

AUTO - SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

Greetings,

We have certainly been given a GO for LAUNCH as far as the Club is concerned. The response has been so good we are wondering just what John has started!

At the moment there is obviously a need to let you out there know what we in here are doing about YOUR Club. I am happy to report that there is complete agreement by the six people who have formed an ad hoc committee to get things established that the Club shall be run by the Members for the Members. In other words, it will be the kind of Club you want it to be. That involves you; make your wishes known!

So, who are 'we'? Charles Trevelyan is acting Chairman. Well, we were sitting round HIS desk in HIS office and he is a Director of A-S so that seemed right and proper. John Cox, who started all this, has accepted responsibility for finding a suitable site for the inaugural meeting - 'rally' if you insist - and is, I know, going on from there to prepare a programme of rallies. Frank Stinchcombe agreed to look after the funds A-S were kind enough to give us, for postage, paper, envelopes, etc., so is acting Treasurer. Neville Jelks of A-S was there to offer further backup from our Sponsor(!) and will make sure we don't get under the feet of the production people. Rita Daley actually volunteered to become acting Secretary because she had been a full-time club secretary and also liked using word processing and filing programs on our micro computer. As for me, I didn't see it coming in time to say no so landed the job I am now trying to do.

A little bit more explanation. I suppose it would be possible to form a club by inviting all interested parties to meet somewhere and start from scratch, hoping it would be alright on the night, but what a potential shambles! So a few of us are laying the foundations and expect to present the results to you in the Spring when you can say what you think of our efforts and change anything or everything. By that time you will have received a lot more information and will, no doubt, be ready to volunteer to serve on committees and to vote for other candidates, approve the Constitution or amend it, etc., etc.

Mention of the the micro reminds me that the Data Protection Act insists that personal data (things you tell us) can only be kept on a computer if you agree. If you don't agree, the same records can be kept on a card index whether you like it or not! Seems daft to me. However, the reason why we want to use a computer system is: a) to reduce the space required (in our fairly modern semi.) & b) to provide a fast and reliable retrieval system - in about 90 seconds it can find and list all members who own a Legend, for example. The sorting it can do is fascinating, but that's another story. So, on the Membership Application Form there will be this question...

There must be hundreds of reasons for buying a motor caravan and you, our (potential) members are already indicating a wide variety of reasons for joining the A-S Owners' Club. The one reason in common is obvious, the others will be catered for as soon as possible. Some are keen ralliers, some, like Rita & I, have never been to a rally and really bought the 'van to get out and do their own thing - foreign touring, birdwatching, visiting National Trust properties, getting to out-of-the-way places for all sorts of pursuits.

It has been suggested that we should not try to compete with the established clubs who cater very well for rally enthusiasts but put our energy into things we can, hopefully, do better than them. At this stage I had better make it quite clear that what you read in this newsletter is only my interpretation of what is happening in our Committee meetings or what you are saying in letters or completed questionnaires. If you'll pardon the jargon, I want to bounce ideas off you and off the Committee to see what we come up with. Official views, comments, statements will come from the Secretary; the newsletter is personal and very unofficial!

Things we should do:-

1. Arrange contact between Members and Auto-Sleepers. (A-S have work to do and we must not disrupt this, despite their well-known willingness to help.)
2. Collect technical data on base vehicles and conversions which will be available to Members on loan if necessary.
3. Arrange contact between members by mutual agreement. We will not give one Member's address to another without the former's consent. Perhaps it would have to be in writing?

4. Compile lists of recommended suppliers of all sorts of useful and interesting things. (Do you know who can fit a bulk - 30 litre - propane storage tank? Bulk propane at 18p per litre).

5. Perhaps arrange Club discounts on spares, tyres, batteries, exhausts etc.

Most of those items are just headings and could be expanded. Some things are not so easy as others; for example, most manufacturers have been putting their technical data onto microfiche instead of in (expensive) owners' handbooks. Anyone got a spare microfiche reader?

Forgive me if I return to the topic of rallies. I feel, and there is some evidence for it, that this is possibly the potential stumbling block as far as a number of people are concerned. Could you manage one a year? Especially the first one? No compulsion anyway. I foresee small groups getting together in various localities with the minimum of organisation from the centre. The new Club badge, currently being designed, will doubtless facilitate introductions on a one-to-one basis. (Badge stuck inside windscreen or on badge-bar?)

I nearly forgot to mention the spread of interest, from Aberdeen to Cornwall and from Belfast to Southend on Sea! Can't be bad...

Perhaps you would like to know that John has a VW VHT, Frank has a Legend and we have a CX1000GTL, respectively petrol, petrol/automatic and diesel. We don't think alike on everything!

Enough for now. Don't I rabbit on...Must collect some rabbit for next month!

Phil Daley.

September 1988.