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*The Club's new shelter in use at Hebden Bridge*

## EDITORIAL

There I was, all in a tizzy because I had nothing to put in the newsletter. But it's amazing the results one panic-stricken email can produce. After a plea to members I was swamped by a tsunami of responses, so now I've had to decide what to do with all the interesting pieces which were sent to me as there isn't room for all of them in the newsletter.

Because quite a few of the items I received were technical tips I have asked Nick to put them on the website instead of including them all in the newsletter.

Some of you may have spotted on the website that the club is now the proud owner of a 4-metre square shelter. We have just been trying it out at the Hebden Bridge meet and it proved to be very successful. The shelter has an inflatable frame (i.e. there are no poles) and is relatively light, so the idea is that it can be shipped to any Murvi Club meet in one of our vans or by carrier at very little cost.

One word of caution however – if lots of us want to get in the shelter at a meet it is best if we all have small chairs or stools. Big (i.e. wide) chairs just take up too much space!

## WE'LL MEET AGAIN.....

**By Adrian Sumption**

..... don't know where, don't know when, but maybe you could organise it! Yes, it would be great to see more members organising small meets for the club.

There really is no magic to organising a small meet. Don't be put off thinking that it's going to be really hard work. It can be as simple as just choosing a site, deciding when you plan to be there, and then letting others know about it. Having chosen your site and the dates, it's entirely up to you how much more planning you want to do.

Simplest of all is to just choose your site and tell Nick when you will be camping there so that he can publicise it on the website or send out an email to all our members. Or if you want a bit more help organising your meet then get in touch with Karin who can give you help and advice whilst you're planning things.

You don't have to make the site bookings for everyone who's coming if you don't want to. You can always ask those who want to join you to make their own bookings direct with the site. However it's a good idea to let the site know that others may be joining you so that you can be pitched together. Just ask people to mention that they are with the Murvi group when they book with the site so that you can hopefully be pitched together.

You may want just a small meet and therefore wish to limit numbers, or there may be limitations because of the site; that's no problem. It can be really enjoyable to have a small group with just a few vans. That way people can get to know each other better and of course it's always easier to organise activities for a small group. One thing to think about is whether there's somewhere you can all get together in the evening – maybe a nearby pub or a room on site.

When you're thinking about activities there's no need to plan every day in detail. You may well have things you want to do that you think others may wish to join in. For example, there may be something of specific interest locally which is your reason for choosing the site. Alternatively you might choose to make a few suggestions of interesting places and activities in the area. That way people can make their own choices and decide what suits them best.

So, why not have a think about it? Do you have a favourite site that you would like to share with a few Murvi friends? You have! Then get in touch with Nick ([nick.mawby@gmail.com](mailto:nick.mawby@gmail.com)) or Karin ([karin@sumption.me.uk](mailto:karin@sumption.me.uk)) and share your plans with others in the club.



The 'Royal Border Bridge' at Berwick

To the 25 Murvis arriving at Ord House Country Park camp-site in Berwick upon Tweed on a cold and squally Thursday mid-November afternoon, it seemed that the magic of Roger's-Redoubtable-Rainless spell was inoperable this close to the border.

We were wrong! We awoke to a wonderfully sunny autumn morning which saw 25 people (and several dogs) waiting for the Edinburgh bus which would take us north to Eyemouth/Burnmouth for a glorious 12/8 mile walk back to Berwick along the Berwickshire Coastal Path, led by Adrian/Roger. Luckily, the rumours swirling around the bar the previous evening that Pensioners might have to pay bus-fare, proved unfounded.

The slide-show originally planned for that Friday evening was postponed until the Sunday owing to a continuation of the Scots/English skirmishes, which have seen Berwick change hands 13 times throughout its history. This one took place at Wembley and was televised. The gentler politics presaged by the recent election of Donald Trump prohibit my recording the outcome.

On Saturday morning 25 intrepid souls ventured into Berwick for a fascinating guided tour by Derek of Berwick a vastly experienced and highly entertaining tour-guide who in 2007 had been awarded an MBE for services to rhyming couplets.

The Chamber of Trade Mini Guide tells us that the town of Berwick was established by charter in 1115 and within 10 years had gained the status of a royal burgh of Scotland along with Edinburgh, Stirling and Rosburgh. From 1296 to 1482 it changed hands 13 times, mostly through force but once or twice as a royal gift or fundraiser.



Cliffs north of Berwick



On the guided tour of Berwick

So strategically important was Berwick that the Tudors originally fortified the 2.5 miles of medieval walls, but in 1558 commissioned a new hi-tech defensive structure more able to withstand 16<sup>th</sup> century gunpowder artillery. Italian designed, it took 12 years to build and cost the modern-day equivalent of almost £40m.

With the Union of Crowns in 1603, the town would never change hands again although it did remain a 'free burgh' until the 1880's.

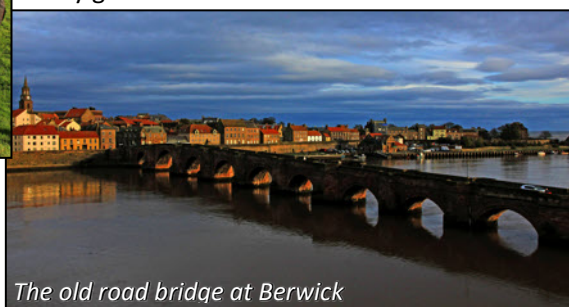
On Saturday evening everyone enjoyed a meal, good conversation (and the occasional drink!) in the campsite restaurant.

Sunday started fine, but there were already signs that powerful forces were being deployed to counter Roger's magic. Buoyed by the earlier victory over the bus company 12 people accompanied Roger on a 90-minute journey by double-decker south along the coast to Craster where they were rewarded with a walk or cream-tea. Unfortunately, by late morning it was raining, but it was insufficient for spirits to be dampened.

Sunday evening saw the traditional slide-show where photos of 2016 exploits generated many ideas for next year's travels.

Massive thanks to the committee and particularly to Adrian for leading a walk, to Alan for collecting the money and especially to Roger and Wendy for the planning and running of what was a thoroughly enjoyable 4-night Autumn meet, and for introducing many of us to a delightful part of the British Isles that we might otherwise never have visited.

Oh, and the Russian war – it is said that because the 1856 Treaty of Paris failed to specifically mention the free burgh of Berwick, then technically a state of war still exists – or so the story goes!



The old road bridge at Berwick

## SO THAT'S WHERE IT IS - A TALE OF THE UNEXPECTED (FROM THE MYSTERIOUS EAST)

By Keith & Lyn Ross

A long time ago two young people grew up having camping holidays then miraculously got together and continued as before, then progressed to a small touring caravan with tiny people added. The caravan eventually went and a long term wish to visit New Zealand happened where a camper van was hired for 4 weeks of great touring, we were converted but to what? Over umpteen evenings plans for a much longer NZ visit were discussed (argued) before the wise one proclaimed "for that budget we

might as well buy a van in the U.K. and forgo NZ" to which I meekly agreed.

Some research later we came across the strange group of the MURVI's and a visit to the NEC led to a first meeting with big chief Rex. The week after a visit to the centre of the earth



Continued overleaf ....



at Ivybridge took place and we left minus a large chunk of cash called a deposit plus a long wait time of 12 months to face. After 8 months we joined the Murvi club minus a van and read the news with a longing to join in. After more months and the world record for changes of upholstery plan we became real Murvi people in mid March 2017, since when we've attended two meets (Devon and Somerset) and met some lovely people.

Along the short way since March we've encountered a number of strange happenings and discoveries. The question "where is the xyz gizmo" has been answered in many different ways the most telling being the discovery of the shower hose just before

phoning Rex to ask why he hadn't installed one! Other kind souls have helped with "why have the electrics gone off?" answer because the circuit breaker has tripped "Ah" we said "and where does that hide?" A most important function of the Murvi is to be our b&b when visiting our daughter and family. This was in doubt due to an archway to the houses and thankfully we squeezed through by a couple of inches. Cue much delight from the grandchildren who now have another playhouse.

We are now looking forward to many more trips and hope to meet lots more of you at both Yorkshire meets in September.

## ANOTHER WINTER IN SPAIN

By Lin Powell

We usually travel south as soon as the weather turns a little chilly, and this year was no exception.

We headed to the Pyrenees and colder weather, minus 7 at night, needless to say a hasty move further south was needed..

We finally found a warm and sunny clime in a small village called la Azohia, near Mazarron . It's a very hilly area with the highest peak approx 850 metres, it's an all day walk, but the area has short , less hilly trails.



Still in the Cabo de Gata at Agua Amarga we were joined by a trio of young travellers. They made an odd request....would you please look after our chicken while we go walking. Apparently they had rescued it on a motorway! It had never laid an egg but a miracle ,that very night it produced one.. The chicken owners were convinced we had put the egg in its coup but we assured them it was freshly produced as there was no little lion on it.

By now we were headed back up the coast , intending to do some walking in the Costa Blanca mountains. We we thwarted somewhat

We wild camped in a rambla along with lots of other vans, one of which was a Murvi. Ronnie, Suzi and Jake Leadbitter had beaten us there. The two vans parked up together did get a few second glances.

by the presence of the processional caterpillars, very dangerous to humans and can be fatal for dogs , but not to be beaten we did manage a few.

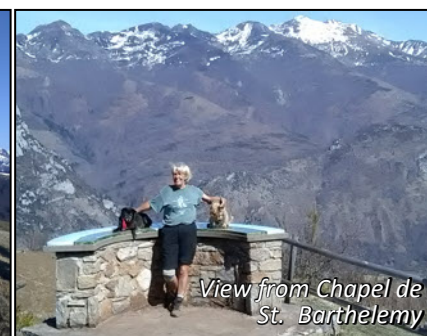


Back in France we spent a lovely fortnight in the Pyrennes. We stayed at a very good Aire in Les Cabannes between Foix and Ax le Therme, spectacular scenery and great walking. The Chapel de St. Barthelemy below is on the Pic de St Barthelemy, part of the Montagne de Tabe range.

We travelled swiftly north and had a very sobering visit to some of the 1st World War graves making us think how very lucky we are.

For two weeks we had lovely weather then a change. After a day of rain we left and encountered snow a few miles up the road, the first time it had snowed there for 100 years.

Our journey continued down the coast arriving at the Cabo de Gata , initially to a small town, San Jose, and again the Leadbitters had got there before us. Again another hill beckoned, El Fraile, which fortunately Ronnie had climbed a day before so the route ,which was vague on the ground ,was still fresh in his mind.



Two years back, Murvi held their AGM at Cheddar..... We were somewhat more active then, and we attended the AGM. We liked Cheddar so much that when this year's AGM was scheduled to take place at Cheddar, we unhesitatingly logged ourselves to attend.

It was a chance to meet up with old friends, and as we do not usually attend Murvi meets, it was very pleasant to renew our contacts with the old crowd. The weather was good – there was a slight postponement of an bike outing, but that was negligible. The organisation was excellent.... mainly due to the fact that on arrival the Rally Secretary, Karin Sumption, was there to direct all the vans coming in to a parking place. So instead of cruising round wondering if the place picked was tenable, the assurance of a designated spot made the arrival that much more agreeable. This is where the Murvi Club is so lucky – all the officers seem to be as caring as Karin – whatever she was doing – having lunch or tea.... Up she would pop and welcome the new arrivals..... No wonder the club numbers are still growing! Having been part of the original membership it is interesting to see how the club continues to develop and grow....

As is usual for Murvi AGMs, various activities were organised. Being (one hopes temporarily ) unable to take part, we yet understood that they were very successful and enjoyable. The cycling trip, postponed to get decent weather, was well attended – as can be seen by this snap of the assembly for the “off” ....



*Cyclists ready to go*

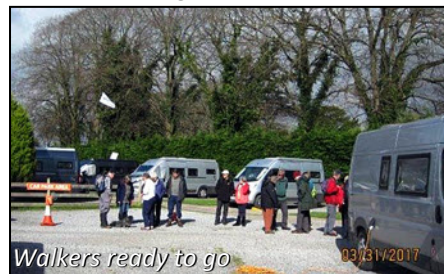
We enjoyed walking the very short distance into town, and although there was no continuous pavement round a formidable looking bend in the road, by facing oncoming traffic it did not prove all that difficult. A bonus of the location of the camping site was the fact that one of the first shopping areas included



*Cheddar town centre with the market cross*

Sainsbury, which was useful for supplies. (Further on in town there was also a Tesco!) The town was really very picturesque – what with the central shelter that used to be the Market Cross, which stands at the junction of Union street (that lead up to the Gorge itself,) and the through road.

There was also a walk organised... and here is the start –



*Walkers ready to go*

As can be seen, the sun was smiling... and really all Murviites could not help but smile at the succesful meet/rally.

The actual reason for the meet – the AGM – was accomplished in double quick time.... Exemplifying the efficiency of our committee-and here they are....



*The Committee*

To our delight, they were all unanimously re-elected and all volunteered for another year of service to the club.

The business quickly finished, there was the Dutch supper..... everybody had contributed a dish, the resulting spread was fabulous... with vegetarian dishes being amongst the best!!!

## **A COMPASS FOR A MURVI**

**By John Laidler**

Many years ago we owned a caravan made by a company called Compass. These days we have a Murvi Morocco but I still wanted a compass – but this time of the north-seeking magnetic kind.

A look at various reviews I could find online suggested that the cheaper vehicle compasses were not very good and so I spent considerably more than I originally intended on a Silva Adventure 58 compass, which is designed for both vehicles and boats. I paid £40 for mine but you may be able to find it cheaper elsewhere. The advantage of this compass is it has adjustment screws so the effect of the metal vehicle body and the engine and gearbox in particular can be compensated for.

It is possible to mount the compass permanently and it also comes with a wire for night time illumination but I have opted for a much simpler approach. The compass has a removable mounting plate which can be slid backwards a little so it can be trapped under the

document clip on the top of the dashboard as shown in the picture on the right.

The advantage of this method is it is reproducible, in the sense the compass can be put back in the same place after it has been removed, which we

need to in order to use the windscreen blind at night.

The instructions which came with the compass describe how to make the adjustments using the two screws so the compass will point accurately, a process known as “swinging the compass”. The way I did it was to find a level area away from other vehicles and with the compass in place turn the vehicle in stages so it pointed roughly north, east, Continued overleaf ....





south and west each time I stopped. Using a standard hiking compass I then stood behind the vehicle and several steps away from it and lined up by eye the body of the compass with the side of the vehicle. I then turned the bezel on the compass so it aligned with the compass needle then adjusted the vehicle compass so it read the same as the bearing shown on the hiking compass. For example, in the picture on the right you can see the reading is 80 degrees.

It is probably best to point the vehicle exactly to the cardinal points but the method I used seemed to work. After adjusting the compass I checked it again and found it was accurate to less than ten degrees which is good enough for me. It could probably be



made more accurate but the adjustment screws are very sensitive and the smallest movement on them makes a large deviation of the compass card.

## A Young Murvi Goes to Oxford

By Jo & Rod Romero

Last October we acquired a Murvi Pimento after a wait of almost 15 months. It should have been a year but the original van had a broken roof and had to go back to the manufacturer; then there was a coup in Turkey where the Ford Transit vans are made and more uncertainty. By the time it got to Ivybridge, it had to be slotted in to other orders and we spent a lot of time on the phone trying to speed up our very slow delivery.

We got home with one day to spare before going on a cruise and pretty soon after that Rod had his second knee of the year replaced so we were out of action for a few months.

Our first trips out were plagued with water leaks, both tank and bathroom tap. We live in Surrey so it was too far to return to Devon. A local representative was called out to fix the tank – on the wettest day of this year. Rod sorted out the tap with long-distance advice from Rex.

All problems solved and Rod now 'rarin' to go we booked a certified site near Oxford. This was the bitterly cold weekend 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The site was a muddy field with a tent for facilities – washing up in what looked like a cow trough, out in the open, full of leaves, no water. To cut a long story short, the owner was skiing somewhere and though we were pretty annoyed at the time, he eventually refunded our money and we parted, telephonically, on good terms.

Luckily Oxford CCC site took pity on us and found us a space for one night and then for the next two due to a cancellation. The alternative was to park in the car park opposite for £2.00 per night but with no facilities or security – and only if you could find the one way in which did not have a barrier. Due to the sodden conditions on site, we had to park on a road as the pitches were all grass. However, we will be forever grateful that the site team managed to find us a space.

Using the bus from the Park and Ride opposite which departs every 15 mins. or so, we could enjoy the sights of Oxford without

the hassle of parking a van. Refreshed and carefree, we braved the cold and visited Castle Mound near the bus stop in Oxford, then Carfax Tower (the remaining part of an old church). There were 99 steps up but worth it for the glorious views towards the old town and the 'dreaming spires'. A 30 mins. tour took us up another 77 steps to the Bodlian Library which is 800 years old and still in constant use by researchers. The medieval fluting was beautiful. Fluting shows the structure of a building and went out of fashion as being too 'primitive'. As most sights are fairly close to each other, we visited the Weston Library for an exhibition of drawings of volcanoes and a much-needed snack, then a (by now) slow dash to the Ashmolean Museum which houses the King Alfred Jewel, an important find but surprisingly small in its glass case.

Back at base, we relaxed in our extremely cosy van, running it on electric. During the night all the electricity on site failed but we kept snug, switching over to diesel.

Rain and sleet next day but the biting wind has eased off. Today we visited the old prison, all that remains of the castle. The youngest inmate was a girl of 7 who had stolen a pram for her doll. We had a quick look round the small Science Museum which housed mainly astronomical instruments; a little boy there was **very** bored and I knew just what he felt like.

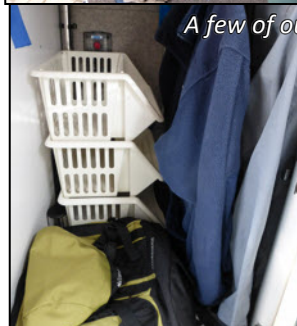
We had a long queue for Christ's Church School and the College dining room whose long tables with table lights are so atmospheric and have featured in several films. 300 students and staff can eat there and at dinner college robes are worn.

Christ's Church Cathedral had several important stained glass windows: Job and the City of Ninevah, two by the Victorian artist Burne-Jones and a medieval one of the murder of Thomas a Beckett.

Luckily there was a Tesco Express close to the site as what with the cold, the walking and all that thinking, we had excellent appetites or, as our daughter used to say, we were 'absolutely ravishing'. Yes, our Oxford trip was certainly memorable but we were lucky to get on a fully booked site and to have warm Murvi



A few of our storage ideas



How many times have you travelled up and down the A303, passing signs to the Hawk Conservancy, the Haynes Motor Museum and The Fleet Air Arm Museum? Well, we have been to the first two in the past, but have never stopped at the last one – why? Always been some excuse, going somewhere, coming home and in a hurry to beat the holiday traffic etc.

So this March, we planned to stay at the little Stourhead CL, en-route to the Murvi AGM in Cheddar later in the week. Robert checked the weather forecast and finding that the Wednesday was predicted to be wet, decided to book tickets on-line for that day. And for once, the weather forecast was right! It was a dull, damp and chilly day, ideal for indoor activity, and we were not disappointed.

We parked Mellow Yellow in the corner of, it must be said, quite a busy carpark and showed our e-mail tickets (£22.40 for two oldies). The collection of aeroplanes is displayed in four huge hangars, right at the heart of the military airfield at Yeovilton and is very comprehensive, including early “string bags” with interactive, wickerwork pilot’s seat with appropriate engine noises, helicopters and fighter jets. There are loads of video points, with multiple choices for films, statistics and period photographs, conveniently placed in front of each plane, with, happily, a bench from which to both rest weary legs and take on board the ample information.

The tour of “the Island” – which is the superstructure of an aircraft carrier – is very impressive, starting with a helicopter “ride” – all noise and shaking floor – to land on the flight deck. Simulated take off and landings from bow and stern are cleverly realised, complete with sound effects, wind and general noise! The interior of the Island is very realistically displayed with the Comms room, bakery, flight controls etc and the connecting staircases and corridors



replicating the ship is very well done.

They also have the first prototype Concorde, complete with the banks of test and evaluation equipment, which today would probably take the form of a small laptop computer, but then,

extended down one side of the plane! They have other delta wing prototype and forerunners of the delta wing design displayed alongside Concorde, so you can see how the technology developed.

We spent at least 3½ hours there, finally succumbing to a sandwich and coffee in their café, back on the ground floor. They also have a viewing room, again on the ground floor, overlooking the airstrip, and we could watch the various training flights, helicopters etc coming and going.

In all, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and, since it is part of the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard complex of museums at Portsmouth, we decided to upgrade our ticket to an annual pass for the two of us for another £45.00. As we are only about half an hour from Portsmouth and there is so much more to see there, we thought it a good investment – normal price for two oldies being about £60.00. The ticket includes museums in Belfast, Hartlepool, Gosport and Eastney to name a few – so quite comprehensive.



## TIPPING'S TIPS - FORCED AIR FRIDGE

Does your Dometic fridge struggle to keep things cool in hot climates? Dometic do forced air kits for all their fridges and they are easy to fit and come with full instructions.

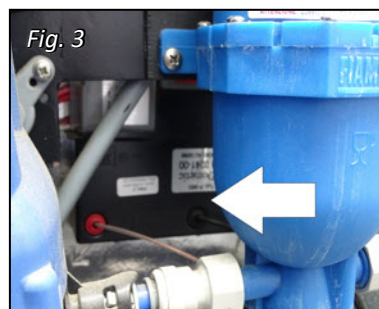
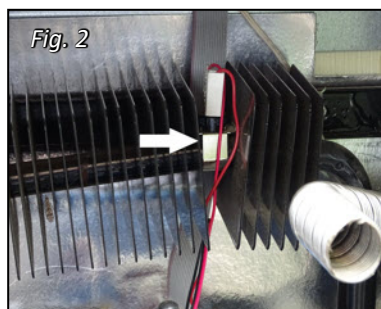
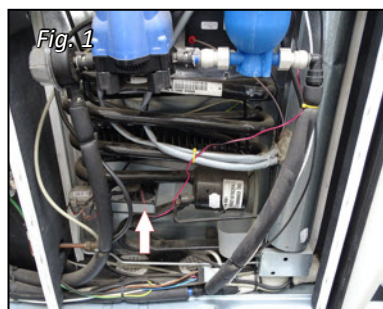
The first component is the fan itself which on my RM8501 fridge is fitted towards the bottom of the back panel – see fig. 1

The second component is a clip-on thermostat which goes on the top radiator – see fig.2..

The tricky bit was connecting the 12-volt cable. On my setup, the control box – see fig.3. – has a dedicated 12-volt connector inside for a supplementary fan. Unfortunately, this control box is behind my water pump and pressure vessel, so I had to disconnect the metal carrier installed by Murvi to carry these. Once these had been gently pulled away from the control box, I was able to remove the cover and connect the two-way cable to the 12-volt pins. Putting it all back together and shorting the thermostat with a screwdriver showed that all was working

correctly. The first time that I hit hot weather and the fan came on was magical. However, it does produce quite a whine and during hot nights it might disturb some.

The part number is 9105900007 and cost is around £70.





Time to update you with the joys of emigrating and shipping our vehicles to NZ.

Our Navara and MURVI camper were shipped in a high cube 40ft container. The Murvi is a Maxi but it fitted with the awning rail removed and air let out of the spring assisters and the rear tyres partially deflated.

Just after midnight on 14th November, central NZ was woken up by a 7.8 magnitude quake. It damaged the dockside at Wellington so our boat was diverted to Tauranga, about 6 hours drive away.

The vehicles were unloaded uneventfully except the van arrived with a dead battery so I agreed with our agent to fit a new one. They passed the MPI bug and dirt tests thanks to preparation back home. It would be \$4,000 to ship them to Wellington so I decided to clear them in Tauranga.

Despite Fiat selling Ducatos in NZ, ours didn't have the right "type approval". Single vehicle type approval was obtained. For Compliance, a modified vehicle in NZ needs a LVV (low volume vehicle) certificate for the modifications. New MURVIs have an equivalent UK certificate, which NZ accepts, but ours is 2009.

Structural modifications include the rear seatbelts, air spring assisters and the caravan windows. The nearest LVV certifier couldn't process it until April, he was so busy and it still couldn't be driven legally because it wasn't registered...

Up stepped a friendly Tauranga RV dealer, Country RVs, who I cannot thank enough. They loaned us a trade plate so we could drive it home to Kapiti. They got an electrician to do the electrical certification so we could hook up on NZ sites. He switched all the sockets to the NZ type and changed the circuit breaker. They altered the grey water outflow to a special sealed unit which is mandatory for "Self Containment" certification (required for wild-camp camping).

We flew up to collect it. It was a huge relief to be reunited! Next morning the new battery was flat again. It became apparent that the battery was overheating but we nursed it home.

We met the local LVV tester and agreed to ditch the rear seatbelts and register it as a two berth; he couldn't certify them with the rock'n'roll bed as was. He sorted out the certs for the windows and air springs. All passed.

Whilst backing the van out he went to adjust the driver's seat, pulled the wrong lever, and discovered it's a revolving captain's seat. Fail, no certs, because the seatbelt is anchored to the seat through the revolving plate. So I take it home in tears and phone MURVI that night. Full marks to Stephen Sullivan and Rex at Murvi who were able to email me a copy of the TUV seat base load certificates. Next day we have a LVV plate riveted to the body.

The battery was checked out and we discovered it's the wrong battery. I sourced the correct battery and the overheating stopped.

Next to VTNZ for the Compliance test where it failed the emission tests. We tried two diesel specialists unsuccessfully. One thought it was the injectors but they were rusted in, so they would break; they need to take the head off and re-machine the injector seats. I disagreed and tried the Fiat dealer. He took it immediately and suggested it gets serviced. It was serviced not long before it left

the UK but I agreed. We took it back to VTNZ. It passed and we got it registered. The trade plate can finally be returned.

We needed Self Containment certification and want NZMCA registration (motor caravan association). NZMCA has over 80,000 members here which doesn't include the huge fleet of rental vans (or 'slugs' as we Kiwis call them!). Self-containment is tested by volunteer guys from NZMCA. We call a retired gentleman called Dave Adamson near Otaki. Could I bring it up today? So, I head off and in the process get a broken windscreen! This is going well, I think to myself.

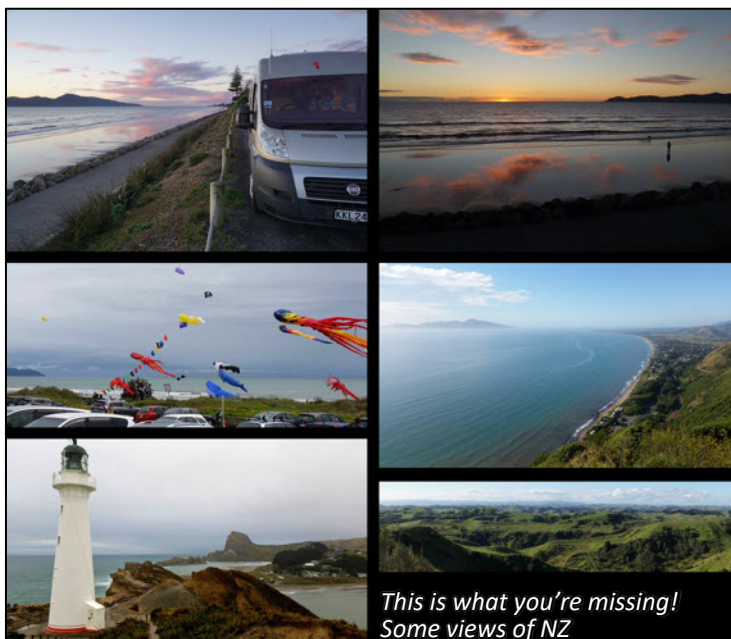
The two volunteers check everything. They take lots of measurements, tanks, pipes etc and we are nearly there. He even gives me a shot on an electric guitar he's built. However, there is no separate vent on the grey waste tank. Murvis vent on the basis there are two sinks and a shower so it only needs one to be open for it to drain. This won't suffice in NZ. So Dave and I work out how to do it. He gives me the sticker and tells me to photograph the job when I've modified it. I stopped by Mitre10 (like B&Q) on the way home and got some irrigation pipe fittings. When I got home I dropped the tank and fitted a pipe, venting it into the wheel arch. A photo (attached) to Dave and he's happy; registration form off to NZMCA and I can put my sticker on. Self contained. No charge.



*The modified waste water tank*

An interesting observation; the grey waste tank will only fill to the level of the highest vent. If you want to increase your grey waste capacity, vent each of the three 'high' areas of the tank. The vent should be 25cm higher than highest outlet on the tank.

The AA arrived with a new windscreen but not the right one. They don't have rain sensors in NZ, so it's coming from Italy - in 6 weeks. We stick some sticky-back plastic on it and have our first weekend away in the van; a night at lake Wairarapa and a night at Castlepoint. Since then, we've had it up to Otaki beach for the kite



*This is what you're missing!  
Some views of NZ*

Continued overleaf ....

festival. All wild-camping and free. Also been mountain biking at Arapuke MTB trails near Palmerston and took it to the NZMCA site at Napier which is \$3/night/pp.

I sourced a NZ map set for the Murvi's Kenwood head, Garmin GPS maps. \$20. We bought a 'UK Bayonet (W21.8) to ACME' filler adaptor from The LPG Shop in the UK. I then found the UK LPG

system is technically illegal, still to establish if it can be certified here. We only have the hob and grill using gas so I may change to induction hob with an inverter and a second solar panel. If any of you haven't fitted solar, do it! It transforms your ability to wild camp.

Was it worth it and would I do it again? Yes it was.. and never.

## THE ROAD TO HEL (AND ONWARD) - PART 1

By Campbell & Jackie Sayers

Our GB Motorhomes Tour of Poland finished in Gdansk, almost within sight of Russia, and we were then free to wander our way home, having been the only Murvi in the group. Having visited most of the major cities we wanted to inspect the Baltic coast and so headed north through Gdynia (a modern area, quite different from the beautifully recreated old centre of Gdansk) and found that the road met the sea at Puck, from where we could see the long thin arm of land that stretches around 35km far out to the east, with a place called Hel at its end. Having envisaged a quiet isolated little fishing settlement out there, the full zoom of my camera revealed that Hel is in fact a substantial resort development, perfectly placed for leisure activities in the large bay enclosed by the peninsula in which many sails were scudding about. Attempting to explore this peninsula a little, we found that the town at its entry, Wladyslawowo, was absolutely jumping and crammed full of people and traffic, so we reneged and headed west. This brought the realisation that all of Poland's population has to share a quite limited coastline, hence this was a busy resort, and Hel probably more so.

So Road 213 took us nearly all the way to Ustka: we skipped Leba due to a mosquito reputation (it sits beside one of the many lakes which abut the sea but are separated from it by a thin strip of land). The campsite was ominously named "Morski" but was insect-free. Ustka was an attractive lively resort built around a harbour at the mouth of the Slupia river and along the dunes which lie behind a vast sandy beach stretching for miles, and was pure resort - reminiscent of Ayr/Filey in the 1960's and great fun. Galleon sails around the bay as well as fishing boats, but also a memorial to a local massacre. Our campsite was a partly-converted military camp but gave shelter from the howling gale which had developed. On Friday Road 203 took us further west and it became clear that those parts of the Baltic coast that are not sandy beaches, are inaccessible bog whose edge is difficult to pin down and roads generally keep well inland as a result. Also that pretty much every bit of accessible sandy



beach has been developed as a resort, and every one of them is very busy: the Polish schools had evidently broken up the day we left Gdansk, and most people had headed for the sea - just as at home.

Kolobrzeg was our next port/resort and was home to some disabled athletic contest as well as hordes of holidaying families on the immense beach, which was

10 minutes walk from the "Baltic" campsite. This town had a more ex-communist feel to it with too many ugly tower blocks. And so on towards Swinoujscie, and along Road 102 we came upon - with no warning - 3 elephants wandering around a field: now that was a first! Their circus was in the next field. Further along the road it was 2 zebras that caught our eye: but this time we realised that they were actually horses wearing coats decorated to mimic a zebra - good one! Lunch at Rewal found another, smaller village resort, again built along above the beach with dunes and lots of holiday stuff happening - nice atmosphere.



The free ferry across the river Swina required a 45 minute wait due to traffic volumes but the service turned out to be operated by 4 large ferries with twin ramps at each side - a major operation. However,

Two views of Ustka



from the ferry could be seen a brand new bridge a bit upstream, which must open to allow through the many ships heading south to Szczecin but seems not yet to be in use. Thus to Swinoujscie, where the road on which the "Relax" campsite

entrance was located, was completely closed due to major works and we had to blunder around to find another (unsignposted) way in. The "prom" at Swino was a couple of minutes walk and well-patrolled by stylish people parading their finery, with the huge sandy beach another couple of minutes away. A more prosperous feel to this area, no doubt due to Germany being a few minutes drive away, and many high-quality buildings. The harbour is a ferry port for Sweden, and also housed around 20 grey boats which we had to assume constituted much of Poland's navy. Next, to (East) Germany.

To Be Continued