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AUGUST 2026

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4 Berth | Automatic | Transverse Bed



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2027 Hymer Redwood 600
Sport **£82,180**

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2026 Chausson X550
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2025 Adria Twin Supreme
640 SGX **£86,995**

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2026 Rapido 696F 65th
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2026 Bailey Autograph 81-5
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6 Berth | Automatic | End Bed / Lounge



2026 Coachman Adventura
545 **£109,595**

4 Berth | Automatic | Island Bed



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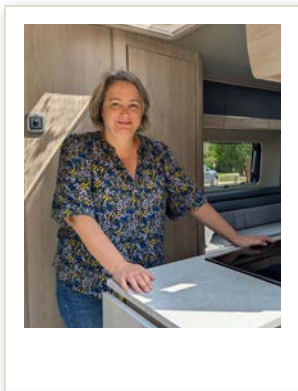
GAS-FREE

FRONT LOUNGE

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FULL WASHROOM

2 BERTH - 2 BELT



Welcome

As well as working on this issue, we've been busy getting ready for the Norfolk Summer Party, including compiling motorhome facts for the quiz held at the Out & About Live Club area.

Next month, we'll also be running the quiz in the magazine, so keep an eye out for it and test your knowledge!

And you know what summer means? Yes, it's launch season. We've been able to announce snippets from the first few, but there will be more news over the next couple of months. Sign up to our newsletters to get the latest stories to your inbox. **W** motorhome.ma/enewsletter

Also, did you know you can set us as a preferred news source on Google? This will show you more motorhome news content in your web searches. It's easy to do through the 'Search personalisation' option in your Google account.

The demand for bigger campervans does not seem to be slowing. In fact, it's a sign of their popularity that many manufacturers are focusing on these ranges with new designs (two significant ones from Westfalia and Rapido, so far).

While the photos and layout diagrams look amazing, there's nothing better than seeing these vehicles in real life.

That said, the shortlist of new models for our annual Out & About Live Awards is building and I can't wait to see if the new designs stand up against proven layouts.

If you've seen anything of interest then we'd love to hear your comments... or have you bought one of our previous winners and made any changes?

E mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk

Rachel **Rachel Scholes**
Deputy Editor



COVER Dethleffs Globelux Performance on the Portugal coast
Credit: Dethleffs

We would love to hear from you

Share your motorhome adventures, your campsite reviews, your motorhoming DIY tips and advice and even your gripes with MMM readers.

Email us at: mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk Join the community [facebook.com/motorhomemags](https://www.facebook.com/motorhomemags) [instagram.com/mm_motorhomemag](https://www.instagram.com/mm_motorhomemag)

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ON PAGE
137**

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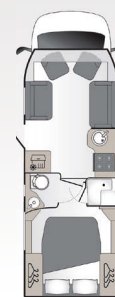
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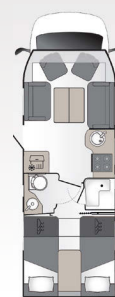
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Off-grid for the first time

In very early May 2026, we had an opportunity to 'wild camp' in the UK. We had the owners' permission, of course, and they were more than happy to allow us access to empty our toilet cassette in a nearby unused building. This was an old farm building which was connected to a septic tank located in the Cotswolds area.

We are on our fourth motorhome, an Adria Matrix Supreme MB 670 DL which we took delivery of in May 2024. This is the very first time we have been isolated from civilization, parking some one and a half miles from the nearest road surrounded by farmland.

We have been in the EU many times but never away from approved stopping areas, aires and occasional campsites, etc. The intention was to stay here for a full week and to experience what our vehicle was fully capable of.

Leaving our storage facility, we travelled for two and a half hours up into the corner of the Cotswolds, close to the Oxfordshire

border. We started with 110 litres of fresh water in our on-board tank, an empty waste tank, five bottles of fresh water (five litres each) and our two Gaslow 13kg cylinders full. We have a 120W solar panel and two 110Ah gel batteries.

My better half had cooked a variety of foods for us to take, some of which were frozen before we left home. Our fridge/freezer is a Thule which runs on gas, mains and engine when travelling. It was set to level three for the duration of our trip.

Our heating system is Alde, which is the radiator-type system. It runs fully around the vehicle, including the garage and water tank areas.

One of the things we discovered by being so remote from any people, buildings or traffic was the amount of wildlife we saw come passing by. Each morning we had deer and hares passing by on their way to find food. The area was wooded, so we had the advantage of seeing a vast array of birds, including the morning robin and



Top Pitch!

the kites flying high overhead all day long.

So did we survive? Yes, and without any loss of a system, power or lack of anything.

We consumed 50% of our fresh on-board water, 15 litres of bottled water and 11.5 litres of gas. We were lucky that the landowners were happy for us to dump our waste water as the area was wild and not farmed in any way.

We had two friends come and find us for coffee, etc; we think they were worried we wouldn't survive so far away from any facility, bringing blankets and a hot water bottle for us just in case.

Neither of the latter was needed as we did run the Alde first thing along with the auxiliary MB-Alde heat exchanger for ten minutes to take the chill off.

So, the exercise proved, if we had to at this early time of the year in the UK, we could fully survive for a week without the need of any facility or support from a site of any type.

Norman Newbigging



Rights still pending

Whilst reading the May issue, I was very interested to read your comments regarding the driving of heavier motorhomes.

I passed 70 last October. To retain my driving rights up to 7,500kg in September, I took an eye test and doctors review to complete the necessary DVLA forms. Cost of eye test was £20. Doctors review and form completion was £140!

Anyway, I posted off my form recorded delivery around 23 September. Since then, I have been unable to gain any possible date when my new licence may be issued.

The doctor did provide quite a lot of medical information (as you might

expect for a 70-year-old person). He confirmed to me there was "absolutely nothing which would stop me from driving".

Naturally, I have continued to drive as allowed by the DVLA whilst my application is processed. However, I am unable to pursue any potential continental travel without my driving licence. As we move into the eighth month of so-called processing, what am I to do?

I have tried to phone the DVLA three times and I was somewhat abruptly informed that it does not give any information regarding processing timings!

Following the last call, I received a letter from the DVLA to inform me

not to either call or write to them chasing any licence applications as there was a backlog, particularly for medical-based licence applications.

Any advice or suggestions would be greatly appreciated. Perhaps I should try my local MP (who happens to be Ed Davey)?

Name supplied

ED Yes, eight months seems like a lot of a backlog. I'd persist with phone calls and maybe even use the webchat service as that is too long a time without any further follow-up
W contact.dvla.gov.uk/driving-licence

I know some of our readers have made contact and been able to get a

Picking up a few details

Martin Watts' Vintage 'vans feature is always one of the first that I turn to in each issue of MMM but I feel I must take issue with a couple of comments in his June column. He says that "a handful of the baby Fiat 850 base vehicles" were used in the leisure market.

Hardly a handful, as the Amigo, from Motorhomes International, was the best-selling campervan/motorhome of its day, with a full-page advert proudly proclaiming the fact month after month in these very pages. It may have been small but its sales were not.

He also refers to the Talbot Express being "assembled on the old Dodge (Commer) Spacevan line." While Talbot cars (Alpine, Solara, Horizon, Sunbeam) and later Peugeot 309s were made at Ryton-on-Dunsmore, near Coventry, which I visited many times with my dad, who was a Rootes/Chrysler/Talbot dealer, there were no vans built there.

The Commer van came from the Dunstable plant, which later built the larger Dodge 50. That site passed to Renault and closed in 1993. It never assembled any version of the Sevel van.

All versions of the Sevel van, including the Talbot Express, were made in Italy, although right-hand drive vans got the much-maligned

floor gear change rather the slicker column shift of left-hookers. The Talbot was effectively a RHD version of the Peugeot J5, which wasn't sold here. In fact, the Express van carried on long after the Talbot badge had disappeared off all the passenger cars.

The current Sevel vans (Ducato, Boxer, etc) continue to come from Atessa, Italy, but additional production has been added with a newer plant at Gliwice, Poland.
Peter

ED Martin says: A handful of conversions on the baby Fiat did refer to the small number of models produced on that van, not numbers sold! I am well aware that the Fiat Amigo, for a one-year period, was one of the best-selling small campervans in the UK. But... converters as we know are clever in their use of words for advertising purposes. At least they were back then, but advertising standards have tightened up a few loopholes these days.

As for the Commer, Dodge Spacevan and Talbot theory, I often go by stories told to me by people who worked on those production lines. Over the decades I have met and chatted with many ex-Chrysler, Vauxhall and Ford employees who have related their stories to me, and I kept copious amounts of notes.

Facts do get distorted over the years, including the memories of individuals involved at the time. When writing non-fictional copy there are always those quick to correct dates, facts and places, and I stand corrected if Peter is right about the Talbot issue.

My mentor, John Hunt, the magazine's founder, told me to use, 'to the best of my knowledge'. Perhaps I have let that advice slip of late?



status, so I think the key is to just stay on the line until you get an answer. If this doesn't get you anywhere, then yes, your local MP is a good route.

The reader replied after our response, "I persevered with the phone calls and after over an hour on hold, I finally got to talk to someone in the medical processing office. He agreed eight months was a long time to wait, but was unable to offer me any timescales as to when I might get my licence."

The reader also then contacted his MP and did eventually get a request for further medical testing. We've asked the reader to report back on his experiences.

Rising costs of breakdown

Since we started motorhoming abroad 15 years ago we've used the Caravan and Motorhome Club's Red Pennant insurance. The cost for an annual policy shot up from around £500 to £1,600 last year when my husband, Peter, became 80. We gulped a bit (OK, a lot!) but the reports of how well it handled accidents and incidents were so good that we bit the bullet and paid up.

Then came the news earlier this year that this policy was being discontinued. We researched alternatives and came across the highly recommended Nationwide Plus packaged current bank account.

For £18 a month you get breakdown cover (motorhomes and Europe included) and travel insurance. It was happy to accept my husband, who has various health issues and is now 81, and me (young,



fit and healthy!) with a £280 fee.

There is no requirement to pay in any money each month (other than to cover the £18 fee) and no SOs or DDs are needed. It was all very quick and easy to set up.

The C&MC has recently announced it now has a new product in place (too late for our April holiday in Ireland) so it may be happy to insure over-80s. Happy and safe travels to all MMM readers.

Best wishes from beautiful Alsace. This was the view I woke up to on my 70th birthday, surrounded by vineyards!

Sally Moorhouse

ED We asked Sally about their motorhome insurance policy, as cover for the over 80s has been asked about a lot recently. They told us they had been with the C&MC, but this year, in March, the renewal premium went up alarmingly.

After getting quotes from other companies, some of whom refused to insure, they have gone with Adrian Flux who quoted £233 (for a 2011 Swift Escape 624).

A graphic story

We own a 2015 Bessacarr and, over the 10 years we have owned it, the decals have faded very badly. Our motorhome became scruffy in

appearance and whilst everything worked extremely well, we were keen to restore it to its former glory.

Upon visiting Newport Caravans (our Bessacarr dealer) with the intention of ordering new decals, we were dismayed when told Bessacarr no longer held any stocks of the decals required for our model. The staff had searched all possibilities but to no avail. It was, however, able to introduce us to a company in Pontypool that it uses whenever decal work is needed. A trip to Marshall & Hicks Print, Pontnewynydd, was a great success.

Dave was extremely helpful and advised us on a variety of options. It could reproduce the same decals by printing on vinyl at a cost or, alternatively, it could strip the decals and replace them with any design. We decided on the latter, a big saving on the print option.

The result was superb and, needless to say, we are extremely pleased. Having returned our 'van to the secure compound where it is kept, I was delighted to have a note placed on our windscreen asking for details of the company; a fellow Bessacarr owner had also been searching for decals with no luck.

We can highly recommend Marshall & Hicks.

Philip Davies



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Grey areas

I read Ralph Curtis's letter (July 2026 edition) last night regarding the dumping of grey waste whilst on a pitch. Disgusting habit.

We are currently at Camping Memling in Bruges and lo and behold the lovely people of a British-registered Auto-Trail did exactly the same and dumped the grey waste on their pitch before vacating it.

The sad thing is you drive right past the motorhome service point to exit the site.

Don't get me started with regards to people who think it's OK to walk across occupied pitches to get to the amenities.

Peter Toogood

I read with interest the letter from Ian Muffet regarding the disposal of grey waste (Summer p11) and whilst I am in agreement with his views regarding disposal on public roads, etc, I feel that he needs to be less emphatic in respect of disposal on some paid-for sites.

Clearly, when pitched up on a site that includes a grey waste disposal area, then of course this should be used. However, in my experience, there are many other sites where such a facility is not provided.

In this instance it is necessary to consult with the site owner or in the case of some Temporary Holiday

Sites (THS), the on-site wardens. They will be more than happy to advise you on how they want grey waste dealt with.

The following are the various methods I have encountered:

- Where the pitches are around a field boundary, it may be permitted to use a drainage hose straight into the hedge
- Drain the grey waste into a bucket or large bowl and throw it into the hedge
- Open the drainage tap slightly and allow it to trickle onto the ground when on a grass pitch (not if it is a hardstanding).

I have been on sites where the chemical toilet waste point is a large tank dug into the ground with a lid of some description. This is not to be used under any circumstances for grey waste and, if found doing so, campers will be given their marching orders very quickly.

I hope that the above proves useful and I guess demonstrates that all we need to do is ask!

Kathy Giles

Regarding Ralph Curtis's letter on the subject of waste water, this is something we have written about to you in the past. We have seen this happen countless times, even when it is so cold that the waste water freezes on contact with the road,



making it an icy site exit.

This practice is lazy, unhygienic and thoughtless to others. It gives responsible motorhomers (and caravanners) a bad name.

It's no wonder we are banned from overnight stays on car parks or that height barriers have been erected where previously we were allowed to park.

And don't get me started on people dumping toilet waste down rabbit holes... We hope other readers think the same.

Sue Brown

Awning peg removal

Having just read the May edition of MMM regarding the sometimes very difficult way of pulling pegs out of the ground (Back to basics, page 18), I would like to share my tip to help other readers.

Firstly, I use a 4lb lump hammer to knock them in, then to remove them I carry a pair of mole grips (like adjustable pliers).

Just adjust to the size of the end you have hit to knock them in, lock the grips on and then twist side to side as you gently pull upwards. They come out very easily.

No more broken plastic ends of the peg, or broken/bent tent peg puller. I have used this method for years and never had any problems. Plus, the mole grips can be used as an adjustable spanner on any small to quite large nuts.

Dave Burlingham

The hot seat

Kevin Hawkins' seat height problem on page 130, Summer 2026 is remarkably simple if he can source a low-enough swivelling seat for his driving comfort.

Or provide a removable cushion of the appropriate thickness to make her driving comfortable.

On many occasions I have made cushions like this from multiple layers of firm carpet underfelt. It is sufficiently firm to avoid overcompression when you sit on it. Try out several loose layers and experiment with the number before gluing with spray adhesive and fabric covering.

There is another advantage to this construction method in that you can change the shape of individual layers to form a slope in the cushion or a central hollow if this adds to your comfort.

Tony Brown



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2016 (66) Fiat Ducato Burstner Viseo I 720 G 2.3TD	£49,995
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2020 (20) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Imala 734 HB 2.3TD	£48,995
4 berth,awning,aerial,sw/seats,kitchen,single beds or double over garage	
2018 (55) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Frontier Dakota Lo-Line 2.3TD	£46,995
4 berth,awning,tow bar,aerial,sw/seats,rear fixed bed,end washroom	
2019 (69) Fiat Ducato Swift Escape 664 2.3TD	£45,995
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2019 (19) Peugeot Boxer Bailey Alliance 66-2 2.0TD	£45,995
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2018 (18) Peugeot Boxer Autosleeper Broadway EK TB LP 2.0TD	£45,995
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2017 (17) Fiat Ducato Swift Champagne 614 2.3TD	£43,995
4 berth,awning,solar panel,sw/seats,drop-down bed,end washroom,garage	
2016 (66) Fiat Ducato Bessacarr 412 2.3TD	£42,995
2 berth,awning,tow bar,c/rack,aerial,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2018 (68) Fiat Ducato Carado T135 Emotion 2.3TD	£42,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,alloys,solar panels,air-con,sw/seats,fixed bed	
2015 (15) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Mohawk 2.3TD	£42,995
4 berth,AUTO,awning,tow bar,aerial,sw/seats,fixed bed over garage	
2016 (16) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Imala 715 2.3TD	£42,995
4 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,solar panel,sw/seats,lounge/diner,fixed bed	
2016 (16) Fiat Ducato Swift Esprit 462 2.3TD	£42,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,heating,side kitchen,rear lounge	
2017 (17) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Imala 2.3TD	£41,995
4 berth,roof bars,solar panel,aerial,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2017 (67) Peugeot Boxer Elddis Majestic 175 2.0TD	£41,995
2 berth,awning,tow bar,c/rack,aerial,solar panel,sw/seats,end washroom	
2017 (17) Peugeot Boxer Bailey Approach Advance 635 2.0TD	£41,995
2 berth,air-con,heating,sw/seats,240/12V,side kitchen,end washroom	
2017 (17) Peugeot Boxer Elddis Autoquest Evolution 115 2.0TD	£39,995
2 berth,awning,solar panel,aerial,c/rack,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2014 (64) Fiat Ducato Bessacarr 442 2.3TD	£38,995
2 berth,awning,solar panel,sw/seats,lounge/diner,side kitchen,end washroom	
2016 (16) Peugeot Boxer Elddis Autoquest Evolution 115 2.2TD	£37,995
2 berth,awning,sw/seats,heating,lounge/diner,rear kitchen & washroom	

2017 (17) Peugeot Boxer Elddis Accordo 135 2.0TD	£35,995
2-3 berth,awning,solar panel,aerial,sw/seats,half dinette,rear lounge	
2008 (08) Mercedes Sprinter Autosleeper Suffolk 2.1TD	£34,995
4 berth,AUTO,awning,tow bar,c/rack,sw/seats,side kitchen,rear U lounge	
2009 (09) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Mohican SE 2.3TD	£32,995
4 berth,awning,ladder,tow bar,c/rack,2*air-con,sw/seats,end washroom	
2009 (09) Fiat Ducato Rapido Le-Randonneur 9048DF 2.3TD	£31,995
4 berth,A-Class,roof bars,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2009 (09) Fiat Ducato Rapido Le-Randonneur 783F 2.3TD	£31,995
3 berth,awning,roof bars,c/rack,aerial,sw/seats,fixed bed over garage	
2008 (09) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Mohican SE 3.0TD	£31,995
2 berth,awning,ladder,tow bar,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,end washroom	
2008 (58) Peugeot Boxer Autocruise Gleneagle 3.0TD	£29,995
2 berth,awning,solar panel,aerial,c/rack,2*air-con,sw/seats,end washroom	
2010 (10) Fiat Ducato Swift Escape 622 2.2TD	£28,995
4 berth,awning,aerial,heating,front washroom,kitchen,rear U lounge	
2008 (57) Peugeot Partner Autosleeper Mezan 1.6TD	£22,995
2 berth,air-con,heating,c/lock,airbags,portapotti,240/12V,rear kitchen	
2003 (03) Fiat Ducato Autotrail Tracker SE 2.0TD	£19,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,heater,washroom,kitchen,rear lounge	

HI-TOPS

2018 (18) Fiat Ducato Autotrail V-Line 610 Sport 2.3TD	£47,995
2 berth,awning,tow bar,aerial,sw/seats,washroom,kitchen,rear lounge	
2021 (70) Volkswagen Transporter Xscape by White Arches 2.0TD	£47,995
4 berth,lift-up roof,awning,sw/seat,240/12V,heating,Rock n Roll bed	
2018 (18) Peugeot Boxer Autosleeper Symbol 2.0TD	£46,995
2 berth,awning,tow bar,solar panel,aerial,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2020 (20) Fiat Ducato Elddis Chatsworth CV20 2.3TD	£45,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,sw/seats,front washroom,kitchen,rear lounge	
2017 (17) Fiat Ducato Swift Autocruise Select 184 2.3TD	£42,995
2+1 berth,awning,solar panel,aerial,sw/seats,half dinette,rear lounge	
2016 (16) Fiat Ducato Apollo by S & L Motorhomes 2.3TD	£38,995
2 berth,awning,tow bar,alloys,sw/seats,washroom,kitchen,rear U lounge	
2014 (14) Peugeot Boxer Autosleeper Broadway 2.2TD	£38,995
4 berth,c/rack,sw/seats,lounge/diner,kitchen,washroom,rear fixed bed	
2013 (63) Peugeot Boxer Autosleeper Warwick Duo 2.2TD	£38,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,sw/seat,washroom,kitchen,rear lounge	
2013 (13) Peugeot Boxer Autocruise Alto 2.3TD	£36,995
3 berth,awning,ladder,aerial,c/rack,sw/seats,kitchen & washroom,rear bed	

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E-bikes enjoyment

As always, I enjoyed the article on e-bikes in MMM. My wife and I are each on our second electric bike and enjoy riding them.

The electrical assistance is really appreciated when riding uphill or into headwinds. Indeed, cycling along a nice level seafront one day, into the wind, it needed 'boost' electric power and first gear just to move. Coming back required no effort.

One thing the article did not mention was punctures. While our bikes are fitted with robust, quality tyres, I have had a couple of punctures.

On a non-electric bike it is a relatively easy job to remove the wheel with the puncture and remove whatever has caused the hole. What I normally did out on a ride was simply replace the inner tube and sort out the punctured tube once back home.

However, a puncture on an e-bike is far more challenging. If you can mend the puncture without removing the wheel (mudguards, brakes, chain guards and wires get in the way), then you can fix the problem when out, but if you need to remove the wheel then you have a problem.

With my limited skills I can just about get a front wheel off, but removing a rear wheel is well beyond my abilities. For both my rear wheel punctures I've had to take the e-bike to a cycle shop.

One puncture was only a couple of miles from home so I pushed the bike back. The local bike shop did manage to fix it, but said afterwards it was the worst job he has ever done on a bike. After this only six of the seven gears worked.

The other rear wheel puncture was 10 miles from home and there was no way I could fix it. All I could think of was to push it back a mile to the nearest road, lock it up, catch the bus home, then take the car to collect the bike, assuming it was still there.

At the time I worked for the local coach company and just seconds after I reached the road, a coach appeared driven by the boss, the first day on a new school run. He stopped, put the bike in the underfloor locker and took the bike and me back to the garage. What luck!

We took the bike back to where we bought it, Cycle Heaven in York (with which we have no connection except as very satisfied customers). It fixed the puncture and serviced the bike.

Colin Kennington

ED Great stuff, Colin. What are other readers' experiences of e-bike punctures? You know the drill, get in touch at [W mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk](mailto:mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk)

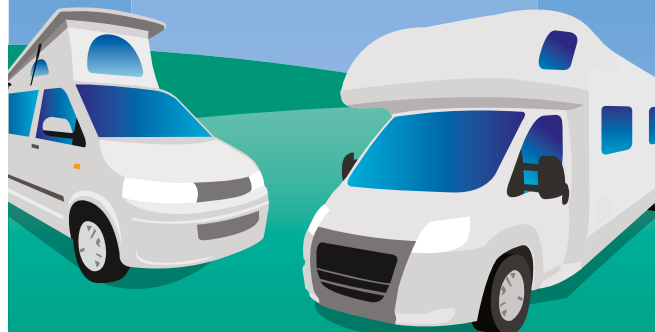


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Timberlanders head to Dover



"There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover..." so sang Dame Vera Lynn to welcome the brave pilots of the RAF back across the Channel after their daring do's during WWII. While we didn't quite get the serenading, members of the Timberland Owners Club were nonetheless warmly welcomed to this part of the south coast by rally organisers, Brenda and Harry.

The venue for our first gathering of the year was the Little Satmar Holiday Park, Capel-le-Ferne, near Folkstone (much used for pre and post ferry stopovers), and 15 'vans accepted this invitation to come together for our Spring Rally.

Once settled in, members were invited to gather for our traditional 'circle of friendship' where new members were welcomed and old friendships rekindled. Sitting in the sunshine, Timberlanders enjoyed a delicious buffet prepared by Brenda, and gleaned information from our hosts – who live locally – as to how the following days could be filled.

With this information firmly in mind, the subsequent days found members keen to explore. There was a bus-stop a five-minute walk from the site, so we could all take advantage of the destinations serviced by the local routes, including Dover, Deal, Hythe and Folkstone – with its rejuvenated seafront offering coffee shops, cafes and restaurants with Channel views. Some took advantage of the park and ride to Canterbury, so plenty to keep us all entertained.

For those members keen to don walking boots and explore locally, Port Lympne Reserve, Warren County Park and Samphire Hoe – created from the spoil

excavated from the Channel Tunnel – proved popular. Another nearby destination for sating the desires of both breakfast and lunch was the Cliff Top Cafe, with stunning views westwards towards Folkestone and Samphire Hoe.

An attraction that proved popular was the Battle of Britain Memorial. This beautifully designed and laid out museum offered an amazing multimedia experience, and outside were replicas of a Spitfire, Hurricane and Stuka dive bomber. The statue of a lone pilot staring out to sea was especially thought provoking, as was the Memorial Wall bearing the names of 'the few'.

Another Timberland Owners Club tradition, the dine-out evening, was excellently catered for at the Royal Oak pub, about three-quarters of a mile from the site, where excellent food was enjoyed over stories swapped.

All too soon the final day was upon us, with a leisurely coffee morning arranged for farewells to be given and safe onward journeys wished, and warm thanks given to Brenda and Harry for organising such an enjoyable event. Until the next time.

W timberlandownersclub.co.uk

Mike Simpson, Press Officer

ED Little Satmar is a Premier Park – check out our YouTube channel for a video review of this campsite

W motorhome.ma/littlesat

Find out more about the Premier Parks network
W premier-parks.co.uk



Rent or buy...

I visited North Island New Zealand earlier this year and spotted an article in the Waikato Times about the pros and cons regarding renting or buying campervans and I wondered if it might be of interest to any of your readers.



On previous visits to NZ I rented motorhomes and I think I'd go that route again... if only for the convenience.

Also attached is a photo of a proper home on wheels that I spotted on a car park in Orewa when I visited NZ a few years ago.

Chris Diplock

ED It looks like the article Christopher sent to us was based primarily at New Zealand residents.

However, it seems that UK residents can buy instead of renting, if you are planning on staying longer. Does anyone have any experiences of this?

Oops

On page 127 (Summer issue), the Sudoku puzzle asks for three figures in the four coloured squares!

Michael

ED It was intentionally four numbers, but I forgot to change the text on the page to reflect that (and on the online entry form).

Thanks for pointing this out. I've changed the text online now, so hopefully it will be obvious when people go online to enter. If you're reading this immediately after the August issue goes on sale, the Summer puzzle competitions closing date is 30 July, 2026.


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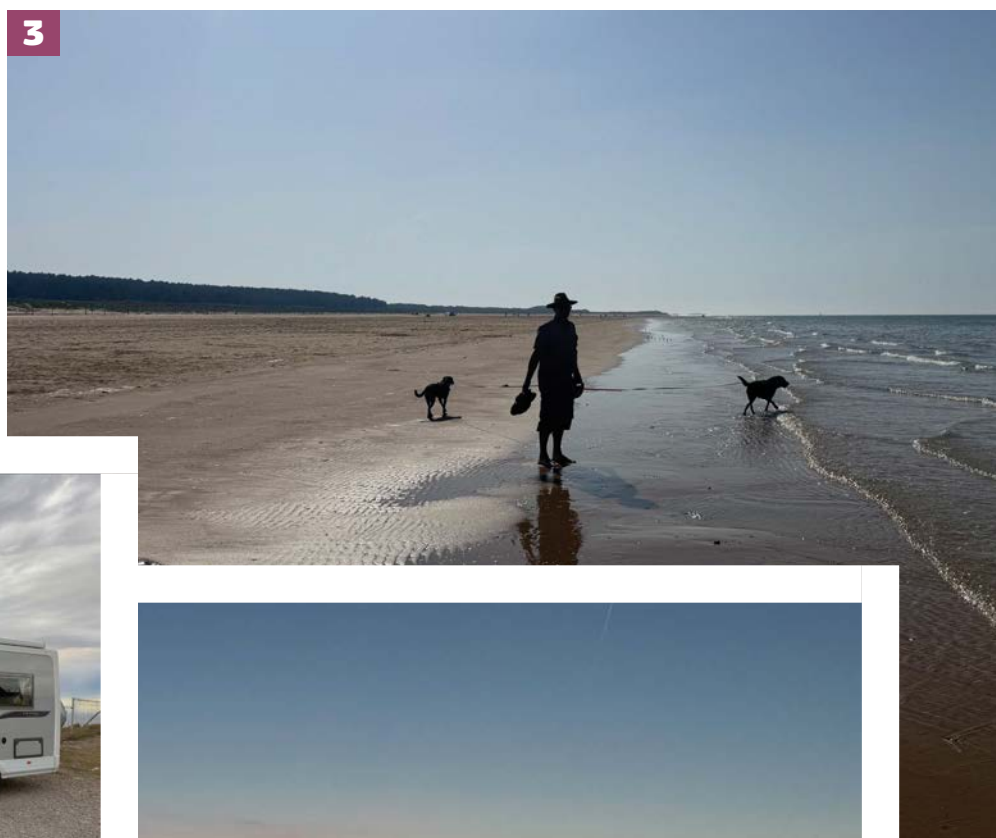
Readers share the photographs that trigger their happiest memories and always make them smile. Here are some of the best from this month...

1 The Great Orme and its spectacular limestone headland in Llandudno. **Dave Plant**

2 The sun setting on the Adriatic coast from the edge of the Croatian city of Zadar. **John and Lesley Geoghegan**

3 Taking the dogs for a morning stroll up Holkham Beach. **Kitty Clark**

4 Taken from outside the Garonne Canal, between Bordeaux and Toulouse. **Chris Emptage**





4



5



6



7

5 This is the beautiful Coumeenole Beach in County Kerry. It was used in a Star Wars film. **Juliet Thomas**

6 An evening view of Bowness Bay Marina. **Neil Murray**

7 Clear skies over Overbrook Caravan Park. **Mick and Dawn Powell**

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

If you have a picture of a motorhome adventure that makes you smile, please share it. Email it and a caption to  mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk

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Back to basics

Dave Richards Trashy novels, tasty treats and easy tidy-up

A campervan break somewhere in the wilds of the British countryside is an indulgence in itself. The last thing a chap needs is to find himself struggling with a whole plethora of difficult camping equipment before he can sit down and begin to chill as nature intended.

Our tried and trusted solution is something we've come to know and love as 'the six-minute erection'. We've been working on this for a few seasons and have finally managed to trim our set-up to the point where, when working as a team, we can have the 'van on blocks, the roof popped and the pup tent pupped and filled with much of the 'van's contents well within our allotted time. As soon as a couple of chairs are unfurled, we can begin to take advantage of the enforced slower pace of life that accompanies it and to enjoy a lifestyle that's as close to bohemian debauchery as we can manage whilst keeping our clothes on.

All that's required now are some drinks, snacks and a cheeky read...

Back in the tranquil days before Brexit & Covid, when you could still buy a huge Toblerone from Poundshop, I'd chuck one into the depths of one of the cupboards as a hidden treat to enjoy later in the week. The last time I checked that same bar of chocolate seems now to cost almost seven quid. So, in order to moderate my expenditure, I've devised my own selection of alternative edible treats instead.

We particularly enjoy nuts and raisins, but rather than your



"The smell of the old ink on stale dry paper is a treat in itself"

traditional, common or garden snack, I take the time to create my own special luxury blend of chocolate-covered raisins and honey roasted cashews. I am of course obliged to measure these out into individual portions in little containers, because otherwise we'd be unable to restrain ourselves and would scoff the whole lot in one go.

As the digital age continues to pervade almost every aspect of our lives, I firmly believe that the traditional holiday practice of reading tatty secondhand paperback thrillers is something that everyone should do their utmost to preserve. I am all too aware of a device known as a Kindle. They are very clever, I'm sure, but I am far happier out there amongst the wild blue yonder with just a dog-eared paperback.

A regular part of our pre-holiday preparation involves a pleasant hour or so spent rummaging

around the local used book emporium. We tend to gravitate towards the room that's filled with crime and mystery stories, the old 'Whodunnit department'.

Immediately our newly purchased books leave the fusty warmth of the shop, we pack them tightly into a polythene food bag and thence into the depths of the campervan.

Only much later, when we are comfortably ensconced on site, and whether it's the inevitable warm summer rain that has forced us to withdraw to the shelter of our 'van or the fact that we find ourselves in need of an hour or so's relaxation on a deckchair after a long walk, do we finally remove our 'new' books from their wrappings. The smell of the old ink on stale dry paper is a treat in itself. A treat I suspect future generations may never come to treasure in the same way.

I'm going to wrap up this month with a tip for packing away a pup tent, a windbreak or a small awning.

You know what it's like, after a week of wall-to-wall sunshine, you wake up to be faced with packing a large wet fabric item into a bag with a ludicrously narrow opening.

The solution is surprisingly easy, just pack the offending soggy tent into a bin liner and roll it up. It will then slip easily into its proper storage bag, and if you're on a touring holiday you'll be unpacking it again before nightfall. If you're heading home, just pop it up on the lawn while you unpack the essentials from the camper. **mmm**

SEND US YOUR TOPS TIPS

The best ones not involving trickery and subterfuge may win a prize... Email with subject line 'Basic tips'  mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk

Our month

MMM's team share the ups and downs of their motorhoming month

DRIVING FOR ECONOMY

“45.7mpg. Is this a record for a Fiat Ducato 2.3?”



Andy Stothert Technical consultant & travel writer

Regular readers will be well aware of my ongoing efforts to travel as far as is humanly possible on every drop of fuel in the tank of our 2007 Fiat Ducato MWB van conversion. Up until recently the most I'd managed to squeeze out of it was 42.5mpg.

This occurred a couple of years ago on our regular 350-mile return journey from home in Leyland to Bourne, in Lincolnshire.

The most recent round returned a surprising 45.7mpg. There was nothing unusual about the journey, but the engine was definitely running noticeably smoother than I can recall it ever doing.

From a personal point of view the aim of trying to obtain the highest possible MPG figures is as much about treating the machinery sympathetically as saving money on fuel. In the forlorn hope it will last forever.

A few weeks earlier we'd returned home from our annual winter adventure in Spain and the fuel consumption over the 2,700 miles was 41mpg. This was the best the 'van had ever returned on the Spanish trip. We don't travel light, and some of the places we go involve driving in challenging terrain, so I was quite pleased.

However, to complicate things, during the latter weeks an intermittent (but gradually becoming less intermittent) fault had developed which caused the solenoid operating the pressure regulator on the EGR valve to be almost constantly in operation. This manifests itself as a buzzing noise from the EGR valve solenoid.

This small black cylindrical object is mounted under the bonnet above the engine, but hiding behind a plate at the front, top, and centre, of the bonnet opening. As the engine was still running Ok-ish, I decided to fill the tank with that 'super' grade fuel, and carry on. It is said that these contain miraculous decarbonising ingredients.

When we got home from Spain I decided to find out what was causing the EGR solenoid problem. There are a few potential culprits, including the solenoid itself, the EGR valve, the turbo or a leak in the vacuum system.

The place to start is to check the vacuum pipes from the engine and EGR valve are both connected properly. They were, but both pipes were split where they connect to the engine vacuum system and the EGR valve. Replacing these was a simple (but £36) task.

So, had the replacement vacuum pipes made the engine that much more economical? Or was it the super grade fuel, which was still in the tank for our 'record' mpg figures trip? Or both.

Nothing is ever that simple. Just before going off to Spain, I'd had the cambelt changed by the most fastidious mechanic on the planet, and the engine was definitely a bit 'sweeter' after it had been done.

'Impossible,' I hear you shouting. Maybe not. There is more guile required to fitting a new cambelt than just putting the locking bolts in place and slinging the belt over the pulleys. Any slack in the belt has to be in the right place, and only the right place.

Lastly, also before going to Spain, the front tyres were replaced with two new Continental VanContact Eco tyres, and these are claimed to improve fuel efficiency. Anyway, with the engine now run-in

properly, a new cambelt fitted correctly, the EGR

valve pressure issues fixed, new low rolling resistance tyres fitted, and a tankful of magic fuel in the tank, how am I going to improve the figures any further? New dancing shoes?

Has anyone out there managed to beat this figure with a Ducato? And how?! Email us mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk with your fuel economy highs and lows!



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NEWS & EVENTS

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NATIONAL PARKS

Scottish national park opens consultation



The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is opening a review of its camping provisions, marking the 10-year anniversary of the byelaws introduction.

Since March 2017, nearly 300,000 people have camped in the permit areas with complaints down from 324 in 2017 to 40 in 2025.

There's a series of new proposals under review, of which this public consultation is a part of. The byelaws introduced in 2017 apply to designated camping management zones running from 1 March to 30

September each year. This means campers need to book a permit or campsite in advance as the use of fire and collection of wood in these areas are regulated.

Kenny Auld, Head of Visitor Services at Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority said, "This review is our opportunity to ensure the byelaws continue to evolve, remaining effective, fair and fit for a changing landscape, a changing climate and changing behaviours."

The new proposals are looking at

the geographical areas covered, seasonal timing, use of fires and bbqs and protections for rangers.

However, there are no proposed changes in the review to the rules surrounding motorhomes and campervans.

The authority states, "Motorhome permit bookings have risen by 128%. This popularity brings challenges regarding waste disposal and crowded car parks. However, the byelaws are legally limited because they cannot be applied to areas considered public roads under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, which includes the very laybys and parking areas where campervans often set up encampments. We will focus our efforts on working with landowners and partners to increase dedicated motorhome parking areas and proper waste disposal facilities to manage the impact."

The public consultation is now open until 21 September, 2026. People are encouraged to share their views online at lochlomond-trossachs.org/campingreviewstory or in person using printed copies available at National Park visitor centres, campsites and local libraries across the area.

VEHICLES

WESTFALIA TO OFFER NEW SKY DECK

Westfalia has offered the first glimpse of its new Columbus Liner, showcasing a host of new features, most notably an all-new upper deck.

Based on the traditional Columbus, the new model combines a large rear bed, an XL bike garage, a clever washroom and a step-free lounge.

Set to go on sale at the start of September, the Columbus Liner will be available in five colours: White, Expedition Grey, Lanzarote Grey, Iron Grey Metallic and Artense Grey Metallic. Inside, the living area features a new

heated double-floor system. The kitchen includes a front-access fridge, a separate sink and a worktop either side of the hob. An induction hob is an option to replace the standard gas version.

At the rear, steps lead up to the bed (2.05m/1.86m by 1.71m), which features Westfalia's Sleeping Comfort System.

High-level lockers have been designed to offer greater storage without intruding too much.

From the bedroom, owners can access the optional new 'Sky Lounge' – a roof deck positioned towards the front.



The washroom features a sliding toilet, so it can be tucked away when the shower is in use. The toilet itself is a waterless Clesana. The sink then folds away to create the shower area.

UK prices are still to be announced, but this model will be launching with a provisional price of €104,999.

VEHICLES

SUNLIGHT REVEALS PRODUCTION-READY IBEX 4X4 CAMPERVAN

Sunlight has released the first details of its production-ready Ibex 4x4 campervan, with the Volkswagen Crafter-based model set to enter series production from August 2026.

Originally unveiled as a concept vehicle, the Ibex has been developed into a fully-fledged off-road campervan aimed at adventure-focused travellers.

The Ibex comes as standard with all-wheel drive, automatic transmission and a 163hp engine. Measuring just under six metres in length, it offers an interior standing height of 1.98m thanks to a specially developed raised roof.

Sunlight says extensive real-world testing has helped shape the final specification. The campervan has been

trialled in challenging environments, including Iceland and the Faroe Islands, with feedback from users helping refine the production vehicle.

The layout also includes a kitchen area, compact washroom with foldable washbasin and a sliding partition wall.



VEHICLES

CamperKing's sub-60k camper

CamperKing has unveiled its latest model with a price tag of under £60,000. The new T7 Go! includes a range of features as standard, including an upgraded three-seater Titan bed and a pop-top roof with panoramic zip-out canvas. A double gas burner and sink, diesel heater and 50-litre Vitrifrigo fridge/freezer are also standard features in the campervan, which starts at £59,500.

It also includes a Sargent

integrated smart power system using a 95Ah AGM leisure battery. Optional upgrades include body kit, furniture, upholstery, flooring and different colour combinations.

Stuart Kidman, CamperKing's Group Marketing Manager, said, "We're really excited to launch the T7 Go! We've worked really hard to keep the price competitive given the current pressures on home finances."



TRAVEL

Ferry travellers back return of Norway link

The UK Ferry Travel Survey 2026, conducted by FerryGoGo, has identified France as the new favourite destination among ferry travellers. But when asked which direct route they would most like to see launched or reinstated, 56.9% chose a UK-Norway service, ahead of all other options. More broadly, 74.6% selected a Scandinavian route, to Norway, Sweden or Denmark.

When discussing the biggest benefits of ferry travel, respondents overwhelmingly cited the ability to bring their own car or campervan (63.2%), while avoiding the airport and environmental considerations came second and third respectively.

MAINTENANCE

Hidden motorhome repair costs revealed

Figures from Warranty Solutions Group (WSG) show that fridge elements account for almost one in five habitation claims (19.3%), with the average repair costing £706.80.

Other regularly reported issues include toilet flush mechanisms, water taps and cooker ignitors, while some of the biggest expenses come from awning motors.

EQUIPMENT

Fiamma upgrades popular awnings

Fiamma has introduced changes to its F80S and F80S Ducato awnings. This includes a new winch with a smoother and more consistent operation and improved leg feet to reduce vibrations and noise.

However, the main development centres around a new lead bar that has two hidden rails instead of three for a cleaner look. The awning comes in three colours and can be widely installed, with more than 95 types of dedicated adaptors available.

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VEHICLES

Rapido launches island bed campervan

For the coming season, Rapido has announced a new Fiat Ducato-based campervan with an island bed. The extra-long 6.36m V64 model has a patent pending on the design.

This new layout swaps the kitchen and lounge over to help create the space needed to have a walk-around bed with access on either side, measuring 140cm by 195cm. The wardrobe and washroom are between the sleeping and living zones.

A sliding table, adjustable headboard and outdoor shelf are just a few of the features this new vehicle will offer.

This is a snippet from the Rapido launch, so keep an eye out for more Rapido news in the next issue of *What Motorhome*. The *Essential Guide to 2027 Motorhomes*, featuring news from all the major UK and European manufacturers, will be published in October.

AWARDS

CONVERTER WINS SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

Vanlife Conversions, an Essex-based converter, has been named the National Service Excellence Award winner at the prestigious HSBC UK Small Business Growth Awards.

The finals took place on 8 June at the Savoy Hotel, where the award was presented by entrepreneur and *Dragons' Den* star, Sara Davies MBE.

Judges were particularly impressed by Vanlife Conversions' personalised approach, which includes sourcing base vehicles on behalf of clients, creating detailed visual design proposals and providing an online portal with regular progress updates.



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DEALERS

YORKSHIRE CARAVANS & MOTORHOMES CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Yorkshire Caravans & Motorhomes is celebrating 100 years since the business was founded in 1926. The independent retailer now operates from a 34-acre site near Bawtry, South Yorkshire.



Jonathan Goulden, Chairman of Yorkshire Caravans & Motorhomes, said, "Reaching 100 years in business is an extraordinary milestone and a proud moment for everyone connected to Yorkshire Caravans & Motorhomes."

To mark the milestone, Yorkshire Caravans & Motorhomes hosted an anniversary celebration for employees and suppliers at the China Rose in Bawtry on 4 June. The celebrations continued with a public centenary weekend at its South Yorkshire site on 27 and 28 June, featuring special offers and family activities.



CLUBS

C&MC unveils its 'Walking Wanderers, Walk of the Month'

The Caravan and Motorhome Club continues its Walk of the Month series, shining a spotlight on a scenic, gentle route from Ferry Meadows Club campsite in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Set within the expansive Nene Park, the walk centres around an escape into nature, and the joy of being outdoors.

Every logged walk via the Club website enters members into a prize draw, with prizes ranging from walking gear to campsite stays.

TRAVEL

Cooler European destinations

Polarsteps has analysed 25 European countries through its 'Summer Heat Escape Index', scoring each on daytime and night-time temperatures, sea swimming temperatures, forest coverage, population density and wild camping access.

Iceland tops the index overall (83.81/100), with average daytime temperatures of just 10.7°C in August and nights dropping to 8.1°C.

Finland (77.02/100) is the standout for nature lovers. A remarkable 73.7% of the country is forested, the highest of any destination in the index, with August days averaging 17°C.

Norway (76.06/100) offers the coldest swimming in Europe. Sea temperatures at Ny-Ålesund reach

just 5.3°C, with average daytime highs of 16.9°C and nights at 12.5°C. Vast, uncrowded wilderness completes the picture.

The Baltic states are an underrated alternative. Estonia (72.18/100), Latvia (68.37/100) and Lithuania (65.27/100) all feature in the top ten. All three have low population densities and average daytime temperatures hover around 17-18°C in August, cool enough to be comfortable, warm enough to enjoy.

Closer to home, the UK ranks 10th (50.74/100), bolstered by some of the coldest coastal swimming in Europe: sea temperatures around the UK average 12.8°C, the coolest of any country in the index after Norway and Iceland.

DEALERS

Spinney celebrates relocation

Spinney is celebrating a major milestone as its motorhome branch on the A45 in Little Irchester officially relocates to the Rushden site. Visitors can now browse a wider range of leisure vehicles – both motorhomes and caravans – in one convenient location, alongside the dealership's service centre, accessory shop and coffee shop.

DEALERS

AUTO-SLEEPERS ADDS NEW DEALER

Auto-Sleepers has announced the appointment of South Hereford Motor Caravan Centre (SHMCC) as the newest addition to its UK dealer network, further strengthening its presence across South Wales, Herefordshire and the West Midlands.

Founded in the early 90s, the company is an Approved Workshop member with a main workshop holding four service bays as well as additional

workshop facilities alongside.

Kristian Franklin, Director at South Hereford Motor Caravan Centre, said, "We feel that Auto-Sleepers is a great fit for SHMCC. Auto-Sleepers represents a premium, British-built brand with a loyal customer following. The kind of customer who buys an Auto-Sleeper tends to be an experienced motorcaravanner who values craftsmanship, heritage and quality."



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This hand-picked selection features the very best child-free sites across the UK, ensuring a relaxing



retreat for your next tour. Whether you want a coastal escape or a rural haven, download your free copy today and start planning your quietest holiday yet.

[W motorhome.ma/aog](http://motorhome.ma/aog)



FREEBIE

Step back in time and explore the roots of motorhoming with a completely free digital issue of MMM from 1966! We are giving all our readers the exclusive opportunity to browse and read this historic edition online.

See how the vehicles, travel advice and layouts have evolved over the last six decades. It is the perfect nostalgic read for a quiet afternoon or a rainy day in your 'van.

Simply head over to our website, enter a few quick details, and start reading your free vintage issue today.

[W motorhome.ma/1966](http://motorhome.ma/1966)

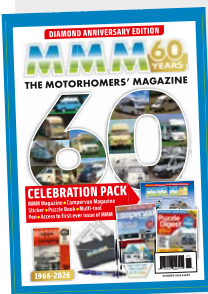


SHOP

Did you miss out on our big summer party celebrations? Don't worry, you can still grab a piece of the action! Our limited-edition summer anniversary promotional boxes are still available to order on the My Magazine Sub shop.

Packed with useful accessories and exclusive goodies, it is the ultimate treat for any motorhome enthusiast. Stock is strictly limited, so make sure you secure yours now...

[W motorhome.ma/summer2026](http://motorhome.ma/summer2026)



FOR SALE

The iconic VW camper remains a firm favourite, leading both listings and interactions on our site. The distinctive Swift Trekker X is also popping up in a flurry of searches, while Auto-Trail continues to dominate overall motorhome listings. We have also seen a notable rise in new Dethleffs listings in the last month or so...

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[W motorhome.ma/emails](http://motorhome.ma/emails)

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Choosing your next campsite just got even easier! Our dedicated campsites team is now publishing detailed video reviews on the Out & About Live YouTube channel.

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YEARS**

Shepton gets hands-on for 2026!

Late summer in Somerset is always a fine excuse to gather the touring community, and The South West Motorhome & Campervan Show from 11-13 September is shaping up to be a weekend full of practical ideas, great food, fresh-air fun and inspiration.

Taking place at the Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, the show brings together new and used motorhomes, campervans, accessories, free manoeuvring sessions, evening entertainment and the ever-popular Out & About Live Advice Centre. Whether you're choosing your first 'van, planning a longer tour or simply looking for ways to make life on the road easier, there's expert help on hand.

This year's Advice Centre line-up is packed with familiar faces, including Peter Vaughan, Motorhome Matt, Wandering Bird, Highlands2Hammocks, bFRANK, BlueFix Energy, Chris Wise, Touring With The Kids, Trailer Lady Fliss and Mark from Vanlife Eats. Talks cover buying advice, touring Europe, responsible road trips, off-grid electrics, wellness on the road and the sort of real-world motorhome mishaps we've all either had, or narrowly avoided.

There's something new to discover outside the Advice Centre, too, as designer, TV presenter and



Outlandish Campers' Max McMurdo continues his live self-build project. After converting a Vauxhall Combo and a Citroën Berlingo at Newark and Norfolk, Max will be working on his next 'van at both the Western Motorhome & Campervan Show and the South West Show, sharing the practical decisions, clever fixes and creative thinking that go into building a camper from scratch.

Food lovers should head for Mark from Vanlife Eats, who will be bringing big flavour to tiny kitchens throughout the weekend. Alongside live cooking demonstrations, Mark will also be hosting free hands-on workshops, giving visitors the chance to pick up practical tips and try ideas they can take back to their

own 'van kitchens. He'll also be running his immersive wine-and-flavour experiences across the remaining shows this season, creating relaxed, sociable sessions that celebrate good food, good company and cooking well wherever your wheels take you.

bFRANK also returns to Shepton after proving hugely popular when introduced last year. Campers can start each day with a 9.30am bodyweight fitness session, including Friday's heart health workout, Saturday's brain-boosting session and Sunday's full-body strength class. Suitable for different fitness levels, with no equipment needed.

Campers can also make the most of three coach trips from the showground: Glastonbury and Street on Friday, Wells and Cheddar on Saturday, and Bath on Sunday. It's a lovely way to explore more of Somerset without moving the 'van, but we'd recommend booking these in advance as they can sell out.

Book early and save at

outandaboutlive.co.uk/shows



ADVICE CENTRE LINE-UP & FITNESS CLASSES

FRIDAY

● 9.30am: Heart health workout

Start the day with an upbeat bodyweight workout. This cardio-focused session is all about good energy, fun movement and helping you feel fitter and happier.

Everyone can take part and choose how hard they want to push themselves.

● 10.30am: Motorhome/campervan buying advice

The major points to consider when buying a vehicle, whether new or used. Ideal for first-timers and experienced motorhomers thinking about a change.

● 11.30am: Touring Scotland's best-kept secret, the North East 250

The beauty, history and quieter corners of the NE250, from whisky country and coastal fishing villages to ancient castles and the Cairngorm mountains.

● 12.30pm: Italy cooking demo & talk

Travelling chef, Mark from Vanlife Eats, cooks rustico from Lecce, one of southern Italy's much-loved street foods. Inspired by an Italian foodie road trip, revel in the stories, traditions and everyday food culture discovered along the way.

● 1.30pm: How to stay healthy and keep exploring

This session looks at the simple health foundations that help keep the body strong, the brain sharp and travel plans firmly on the horizon.

● 2.30pm: Self-sufficient electrical systems

A practical look at how to make your motorhome or campervan more electrically independent, with advice on the latest off-grid power solutions.

● 3.30pm: Albania and the Balkans by campervan

Albania and the Balkans is one of Europe's most spectacular and budget-friendly regions. Expect mountain roads, secluded beaches, wild-feeling stopovers, quirky campsites and honest advice for planning your own trip.

SATURDAY

● 9.30am: Brain-boosting workout

Wake up your body and your brain with a fun session combining quick and slow movements, coordination and balance. Designed to keep you guessing what might come next, this workout suits all fitness levels and is a great way to start the day feeling energised.

● 10.30am: Motorhome/campervan buying advice

Another chance to pick up expert guidance on buying new or used, helping visitors understand layouts, practical considerations and what to look for.

● 11.30am: Your first year of motorhoming

The key things every new motorhomer should know, from planning your first trips and getting comfortable behind the wheel to campsite know-how and avoiding common rookie errors.

● 12.30pm: Changes to European travel in 2026

Planning a European motorhome trip? This covers the latest post-Brexit travel updates, including insurance, documentation and driving laws, helping both seasoned travellers and first-timers get road-ready.

● 1.30pm: Touring the NC500 in 2026 – a responsible road trip guide

A fresh, sustainable take on Scotland's famous North Coast 500, with advice for reducing impact while making the most of the route's scenery, stops and experiences.

● 2.30pm: Touring Britain's coastline

Stories from life on the road as a full-time travel family, exploring Britain's beaches, cliffs, seaside towns and hidden coastal gems. The session includes family-friendly ideas and practical planning tips.

● 3.30pm: Motorhome driving – turn anxiety into adventure

Driving instructor and motorhomer, Floss Spink, looks at why driving anxiety is so common and how to manage it. From narrow roads and reversing to parking and meeting oncoming traffic, this session is designed to build confidence.



SUNDAY

● 9.30am: Strength workout

Build strength, confidence and energy with a full-body bodyweight session. This dynamic class shows how simple movements can increase strength.

● 10am: Motorhome/campervan buying advice

A final chance to hear Peter's expert buying advice, covering the key considerations when choosing a 'van.

● 11am: Exploring Scandinavia & the Baltics

Tales from a recent tour through nine countries in 88 days, planned carefully around the Schengen limit. Expect family travel insights and inspiration.

● 12pm: Inside the industry – motorhome trends for 2026

What does the motorhome market really look like this year? With insight from the showroom floor and wider industry, this session explores trends, popular layouts and where value can be found.

● 1pm: Scotland's undiscovered southwest

Shining a light on the SWC300, a 300-mile route through Dumfries and Galloway and Ayrshire.

● 2pm: Touring France

The practical essentials for a motorhome trip to France, from driving rules and paperwork to tolls, emissions zones, overnight stops and common mistakes.

● 3pm: Motorhome mishaps

A light-hearted and useful session where familiar faces share the mistakes, campsite fails, mechanical mayhem and travel chaos they've experienced.

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out&about LIVE

Cool runnings

When the heat becomes too much for an action-packed break, and for the two dogs that accompany us, where better to head than beautiful North Yorkshire?

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Sarah and Andrew Warburton



THE ROUTE

Follow our journey, go to...

W motorhome.ma/northyorkshire2026

The last time I had visited these parts, I was showcasing a fresh perm and was crammed into the school minibus, singing along to a home-made top 40 mixtape, which reached a crescendo with 'Vogue' by Madonna, the number one single of the day. So, you could say that a return was long overdue.

Our home for the next five nights was the Caravan and Motorhome Club's Cayton Village Club site, five miles south of Scarborough and a 20-minute walk to the nearest beach at Cayton Bay.

Saturday morning began with a visit to the North Yorkshire Water Park. I'm always up for some parkrun tourism, so I joined around 170 other runners on a pleasant two-lap course that circled the large water sports lake, weaving through

tranquil grassland and woodland. It's hard to imagine that if you'd visited this site before 2014, you would have found a working sand and gravel quarry. Since its closure, the area has been transformed into a centre offering a mind-boggling range of activities, from escape rooms and axe throwing through to paddleboarding and sailing.

With parkrun done and dusted, Andrew had booked himself onto an open water swim session, while I settled outside the café with my well-earned breakfast. The dogs were delighted to be served with complementary sausage, too! From my vantage point, I watched the antics across the lake's colourful inflatable obstacle course. A riot of slides, bouncy castles, beams and swings that had visitors of all ages shrieking with laughter, with several



children's birthday parties adding to the cheerful hullabaloo.

Later that day, we walked to the beach at Cayton Bay. It's dog friendly year-round and lifeguarded on a seasonal basis. This wide sweep of bay is hemmed in by dusky coloured cliffs and woodland, creating a rural feel. Given the pleasant temperature, the beach was a popular destination, and we dodged rowdy, barefoot games of cricket, picnic blankets, sandcastles and windbreaks on our way to a quieter spot.

We continued to Osgodby Point, a headland at the northernmost end of the beach. The sandstone cliffs seemed as crumbly as a block of Wensleydale cheese. The sea was bath-water-warm as we enjoyed a paddle, before meandering through woods up to the clifftops. Up top, we joined the Cleveland Way and the

landscape opened up. Tall grasses swayed in the sea breeze, rosebay willowherb blazed cerise pink against the cobalt sky, and goldfinches flitted overhead as we stood to watch stripy cinnabar moths munching on golden ragwort.

Our trip also gave me an opportunity to visit a couple of places from my 'must see' list, the first of which was Ravenscar. Clambering out of the 'van at our roadside parking spot, the view literally stopped us in our tracks. Robin Hood's Bay swept before us in a magnificent arc, a patchwork of golden fields tumbled seaward to meet the cliffs and the smugglers' paradise village of the same name seemed to spill down into the sea on the far side of the bay.

A variety of walks branch out from the National Trust Visitor Centre, including ►

TOP TIPS

There is a bus stop outside Cayton Bay C&MC site with frequent, direct services to Scarborough, Filey and Bridlington. Further details can be found here

W eastyorkshirebuses.co.uk/services/EV/12

ABOVE Cayton Bay from the Cleveland Way National Trail



ABOVE CLOCKWISE Looking along the coast at Bempton Cliffs; One of the pools at Peasholm Park; Shops and arcades in Scarborough's South Bay

BELOW INSET Andrew walks through the woodland leading up from Cayton Bay

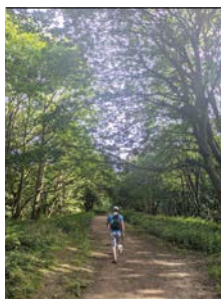
one to the site of a former alum works. But we'd come for the seals. Their haunting calls echoed uphill long before we spotted them and, at first glance, we mistook them for rocks scattered across the shoreline.

As we had our dogs in tow, we opted not to go down as far as the beach, where hi-vis volunteers were on hand to advise visitors about keeping their distance from the seals. It's a sad sign of the times that there are even posters with QR codes encouraging people to report any instances of the seals being disturbed by human activity.

Nonetheless, from the viewing area along the path, we had a great view of the

colony, which comprises both common and grey seals. We found ourselves mesmerised by their antics: snoozing, swimming, bobbing, scratching and even some lounging atop rocks with tails aloft in what looked remarkably like yoga poses. It was a magical experience and well worth the years I'd waited to visit.

After a quick lunch, we walked in the opposite direction, along the Cleveland Way towards Ravenscar World War II radar station. As if from nowhere, a sea mist rolled in, making for an eerie feel as the abandoned buildings loomed through the swirling grey. Now protected as an ancient monument, the site operated ►



THE JOURNEY

From our home in southern England, we drive north via M5, M1 and A1 to our campsite near Scarborough. Day trips included Ravenscar, Scarborough and Bempton Cliffs to reveal a coastline shaped by both nature and history. 562 miles



THE COSTS

Fuel	£107.44
Site fees: 5 nights	£193
Attractions: North Yorkshire Water Park open water swim, Parking at North Bay, Scarborough, Open-top bus day rover ticket x 2, Scarborough Tramway return tickets x 2, Scarborough Castle admission free as English Heritage members, Bempton Cliffs RSPB reserve free as RSPB members	
Total	£327.84



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INFORMATION

At Bempton Cliffs RSPB Reserve, seabirds gather and nest between April and July. Further information, as well as a downloadable trail map can be found at

W rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/bempton-cliffs

The Cleveland Way is a 109-mile-long National Trail that runs between Helmsley and Filey Brigg, much of it running along the North Yorkshire coastline. For more information, as well as details of linear and circular walks based on the trail, visit **W** nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/cleveland-way

BELOW The 12th-century Great Tower at Scarborough Castle is the centrepiece of a royal castle begun by Henry II

from 1942 to 1944 and must have felt like the edge of the universe to the thirty-five men and one officer stationed there.

The evening found us meeting up with friends who live locally and eating out at The Farrier in Cayton village. This dog-friendly pub offers an imaginative menu and excellent food and is a five-minute walk from the site.

We couldn't not visit Scarborough itself on this trip, the town that claims to be Britain's first seaside resort, after health-giving springs were discovered in the early 17th century. As we parked up by North Bay, a layer of iron-grey cloud seemed to press down like a lid, and we knew we'd be lucky to avoid a downpour as the day panned out.

Our first port of call was Scarborough Castle. With centuries of turbulent history behind it, the castle stands on top of the promontory that defines Scarborough's two bays, North and South. This headland was first settled almost 3,000 years ago, and the castle was founded in 1138 by William le Gros, then rebuilt from 1159 by Henry II. Enhancements under the reign of King John meant that it became a key royal castle, and over the years it has endured several sieges as well as German naval bombardment during World War II.

As we climbed to the battlement viewing platforms, what had been a pleasant sea breeze at street level became altogether fiercer, as my hair whipped across my face. Nonetheless, it was a great vantage point to see the contrast between Scarborough's two personalities: the razzmatazz of South Bay and the quiet of North Bay.

Next, we wandered towards the Old Town, past St Mary's churchyard, where Anne Brontë lies buried, then down the part-cobbled Castlegate. Elegant Georgian houses lined the way down towards the harbour, full of fishing boats in bold, primary colours and buzzing with activity.

Lunchtime brought us to Bamford's Chippy where we nabbed the last table on the seafront terrace, perfect for people-watching. But, you guessed it, as soon as we sat down with our steaming chips, the rain that had been threatening all morning finally arrived.

A collective rummage through bags ensued amongst fellow diners and out came a motley collection of cagoules and plastic emergency ponchos, as we all exchanged knowing smiles. Waterproofs donned, everyone carried on eating their chips with the stoic cheerfulness that so often defines a British seaside experience.



The Beachcomber open-top bus whisked us along to the end of South Bay (top deck, of course, despite the rain!). We zipped past colourful neon-lit arcades and shops selling whoopee cushions, crab catchers and kiss-me-quick cowboy hats. Standing sentinel over the bay is the Grand Hotel, an immense edifice crafted in buff and red brick with its four distinctive towers, which represent the seasons. Completed in 1867, the hotel has welcomed many an illustrious guest over the years, including Winston Churchill and The Beatles. But, from the outside at least, it has seen better days, with dirty windows, grotty-looking curtains, and squawking kittiwakes nesting on every available ledge.

Adjacent to the Grand is the Victorian tramway, built in 1881 to transport holidaymakers from town to beach. The smartly liveried cream and burgundy carriages shuttle passengers up and down in around a minute and the bay views during the short trip are spectacular.

Back on the bus, we rode around Marine Drive heading back to North Bay. Work began on this road, which traces the outline of the castle headland, in 1897, but progress was hindered by treacherous conditions. It wasn't actually completed

BELOW CLOCKWISE Scarborough tramway with the Grand Hotel in the background; The route to Scarborough Castle atop the cliffs of North Bay; Bempton Cliffs gannet family nesting

until 1908 (work had been intended to take three years). When it did finally open, it was greeted by a grand fanfare with a royal procession of carriages and finery.

Several sculptures grace Scarborough's seafront, but one named *Bathing Belle* particularly caught my eye, probably as I'm a keen swimmer. This striking statue depicts a 19th-century swimmer, almost totally covered by an elaborate bathing costume, which must have been a nightmare to swim in. Behind her, a steel girder symbolises the constraints that Victorian society placed on women's behaviour.

By this time, we were absolutely drenched, but, figuring that we couldn't get any wetter, we wandered along to Peasholm Park. This oriental-inspired park owes its existence to borough engineer, Harry Smith, who had a flair for landscape design and an idea to overhaul what used to be an area of boggy ground. Opened in 1912, the park's centrepiece is the boating lake with its beautiful bridge and, even in the torrential rain, people on dragon pedaloes were still out there, defiantly pedalling beneath their umbrellas.

A tinkling stream, cascades and waterfalls created an illusion of being in the countryside as we tramped up and ➤

INFORMATION

North Yorkshire Water Park is open daily (8am-8pm, May-Sep and 8am-4pm, Oct-May). There is a campsite at the water park, with camping pods and a lodge available for hire, too. **W** northyorkshirewaterpark.co.uk





ABOVE LEFT Robin Hood's Bay at low tide is a picturesque old fishing village on the Heritage Coast

ABOVE RIGHT Georgian houses on Castlegate, Scarborough

BELOW Fishing boats in Scarborough's harbour which is situated under the castle headland in the South Bay

down Peasholm Glen. Rain had brightened the statuesque woodland trees to an emerald green, and the glorious scent of petrichor hung in the air after the prolonged dry spell. It was one of the most memorable and interesting parks I can remember visiting, and we were both glad that we had opted to take a look.

As our final day ticked around, I had my chance to visit the trip's second location on my 'must-see' list, namely the RSPB reserve at Bempton Cliffs. Beyond the visitor centre, we wandered through wildflower meadows that rolled down towards the cliff edge. Whitethroats sang from the depths of hawthorn thickets, while skylarks burred upward from the swaying grasses.

It was the smell that hit us first, an interesting mix of guano and sea salt, then came the cacophony of what can only be described as seabird central. As we approached the chiselled chalk cliffs with their vertical seaward drop, we were amazed to see that every possible ledge and crevice was crammed with birds. The most numerous residents by far were the gannets. We'd learned in the visitor centre that the UK hosts 56% of the world's gannet population, and it felt like most of them had taken up residence at Bempton.

The air was alive with avian activity as the gannets, as well as kittiwakes and guillemots, swooped and dived in an endless aerial ballet. We were enthralled by the huge fluffy gannet chicks, almost as big as their parents, clinging to precarious ledges. Volunteers with telescopes were also on hand to help folks to spot the remaining puffins.

Through the telescope, it felt as if you were right there with the birds on the ledge and that it would have been easy to reach out to touch them.

As we reluctantly tore ourselves away, we reflected that it had felt like a huge privilege to spend time watching this dramatic performance play out in nature's theatre. Again, it was a day I won't forget in a hurry. **MMM**



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WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: **Jayne Purves**



CLOCKWISE Looking across Rügen from the viewing platform of the Eagle's Nest; One of the magnificent mansions in Sellin; The Eagle's Nest Tree Top Walk



ABOUT US...



US Jayne Purves. A retired primary school teacher who enjoys extended trips with her husband in their motorhome exploring the more remote and quieter towns of Europe and the UK

OUR 'VAN 2015 Frankia 740 Lux. A very comfortable seven-and-a-half-metre 'van which easily allows us to be completely self-sufficient while enjoying all year-round adventures

As part of a trip to explore the Baltic coast we were keen to explore the island of Rügen, but little did we know what impressive treasures we were to discover.

We arrived in Stralsund on the north coast of Germany, where a pretty substantial bridge connects Rügen and the mainland. It was a hot Saturday in September, so we decided to stop and explore. We found a well-organised aire which was in easy walking distance of the historic town centre and spent a few hours enjoying the harbour with its red brick Gothic architecture and lovely views over the island.

The following morning, we crossed said impressive bridge onto Rügen with a plan to drive to the furthest point to start exploring the island. As a couple who relish the adventure of not booking any stops and with the knowledge (thanks to the excellent searchforsites app) there were two campsites and two aires at our destination of Altenkirchen beach, we had no worries about finding a pitch. How wrong were we!

We underestimated the popularity of the island, so with the words 'no vacancies' ringing in our ears we retraced our steps towards the island centre and

were lucky to find a pitch on the aire in Glowe. Not the greatest aire but as it was close to the town and the sea, we thought it was a good base to start exploring.

We spent a couple of days based here and explored this narrow part of the island by bike and were pleasantly surprised by the complete contrast between the east and west shores of Rügen. The east shore is more commercial with beautiful blue seas, long sandy beaches which back onto large pine forests while the west side appeared more remote, less accessible with large interlocking lagoons that went on and on. A real haven for walking and birdwatching.

From Glowe we moved on to the World Heritage Site of Jasmund National Park which consists of one of the few beech forests left in Europe. A large part of the car park was set aside as a serviced aire; this gave ample parking with lovely views and uninterrupted forest dog walks. Having a love-hate relationship with heights, we felt compelled to walk through the beech forest to find the skywalk at the park's exhibition centre. This new addition to the centre is a clear-sided floating path that circled out above the chalk cliffs, giving visitors extensive views



THE ROUTE

For the route, go to...

W motorhome.ma/rugen2026

ABOVE FAR RIGHT Diving Gondola
Sellin; Binz Strand

RIGHT An unusual wedding venue
in Binz

FAR RIGHT INSET Skywalk,
World Heritage Site of Jasmund
National Park





TOP TIPS

Pre-book campsites as they are very busy, especially at weekends and holidays

Using a variety of apps (searchforsites, Campercontact, and park4night) helped us locate campsites and aires. Reading the reviews gave us a variety of independent evaluations of the pitches for us to decide if the site was for us

Visitors and their dogs are subject to a tourist tax (adults €3.40 and dogs €2 per day). This is sometimes included in site fees, or they have to be bought at a separate machine, of which there are many. The payment of this tax gives you free access to various services, including certain beaches, toilets and buses

over the beautiful Baltic coastline. Clutching tightly to the handrail and trying not to worry about the gentle vibrations of the floating path, we grimaced for our photos to send home to the family. Feeling very proud of our achievement, we walked back through the forest; however, little did we realise this was not going to be the only time we would be vertically challenged!

Our next stop was at a large, well run and busy aire on the outskirts of Prora; this gave us the opportunity to visit a building which we had seen on the TV programme, *Abandoned Engineering*. The structure was a four-and-a-half-kilometre building built in the 1930s to give 20,000 ordinary people affordable holidays as part of the Nazi 'Strength for Joy' programme. Due to the outbreak of war, this building was never finished and had stood derelict for many years. We were surprised to discover that now these buildings had been renovated into exclusive apartments with just one small part left undeveloped. It was in this one

area that housed a small exhibition displaying the building's history.

Interested to find out more, we wandered around the gallery. However, with no English translations, we loaded our phones with Google Translate. Unfortunately, it was difficult to gain a clear understanding of the building's past. With the limited information and struggling with technology, we wandered around the rather bleak undeveloped building looking at the architecture and staring out the windows at the amazing views. However, it was on the top floor that we discovered a film with English subtitles being shown on a loop.

To lift our rather solemn mood we left here and jumped on our bikes and cycled to the nearby seaside town of Binz. What a beautiful surprise Binz was! The town was buzzing with everyone enjoying not only the sandy beach but also the magnificent white architecture of the resort houses. We even found a very odd, futuristic UFO-style structure currently being used as a wedding venue! ►



THE JOURNEY

The journey around Rügen was part of a longer trip from Oxford to visit the Baltic Coast during September. This article describes the eight nights we spent visiting Rügen (including one night on the mainland at Stralsund). 120km



THE COSTS

Fuel: Average 25mpg (€19.57)	£17.54
Site fees: (€173)	£155.04
Attractions: Jasmund National Park Centre and Skywalk, Dokumentationszentrum Prora, Treetop Walk at Naturerbe Zentrum Rügen (€66)	£59.15
Total	£231.73





INFORMATION

W ruegen.de

W treetop-walks.com/ruegen/en

W koenigsstuhl.com/en

W proradok.de/en

W ostseebad-sellin.de/en

Back the site's reception we idly looked at the rows of leaflets advertising the many commercial activities available to Rügen's visitors when suddenly that magnetic pull again reared its ugly head. Another height experience! This time it was a 40-metre-high observation tower known as the Eagle's Nest.

The forest trail and tower were within cycling distance from our campsite so next morning we set off on our bikes. The ride along the excellent cycle paths was easy and we soon found the treetop walk. The climb up the tower is step free and is accessible for all, including wheelchairs and prams. The tower has been built in the forest and around a large 30-metre beech tree so the feeling of height did not really step in until we reached the top and found ourselves well above the forest's treetops.

Our final stop on Rügen was at a TopPlatz motorhome site in the charming coastal town of Sellin, a similar spa resort to Binz. We walked from the site in the

direction of the sea with our main aim being the pier with its diving gondola. We found ourselves wandering along a rural track high up on the cliff in the woods and wondered how we would ever find a resort let alone being at sea level to find a pier! Suddenly, we turned a corner and discovered another beautiful Rügen-style cliff-edge spa hotel and then amazing views down over the coastline. We had found Sellin!

The spectacular pier did not disappoint with the cocktail bar that whisked you straight back to the 1920s and Art Deco era and the typical German roofed wicker chairs (*Strandkörbe*) to shelter from the sea breeze as you enjoyed the holiday atmosphere. We ambled down the long pier enjoying the sea and the sunshine until we reached the end and the diving gondola. When we arrived, the underwater elevator was fully submerged with only a tall tower coming out of the water giving a clue to its existence.

As we sat and watched, the gondola slowly rose up out of the water, no noise, no splash! The door in the large mushroom-shaped elevator opened and peering in gave us a glimpse of its interior. With large seats facing the many windows, it would have fitted well as a submarine from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Visitors can pay to take a seat inside and be submerged four and a half metres down into the sea and experience a different view of the Baltic Sea.

This pier was our final stop on the island and what a fabulous place Rügen had proved to be with its interesting history, incredible beaches, magnificent white spa houses and beech forests. An outstanding place to visit. **AAAA**

ABOVE Sellin Pier

BELOW Jasmund National Park trail



WE STAYED AT

Stellplatz An der Rügenbrücke,
Werftstraße 9a, 18439 Stralsund,
Germany

T 0049 3831 6679777

W caravanstellplatz-ruegenbruecke.de/home_en

Parkplatz Waldsiedlung Glowe,
Waldsiedlung 7, 18551 Glowe, Germany

Sassnitz Hagen Großparkplatz Hagen,
Stubbenkammerstraße 57, 18551

Lohme-Hagen, Germany

T 0049 38302 9412

Wohnmobil-Oase Prora, Proraer
Chaussee 60, 18609 Binz, Germany

T 0049 38393 699777

W wohnmobiloase-ruegen.de

Reisemobilhafen Rügen, Kiefernweg
4B, 18586 Sellin, Germany

T 0049 38303 92770

W reisemobilhafen-sellin.de



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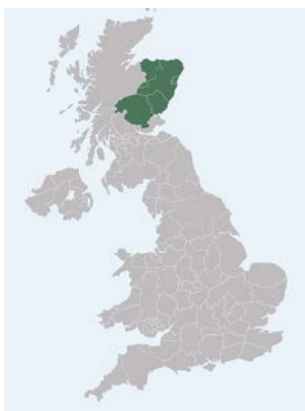
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Rated 4.6 out of 5 stars based on 4,678 reviews of all products as of 5 November 2025.

ABOUT US...



US Kath McMahon Stone and husband, Adrian. We bought a secondhand motorhome in 2016 and gave up full-time work to spend at least three months every year touring Europe and the UK in the 'van

OUR 'VAN 2014 Roller Team Auto-Roller 200 boasts its own washroom, fridge and cooking facilities yet weighs less than 3.5 tonnes fully laden. It's a good size for driving in big towns or staying off-grid in remote areas



THE ROUTE

Follow the journey, go to...

W motorhome.ma/easternscotland

After a stay in Edinburgh we headed north up the A9, inspired by my family history research and by watching reruns of the dramatisation of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *Sunset Song* and the rest of the *A Scots Quair* trilogy on TV over the winter.

The writer set the books in his native region of the Mearns, inland of Aberdeen, in the early years of the 20th century. Also, I had discovered when delving into the genealogy of my husband's Scottish ancestors that some of them hailed from in and around Auchenblae, a small town in the region. Thus, we were keen to explore the alluring countryside for ourselves and also try to find any traces of Adrian's relatives who had lived there in the 19th century.

Our first overnight stop, however, was in Dalwhinnie, famous of course for its whisky distillery (closed for the day when we arrived) and for being the coldest village in the UK due to its high elevation.

In August, however, although not suffering from the heatwave afflicting England, Dalwhinnie was positively balmy. We enjoyed a short walk to the shores of Loch Ericht, overlooked by Ben Alder, one of the remotest Munros at 10 miles' walk from the nearest road just to reach the foot of the mountain. As the sun went in and the wind dropped, we beat a hasty retreat to the 'van before the midges came out to feast on us.

The next morning, after a cooked breakfast in the café, we continued north, picking up supplies in Inverness, before heading off for a picnic and walk around peaceful Loch Duntelchaig near Loch Ness. Walking along the shores of the loch and neighbouring Loch a'Chlachain, we came across a walled burial enclosure for the MacGillivray clan next to Dunlichity church, and enjoyed lovely views north over farmland to Ben Wyvis, before heading back through mixed woodland to the loch shore.

Heading further north in the 'van later, we stopped for a brief visit to the Bronze Age cemetery of Clava Cairns, which was very busy with tourists from all corners of the globe and their bekilted local guides. There was no doubt of the connection with the *Outlander* stories, between the ►



Lonely Loch Ericht near Dalwhinnie

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a Scottish lake and mountains at sunset. The foreground is a grassy field with some low-lying vegetation. In the middle ground, a calm lake reflects the sky and the surrounding mountains. The background features rolling hills and mountains under a dramatic sky with large, white and grey clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden light across the scene.

Into Sunset Song country

The landscapes that inspired Lewis Grassie Gibbon's masterpiece remain remarkably unchanged, offering a glimpse into rural Scotland a century ago

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Kath McMahon Stone



TOP TIPS



Guides to places where you can view Pictish stones, ancient churches or stone circles in can be obtained from local tourist offices

ABOVE Pretty Crail Harbour

ABOVE INSET Pictish stone, Rhynie churchyard

FAR RIGHT Bow Fiddle Rock, Portknockie; Clava Cairns

FAR RIGHT INSET Ballindalloch Castle and grounds

proximity to the Culloden battle site and museum. Then it was on to Lossiemouth, for a stay in one of two car parks where motorhomes are permitted to park overnight for one night only.

The golden sands of the nearby beach made for a lovely evening walk and the town itself is attractive, with its picturesque harbour built for the fishing boats that landed the “silver darlings” during the 19th century herring boom. The harbour now shelters mainly leisure boats, but its history lives on through information boards and a colourful mural depicting iconic vessels and characters from the town’s heyday.

We noticed here, and in other resorts on this northeast coast that we visited later, that the public conveniences are labelled in the local Doric Scots dialect. So, for those unfamiliar with it, or if you haven’t watched *Sunset Song*, “quines” is the Ladies and “loons” is the Gents!

There are some pubs and a restaurant on the seafront and a couple of fish and

chip shops in the town where you can get a takeout fish supper. A local bakery adjacent to the car park opens early and offers freshly baked morning rolls, as well as a selection of the intensely sweet cakes and pastries popular in Scotland. There’s also a small supermarket and a fish shop where we were able to buy freshly dressed crab for lunch next day.

Going east along the coast, every town and village boasts streets and alleys of 19th century fishermen’s cottages lovingly restored as homes or holiday accommodation. We stopped in the quiet village of Portknockie, where the locals hang out their washing to dry in the wind on the clifftop. Here, the sea has shaped the cliffs into stunning formations such as Bow Fiddle Rock.

It’s possible to walk a long distance on the coastal path in this area, but we opted for a short walk down to the popular seaside town of Cullen. As any fan of Scottish delicacies will recognise, the town gave its name to the tasty soup made with

smoked haddock, Cullen skink.

On our walk along the coast to the town, we were unsure whether we could continue down to the beach or whether we needed stay on the clifftop. A local on his way to the Co-op reassured us that the tide was sufficiently low at that time to go down towards the beach. He also showed us the best route over the rocks to reach the sands leading into the town.

The waves really do kick up a fuss on the coast here, even on a calm day, and we noticed the quiet once we dived into the narrow streets and alleyways leading off the beach and harbour. The town’s high street boasts some substantial buildings, so it was clearly pretty well off in the past, but now seems to make most of its income from tourism, with many craft shops and cafés in evidence, as well as a smart hotel.

We decided to walk back along the disused track of an old railway, now repurposed as a walking and cycle track. It extends over a viaduct and then follows the cliffs slightly inland of the town, with intermittent spectacular views over the beach and the sea. Driving on further east, we stopped to have tea near Findlater Castle where there were views over the newly harvested wheat fields to the Moray Firth and the hills of Sutherland.

Afterwards, we drove inland to spend the night on the banks of the Spey near Ballindalloch. A peaceful night set us up for another walk, this time along a section of the Speyside Way. We sauntered back over the old viaduct and across the other bank to indulge in a leisurely walk down a shallow river and its peat.

We crossed the Spey again near the disused railway station at Blacksboat, and walked back up towards Ballindalloch. On the way we explored the extensive grounds of Ballindalloch Castle, its fishing lodge on the banks of the river, and views of this attractive Scottish baronial castle. ➤



THE JOURNEY

This itinerary covers the six days we spent in the northeast as part of a longer trip to Scotland. We travelled north on the A9 from Leith near Edinburgh and ended this trip in Pittenweem on the Fife coast.



THE COSTS

Fuel.....	£89
Parking: Overnight (we used mainly free sites with one exception)	£10
Attractions: Ballindalloch Castle, Grassic Gibbon Centre	£25
Total	£124



INFORMATION

During the 19th century, vast shoals of herring earned the nickname 'silver darlings' because of their shiny appearance and economic value. Towns such as Lossiemouth, Cullen and Fraserburgh prospered as fleets of fishing boats landed huge catches to be exported across Europe. Although the industry declined during the 20th century, many of the harbours, cottages and traditions that visitors see today were built on the wealth generated by herring fishing

ABOVE Pittenweem Harbour with Isle of May on the horizon

BELOW INSET View from our overnight spot, Arbroath

After another night at the rest stop, we drove to the outskirts of Rhynie to view some Pictish stones dating from the fifth to seventh centuries, before heading to visit Auchenblae. Although the numbers on the houses on the town's high street no longer bore any resemblance to those in the 19th century census records which I had seen when doing my family history research, the old buildings remained. Except for the absence of shops, including the "flesher" or butcher's premises of Adrian's ancestor, Charles Duncan, the high street looked much as it must have done back in the time when our family lived there.

We were disappointed to discover the church on the outskirts was locked as we had hoped to explore the interior where Charles married his bride, Barbara, in 1830, back when the church was newly built! However, we were vindicated to discover a gravestone which appeared to have been erected many years after Charles Duncan's death in Auchenblae, but which comprehensively recorded the dates

of birth and dates and places of death of Charles and Barbara and all their children. From this, we discovered that one of the sons had emigrated to New Zealand.

As we were in the area, we decided we couldn't miss a visit to the nearby Grassic Gibbon Centre where we explored the interesting displays and learned more about the author and rural life in the area in the early 20th century. It seemed that very little had changed since the century before when Adrian's ancestors had lived in the region. The centre also has a café where we were able to enjoy a snack.

Heading south again, we stopped for tea and a short walk on the shores of the pretty Montrose lagoon, before moving on to Arbroath. Here we spent the night right on the seafront with views of the harbour. This is where the haddock is landed to make the famous Arbroath Smokies in the many little smokehouses dotted around the town.

After exploring a bit, we spent a pleasant evening watching the birds on the shore from the comfort of the 'van. We



WE STAYED AT

Apiary Café, Station Road, Dalwhinnie PH19 1AB

T 01528 522261

W apiarydalwhinnie.co.uk

Lossiemouth East Beach Car Park, Gregory Place, Lossiemouth, Moray IV31 6JH

Speyside Way Spur Parking Area, 2 B9137, Ballindalloch AB37 9AB

Motorhome Parking, HC37+53, Arbroath DD11 1QJ

8 West Braes Car Park, Pittenweem, Anstruther KY10 2PT



TOP TIPS

As ever, an app such as park4night is essential for finding permitted overnight spots and campsites in Scotland, as well as the sites where you can empty grey and black waste and pick up fresh water. Such sites are becoming a bit more common now in northern Scotland at least and are either free or charge only a nominal fee

LEFT Ruins of St Andrews Cathedral

BELOW The banks of the River Spey near Pitchroy Lodge; Quadrangle of St Andrews University

Late-season swimmers were still out in force in the tidal pool below the cliffs as we walked down the coast path to visit the harbour and town. The views from the cliff path here are spectacular – over the sea to the Isle of May and the coast of North Berwick, and along the cliffs to the church and windmill at St Monans.

The town itself is very popular with artists due to the quality of the light and hosts an annual arts festival in early August each year. We wandered around the harbour before passing the old chapel deep in St Fillan's Cave and exploring the interesting 17th century bench-like graves of sea captains in the churchyard above.

We spent our last night watching dusk fall over the view, congratulating ourselves on another lovely stay in Scotland. www.outandaboutlive.co.uk

spotted groups of eider ducks and curlews and later, as dusk fell, a night heron.

The next day, after crossing the Tay Bridge, we set off to explore the Fife coastline further south. Our first stop was St Andrews where we parked in the large free car park at West Sands and then walked over the beach (famous from the scene in the film *Chariots of Fire*) and the rocks up into the town.

Term-time not having started, we were able to explore the grounds and chapel of St Andrews University before visiting the ruins of the cathedral with its many evocative gravestones, including some belonging to golfers famous for having won the Open on the Old Course here. Not being golfers, we didn't attempt to book to play on the famous links, but we were pleasantly surprised to find that there is a permitted walkway all along the side of the greens in their lovely setting.

Motoring on through a sudden passing rain shower, we stopped to explore the pretty harbour of Crail, before moving on to Anstruther where we bought a takeaway fish supper and salt and pepper squid from its famous, award-winning fish bar where the menu board advises which trawler caught your haddock that morning! We moved on to the West Braes car park to eat our late lunch in the 'van with views looking down on the lovely Pittenweem Harbour.



The constant *cascading coastline*

An action-packed month travelling from the northwest to the southeast

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: **Victoria Illott**



THE ROUTE

For the route, go to...

W [motorhome.ma/
portuguese coast2026](http://motorhome.ma/portuguese coast2026)

Tucked away in the northern beaches of the city, where rugged coast offered up crazy waves that even the surfers wouldn't touch, lies the city of Porto. Our first afternoon was spent walking along the boardwalks that skimmed the modest dunes

Discovering the Capela de Boa Nova (a small church), the sight of a shipwreck, the Obelisco (a large memorial to the liberation in 1832), a capsized German submarine (we couldn't see it as it was underwater but we were assured it was there), some stone Roman tanks that were used for fishing once upon a time, and many beach bars – we agreed this place was not too shabby.

I did suggest we walk the eight miles into the city for our big day out; it seemed fitting as we were on the famous Camino trail. Neil pretended not to hear me and threw me a helmet.

We scooted in and parked at the edge of a small district in Ribeira, home of old colourful riverfront houses which we walked amongst and had our first (of

many) pastel de nata. After marvelling at the quirky buildings and colourful boats, we crossed the Dom Luís I Bridge, getting better views of the River Douro. The south side of the river offered a lot of interesting options. We started by visiting the oldest port shop in the city and then walked around the sloping back streets dominated by all the port houses.

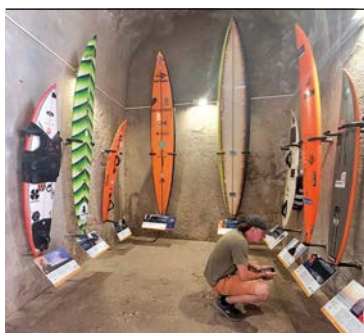
The lively Beira-Rio Market beckoned, and we were overwhelmed by the choice of eateries. It is a wonderful setting with a lively buzz and is decorated with fairy lights and giant dragonfly sculptures hanging from the ceiling.

The idea, though, is that you don't just go to one outlet – you try different small snacks from several. We did exactly that and finished it off with a tasting flight of port before wobbling back out onto the street. Directly opposite the market is the cable car which was a little pricey...

The main town offered up the cathedral, the blue cat mural and an ornate sixteenth century church. From there, though, it was downhill – literally. ➤

RIGHT Cabo de São Vicente, Europe's southwesternmost point

BELOW INSET Surfer museum, Nazaré



THE JOURNEY

Portugal is a melting pot of cultures, colours and cuisine and we sometimes forgot we were still in Europe. We started our journey in Porto before ambling south through Nazaré and Portimão before finishing on the south coast. 545 miles



THE COSTS

Fuel: Average 17mpg.....	£275
Tolls.....	£151.80
Attractions: Gondola ride in Porto, Line 1 return tram ride in Porto, Belém Tower in Lisbon, Coimbra Library tour, Surf Museum in Nazaré, funicular in Nazaré return trip, Silves Castle, Dolphin watching and caves on RIB from Albufeira marina, Faro ferry ride return trip, Sand City entrance	
	£174
Total	£600.80



ABOUT US...



US Victoria Illott, husband Neil and Buster the cat.

We have been living and travelling full time in our old motorhome for three years. I love long walks, Neil loves motorbikes and Buster likes sleeping

OUR 'VAN Our 2005

Concorde Charisma is our first motorhome and we love how much room we have in it. At almost 30 feet (9m) in length we have lots of storage and places to sit and relax



BELOW The Monastery Santa Maria d'Alcobaça, north of Lisbon

We descended to the palace and then into a restaurant called 'Tram', which is so named as it sits next to the main historic tram stop. It was pleasant sitting and watching the vintage trams come and go from under the shade of the trees. Refreshed, we wandered away from the crowds towards the university district through winding streets full of wonky cafés all the way to the old prison, an immense building, that has now been turned into the Portuguese Centre of Photography. The Torre dos Clérigos positioned adjacent is stunning (as are the queues) so we made our way back to our transport. Porto did not disappoint.

It was a hop, skip and jump down the road to Aveiro, the Venice of Portugal. Our time was divided between the town and the beach area of Costa Nova do Prado. Colourful gondolas glided up and down waterways, under bridges and through the town. We saw them weaving next to us and below us as we wandered the charming old town streets and the new town shops. What stands out about this town is the colour, everywhere. There are murals, tiles, houses, boats, trees and pavements all painted vibrantly, and equally colourful ribbons adorned everything. Between the town and the

beach are marshes full of flamingos with several viewing platforms provided to go and watch them from. The beach itself offers up violent waves but a spectacular sunset, and the properties in the area are all cute candy-striped houses. A worthy place for a weekend.

Being a complete bookworm, I wanted to go to the Joanina Library in Coimbra. This eighteenth century sanctuary for literature looked stunning on the photos I had seen, and I was excited to visit. It tuned out that about 100 coaches of tourists were equally excited and also far more prepared, having pre-booked their tickets. I, on the other hand, turned up expecting to just walk in and pop my head around the door to take a peek. It costs £14 to enter, you have to do an organised tour and you are timed to 15 minutes only as there is a conveyor belt of people throughout the day entering at one side and exiting (via the gift shop) at the other. Upon enquiring about buying a ticket I was told the next available slot would be in five hours. We moved on.

A little further south is my favourite place in Portugal – Nazaré. Famous for having the biggest waves in the world and hosting an annual WSL surfing competition, it has a spiritual vibe about ➤



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ABOVE LEFT Canal of Aveiro, on the left bank of the Canal Central

ABOVE RIGHT The Windmill restaurant in Albufeira

the place like nowhere else in the country, and we got to park for five days in the heart of the action. The prom is full of happy, smiley folk, the back streets are filled with fragrant fish grills alight, shops are bursting with bohemian clothes, and the beach is powder soft and big enough for everyone.

Upon walking back to the 'van on our final day, we were startled by a man who jumped out of a restaurant in front of us waving madly. "Neil. NEIL!" he yelled. Turned out it was a man Neil had worked with years ago back home and had spotted him walking past the window. He had sailed to Nazaré with his wife, their yacht was in the marina, and we were invited for drinks. Always nice when that happens. We left Nazaré two days later than planned with a hangover.

With a smile on our faces and made up with life, we drove five minutes out of Nazaré – and broke down. We were of course approaching the brow of a huge hill and on a busy junction and quickly became the cause of much beeping and honking. Long story short the clutch broke. The pedal went all floppy as it lost all its fluid, and we had no gears. Neil did

something clever with the starter motor and jump leads, and we were temporarily on the move. I quickly got on the internet and found us somewhere (downhill) we could pull into.

Neil was quickly under the 'van inspecting, and I was on Google researching. He figured out what parts he needed, and I found two garages nearby. It was a big job that would involve removing the gearbox and replacing the slave cylinder in the clutch. It was a Friday afternoon, and we just knew that we were not going to get parts until at least Tuesday, as nothing opens on a weekend. This was confirmed by two helpful men who ordered what Neil needed, including a jack to support the weight of the 200kg gearbox. They wished us a nice weekend and said see you Tuesday. Tuesday at 5pm the parts arrived, and Neil got to work. (with moral support from a helpful neighbour called Jonathon).

Alcobaça was a wonderful place to break down, and we killed time by viewing the candyfloss pink town hall, the huge antiques market, the monastery, castle ruins and a cool exhibition of gramophones (I promise it was more

TOP TIPS

I recommend people have more patience than me with queues and plan in advance for anything you have your heart set on, so you don't miss out on seeing things. Embrace the local cuisine – Ginjinha, pastel de nata and bacalao croquette are recommended



INFORMATION

Nazaré is home to some of the largest surfable waves on Earth. The secret lies beneath the sea in the form of the Nazaré Canyon, an underwater trench that funnels and amplifies Atlantic swells as they approach the coast. In winter, waves can exceed 25m, attracting elite surfers from around the world

interesting than it sounds). We did a Ginjinha tasting and watched an opera singer perform daily under the arches.

Back on the road we hit the capital – Lisbon. It started with a bang – literally. In my opinion, Neil misjudged the width in between two bollards as he was aiming to park and my right foot got smashed between one of them and the scooter. In Neil’s opinion, it was neither his nor the bollard’s fault, it was in fact because I am too wide. We’ll leave that there.

The rest of the day involved sipping Ginjinha (I have developed a taste for it) in cafés nestled in tall, dark alleys, taking in the impressive Belém Tower and paddling in the clear waters at the city’s beautiful southern beaches. We abandoned the notion of going on any tram as they were packed to the rafters; there were three cruise ships docked that day and the city was generally chaotic, but we did find refuge in the Time Out market – a foodie’s heaven.

I had seen Sintra on a travel documentary; when will I learn that places never look like they do on a travel documentary? Owing to the fact I am not the BBC and cannot pay to have a castle

all to myself, we were slowly scooting behind countless coaches up to our first attraction of the day, the National Palace of Pena. Even with the ability to weave in and out to make progress, we weren’t. We conferred and realised that even when we made it to the car park, we would be queuing up behind thousands of people. No thanks. We took a road away from the masses and aimed for another attraction – the UNESCO Quinta da Regaleira. I was very keen to explore the Initiation Well.

After a hectic few days, we perched the ‘van on top of a cliff in Sines. Above the dramatic rocks we watched the mighty Atlantic all afternoon and then a vivid pink sunset later on. It was very hypnotic, and we were very happy to just chill out.

I took a walk to see the town the following morning; it isn’t a pretty walk as the path runs between two halves of a refinery and on to an ugly port before you meet the harbour. With just one bar on the prom and a handful of people swimming in the unexpectedly calm and clear bay, it is a quiet place that doesn’t offer up much of interest. The small castle is attractive but, overall, the town is a bit shabby. I wouldn’t go back but I would ►

ABOVE Ponte de Piedade is located 2km from Lagos on the Costa d’Oiro and full of grottos, unknown bays and quiet beaches



highly recommend parking on the cliffs in the vicinity. It was perfect.

Windy and overcast, we had a chilly day on the beach in Odeceixe but nothing could detract from the lovely presentation of this spot, with its bulbous sand spit protruding from the small village and the surf sweeping around it to meet the estuary. Jumping in the water there was a lot of fun as the current gently pulls you in and you just glide down and around the bend until you meet the mouth of the river and hop out into the shallow sea.

We hadn't seen the signs upon driving into the car park, but we certainly saw them on foot. No overnight parking allowed. This was a surprise as we had been informed to the contrary. We soon learnt that the authorities in the Algarve have put strict rules in place in the past few years to stop motorhomes wild camping. It appears they are sick of 'vans littering their countryside and towns and the lack of respect shown for the areas they stay in. These rules are heavily enforced with a £600 on-the-spot fine for parking in a rural area and a £300 fine for

TOP TIPS

Be careful swimming on the west coast. Do not ignore red flags and if there are no red flags then proceed with caution, as the waves are powerful and currents unpredictable (this can also be said for the Algarve but the lifeguards there will be watching you like a hawk anyway)

parking in an urban one. So, with that in mind, at 6pm we started looking for somewhere else to park. A diversion had been put in place in the hours since our arrival and now to leave the town you had to drive around it in circles at least three times before finding the exit off into bumpy farmers' lanes.

The fun continued the following morning; determined to go to Cabo de São Vicente, the most westerly point of the Algarve, we headed back down the road towards Sagres and to the lighthouse, where there was a massive parking lot to be found. Being a huge tourist attraction, it made sense there would be. It was capable of accommodating many motorhomes as well as cars, if it hadn't been covered in market stalls. The markets were not bustling as nobody could find anywhere to park to visit them so there was a slow procession of vehicles turning around and heading back out the way they came. We were very lucky that we squeezed into a space that two cars parked heel to toe vacated. The views really were lovely looking up the west coast in one direction ➤

ABOVE CLOCKWISE Tram in Porto; Benagil Sea Cave is a spectacular light-filled dome enclosing a beach within its walls; Sines Castle has a fascinating history tied to Portugal's maritime past

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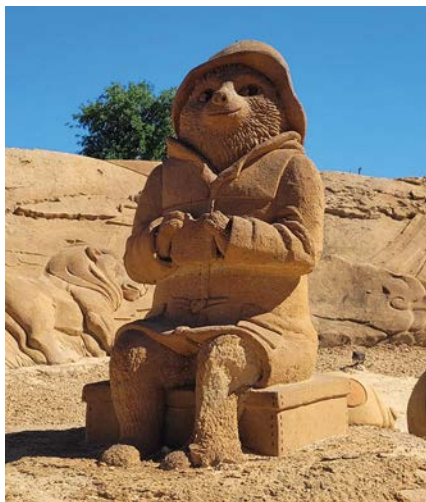


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ABOVE CLOCKWISE A familiar face at Sand City in Lagoa; The Shell Bar, Albufeira; Portimão Marina

BELOW Parked at Sines cliffs

and to the south in the other with a pristine lighthouse in between. Our big rig could not get into any of the daytime car parks in Sagres, so sadly we didn't see anything of the little surf town itself.

Defeated by the park-up problems, we decided to head to Albufeira and make a base there for a couple of weeks at a low-key campsite we knew of. This was one of our better ideas. Venturing to the beach, almost immediately I could see the

allure of the package holiday. Sun loungers, beachfront hotels, waiters bringing cocktails to said sun loungers, people looking refreshed and not worrying about where they are going to sleep tonight. Albufeira has something for everyone; if you want sports bars, karaoke and clubbing until 4am you can do that; we didn't, but if you fancy dinner in a windmill, a classical concert, impressive sand sculptures, dolphin-watching trips, hanging out with wild deer and drinks in a bar made entirely of shells, you can do that, too.

Closer to base, we went off to neighbouring Galé and enjoyed a horse-riding session in the nature reserve followed by two hours strolling on the walkways through the marshes and dunes that ran all the way behind the sand to Armação de Pêra.

Having seen more than a handful of the Algarve's villages and cities and spent an acceptable amount of time at the beach, it was time to get the motorhome started and exit southern Portugal at Vila Real de Santo António. Arriving in this small but attractive town, we found a fair in full swing, huge markets lining the waterfront and café culture booming. We enjoyed all of it for the day and in the evening walked to the lighthouse.

Soon after sunrise we cruised across the Guadiana International Bridge and said goodbye to Portugal – a wonderful country that is so rustic it still has 'No horse and cart' signage at the entrance to motorways, that is full of lovely ladies who build tiny cat houses and feed the stray feline community, that has vivid coloured dragonflies everywhere you look, and that gave us an unforgettable adventure. **MMMM**



WE STAYED AT

Porto Motorhome Park, 2632 Rua de Almeiriga Norte, 4455-418 Perafita

T 00351 939 896085

W portopark.com

Camping Gafanha da Nazaré, Rua dos R Balneários do Complexo Desportivo, 3830-225 Gafanha da Nazaré

T 00351 234 366565

Parque de Camping, Alcobaca, R. Luís de Camões 3, 2460-014 Alcobaca

Parking Convent San Francisco, Av da Guarda Inglesa 3, 3040-270 Coimbra

T 00351 239 857190

Lisboa Camping, Estr da Circunvalação, 1400-061 Lisboa

T 00351 217 628200

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Re-entering childhood

National Trust estates, coastal villages and memories from childhood combine on a rewarding return to County Down

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Nigel Cooke

ABOUT US...



US Nigel and Nicola Cooke.

This is our third year of full-time travel, and with 20 countries under our belt already, we have no plans to stop any time soon

OUR 'VAN 2018 VW

Transporter high-top. Small enough to park in a normal parking space, but with seemingly endless storage, or at least enough for Nicola to squirrel away clothes for every season

Having returned to Northern Ireland to visit family and friends, we found ourselves with a spare long weekend, allowing us to explore an area that is often overlooked, the Ards Peninsula in County Down. I grew up in Comber, most famous for being the birthplace of Thomas Andrews (naval architect of the RMS *Titanic*); the local primary school, which I attended, was named in his memory.

Growing up, I never fully appreciated this area. Even now, when we have returned from our latest far-flung adventure in mainland Europe, we skip it, instead choosing to spend our time on the Causeway Coast or County Donegal.

With family commitments limiting our range, we instead looked for things to do on the peninsula and soon came up with a plan. While there are a few official campsites in the area, many are closed in the winter months; however, with a bit of research, we realised that the National Trust site at Castle Ward was open. As a bonus, we also learned that during our stay, we could visit other National Trust properties free of charge. Given we are no longer members of the trust, this would help offset the cost of our campsite fees. Our plan would be to stay for three nights, allowing plenty of time to explore the peninsula, despite the shorter winter



daylight hours at this time of the year.

The peninsula, the most easterly part of the island of Ireland, is recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and its shape creates the largest sea lough in the British Isles – Strangford.

First up was a visit to Mount Stewart, located on the shores of Strangford Lough. The weather on arrival felt distinctly ominous, the choppy water on the loch showing signs of an incoming storm. We wrapped up and made our way to the reception area, passing a small room which contained the State Coach of the

ABOVE RIGHT Scrago Tower as seen from Island Hill

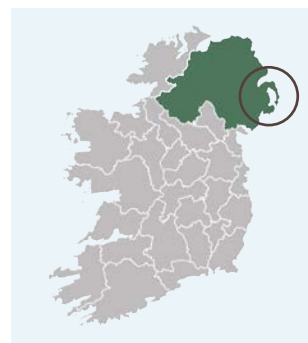


Marquess of Londonderry.

After checking in and receiving our guide to the estate, we made our way to the house; our pace quickening as we tried to avoid the worst of the weather. The property had been decorated for Christmas and, stepping inside the huge front door, we were met by a towering Christmas tree filling the front hall, its tip reaching up towards the glass roof. This theme was to continue as we made our way around the house, most rooms tastefully decorated, each with its own Christmas tree adorned with trinkets in

keeping with the period (1920s-1950s). The house is still inhabited at certain times of the year by members of the family, although, as it turned out, their absence this Christmas meant several rooms, normally behind closed doors, were now open for visiting. One could easily spend a few hours exploring the house, with plenty of information on hand from the guides in each room.

The house is only part of the visit, and afterwards we spent a few hours exploring the many trails in and around the estate, including a bit of time trying (and sadly ►



THE ROUTE

Follow our journey, go to...

W motorhome.ma/ardspenisula2026

TOP TIPS

The largest town on the peninsula is Newtownards, and this is well stocked with supermarkets, bars and cafés, along with a wide range of eateries to suit all tastes and budgets. Also worth noting is the coastal town of Bangor

The area we explored forms part of the Mourne Coastal Route, a driving route between Belfast and the Mourne Mountains. If you have made it this far then I highly recommend spending a few days exploring The Mournes, which contains Northern Ireland's highest peak, Slieve Donard

BELOW CLOCKWISE Grand staircase in Mount Stewart; General view of Mount Stewart house; Audley's Castle

failing) to see if we could spot a red squirrel – their numbers in the area have been helped through conservation efforts by the trust.

With only an hour until sunset, we decided to make our way towards our campsite at Castle Ward, around one hour away. Arriving at the front barrier, we were met by the very helpful warden who explained both specifics regarding the campsite itself, as well as things to do in the local area. As the sun slowly slipped behind the visible horizon, the sky briefly lit up with hues of pink and purple, allowing for a quick photo over the shore before retiring to the 'van for the evening.

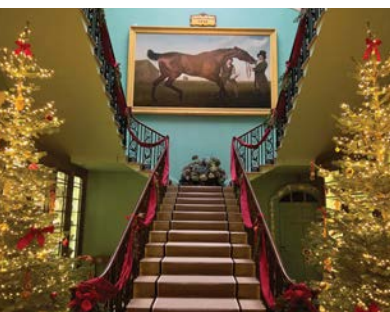
Up before dawn the following morning, I wanted to see if I could make an image or two before breakfast, a chill in the air and crunch of frozen leaves underfoot reminding me of the season. If you enjoy ornithology, then the campsite is perfectly placed to observe many species of ducks, geese and swans, with a hide set-up less than a 10-minute walk from the campsite. Sadly, no images were made, but it was wonderful to be surrounded by the sounds

of nature welcoming a new day.

The day's plan was to explore the Castle Ward estate and local area, allowing us to leave the 'van in situ, the leisure batteries thankful for the much-needed boost from the electric hook-up at the campsite. As we made our way along the shore, we could hear the familiar whoosh from the wings of several whooper swans, who chose the area for their overwintering grounds, flying low over the surface of the water.

As with Mount Stewart, the Castle Ward estate has many miles of trails, and first we took a walk out to Audley's Castle, the lough already busy with members of the Strangford sailing club, out enjoying this beautiful winter morning. The 15th century castle, named after its owner, John Audley and now part of the Ward estate, was used in the popular TV show, *Game of Thrones*.

From the castle, we completed the circular walk around the headland and made our way towards the house. Once again, the National Trust had decorated the interior, this time in keeping with Georgian Christmastide, which was ➤



THE JOURNEY

Using Castle Ward as a base, this three-day tour took in Mount Stewart, Donaghadee, Ballywalter, Portaferry, Greyabbey and Scrabo Tower. Approximately 100 miles



THE COSTS

Fuel.....	£20
Sites.....	£108
Total	£128



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INFORMATION

A lot of the car parks on the route have height barriers, although these were mostly open during our visit in the low season

There are a couple of pub stopovers in the area which are worth checking out

W pubstops.ie

Strangford Ferry runs every day of the year except Christmas Day and takes around 15 minutes. Check the timetable for the most up-to-date information

BELOW Sailing on Strangford Lough;
Nicola exploring the grounds of the
Grey Abbey

much more understated than the show in Mount Stewart from the previous day. During our visit, several volunteers had dressed in period costume, and it was fascinating to get an insight from characters such as the lord and lady of the house, esteemed guests visiting for a Christmas feast, and even down in the kitchen from the cooks and servants.

Exiting through the stables, we refreshed ourselves with a warming coffee in the café before spending the next few hours exploring the extensive grounds. Once again, the estate was used as a filming location for *Game of Thrones*, being transformed into Winterfell, the ancestral home of the House of Stark.

Perhaps one day we will set aside some time to watch the series and then visit the other filming locations in Ireland in our campervan.

With the winter sun hanging low in the sky, we made our way towards the small village of Strangford, where you can catch the ferry for the short crossing to Portaferry. We instead would be staying at the campsite one more night and so

explored a couple of the cosy bars for a cold pint of Guinness or two.

The following morning, we were up and away early as we had a few locations on our map to visit, starting with the harbour and lighthouse at Donaghadee. With the morning sun slowly edging over the horizon, we made our way out towards the edge of the harbour, watching a couple of fishing boats return, having earlier set their baskets at sea. Both Strangford Lough and the surrounding coastal area are famous for seafood, including mussels, prawns and lobster. Taking a brief stroll along the promenade, the availability of such delicacies is reflected in the eateries on offer, including Pier 36, serving up the famous Portavogie prawns.

We continued along the coastal road, sometimes so close to the sea that it felt as though we were skimming across the surface of the water.

It was a beautifully calm day, but one could imagine with a storm raging that your motorhome may get an unscheduled and rather salty soaking.

Next stop was to read the words of 'The





ABOVE LEFT Nicola birdwatching at Island Hill

ABOVE RIGHT Kitchens at Castle Ward

BELOW Nicola exploring the grounds of the Grey Abbey



Lovers', written by the Irish author and poet, Frank Ormsby, and featured on a bronze plaque in Ballywalter Harbour. A short walk along the coastal path from the harbour, you will also find the Lime Kilns. These furnaces, built in 1851 and recently

restored and given listed status, would have been used for calcining lime or firing pottery. The council also installed a viewing area which, on a clear day, has views out towards Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Our journey continued south along the coastal road, where we stopped at Ireland's most easterly point, Burr Point. Over the past couple of years, we have now visited the northernmost (Banba's Crown in Donegal) as well as the most westerly (Dunmore Head) points in Ireland. Perhaps next time we visit, we will complete this challenge by visiting the most southerly point at Brow Head.

A few miles further on, we parked by the ferry terminal at Portaferry, able to clearly see where we had stayed the previous day in Strangford, with a ferry just departing to make the short crossing. One of the main attractions in the village is the Exploris Aquarium, although, during our winter trip it was closed for renovation works.

We were now travelling north along the peninsula, tracing the shore of Strangford Lough, although our initial plan to visit the Echlinville Distillery was also thwarted due to an unscheduled closure.

This is certainly an attraction I would love to visit next time, as not only am I an avid fan of whiskey, but the distillery has recently started producing Comber ➤





ABOVE CLOCKWISE Nicola at Burr Point; Donaghadee Lighthouse; Nigel meets Wolfie in Greyabbey

Whiskey again, where my Grandad used to work in the 1940s.

Our penultimate stop for the day was to be in Greyabbey, which derives its name from the Grey Abbey, the ruins of a Cistercian priory which was founded in the 12th century.

On our way to the abbey, we met a rather famous dog named Wolfie, who has appeared in a couple of TV shows, including *Hope Street*, which is set in Donaghadee. As we spoke to his owner, Peter, about Wolfie's work as an assistance and therapy dog, he asked if we wanted a selfie, and as I crouched down, Wolfie knew exactly what to do, even seemingly smiling for the camera.

Just a shame I didn't get his paw-ograph.

From Greyabbey, it was a 30-minute drive towards our next destination of

Island Hill, just outside of Comber. This was a location I used to come to as a child, the island only accessible at low tide. When growing up, we used to dare each other to stay on the island beyond high tide, but I don't think any of my friends (or I) were quite brave enough. The location is a fabulous place for a peaceful walk, birdwatching and of course, with the late afternoon sun illuminating the 'van, a warming cup of tea, and we spent an hour or so simply enjoying the quiet ambience of the place.

From here, it was a short 10-minute drive to our final stop on our trip, Scrabo Tower, built in the 19th century as a memorial to Charles Vane, the third Marquess of Londonderry. Leaving the 'van in the car park, it's a short but rather steep walk up to the tower, and we were glad to have brought a hat and gloves – the exposed nature of the location doing little to protect us from the biting wind.

We were glad to make Scrabo Tower the final stop on our short visit to the area. From up here, we could spot the various places we had visited over the past couple of days, this small corner of Northern Ireland I once called home, and a reminder that even familiar landscapes can still surprise you. **MMM**



WE STAYED AT
Castle Ward Caravan Park,
National Trust Castle Ward
Estate, Strangford,
Downpatrick, County Down
BT30 7LS
W [nationaltrust.org.uk/
holidays/northern-
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Back to the Llyn

From the beaches of Criccieth to the wildlife-rich shores of Bardsey Island, a week exploring North Wales' western frontier proves some places are worth revisiting

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Sue Phillips





View over Criccieth main beach from Criccieth Castle

ABOUT US...

US Sue Phillips and her husband, Paul. We bought our first campervan soon after getting together, with the honeymoon being one of our first trips together

OUR 'VAN 2020 VW California Ocean T6.1. We changed from a T5 California, our first camper, because of the requirements for London's Ultra Low Emission Zone

**THE ROUTE**

Follow our journey, go to...

W motorhome.ma/llynpeninsula2026

The remote Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales juts out from Snowdonia into the Irish Sea, bordered by Bae Ceredigion (Cardigan Bay) on its south coast. Although relatively small in size, just under 30 miles end to end, and eight miles wide, the peninsula offers nearly 100 miles of coastline to explore.

Paul's family regularly went on holiday to the Llŷn Peninsula during the 1980s, when his children were small. He was keen to revisit a place with many happy memories, find out what had changed and make some new discoveries.

Our first campsite, Eisteddfa Caravan and Camping Park, is two miles from the small town of Criccieth on the south coast of the peninsula. We were keen to discover what Criccieth had to offer. But first we were heading back east to Porthmadog, once the busiest slate port in North Wales and now a bustling tourist destination with a picturesque harbour. We'd booked seats on a Woodland Wanderer train to Tan-y-Bwlch, a tiny station in the heart of the ancient oakwoods of Eryri (Snowdonia National Park). However, our train wasn't due to depart till 2.50pm, so we had plenty of time to eat lunch and explore Porthmadog.

Wandering along the high street, we concluded that Porthmadog is a welcoming but down-to-earth seaside resort that doesn't feel too touristy. Cadwaladers, an ice cream parlour with a distinctive turquoise frontage, tempted us in for a double scoop ice cream cone before catching our train.

At Harbour station, engineers in dungarees and waxed caps were busy preparing the shiny-black steam locomotive which would haul the heritage train carriages off the Llŷn Peninsula and up through the mountains of Snowdonia. The Ffestiniog Railway was originally constructed to serve the slate industry. Between 1836 and 1863, horses were used to drag the trams up the tracks, descending in their own 'dandy waggons' – a type of railway carriage specifically designed for horses – with gravity propelling the trams back down the track.

As the train left Porthmadog we had good views to our left over the Afon (River) Glaslyn where sheep grazed the salt ►

TOP TIPS



You can't reserve specific seats on the Woodland Wanderer train from Porthmadog to Tan-y-Bwlch station. Arrive early for the best choice of seats

marshes. Then, as the train chugged higher up through the mountains we could see the Afon Dwyryd, flowing through a valley increasingly distant below us. The countryside was a lush green, accessorised with pink – the soft-pink of blackberry flowers, the mauve-pink spires of buddleia, creamy-pink hemp agrimony (also known as 'raspberries and cream'), and the vividly bright pink thin spikes of rosebay willowherb (a stalwart of railway lines).

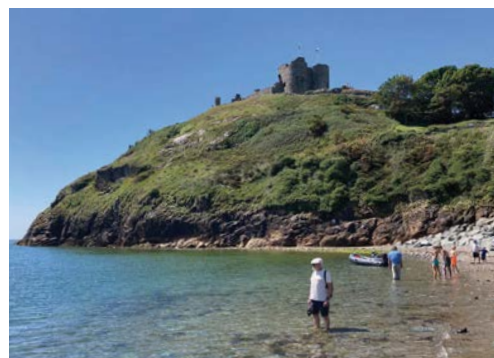
Passing Maenofferen Slate Quarry, we stopped briefly at Minffordd Station, then on through the Welsh mountains. We only had an hour at Tan-y-Bwlch station, which really wasn't long enough. But we took a brief stroll through the woodlands next to the platform, remnants of a vast 'wildwood' that once extended down the western side of Britain and Ireland. These oakwoods comprise an ancient temperate rainforest, with trees that are direct descendants of those that rooted here at the end of the last Ice Age, around 10,000 years ago. On the descent to Porthmadog, we spotted more oaks, crab apple trees, ash and mountain ash alongside the track.

Before returning to the campsite, we took a short detour to the village of Borth-y-Gest. At one time, before Porthmadog was developed, Borth-y-Gest was the starting point of a major crossing

over the wide and dangerous Glaslyn Estuary, and locals earned money by guiding travellers over the treacherous sands of Traeth Mawr to the other side. Although disappointed to find the tide out, we opted to paddle in the harbour. Bad idea – we'd failed to notice the signs warning of shallow mud. But we enjoyed our stroll along the footpath overlooking the estuary.

Criccieth is a charming little town. It's got two beaches, separated by a small headland topped with a castle. In fact, Criccieth Castle is one of a number of stone castles captured by the English King, Edward I, when he invaded Wales following the failure of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the prince of Gwynedd, to pay homage. Over the centuries Wales' borders have shifted and changed, and the clifftop castle later became a symbol of Welsh power. We admired views over Criccieth (both beaches) and beyond, from the castle ruins. Later on, we paddled in the sea, the castle perched on the headlands above us. Before leaving, we bought a sculpture of handcrafted glass oystercatchers perched on a driftwood log, from the Glassworks Studio (arranging to collect them on our journey home so they wouldn't get damaged during our trip). ►

BELOW CLOCKWISE Porthmadog Harbour; The beach just outside Borth-y-Gest; Paul paddling on the beach with Criccieth Castle seen in the background





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DAY TICKETS

Day Tickets are available for Friday 21st, Saturday 22nd or Sunday 23rd August.

If you don't own a van yet — or can't join us for the full weekend — you can still enjoy a great day out! The exhibition area is packed with motorhomes, campervans, and accessories to explore. Plus, take advantage of our free Advice Centre and enjoy everything the show has to offer throughout the day.

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WWW.WARNERS-SHOWS.CO.UK



INFORMATION

Visit Wales **W** visitwales.com/destinations/north-wales/eryri-snowdonia-mountains-and-coast/exploring-llyn-peninsula-national

Day trips to Bardsey Island
W bardseyboattrips.com

The Woodland Wanderer heritage train service from Porthmadog to Tan-y-Bwlch
W festrail.co.uk/woodland-wanderer

ABOVE LEFT The Plas Glyn y Weddw Gallery has a café inspired by the shape of a sea urchin

ABOVE RIGHT View of Hell's Mouth Bay from the ornamental gardens at manor house, Plas yn Rhiw

BELOW Porth Ysgo, a cove on the south coast of the Llŷn Peninsula

Paul has fond memories of visiting Penarth Fawr, a well-preserved medieval house with impressive carved timber beams and a huge stone fireplace. It provides a rare glimpse into how the Welsh gentry lived the good life during the fifteenth century.

But, when we turned up, the property was closed for the day to prepare for a wedding. However, after Paul explained he used to bring his children here when they were small, the owner kindly let us in for a quick look around. On hearing that we were en route to Aberdaron, he also recommended that we visit the Plas Glyn y Weddw Gallery and Café, near Abersoch.

The gallery has a reputation for displaying art by Welsh artists. And it's renowned for its space age, metallic-silver extension to the main house, inspired by the shape of a sea urchin.

Driving past Hell's Mouth Bay (popular with surfers), our next destination was the

National Trust property, Plas yn Rhiw. This manor house was home to the Keating sisters for many years. The sisters grew up in Nottingham but came regularly to the Llŷn Peninsula with their mother for their holidays in the 1920s and 1930s.

The sisters welcomed the presence of rare Welsh black honeybees in the roof and, apparently, honey would sometimes ooze through cracks in the walls. As we wandered around the beautifully landscaped – bee-friendly – gardens, we learnt a lot about bees from the signage. Who knew that bumblebees use their smelly feet to mark the flowers they've been feeding on, so other bees know the nectar has already been taken! Before continuing our journey, we ate a delicious al fresco lunch in the café overlooking the colourful gardens and Cardigan Bay.

Unfortunately, Paul was disappointed to find that Aberdaron wasn't quite as he remembered it. In the 1980s a number of ➤



THE JOURNEY

We drove around the Llŷn Peninsula as part of a longer trip to North Wales, so our route started and ended at Porthmadog. We did a lot of local driving around the peninsula during the week. 175 miles



THE COSTS

Fuel: Average 33mpg.....	£30
Site fees: 7 nights.....	£201
Entrance fees: Two adults (one senior): Woodland Wanderer £61 (including online booking fees), Plas Yn Rhiw £10 (discounted as only part of house open during our visit).....	£71
Parking: Porthmadog £6 (cash only, pound coins only), Aberdaron £3, Porth Ysgo £2.....	£11
Total	£313



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TOP TIPS



Don't miss the opportunity to try battered lobster tails with chips at Sblash in Aberdaron. We reserved ours in advance

Take cash with you for car parks. The National Trust owns the lovely, secluded cove of Porth Ysgo, but the car park is on private land and has an honesty box for parking (£2 gives you up to 2 hours, and you pay more for longer). The machine in the town centre car park in Porthmadog only accepts £1 coins

BELOW LEFT The peaceful little chapel, Eglwys St Maelrhys, in Llanfaelrhys, Gwynedd

BELOW RIGHT View of Bardsey Island from the headlands

buildings were constructed from painted corrugated iron, and he wasn't entirely impressed with their modern replacements. However, a member of staff in the bakery told us she'd worked there in the 1980s and welcomed the difference modernisation made to her working environment.

In the centre of the village, a stream runs under two small humpback bridges at right angles to each other and, from there, past an ice cream parlour and onto the beach. We took a refreshing dip in the sea and returned later that evening to eat battered lobster tails with chips from Sblash, a fish and chip shop with outside tables overlooking the stream.

We'd booked a pitch at the Mynydd Mawr Caravan and Camping site, at the very end of the peninsula. Driving along narrow country lanes between high verges crammed with a profusion of wildflowers, we spotted yarrow, cow parsley, red campion, foxgloves, honeysuckle and many more besides.

From our pitch, it was just a short stroll up to the headland. Walking through low-growing, yellow-flowered gorse, interspersed with clumps of pink heather, we could hear grasshoppers chirruping and spotted a small green specimen right at our feet. From the headland we had a perfect view of Ynys Enlli – the 'Isle of 20,000 Saints' – otherwise known as Bardsey Island. We'd booked a boat trip

over to the island the next day, but this was cancelled due to predicted high winds.

With hindsight, we probably didn't take enough notice of the weather forecast. We woke up during the night to violent gusts, over 40mph, battering the 'van. We'd never experienced weather like this and weren't sure whether we were more likely to cause damage by leaving the pop-up in place, or taking it down. Fortunately, the 'van survived unscathed, and our boat trip was rearranged for a couple of days later. That afternoon we noticed red-beaked black choughs, pecking vigorously in the grass next to our 'van in search of insects and earthworms.

With a day to spare before our postponed boat trip, we drove to Morfa Nefyn, on the north coast, where we parked in the golf club car park to stroll to the small fishing village of Porthdinllaen. We'd heard good things about the pub, the Tŷ Coch, which overlooks the harbour. But we'd probably have enjoyed our visit more if we hadn't got drenched by rain on our walk over.

Bardsey Island has held an important place in Christianity ever since Saint Cadfan built a monastery on the island in the sixth century. These days it's home to a working farm, thriving lobster and crab fishery, a bird observatory and varied wildlife. Our boat set off from Porth Meudwy (Hermit's Cove), the exact same spot from which pilgrims would historically

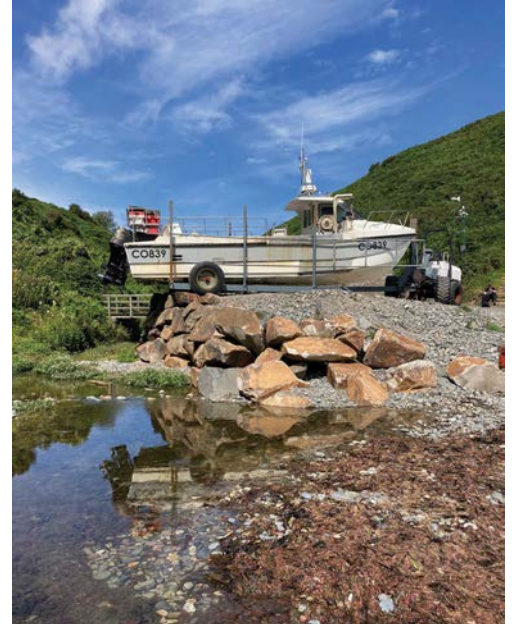




ABOVE LEFT View over the Afon Glaslyn, just outside Porthmadog, from the Woodland Wanderer train

ABOVE RIGHT A fishing boat at the historic small lobster cove of Porth Meudwy

BELOW Whitewashed cottages in the coastal village of Aberdaron



have set off on their journeys to the island.

Colin pointed out puffins swimming in the water, parent birds feeding young shags perched on the lower reaches of cliffs, newly fledged herring gulls hanging around in gangs like teenagers, black and white razorbills, guillemots and kittiwakes.

Later that day we saw close to a hundred seals basking on the rocks, heads and tails in the air in a curiously banana-shaped posture, or heads popping out of the water to gaze in our direction.

The following day we visited the secluded cove of Porth Ysgo, stopping off on the way at a peaceful little chapel,

Eglwys St Maelrhys. From the car park, we followed the path alongside a stream, and down 150 wooden steps descending to the beach. The stream trickled down the cliff alongside us as the Pistyll y Gaseg waterfall, and then made its way over pebbles towards the sea.

The sandy cove was atmospheric and dramatic, with massive angular black and tan rocks interspersed with smaller boulders and pebbles. The sea was too choppy for swimming. Instead, we paddled in the surf, and watched oystercatchers with their distinctive orange beaks foraging for shellfish along the shoreline, and waves crashing against cliffs further down the coast.

Porth Ysgo was one of our favourite destinations on this trip, and we were pleased we'd already bought a sculpture of oystercatchers. When we got back to London, it would remind us of a special afternoon on the Llŷn Peninsula. **MMM**



WE STAYED AT

Eisteddfa Caravan & Camping Park
Pentrefelin, Criccieth, Gwynedd LL52 0PT
T 01766 522696
W eisteddfapark.co.uk

Mynydd Mawr Campsite, Llanllawen Fawr,
Aberdaron, Pwllheli LL53 8BY
T 01758 760223
W aberdaroncaravanandcamping.site.co.uk

My travels

Malcolm Foster explores Iceland with a stop in the Faroe Islands on the way



“Iceland has lingered on our to-do list for some time now. There is only one ferry company serving the country, Smyril Line, and our attempts thus far to book it were unsuccessful, either because the available sailing

dates did not suit us or the costs were too high.

However, in January 2025, Smyril Line contacted us with a special offer for a late August sailing which we duly accepted. The sailing schedule gave us three days in the Faroe Islands on our outward passage, followed by 21 days in Iceland. The first leg of our journey was to the ferry, MS *Norröna*, which set sail in Hirtshals on the northwest coast of Denmark.

We took the ferry from Harwich to Hook of Holland, and enjoyed a pleasant drive through the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. We crossed the Elbe by means of the rather quaint Wischhafen–Glückstadt ferry which has the big advantage of cutting out the busy and stressful Hamburg area. It is also a shorter distance.

The ferry crossing from Hirtshals to Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands, was uneventful. We spent the morning of our first day exploring Tórshavn and, in

the afternoon, enjoyed a scenic drive to our pre-booked campsite at Vestmanna on the west coast of Streymoy, one of 18 volcanic islands that make up the Faroes. This area is famed for the sheer cliffs which provide a habitat for abundant birdlife. Unfortunately, our second day dawned with low cloud, steady rain and poor visibility so our plans for hiking in the area were abandoned. Our third and final day here comprised some rural sightseeing before our onward sailing.

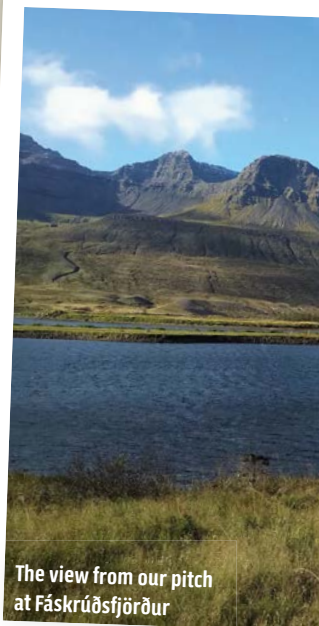
We arrived at Seyðisfjörður, the port at the head of one of Iceland's eastern fjords, early the following morning. After what always seems to be an interminable wait for offloading, we set off for the small town of Egilsstaðir, located some 15 miles inland, where we were to join the ring road which encircles Iceland.

In Iceland the ring road is really the only main road, and this runs for approximately 830 miles. We had decided to follow this in an anticlockwise direction but with some detours and our route included campsites at Mývatn, Akureyri, Laugarbakki, Borgarnes, Reykjavík, Grindavík, Þorlákshöfn, Vík, Skaftafell, Höfn, Djúpvogur,

Breiðdalsvík and Fáskrúðsfjörður, by which time we were almost back to our starting point. We stayed at each of these sites for between one and three nights.

For us, the most spectacular area was Vatnajökull National Park, where we were able to hike up to the edge of the glacier. It was from here that Anne was able to arrange a trek on an Icelandic pony and, as a keen rider, that is something she had always dreamed of doing. At the other end of the scale, we found the Blue Lagoon to be disappointing and very touristy. Far better, in our opinion, were the many towns and suburbs which had outdoor swimming pools, some with hot tubs; facilities we took advantage of whenever possible.

Much of Iceland's water, coming from geothermal sources, is inexpensive to



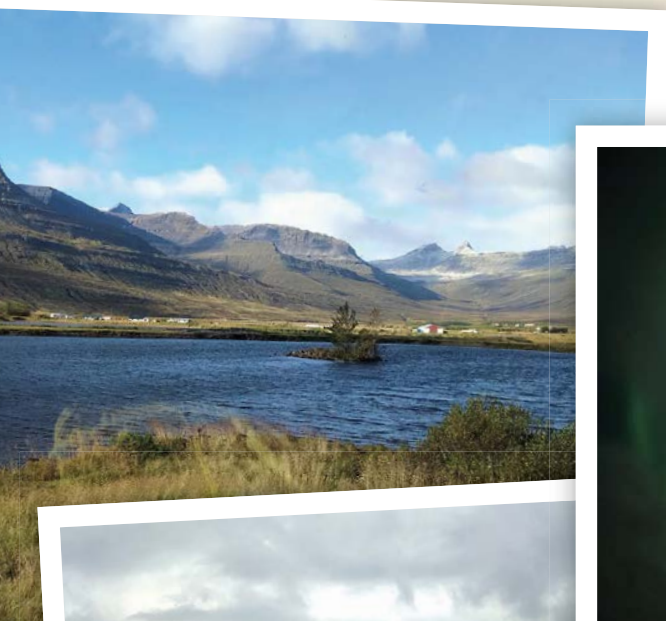
The view from our pitch at Fáskrúðsfjörður



Our trusty Hymer in which we enjoy so many adventures



Anne, Vatnajökull National Park



Northern lights, Breiðdalsvík



Vatnajökull National Park

produce and plentiful in supply. Breiðdalsvík is worthy of special mention in that it is one of the smallest towns in Iceland, with a population of less than 200. Here, we were treated to a wonderful display of the northern lights.

On a bright and sunny day, the scenery in Iceland is simply stunning; volcanoes, glaciers, waterfalls, towering mountains with razor-tooth ridges, black sand beaches, thermal pools and geysers. But the reality is, certainly when we visited in September, that it was often raining, cloudy and misty. Then the vistas become bleak and harsh, creating a sense of grim foreboding. As expected in a country abutting the Arctic Circle, it is cool, much cooler than where we live in the south of England.

Driving is challenging; the roads are often narrow, sometimes with steep drops and safety barriers are a rarity. There are single-lane bridges and gravel sections where repairs and improvements are being undertaken.

Generally, the campsites at which we stayed were disappointing, well short of UK standards. This comment especially applies to cassette emptying and rinsing, with the facilities all too often being run down and lacking even basic maintenance. Amazingly, when we stayed at the Reykjavík campsite, £52 per night at the prevailing exchange rate, no cassette emptying was provided!

Visitors outnumber Icelanders by a factor of six, and overtourism is a serious problem. There are a huge number of rented campervans and motorhomes circulating the country and it has to be said that many of the occupants were clearly unfamiliar with camping protocol.

Late and noisy arrivals were the norm. Inconsiderate parking was commonplace and we even observed a plastic bag full of rubbish, or other detritus, being thrown out of one motorhome. Many of the campervans were so small as not to include toilet facilities, so the occupants, who could not be bothered to visit the toilet block, would simply relieve themselves

outside their 'van, male and female alike, so toilet paper would be in abundant evidence the following morning. Of course, all this nocturnal activity was accompanied by the regular banging and clunking of doors, thus ensuring an interrupted night's sleep.

Also, just about everything is outrageously expensive and shopping in Iceland has been likened to being mugged at gunpoint! On our arrival, Anne purchased some basic provisions which cost about £80. The cost back home would have been about £30. We once had takeaway fish and chips at a cost of around £35.

But, overall, this was a wonderful experience. We have seen sights (and sites) which are unique and probably not repeatable in other countries. We have enjoyed a sense of adventure and, in our view, it is important to grasp these opportunities whilst we can.

Would we visit Iceland again? As matters stand, almost certainly not. But, hypothetically, if we did, we would want to avoid the popular tourist spots and take time to venture off the beaten track and into the unspoilt wilderness areas. However, to do that safely, and to comply with Icelandic law, a suitably equipped off-road vehicle would be required. Indeed, when we visited Vestmanna we pitched next to a couple with an AWD VW campervan who were also en route to Iceland, planning to do precisely that. So, dear reader, if you own such a vehicle, love the great outdoors and have a few weeks to spare, why not give Smyril Line a call!

We spent 39 days away from home, drove 2,411 miles and incurred expenditure of approximately £4,500 on ferries, fuel and campsites.

”

HOLIDAY DISASTER OR HOLIDAY DREAM?

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Shining a light on the coast

11 Must-visit lighthouses for your next motorhome road trip



Portland Bill Lighthouse, Dorset

© Matt Brown

There's something just so magical about a lighthouse. While they can still provide a valuable service, they are also a look at a forgotten time. When there were keepers living on wind and rainswept peninsulas and islands, tending to these beacons of light for ships trying to travel around and dock into port on the rocky shores of Britain.

For that very reason, these are located along some of the UK's most dramatic stretches of coastline, worth the visit for that reason alone. Many have visitor centres and some you can even ascend the steps to the top to soak in the panoramas.

Each of the listings below has a suggested campsite and/or local car parks that are not afflicted by height barriers if you are travelling from a site further away.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you have a favourite lighthouse? Is it in this list? It's not just limited to the UK as there are lighthouses across Europe – see the recently set-up European Route of Lighthouses [W er-ol.eu/explore](http://www.er-ol.eu/explore)
Email your suggestions to [E mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk](mailto:mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk)

1

Portland Bill Lighthouse, Dorset

Located on the outskirts of Weymouth, this is a highly popular and spectacular location for landscape photography. You can climb the 155 steps to the Lantern Room – it's £9 for this and access into the visitor centre or the visitor centre alone is £3 for adult (concessions available, check times before your visit).

It stands alongside the Trinity House Obelisk. Pulpit Rock that is balanced on the edge of the land is an iconic sight, too. On the other side of the village is the Old Lower Lighthouse (which now serves as a bird observatory and hostel).

STAY Hallett's at Portland Bill Campsite, a 20-minute walk, or further afield East Fleet Farm Touring Park
W motorhome.ma/eastfleet

PARK The car park at Portland Bill Lighthouse has no height barriers. The Crown Estate, which manages the car park, confirmed that motorhomes can use the coach park with its dedicated ticket machine.

2



The Lizard Lighthouse, Cornwall

This renowned landmark has been shining a guiding light for shipping since 1752. Although the heritage centre is currently closed to the public, the lighthouse remains well worth seeking out. The South West Coast Path offers superb views of the whitewashed buildings, which sit high above the Atlantic on rugged rocky cliffs.

STAY Henry's Campsite, a small, quirky, family run site within walking distance of the Lizard Point. **W** henryscampsite.co.uk

PARK National Trust's Lizard Point Car Park (TR12 7NT) is free for members and accepts motorhomes but no overnight parking. The Lizard Green village car park also has no height barriers.

3

Maryport Lighthouse, Cumbria

Located by Maryport's marina, offering glorious views across the Solway Firth over to Scotland. The oldest cast iron lighthouse in the UK has been used in several LS Lowry paintings. It's no longer a navigation light.

STAY Maryport Harbou Side Caravan Park
W maryportmarina.co.uk

PARK South Quay Car Park CA15 8AE.



4



St Mary's Lighthouse, Northumberland

Situated at the exposed clifftop site of Old Hartley near Whitley Bay, this lighthouse sits on an island. It is surrounded by a nature reserve and is accessed via a tidal causeway, meaning visitors must carefully check tide times (**W** northtyneside.gov.uk/st-marys-lighthouse) before crossing. If you cut it too fine, you could end up with wet feet. You can climb 137 steps to the top or use the video facility at ground level for a similar experience (admission is £7 for adults with concessions available).

STAY Old Hartley Caravan and Motorhome Club site is one mile away. **W** camc.com

PARK St Mary's Island North Car Park (NE26 4RS).

5

Flamborough Head Lighthouses, Yorkshire

Flamborough Head features two distinct lighthouses. The older one, known as the 'Chalk Tower', was designed as a beacon. A brush fire was lit on its roof (passing ships were supposed to pay a tax to support it, but failed to do so, leading to the use of flag semaphore instead).

The current automated lighthouse is not open to visitors.

STAY Carr House CL, a 20-minute walk or Seaways Farm CS, a 30-minute walk.

PARK Flamborough Head Car and Coach Park (YO15 1AR) which has no height restrictions.



6 Belle Tout & Beachy Head Lighthouse, East Sussex

Located on the South Downs near Birling Gap and Beachy Head, this lighthouse has been decommissioned and now operates as a unique novelty guest house. Walking up from Birling Gap offers excellent views of both Belle Tout and another iconic lighthouse at Beachy Head. The Beachy Head Lighthouse is not open to the public.

STAY **Fairfields Farm Caravan & Camping Park** just outside Eastbourne **W** motorhome.ma/fairfields

PARK Motorhomes can park at Beachy Head (multiple sites), Warren Hill and Butts Brow, all operated by Lewes and Eastbourne Councils

7



Elie Ness Lighthouse, Fife

Described as a “neat little” lighthouse situated on a grassy headland overlooking Ruby Bay. There’s another viewpoint on the headland opposite at Elie Harbour. Nearby stands Lady’s Tower (built in 1770 as a bathing house). The Fife Coastal Path leads directly past it.

STAY **Elie Holiday Park (Premier Park)** **W** motorhome.ma/elie

PARK Ruby Bay Car Park (KY9 1EA) – no height barriers.



Belle Tout & Beachy Head Lighthouse

8 Killantringan Lighthouse, Dumfries and Galloway

Situated on the dramatic coastline of the Rhins of Galloway, it marks a key point on the Southern Upland Way (a 212-mile long-distance trail) and offers a scenic starting point for coastal walks. The lighthouse is now privately owned, but can be viewed from the coast path.

STAY **Portpatrick Farm Holidays**, six miles away **W** portpatrickfarmholidays.com

PARK A small parking area nearby (DG9 8TW), or at Portpatrick for a more challenging walk along the coast.



Killantringan Lighthouse, Dumfries and Galloway



9



Bull Point Lighthouse, Devon

Originally built in 1879 and rebuilt in 1975 following a rock fall, this lighthouse is now fully automated. Its light is powerful enough to reach Wales to the north and Exmoor to the east. Nearby Rockham Bay contains the visible shipwreck of the *SS Collier*, which ran aground in 1914, just one of many stories of shipwrecks in this area.

If you fancy stretching your legs, you can start a walk at Morteheo and out to the lighthouse.

STAY North Morte Farm Caravan & Camping Park with direct access to the coast path **W** motorhome.ma/northmorte

PARK Morteheo Car Park (EX34 7DT) – you can head out to Morte Point and then along the coast path towards the lighthouse.



10 ***Blackhead Lighthouse, Northern Ireland***

Located near Whitehead along the Belfast Lough. The coastal path takes you directly under the lighthouse and past several caves (including one historically inhabited by a local school teacher and another by “Mad McCartney”). Climbing the stone steps to the lighthouse offers impressive views across the lough.

STAY Whitehead Aire, Bentra Golf Course.

PARK Whitehead Car Park (BT38 9ND).

11

The Needles Lighthouse, Isle of Wight

A Victorian, fully automated lighthouse featuring a traditional red and white livery. It sits at the end of the famous Needles chalk stacks protruding from the sea. It emits a foghorn and a light visible from 17 nautical miles out.

Excellent views of the lighthouse are available from the National Trust's Needles Old Battery and New Battery. While you can't get up close and personal, one of the many boat tours available would offer a different view of these landmarks.

STAY Heathfield Farm Camping Park, Freshwater
W motorhome.ma/heathfield

PARK The Needles, Alum Bay PO39 0JD (£10 daily rate for campervans).





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| 2 Callow Top Holiday Park | 6 Lee Valley Caravan Park | 10 Appuldurcombe Gardens Holiday Park |
| 3 Fields End Water | 7 Riverside Caravan & Camping Park & Country Club | 11 Herding Hill Farm |
| 4 St Ives Bay Beach Resort | 8 Tyddyn Llwyn Caravan Park | 12 Drummohr Camping and Glamping Site |

1

Lakeside Park, Lincolnshire

Warren Road, North Somercotes, Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 7RB T 01507 358428

W lakesidepark.co.uk

Lakeside Park is a full-facility campsite set in picturesque grounds, with a large lake and fully serviced pitches. There are local cycle paths and off-site trails, with Warren Woods a short walk away (owned by Lakeside Park), and the beach just over a mile away.

Open from 6 March to 29 November, two dogs are welcome per pitch and in all outdoor spaces. There is a warm water dog wash, dog ice cream for sale, a dog area

behind the coffee shop, undercover areas, and a dog-friendly garden dining lodge which can be booked out for free, with beanbags on the floor for doggie comfort.

Humans can enjoy luxury wet rooms, fishing, golf, tennis, a fitness suite, sauna and steam room, an indoor swimming pool, bar and restaurant, and bookable wooden barbecue lodges.

Three miles from the site are the dunes and sands of Saltfleetby-



Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe beach

Theddlethorpe beach, which is dog-friendly all year round, and even has the remains of a British Army Comet tank on it!

2

Callow Top Holiday Park, Derbyshire



Buxton Road, Sandybrook, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 2AQ T 01335 344020

W callowtop.co.uk

Set within the Peak District National Park, Callow Top is surrounded by open countryside, just over a mile from the market town of Ashbourne. From site, you can step straight onto the traffic-free Tissington Trail, perfect for walking and cycling.

A short 20-minute drive brings you to Carsington Water, where an eight-mile circular route takes you through scenic woodland and wildflower meadows.

On site are hardstanding pitches with electric. Facilities include toilet blocks, a laundry room, a games room and a shop. For downtime, guests can enjoy a fishing lake, a heated outdoor pool, and food and drink at The Callow Inn. The site is open 27 March to 7 November.

3

Fields End Water Caravan Park, Cambridgeshire

Berwick Road, Doddington, Cambridgeshire PE15 0TY T 01354 740199 W fieldsendwater.co.uk

Open from 1 March to 30 November, Fields End Water was already pretty dog-friendly with its walk around the site that takes in all three fishing lakes, the woodland and open fenland. But now the site has just opened Doddy Dog Field – a one-acre, fully fenced field with agility equipment that you can book to use exclusively for 30 minutes or one hour. Better still, guests staying on site get a discount on their booking.

This adults-only site, in the expansive fenland countryside, offers

breathtaking sunsets, with fully serviced pitches, and a mix of grass and hardstanding options.

On-site facilities include toilets and showers, a laundry room, a reception with shop, accessible amenities and a café open during the main season (April to October).

The nearby cathedral city of Ely is full of historic buildings and has a lovely riverside walk. A bus service passes the site entrance, with routes to Doddington and March, where you can catch connecting services.



4

St Ives Bay Beach Resort, Cornwall

73 Loggans Road, Upton Towans, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 5BH T 03300 537000 W awayresorts.co.uk

If you want a coastal holiday of epic proportions with your dog, then this is it! The setting of St Ives Bay Beach Resort is right next to three miles of sandy beach between Hayle and Gwithian, in west Cornwall, where dogs are welcome on the beach, too.

When you can tear yourself away from the beach, on site there is crazy golf, a tennis court, an indoor and outdoor pool, a play area, two bars, a restaurant and entertainment. The Sands Bistro welcomes dogs and even has its own dog menu, featuring food, drinks and dessert options!

The touring area of the resort, which is open 15 March to 3 November, has grass pitches with or without electric hook-up, with toilets, showers, a launderette, dishwashing area and shop.


5

Run Cottage Touring Park, Suffolk

Alderton Road, Hollesley, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3RQ T 01394 411309 W runcottage.co.uk

If you're seeking a year-round escape for an adults-only getaway where your dog is also very welcome, this is the perfect spot! On site there is an enclosed dog exercise field and a short walk from site takes you into the forest and heathland landscape of the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape where you can walk to your heart's content.

A dog-friendly shingle beach is also just two miles away. The majority of local pubs, shops and

cafés welcome dogs, and we recommend watching the fabulous sunsets from the quayside at the Ramsholt Arms, four miles away.

Run Cottage is just eight miles from the charming market town of Woodbridge, in a lovely parkland environment, with grass or hardstanding electric pitches, some fully serviced. On-site facilities include a toilet and shower block, and a village shop and pub are conveniently located just half a mile away.

6

Lee Valley Caravan Park, Hertfordshire

Dobbs Weir, Charlton Meadows, Essex Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 0AS T 03000 030619 W visitleevalley.org.uk

Located beside the River Lee, with Dobbs Weir Lock just across the water, Lee Valley Caravan Park is surrounded by extensive walking and cycling trails. There are plenty of scenic riverside routes for you and your dog to enjoy, ranging from short strolls to longer walks that pass other weirs, locks, lakes and woodland areas.

For a pleasant route that takes in a bit of everything, you can follow the river to Roydon Marina, about

three miles away. Alternatively, you could visit the 1,000-acre River Lee Country Park, which is around four and a half miles on foot or a 20-minute drive, with parking available. Active dogs will also love the 500-metre agility course there.

The campsite itself, open March to January, provides both grass and hardstanding pitches, with electric hook-ups. Facilities include toilets, showers, a shop, a launderette and bike hire. There's also a pub and



café located just a short walk away from the site.

Within a 10-minute walk south of Dobbs Weir you'll find three large lagoons that form part of an area called Nazeing Meads.



Dog walking on Exmoor

7 Riverside Caravan & Camping Park & Country Club, Devon

North Molton Road, South Molton, Devon EX36 3HQ T 01769 579269
W exmoorriverside.co.uk

Ideal for holidays with four-legged friends, open-all-year Riverside is surrounded by mature trees, with 10 acres of woodlands trails, and walks alongside the River Mole. The site is also ideally located for exploring Exmoor and north Devon's stunning beaches.

Facilities include grass, hardstanding and fully serviced pitches, toilets and showers, accessible amenities, a shop, play area, laundry room and dog walking area. The on-site country

club has a bar and restaurant that is dog friendly, and there is also evening entertainment.

A footpath links the campsite to the market town of South Molton where there are shops, pubs and a tearoom. Public transport is available at the campsite's entrance.

For a beach day, both Saunton Sands and Woolacombe are a 45-minute drive. Saunton offers miles of sands and dunes, while Woolacombe has a large car park and is close to the village facilities.

8 Tyddyn Llwyn Caravan Park, Gwynedd

Morfa Bychan Road, Porthmadog, Gwynedd
LL49 9UR T 01766 512205
W tyddynllwyn.com

Tyddyn Llwyn is open from 1 March to 31 October and set within a partly wooded landscape at the base of Moel-y-Gest hill. On site, you'll find fully serviced hardstanding pitches along with toilets and showers, a launderette, a small shop and a play area. There's also a bar and restaurant available for guests.

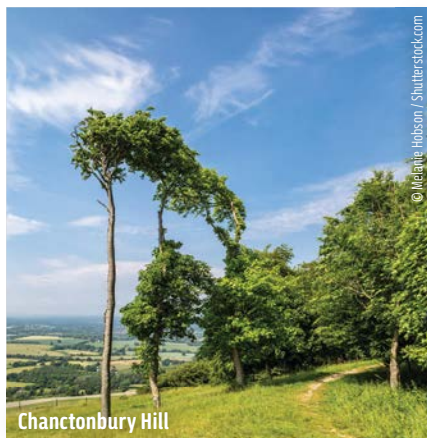
From the site, you can head straight up the hillside on foot and even continue all the way to the coast. Black Rock Sands is under two miles away, where you can also drive onto the beach (be aware that, during peak season, dogs are restricted to the northern section).

Nearby Porthmadog is very welcoming to dogs, with a variety of pubs and cafés that happily accommodate them.



9 Washington Caravan & Camping Park, West Sussex

London Road, Washington, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 4AJ T 07746 698206 W washcamp.com



Chanctonbury Hill

The South Downs Way is a 100-mile National Trail running from Eastbourne to Winchester through the scenic South Downs National Park. It can be joined just a mile from Washington Caravan and Camping Park.

Heading east brings you to Chanctonbury Ring, an Iron Age hill fort crowned with a striking cluster of beech trees and offering sweeping countryside views.

Set at the base of the South

Downs, the campsite is open all year and only a short walk from a pub. It offers hardstanding and grass pitches with electric hook-up, including fully serviced options. Site amenities include showers, indoor washing-up areas, a launderette and an adjacent dog-walking field.

The National Trust's Warren Hill, with its mix of woodland, grassy glades, and heath, is under a mile away and the large seaside town of Worthing is a 15-minute drive.

10

Appuldurcombe Gardens Holiday Park, Isle of Wight

Wroxall, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 3EP T 01983 852597 W appuldurcombegardens.co.uk

Why not plan a memorable getaway and adventure, with your motorhome and dog, by heading across the Solent to the Isle of Wight? Pets travel free on the ferry crossings, and once you arrive on the island, getting around is easy – well-behaved dogs are welcome on most buses and trains.

The Isle of Wight boasts over 500 miles of footpaths, offering everything from woodland trails and clifftop walks to sweeping routes across the Downs. Along the

way, you'll find plenty of dog-friendly pubs and cafés for some refreshments. Most beaches are open to dogs year-round, with only a few seasonal restrictions at the main resort areas, and only during peak times.

Set near Ventnor, Appuldurcombe Gardens Holiday Park occupies 14 acres of land that once formed part of a historic estate. The campsite, open mid-March to 2 November, offers a mix of sheltered grass pitches and



hardstanding options in a meadow setting, along with fully serviced pitches for added convenience. On-site amenities include toilets and showers, a launderette, an outdoor swimming pool and a café that operates seasonally.

11

Herding Hill Farm, Northumberland



Shield Hill, Haltwhistle, Northumberland NE49 9NW T 01434 320175 W herdinghillfarm.co.uk

Just over a mile from Hadrian's Wall and the Pennine Way, Herding Hill Farm makes an excellent base for exploring this historic landscape. You can even set off on a circular five-mile walk straight from the site, taking in sections of the wall along the way.

At the campsite, which is open all year, you'll find hardstanding pitches with electric, along with a range of facilities. These include toilets and showers, two bathtubs, dishwashing areas, plus a laundry room. There's also a licensed shop, play area, dedicated dog exercise space, dog wash and a small petting farm.

Home-made pizzas can be delivered to your pitch on select dates, and guests can exclusively book a barbecue hut or sauna.

12

Drummohr Camping and Glamping Site, East Lothian

Levenhall, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 8JS T 01316 656867 W drummohr.co.uk

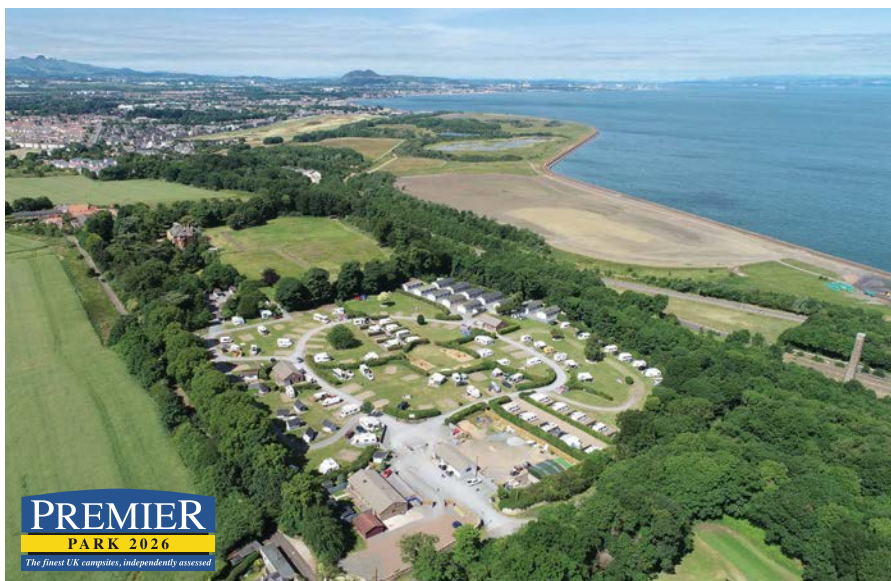
Drummohr Camping and Glamping Site is a 10-minute walk from the Firth of Forth, with coastal paths leading east to Prestongrange and west to Musselburgh. The site has its own dog-walking area, nearby woodland trails, and is a short drive from Dalkeith Country Park. East Lothian also offers many dog-friendly beaches to explore.

Set within the grounds of a former monastery, the open-all-year campsite offers grass and hardstanding pitches with electric hook-up, including fully serviced

options. It's just under a mile from a park-and-ride and train station for easy access to Edinburgh, and facilities include two amenity blocks, a laundry room, motorhome services and a small shop.

Just over a mile away from Drummohr are Musselburgh lagoons and beach, a nature reserve hotspot ideal for enjoying relaxing walks.

If you're looking for a dog-friendly beach to enjoy, head to Belhaven Bay (a 30-minute drive away), which is also adjacent to the John Muir Country Park.



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Dodwell Park, Stratford-upon-Avon



Royal Shakespeare Theatre and River Avon



Views of the site



Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford

INFORMATION

Evesham Road, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire CV37 9SR

what3words: musically.grasp.stared

T 01789 204957

W dodwellpark.co.uk

Cost: Two adults, pitch, electric from £30

Open: All year

Nearest bus/train: At site entrance

Nearest pub/food: 1.8 miles



Exploring Stratford

For a winter visit to Stratford-upon-Avon, Dodwell Park fitted the bill perfectly, as it offered everything that we needed a short distance from the town centre.

The touring site is set back from the road, behind a residential park home area. There are 50 pitches, a combination of grass and hardstanding with or without an electric hook-up. Our hardstanding pitch was level, but the majority weren't and would certainly require ramps. Pitches did feel a little on the small side, and once the park filled up, it felt a tad cramped, although this did not bother us as we were mainly out and about.

The facilities block comprises

toilets, showers, hair dryer and an outdoor covered pot wash. Whilst the block itself was somewhat dated, it was clean and the showers were hot and powerful. There's a very large, non-enclosed dog exercise field and a well-stocked shop on site, too.

Although the site is set along a countryside B road, there is a pavement, and so it would be possible to walk safely into Stratford, if desired. Alternatively, just outside the site is a bus stop with an hourly service running between Stratford and Evesham.

We drove into Stratford and parked in one of the nine designated motorhome bays at the Riverside Coach and Lorry Park (CV37 6YY).

Stratford itself is full of attractions, including the Royal Shakespeare and Swan theatres, several museums, as well as the Shakespearean properties. As we hadn't visited in a while, we decided upon a guided walking tour of the town. We then took advantage of the sunshine to explore some of the town's beautiful parks and enjoyed following a circular walk along the Avon.

If you want to venture further, Warwick and its castle, and the beautiful town of Leamington Spa is within 30 minutes' drive.



Sarah Warburton

DORSET



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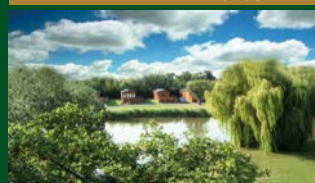
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Langlands Farm, Bridgwater, Somerset



Part of the ruined abbey, Glastonbury



View of the pitch and campsite



Jo in a Roman villa

INFORMATION

Lippetts Lane, Catcott, Bridgwater,
Somerset TA7 9HZ

what3words: hatch.repeat.type

T 01278 722175 / 07974 865366

E langlandsfarm@gmail.com

Cost: £16 per night for a grass pitch with electric

Open: All year (check during winter months)

Nearest bus/train: Bus stop close to entrance

Nearest pub/food: King William, Catcott



Pilgrimage stone near Glastonbury Tor

After a nightmare journey and arriving at the wrong place, the farmer rescued us on his way to taking sheep to market. There were three other units on the five-pitch site, so we were glad we had booked as another arrived next day.

The facilities were basic with clean water tap, waste bins and chemical waste disposal. A small hut housed books for sale or to borrow for £1 or 50p respectively, proceeds to the local church restoration fund.

The lane behind us, hedged from view, was very quiet. In front of us, we had a beautiful scene of grazing sheep, the 'lost' islands of Avalon further off and a hazy Glastonbury Tor, perched atop a conical hill.

From here it was 3½ miles to Avalon Marshes Centre, plus an arts and crafts shop and archaeology

museum. There is a small charge for the former, but none for the centre (though donations are welcome).

The Sweet Track follows a Neolithic path, about 10 mins' walk away, near a small bridge. There are replica Bronze Age boardwalks and eventually a Neolithic walkway of crossed branches with a plank between over erstwhile marshland, which previously led to another village. The track is now a pleasant woodland walk, unfortunately not suitable for wheelchair users along all the route.

To start our spiritual journey next day, we visited the ruined abbey, once second only to Canterbury in wealth and importance, and found sustenance for the body, too, at the abbey café. That day coincided with hundreds of tractors converging on

the town; antique, modern, all shapes and sizes.

Glastonbury Tor is accessible by the tor bus in the summer, from St Dunstan's car park in Glastonbury. There is also parking at Butt Close which has no height barrier. Only disabled parking is allowed at the foot of the tor (a traffic warden checks). The way to the tor is steep with many steps but the view is marvellous. Back near the bus stop is a large, decorated stone with a bell, part of an eight-mile pilgrimage route to Wells. Each bell has a unique chime, which (together) make a tune.

We look forward to returning.



Jo & Rod Romero

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**Campsite
Finder** 

Waldegraves Holiday Park, Mersea Island, Essex



West Mersea beach huts



Tranquil on-site lake area



Looking across the site from the beach path



The beach and coast path

INFORMATION

Waldegraves Lane, Mersea Island, Essex
C05 8SE

what3words: torch.wove.evaporate

T 01206 382898

W waldegraves.co.uk

Cost: Two adults, pitch, electric £22

Open: 1 March – 30 November

Nearest bus/train: Site entrance

Nearest pub/food: On site

This coastal holiday park is a mixture of static holiday homes and touring areas, with and without electric hook-up. Pitches are well-spaced and the facilities on site are extensive. The touring areas are grassed, with some pitches having shelter from hedging, and some are located beside the site's fishing lake – a natural and tranquil spot.

There's plenty to do on site, but you can pitch as close to the action as you want, or further away, closer to the beach. The leisure facilities include a heated outdoor pool, play areas, crazy golf, pitch 'n' putt, driving range, FootGolf and games room. There are also coarse fishing lakes, a restaurant, bar and shop.

In terms of touring facilities there are toilets, showers, a launderette and EV charging points. Local buses

service the site, making it easy to explore Mersea Island which is roughly only five miles long and two miles wide.

The island is reached by The Strood – a half-mile-long causeway that connects the island to the Essex mainland. If high tide is predicted to be five metres or higher this causeway will flood and be impassable for about two hours either side of high tide, so it is advised to check the tide times before you travel **W** [tidetext.com](https://www.tidetext.com)

With all that the holiday park offers, you barely need to leave the site, but you should explore as the local area has a lot to see. The beach, a mix of sand and shingle, is a short walk from the touring pitches.

From there you can walk along the coast to West Mersea passing the

parade of famous pastel-painted beach huts on your way. The town has a selection of shops and places to eat, along with a museum.

A 10-minute drive to the east of the island is Cudmore Grove Country Park (with large car park), where you can enjoy walks in the seaside meadows, birdwatching, and the remains of World War II pillboxes and gun emplacements.

It is worth mentioning that the last 200 yards approaching the site lead through an industrial-looking area, but don't be put off by this. Once on site you are beautifully surrounded by trees, green fields and, of course, the sea!



Claire Tupholme

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EuroParcs De Zanding, Otterlo, Netherlands

INFORMATION

Vijverlaan 1, 6731 CK, Otterlo

what3words: morale.creatively.lots

T 0031 880 551595

W europarcsdezanding.nl/en

Cost: Two adults, pitch, electric from €25 (£22.40)

Open: 31 March – 31 October

Nearest bus/train: Bus stop, 5-minute walk

Nearest pub/food: Restaurant/café on site



Pitched amongst the trees



The Hoge Veluwe National Park



Free white bikes to cycle in the Hoge Veluwe



Het Loo Palace near Apeldoorn

If you don't mind being part of a large complex, then this campsite will work for you. The site is mainly holiday homes, but being Dutch, it is all beautifully landscaped, set around the natural lake of De Zanding, with trees, shrubs and well-maintained open spaces. It is a pleasure to walk through the site and look at the quite amazing chalets.

There are loads of facilities – a large sandy beach, play area, bar, restaurant, shop, indoor swimming pool, bike hire, launderette and wellness centre. If you're travelling with children or grandchildren, there is plenty to keep them occupied, while those seeking a quieter break can make use of the excellent walking and cycling routes directly from the site.

However, the campsite area is

small, in a natural forest environment. There are 38 large hardstanding pitches set amongst the trees, divided by hedges, with access to a shared 10A EHU bollard, as required. Lovely to relax and listen to the birdsong!

Nearby is a small facilities block, all very modern and clean, containing showers, toilets and dishwashing. There is a smart chemical toilet cleaning area and a shared fresh water point on each aisle, plus central waste water drain-off and free WiFi.

Otterlo is a 20-minute walk away and offers a small supermarket together with plenty of restaurants and cafés. It is also one of three entrances to the Hoge Veluwe National Park, a joy to explore by bike. You can also take a bus from

the main road near the campsite, change at the roundabout and be driven right into the centre of the park! You could, of course, drive your motorhome in, although there is an additional charge for doing so.

The site is an easy drive to the royal Palace at Het Loo. Alternatively, Arnhem is a short drive, bus ride or cycle away. All in all, once pitched up, you soon forget that you are staying on such a huge holiday complex.

The peaceful camping area, excellent facilities and superb location combine to make it an ideal base for exploring one of the Netherlands' most beautiful regions.



Julia Ryde

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INFORMATION

Via Tannini 12, 6818 Melano, Switzerland
what3words: hawks.grins.comb

T 0041 916 498333

W montegeneroso.ch/en

Cost: Two adults, pitch, electric from CHF 57.20 (£56.62)

Open: 28 March to 18 October

Nearest bus/train: 10-min walk to Melano

Nearest pub/food: On site



View of the campsite



Lake Lugano

This was another site to add to our collection of lakeside campsites. We booked online and arrived at 2pm, although we realised that reception didn't open until 3.30pm, thinking that we'd have to kick our heels until then. However, when we got there, we saw a notice which had names and pitch numbers – we were to set up on our pitch and then go back to sort out details when the reception opened, which was a helpful welcome.

We had chosen a lakeside pitch and it was worth the extra money as the view was beautiful. The pitch needed a Swiss electrical connector, which we didn't have – we were able to borrow one for a refundable deposit of CHF 50 (£49.50); we've since bought one and I suspect that we'll never need one again, as is the

way of such things).

The facilities were spacious and clean, although there was a small charge for the use of showers. WiFi is included in the price and we had good coverage on our pitch. There is a grill/pizzeria on site and a shop, from which you can order bread and croissants for the next morning.

There are water sports facilities with paddleboards on hire and there is both a playground and a hobbies room. A bonus is that the Ticino Ticket for all guests is included in the price, which gives you free public transport and discounts on tourist attractions. We took advantage of this and used the train to go to Lugano and the little funicular in the city. The ticket saved us a small fortune and made exploring the region incredibly stress-free,

allowing us to leave the camper securely parked up while we took in the stunning mountain scenery.

We also took a train trip to Chiasso which is on the Italian border – it was a Saturday morning and we wandered round wondering where all the people were. Then we realised why... this was when we saw the queues of cars and pedestrians waiting to cross the border to the significantly cheaper shops in Italy! It was a comical reminder of just how close to the frontier we were, and it gave us a fascinating glimpse into local weekend life before we headed back to our peaceful lakeside haven.



Pen Graham

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Spacious lounge area benefits from the lack of a fixed table and the new colour scheme introduced this year

When the Spanish brand, Benimar, was reintroduced to the UK market by Marquis in 2014, the Mileo was its first model range. It has since been joined by Primero (entry-level) and Tessoro (on Ford Transit), as well as the Benivan campervans, with Mileo now acting as the flagship line-up of currently just four layouts (transverse rear bed, rear lounge and island bed, in addition to the model tested).

The 286 is the most compact of the quartet (just), at 6.95m long, but you wouldn't guess so from its spacious interior, achieved by having a drop-down bed as the main sleeping space.

However, this isn't just another copy of the end washroom/garage layout, first popularised by Chausson's 640. Here, there's more emphasis on the kitchen. And, unlike most European 'vans, it has a

UK-handed floorplan, with the habitation door on our nearside.

Of course, that's made possible by the buying power of Marquis Leisure (with its 12 dealerships) and the fact that both it and Benimar are part of the vast French-owned Trigano Group. That connection also brings greater value in 2026, with the Premium Drive Pack, priced at just £95 but including extras worth over 12 grand.

So, rather than a 140hp motor and manual gearbox, your Mileo now comes with 180hp and the eight-speed automatic transmission, while the maximum gross weight is increased from 3,650kg to 4,400kg.

And, with that upgrade, you don't need to worry about the addition of a bike rack, Thule roll-out awning, Trackstar S7 tracker (with a year's subscription) and Truma Aventa habitation air-conditioning to the spec – there's still more than 1,200kg of payload!

BLACK AND WHITE

Based on the ubiquitous Fiat Ducato cab with wide-track chassis, the Mileo comes with a black cab and alloy wheels, as well as a conventional low-profile motorhome body incorporating a large, opening overcab sunroof. Construction is described as "99% wood-free" with a GRP exterior and XPS insulation (25mm in the walls, a substantial 53mm in the floor and roof). It meets the Grade III standard, of course.

There are framed habitation windows, except (oddly) for the washroom, which gets a caravan-style window sitting proud of the bodywork.

Particularly neat is the effort Benimar has out in to integrate the cab with the habitation bodywork, with extra mouldings on the doors merging the two.

The external spec doesn't end there, as an external barbecue point and 200W solar panel are also

**Washroom window sits proud****Tall fridge and even taller mirror****Garage includes a spare wheel, something that's often left out to save weight**

featured. The leisure battery is a 100Ah AGM, so maybe a lithium upgrade could be due for 2027?

LOADS OF LOAD SPACE

Even without a fixed bed, a 7m motorhome almost has to have a garage these days and here it's served by loading doors on both sides. It's a tall space (maximum headroom 1.30m) but relatively narrow, at 80cm, and well-lit by an LED strip right across the back wall.

It's a pleasant surprise to find a full-sized spare wheel here (no worries about payload, although the garage is limited to 225kg), as well as access into the space from the living area. Not so good is that the free-standing dining table is stowed here – more on that later...

At the other end of the motorhome, the cab is ultra-familiar, Fiat having changed very little of the design in 20 years. What has changed is the spec and the Mileo

takes advantage of all the advances in tech, such as the electric parking brake (no more stretching to reach a lever), digital climate control (not just on/off air-con), adaptive cruise control, automatic lights and wipers, Traction Plus, hill descent control, pre-collision assist, speed sign recognition and lane keeping assistance.

Benimar doesn't specify Fiat's own touchscreen but the 9in display from Pioneer seems just as good and includes Bluetooth, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and the view from the reversing camera.

The other advance, of course, is the smooth eight-speed automatic gearbox, which takes a lot of the stress and effort out of driving. The 180hp motor should ensure you always have sufficient performance, too, although with only 500 miles on the clock this one had yet to loosen up. As ever, the Ducato's light steering and excellent stability made

for an easy drive from Marquis Northampton to the Caravan and Motorhome Club's Broadway site in the picturesque Cotswolds. On the road, it was just a shame that there were so many rattles from the Mileo's living area.

SPACE RACE

Step through the habitation door (which is linked to the remote central locking and fitted with a flyscreen) and maybe you'll forgive those rattles, because there's an instant feeling of space.

Benimar has worked on the colours and illumination to brighten the Mileo's interior for 2026 but much of the credit must go to the layout. This is one of those almost Tardis-like motorhomes that feels bigger on the inside...

It's the front lounge that's king here and the lack of a permanent table really does make a difference. Enough of a difference to forgive ►



ADVANTAGES

- Huge payload of over 1,200kg
- Extra spec of Premium Drive Pack
- Super-spacious lounge
- Drop-down bed lowers to just 86cm off the floor
- Well-equipped kitchen with large worktop
- Two XL-sized wardrobes
- Spare wheel included

DISADVANTAGES

- Heavy table stored in the garage
- Too many rattles on the road
- More cupboards than drawers in the galley area



Kitchen is spec'd to suit British buyers, with a mains hotplate, oven/grill and microwave

having to go out in the rain and retrieve a heavy table from the garage and lug it indoors? Only you can decide that – I just wish that Benimar had made it lighter to carry and found somewhere inside the 'van to stow it. Or maybe it could fit a couple of small coffee tables, leaving the big free-standing one for dining al fresco?

Table aside, this is a super space, with an L-settee on the offside and a higher-backed straight sofa opposite. The different backrests also dictate the window size – higher and smaller on the nearside, larger and lower on the offside. The large overcab sunroof ensures there's no lack of daylight and there are spotlights above the front seats and LED strips in the base of the drop-down bed for when things go gloomy outside. Roman blinds can provide privacy when required and there are concertina blinds around the cab.

The front seats are higher, up a

step in the floor, but there are no other variations in floor height (and no need for an external pop-out step on entry).

GOGGLEBOX

You probably won't dine from the cab chairs (too high in relation to the table), but they make a great place to watch the 22in Avtex smart TV (not included) on a height-adjustable bracket above the rear travel seats (which have Isofix).

All the seats are upholstered in a pale beige faux leather that has fancy geometric stitching but won't convince anyone that it's real hide – it will wipe clean, though. In the cab, the chairs are covered rather than retrimmed so these might get baggy over time.

There are no high-level cupboards in the lounge, in order to allow the drop-down bed to come down lower, and under-seat storage is fairly limited – but don't worry, as we'll

see there's loads of storage at the rear. The Combi boiler is beneath the nearside settee, the 100-litre fresh water tank is properly winterised under the forward-facing seat, and the gas locker intrudes on the offside.

The waste water tank (105 litres) is underslung but heated and with an easy-to-use T-handle for draining, while the heating is another nod to the high specification here – a 6kW Truma with gas and 230V power.

The gas compartment is also convenient, housing cylinders side by side at a low level – no heavy lifting. Benimar seems to have got a lot of the practicalities right.

THE LOWDOWN

Used as a two-berth, turning the Mileo's lovely lounge into a bedroom is even more effortless.

Remove the sofas' backrests and just keep your finger on a switch to lower the bed down to just 86cm off



Looking rearward, showing that this isn't just a copy of other drop-down bed models

the floor. So there's no need for a ladder to get into this 1.90m by 1.38m double, with extra room for toes to overhang if you're especially tall.

The bed is limited to 230kg and has headroom of 1.87m underneath when stowed.

Of course, you can leave pillows and duvet in place when the bed is raised in the morning. This means the only criticism is the rather harsh LED strip that provides lighting over the head of the bed.

It's also possible to turn the seating into a bed, using two wooden panels with support legs (stowed in a compartment in the roof of the garage) and an extra infill cushion. So, you'll be going outside again to get the kit but, once made up, this lounge bed is surprisingly flat and very long – 2.16m!

With the lower bed occupied, the drop-down bed has to be parked higher up, so both beds share the headroom and the upper berth has

to be reached by a ladder. It's the usual compromise with this type of layout, which is best viewed as a couple's motorhome (with perhaps occasional potential for a weekend with the grandchildren).

MASTERCHEF

With so much to like in the front half of this motorhome, the kitchen could have been a disappointment, but it's actually another highlight.

Arranged along the nearside, aft of the entrance, it again shows the effort made to suit UK buyers, with an oven/grill, a mains hotplate and a microwave all as standard. But that's not the impressive part – it's the amount of worktop space on offer here, even before you add the slot-in extension by the door.

Twin 230V sockets are conveniently situated at the end of the galley, there's a Baraldi extractor hood and a removable draining board for the sink (for 2026, now

mated to an on-trend black tap).

There's loads of storage, too, although I'd have liked some of the cupboards to be replaced by drawers (a cutlery drawer and a deeper one below are provided).

What you do get is a full-height pull-out pantry unit for your packets and tinned foods and, then, on the offside you'll find the super-tall absorption fridge, offering a generous 142-litre capacity and automatic energy selection.

NO LION, NO WITCH...

...but two wardrobes! If you're wondering about the two doors at the end of the galley, then the lower one gives access to the garage, while the top one is a wardrobe (XL-sized with an 86cm drop from the rail and a large shelved area). If you're struggling to reach your new Levi 501s, then there are folding steps to aid you!

Opposite the kitchen (with a ►



Washroom includes a separate shower



Folding steps ease access to the wardrobe



The cab seats are too high in relation to the table



Opening sunroof over the cab

full-height, backlit mirror on the wall) is the washroom.

This ablutions area is not as palatial as those models that have the washroom right across the full width at the back of the 'van, but you certainly won't feel short-changed.

There's plenty of room to use the loo and basin (the former on a plinth, so check that out if you have little legs) and the mirror-fronted cupboards have fiddle rails to keep your toiletries in place. There's a towel rail, loo roll holder and a couple of robe hooks that neatly

replicate the Benimar 'b'.

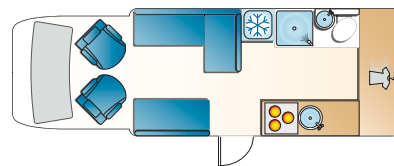
Then there's a decent-sized separate shower, complete with drying rail, twin drains in the tray and a shelf for your lotions and potions. Plus an opening window and roof vent to cater for ventilation, but it seems odd that the latter is over the toilet, not the shower.

Then there's another wardrobe, only marginally smaller than the first one and again offering both shelved and hanging space. You'll be able to take a LOT of clothes on your Benimar travels! **mmm**

THE **mmm** VERDICT

As an ultra-spacious motorhome for a couple, this Benimar excels, offering a huge lounge, comfortable drop-down bed, well-equipped kitchen and good washroom. It even has two XL-sized wardrobes and a garage (plus a massive payload) in a layout that's a slight variation on the norm. It's just a pity about that hefty table and its awkward storage.

FACTS AND FIGURES



PRICE

From: £82,995 As tested: £83,090

BASICS

Berths: 4 Travel seats: 4

Warranty: Two years base vehicle and habitation, five years water ingress

Type Approval: Full GB Approval

DIMENSIONS

Length: 6.95m (22ft 9½in)

Width: 2.30m (7ft 6½in)

Height: 2.89m (9ft 6in)

Gross vehicle weight: 4,400kg (Premium Drive Pack)

Payload: 1,229kg

BASE VEHICLE

Type: Fiat Ducato Heavy chassis-cab

Engine: 2.2-litre, 180hp, front-wheel drive, eight-speed automatic (Premium Drive Pack)

KITCHEN

Cooker: Thetford Triplex with two gas rings, mains hotplate, combined grill and oven, Tesla microwave

Fridge: Thetford 142-litre, automatic energy selection

BEDS

Drop-down double: 1.90m x 1.38m (6ft 3in x 4ft 6in)

Lounge double: 2.16m x 1.35m (7ft 1in x 4ft 5in)

ESSENTIALS

Fresh water: 100 litres (inboard)

Waste water: 105 litres (underslung, heated)

Space/water heating: Truma Combi 6 E gas/230V blown-air

Gas: 1 x 6kg, 1 x 11kg

Leisure battery: 100Ah AGM

OPTIONS

Fitted to test vehicle: Premium Drive Pack (£95). TV shown not included in spec

THE ALTERNATIVES

Pilote Évidence P690D

£81,900

Rapido 606F

£75,500

INSURANCE

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Peter Vaughan

Bailey has added a second single bed layout to its flagship Autograph range with a floorplan that will appeal to those switching from towing to motorhoming



WATCH THE VIDEO!
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BAILEY AUTOGRAPH 79-4XT

Price from: £92,749 • Berths: 4 • Travel seats: 4
 Length: 7.95m • Gross weight: 4,500kg

© Alan Bond Photography

Motorhome supplied by: Bailey of Bristol [W baileyofbristol.co.uk](https://www.baileyofbristol.co.uk)



Lounge seats are a little high for those with shorter legs but we liked the backrests that wrap around the B-pillars

In the October 2025 issue, I reviewed the then yet-to-be-launched Series 4 Bailey Autograph, which debuted at that autumn's NEC show with four layouts initially. It marked the return of a model that had been the backbone of Bailey's motorhome line-up, effectively since the Bristol company entered the market in 2011. Back was the Peugeot cab and Al-Ko chassis and so, too, was the Alde heating that added a further USP, but this was not a rehash of what had gone before – I described it as “the company's most upmarket motorhome yet.”

The new range was completed in February with the addition of two more floorplans, each focused on those buyers seeking to swap from ‘tugging’ to ‘lugging’. Clearly, a healthy proportion of Bailey motorhome buyers are already customers of the brand and, to make the change from towing easier, these

extra layouts are ones that will feel very familiar to caravanners – just with a Peugeot dashboard and steering wheel up front! Both have an end washroom and a bedroom that's open to the rest of the living area – choose between the 79-4F with a French bed and the 79-4XT that has single beds.

Of course, there's another twin bed motorhome in the Autograph portfolio, the 79-4T that we've already tested, but that adopts the usual continental design, with high berths over a garage and a split washroom at the foot of the bed. It's a much more segregated format, with the ablutions and sleeping quarters in one ‘room’ and the lounge and kitchen in another.

SPEC-TACULAR

Of course, while the layout is new, everything else is familiar from the rest of the range – even the cost of the ‘XT’ (£92,749) is the same as the

‘T’, as is the overall length (7.95m). And, in Bailey's usual style, the Autograph comes with most things you could think of included in the list price.

The only factory option listed is the Jasmine Aquaclean soft furnishing scheme (£349), instead of the standard Mulberry upholstery seen here. A towbar and Avtex mobile WiFi are also available as dealer-fit items, while the 32in Avtex telly shown here is another accessory (only the bracket, which allows a supersized TV to store on its side for travel, is included).

Before you've even stepped on board, though, you'll have clocked plenty of standard features, starting with the Graphite cab (which looks like black!) and alloy wheels, front fog lights and automatic headlights. There's a Thule Omnistor awning, too, while the wide habitation door is linked to the central locking (and has a low entrance, requiring no



Plenty of under-seat storage



Not a garage but there are two lockers like this



Just one step up to the bedroom with low-level single beds in which you can comfortably sit up

external step). There are flush-fitting Polyplastic Piuma habitation windows to complete the premium appearance.

The bodyshell, like all Bailey motorhomes, uses the marque's Alu-Tech construction with a GRP external skin (now in Dove Grey and Glacier White), an interlocking aluminium extrusion frame, timber-free upper body panels, high-density polystyrene insulation, GRP on the inside and underfloor, and Grade III classification for insulation and heating. It's backed by a six-year body integrity warranty (extendable to 10 years for £549).

Aesthetically, the biggest improvement is at the rear, where the Autograph's new design with bold tail lights has stopped it looking like a caravan, and bike rack mounts and split sections (for easier repairs) address the practicalities.

Here, you're more likely to add a cycle carrier as the XT doesn't have

a full garage. It does have a 1.30m (max) by 84cm by 72cm locker on the nearside, though, complete with light and 12V and 230V sockets.

There's a compartment that's almost as large on the offside, although this houses the bulky infill for the front bed and the large free-standing table (fortunately reachable from inside the living area of the 'van).

There's a further hatch on the offside that allows servicing access for the loo, but also includes space for your toilet chemical, mains lead, etc.

Other external features include 230V, aerial and barbecue points and a 200W solar panel, but the leisure batteries (two 95Ah) remain AGM units, rather than lithium. The water tanks are both underslung (freeing up under-seat storage), but at least the fresh tank is heated and insulated for winter touring. The grey waste drain is a simple plastic tap that looks a bit old-school at this

price point. Electric emptying would have been nice!

SWEET DREAMS

The big news with this XT layout is the bedroom, so let's start our interior tour there. The beds are a generous length (over 2m on the nearside) and although they each have a slightly cut-off corner at the foot that's not really noticed in use.

What you're far more aware of is the ease of getting into bed and the huge headroom above. Compared with the more usual high bed format, this bedroom feels much more roomy, more like being at home. There's still a step up into this area but the beds are very low in comparison with most other twin bed designs and standing room here is up to 1.95m.

There are padded headboards that you can sit up against and reading lights and USB sockets above. A large rooflight allows ►

ADVANTAGES

- Al-Ko chassis enhances stability
- Alde heating for homely warmth
- 180hp automatic as standard
- Layout appeals to ex-caravanners
- Easy to access low-level single beds
- Excellent rear washroom
- Generous interior headroom



DISADVANTAGES

- Table fits awkwardly in the lounge
- No full-sized garage
- Unheated underslung grey tank



A very British kitchen, with three gas rings, a mains hotplate, separate oven and grill, plus a microwave

plenty of ventilation and daylight into the space, while an upholstered concertina screen can make the bedroom private when required. Most of the time, though, the sleeping quarters feel more integral with the rest of the living area.

The large area under the offside bed can be accessed via a drop-front door, while its opposite number is external access only. At the foot of each bed is further shelved storage, although on the offside much of this is taken up by the Alde boiler. You'll also find a small locker hidden in the raised bedroom floor.

BATHING BEAUTY

The end washroom is also very convenient when you're in bed, although less so for any occupants of the front lounge bed, who would have to pass through the rear bedroom. The front bed has been improved since I tested that early prototype and now works quite well

(although you do still have to store a very bulky infill cushion). It's a proper double bed in size (and very long) and fairly flat considering that it has a number of joins. As an occasional berth it's more than adequate, although if you need to accommodate four folk on a regular basis, you'd be better off with a drop-down bed.

The ablutions area is perhaps the highlight of the new model. It has everything you'd hope for, including plenty of room to use all the facilities. The basin faces you as you enter, with a useful worktop adjacent and mirror-fronted cupboards above (which just need fiddle rails or straps to keep everything in place).

For once, the loo is neither too high, nor lacking in leg or shoulder room. But the star feature is the separate shower, complete with twin drains, shelves for shampoo, etc, a good spray, a second roof vent and a drying rail. Then the washroom is

completed by the wardrobe, sited behind the loo. It has a shelf above its hanging rail, but there's still a drop of 99cm.

LOUNGING AROUND

At the opposite end of this Autograph, the format is familiar from other models in the range. There's a straight sofa on the nearside and an offside L-settee that incorporates the two rear travel seats with automotive head restraints and Isofix.

It's pleasing to see that Bailey continues to lead the way with passenger safety, installing features such as the strengthening hoops under the rear travel seat, following the lessons learned when it carried out a comprehensive series of crash tests before entering the motorhome market. These prevent 'submarining' under the seatbelts.

As with the rest of the vehicle, the lounge is a well-lit space with a large



An open-plan interior in which the bedroom is more integral with the living area than other twin bed floorplans

overcab sunroof, downlights, ambient lighting and flexible cab reading lamps. Large windows and a glazed door also help create a bright space, which also benefits from huge headroom of 2.14m.

Plump scatter cushions are provided and the sofa backrests wrap around the B-pillars behind the cab to enhance both appearance and comfort, but you can't help noticing the difference in floor and seat height between the swivel chairs and settees. The latter suit those with long legs best.

The cab seats are the top choice for watching the telly, sited in the entrance, where you'll also discover a wireless charging pad. On the driver's side there's a neat coffee table, that's ideal for evening drinks and nibbles as you relax to watch the latest blockbuster.

But the good news stops with the main dining table. It's heavy and awkward to extract from under the

rear offside mattress, not helped by the inadequate gas struts on the bed base. Then, in situ, it seems low in relation to the settees, too bulky in the space, and almost impossible to get around. I'd purchase a second coffee table and leave the larger unit for al fresco use only.

CHUFFED TO BRITS

That this is a British motorhome is more obvious in the galley than anywhere else.

The Englishness starts with the Russell Hobbs plateless microwave and the Thetford cooker with separate oven and grill, as well as a mains hotplate and three gas rings. It continues with features such as the two 230V sockets and the removable draining board, as well as the sink cover that doubles as a chopping board. Bailey is also probably unique in covering the cooker's glass lid with a worktop that matches the rest of the counter,

giving you a better surface on which to prepare food and giving a more cohesive look.

Storage includes two drawers (one for cutlery) as well as a pull-out unit for tins, jars, etc.

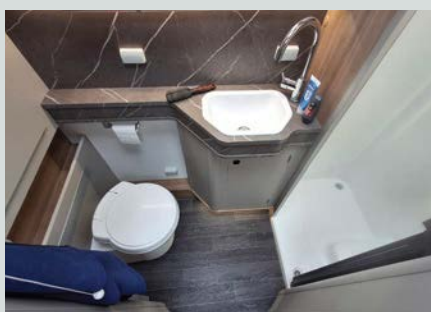
Opposite, the super-tall absorption fridge has a 142-litre maximum capacity and automatic energy selection, so you don't have to worry about swapping from 12V to 230V to gas.

AUTO FOR THE PEUGEOT

Also automatic are the vehicle headlights and, of course, the vehicle itself. You really wouldn't want a motorhome this big with less than Peugeot's 180hp motor and eight-speed automatic transmission. In combination with the wide-tracked and low Al-Ko chassis, it makes for a reassuringly easy, stable, roll-free vehicle – just remember that very long wheelbase on tight turns and don't forget that this is one of the ►



The separate shower is a star feature



Washroom includes a wardrobe (behind the loo)



Front lounge bed has been improved



Concertina screen gives bedroom privacy

widest motorhomes on the market.

The auto gearbox still seems a novelty in a Boxer, where manual was for so long the only option. The rest hasn't changed much, with a basic design dating back 20 years – and still with insufficient steering column adjustment for many drivers.

That said, Bailey does spec the Peugeot with the latest toys. So, it gets the digital instruments and the big 10in central screen with DAB radio, Bluetooth, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, as well as a colour display for the reversing camera.

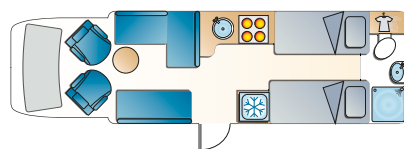
There's digital air-con, too, in which you set the temperature rather than just turning it on or off, as well as a wireless phone charging pad and stop/start. What you don't get is an electronic parking brake, so you still have to lean down to your right for the lever.

That's the only discomfort because the twin-armrest, height-adjustable cab seats serve well. On reasonable road surfaces there weren't too many rattles, although there was some creaking from around the cab cutaway. **MMM**

THE **MMM** VERDICT

Bailey has clearly created a model for its caravan customers wishing to switch to motorhoming. Its interior décor and layout will be familiar to them but the appeal of this less common layout goes beyond that, with low beds and a great washroom. There's a very comprehensive spec here, too. The main downside is the unwieldy free-standing table.

FACTS AND FIGURES



PRICE

From: £92,749 As tested: £92,749

BASICS

Berths: 4 Travel seats: 4

Warranty: Three years base vehicle, three years habitation, six years water ingress

Type Approval: Full GB Approval

DIMENSIONS

Length: 7.95m (26ft 1in)

Width: 2.45m (8ft ½in)

Height: 2.88m (9ft 5½in)

Gross vehicle weight: 4,500kg

Payload: 1,021kg

BASE VEHICLE

Type: Peugeot Boxer with Al-Ko AMC low-profile chassis

Engine: 2.2-litre, 180hp, front-wheel drive, eight-speed automatic gearbox

KITCHEN

Cooker: Thetford dual-fuel hob with three gas burners and mains hotplate, separate grill and oven. Russell Hobbs microwave

Fridge: Thetford 142-litre with 15-litre freezer, automatic energy selection

BEDS

Rear singles: Nearside 2.01m x 0.81m (6ft 7in x 2ft 8in), offside 1.92m x 0.79m (6ft 3½in x 2ft 7in)

Lounge double: 2.13m x 1.28m/1.12m (7ft 0in x 4ft 2½in/3ft 8in)

ESSENTIALS

Fresh water: 100 litres (underslung, heated)

Waste water: 100 litres (underslung)

Space/water heating: Alde Hydronic Compact 3020 radiator system, 6.4kW gas and 3.15kW mains electric

Gas: 2 x 13kg

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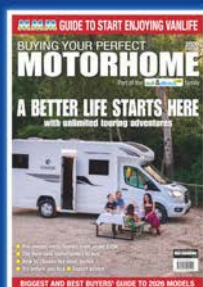
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A serial winner in the annual MMM Motorhome Dealer of the Year awards, Oaktree Motorhomes is one of the UK's highest-rated motorhome suppliers, with a 4.9 rating on Trustpilot based on over 1,000 reviews.

Based just off junction 26 of the M1 motorway in Awsworth, Nottinghamshire, Oaktree is run by Rob Matthews along with his two sons, Ben and Brad. Founded by Rob over 30 years ago, it specialises exclusively in pre-owned motorhomes. In this time, it says it has sold over 10,000 motorhomes and campervans.

Oaktree preaches the key advantages of buying pre-owned, arguing it offers far better value than buying new: no VAT to pay, the initial early years' depreciation will also have been covered by previous owners and any early snags will have been sorted. A pre-owned

motorhome will most likely come with additional extras already fitted, too – the likes of awnings, bike racks, solar panels, alarms and more.

Oaktree also provides every vehicle it sells with a three-year RAC, Europe-wide warranty. That's part of an aftersales package that also includes a full mechanical inspection and habitation check, cambelt replacement (where due), 12 months' MoT and road tax.

The RAC warranty covers both the base vehicle and the conversion – that's everything from the engine, gearbox, turbocharger, etc, all the way through to the habitation heating and hot water system, fridge, toilet, electrical charging system and, for vehicles up to eight years old, damage caused by water ingress. It also covers replacement parts and labour costs. Oaktree says the care it takes in sourcing and preparing the vehicles it sells gives it the

confidence to offer an all-encompassing warranty like this.

As the company puts it, "We are very careful selecting motorhomes for sale so we can confidently warrant them for three whole years. For us to be able to offer a three-year warranty on all our used motorhomes we have to prepare the vehicle to a very high standard."

In addition, its workshops and accessories fitting services are exclusive to the vehicles it supplies only, ensuring its own customers are the priority.

When you visit Oaktree, you can expect to see all manner of motorhomes – from campervans to A-class', including left-hand drive variants, with prices typically starting from the mid-£30,000s going up to well over £100,000. **MMM**

KEY INFORMATION

Other facilities: Black Horse finance, accessories fitting, website blog and advice, on-site workshops

Interesting fact: Oaktree says many of its customers report that when they collect their vehicle, "it feels brand new" – a reflection of the company's meticulous preparation standards and showroom-ready presentation on every handover

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In this issue of **What motorhome**

Rapido's V64 is a star of the launch season – see it and other 2027 models on our YouTube channel, *MotorhomeCampervan*



This time of year goes by in a blur of new model press launch after new model press launch. One thing will have an effect on all 2027-season campervans and motorhomes, though, and that's the arrival of GSR2 regulations. These mandate the fitment of ADAS (advanced driver assistance systems), such as Intelligent Speed Assistance, Driver Drowsiness & Attention Warning, Autonomous Emergency Braking, etc, as well as reversing cameras/sensors. Of course, these are EU regulations (which we're not bound by, post-Brexit), but it wouldn't be viable for motor manufacturers such as Ford and Stellantis to build UK-specific vehicles. Naturally, more kit means higher prices, although I'm pleased to say that many motorhome makers seem to be working hard to keep their prices down.



One option that you don't have to have but many will be pleased to see is Fiat's 160hp motor, which returns. Often viewed as the ideal unit for Ducato-based leisure vehicles, it bridges the gap between the 140hp engine and the expensive 180hp upgrade.

We'll bring you reports from all the launches in next month's issue but, if you can't wait, keep watching our YouTube channel – *MotorhomeCampervan* – where we've already posted Shorts of some newcomers, including Rapido's incredible island bed campervan!

PETER VAUGHAN EDITOR

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WILDTRACKS PANORAMIC

From £62,000
As tested £80,850

LANDSEER CUSTOM 2.0

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Top of the Pops

There's a huge amount of choice in the pop-top campervan world. Here, we compare four of the best models currently available and our team each picks their favourite...

CHOOSING a pop-top campervan might look easy, after all most have the same side kitchen layout. So, just pick one that you like the look of from a converter near to your home, no?

No, no, no! There's a lot more to think about. A LOT more...

First, you'll want to investigate the pedigree of the converter, whether its conversions are type approved and/or have approvals from Ford or VW, or the NCC (National Caravan Council). Will your camper be registered with the DVLA as a 'motor caravan' or just a 'van with windows'?

Then you'll need to think about the spec you want, both on the base vehicle (there's a huge cost difference between the lowest and highest-spec vans) and the conversion. Do you want all the toys and an automatic gearbox? Or is keeping the cost down more important, perhaps with a pre-owned or pre-registered base van?

**MOORLAKE LIBERTY**

From £75,000
As tested £75,000

**BILBO'S CELEX PRO**

From £69,500
As tested £87,040

Words Peter Vaughan

There are many different pop-top roofs, some easier to use or of superior quality, while not all roof beds have a sprung base. Then there are as many different seat/bed systems, sliding or fixed seats, with two or three rear seatbelts. The width of the seat will, of course, dictate the size of the bed.

Kitchens may use gas or electricity, or a combination. Water may be on board in portable containers or in a fixed tank, usually underslung. Fridge sizes vary and can be front or top loading.

Practical storage and good space utilisation are key in a small campervan, but you'll also want to think about options such as solar panels,

lithium battery upgrades, leather upholstery and alloy wheels (don't go too big!).

Of course, there's the choice of Ford Transit Custom or VW Transporter, which are now very closely related (other base vehicles are available!). And that's just the start, long before you start looking at colour schemes...



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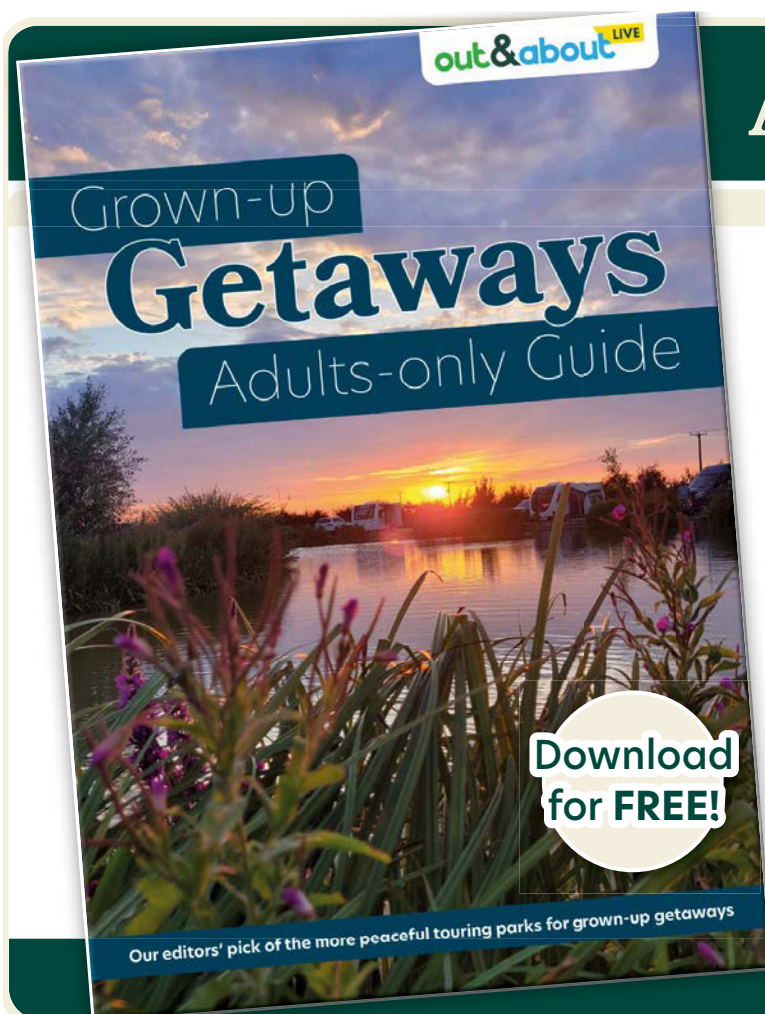


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Bilbo's Celex Pro

Almost 50 years' experience in building VW campervans



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE VW Transporter T7

PRICE FROM £69,500

PRICE AS TESTED £87,040

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 5.05m

WIDTH 2.03m

HEIGHT 2.04m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,000kg

PAYLOAD 500kg

THE most notable first impression of the latest Bilbo's camper, as seen here – apart from the clever CE11 LEX number plate! – is the Reimo roof. We've become used to seeing the Surrey-based converter fitting its own pop-tops, called Low-Lie.

In fact, Bilbo's has long offered what it refers to as a 'Continental front lifting roof' as a factory option. Here, it adds £5,000 to the price, including a 1.96m by 1.12m bed with its mattress mounted on Zomi plastic springs for comfort. The Low-Lie roof can't match the Reimo's bed size but it does have the appeal of being very easy

to use, offering the same headroom front to rear (as it is side-hinged), and the windows built into the canvas ensure there's plenty of daylight coming in. Unless you plan to sleep up top, we'd take the substantial saving and go for the Low-Lie version, especially as the new securing catches on the roof fitted here were a bit of a struggle to release.

However, it's worth noting the pluses of the Reimo roof compared with its rivals. This version has a panoramic, fully unzippable canvas but, when the weather isn't tropical, you can still get daylight in through a front window and some

ventilation via flyscreened panels on either side.

With a Low-Lie roof, the Celex starts at £69,500, based on a 110hp Commerce-spec van with manual gearbox. This demo model upped the equipment level to Commerce Pro and the drivetrain to a 150hp motor with eight-speed automatic gearbox, raising that figure to £77,750. It looked extremely discreet in metallic Graphite Dust grey (£1,000 extra) with matching Montreal Grey 16in alloy wheels (another £75) and it was a surprise to see no Bilbo's branding anywhere. The other external feature to note is the single sliding window (fully opening) on the offside,





ADVANTAGES

- Excellent storage
- Easy bed-making and a wide bed

DISADVANTAGES

- Continental roof is an expensive optional extra
- Fixed seat reduces versatility



OUR VERDICT

If you admired Bilbo's practical approach in the past, then the latest Celex carries on in that tradition.



behind the kitchen.

After nearly 50 years of building Volkswagen campervans, you wouldn't expect Bilbo's to throw the baby out with the bath water and its new Celex carries over much of what made the previous T6/T6.1 version so successful for so long. Not only is the Celex NCC (National Caravan Council) approved but Bilbo's is one of just six UK companies to have VW Motorhome Qualified Converter status.

The Celex is quite a traditional design and retains curtains, rather than fitting blinds, for example. Bilbo's also continues to fit its own fixed seat/bed system, which, like the Low-Lie

roof, you'll not see anywhere else. It only caters for two rear passengers but it comes with a nearside armrest and automotive-style head restraints. Importantly, it's one of the easiest seats to turn into a bed, with the backrest simply pulling forward over the top of the seat squab. There's a slight ridge in the middle of the bed which needs a little refining of the infill cushion's size/shape but this double bed offers generous width of up to 1.36m (mattress length is 1.88m). Under-seat storage is good, too, with a compartment for a loo on one side and a large cupboard adjacent.

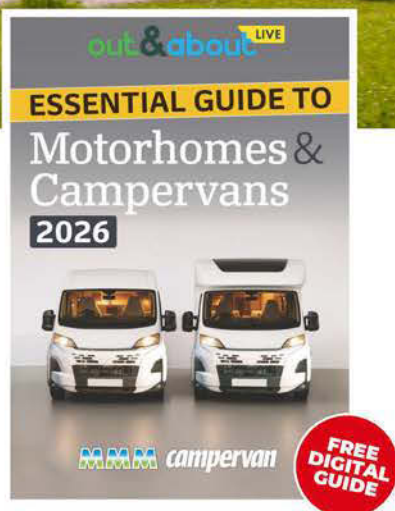
The side kitchen carries on this practical

approach to storage, with three good-sized drawers (so much better than cupboards) and a Dometic 55-litre compressor fridge. A gas grill is available as an option (replacing a drawer), with a two-burner hob fitted as standard. The table mounts onto a rail on the front of the galley and can thus offer extra meal preparation space. A second table (a £25 option) is provided for al fresco dining.

Full-height storage begins alongside the back seat. This unit is shelved, while a wardrobe with hanging rail is found to the rear. Boot area storage is particularly capacious, too, but with a fixed seat it can't be extended.



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FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Ford Tourneo Custom

PRICE FROM £76,000

PRICE AS TESTED £87,365

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 5

LENGTH 5.05m

WIDTH 2.03m

HEIGHT 2.07m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,175kg

PAYLOAD 725kg



HIGHLY Commended in the 2025 Out & About Live Campervan Awards in the pop-top category, NCC (National Caravan Council) approved and sold through a dealer network (rather than factory direct), Landseer Leisure has already stamped its mark on the campervan market despite only being established just over six years ago.

The Custom 2.0 arrives here already having impressed on a full live-in road test (watch the video at [motorhome.ma/review353](https://www.whatmotorhome.com/review353)) and this latest spec model comes with even more kit and a four-year warranty on both the base vehicle and the conversion.

It is built on the Ford Tourneo 'camper donor' (ready for conversion to a campervan), a spec that means it is classified as an M1 passenger vehicle and will be registered with the DVLA as a motor caravan. It also comes with Ford's Camper Assist roadside assistance package.

Its cab spec was already comprehensive but the 2026-model gets a full-sized spare wheel, larger fuel tank, wireless phone charging, reversing camera, trailer hitch assist and six-way adjustment on both (heated) front seats. In addition, there are LED headlights, 17in alloy wheels, a 13in touchscreen and metallic paint (six colour choices) as standard.

Starting at £76,000 with the 150hp motor and six-speed manual gearbox, our test vehicle featured the 170hp motor and auto transmission, increasing the base price to £79,950. The new Driver Assistance Package (adaptive cruise control, sat-nav, power folding mirrors and heated steering wheel – still that weird squared-off shape) adds an extra £1,530, while the superb leather upholstery front and rear costs £2,600.

As well as the enhanced Ford spec, the latest Landseer sees the company swap seat supplier from Schnierle to Mobiframe. Both seats slide on floor rails but the new bench takes less effort to transform into a bed and, thanks to a neat infill

**ADVANTAGES**

- Premium design and finish
- German high-quality pop-top

DISADVANTAGES

- Rear corner cupboard hard to access
- Limited daylight in roof

OUR VERDICT

Landseer is constantly tweaking the spec of its Custom 2.0 to keep it at the top of the premium pop-top sector.

along the nearside wall, the double here is a good size, at 1.92m by 1.29m.

There's a second bed in the roof (1.98m by 1.20m), where the mattress sits on ClimaPlux springs. Landseer uses a premium German pop-top from SCA and you can see that this is a superior-quality roof in areas such as its belt 'n' braces locking mechanisms. However, its canvas seems to have been designed for hotter climes than ours – you can fully unzip the front three-quarters (leaving just a mosquito mesh) but, if you only want daylight (not ventilation), the small offside window is a bit disappointing. Down below, there are two opening windows but

these are just pop-out panels, not sliders.

It's the kitchen that really impresses here, with oak worktops, an underslung sink with solid wood cover and optional Highland Green finish. The slide-out unit for tinned foods, etc, and the dimmable ambient lights exemplify the premium nature of this campervan and it's a completely gas-free conversion, too. Cooking is on a Sterling twin induction hob, linked to a Clayton lithium power system. That was upgraded here to 160Ah and a 3kW inverter for £840, while a 240W solar panel is standard.

There's hot water here, too, both at the sink and rear external shower (£210), supplied from a

Webasto Thermo Top diesel system (£1,245 extra) that includes blown-air heating. Unless you plan to use the shower, we'd stick with the standard-fit Webasto Air Top heater, especially as that frees up cupboard space and allows the loo to store more conveniently at floor level.

Talking of convenience, it's odd that the rear corner cupboard cannot be opened when the rearmost section of bed is horizontal – that seems like a schoolboy error when so much of this camper is so well thought out. Boot area storage is good (although not class-leading), but can, of course, be increased by sliding the bench seat forwards.





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Moorlake Liberty

A clever mix of 230V power and cooking on gas



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE VW Transporter T7

PRICE FROM £75,000

PRICE AS TESTED £75,000

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 5

LENGTH 5.05m

WIDTH 2.03m

HEIGHT 2.03m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,025kg

PAYLOAD 565kg

HERE'S a name that will be less familiar than those alongside it in this Group Test, although Moorlake isn't new to the world of VW campervans. It's a dealer rather than a manufacturer – it outsources the conversions, which are built to its spec, and it has recently switched supplier, so the T7 Liberty is its latest model. As with previous Moorlake campers, it is available from branches in Hertfordshire and Yorkshire and both outlets have a variety of colours (some, as here, wrapped to give a retro duo-tone effect) in stock and ready to drive away.

With Moorlake, you won't have to debate optional extras, although you can choose your kitchen worktop, cabinet colours, upholstery and alloy wheels. It has tried to keep the buying process simple, so only the cosmetics change from 'van to 'van (although you can add an awning or awning rail to the standard kit list).

Conversions are built on pre-registered, delivery-mileage VWs and the base price of £73,000 includes a Commerce Plus T7 with a selection of options that bring it close to Commerce Pro specification, including the wide centre console in the cab, heated seats and

a rear view camera. All are powered by the 150hp motor driving the front wheels through an eight-speed automatic gearbox, so the Moorlake is starting to look good value from the off.

As a Liberty model, this one is two grand more but the extra spend seems well worthwhile, adding an EcoFlow 1kW portable power station. Hidden away in a floor cupboard, the EcoFlow gives you the ability to power all your gadgets (an air fryer or hair straighteners, perhaps, but not simultaneously) even when no hook-up is available, and it can be recharged from zero to





ADVANTAGES

- EcoFlow portable power station
- Five-year conversion warranty

DISADVANTAGES

- Knock-on furniture edging
- Pre-registered base vehicle

OUR VERDICT

If you want all the kit and a practical, cost-effective approach to going off-grid, the Moorlake looks great value.

100% in just an hour's driving, thanks to the 800W alternator charger that's also included in the Liberty Package. It can even be used to jump start the 'van, should the vehicle battery go flat.

Undoubtedly the prettiest camper here on the outside, the Moorlake comes with two sliding windows in the living area and an Austops roof to give you standing room. With simple straps to secure it, this pop-top feels more basic than the German roofs but it still comes with a 1.83m by 1.11m bed featuring Froli springs.

There's no economising when it comes to the seat/bed unit, though, which is a sliding three-seater bench with Isofix, from Stide. It makes

into a 1.92m by 1.10m double bed but lifting the backrest back into its seat position takes some effort (leaving the head restraints off makes it easier if you're not carrying rear passengers). Of course, as with any seat on rails, you can slide it forward to bring kids nearer to parents, or just to maximise load space at the rear. There's a useful locker under the seat but this can only be reached by lifting the squab cushion.

With a 150W solar panel mounted on the roof and a 200Ah lithium leisure battery, you might expect Moorlake to have followed the gas-free trend but here gas is retained for cooking on the two-ring hob. A single

Campingaz cylinder is neatly stowed in a hinged compartment in the boot.

The kitchen also includes a microwave (or you can have a cupboard instead as a no-cost choice) and space to store a portable toilet. There's a cutlery drawer above the 50-litre fridge and a neat pull-out worktop extension alongside the back seat. Soft-closing mechanisms are fitted, too, but the knock-on edging feels a bit 'budget' when the rest of the camper makes a good impression.

The icing on the cake is a five-year conversion warranty, subject to annual habitation checks by Moorlake.

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FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE VW Transporter T7

PRICE FROM £62,000

PRICE AS TESTED £80,850

BERTHS 4

TRAVEL SEATS 6

LENGTH 5.45m

WIDTH 2.03m

HEIGHT 2.10m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,225kg

PAYLOAD 500kg



MOST converters of the VW Transporter or Ford Transit Custom offer the option of going for a long wheelbase model, which, with a side kitchen conversion, gives you a longer galley (and some extra cupboard space) as well as more floor space (useful if you have dogs). The T7 is already a tad longer than its T6.1 forebear, though, so the LWB model (at 5.45m rather than the SWB's 5.05m) may be a bit big as a daily driver – it all depends how you use your campervan and how essential it is that it fits in a normal car-sized parking bay.

Not only is this Wildtracks conversion the

only longer camper in this selection, as a Panoramic model it has no tall furniture – with extra space AND extra windows, it feels extra spacious inside.

It also has a double passenger seat in the cab, making it a six-seater. This example was a customer's vehicle built to their spec, but, unless it's essential to have the additional seatbelt, we'd avoid the three-seat cab which prevents walk through to the rear and lacks the comfort of a single chair with armrests. Here, the FWX swivel base also slides and, with the rear bench moved forwards, you have five seats around the free-standing Loc8 table (stored in the sliding door).

However, parked on a slight slope, the reversed seat refused to stay still!

Much better is the Mobiframe sliding bench in the rear, which converts quickly into a 1.94m by 1.19m bed. With quad rails in the floor, there's even the possibility of adding two more removable travel seats – up to eight people in total! You can also specify the Mobiframe under-seat storage bags that stop items stored in the boot from sliding forward, down the sides of the drawer, under braking – a must-have in our book. As standard, Wildtracks fits a fixed rear seat (usually RIB), the Mobiframe slider is a £2,250 option.



ADVANTAGES

- Spacious feel with no tall cabinetwork on the offside
- Extra storage and floor space of the long-wheelbase T7

DISADVANTAGES

- Too long to fit in a standard car park space
- Untidy solar panel fitting

OUR VERDICT

Wildtracks offers a huge amount of choice, with three side kitchen models and loads of options, so you can tailor the spec to your needs and budget.

There's a second bed (£750 extra), with Froli springs in the Austops roof and here the LWB gives extra mattress length of 2.11m! The pale colour of the roof canvas might let in too much early morning daylight for light sleepers, though.

This Bristol-based converter also offers Discover and Explorer conversions on the T7 but this Panoramic model feels quite different with its full-length low-level unit along the offside. You're not short of storage as there are top lockers, too, and here you'll find one of the model's star features – its practical built-in crockery racks.

Similar attention to detail can be found in the

cutlery holder, the wireless phone charger hidden in the bamboo worktop and the mood lighting beneath the galley, but the key feature, really, is the Vango induction hob. This is part of the £1,500 Off-Grid Package that includes a 340Ah lithium battery and 3kW inverter (standard fitment is a 110Ah lithium battery). Webasto diesel heating is also standard, while a Pundmann 12V/230V boiler is optional. A 250W solar panel is fitted to the roof but its installation looked untidy, with wiring on show.

Elsewhere, the aesthetics of this T7 Commerce Pro 150hp automatic look spot on, with its 45mm lowered suspension (£650), striking 19in

Indianapolis alloy wheels and styling pack (£500). Wildtracks offers by far the most personalisation and conversion options here and puts its new vehicles through the IVA (individual vehicle type approval process). It typically converts pre-owned, one or two-year old Transporter vans, which it sources for customers to keep prices lower.

Clearly cost-cutting wasn't top of the agenda on this £80k test vehicle, though, which also featured £3,000 leather upholstery, an underslung 51-litre fresh water tank with outside shower at £900 (portable water carriers are standard) and a Fiamma roll-out awning (£1,100).



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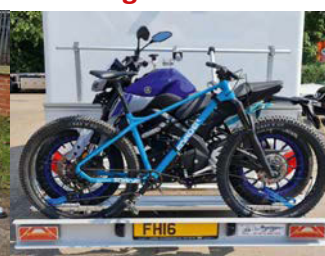
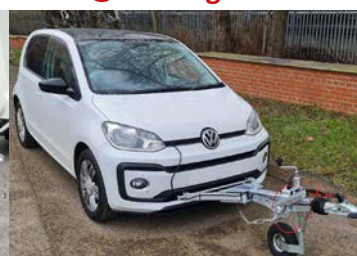
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VERDICT

Four different campervans, but which one wins?



Rachel Scholes, Deputy Editor, MMM

In terms of campervan size, I'd generally go for one that's larger with more facilities, for camping on sites with limited facilities. Think toilet compartments and proper kitchens. Something like a six-metre Ford Transit that's not too big, but not too small. Just call me the Goldilocks of campervanning!

However, there's no denying that the smaller pop-tops can be much more flexible, acting as both a daily driver and an adventure wagon. That's pretty important in the current climate, where our budget is being squeezed from all angles. So, which one would I pick?

I love modern interiors with wood accents, but practicality has to be even more important when I'm choosing a campervan. That's why the Landseer impressed me; that under-seat storage is simply some of the best I've seen in a long while. Add in the sliding ladder unit and I almost swooned. It takes a lot to win me over, but Landseer might just have done it.

MMM



Iain Duff, Editor, Campervan

Because all the campervans here were very good, it's tempting to call them all winners. But this isn't school sports day where everyone gets a medal just for turning up. We need a genuine winner, and the Moorlake is the one that takes my first prize.

The Wildtracks is bright and airy, but its long-wheelbase layout means it doesn't quite work as a daily driver. The Landseer looks impressive but there are practical storage issues. The Bilbo's offers a large bed, but the ridge in the middle affects comfort – and at £87,000, I expect absolute perfection.

For £75,000, the Moorlake gives you a well-specced T7 with an automatic gearbox, sliding rear seat/bed, EcoFlow portable power station, sprung bed in the roof, duo-tone wrap and five-year conversion warranty. Its simple approach avoids endless optional extras, while still offering choices in worktops, cabinets and upholstery. In short, it's a premium 'van without the premium price tag.

campervan



Peter Vaughan, Editor, What Motorhome

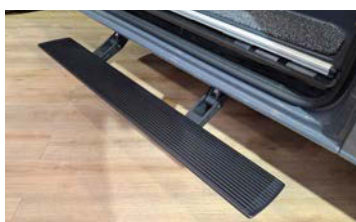
It's not hard to see the appeal of the Moorlake's value for money approach, but it's not the best camper here. The Wildtracks is more expensive but feels more expensive – and the Panoramic conversion appears so light and airy. Perhaps the Bilbo's talents are less obvious but dig a little deeper and you'll discover the practicality born of five decades of camper-building experience.

In contrast, Landseer is a relative new kid on the block but it has already proven its worth in a full live-in road test (October 2025 issue, *MMM*). Back then I wrote, "with a gas-free and stylish design, it should be on your shopping list if you're looking for a compact campervan." In the spec seen here (the green furniture option, especially), it's even more appealing and Landseer continues to gently refine the model. Above all, for its premium feel throughout, it would be my choice from this foursome.

What motorhome

Adria Supertwin MB 700

The biggest Twin, with off-road ability...



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Mercedes Sprinter 4x4

PRICE FROM £131,295

BERTHS 2/4

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 6.97m

WIDTH 2.02m

HEIGHT 2.85m

GROSS WEIGHT 4,100kg

PAYLOAD 687kg

ALL-WHEEL drive seems to be the must-have feature for those campervan buyers to whom budget is rather less of an issue. It has been suggested that owning a 4x4 'van has usurped having an A-class as the way to stand out from the leisure-loving crowd, but, whatever the reason, more and more manufacturers are offering them. Adria was by no means the first, but it has since added a second model to its aptly named Supertwin.

Of course, the original Twin (on Fiat) was the model that kick-started the Europe-wide obsession with fixed bed panel vans, so it's no surprise that Adria has had to keep up with its rivals in adding the Mercedes Sprinter 4x4 to its

campervan range. First of the Supertwins was the MB 600 SPB, with the classic transverse rear bed in a six-metre 'van, but this new longer model makes the Twin more Super than ever before, with a length bordering on seven metres and a price north of £130k. It's available as a standard two-berth, or with a pop-top for an extra five grand to sleep four.

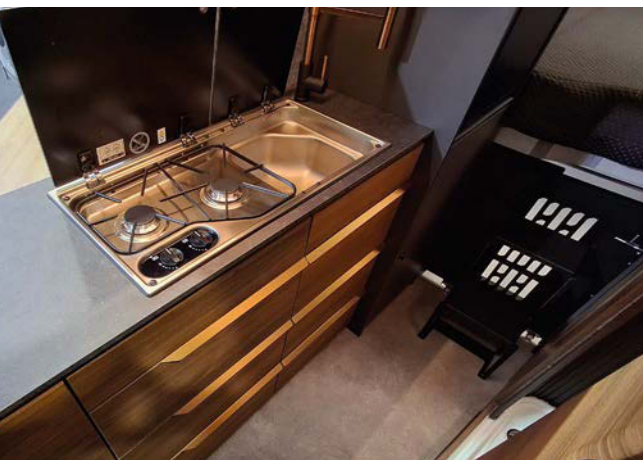
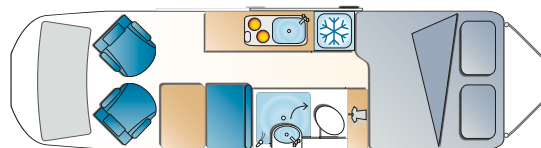
Basis is, naturally, the ultimate Sprinter van, with 190hp motor and 9G-Tronic automatic gearbox. It comes in Tenorite Grey, Graphite Grey, Stone Grey or Obsidian Black, while the comprehensive spec includes front fog/cornering lights, colour-coded grille, LED high-performance headlights, automatic high beam,

electric parking brake and even the option of an electrically opening/closing sliding door.

Of course, all the safety kit is standard – adaptive cruise control, Active Lane Keeping Assist, Attention Assist, Traffic Sign Assist, Blind Spot Assist and Hill Start Assist and a 360-degree parking camera system is available. Semi-automatic air-conditioning, the MBUX multimedia system, wireless smartphone charging and a reversing camera are all standard. Alloy wheels come with General Grabber AT3 tyres but you can alternatively specify BF Goodrich Trail-Terrain rubber.

Externally, the Supertwin also boasts flush-fitting, framed habitation windows, a Vista

SGX

**ADVANTAGES**

- Extra-large lengthways bed
- Height-adjustable garage
- Large swing-wall shower
- Supersized sunroofs over the lounge

DISADVANTAGES

- Needs a C1 licence to drive
- Some garage area storage hard to access

OUR VERDICT

With its comprehensive spec, Alde heating, huge bed, supersized garage and vast over-lounge rooflight, the big Supertwin has plenty to recommend it if you're looking for a 4x4 campervan.

overcab sunroof, an awning with LED strip light and electric steps to make climbing aboard this lofty vehicle more manageable. The bronze Adria logos and graphics are picked up with a matching theme inside...

Then, being an SGX model, this campervan has a more important aspect inside the rear barn doors – a bed that can rise and fall at the press of a button to increase the garage size or give you a lower, more accessible bed. Impressively, it glides up and down almost silently, while the garage headroom can be adjusted from 73cm up to a maximum of 1.38m. The load bay width is 88cm, while folding side sections to the mattress allow the bed to go closer to the ceiling.

This being a near-seven-metre campervan, you can also sleep lengthways in a bed that measures 1.65m wide and up to 1.97m long. So, not only have you a good chance of getting out of bed without disturbing your partner, but there are two folding steps to make egress easier, too.

The rest of the layout holds few surprises, but the overcab sunroof is a rare find on a Sprinter and it's mated to a massive opening rooflight over the lounge, so it should never seem gloomy inside, despite the grey top lockers.

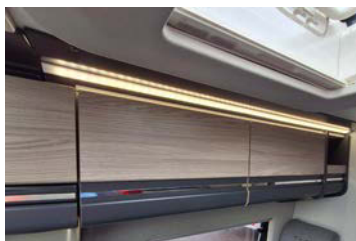
A mid-tone wood finish appears in the galley, where bronze colouring (like the badges outside) returns on handles and details such as the tap.

Storage is all in drawers (much more convenient) and the fridge (an 84-litre compressor model, or 138-litre as an option) is mounted at waist height. An oven is added for the UK and you can even have a coffee machine, too. Then, opposite, is the washroom, behind a tambour door. There's an opening window here, plus a drying rail, but the star feature is the generous size of the shower space, revealed once you've rotated the basin over the loo.

Better still, the Supertwin is said to be unique in its class in having Alde's diesel-powered radiator heating (with heated floor, too), while a heated waste tank with electric emptying valve is another plus.

Swift Carrera 194

British-built with continental style...



FACT FILE

BASE VEHICLE Fiat Ducato

PRICE FROM £82,030

BERTHS 3

TRAVEL SEATS 4

LENGTH 6.36m

WIDTH 2.26m

HEIGHT 2.72m

GROSS WEIGHT 3,500kg

PAYLOAD 370KG

SWIFT has continually evolved its Fiat-based campervans since acquiring the Autocruise brand almost two decades ago. For 2026, the Carrera range received a fresh new look inside and out, along with a new digital reversing camera and upgraded Whale blown-air heating system.

There are six models in the range, three each on the long and extra-long Ducato panel vans, while one version (the 244) comes with a pop-top to create extra sleeping capacity. Very British rear lounge designs dominate, but this 194 model takes a more European approach with its twin single beds at the back of the 6.36m 'van

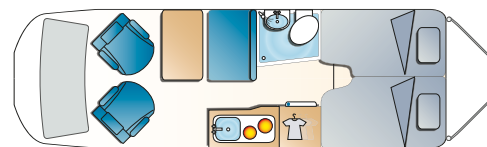
(and, of course, the sliding door on the UK side).

All Carreras come in Artense Grey, set off by new graphics, alloy wheels and a colour-coded bumper. The 140hp motor is mated to a six-speed manual gearbox, with the automatic available as a cost option (which reduces the payload by 20kg). Base vehicle spec includes Traction Plus, ASR, roll over mitigation, hill descent control, stop/start and reversing sensors. In the cab, you'll find a 10in touchscreen with TomTom 3D sat-nav as well as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, an electronic parking brake, automatic air-con and wireless phone charging.

On the outside, you'll notice the large glass

sunroof above the cab first and, while the habitation glazing sits proud of the bodywork, Swift does include a 110W solar panel, external barbecue point and outside shower as standard. On the battery front, it fits two 80Ah units but hasn't yet made the switch to lithium for the Carrera. There's an electric step and flyscreen for the sliding door and, while the water tanks (93-litre fresh and 58-litre waste) are underslung, the standard Winter Pack includes tank heaters and insulated pipes.

Inside, this is a typically continental layout, with single beds in the rear and a half-dinette lounge. A big part of the attraction will be the



ADVANTAGES

- Well-specified as standard
- Large overcab sunroof
- Kitchen with oven/grill
- Flyscreens on rear and side doors

DISADVANTAGES

- All-in-one washroom, no swing wall
- No choice of exterior or interior colour scheme
- One bed quite short

OUR VERDICT

This latest Carrera successfully mixes a very continental floorplan with a sliding door on the UK side and an oven/grill in the kitchen. It has a good spec and some nice details but the size of the offside bed may rule it out for some customers.



rear bedroom, with beds that measure 1.87m on the nearside and a slightly petite 1.77m on the offside. A ladder is provided but taller or more agile owners may not need it as the mattresses are only 90cm off the floor. There are overhead speakers for the radio and ambient strip lights, but no reading lamps. An unusual addition is the roll-up flyscreen for the back doors.

With this type of campervan, storage is key, too, and here the beds simply fold to each side to maximise the load space. There are four fixed lashing points and heavy-duty flooring but the cupboards and drawers on either side may become hard to reach when you're fully

loaded up.

Up front, the travel seats have been redesigned, with adjustable head restraints, an armrest and USB on the side wall and one Isofix position. There's a new stain-resistant Acacia soft furnishing scheme and, although the seat is a little short in the squab, we found it fairly comfortable. A drop-front door provides access to under-seat storage, while the overhead lockers feel substantial and have doors that rise gently on gas struts.

The curved end to the galley hides a novel worktop extension that lifts out vertically before slotting back in horizontally – not as easy to use

as a simple flap but it looks nicer! However, the big difference compared with most rivals is the oven and grill, fitted as standard here but often not available in the competition. The fridge is a 90-litre compressor model mounted over a small wardrobe and a built-in waste bin is also provided. The only drawers are rather low down, beneath the oven.

The washroom is an all-in-one affair but there's good space for showering as the basin folds away. Two outlets in the tray should allow water to drain away efficiently but the loo, cupboards, etc, will need to be dried off when you've finished.

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Forecourt fortunes

Bag a BIG discount while stocks last...



If you're looking to upgrade, or get into your first motorhome or campervan, there are some great offers around at the moment. It's a buyer's market, as dealers look to clear stocks of past season models, before the new 2027 'vans arrive. Many forecourts across the UK are currently overstocked, so there should be something out there for every buyer – with a healthy saving to boot.

This seasonal transition presents an ideal opportunity to secure a deal on a factory-fresh motorhome, or even a used model that's been on the forecourt for a mite too long.

We found some truly staggering discounts, plus special offers with free packs, and savings of over £40,000 on selected high-end models, but you need to temper this with the fact that prices have been rising to an all-time high. These discounts often bring motorhomes and campervans down to what feels like a more realistic level.

LAYOUT FIRST, PRICE SECOND

When dealers are advertising eye-catching offers, it's easy to be dazzled by the discounts. But the most important piece of advice is simple: if the layout doesn't work for you, it's not a bargain, no matter how much money you save. The key factor in

choosing a 'van is having the right layout, starting with its sleeping arrangements.

Before you start hunting for discounts, establish your non-negotiable elements and list the most important features you are looking for, as well as aspects you would like but aren't total deal-breakers. Make sure the beds suit everyone for both comfort and size. Consider access, too, as climbing over your partner to get out of bed in the middle of the night, or negotiating a steep ladder might not be practical.

Think carefully about what kitchen facilities you need and, if you're going for a vehicle with on-board ablutions, ask yourself how often they will be used – daily (meaning you might want a separate shower and larger water tanks) or only occasionally when off-grid?

BE FLEXIBLE

To bag the biggest discounts, you must be prepared to compromise on specification. The deepest price cuts are on physical, in-stock vehicles sitting on dealer forecourts right now. Their spec, upholstery and engine options are fixed. While dealer workshops can easily retrofit accessories like roll-out awnings, bike racks or solar panels, major

changes will be costly or impossible. If you have a long list of highly specific, custom requirements, those stock motorhomes may not fulfil your needs, and you may have to place a factory order instead, reducing your chances of a great deal.

Furthermore, beware of adding too many unnecessary extras unless you're really sure you need them. Everything you add to your vehicle reduces its payload for essential stuff, like your clothes, personal gear, pets and family!

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Never buy solely on price without considering where the dealer is located. Motorhomes are built by hand and they're complex machines full of kit, so minor teething troubles are relatively common. You're likely to need to return to the supplying dealer for any warranty work to be carried out, as few brands instruct their retailers to work on a vehicle they didn't sell.

Buying a motorhome 250 miles away to save a few hundred pounds can quickly backfire if you have to make multiple return trips for minor warranty repairs. Always look for a dealership that has a good reputation for aftersales care and that is located near to your home.



TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Buying a motorhome, especially your first, has a lot in common with buying a house. You have a good idea of what you're looking for and first impressions don't lie, but don't forget to take your time, ask lots of questions and check all the details. Good dealers encourage you to do this, so don't feel pressured by

a salesperson at a show.

Always check for sufficient adjustment on cab seats (especially if you're particularly short or tall), lie on the beds, stand in the shower, measure the garage to see that your bikes will fit, and don't forget to take a test drive.

Renting a motorhome from a specialist hire

company is a great way to get a taste of the lifestyle for hundreds of pounds before you tie up tens of thousands. Use the experience of hiring to learn all about fitting gas cylinders, disposing of grey water, emptying the toilet and finding out how comfortable you are driving a larger vehicle. It'll help you buy the right 'van first time, too.

STAR BUYS Here are just some of the great deals we found...

MCLOUIS LAGAN 410

Price: £16,995

Dealer: Kimberley Caravans, Nottingham



It's not just brand-new vehicles that are being reduced in price, you can find discounts on pre-owned models, too. We found this entry-level Italian overcab coachbuilt from 2003 with an extra £1k off. For £16,995 it's a great way into family motorhoming on a small budget.

ELDDIS ACCORDO 105 MAGNUM GT

Price: £61,999

Dealer: Pearman Briggs, Gloucestershire

A 2025 model, this sub-6m motorhome has £7k knocked off its list price. It's a dealer special edition, so comes with enhanced spec as standard, including WiFi and a microwave. One of your last chances to buy a new Elddis with this layout as the company is moving production to Germany.



SUN LIVING A 70 DK

Price: £64,995

Dealer: Geoff Cox, Derbyshire



There's an impressive £11k off this overcab family motorhome from Adria's entry-level brand. The reason is it's a 2025-season model, but you get a lot of motorhome for your money. Just be aware that, while it's a six-berth, there are only four travel seats.

CHAUSSON SUITE MINI

Price: £31,995

Dealer: Highbridge, Somerset



One of the quirkiest layouts ever to come out of France, this 2013 model has a central travel seat backing onto an island kitchen! If you're after something a little different, then this Fiat-based low-profile with a drop-down bed might be right for you as it's now been reduced by £3,000.

AUTO-TRAIL F-LINE F60

Price: £64,995

Dealer: Brownhills, Newark

There's a staggering £12k discount off this Ford-based Auto-Trail. It ticks a lot of boxes as it's under 6m long, so it's easy to drive, and it has a drop-down bed above the lounge. While it comes with the powerful 165hp engine, the manual gearbox might be the reason that it's not yet been sold.



SWIFT VOYAGER 540

Price: £67,645

Dealer: Don Amott, Derbyshire



There's £10,000 off the list price of this 2026 motorhome, which has one of the most popular layouts for couples, with a drop-down bed above its spacious lounge, a vast end washroom and a garage. It even has the 165hp engine with the eight-speed automatic gearbox.

KNAUS BOXDRIVE 600 XL

Price: £74,995

Dealer: Yourstyle Leisure, Cheshire

The £20k saving on this Knaus had the Editor looking down the back of the sofa for the funds! The MAN cab has an auto gearbox, while the bed above the cab makes it family friendly, too.



KNAUS SUN I 700 LEG

Price: £126,950

Dealer: Premium Motorhomes, Doncaster



There's over £33k off this 2024-model, 4.5-tonne A-class, which was registered in March 2026 as a demo model. Spec of this 7.7m motorhome includes Alde heating, a nine-speed automatic gearbox, two TVs and an Oyster satellite dish.

WEINSBERG X-PEDITION 600 MQ

Price: £129,950

Dealer: Premium Motorhomes, Doncaster

Four-wheel drive campervans seem to be all the rage at the moment, with everyone wanting to live out their off-road, off-grid lifestyle fantasies. With that in mind, we were surprised to find a saving of just over £8k on this Mercedes Sprinter 4x4 from German brand, Weinsberg. It looks the business with its roof rack, light bar, bull bar and off-road tyres.



DETHLEFFS 75K ICONIC EDITION

Price: £78,981

Dealer: Lowdhams, Nottingham



In a sea of grey rivals, this satin blue 'van stands out a mile. The saving is only just over £3k, but this special edition, with a transverse fixed bed layout, comes fully loaded.

FRANKIA F-LINE I 640 SD

Price: £126,995

Dealer: SMC Motorhomes, Newark

At 6.45m, this is one of the most compact luxury A-class motorhomes currently on the market. It feels much bigger inside than out (thanks to the superb front lounge) and the £9,840 saving is the icing on the cake, especially as it boasts the same double floor as larger models and a huge drop-down bed in which you sleep lengthways.



CARTHAGO CHIC E-LINE I 64 XL-QB

Price: £187,669

Dealer: ES Hartley, Cumbria



Now, £187k for a motorhome doesn't sound cheap but that's a saving of almost £42k! That's what we call a discount... For that, you'll get an 8.84m motorhome on a 5.5-tonne Mercedes Al-Ko chassis. It's one of the top models from this A-class specialist and comes with habitation air-con, an electric awning, inverter and more.

MALIBU GENIUS 641 LE

Price: £116,981

Dealer: Lowdhams, Nottingham

Our Campervan of the Year 2025, the Genius lives up to its name with a rear extension making it a more practical size than the 6m Sprinter but less cumbersome than the 7m van. Its rear single beds and garage compete with much larger models and you're saving £10,271.



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140+ AVAILABLE

2011 Auto-Trail Dakota	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£31,995	2022 Chausson Titanium Prem 640	4 Sleeps	Ford	£60,995
2011 Auto-Trail Cherokee	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£34,995	2021 Adria Twin Supreme	3 Sleeps	Fiat	£62,995
2015 Auto-Sleepers Broadway Ek	4 Sleeps	Peugeot	£38,995	2023 Swift Voyager 584	4 Sleeps	Ford	£62,995
2017 Swift Rio 310	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£41,995	2022 Adria Compact Supreme Sc	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£64,995
2020 Compass Avantgarde 175	2 Sleeps	Peugeot	£42,995	2024 Auto-Trail V-line 636 Sport	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£66,995
2015 Auto-Trail Apache 700	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£42,995	2022 Burstner Lyseo 680g Td It	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£68,995
2019 Auto-Trail Imala 715	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£45,995	2022 Malibu T-430	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£69,995
2019 Roller Team T-line 590	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£46,995	2020 Burstner Harmony Line 744	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£70,995
2022 Chausson S514 First Line	2 Sleeps	Ford	£46,995	2024 Wildax Solaris XI	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£72,995
2018 Auto-Trail V Line 610	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£47,995	2024 Adria Supreme 640 Slb	3 Sleeps	Fiat	£74,995
2016 Adria 670 Slit Coral Plus	3 Sleeps	Fiat	£48,995	2024 Adria Twin 640 Sgx	3 Sleeps	Fiat	£76,995
2018 Dreamer D55 Select	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£49,995	2024 Globe-Traveller Voyager Z	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£89,995
2021 Swift Escape 664	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£51,995	2020 Carthago Chic C Line Superior	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£94,995
2020 Auto-Sleepers Broadway Fb	4 Sleeps	Peugeot	£53,995	2022 Hymer Bmci 580	4 Sleeps	Mercedes	£105,995
2020 Chausson 640 Titanium	4 Sleeps	Ford	£54,995	2024 Adria Sonic Supreme 700 DI	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£119,995
2021 Chausson Titanium Prem 720	5 Sleeps	Ford	£55,995	2025 Hymer Grand Canyon S 700	3 Sleeps	Mercedes	£124,995
2023 Swift Select 144	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£57,995	2024 Hymer Bml-i 790	4 Sleeps	Mercedes	£144,995
2023 Swift Select Compact C404	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£58,995	2020 Niesmann + Bischoff Flair	4 Sleeps	Iveco	£199,995

A Selection Of USED MOTORHOMES From Our DEVON BRANCH
50+ AVAILABLE

2016 Camper King Monte Carlo	4 Sleeps	Volkswagen	£33,995	2022 Chausson Titanium 788	3 Sleeps	Fiat	£59,995
2015 Elddis Accordo 105	2 Sleeps	Peugeot	£36,995	2019 Burstner Lyseo Harmony 728g	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£60,995
2013 Auto-Sleepers Warwick Duo	2 Sleeps	Peugeot	£37,995	2024 Swift Carrera 122	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£61,995
2013 Murvi Morocco	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£38,995	2023 Volkswagen California Ocean	4 Sleeps	Volkswagen	£62,995
2014 Swift Espirit 496	6 Sleeps	Fiat	£41,995	2023 Wildax Pulsar Mk2	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£63,995
2018 Bessacarr E412	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£46,995	2022 Knaus Van 640 Meg Vanstati	4 Sleeps	Auto-Trail	£64,995
2018 Benimar Mileo 313	6 Sleeps	Fiat	£48,995	2023 Wildax Solaris XI	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£66,995
2015 IH 630 RI	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£50,995	2023 Westfalia Club Joker	2 Sleeps	Volkswagen	£69,995
2022 Rimor Evo 95 Auto	5 Sleeps	Ford	£51,995	2023 Adria Twin Supreme 640 Slb	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£71,995
2021 Globecar Globestar 600I	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£52,995	2025 Dethleffs Globetrail 640 Es	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£71,995
2023 Hillside Birchover Classic	4 Sleeps	Volkswagen	£56,995	2025 Burstner Lyseo Harmony 684g	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£72,995
2022 Auto-Trail V Line 680 S	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£56,995	2022 Adria Twin Sport 640 Sgx	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£76,995
2015 Swift Kontiki 635	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£57,995	2023 Swift Grand Prix 794	4 Sleeps	Fiat	£79,995
2020 Swift Kontiki Sport 560	2 Sleeps	Fiat	£57,995	2024 Wildax Altair	2 Sleeps	MAN	£89,995

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There's a £25 prize each for the crossword and sudoku puzzles, so get your thinking cap on and you could be a winner!

Crossword

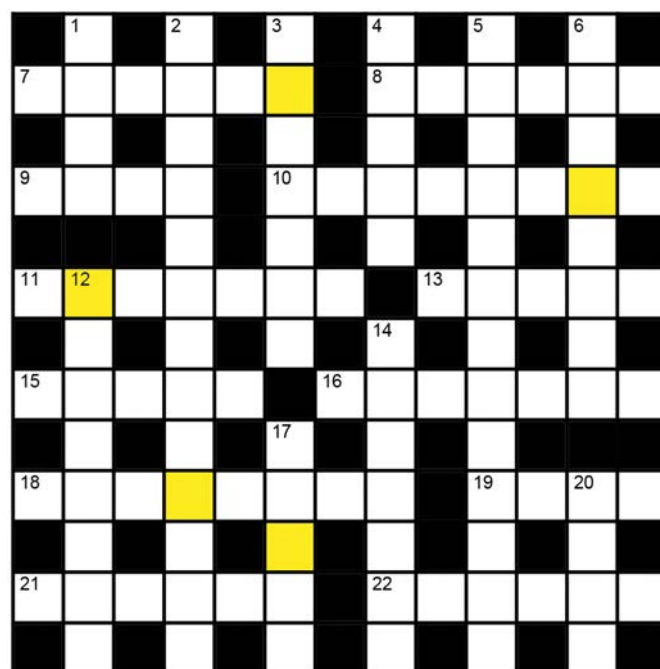
When you have solved the crossword the coloured squares highlight a motorhome-related anagram

ACROSS

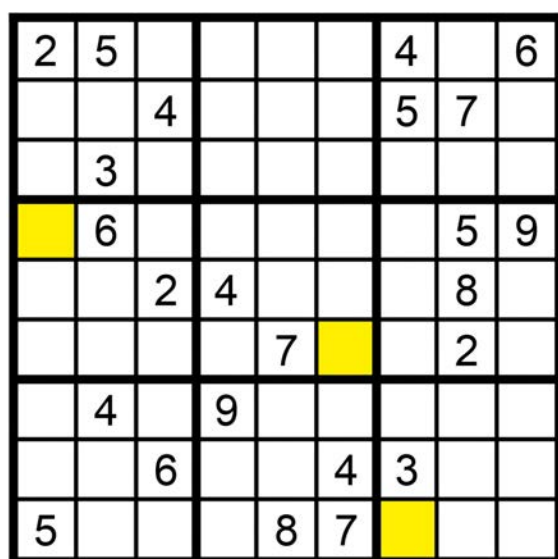
- 7 East African nation (6)
- 8 Standing or reputation (6)
- 9 Perceive with the ears (4)
- 10 Appealing to baser instincts (8)
- 11 Variant of a chemical element with differing neutron count (7)
- 13 Aggressive trouble or bother (5)
- 15 Intimidate or discourage (5)
- 16 Wide-angle lens type (7)
- 18 System for removing excess water (8)
- 19 Concluding passage of a musical piece (4)
- 21 Renovation or restoration, informally (6)
- 22 Feeling of anxiety or discomfort (6)

DOWN

- 1 Frightening giant of folklore (4)



- 2 Modest and unassuming (13)
- 3 Scottish wind instrument (7)
- 4 Feeling great satisfaction or self-respect (5)
- 5 Young bird, or a youthful person (6,7)
- 6 Flat-bodied marine creature with a venomous tail (8)
- 12 Colour of shallow ocean water (3-5)
- 14 Extremely ugly or horrifying (7)
- 17 Lively Brazilian dance (5)
- 20 Measured quantity of medicine (4)



Sudoku

When you have solved the sudoku you will have three figures in the coloured squares, reading from the top to the bottom

Enter the numbers for sudoku and the anagram for the crossword on the online form (see below).

The closing date for both the crossword and sudoku is 27 August, 2026. For T&Cs go to www.warners.gr/comptermis

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Find the 20 seaside-related words



- | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------|---------|
| Bay | Estuary | Pier | Shell |
| Cliff | Harbour | Rockpool | Shore |
| Coast | Marina | Rocky | Surfing |
| Cove | Ocean | Sand | Tide |
| Dunes | Pebble | Seagull | Waves |

Your scribbles

HOW TO ENTER Go online to enter the crossword & sudoku for free. Good luck! mymagazinesub.co.uk/mmm/competitions

out&about LIVE



Martin Watts...

...has swapped his Westfalia Joker high-top for a bigger, comfier Auto-Sleeper coachbuilt with a 'smiley' face, and is really enjoying a more modern classic



Vintage 'vans

Expert advice on buying and running an older motorhome

THIS MONTH Martin looks at the motorhome market 60 years ago...

As we all savour 60 years of this wonderful magazine, I must admit I have enjoyed flipping through the pages, of what was then called Motor Caravan + Camping. It was a brave venture by John Hunt in 1966, but here we are celebrating its 60th anniversary.

Those early issues were as much about camping in general, with the focus on 'Motor Caravans', touring caravans and tent camping. The inner pages were all black and white in those days, with a colour cover, but the copy contained within laid the cornerstones of the magazine we know and love today, with features on travel, technical tips, general motoring news, new accessories and classified adverts.

The more in-depth motorhome tests were to follow, with John's likes and dislikes often noted by converters after



reviewing their prototype vehicle.

As I sat watching England win the World Cup that summer on TV, I was oblivious to the motorhomes and campervans being featured in the magazine, and of course, completely unaware what part those models would play in my later life. We were at that stage still two years away from our first family campervan, a used 1964 Commer Maidstone.

That model had been dropped by 1966, though there were plenty of other conversions available on the Rootes/Chrysler Commer. They included the Highwayman, one of the best-selling motorhomes in the UK at that point.

There was a plethora of examples based on the VW, a strong stable of models by Martin Walter Ltd (Dormobile), Auto-Sleepers at that point only converting the Commer van, and then we had the weird and wonderful creations on the iconic Austin-Morris Mini.

Both the Mini Wildgoose and the Euxton Mini Caraboot featured within the 1966 issues. Their rarity today is a thing of legend within classic vehicle circles.

As little as 70 examples of the Wildgoose were produced, and perhaps only a handful of the Caraboot. Survivors of the Wildgoose hardly reach double figures, and just the

Classic corner

I recently spent some time trawling through hundreds of 'real' photographs for the Classic Camper Club, as it prepares posters and a video for its national weekend, to celebrate the 35th anniversary. I'm sure many of you know that I formed the club in 1991 to bring the classic motorhomes and their owners together. The club is still in existence, but now as a Facebook-only group.

The founding editor of MMM, the late John Hunt, was a huge supporter of the various clubs, and certainly helped me in so many ways back then. He would often be seen at club rallies, together with wife, Audrey, and his trusty camera bag.



The two photos I discovered recently show John and Audrey chatting with an Austin Paralanian owner, and John giving a speech at an early rally, with yours truly alongside him wearing the green hat.

There are still clubs out there for the older motorhome models, and your choice of internet search engine should point you in the right direction. Owners' clubs still have a roll to play in this digital age, especially on the social side for rallies and camping weekends, plus show stands at various classic vehicle events.

SHOW OFF YOUR CLASSIC! Tell everyone about your vintage 'van or maybe you want to ask our expert about a golden oldie... mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk

ON THE MARKET

This month, Martin looks at a pair of Ducato-based Pilote motorhomes, spotted on [W outandaboutlive.co.uk](#)

PILOTE PACIFIC



£13,999

- Year: 2002 ● Mileage: 59k
- Base vehicle: Fiat Ducato ● Berths: 2

Martin says...

As this Pilote is in left-hand drive format, it will likely appeal to those who enjoy long-distance forays on the Continent. Fitted with the 1.9-litre diesel engine, and showing below-average miles, it represents good value for those with a sub-£15k budget. It is nicely presented inside and out, with a smart wood interior, side dining/kitchen and rear washroom. A side awning and rear bike rack are also fitted.

PILOTE PACIFIC 62 LSE



£12,000

- Year: 2002 ● Mileage: 42k
- Base vehicle: Fiat Ducato ● Berths: 4

Martin says...

It may be the same range name and same base vehicle, but this Pilote is the four-berth model with a fixed double bed at the rear. It has the 1.9-litre TD motor but with the preferable RHD steering set-up. Once again, there is a lovely wood interior with side dining/bed and a permanent bed in the rear corner, with washroom and wardrobe. This Pacific also comes with a side awning and rear cycle rack already fitted.

THE ARCHIVES

This archive picture features a Commer Auto-Sleeper, which was one of the first full road tests in the magazine, from August 1966. Motorhome tests have been a firm favourite with readers of MMM for the last 60 years.

From that one-off campervan built for the Trevelyan family on an Austin-Morris 152/J2, one of the most respected names in the UK motorhome industry was born. Initially, it offered pop-top campervans on either the Austin-Morris or Rootes Commer, but by 1963 had switched to the Commer only.

THE WEBSITES

Flicking through Facebook Marketplace recently, I spotted a pair of now quite rare survivors of the Bedford CF CB22 Auto-Sleeper motorhome. One of them, in a poor state, was offered for just £995 (spares or repair).

The other was in a very nice condition, dating from 1979, and offered for sale at £3,750, with 80k on the clock and a recent service.

Then, yet another CB22 Auto-Sleeper popped up! Again from 1979, and with all original interior, plus a rebuilt engine, the price tag was £6,950. It looked to be a little beauty (in Northern Ireland).

rear section of one Caraboot is known.

If you were drawn to the motorhome lifestyle in 1966, and had deep pockets, then the Jennings Roadranger might well have appealed. Based on the Austin 152/J2, Leyland 20, Commer or Ford Transit, it was hand-crafted to a superb quality by J H Jennings of Sandbach.

One of my all-time favourite models, the Ford 'Sprite Motorhome' first appeared in 1966, designed and built by Ci/Motorised in Poole. The styling owed a great deal to the Bluebird caravan pedigree, but build costs curtailed its numbers, with less than 100 constructed. It was later reinvented as the Transit Landliner (less exterior detailing).

This year marks the 65th anniversary of Auto-Sleeper motorhomes. If like me, you have been a motorhomer for several decades, then I suspect you have owned at least one of the models produced in the Willersey factory. It really is a motorhome milestone deserving of celebration, given how many other UK converters have come and gone in that period.

Auto-Sleepers put out a post on social media back in June appealing for the oldest model to come forward for a photo shoot. I am pretty sure that will be a Commer example, and I'm certain a 1964 example still exists. There was a 1963 Commer Auto-Sleeper still in use in the late 90s, but it was simply a rotten bodyshell sat in a yard the last time I saw it.



Tech help!

Our panel of motorhome-owning experts are here to help you solve your motorhoming problems, however small

TECH HELP EDITOR



Nick Fisher

Base vehicle expert

Q Will renewing the rear brakes or brake fluid improve my stopping power?

My 2016 Chausson 610 Welcome is built on the Ducato 35 light camping chassis. In April, my trusty, well-respected Fiat experienced garage carried out a thorough yearly service at approximately 37k miles.

Its recommendation was that the rear brakes will need replacing next time. It did not replace the brake fluid as I requested, saying that it was fine.

Now, maybe my leg muscles are getting weaker, but to me quite a bit more effort is required these days to stop quickly. Could I ask you:

1. Will the renewal of the rear brakes improve my stopping power?
2. The brake fluid is now four years old, will renewing it improve my stopping power?
3. What is your opinion of the EBC Yellowstuff pads and discs fitted by Derek Davies in the June 2025 issue? My front pads were replaced 10k ago.

Steve Bovey



NICK FISHER On the whole, the rear brake pads do not do an awful lot unless the vehicle is close to its maximum weight. Where most motorhomes are concerned, they probably do work a good bit harder than they would on a delivery van. Therefore, yes, replacing them should give a little more bite.

However, because of the mass of the vehicle, I really do think that a change of brake fluid would be advisable. Four years is long enough, especially if you think that braking is requiring more effort.

You may have overheated the fluid at some point and caused some localised boiling. This releases water in the form of vapour and produces often very small air bubbles or pockets of incompressible water and affects efficiency. This is normally felt by the driver as a 'harder' feel to the brake pedal and less effect.

I once had to investigate a small van that had a 'hard' pedal and while the brake linings all looked fine to me, it was not until we started to pull some brake fluid through at each corner that we discovered a highly discoloured fluid with green bits suspended in it. It must have been some sort of algae; the owner of the eight-year-old



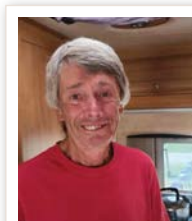
vehicle admitted he had never had the brake fluid replaced.

Performance brake parts can provide more stopping power, but this is normally at the cost of higher rates of wear and excessive brake dust. I did some experiments with performance pads and discs on vans and cars many years ago and on the whole found that, while they were marginally more effective, they are not really worth the expense. Progress is allegedly relentless, though, and if someone has discovered a combination that works and for a reasonable cost; why not?

For the latter 10 years that I was running my workshop, I had long since abandoned OE parts due to the considerable cost and was using exclusively Bosch pads and discs. I have also used Blue Print, Pagid and, to a lesser extent, Brembo. All of these firms produce components to the vehicle manufacturers, and they are normally a good deal less expensive than OE packaged items.

NEED AN ANSWER TO YOUR TECHNICAL QUESTION? Just email MMM's team of experts who are here waiting to help you mmmtech@warnersgroup.co.uk

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Andy Stothert

General advice



Clive Mott

Electrical expert



Mike Hill

Bodywork expert



Barry Norris

Technical & legal advice



Ivan Anketell-Clifford

Cleaning & chemicals



Andy Harris

TV & 12V expert

The brake fluid is absolutely key to transmitting the power, though, and if not actually completely replaced, I recommend getting 50ml or so of fluid pulled through at each corner every two years or whenever brake components are replaced.

It serves two purposes. You get to see the quality and integrity of the fluid, and you get to make sure that the bleed nipples are working!

Also, by doing that, the fluid is going to be completely changed after about six years anyway. Others may disagree, but I am always about prevention more than cure.

Q Will switching the fridge off over winter damage it?

In the April 2026 issue (page 134) I was drawn to the question posed asking about leaving a 'van plugged in when not in use.

I have a 2007 Autocruise Stargazer. At the end of last season, when laying up the 'van for the winter, my local mobile van service agent advised me to leave the fridge switched on (mains power setting) at its highest setting (least cold) to keep the refrigerant circulating.

Leaving the fridge off and static, apparently, can lead to corrosion of the refrigerant pipework and ultimate failure. The fridge model, a Dometic C40/110 model RM7391L, is apparently no longer made so all the more reason to look after it.

Keep up the great work.

Ian Morris

The final straw

This tip is to reduce the effect of water torture, the rain dripping off the roof and dripping onto the top of an external locker.

I took a plastic straw from the inside of an old water bottle and cut it in half lengthwise. Cutting off a small section, I glued it in the small indentation that allows water to drain off the roof. It acts like a gargyle and directs the water away from the 'van.

Gill Speight

NICK FISHER Gillian, this is magnificent!

First, a couple of notes for caution... don't fall off a ladder doing this! Make sure that the sticky stuff that you use to attach the tube is not going to react with the bodywork. And, finally, don't be tempted to make this device too long, or it will blow away.

Back to your work... you had me at 'old water bottle'.



Top Tip

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CLIVE MOTT That's a new one on me. I presume you refer to the exposed pipes and fins becoming rusty and ultimately failing. There are thousands of motorhomes stored or parked off grid. If this were a wide problem, we'd see an epidemic of failures.

From this I would presume that these bits that you worry about are finished in such a manner to make them tolerant to our weather and general storage conditions.

ED We asked the team at Dometic for a response, and got a definitive answer from the Technical Customer Service Team, "We have never heard of anything like that, and in my opinion, it doesn't really make sense.

"The unit itself has corrosion protection which prevents the corrosion mentioned. If the refrigerator is running constantly and is tilted, that's actually worse than if it were turned off."

Q Why did my fan cause such an expensive DPF failure?

I have read with interest the recent MMM articles regarding DPF problems and thought my experience, that has cost me over £7,000, might be of interest. I have owned a 2018 2.3-litre Multijet-based motorhome from new and covered approx 29,000 trouble-free miles.

It is used regularly on nearly always long runs of 60 or so miles at 50 to 60mph. This engine is a Euro 6 without AdBlue and is a twin EGR model with NOx trap.

The first indication of a problem was on a Sunday morning in December when a 'Check Engine' light and corresponding message appeared on the dashboard after the air-conditioning was switched on to help demist the windscreen. We were 70 miles from home and got back without any further indication of a problem.

I took it to a local garage (within approximately 100 miles of the first check engine light) which identified two fault codes:

- **P2000-97** NOx storage catalyst (NSC) dismantled or inactive - component or system obstructed
- **P0481-13** Cooling fan 2 open circuit

The garage cleared the fault codes, took it for a test drive and the check engine light stayed off. However, the light soon came back on after returning home.

I took it to a specialist auto electrician which repaired a broken wire to the cooling fan, but the check engine light remained on.

I then purchased an OBD reader (MultiECUScan), which produced the fault code P24A4-68 Excessive distance with DPF ON warning light, which showed DPF 170% and soot mass in the NOx storage catalyst 7.88g.

I then took it to the nearest Fiat Professional garage (60 miles away). It confirmed a blocked DPF and did a forced regeneration and got it down to 40%. Check engine light turned off but no mention of the fault code P2000-97. Cost £570.

On retuning home, my OBD showed fault code P2000-97 and soot mass in the NOx storage catalyst of 7g. I returned the 'van to the Fiat garage (the DPF performed an active regeneration on the journey from 100% to 8%), which confirmed the fault code P2000-97 and that the OBD instructed that the DPF had to be replaced.

Due to its location at the back of the engine, they would have had to drop it down from the sub-frame to gain access. One sensor also broke on removal and had to be replaced. Cost £6,566.45.

On returning home my OBD showed a fault code P242B-62 (temperature sensor – signature compare failure) and that the new DPF had reached over 100% and a temperature of over 700°C on the journey home but did not regenerate.

I returned the 'van to the garage which confirmed that

the new sensor was faulty and replaced it under warranty. It also advised it had logged the oil change and reset the soot mass parameters which my OBD had identified as being incorrect.

No warning lights have displayed since then and I haven't had the confidence to check it with my OBD.

The problem seems to have initially been caused by the fan not working, although no warning was displayed until I switched the air-con on. No DPF or other warning was displayed. It seems that the DPF had been successfully cleaned but the NSC couldn't be.

I have subsequently bought a new 2026 Ducato-based motorhome which it appears can't have a battery-to-battery charger fitted as it would interfere with the vehicle's battery management system, leaving only the alternator to charge the vehicle battery. This seems less than ideal, is this correct?

Anonymous reader

NICK FISHER In 2017, some models of the Euro 6 2.3-litre engines did not need AdBlue. From the very limited information available from Fiat, I was able to establish that there was a NOx trap and a DPF along with another stage of EGR (exhaust gas recirculation).

While NOx (nitrogen dioxide) is bad, it can be converted to nitrogen and oxygen (which is good). A NOx trap is a cylinder that is lined with a substrate that collects NOx.

Once it is loaded with all that it can take, it must be purged, and this is achieved by the ECU making the engine run richer than usual by increasing the fuel-to-air ratio and this produces heat and the NOx is converted to less harmful things.

That sounds clever, but it fails to consider that when the fuel mixture is enriched, there will be an excessive amount of soot produced. I always suspected that this would not only clog up the very device that you were trying to clean, but also (after the sooty mess had been through the EGR system a couple of times and ended up being dumped in the DPF) rapidly clog up the DPF. This requires a fuel-enriched burn cycle to be carried out to clean out the DPF and so begins the vicious cycle.

If you then add in the known issue of injector faults, and the excessive soot that a malfunctioning injector can cause, you have a recipe for a very expensive problem.

In the reader's case, with a backdrop of a highly inefficient system, the failure of a cooling fan to operate may have exacerbated the problem and potentially caused many more. Excessive heat, in the wrong part of the engine process, can lead to unexpected problems, not least that of overheating the cooling system.

No matter whether you have this particular engine set up or any other... you really must check the operation of your cooling fan(s) regularly. Any anomalies with the running temperature of the vehicle must be investigated!

Q Why is my cab radio not getting a DAB signal?

I have a WildAx Solaris XL built in 2016 on a Citroën Relay van. Recently, I have been unable to receive any DAB radio stations on the vehicle's factory-fitted radio. A message saying 'station unavailable' comes up.

Also, on FM, all the national BBC radio stations appear not to pick up a signal. Occasionally, a local station on FM can be received, but when driving this soon disappears.

John Jobling

NICK FISHER If the radio set-up is entirely factory standard, the antenna for this is normally located in the nearside mirror housing. If you have an external temperature display, the sensor for this is in the offside mirror.

It sounds like you have a

connection issue. The places to look (assuming that the mirror head is not damaged) would be the rear of the radio unit or the connector to the mirror (accessed by removing the electric window switch in the passenger door).

There are a couple of plugs under there. One is for the mirror control and the other is for any antennae in the mirror casing. These are a bit awkward to detach and I have never known one to work loose, so unless the mirror head has been replaced, the problem is unlikely to be there.

The radio unit may be awkward to remove, and this should be carried out by a radio specialist unless there are the traditional twin pin holes in the sides of it and you happen to have the



correct release tools. I don't recall the newer radios having these, and there may be a requirement to remove a surrounding trim.

If there is no obvious fault with any of the connections, it may be necessary to get a better DAB antenna installed. I have used Kenwood windscreen antennae many times and found them to be very good. I would recommend that you use a specialist for this, too, because there may be a requirement for a power supply for the antenna so that the signal is amplified.

I am a little surprised that the sensors for the NOx device were not replaced as a first-stage repair. The values that they were indicating were in the correct range to indicate a problem in the trap but these things do collect dirt and debris and can therefore give high values where there are none. A new sensor is about £150 and a new trap will be supplied without them, so they would be reused and would potentially produce a similar fault in the near future. Just saying...

I also think that before replacing the NOx trap, a test of the injectors would have been wise because of the known potential to cause excessive soot if even one of them is leaking. This causes havoc with the DPF, so it stands up to scrutiny that it could affect the NOx trap.

It should also be mentioned that aftermarket DPFs are available at much lower costs than the OE items. Even franchised workshops should be able to supply and fit these if you wish but you will not have the same level of warranty from them if a defect arises later.

Although it is reasonable to expect that a franchised workshop will have access to the best diagnostic tools for your vehicle and the accumulated knowledge of the network and the factory that built it, the process will be fraught for the owner. The process of investigating and repairing is also going to be eye-wateringly expensive and the thought of extra tests "to be sure" will seem

excessive and expensive without adequate justification. Even though you may get a 12-month warranty on the work that they carried out, if a subsequent failure turns out to have been caused by a leaking injector (for instance), they will not be guaranteeing any of the parts that have been affected downstream of that.

Unless you could prove (in a court of law) that the workshop had been negligent in not offering to test for this or that, you would be out of pocket again. My advice, when faced with significant costs for a repair, is to insist on having a conversation with a senior member of staff that is technically competent and ask if there are any further tests or procedures that they recommend that could discover the cause of the problem.

Having asked, and been informed of precautionary measures, stump up the money for this without hesitation, even if it costs you a kidney. I call this insurance. It has weight if anything goes wrong.

The owner has parted with his vehicle now, and has something newer and potentially less complex, so we will not know if the repair was a long-term success.

Notes: a DPF collects small soot and harmful particles and burns them away into supposedly harmless ash later. SCR (selective catalytic reduction) reduces harmful emissions by squirting AdBlue, which is a type of urea, into the exhaust system.

Q How do I fix my waste water gauge, which has got stuck on 'full'?

My 2014 Pilote 736 Aventura has a rocker switch which gives the fresh water level or the waste water level. Last week, the waste water gauge got stuck on full. At the time the waste outlet was connected to a drain with a waste pipe the same bore as the outlet spout and the tank was emptying OK.

As the Pilote is 12 years old, I suspect it is due to the send unit failing in the tank which is located under the 'van. How can I check it and where is the access?

Although it is an Aventura model, it is a limited edition to mark the 50th anniversary of Pilote and the specification is almost Reference level. The heater is not uprated. Your advice would be appreciated.

John Stenson

CLIVE MOTT The most common issue with waste water probes is that they, and the surrounding area, become coated in a film of

grease, soap and dirt from sinks and showers. This creates false readings, such as the monitor showing the tank as 100% full when it is actually empty. The sensor system measures the conductivity between the probes and the water in the tank and if all probes show as in the water, they report FULL.

On your Pilote 736 Aventura, the waste water (grey water) tank is underslung beneath the vehicle chassis. The tank level sensor, which consists of vertical stainless-steel probes, is mounted directly on top of the waste tank.

You should be able to access the sensor via a floor hatch or locker box situated inside the motorhome, typically located near the front dinette or it could be under the lounge floor.

Unscrew the access cap and open the inspection hatch. If there is no internal hatch, you will probably need to crawl



underneath the vehicle to find the sensor unit on top of the tank.

To remove the sensor unit, unscrew a plastic locking nut to be able to retract the sensor probes from the tank.

Gently wipe the metal prongs and surrounding area clean with a cloth or a non-scratch scouring pad to remove all build-up then reassemble and your system should be restored.

John later replied: I found the information useful, but I haven't found the access to the waste tank. I looked in the heater compartment and the inboard fresh water tank compartment, but no sign of it. I have a friendly garage with a hoist and I will see what it can find as I can't get under it at home.

Q Will a Battery Master keep the cab battery topped up?

I am thinking of fitting a Battery Master or Victron equivalent to my 2026 Chausson Etape 630 motorhome to keep the cab battery topped up. Will this be alright? The base vehicle is a Ford 2-litre with AdBlue.

Alan Rudd



CLIVE MOTT Research suggests that the standard 2026 Chausson Etape 630 with its CBE system does not have a feature to trickle charge the starter battery directly from the leisure unit.

By factory default, the motorhome's CBE power management system acts as a one-way safety barrier. It prevents the leisure battery from being connected directly to the vehicle starter battery.

This is an intentional security design to ensure that heavy 12V usage in the habitation area (like lighting, the water pump, or the electric drop-down beds) cannot accidentally drain the Ford engine battery and leave you unable to start your engine.

If you want the leisure battery to maintain the starter battery automatically while parked up off-grid with no sun, you must add an aftermarket bridge component. The most seamless options are:

- The CBE CSB2 / CSB3-LT is a small electronic module made by the same manufacturer as your habitation electrical box. It installs directly behind the 12V distribution unit and automatically diverts up to 4A to the starter battery whenever it detects the leisure battery is full
- The Van Bitz three-wire Battery Master will trickle a small charge to the starter battery once the leisure battery is fully charged by any means
- Alternatively, the two-wire

Votronic StandBy Charger unit works in a similar manner, but for this you need to be mindful of your battery type. Before buying the component, check whether your leisure battery is lead acid/AGM or lithium

For a standard lead acid or AGM battery, you can use the standard

Votronic 12V StandBy Charger (Model 3065). It activates when the leisure battery voltage rises above 13.1V and safely passes a 0-3A trickle charge to the vehicle.

If you have an upgraded lithium (LiFePO4) battery, you cannot use the standard model. Lithium batteries maintain a much higher

resting voltage than lead-acid starter batteries, which will trick a standard maintainer into running constantly until it completely drains your lithium habitation battery. Instead, you must install the Votronic StandBy Charger Pro (Model 3063), which features an adjustable cut-off limit to protect the lithium.

Q Why was I unable to select a gear?

I have an Auto-Sleeper Nuevo on a Fiat Ducato 2024 model, registered and purchased new in April 2026 which now has 2,000 miles on the clock.

Yesterday, returning from a holiday in Dorset, I was about a mile from home. In the process of changing gears after going around an island, I could not get into any gear. Slowly freewheeling, after about 10 seconds or so, it slipped into gear.

For reference the total mileage from Dorset to home is 126 miles. I arrived home at 10am to avoid the heat and traffic, making a 20-minute stop halfway to break up the journey.

I have never experienced this issue before. Have you had any dealings with such an issue?

Also, it wasn't until after purchasing the motorhome that I discovered it was the model without a dipstick. After reading issues owners had experienced with the oil sensor, is it a small majority in your experience that have faced this issue?

Love MMM magazine, keep up the good work.
Carol Robinson

NICK FISHER The gear selection problem is a first for me. Does your vehicle have a manual gearbox?

If it does, the problem must be with the clutch. If there was an issue with the actual gearbox, where the selectors either internally or externally were misaligned or adrift, it would not be able to fix itself

and go back to operating normally.

The clutch is operated by a master cylinder located at the top of the clutch pedal. This pushes fluid down a pipe to the concentric slave cylinder, which then operates the clutch inside the gearbox's bell housing.

Early failure is unusual but can happen and one of these parts could be sucking in air, leaking fluid or becoming distorted due to excessive heat. This will prevent it from operating.

Whether it is a manual or an automatic, this is something that you really need to get looked at by a Fiat dealership.

Note that if the problem is not present at the time that the garage looks at it, the dealer won't be able to do much other than check it over. It will, however, be recorded by the dealer as an issue.

The clutch fluid is shared with the brake fluid reservoir, so you can check that the brake fluid reservoir is still at the correct level and look for leaks on the cab floor or from underneath the engine if you are able to.

I think the idea of omitting an oil dipstick is pretty absurd, and I would not be happy to rely on the sensor provided. That said, so far, I have heard only a handful of complaints about it.

I suspect that some changes have been made to either the sensor or the software over the last couple of years, so it might be a better resolved situation now than it was at introduction.

Carol got back to me a couple of weeks later...

In response to your reply, for which I was truly grateful, I booked the motorhome into the Fiat garage I have started to use.

After copying your email and logging the issue, the garage did a complete check on absolutely everything that may have caused the problem. There were also checks for any updates, which showed none were needed. After spending some time there, it informed me that everything was fine and nothing could be detected. Seems like one of life's mysteries. Many thanks again for your assistance.





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My project

Grant Wyness builds a slide-out rack for e-bikes

Most campervan and motorhome self-build projects start with a layout. Mine started with a problem. We had two Cube e-bikes and no sensible way of transporting our primary leisure pursuit around Europe and the UK. Anyone who has tried loading 27kg of electric bike onto the back of a Transporter-sized 'van will understand the issue straight away.

E-bikes are awkward to lift and finicky things to secure; furthermore, you are essentially advertising your valuables to everyone walking past. It is not an ideal set-up for peace of mind, and underwriters are not particularly enthusiastic about it.

After years of compromising, this time I was serious about travelling with our bikes without drama. The latest camper had to

be larger than a Transporter, something a bit like a four-star hotel with a bike store in the basement.

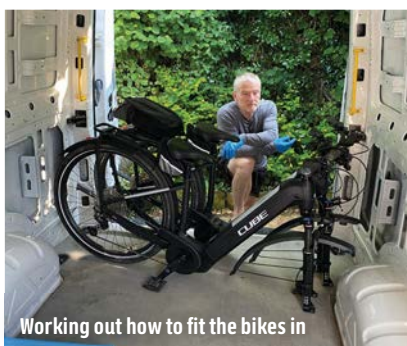
Our sleeping platform is sited above the garage and, in order to create sensible bedroom head-space, the front wheels of the bikes had to come off, a painless two-minute solution with modern bikes. My design logic was to create a retractable tray that would take different bike geometries and allow space for boots, wet gear, a moderate-sized gas cylinder for the barbecue, and the usual travel clutter. The only awkward design quirk was that the tray had to be shaped to clear our 608Ah lithium battery mounted on the garage floor.

For maximum ease of use, the fully loaded tray extends rearwards on pull runners. The design had to lock fully open and lock fully closed without fuss. A 'van garage is a

dynamic place, requiring levels of contingency. Things get dropped, people lean into it, climb over it and generally give it a hard time, so the choice of tray runner becomes pivotal. For things that move, basing any design on total weight alone is not realistic, nor good engineering practice. Go big, it works every time.

The frame uses thick-gauged L-profile aluminium extrusion, roughly 76 by 38 by 6.3mm. It is not shy on weight at around 1.9kg per metre, but the point was not to make the lightest tray possible. The goal is to make one that will not flex or sag, and will stay perfectly still when the 'van is bouncing its way along Spain's B-roads.

The bike tray flooring is 2mm chequerplate, robust and easy to clean. TIG welding the structure is straightforward. Aluminium of ►



Working out how to fit the bikes in



The sliding mechanism needs to be strong



The bike wheel holder



The sliding floor welded up

What I spent

When I did this project in 2025, the aluminium chequerplate and angle was £280. Heavy-duty runners, £124.90. Casters, £5.39. Adhesive and stainless fixings: around £12-£15 for adhesive and £20-£30 in fixings. Total for materials and hardware: £490-£500. If fabrication is outsourced, allow around £120 for half a day's TIG welding and cutting. Realistic all-in cost: around £650 for a fully built tray at current prices

ED Grant supplied a lot of specific info about the hardware and fittings, so if readers want the full list, email us **E** mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk

How long it took

The tray took me three full days to fabricate with all materials on hand

this heft takes a weld nicely, as does the chequerplate. Once the main frame is homogenised, it behaves like a solid object.

The 96.5cm-long runners are industrial ball-bearing units load rated at around 190kg. That number looks impressive; though, like most ratings, it is overly optimistic. Fully extended, the effective capacity drops sharply, down into the region of 100kg.

This meant two things. First, the tray itself had to carry the majority of the load, not relying on the runners alone. A tight fit at the closed position stops the ball-bearing carriers taking unnecessary dynamic forces while travelling. Second, the fixings needed to spread the load along the entire runner.

I enlarged the pre-drilled runner holes to accept M6 and M8 bolts

where possible. This allowed larger through-bolts, increased thread engagement, and better friction between runner and frame once tightened. One bolt head type nearly fouled the slider mechanism, so bolt geometry had to be precise. Nyloc locking nuts were used for the main fastening, with dome nuts as a secondary lock, mainly because I like the steampunk look. No liquid thread locker was required, so dismantling remains simple.

At the back underside of the tray, I fitted two industrial rubber-wheel casters, which carries the central weight when the tray is extended, meaning the runners are not forced to absorb the full load on their own.

The uprights that support the runners are made from the same heavy aluminium profile as the tray. The short side of the angle bolts straight down through the 'van floor

using M10 countersunk bolts, large stainless plate washers, and lock nuts underneath. Before bolting, the uprights were bonded with PU adhesive to the 'van floor. Once cured, the uprights behave like part of the vehicle chassis.

Loading the bikes is straightforward. Front wheels off, the forks bolt straight into the welded tubes, and the rear wheels strap onto the anchor points.

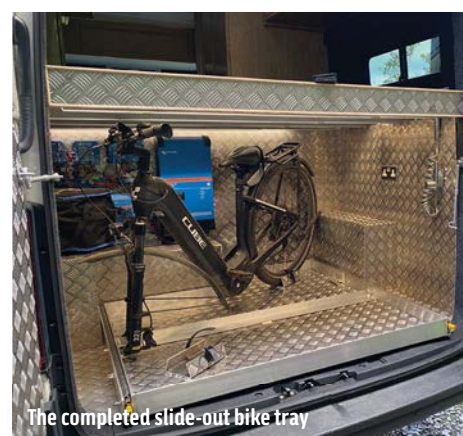
When the tray is fully in, it sits tight to the bulkhead, no rattling, sliding, or chatter from the runners. Pull it out and the casters take over, supporting the central weight and keeping the whole assembly stable. The tray by necessity sits between the wheelarches, leaving useful stowage space and convenient platforms for chairs, table, buckets and the barbecue. [mmm](http://www.mmm)



Profile to secure the casters to



The tray slides out a long way



The completed slide-out bike tray



Casters help the tray slide out

Project summary

The tray proved itself from the outset, and the rest of the 'van naturally formed around it. The weight budget, the garage layout, the bed height, even the positioning of the electrics all followed its lead. It works exactly as intended, and gives the entire build its organising logic. Future bike changes will not trouble it, and the design can be adapted to almost any configuration; give a fabricator the measurements and they could produce a

version of it in a day.

The aim was always straightforward: to transport two valuable bikes out of sight, out of the weather, and without turning each journey into a performance. The tray fulfils that brief with no drama at all.

Everything else in the 'van is built on that simplicity. The tray may sit discreetly at the bottom of the garage, but it remains the backbone of the whole build.

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Rachel Scholes...

...is MMM's Deputy Editor who has been around motorhomes since she was around four years old. She dreams of the day her parents will buy a new motorhome and pass on their current one to her



Motorhome WiFi

How to get better internet on the road for your emails, TV or even research

Watching TV, streaming movies, checking emails and researching your next stopover are a part of modern motorhome travel. In one of our advice articles on televisions a couple of months ago, it became apparent that, while traditional aerals are still common, more motorhome owners are turning to streaming services to watch content.

However, streaming requires a reliable, fast internet connection. Depending on your travel style and budget, several options exist to keep you connected on the road.

CAMPSITE WIFI AND BOOSTERS

Many campsites offer on-site WiFi, but it has its limitations. Sites in rural or countryside locations often suffer the same poor broadband that affects local residents.

While campsite WiFi is usually sufficient for basic web searches and emails, it rarely supports activities like HD streaming or video calls.

Unless you want to wander around the information hub at a campsite, blinking in the rain as you search for the perfect spot to get a basic connection, you're going to need a better option.

WiFi boosters are designed to extend the physical range of an existing network. While they can strengthen a weak signal, they cannot improve the underlying internet speed.

If a campsite's broadband is operating at 100% capacity due to high guest demand, a booster will not resolve the bottleneck.

The solution? To secure a fast, reliable connection, you're going to need an internet source within your own control.

MOBILE INTERNET OPTIONS

Most modern smartphones allow you to share your cellular internet connection (3G, 4G, or 5G) with other devices via a personal hotspot, called tethering. This is a convenient, zero-cost starting point.

However, tethering can quickly drain your phone's battery and consume your personal data allowance. In rural areas, a smartphone's internal antenna may also struggle to maintain a stable connection.

Standalone mobile broadband devices (MiFi or a dongle) offer a more robust solution. While a USB dongle must be plugged directly into a single laptop, a MiFi hub creates a local WiFi network inside your motorhome. This allows multiple devices – including smartphones, tablets and smart TVs – to connect simultaneously.



Choosing the right mobile network is key



MiFi allows several devices to connect at once



Reliable on-board internet can make time away feel even more convenient

Using a MiFi device frees up your smartphone and allows you to use a dedicated data SIM from a different network to maximise coverage.

For the most reliable connection, WiFi systems built into your motorhome are increasingly popular. Manufacturers like Auto-Sleepers and Auto-Trail offer factory-fit roof antennas/routers, and aftermarket installations are also available.

These systems utilise a roof-mounted cellular antenna (typically around 6.5 inches or 17cm in diameter) that is far more efficient at capturing weak signals.

The antenna connects directly to an internal router, providing a secure, stable WiFi hotspot that can be used while stationary or in motion. This set-up can also allow for 'WiFi calling', allowing you to make regular calls over the internet when there is no standard mobile signal.

CHOOSING A NETWORK

As well as investing in hardware, you must choose a network provider. In the UK, the infrastructure is managed by four major networks: EE, Vodafone, O2, and Three. Other

providers (known as mobile virtual network operators, or MVNOs) piggyback on these networks:

- **O2:** Used by giffgaff, Sky Mobile and Tesco Mobile

- **EE:** Used by Lyca Mobile

- **Three:** Used by iD Mobile and Smarty

- **Vodafone:** Used by Asda Mobile, Lebara, Talkmobile and Voxi.

According to Uswitch, while all four major networks offer strong 4G coverage, EE currently has the widest 5G rollout, making it the top choice for consistent speeds and broad coverage.

Types of SIM cards

- **Data-only SIMs:** Designed solely for internet access in routers, MiFi devices or dongles. They prevent you from having to swap out your personal phone SIM and can be cheaper than standard phone plans for high data usage

- **Pay-as-you-go (PAYG) SIMs:** These packages typically last 30 days and can lie dormant without charge for up to six months, making them ideal for use in the motorhome

- **Contract SIMs:** If you need

consistent, high-volume data and are comfortable with a recurring monthly fee then this is a good option. Best for those who are out in the 'van a lot or full-timers, or those that work remotely while travelling

- **eSIMs (digital SIM cards):** An eSIM allows you to download network settings directly to a compatible device without a physical card. Providers like Airalo offer global eSIM packages, which are highly convenient for international travel, but check before buying

- **Dual SIM devices:** These allow multiple SIM cards to be used, meaning you can switch between a UK data SIM and a local EU SIM card more easily.

HOW MUCH DATA?

Your data requirements depend entirely on your online activities. The table on the next page outlines typical data consumption rates to help you choose the right plan.

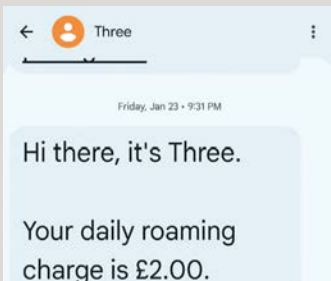
If you plan to stream TV regularly, ensure your router and network can deliver consistent download speeds of at least 10Mbps (megabits per second). Routers generally operate ➤

HOW MUCH DATA DO YOU NEED?

ACTIVITY	TYPICAL DATA USAGE
Email	Very low
Facebook/social media	360MB per hour
Downloading maps	3-5MB per hour
Video calls	1-3GB per hour
YouTube (HD)	2-3GB per hour, depending on quality
Netflix (HD)	3GB per hour, depending on quality
4K streaming	7GB per hour



Satellite systems such as Starlink can provide access in remote locations



Roaming charges can soon add up



A data-only SIM can be a flexible option



YouTube offers lower res options to use less data

on two frequency bands: 2.4GHz (which offers longer range but slower speeds) and 5GHz (faster speeds but shorter range).

The other option is to choose to watch programmes and videos in standard definition rather than the full high-def options where possible.

EUROPEAN TRAVEL AND ROAMING

Using your motorhome internet in Europe requires careful planning. Since the UK left the European Union, free mobile roaming is no longer automatically part of the deal. Many UK networks have reintroduced daily charges (Three charges £2/day, EE charges around £2.50/day). It's a total minefield, to be honest, but if you plan to hop over to Europe in your motorhome, check the allowances on your existing mobile phone.

Key roaming tips:

● **Network exceptions:** O2 still permits free roaming up to a fair usage limit of 25GB (after which data costs £3.50/GB or you can buy a bolt-on package which can work out cheaper)

● **Fair usage policies (FUP):** Most networks enforce a time limit on roaming, typically capping usage at around 60 days within any 120-day period. If you are planning a 90-day European tour, you may need to carry multiple SIM cards from different networks to cover the final 30 days

● **Local SIMs:** For long trips, purchasing a local data-only SIM card in your destination country is often much cheaper than paying UK network roaming fees

● **Billing caps:** By default, UK providers apply a £45 billing cap on roaming charges to prevent unexpected bills. Always verify this cap with your provider.

SATELLITE INTERNET

For off-grid travel or trips to extremely remote areas where cellular signals are non-existent, satellite internet is a viable alternative. While once the preserve of expensive satellite systems that need to be hard-wired into the motorhome, there are now others...

Portable satellite systems like the Starlink Roam Mini have made satellite internet much more

accessible. The hardware is relatively affordable to purchase at £179 (plus £19 shipping and handling).

However, the ongoing service costs are high, priced at £55 per month for 100GB of roaming data. This option is best suited for travellers who require guaranteed high-speed internet in remote spots. One reader reported (December 2025, p17) that it was really easy to set up but just needed connecting to a power socket. He simply placed the device on the roof through the rooflight then partially closed it.

Have you had any experience of any of the topics here? Share your tips and suggestions for other readers

E mmm@warnersgroup.co.uk

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My project

Steve Bovey installs a WiFi system in his Chausson 610

We decided we needed internet in the motorhome. After going through several options, we decided the Falcon product suited our needs for two reasons, the first being the cost and then the length of roof antenna through roof-threaded fixing tube, as our Chausson has an unusually thick roof at 55mm.

After research, the common location for an antenna and router is in and above a high-level cupboard. In our 'van, the only high-level cupboards are above the kitchen so this was the chosen location. It conveniently had a 12V socket above.

Our cupboards do not go all the way up to the ceiling, so complete concealment was not possible.

After careful measuring a small pilot hole was drilled down

through the roof and then enlarged with a 20mm fine hole saw. The area was then cleaned. I next did a 'dry run' to ensure that the threaded stem of the antenna fitted properly.

Using the Sikaflex-type sealant adhesive supplied by Falcon, I applied a liberal amount to the top of the threaded stem and a thin bead around the outside edge and the antenna base. The cables were then fed through the hole followed by the threaded stem. The securing nut was then tightened lightly. This completed the antenna installation.

After deciding on the best position for the docking station and router, this was then fixed to the adjacent bulkhead. The 12V socket above the cupboards was already in use feeding another socket at a lower position.

I, therefore, obtained a 1 plug to 2 cigarette lighter socket splitter which

What I spent

The Falcon Evo 5G Flex mobile internet booster with 4G 150Mbps router was £249 obtainable from Amazon. A 1 to 2 cigarette lighter socket splitter cost £9.99 from Amazon, I also needed various small sundries, say £5

How long it took

Four hours maximum

was screwed to a small piece of plywood. This was then secured to the base of the cupboard's hidden top void with strong double sided self-adhesive Velcro pads.

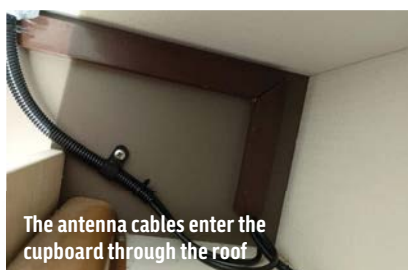
The 12V supply cable was then extended and the cigarette lighter plug fitted with a smaller 3A fuse.

The two antenna cables and the 12V supply cable were then enclosed in a short piece of plastic mini trunking. As the antenna cables are screened it was permissible to run them in close proximity to the 12V supply for a short distance. The final connections were then made to the docking station and router.

The antenna is 5G ready, but I have initially used a 4G router and data-only EE PAYG SIM card that can be upgraded later. A full test was carried out on completion. **MMM**

Please note

The system fitted by Steve is a previous-generation model from Falcon. The new system, priced at £449, offers a 5G antenna with 4G fallback capability, along with a router capable of speeds up to 3,400Mbps rather than 150Mbps. It also supports both eSIM and physical SIM technology, providing much greater flexibility for users.



The antenna cables enter the cupboard through the roof



The low-profile Falcon roof antenna provides strong 4G/5G reception



The 12V power supply was extended and protected with an inline 3A fuse



The Falcon router mounted securely inside the overhead cupboard

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MSAL

Important Information for motorhome and
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Motorhome Sellers Advice Line

MSAL consists of a panel of industry experts who offer advice on the various options available to owners looking to sell a motorhome or campervan

The Motorhome Sellers Advice Line (MSAL) is a genuine and unique opportunity for sellers to discuss the most appropriate method for selling their motorhome or campervan.

The panel members are industry experts with years of experience and are willing to give advice and offer a valuation if appropriate. On certain occasions more detailed advice will be sought by third parties

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Whether you're preparing a hearty breakfast before a day of exploring or cooking an evening meal under the stars, the 2 Cook Turbo FFD Deluxe QR delivers powerful performance, efficient gas usage and reliable safety features in a compact, portable design.

Each burner is fitted with a Flame Failure Device (FFD) for automatic gas shut-off should the flame be extinguished unexpectedly.

Designed for safe cooking in both

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Included with the 2 Cook Turbo FFD are two removable pot stands, a coffee pot stand for use with a percolator or kettle, a ceramic ribbed grill plate and flat plate. A grill handle is also included, along with removable windshields. When not in use, the stove and all accessories pack away neatly into a durable storage bag.

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The closing date for all entries is 27 August, 2026. All winners will be contacted within 14 days of the closing date.

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MMM

Next month

September issue on sale 20 August



Contents subject to change

EUROPE IS YOUR OYSTER There's a world of different experiences awaiting over the Channel, from nearby France and Belgium to Albania and Spain. We've got a Brittany for beginners guide, as well as great campsites near the ferry ports and across Europe

TESTED As well as a first look at a special anniversary Auto-Sleeper, we're reviewing an entry-level single bed motorhome (Joa by Pilote), a 2027 Bailey campervan and a Mobilvetta Kea Kompakt 55 with a spacious washroom. Plus, a reader reviews their Mercedes-based Adria

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My view

Carol Kubicki navigates the ferries during an Outer Hebrides trip



“Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) has been running ferries to Scotland’s western islands for as long as I can remember. Our island hopping would begin with the ferry from Ullapool to Harris and Lewis. We planned to travel north to south, with

two inter-island crossings, before sailing back to mainland Scotland from Barra.

As our departure approached, I read the news reports of CalMac disruptions.

Loading at Ullapool was slow as vehicles had to turn 180° inside the ship due to a technical fault preventing roll-on-roll-off. We were glad to be in our five-metre-long campervan as we watched a caravan being gingerly reversed on.

I relaxed and breathed easier as we rolled onto the harbour at Stornoway. We had arrived on the western edge of the UK and, as an island-hopping newbie, I naively assumed CalMac would now honour our bookings south. I remained chilled for the first half of our week exploring Lewis and Harris. Then, while learning about peat cutting at Geàrrannan Blackhouse Village, CalMac rang.

The adviser informed me that we were bumped from the Harris to Berneray ferry we expected to catch in four days’ time. The only alternative they offered was three weeks away, when we intended to be home! CalMac explained that a smaller ship would be operating the route and apparently it isn’t a first-booked-first-ferried system. Our options were to either sail back to the mainland and miss the remaining islands or try standby. We chose to optimistically try standby on the day and sensibly book a fallback sailing to Ullapool for the following day, in case standby failed.

CalMac’s standby policy isn’t motorhome friendly and effectively keeps us at the back of the queue. No matter if you arrive first, any car or commercial vehicle will



board before you and your ‘van. We fronted the queue when the early morning ferry to Berneray docked but we sadly watched it cast off without us. For over two hours we bought coffee, read books, birdwatched and waited. Vehicles arrived for check-in for the mid-morning ferry as it cruised into sight, navigating the choppy sea.

The crew assessed the queue with knowledgeable eyes and then we were on, loaded skilfully with our bumper just millimetres from the bow door. We sat in the van not daring to breathe lest someone realise they’d made a mistake, and we were in open water when we climbed up to the deck and hugged each other, grinning. The trip was back on!

I rang CalMac to cancel our backup sailing and learnt that the company’s refund system is more efficient than its ferries!

The CalMac app sends notifications of sailing disruptions. My morning routine now included checking these messages and this was where I read there could be problems with our booking for the short hop to Barra. CalMac was again swapping to a smaller vessel as the usual ferry required unplanned maintenance.

We were relieved to see the vessel we had booked manoeuvre to the slipway. The boat swap happened later in the day and no doubt unsettled the plans of others, but our own journey to Barra was on track.

We were braced for an early start for our final ferry; we had to check in around 6am. Enjoying the resplendence of our last Hebridean sunset on Barra’s Atlantic coast, a message from CalMac pinged to my phone. No drama... check-in was now 15 minutes earlier!

Travelling through the Outer Hebrides was magical but despite, rather than because of, CalMac. Although all staff we dealt with were helpful and friendly, the ferries added that frisson of uncertainty to every leg of our trip through these amazing islands.”

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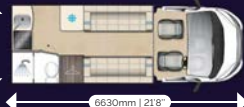
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