

What, no gas?

Gazing into his crystal ball, **Gary Martin** may just have seen the future of touring – and there's not a gas cylinder in sight



Clockwise from above: that barbecue; microwave and fridge; the stars of the show – the batteries; smart induction hob



Here is a prototype motorhome that provides users with total off-grid flexibility! There are no gas cylinders – just lithium-ion battery technology that provides power to all the on-board equipment.

Designed by a UK company called Transporter Energy (TE), at the heart of this revolutionary vehicle is a battery developed, designed and manufactured in America.

For TE's concept van conversion, a bank of six of these 100Ah batteries is used, each one weighing in

at just 13.1kg (comparative lead acid batteries are typically around 35kg).

TE claims that its new battery discharges almost 100% of its power without suffering any loss of efficiency and retains up to 80% of its rated capacity even after 5,000 cycles (approximately 13 years, depending on use). I am also told that recharging takes between three and six hours – that's up to 12 times faster than leading lead acid competitors.

THE POSSIBILITIES

TE has built a prototype motorhome that not only features this lithium-ion technology but also contains a wealth of kit that it can operate, which it has called the Transporter Energy Pod – this comprises a stylish induction hob, fridge, water heater, microwave and even a barbecue. A battery monitor, battery charger and inverter complete the Pod package.

I can vouch for the efficiency of the barbecue, having enjoyed a tasty burger on our photo shoot. I'd

never had a lithium-cooked burger before – but I'd have one again. The barbecue the company uses is a smart bit of kit – it is compact, takes little time to heat up and is easy to clean. And there is not a flame in sight!

The system also works well with a solar panel – so it can be topped up by the sun to extend your off-grid touring possibilities.

Although TE's motorhome contains six batteries, members could potentially buy individual units as alternative leisure batteries.

Considering their apparent efficiency, they don't come cheap – each TE battery will set you back £1,199 (good lead-acid batteries are priced at around the £300 mark). But, depending on your touring habits, this could make a great deal of economic sense in the long run.

At the time of writing, TE tells me that a couple of UK motorhome manufacturers are interested in this system – in both the batteries and the Pod kit.

So, watch this space – you might just see a mass-produced motorhome without gas in a dealer near you in the not-so-distant future.

Contact: transporterenergy.co.uk, 01323 405375

Locations: Lower Dicker, East Sussex and Awworth, Nottinghamshire