



# ELECTRIC AWNING

Peter Rosenthal finds out what is involved in fitting an electric awning when he met the winner of the Carefree awning competition, which ran in the July 2011 issue of MMM



David and Janet Turner enjoy their Carefree electric awning, which they won in the July MMM competition  
Inset: MMM reader David Turner (left) is congratulated on his win by Carefree's Ian Hughes

Shades for motorhomes are one of those essential purchases for many people and now there is a new entrant to the market: the American-made Carefree units. These neat units are fitted as standard by Auto-Sleepers and Bentley motorhomes and are now available to the public.

They also offer a very neat 12V-powered Freedom version, which lucky MMM reader David Turner won in the competition featured in our July issue. We caught up with David and Carefree's Ian Hughes (who runs UK agent, Scan Térieur) at the Lincoln Show to watch it being installed. Installation duties were entrusted to expert awning fitter Graham Clark (so thankfully I didn't have to get my Interchange socket set out!).

The whole fitment took about three hours

but, as this included numerous breaks for video filming and photography (and nosy journalist questions), it's safe to assume it would normally take just a couple of hours.

Graham was keen to point out, though, that every awning installation is different – the ease of fitment very much depends on the internal layout of each particular motorhome. The awning unit itself is the same for all applications, but the mounting brackets vary – some motorhome manufacturers specify dedicated brackets, while others have specific reinforced mounting points already built into their structure.

So the first step before embarking on any fitment is to check the specification of your vehicle with the manufacturers. In this case, the motorhome was a Bürstner Solano T725 low-profile based on a Fiat Ducato.

## FITTING AN ELECTRIC AWNING

### STEP ONE



Unpack the parts and check nothing is missing. The six coachbolts secure the aluminium brackets to the motorhome's body. The weight of the awning is supported by these brackets and hooks in place, being secure by the six self-tapping screws. The red wand (pictured above) is actually an adjustment tool. The white clips are for leg supports, although they were not used here.

### STEP TWO



Getting the position of the aluminium brackets correct is vital, so a great deal of time was spent carefully measuring, marking and aligning the three brackets. The exterior light, rear window, side door and the shower cubicle on the driver's side all determined the positioning of the brackets.

### STEP THREE



Once satisfied with the position, pilot holes were drilled and their position on the inside carefully checked. The holes were then enlarged to take the main support bolts. The plate itself can be attached with either silicone sealant (making it removable) or Sikaflex (which makes it stronger but permanently bonds the brackets to the body). Silicone was used here and can be seen oozing out of the lower holes.

## FITTING AN ELECTRIC AWNING

### STEP FOUR



At this stage, the awning is test-fitted and the wiring connections planned. The 12V electric motor for the awning is at the left hand end of the awning, but wiring connections had to be made at the right hand end of the unit – a channel behind the awning case hides the wiring.

### STEP FIVE



The wiring lead had to be extended in this case and this was carried out using crimped connectors. Next the hole for the 12V electric cable was drilled and the cable fed through to the interior.

### STEP SIX



The position of the actuating switch was worked out next and handily the power to the control panel over the door ran through an overhead locker. So the switch could be entirely hidden inside a locker.

### STEP SEVEN



With all the 12V wiring connections made, the operation of the electric awning is checked before all the internal panels are replaced. Once everyone was satisfied with the operation the cables were tied up, the debris from drilling vacuumed up and all the panels replaced.

### STEP EIGHT



The final step to the fitment is to secure the awning in place using six small self-tapping screws. These don't take any weight – that's the job of the three large brackets – and allow the awning to be removed for either maintenance or cleaning.

### USEFUL CONTACTS

Scan Térieur (UK agent for Carefree awnings)  
Tel: 01923-800353  
Web: [www.scan-terieur.com](http://www.scan-terieur.com)

## FREE motorcaravanners e-newsletter

ENJOY! • Exclusive features & news • Access to numerous competitions • Special discounts and offers

Register at... [www.outandaboutlive.co.uk](http://www.outandaboutlive.co.uk) **Out&AboutLive** **MMM**



### Air Suspension Kits

All Popular Motorhomes Catered For - Including:  
Fiat Ducato, Peugeot Boxer, Talbot Express, Mercedes Sprinter  
With Many Other Kits Available.

- ✓ Easy Installation
- ✓ Enhances Ride Comfort
- ✓ Improves Stability
- ✓ Keeps Vehicle Level
- ✓ Reduces Bottoming Out
- ✓ Restores Ride Height



Alko Chassis



Fiat Ducato

**Marcie Leisure**  
Motorhome and Caravan Accessory Supplier  
Marcie Leisure - Much Marcie  
Herefordshire - HR8 2NB  
Contact : 01531 660797  
[www.marcleisure.co.uk](http://www.marcleisure.co.uk)

**DUNLOP**  
SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS

## Ranger Motorhomes

A universal body which will fit most 1-ton pick-up trucks, single or double cab. Can be used on or off the vehicle.  
Price for standard unit (body only) start at £15,000. Complete units usually in stock. Ring for details. The interior design utilises all the space to a maximum. Extra items are available to suit your individual needs.

Unit 24, Caldershaw Business Park, Ings Lane,  
Rochdale OL12 7LQ  
Telephone: 01706 525932  
Mobile: 07803 678880  
[www.ranger-motorhomes.co.uk](http://www.ranger-motorhomes.co.uk)



Call us for more details