? Thankfully everything was fine. Brian and Linda had the tea and coffee pots on the go as the vans

arrived so everybody got a cuppa and an early welcome.

We had our usual skittles evening. This year it was an all ladies production with Gill, Liz and Marian running the skittles and Joan, Linda and Angela serving up a delicious plough mans supper. The competition was won by another lady Pearl England. Thanks also to Margaret, Janet and Sue for looking after the raffle.

The city centre was easily accessible for shopping and sightseeing and several members were able to partake in the cathedral services and choral works . One group even ventured over the border and spent the day in Abergavenny.

Many thanks to all who came for making it such a worthwhile rally for Joan and I, and a big thank you to Brian and Linda without whose contribution we couldn't have coped

*Joan and Max Cooke*

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Hereford Rowing club is situated about a 10 minute walk from the city centre, where there is a variety of old and new buildings including the cathedral, well worth a visit. A 10/15 minute walk along the river path brought you out by the Pumping House Museum, which we were fortunate being there on one of the two Sundays in the month when they "steam up". This added interest and seeing all the machinery in full swing.

The weather was a mixture of sunshine and very heavy showers, which, fortunately, didn't hamper our evening gatherings. We had a fun knock-out skittles evening, followed by a superb ploughman's supper. Thanks to Joan, Linda and helpers for plating up 60 suppers! Our final evening we had the raffle and quiz, organised by Brian, which certainly tested the old grey matter on a variety of subjects, some easy, some not so easy.

Our thanks go to Joan, Max, Linda and Brian for a lovely few days in Hereford.

*Jackie Moss (5639)*

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"In Hereford & Hampshire hurricanes hardly ever happen", very true.

Thunderstorms however were in Hereford just recently at the rowing club together with Max and Joan Cooke and Brian and Linda Ellis who were the marshals.

It was a true learning curve that week and perhaps we have the beginnings of a 'crafty contingent' amongst the ladies. There was a fair amount of knitting going on but Joan taught me how to do 'beading' and 'tea bag folding' Ask Joan??????

Hereford has a magnificent cathedral with a Henry Wallis organ and a school for choristers. The music was out of this world and we were treated to an organ concert, a freeby, given by James McVinnie a young guy who was the organist in Westminster Abbey for the royal wedding in 2011- WOW.

I could go on and on but David might 'cut me up' so please go next time and soak up the chained library and the Mappa Mundy as well.

Do you want the highlight of the week, well it has to be the 'skittle evening' followed by the ploughman's supper. It was simply too much for some ( see picky ) but Joan stole the show by missing the NINE- yes NINE skittles THREE times!!!! Bet no one else can do that?



A big thank you to the marshals- it's a hard job but boy do they do it well

*Marian Innis 8378*

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## Sheffield Rally

I would just like to say thank you to the members who came and supported the Sheffield Rally on the 11th June to the 16th. Being a new venue you are never sure whether things are going to go according to plan. As it turned out we could not use the grassed pitch due to the wet spring but we managed with the parking area.



The bus stop to Sheffield, Buxton and Castleton is a few yards down the road, as is a garden centre with a good café and a pub opposite that serves excellent food.

A number of members took advantage of meeting with family and friends who live in the area. Sheffield Tigers Rugby Club made us very welcome, allowing us the use of toilets and showers although the water was a bit cold. They also opened the club house and bar every night and made a lovely meal on Saturday.



It was a small rally with 16 vans but sometimes with a small rally members can get to know and talk to new friends. We really enjoyed it because we had a great group of people attend.

A big thank you also to Peter and Rosemary for all their help.

*Yvonne and Stuart Wood*

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## **News!**

### **Moreton-in-Marsh Rally 2014/2015**

A successful Rally was held at the beginning of June in Moreton-in-Marsh with many Ralliers wishing to return in 2015. Unfortunately the Rally site has been bought by Waitrose for another supermarket and it was in doubt as to whether the site would be available next year.

The Good News is that we have been successful in booking the site for a Rally in 2015. The dates booked are the 28th June to 3rd July 2015 (5 nights). This will be before the contractors move in in September. Please make a note of the dates as it will be the last opportunity to Rally on this site.

Regards

*John and Frances Thomas*

## French Emergency Numbers

When you are on holiday in France you may have wondered how do I summon the emergency services having witnessed an accident, burglary or felt ill, the following numbers might assist you.

These numbers will allow you to contact the emergency services for free.

**Dial 15:** SAMU (Service d'Aide Medical d'Urgence)

Dial when you have a medical emergency and you need a medical team in a life threatening situation.

**English website:** [www.samu-de-france.fr/en](http://www.samu-de-france.fr/en)

**Dial 17:** Police Emergency Dial this to report an incident that requires immediate police intervention.

**Dial 18:** Fire Brigade Dial this to report a perilous situation or accident requiring immediate assistance

**Dial 112:** EU emergency number (English Speaking) Dial this if you have witnessed an accident, fire or burglary anywhere in the EU.

**Lost credit card:** 08 36 69 08 80 VISA, Mastercard, EuroCard.

I hope that your holiday always goes smoothly and no-one has to call on the emergency services. There are other numbers but I do not consider you will need them. eg child abuse or homeless!!

*Mo Valentine*

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## HANDS, KNEES AND AN UMPAH-PAH!!

For those members who came to and enjoyed our rallies held at Conkers for the Bavarian Night, and any new members - you may like to join us this year. This will not be a rally, but we have booked three nights (Thursday, 9th - Sunday 12th October) and got our tickets for the Bavarian Night at the nearby Conkers attraction, on Saturday 11th October. The tickets are £16.95 each which includes a hot meal and can be obtained from [www.visitconkers.com](http://www.visitconkers.com)

We will be at Conkers Camping and Caravanning Club site which is in walking distance to the venue. Our three nights (with age concession) is £46.05. Bill will be wearing his leather shorts - a sight not to be missed!!

*Elizabeth Grimsley 2080*

## News from the Factory.

Dear ASOC members

A big thank you for all members of ASOC for the kind hospitality extended to Michelle and myself at the AGM. It was a privilege to be able to share such a prestigious event as the 25th Anniversary with you all. It is clear to me that ASOC is one of the best supported clubs that I know. This of course does not happen by accident and on behalf of Auto-Sleepers I would like to extend my thanks for all the hard work undertaken by the committee and all members for making ASOC such a wonderful club. Here's to another 25 years.

As per normal here at the factory, we have been extremely busy over the past 12 months and as some of you may be aware we will be exhibiting for the first time at the Dusseldorf Show this September. We will be exhibiting up to five vehicles and most will be left hand drive including the new "Wave" models based on the Mercedes Vito. Of course building on left hand drive vehicles is not simply a case of just having the CAD software changed from left to right, there is much more detailed work with tooling and moulds being changed and other alterations that are necessary. For those of you who are not able to make the Dusseldorf Show we will be showing the new "Wave" models at the NEC in October.

As well as developing new models, we have also been busy on the sales side and we have appointed dealers in Sweden and Germany and just signed up a dealer in Thailand who will be exhibiting at a motor show later in the year.

At the factory we have invested considerable amounts of money in new CNC machines and extraction equipment which we locally call the "space ship" and you can see why from the pictures shown below. We continue to strive to make improvements throughout our business and I am pleased to



report that the Vehicle Certification Agency Inspectorate has awarded us our Conformity of Product Certificate for the next three years. In the history of the VCA they have never made such a lengthy period of its accreditation and we are delighted to have achieved such a high accolade.

It is sad to report that just before Christmas last year one of our long standing employees suffered a massive heart attack while at work on the production line. It was only due to the prompt attention of our First Aiders that he still remains with us and for that we are eternally grateful.

As a result Auto-Sleepers will be holding a charity event on Sunday 13th July with employees and their friends and family taking part in either a cycle ride or run to support the Midlands Air Ambulance, British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK with fun events taking place on the recreation ground at Willersey. Should you wish to consider making a donation please visit [www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/auto-sleepers](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/auto-sleepers). The individual concerned continues to make a steady recovery and we wish him and his family best wishes for the future.

On behalf of Auto-Sleepers thank you for your continued support and I wish you good weather and many happy times in your Auto-Sleeper for the remainder of the year and hope to see you soon.

*Geoff Scott CEO*

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### **Senior Moment!**

The telephone conversation began "Have you ever come across an idiot?" "Yes, frequently!!" Your worthy Technical Consultant then advised me to contact Mark Burdett @A/S service Department.

You see, I had just `seeded` my water system with five litres of diesel!! As an ex-locksmith, I should have known better than to leave the water port unlocked - leaving it vulnerable to operation by my ignition key (normally used to open the Diesel port!)

During my discussion with A/S service, I was asked "Had I turned on the water pump, after my strenuous efforts to flush out the system?" Naturally, I said "Yes", which was further bad news as this would have had the effect of circulating `the stinking, oh so important, stuff` throughout the system!

I was advised to contact my insurance company who informed me that my `senior misdemeanour` was actually covered! (To coin a dreadful

Americanism "OMG I don't believe it!) They also agreed to pay for two nights B&B and the petrol for the car, for the round trip between Biddenden Kent and Willersley.

Needless to say, being good ASOC members, we stretched our trip to five days, taking in an Asparagusfest, a visit to my cousin and expedition to the Hay-on-Wye book fair, the Cheltenham Science Festival, a ride on the G & W steam railway and two nights accommodation with my old colleagues from my B.E.A. Days.

Auto Sleepers completed an immaculate refurbishment in two days, having replaced all the water system components at a cost in excess of £3000. They informed me that I now had free Life Membership of a very exclusive, but not inconsiderable "Diesel/Water Club!" (Not to be mistaken for the much larger Petrol/Diesel/Petrol Club with it's half a million - or so, members!).

As Otto the Clubman is now in it's 21st year, I thoroughly commend A/S Service Dept. for keeping us going so efficiently, thank you Mark and team. P.S. One of my fellow members, having heard of my "SM", sent me a sticker, consisting of a large blue tap (which even I can recognise as 'kitchen sink quality'), which I have immediately placed in the appropriate place, (no, not above my tax disc!!)

I don't wish to put Mark and his team out of business, but maybe this story will jog 'the little grey cells', when hovering with the fuel nozzle, talking to those who we love about the coming thunder storm or the two- for- one deals in many a well-known supermarket!!...

*Richard Birch.*

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### **Thetford 'Fridge 3080 on Auto Sleeper Warwick Duo**

Last weekend we had no light on fridge and it would not work on either gas or habitation battery. Checked fridge fuse and the trip switch on EC155 Power Supply Box. As it was the weekend, no help was available from our suppliers (SMC at Newark) who were most helpful and went through the procedure again with me, just in case I hadn't done it correctly. Later, on our return home, (with a fridge full of defrosted food) we checked the system again on mains, but still no luck.

A phone call was made to Mark at Auto-Sleepers, who quickly came to our rescue. The magic trick was to remove the 5 Amp permanent supply fuse (No 8 in our EC unit) and to put the same full back in.

Have no fear of ringing Auto-Sleepers Service Centre, Mark will always help you out if possible.

*Jennifer Smith and Nick Heighton 6313*

Ed: This is one worth noting. Your mention of a feed from Habitation battery must be wrong as the supply is from the vehicle battery and alternator when the motor is running, although there are 12V only fridges that can be supplied from any source.

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### **An Expensive Mistake – Heavy Vehicle Charges**

The GVW of my van is 3,880kg taking it above the 3,500kg limit that differentiates a heavy vehicle.

When we visited Austria a couple of years ago I noted that an electronic Gobox was needed for any vehicle above 3,500kg using the motorway network. I went to some trouble to register my vehicle as Euro V emission to receive a discount on any charge incurred on a Gobox but in the event found that I could avoid the Motorway network without any inconvenience and did so.

For this years trip to Italy we chose to travel via Germany and Austria to avoid French motorway tolls and the Swiss lump-sum heavy vehicle charge (that is payable for each day spent in Switzerland even if you are only parked, e.g motorhome on campsite).

Apart from the cost, I wanted to avoid the nuisance of having to collect and then return a Gobox but discovered that the A13 Brenner Motorway has a special status. It has a toll booth and an extra charge is levied even if you have bought a vignette to use the Austrian motorway network. You can travel from the Italian border to the Innsbruck Sud junction without a vignette. I assumed this also applied to the Gobox system.

As we came through the toll booth on the A13, I was pulled over for a spot check. My registration document was checked for the weight of the van and, despite showing prints of the A13 showing its special status and of the route I intended to take to avoid the other motorways, I was fined €240 and before I could move on, made to acquire a Gobox and load it with €80. I

had to find a garage in a small town when off the motorway network to return the Gobox and was refunded €56. I was not happy about this but when advised that the maximum fine for this offence was €3,000 and that I was being charged the minimum, decided to fight another day!

Now back home and looking for a defence and refund, I found an English translation of the full tolling regulations (link below). I find that I only partly understood the status in Austria. Under 3,500kg the toll is time related and a vignette sticker must be bought. Some motorways such as the A13 are special and attract a specific additional toll. Over 3,500kg the toll is distance related and collected via a Gobox, including on the A13. I should have installed a Gobox before I crossed the border and driven through a special lane at the Brenner toll booth.

I could (and would) have left the Brenner motorway about 2 miles south of the Italian/Austrian border and used the 182 to get to Innsbruck.

[http://www.asfinag.at/documents/10180/7199866/00\\_MO\\_V39\\_Tolling+Regulations\\_en.pdf/b6f98903-1d72-4887-aa81-000d36d999b3](http://www.asfinag.at/documents/10180/7199866/00_MO_V39_Tolling+Regulations_en.pdf/b6f98903-1d72-4887-aa81-000d36d999b3)

Peter Brown

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## **The Whale Fill Up System**

The Broadway has been beautifully prepared for us by the dealer but I had forgotten to ask if the fresh water tank had been sterilised – I felt this was important as I knew that, for some reason, the van had been standing unsold in the dealer's display area for several months. It was then that I discovered the Whale water system!

Taking a jug full of mixed up steriliser, and following well established practice, I attempted to pour the contents down a funnel and into the water tank only to find that the whole lot came back out again! After investigation I found that the tank could only be accessed using the supplied hose and Whale water socket as only the water pressure from the tap would trigger the onboard Flojet pump and so fill the tank.

I then had a look at several online Motorhome forums and read that owners of Broadways, Nuevos, Suffolks and Lancshires were almost universally scathing in their condemnation of the Whale systems fitted to their vans.

The consensus being that, whereas it may be ideal for touring caravans, it's just too complicated for Motorhomes. Apart from my problem with

sterilising the tank, when we are away we sometimes leave the Motorhome on its pitch when we go out for the day.

On these occasions I have got in the habit of topping up the freshwater tank from a 5 gallon container as it saves the upheaval of securing everything in the van merely to visit the service point for water. Who cares if it takes a few trips to a tap – at my time of life I need the exercise! Now the only way to do this would be to invest in a portable 12v water pump and a spare Whale water socket and length of hose.

However, before deciding to do this, and not for the first time, I incurred the wrath of the Caravan Club! As you all probably know, if your granny is flattened by a falling meteorite and this leads to the cancellation of a Caravan Club booking with less than 48 hours notice, then you are in serious trouble! Well. It happened to me when, on our third trip away the Flojet pump ceased to function altogether! That was it!

From one of the forums I had seen that Autosleepers will fit the traditional water filling system to your van so I was immediately on the 'phone to them and a week later we left our home in West Sussex at 5.30am for a 9am appointment in Willersley. All I can say is that Autosleepers came up trumps! It was the first time that we had visited them for work on any of our Motorhomes and the 250 miles round-trip was well worth it.

While the two of us reclined on the comfortable sofas in the waiting area the job was completed in less than an hour and at a very reasonable price. Also the fitter who carried out the work said he was about to do the same job on another autosleeper!

Incidentally, and without making any comments about the popularity of the Whale system, I understand that anyone buying a new autosleeper can now choose to have the traditional water system fitted as well prior to delivery.

Enough said! . On our Broadway the additional filler is on a level with the toilet flush tank flap and the pipe is routed through the locker under the rear travel seats and then goes under the wardrobe to the freshwater tank.

*Bill Chitty*

Ed: I now have this system but I was supplied with the long hose and the unit for topping up from an aquaroll, which I find brilliant. I do worry about the complexity of it all. I'm told caravanners love it and keep them plugged in. A manual system would be a bonus in case of failure though!

## **The BBC has migrated its satellite services causing signal problems for those wishing to watch British TV whilst in France.**

If you experience a loss of picture or unable to find a signal this year when trying to watch free-to-air channels such as BBC1 or BBC2, as you have done in the past, could be because the BBC has moved its services from satellite Astra 1N to Astra 2E. I cannot be sure when the switch will actually take place.

The new Astra 2E will replace the existing older satellite and has a much tighter spot beam aimed at the UK, hence the 'spillage' of the signal or 'footprint' reaching over the rest of Europe will be much reduced. The new signal will reach down approximately to the Lyon to Bordeaux line and anywhere south of this line will be much less powerful than before and may well mean that you will have to increase your satellite dish size.

It has been suggested that when north of the Carcassonne/ Narbonne motorway (A61) you may need a dish of 1M in diameter and when further south will need an even bigger dish. Obviously you will have to experiment when on site but should you not achieve success then this may be the reason why you will not be able to watch your favourite programme. Whatever, enjoy your holiday and travel safely.

*Mike Valentine*

## **Letters to the Editor**

About three years ago Shirley and I were sitting in the waiting room at Willersey, waiting for work to be completed on our van. During the wait a couple came in having just booked in for work on their vehicle. Our usual conversation began ...

Are you members of the owners club, if not why not, what a good club it is and what good rallies they run. etc etc.

Some months later, we are setting up at the Burnham on Sea Carnival rally (an amazing carnival if you have not been) when Shirley is "accosted" by an irate welsh lady who shouts "its all your fault" Shirley looks at me I look at the lady and we both think "what the .... was that all about and who is she.

It soon became clear that this was the lady who we had talked to at Willersey months previously. And it was "all our fault" that not only had they

joined the club, they were now in the process of organising and running a rally at Moreton in Marsh.

Shirley and I were not able to go to their first rally, but this year we made it and we are glad we did. It was a great rally and we were glad we persuaded John and Frances Thomas to join the club

Thanks also go to John and Rita for assisting at the rally.

*Chris and Shirley Sturgeon 2987.*

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We have a Clubman first registered in 1994, making her 20 years old. We call her 'Skuffer' as she has a registration number L802 SKF. Skuffer is the name given to scouse police officers so it seemed appropriate.

This May we attended the National rally and on our way home travelling over the Cat and Fiddle pass on the way to Buxton, our speedo read 99,999 miles so we took a photograph as it turned over to 100,000 miles.

'Skuffer' is the only camper that we know of with multi coloured wheel nuts, inside coloured push button cupboard catches and frilly curtains with stars on the ceiling that light up at night !

Clyde our Urangutang travels everywhere with us and guards our van when we are out. He has been photographed many times He has been photographed celebrating Christmas and New Year attending parties and dances with his mate 'Bonnie'. Across the dashboard are all the characters of 'Wallace and Gromit' that have not moved after all those many miles.

In June 'Skuffer' is taking us to Scotland for ten days and then for us to return home to celebrate our Golden Wedding anniversary in July.

Thank you A.S.O.C. for all those happy years and all those treasured friends we have made through those years, without 'Skuffer' it would never have happened.

Keep safe, be well, God bless,

Maureen and Cedric

## **COMING TO BATH part two**

Bath has just launched its Nextbike [www.nextbike.co.uk](http://www.nextbike.co.uk) scheme. It has nine bike stations around the city where you can collect a bike from one and drop it off at another.

One station is situated inside the Newbridge Campsite and Marina, this means you could ride into the city and drop it off at any of the other stations, you can then bus or walk back to the site, or just pick up another bike to come back.

The new scheme allows you to take the bike out of the city so you can ride the two tunnels if you wish, as they are not far from the campsite.

If I was going to ride the two tunnels, I'd pick up a bike from the campsite ride the tunnels, come back through to the first tunnel entrance turn right into the park up to the road turn left to Bear Flat, take the road by Rolfies and its all down hill to the city.

*John Morris 2388*

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## **Christmas Shopping at Broadway**

Just thought we would mention the above, we have done a few of these and have booked a pitch at Caravan Club site at Broadway for this year's event as have other ASOC members.

Basically what happens is that the shops, hotels etc all take part in festooning the village in lights and trimmings and provide mulled wine, mulled cider, hog roast, mince pies etc at very reasonable prices. Although last year I was plied with wine (free) whilst Pam was browsing in one shop. The shops stay open until 8.30p.m. some offer substantial discounts. There are other attractions such as a London bus all trimmed up and illuminated horse drawn carriages. All in all we think it is a really good night with a terrific atmosphere.

The event will be held on Friday 28th November and Friday 5th December this year. This is a really popular event and we would suggest that anyone interested book their pitch soon as the Caravan Club site books up early for these events. Just to clarify, the dates represent two events so just need to book pitch for one event

*Pam and Steve Earnshaw 3865*

# Technical Group & Website



**Webmaster and Chairman Technical Group:** Baz Wellard can be contacted at 18 Greenwood Close, Fareham, Hants PO16 7UF or email : [technical@asoc.uk.com](mailto:technical@asoc.uk.com)

## **Portuguese 'Electronic Only Payment' Toll Roads:**

As I previously reported, Portugal now collects toll fees electronically only on older motorways that are unsuitable to install pay booths. There are apparently several methods to pay the fees but the most convenient, for foreign vehicles, would still appear to be the 'EASYToll' system. Described on their website as:-

"The EASYToll system is a new solution for automatic payment of electronic tolls, for tourists and immigrants, with the association of a credit card (MasterCard and Visa) to the license plate of the vehicle. The driver, not having to leave the vehicle, enters the credit card in the payment terminal and the system automatically associates the vehicle's license plate to the bankcard. The tolls rates owed are directly debited to the account associated with the card."

If anyone has practical experience of 'electronic only payment', and in particular the EASYToll method, I would appreciate if you could let me know, please.

## **Low Emissions in Germany:**

If you are touring in Germany this year and would like some guidance on the 'low emission regulations' there, I have a new extract that might be of interest. I also have an older article (2012) covering Europe in general. Email for copy as usual.

## **Watch Your Weight:**

In the March issue I reported that Portugal is now weighing motorhomes using mobile electronic scales.

I have now received another related report that France is now weighing vehicles as they leave the ferry terminal at Calais - but at the moment this is unverified. However France does have new technology namely '**Video – Weight In Motion**' [Video-WIM] and - if the report is true - it is possible that this is the system they are deploying at Calais, and perhaps elsewhere. Other countries have similar **WIM** equipment where it may also be being deployed. It is quite probable that these checks are intended for large lorries, but I cannot find anything more definitive at the moment.

The above emphasises the need to ensure that, for both roadside checks, safety and insurance purposes, you are within your chassis weight limit. If you're unsure of the weight of your motorhome perhaps a visit to a local weighbridge, when it is fully loaded, may be appropriate?

**Website Update:**

**Latest rallies –**

**03/14 –** Rally report & photos for Pompeii & Lake Garda rallies

**03a/14 –** Rally report & photos for Stranraer

*Baz*

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## **A Warm Welcome to New Members**

Membership Numbers from 8771 to 8812

Jeff & Sheena Baker	Nairn	Broadway
Chris & Ros Linssner	Andover	Clubman
Stuart & Kathy Devitt	Southampton	Sherpa Leisure
Rober & Judith Proctor	Bury	Talisman
Bernie & Penny Roberts	Tonbridge Wells	Nuevo
Chris & Hazel Hutchinson	Hull	Duetto
Richard & Betty Nunn	Crediton	Talisman
Jean Bond & Tim Ashton-Jennings	Hognaston	Nuevo
Liam & Wendy Geoghegan	Bristol	Malvern
Stuart & Angela Shaw	Ilkeston	Nuevo
David & Rosemary Smith	Oakamoor	Kemerton
Julian & Jacky Teeman	Newark	Kingham
Brian & Carmen Walker	Shepshed	Bourton
Dave & Lynn Wrighton	Tamworth	Kingham
Walt & Sheila Ansell	Colne	Nuevo
Martin & Heather Axe	Plymouth	Dorset

Graham & Sandra Brown	North Washam	Nuevo
Graham & Trisha Fryer	Southampton	Warwick
Stuart & Lesley Greenhill	Chesterfield	Warwick
Grant & Cheryl Leighton	Weymouth	Stanton
John & Joan Lonergan	Colchester	Winchcombe
Patrick & Sheila McKnight	Stoke-on-Trent	Warwick
Peter & Mrs Allsopp	Nottingham	Stanton
Kenneth Harvey	Manchester	Burford
Rosemary Angus	Winchester	Medallion
Graham & Stephanie Baker	Evesham	Topaz
Pauline Day & June Angus	Ashford	Nuevo
Phillip Jeavons & Julie Turner	Angelsey	Harmony
Stephen & Hilary Taylor	Leeds	Broadway
Kev & Mandy Kitson	Bilston	Malvern
Keith Lawson	Chesterfield	Dorset
Martin & Penny Johnson	Boat of Garten	Warwick
Roger & Jennifer Gilbert	Yelverton	Symbol
Lisa Anderson	Birmingham	Trooper
John Dransfield	Aboyne	Symbol
John Newby	Barrow-in-Furness	Symbol
Richard & Wendy Yeats	Southampton	Burford
Ian & Jenn Atkin	Richmond	Topaz
Roger & Jenny Styring	Alnwick	Bourton
John & Barbara Armstrong	Guisborough	Warwick
Steve Gilbert & Patrick Bowen	Ulceby	Symbol
Tony & Johquil Smith	Kendal	Nuevo

**Membership Secretary:** Jill Bertlin, The Rockeries, Sunny Terrace, Lindale, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria, LA11 6LQ or email: [jbertlin@aol.com](mailto:jbertlin@aol.com)



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