

397 OCTOBER 2021

NEWS



Get ready for winter

Because of covid restrictions in 2020, some garments are being offered at 2019 prices before the 2022 price increase.

men and womens fleeces
bodywarmers, and hoodies
in various colours

Woolly ski hat



£8.80



£23.30



£25.00



£23.00

★ BUY TWO GARMENTS TOGETHER
AND GET A SKI HAT FOR ONLY £5 ★

show you belong to the club, buy now at these prices

contact Stuart on regalia@asoc.uk.com

President
Charles Trevelyan
Chairman
Steve Ryan
chairman@asoc.uk.com
Secretary
John Osland-Jones
secretary@asoc.uk.com
Treasurer
Carol Ryan
treasurer@asoc.uk.com
Rally Coordinator
Neil Rogers
ncr@mypostoffice.co.uk
Technical
Dennis Downie
technical@asoc.uk.com
Club Shop
Stuart Wood
regalia@asoc.uk.com
Publications
John Morris
editor@asoc.uk.com
Membership Secretary
Jean Downie
membershipsec@asoc.uk.com
Chair, National Rally
Martin Ross
national@asoc.uk.com
Charities & Exhibitions
Liz Ervin

IMPORTANT

The opinions, beliefs, viewpoints or advertisements expressed by contributors to ASOC News do not necessarily reflect those of the Club or Editor. Contributions from members are published in good faith, and they will be interesting and useful. All care is taken to ensure accuracy but no modification or suggestion has been tested by the Club or Editor. No warranties are expressed or implied nor indemnities given. You try them at your own risk.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

The contents in any issue of ASOC News are subject to copyright and cannot be reproduced or used in any form without the permission of the Editor, who reserves the right to edit or omit any items. They should reach the Editor by the tenth of the month with your membership number.

SUPPLIER DISCOUNTS

You must present your membership card at the time of order or arrival.

News is the magazine of
THE AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB
A Company Limited by Guarantee



Registered Office
Orchard Works, Willersey,
Worcestershire WR12 7QF
Registered No: 4616969
www.asoc.uk.com

THIS MONTH

- 2 editor's view
- 3 chairman's chat
- 5 meet the team
- 6 National rally and AGM
- 7 hub
- 12 becoming foreign!
- 14 tech talk
- 18 Preparing your van for winter
ibc event information

EDITOR'S VIEW

The views expressed by the editor may not be the views of the committee or ASOC

Welcome to October News.

The upload of all the club magazines have now been added to the member area of the website. If you find any issue does not load, please let me know.

Although all the rallies for 2021 are finished, many members still camp throughout the year, but many don't, with that in mind we have included winterising your van in this issue.

Brian Ellis kindly sent a photo of Swindon's magic roundabout, which I admit having been around several times when visiting Swindon.

<https://www.roads.org.uk/articles/magic-roundabout>

This had me thinking about what direction we should be taking the magazine. Originally, we intended to go bi-monthly after December 2021 with the first issue of 2022 being February. It has been decided to hold off and still publish monthly until May 2022 when we will be looking at it again. Many are aware, as editor, I am very keen to eventually go the digital PDF route only, and encourage more members to take up this option, which many of you have already.

Don't forget to make a note in your diaries for the National Rally (see below). Ozzie and his team are arranging the entertainment, and will shortly be giving you all the details.

The logo for ASOC (Association of Swindon Owners Clubs) is displayed in a large, bold, dark blue font. The letters are stylized with a slight shadow effect, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

NATIONAL RALLY & AGM

**THURSDAY 28 APRIL - MONDAY 2 MAY 2022
AT NEWARK SHOWGROUND**

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



We arrived on the shores of the UK on 8th September to pick up Winnie the Winchcombe from undercover storage in the North West. We had put her in storage just before the COVID 19 lockdowns started with everything on board in readiness for the National Rally just a few weeks later.

With a calm trip over the Irish Sea and thinking I had planned everything for a nice break, incorporating an engine service, even though the vehicle had only done 982 miles from new, but, it had been standing idle for a long time, the vehicle battery had died and needed to be replaced before we had even started our planned trip but alas, she still would not purr into action and needed the assistance of Mercedes mobilovan they arrived within 2 hours and kept us informed of their timings by text and app. The engineer fixed the fault quickly. Highly recommended for those of us who are fortunate enough to have a Mercedes base vehicle.

The following day we had the vehicle booked in for a service as a pre check due to the long time it had been standing, and to fix the three recall notices that Dennis our Technical Officer noted in last month's News sadly the service from the Mercedes commercial family run business was the complete opposite of mobilovan, having pre booked it in at their request for a full day, their progress communications were non existent. When we arrived at 16:30 to pick up the vehicle only to be told they had not started the work as they have been very busy and would let us have it back the following day. We reminded them we were living in the van and they then completed the service into the evening. I hooked up the car in an amazing downpour and thunderstorm as we left the garage to return to Donkey Creek Farm, looking down at the dashboard to find everything in German!, I was never good at languages at school, but I'm now learning! ➡

A Friday morning had us on the phone most of the morning due to an unresponsive EC700 control touch panel (replaced just after we purchased the van last year) and the subsequent base system failure leaving many systems non operational it's good to know there are ways to override certain systems with the help of Sargent engineers, although on this occasion, due to our van's internal battery failures within their communications system, this was also in-operable. It's good to carry some spare electric heaters from Argos.

Our next visit sees us visiting SMC in Newark, who will hopefully straighten out many of the outstanding problems on the vehicle and let us have the rest of the holiday relaxing and enjoying Winnie.

If any of you see us on our travels up and down the country we will be towing a blue Honda Jazz, please give us a wave and say hello.

Until next time, stay safe

Steve





I have just taken on the role of Treasurer from John Geeson who has reluctantly had to step down due to family health issues. I previously acted as Minutes Secretary during the last few months, taking the role on after Gill Hopkins sadly passed away in November 2019.

Previously, before motorhoming became our main interest, we spent many years country dancing, throughout the UK, on occasions visiting Germany and Sweden. We still keep in touch with country dance via zoom events and hope to again attend live events in the near future.

We cruised on the rivers and canals for many years in the UK before swapping our boat for four-wheeled motorhome camping in the form of a VW California we then purchased our Broadway in June 2018 and became members of the club. At the beginning of 2020, we changed our motorhome to a Winchcombe and are looking forward to spending some time touring within the UK in September.

My path to being on the Committee really started a few months after the National Rally at Newark in 2019 when my husband Steve, now Chairman, was co-opted onto the committee as Vice Chairman in October.

It was the first National Rally we had attended, and we received such a warm welcome from all the members attending and considered ourselves very lucky to have had the opportunity to meet our President, Charles Trevelyan, and the management of Auto-sleepers based at Willersey.

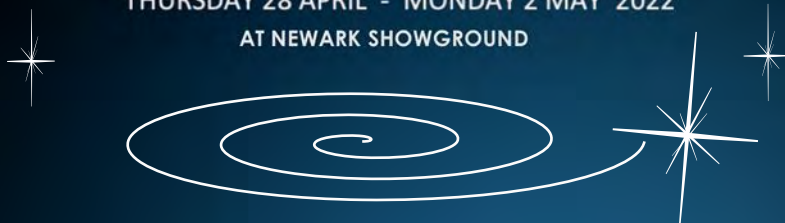
My career has been in banking and secretarial within the Police Force in Hertfordshire.

ASDC

NATIONAL RALLY & AGM

THURSDAY 28 APRIL - MONDAY 2 MAY 2022

AT NEWARK SHOWGROUND



In a galaxy far, far, away past the second star on the right, Martin and I had a meeting and for this issue we will give some insight into the charity for the National, which was selected by the committee from nominations received for the 2020 National. Most of you will not have heard of this charity, but we suspect most of you will at some point in your life had food go down the wrong way and started to choke.

TRACHEO-OESOPHAGEAL FISTULA SUPPORT. (TOFS)

This is a registered charity with an office in Nottingham. It provides one to one support to help families bringing up a child with Tracheo-Oesophageal Fistula and associated conditions. This is where there is an abnormal connection between the oesophagus (throat) joined to the trachea (windpipe). The throat and windpipe run next to each other in the chest cavity. The throat carries food and saliva to the stomach, while the windpipe carries air to the lungs. This can lead to severe and fatal lung complications. Saliva and gastric secretions can be aspirated into the lungs, and normal swallowing and digestion of food cannot occur.

More next month from Martin, Ozzie, and the team when we come back down to earth



WE NEED YOUR HELP AT THE NATIONAL

Hello to all members old and new. As Shelagh and Phil have had to come off the committee and sold their van, we are short handed to man the stalls at the National Rally.

We are looking for a couple to assist us ideally, but anyone who is willing to help will not be refused.

The time scale is Friday from 10 am to 4 pm with a lunch break, and Saturday from 2 pm to 4 pm.

If you would like to help or want more information please contact me on 01484 604133 or

Email stuwd@yahoo.co.uk.

Thank you.

Yvonne and Stuart Wood 2620

Winchester Rally

Thank you Rita & John for the rally at Winchester, it was so nice to see friends and make some new ones, after lockdown, sadly we had to leave early because of a poorly van, no leisure battery. Thank you for those who tried to help us and for those who helped us pack up on Tuesday evening. Sorry we weren't able to say goodbye to everyone. Look forward to the next rally as van now has new battery.

Di Leader & Brenda Jarvis. 2759

Whitby and Winchester rallies
Having just done the two rallies back to back going first to Liz Irvin's and Peter and Chris Brown's Whitby rally at Eskdale school where the weather was "changeable" as in, some showers and some dry spells. Not that this stopped anyone enjoying the rally or venturing into the town to the shops and the Abby ruins. We managed a bus ride to visit nearby Scarborough and also a walk along the cinder trail to the quaint village of Robin Hood Bay.

We went on from Whitby to the Winchester rally organised and run by Rita and John Tubb, assisted by Baz Wellard

The weather had improved and we were able to do an organised walk, then a stroll along the river into the city. Southampton was an easy bus ride away, as were several other towns and places of interest.

We took a walk to the viaduct then continued along the river trail to Catherine's Hill the site of an ancient fortification still with some evidence of its former layout.

Steps have now been added making the ascent less of a struggle, although the views from the top justify the effort.

This was a pleasant rally on the Symondians cricket grounds and we were all parked in a semi circle around the boundary.

Although players did some practising in the nets there were no matches played. This is probably fortunate as a half decent six would probably have gone through someone's windscreen.

I have to admit that I am not a cricket person and never fully understood the

game, so on our return I decided to look up the Late Leslie Crowther's Rules Of Cricket and it all makes sense now. so I have included a copy of it.

Brian & Linda Ellis 2360

The Rules of Cricket

You have two sides, one out in the field and one in.

Each player that's in the side that's in goes out, and when they are out they come in and the next player goes in until they are out.

When they are all out, the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in, out.

Sometimes you get players still in and not out.

When a player goes out to go in, the team who are out try to get them out, and when they are out they go in and the next player of the team who are in goes out and goes in until they are out.

There are two others called umpires who stay out all the time and they decide when the players who are in are out.

When both sides have been in and all the players are out and when both sides have been out and been in twice and after all the players of both teams have been in, including those who are not out, that is the end of the game!

Original author, the late Leslie Crowther

ST IVES and STAFFORD BOAT CLUB

Due to unforeseen circumstances, along with Mo and Mike, we took over another successful rally at St Ives. On travelling back home to Warwick, we noticed a red battery warning light, fortunately we got home safely - more expense! A trip to a local garage, new alternator fitted, a bruised pocket, just in time for the Stafford Rally.

At Stafford, we had a full programme (almost back to normal) with games, quizzes, frog racing, walk along the canal towpath and a meal at a nearby pub. The weather was a mixed bag of

sunshine and showers, most of which we managed to dodge. However, one day, despite having waterproofs, we did get caught in a heavy downpour and got soaked. We would like to say thank you to Angela and Bob Warwick for all their hard work, together with their assistants Pam and Colin Maltby, and we would also like to wish Pam and Colin all the best when they take over the rally next year. Thanks again for a very pleasant and enjoyable rally.

WINCHESTER RALLY We would like to thank Rita and John, ably assisted by Baz, for another enjoyable rally at the Cricket Club. Once again we were sent on a picture treasure hunt round Winchester searching for answers high and low! We did have non-coffee evening gatherings outside the marshals van and again we were entertained with a short quiz. All good fun. Thanks again.

Jackie and John Moss (5639)

Club newsletters/magazines

When Chis and I produced the club Newsletter, Rita Daley, who was the widow of the first Editor, gave me all of her copies from number One onwards. I therefore have a complete set of ASOC Newsletters/Magazines and have read them all

When he became aware of this, Dennis Downie volunteered to scan them for posting on the Club website. Dennis has now completed this mammoth task and John Morris has posted them in the members area of the website.

Several current members had pieces published in early Newsletters and I think some newer members may find the story of the evolution of the club of

interest, as well as noting how members could benefit from the publication before the proliferation of the Internet.

Peter Brown

Great Western Show, Malvern

May I, on behalf of Neil and myself, say a big "Thank You" to Pat and Gary and Mo & Mike for marshalling the rally at the Great Western Show' The ASOC rally site was a long and narrow one with easy access to both the show and an entertainment hall.

As we arrived a bit later than planned, due to a problem with the Truma water heater, we were parked at the end of the site opposite to the hall. My first thought was to see if we still had the little yellow earplugs in the van.

However, I need not have worried because when the music started on Thursday evening, we closed doors and windows, and the music proved to be at just the right level to enjoy. One plus point from being pitched where we were was that I could see the beautiful costumes that so many of the audience wore to attend the concert. Really I was a little jealous because I enjoy dressing up but because of Covid we did not plan to go into any of the halls.

The weekend was very relaxing, just sitting and chatting with old friends. We also spent some time walking around the showground trying to remember where we were pitched when we came to the Club & Company rallies so many years ago. Which gate did we come in and which halls were used for teas? We couldn't remember.

We said our farewells on Monday morning, arriving at Wythall CC site where we hoped to spend a few

nights. However the problem with the Truma water heater returned so we decided to go home and take the van back to our storage site, only to find that we will have to wait until mid October before the suspect circuit board could be replaced.

P.S. Thanks to those people who asked about my health after my close encounter with a pedestrian crossing!

Pauline Rogers 0313

Truma Repair

During the winter of 2019/ 2020, I became aware that the water and heating was taking longer to come to the required temperature than usual. At the habitation check in February 2020 at Willersey I was told that one of the electric elements in the Combi E was not working. I decided to carry on with using it, as I had got used to boosting it with gas when I needed to. I thought the cost of gas would be less than a repair.

In June this year while on a UK holiday tour, I had a cold shower. From that point I could only use gas.

When I returned home, I contacted the Truma factory near Derby on 14th July and the appointments secretary called me on 16th July. I was offered an appointment for Monday 9th August at 9am. I was very surprised at the prompt service. Because of Covid guidelines I wasn't allowed to stay in the factory. After a short time, I was phoned to tell me that both electric elements were not working. I agreed to the cost for two replacement elements and the labour costs. Getting access to the Combi boiler is time consuming and increases the cost. ➡

I returned in the afternoon, the new elements were demonstrated as working, and I couldn't tell the front of the wardrobe had been removed. The invoice was for Heating Element Kit £265.98 +vat, and Labour charge £175.00 +vat. Total £529.18.

The technician told me that it is better to replace both elements together as the kit comes in packs of 2, and the labour costs are the same.

Perhaps most significant is the advice that to increase the life of the elements, use the water heating set on mix (Gas + electric) setting to get it up to temperature as quickly as possible. As soon as the temperature is reached the heater will automatically fall back to electric only to maintain the water temperature in the boiler. This places less stress on the electric heating elements.

I would be happy to use the Truma factory again should I need to, and hopefully the advice to prolong the life of the elements will prevent or delay this.

The workshop is just off the A50 between Derby and Uttoxeter.

My contact was Nicky Price, Customer Services Advisor

customerservices@trumauk.com

Telephone 01283 587900

Liz Irvin 4636

The South Lytchett Manor Park Rally

After a shaky start with numerous people having to "cry off" at the last minute, 24 members met at the South Lytchett Manor Caravan Park on a very hot Monday. It was great to meet members again, some of whom, Mo & I had not seen for two years. We also

were able to greet two first time ASOC ralliers. Tuesday dawned bright and sunny enticing members to get out and explore the region by bus, going East to Poole/Bournemouth and West as far as Weymouth, plus the countryside in between several were very devilish and took to the water, visiting Brownsea Island, where some caught a glimpse of the famous Red Squirrels. Wednesday, again, took members far and wide.

Obedying the site rules, we were unable "to gather" for our usual tea/coffee get together on both the first and last evenings. However, members made the best of it by meeting in small groups, sharing both tales and experiences. Thursday brought us some rain, but this did not dampen the enthusiasm for exploring the area.

We broke camp today on a dull Friday morning, waving good-bye to all of our Happy Campers with several asking, were we going to run the meet next year? Watch this space!

Our grateful thanks go to Al & Barb Buckett for their assistance as Marshals, Brian Ellis for the quiz and all the Park Team for their care and attention at all times.

Mo & Mike Valentine

Are you cycles covered?

Many are now carrying cycles on the back of their motorhomes. Although they maybe be insured on house insurance, it may not cover the full cost if stolen. and need to list them as an extra, and may only be covered in the UK. Check if using of ebikes in Northern Ireland, they are classed at light mopeds at the moment, although this may be subject to change. Consider registering them with bikeregister.com.

Changes to the Highway Code 2021

We all need to be aware of changes planned for the Highway Code.

Be honest, hands up anyone who has looked at a Highway Code book since passing their driving test.

Conceited though it may sound, my hand is up because I have for quite a number of reasons, not least helping family and friends over the years to revise for their tests and also for quiz questions.

We also have the current version of the book, soon to be replaced yet again.

And yet we still come across road signs we don't know or don't recall seeing before.

One quite recently stumped us and although we guessed at its meaning we had to look it up when we got home.

Now there are plans to revise the Highway Code yet again with significant changes that we all should be aware of.

The following is a very brief extract from a news flash on the internet.

September 2021

Edits to the Highway Code will see 33 rules being changed, and two new rules introduced, as well as creating a "hierarchy of road users" putting pedestrians at the top.

Planned updates to the Highway Code are expected to get parliamentary approval this autumn, ahead of a new edition of The Code being published.

These proposed changes form part of the Department for Transport's £338million investment strategy to encourage cycling and walking across the country.

The full Highway Code is more than 150 pages long, with in excess of 300 rules. So, what are the new Highway Code rules for 2021?

There are 33 proposed changes to the code.

I won't go into these as it gets quite lengthy but do advise everyone to look out for the new edition Highway Code as it does call for quite significant changes not only to our driving habits but to the legal requirements as well.

We all "bend" or blatantly break the rules from time to time but if we don't know them in the first place we are highly likely to fall foul of the law, or worse, we may find that we are the ones held legally responsible for some incident.

Remember, ignorance is not an acceptable excuse where the law is concerned.

Brian Ellis 2360

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/updates-to-the-highway-code-will-make-roads-even-safer>

Becoming foreign!

Andy Brown

For the last 4 years we and our Auto-Sleeper Amethyst have been based in France which has caused occasional problems in having to get to the UK for an MOT so that tax and insurance can be renewed. We did re-insure it in France a couple of years ago (mainly to get cover for a trip to Morocco as British insurance companies would not oblige) but then came across the anomaly that although the vehicle was taxed, tested and insured, it would be illegal to drive on UK roads. Apparently the insurance has to be registered on the DVLA database and only British insurers are allowed to do this.

This year, with the problems caused by Covid travel restrictions, we took the plunge and decided to change to French registration plates to regularise the situation even though it meant giving up the private plate we had on the van. I tried to get as much information about any necessary changes and it seemed that the first problem would be getting the vehicle through the “contrôle technique” (MOT) needing a



headlight change to dip in the other direction. This was pretty easy as I managed to buy a couple of second-hand lights for €30 which I then deconstructed to move the lenses to our own light units. The lenses were slightly yellowed but a couple of hours work with T-cut and various other products with an orbital polisher left them far better than the originals.

We had been told that the habitation would also have to conform to French regulations so I checked the mains consumer unit and was delighted to discover that the wiring and trip switches conformed (dipole type so that both + and – go through the tripswitch). Our home-fitted refillable gas bottle (Gas-it) would not pass without the correct installation certificate so was removed and replaced with a Campinggaz cylinder. The mains sockets were replaced by European sockets which fitted conveniently into the original back boxes.

The Contrôle Technique never looked at the habitation but did fail it on rusty hydraulic pipes to the power steering for which Ford can provide no replacement parts in Europe. We live in a very agricultural area so replacement hydraulic pipes are easy to have made and it then sailed through the test and so - on to the next stage of getting a "Carte Grise" (French version of our V5 certificate) from the authorities.

First problem. Did we have evidence that the motorhome had been built to recognised European standards? No we didn't. However a phone call to Auto-Sleepers solved the problem. European standards were only obligatory from 2015 but Auto-Sleepers kindly put a document together for our 2000 Amethyst with all the necessary build codes and we received it within the week; well done to them!

Next problem. Did we have evidence that the base vehicle (a Ford Transit) had been built to recognised European standards? Again, no we didn't as they didn't appear on V5s until 2015. A phone call to Ford did not solve the problem. Several emails to Ford did not solve the problem. A letter to Ford did not solve the problem and then we heard of people who had to give up on re-registration as the information was never forthcoming. An internet search found a company which guaranteed to provide a manufacturer's certificate of conformity for any vehicle. I paid online and then suspected that I had been well and truly scammed but five days later they emailed a pdf copy to me. This was forwarded to the authorities with some degree of foreboding but a week later the Carte Grise was in our letter box and the following day the vehicle was insured through our regular French broker.

It's now all legal and above board and we benefit from a bi-annual Contrôle Technique, no road tax, and worldwide insurance as standard for any driver with a licence older than 5 years (the downside to that is that I no longer have any reason to refuse if my children and families want to borrow it). In the end it was less of a problem than we had anticipated and we can continue to use our comfortable old van to tour all around Europe without having to worry about making the annual trip to the UK for the MOT.

Gel Coat Repairs

Philip Bickerdyke (9937) asked me about small hairline cracks that appeared in the black panel around the roof-light of his Luton cab. I thought it might be interesting to some.

"I currently have a problem with one side of the black bulkhead section of my roof to the offside above the Heki roof light to my 2017 Broadway EB!"

I referred Philip to Cheltenham Laminating, who manufactured all the bodyshells for the monocoque body models (Executives etc) and who still make GRP panels for Auto-Sleepers. Here is his feedback after contacting them.

"Dear Dennis

I am mailing to thank you for your referral of Cheltenham Laminating for fibreglass gel coat repair! The man to see is Gary, he could not have done any more to not only fit me in, and he did a very professional repair to the hairline cracks to my Luton upper front!

In fact, all his staff who I spoke to were very friendly and knowledgeable.

He also gave the black section a full buffing and it now looks as good as it did when it came out of the factory. This Company cannot be recommended more by me, and all Auto-sleeper owners should be aware of their work!

They manufacture panels for our vans but will also help with any fibreglass repair you require!

Before I received your recommendation all the dealers I contacted recommended cutting out the cracks, body filling them and painting the panel! I was not convinced with this being a previous boat owner and was aware a gel coat repair could be carried out and for this job there appears very few companies who will attempt it. Therefore, could you please put my recommendations forward to all our members. Work may have to be done over a number of days as arranged and if necessary I recommend a stop at the Broadway CMH site when it's in for repair & a trip in to nearby Cheltenham for site seeing and shopping!

Best Regards

Philip"

Thank you Philip. Cheltenham Laminating can be found here, With an interesting gallery of what they do. <https://cheltenhamlaminating.co.uk>

Mercedes Servicing Advice

I am aware that some Mercedes Commercial Dealers seem to be pressing owners to have an "A" service every 12 months. The justification given is that these motorhomes are very low mileage vehicles compared to delivery vans and that the oil can sit in the engine for very long periods deteriorating, unlike delivery vans

where they operate at full temperature almost constantly. This will lead to excess wear and tear on the engine. (of course, I paraphrase these conversations, but that is the gist of it). Reasons given when challenged are that the oil sits in the engine contaminated by “products of combustion” from the diesel fuel and degrades. Also, condensation that gets into the oil does not get properly evaporated out in engines that do very little mileage, will have a bad effect on the lubrication of the engine.

I heartily disagree with the first assertion, but am open to being persuaded by someone who can shed more light on this subject. As for the second, I can see how an engine that is run for very short periods on a regular basis during periods of “layup” just to “keep the oil circulating and charge the battery” can increase condensation in your engine. I have spoken on this before and recommended NOT taking the van out for short trips.

My reasoning for disagreeing with the need for interim services for my low mileage van is as follows...

1. A Mercedes “A” service costs £290 (Mertrux Derby – 7th August 2021).
2. I am 71. We have owned 3 motorhomes since early 2017 – all new or nearly new. (Yes, excessive!). Now we have our “forever van” we ambitiously expect to keep it for 15 years. That, according to Mercedes, will add approx. £2,000 to our servicing costs – not accounting for inflation.
3. In 15 years, we expect to cover a maximum of 75,000 miles, our van currently has 2,000 miles covered.
4. The Sprinter and similar vans are designed for very high mileages – figures that motorhomes seldom, if ever, reach. It could be argued that the additional wear and tear on the engine may reduce its life slightly, but you and I will not be buying and using our vans for the 150,000 to 200,000 miles, or even more, that a delivery van will reach. We do not do long periods of stop-start driving as does a delivery driver. So, you may only get to 90,000 miles and have the same wear and tear (and breakdown history) of a delivery van at 120,000 miles or more.
5. By choosing NOT to have annual “A” services, you will still be following the official service schedule published by Mercedes and you will still have an official Mercedes service history.
6. The environmental impact of wasting perfectly good lubricating oil cannot be ignored and at about £16 per litre, the cost cannot be ignored either.
7. My additional investment in servicing of £2,000 will benefit only the next owner. I would rather spend this on fuel to get me to my next holiday.

You may use different criteria to determine if extra servicing costs are right for you and I would like to ask for responses and counter-arguments to this that I can share in next months’ magazine. Please let me have your thoughts – and don’t limit it to Mercedes only service advice given. Let’s hear from Peugeot, Fiat, VW etc owners too. technical@asoc.uk.com

Mercedes Sprinter Model Central Locking Issues

Did I mention we bought a used Bourton? September 2020 with 550 miles recorded? On our first outing, we had a problem whereby an alarm would occasionally be raised on the EC700 control panel, which would light up and beep, the doors would unlock and the entry light would come on. Not good when you are asleep!

I checked with Sargent who were very helpful. They confirmed that my EC700 controller had the latest bug fixed software. I checked with Derby Motorhomes who were equally helpful. They say that an ongoing issue exists that has not been resolved yet. There remains a problem with the way in which the Mercedes electronics interfaces with the Sargent EC700 control system. My observations were common on "some" Mercedes vans, but not all. No solution is available yet and in the interim, the "fix" is to put insulating tape over the habitation door contacts thus disabling the habitation door central locking system. According to Derby Motorhomes, currently the factory fix is to disable the central locking on all new vans before delivery until a solution can be found.

Of course, no-one who knows me will be surprised to know that I needed a better temporary fix than having to use a key to use the habitation door. I now have a separate central locking habitation door controller, not connected to the vehicle central locking system so not confusing the Mercedes systems.

I found a DIY central locking controller with two key fobs on Amazon and with the excellent help of Sargent, was able to add this safely to the van wiring and return my van to full functionality. The modification was carried out in such a way as to be reversible when an "official" fix is released. The new controller is hidden in the box under the seat next to the wardrobe. Total cost around £20 – yes, twenty pounds and about an hours' work to retrofit. Only four connections to the van wiring. The spurious alarms have ceased. The vehicle central locking continues to work fine from the vehicle keys and the spurious alarms have not re-appeared.

Here is the controller, prepared for installation. If anyone is interested in the detail and wants to try it for himself, please let me know.



TOP TIP

Some members have found that after constant use the press studs holding the seating pull the screws out from the body of the van. When this happens you may find replacing them with turn buttons might be better as you no longer need to put stress on the screws.

Search on website browser for turn button fasteners.



Cryptic Group Quiz

compiled by Brian Ellis

1. Quartet in a spin
2. Cinnamon maidens
3. Dark Sunday
4. The lads from Bondi
5. They gather no moss
6. No girls allowed
7. BA, BSC. MBA
8. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
9. Uncomplicated intellectuals
10. A desert waterhole
11. Gorgeous but not northern
12. Parents
13. Moist, soaked, saturated
14. Mum, dad, and children save ships
15. Elizabeth, Victoria, or Mary
16. Insanity
17. Mexican food would be bland without them
18. Not death nor in the Orient
19. Hiking sibling
20. In the beginning

No matter how far away

you can always get ASOC News

available in the member area of the website



GUIDE TO PREPARING YOUR AUTO-SLEEPER FOR WINTER

The information provided in this document is, to the best of the Club's knowledge, comprehensive and accurate. However, no responsibility can be accepted for any loss or damage incurred during the implementation of the described modifications

Checked and approved by Auto-Sleepers Ltd 21 December 2018

The internal insulation of Auto-Sleepers vehicles has improved over the years, so thankfully the only facility requiring winterisation is the water system. You should have no concern for freezing of the system other than the water heater and water pump, since the water tanks are manufactured in a material that can cope with the expansion caused by freezing. If your vehicle is being left unused for several days in freezing conditions, it would be prudent to drain the system fully. Surface freezing of the water in both fresh and the waste water tank will not cause any damage to the tank. The operation of the fresh water system may be affected by ice because the fresh water is drawn off the lower part of the water tank, underneath any layer of ice that may have formed.

It is important that during prolonged freezing conditions, and at times when your Auto-Sleeper is left unused, the water system is drained including the water pump. To drain the system completely open all tank taps, dump valve/drain tap and all internal taps. When water has finished flowing turn the water pump on to rid any residue water from the pump, pipes, pump filter and taps then switch pump off and leave all taps open. Please note that the submerged Whale water pumps should only be operated for 5-10 seconds when there is a risk of running dry. Later Auto-Sleeper models are fitted with either the Truma Combi, Truma Ultrastore or Carver Cascade/Rapide water heaters and instructions for draining and isolating these units are as follows:

Truma Combi Heater

The Combi heater supplied to Auto-Sleepers has a built-in frost protection function called the "Truma Frost Control". If there is a risk of frost (ambient temperature approximately 3°C) the Frost Control opens automatically and drains the boiler. The boiler can be refilled when the temperature rises above 7°C. Nevertheless when the appliance is not in operation, it is essential to drain off the water content if there is a risk of frost. Truma do not allow claims under the warranty for damage caused by frost. Switch off the power to the pump assembly (main switch or pump switch), open the hot water taps in kitchen and bathroom. In order to check the volume of water that is flowing out, place an appropriate container (capacity 10 litres) beneath the safety/drain valve. Open the safety/drain valve. The boiler will now be drained directly to the outside via the safety/drain valve. Check whether all of the water in the boiler (10 litres) has been drained into the container.

Truma Ultrastore


On Auto Sleepers models that are not fitted with an isolation tap, the complete water system should be drained. There is a dump valve that allows the Ultrastore to be drained of water and this is found in different positions on different models. The instruction manual clearly identifies the location of this dump valve and should be used and left open when your Auto Sleeper is left for prolonged periods in freezing conditions. If you continue to use your Auto Sleeper in such conditions, it is suggested that the retro-fitting of an isolation tap in the water circuit would be a wise move so that the water heater can be isolated while retaining the cold water facility. The Motorhome Service Centre (01386 853511) at Willersey will be happy to supply a tap and/or fit this should you require.

Carver Cascade/Cascade 2/Rapide Water Heater

This water heater must be isolated in prolonged freezing conditions, since if the stainless steel cylinder is allowed to freeze it will stretch the securing bolt, blow the seals and cause leaking into the interior of the vehicle. Replacement securing bolts are no longer available. During the time the Carver Rapide water heater was fitted, an isolation tool was supplied with each vehicle. When the heater is drained the isolation tool should be found in an externally accessed chamber on the outside of the water heater, concealed behind the large screw in the lower left-hand corner. Inserting the tool, thick end first, will lock the non-return valve preventing the filling of the water cylinder - the thinner section allowing the claws of the drain plug to fit around the tool and to allow it to be re-fitted. The upper drain screw, immediately above the aforementioned upper screw, should be left open for a good length of time to allow any residual water to drain out. If you do not have this isolation tool these are available from the Motor Home Service Centre. The earlier model of the Carver water heater, the Cascade, does not have the screw on the top left-hand area of the gas module cover; however the isolation tool may still be used.

Valliant Water Heater

For the older vans fitted with Valliant water heater, you should ring the Motorhome Service Centre who will advise upon the course of action to be taken. It is possible that on the Vaillant water heater the lower diaphragm module can become warped through freezing, preventing the water heater working correctly. There is an easy and simple way of rectifying this - please seek advice from the Motorhome Service Centre. Due to recent changes in legislation the Motorhome Service Centre are unable to carry out repairs on any open flue gas appliances, but rectification advice will be given.

Questions are often asked with regards to the winterisation of the Thetford cassette toilet. Since these are positioned well in-board on the van and are well insulated, under normal working use in winter conditions, no winterisation is required. If necessary you may wish to put into the flushing tank a small amount of Glycol or similar anti-freeze to allow the toilet to function in extreme conditions. Further advice is available from your Thetford, see <https://www.thetford-europe.com/gb/> 

These are the only precautions that need to be taken in respect of the conversion side of your Auto-Sleeper. If your vehicle is being stored in the winter for prolonged periods it is always wise to remove any detachable cushions/scatter cushions and keep these in your home. The fixed ventilation in each Auto-Sleeper will allow the vehicle to breathe over the winter months, although it would be sensible, perhaps fortnightly or three weekly, to thoroughly air your Auto-Sleeper perhaps using the heater to warm the interior of the vehicle to evaporate any residual moisture.

On the automotive side, advice should be taken from your local base vehicle dealer with regards to any specific instructions or indeed from the automotive section of the Motorhome Service Centre, but of course, it is always wise to ensure that prior to the winter your coolant is checked for anti-freeze content and to make sure that the specific gravity is of the correct reading. This can of course be checked and rectified by the Motorhome Service Centre on the number shown above. Another sensible precaution would be to periodically charge the base vehicle and conversion batteries to maintain them in good condition.

If using your Auto Sleeper in particularly harsh conditions, the Motorhome Service Centre always advises the use of Propane instead of Butane for the gas supply since this has superior low temperature performance. If you have any fears in respect of the winterisation of your vehicle please contact the Motorhome Service Centre direct on 01386 853511.

They are always happy to discuss any concerns that you have, together with the retrofitting of a frostat - a 12-volt heater in your fresh tank, which is a popular option for some owners and they would be pleased to quote for fitting.

Additional tips from members

Keep all taps open in the central position

Remove the shower head as it has been found to crack in freezing conditions where water may be trapped and dangle the hose to its lowest point

Put on the covers for the fridge vents

Leave the fridge door open

Put on wheel covers if you have them

Leave the hand brake off if this is possible and safe to do so

Contributions are from members and are published in good faith, that they will be interesting and useful. All care is taken to ensure accuracy but no modification or suggestion has been tested by the Club. No warranties are expressed or implied nor indemnities given. You try them at your own risk.

Cryptic Group Answers
1. Four Tops 2. Spice Girls 3. Black Sabbath 4. Beach boys 5. Rolling Stones
6. Boyzone 7. Three degrees 8. Four seasons 9. Simple Minds 10. Oasis
11. Beautiful South 12. Mama's and Pappas 13. Wet Wet Wet
14. Lighthouse family 15. Queen 16. Madness 17. Red Hot Chili Peppers
18. West life 19. Walker Brothers 20. Genesis

EVENT INFORMATION



Neil C. Rogers, Rally Coordinator,
5 Emerson Court, Carmel Road North, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 8JB
Telephone: 01325 954508 Email: ncr@mypostoffice.co.uk



WANT TO RUN A RALLY? BUT NEED TO KNOW MORE INFORMATION?

If you wish to run a rally in 2022 please contact Neil
before the end of November

just call or email Neil 01352 954508 ncr@mypostoffice.co.uk

ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE IS AVAILABLE

WE HAVE DETAILS OF POSSIBLE RALLY SITES

WHY NOT ASSIST A RALLY MARSHAL TO SEE
WHAT'S INVOLVED

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

When a date & venue is chosen you will receive the Rules for Rally Marshals and asked to sign a Marshal's Declaration.

Tanglewood CS, Southampton



photo: © Christopher Macgowan