

Parc la Clusure

Chemin da la Clusure 30 B-6927 Bure/Tellin, Belgium
 t 0032 (0)84 36 00 50
 w parclaclasure.be

Justifiable winner of Top Camping Award in 2004. Sanitary block looks more like a deluxe leisure centre. On-site restaurant, shop, kid's club, and pizzeria in season. The rolls from the local bakery are truly knockout. The site is next to the railway line so some train noise. Camping Cheques accepted. Open all year.



Camping Sulzbachtal

Sonnmat 4, D-79295 Sulzburg, Germany
 t 0049 (0)76 34 59 25 68
 w camping-sulzbachtal.de

It's an ideal site for exploring the nearby Black Forest. The new facility block is immaculate. Pitches are fairly generous in size, and consist of gravel surrounded by grass (see above). In the reception is a decent restaurant. Camping Cheques accepted (including 3kW/h of electricity).

Camping Gravas

Voa Nova, 7078 Lenzerheide, Graubünden, Switzerland
 t 081 384 2335
 w reisen-tcs.ch

If winter sports are your bag, this is one of the best sites in Europe. There's a free shuttle bus to the ski lifts and there's a drag lift directly from the campsite. Facilities are excellent. 16A electrical hook-ups are available at a reasonable flat fee. Bring a shovel as there is year-round snow.



Camping Ohmbachsee

66901 Schönenberg-Kübelberg, Germany
 t 0049 (0)63 73 40 01
 w campingpark-ohmbachsee.de

A friendly, family-run campsite (see above). There's an on-site restaurant and take-away, plus a heated swimming pool, crazy golf, ping-pong, tennis, not forgetting the fresh water lake. The unmetered 16A supply and Camping Cheque offers make for excellent value.



The Pegasus Challenge

The caravan 2010 Bailey Pegasus 546

The participants Andrew Ditton with his parents Marlene and Ernie

The challenge Seven days, six countries, 1400 miles of motorways and Alpine roads, plus temperatures of -15°. Can a British caravan cope with one of the highest, snowiest, most extreme mountain campsites in Switzerland?

Putting a caravan in a massive fridge to test for thermal leakage is one thing, but to try it out for real at a high-altitude campsite in the ski resort of Lenzerheide, Switzerland in December is another. For such an endurance run, a decent towcar would be required. Volvo's XC60 AWD, a winner in the 2010 Caravan Club Towcar of the Year Awards, fitted the bill perfectly.

Departure was delayed thanks to a problem with the 13-pin plug on the caravan, but a quick call to the Caravan Club's fantastic Red Pennant service arranged prompt replacement and our ferry re-booked all in one easy phone call. It was therefore a little later than planned that we were relaxing in the Club Lounge of P&O's Pride of Burgundy.

Despite our late arrival, we received a warm welcome at

Parc la Clusure in southwest Belgium. Dad had prepared homemade oven meals before we left, so upon arrival we put dinner in the oven. By the time we were settled, the van was warm and dinner was ready. But it was the fresh Belgian rolls for breakfast that made my father's stay there memorable.

Next day we crossed the border into Luxembourg, where a low rate of duty meant we filled the car with diesel. From

there we skirted the northeast corner of France, crossed the Rhine, and continued to our second Camping Cheques campsite, Camping Sulzbachtal.

Buying Camping Cheques before you leave the UK can save you up to 60 per cent off your pitch fee. Electrical hook-up is included, but at Sulzbachtal we were limited to a free allowance of 3kW/h. Despite the chilly three degrees outside, we only needed to put

the heater on its 1000W setting. Even so, we still managed to rack up an electricity bill of almost £10 in one night. Hmm...

WINTER WONDERLAND

Day three saw us cross the border into Switzerland. After leaving the motorway at Chur we headed into the mountains to our final destination, Lenzerheide. Fast-flowing motorway or winding mountain

road, neither the Volvo nor the Pegasus skipped a beat. Pitched among snow-capped pine trees we were quickly settled and warm despite being 5000-feet above sea level.

It then started to snow. And snow. And snow. And just when we thought there was no more snow left, it carried on snowing. Inches of the white stuff piled onto the roof of the Pegasus. Snow and ice covered the roads, and I was deeply

INFORMATION

Lenzerheide

Find out about this region
 w lenzerheide.com (click on the 'EN' link for English translation)

Visit Switzerland

One-stop shop for all things Swiss
 w myswitzerland.com

Bailey Caravans

Full details about the Alu-Tech construction of the Pegasus
 w bailey-caravans.co.uk

Volvo

Read about XC60 towcar
 w volvocars.co.uk

Alan Rogers

Camping Cheques scheme
 w alanrogers.com

Halfords

Snowchains, car electronics, and all-in-one continental touring packs
 w halfords.com

Caravan Club Travel Service

Discounted ferries and overseas motoring insurance policies
 w caravanclub.co.uk

Milenco

Caravan accessories
 w milenco.com

How much it cost



Enjoying Club Class luxury on the ferry

Travel

We saved over £1000 by taking the caravan as opposed to flying and staying in a self-catering chalet.

We booked our ferry and breakdown cover through the Caravan Club Travel Service.

P&O Ferries Dover to Calais for the outfit and three people: **£176**

Caravan Club Red Pennant 'Plus' motoring policy for three people: **£139**

Fuel cost

1400 miles at approx 23mpg, fuel cost approx £4.56 per gallon: **£277**

Site fees

Three Camping Cheques at £11.95 per cheque: **£35.85**

Additional site fees for third adult and metered electricity: **£15**

Four nights at Camping Gravas, Lenzerheide, with electric hook-up at £27 per night: **£108**

Total cost

For three people: **£751**

Comparable holiday by air and self-catering chalet: **£1800**



Snow chains proved to be vital



Alpine roads were fine for the Volvo



The Pegasus 546 stood up to the harsh conditions

grateful that I had brought snowchains from Halfords and had such a fantastic and confidence-inspiring car.

AN EXTREME TEST

Later that day I went to take a picture of the Pegasus surrounded by deep virgin snow. As I set up my tripod, a neighbour popped out of his motorhome, and in my broken German I tried to explain the merits of the Pegasus's Grade 3 insulation. My neighbour was doubtful, saying he thought that there were too many windows. He obviously thought that I didn't understand what he meant by 'Fenster' so shuffled his way through the crisp untouched snow up to the caravan to gesticulate at the side window, deaf to my cries of: 'Nein, nein, bitte!'. Ah well.

On our second full day in Lenzerheide the snow had eased enough to take a trip further up the mountain to enjoy the spectacular views. With mum and dad comfortably ensconced in a mountain café, it was time for me to hurl myself down a few slopes on my snowboard. Terrific fun!

Dad's ambition was to capture stunning images of the mountains with his camera, and as if by special command, it stopped snowing the next day the sun came out, lighting up the brilliant white snow-capped mountains against an azure blue



Andrew gets to use his snowboard

sky. Lenzerheide is a very beautiful place indeed.

Spectacular icicles formed on the side of the Pegasus despite the warm temperature inside. Then, as the skies cleared, the mercury plummeted until the temperature hit -15°. Even in such extreme conditions, we still remained warm in the Pegasus without having to resort to using bottled gas to boost the heating.

All too soon it was time to leave. My Swiss neighbours were very impressed at my Milenco grip mats which worked well in the snow and prevented the fuff of once again fitting snow chains to the Volvo.

Our two-day trip home via another Camping Cheques site in Germany passed without event, except for the petrol station attendant at the Swiss/German border who tried to tell

me that it would take £80 worth of Swiss Francs to clear a €59 petrol bill – about £54 at the current exchange rate! Motto to self: pay in local currency!

Everyone was supremely comfortable in the Volvo and I passed the time on the long drive home trying to hatch a plan where I wouldn't have to give it back. I loved driving such an awesome towcar, towing the rock-steady Pegasus as if it wasn't there. Super! The spectacular icicles that had adhered themselves to the Pegasus clung on all the way home, even aboard the P&O Pride of Calais. As we enjoyed a slap-up meal in Langan's Brasserie followed by a civilised coffee in the Club Lounge, we reflected on what had been the most amazing trip.

Is Pegasus really the passport to adventure? You bet it is!

The Pegasus Challenge

Bailey Pegasus 546

Price	£16,345
Berths	6
MIRO	1261kg
MTPLM	1497kg
Internal length	5.61m
Length	7.18m
Width	2.28m
Contact	Bailey Caravans
t	0117 305 2939
w	bailey-caravans.co.uk

CHALLENGE Can the Pegasus cope with being towed on a 1400-mile round trip to include high-speed motorway and the steep and winding Alpine mountain roads?

RESULT Despite the fact that the 546 is a very long single axle caravan, there were no stability issues at all. Not once did the ATC need to intervene, even in 40mph winds or on snow-covered roads.

CHALLENGE Upon arrival on site, can Pegasus warm up from freezing to a comfortable temperature in the time it takes to set up?

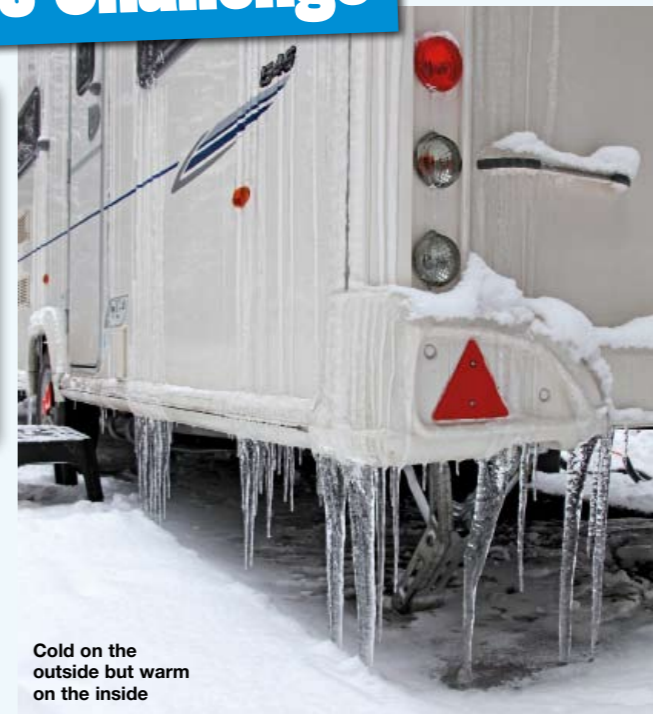
RESULT Using the Truma heater on gas and mains, our Pegasus warmed-up quickly from 3° to a comfortable 18° in just 35 minutes.

CHALLENGE Can Pegasus go a whole week in a cold climate using less than one cylinder of gas?

RESULT We didn't actually need to use gas to heat the caravan at any time. Even when the outside temperature fell to -15°, the 2kW Truma heater maintained an internal temperature of 18-20°.

CHALLENGE Even when the temperature remains below freezing for days on end, does the water still flow?

RESULT As there is a 23-litre inboard water tank, we never



Cold on the outside but warm on the inside



The fresh water tank didn't freeze

had a problem with fresh water. But the kitchen waste water froze in the pipe, leaving us with the washroom sink only.

CHALLENGE Is there enough storage space in the Pegasus for a family on a winter sports holiday?

RESULT Six people may need a roof box on the car. But for three of us there was more than enough space, mainly thanks to the numerous roof lockers and fold-up lower bunk.



The Aquaroll did freeze, though

CHALLENGE Is there space enough to dry wet skiing and snowboarding kit?

RESULT The washroom could do with a proper hanging rail, but we improvised with hangers. Being next to the heater, the area gets very warm and dries clothes quickly.

CHALLENGE Is it easy to keep the interior clean and dry when it is unavoidable to bring in snow on your shoes?

RESULT Thank goodness for removable carpet. We rolled up the central section and used a cloth to mop-up the melted snow from shoes. We retained warm carpet underfoot in the lounge area.

Thank you to: Bailey Caravans for the loan of the Pegasus. Volvo for the loan of the amazing XC60. Caravan Club Travel Service for arranging the ferry crossing and Red Pennant breakdown insurance. Alan Rogers/Camping Cheques for supplying Camping Cheques for our sites en route. Lenzerheide Tourism for their assistance. Milenco for supplying grip mats, noseweight gauge, and security devices. Halfords for sourcing our snow chains and supplying overseas touring essentials. Touring Club of Switzerland for their hospitality at their Lenzerheide site. P&O Ferries for their hospitality on board their fabulous ferries.



Plenty of room for manoeuvre in the spacious lounge area

caravanmagazine.co.uk

SPECIAL FEATURE

Our verdict

EXTERIOR 9/10

We've now proved that Alu-Tech construction really works and insulates well in extreme conditions. Great to tow, too.

LOUNGING 7/10

Television point is at the front shelf, yet soft furnishings dictate that you recline in the opposite direction.

DINING 8/10

Chest unit is an option, but putting up the terrific drop-leaf table was a small price to pay for the additional space.

SLEEPING 7/10

The front king-sized bed is comfortable but there are too many joins. I slept diagonally on the 5ft 7in rear bed.

KITCHEN 7/10

We just about managed to prepare meals for three people. Dishing up a meal for six would be a challenge.

STORAGE 8/10

Many of the roof lockers have shelves. Space under the seats but middle bunk does not lift, so no cycle storage.

WASHROOM 7/10

Basic, and showering involves a clingy curtain. Shower tap is separate, but no drying rail.

BUILD QUALITY 8/10

Well built but a few faults: dodgy road lights plug, crackly stereo speaker and kitchen tap microswitch failure.

PRACTICALITY 8/10

Perfect for winter caravanning, but a solution needs to be found for the waste water freezing in the pipe.

VALUE FOR MONEY 8/10

Not the highest spec, but the 10-year warranty against water ingress should boost residual values.

Caravan **77/100**
our rating