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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

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Portuguese Camping. Photo PP see article

NEWSLETTER 344

May 2017

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The Editor reserves the right to edit or omit items. Advertisements for items to be sold or wanted by members are published free of charge, however, small donations to Club funds are appreciated and will be acknowledged. No guarantee can be given that any item will appear in the next, or any, issue of the newsletter. Cheques

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From the Editor

By the time that you will be reading this, I shall be on my last days as the editor to the newsletter and my place will be taken by John Morris who has been assisting me behind the scenes and also produced the October Newsletter. This will need to be ratified by the committee after the AGM. I have volunteered to continue as Deputy Editor for the time being but it would be good if we can find among the membership a new Deputy Editor to take over eventually.



I hope that you have all been satisfied with how I have run the newsletter during my time on the committee and wish John well in his endeavours to further improve it.

This newsletter, of course, depends solely on members providing the articles and the occasional pictures which now look much better (especially if direct from camera!) and I would like to thank all those members who have regularly supported me in this enjoyable task, and also those members that send in the occasional contribution. There wouldn't be a newsletter without you!

My thanks also to Pat (my long suffering proof reader) and we wish you all well for the future and we hope to see more of you all at the rallies that we have been unable to attend during my time as Editor. Regards to all

David Mayne

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Items for the newsletter **MUST** reach your Editor by the **TENTH** of the month. You may post them to 17 Newbridge Gardens, Bath, BA1 3LT or email to editor@asoc.uk.com

IMPORTANT: Contributions from Members are published in good faith in the hope that they will prove interesting and useful. All reasonable care has been taken to ensure accuracy but no modification or suggestion has been tested by the Company, the Club or your Editor. Therefore no warranties are expressed or implied nor indemnities given. You try them out at your own risk.

Chairman's Chat

This issue of the Newsletter will arrive with you at around the time of the Club's National Rally. During the rally the Club's Annual General meeting is held and part of the proceedings will be the election of committee members.



Our Newsletter Editor, David Mayne, has decided not to seek re-election this year and will retire from the post after 5 years' service. Preparing the Newsletter is a time-consuming job that has to be completed at the same time every month in order to get the copy to the printer in a timely manner. On behalf of you all, I want to thank David, supported and assisted by his wife Pat, for his efforts on behalf of the club during that time.

Following the AGM, the club will have a new Newsletter Editor and a new Membership Secretary. I know the people who take on these roles will be committed to support the club, however please remember these are both big jobs and your support during their learning periods will be much appreciated.

Although a good number of club members camp in their motorhome throughout the year, now is the time that most get into a period of regular and extended trips in the UK and abroad. I hope you enjoy and are safe on your travels and do remember that your committee members will be doing the same so may not be as readily contactable so if you do need to get in touch with us it is best to telephone and speak to one of the committee members, rather than leave voice, text or e-mail messages that may not be accessed.

Peter Brown

WINCHESTER RALLY IN AUGUST NEW DATES

Due to the cricket club requiring the ground for a major fund raising event for refurbishment of the pavilions and provision of better showers and practice facilities on the 17th and 18th August, we have had to rearrange our dates for the rally. Our rally will now be on 21st to 25th August instead.

John Tubb

Rally Roundup

Whitemead Rally

This was another excellent rally. It was also very welcome after the winter months. There was plenty on offer with walks on two of the days and a lovely meal together on one of the evenings. We had two quizzes one containing the words him or her in each answer and another on tags on the vans where we had to match up pairs of words by linking a word in between. This gave us an extra opportunity to chat to everyone as we went around the site. A bonus this year was that a Steam Train was running and a carriage was set aside for ASOC (perhaps our reputation had got there before we did).

There was the use of the swimming pool, gym and restaurant at the venue. In the village there are pubs for meals as another option. The weather was very good to us. We had to apply sun cream on one of the days and could sit out having a drink. If anyone goes on this rally in future it is always worth putting your chairs in for sitting out. Although the weather at this time of the year can vary from snow to sun it is very frustrating if the sun comes out and you are unable to sit out and enjoy it.

All in all a very well run rally. Many thanks to Jackie and John Moss and Glen and Noel Clarke for yet another very successful rally.

Barbara and Al Buckett 5829

WHITEMEAD RALLY - MARCH 2017

WHITEMEAD - The start of our rally season. We were overwhelmed with applications with over 50+ bookings before the end of December, plus numerous phone enquiries. We were sorry for those who were unsuccessful and disappointed this year.

We would like to thank Glenn and Noel (our able assistants) for their help and support in setting up and leading the forest walks, Chris and Gill who did an excellent job selling raffle tickets and Celia for her game of "True" or "False" on our final evening get together.

The site has and is still under- going major refurbishment and we were thankful that they could offer more hard standing pitches, enabling us to

take a few more members taking our total to 35 - the most we have ever had. The bar/restaurant are still being renovated , so the Venue was open to all, however, we were grateful having a section screened off for our needs, including a very enjoyable group meal.

The Parkend to Lydney Steam Train is now running on Wednesdays as well as at the weekend, so many members took advantage of this added bonus to our itinerary.

Finally we would like to thank everyone who attended and helped to make this rally a great success

Jackie Moss (5639)

Our tribute to Alan Selwood 1939 – 2017

Born, bred and educated in New Malden.

Alan and Eileen were married in 1966 and had two children, Jo and Darren. They started camping in a borrowed tent in 1976, graduated to a bigger tent, then a caravan and finally ended up buying their first Auto-Sleeper in 1996. This gave them immense pleasure and although fearful of crossing the channel for the first time, because he could not speak a foreign language, they spent many happy holidays all over the continent as well as attending many rallies.

In 2003 he had an accident with a wooden ladder and unfortunately lost the lower part of his leg in 2005.

Most members will remember Alan as the cheerful character, sometimes with a beer can in hand, chasing around rally sites including the National on his buggy helping where required or else you saw him in town waiting patiently for Eileen to re-emerge from one of the many Charity shops, usually with her hands full. He was never happier than when helping others with whatever problem they might have had.

We found him to be a most lovable, reliable and loyal friend who will be sadly missed by us all especially during our trips abroad.

Mike & Mo

News from the factory.....

It was really pleasing to see the whole industry enjoy an excellent year in 2016. Motorhome new vehicle registrations totalled 12,325 which, was up 17% on the previous year. What dealers are telling us is that there are a lot of new entrants to the market and that can only be good for the whole industry.



By comparison Auto-Sleeper sales were up 16% year on year but it would be fair to say that we have reached capacity at our factory both in terms of physical space and indeed the resource needed to manage further increases in output. However, as we have always stressed we are not driven by volume but product, customer service and quality. We are however currently undertaking a feasibility study into the reconfiguration of the factory which will make material flow easier and we anticipate this may lead to further opportunity to increase capacity. Initial indications are that the investment required will be around the £0.5 million mark including some new machinery.

I am sure you appreciate we operate in a highly competitive market place; The Brexit vote and the following drop in our currency has added around 15% to our material cost as most are either USD or Euro based. This of course puts considerable financial strain on the business. We will reluctantly have to put up prices in the later part of this year.

The new models we launched in 2016 have been extremely well received and our current order book has never been higher. Exports have been growing steadily over the years and it is pleasing to report we have many exciting opportunities to explore in the future.

It is disappointing to hear from the ASOC Liaison Committee that some members think we do not have a quality process or procedure. Nothing could be further from the truth. All our models are Whole Vehicle Type Approved and NCC (National Caravan Council) approved. Both of which have rigorous standards that need to be followed and adhered to. We are approved by the Vehicle Certification Agency who carry out regular audits on our quality systems. Simon Vaughan has gone into more detail on this subject separately.

Contd. over

Finally I would like to thank all the Committee members and those that assist for the sterling work they do. Without their tireless effort the Club would not be what it is.

I wish you an enjoyable season and let's hope the weather is good. For those that are going I will see you in Newark for the AGM.

Best wishes.

Geoff Scott
Chief Executive

The AS Quality Environment

Auto-Sleepers are European whole vehicle type approved (EWVTA) and as part of this standard our quality system is externally audited by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA).

Auto-Sleepers are also approved by the National Caravan Council (NCC). Each product is approved and the NCC performs unannounced audits to ensure standards are maintained. At a macro level our main quality barometer is warranty spend. Which, over the last four years has reduced by 50% and compared to other brands, we know we have a significantly lower warranty cost per motorhome.

At the shop floor we measure and report quality on a vehicle by vehicle basis and constantly take action to improve our product and put in place solutions. Challenges are constantly being thrown up, whether that's through the supply chain, labour or even, new products. Our aim as a Team is to constantly improve our product, reduce variation and strive for perfection with every material, process, person and new product. The customer experience is our main objective.

But, while we strive to achieve utopia please accept that Auto-Sleepers do have an accredited quality system and, that we do endeavour to improve year on year. We apologise to those Customers who have had a less than perfect experience with our product, but are confident, our Aftersales service will act as a catch ball to ensure any issue is resolved swiftly and thereby safeguarding the customers motorhoming experience.

Simon Vaughan
Operations Director

Touring Portugal

At the beginning of the year (January 7th to March 5th) Beryl and I travelled to warmer climes spending 8 weeks touring Portugal

As you know from my previous article in the October issue Beryl is my travelling home - the AS Stanway which for me as a solo traveller is a perfect layout. Being just under 5 foot in height I'm able to make the sitting area (forward and back facing seats) as a permanent fixed bed and with the doorway completely free of furniture this gives me the opportunity to easily pop my bike inside. Then there is the huge kitchen area - to me the most important area as I like cooking in the van and really I have as much working space within the Stanway as my own kitchen at home.

I chose the option of driving through France and Spain using Aires on my route and was lucky that snow hadn't arrived into the Pyrenees but did have heavy rain going over the mountains. I chose to start my tour of Portugal starting at a beautiful rural campsite just north of Porto where I stayed for a week so I was able to explore Braga (Portugal's second largest city) and Porto and the local area by bike. The weather was great experiencing heavy frost first thing in the mornings and then beautiful clear blue skies and warm. After the week I slowly meandered down the west coast using Aires and also wild camping.

What struck me most regarding Portugal is how green the landscape is, covered in beautiful wild flowers and from mid February all trees in full blossom which was a sheer delight. The Portuguese people are extremely friendly and very generous people, still working the land out in the sticks by hand and as a whole the country is very poor so the people put great emphasis on producing as much as possible in crops and livestock. The black pig is a common sight and they use every part of the pig in their culinary skills, also rabbit is very common to buy in the shops.

Being surrounded by the sea, fish is also a very important product and quite cheap to buy so their dietary needs are



well catered for and the vegetables you buy are so much better than what you see on the shelves of our supermarkets. The other great product they produce in vast quantities is wine and the landscape is covered in vast vineyards and also olive groves, both of which are extremely cheap to buy compared to our home prices. Vast areas are also covered in cork trees which after a number of years growth they will cut the bark perhaps mid way up the tree, left in piles to dry naturally before being processed into products ranging from postcards, bottle stoppers to clothing, footwear and souvenir items. Unfortunately today plastic is used more and more so the cork products are not so viable.

My tour proceeded down the west coast until I reached Sagres when my wheels turned slightly inland to avoid the Algarve from Faro through to Tavifa as it's been completely spoilt by us Brits and is heaving with people all looking to enjoy their English breakfasts and the Portuguese people have responded to this extra in-surge and wealth by building huge complexes all along what was beautiful coastline. Just 15 kms inland along this stretch and you travel through to the TRUE Portugal countryside.

I found a beautiful campsite near to Monchique which only takes 15 vans and well off of the beaten track and had anticipated staying about 5 days but in fact I stayed nearly a month as the site was so beautiful, company excellent and was able to cycle, walk in the area. Just down the track was a beautiful restaurant where we could get a true Portuguese 3 course meal for less than £10 and also being surrounded by Portuguese families especially on a Sunday and that to me is mixing and enjoying the country you chose to visit. After Monchique, I then meandered back up the east



coast again using Aires which are all fully equipped - in fact, at some, free electricity is supplied.

If you haven't visited Portugal then I strongly recommend you to, because to me it's a far better country than Spain and far safer. Beryl

and I will certainly be escaping the English winter again this forthcoming year.

Pauline Porter.

BRIT STOPS.

If you have not already tried, or heard about BRIT STOPS, do have a look at their website www.britstops.com - an amazing organization.

A book full of all sorts of places to stop for the night. Pubs, farms, farm shops, vineyards, restaurants etc. Some with no facilities, others with some or most. They are not camp-sites, tents and caravans are not permitted. Major interest, they are free! Just asking that you support what they have to offer, eg. meals or shopping.

I experienced a couple last year, after my daughter and her husband took my Symphony to Ireland. They signed up for Brit Stops, also available over there, and found them most useful and helpful.

I have signed up again for this year, and whilst looking at the website, turned to the gallery – LOTS of pictures of motor-caravans, many of them Auto-Sleepers! on picturesque sites,

Last year, I used the French and Spanish 'Aires', not quite the same situations, but again most useful. In fact on return home nearly wrote to this magazine in praise of them, but just didn't get round to it. This year my daughter and son-in-law will be using the French 'Aires', as they follow the Tour de France in Symphony

Again, I would recommend you have a look at the BRIT STOPS website, especially if like me you are not a regular Rally goer. Happy Motor-Caravanning.

Pauline Hill. (0366)

Members visiting Auto Sleepers in Willersey may be interested to know that the village store is now offering electric bike hire so you can explore the local area while waiting for your work to be completed.

Dave & Jan Bugden

Can anyone help?

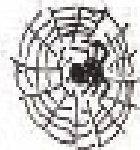
For many years, my wife and I have travelled in our Nuevo to many parts of Europe from the arctic circle in the north (Norway is great to drive through) to Italy in the south. With both of us able to drive we have not worried too much about possible problems although we have usually taken the Caravan Club Red Pennant cover, which on one occasion proved its worth. However we are now both in our early 80's and arthritis means that my wife is no longer able to drive.

We now restrict our travels to the UK where any vehicle problems will be covered by the AA. However what happens if there is nothing wrong with the van but I am taken ill and unable to drive the van home? I've tried our insurance company and also the AA but neither will repatriate the van in this circumstance.

Has anyone had this problem? Is there an organisation which supplies drivers with the ability to drive a motor-home back home? Any advice would be welcome.

David Garraway

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

Deals for members:

In the March newsletter Mike Valentine reported that he had negotiated a 'Deal for Members' with Reliance Caravan & Motorhome Services, of Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9DA www.reliancecms.uk telephone No. 01234 940050.

Their kind offer is:

- 10% discount on the pre VAT cost of habitation servicing – so van conversions £123.75 + VAT and coachbuilt at £148.50 + VAT.
- Also an offer of 10% discount on their pre VAT labour rate for any other works – so £49.50 + VAT per hour instead of £55.00 per hour + VAT.
- For discount prices on accessories & fittings contact them direct (*I do have a listing tho'*)
- **The prices do not apply to their mobile service.**

French Crit'Air Regulations:

You will recall that in the March issue I advised on the application process for obtaining the French Crit'Air vignette.

I can now confirm that all went well and the vignette has been delivered. I will be placing it on my van's windscreen prior my next foray in France.

Passport & EHIC:

It is a general recommendation that one should always carry your passport and EHIC when abroad. However, when out walking, cycling, or on the beach etc it is not very convenient to do so. The EHIC is no problem as it is business card size. However, the passport is larger, easily damaged or maybe lost, so it not so easy to carry. Therefore it is often left in the van or car.

Our personal solution nowadays is to scan our passports and reduce them in physical size (by Photoshop), and print just under business card dimensions, and laminate. They can then be more easily carried in a purse or wallet.

It obviously does not carry the full authority of the official passport but it is the next best thing, in my personal opinion. It will provide basic details of yourself and photo identity should there ever be a need.

Satellite location signal changes:

Lionel Allery has kindly sent me the following article regarding satellite location signal changes. As it is a subject with which I am unfamiliar, I attach his report verbatim:

"You might already be aware that the satellite operators have recently changed the locating signal. I discovered this when my Roadpro unit would not lock on. Subsequently learnt of problem through my complaint to Marquis who were not aware but eventually Roadpro required the locating unit be returned to them for retuning!

Not covered by guarantee so cost £50 for handling and dispatch. Service was good with unit returned within three days.

I assume this will affect other units and have learnt that some suppliers are providing online or SIM card upgrades."

Website Updates:

- Update 01g/17* - Technical – fuel economy – Fairford Euro VI dd 6 Apr
- Update 01h/17* - Member's Deals – Reliance Caravan & Motorhome Services dd 3 Apr
- Update 01g/17* - Rally – Change of Winchester dates dd 31 Mar
- Update 01f/17* - Stop Press - Truma safety issue for some BBQ points dd 15 Feb
- Update 01e/17* - Tech Fuel information Warwick Duo – Euro V1 dd 14 Feb
- Update 01d/17* - Rallies - Change to one of the Scottish rally sites dd 12 Feb

*Supplementary updates. Don't forget to view the website updates page occasionally.

Yours aye

Baz Wellard
Chairman Technical Group & Webmaster



A Warm Welcome to New Members



Membership Numbers from 9759 to 9796

Julie Stanbridge & Mark Selvester	Malvern	Talisman
Steve & Maria Haywood	Swadlincote	Warwick
Paul Mattock	Rotherham	Topaz
Richard Lewis	Grantham	Warwick
Barry Bridel	Fareham	Burford
Alistair & Jan Greig	Lincoln	Corinium

Mary Drake	Wells	Nuevo
Michael & Christina Shields	Wirral	Warwick
John Baker	Reading	Pollensa
John & Lynda Rendell	Swindon	CXL
David & Kath Philips	Buckley	Warwick
Donald Smith	Shackerstone	Kemerton
Hugh & Jayne venables	York	Kingham
Pamela Kent	Middlesborough	Topaz
Graham Cooper	Derby	Nuevo
William Cawthorne	Rotherham	Malvern
Chris & Ruth Hill	Ansley	Stanway
Howard & Gill Thomas	Beaconsfield	Warwick
Simon & Adele White	Shadoxhurst, Ashford	Corinium
Peter & Georgina Pharaoh	Bury St Edmunds	Kingham
Norman & Anne Clarke	Dunstable	Symbol
Ian & Pat Ablett	Weymouth	Clubman
Stephen Bonar	Caldicot	Fairford
Roy Smith	Peterborough	Corinium
Graham & Liz Needham	Kendal	Warwick
Lorraine Chambers	Goole	Fairford
Jeremy & Rita Hind	Nottingham	Pollensa
Mark & Marj Partridge	Milngavie	Symbol
Ivor & Ann Hewitt	Hornchurch	Warwick
Allan & Lynda Cottrell	Bristol	Eton
Gordon Newman	Hooe	Stanton
Clifford & Gwenda Warner	Duffield	Symbol
Paul & Jane Chamberlain	Spalding	Corinium

Mark Murphy & Jane
Barnett

Birmingham

Broadway

Michael Thompson

Colchester

Bourton

Nicholas & Tricia Gallop

Newark

Corinium

David Mould

Ilkeston

Burford

Sue Lester

Wakefield

Nuevo

Membership Secretary: Please contact new Membership Secretary at membershipsec@asoc.uk.com. Further details in next newsletter



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