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

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## ***NEWSLETTER 320***

### ***May 2015***

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## From the Editor



Well, things have been going wrong for me this month. Firstly we went on a cruise to France and the anticipated spring weather did not materialise so it was cold, wet and windy most of the time! We arrived back to beautiful sunny weather.

When we got back, the washing machine had broken (new one fitted), The house PV system had packed up and was not generating for over a week (now fixed). My computer wouldn't switch on so I was expecting a trip to the dealer, but having tried a few times it worked but if I switch it off or sleep, it fails to start again.

Definitely a hardware problem and as I have to get the Newsletter produced, I have decided to leave it on permanently until I have posted the newsletter etc. – then I can take it to be fixed. This is one reason why the club needs a Deputy Editor so I appeal to you all again.

Once again I have not had much in the way of contributions for the newsletter, so it's another thin version but thanks for some interesting contributions. I know I will get more rally reports soon, provided one of the ralliers sends me items but it would be nice to get other contributions that would appeal to the membership generally.

**Deadline for the June Newsletter will be before 10<sup>th</sup> May** and you can send all your contributions to [daveatasoc@virginmedia.com](mailto:daveatasoc@virginmedia.com) or by post to my address below.

*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](mailto:daveatasoc@virginmedia.com).

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## Chairman's Chat



As this issue of the Newsletter hits the doormat, Club members will be celebrating our National Rally at Newark. Hopefully a good time will be had by all and the weather will be kind to us. Necessary business will be dealt with at the AGM and Open Forum and the rest of the weekend promises excellent entertainment.

This year's AGM will see the end of my term as Club Chairman so this is my last Chat and I hope you will forgive me if it takes on a more personal note than usual. It has been a great honour to have filled that role for the last three years and I hope I haven't made too bad a fist of it.

What is certain is that I could not have done it without a great deal of help, so I want to say thank you to all those people. Firstly to my wife Angie for supporting me throughout, encouraging me when the going got tough and telling me what I couldn't write in Chairman's Chat no matter how much I wanted to say it!

Next, thank you to all my committee colleagues who have fulfilled their roles admirably, made difficult decisions when appropriate, but generally run the Club with the light touch which is so necessary. My thanks also to Charles, our President, who is a source of knowledge and wisdom having been involved with the Club since day one. His experience is a guiding light for us all.

Finally thank you to all of you, the Club members, for putting up with me!

# A BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL

See you down the road.

Andy

## Rally Reports

### Whitemead – Our First Rally

Well, none of the white stuff to greet us at Whitemead, just friendly marshals Jackie, John, Glenn and Noel. Mind you, there was a 'white' quiz in the envelope to attempt if there was any time between all the activities. It certainly exercised the grey matter!

So, the first day there was a walk led by an RSPB ranger. A few birds including a black raven did make an appearance, but it was probably the gloopy brown mud which we had to negotiate which we will remember. In the evening most of us joined in a communal meal in the function room, enjoying either curry or stroganoff. Not necessarily cordon bleu cooking but better than we could do in our vans and no washing up afterwards. During the evening, out of the blue, a cake with a candle on it appeared as Shirley had one of those red letter days. She was tickled pink!

The next day was perfect for those going on the cycle ride or walk ~ blue sky with white puffy clouds. Energetic walkers managed a round trip of six miles, but in a relaxed manner, and the bikers clocked up twelve miles, but the timing of the coffee stop didn't coincide because as one lot were leaving the other lot were arriving. Just as well for the café really otherwise the language in the kitchen might have been a bit blue if a horde of thirsty and hungry ASOC members arrived all at the same time. Some even sat outside as that round yellow thing in the sky was providing some welcome warmth.

A leisurely stroll of four miles was enjoyed the next day by those who were in the pink. We ended up at Coleford, not a destination where you would choose to paint the town red but it had a fish & chip shop and a pub and a café, so all the basic needs of the ASOC members catered for. The majority then took the bus to Lydney and spent some time there before bussing back to the site, whilst others lingered over their lunch and walked back. It did not go unnoticed that it was downhill all the way, the gradient that is.

All these activities were interspersed with swimming, using the sauna, pub lunches, trips out in the van, relaxing in the bar and nattering, and as the site had wifi there were a few silver surfers.

For the final evening we compared answers for the 'white' quiz, with the white elephant clue, or could it have been the red herring clue, giving the answer of 'mead'. Also we had the answers to the ingenious 'pairs' quiz

which had encouraged everyone to walk around both parts of the site and stop to chat. The usual raffle had an interesting variety of colourful prizes and some members were possibly green with envy when they saw others winning more than one prize.

So, many thanks to Jackie & John and Glenn & Noel (the greenhorns) for running such a pleasant and entertaining rally. They certainly earned lots of Brownie points. We may have told a little white lie in the title of this article to get you to read it ~ it was not our first rally but it was our first rally of 2015!

*Celia and Alan Waugh (4496)*

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### **BILL'S BIG BIRTHDAY BASH - QUORN 13th/15th MARCH**

We would like to thank Elizabeth, Bill and Liz for an enjoyable weekend to celebrate Bill's birthday. Despite being Friday 13th, the party went well, topped with an excellent buffet and quiz nights. Thanks again.

*John and Jackie Moss (5639)*

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### **BILL'S BIG BIRTHDAY BASH!**

This took place at our rally held at Quorn Station in Leicestershire and it was the best thing we could have done. It is always difficult to try and bring family members and good friends together from all around, including Germany. We had been asked several times about running a rally again at our preserved steam railway. So it was, that the week-end was clear of any special events, and on the very day (Friday 13th March) ralliers arrived to meet in the station Tea Room that evening for a buffet and plenty of chatter. The quiz turned out to be far too easy for our generation and every group of six achieved full marks! Not so the next evening when with groups of four there was only one team with full marks. I breathed a sigh of relief as I had only one set of prizes!

We wish to thank everyone for coming to make it such a happy memorable event and in particular a big "thank you" for all the help given by Liz Irvin, our very able assistant. Also not forgetting Shelagh West for selling all the raffle tickets. Everyone was very generous as we were also accepting donations for the "Bridge to the Future". This is to replace a bridge in Loughborough which was demolished at the time of all the Beeching's cuts to the railway system. The Great Central Railway will then run between the northern edge of Leicester and the southern parts of Nottingham. For this we collected £70.00 and the raffle made £123.00. THANK YOU everyone.

To finish, we had the following poem sent to us from Heather and Pete Martin which I have permission to print here:

A note to express our thanks to you  
For a lovely time at Bill's Birthday 'do'.  
The quiz on Friday wasn't much of a pain  
But Saturday's really taxed our brain.

Finally we would like to point out  
That big 'bills' make us scream and shout.  
But little 'bills' give us much pleasure  
and happiness in equal measure.

*Elizabeth Grimsley*

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## **Visiting the New Forest**

We always take the bikes just in case, but don't always use them. The forest offers good walking and cycling with plenty of well marked routes through wonderful wooded areas. In the summer period forest buses run. Pick up the information leaflets, it will have all the information on the routes, and about bike hire should you need it. [www.thenewforest.co.uk](http://www.thenewforest.co.uk)

If you stay at the Caravan Club Black Knowl site (if you can get in) it offers great walking and cycling from the site as one of the routes is just outside the gates and will take you to Lyndhurst. Walking into Brockenhurst takes about 45 minutes walking by the road but it is better if you strike out across the plain towards the allotments, but it can be muddy and waterlogged, but there is a path to follow. Ask the wardens, they will give you directions

A visit to Lymington is a must on a Saturday, as they have a large market on the high street. Getting there is very easy, take the train from Brockenhurst to Lymington Town or Lymington Pier if you want to take the ferry to the Isle of Wight, the trains run every half hour, take a stroll down to the harbour and walk towards Haven marina passing the open air swimming pool and strike out along the nature reserve giving a view of the Isle of Wight and Hurst castle.

*John Morris*

## **We first went camping in 1964.**

We went by car and pitched our tent in the wilds of Northumberland. Straight away we were bitten by the bug. My brother, Ron, already had a caravan and was a member of the Caravan Cub. This prompted us to buy our first caravan in 1965 – a Sprite 400 for the princely sum of £270.15. After joining the caravan club we went on our first trip to a rally at Leeming Bar aerodrome. In those days holidays were a luxury and, with two young children, the caravan offered regular holidays at a reasonable cost. It also meant we could travel literally wherever we wished to go. The Sprite seemed ideal until a windy night in Norfolk, when we woke to discover that our toilet tent had blown over and the contents were liberally spread around. We spent the next day scrubbing the grass back to a more normal green colour.

After this mishap we upgraded to a Thompson caravan with an internal toilet. The heavier van had dire consequences for my car, a Singer Gazelle, resulting in two new clutches over the next six years. In 1973 we bought a second hand Ford Thames 15cwt van and converted it into a motor home. Over the next 5 years we toured Britain, Austria, France and Switzerland, enjoying holidays and weekends that were only a dream for many other people. Holidays were on a shoestring, as long as we had money for the ferry, petrol and food we always managed to find somewhere to park the van. In those days it was unusual to see a GB sticker on a car or van and locals always took notice.

In 1978 I converted a Leyland Sherpa van and decided to fit a “rising roof” so we could stand normally while in the van. It was a bit of a rust bucket but did the job. On one occasion in Italy, somewhere near Florence, we were travelling South and we were very pleased to be, apparently, the centre of attention for locals as cars were flashing lights and blowing horns at us. They obviously saw our GB badge and were making us welcome – or so we thought. We had actually travelled about 5 miles with the roof open and were on a road that was crossed by a low bridge. We found somewhere secluded, lowered the roof and went on our way with a lot less acknowledgement from the locals.

Over the years we moved on to other motor homes and have owned a Renault RCX, Peugeot Silver Rambler and our present model, a Peugeot Symphony. We have been lucky enough to visit most Western European countries, with many happy memories, meeting a great number of close friends. I have to add that life on the road hasn't always been plain sailing, with holidays sometimes punctuated by mishaps and breakdowns. Breakdowns always seemed expensive to repair and mishaps were

sometimes dangerous. For example, we had a blowout on the M1 and encountered a landslide in the Pyrenees Mountains on a trip to Spain. I've made mistakes – some of them embarrassing, like the time I drove away from the pitch with the amenities still attached. On another occasion we stopped and decided to have a picnic. After a short walk we saw a large rock across a field and decided this might be a good place to eat our sandwiches. It was only as we got closer it became obvious it wasn't a rock. It turned out to be the rotting carcass of a very large, very grey horse. Needless to say we didn't stay for lunch and the birds ended up enjoying the sandwiches. These and many other experiences have added to the enjoyment of holidays and become tales to talk about with friends and family.

We joined the Caravan Club in 1965 and have just completed 50 continuous years of membership. The following year the North Yorkshire Centre was set up and I served on the North Yorkshire committee for 6 years. I also served on the Northern Centres Committee, during which time I helped set up the teenagers committee. I helped organise or assist on 19 rallies and helped out with larger events. We are proud that the Club acknowledged our achievement with a commemorative plaque. We have completed 25 years as members of the Auto Sleeper Owners Club. Again, I have played an active role in helping to organise 18 rallies as well as extra club and company rallies. My membership number is 0009 and I believe I am the longest serving active member of the club. We have seen the ASOC grow from a fledgling organisation to a very successful club.

Our next milestone is our Diamond Wedding in March 2016. This will be a stay at home celebration with family and friends. However, we do plan to be back on the road soon after as the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the North Yorkshire Centre will be held at Castle Howard. Our plaque will be on display in the van. If you see it stop and have a chat – you may even get a cup of tea. Looking forward to meeting new friends.

*Jim and Marion Henwood.*

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## **100<sup>th</sup> Celebration : Lichfield Rally**

We have just realised that this year at Lichfield will be our 100<sup>th</sup> ASOC rally. We will be inviting all attendee's to join us in a drink to celebrate on the Saturday evening.

*Peter and Chris*

## **Please help if you can**

Some of you will be familiar with our reunion with our original Harmony and the unfortunate de-cluttering shortly beforehand not knowing the reunion was just over the horizon.

So far I've managed to replace the 'recycled' magazines and brochures finding an original set of Spring Bouquet crockery! I've also recently been lucky enough to acquire a clean copy of a Cascade Rapide Instruction Manual after 4 years of searching which leaves me with one last piece of the jigsaw which I hope ASOC members can help.

If anyone has an Auto-Sleeper that passed through Berkshire Motorcaravans at Chieveley up to around 1999, prior to them becoming Marquis Berkshire, and has a Berkshire Motorcaravans logo'd Peugeot Boxer handbook wallet and can bear to part with it, please get in touch at [terry\\_hammond1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:terry_hammond1@yahoo.co.uk). I'm happy to cover any costs.

As a full time carer to my disabled wife who can no longer go away in the van. I use the Harmony for solo respite lunches on the seafront at Southsea from time to time and finding that last missing piece would be hugely satisfying. Thank you.

Regards  
*Terry Hammond*

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## **Vehicle Battery Problems**

I picked up a new Kemerton last March and each time I collected it from storage the vehicle battery was flat. The van had been left for less than a fortnight each time. I discovered that the rear camera monitor did not switch off when the ignition was off. At best it was in standby mode and this was draining the battery. I have a solar panel charging the leisure battery, but this was of no help to the vehicle battery.

Auto Sleepers re-wired the monitor and everything has been fine since. I should mention that I have now had a battery master fitted so this is also helping. I hope this opens one avenue for exploration.

*Ray Savigar 7529.*

## **Camperclean – Chemical toilet cleaning device**

Just returned from our first outing of the season at Cairnsmill caravan site in St Andrews Scotland and came across something new which the caravanner might be interested in.

It is German manufactured by Camperclean and claims to be the first fully automatic device that empties and cleans chemical toilets. Understand it is the only one present in UK at the moment but there are a few more on the continent so our European travellers may have come across one already.



It is coin operated and costs £2 and as well as emptying and cleaning your toilet cassette it will add chemicals. I did not try it but I could see it being useful if you did forget your chemicals. More info can be found on their website [www.camperclean.com](http://www.camperclean.com)

*George Langham*

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## **Petruth Padocks Cheddar Rally**

The Cheddar rally is located in walking distance of the Cheddar village and the Gorge.

Within the Gorge are various tourist attractions now controlled by Longleat Enterprises Ltd. See on line at [cheddargorge.co.uk](http://cheddargorge.co.uk)

We used to be able to just visit the cave or just do the bus tour etc. Unfortunately, you can no longer just pay and visit each individual attraction, but they offer two package options and also offer group discount for 12 or more.

Option one is a six part package, at £14.80 each at group discount, this includes Gough's Cave, with Stalactite cavern, Cheddar museum of pre history, Cox's cave and the crystal Quest, the lookout tower (Jacobs ladder), and the cliff top gorge walk,

Then the option of the bus ride tour as an optional extra for £1.60. It is worth noting that you don't have to do them all or even do them in a day, each can be done as and when you wish

The second option is the senior citizen ticket which gives entry into EITHER Gough's Cave, OR the museum of pre history AND a cake and tea / coffee in Costa. This is £11.50 (or £10.50 booked in advance), and again you can add the bus ride tour at £1.65.

If you are interested in either of the above, with or without the Bus tour, please note on rally slip BUT do not send the money.

See Rally Supplement for Rally details

*Brian Ellis*

### **Deputy Editor Wanted**

As you may know, we have been operating without a Deputy Editor for some time and I have made it clear to the committee that I shall not be renewing at the end of my term, so we will need a new Editor in 2 years' time!

It makes sense that we now find a prospective Newsletter Editor, who can cover for me a couple of times a year and also if I get sick or similar. The club has a copy of Microsoft Publisher and I can provide templates that are available for Publisher although I use my personal software Pageplus.

I will be happy to guide him/her through the process of the Editor's job and am willing to do the Deputy job afterwards. As deputy Editor you will not be on the committee but should have a good sense of how the club runs by being an active member.

Please give this some consideration and contact me if you want more details.

*David Mayne*

# 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)

## **Peugeot X290:**

I have recently been informed by Sandra Gayton (5960) that the new Peugeot chassis, the X290 (2015 - on), now has an updated radio which differs in functions to the one in the X250 (2006 – 2014). Which means that Ideas Sheet No. 230, overcoming the 20 minute cut-off, is no longer viable for this new model? I understand there is not a similar solution, but I will investigate.

If anyone one is aware if the 20 minute cut-off on the new X290 can be overcome perhaps you would let me know, please?

## **Power Washers (*In reply to a request in the March Newsletter*):**

In my opinion Janis Wood's concern regarding use of power washers (*March newsletter*) was very wise. I've had more than a few members asking where they can buy decals after using such equipment, and supply is not very easy.

I would never recommend the use of a high pressure device to clean the body of a motorhome. As well as possible damage to decals there is also the potential of water being forced into the van's joints & fridge vents, as Janis mentioned.

Perhaps use of a power wash might be useful to remove salt and mud from the under chassis. However care should be taken to prevent damaging any under-seal or water getting into the van's interior through the 'gas drop' vents. They may be useful for cleaning wheels, but the very high pressure can damage the valve inserts – use the lance at a safe distance.

A good manual practice is to wet the van well before using a good quality wash or wax/wash – not washing-up liquid as it usually

contains salt! Many professional valleters recommend using wash-mittens rather than sponges, the latter can hold the dirt particles, whereas a mitten can be washed. They are also better for control. Finally finish with chamois leather.

Alternatively use an extending wash brush, with a wax/wash reservoir, as this will give a longer reach. Washing the roof requires special safety care.

**All Mod Cons:**

Not really a technical issue.



However, this motorhome we recently came across might be of interest?

As well as having the usual accommodation facilities in the cabin behind the cab, it has also a 2.2 metre salt water Jacuzzi on its rear balcony.

In addition on the outsized trailer there is a large wood built sauna that would easily seat 10.

For heating each amenity has its own wood burner.

It belonged to a German and the facilities were for hire on a timed basis.

**Website supplementary update:**

- Update 01e/15 - Rally list & spreadsheet – revised Cartmel dates
- Update 01f/15 – Rally list & spreadsheet – revised Cheddar dates.

Yours aye

*Baz Wellard.*

# A Warm Welcome to New Members



Membership Numbers from 9056 to 9083

Paul & Barbara Shea	Ramsgate	Burford
Roy & Jean Donaldson	Bognor Regis	Nuevo
Keith & Maria Dronfield	York	Stanton
John & Jeannie Kennell	Cheltenham	Warwick
Dave & Debb Brownlee	Manchester	Warwick
Bob & Jo Harvey	Cromford	Nuevo
Sidney & Marian Richardson	Nuneaton	Topaz
Martin & Julie Dickman	Loughborough	Duetto
Terry & Sandra Gratton	Tiverton	Kemerton
Bill & Mae Morton	Pendle	Nuevo
Andrew & Diane Hoare	Port Talbot	Nuevo
Alan & Anne Port	Fareham	Broadway
Nicholas & Heather Oliver	Sheringham	Topaz
Keith Hills & Sarah Brown	Hayle	Symbol
John & Sam Meyer	Devises	Amethyst
John Lockett & Ann Dumbleton	Stafford	Symbol
Melville Smith	Newport	Broadway
Paul & Pauline Clewarth	Bexhill-on-Sea	Broadway

Ronald Kirby	Paignton	Winchcombe
Mark & Gill Chalmers	Southampton	Clubman
Pete & Gina Jannece	Billericay	Trooper
John & Gwyneth Woodrow	Stockport	Clubman
Phil & Sue Langford	Stoke-on-Trent	Eton
Maria Lockley	Lutterworth	Symbol
Garry & Janet Goodwin	Matlock	Duetto
John & Margaret Marshall	Little Eaton	Nuevo
Trevor & Audrey Duncan	Washington	Duetto
Len & Lesley Aitken	Elgin	Broadway

**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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### **Autosleeper Sussex Duo**

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Tel: **01604870479**

**lenjackson14@tiscali.co.uk**

Len Jackson (Northants)