

AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB

Newsletter No 2.

Greetings,

This is the only the second Newsletter and there is so much to report I have almost exceeded my self-imposed limit of two sides of an A4 page.

When the Committee met again at Willersey at the beginning of October we decided that, although we had not been elected, we were the only Committee the Club had so we must get cracking and put your wishes into effect. I will now report on progress:-

For ease of administration the Club Year will be the Calendar year so membership will, nominally, start on 1st January, 1989. We already have one completed application form and sub. but the 1989 membership cards haven't come from the printers yet nor has Rita bought a receipt book! Its all 'go' round here these days. By the time you receive this letter and the enclosures - Jim Cordell please note the prompt reaction to your suggestion - the following will have been done:-

- 1) Club Badge designed and, with help from A-S and their printers, artwork approved. 1000 vehicle stickers ordered.
- 2) Leaflet produced to hand out to other A-S owners.
- 3) Advertisement prepared for insertion in Press.
- 4) Membership Card designed and 500 ordered for 1989.
- 5) A Constitution and set of Rules drawn up. (Enclosed).
- 6) Membership Application form run off. (Enclosed).
- 7) Bank account opened at Lloyds Bank, Winchcombe with a donation from Auto-Sleepers Ltd.
- 8) Contact made with enamel badge makers, embroidered badge makers - for blazers, anoraks, windcheaters etc. - flag and pennant makers. Quotations being obtained.
- 9) Sites sorted out, primarily for the first Club rally but with a skeleton programme for one per month in popular areas.
- 10) Annual subscription fixed at £10.00

You may well ask how this amount was arrived at, and there is no neat, mathematical answer. We just do not know how much it will cost to get the Club established and to run it for a year. The first year will be the most expensive, relative to the number of members, because some items, such as dies for metal badges, artwork for the windscreen badge and letterhead, involve one-off payments. There is going to be expenditure on items bought

for stock and eventual resale to members so the cost will be recouped in other years. Since we are not a profit-making outfit I would like to suggest we stump up for this year, see how it goes, and if, as may well happen, we find we have a large enough surplus at 31st December, we review the matter at the A.G.M. The more members the lower the subscription, or so it seems to me. At least, until we build a Clubhouse of our own!

Item 9 - Sites for Rallies. John has found a superb site for our very important first get-together, the Cotswold Caravan Park just south of Cirencester. It meets all the criteria we set: Level pitches, all hard-standing, excellent clubhouse, including a most comfortable room for our A.G.M., electricity at all pitches, facilities for the disabled, not too far from Willersey, and this is important because Auto-Sleepers are very closely involved and will be strongly represented, and over 300 pitches if we need them, (and I hope we will!) There had to be a snag and we found one in the small print after we had decided to make the booking - no pets! John was going on holiday, so we offered to search in the library for addresses of sites to visit, and see if there was anywhere else. In the time available - many sites shut down at the end of October - we were unable to find one. Not being rally enthusiasts Rita and I were surprised to find how difficult it was to find a site which met all our requirements. Medium sized sites, 150-200 pitches, seldom had enough level pitches and/or hard-standing, certainly very few electric hook-ups and the "meeting room" would be the village hall some distance away. The only sites we found which were large enough and had a suitable room available, were near the coast so were neither central nor within reasonable reach of Willersey. So we spent time looking at "overflow" sites near Cirencester; the nearest was Ermine Farm which we decided was too sloping, and potentially too soft in March; the Caravan Club site in Cirencester re-opens at Easter and although the pitches are grassy, it is a super site but Caravan Club Members Only. We have not given up the struggle and are working on other ways to meet the needs of dog owners. We want to make it possible for all Auto-Sleeper Owners to attend the Inaugural Meeting. A further report in a later Newsletter. The date - FRIDAY 31st MARCH to SUNDAY 2nd APRIL, 1989, the weekend after Easter. A Note for your new diary. AGM on the Saturday afternoon. A lot more information about Demonstrators etc. to follow.

We have had a lot of letters, very encouraging and all enthusiastic. The predominant theme seems to be, "Never mind dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's, lets get together and do what we want to do." And what do you want to do? "We feel we would like to get together with one or two other A-S owners to talk of experiences, problems(?), and ambitions" sums up a lot of the comments. I can see that, if you think you would like to go "abroad" but wonder how difficult it all is, it could be most helpful to spend an hour or

so with someone with the same type of van who has done it a few times - and come back safely! I know that after a few days in France and Switzerland in 1971, I felt like writing to anyone who hesitated, saying: "Come on In, the water's fine!". I had hesitated for years -lost years- and have tried to make up for it ever since. So, on that subject, there will be members with first-hand knowledge on how to get to the North Cape, Tarifa, Siracusa or beyond.

The form the Club could take is beginning to appear out of the cosmic mist. It seems we need a "Headquarters" address and telephone number as a focal point and a number of satellite groups scattered round the British Isles. At this early stage it looks as though there could be Groups in:

- a) Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset.
- b) Avon, Gloucester, Hereford & Worcs., Glamorgan and Gwent.
- c) Staffs., Warwicks. and West Midlands.
- d) Hants., Wilts., Surrey, and Berks.
- e) Kent, Sussex, Essex and London.
- f) Lancashire, Yorkshire and Humberside.
- g) Beds., Bucks., Oxon., and Northants.
- h) Scotland & Northern Ireland to follow, with France, Switzerland and West Germany by 1991! (Country membership for Aussies & Kiwis on short visits to Europe.) What about that, Mr.Mann?

There is nothing magical about the groupings I have put together, just a similar number of interested people in each. I don't see why there should be any hard and fast boundaries but we probably need to start with something like this so that Group Secretaries (volunteers only, Mrs.Normandale? Mrs Tilley?) can co-ordinate things. All this about groups is just my doodling at the keyboard, none of it has been discussed in committee, but if you like it - or hate it - please put pen to paper.

It seems I was probably wrong about not circulating names and addresses. It would be very inefficient to route all correspondence through the Club Secretary (time, postage) so what do you think about a Club Register? A list of names and addresses with type of conversion - VHT, Rambler, Legend, Talisman, etc. And what else? Should it be a complete list of Members, alphabetically? Or, should it be alphabetically by County? Or, should we list all Talisman owners as one section - treating other conversions similarly, of course? If we had a lot more completed questionnaires (Please, if you haven't, post it soon!) we could sub-divide by interests, hobbies and Consuming Passions. Or, perhaps not! One possible advantage of forming Regional groups would be the election of a Committee member to represent each Region and the holding of committee meetings in each Region in rotation. Come on, there are at least two hundred of you out there and only one

of me so let's have your thoughts. We could have people meeting people before the end of the year, certainly well before the I.R.

Having people meeting people. That, I think, is what we all want but I feel the meeting has to be on our own terms. Difficult to define but most of us have bought an Auto-Sleeper and Independence at the same time. We are very much like the cat that walked by itself and all places are alike to us. If we stick an A-S Owners Club badge on our windscreen it means we are prepared to respond to approaches from other A-S Owners but I suggest the first approach should be tentative rather than assertive. (Even I can get used to being wrong!). I wish the Club had been in existence before we went to Norway this year because, one morning in a little village in Lofoten where we had spent the night parked just off the road, a motor caravan stopped in front of us, the driver attracted our attention, pointed to the Auto-Sleepers' logo on his door and drove away! (Was it you? We would like to renew acquaintance.) The point being, if we had had a badge on the windscreen this would have indicated our willingness to have a natter, wouldn't it? Query - do you peel it off when you're feeling particularly bloody-minded and unsociable. Sorry, do I peel etc.

You will gather from all this that I am very happy about the way the club is taking shape. Although the end of March seems a long way away, the organisation is going to be a bit rushed unless we can get members signed up by the end of the year, and a firm idea of the numbers wishing to attend the rally by the end of January. With this newsletter you should have a Membership Application Form. If you could complete it and return it to the Secretary with your subscription as soon as possible it would be a great help.

And, finally, several people have been kind enough to send in items for the Newsletter. Please accept my thanks and assurance that they will be used, and will indeed be very useful, when there is less frantic activity to report.



Phil Daley.

November 1988.

HAVE YOU DRAINED YOUR WATER HEATER?

If not, switch off the electricity to the pump, open both taps, press the lever on the shower head, and when the water slows to a trickle, BLOW down the shower head to drain the last drop!