

The MURVI Club Newsletter

Spring 2023



Roger & Wendy Pepper
(See page 18)

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Editorial

A mixed bag this month. Snow and curious taps in Spain and if the thought of either should make you feel unwell some advice about obtaining medication in the same country. The Hub had just been launched at the time of the last edition but it has now been running for a few months and activity on it is picking up. Alan Major has written a short article about how to interact with the Hub by email. This is not the only way to do it, you can of course log into the Hub itself and enter content directly. If you haven't looked at the Hub recently please dip in and have a search about. The address is: <https://hub.murviclub.org.uk/>

Sandy Edmond has submitted a detailed description of his stowage solutions and essential modifications like small shelves for your (filled) wine glass. Not everything will be applicable to every Murvi model but there is bound to be something which you might want to consider. At the end he also lists his checklist for jobs to be done after the winter.

Your Murvi probably doesn't get as dirty as ours but if it does I have written a short item about how to remove the blind in the bathroom. It isn't difficult but be careful as the cost of replacing anything damaged is likely to be expensive!

Finally, at the 2023 AGM tribute was paid to Roger and Wendy Pepper as Roger stood down as the Club Secretary after thirteen years in the role. A photograph of a smiling (and relieved) Roger with Wendy can be found on the last page and above. A big welcome to Mike and Sylvia Frew who have jointly taken over the role of Secretary.

2022 and into 2023

Keith & Lyn Ross

Well we did achieve a trip away in our Murvi Morocco every month of 2022. A brief summary: -

- 111 nights - all in the UK
- 7870 miles
- Average cost per night £14.82
- Average diesel cost per litre £1.75
- Average mpg 30 (approx.)

An interesting mix of weather with December at Cambridge being the coldest. Scotland for all of May was very wet. But plenty of pleasant days otherwise.

We joined in nine Murvi meets and in doing so met a few more new faces which always adds to the interest. So thanks to those organising the meets and admin. We get a great deal of enjoyment from our Murvi Morocco and are looking forward to more trips in 2023.

We are just back from Spain. We haven't been there before, and we haven't had a long trip away in the winter with this being for about 6 weeks duration. We left on 27th January using Brittany Ferries Portsmouth to Santander route and returned on 9th March. Just enough time to unpack then ready to start again for the AGM meet.



We had a relatively simple plan – head south hoping for some sunshine in Andalusia. Our friends in the Murvi club gave us a good selection of places to visit and we visited several of them. We also met up with Wendy and Lin. The weather was an interesting mix – snow within an hour of leaving Santander up in high passes, plenty of snowploughs about doing a good job of keeping the main road clear. Lots of brilliant blue sunny skies but decidedly colder than the “normal”. I did manage to wear my shorts for a couple of days. Some of the highlights were being up in the mountains south east of Granada in the Alpujerras which is a beautiful area of majestic scenery. Anyone interested in having an understanding of this part of Spain should read the book by Chris Stewart “ Driving over Lemons”. Places we enjoyed were Ronda, Merida, Caceres. We drove a circular route of 2.000 miles, down the centre to the Med then west and north in parallel with the border to Portugal. Overall a successful first foray to Spain and we are already thinking of our next (and longer) visit. From a technical view we found an Aire with a different size tap and despite a bagful of attachments not this one, we did then find a shop selling them. (Editor’s note: This is the 1” connector which is encountered in a few places. Obtainable online in the UK.)



Medicines

Wendy Palmer

Having travelled to Europe for many years, Spain in particular, we discovered several years ago that ibuprofen and paracetamol couldn’t be bought at supermarkets as in the UK. They are only available at a pharmacy at vast expense. We now bring a significant amount! We are currently in Spain and I got a bout of conjunctivitis. Easily sorted we thought; buy some drops at a pharmacy. But no, to obtain drops a prescription is needed and thus a visit to Centre de Salud Health Centre. Many hours later I emerged at one minute past 2pm...pharmacy shut till 4.30!

So my message is bring all likely and unlikely medication with you. Over the counter medications available in UK are not available.

I was able to use my GB health card, but needed my passport and an address in Spain before I even saw a doctor.

Hub Tips

Alan Major



This is the first of an occasional series of tips and hints aimed at helping overcome some of the common problems experienced by members as they use the Hub. It is aimed at those who mainly use email as a way of interfacing with the Hub. If you log directly onto the Hub you can reply to items or start new threads directly. The tips below cover how to do the same using email.

Replying to emails

The default 'reply'/'reply all' may not achieve the desired results. To avoid problems and ensure the reply goes to the intended destination please read the guidance in the footer at the end of the email. This sets out the alternatives available which will vary according to the email contents.

1. Do not modify the pre-filled reply address.
2. Do not use 'reply'/'reply all' to reply to a Notice, replies can only be made to the author using a link in the footer or, if present, in the body of the email.

Creating a new topic

New topics for discussion or requests for help must be sent to one of the following three email addresses:

- discuss@hub.murviclub.org.uk – for general discussions related to Murvi ownership
- help@hub.murviclub.org.uk – for Murvi related help requests
- feedback@hub.murviclub.org.uk – for Hub related help requests

Requesting help with using the Hub

Create a new topic requesting help from the community by sending an email to feedback@hub.murviclub.org.uk

Email a request for help to hub@murviclub.org.uk

Suggestions for other subjects to be addressed by this series can be made by emailing newsletter@hub.murviclub.org.uk



A Few Ideas on Storage and other Oddities

Sandy Edmond

It is always interesting to see how others pack their vans and the following might be of interest. Ours is a Murvi Pimento XL 2019 on a Fiat Ducato base. I well remember as an untidy teenager not understanding my father's obsession with 'a place for everything and everything in its place'. But in those days we camped all around Scotland (family of four and one Labrador) with only an Austin A35 van and an old ex-army ridge tent. Anyone old enough to remember an A35 I am sure will wonder, like me, how on earth that was possible. A Murvi would have seemed like a dream to my parents!

Anyway, my wife and I are lucky enough to have our Murvi which we love, and cannot fault in any way in terms of layout, build quality or comfort (and we had two previous non Murvi vans to compare). We chose the Pimento because there would only be two of us and two dogs, but opted for the XL for two reasons; firstly to get the enlarged kitchen which is great and makes cooking comfortable and easy (and I like to cook, we hardly ever 'eat out'), and secondly to get the storage locker at the back – this facility we simply could not live without now, and means that the inside of our van only contains 'clean' stuff like clothing, food, drink, games, books etc.. All the 'dirty' stuff is in the back.

I am a great believer in sourcing the ideal size box/basket/container for the job required and this is easy now with online and also with shops like Poundland, Argos, B & Q etc etc. Definitely worth taking exact measurements then looking around.

I have covered some of these ideas before on the Hub but that was some time ago so the following might be of interest to new members;



Kitchen worktop area; started with two baskets at the back (on vertical aluminium bars screwed into the back of the worktop) and they were so good that I now have 5 baskets (all cable-tied together) containing all the condiments, T, coffee, sauces, spices stock cubes etc – all the stuff that gets lost in the back of the cupboard. All this stuff stays exactly as shown when travelling – I only once had a couple of things jump out and that was my fault when I hit a sleeping policeman at 30mph, having not seen it. The kettle lives where shown, sits on a non-slip mat and has never moved. The steel trivet and the silicon mat sit there also, the trivet legs locate behind a small wooden strip to hold it in place. The kitchen roll has an elastic cord round it to avoid it unrolling itself when travelling.



Sink area; another basket to hold the wash-up gear and a towel rail fitted across two of the window blind screws. Note the chopping board - it sits on a non-slip mat so never has to be stowed away – it just sits there all the time.

Rear overhead cupboard; I fitted an upper shelf and our emergency tins go here and below – chick peas, kidney beans, fish tins, corned beef, spam etc., which when combined with noodles, curry paste, or couscous/bulgur wheat means we never want for a meal and can if necessary go for many days without fresh supplies.





Middle overhead cupboard (above left); Boxes and small baskets sized to hold pasta, rice, sauce, couscous, cup-a-soups, jars, all easy access. Front overhead cupboard (right); racks for tumblers, mugs and wine glasses.



Cupboard adjacent to fridge; Pans (3 saucepans plus frying pan, all very good quality pans so minimising washing up 'cos they cook beautifully and nothing sticks to them) and strainer. The bottom section of this cupboard is the perfect wine bottle store but I struggled to find a means to secure the bottles. Just used an old towel to take up slack space until I was doing an electrical job at home with some conduit and had a Eureka moment. So a length of 20mm square conduit (removable lid type) screwed to the inner panel and a short length of conduit lid section with a steel 90 degree bracket bolted on and another short length of conduit to form the leg. The lid/leg section, with a little squirt of wd40 once a year, slides easily along the conduit to form an infinitely adjustable bottle end stop, but is stiff enough to not slide on its own. Also bought a pack of mesh bottle transport protectors and usually slip these onto any bottles to avoid any rattles.



Cupboard (left above) under the sink; aluminium bar fitted top right behind which sit small chopping boards, collapsible toaster rack, grater and 3 collapsible silicon bowls. Below is swing bin that fits perfectly, for general rubbish and box on door is recycling waste. Dustpan and brush and cleaning cloth by swing bin. Cupboard (right above) at sliding door; assorted boxes to hold all fresh food, vegetables, fruit, cereal, biscuits etc., Box of poly bags, bin bags, bottle protectors etc.



End panel at door (above left); 3 boxes screwed on to take dog lead, poo bags, torch, wallet, sunglasses, fitted top right (wired across to panel above pens, loose change and anything else that gets lost easily – all to grab as you go out the door. On the right is the Wardrobe; all per Murvi except 250w inverter fitted top right (wired across to panel above worktop), box for pac-a-macs, tripod leg for small table to be used outside. Entire wardrobe used for hanging clothes, my 'half' is 6" on right, her 'half' is 20" on left!!!!



Overcab shelf (left above); 3 boxes easy slide-out contain games, logbooks, p.c., maps, hairdryer, etc, and small table. Nothing 'loose' goes in here 'cos it gets lost. Underbed storage (right above); library at the back behind steel bar, if away for 4 weeks I need at least a dozen books. (and no, I do not do e-books, the whole essence of campervanning is digital detox and minimise screens) Spare bed linen in bag on bottom with double duvet filling most of the rest of the space. (not shown). We stow 3 x pillows and a mattress protector/topper with a fitted sheet fitted in the bedding bag which fits under our wardrobe. The topper with fitted sheet is great so making the bed consists of just throw out the topper onto the bed, chuck on the pillows, grab the duvet from under the seat, spread it out and job done.



Toilet; half round holders screwed to a nylon plate itself screwed to wall to hold toothbrush stuff – no need to put stuff away – stays there for travelling. Toilet overhead lockers (right); his and hers with baskets fitted.



Boom bar (A sound thingy - Editor) secured beside USB socket. Can be lifted out for alternative location. Mug/wine glass holder adjustable along settee back rail. Mug/glass holder by swivel seat. All our vans to date have lacked any horizontal area within reach of the seating – drove me nuts!! Where to put the wine glass???



Rear door areas; tool roll on Velcro strips above fridge. Then right hand side locker has everything. Top shelf comprises laundry box then 25m EHU lead, 10m EHU lead, 20m roll-up water hose, 5m water hose, 2 silicone collapsible buckets and the BBQ box. Next shelf has 2 x backpacks, tool box with tyre pump, tools, spare BBQ gas, vehicle polish, spare tent pegs, 12v extension lead, outside shower hose, outside gas hose, 240v cable adaptors, then collapsible 25ltr water carrier, then box with anti-midge equipment, laundry sundries and clothes pegs, carrier bags, small gas single burner.

Next shelf mostly dogs, box of bowls, groundsheet, picnic blanket, and drinks table, then dog treats and dog towels, then dog food on right in 2 boxes (enough for 4 weeks). Bottom layer is space for welly boots then boot box for walking boots and anything wet/dirty, shelf with awning above, wheel ramps to the right. Finally 2 x deckchairs and washing line on door.

So that's most of my storage solutions – a few other random ideas that make our life easier as follows;

I got fed up not having anywhere to sit the glass of wine when sitting outside in the deckies so I made up this easy stowed table (right) from an old music stand and a piece of multipanel. Goes anywhere and takes up almost no space when folded. Even goes in a backpack to the beach.



Then we got fed up not being able to take our small Murvi table outside so I found an old loudspeaker tripod amongst my son's left behind junk and cut down the legs to a suitable lower size and modified the top, and now the small table can go anywhere. Legs stow easily in the wardrobe without compromising clothes storage.





We both got fed up (must seem like we are always fed up!!) having to use phones as a clock, especially early morning when the light from the phone seems to be so bright, and the phones often start pinging as soon as you wake them up, so I found a digital clock with adjustable backlighting, mounted it on a bracket, and because I hate using batteries I got a little 12/3volt transformer, fitted it into the battery space and hard wired it through to the distribution panel in the wardrobe. It also doubles as a back-up alarm clock when required.

And of course we need mood lighting so a USB string was tucked, hot melt glued and stitched all around the saloon, great on the long dark out of season nights (right).



I am ashamed to admit that after 3.5 years I finally got around to trying to get the spare wheel out (Ducato style) so having figured out what to wind out (see above), I hauled it out on its wire. I then spent about 5 minutes trying to figure out how to remove the steel suspension plate that the flexy wire attaches to – until I realised that with some severe wiggling it does actually come out through the hole in the wheel – just doesn't look like it can. It is actually the easiest spare wheel stowage I have ever come across and works a treat. Very glad I have now done it 'cos to try to figure that out in the dark, in pouring rain or a howling gale would not have been funny. Took the opportunity to plaster the cable in oil before winding back in.



The following is a list I produced of what needs to be checked after the winter.

Spring Jobs/Checklist

Murvi Pimento XL 2019, Ducato base.

We don't use our van in November/December/January/February but I do use it once a week or so to go to the shops (a 20 mile round trip for us) to keep the wheels and engine turning so to speak. End of October we empty all food and bedding/clothing out and drain tanks, but otherwise it is always useable. So in March I do a pre-season check/service and this year I kept a note of what I did which might be of interest to others. Many of these jobs need repeated during the season, but I like to ensure that they get done at least once a year.

External jobs;

Wash all over including roof. (I use an extending, waterhose-fed brush and a stepladder)

Polish black plastic trim. (I use Maguires Ultimate Black which restores the black really well, but it does only last about 2 months, so an ongoing job. Maybe there is a better product out there?)

Wax bodywork with canauba wax polish.

Clean all door rubber seals.

Open extractor fan, clean around open vent on roof. (There is a section of roof, about 100mm long that is behind the fan unit but under the rise and fall cover that gathers dirt which cannot be seen unless the fan lid is raised).

Clean skylights.

Check roller awning, silicone spray legs and thumbwheels.

Check fluid levels engine compartment. Visual check/clean everything else in there.

Check tyre pressures. (I use a Ring RTC450 12v pump with an extension lead for the cigarette lighter socket. Set to 58psi on all tyres)

Operate/oil spare wheel mechanism. Check spare tyre pressure.

Silicone spray the following;

(I am a great believer in using WD silicon spray on everything that moves and all things electrical. Not aware that it can do any harm to anything).

Rear of fridge electrics.

Rear of oven electrics.

Water tank level wiring.

(All above from nearside rear door)

Sliding door mechanism and tracks.

All sliding windows and opening window rubbers, seals and gas struts, window latches.

All window blind catches and guide channels.

Engine battery terminals. (under passenger footwell)

Domestic battery terminals and relays. (behind sofa).

Sofa-bed hinges.

All electrics behind wardrobe panel. Check for any signs of overheat/burning.

Microswitches and electrics in toilet cassette recess.

Toilet cassette slide and seals. (this is done many times a season, maybe after every 5 empties)

Deck chair legs and pivot points.

Small table tripod leg and thumbwheel.

Drinks table tripod leg and thumbwheel.

Washing line legs.

Anything that looks electrical under bonnet!!!!

EHU input socket, plugs and sockets on both leads. (I have a 25m lead and a 10m lead)

Exterior gas hose connection.

Exterior shower connection.

Checks, cleaning and visual inspection

Clean Shurflo pump water filter. (Never gets dirty but worth a check anyway)

Clean SOG charcoal filter. Never gets dirty and I did renew it once but waste of money – seems to last forever)

Shampoo carpets, mats and upholstery. (I just hire a Rug Doctor for a day, and also do the one carpet we have in our house at the same time. Cannot believe the amount of sand that ends up in the machine bucket! And that's after hoovering the van thoroughly before Rug Doctoring)

Clean extractor fan gauze cover, remove and clean fan blade, check all functions. (our fan and gauze get quite greasy due to the amount of cooking we do, fan blade is held on by a single grub screw).

Check fire extinguisher level.

Operate Webasto on diesel and electric. Open/close dump valve several times (do this throughout the season also to keep the valve moving).

Check around Webasto, hoses, connections. (favourite place for our local mouse population)

Wiggle all electrical connections behind wardrobe panel to test for tightness (make sure 240v EHU is disconnected first!!). Look for any chafing or signs of heat.

Test flush toilet.

Test every interior light.

Check gas level and test hob rings and grill/oven. Check flame failures. (light one ring at a time, blow it out and ensure gas switches off).

Flush and purify fresh water tank. (I do this once a year using Puritabs. We drink the tank water and don't ever carry bottled water, so like to know the tank is clean, but we only travel UK. Also I drain the tank after every trip and never leave it part full for more than a week).

Flush and Mr Muscle grey tank. (I dump a whole bottle of Mr Muscle drain unblocker into the sink, then fill the tank completely, drain off maybe 15litres to create an airspace at the top of the tank and then drive round a 20mile loop to do the shopping to slosh it around, then dump it).

Run fresh water pump and check all visible pipes and connections.

Visual check all accessible gas piping and valves.

Visual check gas tank, grey water tank, Webasto exhaust underneath.

Visual check grey tank discharge piping/valve, fresh water drain pipe and valve.

That's about it I think, and so, after 4 years of faultless (touch wood and fingers crossed) performance our van is good to go for another season.

Happy Murvi-vanning folks, we're off to Ireland soon for 4 weeks so maybe see you there.

Cleaning the Bathroom Skylight Blind

John Laidler

The blind, and particularly the mesh part fitted into the skylight of the bathroom of our Morocco was getting somewhat dusty after nearly ten years and this winter a three month stay in a local garage while they waited for a spare part didn't help. So when we eventually got the vehicle back I set about seeing how easy it was to remove and clean.

The photo on the right shows the skylight with the blind closed. At the bottom of the image you can see part of the skylight in the kitchen.

The key to removing the blind are the two plastic parts seen either side, one facing the rear of the vehicle, the other the front. The retaining screws are found underneath these components.



A word of warning: don't do this if it is very cold as the plastic can get brittle, turn the heating on beforehand if necessary.

This (below left) is one of the strips removed. Note the two horizontal tags near the centre of the image and on the left a vertical tab. This vertical tab is what retains the strip and if you lift this part up with a flat-bladed screwdriver (right) it is possible to slide the strip away from the rest of the frame.



With both strips removed the four retaining screws can be seen. I suggest you now mark the ceiling with a pencil to show the corners of the frame. The marks will be covered by the strips so won't be visible. I didn't do this and lining it up again later to fit the screws was a little tricky. The removed frame with blind can be seen in the next image.



I believe it would be possible to actually remove the blind from the frame if the small clips (left) were released. But the cord which runs through the blind is sprung-loaded and I think it might be tricky to re-fit so we just cleaned the blind *in situ* using a vacuum cleaner followed by a damp sponge.

We couldn't remove all the marks on the blind but it looks a lot better now. What I did discover were the two plastic strips which are used to close or open the blind were starting to split. I repaired them with "UHU Hart Special" adhesive, which is sold as a balsa wood glue but it worked well on the plastic. You can see the fillets of glue in the image on the left.



With the blind removed (above right) you could, if you wish, now remove the skylight itself, which is in two parts. The gap between them can get very dirty but cannot be cleaned without dismantling. It is not necessary to remove the blind to do this but having got this far why stop?

You will need a Torx T10 screw driver to remove the four screws which hold the supports where it screws to the internal frame. The skylight cannot be withdrawn through the opening so you will need a ladder or tall step ladder to retrieve it from the roof.

With a T20 screw driver you can now separate the two halves of the skylight. Be careful as especially with age these can get brittle and if you break anything the chances of getting a replacement part are slim and you may need a new skylight!

It is probably worth mentioning that it is possible to access and clean the kitchen vent but I do not recommend you do anything other than clean what you can from above and below without dismantling anything. The plastic (at least on ours) has become extremely brittle and one part split as I removed a screw. It hasn't ruined it but I won't be going any further!

New Club Secretaries

At the 2023 AGM Mike and Sylvia Frew took over as the new Club Secretaries. Our constitution states there can be only one secretary so Mike has assumed the formal role but Sylvia has been co-opted onto the Club Committee and they will work together as a secretarial team.

Our retiring Secretary, Roger Pepper, took over as secretary at the first every Murvi meeting in July 2010 and in recognition of their long service to the Club Roger and Wendy were presented with gifts at the AGM rally.



Summer Edition

The next edition will be published at the end of June and a request for contributions will be posted at the start of the month – but you don't have to wait! Just email anything you have to the following address at any time. newsletter@hub.murviclub.org.uk