

auto-sleeper
owners' club



Newsletter No 9

Greetings,

Several Members have expressed an interest in Diesel engines so here are some experiences. Bruce Cunningham sent in an item on Diesel propulsion which I will try to quote correctly and he has promised an item on their travels to Turkey, when he can find the time.

"AUTO-SLEEPER FS85 (ELEVATING ROOF) - BASED ON FORD TRANSIT 2.4 LITRE DIESEL CUSTOM 100 VAN - KYM198X, PURCHASED 01/08/81.

Some comments on the above vehicle, purchased before my retirement and now used by my wife and I in retirement, may be of interest to other motor caravanners considering diesel engines.

Prior to purchase both Ford and the supplier were consulted regarding the relative economics of the engine alternatives, the petrol 2.0 litre OHC and the 2.4 litre "York" diesel. Because the Transit did not at that time have a five-gear box an overdrive unit operating on 3rd and 4th gears would be fitted in either case. Both advisers felt that the additional cost of £500 for the diesel would not be justified by the relatively low annual mileage and the similar costs of diesel and petrol throughout Europe at that time. Also the supplier felt that the diesel would be of poor "driveability". Time has proved them wrong on both counts!

A comparison was made as follows:-

ENGINE	POWER PS				TORQUE Nm				
	rpm	4500	3600	3000	2500	4500	3600	3000	2500
2.0 lit OHC		78	68	56	43	117	138	145	145
2.4 lit Diesel		--	62	55	48	---	123	132	134
			GRADE CLIMEABLE %			MAX SPEED.			
	Rear Axle		1st	4th	O/D	4th	4th	O/D	4th
	Ratio		gear	gear	gear	gear	gear		
2 lit OHC	4.11		24.2	4.3	3.44		78	75	
	4.44		26.2	5.0	4.00		78	78	
2.4 lit Diesel	4.11		28.4	5.0	4.00		70	65	
	4.44		30.7	5.6	4.48		66	70	

From the above it was deduced that fitting a 4.44 axle ratio to the 2.4 litre diesel engine would give the nearest performance to the 2.0 litre OHC petrol engine but with better economy.

In practice, unless there is a strong headwind, this motor caravan will return:-

40 mpg when "pottering" at up to 40mph.

31 mpg on long trips

21 mpg flat out, motorway in strong headwind.

Two recent trips have returned the following consumptions:-

To Scotland, (of 3124 miles inc. 900 miles motorway), 30.0 mpg.

To Yugoslavia and Asian Turkey, (8031 miles) , 31.4 mpg.

The speedometer and odometer have been checked and both read about 8% high. This is within the Ford tolerance of +10% +4 mph. The above mileage and consumption figures have been corrected for this error.

In summary this vehicle has fulfilled all expectations, being very driveable with good acceleration and hill climbing ability. Overdrive 3rd, just below 4th and overdrive 4th provide two extra gears. The latter gives relaxed cruising at 55 - 60 mph and switching between the two is by a switch in the gear lever top. Bruce Cunningham." Bearing in mind the elevating roof, why the concern with strong headwinds? (Ed).

Rita & I bought our first Diesel four years ago after as much thought and research as possible at the time. We knew a diesel engine would put up the price of the vehicle and needed to be reasonably sure the kind of use envisaged for the CX1000GTL would repay the extra outlay. I found out from the AA the relative prices of gasoline and gas oil in the whole of Europe and was happy to find I could leave home on a tankful at UK prices, fill up in Luxembourg at their low price and get to Italy for the next fill where the cost was something like half that of 4 Star. The calculation was made a little difficult due to the availability of Italian Tourist Coupons for gasoline. I then discovered how cheap Diesel was in Holland, Denmark and the Scandinavian countries. This put Norway firmly back on our required touring list and cleared up any remaining doubts; a Diesel it would be. Its even cheaper in Greece...

Now, with about 61,000 miles on the clock (to be truthful it's 98,000 kilometers since the odometer reads that way - very handy for Continental touring - we'll miss it on the Talisman GL!), I am totally convinced I made the right decision. Maintenance has consisted of oil, oil filter and fuel filter changes plus two sets of front disc pads and one set of rear brake shoes very recently. Even I can look after filter changes without getting too filthy and the cost is not great. The cost should be less on the new vehicle since Peugeot Talbot extended the service intervals soon after I bought B200REA.

What about fuel consumption? We have kept a record of every drop of fuel bought and the answer is 32.23 miles per gallon since new. That includes just about every kind of journey you could think of, from UK Motorway travel to Scotland, say, at a fairly steady 70, (onto the M6 at Junction 4 and off at Junction 44) to touring in Scandinavia at their maximum 50 mph - but then climbing from sea level to 1,410 meters in a few miles!

Cold starting has never been a problem, and have we had some cold starts, from well inside the Arctic Circle in October to Southern Italy in March and both were down to minus 8 or 10 C! (In the rest of Europe the major oil companies have competed to produce diesel fuel with the lowest "safe" temperature, commonly minus 19 degrees to minus 21 degrees C and it now seems Britain is catching up.) Just turn the key one click, wait for the heater light to go out then the final twist and we're running. It's never failed yet. The same thing applies to starting after a couple of weeks standing on the drive in Winter and no problems with damp electrics.

I think I should say that a diesel engine does not behave exactly like a petrol engine. It produces more power (torque) at lower revs and and is not keen on having the revs pushed into the red section of the dial! So a light big toe on the right foot suits it very well and saves fuel, too. I think it has taken me the four years to learn how to get the best out of the 2.5 Peugeot. Also, needing no choke, it produces plenty of power at low revs as soon as it's running, we just "walk away" from our grassy pitch in the morning!

If you are thinking of going to the **Bath & West Show** at Shepton Mallet, 22nd to 24th September perhaps you would like to have a pitch amongst other Auto-Sleeper Owners? If you let **John Cox (0283 712394)** know fairly soon he will be able to arrange for the Club to have a block of pitches. Individual requests to John C, please. You will have had the complete list of Club Rallies last month and will also know **Auto-Sleepers** are supporting **Bowers M C** at the Motor Caravan Fair at Stratford upon Avon, 9th to 11th June; **Cotswold M C** at the Three Counties Show at Malvern, 13th to 15th June; **Bowers M C** Open Weeekend and Summer Fair, 16th to 18th June and **Sexton M C** at the Cheshire County Show at Tatton Park, 20th & 21st June, but you may not know they are also supporting **Three Counties Motor Caravans** at the **New Forest Show** from 26th to 28th July. Busy, aren't they!

The Committee are looking for a couple of professional people to help them in various ways. Have we a qualified Accountant out there who would be prepared to offer his services in the matter of auditing the Club Income & Expenditure Account sometime between the end of the Financial year and the AGM? The dates are 31st December and in the month of April but allow Frank time to get his figures sorted out and the likely date is sometime in February. Any offers, please? The second call is for a Solicitor to vet the revised Rules and Constitution for possble flaws. Timing is uncertain, but I guess it is some months away. Any takers on that one, please?

There can only be a "For Sale" and "Wanted" section in the Newsletter if... and you know the rest.

FOR SALE.

Frank Stinchcombe has a petrol-driven generator, a Honda EX800, he is willing to part with for a reasonable sum of money. Very new, never run seriously, he says! Interested? Contact him on 0453 843714.

Remember Mike of the 'Pru? He wrote again some time ago to explain why he and Brenda would have to miss the Inaugural Rally - no, not because of the dog but because the Builder decided that that was the only time he could start some major alterations! Being a glutton for punishment he has more to say:-

"INSURANCE.

Well, we certainly did it, didn't we? The article on insurance has stirred up all sorts! What a good thing it was. At least it made you aware and to shop around. We do not normally deal via brokers as we have agents everywhere. Remember, the

example given was for myself aged 52 and my wife the same age, with a maximum No Claims Discount and on a Legend (1988) with a value of £19,000. The contents are covered under my house contents insurance by extending it to include "personal effects away from the home". I get a month's free Green Card, though!

I do not and never will say we are the cheapest, just competitive in Motor Caravans. My original article was at the request of the Secretary who thought it would be interesting to Members, at the same time, I have thought for a long time that our rates were so competitive that I would like to tell people about them, but was afraid of being accused of touting for business, "another fine mess you've got me into, Stanley". The Sec is right, you must shop around and if you wish to include us in the shopping list contact your nearest Prudential Office or give me a ring.

Just to put the cat among the pigeons, did you know that if you insured more than one vehicle with the same insurance company, in the same names and with the same cover you can get additional discounts? With us it's 15% on both vehicles. It's worth asking the next time your renewal is due whether it's with your broker or any other insurance company. Mike Lavercombe."

The Secretary's Corner.

Favourite Sites.

When going to press, no contributions had been received on this subject, so I can only get the ball rolling by including a few of our favourite sites, and advise early arrival as they are in popular areas.

Firstly, **SAN MARINO**. This is a principality in Italy inland from Rimini on the Adriatic coast. The surrounding area is mostly flat, but some rocky hills, rise from the plain (probably volcanic cores) and are quite high. To reach the site you drive up towards the top of the hill until you see the international camping signs. The site is terraced, not very large, not very anything really, and will be crowded in season, but most people only stay a few nights for the sightseeing. A walk of some two kilometres, uphill, or a bus ride, will take you to the old town where wine can be tasted and hooch bought at very low prices. The buildings, narrow streets, tourist shops and forts are photogenic and some have worthwhile gifts for sale. It is very like Ruritania, with a small army which is taken very seriously by the natives. And you can see for miles and miles if you are lucky enough to have a clear day. Oh, and there is a cabin lift from a lower car park.

ASSISI. The site is easily found, but from the south you think you may have missed it for a time. This site is built on the side of the hill in terraces, and so enables you to see over the other campers and across the valley with its small, square fields and farm houses, to the hills on the far side. At night the strings of white and amber lights along the streets and the cars on the main roads with red lights make the whole area look like a box of jewels. There is a long drive through the site to the main road, and a walk to Assisi of around

1-2 km. The town has Fiat-sized curved streets, small squares, and a lot of small surprising corners. A good browsing area.

PISA. The site is within a few minutes walk of the Leaning Tower, etc., (Would you believe it's called, "Camping Torre Pendente"? Ed.) unless the level crossing is closed. There is even a very good Supermarket en route although the site carries a small supply of food. It is very necessary to reach this site early, as it is small and the field at the entrance is flat, whereas the rear field mostly needs levellers. Rcd."

We could have had a competition to find where the missing paragraph should have been, if Norman Teasdale hadn't found it first! At least, he found the mistake. No one else has asked why, about two thirds of the way down page Two, Newsletter No 7, I apparently started rabbiting on about "our" journeying round the world and I didn't and we haven't, anyway, not yet! Between the bit about the ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff, 6 hours and the paragraph starting, "From 1982 until 1985..." should have been:- A good place, this, for a comment from Bruce Cunningham:-

"As you will see from the questionnaire, we are into long haul travel by air as well as in the 'van!" and then the text which followed. Which puts a different slant on the whole thing and calls for an apology from me to Bruce, which is hereby given. Sorry, Bruce!

We are going away for four weeks. I realised there would be no June Newsletter unless I wrote it before we went so, between sending the May one to the printer and getting it back to put up and posted, I have knocked up this one. So the quality is even worse than usual, there are no contributions from the Factory or even from L O, L O, what's all this, then? (Who'd be a policeman?)

An opportunity to mention some of the things we have learnt to do in our short time as motor caravanners, not with any suggestion that you should do the same, far from it - you've probably tried and discarded them long ago! Anyway, for what they're worth:-

Drinking water is said to taste "funny" sometimes when drawn from the tank. We haven't had that problem but we avoid it anyway by carrying two polythene bottles, one of five litres and one of two and a half which we fill direct from the tap and use for drinking, coffee making, etc. Containers of this size can be used under most taps so we can get fresh drinking water where we might not be able to fill the tank. The water from the tank is for washing and cooking. We use these containers to fill the tank, thus ensuring a good washout, some exercise in walking to and fro and save the room needed for a hose. I am also suspicious about bacteria breeding inside a damp hose...

Our first trip abroad in the 'van was in March, 1985. We used quite a bit of gas for space heating and found difficulties in finding Camping Gaz in small towns at that time of year. Also, it was expensive. So, we went to Travel Gas (Midlands) Ltd in Birmingham and had a thirty-litre propane tank fitted. It cost twice as much as expected so probably has never paid for itself in money terms, (it has in

peace of mind!) even though the price of propane for "domestic" use is only 18p per litre. So, allowing for ullage (thank you, Charles) we get 25 litres for £4.50 and that lasts us at least a month, even in the depths of winter. (25 litres weighs about 29 lbs, so I guess it should last a month.) If we need to fill up away from home we have found many filling stations in France and Italy have LPG under various names (Auto-Gas is getting popular.) The number of filling stations in Britain with Auto-Gas is growing and I am getting some lists of sites in case of future interest. Unfortunately, unless you have a supplier who can sell propane for domestic use, duty and VAT free, you will have to pay 24p per litre for Auto-Gas, making the cost of 25 litres £6.00. Calor Gas have told me today that Auto-Gas costs 32-33pence per litre in "the South" and 28ppl in Birmingham and most of the rest of England. Obviously another case for shopping around. It's still a lot cheaper than the equivalent weight in small bottles. The last lot of Camping Gaz (butane) cost me £4.70 for 6lbs! Why do I sing the praises of the propane tank and then go and buy Camping Gaz? Because, up to the last time I went there, it's the only LPG you can buy in Spain! I may check on that next month...

A small addition to the Security items of last month; we had a Strong Box bolted to a strong part of the 'van and well hidden. (Why, do you think, are the the water bottles of different sizes?). After arrival in, say, France and clearing Immigration, Passports, English money, Eurocheques, house keys and any items of value not required on the journey go into the box, French money comes out and the box is locked and padlocked. We think it would take a few minutes to find it and, if it's appearance didn't deter an opportunity-thief, the locks would increase the chances of detection before the worst happened.

The Club Stall at Cotswold Hobourne had total sales of rather more than £500, of which a reasonable amount was profit for Club funds. Very well done, Dily's and Lisa and helpers. The Raffle at the same event raised just over £600 for the same cause and almost all of that was profit, thanks to the generosity of the prize-givers. Well done, Frank and his band of ticket sellers! (Let's hear it for the ticket buyers, too.) It's of interest to note that orders for "woollies" reached 34 by Sunday lunch-time; soon the Club pullover will be obligatory at Club events. As already reported, the "Spares Shop" provided by A-S did marvellous business. The requests for a similar stall or mobile shop at Club rallies around the country has been considered by them and the conclusion was that it was just not feasible. There are lots of difficulties in the way; a stall was out because there would seldom be anywhere under cover for it. To equip a suitable van would be too expensive and on top of that the provision of sales staff/driver plus overnight accommodation, plus time taken to load on Friday and unload on Monday, etc. and Time IS Money! A-S would prefer to do the job well once a year rather than attempt some sort of compromise arrangement.

RALLY MARSHALS are important. More than that, they are essential at all Club rallies. When we get our Certificate of Exemption we will have to name one person to be in charge of each rally and that will involve added responsibility.

Please don't let me frighten anyone out of volunteering, "The Duties of Rally Marshals" is being drawn up so that the quite straight-forward rules and procedures will be known and understood. That is always half the battle - if you know what is required all the doubt about whether you could do the job disappears. It will also help everyone attending rallies - they will know what the Marshal has to do and help him by being prepared. A certain amount of sorting out is going on at the moment in an effort to make the running of rallies smoother. It is thought that sending the payment with the booking slip will enable the Rally Officer to tell the Site Manager the number of 'vans expected and give him (the Rally Officer) time to get a cheque from the Treasurer to pay our dues. The less we all have to handle notes and change the better. If someone should arrive at a rally without booking and provided that there is a pitch available, then cash could be accepted and the appropriate amount added to the payment to the Site. It is also intended to find out the extra charge for awnings, if allowed, and include that information on the booking slip. The number of pitches available at each site and the number of those with electric hookup points and the extra cost of the hookup will also appear on the slips as soon as possible.

Foreign travel is very much on the agenda and the Club will help you more as time goes on. At present we are trying to save you money on Ferries; a report soon. Group travel on the continent is being looked into, too.

Its nice to report a happy ending to an earlier story. Remember Mr LePage of Guernsey who became ill at South Cerney? The Club has had a very nice letter from him, now recovered and getting back to full fitness. He expresses his gratitude to Frank and Dilys who visited him in hospital three times and checked up on Mrs LePage's well-being, too! Well done, all!

Your Editor,

Phil Daley.

June, 1989. 46, Ulverley Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands. B92 8BQ.