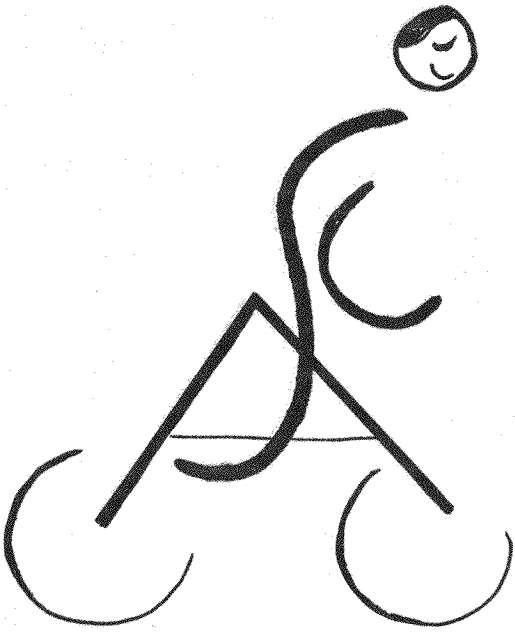


AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB



NEWSLETTER

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AUTO-SLEEPER OWNERS' CLUB.
Newsletter for August, 1989.

Due to a temporary breakdown in communications last month you did not have the benefit of any News from the Factory nor even a note from the President but all is not lost: this month you can have a double helping from them and much less from me. Let the President have the first word:

"NOT SO MUCH FACTORY NEWS - MORE OF BALI!"

As I write these factory notes you may be surprised to learn that I am surrounded by absolute peace and quiet since we are currently closed for a week whilst all our staff have a well-earned holiday. Neville Jelfs, for example, has headed off to the West Country and Alan Beale, who many of you know so well, has headed off to southern Ireland. My brother, Anthony, has been marginally more adventurous and has escaped to the Channel Islands for a well-earned rest, and so I have the luxury of being surrounded by our five ladies which indeed makes a most pleasant change.

As a slight change rather than tell you repetitive ramblings of our factory news, you may be interested to know that I have recently returned from my honeymoon in Bali so perhaps a few lines on this may make a pleasant change to the more mundane happenings at Willersey. Bali, as you know, is an island in Eastern Indonesia, and Angela and I stayed on an island to the east of Bali, named Lombok. Our hotel was situated in ten acres of tropical gardens and we lived in an air conditioned coconut leafed hut which was but twenty metres from the South Java Sea (it really is the Indian Ocean but the South Java Sea sounds a little more romantic!). Crab, lobster and crayfish were available daily at no extra cost and the various tropical fruits were quite magnificent. Coconuts, for example, were very different to those we get in this country, being large, green and smooth skinned, and the milk so very much more pleasant than the type of coconut milk you get here. The locals said the coconut milk was an aphrodisiac! The sea was luke-warm and the sand at times too hot on which to walk. It was wonderful to have a complete absence of tar and the waters were crystal-clear with tropical fish everywhere. We stayed on this island for two weeks and retrospectively we feel it was pure paradise. All the locals, who lived in open-sided huts, with no electricity, air conditioning, sanitation or any of the comforts to which we are so accustomed, were totally satisfied with their life, wanted for nothing, and were without doubt the very nicest race we had ever met - excluding Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club members, of course!

I thought, therefore, that this brief resume of our honeymoon may make a slight change to my normal ramblings. Next month we will be back in harness and for those of you hungry for news, we will let you know the very latest Auto-Sleeper news.

Both Angela and I will, of course, be at the next Club Rally on the 7th July, at which time we very much hope to meet as many of you as possible. With all good wishes from myself and my five ladies.

Charles Trevelyan."

I am sorry it is a little out of date in some respects but I thought you should have it verbatim despite that. And they did take part in the enjoyable Rally we had at Cheddar. Perhaps you have not come to one of the Meets yet - try one, you may become addicted. At least if you only come to one, and I don't think that will happen, you will have met a number of like-minded motor caravanners, most of whom don't bite! About 10% of our Members were at Cheddar

and about 80% of them went along to the local where Frank had organised a meal and skittles for Saturday evening. We now have over 400 Members so there were nearly 40 vans there. (Including Charles and Angela with the VW!)

It wasn't all Beer & Skittles, though. The Committee was there in force to attend a meeting on Saturday afternoon. And what a meeting it turned out to be. It was still going at full blast at 5:45 when the Bar was required for its proper purpose and we were ejected. It has occured to me to wonder if some newer Members have the impression the Committee Members and Officers are some all-powerful beings who step down from Mount Olympus from time to time just to give the mortal members the benefit of their wisdom. If you did, I can assure you it is not like that at all, we are much more keen than clever. We are already finding some of the mistakes we made earlier in the Club's brief history and setting about correcting them.

Item: The Rally organisation is not running as smoothly as it should; we know why and will change things. This is just a matter of bringing in new procedures for booking and paying and the new system would have been notified with this Newsletter but John and Barbara Cox are going away in August for a month so we have to do things in two stages; stage one involves sending booking slips and payments for Rallies 9, 10 & 11 to the Secretary at the well-known address, NOT to John. Those are the Rallies at Blacklands Lake, Calne, Wilts (18th - 20th August), Hurley Caravan Park, Nr Marlow, Berks (22nd - 24th September) and St Helen's Park, Wykeham, Scarborough (20th - 22nd October). The charge for Hurley is £6 for the weekend, not per night. News of what is happening in November and December in the next Newsletter, I expect...

Item: Subscriptions cover the calendar year which seemed a good idea at the time. It has been pointed out by some prospective Members that they get short-changed if they join between now and the end of the year, having to find another £10 in January. This is under review.

"Chairman's Chat (2)

I make no apology for returning to the question of what you expect and want from the Club and in particular the rallies. My impression is that most people prefer a fairly quiet weekend with the opportunity of meeting old friends and making new ones. I have been most impressed with the friendliness of all the members I have met so far - but I suppose that is not too surprising as we are all discriminating people or we wouldn't have Auto-Sleepers!

Without getting too technical I have a simple hint to avoid the dreaded wheel spin when leaving a damp pitch, or attempting to. This is to leave the pitch in the reverse direction to the way you arrived. In other words if you intend to leave a pitch forwards, as is usual, reverse onto it when arriving. This is what most people do anyway but the reason why you are more likely to be successful is, when you think about it, quite simple. As you pull on to your pitch, particularly if the ground is a bit soft, your four wheels each make a slightly depressed channel and as you stop there will be a miniature wall of soil just ahead of your wheels. When you come to leave it is clearly better to drive over the channels you have already made than attempt to climb that wall! That's my theory anyway.

John Normandale, June, 1989."

Help is at hand. I quote from Fiat World, Issue No. 19, April, 1989: "The first Ducato 4x4s come to the UK later this year... Where Fiat believe the Ducato

4x4 will score immediately is in the leisure market which will account for between 60 and 70 percent of Ducato 4x4s at the very least. This would cover not only sales to sports clubs and similar organisations, but also to specialist conversion companies marketing motorhomes where the Ducato chassis is already the market leader." The expected premium for four wheel drive is £2,000, plus, presumably, VAT and modified Car Tax...

It is now a long time since the Innaugural Meeting and you still don't know who the Committee members are or where they live. Sorry. Here goes:-

PRESIDENT: Charles Trevelyan.

Major A C Trevelyan
c/o Auto-Sleepers Limited
Orchard Works
Willessey, Nr Broadway,
Hereford & Worcs. WR12 7PT
0386 853338

CHAIRMAN: John Normandale.

87 Lower Camden,
CHISLEHURST, Kent BR7 5JD
01-467 0798

Vice-Chairman: Clive Jenkins

2 Maypole Knap
SOMERTON, Somerset TA11 6HR
0458 72856

Secretary: Rita Daley
Editor: Phil Daley

46 Ulverley Green Road
SOLIHULL, W Midlands B92 8BQ
021 706 1816

Treasurer: Frank Stinchcombe
Regalia Officer:
Dilys Stinchcombe

40 Hillesley Road
Kingswood, WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE
Glos GL12 8RU
0453 843714

Rally Officer: John Cox

73 Westhead Road
BARTON-UNDER-NEEDWOOD
Staffs. DE13 8JR
0283 712394

Minutes Secretary:
Harry Henthorne
Membership Secretary:
Sheila Hammell

69 Bingham Road
ADDISCOMBE
Surrey. CR0 7EG
01 654 4216

Assistant Treasurer:
Ken Scotney
Assistant Secretary:
Sybil Scotney

1 Church Road, Gt. Stukeley
HUNTINGDON, Cambs. PE17 5AL
0480 451270

Committee Member: Ralph Dulson

Birchbrook, Trafalgar Way
STOCKBRIDGE, Hants SO20 6ET
0264 810406

So there you have a few more points of contact which could be useful.

Ralph hasn't been landed with a specific job because, due to an unfortunate series of coincidences, he hasn't been able to get to a Committee meeting yet (Except the first brief one at South Cerney). How is the cracked rib, Ralph?

We have formed some sub-committees for various jobs; I have mentioned the one searching for the best site for the 1990 National Rally & AGM. There is now one, made up of John Cox, Ken Scotney and myself, to look into ways of meeting the diverse requirements of you all as far as rallies are concerned. For instance, the "Mid-Weekers", the "Quiet-Sitters" and Special Interest groups. Would anyone like to be co-opted onto this one to provide new ideas? We are seeking potential rally marshalls, especially those who would be willing if only they knew what the job involved. The idea is to get you to under-study at a rally to see how things are run and then, hopefully, volunteer to act as assistant Marshalls at a later rally. You know the telephone number!

The question of forming regional groups may have to be put to the AGM for a decision in principle but there is a lot of ground work to be done before then. I hope the volunteer organisers and I can get together over the next few months to agree on and prepare a plan to present to the AGM. For this to work we will have to circulate lists of Members' names and addresses. Whether we will need to include telephone numbers remains to be seen. As always in Club affairs, your comments, advice and help will be very welcome.

I have raised the subject of a "Works Visit" with our President and he has persuaded me that it would be better to postpone any plans for this until next year. I know a lot of people will be disappointed but it is very much a case of patience being rewarded!

"TYRE PRESSURES.

Many members will be interested to know that we have recently been liasing in some detail with the base vehicle manufacturers regarding tyre pressures for our conversions. We can best quote from a letter received from one of our chasis manufacturers. I quote:

"I have had discussions on this matter and checked in the tyre publications which I have in my possession and I feel obliged to advise you that trying to give specific answers along the parameters that you suggest would undoubtedly cause confusion amongst your users.

It would be my recommendation that the tyre pressure indications included in our Owners Handbook are the figures that you should quote in any additional publication. Motorists should always be aware of the recommended tyre pressures for the vehicle that they are driving and the source for the information is invariably the Manufacturers Handbook. Any attempt to expand upon that information would, I believe, be capable of misinterpretation by the non-technical user particularly with regard to his personal understanding of "normal", "high-speed" and "laden/unladen" conditions."

Quite clearly, therefore, we feel that the sensible course of action is to refer to the vehicle handbook in the first instance and, indeed, this recommendation is reflected in our new range of handbooks which is currently in the process of being printed.

Charles Trevelyan, June, 1989."

So there you are, Mary C., all this hard work and back where you started!

I have learnt, almost by accident, that VW do NOT recommend the fitting of spoilers to their vans, unless, of course, they are of their own manufacture. Why? Because other designs of spoiler can deflect cooling air away from the front disc brakes and lead to over-heating with the resultant loss of efficiency. In other words, Mary, if you still want to race HGVs up and down the Motorways, pay up and get a complete VW front end!

"FROM INSIDE THE FACTORY."

Working inside a factory when the weather is hot, (and today it is 85) is not many workers' idea of good fun, the blue Auto-Sleeper overalls are soon exchanged for shorts and bare torsos, the only light relief comes from the factory heaters which also double up as fans in the summer. With a week's factory closure very imminent the fine weather looks certain to break; it usually does when Auto-Sleeper employees head for the coast, so by the time you read this newsletter you will know what the weather was like between June 24th and July 3rd and perhaps you will stop and think before asking, "Did you have a nice holiday!"

The Brands Hatch Motor Caravan Jamboree, which was superbly organised by Bromley Motor Caravans, was a huge success and we know that many Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club members attended. This was the third Jamboree to be held at the famous motor racing circuit in Kent and I am sure those of you who were there will agree it was the best yet, with non-stop entertainment and attractions, including motorcycle and car racing, a Saturday evening firework display and star cabaret, plus one of the largest displays of motor caravans and accessories ever brought together. The Jamboree is one of the very few events outside the Earls Court Caravan and Camping Show that is officially supported by the major motor caravan manufacturers and, despite obvious competition for orders, sales staff and Company directors find it is a good excuse for getting together and discussing what is new.

Neville Jelfs.

PS. Once again Auto-Sleepers topped the list with new van sales during the weekend. NJ."

I have been asked by the Chairman to explain that when I said sales of Club Sweaters were going so well they would soon become obligatory wear at Club Rallies, I was joking. If you don't like what I write in the Newsletter, please tell me; if you don't like what other people write in the Newsletter, please take it up with them. The items I do not write are enclosed in inverted commas and the writer's name is given. Their opinions are their own, not mine. The comment in this Newsletter about "Mary C." racing HGVs along motorways is a Joke. She does not do that and any suggestion that she might be guilty of such bad behaviour is withdrawn, unreservedly. So, no more jokes.

Complaints seem to be popular these days so I will try to put a lot of minds at rest. I quote from a letter received recently from A-S Limited, "I think we need to be a little cautious in the future regarding the publishing of some letters which do tend to slate, unnecessarily, our chassis manufacturers since clearly if they became aware of the contents of the letter it could cause a small degree of offence. Charles Trevelyan." On reflection I agree publishing such letters does no good and in a recent case caused a Member who was awaiting delivery of a Talbot, some needless anguish. I was able to demonstrate my complete happiness with the 2.5 litre Diesel and gearbox after 64,000 miles and four and a bit years. So, please address complaints to those

responsible and not to the Editor. If you don't know who should be approached to get a problem sorted out, give us brief details and we will try to help you. So, no more complaints for publication.

"FROM THE FACTORY.

It is now the second time that we have had a factory holiday when the week in question proved to be particularly wet whilst the first week back at work was warm to say the least. Indeed as these notes are being penned it is a blisteringly hot day and I expect to see the weather map changing for the worse as we approach our August close down period. This prompts me to make a plea to you all, namely that when the factory is closed please understand that we are unable to offer any of the normal services that we provide. Whilst a skeleton staff is always here, namely myself and five ladies, the stores and all other facilities are closed.

Production continues at our steady high rate and currently the first of the face lifted Renaults are being produced. Remember that as members of the Owners' Club you will be the first to receive our revised brochures which will be produced immediately prior to the Caravan Show and these will of course include details of this vehicle, although doubtless many of you would have seen pictures of the revised frontal treatment in the Motor Caravan press. On a more personal note I did so greatly enjoy attending the Owners' Club rally at Cheddar earlier this month. Whilst this is hardly factory news I really must say how much both my wife and I enjoyed it and for those of you who have yet to attend a Club rally I would recommend them most strongly. I had no idea that life in an Auto-Sleeper could be such fun. So this ends our latest contribution. Neville is busy penning away his notes which I trust will give you a greater insight as to what goes on in the factory.

With kind regards to you all.
Charles Trevelyan."

AUTO-SLEEPERS LIMITED, WILL BE CLOSED FROM SATURDAY, 12TH AUGUST UNTIL TUESDAY, 29th. AUGUST.

"FACTORY NEWS.

As the deadline approaches by which my contribution is to be written I am in a mad state of panic since I can think of little to say. To be honest producing Motor Caravans is hardly a newsworthy occupation and with the best will in the world it is unlikely that much changes month by month. Furthermore, I have already seen Charles' contribution and he has effectively stolen much of my thunder. So there dear readers I end, leaving you with the assurance that production continues as well as ever and should this not be the case you would be the first to hear! Looking forward to seeing you at some future rally or perhaps at our factory (by appointment!). Neville."

A PLEA FROM THE RALLY OFFICER, JOHN COX.

Please do make sure you get the booking slip in the post in plenty of time. This is most important, especially in July and August because Site Owners or Managers are not willing to refuse other bookings when space is under pressure just because John says he thinks 30 Members are likely to turn up. He has to give a firm number at least the weekend before the rally and we will have to pay for that number of pitches, used or not. So, if twelve slips are returned and twenty Members turn up it is quite possible, if the site is full, those who did not book will be turned away. Sorry, but you must see the Site Owner's

point of view on this. Slips to be in by the Friday before the Friday of the rally, please.

FRENCH CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

John may be able to arrange, if there is sufficient demand, a rally near Broadway, a coach trip to Dover, day return ferry to Calais or Boulogne, coach back to the site. The obvious time would be November/December. Interested? Views without commitment at this stage direct to the Secretary - John is off on holiday shortly. We need to get some idea of numbers before going further.

Note from the Secretary: - We have not had many entries for the competition but the ones we had were most interesting. They have now been sent to A-S for the final selection. Pam & Peter Stroud want to thank the two people who gave information & advice about the Hebrides as a result of a request in the Newsletter. An interesting holiday ensued and they plan a further visit. Bromley Motor Caravans Open Weekend - 2nd/3rd September.

ITEMS FOR SALE.

"To fit a Talbot High Top CX 1000 GTL. Two matching cupboards which fit on the upper ledges next to the existing cupboards, one on each side. These can only be used if you are not using the upper sleeping bed. They are in wood obtained from Auto-Sleepers and match existing cupboards in trim and catches. They are 24"L X 8"H X 7"D. Held by two fixing screws and are easily detachable if bed is required. £20 the pair.

Mr W L Clarke, 21 Highfield, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3QD 0462 67272."

100% Acrylic V-Neck Sweater, size 36", Royal Blue, £14

Postage and Packaging £1.00

50% cotton, 50% Acrylic Sweat Shirt (Round neck) Large (42"/44") in Sherbert Pink (between Pink and Peach) £12.

Postage and Packaging £1.00

Both with "Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club" embroidered on them.

Payment with order please and cheques made payable to: "Auto-Sleeper Owners' Club." Order from: Mrs Dilys Stinchcombe, 40 Hillesley Road, Kingswood, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos. GL12 8RU.

KONTITE THERM'X CATALYTIC HEATER. Model 320TC - NEVER BEEN USED. £40 or near offer. Frank on 0453 843714.

Items for consideration for inclusion in the September Newsletter should reach the Editor not later than 19th August - at the Calne rally, if you like.

Newsletter Editor: Philip C. Daley, 46 Ulverley Green Road, SOLIHULL, West Midlands. B92 8BQ. Phone 021 706 1816.